

Source Wisely with SFI

A TREND TOWARD FOREST CERTIFICATION AND ECO-LABELING

BY KATHY ABUSOW

Every day we hear concerning trends about the global economy that impact our lives and workplaces. With budget constraints and restructuring, items perceived as luxury and the nice-to-haves are cut. But even in a tough economic climate, there are trends that see companies maintaining or growing their commitment to corporate social responsibility (CSR).

At the Sustainable Forestry Initiative® (SFI), we see many companies in the graphic arts community pursuing SFI chain of custody certification (CoC) as a part of their CSR efforts. With SFI they are able to offer their customers — including graphic designers — a variety of options for paper sourced from well-managed forests. These options include products that come directly from SFI certified forests through a chain of custody, or products that flow through SFI's unique fiber sourcing program, which promotes responsible forestry on all suppliers' lands.

I am happy to say that at SFI Inc. we've witnessed amazing growth and see great momentum in the SFI community, a positive trend for the world's forests.

Beyond the more than 150 million acres of SFI certified forest land and a four-fold increase in certifications, SFI is now processing, on average, five label use requests per day! The SFI label now appears on numerous consumer products including tissue paper (Majesta), paper (Xerox), food products (Sara Lee), office supplies (Pendaflex and Smead), packaging (Nestle & Smashbox Cosmetics), envelopes and more.

For graphic designers, using SFI-labeled from one of these certified printers means that you can use the SFI label in your print projects. The SFI label on products — including envelopes, corporate materials, and packaging, among others — is a way to make responsible forestry less anonymous and a great way to show a commit-

ment to the environment. It is a visual cue — like the recycling logo — that helps responsible purchasing.

We are not the only ones who've noticed trends in eco-labeling. A study by Terrachoice Environmental Marketing found a majority of customers polled agree that eco-labels help purchasing decisions and that having a choice of eco-labels is important. SFI's label was included in purchasers' top 10 most used eco-labels; which is not surprising when you consider today there are more than 1,000 SFI-certified locations across North America.

Another study by GFK Roper Public Affairs and Yale University found that US consumers believe it is important or essential to have eco-labels that describe the environmental impacts caused by the manufacture, use and disposal of products. Of the 10 eco-labels tested in the survey, SFI had the highest familiarity rating of any forest certification program.

With just 10% of the world's forests currently certified, trends towards increased chain of custody certification and eco-labeling are encouraging. It is important to keep promoting the "source wisely" message to influence the other 90% and increase global demand for products from certified companies.

Over the course of 2009 we will continue to work with professional associations, governments, small companies and major brands to promote forest certification and responsible procurement, and encourage the graphic design community to ask your printers about SFI.



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