

# inspire

INSPIRE 1 - 2026 | Issue 76 | A MAGAZINE FROM HOLMEN BOARD AND PAPER

## The brand is in the letters

SPECIAL  
TYPOGRAPHY  
ISSUE!

# INSPIRE 76 1—2026

Features:

**26.**  
**Making each print count**  
Unlocking the power of variable data printing.



**31.**  
**Get personal!**  
How to shine with personalised packaging.



Stories:

**Special edition of *Twilight*** ..... 7  
A stunning fore-edge illusion reveals Bella and Edward.

**Award-winning design** ..... 8  
Performance meets experience in Phonak's hearing aid packaging.

**Flagship beauty device** ..... 10  
New packaging is a refined expression of Medicube's philosophy.

**Architecture in every fold** ..... 12  
Meet paper artist Charles Young.

**Every letter counts** ..... 14  
The role of typography.

**Printing that adapts** ..... 26  
Variable data opens new possibilities.

**Put the personal in packaging** ..... 31  
Make your products memorable and collectible.

**From paperboard to lampshade** ..... 34  
Student's design shines light on reuse.

**14.**  
**Brands live in the letters**  
How does type shape a brand?



**15%**  
faster reading speed is possible with serif fonts in print.

**73%**  
of consumers expect brands to offer personalised packaging options.

Up to **80%**  
higher brand recognition can be achieved by using fonts consistently.



We spent a day at Retuscheriet in Stockholm photographing Holmen's *sample kits*, which were styled and lit to highlight the textures, colours, and details of the materials.

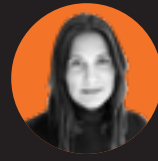


The sample kits in focus.

Inspire's photographer Johan Artursson films the various kits.



Staging the cosmetics kit.



## EDITOR'S NOTE:

We all know the feeling of encountering something that seems made just for us – a name on a label, a message that feels personal, or a special edition of a favourite book. Personalisation has a way of turning communication into connection, and much of that connection comes from the words we place on a page or a package.

Typography plays a quiet but powerful role in how those words are read and perceived. It shapes understanding and influences how brands are recognised. A single letterform can convey trust, authority, elegance or playfulness.

In packaging and print, these choices matter even more. Type must remain clear and accessible – sometimes within strict regulations – while still expressing a distinctive brand voice and standing out on a crowded shelf. How letters appear is shaped not only by design, but also by printing techniques, surfaces and materials.

In this issue of *Inspire*, we explore how thoughtful design, typography, packaging and printing come together to shape how brands are recognised and remembered. We hope the stories in this issue spark new ideas about how the smallest details – even a single letter – can make a meaningful difference and create a fresh impression.

### Enjoy!

Jennie Majgren, Head of Marketing, Holmen Board and Paper

**Address:**  
Holmen Board and Paper  
SE-601 88 Norrköping, Sweden  
inspire@holmen.com  
holmen.com

**Publisher:**  
Jennie Majgren  
Head of Marketing

**Editor in Chief:**  
Alicia Nilsson  
alicia.nilsson@holmen.com

**Printing consultant:**  
Maria Blohm

**Publishing agency:**  
Content Innovation  
Döbelnsgatan 21  
SE-111 40 Stockholm

**Managing Editor:**  
Natalie Roos  
natalie.roos@ci.se

**Art Director:**  
Johan Blomgren  
johan.blomgren@ci.se

**Printer:**  
Multiply

**Contributors:**  
Cari Simmons  
Danny Chapman  
Justin Rubin  
Johan Artursson  
Ebba Söderquist Määttä

**Translations:**  
Comactiva Language Partner  
Transperfect

Manage your subscription at  
[holmen.com/boardandpaper/unsubscribe](https://holmen.com/boardandpaper/unsubscribe)  
ISSN 1404-2436



*Inspire* aims to inform and entertain with stories and photos that are not restricted to the scope of Holmen Board and Paper's own business. As the name suggests, the idea is to be inspirational and not to infringe on a company or person's image rights or intellectual property.



INSPIRE 1-2026 p. 6 FRESH EYES ON

## Kit to go

Holmen Board and Paper's sample kits are fully realised packaging concepts that invite customers to experience material quality, print performance, and structural precision first-hand. More than samples, they are crafted to showcase fresh fibre paperboard in real packaging applications. ●

**FRESH,  
IN MOTION:**





# HERE'S A FRESH ASPECT

It's not every day a brand-new magazine paper hits the market – but when it does, it might as well make an entrance. Holmen's Aspect brings a trio of standout features that give printed content a serious upgrade.

- 1. **Enhanced whiteness** that makes photos pop with sharper contrasts and vivid detail.
- 2. **A smooth, matt surface** for a calm, glare-free reading experience.
- 3. **Superior opacity**, so every page gets to shine on its own.



## Dancing in the clouds

Meet Cloud Dancer, a discrete white hue, introduced by Pantone as its Color of the Year 2026. "A conscious statement of simplification, Cloud Dancer enhances our focus, providing release from the distraction of external influences," says Leatrice Eiseman, Executive Director, Pantone Color Institute.



