



“ColorCert gives us visibility into problems we were not aware we had, including with our ICC profiles, ink formulation and proofs.”

## Ultimate Packaging Sees 200% Improvement in Quality with PantoneLIVE and ColorCert: X-Rite Edition

Ultimate Packaging | Packaging | Europe/United Kingdom



### Challenge:

Asda, a wholly owned subsidiary of Wal-Mart and a key customer for Ultimate Packaging, invited Ultimate Packaging to use PantoneLIVE™ and ColorCert®: X-Rite Edition as part of its objective to drive quality and consistency whilst reducing costs by maximizing press efficiencies.



### Solution:

Ultimate Packaging has access to the PantoneLIVE libraries. ColorCert is being used on one of its presses, which is used 20% of the time for Asda work, to track and report color performance. Ultimate Packaging also uses X-Rite's Color iQC quality control software and InkFormulation Software for its ink kitchen, managed by Sun Chemical. The firm uses X-Rite SpectroEyes for color measurement.



### Results:

Ultimate Packaging has increased its ColorCert score by 200% as a result of implementing these solutions internally and with its repro house, platemaking and ink kitchen partners. With these solutions in place, and the data and scoring they make available, Ultimate Packaging is confident in its ability to print to the numbers.



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*"We have customers that require us to match to both PANTONE colors and their own standards," explains Vincent Whatley, X-Rite Coordinator at Ultimate Packaging.*

*"Adding PantoneLIVE and ColorCert to the mix has truly taken us to the next level in quality and consistency and improved the skills of our staff*



Ultimate Packaging provides flexible packaging solutions to a broad array of customers, including leading retailers such as Asda, a wholly owned subsidiary of Wal-Mart. The company has six flexo presses (8 and 10 colors) from F&K (Bobst), W&H and Soma. Its 220 employees operate out of 100,000 square feet of manufacturing space and generate £45 million net turnover annually. The ISO- and BRC-certified firm produces packaging for fresh and chilled food, primarily fresh produce, supplying both retailer brand and UK brands such as Aunt Bessie's, Youngs and Florette.

Ultimate Packaging is located in Grimsby, Lincolnshire in the UK.

"Asda invited us to trial PantoneLIVE and ColorCert: X-Rite Edition at the end of 2013," explains Vincent Whatley, X-Rite Coordinator at Ultimate Packaging. "This is part of their effort to engage key suppliers in a more streamlined and color-accurate manufacturing effort. We were happy to do so, but at the time we didn't really think it would make a great deal of difference to our operations. In actual fact, it has made a big difference for us and for Asda, and we were recently invited to present our experience to other Asda's approved film printers during an Asda Supplier Day." Ultimate Packaging has implemented ColorCert on its newest F&K flexible packaging press where 20% of the work produced is for Asda. The firm reports on all of the work the press produces, making the information available through ColorCert Scorecard, so that Asda can see how it is performing overall.

According to Whatley, X-Rite solutions have been integrated into the workflow for the entire plant. "We have customers that require us to match to both PANTONE colors and their own standards," he says, "and we have been using spectral measurements with X-Rite SpectroEye spectrophotometers and X-Rite NetProfiler to do so for the past three years. We had also already been using Color iQC, a job-oriented software solution that streamlines color measurement, reporting and tracking to maintain a centralized, cost-efficient process, and we are still using it across the plant."

### A More Efficient Ink Kitchen

Ultimate Packaging partners with Sun Chemical for on-site ink formulation and dispensing. According to Whatley, X-Rite InkFormulation Software has been key to ensuring that not only are the correct inks delivered, but that inks are formulated accurately for each job, right the first time, right every time. PantoneLIVE integrates with the ink kitchen that has resulted in more efficient and accurate ink formulation as well as less waste on press.



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### Improved Premedia; Fewer Proofs

The firm also partners with a number of repro and platemaking houses for prepress operations, and ColorCert has enabled them to reduce the amount of retouching required and improve the quality of the profiles being used. "Profiles created by our repro houses were not optimum," Whatley says. "With the data we gathered using ColorCert, we learned a great deal about repeatability, as well as hitting the scores and ICC targets through matching conditions of fingerprinting. It has also helped us work out how variables such as heat, viscosity and temperature were affecting our outcomes. It was a big learning curve, and as a result we have up-skilled our staff and significantly improved our performance and our communication with our repro house partners." Whatley also comments that as a result of this work, the repro houses are talking with other customers about the benefits of this process.

