

FSC Survey

The Environmental Practices and Preferences of Paper Purchasers



The Forest Stewardship Council (FSC) is an international, independently audited certification and labeling system that allows buyers to choose paper and wood products that come from responsibly managed forests, and verified recycled sources. Under FSC certification, forests are certified against a set of strict environmental and social standards, and fibre from certified forests is tracked all the way to the consumer through the Chain of Custody certification system. The FSC 'check-tree' logo is your guarantee that the products you buy are responsibly sourced. See more: www.fsccanada.org

In October/November 2008, FSC Canada launched an online survey to determine the 'Environmental Practices and Preferences of Paper Purchasers'. The response rate to the survey was an impressive 20%, with 385 respondents in total. Of these respondents, 45% identified themselves as graphic designers, 40% as Managers and paper/print buyers, and 15% as employees of paper manufacturers, paper merchants or printers. Please find below a summary of key results from the survey.

Key Survey Results

Paper Buyers and/or Specifiers care about the Environment

- 73% of respondents are very concerned about the state of our environment. If you include respondents that are somewhat concerned and very concerned, this number goes up to 99%.
- 21% of respondents rated themselves as 'very knowledgeable' about environmental issues.
- The following environmental issues were identified as very important:
 - Decreasing quantity and/or quality of fresh water stores (76%)
 - Air pollution (73%)
 - Forest degradation (70%)
 - Waste Production (69%)
 - Climate Change (68%)
 - Loss of biodiversity (65%)
 - Natural resource exploitation (64%)

Paper Buyers and/or Specifiers will pay more for products with environmental features

- 48% of respondents said they are very likely to consider the environmental impact of a product prior to purchasing. If you include respondents that are somewhat likely and very likely, this number goes up to 97%
- 90% of respondents would choose a product with a lighter environmental footprint, if price is equal.
- 65% of respondents would pay a price premium for a product with a lighter environmental footprint.
- 39% of respondents would pay a premium in the range of 3-5%, 24% would pay a premium of 1-2% only.

Paper Buyers and/or Specifiers identify FSC certification of the paper as very important to their purchasing decision.

- 60% of respondents said FSC-certified paper was a very important environmental quality to their purchasing decision. If you include respondents that thought it was somewhat important and very important, this number goes to 94%.
- Of all of the environmental qualities listed, 60% of all participants identified FSC-certified as the most important.
- The following percentages of respondents identified these paper qualities as very important to their purchasing decision:
 - FSC-certified (60%)
 - Post-consumer recycled content (47%)
 - Recycled content (pre or post consumer) (42%)

- Chlorine Free (ECF, PCF or TCF) (36%)
- Geographic location of manufacturing facility (28%)
- Renewable energy use (e.g. biomass, wind energy) (26%)
- SFI-certified (12%)
- PEFC-certified (11%)

A majority of Paper Buyers and/or Specifiers have specified an FSC-certified Paper and Printer

- 85% of respondents have specified an FSC-certified paper
- 78% of respondents have specified an FSC-certified paper and an FSC-certified printer
- 27% of respondents have specified an FSC-certified paper and an FSC-certified printer for 74-100% of their print jobs.

Paper Buyers and/or Specifiers choose FSC certification because they believe FSC is the most responsible choice, because it is part of their company's procurement strategy, and because of the brand value FSC brings.

- 72% of respondents said they choose to print on FSC-certified paper and with an FSC-certified printer because they believe FSC is the most responsible paper choice.
- 51% of respondents said they choose to print on FSC-certified paper and with an FSC-certified printer because FSC is part of their company's procurement strategy or mandate.
- 50% of respondents said they choose to print on FSC-certified paper and with an FSC-certified printer because of the brand value of having the FSC logo on the printed piece.

Paper Buyers and/or Specifiers did NOT choose FSC-certified paper and printing because it was going to cost more and/or the printer and paper were not available as FSC-certified.

- 26% of respondents said the reason for not choosing an FSC-certified paper and printer was very frequently because the paper was going to cost more.
- 19% of respondents said the reason for not choosing an FSC-certified paper and printer was very frequently because the printer was not FSC-certified
- 19% of respondents said the reason for not choosing an FSC-certified paper and printer was very frequently because the paper was not FSC-certified
- 39% of respondents said the reason for not choosing an FSC-certified paper and printer was infrequently because they had not asked for it.

Paper Buyers and/or Specifiers work for companies with environmental paper procurement policies.

- 55% of respondents said their company has in place an environmental paper procurement policy
- 38% of respondents said their company's environmental paper procurement policy specifies the use of FSC-certified paper

Paper Buyers and/or Specifiers work for companies that use FSC-certified paper to promote themselves.

- 60% of respondents said their company's promotional materials are printed on FSC-certified paper.
- 40% of respondents said their business cards are printed on FSC-certified paper
- 46% of respondents said their company's promotional materials carry an FSC Label.

Paper Buyers and/or Specifiers encourage clients to consider the environmental impact of their paper and print choices, and to choose FSC.

- 91% of respondents encourage clients to consider the environmental impact of their paper and print choices.
- 86% of respondents encourage their clients to choose FSC-certified paper and print services.
- 77% of respondents encourage their clients to use the FSC Label on printed documents.
- 75% of respondents said their clients care about the environmental impact of their paper and printing.
- 49% of respondents said their clients ask for FSC-certified paper and print services.

Paper Buyers and/or Specifiers are interested in joining FSC Professional Membership or Supporters program that provides access to education materials and resources, updates on FSC and a social network of like-minded individuals and experts.

- 52% of respondents said they would be very interested in becoming a Professional Member or Supporter of FSC. If you include those that are somewhat interested and very interested, the number increases to 88%.
- The following percentages of respondents identified the following features of a Professional Member or Supporter program as very important:
 - 64% of respondents said access to educational materials about environmental issues related to paper and printing is very important. If you include respondents that are somewhat interested and very interested, the number increases to 96%.
 - 60% of respondents said access to educational materials about FSC certification is very important. If you include respondents that are somewhat interested and very interested, the number increases to 95%.
 - 56% of respondents said receiving updates on FSC products and services is very important. If you include respondents that are somewhat interested and very interested, the number increases to 94%.
 - 55% of respondents said being able to promote themselves to clients and colleagues as an FSC Professional Member or Supporter is very important. If you include respondents that are somewhat interested and very interested, the number increases to 91%.
 - 50% of respondents said access to resources such as webinars, fact sheets and marketing materials is very important. If you include respondents that are somewhat interested and very interested, the number increases to 93%.
 - 43% of respondents said the ability to interact with like-minded professionals and topical experts is very important. If you include respondents that are somewhat interested and very interested, the number increases to 92%.
 - 42% of respondents said being listed on the FSC website as a Professional Member or Supporter is very important. If you include respondents that are somewhat interested and very interested, the number increases to 85%.

For more information on the Forest Stewardship Council (FSC) please visit www.fscscanada.org or contact FSC Canada at info@fscscanada.org, T: 416-778-5568 x26.