



*All you need to know about
artwork and print preparation*





We want your files to print perfectly

We want the same thing that you want. We want your graphic files to print with no fuss and look like you meant them to. We'll be honest with you – of the small number of jobs that don't print as expected, the overwhelming majority are supplied to us. Even if you're a seasoned professional and are used to supplying files for print, read this guide anyway – our process may be different to what you are used to.

It's a bit complicated setting up a file for print, and if you've not done it before there's a lot you need to know. If you read this guide before you start designing, your file should print like a breeze. Please call us before you start work on anything big or complicated – it'll save tears later.

Our designers usually join us after three or four years of study with a Degree or HND in Graphic Design. From there, it usually takes around 3 months with us to acquire the print process knowledge and understanding to correctly create graphic files for print.

Happy designing!



We check files for loads of designers every day. Whatever you decide, please read this guide in full – it's the best way to ensure that you don't suffer any unnecessary delays and heartache.



Our service provides a comprehensive series of final checks to ensure that your file complies with all of our production requirements. However, our service isn't a critique of your design skills. We won't be checking your spelling or grammar and we won't be questioning whether your design will work on an aesthetic level.

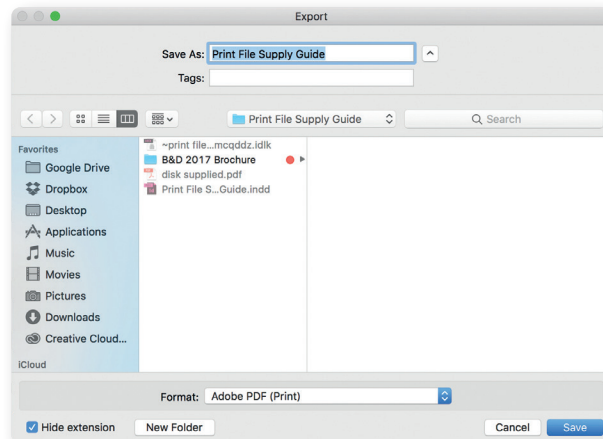
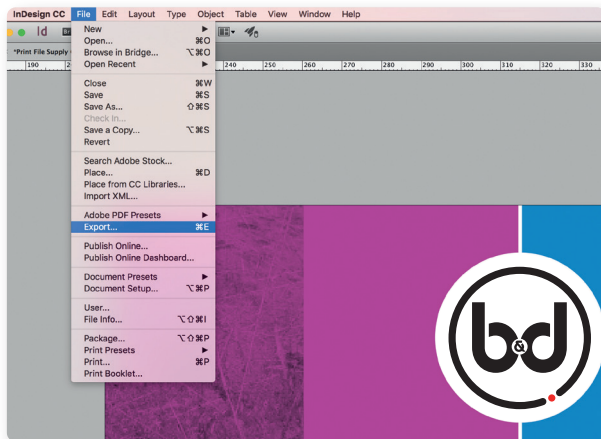
What do we do with your files?

We check your file for technical errors	
If we find errors we will	If the file is fine
notify you of incorrect items	provide you with a proof via hardcopy (at your request)*, email or a Dropbox link
at your instruction, correct errors for you (we'll let you know the charges), or return your file	you can resupply your files if you find any faults and we will reproof
once errors are corrected, verify your file will print correctly	
provide you with a proof via hardcopy (at your request)*, email or a Dropbox link	
We require written confirmation from you that your file is ready to print.	

*Please note, hardcopy proofs are not colour accurate. If a colour accurate proof is required, please contact your sales consultant to arrange this. Please be aware this may incur an extra charge.

We prefer PDFs

PDF is our preferred file format, saved to PDF/X-4:2008 (if this option is not available choose PDF X-1a:2001), with crop marks and bleed included. This setting ensures your file is compatible with and has everything required to process through our workflow. To download our PDF settings, see our website www.bdprints.co.uk and check out the **Support** section.



We also accept the following file formats, just be aware you may incur an extra charge for processing.

