Artwork Guidelines

HELLO THERE!

Here at Go Digital we want to make sure that you get the best quality print as possible. One part of the process that has a big impact on the final product is the way the artwork files are set up and sent to us. Whilst Go Digital will always try and look out for any problems in your files and let you know, sometimes things do slip past our expert eye. To help reduce any issues with how your print looks, we've put together this handy guide for common issues to get the best out of your print.

Setting up your design files

The first step in ensuring that your files will print correctly is in the way your design file is set up from the beginning. The most commonly used programs to design for print are called desktop publishing programs (dtp) such as Adobe InDesign and Quark. These have specific programming aspects that help ensure quality. Other programs such as Adobe Photoshop and Adobe Illustrator can also be used to make print files.

Paper sizes

Setting up the correct page measurements is important to prevent the artwork having to be stretched or reduced in size to fit onto the sheet:

A0 - 841 x 1189mm   **A4** - 210 x 297mm
A1 - 594 x 841mm   **A5** - 148 x 210mm
A2 - 420 x 594mm   **A6** - 148 x 105mm
A3 - 297 x 420mm   **A7** - 74 x 105mm

Business card - 55 x 85mm
DL/Compliment slip - 99 x 210mm
Letterhead - 210 x 297mm
Roller banner - 850 x 2150mm

Bleed

For the majority of print work, we require documents to have a 3mm bleed area all the way. This is to ensure quality during the trimming part of the print process. As guillotines can wobble anywhere up to 3mm, failing to add bleed can result in the white of the paper appearing at the edge of your design. Bleed is used correctly when background colours and images that are at the edge of your design, run into this area (see diagram below for an example).
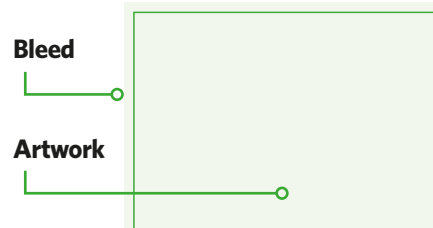
Most desktop publishing programs will include a bleed setup option when setting up the pages for design, however other software may require you to manually add the extra 3mm on the page size (for example an A4 leaflet might have to be entered in as 216 x 303mm).

Colour format

Printing presses differ to most desktop printers in the ink they use. Rather than RGB (red, green and blue) used for desktop printers and computer monitors, printing presses use a mixture of cyan, magenta, yellow and black (CMYK). It is important to set up your design document in the CMYK colour format to avoid unexpected results on the final version, known as colour shift – this is due to the way tones can change when RGB colours are converted to CMYK.

| cyan | magenta | yellow | black |

Pantones

Sometimes a corporate branding or special print project might require the use of a fifth colour to achieve colour consistency across a range of products, these are known as Pantones. It is important to set this up as a fifth colour in your design file rather than a mixture of CMYK to make sure we are able to identify and print these parts of the design in the correct ink. However, if you've ordered just a normal four colour print job, it is equally important not to use Pantone colours in your design work as these will be converted into a CMYK mix which can result in a colour shift. In your swatches you should see these symbols by each colour:

4 colour process symbol

Spot colour symbol

DESIGN

Now that your file is all setup and ready to design, there are still some areas that you ought to be wary off.

Images

The majority of issues that we see that can really distract from a great piece of design work is the standard of images used, with their resolution being the main problem. To achieve crisp images, it is best to use images that have a resolution of 300dpi (dots per inch) and are in the CMYK colour format. A general rule of thumb is that the majority of images on the internet are not up to the standard for print as they tend to only have 72dpi. Stock image files from image banks and photographs straight from cameras (or as close to original file as possible) tend to have the best quality for print.

300 dpi

72 dpi
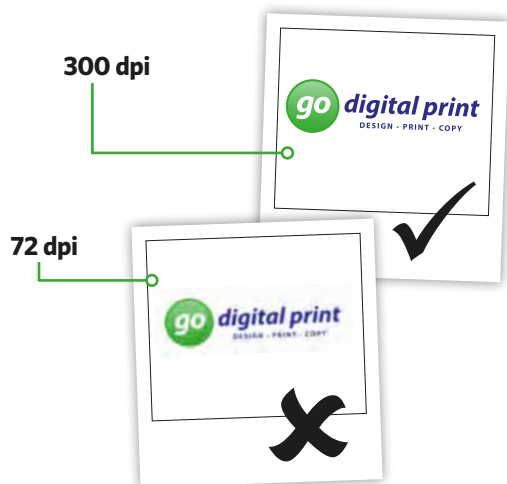
Rich black

Common sense would argue that using 100% black in a design would print out as a solid black colour, however the world of printing sometimes isn't that straight forward. If your design features a solid black area, whilst on screen it can look dark enough but when it is finally printed it might look a bit more muted and grey. This is because rich black is needed to make the colour stand out. Using a mixture of all four colours will increase the level of ink in the black and create a darker, richer tone. Whilst there is not a standard CMYK mixture that can be used, the one limitation that should be adhered is to avoid using a mixture that is over 240% as it can lead to over inking.

