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TITLE: **Tips for Designing GERBER EDGE® Jobs**

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Summary: The following article offers a step-by-step overview of how a GRAPHIX ADVANTAGE user may approach EDGE job design.

Designing a job to be cut in vinyl requires a different approach than that for the layout of a wedding invitation or a newspaper advertisement. Desktop publishing applications, which primarily output to a paper printer, have the luxury of overlooking some inherent limitations of vinyl; namely shape layering and open/closed shapes. As vinyl job design differs from desktop publishing, so to do "vinyl only" jobs differ from those created for output to the Gerber EDGE.

The Gerber Edge technology offers terrific flexibility in full color; accurate and effective image reproduction, the design of jobs with multiple shapes and multiple colors without multiple cutlines, overprinting of gradient fills for "airbrushed" effects and many others. With this greater flexibility comes an opportunity for greater complexity. Simply put, it's easier to get into trouble. Everyone develops their own twist to job creation, but what works well for a "1,2,3" job, can often lead to unnecessary confusion for a more complex effort. Difficulties can be reduced by working with good design habits in the beginning and then developing and customizing them to parallel your own train of thought. See if the following design process doesn't simplify your approach to Gerber Edge jobs.

1. Design the job as a wireframe.
2. Assign a vinyl color to the entire job with the Vinyl Assignment tool (the paintbrush).
3. Select All--assign a clear foil fill to the entire job.
4. *Turn off* cuts on all shapes.
5. Assign foil colors--combine your shapes as appropriate at this time.
6. Adjust front to back.
7. Assign cuts.
8. Preview/Show Filled, viewing what you've created as it will look after processing to the Gerber Edge.
9. Fine tune your job and make necessary adjustments. Return to Preview/Show Filled occasionally to check your progress.
10. Output your job to the Gerber Edge (and then to your plotter, if necessary).

Jobs with Bitmaps Images...

If a job is to include a bitmap image, something scanned or taken from a photo-CD, further considerations need to be made. Remember, process color jobs must be designed on white vinyl. Furthermore, don't forget to give your images a fill. By default, an image is placed in Composer as a template--it is necessary to assign a spot or process color fill.

Another consideration is that of Image Resolution (settings found under the Display menu item and also in the Image Fill dialog box). Image resolution refers to the quality of the bitmap image as it will appear on your computer screen and on the paper printed page. Changing Image Resolution will not affect EDGE output quality, but it will impact the .PLT file size.   Be sure to save the file at low resolution to

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conserve hard disk space. Gerber .PLT files with medium or high image resolution bitmaps will be much larger than necessary.

As a final note, be sure to select reasonable Lines Per Inch (LPI) settings. In general, a higher LPI will result in greater detail, but as a consequence, tonal transition quality will suffer and the image will darken. Final judgment will rely on experience.