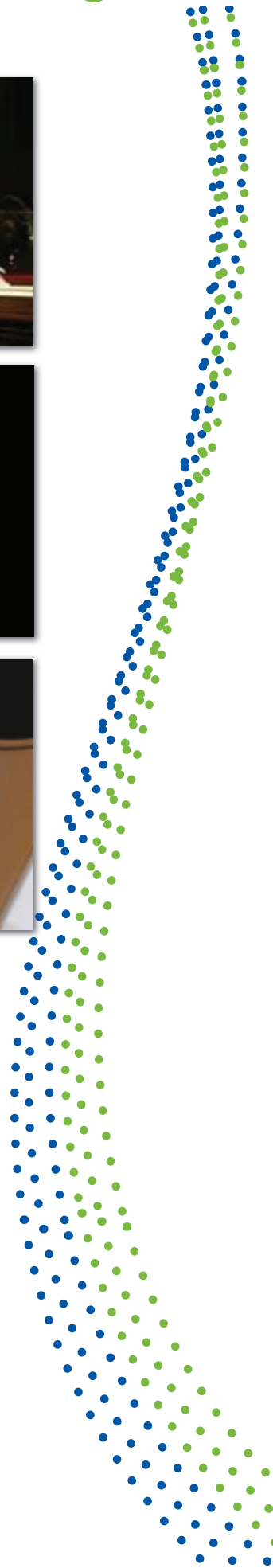# VDP EXPRESSIONS SETUP GUIDE

Tips and Guidelines for a Successful Expressions Project

VDP Expressions can add personalization that is original and fun to your variable data projects. Enclosed are some tips and guidelines to aid in selecting or creating your Expressions graphic for your next variable data project.

CONTENTS

AN INTRODUCTION TO EXPRESSIONS

Make a statement with expressions!

Personalization has come a long way in the last decade, but it is still underutilized. With Expressions, we can help add some magic to your variable data printed piece or email blast, beyond simple, one color personalization. This handy guide will help ignite your creativity and help you visualize the possibilities. As they say, you are only limited by your imagination.

We often think of personalization as name only, but it can be so much more. Consider an offer dependent on certain criteria in your database or images specifically associated with certain records. With Expressions we can make it jump off the page and get noticed. A personalization is more than just a person's name.

There are six ways to use Expressions and the method you choose depends on your budget, image and medium. Certain techniques work better with certain fonts and images. The ultimate goal is to elicit a response by creating an emotional connection through personalized imagery.

Personalization is not done just to be cute. It will elevate your response rates and the campaign's overall effectiveness. Color name-only personalization has been shown to boost response rates by 135 percent over a comparable static black and white piece, while adding the name in black only delivers a 44 percent improvement.[1] Expressions will elevate your response rates even further.

[1] Source: Romano and Broudy

THINGS TO CONSIDER

How are you going to use Expressions?

USES FOR EXPRESSIONS

1. Direct Mail
Expressions goes hand in hand with your direct mail piece and can be utilized on any variable data printed project.

2. Email Campaigns
Expressions can add personalization to your emails beyond simple type.

3. PURLs
PURLs are meant to be personal, but Expressions will add a unique personal touch that will both impress and welcome your target audience.

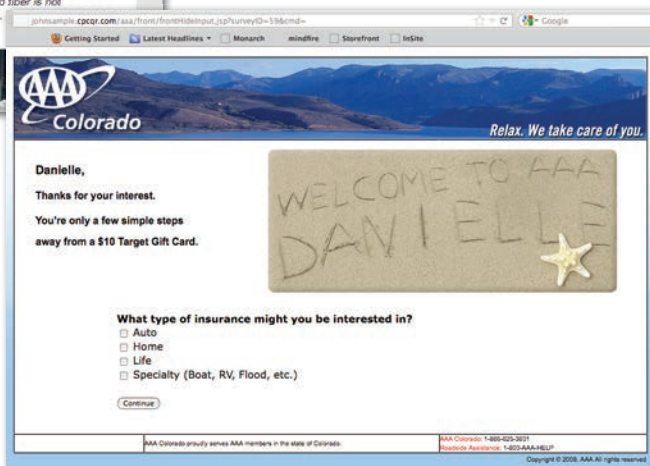# THINGS TO CONSIDER

Where do you start?

OPTIONS

- **Templates-** Purchase a template that already exists. (see page 6)
- **Masking Text-** Choose a font and an image from which to knockout a texture and/or specific color. (see page 7)
- **Fill Randomly-** Choose an object and a font and the software will follow its path (e.g. ants, jelly beans). (see page 8)
- **Tiling-** Use with a grid-like image (e.g. windows in a skyscraper). (see page 9)
- **Image Character Photoshop-** Choose an image and a font and edit in Photoshop to achieve the desired effect. (see page 10)
- **Image Character Live-** Create letters out of any material and photograph or scan each one. (see page 11)

GRAPHICS

Images are important in making Expressions work effectively. Quality images will result in quality printing. The same is true for email and PURL campaigns, although the images do not need to have a high dpi.

