A Brief Guide to the Craft of Thermal Binding

6/2020

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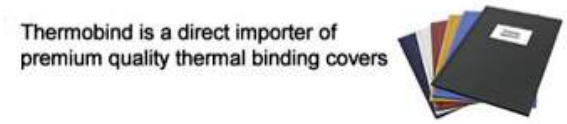
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What is Thermal Binding?

Thermal Binding is the desktop version of the perfect binding of hardcover and softcover books. Instead of a long line of conveyors and processes that ultimately use a hot melt adhesive to fix the pages into a book cover, we offer empty covers that have the adhesive pre-applied. One just picks a cover with the correct spine width, drops in the appropriate number of pages, and then puts the cover in a toaster sized thermal binding machine. A minute or two later you'll have a bound book.

Our 3-minute YouTube video showing the process:
http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=cXMfmpF-znI 

What are the advantages of Thermal Binding vs. Coil, Comb, or Velo-Binding?

All of the older forms of binding require one to punch holes and then carefully lineup the pages. Then you have to bind each book separately.
The results are not as clean looking as thermal binding and the process is much more time-consuming. With thermal, one can bind as many as 15 1/8" reports in less than 2 minutes. It can take 10 times as long to do that with comb binding.
Another advantage of thermal binding is that one can bind hardcovers. These come in a wide range of sizes, cover materials, and customization options. They can have windows, be embossed or foil-stamped, and can be one to four color printed.

A 1-minute video showing a comparison is here:
http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=58x_KZU2jxA 

What kind of quality should I expect?

The quality should be comparable to what you might find in a store or library. You shouldn't be able to remove a page without tearing it. The pages themselves are not weakened by hole-punching. If you are not getting that kind of results and you've reread this booklet, PLEASE give us a call! We'll take the time to walk you through the process and make sure that everything is working as it should.

You can reach us toll-free at **888-992-4144**, email us at **sales@thermobind.com** or visit us online at **www.thermobinding.com**. We're here from 8:00 AM to 7:00 PM Eastern on Monday through Friday.

We also check our emails all the time including weekends and will respond ASAP.

Why do I call thermal binding a "craft"?

Ninety percent of the time, the process is very simple. It's generally very easy if you are using supplies that were specifically designed for your machine. Many manufacturers go out of their way to make you use only their supplies. So, at one extreme, we have machines and covers that are designed to work at 230F and at the other extreme, covers, and machines designed to work at 375F. With so many different manufacturers of both machines and covers, all of which run at different temperatures, have different adhesive characteristics and have different timing and clamping requirements, it is possible to find yourself in a situation where good technique and a good understanding of the variables will allow you avoid difficulties and get superior results.

What is the ThermoBind Advantage?

We represent most of the major companies in the business as well as import our own line of machines an covers. We want all of our customers to be able to select from the whole range of thermal products and not just a few items that a particular manufacturer has. The fact is that all of the companies, Unibind, Pro-Bind, Coverbind, Bind-it, Fellowes, and others all have some unique products, along with differing abilities for customization. So, we got out the digital thermometers and timers and tested nearly all of the machines and most of the covers on the market. Where possible, we invented adapters to modify temperatures and charted timing requirements so we could better advise our customers.



