



Why do things go wrong?

Murphy's Law says: "If anything can go wrong, it will." Which is not very encouraging. When things go wrong in a print job, it's often too late to do anything about it. You have to work proactively and preventively, says Paul Berkvens, Technical Commercial Director at Papyrus Belgium.

A quality print job is the result of many factors working in harmony. "It's about coordinating people with different kinds of expertise – sharing the same goal and knowing the expectations of the customer", says Berkvens. "The starting point must always be the finished product. Things go wrong because people involved don't communicate enough."

The right climate

Especially in summer and winter, the paper gets exposed to great variations in temperature and humidity. Before unwrapping the paper, it has to be brought to the temperature of the workshop. And the workshop needs climate control, to avoid deformation of the paper, which can result in wavy edges, register difference, creases and double print.

Preprint is hard!

"Computerization of pre-print has provided great accessibility, but at the same time contains a risk of banalisation", warns Berkvens. "Scanning and separation techniques are no simple processes. Paper parameters are often not sufficiently taken into account in the ICC profiles. A lot of people don't even understand why you have to compensate for dot gain. The difference between coated and uncoated paper is great in this respect, also when it comes to screening images. Even using FM screen, there is a risk of using too fine structures for uncoated paper. And sometimes the resolution of the images is not high enough."

The right choice of paper

"It's the duty of the print provider to guide the customer to an appropriate choice of paper. For detailed and life-like image reproduction, you should use a coated paper. Uncoated paper has an open, porous surface structure that offers less distinctive dot reproduction."

"An often occurring mistake is the tendency to print uncoated paper heavier to obtain a more intensive and solid printed area, with garbled lighter areas as a result. And using a too-fine screen, in which the dots run out, has an opposite effect regarding detail reproduction."

The post-treatment dogma

"Uncoated paper shows more endurance in post treatment and bookbinding. It can absorb more humidity and is tougher and stronger because the sheet contains more long fibres while coated papers have little or no elasticity", Berkvens explains.

"One difficulty with bookbinding can be the grain direction of the paper, where you may have to compromise because printing and finishing often demand contradictory directions. The dogma, however, is to have the machine direction of the paper parallel to the back of the book. If this is brought to attention at an early stage, it can always be achieved."

Need for knowledge transfer

Technological advances have given us more consistent papers and more adaptable printing equipment. Digital processes alleviate the laborious parts of print production. But along the way, we seem to be giving the paper less attention and fundamental paper knowledge is fading.

"Fading, or even lost", Berkvens concludes. "And this redefines the role of the paper merchant radically. Information and knowledge transfer has become our responsibility. But it can work on one condition only: there has to be a willingness to listen, to take interest and open up for dialogue all along the decision chain." □

www.storaenso.com/finepaper



Murphy's law

Attributed to Edward A. Murphy, an engineer working at the Edwards Air Force Base in the late '40s. Murphy's Law also states the following undeniable truths:

"If any of several things can go wrong, the one that causes the most damage will go wrong."

"If nothing can go wrong, it will anyway."