

Color Correction Reference Sheet

✓ **RGB for correction.** Whenever possible, color correct images in the RGB color space. The RGB color space is a much larger color gamut than CMYK and yields best results when color correcting images.

✓ **Color correction.** To achieve best results when color correcting images, always follow this order:

1. Highlight contrast
2. Shadow contrast
3. Gray balance
4. Selective color
5. Convert to CMYK

✓ **Highlight contrast.** Highlight contrast always consists of more cyan and equal amounts of magenta and yellow. Unequal amounts of magenta and yellow will result in a color cast within the highlights of the image. Typical values are:

5% cyan
3% magenta
3% yellow

✓ **Shadow contrast.** Shadow contrast always consists of more cyan and equal amounts of magenta and yellow. Unequal amounts of magenta and yellow will result in a color cast within the shadows of the image. Typical values are:

95% cyan
90% magenta
90% yellow
80% black

✓ **Gray balance.** Gray balance always consists of more cyan and equal amounts of magenta and yellow. Unequal amounts of magenta and yellow will result in a color cast throughout the image. To set gray balance, locate an area that is representative of a middle tone gray area. Typical values are:

50% cyan
40% magenta
40% yellow
12% black

✓ **Selective color.** Equal amounts of process inks do not create ideal reds, greens, and blues because of impurities in the inks. To counteract these impurities, the cyan, magenta, and yellow values must be adjusted. Typical values are:

<i>Ideal red:</i>	<i>Ideal green:</i>	<i>Ideal blue:</i>
95% magenta	85% cyan	95% cyan
80% yellow	95% yellow	80% magenta

✓ **Unsharp mask.** Unsharp masking applies “sharpness” to an image by darkening (or lightening) pixels along an edge of an image. When applying unsharp masking in Photoshop, always make sure that you are at an appropriate zoom ratio (25%, 50%, 75%, 100%, etc.). Zoom ratios such as 33%, 66%, etc. will conflict with your display resolution and make the image appear sharper than it actually is. Typical values are:

Amount: 60%
Radius: 1.2 Pixels
Threshold: 4

✓ **Fleshtone color correction tips.** Fleshtone values differ tremendously based on lighting and ethnic background. Generally speaking, find the cyan value. The magenta should be double that of cyan, and yellow should be around one fifth to one third higher than magenta. The following values should only be used as guidelines and are not typical of every situation:

<i>Caucasian:</i>	<i>African American:</i>
15C, 50M, 65Y for lighter skin	27C, 50M, 63Y, 21K
6C, 30M, 35Y for darker skin	
For Asian add 10-15 yellow	

✓ **More color correction tips.** Use these general guidelines when color correcting CMYK images:

<i>If the printed image is:</i>	<i>And the image is:</i>	<i>Adjust these values:</i>	<i>If the printed image is:</i>	<i>And the image is:</i>	<i>Adjust these values:</i>
Too Red	Dark	Reduce M & Y	Too Red	Light	Add C
Too Magenta	Dark	Reduce M	Too Magenta	Light	Add C & Y
Too Blue	Dark	Reduce C & M	Too Blue	Light	Add Y
Too Cyan	Dark	Reduce C	Too Cyan	Light	Add M & Y
Too Green	Dark	Reduce C & Y	Too Green	Light	Add M
Too Yellow	Dark	Reduce Y	Too Yellow	Light	Add C & M



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