



Solutions for a Sustainable Supply Chain



Consumable Office Products

Paper, notebooks, folders, toner cartridges, writing utensils, batteries, lamps etc.

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Top Tips for more Sustainable Office Consumables

1. Have an eco-label or certification
2. Are durable and longer lasting with potential for reuse
3. Are made from refurbished/remanufactured post-consumer content
4. Contain rapidly renewable or bio-based materials
5. Can be recycled, composted or repurposed at end-of-life

The Problem: Impacts of Office Consumables

- **Intensive Extraction.** A significant portion of logging worldwide goes towards the production of paper products contributing to deforestation, habitat loss, soil degradation, and general ecosystem disruption.
- **Resource Consumption.** Manufacturing for paper and plastic products is extremely resource intensive; consuming significant amounts of oil, water, and energy per unit produced. While impacts associated with recycling processes still exist, they are considerably less than producing new products.
- **Excessive Waste.** While many paper and plastic products are put into recycling bins in Canada, these items still make up large percentages of solid waste heading to landfill. Reducing consumption first, then demanding recycled materials will help address this.
- **Hazardous Chemicals.** Many office consumables are manufactured using hazardous chemicals, resulting in toxic effluent into the environment. Then during use, they can off-gas chemicals contributing to lowered indoor air quality presenting human health risks.

Myth Buster

Today recycled paper does not jam printers. Recycled paper is of equal quality to non-recycled paper and works well in printers and copiers.

Before you Buy...

- Consider the need for your purchase and whether there may be an alternative choice to fulfill this need
- Check current inventory / surplus and consider if you've used the product to the end of its current useful life
- Right-size your order to the minimum amount necessary

Check the TRU Bookstore

Many office consumable products can be easily sourced from the TRU Bookstore, and oftentimes they have already chosen sustainable options. Always check there first before buying from elsewhere.

Criteria for Sustainable Paper-based Products

Sourcing sustainable paper products (like copy paper, notebooks, envelopes, post-its, etc.) is no longer a difficult task, you just need to be aware of a few key common attributes to look for when making your purchasing decision.

- **High post-consumer / recycled content (ideally 60-100%).** Recycling reduces pressure on forests and diverts waste from landfill. Manufacturing recycled paper generally uses less energy and water than manufacturing from virgin fibre.
- **Made from sustainably harvested wood or alternative fibres.** There is always a need for some new fibre content as old fibres degrade and are lost over time, so ensure they come from sustainably harvested sources. Alternative (non-wood) fibre sources may include hemp or sugar cane.
- **Chlorine free paper.** Chlorine and its derivatives (such as chlorine dioxide) are very harmful to the environment, particularly the aquatic environment.
- **Recyclability at end of life.** While most paper products can be easily recycled, it may be worth checking with the supplier if there are any components or adhesives that cannot be recycled.

Or Just Don't Print!

Reduce the need for paper by really considering if you need to print something.

Make use of fillable forms and digital signatures.

Eco-labels & Certifications

Sustainable paper products often have an eco-label to signify that it meets environmentally responsible criteria such as that it has been made from sustainably harvested forest practices.

Below are a few examples of eco-labels relevant to paper products you can look for:

| The Logo | Description |
|---|---|
|  | <u>Forest Stewardship Council</u> The Forest Stewardship Council (FSC) is an independent, not for profit, non-government organization that provides standard setting, trademark assurance and accreditation services for companies and organizations interested in responsible forestry products. |
|  | <u>Sustainable Forestry Initiative</u> SFI Inc. is an independent, non-profit organization responsible for maintaining, overseeing and improving a sustainable forestry certification program that is internationally recognized. |
|  | <u>ECOLOGO Certification Program</u> UL ECOLOGO® Certified products and services and are verified for reduced environmental impact. ECOLOGO Certifications are voluntary, multi-attribute, life cycle-based environmental certifications that indicate a product has undergone rigorous scientific testing and exhaustive auditing to prove its compliance with stringent, third-party environmental standards. |

| | |
|---|---|
| | <p>ECOLOGO, was previously the Canadian EcoLogo Program, also referred to as “Environmental Choice,” based on the International Standards Organization ISO 14024 standard for ecolabelling and was managed by TerraChoice.</p> |
|  | <p><u>Green Seal</u> Green Seal is an independent, non-profit organization that strives to achieve a healthier and cleaner environment by identifying and promoting products and services that cause less toxic pollution and waste, conserve resources and habitats, and minimize global warming and ozone depletion.</p> |
|  | <p><u>Rainforest Alliance Certified</u> This certification indicates that a farm, forest, or tourism enterprise has been audited to meet standards that require environmental, social, and economic sustainability.</p> |
|  | <p><u>The Canadian Standards Association</u> As a not-for-profit membership-based association, CSA is a widely recognized and respected label that develops standards that address needs such as enhancing public safety and health, advancing the quality of life and helping to preserve the environment.</p> |

