



Best Practices and Tips for Sending Print-Ready Files

IMAGE RESOLUTION (300 DPI-1200 DPI)

When you're printing an image you may encounter the terms DPI (dots per inch), PPI (pixels per inch), or "resolution". For a high-quality printable image, the image resolution should be a minimum of 300 DPI. The higher the resolution (the higher the number), the better the print quality.

To figure out how many dots/pixels per inch you will need to produce a quality image, simply multiply the width and height by the desired pixels per inch. For example, if you want to print an image 4 inches wide x 6 inches tall at 300 PPI, then you multiply 4 x 300 (1200) for the width, and 6 x 300 (1800) pixels for the height. The size in this example needs to be at least 1200 x 1800 pixels in size.

FILE FORMATS

PDF (Preferred for most files)

PDF captures formatting information from a variety of desktop publishing applications, making it possible to send formatted documents and have them appear on the recipient's monitor or printer as they were intended. This is generally the best format for most documents/layouts and sometimes graphics.

EPS (Preferred for large signs, banners, and logos)

EPS is a vector format. It is considered the best choice for graphics and high resolution printing of illustrations. Vector graphics are a scalable, resolution-independent format composed of individual objects or shapes. Vector images can be resized easily without loss of quality making them an ideal format for initial logo designs and illustrations to be used in multiple sizes.

JPG (Preferred for photos)

JPG is a file format best used for photo images, but the images should be as large as possible, with the highest possible resolution in order for quality printing. JPG images are also used for web images. For web images, the resolution can often be lower and still look okay (150 DPI is okay).

TIFF (Preferred for high resolution images)

TIFF is an industry standard designed for handling raster or bit mapped images. TIFF files can be saved in a variety of color formats and in various forms of compression. TIFFs use lossless compression to maintain image integrity and clarity and are often used for professional photography.

PNG

PNG files can be used for images and graphics, for both web and print, but they can be saved with a transparent background which allows you to place your image on top of another image without an outlining white box. They must be high-resolution for printing, just like JPGs.

When sending press ready design files to a printer you should send your images in the highest quality (not fastest) image format possible. Logos work best in a vector format. Really, anything that isn't a photograph will work better as a vector.

BLEED

A bleed is needed when printing extends to the edge of the paper, so when the piece is trimmed or cut to the final size, the artwork goes all the way to the edge. A “full bleed” describes a print project that has artwork that touches every edge. When in doubt, include bleed in your document. Create a bleed that is 0/0625” – 0.125” on all sides. If you’re making multi-page InDesign documents add the bleed in document settings.

MARGINS AND SAFE ZONES

A margin is the space between the print and the edge of the page, sometimes called the Safe Zone. The margin should be a minimum of 0.125”. You just want to make sure your critical artwork or text has a bit of room so it isn’t in danger of being chopped off in the cutting process. Margins become a little more complicated when you print a bound piece like a catalog or booklet. The size of the margin changes on each page because of the wrap of the sheets of paper around the spine. Check with our team to make sure you get the correct specs for this before laying it out.

DESIGNING FOR FOLDS

If you are printing brochures, catalogs, folded cards, or boxes you’ll need to plan for folds. We have brochure and booklet templates available in our resources section to help guide you.

PUBLICATIONS (BOOKLETS)

All books need to be created in sets of four. In other words, your book could have four pages, eight pages, or twelve pages, but not ten pages because ten is not divisible by four. You can include blank pages or “filler” pages so you have the right number of pages for your piece. Please use our 8.5 X 11 book template for a guide on the layout/margins/bleed.

EXPORTING YOUR WORK FOR THE PRINTER

Packaging InDesign Files

If you’d prefer to supply the actual InDesign document to your printer – make sure you package the InDesign file. Zip the entire file and provide that to your printer. Your printer will need all of your images and fonts, so you’ll need to include the entire package not just the Indd file. When packaging, check the boxes shown below.

Exporting a PDF

Make sure your images are the right DPI (300 or higher) for printing. Use vector for text, drawings and logos when possible. Don’t export a PDF with security settings and password protection unless your printer is prepared for and can work with that security. When in doubt, always choose the highest quality file possible.

**Have questions or need help generating your print ready files?
Need a quote for your project?**

Call us or email us and we will be happy to help!

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