

# PAPER MATES

Ever heard the saying 'You never get a second chance to make a first impression'?

BY JANE SMITH

Well the paper industry must have done because they are thriving on just that in a number of different ways. Firstly, their products are well designed to help end users make just the right impression, secondly they are all doing great things in the way of differentiating their branding and product ranges to help their customers choose the right product and finally, because they are leading the way in innovation and environmental policies. While it is easy to think of paper as just a homogenized commodity, this simply isn't the case and there's plenty of scope to utilize paper in a creative way to make companies and brands stand out and create the right impression in every situation.

As we all know, the paperless office is further from the truth now than it ever was and you can't get away from the fact that people are reassured by and prefer a 'hard copy'. But in this increasing mountain of paper we can utilize paper in a way that helps us recognize documents and differentiates different messages for different audiences. But how? Well, the paper manufacturers themselves are constantly and consistently trying to get the message across that it's all about product knowledge and that paper isn't just about 80gm white stuff! That's why companies like HSP Group offer their dealers in depth training programmes, "so that in turn their sales people can really understand what goes into a paper and what that does for a finished job" Sam Findley, marketing manager at HSPG told us.

These days it seems it's a case of application, application, application!

Paul Cassidy, product manager at Independent Paper advises there are three simple rules to follow:

- 1.** *Identify what the paper is to be used for*
- 2.** *Don't be afraid to get advice*
- 3.** *Try before you buy with a few sheets to make sure it's the result you're looking for.*

Branding and packaging has become of particular importance in the quest to communicate that there is more to paper than first meets the eye.

Antalis have come up with a simple system of 'Paper by Numbers' which they use on all their paper products to make it easier for consumers to differentiate between different types and grades of paper. Numbered 1 to 5 from black and white printing to full colour printing, the number clearly identifies what the paper is best used for.

Claire Barter at UPM told us "Through branding we add value and transform paper from a low-interest to a high interest product." Barter agrees that branding is really important and that packaging needs to be clear, simple and attractive and communicate the features and benefits so that consumers can choose the right paper and make optimum use of it.

In terms of optimum use, she also went on to tell us, "Hardware performance has dramatically increased and only with a high quality paper (especially for colour laser and colour inkjet) can the user achieve premium printing results."

In other words it's horses for courses! Choose the correct paper for the job and you'll get the

very best result. Think carefully about 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?

**GO FOR COLOUR!**

The benefits of well thought through communications are invaluable to the communicator and so are the choices of paper. Inspire your imagination and use the products that will enhance your company's image and make sure messages stand out from the crowd. This could be anything from brightly coloured stock for CVs and press releases to unusual iridescent finishes for menus or invitations. You could also consider colour coding different types of internal correspondence. For example, incoming fax orders could always be printed on yellow, whereas copies of minutes of meetings could always be pale green. Thinking 'outside the box' in the way in which internal printing is used can add to productivity and efficiency.

A solution to provide a complete range of matching and co-ordinating business stationery can transform first impressions of a business. New technology has brought with it the ability to print letterheads upon demand, but it also means that anyone can produce authentic looking documents. And in the business arena this is opening companies up to information theft. This is because creating a letterhead, a market report or other paper based stationery item is simple. Italian manufacturer Favini told us that as a result of these threats companies are beginning to look for ways of improving security.

