

How to Prepare Files for **Commercial Printing**



QUICK CHECK

- ❑ **Size & Bleed:** Your file is sized correctly with a 0.125" bleed on all sides. **PAGE 3**
- ❑ **Fonts:** All fonts are converted to outlines or embedded in the final file. **PAGE 3**
- ❑ **Color:** Your document is set to CMYK, and unused spot colors are deleted. **PAGES 4-5**
- ❑ **Images:** All images are at least 300 DPI at actual size. **PAGE 6**
- ❑ **File Export:** Your final, print-ready file is correctly exported as a high-quality PDF and packaged for output. **PAGES 7-9**

BONUS: Tips for bindings, pocket folders & dielines, varnish & embellishments. **PAGES 10-13**

When creating a project, whether it be an entire book or a simple newsletter, you can save yourself time and money if you adhere to a few simple guidelines.

Application Guidelines

- Use Adobe InDesign for page layout. This program is designed and perfected for commercial printing.
- Refrain from using Microsoft Word to produce files for commercial print. It has many of the same features as a desktop publishing application but is not compatible with commercial printing processes.
- DO NOT create multi-page documents in art programs such as Adobe Illustrator and Photoshop.



Document Size & Bleed

A bleed is printed content that extends beyond the trimmed edge of your final printed piece.

- Always build your file to the final trim size, then add bleed settings in InDesign.
- Do not create oversize pages or manually add crop marks.
- The bleed should be 0.25" larger than the trim size (0.125" on all sides).
- Extend any background colors, images, or elements that touch the edge all the way into the bleed area.

See pages 10-11 for additional set up instructions based on binding method.

Why this matters:

If there is no bleed built into your file, you may have a small white space around the cut edge.

Content & Alignment

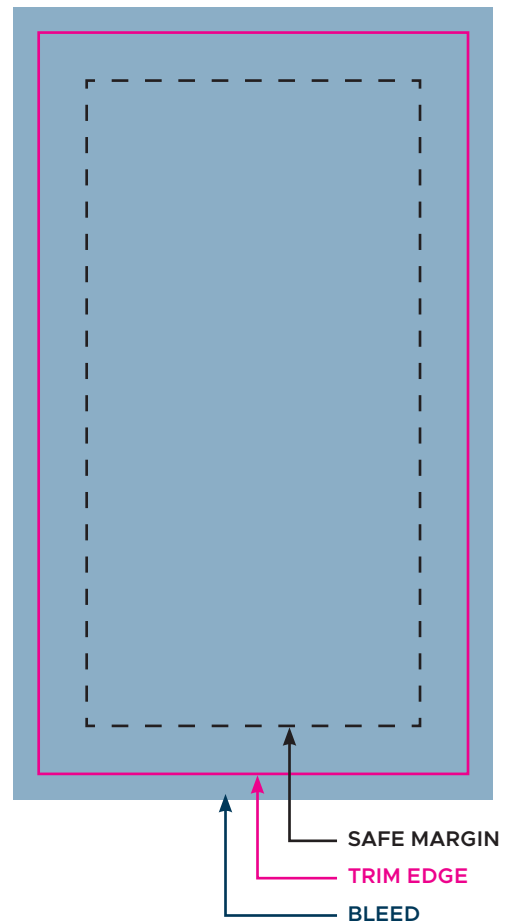
- Safe Margins: Keep all important elements (text, logos, folios, contact info) at least 0.25" inside the trim edge.
- This "safe zone" ensures nothing important gets cut off during finishing.
- Use X/Y coordinates when designing your project

It is important to position elements of your design using X and Y coordinates to ensure that everything is in the correct position and that there are no "leaks" between elements. It is crucial that elements are placed in the proper position (especially in multi-panel designs where folds are important) and not just by what looks good to the eye.

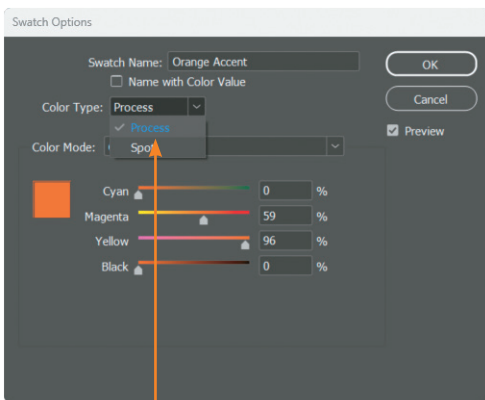
Fonts

- Supply ALL of the fonts used to create your project, including the fonts used to create EPS graphics.
- Use the actual font instead of using the style menu.

As an example, use Helvetica Bold instead of using plain Helvetica and stylizing it bold from the style menu in the application.



4 COLOR SETTINGS



CONVERT SPOT COLORS
TO PROCESS

Color Settings

Process color is the combination of four colors (Cyan, Magenta, Yellow and Black - CMYK) that printers use for full color printing.

Spot colors (such as PMS colors) are pre-mixed inks used when exact color matching is required.

Why this matters:

Unintended spot colors can cause printing errors, undesired results or additional charges.

