
Create Print Ready PDF's from InDesign

Information to help you create PDF's for
printing at Dayfold

When it comes to creating PDF's everyone will probably have their personal preference and reasons for creating them the way they do.

We could just tell you that you must do it with our settings, but as there are lots of different ways of achieving a good result we feel it's better for you to understand what's happening rather than just blindly following a fixed set of rules that may not suit every situation.

This blog will give you guidance to help you understand the options and explain why we make certain suggestions (indicated in **bold**) to obtain the best balance of quality, colour & size. So grab a cuppa and get comfortable! If you have any questions then please comment below or discuss on our forum.

The following screenshots are from InDesign CS6, other versions may vary slightly but should be very similar.

General Settings

Adobe PDF Preset

This is where you'll find a set of preset or will be able to find presets that you have saved.

Standard

This is a selection of Industry defined PDF/X 'standards' which you could select if you take the time to understand them. However, we do not currently require that you use them.

Compatibility

This is the version number of PDF file format that will be created. There is visually 2 differences, PDF 1.3 is the only version that gives you the option to flatten the transparency when you make the PDF and you can only create Acrobat Layers in PDF 1.5 and above. The Acrobat Layers option is not required by us, but there are times that flattening transparency when you make the PDF will highlight issue with the artwork that would not show until we sent you back a flattened proof.

Description

Is a description of the Preset that was selected above. If you save your own Presets then you can write the description to remind yourself why you set it up.

Pages

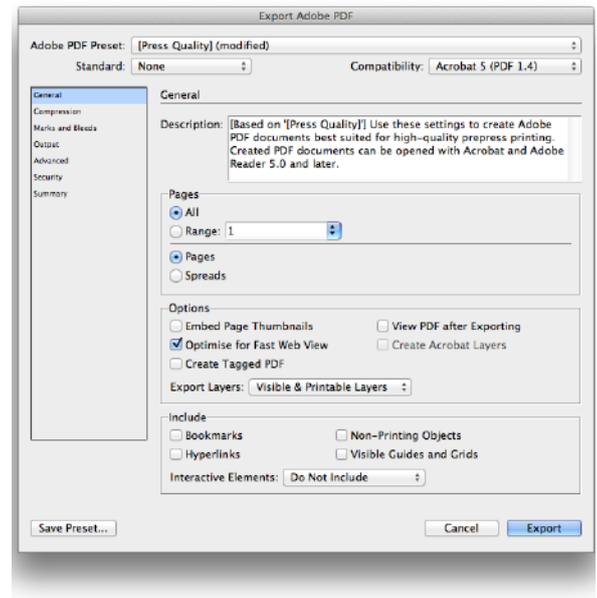
Select the pages you want to PDF, and select '**Pages**' and not 'Spreads' as we need to have single pages to impose them for printing. (It's not the end of the world if you select spreads because we can split them if required.)

Options

We don't need any of these options ticked but you won't generally give us any issues if you do. We only really need the visible layer and any other layers you include will just increase the file size but not stop the job working.

Include

Again, they are all up to you, they shouldn't cause us any issues if you select them or not.



InDesign General PDF settings

Compression

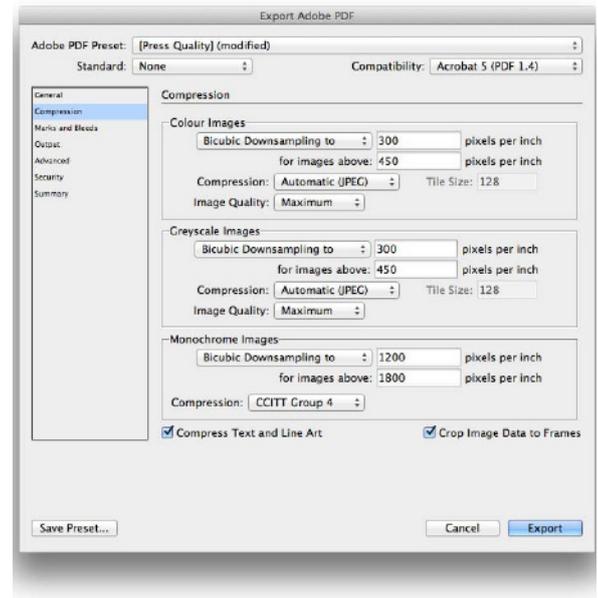
Resolution

As a general rule colour images resolutions above **300 dpi/ppi** after scaling will make no visual difference in the final printed result so is really just wasting disk space. This is assuming that you are not using images that contain predominately single colour text. Colours in print are generally made up from dots of Cyan Magenta Yellow and Black. This dot structure will hide the pixels of the image above 300 dpi and make them invisible. However, if you have text or graphics that are predominately 100% of a single colour then the dot structure won't exist and the pixels will possibly show. If this is the case then you should not downsample below 1000dpi as at that point the texture of the paper will make the pixel edges appear smooth under normal visual inspection.

