



PREPRESS TWO CENTS: HEAVY METAL

How to Create a Metallic Look without Metallic Ink

OR: Adding some bling bling without the cha-ching ching!

Oh, those lovely metallic inks, adding their shiny, attention-getting glitz, glamour and class to printed pieces all around the world. Sigh... Too bad it's just not in the budget. Too bad the metallics are spot color inks. Too bad there's not a way to make them with CMYK. But wait! What's that? There *is* a way to make CMYK metallic effects?

Yes, that's right, you can *simulate* some popular metallic inks using everyday CMYK process colors! Why would you want to do that? Lots of reasons.

As we mentioned above, true metallic inks are spot colors mixed at the factory using real metal flakes. Adding a metallic ink to your four color process job is going to cost more.

True metallic inks create all sorts of trapping issues. They have to be trapped to the rest of the design in a very specific way in order to look right once they're printed. All this extra set-up takes extra time and, in some cases, could end up incurring additional charges.

Not all presses are designed to accommodate a fifth ink color. In that case, your job would have to be switched to a different kind of press where it would be sent back through for a second pass with the metallic ink. Again, all this extra time and set up will most likely end up costing more.

To avoid all this hassle and keep your costs down, just "fake" a metallic ink look. It's easy! And because these are simply CMYK mixes, they won't cause any trapping issues and will run like any other color in your publication.

One thing to keep in mind: just like real metallic inks, screening "fakes" can greatly reduce or completely destroy the metallic look.

HERE ARE THE FORMULAS:

Dark Gold:

C: 28; M: 39; Y: 68; K: 16

Light Gold:

C: 18; M: 37; Y: 81; K: 6

Copper:

C: 24; M: 62; Y: 81; K: 12

Brass:

C: 32; M: 37; Y: 78; K: 10

Silver:

C: 9; M: 3; Y: 0; K: 16

Pewter:

C: 18; M: 6; Y: 0; K: 40

DK GOLD
LT GOLD
COPPER
BRASS
SILVER
PEWTER

These are simulations and other factors such as stock, amount of coverage and varnishes can all affect the final look.

If you have questions about metallic inks, simulated metallics or other questions about your project, please contact us!