

10 TO THE POWER OF SPECIAL EFFECTS

Do you want to make your premium print stand out from the crowd? Are you looking for an effect that'll set you apart from your competitors?

1 Get Spotted



Spot UV varnish is a high-gloss finish applied to a specific area of your print.

Here is a prospectus which has been printed on a silk board and matt laminated before having a Spot UV varnish applied. As you can see, it creates a striking balance which instantly grabs the eye. For simple images, applying a Spot UV varnish can be a great way of increasing the visual impact of your print.

What does a Spot UV varnish add?

- Instant visual impact
- Multi-sensory impact – run your fingers over Spot UV, you should be able to feel the difference...
- Adds vibrancy to the colours of, for example, your company logo
- Creates an impression in the mind of your audience that you're a little bit different, or even more up market than a generic company

If these benefits outweigh the added cost of adding a Spot UV, you should definitely consider it.

How we do it...

Spot UV draws attention to elements of your design, and should be thought about when you're starting your design work (or writing a brief for your designer). You should remember that it's not a part of the design per se, rather, it's a post-printing operation which is applied 'offline' (on a separate machine, after the printing job has been completed).

2 Show Your Mettle



Metallic inks are special inks with fine reflective metallic particles that create a shine and lustre you won't see in standard inks. Silver and gold metallics are most common, but metallic inks also come in bright blues, vibrant purples, hot reds and burnished coppers. Metallic inks are perfect for presenting that high-end image because they add attention grabbing shine to any printed piece without the higher cost of foil blocking.

Metallic inks not only look nice, they will also help take your marketing materials to the next level by defying the status quo.

Often, the spotlight of attention is on layout and colours and the use of ink sometimes gets neglected. If you incorporate metallic inks you create a shiny and glossy effect that will make your full colour postcard, leaflet, catalogue or brochure stand out from the pack.

Consider incorporating metallic inks to:

- Highlight headlines or important points on postcards, brochures and leaflets
- Add some pizzazz to your company name or logo
- Create an unforgettable corporate brochure or annual report with subtle metallic highlights
- Make special elements or lettering on your presentation folders 'pop'

How we do it...

At GPS we can add a metallic ink in addition to CMYK in the same print pass using our 10 colour press. This keeps the costs down and produces better results as the ink is laid down in one pass.

3 Fluorescent Colour



The use of bold and powerful colours will make you stand out from the crowd whether it's a magazine on a crowded newsstand or a leaflet dropping through a letterbox. Use fluorescent colours to energise posters and bring them to life.

Research studies have demonstrated time and time again - colour attracts consumers and drives brand sales.

The extensive range of classic fluorescent inks available can enhance any printed material.

How we do it...

As with metallic inks we utilise the 5th and 10th units on our 10 colour press, adding the the ink in one pass.

If you want to make a big impression with your next print project, sometimes plain black or coloured ink just won't cut it. When you venture beyond the familiar territory of cyan, magenta, yellow and black a wide world of colour possibilities opens up for you.

4/5 Embossing/Debossing



In embossing, an image is pressed into the material using a die so that the image rises from the surface creating a three dimensional effect. Debossing is the opposite of embossing; the area around the image is pressed so that the image is pushed down into the material rather than raised.

Embossed/debossed pieces can be used without ink or foil (known as blind embossing) or with ink or foil such as gold, silver or many other colours, adding another distinctive and visually appealing element to the embossed piece.

How to use Embossing/Debossing

These techniques are perfect for adding a touch of style and individuality to your printed piece. It works well on many types of printed products, including:

- Reports
- Presentation folders
- Books
- Brochures
- Prospectuses

Many elements and images in your design can be embossed, including text. The most effective embossed pieces use a detailed die and heavier paper stock to highlight the depth and detail of the embossed graphics or images. Also, with the addition of coloured metallic foil the emboss really stands out, both literally and visually. It is a great way to draw out and highlight important details, such as names, designs or logos. A combination embossing die and foil stamping die is needed for this process.

The main drawback of embossing/debossing is the impression of the pressed area appears on the reverse of the sheet. Care should be taken to incorporate this into the overall design.