So what do you do with any image resolution above 300dpi, well you let Indesign downsample it and remove it.

Downsampling

- Do not downsample, doesn't downsample images and leaves the image resolution as it is in the original image file, potentially making the resulting file size unnecessarily large.
- Average Downsampling, averages the colour of the area being removed and uses that colour.
- Subsample, take the central pixel of the area removed and uses that colour.
- **Bicubic Downsampling**, take a weighted average of the area being removed and uses that. This produces the smoothest tones and is what we recommend.



InDesign Compression PDF settings

Compression

- None, doesn't use any compression and would result in the largest files.
- **Automatic(JPEG)**, will analyse the image to be compressed and compress photographic images using JPEG (lossy) compression and synthetic images such as graphics and rasterised text as ZIP (lossless) compression. JPEG (lossy) compression is perfectly fine for print when set to '**Maximum Quality**' and any change will not be visible in the final job over not compressing the image.
- JPEG, this setting will compress all images using JPEG compression.
- ZIP, this will use only lossless compression and should be used if you don't like the idea of using JPEG compression.
- JPEG 2000, is a newer version of JPEG compression but is optimised for web use allowing images to be displayed before the whole file is downloaded and the quality increases as more of the file arrives.
- Automatic(JPEG 2000), as Automatic(JPEG) but using the newer JPEG 2000 compression.

The below settings are assuming that images are photographs, illustrations with shading and that you have not set lots of text inside the image that is made up of 100% of any of the CMYK colours. If you have, then please don't use any downsampling on the images. Text as graphics or single colour logos or text should really be either vector graphics, which won't get downsampled or bitmap/monochrome images with a much higher dpi in the region of 1000-2000 dpi so that they look smooth when printed.

Colours Images

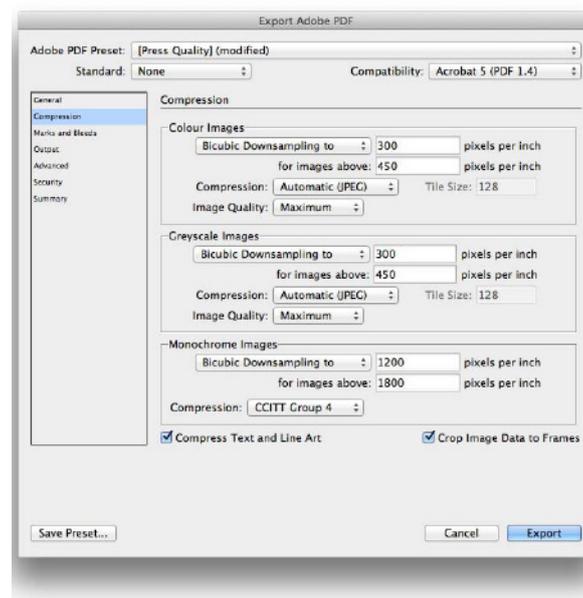
As a general rule the compression can be set to Bicubic Downsampling to 300 pixels per inch for images above 450 pixel per inch with Automatic (JPEG) compression and Maximum Image Quality.

Grey Scale Images

The same goes for greyscale images. **Bicubic Downsampling to 300 pixels per inch for images above 450 pixel per inch with Automatic (JPEG) compression and Maximum Image Quality.**

Monochrome Images

These can be **Bicubic Downsampled to 1200 pixels per inch when above 1800 pixel per inch with CCITT Group 4 compression.**



InDesign Compression PDF settings

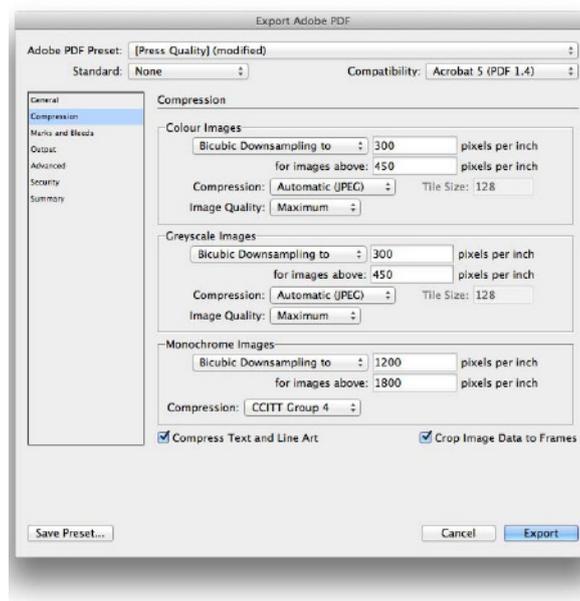
Compress Text and Line Art

Compressing Text and Line Art doesn't cause any loss of detail so can be turned **ON**.