**SECURITY MATTERS!**

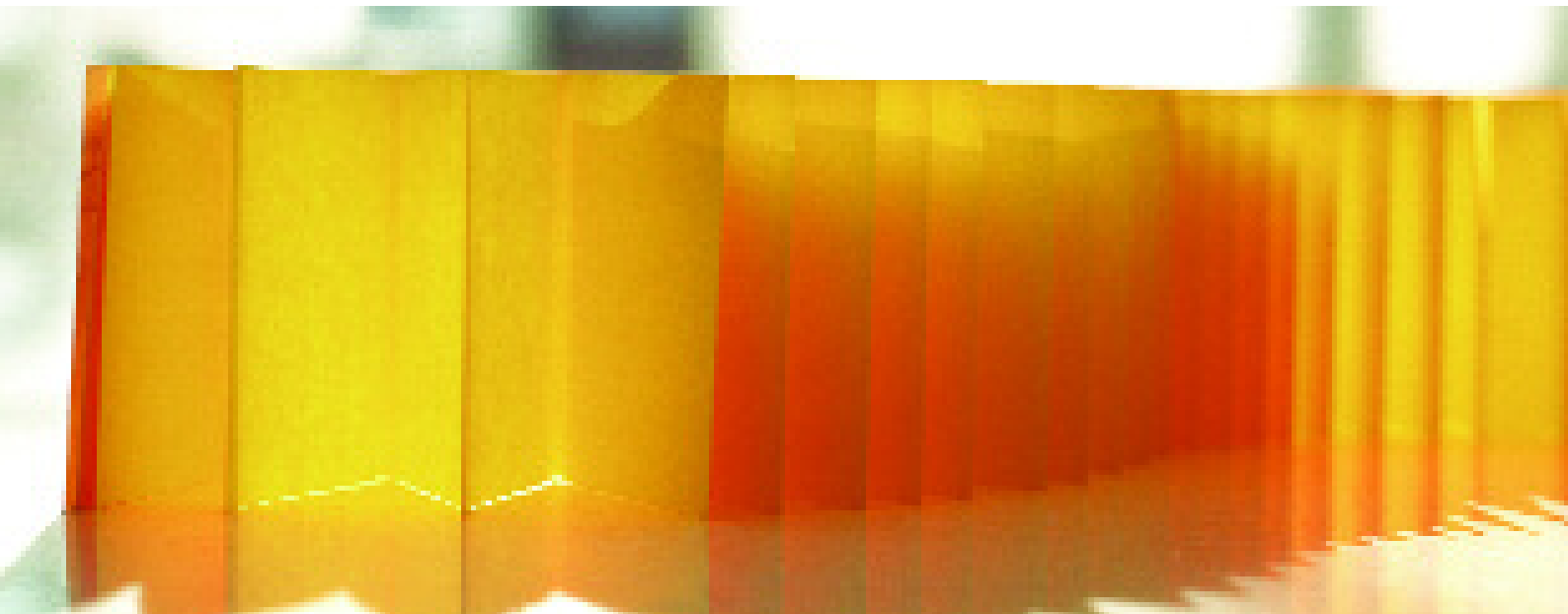
Believe it or not the ancient art of watermarking is providing an answer that not only meets the security concerns of business, but also offers the opportunity for companies to differentiate themselves and give a unique impression of their company. New manufacturing techniques mean the volumes of paper required for own watermarking is lower than you'd think – only 160 reams! Favini's marketing director, Chris Brown says, "We keep the process simple and offer a choice of modern papers geared to the business user. Once the final watermark design has been signed off the unique own watermarked paper can be delivered in just eight weeks and what's more, the costs are in line with the leading off-the-shelf watermarked papers. Dealers are in a position to stock manage this paper just as they have in the past with standard pre-printed stationery."

