

How to develop an environmental policy:

a guide for small printing companies

Are your customers demanding an environmental policy from you? Would you like to increase your profits? Read this leaflet to find out how developing and implementing an environmental policy can boost your business performance by reducing costs and improving your public image.

“Over the past four years, the environmental performance of Seacourt Press has become something of a crusade. We all have to take responsibility for our actions - not only manufacturing business but also large organisations. There may well be an initial cost involved but the results far outweigh this in the longer term.”

**Mr Roy Williams
Managing Director
Seacourt Press Ltd, Oxford**

Use the form on the back page to request free copies of the Envirowise publications featured in this leaflet.

**Environment
and Energy
Helpline
0800 585794**

www.envirowise.gov.uk





Why develop an environmental policy?

Concern about the environment is moving up the agenda at many UK companies and becoming a priority issue when assessing tenders and awarding contracts. More and more customers are now asking their suppliers whether they have an environmental policy - some are making it a prerequisite of placing business with them. Printers are particularly likely to face this demand because their processes have the potential to harm the environment in a number of ways, eg solvent emissions and the generation of hazardous waste.

There are over 12 000 printing companies in the UK, but most (~90%) employ fewer than 20 people¹. However, companies of all sizes can achieve significant cost savings and other benefits from the waste minimisation and good environmental practices that stem from an effective environmental policy. This leaflet aims to help busy managers in these small companies to:

- develop a meaningful environmental policy;
- achieve a competitive edge by integrating this policy into business operations.

There are a number of reasons why taking these measures will improve business performance.

■ **Cost and efficiency benefits.** An environmental policy creates a framework for good environmental management. This can have a direct and positive impact on business performance through:

- cost savings from reduced ink, substrate, solvent, water and energy consumption;
- cost savings from waste reduction, re-use and recycling;
- reduced waste disposal costs;
- reduced volatile organic compound (VOC) emissions;
- improved product quality and process control.

■ **Regulatory compliance.** Printing processes are subject to a range of regulations². An effective environmental policy provides a framework to help you comply with these regulations.

■ **Customer assurance.** Many companies and organisations, such as local authorities, are now taking their suppliers' environmental performance into account when selecting services. An environmental policy provides a clear statement to customers that your company understands its environmental impacts and is taking action to reduce them.

■ **Working conditions.** An environmental policy provides a mechanism through which employees can improve their own working environment. Better management of solvents and other chemicals will improve working conditions and reduce the need to wear personal protective equipment (PPE).

■ **Insurers and investors.** An environmental policy clearly shows that you have a framework through which to control the environmental risks associated with printing (eg those associated with handling inks, solvents and hazardous waste). Some financial companies now request environmental policies or reports when considering a loan application, while some insurers offer reduced premiums (eg for fire insurance) to companies that can demonstrate good environmental practice.

¹ Figures provided by the British Printing Industries Federation (BPIF), Web site: www.bpif.org.uk

² For free, up-to-date advice on environmental regulations affecting your business, contact the Environment and Energy Helpline on freephone 0800 585794.

What should my environmental policy cover?

An effective environmental policy sets out the company's commitment to operating in an environmentally responsible manner with due respect to its legal obligations and good environmental practice.

A typical environmental policy occupies no more than one side of A4 paper and incorporates the following elements:

- introduction and aim of the policy;
- responsibility for the policy's implementation;
- commitment to make resources available to achieve the policy's objectives and targets;
- objectives and targets through which the aims will be met;
- monitoring and auditing;
- communication of the policy to stakeholders, eg customers, shareholders, employees, regulators and neighbours.

Table 1 summarises the type of information that can be included under these headings. It is vital to involve employees in policy development and to ensure they know how it affects them and are aware of their responsibilities. Fig 1 shows an example policy from a fictitious small printing company. You may wish to use this example as a template for your environmental policy but, as the policy should reflect the particular concerns relevant to your company, it is unlikely that any two policies will be identical. It typically takes about a day to draw up an environmental policy.

You will gain the most benefit by taking action to achieve your policy objectives and targets. It is helpful to prepare an Environmental Policy Action Plan, for use

within your company, that outlines how you will meet your objectives and targets, who is responsible, the resources required and the benefits to be gained.

Key issues

Issues to consider in an environmental policy include:

- ensuring compliance with all relevant legislation;
- efficient use of materials (particularly inks, solvents and substrate);
- efficient use of water (this will also minimise the amount of wastewater generated);
- the segregation, re-use and recycling of waste;
- minimising the use of organic solvents and thus VOC emissions;
- ensuring energy is used efficiently;
- making all employees aware of the policy and providing any necessary training;
- encouraging all employees to be involved in saving materials and energy, minimising waste and re-using/recycling waste.

