HOW TO PREP YOUR PRINT
FILE FOR OPTIMUM RESULTS

When you're short on time, but your print job needs to look top-notch, the last thing you want is delays because your file wasn't 100% print-ready. Here are some print file tips and guidelines to ensure your print looks as beautiful as it can be every time.

FILE TYPES

For most jobs, printers ask for a print-ready PDF document. However, depending on the nature of your print, you may also submit alternative formats, such as Adobe files.

ACCEPTABLE FILE TYPES INCLUDE:

PDF – Portable Document Format

INDD – InDesign

PSD – Photoshop

AI – Adobe Illustrator

JPEG – Joint Photographic Experts Group

TIFF – Tagged Image File Format

PNG – Portable Network Graphics

DOCX – Word

**PPT** – PowerPoint

SET-UP REQUIREMENTS

If you're printing more than one page, supply them as single pages. Start with page 1 (your cover page) through to the last page (back page). You should also make sure you delete any unnecessary pages.

The size of design files should be set to millimetres (mm) prior to export to ensure your digital document is in line with the final print size.

BLEED

If any design elements on your page reach the edges, you'll need to add a 3mm bleed. This means, extending your artwork 3mm beyond the document edge. This helps prevent unwanted white edges post trimming.
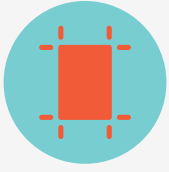
CROP MARKS

Crop marks are usually placed 3mm from the bleed edge. This can help the printer see where you would like the pages to be trimmed to achieve your desired document size.

BINDINGS

If you're printing a book, magazine or large brochure, the printed pages are going to be bound. Depending on the job, they may even be folded multiple times at right angles.

To set up your file property, you'll first need to know how the piece will be bound and finished. Here are a couple of things to look out for:

When using saddle stitching, the centre pages will stick out further than the outer pages. Here, you need to allow enough margin for page creep.

Perfect-bound books typically need a larger inside margin because 4–6mm is lost in the binding.

Calendars, notepads or brochures may require crop margins of 3–20mm, depending on their design.

Consider where the content sits once the product is finished, so it doesn't get cut off.

IMAGE RECOMMENDATIONS

The quality of your images can make or break your print job. So, it's important to make sure they have the right resolution. Here, the rule of thumb is: the higher the resolution, the smaller the dots.

A **300 dots per inch** (dpi) image is considered high resolution, which means even up close it's difficult to see the pixels.

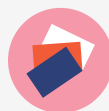300dpi are recommended for image-heavy documents, such as:

Brochures

Business cards

Flyers

Catalogues

In a **150dpi** image, you can just pick out the dots if you're close, but won't notice them from a short distance.

This is usually sufficient for jobs like:

Banners

Signage

Posters that will be seen from a distance

If your item is going to be viewed from a greater distance, you can drop image resolution even further, to **100dpi** or less. This is usually the case when printing billboards and other large-scale items.

PROOFING

When it comes to print, catching mistakes is even more important than online. Costs of reprinting aside, grammatical errors can have a negative impact on your brand perception and even mean the difference between winning or losing business.

PROOFING TIPS:

Read the text out aloud.

Try reading it backwards to focus on the spelling of the individual words.

Compare any images and artwork to the original.

Check how your text sits within the design. Sometimes the spelling is correct, but the way the words and paragraphs break can be problematic.

When in doubt, bring in another pair of eyes.

For more details on how to set up your files for print, contact our experts at your **local Snap Centre.**

For the love of print

snap