



This Guide Applies to the Black River Imaging Software, Albums – Black River Imaging Software and the Sports Design Software

Template Designer

The Template Designer is a set of tools built into the software that allows you to custom-create most products we offer and edit pre-designed products. The steps below will lead you through the basics of creating a custom designed product and then the guide will wrap up with some special notes about editing the pre-designed composites. This guide also has a complimentary Video Tutorial available online to further assist your ordering needs.

Getting Started & Using the Grid Option

This section will cover getting started with Template Designer and the importance of using the Grid in your designs.

Once you have selected a template to begin with you will want to enable the Template Designer tools by clicking the button to the top left of Rotate Layout. When you click this you will see two tool boxes appear, one set under the Image Layout Area and the second one under the Thumbnail section. You may also see the My Templates palette appear. You may opt to close or move the palette and by the end of this guide you will have an understanding each of these aspects.

We will cover the Grid option first as we have found this feature to be most beneficial to your design. You'll find this option on the right side under the thumbnails option. You may need to expand this area to better view your options.

The Grid option will assist you in drawing specific size openings or borders. These grid lines will not print on the final product. Clicking in the opening beside Show Grid activates the grid on your product opening. The default grid size is half an inch which can be modified by entering the desired number in the Grid Spacing opening and hitting enter will refigure the displayed grid.

You may notice that the right side and bottom spacing appears to be distorted. This is how the system reads the file and although it appears distorted, it is not. You will want to adhere to these grid lines so that your final product prints as you planned.

You may now freely draw on the layout using the lines as your guide and if you want a more tightly controlled layout clicking the Snap to Grid option will prevent you from moving beyond the grid lines.

Using Draw, Edit and Layer functions

Once you have an understanding of how to use the grid and why you are ready to begin to draw an opening, or node, by clicking the Draw button and while holding the left click of your mouse down draw the opening as you would like. While drawing, the opening will appear in yellow and will change to blue when you release the mouse.

It is to your benefit to choose the "revert to Edit tool" in the preferences window as you will most generally need to do some minor adjustments to your opening once you have drawn it. Otherwise you will need to click the Edit button to begin making adjustments. The Preferences button is located on the bottom of the main software screen. When you are in edit mode you may move the opening by resting your cursor on the opening center, holding down the left click and dragging the opening where you would like it to be. You may also use your cursor to extend the sides of the opening you have drawn or tilt the opening by resting the cursor on the corner of the opening until you see the curved arrow, you will then hold down the left mouse click and move to the left or right.

The smaller box with the X Y coordinates will display the current location of your cursor on the layout while the larger box of X Y coordinates will display the dimensions, or bounds of the opening you have selected on the product layout.

You may change the layering of the openings you have drawn by either right clicking on the opening and choosing Layer + or Layer- or you may use the button beneath the image layout area and simply click the option you want.

When you click on the Image button it will allow you to use your cursor to drag an image into your opening(s). To change the color of the image, have the opening selected and click Node under the thumbnail section, close the fonts (this option will be discussed later) and you will see black and white and sepia. Your image will change as you make your selection and clicking again will deselect the option.

Adding a Text box

Having the ability to customize products by adding a text opening is great benefit. You may want to use this feature to add your studio name, client name or captions. This section will outline the design process and hints for this option.

First, be sure you have enabled the grid so that you know your text-opening placement will be more accurate. If you have not reviewed the first section of this guide covering the Grid option, please do so before adding text to your product. Add a text opening by clicking the Text button and holding down the left click on your mouse while dragging the cursor to the desired dimensions of the opening. While drawing you will see the box appear in yellow and when you release the left click the opening will appear blue; this box can revert to yellow depending on which mode you are in and the words "type your text here" will be displayed. As a standard rule you will want to allow ¼" on all edges of your text opening and the edge of the print. Products that require additional space will be identified in their prospective guides and tutorials. Edit the opening if needed and then click on the Image button so that you may access the drop down box to type in. Be sure to enter any line breaks you may need by hitting the Enter button on your keyboard.

You can customize the text by choosing a font, color and opacity. To change the font click the Node button located beneath the thumbnail section and choose your desired style. If you do not have these fonts installed on your computer system then your text will not reflect the changes in the image layout area. Your text will print with the font style you have selected regardless of how you see it in the display section. There is a zip file of fonts available on the Downloads Page of the web site. Having these installed on your computer should allow them to display in the software as well.

You can change the color by clicking the Text button located under the thumbnail section. You will see a color palette appear from which you may choose a preset color. You may also choose to customize the color by using the HSB or the RGB tabs. Clicking the Sample Color button will change the cursor to an eyedropper; the text will change to the color of any part of your layout that you click on. To deactivate the eyedropper you will need to click the Sample color button again. You may also adjust the opacity of the text by clicking the Opacity button located under the thumbnail section and moving the slider or entering a specific degree.