Policy essentials

- Keep it concise, simple and clear.
- Make sure it is relevant to what your company actually does.
- Make sure it covers the most important environmental issues for your company.
- Set realistic aims and objectives.
- Have the policy endorsed by the managing director.
- Date the policy.
- Communicate it to all employees.
- Make it publicly available and include it in marketing material, tenders, etc.
- State that you will review the policy regularly to make sure it is still relevant.
- Ensure that you have the resources available to implement the policy.
- Take action to achieve your policy objectives.

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Table 1 Suggested content of an environmental policy

Heading	Information
Introduction and aim	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Company name. ■ Which aspects/part/location of the business the policy covers. ■ Links to other aspects of the business such as quality systems. ■ The overall aim of the policy.
Responsibility	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ State who is responsible for: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - integrating environmental considerations into the business; - maintaining the environmental policy.
Resources	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ State that you will: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - make resources available to implement the policy, eg time; - provide relevant training to staff and stakeholders.
Objectives	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ State the company's environmental objectives, eg: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - complying with relevant regulations; - reducing material and energy consumption; - reducing solvent emissions; - reducing hazardous waste generation; - minimising the impact of activities on neighbours.
Targets	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Give specific targets relating to your objectives, eg: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - percentage reduction in substrate waste from a known base-line; - percentage reduction in solvent emissions from a known base-line; - percentage reduction in energy consumption from a known base-line.
Monitoring and auditing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Indicate the systems to be used to monitor progress, eg: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - reviews and assessments; - data collection; - annual audits; - publication of annual summaries of progress against policy objectives.
Communication	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ How to obtain a copy (eg telephone number and address of company web site). ■ Who will be given a copy (eg all employees and customers). ■ Name and title of person to contact with any queries.

Fig 1 Example environmental policy for a small printing company

[Company name]

Environmental Policy

Introduction and aim

[Company name] is a family-run printing company, operating from a site in [name of town/city]. Our main products are letterhead notepaper, business cards and other associated products. We recognise that our operations result in emissions to air and water, and the generation of waste. It is our aim to reduce the environmental impacts of our business and to operate in an environmentally responsible manner. This policy describes how we will achieve our aim.

Responsibility

This environmental policy applies to all of our operations including management, office services, printing, delivery and procurement. [Name and title] is responsible for ensuring that the policy is implemented. However, all employees have a responsibility in their area to ensure that the aims and objectives of the policy are met.

Resources

We will ensure that resources are available to enable us to achieve our objectives and targets.

Objectives

During 2002 and 2003, we aim to:

- reduce solvent consumption and the emission of volatile organic compounds;
- reduce the generation of general and special wastes;
- inform all customers and suppliers of our commitment to reducing our environmental impact.

Targets

To achieve our aims, we have set ourselves the following targets:

- Inform all customers and suppliers about our environmental policy by January 2002 and, thereafter, all new customers and suppliers.
- Define good housekeeping for solvent and ink use, ensure all employees receive training in good housekeeping by May 2002 and incorporate this training into the induction programme for new employees.
- Introduce an ink management system to reduce the amount of waste ink being disposed of by March 2003.
- Evaluate the costs and benefits of converting one or more presses to a water-based ink system by October 2003.

Monitoring and auditing

Progress against these objectives will be monitored through our monthly management meetings.

Communication

This environmental policy is available on request. If you wish to obtain a copy or would like to discuss our progress against our objectives, please telephone [number]. This policy is also available on our web site at [http://\[company web site\]](http://[company web site]).

signature

[Name and position]

[Date]

Measuring to manage

To gain tangible benefits from your environmental policy, you need to think about how you are going to take action to achieve your stated aims and objectives. Setting realistic and measurable targets will give you something to work towards and provide a framework for reporting progress.

Start by measuring raw material and energy use and develop targets related to resource efficiency, such as reducing trim waste by 10%. When measuring waste arisings, take into account that in small printing companies it is beneficial, in terms of legal compliance and cost savings, to measure and segregate special, re-usable and recyclable wastes and waste that is hazardous to health from your general waste. You can contact the Environment and Energy Helpline for advice on waste types and setting targets for waste reduction. A Fast Track visit from Envirowise can help you to get started and this is also available through the Environment and Energy Helpline.

When you have quantified your monthly consumption of substrate, solvents, ink etc and the amount of each waste generated, you will be in a position to include specific actions in your new policy or amend your existing policy (see Fig 2).

