

Case Study: ES

Recycled paper cuts the cost of colour supplement



'No advertising revenue has been lost as a result of switching to recycled stock'

ES is a glossy lifestyle magazine distributed with the Friday edition of the London Evening Standard newspaper. Published by Associated Newspapers Ltd, its wide-ranging content, focusing on fashion, beauty, food, travel, shopping and celebrity news, includes many high-quality, often artistic photographs. Some of these accompany editorial text, while others are integral to the magazine's advertising content. Each edition of ES has a print run of over 300,000.

Key Facts

- The inside pages of the London Evening Standard's colour supplement ES are produced on paper made entirely from recovered fibre.
- Introducing recycled paper has enabled the publisher to achieve valuable cost savings.
- Using this paper has not caused production delays or any significant printing problems.
- Since making the switch from virgin stock, no critical comments have been received from readers of the magazine.

This full-colour supplement is printed, to a tight weekly schedule, using a heatset web offset (HSWO) process. For the last four years, all inside pages have been produced on 65gsm paper made from 100% recovered fibre. The cover is printed on 100gsm coated wood-free paper derived from responsibly managed forests certified in accordance with Forest Stewardship Council (FSC) criteria.

Maintaining the overall quality of ES is critically important, both to the magazine's publisher and to those who buy advertising space in the publication. The adverts primarily target affluent readers and so generally promote premium-grade products.

Motivation to 'go recycled'

When first published, ES was printed entirely on lightweight coated plus (LWC+) paper made from 100% virgin fibre. The main motivation to discontinue use of this stock was a commercial one, based on purely economic considerations. The publisher wanted to make reductions in the cost of the magazine's production and switching to a different grade paper was an obvious way of achieving this goal.

“Everyone involved in producing ES has been very satisfied with the outcome”

Dr Rick Stunt,
Harmsworth Quays Ltd

At the outset of the process, identifying a recycled-content paper to replace the original stock was not a specific objective. However, in assessing the different options available, it became clear that 65gsm Leipa paper – an LWC stock with 100% recycled content – would be fit-for-purpose for producing the magazine’s inside pages.

Associated Newspapers also uses recycled-content paper for some of its other publications. These include the Mail on Sunday’s Live supplement (which used to be called Night & Day), now printed on either 72% or 100% 52gsm recycled-content paper.

The process involved

After carefully evaluating the options, the Managing Director of the Evening Standard took the decision to switch the inside pages of ES to the Leipa recycled paper. Although the magazine’s editor naturally had reservations, this decision was recognised as a necessary compromise consistent with the wider requirement to produce the magazine more cost-effectively.

At Associated Newspapers, all such changes from one type of paper to another are subject to a costings approval process. The company’s policy is that any change of this kind must have a cost benefit, as well as an additional advantage. In the case of ES, the switch would enable a real cost reduction plus an environmental benefit to be achieved, so the Managing Director’s decision was approved.

For each issue of the supplement, Associated Newspapers purchases the 100% recycled paper and supplies it, on a just-in-time basis, to Polestar Colchester, the company that has been responsible for printing ES for over two years. Since going recycled, the magazine has continued to be produced in complete accordance with the demanding weekly schedule, with printing taking place on Monday, binding on Tuesday and delivery to Associated Newspapers on Wednesday. There have been no problems with paper supply.

Results and perceptions

In terms of production, the use of 100% recycled paper has not caused any major difficulties. Waste levels are not noticeably different from using any other stock, while ‘runnability’ and ‘foldability’ are good and no change in normal running speeds is required. In addition, ink-drying has not posed any problems and there has been no alteration in ink demand. More fount solution and (occasionally) an extra blanket wash are needed but, overall, the only significant issue

that has had to be addressed has been the particularly tight ink tolerances required by Associated Newspapers. Achieving this is a challenge due to an apparent inconsistency in the recycled paper.

In terms of quality, the recycled paper has had a marginal impact on the appearance of the printed magazine. However, the decrease in quality has not proved to be very significant. It is possible to detect a ‘barring’ or ripple effect in the printed paper (largely due to ink weight and high paper coverage). This occurs with many HSWO-printed papers but appears to be slightly more obvious when using recycled stocks.

The switch from virgin to recycled paper has attracted little comment from advertisers, who have continued to provide good support for ES. Initially, some advertisers observed that the recycled paper was less bright and less white than the paper it replaced, but no advertising revenue has been compromised.

Although ES regularly receives reader feedback, no criticisms have been made regarding the paper that the magazine is now printed on. This suggests that the 100% recycled-content stock is perfectly acceptable to this publication’s audience and is well-suited to ES’s position in the market place.

In terms of cost, a real reduction has been achieved by moving to recycled paper. This paper is bought at the normal market rate, with no special discounts in place.

Conclusions

Associated Newspapers is very satisfied with the outcome of its decision to print the inside pages of ES on an appropriate paper made entirely from recovered fibre. The company fully expects to continue producing the magazine on a recycled-content paper in the future.

Summary

Switching to 100% recycled paper has enabled the publisher to achieve valuable cost savings, while not causing any significant change to the magazine’s overall appearance.

“We’ve found that the best approach to using recycled paper is to treat it like any other job”

Craig Allen,
Polestar Colchester



The printer's experience of recycled papers

Polestar Colchester produces ES magazine at one of its HSWO plants which is equipped with four 32-page presses (MAN Rotoman and Polyman machines), a Goss Sunday 4000 press and a Heidelberg eight-page mini-web press.

The company finds that, in general, the most effective approach to using recycled-content paper is to treat it as 'just another job' and to apply usual in-house procedures. Other jobs for which Polestar Colchester uses recycled stock include Lewisham Council's monthly magazine Lewisham Life (125,000 print run).

In the press operators' experience, recycled papers are weaker than virgin grades and this requires particular attention to in-feed tension and web tension through the machine. More fount solution is also often needed. With some recycled stocks (although not with the paper used on ES), Polestar has found a modest increase in ink to be necessary in order to overcome a tendency to linting. Inconsistency is not generally a problem with recycled papers.

For more information contact:

Dr Rick Stunt
Group Paper Director
Harmsworth Quays
Ltd (part of Associated
Newspapers Ltd)
1 Surrey Quays Road
London SE16 7ND
Call: 0207 6347804
E-mail:
Rick.stunt@hqp.co.uk

Craig Allen
Pressroom Manager
Polestar Colchester
Newcomen Way
Severalls Industrial Park
Colchester
Essex CO4 9TG
E-mail: Craig.allen@
polestar-group.com

David Mears
Purchasing Director
Southernprint Ltd
17-21 Factory Road
Upton Industrial Estate
Poole
Dorset BH16 5SN
E-mail: david.mears@
southernprint.co.uk

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Waste & Resources Action Programme

The Old Academy
21 Horse Fair
Banbury, Oxon
OX16 0AH

Tel: 01295 819900
Fax: 01295 819911
E-mail: info@wrap.org.uk

Helpline freephone
0808 1002040

www.wrap.org.uk/manufacturing