



**MITCHELL PRESS**

Every Impression Matters

# Summary of **Tips** for Building Better Documents

**SUMMARY OF TIPS**

Section Page

**2-4**

# Tips for Building Better Documents

## 1. USE A HIGH END GRAPHICS APPLICATION

Prepare layouts or artwork in a program commercially used in the graphic industry such as QuarkXpress, PageMaker, InDesign, Illustrator or Photoshop. Microsoft Word, WordPerfect and other word processing software are not graphics programs, so it is best not to use them.

## 2. CREATE DOCUMENT USING PROPER PAGE SIZE

*(Please refer to section on Guidelines for Page Layouts and Graphic Files)*

When designing a multi-page publication such as a book, an annual report or a magazine — or any other document to be printed — check with your printer as to page size required to accommodate the press on which the job will be printed. Never assume 8.5 x 11 or 11 x 17 will work.

Create document reader spreads (facing pages) 1, 2, 3, 4, etc. — rather than printer spreads — pages 1 and 16, etc.

Calendars, coil bound books, however, should be made up as single pages as the pictures and colored backgrounds often bleed on all sides.

PostScript for each page of the calendar should be saved and distilled independantly. This makes it easier to place into the imposition software. (This reference is for calendar work only.)

## 3. DELETE UNUSED MASTER PAGES AND BLANK PAGES

Deleting all unused Master Pages and blank pages from your publication will make your files less complex and therefore smaller in size.

## 4. DELETE UNUSED COLORS, STYLE SHEETS AND H&Js

To make file sizes smaller, delete all unused colors, style sheets and H&Js from your palettes.

## 5. CROP GRAPHICS TO SIZE

Making Postscript describe what is invisible is not a good idea. Crop your image in Photoshop to no bigger than the size you need. Whether in Quark, PageMaker, InDesign or any other layout program, do not make little boxes that contain huge hidden images. Likewise, do not step and repeat little box with large images.

## 6. KNOCKOUT AND OVERPRINTING COLORS

White text must be set to KNOCKOUT of the background not to OVERPRINT as this will cause the text to disappear when RIPPED. Colors in eps graphic files that sit on top of one another must be adjusted so that the top color does not OVERPRINT but KNOCKSOUT of the color below it so as not to change its color. Black text should always be set to OVERPRINT.

## 7. USE PICTURE BOXES FOR SHAPES

Empty picture boxes are smaller in size than text boxes. If you need to draw a shape, always use a picture box. If at all possible picture box color should be white rather than none.

## 8. ALWAYS ADD BLEED — IF REQUIRED

If color extends to the edge of a page, it has to bleed off the page at least .125". When saving Postscript be sure and check your print settings in your application.

9. **PROVIDE HARD COPIES**  
If possible supply printouts of both composite and color separated proofs to your printer.
10. **USE SELF-DESCRIPTIVE FILE NAMES**  
Remember that other people may have to understand your file names, so use names which clearly describe the contents of your files. Use the proper file format extension — it makes it visually easier to find files.  
e.g.: WestMag Pages 1-16.pdf
11. **USE NATIVE PROGRAMS TO TRANSFORM GRAPHICS**  
Bitmaps (pictures) should be resized and rotated in bitmap (Photoshop) programs. If you do that in a page layout program, you not only lose quality, but also increase the file size and printing time. Fine lines in vector graphics (AI eps files) may disappear if they are reduced too much. Remember most page layout applications such as Quark scale everything proportionately, including line widths.
12. **KEEP PATHS SIMPLE**  
All paths, whether drawn or traced, should ideally have one point for each change of direction. Tracing with tolerance close to zero results in lines that trace square pixels — which not only produce jaggies, but also slows printing times considerably and can possibly generate Postscript errors. Refer to appropriate software user guide manuals for recommended values.
13. **DO NOT USE LOW RES IMAGES.**  
72 ppi is fine for screen viewing, 150 ppi is good enough for printing to desktop printers. For high end printing we recommend 300 dpi. And don't think you can just take a low res image and have Photoshop magically turn it into a high res one. The pixel data has to be there in the first place.
14. **ALWAYS INCLUDE FONTS AND/OR IMAGES**  
Always include and link all your graphics files or the application, such as Quark or PageMaker, will print low-res, 72 ppi previews. Illustrator may print nothing at all. If your job is missing fonts, you might end up seeing a lot of Courier or other default font in your publication. Always include full type families: when you start picking and choosing, you're asking for mistakes. The safest bet is to use Type 1 fonts. TrueType fonts especially if mixed with Postscript (Type 1 fonts) may cause problems on output. For example: both Palatino Type 1 and Palatino TrueType in same font folder. Multiple Master fonts require Adobe Sans MM and Adobe Serif MM in system folder fonts for proper representation. Stay away from them if at all possible. **Please refer to section on Fonts.**

**15. CONVERT IMAGES TO CMYK**

There is only one way for imagesetters to separate process color images, and that's if they are converted to CMYK. RGB images will print grayscale or be converted on the fly by the newer RIPs but the color may not be what is required.

**16. IMAGE FORMATS**

There are three main graphic file formats for the prepress environment: TIFF and PSD for bitmaps and EPS for bitmaps and vectors. Remember, these files are like translators — they're needed only if you have to make the file available to a page layout program such as Quark, PageMaker, InDesign or graphic program such as Adobe Illustrator. Most RIPs and imagesetters now support the JPEG format, however, opening and saving to one of the other formats is preferable. The more recent Adobe Suite products also support native .psd and .ai files being placed without saving as a .tiff or .eps. Check with your printer if this is acceptable.