Print Lab
SpotModel

2.0 Version

At **SpotModel** we are always thinking about how to go one step further, offering new possibilities to our dear modelers.

Thinking of you modeler, who wants to reach further just like **SpotModel**, we offer you **SpotModel Print Lab**, a **new decal digital printing service** that will allow your designs, your liveries and decorations, your customizations and logos to be transformed into actual decals you can use in your models. With the infinity of colors and possibilities that the process color system gives, including white ink and clearcoat printing.

The mechanics are simple:

1.- Make the design you want, following our templates and instructions.

2.- At **SpotModel** we will supervise your design and, usually 1 or 2 weeks after receiving it, we will let you know whether if it's ready to print or if it's not correct, in which case you must modify it to be valid.

3.- When it is finally validated, you will be given access to it on our website under your user account (only you can see it) and from there you can buy as many prints as you want, from one copy to thousands.

Here's how to prepare your files to upload them to our website:

1.- We only support **Adobe Illustrator** and **Corel Draw** files, up to their latest version.
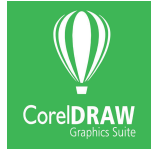
2.- Download the **provided design template** (Illustrator or Corel) to make sure that your design is valid and prints correctly. Our file upload system will automatically reject any file not designed using this template.

3.- In that template, you will find five different layers: Print Marks, Blue paper, White, Design, and Clearcoat.
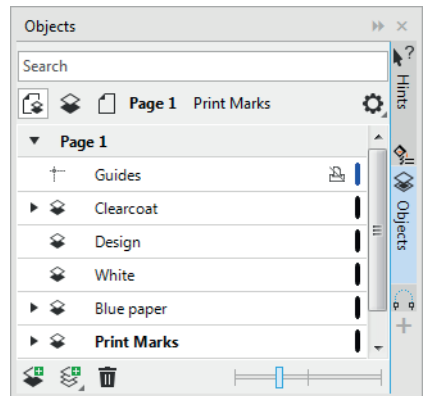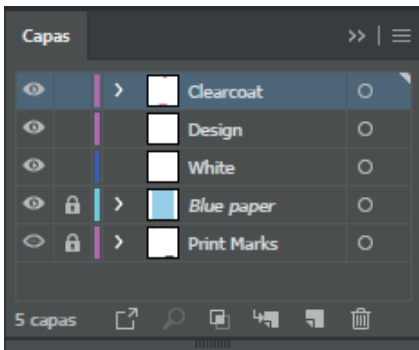
Note that this is also the actual printing order: white is printed first, the design layer is printed over it, and finally, the varnish layer is printed over both of them.


Clearcoat
Design
White
Blue paper
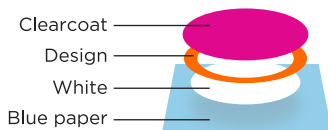
Printed result ▶

4.- The **Print Marks** layer is only used to facilitate the printing process. Just ignore this layer: it will show as locked in the template, so please do not add, modify or delete any element on it.

5.- The **Blue paper** layer only indicates the area where your design will be included. It will also be shown as "locked" in the template, so **do not modify this layer** either, or place any objects inside it. Just make sure your design does not fall outside the blue area.

6.- The **White layer** should include **all the elements** that make up your design except the black ones. In this layer, all elements must be drawn in the WHITE color included in the provided palette (C1 M1 Y1 K1). Please not include PNGs or JPGs in the white layer, only vector elements. If any element does not have its corresponding underlying white shape, it will look transparent when placed on the surface of the model. Of course, if your design includes white elements, you should keep in mind that these elements will only be printed if they are drawn in this White layer.

