



Helping you with Colour Most commonly asked questions

What is a pantone colour?

A pantone colour is a solid colour used when printing 1, 2 or 3 colours, it normally carries a unique numerical reference followed by a u for uncoated or c for coated. It is an internationally recognised standard. The term PMS colour may also be used and stands for pantone matching system.

Why have a pantone reference?

When designing stationery a pantone colour is chosen, the reference is then applied to all future printing requirements this helps maintain consistency on all items of printed material, even if you are using a number of different printers supplying them with the pantone number helps them match a colour standard.

Can it ever appear differently?

Yes, although a pantone colour can be from the same tin of ink the colour can appear differently on uncoated and coated materials, a pantone colour printed on a gloss sheet will often look more vibrant than that printed on an uncoated sheet, when printed on a silk sheet it can vary again although the make up of the ink is the same it is the material that can give it a different effect, a colour printed on a brilliant white sheet will appear different to one printed on an off white sheet.

How can we be sure we will know how it looks?

The printer can show you a pantone guide with the colour printed on gloss and an uncoated alternative as a guide, unfortunately on occasions we have known of clients shown a pantone colour on a computer screen and told that is how it will look, this will lead to confusion as a computer screen is a completely different medium to a paper and it will not look the same when printed, the printer can arrange a machine proof showing exactly how it will look on the material to be used, we have also come across situations where a pantone is shown on a gloss paper and it is being printed on an uncoated paper or visa a versa, if unsure you should involve your printer at the early stages of a project to offer advice, this can avoid potential problems further down the line.

We are printing a full colour image but our house pantone colour looks different when printed in 4-colour process.

When printing items involving photographs the work will be printed in four process colours cyan, magenta, yellow and black, every pantone colour can be made up out of 4 colour process but the result can look quite different to a pantone colour printed as a solid ink, printers do have available pantone to process conversion books showing the pantone solid colour alongside it's process equivalent, we strongly recommend that you view these to gain an understanding of how the final result will look.

I am unhappy with the way my pantone prints in four colour process, what can I do?

We can print in 4 colour process plus a pantone special to achieve the correct match for a house colour, this involves additional cost as an extra printing unit is needed and an extra plate required but it is something worth considering, Kopykat would normally produce this type of work on our five colour press.

I have printed out a proof on our internal colour laser printer will it look the same when printed on a print machine?

No, the result can often be quite different, most PCs use RGB (red, green and blue) printing machines use cyan, yellow, magenta and black (CMYK) when printing full colour process work, the pre-press department would need to convert your file to CMYK. The result of a file printed on laser printers can vary from machine to machine and can even differ in the same office using laser printers of an identical make.

If your work is two colour using pantone mixes (solid colour) if printed off on a laser printer again it will be made up from RGB and even a digitally calibrated proof would still use CMYK.

Can a metallic ink be printed out of 4 colour process?

No Gold, Silver or Bronze need to be printed as a solid

I want a shiny metallic effect how can I achieve it.

On a brochure the metallic pantone ink needs to be printed on gloss material or laminated using a high gloss finish, alternatively a foiling process can be used where by a metallic foil is stamped onto the sheet

The points above are given as a guide to assist you and are questions often asked by clients when liaising with Kopykat but please call us on 020 7739 2451 if there is something you wish to ask that we may not have covered. Or email print@kopykat.co.uk