

TECHNOLOGY • SOLUTIONS • RESOURCES



**RIGHT: ERICK JESSEE, PRESIDENT**

**LEFT: HIS FATHER LANCE JESSEE, CHAIRMAN OF THE BOARD**

## POSTY CARDS

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Printing Industries of America and Its Affiliates—  
Your National and Local Resource

# PRINT PROCESS ADVANCEMENTS AND TRENDS

# SMALL BUSINESS, BIG VISION

## POSTY CARDS' PLATINUM JOURNEY

*Kristina Gleeson, Manager, Copywriting, Printing Industries of America*

According to Posty Cards President, Erick Jessee, "You don't have to be big to be green." Even before green was "in," his family-run small business, Posty Cards, was ahead of the pack. With a commitment to sustainability, the expanding business-to-business greeting card printer in Kansas City decided to apply for a LEED certification. They had no idea how much their investment would pay off.

LEED, or Leadership in Energy & Environmental Design ([www.usgbc.org/leed](http://www.usgbc.org/leed)), headed by the U.S. Green Building Council (USGBC), is a widely recognized accreditation that companies can apply and qualify for by satisfying standardized prerequisites to achieve either a Certified, Silver, Gold, or Platinum certification level. LEED and similar environmental certifications provide operational benefits as well as valuable third-party endorsement of a company's green efforts, which is respected by customers, employees, and vendors. In many cases it can also contribute to healthier working conditions and improved employee performance and productivity.

### Going for the Gold

In 2011, business was expanding, and Printing & Imaging Association of MidAmerica member Posty Cards was more than doubling the size of their building space from 22,000 to 45,000 square feet. The 67-year old company was also looking to rebrand—an opportunity to find a long-term

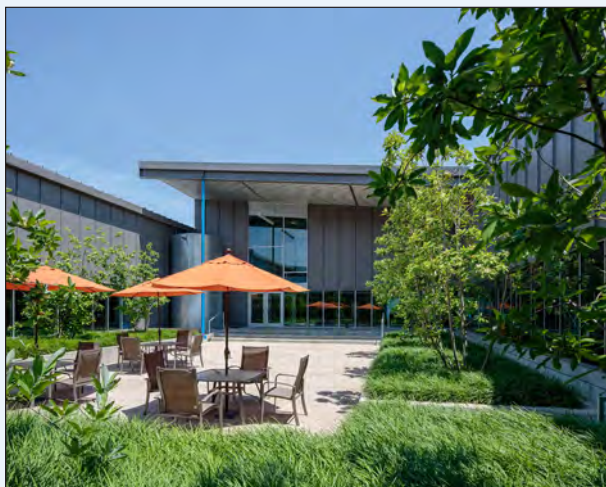
solution and invest in LEED certification. "We didn't want to do a conventional building," Jessee says. "If we did, we'd be stuck with it for 25 years."

For them investing in certification aligned with their existing green business philosophies. They were addressing their supply chain by sourcing paper from U.S. mills only to ensure verifiable environmental regulation; began a transition to 100% FSC-certified paper; introduced products using paper with 30% to 100% recycled content; moved to low-VOC soy-based inks, low-VOC coatings, and more environmentally benign chemicals; and began a program to recycle office and industrial waste.

Posty Cards' goal was to achieve a Gold-level LEED certification, or a score of 60 to 79 on a 100-point rating scale. This was a tall order for a small printing business of only 35 employees at the time—and a small budget to match. But, despite the large upfront capital investment required, the company pushed on, confident in the significant cost savings over the life of the building. "You only do it once," remarks Jessee "so do it right." And do it right they did. After working with their architect, engineers, and contractor to meet stringent Gold-level LEED criteria, Posty Cards had another big decision to make. "When we tallied up all of our LEED points, we found that we were only three points away from Platinum," Jessee says. "So we ended up making an additional investment to get to the Platinum level."

**Below**—Native landscaping is irrigated thanks to a rainwater collection system.

**Right**—Inside the plant clean air and well-lighted spaces provide efficiency and a comfortable environment for Posty Card employees.





## The Platinum Payoff

Today Posty Cards continues to reduce their environmental footprint. The company has shown further commitment to sustainable green practices by gaining certifications in the Sustainable Green Printing Partnership (SGP), Forest Stewardship Council™ (FSC), and Green-e Energy. As a G7 master printer, their equipment and prepress workflow not only ensure color consistency from offset to digital printing, which pleases customers, but also helps reduce makeready waste. They have added 45kW more solar, on-site power generation, are working toward achieving zero waste to landfill certification by 2016, and have more than 50 additional initiatives in various stages slated for completion in the next one to five years.

