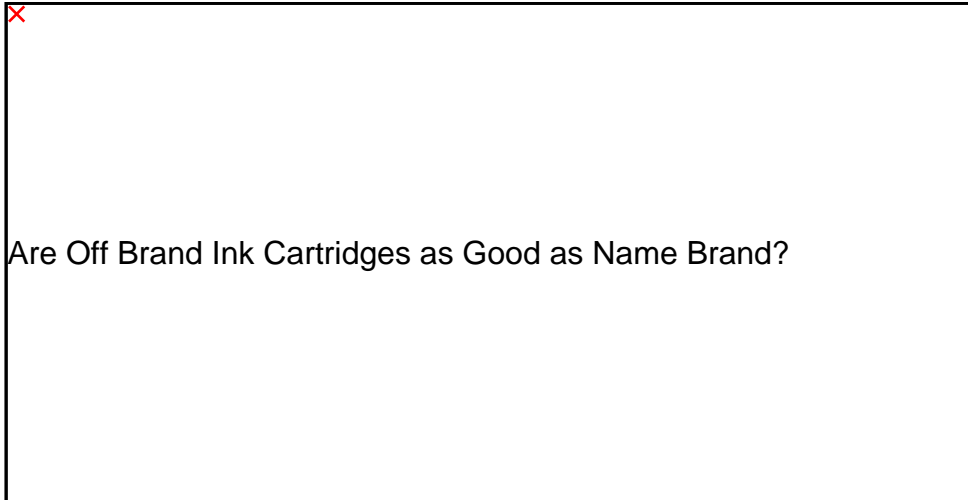


Are Off Brand Ink Cartridges as Good as Name Brand

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Editors Note: The Computing Center sells a lot of ink and toner. In 2020, the amount of ink cartridges we sold jumped dramatically with many of our clients working from home. We also serviced a lot of home-based printers for the same reason. The vast majority of the inks we sell are from OEMs (original equipment manufacturers), Hewlett Packard and others. Only about 5% of the inks we sell come from 3rd parties. This article, definitely written from Hewlett Packard's point of view, discusses the advantages of using their branded cartridges, generic ink cartridges. We're always happy to discuss our experiences with all ink cartridges.

The printer is perhaps more important than ever these days with so many people working remotely and even teaching their children at home. These trends have resulted in high demand for printers, ink, and accessories, with the U.S. print industry expected to hit **\$6,792.7 million in 2021**.

Whether you opt for a black-and-white printer or go all-in for an enterprise-level, multifunction color model, it's crucial to consider the cost of ink before you buy. One way people have tried saving is by buying generic or remanufactured ink cartridges. But are they actually a good deal?

Here's what you should know before you try to cut costs with anything but an Original Equipment Manufacturer (OEM) ink product. The actual savings may not be what you expect.

What is an off-brand ink cartridge?

As consumers, we buy “off-brand” items ranging from cereal to eyeglasses, and printer ink is often sold in a similar way. When a cartridge is sold as “off-brand,” however, you may actually be getting one of a couple of product options. They include:

- **A non-OEM cartridge** made with a similar design and ink capacity to look and work like brand-name ink. These ink cartridges aren’t manufactured by the brand name company they emulate, even though they may be marketed in the same way.
- **A remanufactured ink cartridge** that essentially puts new ink into the used name-brand cartridge. The used cartridge is filled with off-brand ink and hasn’t received the quality assurance and testing process of the original brand.
- **You refill your own cartridges** with off-brand ink at a local refilling station

Whether your off-brand cartridge is made with new or used parts, it is not considered a genuine, official product of the original brand. An end-of-life HP cartridge, for example, sold by a reseller under their brand as “refurbished,” “remanufactured,” or refilled by another company doesn’t have the same warranty as name-brand ink supplies.

The sites selling these cartridges are usually upfront about the fact they are not selling genuine parts. But if you aren’t sure whether a product is genuine, consider buying only through your printer brand or through its authorized resellers.



What about consumer ink refills?

Another option sold to consumers is to refill your own ink. Most inkjet cartridges, HP ink cartridges for instance, aren’t made to be refilled by the consumer. HP recommends recycling end-of-life ink cartridges with [HP Planet Partners](#) for our closed-loop manufacturing process.

