

The Right Paper For the Job

Few things are more important in an office than what comes off the photocopier. That one machine being broken can bring the busiest office to a halt within seconds. It is very important to take good care of your photocopier. Additionally, because of the nature of the machine, the copies that it produces are important, as they are intended to be distributed to people.

When looking at paper for your photocopier, there are many, many types of paper to get confused with. There is computer paper, Laser paper, InkJet paper, photo paper, matte paper, glossy paper, printer paper, recycled copy paper, and copy paper. Many of these paper types won't fit or look good in your typical photocopier, so we shall remove the continuous sheets of paper used by the old Dot Matrix printers and all related types of

The issues you will want to look at when choosing your paper are the weight, brightness, opacity, and smoothness. All these factors will affect the durability and quality of the print you're making.

When looking at the weight of paper, it is figured by the weight of a 500 sheet slab of 17 x 22 inches (4 times the area of a normal sheet of paper). The average use in offices these days is 20 lb paper. The heavier the paper, the more durable it is, and it has a better feel to it. Heavier paper should be used for presentations, as well as extremely high quality applications.

Opacity is a measure of how much light passes through a piece of paper. The less light passes through, the more opaque it will be. The heavier the paper, the more opaque it tends to be. Standard 20 lb paper is relatively clear, and, as such, should not be used for presentations against a lit background.

Brightness is the contrast of the paper, and how far from white it appears to be. The higher the contrast number (normal paper ranges from 80 to 100), the better your copies will look.

Smoothness is simply how smooth the paper is. Different printers print different ways. Laser printers and copiers (of which you probably have one) use toner and ink, and benefit greatly from a smoother paper. Inkjet printers use waterbased ink, with dries faster and produces a better image on a rougher textured paper.

As you can see, the choice of the paper to use in your office copier really hangs on what you're using the machine for. If you're using it to print off a presentation for clients, go with the smooth heavy weight bright paper. But if you're only using it for internal affairs for which quality isn't extremely important, as long as the message can be read, the go with the standard cheap 20 lb paper. It's cheap, in ready supply, and it works extremely well for most applications.

As for those old perforated nearly endless strips of Dot Matrix paper... well, give those to the kids to make some confetti for the office opening party.

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About the Author

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