Process Color (CMYK)

If your project does NOT require spot colors:

- Convert all spot colors to process (CMYK) colors before sending files. This can be done by:
 - ▶ Opening the Swatches panel
 - ▶ Selecting the spot color
 - ▶ Open “Swatch Options”
 - ▶ Changing the color type from Spot to Process (CMYK)
- **Adobe Illustrator:** Make sure the document is not RGB. Go to File > Document Color Mode > CMYK.

Spot Color

- Always set up files using consistent color names.

Pantone 186, Pantone 186CVC, Pantone 186CVU and Pantone 186CV are all the same color. Because of the different names, a plate would be generated for each color.

Additional Color Notes

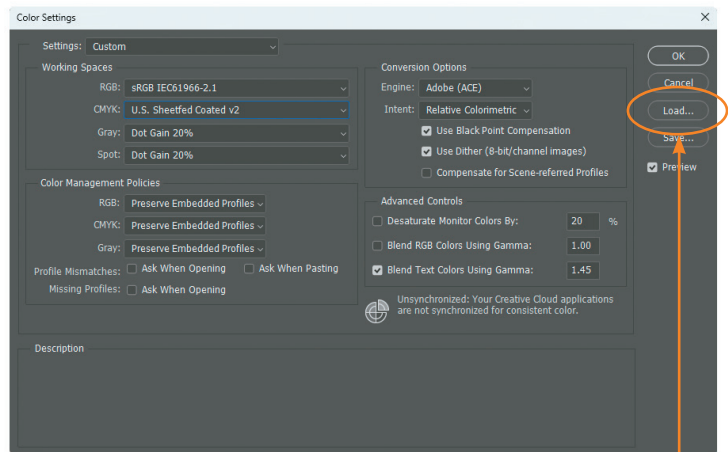
- Remember to delete all unused colors that show up in your palette, in order to avoid questions about which colors are to be output.
- Maximum ink coverage for our presses is 340%.
- DO NOT use RGB builds for colors.
- DO NOT use “Registration” (100C 100M 100Y 100K) for any black elements within the design.
- Rich Black: Our presses have been optimized for the following rich black formula: 40C 40M 30Y 100K

Large black areas/elements should have underlying cyan, magenta, and yellow to ensure a better black reproduction. In your swatches palette, create a new process swatch called Rich Black and use the above color measurements.

Advanced Color Settings

Prestige has preset color settings for Photoshop that optimize the conversion of RGB to CMYK. You can request this file by emailing prepress@prestigecolor.com.

- Open Adobe Photoshop:
 - ▶ Go to the Edit Menu, select “Color Settings”.
 - ▶ Click the “Load” button.
 - ▶ Open “Swatch Options”.
 - ▶ Navigate to where you saved “Prestige.CSF” and click “Load”.
 - ▶ Click “Ok”.

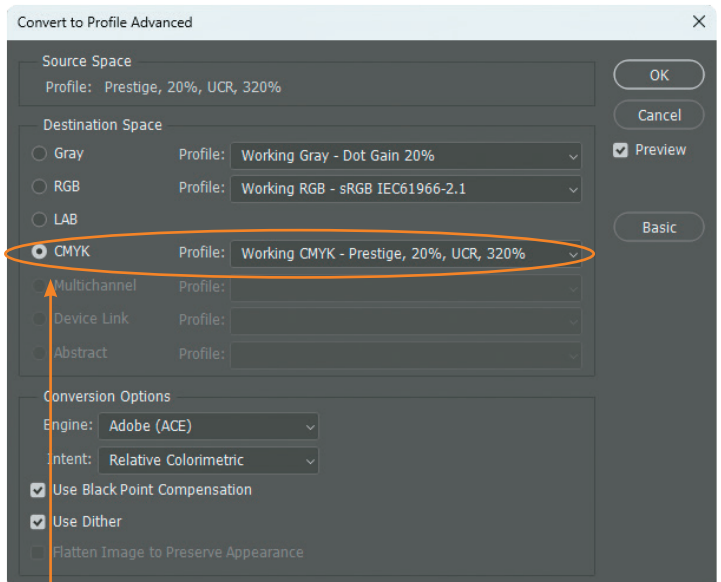


COLOR SETTINGS > LOAD

Advanced Color Conversion

Once the color settings are loaded, you can use them to convert RGB images.

- Open your image in Adobe Photoshop:
 - ▶ Go to the Edit Menu, select “Convert to Profile”.
 - ▶ Make sure that CMYK is selected, with the Prestige profile.
 - ▶ Click “Ok”.



CMYK & PRESTIGE PROFILE



HIGH RESOLUTION



LOW RESOLUTION

Image Resolution & Quality

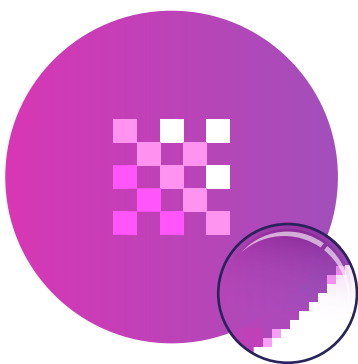
- Ensure all images are the right DPI (300 or higher) at final size for sharp print quality. When in doubt, always choose the highest quality file possible.
- Use vector for text, drawings and logos when possible.

