prontaprint

...trusted to deliver, every time.

Technical Guide

YOUR GUIDE TO PRODUCING PROBLEM FREE FILES FOR PRINT

contents / checklist

This guide will cover the key elements you must be aware of when creating a file for print.
Please use this as a checklist when designing your job and submitting it for print. Please be aware this is intended as a guide only to assist designers and prepress operators who already have a sound technical knowledge.

contents

how to send files to print

Upload to
https://prontaprint.wetransfer.com/

Upload on our website
https://printers.prontaprint.com

Email
Coventry – Sales@ppcov.com
Leamington Spa – sales@pplspa.com
Stratford-upon-Avon – sales@prontaprintsua.com

the basics: sizes

Standard page sizes for your design jobs:

A3
297mm x 420mm

A4
210mm x 297mm

A5
148mm x 210mm

1/3 A4
99mm x 210mm

A6
105mm x 148mm

Business Cards
85mm x 55mm
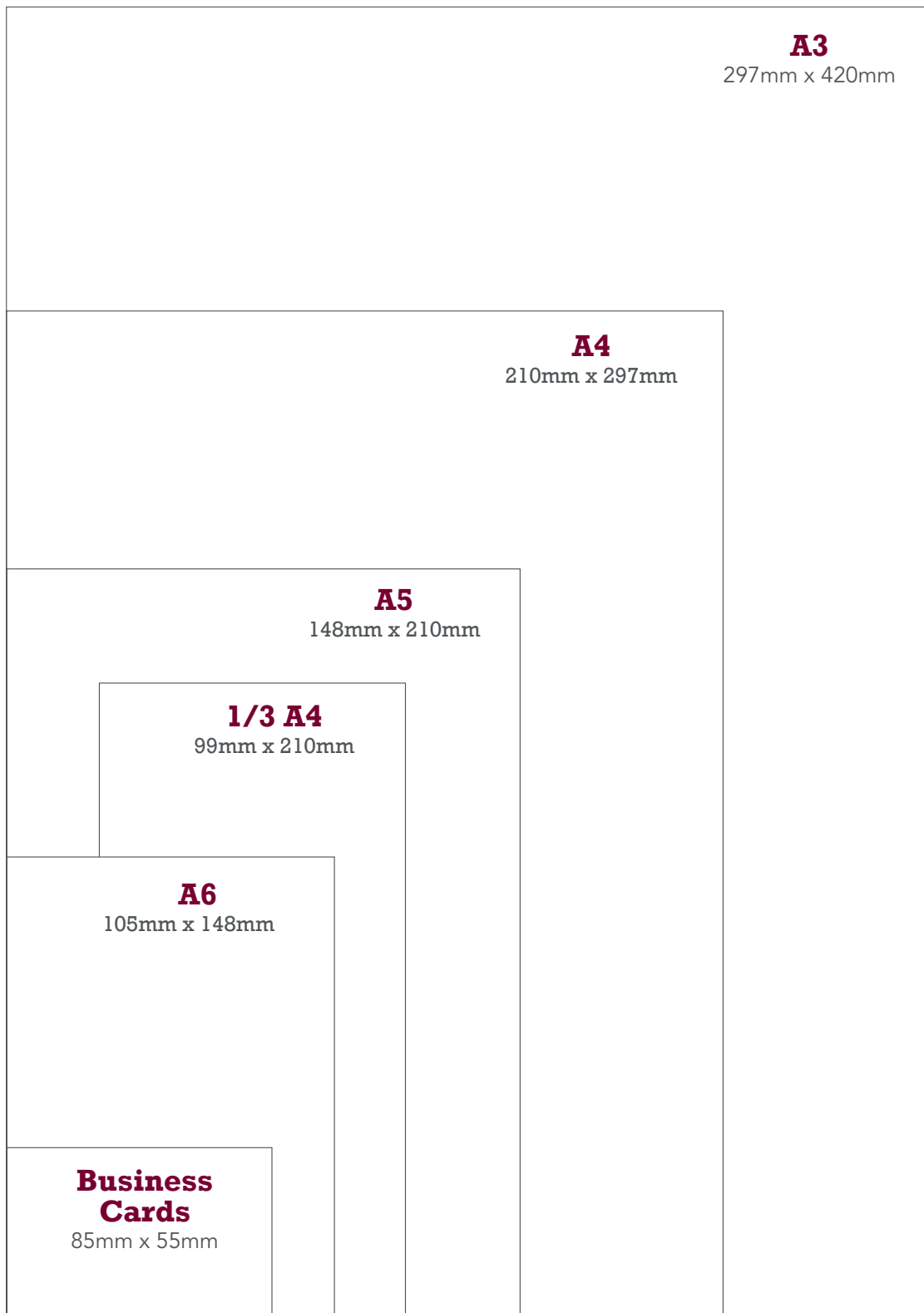
Other Sizes: **A2** 594mm x 420mm
A1 840mm x 594mm

folded leaflets

TRIFOLDS

A little more set up time is required when designing a Tri-fold leaflet.
Below is a template showing the basic setup of the panels in your document

