

30 Percent Recycled-Content Paper: Getting More with Less

Environmental and Human Health Impact: Save 36,000 trees, 10.5 million gallons of water, and 6.2 million kilowatt-hours per year with recycled-content paper
Business Impact: Purchasing 30 percent recycled-content paper increases cost per ream of paper by 1.5 percent

Challenge

When the Procurement & Supply department published an internal article about our environmentally preferable purchasing (EPP) program in early 2008, we received a flood of positive responses from employees. They were thrilled to work for a company so focused on environmental responsibility. They also provided valuable suggestions for improvement, with the number one suggestion being Kaiser Permanente to commit to buying recycled-content (RC) copy paper, and completely eliminate the purchase of copy paper made only of virgin pulp (pulp straight from the forest).

Aim/Goal

- Act on number one suggestion for improvement from employees.
- Strengthen the foundation of our EPP program by making a comprehensive move from virgin to 30 percent RC copy paper.

Team

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Actions Taken

- ✓ Researched what percent of cost centers were already using RC copy paper. Found that **40 percent of paper** purchased was RC, with 6 percent of the reams being 100 percent RC and the remainder being 30 percent RC.
- ✓ Found price difference between RC and virgin paper to be nominal – so small in fact that any cost increase could be eliminated by even modest consumption reduction efforts by employees.
- ✓ Piloted the use of 30 percent RC with network and dedicated print devices for over 6 months with **no adverse** outcomes.
- ✓ Discovered the existence of an industry-wide standard specification for all copy paper defining paper brightness, thickness, and content. This ensured that all print equipment less than ten years old is designed to work with this standard paper, including RC.

- ✓ Communicated to various buyer communities throughout KP (administrative assistants, facility managers, and copy centers) about upcoming conversion to 30 percent RC paper.
- ✓ Ensured our preferred supplier had adequate stock to meet our paper demands (especially in Hawaii).

Results

The annual use of **two million reams** of recycled-content copy paper (8 ½ x 11, three-hole punch, 8 ½ x 14, 11 x 17) *instead of virgin* means a life-cycle savings of:



36,000 trees per year - equivalent to the number of trees in Central Park

10.5 million gallons of water - equivalent to 6 Olympic-sized swimming pools

6.2 million kilowatt-hours of electricity - equivalent to energy consumption of over 5,500 average U.S. homes

Lessons Learned

- ✓ Paper is emotional, and people get attached to paper. Feedback from a more geographically and functionally diverse stakeholder group, earlier in the planning process, would have improved execution of the conversion.
- ✓ Utilize more communication methodologies such as posters, flyers, intranet postings, and e-mails to get the message out.
- ✓ Partner with supplier to develop and execute roll-out plan.

Next Steps

- ✓ Work with the Print Fleet Management team, print equipment suppliers, and IT to standardize settings on printers to reduce paper consumption.
- ✓ Engage employees to reduce printing. While Programwide efforts like electronic health records have vastly reduced consumption, KP still has opportunities to further reduce paper use.