

# Artwork Setup Guide

Use this handy reference as a quick guide to learn more about resolution, color, and bleed preparation.

Upload a file to our website: Go to [ilovealphagraphics.com](http://ilovealphagraphics.com) and click SEND A FILE.



**alphagraphics®**  
Lake Mary

## RESOLUTION

**Resolution** refers to the level of detail and clarity in a printed image, measured in dots per inch (DPI), which is the number of ink or toner dots a printer places in a one-inch space. A higher DPI results in a clearer, more detailed, and sharper image, while a lower DPI produces a less focused, grainy, or pixelated image.

### Small Format Prints:

Anything under 12x18  
(e.g., menus, postcards, check stuffers, bounceback cards, etc.)

300 dpi+ - Standard

150-299 dpi - Passable

1-149 dpi - Not Acceptable



### Large Format Prints/Signs:

Anything above 12x18 and/or is mounted  
(e.g., A-Frame, signs, etc.)

150 dpi+ - Standard

75-149 dpi - Passable

1-74 dpi - Not Acceptable

## BLEED

To prevent your printed product from having unsightly white lines around the border, you must set your document up with bleeds. Here are a few terms you should understand:

**Bleed:** Bleed refers to an extra image or background color that extends beyond the trim area of your printing piece. This margin should be at least 1/8" inside the edge of the trim line for small format jobs and 1/2" from the edge for large format jobs.

**Trim Area:** The final size of the document after the last cut is made

**Live Area:** The live area or inner margin in which to keep all important elements (such as logos, copy, and page numbers) within to prevent them from being trimmed off. This margin should be at least 1/8" inside the edge of the trim line for small format jobs and 1/2" from the edge for large format jobs.



For the business card sample above, the artwork setup specs are:

**BLEED** - 3.75" x 2.25"

**TRIM** - 3.50" x 2.00"

**LIVE** - 3.25" x 1.75"

## FILE FORMATS AND ART GUIDELINES



### Banners

**File Format:** Adobe PDF

**Resolution:** 150dpi

**Color Space:** CMYK

**ICC Profile:** GRACoL2013\_CRPC6.icc

**Live Area:** 1" from each side

**Bleed:** 1" on all sides

**Crop Marks Offset:** 1"



### Print

**File Format:** Adobe PDF

**Resolution:** 300dpi

**Color Space:** CMYK

**ICC Profile:** GRACoL2013\_CRPC6.icc

**Live Area:** 0.125" from each side

**Bleed:** 0.125" on all sides

**Crop Marks Offset:** 0.0833"



### Cut Vinyl

**File Format:** Illustrator EPS or AI

**Version:** 2018 Adobe CC or earlier

**Color Space:** CMYK

**ICC Profile:** GRACoL2013\_CRPC6.icc

**Live Area:** 0.25" from each side

**Bleed:** 0.25" on all sides

**Cut Spot Color:** "CutContour"



### Signs

**File Format:** Adobe PDF

**Resolution:** 150dpi

**Color Space:** CMYK

**ICC Profile:** GRACoL2013\_CRPC6.icc

**Live Area:** 0.5" from each side

**Bleed:** 0.5" on all sides

**Crop Marks Offset:** 0.375"

While PDF is the preferred file format, we do accept other file formats. Below is a list of other file types that we will accept.

- JPEG and PNG
- EPS (Encapsulated PostScript File)
- TIFF (Tagged Image File Format)
- AI (Illustrator)\*\*
- INDD (InDesign)\*\*
- PSD (Photoshop)
- Canva\*\*

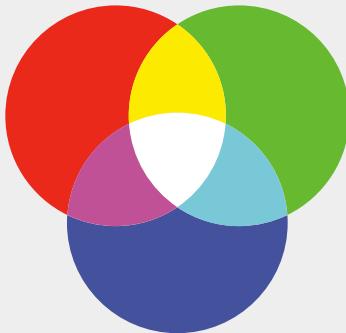
**PLEASE NOTE:** The sizes may change based on product. Please consult with your AG Account Specialist for the exact size and/or template. Spot/special colors must be specified prior to order being placed.

\* We accept Canva files, however, please note they have been difficult to print at high quality.

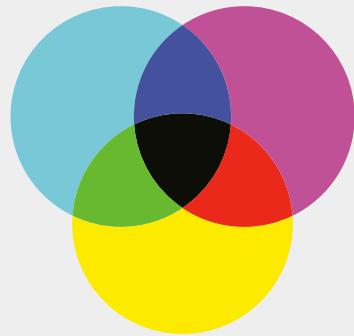
\*\* Packaged files that include all links and fonts must be provided.

