ARTWORK HACKS

A PRINTER'S GUIDE TO CORRECTING CLIENT ARTWORK

IT'S *Easy*

Discover quick tricks to correcting client artwork...

Route One Print
TRADE PRINT MADE EASY

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A PRINTER'S GUIDE TO CORRECTING CLIENT ARTWORK

As we all know, print mistakes can be costly. Not only are they costly in terms of money as customers ask for a refund or a reprint, but they are costly in terms of a company's reputation too.

Errors in print can completely undermine the message as people link this example of carelessness with their impression of the entire brand. Poor reflections on a brand can lead to customers losing faith in its services and, ultimately, have a knock-on effect on future income.

Imagine you're updating the design on a coin and you misspell your own country's name. A mistake like that making it to print is the stuff of nightmares but that's exactly what happened **in Chile in 2008!** It was such a simple mistake but it was humiliating for the country and its government.

Thankfully, many printers state that typos are their client's responsibility to spot. There are however, many other artwork based errors which clients will expect you, their printer, to catch and correct.

From converting colours to CMYK to fixing transparency issues, we'll take you through the most common artwork mistakes you might face. Learn how to quickly identify and fix them so that your clients always leave happy.

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HACK_#01

CONVERTING COLOURS

Using the wrong colour spectrum is a classic mistake that comes up time and again. Here's how you can make sure all your clients' artwork is free of RGB and fully converted to CMYK before you send it to print.
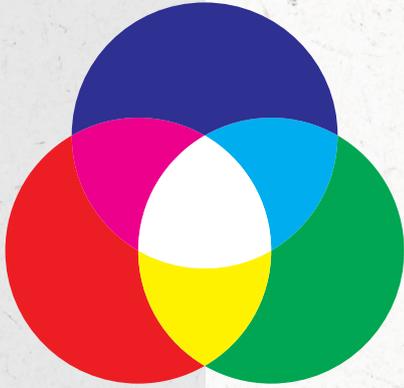
R G B   C O L O U R   M O D E L
+ ADDITIVE +
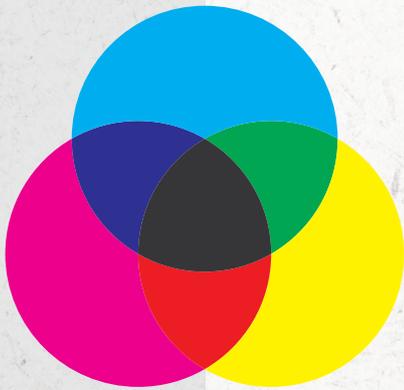
C M Y K   C O L O U R   M O D E L
- SUBTRACTIVE -

WHAT'S THE DIFFERENCE?

The basic difference between these two colour models is that RGB is an **additive system** whereas CMYK is a **subtractive system.** As an additive model, RGB is all about combining different coloured light which is why it can be created on computer screens and other electronic devices.

CMYK, on the other hand, is a subtractive system so it blocks out light by combining physical colouring agents. Think back to your art classes in school and mixing paints to create new colours – that's how CMYK works.

This is important because combining light allows you to create a different range of colours than combining ink does. If you design artwork using RGB colouring, you might be surprised to see your print come out looking differently as the printer struggles to create the same colours using CMYK.

If a client sends you artwork using RGB colours outside the CMYK gamut, there is nothing you can do to recreate those exact same colours. You can, however, convert those colours to as close a match as possible in CMYK.

HOW TO CONVERT RGB TO CMYK*

Using Adobe Photoshop

1. First, check to see if the artwork will be affected. Open the artwork file in Adobe Photoshop, select 'View', and from the drop down menu select 'Gamut Warning'. If there are any RGB colours present in the artwork they should now have turned grey.
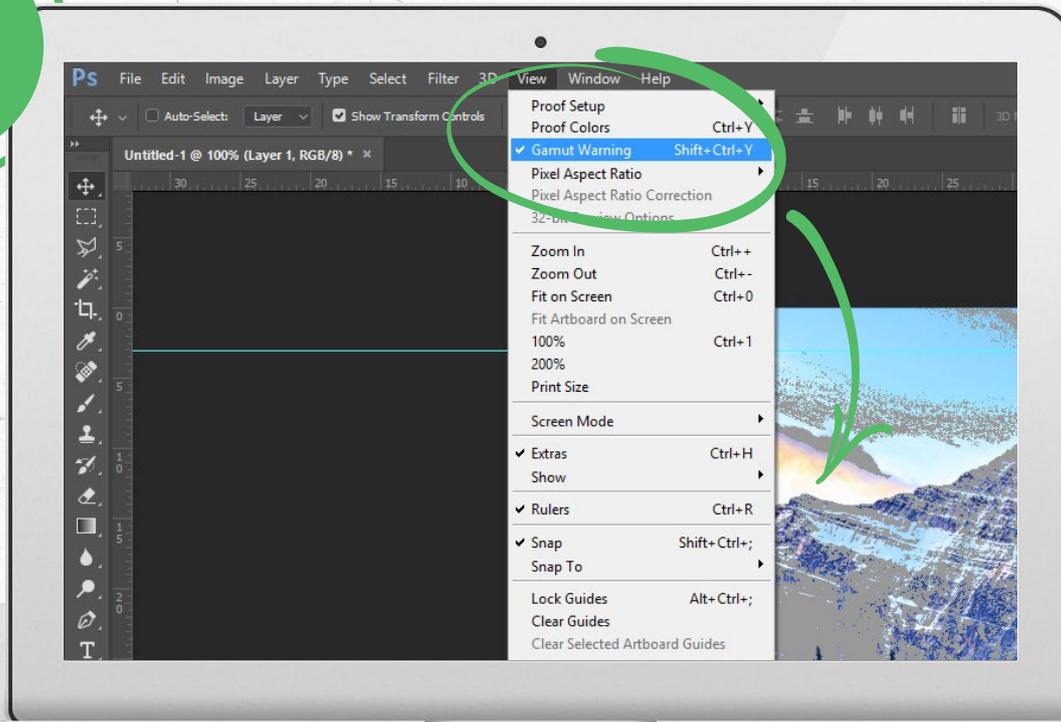
2. To convert the colours to CMYK, open the 'Image' drop down menu, select 'Mode' and then 'CMYK'.