Why this matters:

Low-resolution images may appear blurry or pixelated.

Additional Image Notes

- Placed photographs should not be reduced less than 75% or enlarged more than 125%. Use Photoshop to enlarge or reduce images before they are placed into your document.
- Don't embed art or photos in your document.
Adobe Illustrator: If you save your art as an EPS, uncheck the "Include Linked Files" in the options window.



RASTER GRAPHICS

Raster images are made up of millions of tiny, colored squares called pixels.

Scalability: Poor. Because they are locked to a fixed grid, enlarging a raster image forces the pixels to stretch, resulting in blurriness and pixelation.

Best Uses: Photos, web graphics, and artwork with complex shading or gradients.

Formats: JPEG, PNG, GIF, TIFF.



VECTOR GRAPHICS

Vector graphics are built using mathematical equations, points, lines, and curves.

Scalability: Infinite. Because it is math-based, you can scale a vector graphic down to fit a business card or stretch it to the size of a billboard without any loss of quality or sharpness.

Best Uses: Logos, crisp line art, and typography.

Formats: SVG, AI, EPS, PDF.

When to Use Each:

Use **raster** when you need rich colors and intricate detail (like photos).

Use **vector** when you need graphics that will be resized frequently and require clean, solid lines (like logos).

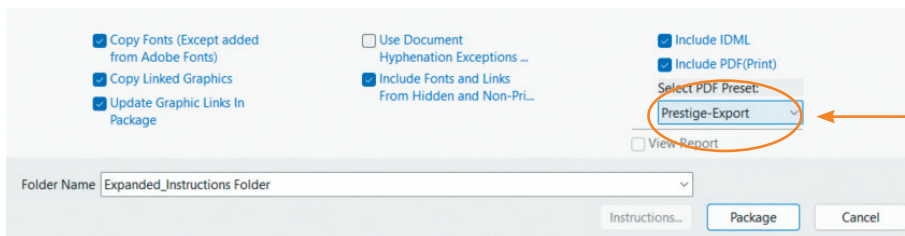
InDesign File Packaging Instructions

When supplying an InDesign document to your printer you will need to package it.

- Before you package the file, make sure that your document is not missing any images or fonts.

Your printer will need all of your images and fonts, so you'll need to include the entire package not just the Indd file.

- Go to the top menu and choose File > Package and then choose the "Package" button.
- When packaging, check the boxes shown below.



SEE PAGES 6-7 FOR PDF EXPORT SETTINGS, OR ASK FOR OUR PRE-BUILT PROFILE TO LOAD INTO INDESIGN.

- Zip the entire file and provide that to your printer.

