



## Printing Methods

Test Valley Packaging Innovations / Registered and Unregistered print explained

**There are three principal methods of applying printed images to corrugated boxes; flexographic printing, screen printing and litho-laminating. All three methods are commonly used, but serve different purposes and budgets.**

### Flexographic Printing

This is the most common method of printing on corrugated board and is often executed on the same machine and at the same time in-line as it converts a corrugated pad into a box. Flexography uses flexible rubber or polymer plates to transfer an image onto corrugated much like a mechanized rubber stamp. Fast-drying, water-based inks are generally used, which allow for fast running speeds. The print quality is dependent on many variables, and is influenced by the absorbency of the material being printed. By nature, corrugated material is highly absorbent and thus flexo printing is not recommended for high definition graphics. For straight text or 1-2 colour graphical images, this method is ideal. Flexographic printing is very economical and is utilized in large or small production runs.



### Screen Printing

Screen printing is a process of forcing ink through a tight screen which is mounted on a frame. The screen carries a stencil which defines the image area and is made of porous material which allows for full ink coverage on corrugated board. The board is generally screen printed prior to its conversion into a box or display. This method is ideal for those who desire a higher resolution image than flexo-printing provides. Full colour graphics are available using screen printing. This method is often used for retail packaging or POP displays and is appropriate for small or medium sized production runs.



### Litho-Laminating

The method of litho-laminating involves the printing of a sheet of paper by an offset printer. The printed paper is later glued to the corrugated board using a water-based adhesive. The litho-laminated board is then converted into the box. This process results in very high definition, sharp images with the ability to produce bright colours. Litho-laminated boxes are appropriate for those who are looking for a high quality finish to their corrugated packaging and is often used for retail packaging or Point-of-Sale displays. This method is most suited to larger production runs.



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