

File Preparation: Best Practices

Use this handy checklist to double-check all of your files before you turn them over for production, whether it's for print, web, device, signage or packaging.

Print

(Images)

- ☐ CMYK*
- ☐ .tif
- ☐ 300 ppi (actual)
- ☐ 300 ppi (effective)

(swatches)

- ☐ Delete All Unused
- ☐ CMYK*
- ☐ Change Spot Colors To CMYK*
- ☐ Name Swatches As Per Protocol

(text styles)

- ☐ Use Paragraph Styles Throughout Doc
- ☐ Use A Minimum Of Text Boxes, Use Hard Return To Switch Styles
- ☐ Character Styles Overwrite Paragraph Styles
- ☐ Delete All Unused

(preflight panel)

- ☐ Check Before Preflight And Package

*Always double-check the color mode your vendor prints in. Most print in CMYK color space. Small custom shops, like the CIA DOC, may use RGB. But, even the DOC requires CMYK for some files. Make sure your entire document is in the correct color mode.

Web + Device

(Images)

- ☐ RGB
- ☐ .jpg - Continuous Tone
- ☐ .png - CT and Transparency (check compatibility)
- ☐ .gif - Hard Edge and Transparency
- ☐ 72 dpi (actual)
- ☐ 72 dpi (effective)
- ☐ Optimized For Web

(swatches)

- ☐ Delete All Unused
- ☐ Hex Numbers
- ☐ Change Spot Colors To Hex
- ☐ Name Swatches As Per Protocol

Signage

(includes billboards and banners)

Note: Signage requirements change from media to media and vendor to vendor. Always check with the vendor, or read Specifications and follow carefully.

(Images)

- ☐ Print Signs Are CMYK
- ☐ Digital Are RGB
- ☐ Fabrication Requires Conversion To Vector
- ☐ Follow Specs For ppi
- ☐ Do Not Compress

(swatches)

- ☐ Delete All Unused
- ☐ Hex Numbers

(type)

- ☐ Banners: Often Outlined
- ☐ Embedded PDF or Packaged File
- ☐ Fabrication: Outline

Design: Best Practices

Use this handy checklist to double-check how you arrive at your design decisions

Grid

- ☐ How Many Columns Are In Your Layout?
- ☐ Where Are Your Horizontal Grid Lines?
- ☐ Do You Need A Flow Line?
- ☐ Do You Have A Prominent Diagonal In Your Piece? Do You Need One?
- ☐ Would A Classic Grid (such as 3X3, or the Tschichold Cannon) Work For This Piece?

Hierarchy

- ☐ What Holds The Primary Hierarchy? Is It:
 - ☐ Image
 - ☐ Display Type (Headline)
 - ☐ Body Type
- ☐ How Does Secondary And Tertiary Hierarchy Operate?
- ☐ What Is The Hierarchy Withing Hierarchies (in images this really matters)

Client

- ☐ Who Is The Client?
- ☐ What Is The Project?
- ☐ Who Is The Audience?
- ☐ What Do You Want Them To Feel?
- ☐ Full Design Brief

Principles

- ☐ Balance
- ☐ Rhythm
- ☐ Repetition
- ☐ Economy
- ☐ Emphasis
- ☐ Variety
- ☐ Unity

Elements

- ☐ Line
- ☐ Shape
- ☐ Value
- ☐ Texture
- ☐ Color

Color

- ☐ Analogous
- ☐ Complementary
- ☐ Split Complementary
- ☐ Triad
- ☐ Compound
- ☐ Monochromatic (if NOTHING else works)
- ☐ Shades
- ☐ Tints
- ☐ Tones

Design: Best Practices

Most Important:

Spell Check!