



# General Guidelines for Digital Files

While all programs are different, be it InDesign, Illustrator, Quark, etc., there are some general guidelines to follow that will help make a good, stable, problem free, PDF file. Not following some of these guidelines can lead to time spent by our Prepress department to fix issues.

## **CMYK colors vs RGB colors**

Our Indigo 5000 and 4000 digital presses use cyan, magenta, yellow and black inks, CMYK. Your computer's monitor views color in red, green and blue mixes, RGB. It is very important to choose the right color mix when generating colors to be used in a layout that will be printed. If you are building colors to put on a website, RGB will work just fine. Layouts that are to be printed need to be built using CMYK color mixes.

Our digital presses have a conversion utility that will convert colors from RGB to CMYK on the fly. Many colors convert well and look very similar between RGB and CMYK, but not all. Since not all presses have the same color conversion utility and may not translate the same, choosing CMYK as your color scheme will generally have better output results.

## **Resolution of Images/Graphics**

300dpi is what we recommend for all raster images to ensure that the project prints crisp. Our digital presses are a lot more forgiving than traditional lithographic presses which allows us to print images with less resolution, however we cannot guarantee a crisp, non-pixelated result.

## **Dielines**

If your print project requires a special cut, please use a spot color. We recommend naming the spot color something like Dieline so it is easy to see and understand what is needed. Also, it is important to make sure that all dielines are set to overprint. By setting the lines to overprint we can turn off the Dieline color without leaving a white area behind where it was previous.

## **PDF Version**

PDF version 1.4 (Acrobat 5) or earlier is what is needed by our imposition software. Any version after PDF1.4 will require additional time to save the file back so that it is compatible with our software.

*The walkthrus we have set up outline where to set the version to PDF 1.4.*



# General Guidelines for Digital, Spot Colors

## Spot Colors vs Process Colors

When setting up a layout, spot colors are certainly easier to choose from a color palette rather than building the color from scratch, however there are drawbacks to leaving those spot colors as spot when creating a PDF.

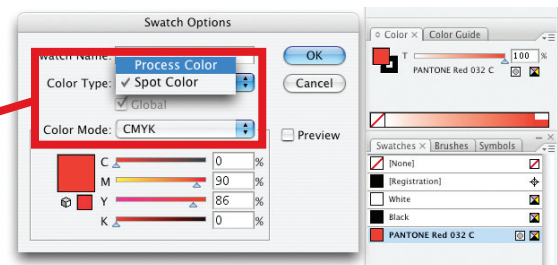
Most programs now allow the addition of effects to type/logos. These effects can range from drop shadows to a transparent type look. These types of effects are NOT compatible with spot colors and will lead to problems when we go to press. The following is a screenshot of an error message from Adobe Illustrator when attempting to save a file that has a spot color chosen and set to a 75% opacity.



This file saved in this manner would not print like it was intended to look in Illustrator. The result could be anything from printing a solid red color to a solid white to a solid black, all of which is not what is intended.

To avoid this from happening, a simple modification of the color in the Swatches palette, changing the color from a spot color to a process color, is all that is needed.

In this case: Double click on the color in the Swatches window. Change the Color Mode from Book Color to CMYK as shown. Then click the drop down arrow by Color Type and change it from Spot to Process Color. Press the OK button. This color can now be used in any number of effects and reproduce on press like it was intended.



Any type of transparent effect requires a process color.