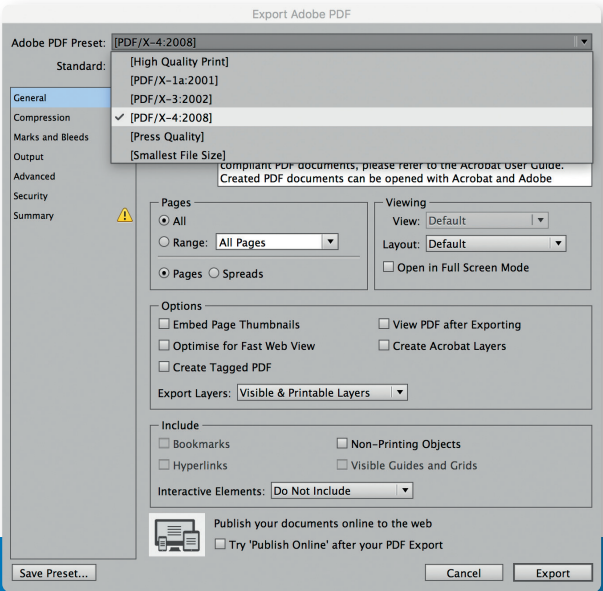
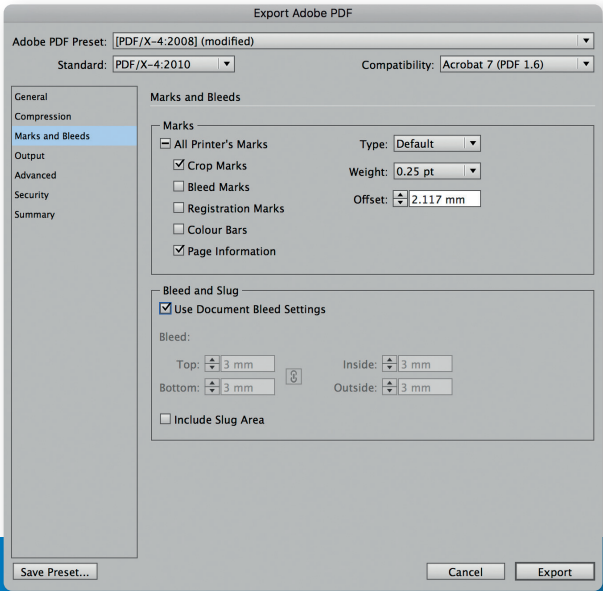
- Adobe InDesign
- Quark Xpress
- Adobe Illustrator
- Microsoft Publisher
- Microsoft Word

Please ensure you have included all the necessary images and fonts contained in your job to avoid a delay in your order.

The following screenshots illustrate settings for exporting a PDF/X-4:2008 Compliant PDF from InDesign. Selecting PDF/X-4:2008 in the pdf export preset window will create

a PDF to a proven criteria that has been tested on all major RIPs and workflows.

If using other software and it is not possible to export using the PDF/X-4:2008 option, please use PDF/X-1a:2001 instead.





A bit about

Your computer, scanner, digital camera and monitor create images using combinations of just three colours: Red, Green and Blue (RGB).

Printing presses use four different colours to print these images – Cyan, Magenta, Yellow and black (or CMYK – also known as Process Colour). At some stage of production, RGB images must be converted to CMYK.

Conversions from RGB to CMYK are best done in packages like Photoshop and you should do this before sending your file to us. If you don't perform the conversion yourself, when we print your

Your artwork is, unless otherwise specified, split onto four plates for printing – Cyan, Magenta, Yellow and black, or CMYK. These pictures help to illustrate how your artwork is broken down into its separations. If you use a Pantone® Spot colour, you will have an extra separation with that colour on it.



t colour...

file, our process will apply a standard profile RGB to CMYK conversion meaning that colours may look washed out.

Traditional printers often use Pantone® Spot colours when printing work. Spot colours are mixed like paint and printed one at a time. All Pantone® Spot colours must be converted to their CMYK equivalent before your file is sent to us, unless you have specified printing with Pantone® inks. Specifying conversion to process colours

at the print stage will not meet with our requirements. If you don't convert spot colours to process, then an extra separation printing plate may be produced when we process your job. This means objects may not appear on your printed job and may result in you incurring unnecessary costs. You can check your document by printing 'separations' on your desktop printer - see the help file that came with your application for more details. If anything other than a cyan, magenta,

yellow and black separation prints, then you've got unwanted colours that you need to convert. This is also a good way of checking knockout/overprinting settings.

