

# CONNECTED

VISUAL MEDIA ALLIANCE

SPRING 2022



## CONTENTS

03

Letter from the President

08

Sustainability,  
Good for Your  
Bottom Line

10

Strategies &  
Tactics to Easily  
Go Green

12

Saving the World  
One Small Step  
at a Time

14

How a Woman  
Owned Company  
Encourages  
Sustainability

16

Can Sustainability  
Help You Find &  
Retain Employees?  
Yes, it Can!

04

VMA Insider

07

Earthday Contest

11

New Members

18

Ask the Experts



# What if all packaging was digitally printed?

Packaging is a huge part of the conversation around brands reducing their impact on the environment. It's not just a challenge for the supply chain, it's an issue for the entire value chain, and it's an issue that touches almost every sector. We can all aspire to a more sustainable future and the role that digitally printed packaging plays within that is profound. The technology can reduce supply chain waste by up to 26% and cut its carbon footprint from 65% up to 80%, all while allowing you to print with sustainable inks and on sustainable materials.

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Visual Media Alliance is non-profit trade association serving Northern California printers and design agency and other small business owners. By providing events, education, discounts, advocacy, industry promotion and insurance programs, we help our member firms become more successful and profitable.

## ON THE COVER

Designed by Paulina Turcios, winner of the VMA Earth Day Student Design Contest. (See page 7 for details)

## LETTER FROM THE PRESIDENT

Dear Valued Members,

It has been an unprecedented couple of years and each day provides new surprises. We have empathy for our members as our industry continues to experience the impact of the pandemic — this time through supply chain issues. The result is severe paper shortages are affecting our printers' business operations and agencies' client projects.

As your industry association, VMA is taking action to address this crisis.

- We are working with the leadership of paper merchants and distributors to be transparent and fair in allocating paper to our commercial printers.
- We held a Collective Conversation, part of VMA's virtual roundtable series, to share accurate information and tips with print and paper leaders.
- VMA and 12 regional print association affiliates across America have reached out to the leadership of the North American paper industry and urged them to take every possible action to speed up production and deliveries of paper so we can return to normal.

We must remember that our industry is resilient and that in the months ahead, we will find ways to move past these hurdles. We are at a time in history where we must balance our current pressures with the future. We must not lose sight of the larger picture, as "tomorrow is the today of the future."

In honor of a brighter future and 2022 Earth Day theme of "Invest in Our Planet," in this issue of *Connected*, we share how to make your business more sustainable to help create a healthier tomorrow. Attracting new customers as well as finding and retaining employees requires making decisions based on sustainability. We offer strategies and tactics to assist the planet while also helping your company's bottom line.

Please reach out to me anytime at [ian@vma.bz](mailto:ian@vma.bz).



Sincerely,

*Ian Flynn*

Ian Flynn  
President, Visual Media Alliance

## Forestry Local Forests through this Issue of *Connected*

We were unable to print this edition of *Connected* on recycled paper due to paper supply shortage. However, it was printed using PrintReleaf, a paper usage carbon offset solutions provider. The result was eight trees were planted in our local Mendocino forests for this issue. To date, PrintReleaf's partners and customers have planted over 3 million trees across their network of reforestation projects — that's over 25 billion pages of paper that have been offset!

A special thanks to Dumont Printing who donated Print Releaf's services. Thank you Dumont for supporting VMA and sustainability!

Scan the QR code to learn more about this project's sustainability impact!



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## VMA PROGRAMS FOR SUSTAINABILITY

At VMA, our goal is to help the industry and your business today and tomorrow. We understand it can be daunting to know where and how to start being environmentally conscious with your business, so we are developing a sustainability program as a VMA member benefit to help make it easier wherever you are in the process.

The easiest first step you can take is asking suppliers and vendors if they incorporate green practices or would do so. The second can be choosing vendors that offer green services or have made it part of their values and plans. Below and on the following page are featured partners in VMA sustainability program. We will be rolling out additional partnerships in the coming months.

The need for sustainability action is growing in urgency as we look at the state of climate conditions and that one in three consumers prefer eco-friendly options.<sup>1</sup>

This year's Earth Day theme of "Invest In Our Planet" sums up the need for businesses to do their part. Get started, and if you are doing something green already, we'd love to hear about it and feature it on a blog and social media.

Contact [shannon@vma.bz](mailto:shannon@vma.bz).

<sup>1</sup> IBM & the National Retail Federation Study

### Save 50% with QuickBooks® Online (QBO)

Receive Over 50% savings for the first year of QuickBooks Online. QBO gives you three options to choose what's best for your business.

There's no better time to switch: Intuit will be discontinuing support of its desktop version after May 31, 2021. For a limited time, get a bonus of a virtual gift card up to \$300!

