



big sky

environmental design and print solutions

The world is big enough for everyone's need
but not for everyone's greed.

M. K. Gandhi



Big Sky is a trading name of



Printed on 9 Lives recycled paper using vegetable oil-based inks

Moray skies and landscapes:

Red skies © Duncan Easter, Blue skies © Lex Le Feuvre, Windmill landscape © Dieter Bartholomaei

Big Sky offers a high quality, competitively priced design and print service. We produce a wide range of print from stationery through promotional leaflets to full colour magazines and books. We will invest your material with a professionalism and creativity that elegantly expresses exactly what you want to say.

Our experience in design and reproduction for print is on a par with the best design houses, however our prices can be as little as 33% of their hourly rates. We are able to do this because, as a printer, we do not solely rely on design for our income. We also print for designers who want their work to be presented with real quality and environmentally sound processes.

Our company was founded in 1990 and moved to our present site in Findhorn Bay in 1993. Since then we have grown through the early application of new technology which has reduced production costs and enabled us to supply a sophisticated high quality design and print service to our customers at affordable prices. We have recently invested in a brand new fully automated full colour press and an environmentally friendly chemical-free computer-to-plate imaging system.

Questions that may occur to you

What is so good about your service?

- It's personal – we are a small attentive company
- Quality product – we are expert printers and creative designers
- It's affordable – we offer very competitive prices
- Environmentally sound – we ensure best practice to make a real difference
- Convenient – we can work remotely or face to face
- Quick turnaround – we will meet your deadlines

What do you do?

- Offset litho & digital printing, using the most environmentally sound processes
- Graphic design and illustration for leaflets, magazines, books, advertisements, business cards, stationery, display materials etc
- Copying and binding
- Book production
- Large format colour posters and banners

How can you hope to compete with bigger printers?

- We are a small, efficient company with low overheads
- We have automated, highly productive equipment
- We receive good discounts on our purchase of recycled paper, because we use high volumes of recycled stock
- We enjoy high customer loyalty because they appreciate our service.
- We win new customers through our attentiveness, competence, quality and value

Why Big Sky?

Big Sky is a name that reflects and celebrates the spectacular skylines here in Morayshire. We are committed to working in a way that protects our common environment and our name is a useful reminder of how important it is to look after the planet and its climate and to look for the wider vision in all aspects of life.

Does being environmental mean higher prices, dull paper and washed out ink colours?

No, no and no! We don't charge a premium for recycled paper. In fact we can supply it cheaper than an equivalent virgin paper. The recycled stocks we use are of excellent quality and difficult to distinguish from virgin grades. (If you want the 'recycled look' we can supply stock to suit also). We can source Forestry Stewardship Council certified papers as an alternative to recycled paper and of course are happy to use any type of paper or board that is commercially available. The vegetable oil-based inks we use as standard are equivalent in performance and printed result to mineral oil-based inks. Overall we don't see why our customers should pay a premium just because we take care of the environment.

Where are you?

Answer A – "It's not really that important any more".

It's so easy to work through projects by phone, email or fax these days, that location doesn't really matter. Using reliable carriers or Royal Mail special delivery, all jobs are quickly delivered.

Answer B – In Findhorn, Morayshire, North-East Scotland.

Company Policies

General

We are a small company which only employ experienced, conscientious staff and aim to provide a personal service tailored to our customers needs. Good design is a priority.

We seek to maintain and expand our client base through:

- continually ensuring a high standard of attention is given to all our customers' requirements at all times
- having a fast turnaround
- keeping costs down
- seeking clients who will appreciate our professionalism and commitment to protecting the environment

Quality Control

All print is checked at each stage of production for quality and errors, and sample checked at the finishing and packing stage. We want customers to be delighted with the quality of the finished product and work hard to ensure this.

Good Value

We deliver great value because our pre-press, printing and finishing equipment is highly productive and our overheads are relatively low. Our design service is very affordable compared to most graphic design businesses. While our staff have many years of design and reprographic experience, our hourly rate can be as little as one third the cost charged by a design house.

Same day quotes next day delivery

We can produce quotations on the same day if the request is received before 3pm.

For the smaller job it is not unusual for us to receive an order by email in the morning and have the package with the customer the next day by special delivery.

Most of our jobs are turned around in 1-4 working days. Where design is involved, or the job requires specialist finishing, or when we are very busy things can take longer and it is safest to plan in advance to avoid disappointment.

Employee policies

Professionalism is our watch word. And to keep high-quality, professional staff, we make sure we look after them well. We pay above-average wages for the local area. As a small company, we respond personally to the needs, concerns and aspirations of our staff. In addition we pay for our staff to have access to the facilities of our local community association (discounted arts and theatre events, use of community centre, affordable meals service twice a day, free local bus service, discounted workshops, library, hot tub).

