



What does your printer really mean when he says:

We produce to Process Standard Offset



For some time now you have kept on encountering the term Process Standard Offset in connection with the production of your printed media. You might perhaps have read it on the web site or the quotation from your media service provider or your printer's customer adviser might have spoken to you about.



In this publication, what we would like to do is to provide you with a brief, clear explanation of what lies behind the words Process Standard Offset and how the fact that your service provider works to this standard can be a benefit to you.



The benefits to you of Process Standard Offset

- Prints match the approved contract proof
- Unnecessary colour correction costs saved
- Prepress and press suppliers work together smoothly
- Distributed printing at several sites (including international ones) results in comparable colour.
- Reprints match the original run
- Passing for press becomes superfluous or less time consuming
- Fewer errors, fewer complaints
- The responsibilities of your print and media service providers are clear (no mutual recriminations)
- Faster, to deadline delivery through smooth workflow



Standards make life simpler



music, software or other data and the quality of such data is not dependent upon the form of the disc or the technology used to record and read the data. Ultimately, the standard only determines the properties of the product that ensure a smooth interaction with other products. The user generally takes it for granted that such interfaces are adhered to by the manufacturers.

In everyday life many standards seem so natural to us that we scarcely think about them. Although produced by different manufacturers, data carriers and readers are compatible. The content quality of the data they carry is a completely different matter.

Standards are all around us. If, for example, DVDs and the units used to read them were not standardized to a certain degree, there would be considerable extra expenditure for production, storage and transport, not to mention advice and sales too. Buying the wrong data carrier or player would mean a time consuming and expensive exchange. Video libraries would have to hold films on all storage media, making the move from VHS video to DVD difficult to manage and, at the end of the day, you, the customer, would have to pay for all this effort.

Many companies claim their products are, "better than standard". Usually this is simply a sales pitch, because the standards adhered to in production or that are implemented in the product generally say little about the properties that the purchaser perceives as marks of quality. Whether a DVD holds a video,



If the colour of the advertising message is right the desired effect on the recipient can be achieved. Process Standard Offset ensures that the intended colour is produced during printing even when production involves several suppliers..



Standards in printing – what’s the point?

When you place a print order you want to be sure that the colour of the print run will match your ideas. It’s often the case that everything rests on the orange of a lemonade being particularly “fruity” or the reproduction of the colour of a car being as close to the original as

possible. What is required is the ability to adjust colour in a targeted way and to reproduce the same quality at any time. Many steps are involved in the print production process and it is therefore vital that

colour information that is relevant to the end product is correctly transferred and interpreted between the individual stages. Process Standard Offset simplifies print production by defining the interfaces in the workflow and consequently helping to avoid possible errors.

What can happen without standards

Have you ever been unhappy with the colour of your run and had printing and prepress companies blaming each other? Have you stood around at the printer for hours waiting to pass for press only to decide in the end that the colour of the proofs cannot be achieved on the printed sheets? Have you produced several printed products with identical subjects at different printers with clearly differing results? Have you ordered a reprint without any alterations where the colour is completely different from the original run? Have you had printed products delivered long after the agreed deadline because the printer had problems with the data? If one of these scenarios rings true then in all probability the job in question was not being carried out to Process Standard Offset.

Of course, Process Standard Offset cannot work miracles. The substrate means that an image printed on newsprint can never have such strong colour or rich contrast as one printed on high quality illustration printing paper. What Process Standard Offset does do, however, is to ensure that in both cases the result is as close as possible to the original, so that the match between your

newspaper advertisement and product catalogue is as good as can be achieved technically.




The correct reproduction of the colour of an image must be guaranteed even when it is reproduced at a different site or at a different date. Process Standard Offset makes this possible..



So, what is Process Standard Offset?



Process Standard Offset determines the criteria by which the colour reproduction can be objectively assessed and precisely controlled at all stages in the process.

 Process Standard Offset is a set of rules for working accurately with colour in the printing industry contained in a Handbook published by the Bundesverband Druck und Medien (bvdM), Germany's printing and media federation. This lays down requirements for data, films, plates, proofs, press proofs and print runs, which, in most cases, consist of measurable target values taken from international and therefore globally applicable standards. Therefore, at each

stage in the process, everybody involved in print production can also work towards the desired final end product.

