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Preparing artwork for large format digital printing

The best file format for us to print from is a high quality print pdf. This one file format is easier to send and avoids any potential issues with file formats, fonts and missing/corrupt graphics.

The artwork size should be set at the same size as required output. However this is not always possible due to the constraints of the software you are using. Quark Xpress has a maximum page size of 1219 x 1219 mm. InDesign has a maximum page size of 5486 x 5486 mm (you can go wider if you use multiple pages as spreads). If your design is larger than your maximum page size then you will have to supply your pdf at half size or quarter size. Any scanned images should be at least 300 dpi or more depending on final output size.

Because of InDesign's larger maximum page size and ease of exporting to pdf format, it is fast becoming the preferred application for creating artwork for large format printing.

After creating your pdf it is a good idea to check the final output quality. This can be done by printing a finished size patch and checking on screen at the finished size. If your artwork has been created at quarter size you will need to view your pdf on screen at 400%. Make sure you have overprint preview on. When you are happy with the quality of your pdf(s) you should then zip your file(s) for sending via email or ftp.