Artwork Guidelines / Requirements

We are excited to print your project! To help avoid delays and extra costs, we are providing you with this guide that are standard in the print industry. You must ensure your files are print-ready (meet these guidelines) AND match the quoted specifications of your project. We strongly recommend you consult with a designer familiar with all aspects of preparing files for print (including colour management).

We can provide cover and other templates for your project. Please check with us early on in your design process. We are also happy to speak with you or your designer if you have any questions or concerns.

Carol Popper is your main point of contact for print questions carol@mcrlprinting.com

Setting Up Your Files

• Artwork should be supplied as press quality PDFs (exported from Photoshop or InDesign) with all fonts/images embedded.
• All text should be saved as live text (with fonts included or embedded) and NOT rasterized
• Save page files with all pages included as single pages (not spreads) in the same file
• Cover, pages and end sheet files must be saved as separate files and labeled accordingly
• Recommended resolution is 300dpi minimum
• All colours must be created as or converted to CMYK. NO spot colours (unless quoted as such) and no RGB (refer to the next page for more information on colour conversion)
• For monochrome (1 colour black), ensure your final files are converted to gray scale
• Extra features like foil stamp, spot gloss UV, die-cutting, heat burnishing, embossing or debossing should be saved in the file and clearly labeled OR submitted as a separate 1 colour file, sized and positioned correctly for final output (vector line art with fonts/graphics outlined). There must be at least .25″ from all template edges without crossing, with all lines having a minimum stroke width of 1.5 pt. and mimimum of 8 pt. font
• All multipage books should include .5" type safety/clearance at the binding/spine side of all pages

PAGES SETUP EXAMPLE (NOT TO SCALE):

Bleed — Trim — Type Safety — crop marks →

This example shows how a page in your file should look. The solid and dashed boxes for bleed, trim and type safety (as well as the descriptions) should not actually be included in the artwork. They are included here for illustration purposes only. Only crop marks should appear in the file in addition to your artwork.

BLEED: The distance between the red box and the blue box is the bleed area. It should be .125" on each side of each page. Background colours or graphics (like the pink background here) must extend this distance beyond the trim edge on each side. NO critical graphics should be included here or they will be cut off during final trimming.

TRIM: This is the finished size of the printed page. Crop marks act as a guide for trimming. They must be included at all 4 corners and should be positioned approx. .125" outside of the trim so that they don't show on the final prints.

SAFE AREA (TYPE SAFETY): The distance between the blue box and the purple dashed box is the safe area/type safety. It should be at least .25". All critical elements (text, images, logos, etc.) must be kept at least this distance from the trim edge otherwise there is a risk it could be cut off during final trimming. Keep in mind that the standard rules of typography usually require much more than .25". All multipage books with sewn binding should include a minimum of .5" type safety/clearance at the binding/spine side of each page.
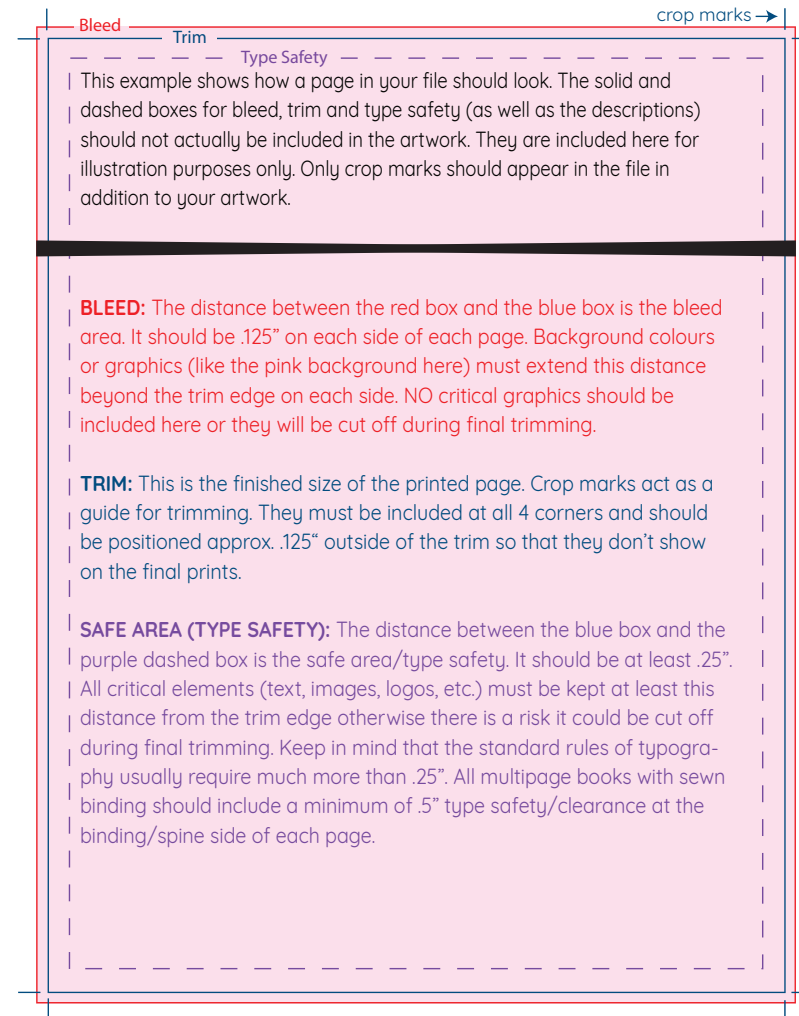
When Ready to Submit

