



whitepapers
by Beacon®

Tote Bags

MATERIAL



Take a look around. You'll see tote bags used in many different places: tradeshow; health/job/home shows, college orientation, 5K walks/runs, open houses, grand openings, cause marketing, registration tables, just to name a few! Why? Because a tote bag is the perfect place to display your corporate logo, school mascot or association name. The large imprint area is a walking billboard that gets on average 3,300 views in the tote's lifetime.

You hear a lot of different terms describing the material used on tote bags. Understanding the material types will help in understanding what your customer wants and the price variations there are.

What are the different materials available on the tote bags?

Kraft

The outside looks like a paper bag, while the inside is lined with a 3mm aluminum foam liner. The bag is made with 50% recycled kraft paper laminated onto non-woven polypropylene.

Cotton

Cotton has made resurgence as of late. Consumers like the cotton material because it is natural. Some think of it as organic. Our cotton totes are AZO Free - no carcinogenic dyes. Cotton can be hand washed.

Non-Woven

Non-woven bags are not made of fabric. These bags are made of Polypropylene, which is a petroleum based product poured into a mold and pressed (where the non-woven name comes from). The weight of the totes is measured in grams. This is grams per square meter - GSM. This measures the density of the polypropylene. Note: The higher the number of grams, the thicker and stronger the bag. Our totes start at 75 grams with the highest being 120 grams. This is typically the least expensive of the three material types.

Laminated

These are non-woven totes with a laminated surface put over the top. We have bags with both a glossy and matte laminated finish. The lamination is 30 to 35 grams. Both finishes are water resistant and can be wiped clean with a damp cloth.

TOTE USE



Why use totes?

Answer: 73% of consumers own logoed bags. Bags generate one of the highest impressions for a promotional item – approximately 3,300 impressions from one tote bag in its lifetime (approximately one year). Totes can be eco-friendly when they are used as a replacement to plastic shopping bags.

What's causing the increase in tote usage?

Star Power: Celebrities are using them and we Americans love to use products that our favorite celebrities are using.

Walking Billboard: Totes have large imprint areas and colorful imprints that stand out even more! Promotional totes have one of the lower cost per impression.

Cause Marketing: Tote ads bring attention to causes (environment, breast cancer, etc.). 90% of consumers buy from businesses that support causes and 83% of Americans say they want more retailers to support causes. Cause marketing creates an emotional connection, builds customer loyalty and attracts new customers.

Case History

A school booster club was working on a fund raiser for their athletic department. They wanted something that would get a lot of exposure for the school, while also being environmentally friendly. They chose the BGNW4300 Non-Woven Carry All Bag because it was a large bag that could be carried to the athletic events, shopping trips, etc. Plus it had a large imprint area that would get a lot of recognition and promote the school pride and it is made with recycled material. Part of the fundraising effort was to educate the students on the perils of plastic shopping bags and how they adversely affect the environment. That was to be part of their sales pitch when they were taking orders. The booster club was pleased with the number of bags that were ordered and how involved the students got with the educating of their parents, grandparents, friends and neighbors as they were out selling the bags.

Why do cotton totes have different prices?

Answer: The natural totes are not dyed, while the colored totes are. The difference in the price covers the dying process.

How do totes fit into the Eco Friendly/Goin' Green push?

Answer: Polypropylene is a number 5 plastic that can be recycled in participating communities. It also takes less energy to manufacture than cotton totes. Polypropylene can be made with as much as 25% pre-consumer recycled materials. Here are some important stats to keep in mind regarding plastic bags that will help in selling the non-woven totes:

- Over 380 billion plastic bags, sacks and wraps are consumed in the US each year
- The US goes through 100 billion plastic shopping bags annually
- A plastic shopping bag is used for approximately 12 minutes
- Each year an estimated 500 billion to 1 trillion plastic bags are consumed worldwide

IMPRINT OPTIONS



What are the decorating options and production times?

