

**Artwork issues are the
#1 reason for delays
and extra charges!**



**IT DOESN'T HAVE TO HAPPEN TO YOU:
Learn the 6 simple mistakes that cause over
75% of artwork related delays and problems.**



1. Didn't follow our Artwork Specifications

The #1 most common problem is, without a doubt, failing to read (or not following) our Artwork Specifications. Let's face it, if people followed the specifications we wouldn't need to write this list.

Mind you, a surprising number of people admit that if they are confused about something on the Artwork Specifications (such as terminology), they just guess and carry on with their design, hoping for the best. If you do have a question or if there's something that you're not sure about... don't guess... just give us a call or shoot us an e-mail because that's what we're here for!

IMPORTANT: Different manufacturers often have different specifications and requirements, so when in doubt call Realtime and get the answer straight from us.

2. Didn't use our Design Templates

The 2nd most common problem is creating your design with someone else's Design Templates. As noted in item #1, different manufacturers often have different specifications and requirements, and this is most commonly found with Design Templates. If you choose to supply your designs on someone else's templates you run the risk of having your artwork rejected - this applies to discs, inserts, and packaging.

We have a really good selection of templates that you can download from our website but if there is something specific you're looking for and don't see it on our website, that doesn't mean it's not available. Please give us a call and we'll be happy to be of assistance.

3. Fonts, Fonts, Fonts

The 3rd most common problem is with fonts (aka: timesteps). Font issues are becoming much more common due to different computer platforms and operating systems, and the variety of font styles and font formats available.

To prevent this issue we require your artwork files to be supplied with all fonts converted to 'outlines' or 'curves' (if using Photoshop you would 'rasterize' your text layers). In short, 'outlining' your fonts changes them from being computer-recognizable and editable timesteps into a collection of lines and curves.

4. Bleed & Gutter

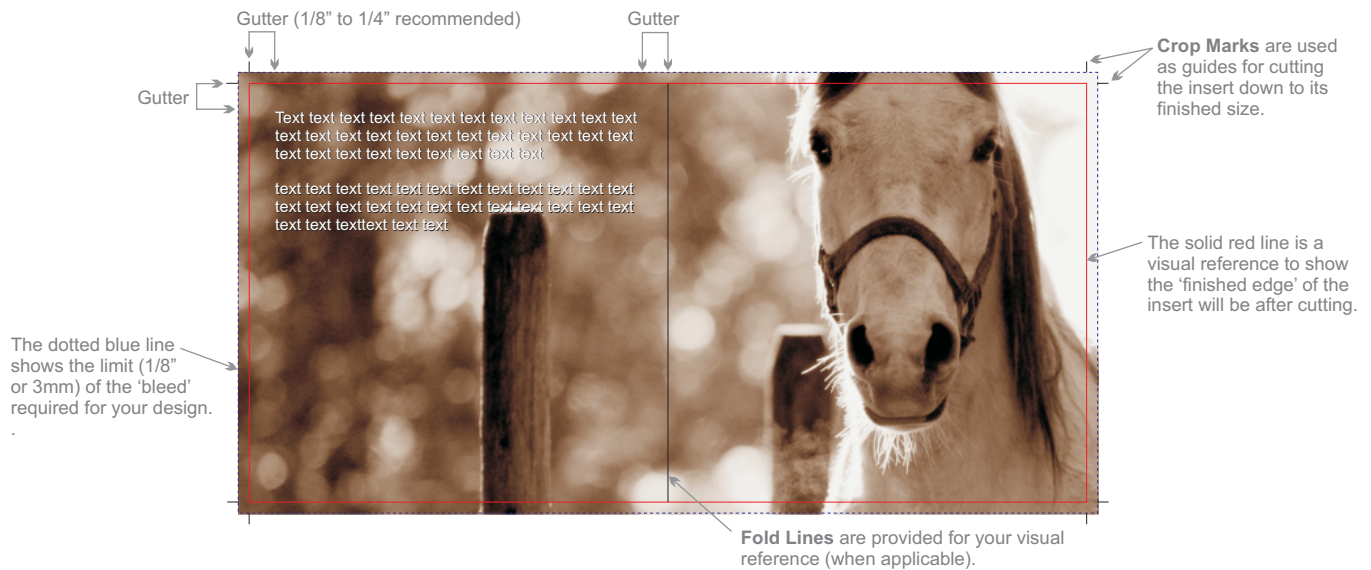
The 4th most common problem is the requirement for 'Bleed' and 'Gutter' in your design:

Bleed: Your design must allow for a little bit of movement in the cutting process when your paper inserts, disc sleeves, or Digipak are being trimmed down to their finished size. To allow for this, any aspect of your design that touches the finished edge (represented by the solid red line in the design template) must continue past (aka: 'bleed' past) the finished edge by 1/8" (3mm). *See the following page for an example.*

