



***Preparing Digital Artwork  
for Successful Printing  
— A MomentoXtra Publication —***

# Contents

Publication Information .....	<u>3</u>
PDF Format Files .....	<u>4</u>
Why is PDF the best file format? .....	<u>6</u>
High Resolution .....	<u>7</u>
Standard Artwork sizes .....	<u>8</u>
Understanding Colour Issues .....	<u>10</u>
Need Artwork advice or inspiration .....	<u>13</u>
Quick Response Codes .....	<u>14</u>

# **Preparing Digital Artwork for Successful Printing**

***A MomentoXtra Publication  
by Momento Print***

© MomentoXtra Publications May 2012  
[www.momentoprint.com](http://www.momentoprint.com)

The right of Momentoprint to be identified as the author of this work has been asserted by him in accordance with the Copyright, Designs and Patents Act 1988.

All rights reserved. No part of this book may be copied, re-sold, or transmitted in any form or by any means, electronic, electrostatic, magnetic tape, mechanical, photocopying, recording or otherwise, without the written permission of the publisher.

---

# PDF Format Files

---

If your Artwork already exists in a digital (computer) format, we always recommend that you supply the Artwork in Adobe PDF format. This format has quickly become the Industry Standard for printing artwork. Provided that your PDF files are prepared correctly they offer the best and safest solution to efficient Litho or Digital Printing.

Most Program Applications (Word, Publisher, Photoshop, Pages . . . etc. etc.) now offer the facility to “Save as” or “File Export” your work directly as PDF files. There are also numerous (free) PDF-writer utilities available for download from the Internet. i.e. The EXCELLENT Neevia Technology PDF converter at <http://convert.neevia.com/pdfconvert/> for PC, or from a Mac, we would recommend: <http://sourceforge.net/projects/pdfwriterformac/>

PREPARING YOUR PDF FILES – (Select Compatibility to PDF/X-1a if available, or Acrobat 6.0 or earlier !!!)

When creating your PDF file from the actual host programme the artwork was produced in, it is important to ensure you EMBED all Fonts AND Images, or pictures, within your document if this function is available. You should also de-select any “Downsizing” or “Compression” of your Images, (in other words DO NOT select Zip or Jpeg Compression etc). You should also have converted any Graphics or Pictures in your artwork to CMYK format before inserting them into your artwork document (see our Colour Issues Page for more information).

Always set CROP MARKS to print when preparing your PDF file if this function is available in your PDF export options, as without these it may make it IMPOSSIBLE to trim your artwork to the correct size after printing. Any background Colour or Images that go right to the edge of your design MUST be extended a further 3mm outside the finished trim size of your final document. This is because guillotining must have a “bleed” area, as

it is IMPOSSIBLE to cut a large number of sheets on a line or white edge. For the same reason, ensure that ALL text is 5mm away from the edge of your artwork. The principle of BLEED and SAFE MARGINS is the SAME for ALL SIZES of printed documents whether they are Business Cards, Flyers, Brochures, Card Flyers, Letterheadings etc. etc.).

\*Why NOT Photoshop FILES? Avoid supplying native Photoshop (PSD) format files ! This is due to possible conflicts that can arise with Photoshop Plug-Ins and the different treatments that can occur when flattening multi-layered PSD files on a different platform, or operating system, than that on which they were created. ALWAYS merge your layers and CONVERT your PSD files to CMYK Tiff or High Resolution Jpeg files BEFORE saving, or exporting, them as your final PDF files. It may be possible to convert your non-PDF files, but this may incur additional conversion charges and may delete special effects you have created, or in some cases, may even reduce the output resolution of your image. !!!

Design Tip !!! Avoid using vignettes or tinted gradient effects in your artwork – these may look good on screen but rarely print effectively. Check our Colour Issues Page for further detailed information!

---

# Why is PDF the best file format?

---

The advantage of saving your Artwork as a PDF file is that your text can be preserved as vector strokes or outlines, rather than pixels (or dots) when saved in other file formats such as Jpeg or tiff files. Vector strokes will result in a much higher quality finish than flattened text which you may find in JPEG. A correctly formatted PDF file will also embed any fonts used in your design directly into the document. This helps prevent any font defaulting, or changing, should we not have exactly the same typeface font that you have used in your artwork

Do carefully check all the relevant Dialogue pop-up boxes which should be evident when saving to / printing to / exporting to, your PDF format.

