

# Digital vs. Offset Printing

Comparing digital and offset printing is a lot like comparing apples and oranges. Although each print method can help marketers and designers create a high quality print piece, they are inherently different by design. Just keep in mind, that this chart is for reference-only. If you're unsure or need recommendations, contact us.

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DIGITAL		OFFSET
No minimum order.	QUANTITY	Best for large quantities (1,000+)
CMYK	COLOR	Pantone (PMS) or CMYK
No setup required. Files are sent directly to the digital press.	SETUP	Requires time to create metal plates from digital files. Press setup for each job runs approximately 30 minutes or more
Varies based on the number of inks per side. Presses like the HP Indigo print at speeds ranging from 1,000 to 1,800 impressions/hour.	PRESS PRODUCTION TIME	Varies based on quantity. Generally, offset presses print between 10,000 and 15,000 sheets per hour.
Prints lower quantities at lower cost.	PRICE	Prints higher quantities at lower cost
Print quality as high as offset printing. May be susceptible to scratching and scuffing upon handling.	QUALITY	Excellent resolution and image quality
13" x 19" is the most common sheet size.	SIZE	Up to a 40" sheet size
Available when linked to a database	PERSONALIZATION	Not available
Drying time is not required.	FINISHING	Offset presses with H-UV inks dry instantly, otherwise drying time is required.
White or transparent inks.	SPECIAL EFFECTS	PMS Colors, Metallics, Fluorescents
Raised Ink, digital embossing, foil stamping. Overall coatings can be completed offline.	SPECIAL INKS	Spot varnish, foil stamping, in-line coating options, and more
Digital-only stocks. Digital substrates include most if not all of the same stock brands used in offset printing.	STOCK/ AVAILABLE SUBSTRATES	A wide range of substrates including thick paper, textured, and specialty papers
Can be produced directly on the stock for the job.	PROOFING	Very accurate color proofs produced on proofing paper
Best for smaller quantities and/or projects with variable data.	APPLICATIONS	Best for large volume, image areas and finished pieces.
Digital presses excel at creating and leveraging variable data. Additionally they continue to improve their compatibility with both off-line finishing devices as well as more efficient in-line processes.	FUTURE ADVANCEMENTS	Increase run speeds and hourly output/yield. New H-UV presses are becoming increasingly eco-friendly.