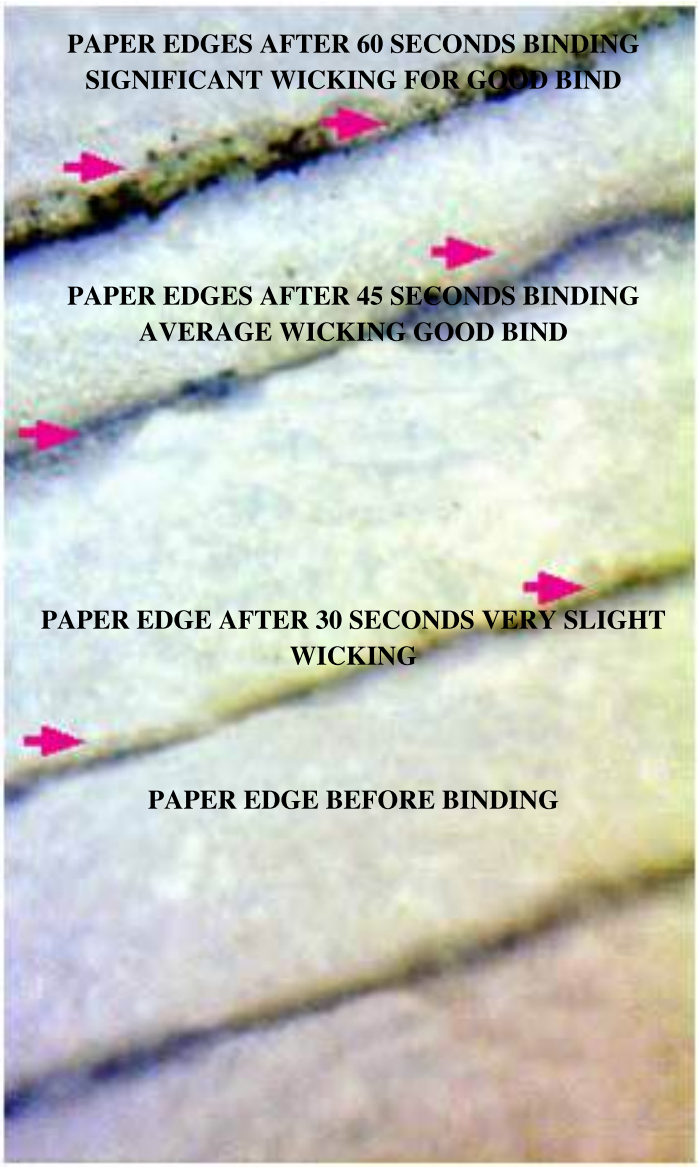
www.ThermoBinding.com

The Basic Principle of Thermal Binding:

You need a combination of enough heat and enough time so that the adhesive in the cover gets thin enough to slightly wick into the paper pages. Then, when the adhesive cools, the glue won't just be holding on the edge. It will actually have become part of the page. If there is too little heat/time, the glue is more like honey. It only sticks at the edge and the bond is week. With more heat/time the glue becomes thinner,more like maple syrup, and can then penetrate the paper.

The Process of Thermal Binding:

- Pick the correct spine width for your cover
- Align the pages carefully inside the cover
- Pick the right heating cycle and bind
- Tap down on or "jog" the "book block" to make sure they have made contact with the melted adhesive
- Crimp where applicable * (Generally required only with Pro-Bind and Bind-it Hardcovers)
- Cool for at least 10 minutes with the spine down.



In 2014 Unibind came out with its Unicover line which has fewer spine widths and requires crimping. Two new machines have built-in crimpers. At this time (4-2016) there is still inventory of the traditional steelcrystal, steelmatt, steelbacks, and steelbooks, all with many spine choices so that a crimper may not be necessary. As of 6-2020, almost all of the old sizes are available but the steelmatt and the steelcrystal have been combined into one cover called a Uniflex cover. You can flip the cover so that either it has a clear front or a frosted front.

How to pick the correct spine width for the cover:

For all of the major manufacturers, the spine width on the box refers to the width of the strip of glue that is inside the cover. It's always possible to squeeze more sheets of paper into a folder than the stated spine width. However, if there's no adhesive behind some of those "extra" pages, some pages either at the ends or middle won't be hitting the adhesive and will fall out. If in doubt, always move to the next bigger spine size.

Built-In Measuring Guides Are Limited

Some machines have a built-in measuring device. Please note that the machines do not take into account the fact that different manufacturers offer differing increments in their spine widths. Unibind no longer offers 1,3,5,7, and 9mm but specifies maximum page count based upon 20 lb paper with 4 sizes to go from 1 to 80 sheets. Pro-Bind and coverbind also have in the same range 4 sizes: 1/16", 1/8", ¼" and then 3/8". At ThermoBind, we put out a 1.5mm, 3mm, 4mm, 6mm, 8mm, and 10mm to offer more closely fitting covers. This is another reason to get out the ruler and be sure you use the closest size that is at least as wide as the stack of items you wish to bind!

