



Color Management & Conformance

Eliminating margin erosion caused by color inconsistency across a multi-device production environment

Color issues drive over 40% of all reprints in commercial print. Each reprint represents pure profit erosion: wasted materials, duplicated labor, consumed capacity, and damaged client confidence. This use case illustrates how a strategic approach to color conformance transforms a cost center into a competitive weapon.

Gimbel & Associates

Management Consulting for Commercial Print

www.rogergimbel.com

THE PROBLEM

A VP of Operations at a mid-size commercial print company overseeing three production facilities was losing approximately \$140,000 annually to color-related reprints and waste. The operation ran a mixed fleet of inkjet and toner-based presses across locations, each calibrated independently by different operators using inconsistent methods. Brand clients were increasingly flagging color drift between print runs, and one national retail account—representing 18% of annual revenue—issued a formal warning after receiving signage with visible color variation between stores.

The root cause was systemic: no centralized color standards, no spectrophotometric measurement at press-side quality gates, and no closed-loop calibration process connecting the proof room to the production floor. The company's senior color technician had recently retired, taking decades of institutional knowledge with him. Without intervention, the operation faced both immediate financial losses and the risk of losing its largest account.

THE SOLUTION

Gimbel & Associates deployed an enterprise-grade color conformance assessment across all three facilities. The engagement began with a comprehensive audit measuring Delta-E variance on every production device, documenting substrate-specific performance gaps, and mapping the workflow from file intake through final output.

The G&A team implemented a cloud-based color management platform that centralized CxF color data and ICC profiles across all locations, replacing the siloed, operator-dependent approach. Precise OEM calibration protocols were established for each press model, and substrate-specific profiling was conducted across the full range of stocks in use. Spectrophotometric verification checkpoints were embedded into the production workflow at proof approval and mid-run stages, creating objective go/no-go criteria that eliminated subjective visual assessment.

G&A also facilitated a marketing-operations color council, bringing production leadership and the sales team together to define achievable color tolerances that could be confidently promised to clients and consistently delivered on the floor.

THE OUTCOME

Within six months, color-related reprints dropped by 72%, recovering over \$100,000 in annualized waste and labor costs. Substrate waste fell 22% through tighter calibration and reduced make-ready cycles. The retail account renewed its contract with a 15% volume increase after being given access to a real-time color compliance dashboard showing conformance data across all production runs.

The sales team began proactively positioning color conformance capability in new business pitches, winning two competitive bids specifically because the company could document measurement-based quality assurance. The operation's color management infrastructure became a revenue-generating differentiator rather than a cost center.

MEASURABLE IMPACT

15–30% reduction in substrate waste, maximum asset utilization across mixed-model production floors, and brand equity protection that commands premium pricing.

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Schedule a 30-minute discovery call at rogergimbel.com/free-consultation

