



Using Templates to Create Direct-Mail Postcards

When it comes to business, efficiency equals profitability. If you're a graphic designer, you know that mundane tasks such as setting up custom printing templates can be very time-consuming. Time is money, and the less time you have to waste on these repetitive tasks, the more time you can focus on designing creative artwork for your clients — and getting paid for it. One of the best ways to speed up postcard design — while ensuring the finished product looks exactly as intended — is to use layout templates.

The following is a guide to using templates to create effective direct mail postcards:

Postcard templates use a series of lines that not only set up the size and shape of the postcard, but also ensure the postcard will be printed quickly, efficiently and exactly as intended. Postcards can come in many different sizes, but the layout lines always represent the same things. Understanding the layout lines and following them accordingly means your clients' postcards will come off the press looking great. They are:



Bleed Area

On postcard templates, this is the area outside the actual card's dimensions that colors and lines must be drawn through to ensure edge-to-edge printing. If you're designing a postcard with a blue background, for instance, you'll want to make sure that the blue extends all the way to the outside edges of the bleed area.

Cutline

This line represents the card's dimensions, and where the finished print job will be cut. Most presses have a variance of up to one-quarter inch, so even though your

template has a cutline you'll want to take notice of the Bleed Area to ensure you don't have an uneven white border. You can use the cutline to help gauge the distance from your postcard's edge to the graphic and text elements of the card, in conjunction with the safety line.

Safety Line

This line represents the safe area of the card. All of the postcard's graphic and text elements should be inside this line, or they could potentially be cut off — the last thing you want. Any elements placed inside the safety line area will not be cut off, leaving little room for ambiguity between the design on your computer and what the finished product will look like.

Using postcard templates to streamline your graphic design business is a great idea, because every time you start a new postcard project you won't have to waste time setting up these lines — or worry that the final print will be ruined by a lopsided cut. Spectrum offers free postcard layout templates. You should always take advantage of these free resources, because use of these templates will make your business more productive and efficient, will save you worry and stress and will ultimately help you make more money faster.

About Us

Since 1985, Spectrum has provided better printing and service to nearly 5000 small business marketers, business owners and graphic designers. Spectrum combines state-of-the-art capabilities and the industry's best digital and offset sheet fed and web printing equipment with experienced print professionals and color specialists to deliver quality, consistent color matching and 99.8 percent on-time delivery. By offering a 100 percent customer satisfaction guarantee, Spectrum also stands behind every order, every time. Spectrum is your success story!

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