

Which Printing Method?

	IDEAL QUANTITY	GRAPHIC VARIABILITY <i>(e.g., High Number of SKUs)</i>	SETUP TIME	IMAGE QUALITY	REPEATING RUNS	SETUP COSTS <i>(e.g., Printing Plates)</i>	UNIT COST
LITHO LABEL	10K OR MORE	✓✓	✓	✓✓✓	✓✓	\$\$	\$\$\$
SINGLE FACE LITHO	25K OR MORE	✓✓	✓	✓✓✓	✓✓	\$\$\$	\$\$\$
FLEXO	5K OR MORE	✓	✓✓	✓	✓✓✓	\$-\$\$\$\$*	\$\$
PRE PRINT	100K OR MORE	✓✓	✓	✓	✓✓✓	\$-\$\$\$\$*	\$
DIGITAL	1K OR LESS	✓✓✓	✓✓✓	✓✓	✓	\$	\$\$\$\$

Good ✓ Better ✓✓ Best ✓✓✓

*Depends on artwork

The finished package may incorporate a mix of printing methods for the best of both worlds. For example, a floor display which routinely uses the same base and tray might be printed 1-color flexo, with a digitally printed header that is frequently updated for special promotions or seasonal campaigns.

LITHO LABEL

The artwork is litho printed on an 80 lb label and laminated to the outer liner of the corrugated sheet.

**See diagram on next page.*

80 lb Litho/Outer Liner/
Fluting/Inner Liner

Unit Cost \$\$\$
Print Plates \$
Cutting Dies
High and Mid
Volume 4CP/Spot
Colors
Foil Stamping, Etc.

The most widely used and versatile option for high graphics retail packaging and displays. Can include foil stamping, spot UV, embossing, and other special finishes and coatings.

SINGLE FACE LITHO

The artwork is litho printed on 10 pt SBS liner and laminated directly to single face corrugated.

**See diagram on next page.*

10 pt Litho/Fluting/Inner Liner

Unit Cost \$\$\$
Print Plates \$
Cutting Dies
High Volume
4CP/Spot Colors
Foil Stamping, Etc.

Offers excellent sheet registration. Foil stamping, spot UV, and embossing are available. Typically a more cost effective litho option for very large volume runs by reducing manufacturing processes and materials. Higher setup costs than litho label. Size limitations and inability to print on both sides are some cons vs litho label.

FLEXO

Artwork is flexo printed directly onto the outer liner(s) of the corrugated sheet.

Outer Liner/Fluting/Inner Liner

Unit Cost \$\$
Print Plates \$-
\$\$\$\$* Cutting Dies
High Volume
4CP/Spot Colors

Best for 3 colors or less. Simple 1 or 2 color flexo printing is often used on shipper boxes, or other large volume packaging that doesn't require high graphics. Flexo printing can also incorporate up to 7 colors for higher graphics quality. Typically used on large volume runs due to more expensive print plates. Also known as direct print. **Depends on art*

PRE PRINT

Artwork is printed via flexo onto roll stock which is then laminated onto single face corrugated.

Outer Liner/Fluting/Inner Liner

Unit Cost \$
Print Plates
\$-\$\$\$\$* Roll Stocks
Cutting Dies
Very High Volume
4CP/Spot Colors

High quality flexographic printing ideal for high volumes but tougher for exact quantities due to need for roll stock, best for repeating runs. Reduced board crush improves the strength of the substrate. **Depends on art*

DIGITAL

Artwork is printed digitally directly onto the corrugated sheet on one or both sides.

Outer Liner/Fluting/Inner Liner

Unit Cost \$\$\$\$
No Plates
Cutting **Dies**
(Sometimes) **Low**
Volume
4CP/No Spot Colors

Ideal for low volume runs or frequent graphics changes where setup times and cost of print plates would be prohibitive. Serves as an excellent alternative to litho for low volumes. Requires flatbed die-cutting, and production speed per unit is slower than litho or flexo. High image quality but lacks ability to incorporate spot colors and special finishes including foil.



**LITHO LABEL
SINGLE FACE LITHO**



**FLEXO
PRE PRINT**



DIGITAL

**Graphic representation
of print differences*

LITHO LABEL



SINGLE FACE LITHO



DIRECT PRINT



TYPE OF CORRUGATED BOARD

FLUTES

F flute 

E flute 

B flute 

C flute 

A flute 

WALL TYPES

Single face 

Single wall 

Double wall 

Triple wall 