The Problem With Paper Weights

Paperweights refer to the weight of a ream (500 sheets) of 20"X 26" paper. The problem in using paperweights as a guide in the various charts that manufacturers (including us) offer, is that some papers are thick and fluffy and others may be thin and dense while both have the same weight. The guides are close if we're talking about 20lb standard copy paper and your booklet has fewer than 50 sheets. Our "rule of thumb" is 8 to 10 sheets of 20lb paper per millimeter of spine width. When the number of pages goes up and the pound weight goes up there is increasing room for error.

How to pick the correct spine width for the cover revisited:

The best way to determine the right spine size is to measure the stack of paper that you will be binding. You should do this without pressing down or pinching the stack of paper. If you find yourself in between two sizes you must move up to the larger spine width. The added advantage of not inserting the pages so they are very tight is that the adhesive can also attach to the sides of each sheet which further strengthens the bond.

Determining Your Timing

As a general rule of thumb, most softcover thermal binders take between 45-90 seconds to bind at a temperature of 300F. This will vary slightly based on the width of the spine, the thickness of the material the binder is made of, and how many binders you are trying to bind at the same time. It will also vary based on what machine you are using and in some cases how much time the machine has had to warm up.

Most machines will come with a user manual that suggests timing options. They may have fixed time settings or can have automatic or manual time settings. Unfortunately, most machine manufacturers aren't paying attention to the wide variety of products that could be stuck into their machines. So, you'll need to know your machine, and the products you are using to get it right.

About Our Machines

Unibind:

Unibind machines run at a cooler temperature than most other machines; 230- 250F. UniBind covers have metal in their spines. The metal conducts the heat rapidly, so higher temperatures are not needed. Unibind machines have a magnetic switch under the hot plate. This means that the machine will only turn on when it detects metal and will turn off when it does not.

Yes, in a pinch, you could cheat and put in a "dummy" Unibind cover or a properly bent coat hanger next to someone else's cover to trick the machine into going on, but the machine will probably need 2 cycles to bind most of the thicker soft covers. Hardcovers from ProBind, Bind-it, or Coverbind simply won't get enough heat. Fortunately, Unibind has a good selection of hard and soft covers that will work just fine as well some of the ThermoBind brand steel covers and ThermoBind standard soft covers with an adapter.

Unibind machines go from off, to hot, and done in 90 seconds, a little longer if it is heating up for the first time, and a little less if the machine is already hot from the previous binding. Once the time cycle is up, it shuts off automatically. This is useful if you get lots of interruptions or have a busy office where a lot of people may use the machine. It's pretty foolproof! With Unibind multi-heater machines like the XU238, XU338, or larger machines you can just keep loading up the heating compartments while the covers in the other bays are cooling down so it's possible to process many covers very quickly.

Youtube Unibind Steelcrystal Demo: 1 minute
http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=l3f2ng3eDLY



UniBindXU 138

LEARN MORE

Unibinder 120 and 8.2 machines with built-in crimpers:

Unibinder XU 120 LEARN MORE



Unibind recently introduced two new machines with built-in crimpers. The Unibinder 120 has ¾ " wide heating plate and can bind up to an 18mm softcover or a 12mm hardcover. After binding one drops the cover into another slot where there are a rack and pinion driven set of jaws. One pulls down on an attached handle and one can quickly and easily crimp a 10 mm cover down to 7mm for a better fit. For those who would like to cut down on the inventory required to make a range of reports, 120 is a great way to get perfect results every time.

Unibind 8.2 LEARN MORE



The 8.2 is the top of the line Unibind machine. It has the capability to bind covers up to 36mm thick. There is a built-in electric crimper that can handle adjustments for the full range of covers from SM (5mm) to 36mm (XXL) While the electric crimper is nice, the 8.2 is the best choice if the job requires binding many covers at a time, or if there is need to bind covers with more than 120 sheets.

Brands of thermal binders that work with these machines: Unibind only.

