



DESIGN GUIDELINES & BEST PRACTICES (Sublimation)

General Design Considerations

In order to set yourself up for success in the POD industry, it's important to prepare your art files properly to optimize the quality of your final product. A high-quality art file will yield a high-quality final product. Taking the time to prepare your files properly will not only save you time & money in the long run, but it will help you maintain a great reputation for your online store. We've created this guide in order to help you avoid basic print file mistakes.

Product Decoration Details

Each item in our catalog has a designated print method -- we offer three:

Digital (DTG), Embroidery, & Dye Sublimation.

Our apparel products are generally decorated by either DTG printing or embroidery (though there are a few special garments decorated by dye-sublimation). Details about the decoration method for a particular product can be found in the in-app product catalog or the catalog at customcat.com/products.

Each of the hats & bags in our catalog are decorated via embroidery.

Other accessories & housewares (including face masks, drinkware, blankets, ornaments, & jewelry) are printed with dye sublimation.

We can print any type of design as long as the file's specs are up to par. However, it's important to consider the strengths & limitations of the decoration method used to customize your product when you're creating your art files.

Recommended File Formats (.png & .ai)

For the highest quality results, we recommend submitting transparent .png files or .ai files at 300 DPI, regardless of decoration method. Photos taken from a cell phone at 72dpi will also produce high quality results.

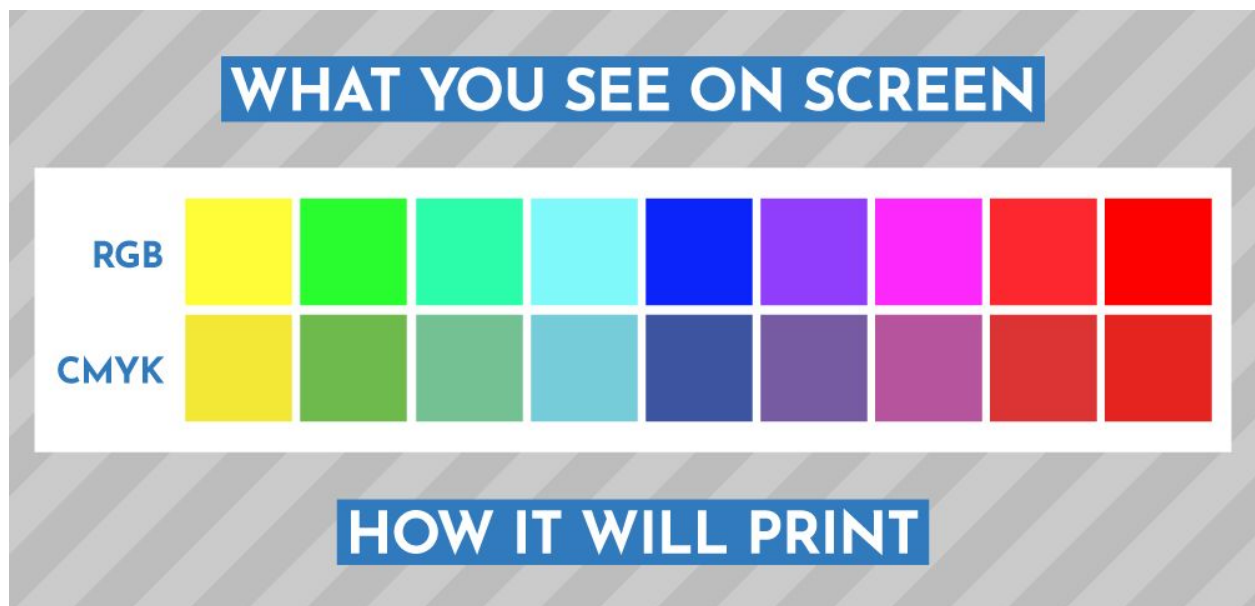
The CustomCat app will also accept vector formats .ai, .svg, .eps & high quality .pdf files .

Colors: RGB vs. CMYK

Put simply, RGB colors are from a wider color spectrum than CMYK colors.

RGB: Generally, when designers are creating images for use on screens, they will use an RGB color profile. RGB colors come from a wider spectrum & take into consideration that a screen is backlit -- RGB profiles can create very bright & vibrant colors. Using RGB color profiles to design your artwork will result in beautiful on-screen color that may not translate accurately to print.

