WHAT IS PRINT READY?

Here are some helpful steps to ensure that your design is print ready…

Our team at First Class Digital offers design services at our in-house studio at a competitive price. We work closely with our clients to ensure the highest quality of artwork.

In order to achieve the best outcome for your printed material, there are certain requirements that must be met. Our design team checks through these for you, and if there are any changes or corrections that need to be made, we can help you out (fees may apply).

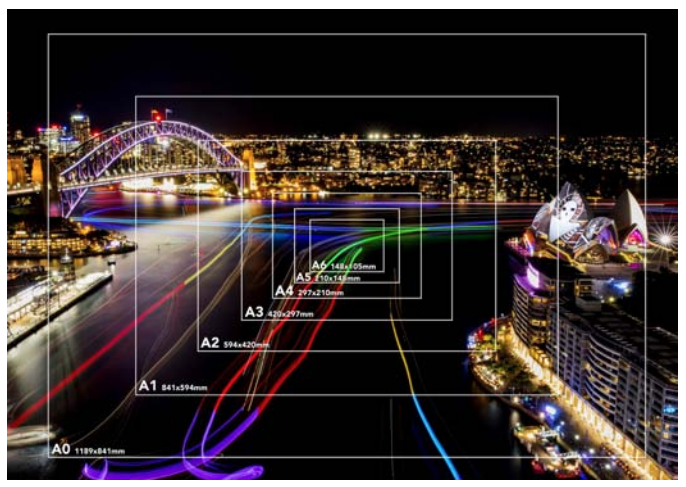
Whilst you're being a creative genius designing your file ready for print, ensuring that you follow these simple steps will cause fewer headaches for you down the track.

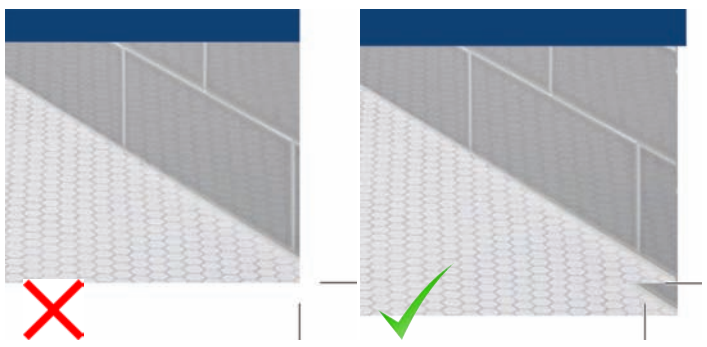
These suggestions are based on any file being created using Adobe InDesign*. However, they can be applied to any other software program you use.

Step One: Create Your File At The Correct Print Size

Sometimes people have a little trouble figuring out what size they should set up their file to be ready for print. This handy chart displays various sizes which you can easily customise in whichever design program you use.

There is no need to impose your artwork – we take care of that for you!





Step Two: Add Bleed And Crop Marks To Your File

When using your design program, the term 'bleed' refers to any content that overlaps the edge of the file. Any images or colours that meet the edge of the page need to be extended by at least 3mm (or 30 for large format documents). If not, you could run the risk of having an unnecessary white border around your final print – which could be a fatal error after spending hours over your design!

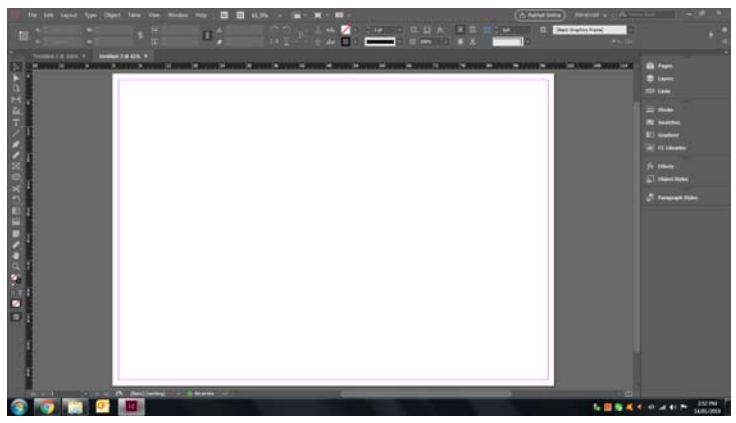
Crop marks are helpful guidelines included in the artwork to ensure that printed sheets are trimmed to the correct size.

