8 TO THE POWER OF
DESIGN TIPS

We've worked with some of the best creative minds around and been involved in fascinating and challenging projects. Many designers come to us as they trust we can translate their 'vision' into print. Here are some of the tips we have passed on along the way.

## 1 Document Size, Bleed and Quiet Zones

It's important that you set your document size correctly. If you don't, parts of your design may be chopped off, look off-centre, or have areas of undesired white space. It sounds obvious, but your document size should be the size you wish your finished job to be.

Any elements of your design (e.g. photographs or coloured heading bars) that extend beyond the final trim size should have 3mm of bleed added. Adding bleed is simply extending these artwork elements beyond the edge of the document (by 3mm). In doing so, you are allowing for any small variations in cutting the printed job.

Note: Remember to check your bleed output options when creating your PDF. Also please remember to include crop marks which should be offset by 3mm so as they do not encroach into the finished printed image.

Finally, it's good practice to leave a 'Quiet Zone' of 4mm (10mm for Booklets and Posters) from the trim edge. The same goes for any folds or creases. Avoid placing any important objects such as text or logos within this quiet zone. This will make your job look more professional and ensure objects don't look like they're about to fall off the edge of the page.

2 Image Resolution and Format
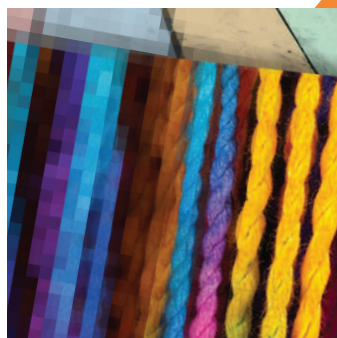
All your images should be 300dpi (dots per inch). Your typical image copied from the internet or taken with a digital camera/ mobile phone will be only 72dpi, which when printed will appear pixelated (low resolution). These types of files should be adjusted in photo manipulation software such as Adobe Photoshop and set to 300dpi. This will increase the image file size but will produce a better quality printed image.

Note: If you just open a 72dpi image in Photoshop, change to 300dpi and save you will not regain the effective difference in resolution between 72dpi and 300dpi (i.e. an image which has been downsampled to 72dpi then back up to 300dpi will not have the same resolution quality as an image which has always been 300dpi). Save images as either EPS or TIFF files as this will preserve the colour clarity. GIF or JPEG formats compress the image and actually discard information, causing colour shifts and blurriness. Do not use either of these formats if quality is paramount.

Remember to ensure all your images are linked before creating a PDF.

3 Proper Use of Colour
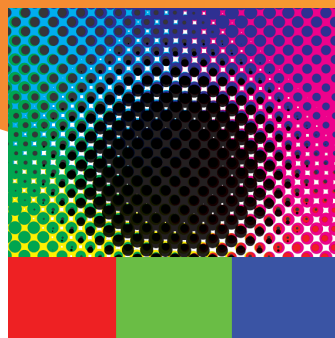
The printing process uses Cyan, Magenta, Yellow and the 'key' colour, Black (CMYK). However we are constantly receiving files that use other colour profiles, such as RGB, LAB and Indexed Colour. These often come from digital cameras and internet sourced images and do not always reproduce as they would appear on your screen.

It is very important that all images and colours used in your documents are converted to CMYK* before sending the files to us. We cannot be held responsible for the quality of the finished product if the original documents contain Indexed Colour, LAB, RGB or any other colour profile that is not CMYK. (Our workflow systems will auto convert RGB, LAB and Indexed Colour to CMYK using the best possible colour match algorithm, however due to the nature of the differing colour spaces a colour shift may occur).

* The exception to this rule is if Pantone Spot Colours are required, which should remain as a spot colour in the colour palette of your document.

4 Working with Fonts

If applying styles to a font, do not use text effects to italicise or embolden type - only use fonts that you have in your system and select the appropriate font from there. Using a font manager such as 'Suitcase' makes this easier.

When creating your print ready PDF, it's vital that you embed all fonts within your document. Most modern prepress workflow systems use PDF format so ideally you should make a PDF/X standard PDF from your artwork and supply that to GPS. At GPS we use the PDF/X-1a standard although any PDF/X standard will be suitable.

