

DOCUMENT SETUP

Initial Communication

Our Graphic Specialist department is a crucial part in the success of your graphic production. Communication with your Graphic Specialist Representative at the beginning of a project and throughout the process allows for mutual and collective ownership of your project positively impacting the cost and workflow of your projects.

What and Where to Submit Files

Discuss what should be submitted with your Customer Service and Graphic Specialist Representative early to ensure artwork is ready for print production. It is recommended that you provide information regarding how your art files will be submitted on your purchase order. Will the artwork be sent on a disc, by FTP, via email or by <http://upload.aproofnow.com/>?

Software Compatibility

Due to the frequency of software upgrades we recommend that you notify us if you are submitting artwork built in a recently upgraded application. Software upgrades tend to have glitches or behave unexpectedly during the initial update. We make software upgrade purchases as soon as they become available and can offer helpful advice regarding any known issues.

Software Selection

It is important to use the right program for the job. For example, it is not advised to create a logo in InDesign (a layout program) that will then be used as a placed file in other documents. While it is possible to produce graphics built in this manner, it typically requires more time and/or money to produce these graphics. Remember that when designing for wide format dimensions, raster/bitmapped graphics will be very large can cause difficulty for computers to handle; saving, editing and transferring of your art files can take much longer to process.

File Naming Conventions and Organization

We recommend identifying files with thoughtful names. By avoiding special characters and ensuring each file has a unique name the workflow of your project will require less time to process. We also recommend providing multiple files packaged in appropriate folders (e.g. "Fonts"; "Links"; "Layout"; etc.) can have a tremendous impact on our mutual workflow efficiencies.

Document Size

Always create your artwork document to final trim size. We provide non-branded templates for your use to ensure artwork is built to final size and with consideration of live areas. You can visit: <http://visproducts.com> for all graphic templates. If a template is not provided, please include a 2" overall bleed.

Color Settings and Modes

When building your artwork in an Adobe application the following settings will deliver the best results:

RGB: Adobe RGB (1998)

CMYK: "US Web Coated (SWOP) v2 OR GRACol2006_Coatedv2"

Color Settings: "North America Prepress2"

If providing a PDF file please save as, "PDF/X-4:2010" Standard

CMYK VS. RGB

Once you have built an art file in either CMYK or RGB do not force the file into another color mode. This will always result in a loss of color gamut. Leave the file as originally built in the native color mode. When building multiple art files be sure to use the same color mode for all of the files (when possible) to ensure color consistency across multiple graphics.

Spot Color Use

We recommend only using spot colors to represent critical solid color matches. Once the design has the correct color applied to the artwork, please remove all unused colors from the color/swatch palette. Be mindful of linked images and make sure that they have the exact swatch names as the graphic elements built in the page layout document. When a spot color is named differently in one file than another (i.e. "PMS 021 CVC" in one file, and "PMS 021 CVU" in a linked file), the software interprets the color names as two separate colors and attempts to print them that way. Please name spot colors exactly the same across all files to avoid delays. We use the Pantone Color system and it is the best tool for selecting critical color matches.

DESIGN CONSIDERATIONS

We employ multiple workflows to ensure proper and fast production of your graphics order. Below are some tips that should be used, as a guideline to ensure your graphic order does not produce undesired results or slowdown in the production process.

Placed Images

We recommend that you supply the native/original versions of any imported art files (i.e., the original file/s that created the graphics). Through the prepress process we may have to apply critical color matches or make slight adjustments to imported graphic elements and not having the native/original files may delay our ability to make the necessary changes.

Clipping Masks/Digital Whiteout

Never use white boxes to hide unwanted elements. These boxes will still be processed by the RIP and may cause undesired results. Always use a masking option to trim or hide unwanted graphic elements.

Print Proofs/PDFs/FPO Files

We recommend printing a laser proof or creating and reviewing PDFs of your final art file/s. This will allow you to check and verify your design as well as supply a proof/FPO file to us. If your file crashes on a laser printer or while exporting to a PDF file, it will most likely fail to process on our RIP.

Fonts

One of the most common delays in the production workflow is related to missing or corrupted fonts. Not all computers or printers have the same system font library and will likely force a substitution that is not what is expected. Fonts are available in three different types, Postscript Type-1; TrueType; and Open Type. Be mindful of the fonts you are using and make sure to send all fonts used in your layout and support graphics. Version numbers and manufactures need to be identical to avoid font errors. Incorrect fonts can result in not only font substitution, but also subtle changes in the character shape, line endings or reflow of text. If you are unable to provide us with the fonts used in your graphic file, please convert fonts to outlines/paths.

