

Practical approach to manage the environmental issue

Csaba Horváth¹, István Patkó²

¹ Óbuda University, Institute of Media Technology, Hungary

² Óbuda University, Institute of Environmental Protection Engineering, Hungary
horvath.csaba@rkk.uni-obuda.hu
patko@uni-obuda.hu

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Abstract

The authors have demonstrated in the article what principles can serve as the basis of the development of a system of criteria that would qualify, offer references and examples for the environmentally conscious operation of printing companies. Such a system of qualification and title would be an important marketing tool and element of persuasion towards evidencing the sustainable development of graphic communication.

Scope of research

*If you really care about the environment, turn off your server tonite
Paper is a completely renewable resource!
(Michael Makin, President & CEO, Printing Industries of America)*

In the struggle between graphic and electronic communication taking place in our evolving information society, this latter type of communications seems to have a more positive image in society. Such judgment must have emerged as a result of opinions that have been formulated in relation to the erroneously interpreted and assumed environmentally-damaging impacts of printed products and technologies.

One of the most important responsibilities of the profession is to turn this negative judgment of the public opinion into a positive evaluation by highlighting the unaltered efficiency, importance and enhanced environmental friendliness of printed products.

The authors have demonstrated in the article what principles can serve as the basis of the development of a system of criteria that would qualify, offer references and examples for the environmentally conscious operation of printing companies. Such a system of qualification and title would be an important marketing tool and element of persuasion towards evidencing the sustainable development of graphic communication.

And how can a printing company be environmentally friendly? Obviously as a result of its commitment to environmental protection and consciousness. The printed products of such a printing company considerably reduce environmental loading, and support sustainable development. In addition to the environment-sparing technologies, environmental aspects also determine the internal operation of the printing company, and are taken into consideration to an utmost extent.

Commonly used labels and certification systems

Printers' environmental programmes are either independent company initiatives or, more commonly, voluntary regional schemes like those Scandinavian Nordic Swan or France's Imprim' vert (Green Printer). The latter is an initiative launched by the French Printing Federation FICG) in association with Chambers of Craft and Commerce. Participating printers are given assistance to define their environmental priorities. A network of over 60 engineers has been created to visit these printers to assist them in implementing their policies. At the same time FICG helps promote companies that have obtained the Imprim' vert classification by using the logo as a value added brand to print buyers, administrators and insurance companies [1]. Printing Industries of America has introduced a Sustainable Green Printer Partnership, the Japanese Federation of Printing Industry manages the Green standard and GP certification system [2,3].

Proposal for an eco-friendly printing standard and EFP certification system in Hungary

On the basis of this approach, such a set of criteria can be defined that seems to be sufficient for appropriate evaluation, still does not make qualification superfluously complicated. Under the commission of the Hungarian Federation of Printers and Papermakers, the authors have made a proposal for such a solution.

Primarily, they have set forth requirements whose fulfillment can be properly documented, controlled.

Factors of standard to be environmentally friendly:

- reduction of pollutant,
- prevention of global warming (carbon footprint)
- material circulation (sustainable resource use; long term use; reuse, recycle; easy processing and disposal),
- easiness to continue and improve the task.

Besides environmental sustainability, the system of standards for evaluation also considers activities performed for economic and social sustainability.

The proposed system would award the title on the basis of applications. By submitting their applications, the actors wishing to use the title should complete a self-assessing checklist that serves as a stage of pre-selection. Thereafter, an appointed body accredited by the founder and professional forums would verify the authenticity of the self-assessments. Then, the founder decides on the awarding of the title for a definite term.

The authors have already tested the proposed system of criteria at seven Hungarian printing companies, checking whether the system can be used realistically. The responses and results show that the criteria that they have elaborated and recommended can be fulfilled, and are motivating. Nevertheless, until acceptance they still should be subjected to and shaped in several filters and consultations.

The authors are also proposing the creation of a trademark in association with the “eco-friendly printing” title.



Figure 1. Proposal for trademark “eco-friendly printing” title (English and Hungarian).

Conclusion

“Eco-friendly printing and sustainability are more than using recycled paper and soy inks ... it is a holistic approach to running a business.” (Gary Jones, director of PIA) [3]. The Hungarian printers should operate on eco-friendly way to demonstrate their business is a sustainable medium.

References

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Author biography

Professional CV of Csaba HORVATH

Born and live: 1953, Budapest, Hungary

Qualifications: Mechanical Engineer (M.Eng) – Technical University of Budapest, 1977

Electrical Engineer (M.Eng.) – Technical University of Budapest, 1987

Academic degree: PhD – Pannon University, 2006

Dr. (univ) – University of Veszprem, 1994

Workplaces: Óbuda University, Budapest, Associate Professor, 2007 –

and professions: Director of Media Technology Institute, 2010 –

Others: President of the Federation of Hungarian Printers and Papermakers, 2008 –

Member of the Board of INTERGRAF, 2010 -

Main fields Printing technologies and machines, Production and Maintenance Management,

of research: Environmental Engineering