



EVERYTHING YOU ALWAYS WANTED TO KNOW ABOUT PAPER*

*BUT WERE AFRAID TO ASK

Paper is one of the world's oldest mediums. You make it, print on it and distribute it – job done. But with thousands of different types of paper available with a vast array of inks and finishes, the choice of what to use and how to order it can be mind-boggling.

Paper as a medium is having to compete in a very crowded media landscape and consumption is under pressure, largely because of the digital revolution. However, when done well, a printed piece of paper is a much more effective call to action than an SMS text or unsolicited email.

If you need convincing just look at the stats: some 48% of UK adults have done something in the last 12 months as a result of a printed piece of direct mail, with 23% of consumers purchasing a product after being exposed to magazine print advertising (Royal Mail, 2011 and PPA, 2012 respectively).

Despite these compelling figures, print media is taking a reduced share of the media budgets and, as a result, a knowledge gap has emerged amongst marketers who don't know even the basic

information about the industry, such as the difference between coated and uncoated paper stock, or that putting ink onto paper can actually be more environmentally friendly and sustainable than digital messaging.

To redress the balance, what follows is a rundown of the most common questions marketers and print buyers have, from choosing the right paper to environmental credentials.

There are thousands of different types of paper available, so how do I choose the right one?

There are lots of different grades and grammages available at price points to suit all budgets, but to zero in on the best substrate for a particular print job you have to understand the nature of the target

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Simple and relatively affordable finishing embellishments such as lamination, cold foiling and embossing can also create an engaging stand-out piece of print, with great examples everywhere you look.



audience and the brand message that you want to convey. Jeremy Martin, UK Managing Director at Burgo, says a good way of getting your head around this is to consider the differing demands of magazine publishing houses.

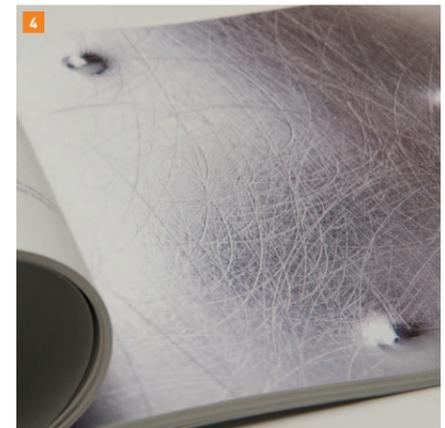
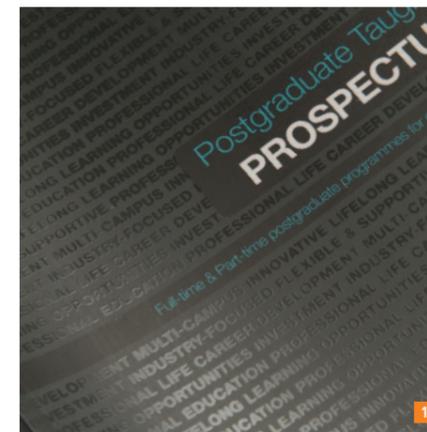
"A publisher like Conde Nast is going to use heavier grammages for the cover and the internal pages of their magazines," he explains, "and they're going to use premium inks to portray a high-quality brand image because that's what they've set their stall out to do. Equally, a magazine such as OK will use a good quality cover, but for the internal pagination they'll use lightweight coated materials. These papers still look good and print well, but since the shelf life of these impulse products is much shorter than a luxury coffee-table magazine, you don't have to use materials that are as high quality."

Another good way to get a feel for the best type of paper to use for a particular job is to request samples, advises Will Stone, UPM Kymmene's Head of Communication of UK and Ireland.

What effect does coating have?

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Coated papers tend to give a glossier high-end feel to a piece of print, but Stone says that he's recently detected an emerging trend of mixing coated and uncoated paper grades as it gives a "much richer reader experience", with the use of uncoated



1. The use of spot UV varnishes can really lift a cover and give a publication a unique feeling to the touch. 2. Almost any words, shape or pattern can be embossed or debossed, adding a sense of depth. 3. Foil blocking can enhance a cover and provide an extra element of interest. 4. Good photography and design can bring a page to life without the need for special effects.

papers also seemingly growing in popularity amongst brands and designers.

