

how to

DESIGN

*for* letterpress



# Impression:

In letterpress, especially with thicker stocks, we can play in the third dimension. You can specify light, medium, or heavy impression.

Keep in mind that heavier impression will show through to the other side, and will need to be addressed in any two-sided layouts. See the bottom of this page and the next for an example.

Another consideration is that lighter impression may have a vintage or distressed look when printing larger solids.

Impression

*light*  
*medium*  
*heavy*

# Ink:

We print using the Pantone Matching System. You can specify your colors when submitting files, and you can set up your files using the swatches included in your desired illustration programs. Tints of Pantones are tricky to print and rarely have the desired result on letterpress. We recommend that you use an additional lighter Pantone in place of a tint.

One or two color prints are most common, and definitely more cost-effective, but adding in more colors can make for beautiful prints.

You can also forego ink altogether to get a blind deboss. This is best done on thicker stocks to allow for heavy impression.

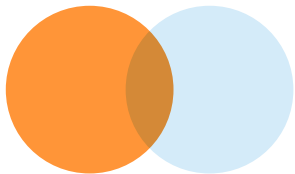
heavy  
medium

Show Through

Letterpress ink is somewhat translucent. You can use this to your advantage by printing one color over another to make a third. Play with this on the computer by setting the blending mode to “multiply” and layering your colors on top of another.

This translucency also allows for the color of the stock to show through, so you may need to plan for paper color when designing your piece. Light colors on dark stock will not appear the way they would in a swatch book, and white on a dark paper will never be truly white.

Plan for this in your design.



# Large solids & Lines:

Solids over 1/2" thick do not print the same in letterpress as they do in off-set printing. Rough paper textures and translucent inks can lead to slight variations in coverage. Heavy coverage also effects impression strength. Larger solids will not show as dramatic of a deboss as a thin line.

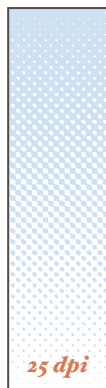
Don't be discouraged from using large solids in your design. This is one of the things that make the medium beautiful, but you need to be aware of the results when setting up your designs.

Line art is ideal for letterpress, but lines should not be thinner than .25 point.



# Halftones:

Halftones can be used with great results in letterpress, but will be made of much coarser dots and look more vintage than in offset printing. You will need to design with a dot size of 100 dpi or larger. Drop us a line if you have questions about setting up or printing your halftones.



# Type:

There is no limit to which typefaces you can use, but only to the sizes in which they can be printed. Depending on the face, it is not recommended to go smaller than 6-8 points.

Reverse type knocked out of a large solid should be no smaller than 12pt, and even still may have slightly mottled edges (see example two pages back).

Make sure to include all typeface files when sending art, or convert your type to outlines.



# Die Cutting and Scoring:

While letterpress printing became scarce in the years past, many print shops still use old letterpresses to score and die cut. We have kept our presses equipped to print, but it is a simple conversion to allow us to die cut, score and even perforate. Send us an e-mail with your die line and we will try to help you figure out the logistics of producing your masterpiece.

Worried about how well your cards will fold? Rest assured that letterpress scoring is considered the best type of crease when folding heavy stocks. Nowadays they make expensive equipment to try to emulate what comes naturally to our presses.



# Nerd Stuff:

Illustrator files are our preferred format, but PDF and packaged InDesign files are also acceptable.

We love working with vectors, but we can print scanned illustrations too. Scans must be scaled to 100% of their final print size and be 300-1200 DPI (the higher the better). Unless printing a halftone, convert the image to bitmap mode.

Any bleeds should run off the page by .125"

Embed any linked files in Illustrator or package them with your InDesign files.

When ready to print, submit your files to [art@thousandpoundpress.com](mailto:art@thousandpoundpress.com)





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