

# 101

What every screen-printer needs to know about...

## adobe illustrator and **spot colors**

Spot Colors are a screen-printer's best friend. Understand the differences between spot color and process color and how important working with "spot colors" is when the job is not a process (cmyk) (4-color process) print job.

The Adobe Illustrator software manual may not give the specific instructions a screen-printer needs to prepare a graphics file for spot color creation, separation and output BUT the great news is the program has everything you need to get the job done easily and accurately.

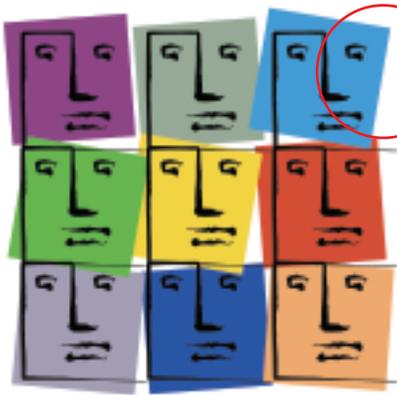


If you are changing all of your colors to black, for example, just to output files or get unwanted results then you are wasting valuable time. Time is money.

Read on to learn how friendly spot colors are to a screen-printer and how to increase your job turnaround rate while reducing costly downtime...

Newsletter for Screen Printers

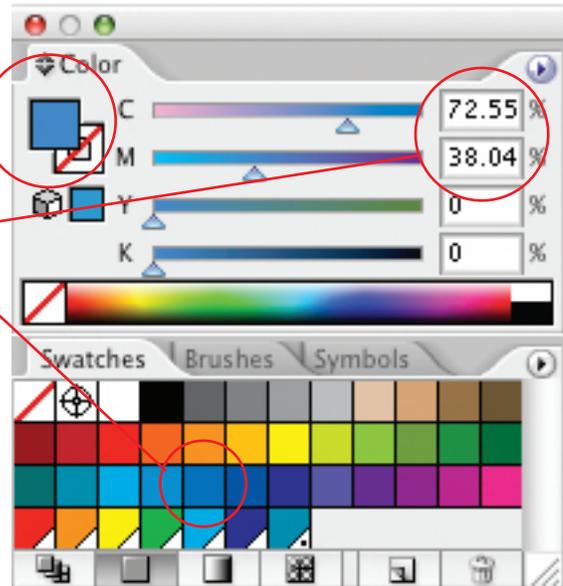
# ADOBE ILLUSTRATOR® spot colors



How do you know if this is a spot color?  
And, does it matter? **ABSOLUTELY!**

This may look like a spot color but it is actually made up of a mixture of cyan (72.55%) and Magenta (38.04%) making it a process color (for 4-color process printing).

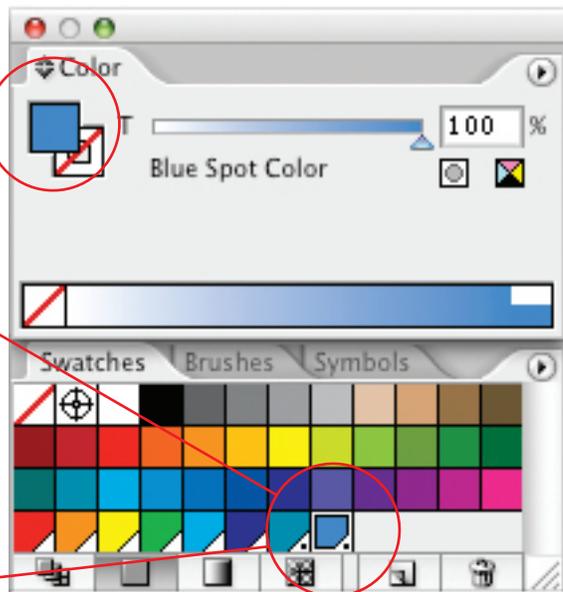
As it is now, you **can't** output this process blue color as "ONE SPOT COLOR" to a single sheet of film. Upon output - two films (cyan and magenta) will print and they will also be halftones requiring process inks and not a specific solid color.



The Color Window in Adobe Illustrator showing a process color selection.

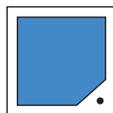


This blue is a true "SPOT COLOR" which was custom named Blue Spot Color. When a color is a SPOT COLOR the swatch in the Swatches palette will have a unique appearance. Work with spot colors when you are NOT creating a "4-color process" job.

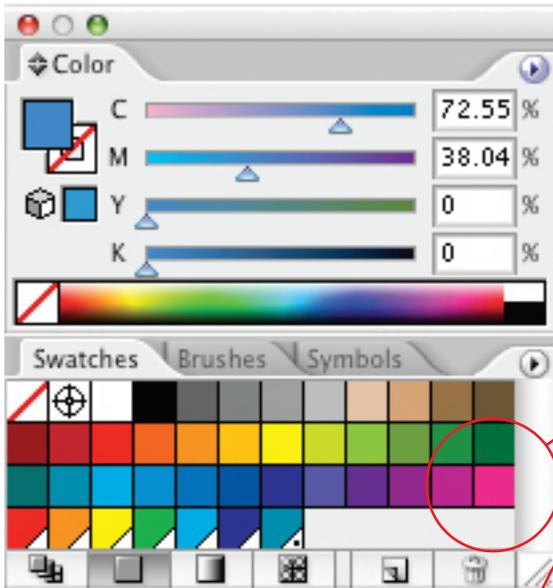


The Color Window in Adobe Illustrator showing a spot color selection.

