



ART & TEMPLATE GUIDE

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- 100 qty 12" Vinyl
- Standard Full Color Jackets
- Full Color Center Labels
- Direct Metal Mastering
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GET STARTED NOW



CONTENTS



The Basics

/// Quick Checklist.....	4
/// Our Templates.....	4-6

General Overview.....	7
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Graphics - In-Depth Breakdown

/// Recommended Software.....	8
/// Resolution.....	8
/// Color Mode.....	9
/// Bleed & Safety Lines.....	10
/// Fonts.....	11
/// Linked Images.....	11
/// Barcode.....	12
/// Saving Your Files.....	12
/// Uploading Your Files.....	13

3RD Party Graphic Software.....	14
---	-----------

Support & Contact Information

/// Trouble with our Templates?.....	15
/// Hire Atomic for Graphic Services.....	15
/// Any Questions? Ask Away!.....	15

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www.atomicdisc.com

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Atomic Disc LLC
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THE BASICS

THANK YOU for downloading our templates! This guide will walk you through our process and help you prepare your graphics for print with Atomic Disc. The Basics will provide you with a brief summary, and the following pages will provide more detail to help you create optimal, print ready graphics.

/// QUICK CHECKLIST

- ❑ **Please provide artwork as a high resolution FLATTENED PDF** - If we receive artwork with layers we immediately merge/flatten all layers, which may cause unpredicted results. We recommend you complete this for the most accurate rendering.
- ❑ **Artwork should be created in the CMYK color mode** - Supplying files in RGB color mode may cause unintended color shifts during the conversion process.
- ❑ **Please provide layouts with the text converted to outlines** - Keep in mind text smaller than 8pts may become illegible, depending on font choice.
- ❑ **Artwork needs to be provided with at least 1/8 inch of bleed past any cut lines** - And all text should be allowed at least 3mm of safety away from any cut or fold lines. Not adhering to this might cause text to be cut off.
- ❑ **Do not include a center hole in the label artwork for your On-Disc Print** - Allow your artwork to fill that area and we will handle knocking out the center hole during the imposition process.

/// OUR TEMPLATES

Our templates were created with you in mind first. We wanted to make the process as simple as possible for you, so you can focus on what matters most - your music. We take pride in creating the best discs and packaging for you, so rest assured.

When you open one of our templates, you will see they are layered with our header and some guidelines. **These documents are set up in such a way that all you need to do is drag and drop your content into them, size accordingly, save and send back.** They are already prepared with the proper Color Mode, Resolution and Print Size in mind so you won't need to worry about that.

DON'T FORGET - We are here to help, so don't hesitate to give us a call at (503) 610-2929 if needed and we will happily walk you through this process to ensure your vision comes to life.

Please note that not creating your files as specified may result in complications and delays in your order. When in doubt, reach out!



EXAMPLE OUR TEMPLATES

Below is an example of one of our templates. **This template was properly laid out.** Note where the artwork meets the Bleed, Cut, Fold & Safety Lines. These margins ensure your work comes out *perfect*.



ECO-PACK
4/4 - HORIZONTAL
www.atomicdisc.com
production@atomicdisc.com
(503) 610-2929

IMPORTANT

BLEED - - - - - CUT - - - - - FOLD - - - - - SAFETY - - - - -

Please double check that all important components of your submitted artwork (text, etc...) are within the supplied safe regions of the template and that your artwork extends to the bleed lines. Failure to do so may result in some clipping of your artwork or white borders around your artwork. Do NOT flatten or merge template lines with artwork.

IMPORTANT

BACK

FRONT

Text remains within the Safety Lines



Background extends past the Cut Line all the way to the Bleed Line

INSIDE LEFT

INSIDE RIGHT

Inside panels can allow for layouts that extend over the Fold Lines (middle)





EXAMPLE OUR TEMPLATES

Below is an example of one of our templates. **This template was NOT properly laid out.** Take note: Do not do these things! We do not want to shrink your artwork to margins or cut off design elements, and we want to ensure your text and barcode are legible.



ECO-PACK
4/4 - HORIZONTAL
www.atomicdisc.com
production@atomicdisc.com
(503) 610-2929

IMPORTANT BLEED - - - - - CUT - - - - - FOLD - - - - - SAFETY - - - - - **IMPORTANT**
Please double check that all important components of your submitted artwork (text, etc...) are within the supplied safe regions of the template and that your artwork extends to the bleed lines. Failure to do so may result in some clipping of your artwork or white borders appearing on the final product. Do NOT flatten or merge template lines in any way.



