

Questions to Ask Your Digital Lab.

The key to any successful relationship is good communication. Communicating with your digital lab or service bureau is particularly important because of the vast array of choices available today. To make things easier, we've supplied you with this list of questions to ask whenever you're considering using an outside vendor for digital printing.

Remember that color is subjective, so it's always a good idea to bring an original slide or a color-corrected print for reference.

It is important to find a lab you can trust to handle your valuable originals as carefully as you would.

Be nice. Everyone wants to work with people they like and lab technicians are no different. Establishing a good working relationship can help in more ways than one.

Labs will go out of their way to satisfy what they perceive to be a good client. This might mean a free reprint when the color isn't quite right or rushing a job without the extra charges.

Don't settle on the first lab you find; shop around for the best price and the best quality. Remember the lowest price IS NOT always the best way to go.

- What kind of prints can you make? (ink-jet, dye-sub, etc.)
- What file formats do you accept? Do you prefer a specific format? (.psd, .tif, etc.)
- What are the resolution requirements for each output method? (300 ppi, 320 ppi, etc.)
- What color mode is required? (RGB, CMYK, etc.) Is there any cost to convert the color mode?
- What paper choices do I have? (glossy, matte, double weight, single weight, textured surfaces, etc.)
- Do you use archival inks and papers?
- How big (or small) a print can you make?
- Can you make a proof print first? How much will it cost?
- Can you mount prints? What kinds of mounting material do you offer? Cost? (Foamcor, Gator board, etc.)
- What are your NORMAL turnaround times? (2 days, 3 days, etc.)
- If I need a print quicker than NORMAL, are there RUSH charges?
- Do you offer any discounts? (student, professional, etc.)
- What payment options are available? (cash, credit, debit, check, corporate account, etc.)
- What are the delivery options (if necessary)? Cost?
- Do you have a price list? (comprehensive, accurate, easy to read)
- What are your hours? Weekends? Special holiday schedule?
- How is the customer service? Do they meet deadlines? Are your questions answered to your satisfaction?