

Indesign CS4 and PDF

Questions and Answers from a Commercial Printing Prepress Perspective

What recommendations do you have for those of us who want to prepare artwork that will have special die cuts, metallic inks and/or foil stamping?

Metallic Inks

Die Cuts

Foil Stamping

Metallic Inks

Gold 872

PMS 8343

Die Cuts



- **1 point stroke**
- **unique spot color**
- **Separate Layer**

Build a clean path for cutting, either in Indesign or Illustrator. If you do it in Illustrator, place it as an EPS in Indesign on another layer

Foil Stamping

Company
Name

- **unique spot color**
- **Separate Layer**
- **1 point minimum thickness for any object or stroke**

Build a logo, text or line art on a separate layer in Indesign. Apply a unique spot color. If you do it in Illustrator, place it as an EPS in Indesign on another layer.

Types of Printing Companies

- **Copy Shops:**
 - FedEx (Kinko's)**
 - Office Depot**
 - Clone (5th Street)**
- **Quick Printers**
 - Sir Speedy**
 - Minuteman**
 - Allegra Print & Imaging**
- **Small Commercial Printers**
 - AJ Printing & Graphics, Inc.**
- **Medium & Large Commercial Printers**
 - Chromagraphics**
 - O'dell Printing**
- **Web Printing**
 - Barlow Printing**

Types of Digital Printing

- **Toner Based:**
 - “Color Copiers”**
 - Konica, Canon, Xerox, others**
 - Some Digital Presses**
- **Ink Based new wave digital**
 - HP Indigo**
- **Ink Based traditional printing**
 - Heidelberg DI Press**
 - Ryobi DI Press, and others**
- **Traditional Commercial Printing**
 - Plates are made prior to the press phase**
 - Tried and true method**
 - Most cost effective for long runs**

Digital Printing vs. Traditional

The questions:

What quantity do I want?

- **Smaller Quantities are better for digital**
- **Larger Quantities are better for offset**
- **The “breaking point” on price/quantity will depend on the specifics of the job**

What quality level do I want?

- **Traditional offset will almost always have better quality. It allows you to:**
 - Use Spot colors matched precisely**
 - Have the ink interact with the paper better for a smoother, flatter, more “even” appearance**
 - Toner sits on top of the sheet**

How much time do I have?

- **Digital is usually faster than traditional**

Variable Data? Go Digital

Pricing

Digital Printing

vs. Traditional

Example:

Flier: 4/4 (double sided), 100# gloss book (paper), CMYK

Quantity:	50	500	1,000	2,000
Digital	\$67	\$284	\$522	\$914
Traditional	\$478	\$543	\$617	\$740

What to look for in a Press Check

First: Is a press check required?

Many times it is not necessary. Viewing a prepress proof should be adequate MOST of the time.

What are your quality expectations for the finished job? Based on the answer to that, you need to make sure you're on the right type of printing equipment (see earlier discussion on types of presses)

If you have some unique spot colors (metallic), or some area of special concern on the artwork, perhaps a press check is appropriate. Communicate with the printer about this and ask questions ahead of time.

Press checks are time consuming, and can lead to extra expense if you see something you don't like when the job is on press.

What to look for in a Press Check

Items to look for in a press check AND in a prepress proof:

Fonts: did any fonts substitute? They won't always go to courier. Look closely. This isn't as common a problem as it used to be.

Transparency: Did any transparency objects flatten correctly when they went to print?

Color accuracy: If the horse is pink, there's likely a problem. Small color adjustments may be acceptable on press (ask the printer) but NOT always. Don't assume you can fix color on press! The range of adjustment once it is on press is VERY small.

Content: Did anything disappear?

Common Errors in customer files

PDFs:

- **Fonts not embedded**
- **Low resolution images**
- **Spot colors inadvertently converted to CMYK**
- **Bleeds not included**
- **RGB colorspace**
(never a reason for RGB in print production)
- **Page Size incorrect: set page size to the final trim size. A business card is 3.5"x2". Don't just let it float in the middle of an 8.5"x11" Indesign page.**

Native documents:

All of the above potential trouble spots, plus:

Missing Fonts

Missing Linked Files

...or...someone trying to build a complex document using Illy or Photoshop when it belongs in Indesign!

Rich Black?

\$\$\$ Rich Black \$\$\$

First, it doesn't cost any more to use Rich Black in your printing project. <g>

When printing CMYK, if you have a large area of black, you can utilize more than just 100% black ink, and it will give it a very deep black appearance.

Rich Black = 40c 30m 30y 100k (or something close)

Cautions:

- If you change the percentages for building rich black, you could end up with a brown or blue tone to the final appearance.**
- If you have small text or artwork reversed out of the large black area, you may not want to use rich black, or you may want to make a modification to keep the rich black away from the text.**

Color Management

Book:

“Real World Color Management”

Color Management is a very complex issue

Best suited in another class dedicated to the topic

Handled in different ways depending on which phase of production you are in.

Basically, you can create a profile for any device:

- **Your inkjet printer**
- **Your monitor**
- **The CTP Platemaker at AJ Printing**
- **The Printing Presses at AJ Printing**
- **The Printing Presses at other printing companies**
- **The scanner used to scan your film negatives**

THE LIST GOES ON.....

