

Continental Case Study

Digitally transforming the colour quality processes at one of the world's largest automotive interior material suppliers.



As a leader in surface design, