

# TOP TEN TIPS *for paper efficiency*

Many organisations are finding that paper efficiency makes good business sense. It is estimated that an office can save up to €100 per employee per day<sup>1</sup> by introducing paper efficiency policies.

Yet the reasons why paper should be used more efficiently are not only economic. Paper production can cause serious environmental problems. We are already aware of its impact on forests and biodiversity and now the full extent of its contribution to global climate change is starting to emerge<sup>2</sup>.

Improving paper efficiency is a relatively quick and easy way to cut both your organisation's financial costs as well as its cost to the environment. It should be a key strand of every climate change strategy and budget saving plan.

The European Environmental Paper Network's Shrink Paper project works with organisations across Europe to help put their paper efficiency aims into practice. Based on feedback across a range of sectors, we have identified Top Ten Tips to help you initiate paper efficiency policies in your organisation.

## Tip 1: Get top-level commitment to a paper efficiency target

Real change only ever comes with a commitment from the highest level within a business or organisation. Senior members of staff need to champion a paper efficiency policy, and that must include a plan of change and targets.

- *The UK Health Secretary plans to make the NHS paperless by 2018.*
- *The Co-operative Group's senior managers encouraged staff to use new, flexible work routines that make the most of digital technology and to 'cleanse' their work areas of paper. Paper use in the organization reduced by a staggering 71%.*
- *Sainsbury's signed the Courtauld Commitment<sup>3</sup>, and aims to reduce its packaging by 50% by 2020.*
- *Standard Life made a commitment to improve its paper efficiency by 50% by 2012.*
- *Haymarket has set a target to reduce unsold magazines by 50%.*
- *The French Government committed to reduce paper use by its national administration by 50%.*
- *Standard Chartered Bank first made a commitment to reduce paper use in 2004, down from over 70kg per full time employee (fte), to just 10kg per fte. Since then it has achieved a 67% reduction.*
- *Bank of America top executives made it company policy to reduce its forest footprint, achieving millions of dollars of paper savings.*

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1 [www.greenandsave.com/greenoffice/paper/office\\_paper\\_reduction](http://www.greenandsave.com/greenoffice/paper/office_paper_reduction)

2 <http://shrinkpaper.org/paper-vapour/>

3 <http://www.wrap.org.uk/node/14507>

## Tip 2: Make the economic case to reduce

A member of a corporate Board might be more motivated to support a paper efficiency drive if he or she hears the economic case. Identify the areas in which paper is most wasted and make projected estimation of the costs that could be saved by getting better value from less paper, rather than using a lot of paper inefficiently. Mention our examples of other companies.

- *The Co-operative Group saved £20 million (€24 million) when it put its new paper-light policies into action, because the group found it no longer needed an entire floor of its new head office.*
- *Standard Chartered Bank saved \$11 million (€8 million) when 56% of its customers went digital.*
- *Bank of America saved US\$10 million (€7.3 million) by putting forms on-line and this saving excludes savings on postage and storage.*
- *When Vodafone cut its staff printing by 80% the company saved £3.5 million (€4.2 million).*
- *Barclays Capital saved £200,000 (€240,000) through office paper efficiency measures.*
- *Oxfam saved £40,000 (€48,000) simply by reducing the size of its Oxfam Unwrapped catalogue.*
- *Bradford University cut in-house photocopying and printing by 20%, saving £28,000 per year.*

## Tip 3: Communicate digitally

Paper documents, such as letters to shareholders and mail shots, can have a very short shelf life. Many of these communications may not need to exist on paper. Ask staff to consider whether a document needs to be printed and, if not, only publish online.

It may be that many of the people receiving your document prefer electronic messages instead of receiving post. Postal communication that is not desired by the recipient is perceived as 'junk mail' and this can damage your image, brand or reputation. Digital direct mail can be quicker, more personal, interactive and cheaper, and it provides better tracking options than the paper-based alternative.

- *Standard Life asked its 1.5 million shareholders how they preferred to receive their communications. Only 6% wanted paper mailings.*
- *FERN made its Annual Report available electronically, reducing the print run by 95%. It also asked recipients of its monthly news bulletin whether they would prefer it by email. Today, only 8 paper copies are sent by post each month; 1,200 people receive it by email.*
- *Marks and Spencer increasingly engages with customers through the new M&S app and tailored customer emails, leading to fewer printed catalogues. It has also converted to digital payslips.*
- *The RSPB has started to distribute its health and safety newspaper electronically. It also sends monthly pay slips to its 2000 staff electronically.*

## Tip 4: Redesign publications

Reducing the size of a publication can save a lot of paper and reduce costs, yet take care to ensure you are making best use of the available paper. Work with your designers and printers to find press efficient sizes: the optimum publication size to get the maximum amount of printed material from a sheet. Any remaining areas could be used for smaller items, such as business cards, or to let your clients and customers know how much paper you have saved by redesigning the publication.

