

Sustainability in Print

How the sustainability conversation is impacting the print industry and why net-zero targets could be impacting your business sooner than you may think.



WHY PRINTING IS GOING GREEN

With developments in printing technology, a greater focus on sustainable sourcing and more sustainable approaches to waste, the printing industry is going green.

Just over one in five (21%) printing businesses expect to be carbon neutral within the next five years, with greater energy efficiency, recycling practices and more sustainable consumables are key elements of that goal.

Much of that drive is coming from the demands of customers, with many B2B buyers now placing a greater focus on sustainability in their procurement processes, as they themselves look to meet strict scope three sustainability targets. That pressure from customers is now prompting businesses in the industry to think more carefully about their environmental impact and develop innovative solutions and strategies to reduce their environmental impact. In this report, we'll look at what those pressures are, and how businesses in this sector can respond.



of printers report that customers are asking for more sustainable products.
(Soyang Europe 2023 Print Industry Report)



of printers are making steps to become carbon neutral.
(Soyang Europe 2023 Print Industry Report)

64%

of print businesses said their customers were requesting more sustainable products.

Many major organisations in both the public and private sector are now conscious of the role that their supply chains play in their own respective net-zero targets. As a result, these organisations are requesting that the products they procure from their suppliers are produced in a much more sustainable way – this includes the materials that are used, as well as the emissions produced manufacturing. This is often referred to as “scope three” emissions.

This is reflected in the number of printing companies being asked about the environmental credentials of their products, with 64% reporting that they have been asked by their customers for more sustainable products.

Some organisations have set stringent targets to achieve net-zero - well ahead of the UK's own target of 2050 - and this is starting to be reflected in their procurement guidelines. Companies are now starting to give weight to environmental credentials, including the use of renewable energy, in their tendering process and expecting their suppliers to demonstrate how they can support their net-zero targets.

MAYOR OF LONDON

procurement rules favour low-carbon suppliers – with renewable energy a consideration. ¹

