



## tips + tricks

### **Tips and Tricks to Make Your Job Run Smoothly**

Perfect Image is your “**More than printer**” source. We’re always willing to work with you and are extremely flexible in meeting your requirements. We provide our supported file formats to help you understand those files/programs that make our relationship win-win. When we say that, we mean a relationship that alleviates extra time in building your files, keeps costs contained on your print job, and ensures the fastest, smoothest processing of your files to meet your due dates or those of your clients. Perfect Image understands you don’t wake up in the morning thinking about us; however, to serve you best, we need to produce your jobs correctly, without unexpected costs. This requires that you present files to our staff in a compatible format.

See our Supported File Formats document on our Helpful Resources and Forms page, and take advantage of our tips and tricks. We're available to personally assist you at any time.

### **Use the Right Publishing Program for Your Job**

There are literally hundreds of programs on the market that can produce text and graphics; however, only a select few are appropriate for professional publishing. It’s important for us as a manufacturer to state clearly that some programs facilitate your job and others simply do not. Following our file standards makes things easy for you, ensuring you get results you want and deserve. You can expect additional charges when you go outside of our recommended boundaries, and these costs can grow exponentially as problems mount. Plus, there’s no guarantee your final proof will look like what you created in an original document.

- Using programs such as Adobe Illustrator and Photoshop for artwork only, and for single page ads is fine. Most jobs are better off when created in a page layout program.
- Please use QuarkXpress or Adobe InDesign for laying out pages. This is especially important on multi-page jobs.
- We do NOT recommend using drawing programs like Adobe Illustrator or Photoshop to lay out pages with photographs and columns of text. This type of program often takes extra time to output files and can cost extra for the additional time needed to produce the job. They also tend to grow large and are hard to manage.

- With the addition of vectored text in PhotoShop, we see a lot of files where entire pages are created in PhotoShop. Although this works, vectored text pages are considerably larger than they would be if done in a page layout program with the photos properly placed. As a result, output times increase.
- If you are preparing your entire job in a drawing program, such as Adobe Illustrator or PhotoShop, make sure your Perfect Image Sales Consultant or Project Manager is informed and your job has been estimated accordingly, as this will require extra time in PrePress to produce. The one hour Perfect Image traditionally allows in Mac time is not sufficient. If you do not make this clear at the outset, estimating will not allow enough time and you may experience additional charges, known as alterations (AA).
- We've seen jobs estimated for three to four hours of output time double to eight to 10 hours or more because the job was prepared in PhotoShop or a drawing program. The number of problems increases with these programs and changes or corrections may also take longer.
- Multi-page files take an extra long time to produce. Files created in Adobe Illustrator or PhotoShop should be saved as EPS files and placed in a page layout program for output.

### **Avoid Less Desirable Programs, Inferior Quality and Unnecessary Costs**

Less desirable applications produce unreliable and/or unpredictable professional publishing results, and are known to require extensive reworking to get them to output pages to PostScript printers. It may be less expensive to recreate your document using a professional program than having Perfect Image work through the issues of undesirable applications. It's worth considering that the costs associated with problems from incompatible programs could cover the purchase of a professional publishing product.

#### **What happens when you use less desirable programs?**

- Unreliable color production
- Program only supports RGB colors (not CMYK or Spot Colors)
- Type rewraps unpredictably and without warning
- Poor image resolution
- Errors when attempting to print to PostScript devices
- Exceptionally long time to output proper files
- Extra costs due to problems – who needs this in today's economy?
- Greatly compromised quality of the finished product – who can afford poor quality today?

**Please note that Perfect image does not support any of the following programs:**

- Microsoft Word
- Microsoft Excel
- Microsoft Publisher
- Microsoft PowerPoint
- WordPerfect
- Adobe FrameMaker

## Photographs and Images

- Photographs should be 300 dpi resolution at 100 percent size.
- Images that are to be enlarged need to be scanned at the correct size – or provided to us with greater than 300 dpi resolution.
- Color images should be in CMYK color format. Not RGB.
- Grayscale images should be in grayscale format. Not RGB.
- Pure black-and-white images should be bitmap black-and-white images and saved as TIFF or EPS files.
- Bitmap black-and-white images should be at least 600 dpi (preferably 800 to 1200 dpi) at 100 percent size.
- Save your images in EPS, TIFF or JPG formats only (not WMF, WBM or other formats), with no compression.
- Do not over-res images. In other words, don't use a 500 dpi color image at 100 percent size, or you will end up with a huge file with no greater quality.
- Do not create or edit clipping paths within QuarkXpress. Create all clipping paths in PhotoShop and save the image as an EPS file.
- If you are creating a duotone, do not use flat curves. We recommend that you use a reference like the Pantone Duotone Guide.
- Do not create silhouettes by 'deleting' to a white background – unless you intend to place the image on a pure white background within your page layout program (you must use a clipping path for this).
- Keep clipping paths simple. Make sure the path is placed at least two (2) pixels within the colored area of your image to prevent edge halos.
- Do not use the Style menu to edit any images in QuarkXpress.