Stylized Fonts

Only utilize the actual typefaces offered by the font family. Several design applications allow for added style attributes (e.g., bold, shadow, small caps, etc.) to all fonts. End results can vary depending on the RIP, printer drivers and applications used. Applying style attributes typically creates an artificially sized/shape of the typeface, not intended by the original design of the font. When ripped the applied style may be ignored or exaggerated and produce unintended results.

We warn against utilizing the style menu since it does not always produce consistent results in output. We recommend only using fonts available from your font menu listing.

Rich Black

We use a standard build of C=100, M=100, Y=100, K=100 to create a "rich black". For regular black, you can set the values to C=0, M=0, Y=0, K=100. Please do not change black or rich black swatches to a spot color, and verify that overprint is not applied.

White Color Swatch Application

If you are producing graphics on a white material, and you want white to appear in your design, simply leave those elements blank (or use the "paper" color swatch if your design program comes with one) - the white paper will show through. Adding a white colored swatch to your design in this case, may actually interfere with the way it prints. Again, please make sure that overprint is not applied.

Image Resolution

We recommend providing high-resolution files as TIFF or EPS files and without compression if possible. If you are providing a large, layered file please save this as a PSB. It is ideal to keep resizing or scaling to a minimum in a layout program.

Increasing the size of a placed image will drop its resolution. An example of this is,

linking a 2"x 3" (300 DPI) image at 200% will print at only 150DPI; low resolution is 72 DPI.

Scaling

We recommend sending your art files built at 100% scale when possible. It is important that your art files have necessary resolution to be scaled up for output.

For example:

- A File built at 25% scale = 400 DPI images
- A file built at 50% scale = 200 DPI images
- A file built at 100% scale = 100 DPI images

COLOR MATCHING CONSIDERATIONS

Color Matching Multi-Process Graphics

We offer several print processes. Due to the amount of different printers, inks and media available not all colors can be exactly duplicated. Our prepress and color management departments do all they can to provide you with the best possible color match to colors requested across multiple print processes or medias. We cannot guarantee exact color matches and strongly encourage ordering a printed hard copy proof to review and approve any color matches.

Critical Color Matching

We use the Pantone matching library, please reference a Pantone color and be sure to include it in your file. It is also advised to send us a printout as a guide. Color matching and hard copy printed proofs will add additional time to the production process, please work with your Customer Service representative to plan accordingly.

Color Matching Previous Prints

Digital printers will output color differently, even when using the same printer profiles. If you are ordering a graphic that needs to match a prior order please provide the previous print to us for color matching. While there is no way of guaranteeing an exact color match, having the previous print to reference will allow our prepress department to get the best possible color match possible.

QUICK TIPS FOR WIDE FORMAT PRINTING

- Minimize gradient banding in wide format printing by creating gradients in Photoshop and choosing colors that are closer together to reduce the "steps" of color between them when outputted to print.
- Remove all unwanted or unused colors from the swatches palette to eliminate color conflicts. Color space issues, such as unwanted spot colors, RGB to CMYK color

shifts and so on create delays in turnaround time or unexpected results in printed graphics.

- Reduce hold time of your digital art files by providing all linked files and fonts. Packaging all necessary files into one bundle for printing will keep your project moving through production.
- Be aware of your intended output and the color space designated to avoid unexpected color shifts. Mixing processes, RGB and spot color definitions in the same file delay production time.
- When possible, build your files with vector art. Vector files are infinitely scalable without losing image quality and provide a reduced file size compared to raster art.
- Be sure to specify a PMS color match for critical colors. Remember, gray is never just gray.
- With the exception of continuous lineup over multiple graphics, providing a digital document with one layout per page, rather than multiple layouts on one page eliminates confusion and delay in preflight and prepress process.
- Creating your document to the final size of the printed piece ensures timely production. We offer templates to instill confidence that your digital files will allow for enough bleed and live area placement will keep all critical information intact.
- Typically, wide format graphics will be viewed from a distance. Be sure to use large text sizes and styles that are easy to read.
- Please create multi-panel/critical lineup graphics on a single page, not as separate pages or documents. This will allow our prepress department to tile these and provide exact lineup.
- Provide a PDF/FPO file or hardcopy color proof whenever possible for a reference.
- Specify all critical colors using the Pantone color-matching library.