

Ad Preparation Recommendations

for advertising being designed for, or submitted to, AGL magazine.

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Platforms and disk creation

Press-ready advertising PDFs (Adobe Portable Document Format files) sent by email or FTP upload are readable on either Mac or PC platforms, but AGL magazine is a PC-based operation. Ad files sent to us *on disk* must be saved on a *PC-formatted* CD or DVD. Our preferred format for submitted ad files is **PDF/X-1a**.

Ads created in Microsoft Word or other word-processing programs are not considered press ready. "Build" ads, and ads submitted as TIF or EPS files that haven't been converted yet to PDF format, must be received three working days before the press-ready Materials Due Date. The *Sending Your Ad to AGL* handout gives these deadlines, as well as uploading and mailing instructions.

File-creation procedures

In the page/document setup in your ad-design program (Adobe Illustrator, PageMaker, InDesign, QuarkXpress, Adobe PhotoShop, etc.) create full-page, non-bleeding ads at the AGL full-page trim size of 8¼" × 10¾" (49½ picas × 64½ picas; 209.6 mm × 273 mm). For bleed ads, add ⅛" more on all sides that bleed. Create partial-page ads at their actual sizes, not the size of a full page or the pasteboard used in the design program. Dimensions for all advertising sizes (with and without bleeds) are listed in the *Ad Sizes and Mechanical Specifications* handout.

Keep printer's cropping or registration marks at least ¼" outside the ad border or edge (the live-image area).

Ads larger than one page (two-page spreads and foldouts) must be exported as *separate* (and sequentially numbered) PDF files for *each magazine page* used for the ad. That is, do not submit a two- or three-page PDF as a single ad file. The PDF will have to be broken into discrete pages and re-registered, which creates the risk of a crossover mismatch.

Common ad-preparation errors

Spreads

- Avoiding running essential copy or images across the gutter of a spread ad will prevent crossover mismatches on press. Crossing over large solid-color backgrounds or solid-color bars should also be avoided on two-page spread ads, as there is a possibility the two pages may be printed on separate forms—or even on separate presses.

Text (copy and other type elements)

- When using text that requires special attributes, such as bold and italic, use fonts created for that specific attribute (e.g., Helvetica Bold Oblique). Do not use the design application's style menu or toolbox to apply these attributes if there is no corresponding font. Menu-imposed font attributes cannot be consistently relied on to appear the same after files are converted to other formats, such as exporting to a PDF format. Sometimes, such type will drop of the PDF altogether.
- Give preference to the use of PostScript Type 1 fonts. Avoid using TrueType fonts, Multiple Master fonts, Open Type fonts or copyrighted fonts that cannot be embedded in, or printed from, a PDF.
- The appearance of text combined with graphics may be more dependable if you rasterize the text or convert it to "outlines," "paths" or "curves" (depending on the options in the design application you are using).
- Do not set overprint trapping within native applications unless you are familiar with how the settings you use will affect your final page. Many applications set black to overprint as a default. Keep this in mind when setting black type with colored dropshadows.
- Thin lines or medium-to-small type (10 pt or smaller) appear best when restricted to two process colors.
- Font sizes smaller than 8 pt (particularly fonts with fine serifs or small character bowls) should be avoided because they can become illegible due to under- or over-inking, and they diminish readability.
- Likewise, avoid oversizing type for headline-sized copy blocks beyond the font's metrics (usually, a maximum of 72 pt). Create oversize heads as a high-resolution graphic element for smoother appearance.

Position of page elements

- Live image safety: Keep all essential text (especially phone numbers, email or Web addresses and other contact information), rules and images at least ¼" inside the innermost trim/crop marks.
- Avoid thin rules, borders, text and images that require precise alignment across facing pages or along the trim.

Layers and transparencies

- Flatten all layers before saving and exporting your file to PDF. Editorial pages where partial-page advertising is placed often have background color tints or patterns that will bleed through transparent ads.

