

ARTWORK FAQ'S

In order to speed up the branding process and help you understand our artwork requirements, we've put together a list of FAQ's that will help guide you through the process.

What is Vector Artwork?

This is artwork that we can manipulate and separate into individual elements for branding. This artwork is also the highest quality and is in the original design format. Vector artwork is created using vector illustration software programmes such as Adobe Illustrator or Corel Draw. These programmes use points, lines and shapes to create artwork that can be scaled infinitely without any loss of quality. Vector artwork is editable and the artwork can be changed according to your specifications.

Which formats would be considered Vector?

There are a few formats that will be acceptable, namely:

- Adobe Illustrator (.ai)
- Corel Draw (.cdr)
- Freehand (.fh)
- EPS
- PDF

Please note: vector and non-vector artwork, or a combination of the two, can be stored in any of the above formats. In order to check if artwork is vector, zoom into the image. If you see pixellated edges, as illustrated below, it means the artwork is non-vector (vector artwork will remain crisp and clear no matter how much you zoom into the image). Alternatively, click on the artwork and if a blue block appears around it, as illustrated below right, it means that the artwork is non-vector and the elements cannot be separated.

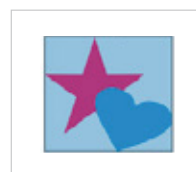
Crisp & clear edges =
vector artwork



Pixellated edges =
non-vector artwork



Blue block around image =
non-vector artwork



Why is it that other suppliers accept non-vector and Instant Ninja insists on it?

Instant Ninja has a very high quality standard when it comes to branding. Artwork has a lot to do with the quality of branding. If the quality of the artwork is not acceptable we will not use it as it will compromise the quality of the branding. Certain branding methods can use very high quality jpeg images for branding, these methods include embroidery, digital processes and CMYK screen printing. However we cannot amend jpeg artwork at all, e.g. change the colour of a logo.

We do not use quick traced artwork as quick traces often result in uneven lines and this compromises the print quality, we would rather recommend a redraw of the logo.

What is quick traced artwork?

There is a tool in Corel Draw that allows you to automatically convert a non-vector logo into vector. This tool does not always work well, the reason is because it simply traces the edges of the artwork and where colours start and end. The result is a vector image but it will be broken and the edges will not be smooth. For this reason Amrod does not use quick traced artwork because it compromises the quality of the branding.

Original artwork

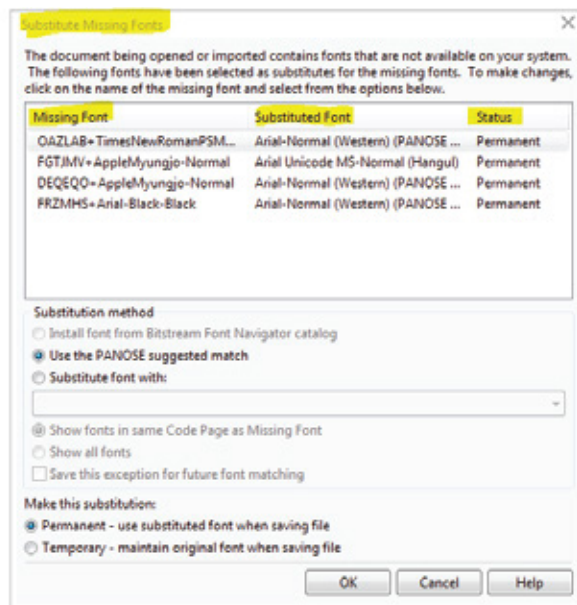


Quick traced artwork



What does “convert to curves” or “convert to paths” mean?

When artwork contains wording in a certain font and the font is not converted to curves or paths it remains in a text format. This means that when the artwork is imported into a design programme the programme reads it as text that can be edited. If we do not have the font that the wording was created in, the design programme will automatically convert it to a font that we do have, compromising the original artwork. Converting to curves or paths results in the design programme reading the font as a drawing instead of text and, as such, the programme does not require the font.



Alternatively you can send us the font file to install. We cannot redraw the artwork if it is not converted to curves because as soon as we put the artwork into a design programme to start redrawing it will substitute the font with a different font.

What is redrawing artwork?

