

Introduction






All cards we print are standard CR80 plastic cards – as used for driving licences and credit cards. Each card is individually printed using re-transfer technology – putting 4 colours on a piece of film and then transferring that image onto the card using heat. This allows us to produce small volumes of cards and ensure they are 100% customised to your needs.

Generally we produce two types of card:

- | | |
|----------------|--|
| Non-customised | where every card is the same |
| Customised | something on each card is different from the others e.g. a membership number |

Step 1 **Preparing your artwork**





If you want to print some cards without any customisation whatsoever, then you can supply a PDF file as your artwork. It should:

-  be 86 x 54mm in size (allows us to print “edge-to-edge”) with no crop marks
-  have graphics within the PDF and be as higher quality as you can make them. See our note below “Graphics”
-  have all typefaces and fonts embedded
-  have colours as CMYK – see our note below “Colour Matching”
-  include font sizes that are not too small – a minimum of 6pt is advised and even this is small

We can prepare your artwork for you should you wish. There is a small charge of £20 to do this and does include a printed version of the card for your approval.

Should customised cards be needed it’s probably best for us to work with you. Whether it’s to help you set the artwork or us creating it on your behalf. Custom cards can be simple or very creative.

Help us ensure you get the card you want by:

-  providing a rough layout of what you would like the card to look like
-  listing down any specific typefaces and fonts you wish to use
-  supplying graphics (photographs or logos) as JPGs or PNGs – at least 300 DPI or larger if you can, including any brand guidelines
-  sending us a sample of “data” if you want to put someone’s name or other details on each card

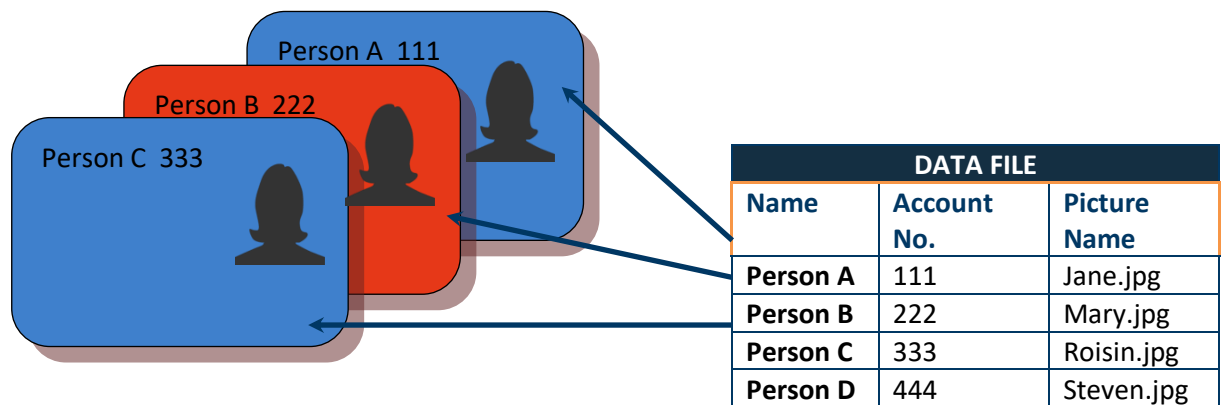
Once we have received this we can then get a good idea of what it is you want from the customised cards.

Step 2 Preparing your customisation

From the brief you give us, we use our card design software (Card Exchange) to prepare the artwork. Once done, we will then send an electronic proof to you via email. Should you need any amendments made then this is free of charge*. Electronic proofs are used until you approve the design but we do trial prints to ensure the card looks very similar to the design.

Once the design is signed off, we will print out a sample card and send it to you for your approval. There is no charge for this service provided that cards are then ordered within 3 months.

Whilst the design is being approved we also set up the technical side of getting the customisation onto the card. In simple terms a mail-merge is done between the artwork you have approved and the list of people you want to give the cards to.



Any graphics that change on each card, (e.g. photograph of the person), then the name of that graphic must match the correct one in the data file. In the picture above **Person A** has the **Account Number 111** and will have the picture called **Jane.jpg** printed on their card. Please supply all data files and graphics at the same time.

Step 3 Printing and delivery

Once the card design, data file and pictures are ready, we go to print. On completion of the printing, cards are spot checked for blemishes and then a weigh-count is done to ensure the correct number of cards have been produced. These are then packaged up with a delivery note and given to either Royal Mail or a courier firm to ensure they get to you and are signed for.

**Card Amendments – whilst we attempt to ensure your card is as close to your design as possible, we do reserve the right to charge for significant changes made from the initial brief. We will advise you of the projected costs before the changes are made.*

Colour Matching

You may know about or have come across PANTONE colours. These are specific mixes of ink used in the printing industry. Should you want to indicate what exact colours you require, we will endeavour to match them. Colours appear differently on paper when compared to plastic due to the materials being different.

Also you may have heard of CMYK. This is an industry standard way of saying: “we print using four colours – Cyan, Magenta, Yellow and Black”. But computers work in RGB or “Red, Green and Blue”. Therefore your cards may look slightly different to what you see on screen.



It’s for these reasons we send you a card proof for your approval.

Graphics

Graphics and pictures come in many different formats: *PNG, JPG, TIFF, BMP, GIFF* are just a few and all are acceptable. But, the resolution of the picture is really important – the higher the better. Pictures on a website are generally about 75dpi (dots per inch) and do not print at all well. They give you a very jagged edge and “pixelate”. Ideally any pictures or images you supply should be at least 300dpi.

Cards with a Magnetic Strip

There are two types of magnetic strip cards – HiCo and LoCo (High Coercivity and Low Coercivity). The key thing to remember, is you need to order the right kind. HiCo are appropriate for high frequency of use (e.g. door entry systems/ATM) and are harder to erase. We recommend their use opposed to the easier to erase LoCo cards.

The card template below shows where the magnetic strip appears on the card.



When printing this side of the card we use a special ribbon to enable printing onto the card without damaging the magnetic strip. We suggest a non printable area of 3mm either side of the magnetic strip

The magnetic strip itself is made of 3 sections called Tracks (Track 1, Track 2 and Track 3). You have to instruct us what to encode and onto which Track.

Smart Cards

These come in different forms – CONTACT – those with a chip in the surface needs the contact to be read – just like a credit card. CONTACTLESS cards have an integrated circuit that uses a radio frequency (RFID) to be read close to a card reader

Your decision on which cards to use will be influenced by which system you intend to use with the cards.

Barcodes

Barcodes tend to hold unique information about the holder of the card. Most tend to be a unique reference number that links to some form of connected database.

There are many different types of barcode (type 39, Interleaved 2 of 5, ISBN, EAN) and your barcode reader and system will need to understand what's on the card. Therefore it is vital for us to know what type of barcode you want to print. They can be positioned anywhere on the card, but the barcode should be black and on a white background with a 1mm non-printed border all the way round.