

GREEN AND RECYCLED

A look at how to know just how green you are!

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DO YOU KNOW WHAT THE FSC IS? WHAT THE BENEFITS OF RECYCLED PRODUCTS ARE? DO YOU HAVE A CORPORATE CONSCIENCE?

Consumers are choosing to go green. They're demanding that the products they buy are environmentally friendly; that they're made by environmentally conscious companies who put back into the environment what they take out. And it's not just about the product; through a few high-profile cases, people are now aware what companies are capable of doing to the planet and are increasingly scrutinising company conduct as well as product.

This interest in environmental issues, by both consumers and government, has affected the market place through legislation, industry regulation and voluntary codes of practice. There are different regulations for different manufacturers and, within these organizations, different regulations for different aspects of the business. And even though many of these regulations are voluntary, more and more companies are deciding to become 'greener', for a number of reasons; to satisfy consumer demand, to clear their corporate conscience, or to appease their own sense of responsibility. And this can only be good news for salespeople. We show you how you can drive sales by promoting what manufacturers are doing to be greener. We spoke to some manufacturers who are taking the initiative when it comes to being environmentally friendly and find out what you need to know about this worldwide trend.

Paper producers in particular, having been in the spotlight for years due to their reliance on forests, have been affected by recent changes in the way forests are managed. There are a few certificatory organizations for the protection of forests in the UK and more and more companies are going to the effort of applying for certification to ensure they are using materials from well managed forests. This means that the pulp used to make the paper comes from sustainable sources. This allows the end user to state on their stationery and correspondence that they are environmentally friendly – which is a sales tool for you!

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The Forest Stewardship Council (FSC) certification assesses the quality of forest management certification and then traces forest products through the supply chain. The FSC system is a tool for industry to show that they are living up to the environmental and social commitments they have made and are sourcing wood from well managed forests for their products.

The pan-European Forest Certification (PEFC) is also a framework for forest and chain of custody certification, which many paper and furniture manufacturers are embracing. Len Yull, PEFC UK chairman, says, "Certification is, and should remain a voluntary option, but it will become increasingly important for businesses to be able to provide credible and independently verifiable green credentials, in order to maintain and develop access to an increasingly discerning market."

The market Yull refers to is an environmentally aware one, they probably already recycle at home, their children most likely take part in recycling schemes at school, and it's a certainty that they will be aware what the devastation of rainforests can and has done to the environment. Given the choice, they will opt for accredited paper over non-accredited. Dealers and resellers are catching on to this increasing change in the buying patterns of consumers and are becoming more and more selective when it comes to sourcing their supplies. >>

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