

# The Smallprint Co.



LETTERPRESS & DESIGN

## Tech Spec

### *Preparing artwork for letterpress*

Letterpress printing is easier to work with than you might realise. If you've not worked with letterpress before though, we've put some handy tips together to help you prepare your artwork.

Each colour is printed one at a time and so print jobs with more than one colour will pass through the press at least twice. This can sometimes cause small amounts of movement. If you've got a question, just get in touch!

### *Artwork*

#### *What file format should I use?*

Our preferred file format for artwork is a press quality PDF. We also take Adobe Illustrator, Photoshop, and InDesign files. Please ensure all fonts are outlined and all components are high resolution.

#### *How should I set up my artwork?*

Create your file as a CMYK document - do not use RGB. For full bleed, set the artwork file at the intended trimmed size and add 3mm bleed on all sides. If the design is not full bleed and sits within an area leave at least 3mm between the edge of the design and the edge of the paper to allow for trim. Die cut lines should be shown as a 100% magenta stroke and any crease lines with a 100% cyan dashed stroke. Registration and trim marks should be indicated with registration colour but we can do this for you.

#### *Can letterpress print fine detail?*

Letterpress can print extremely fine detail. If it's on your artwork it will be on our plates.

#### *How thin can my lines and strokes be?*

We can print extremely fine lines and we can advise if you need to use finer lines with lighter weights. If your artwork contains any lines or strokes keep your line weight at least .25pt. This may need to be increased for any isolated lines.

#### *Do I need to create colour separations?*

Don't worry about this we'll take care of it for you and this is included in the price. Send your artwork layered, do not flatten or rasterize any layers and please don't send each colour as a separate file or plate. Your artwork file should look as you intend to it to be printed.

#### *What is trapping?*

Trapping is a pre-press technique where small overlaps are created between adjacent colours to compensate for small movements in registration as each colour is printed one at a time. If you are unsure about trapping we can take care of this for you.

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### *Do you check my artwork before printing?*

Yes, we always check your artwork files thoroughly. We check dimensions, resolution and fonts and we always send a digital pre-press proof to you for your approval before proceeding to print.

We do not check your design for choice of colours or placement of any elements of the design. If your artwork is not suitable for letterpress printing or your artwork is not a print ready file we will inform you of any changes that may be required, together with the charges for making these amendments.

If you cannot make any changes to the artwork we can prepare the artwork file for you (please note that this is a chargeable service).

### *Inks and Colours*

#### *What inks do you use?*

We use a mixture of rubber based and oil based inks. Some inks take a little longer to dry than others and this can affect the turnaround time.

#### *Which colours should I use?*

We carry a comprehensive collection of core pantone colours and we can match to any Pantone reference provided from the uncoated Pantone swatch library.

#### *Which Pantone's should I use?*

We match our inks to the Pantone Matching System (PMS). Please use spot colours chosen from the Pantone Solid Uncoated colour book in the Swatch Libraries and provide a PMS Uncoated colour reference with your artwork. We can also mix and match to any other swatches provided. We cannot mix inks to CMYK, RGB or Hex and will not match inks to colours used on a computer screen. We mix to very small quantities and aim to match as close as possible but please remember that some variation may occur.

#### *I don't have access to a Pantone book, what do I do?*

We can match to a swatch of paper, fabric or cutting from a magazine.

#### *Can I have white ink on dark stocks?*

Letterpress inks are more translucent than opaque and any ink on light paper works better than light coloured inks on dark papers. Unless this is what you want from the design we recommend keeping to light coloured papers. Printing on dark papers is possible and we can achieve some striking results printing a transparent white or tint. Metallic colours are opaque and print well onto dark papers with striking results. For best results we advise printing a hot foil for an opaque result. We are always happy to advise. Ask us for more information on our hot foil printing service!

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### *Can you print a large solid area?*

We cannot guarantee a solid flat area of colour over a certain size and will need to view your artwork before we commit to print. Large solids do not print as well as in other printing techniques. The texture of the paper will show through the ink and can appear uneven and patchy. However, it may be possible to use a coloured stock rather than print a flat area of colour. Again, we will advise.

### *Fonts & Typefaces*

We have a large collection of antique moveable wood and metal type. We also use digital type and have access to thousands of digital fonts, with access to commercial font libraries. If you need a font that we don't already have, we can source it for you but remember that a charge may sometimes apply.

### *What's the smallest font size you can print?*

For best results keep font sizes to 7pt or above. Depending on the font we might be able to print smaller type. We have printed type 5pt but please do consult with us if your type is smaller than 7pt.

### *Do I need to outline my fonts?*

Yes, please make sure all fonts are converted to outlines before sending us your artwork file.

### *Do I need to send my fonts to you with my artwork?*

You will need to send fonts to us if we're creating your artwork for you and you have a specific font in mind. However, if all your fonts are converted to outlines you don't need to. Where fonts are reversed out it is advisable to enlarge or use a bolder alternative to help avoid any ink fill-in. We will use our judgement and advise if any adjustment is required.

### *Paper*

We have access to a vast range of papers from across the world which we have selected for their individual qualities and merits.

### *What's the thickest paper you can print on?*

We have printed on paper up to 1000 mic.

### *Can I have a deep impression?*

We print with enough pressure to create a tactile crisp print with a deboss into the stock. Impression depths can vary depending on the stock. A heavy stock will take a deeper impression than a light stock. Please note that a heavy impression can cause the paper to buckle so we print with as deep an impression as possible without compromising the paper or quality of the print. We are happy to advise at time of print.

*Will I see any show through on the back?*

There will be some evidence of an impression on the opposite side of the print. Where there is print on both sides we may adjust pressure and impression to achieve the best possible results. We may also suggest alternatives for elements of the artwork that overlap from front to back to avoid any flattening or bruising.

Need some advice?

Call us on 07806 782109 or email [hello@smallprintcompany.co.uk](mailto:hello@smallprintcompany.co.uk)

### 5 Top Tips *for* Successful Letterpress

1. Ask a friend to check your artwork for spelling and grammar.
2. Spot colours are preferred in original artwork. RGB or Hex colours are not recommended.
3. Choose your ink colours from the Pantone uncoated colour swatch book.
4. Remember - dark inks on light papers work better than light inks on dark papers.
5. Colours are printed one colour at a time.