A4
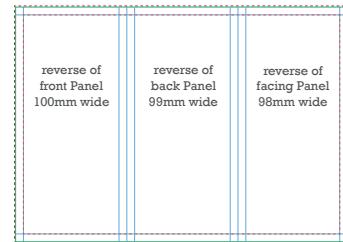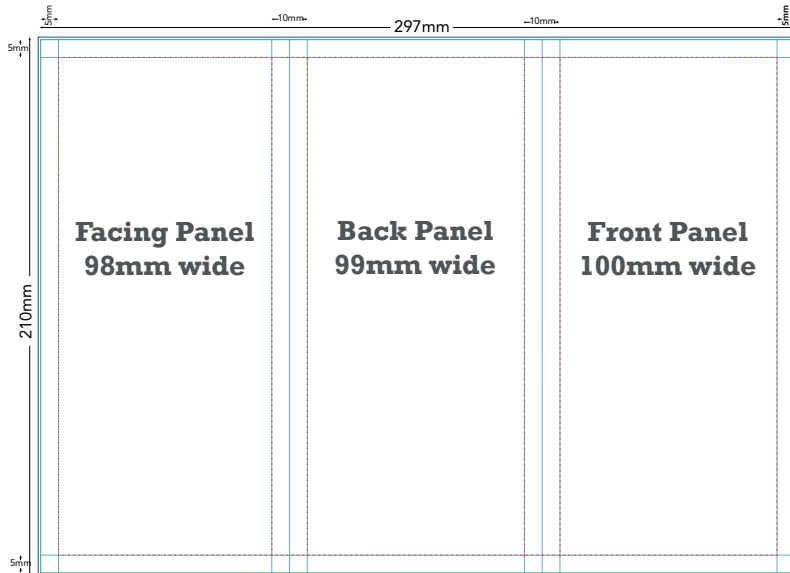
5mm · 10mm · 297mm · 10mm · 5mm

5mm

| Facing Panel 98mm wide | Back Panel 99mm wide | Front Panel 100mm wide |

210mm

5mm

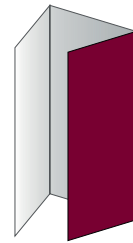| reverse of front Panel 100mm wide | reverse of back Panel 99mm wide | reverse of facing Panel 98mm wide |

- - - - - **no text beyond this line**
───── **gutters and borders**
───── **1mm bleed**
───── **finished page edges**

A3

5mm · 10mm · 420mm · 10mm · 5mm

5mm

| Facing Panel 139mm wide | Back Panel 140mm wide | Front Panel 141mm wide |

297mm

5mm

| reverse of front Panel 141mm wide | reverse of back Panel 140mm wide | reverse of facing Panel 139mm wide |
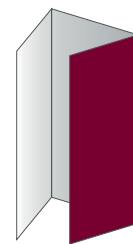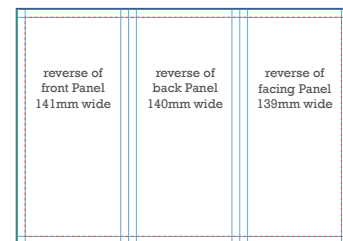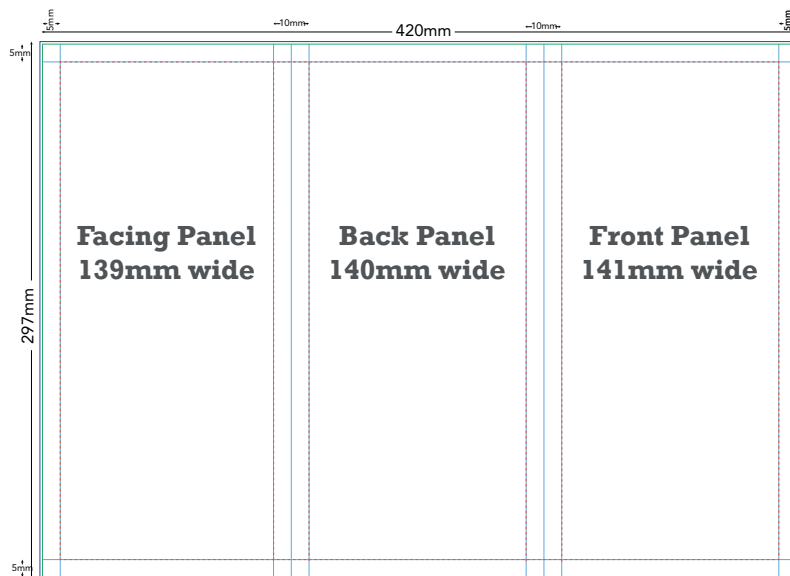
- - - - - **no text beyond this line**
───── **gutters and borders**
───── **1mm bleed**
───── **finished page edges**

TOP TIP

Try making up your own folded sample to check it works before sending to us for print.

bleed & crop marks

Crop & Trim Marks	
Trim Box	Trim Box
Bleed edge	Bleed edge
NO BLEED REQUIRED	BLEED REQUIRED

BLEED

Ensure all jobs have 3mm bleed if required. To determine
if bleed is required please see diagrams on this page.

