

Case Study:

Mars Fishcare

A True Fish Story –
How CMYK Nearly
Doubled Sales

“We saved 22% in ink the first half of 2020.”

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Specifications:

Market Segment:
Specialty

Format:
Folding cartons and
blister cards
ezComboSM Program

Spot color vs. CMYK

Pantone spot color or CMYK? Many companies face this question whether it's a new design or redesign on their packaging. But first, it's important to know the difference between both to make an informed – and cost-effective decision. Spot color or solid color is any color generated by an ink (pure or mixed) that is printed using a single print run. The major benefit is color consistency from printer to printer. So, if you cannot allow for any brand color variance as in a 'Coca Cola red' that emblazons all packaging for example, spot color is your spot-on choice. But it comes with a price.

CMYK stands for “Cyan Magenta Yellow Black” - the four basic colors used for printing color images. A printing press uses ink dots to make up an image from these four colors. Look at any newspaper or magazine picture with a magnifying glass, and you can see the CMYK dots forming that image. While this option produces high quality results, there's the risk of a slight color variance. And that factor makes it a more cost-effective choice, as a recent Rohrer customer discovered.

Blister cards – need for cost savings and productivity, but what about the blue?

Mars is the largest Consumer Packaged Goods manufacturer of pet care products globally. Mars Fishcare is a subsidiary that produces

food, treatments, pharmaceuticals and medications for aquarium and pond fish. As a long time customer of Rohrer, they needed to make a major change in their packaging to decrease costs and increase productivity. Rohrer had been printing their blister cards using spot colors. But Mars could no longer 'time and cost-justify' that process, especially when it came to overall cost savings and the need for shorter 'just-in-time' print runs. If they wanted to do a special promotional product, spot color runs slowed down their logistics and eroded their profit margins. For each print run using spot colors, it was an additional \$400 to buy the customized, pre-mixed ink. Then there could be a delay in finding a 'spot color slot' on Rohrer's ezComboSM print program. Although Mars Fishcare was cutting costs with this unique shared tooling arrangement, spot color print runs required special technical considerations in advance. So, a spot color print job couldn't be placed on any ezComboSM print run that had capacity. And that bogged down logistics and time to market.

But they also had done their homework. Blue was Mars Fishcare's brand color, and blue was a tough color to match in CMYK. This was a major reason they were slow to make the transition. How much of a blue color variance would they be risking? Could Rohrer help with a solution?

The spot-on solution with no spot color

After a call with their Rohrer sales representative, a sample was run to compare the spot color blue with the CMYK. While some colors can be simulated well, there are many that are outside the possible color gamut for that process and will look quite different. Although there was a slight difference, Mars Fishcare said it was negligible and approved the transition to CMYK. After design changes were made, the transition to CMYK was official and Rohrer could start producing the full line of folding cartons and blister cards including 4/1, 4/4, face and back seals.

Business is booming

Because the blister cards no longer had technical requirements on the press, they could be run on any ezComboSM. This timesaving feature increased Mars Fishcare's need for faster productivity. And the cost savings? From January– August 2020, Mars Fishcare saved 22% on ink alone by transitioning to CMYK. But perhaps the best news of all is business is booming. Mars Fishcare nearly doubled their order of blister cards from 2019 to 2020!