

Sustainable Design Checklist

Keep your projects green by using this handy checklist to audit your decisions throughout the design process. The goal is to get as many checkmarks as possible.

Strategy

- Best serves the client's needs
- Employs an effective message
- Fulfills the objectives
- Serves multiple purposes
- Doesn't require subsequent or parallel efforts to support it
- Has limited environmental impact throughout its lifecycle

Execution

- Will unlikely benefit from additional strategy
- Uses the most appropriate format
- Maximizes space on the press sheet
- Uses of recycled materials
- Is easy to recycle
- Considered paperless options
- Uses as few materials as possible
- Raises awareness by displaying environmental specs
- Limits ink coverage and areas of solid colour
- Maximizes shelf life
- Can be proofed on screen
- Uses die-cuts or embossing rather than an additional ink
- Combines many components for maximum efficiency

Production

- Is on target with our print quantities
- Uses local vendors and sourcing local materials
- Minimizes transport and shipping
- Uses vendors that use renewable energy

Printer

- Can proof on screen
- Doesn't require film; it can go from digital to plate
- Utilizes an environmental management system
- Manages their waste responsibly
- Has environmental certification

Paper

- Is smaller and lighter
- Contains post consumer waste fibre (PCW)
- Is recycled

- Uses tree-free fibres such as kenaf, hemp, and bamboo
- Was produced with renewable energy (Green-e certification)
- Is FSC-certified
- Was processed chlorine free (PCF)

Packaging

- Eliminates adhesives by using an alternative binding or tabs
- Avoids labels by printing directly on the packaging surface
- Does not require secondary and tertiary containers
- Minimizes the gauge of the materials
- Is robust, reducing the amount of protective materials
- Is refillable
- Nest and stack well for efficient transport
- Does not contain toxic substances such as PVC

Inks

- Are not specialty metallic or fluorescent inks
- Are vegetable or soy-based inks
- Do not require a protective surface coating

Post Press

- Avoids solvent-based adhesives in the bindings and labels
- Limits use of staples
- Avoids foilstamping, thermography, and lamination

Distribution

- Has mailing lists that are up to date
- Accurately targets our audience
- Avoids shipping by air
- Avoid use of labels by printing addresses directly on the piece

End-of-useful life

- Can be recycled
- Can be reused
- Minimizes the de-inking process
- Is biodegradable

So, how did you do? Can anything be done about the unchecked boxes? For more information on sustainable graphic design, visit: www.designcanchange.org