Fig 2 Example target for an environmental policy

We produced 1.2 tonnes/month of substrate waste in 2000. Our aim is to reduce this by 33% to 0.8 tonnes/month by December 2002 through:

- sorting and re-using sheets in press make-ready spoilage;
- defining best practice and ensuring that all press operators are fully trained;
- reducing trim waste.

Stewart Signs

ENVIRONMENTAL POLICY STATEMENT

Stewart Signs Ltd is a well-established sign manufacturing company. We manufacture a wide variety of sign and self-adhesive products using advanced screen process, digital printing and cutting techniques. We operate a programme of continual improvement in our environmental performance and pollution prevention, aiming to minimise the environmental impacts resulting from our activities.

We will ensure that the company complies with all relevant environmental legislation, regulations and any other requirements to which the company subscribes.

Improvements in our environmental performance will be achieved by:

- reducing atmospheric emissions where practical;
- minimising the consumption of energy where practical;
- minimising, re-using and recycling waste where practical;
- maintaining an environmental management system which complies with BS EN ISO 14001 and enables improvement objectives and targets to be established and implemented.

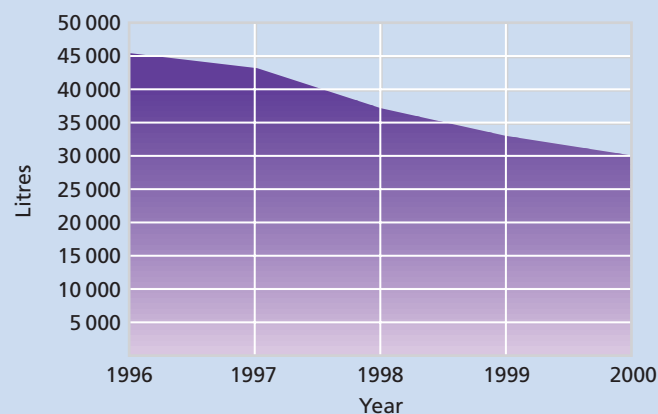
This policy has been communicated to all employees. It is also available to all interested parties on request from the company office at Chandler's Ford Industrial Estate, Eastleigh.

Signed: Date:

Screen printer targets all forms of waste

Bovince Ltd, a screen printer, aims to improve its performance in all of its services and activities, as well as prevent pollution. For example, a solvent controls programme meant that solvent use and VOC emissions fell significantly during the 1990s (see Fig 3). By the end of 2000, solvent consumption had dropped by 33.37% compared to that of 1996. Bovince's current usage is 19% above the limit for 2004, set under the Environmental Protection Act, and it is aiming to be below the limit by the end of 2002.

Fig 3 Annual solvent consumption at Bovince Ltd



Integrating your environmental policy into your business

Good environmental management increases efficiency and hence contributes directly to the bottom line. Developing an effective environmental policy is the first step towards integrating business with environmental management. Table 2 gives examples of routes through which you can make your environmental policy work for your business and yield cost savings and other benefits. The time you invest will be recouped through improved efficiency, increased profits and improved customer relationships.

Table 2 Ways of integrating your environmental policy into your business

Route	Description
Management meetings	■ Include progress and developments in environmental management in business management meetings.
Business planning	■ Include consideration of environment-related investments (capital expenditure or training) in business planning.
Key performance indicators	■ Integrate environmental performance into key performance indicators alongside traditional indicators such as turnover and profit margin.
Communications with customers	■ Include your environmental policy and/or progress on objectives and targets in marketing materials and other communications.
Staff objectives and professional development	■ Include environmental responsibilities in employees' job descriptions and recognise people's responsibilities in their professional development.

Enhancing supplier and customer relationships

More companies are now assessing their suppliers to ensure that they are also taking action to reduce their impact on the environment. Such companies understand the business value of good environmental practice and are keen to ensure that their activities and those of their suppliers comply with environmental legislation and do not pose a potential risk to the environment.

In some cases, printers have been asked to develop a certified environmental management system (EMS) if they want to remain a supplier or be awarded new business. More and more companies are asking questions such as: "Does your company have an environmental policy?" or "Does your company have an environmental management system?" Companies that develop and implement an environmental policy now will have a competitive edge over those that do not.

Links to formal environmental management systems

The formal EMS standard ISO 14001 and the EU Eco-Management and Auditing Scheme (EMAS) require an environmental policy to be in place. EMAS also requires environmental reports to be made available. Developing an effective environmental policy is good preparation to meet the requirements of ISO 14001 and/or EMAS, including:

- demonstration of commitment;
- raising staff awareness;
- identification of key environmental issues;
- implementation of measures to reduce significant environmental impacts;
- introduction of monitoring and reporting systems.

