Guidelines for Specifying Colors

You can specify colors either by referring to a printed color swatch book or by using a calibrated computer display and selecting colors onscreen.

When you use an illustration program to create art that will later be used in your page layout, be sure to use the same color names in both applications. For example, if you use Pantone 228 C in your Adobe Illustrator document, the color will be named the same when the art is placed in your Adobe InDesign layout and will have the same display characteristics. It’s wise to double-check the color palette in your page layout application to be sure that spot colors aren’t duplicated. If they are, be sure to consolidate them by deleting one of the duplicates and assigning all items that use that color to the other similarly named color.

Whether you use spot colors, process colors, or a combination of both in your publication depends on your budget, the purpose of the publication, the type of page elements you use, and how your design will be reproduced. Use the following guidelines to determine what colors are suitable for your publication.

Use spot colors when:
• You need one or two colors, and you won’t be reproducing full-color photographs.
• You want the effect of special inks, such as metallic, fluorescent, or corporate color inks. These are often colors that can’t be reproduced with combinations of the process colors.
• You want to print logos or other graphics elements that require precise color matching, or you’re printing large areas of color throughout a publication and you want to ensure color consistency.

Use process colors when:
• You need more than two colors in your publication. Printing with process color inks (CMYK) costs less than printing with three or more spot inks. (Printers usually print with process colors; to print in spot colors requires a different press setup, which takes time and costs money.)
• You want to reproduce full-color photographs or color artwork that can only be reproduced with process colors.

Use spot and process colors together when:
• Your requirements extend beyond process color printing. This could involve corporate colors, as already explained, or extending the range of process color by using a bump plate—a spot color plate that serves to intensify one of the process colors. Remember that printing with more than four inks can be expensive because of the extra plates and press work.
Purpose & longevity separate an ordinary gadget from the invaluable tool.

enhance the flavor of your meals with a selection of herbs from Earth & Water. While fall is usually reserved forpreset work and preparation for the color months ahead,

It's also the perfect time to let your plants mature indoors.

During winter place them in a sunny kitchen window for a

companion crop or tend of your favorite fresh herbs. By spring you'll have

large, full plants ready to move outside.
Specifying spot colors and varnishes

Specifying a spot color means that any page element assigned that color or any screened tint of that color will appear on its own printing plate. Name spot colors consistently across all the applications you’re using, including illustration, photo-editing, and page-layout programs.

Remember that when you’re printing with spot colors, the name you assign to a color doesn’t determine what ink will be used on press. But naming colors consistently helps ensure that your artwork will separate correctly and reduces the chance of confusion between you and your printer. You specify which spot inks should be used when you submit your files to the printer.

If your artwork contains both spot and process colors, you can convert spot colors to their process-color equivalents; doing so lets you print with four process colors and thereby save money. When you convert a spot color into a process color, be aware that most spot colors can’t be reproduced accurately with process inks. When you convert spot colors to their process color equivalents in computer applications, consider the components of the resulting colors, and look for opportunities to simplify them.

For example, specifying Pantone 406 C (a light gray) and then converting that gray into process colors creates a combination of 1 percent cyan, 5 percent magenta, 6 percent yellow, and 16 percent black. It isn’t a good idea to have a 1 percent cyan value in a critical color, because that color can be lost in plate-making or can cause color balance and register problems on-press. It’s better to eliminate the cyan component of the color.

Varnishes are used to protect a page, to create a visual effect, or to emphasize photographs or other elements of a publication. Varnish can be applied to whole pages of the publication or applied only to specific areas. As an alternative to a printed varnish, some presses have the option of applying an aqueous coating that covers the whole press sheet, creating a handsome gloss veneer.

Specify a spot varnish just as you would a spot color. If you want to print varnish over photographs, you must create a duplicate of your page layout document, delete the photos from their frames, and then set the frames to be filled with the varnish color. The printer will generate a separate printing plate from the duplicate document for the varnish panels that overprint the photos. Varnish used elsewhere in a document should be included in the layout and separated with the varnish used over the photos. If varnish is used in a layout, it’s generally set to overprint.
To achieve predictable printed results, it’s a good idea to select colors from one of the commercial process-color swatch books available. Remember that paper surface affects the character of ink and thus the color reproduced by process colors. So, printed colors may not look exactly the way they do in the swatch book.

Because process black is transparent, the addition of another process color to black is often beneficial. A rich black ink combines process black ink with one or more of the other process inks to achieve a more intense black. Use a rich black in areas where objects could show through process black and cause it to appear inconsistent or not dense enough.

Avoid creating process colors with high total ink coverage (the sum of the percentages of the four process colors). Most paper and press conditions require a maximum ink coverage of 250–320 percent. Higher total ink coverage may prevent the ink from drying correctly and can cause set-off, where the ink from one sheet of paper is transferred to the next sheet in the pile. Your printer will know the total ink coverage limit for their press and paper combinations.

Use a single, solid ink (such as 100 percent black or a dark spot color) to print hairline rules and small text. Fine elements printed with two or more colors are difficult to print in register.
Process black (100% K)  
Rich black created with 100% K + 20% C + 20% M + 20% Y  
Cool rich black created with 100% K + 20% C  
Warm rich black created with 100% K + 20% M  

Process colors in small type and fine elements are more likely to show register error on press.  
Black or spot colors in small type and fine elements produce a sharp edge.