Bleed is required when images, colour or text go right to the edge of your page. To create a bleed simply extend your image(s), colour(s) or text 3mm over the edge of the page

PLEASE NOTE: If making a PDF for print, please make your PDF page size large enough to incorporate the bleed i.e. if your flyer is A5 with bleed, make your PDF page size A4, etc.

Crop & Trim Marks	
Trim Box	Trim Box
Bleed edge	Bleed edge
NO BLEED REQUIRED	BLEED REQUIRED

PLEASE NOTE:

If you supply a Print job without bleed we will automatically enlarge it to cater for this. If you have text close to the edge it may be fractionally cut off once the file has been enlarged.

CROP MARKS & TRIM BOX

Please always make your PDF with crop marks. These should be software-generated and added at the PDF-making stage (by ticking the 'Crop Marks' option).

Crop & Trim Marks	
NO BLEED	BLEED
Trim Box	Trim Box
Bleed edge	Bleed edge
NO BLEED REQUIRED	BLEED REQUIRED

colours

SPOT COLOURS

Ensure all colours in spot colour jobs are assigned Pantone colours (or are 'Black'). CMYK and RGB colour used in spot colour jobs will result in your job being rejected.

PLEASE NOTE: Do not use fountain fills in spot colour jobs as this will cause your job to be rejected.

SPOT TO PROCESS COLOUR CONVERSION

When Pantone colours are converted to CMYK for full colour printing a change in colour is inevitable, it is impossible to exactly replicate spot colours using CMYK inks. Similarly, with RGB images, when they are converted to CMYK, there is a colour shift. Allow for this colour shift when designing your job.
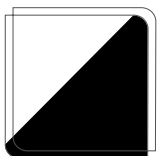
RGB COLOURS

Do not use RGB colour in full colour jobs as the resulting colour may not be as expected once converted to CMYK for print.
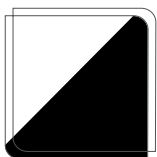
RGB BLACK

Please note if you use RGB black (R 0 G 0 B 0) as a vector fill colour this will be automatically converted to CMYK black (100%k) by our workflow. Please also avoid having vector RGB black joining bitmap RGB black in your design as the join will be extremely noticeable once the conversion has taken place.

BLACK

Ensure all black text and fills have the colour value C0 M0 Y0 K100. Try to keep text below 12pt in black whenever possible, as small coloured text may not look as sharp once printed. Large solid areas of black can be 'beefed up' with the addition of 60% Cyan (C60 M0 Y0 K100) resulting in a deeper looking black known as 'rich black'.

colours

VECTOR/BITMAP COLOURS

Areas of colour which have vector fills will appear different to areas of colour which have bitmap fills once printed even when the colour values are identical.
This means that a 'join' will be visible where vector colour meets bitmap colour. This will be more pronounced if RGB colour has been used after the conversion to CMYK has taken place.

The solution is to extend your bitmap colour out in a bitmap package (such as Photoshop) avoiding the joining of vector and bitmap colour completely.

OVERPRINT COLOURS

If you accidentally set a fill or line to overprint, the final printed job will NOT look as it does in your design file, since all inks are transparent.

(Top Tip: Once you have created your PDF for printing (see page 10) view it In Acrobat Professional and go to the drop down menu Advanced/Print Production and activate Overprint Preview. In this view you will be able to see if you have inadvertently left any Overprints on your job. Try it with this Technical Guide PDF. Overprints are also identifiable by printing separations.)

FOUNTAIN FILLS & TRANSPARENCIES

Do not use fountain fills in spot colour jobs as this will cause your job to be rejected. Fountain fills in full colour jobs are fine.

If you have a spot colour job containing a fountain fill please supply us the native design file as File Assist and we will convert the fountain fills to a printable format.

Do not use transparencies in Microsoft Word or Publisher as this will result in your job being rejected. Please flatten any transparencies in Adobe Illustrator or Indesign prior to submitting your file.

If transparencies are present, please ensure that you do not use multi-layer transparencies (two or more transparencies sitting on top of one another) as this may cause problems when your file is processed through our PDF workflow, and may not give the desired end result.

Do not use transparencies in any document which contains spot colours. The flattening of transparencies and the conversion of spot colours to CMYK occur during the same process, and this simultaneous double-conversion can often be too complex for our software to give an accurate end result.

INK COVERAGE

Try not to exceed 300% ink coverage in any of your chosen colours in your design file (work out the total percentage by adding the C, M, Y and K values together).

High ink coverage takes longer to dry and may result in set-off (colour from one side of your job getting transferred onto the other side of your job leaving a mark) and a delay to your job.

