

It's the time of year when everything is overstuffed. Calendars are stuffed with networking events, parties and year-end deadlines. And of course, holiday dinner plates are overstuffed, which leads to us being overstuffed! Before we all submerge completely for December, this issue of Words of Worth addresses a topic that may help you in planning for next year's marketing.

As we said in our last issue, electronic marketing is not environmentally pure and the sustainability of print marketing can be improved. In this issue we talk about how.

We are very grateful to Eugene Lee, president of Rolling Press, for the information in the article below. [Rolling Press](#) is a family-run print house that brings together environmentally-friendly methods, ethical practices, and personalized service for non-profit organizations and eco-minded businesses.

### Print Marketing Materials: Sustainable Choices

The first step in making more sustainable choices in print marketing is to work with a designer who understands how to design for sustainability. There's a lot of detail involved in sustainable design and printing, and you've got other things to think about. This introduction should give you just enough background to feel comfortable finding and talking to an appropriate designer.

It's also a good idea to consult with your (sustainable) printer up front, when first thinking about the design concept. They may be able to advise on getting the impact you want while saving on production costs.

#### Choosing Recycled Paper Has Gotten Easier

Recycled papers have evolved tremendously over the last few years. The chances are high that you can find the kind of paper your marketing piece requires, in a brand with a high percentage of post-consumer recycled content. You can find high gloss paper with up to 60% post-consumer content, and you can find higher percentages of post-consumer content in paper with silk and satin finishes.

#### Size Matters

It seems logical that making a brochure or other printed piece smaller would save resources, but it takes some care to make that true. Paper comes in a few standard sheet sizes, so you and your designer need to plan carefully for smaller sizes or you will just end up with more scrap on the printer's floor.

To save paper, use a size that fits multiple pages efficiently in a standard sheet size. A standard 11 by 17 inch sheet makes one 9 by 12 inch page (with a lot of waste) or two 8 ½ by 11 inch pages (with no waste). Want something smaller? Go for four 8 ½ by 5 ½ inch pages. Or, use fewer pages in your printed piece (this saves postage on mailings, as well).

Whatever size you select, remember that if you are printing something for mailing, you'll save money and resources by making sure it will fit in a standard envelope. If it doesn't, you'll pay a lot for non-standard envelopes, and you'll also have to pay additional postage.

#### Inks: Bad, Good and Better

There are dozens of ink types for different surfaces and applications (e.g. for use with a specific coating or varnish). Each type of ink is made by many companies, and each of those companies has a different "recipe" to produce similar visible results.

The most responsible inks on the market now have close to zero VOCs (volatile organic compounds). Ask for non-toxic inks (don't specify soy; you'll see why).

Petroleum inks were originally considered desirable because they dry fast. That's important to printers who need to dry both sides of a printed sheet in the same day. Unfortunately, petroleum-based inks are toxic and use a non-renewable resource.

In the last decade, there has been a movement to using soy and other vegetable-based inks. Soy inks are very vibrant in color, allowing the use of 10-15% less ink than petroleum inks. Many of today's inks are soy-based, whether they are labeled as green or not.

Today there are ink alternatives that are superior to soy. Using soy is a bit like using corn in ethanol--it can drive up the price of staple foods. And soy is not a sustainable choice when rainforest is cleared to grow it in a monoculture. Flaxseed and linseed oil can fill the same role as soy, with lower land and water requirements.

A final note on inks: try to avoid designs that call for metallic inks and foil stamping. The metals cannot be recycled and the paper they are on may not get re-pulped, either. Metallics break the cycle on paper (and metal) recycling.

#### Coatings and Varnishes: Good, Bad and Ugly

Coatings and varnishes are used to produce certain surface effects, and to protect inks so they don't rub off the printed piece. Some are sustainable choices; some are not.

- **UV (ultraviolet) coatings** are used for their high gloss and because they harden immediately to allow instant printing of both sides of a page. While this coating seals in any VOCs, it also makes the paper virtually unrecyclable. Use low VOC inks and skip the coating.
- **Aqueous varnishes** are based on a combination of water and ammonia. While less harmful to the environment than UV coatings (they can be recycled), these can cause respiratory or allergic reactions in people exposed to them. Varnished sheets dry in 15-30 minutes.
- **Vegetable-based varnishes** are non-toxic to printing staff and have a much lower environmental impact. They are a challenge to printers as they take four to eight hours to dry. Matte, satin and glossy vegetable-based varnishes are all available.

Sustainable print production requires thinking a bit differently, as well as a little more planning ahead (a rush job may not be possible with slower drying inks and varnishes, for example). The key to success is finding a designer and a printer who can take the stress out of making sustainable choices.

### News Bytes

#### Save the Date

Plan to join me on January 27th for the Manhattan Chamber of Commerce' Green Business networking event. It will be held at the American Cancer Society's Hope Lodge, a LEED gold certified space. Details to come within a few days on the Chamber's [Green Events calendar](#).

#### On our Desktop

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