



GREEN BUSINESS EVALUATION

RIVERWORKS PRINTING

The Green Alliance will consider the following factors in evaluating your business' commitment to environmental responsibility. This is meant to be a guide, not a test, and will help you think about ways to move toward further sustainability. It will also help us promote what makes you "green" to local consumers and provide transparency to the community. A green business will bring sustainable practices into some or all of the following aspects of commerce: production and service, supply chain management, employment, investment, community relations, and vendors.

Green Products

1. Do you offer a green version of a good or service? Do you offer it as a choice alongside other non-green products or is it all you offer? What makes it green? What made you decide to green your business and/or product?

3) Yes, everything
N/A

X2) Mostly (> 50%)

1) Some (<50%)

0) None

When Jeff Cutter launched Riveworks Printing two and a half years ago, his goal was to create an eco-driven large format print company. At the time, Jeff was no stranger to sustainable business practices. He spent years working in the restaurant industry, and as the owner of Molly Malone's, once a mainstay of the Portsmouth dining scene, he donated old fry oil to be converted into biofuel.

"A lot of our food waste went to feed pigs at local farms," Jeff adds.

He was soon joined by print manager Danis Chamberlin, who saw in Riverworks the opportunity to try something new and different in an industry she describes as "caustic" and "not known for being green."

"I had worked for a few other sign companies, and it was always very basic recycling of things like soda bottles and paper," she recalls. "Everything else would go into a big old dumpster."

Today, Riverworks Printing core eco-friendly offerings include: biodegradable and/or recyclable banners, foam cores, posters, papers, and fabric decals, as well as metal or 100% bamboo banner stands. These green options are offered alongside traditional large print products.

"Our decision to go green mirrors our beliefs and how we live our lifestyles," Danis explains. "There is no reason why our jobs should be different than our lives outside of work, which are sustainable."

"It's just the right thing to do," Jeff chimes in. "Every day being green becomes more mainstream. Just like recycling was odd at the beginning, now it's just a matter of course."

2. Do you educate the customer about what makes this choice sustainable; encourage it? How do you and your employees keep abreast of sustainability developments in your industry?

X3) Yes, education major part of business strategy; aggressive efforts to stay educated 2) Yes, but not central focus of sales/marketing; some on-going education 1) Minimal education 0) No education N/A

Researching new eco-friendly alternatives and educating the public about them is at the heart of Riverworks Printing's business model.

"We do a lot of testing ourselves," Danis explains. "That's what sets us apart from the rest of large format printers. That's what we're all about."

Posters bearing images of whales and other local wildlife printed on eco-friendly Photo Tex material decorate the walls of Riverworks Printing's headquarters in Greenland, NH. Photo Tex is not only biodegradable, it's paper thin, more durable than poster paper, and can be stuck and re-stuck to walls time and time again without losing adhesiveness. Plus it requires no tape and doesn't leave behind any sticky residue.

Riverworks Printing is already making green inroads into the local real estate industry. They have partnered with the Gove Real Estate Group to develop eco-friendly signage for a new development that's being hailed as Portsmouth's first sustainable community.

The duo's customer education efforts continue even after a sale is made.

"We teach clients about how to properly recycle our products, or we take them back," says Jeff.

3. Does the customer pay more for the "green" option?

3) Costs less or same 2) costs a little more 1) Costs significantly more 0) cost-prohibitive / no green option to speak of N/A

Price is one of the factors Jeff and Danis consider before deciding to carry any product. They strive to make going green affordable for their customers.

"We probably won't carry a product labeled as 'eco-friendly' if it costs five times as much," Danis suggests. "We also have to keep the end goal in mind. Eco-friendly, but it has to look good."

"We cut our profit really tight on the eco-friendly products," Jeff says.

"Sometimes the price is the same," adds Danis. "Sometimes it is a little less. We have a bamboo stand with a retractable biodegradable banner, probably costs about \$30 more than the metal option."