Action plan

- ✓ Contact the Environment and Energy Helpline to order free Envirowise publications and ask about free, confidential on-site reviews (Fast Track visits).
- ✓ Show commitment from the top.
- ✓ Assign responsibility for drafting the policy and putting the policy into action.
- ✓ Involve staff in policy development and implementation.
- ✓ Identify regulatory responsibilities and environmental issues.
- ✓ Identify your environmental aims and objectives.
- ✓ Establish a monitoring and reporting system.
- ✓ Integrate the policy and its requirements into your business.
- ✓ Consider what resources you will need to implement the policy.
- ✓ Assess the cost savings and environmental benefits to be gained.
- ✓ Set measurable improvement targets.
- ✓ Communicate the policy and your progress against its aims and objectives to stakeholders.
- ✓ Review the policy regularly.

Help from Envirowise

Envirowise has produced a wealth of free information to help all sizes and types of printing company to:

- reduce their costs and thus boost profits;
- reduce waste;
- improve their environmental performance;
- gain new customers and markets.

Use the fax back form on the back page to order copies of these free Guides that are packed with practical advice on how printers can save money and help the environment.

The Guides are just a few of many Envirowise publications that aim to help printers boost their business performance. Why not contact the Environment and Energy Helpline on freephone 0800 585794 to discuss which Envirowise publications are the most appropriate to your particular needs?

Sources of further help

Energy Efficiency Best Practice Programme

Environment and Energy Helpline

Tel: 0800 585794

E-mail: helpline@eebpp.org

Web site: www.energy-efficiency.gov.uk

Trade associations

British Printing Industries Federation (BPIF)

Tel: 020 7915 8300

E-mail: info@bpif.org.uk

Web site: www.bpif.org.uk

Screen Printing Association (UK) Ltd

Tel: 01737 240792

E-mail: spa-uk@msn.com

Web site: www.martex.co.uk/screen-printing/

Lifting the lid on substrate waste

Cost-effective Substrate Management for Printers (GG107) shows you how to cut substrate losses and generate savings without sacrificing speed, output or quality.



Cleaning-up on ink-related waste

Cost-effective Ink Management for Printers (GG163) shows you how to reduce ink loss and spoilage - and how to achieve other benefits in process control, quality, working conditions, customer satisfaction and financial planning.



Controlling chemical use

Cost-effective Chemicals Management for Printers (GG230) has the perfect formula for handling, monitoring and reducing the amount of chemicals you use.



Keeping the lid on cleaning materials

Cost-effective Management of Cleaning Materials for Printers (GG231) describes how printers in the sheet-fed and web-fed sectors can achieve cost savings and operational benefits through improved management of cleaning materials.



Helping your business and helping the environment

How to Become a Green Printer (EN281) contains a range of no-cost and low-cost tips to help smaller printers use good environmental practices to save money and to demonstrate their 'green' credentials to customers.





This leaflet describes how to develop an environmental policy and the business benefits of improving your environmental performance. Envirowise offers a range of free services to help printers develop environmental management in their company, including:

- free publications with practical advice and information;
- free advice from Envirowise experts through the Environment and Energy Helpline;
- free, confidential on-site waste reviews (Fast Track visits) from Envirowise consultants that help businesses identify and realise savings.

For further information, please contact the Environment and Energy Helpline on **0800 585794** or fax this page to **01235 433961**.

Alternatively, visit the web site at www.envirowise.gov.uk

Or you can post the form below to:
**Envirowise Publications,
 Environment and Energy Helpline,
 156 Curie Avenue,
 Harwell, Didcot, Oxfordshire OX11 0QJ**

Fax back form

please fax this page to 01235 433961

Please send me a **free** copy of the following publications:

- Good Practice Guide (GG107) *Cost-effective Substrate Management for Printers*
- Good Practice Guide (GG163) *Cost-effective Ink Management for Printers*
- Good Practice Guide (GG230) *Cost-effective Chemicals Management for Printers*
- Good Practice Guide (GG231) *Cost-effective Management of Cleaning Materials for Printers*
- General Information Leaflet (EN281) *How to Become a Green Printer*

FAST TRACK VISITS

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Title:	Forename:	Surname:
Position:		
Company name:		Number of employees:
Sector/product type:		
Address:		
		Postcode:
e-mail:		
Tel:	Fax:	

Please note: we may share your name and address with other sources of free Government help. Please do not enter your e-mail address if you do not wish to be contacted by e-mail.



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