

Flexo tools for Adobe® Photoshop®



Printing images in a flexographic packaging workflow require significant expertise from the trade shop or printer/converter. DeskPack for Adobe® Photoshop® delivers that expertise to the desktop, within the industry's favorite retouching application, Adobe® Photoshop®.

Three tools for perfect flexo images

DeskPack flexo tools resolve printing issues specific to flexo, and allow Adobe® Photoshop® operators to visualize changes. Tools include:

- viewX for flexo print and plate inspection.
- FlexoClean controls efficient removal of scum dots.
- the FlexoFix image filter to dramatically reduce retouching while preparing images for the flexo press.

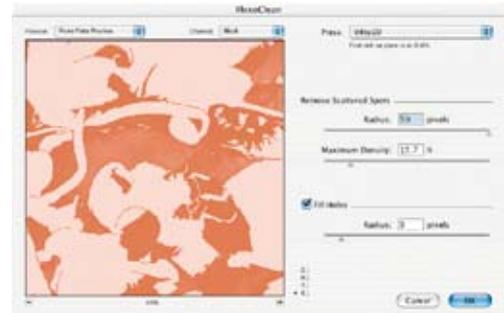
Novice flexo operators will develop images ready for flexo, while experienced retouchers will appreciate how the flexo tools improve the quality and productivity of work.

viewX: a flexo image preview

DeskPack creates viewX layers that, when selected, allow an operator to inspect images for flexo. viewX can demonstrate a print preview, plate preview (displaying a single, plate channel), and total area coverage (TAC) preview that highlights areas where the TAC value exceeds a given limit.

Print preview can accurately predict:

- Breaking out highlights
- Abrupt edges in black highlights
- Isolated pixel groups that may print as scum dots
- General loss of dynamic range and print saturation



FlexoClean: a filter to clean separations

The FlexoClean image filter automatically removes isolated spots from separations, based on size and density. The result is cleaner printing plates. Small holes in plates can be automatically filled with minimum dots.

FlexoFix: an image-filter to prepare offset images for flexo

Most images are separated, retouched and proofed for offset. But for flexo, retouching must reflect the flexo printing process, assisting the reproduction of low dot percentages. Rather than applying color management, FlexoFix conducts context-sensitive changes to the image to assist flexographic printing. FlexoFix provides four strategies:

- **Avoid highlight C, M, Y tonal jumps:** Tonal jumps occur where a transition is found between dots and no dots. All dots have a minimum size, which print quite dark due to the physical limitations of the flexo process. Where dots are absent, the substrate color is seen and the transition can be very abrupt. FlexoFix eliminates the transition by filling in the no-dot areas with dots.
- **Avoid unwanted darkening:** Plate making curves typically bump up highlights and lower mid-tones more than required, to preserve subtle highlight contrasts. In image areas where there is no highlight contrast, bump-up curves are useless, rendering a less faithful reproduction. FlexoFix corrects for image areas needlessly darkened by dot gain curves. Other image areas are untouched. The end result guarantees preservation of detail and colors closer to target.
- **Compensate for loss of saturation:** In composite colors, low percentages of a third color may print too dark – hence less saturated than intended. Flexo printed images look dirty and dull. FlexoFix restores the original saturation by raising the percentages of the other two color components. For example, in a flesh tone, magenta and yellow will be slightly raised – only where cyan may print too dark.
- **Influence the black starting point:** The most noticeable tonal jump is found in the black separation, especially when skeleton-black is used. With FlexoFix, the black is shortened a little further, moving tonal jumps deeper into the shadows – much less noticeable. Thus, black is used where it really contributes to sharpness and contrast.



DeskPack is an integrated part of Esko's complete packaging solution, the most advanced workflow environment for the packaging industry. DeskPack turns Adobe® Illustrator® and Adobe® Photoshop® into full-fledged design and prepress production tools.