

CATALOG PRINTING & PRODUCTION TIPS

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Self-Cover Basics.....	1
Plus-Cover Basics.....	1
Paper Choices.....	1
Page Counts.....	2
Trim Sizes.....	2
Folios.....	2

CATALOG PRINTING & PRODUCTION TIPS

Catalogs come in many shapes and sizes, especially around the holiday season. Well, these different catalog formats may be intriguing but they can have a significant bearing on costs, turnaround and the bottom line. For your benefit, RapidoColor has provided some simple and pragmatic money-saving advice on catalog printing and production.

1 ■ SELF-COVER FORMAT BASICS

Self-cover means that the paper stock – type and basis weight – is common from the first page to the last page regardless of the number of pages. So, a 16 page catalog which is printed on #70 gloss text – pages 1 through 16 – is a “self-cover” catalog.

Self-cover catalogs are more cost-effective than a “plus-cover” format (description, section 2) because the cover pages will print on the same form/signature as the text pages.

EXAMPLE:

A 16-page 8½” X 11” self-cover catalog printed on a half-size sheet-fed press encompasses 2 signatures (an 8 pager + an 8 pager).

2 ■ PLUS-COVER FORMAT BASICS

Plus-cover means that the paper stock – type and basis weight – of the text pages is not common with that of the cover. So, a 16 page catalog which employs 80# gloss cover for its cover (pages 1, 2, 15, 16) and #70 gloss text for pages 3 to 14 is a “plus-cover” catalog.

Plus-cover catalogs are more expensive than a “self-cover” catalog (description, section 1) because the cover pages must print on a different form/signature than that of the text.

EXAMPLE:

A 16-page 8½” x 11” catalog in a plus-cover format encompasses 3 signatures (an 8 pager + a 4 pager + a 4 page cover).

3 ■ BEST PAPER CHOICES

As quantity increases paper becomes an increasing percentage of the cost per unit (CPU) as the economies of scale related to prepress, make-ready and bindery set-up costs are amortized. So, depending upon quantity, paper can have a significant impact on cost.

Best paper choices for 4-color-process printing for text pages:

- 70# gloss (or dull) text or
- 80# gloss (or dull) text

Best paper choices for 4-color-process printing for cover pages:

- 80# gloss (or dull) cover or
- 100# gloss (or dull) cover

NOTE: Selection of house-sheets is typically the most cost-effective paper choice.



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4 ■ PRESS-EFFICIENT PAGE COUNTS

While the conventional page-count rule – to always work in 4 page increments – is credible, working in 8 page increments is even more ideal because all conventional printing presses are designed to deliver 8 page signatures per the following:

HALF-SIZE SHEET-FED PRESSES: (19" x 25" to 23" x 29")

1 press form yields one 8 page signature (sheet-wise) or two 4 page signatures (work-and-turn)

FULL-SIZE SHEET-FED PRESSES: (25" x 38" to 28" x 40")

1 press form yields one 16 page signature (sheet-wise) or two 8 page signatures (work-and-turn)

The most cost-effective catalog page-counts are:

SELF-COVER FORMAT

- 8 page self-cover
- 16 page self-cover
- and additional 8 page signatures, thereafter

PLUS-COVER FORMAT

- 4 page cover + 8 page text
- 4 page cover + 16 page text
- and additional 8 page signatures thereafter (for text)

(NOTE: while working in 4 page increments is common and feasible, page-counts of 12, 20, 28, 36, etc. are not as efficient)

5 ■ COST-EFFECTIVE TRIM SIZES

The most cost-effective finished page sizes for conventional offset sheet-fed printing presses are:

- 5 1/2" x 8 1/2" to 6" x 9"
- 7" x 10" to 9" x 12"

6 ■ IMPORTANCE OF FOLIOS

The term "folio" means "page number". In the context of layout and design, it is advantageous to all parties that each page has a folio (page number) so that there is no chance of confusing the order/sequence of pages.

Printing, direct mail and fulfillment services for the trade.

