

# 50 Ways To Cut Your Printing Costs In Half



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Published by:  
Anchor Creative  
1437 Beartooth Dr.  
Laurel, MT 59044

Phone: 406-628-7178

E-mail: [pros@anchorcreative.com](mailto:pros@anchorcreative.com)

websites: [anchormarketingconsultants.com](http://anchormarketingconsultants.com)/[anchorcreative.com](http://anchorcreative.com)

# Since printing and paper are large costs of Direct Mail, and other marketing efforts, saving in this area can greatly impact the profit potential of a campaign.

Here are 50 ways to help you save printing and paper costs—as much as 50%—on your next campaign.

1. Reconsider full-color design. Four-color work looks appealing, and is necessary to sell some products such as food items, but in many cases 2-color work that incorporates tints and shades can be just as appealing for about half the cost. If you opt for full-color, go with 4 or 6-color work instead of 3 or 5.



***Can your brochure art do double duty on your website or in an ad?  
Can a photo from a flier be used in a lift letter?***

2. Simplify order forms. The last thing you want to do is confuse the reader just when she's ready to sign on the dotted line, so make order forms simple in copy, graphics and color. In most cases one or two colors is best.

3. Have your artist avoid bleeds if they aren't necessary. Bleeds look impressive, but they require extra paper and cutting which quickly add expense.

4. Avoid combining spot colors with CMYK. If your artist is working in CMYK (4-color process) make sure she uses it throughout the piece. Companies run into unexpected expense when they want to place their 2-color logo or other image into a CMYK document. Combining spot colors with CMYK requires two print runs and adds significant costs to the printing bill
5. Recycle your artwork. Can your brochure art do double duty on your Web site or in

an ad? Can the photo from a flyer be used in a lift letter? With use of digital images in graphic design, recycling art is simple.

6. Prepare your electronic design files well. Most prepress and printing suppliers will charge you for any extra time spent to fix your files so they print properly. Make sure whoever prepares your files contacts your printer early to discuss file formatting.
7. Prepare your printing bureau well. Over 90% of work submitted to service bureaus now arrive electronically on Mac or PC disks, via e-mail or by uploading files to the bureau's FTP site. This saves typesetting costs, but it shifts the responsibility of preparation to you. When sending files (or having your designer send them) be sure they include a detailed cover sheet with file information by file name and program in which they were created. Also include a hard copy or .pdf of the design for a visual example along with all original files of copy and art, color models and numbers, and any special instructions. And don't forget to include contact information for yourself and your designer in case the printer has questions.
8. Design in sizes that make sense according to press size, paper size, personalization and lettershop. The printing industry revolves around the 8.5 x 11 in. sheet of paper, so the most cost-effective jobs are multiples of this size (5.5 x 8.5 in., 11 x 17 in., etc.). Envelopes are pre-made for these sizes as well. The odder the size, the higher the costs.



***Allow enough production time so you don't run into rush charges during the creative or production phases***

9. Don't date materials unless necessary. Don't date letters in case they wind up mailing late, don't date offers unless absolutely essential. For offers simply ask for a response within (10) days, rather than by a specific date. If materials are not dated you may be able to use leftovers again later.

10. Ask your designer what's included in his cost. Often film and proofs get overlooked and can be a large portion of project expense. Make sure everything is in writing with your designer so you don't get an ugly surprises when you're facing deadline and you have no choice but to fork over the money to get the job done.

11. Make sure your designer is experienced in the type of project you need. Different designers have different talents and specialties. The designer who excels in line-art logos probably isn't the best choice for a mail order package.

12. Carefully proofread copy and design before the project goes to print. This goes without saying, but it's easy to overlook small things like the standard mail permit art, or a phone number. By the time you see the problem in print, correcting mistakes or making changes becomes expensive.
13. Be careful of postcard design. A first-class postcard is actually cheaper to mail than a standard-rate postcard, but it has size restrictions (3.5 x 5 in. up to 4.25 x 6 in.). If you design larger, such as the 6 x 9 in. cards that are popular now, you'll have to bump postage up to standard rate.

program to build upon one another. Then print them in one run using the same papers and colors, instead of doing a separate run for each. This will save money and build brand recognition.

15. Design for mail automation. The less a piece has to be handled, the less expensive it is to mail. To make sure design meets automation requirements, create a mock-up using the same paper, folds, envelopes etc., you plan to use in the real piece and take it to the post office or your lettershop for approval—and get that approval in writing with a signature.
16. Use b&w or duotone photos. If your products don't require full-color photography, consider using black & white or duotones (2-colors). Photos in black and white are the easiest on the eye. If you use duotones be careful of the colors you choose. Gray can make an image look washed out, red can look pink, green can look martian.