Social and environmental policies

Please see over

What we do at Big Sky to be a more environmental printer

We are developing an environmental management system aimed at achieving EMAS and ISO14001 certification. But we have been working on becoming more environmental since 1990. This is what we actually do:

A. BEING MORE SUSTAINABLE IN THE PRINTING PROCESS ITSELF

1. Support renewable energy

- we support a local wind power project by purchasing all our electricity from them

2. Reduce energy consumption

- choose highly productive and therefore lower energy consuming presses and processes (e.g. an automated 4-colour press and chemical-free plate production system)
- use power-save settings on equipment, low energy bulbs etc.
- turn off appliances when not needed
- reduce and monitor heating levels
- plan long-term measures to reduce energy consumption

3. Reduce waste caused through errors

- choose modern automated equipment
- employ experienced conscientious highly trained staff
- plan and prepare jobs carefully, check for quality and errors at each stage of production

4. Reduce, Re-use, Recycle

- any chemicals we still use are collected by a waste management company and recycled or disposed of safely.
- we look to use equipment and printing strategies which reduce paper waste
- all our waste paper trimmings are recycled and none goes to landfill
- we make notepads out of waste paper which we give to local charities, community members and customers for free
- we use so much recycled paper that we are classified as a “recycled paper promoter” by our supplier and consequently can offer recycled grades at cheaper cost than virgin paper
- we give away or re-use waste such as pallets, paper offcuts, packaging
- we plan orders so as to minimise transportation

5. Restrict use of chemicals that evaporate

- we minimise our use of volatile organic compounds and petrochemicals generally and use vegetable-based alternatives as much as possible
- we requested a plate cleaner be specially developed which is non-toxic to marine life, and this is now used by other companies

6. Reduce overall chemical use

The traditional offset printing process used film and film chemistry (developer & fixer). The film was used to expose a printing plate. This plate was then developed with more chemicals. Modern computer to plate systems have dispensed with the film stage but most systems in use today still process the plate using chemicals. However we are one of the few printing companies in the UK who have invested in the latest chemistry free computer to plate system. This means we do not use any chemicals to produce our printing plates.

In addition:

- we use vegetable oil-based inks as standard with no adverse effects at all on printing quality
- we use cloths for cleaning the presses and have waste recovered from the cloths which is either reused or safely disposed of
- we are looking to reduce to a minimum the amount of chemicals used in the printing process itself, e.g. unlike most printers we don't use any isopropyl alcohol in the fountain solution.

B. CONTRIBUTING TO THE QUALITY OF THE HUMAN ENVIRONMENT

We treat staff with individual care and respect, and pay salaries that are at least 10% higher than the local average. We are an equal opportunities employer, and have employed people of all sexes, orientations and ages.

We try hard to find best solutions for our customers, even if this reduces our short term profits.

We periodically look at ways to improve office and print shop conditions.

Where possible we support the personal development of staff and offer training opportunities.

We work on learning to understand each other's stresses, as well as our own and our customers!

Locally we support a youth project, community association and independent school.

We subscribe to “Common Ground”, a community code of ethics.

C. CONTRIBUTING GLOBALLY: BIODIVERSITY, SOCIAL WELL-BEING, CLIMATE CHANGE

We support a re-forestation project ('Trees for Life', in Scotland), a health project in Nepal, and an orphanage in Russia.

Staff are allowed to use office and internet facilities to pursue their own ethical and environmental concerns and networking.

We resell 100% recycled paper locally with minimal mark-up so as to make it affordable unlike most retailers who charge a large premium for recycled papers.

Designers appreciate working with us because:

We handle most file formats

We fix problems on files without making a fuss

We produce a contract quality proof as standard within 24 hours of receiving artwork files and achieve an excellent match between the proof and the printed result

We aim to print a job within a matter of days

We are designers ourselves so we understand your needs

Our prices are excellent

We are environmental printers who don't charge extra for our extra care

We guarantee absolute confidentiality – we would never contact your customers directly.

Testimonials

"Many thanks for attending to this so promptly. I am absolutely delighted with your designs, both versions of the upright banner being just great. I have a slight preference for version 2"

Richard Ogilvy, Dulnain Bridge Plant

"Thank you, Posthouse (now Big Sky), for your generous support – AND for your wonderfully efficient service".

Liza Hollingshead, Ecologia Trust

"Many thanks for making a donation to the Nepal Trust's work once again. Your ongoing support is much appreciated, as is your helpfulness and consideration in any of our dealings with you."

Liz Donovan, Nepal Trust

"We are really delighted with the quality of printing and production (of the magazine), thank you very much for all the care and skill that you put into its creation."

Judith McNicol, Artesian Magazine

"I have had a very good experience working with you all - so, many thanks. I look forward to working with you again soon."

Kate Williams MacKenzie, Personal Growth Consultancy

"I would like to thank you for once again producing a very professional result in an impressive time scale."

Ian Baxter, Midlothian Green Party



Scanning: Scanmate F8 high resolution A3 flatbed professional scanner.

Proofing: Compose Starproof contract quality digital colour and mono proofing. This proof is produced from same bitmap files which produce the plates so data integrity is guaranteed. Proofs are calibrated to our full colour press to ensure highly accurate colour rendition prior to print. Epson 7600 print engine also provides photo-quality large format full colour printing up to 610mm wide for posters and banners, using light safe inks on a variety of different paper stocks.



Pre-press: Presstek Dimension 400 computer-to-plate. High quality imaging direct to plate. Chemistry free – no film or plate processing required.

