Kingfisher
Press

LAYERS

Making the best use of layer tools when
creating files for print.

If you're creating artwork that includes a special finish, such as spot UV varnish or die cutting, then you may want to consider using the layers function of your design application when preparing your files. Quark Xpress, InDesign and Illustrator enable the user to create layers.

Why should I use layers?

By using the layers function of your chosen application you can separate elements of your file that are intended for different processes, but still ensure that they work in relation to each other. When we receive a layered file and bring it into our XMF workflow, we can turn the layers off and on, depending on the tasks being carried out, but can be confident that we retain the integrity of your artwork.

As an example we will take a bottle label being printed CYMK, then foil blocked and finally die cut to shape. For this we will create a file containing three layers and call them "print", "foil" and "die cut". The following images show each layer separately and finally all three together. You will see also that the document size is the same as the final finished item. In this case that's being determined by the overall size of the die cut area. This is important because when we are arranging a job on a printed sheet, our workflow uses the trim box as a reference. The cutter guide has been set up to print in a pantone colour, as has the foil blocking.
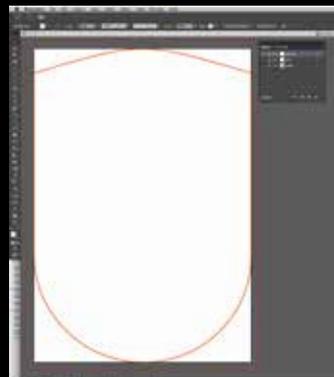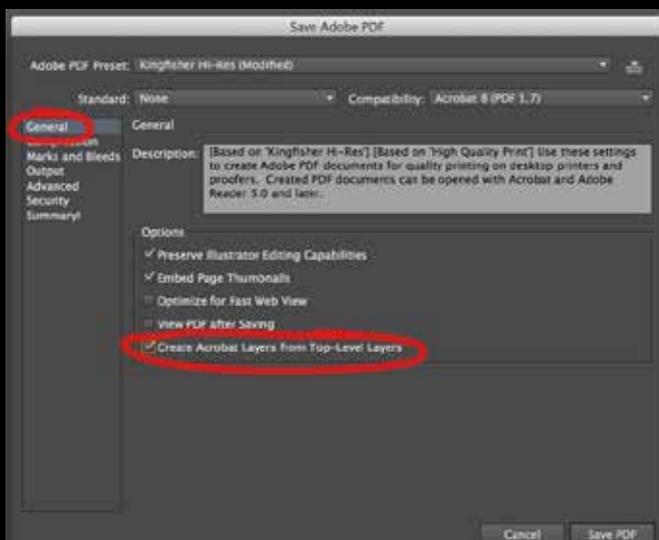

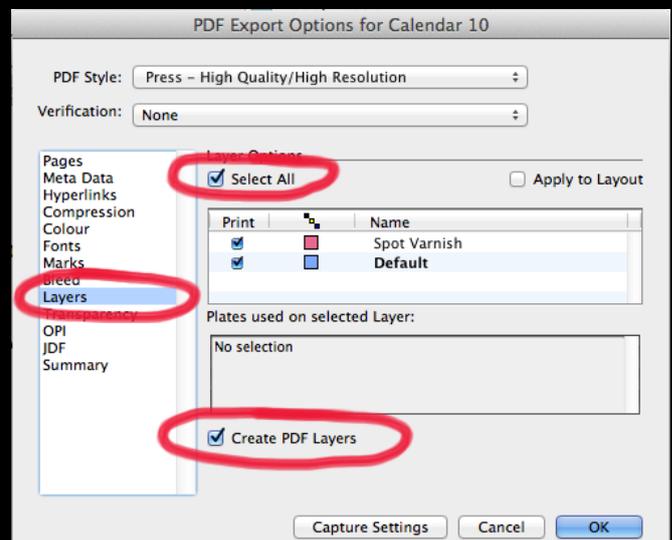*Print layer*   *Foil layer*   *Die cut layer*   *All 3 layers together*

Once your artwork has been approved for printing you can save your file as a high quality PDF. It's important here to make sure that all your layers are turned on and that you select the preserve layers function in the application your using.