Some elements on Design layer
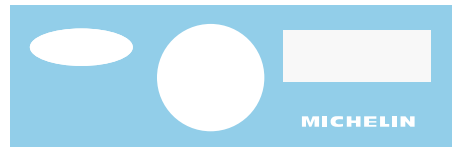
The same elements on White layer. Black elements don't need white background

7.- Draw everything you want to print in the **Design** layer, inside the blue box area shown in the template. For the best possible result, keep these parameters in mind:

a) **The texts must ALWAYS be converted to vector curves.** The reason is because if you use a typeface that we do not own at SpotModel, we will not be able to print your design correctly. To do this in Illustrator, select all text in your design, and in the "Type" menu, click on "Create outlines". In Corel, select all text in your design, and in the "Object" menu, click on "Convert to curves". Keep in mind that once you do this you will not be able to modify the text, so we advise you to leave this step for the very end, just before sending us the file ... but do not forget it!

b) The smallest dot size that can be printed with quality is 0.1 mm in diameter, but we recommend 0.2 mm as the smallest.

c) The thinnest line that can be printed with quality is 0.1 mm wide, but we recommend 0.2 mm as the thinnest line.

d) The texts can be printed so small that you will have to read them with a magnifying glass, but we recommend a minimum of 3 points.

e) If you are planning to draw small objects with lots of detail, they will not have enough sharpness. In these cases, we recommend that you simplify the design.

Original   Simplify

f) Gradients can be used.

g) Pictures can be printed. IMPORTANT: make sure to **Embed** the pictures in the **Design layer**, and remember to add a white background in the **White layer** and the corresponding varnish in the **Clearcoat layer**.

h) Since your design will be printed using CMYK process, you can use as many colors as you want. In the print sample (available for purchase on our website), you can see CMYK simulations of the Pantone color references commonly used in decal printing.

i) Fluorescent colors can not be printed.

j) Metallic colors can not be printed, but if you use Pantone gold and silver inks (Pantone 877 C and Pantone 871 C), the interpretation in CMYK is quite acceptable for small details.

8.- **All the elements of your design must be clearcoated on top.** Therefore, the **Clearcoat** layer must also contain the outlines of every object in your design, but in this layer all must have the same color: the CLEAR color of the color palette of the template.

Some elements on Design layer   The same elements on Clearcoat layer

IMPORTANT: keep in mind that the clearcoat shape is the one that will stick an individual decal all together, so think carefully about which area you should cover with clearcoat in each case.

Please, study carefully the following examples:

These elements must have a manual designed clearcoat contour

Incorrect clearcoat contour. In this way each letter will be a independent decal

Here the clearcoat contour it's ok

9.- Once printed, your decals will have a peculiarity: they will slightly expand when wet, so your design will be printed using a small scale factor to compensate for this expansion. The effect will be minimal, but if you compare the measurements of the printed elements with the elements in your original design you will see that there are small discrepancies. Don't be alarmed: when you wet the decals and place them on your scale model, you will see that everything falls perfectly into your place.

10.- Due to the nature of the printing inks used, the decals adjust really well to flat surfaces but they show some difficulties at the bends, edges and sharp areas, such as spoiler edges. In these cases, we recommend that you analyze your design well and avoid designing decals that need to fit tightly curved surfaces or bends. For instance, in the case of spoilers, it is preferable to split your design in two decal sections, one for the top and one for the bottom.
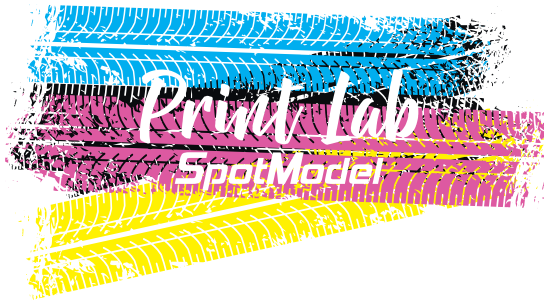
HOW TO USE OUR DECALS

1. Roughly cut around the decal you want to place, in order to separate it from the rest of the decals in the sheet (no need to be accurate at all in the cut).

2. Dip the decal, including the supporting blue paper, for 5 seconds in any recipient with water at room temperature.

3. After the water bath, wait for at least 10 seconds before starting to manipulate the decal.

4. Generously moisten the area where you want to place the decal, this will make the surface slippery and help you a lot during placement.

5. Adjust the decal to its final location with the help of flat tweezers or with a brush moistened with water.

6. To achieve a better grip and tighter adaptation to the surface, you can gently press with a wet sponge over the decal.

⚠ IMPORTANT

• Do not use any products to soften decals (decal softeners), since they are not valid with our decals.

• Never use a hair dryer or any heat source for placing the decals, as they will become damaged.

• For better adhesion, it is recommended to apply the decals over shiny surfaces.