Intuit is committed to helping 1 million small businesses reduce their carbon emissions by 50% by 2030. They've brought together sustainable business solution providers to help small businesses reduce their environmental impact. See a list of these at [intuit.me/3LsQlhx](https://intuit.me/3LsQlhx).

[vma.bz/discounts/quickbooks](https://vma.bz/discounts/quickbooks)



### Save on Shipping While Being Sustainable

Members can save with UPS. Save up to 30% on international, air, and ground shipping. You'll get the peace of mind that comes from using the carrier that delivers outstanding reliability, greater speed, more service, and innovative technology. Members with existing UPS accounts are able to sign up for this savings.

Plus, you'll contribute to helping the planet. UPS has set a goal to achieve carbon neutrality by 2050, including fueling 40% of ground operations with alternative fuels by 2025. See more at [bit.ly/3uIjoaO](https://bit.ly/3uIjoaO).

[vma.bz/discounts/ups](https://vma.bz/discounts/ups)





## PrintReleaf Sustainability Certification – Reforest with Every Job



One of the easiest ways for businesses to be sustainable is to offset their carbon emissions. VMA's partner, PrintReleaf, allows you to do this easily.

PrintReleaf plants trees in global forests to offset paper use. Through their verified reforestation process, they guarantee 100% net survival of the trees planted. And you even get to choose the forest to support through the offset.

Members receive 25% off published rates.

[vma.bz/discounts/printreleaf](http://vma.bz/discounts/printreleaf)

## FSC Certification – Ensures Products Are Sustainable



Affordable FSC certification is available to our members under a group certification program. Certification, which normally can run members upwards of \$5,000 per year, is available for \$1,695 per year under a group contract. The maximum shop size to qualify is \$5M in annual sales.

The group certificate carries the same weight as an individually obtained one, and companies with either type of certification may use the FSC logo.

[vma.bz/discounts/fsc-certification](http://vma.bz/discounts/fsc-certification)

## UPCOMING EVENTS

Come join our online and in-person events. We have roundtables, networking, educational events, and more. Check out upcoming events at [vma.bz/networking-events](http://vma.bz/networking-events).



### Collective Conversations

Virtual Round Table Series

Online

[vma.bz/cc](http://vma.bz/cc)



### ConnectUp

Networking Events Series

May 12 • 5-8PM • Sacramento

[vma.bz/connectup](http://vma.bz/connectup)



### SalesCircle

Networking Referral Group

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# CAN





# Earth Day Design Contest Winners

To get youth excited about our industry, VMA sponsored two student design contests. The first was to design a cover for this issue of *Connected* magazine on the theme of sustainability in alignment to this year's Earth Day theme on the green economy: "Invest In Our Planet."

The cover design 1st, 2nd, and 3rd place winners are showcased below. Paulina Turcios of City College won first place with \$1,000 prize and her design is also on the cover. She did a great job in her design demonstrating that business, government, and the public are all responsible for the health of the planet.

Congratulations also to Nelson Gines Jr. for second place and Kyle Gray for third place. They will receive \$500 and \$300 awards, respectively. All awards come from VMA's scholarship fund dedicated to supporting growth of the industry through education. All entries showed amazing creativity and passion and we were highly impressed.

In addition, we awarded two students, Saisri Rayapati and Grace Bhatia with \$300 and \$200 respectively, for their social media graphic to promote the message from Lyndee Sing's "Intro to Social Media" class offered at Cal Poly San Luis Obispo.

## CONNECTED COVER DESIGN WINNERS



### 1ST PLACE

**Paulina Turcios**  
City College of San Francisco



### 2ND PLACE

**Nelson Gines Jr.**  
City College of San Francisco



### 3RD PLACE

**Kyle Gray**  
Cal Poly SLO

All winning designs can be seen at [vma.bz/earthday-winners](https://vma.bz/earthday-winners)

# Sustainability, Good for Your Bottom Line

BY SONALI SHAH

With the many intense issues we've experienced in the last couple of years, it can be challenging to find time to focus on the future. But the planet won't wait. As we look at climate conditions, from devastating fires to catastrophic floods, the need for sustainability action is growing in urgency. In addition, the fact that one in three consumers prefer eco-friendly options and will put their money with their preferences makes acting sustainable something that should be a priority.<sup>1</sup> And there is the fact that your customers, as well as your competitors, are starting to take notice, and you won't want to be left behind.

Sustainability has become a standard business principle and expected practice. There is a real business case for investing in it. For small businesses, adopting a greener approach to running your business is not only essential to doing your part to help the environment, it's critical to staying relevant to your clients and customers.



## Eco-conscious efforts can offer a double bang for your buck.

They combat serious environmental issues like climate change, pollution, and adverse effects on pollinators, thereby helping the planet for your children and grandchildren. Plus, these environmentally conscious practices can also be good for your business.

