

paper fact sheet

Paper choices are endless – here are a few pointers when deciding on stock for your next project:

The first choice to be made is one between 'coated' or 'uncoated' stocks.

Uncoated paper is much more absorbent – when printed on, ink sinks into the paper itself and affects the look of the final print project.

Finish choices:

Laid paper – has a textured pattern of parallel lines on its surface – most commonly used for stationery.

- Wove paper – has a smooth surface - most commonly used for stationery.
- Bond paper – cheaper wove paper – most commonly used in photocopiers and office printers.
- Uncoated papers are more bulky and are often more expensive than similar coated stocks – more coated stocks are produced and printers are generally able to command better prices.

Good for forms that need writing on.

Coated papers have a coating, usually of china clay, to give them a smooth finish – sometimes known as 'art' papers. This allows ink to 'sit' on top of the coating and not sink in to the paper.

Finish choices:

- *Gloss* – a good quality gloss stock is ideal for print projects that include a large amount of imagery – photography or detailed colour illustrations. Used for magazines and holiday brochures. Lower weight gloss stock is also used for high volume projects such as take-away menus – needing no seal, it's usually more economical.
- *Matt* - If the design is more text heavy then we would probably choose a matt stock. Matt has the opposite effect of gloss - it diffuses any shine and spreads it across the page. So when reading text the reader's eyes are less likely to get tired. (Unless of course the copy isn't very engaging – see wow! for some top class copywriting!). Used for Annual Report & Accounts, Menus, Information leaflets.
- *Silk* (also known as 'Satin') – Has a slight shimmer and really does sit in between matt and gloss stocks. Holds colour well and is less 'shiny' than gloss stock.

Matt and silk coated stocks generally need a machine sealer applied to them so that inks don't smudge.

Not good for writing on – ink will usually smudge.

Paper thickness is measured in gsm (grams per square metre). As a guide the following are examples of familiar items and their typical paper weight:

- Standard photocopy paper: 80gsm bond
- Letterhead (good quality): 120gsm uncoated
- Take-away menu: 150gsm silk/gloss
- Business card: 350gsm silk or uncoated
- Brochure: Cover – 350gsm silk coated / text – 170gsm silk coated

Board, as opposed to paper is measured in microns (1000th of a millimetre).

Environmental considerations:

- Think carefully about the size of your project and paper planning for the printer, reducing wastage.
- All paper can be recycled – it's what has happened to the paper before recycling that makes a difference: heavy print coverage / use of laminates and varnishes can mean the difference between recycling or not. Envelopes with windows should be avoided if possible too – they're usually separated out in the recycling process.
- Recycled papers are great but look out for the amount of recycled fibre in a paper: being recycled does not mean 100% recycled.
- Choose a material that contains a high percentage of post-consumer waste – in that way, less ends up in landfill sites.
- If you do use paper that contains virgin fibre (i.e. first-use, non-recycled stock), ensure that it's an FSC certified material.

Talk to us when specifying paper and we'll do all we can to ensure that you make the best all round choice to help you stand out, to make the most of your budget and to reflect your company's values.