Criteria for Sustainable Writing Utensils

Writing utensils, like pens, pencils, markers, and highlighters, are prime suspects for cheap plastic, lack of recycled content, and ending up in landfills. Look for the following features for more sustainable choices:

- **Recycled content.** Writing instruments can be easily manufactured using recycled materials. A pen’s ink tube can be made from recycled plastic, the ballpoint made from recycled metal and the barrel made from a variety of recycled materials including unbleached paper, recycled plastic or rubber.
- **Bio-based and/or sustainably harvested materials.** Look for utensils made from bio-based materials like cornstarch, paper, bamboo, or sustainably harvested wood; this helps reduce consumption of petroleum-based plastic and keeps it out of landfills.
- **Reusable / refillable.** In refillable pens, pencils and markers, the pencil lead and/or the ink are the only consumable parts, while the barrels (usually made of plastic) are durable. Refillables therefore reduce the resources and energy used in manufacturing by avoiding the necessity for replacement of the whole unit.
- **Environmentally preferable inks.** Reduce the amount of volatile organic compounds (VOCs) that are released by petroleum oil inks by seeking soy or vegetable-based inks. Additionally, avoid pigments that contain heavy metals like fluorescents, warm red and metallic colours.
- **Other features to look for:**
 - Look for eco certifications (see above list of eco-logos)
 - Choose water-based markers and high-lighters
 - Choose finer points over wider point instruments
 - Choose alcohol-based dry-erase markers instead of Ketone-based

Don't Forget about Packaging!

Beyond the product being purchased, packaging can also have negative environmental impacts, so look for packaging that:

- *Is recyclable (ex. no polystyrene)*
- *Has post-consumer content*
- *Has less plastic and more bio-based materials*

Criteria for Other Sustainable Office Consumables

Aside from paper products and writing utensils, there could be many other office consumables on your shopping list. Generally, to get the best sustainability bang for your buck, check out the “Top Tips” on page 1. Here are some more specific sustainability criteria to consider for three other common products:

Toner Cartridges & Ink

- Has an eco-certification such as ECOLOGO, EPEAT, or GreenGuard to demonstrate compliance with indoor air quality and other life-cycle impacts.
- Re-manufactured cartridges or made from recycled content.
- Refillable and recyclable cartridges accepted in take-back, trade-in, or other recycling programs offered through the supplier or other third-party.
- Soy, vegetable and low VOC-based inks.
- Supplier to provide Safety Data Sheets (SDSs) for offered printer cartridges containing toner or ink (if containing hazardous materials).

Disposing Ink & Toner Cartridges at TRU

Please put used cartridges in a bag, then in their box, then write with a felt marker "For Recycling".

Then leave in any TRU Mail Room for pick-up.

Lamps & Bulbs

- Has an eco-certification, like Energy Star or Design Lights Consortium (DLC), to indicate energy efficiency; generally LED's are most efficient, followed by CFL's then incandescent.
- Look for longer lasting bulbs; for example LED lighting can last up to six times longer than compact fluorescents (CFL's) and 20 times longer than incandescent lamps.
- Specify low or no mercury (ex. look for [RoHS certification](#) compliance).

Batteries

- Has UL ECOLOGO and/or CE certifications to indicate meeting standard safety, health and environmental protection requirements.
- Rechargeable nickel metal hydride that are low self-discharging and delivered pre-charged.
- Safer battery chemistry; look for lithium ion (Nickel Manganese Cobalt (NMC) or Iron Phosphate) or other high-capacity battery (e.g., sealed lead acid)
- Energy Star certified battery chargers

TRU's Battery Recycling Program

There are brown batteries-only recycling bins wall-mounted around campus at [these locations](#) for recycling all types of household batteries.

Remember to put tape over the two points on 9-volt batteries so they don't catch fire. They have self-combusted in homes while stored over time!

