



PROJECT ESTIMATES

Estimates provide realistic project parameters, eliminate surprises and keep everybody on the same wavelength—designer, printer and client. Designers and clients should consult with their printer as early in the project planning process as possible—even if the design is only at thumbnail stage. The results are noticeable because a quality printer can head off potential issues ahead of time and often redirect dollars to have greater visual impact. Ballpark quotes provide a frame of reference and an idea of what the design-in-progress will cost. Once the design is complete, it's important to nail down the specifications and re-estimate the job before it goes on press—that way, if there's a major shift, there's time to manage the client's expectations.

HOW TO AVOID SURPRISES

- AAs are changes to a job after the final estimate is created. Depending on the timing and type of changes, they can add big bucks to the final bill. To avoid costly surprises, always ask your printer what the cost implications of any change will be.
- Overs are extra finished pieces that the printer delivers over your requested quantity. Printers print extra material for a number of reasons. First, printing presses don't stop on a dime, so printers must overprint to be sure you receive your desired quantity. Printers also plan overs to accommodate potential waste in subsequent bindery and supplementary process operations (such as embossing and engraving). Printers often charge for overs, so be sure to plan for that potential expense. You can specify "no overs" prior to doing the work, but you must be willing to take less than your specified quantity as a result. You can also limit your overs to a specified amount, commonly 10 percent.

MAKE YOUR ESTIMATE CLIENT-FRIENDLY

- Keep the format simple and complete. It should be easy to read and the bottom line should be easy to understand.
- Include costs per thousand and the cost of special items, like dies or special finishing, if appropriate.
- Provide a total cost per quantity on the estimate.
- Highlight new numbers on revised estimates so that clients can easily distinguish them from the previous estimates.
- Communicate AAs in writing before the work is done.
- Note availability of materials, especially if there will be a wait for special papers or binding materials.
- Provide a final estimate, particularly if the piece has changed since initial quotes were submitted.