

HOW to CHOOSE PAPER



TRYING TO SELECT COVER AND BODY STOCKS FROM ALL THE CHOICES OUT THERE CAN MAKE YOUR HEAD SWIM. A FEW TIPS FROM PUBLISHERS PRESS, HOWEVER, SHOULD HELP MAKE YOUR DECISIONS EASIER.



While design and aesthetics can, and should, factor in when you're choosing coated paper, it's ultimately a business decision. It is essential to balance design, photography, editorial, and advertising quality with your publication's current and desired market niche.

The image that needs to be conveyed should be determined before you get to stock samples. Is high-quality advertising your bread and butter? Are you photography focused?

Brainstorm your needs, then move on to the following decisions.

- **What level of quality do you want?**

Brightness is the most important factor when choosing paper, and is generally determined by grade (No. 5 being the lowest and No. 1 being the highest), though papers in the No. 4 category can vary significantly in price, quality, and brightness depending on the mill.

The quality should fit your needs. Most b-to-b magazines print on No. 5 stocks, while special-interest publications generally run No. 4 paper.

If you are paying premiums for high quality photography to showcase your magazine's topic, make it worthwhile by printing on high-quality, high-brightness paper. If your publication is news oriented with a few stock photos tossed in, you probably don't want to spend unnecessarily for the best paper.

Collector magazines and others that have a long shelf life should consider that when

buying paper. No. 3 freesheet papers will resist yellowing much longer than others.

- **How should your magazine look?**

The basis weight of your magazine should be considered, especially when managing postal costs. Go for what you can afford, keeping in mind that the weights of the cover and body stock should be proportional according to these guidelines:

35-40 lb. body: use 60-80 lb. cover

40-50 lb. body: use 80-100 lb. cover

50-80 lb. body: use 6, 8, or 10 pt. cover

Choosing between gloss, matte, and dull papers is not a purely aesthetic decision. Matte and dull papers reduce glare for improved readability, especially appropriate for mature audiences. Matte papers are currently used to differentiate publications and are perceived as having richer, higher-quality looks.

- **What can you spend on paper?**

Start with the best paper you can afford and decrease if necessary as your publication grows in page count and quantity.

Manage your choice of paper with market fluctuations. If your magazine will not lose integrity by going to a lower basis weight, it may be the time to take advantage of the paper savings and postal discounts. On the other hand, it may be more essential to go for better quality to increase readership. Know your market.

Using paper available from your printer is a good way not only to potentially save money but also to know which papers are going to run best on press.