PRINTING WITH PUMPT

DESIGN PRINT DISTRIBUTION MEDIA E-SOLUTIONS BRANDING CUSTOM DISPLAYS SIGNAGE

Welcome to Print 101

Contrary to popular belief, getting a document professionally printed is not as easy as clicking print. Setting up a file to print correctly is a complicated process, and if you haven't done it before there's a lot you need to know. Without correct set-up, a printer will 'bounce' your job back to you for you to fix, wasting your time, or will charge you through the nose for them to fix, wasting your money. But if you follow these guidelines before you start designing, your print job should go through smoothly.

Of course, if you get halfway through this document and start to panic, don't worry. You can arrange to have us sort this all out for you at a competitive rate – and we'll throw in our great design and marketing expertise as well. We've been doing this for years, so we know what works.

If you're going to supply us with your own design file, do make sure you're aware of the following:

WE WILL

- Check your document for technical errors.
- Send it back to you to fix if there is an issue.
- Try to fix the issue for you if you choose at a charge (we will let you know what this is beforehand).
- Verify your file will print correctly.

WE WON'T

- Check your document for spelling, grammar or inaccuracies.
- Check your document for missing images or text.
- Send your document to print without advising you of technical errors.
- Provide you with a proof – so ensure you check your document carefully before sending to us.

DOCUMENT SET UP

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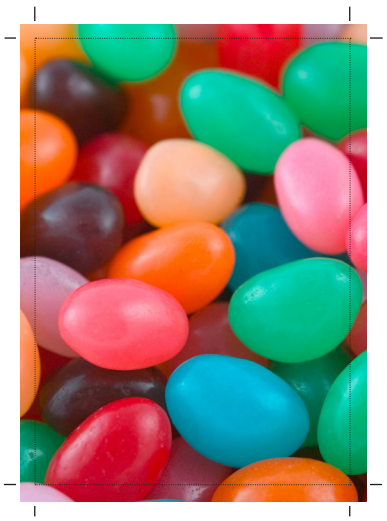
Probably the most important part of print is setting up your document correctly for trim.

You may think A4 means A4 – right? Wrong. A4 means A4 after being trimmed – before trim, you document needs to be bigger than A4, by 5mm in each direction. This 5mm area is called bleed. So if you're setting up an A4 document, your document size should be A4 (297 x 210mm) PLUS 5mm bleed on each side, making the document 307 x 220mm.

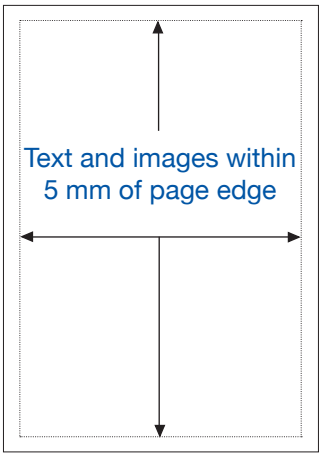
Make sense? A program like InDesign has options for adding bleed in the document set up, but others you may have to set up manually.

Why all the hassle? When your document is trimmed to A4 size, the guillotine may deviate slightly, even up to a few millimeters. If your document bleeds over this edge, then the deviation won't be detectable. But if your document ends at exactly A4, you will end up with a white strip around the outside.

Furthermore, bleed adds a space for your crop marks, which show the printer exactly where to trim, so they can line the guillotine up correctly. If you're working in InDesign, selecting the 'show all printers marks' option when exporting to PDF will automatically add crop marks.



Full bleed image with crop marks



In addition to bleed, you should design your artwork with a 5mm "quiet zone" within each side of your document. Don't place any text or important images in this area, as you may find them slipping off the edge of the page.

IN SUMMARY FOR DOCUMENT SET UP

- Add an extra 5mm to each side of your document size.
- Add crop marks to show where the page should be trimmed.

