

# Unleash the action!

A still photo is real life on “pause.”  
Here’s how to restart the action.

*Continued* ►



*Continued* ►

Unleash the action! 0622

# Unleash the action!

If life is a film reel, a still photo is a moment on “pause.” Here’s how to use type, color and layout to restart the action.

Hooboy, Al liked *that* day!—he and his fellow extreme-off-road enthusiasts spent it roaring, bounding and schlepping their way through muck and mire. He got some great pictures, too, and one of them is perfect for his store’s next promotional coupon. Problem is, the design he made doesn’t feel like the energetic day. The data is there, but that sweaty, bone-jarring vitality—the fun stuff—is missing.

A still photo is a moment from real life on “pause.” What’s cool about design is that the designer can restart the action. The key is to think image first, not layout. Describe its lines, shapes, directions and so on, then repeat or complement them with type, color and layout. Here’s how.

Before

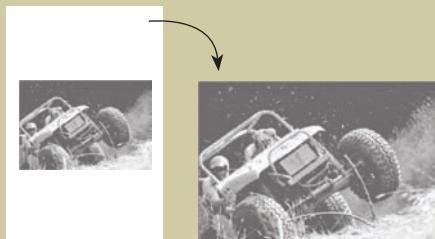


The information is clearly presented—name on top, offer prominently at the bottom, image at center stage. It’s a great image, too, unexpected and coming at you with lots of energy. But its energy is diminished by its small size and the typographic activity around it. The designer was thinking *layout*, but what we need to think is *action*.



## Make the image BIG

Engine roars, ground shakes, mud hits your face—the closer you are to the action, the more real it feels. To get the reader close, too, make the image as big as the card!



### Pull the image out of the white field

(Above, left) The vehicle's horizontal motion is slowed by the vertical format, and its small size sets it in the distance where the reader can't feel it. (Above, right) As big as the card, the image has in-your-face impact and gets the reader's undivided attention.





## Make more mud!

Next, find a typeface that looks like the subject—in this case, bold and blobby with splatters and irregular edges.

Type that oozes between your toes!

# ALL ABOUT MUD



**It's about texture.** For this job, nothing clean will do. With its cracks, bumps, splatters and irregularities, display type Sabotage (top) has *mud* written all over it. Its condensed form gives it a lot of weight and energy that perfectly mimic the image.

## DIRT BIKES

**Utility font** Small type requires a face that's readable at small sizes and that complements the display type. Look for simple letterforms with wide counters (below, left). Typefaces like Sabotage (below, right) with narrow counters tend to close up when set small.

DIRT BIKES

Wider counters

DIRT BIKES

Narrow counters



## Make a field for words

With the image now occupying the whole card, the words must go right on top.  
Separate foreground from background with an artificial horizon.

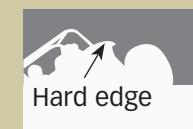


**Determine the line** (Above) To create a flat field while sustaining the coming-over-the-horizon action, divide the page horizontally, and delete the top part. Where you delete affects the story. Note (right) that you can jump an object *out of* or *into* a scene.



**Keep the mud** To convey every speck of action (literally), keep the mud splatters.

**Fill the background** Sample a color from the image, and fill the space. What color? Think *contrast* (edge). The higher the contrast (hard edge), the greater the separation between foreground and background.





## Bring the words into the action

Here's where it gets fun. The bigger and more compact the words are, the more rumble they will convey; words behind the image push the action toward the reader!

Small



Huge



Just right



### How big should the words be?

To convey power and excitement, set the type as big as possible without straining credibility or readability. (Left, top) Set small, type seems separate from the image and distant. Huge type (left, middle) has lots of depth but sacrifices readability. In between, in this case, is perfect.





## Add the logo

The upper left corner of a landscape format is its pre-eminent position, a good place for the business name. But don't get formal; sustain the exuberant angles!

### Details matter

(Below) Angled logo mimics everything else on the page, which is full of unpredictability and tension. Note the slight overlap.



ALL ABOUT  
MUD

DIRT BIKES ATVs  
BUGGIES TRUCKS

25% OFF

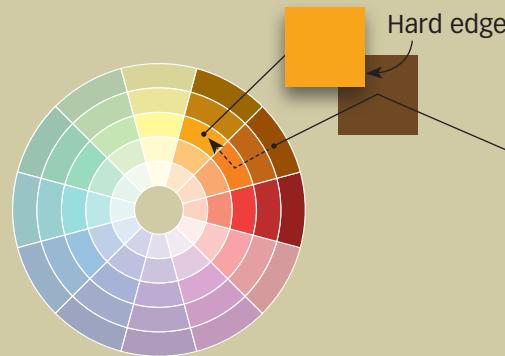
ANY ONE ITEM\*  
LIMITED TIME OFFER

\*NOT TO BE COMBINED WITH ANY OTHER DISCOUNT OR OFFER.