3. Once you've converted the image, you will need to send the artwork back to your client quickly but they don't need to make any alterations themselves. They just need to be aware that this is how their colours are going to turn out when printed so that it's not a surprise when they receive their order.

We also recommend that you set your colour settings to 'Coated FOGRA 39'. This is the colour format we use as it also helps deal with other colour-based issues such as ink coverage. If you can't set your files to Coated FOGRA 39, keep reading to find out how you can fix those other issues.
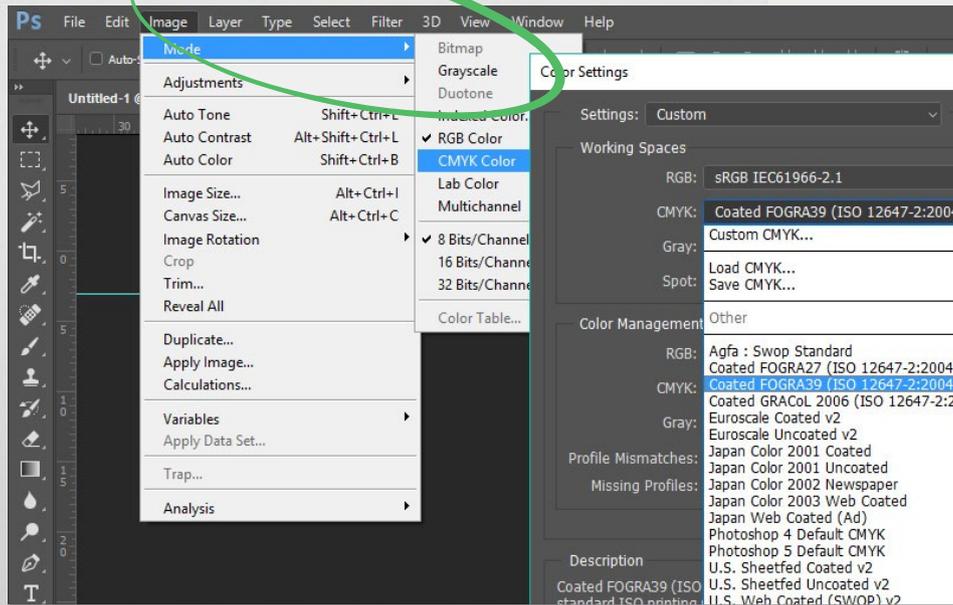
HACK_#02

CHECKING BLACKS

Who knew that one colour could cause such confusion? Surely you just select black from the colour swatch and that's that. Turns out, things are not so simple...

CHECKING BLACKS

76% + **68%** + **67%** + **90%** = **300%**
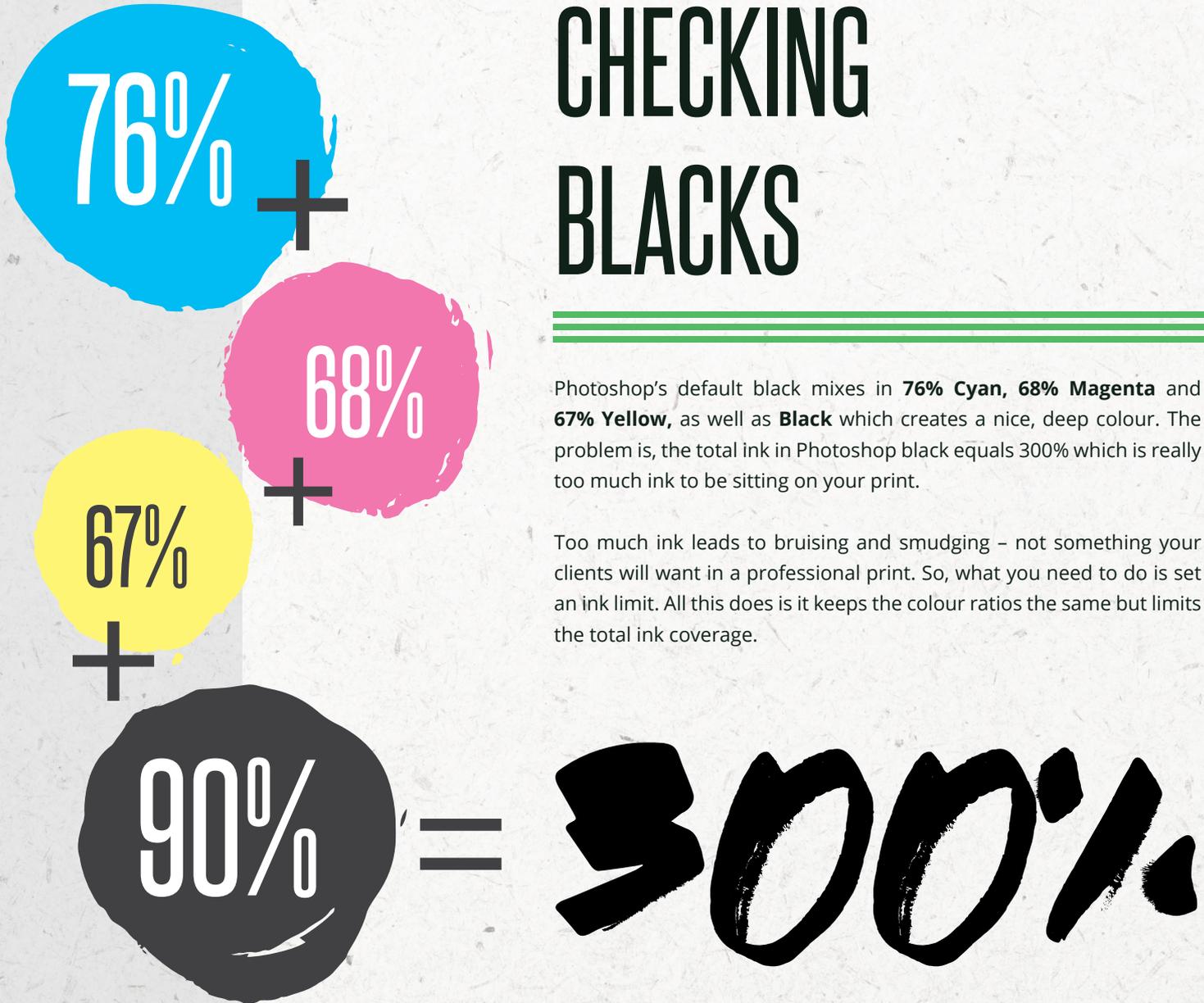
Photoshop's default black mixes in **76% Cyan**, **68% Magenta** and **67% Yellow,** as well as **Black** which creates a nice, deep colour. The problem is, the total ink in Photoshop black equals 300% which is really too much ink to be sitting on your print.