Text extends beyond the Safety Lines

Background does not extend to Bleed on all sides - Wings get cut off

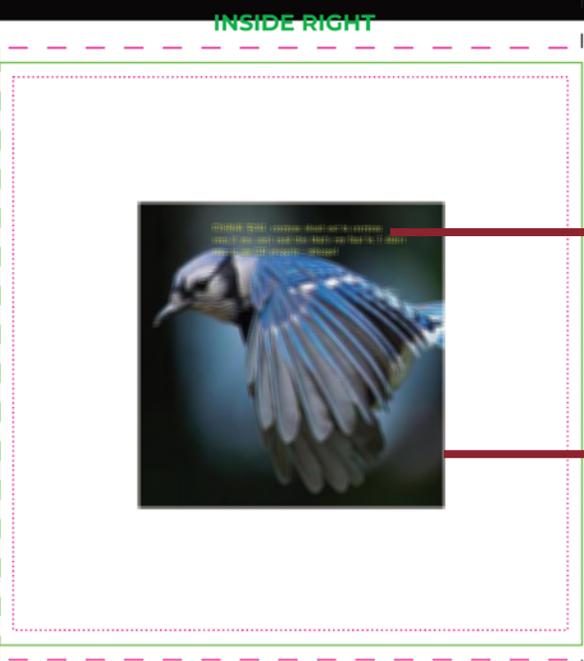
Image is the wrong aspect ratio, leaving black border

Text extends beyond Safety Line

The copyright text & barcode are too small. Barcode is inverted.



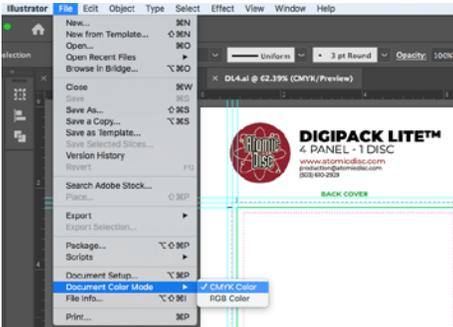
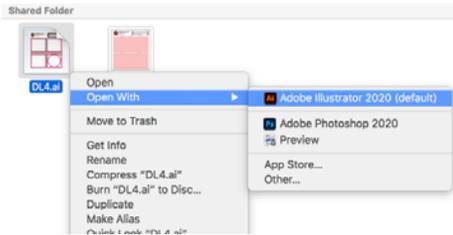
This image is watermarked



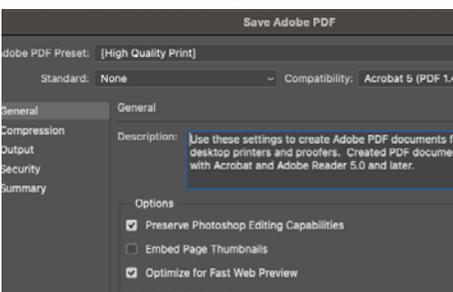
Text is too small and is illegible

Image is Low Resolution & too small to enlarge. Leaves border.

GENERAL OVERVIEW



ON DISC PRINT
ODP GRAPHIC
www.atomicdisc.com
(503) 610-2929
production@atomicdisc.com



Our general overview will give you a brief run-down of our process. If you need further instruction don't worry - we will break all of this down for you on the next page.

/// AFTER DOWNLOADING

- 1. Open up your template file in the corresponding program** - PSD opens in Photoshop, PDF opens in Illustrator and other 3RD party graphics software.
- 2. Create your artwork using the CMYK Color Mode** - (*Do not use RGB Color Mode*). When you place your artwork into the template, if it is not already CMYK our templates will convert them for you.
- 3. Ensure that your artwork falls appropriately within the template guidelines** - Safety Line, Cut Line, Fold Line and Bleed Line. There are descriptions in each of our templates that elaborate on what these lines mean, and how they will affect your artwork and final print product.
- 4. For your On-Disc Print Graphic** - Use our On-Disc Print template to appropriately size and lay this out. Do not cut out the center hole in your artwork, we got you. We also recommend not using the same image as your front cover - we use different printing processes because the materials are the same (*paper vs. CD*) and so, getting a precise color match between the 2 can be difficult.
- 5. Determine if there will be a barcode** - We can place this for you - just leave us enough space. We recommend 1.2x0.8" on the back panel.
- 6. Save your files correctly** -
 - DISABLE any template layers
 - FLATTEN your layers (*Photoshop*)
 - OUTLINE your text & EMBED your links (*Illustrator*)
 - SAVE AS High Quality PDF

REMINDER: Not creating your files as specified may result in complications and delays in your order. When in doubt, reach out!



