



Prepress Recommendations

We all want your job to go as smoothly as possible. We have put together a list that includes many common tricks to get your files to press in the most efficient way. There are many things that can cause a job to slow down, cause delays and subsequently, add cost. Many of these problems can be avoided with open communication between designers, coordinators and pre-press operators. Please review the following list and don't hesitate to call us with any questions. These are only a few recommendations that you can use to streamline the process.

Design

- Use Photoshop (or alternative) for manipulating bitmaps, halftones and photos. Use vector programs like Illustrator for drawing and creating art with certain effects. Place these files into a page layout program like Quark or InDesign for your final design. Doing layouts in a drawing program or in Photoshop will slow production and may not give you the results you intended. We have the latest versions of all major desktop applications.
- Programs such as Word, Wordperfect, Excel and Powerpoint are not made for print design. They do not allow separation of colors and do not print with cropmarks, bleeds, etc. It is recommended you do not use these programs for design. If in doubt, just call and ask.
- If "for position only"(fpo) pictures are placed, indicate as FPO on the file and hard copy to avoid problems.
- Do not bold, italicize or use other tool/palette options in the Quark font palette. Always use the pull-down menus to find the exact font you are using. Just because you bold a font using Quark's tool palette, and it prints to your printer, does not always mean it will process in our RIP.
- Label all scans to be done and include final size of the placed photo. If the scan is used multiple times, list the largest size it will be used.
- Make sure all photos are hi-res. In general, the resolution in Photoshop (image\image size\resolution) should be 300ppi. If you increase the size of an image in the page layout, this decreases the resolution.
- Remove unnecessary colors in all palettes. Color palettes in all programs should only contain the colors used in the job (spots + process). All spot color names should match exactly from program to program. For example, in Illustrator if the color is "Pantone 220 CVC" it should be "Pantone 220 CVC" in Quark.
- Spot colors in Photoshop images are tricky. It is possible to create DCS files and duotones, but they are difficult to do correctly.
- Whenever possible, link images within files, do not copy and paste into file. Avoid embedding files.
- Page size in the document should be the final page size. Do not draw crop marks in a page layout program. Use the "marks" or "registration" option when printing hard copy. Add 1/8" bleed wherever images touch the edge of the sheet. For elements that do not bleed, keep them at least 1/8" in from the edge of the document.
- Always use spell check before copying the final file to disk.
- Be careful when using files for in your designs that came from the internet. Web-based files are usually created as 72 dpi, much too low in resolution for print.

- Name files logically. Do not have two different files named the same thing..
- Do not attempt to impose or create bindery spreads. Imposition software is used for this, so you do not need to worry about creating spreads or “multiple ups.” Never set up two page spreads on one larger page in the page layout program. For example, do not place two 8 1/2 x 11 pages on one 11x17 in layout program. This causes problems when job is imposed.
- Label all disks with customer name, contact and phone number. Also label disk whether it is formatted for PC or Mac. Do not include old jobs, future jobs, or miscellaneous files that are not needed.
- When sending files via e-mail or ftp, always fax a copy of the hard copy for our use. You could also include a hard copy pdf for content. We have a much better chance of finding any quality issues if we can compare the proofs to hard copy. Include a printout of what’s on each disk for easy reference.
- Include the latest hard copy, preferably in color, with your job. If color printer is not available, call out any spot colors on the hard copy.
- Include all fonts. For postscript fonts, include both screen and printer. On the PC, these are .pfm and .pfb files. Please call for instructions if you are unsure where to find these files. Avoid obscure, third party fonts often sold inexpensively in bundles. OTF fonts are Mac OSX fonts and perfectly fine to send.
- If electronic copies of any generated files are to be given back to the customer after a job is printed, indicate the program, platform (PC or Mac) and the type of disk that is preferred. Please make this request when the job is begun, so we can plan for the specific formats.
- Be careful with e-mails. Internet service providers have limitations on the size of files and the way they are encoded. Please check before sending large e-mails, there may be an alternative method. Whenever possible, use Stuffit or other compression methods before e-mailing files.
- PDFs are tricky. If you have decided to use pdfs in place of native files, check them carefully. For best results, embed all fonts and turn all compression off. Also, create them with crop marks and bleeds. We can provide instructions for creating PDFs correctly.
- PDFs are especially useful for Microsoft Word, Powerpoint or Publisher files.

Approval Process

- Sign all proofs, either on back or front, with changes clearly indicated.
- Return originals with new proofs for comparison. Always review entire proofs thoroughly. Many things can happen (such as reflow and type defaults) when a file is sent to the RIP or printer.
- If you have a minor change to a file, please let us make the change. Typically there is a lot of work that goes into files to get it ready for print. Giving us a new file will cause us to restart the pre-press process and add unnecessary costs.
- If you are approving pdfs for your final proof, please be aware that they are not for color accuracy. We can generate a higher resolution pdf, but may have to send the file via ftp.

Thank you for your help.