



COLOUR

PRINT GUIDELINES

Colour Set Up

Most computers, scanners, digital cameras and monitors generate images using combination of three colours: Red, Green and Blue, often referred to RGB.

Our lithographic and digital printing presses use four different colours to print these images.

- Cyan (light blue),
- Magenta (Hot Pink)
- Yellow
- Black

These are known as CMYK or Process Colour. At some stage of production, RGB images must be converted to CMYK. Conversions are best done in design software such as Photoshop and it is important that you do this before sending finished artwork to Minerva. If you are unable to do this then our software will apply a standard profile RGB to CMYK conversion, which may cause the colours to look washed out.

Printers often use Pantone Spot colours when printing work. Spot colours are mixed like paint and printed one at a time. Printing in more than one Pantone Spot colour is quite costly. We can colour match if required but in general, converting to CMYK is acceptable and still has the desired effect. If you would like for Minerva to print in Process colour, please ensure that all Pantone Spot colours are converted to their CMYK equivalent before your file is sent to us.

If you do not convert spot colours to process, then an extra separation printing plate may be produced when we process your job. This means objects may not appear on your printed job and may result in you incurring unnecessary costs.

You can check your document by printing 'separations' on your desktop printer – see the help file that came with your application for more details. If anything other than cyan, magenta, yellow and black separations prints, then your file has unwanted colours that you need to convert. This is also a good way of checking knockout / overprinting settings.

Some RGB and Spot colours do not have a direct CMYK equivalent – the technical term for this is 'out of gamut'. If you have chosen a colour that is out of gamut, your software will choose the closest equivalent CMYK colour, which may be very different from the colour you intended. This is something that everyone has to put up with, so for best results, stick with colours from standard colour charts.

NEED HELP?

Call us on 01204 397 522

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Printing Black

If you heard the phrase 'designers never use the colour black in artwork' you are wrong. And a solid shade of black isn't as simple as it looks. To get the best results, black can be produced in two ways. The first method is Process black, made from 100% black ink. This is ideal for small areas less than 30mm² such as text or logos. Too much ink coverage in small areas can result in set off and / or sheets sticking together.

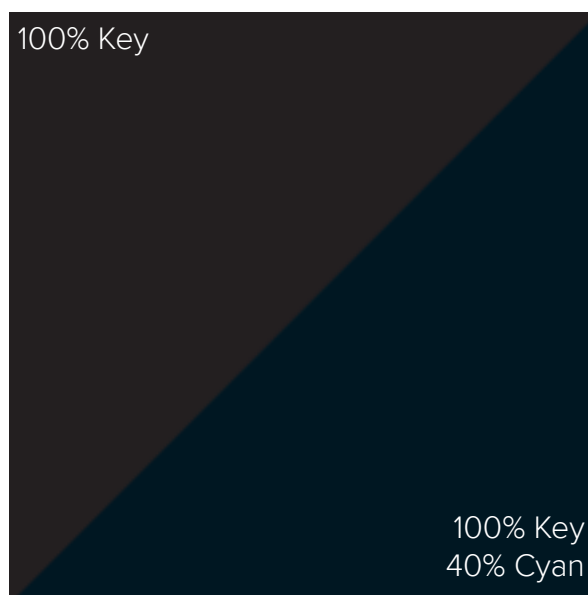
On areas of over 30mm² in size, process black can appear washed out and uneven. This is because the rollers on lithographic printed presses roll the ink over a large area. The alternative is rich black, which consists of 100% black and 40% cyan. A rich black should be used on larger areas to ensure an even dark coverage, as the second ink disguises any inconsistencies. However, rich black should never be used on small text as any tiny deviation in registration will lead to a blurred effect.

It is important to bear in mind that the higher the ink coverage, the longer the drying time required. This is particularly true of uncoated (non glossy) stocks such as business stationary. Black will inevitably appear duller on uncoated stock because of the absorbency of the paper. This absorbency also means that any fine detail reversed out of black may disappear. We do not recommend less than 8pt text, for example, on uncoated stock.

You may think it would be okay to have three or four colour black text. It is virtually impossible to print four colour black and will look blurred and may also cause sheets to stick together.

Also be aware that black within a photograph as a background may have a different CMYK compared to other parts of your design. This will be noticeable when printed, even if not on screen. Placing a photograph with a black background over a black area in Quark for example may reveal a difference between the two shades of black when printed. To overcome this, take a sample of the black that the background is required to match in an application such as Photoshop, using the colour picker tool. Then simply mix the matched colour paying careful attention to the overall ink coverage.

You'll get best reproduction from colours that are made up of two inks for example magenta and cyan etc, with the exception of shades of black.



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A note about Proofing

When using lighter shades, avoid tints that contain less than 10% of either Cyan, Magenta, Yellow or Black, as they usually print much lighter than they appear on screen and you may be disappointed with the outcome. For best results, use tints containing 15% to 30% where possible.

When you submit artwork, you should outline any specific Pantone colours and we will show you a swatch chart to ensure correct matching. The colours in these charts will give you the closest approximation to how your finished job will look, and with any print, there may be a slight colour variation.

Try to avoid large areas of the same colour, as this is where the variation becomes more noticeable. Adding a texture or images can allow you to overcome these issues. Vignettes and gradient fills are best avoided and look unprofessional, as often these will show banding.

As part of the service we will supply you with a colour proof. This is not colour accurate and is produced on a laser printer. The proof acts as a guide to show how the finished print will look and should be used to check that the text hasn't overflowed and no objects are missing.

Our proofs cannot be relied upon to spot items such as objects set to overprint, hairlines and JPEGs/RGB/ Duotone images.

If you need more accurate proofs then just ask our team. You will get the best reproduction from colours that are made up from one or two inks.

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