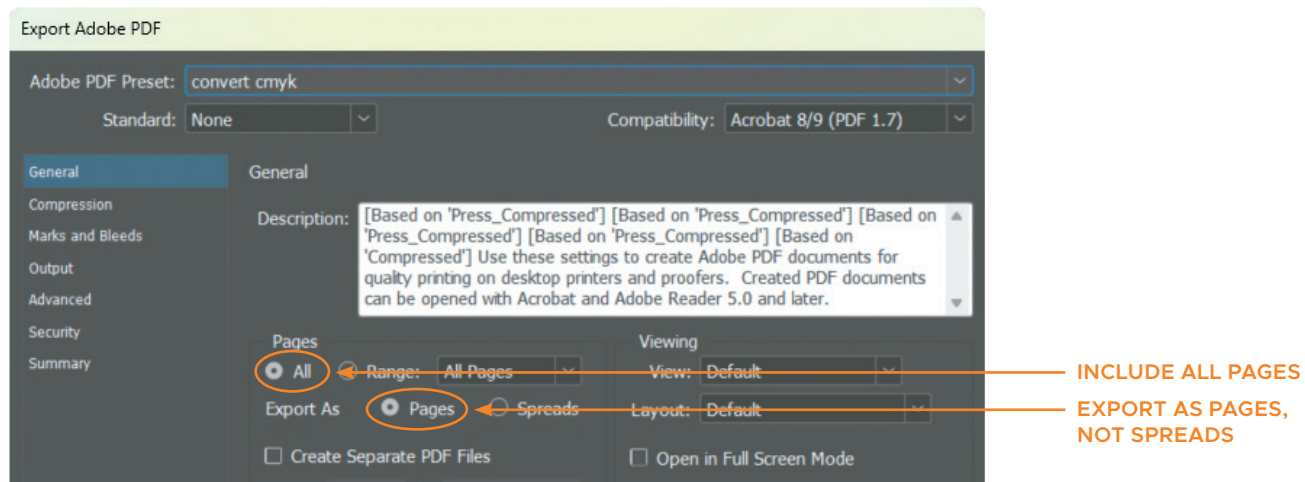
PDF Export Settings

Exporting a PDF from InDesign

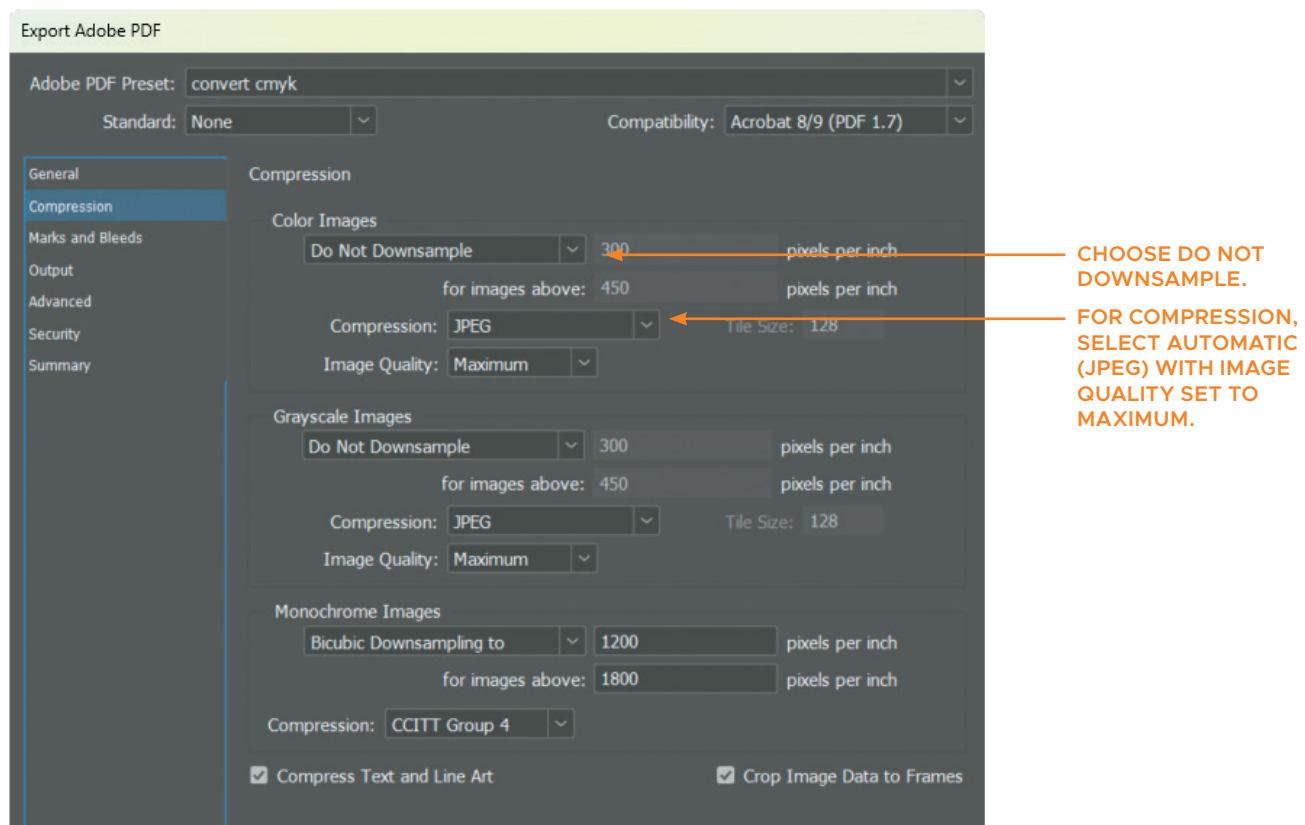
Step 1: Go to the file menu and select “Export”

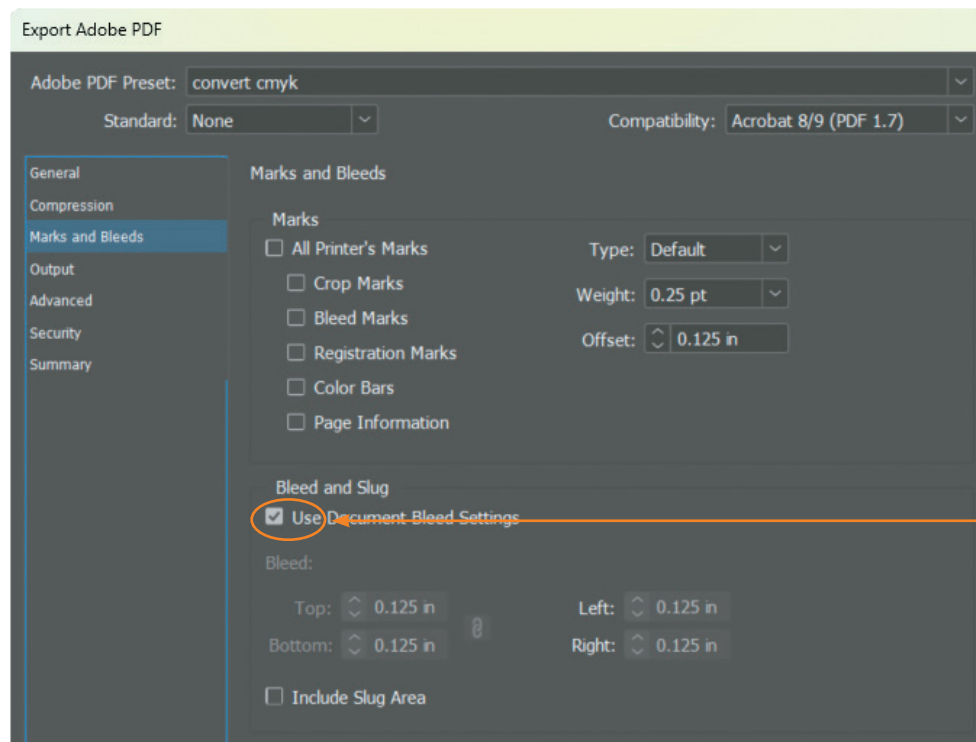
Step 2: Choose where you want to save your PDF and select “Save”

Step 3: Select your PDF preset.



