The future belongs to PDF X - Faubel thinks so too!

Technological progress is everywhere to be seen and no end is in sight. This is also true of the printing industry and especially of the prepress sector!

Everything is getting faster, more complex and short-lived, a situation that modern companies have to adjust to.
Today, there are plenty of advanced graphics and layout applications available to create print data. Each of them has got its pros and cons, technical strengths and weaknesses often due to different platforms being used (Microsoft Windows and/or Apple Mac OS). Because of differences in the architecture of these operating systems, there is always a risk of producing documents that are incompatible with one system or another: the print image has changed or files cannot be read, and many other things.

Yet, the data to be printed has to be complete, which means all the fonts, images, logos etc used must be at hand to complete the print job successfully. That is why we have large data volumes which can seriously hamper flexible handling and swift data exchange. In the early nineties, Adobe who produces DTP software, developed a new file format to tackle the problem. This innovation called "Portable Document Format" - in short PDF - was to allow the exchange of files between all operating systems whilst ensuring that these files all look the same across all systems. This was such a terrific idea that it was quickly adopted, enhanced and continuously improved by the printing industry. As a result, it became more and more of a standard over the years. Today, a finished document or layout can be issued as a PDF by almost every software tool.

The PDF format contains every single layout data needed such as fonts, images, etc. It is possible to view the finished layout as it is meant to be ultimately printed. Everything is packed into one space-saving, operating system-independent file, which means that any printer can actually work with this one file. Sounds great, doesn't it? Yes, well only in theory, unfortunately: practice still looks a lot different!

Indeed, there are so many different types of errors that can occur in a PDF file: fonts are not properly embed or not at all, colors and spaces are not correctly defined, the image resolution is too low, the file creator has used the wrong settings, perhaps because he or she didn't know any better, and far more. "Repairing" faulty PDF files is mostly time-consuming and expensive. Avoiding such errors demands a lot of expertise and know-how but even more of it is necessary to eliminate them. This is precisely why DIN standards (PDF X) have been developed to define exactly what a printable PDF should be like.

To remain at the cutting edge, we have recently invested into prepress. In addition to a modern Computer to Plate System (Ctp), we have set up a new workflow – a native one, i.e. without prior conversion – that can handle PDF X-conforming data and prepare it for being issued on a printing plate and/or on a film at an amazing speed.

To comply with state-of-the-art technology requirements, we have taken the opportunity to have our prepress process certified by the Swiss expert organisation "PDF X-ready" (www.pdfx-ready.ch). This certificate confirms that we are able to create and process PDF X data. Through staff training and technical advances, we are in a position to offer the highest quality and safety in manufacturing whilst preparing for the future.