

Digital File Setup for Inkjet Output



Images and artwork should be 8-bit CMYK mode.

CMYK files should have the ink density limit set to 300 maximum to ensure that shadow details remain.

Important: Files should be set up in proportion to your final output size.

We recommend sending TIFF files (flattened with no alpha channels) or send hi-resolution PDF's for output.

We cannot check color mode or resolution of images on PDF's correct color or type. We recommend rasterizing PDF's with transparency and submitting a TIFF. Files with small type (below 12pt) should be sent as vector or rasterized at high resolution.

Supply all of your images, artwork and fonts when sending native files.

We accept Photoshop, InDesign, and Illustrator native Mac files. All fonts must be changed to outlines/curves to prevent unexpected font problems. **Images embedded in ANY program or file cannot be checked for accurate resolution or color mode prior to printing.**

Image resolution at FINAL SIZE should be 100-200 dpi, 50-100dpi for banners viewed beyond 10-12 feet.

Unnecessarily large file sizes DO NOT enhance prints. To check your image resolution, open the image in Photoshop, go to the image menu> image size> deselect the resample box and type in the FINAL output size to ensure the resolution is correct.

All placed images should either be TIFF or EPS formats.

Saving files as JPEG with high compression can permanently reduce image quality.

For trade show booths or multiple panels, set up the entire file on one page.

Bleed and crop marks should be on all files. All files should appear in the program just as you want them to look on your final product. Avoid including any comments or instructions including dead space on the final document you send.

For files intended to be mounted, printed on rigid substrates or printed on banners, add bleed.

We recommend between 1/8" to 1/2" bleed all around, outside the document live area. Files setup without bleed may be enlarged slightly during printing to compensate. *(This might result in pixelated images or type.)*

Provide hardcopy of final output.

Color lasers should not be used as proofs for accurate color matching. If a color match is required, please request a proof. Signify Pantone™ colors and panel brakes where important.

Use Pantone™ coated colors for reference.

We do not use Pantone™ inks but it can be a helpful reference when color is critical to the final output. **Please note, altering the values or using a percentage of a Pantone™ color will produce mixed results. Digital output is very different from offsetoutput. Please request a proof.**

For richest blacks, use: C:50% M:50% Y:50% K:100%

Avoid sending unflattened transparency.

Transparency and transparent effects like drop shadows and glows in Illustrator or InDesign may not print as expected if they are not flattened OR may give errors when processed with the RIP software. We recommend rasterization to ensure expected results.

When creating files with duotones, always send a file converted to composite CMYK, as well as the native duotone file and a hardcopy with color expectations.

Duotones can be difficult to reproduce but there are various techniques to match colors.

Please call us or email us with any questions or concerns

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Tips & Tricks



When possible, leave all type, logos and backgrounds as vector art.

Vector art does not have a finite resolution like raster images and can be blown up without worry of degrading its quality. It makes a quick and easy transfer as well because of its smaller file size.

For acceptable resolution of raster images, keep images placement and document proportion in mind.

Resolution is a ratio of *dots per inch (dpi)*. As the print size increases, resolution decreases and after a certain point, may produce unexpected poor quality. To figure out the final print resolution of any image placed in a layout program, take the starting image resolution, divide by the image placement percentage and multiply by the document scale.

Example:

A document 12x12 but will need to be printed at 48x48
 $12/48 = 1/4$ scale or .25

Photoshop image 300 dpi
Placed at 75% in InDesign or (.75)

So, 300dpi divided by .75 multiplied by .25 = 100dpi

Do not send unnecessarily large files. They will only slow transfer and production time.

Resolution has diminished returns above the minimum resolution we recommend for our printers and no benefit beyond the maximum resolution. For instance, an image printed at 200dpi will look identical printed at 400dpi and it will be 1/4 of the size.

Specify critical colors and give Pantone™ references.

All of our printers are regularly calibrated for color accuracy. However, if certain colors are critical to the final output, we can manually attempt to match them with a specific chart for our digital printer. For \$25, we can print a proof to be signed off before going into production.

Type can be outlined or converted to art for reliability.

To ensure that there is no shift in the type or line breaks, Illustrator and InDesign can easily turn type to outlined artwork. This cannot be undone, however, so be sure to save a copy of the original file in case copy needs to be edited later.

Native files versus ready-to-print files.

Ready-to-print files, such as rasterized TIFFs or hi-resolution PDF's are very convenient and more importantly, more reliable. A TIFF file or vector PDF with outlined fonts will reliably look the same way on our system as yours. However, there may be things we cannot change or check. Native files that require fonts have the possibility of performing differently than expected, but we will be able to access individual components should we they need editing. A good rule of thumb, native files should always be accompanied by hardcopy or a PDF or JPG for reference. If the file sizes permit, it's never a bad idea to submit both ready-to-print files, just in case.

Saving files as a JPEG.

The JPEG file format uses a lossy compression and removes information to compress an image, often permanently putting compression noise around high contrast areas (eg. the edge of type and in solid areas) that cannot be easily removed. The higher the compression of a JPEG, the more the image will suffer. When possible, use a lossless compression to reduce file sizes when submitting. We recommend checking LZW compression when saving TIFFs as a good solution. It may not be as small as a JPEG would be, but your artwork will remain completely intact.

Black and Rick Black variations will not print the same.

A color that is marked 100% black will not print as deep and dark as one that also contains 50% of cyan, magenta, and yellow with it. This can be used for effect but if you want a truly dark black, use a rich black build: C:50% M:50% Y:50% K:100% for inkjet prints or R:0% G:0% B:0% for lightjet prints.

Keep grommets and edging in mind when designing layouts for banners.

Banners that will get edge hem for durability or sewen pockets for hanging will show stitching on the front. To ensure that threads do not go through logos, type or other crucial artwork, use these guidelines:

Example:

A banner that gets a full 3" horizontal pocket on the top should not have critical artwork within 4" running across the top.

For sides that get hemmed, keep items 1.25" away from the edge.

For sides that get pole pockets, keep items away from the edge a total of 1" plus the size of the pocket.



Keep panel breaks in mind when designing layouts for booths.

Booths that will be split into multiple panels should be submitted altogether as one piece. However, be mindful when designing layout that it's best to avoid putting critical text, especially small text, directly on panel breaks.

Gradient blends without banding.

Banding can occur in gradient blends when they are spread across large areas or using colors that are very similar. There are sometimes simply not enough colors to create a smooth transition. InDesign and Illustrator can produce acceptable results but sometimes Photoshop's dithering is best.

To take advantage of this, work with only the gradient at first. Make a new document with the size of gradient you desire to the resolution you need but choose 16bit mode instead of 8bit mode. Create your gradient. It will look like it has banding at this point since Photoshop's preview is 8bit.

Go to Edit> Color Settings. Click on More Options to the right if available. Make sure the option "Use Dither (8bit/channel images)" is checked.

Go to Image>Mode and change the file to 8bit/channel. Gradient banding should be much less prominent. If there's still too much banding, this can be further hidden using Filter>Noise>Add Noise, adjusting amount to preference.

