

YOU COMPARE

Online printers vs local print provider for your next printed marketing project.

Many small businesses face the question of who's going to print their next marketing collateral project. Do you use an online printer that can offer competitive pricing because of the volume they do, or do you work with a local printer for a more personal interaction? Here are comparative facts about the two. Choose what makes sense for your needs and budget.

	Online Printer	Local Printer
Bottom Line Up Front	Best if you have a standard print job that's large, flat, square and requires no bindery or unique finishing operations.	Best if you need assistance in planning, technical support, and a fast turnaround.
Cost	Cost depends on type of job. May be more or less than a local printer.	May a little higher than an online printer for smaller projects. Typically less expensive on projects requiring bindery or mail operations.
Placing Orders	An online form you can complete anytime and get an immediate quote or response within a short time. Easy to play around with options to get a price and volume that works best.	May have an online form. Usually requires a phone call to discuss the specifics and they build a quote to email to you. Changes to the quote takes additional time.
Payment	Full amount in advance plus freight charges.	After the job is complete, or a small percent up front. Freight may be free for local printers.
Examples/ Samples	Limited examples and no physical samples. Computer monitor doesn't accurately display true-to-life colors and textures.	Printer provides examples and samples to review in hand if you visit their office.
Technical Knowledge	Know and communicate the technical details of direct questions. No intuitive thought.	No technical knowledge required. Tell the printer what you are thinking about and they work up the specifications and tell you what to send them. Typically offers several options and recommendations.
Design Support	Provide the design to the exact specifications required. System may catch errors when uploading, but it is not reviewed by a human being.	Usually have a designer on staff experienced in design for print. Will make edits if they see something that won't work well for the print.
Customization Options	Good at delivering standard print jobs but not flexible to do anything out of the ordinary. Has to fit their standards for size, paper, quantity, etc.	Standard or custom jobs are all the same. You get what you want or they'll explain where you can get it.

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	DIY Websites	Website Designer
Feedback	None offered.	Will provide candid feedback and advice based on their years of experience producing marketing collateral.
Physical Proof	Usually not an option, but if so is an upcharge and extended print date because of time to mail the proof.	May add extra day to print schedule but usually no extra cost. Proof can be delivered and reviewed in one day because of locality.
Online Proof	Their online system might digitally find errors but no humans will catch mistakes for you. Review closely yourself.	Discuss concerns or questions with the printer as needed. They are an additional pair of trained human eyes also looking for issues.
Turnaround Time	Shipping adds to time and expense, particularly if it's a larger order or overnight delivery. May not know delivery date until after order is placed.	Usually faster at executing print orders. Will tell you when they can deliver before placing the order. Small printers are nimble and local printers can deliver same day.
Dissatisfactory Print Job	If you can prove it was their error, they will reprint for free, but you pay the shipping.	Will look if it's their problem or not and may even help if it's your fault by providing a discount to reprint.
Future Needs	Your online profile with the printer may store documents so you can use them again, but usually they are submitted each time an order is placed.	Local printers hold onto documents so you can reorder quickly through a call or email.