New Files

You are going to create a new file for print, what do you do? File > New > Document, if you are using InDesign, my preferred layout tool of choice.

Before clicking that OK button, what do you look for, or what options do you change?

The new document dialog box for InDesign. Fewer Options will hide the options for Bleed and Slug. The button changes to More Options to show Bleed and Slug. I prefer to have the options for Bleed and Slug to show when I create a new document. Most of the time, there is no need to change from the standard settings.

Here is the new file dialog box for InDesign, it should look familiar. I have chosen to work with the Pica scale. Between the numbers 1 and 12, the only two numbers that will not give even divides are 7 and 11. The other ten numbers will divide evenly into 12 or give you a clean fraction, or decimal remainder. I have also chosen to use 72 points to an inch, instead of the traditional 72.27 points to the inch.

Number of pages is 1, I do not have Facing Pages checked. I'm setting up a business card, not a book. If I were setting

12/1=12

12/2=6

12/3=4

12/4=3

12/5=2.4

12/6=2

12/7= 1.714285714285715

12/8=1.5

12/9=1.33 (even third)

12/10=1.2

12/11= 1.09090909090909

12/12=1

Though it can be a different thought process, a base 12 formula is not bad for creating layouts.

up a newsletter or booklet, facing pages would be helpful, so that I can see how the pages work of each other. If there's an ad for page two that uses a bright green and an ad on page three that uses bright pink, someone is going to notice the conflicting colors before it goes to press,

By default, I have facing pages turned off, for most of the layouts I work with, they are unnecessary.

Page Size is set to the trim size of the document. A standard US business card is 3½ x 2 inches. With 6 picas to the inch, 21 x 12 picas.

Columns and Gutters, in reality most business cards are too small for columns.

Margins for a business card are generally equal. I like to use ⅙ inch. Generally, ⅙ is good for outer margin, ⅛ inch will work, however, you might get a tight registration charge. To use a margin that is smaller than ⅛ inch, will definitely get you a tight registration charge. If you have a preference for working in inches an you are not sure what the decimal value for ⅙ inch in, you can enter 1p0 or 12 points, and the software will do an automatic conversion to inches for you.

Business Card

The yellow area represents the standard print size of a business card that requires bleed. The trim marks extend past the bleed area.

If you don't see options for Bleed and Slug, click More Options. The bleed is the area that you want include with the print area, the bleed area is outside the trim values of the printed piece. The slug is a safe area where you can put notes.

Earlier versions of InDesign choked when notes were placed outside the trim area. I'm not sure why that was. I have heard that the imagesetter tries to process the information that is not in a slug safe area on the pasteboard. I believe it.

Generally, document bleed is ⅛ inch. If you need a different bleed value, your pre-press person will tell you. If you are setting up a file in software that does not add bleed value. Earlier versions of Illustrator, all versions of Photoshop, all versions of Quark Xpress, add the bleed to the file size. Instead of 2 × 3½ for the document size, it will be 2¼ × 3¾. If your file requires an image that needs to be larger, and can not be moved because the placement is critical, bleed can not be added to the file.

The document slug does not have to be large. I give it one inch all the way round. I put in notes like, "This file has paragraph styles," paper specs: 100# natural white cover, bindery specs: pad 50s, glue top.

Do not build your small business card file slap dab in the center, or what you perceive as the center of the document. That's for your benefit, if you build the file to size, your job will be a lot easier.

Consider warming up a small can of soup in a 20 quart stock pot. That is an example of working harder than you have to in order to eat. You have to work harder to get the soup out of the big honking stew pot when it is warm, the pot is harder to wash up when you are through. The same with setting up files. If you choose to set up a card in a file that is 8½ × 11 or 11 × 17, or even the size of a parent sheet, 26 × 40, how hard will you be working? Who is going to set up a business card on a 26 × 40 sheet? It is overkill, so is setting up for an 8½ × 11, when the trim size is 2 × 3½.