## COLOR

### Color Printing: The Difference Between RGB & CMYK



**RGB** is used in digital equipment like cameras, scanners and your computer monitor. What you see on your computer monitor is RGB-based and may not be an accurate representation of how something will print commercially.



**CMYK** is based on ink or toner and it is the mode that commercial printers use when they print. Sometimes the color of the paper being used for a printed project can impact the way a color appears. If your project uses anything other than white paper, ask for a hard proof to ensure your printed job looks the way you intend.

If you design something in RGB mode, the shift in color when printing may be surprising. When you need to match color exactly, it's best to reference a **Pantone Color (in the Solid Coated book)** or to supply a color swatch when you submit your job.

## CREATING PRINT-READY FILES

### Creating Print-Ready PDFs in Canva

Canva is a web-based design platform that allows users to easily create graphics, presentations, social media posts, and other visual content using customizable templates. It offers a drag-and-drop interface, a large library of images, fonts, and design elements, and tools for collaboration. Designed for beginners and professionals alike, Canva makes it simple to produce polished designs without advanced graphic design skills.

1. When your artwork is completed and you are ready to export, click on the **“Download”** button or Download icon in the upper right corner of the Canva page depending on your layout.
2. Under the **“File Type”** dropdown, select **“PDF Print”**. This will export a print-ready, high quality PDF.
3. Check the **“Crop Marks and Bleed”** box. Even if your artwork does not bleed to the edges of the page, it will add crop marks, which will allow us to cut to final size.

If your artwork has multiple pages, click on the **“Select Pages”** dropdown to select which pages you want downloaded. Once you've selected which pages you'd like downloaded in your PDF, click the **“Download”** button and your print-ready PDF will download.

### Adding Bleed to Your Document

**If your document bleeds to the edge of the page, you will need to add a bleed to the artwork.**

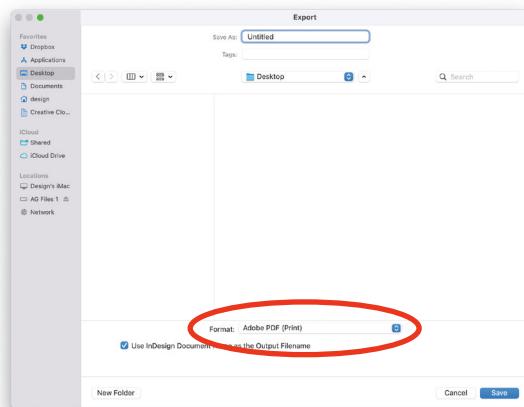
Under **“File”**, select **“Show Print Bleed”**. This is going to add an extra border that will appear close to the edges of your design. If you have color going to the edge of your artwork, but there are white gaps around the design edges, you will need to resize or stretch your background color to fully cover them. Once all edges are fully colored, bleed has been successfully added.

## CREATING PRINT-READY FILES (continued)

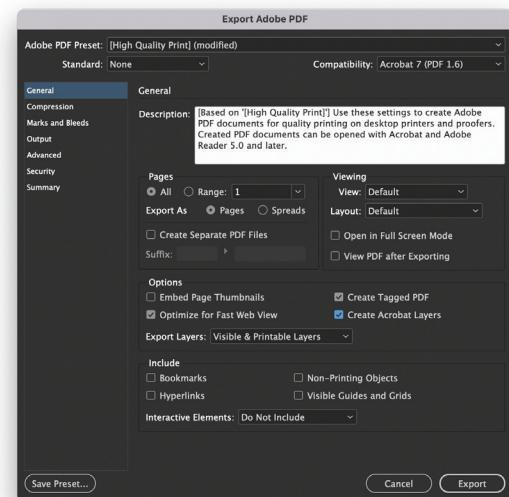
### Creating Print-Ready PDFs in Adobe InDesign CC

1. File > Export. Set format to Adobe PDF. Click Save (IMG. A)
2. Start with the High Quality Print Adobe PDF preset. For General, Compression, and Marks and Bleeds settings tabs on the left, make sure your choices match the following screen shots (IMG. B-D). The last four settings tabs can be left with their default selections (Output, Advanced, Security, and Summary).

