

WHAT YOU NEED TO KNOW ABOUT COLOUR



Knowledge Base

RGB or CMYK? Why you don't have a choice for print!

There are lots of different colour processes available for printed materials, but understanding how the two main ones function is the key to getting your designs to achieve the effect you want.

CMYK is used throughout the offset litho traditional process of printing ink onto paper and is what must be used to produce the final printed product.

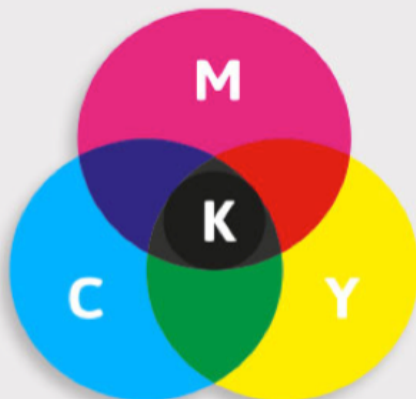
RGB is a light-based colour scale used throughout most digital methods. All the colours are created by the combinations of just Red Green and Blue ... check your TV screen up close!

CMYK

CMYK stands for Cyan (light blue), Magenta (red/pink), Yellow, and Key tone (black). These are the coloured process inks that are overlaid to achieve the almost unlimited number of colour combinations we see in printed material.

This colour scale or gamut, is what must be used to produce printed material the traditional way on offset litho machines.

CMYK Colour Model

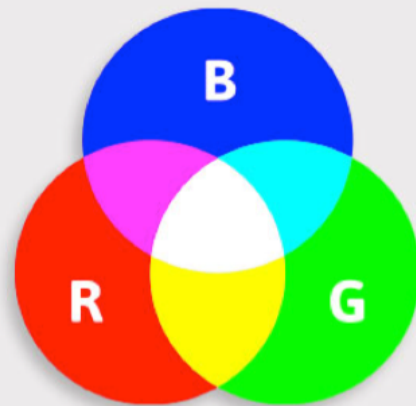


C - cyan, M - magenta,
Y - yellow, K - black

RGB

The RGB colour model is a simple concept. Using thousands of light pixels. The combination of colours create lighter and brighter results. As you see from the graphic below, Red, Green and Blue combined make White. This is how all digital screens project a huge range of bright colours

RGB Colour Model



R - red, G - green, B - blue

TOP TIP

Digital-based software is set in RGB colour mode - this includes word processing and many graphic applications. These will always print out in duller tones than they look on screen and colours may show as vastly different from the CMYK mode. Therefore always convert artwork for printing to CMYK and take account of the colour variances to avoid nasty surprises with the final result!

Although CMYK colours are ALWAYS less vibrant than RGB, a good graphics application will allow adjustments to revitalise colours, although the result is never going to be quite the same as what you see on screen.