Borders & screen tints

- To avoid page-background conflicts, give preference to the use of simple boxes for borders. Box corners that are rounded, that overlap or that are not joined may create white-space traps when placed on colored-background editorial pages. AGL uniformly keylines most light-background ads to minimize cross-bleeding of editorial and advertising matter, so in most cases, adding an ad border is unnecessary.
- To improve registration, minimize border or screen color combinations to two process colors, especially where small images and type or thin rules are involved. If an image requires three colors, try to use black as the third color. Avoid using all four process colors to create a color.
- Avoid thin colored rules of ½ point or less which must border a different color.
- Avoid using wide, dark-colored borders as a frame; this will minimize the impact of mechanical ghosting on press.

Reverse images

- For greater legibility, avoid reversing type out of screens of less than 70% opacity.
- Avoid reversing thin type, serif type, type smaller than 8 pt or rules less than 1 pt.
- Limit reverses to two-color backgrounds when possible. Reverse type should be knocked out of no more than two process colors.

Photos and graphics

- Convert all RGB and Indexed Color images (including PMS) to **CMYK** before linking them to, or embedding them in, your layout. Do not embed or use ICC profiles. If the an image is black & white, create and save the file as a **grayscale** image.
- Resolution of *all elements* in the ad—backgrounds, logos and photos—must be *at least* 300 dpi (at actual size, when printed). Resolution of line-art images (actual size) should be at least 600 dpi. Using a 72 dpi background and then saving the ad file at 300 dpi does *not* convert that background to 300 dpi; it's still a 72 dpi element within a 300 dpi ad.
- Save all graphics as full-size TIF or EPS files and embed (save) them within the document. Do not use JPEGs or GIFs as graphics, *particularly* logos clipped from website material; the resolution is invariably insufficient and “jaggy.” Do not use TIFs that have been LZW compressed to save file space; use an uncompressed version of the file.
- Check your links to make sure you are not saving an unlinked screen TIF or low-res OPI image in your ad instead of the complete photo or graphic file.
- Avoid altering images after placement. Size, crop or rotate images and resave them as new files in their original application (e.g., PhotoShop or Illustrator) *before* placing them in your layout. If you must rotate an image in the layout, do it by whole-number degrees without any decimal places.
- Likewise, when placing any type of image, do not

use the layout program to apply attributes such as opacity, contrast, skewing, etc. Again, alter the graphic *before* placing it.

Color and ink specifications

- In color-options windows, do not use RGB spot color values. RGB and Indexed Color images must be converted to CMYK. Use CMYK builds in your layout application (and graphics programs such as PhotoShop or Illustrator) unless the ad client is *purchasing* a specific PMS or other spot color for press.
- PMS color use *must be specifically requested in the advertising contract and should be specified in the insertion order*. Because of AGL's own filing deadlines for press orders, PMS-color requests cannot be honored for ad materials that are received after an issue's ad materials submission deadline.
- If the ad was designed or thumbnailed using PMS colors that must be converted to CYMK during actual ad preparation, be aware that fewer than 60% of the Pantone colors can be precisely matched using process colors. We recommend using the Pantone Process Color Simulator to determine whether an acceptable match is achievable or not. More advisably, CMYK values should be used at the design stage.
- Remove “Auto” (often incidentally imported with text from Microsoft Word, etc., as a default) as a color choice from your color pallete before the final save of your ad file. Identify all items that are black as “black,” not as “Auto.”
- Process-build screens are best limited to two process colors (C + M; C + Y; C + K; M + Y; M + K; Y + K) for optimum quality.
- Avoid excessively large areas of ink coverage, such as solid process-color backgrounds (particularly large areas of 100% black). To avoid mechanical “ghosting” problems (abrupt variations in ink thickness of color applied by press rollers) that sometimes occur in web-offset printing, add in a second color. (For example, create a large, black background as 100% black *plus* 20–40% cyan. While still appearing “black,” the area will print more evenly.
- Keep maximum color density (the added levels of all four process colors in one area) below 300%; otherwise, over-inking will result (e.g., a CMYK color composed of 75% cyan, 100% magenta, 90% yellow and 80% black = 75 + 100 + 90 + 80 = 345 = too much ink). Black already exists as a color; it is overkill to create it out of four inks.
- When specifying spot colors as 4/C process in your layout, in the “Edit Color” menu, set the output to “Process Separation.”
- If the ad is black & white, create and save the ad with “grayscale” selected.

