COMMERCIAL PRINT
File Guide

For business cards, brochures, flyers, postcards, booklets and direct mail, send a print-ready PDF.

B&B PRINT SOURCE
BE IMPRESSED

Choosing the Right File Format

Type of Artwork	Preferred File Type
Business cards, brochures, flyers, postcards, booklets and direct mail	**.pdf**
Logos, icons, large-format graphics, signage and artwork that needs to scale	**.ai**
Logos, spot-color artwork and legacy files	**.eps**
Product photography, portraits and full-bleed images	**.tif or high-res .jpg**
Web and digital ads (usable in print with proper color conversion)	**.png**

PDF: the gold standard for print-ready files

A print-ready PDF should have fonts embedded, images at 300 dpi or higher at final print size, bleed included where required, and color set to CMYK. Not all PDFs are equal. A PDF exported from Word is very different from one exported from InDesign.

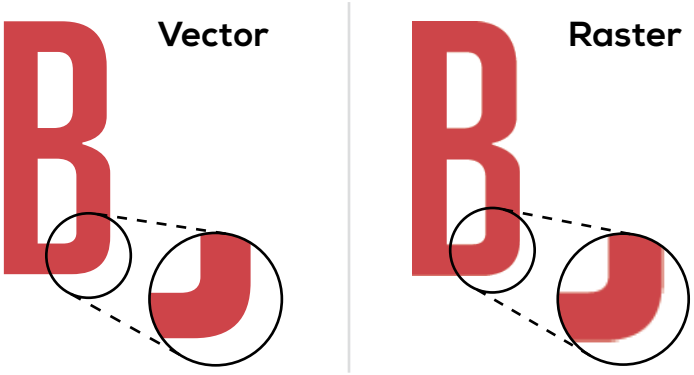
Photos

TIFF is a preferred format for product photography, portraits and full-bleed images. Aim for 300 dpi at final print size. Photos are raster images, so check their resolution and quality at the intended print size.

Vector vs. Raster

Vector files (.ai, .eps, .pdf, .svg) can contain mathematical paths, lines and curves that scale without losing sharpness. They're ideal for logos, illustrations and graphics that need to scale.

Raster files (.jpg, .png, .tif, .gif) are made of pixels and have a fixed resolution. Enlarging them too much can cause blur and pixelation. Photographs, scans and screenshots are typically raster images.



Check Your Artwork

Check every element, not just the file type. A vector document can still contain raster images, such as a logo pasted in as a JPEG, a photo placed in the design, or a placeholder screenshot that was never replaced.

- **Zoom in to inspect edges.** Soft or blocky edges may indicate a low-resolution raster image.
- **Check for editable paths.** In Illustrator, vector artwork typically contains editable paths and shapes. If an element selects as one flat image, it may be raster.
- **Check the file extension.** Renaming a .jpg to .pdf or .ai, or choosing .eps in Save As, doesn't turn pixels into vector artwork. The artwork must be redrawn in vector software or professionally vectorized.

Sending Your Files

Linked images and fonts need to be sent with the .indd or .ai file. Use the Package function in InDesign or the appropriate collection and packaging options in Illustrator to gather the layout file, linked images and other required assets into one folder.

- **Linked images** don't travel with the file. Without them, images show up missing, low-res or blank.
- **Missing fonts** get replaced with a default font, changing your design without warning.
- **Can't share fonts because of licensing?** Outline the text before sending. Outlined text can't be edited.

AI-generated artwork

Artwork created with AI tools such as ChatGPT or Canva may not be suitable for wide format production. An additional artwork fee applies to rebuild it as a high-resolution, production-ready file. The rebuilt design will closely resemble the original but may not match exactly.

Before You Send

☐ Inspect your artwork

Check that logos and other elements are suitable for the intended print size. Zoom in to spot blurry or pixelated images, and verify that embedded raster elements have sufficient resolution.

☐ Check your file setup

Confirm that your PDF is print-ready, with fonts embedded, images at the required resolution, bleed where needed and the correct color settings.

☐ Package layout files

InDesign and Illustrator files need their linked images and required fonts. Use the appropriate packaging tools to gather them together.

Have File Prep Questions?

Send the file to your B&B sales rep and we'll check it before your job moves forward.
A five-minute check beats a reprint.

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