

12 TOP TIPS FOR EFFICIENT DOCUMENT DESIGN

With an increasing number of documents now delivered as pdf downloads, the onus for printing – assuming it's necessary - has transferred from the messenger to the recipient. But because pdfs are not usually editable there is little opportunity for the recipient to control the amount of paper and ink used. This can be frustrating and create a bad impression if the recipient feels that his resources are being wasted. Here's how you can help to ensure the pdfs you publish can be printed efficiently.

- 1. Right size type.** Use type that's too big and your document will run to more pages than necessary – but too small type will make it hard to read. Try to find a sensible balance.
- 2. Lost in space.** Designers love white space, and there's no doubt that it gives a document a confident and open feel but can also dramatically increase the number of pages. Try to use just enough to avoid your document feeling cramped.
- 3. How many pages?** Assuming that the recipient is printing double-sided (which represents best practice) then ideally your documents should have an even number of pages. But try to reach an even number by condensing it into one page fewer, rather than spreading on to one page more.
- 4. Avoid the margins.** Normal office printers can print fully edge to edge, there's always a narrow white margin around the page. If your design relies on the image bleeding off the page, or between pages, your reader won't experience it that way if they print it themselves.
- 5. Avoid all-over tints.** It may look fabulous on the screen, but if you use white type reversed out of a coloured page, the person receiving your document will waste a lot of ink printing it. And there will be a white margin round the page when it's printed – see point 4 above - which rather spoils the effect. Keep background tints for litho-printed documents (although the point on high ink consumption still applies, that's between you and your printer).
- 6. Keep photos to a sensible size.** Full page photos look lovely but use a lot of ink and increase the number of pages the document occupies. It's much more efficient to use photos that are only as large as you need to communicate the illustrated concept effectively.
- 7. Think about the tints.** When the recipient prints your document, you have no control over the print quality or the colour saturation so if you use a pale colour in text or illustrations, there's a chance it won't be legible.
- 8. Folding and finishing.** Not everybody has the facilities to make booklets on their printer, so when publishing a self-service pdf it's best to present your document as single pages rather than in booklet layout.
- 9. Size matters.** Downloading large documents can be a problem for people whose broadband speed is limited, so try to keep your pdf file to a reasonable size without allowing the image quality to be degraded too much.
- 10. Break it down.** Some documents are unavoidably long and, in these cases, it may be better to offer the option of downloading individual sections rather than all at once.
- 11. Which way up?** It's common to design documents in A4 portrait format, but computer screens are landscape. This means it can be hard to read on-screen because the viewer either has to reduce the scale to fit the entire document on the screen (which might make the type uncomfortably small) or has to scroll down. Designing documents in A4 landscape format increases the chance that they will be printed only for reading and then discarded.
- 12. Horses for courses.** If the document is intended to be both litho-printed and offered as a download, you may well need two quite different versions. Even if you are only going to print copies on demand in your organisation, you may want a version that suits your own printing equipment and another that's device neutral for publishing online.

More tips on making your office more sustainable can be found at <http://greenlight.kyocera.co.uk>