FREE SHIPPING
COVERBIND OR UNIBIND
Orders Over $95
UPS Ground Shipping Lower 48 States

Fellowes Helios 30 and Helios 60:

These machines run in the 310F to 335F range with occasional spikes up to 20 degrees hotter`. The Helios machines try to set the timing for you automatically based upon the thickness of what you are binding. That was a better idea in theory than in actual practice. Fortunately, there are override arrow buttons to increase or decrease those settings (see your Helios manual for details). For most imported soft covers the machine will simply add time as the thickness of what you bind increases. That works great for our soft imported covers, but needlessly adds time for Pro-Bind covers that have a faster melting adhesive. You won't need more than 90 seconds for them, and should never need the 3 minutes the Helios 60 might set. There is an override to the automatic time setting: Just press the < arrow to decrease the time.

If using Pro-Bind or Bind-it hardcovers with this machine, the Helios machine may only select 45 seconds for a narrow cover, but you'll need at least 120 seconds for the heat to rise up to the side glue strips before crimping. In this case, you'd push the > button to increase the time.

One more tip: The Helios machines were built so that there is a considerable angle, front to back.The idea was to keep the thicker reports from flopping forward during the binding process.

We have received some complaints that the combination of high heat and the acute angle resulted in pages at the back of the cover being bound OK but pages in the front coming out. The high heat and excessive time made the glue flow to the back and didn't leave enough to bind the front pages to the spine. The solution is to use the override buttons to keep the time down to no more than 90 seconds or so and use a shim to tilt the machine forward so that the heating plate is only very slightly inclined.

Helios 30 & 60

LEARN MORE



Brands of thermal binders that work with these machines: ThermoBind, ProBind, CoverBind, Bind-It, Fellowes. We do not recommend using Unibind covers with the Helios machines.

Covermate 550

These machines were originally manufactured by a company called Bind-It. We bought out most of Bind-It's inventory when they were bought out by another company. The machine is nearly identical to our TB500 (below) and was made in the same factory. We modified the machine slightly, adding a Teflon insulator to bring the temperature down to a point where it works well with Unibind. The 3-time cycles of 30, 60 and 90 seconds are well suited to handle nearly all soft and hardcovers. For the thickest Pro-Bind brand hardcovers, you'll need to allow the machine an extra 30 seconds. This machine features a long-lasting PTC ceramic heating unit that keeps an even temperature for consistent results.



Covermate 550 LEARN MORE

ThermoBind TB500

This machine was designed from the outset to work with all brands of thermal binders on the market. It runs at a temperature that is safe for Unibind products, but high enough to work with all other brands. It has time settings of 60, 120, and 180 seconds to accommodate everything from fast-melting soft covers to thick Pro-Bind brand hardcovers. This machine features a long-lasting PTC ceramic heating unit that keeps an even temperature for consistent results. The 2016 model has an automatic shut off of power to the heating plate if a cover is left in the machine for more than a few minutes after the binding cycle ends. All power to the machine automatically shuts off if the machine is not used within a 30 minute period. To reset, one simply turns the on/off switch to the "off" position and then back to the "on" position. In 2019, in response to the demand from Libraries using this machine with glue strips for book repair, we've added a hotter version of this machine. The hotter machine will require a free adapter if it is to be used with Unibind covers.



TB 500 LEARN MORE

Brands of thermal binders that work with this machine: All brands.

ThermoBind TB300

This machine was designed for ease of use. It is a medium-duty machine for office or home. It has a very fast warm-up time followed by a single 80 seconds time cycle so it's ideal for someone who needs to quickly bind a few reports. The moderate temperature makes this machine suitable for all thermal covers except for the Bind-it or Pro-Bind hardcovers that require high heat.

