

Ten HORRIFIC Mistakes Your Average "Printer" Currently CHARGES You To Make

MISTAKE #1 – You pick a printer based solely on price!

The old adage is really true. "You get what you pay for". This is especially true in the printing business. If you want good printing you should decide to deal with a printer because of the overall value you receive, NOT because they are the lowest priced.

Here's why...

Value = Quality + Service + Price

Just like in your business, you hire the best people and buy the highest quality products – consequently you have to charge more for your services.

Total Value is all three. Quality, Service and Price! The 3 most common problems YOU WILL have when you choose a printer who only offers the lowest price: Dirt cheap printers don't usually stand behind their work if there is a mistake. Sure, other printers might do your printing for a little less money, but how will they treat you if there is a mistake with your job? To give the cheapest price, they usually have low-wage, inexperienced employees that have not been adequately trained. They also cut corners by using cheaper inks and lower quality paper. You get what you pay for. The little bit of money you saved ends up costing you more in the long run. Believe me, this is a little saying we tell our customers: "The good feeling of a cheap price is long gone before the stench of poor quality is ever used up." The lowest priced printer also tends to offer the lowest quality. Your printed piece is YOUR IMAGE. It directly reflects on your professionalism and the standards of work you are willing to accept. If you hand out shoddy materials it rubs off on your company image. Plainly said, "Shoddy or low quality printing because of cheap price makes you look bad." No amount of savings is worth this. You've worked too hard and spent too much money to build your company image. Why throw it away for the few dollars you save on printing? And the third reason why choosing the cheapest printer is a problem is that you will get charged extra for things other printers normally include in their quote in the first place. You'll be charged extra for such things as plates, film, cutting and artwork. Cheap printers will short-change you to death. What seemed like a good price actually ends up costing you more in the end. This is just a tactic cheap printers use to get you in the door.

To avoid buying on price alone, we suggest you choose two or three printers and rank them in the order that is important to you such as Image first, Quality second, Service third, Delivery time fourth and Price last.

MISTAKE #2 – You think all printers are the same.

Every printer is different. No two printers are really the same. Every printer has different equipment and different employees who know how to print certain kinds of jobs well. Every company has a different number of employees, each with different abilities, and different lead times to complete your work.

Printing is art, science and craftsmanship combined. Most people who buy printing don't truly understand that despite all the technological advances, printers still use a lot of the same techniques as twenty years ago.

Contrary to what a lot of people think, printing is not just running paper through a copy machine. It takes craftsmanship to turn out quality printing. You must have great design and pre-press setup before you print. Printers then have to adjust ink, water, plates and paper before they can print the first sheet. Then, they have to do all the finishing work such as cutting, folding, drilling, perforating, addressing, wrapping and boxing.

Communication is the key to picking the best printer for YOU.

Ask what type of work they print (Ask to see samples) Ask what their average turnaround time is. Ask for references from their other customers. Ask any other questions that are unique to your needs. This will help you decide whether they are the best printer for YOU. Remember, your job is printed just for you and you want it done right.

After you ask your questions, it will become pretty obvious which company you should choose. The company that wants your business will prove to you they are the best printer to do your work. Take your time to decide which printer you will use—but when you decide, you must be loyal to them. (See Mistake #3)



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MISTAKE #3 – You always have three or more printers competing with each other for your work.

You may think this is a good way to do business. And it is to some extent. But here is why it usually isn't a good way to deal with printers.

A good printer has enough loyal customers that they don't have to deal with price shoppers.

Once you find a good printer, you must be loyal to them. If you flip-flop from printer to printer, a good shop won't be motivated to keep YOU as a customer.

Price is important. But price should not be more important than good quality and good service.

This is what purchasing agents typically like to do. They try to get everyone fighting for the same piece of pie. This might be an OK short term strategy because you save a few bucks. But, when you need a favor, or super- fast turnaround – not one of these companies will instantly bend over backwards to help you. (And if you have been a price shopper in the past, they will probably charge you more!)

