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# Offset Printing: How Does It Operate?

Many significant operations in a business such as maintaining flow of information within the company and marketing the products of the company need printing service. Hence it is helpful to know about the basic working of the frequently used printing process called offset printing.

Offset printing is so popular among printing service providers and clients because for large volumes, it is more economical than other options. The customers giving big printing orders are recommended by the printers to opt for offset printing due to this reason.

This printing technique uses oil-based ink, which is not soluble in water. In offset printing, rubber blankets act as intermediate for copying the image on the paper, which is originally on the plate.

First step is to prepare the graphics. Film negatives were used in the past for making images and then copying them to aluminum based printing plates. This is no longer required as the technology is available for making the plates in one step through an image setting system. This plate is then placed on a cylinder in the proper configuration. Then the water and ink are dispersed on the image plates, in that order. While the ink gets fixed to the image, the water gets attached to that part of the plate which has no image so that the ink does not spill beyond the image.

The image is then taken from the plates to the rubber blanket rolled on another cylinder, so that it is inverted. After that, sheets of paper of required proportions are put together and the rubber blankets transmit the image to the sheets on a third cylinder, where it comes out as the right side.

The task of printing is finished by the printing company by consolidating the printed sheets using staples or paste or in any other way as per the requirements of the client.

Most usual form of offset printing is came from the photo offset procedure, which uses photosensitive chemicals and photographic techniques to transmit images and type from original materials to printing plates. The master copy may be the actual photographic print and typeset text. With the presence of computers and digital images, master copy are now data in a digital publishing system.

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