Please note that our corrective software will reduce any ink coverage between 340-400% down to 340% by altering the CMYK values. It does this in such a way as to still give an accurate end result and produce a colour very similar to the original intended colour (in fact you may not notice any difference).

You can avoid this happening, though, by keeping all of your colours to a maximum of 300-340%.

IMAGES

Try to ensure all images in your design file are high-res, the standard for which is 300dpi (dots per inch). The lower the dpi the worse your image(s) will look when printed, so please bear this in mind when scanning, manipulating or sourcing images for your job.

PLEASE NOTE: Images and logos saved from websites are most likely to be between 72-96dpi and are therefore unsuitable for print.

We highly recommend images to be CMYK, any RGB images will be converted to CMYK in our workflow which may result in a small colour shift (see p6 for details). Sourcing Images - always try and use professional images, low quality images will only downgrade your designs. Images can be purchased from our image library.

> ⚠ NOTE:
>
> Anything above 450dpi will be downsampled to 300dpi in our workflow.

FONTS

Your minimum font size should be 5pt. Please use 100% black if text is between 5 to 7pt

Just Print & File Check jobs

PDF –   ensure you embed all fonts when making your PDF.

EPS –   ensure you convert all fonts to outlines when making your EPS.

File Assist jobs

Please ensure all fonts used in your design file are included with your job, or converted to curves/paths/outlines prior to submission.

ADDING TEXT ON TOP OF A PDF

figure 1 screen file

TECH-TEAM
01243 674533

figure 2 printed file

TECH-TEAM

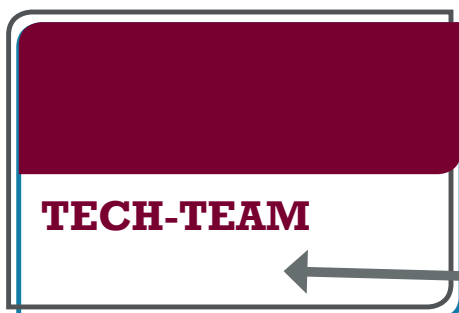← **File has been printed and text is missing**

Please do not add text on top of a PDF using the Adobe Acrobat Typewriter tool, as this will mean it isn't embedded in the PDF and will not be included in the job when sent to print.

 It will have, in effect, been added on top as a 'note'.

This text tool must never be used on PDF's supplied for litho-printing as it doesn't flag up the same way an actual unembedded font would therefore may not be detected.

See graphics to the left, figure 1 the text has been added in Adobe Acrobat, using the typewriter tool. In figure 2 the flyer has been processed through our system and resulted in the text not being printed.

artwork elements

QUIET BORDER

A "Quiet Border", (i.e. an area where no text or logos should be present), of at least 5mm from the trimmed edge of your artwork should be observed. This will avoid any part of your design appearing too close to the edge of the page and will give your job a more professional appearance.

For A5 - A4 booklets we recommend 10mm quiet border for a much better finish.

HAIRLINES
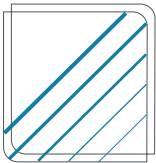
Hairlines are 'device dependent'.

Because hairlines are device dependent they could print differently on different printers. Often they may look fine on your 300dpi laser printer but will disappear on our 2400dpi press. Therefore avoid hairline text and lines - use 0.25pt.

SPELLING/TEXT CONTENT

When you supply your files for print we will not check spelling, or check that addresses and phone numbers are correct. It is the customer's responsibility to ensure that all text content within the file(s) is correct.

QR CODES & BARCODES

Whilst we are happy to print QR codes and barcodes we take no responsibility for them, it is the customer's responsibility to ensure that they will work once printed.

SCAN ME

PLEASE NOTE:

Please also note that if you supply a Print job without a bleed, we may enlarge your job to create a bleed which, will in turn enlarge any QR codes present on the artwork.

PERMISSIONS

Please ensure you have permission when using copyrighted material in your design e.g. bank notes, cartoon characters, maps, and other companys' logos or trademarks.

preparing your files

ACCEPTED FILE FORMATS

pdf PRINT:

FILE CHECK:

pdf **jpg** **eps** **tiff**   We will offer the safety net of a double check on your Print Ready files before proceeding to print.

FILE ASSIST:
We will turn your finished design into a Print Ready PDF.

DESIGN:
We will design your product for you.

PDF CREATION

When creating your PDF to submit for print please use a recognised PDF-maker such as Acrobat Distiller to make your PDF. Using a design package's own PDF maker may result in your job being rejected.

Always save as a High Quality or Print Quality PDF.

If using Acrobat Distiller then choose PDF/X-1a:2001 from the drop-down list.

When creating your PDF please embed all fonts.

If your job has a bleed please ensure, you choose a large enough PDF page size to accommodate the bleed i.e. if you design an A6 flyer with a bleed, make your PDF page size A5.

Create your PDF with crop marks if possible.

Supply all files as 1up as we will deal with the imposition at this end.

