

How to ... avoid the top 10 file preparation mistakes

There is much to consider before a designed file can go to press. We have compiled a top 10 list of some of the most common problems that occur when we receive customer files. By following this checklist, you can avoid many of these problems.

1. Inadequate Bleed

Bleed is an area on a document where content extends beyond the trimmed edge. Inadequate bleed can result in a white line on the trimmed edge. 3mm bleed is recommended. See our How To Guide for more info.

2. Wrong Applications Used

We use and recommend –
Adobe InDesign for complex document layout.
Adobe Photoshop for photo editing and manipulation.
Adobe Illustrator for vector artwork, logos and graphics.
MS Word, Powerpoint and Publisher are great for word processing at your desk and printing to your desktop printer, but are not recommended for complex layouts. If you do want to send us these kinds of files to print from, always save as PDF.

MS Word is perfect for preparing your book manuscript, contact us to discuss the best way to do this.

3. Image Resolution Too Low

Images and documents that have a low resolution will print pixelated and grainy. Images taken from the internet do not usually print well because their dpi (dots per inch) can be as low as 72dpi. Always aim to use images with at least 300dpi.

4. Fonts Not Embedded or Missing

When creating a PDF you should always embed your fonts. This ensures that your file will view and print correctly wherever it is opened. InDesign files should be packaged with all fonts (see our How To Guide). Text in Adobe Illustrator files can be converted to outlines (send an unoutlined version as well).

5. Images Missing

InDesign files should be packaged with all images used within them (see our How To Guide). If you are sending us a book manuscript in MS Word with illustrations or photos, contact us as early as possible to discuss the best way to put your file together.

6. Incomplete or Corrupt Files

Before sending, check to see if your file will open correctly and has all necessary pages, images, etc. If you've saved a PDF, open it and check that it looks as it should.

7. Wrong Colour Profile Used

Commercial digital printers print with Cyan, Magenta, Yellow and Black (CMYK). Computer monitors display colour as Red, Green and Blue (RGB). MS Word uses the RGB profile, so expect to see a colour change when your document is printed. This is one reason why Word is unsuitable for book layout. If using Adobe InDesign, use CMYK, and be sure to check that black text is black only (importing text from Word can result in 4 colour black).

8. B&W Images Not B&W

Check your black and white images are actually saved as greyscale and not colour. If they are not, they will print with some colour – at extra cost to you.

9. Wrong Document Size

The default page size in MS Word and Publisher is US Letter, whereas the NZ standard size is A4 (210 x 297mm). Be sure to set your document to the correct page size from the beginning.

10. Spelling Errors

No matter how small or simple your document is, don't forget to proofread it carefully before sending. When designing, it is easy to focus on the layout and overlook the actual content.

If you have any questions about creating your artwork, please contact us on 03 547 2972.