Too much ink leads to bruising and smudging – not something your clients will want in a professional print. So, what you need to do is set an ink limit. All this does is it keeps the colour ratios the same but limits the total ink coverage.

SETTING AN INK LIMIT IN PHOTOSHOP

1. Open the **Edit** drop down menu
2. Go to **Colour Settings**
3. Select **CMYK**
4. Select **Custom CMYK**
5. Set ink limit to **240%** (or whatever limit your printer can handle)

#1
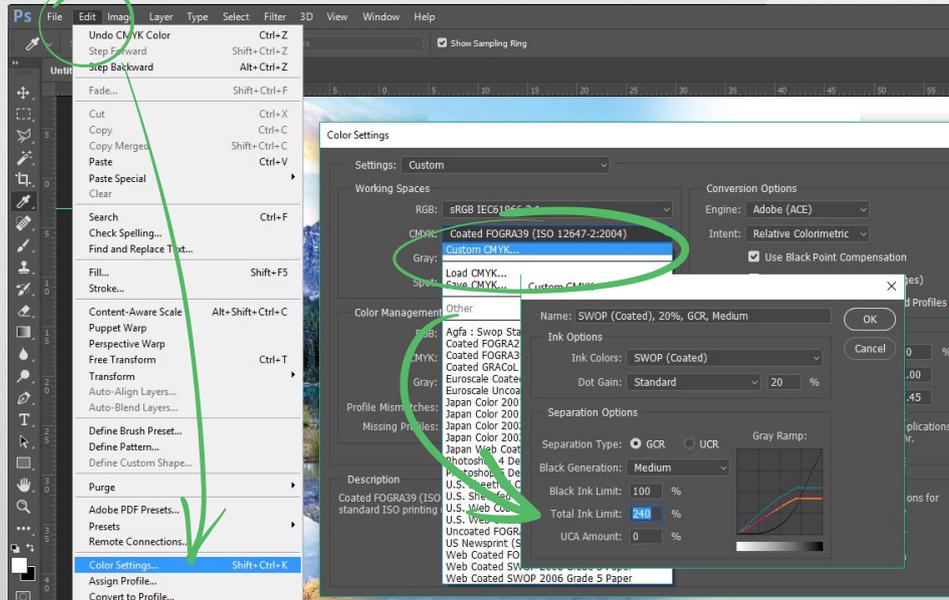
FUTURE PROOFING CLIENT ARTWORK
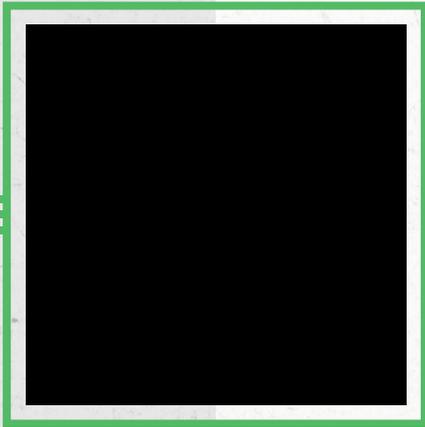
RICH BLACK
C:30 M:30 Y:30 K:100

Setting up an ink limit is a great trick for when clients choose the default black option. It could be useful though to send out some communication to your customers, advising them of the best alternatives. Passing on such advice will demonstrate your expertise and lets your clients know that you're prepared to work with them to make sure their artwork is produced well.

100% CMYK BLACK
The most obvious alternative is to set your colour ratios to 100% black. This would ensure that clients don't have excess ink on their print and fine details will also remain nice and crisp because it only involves applying one layer of ink.

However, for the same reason that 100% black works well for fine details and text, large blocks of 100% black are not so great. Because you don't have the other colours to build up strength, one layer of pure black can actually come out looking slightly faded when printed.

RICH BLACK
For bigger chunks of black, it's okay to layer up some of the other colours too. cClients could inject a little cyan or magenta to create what are known as a 'rich black' *(see left)*.

HACK_#03

FINDING MISSING FONTS

The fonts you choose can completely redefine the way a design feels. Gothic? Delicate? Abstract? So, it's pretty important you make sure those fonts make it to print alright.