Please always view your PDF with Output Preview open before submitting it for print as this gives the most accurate representation of how the file will look once printed, and may flag up errors that aren't visible without Output Preview open.

SUPPLYING FOLDED WORK

Please supply folded work as a double-sided 2-page file (or 2 single files with the file which is to be the outside of the leaflet clearly named), not a 3-page or 4-page file.

BACK   FRONT   PAGE 2   PAGE 3
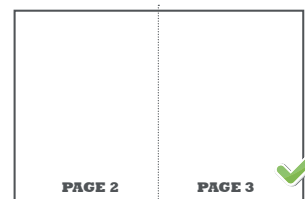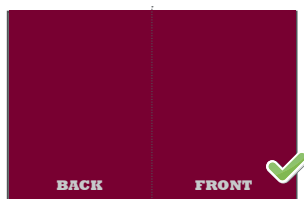
PREPARE YOUR OWN MOCK UP

If your job is to be folded, we recommend printing it out and make a folded mock up to check that it backs up properly, and that each section is orientated properly.

preparing your files

SUPPLYING MULTIPLE TYPES OF BUSINESS CARDS

When you supply multiple types of business cards we need the number of files to match the order placed. So, for instance, if you order 4 double sided cards we would require 8 pieces of artwork. If you have a common piece of artwork for the back of the cards this should be duplicated.

We also need the artwork supplied in a way that allows the fronts and backs to automatically back up correctly. So they either have to be supplied within 1 pdf as front, back, front, back, front, back etc or as pairs so you have 1 pdf for each card you'd like printed that includes a front and a back.

If we are missing any files, or they are in a way that we cannot determine the order, we will unfortunately have to reject your artwork.
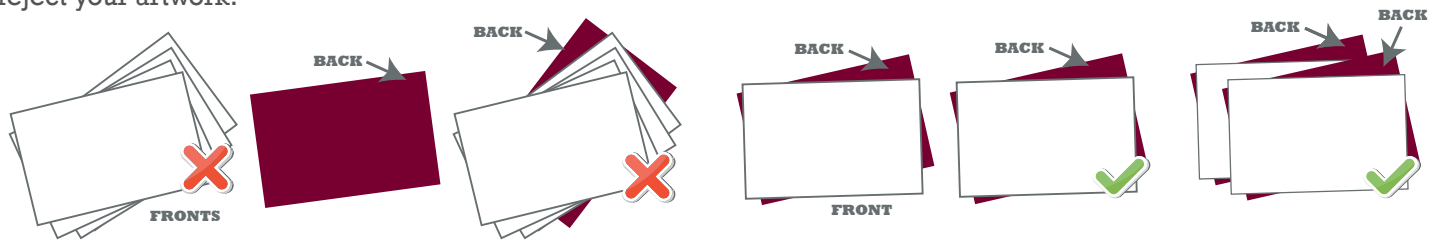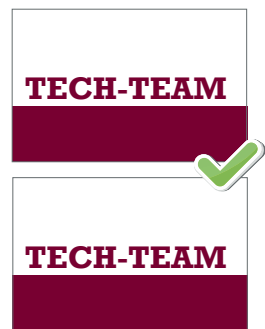

ORIENTATION

Please ensure that the files that you supply are orientated correctly.

If your artwork is landscape please ensure that the files are supplied landscape, and not rotated through 90 degrees and supplied 'on their end' (see Figure 1).

LANDSCAPE FIGURE 1

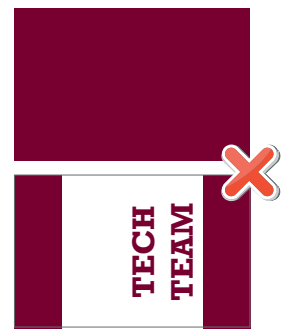Correct Orientation   Incorrect Orientation

⚠ NOTE:
Failure to do this will result in the back of the job printing upside-down

PORTRAIT FIGURE 2

Correct Orientation   Incorrect Orientation

Similarly if your artwork is portrait please ensure that the files are supplied portrait, and not rotated through 90 degrees and supplied 'on their side' (see Figure 2).

LANDSCAPE FOLD

When supplying artwork with a landscape fold (figure 3 & 4), it is important that the front and back page are supplied as one page with the front orientation correct and the 2 inside pages suppled and as one and rotated 180 degrees so the inside text is at the top and reading upside down.

colour
variation

Due to the complexities involved in printing there are a number of other factors to consider as these will affect the finished look of your job

ON-SCREEN COLOUR

RED
GREEN
BLUE
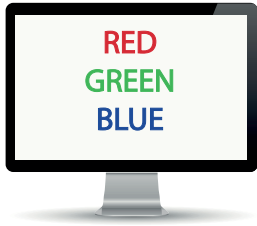
Please note that the colour of your file(s) on-screen is not a 100% accurate representation of how the colours will look on your final printed job, it is merely an indication of the colours.

The colours on your monitor are made up of red, green and blue light, the colours on your printed job are made up of cyan, magenta, yellow and black ink, so it is not possible that they will exactly match.

