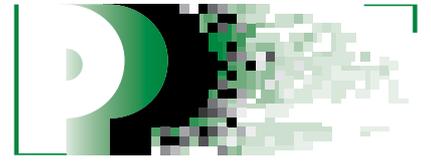


How an ill-fated adventure 41 years ago led to Mellow Colour partnering with one of Germany's leading printers.



druckpartner
Druck- und Medienhaus



When you have the likes of Mercedes Benz, Volvo and Coca Cola as your clients, you need to ensure your print is meeting the most stringent ISO 12647 quality controls, with predictable and cost-effective results.

German print company druckpartner was faced with such a challenge. With international clients demanding nothing but the very best for their colour-critical print products, druckpartner needed to be able to satisfy their customers' rigorous acceptance procedures, while maintaining reasonable efficiency and profitability for the printer.

This is where Mellow Colour came in.

Our ISO 12647 colour management technology means predictable results are the norm for audited printing plants. Mellow Colour's solutions make the entire customer approval process more efficient and more cost-effective for both the client and the printer. Clients are able to give online print approval rather than having to be physically present with the printer, approving an OK sheet, that the printer then maintains during the print run.

Mellow Colour technology offers a greater protection for printers, as automatic software documentation tracks all information that is passed between client and printer. This means if a mistake is made on the part of the client, the printer won't be liable for the associated costs of putting that error right.

Gerhard Florian is Operations Manager at the Essen-based company and he believes his decision to introduce Mellow Colour has helped to put druckpartner ahead of their competitors.

"In my eyes, Mellow Colour is currently the best quality control on the market," says Mr Florian, who has worked at druckpartner for the past 41 years. "We specialise in anything that can be printed cost-effectively by offset and digital methods, and we have some big-name clients to satisfy - Coca Cola, Mercedes, Thyssen Krupp, Volvo, Opel and Burger King to name a few."

"We can produce almost any print products for them, ranging from calling cards, to business reports, posters and magazines - and the quality has to be fantastic."

“Before we introduced Mellow Colour, we were left up in the air if we received complaints,” says Mr Florian.

“We were always able to satisfy our customers in the end, but we were often unable to prove we were in the right after production.”

“Introducing Mellow Colour has meant we can identify and remedy our errors beforehand and monitor print runs more effectively.”

“It’s now possible to provide evidence of inconsistent data from the customer straightaway and at little expense,” he adds. Mr Florian hails from Austria originally, and studied in Graz, commuting between Salzburg and Graz during his apprenticeship. “I found a job as a printer in Salzburg,” he explains, “and worked there until a friend and I decided to travel to Hamburg in Germany.”

“We set off for Hamburg in my car, with the hope of joining the crew of a ship so we could learn other languages and see the world.” But Mr Florian’s dreams of travelling the globe came to an abrupt halt, when his car suddenly broke down near Essen, in Germany’s Ruhr district. “It was an old Opel Rekord, a heap of junk really,” laughs Mr Florian. “It was beyond repair, so we left it behind in the scrap yard and went to find some digs for the night”. Mr Florian and his friend decided to stick around in Essen for a while, so the next day started to look for work. “We saw an advert in the newspaper for a print shop. We called them, went over and introduced ourselves. The print shop only needed a typesetter, which was my friend’s profession, but they took me on as a printer too.”

Unfortunately, Mr Florian’s friend soon changed his mind about leaving home, and returned home to Austria, leaving Mr Florian to his new life in Essen. But all was not plain-sailing. “The printing industry went into a steep decline after my first year,” explains Mr Florian. “The switch from hot-metal typesetting to phototypesetting was causing serious difficulty for some printing plants, including mine. I was the last in so I was the first out.” Mr Florian looked for more work, and came across an advert for a position at druckpartner. “I went over, introduced myself and got the job.”

But what of Mr Florian’s plans to see the world? “I was still planning to go to Hamburg and join a ship,” he says. “However, I was becoming increasingly fond of the Ruhr district as it somehow really reminded me of Graz.”

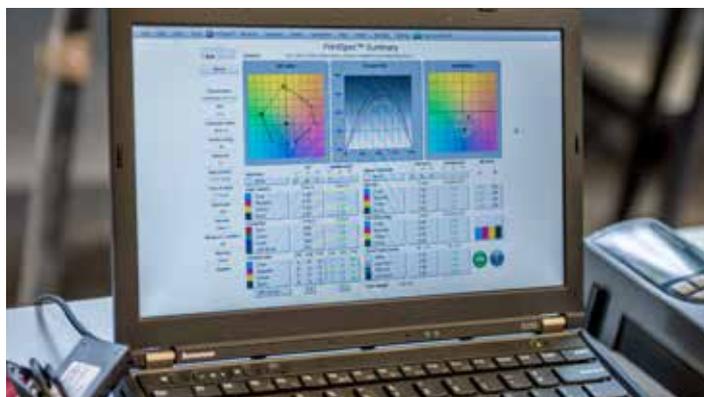
“I said to myself: you’re staying here. Then I met my wife and carried on working at druckpartner. I’ve been with the firm for 41 years now and I’m the authorised representative, works manager and partner.”



“It is our belief that the extraordinary Mellow Colour print quality management model is leading for the entire printing industry. Its holistic strategy, combined with thorough training processes, puts all parties involved on an equal footing. This, in turn, secures a better grasp for the entire production process and generates an intrinsic motivation that encourages knowledge and, as a consequence, quality on a much improved level.”

- Jost Uhrmacher

Head of Project Management netzwerk P, Berlin



So how has Mellow Colour’s recent implementation at druckpartner affected the business? “That’s an easy one,” says Mr Florian. “Complaints are now few and far between.” And going forward? “We plan to press on with the newly introduced system, which will mean acquainting our customers with remote approval.”

“Expensive overnight stays and machine downtimes are a thing of the past. This means added value both for customers and druckpartner alike,” smiles Mr Florian. The Mellow Colour system has given druckpartner a clear advantage over its rivals. The quality control facilitates fast and easy print approval, the documentation provides security and press downtime is a thing of the past. At the same time, there are significantly fewer complaints or none at all. Trips and express shipments are no longer necessary.

Mellow Colour has helped to enhance cost-effectiveness, resource conservation and efficiency, in turn confirming druckpartner’s place as Germany’s leading printer. A happy partnership if ever there was one – and all thanks to a beaten-up old Opel Rekord that couldn’t make it all the way to Hamburg.