CONTAINER AND **PACKAGING**

How to Prep Digital Art Files for Printing

Prepress Guide

The following pages are designed to help you set up your artwork for the most successful print. Please refer to this document before sending art files to ensure proper setup and a smooth approval process.

1. File Format

Graphic Designers often use Adobe® Illustrator® (Ai) and Adobe® InDesign® (Id) to produce beautiful vector artwork. Adobe® Photoshop® (Ps) can support vector art, but does not offer a reliable vector export option. Photoshop is mainly used as an image editor for raster images.

LABEL

SILK PRINT

We recommend:
- Vector format file (.pdf, .eps, or .ai)
  Files created using a vector application will yield the best results.

We accept:
- Adobe InDesign (.indd)
  Remember to include all fonts and support files.

- Raster format file (.jpg, .tif, and .psd)
  If image resolution is appropriate this format should be fine, but edits are often difficult.

Resources:
[InDesign: Packaging files for handoff](#)

2. Image Resolution

Combining raster (photography) with vector artwork to your label is a great way to maximize visual impact, but you need to make sure the image is high-quality when the file is saved. Adobe Illustrator allows you to do this through its Raster Effects feature where image resolution can be set.

These settings can be found in Adobe Illustrator's Effect dropdown menu.

We do not recommend using raster elements for silk print projects.

LABEL ONLY

We recommend:
- 300 Effective PPI (aka: Dots Per Inch - DPI)
  Remember that an image's resolution will change when scaled within your layout.

- Color Mode (CMYK or Grayscale)
  The appropriate color mode should be used for the desired effect.

- Cropping Images
  Images should be cropped close to the size they're used to help reduce the file size.

We accept:
- Images higher than 300 Effective PPI
  Excessive resolution does not result in a higher quality image.

3. Screens and Gradients

If your artwork uses screens and gradients, it's important to consider how they will reproduce on your container.

LABEL

If stepping occurs in Adobe Photoshop we recommend:
- Add a slight "Noise" *(Ps: Filter> Noise> Add Noise)* to color gradients
  This will help eliminate screen stepping in blends.

If stepping occurs in Adobe Illustrator we recommend:
- Add a slight "Film Grain" *(Ai: Effect> Artistic> Film Grain)* to color gradients
  This will help eliminate screen stepping in blends.

SILK PRINT

We recommend:
- Avoiding Screens and Gradients because they will not reproduce well
  Best results come from using solid colors.

4. Dot Gain and Ink Spread

Dot Gain and Ink Spread can be avoided if you set up your labels correctly.

LABEL

If labels are produced by a "Digital" press:
- Minimal, if any, Dot Gain or Ink Spread may occur

If labels are produced by an "Offset" press:
- Colors may appear slightly darker between the film and the printed piece

SILK PRINT

Be cautious:
- When dealing with small type and fine details that may fill in or spread during the Silk Printing process.

5. Color

Our labels are typically produced by digital printers using process color, which combines cyan, magenta, yellow, and black (CMYK) to produce most colors. If you have a specific PANTONE® color you're trying to match it can be converted to process color by most graphic design applications.

Silk Printing uses solid colors from the PANTONE® spot color library. When printing multiple colors with silk printing, keep in mind there may be a variance of 1/16'' between spot colors.

LABEL

We recommend:
- Process color (CMYK)
  Process color will produce the best results.

- One-color black
  Try to avoid including additional colors (cyan, magenta, and yellow) when using 100% black.

We accept:
- RGB color
  Not recommended due to unacceptable results when converted to process color.

SILK PRINT

We recommend:
- Spot color (PANTONE®)
  Pantone Matching System provides hundreds of spot colors to choose from.

- Include white "Under Base" layer when needed
  This will give your color more "pop."

We accept:
- CMYK & RGB color
  Files with these colors will require editing.

Resources:
Ode to Lawrence Herbert and his PANTONE color system

6. Fonts

There are thousands of fonts on the internet. Some require you to purchase usage rights while others may be free. Please check your font usage rights early in the design process.

It's unlikely we have the same typeface, version, or even the rights to the font you're using. The best way to avoid any issues is to convert all your text to outlines before providing final artwork. By doing this, text will be converted to a non-editable element (vector) and no longer require the font to be loaded. Keep in mind that once this is done text edits will be difficult if changes are needed. A common practice is to keep an original version before creating a version with outlined text.

We recommend printing your label out at actual size to ensure your text appears as intended.

LABEL

We recommend:
- Convert all text to outlines
  Ai & Id: Type> Create Outlines.

- Fonts should be no smaller than 4pt (Medium font style)
  Also, go easy on the copy. A label is not the place to put your doctoral dissertation.

- Use caution when using "Light" and "Thin" typefaces with small point sizes (~5pt)
  Print out your label scaled at 100%.

- Avoid "Reversed" text on small text (~5pt)
  This will reduce the chance of enclosed spaces from filling in.

We accept:
- Editable text (not outlined)
  Please include the actual font files (.otf or .ttf) with your art files.

SILK PRINT

We recommend:
- Convert all text to outlines
  Ai & Id: Type> Create Outlines.

- Fonts should be no smaller than 6pt (Medium font style)
  Also, go easy on the copy. A label is not the place to put your doctoral dissertation.

- Use caution when using "Light" and "Thin" typefaces with small point sizes (~7pt)
  Print out your label scaled at 100%.