Like the Pro-Bind 1000 and many other thermal binders, this machine has spring-loaded camps inside to hold the covers upright. This is not a problem for hardcovers or the various brands of softcovers except for Unibind soft covers. In the case of Unibind, the clamps can pull the spines off the soft covers during removal. This is not a problem for the Unibind hardcovers. (See ThermoBind TB240S for an alternative) The TB300 machine will automatically lower the temperature, to save energy if a new binding cycle is not started right away and will completely shut off power if the machine remains idle for more than 10 minutes

Brands of thermal binders that work with this machine: All brands except Bind-it or Pro-Bind Hard covers



TB 300

ThermoBind TB 240S

This machine was also designed for ease of use as well as maximum compatibility with a wide range of products. It is a medium-duty machine for office or home. Like the Unibind machines or the more expensive ThermoBind machines, there are no spring-loaded clamps to interfere with Unibind soft cover spines. There are 3 selectable time settings, and automatic. In 2019 we added a hotter version to make it more compatible with glue strips, and both CoverbInd and Pro-Bind hardcovers. There is an automatic shut off after each cycle is complete, so if you get distracted and forget the report you bound will be there in good
condition and the machine will be off. The maximum capacity of this machine is 180 sheets for soft covers and 120 sheets for hardcovers.

Brands of thermal binders that work with this machine: All brands.



TB 240S

ProBind 1000

This machine works best with small spine width softcovers from Pro-Bind. For larger spine widths of soft covers, the machine should be set on the longer (hardcover) time cycle. ThermoBind brand covers use an adhesive that takes a bit longer to melt, so you'll want to use the longer time cycle for those covers as well. Much like the Helios 30 and 60, the ProBind 1000 will work with all brands of thermal binders except for Unibind. The ProBind 1000 has a spring-loaded clamping mechanism to hold the binder(s) in place while on the heating plate. At times, this feature can prevent pages from reaching the bottom (spine) of the binder. It is best to spread the clamp apart with your fingers, and tap the binders down on the heating plate. This ensures that the paper inside of the binders will reach the glue strip in the spine.

Brands of thermal binders that work with these machines: ThermoBind, ProBind, CoverBind, Bind-It, Fellowes. UniBind hardcovers will also work if you use our adapter strip. Not for use with Unibind soft covers.



ProBind 1000

ProBind 2000

Pro-Bind is on its second version of this machine. It is a very solid all-metal machine and one of the few that is made in the USA. The factory setting on this is about 320F but it is programmable to go up another 20 degrees which are desirable for working with the Pro-Bind or Bind-it hardcovers that need enough heat to melt the side glue strips before crimping. It also is programmable to go down, up to 40 degrees which should put it in the safe zone for use with Unibind products. The time cycles for this machine are quite short 30 seconds for soft covers and 60 for hardcovers. We feel the 30 seconds is only enough time for Pro-Bind or Bind-it soft covers in smaller spine widths. If you are doing larger spine widths or multiple booklets at the same time, we suggest using the hardcover setting. Most other soft covers on the market need a bit more time, so for Coverbind, ThermoBind, or Unibind products (using the lower temperature and a thin Teflon adapter) you'll want at least a 60-second cycle. For Pro-Bind hardcovers even with the machine programmed at the highest temperature, you may need to do 2 60 second cycles. If the book is not completely filled, and there is air between the side glue strips on the covers and the inserted pages, it requires more time for the heat to rise to the side glue strips.

Brands of thermal binders that work with these machines: ThermoBind, ProBind, CoverBind, Bind-It, Fellowes. UniBind will also work if you program the machine's temperature down 2 levels or use our adapter



ProBind 2000

ProBind Hardcover Crimper

Pro-Bind hardcovers come with a central glue strip like most other covers, but they also have two side glue strips that come up slightly from the spine. The idea is that if the cover is somewhat underfilled, one puts the still hot cover into the crimper where jaws pressing at the hinges of the book pull the slack out of the spine and slightly elongate the front and back covers in the process. The side glue strips grab the first and last page in such a way as to make a neat, perfectly fit the profile. The crimper is adjustable to work with all sizes up to 1 ¾ inch capacity. It is not suitable for crimping Unibind covers but can be used with most brands of soft covers to produce a neater fit.



ProBind Hardcover Crimper LEARN MORE

Coverbind 5000: Now Replaced by Bindomatic Accel Flex

This machine is set to run comparatively hot, at up to 375 degrees. It will work as-is with most thermal covers except Unibind. (If ordering Unibind supplies with this machine please ask for the free adapter) Coverbind coats their binders to protect against the high temperature. White or Ivory colored covers from other manufactures may discolor in their machines unless an insulating adapter is used. So again, if you need it, we will provide an adapter with your supply order. The Bindomatic Accel Flex is basically the same machine but colored black. It comes with a separate cooling rack.

