X-Rite Digital Color Solutions Enable Soap & Glory to Set Clear Color Expectations within Packaging Supply Chain

Industry:
Skincare and Cosmetics

Location:
Worldwide

Website:
www.no7company.com

Soap & Glory's bespoke pink draws customers to the brand's impactful Indulgent Bathing, Skincare, Cosmetics, Gifts and Accessories products on shelves for No7 Beauty Company and the retailers worldwide that stock it. Getting the pink just right and ensuring that it matches consistently between every printed packaging format on shelf is key for brand awareness and consumer engagement.

Color references and physical standards are the first step to achieving better color results. For years, No7 Beauty Company used a physical reference to communicate color expectations and get quick alignment from print suppliers. Pink, the key color of the Soap & Glory core range, was based on Pantone 701C from the Pantone Coated Formula Guide.
Initially using this Pantone color reference helped simplify brand color communication because it gave print suppliers a visual idea of the desired color. But over time the brand began to recognize a lack of color consistency across printed packaging, point of sale, merchandising, and marketing materials.

A closer look revealed the key pink color they had selected to represent the Soap & Glory brand had actually become multiple different shades depending on where and how it was printed. This inconsistency was costing the business a lot of time and money and impacting brand equity on the shelf.

"Moving from physical color references and visual evaluation to a digital color program has dramatically improved Soap & Glory's printed packaging color consistency. Instead of spending time and money relating to the subjective acceptance or rejection of printed colors from Soap & Glory printers from around the world, we can now monitor print quality across multiple sites through X-Rite Pantone's connected software solutions. Giving printers ownership over print quality means they don't ship if color isn't right, preserving our brand identity on the shelf. It's a win-win for everyone."

~ Craig Davids, Global Artwork and Print Manager – No7 Beauty Company

Challenge

With the help of X-Rite Pantone, No7 Beauty Company uncovered four issues:

1. Although the Pantone 701C reference No7 Beauty Company provided their print suppliers as a guide was close, the pink desired by the Soap & Glory brand was more "yellow." Trying to describe this shift to printers was difficult and led to misinterpretation due to subjectivity.
2. Pantone 701C is a reference for a coated white commercial offset paper. While this type of color reference works well when the printer uses the same substrate, the color did not produce accurately across all materials and pack types.
3. Physical references are prone to fading and damage from use. After a period of time, the physical copies of Pantone 701C started to change, leading to a slightly different color target for each print supplier.
4. Each printer was working a little differently. Some were following Pantone 701C, others modified Pantone 701C to the color they thought No7 Beauty Company wanted, and others simply followed previous production runs.

Solution

Technology was the key to digitizing and streamlining No7 Beauty Company's color management process.

*   Working with the team at X-Rite Pantone, No7 Beauty Company selected a new, bespoke pink brand color for Soap & Glory in exactly the shade they wanted as part of a brand visual identity (BVI) re-design to replace Pantone 701C. Soap & Glory pink is now a clearly specified brand color.
*   This new brand standard was digitally defined by X-Rite and uploaded into the PantoneLIVE cloud for access by everyone in the design, artwork creation, and packaging production workflow.
*   While physical Pantone standards remain a valuable tool for design and visual evaluation, the digital PantoneLIVE standard enables the entire packaging supply chain to understand the achievability of the Soap & Glory pink on over 30 different print process and substrate variables. Printers can also access the spectral data for ink formulation and print quality checks.
*   To protect Soap & Glory's brand equity, X-Rite ColorCert Scorecard Server was installed to evaluate and control printed packaging colors. Print suppliers are required to measure production into ColorCert and submit a job score into the No7 Beauty Company Scorecard server. This empowers No7 Beauty Company to be able to view supplier performance and for printers to monitor their own print quality.
*   No7 Beauty Company can now see objective color results from every production run to gain insight and control over the print quality of their global packaging supply chain. They can evaluate and score the quality of each print supplier numerically, and where necessary, identify areas for improvement.

Results

*   Decreased Soap & Glory's pink from multiple shades to one clearly specified digital target color.
*   Reduced the color target variance from over 6 dE in some cases to a current average of <1.3 dE.
*   Sets clear color expectations across over 30 different print, ink, and substrate combinations.
*   Delivers ongoing visibility into the color quality of the global print supply chain.