Gutter: When you read a book or magazine you will notice a gap, or margin, between the edge of the page and the edge of the text. In printing terminology this margin is called 'Gutter' and it is very important for overall visual quality and legibility. While the use of gutter typically applies to the finished edge of the design (represented by the solid red line in the design template) it can also apply to 'folds' as well. Additionally, gutter should also be used for images and graphics that are placed within the design that do not bleed past the finished edge. A minimum gutter distance of 1/8" to 1/4" (3mm to 6mm) is recommended for most CD and DVD designs. *See the following page for an example.*



Continued from #4 - demonstration of 'Bleed' and 'Gutter' using a 2 panel design template



5. Designing Screenprinted Discs

The 5th most common problem is designing for Screenprinted discs. We provide two types of print for replicated discs: CMYK Offset print which is state-of-the-art and well suited for designs with photographic content and complex-color designs; and Screenprint which is well suited for line-art, solid color and less intricate designs.

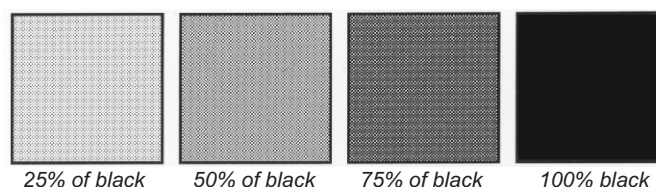
Designing for Screenprint is a lot different than CMYK Offset, so here are some helpful tips:

(A) Best results come from line-art graphics and text... refrain from using bitmaps whenever possible. Use Adobe Illustrator, Indesign, or other commercial-grade design program that allows you to design with line-art graphics and text. We do not recommend the use of Photoshop for Screenprint designs because everything that Photoshop generates is in bitmap form.

(B) Your design must be color separable. When Screenprinting, the colors print one at a time with each color printed from its own screen. The best way to create your design for Screenprinting is to set up your Layer Menu so each color is designed on its own separate layer.

(C) When Screenprinting, only the elements that have 100% solid color value will print as a solid color. If you are designing with transparencies, gradients, or any percentage of color that is less than 100% it will print as a 'dot' pattern and not as the solid/consistent color you view on your computer monitor or design proof (see below for an example). Only designers who are very experienced with Screenprinting should attempt to use transparencies, gradients and percentages of color in their Screenprint designs.

(D) For Screenprinting, your color values must be supplied as **Pantone Matching System** 'Solid Coated' colors. The proper designation for this color value is "C" (for example: PMS 123C).





6. Low Resolution

The 6th most common problem is low resolution imagery. Designing for commercial print is different than designing for the internet and other computer-viewed uses - one of the biggest differences involves the resolution of photos and bitmap graphics.

Typical image resolution for the internet is 72dpi because it provides a good balance between image quality for computer monitor viewing and low file size for quick downloading. For commercial printing processes an image resolution of 300dpi is required for professional print results.

An example of image resolution is shown below. For best effect, zoom in (200%) to view the images.



*Image "A":
Created at 300dpi
Saved at 300dpi*



*Image "B":
Created at 72dpi
Saved at 72dpi*



*Image "C":
Created at 72dpi
Saved at 300dpi*

Image "A" was created at 300dpi resolution and saved at 300dpi resolution. You will note a sharp and clear overall image quality. *Image "B"* was created and saved at 72dpi resolution. You will notice a jagged and somewhat blurry image quality. *Image "C"* was created at 72dpi but was re-sampled to 300dpi. Artificially increasing the resolution of the image does not provide a true 300dpi quality image. While the result is less jagged in appearance than the 72dpi version, it is noticeably more blurry and does not compare well with the quality of *Image "A"*.

Design Tips:

- (A) When creating bitmap graphics make sure your design page properties are at 300dpi and in the CMYK color mode (or Grayscale if applicable) before you begin your design.
- (B) If scanning photos or graphics, ensure your scanning properties are set to 300dpi before you begin your scan.
- (C) File types such as .JPG, .GIF and .PNG are commonly used for the internet and multimedia but they are highly compressed and don't provide the best results for commercial printing. We recommend you save all bitmap images in the .TIF (or .TIFF) file format with no compression.
- (D) Process and save your bitmap images at the same height and width that you require in your finished design. Do not place a bitmap into your design and then manually shrink its size down to fit.
- (E) Photoshop is perfect for processing photos and bitmap graphics but is not recommended for typesetting. Even at 300dpi small text in Photoshop can reproduce looking jagged and blurry. Best results are achieved when using Photoshop for processing photos and bitmap graphics only, and then importing the finished bitmap files into a program such as Illustrator for final design/layout and typesetting.