Branded vs. generic ink: Why name-brand ink performs better

At first glance, off-brand ink may look just like the brand name products, but do they really stand up to the test? While you may get many printed pages from your generic or refurbished ink, there are some important distinctions to make between the two options: branded vs generic ink.

1. Proven legacy of products

While an off-brand ink company may have used its own approach to testing, it's hard to know what that is. And the cartridges aren't tested with the proprietary information and specifications unique to each HP Printer. The same proves true for other printer manufacturers as well.

With Original HP Ink products, you enjoy a proven legacy of ink engineering and hundreds of hours of testing. We manufacture our ink products to exact specifications for our printers to give results we promise for hundreds or even thousands of printed pages.

2. Low emissions and less waste

Brand name ink is customized for each printer cartridge type to apply just the right amount of ink onto the page for **perfect color and quick-drying time** for smudgeless prints. With off-brand ink, you aren't really sure **what you are getting or what color outputs you'll see**.

You may also run into a higher output of fumes from your ink. For HP printers, water-based Original HP Ink is odorless for low-emission printing. [1] And with high-quality, precision printing the first time, name-brand ink cartridges will also reduce paper waste.

3. More for your money

You may not actually save any money or time, in the long run, buying

off-brand over name-brand ink. In fact, cheaper ink may end up costing you more, just in supplies. You may get more for your money, even if you pay more up front for name-brand ink.

A [SpencerLab study testing](#) OEM cartridges against off-brand ones has shown that Original HP Inks will print **two times the number of pages** as a similar volume off-brand cartridge. Off-brand ink has also been shown to result in **28 times – yes, 28 times! – more wasted pages** than Original HP Ink products.



Comparing cost vs. value

While cash shouldn't be the only consideration in making an ink purchase, saving money is always welcome. The truth is that off-brand cartridges may be cheaper to purchase initially, but their lack of reliability may end up costing you more in the end. In testing off-brand ink on HP printers, the [SpencerLab study found that up to 58% of refilled or remanufactured ink cartridges](#) failed right out of the box or during use.

1. Warranty issues

Using a generic or refilled ink cartridge won't automatically void your warranty, but it's important to note that any damage caused specifically from using a non-HP ink product won't be covered by the warranty for your HP printer. If the ink cartridge does cause damage to your printer, you'll pay out of pocket for repairs for any issues related to off-brand options. HP is not the only manufacturer to have restrictions like this due to listening to years of customer complaints stemming from their use of non-original refills. Check your printer's warranty for specifics.

2. Better printing results

The time spent dealing with ill-fitting cartridges or trying to research all the

off-brand options may be put to better use – like growing your business. An Original HP Ink cartridge produces more precise printing output and, **on average, more than twice the printed pages** of off-brand, non-HP ink. As a result, the savings you expected when buying off-brand ink may never materialize.

3. Streamlined ordering from a company you trust

Time spent scouring the internet comparing deals from third-party ink sources is time you are not furthering your business. When you automate your ink purchases with a reliable OEM, you know every cartridge will perform up to your expectations. Original HP Inks are **convenient to order and replace**, and there are plenty of options to keep your costs low.

How to save money on brand name ink

Are genuine brand-name ink cartridges always more expensive to buy? Not necessarily. While it's easy to assume that brand name equates to a higher price tag, there are many ways to trim your ink budget and still get quality prints. Some easy ways to save on Original HP Ink cartridges include:

1. Buy XL format ink cartridges

These larger cartridges offer up to 3 times as many pages per cartridge compared to standard cartridges **without costing 2 to 3 times more**. You'll get the same print quality for a lower price per page. You'll also save time by not replacing them as often.

2. Sign up for the HP Instant Ink program

By using **HP Instant Ink**, you can get Original HP replacement ink delivered automatically to your door for a low, monthly subscription price and save up to 50%. [2] You get to print a set number of pages for the monthly price, and unused pages roll over to the next month. [3] It doesn't matter whether you print color and black-and-white pages – each page

counts as a single page, so you can really save if you print colorful, graphics-heavy projects.

3. Get free replacement ink for HP printers

Some **[HP+ printers](#)** come with 6- to 12-months [4,5] of the HP Instant Ink program included in the price. That means you can make one purchase and don't have to budget for ink for quite a long while. This program is an excellent buy for anyone who wants the quality of Original HP Ink products.



