

ARTWORK GUIDE: Vector Art

What Is Vector Art



When it comes to large format printing where small images often need to be enlarged, sometimes you will be asked to provide vector artwork. Vector artwork is also required for computer cut vinyl lettering and logos that you might stick to a van or a window. If you've not encountered this term before it can be a confusing subject, but our short guide will make it easier for you and enable you to tell the difference between vector and raster (bitmap) artwork.

In very simple terms, vector art is made up from lines and has the advantage of allowing you to blow the image up as large as possible without any loss of quality. Raster artwork on the other hand is made up of dots known as pixels, that will lose quality as you enlarge them.

Because vectors use mathematical equations to create lines and images they can be reduced and enlarged without any loss of quality, making them ideal for printing applications.

VECTOR

this image will print well



.ai .eps .svg

BITMAP

this image will not



.jpeg .gif .png

In the image above, we have enlarged each version by a factor of several hundred percent. You will notice how in the raster (bitmap) art file, the edges of the art become distorted or pixelated when the picture is enlarged, while the vector image stays sharp. Vector files are created in programmes such as Adobe Illustrator, Corel Draw and have file extensions such as .ai .eps .svg or .pdf.

Raster art can be used in print but the source file will need to be large enough for your requirements. However, they can not be used for vinyl that needs to be cut. Common raster file extensions include .jpg, .gif, .png and .tif.

It is a good idea to have master files of company logos and global branding saved as vector files as they are often used in various applications.

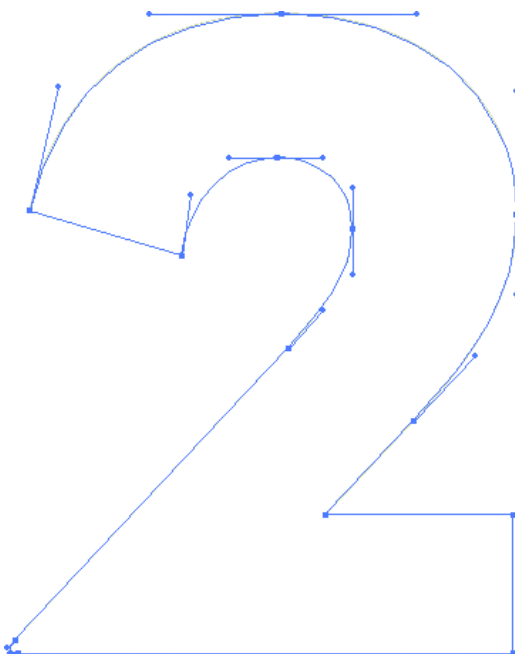
Is My Art Vector?



If your file name ends in .ai, .pdf, .eps and .svg. The chances are it is a vector. However, just because a file is saved in one of these formats, does not mean that it is truly vector art.

One of the easiest ways to tell is by enlarging the image by several hundred percent and see if the edges become distorted.

The only way to be sure your files is a vector is to open it in a vector editing program such as Adobe Illustrator or Corel Draw. If you open your file and use the selection tool on an area within the art. You might see something like this:



If you see the nodes surrounding the graphic, you have the correct vector artwork. If you don't have a vector programme, and are looking to purchase from Discount Displays, your artwork will be checked for free.

What If I Don't Have A Vector File?



If you had a professional designer create your art, then the easiest way is to contact them, and ask for the file in a vector format. Alternatively, if your design has been printed previously, the printer you used may have a copy they could provide.

Depending on the quality of the original file, Discount Displays may be able to create a vector file for you.

All you would need to do is send it over to sales@discountdisplays.co.uk and the print team will check your artwork and if it is possible to convert, will provide a quote.

A third option would be to get a graphic designer to re-create the artwork for you, although this method could be fairly expensive, depending on the artwork.

We hope that this short article has helped you understand vector artwork a little better.

If you have any questions, or would like a free art consultation, please feel free to call us at 0844 800 1020.