4. Is there a greener version of your product? If so, what prohibits you from offering it?

3) No, offer the greenest 2) Yes, working toward offering, 1) Yes, but not in business plan 0) Yes, no intent to offer N/A

Jeff and Danis pride themselves on being green trailblazers in the large format print industry.

"I think we're on the cutting edge," Jeff says. "That's the whole point of our company."

5. Are there greener options/products that you plan on offering in the future?

3) Yes, tangible plans with date 2) Yes, no specific date 1) Possibly, investigating possibilities, no solid plan 0) No, never N/A

Riverworks Printing is currently exploring bringing a new eco-friendly line of large format printing products across the pond from the United Kingdom.

"There is a whole new line called BioMedia in the U.K. that no one is distributing yet in the U.S.," according to Danis. "It's made from a polyester base that will break down over time, and you can recycle it. We're trying to educate our customers about it."

"Our next step will be to add new equipment that will make us even more eco-friendly, once we develop the funding," Jeff adds. "We're going to get a UV printer that prints directly to substrate, eliminating an entire part of the printing process."

Energy Use:

6. Have you conducted an energy audit? Identified areas of inefficiency? Taken corrective measures?

3) Yes, official audit completed, corrective measures taken 2) Audit in process, has committed to official audit/official audit completed, no corrective measures taken 1) unofficial audit, corrective measures 0) No official or unofficial audit, no measures taken

While Riverworks Printing has not conducted a formal energy audit, their energy use is minimal in part due to a common sense approach to energy conservation.

"It's under \$240 to heat and run everything, including the electric heaters," according to Jeff.

A mix of natural gas and electric space heaters provide heat to their facility.

"Our thermostat is set to 65 degrees," Jeff explains. "Throw on an extra sweater and your fine. If it gets too chilly, we turn on the electric heaters for a few minutes to bring the temperature up."

As a result, Riverworks Printing's natural gas use is minimal.

"The natural gas basically only heats the back room and upstairs office," Jeff explains.

When they first moved into the building, Jeff installed insulation in a room that was previously uninsulated, making the space more energy efficient.

"I also looked into central heat and air, but it would have cost almost \$10,000," Jeff explains.

7. Have you invested in energy efficient technology/equipment/appliances? Energy Star?

3) Yes, substantial equipment changes 2) Some equipment changes 1) minor equipment change 0) No new equipment N/A

Just about all of Riverworks Printing's equipment is new. After all, the company was launched just a few years ago.

"Our printer is Energy Star, we use that all the time," says Danis. "Otherwise we go by the industry standard."

8. How are you heating your business facility? Are there measures or technologies/systems in place that facilitate conservation and efficiency? If you heat with oil, are you using Bioheat or some other renewable source to augment (wood?, geothermal?)?

3) Heating business very efficiently, using technologies/systems/fuels that facilitate substantial results, B20 or higher 2) Substantially cleaner fuel than straight oil, super efficient oil burner, substantially augmenting oil with renewable fuel, made conscious decision/investment for cleaner system (ie natural gas) 1) B5 or some wood, using natural gas but only by default, burning oil with some efficiency technologies/systems 0) Burning straight oil, no efficiency measures or conservation N/A (renting space, landlord decision)

As noted earlier, Riverworks Printing heats with a mix of natural gas and electric space heaters, and has taken steps to facilitate conservation and efficiency.

9. Have you looked at water usage and taken steps toward efficiency and conservation?

3) Yes, significant steps taken 2) Some conservation measures 1) Minor measures taken 0) None N/A

"We haven't implemented the 'If it's yellow let it mellow' rule yet," jokes Jeff.

In all seriousness, Riverworks Printing's water use is minimal.

"Doing dishes, bathroom use – that's pretty much it," Danis explains.

They have also taken proactive steps to improve the efficiency of their hot water system.

"When we first moved in, I installed a smaller water heater," Jeff says.