Some RGB and Spot colours do not have a direct CMYK equivalent- the technical term for this is "out of gamut". If you have chosen a colour that is out of gamut, your software will choose the closest equivalent CMYK colour, which may be very different from the colour you intended.

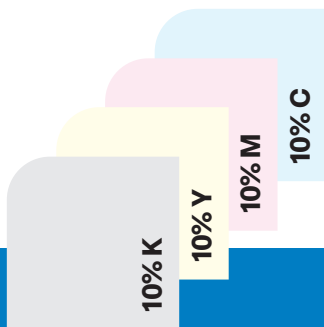


Getting the best

You'll get best reproduction from colours that are made up from one or two inks (i.e. magenta and cyan etc). When using lighter shades, avoid tints that contain less than 10% of either Cyan, Magenta, Yellow or Black, as they usually print much lighter than they appear on screen and you may be disappointed with the outcome. For best results, use tints containing 10% to 30% where possible.

**Black is black!
Isn't it? It may
surprise you to
learn that there's
more to black than
meets the eye.**

To get the best from our process, black can be produced in two ways. The first method is single colour black, made from 100% black ink. This is ideal for small areas less than 25mm² such as text or logos, since too much ink coverage on small areas may result in sheets sticking together. On areas of over 25mm² in size, single colour black can appear washed out and uneven. This is because the rollers on printing presses roll the ink off over a large area.



out of CMYK...

The alternative is rich black, which consists of 100% black and 40% cyan. A rich black should be used on larger areas to ensure an even, dark coverage, as the second ink colour disguises any inconsistencies. However, rich black should never be used on small text as any tiny deviance in registration will lead to a blurred effect. You may think that it would be okay to have 'three or four colour' black text. You'd be wrong! "Four colour black" text is virtually impossible to print, will look blurred and may cause sheets to stick together.

Be aware that the higher the percentage ink coverage, the longer the drying time required. This is particularly true of uncoated stocks such as letterheads. Black will inevitably appear duller on uncoated stock because of the absorbency of the paper. This absorbency also means that any fine detail reversed out of black may disappear. We do not recommend less than 8pt text, for example, on uncoated stock.

Also be aware that black within a photograph as a background may have a different CMYK make-up to other parts of your design. This will be noticeable when printed, even if not on screen. Placing a photograph with a black background over a black area in InDesign, for example, may reveal a difference between the two shades of black when printed. To overcome this, take a sample of the black that the background is required to match in an application such as Photoshop (use the colour picker tool). Then simply mix the matched colour in, say, InDesign.

BLURRY TEXT



Using photographs...

If you are scanning photographs yourself, save them as either EPS or TIFF files as this will preserve the colour and clarity of your images. If you are scanning a previously printed item, such as a magazine photo, you will need to 'de-screen' the image, blurring it slightly to avoid a moiré effect (see your scanning software manual for more details).

GIF or JPEG formats compress the image and actually discard information, causing colour shifts and blurriness. Don't use either of these file formats - they may actually print in black and white and you won't like the results.

To change the mode of a picture from RGB to CMYK using Photoshop. This is an important step to ensure your picture prints as expected.

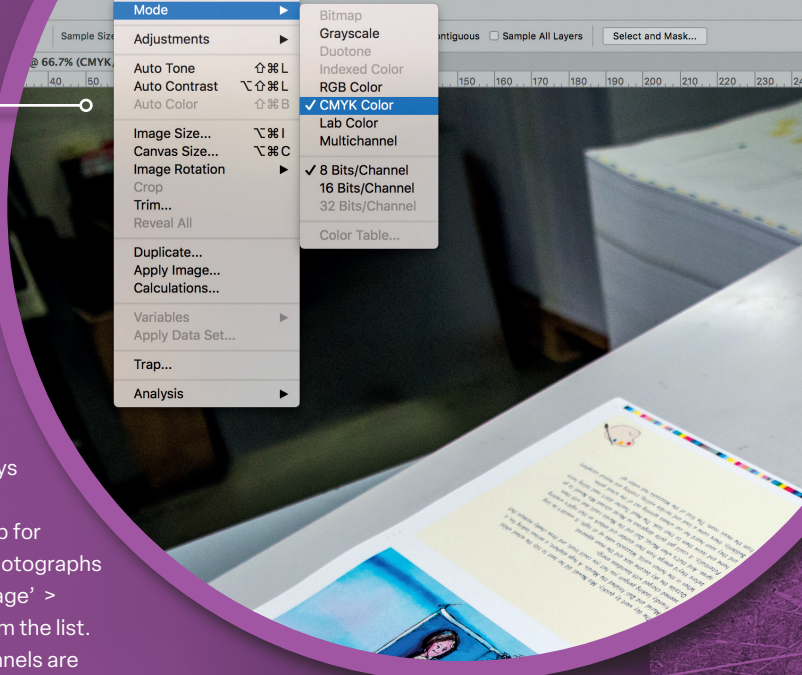
When you are scanning, consider the final size your image will be used at. Always scan photographs at 300dpi at the size you are going to use them. There's no point scanning a postage stamp at 300dpi and then blowing it up to a A4 size – use your scanning software to help you calculate the output resolution. Conversely, scanning photographs at more than 300dpi will have little or no effect on the actual printed quality and will unnecessarily increase file size and processing time.

