

## G7 Master Printer

If you are a print buyer or graphic designer, and the term “G7” elicits a confused “Say what?” from you, read on...

The term is new for many in the industry, and it’s often confused with “GRACoL” and “GRACoL 7.” It’s time to fix that!

### 1. How does G7 help our customers?

Customers benefit because they are getting the very best color management available today. Printers who are G7 certified have proven that they can match proof, plates and press sheets - so the customer is getting the expertise of tighter process controls rather than simply using a pressman’s eyeball for color.

By using G7, we are measuring color with spectrodensitometers, which provide accurate readings of the color being printed. Color has always been subjective, so why rely on human eyes when we have equipment capable of measuring color so accurately? Also, G7 Master Printers can produce proofs that are easily matched on press.

G7 also benefits the printer. G7 means that instead of just using SIDs (solid ink densities) as our measuring tool on press, we now use a spectrodensitometer to measure gray balance. If the color is off, by measuring the gray balance it will help us identify how to correct it.

### 2. What is G7?

Print buyers, agencies and marketers want to be able to make things “look the same,” regardless of where or how they’re printed. G7 is an improved method for matching color across multiple devices – it’s all about calibrating printing presses and proofing systems with the goal of repeatable, consistent color and images from proof to press, press to press, and even facility to facility. The G7 specification is managed by **IDEAlliance**, and the biggest breakthrough is its emphasis on gray balance “target values” to monitor and control color.

The ‘G’ stands for the new calibrating Gray values and the ‘7’ for the core colors in the ISO printing rainbow . . .Cyan (C), Magenta (M), Yellow (Y), Black (K), Red (M+Y), Green (C+Y), and Blue (C+M).

For print buyers, G7 means that if you are working with two or three firms and all of them are G7 Masters, you can be more confident that the vibrant reds and yellows in

your new marketing campaign will “visually match” across all locations, regardless of whether it’s printed heatset web offset, sheetfed, inkjet or digital. . . and whether it’s a point-of-purchase display, brochure, self-mailer, or packaging.

### **3. So many graphic arts terms are confusing. G7 is not synonymous with GRACoL or with GRACoL 7.**

I know, I know – total alphabet soup! The acronyms are different but related because they all involve **IDEAlliance**, a membership organization that’s been the driving force for creating specifications and best practices in the industry. Here we go: GRACoL stands for General Requirements and Applications for Commercial Offset Lithography, the guidelines that have become the de facto rule of the land in printing shops everywhere for producing high-quality color print. These guidelines were developed by an **IDEAlliance** committee beginning back in the mid-1990s. The term GRACoL nowadays refers to the committee itself, while its published guidelines are “GRACoL x” – GRACoL followed by the version number . . . for example GRACoL 6, which came out in 2002, and the new GRACoL 7 in 2006.

GRACoL 7 was released after comprehensive research and press runs. It emphasized “visual appearance” based proof-to-print, introduced the new grayscale calibration technique and more. Then came G7, **IDEAlliance’s** “Proof-to-Print” process, the way you get to the goals and specifications laid out in GRACoL 7: by employing the new gray scale calibration techniques based on principles of digital imaging, spectrophotometry, and computer-to-plate (CtP) technologies.

Next came the “G7 Master” designation, which is the “seal of approval” granted by **IDEAlliance** to printing companies, ad agencies, and premedia shops who have successfully gone through the training, testing, press form auditing etcetera to meet their requirements. G7 Masters must renew/retest annually to maintain their Master status guaranteeing that once a plant is approved it will stay compliant and maintain the methodology.

### **4. Do your customers have to prepare their files any differently because of G7?**

No. If the customer provides their file and we proof it, we now have even greater confidence that we can match the proof. What’s great is we can accept G7 proofs from other firms, including advertising agencies and premedia shops, and really have a leg up on reaching accurate color swiftly. The G7 colorbar is scanned on the proof to verify its within the correct range then we’re off and running. Note that an important caveat is the paper you proof on should be what you plan to print on for the most reliable results.

### **5. What is the significance of Poor Richard’s Press’ “Master Printer” status?**

Being a G7 Master Printer means we have invested the time and money to calibrate proof to plate to press, to train our people on the methodology, and are vigilant in monitoring the process daily by reading colorbars for solid ink densities, gray

balance and dot gain. It demonstrates that we took the effort to become better and more consistent day in and day out, that we are firmly committed to industry-best practices and modern color management, and that we want our customers to have the best quality printed products.

#### **6. Where can our readers go on the Web to learn more about G7?**

We recommend spending some time on the **IDEAlliance** website [www.idealliance.org](http://www.idealliance.org), as they are the people who are truly making a difference with these best practices and specifications. A second good resource, including links to good articles, is **ColorWiki** [www.colorwiki.com](http://www.colorwiki.com).

