

# ICC

## (The Informed Client Checklist)



For any printed job, whether it's a business card, brochure, or booklet, many people are involved in its creation. However, you, the customer play a very key role. You are the designer and the proofreader and your input can be beneficial to everyone. We believe that an informed client will help produce a successful job. That is why Preflighting is so important. Unfortunately many clients are unaware of what Preflighting is and why it is so vital to the success of their job. This brochure was created to help you understand the basics of Preflighting and to give you a helpful checklist so that you can work with your sales representative and be informed.

### What is Preflighting?

A professional pilot, before he takes off, checks the engine of his plane and all its vital controls for damaged or faulty wires. He does not want his plane to crash and his main concern is to have a safe and smooth journey. He plans ahead and considers any danger or uncertainty.

This analogy, in many ways, is true for the designer or client. Before you go to your sales representative or print house, you check your files for errors or missing information. You, the designer must make sure you have done all you can to create a job that will flow smoothly through the print house, to the press, and arrive back to you on time, error free.

However, in order for you to achieve this you must be aware of what to look for in your files and have knowledge of what questions to ask your sales representative.

### What should I be looking for?

Every job is unique and different; no two jobs are exactly the same. Nevertheless, there are some similarities and some basic file problems to watch out for. Here is a checklist with some simple explanations.



### ❑ Missing or Damaged Fonts

Fonts are one of the main parts of your document. All the document's fonts must be included with the file you send to the print house, because they may not have that exact font in their computer system. Also, find out from your print house what brands of type they accept because their machines may regard your font as damaged or corrupt. In addition to this, do not apply bold or italic styles by pressing this button in a layout program; use a font that has **bold** or *italic* in its name, such as *Times Italic* or **Times Bold**. The reason for this is that some printing devices do not understand the button style setting and may fail to print a Bold or Italic font thus degrading quality.

### ❑ Are the Page Dimensions, Bleeds, & Hairlines correct?

At the start of your project, be aware of what the final size will be. Sometimes making a simple mock-up or dummy is helpful before you create anything in your computer. Be aware a job can look like it is in inches on the screen but it may actually be in centimeters or picas. Always double-check the page dimensions and units.

Bleed is also another common thing to check before the job is sent to the print house. Bleed is extra image that goes beyond the cut area so that when the document is trimmed there is no white space on the edge of the sheet. If you are unsure if your design needs or has enough bleed, talk to your sales representative.

Hairlines refer to a thickness of the thinnest possible line in a document. For a line to print clearly it should be no less than .25 of a point.

### ❑ Are my Files's Colour Settings correct?

There are four main colours settings used in the digital world, RGB, CMYK, Grayscale, and Spot Colour.

RGB or red, green, blue is not a colour setting that commercial printers use for printing because these are the colours of light or what you see on your computer screen. You must therefore convert your file's images and graphics to one of the other three, depending on the job.

CMYK or Cyan, Magenta, Yellow, Black (K) is a four colour process that most commercial printers use. If you have coloured photos in your job this is the setting to use.

Grayscale is one colour printing, generally black, for simple jobs that contain only text.

Spot colours are special colours of ink and if you are unsure of this conversion, talk to a sales representative.

### ❑ Correct Layout Programs & File Formats

Inform your print house what layout or design program you used and the version of that program. It's important because not all companies have the same software. Layout programs could be PageMaker, Quark, or InDesign, and some design programs used are Photoshop, Illustrator, or Corel. Version type, example "Illustrator CS6", is important to know because not all companies have upgraded their programs from version CS5 or older.

Knowledge of the File format is also useful; it can identify what program the file came from or its possible use. Most common image file formats used by print houses are EPS, Tiff, and PDF; they generally do not accept PICTs or JPEGs. In some instances a print house may even be concerned as to whether the job was designed on a Mac or PC computer due to fonts or image formats that may conflict with their computer's systems. If you are unsure what image file formats your printer accepts, talk with your sales representative.

### ❑ Correct Image Resolution

Resolution is an image's sharpness or clarity. Digital images that have come from a scan or a digital camera are made up of little square dots known as pixels. The more pixels, the sharper or clearer your image will be. Low-Resolution or Low-Res images are generally in the range of 72-100 pixels per inch and are used for computer screen use, internet or at home use. A High-Res image is 250-300 pixels per inch and is used by commercial printers. Nevertheless, always check with your print house what resolution they use so you will get the optimum quality.

### ❑ Any Missing, Unnecessary, or Unlinked Files?

Before CD creation or an upload to an FTP site you must make sure you send all the necessary images with your documents and that they are linked to the file, so that they will appear in the document. It's also important to remove all unnecessary files that will not be part of the document. This may include text or images that you do not want printed.

### ❑ Spell Checked & Laser Proofs

Spell checking is important, and vital to a well-printed job. It is not the printer's responsibility to correct spelling unless requested. Lastly, supply the most current laser proof and if possible print the file at 100%. If this is not possible, write down what size the images on the laser proofs are and write down the page dimensions of the original. If your job is more than one colour, include colour laser proofs with registration marks.

### ❑ Files are Organized

When files are placed on a CD, it is important that three main parts are included. These items can be grouped into three main folders entitled Fonts, Final Documents, and Images. This way Images and Fonts can be linked to the Final Document and can be located by the computer operator should they become unlinked. All files must also contain a unique file name for easy identification. If a file needs to be updated, check with your sales representative, whether it should have a new name or keep the original. You could also include a fourth folder that contains raw or original images, if for some reason a document's image becomes corrupted.

Once everything is included on the disk, label it with your company's name and project name(s). It might be helpful to have two disks, a copy can be sent and you still have the original. Also let the print

house know if you want the disk or any material returned afterwards.

### Final Thoughts

Hopefully this helpful checklist and these definitions will assist you with your preflighting. Remember, if you are unsure about any of these explanations, have a more technical concern not listed, or would like more information, consult with your sales representative. We want your job to succeed. You are a valued client and when we work together success is possible.

