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Printing & Handling of Soft-Finished Papers

The very quality that is so attractive in soft-finished papers – the soft tactile feel - is one that can be most challenging during print processing, bindery, and mailing operations.

Ink Transfer

The first issue to consider is ink transfer. When a dense area of coverage is facing an open, unprinted or lightly printed area, inks may transfer if they are not properly protected with varnish or coatings. This can occur when the press sheets are stacked and waiting for processing (the top or bottom of a sheet transferring to the top or bottom of the sheet above or below) or during or after the bindery process. Even relatively small, wispy type can transfer without a spot or overall coating.

Scuffing, Polishing, & Attracting Oils/Dirt

Soft-finished papers may scuff during bindery processes as they come in contact with wheels, belts, and other parts of the finishing process. You may have noticed that raised areas of an emboss or areas where stitches sit in the spine may “polish” due to the friction of the process. These papers can also attract oils and dirt from equipment – including postal processing equipment. Varnishes and coatings can offer protection in these situations and you may want to consider slip-sheeting brochures to prevent marking in transit.

Protective Varnishes & Coatings

Spot varnishing image areas allows the paper finish to maintain its distinctive tactile feel and prevents the yellowing that can occur when you use an overall varnish. Overall aqueous coating will prevent transfer and not create yellowing but will take away the tactile feel.

As a rule, we recommend gloss varnish or aqueous on gloss finishes, satin varnish or aqueous on silk finishes, and dull varnish or aqueous on dull or matte finishes.