# Spots and Layers

How to identify artwork for Spot UV,
Cutters, Foils and other non-printing elements

Let's start by making clear a very important point. Layers and Spot colours are 2 completely different things and just because artwork is put on a layer named for example 'Spot UV' does not make it a spot colour and usable as a non printing effect.

Layers are for helping you to organise your artwork and each layer can contain all the colours used in your design.
Spot colours are for splitting your artwork into different coloured elements for printing, all the visible layers are flattened and spot colours are key to defining the different printing colours and non printing effects.
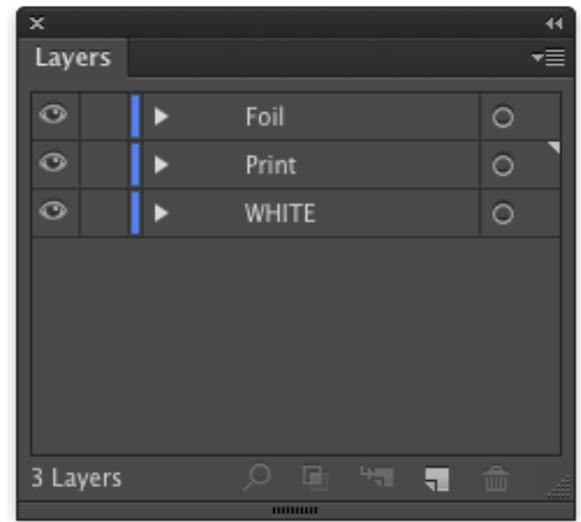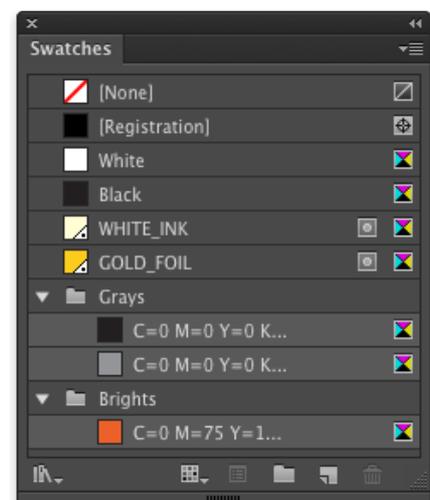

Layers in Illustrator
Naming layers is a good idea to help organise your artwork, but they're not for separating your artwork for print.

BUT... just creating lots of spot colours and colouring your elements in them is missing a very important part of the process. It's very easy to create spot swatches from the Pantone library and then use them for Spot UV, Foils & Cutters etc. However that then expect us to be mind readers to know that Pantone XXX means cutter guide, or that Pantone XXX is a Spot UV element. Naming the colours accurately and not as a default name will avoid us having to ask & will ultimately speed up the production of your job.

The solution is simple......rename your colour swatch! It really is that simple, if you want a Spot UV, then call the colour Spot UV, if you want Gold Foil, then call it Gold Foil. It really does help a lot and means we have a chance of understanding your files when you send them in.


Colour swatches in Illustrator
Name your SPOT colour swatches to make it clear what's what.

Now there's one more thing you may want to think about.

Should these non-printing elements be overprinting or knocking out? Most of the time it's possible for us to change the behaviour of spot colours in a supplied PDF file from knocking out to overprinting so if you've not set your cutter guide to overprint then we can probably sort that out for you so that it doesn't knock a hole in your artwork. Unfortunately there's no 100% rule for setting this up as let's say for instance that you are wanting to use a foil over some printed artwork, most foils are opaque so you can't see through it, so do you want the print under it to be knocked out, which could lead to fit issues or do you want the foil to sit on top of the artwork, which on occasion could result in you seeing a faint image through your foil. Then think what would you like if the foil was a clear holographic foil that you can see through, then the rules change again.

The earlier in the design process that you think about this and talk to us the earlier we can assist you in setting the artwork up correctly for each different situation.
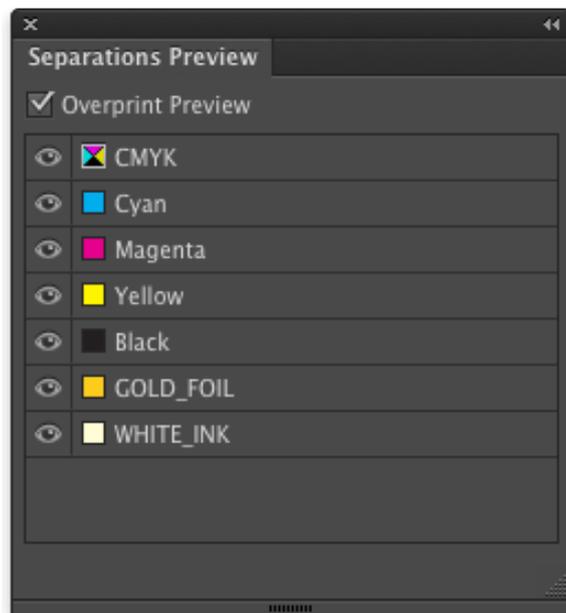
Separations Preview
It's a good idea to use the Separations Preview in Illustrator, InDesign & Acrobat to check you've got the right elements set in the right spot colour.

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

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