ITP Requirements for Preparing Print Ready Files for Production

When planning to export a print-ready PDF, ITP recommends that you refer to your InDesign file and follow this checklist for properly preparing your file for export to achieve the highest quality finished print piece as possible. From your InDesign file, you should export your document to a print ready PDF file called a digital master. These digital masters are compact, reliable files that you can view, edit, organize and proof. The quality of printing is not compromised as long as the PDF file is saved properly.

The following list offers steps to follow prior to sending ITP your print ready PDF file:

1 Please provide all files with a 1/8 inch bleed on all sides for each page/panel of the file. The "bleed" extends 1/8 of an inch past the trim area or outside edges of the "live area" of the print file. This allows for clean, crisp color all the way to the printed edge so that no "white edges" are visible when your print piece is trimmed to its actual finished size as it comes off press.

2 All images should be provided in the highest resolution format possible at a minimum of 300 dpi at 100% of actual size.

3 Please provide all images, logos, graphics and color backgrounds in CMYK (Cyan, Magenta, Yellow and Black) four-color builds. Your entire file should be in Cyan, Magenta, Yellow and Black. Though you may have logos or other elements that you normally produce in a PMS color, all PMS colors will be converted to CMYK in our pre-press department for printing both digitally and offset, so ITP prefers that our customers convert their elements to the CMYK percentages that best represent the color they are looking to achieve on press. In addition, all RGB (Red, Green, Blue) images and elements will also be converted to CMYK.

You may keep your PMS or RGB images in your working InDesign file and then convert them to CMYK as you export your High Resolution Print Ready PDF file. Rest assured, InDesign will convert images and logos to CMYK as well as Photoshop, since they are the using the exact same color engine. Keep in mind, ITP does have the option to print up to six colors on our offset presses, so you do have the option for printing CMYK and having one or two additional PMS match colors in your file that print in conjunction with your CMYK build.

4 Please exclude hidden or nonprinting layers from the exported PDF document and if your artwork contains transparency, overprints or drop prints, please contact us to determine whether it's best to receive a flattened or unflattened PDF file.

5 Use the InDesign Preflight feature to ensure that image resolution and color spaces are correct, that fonts are available and can be embedded and that all graphics are updated.

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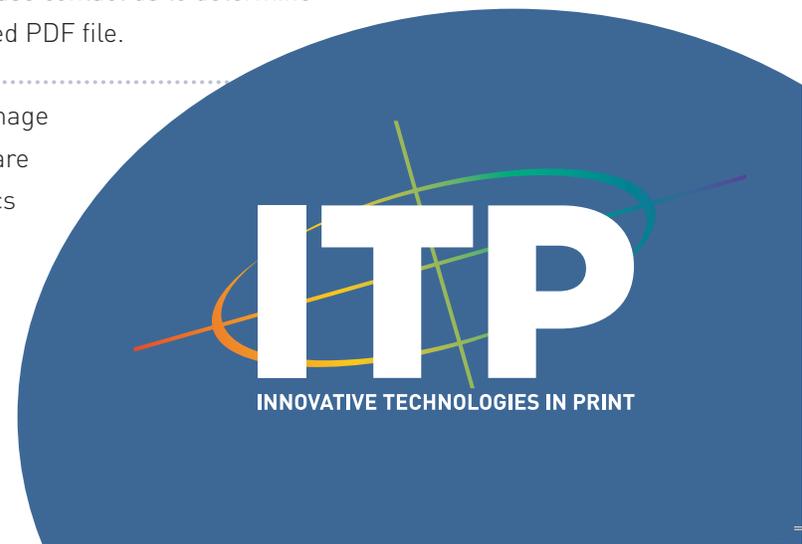
6 View your Adobe PDF export settings before exporting, and adjust as necessary. Your summary area includes a warning section that indicates if preset settings can't be honored.

7 If ITP needs to make minor edits to your art file before printing, your PDF file will be opened in Adobe Illustrator to make necessary adjustments and perform preflight checks, correct trapping issues and perform imposition and color separations as needed. Due to file or document size, you may still choose to provide native files. Please remember to include all fonts, images and graphic elements prior to uploading to our FTP site (FTP address: http://eft.itpofusa.com) Our FTP Upload Instructions can be referenced at www.itpofusa.com/eft

8 Total Ink Coverage/Total Area Coverage-

With sheetfed offset presses, when several colors are printed on top of each other, there is a limit to the amount of ink or toner that can be put on specific papers at certain press speeds. Ignoring these technical limitations leads to ink not properly adhering to the last layer of ink and not drying on the press sheets. This causes set-off where the ink of a still wet sheet rubs off on whatever is stacked on top of it.

Adobe InDesign has a 'Total Ink/Total Area Coverage Indicator' setting in the Separations Preview Window. ITP recommends you specify a threshold value for this setting at or below 320%. We also recommend to never use "registration color" for design elements. Since registration equals 100% of each separation, the total ink coverage is always exceeded when this color is used. The default color settings in Photoshop are optimized for web coated paper and need adjusted down for ITP's sheet-fed offset printing.

While our prepress department can check for TIC-related issues or re-separate files, we hesitate to adjust percentages within the provided file because this can affect/change to the intended final printing of the design file. You can refer to this helpful link at https://www.prepressure.com/design/basics/tic

There are many online resources that provide information when working in Indesign to successfully fix errors and make conversions prior to exporting a print-ready PDF. If you need guidance in any of these areas prior to sending a file, please contact your ITP Sales Representative or Customer Service Representative for assistance at 1-866-487-8506 or email info@itpofusa.com.

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