

# MOHAWK

Mohawk Fine Papers Inc.  
465 Saratoga Street  
Cohoes, New York 12047  
1 800 the mill  
www.mohawkpaper.com

# How to buy paper: a designer's guide

Mohawk Fine Papers produces high quality papers for commercial offset and digital printing. These papers are specified by graphic designers and printers for a wide range of projects, including annual reports, invitations, posters, brochures, and direct mail. The paper supply channel is fairly simple, but many different people can influence the final paper specification. By understanding your role in the process you will receive better service from your sales reps and retain more control over your specifications.

## **From mill to printer: the short story**

Mohawk manufactures over 3,000 different stock items. These represent various combinations of color, grade, basis weight, finish, and size. Our paper is distributed from four locations for quick service: upstate New York, Ohio, Washington, and California. Mohawk sells its paper to distributors (merchants) in North America, Europe, Asia, South America, Australia and New Zealand. A merchant typically stocks their warehouse with a wide selection of papers from a variety of mills and sells to printers.

## **From a paper perspective, jobs come into the printer in two ways:**

The paper is either specified by the graphic designer or end user. In this instance, the printer calls two or three merchants to get competitive prices on the selected paper so they can include the paper price in their printing quote. A printer often asks for pricing on an alternate stock if they feel it offers better value for their customer. They then present both options to their client.

Alternately, the printer may be asked by the designer to recommend a stock. In this case, the printer chooses from papers they have experience with, calls merchants for pricing and passes the information onto their customers. Papers chosen by reputable printers will provide acceptable results, but may be somewhat generic. If you want to differentiate your message it's wise to learn about papers and specify them to the printer. You'll also be in a better position to evaluate alternatives presented by printers and merchant sales representatives.

## **Merchant representatives**

For large jobs, your local merchant is the best resource for paper information. There are two basic types of merchant representatives. Merchant sales representatives call on printers. They provide samples, recommendations, pricing, and handle delivery issues.

Merchant specification representatives (spec reps) call on graphic designers, end users, and ad agencies. They provide mill samples, swatchbooks, dummies and envelope information. They also provide commercially printed samples to help evaluate a paper's performance. The spec rep has a grasp of the big picture and may recommend alternative papers that will print better or save money. When consulted early in the planning stages of a project, the spec rep can help the designer choose appropriate papers, saving time once the project goes to the printer.

continued

## **GRAPHIC ARTS ORGANIZATIONS**

Becoming a member of design and printing organizations supports the profession and gives you access to a wide range of product and service offerings. Your local AIGA, Graphic Artist Guild, or ad club chapter is a great place to start looking.

## **AMERICAN INSTITUTE FOR GRAPHIC ARTS (AIGA)**

212 807 1990  
Fax: 212 807 1799  
www.aiga.org  
comments@aiga.org

## **ART DIRECTORS CLUB, INC.**

212 643 1440  
Fax: 212 643 4266  
www.adcglobal.org  
info@adcglobal.org

## **GRAPHIC ARTISTS GUILD**

212 791 3400  
www.gag.org  
secretary@gag.org

## **ASSOCIATION OF GRAPHIC COMMUNICATIONS**

212 279 2100  
fax: 212 279 5381  
www.agcomm.org  
info@agcomm.org

## **INSOURCE**

www.in-source.org  
info@in-source.org

## **PRINT BUYERS ONLINE**

703 534 9305  
Fax: 703 534 1858  
www.printbuyersonline.com  
membersolutions@e-pbo.com

# MOHAWK

Mohawk Fine Papers Inc.  
465 Saratoga Street  
Cohoes, New York 12047  
1 800 the mill  
[www.mohawkpaper.com](http://www.mohawkpaper.com)

It should be noted that while spec reps provide a valuable resource to the designer, their service is costly to the merchant. It's therefore important for design firms, who have been aided by spec reps and merchant sample departments, to specify the merchant along with the paper to the printer.

## Mill representatives

Quality paper mills like Mohawk also have their own sales and specification representatives in the field. The mill sales rep calls on merchants and printers, while the mill spec rep calls on designers and end users. They work as a team with the local merchant.

## Specifying the details

The process begins by choosing a stock, finish and color. You then decide upon a basis weight. Start by feeling the samples in the swatchbook. A complete range of basis weights is usually shown. Double check the chart in the swatchbook to make sure the color comes in the basis weight you prefer.

It's important to be as specific as possible. Ask your merchant for plain paper samples or dummies of the paper you've chosen. A dummy is a complete bound version of your project with no printing. It shows how papers look next to each other and makes it easier for the designer and end user to imagine the finished piece. Once you've specified the product, color, basis weight, and merchant, your printer will decide on sheet size and grain direction as part of their estimating process. The printer then gets a price quote on the paper from the merchant and includes the price of paper on the overall printing quote.

## For very small jobs

Today many paper merchants operate their own retail stores, selling reams of copy paper along with high quality digital and offset printing papers. Often located near their warehouse, but sometimes found in business districts of major cities, these merchant paper stores offer a larger selection of high quality papers than office superstores.

Mohawk sells reams of all of our cut-size papers and boxes of matching envelopes at [www.mohawkpaperstore.com](http://www.mohawkpaperstore.com).

## Envelopes

If you need envelope information, your merchant is the best place to start. They can help you decide on envelope paper stock and size, and determine the pricing and delivery details with the envelope supplier. Envelope specification and postal requirement information are available at [www.mohawkpaper.com](http://www.mohawkpaper.com). You can also purchase envelopes at [www.mohawkpaperstore.com](http://www.mohawkpaperstore.com).

For more information and samples, please call your local merchant or Mohawk at 1 800 the mill. [www.mohawkpaper.com](http://www.mohawkpaper.com)

## GRAPHIC ARTS TRADE JOURNALS

The graphic arts industry is serviced by many excellent publications. They provide valuable insight into the design and printing process. They keep designers and printers up-to-date on paper trends, product introductions, and case studies.

## COMMUNICATION ARTS

650 326 6040  
Fax: 650 326 1648  
[www.commart.com](http://www.commart.com)  
[webdirector@commarts.com](mailto:webdirector@commarts.com)

## DYNAMIC GRAPHICS

888 698 8542  
[www.dynamicgraphics.com](http://www.dynamicgraphics.com)

## GRAPHIC DESIGN USA

212 696 4380  
Fax: 212 696 4564  
[www.gdusa.com](http://www.gdusa.com)

## GRAPHIS

212 532 9387  
Fax: 212 213 3229  
[www.graphis.com](http://www.graphis.com)

## HOW MAGAZINE

800 333 1115  
[www.howdesign.com](http://www.howdesign.com)  
[editorial@howdesign.com](mailto:editorial@howdesign.com)

## ID MAGAZINE

212 447 1400  
Fax: 212 447 5231  
[www.idonline.com](http://www.idonline.com)  
[idedit@fwpubs.com](mailto:idedit@fwpubs.com)

## PRINT MAGAZINE

212 447 1400  
Fax: 212 447 5231  
[www.printmag.com](http://www.printmag.com)  
[info@printmag.com](mailto:info@printmag.com)

## STEP

800 227 7048  
Fax: 309 688 8515  
[www.stepinsidedesign.com](http://www.stepinsidedesign.com)