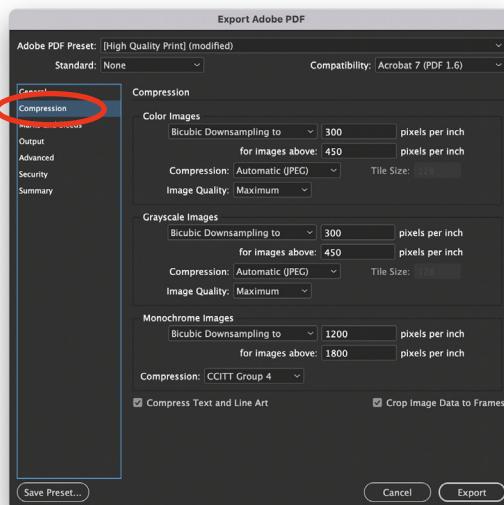
3. Click Export (IMG. D)



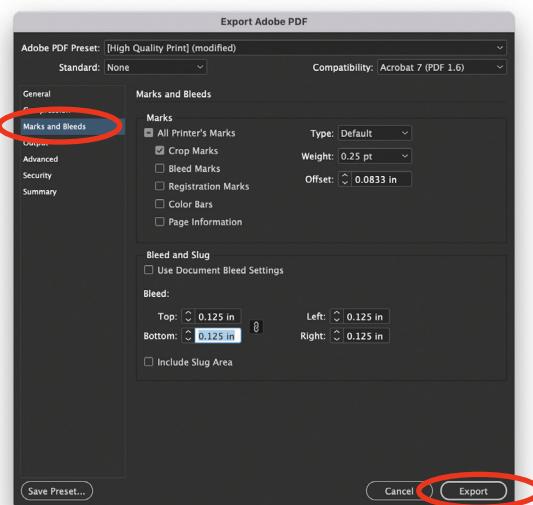
IMG. A



IMG. B



IMG. C



IMG. D

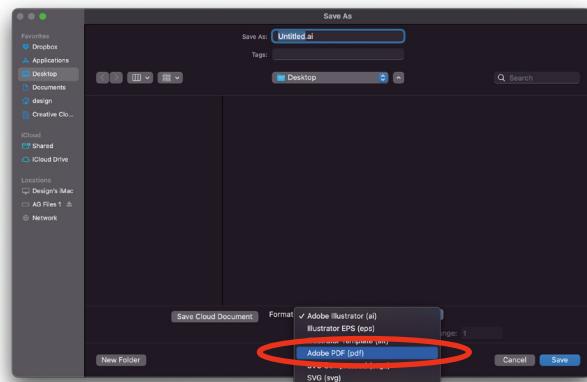
## CREATING PRINT-READY FILES (continued)

### Creating Print-Ready PDFs in Adobe Illustrator CC

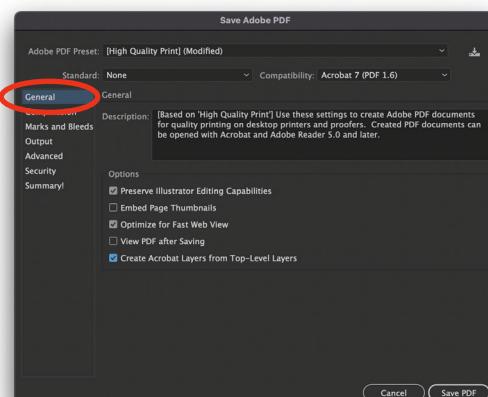
1. First, convert all text to outlines. Go to: Select > All. Then: Type > Create Outlines
2. File > Save as. Set format to Adobe PDF. Click Save. (IMG. A)
3. Start with the High Quality Print Adobe PDF preset. For General, Compression, and Marks

and Bleeds settings tabs on the left, make sure your choices match the following screen shots (IMG. B-D). The last four settings tabs can be left with their default selections (Output, Advanced, Security, and Summary).

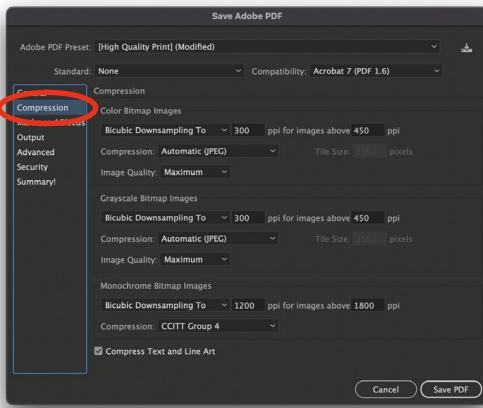
4. Click Save PDF (IMG. D)