CMYK: When printing, Cyan, Magenta, Yellow, & Black inks are added together to create the print color. When a printer converts a file created with an RGB file into CMYK colors for print, they can lose quite a bit of their vibrancy unless the files were created with that process in mind. We recommend designing in CMYK color profiles or CMYK-safe RGB colors for the most accurate on-screen representation of the print colors you'll see on a garment. When saving your artwork as a .png file, it will be converted into an RGB profile (but your colors will maintain more accuracy on screen).



We recommend using a CMYK color profile or CMYK-safe RGB colors to create your design files.

Clipping Masks (when Designing in Adobe Illustrator)

In order for our production system to read the graphic information accurately, you must expand the clipping mask within .ai files.





Copyright Images

Use your own original artwork or obtain the rights to print copyright images.

We do not assume responsibility for copyrighted images. By downloading the app & opting for our terms & agreements, you are stating that you are authorized to manufacture products with any copyrighted designs you submit.

We reserve the right to reject orders based on violation of copyright. If this occurs, you will receive an email notifying you that we are unable to fulfill your order based on rejection of your design.

DYE-SUBLIMATION GUIDELINES

Dye-Sublimation printing is a specialized decoration method that allows for decoration of solid materials like ceramic mugs & synthetic fibers like polyester. In order to decorate your custom sublimated products, we print your designs on specialized paper with a specialty ink & apply that paper to your products. When heat & pressure are applied, the ink enters a gaseous state & is accepted into the material that's being decorated. Sublimation printing is incredibly durable & will not fade, flake, or crack, as the dye truly becomes part of the product itself.

****No white ink is used in dye-sublimation.** If you have white elements in your designs, it's important to be sure that the blank product you're printing on is white. CustomCat's only non-white blank sublimation products are currently Silver Travel Mugs & Silver Dog Tags. For these products, no white design elements should be used.

How to Design for Dye-Sublimation Products

For Dye-Sublimation products, you have the following 3 positioning options to choose from in the CustomCat app. Select the appropriate positioning based on how you want your final product to look.

CC Preset: This positioning should be used if you are uploading a transparent .png file & would like CustomCat to optimize the positioning of your design for you. This positioning differs by product, but most often your design will be resized & centered on the final product. *For all drinkware (except water bottles), CC Preset will duplicate your design & center it on both sides of your product so it's visible while holding the product by the handle for both left & right handed customers.*

Custom: If you'd like to size & position your design on your product yourself, select "Custom" positioning. This will allow you to resize & drag your design around on the design area until you're happy with the placement. Be sure to review your mockup after modifying your positioning to be sure your design is positioned & sized the way you want. We will print your product based on the positioning you submit & cannot issue replacements if placement is consistent with your mockup.

Full: Only select "Full" positioning if you've used a CustomCat Art Template specifically for the product you're designing. These art templates are specific to each dye-sublimation product & designed to utilize the entire available printable area. For drinkware, using CustomCat art templates will produce a "full wrap" effect.



How to Use a CustomCat Art Template:

CustomCat provides Art Templates for all dye-sublimation products. The templates are designed to act as a guide to help you optimize your design positioning, artwork dimensions, & resolution (DPI). Art Templates for each of CustomCat's dye-sublimation products can be downloaded here:

<https://customcat.com/guides/resources/artwork-guidelines>

To use CustomCat's Art Templates, open the .png or .psd files in your design program, or a free online design tool (like PhotoPea, Pixlr, or GIMP**). Next, insert your artwork as a new layer in the document.

Position your design elements within the designated safe area, but be sure to fill the template from edge to edge if you want to utilize the maximum print area.

Lastly, hide or delete the CustomCat Art Template layers & save your design as a .png file.

Within the CustomCat app's Add Product flow, select your product & upload your design. **"Full" positioning** should be selected to utilize the max print area of the product.

To upload this file directly to your CustomCat Design Library (rather than when designing your product), please use our Bulk Uploader, selecting "Use Exact Artwork Dimensions" from the dropdown menu. This will ensure that any excess transparent space is respected & your design is positioned exactly how you want it.

Safe Area

All important design elements should be placed within the noted "Safe Area" on the design template. Design elements placed within the Safe Area can be expected to print on your final product. If elements of your design are positioned outside this safe area, they may not be printed.

The Bleed

"The Bleed" is the outer edge of the design area on our Art Templates. In order to ensure there are no white unprinted areas on your final design, it's vital that you fill the entire template (including the bleed area), submitting a design in the same dimensions as the template itself.

If you forget to fill the entire template, your final product will not be printed from edge to edge.

**CustomCat is not affiliated with any of the aforementioned online design services