



Making printed matter

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Printed matter as a marketing tool

Using printed matter, such as flyers, posters, invitations or brochures, is one of the traditional ways of promoting a performance, show, presentation or exhibition. Almost every theatre makes an annual brochure and festivals as well as parties, music venues, companies and museums use flyers and program booklets for promotion. Always choose the type of printed matter carefully, based on your marketing plan. Purpose, form and content (text) should all fit together as well as to the message and the corporate identity. This is not to say that you should always go for a standard option (e.g., why not use a badge instead of an admission ticket?). Ask for feedback to find out whether your choices match your aims and target group(s), and if they are having the desired effect.

Types of printed matter

Often the first step in making printed matter is to design a corporate identity that enhances the visibility. This could just be a logo or a pictorial mark, but could also include a standard font and colour scheme, or using the same format for posters; for example, always having a photo on it which covers the whole poster, or always putting a standard red border around the edge.

The house style usually finds its first expression on writing paper, envelopes and business cards. Many printers offer inexpensive standard sets of this kind of printed matter. Don't be too modest about the number you order; it is much more expensive to have additional copies printed than to buy a single large run.

Printed materials can also be made for specific projects (a performance, exhibition, CD). Often, nowadays, these materials are not limited to posters and flyers but can include handouts and merchandise such as packets of sweets, picture postcards, badges, discount cards or T-shirts. Don't forget that 'funny and eye-catching' is not always effective; keep your marketing objectives (and your house style!) in mind.

Designing the content

Give a lot of thought to the kind of printed matter you need, what you will be using it for, how you will distribute it and what this entails for the design, layout and text. Some examples:

- If you also want to use your stationery for your invoices, then include your bank account, BTW (Dutch VAT) and Chamber of Commerce numbers;
- Flyers can be used to attract an audience, but if you want to use the flyer as a programme too then you should adapt the text for that purpose;
- If you want to distribute outdoor posters, make sure that they are large enough. Conversely, making a lot of large posters is no good if you don't have the means of distributing them.

You can make the design yourself in Photoshop, Indesign or Illustrator or you can ask a graphic or DTP designer. But graphic design is a specialised skill: graphic designers have more experience than you have, they know all the technical and creative options, and can supervise the printing process for you. Always provide a clear briefing.

Note: Poster design often results in 'works of art' that are beautiful in themselves but don't necessarily constitute good promotional material. Make sure that your poster serves your promotional objectives. If you use images, heed copyrights.

You can either write the text yourself or employ a professional copywriter. Make sure an outsider checks the text, because you may become blind to any mistakes in it.



Carry out a final check. The printer or designer can send you a digital file with the final version. Remember that the colours on a computer display may differ slightly from the final printed copy.

Choosing the paper, colour and finish

Paper comes in different thicknesses and qualities. Luxury paper and coloured paper are more expensive than standard paper. Standard paper varies from printer to printer, so it is a good idea to ask for paper samples from several printers.

The more colours you use, the more expensive the printed matter will be. Using PMS (Pantone) colours or the full colour process (CMYK) will also affect the price. Printing presses are normally set up for full-colour printing but PMS colours are mixed separately, which makes them more expensive. In a full-colour process all the colours can be made, but the colour intensity is not always the same as that of pre-mixed PMS colours.

Finally, you need to determine the finish of your printed matter. Should the business cards have a (partly) glossy or a matt coating? Do you want the brochure stapled, a hole punched in your stickers or the programme scored (i.e., creased but not folded)? Designers and printers can inform you about the prices and options.

Producing printed matter

The designer not only designs the printed matter but, in most cases, can also advise you about printers and printing methods. Ask!

Always ask for a detailed quotation in writing beforehand, so that you know what is being done for the price agreed. Send a confirmation of the order according to the specifications in the quotation. If any changes or modifications need to be made, ask for written confirmation of the additional costs.

Always consult with the printer what kind of file he needs. Usually you'll send a PDF file, with all used fonts added to it. This way your exact design is used and colour and fonts will be printed correctly. Make sure the resolution of your file is high enough, at least 300 dpi. Also take into account a margin of at least 3 mm on the edges of the design.

Instead of using an ordinary print shop you can consider alternatives. If you need a very small run of posters, for example, it may be cheaper to go to a copy shop. There are also various online printing sites and internet printing services where you can order printed matter cheaply too. The options are usually limited as regards the types of paper and the format, but it can save you a lot of money.

Distributing printed matter

Make a plan how and where you want to distribute the printed matter before you print it, so you can estimate what exactly you want to print and how much you need.

Many cultural institutions have a place for flyers and program booklets or a spot for posters. Of course you can distribute flyers yourself, but there are also companies that specialize in the distribution of cultural printed matter, such as Zzappservices in Amsterdam and the Cultuurkoker ('cultural tube') for schools.

More information

On [Beroepkunstenaar.nl](https://www.beroepkunstenaar.nl):

- Several texts about publicity, marketing, copyright, intellectual property and portrait rights can be found.