6 Sleek Laminates



Lamination is a popular option for many printed pieces. It is a protective and decorative surface and is utilised widely in most book production. This is because the surface of the printed products after lamination will be smoother, bright, dirt resistant, water resistant, durable and not easily be damaged and the colour will be more vibrant. It greatly enhances the wear resistance, folding resistance, tensile strength and moisture resistance of the printed products, protects the appearance and improves the using life of the various types of printed products. It is a must if you have a heavy coverage of dark ink down the spine of a book or folder as it will eliminate cracking.

How we do it...

Lamination is not a part of the design as such, rather, it is a post-printing operation which is applied 'offline' on a separate machine.

Not all commercial printers have the equipment to produce laminated pieces in-house.

GPS offer three types of lamination in house: gloss, matt and our premium soft touch lamination.

7 The Die Cut



Die cutting lets you create a limitless range of contours, from unconventional corners to circles to the outline of an image or logo. A die cut provides a tactile and visual edge to distinguish your piece.

Why you should use a Die Cut

As you look for ways to add a die cut to your leaflet, think about the purpose of it and what kind of message you want to deliver. Are you looking for a classic shape such as a folder or perhaps something wild or unique, like the top of a palm tree, a car, the wings of a bird or even a penguin box as seen here?

Your industry can provide additional creative direction. Construction companies, estate agents or architects could use the shape of a roofline or building, restaurants perhaps could use a plate or even a fork or basil leaf; the possibilities are almost endless. The real benefit of using a die cut is to get a potential customer to do a double-take, take a closer look and check out what you have to offer. Sometimes it is that critical few seconds that can result in your brochure or leaflet being ignored or held onto and followed up, just because of a unique finishing option - the multipurpose die cut.

How we do it...

A die cut is created by using a sharp steel blade formed into a specific shape then cut through the paper. Think about how a steel cookie cutter would work; just substitute the dough with paper. The shapes for die cutting are nearly limitless—circles, squares, holes, curves, stair-stepped, rounded corners, sharp points, just to name a few. The die cut forme, or "die", is usually customised to the piece it is creating and it creates a very crisp, smooth edge that can include fine detail and a very distinctive look, which cannot be achieved with a standard cut.

The products you can use die cuts on are wide ranging. Many people add eye-catching details to their business cards with die cutting, but you can also use the process on door hangers, brochures, postcards and presentation folders, to name a few.

8 Foil Blocking



Foil blocking/stamping adds shimmer and texture to highlight specific text or images. Gold, silver and other metallic colours can be used as well as clear and holographic foils.

Foil blocking can add greater brand perception. By adding foil or other interesting effects to your piece, consumers perceive your product to have a higher value and quality. It is an attention-grabbing effect and helps make your printed piece stand out from the crowd with its distinctive and eye-catching appeal.

What can you Foil Stamp?

Foil can be applied to most paper stocks. However, the ideal paper stocks are gloss, silk or other laminated stock with a smooth surface. Linen or other textured papers can be a challenge due to their uneven surfaces and the foil may not look as crisp. The minimum point size for foil blocking is 8pt although increasing this size it advisable.

Brochures, catalogues, invitations, presentation folders, greeting cards or note cards are some of the endless possibilities that you can foil stamp to add a touch of class.

How we do it...

Foil blocking or foil stamping is the application of pigment or metallic foil to paper using a heated die. The die presses the foil onto the surface under pressure, leaving the design of the die on the paper.

Foil stamping is frequently combined with embossing to produce a three dimensional image as was used for the Mary Peters Freedom of the City invitation and brochure.

Whether you're striving for vibrancy not attainable in process colours, or looking to add some pizzazz to your printed piece, it may be time to consider incorporating some custom finishes to add that little something extra.

GET IT RIGHT: THINGS TO CONSIDER WHEN USING SPECIAL EFFECTS

If you are thinking of using any of these special effects on your next printing project, there are a few things you should consider to ensure you get the best possible results.

