



Graphic File Preparation Guidelines

Acceptable File Types

The preferred format is an Adobe Acrobat PDF (Portable Document Format) file created with a high-resolution PostScript from the native application. Include bleed and crop marks, embed fonts and use CMYK, not RGB, settings.

The following native files are also accepted (in order of preference) and should adhere to the guidelines listed in this document:

- Adobe InDesign (.indd)
- QuarkXPress (.qxd)
- Adobe Illustrator (.ai)
- Adobe Photoshop (.psd)
- Macromedia Freehand (.fh11)

Working in the Right Software

Prepare your art in the program best suited for the task. Illustrator is a drawing (vector) program, ideal for logos, packaging, posters and single-page layouts. Photoshop is a pixel-based (raster) program that lets you size, color-correct and manipulate scanned images such as photos and flat art (fonts in Photoshop do not print as sharp as they do in a vector-based program). Neither is intended for multi-page documents. For that, use a page layout program such as InDesign or QuarkXpress.

Build to Size

Build your files at actual size unless your final size is too large for your software to accommodate. A printed piece with a final size of 8.5 x 11 should be built to 8.5 x 11 page size. Spreads (i.e., for booklets) should be created as two 8.5 x 11 pages, not a single 17 x 11 form. If your file is a 17 x 11 double-sided brochure, folded to 8.5 x 11, then do set up your page as 17 x 11. Incorrectly specified page settings cannot be fixed by simply scaling up or down, so make sure your document is built at the correct size.

Bleed

The area beyond the trim edge of your page document is considered the bleed area. When butting a color or image up to the edge of your page, it's required that the color or image "bleed" 1/8" beyond the edge to prevent an unwanted white border from showing when the document is trimmed (see Figure 1). For the bleed to show up in your PDF, you must indicate 1/8" bleed in your PDF print or export setup (see Figure 2).

