



PrintPlace Improves Process Control with SpotOn!™

With the promise of one-day turnaround and guaranteed end-to-end color management, PrintPlace has become a trusted online provider of customized printed products. It goes without saying that process control and quality assurance rank high for a company that produces 60 make readies a day. For some print professionals, this could be a tall order to fill. For Matt Louis, workflow expert and G7® Professional for PrintPlace, he found a way to make it work without compromising quality.

Louis' primary challenge was to improve the company's Customer Care response time. "Each customer complaint requires an investigation to determine if an issue stems from either improper expectations or from poor printing. This took a considerable amount of time because the information we needed was not readily available," noted Louis.

A SpotOn! Solution

In order to improve internal efficiencies, and in turn improve customer service, Louis implemented SpotOn!, a software tool that provides a visual dashboard of press conditions, enabling printers to fully realize the benefits of standardization and process control in the press room, in accordance with GRACoL® and SWOP® specifications. SpotOn! provides the tool Louis needed to verify if the color is G7 compliant.

"Good process control, quick investigations and credible proof of performance keep our phones lighting up for positive reasons, so we can focus on sales conversions," comments Louis. "I originally discovered SpotOn! to assist with press calibrations and was surprised to find such a powerful trending application."

SpotOn! provides a visual 'dashboard' for analysis of press conditions over time in a G7 context, regardless of the KCMYRGB solid aim points, which can be 12647-2, GRACoL, SWOP or any user-defined value. The trend graphs are valuable, as they indicate how aligned the press is to the target, and what Solid Ink Densities are necessary for proper control of the press run.

Passionate about Printing, Reducing Waste

When dealing with high-volume printing, the competitive nature of press operators thrives. PrintPlace houses two Komori presses managed by four seasoned operators. SpotOn! gives operators the feedback needed to control print jobs and to provide benchmarks to measure operators' performance. "SpotOn!'s query by metadata allows us to make reports per press, press crew, time line, job identification number, and stock. This helps us communicate G7 compliance with all levels of staff: press crews, customer service, and high-level management."

On its path to zero waste, or thereabout, Louis devised a custom control strip to satisfy SpotOn! requirements for data import and for online closed loop ink control. “To have an additional control strip for trending wasn’t an option for us. We try to use every square inch of our press forms. The ‘integrated’ control strip is scanned with an i1™ spectrophotometer from production pull sheets,” comments Louis.

As Good As It Gets

Louis recognizes that any technology is only as good as the users’ ability to understand the analysis. “SpotOn!’s multi-faceted charts serve as pictorial training guides to help our staff think in terms of CIElab by correlating density, hue, chroma, tvi, trap, NPDC, and dE. These graphs translate the metrics to what operators are familiar with,” comments Louis.

“When considering the cost of 40” presses and the paper we move through them, the cost of implementing SpotOn! is negligible,” notes Louis. “SpotOn! has become pivotal in PrintPlace’s press facility management and Customer Care Center. I wouldn’t calibrate a press without it.”

About PrintPlace

PrintPlace, based in Arlington, Texas, is a collaboration between print professionals, designers, and developers committed to delivering the best online printing experience. With a manufacturing facility that is ISO 9001 certified, a user friendly website powered by the industry’s most flexible quote tool, and instant proofing, PrintPlace has engineered a workflow that guarantees end-to-end color management. They offer more substrates than any other online printer, and quality and production capabilities that meet or surpass a commercial print shop. The difference is their dominant presence in the online world. For more information, go to www.printplace.com.

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