

DSN invests in Epson SureColor S80600 in combination with GMG OpenColor & JetComp

Realistic colour tests on packaging substrates

Being a long-established premedia company, De Schutter Neroc (DSN) has extensive experience in preparing packaging designs for printing. The delivery of reliable colour tests is a critical link in the conversion from digital design to print-ready files. Joachim de Bue, Color Technics Manager at DSN's Antwerp subsidiary, explains how, by using GMG OpenColor software and Epson printers, the colour tests are accurately matched to production, down to the finest detail.

Corné van der Velden and Patrick de Ronde of MacManiac also attended the meeting. The company previously supplied various Epson printers to create colour tests on paper. With their extensive ink set, the Epson printers can accurately display up to 98% of the Pantone colours. MacManiac recently supplemented its range of test printers with a ten-colour Epson SureColor S80600, that, in addition to its extensive colour range, can also handle white and silver ink. The SureColor S80600 can print very realistic images on transparent carriers such as shrink wrap and aluminium. MacManiac supplies JetComp substrates for this purpose. The printers are controlled with GMG proofing software. GMG OpenColor technology is used to create true colours on press.

Joachim De Bue: 'Most brand owners manage the process themselves and subcontract the printing of their packaging to printers in different countries, which means the inner and outer packaging may be produced in different locations. As a result, the original approach with individual printers being responsible for converting the design into print-ready files no longer works. We have taken advantage of this and extended our services, focusing on preparing the packaging designs for printing, which means that we are now targeting brand owners.'

Joachim De Bue explains how DSN geared its services to the specific requirements and demands of brand owners. Where preparing a packaging design for printing means complying with detailed printing specifications, the wider scope of Packaging Development touches upon a whole range of disciplines. Next to the triangle of product marketing, purchasing and design, the composition of packaging also requires involvement and input from translators, legal advisers and product experts. Joachim De Bue: 'Where necessary, we coordinate all the different stages, from the arrival

Over DSN



About DSN

De Schutter Neroc N.V. (DSN) is a premedia company, part of an international graphics group established in 2004. The group was created as a result of the merger of the Antwerp photo engraving business De Schutter and the Dutch Neroc prepress companies (Rotterdam and Amsterdam). In 2013, a management buyout led to the various subsidiaries being incorporated in the Brand Quadergy Group. The group currently employs 250 people across several different countries and has a turnover of 25 million euro.

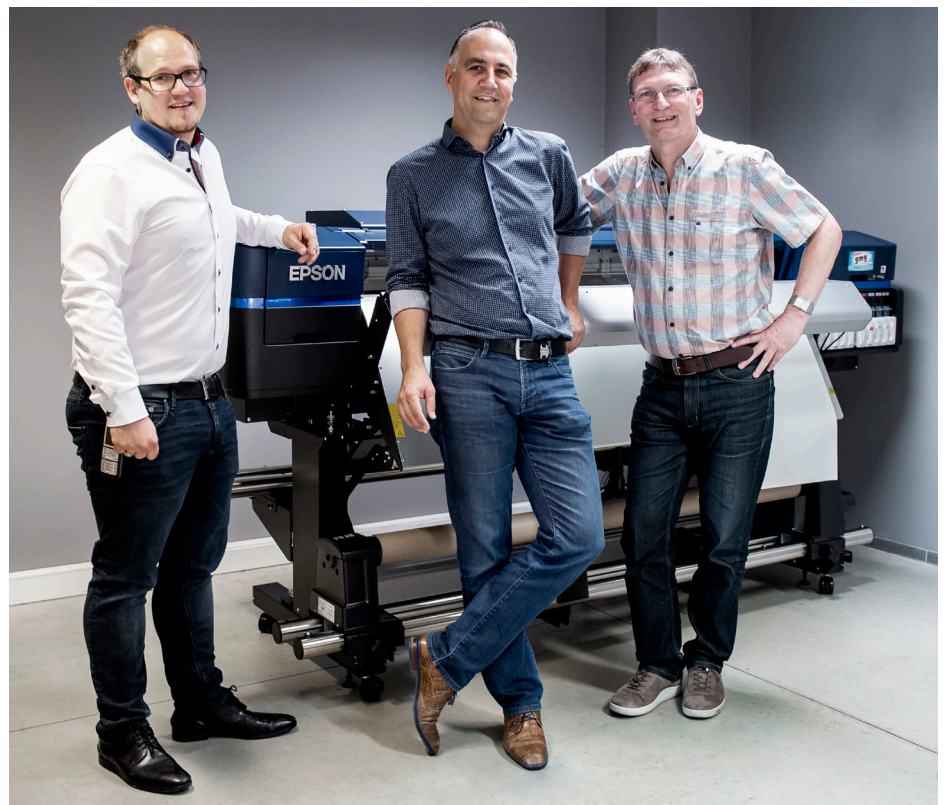
Some figures on DSN:

- active partnerships with 1,200 printing companies worldwide
- 800 colour profiles in circulation
- managing approx. 1,500 brand colours on behalf of brand owners
- producing around 20,000 colour tests per year



Brand owners

'Initially, we mainly worked for packaging printers,' says Joachim De Bue. 'We prepared the files for printing and, when required, also supplied the printers with the printing template.' Since the market for packaging print has gone global over the past decade, DSN shut down its toolmaking operations.