Send in a file to be printed that has four business cards, one centered in each quadrant of the sheet...consider this. First, it's not efficient use of the paper if each of the four names get 500 cards each. Efficient use of the press sheet would be eight cards to a sheet (if the cards bleed or require tight registration), or 12 cards to a sheet (if the cards are allowed to butt up against each other). Second, the pre-press
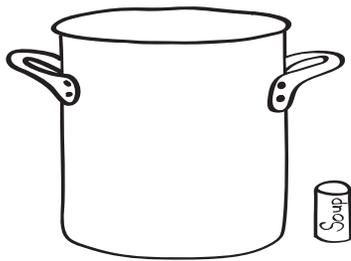
This is a good prospective on working harder than a person has to has to when creating a layout.
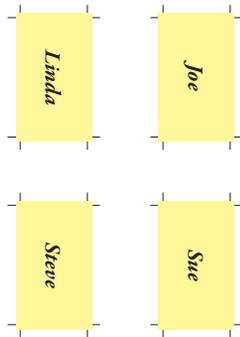
Unless Embossing or Foil Stamping the business cards, or other difficulty factor is used, 4-up is not an efficient print option.

Joe Sue
Joe Sue
Linda Steve
Linda Steve

Joe Sue
Linda Linda
Steve Steve
Steve Steve
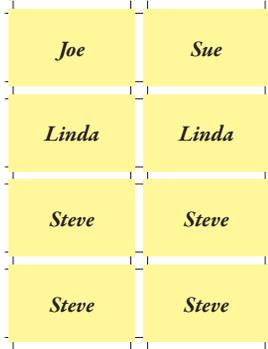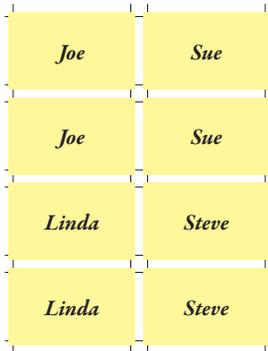
Cards that bleed do well to print with gutters. If the cards do not bleed, but have other high difficulty factors, gutters are recommended for the cards. Tight registration, colors within points of touching, or touching to the point of needing trap, with or without bleed.

technician has been given extra duty, because the file has to be de-constructed and re-constructed for efficient use of the press sheet. If the quantities vary per card, the press sheet is not impossible, it takes a little more thought. What will you do if two people need to have their cards printed two sided? Are you going to send a file with a front and the back in the same file? Only if it is a two page pdf file, or you sent in the native file, with page one as the front of the card and page two as the back of the card.

I do not consider it extra work to set up the press sheet, I have press sheet templates set up. I consider it extra work if I have to de-construct/re-construct a file in order to make it print. You have the option to be charged more.

If specialized processes are required, four business cards per page just might be the ticket. Embossing and Foil Stamping are two such processes that may limit the print job to four cards per 8½ × 11 sheet.

Text styles are one of the most important element of a repeating layout, such as a business card, stationery or other collateral print pieces.

Break down a business card, Company Name/Logo, Contact Name, Title, Address, Phone Numbers, Email and Website. If the Company Name is part of a graphic logo, it is my opinion that the logo should be part of an Illustrator file. True, the logo can be built inside of InDesign, however, it is my opinion that a designer works harder than they have to. If you set the logo up inside InDesign, stop, and export to an EPS file. Open it in Illustrator and check for conversion problems. Whether or not you see any conversion problems, use the eps file for future placement in collateral files built with InDesign. Contact Name, usually bolder and larger than the title, I will set the name, and create the paragraph style. I will normally name it "01 name on card" and the title will be "02 title on card" and so on. I like to put numbers in front of the styles, so that I know what order they are used in. The following month, when I get an order for the new guy, I can copy and paste the information from the email. If "Paste
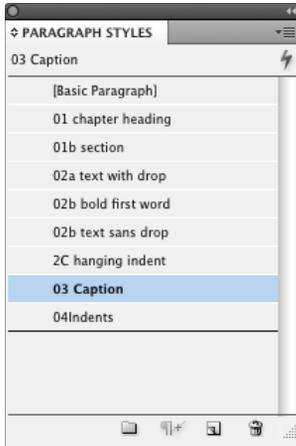
The icons at the bottom of the page are as follows:

New Folder for organizing styles, comes in handy for an involved project.

