



prismagraphic
Print Smart

Guidelines for Successful
File Preparation

The following guideline was compiled to strengthen the communication and workflow between Prisma Graphic and our clients.

Prisma Graphic Guidelines for Successful File Preparation

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INTRODUCTION

► Early Communication

Effective communication is a critical ingredient to successful electronic publishing. Communication must begin early in a project and continue throughout the process.

As designers you currently initiate the print production process at the outset of a digital design. Decisions made here impact the workflow and cost of projects. Getting Prisma involved at this early stage and establishing who will be responsible for which tasks is very important. Mutual and collective ownership of the project (from design through print production) should be clearly established.

► What to Submit

Discuss what should be submitted when the job is ready for print production—marked-up lasers, properly labeled media, fonts, mock-ups, etc.

► File Submission

Discuss with your Sales Representative how the project will be submitted. Will it be sent on disk or by FTP? See page 7 for information on FTP usage.

► Software Compatibility

Today, software upgrades are frequent. Notify us if you are planning to submit a job using a recently upgraded application. Major software upgrades can be buggy. Prisma purchases copies of upgrades as soon as they are available and will advise you of any known issues.

► Proper Software Selection

Always use the right tool for the job. For example, avoid using layout programs to create logos that will be placed in other documents. And, illustration programs are generally bad for layouts. While the software allows for full page-layout, the project may require more time and/or money to produce.

► Naming Conventions

Identifying files with meaningful names is helpful to the many people who will handle your project. Each file must be given a short unique name. Avoid using special characters (e.g. / @#^*! etc.). These seemingly minor matters can have a tremendous impact on our mutual workflow efficiencies.

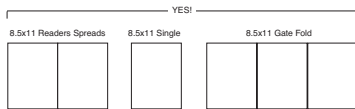
SETTING UP A DOCUMENT

► Document Size

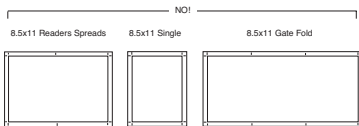
Always create the document to final trim size. Oversized documents are not easily “impositioned” and may incur extra time/costs.

Build pages in readers spreads using single “facing” pages.

Pages should have a minimum of 1/8 inch bleed on all outside edges.



Avoid building pages on oversized documents



► Special Color Treatments

Many projects are printed with colors other than CMYK. Correct usage of spot colors will expedite the production process. On the other hand, if used incorrectly, they can create a mess. As a general rule, spot colors should be used to represent the actual inks that will be printed and/or any subjects that are to be handled with separate treatments by Prisma (e.g. foil stamping or die cutting).

Once the number of colors to be used has been determined, please remove all unused colors from the color palette. All colors used in linked images must have the exact color names as the colors built in the page layout document.

CONSIDERATIONS DURING DESIGN

► Design Guidelines that Minimize Errors with Improved Processing Times

The underlying technology we are relying on to process pages is PostScript. PostScript code is created when graphics are built in an illustration program, when digital color subjects are separated or when electronic pages are composed. All these pieces must be processed through a PostScript Raster Image Processor (RIP) and be rendered on an Imagesetter. In reality, our industry depends totally on the reliability of PostScript to produce our digital pages. Even with today’s newer, more powerful processors and RIPs, errors sometimes occur.

Here, we will identify how to avoid the more common errors. Graphic designers need to keep them in mind while creating digital pages and Prisma, as service provider, need to look for them early and possibly test them before the deadline crunch.

➤ **Simple Construction is Best**

Simplify your project in a way that will produce a minimum amount of processing. Create vector art with as few points/nodes as possible. This is especially important if using auto-trace software. Delete all unneeded points.

➤ **Nesting**

A shape built in one program and imported into another program is nested two layers deep. By importing the combined image into yet another document (perhaps a layout document), nesting becomes three layers deep. During processing, the RIP must follow the links to find each of these nested elements. Beyond two layers deep, the RIP may not find them. If this happens the graphic may have to be rebuilt without nesting (elements may have to be isolated and copied/pasted into a single document, eliminating nesting complications). Additional time and/or charges may be incurred for this process.

➤ **Workers (or Native Files)**

Always supply the worker versions of imported graphics files (i.e., the original file that created the graphics). If we have to change a color, type or vignette in an imported graphic and do not have the “worker files”, it is more costly and may impede our ability to make the change.

➤ **Digital White-Out**

Avoid using white boxes to cover up unwanted elements as they will still be processed by the RIP. Please delete unwanted elements.

Projects that are designed in drawing programs have masking options available to trim excess image. Effective use of these masking functions can eliminate the need for overlaid white shapes.

