

02 KEY-STATEMENTS SUSTAINABILITY

The final report of the Investigation Committee for the Globalisation of the Economy defines sustainability as "the use of a natural system exclusively in such a manner that preserves its characteristic features in the long term." An idea that has always been a driver for the paper, carton and cartonboard industry and its use of natural resources. Today, the issue of sustainability has become a more and more prevailing one – not just as part of ecological strategies, but also in terms of marketing. Its relevance to marketing is a growing movement of people dedicated to personal responsibility and ecological awareness: to LOHAS, a "Lifestyle of Health and Sustainability".

- » Paper is all around us, working for us, delivering to us; it contributes to comfort, hygiene, security and information. Using paper doesn't just make our lives easier; it also makes an important environmental contribution to sustainability.
- » The paper industry uses two main raw materials for manufacturing paper – wood and recovered paper. Kaolin, starch and other products are used as supplementary materials in the paper production process.
- » Today, the papermaker usually uses parts of the tree that are left after wood has been used for other commercial purposes. Nearly all the pulpwood used in northern Europe could be classed as secondary cuttings, for example, thinnings extracted from the forest.
- » The European paper and cartonboard industry is one of Europe's most sustainable ones. It produces 100 million tons of paper and 40 million tons of chemical pulp per year, about 28 percent of the worldwide production. 50 percent of the industry's energy requirement are covered through biomass energy – making the industry both one of Europe's most important providers and consumers of renewable energy sources.

PAPER AND BOARD ECO-CYCLE



The raw material used for the manufacture of cartons is chemical pulp, which is produced from thinning wood, waste wood and sawmill waste. The used paper and cartonboard products from household and industrial waste are recycled for the production of recovered fibre. And even production waste from the manufacture of folding cartons is re-used as raw material for carton- and cartonboard production.

Besides the collection and recycling system for paper and cartonboard products, thermal utilisation is another way of recovering energy from the natural product wood. The carbon dioxide that is released in this process is absorbed by trees and turned into oxygen as the trees grow larger, which concludes the life cycle.

- » Choosing paper has an important and positive environmental effect. These products can then be recycled, extending their life cycle and minimizing the use of landfill. When they can no longer be used or recycled it is possible to convert them into a renewable energy source.
- » The world's forests – and the wood and paper products that come from them – are unique in their ability to remove and store CO₂. A portion of the CO₂ that trees remove from the atmosphere remains fixed in wood and paper products throughout their useful life. The recycling of paper stores CO₂ longer than would otherwise be the case. On average one tonne of paper, for example, contains some 1.4 tons of CO₂.
- » Paper is inherently sustainable; its raw materials are renewable and its products are recyclable. The European paper industry's strategy is to use natural resources in an efficient way, reducing negative environmental and social impacts and meeting society's need for sustainable consumption.
- » Contrary to public opinion, forest area in Europe is increasing, not decreasing every year. In fact it's increasing annually by an area of about 6.000 km². The sustainable way that European forests are managed leads to 33% more new trees grow in Europe each year than are felled.
- » Paper products can have several 'lives' as a result of recycling as they can be recycled several times. Recycling has its limits though. After being re-used about five to six times, it is no longer strong enough for papermaking.
- » The industry was once based almost entirely on softwoods such as spruce, pine, larch, fir and cedar. Now birch, aspen and other hardwoods occurring in temperate climates are used as an ideal raw material. Nevertheless, softwoods provide longer fibres and therefore continue to be used.
- » Paper and board forms the basis for 40% of all packaging in Europe today. Paper and board packaging has a recycling rate of 77%, well beyond the target set by the European Commission.
- » More than half of the paper used in Europe today is already recycled, 55.4%. And the paper industry is part of a drive to increase that rate to 66% by 2010. The maximum theoretical recycling rate for paper would be 81%.
- » Paper and board packaging is versatile – coming in a variety of forms from functional brown cardboard boxes to beautiful wrapping papers. Paper and board packaging is practical – cartons can be delivered flat to the packager, reducing both space and transport costs. It is manufactured from a natural and renewable raw material – wood – and it is 100% recyclable.
- » Folding cartons are the ideal packaging for products that have to comply with high moral and ecological standards from source to presentation. "By packing your product in cartonboard, you are sending out a message: this is a natural product! And it is eco-friendly". This is what Dr. Helene Karmasin's study "Surprise me. What psychological and emotional expectations do consumers link with a product's packaging material?" finds.
- » According to a study by IPSOS and PaperPlus, 93% of Europeans favour paper or cartonboard as packaging materials in terms of eco-friendliness, and 87% favour them because of their practical value.