## Finish with color

Color completes the connection between type and image. Select one or two key elements to stand out. The finished card beautifully conveys Al's happy, high-energy day!



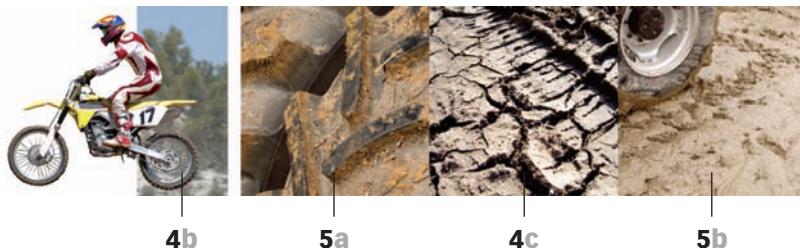
### Maintain an earthy palette

(Above) Using the brown field as the base color, find its approximate location on the color wheel. Then establish *contrast* (hard edge) between type and background with a neighboring yellow-orange. Red on the opposite side would harmonize with the brown, but it would have too-little contrast and compete with the logo.

A tint of the background color makes small type recede.



## Article resources



### Typefaces

- 1 (a-b)** [Sabotage](#) | a) 111 pt, b) 82 pt  
**2 (a-c)** [Trade Gothic Bold Cond. No. 20](#)  
 a) 10/10.5 pt, b) 14 pt, c) 9 pt  
**3** [Trade Gothic Cond. No. 18](#) | 6.6 pt

### Colors

- |          |                  |
|----------|------------------|
| <b>6</b> | C50 M45 Y70 K65  |
| <b>7</b> | C50 M70 Y100 K30 |
| <b>8</b> | C0 M40 Y100 K0   |
| <b>9</b> | C20 M25 Y55 K0   |

### Images

- 4 (a-c)** iStockphoto.com | [a](#) [b](#) [c](#)  
**5 (a-b)** Photos.com | [a](#) [b](#)



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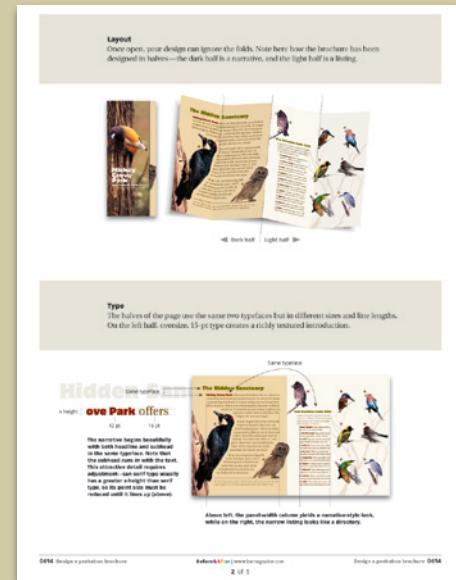
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Before

The image shows a promotional coupon for "ALL ABOUT MUD". At the top, the word "Before" is written. Below it is a small photograph of a red off-road buggy in a muddy field. To the right of the photo is the word "MUD" in a large, bold, white font inside a red oval. Below the oval, the words "DIRT BIKES", "ATVs", "TRUCKS", and "BUGGIES" are listed in a smaller, sans-serif font. At the bottom of the coupon, there is a large, bold offer: "Limited time offer 25% OFF ANY 1 ITEM\*". Below this offer, a small note states: "\* Not to be combined with any other discount or offer."

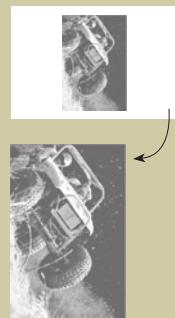
6"

4"