## Sustainable-focused actions have the following business benefits:

- **Differentiate and boost your brand** – Standing out in today's crowded market can be challenging. Sustainability can give your business a competitive advantage. It can be as easy as offering carbon offsets through a VMA partner like PrintReleaf ([printreleaf.com](https://printreleaf.com)).
- **Increase your ability to attract and stay relevant to staff, prospects, and investors** – When deciding which brands to engage with, studies show that all these constituents say that they care a lot about the societal impact of that business.<sup>2</sup>
- **Reduce your operating costs and increase your profitability** – According to studies by Economist Intelligence Unit at Harvard and MIT Sloan, sustainable businesses often perform better financially. One example is that companies who "go green" receive tax credits and breaks from the local and federal government, increasing their net profits.

## Where to Start? – Create a Simple Sustainability Plan

The first step is understanding the issues at stake and that creating a sustainable plan and taking action is both feasible and beneficial for your business. Here is a simple 4-step process to make it more manageable.



“It's not always easy being eco-conscious, but it's worth the effort.”

#### STEP ONE

### Understand the Issues - Profit, People, & Planet

Internalize the idea that sustainability within your business means managing your triple bottom line: your company's financial, social, and environmental performance over time. Become knowledgeable on the issues and options. Forget outdated "take-make-waste" thinking and change your perspective — see the business, the self, the economy, and the household as connected with, instead of separate from, the environment.

#### STEP TWO

### Find Your Vision

A sustainability vision is a top-line statement of what sustainability means to your business. Ask yourself, what are we [your company] passionate about? It could be what you, your employees, or your customers care about — and ideally, all three. And it's also where you can have a meaningful impact.

Here's an example:

*We will employ a production process that prevents waste and reduces the manufacturing requirements for materials, energy, and personnel.*

Your vision statement can be used to communicate instantly to customers, employees, partners what you're about and can be referred back to as a benchmark for judging all your business decisions.

**Hint:** Start with your values, and don't be afraid to make them personal.

#### STEP THREE

### Choose the Strategies & Tactics

Choose a few short-term and longer-term ways your business can support the environment. This could be as simple as selecting "recycling" as one of your key strategies for sustainability and then picking easy tactics such as having multi-use recycling bins in the office. Or deciding to get a larger recycling program going for your print shop, such as connecting with a company like iPaper (<https://bit.ly/3IAQTPJ>) that will recycle all your fiber waste instead of it going to landfills. You will find a handy list of easy sustainable strategies and tactics on page 10.

#### STEP FOUR

### Implementation

The most important step is executing on an ongoing basis — meaning implementing these tactics in your business and with employees. Make sure to adequately communicate your new sustainability plan across your entire company. Educate and encourage your employees to ensure successful execution. And be sure to practice what you preach.

Once upon a time, "going green" was treated as a side project. It was something to think about, something to consider, but not a main priority. Now, sustainability should be a state of being for your company.

It's not always easy being eco-conscious, but it's worth the effort. With labor and supply chain challenges so difficult right now, it can be tempting to put sustainability on the backburner. But, remember, sustainability is good for business, good for your clients, and good for the planet that we all share. Whether you take small steps or big leaps, the most important thing is building momentum and keeping it going.

Businesses large and small need to do their part for the sustainability of our planet. Get started, and if you are doing something green already, we'd love to hear about it and feature it on our blog and social media. Reach out to [shannon@vma.bz](mailto:shannon@vma.bz).



<sup>1</sup> IBM & the National Retail Federation Study,

<sup>2</sup> 2019 Edelman Global Brand Report

# Strategies & Tactics to Easily Go Green



Every dollar and hour matters to a small business so you want to be thoughtful with your commitments; It will much more effective to focus on supporting a few initiatives that really matter to you, your staff, or your customers. Try these practical ideas, both big and small, to make your business sustainable.

## Reduce energy use

- ☐ Use electricity meters to find which equipment uses the most energy. See if you can use those appliances more efficiently, or switch to energy-efficient alternatives.
- ☐ Investing in solar panels or energy-efficient lighting. It might be more cost-effective than you think.
- ☐ Ask your energy providers if they offer renewable forms such as solar or wind.

## Conserve resources

- ☐ Improve water conservation. Recent, sustained droughts have made clear, water conservation is just as important. Low-flow toilets and faucets, as well as waterless urinals, can drastically cut your water consumption.
- ☐ Instead of stocking the fridge with plastic water bottles, use a water filter system so employees can fill their own.
- ☐ Go paperless. Running your business digitally reduces waste and costs associated with paper, printers, copiers, ink cartridges, and filing cabinets.

## Reuse everything possible

- ☐ Try not to buy everything new – reuse stationery, binders, and folders when they're available.
- ☐ Print smarter. Use recycled paper and ink cartridges where possible, only print when necessary, avoid color printouts, print documents double-sided, and reuse unwanted paper.