### **Make Your Printer A Partner In Your Money Saving Efforts**

17. Don't become married to your printer. It's important to build a good relationship, but don't allow the relationship to become so relaxed that the printer becomes lazy about pricing or quality. Ask for suggestions about ways to save money. Most printers will be helpful, but if you ever sense resistance it's time to find a new one.
18. Bid out jobs to several printers even if you have a favorite. This way you'll know if yours is staying competitive. And there may be times when another printer needs the work and will give you special deal.



19. Ask your printer what document sizes work best for him. This will vary depending on his equipment. He may be able to make suggestions that save you money while not greatly affecting the design of your project.
20. Plan in advance. Allow enough time for production that you don't run into rush charges during the creative or printing stages.
21. Make sure "the shoe fits." When you make a mock-up for postal approval, take that opportunity to be sure everything in the package works. For instance ...
  - Everything fits properly into the outer envelope for letter packages
  - The outer window is in the right place

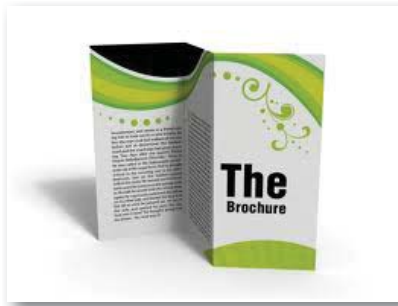


***Eliminate add-ons that don't justify their expense with increased profits***

- The information that should show through the outer window is in the right place
  - The order form fits into the reply envelope if one is needed.
  - Label areas are sized and positioned correctly
  - The mail permit has the correct information
22. Simplify your mailings. If you can use a self-mailer instead of a letter package without affecting response, you'll save on materials, insertion and postage costs.
  23. Photocopy small lots. When printing fewer than 1,000 pieces for items such as letters, fliers, posters, etc. it may be cheaper to photocopy than to print. And with today's technology the quality is nearly the same.
  24. Get to know your printer as well as possible. Take a tour of the shop. Talk to press operators and prepress technicians; show

them samples of your projects and discuss how you can work together to streamline the process and make the job easier for them and for you.

25. Pick a printer experienced in your types of projects. Some specialize in commercial printing, some in stationary products, some in direct mail. Some do copying as opposed to offset printing. A printer's niche will depend on what equipment he has. Interview several printers about the kinds of printing you need. Get samples of their work and ask for references from other clients. Then call those clients about their degree of satisfaction with the quality of work and service they received.
26. Learn to talk the talk. You don't have to know every bit of jargon used in printing but you should know common references like 2-up and 4-up printing and what screens, half-tones, and overprints are.
27. Know what different presses can and can't do. Know the cost and quality difference between open-web, heat-set web, jet offset, sheet-fed and flexographic printing. A good printer will be willing to work with you—experimenting with screens, half-tones, bleeds etc.—to get the best results for you out of his equipment.
28. Don't leave your printer in suspense. Be available when he calls with a question. Don't make him make the choice of either guessing what you want or bumping your job from the press.
29. Do away with bells and whistles you can't justify. Are those fancy extras like freemiums, peel-off action devices and tokens paying for themselves in profits?
30. If you need a 3-color job your printer can



***Instead of mailing expensive brochures to every prospect, send them a lead-generation piece that requires them to contact you for the brochure***

help you save money by using a 2-color press and using screens or overprints to make the third color. To see what a screen or overprint would look like, check with a graphic arts supply company for the various color guides supplied by Pantone. Your graphic artist probably has some of these on hand as well.