Adobe Illustrator and InDesign look like this.   *Quark Xpress looks like this*
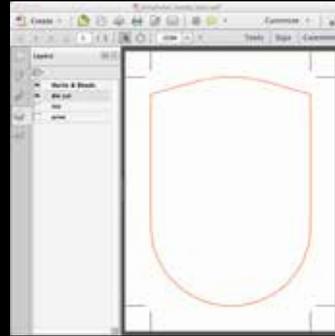
Once saved you can open your file in Acrobat. If successful you will see the layers tab in the left-hand tool bar (see below) and you can check your file has "layered out" as you expected. Once you're happy you can send us your file.
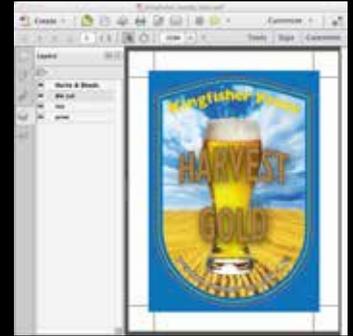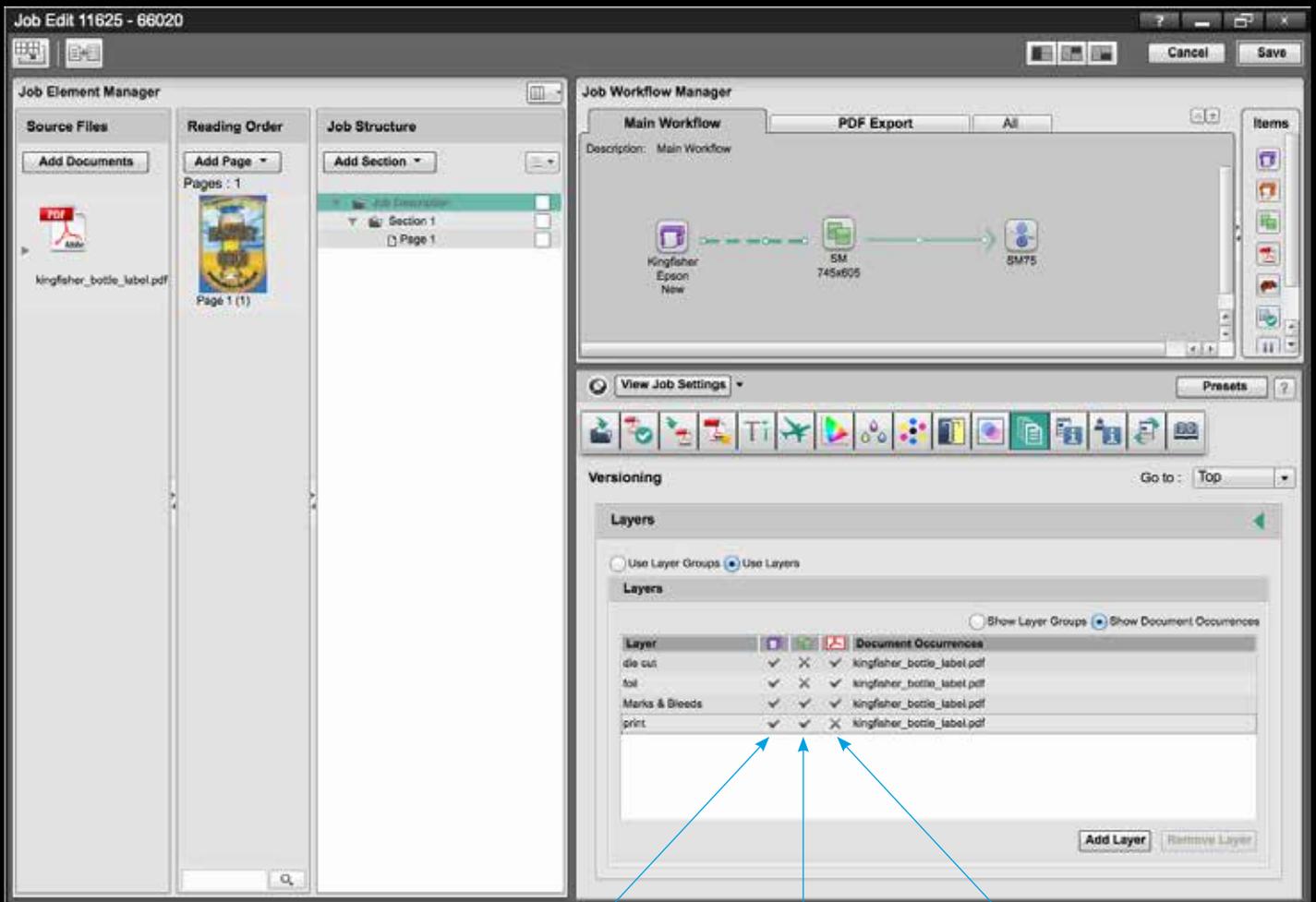

