

# Die Cutting

## What is die cutting?

Die cutting is an amazing Print Finishing technique in which printed substrates are cut into various shapes. In its simplest form, die cutting is the process of using a steel cutting die to, in our case, cut paper into a specific shape...much like cookie cutters cut dough into a shape.

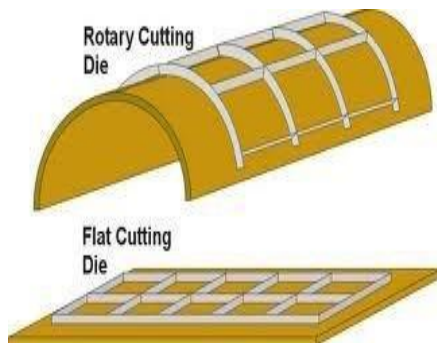
Die cutting is used to enhance the printed piece and differentiate a printed piece from others. Greeting cards are often die cut to create unusual shapes such as hearts and unique shaped windows. Other familiar die cut applications are point of purchase displays, tags, puzzles and, of course, pocket folders.



## How does the die cutting process work?

The process is straight-forward.

1. We require a mylar containing the image or lines of what is to be die cut.
2. We then manufacture a die. The die contains steel rule that is formed or bent into the shape of the image. This process is done with great precision on sophisticated benders. After all, it is this die rule that will be die cutting your specific shape.
3. Now, the actual process of die cutting begins. First, the die is mounted to the press. Next the press is engaged, and the sheet is automatically fed and then moved into a precise and consistent location on the platen. Finally, the die strikes through the sheet and cuts through the substrate. The excess material around the die cut is "scrapped" away and the piece is complete.



Die cutting can be done with a flat cutting die or with a rotary cutting die. Rotary die cutting is often done in line when printing. The primary difference between rotary die cutting and flat die cutting is that the flatbed is not as fast, but the tools are cheaper. This process lends itself to smaller production runs where it is not as easy to absorb the added cost of a rotary die.

## What is kiss cutting?

It is also important to note that when diecutting there are other processes that can be accomplished at the same time (or in the same impression). Examples of these other processes include scoring and perforating. Additionally, there is another form of diecutting called kiss cutting. This form of diecutting is so delicate and precise that it is used to cut through a single layer of film or paper as opposed to cutting the piece completely out. It is common to kiss diecut custom labels.