COMMON PAGE SIZES

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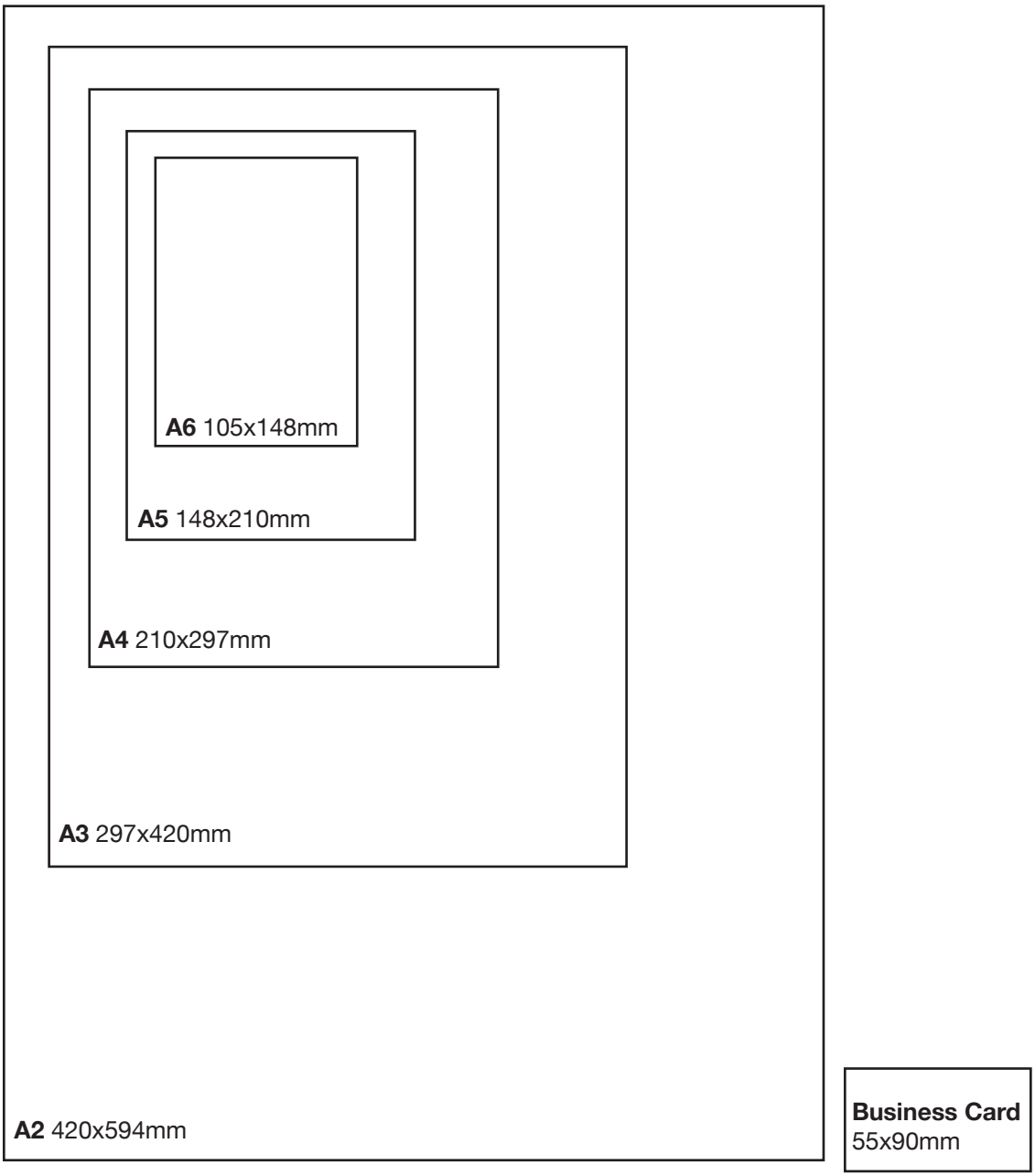

Business Card 55x90mm

A5 Bookmark 105x297mm

DL (1/3 A4) 99x210mm

sizes not to scale

ABOUT COLOUR

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Using Colour Profiles

There are several different ways of setting colour in your artwrk, and it's crucial that the correct profile is used.

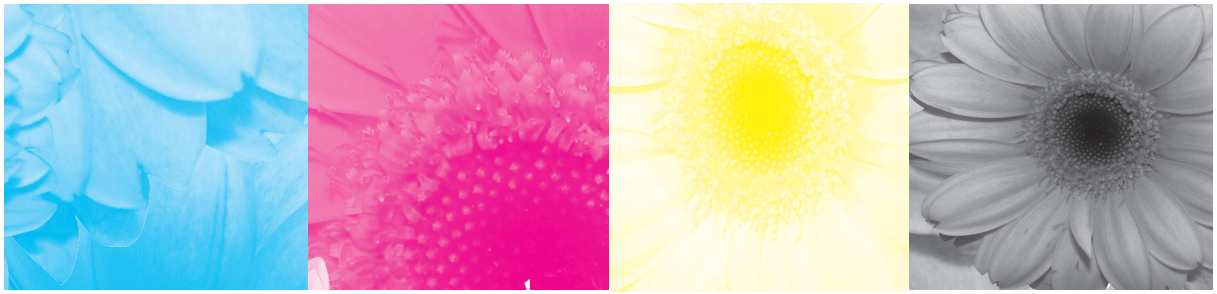
RGB

Your computer, scanner and camera uses what is called an RGB (Red Green Blue) colour profile. There is a much wider spectrum of colours that can be viewed on a screen than printed using standard inks, so your images need to be converted before printing to what is called CMYK.