Step 4: Set your compression settings.

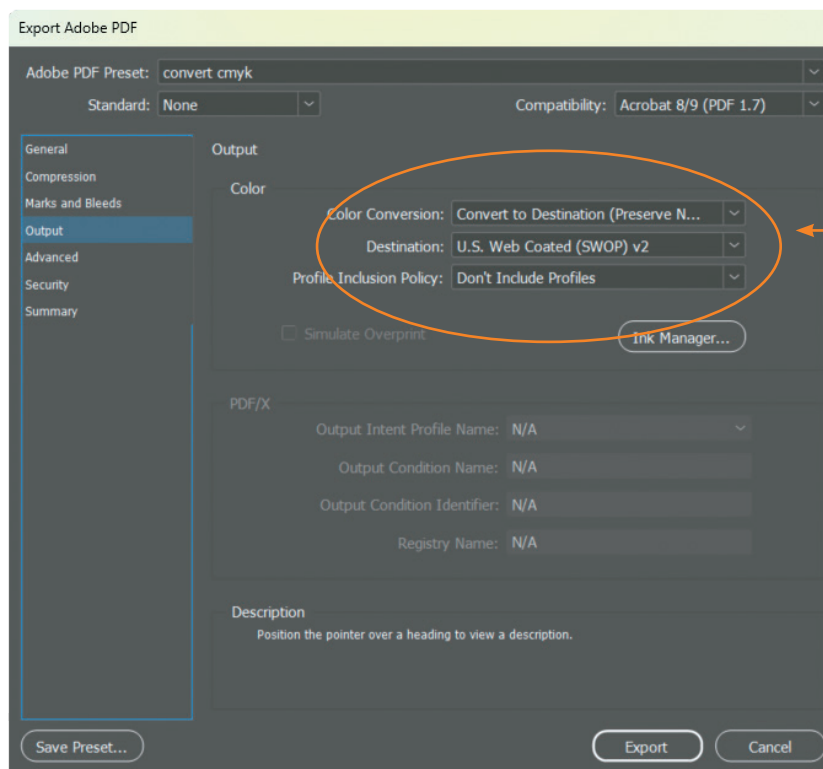


Step 5: Set bleeds.

It is preferred that marks **are not included** in the PDF. However, if you must include crop marks, please be sure that they are offset at .125" so the marks do not show in the final print area.

CHECK USE DOCUMENT BLEED SETTINGS IF BLEED WAS SET UP IN THE DOCUMENT.

OTHERWISE, MANUALLY ENTER .125"

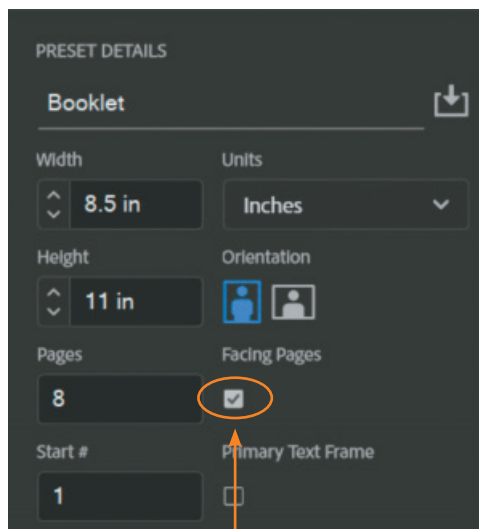
Step 6:
Convert to CMYK and Save.

ALL FILES SHOULD BE SUPPLIED AS CMYK.

USING THIS CONVERSION WILL CONVERT RGB IMAGES IN THE PDF TO CMYK.

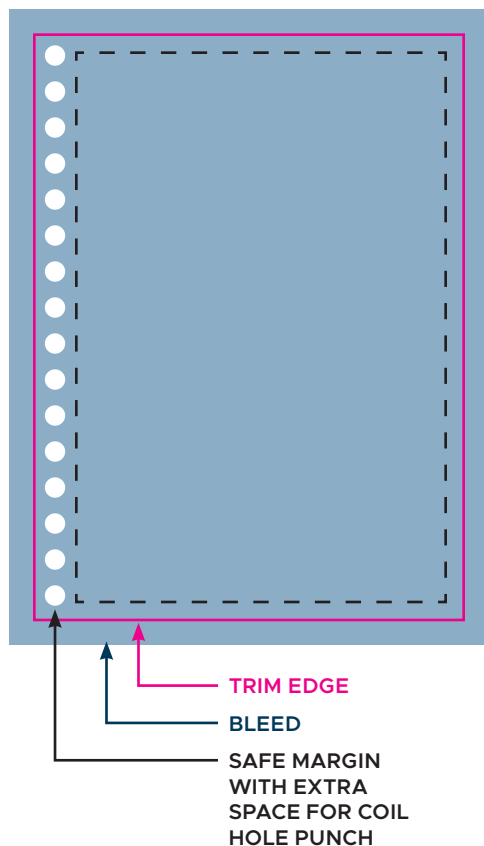
Don't export a PDF with security settings and password protection unless your printer is prepared for and can work with that security.