## Fonts

Font problems are the most common causes of delays and problems with a print job. Please note the following recommendations to help ensure your jobs run smoothly every time.

- All fonts to be used in your print job should be provided to Perfect Image on a disk with the rest of your job. Failure to provide fonts may result in delays and extra charges.
- Type 1 Fonts: These are preferred as they cause the fewest problems on PCs and Macs.
- TrueType Fonts: Although we accept these, we recommend avoiding them because they are known to cause occasional output problems.
- OpenType Fonts: This is a new font type. So far, we have seen no problems with them; however, it is a new format so issues could arise.
- Avoid Cheap Fonts: Choose fonts from reputable sources. You often get what you pay for, and many cheap fonts do not properly handle letter spacing and may not print at all on our Imagesetter (even when printed fine on a laser printer).
- Keyboard Commands for Bold, Italics and Bold Italics: Although most any font can be made to appear bold or italic on the screen and on your printer, the only way to guarantee the fonts operate properly when output to film is to choose the font from the font menu. Choosing bold, italics or bold italics from the Style menu in any program may result in bad proofs and wasted money

## Placing Images In Page Layout Programs

- All graphics need to be sent to Perfect Image as separate files.
- If placing images in Adobe Illustrator documents, these images are automatically embedded. Still, be sure to send us each image separately so that, if needed, we can make changes and corrections to your documents.
- Never copy-and-paste images from any program into your page layout program. Make sure you fill picture boxes with 'None' when importing TIFF files into QuarkXpress.
- Do not reduce images more than 30 percent, if possible. Doing so may cause the file to take longer to output, which can cause some images to lose quality.
- Enlarging and Reducing Images: Always keep in mind what happens to resolution when you enlarge or reduce images. A 300 dpi image enlarged 200 percent becomes a 150 dpi image. The same image reduced 50 percent becomes a 600 dpi image.
- Placing images that are too large and reducing them (by 50 percent or less) may result in extended processing times and extra fees. It is especially important to place images at 100 percent size at 300 dpi when the images are repeated multiple times on the same page or on multiple pages.
- Rotating Images: Rotating Images is okay to do in most cases. Images with lots of detail will sometimes lose quality when rotated in a page layout program. If you are concerned about this, rotate your images in PhotoShop.
- Do Not Save Multi-Layered TIFF Files: TIFF files must have a single layer (be flattened) and have no extra alpha channels. If you need extra channels, the file should be a DCS/EPS file.
- Transparency: Transparency in PhotoShop does not exist once the file has been saved as an EPS or TIFF file. To achieve the effect of transparency, you should create a clipping path and save the file as an EPS document.
- InDesign and Transparency: In-Design users can achieve transparency by placing a native PhotoShop file with transparency. Although this works, use it with caution. This method has been known to cause serious problems and delays if used inappropriately or excessively.

## Page Sizes and Page Design

- Set up the page size in your document to be the final trim size of a single page. If you want an 8.5 x 11 brochure, set up your pages for exactly that size. If the project is a 5 x 7 postcard, set your page to 5 x 7.
- Bleed: Make sure all items that are to bleed (run off the page) extend beyond the page boundary by at least 1/8 inch. Do not make your pages larger to accommodate the extra size. Repeat: Make sure that any type of image that you do not want cut off the page is 1/8-inch inside the final trim size.
- If you are designing a document that will fold, it is very important that you talk with your Perfect Image Sales Representative/CSR about exactly where the folds need to be in the document. Otherwise, you may have to redesign your document to fit the folding.
- Set your pages as single pages in a regular printing order of page 1, page 2, page 3, etc.
- Do not set your document in Printer Spreads.
- If you have odd-size pages or inserts, create them in a separate document. For example, for an 8.5 x 11 document with an 11 x 17 foldout, produce the foldout in a separate document.

