

Back of Envelope

Tips for the best quality Flexography output

All printing processes—whether flexography, digital or offset—have certain parameters that have an impact on the success of the finished product. Below are some flexography facts to keep in mind when designing Money Mailer Back of Envelope artwork. It is important to follow these guidelines as they have been created to help you design ads that print well. Remember, credits will not be issued for flexography-printed envelope backs as stated in the Back of Envelope Policy.



Photo and Graphic Tips:

i Photos and graphics will print darker with flexography printing. The paper used for the bond envelopes is more absorbent than the paper used for the ads inside the envelope. This absorbency, known as “dot gain,” allows the ink to spread beyond its original size causing light colors to print darker and dark colors to print even darker.



★ SOLUTION: When choosing photographs and design elements, make certain the colors are as pure and bright as possible, without a lot of really light tones. Try to get as much contrast as possible as colors tend to flatten out when printing flexo, so the more contrast you start out with, the better. Make certain your shapes are clear and distinct and do not use soft blur and shadow effects.



i The printing resolution used in flexography is lower than what is used for the ads inside the envelope. This means the dots used to print the envelopes are bigger which reduces the amount of detail that can be reproduced.

★ SOLUTION: Avoid overly complex and detailed images. Choose images that are simple and impactful.

Flexography Gradient (exaggerated to show effect)

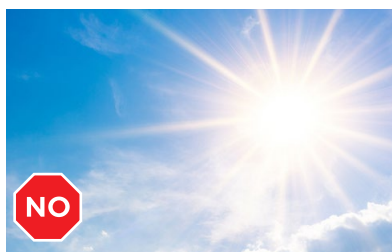
C = 10%	0%	0%
M = 60%	3%	0%
Y = 100%	4%	3%
K = 0%	0%	0%

Offset Gradient



i Photos and graphic elements cannot be faded/blended to zero.

★ SOLUTION: Flexographic printing cannot print tones below 3%, so photos or graphic elements that are faded to zero will have harsh, stepped edges instead of the smooth gradient that is desired. Change the design to not fade any items to zero.



i Photos that have elements that fade to white or less than 3% CMYK will not print as expected with individual CMYK color channels having hard edges as they fade to the 3% cut off of flexography.

★ SOLUTION: This is particularly noticeable on photos of clouds and skies with bright sunshine. Choose a different photo or modify the individual CMYK color channels of the photo so that none of them goes below 3% at the lightest point of the image. Modifying the photo will make it darker, and is not recommended.



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Tips for the best quality Flexography output (continued)



Photo and Graphic Tips:

❗ Low resolution graphics will print worse than they appear on screen.

★ **SOLUTION:** Low quality images will print worse than the client expects and often make the printing appear dirty and messy. Do not use low resolution images especially if they contain typographic elements. Use high resolution raster and vector graphics whenever possible.



Typography Tips:

❗ Small colored type may be hard to read if the registration is even a little bit off.

★ **SOLUTION:** Do not size colored type smaller than 10 points. Use 100% black for any type below 10 points and no type should be smaller than 6 points. Choosing type colors from the Money Mailer Color Guide found at mm-gasys.com/colorguide.html will produce the best results. Never use the "Registration" color swatch for type.



❗ Reverse type is not recommended as it has a tendency to "fill in" and become hard to read due to the dot gain inherent in flexography printing.

★ **SOLUTION:** If you must include reversed type in the design, use open sans serif fonts. Thin and delicate serif fonts will fill in and become hard to read. It is also important to choose a background color to reverse out of that has as few CMYK components as possible to prevent registration issues. The best results for reversed type can be obtained by using the Money Mailer Color Guide.



❗ Soft shadow and glow effects are not recommended as they may output with hard edges that are not what the client expected.

★ **SOLUTION:** Do not use shadow or glow effects at all. Consider using a stroke around type instead of a glow to improve legibility if necessary.