INSPIRE 1 – 2026 p. 6 FRESH EYES ON



## A flip through Dutch design

Books still have the power to surprise and delight as the latest *Best Dutch Book Designs* catalogue proves. This coffee-table gem is made by The Best Dutch Book Design Foundation and supplied by IGEPA Netherlands. It showcases 30 jury-selected works, revealing the craft, quirks, and clever details behind each winning design. Packed with striking photography and printed on Holmen TRND 70 gsm, it's as tactile and stylish as the designs it celebrates. As noted in the introduction: "In a world we all think we know, there are still books that open up new perspectives." ●

Quirks and clever ideas unfold throughout the book.

The 20th anniversary edition of *Twilight* mesmerizes with gilded edges and a stunning fore-edge illusion that reveals Bella and Edward as the pages are flipped.



### Special edition of *Twilight* novel enchants fans

Brand: PRHGE

Product: Special edition book

Paper: Holmen BOOK Cream 70g

#### THE INCREDIBLY SUCCESSFUL

*Twilight* novels are fantasy-romance stories about a teenage girl who falls in love with a vampire. A 20th anniversary edition of the first novel has been created for the Spanish market using a unique digital printing layout on Holmen paper. “The book is published in Spain by Penguin Random House

Grupo Editorial (PRHGE), who use Holmen as their main paper supplier,” says Eva Farriol, Commercial Director, Holmen Paper Spain.

The most obvious design feature of the edition is the gold-painted edges of each page. “But the magic really starts when you begin to open the book,” says Farriol. “Because when you flip through the pages one way the face of Bella Swan magically appears. Flip them the other way, and Edward Cullen appears.”

This design was developed by PRHGE, while Liber Digital created the unique printing process. “To execute

the design, Liber Digital printed a different image on every page, about two millimetres from the edge, while the very edge was gilded. This could not be done using standard book printing techniques on reels. It had to be printed digitally. And in many ways, this was a crazy thing to do because you need a lot more time and money for this kind of production. But it really was worth it. They created a unique and magic book,” says Farriol. ●

## Raising the volume on hearing tech packaging

Brand: Phonak

Product: Hearing aid

Paperboard: Invercote G

**THROUGH ITS** innovative hearing technology, Phonak (a brand within the Sonova group) is committed to improving the quality of life for people with hearing loss.

Its package has an angled lid and a signature Phonak green interior, reinforcing the brand's visual identity. The lid features a unique, easy-to-open, resealable mechanism that doesn't require a label, and modular inserts allow flexible configurations.

"A package can evoke emotions by turning the act of opening it into an experience," says Olivia Husslage, packaging developer at PAWI, a company specialising in packaging solutions. "With this project, the goal was to make the opening and closing mechanisms a memorable part of the unboxing, to highlight the product in a special way, and to create an experience that supports the premium quality of the product inside."

Dimensional stability was another important factor in the choice of material. This type of packaging is often used as a storage box by customers. It is opened and closed frequently, and needs to last for a long time. To achieve this, high-quality paperboard with long fibres is required.

That is why Holmen's Invercote G paperboard was chosen. "Invercote G was selected because of its excellent processability and high-quality feel, which perfectly matches the premium design and reinforces the overall luxurious impression of the packaging," Husslage says.

The packaging has been



recognised by the packaging industry, with PAWI winning a 2026 WorldStar award in the medical and pharmaceutical category, presented by the World Packaging Organisation. The packaging also received an award in the pharma/health care category at the European Carton Excellence Award 2025, organised by the industry organisations Pro Carton and European Carton Makers Association. ●



The new packaging with the signature Phonak green interior.

High-quality paperboard ensures the storage box retains its shape, even with frequent opening and closing.

The lid features a unique easy-to-open mechanism.





Jieun Nam,  
Head of Product  
Planning at  
Medicube.



## Precision in every detail

Brand: Medicube  
Product: Beauty device  
Paperboard: Invercote

**MEDICUBE IS A** fast-growing K-beauty brand in South Korea. It was founded to offer professional solutions for real skin concerns.

For the renewal of its flagship AGE-R beauty device packaging, the brand turned to Invercote. The result was more than a sturdier box: it became a refined expression of Medicube’s philosophy.

We spoke with Jieun Nam, Head of Product Planning at Medicube,

about how Invercote helped transform protection, precision, and brand experience.

### What motivated you to renew the packaging?

“Our first magnetic one-touch box looked neat, but in reality, manuals slipped out, corners dented, and devices were sometimes damaged in transit. It didn’t live up to the promise of a premium device. We needed packaging that could truly protect while enhancing the customer’s first touchpoint with the brand.”

### What were your main objectives?

“Two things: safety and experience. Customers should feel confident their device is safe, and at the same time, the act of opening the box should feel like unwrapping something designed with precision and care.”

### What challenges did you encounter during development?

“The hardest part was merging function and storytelling. A box that is only protective feels cold, while one that is only beautiful may fail during shipping. We wanted both.”

### How did you redesign the structure?

“We completely renewed it with a top-and-bottom rigid packaging. When you open the box, you first see a smaller box containing the manual and charger. This was arranged to protect the device’s head while also building anticipation. It was designed to be a staged unboxing experience, not just a simple opening.”

