



HOW PRINT
GROWS
TREES

A WHITE PAPER

How Print Grows Trees



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What Have You Been Told?

We all want to be “green.” We’re constantly being told that being green is desirable and good for our world. Children learn it in school, businesses are complimented for making environmentally friendly changes in their operations, and “being green” is all over the TV. The media constantly tells us that printing marketing materials and emails is bad for the environment. However, you might be surprised to learn that tree farmers have a different view of what it means to be “green.”

They actually want you to use more paper, rather than avoiding it. New trees need to be cut down in order for newer, healthier ones to be planted in their places. But that’s not the message we’ve been given. It’s time to look at both sides of the story and hear the truth from the farmers’ viewpoint, so we can see a balanced view.

Not only is this a balanced approach to life, but it’s a great way for business owners to get ahead and make strides in their marketing efforts.

Rethink Your “Do Not Print” Mantra

We all get those emails, cautioning us not to print things out in order to be mindful of the environment. But research actually shows that printing emails (or anything for that matter) actually helps sustain our forests. In fact, tree farmers encourage people to add the tagline to their emails: “Think before you DON’T print,” in hopes of raising awareness of the vital role continued paper use plays in keeping tree farms viable and profitable for farmers.

Here’s another popular footnote endorsed by tree farmers that is often added to emails: “Notice: It’s OK to print this email. Paper is a biodegradable, renewable, sustainable product made from trees. Growing and harvesting trees provides jobs for millions of people. Working forests are good for the environment and provide clean air and water, wildlife habitat, and carbon storage. Thanks to improved forest management, we have more trees today than we had 100 years ago.”

This is good news because now you can maximize your marketing efforts while continuing to be mindful of the trees we all love and depend on. It means you now have the freedom to print in your office and to use portfolios, flyers, business cards, and other printed materials to further your business, while at the same time helping local farmers.

Put Your Guilt to Rest

Research shows that we actually have more forests than we did in 1900, which means our use of paper has not affected our forests. In fact, one major threat to forests is having no use for trees. In these cases, farmers are often forced to clear the land without replanting trees.

When farmers have to use forestland for agricultural purposes, that's when our forests are in trouble. However, when we use paper on a regular basis, this increases the need for trees. And when it's profitable for farmers to plant trees, we'll have more forests. It sounds simple when you see it from the farmer's point of view, but we've been told so often NOT to print things out that many of us now feel guilty whenever we print an email or other item for later review. In truth, we should feel good about helping to provide a constant need for trees.

Of course, we aren't talking about wasting paper or filling up the landfills with unnecessary junk. But being armed with this knowledge can help us feel good again about using the paper in our printers and about creating traditional direct mail marketing campaigns that we know work for our businesses and that are also cost-effective.

We Need to Cut Trees to Save Them

Typically, trees are cut for pulp as part of the thinning operation for forests. This pulp actually can't be saved. If farmers don't thin their forests, growth slows, forest health declines, and beetles start to attack all the trees.

Farmers could thin the trees and then just leave them on the ground, but that leads to fire danger and insect infestations. Thinning trees is good for the health of the forest, as well as for the wildlife, since the thinning allows sunlight into the woods, encouraging the diverse food supplies wildlife need. Forest landowners don't make much money from thinning operations. Most of the money they make goes into forest improvement. But if there's no profitable market using thinned wood, such as the need for paper, most forest landowners couldn't afford to maintain the forests at all.

The bottom line is that the paper industry contributes to healthy forests. Forests would be less robust without the paper industry's demand for pulpwood. Listen to what Lawrence Selzerpres, the president and CEO of The Conservation Fund says:

“We are in danger of losing the magnificent working forests in America as properties continue to change hands according to economic and environmental pressures. It is time we focused on keeping working forests as forests, because of the role they play in preserving the green infrastructure of the nation.”

Using Paper is Good for Our Country

Paper is a biodegradable, renewable, sustainable product made from trees in our own country. Growing and harvesting trees provides jobs for millions of people, right here. It feels good to know our use of a product is keeping money in our own backyard.

Tree farming allows people to follow their dreams of being landowners, farmers, and sole proprietors. It allows them to pass down a heritage they can be proud of, while protecting our environment and keeping our air clean.

Brett J. Butlerre, Research Forester for the U.S. Forest Service, says, “The fate of the nation’s forests lies primarily in the hands of the people who own and manage (or do not manage) the land. Any report that claims to analyze forest resources must consider not only the biophysical characteristics of the forests, but also the social context in which they exist. It is ultimately landowners, within the social constraints imposed by society, who make the decisions that lead to parcellation, fragmentation, timber harvesting, recreational opportunities, and many other outcomes.”

Print Important Documents

When farmers can't use their pulp for paper, they eventually can't afford to use their land and own their farms. Then, in the name of progress, all the trees get bulldozed, and the land is used for buildings, parking lots, stores, roads, and more. This is definitely not the best solution for a healthy environment.

This should help business owners feel good about keeping paper files in their cabinets and creating new marketing materials when they feel they need to do so. Sometimes business owners wait until their materials run out before they entertain the idea of re-branding or redoing a logo or packet of promotional items, all in the name of "being green."

But knowing that farmers are depending on us to use their product should take the hesitancy out of this decision. Sometimes waiting to create a new image for your business can actually do more damage than good. When competition heats up, we need to move and improve our image and make sure our marketing products follow suit.

Go Ahead, Use Traditional Marketing Techniques

People are worried about using traditional, tried-and-true, paper-based marketing for fear they aren't being "green." If trees were a nonrenewable resource, like oil or helium, that reasoning would be totally valid. But forests are one of our most renewable resources, since trees grow back. The more paper we use, the more trees get planted to satisfy demand, and the more total forest area we have.

That's a relief to many business owners who have found great success with direct mail. Now they can go back to producing their effective postcard campaigns — or even printing and distributing newsletters.

Now What?

Go ahead and make that amazing portfolio of successes for your customers and prospects to see. Print it and hang it up. Frame it. Make flyers for people who enter your doors, so they can find out about what a great company you have. No more guilt about misusing trees to get ahead in business. Your marketing kit can now look and feel spectacular with high-quality marketing products from your local printer.

Pat yourself on the back for using our renewable resources and for giving farmers the ability to stay in business by planting more trees, rather than having to sell their land for the the development of condos or parking lots. We need trees to help us live in a healthy world, so you should congratulate yourself for contributing to our healthy, breathable air.

Now that you don't have to feel guilty about printing out a flyer, postcard, rack card, table tent, or shiny new business card, maybe your customers will stand up and take notice of your bold new moves. And if they mention anything about the environment, you can be the leader and expert on how much you're helping tree farmers by also helping your business