

## **Buying Promotional Print - Our Top Tips.**

Before you start on your project, think about the answers to these questions so you end up with a product that will not only do the job you require but also help you gain an instant advantage over your competitors!

### **What do you expect the printed product to achieve?**

How does it fit into your wider marketing strategy? How will your leaflet or brochure be distributed? What do you want to say and how do you want to say it?

**Who is your audience?** Is it existing or prospective customers or all of them? Whoever is reading it must understand the messages. Don't overload with "technical jargon" for example if you are aiming your message at the general public.

**What is your budget?** It's best know this from the outset. Discuss your needs with us and we will find the most appropriate solution and supply you with a quote without breaking the bank.

**Who will be responsible for the overall production?** Who will commission printers, designers, copywriters and photographers? Shetland Litho provides a wide range of these services but we are equally happy to work with the designer and photographer of your choice but, please commission the designer first! Also, make sure the designer and photographer understand your requirements and can work together.

**Who should design your job?** Make sure the designer keeps in touch with the printer and is willing to accept any technical limitations. Large areas of high ink coverage, for example, on folds or near sheet edges can cause paper or board to mark or crack when finished. A good designer should know how far they can push the printer!

**How much detail should you incorporate?** Try not to overload! It's tempting to cram in every little piece of information. Edit your copy, then edit again! The best brochures are often clean and uncluttered – there's nothing wrong with a bit of "white space".

**Can you supply electronic copy of the job?** Call along and pick up a copy of our "Supplying Electronic Copy" information sheet. Then list the software you are going to use and specify exactly what additional work the printer must do. Always supply a hard copy with the disk so the printer can check that output matches what you think is on disk! Supply Shetland Litho with a trial disk and we will check that the format you are using is suitable, free of charge, prior to commencing.

**How many photographs do you need?** Do not accept/provide photography that is second rate as it will affect the impact of the finished job. Will low cost stock photos do? Why not take the printer's advice on this? Shetland Litho wants your job to go out looking its best.

**What are your competitors doing?** Look at their promotional material as it may help you decide what points to cover then improve on it and make yours better.

**Who will liaise with the printers and deal with the initial enquiry and specification of the job?** Shetland Litho will be happy to advise but we can only do so if we fully understand your requirements. Call to make an appointment with our sales staff.

**Do you know how much you want the printer to do?** How will the material/copy be presented to the printer? This can range from a few rough notes and a pile of photos to supplying complete artwork and scans on disk. We have an information sheet that advises on how to best provide electronic copy to us.

**What printer suits your needs?** One who will give you the attention, quality and will deliver your job on time. Ensure quotes are "like for like" and that they are all based on the same specifications. Read them very carefully to ensure, for example, you are not caught out by an inferior quality of paper, the price does not include colour proofs, delivery is included and that there are no hidden charges. If you do not fully understand the quotes you have received ask Shetland Litho to explain them so that you are not faced with a pile of "extras" on your final bill. Bring along a copy of the specification (blot out printer's name and prices if you wish).

**When do you need the finished job?** Please try to be realistic and honest. Remember that time scales vary depending on the work required. Putting the printer and yourself under unnecessary pressure can lead to errors and leave no time for corrections to be made (and even the best presses develop faults occasionally!)

**Who should check your proofs?** Printers will not accept responsibility for any mistakes not corrected by you on proofs. Get someone who has not been involved with the job to read it. People can tend to read what they *think* they've written!

**Who are the best printers?** *Shetland Litho*. We hope that these brief notes may help you avoid some common pitfalls and will be useful whoever you choose to print your promotional literature. Of course we would like it to be **Shetland Litho**.