### Why Invercote?

“Invercote solved issues that other paperboards could not. We wanted the packaging to reflect the device’s delicate technology and aesthetics, and Invercote made that possible. Its dimensional stability is excellent, enabling us to create flawless right angles and a precise finish. We were able to create a box as professional as the device itself, with no warping or sagging. We could finally realise the precision and quality we had envisioned.” ●

## Page turners: keeping kids book smart

**Brand:** Rabén & Sjögren  
**Product:** Children's book  
**Paper:** Holmen BOOK Cream 60g/M2

**RABÉN & SJÖGREN**, founded in 1942, is the leading publishing house for children's books in Sweden. "One of the most important pillars in our business plan is of course promoting children's reading," says Jenni Blom Castenfors, Publishing Director, Rabén & Sjögren. "Reading skills are essential for many things, including education and even democracy. You have to have a population that can read."

One of Rabén & Sjögren's latest books is a feel-good novel called *Sa du Bonjour?* (Did you say Bonjour?) by Jenny Clevström. Targeted at 9–12-year-olds, the novel is about a Swedish girl who has a successful baking video blog on YouTube. "It's a story that is placed very much in today's world and which today's children can identify with," says Blom Castenfors.

Like many of Rabén & Sjögren's

books, *Sa du Bonjour?* is printed on Holmen BOOK paper. "The choice of paper is important for several reasons," says Ylva Jonsson, Production Manager, Rabén & Sjögren. "First and foremost, for the sake of readability and creating the best possible conditions for the eye's ability to perceive the words. When this works well, it becomes easy to read and engage with the book's content. This is particularly important for encouraging children to read books.

The paper's surface, colour,

thickness, and texture also affect the reading experience and how the book is perceived visually and emotionally, adds Jonsson. "A matte, uncoated paper provides a warm and natural feeling suitable for a text-based book and prevents disturbing glare or reflections. A glossy paper enhances images and colours in an illustrated book. The format, weight and tactile sensation also influence how the reader experiences the content. These aspects work together to strengthen the book's message and purpose." ●



After studying architecture, *Charles Young* became a paper artist. The versatile material enables him to quickly create almost anything he can imagine.

# Imagined structures



## CHARLES YOUNG LOVES

working with his hands.

While looking for work in architecture, he began making something out of paper every day using architectural modelling techniques. He continued this for a year, and it eventually led to commissions for advertising projects with leading multinational brands.

Eleven years later, Charles is now an established paper artist based in Edinburgh. He creates paper sculptures and stop-motion animated films, mainly for social media campaigns. His work enables him to fulfil his ambition to create something by hand every day.

### Why do you work with paper?

“Paper is very adaptable; you can make almost anything with it. It’s easy to use, sticks together well and is easily cut. And because it is a lower cost material and enables me to make things quickly, I can be more experimental. I work on a small scale, making models just a few centimetres tall, so I can also use just a single layer of paper, and it holds its form. It’s also surprisingly strong.”

### What techniques do you use in your art?

“I usually work directly onto the paper. I draw on the back, so I’ve got a white surface, and I cut using a surgical scalpel, creating individual frames that are glued along the edges to hold together in a very neat way. I manipulate the material by hand to get more complex shapes. Paper has a grain to it, so you need to work with the material rather than work against it.”

### How do you use your architectural education in your paper art?

“Architecture is the basis of all the



art that I make. My sculptures are structural and based on buildings. I developed my techniques while studying architecture, where we had to make paper models for our designs. I developed a personal style and over



**“MY SCULPTURES ARE STRUCTURAL AND BASED ON BUILDINGS”**

— Charles Young

time my designs became more complex, with much more detail.”

### Where do you get your inspiration from?

“Although I do make models of real buildings, they are not to scale. So my models are imagined structures, shaped by things I’ve seen or been thinking about. I am also inspired by Sanzo Wada’s Dictionary of Colour Combinations. I originally made everything in white. Then I began injecting colour into my work using colour combinations from the book. I quite like to be in a colourful world.” ●

## Paper creations by Charles Young.



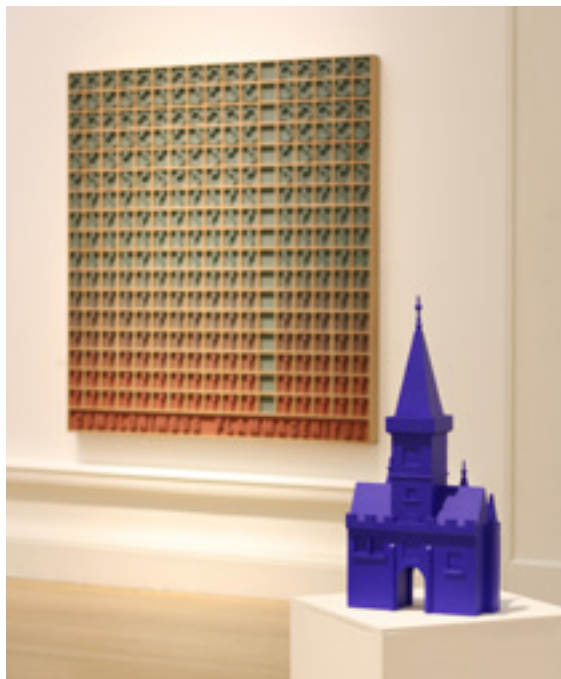
2



1



4



3



5



6



- 1 — Working on a piece of printed watercolour paper.
- 2 — A full set of 120 three-colour combination models
- 3 — A three-colour combination paper model, around 5 cm tall.
- 4 — A larger wooden artwork (Michael Visocchi RSA on wall).
- 5 — Paper models of the old gates of the City of London.
- 6 — Sydney Harbour. Built to create an animation and still image for the cover of Australia's *The List* magazine.



