

Key elements of artwork set-up



1. Colour Profiles

CMYK vs. RGB:

CMYK (Cyan, Magenta, Yellow, Black) is the standard for print production, while RGB (Red, Green, Blue) is for digital screens. Always convert artwork to CMYK before sending it to print to avoid colour mismatches.

Spot Colours and Pantone Matching:

For brand consistency, especially in logos, use spot colours or Pantone matching systems to ensure colours remain the same across different packaging and materials. Example: Coca-Cola’s signature red is a specific Pantone colour that ensures uniformity across all markets.

2. Bleed, Trim, and Safety Margins

Bleed Area:

Extend the artwork 3mm beyond the trim line to prevent white edges from showing if the print is slightly misaligned during cutting. Example: For a box design, ensure any background colours or patterns “bleed” past the edges of the cut area.

Trim Line:

The actual cut line of the packaging. Ensure that critical elements like logos or text do not sit too close to this line to avoid being trimmed off.

Safety Margins:

Keep important content, such as text or logos, at least 5–10mm inside the trim line to ensure they remain visible and undisturbed during production.

3. Resolution and Image Quality

High-Resolution Images:

Use images with at least 300 DPI (dots per inch) for sharp, clear prints. Low-resolution images result in pixelation, which diminishes the overall quality of the packaging.

Vector Graphics:

Whenever possible, use vector graphics (e.g., SVG, AI, or EPS files) for logos, icons, and illustrations. Unlike raster images, vectors can be scaled infinitely without losing quality.

File Compression:

Avoid excessive file compression (e.g., low-quality JPEGs), as this can cause artifacts and degrade print quality.

4. Fonts and Text

Convert Fonts to Outlines:

Converting fonts to outlines ensures that text renders correctly even if the printer does not have the specific font installed.

Font Size for Legibility:

Ensure all text meets minimum size requirements for readability (e.g., at least 6pt for European compliance).

Text Alignment:

Avoid placing text in areas where folds or cuts may occur, such as along the edges of boxes or near perforations.

5. File Formats

Preferred Formats:

Print-ready PDF files are the standard for most printers due to their ability to retain vector data, fonts, and high-resolution images in a compact format.

Layer Organization:

Maintain clearly labelled layers for elements like die lines, artwork, and regulatory markings to simplify the printer’s workflow.