- *By redesigning the way that customer till receipts print sales details, The Post Office made a saving of 750,000 rolls a year. If put end-to-end this represents over 149,000km of paper.*
- *Oxfam saw a 37 tonne reduction in paper use from a catalogue redesign to a smaller, more press-efficient design.*
- *Barclays Capital redesigned its investment presentations from single-sided A4 to double sided A5, achieving a saving of 7.7 million sheets of paper.*

## Tip 5: Reduce mail outs

As well as reducing the physical size of your direct mail by redesigning them, you can also reduce the number of items you post by making sure your recipient databases are up to date and that you are only sending documents to people who wish to receive them. Segmentation of your audience and carefully crafted communications, tailored for each segment, will mean that you do not need to mail everyone about everything. Knowing whether your target audience has email or mobile phone preferences above paper, how they have responded in the past and what they would like to receive, can help you to deliver a better response, while also saving paper and costing less.

- *Littlewoods reduced its catalogue paper consumption by 66% (over 50,000 tonnes) by striving to shift purchasing online and merging the customer databases of several separate Littlewoods brands, so it now sends out far fewer catalogues by post.*
- *By targeting recipient groups for its publications more accurately, Oxfam was able reduce its paper usage drastically. Overall, with other measures, it reduced its paper consumption by 50% in 3 years.*

## Tip 6: Improve accuracy of forecast sales

Publishers that forecast sales more accurately can drastically reduce the number of unsold books or magazines produced that are eventually recycled. The use of computer models can help forecast sales more accurately. New technology has also been developed for better print order planning. Improved forecasting will save the cost of printing, storing, transporting and pulping print over-runs.

- *The Penguin Group significantly reduced the number of books it produces that remain unsold by working with retailers to deliver smaller quantities of books more often. It has changed the way it distributes and, in some cases, the way in which it produces books to achieve this.*
- *IPC Media reduced unsold magazines by 16% (30 million fewer) between 2006 and 2008 by better forecasting sales and print order planning.*

## Tip 7: Replenish/reprint only when needed

Sales based replenishment systems at wholesalers and retailers enable stock to be topped up as needed rather than automatically over-stocking shelves. A specialist team of supply and demand experts can oversee these processes, communicating with everyone involved in the supply chain about the measures they can take to avoid waste, ensuring that both money and paper are saved.

- *By working with its distributor, Marketforce, IPC Media achieved 16% unsold magazine reduction, saving 9,600 tonnes of paper from 2006 – 2009.*
- *The Post Office is introducing “print stations” in main Post Offices where a customer can select the form they require from a touchscreen menu and a copy is printed out. By holding an electronic copy of the form on a central server, this allows amended forms to be uploaded for instant availability with no reprint costs or waste.*

## Tip 8: Go lightweight

Reducing the weight of paper or carton board can bring about impressive paper savings. Such a move may involve some redesign work. If this is the case, it could be coupled with other opportunities, such as reducing the packaging size.

- *Sainsbury’s reduced the inner tubes of its toilet rolls by 12mm. This saved 300 tonnes of cardboard every year and 140,000kg of CO<sub>2</sub> emissions, as it reduced the space required for transportation.*
- *By reducing the basis weight of ATM receipt paper, the Bank of America saved US\$500,000 each year, plus added savings by cutting storage, handling, transportation and labour costs.*
- *Duchy Originals achieved a 48% reduction in the packaging of its premium Chocolate Bezants (coins) through a reduction in weight of the carton board it used and redesigning the whole pack.*
- *Light-weighting many of its paper uses (to 70-80g paper) has contributed towards Standard Chartered Bank achieving an overall 60% paper reduction since 2004.*

## Tip 9: Reduce packaging

Reducing packaging can, counter-intuitively, reduce breakages by encouraging handlers in the supply chain to take more care. It can also improve sales by allowing customers to get closer to the product. Any packaging reduction that saves paper is also likely to save money too.