Please ensure your files are compressed in a single .zip file before uploading. Clearly label the file for easy identification with your quote number, company/name and project description. Upload your final artwork via our website: https://www.hightail.com/dropbox?dropbox=MCRL. Send an email to carol@mcrlprinting.com once your files are uploaded

Physical Proof

You will be sent a physical sample of your project to proof BEFORE we print. See here for additional information about the differences you can expect between the bound proof and final production.

Converting Your Project from RGB to CMYK

Before submitting your files to us, you must ensure they are in CMYK colour mode. If not, you must convert them from RGB to CMYK. This can be easily done in either Indesign or Photoshop. While our software would convert any RGB colours to CMYK, the conversion can cause colour shifts so it's in your best interest to ensure the colours are correct in the correct colour mode before submitting to us. So we recommend you convert colours on your end in the native working files (Indesign or Photoshop). We do not recommend using Acrobat to convert colours.

1.! Select *Edit > Convert To Profile*
2.! Under *Destination Space*, leave the *RGB Profile* as is but set the *CMYK Profile to Japan Color 2001 Coated*, this is the CMYK color setting that is used by most high-quality overseas offset printers.
3.! In the *Conversion Options* section select *Adobe (ACE)* as your conversion *Engine* and choose *Relative Colorimetric* for your *Intent*. This option preserves all RGB colours that can be reproduced accurately in CMYK, and it will replace any colors that cannot be reproduced accurately in CMYK (known as "out of gamut" colors) with their nearest CMYK match.
4.! Click *OK*
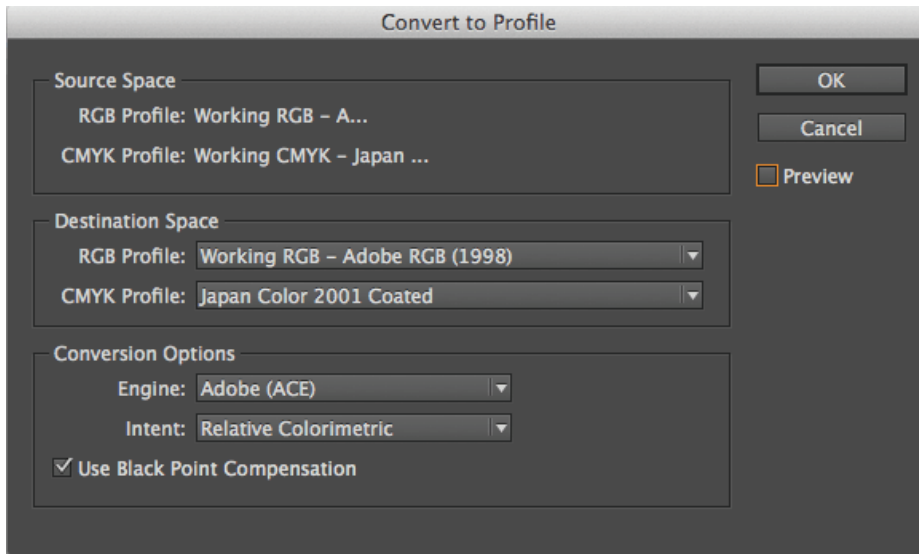
Adjusting the CMYK Values

After your file is converted to CMYK, check how the colours have shifted. If you had any very bright blues, reds, or greens, their brightness has likely been reduced to account for CMYK's reduced colour gamut (colour range). Unfortunately, this is the reality of printing in CMYK. It just doesn't have the same wide colour gamut that RGB has which makes it impossible to reproduce every colour. However, because you chose to convert the colours yourself, instead of our software automatically converting it, you have some control to adjust those colours by adjusting the contrast and saturation and/or adjusting the CMYK values of each colour individually. This can be done using the selection/eyedropper tool which shows how much of each colour is being used. Once your happy with the results, you can export as PDF.

