

Deal or No Deal?

We recently participated in a climate change event sponsored by HRH the Prince of Wales' Corporate Leaders Group on Climate Change. Apart from being completely baffled as to why we were invited, we were even more shocked that not a single printer or publisher was present amongst 200 business leaders. How can this industry hold its own against stiff competition from alternative media and against charges of environmental hostility, without engaging with government and NGOs?

At the gathering at St James' Palace last July, the objective was to debate the need for, and route to, an international agreement on how to deal with climate change. The point was to come up with a position representative of British business interests, so that that position could be included in discussions running up to and at the Cancun sessions. The meeting was stuffed with some very big names including HRH the Prince of Wales, the EU Commissioner for Climate Action Connie Hedegaard, economist Lord Nicholas Stern and Richard Kinley, Executive Secretary of the United Nations Framework

This article is part of the Verdigris series of stories about understanding the environmental impact of print. The Verdigris project is supported by founder members Agfa Graphics, Canon Europe, Digital Dots, drupa, Fujifilm, HP, Kodak, Océ, Ricoh and Unity Publishing, and associate members Presstek, Xeikon and Strålfors.

Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC and parent treaty to the 1997 Kyoto Protocol), plus a shedload of CEOs from across the globe.

But why no printers? Is the printing industry so completely deadminded and apathetic? It seems that whatever country one looks at, our industry has a share of enthusiastic green fanatics, plus a tranche of truculent disinterest. This tranche, unfortunately the bulk of the industry, includes many companies struggling and intently focused on making a living, but there are still plenty of high margin businesses who can well afford to take a more proactive interest in what is happening to our

industry. A head-in-the-sand mentality is threatening industry atrophy on a massive and unprecedented scale. Now is not the time to lose our passion for print!

Quite how we engage a broader and more active interest is at the heart of what Digital Dots is struggling to achieve in a small way with Verdigris and our ISO efforts. Supporters of this work such as Agfa, Kodak,



Is this man really thrilled that ISO is working on standards to measure the carbon footprint of print, or is he just flirting?

Ricoh, Canon and HP are also doing their bit with specific initiatives to educate the market about the environmental impact of printing. But printers really do need to take up arms and fight for their corner; the alternative is to watch the industry crumble under the weight of electronic alternatives.

A lack of environmental impact awareness is obviously not unique to printing. However, with a few exceptions, printers and their industry associations are deeply reluctant to engage or counter misrepresentation and unfair criticisms, particularly in mature markets such as the USA and the UK. In the UK especially, there is glaring absence of active involvement in initiatives to represent the sector's interests at the national level. There is a total lack of educational initiatives or industry leadership both in the trade press and from national trade bodies. When it comes to engagement with matters environmental, the printing industry is almost moribund.

The Customer's View

But what did those customers of printers, those buyers of print on massive scales think about Copenhagen, when

In Cancun one year on from Copenhagen a series of agreements have been reached, including:

- official recognition of industrialised country targets for developing low-carbon strategies
- registry of mitigation activities and finance for developing countries, with requirements for these countries to publish progress reports every two years
- strengthening of the Kyoto Protocol's Clean Development Mechanisms, to drive more funds and technology into sustainable emissions reductions projects in developing countries
- a Green Climate Fund for raising and delivering the \$100 billion to support climate action in the developing world
- agreement to push for further emissions reduction from deforestation and forest degradation in developing countries
- establishment of a Technology Executive Committee to increase technology cooperations for action and mitigation

last they met at the palace of St James? Do the likes of Virgin Atlantic and British Telecom really care? Does it matter to Allianz Insurance or EDF Energy that business has a vested interest in climate change? That they pitched up at all says they do, for these are businessmen who can rub elbows with HRH pretty much whenever they fancy, and who run huge enterprises. According to Tony Tyler, CEO of Cathay Pacific, too much time in Copenhagen was spent with NGOs and not enough with business representatives. What was perceived as China's blocking in Europe was seen in Asia as an articulation of China's intent. As Tyler sees it "for China the overriding policy objective is the need to ensure social stability ... they're not going to do anything in any area that jeopardises that".

Although it got a mostly ragged press, Copenhagen did achieve some progress: it was the first time that nations representing over 80% of global carbon emissions met and agreed to take action to reduce them; commitments were made to mobilise money to cut emissions arising from deforestation; and most important richer countries agreed to provide \$30 billion between 2010

and 2012 rising to \$100 billion per annum by 2020 to poorer countries to help them tackle climate change, via the Copenhagen Green Climate Fund.

Apart from a few mutterings on frameworks and achievable targets from yours truly, the closest the printing and publishing industries came to making a contribution to this session was through Peter Goldmark, an ex-newspaper publisher. Now Director of Climate and Air at the Environmental Defence Fund, he believes that Europe is driving action on climate change and that the US position is weak because of the continuing lack of legislation. He says: "There is going to be a deal for a low carbon/high efficiency economy at some point soon in the EU and the US [will] have to forge a common position". It's possible that there will be progress on legislation at some stage but it will be difficult for an economy in tatters and a culture that considers rampant consumerism a divine right. So not much hope for change there!

The EU financial crisis has clearly influenced US perceptions, but it doesn't help that Europe rather than America is the global leader on climate change mitigation initiatives. Europe, not the US, has a functioning carbon market plus the geopolitical size and readiness to move forward with a publishing framework system. Europe is also driving standards to help more companies to reduce their environmental impact, such as ISO draft 16759 for measuring the carbon footprint of print media.

Although many people felt that Copenhagen failed, in part this was down to the excessive hype and heightened expectations for some sort of massive result. But global initiatives take time and process, something that Copenhagen definitely aided. Nani Beccalli Falco, President & CEO of GE International saw Copenhagen as a process for enhancing peoples' awareness and understanding of the problem of climate change: "Copenhagen was a step and this is going to be an evolution so for me, Copenhagen was not a failure".

As world leaders from over twenty countries return home from their meeting in Cancun, we have to ask is a deal still possible? Yes, but we need to overcome barriers

of diversity and timidity and printers and publishers need to do more to ensure that their interests are truly represented. This has to be an organic development but industry, including printing and publishing, must participate and attempt to demonstrate progress.

What's needed, most will agree, is a coalition of the willing, one that has to include governments, NGOs and industry voices, from all regions including the emergent



This little slice of rainforest os São Paulo is safe; efforts are underway to protect its cohort elsewhere in Brazil.

economies in Asia, the Middle East and South America. A government representative said, under Chatham House rules (the quote can be published, but not who said it), that “the only way you can make a coalition of the willing is with sticks”. Surely market pressures are a hefty enough stick for the worldwide printing industry?

But printers should also be pushing their associations to take a louder more proactive stance. They should push for initiatives, as the Japanese Printing Industries Federation

has done, to educate members and print buyers and to provide a communications channel to events that shape future policy and carbon commitments. It's a matter of political will to get a deal but businesses, including printers, can also apply their own pressure. The argument is not between free trade and protectionist barriers; it's between protecting interests and inertia.

The general conclusion for the participants at this event was that a deal is necessary because the move to a low climate risk economy is inevitable. A deal must not be rushed, and objectives such as developing a common language meaningful to citizens and developing a global carbon market, can only be achieved once a framework is established. Businesses, including printers, can start by developing processes and programmes that set an example for customers and suppliers and demonstrate what the law should enshrine. For printers and publishers this means moving from the sidelines and becoming active agents for positive change.

– Laurel Brunner 