



COPY KING
On Time, On Demand

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DIGITAL PRINTING VS. COMMERCIAL OFFSET PRINTING

Digital Printing and Commercial Offset Printing are both offered at Copy King. The differences between them can affect the output of your print job and the price you pay.

Digital printing is straight from a digital file to the printed piece. Similar to printing to your desktop printer at home.

In Commercial offset printing, the desired print image is burned onto a plate and is then transferred (or offset) from the plate to a rubber blanket, and then to the printing surface. The lithographic process is based on the repulsion of oil and water. The image to be printed gets ink from ink rollers, while the non printing area attracts a film of water, keeping the non printing areas ink-free.

Advantages/Disadvantages of Each and How to Decide which is Right for Your Project.

Digital Printing:

- Ideal for short run jobs that require greater customization
- Variable Data Printing is a form of customizable digital printing. Using information from a database or external file, text and graphics can be changed on each piece without stopping or slowing down the press. For example, personalized letters can be printed with a different name and address on each letter. Without question, digital printing offers the most affordable way to customize marketing materials, direct mail pieces, letters, etc.
- If you make frequent changes to your printed documents, digital printing is a more cost efficient choice.
- Digital printing simulates the color using a four-color matching process, so some digital printers may offer less accurate color matching on projects.
- Proofing is one way to produce accurate color. Digital offers accurate proofs since you see an actual sample of the printed piece.
- If you need it fast, digital usually offers quicker delivery. Since very little pre-press work is needed, running your job on a digital press can be faster, with a shorter turnaround.
- Digital printing can only accommodate a limited paper thickness. If you wish to provide your own stock, you will need to check first to see if it can be run through a digital machine.
- Metallic inks are not available in digital print runs.
- Digital presses use four-color process printing. If you need four-color printing, digital may offer advantages in lower up-front costs.

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Commercial Offset Printing:

- More efficient with a high volume print job -While today's digital presses are close to the cost/benefit ratio of offset for high quality work, they are not yet able to compete with the volume an offset press can produce.
- Press printing requires a new plate to be produced for every change made which can be costly and time consuming. Additional time is involved in setting up and aligning the press, as well as washing the press.
- If you need only black ink or one or two ink colors, offset printing may offer a more cost-effective solution.
- Pantone colors are mixed to precise, pre-set specifications, which are printed each year in their color matching guides. You can consult these books to see exactly what the final color will look like in advance. So, if color accuracy is important to you, then press printing may be the best choice.
- Since the Pantone colors are mixed using inks, colors can be created to be much brighter and more intense.
- For two- or three- color jobs printed using the Pantone system, complete color proofing is often not available. However, inexpensive laser prints or inkjet prints can be created to view the positioning of the elements of the page.
- Press printing can take longer than digital. Films and plates must be made, the press set up, run the job and then drying.
- Printing press has more options of mediums. There is a wide range of paper thicknesses and textures from which to choose, including specialty papers, such as vellum and metallic papers. If you are considering using nontraditional paper, press printing is the best way to go.
- Fine line screens are available - The result of this is that even under close inspection, the color will look smooth and seamless. It will also appear brighter and more intense.
- Metallic inks are available in Commercial Offset Printing.
- Works on a wide range of printing surfaces including paper, wood, cloth, metal, leather, rough paper and plastic.

We hope that the above information will help you understand the differences between Digital and Commercial Offset Printing.

When you are ready to have your job printed we can advise which printing method is appropriate and the most cost-effect for your print project. We can also offer advice on preparing files properly for either print option.