Brands of thermal binders that work with these machines: ThermoBind, ProBind, CoverBind, Bind-It, Fellowes. Unibind only with an adapter.







LEARN MORE

Fellowes 250: (replaced by the Helios 30)

This machine has been discontinued and replaced by the Helios 30, but there are a lot of TB250's out there. The machine has only one short time cycle of about 25 seconds. It runs at about 325F. That time cycle is too short for all but the smallest spine sizes. For most softcover applications you'll need to run 2 successive cycles. After the beep that signals the end of the first cycle, you can simply lift the covera few inches and then drop it down so it activates the electric eye and starts a second cycle. This machine maintains a steady temperature unit it is either shut off manually or automatically goes into sleep mode, so you can choose to simply leave the cover in for another 30 seconds. For Bind-it or ProBind or Coverbind hardcovers, you'll need at least 3 cycles. (75 to 90 seconds) For Unibind products, you'd need the heat-reducing adapter, and then 2 to 3 cycles.

Brands of thermal binders that work with these machines: ThermoBind, ProBind, CoverBind, Bind-It, Fellowes. Unibind only with an adapter.

Helios 30





Fellowes 450: (replaced by the Helios 60)

This machine has been discontinued and has been replaced by the Helios 60. Unlike the TB250 the TB450 offers a choice of 3-time cycles, 25,50, or 75 seconds which you can select before binding, so you don't have to hover over the machine. It also runs at about 325F. For most softcover applications you'll need to set the machine for the 50-second cycle. For soft covers over 15mm or for multiple covers, select the 3rd time cycle. This machine maintains a steady temperature unit it is either shut off manually or automatically goes into sleep mode so you can choose to simply leave the cover in for another 30 seconds. For Bind-it or ProBind or Coverbind hardcovers, you'll need at least the longest cycle. (75 to 90 seconds) For Unibind products, you'd need the heat-reducing adapter, and then the 2nd or 3rd cycle.

Brands of thermal binders that work with these machines: ThermoBind, ProBind, CoverBind, Bind-It, Fellowes. Unibind only with an adapter.

Bind-it Perfect Binder II:

This was a relatively late addition to the Bind-it line. It has 2-time settings: a shorter time for soft covers and a longer time for hardcovers. An internal clamping device holds the covers tightly. The power button turns the machine on. The pink selector button lets you choose the time setting. An electric eye activates the cycle when a cover is placed into the machine. Starting from a cold machine, the first cycle will take over 3 minutes because it includes a warm-up time. Successive Cycles will be shorter. This machine runs quite hot and the nature of the clamping mechanism makes it difficult to add any type of adapter, so we don't recommend it for use with Unibind products.

Brands of thermal binders that work with these machines: ThermoBind, ProBind, CoverBind, Bind-It, Fellowes.

Bind-it Covermate 600 and 700 series:

These oldies but goodies have a start button that begins a time cycle. Like the Perfect Bind II, the first cycle will include the warm-up and successive cycles will be shorter. They operate at fairly high temperatures. These all-metal machines have the same sliding throat mechanism as the Coverbind 5000, ThemoBind 500, and Covermate 550's so it is easy, (and necessary) to add an adapter for use with Unibind covers. One drawback to these machines is that the time cycle is often too short for most thermal covers so count on running 2 cycles for most soft covers, and 3 for hardcovers.

Brands of thermal binders that work with these machines: ThermoBind, ProBind, CoverBind, Bind-It, Fellowes, and Unibind with an adapter.

Glossy Paper

On rare occasions, we've had customers say that they were having difficulty binding heavily coated paper stocks. Some high gloss stocks and some printing processes that deposit an oily film on the paper can be resistant to adhesive penetration. In those cases, we suggest that you take the stack of paper that you plan to bind and rough up the side of the stack that is going into the spine with a piece of fine sandpaper (150 grit). This will open up the fibers and allow the glue strip to wick into the paper.

