Supplying cover files for print

The following information has been put together to give you an explanation of pre-press preparation and guide you through preparing your cover files for print. There are certain variables that can affect components during production and though on their own they can be small, they can combine to affect the final cover design on the trimmed book. It is useful therefore to follow some basic guidelines.

Cover Colours

We print all our of covers in CMYK (Cyan, Magenta, Yellow, Black) with an option to use Pantones. Although the colour profile is called CMYK, we print all covers in the following colour order: Black, Cyan, Magenta, Yellow.

Four Colour Printing

- 4/0 refers to single-sided, four colour printing
- 4/1 refers to doubled-sided printing, four colour printing on the front and single colour printing on the reverse of the cover
- 4/4 refers to double-sided four colour printing
- If printing 4/1 or 4/4 you will need to provide two separate cover files for printing - one for inner and one for outer
- Pantones - a pantone is a specific colour code, usually defined by a series of numbers and not often accurately matched by a 4 colour printing process. If you have an important stand-out colour that you want to use in a series of books and can't accurately be matched with a 4 colour printing process, then we suggest you use a 5th colour- a specific Pantone.

Note: Please ensure all cover files are set to CMYK to help with accurate colour matching. If you supply your file with an RGB colour profile and we convert it to CMYK, the colours will be different to the colours that you see on your screen at home. If you are concerned we can produce digital proofs that use a highy sophisticated colour matching system that will give you an accurate representation of how your cover with print. Speak to your account controller for more information.

Ink Density

When designing work using 100% of all 4 process colours, there can be potential problems due to the curing of the black ink. If a black solid is covered by another 3 solids, the curing of the ink, and consequently the setting of the ink to the cover board, can be affected.
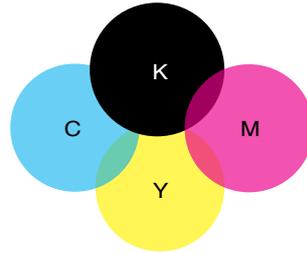
The potential problems could be:

- Ink that is not dry can be transferred to the fore-edge of the books when trimmed in the bindery
- Ink that is not cured can flake off the board, including any finishes on top, i.e. foil and varnish
- With large areas, the adhesion of the laminate can also be affected, and UV varnish can give a mottled effect

Maximum ink coverage should therefore not exceed 300% and you can check these levels on the software that you are using to create your cover. If you are having your cover designed professionally then this is something that you can check with your cover designer.

Spine Width

When designing the cover it is essential that you have the correct spine width. Spine width is effected by the text paper and the number of pages so any adjustments made to the production sepcifications need to be taken into consideration or discussed with the cover designer. Please follow the link below for access to our spine width calculator or speak to your account controller.

Spine Width Calculator
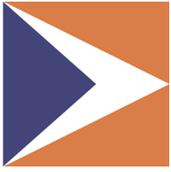
Bleeds and Crop Marks

When you supply your PDF you will need to add:

- Bleed
- Crop marks
- Spine width marks

This is so that we know where the edge of the cover sits and the intended spine width. Where images run to the trim, a bleed allowance needs to be made to account for the tolerances in printing. The image should continue outside the trim area to ensure that the image covers the whole of the print area and so that there is no risk of the image not covering the whole area once trimmed. When we pre-flight your files, if there are any issues we will flag them up so that you can make any necessary adjustments.

- Bleeds should be a minimum of 3mm around all 4 edges of the cover
- Crop marks and spine-width marks should be withdrawn at least 2mm away from the edge of the cover to avoid them being printed on the final cover

Creating cover files

We have created some simple templates in order to illustrate how cover files should be set-up. Please follow the links below.

Paperback
Paperback with flaps
Flat-backed hardback - cover for case
Round-backed hardback - cover for case
Jackets

Notes for jacket files
- *min. flap width: 70mm*
- *max. flap widths for standard formats are as follows:*
  - *large crown: 109mm*
  - *Demy: 115mm*
  - *Royal: 130mm*
- *Maximum jacket width, including flaps, is 600mm*
- *Maximum flap widths for all other formats should be no greater than 20mm less than the measurement of spine to foredge trim size*
- *Any image that is to bleed beyond the front fold should be extended by a minimum of 10mm*
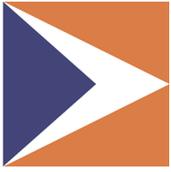
Cover images

The higher the resolution of the image, the higher the quality printing that we can achieve. Four colour and greyscale images should have a minimum resolution of 300dpi or above. This is industry standard and will ensure that you get a good result - a low resolution image will be pixelated and less defined. Bitmap or line-work images should have a minimum of 550dpi.

low resolution   high resolution

Please make sure that all images within your cover file are set to CMYK. If, for example, you submit a file that has your logo set to RGB and a background image set to CMYK, when we convert the whole file to CMYK, the colours in the logo will look different. We do perform pre-press checks on your submitted files however it is your or your designers responsibility to ensure that the cover is set to the correct colour settings when we receive it. You can either check with your designer or check the document settings on the software that you have used.

Cover finishes

All cover finishes, including spot-uv, embossing, debossing and foils, require additional files to isolate the area that requires that specific finish. This is because the finish is applied to the printed cover after printing the 4 colour file.

The finishing files should have exactly the same set-up as the cover or jacket files. It is essential that these files match the 4 colour file exactly in size and position. The finishing files should be made from a solid colour (we reccommend black) and can either be incorporated into the 4 colour file on a separate layer, or can alternatively be supplied as a separate PDF file and labelled appropriately. The important thing to remember is that they need to correspond exactly to avoid mis-fit.

If files are set-up correctly then you will obtain the desired finish but if it hasn't been positioned correctly, you could end up with a cover where spot-uv sits outside the desired area.

Final checks: Guidelines for cover designers

- Provide files as PDF's using logical file names

- Use suitable fonts and embed them within the PDF

- Use high resolution images in the PDF file and ensure that they are set to the correct colour profile

- Type and non-bleeding images should be withdrawn 4mm from book trims

- Make sure that your spine-width is correct- it is worth noting that spines on sewn books can be between 1mm and 2mm larger than their unsewn equivalents (contact your account controller if you are unsure)

- Logos and type for wider spines should be sized to give 2mm minimum space either side of the image. This should be increased to 3mm on spines exceeding 30mm

- Make sure that the trim size is correct

- Check that your trim and spine-width marks are correct and withdrawn 2mm from the print area

- Spine bulks of less than 5mm should contain no type on the spine

- The cover file must have a minimum 3mm bleed around all 4 edges of the cover

- Files for cover finishes should be supplied as separate files/layers and be in one solid colour - black is recommended. Each finish should be a separate file.

- Make sure that finishing files fit the 4 colour file exactly

This guide has been put together to provide useful information but if you have any further questions regarding supplying your cover files for print, please contact your account controller and they will happily help you with your query.