

## Why print on paper is *the* sustainable choice for brands

By Erwin Busselot, Director Business Innovation & Solutions, Ricoh Graphic Communications, [Ricoh Europe](#)

**Ricoh Europe, London, June 27 2025** – The European Commission’s Clean Industrial Deal (CID) policy package has pledged over €100 billion in support for innovation and decarbonisation to help Europe’s energy intensive sectors transition to climate neutrality, while remaining competitive. Paper is one of those industries.

This comes at a time where marketers still underestimate the verified sustainability of print.

Just 16% of European consumers appreciate that European forests are increasing, according to the latest [Two Sides](#) Trend Tracker Survey that checks perceptions about paper and its sustainability, and how these have shifted. The research includes insights from 12,400 consumers from Europe, including Austria, Belgium, Denmark, Finland, France, Germany, Italy, Norway, Sweden, and Great Britain, as well as Argentina, Australia, Brazil, Canada, New Zealand, South Africa, and the USA.

Only 56% of respondents now believe that European forests are shrinking, compared to 60% two years ago. Just 25% of those questioned from Europe understand that recovery and recycling rates are above 60%.

More hearteningly three quarters believe paper to be the most biodegradable material of packaging materials, 53% said paper and cardboard are better for the environment and 51% found paper is easier to recycle than plastic, metal, or glass.

The reality is paper recycling rates in Europe now average 71% to 73%, with packaging paper exceeding 80%. Carbon emissions from European mills are down nearly 46% since 2005. Over half of mill energy comes from renewable sources and most fibre is now certified sustainable, with over 70% of European forests certified under FSC or PEFC.

These figures were shared by Marco Eikelenboom, CEO of Sappi Europe and Chair of the Confederation of European Paper Industries (CEPI), in this [Print Power](#) article.

He stated that, when done right, print can outperform digital in both sustainability and engagement. It delivers on its:

**Comparative footprint.** While digital platforms are typically presented as a 'green' option, their energy consumption - especially from data centres, streaming, and device manufacture - is frequently ignored. From a full life cycle perspective, digital can carry [significant emissions](#). Chat GPT also has an [impact](#) as recent figures show. Print, especially when sourced responsibly and used efficiently, such as for digital on demand work, can be a lower impact choice.

**Traceability and verifiability.** These qualities are increasingly required in ESG driven marketing. Print can provide third party verified Life Cycle Analyses, carbon footprint data, and certified sourcing. How energy is used forms part of a company's ESG report which in turn directly shapes business decisions and affects assessments such as for business loans or financing deals from banks.

**Provability.** Print has become a circular, renewable channel. Paper in Europe is often FSC- or PEFC-certified, over 70% is recycled, and more than half the energy used in production comes from renewable biomass. All of which allows marketers to build credible low carbon campaigns.

**Greater targeting of print.** Waste can be reduced by swapping mass mailouts and inserts for tools such as programmatic direct mail. Data can be honed to create highly personalised, relevant communication that connects as I shared [here](#).

**Engagement.** Unlike relentless doom scrolling, we can pause with print. Texture and weight provide a physicality that commands attention and builds trust. It engenders an emotional resonance that is incredibly valuable for brands. This something I discussed [here](#).

**Impact.** Print often achieves higher recall, stronger brand trust, and longer dwell time than digital ads which is something I touched on [here](#). As it is often shared and discussed, it spends time in the home before being recycled. When used as part of a hybrid campaign – and each channel deployed for what it does best - print doesn't compete, it enhances.

Print is both sustainable and effective.

Its reinvention as a viable, verifiable part of any climate conscious communication strategy is supported by measurable sustainability data, elevated by policy inclusion, and enhanced by technological innovation.

It gets results, builds trust, and supports ESG goals. The latter is something we at Ricoh have been focusing on as part of our SDG month. Want to learn more? Get in touch.

## | About Ricoh |

Ricoh is a leading provider of integrated digital services and print and imaging solutions designed to support digital transformation of workplaces, workspaces and optimise business performance.

Headquartered in Tokyo, Ricoh's global operation reaches customers in approximately 200 countries and regions, supported by cultivated knowledge, technologies, and organisational capabilities nurtured over its 85-year history. In the financial year ended March 2025, Ricoh Group had worldwide sales of 2,527 billion yen (approx. 16.8 billion USD).

It is Ricoh's mission and vision to empower individuals to find Fulfillment through Work by understanding and transforming how people work so we can unleash their potential and creativity to realise a sustainable future.

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