How Do I Create a Dieline in Illustrator, Indesign or Photoshop?

Why do we set a dieline?

A dieline (also known as a knifeline) is a graphic element placed in artwork, that is used as the template to produce a die. The die enables the printed artwork to be cut to a particular shape to suit your requirements.

The dieline is typically placed into the artwork print file as a separate layer, which allows the user to ensure it is correctly located relative to the print component.

How to set the dieline

Firstly ensure all your artwork is set up in CMYK format.
If you are unsure how to do this, refer to our separate guide for setting up colours.
Refer to www.displays2go.com.au/convert-spot-colour-to-cmyk

In order for the dielines to be separated from the CMYK artwork so they do not print, they are typically set to a spot colour. We prefer the Full Cut line is set to one colour and the Fold line is set to another. The dielines should be set on separate layers and named accordingly, as shown below.

Use the following steps to set up dielines correctly

1. Create the cut file using Adobe Illustrator, irrespective of what design software you've used to create your artwork. If your artwork is in any other format than Illustrator (e.g. InDesign, Photoshop, CorelDraw), simply save the file as a flattened PDF and open or place the PDF in Illustrator.
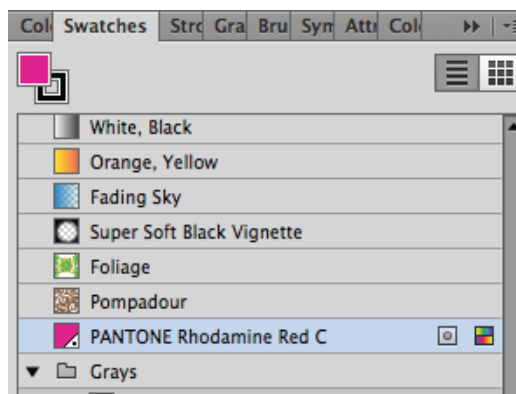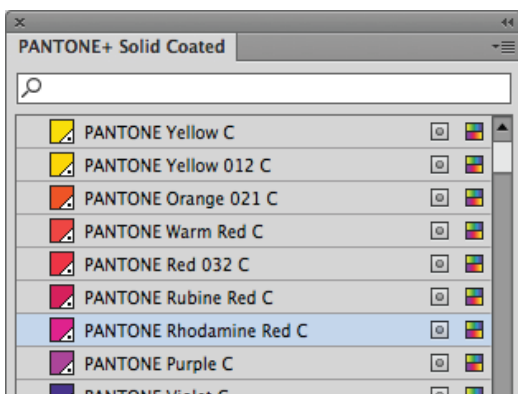
2. With the file open, check the Document Colour Mode is set to CMYK.

In the main menu, go to File > Document > Colour Mode > CMYK

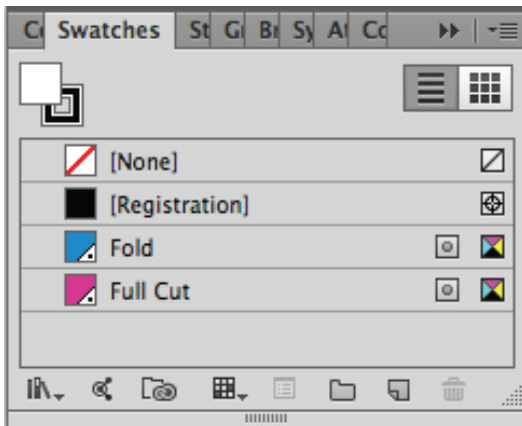**3.** To create a spot colour swatch, go to:

In the menu, go to Window > Swatch Libraries > Colour Books > Pantone+Solid Coated