If you send us non-vector artwork for a process that requires vector artwork, our redraw artists will have to re-create the artwork in vector. In order for the artist to do this s/he needs to import the non-vector into Corel Draw and trace the artwork.

Not all images can be redrawn, if there is any shading or gradients in the artwork it is impossible to achieve. We are also unable to redraw photographs.

Why does Instant Ninja charge to redraw artwork?

This is a time consuming process, which requires a lot of attention so that there are no errors in the redrawn artwork. If the artwork is simple and will take an artist less than 10 minutes to redraw, we redraw the artwork at no charge. If the logo is more complicated, it will be charged for. Please remember that the lead time for redrawing artwork is 24 hours as the demand is quite high.

What types of artwork are required for the different branding processes?

Vector artwork is required for the below processes:

- Screen Printing (spot colours)
- Pad Printing
- Laser Engraving
- Debossing

Non-vector artwork can be used for the below (please note that it must be high quality):

- Screen Printing (CMYK process only)
- Embroidery
- Sublimation
- Stickers
- Dome Stickers
- Heat Press
- Digital Transfer Printing
- Direct to Product Printing

Please remember: vector artwork can be used for all of our branding processes. When using non-vector artwork and a change to the artwork is requested, it cannot be actioned and vector artwork will need to be supplied.

Why can we use non-vector for embroidery and not for screen printing?

Screen printing: the print preparation requires that the artwork be separated into its individual colours.

Each element or set of elements that is a different colour gets printed on a different screen, e.g. a 2-colour logo requires 2 different screens.

Embroidery: artwork is digitised as a whole and the colours are specified when digitising. As the logo does not have to be separated into various elements, we do not have to have vector artwork unless changes need to be made to the artwork.

Why is it that often layouts are done differently to the mock-up that was supplied?

If you send through a mock-up it is very useful as it gives the layout artist an idea of what your client wants.

When the layout artist is doing the layout they have to take the branding guideline into consideration. If the mock-up shows branding that is outside of the parameters indicated on the guideline the layout artist will create a layout that is as close to what your client requires, but falls within our guidelines.

What is a branding guideline and is it available to me?

Guidelines have been created for every item that we can brand. Once a new item is introduced there are samples that are sent to production and each department tests the item to see what the branding capabilities and limitations of the item are.

Once they are done we gather the info and create a branding guideline indicating which positions can be branded, how many colours can be printed, the maximum branding size and which branding methods will work on the item.

Branding guidelines are available on request.

What is CMYK printing in screen printing?

This is a method employed in Screen Printing to print a full-colour image that has shading and gradients. This is perfect for printing photographs and detailed images.

This process uses 4 colours, namely: cyan, magenta, yellow and black. It works similarly to digital printing in that it uses a combination of the 4 colours mentioned to print almost every available colour. Like a digital printer, white and metallic cannot be created from these 4 colours and if there is white in the artwork, that must be printed first. The screens for this process are made such a way that they allow a certain percentage of each ink colour to flow through individual screens.

When branding via CMYK on a white item we charge for a 4-colour print, however if we are branding CMYK on a coloured item we will need to charge for a 5-colour print because we need to print white as a base owing to CMYK inks being semi-transparent.

What programme does your layouts department use?

We have a variety of programmes in the layouts department:

- Adobe Illustrator
- Photoshop
- Corel Draw

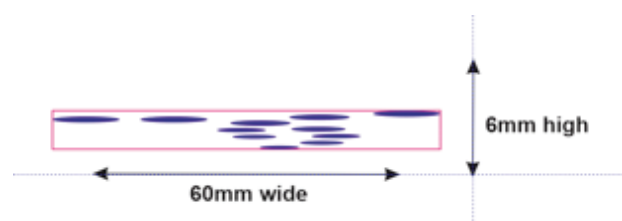
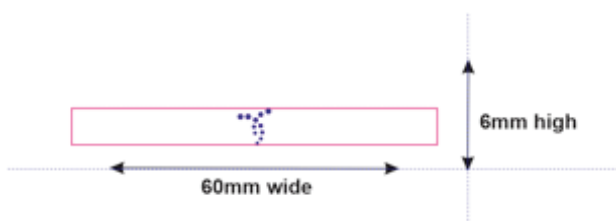
The main programme that we use is Corel Draw.

