

## Design Specs for Print Ready Files

Before setting up your artwork, please review these guidelines. It's important to make sure your file is set up properly to avoid any unexpected printing results and it will also save you time and frustration. If the file submitted is wrong then our graphics team will send it back to you and ask for you to adjust it then re-submit, further delaying your order.

**Final File Size:** Each product has the expected final file size in the Design Specs tab. It's important that you set up your file according to the "Final File Size"; this will ensure you have all the required bleeds or finishing in your file. If your file is not saved at the proper final size our graphics team may have to ask you to adjust and re-send the artwork.

Set up your artwork to the specified size listed in the Design Specs tab of that product.

**PDF Templates:** If the product you are designing has a PDF Template; please download and review it. Our PDF Templates are designed at the exact size you will need your final file size, it's also listed inside the template what the final file size is for that specific product. If you open the PDF template in your design program it should create the file at the exact size needed.

For more information on how to use our PDF Templates please view our [Setting up Artwork with a PDF Template](#) guide.

**Designing in a smaller size:** We do prefer for files to be set up to the final size specified; however, you can set up the file at a proportional size smaller and we will enlarge it when printing.

**Colors:** Our printers convert all artwork to CMYK prior to printing, so it's best to design in CMYK to avoid any unexpected color results, however, we do accept RGB, mixed colors and Pantone colors.

**Pantone Colors:** We print in a 4-process, Pantone colors are mapped to match as closely as possible. If you have concerns about how a specific color will print, please contact our customer service team and we can print [sample swatches](#) for \$25 each.

### **Text / Transparencies / Special Effects / Gradients:**

You put all this work into creating the perfect graphic, you'll want to make sure your file retains all that hard work!

- Convert all **text/fonts** to curves or outlines before saving for print. If not, the fonts or text could change or drop out during the printing process.
- Rasterized or flatten any **transparencies, special effects and/or gradients** to a bitmap. If not, these things could distort, drop out, or change the overall colors during the printing process.

**NOTE:** Although our proofing/pre-flight system is top of the line some text, fonts, transparencies, gradients or special effects **could appear normally during the proofing process** and we don't see the issues until the product is actually printed. By converting these to bitmaps it reduces possible unforeseen issues when printed.

**PNG image Warning:** When using images with a transparent background such as PNG images in your design you will want to make sure that you rasterize/flatten your file prior to submitting for print. PNG or files with transparent backgrounds tend to appear normal when proofing with our preflight program, however, when printed it typically creates a colored box around the image(s). Unfortunately, we are not able to find these things on our end. If you are using a png images you will be responsible for rasterizing/flattening the file before submitting for print. If a graphic does print out wrong due to the use of png images then you'll be notified if our team notices prior to it shipping and you'll have the option to go with it as is or purchase a re-print.

**Spelling and Grammar:** Please review your file for any spelling or grammar issues prior to saving and submitting it for print. Our graphics team does not proof-read any print ready files and if there are any spelling/grammar issues it may go unnoticed during the proofing process.

**Image Resolution:** Image resolution for large format printing does not have to be high, since these are typically large products that are normally viewed from a distance, therefore, the DPI resolution can be lower, and you'll still get a high-quality print. In our experience 125 - 150 DPI is perfect, you can go lower in DPI if necessary, usually anything higher than 150 DPI does not make too much of a difference for large format printing.

**NOTE:** If you're designing for smaller print products such as business cards, postcards, color copies, etc. then you will need to have a minimum 300 DPI, anything lower than 300 DPI will appear blurry when printed.

For more information about DPI resolution please see our [DPI Explained](#) guide.

**Files we Accept:** These are the best file types to use for large format printing.

- PDF - Preferred file type
- JPEG
- PNG
- EPS

**Accepted File Types, but not preferred:**

Native design files are not best to use for final printing because a lot of things can go wrong since the file is not prepped for printing; however, if you send in a native file our graphics team will do our best to prepare the file for printing on our end. Since our team is not familiar with the artwork and how it should look, you'll have to pay close attention to your proof to make sure everything was converted properly. In our experience fonts, images and transparencies

tend to distort, drop out or unlink when converting your native files for print. It's best to convert your files on your end to a preferred file type to ensure the file retains the design properly. Also converting the text to curves/outlines and flattening any special effects or transparencies is helpful before submitting your native files.

**NOTE:** Unfortunately, our team is not equipped to be able to re-link, replace or fix any issues with native files. If we are experiencing issues with the native file then our graphics team will request you send a new file in a preferred file type, this will further delay processing of your order and it's best to submit a print ready file in a preferred file type from the start.

- Illustrator
- Photoshop
- Corel
- InDesign

**File Types NOT Accepted:** The following file types we are not able to accept for large format printing. If designing in any of these programs you will have to convert the file to an acceptable file type before submitting the artwork to us.

- SVG Files
- Microsoft Word
- Microsoft Paint
- Powerpoint
- Publisher
- Canva

Keep in mind that although you can convert your artwork into an acceptable file type in these programs, most likely the file won't be print ready since the following programs are not meant to create large format artwork and you have little control over the final file size and DPI. If you do submit a file that is converted from one of these programs our graphics team will look over the file and let you know if it can work or not during the proofing process.



If you have any questions, we are available:

Monday - Friday, *with the exception of holidays*

8:30am - 5pm EST | 800-319-8184