Digital Die Line Setup

OVERVIEW

Every die cutting, kiss cutting, foil stamping, embossing and debossing project requires a die. Additionally, precision creasing and perforating projects require dies. These dies are created from digital artwork referred to as a die line. The die line acts as the blueprint for your printed project. Like the blueprint used to build a house, the die line is based on the final form-factor dimensions of the printed piece. It should take into account stock thickness, number of folded panels and creep.

DIGITAL IMAGE TYPES

Digital images used to manufacture cutting and stamping dies can be divided into two categories.

1. Vector Illustration Files
   a) Are created from scratch with illustration software such as Adobe Illustrator.
   b) Generate an image that consists of stroke (outline of image) and fill (color that fills inside of outlines) components.
   c) Can be reduced or enlarged without loss of resolution.
   d) Can be used without much manipulation or programming in computer-based, steel-rule bending and CNC machining equipment.
   e) Create the most accurate steel-rule dies and the most detailed stamping dies.

2. Rasterized Image Files
   a) Are digitally captured with a scanner or camera.
   b) Generate an image that consists of millions of dots.
   c) Can only be reduced without loss of resolution. Enlargement can create pixilated or rough final images.
   d) Are used to create film negatives for chemically etched copper or magnesium dies. These files may be used in CNC machining equipment, but require additional programming. Additionally, these files cannot be used in steel-rule bending equipment.
   e) Create stamping dies with moderate to low detail.

STEPS

Digital die line artwork can be properly created in just a few steps.

1. Create the Die Line Layer
   - Decide your final form-factor dimentions.
   - Add vector die lines to "Layer 1" in the form of decimal measurements. Use software tools like move, rotate, reflect, scale and step-and-repeat to precisely manipulate the die lines. Do NOT use drag-and-drop visual manipulation, as this creates imprecise dies.

2. Add the Artwork Layer
   - Create "Layer 2" and add text, vector images and raster images.
   - Extend artwork 1/8" beyond the die line for projects requiring bleeds.

3. Proof your Artwork
   - Print, cut and fold the composite proof (both die line and arwork layers together) to ensure that the final dimensions and placement of all type and images are correct.

4. Send us your File
   - Convert all type to outlines (strokes) and make all die line elements (lines, logos and type) 100% BLACK in color.
   - Send the artwork composite without the layers merged.
   - Send the original illustration file. EPS and PDF files will work, if the original illustration file is unavailable.
   - Upload your files at www.flexfinishing.com/pages_custservice/upload.html or email files less than 3MB at artwork@flexfinishing.com.

Step 1 - Die Line Layer
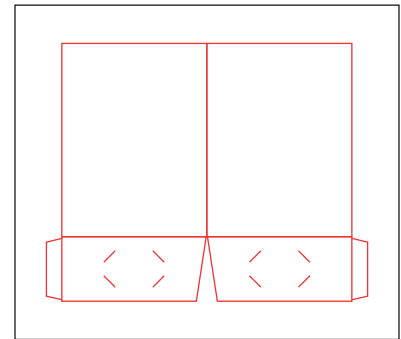
Step 2 - Artwork Layer

Step 3 - Composite Proof