Exporting a CMYK File as PDF

Generally, the "Press Quality" default settings in InDesign and Photoshop are great, however for submitting files to us, we recommend you not do any further colour conversion or embed any colour profile information. Instead, use the following settings in the *Output* panel of the PDF export dialog.
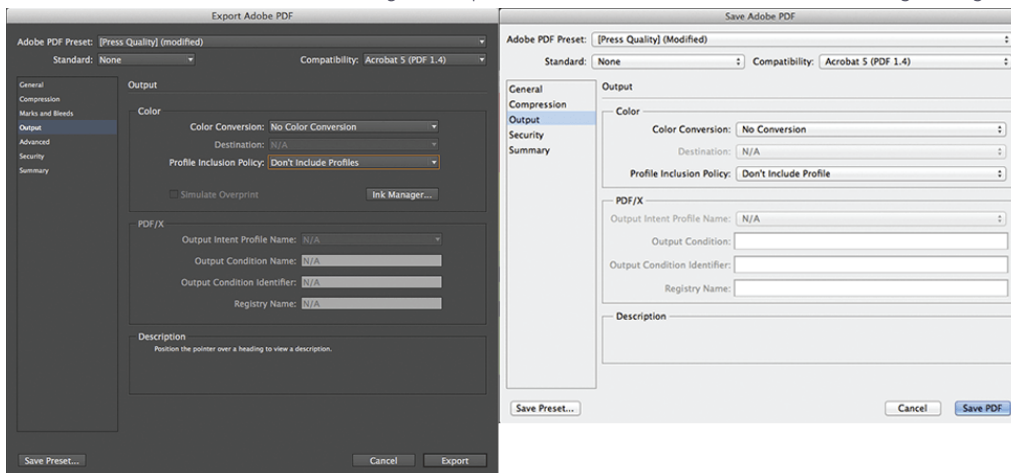
DESIGN TIPS / IMPORTANT NOTES

• If your project is a reprint that you have previously printed with another vendor, consider sending us a sample for colour matching. We otherwise do not know how you envision the colours. Even if the file colours are the same as the previous print run we would still require a sample because every printer has slightly different settings. Once we have a sample as an objective point of reference, we would match as close as possible to it.

• Choosing brand colours (or any solid colours) - When designing for 4 colour CMYK printing, to ensure the best colour match on final production, select colours from the Pantone color bridge guide (coated or uncoated) for print. Pick colours from the right hand column which shows how Pantones would look when CMYK offset printed. Once selected, the CMYK values should be applied to the print file(s). In addition to selecting and applying these colours, MCRL should also be advised of any specific colour matches with Pantones so that our team can help ensure the closest possible matches. Because every printer is different and papers are different, this is not a guarantee of exact colour matching but it does offer an objective point of reference.

• We recommend not to go below 10% for the minimum ink coverage otherwise it may not show on final production (even if it does show on the bound proof). Maximum ink coverage should not exceed 280% otherwise the final graphics could look muddy (uncoated paper) or have trouble drying (coated paper).

• Black that is printed as 1 colour (standard black) differs from black that is printed as 4 colour CMYK (rich black). Rich black uses more ink and is therefore best suited for large areas/images. 1 colour black can look washed out when used for larger areas, so rich black is recommended.

• When black is used in design for small type (anything less than 12 point) or fine lines, standard black should be used to avoid mis-registration on press. If small text/lines must be in a colour other than black, consider using a Pantone spot colour. Or consider limiting the text colour to 2 of the process colours instead of all 4. It's easier to register (align) 2 colour plates than 4.

• Avoid using borders or solid colour breaks in your creative near trim edges or folds. There can and often is movement during trimming/folding of up to 1/16" in any direction. When borders are part of the graphic and depend on precision (ie: a box perfectly centered on the page in your file, 1/2" in from the trim edge OR a book spine with a solid background colour that's different than the front/back covers), a shift of 1/16" would be very noticeable.

Endsheets (also called endpapers, endpages or endleaves): These are the pages at the beginning and end of hardcover books that are glued to the inside covers and to the pages (book block) to attach them. Because the endsheets are glued to the first inside page of the book, approx. 10mm will be lost at the spine side on the back side of the fly sheet (the loose page that is part of the endsheet) and the first and last inside page.

An endsheet is 1 sheet of paper (double page spread width), usually uncoated, that is a bit heavier than the pages paper. The sheet is folded in half to create 4 sides/pages. 1 side is glued to the inside cover leaving 3 pages (this applies to each end of the book; front and back) that can be left blank or include content. Endsheet files that will be printed should be saved at double page spread size (plus bleeds/crops), 2 spreads for each - front and back endsheets - if the content will be different between the front and back. The 1st spread in the front endsheet file represents the inside front cover, the 2nd spread is the backside of the fly page so content should be placed on the left side of the spread and the right side should be left blank (this is the side that is glued down to the inside cover board). The back endsheets file should be saved in a similar way except reversed.

NOTE: Ensure "Printed in China" is included somewhere in your artwork (usually on the copyright page of books). This is required. Products not bearing this marking may be denied entry into North America.

Inside pages: The 1st inside page of a book is on the right side of a double page spread after the inside front cover (or after the front endsheets). The last inside page is on the left side of a double page spread before the inside back cover (or before the back endsheets). Each side of a sheet counts as one page. So page 2 will be on the left hand side when page 1 is turned over. In other words 1 sheet = 2 pages, front and back, so 100 sheets = 200 pages. Remember, even blank pages need to be included in the overall page count.