"[Our building] is the first LEED-certified industrial building in Missouri," Jessee says, "and at the time it was one of seven LEED Platinum-certified industrial buildings in the country." Furthermore they're the smallest manufacturing company to achieve Platinum certification in the U.S.

Their efforts have also returned measurable improvements in operational costs as well as the working environment. "We doubled our space but are only using five percent more energy, almost doubling the efficiency of the facility," Jessee reveals.

Solar panels installed on the roof of the Posty Cards facility generate a total of 94kW of power, or more than 20% of their annual electricity use, which, as anyone who has been in a working pressroom knows, is a significant amount of power. Sustainable materials and fixtures include FSC plywood, low-flow faucets, waterless urinals, a controlled lighting system, and a solar-heated water system throughout the facility.

Regional, well-adapted native landscaping outside the building does not require supplemental irrigation once established, plus they help to re-establish native insects and animals. Extensive rain gardens, or bio-retention basins, are planted with native plants and are part of storm water runoff management designed to keep natural waterways clean. An 8,300 gallon water retention tank collects rainwater, which is purified and used for irrigation as well as plumbing.

Inside natural light shines through the floor-to-ceiling windows, illuminating the once-dark press and office space and giving the entire space a more open feel and employees room to breathe. This fresh air is delivered by variable refrigerant volume HVAC for zone heating and cooling, which is 45% more efficient than traditional methods, and the installation of an air energy transfer system provides superior air quality and efficiency. This system continually refreshes interior air with conditioned outside air. Imagine walking into a pressroom that is not permeated with the smell of ink!

Ultimately all of these building improvements added up to a rebuilding of the Posty Cards brand. Their stewardship has played an enormous role in creating a strong identity for Posty Cards. "A building can represent a brand, and it reflects that to visitors, customers, and employees," Jessee says. "It

## EASY, LOW-COST WAYS TO GO GREEN

Not all budgets can support a complete green project right away. However there are a number of small improvements that can have a big impact.

- **Seek and destroy waste**—Turn off lights and other power users when not in use, order materials wisely, use more efficient production methods.
- **Green your supply chain**—Manage your supply chain by purchasing green input resources that flow through an environmentally friendly production process to produce green outputs.
- **Look for post-consumer products**—Recycled products are now more competitively priced, so when possible use green alternatives, like paper, notebooks, kitchen and restroom supplies, and even printing equipment—Posty Cards buys used equipment whenever possible and uses it until the end of its life.
- **Clean smart**—Use natural, biodegradable cleaners when you can and be sure to follow any regulations to dispose of them properly.
- **See the light**—Use compact florescent (CFL) or LED lights, which, while more expensive, will use significantly less energy and last longer too.
- **Go Green Power**—Alternative energy, or "Green Power," uses energy from renewable resources like wind and solar. It is used by Fortune 500® companies and is available in many areas from your energy provider at a slightly higher cost. Posty Cards offsets 100% of their electricity usage that is not generated on site with Renewable Energy Credits.
- **Replace outdated appliances**—Energy Star appliances, which Posty Cards has invested in, include a label that helps you assess your long-term energy requirements.
- **Recycle**—Your waste is someone else's treasure. Develop a recycling program and find partners that will gladly take your waste, often paying you for the material.

makes us much more attractive to future employees. It's a very powerful statement to have a LEED Platinum building for your headquarters."

Posty Cards has been recognized nationwide, earning various awards and other third-party recognition for their sustainability efforts. Gary Jones, assistant vice president, EHS Affairs at PIA, who assisted them in obtaining and maintaining their SGP Certification remarked on the company, "Ever since I began interacting with Posty Cards several years ago, they have been dedicated to manufacturing products in a sustainable manner. They are to be commended for their dedication and commitment to integrating sustainability into their business operations."

Posty Cards has shown that even small improvements—and small businesses—can make a big impact. LEED certification may be a lofty goal for some operations, but for a company that has focused on sustainability as a differentiator, it proved to be attainable. "We said, 'here is our one opportunity to get it right,'" says Jessee, "so we set a goal that was challenging, and we are fortunate to have exceeded it."

You can learn more about Posty Cards at [www.postycards.com](http://www.postycards.com).