

Northern Arizona University Printing Services

Communitas Awards: Excellence in Corporate Social Responsibility; Ethical and Environmental Responsibility; 7.2 Green Initiatives

Our Environmental Direction at Printing Services

We have a huge opportunity to influence the ecological impact of not only our department, but of the entire university. We continually review and adapt our processes to reflect our care and stewardship of the environment – from the initial ordering process to the delivery of on-campus orders and beyond. We practice the following initiatives of note:

- Prioritization of sustainability while selecting and implementing print technology
- "Go Green" alternatives for many of our products
- Electric Delivery Bicycle to reduce delivery van carbon impact
- Print Vendor Sustainability Commitments

Description

-Prioritization of sustainability while selecting and implementing print technology.

Our most recent and significant green initiative is the purchase of the efi 16H UV flatbed printer. The implementation of the new printer is contingent on the installation of a Smart Fog system to humidify the shop to meet production equipment standards. Once in operation the flatbed printer will give us significant flexibility in continuing to provide sustainable options for the campus community and intergovernmental customers. This device will allow us to print directly on substrates with UV inks, therefore eliminating the process of printing on adhesive vinyl, and mounting to materials. We continue to pursue our goals of creating biodegradable indoor signage while also significantly reducing consumables and labors costs for standard rigid signage products. We can insource more projects and create additional job and internship opportunities to NAU students.



NAU Printing Services currently outsources approximately 3500 square feet per year of signage which is printed direct to substrate by a vendor and delivered via FedEx or UPS Ground. By implementing this device, we will be able to insource this printing. This will reduce the carbon impact from routine parcel delivery services and allows us to offer the more sustainable paper-based options which are not available through our vendors.

We currently produce in-house approximately 1800 square feet per year in mounted products. These mounted materials include 3/16" foam core board, corrugated plastic, styrene and 1/2" foam core board. Our current process requires us to print on an adhesive PVC based material which is then mounted onto the various rigid boards. The hybrid flatbed printer will allow us to print directly onto the board, eliminating the print and mount process. The direct printing method will reduce labor time by ~50% and eliminate 1800+ square feet per year of waste vinyl that is typically one time use and ends up in the landfill because PVC cannot be recycled.

The hybrid flatbed printer will allow us to expand our indoor and outdoor rigid board offerings and create a "Go Green" line of signs made from paper-based materials. This gives campus buyers the option to choose paper based biodegradable signs instead of plastic and PVC based, significantly reducing the impact of plastic-based temporary signs that end up in the landfill – with a potential to divert 5300 sq/ft per year.

-Go Green

The "Go Green" print product family encompasses sustainable alternatives for commonly ordered products. Generally, it's categorized into two printable material types: paper and plastic. Our in-plant digital production area now carries 100% Post-Consumer Waste alternatives as a standard inventory item. This means we can offer 100% recycled options for commonly ordered products such as Business Cards, Letterhead, Posters, and many more. The most recent additions to the Go Green line of products are Recycled Matte Labels and 100% PCW Envelopes. Furthermore, the Large Format production department carries non-PVC based adhesive vinyl options which provide more eco-friendly plastic alternatives for products like stickers and signs.

On average 14.85% of products used Go Green options when available (FY22). We are promoting awareness of Go Green alternatives in customer emails and as an option on custom estimates.

-Electric Delivery Bike

University Printing Services provides on-campus delivery for printed projects using the fleet services delivery van. This project was developed to provide a sustainable alternative to our traditional delivery van method. We have logged 537 miles, delivered 250 packages, and saved 40 gallons of gas.



-Print Vendor Sustainability Commitments

University Printing Services operates a medium sized in-plant print production facility and also works with university approved print partners to broker print projects which are high volume or require special production capabilities. Most of our print partners have gone through a review process and must meet specific standards outlined by the university.

- Most are **FSC Certified and undergo regular auditing**. FSC Chain-of-Custody certification traces the path of products from forests through the supply chain, verifying that FSC-certified material is identified or kept separated from non-certified material throughout the chain.
- Most of our print partners are locally based in Arizona, reducing shipping miles.
- Most print partners use soy and vegetable-based inks – and most use the newest technology that minimizes chemicals, plates, and VOC's (volatile organic compounds).
- On some premium products such as large volume brochures and booklets, our print partners use a soft touch coating that is water-based, recyclable, and non-toxic.

Other Eco-Friendly Practices

- Use digital storefront and custom estimate request forms as ways to quickly gather information and approvals to process orders without using paper.

- Digitally archive quotes and estimates rather than print them.
- Use a paperless digital delivery system and no longer use NCR paper for delivery receipts.
- Our large format printers use **water-based inks** (not harmful solvents) and are Energy Star Certified.
- Long-term signage and wall graphics are made of 3M Vinyl and overlamine that is **non-PVC and phthalate-free**. They contain no added chlorine or halogens and are manufactured using 58% less solvents than standard films. They are also made in part using a bio-based material.
- We use 100# PCW Kraft paper sleeves rather than plastic shrink wrap and we repurpose and reuse supplier and vendor packaging whenever possible.
- We use paper tape instead of plastic tape when packaging orders.

Further Objectives

- We are testing PVC Free Banner Material as an eco-friendly alternative.
- We are switching to aluminum name tags after we deplete our plastic name tag inventory.