



GRADIENTS IN ADOBE ILLUSTRATOR

GRADIENTS IN DIFFERENT VERSIONS OF ADOBE ILLUSTRATOR

Before Illustrator v3.2, gradients are created by a series of similarly color objects. These objects, whether lines or boxes, when put close together, give the illusion of a smooth transition from one color to another. Gradients created with this method are called "blends."

With the introduction of Illustrator v5.0, you can create true gradients by defining the starting and ending colors. In addition, you can set up a gradient with multiple colors. This method dramatically simplifies the process of creating a gradient, and is preferred by almost all graphics professionals.

HOW COLORS ARE DEFINED IN EACH TYPE OF GRADIENT FILL

To create a blend, you color two objects with different colors, and using the blend tool, click on the corresponding point of each object to generate the intermediate steps. These steps are additional objects generated by the program, each one with a slight color variation. If a modification should be made to the blend, you will need to delete all the intermediate steps, and re-create the blend by clicking on the points of the starting and ending objects. The starting and ending objects can be of any color, including those from the Pantone Matching System (PMS). However, when a blend is created between 2 PMS colors, all of the intermediate steps will be converted to process (CMYK), since there is no way to use PMS colors as component colors (i.e. you cannot mix two PMS colors in Illustrator). Now we have a dilemma. Although the colors look correct on the screen, they will NOT print right when spot-color separations are made. Only the two end objects will show up, while all the intermediate steps disappear.

To create a gradient fill in Illustrator v5.0 or later, you would define the starting and ending colors, and the program will generate the transition between the two colors without adding any objects. To make modifications, you simply change the color specifications, and the transition is generated automatically by the program. When printing separations, spot colors will separate correctly according to their settings in Illustrator.

KNOWN COMPATIBILITIES PROBLEMS

With a gradient created in Illustrator v5.0 or later, there could be incompatibilities when making print outs. Here we are going to discuss one specific problem with TrapWise.

If the gradient is applied to an object in Illustrator by the gradient tool (by dragging it over an object to show only part of the gradient), then it will NOT print properly through TrapWise. In this situation, the separations need to be printed with process colors.

If the job is going to print as 4-color process:

1. Save each Illustrator file in v3.2 EPS format. All spot-color gradients will be converted to 4-color process blends.
2. Update the image in Quark or PageMaker.
3. The file can now be trapped properly with TrapWise.

If the job is going to print with spot colors:

1. In Illustrator, substitute all spot colors with process colors. For example, if you are using PMS 293 Blue and 185 Red, change everything that's 293 to Cyan, and everything that's 185 to Magenta. The simplest way to accomplish this is to re-define your Custom Colors with just one component process ink. If you have more than three spot colors, leave the ones not used in gradients as spot colors.
2. Save your file in v3.2 EPS format. When you do this, all your spot-color gradients will be converted to 4-color process equivalents. But since you already defined Custom Colors with only one process component, this will not make a difference in terms of color density.
3. Update the image in Quark or PageMaker.
4. The file can now be trapped properly with TrapWise.