## Recycle whatever you can

- ☐ Provide bins for returnable bottles, non-returnable bottles, aluminum cans, paper, and food scraps. Have clear signage for separate bins and make them easily accessible.
- ☐ Contact your local e-scrap recycler to get a bin for your workplace and put old hardware there instead of in a landfill. Allow your staff to bring their e-waste in from home.

## Buy supplies mindfully

- ☐ Provide real kitchenware rather than disposable cups, plates, knives, and forks.
- ☐ Use green office cleaning products – replace cleaners, dish, and hand soaps. The benefits include improved health, a reduction in allergic reactions, and a healthier planet. Check out [grove.co](https://grove.co).

## Encourage your staff

- ☐ Gift reusables – give your staff easy access to reusable coffee cups, water bottles, and recyclable/reusable tote shopping bags.
- ☐ Reduce commuting by car – encourage your staff to ride, walk, or take public transport to work, or work from home where appropriate.
- ☐ Reward employees for coming up with sustainable ideas or for volunteering for an environmental cause.
- ☐ Ask you employees for sustainable ideas. To make it engaging, create a challenge and offer a small reward for employees whose ideas are implemented.



## Support environmental causes

- ☐ Community-driven programs are good for your image and public reputation, and it feels good to support something that makes a difference.
- ☐ Adopt a green cause and do an annual fundraising event or volunteering day. There are all sorts of conservation campaigns you can take part in; find one that's close to your heart and involve your staff and customers.

## Spread the word and educate

- ☐ Celebrate and promote what you are doing externally through your website, newsletters, and social media.
- ☐ Partner with other local businesses to share sustainability ideas and solutions.



## Choose eco-friendly vendors and partners

- ☐ Choose vendors who are committed to the environment. See pages 4 and 5 for a few such vendors.
- ☐ Read labels and check out alternatives for items that are resource intensive or polluting.
- ☐ Ask your vendors to develop sustainable solutions.

## Deliver on demand for sustainable

- ☐ Designing and producing high-quality packaging is essential to standing out on store shelves. But sustainability matters too. According to McKinsey, 55% of consumers are concerned with the environmental impact of product packaging.
- ☐ Provide paper, ink, carbon offsetting, and other sustainable options and recommend these to your clients.

## Lastly put the word out

- ☐ Being sustainable is a selling point, so don't be shy about advertising your efforts. Are you using recycled paper? Label your print projects with the recycled symbol.
- ☐ Are you outfitting your building with solar panels? Show them off on your website.



## NEW MEMBERS



### Interpress Technologies

Interpress Technologies is recognized as an innovative leader in the food packaging industry. They specialize in custom-printed and formed paper containers, lids, sidewalls, and folding cartons with high-impact graphics.

Jessica Luedy  
jessica.luedy@iptec.com  
interpresstechnologies.com  
916-929-9771



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### Touchpoint90

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Monique Tremaine  
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# SAVING THE WORLD

## One Small Step at a Time

BY REVA HARRIS

For JP Graphics, sustainability started out as a differentiator and has evolved into a mission. When its president, Joan Escover, started the business in the late 1990s, she realized that she needed to find a way to stand out. “I couldn’t compete for a 10-cent piece of paper. I couldn’t compete running one shift. So I began to look at how I could do things differently,” she says. At the same time, the idea of corporate sustainability was beginning to take off. For Escover, who was already an avid recycler, the path forward was clear: take advantage of all the opportunities that sustainability offered to boost the bottom line and to build the brand.

### Buying in early to accelerate cash flow

Once Escover decided that sustainability would be her focal point, she began to take action. She started selling 40% post-consumer waste paper to justify higher prices. She took advantage of rebates for installing solar panels. And when the city of Santa Clara began its Green Business Program, Escover was one of the first to sign up. After taking these measures, she was able to embed sustainability into the company’s messaging. “Some of the best

feedback we’ve gotten on our messaging is about our solar panels,” she says. “When people see that your whole roof has solar panels, it’s a big thing.”

Solar panels are a no-brainer for Escover. Not only do they make use of unusable rooftop space, but they also resulted in a kickback for the company. Between tax rebates and the payment for sending power back to the city’s grid, installing solar panels was a critical source of cash flow in JP Graphics’ early days. The company was also able to generate cash flow through International Paper’s recycling program.

One of the keys to JP Graphics’ success is Escover’s willingness to be an early adopter of eco-friendly program that translated into short- and long-term revenue. “You have to buy into some of these programs,” she says. “If you’re willing to spend more money on it, you’re going to reap the benefits more quickly.”

### Making noise to move the needle

Escover says one way small businesses can reduce their environmental footprint is by putting pressure on their vendors. When she noticed that an equipment manufacturer’s inks and oils came in plastic containers, she asked about their recycling options. She was surprised to hear that they weren’t recyclable or refillable — until she made a big fuss about it: “I said, ‘No, you guys have to come up with a way for us to either refill them or recycle them.’” After Escover’s prodding, the vendor retracted their statement and said that the containers were in fact recyclable. “You’ve got to save the world one plastic thing at a time.”

