

## Top 10 Do's & Don'ts for Wide-Format

These are observations gathered from nearly 3,000 wide-format placements across 36 years and are not brand-specific, but general knowledge and guidance.

The average wide-format printer is replaced every 7.6 years. It is important to make an informed decision as you will have this machine for a long time. We need to ensure that you achieve maximum value.

**Ask vendors how many wide-format machines they have placed.** Follow up with, how many in your particular industry. Demand to see references and do check them. You do not want to be anyone's test case.

**Insist that ink and roll bond paper be included in your contract.** Paper is expensive if you are out in the world buying in small quantities. Be certain it is included, without restriction.

**Confirm who is actually providing service?** Be certain that the company selling you the machine is actually authorized to perform service and that they will, in fact be doing so. Too many companies will "drop" a machine and then contract with a 3rd party for the service.

**Your cost per square foot must be "All-inclusive" without extra charges for ink or paper.** Some contract forms provide a fixed amount of ink with punitive charges for additional consumption. You want to know the exact cost of each and every print.

**Do not bundle your wide-format in the same lease as your office copier.** Copiers are replaced about every 4 years. The average wide-format is replaced every 7-8 years. You only want to pay for your plotter once. Keep them separate.

**Whenever possible, use a 60-month lease with a \$1.00 purchase option.** Wide-format machines are designed to last a long time and models do not change often. We encourage customers to own their equipment and run them for as long as possible.

**Make sure that prices quoted include delivery and installation.** Some deliveries can be quite involved and require extra help or even outside rigging. Insist on a site-survey. You do not want any surprises.

**Avoid big monthly minimums.** Do not agree to a service agreement that has a large minimum number of feet required each month. You may wind up paying for prints that you never make.

**What does it take to get a person on the phone?** Wide-format requires a much higher level of customer service than an office copier. When a deadline is looming or a bid is due, you need a live, motivated human to help you immediately. Call a prospective vendor and find out what it takes to get a person to help you.

**The less-expensive machine is seldom the lowest cost.** Simple rule: the less expensive the machine, the higher the print cost. An experienced vendor will help you calculate your print volume based on a few simple questions and some basic math. At a certain print volume, the next model up may not only provide greater productivity, but a lower overall cost as well.