# C·SQUARED

How to Prepare Contour Cut Print Jobs

Use the following steps to configure an Adobe Illustrator file for custom contour cutting:

1. In Illustrator, ensure that the Swatches tab is visible (under the Window menu click Swatches to view).

2. Click the arrow on the Swatches tab to display the Swatches menu.

**3.** Select New Swatch from the Swatches menu to open the Add Swatch dialog.
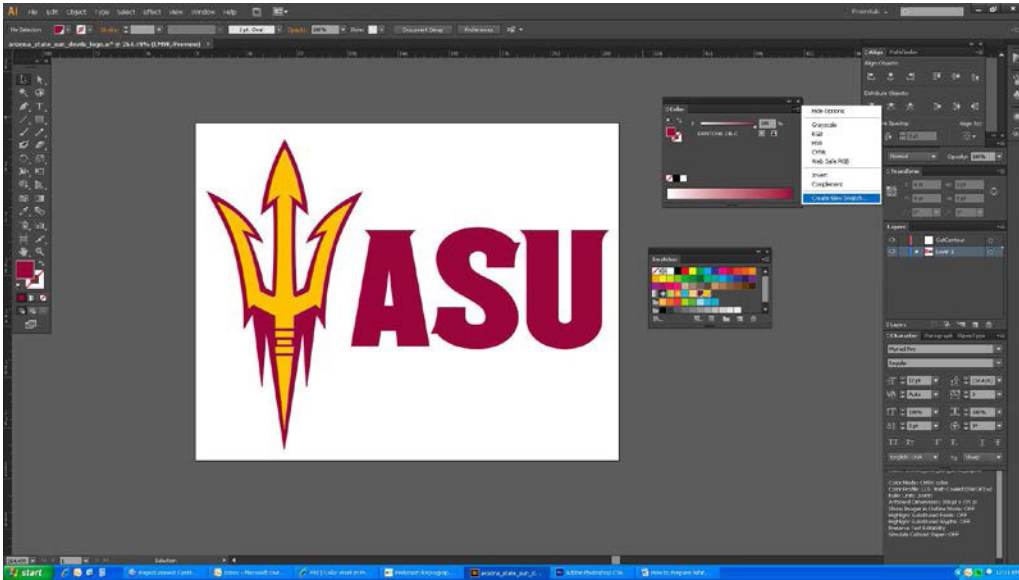
**4.** Within the Add Swatch dialog, enter the following information:

▪ **Name** – Enter the name CutContour. *(Case Sensitive)*

▪ **Color Type** – Use the drop-down menu to select Spot Color.

▪ **Swatch Color** – Use the sliders to adjust the swatch color. Since white can be hard to distinguish you can make this color any value that will help you see the design better.
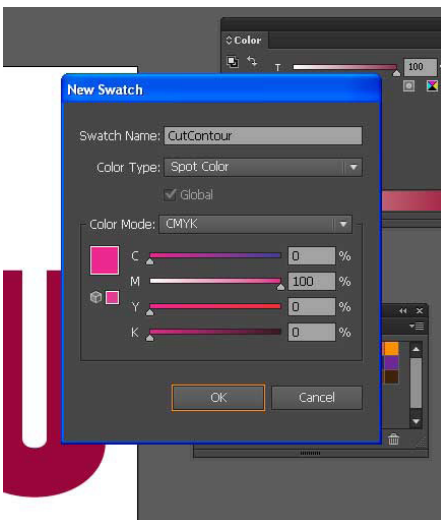
5. Click OK to save your changes and close the Add Swatch dialog. You should now have a new Spot color in your swatch palette, which is indicated with a small dot on bottom right side of swatch.
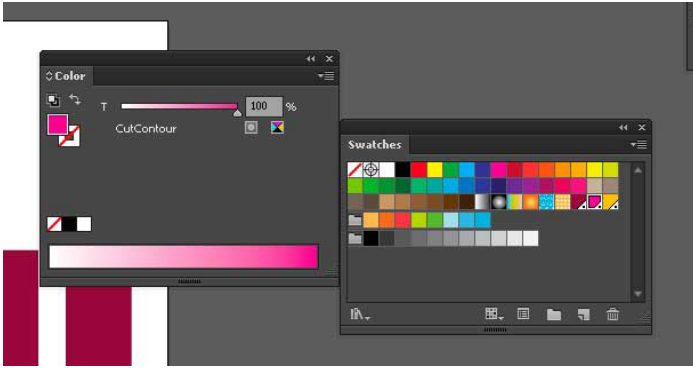