/// RECOMMENDED SOFTWARE

Our seasoned and highly skilled designers use software from the Adobe Suite, mainly Photoshop and Illustrator, as our templates are intended to be used with a layer-enabled graphic design program. For this reason, we recommend creating your graphics using these programs to ensure the highest quality product.

WHICH TEMPLATE SHOULD I USE?

- **Photoshop** - Use our PSD template.
- **Illustrator** - Use our PDF template.
- **InDesign** - We do not prepare files using InDesign however you are welcome to “Place” our PDF template within InDesign if you are comfortable utilizing the *Object Text Frame* functionality.
- **Third Party Graphics Software** - Use our PDF. Please understand the limitations these programs have that may result in poorer print quality.

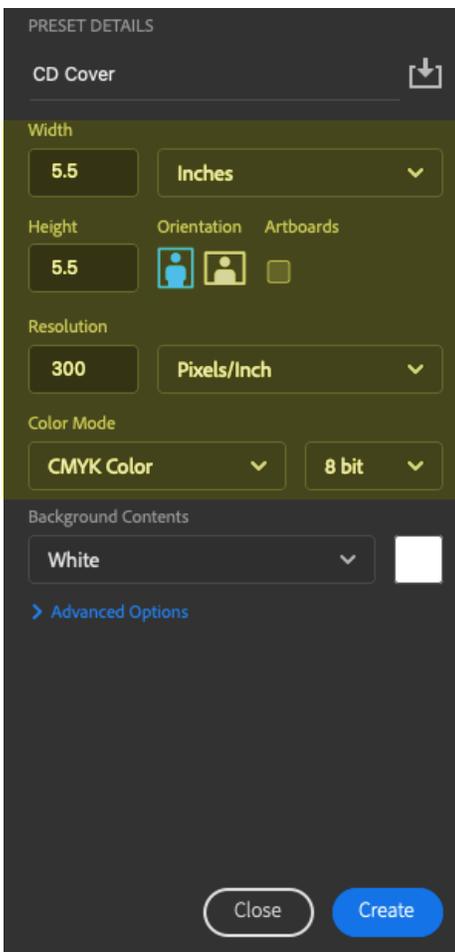
Whatever you do - DO NOT USE *Microsoft Paint, Word, any text edit program such as PowerPoint, Preview, Adobe Reader or Publisher.* These are not usable file types and will not produce quality graphic files that we need. If we receive these files, we will return them to you and request new files created by these guidelines.

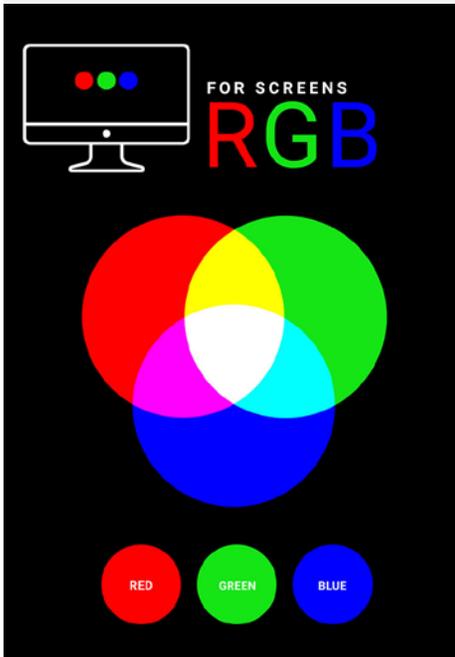
/// RESOLUTION

Unlike designing for web, non-vector print files need to be at a resolution of **300DPI (dots per inch) or higher** at the intended print size to ensure that the image is sharp and not pixelated. This is especially important on detailed images, or images/raster layouts that contain text.

