

Glossary of Terms

Back Trap Mottle	The contamination of the ink train by ink from the previous unit laydown. Normally caused by incorrect tack sequence or tack cross over.
Blanket	In offset printing, a rubber-surfaced fabric which is clamped around a cylinder, to which the image is transferred from the plate, and from which it is transferred to the paper.
Dot Elongation	The printed dot becomes longer than it is wider. This can also be defined as dot slur.
Dot Gain	The unintentional increase in size of the printed dot. All offset applications recognize a planned increase in dot size, unwanted, is excessive dot gain.
Doubling	A second halftone dot appears, in the form of a shadow, usually of smaller size, next to the expected dot.
Embossing	The chemical attack of the face rubber which causes it to print an old job on a new form. This can also be defined as ghosting.
Face Picking	The removal of small spots of face rubber normally along the edges of the plate or at the gap.
Fan Out	The progressive widening of the web or sheet as it goes from unit to unit. Normally caused by tension differences between the roll and printing units or water pick-up of the stock.
Felt Side	The smoother side of the paper for printing. The top side of the sheet in paper manufacturing.
Gauge Loss	Loss in blanket thickness, exceeding what is expected, in a short period of time. Can also be defined as excessive gauge loss.
Ghosting	Faint images of print appear in solids or halftones following the printed image.
Hickeys	In offset lithography, spots or imperfections in the printing due to such things as dirt on the press, dried ink skin, paper particles, etc.
Hydrophilic	Water receptive.
Hydrophobic	Water repellent.
Impression Cylinder	In printing, the cylinder on a printing press against which the paper picks up the impression from the inked plate in direct printing, or the blanket in offset printing.
Impression	In printing, the pressure of type, plate, or blanket as it comes in contact with the paper.



Light Print	Areas of the printed sheet where required densities can not be achieved.
Loss of Print at the Gap	The inability to print the bleed area on the lead or tail end of the form. Normally occurs on the lead or gripper end of the form.
Low Spots (MD)	Small, isolated areas of the blanket that are of less gauge than the surrounding material. Normally can not be detected by touch but are visible when the surface is solvent washed.
Moire	In color process printing, the undesirable screen pattern caused by incorrect screen angles of overprinting halftones.
Mottle	The spotty or uneven appearance of printing, mostly in solid areas.
Mottled Print	The spotty or uneven appearance of printing, primarily, occurs in solids.
Non Alcohol System	Dampening solution that uses something other than alcohol as a wetting agent.
Packing	In offset printing, paper or polyester is used to underlay the plate and blanket to get proper squeeze or pressure for printing.
Picking	The lifting of the paper surface during printing. It occurs when pulling force (tack) of ink is greater than surface strength of paper.
Piling	In printing, the building up or caking of ink on rollers, plate, or blanket; will not transfer readily. Also, the accumulation of paper dust or coating on the blanket of the offset press.
Pin Holes	Small areas or holes, on the printed sheet, most apparent in solids, that do not transfer ink. These differ from hickeys by not having a dark center.
Plate Blinding	The disappearance of the image from the plate, or the inability of the plate to transfer the image to the blanket.
Plate Crack	The fracture of the metal, normally located at the leading edge.
Registration	The ability to hold and maintain required print location in the around and across direction.
Scum	In offset lithography, a film of ink printing in the non-image areas of a plate where it should not print.
Scumming	The occurrence of the plate taking on ink in the non-image area. Normally due to improper ink water balance.
Set Off	In presswork, when the ink of a printed sheet rubs off or marks the next sheet as it is being delivered. Also, called offset.
Sheet/Web Release	The ability of the blanket to let go of the printed material.
Smash Resistance	The ability of a blanket to withstand more than normal printing pressure.
Smash	The transfer of foreign material between the blanket cylinders or the plate and blanket cylinder resulting in damage to the blanket to blanket.
Solvent Resistance	The ability of a blanket not to swell or become tacky when exposed to liquids used to clean blankets.
Streaking	Areas on the printed sheet, in the across direction, that appear darker or lighter. Streaks can be uniform in location, i.e., gear streaks, or non-uniform.



Tack	In printing inks, the property of cohesion between particles; in the separation force of ink needed for proper transfer and trapping on multicolor presses. A tacky ink has high separation forces and can cause surface picking or splitting of weak papers.
Tinting	Contamination of the fountain solution by ink which transfers to the non-image area of the printed sheet.
Trap	The ability to print one ink over another.
Trapping	In printing, the ability to print a wet ink film over previously printed ink. Wet trapping is printing wet ink over previously printed wet ink.
Unit	In multicolor presses, refers to the combination of inking, plate and impression operations to print each color. A 4-color press has 4 printing units each with its own inking, plate and impression functions.
Waterless plate	Printing plate with silicone rubber coating in non-image areas, that is printed on an offset press without dampening solution.
WYSIWYG	In electronic publishing, an acronym for What You See Is What You Get which means that the composite page viewed on the screen of a work station essentially represents what the printer will output.

