



COLOR & PREPRESS MANAGEMENT



MEXICAN GROCERY STORE CHAIN SOLVES THE COLOR PROBLEMS IN THEIR PACKAGING

Summary

After working with a creative agency to develop a new branding strategy for their private brand, a Mexican supermarket chain launches into the print stage through different printers and using different substrates.

When the new products arrived to the shelves, the Marketing Department found many reasons to not be satisfied as the packaging results surprised them: everything looks different to what was approved to the creative agency, the products seemed to belong to different brands, with unexpected shades of colors, and in general had a poor appearance, making them look as lower class products. For example, the pictures used did not have the desired impact and there was inconsistency on graphic elements and text appearance across packages due to each printer making adjustments. It was not what the retail company expected, and neither was warned about this possible outcome.

At that time they decided to hire BRANDWATCH to act as their Print Management Agency, helping to fix the immediate problems and prevent surprises like this to happen again.

Challenges

- The new branding depended heavily on complex artwork using direct colors mixed with CMYK, without considering specifications of the printers.
- They had not established a color management system for the brand throughout the process, so what was approved was unpredictable.
- Print vendors controlled the pre-press process and adjusted the designs according to their needs and criteria.

How BRANDWATCH helped

BRANDWATCH led the implementation of a Color Management system and Pre-Press, based on 3 essential premises:

- Fingerprinting and technical assessment of print supplier capabilities.
- Centralization and standardization of the pre-press process and final approval.
- Quality assurance of the final result through press approvals with scientific measurement of printed results vs agreed colorimetric standards.

Results

Result 1: Reduction of uncertainty through achievement of 97% predictability in color proof, against the final printed result measured in DeltaE.

Result 2: : A 40% reduction in artwork changes cycles during the last stage of the process.

Result 3: Unification of pre-press criteria for graphic elements, and control of final files.

Return of Investment

Pre-Press work represented 3% of the total printed packaging cost, which was billed by the suppliers on every print run. For an annual packaging expense of 25 million USD, printing every SKU about two times on average, the investment in centralized Color Management & Pre-Press mean savings of \$375.000 USD per year.

It is complex to accurately measure the return on investment of avoiding potential risks, but we can list approximate costs of not having a process of Color Management & Pre-Press:

- Print run repeat due to inaccuracies: \$250.000 USD to 1 MM USD.
- Sales lost by failure of products reaching the shelves on time for seasonal promotions, depending on the sales forecast.
- Non-quantifiable loss of brand value, by giving an inconsistent and weak appearance.

**CENTRALIZATION,
STANDARDIZATION AND
SCIENTIFIC CONTROL OF RESULTS**

Key Performance Indicators

KPIs that are measured in the process:

- Average Cost and Turnaround times per Artwork
- Type and number of errors in original files received by design agencies.
- Percentage of files released Right The First Time.
- Monthly print quality scorecard, based on evaluation of printed samples.