How To Create a Bleed

A "bleed" is a printing term to indicate the area that will be trimmed off after the job is printed.

The sample below shows a business card set up with an 1/8" (0.125) bleed area on all four sides, and crop marks to show where to trim the card. Any objects in the bleed area will be cut away. Important information must be kept an additional 0.125 away from the cutting edge.

The document set up for a standard business card is as follows
Page Size:
Width 3.5
Height: 2
Bleed: 0.125 (in all 4 directions)

If the program you are using does not offer a bleed set up, then the file size will need to be 3.75" w x 2.25" h. A 1/4" is added to both dimenions.

To Prepare the file for printing in Adobe InDesign:
Under File, Export, file name "name your file", "save as type" choose PDF, in the next window choose the Marks and Bleeds, under Marks, check the Crop Marks (this selection is preferred over Bleed Marks). Under Bleed and Slug, check Use Document Bleed Settings (if the .125 does not appear in the boxes, manually enter .125).

In some programs, the PDF choice may be Save As and the Marks and Bleeds may be Trim Marks.

Files should be submitted as High Quality PDFs. When selecting colors, please use the Pantone Solid Coated swatches.

Area to be trimmed

Crop Marks (or Trim Marks)

business card with 0.125 bleed area
and crop marks

All important information/ artwork should be kept an additional 0.125" away from the finished edge, as indicated by the dotted blue line.

actual business card size after trimming