

When It's Time to Find a Printer



These five tips will make it easier.

By Steve Goerth

Printed materials are more than important—they're your best chance to spread your message and turn strangers into supporters. Communication is important at every level but never more so than when dealing with a printer. Use these tips to ease the way:

1. Find a printer who understands nonprofits. Make learning about printers a priority. Before you bring work to a printer, find out if they've done work for other nonprofits. Ask them for lists of those nonprofits, and find out more about the printer's relationship with those organizations. Remember that working with a

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printer is a two-way street: You'll need to know about their experience in dealing with nonprofits, and they'll need to know about your experience when it comes to printers.

2. Ask the printer for samples that match your plans and pocketbook. Most printers show up with a sample case of four-color material. That's understandable—they want to show off their top-of-the-line work—but most nonprofits don't need anything that complex or

expensive. You can help them and yourself by asking for samples of what they've printed in one or two colors.

3. Be aware of what's going to cost you money. Find out how much it will cost each time you make a change. As an example, it's easy to say, "I'm not happy with this proof. Let's do it again," but those additional proofs will get tacked onto your bill and may put you over budget.

4. Let the printer know everything they can about you. It'll make your job—and the printer's job—easier if they know about your

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How Your Printer Can Enhance Your Message



Not just the text and graphics but the printing process, binding, and paper help tell this museum's story in its annual report.

The annual report for Chicago's Peggy Notebaert Nature Museum (www.naturemuseum.org), produced by Triangle Printers (www.triangleprinters.com), shows how the printing process can be an important part of the message. The museum is all about educating people on environmental issues. So an environmentally friendly report was important. Triangle Printers collaborated with Designer Zina Castanuela to use a variety of recycled paper stocks and soybean based, environmentally friendly inks. But the challenge was to find an environmentally friendly, workable, and attractive binding.

The most common way to bind an annual report is with metal staples, but staples can't be recycled unless readers remove them by hand. Fortunately, Triangle Printers has an established relationship with Chicago Protective Apparel, an industrial sewing facility, which agreed to stitch the binding. "We are always looking for new ways to make our printed projects more interesting, and we really wanted to show off the quality of the recycled papers," says Castanuela. "I have always wanted to do a book like this."

The key to the project's success was extensive attention to detail before the project hit the presses. Triangle Printers made paper dummies and did test sewing. Also, to see how the images worked on the variety of papers, they press-proofed color photos for the cover on ivory, brown, and white paper. Ultimately, the project was delivered a week ahead of schedule and on budget.

group and your needs beforehand. Let them know upfront if you're tax-exempt for all materials and if you want to use low-cost paper. Paper can cost up to 30% of your job, so using inexpensive paper is a good way to stretch your budget.

5. Remember, a good printer can build upon and improve your ideas. About 50% of nonprofits have internal people who'll design the material. If a printer has to alter those designs to fit the proper format, you'll incur additional costs. Make sure your design staff communicates with the printer and ensures that their materials will be compatible with the printer's equipment. If you have no design department but lots

of ideas, share those with your printer, listen to their suggestions, and let them use their expertise. ■

Resources

Bartlett, Neil, "Six Steps to More Effective Annual Reports," *Nonprofit World*, Vol. 3, No. 6.

Ott, Christine, "Nonprofit Communications on a Shoestring," *Nonprofit World*, Vol. 8, No. 2.

Pietzner, Cornelius, "Creating Your Brochure," *Nonprofit World*, Vol. 4, No. 3.

Public Relations and Communications and Marketing categories in CD-ROM.

These publications are available at www.snpo.org/members.

Steve Goerth and his colleagues at Triangle Printers (3737 Chase Avenue, Skokie, Illinois 60076) have provided guidance and services to nonprofits for over 40 years.