

## HOW TO...

# SELL PAPER

And make more paper (money). It's a crazy world

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Those reading this article will, in the main, be selling paper already, the real question is: how to sell more paper?

The first thing to understand is selling paper is more than shifting 'white boxes'.

Selling paper successfully, and increasing your margins and volumes, comes down to a handful of key areas. Product and application knowledge are essential, supported by comprehensive training. Concentrating on paper is a must, particularly in a sales environment that encompasses thousands of products. A wide range of quality paper, stocked in depth is critical. Finally, get samples into the hands of consumers to provide the 'touch and feel', which differentiates your product from the competition.

The papers you stock are targeted at specific applications. Understanding each product and its application enables you to sell that brand's added value benefits. It supports, for example, your efforts to sell colour copy to the colour laser market or FSC and recycled papers to environmentally sensitive customers. Remember that the papers you're selling may be designed for various applications, they may have various environmental accreditations and be sourced globally, but every one of these characteristics defines its ultimate end use. This knowledge enables you to sell the right product, for the right application, at the right price.

Underpinning this is training – investment in training leads to added value and greater margins. Understanding the papers you're selling

and why you're selling them makes the sale more interesting, the motivation greater and the sale more profitable.

One of the keys to selling paper is to concentrate on it. And an effective way of doing this is to offer incentives, both internally and externally. The incentives can range from low cost giveaways such as chocolate, for example, to larger prizes ranging from ipods to weekend breaks. Internal promotions always add an element of competition, prizes always concentrate the mind, and paper, whether being purchased or sold, will always benefit from a little glamour. Buying your usual 20 boxes of paper each month is certainly more rewarding if a weekend break to Rome is up for grabs!

Paper is one of the largest turnover items for any stationer and, with investment in training and product focus, added value can be given and the right paper sold. This results in your customer buying the right paper at the right price. Exploring the paper range and not just selling 'white boxes' is beneficial for margins and customers. Knowledge, training, product focus, incentives and samples are essential ingredients when you want to build a good relationship and sell more paper at better margins. It differentiates you from the opposition. ■

## TOP TIPS

>> 1.

**KNOW YOUR PRODUCT:  
THERE ARE MANY VARIETIES  
OF PAPER OUT THERE AND  
UNDERSTANDING WHICH IS  
FOR WHAT IS ESSENTIAL**

>> 2.

**TRAINING:  
GOOD TRAINING IMPROVES  
PRODUCT KNOWLEDGE AND  
WITH IT, SALES CONFIDENCE**

>> 3.

**GET SAMPLES TO CUSTOMERS:  
SHOW THEM EXACTLY WHAT  
DIFFERENTIATES YOU FROM  
THE COMPETITION**

