A concise and tasty guide to understanding paper

**Why Donuts and Paper?**

Like a good donut, choosing the right paper stock can lead to total happiness.

Paper - like donuts - comes in a wide variety of sizes, styles & coatings. Understanding the terminology of paper and how different types perform on press, leads to a deeply satisfying end result.

So does eating a donut.

So, grab your favorite sweet treat, and let's get started learning about paper!
**PAPER BASIS WEIGHT**

Basis weight is the weight of a sheet of paper based on standard sizes

PAPER types are categorized by their **base size**.

These **base sizes** are used to calculate a paper’s **basis weight**.

The **basis weight** equals the ream (500 sheet) weight of the base size, hence the term basis weight. Because the starting base size is not the same between paper types, the basis weights do not correspond directly (80# Text is much thinner than 80# Cover).

**COMMON PAPER TYPES**

**Text:** A general term applied to various grades of coated and uncoated printing paper. Sometimes referred to as “book”, text is designed for deluxe printed booklets, programs, announcements and advertising.

**Index:** A stiff cardstock that’s a lesser grade paper with a smooth uncoated finish. Often used for tags and other functional print.

**Bristol:** A high quality heavy weight uncoated paper, sometimes made with cotton fiber prepared or glued together.

**Cover:** Durable, heavier weight coated and uncoated papers, available in a variety of finishes and colors, used for the cover of pamphlets, annual reports, business cards, etc.

**Bond:** Strong, durable uncoated paper also referred to as writing, consisting of wood, cotton, or both, most commonly used for letterheads, stationery, etc.
Uncoated paper stock

Think powdered sugar donut. Uncoated paper has a porous surface that absorbs inks resulting in softer colors and shapes. Its surface is easily written on.

Thinner, uncoated stocks are perfect for...
Use for: Business stationery; notepads; copies; envelopes
Know the following:
1 - WEIGHT
2 - FINISHES: Smooth, Linen, Laid, Felt, etc.
3 - TYPE: Bond or text weight.

Thicker, uncoated stocks are perfect for...
Use for: Business cards, Invites, thank you cards, pocket folders incorporating foils and embosses.
Know the following:
1 - WEIGHT
2 - FINISHES: Smooth, Linen, Laid, Felt, etc.
3 - TYPE: Cover, Index, Bristol Cardstock weight.
Coated paper stock

The glazed donut of the printing industry, coated paper has a clay coated and calendared surface which produces sharper, brighter color. Coated stock can be difficult to write on.

Thinner, coated stocks are perfect for...
Use for: fliers, magazines, brochures
Know the following:
1 - WEIGHT
2 - FINISHES: Matte, Silk, Dull or Gloss
3 - TYPE: Coated Text weight.

Thicker, coated stocks are perfect for...
Use for: Business cards, glossy folders, brochures.
Know the following:
1 - WEIGHT
2 - FINISHES: Matte, Silk, Dull or Gloss
3 - TYPE: Coated Cover; C1S or C2S Board stock

- Matte coated paper is a rough, low gloss stock. Some of the ink pigments do not lie evenly, and sink into the sheet fibers.

- Silk coated paper, is a smooth, low gloss paper with a uniform printed ink gloss and a silky feel.

- Dull coated paper is fully coated and calendared. It’s rougher, glossier than silk, and has better printed ink gloss and excellent ink hold-out for sharp photos.

- Gloss paper is fully coated and calendared. It is extremely smooth and has excellent ink holdout for sharpest photos and color.
Because uncoated and coated papers have unique properties, the same color mix can appear to be different when printed on uncoated vs. coated. Generally speaking, colors will appear darker and more muted on uncoated vs. coated.

Take a look at the two Pantone spot color chart strips to the left. The exact same color mix is printed on uncoated (left) and coated (right) paper. As you can see, the results can be quite different based on the paper it prints on.

When it comes to paper, knowledge is power. The more designers and purchasers understand the terminology of paper and how different papers behave on press, the better the end result.

All the variables and options can get overwhelming. Contact your print and marketing services provider to find out what paper is best for your project and brand.

Contact us for a free consultation (we’ll bring the do-nuts) and let’s talk about how we can help you grow.