*“When people see that your whole roof has solar panels, it’s a big thing.”*



*“This generation wants to see that you're being globally aware. And we need to show them that paper and recyclability is the best way to do that.”*



Other printers can do the same. Before making a purchase, Escover advises fellow business owners to rethink how they evaluate their options. Considerations for sustainability are just as important as productivity and new features. “Instead of only asking how much ROI I can generate from a machine, I also ask about how much waste I’m generating from it.”

### Getting employees in on the action

Sustainability is a part of the culture at JP Graphics. Everyone knows how important it is to Escover personally, but she’s also found ways to make it engaging for her employees. When she started the International Paper recycling program, she gave her team a mission. At the time they were cleaning their office themselves. She told them that if the program earned enough money, she’d use it to cover the costs of a cleaning company, and the plan worked. “We used it as a motivator for people to recycle everything here. And the team knows if they put something recyclable in the trash, I’ll go take it out of the garbage and say ‘Hey, we need to save the world!’ They laugh at me but it’s true.”

### Spreading the word

Escover is passionate about promoting sustainability in the industry, and she’s using partnerships to spread the word without breaking her budget. Her latest partnership is with Monadnock,

a paper supplier that wanted to raise awareness about its paper stock in the Northern California area. She teamed up with them to create a tab in the VM Guide. It’s a win-win for both parties. Monadnock paid for the ad and supplied the paper for it in order to get access to VMA’s audience through JP Graphics. And JP Graphics got a full-page tab in the VMGuide at no cost.

These partnerships for double-sided ads have been a smart cost-saving solution for Escover. “I’m a huge partner type person. I tell them ‘I’ll give you the advertising if you pay for the ad.’ It’s a great way to get things done with a limited budget.”

### Reminding people of the power of print

While economic downturns have slowed the momentum of sustainable efforts, Escover believes that people are finally bringing it back into focus. Escover uses the tagline is “Everything is Better With Print” to represent the company’s dedication to shining light on the intangible yet priceless effect of printed materials, such as the special feeling of receiving a beautiful embossed print event invitation. And in order to capture the next generation of consumers, she thinks the industry needs to raise awareness of the sustainability and power of print, especially among young people. “This generation wants to see that you’re being globally aware. And we need to show them that paper and recyclability is the best way to do that.”



Monadnock Paper Mills ad printed at JP Graphics on Monadnock paper



JP Graphics social post of a plantable, die-cut, bookmark made from 100% recycled material in the shape of a flower to promote Earth Day.

# Straight from the Source

## How a Woman Owned Company Encourages Sustainability

BY TAMMY TROUT



Jenny Dela Cruz at a recycled paper mill.

Being an environmentally conscious business is important for many reasons, from protecting our world for future generations to helping you attract and retain customers. Sustainability is not meant to be overwhelming or a burden, and there are many ways to go about it that are actionable, and even enjoyable. It's about meeting current needs through thoughtful choices that are ecological and economic in nature. Snowball Print Marketing leads the way in how they have incorporated sustainability into their operations.

a review of your current practices and purchasing to understand exactly what you're buying and then set goals. "Don't be afraid to set lofty goals," she says. "It's a lot easier to attain than you think."

### Finding Creative Partnerships

The key factor in printing is paper, so finding and using environmentally responsible options is critical. Snowball immediately instituted an environmental paper policy using a nonprofit called Canopy Planet. "We understand it will be challenging to be price competitive if we commit to such high environmental standards, however it is a holistic approach and we have been able to incorporate sustainability into our current offering and believe in what we're selling," says Dela Cruz. Another shift is they encourage printers to have an environmental house sheet, which is a stock of preferred paper you've bought at a fixed cost so you can offer it to customers. Snowball also prioritizes working with printers who are part of Sustainable Green Printing to ensure they are certified regarding processes and products.

While it's preferable to use fewer natural resources, another way to support sustainability is to help restoration.

### Establishing the Groundwork

Jenny Dela Cruz and co-founder, Katrina Shaw, started Snowball Print Marketing, a print marketing company headquartered out of Palo Alto in 2018 with sustainability as a foundational tenet of its mission. Snowball is currently the only woman-owned Ancient Forest Friendly certified print marketing company in the world and can use their mark on their client's projects that are printed on 100% post-consumer wastepaper.

For small businesses, it can be intimidating to know where to start to be able to make a discernible impact. So, what's the first step? According to Dela Cruz, begin with



Snowballs Happy Earth Day Social Post



*“I’m a big believer in conserving what we have and making sure we leave the earth in a better place.”*

Snowball partners with PrintReleaf, a certification system and software platform that facilitates global reforestation. While Dela Cruz prefers conservation to restoration, partnership with PrintReleaf offers a significant opportunity. As of February 2022, Snowball’s customers have collectively offset 2.03 million pounds of paper consumption by reforesting 24.5 thousand trees since the company joined PrintReleaf in 2021.