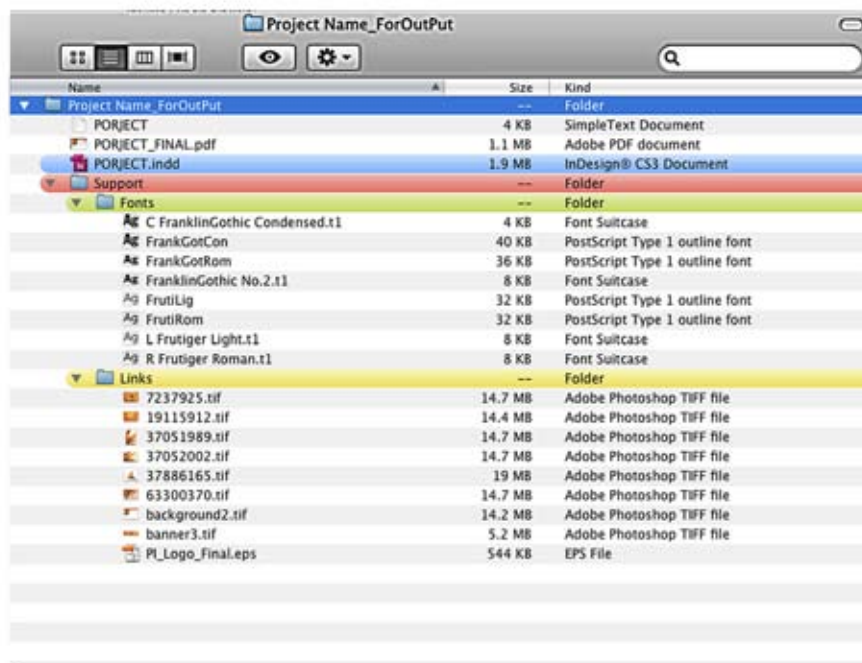
- Die lines should be set as a separate spot color named “Z\_die” – in a color that will show up. Die lines can be created in Illustrator and imported into the page layout program, or they can be created directly within the layout program. Set the spot color to Overprint.
- Spot Varnishes should be set up as a separate spot color. Many customers prefer to let us create varnish plates to avoid problems. Be sure to tell us exactly what you want varnished.
- Avoid placing text or objects within 1/8-inch of the edge of the page – unless it is a photo or graphic that will bleed off the page.

## Colors

- Understand the difference between a spot color job and a four-color process job. Make sure all color formulas are what you want and that you have checked the formula against a standard swatch book, such as the Pantone GoeGuide/CMYK book.
- Always check the color formulas against the Pantone Solid To Process guidebook.
- Make sure any spot colors are named the same within all files being used. For example, if you have a color named Pantone 300 CV in one document and Pantone 300 CVC in a graphic, you will get two different colors.
- Remove any unused colors from your documents as this reduces confusion and helps assure you get exactly what you want.
- To be sure you get what you want from a spot color job, we recommend printing a set of color-separated lasers. Examine them to ensure your spot colors are on the correct plates.

## Job Organization

- Make sure you do not have any two files bearing the same name – even if they are in different folders. This causes serious problems when we re-link images in preparation for outputting the file.
- Organize your job files cleanly. We recommend a folder structure like this:



## **Sending Us Your Job**

- Include all layout documents and each linked/imported image.
- Include all fonts used in your document and any imported images (be sure to include all weight and styles used, e.g. Bold, Italics, Extra Bold, etc.).
- Please send a PDF file with all fonts embedded to be used as a laser proof. Name this file: "jobname\_laserproof.pdf" – so we'll know its purpose. Additionally, anything that folds should include a folding dummy. Customer-supplied lasers are always appreciated. As a part of our proofing and sign-off process, we will obtain your approval on an Epson proof, a NexPress Proof or a Blue Line, unless you desire a PDF proof. This is an important quality checkpoint.
- Be sure to mark your PDF file or lasers showing where FPO (For Position Only) images or PICKUP images are located. It is also a good idea to place a non-printing text box in the layout to mark FPO and PICKUP images.

## **Archives**

- We can archive your job to CD-ROM or DVD to return to you after the job is complete. This will ensure you have the latest changes and corrections made during the production process. Please request this service before we begin production on your job. The charge for this service depends on the size of the job.
- Perfect Image archives all jobs after they have been printed; however, every type of media has a percentage of failure and there is no guarantee of archived file integrity. We do not guarantee copies of files in our archives and are not responsible for the integrity of stored files.
- Retrieval of files from our archives for reprints is always a free service; however, there is a fee for retrieving files to be re-archived to disk to be sent to customers. The fee depends on the size of the job and the amount of time involved. We charge in 15-minute increments, and the minimum charge is \$25.

## **Contact Us for Additional Guidance**

Please feel free to contact your Perfect Image Sales Consultant or Project Manager for assistance with any aspect of your print job, or send an e-mail to: [contact@perfectimageprinting.com](mailto:contact@perfectimageprinting.com)