Lower your impact on the planet

You can easily return Original HP Ink products at many locations, and those who enroll in the HP Instant Ink service will receive postage-paid returnable envelopes with every new ink cartridge to make recycling simple and free. Even if you purchase your Original HP Ink from a third-party retailer, **[you can still order free, postage-paid return envelopes sent straight to you using this link.](#)**

1. HP Planet Partners closed-loop commitment

HP is committed to closed-loop manufacturing for our ink and toner cartridges. If you are buying off-brand ink cartridges from manufacturers without the same commitment to protecting our planet, you won't have the assurance that your empties are never sent to a landfill. In fact, a **[2020 InfoTrends North America Supplies Recycling study](#)** shows that nearly 90% of non-HP brand ink and toner cartridges end up in landfills.

2. HP sustainable sourcing

When you buy HP products, you're supporting our efforts to **[help the planet and communities](#)** around the globe. Used cartridges are sorted and shredded to become materials for new cartridges, in addition to other recycled materials.

On average, **HP helps divert almost 1 million plastic bottles per day** by using them as recycled content in new ink cartridges. HP purchases empty single-use plastic water bottles, for example, from communities in Haiti, adding to the local economy. This also keeps **those bottles from ending up in our oceans**. This win-win approach is changing the world for the better and it's another reason to consider how your ink choices have a global impact.

A final word on off-brand ink

When you factor in the long-term value, it's easy to see how paying a little more up front for an Original HP Ink cartridge can actually save you money in the long run and may do more to reflect your personal values.

There are many ways to save on Original HP Ink. These include buying in XL size, signing up for the HP Instant Ink program, or purchasing a printer with months of HP Instant Ink replenishment services included.

Consider quality in addition to the price since you are using ink to print full-color assets for your business or to communicate with customers. You may find that your return on investment has more to do with reliability and making a good impression than per-cartridge cost.

When using off-brand ink, your mileage will vary, and crisp prints aren't guaranteed. If you really want to put your best foot forward, it's best to go with the reliable option and purchase genuine ink products.

About the Author: *Linsey Knerl is a contributing writer for **HP Tech@Work**. Linsey is a Midwest-based author, public speaker, and member of the ASJA. She has a passion for helping consumers and small business owners do more with their resources via the latest tech solutions.*

here: <https://produktinfo.blauer-engel.de/uploads/criteriafile/en/DE-UZ%20205-201701-en%20Criteria.pdf>

2 - Based on monthly subscription cost of HP Instant Ink 700-page plans without purchase of additional sets of pages compared to cost per page to print ISO/IEC 24711 pages on most in-class, traditional A4 color inkjet cartridge printers & MFPs using original standard capacity cartridges priced for: Australia <299 AUD; New Zealand <349 NZD; Canada <=399 CAD & United States <399 USD.

Sale prices not considered for this study. HP Ink Advantage printers excluded due to non-standard hardware & supplies model.

Buyers Lab July 2020 study commissioned by HP, based on publicly available information as of June 1, 2020. Printers selected by market share in IDC Quarterly Hardcopy Peripherals Tracker - Final Historical 2020Q1. For

details: www.keypointintelligence.com/HPInstantInk.

3 - Rollover allows unused pages in a month to be placed in a rollover account and then applied to pages in excess of your monthly allowance. The rollover account balance is limited to a maximum of two times your monthly service plan pages on Toner plans and three times your monthly service plan pages on Ink plans (Toner example: you can roll over up to 100 pages if you are on the 50 page plan. Ink example: you can roll over up to 300 pages if you are enrolled in a 100 page plan.).

4 - 6 months of free ink: HP+ Print Plans sign up required. HP+ Print Plans not available in all countries. Subject to monthly page limit of plan selected. Must complete HP+ Print Plans signup within 7 days of setting up the printer with the HP-recommended setup process as indicated in the instructions that came with your printer. Use of in-box ink cartridge is included in period of offer. One offer redeemable per printer. Free months offer with HP+ Print Plans subject to change after 10.31.2021. Offer cannot be redeemed for cash. Setup Offer may be combined with other offers; see terms and conditions of the other offer for more details. Requires a valid credit/debit card, an email address, and Internet connection to printer. Unless service is cancelled within the promotional period online at hprintplans.com, a monthly service fee, based on the plan chosen, plus tax and overage fees will be charged to your credit/debit card. Customer will be charged for any overage fees and applicable taxes at the end of each month in the promotional period. See additional offer information available during online signup process. For service details, see hprintplans.com.

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