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The print-ready **artwork** checklist

The checks our production team runs on every file — bleed, colour, resolution, fonts, dielines, proofs — so your next print job, with us or anyone, comes back looking like the design.

- Why print goes wrong
- 20 checks in six sections
- A "brief a print job" template

Most print mistakes are not in the design itself — they are in how the file was prepared for it. The gap between a beautiful design and a matching print run is usually twenty small checks, no more.

File setup: bleed, safe area, size

[5 CHECKS](#)

- ☐ **The file includes at least 3mm bleed on every edge that touches a cut line.**
Without bleed, a slight shift in cutting leaves a white edge.
- ☐ **Text and logos sit inside a safe area, away from the trim edge.**
A trim can shift by a millimetre or two; text right at the edge gets clipped.
- ☐ **The document size matches the final trimmed size, not the bleed size.**
This is the single most common source of a wrongly sized job.
- ☐ **Folds, perforations and die-lines are marked on a separate, clearly labelled layer.**
A printer cannot guess where a fold should be from the artwork alone.
- ☐ **The file is flattened or exported in the format the printer actually asked for.**
A layered file can render differently on a different machine.

Colour: profiles, spot colours, rich black

4 CHECKS

- ☐ **The file is in CMYK, not RGB, before it goes to print.**
RGB colours can shift unpredictably when converted at the press.
- ☐ **Spot colours (Pantone) are used only where brand consistency needs them.**
Extra spot colours add cost and are easy to specify wrong.
- ☐ **Rich black (not 100% K alone) is used for large dark areas, and 100% K alone for small text.**
The wrong choice either looks washed out or muddies fine text.
- ☐ **Total ink coverage stays under the printer's stated limit.**
Over the limit, ink can smear or take too long to dry.

Images & resolution

3 CHECKS

- ☐ **Photos are at least 300dpi at the size they will actually print.**
Lower resolution looks sharp on screen and blurry on paper.
- ☐ **No image has been stretched beyond its native resolution.**
Stretching magnifies the same pixel problem as low resolution.
- ☐ **Logos are placed as vector files, not low-resolution rasters, wherever possible.**
A vector logo stays crisp at any size; a raster one does not.

Fonts, outlines & Arabic text

3 CHECKS

- ☐ **Fonts are embedded or outlined (converted to shapes) before sending the file.**
 A missing font on the printer's machine silently substitutes another one.
- ☐ **Arabic text is checked for correct joining after any edit.**
 A small edit can break letter connections if the software is not handling Arabic properly.
- ☐ **No text layer relies on a font that was not licensed for embedding.**
 This can be a legal issue, not just a technical one.

Packaging die-lines & signage specs

3 CHECKS

- ☐ **The die-line came from the packaging supplier, not redrawn by eye.**
 A redrawn die-line rarely matches the actual cutting tool.
- ☐ **Folding and gluing areas are marked and kept clear of critical text or logos.**
 Text on a glue flap disappears when the box is assembled.
- ☐ **Signage material and mounting method are confirmed before the file is finalised.**
 Different materials need different bleed, resolution and colour handling.

Proofs, quantities & delivery

2 CHECKS

- ☐ **A physical or digital colour proof is approved before the full run.**
 A proof catches problems a screen never shows.
- ☐ **Quantity, delivery address and deadline are confirmed in writing.**
 A verbal confirmation is the easiest thing to lose track of.

Copy this table for any new print request — with us or anyone — so every detail arrives the first time.

ITEM	
FINAL SIZE	
QUANTITY	
MATERIAL	
FINISH	
DELIVERY DATE	

A file that is ready never goes back for a redo.

This checklist keeps your files press-ready. A tailored proposal covers the production itself — design, proofing and delivery, managed end to end.

Get your tailored proposal — majadv.com