

A PRACTICAL GUIDE TO FINDING THE RIGHT FABRIC FOR YOUR BAGS & CASES



With so much on the line for manufacturers when selecting the optimal fabric for bags or cases, it helps to have a guide to help get the process underway. Choosing the wrong fabric can result in higher costs, performance issues, and even damage to brand reputation. The best place to start is by aligning fabric characteristics with the product's intended end use.

Ask these critical questions before selecting a fabric:

- What environment will the product be used in? (Outdoor, travel, tactical, retail, industrial)
- What level of wear and tear is expected?
- Will the fabric be printed on?
- What are the weight and cost constraints?
- Are there compliance or regulatory requirements to consider? (e.g., CPSIA, military standards such as Berry compliance, flame retardancy)

DURABILITY IS JUST THE STARTING POINT

TVF Senior Sales Consultant Laura Ballard, who has more than 15 years in textiles and bag and case customers ranging from ultra-durable to promotional in nature, says durability is the number one factor her customers ask about. Digging deeper about the spectrum of uses and goals for the fabric's intended applications, however, reveals the true textile match for the job.

"I was just working with a new customer who texted me pictures of the bags he wanted to make," Laura says. "He was leaning toward canvas, but I guided him to a 600D (denier) polyester, because you're going to have more color options."

- Laura Ballard, TVF Senior Sales Consultant

THE RIGHT FABRIC FOR EVERY BAG & CASE

Heavy-Duty & Tactical Bags

Tool bags, military

Recommended fabrics: 1000D/1680D CORDURA®, 1050D Ballistic Nylon, Magnatuff® 900D Ultra Nylon

Key benefits: abrasion resistance, tear strength, dimensional stability

Watch out for: balancing durability with overall product weight

Everyday Carry Bags & Backpacks

General use, commuters

Recommended fabrics: 500D CORDURA®, Nylon Pack Cloth, Nylon Oxford, Mini Diamond Ripstop

Key benefits: balance of durability, aesthetics, and weight

Watch out for: colorfast requirements, finish options

Branded & Promotional Bags

Trade show, giveaways

Recommended fabrics: 300D Polyester Poplin, 600D Magnatuff Polyester, PVC-Backed Polyester

Key benefits: printability, color vibrancy, cost-effectiveness

Watch out for: print method compatibility, CPSIA compliance if kids' products

Luggage & Travel Cases

Soft-sided, carry-on

Recommended fabrics: 1680D PVC-Backed Polyester, CORDURA® TrueLock

Key benefits: structure, scuff-resistance, retains appearance over time

Watch out for: weight limits for soft-sided luggage

Outdoor & Technical Gear

Dry bags, stuff sacks, pack covers

Recommended fabrics: 70D Coated Nylon Ripstop, 200D Double Wall Ripstop, PVC-Backed Nylon Taffeta

Key benefits: lightweight performance, packability, waterproofing

Watch out for: coating durability over time, seam sealing needs

Cases & Equipment Bags

Camera, medical, industrial

Recommended fabrics: Ballistic Nylon, Vinyl Coated Mesh, CORDURA® HP

Key benefits: protection, structure, professional appearance

Watch out for: compatibility with interior linings and padding

PERFORMANCE TRADE-OFFS

Laura's customers span a broad range of applications, from lightweight polyester bags used in meals-on-wheels programs to heavyweight, solution-dyed polyester for motorcycle bags, often requiring specialized finishes or coatings. It's important to understand that enhanced performance can come with trade-offs.

- Polyvinyl Chloride (PVC) vs. Polyurethane (PU) coatings — how do they impact performance, flexibility, and compliance?
- When is a DWR finish necessary?
- How will coatings affect printability?

DON'T OVERLOOK SOURCING

Ask these critical questions before selecting a fabric:

- Is the fabric in stock or made to order?
- Are there MOQs for custom products?
- How consistent is the fabric across dye lots and production runs?
- Can the material be sampled or tested before committing to production?
- Should you work with a full-service fabric partner or a commodity supplier?

TVF has 50 years of textile expertise, serving as an extension of business for manufacturers. Connect with Laura and the TVF Sales Team at TVFinc.com.