



The Packaging Professor's guide to

Art Prep Basics



We currently use Adobe® Creative Suite® Cloud

To limit excessive art charges, please consider the following guidelines before creating new packaging graphic files:



Just say no to Quark: Avoid using pagination programs (such as Quark Xpress or Page Maker) and generic graphics programs such as CorelDraw: While these are good programs, they are not well suited for packaging layout requirements. Using these programs will require extensive rework of the graphics, and additional art charges. If you are limited to using any of these programs, please consult with our Graphic Designer to resolve any issues.



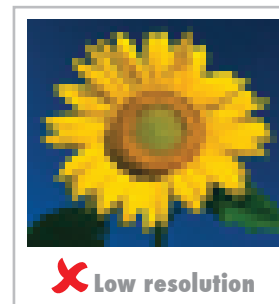
Add some structure to your file: If you are creating new art for an old design, please verify that the display or box structure has not been changed; often structures are revised during production which could effect the placement of your new art. If a new packaging item is currently being designed, please have the structural sample approved before proceeding with the art.



Stay away from the lines: Graphics should be spaced at least 1/4" away from the structural die lines. Shifting occurs on the press, which will cause your design to fall slightly adjacent to the actual box edge. The shift (direction and amount) will vary based upon the production methods. On each panel, create a "margin" around all graphics elements, or bleed the graphics 1/4" past the die line (either into the next panel, or off the edge of the structure).



The right tools for the print job: We most commonly use Illustrator and/or Photoshop files. Vector graphics work best. If you are providing any bitmap images, please make sure that they are no less than 300 dpi at full size, uninterpolated (meaning, don't force it to 300 dpi, you have to start out with a high resolution image). If the placed images are very large, you may want to use a low res copy in the layout file (marked with an FPO), to be replaced before printing.



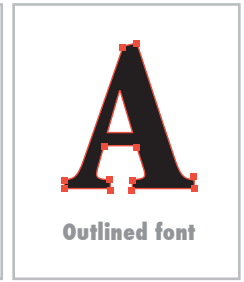
Control your colors: Most files should be saved in a CMYK color mode. Convert multiple spot colors to CMYK for printing practicality. Do not oversaturate process colors (meaning, if you add the CMYK %, the sum must be less than 200%).

If you intend to print with spot colors, please make sure each graphic element has been created using the appropriate color swatch (PMS Coated colors are most common). Using spot colors in bitmap images is more difficult than simply assigning a PMS fill. Please provide a CMYK version of the file and discuss your printing request with our Graphic Designer. If an existing printed sample will be our color target, it is very important to provide that sample with the graphics file.





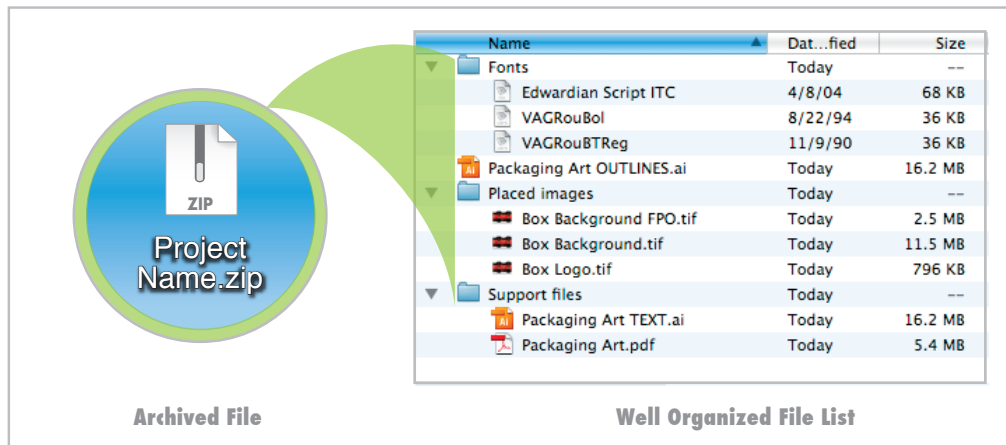
A font in time saves you a dime: It is best to convert any text to outlines. If text has not been outlined it is possible to see a shift in the size, spacing, and form. If there are any possible changes to the verbiage, it is imperative to supply the font files. Ideally, we would prefer to receive two files, one with editable text, and one with outlined text. Please proofread all text carefully. Unless we have created the original files, we are not financially responsible to correct customer supplied typos.



Get out of embedding: Avoid embedding support graphics into your layout files. Always supply the additional support graphics, ensuring the “links” have not been broken (a broken link may be caused by a missing file, renaming a file, or a corrupt file). All support images must be high resolution, based upon the size in the layout file, and saved as CMYK.



Make a list and check it twice: Organize all files so that it is easily understood by someone unfamiliar with your project. All file names should describe contents of the files (such as “box art TEXT.ai” and “box art OUTLINES.ai”; or “background image HRES.tif” and “background image FPO.tif”)



Send it on its way: It is best to burn your files to DVD or CD (we prefer to keep the original copy). Include a full color print out with any disks, and ship the disk Attn: Art Department. We have an FTP site available where you can upload your files, or we can download from your FTP site (please email our art department your FTP address, username and password as well as a low res JPG or PDF for layout reference). When sending files via FTP, it is best to compress several files into one archive file. If the file is less than 5MB, it could easily be emailed.

Please note: It is imperative for you to retain a copy of the original file, especially if you plan on reordering the design, in the distant future. We generally keep files active for one year and archived for up to 3 years.

For Additional information please see the following articles:

Offset Pre-Press Guidelines - Describing advanced file requirements for Offset/ Litho print files.

FTP Instructions - Detailed instructions for file upload or download, via the Dusobox web site.

