

# TWELVE TIPS TO BUILDING BETTER PAGES

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## 1 USE A HIGH END GRAPHICS APPLICATION

Prepare layouts or artwork in a program commercially used in the graphic industry such as QuarkXPress, Illustrator or Photoshop. If you work in CorelDraw or PageMaker, better check with your output people to see if they do, too. Microsoft Word and WordPerfect are not graphics programs, so don't expect everybody to accept them. CorelDraw files don't always easily translate into Quark-friendly graphics, so don't expect a Mac/Quark based studio or service bureau to deal with them free of charge. And don't forget that there are lots of versions of the same program in use, so always make sure that your service bureau takes files in the version you use. For example, QuarkXPress 4 has been around for a while, but there are still incompatibility problems with some versions of imposition software – and other bugs – so many service bureaus prefer to get QuarkXPress 3.3.x files.

## 3 CHECK PAGE GEOMETRY

Always use the measurement palette for positioning. You can use it like a calculator: add, subtract, multiply and divide. There is really no need to eyeball for positioning.

## 2 DELETE UNUSED MASTER PAGES AND BLANK PAGES

Deleting all unused Master Pages and blank pages from your publication will make your file less complex and therefore smaller in size.

## 4 USE NATIVE PROGRAMS TO TRANSFORM GRAPHICS

Bitmaps should be resized and rotated in bitmap programs. If you do that in a page layout program, you not only lose quality, but also increase the file size and printing time. Fine lines in vector graphics may disappear if they are reduced too much. Remember, Quark scales everything proportionally, including line widths.

## 5 CROP GRAPHICS TO SIZE

Making PostScript describe what is invisible can't be a good idea. Crop your image in Photoshop to no bigger than the size you need. Whether in Illustrator, QuarkXPress or any other layout program, do not make little boxes that contain huge hidden images. And likewise, do not step and repeat little boxes with large images.

## 6 DELETE UNUSED COLORS, STYLE SHEETS AND H&Js

To make file sizes smaller, delete all unused colors, style sheets and H&Js from your palettes.

## 7 CREATE CONTROL MARKS PROPERLY

Draw and position crops, registration marks, fold marks, dielines, etc. Use Registration color, or make sure that correct color marks overprint each other so they print on every color plate. Standard width of a control mark is .3 pt. However, if you are designing a multi-page publication like a book, an annual report or a magazine, use the page size as trim size, and leave creating flats (multi-page impositions) to your service bureau.

## 8 DELETE UNUSED FONTS

Ever had fonts showing in your file that weren't used? This happens if you have empty text boxes or empty text paths. In QuarkXPress, Find/Replace fonts, and in Illustrator use the amazing Edit/Path/Cleanup (I use it a lot!). Ghost fonts can also cause PostScript errors on output.

## 9 KEEP PATHS SIMPLE

All paths, whether drawn or traced, should ideally have one point for each change of direction. Tracing with tolerance close to zero results in lines that trace square pixels—which not only produces jaggies, but also slows printing times considerably and can possibly generate PostScript errors.

## 10 USE SELF-DESCRIPTIVE FILE NAMES

Remember that other people may have to understand your file names, so use names which clearly describe the contents of your files. Use the proper file format extension—it makes it visually easier to find files.

WRONG: Business card  
logo3

RIGHT: CAP>Bcard CMYK layout.qxd  
CAP>logoCMYK.eps

## 11 USE PICTURE BOXES FOR SHAPES

In Quark's tool box you have several picture box shapes and one text box shape for a simple reason. Empty picture boxes are smaller in size than text boxes. If you need to draw a shape, always use a picture box.

## 12 PROVIDE HARD COPIES

Always send or fax printouts of both composite output and separations to your output service.