Tech-Neal-calities

Contour Cutting with FlexiSIGN ™

Preparing the image

Prepare the image by generating a line path or contour around the image first. This line will have special properties indicating to FlexiSIGN that this line should not be included with the print output, but is to be cutting only.

Vector graphic images are fairly simple. The difficulty lies when creating a contour around a bitmap image or certain portions of the bitmap (for example, there may be white space surrounding the image). Therefore, it is important to prepare your image correctly.

1. Create the contour

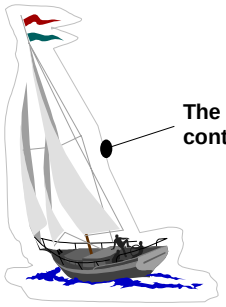
There are two methods to contour an object.

Method #1: Select an object, and from the EFFECTS menu, click CONTOUR CUT.

This will provide a dialog box for setting the distance of the contour (positive or negative), inside or outside the object, etc. Click Apply and it will automatically place a contour according to your specifications.

Method #2: This is useful when an object has already been created and can be converted into a contour line. This is accomplished by selecting an object and, from the ARRANGE menu, pointing to CONTOUR CUT, and then clicking on MAKE CONTOUR CUT.

***Note**: When creating a contour line, it will appear as a thin light gray line to distinguish it from other lines on the drawing. The software will only cut these lines, not print them.*



Once the contour has been created, the image is ready to be printed.

Contouring Bitmap Images

When creating a contour around a bitmap, only the image's bounding box will be contoured. Since you may want to create a contour around a specific portion of the bitmap (for example, there may be white space surrounding this image), you can use some of FlexiSIGN's bitmap tools to manually create a contour around specific element of the bitmap.

Two of the methods for doing this are:

- Use the bitmap editing tools that are incorporated in FlexiSIGN to isolate the portion of the bitmap.
- Use ColorTrace to trace the colors either individually or the whole image.

***Note**: For instructions on how to manage your bitmaps for these applications, consult your FlexiSIGN manual under "Contouring Bitmap Images".*

Printing the Image

2. Rip and Print

Use the *RIP and Print* dialog box to send both the print job and the contour job to the *Production Manager*.

Under the *File* menu, click on *RIP and Print*

Before sending the job, make sure the following options are set correctly in the *RIP and Print Dialog* box:

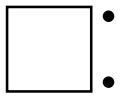
A. Select the correct printer in the RIP dialog box.

B. Select the correct cutting device under contour cut.

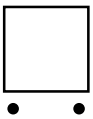
C. Click on the Advance tab and then click on the Contour button. The Contour Options dialog box will appear.

D. Under device name, select the Graphtec cutter you are using.

E. Click on the Registration Marks and select either the Vertical or Horizontal.



***Vertical* will print the registration marks on the side of the image.**



***Horizontal* will print the registration marks along the front or leading edge of the image.**

Tips:

- *Select Horizontal for the ease of locating the marks and Vertical for better accuracy on longer contour cuts.*
- *When producing multiple copies, it is usually best to check "One Set for All Copies."*
- *Put the job status as "Hold on List." This will give you better control when you are sending the jobs.*

3. Click Send

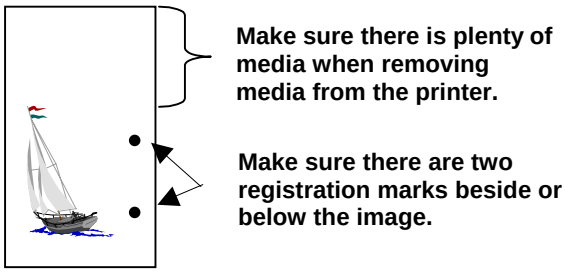
Once you have adjusted the settings, click Send. FlexiSIGN will send two separate jobs to Production Manager. In the Production Manager, the print job will be listed under the printer driver and the cutting job will be listed under the Graphtec cutting device you have chosen.

Cutting the Image

4. Remove the image from the printer.

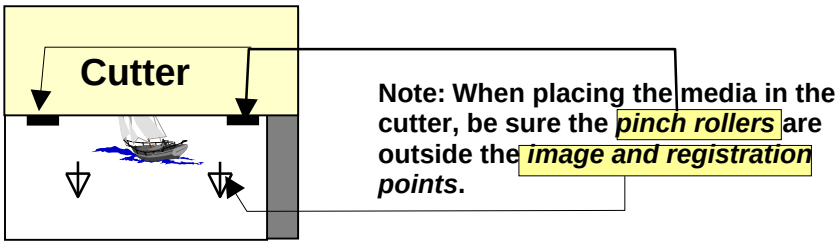
Caution: *When removing the media from the printer, be sure to have plenty of media at the end of the image. If there is not enough, this could cause difficulties when loading the media later.*

Once the image has been printed, there should be two registration marks either on the side or below the image with the numbers 1 and 2 beside each mark.



The registration marks should have an arrow pointing to the leading edge and a number 1 or 2.

5. Place the media in the cutter.



6. Latch the wheels onto the media and press ROLL-1.

This will find the leading edge of the media.

Aligning the Print and Contour.

7. Go to your Production Manager and click on the contour job.

A dialog box will appear asking whether you would like to use the *Interactive (Manual)* or the *Digitize (Bomb sight)* method.

The difference is that *Interactive alignment* controls the alignment process from your computer, whereas *Digitize alignment* controls the alignment process from the cutter.

If you are communicating to the cutter via the serial port (COM1:, COM2:) continue below otherwise start at step 12.

8. Click Digitize alignment (Bomb sight).

Follow the instructions on the screen. Below is just an overview of the steps to take.

9. Find registration mark # 1.

The Production Manager will ask for point 1. If you have not already moved the pointer tool to the first registration mark, do so now *using the arrow keys on the control panel on the cutter. Be sure the cutter is in READY mode.*

Note: *For the* ***FC4100 series*** *the light point will turn on. Other models should use a pen or the bombsight loupe.*

After positioning the pointing tool over registration mark # 1 and clicking OK on the computer screen, Production Manager will ask for the registration mark # 2.

10. Find registration mark # 2.

Once again, use the arrow keys on the control panel of the cutter to position the pointing tool over registration mark #2 and click the OK key on the computer screen.

11. Place the cutter tool into the holder and continue by clicking the OK key on the computer screen.

The software will now cut the contour.

If you are communicating to the cutter via the parallel port (LPT1:, LPT2:) do the following:

12. Click Interactive (Manual) alignment.

Follow the simple instruction on the screen. Below is just an overview of the steps to take.

13. Find registration mark # 1.

The Production Manager will ask for point 1. Move the cutter's pointer tool to the first registration mark *using the arrow keys on the* ***screen***.

After positioning the pointing tool over registration mark # 1 and clicking OK on the computer screen, Production Manger will ask for the registration mark # 2.

14. Find registration mark # 2.

Once again, use the arrow keys *on the screen* to position the pointing tool over registration mark 2 and click the OK key on the computer screen.

15. Place the cutter tool into the holder and continue by clicking the OK key on the computer screen.

The software will now cut the contour.