Saving a template to My Templates

The software offers the ability to save your designed product so that you may order from the same design in future orders. This action saves the template and the applied options but not the images that you have placed in the openings.

These saved templates will be listed in the My Templates palette, which appears when you first turn on the Template Designer tools. If you have closed this palette you may reactivate it by turning the tools off and back on again.

Before you can save a template you will need to create a group in the My Templates palette. Click the folder icon at the bottom of the pallet to activate the first group. You will then click in the box to type the name and hit enter to activate it. Once you have named your group, should you need to change the name simply click the ABC button and reenter a name.

Once you save the template it will clear the images from the layout so you will need to be sure to click Add to Order prior to saving the template.

Click Save and enter a name for the product. The default will be the product description but you may type whatever you wish. Be aware that Template Designer products must be size-specific so you will want to be sure to enter the size as a part of the template name. Once you have typed the name, click Enter and you will see a dialog asking if you want to use a copy or modify your original layout. Make your choice so that you can continue.

To recall a saved template you must be in the same catalog file as what the product was created. If you attempt to order from a different catalog file you will get a warning message when you click Add to Order. Choose the group you want to work with and single-click on the template. You may have a dialog asking again about working with a copy or the original and then the image layout area will change to reflect the saved template. Any Size options you had selected at the time you saved the template are recalled as well. Add your images and make any changes you would like and click Add to Order. You may also save this template again with any changes you have made.

Adding a Stroke or Fill color

Template Designer allows you the option of filling an opening with a solid color as well as adding a stroke (or border) around the edge of image and text openings. Strokes are available on both image and text openings but text openings need a second node drawn around them for a better overall appearance.

Begin by clicking on the node so that it is highlighted and then choose the Stroke button under the thumbnail section of the software screen. This will open a color palette from which you may choose a preset color, or you may customize the color by using the HSB or the RGB tabs. You may also use the Sample Color button, which will change the cursor to an eyedropper allowing the stroke color to be determined by the color clicked on from an image in your layout, this allows you to match the stroke to part of your image. To deactivate the eyedropper you will need to click the Sample color button again. In order for the stroke to appear you will need to click in the small box beside the word Stroke located above the color palette. The default width of the stroke is 0.035, which can be adjusted by scrolling to the right of the color palette. You may also adjust the opacity of the stroke by moving the slider or entering a specific percentage.

When you want to add a stroke to a text box it is advisable to add an additional opening just around the edge of the text opening. This is necessary because the letters in the text box will print all the way to the edges of the the text opening so any stroke on thte box could cause your text and stroke could overlap. Drawing a second slightly larger box for the stroke eliminates this issue.

When you have an opening that you would like to fill with a color, simply click on the opening and choose the Fill button. You will have the same options to adjust the color and opacity as with the text. Most of the layouts have a background opening in place but if not it is advisable to draw an opening that covers the background when you first begin the design that way you do not end up having to move the layers. You can then fill that opening with a color or image when you are ready. Remember for more effects you can combine an opaque image with a color.

Opacity options and adding Drop Shadows

You will have the opportunity to adjust the opacity of image and text openings as well as adding drop shadows to the openings you create.

For artistic effect you may adjust the Opacity of your images by selecting your image opening and clicking the opacity button located under the thumbnail section. You may now change the opacity of the image you have placed in the selected node by using the slider bar or entering a specific degree of opacity.

Drop shadows may be added to openings by selecting an opening and clicking on the Shadow button and then clicking in the white box beside the drop shadow option. A dark shadow will now appear around your product opening. You may use the sliders under the blur, opacity and x and y coordinates to change the appearance of the drop shadow. The X determines horizontal movement while

they Y controls the vertical movement. These changes can take a moment to reflect on your screen.

Using the Background and Mask options

The Background option allows you to import in an image for the background opening. There are no lab options available with this feature. The imported image is made to fit in the opening and you may not adjust the crop, color or opacity. You may click on Background again and browse to a different file if needed. Should you decide to remove the background entirely just right click on the layout and choose Remove Background.

A mask is a file that is overlaid on your image opening to create a desired special effect. There is an assortment of masks available for download from our web site but you may also use any mask per image opening. To add a mask to your layout first select the opening, choose Edit and then click Mask. A search dialog will appear so that you can browse to the location of your mask and double-click on the one you want. This process can take a few moments, the dialog box will turn gray and when it disappears your mask is in place. You will not be able to see the mask until you drop in your image. You may choose to drop in the image before adding the mask. The mask will auto-adjust to fit the size of your image opening so you may have to edit the opening for a better fit. Also, any circular masks can be changed to ovals by making your opening a rectangle instead of a square. Masks can be removed from the layout by right clicking and choosing the Remove Mask option.

Customizing with Right Click options

There are several features accessed by choosing to Right Click on an opening. Most of these options are self-explanatory so we will just cover a few.

