

File Preparation Guidelines

It is best to supply a print ready PDF for your flat sheet item. You should export the PDF from an application that supports vector elements (fonts, shapes, and strokes). We recommend Adobe InDesign, Illustrator, or Quark XPress. A free open source alternative is Scribus, which includes most of the features of the other applications (overprints, transparencies, layers) but does not have a Pantone library. All of these programs support fonts and linked placed images, as well as the color management of source color (RGB and Lab) to destination color (CMYK), and the preservation of source ICC profiles for any placed content.

The document size in your application should match the final trim size of the piece, and should also match the Width and Height dimensions you enter on the product page. In your document, you should add extra bleed area for any objects that extend beyond the page trim boundary. 0.125" on all 4 sides is an optimal amount of bleed. You can include this bleed area when you export your PDF.

To check your PDF we recommend using Adobe Acrobat Professional or Adobe Reader. Adobe Reader is free software. If your PDF has been exported correctly, the PDF page size will have the bleed area included. For example, an 8.5 x 11 item would be an 8.75 x 11.25 PDF.

We recommend using the PDF/X4 standard when exporting PDFs. This ensures that all fonts being used are embedded in the PDF for print output. The transparency blend color space of the PDF will be Device CMYK. It also includes a CMYK Output Intent in the PDF. The Output Intent and Device CMYK blend space ensure consistent viewing of the PDF in Acrobat or Adobe Reader. Please be aware that even with this, monitor color is not a 100% accurate representation of the final printed piece because it relies on the RGB color space of the monitor.

Please do not include any Pantone spot colors in your PDF. These need to be changed to process CMYK color in your document before you export the PDF. If you have any non-printing content that needs to be included in your PDF, this should be included as a separate spot color, and its elements should be set to overprint. Name this spot color appropriately (FPO is a good choice, "For Position Only").

If your item prints on one side only, supply a one page PDF. If your item prints on two sides, it is best to supply a two page PDF. If you have two separate one page PDFs for a two sided item and you have no way to combine the two PDFs, it is OK to put both PDFs in a folder, zip this folder, and upload the zip file to add the item to your shopping cart.

Please do not hesitate to reach out if you have any questions, and thank you for your business!