the paper chase
WHAT YOU NEED TO KNOW ABOUT PAPER

Your choice of paper shows the value you have placed on your printed pieces and should not only support the message of the project but the other aspects of the publication—for example, if your photos are low quality, don't print in full color on coated paper to make them seem better. But how do you choose the right paper? Although the system for describing and selecting paper can be a bit complicated, don't fret. The information below will assist you in getting just the paper you need.

EXAMPLE

1 New Leaf Everest **2** Bright White **3** Uncoated Smooth **4** 80# Text

1 mill and brand name

There are many paper mill companies and they produce various brands of paper. Individual printers don't stock or even purchase all of them. If you have a specific paper in mind, check with your printer about availability.

2 color

Paper comes in hundreds of colors, but there is no standard system for naming them. What's "white" to you may be "ivory" to a paper manufacturer. The color of paper affects legibility and the personality of the publication. Ask to see a paper sample before approving a job, and be sure to look at the sample under natural light.

SIZE MATTERS

When designing a piece, ensure that the size you've chosen is available in the paper you want and can be obtained affordably. You'll need extra paper if color and images bleed off the page.

RECYCLE

Using recycled paper saves trees and sends a socially responsible message. Uncoated paper with at least 30% post-consumer waste and coated paper with at least 10% post-consumer waste are classified as recycled paper.

3 surface and finish

The surface and finish of the paper you choose will create both a visual and tactile impression on your audience and will enhance the message of your publication. Paper surface is divided into two categories—coated and uncoated. Each category has various finishes.

COATED

A clay coating applied to the surface of paper improves reflectivity and ink hold-out. Coated paper is very smooth and produces crisp, bright colors and images. There are three main finishes: gloss, satin (or dull) and matte. Gloss is typically used for magazines and high-end publications. Because satin and matte finishes have less shine, they are easier on the eyes and make for better readability.

UNCOATED

Paper without a coating absorbs more ink so colors are not as bright and photos won't be as crisp. But the natural feel makes it an ideal choice for some projects. Uncoated paper has two surface categories—rough and smooth. Within those are a variety of finishes, such as laid, vellum and wove. Offset presses can print on any finish, but textured papers are a poor choice for laser printers and copiers.

4 weight & grade

The end use of your materials will help you determine the weight and grade of paper you should choose.

WEIGHT

Weight is how many pounds a ream (500 sheets) of paper weighs. The size of the paper is usually a basic parent sheet measuring 25 x 38 inches.

GRADE

Grade is the category given to paper based on its end use. The three major grades are cover, text and writing (bond). Regardless of the weight, cover paper will always feel stiffer than text paper.

20# WRITING
letterhead
business forms
office paper

80-100# TEXT
brochures
annual reports
invitations

80-100# COVER
postcards
report covers
folders