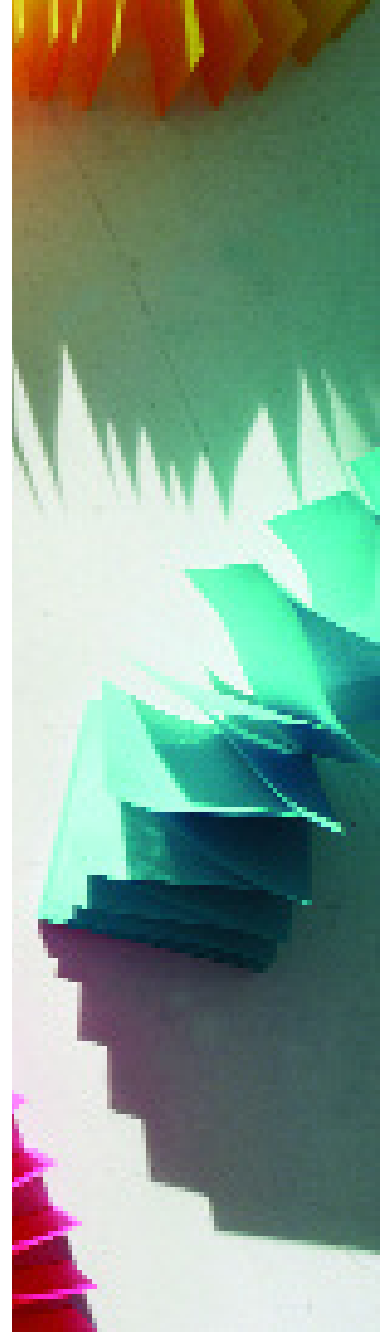
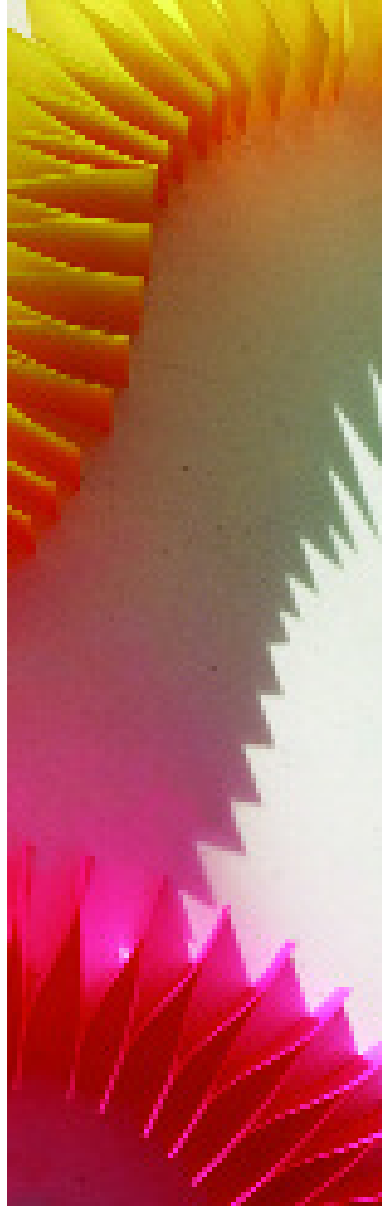
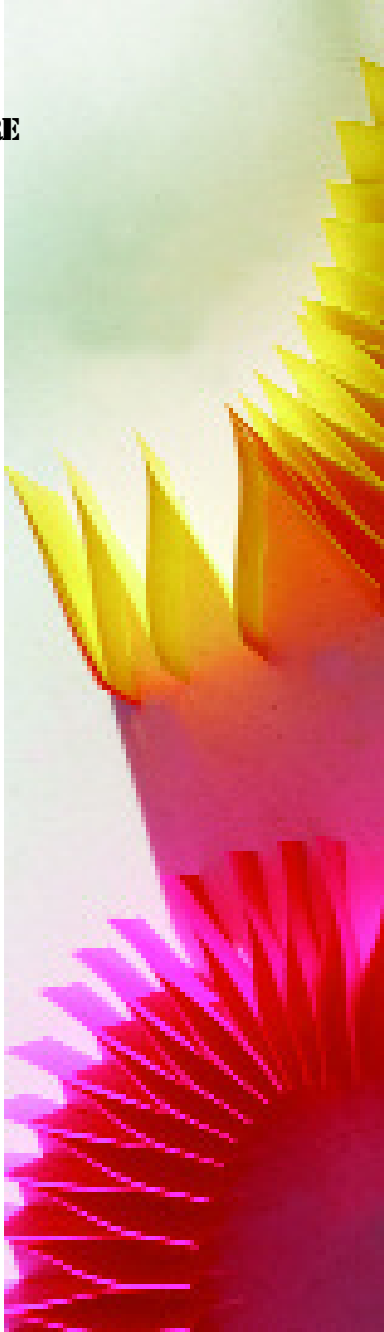
Brown went on to point out that for financial services, law, consultancy, utilities and local authorities there are real dangers of logos and other identities being cut and pasted from the internet to create documents that are passed off as theirs.

There is a dedicated website where you can obtain further information: [www.individualwatermark.com](http://www.individualwatermark.com)

**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 their 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 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.

Being so close to environmental issues has positively encouraged this sector to get on board with internal 'green' policies too, from the logging off diesel miles used to deliver paper through to the recycling of waste paper and conservation of

energy. All in all, this bunch seem to be 'squeaky clean' when it comes to being 'green'.

If your environmental policies lead you to want to partner with like minded suppliers then you'll find plenty of choice in the UK paper market. It's not difficult to determine who is who. Most of the packaging will carry clear environmental credentials so you can see who you're dealing with.

Be careful of 'white box' brands though. Going back to our bog standard copier, price 'deals' may be available but there are some significant arguments against it. Most of this kind of supply will be short lived and variable. In other words it is 'spot' sourced and may be from various different sources. There are no guarantees of quality from one batch to another and, more often than not, there are no credentials to show the true source and quality.

*As my parents always told me, 'you get what you pay for'.* ■

## 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 colour? 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 are they really?**