FINDING MISSING FONTS

With the number of fonts available in the world these days, it's not surprising that sometimes your clients will use a font that you don't have on your system.

Now, this isn't normally an issue unless your clients have forgotten to embed their fonts. If they have embedded their fonts, the font data is contained within the file itself so the artwork can be sent to anyone and still look the same.

If they've forgotten, the file will start searching for the font data within your own computer's library. So, if you don't have that font, it will have to default to one that you do and the artwork will look completely different.

When this happens, you have a couple of options...
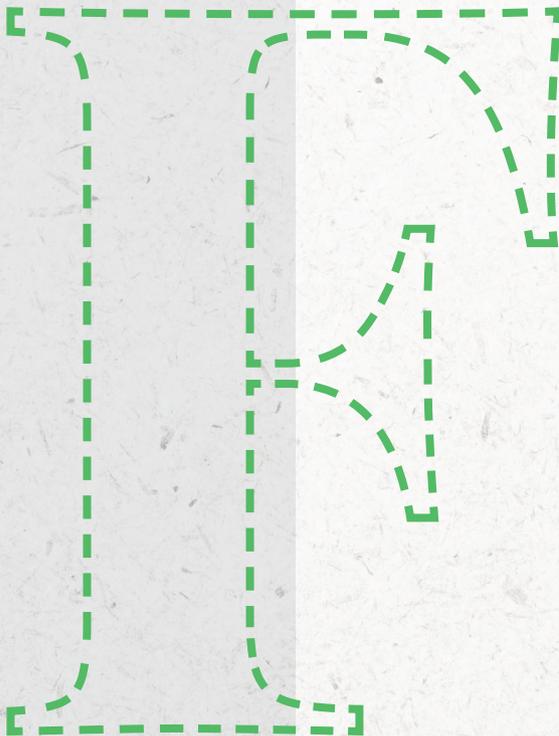
FINDING FONTS ONLINE

You could find and download the font for yourself so that all the font data is there on your computer.

If artwork contains a font that you don't have the data files for, you'll receive a warning message when you open the document. That message should include the name of the font that's missing so you can search for it online and download it for your library.

This option is particularly useful if you do make it within your remit to correct typos.
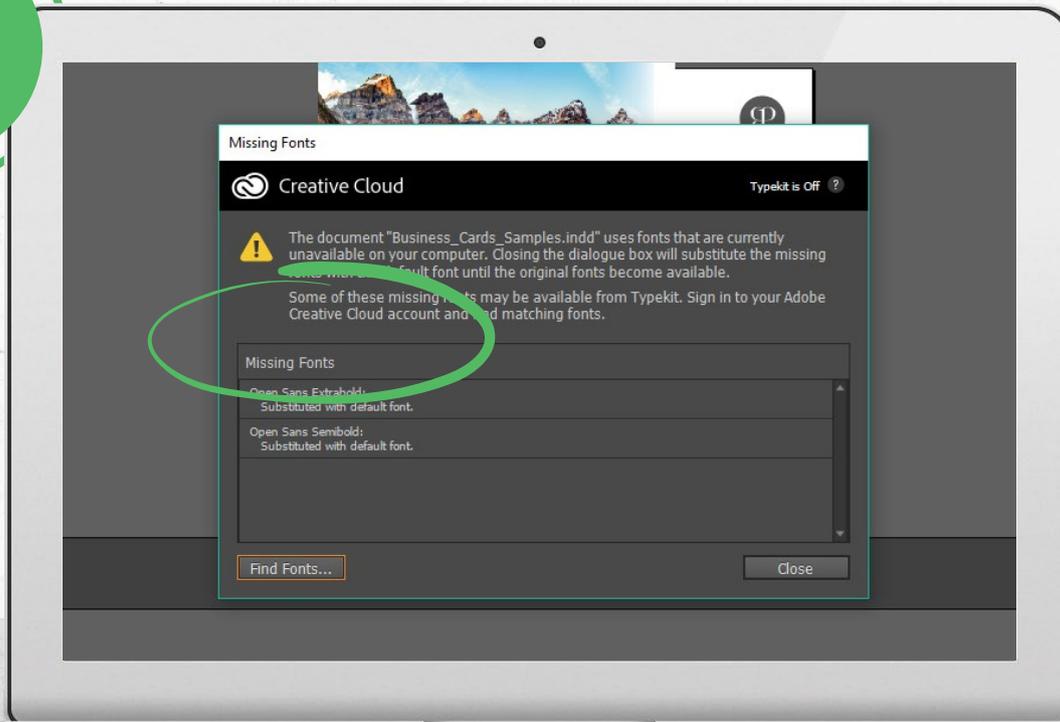
HOW TO EMBED FONTS

Alternatively, you'll need to pass the artwork back to your clients so that they can embed the font themselves.