When you set up your document, you can adjust the amount of bleed in your design program. For example, in Adobe InDesign, when you output your file as a PDF, the crop marks and the bleed can be adjusted under the "Marks and Bleeds" section.

We recommend the bleed to be set to 5mm, and the crop marks at 2mm.

Step Three: Set Your Margins

There are some problems that can occur which could affect your final print. This includes text or images that are placed too close to the edge of the document. To ensure that you don't lose any information on your printed files (because we wouldn't want that!) we recommend designing your work within what we like to call the "safezone." We advise to place a margin at 4mm (or 10mm for large formats) from the edge of the document. This can easily be done when you first set up your file.



Digital: CMYK

Offset: CMYK and PMS

Step Four: Colour Modes And Assigning Your Colours

There is a difference in the colours that your computer shows you versus the colours of your final printed product.

Computers emit all colours in RGB mode (Red, Green and Blue light). Keep in mind that the colours can display differently on every computer due to brightness and screen settings.

Colours on a printer are based on a mixture of CMYK ink (Cyan, Magenta, Yellow and Black).

We strongly recommend all files to be set up in CMYK mode so that you end up with the colours you desire.

When setting up your file, be sure to choose the correct colour type under the Colour Mode section in your design program.

Step Five: Image Resolution And Linking

The images that you use in your documents may look different on your computer as opposed to when you go to print them. This is due to the image's resolution which is measured by dots per inch (dpi). It is recommended to use images of at least 300dpi. Be sure to note as well that if you enlarge an image, the resolution could be lowered. Take this into consideration to avoid the result of a blurry image.

Missing images can also be a problem when creating files ready for print. Your design program can show a page layout with images, but the actual image file could be missing. This can occur if the image is moved from its original location in the folder on your computer. To prevent this, be sure to link your images before outputting your file.

High Resolution

Low Resolution

Step Six: Fonts

Aa

As with missing images, the same process can occur with missing fonts. There are so many different versions of the same font, and if it goes missing then it could be hard to substitute. If you supply a document in its original format, make sure to also supply all fonts used in the document. If you are using bold or italic fonts, make sure they are styled version of the font given by the font list.

If you are supplying a PDF of your artwork (which we love, by the way), ensure that the font is correctly embedded in the file, or that all text is converted to outlines.

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Step Seven: Output And Check Your File

PDF is the much preferred file format for printing – it ensures the most accurate quality of your final print. As mentioned in the previous steps, always remember to embed your fonts and images and choose the highest available quality setting when you save your file as a PDF. This is often referred to as "High Quality Print" or "Press Quality" in your design program.

For example, in Adobe InDesign, you can output your file as a PDF by selecting File -> Export -> Abode PDF from the Format drop-down menu and click Save. A dialog box will then appear. Select High Quality Print in the Adobe PDF Preset drop-down menu. On the left hand side, select Marks and Bleeds and then check the Crop Marks box and the Registration Marks box in the Marks section. Ensure that there is at least 3mm of bleed in all sections of Bleed and Slug, then click Export.

Now it's time to double check your file so that it's all ready to go – open your PDF and see if it looks like you'd like it to. Check that all fonts are embedded by selecting File -> Properties -> Fonts.

You should also check the Output Preview. Select View -> Tools -> Print Production. Under the Print Production window, select Output Preview. Ensure that the "Stimulate Overprinting" box is checked. Under Preview, you can select Separations to see the colour breakdown of your document, including and PMS colours used.

ARE YOU USING CANVA? >

*Please note that these tips are intended as a guide only and are based on First Class Digital printing specifications.

Any artworks provided that are created in Canva can have color shift issues or be set as RGB, which First Class Digital take no responsibilty for as we would print as CMYK convert mode.

SELECT SHARE>PRINT READY PDF> CHOOSE BLEED AND CROP MARKS ON AND SAVE TO SEND US.