10. Do you shut-down/unplug equipment after hours on weekends or when not in use? Do you turn off all lights after hours or if not using a room? Educate employees to do the same? (*Vampire loads waste enormous amounts of energy; turning off 1 computer saves 500 lbs. of CO2 yearly.*)

3) Yes 2) Sometimes 1) No, but is landlord's decision 0) No N/A

"We turn off the lights whenever we leave a room," according to Jeff. "We turn off everything that can be shutdown. Our computers go into sleep mode when not in use. One printer needs to be left on for automatic cleaning."



11. Have you switched to CFLs; dispose of CFLs properly? LED lighting? Motion sensors or Energy Misers for vending machines to reduce energy use? *(CFLs use 66% less energy – save \$45 over the life of the bulb! CFLs contain mercury and must be disposed of properly)*

3) Yes, all lighting CFLs, some LEDs, motion sensors and/or Energy Misers 1) Most lighting CFLs, one motion sensor 0) Still using incandescents N/A

All of the lighting at Riverworks Printing is fluorescent.

"We've talked about replacing the existing light bulbs with energy efficient brands once they burn out, but we're not going to send perfectly good light bulbs to the landfill," Jeff explains.

12. Is your business lit-up at night? Is your sign lit-up all night? Switch these to CFLs or LEDs?

3) Lit up, using LED lighting 1) Business lit up, using CFL or fluorescents/timers in place 0) Lit up using incandescent, no timer N/A

Riverworks Printing is not lit up at night.

13. Do you use any renewable technology? Have you explored wind/solar/geothermal?

3) Yes, hardware on sight 2) Tangible plans for future 1) Researching/researched options, not possible 0) No attention given

"We have talked about cutting down on our carbon footprint by putting solar panels on our roof since the beginning," according to Jeff. "It's just obvious over the long term, harnessing energy from the sun."

"We've also talked about purchasing carbon offsets," Danis adds. "The benefit would be more immediate on that."

Riverworks Printing's project portfolio includes a "wrap" of a solar trailer owned by the local IBEW.

14. Do you encourage/educate employees to use energy responsibly at home? Customers?

3) Yes, major part of business strategy 2) Some, not central focus to training 1) Minimal education, not comfortable preaching 0) No education/encouragement N/A

Riverworks Printing is currently a two-person operation consisting of Jeff and Danis, both of whom strive to live sustainably outside of work.

"How often do we encourage each other to use energy responsibly at home?" Jeff repeats. "Daily!"

"We're both very aware of our lifestyles," says Danis.

"With my kids, there's no way we could not be," Jeff explains. "It's just ingrained today."

Waste:

15. Do you recycle? How extensively? Is it easy and automatic? Have you instituted/encouraged/educated employees/customers on recycling? *(America consumes 31.2 billion water bottles a year, using 17.6 million barrels of oil to create them.)*

3) Yes, extensive recycling for everything produced/sold, prominent display for customers 2) More than the status quo, some special effort 1) Minimal, fulfilling status quo 0) Don't recycle N/A

Riverworks Printing not only recycles, they are redefining the very nature of recycling within the large format print industry.

As Jeff explains it, "We took a lot of samples of things that supposedly couldn't be recycled and took them over to Poly-Recovery in Portsmouth and he said, 'Yup!'"

PVC, paper, mixed paper products, mixed plastic products, ink, ink cartridges, bottles, food containers, and cardboard all get recycled.

"We don't buy boxes if we don't need to," says Jeff. "We have a whole pile of old boxes upstairs that we reuse. Our customers are really good about it. They get that we are trying to reduce waste."

16. Do you sell a product that is packaged? Do you receive goods extensively packaged? Is that packaging necessary and have you talked to suppliers about excessive or wasteful packaging? *(Five trillion plastic bags are manufactured each year. Americans throw away 100 billion bags a year – using 12 million barrels of oil in production - of those only 1% is recycled)*

X 3) All or almost all packaging renewable/sustainable/biodegradable, chooses suppliers that minimally package/encourages all suppliers to consider packaging 2) Some/a good portion renewable/etc, has influenced a supplier or changed due to packaging 1) Minor alternatives integrated into packaging, considers packaging of a supplier 0) Using typical plastics, no consideration of suppliers/vendors' packaging N/A

"Almost everything that we do is not packaged," according to Danis. "We do have a dry erase product does come in a package, but it's recyclable."

