

# THE SEVEN BASIC PRINTING PROCESSES

## 1. OFFSET LITHOGRAPHY

pros:

- fastest and least expensive process for most jobs
- produces very sharp type and images

cons:

- expensive for very short runs
- not suitable for oddly shaped objects such as bottles or binders

best used for:

- almost anything: about 40% of all print jobs are produced with offset printing.

## 2. LETTERPRESS

pros:

- good on handmade papers, chipboard, and other funky papers
- basically the guternberg system, creates an elegant, old-world impression

cons:

- runs one color at a time, not suitable for jobs requiring precise registration
- time-consuming, don't use it if you're in a hurry
- expensive

best used for:

- invitations
- announcements
- stationery
- very short run print jobs

## 3. ENGRAVING

pros:

- gives an elegant, prestigious look
- produces clear continuous tone images such as photographs

cons:

- not suitable for 4-color process
- presses are small, under 5" x 9"
- expensive

best used for:

- invitations
- stationery
- very short run print jobs

## 4. SCREEN PRINTING

pros:

- may be used with almost any type of material, including paper, glass, fabric, metal, plastic, and wood.
- may be used on oddly shaped objects, such as bottles
- produces brilliant, even color

cons:

- time-consuming, don't use it if you're in a hurry
- not suitable for very fine or continuous tone artwork or that requiring tight registration

best used for:

- clothing
- signs
- binders
- bottles
- short run print jobs

## 5. FLEXOGRAPHY

pros:

- may be used with a variety of materials, including plastic and other non-porous substrates

cons:

- results are generally less fine or less sharp than with offset
- less accurate color reproduction

best used for:

- packaging
- gift wrap
- wallcovering

## 6. THERMOGRAPHY

pros:

- produces raised text and images sometimes mistaken for engraving, at less cost

cons:

- very small and very fine type will not reproduce sharply
- not suitable for tints or halftones

best used for:

- invitations
- announcements
- stationery

## 7. GRAVURE

pros:

- high-quality printing excellent for reproducing continuous tone images like photographs

cons:

- reproduces small type sizes with less sharpness than other methods

best used for:

- print runs of over a million