10 BINDING OPTIONS



CHECK FACING PAGES FOR SADDLE STITCHED BINDING DOCUMENTS.

UNCHECK FOR COIL OR PERFECT BOUND.



Saddle Stitching

Saddle stitching is a simple, cost-effective binding method where folded printed sheets are nested inside one another and stapled through the center fold.

- Choose “Facing Pages” InDesign new document window.
- Saddle stitched books must have 4-page increments.

Note: Saddle stitch books that have a large page count (32-150 pages) should have elements, such as page numbers, placed away from the face trim (outside edge). The inner pages of the book will push outward causing elements close to the trim to be cut off in the final book.

Coil Binding

Coil binding is a document finishing method that uses a durable, continuous coil threaded through punched holes.

- **Do not** choose “Facing Pages” InDesign new document window.
- Coiled books must have 2-page increments.
- The interior margin must have a 1/2” margin with no critical information.

Why this matters:

Setting up the document as “Single Pages” instead of “Facing Pages” allows bleed around all sides of the page. Critical information may get cut off in the hole punched area if it is too close to the inner margin.

Perfect Binding

Perfect binding is a binding method where the pages and cover are glued together at the spine with a strong, flexible thermal adhesive.

- **Do not** choose “Facing Pages” InDesign new document window.
- Perfect bound books must have 2-page increments.
- Use caution when designing perfect bound books with elements that span across the gutter of 2 pages. Objects will not cross over properly due to 1/4” hinge score and 1/4” grind off. Do not place critical information too close to the inner margins or it will get lost in the gutter.

Spot Gloss & Dull Varnish Setup

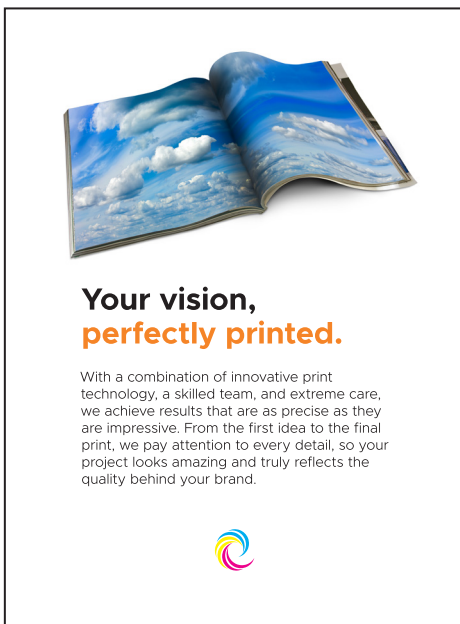
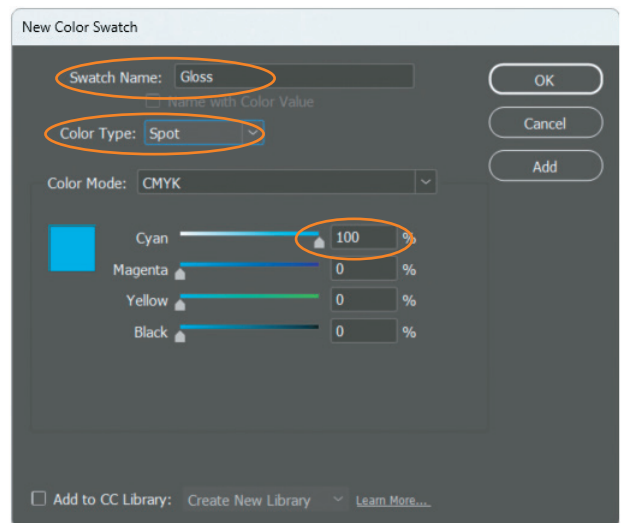
Using spot gloss and dull varnish is a great way to make images pop and create contrast on pages.

- Files that require spot gloss/dull varnish should be supplied as a separate, exact duplicate document or layers in your page layout program.
- Create a spot color called “Gloss” and set to 100% cyan.
- Create a spot color called “Dull” and set to 100% magenta.
- Make sure the varnishes are set to **knock out**.

Embellishment Setup

Areas that will emboss or foil stamp require a die, and should be set up the same way you would a dieline (previous page).

- Embellishments must be **vector**— do not create in Photoshop.
- Embellishments must be a **spot color**—create a spot color and name it “emboss” or “foil”.
- Make sure the embellishment is set to **overprint**.



