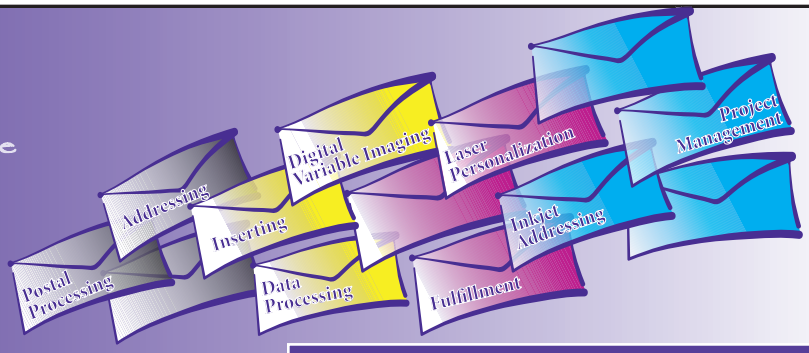
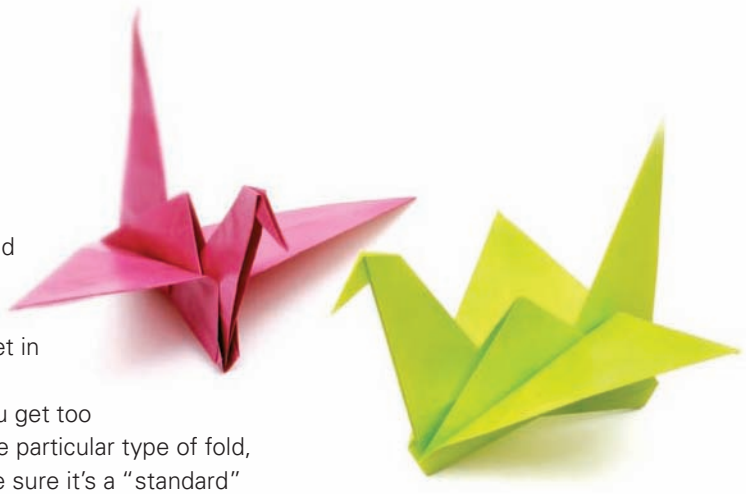
THE TOTAL MAILING SYSTEM
Pushing the envelope in direct mail



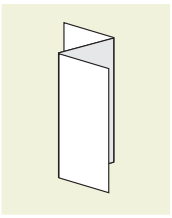
A Folding Primer

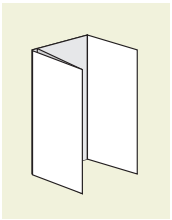


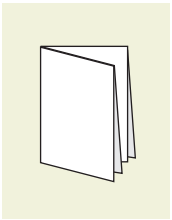
Folding mistakes can ruin an otherwise perfectly printed piece. People notice when a brochure fold is crooked or a booklet doesn't lie flat. You have a dizzying array of folds to choose from so it helps to know a bit of folding lingo. Good communication is key to getting the end result you want.

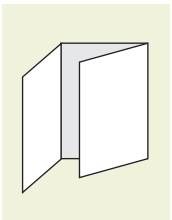
The most common folds for brochures are called the accordion (or z) fold and the barrel (or roll) fold. With an accordion fold, the paper is folded in a series of parallel folds that run in alternating directions, like the letter "z" or the bellows of an accordion. With a barrel fold on the other hand, the series of parallel folds are made so the second fold wraps around the first one, much like you fold a letter before you put it into an envelope.

With a broadsheet (or broadside) fold, the paper is printed on both sides and then folded in half. Then a series of parallel folds are done in the other direction. This type of fold is often used for maps or brochures that require a large diagram. Another common fold is called a gatefold in which two "flaps" fold over a center panel, so the edges meet in the middle.









Before you get too attached to one particular type of fold, however, make sure it's a "standard" fold. Although most binding machinery can be set up to do myriad types of folding, some uncommon or specialty folds might incur extra charges.

You also want to be sure to select paper that is going to fold well. The number of folds and the type of paper affect your decision. If a brochure is going to be handled extensively, you might consider a heavier stock, however, some paper stocks are simply too heavy to score or fold well.

With heavier stocks, it's particularly important to consider the grain of the paper. When paper is manufactured, the fibers align in one direction (the grain). When folding, it's best if the folds run with the grain or you might end up with ink cracking or folds that don't lay flat. You can tell which way paper grain runs by folding the paper in both directions. The fold will look better when you fold it one way versus the other.

You'll run across a few other folding terms that might be confusing at first. A panel is the two-sided section of the printed piece that is defined by the fold. So when you look at a standard "3-fold brochure" you are really talking about a 6-panel brochure. The flat size is the size of the piece when it is laid out flat, and the finished size is the size of the piece when it's folded. For example, a 6-panel brochure might have an 8.5 x11-inch flat size, but a 3.75 x 8.5-inch finished size.

The best way to communicate your folding needs is to find samples that incorporate the folds you want. It's also helpful to make a folded "dummy" out of your proof copies. By creating a dummy, you can spot folding problems long before your project ever gets to press. When it comes to folding, a little up-front planning can save you a lot of time and expense in the long run.

For more information on this and other direct marketing production topics, contact Jim Capanna at 856-628-8800 ext. 35 or by email at jim@ttms.com