Types of acceptable graphic file
- **.tif**
- **.jpg**
- **.png**

Size and resolution
- **300 dpi images are standard for high resolution output**
- **100 dpi images or larger for Email or PURLs**
  (images can be down-sized but not up-sized without loss of quality)
- **Crop/size the image appropriately to the dimensions for placement**

DATA

Your data should include any part of the Expression that makes it unique. Use an Excel spreedsheet to organize your data. If this will be part of another VDP project the list should be combined, not separate; one column for each variable that changes.

Example

Variable name	Variable image	variable statement
Julie	golf.jpg	buy one get one free
Sam	fishing.jpg	10% off
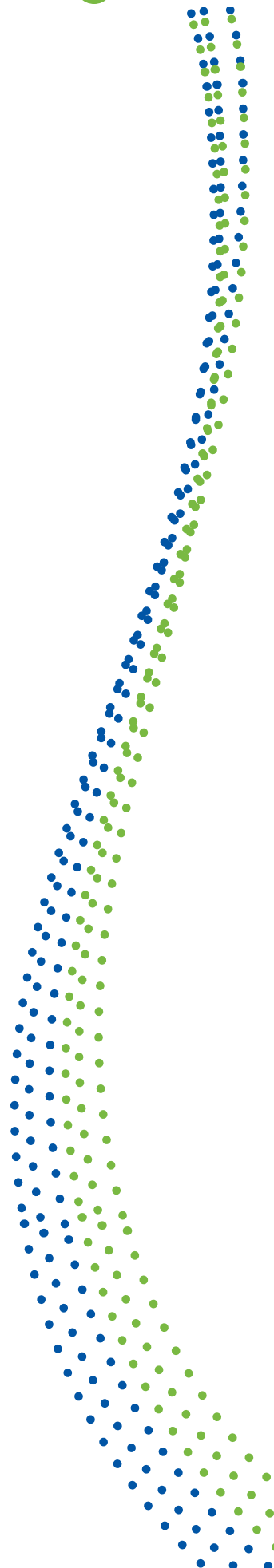
TEMPLATES

Skip the setup

READY FOR YOUR DATA

Take a look at the templates that are offered for purchase. Select the one that best suits your needs and supply us with your data. Please contact your sales representative for all the available templates.

CATEGORIES

There are serveral catigories that offer many choices for a template that best suits your needs.

- **Abstract**
- **Buildings**
- **Entertainment**
- **Food**
- **Holidays**

- **Industrial**
- **Kids**
- **Nature**
- **Special Occasion**
- **Sports Transportation**

MASKING TEXT

A simple effect with excellent results

IMAGES

This technique is similar to creating a stencil out of masking tape. You will start with 2 images. The first image is your main background image. You will be hiding part of that image to reveal the second image below it.

Mask Font

Background Image

Seen Through the Mask

When you put these all together you see the white surfboard through the letters

These are some possiblities of masking

Font
When selecting a font select a true type (ttf) or an open type (otf) font. Supply the font to CPC with your data and image files.

