



RECYCLED FIBER

When consumers look for sensitivity to the environment, using recycled fiber is often the most recognizable change a company makes to a product, project or packaging. A common belief is that the sole purpose of using recycled fiber is to save trees.

Although recycled fiber does indeed offset virgin fiber content, it's important to remember that forests are a renewable resource. Recycled fiber's biggest contribution is really in diverting waste from landfills.

How Is Fiber Recycled?

Office wastepaper is purchased from numerous sources, then baled and shipped to a reclaimed fiber supplier's facility.

There, the bales are graded and sorted according to quality, and are pulped (mixed with water to separate the contaminants and fibers), and moved through a series of screens to remove such items as paper clips, staples, plastics, and rubber bands. Finer screening removes smaller particles like dirt and toner.

Next, the pulp is put through a flotation process where the stock is "frothed" using air and a surfactant (soap). Any remaining dirt and toner floats off with the bubbles.

This washing removes ash, filler, fines, and small ink particles. Typically, the pulp is bleached for brightening using a process chlorine-free (PCF) system that utilizes hydrogen peroxide and sodium hydrosulfite. Both process chlorine-free.



More Recycled Fiber Isn't Always Better

High-quality virgin fiber makes paper smoother, stronger, and more stable. Smoothness is important for holding a sharp dot and achieving maximum effect when printing. It also allows solid coverage areas, varnishes, and coatings to lay flat and even.

Strength is important for dimensional stability on press, which is critical to registration and holding up to bindery operations and repetitive uses.

Using FSC-certified virgin fiber and renewable energy can serve as an alternative to recycled content — or, when ideal, to enhance the environmental savings of a recycled sheet.