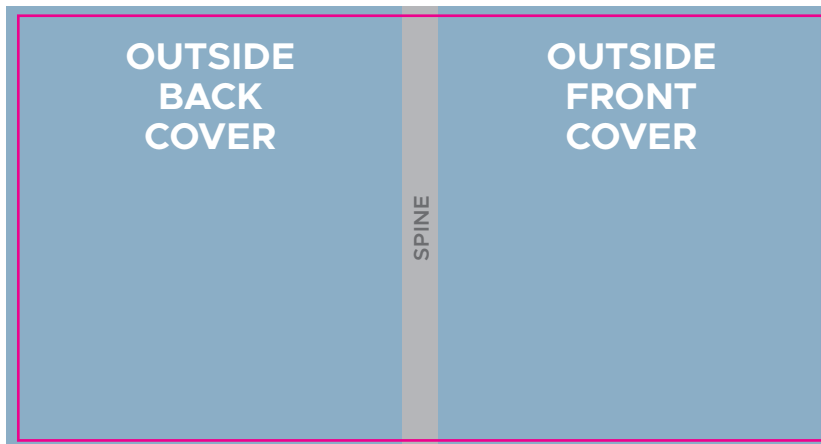
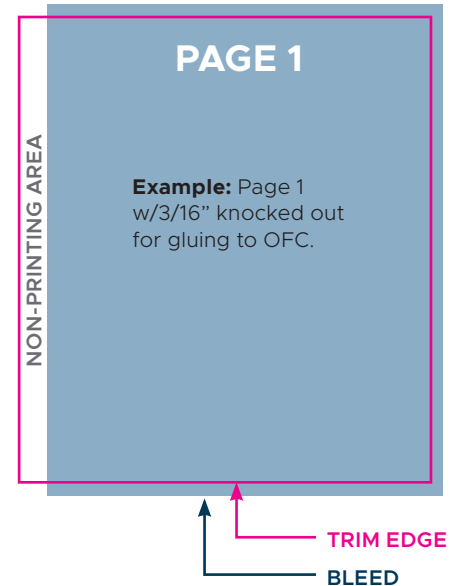
FAR LEFT:
THIS IS AN EXAMPLE OF A COMPLETED DOCUMENT THAT WILL BE SET UP WITH SPOT GLOSS & DULL VARNISHES.

LEFT:
THIS IS AN EXAMPLE OF A COMPLETED VARNISH DOCUMENT. THE CYAN REPRESENTS “GLOSS” AND THE MAGENTA REPRESENTS “DULL”.

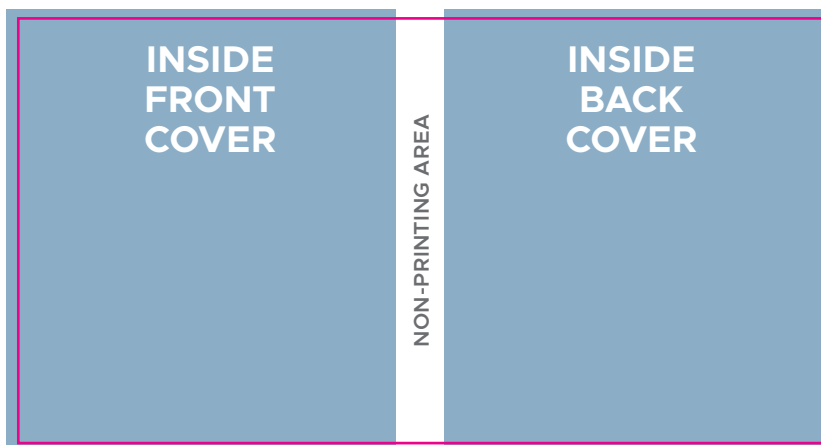
12 PERFECT BOUND SETUPS

Perfect Bound Book Setup

- Perfect bound book cover documents must include the front and back covers and the spine in the overall document size.
For instance, a 8 1/2"x11" book with a 1/2" spine would have a document size of 17 1/2" x11."
- Perfect bound book inside covers have a non-printing area of 3/16" on each side of the spine to accept glue for a 1/4" hinge score.
For instance a book with a 1/2" spine will have a non-printing area (no ink) of 7/8"
- Perfect bound books should not have run-across images/elements. Objects will not crossover properly due to 1/4" hinge score and 1/4" grind-off.
- Perfect bound books should be setup as single pages (not spreads) with 1/8" bleed on all sides.



Example: OFC/OBC of a perfect bound book with a spine. Notice that this is done as 1 page.



Example: IFC/IBC of a perfect bound book with spine. Ink and varnish must be knocked out - 3/16" on either side of the spine as shown.