Clear Overrides, here it is grayed out, there is no text selected or overrides to clear.

New Style is the box with the turned up corner.

The Trash icon allows you to delete styles that are no longer used.

Near the top of the panel on the right, the medium gray bar, is the panel menu icon.
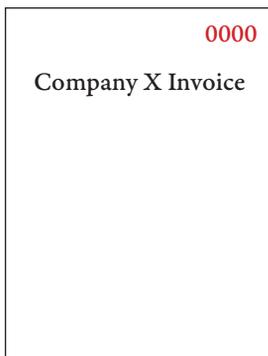
There's not a lot of detail to this fictional invoice, part of the layout should include numbering position.

without Formatting" is not available, once the type is pasted in, I can reapply the paragraph style without having to wonder what it was, by simple clearing the overrides with the icon at the bottom of the paragraph styles panel.

I can then use the paragraph styles as a base for the letterhead and envelope. I won't need the style for the Contact Name or Title. I can delete those. Address, Phone Numbers and Website can probably be merged into one style for the letterhead and envelope. But if they only need one style? Don't count on it, you may need a nested style. Anything you can do to *blond proof* the file, and I can be as blond as they come when I am swamped and rushed, is to your benefit and mine to make the file as bullet proof as possible.

Normally, if I don't need to make extra layers in the file, I won't, but there are times when it is a good idea. If there are multiple text frames, which I try to avoid, by having good paragraph styles, the text will be on one layer and the images/graphics on another. When a third layer is needed, it is for non-printing objects. For printed pieces that are not the size of a standard letter, I put a non-printing frame around the document. When I print a sample, I override the non-printing item, so that it shows on the print out. This shows the finished size to the customer, the press operator and the bindery operator. It also shows how close objects are to the edge of the printed piece. Most small presses only need ¼ inch for grip, some presses need ⅓ inch. When I'm able, I like to use ⅓ inch, it gives the press operator more breathing space when setting up the placement on the sheet.

Without this printed sample, the placement on the sheet could be off, the trimming can be off and the customer has the option to reject the file.

Non-printing objects can include a text frame that shows placement for numbering a form. Can show drill marks for sheets that go into a notebook or pocket folder with brads. Non-printing objects can also be used to mark perforations on the paper, score and fold lines and die-cutting placement. Anything you can show on the layout ahead of time

Snippet Libraries are customized to the customer or the process. As a pre-press technician, I use Snippets more often for the process than I do the customer. My job is the process more than it is design.

Though the job is pre-press, I don't ignore the design aspects of the job. Once in a while I get to design something more than a spec layout.

with a non-printing object, speeds up the processing time of the print job. With everything clearly demonstrated with a printed sample, there are fewer stops to ask questions.

Press operators have a natural tendency to center everything. If the layout is off center because it needs to be drilled for a notebook, the press operator may not look ahead to the bindery instructions for drilling, and center the content on the sheet. Then bindery comes back to pre-press, "Where do I drill this at?" I have a snippet set up for drill marks. I place it in the layout and print a sample, overriding the option for non-printing. The press operator should look at the printed sample, if he sees drill marks, he will be less likely to center the content on the sheet.

I have a customer that has us print report covers. The copy is not centered on the sheet. Every time I get the order, I get out my red pen and mark in big red letters, do not center content. The press operator could be distracted, maybe there was some news, good or bad, and he just wants to get everything printed so he can leave early. Stuff happens, good stuff, bad stuff and crazy stuff.