Crimping

Crimping is required when using Pro-Bind or Bind-it hardcovers. These covers have two side glue strips, in addition to the main strip in the spine. When the cover is still very hot it is immediately placed in the crimper (a clamping device). This forces the adhesive into the pages and at the same time removes any excess empty space in the spine. The side glue strips catch the first and last pages to hold everything in place. When the cover cools, the spine will be crisply defined.

Crimping UniBind

Unibind hardcovers have a metal channel on the inside the spine. This gives the cover a crisp, defined shape. There are occasionally times when you are in between sizes or are forced to use a size larger than you need. In those cases, you can simply take a straight edge ruler and press down on the edge of the spine on one side of the binder, and then equally on the other side. It's a bit like bending in the legs of a staple. You'll end up with a crisp clean look.

In 2018 Unibind in an effort to reduce inventory requirements Unbind combined the Steelcrystal covers which were clear on both sides, and the Steelmatt covers which were slightly frosted, but still see-through, into one cover, the Unicover Flex, AKA: "Uniflex" They also tried to eliminate sizes so if one was "in-between" sizes one would have to crimp a larger size down to avoid having a lot of extra space in the spine. New machines were introduced that have built-in crimpers. However, since there were many thousands of customers who had machines without crimpers, Unibind has had to keep most of the same range of sizes it had before. The 1mm has been eliminated with the smallest size starting at 2.5mm. Likewise, the 21mm and the 30mm have been eliminated.

Newer Unbind machines, Unbinder 120, the 8M and Unibnder 8.2 have built-in crimpers that make crimping operations faster and easier when necessary.

For further details on determining your timing, reference your specific machine and your specific brand of covers, below.

Pre-Stapling

We have had a few occasions where customers have underestimated the thickness of their report and find themselves with a deadline. One can generally "cheat" by pre-stapling the contents. If possible, I recommend using staples that are too short to go all the way through. Place a couple in from each side so they go in more than 1/2 way. That avoids the pucker that can occur when one staple all the way through. If you use this method, even if a few pages don't ever hit the glue, the binding will stay strong and you won't lose a page. This process also works well when one has to make a large quantity of reports, even when the covers are the right size, because it allows one to collate the book blocks ahead of time. This method shouldn't be necessary once you're past the learning curve, but it is a useful tool.

Since we originally wrote this, flat clinch staplers, that leave the staple flat on both sides, have become inexpensive and widely available so pre-stapling is easier than ever.

Book Repair and Glue Strips

ThermoBind sells a wide variety of supplies for repairing books. Our glue strips are available in precut widths ranging from 1/16 inch to 2 inches. One places the strip against the spine and then reinserts missing pages. Then heat until the glue gets to the consistency of maple syrup. Push the sheets into the melted adhesive and then let cool to room temperature. Glue strips should always be cut ¼" short of either end of the spine so the glue doesn't run out onto the heating plate. Other supplies for book repair include the Unbind steelbackspines, for use when the covers are salvageable but the spine is gone, and CoverBind "Print-on-demand" covers which are used to make acomplete printed soft cover up to 11 X 8.5 inches or smaller. They come with a separate glue strip. For more on book repair, see our web page at www.thermalbookrepair.com.

Pages Are Falling Out Of My Document:

We have had a few occasions where customers have underestimated the thickness of their report and find themselves with a deadline. One can generally "cheat" by pre-stapling the contents. If possible, I recommend using staples that are too short to go all the way through. Place a couple in from each side so they go in more than 1/2 way. That avoids the pucker that can occur when one staple all the way through. If you use this method, even if a few pages don't ever hit the glue, the binding will stay strong and you won't lose a page. This process also works well when one has to make a large quantity of reports, even when the covers are the right size, because it allows one to collate the book blocks ahead of time. This method shouldn't be necessary once you're past the learning curve, but it is a useful tool.

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The See-Through Front Covers On My Soft Covers Get Wavy After Binding:

The card stock back covers and lips and the PVC or PET front covers can have different rates of expansion when subjected to the heat of the binding process. If the time and temperature aren't too much out of range, the covers will return to their normal state after cooling. We have noticed this with all brands of covers on some occasions. You'll find that Pro-Bind and our ThermoBind brands have made the card stock lip on the front covers wider on the larger spine widths that require more heat and time. This keeps the heat away from the line where the 2 different materials are attached and pretty much eliminates any waviness.

