P.o.P (POWER OF PRINT) SUMMIT '24
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CLASS NOTES
Paper & Print

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Promoting the Environmental Credentials of Paper and Print

Jonathan Tame

Managing Director, Two Sides

Jonathan Tame is Managing Director for the global Two Sides campaign, which promotes the sustainability and attractiveness of print, paper and paper packaging. He is also Managing Director of CarbonCO, a Carbon consultancy, running the successful Carbon Balanced Print and Paper programme for conservation charity World Land Trust.

With over 30 years experience in this sector working for paper manufactures, merchants and printers. Previously Head of Environment for PaperlinX merchants, and an advisor to the UK Government on sustainable procurement for print and paper.

"Print, Paper and Paper Packaging have a great environmental story to tell."

Jonothan Tame

Founded in 2008, Two Sides is a not-for-profit, global initiative promoting the unique sustainable and attractive attributes of print, paper and paper packaging.

The Two Sides campaign is a collaboration of companies from sectors including forestry, pulp and paper manufacturing, packaging, inks, pre-press, press, finishing, publishing, printing, envelopes and postal operators.

Two Sides operates throughout Europe, North America, South America, South Africa, Australia and New Zealand.

CONSUMER TRENDS

Research is important because we want to understand what consumers think. Two Sides research has been undertaken globally, to find out what consumers environmental perceptions are of our industry.

COVID did have an immediate impact on consumer reading preferences. But post pandemic, it has shown significant recovery with bills and statements. Consumers want the choice. They do not want to be pushed online and they understand that service providers are greenwashing and their primary reasons to move consumers to digital communications is to reduce costs.

Papers' perception has improved since the last survey, but environmentally, certainly within Europe, consumers remain concerned that forests in Europe are shrinking in size. It has improved, but we've got a lot of work to do and they do not understand the industry's great recycling rate. These are the things that we need to really focus on in our messages; our materials come from natural, renewable, sustainable forests and it can be easily recycled into new products.
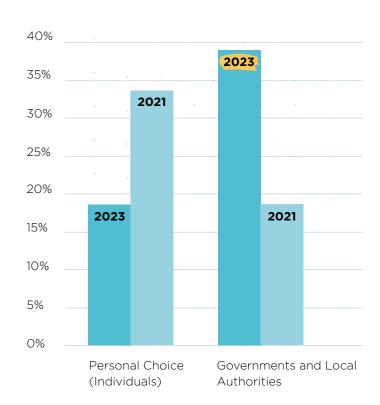
CONSUMERS -
PREFERENCES AND ATTITUDES

The print and paper industry is surrounded by myths, many of which are rooted in historical misconceptions about paper's impact on forests. For many years, service providers have reinforced these environmental myths in their efforts to move consumers to digital communications.

Common messages you might have seen include:

> Print is bad for environment.

> Paper destroys forests.

> Move to e-billing and save a tree.

> Digital communication is better for the environment.

> Think before you print!

The need to bust these myths and raise awareness of paper's sustainability is now more important than ever.

WHOSE RESPONSIBILITY IS IT TO REDUCE OUR USE OF SINGLE-USE NON-RECYCLABLE PACKAGING?

Growing awareness has been proven - consumers were asked to rank who they believe has the most responsibility for reducing the use of single-use non-recyclable packaging, 39% now believe that governments and local authorities are the most responsible. This is a big change from 2021, when consumers ranked the individual (your personal choices) as the most responsible at 33%.

CONSUMERS PREFER PAPER

76%
of consumers choose paper packaging because it is **Home Compostable.**

55%
of consumers choose paper packaging because it is **Better for the Environment.**

53%
of consumers choose paper packaging because it is **Lighter Weight.**

51%
of consumers choose paper packaging because it is **Less Expensive.**

49%
of consumers choose paper packaging because it is **Easier to Recycle.**

TACKLING NEGATIVE STATEMENTS -
PAPER AND PACKAGING / GREENWASHING

To date, Two Sides have engaged and changed the messages of 1,100 companies globally and these are some of the very biggest companies.

We've had a recent case with Adobe in Germany and throughout Europe where they were encouraging customers to use PDF, go paperless and help save the environment. Two sides had a number of meetings with Adobe. They agreed that it was an error on their behalf. Every piece of print that is outputted probably starts as a PDF or other electronic document but also, everyone within the sector, every printer is using Adobe as part of their packages. This was a senseless message that Adobe were pushing.

Brands are starting to realise that by cutting off print, by not using it, we're actually seeing sales decline.

58%
58% of consumers don't pay attention to ads online – up from 55% 2021 (compared to 42% who don't pay attention to ads received in the post).

63%
63% of consumers say they are either more likely to act when they see printed ads or are neutral on the issue, where 64% also trust print ads and direct mail.

A really good example in Europe was Boden who removed their catalogues and soon after published that it was an error. They realised they weren't connecting with their customers. There is nothing more powerful than a brand admitting they'd made an error, Boden are again increasing print of catalogues because it's a good and proven way to connect with customers. We need more case studies like this. As an industry, we are able to advocate and talk positively about the brands who use print and their success.

WHAT ADDITIONAL RESOURCES CAN I SHARE TO MY NETWORK?