PDF/X is a subset of the PDF ISO standard. The purpose of PDF/X is to facilitate graphics exchange and it therefore has a series of printing related requirements which do not apply to standard PDF files. For example, in PDF/X-1a all fonts need to be embedded and all images need to be CMYK or spot colours. PDF/X-3 accepts calibrated RGB and LAB colours, while retaining most of the other restrictions of PDF/X-1a.

5 Overprint
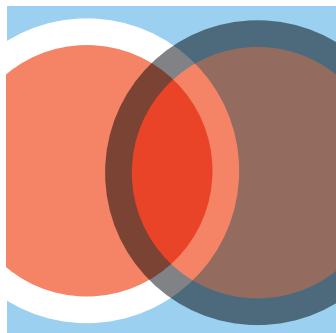
Be careful with overprint settings (especially in Quark). If you set objects to overprint, they will not 'knock-out' the background and will look very different to what you see on screen or proof. Black text generally defaults to overprint, (as does the 100% black swatch in some applications).

If your artwork requires custom trapping or overprinting to achieve a certain effect, it is possible to preview your results to see if they work as you expected, before submitting your file to us. Create a PDF and open this file in Adobe Acrobat. From the Print Production menu select and turn on the Overprint Preview* option and you will see the simulated print result.

6 UV Masks

We require a template for any jobs that require UV varnish. We advise creating a new layer in your document onto which you should place your UV mask artwork. Your UV mask should be overlayed in the desired position and must be a solid colour (not a tint). Do not use a process colour for your UV mask, instead create an additional spot colour and name it something appropriate i.e. UV and set this colour to overprint.

* It's good practice to set up your Adobe Acrobat to **always** show the **Overprint Preview** as it gives a more accurate screen representation of how your files will print.

7 Cutting Formes

We advise creating a new layer onto which you should place your cutting forme artwork. Your forme drawing (keyline) must be vector based and overlayed in the desired position. Do not use a process colour for your keyline, instead create an additional spot colour and name it something appropriate i.e. Keyline (keylines should be 1pt in width and set to overprint. Folding guides should be indicated as dotted lines while cut lines should be solid).

Artwork should have crop marks, 3mm bleed and the flat size of the folder (i.e. with flaps spread out) should be the document size (i.e. the artwork should NOT be 'floating' on a larger page size). If the folder is printed on both sides, check that you've designed the inside of your artwork to fit a mirror image of the outside.

8 Emboss/Deboss and Foil Blocking
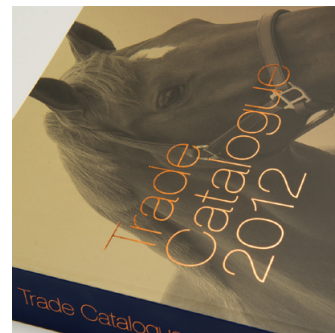
We also require a template for any jobs that require foil blocking, embossing or debossing. We advise creating a new layer in your document onto which you should overlay the artwork in the desired position, again ensuring it's a solid colour (not a tint).

Do not use a process colour for your effect, instead create an additional spot colour and name it something appropriate i.e. Foil and set this colour to overprint. There are limitations to using these processes which can affect the finished product. For the best results, do not include intricate shapes or very small text.

If you require more information on how to set up your artwork, contact the GPS Prepress Team on +44 (0) 28 9070 2020.

MAKE A MOCK-UP!

You wouldn't believe how many times we see an amazing design that does not work on a practical level. If you want to save yourself heartache, do yourself a favour and make a mock up.

Here is a list of the most common basic errors. They all sound obvious but it is amazing the number of times people fall foul of these simple rules.

Roll Folded Leaflet
Check all your panels are not the same size. On a 3 panel leaflet the right hand panel needs to be at least 2mm smaller, depending on the paper weight, to allow for nesting so the leaflet is crisp and doesn't buckle when folded.

Perforation
Check that the front and back have the perforation in the same place so they line up.

Folded Leaflets
It sounds obvious, but check that all the pages are in the correct position – the front panel is where you want the front panel to be etc.

Presentation Folder
If the folder has capacity/a gusset make sure you allow for the gusset in all the relevant places. Ensure that when the flaps/pockets are folded they don't cover any text/images that you want to be visible.

Cut-outs
Make sure you have designed the reverse of your artwork to fit an exact mirror image of the front.

Booklets
Check that all the pages are numbered in the right order.

Landscape Folded Leaflet/ Greeting Card
Ensure that you rotate the inside artwork by 180° so that it's upside down, otherwise when you open the document the inside will be upside down.