Crop Image Data to Frames

Cropping Image Data to Frames is a very good way of reducing file sizes as quite often there is more image outside of the area that you can see in the final design and if this is ticked it isn't included in the resulting PDF so should be turned **ON**.

If you are unhappy about downsampling or compressing your images then just turn it all off and send us the file, however this will generally give you a much bigger file to transfer to us. We have seen jobs with 500mb uncompressed PDF files reduce to 35mb when compressed and without any visual difference in the end result. This could save you a day if your upload speed isn't great.



InDesign Compression PDF settings

Marks and Bleed

Marks

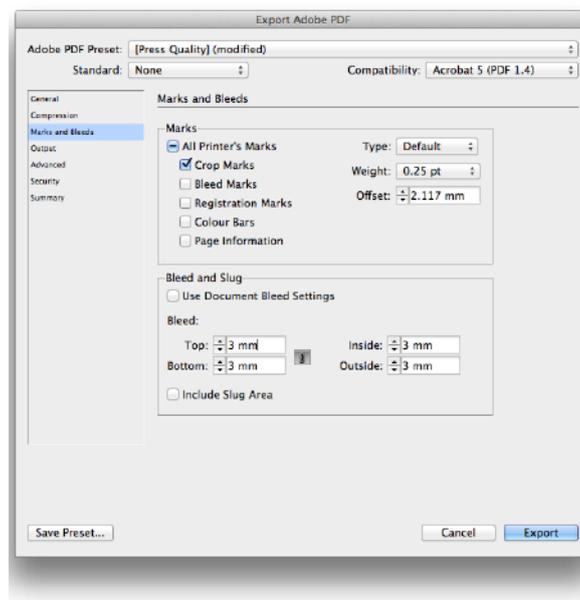
Crop Marks: are helpful so please turn them **ON** with Type: Default, Weight: 0.25pt & Offset: 2.117mm.

Bleed Marks: aren't required but it doesn't matter if you turn them on.

Registration Marks: aren't required and doesn't matter if it's turned on.

Colour Bars: can cause problems especially if your job doesn't contain Cyan, Magenta, Yellow & Black ink as turning them on will make the system see all the colour as being used in the PDF. So please turn them **OFF**.

Page Information: This can be turned on if you find it helpful to have the filename and page number inserted below the page artwork but we don't require it.



InDesign Marks and Bleeds PDF settings

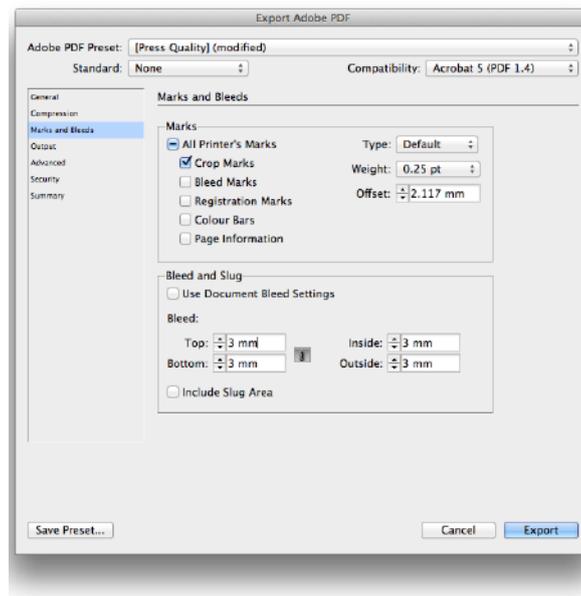
Marks and Bleed

Bleed and Slug

Use Document Bleed Settings: will only work if you have set the Bleed when you created your document.