- *Hewlett Packard scrapped the cardboard packaging for its printers and used reusable shelves for transport to large stockists instead. This reduced its packaging by 90% and breakages by 5%.*
- *Patagonia scrapped its old packaging and started to simply roll its garments up, securing them with 2 rubber bands and a recycled card. This reduced costs from 20c/unit to 6c/unit and eliminated several tonnes of waste. At the same time sales went up.*
- *With smart design, M&S reduced its paper-based packaging by 26% between 2009 and 2013.*

## Tip 10: Make your office paper efficient

There are many ways in which you can improve paper efficiency in your office.

### ***Upgrade and reduce the number of printers***

Printers with duplex and energy saving functions save paper and money. Having fewer printers shared by more people allows for savings too.

- *Haymarket, one of the UK's biggest magazine companies cut office paper use by 33% between 2005 and 2009 by replacing desktop printers with a central pool of larger more efficient duplex printers.*

### ***Introduce a printer swipe card system***

A 'PIN and collect' or swipe card system on central printers allows staff members printing to be tracked and can ensure that there is never any unnecessary or uncollected printing. By having to enter a pin number to collect print jobs at the printer, or by using a swipe card system, uncollected print jobs can be deleted after a given time period. The system also ensures confidentiality.

- *Barclays Capital issued staff with swipe cards to use at printers before printing commenced at central printers. This contributed towards Barclay's 48.1% reduction in in-house paper use.*

### ***Make double sided printing the default***

Setting all staff computers to print double-sided by default can ensure that there is no accidental single sided printing. Factory defaults are usually set to single side printing.

- *At Bank of America, a year after instituting a campaign to get staff to print and copy double-sided, copy paper use was down 18%, computer paper was down 32% and the company had saved a million dollars.*
- *The RSPB is encouraging staff to use double-sided printing as default and to use print preview to reduce unnecessary printing, to only print key parts of emails to minimise paper use and consider alternatives before printing.*

### ***Use technological tools to reduce printing***

Tools, such as Greenprint [www.printgreener.com](http://www.printgreener.com), allow the user to print only the precise pages needed, instead of reams of pages of linked internet material or email discussions.

- *M&S has introduced a Greenprint system, contributing to a 29% reduction in printing paper use.*

### ***Set margins to a paper saving default***

Setting margins to a default of 2cm or less can save tonnes of paper over time in a large office. Factory default settings are usually much wider.

### ***Introduce 'green teams' or specialist employees***

Motivating staff to undertake change is the key to success. Organisations that have made significant paper cuts have key drivers of the process amongst staff, as well as role models at a senior level.

- *Bank of America's successful paper efficiency measures have been by supported by a full time employee dedicated to tracking how much paper is used in the corporation, by whom and for what.*
- *Co-operative Group's paper-light policy introduced new working practices from the Chief Executive throughout the company with dedicated staff to support the change to paper-free working.*
- *Standard Chartered hired a Group Technology and Operations Sustainability Manager in 2009 to specifically oversee paper reduction throughout the business. It also has 'Paper Champions' throughout its global business. Every two months the Paper Champions meet virtually together with the Sustainability Manager to discuss ideas and share paper reduction best practice.*

### ***Train and inform your key decision making staff***

Training some members of staff to be paper efficiency drivers can bring about rapid paper reductions once the benefits of using paper more efficiently, such as having a tidier office, are understood.

- *Oxfam provided internal training to purchasers and key stakeholders about print products and improved understanding of its paper supply chain. This initiative contributed to the organisation's 50% paper saving.*
- *M&S communicates the true cost of printing to its staff.*

### ***Encourage staff innovations***

When encouraged, staff from many different parts of an organisation may come up with excellent paper saving ideas and innovations. They are more likely to implement them and encourage others to do so when they have a strong sense of ownership of an idea.

- *At Bank of America, all staff are encouraged to cut their own paper use and come up with innovations that can help the company to use less resources.*
- *Standard Chartered's Paper Champions are tasked with bringing about paper reduction in their teams; they learn from each other through regular communication.*

### ***Start a paper efficiency pledge scheme***

Getting employees to make a paper efficiency pledge can help achieve targets.

- *Standard Life ran a 'company pledging scheme' in which 700 employees pledged to "think before printing, if printing to print duplex and two pages to one side".*

*With thanks to all the companies that submitted case studies and also to Generation Press and Meterorite for publications and presentations that contributed to these tips.*

**For more information on paper saving, visit [www.shrinkpaper.org](http://www.shrinkpaper.org) or contact [shrinkpaper@environmentalpaper.eu](mailto:shrinkpaper@environmentalpaper.eu)**