1.   Exporting a file as a PDF from InDesign should embed your fonts automatically but just to be sure, you can tell your clients to set up their PDF Preset options as follows:
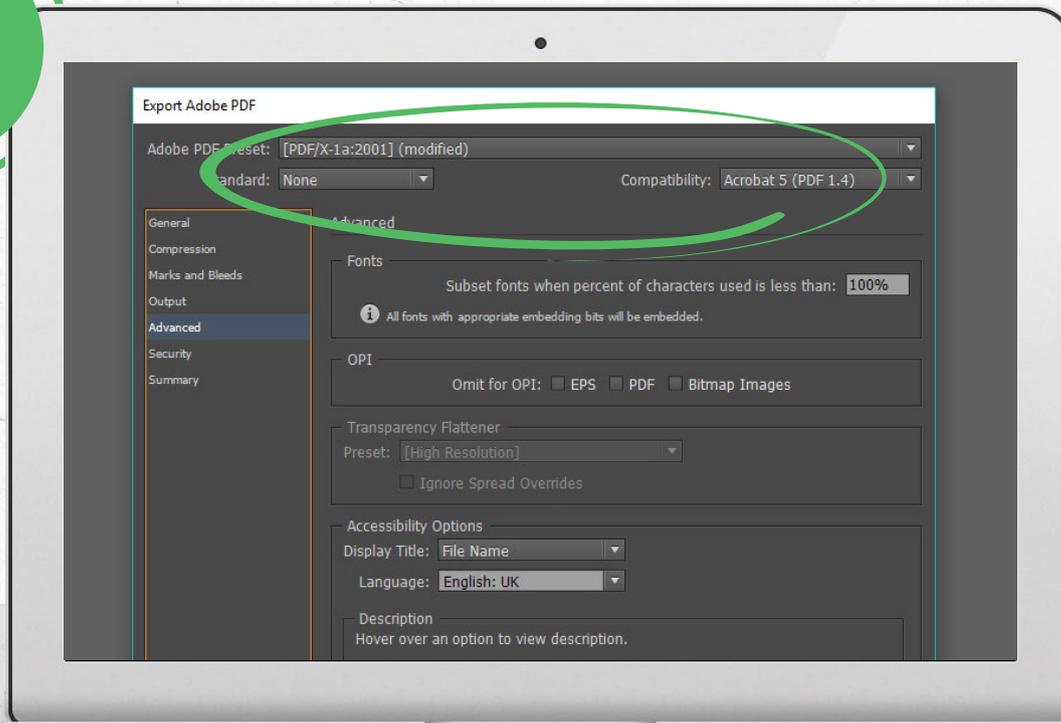
2. If your client works from Photoshop, simply tell them to untick the box asking if they want to preserve editing capabilities when they export to PDF.

#2
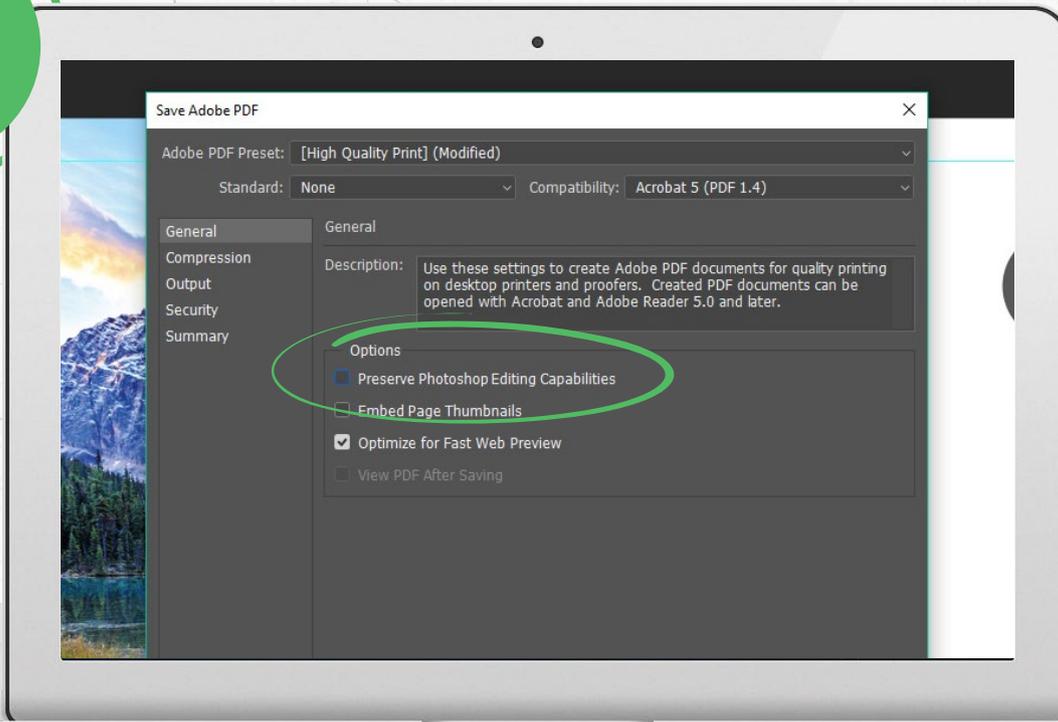
HACK_#04
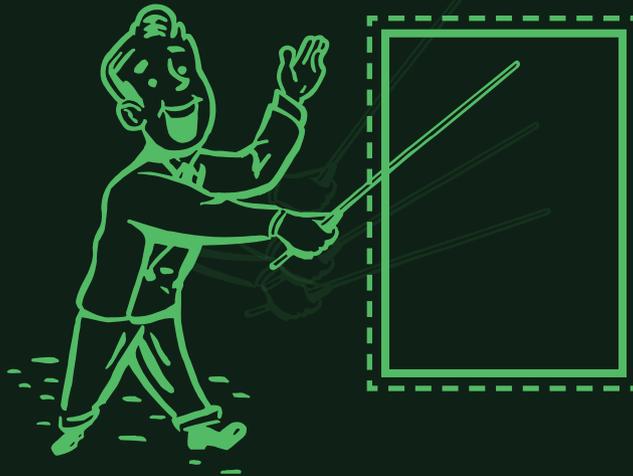
ADDING BLEED

Think of bleed as your print safety net, there to catch any mistakes if the guillotine falls slightly off the artwork border. If you don't have that safety net at the ready, who knows what could happen!

