

Pad Printing – Creating Unique Customer Colors

Most of the time customers will provide us with a specific color or specific ink they need for their print job. However there are those occasions where we need to match a color with ink that is correct for the job.

In those situations we need to know the following information:

- The exact color the customer wishes to match and if it is a P.M.S. (Pantone Matching System) color or the color already on a specific project.
- The surface characteristics of the item we will be printing on.
- The number of “hits” or times we plan to print the color on the item.
- The type or series of ink we will be using and if we should use a hardener we will need to know the ratio.
- Whether the customer wants the dried ink to be gloss or matte finished.

The most popular system in the US is the Pantone Matching System but a big problem is that all of their colors on the samples are printed on bright white paper. More than likely we will NOT be printing on bright white paper.

Both the texture and the color of the product will have an effect of the look of the dried ink once it is applied to the product. This means that it may be difficult to get an exact copy of the Pantone Matching System colors.

When working from an established product color, we may have the same issues. The product or color chip may have been applied using a different color chart and processes than we will use in production.

Light tends to bounce back off the ink on a product especially if it is textured. This may cause us to see the color of the product through the color of the ink used in printing the product. If the product we are printing has a lot of texture in the surface, adjusting the amount of ink used in creating the correct color will usually fix the problem.

The number of times we intend to “HIT” or print each piece is important because it determines how much ink we will be using on the product, and how much the products color will affect the perceived color after drying. The more “hits” the deeper the color.

The addition of hardeners to ink can change the color of the ink and could cause the ink to have a glossy finish. Thinners used in production can cause the ink to have more transparency.