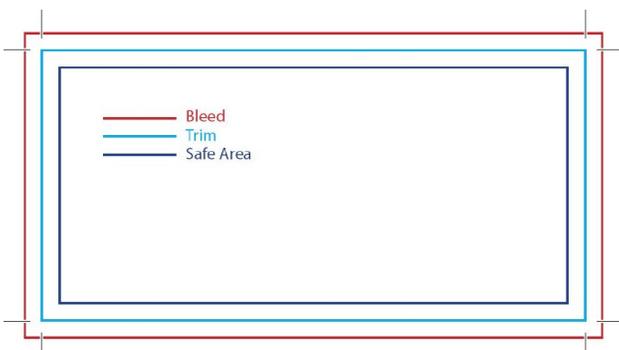


Figure 1

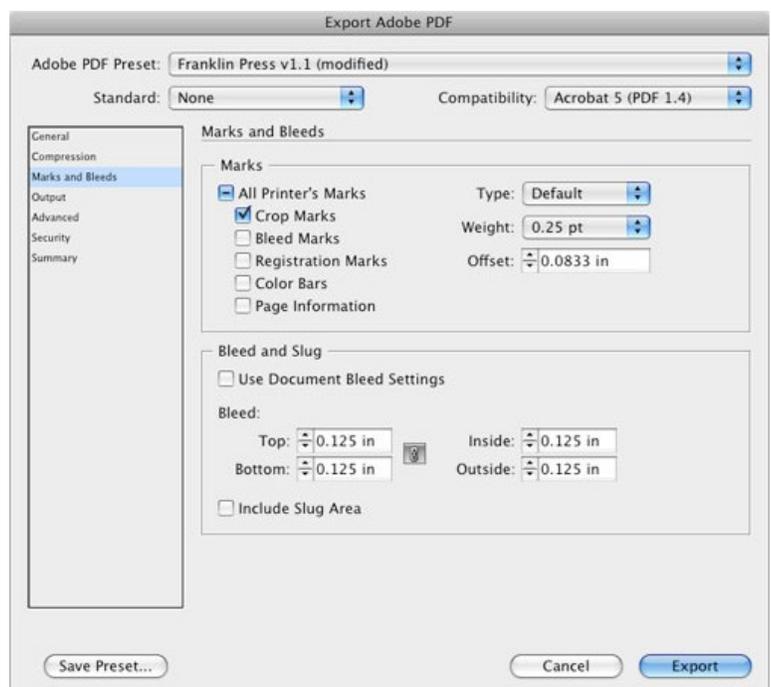


Figure 2

Trim Marks

The trim area indicates the finished size of the document. Files should include trim marks set back 1/16" from the edge of the document (see Figure 1 above). Do not manually draw in the trim marks. Allow the software to add the trim marks when you create your PDF. You must indicate you want trim marks in your PDF print or export setup for them to show up (see Figure 2 above).

Safe Area

Remember to keep important information, like names, addresses, phone numbers or logos, within the safe margin (at least 1/8" – 1/4" from the edge) to ensure that they aren't cut off when your document is trimmed (see Figure 1 above).

CMYK vs. RGB

CMYK (cyan, magenta, yellow, black) are the ink colors used in the printing process, whereas RGB (red, green, blue) are the colors used by screen displays such as your monitor. Your document should be created in CMYK mode so that the colors you see on the screen most closely match the final printed product (see Figure 3). Many of the bright values produced by our monitors' RGB displays cannot be reproduced in print.

CMYK Process vs. Spot Colors

Process and Pantone match colors may look identical on screen, but they will separate differently. If you need to convert a spot color to process, use a conversion guide or ask us for a recommendation.

Rich Black

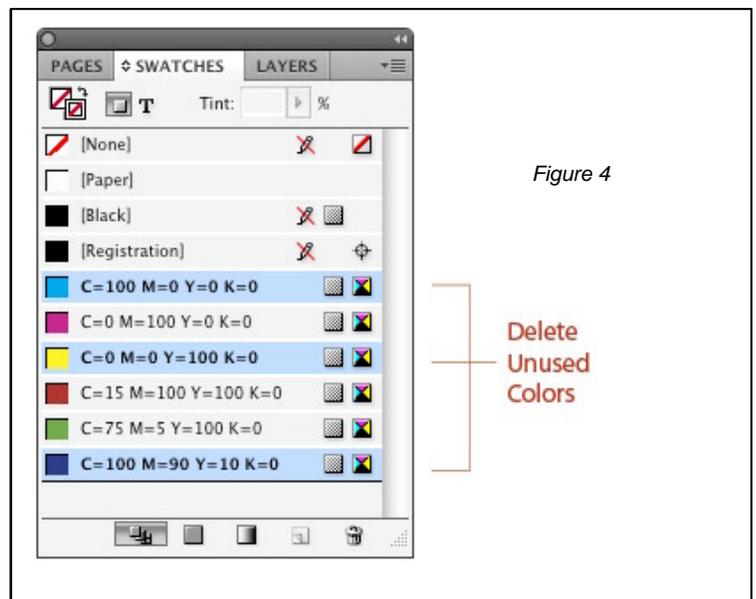
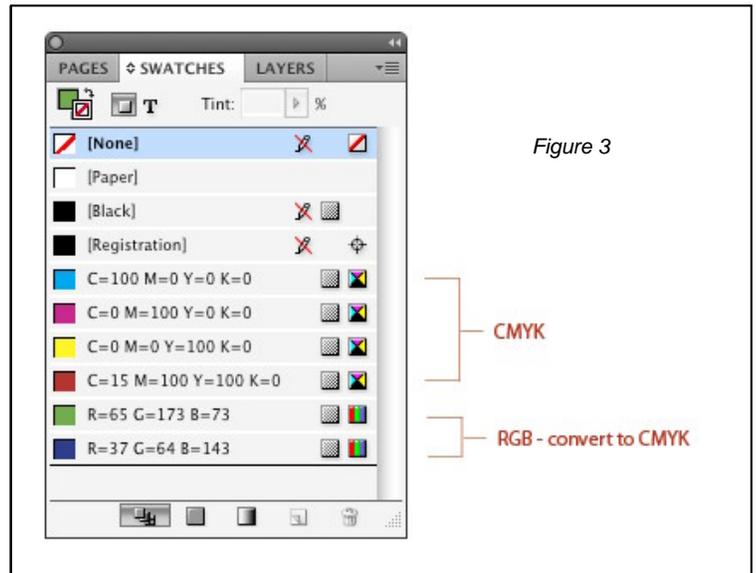
Use only on large areas of black. For best registration on press, do not use rich black on fonts. The rich black combination we prefer is C - 25, M - 25, Y - 25, K - 100.

