

Press Release

43% of major Banks, 70% of Telecoms and 30% of Utilities risk Greenwash sanctions

Research carried out for Two Sides reveals that major UK Corporates are flouting advertising regulations and risk reporting to the Advertising Standards Authority.

15 November 2010, London, UK – Two Sides has announced details of a national campaign to educate major UK Corporate companies (i.e. Banks & Building Societies, Utilities and Telecoms) and prevent them from using misleading or factually incorrect environmental claims. This follows research of the major banks, telecoms and utility companies; many who are using the environment in their marketing message to promote lower cost electronic billing and services.

Two Sides is the European initiative to promote the responsible production and use of print and paper, and encourage its use as an attractive, practical and sustainable communications medium.

Two Sides is targeting companies who claim that switching to online communication is better for the environment without supplying verifiable supporting evidence. Martyn Eustace, Two Sides Director, says “This is misleading to consumers and encourages them not to use paper when in fact it may be the sustainable way to communicate. Greenwash of this nature is creating a false impression about the sustainability of print and paper and has a detrimental effect on the print and paper industries.”

In recent years companies have improved their awareness of corporate responsibility and sustainability however, in seeking to gain environmental credibility whilst reducing costs, many are using misleading “green” marketing to encourage customers to receive their bills or communications online, claiming that this is “better for the environment”. The majority of these claims are unsubstantiated and damaging to the print and paper industry. The term “paperless” is also disingenuous as the paper, currently used within an organisation to generate a traditional bill or statement, is now being replaced by home or office printing; which is necessary for the many users who still prefer and demand a permanent hard copy.

The linkage made between reducing the use of paper and helping the environment not only creates a misleading impression about the sustainability of print and paper but as these claims are also unsupported by facts they contravene the latest CAP code, (Committee for Advertising Practice), which states that environmental “*claims must be supported by a high level of substantiation*”; and also flout the guidelines set by CSR Europe, the leading European business network for corporate social responsibility, who are clear that “*Green claims should be truthful, accurate and able to be substantiated and they should not make comparisons unless the comparison is relevant, clear and specific*”.

Print and Paper
have a great
environmental
story to tell



Two Sides is targeting companies who claim that switching to online communication is better for the environment without verifiable supporting evidence and has written to the CEO and Head of Legal Department of all the major banks, building societies, utility providers and telecoms. Two Sides' Director Martyn Eustace comments that, "major British businesses should be setting an example, not promoting Greenwash. We will be writing to the many companies that are in breach of advertising regulations and, if these concerns are not addressed, we will lodge a complaint with the Advertising Standards Authority (ASA)."

Eustace emphasises that, "we are more than willing to engage in a meeting and provide these companies' marketing and legal departments with all the facts about the sustainability of print media to help ensure that the messages they are sending out to the public and their customers are both factually and environmentally correct. Two Sides have recently successfully engaged with three leading companies in these sectors and have been able to quickly find an amicable solution without having to resort to the ASA."

"If organisations want to encourage customers to switch to e-billing", says Eustace, "because they believe it offers efficiency then we have no quarrel with that but we will fight all the way to stop them from making a link between reducing the use of paper and helping the environment unless they have proof that this is so."

"The true picture of the excellent environmental benefits of paper is being overlooked by these false messages. In Europe:

- 44% of the land area is covered by forests
- 93% of our paper comes from Europe where the area of forest has grown by 30% since 1950 and is increasing at a rate of 1.5 million football pitches every year."

Eustace concludes: "Paper is a renewable and recyclable product that, if responsibly produced and consumed, is an environmentally sustainable media and may be the sustainable way to communicate. The forestry and paper industries are major guardians of this precious and growing resource."

Notes to editors

1. If you have any queries please contact Andy Scott (07770 520484) or Vince Collins (07977 178772) at Collins Scott Marketing Ltd.
2. For more information on Collins Scott Marketing's services, visit www.collinsscott.com, or email info@collinsscott.com

About Two Sides

Two Sides is an initiative by companies from the Graphic Communication Value Chain including forestry, pulp, paper, inks and chemicals, pre press, press, finishing, publishing and printing. Today there nearly 300 members. Our common goal is to promote the responsible production and use of print and paper, and dispel common environmental misconceptions by providing users with verifiable information on why print and paper is an attractive, practical and sustainable communications medium. www.twosides.info

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