Scan black and white line art (i.e. a logo), at 1200dpi for best results. Any lower, and it may look blurry.

Don't enlarge or reduce your scanned images in your drawing/vector software (such as Illustrator) – it's always best to use an image-editing application such as Photoshop for this task. When converting photographs from RGB to CMYK, go to 'image' > 'mode' and choose CMYK from the list. Make sure that any alpha channels are removed and all layers are flattened before finally saving your image. You shouldn't compress your image either, or it will cause problems. So LZW, JPEG and ASCII encoding are all no-nos. And don't use DCS

files, LAB colour, Duo-tones or Tri-tones either - convert them all to CMYK. Images to be used on the black & white reverse of a job should be saved as greyscale.

“ Always scan photographs at 300dpi at the size you are going to use them. ”





Using text...

When working with small text, it's best not to use colours which contain more than one ink. All printing presses have a tiny variation in the positioning of the different colour printing plates. It's fine to use coloured text in headlines or type above, say, 12 point, but below that the blurring will be noticeable and won't look too hot. The same thing happens when you knock white text out of a coloured background made from more than one ink.

Be careful if you are putting text over a photographic background. You may make the text very hard to read. To overcome this, take the photograph into an image-editing package and 'bleach' or lighten the image. You will have to lighten the image quite a bit more than you may think is necessary – always think to yourself "is it more important to see the image, or read the text?" If the text is more important, it may be best not to put it over the photograph at all.

It is best not to use Quark 'P', 'B' and 'I'

styles, as they aren't reliable. It is much better to use an italic version of the font (or bold or plain etc). Please don't use Mac System Fonts either (such as "Times") as they do not contain printer information and will not print. (Use "Times New Roman" instead). Include all fonts that you have used. Postscript fonts come in two parts – the screen font and the printer font. We need both, so please make sure you send both. True Type fonts only come in one part. If you are sending the font to us via

email, please ensure you zip it, as if not zipped they can sometimes corrupt. To comply with the licence agreement, you should remove the fonts from your system whilst we are processing your jobs. If you are going "cross-platform", ie. from PC to Mac, remember that fonts don't travel well. Check that we've got the same font and provide hard copies. We'll need you to check a proof carefully since even fonts from the same place can have slight differences resulting in reflow and words disappearing.



Bit

Bitmap Text

Bit

Vector Text

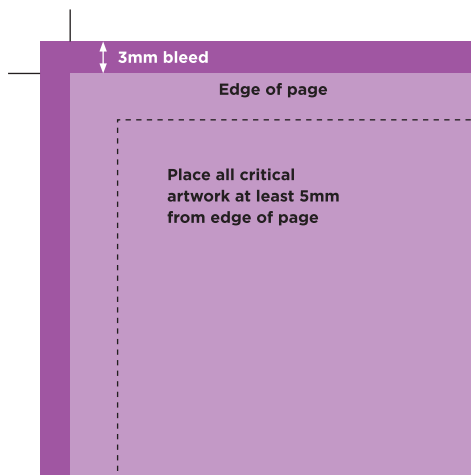
It's fine to convert headlines and large text to curves, paths or outlines (which means that you don't need to supply the fonts).

We really advise against setting text in a bitmap application like Photoshop – the text will not be nearly as clear as if it were vector text from Illustrator or InDesign.

Bleed and papersize...

