

# VARIABLE DESIGN TIDBITS

When designing documents for variable, please use Adobe InDesign to layout final document for print.

**Does this mean I cannot use other programs such as Photoshop or Illustrator?**

**ABSOLUTELY NOT...**

## **Image Guidelines:**

- Do not Copy/Paste images into InDesign; import them by using the File-Place Command.
- Use images that are 300 dpi in resolution.
- Build your image in Photoshop or Illustrator so that you only have to place a couple of images into InDesign. Think of making the leanest end-file possible. If you have a background image with a transparent image on top of that, with a solid image on top of that, build this in Photoshop, flatten the file and THEN place it into InDesign. This way you are only placing one image into InDesign instead of three! (Make sure to save a copy of the layered file and send it with the job).
- Images should be flattened before placed into InDesign. Please do not place layered Photoshop files (layered files add 'bulk' to the file and increases file size, making it more difficult to process to print). We would however like for you to send the layered files with the job, just in case we need to make edits.
- Use images that are the final resolution, size, rotation, etc. The more work the file has to do to render the image (for example: decrease it down to 75%, apply a 45 degree angle and then drop the transparency 10%) all of this adds to the file size and increases the time it takes to produce the job.
- When saving Photoshop tif's, do not use LZW compression.
- Do not use JPEG!
- In Illustrator, if the file has transparency or other effects, do not save the file as an .eps. Either place the AI file or save the file as a PDF (version 5 or higher).

**Other things to consider:**

- If a piece has text that will be variable, the text **MUST** be done in InDesign. It cannot be done in another application (such as Illustrator, Photoshop or Word) and placed into InDesign as part of an image.
- Do not use the Paper Swatch as a fill color; instead click on the Black swatch (not Registration) and make it 0% or create a new swatch of 0% black.
- Black should be 100% K; please do not create “Rich Blacks”.
- Do not using “Facing Pages” in the Page Setup window.

**Things that will affect print production time of piece:**

- Drop Shadows
- Transparency (which includes blending modes, opacity)
- Drop Shadow on variable text
- Feather

The above items can be used but need to be done in small quantities. Using any of the effects above will affect processing time, however, using large portions and combinations of the above items can dramatically slow down processing time. If you are going to use transparency, drop shadows and blending modes they need to be done in Photoshop as much as possible; limit the above in InDesign.

When working in InDesign, **DO NOT USE THE ABOVE EFFECTS WITH SPOT COLORS**. If you do, a lighter box around the edge of the drop shadow, etc. will appear. If you use a drop shadow over a spot color, convert the color to process and everything should be fine.

If you have any questions please contact Valarie Floyd or Leslie Berry at 336-760-0099.