

File preparation tips

Printers maintain that 75% of the files they receive have errors—due to font problems, low resolution images or other issues that should have been resolved by the designer. Preparing your files for the printer is the last step in the prepress process. This is when you catch the errors that could hold up your job on press. To expediate the project, ask your printer about file preparation and formats at the start of the project and use preflight software to help collect fonts and images.

When you send your job to the printer, follow these steps to avoid costly mistakes:

- > print a directory of your job and include it with the CD or DVD
- > number your discs and label with your contact information
- > always backup your original
- > always include a b&w or color laser print with your job for a quick reference
- > also include either laser or inkjet color separation proofs
- > mark up the hard copy indicating any special instructions such as color breaks, overprints, bleeds, knockouts, etc.

Checklist for preparing files

Document:

- > delete empty pages that shouldn't be there
- > define thin lines and frames with exact measurements and make sure corners meet
- > collect all pages into as few documents as possible
- > check that pagination is correct
- > clean everything up: delete extra picture boxes, guides, old data on the pasteboard
- > define the size of the document to make it the correct size for the final output

Files:

- > make sure your printer is able to work with your program versions and plug-ins
- > use preflighting programs such as Preflight or use the simpler preflighting abilities of Quark, InDesign and PageMaker

Images:

- > check that images are linked to the images used
- > make sure images are cropped correctly
- > TIFF images should be set with a white background
- > mask channels, paths and illustrations should not have too many anchor points or be set with too low tolerance
- > spot colors must have exactly the same name as in the original document

Typography and fonts:

- > check the printout for text reflows and bad breaks
- > be sure to include all the font families for every typeface used in the project, not just the individual font

For more information and samples, please call your local merchant or Mohawk at 1 800 the mill. www.mohawkpaper.com