

Making PDF Files with Crop Marks & Bleeds for a Commercial Printer

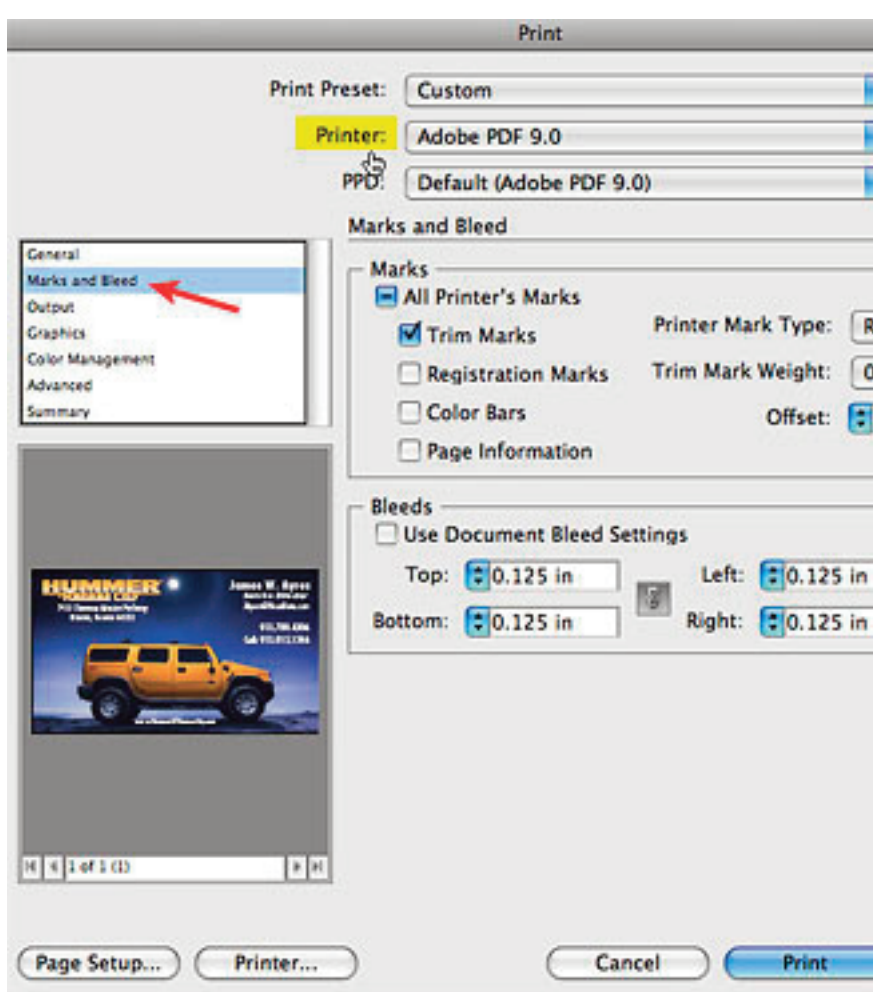
Adobe, as well as many other software programs, have built-in capabilities of making a PDF file. Many programs rely on Adobe Distiller for turning files into PDF documents, so it may also need to be installed to generate a PDF file. Although Adobe is the industry "standard," there is other (less expensive) software Available, and some are even free: PDF995, AcroPDF and CutePDF.

This tutorial will be using screen-shots from Adobe Illustrator to explain some of the settings used to make PDF files. There is some variation in software dialogue boxes (even between other Adobe products and versions), so your software's interface may be a little different. They are all very similar, so with a little trial-and-error you should be able to find the same settings in your particular dialogue boxes. The only challenge may be finding where your PDF creating dialogue is located for your particular software and configuration. It may be located by one or more of three possibilities:

FILE > SAVE AS ... and look for PDF as a choice

FILE > EXPORT ... and look for PDF as a choice

FILE > PRINT ... and look in the choices of available print devices (such as PDF995)