Spot to CMYK Conversion

**What if I have a document with spot colors
that needs to print CMYK?**

**Generally speaking it is best to leave the spot colors
in place and export to PDF with the spot colors.**

**The ideal conversion, in our workflow, is to allow
our RIP to convert the colors to CMYK.**

**Or we can convert it in the PDF prior to sending it to
the RIP.**

**If you really want to convert it (perhaps you are
using a custom CMYK build for a particular color),
then you can alter the color swatch in Indesign prior
to making the PDF.**

What is a RIP?

Raster Image Processor

A RIP is a computer which is running special software. It will accept our PDF file, analyze the data, and it will decide exactly which spots on the plate need ink. Down to a resolution of 2540 x 2540 (or higher in some cases).

So that way, the plates are imaged with each pixel on the plate either getting ink, or not. At that point it is a binary (“yes or no” question). Does this spot on the plate need ink?

The resulting electronic file is then imaged on the plate with a laser and the plate will pickup ink in the correct locations.

Extremely precise.

What makes a job successful at a print shop?

Communicate! Ask questions early. Ask all the questions you need to assure yourself that the printer understands what you expect the final product to look like!

If they won't take the time to answer your questions, you may be in the wrong place!

Avoid arbitrary descriptions, especially with color (be specific, use pantone numbers, etc.)

Look at samples. Ask the printer for samples of past work that they've done that involves similar processes to what you're looking for (foiling, embossing, booklets, postcards, CMYK, whatever)

Build clean files following all of the BEST PRACTICES discussed in Cyndi's classes!

Different Papers

So many kinds of paper! We could take up a whole evening discussing paper and perhaps still not cover the whole topic.

Coated

Gloss

Matte

Dull

Silk

Uncoated

Copy Paper

Letterhead Paper

Newsprint

Forms (to write on them)

Don't be fooled by paper weights. Different types of papers are weighed in different sizes.

For example: 32# bond = 80# book

.....because.....

Some genius decided we would measure the weight of bond paper as a 17x22" parent sheet, but we would measure the weight of book paper as a 25x38" parent sheet

Are there certain fonts that don't print?

All fonts should print, however there are situations where some fonts will have licensing restrictions that prohibit them from being embedded in a PDF.

In these situations:

**Font may substitute
or Text in that font may not print at all! (blank area)**

Workaround:

Convert Text to outlines

or

Use another font

How to know?

Usually a warning when creating the PDF

Also: PDF -> Document Properties -> Fonts

**Is it a problem to scale
an image in InDesign
because that will
increase time for the
RIP and slow it down.
Is that “old school” ?**

**That’s old school. Files RIP in seconds.
A delay would be so short it would be
imperceptible to us.**

**Just watch your effective resolution in
Indesign to make sure you don’t have less
than the proper resolution after you scale
the image. “Info” panel.**

Will a placed image with a drop shadow effect created in InDesign print correctly on a PMS and 4C backgrounds?

Yes, as long as you either flatten the transparency when exporting to PDF, or you make certain your printing company can handle live transparency within PDFs. Our RIP is extremely current and can handle live transparency.

Do you get better print results if you convert RGB assets to CMYK before you export to PDF for Press Quality printing?

It is critical to convert to CMYK in Photoshop for photos and to use CMYK colorspace for spot colors in Illustrator and Indesign. Any conversion from RGB which is done later in production will create some color variation.

Is it a good idea to overexpose your images some to compensate for this result which I also experienced with lulu.com?

I haven't used lulu.com, but...

No, you shouldn't have to overexpose your images to get a reasonable result. What is your baseline for comparison? Have you had it professionally printed elsewhere? Or are you comparing to what you see on screen?

Any tips for using spot varnishes successfully?

Use enough of a varnished area to create contrast between the unvarnished and varnished areas. Refer to the AJ Printing & Graphics brochure which has both a gloss varnish and a satin varnish.

How is UV coating used and what exactly is it?

UV Coating is a liquid coating that is applied to the entire sheet a fraction about a second after the final ink color is printed. This creates a bit of a protective coating. The two bonuses are:

It dries the sheet nearly instantly, so the job can be cut to finished pieces within minutes; and

It creates an extremely high gloss appearance

Downside: it is not very environmentally sound. Lots of VOC's which are not great for air quality.

Consider Aqueous Coating.

What recommendations do you have for those of us who want to prepare artwork that will have special die cuts, metallic inks and/or foil stamping?

First, follow the guidelines set forth in earlier answers to this question.

Second, be mindful of your budget.

Remember that producing a job in Indesign needs to be done with an eye toward final production. Will the cost be within budget? Will the appearance be what the client wants? Are there elements being applied which cannot be produced, such as hairline embossing, text below 10 point with more than one color?

Why is it so important to understand color management? or why is it such a big deal when you have someone who handles it?

It becomes more important when you are working across multiple mediums. You may print one job CMYK, and another job spot color. How close will they match? Another job large format...how will that match?

What are your client's color tolerances? Do they like "Pleasing color" or "critical color"? Are you reproducing true "artwork"?

How can I tell if a .joboption is an InDesign export shortcut or a Distiller setting?

I would recommend using Indesign Adobe->PDF Export->Define... and import those job options into Indesign so that you can use them with your Indesign documents. You shouldn't need Distiller when you are working with Indesign. The same job options may import into Distiller as well, but with Indesign you should use the built in PDF export tool.

A word about graphics embedded in Word documents

**Why does the color
not match my
monitor?**

**Why is the color
different at Kinko's,
and different yet
again on my home
printer, and different
even another way on
the color printers in
the classroom?**

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