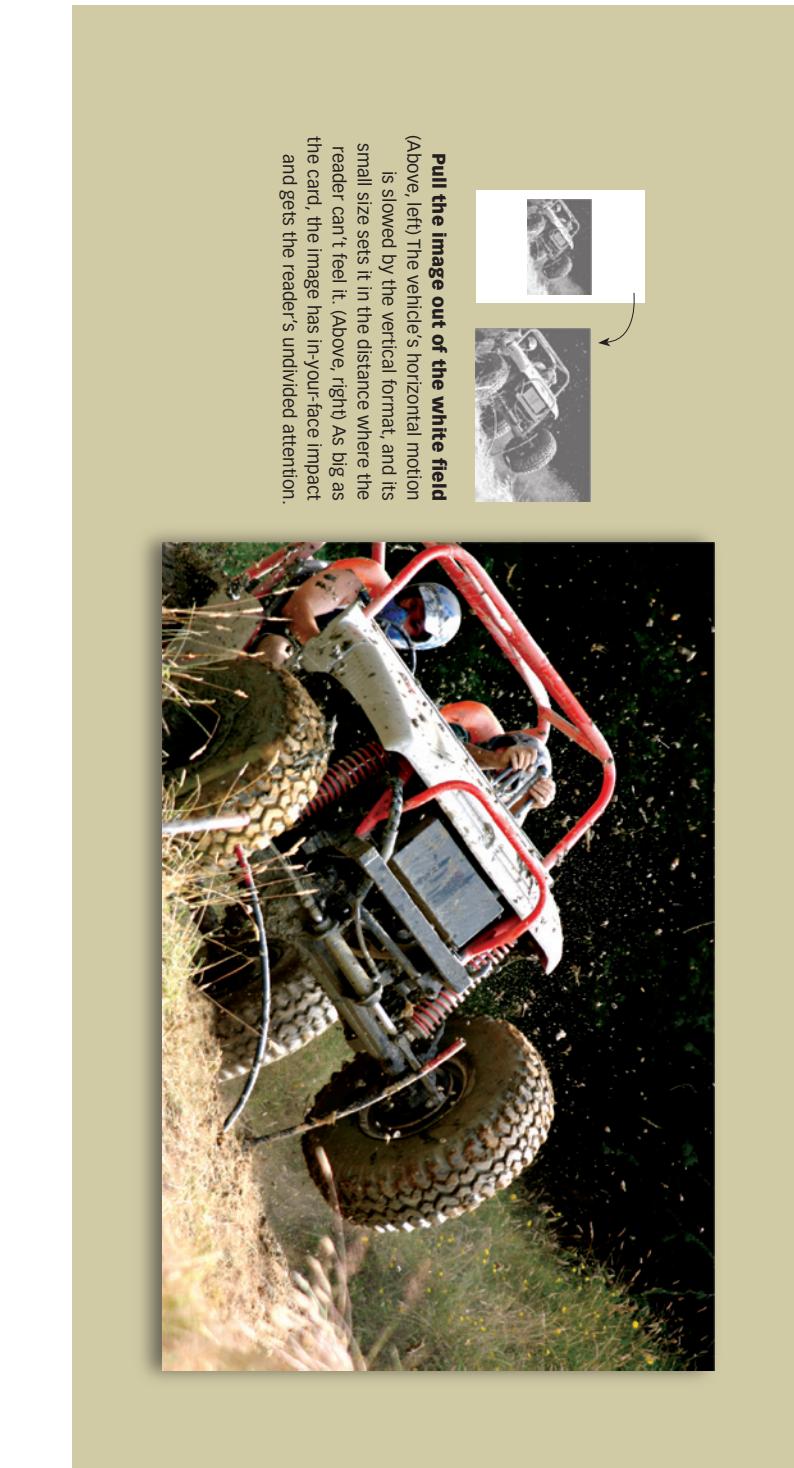
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DIRT BIKES      DIRT BIKES

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Wider counters

Narrow counters

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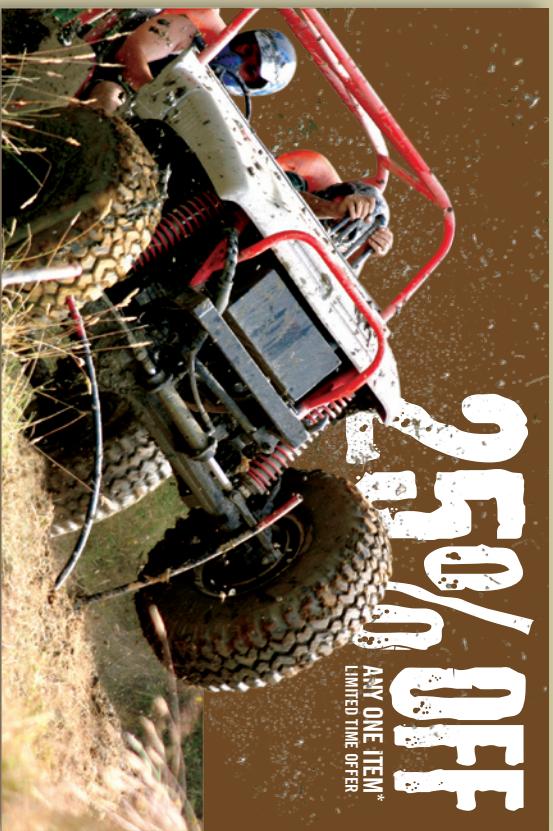
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**Fill the background** Sample a color from the image, and fill the space. What color? Think contrast (edge). The higher the contrast (hard edge), the greater the separation between foreground and background.