It's important to note that although one can *resample* an image in Photoshop from say, 72DPI to 300DPI, *the quality of the image will still suffer significantly.* For that reason, **artwork should be CREATED in its original form in at least 300DPI(or higher) at the intended size to avoid any resolution issues.**

Therefore, **DO NOT SCALE UP** from the image's original size (*and resolution*). Instead, we highly recommend that you instead choose a different image that is large enough.





/// COLOR MODE

RGB and CMYK are the two most common color modes around. Any art file can be prepared in both RGB or CMYK, and the differences can be either very slight, or very significant. **Therefore, it's important to understand that all artwork submitted in RGB will need to be converted to CMYK.**

OK - BUT WHY?

- **RGB** (*Red, Green, Blue*) is the color space used on-screen, using a combination of red, green and blue lights. It is used primarily for web-design & other on-screen applications. Because the colors are created using light, many colors such as blue can be made to look very bright. Many of the colors created in this colorspace can translate to CMYK just fine, but others, such as those bright blues, cannot be replicated.
- **CMYK** (*Cyan, Magenta, Yellow, Black*), is the color space used for printing as it refers to the process ink colors used in almost any print application. Ink is a physical substance that has a density of pigment. This is why some RGB colors, like those bright blues, simply cannot be replicated in CMYK.

For these reasons, it's very important that you **create your art in CMYK from the very beginning**. This eliminates any conversion process required from RGB to CMYK, and ensures your colors are not dulled and turn out exactly as you're expecting.

Many applications such as Illustrator or Photoshop are set to RGB as a default, so it's a good idea to check before designing anything!

REPLICATED DISCS & PMS PRINTING

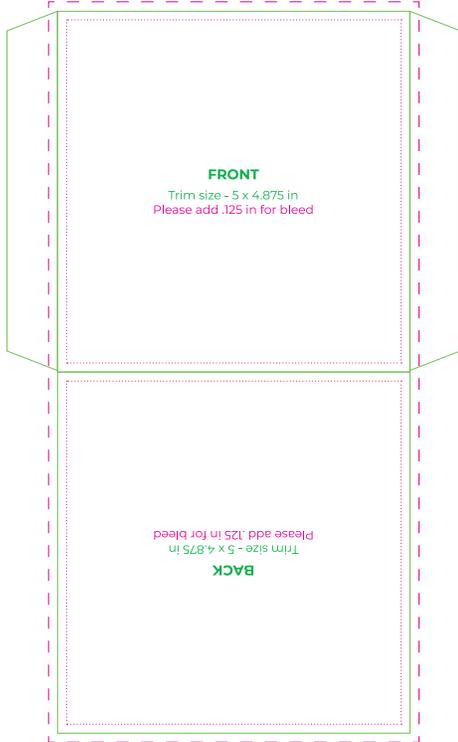
If you are getting Replicated Discs, please know that if your design consists of 4 or less whole/spot colors, we will be converting these colors to Pantone Colors for you. You do not need to worry about selecting the Pantone Colors or doing anything special - we will do this for you if necessary. If we do, we will let you know. This may produce slight color shifting but superior print quality overall.

GRAPHICS IN-DEPTH BREAKDOWN



JACKET
TOP OPENING
www.atomicdisc.com
production@atomicdisc.com
(503) 610-2929

IMPORTANT BLEED - - - - - CUT ——— FOLD - - - - - SAFETY **IMPORTANT**
Please double check that all important components of your submitted artwork (text, etc...) are within the supplied safe regions of the template and that your artwork extends to the bleed lines. Failure to do so may result in some clipping of your artwork or white borders around your artwork. Do NOT flatten or merge template lines with artwork.



/// BLEED & SAFETY LINES

Ensure that your artwork falls appropriately within the template guide lines - the Bleed Line, Cut Line, Fold Line and Safety Line. Consider this your BREATHING ROOM.

BLEED - - - - - CUT ——— FOLD - - - - - SAFETY

- **Bleed** is the additional area of printed artwork that extends past the cutting line, typically by 1/8 inch. This ensures there are no white slivers or “white flashes” as we call them, on your final product.
- **Cut** shows the trim size, the final trim size of the artwork, once the bleed has been removed.
- **Fold** lines will show you exactly where, once printed and prepped, your final artwork will be folded. This helps you determine how far to place your images and text.
- **Safety** ensures that any text or important design elements should have 1/8 inch of space away from all cut and fold lines. Do not allow your text or important design elements to extend beyond these lines.