CMYK

Printing presses use a colour profile called CMYK (Cyan, Magenta, Yellow, blacK), or process colour. Basically, at some stage, the RGB images need to be converted to CMYK. This can be easily done using photoshop software, but if you don't perform the conversion yourself, when we print your file, we'll apply a standard conversion meaning you may get unexpected results or colours may look washed out. Some freeware available online for download can be used to perform this conversion also – try www.gimp.org

Cyan Magenta Yellow Black



SPOT

Spot colours, also known as Pantone colours, are inks used by printers to get a very specific colour. They are mixed like paint and used one at a time. Generally, you do not want to be using spot colours unless you've discussed it with your printer first, as the appearance of spot colours in your job will generate an extra colour plate at additional cost.

You can check your document by printing separations – check your application help file for instructions on how this works. If you get anything other than a cyan, magenta, yellow and black separation print, you have extra colours in your document that you need to convert.

Sometimes an RGB or spot colour has no direct CMYK equivalent – especially if you've got very bright or fluorescent colours. When you convert them, your software will choose the closest possible colour, but colours can come out quite different from what you were expecting.

Be aware also that colours on screen appear brighter and stronger than when printed – it always pays to run off a laser print to check how they're looking, especially when it comes to tints.

BLACK

This may be surprising, but black is not always the best black. While small areas of black such as text or logos should be created only in black in, a combination of 100% black and 40% cyan is best for larger black areas.

One thing to watch out for…

When placing an image with a black background into a black document, the blacks may look the same on screen, but will print as a black box unless they are matched perfectly.

IN SUMMARY FOR COLOUR

- RGB and spot colour images must be converted to CMYK.

USING PHOTOGRAPHS

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PHOTOGRAPHS

When working with photographs, always save them as tiffs. Don't use jpegs – a jpeg applies a compression every time you save it which throws away information, and the image will rapidly decline in quality. If your image is already in jpeg format, save it as a tiff.

To get a decent image, your photographs should be 300dpi (dots per inch) at 100% print size. Photographs on websites are generally only 72 dpi. This means that when they're printed, they will look fuzzy or pixilated, so don't ever take images off a website and place them in your document – you won't like the result.

As an image is scaled larger, the dots per inch decreases, and the more the image quality declines. Ideally, you should already have the image at the right size or larger so no stretching is required. If you must make your image slightly larger, try to keep the increase within 30% of the original size, or it will become very noticeable. Always scale to proportion – if the image is the wrong shape crop it, don't ever stretch it more one way or another. It will be noticeable, and it will look very bad.

Image at 300dpi and scaled down (top)

Same image at web resolution (72dpi) and scaled up.

WHEN SCANNING

Scan photographs at 300dpi at the size you are going to use them. Scan black and white line art at 1200dpi and save as a bitmap.

IN SUMMARY FOR PHOTOGRAPHS

- Don't use jpegs
- Don't stretch or scale larger
- Don't use images off the web

ABOUT TYPE

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Fonts can be a problem, especially when going from PCs to Mac and back again. Most standard fonts shouldn't cause too much problem, but it always pays to convert all text to paths or outlines before exporting to PDF.

Convert your text to outlines

Be wary of very small text as well – if it uses more than one ink the process of overlaying on such precise areas can cause your text to look blurred. Likewise, if it is reversed out (white text on black background) avoid anything less than 9pt bold.

IN SUMMARY FOR TYPE

- Convert all text to outlines
- Avoid very small reversed out text

SUPPLYING ARTWORK

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So now you've read this guide, done all the things we've told you to, and you're ready to send us your artwork! Just a few more dos and don'ts to make sure it all arrives in one piece.

GETTING YOUR ARTWORK TO US

DO

- Send us your artwork via email.
- Send us your artwork in PDF format.
- Print off your artwork at home and check it carefully before sending it to us – we won't provide you with proofs or samples.
- Check your artwork is set up correctly for print.

DON'T

- Send us any live files.
- Send us files in MS Word, Publisher, or any other application.

And of course, if you are unsure about anything in this guide, you always give us a call - we're more than happy to talk you through it.

Happy designing!

CONTACT PUMPT

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