This symbol represents a spot color when working in Adobe Illustrator.



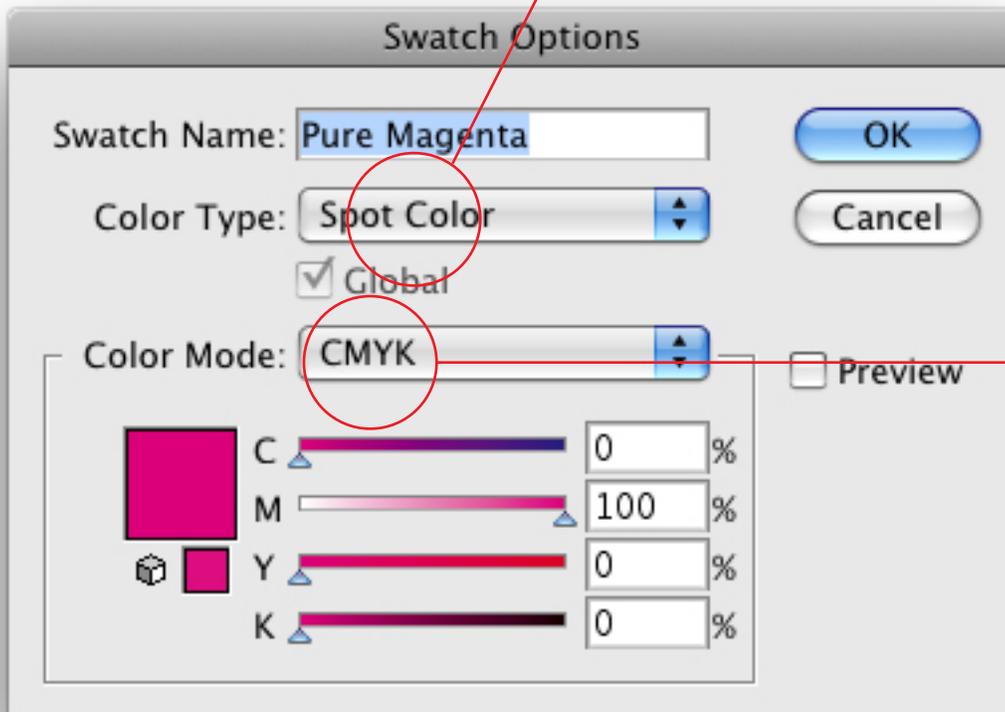
Note: CorelDraw uses a similar symbol to represent spot colors.



You can easily CONVERT “process” colors to screen-print friendly “spot colors”.

Double click any process color swatch in the Swatches palette. It will open the “Swatch Options” window.

Simply change the Color Type from “Process” to “Spot Color”. You can rename your Swatch, too.



IMPORTANT:  
the color mode  
(cmyk, rgb, LAB)  
DOES NOT MATTER -  
that is why spot colors  
are so user friendly.  
Once converted they  
are ready to use!

**PLUS:** You can import a swatch library of spot colors such as a “PANTONE solid coated”. See the Adobe User Manual or Adobe Help Menu for additional info.

Spot colors print clean and sharp - and only create halftones when tinted, shaded, faded or used as a gradient (blend). Other than that, all spot colors regardless of their actual color on screen will output as solid black to your film when at 100% Tint.

**IMPORTANT:** To output spot separations – choose PRINT. Go to the OUTPUT option. From the “Output” pop-down menu select “Separations”(default is Composite). Note the spot colors in your file.

**Print**

Print Preset: Custom

Printer: AccuRIP to Epson 1400

PPD: Default (AccuRIP to Epson 1400)

General  
Setup  
Marks and Bleed  
**Output**  
Graphics  
Color Management  
Advanced  
Summary

**Output**

Mode: Separations (Host-Based)

Emulsion: Up (Right Reading)

Image: Positive

Printer Resolution: 60.0

Convert All Spot Colors to Process

Overprint Black

Document Ink Options

Document Ink	Frequency	Angle	Dot Shape
<input type="checkbox"/> Process Cyan	60 lpi	45°	Dot
<input type="checkbox"/> Process Magenta	60 lpi	45°	Dot
<input type="checkbox"/> Process Yellow	60 lpi	45°	Dot
<input type="checkbox"/> Process Black	60 lpi	45°	Dot
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Mint Julep	60 lpi	45°	Dot
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Pumpkin Spot	60 lpi	45°	Dot
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Twilight Blue	60 lpi	45°	Dot

Reset to De

Page Setup... Printer... Save Preset... Cancel Print

**IMPORTANT:** From the Illustrator art file custom create registration marks and color them with the swatch palette color REGISTRATION (looks like a registration mark). Elements automatically and universally print on every spot color film output! The program registration marks are not big or bold enough for screen-printers so it is best to make your own.