➤ **Print Laser Proofs/PDFs**

Always print laser proofs or create pdfs of the final file(s). This will allow you to check your design and supply a proof to Prisma.

If the file crashes on a laser printer or while it's distilling, it will probably crash when submitted to a RIP.

FONTS

Missing or corrupt fonts are the most common reasons for production workflow interruptions.

When a document is moved to another computer or printer, the same fonts must be on the new system or the document will print incorrectly. There are three different types of fonts available: Type 1, TrueType and Open Type. Know what you are using and send all fonts used in the page layout and support graphics. Version numbers

and manufacturers must be identical. If the wrong fonts are sent the result can be anything from a font substitution, subtle changes in line endings and possible reflow.

► **Styles Applied to Fonts**

Only use the actual typefaces offered by the font family. Some applications allow you to add style attributes (bold, italic, bold italic, outline, shadow, small caps and all caps) to all fonts. Results will vary depending on the RIP, printer drivers and application being used. Selecting style attributes usually creates a pseudo (artificially stylized) version of the type face, which is a degradation from the original font design. When ripped the style may be ignored, it may be exaggerated or it may output as intended.

An example of this problem might be to select Humanist 541 Condensed Bold (which has a corresponding printer font) and applying the italic command from a STYLE menu. On screen, the font will display as a condensed bold italic. When printed out, however, you will most likely get the condensed bold version without italics.

This particular point may seem confusing because applying styles from menus sometimes works. Since this practice produces unpredictable results however, the rule of thumb should be to only use fonts available from your font menu listing.

GRAPHIC TREATMENTS

► **Rules and Frames (Borders)**

The words “FRAME” and “BORDER” may be used interchangeably.

When designing with thin rules please specify a width rather than using predefined “Hairline” width rules. Using “Hairline” rules can be problematic as they vary between different applications and output devices (some are barely visible and will not hold on press). We recommend that rules be defined as no less than .25 point.

Wherever possible, avoid using individual lines to create frames. It is extremely difficult to align rules to create perfect corners. For example, this is seen in instances where ads bleed off the page. Instead, apply a frame and extend it over the edge rather than using individual rules.



AVOID STYLIZING FONTS THIS WAY! ↑



Frames incorrectly built with individual lines

When viewing on the computer screen even up to 175% enlargement, the corners of a frame appear to connect, however they may not actually connect when imaged.

► **Four-Color Rich Black**

Many designs require a four-color black. Specifying 100% of each Cyan, Magenta, Yellow and Black should be avoided, as printing presses are unable to lay down that much coverage. Prisma defines “RICH BLACK” using these process values: 40% Cyan, 30% Magenta, 0% Yellow and 100% Black. Four-color black values may need to differ based on the nature of your printing project. Talk to us about the ‘look’ you are trying to achieve and we can guide you in the right direction.

► **Images**

High resolution files can be saved in many different formats. It’s best to supply Tiff or EPS files and without compression when possible. Convert all RGB images to CMYK/Spot when preparing them. You may get unpredictable results if you leave the conversion to the output device. Photoshop will give you the best raster image conversion. Since our goal is to give you the pleasing color you have chosen, we recommend that you do this conversion and make any additional adjustments.

► **Resolution Issues**

As a general rule, the scanned image (used at 100%) should have a minimum sampling of 1.5 to 2.0 times the output line screen. If you scale your image, you are changing the effective resolution. High quality printing requires 300 dpi for scans placed at 100%.

Try to keep resizing or scaling to a minimum in a layout program. Increasing the size of a placed image will drop its resolution. The results are rarely as good as scanning for the desired size and resolution (no more than 200%).

Theoretically, line art should be scanned at a resolution matching the output device: a 1:1 ratio for the best scanned results. There is little visible improvement however, on most line art subjects scanned above 600 dpi. A difference will be noticed if the subject is to be scaled. For sharper line art, scan at 1200 dpi.

HARD COPY PROOFS

Hard copy proofs at 100% original size should match the supplied files. The hard copy is compared to the final proof as a quality control measure. On all files sent by FTP, please include an approved PDF file for reference.

HANDLING CORRECTIONS

If the corrections are light and you wish Prisma to do them, clearly mark them on the proof and communicate them to your Account Representative.

If the corrections are extensive, it may be more time and cost effective for Prisma to send you our working copy of the file for you to revise. Using Prisma's version of your file will ensure that we avoid repeating work previously completed preparing your file for ripping. If so:

- All changes should be marked only on the Prisma supplied proofs.
- A new hard copy proof should be supplied with the revised files, using the guidelines discussed above.