Why is it that my logo does not always fit exactly into the size on the guideline?

When a layout is done we need to make sure that the logo is in proportion. If we are branding on a pen, for example, and the guideline says that we can brand 60mm wide and 6mm high, we will need to fit the logo into the area shown on the guideline. Take a look at the example below:

The bubbles can be branded at 6mm high; the logo is higher than it is wider so the maximum branding size is limited by the height of the logo.

If we filled the allowable print area with the logo, the logo will appear stretched and out of proportion. In the example below the logo is at 60mm wide and 6mm high, taking up the full branding area, but it does not look anything like the original logo anymore.



What are the minimum height restrictions when branding text in the various branding departments?

In certain departments we can make the text smaller depending on the font and the texture of the item.

A basic guideline below:

- | | |
|------------------------------|------------|
| • Screen Printing | 2mm high |
| • Pad Printing | 1mm high |
| • Debossing/Foiling | 4mm high |
| • Embroidery | 5mm high |
| • Laser Engraving | 1mm high |
| • Sublimation | 1mm high |
| • Heat Press | 1mm high |
| • Stickers/Domed Stickers | 1mm high |
| • Digital Transfer Printing | 1mm high |
| • Direct to Product Printing | 0.5mm high |

In cases where the text is smaller than given in the above guidelines or the text may close up due to the font used or the texture of the product it is being branded on, we advise leaving off the text.

Why is tone-on-tone embroidery sometimes added on embroidery layouts when I have only asked for specific colours to be branded?

When we have a logo that has gaps in the artwork where the item is going to show through we fill those gaps with thread that is the same colour as the item so that the logo has a neat, professional finish.

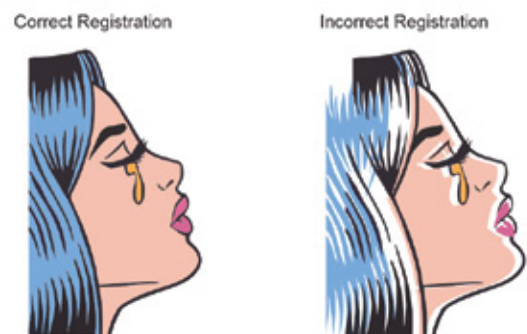
Why is the number of colours that can be branded limited?

If the item is lined, e.g. a cooler bag, it is difficult to screen print more than one colour. In screen printing we have to apply a light glue spray to the board that the item is loaded on so as to prevent movement of the item during printing. This ensures that the branding position is consistent and that, when branding more than one colour, the registration of the logo is correct. In cases where an item has a lining, only the bottom layer of the lining adheres to the board leaving the top layer loose; as a result we cannot ensure that all of the colours in the logo will register (line up) correctly and consequently restrict the number of colours we brand on certain item.

The number of print colours may also be restricted due to the type of material the item is made of. When we brand a multi-colour logo the print must be dried after each individual colour is laid down. Some items cannot withstand long periods of heat so we cannot dry each individual colour when branding and we have to restrict the number of print colours.

With regards to branding what does “registration” mean?

This is a term that is used in printing that refers to laying down all the colours of the artwork in the correct places. If the registration is off the colours next to each other will either overlap or be too far apart and spaces will be evident.



Helpful branding tips

- Always check what warnings are on the layouts before you approve it as if it states information like – texture of product will effect print/ small text may not be legible etc and the branding turns out to be as per the layout with the warning we wont accept that job as a reject job.
- Check the colours stated that we will brand and always try give us a Pantone colour, a colour branded may be one shade out from what is mentioned as the colours are mixed.
- If you have a marathon colour please supply this as there are a fraction of marathon colours compared to Pantone colours so matching a thread colour to Pantone colour will never be exact and is often left up to discretion of what we think will work best but your client may have something else in mind.

Why can we not guarantee the exact positioning of embroidery/ print on a striped item?

Panels on garments are inconsistent and one item will not be exactly the same as the next. Because of this, if we brand according to the stripe detail or the panel, the logos will not come out on the left chest branding position resulting in incorrect positioning when the shirt is worn.