## Offering Sustainable Options

Supply chain issues are problematic for everyone in the print industry, making it challenging to find any stock, let alone recycled stock, and cost is a factor. It has to be part of the discussion with customers since some will be more open to paying a premium while others simply won’t.

Sometimes showcasing the use of sustainable practices can make all the difference in a marketing effort. For example, Snowball has a client, an end-of-life service company, that targets potential clients where the prospects are especially environmentally conscious. This client has a strong conservation component to its business purpose and wants all its pieces printed on 100% post-consumer waste paper. “Our client wants to inform their audience and include environmental stats on printed pieces,” says Dela Cruz. “We use our slogan ‘Green is Our Thing’ along with an Ancient Forests Friendly logo to help showcase that commitment.” They print an array of products from postcards, trifolds, bifolds, letters, and envelopes and distribute them with presorted standard direct mail.

## Making Personal Choices

Beyond customer relationships and providing environmentally-friendly products, sustainability extends into the workplace. At Snowball, volunteering is encouraged as a part of the company culture. “I’m a big believer in conserving what we have and making sure we leave the earth in a better place. We have done cleanups — beaches, forests, parks,” says Dela Cruz. “We’re also involved with the organization Women in Cleantech and Sustainability – WCS. We’re a corporate sponsor and support their mentor program. Snowball also rewards employees for coming up with creative ways to be green and provides employees with “Green Spot” bonuses for doing so. Dela Cruz encourages the team to take walks outside. “It is a good way to connect and communicate our goals and what we are passionate about.”

Whether it’s a commitment to using post-consumer wastepaper, partnering with sustainable vendors, or encouraging employees to get involved in their community, there are practical steps any size business can take to be a more responsible corporate citizen. Being sustainable can be easier than you might think.

“Green is Our Thing” is a logomark Snowball Print Marketing places on client projects who also collaborate on sustainable practices. They focus on 100% post-consumer waste materials and print with eco-friendly inks.

Snowball Print Marketing	

Snowball Print Marketing customers have collectively offset 2.97M lbs. of paper consumption by reforesting 35.7k trees since joining PrintReleaf in January 2021. View more at [printreleaf.com/SnowballPrintMarketing](https://printreleaf.com/SnowballPrintMarketing).



The Snowball Print Marketing team (from left to right): Jenny Dela Cruz, COO and Co-Founder; Katrina Shaw, Founder and CEO; and Candice Sampson, Director of Client Services.





# Can Sustainability Help You Find & Retain Employees? **Yes, it Can!**

BY SONALI SHAH

One of the most significant challenges facing small businesses today is recruiting and retaining employees. Who would have thought that being environmentally conscious could help you with this issue? But in fact, implementing sustainability tactics will help you both recruit and retain a stronger, happier workforce.

Just consider the following statistics:

- 51% of employees won't work for a company that doesn't have strong environmental commitments.<sup>1</sup>
- Among Generation Y employees, 96% are concerned about the environment and expect their employers to take steps towards becoming more sustainable.<sup>2</sup>
- 25% of employees say they will look for a new job if they discover their employer doesn't handle environmental issues well.<sup>3</sup>
- Almost 90% of employees engaged in their company's sustainability work say it enhances their job satisfaction and overall feelings about the company.<sup>4</sup>

Employee engagement, otherwise known as “total employee experience or TEE,” isn't just a challenge for big corporations; it's an issue facing mom-and-pop shops and all sizes in between too. Today, creating a workplace where employee engagement and satisfaction are high is essential for maintaining an effective team.

Engagement and satisfaction refer to the extent to which your employees feel passionate about their jobs, are committed to your company, and take their responsibilities seriously. Studies consistently show that the more engaged and satisfied your employees are, the more motivated they are to help your business succeed.

Knowing that sustainability is very important for today's employees, adopting environmentally-friendly practices as an employee engagement and satisfaction strategy makes sense.

“Employees who believe that management is concerned about them as a whole person – not just an employee – are more productive, more satisfied, more fulfilled. Satisfied employees mean satisfied customers, which leads to profitability.”

— Anne M. Mulcahy, Former CEO and Chairperson, Xerox

# Five tactics to increase TEE through sustainability:



## 1. Create a green team

Invite employees to develop a green team. What exactly does this team do? This group aims to build internal awareness of your efforts, educate other employees on important environmental issues, and provide opportunities for employees to brainstorm and give their sustainability ideas.

A "green team" is a great way to understand better what sustainability measures are most important to your staff. It's also a great way to get your entire staff on board with your environmental initiatives.