17. Do you buy post consumer recycled paper? Do you recycle paper? Do you print your brochures/flyers/business materials on recycled paper? Do you use both sides of paper whenever possible? Print on both sides? Print black and white when possible? Do you reuse what you can in the office? Boxes, envelopes, etc...? Encourage conservation of products? *(Staples offers printing on recycled paper for the same cost of virgin paper. Ram Printing Company, a Green Alliance member, offers fully sustainable printing options which include sustainably harvested paper products and soy-based sustainable ink options for the same price as other printers, visit www.theramcompanies.com)*

X 3) Only uses recycled, recycling, conserving, printing (only if business materials on recycled), full commitment to sustainable printing and paper use 2) Often uses recycled, do recycle, do conserve. have not yet moved to print business materials with sustainable printer 1) Recycling paper, minimal conservation 0) No recycled/recycling N/A

Riverworks Printing buys post consumer recycled paper and recycles paper. They also print in black and white and on both sides when printing documents for internal use.

"I turn recycled paper into my own notepads and write on both sides," says Danis.

"I make little wallets out of the stuff," adds Jeff, holding one up as an example.

Company brochures are printed on FSC certified paper from responsible sources. Plus, their promotional materials emphasizes the sustainable nature of the large print products Riverworks Printing provides.

"We also repurpose materials by donating them to schools and nurseries for art projects," says Jeff. "We just had a great meeting with the Cochecho Arts Academy about that. We already send them a lot of our extra materials."

18. Do you recycle printer/toner cartridges?

X 3) Yes 0) No N/A

Just one of the many things they recycle.

19. Do you donate furniture/equipment instead of throwing it out? Try to obtain used or second-hand office equipment, furniture or industry equipment?

3) Yes, obtain second-hand as much as possible/donate and reuse X 2) have some second-hand items 1) have donated but almost always buy new 0) Never second hand/never donate N/A

"I definitely repurposed a few of pieces of our office furniture from my wife's business," Jeff says, pointing out a few chairs and tables.



Transportation/Travel:

20. Does your business involve transporting goods or materials? Do you use fuel efficient vehicles, (both business and personal)? BioDiesel? (If you contract out your deliveries have you encouraged that company to use fuel efficient vehicles or Biodiesel?)

3) Yes, highly fuel efficient (hybrid/biodiesel) for personal and business, contracted or in house deliveries focus on fuel efficiency 2) Some effort, some changes (ext. circumstances) 1) Very little effort, vehicles not very fuel efficient, not a main concern with deliveries 0) No consideration of fuel efficiency for vehicles or deliveries N/A

Riverworks Printing's business model does require delivering products locally.

"We have to use a truck to deliver larger signs," Jeff explains.

"We have a couple vendors who will deliver our products on their way to another delivery," he says. "It saves us on shipping. They're great like that."

"We carpool to meetings together, or if we go out for lunch," Danis adds.

21. Have you sought out local distributors/vendors in an effort to reduce the travel time of your product and support the local economy? How high of a priority is sourcing local to your business? What percentage of your product comes from local suppliers? (*Studies show that dollars spent locally tend to stay local; local businesses contribute more to local non-profits and participate more in community life; and local independents demand less of our energy resources and public infrastructure.*)

3) Yes, 50% or more, integral part of choosing supplier 2) less than 50%, try to source local first, serious extenuating circumstances don't allow "local" to be first 1) aprox. 20%, when convenient 0) Not a consideration N/A

"As much as possible. This is a huge priority for us. We're a big supporter of keeping it in the community," Jeff responds.

"Not a lot out there in terms of sign distribution in the Greater Seacoast area, but a lot of our vendors are in Massachusetts, which is still pretty local."

