



# paper: the fifth color

Paper is one of the most overlooked variables in printing. How a printed image looks is directly affected by the color, brightness, finish, coating, opacity, weight and absorbency of the paper on which it's printed. To help define consistent printed appearance, specifications like GRACoL® and SWOP® recommend a specific paper color and brightness. The closer your printing substrate is to the proofing paper color, the better it will simulate a standard proof. **Remember, paper color directly affects image color.** It is a crucial factor when evaluating a visual match between contract proof and press sheet.

## Different Substrates (Printing Surfaces)

If your job is printed on a substrate with different color or brightness than the proofing substrate (also called a color cast or paper shade) the press sheet will not look exactly like the proof. For example, if the white press stock has a blue shade, the print will look blue compared to the proof. And if the press stock has a yellow shade, the press sheet will look yellower than the proof. **Differences in paper color or brightness will tend to be more noticeable in lighter tones and clean, pastel colors.**