Bleed: We would generally like to have a minimum of **3mm on all sides**. (You will have to untick the Use Document Bleed to edit the Bleed amount)

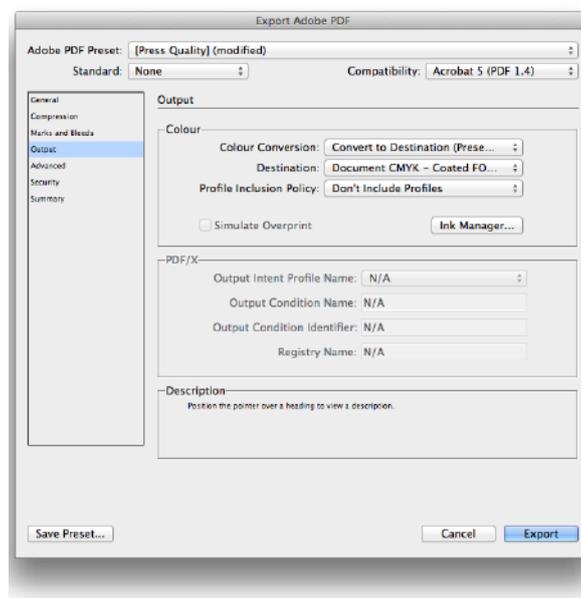
Include Slug Area: We do not require this. (It doesn't seem to have any effect on the PDF anyway!)



InDesign Marks and Bleeds PDF settings

Output

The colour settings in this area are going to be led by your InDesign document colour setup. We would suggest that you are at least aware of the colour setup and how your different Adobe applications, photoshop, illustrator etc are set up to make sure they are consistent. This can be done by setting the colour settings in Adobe Bridge and then synchronising them so that it sets all the other Adobe applications the same way. Just be aware that any changes to your colour settings could unfortunately impact how your colours come out and what warnings you get when opening jobs created before you made the change, so be careful. If you would like to discuss this further with us then please use the comments or forum area.



InDesign Output PDF settings

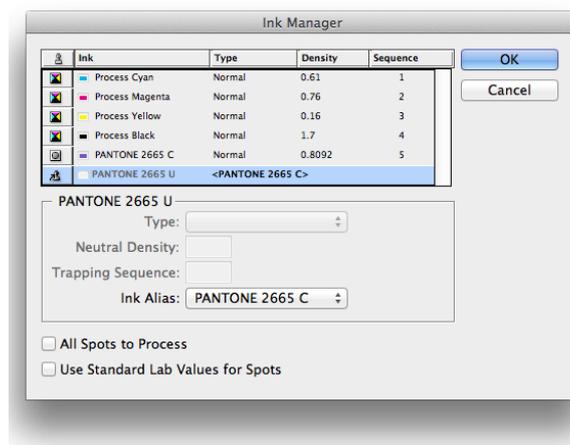
Output

Colour

Colour Conversion

- No Conversion, does exactly that, so any colours including RGB will be included so this must not be used if you have used RGB images or colours when designing your file.
- Convert to Destination, will convert all the non CMYK images and colours into CMYK but will also effect any colours that you may have set up in the colour palette and change the colour mix.
- **Convert to Destination (Preserve Numbers)**, will convert all non CMYK images and colours into CMYK but leave all your CMYK% colour mixes in the colour palette untouched.

Destination: In here you will find a huge list of possible conversion destinations/colours. As a general rule we would suggest using the **Document CMYK** profile as this is most likely to be the settings you've used when you set up the document and if synchronised, the same conversion that photoshop & illustrator are using. Here at Dayfold if we create a new document we use Fogra 27. However if we are sent documents we will always leave them as you have set them up and use your Document CMYK Profile for any colour conversion.



InDesign Ink Manager

Profile Inclusion Policy

- **Don't Include Profiles**, doesn't include the Destination CMYK Profile that you selected above but by not including it it leads to less colour misunderstanding in Adobe Acrobat.
- Include Destination Profile, this includes the Destination CMYK Profile selected above but will likely cause Adobe Acrobat Pro to display a different colour in the Output Preview readout as it will do 'on the fly' conversion from the Destination Profile to the Simulation Profile and unfortunately it doesn't tell you what the Document Destination Profile should be so it may be different.
- **Simulate Overprint**. If you can select this (most of the time it seems to be greyed out due to a bug) then turn it **ON**. It will make the PDF show correctly where parts of your artwork overprint another part instead of knocking it out. Acrobat Reader is very good at displaying everything knocked out even if your artwork is set intentionally or unintentionally to overprint.
- **Ink Manager**. This allows you to see all the colours that will output into the PDF, CMYK & Spots. In the Ink Manager you can merge/alias different colours together if required for example if you have multiple versions of the same spot colour. You can also convert all spot colour to process if the job wasn't quoted to contain them. The settings for Neutral Density and Trapping Sequence are not something you should change.