Around 80 percent of their supplies and materials come from Salisbury or Woburn, MA.

"Our Photo Tex products have to be shipped from Pennsylvania," according to Danis. "We should become a distributor ourselves."

22. Do you carpool whenever possible? Travel less, phone meetings whenever possible? Do you encourage employees to work at home if possible? Do you encourage employees to carpool or walk/bike to work? Do you have a bike rack for customers/employees? Incentives for workers who walk/bike/car pool?

3) Yes, personal & employee system for less travel/working from home or walking/biking, incentives 2) Sometimes, some employee outreach 1) Not a priority but welcome 0) No employee outreach, no personal effort N/A

"We don't carpool to work, but do carpool while on the job," says Jeff.

"We absolutely use the phone, email, webinars to connect with people," adds Danis. "I think that happens naturally these days."

23. Do you have an anti-idling campaign at your facility? Do you have any sort of fuel awareness/transportation efficiency program for employees/customers?

3) Yes, campaign in place 2) No official campaign but do not idle 1) Will be instituting plan 0) No, nothing, not interested N/A

"We don't idle," Jeff explains. "It's just common sense."

Community:

24. Does your business give back or contribute to the community?

3) Yes, extensively, tangible examples 2) Some 1) Small amount 0) not much N/A

"My big thing is fly fishing, so I'm heavily involved in both Trout Unlimited and the Western Waters Conservancy," Jeff says. "I also work a lot with Jeff Barnum and the Coastal Conservation Association on the oyster restoration project in Great Bay."

"We've been involved pretty heavily in fundraising for these groups, as well as for local schools," he goes on to say.

And that's just the start of Riverworks Printing's plans for philanthropy.

"We're planning to open up a fundraising arm of Riverworks called True Circle," Jeff explains. "We came up with the idea after my kids did yet another wrapping paper fundraiser around Christmas time, which was run by a company in South Carolina, with 40 percent of the funds raised leaving the community."

"True Circle will focus on providing fundraising opportunities that keep money in the community and in the state," he says. "All the products we use in fundraisers will be New Hampshire made, with more of a focus on eco-friendly products."

While still in the planning stages, Jeff describes initial support for the program as "very, very overwhelming."

25. Do you check to see if your suppliers are environmentally responsible? Do you talk to other businesses/vendors/suppliers about the importance of sustainable business practices?

3) Advocate to all other businesses and suppliers, deal mostly with other environmentally responsible businesses
2) Some advocacy and outreach, favor green suppliers sometimes 1) Minimal, just starting to advocate/reach out, occasionally will choose green supplier 0) None

It's pretty obvious looking at Riverworks Printing's suite of sustainable large print products that they focus on doing business with environmentally responsible suppliers. After all, a big part of their business model is researching new eco-friendly products, and then putting them to the test for quality and cost effectiveness before offering them to customers.

"We're friends with the folks from RAM Printing, another Business Partner in the Green Alliance," Jeff notes. "We love to talk with them to share ideas and learn about new sustainable products and approaches."

26. Are you a member of Seacoast Buy Local?

3) Yes 2) not a member currently but will join 0) No N/A (out of area)

Riverworks Printing has submitted its application to join Seacoast Local.

27. Do you encourage your staff to volunteer with local community projects/nonprofits?

3) Yes, large part of employee ethic 2) Yes, encouraged 1) Suggested occasionally 0) No, never N/A

As noted earlier, Jeff is very involved in local conservation groups like CCA and Trout Unlimited.

The other half of this two-person operation, Danis is busy raising a family, passing her passion for sustainability on to the next generation

Miscellaneous:

28. How do your businesses sustainability efforts compare to the industry standard?

X 3) Far more sustainable in very important ways, than the industry standard 2) Significantly better than typical businesses in this industry 1) Slightly better; a long way to go 0) Exactly the same environmentally to other businesses of the same type

"We're trying to break the mold in this business," as Jeff puts it. "Sustainability is much more of a focal point for us than it is for most companies in the large format print industry. We could be ambassadors to the print industry."

