

Sandy Alexander – G7® Case Study

Through many years of developing “symbiotic strategic partnerships” with clients, this full-service printing and marketing powerhouse uses G7 as the foundation for producing great color—and saving money in the process.

An industry leader like [Sandy Alexander](#) must be more than just a printing company. For over 50 years, the tri-state area firm has become a single point of contact for marketing and promotional services, including multi-channel campaigns, data management, fulfillment, and of course printing. It has been a frequent winner of the [Sappi Gold Award](#) for quality and technical excellence, and has lead in the print sustainability movement, with both ISO 14001 and [Sustainable Green Printer](#) certification.

With such an emphasis on full-service quality, it’s only natural that the company prides itself on the highest level of color quality and consistency. This is a challenge with so many types of print, including sheetfed and web offset, HP Indigo digital, and both wide and grand format. But it is a particular point of pride at Sandy Alexander to offer color consistency for multi-channel marketing products on any substrate—including paper, fabric, wood, metal, and

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– Gregory Hill, Sandy Alexander

vinyl. According to their website, the goal is “brand consistency on any piece from a postcard to a stadium wrap.”

Such lofty aspirations require a firm basis in color management technology. “Our clients look to us as a single source,” said Manager of Prepress Systems Gregory Hill. “We may have a campaign where we’re producing something in wide format, something in litho, and

maybe a companion piece in digital. All those things need to match. They all use different technologies, different substrates, different ink sets. For example, magenta in our wide format devices is a different color than magenta litho ink.

Hill continued, “G7 is a tremendous starting point, but we also use ICC profiles. G7 does the heavy lifting; it provides gray balance and proper tone reproduction. On top of that we build ICC profiles. Between the two, we are able to get a visual match from one technology and substrate and one output device to another.”

One of the unrecognized benefits of G7, according to Hill, is that it makes ICC profiles more valuable and long lasting. “In the litho world, there are a huge number of variables, like humidity, temperature, raw materials—all of which are constantly changing” he said. “G7 gives us a really good starting point. From there, we build ICC profiles that last. If conditions change, all we need to do is bring the device back to G7—which is a lot faster than a new profile.”

The economic implications are enormous. “Creating ICC profiles is expensive. If I’m running a test form on a web press to make a profile, I’ll spend up to two hours of press time,” he said. “I’ll use an enormous amount of paper and ink, and there’s a crew involved. Without G7, I’d have to do that four times a year on each press, and double that if we’re talking about coated and uncoated paper. That’s time we’re not using to print jobs.” Hill estimated that without the foundation of basic device linearization and G7 calibration, cost of creating good ICC profiles for multiple presses, conditions, and substrates would exceed \$200,000 per year, not including loss of business caused by press downtime.

Like many G7 Master printers, Sandy Alexander has realized significant make ready savings from both G7 and good ICC color management. “A powerful number to ponder is the

\$200k
SAVED PER YEAR

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estimated dollars saved in make ready as a result of color management techniques—G7 and profiling combined. We estimate this to be over \$1 million a year.”

Color-related cost savings are only the beginning. For many years, Sandy Alexander’s color management prowess—combining G7 and ICC color management—has enabled them to charge premium prices, as well as keep clients satisfied in decades-long relationships. “Clients recognize us as a premium quality printer, not a commodity-level printer,” Hill said. “It’s not just about color, but other factors like service and our breadth of offerings.”

Color consistency does have a significant role in day-to-day customer satisfaction. “It’s not enough just to say, ‘We’re G7,’” Hill noted. “We live it. Because our press sheets match a GRACoL-based inkjet proof in minutes instead of hours, our make ready is way down. We’re saving our clients’ time, meeting their needs, and exceeding their expectations. That leads to nice relationships.”

\$1M
SAVED PER YEAR

Dollars saved in make ready as the result of color management (G7 and profiling combined) are over \$1 million/year.

Hill concluded with some general advice to the printing industry as a whole. “Because of improvements in technology, most print shops can produce a nice job on any given day,” he said, “but G7 helps achieve form after form, day-to-day consistency. In addition, if a designer creates a project for a specific use, G7 and color management make it more valuable for repurposing. If a file originates as RGB—perhaps for use on a web page—it can be converted to CMYK with an ICC profile. Then, with G7 methodology in use, it is in an appropriate place for print.”