In any industrial production process small deviations from the target result are unavoidable from time to time, and printing is no exception to this general rule. This is due both to the technologically highly complex process and the materials used. In order to limit the possible differences to the minimum that is technically and economically feasible, Process Standard Offset lays down tolerances for the individual target values that should be adhered to in production. Process Standard Offset also describes in detail how the tar-

get values can be achieved efficiently and the monitoring options that are available.

If all the prepress and printing companies that you use for the production of your printed media work to this Standard, then, no matter when or where, you should benefit from the consistent and accurate colour reproduction of your material—besides saving yourself any amount of hassle.



Of "good" and "bad" data

The correct composition of the data and the printing materials is a very important prerequisite for reliable colour during print production. If the quality of the available data is not adequate for offset printing, perhaps because it has been generated by Office programs or without colour management, the printer cannot guarantee that the colours will be reproduced as desired. It is often more time consuming and expensive for the printer to correct faulty data than it is to create it afresh with the right software.



Subsequent correction of faulty data costs a great deal of time and money. Timely advice from the print or media service provider helps to avoid problems.

If you want to produce your own print data it is best to ask for the advice of your print or media service provider. The safe approach is to put your prepress work in the hands of professional media designers who work to Process Standard

Offset. The training and, in many cases, years of experience of such professionals means that they are

totally familiar with the production, preparation and output of data for offset printing.

When is copy contract copy?

Proofs produced for colour correction or as copy for the printer must simulate the expected printed result as closely as possible. Correctly anticipating the colour of the subsequent printed result is,

however, only possible if the printing conditions are known and taken into account when producing the proof. These conditions include the printing process, paper grade and screening that will be used.

It is possible to use a colour measurement device to check whether or not the simulation has succeeded but this requires a media wedge made up of a number of predefined colour patches to be printed out with the proof. Only when the media wedge displays the right values for the planned printing conditions can one be sure that the colour result of the proof is really achievable during the print run. A proof without a media wedge can never be used as a contract proof. Print and media companies that produce to Process Standard Offset know this and are able to correctly produce and check contract copy and flawlessly reproduce it during printing.



A proof is more than a coloured print out. For it to serve as a contract proof the media wedge patches must display the right values.



A Standard that binds

Even if this all sounds a bit complicated—Process Standard Offset actually makes the production of your printed matter simpler and, above all, more reliable. Neither you nor your service provider need to reinvent the wheel with every job but can rely on robust guidelines. It is precisely when you use several partners to produce your printed products that you should make sure that everybody works to Process Standard Offset. Should problems arise, it is then possible to trace the cause using the documented production data and you, as the customer, are not left helpless in the midst of all your suppliers.

A much more likely scenario is that problems with colour reproduction will be consigned to the past, because with Process Standard Offset everyone is singing from the same hymn sheet.



Process Standard Offset – a firm foundation for working together.

Your print and media supplier will be happy to explain to you how you can benefit from Process Standard Offset, because what the printing industry wants is sophisticated, well-

informed customers who are able to act as competent partners when it comes to quality assurance. So, talk to your sales adviser about Process Standard Offset

Would you like to find out more about standardized print production such as Process Standard Offset?

- You already know a bit about print production processes and possibly would like to learn more about what standardized production processes (e.g. Offset) are and the benefits they offer you.
- We recommend in this case as a first step to use the “Media Standard Print” which summarizes the requirements for standardized print production such as offset and other printing processes (newspaper/coldset offset, gravure).
- For further information and free download of “Media Standard Print” please go to www.bvdm.org/Aktuelles/Downloads.php
- Note: a completely updated and revised comprehensive english language manual “Process Standard Offset” will be published by bvdm in 2011.



Imprint

Publisher:

Bundesverband Druck und Medien e.V. (bvdm),
Biebricher Allee 79, 65187 Wiesbaden

Production:

Print & Media Forum AG,
Biebricher Allee 79, 65187 Wiesbaden
Artikel-Nr. 86 469

© 2006 – 2011

Bundesverband Druck und Medien e.V. (bvdm),
Wiesbaden

This work and its constituent text and illustrations is protected by copyright. No use may be made of it beyond the limits narrowly defined by copyright law without the permission of the publisher and any such use constitutes an infringement of copyright. This applies in particular to reproduction, translation, microfilming and storage and processing on electronic systems.

Text:

Harry Belz

Illustrations:

Peter H. Schäfer

Design and prepress:

mayart GmbH, Ingelheim