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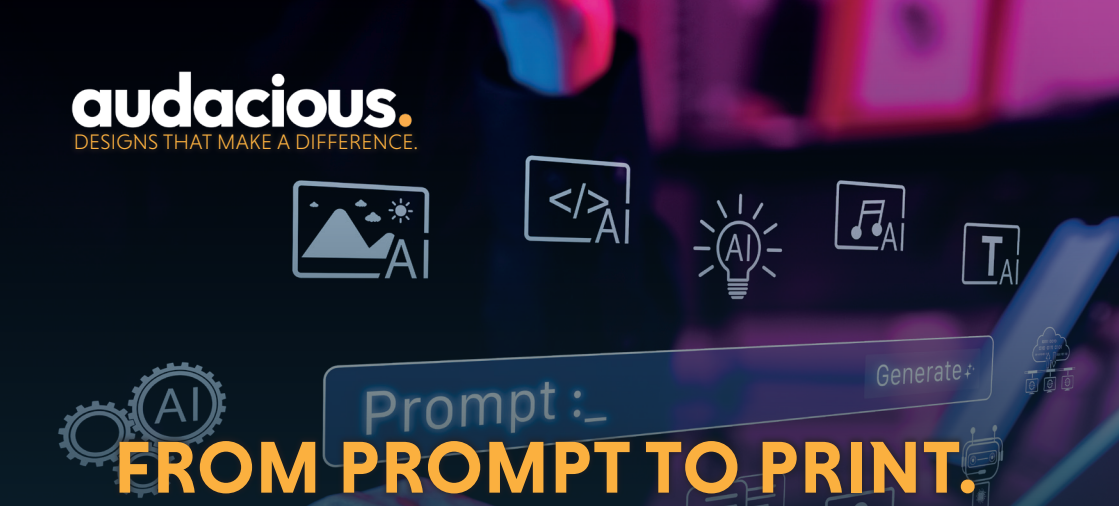
DESIGNS THAT MAKE A DIFFERENCE.



FROM PROMPT TO PRINT.

What small businesses need to know before using AI to generate artwork for printed marketing materials.

If you are considering using ChatGPT, Claude or any other AI tool to design your print-ready materials, then this short guide could well save you a considerable amount of time and frustration.

The temptation to use AI is strong. It's often free, quick and available 24/7. A few prompts, and *hey presto!* Your artwork looks better than you could do it yourself. But there's a catch: **what you create may well not be suitable for commercial printing.**

So, without getting too technical, here are the four reasons why this is the case and what you can do about it.



RESOLUTION & SIZE

AI image generator output lacks the quality required for printing.

Your commercial printer will need to work from documents created at a high resolution of 300 dpi (dots per inch). Generally, AI generators export images at a considerably lower quality, good enough for digital use, but not for printing.



COLOUR

AI image generators output in a different colour scale than commercial printers require.

Images created for screens use the Red, Green and Blue (RGB) scale, but commercial printing uses a blend of four inks: Cyan, Magenta, Yellow and Black (CMYK). To be print-ready, your AI generated materials will need their colours converting or may have to be recreated from scratch.

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BLEED AND TRIM

Documents are often printed on larger sheets and trimmed to their final size.

Professional graphic designers create print-ready materials with a trim line to ensure quality, image positioning and compliance with commercial printer expectations. AI image generators cannot build these print-ready files on their own.



PRINT MARKS & PDFs

Print-ready PDFs need to be prepared to the printer's specifications.

AI tools can generate PDFs, but these rarely meet commercial printer requirements with the correct page size, bleed, colour settings and, where required, trim marks.

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WHAT ARE YOUR OPTIONS?

If AI cannot create print-ready materials, your two main options are DIY (using Canva, etc.) or to work with a graphic designer. ***Here's how they compare.***

Use an online DIY tool like Canva.

✓ **Affordable and accessible.**
Budget-friendly and quick.

✓ **Easy to use.**
Templates simplify design.

✓ **Print-ready PDFs.**
Export with bleed and crop marks.

✗ **Your time isn't free.**
Use your time for what matters most.

✗ **Consistency is a challenge.**
Will your new designs match your existing marketing materials?

Work with a graphic designer.

✓ **Save time and get it right.**
Work with a specialist to turn your ideas into strong, effective marketing.

✓ **Made for you, not everyone.**
Custom design that fits your brand and helps you stand out.

✓ **Designed for the real world.**
Artwork ready for print, digital, or both.

✓ **Experience makes a difference.**
A skilled designer creates what works.

✗ **Cost.**
Yes, but it might be less than you think.

SO... WHAT NEXT?

AI and DIY tools are great for some jobs, but for print-ready materials or those your business will rely on to represent its brand or drive its marketing, it's often best to speak to a professional. **For design support or some good old-fashioned human advice, call Stu on 07824 862 952.**

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