Knocked out = no ink or varnish
OBC = outside back cover
OFC = inside front cover
IFC = inside front cover
IBC = inside back cover

Pocket Folder Setup

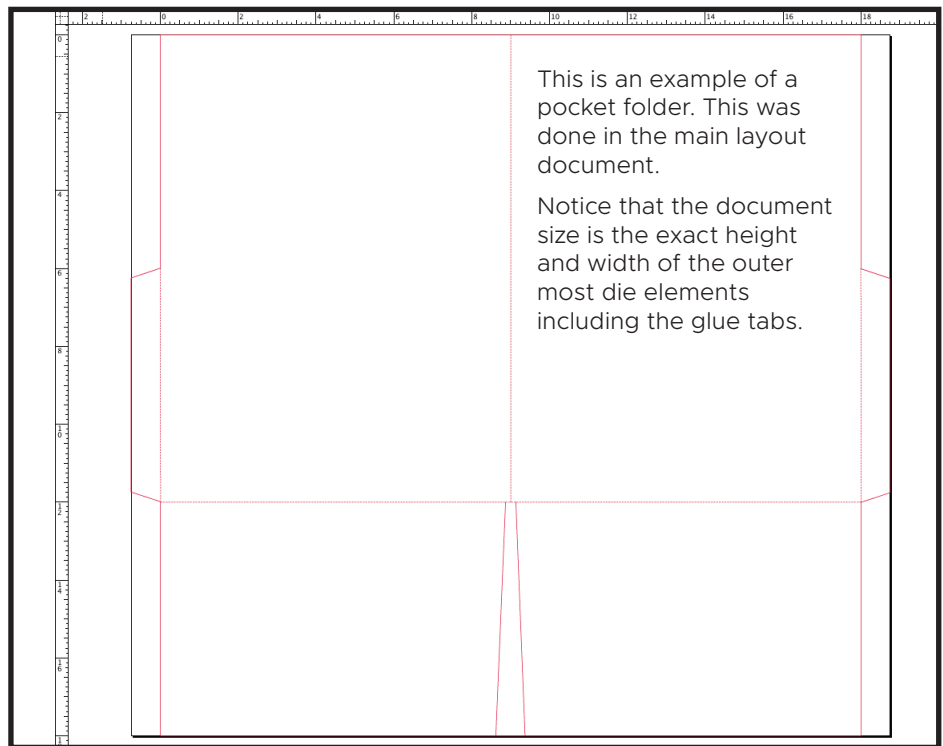
- Pocket folders should be set up on a single page document that includes the front cover, back cover, 3/4" glue tabs and pockets.

For instance, a 9x12 pocket folder with 4" pockets and 3/4" glue tabs should be setup on a 19 1/2" x 16" document.

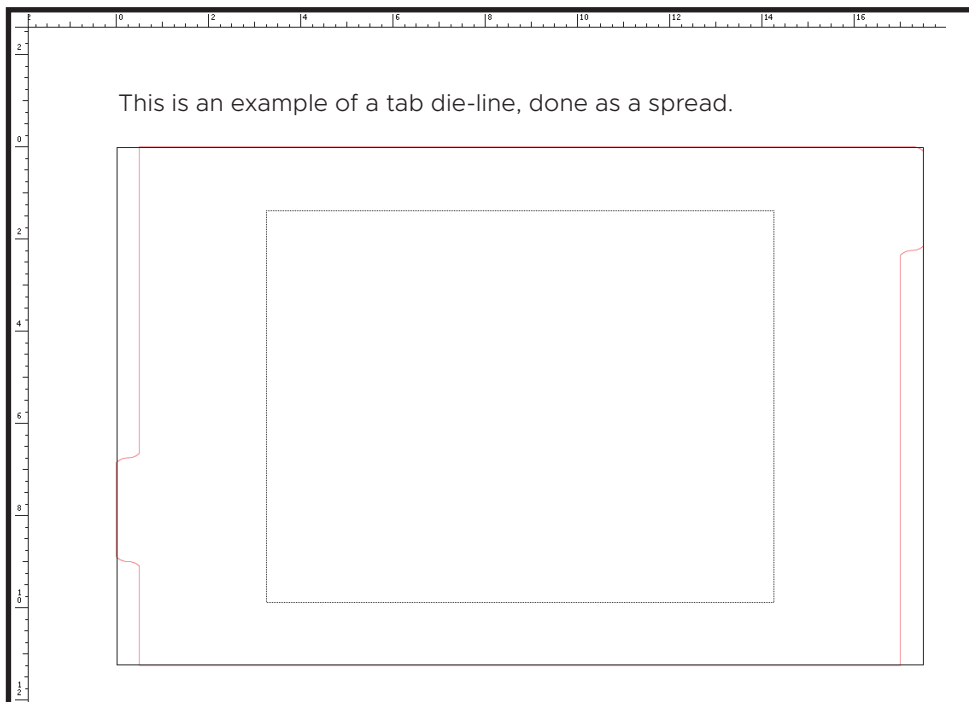
- Glue tabs are placed on the body of the folder, not the pockets.
- Create a dieline with all folds, trims, capacities and glue tabs.

Dieline Setup

- Dielines must be **vector**—do not create in Photoshop.
- Dielines must be a **spot color**—create a spot color and name it "dieline".
- Make sure the dieline is set to **overprint**.



DIELINES CAN BE CREATED DIRECTLY IN THE MAIN DOCUMENT, OR IN ILLUSTRATOR AND PLACED IN THE MAIN DOCUMENT.



SUBMIT A TEST FILE FOR REVIEW PRIOR TO SUBMITTING FINAL FILES. OUR LAYOUT DEPARTMENT CAN REVIEW FOR POSSIBLE PRODUCTION CONCERNS.

Print Solutions That Drive Your Business **FORWARD**



717.392.1711



info@prestigecolor.com



prestigecolor.com