If this continues to happen, placing a heat-reducing adapter or a few strips of paper onto the heating plate, to reduce the temperature will generally solve the problem. The other trick that works well is to place a piece of corrugated cardboard against the clear front cover. This will insulate the cover from any excess heat.

Unibind softcovers operate at a lower temperature and do not have this problem unless they are considerably overheated. If using Unibind soft covers with a non-Unibind machine the above tricks will get you good results.

Frequently Asked Questions:

Q. What are the pro's and con's between crystal clear and the see-through frosted covers?

Both types are clear enough to see photos and the finest type. The frosted or matt covers tend to hide any scratches or imperfections in the cover and continue to look good after repeated handling. The crystal clear covers show off photos very well, but do get more easily marked up. Our ThermoBind brand soft covers are imported only in a more expensive matt because we have found that the combination of dust and moisture can create viable imperfections in the crystal covers. This is an occasional problem for all manufacturers of crystal. We find that custom covers made in the US don't generally have that problem, whereas covers that come into the county via ocean freight are more likely to have problems with the crystal fronts.

Q. Can I print on the covers?

Once the covers have glue in them there is no way to run them through a regular printer. There are flatbed printers that can print on most surfaces but these are not that common.

Q. How can I customize my presentations myself?

There are 3 products we carry that allow easy desktop customization of the cover itself.

Unibind steelbacks are an adhesive filled metal channel (covered in various colors) with temporary covers attached. You can print out whatever you want on standard coverstock, then drop your covers into the steelback along with the pages you wish to bind.

Coverbind print-on-demand covers are preformed U-shaped laser printable covers. One needs a printer or copier that can feel 11" wide. After printing, one drop in a separate glue strip and then the contents to be bound.

Coverbind ambassador on-demand hardcovers come with a debossed area in the center of the front cover so that the cover has a "picture frame" appearance. There is a laser-printable label with a peel-off sticky back that fits inside the debossed area.







Frequently Asked Questions:

Q. My Spine Size Is Too Small, And I Have No Time To Order Replacements:

We have had a few occasions where customers have underestimated the thickness of their report and find themselves with a deadline. One can generally "cheat" by pre-stapling the contents. If possible, I recommend using staples that are too short to go all the way through. Place a couple in from each side so they go in more than 1/2 way. That avoids the pucker that can occur when one staple all the way through. If you use this method, even if a few pages don't ever hit the glue, the binding will stay strong and you won't lose a page. This process also works well when one has to make a large quantity of reports even when the covers are the right size because it allows one to collate the book blocks ahead of time. This method shouldn't be necessary once you're past the learning curve, but it is a useful tool.

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Q. How can I customize my presentations myself?

The vast majority of soft covers we sell have see-through fronts, and some have see-through backs as well. That allows one to print a nice quality first page (and possibly last page) and have it show through.





Q. Are thermal covers available with pockets or in other configurations?

We can make bifold and trifold thermal covers with 1,2 or 3 pockets with or without business cardholders. If we don't have a die to cut the exact configuration you'd like, we can have a custom die made.

Frequently Asked Questions:

Q. What forms of decoration are available?

Almost any type and combination of the following elements are available:

- Foil Stamping
- Embossing
- Printing and registered embossing
- 1 to 4 color Offset printing
- 4 color Digital for soft covers laminates
- 4 Color digital for hardcovers
- Silkscreening
- Spot Varnish
- Glossy and Matte La

Printing and registered embossing



1 to 4 color offset printing



4 color Digital for soft covers



4 Color digital for hardcovers



Silkscreening



Frequently Asked Questions:

Q. What is the process for having a custom cover made?

We'll need order with spine sizes and quantities and the type of customization. We'll also need the artwork provided in a vector format along with instructions on how to size the artwork and where to place it. We'd then have the art department make a digital proof for your approval. One can then make changes and get additional proofs until the final version is approved.

Payment is then required. Production can take 14 to 20 working days depending upon the nature of the project.

Thermobind Custom Printed Folders

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