## 2. Make it easy for employees to be eco-friendly

The easier things are, the more likely people are to adopt them. Have recycling stations accessible and encourage their use. Sort and separate recyclables correctly (glass is almost always collected separately). Have eco-friendly products available for their use. From utensils to toilet paper — this is a super-easy thing to do and much more cost-effective than you think.

At a new employee orientation, teach employees about the company's environmental goals and why they matter — train employees on issues related to sustainability that are specific to their jobs, such as waste management. .



## 3. Reward sustainable thinking and actions

Allocate time and money to environmental and social initiatives. Give employees company time to participate in volunteer projects. Organize team-building events around activities such as beach cleanup day.

Encourage employees to figure out how they can make a difference and let them try out new ideas. Maybe one of them will volunteer to put together the first draft of the sustainability plan.

Give employees rewards and bonuses if they develop ways to be sustainable or take an eco-conscious action that goes beyond.

## 4. Make it local and real

Participating in local community initiatives provides a sense of relevance for those employees who may not jump immediately at the thought of sustainability. One could argue that after experiencing the successful involvement with community initiatives, those employees can better see tangible results and are more likely to participate.

Seeing and experiencing the connection between their personal lives and those of the company can get an employee excited about the company they work for and the results they achieve at the end of the day.



## 5. Include a section on sustainability in the employee handbook

When new employees come into a company, they are more likely to participate in the sustainability culture when they see it as part of their job/company description. Be sure to include a section in your handbook. Don't forget that VMA members get free access to Mineral, an HR portal that includes a customizable handbook builder.

Make sure to let employees and prospects know you care about their health and wellbeing, as well as the wellbeing of the environment. Communicate the message on your website, your job ads, your mission statement, and encourage it in reality.

<sup>1</sup> 2016 Cone Communications "Employee Engagement Study"

<sup>2</sup> Greener Ideals and Johnson Controls

<sup>3</sup> 2013 WattzOn Survey

<sup>4</sup> 2017 National Environmental Education Foundation "Winning in the Workplace Study"



## OFFSET YOUR PAPER FOOTPRINT WITH PRINTRELEAF

JENNY DELA CRUZ, COO & CO-FOUNDER, SNOWBALL PRINT MARKETING

One of the challenges with print work is the large impact it has on the environment. With sustainability becoming an increasingly important and a hot topic, this is also an opportunity for printers and creative agencies. But it's more than just saying you support the environment; impactful sustainability practices need to be carried out correctly and ethically. At Snowball Print Marketing, we have found that this is where PrintReleaf can help.

### How It Works

PrintReleaf is a certification system and software platform that empowers businesses to be sustainable and grow our global forestry system. They review paper use by project or client and calculate how many trees were harvested, equal to that consumption. With this information, it is possible to offset the impact of a print job.

### The Benefits of Offsetting

Small business owners need to make effective and efficient decisions. With PrintReleaf, you can offset paper use proportional to your impact both easily and economically. Plus, your clients

have the option to put the PrintReleaf certified mark on the printed pieces or share the Lifetime Impact Statement helping to show off their commitment to sustainability. An additional benefit of the program is the opportunity to choose the forest you want to support. We love to support local — And their newest offset option is close to home in Mendocino, CA!

As business owners, we are in a position to make a difference to our planet. At Snowball Print Marketing, we view this responsibility as the cost of doing business. And, VMA members can save 25% off on PrintReleaf!

Jenny Dela Cruz, COO & Co-Founder of Snowball Print Marketing AKA The Green Queen, Energizer Bunny, and genuine tree-hugger. Jenny brings over 15 years of print experience to the table. She is experienced in the many sides of print management and has a deep passion for sustainability. She holds a BA in Print Management from Rochester Institute of Technology and a Business Sustainability Management Certificate from CU Boulder. Jenny is an expert at focusing print and marketing solutions to protect natural resources. [snowballpm.com](http://snowballpm.com)



## SUSTAINABILITY IS IMPORTANT FOR EVERYONE

JEFF JARVIS, VICE PRESIDENT AND GENERAL MANAGER, KELLY SPICERS

In this age, sustainability should be an integral part of businesses, no matter your size. The reasons for this commitment are many — from the fact that we are all responsible for creating a healthy planet for future generations to the business case that customers on all parts of the business chain are starting not only to ask for it, but to demand it. As part of an industry that has a significant impact on the environment, it is important for us at Kelly Spicers to have an eco-conscious approach, and we encourage all businesses to do so.

### Get Earth-friendly Certified

One way for companies to be sustainable is to become certified through accredited sustainability programs. At Kelly Spicers, we are tri-certified for Forest Stewardship Council (FSC), Programme for the Endorsement of Forest Certification (PEFC), and Sustainable Forestry Initiative (SFI) chain of custody. We earned our FSC certifications in 2004 and have progressively added PEFC and SFI certifications. Start wherever you can and grow from there.

