

PAPER PADS BOOKS

Thought food for your end-user.

BY JANE SMITH

Along with pens – books, pads and paper are the staple products of any office environment, whether that is a home office or work. Most of us have some form of home office, where we go to do our emails, manage our bills and bank accounts, and finish off what we didn't get done at the office. The kids use our office space too for homework, research and MSN! Paper based stationery and paper itself is therefore still very relevant and manufacturers are constantly innovating to bring us more choice and better value.

Let's take books and pads as a starting point. Standard refill and memo pads are ideal for quick note-taking when the pages are either going to be destroyed once the notes have been typed up or the pages removed and placed into a folder or binder. If going into a folder or binder then it is worth considering pads that are pre-punched as they will be quicker to file and neater as the holes are always in the same place.

Another consideration is whether the pad has perforations at the side or at the head. Again this makes for a neater finish if the pages are to be filed away. If the notes are longer term and/or need to be referred to at a late time then there are other products that could prove more practical. Take, for example, hardback books. A hard cover book will provide greater protection to the pages inside and avoid pages becoming creased or curled. Pages are also less likely to fall out of their own accord. Possibly the best-known brand in the market is Black 'N' Red from John Dickinson but there are lots of other

makes around offering a wide choice of rulings and sizes to suit everyone. You can get standard notebooks or wire-bound ones. Wire binding is handy for note-taking on the move as you can bend the book back upon itself which is great to lean on. And because the book will lie completely flat it is great if you want to take any photocopies.

A recent addition to the Black 'N' Red range is called the Smart Collection. A range featuring the smart ruling system designed for organised note-taking. There is a left-hand column for bullets or numbering and two right hand columns for actions and deadlines. Great for project managing or customer meetings and reviews. The books also have a document pocket for loose sheets or CDs.

If it's the environment you care about then there is a wide choice of recycled books and pads available. The quality these days is excellent too so there does not need to compromise. You won't find the ink from your pen going straight through the paper like it used to.

Finally, if it's funky and fun you're looking for the Pukka Pads have got an exciting range of exercise books and project books that would be worth a look, especially for children, students and the young at heart.

Another kind of pad is the Post-it Note and the brand leaders continue to innovate all the time with groovy new colours, shapes and applications. The newest edition is the launch of the super sticky note which will stick to anything and last much longer.

While our diaries and calendars are already in 'situ' and now populated with birthdays, anniversaries, holidays and important 'other' dates, 2007 is 'in the bag' as far as leading manufacturers such as Collins, Letts and Filofax are concerned. They have already selected their new designs, colours and materials and are busy manufacturing ready for launch in early summer.

Paper and envelopes are a massive sector that continues to grow regardless of our increasing use of computers and the internet. It's a subject in itself but we thought it would be useful just to touch on a couple of key aspects of change.

Firstly, in the envelope market, there are due to be some fairly dramatic changes due to new pricing structures being introduced by Royal Mail. From August 21 2006 mail will be priced in proportion. As far as paper is concerned, the most significant changes are in the development of recycled products and in digital imaging.

POST: the new regulations

Mail will be priced by size and weight and will fall into one of three categories:

LETTER (max 240x165x5mm, slightly bigger than a C5 envelope, up to 100g)

LARGE LETTER (max 35x250x25mm, slightly bigger than a C4 envelope, up to 750g)

PACKET (over 25mm thick, or 353mm long or 250mm wide, or 750g weight bands up to 1kg).

More information is available on www.royalmail.com/pricebysize

SEEN TO BE GREEN!

Consumer interest and government focus has never been so high when it comes to environmental issues. This has been reflected through legislation and voluntary codes of practice, providing credentials for organisations and its products. Not surprisingly (and for a number of years now) paper producers have found themselves in the spotlight on this issue, due to the reliance they have upon forests to make paper pulp. As a result, the paper industry has led the way in environmental policy.

One such innovation has been the emergence of an independent global organisation called The Forest Stewardship Council (FSC) whose label guarantees fine quality. FSC certification ensures that the raw materials used can be traced back to sustainable forests. While the FSC is a voluntary standard, there are others that have more legislative origins. ISO14001 and EMAS (Environmental Management System) being two of the most prominent.

In terms of digital imaging the by-word here is application, application, application!

From both a hardware and a paper point of view manufacturers have been striving to provide products that will give optimum results. But it is important to understand the differences in paper qualities and likely results. Choose the correct paper for the job and you'll get the very best result. Think carefully what you want the paper for. Is it for simple black and white printing, for official documents or presentations, is there any colour, or is it for printing images and graphics? Follow our top tips to make sure you select the right paper for you. ■

USP TOP TIPS...

- 1** Determine what the paper is to be used for.
- 2** Agree what environmental criteria to source within.
- 3** Always ask for advice and gather as much information as you can.
- 4** Think more closely about what is to be communicated internally and outside the organisation.
- 5** What impression do you want to make?
- 6** How could productivity and efficiency within the organisation be improved? (oh and we forgot to mention double sided copying!)
- 7** What about coloured paper? How could that be used more creatively?
- 8** What about security? Determine whether this is an issue.
- 9** Try before you buy.
- 10** Be wary of 'cheap prices'. How good is the quality in reality?