

BEHIND THE BADGE

With more customers asking about print sustainability, it is important to get up to speed on eco certifications, the most common labels and what they mean, believes Colin Easton

Buying a product with a sustainability certification can be great for your business. As well as reducing your environmental impact, and potentially your costs, you can pass that assurance on to your customers. Increasingly, people are looking for ways to be more sustainable, so may choose you over a competitor if you can prove your service ticks more eco boxes. Additionally, some certifications can pave the way to new markets – a badge for clean air quality could help you access the healthcare and education sectors, for example. Each of the main certifications cover different aspects, so it's important to know what they mean.

ECOLOGO

A **UL Ecologo** certification indicates that a product has been rigorously tested to comply with environmental performance standards throughout its life cycle. The criteria for this voluntary certificate cover a range of categories, including health and environment, and product performance and use. You may see the green and white UL Ecologo badge on inks, such as the most recent generation of HP's water-based Latex inks.

GREENGUARD

Greenguard relates to air emissions. The certification body, UL, notes that most people's chemical exposure occurs through the air we breathe at home, at work and in education, via the volatile organic compounds (VOCs)



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found in building materials, cleaning products, toiletries and furnishings – such as wallpapers and furnishings. VOC levels in the inks used for these products have significantly decreased in recent years, and inks that sport the **Greenguard Gold** badge have the lowest in the industry. Latex and Stitch inks from HP have this certification at the highest level, meaning they are safe for decorating an entire room (some printing inks may only be certified for a limited size, such as a single wall or decal).

OEKO-TEX

Oeko-Tex is a network of independent research and test institutes. For its **EcoPassport** label, textile products are tested to ensure they have been manufactured sustainably and do not contain substances that are harmful to humans – the criteria are updated annually. Importantly, these results are published online so anyone can input the EcoPassport label number of a product and be assured their purchase meets their demands. The water-based inks for HP Stitch textile printers hold the Oeko-Tex EcoPassport certification.

ZDHC

The Zero Discharge of Hazardous Chemicals Foundation (ZDHC) has compiled a list of substances that are banned from intentional use during the production of textile, leather and synthetic products, in order to improve air, water and production itself in these sectors. This directory: the Manufacturing Restricted Substances List (ZDHC MRSL) includes over 100 entries, from VOCs and problematic dyes to heavy metals and phthalates. HP Latex inks conform to or meet the standards of the ZDHC MRSL version 1.1, demonstrating an effort to reduce the environmental impact of textile production. **ZDHC's Roadmap to Zero** programme is a multi-stakeholder organisation, which sees major brands, value chain affiliates and associates working collaboratively to improve chemical management practices.



HP recycling

ENERGY STAR

Energy Star is a symbol denoting energy efficiency. It is a government-backed American programme – recognised by 90% of US households, according to its research – but its blue logo is also known by consumers across the world. It independently tests all kinds of commercial and domestic technology, from air

“Manufacturers are constantly improving the performance, energy efficiency, safety and sustainability of their technology and consumables”

conditioners to washing machines to select HP Latex and HP Stitch printers, for their ability to deliver energy savings without reducing performance. This may mean cost savings for print businesses that could be passed on to your customers.

EPEAT

EPEAT (the Electronic Product Environmental Assessment Tool) covers printers, plus products like computers and TVs, and assesses their environmental performance across several life cycle criteria to award them Gold, Silver or Bronze certifications. Manufacturers must sign a contract self-declaring which of the programme's criteria their products meet. The information is accessible via an online registry, allowing customers or resellers to compare printing solutions based on their environmental credentials. The HP Stitch S400 and S500 have achieved the EPEAT Silver grade, while HP Latex low-volume systems have achieved Bronze.

Manufacturers are constantly improving the performance, energy efficiency, safety and sustainability of their technology and consumables. Brands will happily share information with their customers and work with you to find a solution that meets all your ecological requirements. ■

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