Signal Graphics
PRINT | SIGNS | MARKETING

How to Prepare a Document for Professional Printing Results

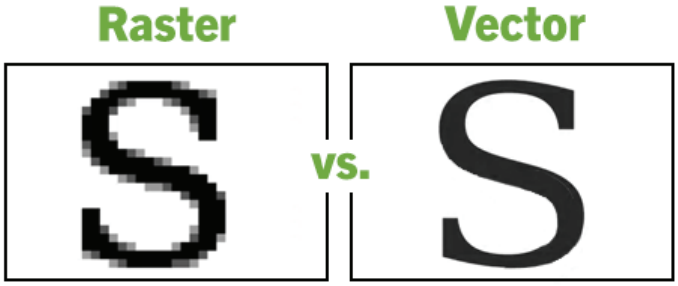
Preparing your document before submitting it for professional printing is crucial for high-quality results, avoiding costly mistakes and streamlining the production process. Proper preparation includes checking the resolution of images and logos, using the correct color output mode, including bleeds where necessary and using the proper format to ensure your document looks its best. For optimal results, follow the guidelines below.

DESIGNING YOUR DOCUMENT WITH PRINT IN MIND

When you import images and graphics, like a product picture or a logo, keep this in mind:

Images are raster or made of pixels that usually don't scale up well. Graphics like a logo are vector, meaning they can be scaled up or down and still look crisp. See the image below for a raster example on the left and a vector example on the right.

Make sure that any raster images (JPG, PSD, TIF, and PNG) you place in InDesign are the correct resolution for printing. For graphics, 300 PPI (Pixels Per Inch) is the general rule.



EXPORTING A CANVA® DOCUMENT FOR PRINTING

- If you use a Canva template for your design, the document will be constrained to the dimensions of the template you choose (i.e., if you wish to create a 6" x 9" postcard, make sure the dimensions are 6" x 9" to start with). You can change the dimensions of the template using the "Resize> Custom Size" tool located on the top menu bar.
- If your document has images or artwork that extend to the edge, you must add bleeds for later trimming. To add a bleed to your document, go to the "File" menu and select Settings> Show Margin and Settings> Show Print Bleed. Manually extend the items that extend to the edge by at least 1/8 inch beyond the bleed marks (outer white line).

To export your document for high-quality printing:

Click the "Share" icon located in the upper right corner. Then, select the "Download" icon.
Choose "PDF Print (best for printing)" from the File Type menu.
Select the "Crop Marks and Bleed" and "Flatten PDF" boxes.
Choose "CMYK (best for professional printing)" from the Color Profile menu. *Note: Canva uses an RGB color space (standard for computer screens) for all documents. Colors may shift when exporting your document using the CMYK color space. Request a proof to verify that your document will print as intended.*
Next, select the "Download" button.

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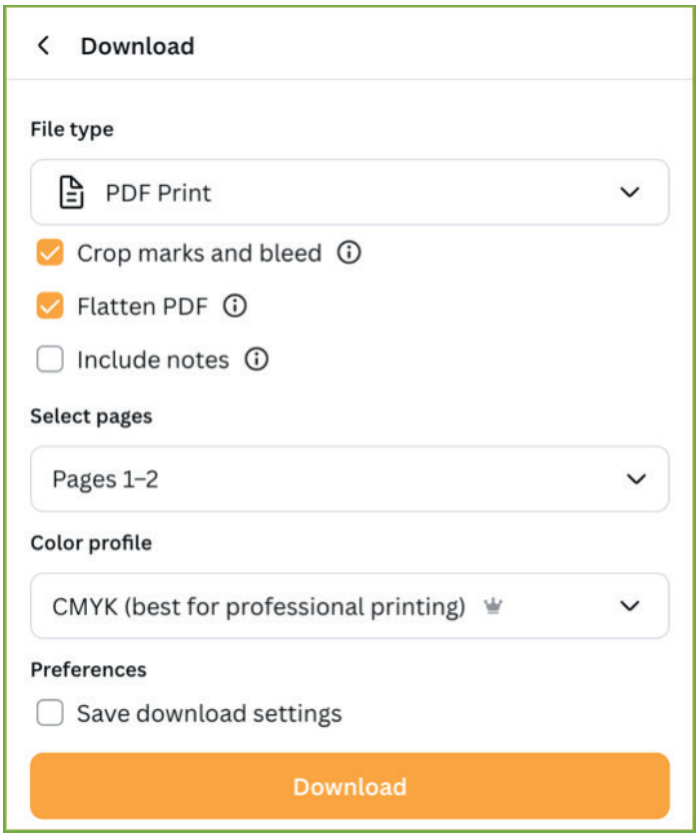

