

A close-up photograph of a person's hands holding a small globe of the Earth. The person is wearing a dark suit jacket and a white shirt. The globe is blue and green, with a grid of latitude and longitude lines. The background is blurred, showing more of the person's torso and the globe's surface.

# How to Green Your Documents

*The best green practice in the publication and management of documents is to maintain all your files as electronic files. Your organization will reduce the costs of printing, mailing and document handling, at the same time you save both trees and space at the landfill.*

The digital design, publication and distribution processes for most documents can be accomplished easily. Adopt these simple-to-implement ideas to maximize your use of electronic documents:

1. Send e-mail messages instead of printed letters and postcards.
2. Convert printed materials to electronic PDF files in order to share them easily.
3. Edit and review documents onscreen; do not print to edit.
4. Maintain records as electronic files; do not print and store in file cabinets.
5. Switch from a paper fax machine to a Web-based fax service that allows you to send and receive fax messages as e-mail attachments which then can be viewed online.

For documents that must be printed, consider the following green practices:

- 1. Buy recycled paper** produced with a high percentage of post-consumer content and a minimum of chlorine

bleaching. In general, recycled paper saves 55% more water and uses 60 - 70% less energy to produce than paper produced from virgin pulp.

**2. Print simultaneously on both sides of the paper.** If your printer does not already have this capacity, attach a duplexer. Not only will you reduce printing costs, but you will also create thinner, lighter and more portable documents.

**3. Use software like Greenprint** to eliminate unnecessary information (e.g., banners, advertisements and blank pages) before printing.

**4. Eliminate the use of staples.** Staples are made from galvanized steel, which is energy intensive to mine, form and transport. The production and delivery of staples, therefore, produce pollutants, and because of their small size, staples are rarely recycled. Use paper clips or a staple-free stapler instead. This “stapler,” which is practical for 2-7 sheets of paper, cuts and binds papers using only a paper strip.

The above tips will lead you toward the easy “greening” of your document publication and distribution processes. Remember, green practices are easy to maintain, help reduce waste and cost, and add to the quality of life for your employees, your customers and the local community.

## If You Must Print, Make It Green!



If electronic documents are not appropriate for certain printed items – for example, collateral marketing materials such as handouts at tradeshow or mailer inserts – focus on ways to make your printing green.

You can make environmentally preferable printing choices when you follow these simple guidelines:

1. Choose chlorine-free paper composed of post-consumer fiber.
2. Choose vegetable-based inks or recycled inks that cause less pollution.
3. Save on paper when you avoid the printing of non-standard sized materials.
4. Plan your printing projects with recycling in mind: e.g., avoid foil stamps and coatings.
5. Design your marketing pieces as “self-mailers” to avoid the use of envelopes.
6. Design packaging to avoid the use of bindings and adhesives.

Through the use of wise design principles and the careful selection of papers and inks, you can minimize the use of chemicals and raw materials. To help you make green printing choices that will satisfy your marketing needs, work with both a designer who understands how to design eco-friendly print jobs and a printer who uses environmentally responsible printing techniques.



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