

The Ultimate 10-Point Prepress Checklist

Never let a printer reject your files again. Check these 10 points before every submission!

☐ 1. Is the Format correct?

Verify that your document size matches the final desired output format (e.g., A4 = 210 x 297 mm). Avoid last-minute resizing that might stretch or compress your layouts!

☐ 2. Did you add Bleeds?

Paper cutters are not pixel-perfect. Always allow 3 mm to 5 mm of bleed area all around your document, and include crop marks in your export.

■ **Magic tool: *Bleed Fixer* (automatically adds mirroring bleed margins)**

☐ 3. Is the Safety Zone (internal margins) respected?

Do not place any text or important visual elements closer than 4 mm to the inner borders. Otherwise, they risk being cut off during trimming!

☐ 4. Is Color Management calibrated?

Keep your source images in RGB to preserve maximum color gamut. Let the final PDF/X-4 export or the printer's RIP handle the conversion to the target profile (e.g., Fogra39, Coated GRACoL, or Japan Color) using the Output Intent.

☐ 5. Is the Ink Limit (TAC) under 300%?

Overlaying 100% of Cyan, Magenta, Yellow, and Black creates 400% ink coverage, causing paper warping and smudging. Keep the total ink limit below 300% maximum.

■ **Magic tool: *Prepress Simple Tools* (analyzes and adjusts ink coverage limits)**

☐ **6. Are your black texts in Pure Black (100% K)?**

Texts set in "Rich Black" (a mix of 4 colors) will appear blurry if the printing plates misalign by a fraction of a millimeter. Force all small black text to 100% Black (K).

■ *Magic tool: K-Fixer (converts rich black texts to clean pure black)*

☐ **7. Are all images in High Resolution (300 DPI)?**

Images that look great on screens might print pixelated. Ensure all raster graphics (JPEG, PNG) are at least 300 DPI at their final physical print size.

☐ **8. Are your fonts outlined or embedded?**

If the printer does not have your font installed, it will automatically default to a basic font, breaking your design. Always outline (vectorize) your text or embed fonts in the PDF.

☐ **9. Is your PDF file flattened and optimized?**

Hidden layers, complex transparency overlays, and unnecessary metadata bloat file sizes and trigger printer RIP system errors. Flatten transparencies and optimize your PDF.

■ *Magic tool: CompressTool (reduces file size and flattens complex transparencies)*

☐ **10. Is the output format PDF/X compliant?**

Do not export your printing file as an "Interactive PDF" or "Web PDF". The global industry standard for print is PDF/X-1a or PDF/X-4. It locks your file settings for a surprise-free result.

■ *Magic tool: PDF/X-4 Normalizer (ensures strict compliance with printing standards)*

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