Ultimate uses three different platemaking houses for plate production. "We have them come in and profile our presses," Whatley reports, "and then produce plates based on those profiles. That has improved the quality of plates and our overall cycle time and reduced waste, since the plates we now receive are always accurate."

There are potential efficiencies in the proofing process as well. "Asda provides us with proofs to match, and proofs are generated by our repro house. Although at present we still have a proof produced by our repro house, this has the potential to be discontinued. Considering that we produce between 30 and 40 jobs per month for Asda on that press, and a proof costs between £25 and £50, that alone has the potential for saving of minimum £750 per month for Asda work, not counting the time savings we could benefit from."

### On the Production Floor

"When we first started using ColorCert," Whatley explains, "we actually took a productivity hit as we began to better understand gaps in our performance and work to correct them. However, the investment was well worth it as we addressed the issues, moved up the learning curve, and saw our quality and productivity begin to climb. With ColorCert Scorecard, we have been able to

more easily identify areas where we can improve our performance. This ensures that profiles are correct, plates are correct, inks are accurate, and our partners better understand what we need. The result? An improvement of 200% in our ColorCert score!"

Custom color bars with patches at 100%, 70%, 40% are placed in the design, rather than on the outer edges of the print, for extremely accurate measurement data. Once the job has been completely measured, the Operator uploads the data direct from press side to the Asda ColorCert Scorecard Server for review by Asda, with full visibility & traceability for all jobs. Asda can also see which instrument has been used and verify that Netprofiler has been applied, which gives them confidence in a reliable, closed-loop color measurement and management process.

### Better Relationships

The new PantoneLIVE/ColorCert-enabled process has given the firm a 360-degree view, achieving a better all-around awareness of what is coming into the building and what is leaving.

"Our relationship with Asda was always good, but it has really improved since we implemented PantoneLIVE and ColorCert." Whatley states. "Having the ColorCert Scorecard in place has given performance visibility to all authorized parties in the supply chain. This helps with communication, putting everyone at ease, knowing that product delivered will be consistent and of highest possible quality."

Whatley adds, "The Asda Print Team is open to comments and feedback from us, and has encouraged us to continue to make strides in quality improvement. We have much better communication and deeper contacts into the organization." He reports that weekly status meetings with Asda, which used to take a minimum of 20 to 30 minutes, are now reduced to a quick 10-minute update once a fortnight.

This adds up to significant cost savings and productivity improvement across the board.



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## Looking Ahead

"Asda Print Manager Jason Gilmartin's objective all along has been to raise the bar on the quality and consistency of printed packaging, and as such, we are discussing how we can expand our usage of ColorCert in the future," Whatley says. "As of right now, we are only using it on the one press for reduced gamut CMYK work, but we see opportunities to expand its use across the entire production platform. We are also having ongoing conversations with a number of other customers about the benefits X-Rite solutions can bring, and we expect to on-board more customers with both PantoneLIVE and ColorCert in the near future. These are exciting times!"



## Acronym List

**G7:** IDEAlliance proof-to-print process

**FSC:** Forest Stewardship Council

**SFI:** Sustainable Forestry Initiative

**UV:** Ultraviolet

**SOPs:** Standard Operating Procedures

**CMYK:** Cyan, Magenta, Yellow, and Key (black)

**L\*a\*b\*:** Lab Color Space

### About X-Rite

Founded in 1958, X-Rite, Incorporated is a global leader in color science and technology. Including its wholly owned subsidiary Pantone, X-Rite employs more than 800 people in 11 countries. The company's corporate headquarters are located in Grand Rapids, Mich., with regional headquarters in Europe and Asia and service centers across Europe, the Middle East, Asia, and the Americas. X-Rite Pantone offers a full range of color management solutions used by manufacturers, retailers, printers, photographers and graphic design houses to achieve precise management and communication of color throughout their processes. X-Rite Pantone leading edge products and services are recognized standards in the printing, packaging, photography, graphic design, video, automotive, paints, plastics, textiles and medical industries. For further information, please visit [www.xrite.com](http://www.xrite.com).

### About Pantone

Pantone LLC, a wholly owned subsidiary of X-Rite, Incorporated, has been the world's colour authority for nearly 50 years, providing design professionals with products and services for the colourful exploration and expression of creativity. Always a source for colour inspiration, Pantone also offers paint and designer-inspired products and services for consumers. More information is available at [www.pantone.com](http://www.pantone.com). For the latest news, trends, information and conversations, connect with Pantone on Twitter, Facebook and Pinterest.