**Hard edge**   
**Soft edge**

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Small

**25% OFF**

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Just right

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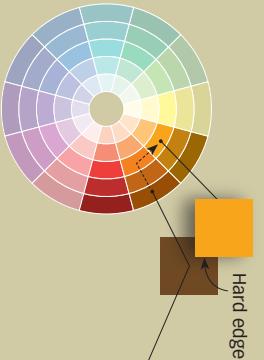
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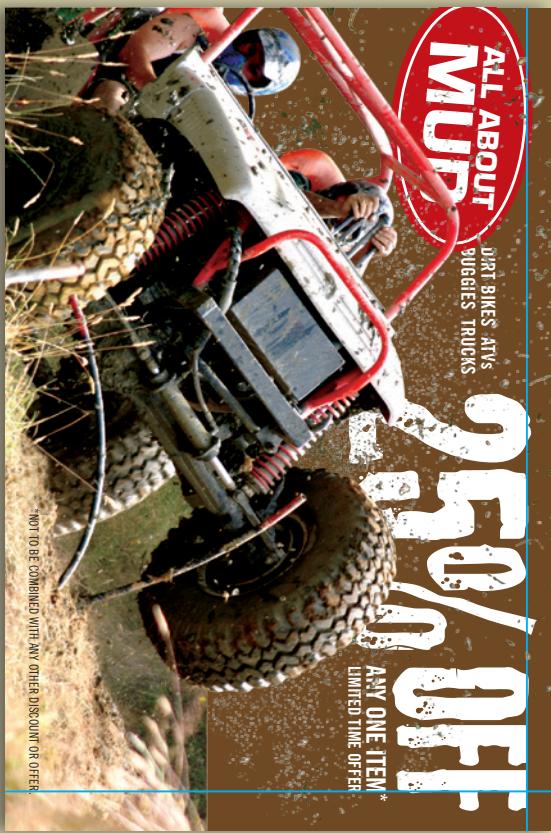
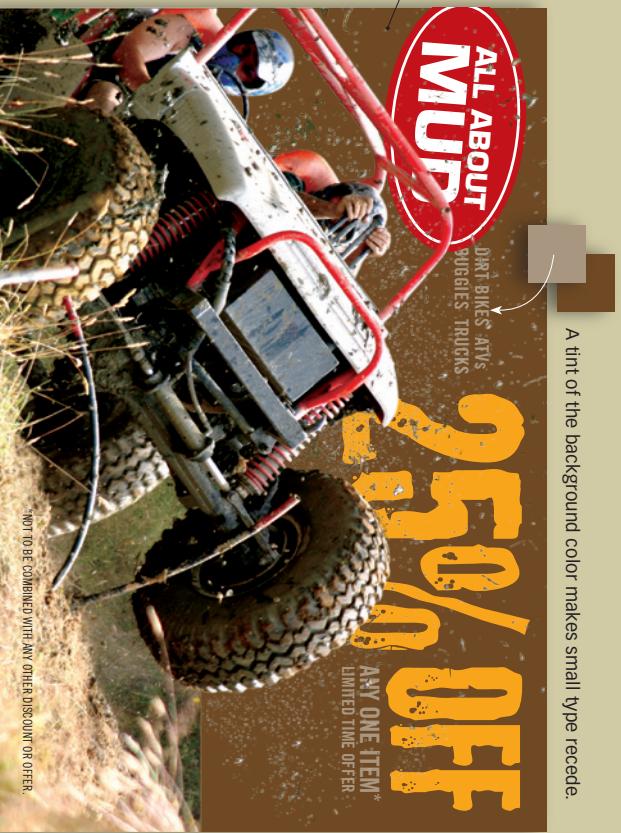
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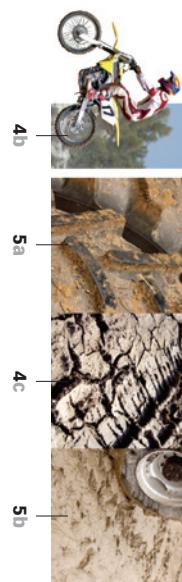


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3 <b>Trade Gothic Cond. No. 18</b>   6.6 pt	8 C0 M40 Y100 K0
Images	9 C20 M25 Y55 K0

4 (a-c) iStockphoto.com   a b c	6 C50 M45 Y70 K65
5 (a-b) Photos.com   a b	7 C50 M70 Y100 K30

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