The items given to Prisma should include:

- Marked-up, most recent Prisma supplied proof.
- Hard copy proof of the revised file that includes your marked, authorized alterations.
- The revised file, correctly formatted.
- If you have modified imported live images, please include them when re-submitting the files. In this instance, do not rename the imported illustrations or scans, since they have

already been imported into your layout document. Open your layout document and update the links, to ensure that cropping and placement have not been altered by the file modifications.

TRAPPING

Prisma prefers to do all trapping on client files, allowing us to concentrate on preparing files in a consistent manner that conforms to our standard guidelines and press requirements.

Please let us know of special trapping needs: 2-hit colors, overprints etc.

TRANSFERRING FILES VIA EMAIL AND FTP

Files may be submitted by email depending on your email server's size limitations. Prisma has no size limit for emails. FTP (File Transfer Protocol) is faster and more reliable for larger files. Prisma has its own FTP site where files can be uploaded or downloaded. All you need is a computer, FTP software or a Web browser.

For complete instructions or to download FTP software go to www.prismagraphic.com/ftp.html

If you have not used Prisma's FTP site before contact your Account Representative for a User name and Password.

We recommend using StuffIt or Zip Archives to protect files from corruption before posting them.

POST-PRODUCTION MEETINGS

Post-production meetings are a useful way to learn from a project. This meeting is an essential final stage in the process. Let's take the opportunity to review our relationship and to introduce new techniques.

In the past, a printer considered it part of their services to just take care of many of the issues that came up during production. Many things once left to printers are now done by designers. Responsibility lines have been blurred and designs often include elements created using new software or methods. The technology isn't perfect and appears to be a moving target for all of us. Today, for a service provider to "just fix it", may not be the best solution. By taking that route, they will continue to see the same time consuming problems and designers will continue to see inconsistent billings.

After your project is completed, plan to get together with us and discuss the job. This meeting can include

anyone involved in the project—the Salesperson, Designer, Account Representative, Digital Prepress Representative, etc. The goal is for each of us to walk away having learned something new about each other's processes and work requirements. This is an extremely useful tool that can strengthen communication and create a highly productive relationship.

PRISMA GRAPHIC PREPRESS EQUIPMENT INVENTORY

► Work Stations & Network

- (9) Mac Work Stations with Gigabit Connections
- (9) PC Work Stations with Gigabit Connections
- (2) Dell Servers & Gigabit Speed Network
- (2) CIP3 Servers
- Quix Server & High Speed Network

► Software

Prisma has the latest versions of all software for both Macs and PCs. If we don't have what you need, we'll get it!

- Complete Font Library
- Adobe Creative Suite 2 (Photoshop, Illustrator, InDesign, & Acrobat)
- Adobe Pagemaker 7
- ATM
- CDFinder

- Corel Draw
- Fetch
- Flightcheck
- Freehand
- Microsoft Office Professional (Word, Excel, PowerPoint)
- Microsoft Publisher
- Pitstop
- Preps Imposition
- Profile Maker
- Quark 7
- Rampage Client
- Retrospect (All work is archived on DAT tape & DVD)
- Stufft Deluxe
- Suitcase Fusion
- Toast

➤ **Imposition, RIP/Trap and Output**

- (6) PREPS Imposition Stations
- (2) Rampage Ripping & Trapping Systems
- (2) 3244F Creo Trendsetter Spectrum Platesetters with Digital Matchprints (31"x42" max)
- Rampage Remote Proofing Server
- Rampage Segundo Stochastic Screener
- Rampage Proofing Server
- Canon Color ImpoProofer 2-sided proofer w/Color Management

- Canon Contract Proofer ImagePrograf Color Proofer w/Color Management
- HP 5500 Digital Ink Jet 42" Wide Printer
- HP Laserjet Color 5500 Printer (12"x18" max)
- HP 5000 Hi-res Laser Printer (12"x18" max)
- Sherpa 2-Sided Proofers
- Fuji Pictro Proofer (11"x17" max)

➤ **Media & Storage**

- Multiple CD/DVD Burners
- Rimage Everest Thermal Disk Label Printer
- High-Speed Automated CD/DVD Duplicator w/6 bays
- DAT Drives
- Prisma has the capability to accept most legacy disks.

➤ **Scanning & Color Calibration**

- Eversmart Pro2 Flatbed Scanner (11.5"x17" max)
- X RITE Densitometer
- Eye One Color Calibration System

PREPRESS TECHNICAL SUPPORT

To reach a Prisma Prepress Representative, call

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