



HOW AUTHENTIC INK AND TONER CONTRIBUTE TO A SUSTAINABLE CLOSED-LOOP ECONOMY

By David McQuarrie, Chief Operating Officer, HP Print



Channel resellers should work with vendors who invest in sustainable practices. It's good for the planet – and for business.

Make it. Use it. Throw it away. For centuries, that's the way the economy has worked, sending goods along a linear path from the factory to the consumer to the landfill.

Today, however, more citizens, businesses and governments believe the path needs to come back around, creating a “circular” or “closed loop” economy that encourages — or demands — recycling, returning, repurposing and regenerating products at the end of their life cycles.

Why does this matter? Because as my colleague Nate Hurst, HP's Chief Sustainability and Social Impact Officer, [often points out](#), today it would take the natural resources of 1.6 Earths to sustain humankind's current demands for resources, and there may be 4 billion more of us crowding onto the planet by 2100. Clearly, something must change.

Important for the Planet and Business

A successful closed-loop model helps a business grow its profits without increasing its environmental impact. Companies that do so find that they can create value for their business and please their customers, all while giving the planet a little help. Companies that haven't figured it out yet may soon have no choice, as governments around the world introduce policies and regulations to jumpstart the creation of circular economy practices.

Even without regulatory edicts, many companies are changing the ways they design, manufacture, service, recycle and reuse products – strategies that fortuitously put their customers at the center of the loop and help to encourage relationships and brand loyalty. Within this framework, companies can engage with customers by offering products as well as inviting them into the business, garnering trust and profitability.

As businesses find ways to keep products and materials in use for as long as possible and at the highest state of their value, buyers – especially younger buyers – recognize the environmental and social benefits of moving past traditional “throwaway” attitudes. Increasingly, they vote with their dollars.

HP Goes Round-and-Round

When a toner cartridge from a laser printer ends up in a landfill, reports note that it can take [hundreds of years](#) to decompose, and fewer than [30 percent](#) of ink and toner cartridges are recycled annually. We simply must find a more sustainable path to the future.

As a large global manufacturer of a wide array of imaging and printing products, many of which include plastic components, HP has been working to build and fine-tune closed loop manufacturing systems – starting with its product design – since 1992.

A few years later in 1995, HP's [Planet Partners](#) take-back and recycling program for ink cartridges was

launched, and HP started closing the recycling loop in 2000, when it began creating toner cartridges with plastic recycled from the program. Through Planet Partners, HP has collected more than 3.3 billion pounds of hardware and supplies — the equivalent weight of more than 150 Eiffel Towers. To date, HP has manufactured more than three billion ink and toner cartridges, using more than 218 million pounds of recycled content material, including 784 million used HP cartridges and four billion plastic bottles.

At HP, a key concept in the circular economy is a materials cycle — where plastics, metals and other durable materials are continuously used and reused for high-grade applications, without being “downcycled” into lower-grade uses that eventually become waste. Today, [more than 80 percent of HP’s ink cartridges contain recycled material](#) 100 percent of HP toner cartridges contain recycled content.

Anyone making technology purchase decisions, especially for office environments, should make sustainability part of the decision criteria, and it looks like those decision makers buyers are getting on board fast. In fact, HP estimates that in 2017, at least [\\$700 million in new revenue](#) was the result of contracts or sales in which sustainability factors were a key differentiator. It turns out that sustainability is good for business, not at odds with it.

Big Business Benefits

To those who might complain that shifting from landfill dumping to lifecycle management sounds painfully expensive, the numbers tell a different story. According to Accenture research from 2015, [the circular economy could unlock \\$4.5 trillion in additional economic output by 2030](#) as circular economic models “help decouple economic growth and natural resource consumption while driving greater competitiveness.”

As Dion Weisler, HP’s President and CEO, puts it, “We believe sustainability is a powerful force for growth and innovation, in the world and at HP. It guides how we do business and drives the way our products are designed, made, used and regenerated. And it is a focal point as we reinvent our business models and operations toward a materials and energy-efficient circular economy.”