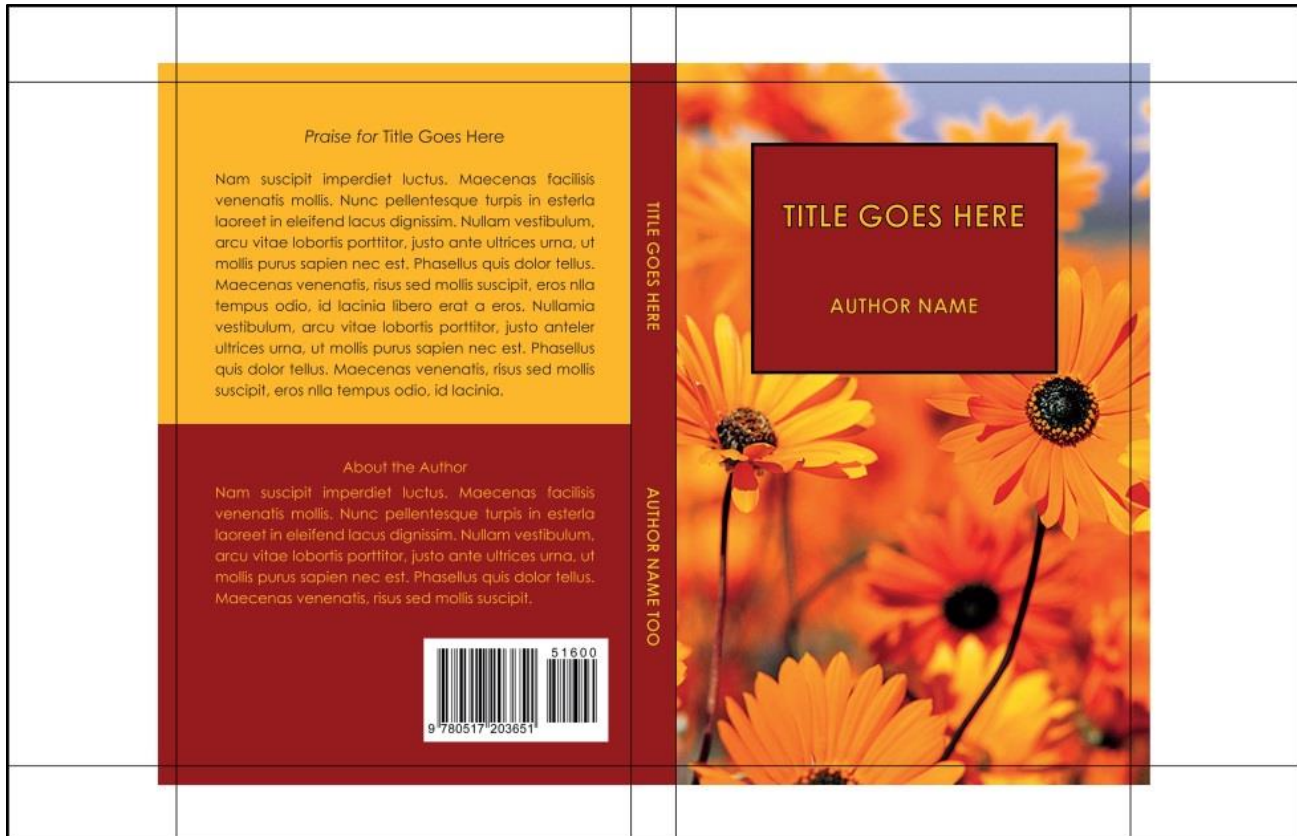# Quick Guide to Formatting Your Book Cover

Cover files can be designed in a variety of software, including MS Word, Adobe InDesign or Illustrator. Your cover design must include the back of the book, the spine, and the front of the book, all in a single PDF. The cover is printed on a single 17 x 11 sheet of paper which wraps around the printed book block and is then cut to your final book size.

