COLOUR

USE CMYK FOR PREDICTABLE PRINTING RESULTS

For the best results in offset printing, use CMYK (Cyan, Magenta, Yellow, and Black) images & colour profiles. This is the colour model used by our printing presses. If your images are in RGB (Red, Green, Blue), they'll need to be converted to CMYK. It's best to do this conversion early on to avoid surprises later.

Since RGB has a wider colour range than CMYK, some colours won't print the same. Converting to CMYK early lets you spot any colour shifts before you see the proof or final print.

There is a number of good ready made profiles around to be used for colour conversion. ***Here at Vanguard we suggest using Coated Fogra39***, this profile is located within your Adobe Creative Suite software.

MANAGING COLOURS IN YOUR PRINT JOB

What colours will your job use? Are you printing with spot (PMS) colours, CMYK, or a mix of both?

To stay in control of your print job, make sure you only use the correct colours. ***If you're using CMYK, convert any spot colours to CMYK in your document.*** Watch out for differences in how spot colours break down in different software versions - even the same program can give different results. Colour libraries change over time, which can affect how colours appear.

Always delete unused colours from your file.

To check if everything looks correct, you can view the separations:

In InDesign, press Shift + F6 (or go to Window>Output>Separations Preview).

In Acrobat Pro, go to Advanced>Print Production>Output Preview.

HOW TO EVALUATE COLOUR ACCURATELY

Don't rely on how colours look on your computer screen unless it's professionally calibrated. Even with calibration, your screen shows colours using RGB light (which is different from the CMYK pigments used in printing).

The best way to check colour accuracy is by using exact CMYK values or by reviewing a colour-calibrated proof.

Our printed proofs are carefully adjusted to match our printing process, offering the most accurate colour preview.

TOTAL INK LIMITS & BLACKS

To avoid printing issues, keep your total ink coverage within these limits:

330% for coated stock

300% for uncoated stock
(This total is the combined percentages of CMYK values.)

Going over these limits can cause slow drying, smudging, and delays — not ideal for quality or delivery.

For large black areas, use Rich Black so it doesn't look dull. Here are two good Rich Black mixes:

100% Black + 40% Cyan or for a more neutral tone: 100% Black, 30% Cyan, 25% Magenta, 25% Yellow

Important: Avoid using Registration black as it will convert to plain black in our system and may cause issues.

Blacks and ink coverage

100% Black	100% ink coverage
Acceptable and desired for any black text. White text on it will be clear and sharp. No concerns for ink coverage.	
100% Cyan and 100% Black	200% ink coverage
100% Magenta and 100% Black	200% ink coverage
100% Yellow and 100% Black	200% ink coverage
The three above are acceptable. Shouldn't be an issue for printers to register white text on it. No concerns for ink coverage.	
100% Cyan, 100% Magenta and 100% Black	300% ink coverage
100% Cyan, 100% Yellow and 100% Black	300% ink coverage
100% Magenta, 100% Yellow and 100% Black	300% ink coverage
The three above are acceptable. May present an issue for printers to register white text on it and it may appear a bit fuzzy, especially if the white text is small and thin. Most stocks will handle 300% ink coverage, but it may present issues for very light stocks.	
50% Cyan, 50% Magenta, 50% Yellow and 100% Black	250% ink coverage
Acceptable so long as there isn't any white text on it. The four colours will make properly registering white text diffcult. No concerns for ink coverage.	
80% Cyan, 80% Magenta, 80% Yellow and 80% Black	320% ink coverage
Acceptable so long as there isn't any white text on it. The four colours will make properly registering white text diffcult. High ink coverage. Many stocks can handle 320%, but it's best not to push past this.	
100% Cyan, 100% Magenta, 100% Yellow and 100% Black	400% ink coverage
Not acceptable. Too much ink coverage will cause problems while printing.