"It could be a move to a more understated look," he says. "This may be due to the economic situation or – I hope – a renaissance for print and the tactile nature of paper."

Philippa Charlton, UK and Ireland Marketing Director of PaperlinX, has also detected a recent push towards uncoated stock for jobs that would traditionally have been printed on coated paper.

"What was interesting recently was how Jamie Oliver's Big Feasting cook book moved from a coated sheet to an uncoated sheet," she says. "He was very much involved in that process because he understands how different cook books feel and look on an uncoated sheet. The food looks very different. It doesn't give it that lift but it's a more tactile experience and I think it looks amazing."

Philippa also cites the example of the iconic Pirelli calendars, which recently switched to uncoated sheets for the first time.

"If you think about the kind of images you would typically find on a Pirelli calendar," she says, "you'd expect it would have to be printed on a coated sheet in terms of stand-out, but it just looked like pure class."

What special techniques can I use to make my print product stand out?

Here, the world really is your oyster. "Over the past few years I've seen some amazing finishes," says Will Stone.

Simple and relatively affordable finishing embellishments such as lamination, cold foiling and embossing can also create an engaging stand-out piece of print, with great examples everywhere you look.

"I'm a print junkie and pick up lots of different pieces of print," he says. "It's best to go and explore and see for yourself rather than present your printer with a shopping list."

What environmental accreditations should I look out for?

It's never been easier for marketers to find environmentally friendly paper grades, according to Burgo's Jeremy Martin.

"The vast majority of products in the UK market have got environmental credentials of one form or another," he says, "so it's much easier to tick all the right boxes now."

However, the profusion of environmental claims surrounding different paper grades has made it increasingly difficult for substrate buyers to establish which of the different accreditation schemes is most suitable for their business values and needs.

Take recycled paper, for example. Even if a paper claims to be made from recycled sources, the percentage of recyclable material can vary wildly and the waste may come from pre-consumer sources rather than post consumer (post consumer is better).

Also, although the paper may contain a high percentage of recycled materials, you need to check that the remainder of the fibres come from a forestry that's sustainably sourced and accredited by one of the main sustainable forestry accreditation schemes, such as the Forest Stewardship Council (FSC) and the Programme for the Endorsement of Forest Certification (PEFC).

Historically, a debate raged as to which of the two schemes was better, but today Martin thinks that it's less of an issue.

"PEFC was always better known in Europe, whereas FSC was always buoyant in the UK market", he explains. "That's largely due to the fact that it was prevalent in other industry sectors, such as furniture. However, today there's no real difference between the two."

Finally, it's worth bearing in mind that just because you choose an environmentally friendly paper grade, it doesn't necessarily mean that your print job is going to be green. For instance, if you specify a finishing embellishment such as lamination or foiling, it can make it harder for the piece to ultimately be recycled. When considering finishing options, it's always worth asking your print partner what impact it will have on the recyclability of the job.

What do I need to know when ordering paper for my campaign?

It may sound obvious, but make sure the paper you select is right for the job you want to produce. So if you want greater ink lift and definition of colour, don't go for ultra-absorbent uncoated stock.

Likewise, if you want to employ a particular finishing embellishment to give your printed piece a lift, make sure you select the right grammage of paper.

"There's no point embossing lightweight paper," advises Burgo's Jeremy Martin. You need something with a bit of grammage and rigidity about it. Take foil blocking for instance. If you opt for a stock that's 100gsm, it's never going to stand up to the blocking process."

Also, make sure you never fall into the trap of treating paper as a commodity product, cautions UPM's Will Stone.

"Paper should be the first thing you consider in the print process," he says. "It's vital to consider the end result – what's going to make your target audience pick it up and read it. The more tactile the better. Digital can offer all sorts of rich media but print provides a powerful, colourful and tactile experience."

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