P Preflight Checklist

F **All Preflight Technicians are to utilize this checklist to provide a thorough and consistent inspection of customer files.**

C **The result of this examination will be a detailed Job Problem Report identifying the issues which will require correction.**

Reviewing job as submitted for Preflight:

Carefully review the customer's materials: Do you have:

- ☐ Digital files
- ☐ Non-digital art (slides, illustrations, anything to be scanned)
- ☐ PDF/laser
- ☐ Production Request Form completed by customer

Do you have the following information on the job jacket:

- ☐ Job number & customer name
- ☐ Trim size of job (folded)
- ☐ Name of Salesperson/CSR
- ☐ Bindery method (saddle stitch, perfect bound, etc.)
- ☐ Tentative proof due date
- ☐ Inks to be used— don't forget varnish!

- ☐ Review the job jacket and compare it to the Production Request Form, check for discrepancies. Note any possible problems or sources of confusion on the Job Problem Report.
- ☐ Has the customer signed the copyright disclaimer on the Production Request Form?

Dealing with folders, files and fonts:

- ☐ On your hard disk, create a folder entitled "Job Output".
- ☐ Within the "Job Output" folder, create a "job number—customer name" sub-folder.
- ☐ Write-protect any customer's floppies you may be working with.
- ☐ Copy supplied customer's files to that sub-folder.
- ☐ Visually examine the customer's files. Are files compressed?
- ☐ Within the "job number—customer name" sub-folder, create another sub-folder called "Originals"
- ☐ Check to see if customer included fonts for the job. If so, close all your fonts and activate only the customer's fonts.

Launching the software, opening & preflighting a document:

- ☐ Launch the appropriate page layout program; open the document. Note missing fonts on the job problem report.
- ☐ Check the picture usage for broken links. Update "modified" images, but be very careful! Update images individually, and always click "Show Me", then watch the percentage, X Y coordinates and rotation numbers. If any of these change during the update, note the change on the Job Problem Report.
- ☐ If the files are present but the links are broken, close the document immediately without saving. Combine the page layout document and all the art/image files in a single folder.. Next, open the document again. Now all links should be established (although some may need to be updated). When updating links, first choose "Show Me", then observe each image carefully to see if the position changes.
- ☐ Still missing some image files? Note them on the job problem report.
- ☐ Before proceeding, choose "Save As" from the file menu! When the dialog box appears, add an extension to the name of the file to signify this file is to be used for output (such as ".rfo", or ".sbo"). Save this file in the first level of the customer job folder (outside the folder containing the art and image files).
- ☐ Check the font usage and note any instance of text that has been modified with a "button".
- ☐ Make sure background color of all picture boxes are set to be a color, not "none". Saw tooth effect may occur if the picture box background is set to none. This does not apply to vector graphics, or images with clipping paths.
- ☐ Do images fit picture boxes? Is the aspect ratio equal (same % in both directions)? Mark the percentage of enlargement (or reduction) on the customer's laser proof, directly on or next to the image itself. Note any instances of distorted aspect ratio on the Job Problem Report.
- ☐ Look for images which have been rotated in the page layout program; note any rotation on the laser.
- ☐ Check for page size: does it match customer's and CSR's information?
- ☐ Check folding panels size(s)
- ☐ Check bleeds (standard=1/8"; press stock size may affect amount).

☐ Do repeating elements (such as page numbers and headings) butt and/or align properly? Check the position of master page items on "facing pages" documents, to be certain that left and right page elements align properly.

☐ Save the file, then change to the Finder.

Protect the Unmodified Document

☐ From the Finder, drag the customer's original page layout document into the "originals" sub-folder, so that an unedited copy of that customer's document (with original date of creation) remains untouched.

Preflighting Vector Graphics

View the job's files on your hard drive. Referring to your list of all the linked images, locate all vector graphics and launch the associated programs. View each graphic individually:

☐ Check custom color list to see what special colors are being used (delete any unused colors). Verify color choices against job jacket and output request form, to be certain whether these colors should be special inks or screen builds.

☐ Note the exact names of the special colors created within the illustration applications. Later, use these notes to make certain that the color's name is spelled exactly as it appears in the page layout document

☐ Check trapping: are there elements that may have been incorrectly trapped, or overprints set improperly? Note this on the Job Problem Report.

Preflighting Bitmap Images

Leave the illustration program and return to the Finder. View the job's files on your hard drive. Referring to your list of all the linked images, view each bitmap individually in a bitmap editing program (such as Photoshop):

☐ Before opening each scan, click once on the file name. Photoshop will identify the file format of each image in this dialogue box. Note any instances of "GIF", or "PICT" format on the Job Problem Report.

☐ On all full-color images, check the image color spaces (RGB, CMYK, LAB, Indexed Color, etc.)

☐ On all images, check the actual image resolution (under IMAGE—IMAGE SIZE in Photoshop). Mark this *actual* resolution of the image on the customer's laser proof.

☐ Check to see if the *effective* image resolution is adequate with this calculation: LPI of your output multiplied by 2, then multiplied by the percentage of enlargement/reduction expressed as a decimal (1.22 instead of 122%). The resulting number must be equal to or less than the actual image resolution. If it is not, write it down on the Job Problem Report. Afterwards, mark your initials on the laser inside the image, to signify you've performed all of the above steps on each image.

☐ Were any images not supplied? Any image visible onscreen or on the customer laser should have a corresponding supplied digital file or non-digital artwork (photo, slide or artboard). Document any missing images on the Job Problem Report.

Finishing the preflighting: return to the page layout software

☐ Check color palette to see what colors are being used. Verify these color choices against job jacket and output request form, to be certain whether these colors should be special inks or screen builds.

☐ Check the spelling of special colors in the color palette against your list of spot colors from vector graphics and duotones. Be certain that these spot color names have exactly the same spelling and capitalization in the vector, bitmap and page layout programs. Note any instances of near identical colors (such as Pantone 286 and PMS 286) on the Job Problem Report.

☐ If special inks are to be used, make certain that an appropriate output angle is assigned to each special ink.

☐ Look for potential trapping problems, especially with jobs what print spot and metallic inks.

☐ Check every instance of reverse type or graphics within the document individually. Make certain that the color of reversed elements is set for "paper", not "white" or "knockout."

☐ Is there a separate file for varnish, or does the file include information to generate a varnish plate?

☐ Look for extraneous elements (items that are off the page). Delete them to avoid possible output problems...

☐ Is there ink coverage in glue areas?

☐ Compare every page of the customer's supplied PDF/laser to the on-screen display of the document. Look for any discrepancies, including missing items and text reflow.

Finishing the preflighting

☐ Estimate the amount of time each correction might take to perform—question an experienced prepress technician for advice, if necessary. Estimate the total time required for all corrections at the bottom of the Job Problem Report.

Using a set of estimating guidelines, or software designed to produce accurate estimate, produce an estimate of:

☐ Amount of time needed to output proofs, plates, etc.

☐ Note this information on the Job Problem Report

Complete the Preflight Log

- ☐ Detail the problems found. Provide sufficient explanation of any complicated problems.
- ☐ Suggest methods for overcoming or correcting the problems.
- ☐ Note the location of the job files (which hard drive, which directory).

Clean up, prepare for the next job

- ☐ Close the customer's fonts.
- ☐ Copy all the files to the File Server.
- ☐ Move your local copy of the files to a "Preflight Completed" folder until File Repair is completed.
- ☐ Discuss the contents of the Job Problem Report with the CSR.

Job Problem Report

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Our Preflight analysis of your job has revealed the following problems and/or discrepancies:

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Estimate of total output time: Total estimated correction time:

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