

G7 – A New Efficient Print Method

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As more and more printers are becoming G7 certified, we wanted to provide our customers and colleagues with an update on our on-going G7 effort. We know this is an area that is or will be pursued by many and want to make sure you have the expertise and product to enable you and your customers to compete in this challenging market.

The benefits of G7 have been recognized in the litho and gravure industries, but G7 is now gaining ground as it relates to the flexo industry. You may or may not be aware of G7 and the benefits of this method, but we feel it is our obligation to keep you informed and to let you know where we stand on this topic.

G7 is not a standard...it is a method of calibration. This method only encompasses 4-color process printing. Through the use of spectrophotometry, digital imaging and computer-to-plate technologies, G7 allows a printer to get "similar match" between their proofing and printing devices. Even though this was initially developed for the litho industry, we know the flexo industry will soon follow.

We feel the pressure is going to come from Consumer Product Companies as they are always looking for better practices to achieve more consistent print and cut costs...G7 provides both. Kevin Chop, Manager of Packaging Graphics and Commercialization at Diageo North America, understands the impact that G7 provides to a company like Diageo. Diageo – a world leader in the spirit and beverage industry – demands consistent color in a global market. Diageo's packaging covers a wide range of substrates and print processes. The challenge is to achieve a consistent look when dealing with all these variables. Kevin explains, "A group of packaging printers that are optimized to a single data set/profile allows for global color consistency. This can also lead to cost savings as it relates to retouching fees and efficiency."

Another benefit to G7 is the workflow process. Kevin Atchley, Technical Project Manager at Southern Graphics System, was impressed with a proof he generated after a recent trial with G7 compliant inks provided by BCM Inks. Kevin indicated that the proof pushed through the G7 workflow was very similar to a proof he generated with a

more cumbersome workflow. Although not exact...they had very similar appearances. "Since G7 establishes a standard that all phases of the print workflow, proofing and printing, tries to achieve, one proof can work for many different printing methods," according to Atchley. This is valuable for CPC's that are printing the same image on multiple packages produced by several different print methods.

This method is not a cure all. We still have to deal with challenges associated with flexo print - high light transitions, minimum dot treatments, etc. However, this does allow for a more consistent look if you have to match an image printed litho or gravure (assuming both are G7 certified). We envision CPC's will elect to only use G7 certified printers in time. If you are not part of this pool of printers, you may miss opportunities! And in this demanding market, no company can afford that.

If you would like more information on G7 standards and benefits, please contact me at smiller@bcminks.com. ■