BUSINESS CARD
85mm x 55mm
450gsm Silk
Gloss Laminated
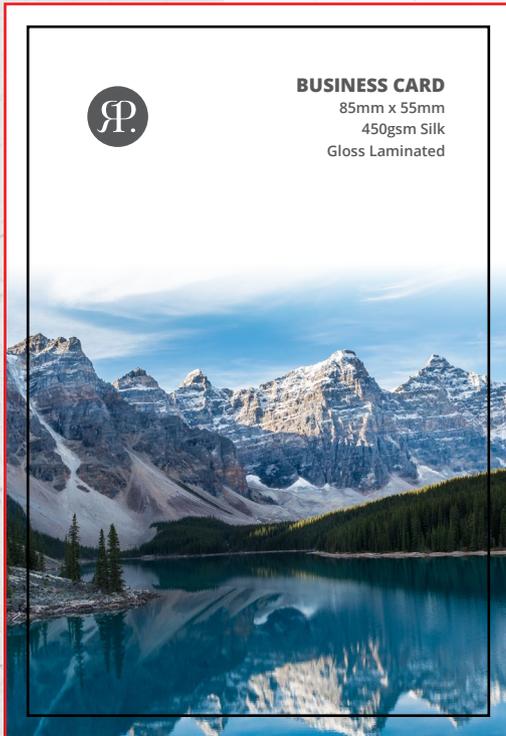
ADDING BLEED

Modern guillotine technology uses automation to make it incredibly accurate but if the blade is out by even 1/4 mm, it can make a noticable difference. Adding bleed to a design protects the artwork against thin white lines appearing at the edges if the guillotine is out by a tiny bit.

How much bleed you want your clients to include is entirely up to you and your printer's guillotine capabilities – the industry standard is 3mm. Whatever you decide, make sure that you pass on that information to your clients so that they know how much to extend their artwork by.

Of course, even if you advise to include bleed, some clients will still forget. Not to worry, though! You can create an artificial bleed using something known as the mirror technique.

THE MIRROR TECHNIQUE

Essentially, the mirror technique involves you reflecting the image outwards on each edge. This allows you to extend the artwork as necessary while making sure that all the artwork still matches up seemlessly. Please note, this does depend on the nature of the artwork but, for many designs, this is a great little hack.

STEP ONE

Create a new InDesign* document with a canvas that has been correctly set up to include bleed and drop your client's artwork into it.
(Go to File > Document Setup > Input Bleed to manage your bleed settings).

Please note, we've used the example of InDesign but the same basic instructions could be done on most design programmes.

#1

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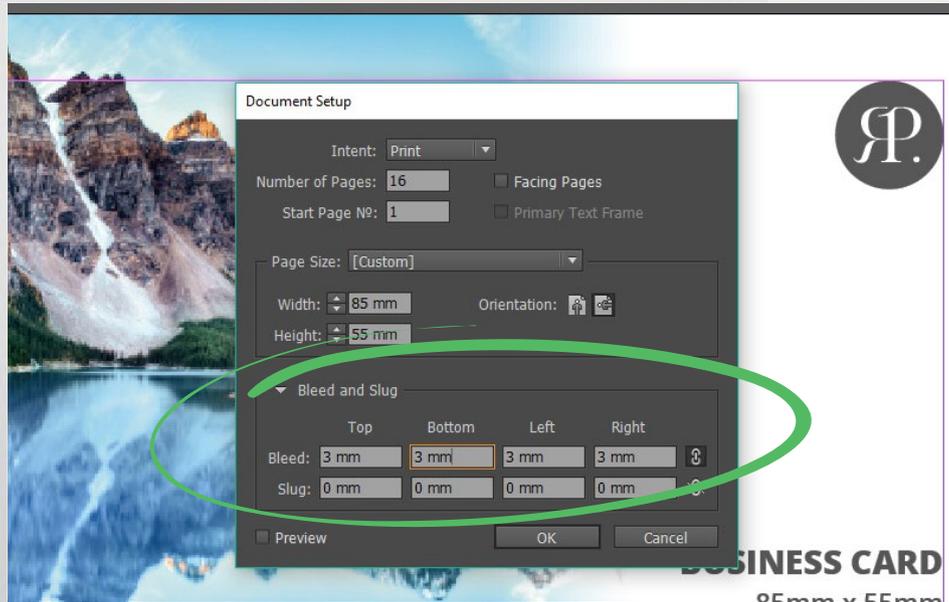
STEP TWO

Create eight copies of the artwork and reflect them as follows;

- 2 copies to be reflected vertically
- 2 copies to be reflected horizontally
- 4 copies to be reflected both vertically *and* horizontally
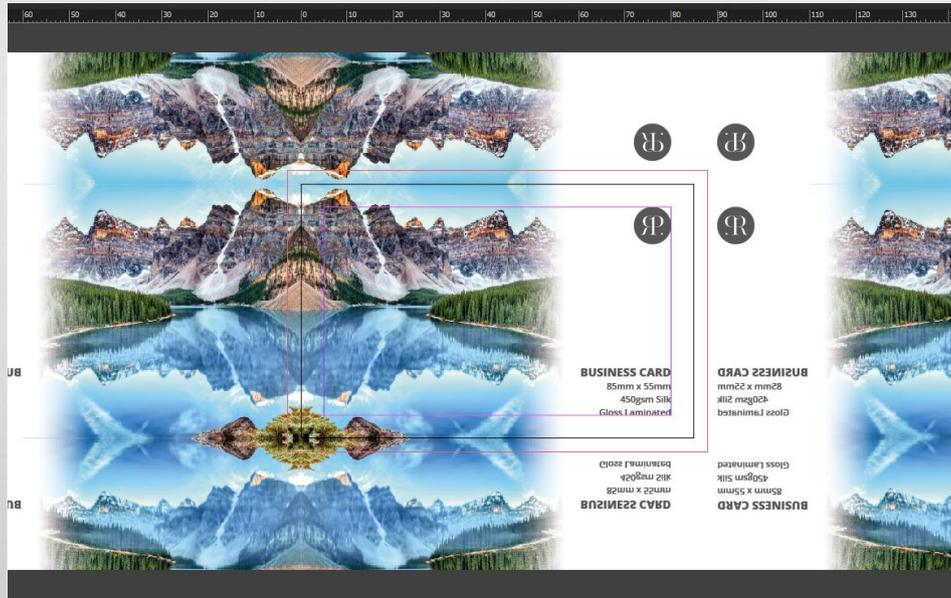
STEP THREE

Place these eight copies around your client's original artwork to create a kind of 3x3 grid of artwork copies. Place the vertically reflected copies above and below the original artwork and the horizontally reflected copies on either side. Finally, place the doubly reflected copies in the remaining corners.

