

defining PRINT

A highly competitive industry

Print is a highly competitive industry to be in. Being involved in the fourth biggest industry in Australia and third in the world means a lot of competition and very high demands by the customer.

The question is then asked what defines a good printer from a bad one? It all boils down to one word and that is "consistency".

Any printer can produce one sheet that can win an award given the time and probably more importantly an innovative design. A really cheap price by a printer can get the foot in the door but there is much more to purchasing print on a regular basis than that. When dealing frequently with print "consistency" is what is required. Consistently being reliable in service, print quality and of course pricing.

All printers have a niche in the market dependant on the exact equipment they have access to. For a printer and a purchaser of print the battle is to find that niche. Sales and production knowledge, machine size/speed, pre press size/speed, the list goes on, all play a major role in the efficiency of a print company. It is definitely in your best interest to find out these variables so you can purchase print effectively.



DPI

The higher the dots per area the more clarity can be achieved. However pre press systems, printing presses and paper play a major role in deciding on the line screen to use. When printing on uncoated surfaces a larger dot is used. Due to the absorption properties and surface texture the dots hold their shape better. There are several types of dots used and some are not even round! Stochastic dots are the most popular. For high quality work on good paper 200 line screen is a must.



GREEN IS OUR NEW BLACK

Around here we like to think of ourselves as Green Printers. With a carbon footprint of almost zero we use recycled paper whenever possible (or paper from sustainable forests) to help contribute towards a greener planet. Our inks are Soya based and are environmentally sound which means a cleaner and greener planet. Even our offcuts and metal plates from the press are recycled.



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PAPER

Selecting stock can be an easy affair or potentially end in a catastrophe. It is amazing how many print jobs are rejected that stem from paper issues. Well when you consider it, it is not that surprising as it is the whole foundation of print.

Be careful when selecting stocks outside the norm. Coated stock, whether it be A2 grade or A1 are generally very reliable. The major difference between A1 grade and A2 is the number of layers of coating applied to the surface of the sheet. An A2 sheet has approximately 8 coatings applied whilst an A1 has around 15 coatings. A1 grades are not as sort after anymore as the whiteness, smoothness and printability has improved dramatically of A2 stocks. If the budget allows go A1 you will get a better print job every time. If you are wanting to use a high line screen it is advisable to go A1 stocks. The dot shape will hold better on the higher grade surface of paper.

The uncoated paper stocks do not hold the same image anywhere near as well as coated.

And if you have spent money on photography the customer may not be very happy. Uncoated paper with the right design can really grab your attention by the feel of the stock and the uniqueness of colour. Get some samples from the paper companies or your printer so you can show your customer what it will potentially look like.

Here are some uncoated stocks to consider for your next print run.

- Nordset
- Precision
- Knight
- Splendorgel

Textured stocks have do not have as big a market share as they used to. Technology on the design front has impacted so heavily on printed matter today that variables of paper and finishings are struggling for their right to be options to the customer.



QUOTING

When quoting a job follow these simple guidelines to ensure fast, accurate pricing.

- ▷▷ 1] quantity
- ▷▷ 2] description
- ▷▷ 3] size
- ▷▷ 4] colours
- ▷▷ 5] paper
- ▷▷ 6] special finishings eg celloglazing die cutting.
- ▷▷ 7] miscellaneous instructions
- ▷▷ 8] delivery instructions



WHEN THINGS GO WRONG!

Once that first sheet is passed there is not a lot stopping the motion of a print job going wrong. Firstly, as in the opening article consistency plays a big part here. You want a professional approach from a printer when it has gone wrong. You need to be able to find out can it be fixed?, how much? When is it going to be ready? Your customer is not concerned who is to blame and all they want to know is. Where is the job! The days of printer's arguing and not returning phone calls are over. A professional approach for a printer is vital to a long term relationship with a client. Find out the facts of what went wrong as soon as you can and same old story be aware of it for next time. Twice bitten does not please the boss.



INK

The age old battle of matching uncoated pantone colours to coated pantone colours is still raging strongly. Coincidentally many printers now are opting out of the market altogether to print full colour work only.

As long as the customer understands the variables associated with this form of printing it should not be an issue. Printing pantone colours still relies heavily on qualified tradesmen. Modern presses are going a long way towards taking away the need for highly experienced tradesman. The big printing press manufacturers state that they can train anybody to run a printing press in 3 months! That is how automated modern presses are.

Is there value in pantone work?

Pantone printing can have a very distinctive look with the right design. Stationery sets really have some impact when using pantone inks. Process b/c and l/h etc dominate the market as they have become so cheap to purchase. If you want to look different and gain that edge get your designer to experiment a bit more with pantone colours. Another option is metallic inks. Your printer should have a large range of metallic colours available check out their swatch book and experiment!



A handy tip to stop problems in print is to take the time to sit back and visualize the finished product. You will get a better understanding of other facets in production if you consider all angles before giving the go ahead to the next person in line. Examples like understanding where fold lines are going to go. Or potential split set photos aligning correctly. Don't forget to fully understand the quote received as misunderstandings do occur. Last but not least if you are not sure communicate with your printer express your concerns he should be able to help you.

Celloglazing= like laminating

Spot u.v = high gloss or matt similar to cello utilized in specific areas of a print job

Die cutting = actual shapes cut out of paper used in all sorts areas, be creative!

Foiling = opaque coating comes in specific colours to apply onto paper

Embossing = shape projected out of the paper by a couple of millimeters.



CMYK = cyan magenta yellow black (The four primary colours used in print) Unlike reflective light colours being rgb= red green blue (monitors, t.v screens)

Pantone colours = specific colour guide not dissimilar to paint selections

Pms book= pantone matching system

A1, A2 grade paper = The amount of coatings on a stock a1 15 coats a2 8 to ten. A1 grades are smoother and glossier or dull depending on the sheet. They maintain the edges of the dot better when using higher dpi.

Dpi = dots per inch. The amount of dots contained in an inch. The higher the dot the more clarity achieved. However pre press systems, printing presses and paper play a major role in deciding on the dpi to use. Uncoateds generally contain larger dots which means smaller dpi

Split sets = when photos run across different pages

Uncoated stocks= they are the stocks that feel like the laser paper you put in your photocopier or fax.



PRE PRESS CORNER

Most printers require an eps or pdf with trim marks and bleed. Don't forget to convert the fonts to outlines or curves when making an eps. If using indesign use the collect for output option. Some printers require the job imposed or supplied as single page documents. Supply a mock up or dummy copy of the job to the printer (It also helps you to understand the print job better). For a designer screen calibration is important make sure you have a good balance and don't expect too much accuracy unless you have spend ten thousand dollars on it.

Too proof or not too proof? There is a definite trend occurring in the market where proofs are not required. Technology has once again played a major role in the advancement of creating an accurate file to supply a printer. Probably for speed reasons the onus lies on the designers file being correct the first time as there is no second chance! Certainly the communication between modern printing presses and pre press systems has created a very, very accurate colour reproduction as human error has been minimized by computer equations, sounds reliable! Not always we still need printers to check the job thoroughly.



Tip1:
NO RGB PHOTOS. CMYK!



Don't forget to convert the fonts to outlines or curves when making an eps.

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