

Colour and proofing workflow

A practical explanation of ICC profiles, RIP settings and approvals

This guide helps you prepare a clearer brief and a more reliable production file. Use the agreed job specification for final dimensions, finishing and colour targets.

Define the target

Start with the intended print process, substrate and viewing condition. The same CMYK values can look different on uncoated paper, coated paper and vinyl. A profile must represent the actual printing condition, not merely a familiar filename.

Maintain colour-managed assets

Keep source profiles embedded in photographs and artwork. Use a consistent working space and rendering intent. Identify spot colours explicitly. For PDF/X exchange, the output intent communicates the expected process-colour condition to the receiving workflow.

Prepare the device and RIP

A production team should confirm the machine is stable, nozzles or imaging units are in condition, ink and substrate match the preset, and the RIP queue applies the approved linearisation and profile. A changed media, firmware or ink combination can require a new calibration and profile; copying an old preset without checking can move colour.

Proof against the right reference

Soft proofing requires a calibrated display and suitable viewing conditions. A hard proof needs the appropriate substrate, proofing profile and measurement. Agree whether approval is for content, appearance or a contract colour target. Record reference values and any accepted tolerance for repeat jobs.

Check production and repeats

Measure control patches or a control strip when the job calls for it; compare to the agreed target. Keep a record of machine, media, profile, RIP preset, date and approved proof. Recheck after maintenance, media changes or a significant shift in environmental conditions.

| What the buyer should provide

Send brand colour references, previous approved samples if available, intended material and the importance of the match. Identify which elements are critical. Ask for a physical proof where colour has a commercial or brand consequence.

Need a specification for your job?

Tell us the finished size, quantity, use and deadline. Call 01925 632717 or visit theprintcentrewarrington.co.uk/contact.