



Idealliance®

Managing the Prepress Supply Chain with G7® to Serve Global Brands and Print Buyers

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While many claim printing and publishing holds limited opportunities, certain global print service providers have found new opportunity in established markets. Korean Studies Information Co., Ltd (KSI) was established in 1992 and grew through the e-journal database business, and entered the printing field starting with the printing of academic journals using digital printing. Since then, KSI has focused on growing into a comprehensive content group by expanding their business area to academia, Web to Print, and publishing. Focused on innovation to serve a growing market through digital and offset printing, Jong-Jun Chae, CEO of KSI, has led the charge for optimizing production through the use of G7® in their multi-format print production.



Mr. Jong-Jun Chae, CEO, Korean Studies Information Co., Ltd.

Courtesy of Korean Studies Information Co., Ltd.

In the field of printing, KSI and Mr. Chae have been fascinated by the infinite possibilities of printing and has expanded its business starting with digital printing. In the past two years, focusing on the field of publishing printing by introducing five presses across their production line, four 8-color(4+4) offset presses and a 4-color offset press. While others claim, "print is stagnant, and there is no possibility of development," KSI is growing with additional production acquisitions, as well as know-how to best manage these capabilities to support aggressive investment.

As a result, KSI is growing leader in the domestic printing market and has been selected as a global partner for INGRAM, North America's largest content distributor, in recognition of its ability in the global printing market, and maintains good partnerships with various global publishers and print buyers such as Japan's Newton Press.

Compared to peers in their marketplace with a long tenure in the marketplace, KSI maintains a start-up mentality culture. KSI leads production through innovation with this startup mentality, including pursuing best practices across their production, especially through color management driven by G7, in order to create printed products which meet international color standards and KSI drove to equip their production staff with tools to achieve the same print results on any equipment through developing IT-based printing solutions and automating printing processes. Based on this technology and confidence, KSI quickly became a recognized global manufacturer, serving not only leading Korean brands, but also various customers around the world.

Prior to incorporating G7 as a color management and process control strategy, like most Korean printing companies, KSI relied on pre-press providers for color management. The theory of color and the operation of color evaluation equipment were an unfamiliar concept among staff, and all work was carried out depending on the eyes and senses of operators. Managing color was an ongoing issue, with many opinions on goals, and the consistency of arriving at those targets.



Print technology spanning digital and offset to drive profitability and flexibility. Courtesy of Korean Studies Information Co., Ltd.

The ease of G7 was the first factor that drew KSI to implementing it as a process control tool within the workflow.

According to Mr. Chae, "First, to tell you the conclusion, "G7 is easy." Among the various color control methodologies, G7 Calibration literally had a very easy basic principle, and the dramatic changes between the actual G7 Calibration applied results of printed matters and existing print matters were impressive. The colors we saw and believed in were not balanced based on grayscale, and this easy and ingenious theory that such unbalance affects other images or colors helped me understand colors.

Another reason was 'Easy application'. In the case of color matching between devices with different color reproduction capabilities of equipment had limitations in technical methods other than the G7 methodology. On the other hand, G7 Calibration made it easy for anyone to solve the problem with easy tools and fast application and made the appearance of color prints similar."

G7 then became an integral piece of KSI's Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs). From implementing production equipment into workflows, to maintenance of print and color quality, G7 helped to achieve optimal results

In order to introduce printing equipment for the first time and manage color quality, the same equipment condition as a certain environment must be maintained. Standard Operating Procedure (SOP) for each device should be written for each device, and regular process compliance always ensures optimal conditions are maintained. After that, it is important to introduce an appropriate calibration methodology to adjust the changing state of the device.

Currently, KSI production sites are constantly managed according to procedures across equipment and media, to hit color targets regardless of inputs. To achieve consistent color through a strategy across multiple devices and technology, first a common target value is set, and individual equipment performs quality control for color changes using the G7 Calibration method. As a G7 Master Qualified facility, KSI maintains quality control according to G7 Targeted compliance levels, and if full color matching is required, production is aimed at the G7 Colorspace compliance for common reference print conditions. Both compliances levels, as part of the G7 Master Qualification program, dictate strict controls for gray balance and visual similarity, as well as alignment to print conditions such as GRACoL 2013, and others dictated as part of ISO 15339.