**Typefaces are not just letters on a page – they shape how your product or brand is read, perceived, and remembered. ↘**

By Cari Simmons

Typography 

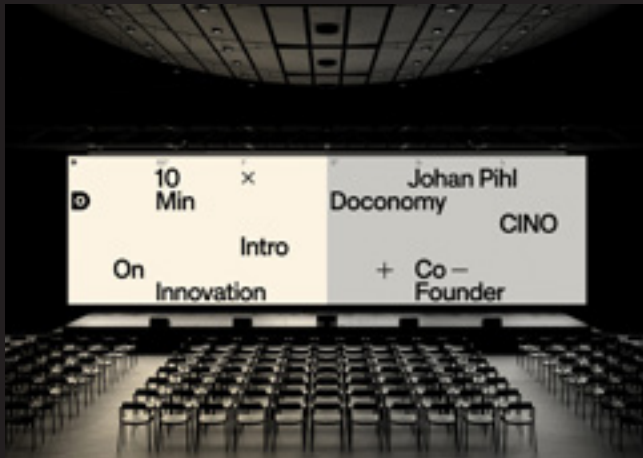




The typeface 'Arctic Fox' for Fjällräven.



Custom typeface for One Delisle, in collaboration with Vanderbrand.



Type design for Swedish Impact-tech start-up Doconomy, in collaboration with ID-C.



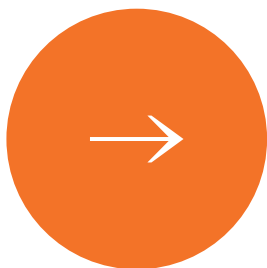
A collection of house numbers for Habo, in collaboration with Fredrik Gruber.

Letters from Sweden has designed bespoke typefaces for numerous multinational brands.



"Alfred sans" for the Nobel Prize, in collaboration with Stockholm Design Lab. (Photo courtesy of Stockholm Design Lab)

# Should you pick Arial, Verdana, Garamond, or perhaps a unique custom *typeface*? Whatever you choose will have a direct impact on your audience.



**THERE WAS A TIME**, not so long ago, when little thought was given to typefaces. But technology has changed all that. Graphic designer Roger Black's 1990 prediction that everyone would have a favourite typeface (by the year 2026) proved to be true. Fast forward to 2026 and not only does everyone have a preferred typeface, but some are adopting a custom typeface to create a more distinct identity.

"Type has the ability to communicate more than the words it carries," says Göran Söderström, a designer of retail and custom typefaces, and founder of Letters from Sweden. "Beyond meaning, it conveys something harder to explain – much like why we are drawn to certain people."

A typeface should reinforce the brand's message, adds Söderström, who has designed custom typefaces for a wide variety of companies and organisations including Cadillac, Gucci, Fjällräven, Sandvik, and the City of Rotterdam. "A well-chosen typeface can position a product or company anywhere on the spectrum – from playful to professional

– reflecting the brand's underlying strategy."

When it comes to brand recognition or shelf impact, typeface plays a big role in attracting consumers and triggering associations. A graceful typeface, for example, naturally lends a graceful appearance. "Tapered serifs, strong stroke contrast, and well-bal-

anced letterforms can give a brand a premium, sophisticated feel. That said, a Sans Serif can achieve a similar effect. It's also about how the typeface is applied," Söderström says.

A typeface can provoke a powerful emotional response, affecting people in unconscious ways. "It can affect credibility even before the reader has read the message. In the worst case, it can have a negative effect or evoke a feeling of suspicion or seem untrustworthy," Söderström explains.

"Clear, well-crafted type conveys care and professionalism, while sloppy or inconsistent type can undermine confidence in a brand. That said, if a brand is bold and intentional, it can flip these conventions. Using unexpected or unconventional type can create surprise, memorability, or even signal confidence."

Typefaces serve a very functional role as well, in terms of readability and relaying messages. The use of bold type or large letters is a surefire way to draw attention or highlight key messages, but such applications should be used appropriately and in the right context.

## Book considerations

"Typeface choice is really important. It is the key to making type readable at a particular size, and crucial when using different fonts to articulate a text," says Paul Luna, author of the book *Typography: A Very Short Introduction*, and Emeritus Professor at the UK's University of Reading Typography and Graphic Communication department.

Luna has worked with design and typography for decades and been responsible for the design of major publications at Oxford →



Göran Söderström, type designer and founder of Letters from Sweden.

## Designing a dictionary

When designing the new edition of the **OXFORD ENGLISH DICTIONARY**, it was crucial to ensure maximum readability while fitting as much text as possible onto each page. The typeface had to work in very small sizes, and the sharpness and ink coverage on thin paper were other important considerations. Every choice aimed to make the book easier to read.

**vector** /'vɛktə/ *n.* E18. [L = carrier, traveller, rider, from *vect-* pa. ppl stem of *vehere* carry, convey: see -OR.] † **1** *Astron.* = *radius vector* s.v. **RADIUS** *n.* Only in 18. **2 a** *Math.* A quantity having direction as well as magnitude, denoted by a line drawn from its original to its final position. Cf. **SCALAR**. *n.* M19. **b** *Math.* An ordered set of two or more numbers (interpretable as the coordinates of a point); a matrix with one row or

OXFORD ENGLISH  
DICTIONARY  
BEFORE ...

