

# Tips for a Successful Wine Label Press Check

*A pre-press and on-press checklist.*

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**You have made it to the press check!**  
The part of the process where you see the designs and hard work come to life. Typically, it is what feels like the home stretch for our clients.

Press checks are an exciting time, but it's important to be prepared to ensure the process goes smoothly.

To prep you for before, during, and after the press check we're sharing our process at the Offset Brand Studio for successful navigating this crucial step in the process which culminates with bottle ready labels.

***\*It is important to remember in most cases, once labels are approved at a press check the production of all labels proceeds immediately so being prepared is paramount.***

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## Pre-Press Check:

*Items that should be completed before the press check is scheduled:*

- ☐ **TTB approval**
  - All label artwork should be submitted to the TTB for COLA (Certificates of Label Approval) before it goes to your print vendor. That being said, people often parallel starting the quoting process with their print vendors with getting their TTB COLAs. The TTB's website provides insight into its current processing times to get a sense of the most appropriate way forward.
  - Printer proofs should not be approved until you have a TTB COLA. If you go to print without having your TTB COLA, some printers will require you to sign a waiver.
- ☐ **Approval on proofs from the print vendor**
  - Make sure to check everything carefully before signing off. Not only is content, color and tooling important but roll information. If you are unsure of how the label rolls need to be for your bottling line, please make sure someone from the bottling team verifies the information.
  - If you are having a hard time visualizing what the emboss will look like, ask the print vendor to see a 3D render of the die before it is ordered. This might be a good tool to help ease your mind if you are worried about anything. Please note, the depth they show in the 3D render is not always achievable on press. It is a good tool though if you have any questions.
- ☐ **Prepare and send special match colors or prints for matching color**
  - If special match swatches are called out, color swatches or prints or illustrations to be matched for color should be supplied to the print vendor ahead of time. That way the print vendor has time to work on color matching before your arrival at the press check.
  - If possible send the print vendor a set and keep a set for your record and reference.
- ☐ **When planning for the press check, expect to be available most of the day**
  - The printing facility would love to get press checks perfect on the first pull but most of the time there are subtle changes to be made. Depending on the equipment, some changes or adjustments might take longer to achieve than you expect. And unfortunately, sometimes there are mechanical issues that need to be worked out.
- ☐ **Communicate what order you'd like to proof labels**
  - Let the vendor know beforehand if there is a specific item you want to see first or if you have a priority order. That way the print vendor can review the job and see if your priority order works for their production schedule and setup.

## Day of Press Check:

*Items to bring with you on the day of the press check:*

- ☐ **Bottles used for each varietal being printed**
  - Full wine bottles help assess label colors on the actual product. Empty bottles will also work to help see the label on the bottle and how the curvature of the bottle affects the label and design, it's just not as optimal as a full bottle.
  - *HELPFUL TIP: When applying the label to the bottle at the press check, first apply it to your pants or shirt to get some lint on the back. That will allow you to more easily take the label off.*
- ☐ **Prints of mechanical files and prints of proofs provided by the vendor**
  - These should be printed to scale. That way information and details on embellishments can be compared and reviewed at accurate sizing.
- ☐ **Color matches**
  - Pantone chips
  - Color swatches of special match colors
  - Original pieces of artwork
  - Prints of artwork to match color
  - Prints/comps provided by print vendor ahead of time that were approved
  - Foil chips of intended color
- ☐ **Existing portfolio wine bottles**
  - If this new label will live with any existing products it is good to bring them to the press check to line up all the wine/labels and assess the new labels with the existing portfolio.
  - Make sure the bottles you grab are good examples of the packaging and colors are the ones you like.
  - *HELPFUL TIP: We like to bring a binder with unlined white paper in it to keep samples of each pull/label sample we are provided. We note what we like along with what we asked to be adjusted. Not only is it good for record-keeping, but it is also fun to see where you started and where you ended up.*
- ☐ **Don't be afraid to ask questions and speak up**
  - While you are at the press check we encourage you to ask questions and not be afraid to speak up if you do not like something or you want to see an adjustment. Collaborating with the printing team on what you are seeing and what you hoped to see is important so they can make the correct adjustments. That being said, there are a few things that the print team is not able to change the day of. Any emboss dies, deboss dies or foil dies are done at a third party vendor and the actual die is not adjustable the day of. The impression of foil on the paper is adjustable, to a point. The depth/impression of the emboss and deboss dies are also adjustable to a point. Again, ask questions and collaborate and work with the printing team to help your vision come to fruition.

## At the End of the Press Check:

*Items that are good to take with you at the conclusion of your press check:*

- ☐ **Item/Color Standards provided by the print vendor**
  - These are helpful to have when you receive your label shipment for comparison reasons. The Item/Color Standards are what the vendor will be using to match when your labels are produced now and in the future.
  - *HELPFUL TIP: Keep these in a drawer out of sunlight to help preserve the color and keep them safe.*
- ☐ **Some samples of the work produced while you were at the press check**
  - If you cannot stay to see all the items, ask your customer service representative to pull samples and send them to you.
  - Don't forget to bring home any art, color targets, or bottles you brought with you.