Be aware not to use rich black in text (unless it is large and bold) as this can lead to registration issues. By using 30% Cyan, 30% Magenta, 30% Yellow and 100% K (Black) this will create a rich black.

30%   **30%**   **30%**   **100%**

Overinking

Over inking is when a mixture of CMYK values is too high that it can create too much ink in one area which leads the colour being darker than planned. It can also lead to longer drying times, offsetting (ink rubbing onto other pieces of work that it's stacked up with causing dirty marks), as well as a loss of details in artwork.

Overprinting and knockout

Overprinting and knockout are two methods which can be used as a design aspect, but if you're not careful they can be also be methods that can unwittingly hinder great design. Overprinting is the process of different layers printing over each other. Knockout, on the other hand, prevents the lower layers being printed. The majority of designs will have overprinting turned off and all elements set to knockout. The most important feature to ensure that knockout is white text/elements designs over a coloured layer, otherwise they won't show up on the final print.
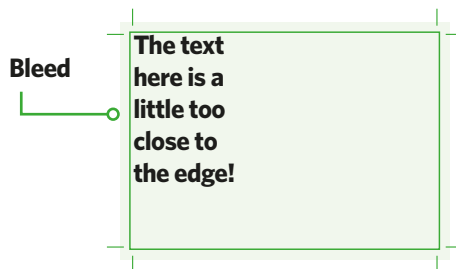
Knockout   **Over print**

A few more things

It's important to ensure that important design elements are kept at least 5mm from the edges of the final size as they could be trimmed off during the cropping of the design.

Bleed

The text here is a little too close to the edge!

Ensure that text doesn't go below 8pt otherwise it will be difficult to read.

This is 8pt   This is 5pt   This is 3pt

When designing a booklet or brochure, it is important to remember that it can be hard to line up separate pages to the level as shown on screen. As a result it is advised to avoid having text or images to run across the centre of page (unless it's the centre page spread, which doesn't feature alignment issues).

**Running text will be difficult to read if its spread over pages**
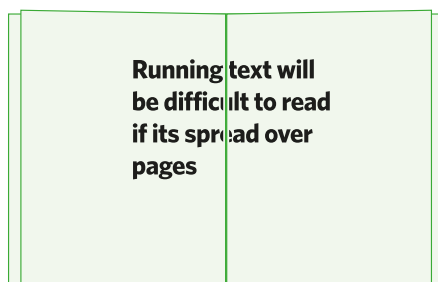
PRINT

Now that your artwork is all designed, it's time to save the files ready for Go Digital to work with them and create your print. These final steps will help ensure that your files are all ready to go.

Crop lines

Crop lines help us identify where we ought to trim the artwork. They also allow us to make sure that bleed has been setup correctly.

Crop

Bleed
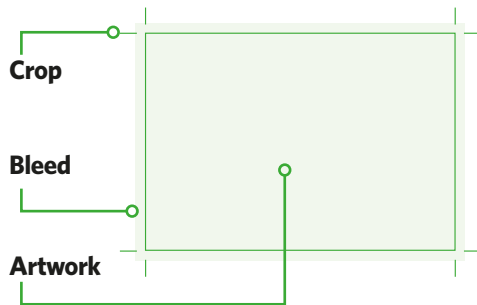
Artwork

Pages

Whilst you're designing, it was most likely going to be in page spreads. However, for print purposes we require that pages are sent as single pagination to allow us to impose the artwork correctly on the print sheets.

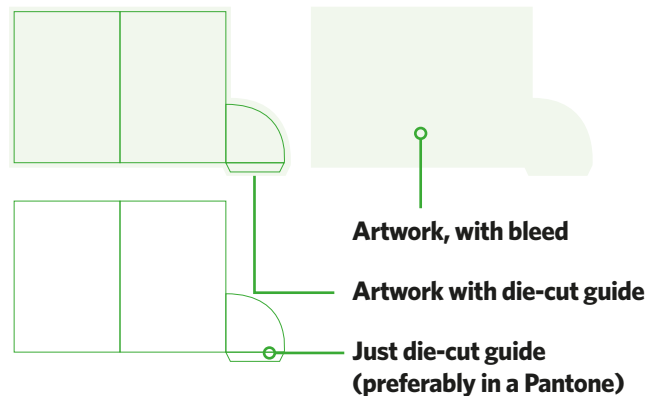| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 |
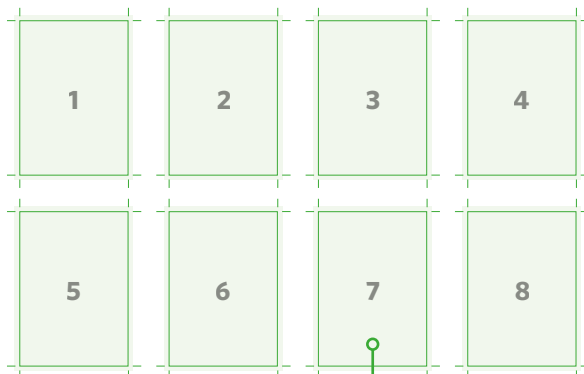
Single pages not spreads

