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TWO SIDES EMAIL FOOTERS

Sick of seeing 'Think before you print' email footers?

It has become common practice to see emails with footer messages such as 'Do you really need to print this email? it will harm the environment,' or 'Think before you print.' These messages, although attempting to promote positive environmental behaviour, often ignore the unique sustainability of print on paper and should be questioned.

Paper is made from wood; a renewable resource. In fact, most of Australia's wood (82%) is harvested from planted forests and harvesting from native forests in Australia is NOT for the pulp and paper industry but for the timber industry to build homes, commercial buildings and general consumption products. Therefore, print and paper can often be a great way to communicate and, when responsibly sourced and recycled, is environmentally sustainable.

These common email footers assume that electronic communication always has less effect on the environment than printed materials.

Below are some facts that are often overlooked:

- A regular e-mail emits 4 grams of CO₂e. An electronic attachment (invoice/letter/statement) sent via the internet releases 50 grams of CO₂e.
- A year of incoming e-mail for a typical business user adds up to 135 kg of CO₂e per year. This is equivalent to driving about 520 kilometres in an average car.
- A remarkable 78% of all incoming emails are spam. Around 62 trillion spam messages are sent every year, requiring the use of 33bn kilowatt hours (KWh) of electricity and causing around 20 million tonnes of CO₂e per year. This is equivalent to the greenhouse gas emissions from over 4 million cars driving on the road for one year.
- The average Australian generates nearly 20kgs of e-waste every year.
- A letter made from recycled material and recycled after use creates 140g of CO₂e. That looks like carbon savings (compared to 4g of CO₂e from one email) unless you end up sending 35 times more e-mails (without attachments!) than the number of letters you would have posted in the days gone by. Lots of people do! This is a great example of the rebound effect, something that is low carbon actually results in higher-carbon simply because we use it more.



Consider these email footers for your email signature that convey the inherent sustainable nature of paper!

- Yes, it's ok to print your emails – but please recycle waste paper.
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- Print on paper is a practical, attractive, and sustainable communications medium.
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- If you print, please recycle.
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- Paper is one of the most recyclable, renewable and natural forms of communication. If you print, please recycle.
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- Printed emails create a permanent and sustainable record but please ensure all waste paper is recycled. Responsibly produced print and paper is renewable, sustainable and powerful. If you print, please recycle.
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- Responsibly produced paper has unique environmental features. It is highly recyclable and comes from a renewable resource. If you print, please recycle.
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- Paper is one of the most recycled products in the world. It is also made from trees – a natural and renewable resource. If you print, please recycle.
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- Please don't be alarmed or feel guilty; it's OK to print this email. Paper is a biodegradable, renewable and sustainable product made from trees. Growing and harvesting trees provides jobs for millions of men and women. Sustainable forests are good for the environment, providing clean air, clean water, wildlife habitat and carbon storage.
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- Choose print. The paper industry plants more than it harvests and today there are 25% more trees in the developed world than in 1900. Paper is biodegradable, renewable and sustainable. Growing and harvesting trees provides jobs while forestry plantations provide clean air, clean water, wildlife habitat and carbon storage. A decline in the demand for paper products risks a decline in sustainably managed re-growth forests.
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- Use print, it is tangible and effective in getting your message across and when recycled it will come back to us as paper or board.
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- In our noisy multimedia world it's often mistakenly supposed that e-media is more sustainable than print communication. One email with a 400K attachment, sent to 20 people is equivalent to burning a 100-watt light bulb for 30 minutes. So, think before you forward this email. Paper and print are a viable and sustainable option.
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- At <INSERT YOUR COMPANY NAME> we employ XXX people, we recycled XXX tonnes of paper in 201X and we comply with the highest global environmental standards with our ISO 14001 certification. We encourage forest certification through our FSC and PEFC chain of custody certification, we are a member of Two Sides Australia and continue to work with and encourage our customers to communicate in a sustainable manner through paper based communications when communicating with their customers.
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