The traditional,  
compact dictionary  
setting looks easy to  
read at first sight.

**vector** /'vɛktə/ *noun* E18.

[Latin = carrier, traveller, rider, from *vect-* pa. ppl stem of *vehere* carry, convey: see -OR.]

† **1** **ASTRONOMY** = *radius vector* s.v. **RADIUS** *noun* Only in 18.

**2 a** **MATH.** A quantity having direction as well as magnitude, denoted by a line drawn from its original to its final position. Cf. **SCALAR** *noun* M19. ▶ **b** **MATH.** An ordered set of two or more numbers (interpretable as the coordinates of a point); a matrix with one row or one column. Also, any element of a vector space. **E20.** ▶ **c** **AERONAUTICS.** A course to be taken by an aircraft, or steered by a pilot. **M20.** ▶ **d** **COMPUTING.** A sequence of consecutive locations in memory; a series of items

... AND THE  
NEW EDITION

The need to add  
information to a new  
edition necessitated  
a smaller type size  
and a radical rethink.  
Many more fonts  
were used so that  
every structural and  
grammatical element  
was assigned its own  
typographic identity.

University Press (OUP), including the print edition of the Oxford English Dictionary.

“As a designer, your job is to remove any stumbling block for the reader. The typographer stands between the writer and the reader – your choices can make the writer’s words clearer for the reader – or less so!” he says. “What really matters is that the visual language you are using is appropriate for the verbal language of the text. The connection between the way some-

thing is written, and its presentation is absolutely fundamental.”

For Oxford dictionaries, the demands were largely for readability – and getting as much text into the books as possible.

“The typefaces had to work in small sizes, and we were always thinking about how we could make a book easier to read. For small-format dictionaries, we initially chose the Nimrod typeface, which was very plain and very readable at sizes as

small as 5 point. We were printing on quite thin paper and had to balance the ink coverage, have a sharp image, and pack many words onto a small page,” he says.

Luna points to the design of an Oxford edition of *War and Peace*. By carefully choosing the typeface and type size, he was able to improve the appearance of the new translation within the same number of pages as the old edition, keeping reprint costs the same. “Unlike a magazine article, →



**“YOUR CHOICES  
CAN MAKE THE  
WRITER’S WORDS  
CLEARER.”**

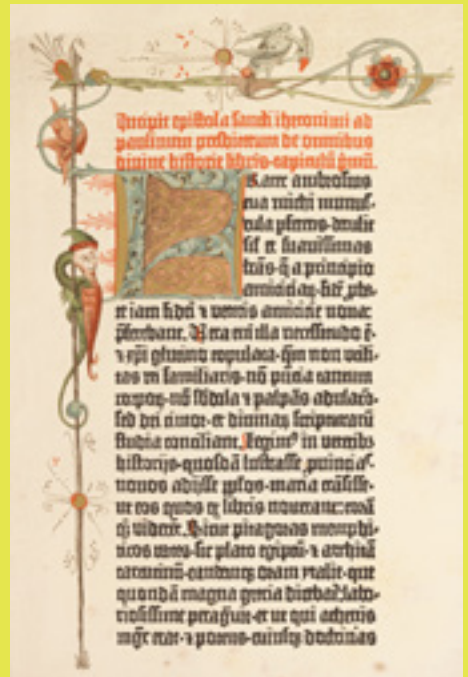
— Paul Luna



Johannes Gutenberg and his printing press.

# Gutenberg FONTE Inspire

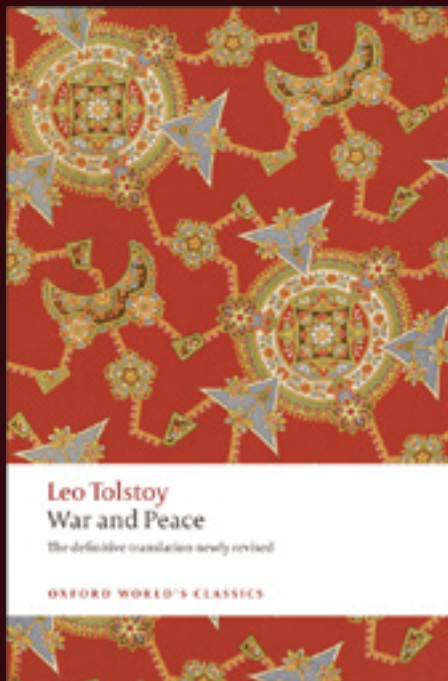
LTC Goudy Text.



The 42-line Gutenberg Bible printed in 1455.

## Books for the masses

The Gutenberg Bible, printed on a printing press in 1455, marked a landmark achievement. Johannes Gutenberg chose the Blackletter (Textura) script, a Gothic style similar to the hand-written style of the religious manuscripts of the time. His choice of typeface probably helped ease social acceptance of the new mechanically reproduced texts that were about to replace hand-copied ones.



There were several challenges when selecting a typeface for this classic novel.

a textured surface, a typeface without very thin strokes is often preferable, as fine details can disappear or become distorted,” says Söderström.

