

## Universal Printing "How-To" Series...

# Planning your next print project: What to consider

Pre-planning a print project will save you time and money and avoid potential headaches during the production process. There are a multitude of decisions that come into play and we can help you streamline the process and make things easier by following the simple steps in this How-To guide and talking with our knowledgeable staff.

*Here are the preliminary questions you should answer:*

### **1. Who is your intended audience and how do you want them to use the printed piece?**

This will help determine how the piece is designed, the type of content that should be included and the eventual cost to produce it. Is it informational only? Do you want them to respond in some way?

Knowing who you're going to target with the piece and how you want them to react will make it much easier to find the right design, content and form.

### **2. Do you know what size you want it to be? How many do you want? How will it be distributed?**

Do you want it to be a standard size--letter, tabloid, etc? Or, is it a custom size? How do you intend to distribute it... by hand, by mail or other? Will it have a response mechanism?

Using standard paper sizes will save costs in production whereas custom sized pieces may be more impactful. And, always consider mailing or other restrictions for distribution. We can help you understand distribution and fulfillment.

### **3. How many colors will it use? Will it use bleeds?**

Do you want a simple 1- or 2-color piece? Or, the impact of full 4-color printing? Or, does it require 4+ colors based on special graphics or specified style guidelines?

Everyone loves the impact of 4-color printer but there are other options. Our press capabilities offer almost limitless options to accommodate the simple to the outrageous in design and color.

### **4. Will it be folded or use any other special treatments?**

How many folds will there be? Will it incorporate the use of varnish, clearcoat or other treatment? Does it require a die-cut, hole punch, perforation, insert or other special handling to be finished?

A printed piece can often include more than just printing. Folds, sorting, inserting, perforation, hole punching are only a few of the options. Ask how we can help make your piece better.



### **5. Who will design it and complete pre-press procedures?**

Are you using your own graphic designer? Will you supply us with production files? What software application will the piece be designed in? We can help guide you.

We offer complete design and pre-press services to our clients but we also work with clients who do their own design work or third-party designers hired by our clients. Regardless, we'll help bring your design to life.

We support most professional design/pre-press software applications currently in use. For more information, see the our How-To document explaining the preparation of production files to send to Universal.

### **6. What is your timeline for project completion and your budget?**

Based on your answers to the questions above, how will your desired timeline be affected? And, how will your budget fit production of the desired piece? We can help you find the answers.

Depending on the printed specifications you desire in your printed piece, reasonable timelines can be determined by each step required to complete production.

We recommend that you always include a "fudge" factor in both timeline and budget to make sure there is room to accommodate the unexpected.