How a Printing Company Works: A Prepress Reading

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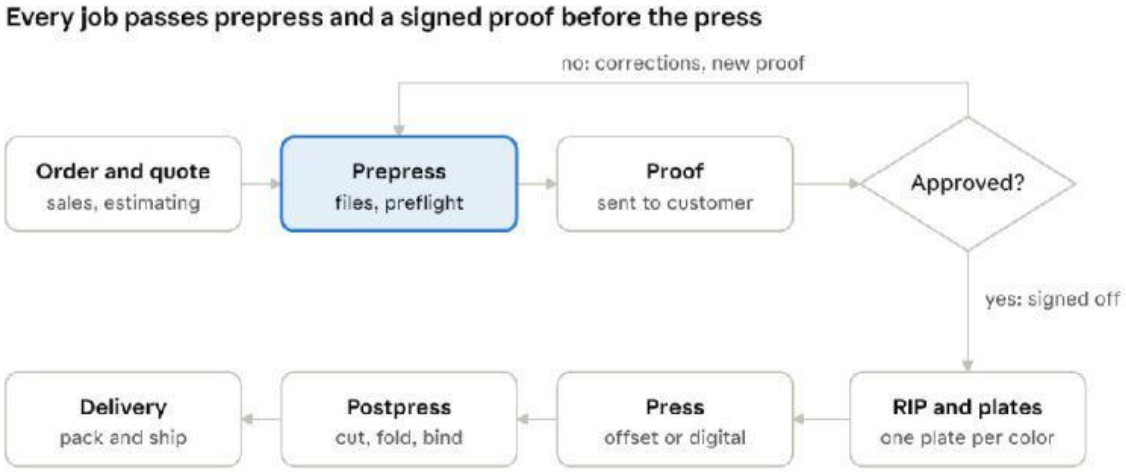
Reading

Every day, printing companies turn customers' ideas into books, magazines, packaging, labels and posters. Each job follows the same path, shown below.



the life of a print job · 7 steps, 1 approval loop

First, a salesperson talks to the customer and an estimator calculates the price. All the details (size, quantity, paper, colors and deadline) go on a **job ticket**. Then the job moves to **prepress**, the stage that prepares everything for printing.

In prepress, a technician receives the customer's files, usually as a PDF. The first task is **preflight**: checking the file for problems before they become expensive. Are the images sharp enough? Are the colors in CMYK, the four ink colors of the press, and not in RGB, the colors of a screen? Are all the fonts included? Does the background extend a few millimetres past the edge of the page? This extra area, called **bleed**, prevents white lines after the paper is cut.

Next, the technician arranges the pages on a large sheet. This is called **imposition**. A press does not print one page at a time. It prints many pages on one big sheet, which is later folded and cut so the pages come out in the right order.

Then the customer receives a **proof**, a sample of the final job. If the customer asks for changes, the file goes back to prepress. When the customer signs the proof, the job is approved. Finally, the technician makes one **plate** for each ink color, and the job goes to the press.

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After printing, the sheets go to **postpress**, where they are cut, folded and bound. Then the job is packed and delivered.

Prepress is the bridge between the designer's computer and the printing machine. A mistake fixed on screen costs almost nothing. The same mistake found after printing 10,000 copies wastes paper, ink, time and money.

Activities

A. True or false?

1. The estimator prints the job.
2. Preflight checks the files for problems.
3. Screens use CMYK colors.
4. Bleed prevents white lines after cutting.
5. The job goes to the press before the customer signs the proof.

B. Match the words with their meanings in Catalan

Word	Significat en català
1. Job ticket	a. Tinta
2. Bleed	b. Revisió dels fitxers abans de la producció
3. Ink	c. Mostra del treball final perquè el client l'aprovi
4. Imposition	d. Data límit d'entrega
5. Proof	e. Document amb tots els detalls d'una comanda
6. Sheet	f. Tipus de lletra
7. Preflight	g. Planxa que porta la imatge d'un color de tinta a la màquina
8. Plate	h. Full gran de paper
9. Deadline	i. Persona que calcula el preu d'un treball
10. Postpress	j. Disposició de les pàgines en un full gran
11. Fonts	k. Enquadernat
12. Folded	l. Tall, plegat i enquadernació després d'imprimir
13. Estimator	m. Plegat

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Word	Significat en català
14. Bound	n. Sang: imatge que sobresurt de la vora de la pàgina

C. Choose the correct answer

1. What does a printing company do?
   - a) It designs websites.
   - b) It turns customers' ideas into printed products.
   - c) It sells computers.
2. Who calculates the price of a job?
   - a) The press operator.
   - b) The customer.
   - c) The estimator.
3. Where are the details of an order written?
   - a) On the job ticket.
   - b) On the proof.
   - c) On the plate.
4. What is the first task in prepress?
   - a) Making the plates.
   - b) Preflight.
   - c) Cutting the sheets.
5. What are CMYK colors?
   - a) The colors of a screen.
   - b) The four ink colors of the press.
   - c) The colors of the paper.
6. Why do designers add bleed to a page?
   - a) To prevent white lines after cutting.
   - b) To make the images sharper.
   - c) To save ink.
7. What is imposition?
   - a) Checking the fonts.
   - b) Printing one page at a time.
   - c) Arranging many pages on a large sheet.
8. What happens if the customer asks for changes on the proof?

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- a) The job goes to the press.
- b) The file goes back to prepress.
- c) The job is cancelled.

9. How many plates does a job printed with four ink colors need?
   - a) One.
   - b) Two.
   - c) Four.
10. What happens in postpress?
    - a) The files are checked.
    - b) The sheets are cut, folded and bound.
    - c) The price is calculated.
11. Why is it important to find mistakes in prepress?
    - a) Mistakes found after printing waste paper, ink, time and money.
    - b) The customer never sees the proof.
    - c) Presses cannot print PDF files.
12. What does the reading call prepress?
    - a) The end of the process.
    - b) The bridge between the designer's computer and the printing machine.
    - c) A type of paper.

D. Match the beginnings and endings of the sentences

Beginning	Ending
1. An estimator calculates	a. white lines after the paper is cut.
2. In preflight, the technician	b. the job is approved.
3. Screens show colors in RGB,	c. checks the files for problems.
4. Bleed prevents	d. are cut, folded and bound.
5. A press prints many pages	e. the price of the job.
6. When the customer signs the proof,	f. for each ink color.
7. The technician makes one plate	g. but presses print with CMYK inks.
8. In postpress, the sheets	h. on one big sheet.

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