

Poppin Inc. Case Study



Poppin Inc. thinks it's time to splash color on the inside of offices like a Jackson Pollock painting, replacing the standard issue black and gray office supplies with lime green pen cups, pool blue staplers, and blazing red tape dispensers.

By breathing new life into the office environment with bright colors, Poppin hopes encourage office employees to "Work Happy," the tagline for the New York-City-based e-tailer that designs and sells products in the United States that are manufactured in China.

To make sure that the colors all coordinate on a variety of materials -- plastic, metal, paper and cloth -- Poppin enlisted the aid of the world leader in color management, X-Rite and its wholly owned subsidiary Pantone.

"We set ourselves apart from the big-box competition partly through the use of vibrant, eye-catching colors defined by Pantone and measured with X-Rite technology," said Roger Cole, vice president of 9 Kings, Poppin's sourcing agent based in China. "We've built a loyal customer base because we present stylish colors in an office setting at the right price point. So having colors match properly is critical for our business."

With its new approach to office supplies and accessories, it was only natural that Poppin would be one of the first to adopt a new technology from X-Rite that ties together worldwide locations with color matching ease, accuracy and portability: the RM200QC.

When Tech Manager Tony Yan travels from the 9 Kings Shanghai office to manufacturing plants all over China, he makes sure to slip a RM200QC in his pocket to check how closely the products match the color requirements from Poppin's headquarters in New York City.

The palm-sized RM200QC spectrophotometer simplifies how plastic molding, coatings, chemicals, textile and other industries can compare the colors of lab samples or parts in production with reference standards, then create reports that can be shared with supply chain partners.

Yan uses his RM200QC to ensure that items sold as a desk set such as lime green scissors and its associated file tray match each other exactly in color for customers who want bright, fresh hues that coordinate perfectly in their offices.

"One of the most important factors for us is the control of color deviation between our products that need to match in color," Yan said. "We use L*a*b* data generated by the RM200QC to check that degree of color deviation and communicate effectively between manufacturers and our team at headquarters."

With its strict quality control regime and aided by color checking instruments, Poppin has been able to tighten

color tolerance from delta E 2 to delta E 0.8 with RM200QC. Using the quick check function in RM200QC they can also monitor the color variations in same lot around the range of delta E 0.3 in an industry where delta E 2 is common. Yan is confident that good color matching will definitely make Poppin product stand out in the market.

The new instrument goes well beyond the capabilities of existing colorimeters with advanced features that identify color differences between samples and standards, opacity, and grayscale assessment, as well as highlighting how colors may change in appearance under D65 daylight and Illuminant A household tungsten-filament lighting.

With a measurement time of about 2 seconds, the instrument gives results in the form of a simple pass/fail message or CIE L*a*b* values and delta E color differences. It also reports results in all of the standard color difference equations and tolerances, such as CIELAB, CMC, CIE 94, or CIE 2000.

The RM200QC memory holds 20 standards and up to 350 measurements automatically stamped with time and date and saved as PDF and CSV files that can be downloaded easily via USB cable so the information can be shared with other stakeholders in a supply chain. Any measurement can be linked with images of test surfaces, text notes, or voice messages and the reports can be output in multiple languages.

"This device is a marvelous tool to assist in our worldwide control of color," Yan said. "It gives accurate color measurements that are accepted by both the U.S. and Chinese teams as an unbiased standard, so we can make decisions quickly to maintain customer satisfaction and introduce more colors to our product line with confidence."



X-RITE WORLD HEADQUARTERS

Grand Rapids, Michigan USA • 800 248 9748 • +1 616 803 2100 • xrite.com
© 2012 X-Rite, Incorporated. All rights reserved. (10/12)

