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University of Maine Pulp & Paper Foundation

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Fact or Fiction: Pulp and Paper Industry Myths and Truths Exposed

Industry

Being one of the oldest in the country, the paper industry has seen its fair share of change. There's a common perception that because some paper mills have had to close down, the industry as a whole is disappearing. This isn't true! While it seems to be the most common misconception, it's not the only one out there.

**The paper industry...
is dying.**

FICTION. While some facets of the paper industry are shrinking (ex: newsprint), the rest of the industry is evolving. With the rapid developments in ecommerce, sustainable products, and high consumer demand, companies in the industry have had to react and adapt quickly. The paper industry is resilient.

lacks job opportunities.

FICTION. With a large part of the workforce looking to retire, the industry is actively looking for younger workers to step in. While it's true that many facilities contain automated or computerized machinery, knowledgeable engineers and technicians are needed to maintain them.

is innovative and high tech.

FACT. Innovations in the industry have allowed outdated machinery and facilities to become highly efficient. These innovations also reduce carbon emissions, water and energy usage and improve workplace operations and safety. Paper companies also research, develop and produce new products to meet customer needs. Some are also

expanding their capabilities by innovating new ways to repurpose materials and machinery.

is sustainable and environmentally conscious.

FACT. Paper itself is a renewable and recyclable resource. Much like other crops, trees are replanted after harvest. Sustainable companies are committed to restoring forests not to the same size pre-harvest, but to a much bigger size. Also, certification systems such as The Sustainable Forestry Initiative and The Forest Stewardship Council exist to hold companies accountable and to make sure that companies are working with environmentally sustainable practices.

The United States is the second largest producer of paper and paperboard in the entire world (following China) and employs over 50,000 people. Although rumored to be an industry on the outs, it is anything but. Know fact from fiction, myth from truth when it comes to the pulp and paper industry and the opportunities therein.

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