Outlined text

When using nonstandard text, it is sometimes common to make sure that the text is outlined rather than separate on the design file. This is to ensure that the text doesn't change incase the original font is accidentally not embedded.

Not outlined text
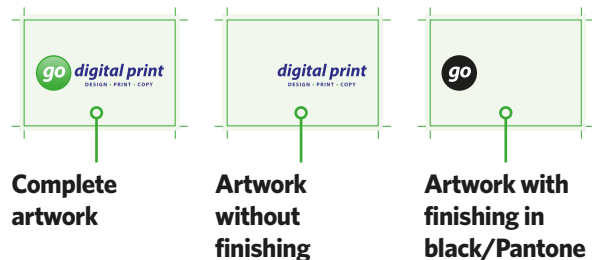
Go Digital Print

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Outlined text
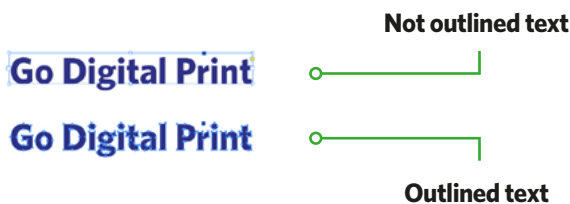
Special finishing

If you've opted to have your product to have a special finish such as spot uv, foiling or die-cutting, you will be required to submit a few different files. The first being the artwork submitted as standard. The second file would feature your artwork with the special finishing areas imposed over the top. For safety reasons, it's normally best to submit this set up as a fifth colour to prevent it being printed in case the wrong file ends up going on press. The final file require highlights just the finishing areas without being imposed onto the artwork.

Die-cut artwork x 3 files

Artwork, with bleed

Artwork with die-cut guide

Just die-cut guide (preferably in a Pantone)

Foil artwork x 3 files

go *digital print*
DESIGN · PRINT · COPY

digital print
DESIGN · PRINT · COPY

go

Complete artwork

Artwork without finishing

Artwork with finishing in black/Pantone

Saving your file

The best file format to submit your artwork with is generally PDF as this method preserves the quality of images, colour formats and embeds the majority of text all automatically. If submitting the original design files, remember to ensure all images, fonts and links are also submitted.

PDF Adobe

Id Indd Adobe

Please remember to include images and fonts with InDesign

Sending your file

Go Digital are able to receive your files in a number of ways. You may wish to submit with a disc, pen drive but the most common method and quickest method is via email. Remember that most email clients have trouble with file sizes over 10MB and artwork files can sometimes number over 100MB. Plenty of third party methods are out there to send larger files for free. We recommend the use of WeTransfer/Hightail (which also provides you with a receipt when we download you files) or sending artwork through a Dropbox link.

WHAT NOW?

In most cases we will provide you with a print proof before printing. These can come in a range of formats deciding on the order and the presses your job is due to be printed on. All proofs are there to provide you a chance to ensure that nothing has 'dropped' or changed in your artwork through our ripping process (software that maps your artwork ready for printing). The majority of proofs will come through as a low-res version as hi-res proofs tend to be very large file sizes. Depending on the software used, they can be imposed proofs (lined up as printers pairs on large sheets rather than designer pairs) or single pages.

Another proofing method you might opt for is a hard-copy proof; a physical version which can be on the sheet or as a mock up. Depending on the type of job, these can carry an extra cost and add an extra couple of days onto the turn around schedule but does give you a closer representation of the colours you can expect to see in the final version.

Further information

At Go Digital we know that not everyone that requires print/design work is a designer. If any of the above information is confusing or new to you and you find yourself struggling, please do not hesitate to get in contact and our team is always willing to help you through it as much as possible.

If it gets too much, we do offer a design service in-house with our team of expert designers who will be able to work with you on your design, offering advice and tips on how to get the best return on your product. For a free quote, please do not hesitate to call us on 01332 347208.