



Playing a part in...

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recycling for the office environment.

PART TWO

# GET READY TO RECYCLE

**A**lthough we are all encouraged, and indeed in the near future, may be regulated to recycle at home, there is little pressure to segregate waste from the office environment for recycling. However, with each employee estimated to produce 25–55 kg of waste paper alone per annum, much of which is currently going to landfill, legislation cannot be far away.

Surprisingly, if one checks the comprehensive office products catalogues, there are relatively few products that can be recycled for future use and indeed are produced from recycled materials. Most that are, surround the printing, copying, faxing etc of documents.

Paper is the obvious recyclable material. Although pure paper is predominately made from trees, it can be argued that these are often grown for commercial use and harvested as a long term crop, with new trees replacing those cut down.

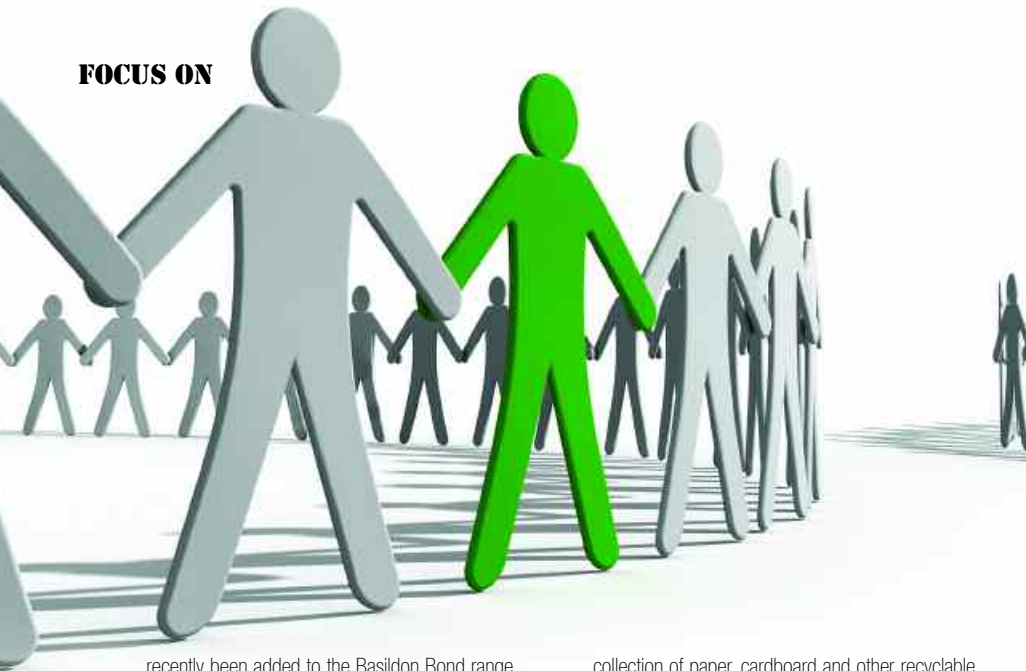
However, the production of recycled paper uses up to 70% less energy and, when the pulp and paper industry is the fifth largest industrial consumer of energy, that makes a big contribution to reducing carbon emissions. Also, not only is less water consumed, another scarce resource in certain parts of the world, it also only takes nearly one tonne of recycled material to produce one tonne of new paper, compared to two to 3.5 tonnes of trees!

Another significant contribution of sending paper to be recycled is that it reduces landfill, with 60-80% of office waste otherwise being paper products. Being a degradable material, as paper rots, it produces methane. This is considered to be a potent greenhouse gas, twenty times more so than carbon dioxide.

To be classified as recycled, paper needs to have a minimum of 75% material that is being

re-used, the balance being made up of virgin pulp or mill-broke material. The latter is off-cuts and damaged rolls/sheets being returned from printers and other uses. Although the used paper will need to be de-inked, to produce a clean, white, new pulp and this can use water and chemicals, these are considered to be less harmful than those used in the production of new paper. As James Dudney of Arjowiggins comments, "Now the market consists of a more demanding and better-informed user, who will not compromise on recycled quality or appearance."

In addition to the obvious standard paper product, other products such as flipchart pads, dividers and indexes, envelopes and tissue paper can all be made from recycled material. Until recently, window envelopes presented a problem as the window itself could not be recycled. However, a new product has >>



recently been added to the Basildon Bond range where the window film is clear but also 100% biodegradable, being made from corn rather than petrochemicals.

