BRODNAX
21C Printers

HD Lithography
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Promo Products

Prepress Checklist

Prepress refers to the collective processes that transform and prepare a the print layout for final printing. It includes all the processes a printing device/personnel must take to transform a your design file into a print-ready file. It defines all the processes that occur after a graphic designer has created a design file until it is ready for printing or is printed. The prepress process is necessary, as a print layout may appear different in alignment, format and color if it is directly printed on a press machine. What you see on-screen is not always what you'll get when printed. That's why this process is crucial for delivering you the best possible quality for your print.

Prepress typically involves the following processes:

- Checking and verifying the design file for format, color, bleeds, die lines *(if applicable)*, fonts and resolution
- Matching the computer-generated color codes with print color codes
- Aligning and formatting the layout for print
- Creating a sample or proof of the design before it goes into bulk printing
- Having a clearly defined plan of the product functionality with supporting documentation if necessary

How to prepare your files

- ☐ Save PDF with High Quality Print preset, crop marks and bleed. *(Document bleed settings should be selected)*
- ☐ Extend bleed artwork to bleed lines (1/8" or 0.125in)
- ☐ Spell check entire document. Correct any errors in grammar and punctuation.
- ☐ Check that important content is within safety margins (Final trim)
- ☐ Check and edit colors
- ☐ Remove InDesign drop shadow effects from objects and text. (If your art requires a drop shadow import the art from Illustrator or Photoshop)
- ☐ Check that process colors, including all placed images, are CMYK (not RGB)
- ☐ Check that spot colors are converted to CMYK
- ☐ Trash unused color swatches
- ☐ Make sure all type is only 100% black. (Cyan 0%, Magenta 0%, Yellow 0% and Black 100%)
- ☐ Otherwise, large areas of black should be "rich black", which is Cyan 60%, Magenta 60%, Yellow 60% and Black 100%.
- ☐ Make sure there are no missing or inactive fonts
- ☐ Check that fonts are styled in their "true" form (e.g. unaltered by artificial "bold" or "italics" options in the application)
- ☐ Check that linked graphics are up to date
- ☐ Clean up document by deleting unused elements, elements on the pasteboard, and empty boxes
- ☐ Make sure that the template layer only contains template elements
- ☐ Template layer is set to non-printing or turned off
- ☐ Artwork layer only contains artwork
- ☐ Create a color proof to check your document for color quality, spelling and layout.
- ☐ Tag variable items with angled brackets. **Example:** <your variable content>
- ☐ Supply any additional documentation for variable products with specific instructions as necessary

How to package files (step 2)

What is preflight or packaging? Preflight means to check it for technical errors to make sure the document is ready to print. The process involves running your layout file through preflight software, or a preflight plug-in, that checks for font conflicts, misused colors, missing graphic links, etc. — issues that could be a problem at print time.

- Note that preflight is an automated function, manually checking that your document is correctly laid out still needs to be done by the designer. That is why the two steps go hand-in-hand, and one cannot replace the other.
- The way you run preflight depends on what application you used for your layout file. As layout programs, InDesign and Quark have built-in preflight and/or job-collecting functions, while Illustrator and Photoshop files have neither.

For some of the file formats we accept, here are the methods we suggest:

- For an InDesign layout, simply open the document and select "Package" from the File menu.
- We use InDesign, if you use Quark or any other Typesetting software, please let us know in advance.
- Packaging will result in a report listing conflicts and errors with your files. This is common. Part of the preflight process is correcting errors and running it again until you resolve all issues.

Common errors and how to fix them:

- **Linked graphics are RGB**: To fix, open the original graphic file(s) and convert the colors to CMYK.
- **Missing fonts**: To fix, first attempt to activate the missing font in your computer. Or, open the layout file and manually change any text that uses a missing font to another font. Many times, the "missing font" warning refers to something as imple as a space formatted with a missing font. (You can detect where missing fonts occur in InDesign and Illustrator with the "Find Font".) For an acceptable layout file, you must delete or edit all unused/invisible text (even spaces) detected as problematic. You can also convert non variable text to outlines by selecting the the text or text box, then select the menu item Type and finally Create outlines.

Readying your job (step 3)

Collecting your job is an automated process for gathering all of the active components of your job — layout, graphics and fonts — into one new, neat job folder. As with the preflight procedure, the way you collect your job depends on the program your layout file was created in. InDesign lets you "Package", this is our preferred method.

Alternatively, you may supply us with a printable Hight Quality Print PDF of your job with crop marks and bleeds if applicable. Be sure to carefully create your PDF with all the attributes listed above so that the bleeds, image resolution, etc. is correct.

For some of the file formats we accept, here are the methods we suggest:

- For an InDesign layout, select "Package" from the InDesign File menu.
- For a Quark, please contact us for further instructions.
- After collecting your job, you will create a preview PDF and add it to the collected job folder.
- If you designed with fonts that you don't have commercial permissions to, please buy the font and supply it.
- We will also accept a print-ready high resolution PDF file. If you have questions about which settings to use in creating this file, please feel free to contact our Prepress department at 214.528.2622 or email at support@brodnax21c.com.