Keep Track of Your Colors

Delete unused colors from your swatch palette before submitting your file (see Figure 4). If the piece is printing entirely in CMYK, convert any spot colors you may have used. This eliminates any question as to whether you want the piece printed as CMYK or spot. Having said that, it's still best to indicate the ink specs when you upload your file, especially if you want it to print CMYK plus spot.

Small/Reversed Type

- Reversed type should be no less than 6 pt., and if possible, a sans-serif (i.e., Helvetica or Arial) and bolded.
- Fine lettering (thin lines, serifs) should be restricted to one color for best registration.
- Small black type should be 100% black rather than rich black for best registration.
- For digital art files not supplied same as print size, the effect of scaling reduction should be considered for small text and for thin rules or lines.



Rule Lines

All lines and line art images should be a minimum .5 pt. thickness (including reversed lines/line art) at final size to reproduce effectively on press.

Fonts and Linked Graphics

All fonts and graphics must be included with your files. Take advantage of the “Collect For Output” feature in QuarkXpress, or the “Package” feature in InDesign. It will help you collect all the fonts and images used, and search for missing items. (Your document may show the placed image, but the actual file may have become unlinked when saved in a folder that differed from its original location. Missing links can cause graphics to print out low-res or not at all.)

If working in Adobe Illustrator, graphics should be embedded within the file and fonts should be converted to paths. If you do not convert your fonts, be sure to include them with your document when you upload your files.

Use of Postscript Type 1 fonts is encouraged. Include fonts for any embedded graphics. DO NOT use Type 3, Multiple Master or CID fonts. Avoid using menu-stylized fonts, TrueType fonts, Macintosh “city” fonts (Chicago, Geneva, etc.), and Microsoft Outlook fonts (Tahoma, Impact, etc.).

Maintain Image Quality

Images must conform to the specifications for minimum image resolution – 300 dpi for color and 150 dpi for grayscale. Photoshop provides tremendous pixel control, however, raster software cannot enlarge images without a loss in quality. It's better to start out big when producing a digital image, as you can scale down with impunity. If you need to make an image larger, it is best to rescan or reshoot it at a higher resolution. Vector graphics, however, retain high image quality at any size.

Make Image Changes Before Importing Them

Placed images should not be scaled, cropped/masked or rotated within the page layout application. Instead they should be manipulated in a proper image editing program (i.e., Photoshop) and then imported into the page layout program at proper size and position. If done in a page layout program, these steps consume a lot of computer memory.

Direct Mail Considerations

When creating a direct mail piece, please take into account these considerations:

Address panel: The address area must be at least 4.25 x 1.5 to ensure there is adequate space for the barcode and address.

Lasering variable info on a colored background: The colored background can be no more than 30% of all CMYK combined. This is to ensure that the laser ink will adhere properly to the printed shell.

For example:

Acceptable: C - 10, M - 15, Y - 3, K - 0 = 28%

Not acceptable: C - 10, M - 15, Y - 15, K - 5 = 45%

Orientation of Address Panel: The number of tabs used on a direct mail piece that folds closed is determined by the orientation of the mailing panel. Two tabs will cost more than one. Check with us about orientation that is best for mailing.

Perfs: Please indicate perfs with a 20% black dotted line.