Artwork
Guidelines

Includes pricing guidelines

Mercian
Labels

Artwork

To help our clients and their design houses, we've set out the core requirements for artwork files. Please follow these guidelines to ensure a trouble-free workflow that will produce great results for you and your client.

Artwork Format

We recommend using VECTOR based graphics software such as Illustrator CS6/CC or Corel Draw. Vector software will ensure that your finished product is of higher quality than Raster based artwork (i.e. Photoshop). It also enables better flexibility when colour-matching to previously printed labels from other suppliers, as the colours in the design can be easily altered and edited.

Files should be exported in an editable vector PDF format, with all images and fonts embedded (not just a jpeg saved as a PDF file). **A jpeg is not acceptable** for most designs.

If the fonts cannot be embedded, the best option is to **convert the text to outline paths instead.** Files with missing fonts will cause problems and delays with your orders. Any raster/photographic images within your design should be at least 300dpi otherwise they may appear pixelated once printed. Graphics pulled from a website are not good enough quality for print purposes.

Cutter Guides

Please create a "Cutter Guide" to show us exactly where to cut your labels correctly. These lines are later removed in the studio before going onto the press. When you supply a cutter guide within your artwork, please make sure it is **a stroked line set to a spot colour which MUST be named "7"** at the actual size and shape that you require us to cut. This allows our pre-press software and our printing presses to view the cutter guide whilst also preventing them from being printed. Setting the cutter guide correctly will save time and may avoid the need for us to charge for time in graphics.

Safe Area

To allow for slight movements during print, there should always be a **"safe area" of at least 1.5mm inside the edge of the cutter guide** where no text or important elements are located. This will prevent the cutter removing any critical content from the label.

Bleed

In the same way that we need a safe area, we also need to allow for "bleed," which is the area that extends over the edges of the finished labels. Allowing a tolerance for slight movement prevents the finished product having white edges.

We ask our customers to create a **1.5mm bleed on each edge** of the artwork (e.g. the artwork should be 3mm wider and taller than the required label size; so, a label size of 76 x 51mm should be designed on an artboard that measures 79 x 54mm).

Finishing and Materials

Certain substrates may darken or lighten the colours of your artwork once printed, and different finishes can also affect the colour; matt varnish can dull colours and gloss lamination can increase the brightness. If you are unsure how these would impact your design, we would recommend a printed press proof which is available at a small additional charge.

Metallic Colours

Our digital presses use CMYK toner to create a range of metallic colours in print. Therefore, there is no need to use metallic pantones in artwork as this does not help to achieve the metallic effect on press.

By printing onto silver polypropylene, we can create a variety of metallic colours. If your design does not need to be metallic, we must create a white plate to flatten the silver. These **white plates are made by creating a layer above the artwork with a spot colour named "5,"** which is then **set to overprint.** When our presses see this layer, white will automatically be printed under the CMYK artwork.

Mercian Labels

Artwork **White Substrate Submission Guidelines**

Clear Areas

If you would like to show areas that are meant to be clear then use the shown pattern on a layer called 'Clear'.

Cutter Guide •7

Cutter should be named spot colour 7, should match the size of the label and have 2mm radius corners as standard.

Bleed Area

Please allow 1.5mm of bleed on each edge of the design.

Rich Blacks

Areas of rich black don't require a white plate because they are dense enough.

Mercian Labels

Black text and barcodes should use 100% black else it can cause issues with the print.

Text should be no smaller than 8pt if more than one colour is used. (Magenta and Yellow here)

This is also true for shades of grey as they are created using tones (dots).

Really small text should be in black only and no smaller than 4pt.

To avoid any problems with fonts all text should be sent outlined.

RICH BLACK
(C40 M30 Y30 K100)

Pantone 356C

Mercian Colour Swatch

Rich Black
(C40 M30 Y30 K100)

100% Black
(Best black to use most of the time, especially with text and barcodes)

Shiny gold
(For creating gold with silver material)

Shiny Silver
(For denote areas that will be silver when using silver material)

5 (Spot white)
(When printing white on any material other than white use this colour)

7 (Cutline)
(Our system picks up colours named 7 as a cutter and won't print them)

ML_VAR
(For any areas that we will print as variable data)

Mercian

Spot Colours

Pantone spot colours should be left as a spot colour. Our system will convert it to CMYK before print.

Images

Any images should be at least 300dpi at the size it will be printed at. If it looks poor quality on the screen it will look poor quality when printed.

Safe Zone •

Objects that do not bleed off the edge should be no closer than 1.5mm from the cut line to avoid being cut off and allow for movement.

Barcodes

Barcodes need to be scannable. Light colours and a lack of contrast between the bars and background will make this difficult. We recommend using 100% black with a white background. Small barcodes should only be 100% black.

Mercian Labels

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Safe Zone •

Objects that do not bleed off the edge should be no closer than 1.5mm from the cut line to avoid being cut off and allow for movement.

White Plate •5

A white plate should be set above any CMYK areas should use spot colour '5' and must be set to overprint! This is how our press registers in order to print the colour white.

Metallic Finish •

Any colours on silver that **don't** have a **white plate** on them will be given a metallic effect. Silver areas should be named as spot colour 'Shiny Silver'.

Mercian Labels

Artwork panel content

Text should have a white plate on it unless it is not big enough to be trapped.

Light coloured text will look translucent on clear without any white behind it.

Any text you require to be printed white should be set to spot colour '5' with overprint turned off.

Black text and barcodes should use 100% black else it can cause issues with the print.

Text should be no smaller than 8pt if more than one colour is used. (Magenta and Yellow here)

This is also true for shades of grey as they are created using tones (dots).

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ML_VAR (For any areas that we will print as variable data)