31. Put it in writing. Your purchase order should include all of the printing specs, delivery date and location, quoted price, maximum over and under counts, proofs and samples needed, and anything else you can think of.
  32. Check your bills carefully to be sure you're being charged correctly. There may be extras involved that are your responsibility, but you don't want to pay for changes or problems that were the printer's responsibility.
  33. Print only what you need. Roughly 30% of print jobs go to waste, so use accurate quantities regardless of where a printer's volume discount kicks in. Discounts don't save you anything if you're left with thousands of dollars in materials you can't use.
  34. Clean up your mailing lists. You will save money by avoiding unnecessary duplicates and wasted postage.
  35. Make lot changes easier. If you're testing something in the copy, such as prices or headlines, don't use type that reverses out of four colors (CMYK) and don't use colored type that's CMYK. Use black or one PMS color with nothing behind it.
  36. Combine pieces of a package that will be printed on the same or similar paper onto one press form.
  37. Combine runs of several different projects on one press sheet if they can use similar paper and colors, i.e. two different reports or booklets.
- ### **How to Save a Bundle on Paper**
38. Check paper quality. The look and feel of paper attaches to the quality of the product, so don't skimp on quality just to save money. At the same time, that linen paper you'd have to buy in large lots and pay a small fortune for from a manufacturer, may not be the best purchase for your situation. Show the paper you have in mind to your printer and ask for a cost quote for it and for the closest equivalent he can buy at a lower cost. Then compare samples to be sure the alternative paper offers the quality you want.
  39. Reduce paper weight. You purchase paper by the pound, and weight also affects postage costs. Use the lightest weight paper that will do the job while maintaining the quality you're after.
  40. Use a lower grade paper if it will not adversely affect the design or quality you need.
  41. Use standing dies for carriers such as envelopes and folders. That mountain silhouette cut into the pocket of a promotion folder may look impressive, but custom dies for such work can add \$500 to a project.
  42. Make sure paper costs are itemized. Paper typically makes up 30% of a final printing bill and because price varies greatly depending on grade, weight, colors and finishes you want to know exactly what you're paying for.

43. Ask your printer about “house sheets.” This is paper that a printer typically stocks in his plant as opposed to special ordering. House sheets cost less and come in various weights, grades, colors etc.
44. Ask your printer if there are any ends available. This is the left over material from another job. If yours is a small job, this may be the ticket to getting premium paper at a lower cost.
45. Go light, white and uncoated. Light paper is cheaper than heavier, white is cheaper than colored, uncoated is cheaper than coated, and one type of paper in a booklet is cheaper than two. Keep this guideline in mind when purchasing paper. One



***It's generally cheaper to use colored paper than to use a color bleed on white paper***

exception to the rule though: it's generally cheaper to use colored paper than it is to use a color bleed on white paper.

46. Some folds cost more than others. The type of folds as well as the number of folds affect price. And some can only be done by hand, so it's a good idea to double-check costs.

47. Forgo four-color envelopes. The envelope is an instant throw away piece, so why pour money into four-color graphics that immediately go in the trash can? Depending on the audience and the product, you may do just as well with a strong teaser and simple graphics. Try using one or two colors and let the copy take center stage.
48. Use colored ink on colored paper to create a three dimensional look instead of paying for 3-color printing.

49. Don't use coated-one-side (C1S) papers if the same colors are printing on both sides. Gloss papers tend to be cheaper and easier to work with than coated.
50. If you have a onetime project that doesn't require a specific paper, ask your printer what paper is available on the spot or in his closeouts.

### **Bonus:**

Seven things that increase the cost of press work:

- Designs that don't allow for proper color trapping.
- Large, solid areas of PMS colors that require a double hit of ink for correct saturation.
- Heavy solids next to panels of screen tints or gradients.
- Reversed type of 10 points or smaller.
- Creating CMYK drop shadows instead of black only.
- Printing 4-color process on uncoated paper to achieve the same look as coated paper.
- Asking for matte coated paper for quick-turn-around projects.

# FULL COLOR PRINTING

The final production of your printed marketing material should almost always be produced in full color. In order to properly convey the image of professionalism and mastery, your final printed products should be designed and printed to match your company image. Below is a sample price list of Power Marketing's printed pricing guide.

All business cards and post cards are printed on 16 point stock with full UV Coating. Other options like: rounded corners, metallic printing, and even plastic cards are available.

## BUSINESS CARDS

1,000 - 4/0, 4/1, 4/4	.....	\$75 <sup>00</sup>
2,500 - 4/0, 4/1, 4/4	.....	\$99 <sup>00</sup>
5,000 - 4/0, 4/1, 4/4	.....	\$150 <sup>00</sup>
10,000 - 4/0, 4/1, 4/4	.....	\$250 <sup>00</sup>

## 4 x 6 POST CARDS

1,000 - 4/0, 4/1, 4/4	.....	\$150 <sup>00</sup>
2,500 - 4/0, 4/1, 4/4	.....	\$250 <sup>00</sup>
5,000 - 4/0, 4/1, 4/4	.....	\$325 <sup>00</sup>
10,000 - 4/0, 4/1, 4/4	.....	\$500 <sup>00</sup>