Presses: Hamada B452-A, full colour automated offset press. Highly productive press with very quick make-ready times as plates are auto loaded and ink ducts are set automatically from computer data according to the ink coverage required for each job. This press allows us to be very competitively priced especially for short to medium length runs of full colour work.



Digital printing and copying: Xerox DC12 digital colour & mono print centre. Quality approaches off-set litho. Ideal for short run colour printing of booklets, leaflets, posters and business cards.

Finishing: Polar 76EM programmatic guillotine. Morgana System 90 collate, stitch, fold and trim line for bookletting, UFO folding machines, perfect, comb & wire binding, padding, 2 wire stitching. Laminating up to A1 size.



Environment: Chemical-free pre-press
Waste minimisation and recycling
Vegetable oil-based inks
Powered by 25% local renewable wind energy (soon to be 100%, with surplus supplied to grid)
Low volatility and environmentally safer press washes
We are classed as a promoter of recycled paper by one of our paper merchants which means we receive a good discount on our purchase of recycled papers and can supply such papers at very competitive rates, in fact in many cases cheaper than we could supply virgin paper grades

Turnaround: Most small to medium sized jobs can be printed within 3-4 working days (offset litho) or 1-2 days (digital print).



Artwork Files: Our own design work is originated in QuarkXpress, Adobe InDesign, Adobe Illustrator, Macromedia Freehand & Photoshop. We are happy to accept files for print from designers or customers in the above formats. Additionally we accept file formats as follows: High resolution pdf files, Pagemaker and Microsoft Word on either PC or Apple Mac, Microsoft Publisher on the PC.

How to be more environmental when you print

Printing is estimated to be the UK's 4th most polluting industry, mostly because of high energy and chemical use, and associated waste.

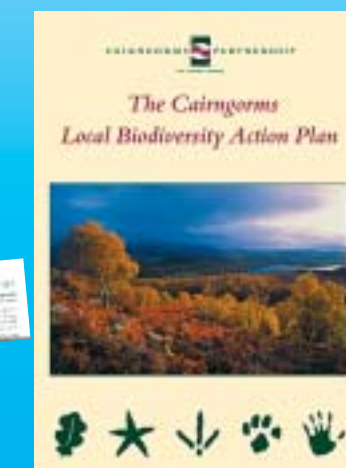
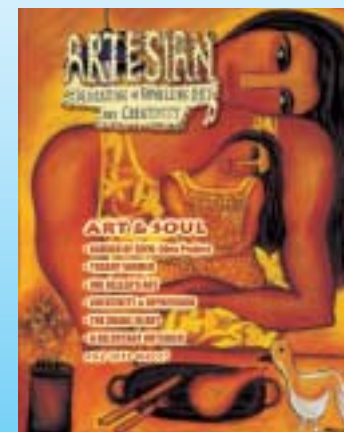
People want to know what they can do to reduce environmental impacts, not just by using less energy in planes/cars/domestic heating, but also in their purchasing choices. This is especially important when it comes to choosing a printer and it is not just about recycled paper. In fact all aspects of a companies activities need to be addressed as well as the design and printing process itself to ensure sustainability.

What customers can do to be more environmental in their printing choices

1. Consider printing less, but getting more value into it and out of it:
 - spend more on good design to make sure that your message gets across (please call Big Sky for help);
 - use an expert designer and professional page layout software to create attractive and cost effective printing;
 - combine your printing with other marketing strategies (if you would like advice please call Big Sky for an appointment);
 - ensure your distribution and targeting is efficient so as to avoid wastage of materials and costs.
2. Choose an environmental printer. Check if:
 - they have an explicitly stated environmental policy;
 - they are certified to or working towards a recognised environmental management standard (ISO 14001, EMAS, ACORN);
 - they really minimise waste;
 - they minimise energy use;
 - they have a real commitment to continuing improvement
 - they have eliminated unnecessary chemical processes and use the smallest amount of the least damaging press chemicals, especially Volatile Organic Compounds (VOC's) which damage the ozone layer;
 - they serve their local community.
3. Litho printing is more energy efficient than photocopying when you're doing longer runs. Digital copiers and scanners are better than analogue photocopiers.
4. Consider using an alternative to gloss coated paper which is less recycled and less recyclable. If you want a coated paper, remember that silk and matt finishes can give a more sophisticated feel and look.

What we do A-Z

Advertisement design	Die-cutting	Menus
Application forms	Envelopes	NCR sets
Appointment cards	Folders	Newsletters
Art scanning and prints	Forms	Notepads
Binding (comb, wire and perfect)	Greeting cards	Order forms
Book design and production	Gummed labels	Posters
Booklets and brochures	Invoice pads	Postcards
Business cards	Labels	Raffle tickets
Calendars	Lamination	Reports
Catalogues	Large format colour prints up to A1 and banners up to 600mm wide	Ring binders
CD booklets and inserts	Leaflets	Scanning
Compliment slips	Letterheads	Tickets
Corporate ID	Logo development	Typesetting
Colour copying	Magazines	Xeroxing
Colour printing (digital & litho)		Zero quibbles



big sky

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