Using techniques like embossing or hot foil can also impose constraints on the typeface, he adds. “Fine details and thin strokes often fail, while open shapes and sturdier forms reproduce more reliably. Understanding the material and production method – and testing early – is key when working with such effects.” (See more on page 22).

Söderström advises designers to focus on readability and avoid fads when selecting a typeface. “Typefaces that overdo expressive details, are hard to read, or poorly drawn definitely irritate me. In my eyes, a sustainable typeface is one we never tire of reading or seeing. Designing such a typeface means respecting historical references and avoiding fleeting trends. That doesn’t mean it can’t feel contemporary or fresh; the key is timelessness combined with careful design.”

He offers a useful starting point for those about to select or design a typeface: “Explore your company’s history and story to uncover ideas that can form the foundation of a typeface. The most compelling typefaces are those grounded in authenticity, thoughtfully crafted, and contextually appropriate.”

Paul Luna provides similar advice: “Designers need to work hard to make sure that what they’re doing isn’t just a cliché – that they are not just responding to what’s currently fashionable. It’s important to choose the right typeface – that means understanding how it’s designed, and why it has the qualities that are right for a particular job.” ● →

you can’t cut a classic text, so you have to really think about which typeface will fit the format best,” says Luna.

Another challenge was to match the typeface with the lightweight paper used for the 1,390 page tome. “We didn’t want the ink showing through the thin paper, so we had to select a typeface that wasn’t too dense. We used Sabon Next, which is lighter than

the Ehrhardt typeface used for other Oxford World’s Classics.”

### Printing on different surfaces

Since paper-based surfaces vary in texture, structure, and quality, it’s important to use a typeface that can perform well with the substrate chosen. “When printing small text on



Facts:

## Why fonts matter

Up to **80** %

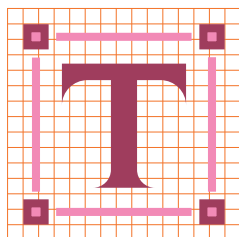
higher brand recognition can be achieved by using fonts consistently.

**76** %

of designers prioritize making text easy to read and accessible for everyone.

**15** %

faster reading speed is possible with serif fonts in print.



[Source: designyourway.net]



## Typeface or font?

When people speak about typefaces and fonts, they often use the terms interchangeably. There are some key differences, however. A typeface is a design style of letters or a complete family of designs, for example Times New Roman, Helvetica or Arial. A font is a specific style, weight or variation within that family of typefaces, such as Times New Roman Italic, Helvetica-Thin, or Arial Bold. And typography? Well, that is mainly the art of designing text and letters for improved legibility or visual appeal.

# How to print it

**MARIA BLOHM**, Project Manager at **Multiply**, offers some paper and paperboard printing tips to guide your selection of typefaces.



## How does paper surface affect a typeface's ink absorption, crispness, and thus brand perception?

"Rough or uncoated materials absorb more ink, which reduces sharpness and fills in fine details. Smooth or coated surfaces produce crisper typography and higher contrast. This affects brand perception, as reduced sharpness can make a typeface less recognisable and alter how the brand is perceived compared to its intended expression. It can also affect perceived quality if products printed on different materials result in inconsistent visual expression."

## What is important to keep in mind regarding typefaces together with special techniques like embossing and hot foiling?

"Embossing and hot foiling require sufficient stroke weight, open counters, and simpler details. Thin hairlines, serifs and tight letterspacing often perform poorly and need to be adjusted or avoided."

## How can typography replace costly embellishments for a lower carbon footprint?

"Strong typography, through scale, contrast and spacing, can replace foils, varnishes and other decorative effects, and reduce cost and carbon footprint while maintaining clarity and brand recognition."

## Any other advice to brand owners/designers when choosing a typeface?

"Choose typefaces based on material and print method. Test in final production conditions and treat typography, the print process, and material as a single, integrated system".



**Maria Blohm**, Project Manager at **Multiply**.





Material choices influence how every letter performs on the page.

## 6 useful typography takeaways



1

Timeless type balances history and contemporary design.



2

Thin strokes can disappear on textured paper.



3

Typography should reflect the tone of the message.



4

Combining fonts helps structure and guide text.



5

Embossing and foil favour sturdy letterforms.



6

Typefaces shape brand recognition and shelf impact.



# A quiet type can achieve serious results

Everyone, regardless of their visual or cognitive challenges, should be able to read packaging information. For designers, the choice of typeface is a key to inclusion.



Sofy Dubinska,  
graphic designer  
at Zajno studio.

identity, she points out. And typefaces should always be tested in real-life scenarios. “It’s important not to chase creativity at the expense of readability, particularly when it comes to biotech and pharimatech projects. It’s often better to choose a simple, restrained typeface and work very carefully with details: sizes, line heights, and accents. This kind of ‘quiet’ typography tends to work best and naturally conveys seriousness and trust.”

When it comes to legibility, she highlights these rules: “Typefaces should be technically precise but not cold, modern but not experimental. In branding, typography should support a sense of scientific expertise and stability. In interfaces, it must scale well, remain readable across devices, and allow for complex information hierarchies – from marketing messages to clinical data or analytics. Flexibility and consistency are essential when typography has to perform across very different types of content.”

Sufficient contrast, comfortable font sizes, clear hierarchy, and a logical structure, are fundamental, she adds.