## 5 x 7 POST CARDS

1,000 - 4/0, 4/1, 4/4	.....	\$225 <sup>00</sup>
2,500 - 4/0, 4/1, 4/4	.....	\$330 <sup>00</sup>
5,000 - 4/0, 4/1, 4/4	.....	\$450 <sup>00</sup>
10,000 - 4/0, 4/1, 4/4	.....	\$800 <sup>00</sup>

## 6 x 11 POST CARDS

1,000 - 4/0, 4/1, 4/4	.....	\$325 <sup>00</sup>
2,500 - 4/0, 4/1, 4/4	.....	\$465 <sup>00</sup>
5,000 - 4/0, 4/1, 4/4	.....	\$700 <sup>00</sup>
10,000 - 4/0, 4/1, 4/4	.....	\$1300 <sup>00</sup>

## 8.5 X 11 BROCHURES

1,000 - 4/0	.....	\$200 <sup>00</sup>
1,000 - 4/1, 4/4	.....	\$300 <sup>00</sup>
2,500 - 4/0	.....	\$325 <sup>00</sup>
2,500 - 4/1, 4/4	.....	400 <sup>00</sup>
5,000 - 4/0	.....	\$500 <sup>00</sup>
5,000 - 4/1, 4/4	.....	\$550 <sup>00</sup>
10,000 - 4/0	.....	\$825 <sup>00</sup>
10,000 - 4/1, 4/4	.....	\$875 <sup>00</sup>

These prices include the cost of folding.  
Printing on 100 lb Gloss Book with Aqueous Coating  
(UV coating additional - request quote)



## 11 x 17 BROCHURES

1,000 - 4/0	.....	\$320 <sup>00</sup>
1,000 - 4/1, 4/4	.....	\$495 <sup>00</sup>
1,000 - Std. Fold	.....	\$ 40 <sup>00</sup>
2,500 - 4/0	.....	\$550 <sup>00</sup>
2,500 - 4/1, 4/4	.....	\$685 <sup>00</sup>
2,500 - Std. Fold	.....	\$ 60 <sup>00</sup>
5,000 - 4/0	.....	\$700 <sup>00</sup>
5,000 - 4/1, 4/4	.....	\$900 <sup>00</sup>
5,000 - Std. Fold	.....	\$ 90 <sup>00</sup>
10,000 - 4/0	.....	\$1250 <sup>00</sup>
10,000 - 4/1, 4/4	.....	\$1500 <sup>00</sup>
10,000 - Std. Fold	.....	\$160 <sup>00</sup>

Standard Folding pricing is for an  
Accordion Fold, Half-Fold, or Z-Fold.  
Printing on 100 lb Gloss Book with  
Aqueous Coating  
(UV coating additional - request quote)

## 8.5 x 11 8 PAGE BOOKLETS

1,000 - 4/4	.....	\$1,399 <sup>00</sup>
2,500 - 4/4	.....	\$1,999 <sup>00</sup>
5,000 - 4/4	.....	\$2,599 <sup>00</sup>
10,000 - 4/4	.....	\$4,499 <sup>00</sup>

## LETTERHEAD

1,000 - 4/0	.....	\$199 <sup>00</sup>
2,500 - 4/0	.....	\$365 <sup>00</sup>
5,000 - 4/0	.....	\$575 <sup>00</sup>
10,000 - 4/0	.....	\$1000 <sup>00</sup>

Letterhead is printed on 70 lb Premium  
Opaque Paper

## #10 ENVELOPES

1,000 - 4/0	.....	\$275 <sup>00</sup>
2,500 - 4/0	.....	\$425 <sup>00</sup>
5,000 - 4/0	.....	\$825 <sup>00</sup>
10,000 - 4/0	.....	\$1450 <sup>00</sup>

Letterhead is printed on 70 lb Premium  
Opaque Paper

## DOORHANGERS

1,000 - 4/0, 4/1, 4/4	.....	\$250 <sup>00</sup>
2,500 - 4/0, 4/1, 4/4	.....	\$399 <sup>00</sup>
5,000 - 4/0, 4/1, 4/4	.....	\$675 <sup>00</sup>
10,000 - 4/0, 4/1, 4/4	.....	\$1250 <sup>00</sup>

The number "4" represents full color, "1" represents a single color, and "0" represents a blank side. 4/4 denotes full color on both sides, 4/0 denotes full color on one side and blank on the other, etc.

# (855) 624-6290

1437 Beartooth Dr. • Laurel, MT 59044  
anchormarketingconsultants.com