Print to File PDF Creation Method

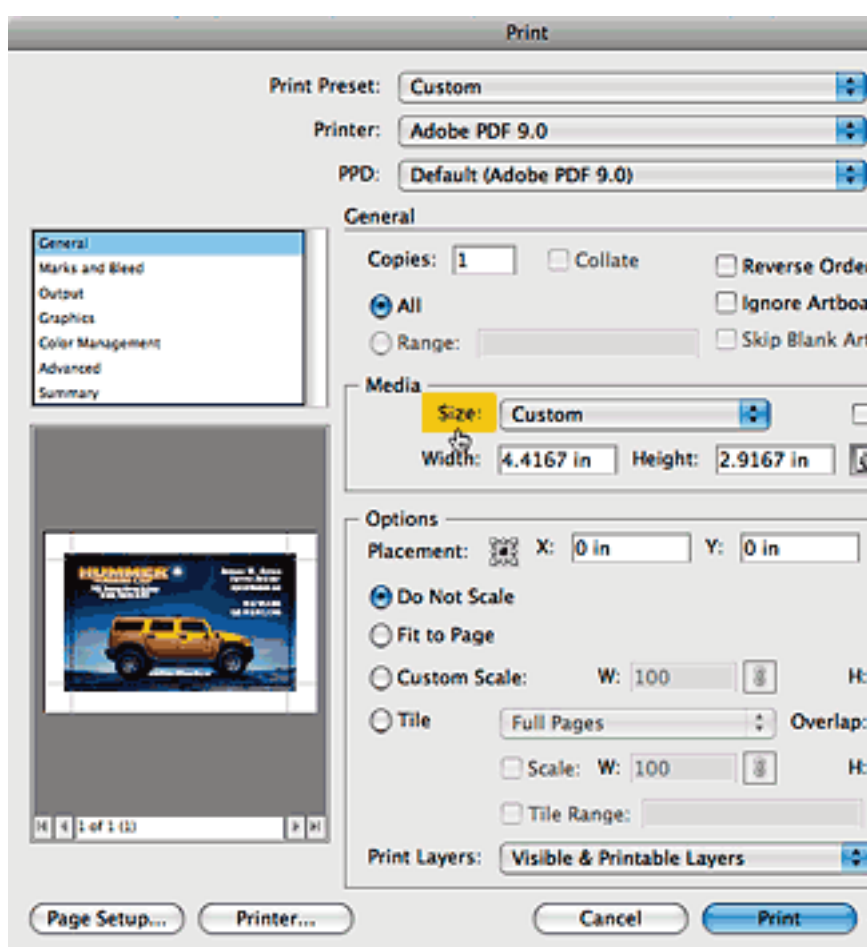
Choose FILE > PRINT
to use the print-to-file method & open the dialogue box

By default, the dialogue box opens on the **General** setting. Since this file bleeds, change the setting to the **Marks and Bleed** section.

Set the PRINTER to PDF.
In the MARKS section, check "Trim Marks."

In the BLEEDS section, Uncheck the "Use Document Bleed Settings." Set the bleed to 0.25" on all four sides.

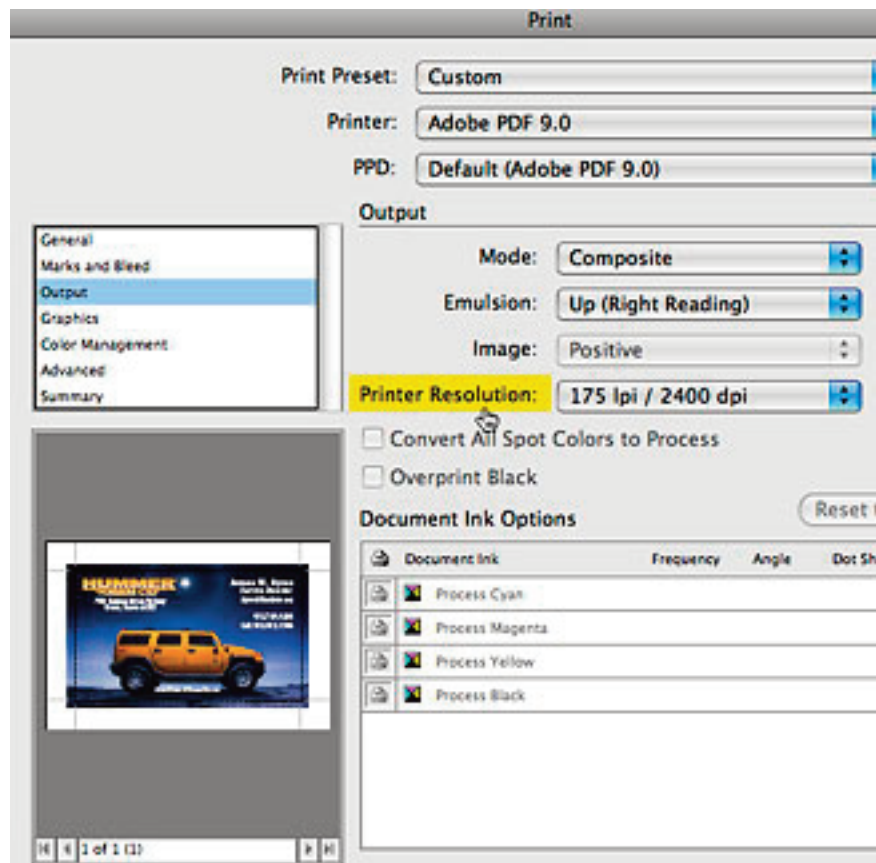
Note: if the units are not in inches, it can be changed in the preferences section.