Print layer

Foil layer

Die Cut layer

All layers

Once we've received your file we will bring it into our XMF workflow. Here we have the option of determining what happens to each of your layers. Below you can see we have told XMF that "print" is included on the plate but not "foil" or "die cut". Those two layers are included on PDF export but "print" isn't. Finally we have told XMF to include all the layers on the Epson proof it will create.


PROOF Layer
all layers are switched on

PLATE Layer
"print" is switched on,
"die cut" and "foil" are
switched off

PDF EXPORT Layer
"die cut" and "foil" are
switched on,
"print" is switched off

Next we will create a laydown for the printing plates and save it. We can then use that same lay-down when we export our imposed PDF for the foil and die cut, that way ensuring that everything is in an identical position. We tell XMF not to rasterise the PDF, ensuring that the foil blocking and die cutting are the vector files that we require.

Here we can see a ripped image of the plate plus a view of the imposed PDF. We could have saved separate PDF files for the die cutting and foil blocking by turning off each layer in turn and saving to different locations.
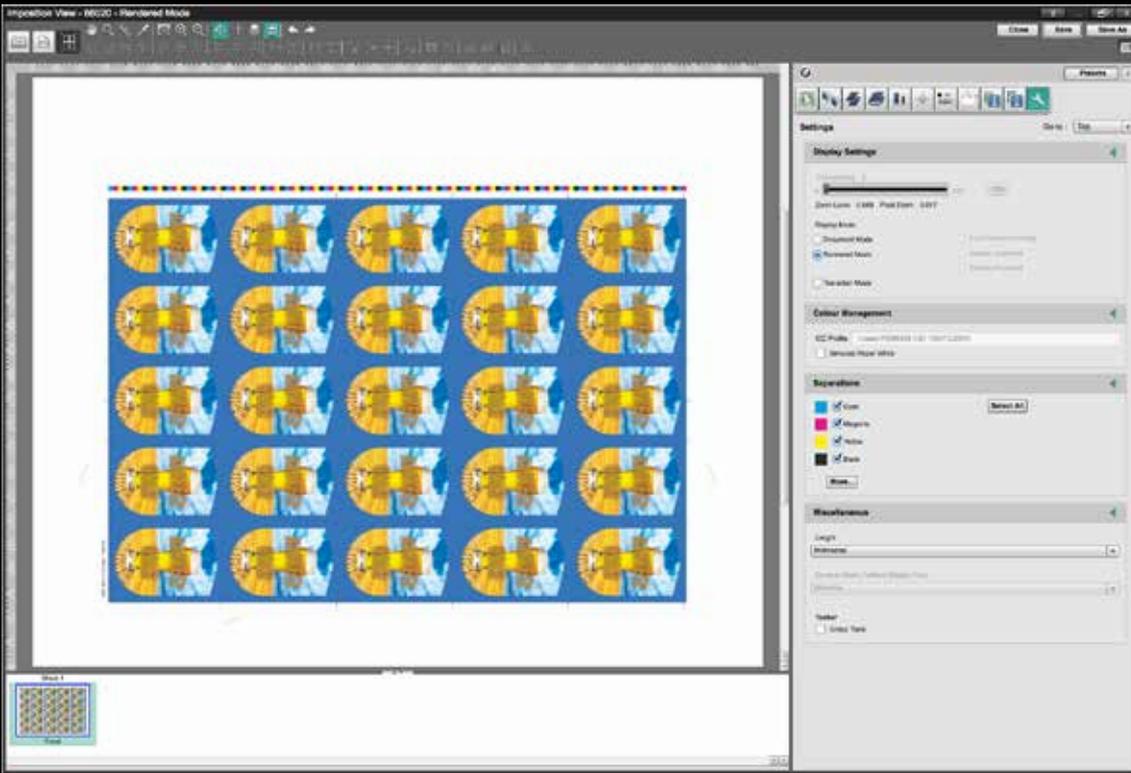
Screen view of rendered plate, foil and die cut layers are not included
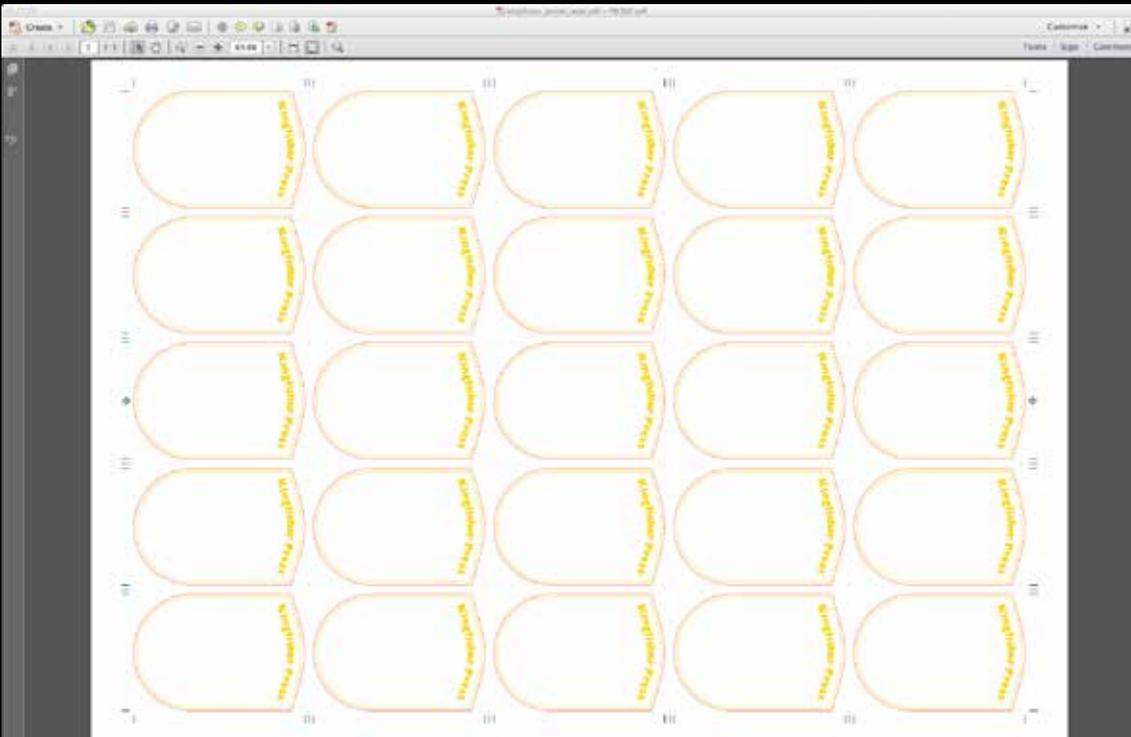
Screen view of imposed PDF. Print layer is not included. File saved in vector format.

We hope that you find this information useful. If you would like any further guidance please do not hesitate to get fin touch.