

SAMPLE THIS - How printers and designers can take advantage of paper samples

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Right up there with equipment, ink, messaging and graphic design, choosing the right paper is integral to the success of any printed piece. Studies around haptics - the science of touch - have proven that collateral printed on high-quality paper is more likely to create a positive first impression than the same collateral printed on low-quality paper. With this in mind, it's important to hold paper samples in your own hands and see them with your own eyes before committing to a certain stock.

With so many stocks available, there's no reason you shouldn't be able to find the perfect one for your project. Just keep in mind - especially if you're a printer - that new papers are hitting the market all the time, so even if your years of experience tell you that you already have the perfect stock, you can't be sure there isn't an even better solution out there without enquiring.

Besides sample sheets, a great way to put a specific paper to the test is to request a mocked-up finished piece from your supplier. This will help you see (versus imagine) how a particular stock might respond to the printing process you have in mind. After all, best results require a perfect marriage between the two.

How else can samples be of service?

* Are you looking for paper with a specific brightness? Should it be coated or uncoated? What colour do you need? And what's your project budget? A good paper supplier should be able to zero in on your precise needs and offer up a variety of options that meet your specific criteria so you're not drowning in a sea of samples that may or may not be up to task.

* Need to find an exact match to a discontinued paper stock? If you're not in the paper business, you'll probably have better luck finding a needle in a haystack! Turn to your merchant for help.

* Samples are a great way to put newly acquired printing equipment to the test. Ask your supplier for suitable samples (keeping in mind that offset and digital equipment require different stocks) and take them for a test spin. Mistakes are inevitable during any learning curve. By experimenting with sample sheets, you can prevent mistakes from happening on your client's dime.

* In addition to stock samples, you can also request samples of printed formats, from tri folds and custom folds to perfectly bound or saddle-stitched brochures and more.

At Ariva, we have two dedicated paper sample teams, one in Montreal and one in Toronto. Whether you're looking for paper samples, swatch books, or mock-ups, feel free to reach out to them for help finding the best paper solution for your next client project:

Montreal - echantillons.mtl@ariva.ca

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Rita Van Schelven has been working in the paper and print industry for 36 years. Based out of Toronto, she is the Sample Services Supervisor at Ariva, where she has been working for the past 17 years.