Electronic file release checklist

This document is intended to serve as a general list of things to review and verify prior to releasing electronic files to vendors for outside services. For the best results you should always consult your vendor and adjust this checklist to their specific needs.

From the beginning think about the end. Building files correctly from the start will go a long way towards reducing the chance for errors.

Approvals

- Have files been proofed internally?
- Are files approved for release?

Document

- Review the document size and setup to ensure settings are correct
- Check the page count removing any unneeded pages in the document
- Check that the pagination is correct
- Check bleeds are used as needed (minimum of 1/8" if needed)
- Check alignment of elements, copy, fonts, text reflows, font substitutions
- Check line weights for consistency throughout the document
- Check the values of any screens throughout the document
- Check the document's colors. Remove unused colors, verify color's name as well as process or spot
- Verify rich or super black formula to vendor standards (Varies by vendor)
- Die, fold, trim, perf lines or varnishes should be named as such and indicated as a spot color
- Dies folds, perfs etc on layers within the document
- Verify any specialties are indicated correctly, die cuts, foils, embosses etc
- Check placed files to make sure all are placed at 100% and oriented correctly
- Check picture boxes to ensure no light leaks or improperly cropped images
- Remove any items on the pasteboard such as; unused text, art or line work, images, etc.
- Don't use boxes filled with white or other colors to mask or hide other elements
- Verify and label non-printing areas
- Check crossovers alignments and document's gutters
- Clearly name and organize document's layers
- Check all text formatting for consistency; point size, leading, tracking, paragraph spacing, etc.
- Run spell check, fix errors, run spell check again
- Visually review to ensure no text reflowed due to spell check corrections

Fonts

- Check that fonts are included for the document and any supporting or embedded files.
- Convert fonts to paths only as needed, and be sure to save an editable copy of the file.
- Collect all fonts used and supply with electronic files.
- Do not use effects such as bold/italics but rather use the correct version of the font.

dcs™ DAYTON CREATIVE SYNDICATE

Electronic file release checklist

Linked raster and vector files

Raster files

- Collect images included within your document
- Check all images to make sure files are saved to the correct color mode; CMYK, grey-scale, etc.
- Check colors and channels in duo, tri or quad tones or DCS2 files are named correctly
- Check all image's resolution to confirm final output resolution (final output is the size when output @ 100%) Check with vendor. A general rule 300 dpi for print and 150 dpi for big color or large format processes
- LZW compression should be turned off when saving tiffs
- Remove any unused masks or channels
- Check clipping paths on images which may have been outlined
- Check image for color and content
- Keep a layered prep file for images that were layered or composited together
- Check overly dark areas to make sure that total ink densities in those areas are not higher than they should be (a total ink density of 305 is the top end)
- Be sure your image includes a minimum of 1/8" of bleed if needed

Vector files

- For logos and other art files you may want to convert text to paths or check for embedded fonts
- Check that colors are named correctly and match documents color name
- Remove unused colors, verify color name as well as process or spot within the vector file
- Check for embedded images
- Remove any stray points, unused masks, or items placed on the artboard
- Check that each art file is placed individually rather than multiple within a single eps cropped differently
- Check gradients to make sure correct colors are used

Items to provide for outside service

- Provide a complete set of color printouts or working comp to scale. Write the putput percentage on prints
- Label die cuts, perfs, folds, embosses, foils or any areas that need special attention
- Printed separations of any spot colors or varnishes used in the document
- Pagination diagram if needed
- A copy of the vendors estimate or a supplied print specifications sheet that provides, size, colors, stocks, file names, fonts and your contact info
- Purchase order (if applicable)
- Files on industry standard medium
- Printed disc directories for all media supplied
- Previously printed samples that may be used to match color or look
- Any additional samples that can be referenced

Have another person review your work.

It's always best to have a second person review your files following the same check list. This helps to put a set of fresh eyes on your project that might help to catch things you've missed.