In biotech and pharimatech design, modern Sans-serif typefaces – especially Grotesk families – tend to work best, says Dubinska. “Their simple shapes, open letterforms, and high legibility make it possible to build complex typographic systems for branding and digital products without overwhelming users or distracting from the content.”

Typefaces inspired by Helvetica are also appropriate for serious, scientific, and contemporary industries. “Helvetica remains timeless: it’s highly readable, restrained, and visually confident. For me, it’s the ‘little black dress’ of typography – a universal base that works in almost any context,” says Dubinska.

“Ultimately, good typography is typography the user barely notices. It simply helps them understand, navigate, and move forward without friction. And that, in my opinion, is its greatest value.” ●



“In biotech and pharimatech, the most important factors are readability, accessibility, and clarity,”

says Sofy Dubinska, a digital artist and graphic designer at Zajno studio, who frequently works with such clients. “These industries deal with complex topics, scientific data, and advanced technologies, so the role of design is not to add complexity but to help users navigate and understand the information.”

Readability should never be compromised when creating a distinctive



**“READABILITY  
SHOULD NEVER BE  
COMPROMISED.”**

— Sofy Dubinska

Helvetica is like the  
"little black dress"  
of typography,  
working well in  
many contexts,  
pharma included.



# Redefining the of packaging

VARIABLE  
DATA  
PRINTING

Variable data printing enables individual elements to be customised in the same print run. Its potential for personalised packaging is now primed for adoption across a range of sectors.

possibilities



# Packaging – the next wave

Variable data printing could be used in a variety of ways by brands in multiple sectors, including cosmetics, food and beverages, confectionery, electronics, and pharmaceuticals. Here are some examples of the ways it can be used.



1

Names and short messages for promotions and limited luxury editions.

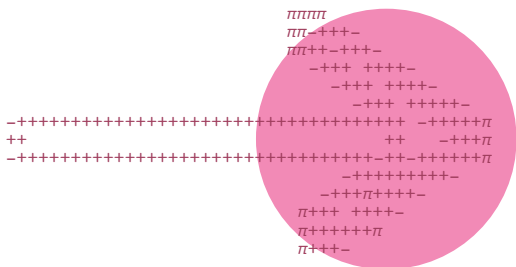
**VARIABLE DATA PRINTING (VDP)** uses software and digital printing presses to change individual segments – such as text, photos and graphics – on different printed pieces without the need to stop or reset the printing process. It enables customised printed communication at speeds and costs that are unimaginable with traditional offset printing. But while VDP has been around since the mid-1990s, its potential has only recently been exploited at scale.

Bryan Mathes, Prepress Manager



**“IT CAN BE AS SIMPLE OR AS COMPLEX AS YOU WANT.”**

— Bryan Mathes





2

Unique QR codes for authentication, loyalty programmes and digital experiences.



3



Customised designs for collectible or seasonal packaging, or brand storytelling.

4

Premium unboxing experiences for e-commerce and subscription services.

at ICS Corporation, one of the largest VDP companies on the US east coast, has worked with VDP since the start of his career. “When I got into printing 20 years ago, VDP existed, but it wasn’t widespread,” he says. “It was like when QR codes first came out. Nobody knew what to do with them. Then everyone figured it out and now they’re everywhere. It’s the same with VDP. Its use has exploded in the last ten years.”

This growth coincides with rising demand for personalisation. “People

are used to personalisation now and almost expect it,” says Mathes. “Companies have also become comfortable using VDP as a marketing tool. They can use it to target very specific audiences instead of sending the same message to everyone.”

### Keep it simple or complex

Today, VDP is most commonly used for direct mail, invoicing and loyalty communications. “It can be as simple or as complex as you want,” says Mathes. “Putting an address on mail

is an example of VDP. It could also be changing layouts, images or messaging so that every piece is completely different.”

Achieving this level of personalisation with offset printing, which requires metal plates for each design change, would simply take too much time and involve too high costs. But with VDP, the individual elements, or variables, such as text or photos, are fed into digital presses via PDF files. This removes the cost of plates and significantly reduces setup times. →

5

Regional and language customisation for international distribution.

Hallo!

Hej!

Hei!

6

Compliance-driven variable data for regulated products like food, chemicals, and medicine enables each item to carry unique info. It prints batch numbers, expiration dates, and regulatory labels directly on packaging, ensuring traceability and compliance.

“You build layers in your layout file to set up the variable fields,” says Mathes. “The variables could be anything; a name, date, monetary amount, image or QR code. And the technology has of course evolved, enabling the data to become more complex. I’ve worked on data files that had over 100 variables. You can therefore run cost-effective customised print jobs whether you need 10 pieces or 10,000.”

### Remarkable response rates

The ultimate goal of VDP is to help brands improve customer engagement, and the benefits in this respect are clear. Industry reports indicate that personalised direct mail can achieve response rates up to three times higher than non-personalised mail. “People are more likely to pick up something with their name on it, or something

that feels relevant to them,” says Mathes. “That’s why VDP has become a necessity in direct mail now.”

While direct mail still accounts for most VDP applications, its potential extends much further. It could, for example, be used far more for things like personalised book and magazine covers, and of course packaging. “It is not common yet, but I’ve started to see its use in packaging,” says Mathes.