Proofing also focuses on consistent color reproduction by after first performing G7 calibration. The color matching of printing machines is at the G7 Color Space Level based on coated paper, and it is very helpful for communication with customers as you can check the color status of the print results in advance.

Since implementing G7, “Now, We are able to control color diversity among different equipment with consistent goals, and equipment operators also have clear standards, which greatly reduced production time for color matching so increased overall production,” according to Jong-Jun.

Complexity increases for each device, and process characterized. In addition, ink and media used in different equipment make color matching more difficult. In that situation, G7 Calibration provided a lot of convenience as a centralized methodology for print alignment, and a repeatable starting point based on gray balance, and neutral tonality. Implementing the same visual appearance by controlling grayscale after the introduction of G7 is very helpful in terms of color management.

To compete against a 30% increase in cost in offset production consumables, G7 has allowed for sales and profitability by KSI to grow. Since the introduction of G7, offset sales has grown sales by more than 30% per year. As a relative late comer to the offset market, profitability was a challenge compared to other established providers. G7 allows KSI to thrive as a print provider, and compete with established peers in the marketplace through the cost savings as a result of G7 based production, eliminating waste, allowing production to get up to color quicker, and optimizing press time. The use of new technology, 'centered on G7 alignment, ensured production was consistent, job to job, across a brand's full portfolio.

As a result, KSI's credibility with its customers has also improved. In their marketing, results matter, and if KSI cannot delivery quality, stable color, ongoing business would suffer. G7 calibration, and recalibration, ensured client needs were met, season after season, providing a unique, yet stable, position in the marketplace. In addition, after the introduction of G7, the productivity of KSI increased.

Rather than relying on an operator's determination on color adherence, and quality control, G7 calibration, with consistent color assessment, ensured production remained aligned, from a measurable vantage. This produced efficiency and consistency, shift to shift, team to team, regardless of color aptitude, or operational experience, for always certain color alignment. G7-based color quality management showed greater power than KSI anticipated compared to earlier reliance on human senses, and visual color assessment. The color measurement data managed numerically relieved customers' anxiety and became the driving force behind productivity improvement.

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Quality Control for Maximum Print Consistency Driven by G7 & Color Management.

Courtesy of Korean Studies Information Co., Ltd.

Color across print is driven by print buyers, publishers and brand owners. Print service providers must manage color for multiple stakeholders through the most stable, yet flexible, color management methodology. The G7 process allows operators to best control their output to meet these stringent demands, while reducing cost, and production time. Communication is also critical, as all members of the supply chain, including the print buyer must be aligned. No matter how good the technology is, if it doesn't adhere to the demands of the print buyer. A flexible, universal approach, serves the needs of those print buyers across their entire supply chain, allowing these drivers to communicate their requirements, and ensure their providers are aligned with ongoing verification across production.

To learn more about G7®, and how Idealliance aligns the global print supply chain through training and certification across the print, packaging, and graphic communications industry, visit www.idealliance.org.



Idealliance®

Who We Are

Idealliance is a pioneering print industry association. We engage partners across the entire supply chain, making us different from other trade associations. Idealliance and its members create solutions to workflow barriers using real-world standards and guidelines. We then go a step further, simplifying the complexity of our workflow improvements by training and certifying your team, and by certifying the facilities and technology essential to your business.

Become a member of Idealliance to receive discounted access to exclusive Trainings & Certifications, as well as access to the industry leading Print Properties Committee, and other great member-only content.

**Learn more about G7: idealliance.org/G7
Sign up for G7 Expert Training & Certification:
idealliance.org/g7training**

About G7®

G7® is the most sought-after certification in the world and is the driving force for achieving visual similarity across all print processes.



About PRINTING United Alliance

PRINTING United Alliance is the most comprehensive member-based printing and graphic arts association in the United States, comprised of the vast communities which it represents. The Alliance serves industry professionals across market segments with preeminent education, training, workshops, events, research, government and legislative representation, safety, and environmental sustainability guidance, as well as resources from the leading media company in the industry – NAPCO Media. Now a division of PRINTING United Alliance, Idealliance is the global leader in standards training and certification for printing and graphic arts operations across the entire industry supply chain.

PRINTING United Alliance also produces the PRINTING United Expo, the most influential days in printing. The expansive display of technology and supplies, education, programming, and services are showcased to the industry at large, and represents all market segments in one easily accessed place.

