

## **Mellow Colour PrintSpec™ case study: The Midas Press**

- **Issue:** Needed to implement a colour control system for assessing colour reproduction job-to-job, device-to-device, proof-to-press for print conforming to the international standard: ISO 12647 specification for offset lithography.
- **Solution:** Mellow Colour's **PrintSpec™** system, which facilitates measurable, predictable and consistent CMYK print, matching to the targets and specifications of ISO 12647

The Midas Press is a sheet-fed litho print company, with over 37 years experience in delivering high quality, cost-effective print solutions to its clients. As a traditional commercial printer The Midas Press produces a broad spectrum of print including stationary, forms, leaflets, point of sale, posters, brochures, catalogues and annual reports. In order to assure customers of the highest quality standards, The Midas Press has invested in a range of high-tech products, ranging from Heidelberg presses, DuPont™ Cromalin® and Mellow Colour's **PrintSpec** system.

Supplying print both directly and in-directly to blue chip and high prestige companies such as BMW, Williams Lea and Land Rover, matching brand and corporate colours, plus maintaining a consistent colour output is integral to the success of the business.

With a typical print run of 20,000, The Midas Press prints to five Heidelberg presses, one 12-colour, two 6-colour, one 5-colour and one 2-colour, often running various jobs for one client across multiple presses. In such a demanding production environment, it became increasingly evident that the business needed a new solution to provide a more accurate, measurable way of assessing its colour reproduction from job-to-job, press-to-press and proof-to-print. The solution came in the form of Mellow Colour's **PrintSpec**.

Terry Copeland, pre-press manager at The Midas Press has been responsible for the implementation and training of the tool: "Offset printing can be wasteful and the results often unpredictable, something that **PrintSpec** is addressing," said Terry. "We used to use an in-house standard, but our customers were experiencing colour variations across a range of prints and from different suppliers. We needed a system that allowed us and other printers to conform to an international standard, in

order to supply print to the same blue-chip customers. Until **PrintSpec** was developed we were not aware of a tool that offered such functionality for conforming to the ISO 12647 specification.”

Using a spectrometer and colour bar on the print, **PrintSpec** measures the spectral L\*a\*b values, grey balance and dot gain that the press produces. This information can be analysed and compared to the ISO 12647 specification for CMYK offset litho printing. By comparing data from different prints, job-to-job, proof-to-press and proof-to-print, users can ensure that colour is replicated accurately each time a job is run, regardless of different variables.

From the word go The Midas Press was able to establish which inks and presses weren't in tolerance – today everything is calibrated, measured and controlled. For some of the colour work it is producing, for example some very fine artwork for a well known auction house, which is made up of very intricate colours and shades, calibration has been key in replicating subtle hues and establishing a consistent grey balance.

In operation, the job is loaded onto the press and up to a couple of hundred copies run to ensure that the press is in spec. The on-press image control helps maintain the tolerances while the job is running. Once the print has been produced, a spectrophotometer is used to read the colour bar. This is then compiled into a report, with the printer able to compare these specs to previous jobs or the same jobs run on different presses. Getting colour right in the first instance has enabled The Midas Press to maintain these standards.

Working for Williams Lea, The Midas Press, along with all other print suppliers are required to conform to ISO 12647. Each of William Lea's suppliers is audited to ensure that they comply with this standard for 4-colour printing. Every quarter Midas Press submits live colour bars from jobs, which Williams Lea will measure against ISO specifications. For all Williams Lea's jobs this ensures consistency across its entire vendor base and clients can trust that no matter which supplier the print comes from it should appear the same.

“This is a service we were keen to establish for the benefit of all of our clients, particularly if they are running multiple jobs from different suppliers as they will be assured that jobs we produce in the UK will conform to those put through a Spanish printer, for example. We often run jobs for BMW, Mini and Land Rover – these are organisations that produce print on a worldwide scale,” said Terry.

Along with each installation, Mellow Colour provides a two-day training course, which enables all installation bases to leverage knowledge and application skills to maximise the functionality of **PrintSpec**.

“Williams Lea uses **PrintSpec** as part of a vendor audit programme to objectively measure and benchmark press performance according to our vendor base. The reports are easy to read and provide a wealth of data to help our vendors align to the ISO 12647 standard. The technical support and training provided by Mellow Colour is first class,” said Andrew Horn, Senior Vendor Manager, Williams Lea.

With Mellow Colour’s **PrintSpec**, The Midas Press has implemented a successful solution to the issue of maintaining colour consistency across its production processes. Its clients can be assured of first-rate quality, with uniform results every time.

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**About Mellow Colour:**

Mellow Colour Ltd was founded in 2003 by Alan Dresch, a specialist in colour reproduction, to develop and supply software tools and technical training to printing companies wishing to implement ISO 12647. In practice, Mellow Colour’s range of products allows quick identification and the resolution of colour reproduction problems and maintenance of colour standards. Its flagship product, the award winning **PrintSpec** software, delivers consistent colour from proof-to-press, from press-to-press, and from one print run to another.

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