Every printer expects to bend over backwards for their loyal customers now and again. He or she might have to work all night, print a super rush job, or pull off a miracle. Provided the customer is loyal, the printer will do all he can to help you meet your deadline.

All good printers will be loyal to you if YOU are loyal to them. Don't you want your customers to be loyal to you? Loyalty doesn't come instantly but is built over time. It's like a savings account...if you add to it continuously, it will be there when you need it.

Keep loyalty in mind when you pick your printer.

MISTAKE #4 – You think having the right equipment is all a printer needs to print your job!

Many printers own great equipment, but that doesn't mean they know how to run it. You can have the "latest, greatest technological wonder gizmo", but if you don't know how to operate it properly, you are better off not even turning the friggin thing on.

Many printing presses have lots of bells and whistles, but if the printer has a pressman who doesn't know how to use the new features, you might as well go to a company that has old equipment that knows how to run it!

Make sure the pressman is trained by the factory or another competent company. This ensures that your printing will get done right the first time. And on time.

MISTAKE #5 – You don't give your printer enough time to print your job properly.

Mistakes happen when you rush!

When you're in a hurry, you may forget to tell your printer certain instructions. Or you might make a mistake on your original artwork because you were concentrating on getting it done, instead of getting it done right.

Schedule. Schedule. Schedule.

Before you work on your printing project, talk with your printer. Get your printer involved from the beginning because there might be a more efficient way or cost-saving way to finish your project on time that you don't know about. You can save time, money and headaches from the very beginning by communicating with your printer! Why do most people do the opposite of this and wait until the last minute to talk to the printer? Because everyone takes the printer for granted. Everyone thinks the printer can easily take care of their work. Almost everyone thinks the printer is sitting around waiting for their job to come through the door. This isn't the case.

You should think of your printer as your "project partner". Consult with your printer. Let them know in advance what you want printed. Ask them if there are any tips they can give you to make your printing go smoother.

You are not the only customer your printer has. When you walk in the door saying you need it now, a printer can't always help you.

YOU need to work together.



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MISTAKE #6 – You pick printers who don't guarantee their work.

All reputable printers should guarantee their work automatically. This means if they make a mistake on your printing, they will re-run your job at no charge.

Unfortunately, there are unethical printers who won't do this. Instead, they won't make good on your printing and may not take any responsibility for their mistakes.

An unethical printer may hold your artwork hostage. Or may say they will fix your printing, but pin the problem on you and tack on an extra charge. There are about a hundred other things a not-so-good printer may do to you.

The best thing you can do is pick a printer who unconditionally guarantees their work. If it's not printed right and it's their mistake, they will run it again.

MISTAKE #7 – You don't ask for references.

This is probably the easiest way you can avoid any problems with a printer. ALL good reputable printers will eagerly give you references.

Ask your printer to give you at least three names of people who they have done business with. And also ask them how long they have worked with this customer.

Also ask them what type of printing they normally do for those references. Try and get the names of customers who print similar things like you need to print.

This is the easiest way you can pick the right printer for YOU!

MISTAKE #8 – Your printer doesn't have a good grasp of digital technology.

Sure, he can throw around enough technical terminology to make your eyes glaze but the truth is, most printers only know about their "favorite" software they use everyday.

With more and more people doing their own design and layout work, a good printer has to have a good working knowledge of the most popular software, like Publisher, Word, Printshop, Photoshop, Coreldraw, Word Perfect, Excel, Illustrator, etc.

A good printer will always "pre-flight" your digital files which is just a fancy way of saying they'll open your disk or file and make sure there aren't any problems and if there are ... they'll tell you how to fix them. And nine times out of ten, there is some kind of problem which brings us to...

MISTAKE #9 – You don't ask for a proof.

Whether you give your printer a digital file or your printer does your design and layout ... it is important to ask for a proof. Many printers don't want to provide a proof because if you approve a proof, they wouldn't have anyone to blame for a mistake!