Now switch back to the GENERAL setting in the dialogue box and set the MEDIA size to "custom."

In the preview box you should be able to see the document, as well as the bleed and crop marks.

In my case, the MEDIA size was already on "custom," so to get it to the desired sized it was switched to any other setting, and then put back to "custom" to get it to resize automatically to accommodate for the bleed and crop marks.



Under the OUTPUT section, set the "Printer Resolution."

Most printing presses print at 150-175lpi (lines per inch), so 175 should be an adequate resolution setting to obtain the best printing quality possible.

Any setting beyond what the printing press is even capable of will not yield better quality printing, only a much bigger PDF; the printer has RIP software that will down-sample an unnecessarily large file anyway. A few commercial printers do have printing presses that will print at resolutions over 200lpi.

To make the PDF, click the PRINT button in the interface and direct the dialogue box as to where you wish to put the PDF file.

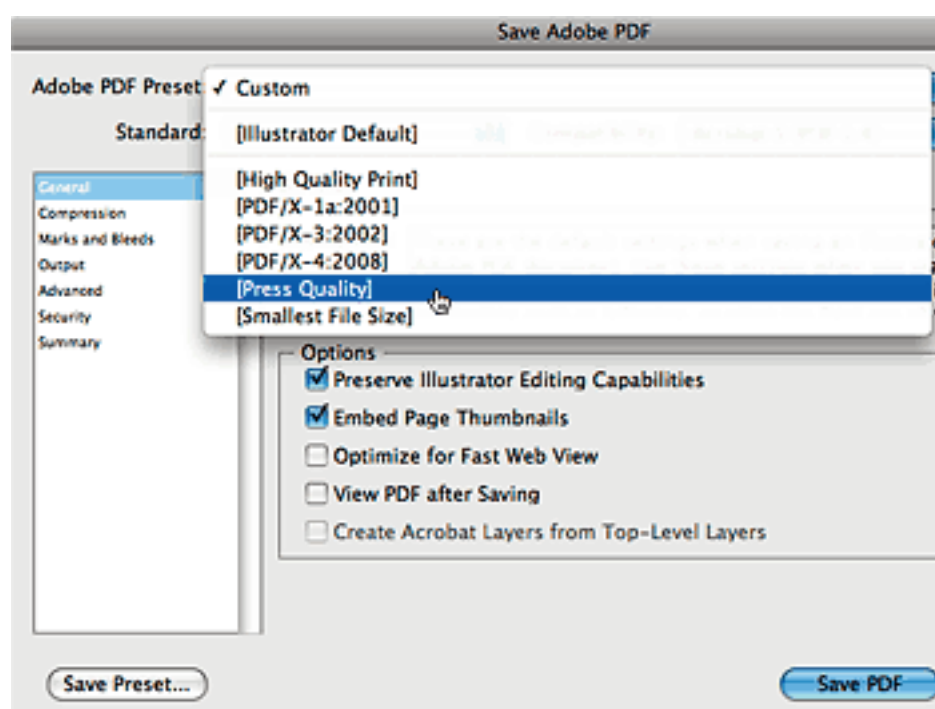
Save as PDF Creation Method

Choose FILE > SAVE AS ... to save the file as a PDF

Choose FILE > SAVE AS and choose PDF as the file type.

In the dialogue box (in the GENERAL section) under "Adobe PDF Preset" use the drop-down menu and choose "Press Quality."

This will make a high resolution PDF for printing on a printing press.



The only other tab you need to make changes to is the "Marks and Bleeds" section.

Select TRIM MARKS and set the bleed to 0.125" on all four sides.

The simply select the "Save PDF" button and direct the dialogue box as to where you wish to put the PDF file.

Some commercial printers have their own custom presets for the Adobe Distiller with setting just the way they want a PDF made. You may want to contact your printer prior to making your PDF production file.