STEP FOUR

Crop any excess artwork from the copies beyond the bleed line, and you're done!

This technique can also prove useful when clients forget to adhere to the recommended 3mm safety zone to keep important info from being cut off.

To ensure that no important information gets accidentally trimmed, you can shrink their artwork down to just the safety zone and use the mirror technique to extend the artwork out again. This isn't always possible as it depends on the nature of the artwork, but it can be helpful.

#4

BUSINESS CARD
85mm x 55mm
450gsm Silk
Gloss Laminated

HACK_#05

FIXING TRANSPARENCY ISSUES

*Transparent. **/traːnˈspar(ə)nt/** Adjective (of a material or article). Allowing light to pass through so that objects behind can be distinctly seen. **(OED)***

FIXING TRANSPARENCY ISSUES

In life, transparent objects include coloured plastic, tinted glass, and sheer fabric. In graphic design, transparency is pretty similar – it refers to design elements which allow you to fully, or partially, see the objects behind it.

Your clients could be using a number of transparency effects in their work – from drop shadows, to transparent backgrounds. It's vital that you deal with transparency correctly because getting it wrong can have disastrous effects on the final print.

WHAT HAPPENS WHEN TRANSPARENCY GOES WRONG?

If you forget to take care of transparencies before sending a file to print, you could be met with some very frustrating results.

For example, an element of the design might have a transparent background – so that it shows the background behind it. However, when printed, it appears within a white square, having blocked out the background.

FLATTENING ARTWORK

Before you do anything, save a working version of the file. Flattening your file will take care of transparency issues but it also means it's no longer editable. So, just in case, you're going to want to make sure you have an editable version around.

WITHOUT TRANSPARENCY

ADOBE PHOTOSHOP

1. Open the **Layer** drop down menu and select **Flatten Image.**
2. Save file under a different name to your working file.
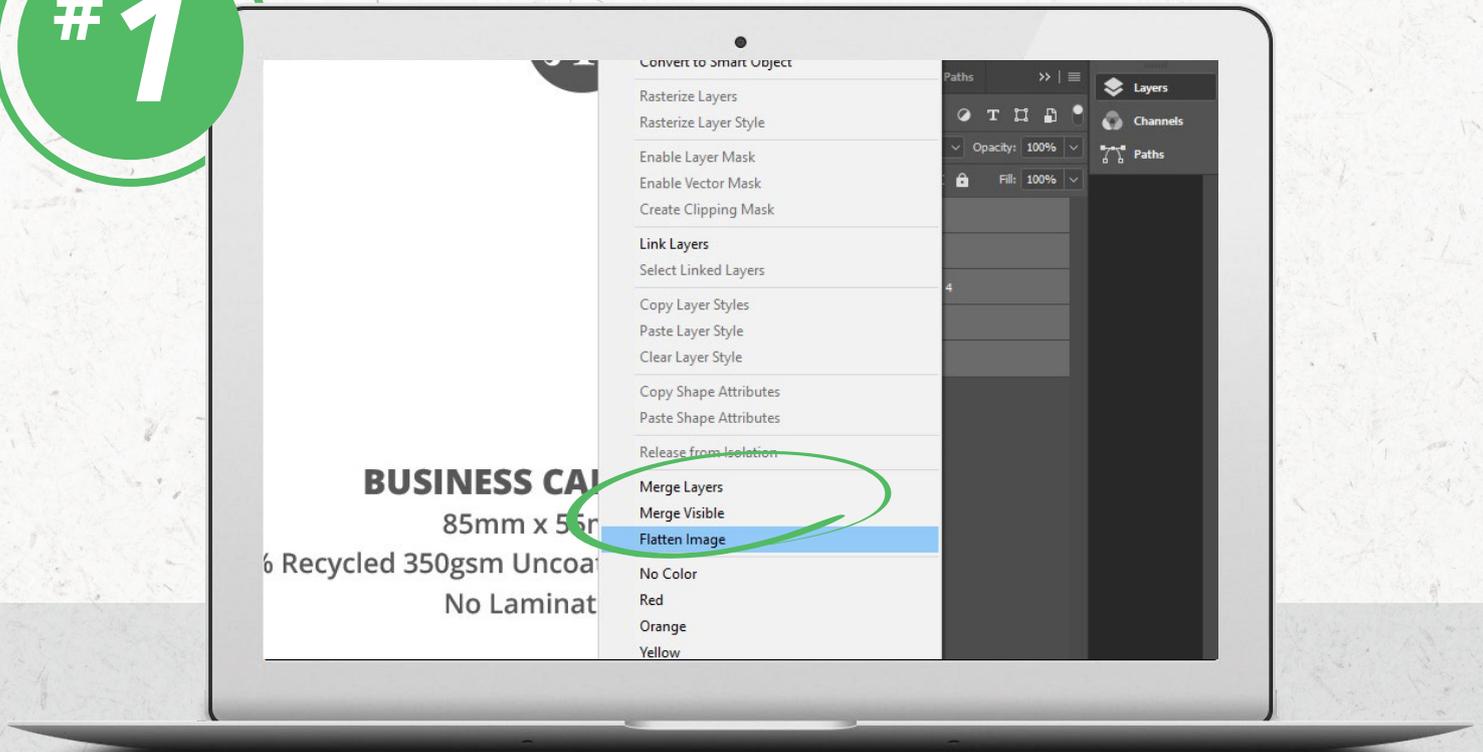
ADOBE ILLUSTRATOR

1. Open the **Window** drop down menu and select **Layers.**
2. Open the **Layers** drop down menu from the top right-hand corner of your layers palette and select **Flatten Artwork.**
3. Save file under a different name to your working file.