For help, go to www.canva.com/help/margins-bleed-crop-marks

EXPORTING AN ADOBE® INDESIGN® DOCUMENT FOR PRINTING

- If your document has elements that go to the edge, go to File> Document Setup and add 1/4" bleed on all sides.
- Keep important elements inside the safe zone (at least 0.25" inches from the edges).
- Use CMYK colors for accurate printing.

To export your document for high-quality printing:

Go to File> Export and select "PDF (Print)" from the Format menu.
Next, choose "PDF/X-1A 2003" from the "Adobe PDF Presets" menu at the top.
In the Marks and Bleeds section, select the "Crop Marks" and "Use Document Bleed" settings.
Then, choose "Export."

EXPORTING AN ADOBE® ILLUSTRATOR® DOCUMENT FOR PRINTING

- If your document has elements that go to the edge, go to File> Document Setup and add 1/4" bleed on all sides.
- Keep important elements inside the safe zone (at least 0.25" inches from the edges).
- Use CMYK colors for accurate printing.
- Prior to export, Convert all fonts to outlines (Ctrl/Cmd + Shift + O).

To export your document for high-quality printing:

Go to File> Export and select "PDF (Print)" from the Format menu.
Next, choose "PDF/X-1A 2003" from the "Adobe PDF Presets" menu at the top.
In the Marks and Bleeds section, select the "Crop Marks" and "Use Document Bleed" settings.
Then, choose "Export."

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EXPORTING AN ADOBE® PHOTOSHOP® DOCUMENT FOR PRINTING

- To create a Photoshop document for high-quality print output, go to File>New and input the final trimmed size of your document. Then, input 300 pixels/inch and choose CMYK color mode.
- To add bleeds in Photoshop, you'll need to manually adjust the canvas size and add guides to create a bleed area, as Photoshop doesn't have a built-in bleed setting.
- Here's a step-by-step guide:

1. **Enable Rulers and Guides:**
    - Go to View > Rulers to display the rulers.
    - Go to View > Snap To > Document Bounds.
    - Drag guides from the horizontal and vertical rulers to create guidelines at the desired bleed area (e.g., 0.125 inches or 3mm from each edge of your document).
2. **Adjust Canvas Size:**
    - Go to Image > Canvas Size.
    - Ensure the anchor point is set to the center.
    - Add the bleed amount to both the width and height of your document (e.g., add 0.125 inches or 3mm to each side).
    - Click OK.
3. **Design Your Artwork**:
    - Design your artwork within the main document area, ensuring that elements intended to bleed extend into the bleed area.
    - Background colors and images should also extend to the bleed area.
4. **Add Crop Marks** (Optional):
    - To add crop marks, use the Line Tool (U) to draw lines where the artwork will be trimmed.

To export your document for high-quality printing:

Go to File> Save As and select "Photoshop PDF" from the Format menu.
Next, click Save and choose "PDF/X-1A 2001" from the "Adobe PDF Presets" menu at the top.
In the Marks and Bleeds section, select the "Crop Marks" and "Use Document Bleed" settings.
Then, choose "Save PDF."

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