When designing a job please ensure all colours are chosen from a Process/Solid to Process Pantone book as this is the only way to achieve a predictable result once printed.

If your colours are not referenced from a Pantone Book but instead are a CMYK mix then we cannot predict how they will look when printed, we will simply print your file in spec and as supplied.

COLOUR PROFILES
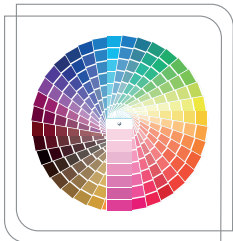
The output press profile we use when sending to print is ISOcoated_v2_eci.icc so all images within your file will be converted to this profile. Any profiles other to this embedded in your file will be overwritten.

If you wish we can send you a copy of this profile to use when designing your artwork, though generally speaking this won't be necessary as this industry-standard conversion profile gives a consistently good result.

> ⚠ NOTE:
>
> Output press profile we use when sending to print is ISOcoated_v2_eci.icc

PAPER STOCKS

The type/colour of paper you chose for your job may affect the final printed colour of the job itself, as all inks are transparent.

So if your job is printed on an off-white paper, this may have a slight effect on the ink colour i.e. it may turn out slightly darker than anticipated.

There will be a visible difference in colour between a job printed on coated paper and one printed on uncoated.

So, if you were to get full colour letterheads on 120gsm bond (uncoated) printed along with full colour business cards on 400gsm silk (coated), any common colours may appear different on the final print.

Gloss and matt lamination will have a noticeable effect on the appearance of your printed colour, so please bear this in mind when you are designing your job (especially full colour business cards which will always be matt laminated after print).

If you have a printout of your job which has been produced on an ink jet or laser printer, please note that the colours may appear different to the colours on your final litho-printed job. Refer to process Pantone Book for accurate preview of colour.

colour variation

INK TOLERANCE

Due to the ink tolerances involved in the four colour printing process, slight variance in finished printed colour is inevitable.

This means that although your job will be printed within tolerance, and to ISO standards, the finished colour may turn out to be slightly different to how you anticipated it, and may not be an exact match to your original colour in your design file.

On jobs with multiple setups (especially booklets) there may be a variance in colour within the job itself, but this variance will be slight (if at all) and always within tolerance.

Subsequent reprints may differ in colour slightly from previous print run(s), but this is perfectly normal and again will always be within tolerance.

Lower Tolerance Chosen Colour Upper Tolerance
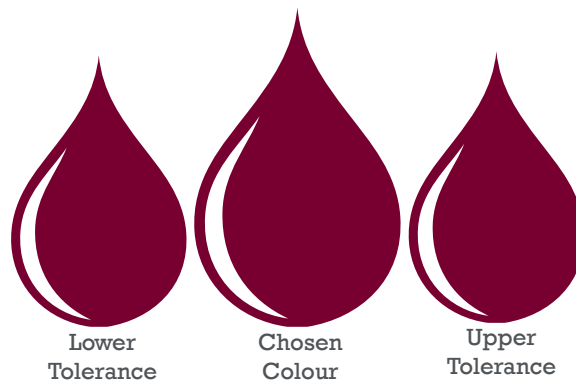
SCREEN COLOURS

When viewing the colours in your job on-screen you are looking at colour which is made up of red, green and blue light, and these colours cannot be exactly replicated with ink on paper. How the colours appear to you on-screen will also vary hugely depending on how/if your monitor is calibrated.

Please always choose your colours from a Pantone book to give a predictable result. Please also note that the colour/content of your PDF as it appears on-screen will vary depending on which simulation profile you are using to view it in Acrobat, so please ensure you are not using a simulation profile for a web-based press. Our recommended simulation profile file is available on request.

COLOUR BANDING

Please try to avoid using large areas of solid colour in your designs that consist of only Cyan, Yellow, Magenta or Black as this can be prone to banding. Please try to use fills which consist of two or more of the aforementioned colours.

LARGE FORMAT AND DIGITAL
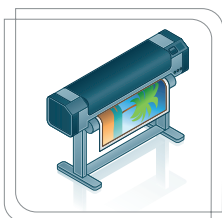
Large format printing utilises a different print technology to lithographic print. This means colours may not be an exact match to your litho jobs.

If your job is to be printed digitally, or is a large format poster or banner, please bear in mind that the final printed colours may not match exactly to the same colours printed using the litho process (standard jobs on a printing press) as large format digital printing uses an entirely different printing process and indeed a different type of ink. So if you are submitting jobs for both litho and large format digital and they contain common colours, please be aware of this slight variance in colour between the two processes.

FORME CUT
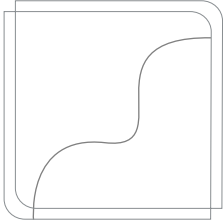
When supplying Forme Cut jobs you must also supply a PDF of the cutting forme you require. This should consist of a black hairline in the exact shape and size of the cuts/creases you require, which will be used to produce a cutting forme for your job. Cuts should be denoted by a solid black hairline, creases should be denoted by a dotted black hairline.