#2

Convert to Smart Object

Rasterize Layers
Rasterize Layer Style

Enable Layer Mask
Enable Vector Mask
Create Clipping Mask

Link Layers
Select Linked Layers

Copy Layer Styles
Paste Layer Style
Clear Layer Style

Copy Shape Attributes
Paste Shape Attributes

Release from Isolation

Merge Layers
Merge Visible
Flatten Image

No Color
Red
Orange
Yellow

BUSINESS CAL
85mm x 5
% Recycled 350gsm Uncoat
No Laminat

Layers
Channels
Paths

Opacity: 100%
Fill: 100%

HACK_#06

DEALING WITH OVERPRINTING

When you think about it, printing is just layers of ink on paper. Overprinting gets to use those layers to their max potential but only when you set up your artwork correctly.

DEALING WITH OVERPRINT
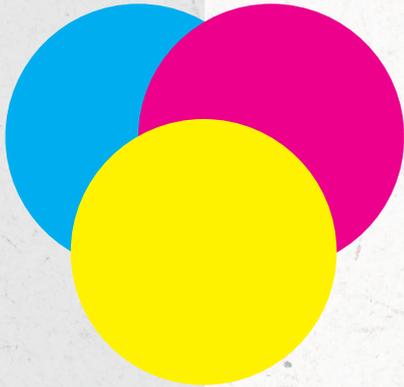
WITHOUT OVERPRINT
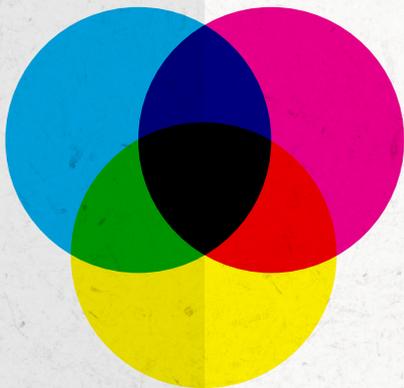
WITH OVERPRINT

Normally, when designing, you can place one asset over another without worrying about the object beneath peeking through. That is, the objects on top effectively 'block out' the objects behind them.

Occasionally, however, you might not want this to be the case – you might want the colours of the top elements to mix with the objects behind them. Take a look at the example *(left)* to see what we mean;

Of course, you could create each area of colour as its own shape but that could get pretty fiddly after a while. The example to the left is rather simple in comparison to some of the things you can do *(right)*, hence why overprinting is used instead.

Because overprinting is not the default, artwork set up for overprinting can sometimes revert to blocking out the items at the back. Thankfully, it doesn't take much to make sure that doesn't happen.
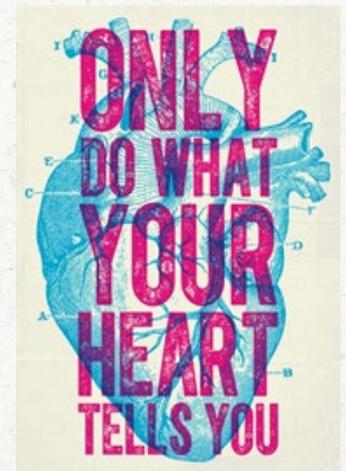
1. Open the overprint preview in the **View** drop down menu.
2. Select the object that should be overprinted.
3. Tick the box next to **Overprint Fill** in the Attributes Panel.

#1

HACK_#07

PROOFING & PRE-FLIGHT TOOLS

Finally, we'd like to leave you with our ultimate hack – a tool to help you catch all of the issues we've talked about in this eBook.

PROOFING AND PRE-FLIGHT TOOLS

Named after the checks pilots make before lift-off, a pre-flight tool can notify you about various artwork issues that you haven't noticed when you go to export your PDF. They can even correct small issues automatically so that you don't have to worry about a thing.

According to a global survey conducted by Enfocus, 17% of respondents don't use pre-flight tools but only 6% said that they receive files without any errors!

Pre-flight tools like **Pitstop**, allow you to set up profiles of criteria that you need your files to adhere to. Then all you need to do is run the file and it will check and correct the artwork against the list of specifications you've set up.

Unfortunately, these tools do come with a cost but they can save you a lot of stress, not to mention the value they give in preventing reprints.

REMEMBER: ALWAYS GIVE CLIENTS A FINAL PROOF FOR APPROVAL!

ABOUT US

We're passionate about print. Helping resellers grow by providing high quality, low cost print is what we're good at.

As the UK's biggest trade printer, we see ourselves as partners with our clients. We help copy shops around the UK thrive with reseller tools, white label packaging, and an order process to make your life easier. That's why **9/10 customers come back time and time again.**

We dispatch around 5,500 jobs every week from our **100,000 square foot** production facility in South Yorkshire. Our products are all printed on GMG colour managed presses and we follow ISO certified production processes. We utilise the very latest technology available and none of our machinery is more than five years old.

COME AND FIND OUT HOW WE CAN HELP YOUR BUSINESS GROW TODAY.

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