"Some other companies offer eco-friendly products as an alternative, but they're expensive," Danis says. "We try to provide products that are both good for the environment and affordable."

29. Do you have a rain garden or other planted area that you direct rainwater to on your property?

3) Yes, deliberate and functioning rain garden in place 2) No, but we have a rain barrel or utilize some other form of rain water recycling 1) do not have rain garden but have asked owners of property to install one, investigating, in the process of implementing 0) own property and have significant outside space that would benefit from a rain garden/should have a rain garden X N/A) No area for rain garden, have aggressively attempted to get rain garden but don't own property and owner is not amenable to making any positive changes

Riverworks Printing does not own the property, so they can't install a rain garden.

30. Are there aspects of your business which are toxic/hazardous? If so how do you mitigate them? Have you investigated alternatives? What keeps you from offering/adopting safer products?

3) Completely non-toxic in a toxic industry X 2) Make special effort to reduce impact or toxicity 1) Some effort, extenuating circumstances, not priority 0) Toxic business, haven't yet address any of these issues N/A

"A lot of the vinyl films traditionally used in our industry are made from petroleum. We still use some of these traditional materials, but what is different here, is how we manage our production and handle our waste." Jeff reports.

"The PVC we use isn't made in an environmentally friendly way," he continues. "We try to offset that by recycling PVC, rather than just trashing it."

Even for an environmentally focused company like Riverworks, eliminating all toxins from the printing process is a challenge.

"The eco-solvent ink we use still has a solvent property to it," as Jeff explains. "But, we are always on the lookout for greener products & processes to use instead."

Further questions which help us evaluate your business:

What is your biggest obstacle to offering more sustainable products or sustainable business practices?

Riverworks Printing is already way ahead of the curve in the large format printing industry when it comes to sustainability, but cost remains a factor when it comes to selecting which eco-friendly products they choose to carry. They want their customers to be able to afford to go green.

Given the nature of their business, Jeff and Danis do also need to make sure that all of their products are attractive, as well as sustainable.

Brief history of your company.

Riverworks Printing launched in 2009 as an offshoot of Alternative Transit Advertising, a company run by Jeff's wife which provides ad solutions for public transportation systems like the local COAST bus line.

How many employees?

This locally owned business has already grown from one to two employees.

How big is your customer base?

"We have around 150 accounts," Jeff says. "We get dozens of different jobs in from all over New England, and have also done work for some of the fly shops I've visited out west while on fishing trips."

What is the average distance employees drive to work?

Both Jeff and Danis travel under 10 miles to work. For Jeff, it's 3 miles. For Danis, it's 7.

Do you offer a product or service? How much of your income comes from the products vs. a service?

"We primarily provide products, which is where most of income come from, but consulting is part of our service as well," says Jeff.

"We also have design services available, so our can have all aspects of a print job done here," adds Danis.

What is the average distance your product, or materials to make your product, travel?

Most of Riverworks Printing's customers are local, as are their distributors.

"A lot of our sales come from within a 60 mile radius of our shop," according to Jeff. "Our distributors are mostly are found within New England."

Does your product require heat/electricity to produce? How much compared to the heat/electricity of just the building? What are your heat/electric sources? Are any of them renewable?

"We pay around \$237 a month for all our utilities," says Jeff. "We have two printers powered only by electricity. A third piece of equipment uses heat to laminate materials, and is also powered by electricity. Altogether, they maybe account for 20 percent of our total usage."

What is your water source? Water usage/month?

"Our water comes from the City of Portsmouth," according to Jeff. "We don't use too much, just to flush our toilet and do dishes after lunch."

The City of Portsmouth recently completed construction of a new drinking water treatment plan following LEED principles. Solar hot water collectors are among the new facilities sustainable elements.

How big of a building do you utilize? Is space being used efficiently?

Riverworks Printing fits a lot into a small space, around 1700 square feet.



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