---

# High Resolution

---

If you are creating your artwork in software such as Adobe Photoshop you should ensure that you start, or set-up your artwork when you first begin your design, at an absolute minimum of 300dpi. To ensure a crisp print on items such as text we strongly recommend creating all artwork in software such as Page Plus (Page Plus has it's own, built-in PDF exporter); Quark Xpress; Adobe Illustrator or Adobe In-Design (but please STILL ensure you save, or export, your artwork as PDFs from these applications). However, even if you do not have access to these professional design software applications, it is still possible to save, or export, successful PDF files from most Home / Office applications providing you have followed the advice, and design tips, noted in this publication.

---

# Standard Artwork Sizes

---

When designing your artwork it is important to remember that Standard Document sizes offer the most cost-effective, and environmentally friendly options for final printing. Normally your document will be positioned several “times-up” on a larger sheet to shorten the print-run and more efficiently use the way paper is supplied to us from our suppliers.

Should your artwork be supplied at an unusual, or non-standard, size it may be possible for us to slightly re-scale and re-size your artwork. However, this could incur additional costs in either the “plate / imposition” set-up, or require more paper usage. (NB: It is also often more cost-effective, and cheaper, to print your document very slightly under-standard size, please ask for details and clarification).

Please refer to Standard document sizes later in this booklet. Noted along with the document size is the final additional size should your design require a 3mm “bleed” on each edge. “Bleed” is where any background Colour or Images in your design that go right to the edge of your design must be extended a further 3mm outside the trim area. This is because guillotining must have a “bleed” area, as it is impossible to cut a large number of sheets on a line or white edge. For the same reason, ensure that all text is 5mm away from the edge of your artwork.

Artwork created to a correct standard size with bleed, you will help reduce any potential delays in both proofing and printing.

## *Business Card Size Standard*

Finished Size = 85mm x 55mm

(For Bleed supply as 91mm x 61mm)

## *Postcard Card / Invitation Size A6*

Finished Size = 105mm x 148mm

(For Bleed supply as 111mm x 154mm)

*A5 Flyer (Half A4-size)*

Finished Size = 148mm x 210mm

(For Bleed supply as 154mm x 216mm)

*DL (Compliment Slip) Size*

Finished Size = 99mm x 210mm

(For Bleed supply as 105mm x 216mm)

*A4 Size (Standard Imperial Page Size)*

Finished Size = 210mm x 297mm

(For Bleed supply as 216mm x 303mm)

*A3 Size (Standard Imperial Page Size)*

Finished Size = 297mm x 420mm

(For Bleed supply as 303mm x 426mm)

---

# Understanding Colour Issues !!!

---

All print products, whether printed Lithographically (for longer run printing), or digitally (for shorter run printing), are printed using a four colour process (CMYK - Cyan, Magenta, Yellow and Keyline Black).

It is vital therefore that you refer to the following information on “Colour Issues”.

Computer screens, by default, make up the colours they display in RGB Mode (that is, every colour you see on your computer monitor is created out of differing values of Red, Green and Blue). For this reason most of the standard software applications, or programs, supplied with your computer . . . such as Microsoft Word, Microsoft Powerpoint, Microsoft Publisher, Apple Works, Pages etc. use the RGB model for their colour palettes. This is usually ideal for displaying colour elements on screen and even printing out work on standard desktop Inkjet or Laser printers, where the colour is produced from the three basic RGB colours.

However, both the Litho and Digital Printing processes used for Commercial printing use the CMYK colour model . . . C = Cyan, M = Magenta, Y = Yellow, K = Black (K to avoid confusion with B for Blue). This is the reason why you will often have heard “Full Colour printing” referred to as “4-Colour Printing”. CMYK printing actually allows far more flexibility in colour usage and tonal variations. Litho and Digital Printing software will therefore attempt to automatically convert any supplied RGB work to the closest CMYK equivalent colours. This will, inevitably, result in some change occurring to the colour of the work you have seen displayed on your screen, or even printed-out on a desktop Inkjet or Laser printer. Some colours (or combinations of colours) will be affected more than others, and . . . depending on the actual software used to originally create or compose the work . . . in extreme cases may even change an RGB coloured image to print-out completely Black or Grey. For this reason, we always recommend that you select a CMYK

colour-palette in your production software if this is option is available. If you have scanned images or logos that you are inserting into your document these should be checked in your photo-retouching software (such as Adobe Photoshop) and converted to CMYK before inserting them into your document.

