

# Save the world with print

If you want to save the world, put your message in print - that is the word from experts who addressed a seminar to printers in Melbourne, reports Robyn Frampton



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**T**HE perception that electronic media leaves less of an environmental footprint than printed material was just one of the myths challenged at the seminar, held at Heidelberg, hosted by Dalton Fine Paper and Scandinavian-based paper company, StoraEnso.

StoraEnso operates more than 80 paper mills in some of the world's most environmentally conscious countries, where it is not only required to provide detailed annual reports on its operations, including carbon emissions and other environmental impacts, but it must demonstrate that it has reduced those impacts every year. This year Stora Enso was named as one the world's most open companies in regards to Carbon Emissions reporting.

Not surprisingly, says Phillip Lawrence, the company's sustainable business manager, the company knows a lot about environmental issues and, he says, has hard evidence that ink on paper is one of the most ecologically responsible ways to get your message across.

He says, "For an industry that gets regularly slammed for its supposedly poor eco-credentials, this is excellent news.

"We should be telling this to our customers and challenging common perceptions, like that print is a major cause of deforestation and is highly polluting. In fact, neither of these is true."

Lawrence says less than three per cent of certified forests is used for paper production and only half of this goes to print. And these certified forests themselves represent only seven per cent of the world's total forest area,

"Even evaluations in Kyoto and the Stern Review state that the paper and print industries make a negligible impact on deforestation," he says. "According to the Stern Review 2007, page 605, the entire CO<sub>2</sub> emissions that are attributed to the forestry comes from tropical forest fires and illegal forest clearing where land is to be used for crops or grazing.

"Forestry certification systems and chain of custody requirements today provide strong frameworks within which

forests can be managed sustainably and your paper supplier should be able to demonstrate that they are complying with these international systems. The trouble is forestry certification systems are not working in tropical areas of the world where all the damage is being done".

In terms of pollution, too, Lawrence says the printing and paper industries are among the world's best performers. He says, "The paper making process has become much more environmentally responsible with the elimination of dioxins and acid output, the elimination of chlorine bleaching, reduced use of fibre due to better fillers and coatings, and a range of water saving measures and environmental certifications.

"Printing, too, has improved dramatically over the past few years and is now 95 per cent less damaging than in 1990, largely due to massive reductions in film and plate chemistry and chemical proofing, lower use of mineral based oils and petro-solvents, as well as improvements like automatic wash-up and computerised makereadies, which greatly reduce waste and energy consumption.

"Ironically, it's not a desire to be green that is driving much of this improvement but rather the need to be more productive, cost-effective and competitive.

"Overall, the message is that print is still unmatched for its tactile quality, mobility and design flexibility, is highly competitive in terms of cost and

performance and, contrary to popular belief, is a viable and environmentally sustainable process."

There are still, of course, massive problems facing the world and Lawrence, together with fellow speaker Gerry Gillespie, chairman of Zero Waste Australia, challenged the industry to take a leadership role in finding solutions. Gillespie says, "The opportunity for the print and paper industries to contribute to this area is enormous." Gillespie has headed up some of the most innovative pilot programs in waste management seen in this country, most particularly in the creative use of paper and other organic waste.

He says, "Paper - which is really just organic fibre - along with other organic waste, makes up more than half of the millions of tonnes of the waste that is sent to landfill each year.

"For a fraction of the cost of disposal, that waste could be processed into products like mulch, compost, foliar spray and agri-char, which would contribute significantly to our country's wealth, agricultural productivity and sustainability by improving soil quality".

A model program, using organic wastes in the City of Queanbeyan, near Canberra, clearly demonstrated the viability of the project. It has since been expanded to a \$2m project called Groundswell, to demonstrate the economic viability for the return of organics to agriculture. Groundswell will be looking for commercial partners in the coming two years.

Response from attendees, which covered a broad cross section of specifiers including designers and ad agency staff and eco-savvy printers like Print Bound, who printed the event invitation, was enthusiastic, and lively discussion ensued for almost an hour after the close of the event. **AP**

## How much CO<sub>2</sub> is generated?

Did you know that screening a one-minute commercial on a plasma TV generates as much carbon as printing a single copy of a 16pp colour catalogue on a heatset web press?

Here are some other comparative facts which might change the way you - and your customers - view the eco-friendliness of print:

Product	CO <sub>2</sub> generated in production
CD or DVD	300 - 350 grams (not including carbon generated by viewing)
Daily Newspaper	70 - 80 grams
100 page Annual Report	80 grams
2 pages printed from a laser printer	80 grams