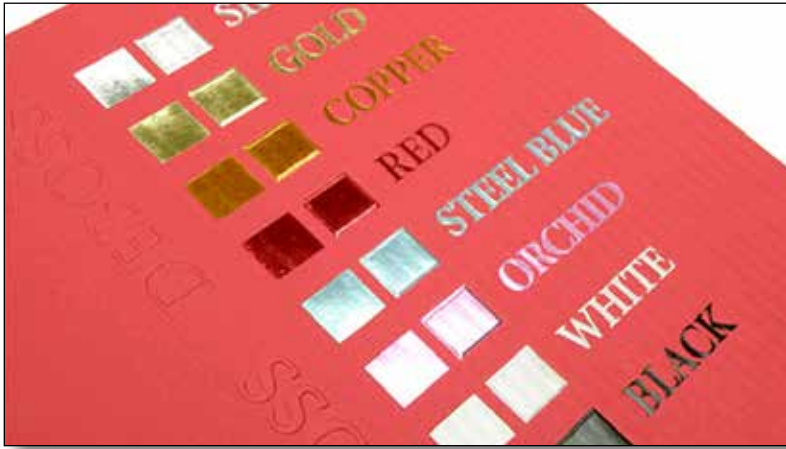


Foil Stamping Guide



Yes, we're familiar with foil stamping's golden sheen on official seals and silver reflection on university certificates, but ... when it comes to cool and flashy design, this technique is often an afterthought. Okay, I admit it; it's often not even on our radar.

You readily think of metallic inks. But, metallic inks have a tendency to look dull as they are absorbed into the paper during the offset process – especially when you plan on using an uncoated sheet.

When it comes to true metallic sheen, popping opaque or even subtle translucent colors, do not underestimate the creativity and possibilities of what you can do with foil stamping these days.

And forget about gold and silver (well, don't dismiss them totally), but widen your foil horizon. Today's foil colors range from opaque whites and bright colors, to translucent and metallic, even holographic ones.

How it Works

Like embossing and diecutting, foil stamping falls under the specialty printing techniques.

No ink is used in this process. The foil material provides the color. While the paper runs through the press, a heated metal die presses your design on top of the foil, which frees the foil from its backing and attaches it to the paper surface.

The heat part is what also gives it the name "hot foil" or "hot stamping."

In the foil stamping process, the die comes in contact with the foil and transfers a thin layer of the foil film onto the intended surface. As the metal plate is heated, the foil sticks to the surface only in the design of the plate and in the required areas with the desired imprint.

In most cases, a good old-fashioned letterpress is used to for this process – in specialized printing companies a Bobst press might be used, which is specifically manufactured for hot foil stamping and embossing.

Designing for Foil

Once you have finalized your design, a metal die is created for the text or image you want foil stamped.

Depending on the width of the press and the location of the artwork to be foil stamped, you can run multiple colors at the same time. The foil comes in rolls, which are placed strategically on the press to hit the corresponding areas on the paper.

The tricky part when designing a project is the position of the foiled elements in your artwork – particularly if you want the piece to run in one pass on the press. Since each roll of foil physically takes up a certain width, multiple press passes maybe required if the design elements overlap or are very close together. Your printer can help you in the preplanning of your design.

In this treasured EBD Mix example, a lighter transparent foil was pressed on top of a darker brown foil (second print run as we now know). Combined with the dark brown paper as a backdrop and the geometric design, this foil stamping is oh-so stunning. You can do this too!

Colorful Effects

We might first think of gold and silver when it comes to foil stamping, but today's foil has so much more variety. It is basically limitless. From clear foil, to matte or gloss ones, to holographic and pearlescent shades. The sky, as they say, is the limit!

Paper Choices

Coated or uncoated papers work equally well with foil stamping. As the foil is opaque you can achieve beautiful, clean results, even – or specially – on colored uncoated stock. The only foil that is not opaque are the clear ones of course. They create a special subtle effect if used on uncoated sheets, as the paper surface shines through so to speak.