



Artwork Preparation Guide

Standards & specifications for print-ready file submission

Crucial Colour Ltd

1.

File Setup

File Format

Submit artwork as **PDF/X-4** for best compatibility with our workflow (Heidelberg Prinect, Screen CTP).

- Ensure all links are embedded and fonts are outlined or embedded

Colour Mode

Use **CMYK** for full-colour work. Convert all RGB elements prior to submission.

- Spot Colours: Clearly name all Pantone or custom spot colours (e.g., "PMS 186 C") and avoid duplicates

Resolution

- Images: Minimum **300 dpi**
- Linework (bitmaps): **1200 dpi**

2.

Document Dimensions & Bleed

- Trim Size: Must match the supplied dieline/template exactly
- Bleed: Minimum **3 mm** beyond all edges
- Safe Zone: Keep critical content **3–5 mm** inside the trim area
- Dieline Layer: Place on a separate layer and set to a non-printing colour (e.g., magenta stroke)

3.

Colour & Ink Management

White Ink

Clearly label any areas requiring white ink, especially on transparent or kraft substrates.

Overprinting

Specify elements requiring overprint (e.g., varnish plates, white knockouts).

Rich Black

Use: **C=60%, M=40%, Y=40%, K=100%**

- Avoid 100% black-only for large areas

Varnish / Emboss / Deboss / Foil

- Create as separate spot colours
- Name clearly (e.g., "Spot_Varnish", "Emboss")

4.

Fonts & Text

Minimum font sizes:

- **6 pt** for positive text
- **8 pt** for reversed text
- Convert fonts to outlines if not embedding
- Keep text on a separate layer for clarity

5.

Barcodes & Variable Data

Barcodes

- Must be vector-based
- Maintain minimum **3 mm** quiet zone
- Ensure suitable contrast and scannability

Variable Data

- Supply as CSV or Excel file
- Clearly reference fields within the artwork

6.

Layers & Naming

Structure files with clearly defined layers:

- Artwork (CMYK / Spot)
- Dieline
- White Ink
- Varnish / Emboss / Deboss
- Guidelines (non-printing)

7.

Proofing

- **Soft Proofs:** Review on a colour-calibrated monitor
- **Hard Proofs:** Recommended where colour accuracy or dieline alignment is critical

8.

File Submission

File Naming

Use clear file naming convention:

`[JobName]_[Version]_DATE.pdf`

Example: **Crucial_Box_Lid_V1_120624.pdf**

Submit via approved file transfer method. Ensure all required elements are included:

- Final artwork
- Dielines
- Linked assets
- Special instructions

9.

Preflight Checklist

Before submitting, confirm:

- Trim size and bleed match dieline
- Images meet resolution requirements (300 dpi / 1200 dpi)
- CMYK and spot colours are correct
- Fonts are outlined or embedded
- No RGB elements or low-resolution images
- White ink and special effects clearly identified

This guide ensures compatibility with our Heidelberg Prinect and Screen CTP workflow, helping streamline production and minimise delays.

For any questions, contact our Prepress team:

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