



CIRCLEGRAPHICS

Recycle. Reuse. Rethink.

How Circle Graphics' latest Eco-Flexx™ 2.0 is leading the way toward a greener bulletin landscape.



It's a fact that, over the years, outdoor advertising—and more specifically its non-recyclable waste—has left its impact on the environment. The good news is that huge strides have been and continue to be made toward our industry's adopting greener and more sustainable practices and products on a wide-scale, mainstream basis.

The development of and transition from 30-sheet paper to single-sheet, 100% recyclable polyethylene (PE) poster substrates like Circle Graphics' groundbreaking Eco-Poster™ was one of the most significant successes in industry history.

In fact, more than 1 million poster units are produced and installed annually, and since March 2009, more than 80% of these have been converted from paper to PE single-sheet plastic and are currently being recycled.

This nearly universal adoption of Circle Graphics' Eco-Poster and similarly PE-based poster materials (and the equally revolutionary CG Cable Installation System, which has eliminated the need for glue and/or paste) proved such a success that the industry next set its sights on the higher-volume bulletin sector, a space that until just a few years ago had used (and continues to use) PVC vinyl as its primary material.

More than 130 million square feet of bulletin substrate is produced and installed in the U.S. market each year, with 85% (or approximately 113 million sq. ft.) consisting of non-recyclable PVC that more often than not ends up in landfills. And while efforts have been made to reduce vinyl's environmental footprint, the fact remains that PVC billboard substrate is not cost-effective to recycle in significant volumes. The reason for this is the need to separate out the PVC's polyester scrim reinforcement fabric, which is very difficult and melts at a higher temperature than PVC. In addition, toxic fumes (dioxins) are released into the environment when PVC is burned.

Enter Circle Graphics' PE-based Eco-Flexx™, which is 100% recyclable and can be melted down and repurposed into applications such as plastic railroad ties, freight pallets and lawn edging. In addition, Eco-Flexx weighs substantially less than PVC. A typical PE bulletin weighs 20 pounds compared to a similarly sized PVC billboard produced on 12 oz. PVC, which weighs 75 pounds. This translates into multiple advantages in worker safety in production,

installation, de-installation and disposal, as well as transportation savings throughout the entire process.

Our latest generation—Eco-Flexx 2.0—has been further improved in durability, tensile strength (for tensioning during installation), and coating surface brightness, which allows better color reproduction.

Circle's latest generation of recyclable, PE-based Eco-Flexx 2.0 is welcome news to the industry's major billboard companies such as Clear Channel, CBS Outdoor, and Lamar Advertising, companies that have embraced the need for recycling and have been key participants in the drive to create viable alternatives to toxic PVC and non-recyclable materials.

“We are dedicated to going green, and have made significant strides in addressing the environmental concerns of our clients and the communities in which we do business,” Clear Channel Outdoor stated back in November 2009. “We are also currently working toward converting our entire bulletin inventory to accommodate recyclable Eco-Flexx material and will be recycling PE bulletins in the same fashion as PE posters.”

The Outdoor Advertising Association of America (OAAA) is also keeping a close watch on how PE fares in the marketplace, with Eco-Flexx's production and installation volume comprising roughly 15% of the current U.S. bulletin market share.

“PE-based substrates have proven a durable, high-quality poster product,” comments OAAA's Stephen Freitas. “It now appears that PE materials will be a viable option for bulletin flex printing as well.”