



## File Preparation Guide

**First and Foremost**, include a printed color proof or a .gif (or .jpg) file so we have a reference to look at. Many people use .pdf's, but sometimes they do not show all information.

### **Accepted File Formats (MAC & PC – CD, DVD-ROM, ZIP)**

Adobe Illustrator, Adobe Photoshop, Adobe InDesign, Adobe PDF, Quark Express

### **Saving Documents**

The more accurate your output file is, the more likely that it will move through production without requiring additional work on our part which translates to additional cost for you.

- Build to trim and drag **bleed items** off the page an additional:
  - 1/8"-1/4" for offset printed pieces
  - 1/4" for Digital Prints i.e. posters, backlit displays, etc...
  - 1" for Banners
  - 3" for Billboards
- Convert all graphic files to CMYK. RGB files will not be accepted.
- Name spot colors consistently within all files referenced by your job.
- Delete any unused colors from the color list.
- Select "Process Separation" in the Edit Color menu for any custom or PMS colors that convert to a process build.
- Include marks to indicate folds or perforations.
- Open the output document(s) from the media (CD, DVD, etc...) you're sending and make sure that all placed elements retained their links to the referenced files.

### **Saving Fonts**

Fonts are the biggest cause of prepress and production problems. Follow these guidelines to minimize font problems with your job.

- Page layout programs have a "collect for output" (Quark) or "Package" (InDesign) feature used to collect all linked files and fonts. Perform each time you save a file to disk.
- Place all fonts used by your job in a separate folder.
- When using PostScript fonts, supply both the screen fonts and the printer fonts.
- Copy the entire contents of the typeface folder from the font manufacturer (i.e. do not mix typefaces in one suitcase and don't just send the printer font styles that you think you used).
- Send the screen fonts in suitcases; removing them can create font ID conflicts.
- Fonts are an important part of your job and you should send them every time you submit the job.
- If you have fonts in EPS graphics, be sure to either include the fonts used or convert all type in the EPS document to outlines.

Remember, viewing a project on your computer screen will not indicate what it will look like when printed. Fonts **MUST** be included with **EVERY** job.

(Continued)

## Graphics and Illustrations

A simple oversight here can cost time.

- Place all graphics in descriptively named folders.
- Include all "placed" images, even if they've been embedded in another document.
- If the supplied EPS is not editable, be sure to also send the native-format document.

## Scale

Choosing the proper scale will insure manageable file size and highest quality output.

- If the document size is 48" x 48" or less, save at actual size
- If the document is larger than 48" x 48" but smaller than 16' x 16' save at 1/4" = 1" (or 1/4 size)
- Documents larger than 16' (Higher & Longer) should be saved at 1" = 1'
- IMPORTANT – Whatever scale you use, you will need to apply this scale to all files that make up the graphic, and you must indicate what scale you used upon giving files to us for output.

## High-Resolution and Low-Resolution Scans

- Identify images as high-res or FPO (For Positioning Only) on laser proofs.
- Place your images in descriptively named folders, i.e. "FPO" or "High Resolution."
- If an image is to be used for positioning only, include "FPO" in the file name.
- Be sure that high-res, 4-color images are saved in CMYK mode and not in RGB mode.
- Don't scale high-res images to less than 50% or greater than 150% of the original size. If necessary, rescan the image to stay within these guidelines.
- Consider import size when determining input scan resolution:
  1. 4-color scan (CMYK) — 300 DPI at 100% image size
  2. Halftone scan (Grayscale) — Same as above
  3. Linework scan (Bitmap) — 1200 DPI at 100% image size. If possible, scan at 600 DPI and convert to vector-based EPS using Adobe Streamline.

## Vector vs. Raster

There is a huge difference between vector and raster images. Raster is defined by a grid of pixels. Each pixel is a different color to make an entire image. This is a great type of image format for photographs. An image in the Raster format is resolution-dependent. You specify the resolution and pixel dimensions when you create the image. If you later decide to increase its size, you enlarge each pixel, which lowers the image quality.

Vector graphics, on the other hand, are not defined by pixels and are not constricted to a grid format. Each object in a Vector image is stored as a separate item with information about its relative position in the image, its starting and ending points, width, color, and curve information. This makes them suitable for logos, fonts, and line drawings. An image in the Vector format is resolution-independent. It can be resized without losing detail because it is stored as a set of instructions, not a collection of pixels. Each time you display an image, you recreate it.

(Continued)

## **Colors: CMYK + 4-Color Black**

If you are using Pantone colors in your job, you need to know that our printers print the 4-color process of the Pantone. Our designers will always try to match the actual Pantone color first. If they cannot find a color close to the Pantone color used, then they will try to match the 4-color process of the Pantone color. To help ensure the accurate match of your graphics, please include your PMS number and a PMS color chip in your documentation. A color-accurate proof should also be included with your job if color is critical to match. There is a charge for PMS color matching.

For best results in printing solid black, please use a 4-color black in all of your programs. Use these settings: K=100% CMY=65%

Preparing files for print or other forms of output can be tricky and can cause costly delays and incur additional costs due to improper file preparation. Most of these problems can be avoided easily by following these suggestions. If you still have any questions, please do not hesitate to call us. **AG**

### **AmeriSign & Graphics**

6657 N. Sidney Place  
Milwaukee, WI 53209  
414-228-0833

**[www.amerisignandgraphics.com](http://www.amerisignandgraphics.com)**