

PRINT TECHNIQUES

Varnishes and More: Put a Coat on It!

Protect it, detail it or both—varnishes and other liquid coatings can both preserve and add impact to your printed materials.

Print builds brands. And creativity multiplies print's brand-building power, making your message more memorable. Artful use of coatings can be the detail that makes the difference, whether protecting your brand's quality impression from scuffs or fingerprints, or creating something special that sets your brand apart.

THE BASICS

The most common and generally least costly coating is varnish. Varnish is essentially a clear ink, printed either in-line, or applied in a separate pass after the ink has dried to maximize the varnish's protective properties and contrast. Varnishes are available typically in gloss, dull or matte finishes. Specify a flood varnish to cover the entire surface or a spot varnish to hit only specific areas such as photos, a logo or other graphics.

Great for protecting the printed surface, liquid coatings can add visual and tactile impact—and memorability—to your brand impression.

Water-based aqueous coatings are clear, environmentally friendly and durable, highly effective as a protective layer against scratching or fingerprints. Available in gloss or dull finishes, aqueous generally cannot be a spot technique because of how it's applied. Soft-touch is a special aqueous coating that creates a matte finish and smooth, velvety surface feel.

UV coatings pass under an ultraviolet light after application to cure and harden the surface, creating a high sheen and deepening the ink colors. Your printer can apply it as a spot coating to add dimension and contrast in specific areas. Because it's a harder finish, a flood UV coating can be a less costly alternative to lamination for protecting the printed surface, but be careful—it's more vulnerable to cracking if folded.

WHEN TO USE COATINGS

Does your printed piece have areas of solid ink coverage? Will it be handled frequently during its lifetime? Are you looking to add dimension and separation for elements like photos or other graphics? If your answer is yes—for packaging, book sleeves, high-end brochures or direct mail projects—then coating is a good idea.

WHEN NOT TO USE A VARNISH OR COATING

Sometimes it's not appropriate to apply a varnish or coating. Because a coated surface is often tough to write on, printed materials such as postcards and greeting cards are not ideal for coatings. Likewise with any surface that will be ink-jetted.

GET CREATIVE

Add to visual impact by taking coatings to the next level. Tinting the varnish can add depth and uniqueness. Printing a varnish or UV coating in a pattern can change the impression from standard to striking. A raised, spot UV coating invites touch. A pearl additive, either in UV or aqueous, creates a pearlescent effect. Glitter particles, available in a variety of colors, are another UV coating option. Use your imagination. Create!



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