2024

ASTRAZENICA

committed net-zero operations by 2030. ²

2030

SAINSBURYS

own operations net-zero & 50% reduction in scope 3 by 2035. ³

2035

JAGUAR LAND ROVER

committed to net-zero across supply chain by 2039. ⁴

2040

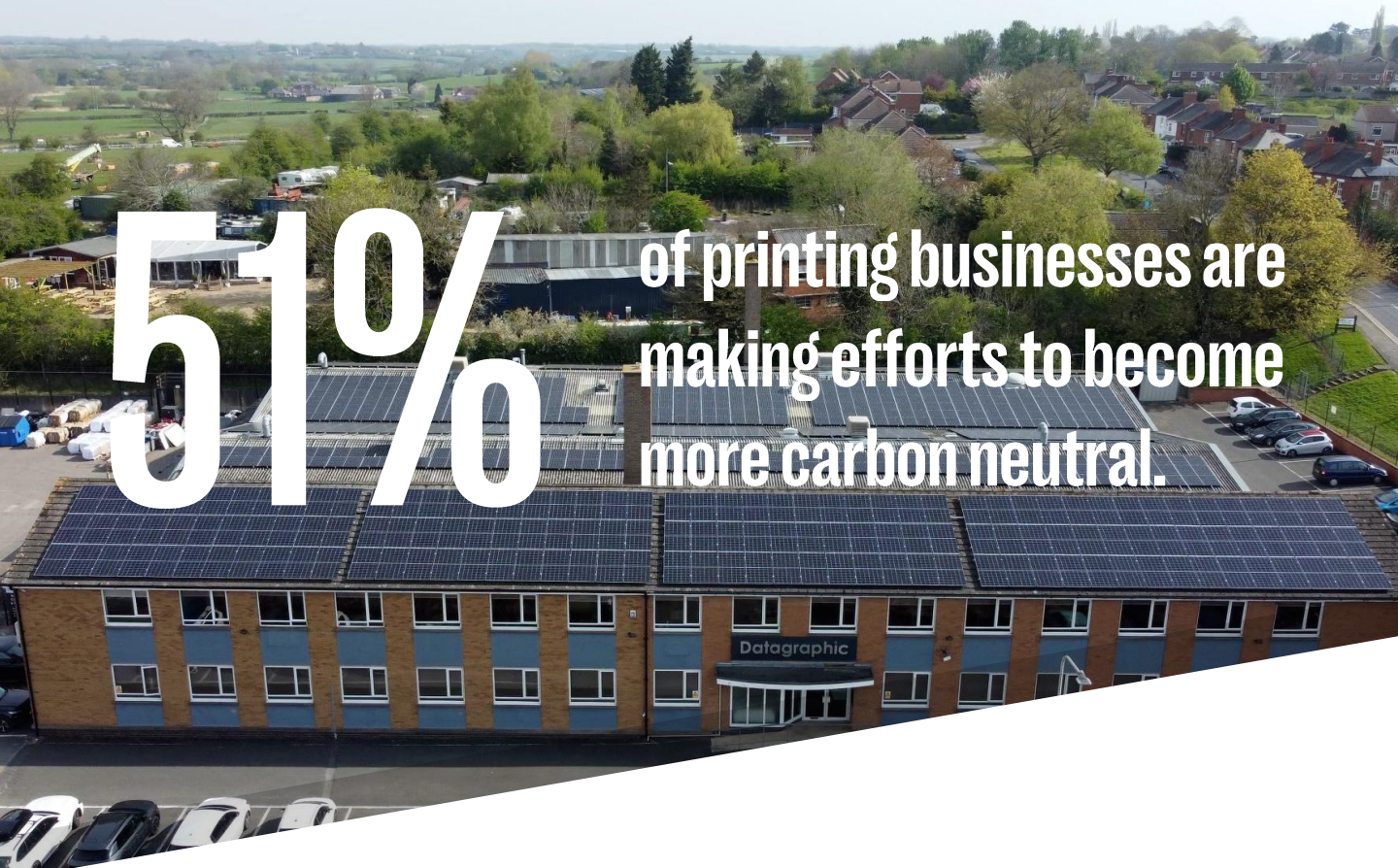
NHS ENGLAND

net-zero from scope three emissions by 2045. ⁵

2045

UK net-zero target

2050



51% of printing businesses are making efforts to become more carbon neutral.

The pressure from customers to reduce carbon emissions is driving a fundamental change across the printing industry. Our data found that 58% of businesses in the industry were making efforts to reduce both carbon emissions and the wider environmental impact of their operations.

One such example is Datagraphic, a document automation specialist in Warwickshire, that took significant steps to become more sustainable – with the demands of their customers being one of several key drivers.

In addition to securing ISO 14001 and ISO 50001 certification, the business has invested heavily in more energy-efficient machinery, as well as powering its operations with renewable energy

“Datagraphic started paying more attention to sustainability in 2016, when the management team wanted to future-proof operations by developing an energy re-engineering strategy across both sites”, said Peter Wells, Responsible Business Manager at Datagraphic.

“It started from a position of improving efficiency, but since then has become all-encompassing across all areas of the business. We’ve replaced older equipment with more energy efficient production technology, reduced energy consumption, switched to greener alternatives, and can now self-generate enough renewable energy to power our entire operation.”

“

For both public and private sector contracts, making a positive difference is a high-priority. By embedding quantifiable ESG principles across the business, our clients can be confident that we consider the impact of our operations for all stakeholders.

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A GREENER WAY TO POWER PRINT

As an energy-intensive industry, the printing sector has been at the forefront of innovation to improve energy efficiency, with advances in technology and operational efficiency driving reduced energy consumption across the sector.

Today, modern printing machinery has made significant strides in reducing energy consumption. Research by Heidelberg suggests that today's models use around 40% less energy per 1,000 sheets than their equivalent models from the 1990s, and many manufacturers are installing energy monitoring software into their machines to help printers reduce their consumption further.

But many printing companies are increasingly paying attention not just to how much energy they use and when they use it, but also the provenance of that energy and where it comes from – driven in part by how many B2B buyers have updated their procurement processes to consider scope three emissions.

As renewable energy generation grows to provide a greater proportion of the UK's energy mix (zero carbon sources provided 51% of the electricity used in the UK in 2023), many businesses are turning to renewables to further improve their sustainability credentials.

As a result, many B2B energy suppliers have developed products and tariffs to make renewable energy more accessible and to support businesses – particularly SMEs – to adopt renewable energy and make zero-carbon power a part of their overall energy mix.



WE'RE HERE TO HELP

ENGIE believes in energy to feel positive about. We believe that we can make a positive difference - to the customer we serve, the communities we work in, and the environment in which we live.

We've been an energy industry leader for over 20 years, providing know-how, expertise and personal customer service to help our customers find the right energy solutions for their business.

We provide energy solutions to businesses of all sizes, from small and micro-businesses, to large industrial and commercial operations, with a range of independently-certified renewable options to help your business on its carbon-neutral journey.

All of our customers are supported by dedicated account managers, who are on hand to help you every step of the way.

CONTACT US FOR AN ENERGY QUOTE



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SOURCES:

¹
The GLA Group Responsible Procurement Policy:
https://www.london.gov.uk/sites/default/files/gla_group_responsible_procurement_policy_2021.pdf

²
AstraZeneca's 'Ambition Zero Carbon' strategy to eliminate emissions by 2025 and be carbon negative across the entire value chain by 2030:
<https://www.astrazeneca.com/media-centre/press-releases/2020/astrazenecas-ambition-zero-carbon-strategy-to-eliminate-emissions-by-2025-and-be-carbon-negative-across-the-entire-value-chain-by-2030-22012020.html#>

³
Sainsbury's cuts five years from target to become Net Zero by 2035 in its own operations:
<https://www.about.sainsburys.co.uk/news/latest-news/2021/26-10-2021-sainsburys-cuts-five-years-from-target-to-become-net-zero-by-2035-in-its-own-operations>

⁴
Jaguar Land Rover announces 2030 Sustainability targets:
<https://media.jaguarlandrover.com/news/2022/03/jaguar-land-rover-announces-2030-sustainability-targets-0>

⁵
Delivering a net-zero NHS:
<https://www.england.nhs.uk/greenernhs/a-net-zero-nhs/>

With special thanks to Datagraphic:
www.datagraphic.co.uk



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