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BIOGRAPHY

Prior to joining Two Tomorrows, Rob has worked in sales, marketing and sustainability roles during his earlier career in the paper industry. His expertise includes significant experience in supporting paper, print and packaging companies with their corporate responsibility and environmental communications. Rob has in-depth technical knowledge of print and paper manufacture processes and has helped manufacturers of paper based products, such as Stora Enso, to communicate sustainability of their fibre supply chain into the marketplace.

ABSTRACT

SUSTAINABILITY COMMUNICATIONS – THE DEBATE, PAPER VERSUS DIGITAL

The paper industry can already provide robust and to some extent comparable carbon figures for their products. This covers the energy use throughout the supply chain from forest to end user. We also know a lot about the product itself and what it contains; largely fibre. Buying from the vast majority of suppliers means this fibre is traceable and the credentials of a well managed forest are well understood and conveyed to our buyers.

Compare this to an e-reader or any other device that can deliver digital content. Do we have a robust and comparable way of looking at carbon emissions? Do we understand the contents of the products themselves in terms of the materials used, for example the metals used in electronics components, are these traceable or even identifiable? And what about the global infrastructure that is required to support the digital industry?

Companies that take sustainable sourcing seriously are already demanding answers to these questions, so how can the paper industry respond and seize an opportunity?

To do so, the industry must promote its sustainability credentials much more effectively. These messages need to align with those of your buyers who themselves are under the same pressures to build the sustainability message. If you read the CR reports of all the leading paper companies the messages are there, but are they also being communicated effectively to those key decision makers that don't read the CR reports?

To what extent can sustainability labelling help to promote these messages? Are we in danger of causing confusion and reduced effectiveness by the proliferation of certification schemes?