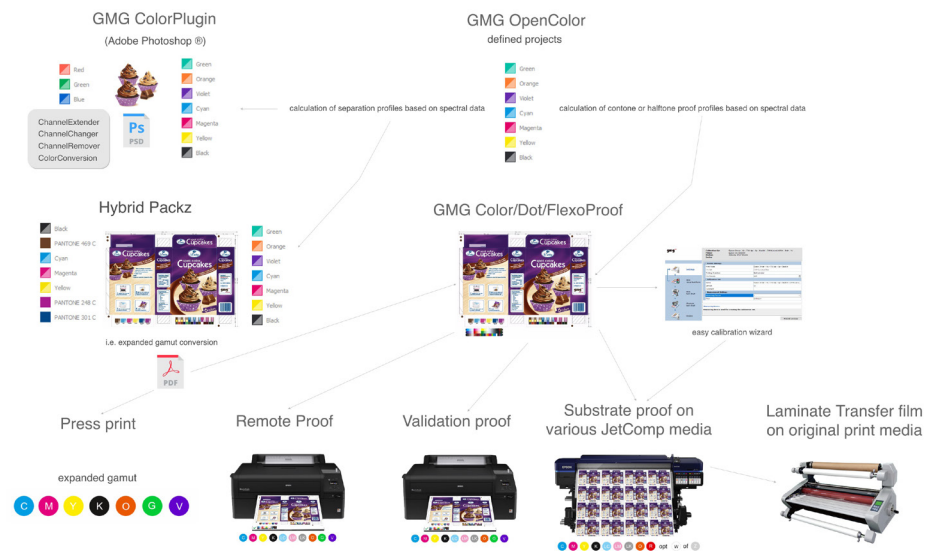


Sten Hendrikse (l), Joachim de Bue (m), Roland Sukul (r) of DSN with their latest acquisition: Epson SC S80600 printer.

of the initial design to the final approved file that is sent to the printer. A large part of the process from design to print-ready file is digital. Still, physical colour tests on paper, or on the substrate used for the packaging, are vital throughout the various stages.'

Different techniques

Joachim De Bue: 'Packaging is not just printed on paper and cardboard, but also other on substrates including aluminium or metal for cans. It also uses various printing techniques, such as offset, flexo and engraving, and requires support colours or extra colours in addition to CMYK. In short, each printing process has its own colour range and characteristics. A colour test produces the only tangible result prior to the print run. Our customers need to be able to properly assess the colour results in advance, so the reliability of a colour test must be beyond reproach. With non-standardised printing processes, which is often the case with packaging print, the production of a reliable colour test requires a number of additional steps.'



Reliable print tests

This is where GMG OpenColor comes into its own. This software enables DSN to produce reliable tests based on the printing press that will be used. Obviously, this is always done in close collaboration with the printing company in question. DSN staff exchange the correct technical data with the printing company's staff to define colour behaviour on the basis of spectral measurements. This is no mean feat. The DSN database now comprises data on more than 800 different printing presses used by printing companies across the globe. And that number continues to grow every month. Joachim De Bue: 'GMG OpenColor is a crucial link, and not just for the production of colour tests. It also controls colour separation in the prepress workflow of the Hybrid software. GMG OpenColor even interfaces with the

About JetComp Films

JetComp Films, which is based in the US, supplies film substrates used for the production of realistic colour tests for packaging print. The applied coatings facilitate high ink loads and consequently extensive colour ranges. The prints can be used to produce colour tests and to create realistic mock-ups.

A number of films can be supplied in various thicknesses. On metal and cardboard packaging the films can also be bonded to the carrier. The range on offer includes, amongst others, transparent white film for shrink wrap packaging and aluminium.

PantoneLIVE method, which is used by some customers to optimise consistency in corporate brand colours.'

Patrick de Ronde adds that colour separations in GMG OpenColor are always based on spectral data. This makes the colour separations more accurate than colour separations that use

demonstrate the effect of the substrate on the end result at an early stage in the proceedings. That was not always possible previously, when we printed all our tests on paper.'

Other purposes

Joachim De Bue says that colour tests presented on the actual substrate are used by customers for other purposes as well. For example, it is now possible to adjust the effect of transparency during the design stage by partly eliminating the use of white ink. This effect was difficult to assess on a screen or paper print. The smart use of an aluminium carrier and white on a colour test can simulate foil print effects in silver or gold. Sometimes the question is whether or not to use an additional colour when printing corporate brand colours, or whether this colour should be built up using standard colours. Joachim De Bue: 'because we can demonstrate the impact of these choices on the substrate in advance, our customers' employees are in a position to make an informed decision early on.'

DSN is a frontrunner when it comes to the application of the latest developments in packaging print. The Epson SureColor S80600 installed by MacManiac is the first printer used in combination with GMG software and JetComp Film for the production of tests.

Corné van der Velden: 'The eco-solvent ink used by this printer promotes optimum bonding of the ink to the substrate, producing a unique wear resistant result. In addition to being applied to produce tests, the subsequent prints can also be used to create 3D mock-ups.'



GMG ColorProof and GMG OpenColor are used to optimise colour fine tuning. Supplied and supported by Patrick de Ronde and Corné van der Velden from MacManiac BV.

an ICC colour profile, as is the case with Adobe Photoshop. GMG OpenColor applies the new approach both for the simulation of a printing press in colour tests and for the actual colour separation in the print-ready file. It uses previous measurements saved in a database, which means the colour separations can be finetuned accurately even on special substrates.

Joachim De Bue: 'Because of the tolerances in the printing processes and substrate, a 100% match is not always feasible in this industry. However, the use of GMG OpenColor, combined with the accuracy with which Epson printers, produces colour tests that are a very close match. The new Epson SureColor S80600 is a valuable acquisition for us. We are now able to comply with our customers' demand for critical and complex packaging tests.'

Joachim De Bue continues: 'It enables us to