

# Carol Fischer is going...goinggreen®

Fischer and Norwood Promotional Products & BIC Graphics USA launch a new, environmentally friendly product line.



Sleepy Eye, Minnesota proudly lays claim to being the only town in the world so-named. Fortunately, though, for the 3,500 residents of this cozy little farming community nestled about 115 miles southwest of Minneapolis, their town's unique moniker isn't the only thing putting it on the map. It also happens to be home to Norwood Promotional Products & BIC Graphic USA's calendar and paper products division, a promotional products company that's honoring its commitment to the environment by producing a brand-spanking new

line of journals and calendars that are as lushly "green" as the state of Minnesota itself.

These days, Norwood is winning numerous accolades for its efforts to develop and produce journal and calendar products that respect the environment in their use of 'green' recycled materials. In fact, the company's goinggreen® Calendars, Planners & Diaries were recently singled out with a prestigious award for their earth-friendly design and production specs.

## Sturdy, lightweight and 'green'

The new environmentally conscious product line was the brainstorm of Carol Fischer, Norwood's assistant trade marketing manager. In her role, Fischer is largely focused on product marketing, along with a healthy dose of product development and management. With a 27-year career at Norwood to her credit, she was more than qualified to head up the new project.

With roughly 450 stock line types of calendars that Norwood produces, Fischer says the new line represents a departure from the status quo.

"We've always wanted to get into journal production, so I was looking for truly recycled stock materials that would be 'green' and sturdy, but not so thick that we couldn't bind them," Fischer explains. She found it with FiberMark's Dorset® and Reprise® lines, which fit the criteria to a "t." "As soon as I saw them, I said to myself 'Yes, this is something we can work with.'"

The new line includes journals and dated products. Although she championed the development of the new line from concept through manufacturing, Fischer gives a lot of credit to the team who helped make it possible. She tapped the skills of two designers on the Norwood staff—Jana Bocklund and Jeff Julien—to create the grid design on the dated products. In addition, she credits Norwood's manufacturing staff for their efforts. "They're always helpful and interested in working on new projects," she notes.

For the design, Fischer says she explored different size products. "We currently have one that's 6" by 9" that has done fairly well, but it had a heavier weight cover stock," she explains. "I liked the idea of going with a sturdy but lighter weight stock, not only because the materials they're made from were green, but also, because since it weighs less, it meant we would end up spending less in shipping as well as using less energy to ship it."

## Growth line

Norwood's new **goinggreen** line is ripe for growth, Fischer says. Not only is it consistent with the company's environmentally sensitive values, but, as she notes, she can see a definite need and demand for it in the marketplace. "Planners, diaries and journals are a relatively small segment of our business, and we would like to grow that," she remarks.

Norwood's recycled products are green through and through. The cover materials are made from post-consumer recycled material (FiberMark's Dorset contains up to 35 percent recycled fiber and up to 10 percent post consumer waste and Reprise contains 100 percent recycled fiber with 30 percent post consumer waste), and the stock used for the interior pages and even the wire that binds the products use a minimum of 30% recycled materials as well. What's more, Norwood uses inks containing vegetable oils for the products. "And," Fischer adds, "we design, print and imprint our journal products right here in the U.S."



FiberMark's stock color options were important to the product line's success, says Fischer. "I liked FiberMark's colors. They were very natural and yet lent themselves to the type of colors that advertisers would want to promote their businesses," she notes, adding, "I chose the Espresso, Green Tea, and Imperial Red in the Dorset; and the Ginger, Indigo, Maize, Kohl and Wheat in the Reprise."

Fischer also liked the Dorset and Reprise finishes, and the fact that when they tested them, they worked very well with the binding and imprinting equipment. "By and large, the entire design and production process ran smoothly, from start to finish, Fischer says. "I really feel that FiberMark was responsive and provided a lot of follow-up."

### **To market, to market . . .**

With the early success of the new line, Norwood is pursuing a green identity more actively. "We've been working at trying to be efficiently green for a number of years," Fischer says. "Right now, we're working on our ISO 9001 compliance, and the training to attain that. Also, for many years, we've had a system that vacuums up the scrap papers in our manufacturing facility, and then bails it to sell to a recycler."

Asked how the line of green products is doing, Fischer says she's very pleased with the response from the marketplace. "The journal introduction was one of our best; it came out much stronger, with more of a recognition factor than we generally have with these products. I would say this one is going to be around for a while."

And, of course, Fischer is equally pleased that FiberMark has recognized Norwood's and her efforts by awarding them FiberMark's 17th Annual Specifier "Green" Best of Show Award, another "green" feather in Norwood's increasingly earth-friendly cap.

Norwood's  line can be found on the company's website, [www.norwood.com](http://www.norwood.com).