THE KEY

You will see this **KEY** on all of our templates as a quick reference. Please be sure to utilize it when laying out your graphics!

IMPORTANT

BLEED - - - - - CUT ——— FOLD - - - - - SAFETY

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IMPORTANT



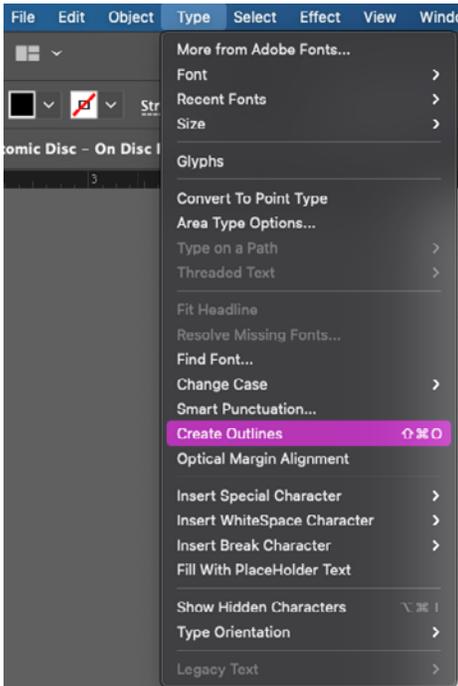
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WHY IS THIS IMPORTANT?

The trimming process has a tolerance of up to 1/8 inch, which means it is possible that your print could shift between 0-1/8 inch when being cut to the final size. The presence of bleed prevents areas of noticeable unprinted stock, often referred to as a “white flash” on your final product, the presence of the Safety ensures that your text and images fall where they are supposed to and do not get cut off or folded onto the wrong panel.

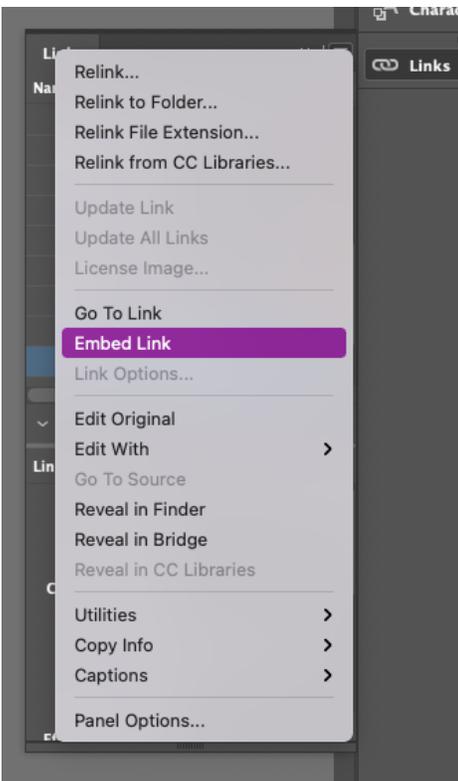


/// FONTS

In every situation - *OUTLINE YOUR FONTS*. Fonts that you see and create with are pulled from your personal computer's font directory. When you save and send to us, there is a the potential - especially if it's a fancy or uncommon font - that we do not have the same font as you do. When this happens and we try to open up your files, we get an Error Message that we are MISSING FONTS. By converting your text to paths i.e. Create Outlines, we no longer need the font at all.

CAN I INCLUDE MY FONT FILES?

Please do not. **We will kick the files back to you and request that you Create Outlines.** Not all fonts are compatible with all computers and may cause unexpected results, even crashing computers. Instead of delving into .TTF vs .OTF and issues caused by corrupted font files, we ask you to Create Outlines for all text to maintain consistency. *Outlined text become shapes that will not shift or change, whether we have the font or not.*



