

CHECKLIST FOR VARIABLE DESIGN

PLANNING AND MAPPING

- Variable layers names should be the same as name in data file (ie. In the data, if a variable layer is triggered by *Melanie Fitness*, the layer should match that name).
- Each variation should have artwork supplied. New variations require new artwork supplied.
- Each variation, other than variable text, should be on its layer.
- Provide a list, file or layout designating the variable areas in the document (ie. Reference PDF).

DESIGN

- Files should be created to the trim size. Do NOT create each panel as separate pages outputting as spreads. (ie. Each spread is the full layout of one side of the mailer flat, to trim size. So a trifold piece would be a 2-page document, not 6.)
- Make sure file has at least 1/8 (.125") inch bleed. Images that extend to the trim should have bleed.
- Place guides or rules for folding on a separate layer called FOLDS.
- Avoid effects on variable type and images.
- Avoid PNG or PSD files where the background is defined as transparent. Silo artwork instead; use clipping paths or detect edges without using transparency.
- Grey type: use a percentage of black, and not a build (when possible).
- When possible, colored type should have a 100% of either cyan, magenta, OR yellow in its build.
- Preferably use OpenType (OTF) or TrueType (TTF) fonts which are cross platform compatible.

OPTIMIZING THE FILE WHEN DESIGN IS COMPLETE

- Resample images in Photoshop to show in InDesign at 300 dpi @ 100%.
- Crop the images in Photoshop instead of using the placement box in InDesign to crop images. By cropping in Photoshop, data not seen is removed rather than hidden which leads to small file sizes and faster processing time without losing quality.
- Convert Pantone colors to CMYK.
- Avoid using Pantone overlays:
 - Convert Pantone overlays to CMYK.
 - Stylized treatments/effects on static art should be recreated as placed art.
- Flatten artwork. (Do not flatten text with art.)

DATA

- Remove foreign characters from data.
- Data mailing files should have information broken into separate columns. Delivery addresses should be in one column. Business names, building names, care of, etc. should not be in the delivery address column.
- Variable data needs to be consistent with no variations in the naming convention. Modification of names will drop artwork when there is no artwork associated with it. (ie. Data entry called *Comm & Arts* needs to be *Comm & Arts*, NOT *Communications & Arts*; *Comm*, & *Arts*, or any variation).
- Data files that contain sensitive information (PIN numbers, bank account numbers, etc.) should be encrypted.

SUBMITTING THE FILE

- Package the file with fonts and images.
- Zip file before uploading to Sentinel's ftp or emailing to prevent file corruption. (If file is uploaded to our ftp, send an email noting file has been uploaded with the file name.)