Re-using ink and toner cartridges is another obvious contribution to a better environment and reduced landfill. The cases themselves are fully recyclable and quality concerns have now generally been allayed with performance of recycled cartridges from good manufacturers being comparable. However, for high quality printing, such as photographs, it is still suggested that original cartridges are used.

The recent WEEE regulations, now require the recycling of IT and telecommunications equipment. Everything from computers through to printers and fax machines need to be returned to a recognised recycling centre where the materials and components, and even the machines themselves, can be either refurbished or recycled.

The objectives of this legislation are to encourage the separate collection, treatment, re-use, recovery, recycling and sound environmental disposal of equipment. Tom Weyland, the environmental manager of Ricoh, who operate a dedicated Green Centre, advises that old business machines being returned to them are recommissioned or recycled, with 85% of components and materials being saved.

Products can only be made of recycled materials if those that have been already used are collected and returned for re-use. Indeed, one of the most significant benefits of recycling is the reduction in landfill, particularly as these facilities become scarce, and indeed more costly for businesses to use.

The question is whether you, as an office products dealer, can play a part in the recycling chain. With empty vans returning to base, could these be used to collect materials for recycling, back-loading being the technical term?

Whilst this will not be an option for all dealers, there may be an opportunity to add a new facet to the business, either for monetary purposes, with the

collection of paper, cardboard and other recyclable materials, which may require a licence, or for charitable purposes by collecting used ink cartridges, mobile phones etc.

There are separate companies established to make collections from recycling. These charge a fee, based on the fact that companies are then not sending this waste to landfill and also the reduction in cleaning costs, a large proportion of a contract cleaner's time being spent in removing rubbish from the office to the bin. These companies are often making an income from selling the recyclable material to converters.

This may be a service that you can also charge for. Alternatively, the facility could be wrapped into a supply contract helping to further cement your relationship with the customer and retain the loyalty of your clients. All this, for using your transport, which would otherwise be, generally, returning empty.

HSM, known in the office products market for its range of shredders and guillotines, also has an environmental technology division, which manufactures waste baling systems. They already have an initiative running with some of their key dealers to encourage use of this expertise, possibly installing an HSM baler at the dealers or customer's premises, as higher prices can then be obtained for the recyclable materials.

Introducing products made from recycled materials to your customers is one way of helping them to meet their corporate social responsibilities in this respect. However, these items can only be produced if the waste materials are collected for this purpose. Therefore, can you play a part?

You may well find, with a bit of research, that your clients are already paying for a collection service, that you could equally offer. Indeed, you could even sell them some of the specialist bins, featured in the office products catalogues, for this purpose. Doing your bit for the environment by encouraging recycling could also turn into a profitable additional facet of your business. ■

## CASE STUDY Explorer Premium Recycled

Grupo Portucel Soporcel

During the last few years, the environmental consciousness and the concerns of society with environmental protection have increased. This has led to the connected issues becoming a key factor in purchasing decisions, especially with large size companies.

Nevertheless, due to the fact that most recycled office papers available in the market today are still low-quality grades, most users still have the perception that recycled papers have quality problems in three main areas: aesthetics, performance and image.

In order to obtain the highest quality, Explorer Premium Recycled is produced according to an advanced formula, using 50% of top-quality post-consumer fibres and 50% waste from the paper production process (reused fibres).

This combination guarantees, what Ricardo Ferreira, brand manager for Grupo Portucel Soporcel, calls, the best product characteristics, ensuring high machine performance and excellent printing quality as well as overcoming the traditional recycled paper drawbacks. This concept was subject to extensive market research in Europe and the USA, with excellent results.

"Explorer Premium Recycled has a unique basket of benefits, namely accurate ink absorption, excellent stiffness and improved toner adhesion, as well as being multifunctional," says Ferreira. "In order to support the high environmental protection offered by Explorer Premium Recycled, the brand is 100% FSC-Mixed certified, and complies with the English NAPM Recycled Mark regulations."

Explorer Premium Recycled is produced according to the most important quality and environmental management systems (ISO 9001 and ISO 14001). Extensive product trials have been performed and the results support Explorer Premium Recycled's positioning, with excellent printing quality and superb machine performance.

"All in all, Explorer Premium Recycled is the best option to ensure environmental protection without compromising performance and printing quality," adds Ferreira.

**The Basildon Bond range where the window film is clear but also 100% biodegradable,**

**being made from corn rather than petrochemicals**