Silk Screening

The most affordable with a quick lead time. Standard production is 5 business days, with free 24 hour service available up to the 2nd quantity break. You can also do Pantone ink matching with a silk screen print, but it is limited to a one color imprint only. This is available on all three tote materials.

Heat Transfer

You can do art with tight registration, in full color process. This has a longer lead time because a transfer is needed for every bag and is a manual process. The art needs to have a solid border/frame around the art. Standard production is 12 business days for 2,500 pieces or less. The 24 hour service is not available on this imprint method. This is available on cotton and non-woven styles. If a quicker turn time is needed, we can check with production to see if it is possible, since this is all done in-house. We would need to know the art and the size of the imprint when making this determination.

Perma Press

Revolutionary new imprint method. You can do art with tight registration in full color process. This has a longer lead time because a transfer is needed for every bag and is a manual process. These transfers come from a Chinese vendor. During the Chinese holidays, the perma press imprints are not available, as we do not have domestic supplier. The art does not need to have a solid border/frame around the art like the heat transfer method, giving the imprint a more “natural” look. Gradients (screens) and cutouts are available. This is available on all tote materials, including laminated. A 250 piece minimum is required. This imprint method is not available on black laminated totes. Standard production time is 12 business days for 2,500 pieces or less. We cannot shorten the production time on this imprint method. No rushes are available with this imprint method. Spec samples and pre-production proofs are not available on this imprint method.



Silk Screening



Heat Transfer



Perma Press

IMPRINTS



Can the imprint areas be larger?

Answer: No. We need to stick to the sizes that have been given, as we have some limitations with the size of the transfers and machine limitations.

Will a heat transfer peel off of the totes?

Answer: No. This is a tested imprint method and will wear just fine on the cotton and non-woven totes. Note, that the heat transfer method is not available on the laminated totes for this very reason.

Can the customer choose the background color on a heat transfer?

Answer: Yes. If the customer or distributor does not choose a background color, the graphics area will pick one. All heat transfer and perma press ads are proofed, so the customer or distributor will see the background color chosen at that time.

Can spec samples or pre-production proofs be done on perma press imprints?

Answer: No. We cannot do spec samples or pre-production proofs on the perma press imprints. This is because we have to order a minimum of 250 pieces of the art.

Can totes be ordered thru Beacon's World Imports?

Answer: Absolutely! You will typically need a 5,000 piece minimum. The customization on totes is unlimited! It's important to keep in mind that the lead time is 10-12 weeks for non-woven or laminated and 12-14 weeks for cotton totes. Size, material type and weight, imprint method/colors/location are needed to do a quote. It's best to start with a stock size and make adjustments as needed.

DURABLE



What makes totes durable and long lasting?

Answer:

1. Some of the non-woven totes have a rigid plastic base in the bottom. Some of the bases are removable, while others are sewn in, giving additional strength.
2. X cross stitched handles give the totes extra resilience.
3. Shoulder straps sewn to the entire bag (all the way from the top to the bottom of the bag) also gives it extra durability.



X Cross Stitching

Is there a difference in the handles?

Answer: You'll hear the term cross stitched. This means there is X cross stitching where the handle is attached to the tote. Cross stitching gives more strength to the handle. Another term is self-material - this means the handles are made of the same material as the tote. Webbed handles are typically stronger than the self-material handles. Another feature that gives the handles more strength and durability is a tote where the handles are sewn front and back to the entire height of the bag.



Straps Sewn to the Entire Bag

Have the totes been weight tested?

Answer: We have not had testing done. This is the information we received from our vendors:

- Non-Woven and Laminated: about 18 pounds
- Cotton: 4.5 oz. and 5 oz. about 10 pounds; 12 oz. about 20 pounds

However, each tote will be slightly different based on these factors:

1. Weight of the grams of the polypropylene or weight of the cotton in the tote
2. Length of time it is being carried
3. Type of handles
4. Whether it has a base