- Avoid "Reversed" text on smal text (~7pt)
  This will reduce the chance of enclosed spaces from filling in.

We accept:
- Editable text (not outlined)
  Please include the actual font files (.otf or .ttf) with your art files.

7. Stroke/Rule Thickness

If you have strokes/rules in your artwork you should use caution when using thin lines to avoid disappearing when printed.

LABEL

We recommend:
- At least .5pt thick, and at least 1pt thick when over black backgrounds (reversed)

SILK PRINT

We recommend:
- At least 1pt thick, and at least 2pt thick when over black backgrounds (reversed)

8. UPC Code

Consider the color of your container, product and ink when using barcodes. Printing a barcode on a dark container may require a white background or you may consider reversing the barcode.

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LABEL

SILK PRINT

We recommend:
- At least 1" wide
  Please confirm they work as intended if they are used smaller than 1" wide.
- Black barcode on a white field
  This will be the most successful.

We accept:
- Reversed, light, and red colors may not scan properly
  Please test before providing final artwork.

Resources:
Get Started Guide
How to silk print barcodes and make them scannable
Cracking the Barcode Encryption

9. Margins & Bleeds

These need to be considered so critical content avoids being cut-off during the printing process.

LABEL

We recommend:
- Keep all critical text and graphics at least 1/8" from the trim edge
- Include at least 1/8" bleed

We accept:
- Content 1/16" from trim edge
  Although not recommended, critical content should not come within 1/16" from trim edge.

SILK PRINT

We recommend:
- Keep content 1/8" from the right and left edge
  This will ensure your artwork will print clearly.
- Avoid placing content within the squeegee lift area
  Silk Printing needs 1/4'' of free space on left or right side to operate correctly.
- Do not extend content beyond the maximum dimension
  Since Silk Printing is applied directly to a container, bleeds are not necessary.

10. Wraps and Panels

A wrap refers to how a label "wraps" around a container, and a panel is the "side" of the label that can been seen without having to rotate the container when applied.

Only about 30% of the container can be visible at any one time. Keep this in mind when designing your label so panel content is visible without turning the container.

LABEL

We recommend:
- Print out your art and adhere it to your sample container
  This is a great way to verify your artwork looks as expected.

SILK PRINT

We recommend:
- Avoid printing within 1/8" of container seams
  Most containers have mold seams that may impact how artwork prints over them.
- Print out your art and adhere it to your sample container
  This is a great way to verify your artwork looks as expected and avoid container seams.

We accept:
- Content that crosses over container seams
  Be aware that content may "smudge" if it crosses over container seams, and may reduce legibility.

Resources:
How to Make the Perfect Label

11. Templates and Dielines

Some of our print partners require artwork built using their templates. In these cases, your Container and Packaging consultant will provide a template for your designer to use. We also offer templates, for both label and silk printing, for all of our containers on our website.

We recommend:
- Verify the template fits your container correctly
  Your container may have a slight taper, so labels may need to be designed with that in mind.

We recommend:
- Verify the template fits your container correctly
  Your container may have a slight taper, but this process can accommodate for small tapers.

12. Clear and Chrome Labels

Colors will appear dull on clear labels if a "white base" is not included. The "white base" will be printed below the rest of the colors to help your colors appear more vibrant.

Labels on a chrome substrate also require a "white base" everywhere the metallic appearance should be blocked out. This will allow the areas without a "white base" to have a colored metallic appearance.

Artwork should include this "white base" as a separate layer, indicated as 100% magenta, everywhere white should be printed for non-metallic areas.

For Clear labels we recommend:
- Include a "white base" layer under all content you don't intent to appear clear
  This acts as a "primer base" to help your colors pop.

For Chrome labels we recommend:
- Include a "white base" layer under all non-metallic content
  This acts as a "primer base" to cover the chrome substrate.

13. Review / Confirm

Print it out and try it on. You'll be amazed at how many problems you'll catch if you do this simple trick. Print your label out at actual size (double check that Adobe Acrobat does not have "Shrink to page" selected) on any printer, cut it out, and tape it to your container. You'll quickly see that your front panel is too wide, your text is too small, your label doesn't fit, the wrap doesn't line up, etc.

LABEL

SILK PRINT

We recommend:
- Proofread your content
  Check for spelling, proper instructions, correct ingredients and legibility. You'll be glad you did.

- Print-out your art and place it on your container
  This is a great way to confirm your label looks as you expected.

- Does your container have tapered walls?
  Double-wall jars may not look like they have tappered walls but most do (~1/2 degree).

14. Submit

The last step is to have someone check your art and make sure that it's going to print successfully. The last thing that you want to do is print hundreds of labels and find they aren't the right size, the image is fuzzy, the text is too hard to read, or the color is off. Pay the nominal fee to have your art checked by our Studio, and you can move forward with the assurance that you haven't made any mistakes. We wish you the best of luck with preparing art files for label printing.

LABEL

SILK PRINT

We recommend:
- Clearly name your files
  This is helpful when product lines that have several types, and/or sizes

15. Celebrate

Behold, the finished product. A quality label on a quality container is a quality thing.

LABEL

SILK PRINT

We recommend:
- Do a happy dance
  Don't worry... nobody is looking.

- Buy donuts for the office
  Let eveyone share in your achievement of a beautifully designed container.