



Carbon footprint- Environmental accountability - Who cares?

Environmental issues used to be the preserve of tree hugging eccentrics determined to hinder motorway building, but they made their point and may be there is a case for us to review how we can improve our involvement.

As a designer of school prospectus for many years I used to be a little sceptical of specifying recycled papers. There are many reasons for this, not least, they used to be consistently more expensive to produce and often the quality of print seems to have suffered, but these concerns have in the main, been addressed as competition has meant an increasing number of informed, commercial clients are buying into environmentally friendly printing, yet, astonishingly many schools are getting left behind on green issues.

Commitment to environmentally friendly printing can substantially reduce a school's carbon footprint. In my opinion it is crucial that schools are seen as trailblazing an environmental consciousness. As centres of excellence they should be setting an example in demonstrating their commitment. Furthermore, I think such commitment will not only help the environment, but will improve their public profile.

To be fair, there is a fairly complex learning curve, there is a wide variety of paper which claims to be environmentally friendly, and the standards do vary enormously. Papers coming online have a wide variety of credentials that make them partially or totally green, they include: wood and chlorine free papers, 50% recycled papers are often combined with 50% FSC (Forrest Stewardship Controlled) fibres to provide a cost-effective alternative to 100% recycled stock which is made from 100% post-consumer waste. Some recycled papers use more energy in their manufacture and there is one company, Munken which uses wind power to reduce the use of carbon fuel in the paper production! The choice of paper has a real impact on the quality of image that appears on the paper. Other issues have an impact, not least, the printing process, ink compatibility and whether the printer is FSC accredited.

We have a reputation for fresh design solutions and creative photography in our work. Furthermore many schools choose JWA because of the discreet way in which we execute our work. We try to be a "fly on the wall" and capture the moment, rather than over art direct our shots. So to us a picture is worth 1000 words. But ensuring we maintain the vibrancy of the original shot to the printed page is always a worthwhile challenge.

Many recycled papers are inevitably uncoated and when printed the ink can tend to 'bleed,' a process known as 'dot gain'. Unless this is managed correctly at repro stage the highlights in the image can suffer. Clearly, considerable care and expertise needs to be exercised to achieve compelling results.

The printer has to be driven by mindset of being 'green'. The paper manufacturer has to be conversant not only with manufacturing stock that has at least a FSC (Forestry Stewardship Controlled) rating. For more information on papers and printers regarding their suitability check out - www.ppe.uk.net.

For three very helpful contacts that have much more knowledge on this subject than I have; may I recommend - for paper contact Simon Gillingham: www.paperresources.ltd.uk.

Also other companies worth looking at include: www.mohawkpaper.com, www.gfsmith.com, www.paperback.coop, www.munken.co.uk, www.roberthorne.co.uk/environment

For print contact Richard Owers <www.beaconpress.co.uk> and Richard Gregory, <www.evolve-print.com>

No longer can it be said environmentally friendly papers print are inferior to conventional stock, nor are they necessarily more expensive. So schools that demonstrate that they are setting an example on recycling and thereby reducing their carbon footprint can only benefit. They will win respect from the scrutiny of the public.

We at JWA will continue to encourage our clients to increase their commitment to be environmental aware.

Design excellence goes beyond the choice of type the quality of the photograph but must include the right choice of paper and a printer. We have had some good response. We have recently designed and produced Prospectuses for Wycombe Abbey, Winchester College, and Casterton School for Girls, we are currently about to print City of London School for Girls, More House School, Malvern College and Abberley Hall, all of whom all have been keen to let us specify recycled stock.

We care! If we can help your school with the design, photography and production of environmentally friendly marketing material, get in touch.

Contact: Jon Willcocks or Montserrat Rubio at JWALTD - 01753 646300

www.jwaltd.com