

Increasing demand of the market for colour measurement and control systems

Technological evolution

Technological evolution is one of the most significant driving forces behind competition. New technologies change existing work processes fundamentally. Integrative technologies, comprehensive digitisation and automation systems make it possible to do without or skip individual production stages (e.g. due to data preparation, inline processing etc.) and allow the development of new market segments (e.g. digital printing). In this way completely new interfaces are created for preliminary and downstream production stages both within and throughout industrial sectors with the effect that the interfaces to the customers also need to be redefined.

The technically supported improvement of operational procedures is essential for almost every company of the graphic industry, because in the future only those companies will be able to stay in business who produce high quality economically and on schedule.

Colour management and the colour measurement technology allow the ink to be handled consistently from the preliminary stages up to the actual printing process. Measuring is an integral part of modern industrial production processes and colour measurement and control systems are also used within the printing industry to control, check and document whether the printing machines adhere to the quality specifications at high levels of precision and speed.



The influence of customers

Customers have a great influence on the technological requirements of print shops. Especially greater cost consciousness and the idea of shorter processing times require an efficient employment of the technology. Furthermore customers expect the data created during the operational procedure to be available.

Customers define the requirements of the technical equipment of graphic companies by the quality they demand, their down payments and their ideas of schedules and prices. These companies must therefore establish a continuous process of adaptation in order to meet customer requirements.

The requirements of the different customers also vary to a great extent. On the one hand some customer do not know much about printing processes and are only interested in the results in terms of quality and reliability as well as the costs. These customers therefore often need to given a great deal of advice. On the other hand some customers know more about the technological options than the assigned printers themselves, since they either come from this field themselves or have a great deal of purchasing experience.

The objective of these customers is often to commit oneself to partnerships with “best-in-class” suppliers in order to meet higher standards of quality. The strategy of these customers is the definition of stable processes and the unambiguous specification of quality control.

With regard to dealing with colour, this means passing on specific printing profile data and continuous monitoring of the printing quality by permanently measuring and analysing the printing specimens. Pure reception control is of less significance. The processes are checked and optimised to a higher degree instead.

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Customers are nowadays increasingly demanding proof of the quality of the entire run and in this way are helping establish quality control at print shops. The quality is checked during the production process.

The demands of the market for colour measurement and control systems are based on

- Increased demands on the quality of colouration
- Required proof of the quality of colouration
- Cost reduction requirements
- Competitive advantages over competing print shops

The focus is nowadays more and more on the quality and stability of colouration. Customers assign their jobs to several print shops and in this way set high standards for the consistency of colouration.

In terms of the cost factor, two aspects in particular speak in favour of colour measurement and control systems. Print runs are not only able to be produced more economically because the set-up times and the amount of waste paper are reduced dramatically, but also because price rebates due to deficiencies are able to be avoided.

Print shops which are already using colour measurement and control systems have an invaluable competitive edge. The exclusive feature is what some print shops are capable of doing compared to others. A decisive advantage over the competition exists if certain jobs are only able to be obtained or are only technically possible due to the employment of measurement and control systems (for example certain types of packaging in the product segment). Print shops from the job printing segment can also use measuring technologies to enter segments of higher quality and meet the requirements in order to compete.

In a nutshell the following competitive arguments speak in favour of using the colour measurement technology in the printing industry:

- The development of new market segments in which the colour measurement and control technology is a prerequisite
- Competitive edge due to the expertise in using a modern colour measurement and control technology
- Lowering of production costs by reducing the number of set-up stages, the set-up time and the amount of waste paper involved in set-up procedures
- Reduction of production costs by avoiding unacceptable fluctuations and misprints during printing
- Reduction of production costs by avoiding price rebates
- Increase in quality by minimising fluctuations during printing
- Automatic quality control by logging all measurements throughout the entire run

