Artwork Document Size When Using Cutter Guides
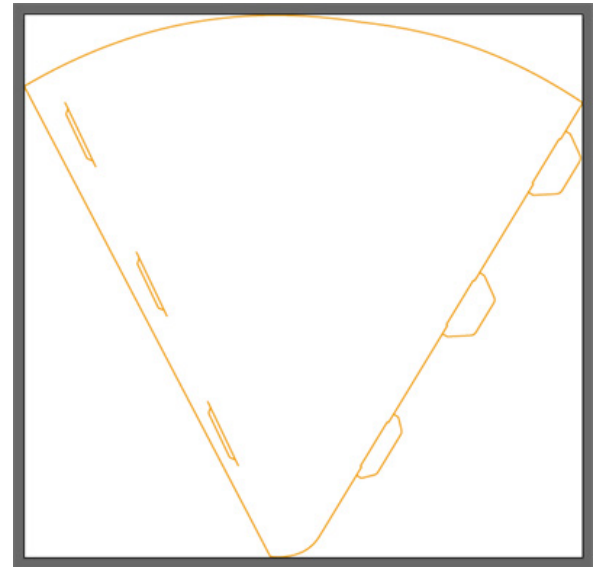
How to correctly size your artwork document when you're using a cutting guide/form

When setting up artwork for print it's always important to set the document size to the finished size of the artwork, not bigger or smaller, but exactly the size you want it to end up. This means that when you are creating a job with an external cutter you MUST make the document size the outer dimensions of the cutter guide so that the biggest dimensions of the cutter touch all the edges of the document page size, not set back from the edge and not running over the edge either.
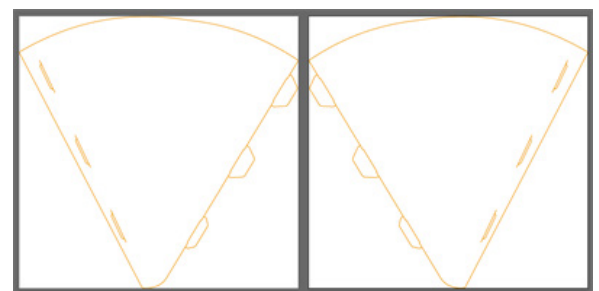
This is very easy in Adobe Illustrator as you can just select all the cutter guide elements and tell the artboard to resize to the selected artwork. In InDesign & Quark you will need to find out the size of the cutter artwork and then just create a document page size that matches, then place the cutter at the zero point.

Cutter Guide In Illustrator
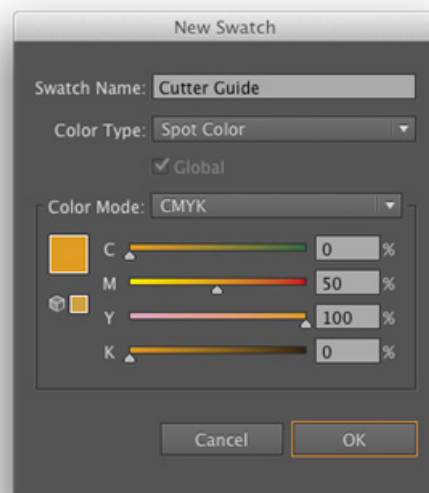The outer edge of the cutter artwork touches all the sides of the page/document

You also need to remember that for the artwork on the reverse you need to **flip** the cutter horizontally and design to the reversed shape, not just copy it to the next page.

Cutters flipped for front and back
Flip Horizontal in InDesign, Reflect Vertical in Illustrator, how confusing!

Finally make sure you colour the cutter guide elements in a Spot colour named 'Cutter Guide' or similar, not for example Pantone 877!

Name your spot colour
The name of the colour and the fact that it is a SPOT colour are the important parts. The visual colour makeup is not important and just so that you can see it against your artwork.

Any questions, please contact us, we're here to help.

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