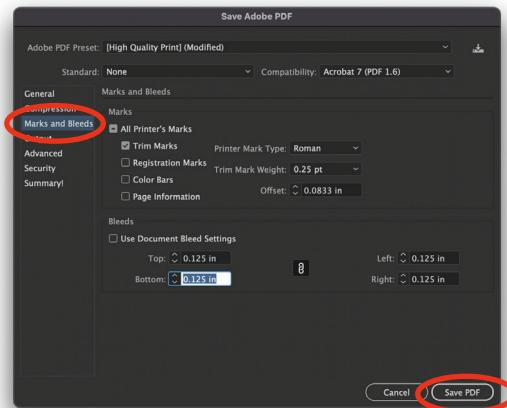
IMG. A



IMG. B



IMG. C



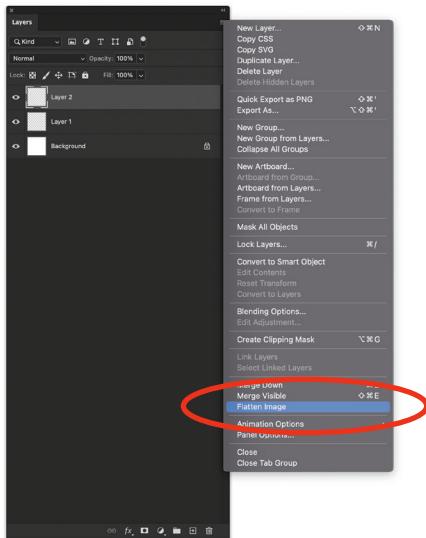
IMG. D

## CREATING PRINT-READY FILES (continued)

### Creating Print-Ready PDFs in Adobe Photoshop CC

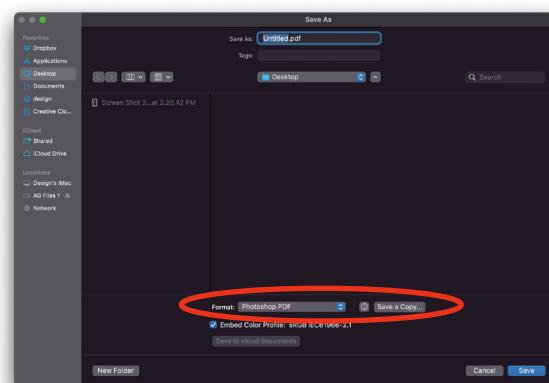
Because Photoshop is unable to create pdfs with crops and bleeds, remember to build in the bleed to the canvas size (create your page size at least .125" larger in all directions than your finished piece). Remember to keep text and other essential design elements out of the bleed area.

1. Make sure the file is in CMYK mode: Image > Mode > CMYK color
2. Flatten your design. In the layers palette drop down menu (IMG. A), click Flatten Image.

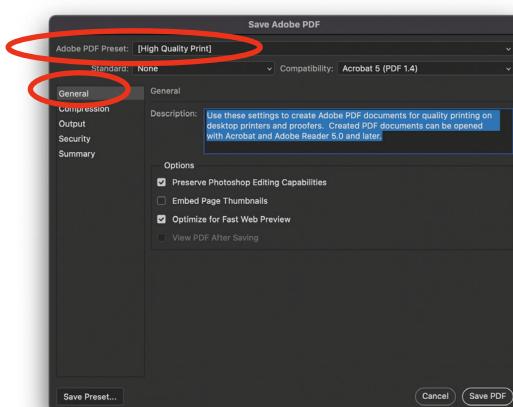


IMG. A

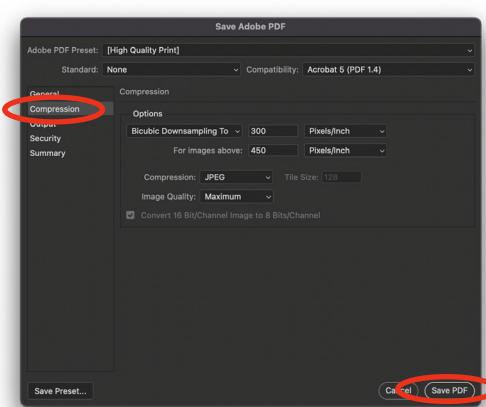
3. Image > Save as. Set format to Photoshop PDF. Click Save (IMG. B).
4. Start with the High Quality Print Adobe PDF preset. For the General, and Compression settings tabs on the left, make sure your choices match the following screen shots (IMG. C & D). The last three settings tabs can be left with their default selections (Output, Security, and Summary).
5. Click Save PDF (IMG. D).



IMG. B



IMG. C



IMG. D



1061 S. Sun Drive, Suite 1033  
Lake Mary, FL 32746  
407.330.0245  
[www.ilovealphagraphics.com](http://www.ilovealphagraphics.com)  
[ilove@alphagraphics.com](mailto:ilove@alphagraphics.com)