FILL RANDOMLY

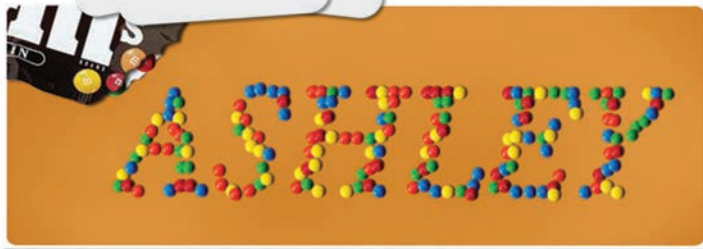A little tricky, but fun

BITS AND PIECES

Fill Randomly is based on the bits and pieces that can be put together to create letters. The trick is making it look real and legible. Small identifiable objects work best. Baseballs, popcorn and jelly beans are all objects that would work well.
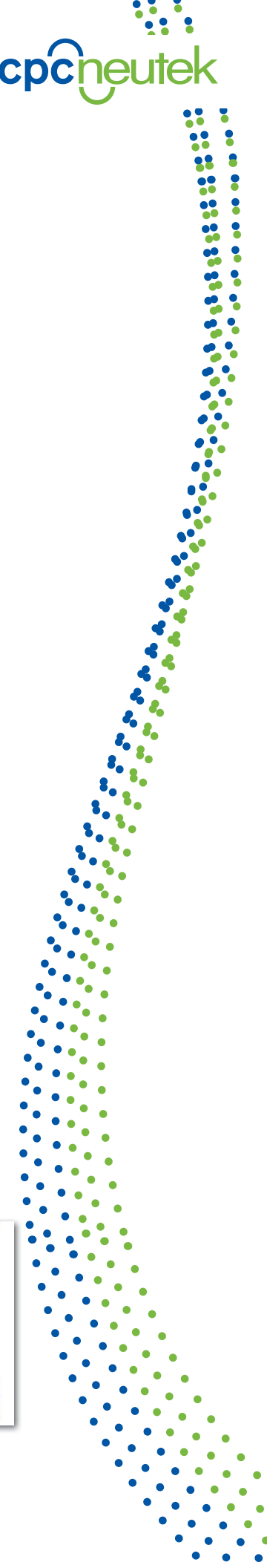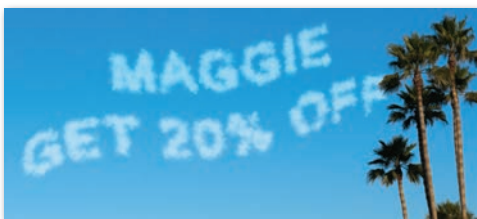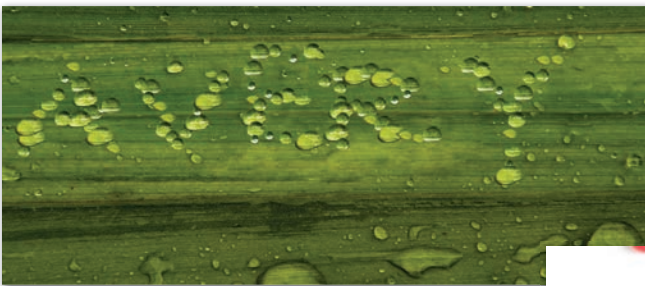

Background Image

Images follow the path of the letters

Your Final Image

TILING

Just like Masking

IMAGES

This technique is similar to the masking technique with the exception of a grid pattern. You will start with two images. The first image is your main background image. You will be hiding part of that image to reveal the second image below it.

Mask Font

Background Image

Seen Through the Mask
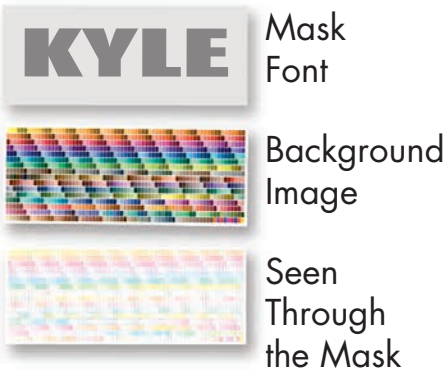
When you put these all together you see the lighter color chart through the letters in a grid pattern
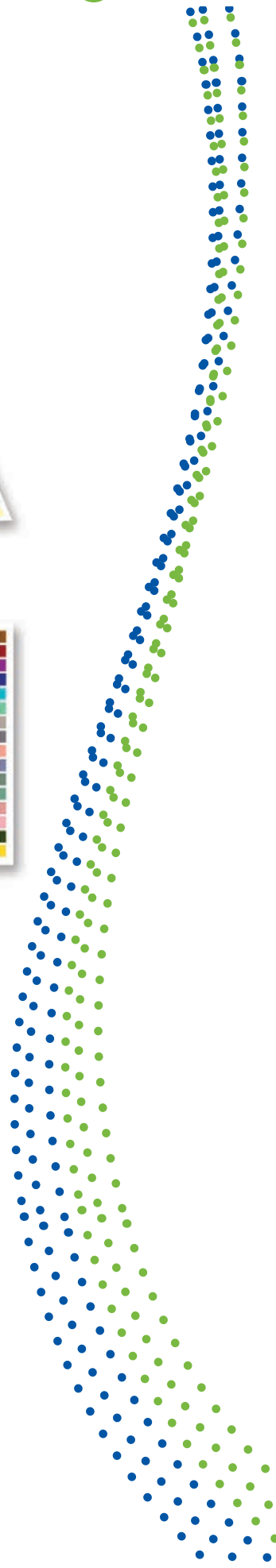
IMAGE CHARACTER PHOTOSHOP

Create your own letters

IMAGES

This technique is done in Photoshop or similar editing tools. The possiblities are only limited by your creativity. Using elements found in photos, fonts and brush strokes you can create realistic, fanciful or creative letters.