In the window of colour swatches that pops up, scroll down and double click on a colour to add it to the Swatches.
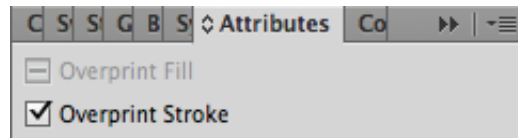
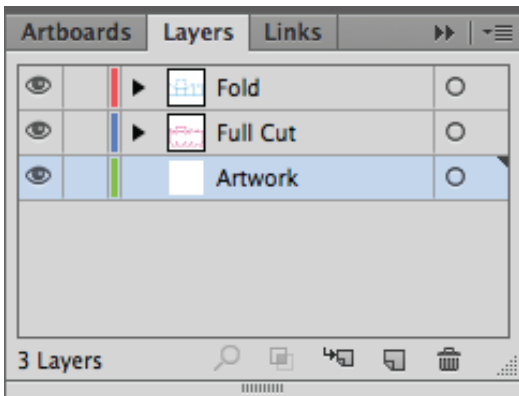**4.** Rename the swatch to 'Full Cut' or 'Fold"
as appropriate

5. Create your dieline on a separate layer,
with the outline colour set to the spot swatch
with no fill.

IMPORTANT: Set the dieline Attribute to
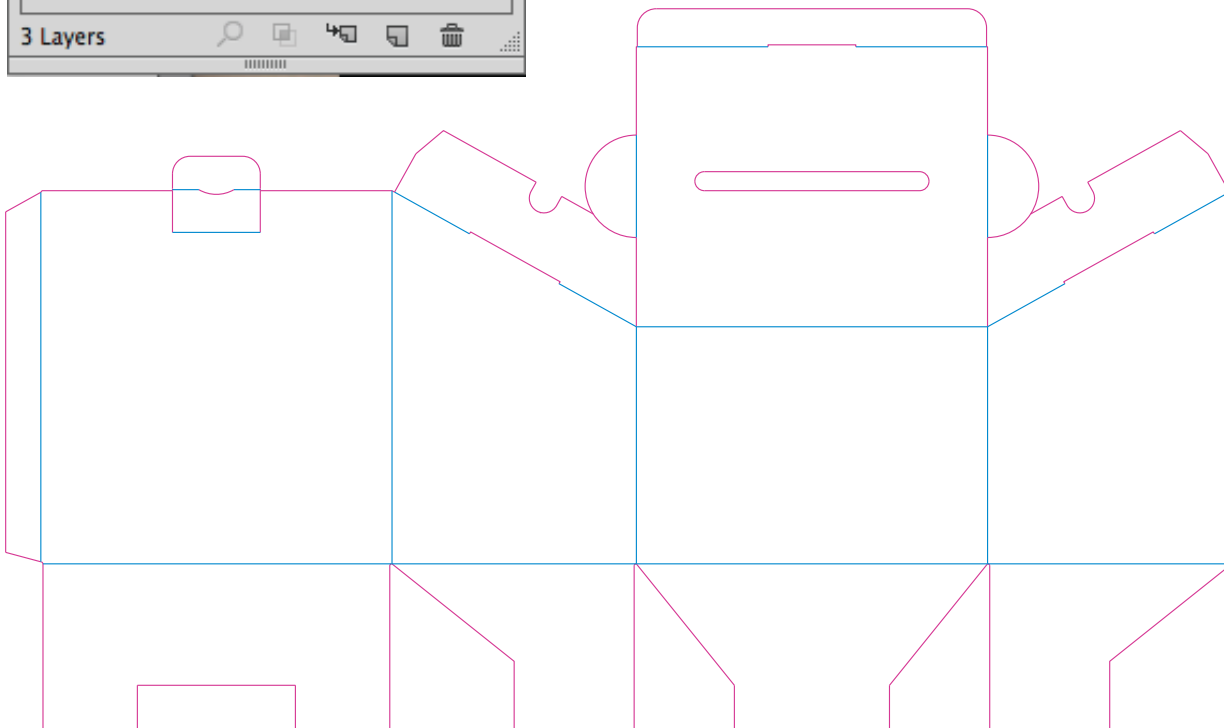Overprint Stroke:

In the main menu, go to Window >
Attributes > Overprint > Stroke

6. Name the layers either 'Full Cut' or 'Fold'

7. The dielines can be made up of
individual segments or continuous lines.
An example of a dieline showing full cut
and fold lines is shown below.