



WHITE PAPER

HOW TO MANAGE BRAND CONSISTENCY
ACROSS REGIONS WITH CENTRALIZED
PRODUCTION FACILITIES

CUSTOMER PROFILE

Subject of this case study is the UK based largest retailer of car maintenance, cycling and touring products. Products go cross category of leisure, car tuning, car enhancement and travel solutions with many vertical variants defining a full range of product offering. Different own brands labels are successfully marketed through a national network of stores backed by online promotions and catalogue selling.

CASE OVERVIEW

With products not being manufactured in-house, the client's product sourcing unfolds globally, taking the DSN partnership not only to classic European countries but also to more global destinations such as Hong Kong, Mainland China, Taiwan, Thailand and Indonesia.

Generally, all packaging projects start with a concept development by the client's brand management team. When the product strategy (different brands) and the positioning (different levels of product quality) are defined, sourcing specialists look for the most appropriate manufacturer to deliver the requested materials.

Typically these products are sourced including the full packaging as they are completely packed before shipping them to the selling market. This implies that a lot of these manufacturers work with local affiliated packaging providers and/or printers. Unfortunately, these printers operate with their own specifications, if any. Lacking colour consistency and no insight in printing conditions were perceived as non-negligible risk factors by the brand management team.

DSN print management services were selected to tackle these challenges. Headquartered in Europe with support functions in different regions, the DSN experts in colour and printer management would become vital in ensuring and improving quality and consistency throughout.

To defeat the effects of the scattered way of working, the following targets were ambitioned:

- More brand & colour consistency crossover printers, printing techniques and packaging types
- More visibility on process and costs, as well as cost reduction in the total packaging development chain
- Printer independency
- Workflow standardization and workflow tools

THE SOLUTION

Through a process known as questionnaires and fingerprinting, existing printer characteristics were registered and digitalized in individual printer profiles. Based on this data, an accurate digital colour proof was presented to the client's brand management team for approval.

With the proof offering full print predictability, including also simulating the effects of substrates on the design, design and colour expectations could be managed upfront. At this stage the client can still intervene when unhappy with the result. After approval, the digital proof serves as the single colour target for the printer.

Additionally, DSN print management services developed a “brand colour reference book” also known as brand colour book. Specific brand colours were created, developed and presented via a “colour book” providing a single colour reference proof to the printer. This ensured that the desired brand colour would be achieved.

To understand the basic printing specifications even further, printer questionnaires were filled in by every printer involved in the process. This offered benefits for DSN as well as for the printer; DSN had a more in-depth knowledge on how to prepare print-ready-data; on the other hand, the printer was satisfied in knowing that the delivered repro files would be suitable for his printing machines allowing him to minimize setup times.

This new constellation also required new roles and responsibilities. The manufacturer of the products needed to manage the printer quality, ensuring an accurate representation of repro files and colour proof. Next to this, the printer needed to print on time and with the correct quality. The printer provided DSN with accurate printing information by filling in the printer questionnaire ensuring that repro would be provided to their exact technical requirements.

To manage all these changes toward the previous way of working, DSN installed a dedicated team to support its client all the way. While dedicated resource in Western Europe were handling all artwork & repro preparation of all packs and proofs, dedicated DSN Far-East staff supported the local manufacturer and printers in technical management. Since brand knowledge was diffused and often misinterpreted, the centralized team – combining multilingual and print technical account handlers – got the mandate to support the client’s business in all colour management related topics and projects.

THE RESULTS

Next to the targeted goals of managing colour consistency across all different manufactures, packaging types and printing techniques, the solution positively affected pressure and workload within the client's product teams. Brand management benefited by DSN's expertise and support in centralization of all artwork and prepress activities as well as colour management and additional benefits DSN service offering holds. In fact, next to the quantifiable gains, strong relationships were built between the client, DSN and its manufacturers and printers leveraging efficiencies and quality throughout.

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