- **Do your homework** - Not every printer has experience. Before you award a job to a printer ask to see samples of various projects they have produced in the past.
- **Be forward** - Show your design to the printer early in the process to find out if it works from a production perspective. If you are concerned about how the metallic colours will read, it may be worth negotiating a press proof - the gold standard insurance policy for getting the look you want as regular proofs cannot emulate a metallic ink.
- **Coated is key for metallic inks** - If you are aiming for maximum shine, print on a coated stock - the glossier the better. Coated stocks have more ink holdout, which means that less of the ink is absorbed into the paper fibres. The ink sits on top the paper instead, where it can work up some serious shine.
- **Protect your piece** - special effects often mean additional processes so a sealer will help keep things in place. In the case of designer papers a sealer may not always be suitable so ask your printer.
- For a number of the effects featured, an additional piece of artwork is required. If you are unsure how to set this up ask your printer for advice. They will only be too happy to help you get it right.
- Prices increase according to complexity and additional processes and materials. For this reason it's worth thinking in detail about the purpose of your print before you opt for a particular special effect e.g. is it really going to be worth it on flyer printing or poster printing? Is it intended to be read for the information, with the aim of drumming up support, attendance or business and then discarded? On the other hand is it on something that you expect your audience to return to again and again, e.g. your business card, your company's annual report, the prospectus for your school or something similar? Well, that might be worth the extra expense.
- Obviously the more that you ask your printer to do, the longer it's going to take them to do it. If you're planning on a special effect make sure you ask how much time this will add to the standard turnaround quoted. It may require more drying time or the use of specialist finishing houses in Ireland or mainland GB.
- Some special effects work better on some materials than others so ask your printing company for advice. E.g. Spot UV sinks into offset material so may need a double hit.

9 Designer Paper

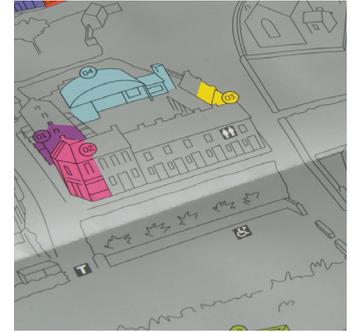


Ask almost anyone where paper comes from and they will tell you, trees. And they would be correct, in most instances. However, many premium papers are manufactured from linen, cotton and other raw plant fibres. Some paper is even made of synthetic materials like polyolefin, often used when waterproofing is needed, e.g. divers maps. Designer paper can meet an array of needs that standard paper cannot.

There are many specialist papers, everything from luxurious textures to holographic finishes. Designer paper needs to compliment the design, lending personality to a printed piece whilst letting the paper do the talking.

Designer paper stocks add sophistication and tactile interest to professional print pieces. Whilst expanding options, choose from crisp and conservative, to rugged and edgy, they undoubtedly add to the cost of the printing project. It always worth considering the length of print run when specifying a premium paper. For invitations or a short run bespoke brochure the cost of the paper element may be relatively small in the overall cost but this will be a very different story if you intend to print hundreds of thousands of brochures. Most printers will not hold specialist papers in stock so it is important to factor in additional time to order in stocks and potentially more drying time which can be necessary for designer papers.

10 Print Sealers



Print sealers are used on printed products primarily for protection or sometimes to achieve certain visual effects. Sealers can provide protection from moisture, scuffing, set off, scratching and finger prints. They can also be applied to one or both sides of a printed piece to create a glossy or dull finish or can be applied selectively to highlight a certain visual element.

How we do it...

At GPS we use a varnish sealer which is basically clear ink and can be gloss, satin or matte. A flood varnish covers the entire printed page for protection or sheen.

For a flood varnish we create the artwork for the plate. In the case of a spot varnish the designer needs to supply the artwork for the plate.

GPS used a spot gloss varnish to enhance the look and feel of its corporate brochure. This involved creating additional artwork as well as having a varnish specifically made for the job.

SPECIAL EFFECTS WARNING!

Special effects are special and in most cases involve an additional process, extra materials to be ordered and more time. All printing companies will have to outsource some if not all of the effects listed to a specialist finishing house. For the health of your printed products do not try to rush these products - they take time and add cost.