Texture Images

A Font for Reference

AMN

A Creative Brush Pattern

When you put these all together individual letters are created and added to a background
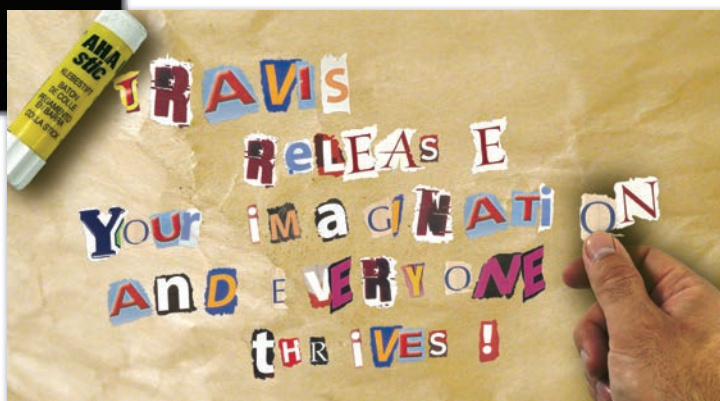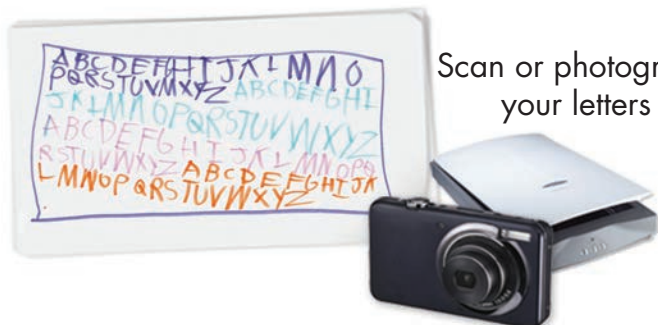
IMAGE CHARACTER LIVE

Camera, ready, set, go

IMAGES

This technique is made using a live piece of art such as a drawing, handwritten letters or an object and then converting it, essentially, into a font. You can photograph your letters or scan them. The key is to get the entire letter in the shot. Remember, you'll have to take out the background in photoshop so keep that in mind.
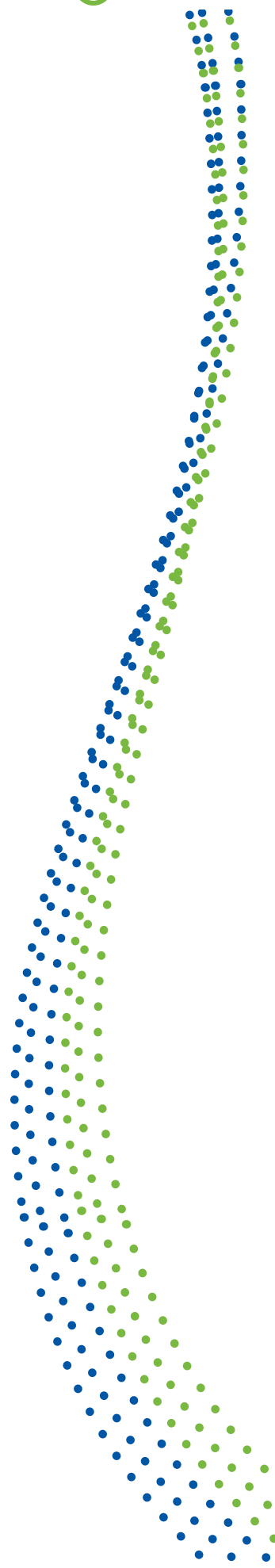

Scan or photograph your letters

Create individual files for each letter, number or character

Photograph your background

Your final image!

www.cpcneutek.com

EXPRESSIONS CHEAT SHEET
Setting up and submitting your project successfully

GATHER YOUR DATA:

Where to get your data:
- your mailing list
- customer list
- purchase a list

Add to your data:
- specific messages
- greetings
- specials

Use an Excel spreadsheet to organize your data. If this will be part of another VDP project the list should be all in one, not separate.

OPTIONS:

Use for expressions:
- direct mail
- email campaign
- PURLs

Graphics:
- tif
- jpg
- png

DPI:
- 300 dpi for print
- 100 dpi for email and web
  (larger is always better and can be down sampled if needed)

Font:
- true type (ttf)
- open type (otf)

GATHER YOUR SUPPLIES:

Template:
- data file

Masking:
- data file
- font
- image with 2 versions or 2 images

Fill Randomly:
- data file
- font
- background image
- foreground image (optional)
- photo of objects (transparent background)

Tiling:
- data file
- bold font
- image with 2 versions or 2 images

Image Character Photoshop:
- data file
- image files for each character and number (upper case and lower case if desired) Multiple images for each character may be needed for variety (transparent background)
- background image
- foreground image (optional)

Image Character Photoshop:
- data file
- a photo image for each character and number
- background image
- foreground image (optional)

Contact us toll free 800.332.1069

www.cpcneutek.com