

# Coat Your Projects in Style

*Choose from a Variety of Coatings to Protect and Enhance the Look of Your Printed Piece*

All printed documents are designed to be viewed by somebody. People handle them, pass them around, pile them, file them and generally manhandle them. All that activity can result in damage, because inks can show fingerprints, scuff marks, and scratches—particularly if the ink is a dark, solid color. Your printed piece has a better chance of holding up against all this abuse if you add a protective coating.

## Coats of Many Colors

There are a number of different types of coatings, but they fall into two broad categories: those that are applied like another ink on the press, and those that are applied during the binding phase after the ink is dry. Press coatings are generally thinner and less expensive to apply than bindery coatings. Varnish and aqueous coatings are generally applied on press, but ultraviolet coatings are usually a separate finishing operation.

## On Press: Varnish versus Aqueous

Because it is applied like an ink, varnish is the least expensive coating; it often costs about the same as adding another color ink to your project. You can choose either flood or spot varnish. A flood varnish covers the entire sheet, whereas a spot varnish applies the coating only to the areas you specify. Applying a spot gloss varnish to a photo, for example, can be a great way to emphasize it, since it can make the image look just as glossy as a photographic print (depending on the paper stock used).

As the name suggests, aqueous coatings are water-based. Like varnishes, aqueous coatings are available in gloss, satin, or matte finishes. Aqueous coatings are often used on magazines because they do not crack or scuff easily. This type of coating generally covers the entire sheet,

and can be applied on press, if the press being used is equipped with a coating unit. We perform both varnish and aqueous coatings on our presses here at **TanaSeybert**.

## Post-Press: Ultraviolet

Ultraviolet coatings, which we also offer, are performed off-site through a third party vendor. Ultraviolet coatings offer even more protection than aqueous coatings or varnishes. These coatings are often used for heavy-duty applications, such as book jackets or packaging. An ultraviolet coating is essentially a type of plastic that is dried under ultraviolet light. Like other types of coatings, it is available in matte or gloss finishes. As with varnish, you can select a flood or spot coating. Ultraviolet coatings also offer a greater sheen; however, due to their viscosity, they can become brittle and crack when folded.

## Preparing Your files

You don't need to do anything special to your artwork to add a flood coating. If you opt to do a spot coating, you can set up the artwork yourself. Treat it as you would a separate spot ink color (like a PMS color) in your design file, so it will output on a completely separate piece of film.

## Thinking it Through

As with other finishing options, you always need to consider how your finished piece will be used. For instance, it is often difficult to write on a document that has a thick coating. Gluing and stamping can be problematic as well, so make sure you take that limitation into account during the design process. If environmental

concerns factor into your decision making, there are a few issues to be aware of. Varnish coatings, many of which are solvent-based, emit volatile organic compounds (VOCs) while being applied. Aqueous coatings, because they are water-based, are less toxic and emit fewer VOCs. Ultraviolet coatings produce no VOCs, but are more difficult to recycle than the other coatings.



## Making the Call

With a little up-front planning, coatings can be a practical and eye-catching way to add a finishing touch to your piece. Consult with your account representative regarding what your preferences and needs are. He or she can show you samples that illustrate how different coatings have worked on past projects comparable to yours. Conversely, if you see a coating used elsewhere that you would like to incorporate, let your account rep know. An open exchange of ideas with clients is something we nurture at **TanaSeybert**—we want to make sure you get exactly the results you're looking for, both in terms of aesthetic quality and cost effectiveness.