6. Create a custom path where you need the graphic contour cut out and assign the newly created "CutContour" swatch to the "Stroke" color of the custom contour cut path. Make sure to place the custom contour path on its own Layer. Also make sure all text is converted to Outlines. See the example below.
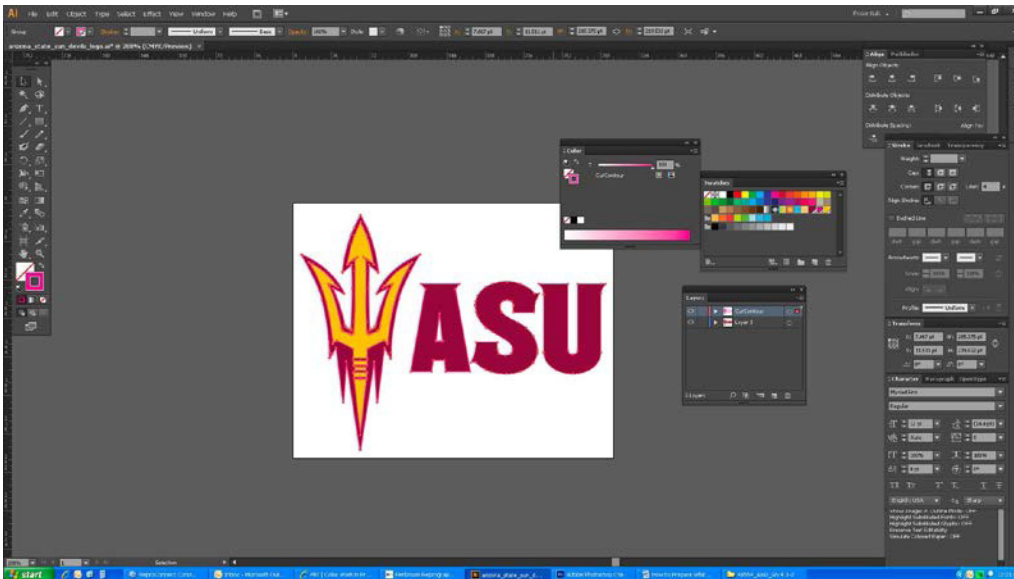