Cheap printers don't like to provide proofs because it adds to the cost of doing the job, especially on full color work. Good printers know that acceptance of proofs by the customer shifts the responsibility of correctness of the job back to the printer where it should be.

Never assume your digital file will look like it's supposed to when your printer prints it out. Many things can happen between their computer and yours.... dropped fonts, font changes, dropped artwork, shifts in margins, file conversion issues, wrong colors ... the list goes on and on.

A good printer will always insist that you see a proof.

TIP: Always have someone else look at your proof, too. They may catch misspelled words or other problems that you may overlook.

Bonus! Bonus! Bonus!



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MISTAKE #10 – You don't understand the "lingo."

Alright, this isn't one of the original mistakes for this list. But it is important. It's so important, we decided to define 11 common printing terms so **YOU** understand what printers are saying!

Bleed - Printing that extends to the edge of a sheet or page after trimming. Printers usually always charge extra for this because it requires printing on oversized paper, getting less product out of a sheet and calls for additional trimming.

Gripper – The gripper is the space at the top of the sheet that is needed for the press to grab the sheet of paper and pull it through the press. The gripper area cannot be printed on. So when your printer is laying out your sheet, they need to consider the non-print area at the top. This only becomes a problem if you are trying to cover the whole sheet with ink (such as with a bleed). The typical gripper area ranges from 1/4 to 3/8 of an inch. Copiers, digital printers and digital presses also have non-print areas that vary from model to model.

Camera-Ready Copy – Text, photographs and art fully prepared for printing. That means it is ready to reproduce as is with no alteration required. If corrections have to be made, art has to be properly resized, photos scanned and dropped in, your artwork is not camera ready and your printer will charge an additional fee to make it so.

Halftone – Photos must be converted into dot patterns in order to be printed. Halftones are sometimes referred to as a dot screen. Printers used to take a photo and put a piece of film that has a dot pattern over it and shoot a halftone. Now, it is done by computer which is what happens when you scan your photo and convert it to a grayscale image. Many people then print their piece out on a laser printer or inkjet printer and carry to their printer for reproduction. However, most laser and inkjet printers DO NOT PRODUCE a round dot that is needed for offset press reproduction. So always bring a digital file and your original photo files or photos to your printer as well so they can output your photos at the proper dot pattern for printing.

Collate – To assemble sheets of paper into proper order. Most copiers today do this automatically so some printers include this in the cost of your copying. However, if you were printing a larger quantity of booklets with many pages, special equipment is needed to assemble the pages in sequence and this will cost extra.

Color Separation – Printers need to separate Color 1 from Color 2 because when they print your job, they can only print one color at a time. Let's say you need to print black and red on your letterhead. Your printer must shoot a plate for the black and another one for the red. If you are printing in Four Color Process or Full Color, you need four plates, one for each of the four colors, Black, Yellow, Cyan and Magenta, needed to make up a full color image such as a photograph.

Hard Copy – This is simply a copy on paper, as opposed to on electronic storage such as a disk or file. So if your printer asks for hard copy, don't panic...they just want you to print out a copy on paper so they will know what it's supposed to look like.

PDF File - Portable Document Format or PDF is a file format created by Adobe Systems, Inc. and is readable with Adobe Acrobat Reader. It allows you to share files with others, like your printer, who may not have the same software, computer platform (Mac vs. PC) or fonts as you do. Most printers use it for proofing and accepting files for printing.

PMS - (Pantone Matching System) Commonly used initials of Pantone, Inc., trade names for ink colors in that company's color matching system. Your printer has a PMS chart from which you can select special ink mixes. Many printers have "house" colors that are their standards. Most printers will charge you for special PMS color mixes.

Reverse - Type of graphic reproduced by printing ink around its outline, thus allowing underlying color or paper to show through and form the image. For instance, a black box with white type in it would be called a reverse. Large reversed areas require lots of extra ink so may incur additional printing costs.

Saddle Stitch - To bind by stapling sheets together where they fold at the spine. Very popular way to economically bind booklets.

Check out our website for other valubale information



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