



Sourcing Sustainable Products

When sourcing the variety and number of products and services that a large educational establishment needs, sustainability, ethics and minimising the impact on the environment are becoming increasingly important aspects to consider.

Although the relative impact of promotional merchandise on the environment may be small in comparison to some more sizable purchases, it can be just as important to *promote* your 'Green Credentials' as well as put them into practise.

Promotional Merchandise is an unusual marketing medium compared to TV, radio or traditional print. The recipient takes away a tangible item which represents the product or service your establishment offers. Therefore, the sustainable, environmental and ethical credentials of the merchandise distributed must reflect the values of the organisation being promoted.

With this in mind, when selecting a product, it is vital to consider its entire 'back story'.

This could include:

- Raw materials and their origin
- Labour standards of all organisations involved
- Manufacturing processes and their location
- Branding method used
- Delivery method
- Packaging utilised

Written evidence including certificates, audit trails and inspection reports should also be sought to authenticate all declarations.

There are supply channels within the industry that cannot evidence their products' supply chains in this way, so the need for this level of scrutiny should be raised at the very early stages to ensure the products and organisations being considered can achieve this standard.