Why we ask for Pantone colours

To get exactly the right colour on your label – every time – we ask you to specify key colours as Pantone. This applies, for example, to logos, brand colours and larger solid areas.



FIGURE 1 Pantone is mixed in advance and printed as one ink. CMYK is built up from small dots in four colours – and the dots are affected by press, material and ink volume.

1 Pantone is exact and measurable

A Pantone colour is premixed to a set shade. We can check it against a physical colour guide, so both you and we know exactly what the result should be.

The colour stays the same from print run to print run – and if anything deviates, there is a clear reference to measure against.

Air Labels blue – three ways to write the same colour

Pantone 2728 C	Print – exact reference
C90 M53 Y0 K0	Print – approximate
#096CEE	Screen and web

2 CMYK varies

CMYK is not a finished colour but a recipe. The resulting shade depends on printing method, material and press – the same CMYK value can look different on different materials or in different print runs. Some colours cannot be reached in CMYK at all, for example strong orange, vivid greens and blues, neon and metallic. CMYK works well for **photos and images**, but less well for colours that must be exact.

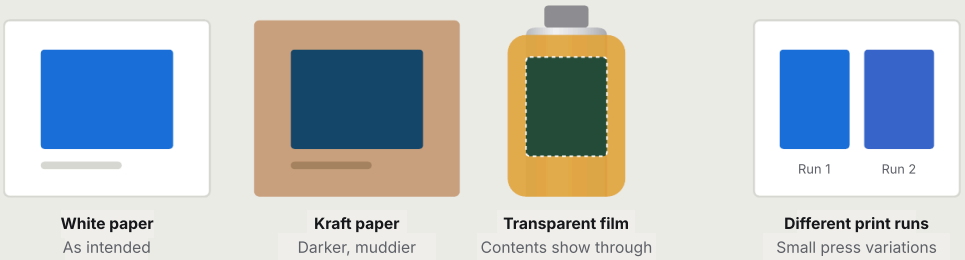
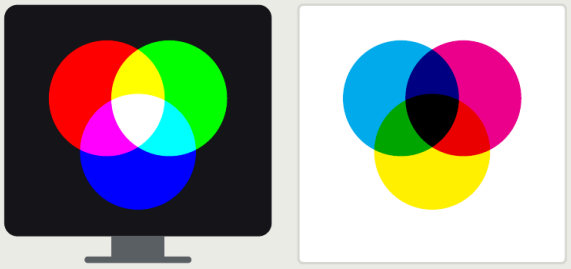


FIGURE 2 The same CMYK value (C90 M53 Y0 K0) on different materials and in different print runs. All materials affect the colour – but with a Pantone reference we know exactly which shade to adjust towards.

3 RGB and HEX are screen colours – not print colours

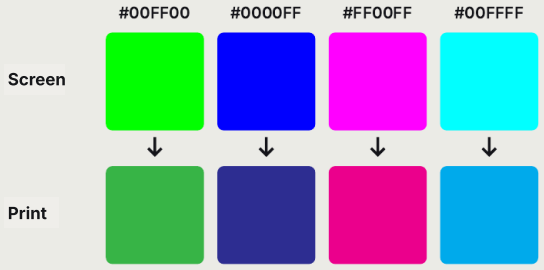
RGB and HEX describe how a colour looks when it **shines on a screen**. HEX is just another way of writing an RGB value, for example #096CEE. A screen creates colour with light – print creates colour with ink on paper or film. Therefore:

- Many screen colours, especially bright and luminous tones, **cannot be printed**. They turn duller on the label.
- When RGB or HEX is converted to print colours, the result varies depending on software and settings.
- The same HEX code looks different on different screens, so there is no reliable reference to match against.



Screen = light, print = ink

FIGURE 3 Screen light (RGB) gets lighter when mixed. Printing inks (CMYK, Pantone) get darker. Two completely different ways of creating colour.



Bright screen colours turn duller

FIGURE 4 Roughly how pure screen colours change when converted to CMYK – they lie outside what printing inks can reproduce.



Same HEX code – three screens

FIGURE 5 Brightness, settings and screen type make the same code look different. A HEX code therefore cannot be the reference for print.

Colour codes at a glance

CODE	WHAT IT IS	BEST FOR	EXACT IN PRINT?
Pantone	Premixed printing ink with a number, e.g. 2728 C	Logos, brand colours, solid areas	**Yes**
CMYK	Four printing inks that build the shade from dots	Photos, images and gradients	**Varies**
RGB	The screen's light colours: red, green and blue	Web, screen, film	**No**
HEX	An RGB value written as code, e.g. #096CEE	Web and digital files	**No**

Our recommendation

- Specify logos and brand colours as **Pantone**, for example "Pantone 286 C".
- Keep **photos and images** in CMYK.
- Not sure which Pantone colour matches yours? **Contact us** and we will help you find the closest match.

The colour samples in this sheet are illustrations and may differ from actual printed colour.