### Demand it From Your Vendors

Part of the reason for our sustainability efforts is that our customers want it. By showing our commitment to environmentally-friendly activities, products, and supplies, we provide what our customers want and what they can feel good about. Take on sustainability action within your company, but also make a choice to work with partners who are green-committed.

### Take an Active Role

It's important to make sustainability an intentional effort. Kelly Spicers regularly conducts in-depth analysis of our sustainable sourcing practices, including supplier visits, information exchange, and meetings with ENGOs. We improve our sourcing practices to ensure that our product portfolio only contains grades with fiber sourced from legal or well-managed forests.

### Trailblazer & Create a Competitive Advantage

At Kelly Spicers, we've seen the benefits of early adoption. Kelly Spicers was the first US-based merchant to offer to the market a 50% recycled (30% PCW) coated paper with FSC certification and continues to set the industry benchmark for high-quality, sustainable coated paper options. While more and more companies are prioritizing sustainability and using it to differentiate themselves, there's still space to stand out!

Jeff Jarvis is the Vice President and General Manager for Kelly Spicers in Northern California and has been with Kelly Spicers for over a decade and in the paper industry since 1980. Jarvis brings a collaborative approach to finding solutions and is always looking for ways Kelly Spicers can be easier to do business with. [kellyspicers.com](http://kellyspicers.com)





# Be a part of the solution!

*Discover how you can attain an environmentally sustainable wide format printing process.*

## Water-based Inks are a Big Step forward in Eco-Friendly Wide-format Printing

In the business world, going green is no longer trendy, it is an integral part of business planning, strategy, and competitive positioning. Companies are now viewing every business process through the lens of sustainability and printing is no exception.

## Printing Manufacturers are Getting Greener

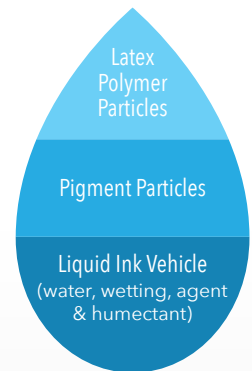
One area of printing technology that is becoming greener is the wide-format or large-format space. HP, our leading wide-format brand, has made huge strides in sustainability with the development of water-based inks. Traditional wide-format inks rely on an organic solvent that is listed as a Hazardous Air Pollutant (HAP) by the EPA. As much as 80% of traditional inks are made up of this solvent.

*HP as an organization is now recognized as one the most sustainable organizations in the world. For this reason and many others, RMC a UBEO company is proud to lead with the HP line of products in the wide-format printing space.*

## Sustainability as a Competitive Advantage

It is no longer enough to address sustainability in your own operations, but you must seek out partners that adhere to the same strategies. Due to the global nature of commerce and supply chains, customers often review the entire partner network before making a purchasing decision.

Your organization can use sustainability within your group and your partner network as a topic of pride to be promoted. Once viewed as trendy or as a novelty, sustainability is now a topic in many RFP's (request for proposal) for government, non-profit and for-profit purchasing groups. The lack of a sustainability plan can potentially disqualify your organization from an RFP process.



Water-based inks used in HP Latex products are made up primarily of water. Since the inks are primarily water-based, they avoid reactive chemical exposure which can result in ozone generation.

**TAKE THE NEXT STEP TOWARD ENVIRONMENTAL SUSTAINABILITY!**

**If you'd like to learn more about wide-format and many other sustainable printing solutions please contact:**

Tonya Hastings | [thastings@ubeo.com](mailto:thastings@ubeo.com) | 925.518.6111



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# Cyber Insurance with Cowbell Cyber

## Protect Your Business from Cyber Attacks Risk

Cyber attacks are growing in both frequency and severity, particularly against small businesses.

- Industry experts estimate that cybersecurity incidents will cost businesses over \$5 trillion within the next five years alone.<sup>1</sup>
- The average cost of a cyber attack has exploded from \$34,000 to just under \$200,000 per single incident.<sup>2</sup>
- The average downtime a company experiences after a ransomware attack is 21 days.<sup>2</sup>

The good news is using artificial intelligence can help balance exposure with appropriate coverage.<sup>2</sup>

VMA Insurance Services has partnered with Cowbell Insurance, an insurer of cyber risk that uses just this type of AI to protect small businesses!

Get peace of mind from cyber risk for as low as \$400/year for \$250,000 worth of coverage.<sup>3</sup>

Additionally, should a situation arise, cyber insurance can help your business recover quickly by bringing expert services to help you after a cyber attack.

<sup>1</sup> Hiscox's 2019 Cyber Readiness Report. <sup>2</sup> Cowbell Cyber. <sup>3</sup> Amount varies based on specifics

Contact Shannon at 415-710-0568 or [shannon@vma.bz](mailto:shannon@vma.bz) for more information to protect your business.

