



## Backpacker Operators Alliance of Victoria

# A GUIDE TO PRINTING AND DESIGN THAT DOESN'T COST THE EARTH, LITERALLY!

A guide to printing and design that doesn't cost the earth, literally!

We all know that the paper free society is a myth. Despite improved recycling habits, huge amounts of paper are still wasted everyday in the workplace and in the home, while residue from inks and printing-press solvents poison our air and waterways.

The plethora of communications generated daily, accounts for much of this waste and pollution. This fact sheet offers simple advice to help you do your bit to preserve our precious environment and still get your message out, on budget.

### **DESIGNING YOUR JOB**

Every decision made from the beginning to the end of a job will effect how much your designs impact on the environment. An informed designer can maximise the quality of your publication and ensure minimal environmental impact, without necessarily increasing costs. They can advise on a choice of eco-friendly paper, ink, printing and finishing, and publication format, size, colour, quantity and aesthetic.

For eco-friendly design:

- Check that a printed publication is the best way to reach your audience. Could it be done digitally? Eg. via email, website or online instead?
- Check the potential for multi-purposing – can one publication serve the purpose of two? Also consider the shelf life of the publication – will it become obsolete in a

short period of time?

- Consider the smallest paper size for your job. Ask your graphic designer to use as few pages as possible, resulting in less paper consumption and using as few ink colours as possible
- Choose a printer with eco accreditation
- Discuss with your printer a design format that minimises paper wastage on press and use recycled or semi-recycled paper where possible
- Consider the minimum number of ink colours necessary
- Choose recycled materials where possible
- Print only as many copies as you will need – don't fall into the trap of printing extra to save costs, only to dispose of them if uptake is slow
- Check that the publication can be re-used and recycled
- Inform your audience of the initiatives taken to produce your work in an environmentally sensitive manner

### **CHOOSING PAPER**

Paper production has a significant impact on the environment, from the destruction of virgin forest for fibre to the toxic discharges from the pulp and paper processing.

There are a number of high quality, cost competitive papers that minimise these environmental impacts. Selecting an eco-friendly paper is a simple way for you to have a positive impact on our forests, air and water.

Recycling one tonne of post-consumer paper will save an average of 17 trees.

For the most eco-friendly paper choice, ensure that it:

- has high post-consumer recycled content
- comes from sustainably managed plantation timber – look for Forest Stewardship Council (FSC) certification
- is free of chlorine bleached fibres – look for Process Chlorine Free (PCF), Totally Chlorine Free (TCF) or Elemental Chlorine Free (ECF) certifications
- comes from a paper mill that has an EMS certification – look for ISO 14001 or EMAS
- is produced in Australia – supports local industry and reduces environmental impacts from transportation. To help you further in choosing paper products, use the Recommended Environmentally Accountable Paper (REAP) Guide

### **PRINTING YOUR JOB**

Printers are key contributors to the discharge of volatile organic compounds (VOCs) and other potentially toxic pollutants into our environment. An environmentally aware printer is one who minimises the impacts on human health and the environment while producing a quality printed product.

VOCs react with vehicle exhaust to form photochemical smog. In its liquid form, VOCs can effect water and soil quality.

For the most eco-friendly printing options:

- Check that your printer has an environmental management system in



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place

- Check the VOC emission ratings from the printing process – inks, coatings, cleaning solutions, dampening solutions, glues – select minimal or no VOC emissions where possible
- Check that your printer can do computer-to-plate printing (eliminating film)
- Choose vegetable inks with uncoated paper where possible
- Avoid metallic and fluorescent inks as these contain heavy metals
- Choose aqueous varnish over UV coatings and plastic laminates
- Check how your printer recycles and separates solid waste – paper off-cuts, cardboard, printing plates, ink containers, cleaning rags, palettes, screens and metals
- It can be an effective marketing strategy to communicate on your printed material the eco-friendly paper and printing choices you have made. For example: 'This brochure was printed on 100% post consumer recycled content using vegetable based inks'. If you have used paper with environmental certification, e.g. FSC, then you may also want to use their logo on your material

For more detailed information on each of these sections visit Design by Nature [www.designbynature.org](http://www.designbynature.org)

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