



RIGHT PAPER

Whether you're printing in black and white or colour the paper you use is a big consideration.

BY JANE SMITH

Presentation is about first impressions, and the paper itself is as important as the content it is communicating. However, other considerations must come into play with the cost of printing becoming a higher and higher proportion of a company's budget.

If a document is for internal use and meant to be read once and disposed of afterwards, then the paper consideration will be different to a presentation document being left with a potential client at the end of the first meeting. Any business worth its salt will put plenty of thought into the impression its correspondence is making in the world outside its office. But sometimes we may not think carefully enough about when the quality can be lower, and still acceptable, and we mainly use one paper stock for everything.

In terms of your customers, it is about delivering a solution and demonstrating your ability to show them best value based upon what their objectives are. With so many product types and brands available it can be a bit of a minefield.

WHAT ARE THE OPTIONS?

The most fundamental question of all has to be what is the paper being used for? The bulk of most companies' printing needs is mono, laser printed, single-sided printouts from individual's PCs or multiple copies through a photocopier. The documentation tends to be for internal use and is needed on a short-term basis. In this situation then a good quality standard grade will cope. As the demands of what the paper is being used for increase so does the quality of the paper.

Most branded papers will now carry details of the types of equipment and uses they guarantee, most with different symbols for the same thing, but the important ones to look for are laser and inkjet guarantee. It's true that some laser guaranteed papers are not good on inkjet printers and vice versa but the bulk of quality grades now cover both applications.

Paul Cassidy, product manager at Independent Paper, confirmed that the largest volume sales in these papers is for the multipurpose grades, but increasingly the need for papers that are happy with full colour pictures from laser or inkjets is getting stronger.

In terms of the growth in colour printing, the conclusion of the experts is that this sector will grow and grow and grow. With inkjet still the predominant technology for printing colour it is important to choose a good quality paper with the right weight. If the ink coverage is high then you need to choose a much heavier weight of paper too to avoid show through and the paper crinkling when it dries. >>



There is also now a wide choice of coated, uncoated, matt and glossy papers to choose from and these too can have considerable influence over the impression of quality a document gives and the cost to produce it.

Antalis is a company that has recognised the importance of making it easier for consumers to pick the right paper for their needs and for the dealer to sell the right products. Called Paper by Numbers, it is a grading system, which, although it has been around for some time has recently been given a 'completely fresh approach' with a change of logo.

ONCE your customers get used to using specialized paper, they'll want more!

They're not alone, however, as Cassidy from Independent Paper pointed out. "Information and training on grades is readily available from Independent Paper and other suppliers and is very helpful to enhance a dealer's knowledge base in tune with the end-user's requests."

Talking more about first impressions, Conqueror have long been a brand leader for letterhead quality products and have recently developed the new Conqueror Office range offering matching paper and envelopes as well as ready made business cards and complement slips which can all be printed in the office on a desktop printer. The smaller business and remote, mobile worker has not been forgotten and packs come in a variety of sizes 500 or 50 A4 sheets, 200 or 25DL envelopes, 100 business cards etc. There are three finishes available too for personal choice.



The demand for businesses to differentiate themselves from their competitors is driving demand in all these sectors, and not least in colour ink printing. As companies invest in colour printing hardware, demand is growing for specialist smooth and super-smooth papers, which produce the best results. This demand will only increase as more and more businesses choose to produce leaflets and promotional correspondence in-house rather than outsourcing it – and as hardware manufacturers continue to develop more and more advanced machines.

SHADES OF THE RAINBOW

But! Coloured ink is only one half of the story, with tinted papers forming a further opportunity for dealers.

So what arguments can be used to persuade your customers to trade up? The following examples of uses for tints should do for starters!

- Tinted paper provides a dramatic impression with leaflets and flyers, and is also invaluable for internal documentation and information management, such as colour coding in manuals and presentations.
- The paler tints are sometimes used to print emails or faxes to make them stand out
- Bright colours can be used for striking invitations, menus and notices

And if your customers are unconvinced, bear in mind that mixed reams of coloured paper are available – and are great for convincing those who cannot see a use for 500 sheets of tints! These packs are also invaluable as 'trial-packs' to introduce clients to coloured papers – once they get used to using them, they'll want more! – and for smaller businesses with a lower paper usage rate.

So we see more and more diversification, fragmentation and personal requirements driving the paper sector. If understood and used correctly, this can provide great potential for higher sales and higher profit margins. ■