“I can imagine it being used for promotional packaging,” he adds. “You can make a personalised box, perhaps a wine box, and send it out to certain customers. You could do stuff around the holidays. At my last company, we designed personalised boxes containing coffee cups for new customers. We printed the box flat, die cut it, and folded them. I think packaging is going to be the next wave for VDP.” ●

### Bryan Mathes and ICS Corporation

Based in Pennsylvania, Bryan Mathes is a senior print production and prepress specialist with 20 years’ experience in variable data printing and creating prepress workflows. He is Prepress Manager at ICS Corporation, which has grown into one of the largest direct mail production facilities on the US east coast. Operating a 500,000-square-foot (46,452 m<sup>2</sup>) production facility, ICS Corporation has the capacity to produce over 4.5 million mail pieces daily.



*Personalised packaging* is no longer just for luxury brands. Today, it's a powerful way to create memorable, collectible products that delight customers and build brand loyalty.

## HOW-TO:

# Get personal through packaging



The idea of personalising products and packaging is far from new. In pre-industrial times, tailors, cobblers, engravers, and printers added names, crests, and personal symbols to clothing, jewellery, and tools. At the same time, personal labels and seals were applied to packaging. With the rise of mass production however, and the need to reduce costs and speed up output, personalisation became limited to special items such as engraved gifts, monogrammed luggage and other luxury goods.

Today, personalisation is everywhere. Advancements in digital printing, automation, data-driven design and e-commerce allow brands to now personalise products and packaging at speed, at scale and affordably. What was once a premium add-on is now a must-have, reshaping how brands connect with their customers.

### **A range of products**

Personalisation, often paired with collectables, is now used across a wide range of products. A famous early example is Coca-Cola's "Share a Coke" campaign, where each →



bottle featured a different name. In the perfume and cosmetics sector, brands like Chanel and Jo Malone offer collectors' editions and custom, engraved packaging. In the toy industry, Build-A-Bear lets consumers choose clothing and accessories, while American Girl Dolls come in customised boxes, that include dolls' names and certificates of authenticity. Special anniversary editions of books, such as the Harry Potter series, are also a growing trend, often presented in luxurious box sets.

Despite its broader use, personalisation and collectables still convey a feeling of luxury and specialness. They are powerful marketing tools, helping brands boost engagement, forge emotional connections and increase perceived value – consumers are often willing to pay more for special editions. Personalisation and collectables also drive repeat purchases: the closer a product aligns with the recipient's preferences, interests and behaviours, the more effective it becomes.

And the value of personalisation very much relates to packaging. Studies show that personalised packaging increases brand recall, strengthens preference and enhances willingness to pay, making personalised or collectable packaging a highly effective strategy to build loyalty and long-term customer relationships. ●



  
**USE PERSONALISATION  
TO BOOST YOUR  
BRAND RECALL**



For more fresh insights:  
[holmen.com/board-and-paper/insights](https://holmen.com/board-and-paper/insights)

# Make your packaging personal and collectable



## Leverage technology:

Use variable data printing (see article on page 26), digital presses, and automation to reduce costs, speed up production and personalise at scale – from individual names to unique packaging designs. Data-driven design, based on user behaviour data and analytics, ensures customer behaviours and preferences are reflected.



## Emphasise sentimental value:

Add personal touches such as names, initials, or customised messages to packaging. Emotional connections drive brand loyalty, repeat purchases, and perceived value. Use limited editions or collectors' items to make products feel unique, special, and emotionally meaningful.



## Create collectability:

Offer series editions, sequential packaging, numbered items, or special customised packaging to encourage repeat buying. Combine



personalisation with collectables, such as limited-run personalised toy boxes, custom engraved perfume boxes, multiple magazine covers, or anniversary book sets, making products both unique and something that consumers want to keep.



## Enhance storytelling:

Apply unique artwork, patterns, or textures on each personalised item to make packaging visually compelling

and shareable. Include your brand story on the packaging – storytelling builds trust, loyalty, and emotional engagement.



## Build communities:

Turn consumers into co-creators through brand campaigns that offer opportunities to customise designs and products, such as toy boxes or magazine covers. Encourage personalised items or unboxing experiences to be shared on social media, creating buzz and word-of-mouth marketing.

Facts:  
Limited editions and personalisation drive desire.

# 1 in 3

millennials admit to buying a limited-edition product even if they didn't initially plan to due to FOMO (fear of missing out)

# 2.5x

more online searches are generated by limited edition collaborations compared to regular product lines

# 73%

of consumers expect brands to offer personalised packaging options

## A bright, reusable idea



A design made from Holmen's Invercote paperboard won the "Future of the Packaging Industry" category at the 2025 Packnorth Award. Students Beata Tapola Jakobsson and Sofie Josefsson created an innovative lightbulb package, designed to double as a lampshade.

"During our training as packaging engineers, we often encountered a major challenge with reusable packaging: getting consumers on board. This inspired our idea of transforming everyday packaging into something interactive, that encourages people to reflect on how packaging is used in daily life. By engaging with the packaging, consumers gain a fresh perspective on how ordinary packaging can be given a new life." ●





**COVER**  
Invercote G 280 g/m<sup>2</sup>, 360 µm, 14.2 pt  
H-UV offset printing  
3 Pantone colours + black  
Silver satingloss hot foil

**PAGES**  
Holmen TRND 80 g/m<sup>2</sup>  
4-colour H-UV offset printing

**HOLMEN**

CO25003EN