



# Hemlock's Top Five Questions that you should ask your printer

Here is a list of the top five questions that you can ask your printer to ensure that you are procuring an environmentally sensitive print project.

If the answer to any of these questions is “No”, make sure you ask “Why not?” Consumer demand for environmentally responsible printing is on the rise. By challenging your printer/agency to be more environmentally conscious, you can create an even greater shift in the industry.

## (1) Is the printer Forest Stewardship Council (FSC) Chain-of-Custody certified?

The Forest Stewardship Council (FSC) is an international non-profit organization founded in 1993. FSC supports the environmental appropriate, socially beneficial and economically viable management of the world's forests.

Chain-of-Custody means that every entity that touches the FSC certified product, from the logger to the printer, has been audited to the FSC certification standards. Only projects printed on FSC certified papers, at an FSC certified printer are eligible to carry the FSC trademark logo. Ask the printer to supply their certificate number and a copy of their certificate.

## (2) Will they provide environmentally responsible paper options?

There are many environmentally responsible paper options to choose from. Today's recycled papers print beautifully and are available at a range of prices. Consider the following aspects when selecting your paper:

- Does the paper contain recycled content?
- Is the paper FSC certified?
- Is the paper bleached using a chlorine-free process?
- Is the paper made using alternative energy sources like wind or biomass energy?

## (3) Will they provide you with an *EcoAudit* for your print project?

An *EcoAudit* is a statement of the environmental savings realized by using an environmentally responsible paper. It provides tangible numbers that consumers can relate to, such as the number of trees saved or the amount of energy reduced.

The *EcoAudit* calculator was developed by *The Environmental Defence Fund*. If your printer won't provide you with an *EcoAudit*, you can calculate your own at [www.papercalculator.org](http://www.papercalculator.org) – all you need is the weight of the paper required for your project.

## (4) Does the printer use vegetable-based inks and alcohol-free fountain solution?

Vegetable-based inks are much better for the environment than petroleum-based inks because they emit low VOC's, are biodegradable and are made from renewable resources such as soy and linseed oils.

Using harmful isopropyl alcohol in press dampening systems is a thing of the past, yet many printers still continue to use this hazardous chemical in their processes. Make sure that your printer is using an alcohol-free fountain solution.

## (5) Does the printer have a formal environmental policy?

Ensure that the printer has a formal policy and documented standards for their recycling programs, their handling of consumables and for their emissions and resource consumption.