FOLDERS

When supplying artwork for a folder, please send us 2 files, one with the template visible (overlaid on your artwork) so that we can check that the artwork meets our specifications, and one with the template removed leaving only what you wish to be printed (it is this file which will be proofed/printed) as the visual below indicates.

Please supply 3 mm bleed on all folders
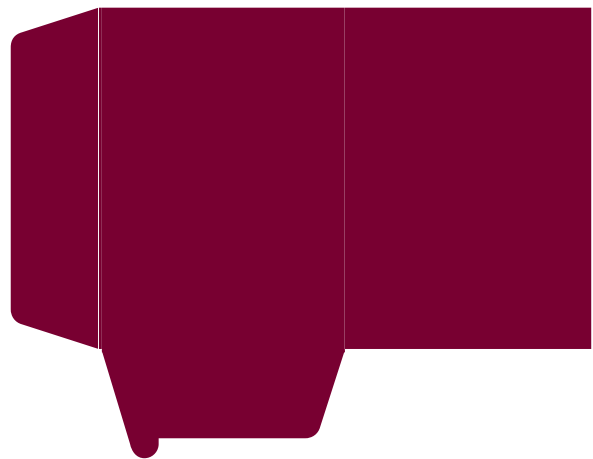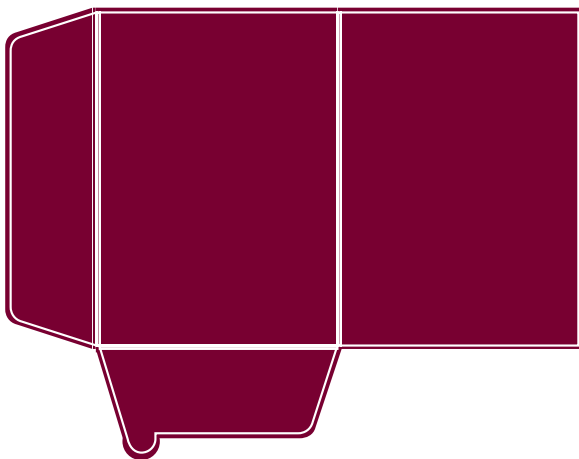
TOP TIP

Specify at point of order whether you wish to have business card slots on your folder, as these are optional.
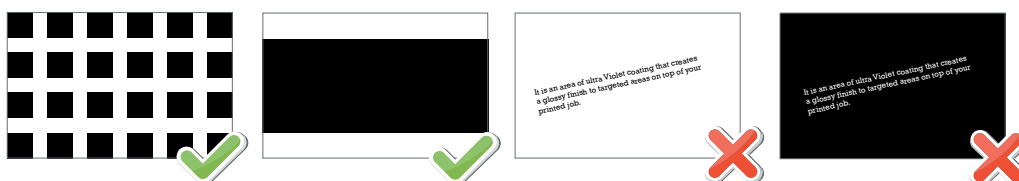
SPOT UV

It is an area of ultra Violet coating that creates a glossy finish to targeted areas on top of your printed job.

SUPPLYING YOUR FILES

When supplying Spot UV jobs you must also supply a PDF of the areas which need spot UV applied. The PDF should consist of black (100% k) solid shapes in the exact position where the spot UV is required, ideally slightly bigger all round to allow for easier register.

Please ensure spot UV artwork is black only and does not contain any cyan, magenta or yellow.

Please add a black outline to any text on the spot UV file(s) which needs spot UV'd, again to help with register (the larger the text, the thicker the outline should be added). It is not recommended that small text is Spot UV'd.

SPOT UV BUSINESS CARDS

When supplying artwork for spot UV matt laminated business cards please supply a 4-page PDF, page 1 being the front of the artwork to be printed, page 2 being the back of the artwork to be printed, page 3 being the spot UV artwork for the front and page 4 being the spot UV artwork for the back.

| Page 1	Page 2	Page 3	Page 4
TECH-TEAM	TECH-TEAM	TECH-TEAM	TECH-TEAM
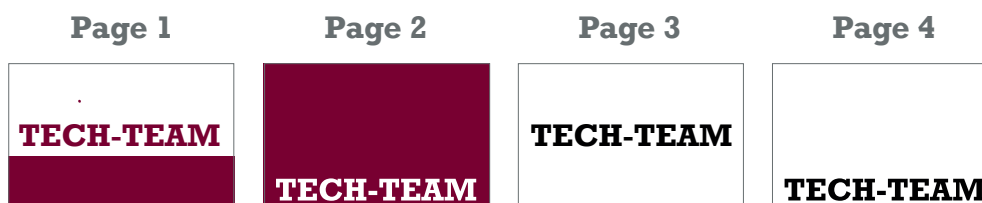
IMPORTANT: If your double-sided business card is to be spot UV'd on one side only you must insert a blank page for the side which isn't to be spot UV'd i.e. if your double-sided business card is to be spot UV'd on the back only, then page 3 of your 4-page PDF must be a blank page (page 1 artwork front, page 2 artwork back, page 3 BLANK, page 4 spot UV back).

