

GET THE MOST FROM YOUR PRINTER

Benjamin Gnanamanickan, General Secretary of the Evangelical Literature Service in Chennai, India, provides suggestions for effectively communicating and working with printers.

No matter what you publish, or how often, you will have to work with a printer. Learning to communicate with a printer can help you save money, time and appearance.

Ask questions about everything the printer does. Printers want to have satisfied clients. They are very willing, even eager, to help you. Is the printer familiar with book work? How large a sheet of paper can the printer's equipment handle? The larger the paper, the more can be printed at once to lower the cost and time of printing. How costly is it to add a second and third color of ink? Does the printer have the equipment that will handle the job most economically? As you get answers to these questions, you will be able to plan ahead more efficiently. Planning is critical in saving money and time.

Visit the printer's shop. Insist seeing the press machines and other equipment so you can understand the printer's capabilities.

Rely on your printer's expertise. Printers are experts at producing literature economically. If you specify a particular paper, they will use it. But if you tell them what the job requirements are, they may suggest a similar paper at a lower cost. They are familiar with the great variety of quality papers available in the market. Since paper usually accounts for 50 to 65 percent of the final cost of books in India, a publisher can

realize substantial savings by working closely with the printer.

The printer's main consideration is delivery time. The following quotation is framed and hung in the reception area of one of the presses in Madras: "Of all sad words of tongue or pen that cause a printer worry, behold the saddest of them all: WE NEED THESE IN A HURRY." Do not expect a first-class, high-quality product on a last minute rush basis. Supply the manuscript to the printer at the agreed time.

Before a manuscript is handed over to the printer, it should be thoroughly edited and should include clear instructions. If you plan far enough in advance, the printer will be able to schedule the job for the most economical press. Remember, the printer will also be serving other customers. Allow time for delays caused by power failures, equipment problems, worker strikes, natural calamities like fires or floods, non-availability of paper or binding materials, etc.

Do not expect more quality than a printer is capable of delivering. When new printers approach you for work, ask them to show you samples of their work for other customers. Find out whether they have any promotional brochures. Find out what kind of type faces they have and whether they have enough type to compose several forms at once.

Ask printers for a written estimate. If a printer does not know how to prepare an estimate for a job, do not use his or her services. Work with professionals who can give you good service.

Does the printer have bindery facilities or will it be necessary to send the book to a specialty shop? If a printer uses another company for binding, this may add to the cost. No matter who handles the binding, insist on a quality job. See that the books are cut neatly and the spine of the book is bound without wrinkles.

Never accept a poor job from printers, binders, artists, blockmakers or others. Tell them that as a Christian publisher, you want to glorify God by maintaining a high standard in publishing. Let them know that you are publishing to further God's kingdom. ❖