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How to export your design to a print-ready PDF

Easy, step-by-step guide for Canva, Illustrator, CorelDRAW and Microsoft Office. You don't need to know design: follow the steps for your program and you're done.

Before you start: 6 checks

1. **First decide what you want to print, then design.** Be clear about the product, the final size, whether it folds, the paper and the quantity. If in doubt, ask me before you start: designing at the wrong size means redoing everything.
2. **Use the template for your product.** It already has the right size, with the **3 mm bleed** included.
3. **Background and photos must reach the red line** (bleed). That way no white edges appear when cutting.
4. **Text, logos and phone number inside the blue line** (4 mm safe zone). That way nothing gets cut off. On **bi-folds and tri-folds**, also leave **4 mm on each side of the fold lines**, so nothing ends up in the crease.
5. **Good-quality photos and images:** 300 ppi (DPI) for cards and flyers, 250 ppi for banners and large format. An image copied from WhatsApp or the internet almost never works.
6. **Hide or delete the guides layer** (the red, black, blue and pink lines and the template texts) before exporting.

Is your design made with AI (ChatGPT, Claude, Nano Banana…)? These designs usually come out in low resolution, in RGB, without bleed and sometimes with distorted letters. It shows when printed. Check it first with this guide, at no cost. If you then want me to review it: **review for an extra €20** (I tell you what is wrong and you fix it, up to 2 reviews) or **preparation on quote** (I get it print-ready for you).

1 · Canva (the most used)

In Canva **don't use the template PNG as the size**: create the design at the **final size** and turn on the bleed.

1. Click **Create a design › Custom size**, choose **mm** and type the **final size** (for example 85 × 55 mm for a card).
2. Turn on the print guides: **File › View settings › Show print bleed** and also **Show margins**.
3. Optional: upload the template image **_canva-powerpoint-guide.png**, set it as the background and stretch it to the edge of the bleed. It works as a reference. **Delete it before downloading.**
4. Design. Backgrounds and photos to the edge of the bleed; text inside the margins.
5. Click **Share › Download**. Under **File type** choose **PDF Print**.
6. Tick **Crop marks and bleed**. If you have Canva Pro, under **Color profile** choose **CMYK**. Also tick **Flatten PDF**.
7. Click **Download** and send me that PDF.

Tip: if you don't have Canva Pro and can only export in RGB, don't worry: send it anyway and I'll review it. Very bright colours (neon greens and blues) can come out a little duller on paper.

2 · Adobe Illustrator

Open the **.pdf** or **.svg** template. The artboard is already the final size plus 3 mm bleed.

1. **File › Open** and choose the template. Check that the document is CMYK: **File › Document Color Mode › CMYK Color**.
2. Create a new layer for your design and keep the guides layer on top and **locked** (or the other way round, as you prefer).
3. Design. Convert the text to outlines: select all text › **Type › Create Outlines**.
4. **Hide or delete the guides** (the "GUIDES" group).
5. **File › Save As › Adobe PDF**. Under **Preset** choose **[PDF/X-4:2008]**.
6. Under **Marks and Bleeds** leave the bleed at **0 mm**: the template already includes it in the artboard. Click **Save PDF**.

3 · CorelDRAW

Import the **.pdf** or **.svg** template (File › Open). The page is already the final size plus bleed.

1. Check that you are working in CMYK: **Tools › Color Management › Default Settings**.
2. Put the guides on their own layer and lock it (**Objects** window).
3. Design. Convert the text to curves: select the text › **Object › Convert to Curves** (Ctrl+Q).
4. **Hide or delete the guides layer**.
5. **File › Publish to PDF**. Under **PDF preset** choose **PDF/X-4** (or "Prepress").
6. No crop marks or extra bleed: the page already includes it. Click **Save**.

4 · Microsoft PowerPoint (and Word)

For Office I give you the template in **PowerPoint (.pptx)**: each slide is already the final size plus bleed. **Word is not a good choice for print** (it doesn't let you control the bleed properly).

1. Open the **_powerpoint.pptx** template. You will see the guides image in the background of each slide (side A and side B, or outside and inside).
2. Design on top: backgrounds and photos to the edge of the slide; text inside the blue line.
3. When you finish, **delete the guides image** on each slide (click it and press Delete).
4. **File › Export › Create PDF/XPS Document** (on Mac: **File › Export › Format: PDF**).
5. Click **Options** and tick **All** slides. Under **Optimize for** choose **Standard (publishing online and printing)**. Save.

Important: Office exports in RGB and sometimes lowers photo quality. Use large photos and I will check the PDF before printing.

5 · Check your PDF before sending it to me

1. Open it with **Adobe Acrobat Reader** (free) or with Preview (Mac).
2. Check the size: **File › Properties › Page Size**. It must be the final size plus 6 mm (for example, **91 × 61 mm** for a card).
3. Zoom to 200–300 %: if photos or text look pixelated, they will look the same printed.
4. Check that the template **guide lines are not visible**.
5. If it is double-sided, check that the PDF has **2 pages** (side A and side B, or outside and inside).

Ready? Send me the PDF on WhatsApp at **605 900 377** or by email to **presupuesto@todoimpreso.es**. I will confirm everything is fine before printing. Full guide with drawings at **todoimpreso.es/en/file-preparation-guide**.