

Brand Color Consistency

Situation

A leading global food manufacturer relies heavily on its primary brand color for consumer recognition and to communicate its rich flavor, freshness, and overall quality. This brand color dominates the label design so it's critical that every package meet the color target, everyday and everywhere. Unfortunately, that was not happening. Random store checks frequently revealed noticeable, unacceptable color variations; potentially affecting brand performance at shelf.

Action

The Phototype team started with a comprehensive review of print quality metrics (by printing plant) to determine if the inconsistency was the result of system-wide issues or if it could be narrowed to specific print locations. As a result, it was identified that one plant consistently had a 6.0+ DeltaE variance vs. the approved color standard (6.0 DeltaE is visually noticeable difference in color, 2.0 or less DeltaE value is typically acceptable).

Phototype worked closely with the plant's on-site team to pinpoint the cause. The team began a step-by-step review of the printing process, starting with confirmation that target colors were being downloaded from the brand's approved Central Color Library (CCL). Plant operations insisted they were measuring against the approved target. However, further investigation revealed that runs were actually being compared to color specifications derived from a physical sample that had been approved at a press run several years earlier...not versus a download from the CCL.

Phototype staff trained plant personnel on the CCL download process and reviewed all SOP's for Print Quality Management (PQM) metrics to ensure understanding and compliance with future press runs.

Results

- Within 6 months, the printer's DeltaE variance dropped to 1.65 and has been maintained within tolerance ever since
- A common language and understanding of PQM metrics and its associated feedback loop was embedded in the facility's quality culture
- A "single version of the truth" standard was established and recognized across all print facilities; brand appearance on-shelf improved...day in, day out, at every location

