

Checklist for printing quality

This checklist (prepress and printing) is intended to assist you in establishing whether good conditions are guaranteed at your operation for obtaining a high standard of printing quality, or where potential for optimisation exists (*see also remarks on the checklist at the end).

Equipment

- Monitors for reproduction jobs/soft proofing not older than ca. 2 years*
(*manufacturer data decides)
- CTP system is in line with technical state of the art
- Screen definitions of minimum 40 lines/cm (in modern CTP systems up to 48 l/cm should be possible); use of FM or hybrid screens possible
- Closed-loop system for CTP quality control (beneficial)
- Press is in line with single drive, modern press control
- automatic colour register control for 4-high tower presses (beneficial)
- dynamic fan-out control for 4-high tower presses (beneficial)
- automatic web tension control when many webs are used or in hybrid printing (beneficial)
- automatic blanket cleaning when linting is an issue or shortage of time (beneficial)
- automatic roller lock setting (inking and damping rollers)
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Processes

- Application of the ISO 12647-3 process standard for newspaper printing in prepress and printing (recommended to check at two-year intervals or certification)
- Quality management
- Regular calibration of monitors (*manufacturer data decides)

- Specifications for customers and freelancers re data supply (e.g. Format: PDF/X 1A with embedded fonts, resolution: min. 1.7 x value of used screen definition, file name should contain name of customer and date)
- Preflight check as standard routine for all files
- Use of automatic image optimising software (beneficial)
- Use of an ink-saving program (beneficial)
- Regular calibration of the CTP system
- Regular cleaning and other CTP maintenance jobs (exchanging worn-out parts) in accordance with a maintenance schedule
- Regular checking of certain parameters of the CTP system such as temperature, filling level and pH of the developer
- Production of maintenance schedules for all technical systems and check that they are carried out
- Press acceptance tests for new presses (strongly recommended)
- Press tests with test form once a week (recommended)
- Ink presetting at the press based on prepress data
- Optimised press start-up curves
- Fan-out correction via RIP and dynamic anti fan-out rollers (recommended)
- Possible use of proofs (hardcopy or soft proof)
- Use of print control elements (recommended)
- Press cleaning and maintenance based on maintenance schedule
- Check on materials at time of reception
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Personnel

- Personnel specialised know-how in line with latest developments
- Regular/as required advanced training at all levels

- Quality management officer
- Continuous Improvement Process as guiding principle
- Transparent processes and results
- Quality and education-dependent remuneration systems
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***Remarks on checklist**

Fulfilling all the above conditions (N.B. this list is not intended to be exhaustive) is not an automatic guarantee for high printing quality, just as non-fulfilment necessarily means that the printing quality could not be good. The principle applies here also that the know-how and commitment of the personnel constitute the most important factor for quality.

Quality is not dependent on the level of automation. In principle, all automatic processes and controls can also be carried out manually and correcting mechanisms are necessary where there is a need of correction (e.g. in single-width presses there is little need for fan-out compensation and manual image processing done by an experienced operator can produce better results than automatic optimisation). The advantage of automation (besides time and labour savings) lies in the consistency of the results and the avoidance of operator errors.