/// LINKED IMAGES/FILES

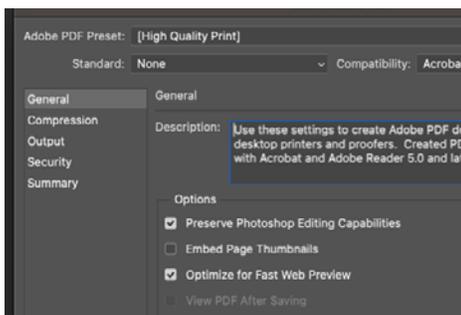
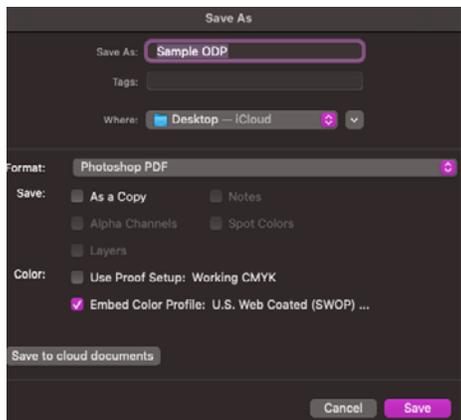
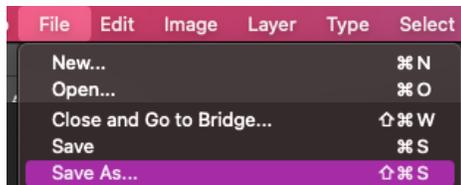
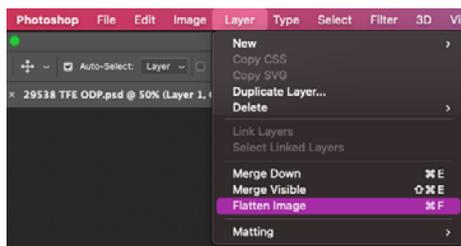
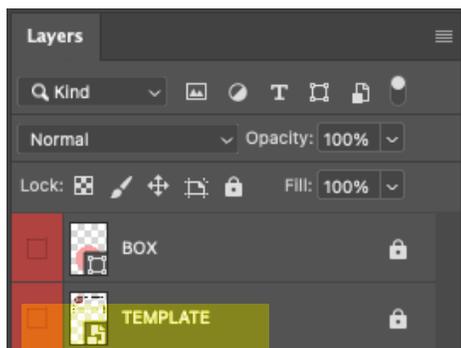
Whenever you place an image into your creation, you must always ensure that the image has been *EMBEDDED* before you save and send off. Whenever an image is placed, the program is rendering it based on its location in your personal computer's directories. Therefore, it is merely linked. Linked images provide a path, directions, on where to locate the image. Since we do not have those images on our computers, when they try to follow those directions they get lost.

CAN I INCLUDE MY LINKED IMAGE FILES?

Please do not. **We will kick the files back to you and request that you embed them on your end.** Why? Illustrator treats linked images different than embedded images - for example, it will not convert linked images to CMYK when placed into our template, and the color that you see in your proofs might differ vastly when you receive the printed version. It also does not alert us if the resolution is too low. Therefore, we ask that you review your Links Panel closely & embed all images before sending them our way. *Embedding your images ensures we can render the image at sufficient quality for print.*



←----- 1.2" WIDTH ----->



/// BARCODES

If you want a barcode, it will be generated and placed by our intuitive graphic designers who will ensure they are appropriately placed and meet the standards necessary for scanner readability. Simply leave space on your back panel that is at least 1.2x0.4" (*horizontal or vertical is fine*). We recommend not placing any text or a box to signify it's placement, as this can complicate the design process and delay your proofs.

/// SAVING YOUR FILES

Saving your files properly are just as important as how you create them. There are a lot of different options and filetypes when saving so we want to make this as simple as possible. Just follow these steps and you'll be saving like a pro in no time. Once you are satisfied with your layout:

- 1. DISABLE Any Template Layers** - Open your 'Layers Panel' and **DISABLE** the Template Layer by hiding or deleting it. If you flatten your layers without doing this step, all of the template lines will remain visible and we will be unable to remove them, which means the lines will be **PRINTED**.
- 2. FLATTEN Your Layers** (*Photoshop*) - In Photoshop, go the menu bar at the top and select Layer > Flatten Image. If you look into your 'Layers Panel' and see a single layer called Background that is locked, you have successfully flattened your file. Congrats!
- 3. OUTLINE Text & EMBED Links** (*Illustrator*) - In Illustrator, now is the time to Create Outlines for your text and **EMBED** all of your links. You can read more about the importance of this crucial step on Page 11.
- 4. SAVE AS High Quality PDF** - Once you Save your Working file (.PSD or .AI) we need you to generate your High Quality PDF file for us to proof and preflight for print. Under your 'Menu Bar' go to File > Save As.
 - **Photoshop** - Select your file type as 'Photoshop PDF (.PDF)'
 - **Illustrator** - Select your file type as 'Adobe PDF (.PDF)'

Hit Save. A new dialogue box will appear and regardless of Ps or Ai, they are generally the same. At the top you want to set your Adobe PDF Preset to: **High Quality Print**. Leave all checkboxes and options as they are defaulted to.