Page 1	Page 2	Page 3	Page 4
TECH-TEAM	TECH-TEAM	Insert Blank	TECH-TEAM
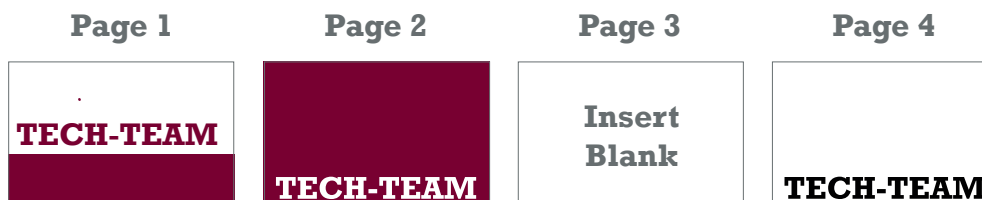
To do this firstly create a blank PDF that is 85 x 55mm, then insert it in one of the two following ways. Either combine your files using Acrobat's Combine PDF function, or insert the blank page into the PDF by using Acrobat's Insert Page function. Please then ensure that the page order is as described above.

If your spot UV business card is single-sided please supply a 2-page file, page 1 being the artwork and page 2 being the spot UV artwork.
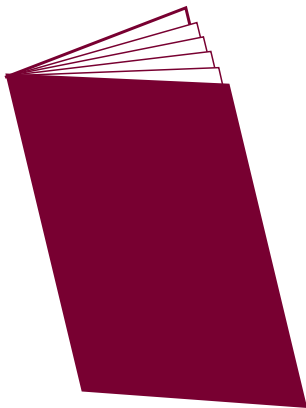
specialist print

LARGE FORMAT
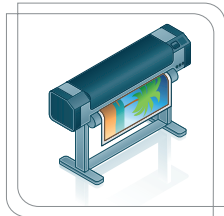
POSTERS

All posters should have 3mm of bleed regardless of their finished size and quiet borders should be at least 10mm. However, if the finished product is to sit inside a frame allow for a larger quiet border for size of the frame. Graphic resolution should be no lower than 150dpi.

BOOKLETS

PAGE ORDER

The booklet page total must be divisible by 4. Please supply your booklets in single-page format running in the correct order from start to finish i.e. a 20 page booklet will run from pages 1-20, page 1 being the front cover and page 20 being the back cover (please do NOT place the back cover on Page 1).

CREEP

The closer you get to the centre pages of a booklet, the more has to be trimmed off the page edges. Our imposition software does make allowances for this. However, it is recommended that you do not have text (especially page numbers) or images too close to the edges of your booklet pages. A gap of at least 5mm is recommended on all edges.

TOP TIP

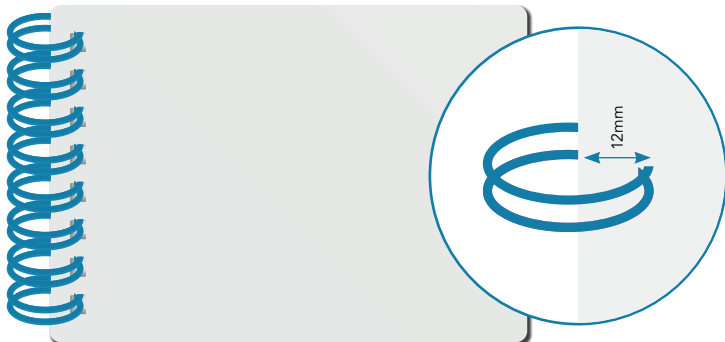Avoid content which crosses two adjoining pages.

SUPPLYING YOUR BOOKLET

Please supply your booklets as a single multi-page PDF running in the correct order i.e. if you are supplying artwork for a 12-page A5 booklet you must supply one PDF which is 12 pages long, each page being A5 and running in the same order as the finished printed booklets are to run, from front cover through to back cover.

FRONT COVER	Page 2	Page 3	Page 4	Page 5	Page 6	Page 7	BACK PAGE

BACK PAGE	FRONT COVER	Page 2	Page 7	Page 6	Page 3	Page 4	Page 5

WIRE BINDING

BINDING

When designing a job that is to be wire bound, please observe a minimum 15mm quiet border on the edge of each page that is to be bound to avoid content being lost i.e. an area of at least 12mm from the edge of the page to the first piece of text/graphic.

PERFORATING

PERFORATION

When designing a job that is to be perfed, please observe a minimum 20mm quiet border on the edge of the page that is to be perfed to avoid content being lost i.e. if your job is to be perfed down the left hand side, the perf will come 15mm in from the left page edge, so you should ensure that any text/graphics are at least 20mm in from the left page edge, meaning they will be 5mm clear of the perf.

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