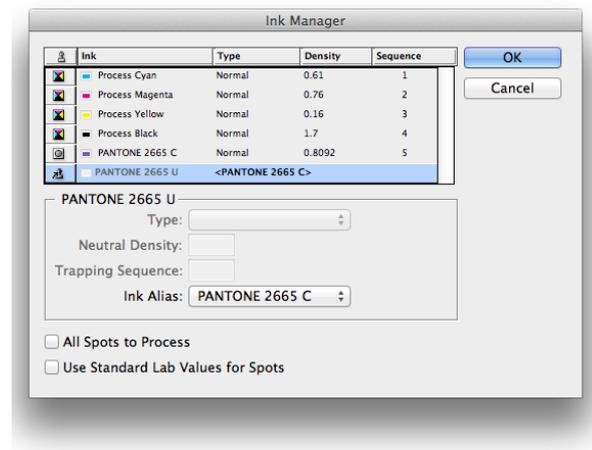
PDF/X

Output Intent Profile name: If you are creating a PDF with a PDF/X standard then the Profile here will be the same as the Colour Destination profile above.

Output Condition Name: This is just a text field for information.

Output Condition Identifier: This is the conditions of the output profile.

Registry Name: And where it's registered.



InDesign Ink Manager

Advanced

Fonts

Subset fonts when percent of characters used is less than: 100%. This just saves space in the file as it only includes the characters needed to output the job and not the full set, which could be in the thousands of characters in newer opentype fonts.

OPI

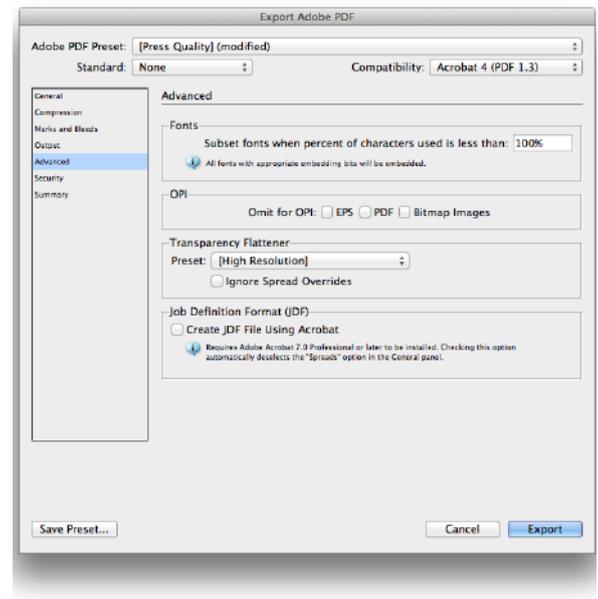
Omit for OPI: EPS, PDF, Bitmap Images. Leave these all **OFF**. These would mean that the image/illustration files are not included in the PDF but that you have to supply them separately to us and our server would reinsert them. This leads to many more issues than it solves.

Transparency Flattener

Preset: High, Medium or Low Resolution. You shouldn't need to set this and unless you have set the PDF Compatibility to Acrobat 4 (PDF 1.3) the option won't even be available. Sometimes you will need to flatten the transparency in InDesign if you are converting spot colours to CMYK and transparency flattening on the same objects as the results can be unpredictable if done outside of InDesign. Always check the resulting PDF.

Job Definition Format (JDF)

Create JDF file using Acrobat: Not required by us at the moment but it creates a second file with the .JDF extension that contains more information about your job like number of pages, size, colours etc.



InDesign Advanced PDF settings

Security

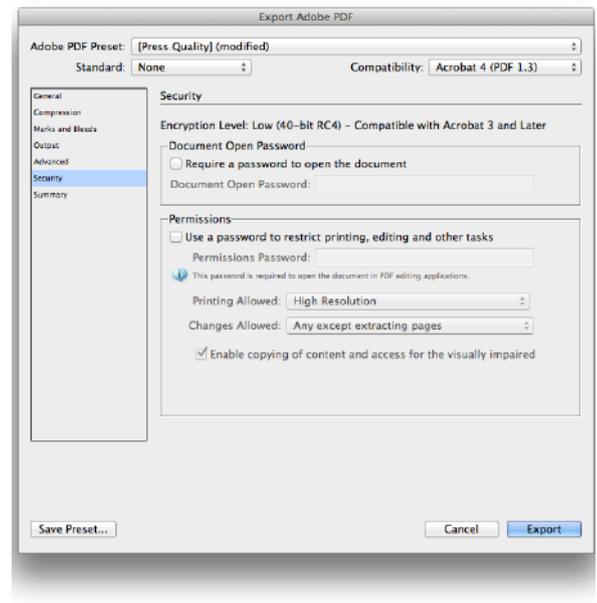
Document Open Password

Require a password to open the document: OFF.