7. Make sure to add bleed behind the original graphic to ensure no white background color is left on the edges of the contour cut when finished. Create a new Layer to place the bleed elements on and make sure it is the last layer in order to ensure the bleed elements are behind all the other elements contained in the original graphics. Make a copy of the original graphic elements to use as bleed and place the copy on the newly created 'Bleed" Layer.
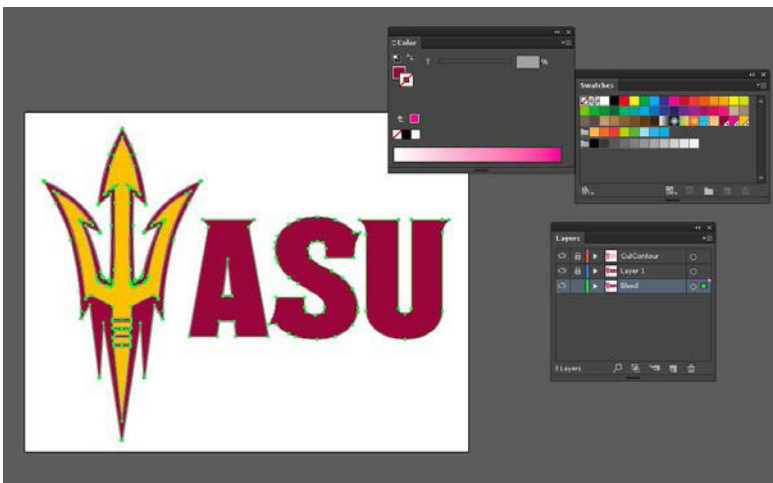
8. Select the copied graphic elements from the "Bleed" Layer and use the "Offset Path…" command from the "Object" –– "Path" pull-down menu to extend the color behind the original graphic elements to act as bleed.
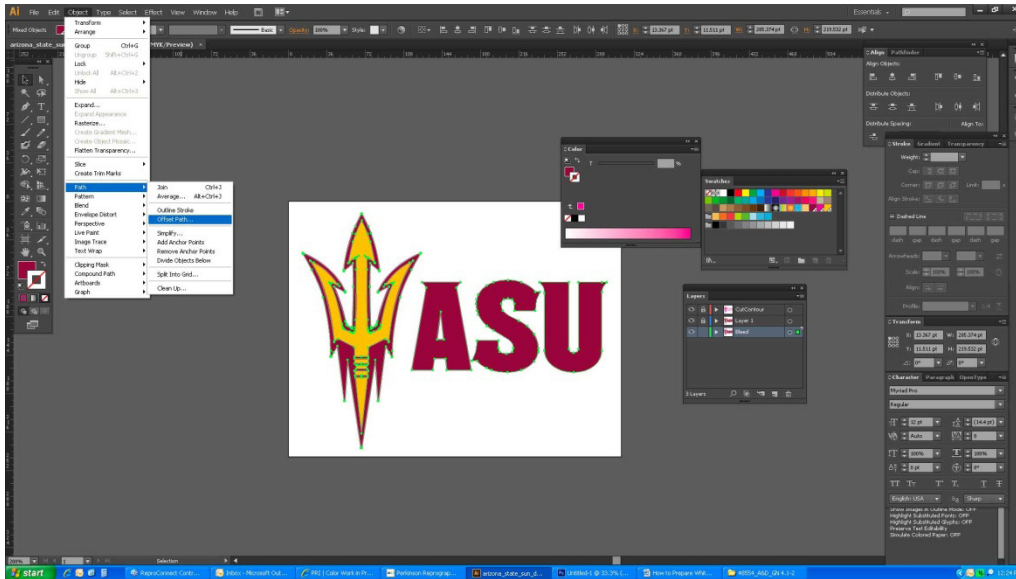
9. Select an "Offset" value that will allow for plenty of extra color bleed behind the original graphic elements.
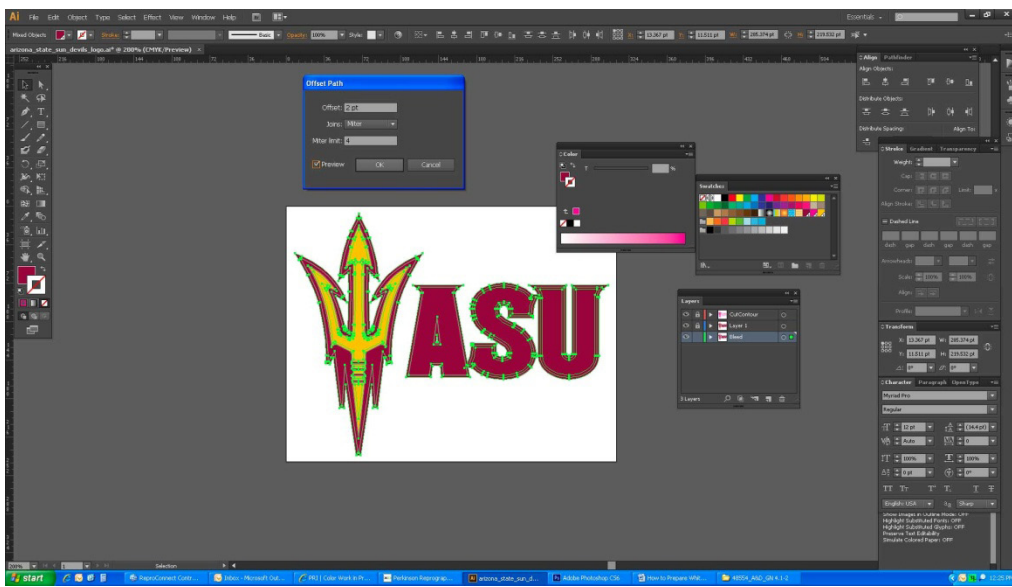
10. Save the file as an Adobe Illustrator (.AI) file or an Adobe Acrobat (.PDF) file for production.
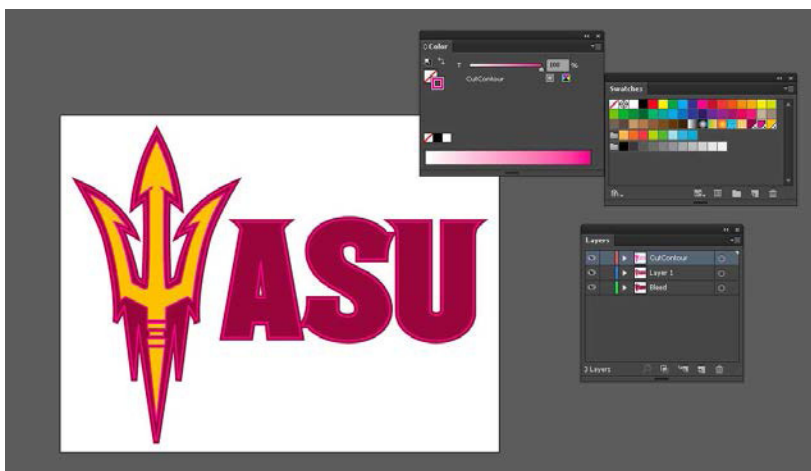
11. If contour cutting an Image graphic such as a photograph, place the image into Adobe Illustrator and follow steps 1 through 6 to add the custom contour cut path needed to cut out the image.

Make sure the image file is large than the custom contour cut path to allow for bleed.

Make sure to "Embed" the image file from the "Save" options if saving the final file as an Adobe Illustrator (.AI) file. Otherwise save the final production file as an Adobe Acrobat (.PDF) file using the "Press Quality" setting.