OPI Images (low-res images)

- Never open and resave an OPI LowRes image in Photoshop that was supplied by your service provider.
- Never apply picture styles (contrast, color, etc.) to OPI images or enlarge copydot OPI images.

Before saving/exporting your file as a PDF

- Check all elements for the file by using “Collect for Output” in QuarkXpress, “Save for Service Provider” in PageMaker, or “Preflight” in InDesign.
- *Preflight or verify* — Using a preflight application such as Markzware Flightcheck or Extensis Preflight Pro will allow you to easily and accurately collect the necessary fonts, images and artwork necessary for high-res output. These preflight applications also check the files to ensure that they are correctly prepared. Quark, PageMaker and InDesign also have the capability to collect the used image files for high-res output, but most native applications do not check to ensure that the files are correctly prepared. Native application files should be preflighted before converting to PDF. To avoid deadline problems due to file errors, advertising agencies and artists are also strongly encouraged to verify PDF ad files before they submit them to publications. This can be done by checking the files with plug-in or stand-alone applications such as Pitstop Professional (Enfocus), Flightcheck Professional (Markzware Software) or pdfinspektor2 (Callas Software GMBH).
- Provide all pattern screens and printer fonts and verify that they are embedded within the final PDF file.

Proofs

All ads should either be accompanied by a laser proof, or one should be sent under separate cover when ad materials are submitted electronically. This is the only way Ad Production can verify that fonts and elements

in the ad file are displaying properly and as expected.

“Laser” proofs used to verify text and element positioning can be created by standard desktop laser, inkjet or bubble-jet printers. Print laser proofs at 100% of the actual size the ad will appear in print. Do not print out proofs “enlarged,” “reduced” or “autofit to page.” Proofs may be printed in black-and-white or color. (Laser proofs are only used to verify copy, font appearance and element positioning; they are not acceptable for color matching.)

Note: All proofs should be printed from the actual final PDF file that is being provided to AGL, *not* from the native application program (design-software file) used to create the ad. That is, the proof must accurately reflect the precise content of the file being sent. Therefore, proofs sent should reflect **all final corrections and changes made to the file.**

SWOP proofs

If the insertion order calls for a SWOP-certified, contract-quality proof, it must include a **color-control bar**. All contract proofs provided should be made on a substrate similar to the actual magazine stock (inside cover, inside back cover and back cover ads, 70 lb. #2 gloss, 87 BR; run of publication ads, 50 lb. #4 gloss, 80 BR). **Contract proofs must conform to SWOP Standards.** SWOP Proofing Standards Specifications and approved proof-output systems can be found at: www.swop.org.

Laser proofs or other proofs that do not meet SWOP standards are only used as a general press check. **agl**

ADVERTISING-RELATED INFORMATION AVAILABLE FOR DOWNLOADING (PDF) AT www.agl-mag.com:

For general information on advertising content requirements and restrictions specific to AGL magazine, see ***Publisher's Policies, Provisions and Protective Clauses***.

For available AGL advertising shapes and dimensions, see ***Ad Sizes and Mechanical Specifications***

For technical notes on preparing acceptable PDF advertising files, see ***Creating Press-ready PDFs***

For AGL advertising materials delivery instructions and deadlines, see ***Sending Your Ad to AGL***

For AGL news- and product-release submission information, specific-issue content and editorial policies, see ***Editorial Guidelines, Calendar and Policies***