Choosing the lock makes it so that the opening cannot be moved or altered. This can be especially helpful when using products with multiple openings so that you do not inadvertently move an opening you had already completed.

Duplicate is another helpful tool if you want a multi-opening product with the same size openings. Choose Duplicate in the Edit mode and it will create an identical opening over the top of the opening you are currently on. You can then move the duplicated node by holding down the left click of your mouse and dragging the new opening to another location on the product.

Node Type is an easy way to toggle between image node and text node.

Node Bounds is a handy feature if you need to know how large an opening is or dictate the size of an opening. You will need to first draw an opening and then

in Edit mode, right click and choose Node Bounds, which opens a dialog with several options. You may indicate specific X and Y coordinates, determine the exact dimensions of the opening and the degree of rotation. Once you make any needed changes clicking Ok will put them in place. You may still edit the opening with the other editing options if needed.

With Remove Images may remove the selected image or you may also choose Select All and then Remove Images to clear an entire layout at once. You may also remove individual images by clicking on them and pushing the Delete key on your keyboard.

Reset All will remove all openings you have drawn.

Building layouts with Montage

The Montage option is an easy way to create a layout with multiple openings that follow specific rules. After you have selected the desired product clicking the Montage button opens a dialog box with several options. Fill in each option and choose to what degree you want to vary the location, size, gap and rotation by using the slider bars. Once the information has been entered clicking "Create New Montage" will display the node openings. Changes can be made if needed and then click "Recreate Montage" which will erase the previous openings and replace them with the new specifications. Clicking "Create New Montage" at this point will cause the new openings to cover the existing openings. You will also have full editing options on these openings created with the Montage option.

Editing Pre-Designed Composites with Template Designer

Template Designer is an option that allows you to further customize the pre-designed composites. There are a few limitations to these tools when used with the pre-designed composites so we will cover those now.

We will not cover every tool of the Template Designer so it is recommended that you view that tutorial. Once you have selected a template to begin with you will want to enable the Template Designer tools by clicking the button to the top left of Rotate Layout. When you click this you will see two tool boxes appear, one set under the Image Layout Area and the second one under the Thumbnail section. You may also see a My Templates palette appear. This can be closed or moved to the side.

Since our layouts are stored here you cannot adjust the layers. When attempting to utilize a Template Designer tool that is not allowed on the pre-drawn opening you will see a prompt appear or the opening will be outlined in pink.

Allowable edits to the pre-drawn openings include being able to add a fill color, stroke color, adding a mask or adjusting the opacity. You may not move, resize, rotate or tilt the openings but you may choose to draw your own opening, tilt and add a stroke all within the Template Designer to have these options. Using this same concept, you may not add a drop shadow to a pre-drawn opening but you can draw an opening and then add the drop shadow. To draw an opening you click the Draw option located under the Image Layout Area and by holding down the left click of your mouse you will draw the opening. You add the image in the opening by clicking the Image button and dropping in your image.

A stroke is a line around the image opening. To add a stroke to an opening click the image opening, then click the stroke button under the thumbnail section of the software. This will open a color palette for you to choose a color or enter your own values in the HSB or RGB fields. You may adjust the stroke width and opacity by scrolling to the right of the color palette. To activate your selections you will need to click in the white box to the left of the stroke option that appears above the color palette.

Fill is an option to fill an opening with a color. You will utilize the same steps for adding a stroke only by choosing the Fill button instead.

Opacity allows you to adjust the transparency of the selected opening, clicking the Opacity button will display a slider allowing you to adjust the opening.

The Mask option allows you to add a mask to a selected opening. For example, you can only draw square or rectangular openings; this will allow you to add a circular mask to make the image opening appear rounded or oval instead. To activate the search dialog you will click the button under the thumbnail section, this will allow you to search for your mask jpg file. You will need to have an image in the opening to see the mask. You may use a mask from any source; there is a zip file of masks on the Learning Center of our web site that you may download as well.

Another benefit to using the Template Designer is being able to add a text opening to any layout. You do that by choosing the Text option located under the Image Layout Area and by holding down the left click of your mouse you will draw the opening. You may want to enable the grid to assist you in getting the text opening a specific size. Once you have drawn the opening you will need to click on the Image button, click on the text box you have drawn and the drop-down will appear so that you can type in the opening. To choose the font style you will click on Node beneath the thumbnail section, (be sure your text opening is highlighted in blue) and choose the text. You may customize the color by clicking the Text option you see under the thumbnail section (while your text opening is selected). Choose from one of the pre-set colors or use the sample

color option and click on an area of your image to which you would like to match the text.

When utilizing the Template Designer the composites retain their original options in the Options Palette but it is recommended that you choose to add strokes and fill colors with the template designer tools, as there can be conflicts in the information when it is trying to translate all of the changes that have been made.