

ISO 12647/2: MAKING STANDARDS WORK FOR YOU!

THIS QUALITY STANDARD IS NOW GAINING REAL MOMENTUM – AND OFFERS POTENT BENEFITS TO COMPANIES WHICH GAIN ACCREDITATION

ISO 12647 has existed for some time, but take-up was low: perhaps because of the indigestible language it employs. However, February saw the publication by the BPIF Technical Committee of the ISO 12647/2 Scheme Requirements: and for the first time there was a clear road-map setting out what is needed to achieve certification.

There are good reasons to do so. A colour standard gives increasingly demanding brand owners the confidence that exacting colour standards will be met - clearly a big asset for printers when it comes to retaining clients and winning new ones.

Solid gains

Certification to ISO 12647/2 [litho only at this stage] means that the printer operates a colour quality system and prints to the ISO standard. The BPIF Scheme takes ISO 9001 and combines it with ISO 12647 to avoid fresh systems where possible. Just as importantly, it supports the UKAS certification programme and is therefore independently audited, giving it the same

status as FSC, 9001, 14001 etc.

The scheme covers the procedures in use by the company in the production process. Clearly a successful press run test is essential, but this comes at the end of a wider assessment of the colour quality and management system, including reception of copy, pre-press, proofing and printing. This delivers a better way of doing colour throughout the whole business and ensures improved and more reliable colour quality. As a result, there are savings in time, materials and manpower, giving rapid ROI.

With the increases in paper costs, it is now even more vital to reduce paper use and improve efficiency. Working closely to the standard will contribute to this drive for excellence.

Mind the gap

To help companies achieve this, the BPIF launched the 'Sun Chemical ISO 12647/2 Gap Analysis programme at IPEX. The programme allows printers to gain quick, clear, independent assessment of the actions needed to meet the scheme requirements.

This gap analysis programme, sponsored by Sun Chemical to keep the cost low, highlights any process shortcomings and details the actions required to overcome potential non-conformances throughout the whole production process. Any company going for certification will find this a useful way of preventing additional expensive auditing costs.

What are the ultimate benefits? The twenty or so printers who have already done the gap analysis point to savings in make readies, greater customer confidence and stronger marketing advantages. And they must be worthwhile obtaining in today's challenging trading conditions.

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CASE STUDY: Bridson & Horrox

Based in the Isle of Man, this company's directors became interested in the Colour Management Standard ISO 12647/2 almost as soon as details of its impending introduction were released in 2008.

They knew that the quality achieved through its pre-press, proofing and printing processes was good, given its skilled workforce and the fact that its equipment was relatively new. However, no procedures existed to allow an accurate measurement of performance against a colour quality standard such as ISO 12647/2.

Tommy Crowe, Director of Print Operation: "Many of our customers have critical colour requirements and would demand compliance with ISO 12647/2. This led us to contact the Business Division of the BPIF for advice. A Technical Consultant made a GAP analysis of all areas that involve colour production processes."

This analysis measured and recorded the

company's performance in the sectors of pre-press, proofing and printing against the standards for ISO 12647/2. The Consultant's report set out a route map for ISO 12647/2 UKAS certification.

Fortunately, the existing equipment could achieve and maintain the new standard consistently with little additional capital expenditure. However, the report highlighted a number of working practices that needed changing or introducing. It was recommended that ISO 12647/2 be integrated with the procedures that the company already had for the quality standard ISO 9001. A small amount of capital expenditure was identified as being necessary as well as some training.

Benefits include efficiency gains, reduced wastage, enhanced customer satisfaction, the ability to tender for more exacting work and a checklist of standards for accuracy and consistency.

