Improving Printer-Brand Relations

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South Bend, Indiana
“leave the winter blues behind and enjoy the sun....” I’m in.
Founded in 1930 by my grandfather Herman Mossberg...
Brand Color Customers:

NORDSTROM

j.jill

ALEX AND ANI

BIRCHBOX

MACY'S

BANANA REPUBLIC
Improving Printer-Brand Color Relations

Brands want Printers to “match color”.
Printers want Brands to provide standards or define that.

“Color” = Standard or Reference Color
“Match” = Tolerance

What color exactly do we match?
How close a match?
Challenges and Variables for Printers and Brands

Substrates! – What substrate is specified?

Paper or Synthetic
  Surface-Gloss, Mate, Uncoated
  Color Brightness and Brighteners
  Opacity

Paper samples from Verso’s “Paper Knowledge Seminar” in our color booth.
Challenges and Variables for Printers and Brands

**Inks**
4/C Process
“Spot Color” which ink pigments blended to “match” color

**Lighting**
Color Booths
vs Office
vs Outdoors
Measuring the light quality of a viewing booth.
Using a handheld spectrophotometer to measure light-booth color and conformance.
## Color Standard
What we often receive to “match” brand color standards.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Physical-Visual Standards</th>
<th>Numeric-Digital Standards</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>None</td>
<td>None</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“Match previous printed sample”</td>
<td>CIE lab data</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“Match PMS#”</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Printed Color Standard</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The value and limitations of numeric and visual standards

Physical-Visual Standards

+ Visual reference for printer at press
+ Actual print, actual substrate, actual density documented
  – Expensive, substrate and ink dependent
Potential issues of using Physical Standards

- A sample might be non-uniform (heterogeneous)
- Is getting old, color fades or changes
- Metermerizm issues (pigments issue)
- Fluorescent issues (OBAs) (substrate or ink may be UV sensitive)
- Finishing may change appearance (varnishing, lamination, calendaring...)
- The surface may not be smooth
The value and limitations of numeric and visual standards

Numeric-Digital Standards

+ Easily communicated, inexpensive
+ Eliminates substrate, ink and lighting variables (spectral data only)
- Printer provides a proof that may or may not match color standard
  – Not all printers can “match” a color from numeric only standards
Potential issues of using Numeric CIE Lab only Standards

- Lab values may come from different illuminant or observer
- Light condition dependent
- Potential metamerism issue
A Printer’s Perspective:

What we would like to receive from a Brand for their critical color standards?

**Ideal**

- A printed Color Standard
- Spectral Data – CXF format
- Numeric tolerance

**Acceptable**

- A printed sample to match
- CIE Lab data
- Visual tolerance
A Printer’s Perspective:

What we provide – Rollouts.
A Printer’s Perspective:
What we provide – Printed samples
A Printer’s Perspective:
What we provide – Standard Books
A Printer’s Perspective:
What we provide – Color Boards
A Printer’s Perspective: What we provide – CIE or Spectral data.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>CIE color values</th>
<th>DS0 / 2 degree</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>L</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>M0</td>
<td>97.952</td>
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<tr>
<td>M1</td>
<td>98.3731</td>
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<tr>
<td>M2</td>
<td>97.7187</td>
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<tr>
<td>M3</td>
<td>96.8429</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
Conclusions: Brands.

Ideally Brands will invest in developing physical-visual and numeric-digital color standards for their most critical brand colors, and provide those to their printing resources. Ideally, printed color standards with visual tolerances and numeric spectral data, or CIE Lab data. Let your printer know ahead what you expect of them regarding the tolerances for matching a brand color standard.

Expect printers to provide a an off-press proof or roll-out (or even a press-proof if warranted – usually additional costs) along with their stated tolerances for “matching” your brand colors.
Finally,

As in almost all successful relationships, open, honest communication prevents a lot of friction and disappointment. If Brands can communicate and provide clear visual and numeric color standard and tolerance expectations, printer’s have the best opportunity to complying with expectations or communicating their limitations up front.
Thank you for attending!