Set Your Page or Canvas Size

The size of your cover must be 17 x 11 (width x height in inches). When you begin designing, set the page or canvas size to a landscape-oriented document of 17 x 11. The cover image must be centered on this canvas. The size of the image on the canvas depends on the cut size and the number of pages in your book. Take a look at the example below.
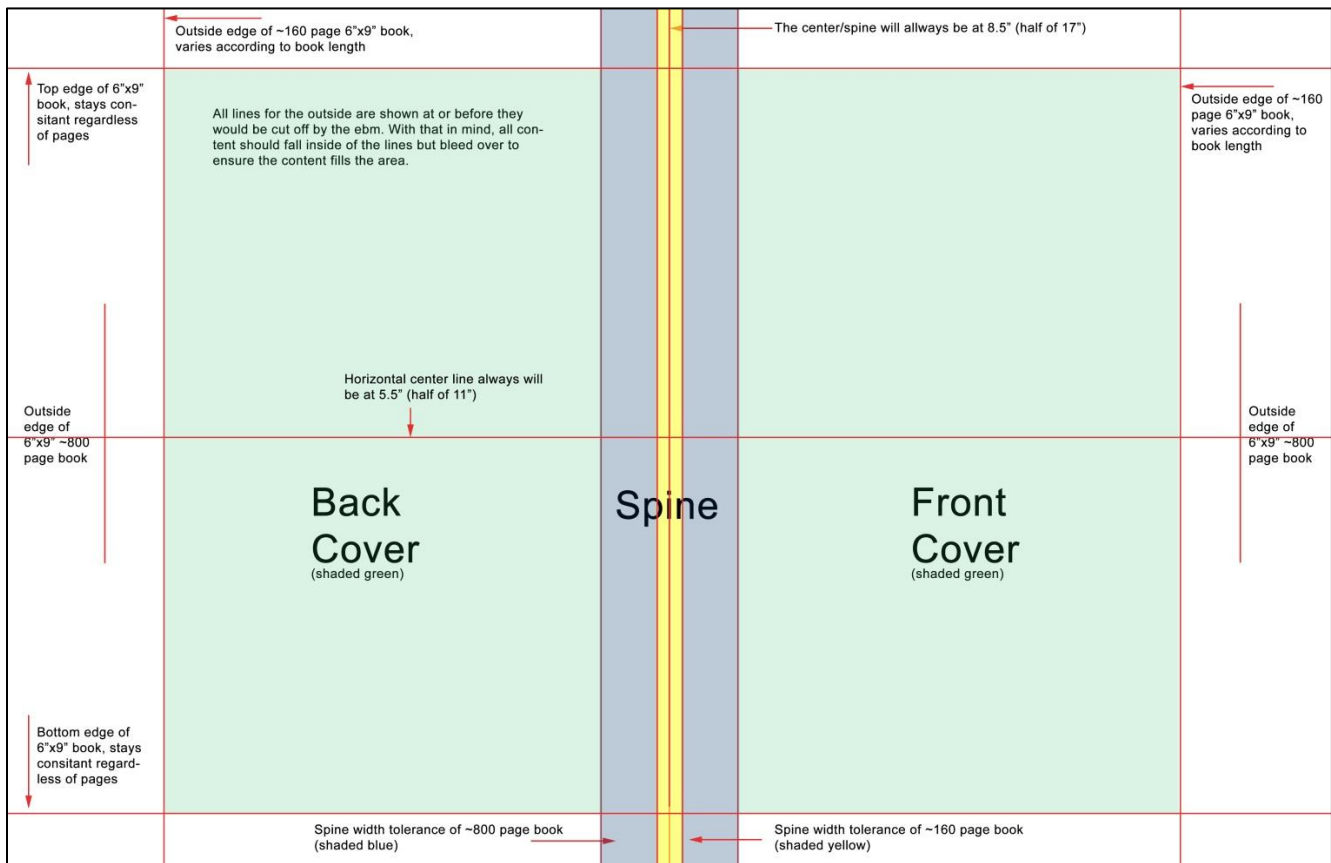

Calculating Spine Width

Before designing your cover, you must know the spine width of your book. To calculate this, you'll need your final page count. The formula is: (page count) ÷ 500 = (spine width in inches). For example, the spine width of a 250 page book would be 250 ÷ 500 = 0.5 inches.

Designing Your Cover

Once you know the spine width of your book you can begin marking out the placement of your cover design on the canvas to create your own template.

- Use the ruler tool to mark a vertical guideline at the center of the page at 8.5 inches. This guideline shows where the exact center of your book's spine will be. This will always be at 8.5 inches on the 17 inch wide canvas.
- Create a guideline on either side of the center line at half the width of your spine. For example, a 250 page book needs a guideline ¼ inch on either side of the center line.

- Next, create a horizontal center line, which will always be at 5.5 inches on the 11 inch high canvas.
- Create guidelines to mark the top and bottom edge of the book. From the horizontal center, draw guidelines that are half the distance from the center to the top and bottom edge of the book. For example, for a book that is 9 inches in height, these guidelines will always fall 4.5 inches up and 4.5 inches down from the center line.
- Finally, draw vertical guidelines from the front and back edge of your spine out to the right and the left edges of the canvas. These guidelines mark the width of the front and the width of the back of the book. For example, for a book that is 6 inches wide this will be 6 inches from the right and 6 inches from the left outer spine guidelines.
- Now you have created a template that is unique and specific to your book's page length and cut size. See the example below that shows the template range of a 6 x 9 book.
- In your final design, make sure the background image or color of your cover extends at least .25 inches past your template guidelines (a ¼ inch bleed). This will account for any slight variance in the cut or spine calculations.

Formatting Tips:

- The cover image should be centered vertically and horizontally on the 17" x 11" canvas.
- Do not include crop marks or template lines on your final image. Use the ruler tool to place guidelines.
- To place text on the spine, rotate it so that the left type margin falls at the top of the book. The type will then read correctly from left to right when the book lies front cover up on a horizontal surface.
- If you have your own ISBN and barcode, remember to put it on the back cover of your book design.

Creating a PDF file to Print on the EBM

In order for us to print your book on our Espresso Book Machine the final cover file must be sent to us in PDF format. Go to File and choose the Save As option. When saving your file click on the Save as Type drop-down menu and select PDF from the list.