

Creating a sustainable future at LTD

At LTD we love a challenge, and live by the mantra 'We'll find a way'. Our reputation-based success has been built on a willingness to always search for a better way of doing things, achieving stunning graphic installations for clients even when the odds are against us. We are putting this same positive energy into the challenge of becoming more responsible.

Measures to promote sustainability

Because the printing industry uses chemicals in its materials and processes, it has a significant impact on the environment. At LTD we're aware that we need to lessen the impact of the materials and processes we use, so we're not just looking at ways to reduce our day-to-day consumption of energy and resources, we're also putting every aspect of how we print and produce work under the microscope.

Industry-specific measures

Armed with a proper understanding of what's involved in the materials and processes used in our industry, we're able to make better, more conscious purchasing and process decisions – it also becomes easier to get our heads around the proper disposal of waste materials. We already steer clear of materials that use solvents, and are working closely with suppliers such as Epson and Mimaki to build our understanding of how to dispose of, re-use or recycle their materials.

We're learning as we go, and are aware that we'll sometimes need to reappraise things or seek expert help and advice on how to proceed. We want to be open not just about what we're doing but also about the process behind it, including how we tackle issues and deal with setbacks. Towards the end of 2013, for instance, we initiated an environmental review, and when we received the results were surprised to discover just how much more we could be doing.

We are now putting measures in place to raise our sustainability standards across the board. This is the first stage in the development and implementation of an ISO 14001 Environmental Management System, which has so far involved:

- Moving away from using heavy solvent inks
- Limiting the VOCs (volatile organic compounds) used in inks as these use solvents as a carrier
- Working with companies like Epsom, 3M, Avery, Converd, Amari Digital and Paper Graphics to ensure the materials we use are as eco-friendly as possible
- Dealing with these companies and testing new ideas in order to find alternatives to PVCs and plastic-based materials
- Using cotton-based paper for wall coverings
- Experimenting with 100% recycled rigid boards for mounting services.

Day-to-day measures

Alongside industry-specific measures, we are taking other steps to reduce our consumption of energy and resources. These include using tablets for note taking, in order to use less paper; switching to energy efficient lighting; and using local suppliers wherever possible to reduce transport miles (buying in bulk and holding bigger stocks in our office when we do need to use suppliers from outside London).

Gaining buy-in from staff, suppliers and the wider community

For LTD, being sustainable is an ongoing process and not a quick fix. We don't want responsibility to be a box-ticking exercise, and believe that it's important to share what we're doing, involve others and invite them to be a part of it.

We want all our staff to understand and be enthusiastic about what we're trying to achieve, so we conduct in-house training and make departmental presentations that explain the reasons behind changes in our choice of products and processes. We also encourage staff to put forward their own ideas on reducing consumption and limiting waste, and to make this a part of their everyday lives both at work and at home. It helps that we've cultivated a warm, open culture, as everyone feels they can add value and will be rewarded for trying to find the best way of doing things, not just in client projects, but also in our approach to sustainability and responsibility – something we're committed to becoming better at.

We check the ethos of our suppliers, and if we find that they're not yet working in a sustainable way, we share our knowledge and invite them to become a part of what we're practising at LTD.

Education

At LTD we believe that if you've had any kind of success, you have a duty to add back into the education system. We want to help tee-up young people for the future, and are committed to giving as much back as we can.

We became involved in education organically, as a result of employees, friends and acquaintances asking us about work placements. It turned out that we had a natural ability to connect with and get the best from young people, so joining an official scheme seemed the logical next step.

In fact, we ended up joining two schemes: local charity Inspire!, an education / business partnership in support of young people in Hackney, Camden & Islington; and PrintIT, a national print industry programme for young people.

As a result, we're now twinned with five local schools: Mossbourne Community Academy, Haggerston School, Newstead Wood Girls School, Norlington School for Boys and Haverstock School, and in 2013, we were proud to receive Twinner of the Year Award.

Our involvement with education includes:

- Offering work placement opportunities
- Donating leftover materials for art projects
- Providing printing free of charge
- Making presentations to the schools on aspects of our business ranging from production workflow to colour management, materials to standards.
- Supporting and mentoring students participating in PrintIT's national competition, which highlights fair trade and sustainability, as well as in projects such as a mini-Dragon's Den, which inspires them to think independently.

In this way, we hope to not only give young people an idea of the range of opportunities that exist within this high-tech sector, but also to help them understand what the world of work entails, give them an insight into how a business such as LTD operates, and actively engage them in issues of responsibility and sustainability.

Our 2015 Goals

Sustainability needs to be understood before it can become a way of life, so we'll continue with the ongoing process of educating ourselves, our team and our suppliers, in order to make ongoing, incremental improvements to our way of doing things.

We find our involvement in education rejuvenating, and are working with both Inspire! and PrintIT to develop exciting new student activities. We will also endeavour to reach out to the wider community in 2015, sharing what we're learning as we attempt to make our business more sustainable.

Carbon offsetting is a key way for those who work in industries with a significant environmental impact to balance out a proportion of their carbon emissions. We already offset certain parts of the business through Myclimate, which develops and supports projects around the world that directly reduce greenhouse gasses to the highest standards (CDM, Gold Standard and Plan Vivo), and one of our objectives for 2015 is to increase such offsetting activities, including a tree-planting scheme both in the UK and abroad.

Our ethos

Your reputation runs ahead of you to tell people what they can expect of you, and hangs around after you've gone to tell people what you were like. We are committed to safeguarding our reputation by acting responsibly – with the long-term aim of leaving the world a better place than it was when we found it.

If you have any comments or advice on any aspect of our responsibility endeavours, we would love to hear from you. **Please contact Seymour Reeves at seymour.reeves@ltd.ltd.com.**