/// UPLOADING YOUR FILES

The moment you place your order with us, you will receive an email that includes order confirmation, your Order Number, and a link and instructions to upload your **GRAPHICS** as well as your **AUDIO**. Keep this email for your records! Whenever you are ready to submit your graphics, follow the link and you will be able to upload your graphics directly to our website - your files will populate into our Graphics Queue where our **AMAZING Graphic Designers** will be able to view, download and proof them with ease.

DO NOT EMAIL YOUR GRAPHICS - Emailing your graphics **WILL CAUSE DELAYS** in processing & fulfilling your order. Our automated process was designed to help you skip the email queue, avoid any setbacks and to get your graphics where they need to be without delay.



/// CONGRATULATIONS!

You have successfully prepared, saved, and uploaded your Graphics for printing with Atomic Disc. Kick your feet up and leave the rest to us.

/// NO ACCESS TO PS OR AI

Adobe Photoshop (*Ps*) and Adobe Illustrator (*Ai*) are powerful tools, but unless you are an active Graphic Designer, the programs can be costly. We understand that not everyone has access to these tools or are able to use them as needed - thankfully, there are some alternatives, but you may need to be prepared to compromise on things like colors shifting or less than ideal print quality. Here is a break down on alternate 3RD Party Software you want to use with our templates

WHICH SHOULD I USE?

Use our PDF templates for all 3RD Party Software. Please understand the limitations these programs have that may result in poorer print quality. Read more, below:

- **Krita:** Our #1 recommendation - includes PSD support as well. Free forever.
- **Photoshop Elements:** Only creates files in RGB Color Mode, meaning we must convert manually to CMYK Color Mode. This conversion process will dull your colors.
- **Pixlr:** Pixlr also only works in RGB but is generally adequate as far as resolution goes if you save as a HIGH QUALITY PRINT. The interface can be difficult to navigate and it's easy to get the incorrect aspect ratio.
- **Canva & GIMP:** The limitations to these well known programs are vast, and the files they create are not print quality. *NOT RECOMMENDED.*
- **And so much more:** We have detailed a couple of the most well-known 3RD Party Software for Graphics, however, know that there are dozens more, including PicMonkey, BeFunky, Figma, and more. All will present limitations, but it will come down to which you prefer. Please know that we can't always offer directions on navigating any 3RD Party Software but we will do our best to help you create the best files possible for your project.

Whatever you do - DO NOT USE *Microsoft Paint, Word, any text edit program such as PowerPoint, Preview, Adobe Reader or Publisher.* These are not usable file types and will not produce quality graphic files that we need. If we receive these files, we will return them to you and request new files created by these guidelines.

SUPPORT & CONTACT



/// TROUBLE WITH TEMPLATES?

If you cannot navigate the template or are having difficulties with any of the graphics software we have recommended, you can send over individual artwork files (such as a .JPG, .TIF or .PNG) that were created at **300DPI** and are sized at least **5.5" x 5.5"** with all text well over 1/4" inside of the edges, and we can drag and drop them into the templates at no additional cost to you.

Ensure that the files you send over include all the text and information in them and they need to be named clearly as to where we are to use them. ie: "Front", "Back", "CD", etc.

We will keep you posted if they won't work and get you directions on what changes we need to see for a better result.

/// HIRE ATOMIC FOR GRAPHIC SERVICES

If you would rather leave it to the pros, don't worry about it. The time and talent of our in-house Graphic Designers are available to you beginning at \$79 and are eager to impress your socks off. Select the options that work best for you, kick your feet up and let us handle the rest.

LEARN MORE:

www.atomicdisc.com/products/graphic-services

/// ANY QUESTIONS? ASK AWAY!

Don't hesitate to reach out! We are here to help you bring your vision to life. We're here to answer all your questions, via chat, email or give us a call at (503) 610-2929.

TELEPHONE ///

(503) 610-2929

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WEBSITE/CHAT ///

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THIS IS WHERE YOU

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LEAVE THE MERCH TABLE TO US

CDS - POSTERS - TSHIRTS - VINYL - STICKERS

