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Eco-friendly marketing communications

By Mary Gospe

Companies across the globe are adopting environmentally-friendly business practices to address growing concern over global warming. Here are a few suggestions for lessening the impact of marketing communications programs on the environment:

Shift more of your marketing mix to online communications & events

- Use email and eNewsletters to communicate with prospects and customers versus mailing printed materials
- Generate leads with Search Engine Optimization (SEO), Pay-per-click (PPC) ads, banner ads and email
- Provide collateral and offers such as white papers in PDF format for viewing on screen; use Flash demos and online videos to showcase your products and services

For printed materials:

- Avoid printing large quantities of collateral or other material that goes out of date quickly. Instead, leverage digital printing to “print-on-demand” the quantity you need, when you need it.
- Print on both sides of 100% recycled, post-consumer waste paper and use soy or vegetable-based inks
- If sending direct mail, adopt one-to-one, personalized marketing practices to send relevant messages and offers to specific segments rather than generic mass mailings. Increase deliverability by cleansing your list with National Change of Address (NCOA) and Coding Accuracy Support System (CASS) certification to ensure correct zip codes and rural routes; remove returned mail addresses from your database.
- Save on paper, printing costs and postage by sending a self-mailer or postcard rather than a letter with envelope and inserts.

In-person events:

- Choose a destination with minimal travel requirements
- Choose a venue within walking distance of hotels and mass transit options
- Choose venues that recycle, use non-toxic cleansers, and provide organic and/or sustainable food
- Publish handouts online
- Recycle signage, badges and badge holders
- Give out reusable water and/or coffee containers
- Use biodegradable cups, plates and other materials

There are many things we can do day-to-day to lessen our impact on the environment. Use paperless technology whenever possible, be selective when choosing event sites and venues, and remember the 3 R's: reduce, reuse, and recycle.