



Photo Lasering Basics

Being able to engrave a photo with high detail is one of the best reasons for owning a laser engraver. You can laser a photo on a wide variety of substrates, including Rowmark laser-engravable plastics. Here are some basics to get you started on your way to lasering photos:

Materials

While you can laser engrave photos on a wide range of substrates, it's best to look for materials that have contrast between the cap (top layer) and core (second layer). Dark woods such as oak and cherry work well with photos, as do dark marble finishes. Rowmark carries a line of sheet materials designed especially for the laser with many contrasting color combinations. You can see all of Rowmark's laserable materials at

http://www.rowmark.com/laser/Laser_Engravable_Materials.asp.

The Photo

The success of photo lasering begins with your computer. Processing high quality (and large file size) photos requires a little more "power under the hood." Your computer should have a *minimum* of 128MB of RAM, but we would recommend between 256MB and 512MB to do the job effectively.

Since your laser will interpret your photo as a series of dots, the more dots you have, the better. Start with an image of 600dpi or greater, and save the image as a .tiff. This is where that extra memory comes in handy, as the file size will be quite large. Use image editing software such as Corel® Photo-Paint or Adobe® Photoshop to adjust your brightness and intensity. You'll also want to convert the image to halftones which will make your picture a series of black and white dots. This will help your laser give you the best results.

Lasering

The magic question is always, "What settings should I use?" And the magic answer is...well, there is no magic answer. It all depends on the substrate you're using. The best advice is to consult the laser and substrate manufacturer and experiment. Rowmark offers help on

particular product lines on the product pages of our website at http://www.rowmark.com/laser/Laser_Engravable_Materials.asp.

A couple rules of thumbs are to try a focal length lens of 1.5" to 2" and use a slower engraving speed than normal. But again, the best results are through trial and error.