Remember all jobs with a solid colour or image that should go to the edge of the page need 3mm of extra image past the actual edges of the document, on all sides.

For example, if you are creating artwork for an A4 page (210mm by 297mm) you should create your document at 216mm by 303mm. This is known as 'bleed' and is needed because printers use larger paper sizes to allow for the printing press to grip onto the paper, also to have space for colour bars and registration marks. When the job is printed, then your larger artwork (3mm on all sides) will be trimmed off at finishing stage to the correct size. The 3mm bleed will ensure there are no white areas left at the sides of your design.



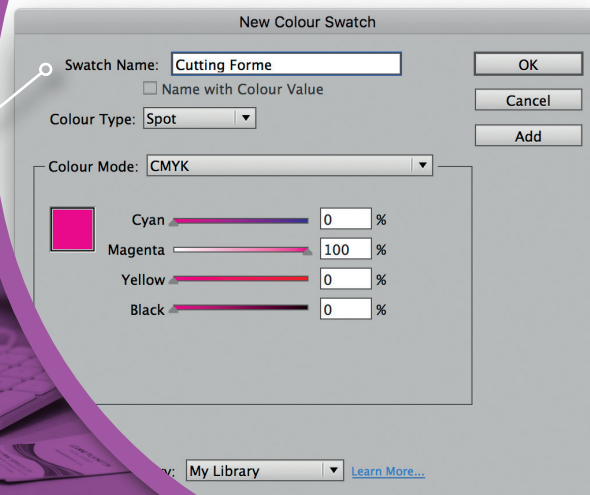
Make sure that any text or important graphic is not in the bleed area! Better still, you should leave a minimum of 5mm space between the edge of the final trimmed size and any important content as shown, to prevent any of this content getting trimmed into.

Most professional design packages allow for the inclusion of bleed at document setup stage - for example InDesign. In addition, most programs will allow for the document size to be altered at any stage.

One of the great things about using us as your printer is that we can print your artwork the size you want it. We don't just have a choice of papersizes and that's it, you can have folders - you can even have your artwork cut into unusual shapes for that extra edge! We can have new cutting formes made up for you, or we have a list of standard cutting formes (for folders) - see our website to download these.

General advice if you are setting up your own cutting forme:

- Use a vector program such as Illustrator or InDesign.
- Make your stroke a spot colour - a good way to ensure it's correct is to make a new swatch, make it 100% magenta and set it to spot colour.
- Use solid lines to indicate a cut, and a dashed line to indicate a fold.



Useful tips...

Our preferred file format is PDF, use the PDF setting PDF/X-4:2008. You can download our PDF settings from our website if you are unsure.

Be careful with overprint settings. If you set objects to overprint, they will not 'knock-out' of the background, and will look very different to what you see on screen or proof. Black text is generally set as default to overprint. This is usually OK. Please refer to your application manual for more details.

Don't forget your bleed and crop marks- anything that bleeds off the page needs at least 3mm bleed on every edge. Anything you don't want to bleed

**We
would always
recommend you have
a proof - when the file goes
through our RIP, if there's
something amiss in the set up it
may look different to the way you
expected. Much cheaper to
catch this before print than
after a 500,000 run!**

off needs to be 5mm away from the (finished size) edges e.g. an A4 document is 210mm x 297mm, therefore any non bleeding content should be inside a 200mm x 287mm area in the centre.

Always convert images to CMYK, and build your design in CMYK colourspace. Images should be 300dpi at finished size, otherwise they may suffer from pixelation when printed.

Always make sure your document is set

up as 300dpi (not 72!) before you begin designing - this cannot be fixed afterward.

Supply brochures as single pages in order, not as spreads. Remember, saddlestitched brochures need to have a number of pages that can be divided by four e.g. 4, 8, 12 etc.

'Collect for output' or 'package' last thing before sending to the printers. If you package then change an image and don't repackage, that image won't

**Remember
- we are more than
happy to talk you through
anything or answer your
questions, just get in touch -
01772 435050 or use our contact
form on the website
www.bdprints.co.uk**

go with your artwork to the printer.

We have several ways for you to supply us with your artwork - you can send us a disk, Email us, [send a USB stick](#), [use our FTP site](#) (or yours and provide a link). We can proof back to you via hardcopy, email or Dropbox link.

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