1. Two Sides Myths and Fact Sheets
2. Insight Articles
3. Factographics and Mini Videos
4. Events and Training
5. Packaging Booklets
6. The Page - Publication
7. Research and infographics

Q: In Australia we've been running this campaign for 12 years now. Do we still need to do it?

A: I think it's more important than ever actually. I think sustainability is the number one thing for many brands. It certainly is for the paper and print sector within Europe. We are continually getting requests for help, for support, for difficult questions, because I think the industry more than ever is under enormous scrutiny. And that scrutiny is coming from brands. It's coming from agencies and marketing companies because all brands are under enormous pressures to be seen to be doing the right thing, both through their packaging choices but also to defend their use of direct mail, to defend their use of catalogues. I think we've got to be able to answer difficult questions and you know we don't live in a perfect world. What we do have to be able to do is to communicate the very sound environmental practises that our industry has introduced and continues to develop. It is critical more than ever for us to continue with this Two Sides campaign and make sure that all within our industry are armed with the facts to be able to have proper truthful robust conversations with brands, stakeholders, anyone who is questioning why print and paper are the sustainable choice.

Q: How do you recommend some of our printer sales teams can really tap into what the big guys are doing to their mid-tier customers?

A: I think what we've seen certainly throughout Europe in the UK, particularly Germany and France is that it's not just the largest companies now who are demanding attention to resource efficiency, to management of CO_2 emissions. And I think as printers, we the industry, need to be able to talk in an informative way to help customers reduce their impacts and in a way that can help show what those reductions are. Being able to have educated conversations with end users about their choices of pagination, of sizes and to be as efficient as they possibly can.

We shouldn't just always think about the retailers, we shouldn't always think about the biggest brands. Certainly, our experiences are within Europe that all companies now, all midsize companies, are really trying to address their environmental impacts. And we almost need to move into an advisory role where we're front footed, where we can say to organisations we can help you manage, we can help you reduce your impact and come up with some new clever ways for them to not just be able to do this but for the them to be able to report it as well.

Q: Is the fibre based or paper packaging discussion more readily understood or are you finding that this is just as challenging as when we sort of started with graphic coms papers?

A: To talk about the sustainability of fibre based packaging is, is really important. Paper is seen as the environmental solution but there are still worrying questions being asked. Does paper based packaging and the huge rise in paper based packaging, particularly in ecommerce, is this bringing unsustainable pressures on forest resources? With the global demand for wood, is it creating a problem of monoculture? These are all questions but an industry we don't need to just answer now today, but we're really going to need to be able to answer in the future. We're seeing a really quick shift certainly in Europe from many plastic products to paper-based packaging. Brands are only going to do this if they're really confident and they can be absolutely sure of the long term sustainable benefits. I would say for the packaging producers actually to size using these messages, using the messages to help explain the sustainable nature of paper, I think this is really, really important. I think the time is here and now, there is a great opportunity. There is definitely an anti-plastic sentiment, but the paper industry really needs to focus on making sure that we can answer those questions about why paper is the sustainable choice and to be able to answer robustly.
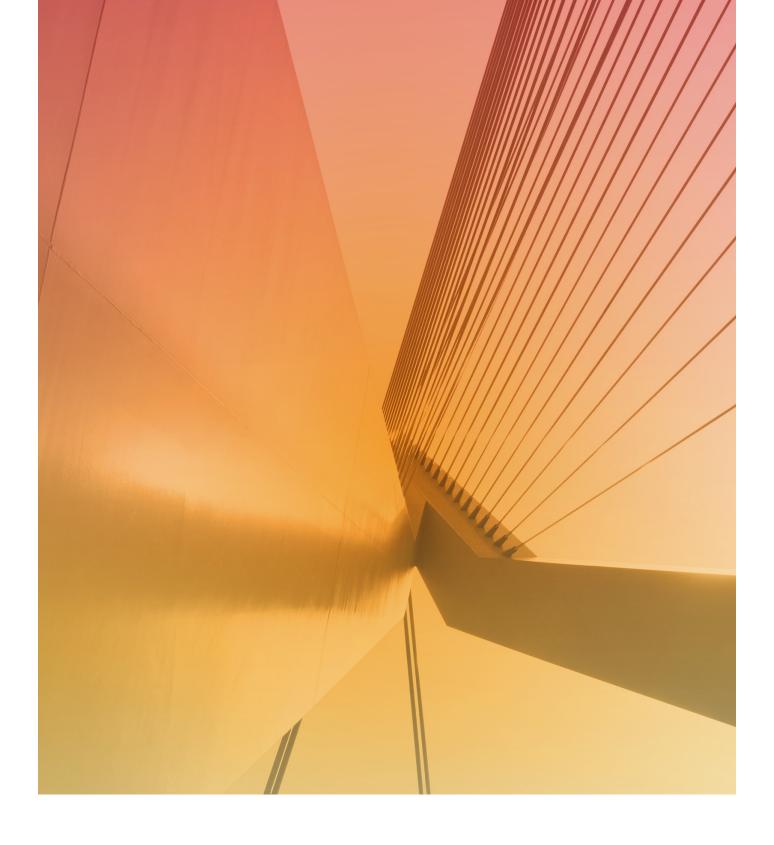
NOTES

Reach out!

For more information and to use TwoSides resources and to support the campaign:

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Q&A

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