



THE PEN IS MIGHTIER

You might think that modern technology is driving a fall in sales of pens and correction products but we know differently!

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Modern technology has had a massive impact on the way we work in recent years. With the advent of computers, laptops and hand-helds, predictions of an eventual paperless office were widely forecast. And with techie companies all jumping headfirst into the 'faster, quicker, easier' race in a bid to lower our workloads and improve efficiency, resulting innovations have increasingly done just that.

However, technology does not come without problems; computers crash, data mysteriously disappears, printers run out of ink and hand-helds get stolen, smashed, dropped in the bath?! Aside from all of this, there is also the irrefutable fact that creating a document on screen is

not nearly as satisfying, or emotionally engaging, as moving your hand across a snowy white page and watching real ink create an orderly progression of real words on smooth paper you can actually touch.

Unsurprisingly, I am not alone in my love of all things tactile; as the pen manufacturing industry can testify. BIC's Emma Lawley, stationery category marketing manager, comments: "Despite the prevalence of computers in everyday life both at home and at work, the writing instruments market surprisingly continues to grow. This fact is backed up by the recent 2004 GFK market data study which reported a year-on-year growth in writing and correction products.



This prevailing popularity is, admittedly, down to more than just a love of the 'old-fashioned ways'. Pens are just convenient aren't they? After all, you can't wander around with a keyboard in your breast pocket in case you need to jot something down on the move.

Clare Gibbard, marketing manager for Uni-ball, agrees that it's difficult to imagine life without pens: "Even a palm top lacks the convenience and speediness associated with a high performance pen. They are an integral part of the office culture from listing people's choices for lunch to making notes from telephone conversations and meetings...and they will always be ideal for people on the move."

Even when in the office and viewing a document on screen, most people prefer to print off hard copies to interact with more readily. Leah Lister of the Cumberland Pencil Company, says: "Text can be difficult to read and digest on screen, but when the document is printed out, it's much easier to absorb and highlight important points."

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ROBIN CRAIGIE, EDDING

The myth of the paperless office has yet to be realized, and where there's paper there will always be a need for pens and correction instruments for jotting, scribbling, note-taking and reminders. Robin Craigie, marketing manager, Edding, predicts that pens and correction fluids will continue to be used well into the future: "There is an expression to writing with a pen that you just do not get with computers. Technology simply cannot compete with the freedom and flowing flexibility of expression for the user that conventional hand held office products allow."

And, let's not forget, as Lawley points out, "Where would we be if we didn't have our pen to chew on or doodle with?" ■