We also suggest using a CMYK Black (ie a Black made-up of 40% Cyan and 100% Black) for any large areas of solid Black background . . . but NOT for BLACK TEXT . . . instead you must always use 100% Black for setting Black Text in anything other than for large Poster work.

Colour balance and reproduction can also be affected by the resolution at which the original element was first created in and the way it reacts to differing printing processes. Work created by most Web-Designers and Web-software applications will have been produced exclusively to display QUICKLY on even the most basic of computer monitors. That is they will have been designed to download through your Modem to your computer screen at between 96 to 72 dpi (dots per inch) and in the “web-safe” colour palette mode of RGB. (Most standard computer monitors display at 72 dots per inch.)

Furthermore, by their nature, computer screens (like televisions) display their image with light projecting out of the screen towards the eye of the viewer. Commercial printing will normally require images to have been produced at around 300dpi (dots per inch). Because our modern Litho or Digital printing machinery prints at a much higher resolution (between 2400 to 1270dpi), elements such as graphics or logos downloaded from web-sites will often pixelate or appear jagged or blurred when printed. And, unlike the images projecting outwards from your computer screen, the colours of the printed image will be produced by varying layers of ink printing downwards on top of the printed matter.

The complication doesn't just end there though !!!! Different printing processes, and different printed materials, will also have an affect on the way your image displays after the printing process. Inkjet Printers spray ink from cartridges in one pass onto the paper;

Digital Laser Printers lay down layers of Toner in several passes onto the paper; Litho Printing Presses print the Ink from four different plates onto the paper leaving blank minute layers where the edges of some colours will overlap over others so as not to compromise the join where two or more colours touch (known as “trapping”).

It is also essential to remember that the nature of modern printing processes, and the ever-changing make-up of both inks, paper-stocks, processing plates (often due to constantly changing technological and environmental requirements), means that it is not technically possible to guarantee exact colour matching of the same project reprinted at a later date.

At momentoprint we will always endeavour to advise on how all these differences, and pitfalls, may affect the final printing of your project. However, because of the hugely varying number, and technical quality, of software applications, colour palettes and production techniques, it is technically impossible to accurately predict how close to the printed proof your project will finally print . . . we must ALWAYS advise that any printed proofs are intended as a Visual Guide only !!!!!

---

# Need Artwork advice or inspiration?

---

Take advantage of our Design Service and Print Production . . . It's probably more cost-effective than you think !!!

We offer an excellent Design and Artwork preparation service and would be delighted to show you our sample books of recent design work we have produced.

Whether you have just sketched layouts, a montage of pasted-up styles or even a previously printed example of the type of design you'd like . . . we can turn your concepts into reality . . . from even the most basic of ideas.

Alternatively, we can accept artwork from most file formats, and may be able to convert your native application files to the correct print-ready PDF format.

Simply call us on *020 8340 3490*, or email: *info@momentoprint.com* with "Artwork" in the subject line, for more information.

---

## Quick Response Codes

---

They're popping-up now more and more often. Quick Response Codes are appearing printed in magazines and newspapers, flyers and leaflets, packaging and postcards . . . even on bus-stops and television advertising.

Mobile phones with their FREE Apps and in-built cameras are increasingly being used to scan those distinctive codes and jump the user directly to your website and your latest promotions, discount-offers and downloadable vouchers.

At momentoprint we can not only print your QR's directly onto all your marketing materials and stationery, but also help with creating and using them to the best advantage!

Simply call us on *020 8340 3490*, or email: *info@momentoprint.com* with "QR Codes" in the subject line, for more information.

***For further information on any of the subjects covered in this booklet, or for EXCLUSIVE on-line Printing Discounts, visit: [www.momentoprint.com](http://www.momentoprint.com)***