Obviously if we can't open the file we can't process your job.

Permissions

Use a password to restrict printing, editing and other tasks: OFF. We need full access permissions to be able to print and modify the PDF for imposition and trapping.



InDesign Security PDF settings

Summary

This is just an area where it lists all the settings and displays any warnings.

Recap

Although we don't force you to use a default set of settings the below are the settings we would advise that you use, but please ensure you understand the reasoning behind these as described above.

Compression

Colour Images

Bicubic Downsampling to 300 pixels per inch for images above 450 pixel per inch with Automatic (JPEG) compression and Maximum Image Quality

Greyscale Images

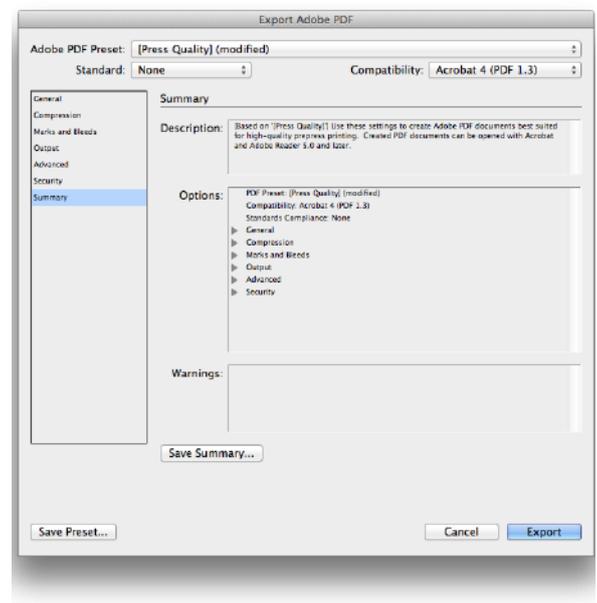
Bicubic Downsampling to 300 pixels per inch for images above 450 pixel per inch with Automatic (JPEG) compression and Maximum Image Quality

Monochrome Images

Bicubic Downsampled to 1200 pixels per inch when above 1800 pixel per inch with CCITT Group 4 compression

Compress Text and Line Art: **ON**

Crop Image Data to Frames: **ON**



InDesign Summary PDF settings

Marks and Bleed

Crop Marks

ON

Bleed

3mm all round

Output

Colour Conversion

Convert to Destination (Preserve Numbers)

Destination

Document CMYK

Profile Inclusion Policy

Don't Include Profiles

Advanced

OPI

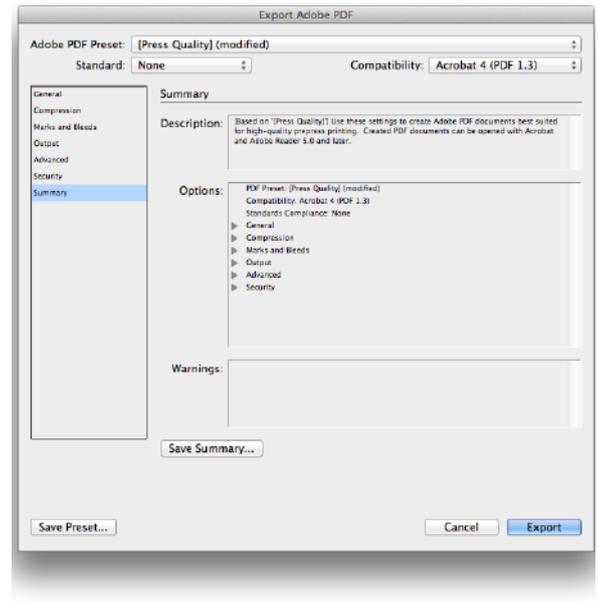
All OFF

Transparency Flattener

OFF or HIGH Resolution

Security

All OFF



InDesign Summary PDF settings

Any questions, please contact us, we're here to help.

27 Black Moor Road,
Verwood, Dorset.
BH31 6BE.

enquiries@dayfold.com
01202 812208

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