

SAVE MONEY, SAVE TIME, & *END REPRINTS!!!*

So you're going to print a Data-Merged document? Awesome!!! Here are a few tips to getting the data set right so that we can print it for you, and do it correct the FIRST time, EVERY TIME:

Set it up in EXCEL

While we generally prefer our files to come in PDF format, this is one area where exceptions apply! Excel does just that, EXCELS at organizing information into neat little columns and rows so that our program can read each piece individually without issue.

Title the Fields

This is EXTREMELY important to remember: The FIRST row of fields must be the TITLE of the information to follow in the column it's leading. Titling the columns not only helps to let the designer know what they're dealing with for information, it also gives the layout program a filler text to use as a place holder in the document. This keeps things neat and tidy, while telling the program what column of information goes where.

If you put DATA in Row One, It WILL get LOST!

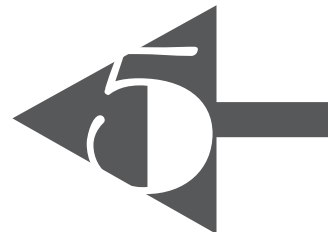
That's right! Gone, Kaput! Finite!!! It will NOT be included in the final merged document. The first row of your excel document should be for the FIELD TITLES ONLY!!! Anything else included in this row will NOT show up when it goes to print.

DON'T INCLUDE UNNECESSARY INFO!

We like to make everything as quick and painless as possible for everyone involved. Including a column in your document that tells us what your aunt's nephew's grandkids' birthdays are when we're addressing envelopes is NOT OK. It adds extra fields that we must sort through and decide whether to include or not.

No Blank Rows!

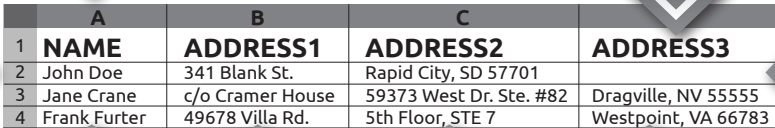
Blank rows create blank fields. Blank fields are STILL FIELDS. If you leave a space between row 200 and row 202, you're still going to get charged for row 201. It's a field. It's there. It has "information", invisible or not, and a BLANK FIELD still PRINTS. So, JUST the necessary info, please.



Combining info is OK, as long as it's concise.

No books. If we're data-merging custom letters, that's a different problem all together, and we'll need to discuss it with you further. But for the most part, data merge is best left to addressing, including special names in certain locations, giving that ONE special customer a Unique Discount, you see where we're going with this!.... Simple, short, sweet, concise. Shorten addresses where possible, Name fields in order to minimize blanks on the final document. Here's a quick example:

This tells the program what to call the placeholder text.



	A	B	C	TITLE FIELD
1	NAME	ADDRESS1	ADDRESS2	ADDRESS3
2	John Doe	341 Blank St.	Rapid City, SD 57701	
3	Jane Crane	c/o Cramer House	59373 West Dr. Ste. #82	Dragville, NV 55555
4	Frank Furter	49678 Villa Rd.	5th Floor, STE 7	Westpoint, VA 66783

This will print, but with NO information attached. The space will be empty. Keep it in mind when setting up and naming fields of data.

Size Doesn't Matter!

Only ONE file can be data-merged to a document at once. If you have a document that needs addresses, but then another part that requires special information that will be included on the other side, PUT IT ALL TOGETHER! Yes, this does mean that you'll have to repeat the information for every single use with the information it's to follow. (Jane, John and Frank all get the same Discount? Then in the corresponding Field, you'll need to repeat 50% Off for ALL THREE) No skimping! We would rather not have to scroll down to line 2054 to fill an empty field that should be there. Which leads us to #8.....

PROOF READ, PROOF READ, PROOF READ!!!!!!

Notice it's repeated... More than once! Data-Merged documents don't take long to set up as long as EVERY DETAIL is CORRECT!!! If an address is wrong, if Frank happens to get 100% off when he was only supposed to get 10%, the responsibility falls on the person that didn't correct it. Unless you pay us for our time used to type it, that falls to YOU to make sure everything is EXACTLY as you want it.

So here's the big secret: OUR GRAPHIC DESIGNER thinks DATA-MERGE is FUN!!! YES, FUN!!! But it's only enjoyable when all parts are correct from the beginning. Please do your part to keep our job enjoyable, —and your costs low— by following these simple steps!