



Survey of Graphic Communication Companies to Determine the Importance of Color Management

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INTRODUCTION

- Problem
 - It is challenging to reproduce colors consistently throughout the process.
- Purpose
 - The purpose of this study is to determine the importance of color management for the graphic communication companies.
- Research Questions
 - Is it critical for graphic communication companies to manage colors?
 - Do companies invest in color management tools and devices?
 - Do companies educate their employees on how to manage colors?
 - Do companies educate their customers on color reproduction processes?

Research Methodology

- An empirical research study was conducted to determine the importance of color management in the graphics industry.
- A questionnaire was developed to ask questions and collect data from graphic professionals.
- Graphic companies were mainly located in the Triad area of North Carolina, USA.
- A wide variety of graphic companies from small-sized to large-sized and quick printers to packaging companies were included in the study.
- The sample size was 20.

Findings – Classification

- A majority of companies were commercial printing companies. Some of those companies also specialized in other categories.
- Two companies didn't classify themselves as Commercial. They classified as Publishing and Graphic Design.
- Only web development companies were involved in multimedia productions.

Classification	% (20)
Commercial*	80
Advertising	35
Packaging	30
Quick	25
Web	20
Publishing*	10
Multimedia*	10
POP Display	5
Photograph	5
Graphic Design*	5

Findings – Size Based on Employees

- Small Sized (less than 20)
- Medium Sized (bet. 20 & 49)
- Large Sized (50 & more)
- There were more small-sized companies than medium and large sized companies.

Co. Size	% (20)
Small	55
Medium	15
Large	20

Findings – Printing Processes/Equipment

- A majority of companies had digital equipment such as digital presses, ink-jet printers, or copiers.
- Litho/Offset stood out on the 2nd place.
- None of the companies had gravure presses.
- Some companies utilized more than one printing processes.

Processes/Equipment	% (20)
Digital/Copiers/Printers	60
Litho/Offset	40
Flexo	5
Screen	10
Gravure	0
Letterpress	5
Heat Transfer	5
Foil Stamping/Die Cutting	5

Findings – Software and Platform

- Most of the companies used Adobe software for design. Few mentioned that they used Publisher, QuarkXpress, Freehand, CAD/CAM, and Flexisign.
- Still Mac is a widely used platform.

Software & Platform	% (20)
Adobe	85
Mac	35
PC	15

Findings – Color vs. B&W

- Most of the companies printed color products.
- Only one newspaper publishing company said they do B&W printing.

Color vs. B&W	% (20)
Color	80
B&W	5

FINDINGS – SIGNIFICANCE OF CM

- All companies emphasized that it is important to manage colors.
- Comments:
 - To print correctly
 - To control colors
 - It is mandatory/required
 - Branding purpose
 - One should know
 - To keep customers happy

FINDINGS – CM Tools

- A majority of companies used PMS swatch books to match and select colors.
- Some used spectrophotometer, spectrodensitometer, calibration software, and profiling software.

FINDINGS – Challenges

- Not two monitors are the same. So many different color devices.
- To make sure colors are correct. To match the colors. To get consistent colors.
- Customers select out of PMS colors.
- Different paper.

FINDINGS – Solutions

- Show printed samples/proofs to customers. Get customer's approval.
- Keeping consistency in processes, paper, and ink.
- Setting up profile, showing proofs, and saving media correctly.
- Do research and try to fix it.
- Try different color of inks or change paper.
- Try to pick the similar color. Use the eyedropper tool. Do color adjustments/retouching.
- Adjust CMYK level using the spot color on PMS. Match the color with PMS.

FINDINGS – Selling Products

- Meeting customers' expectations. Target customers' needs.
- Showing samples.
- Helping customers. Treat customers with respect and advise them.
- Giving the best deals.

Findings – Educating Employees and Customers

- Almost all companies educated their employees.
- Most of the companies educated their customers, but few companies said no.

Educating	% (20) = Y	% (20) = N
Employees	90	-
Customers	70	15

CONCLUSIONS

- It is very critical for graphic communication companies to manage and control colors in order to reproduce consistent colors.
- Not many companies invest money in purchasing color management software and equipment. They mainly rely on visual inspection and try to match with PMS colors.
- Almost all companies educate their employees.
- Though most of the companies educate their customers, some companies don't.



QUESTIONS? DISCUSSIONS?

Thank you.
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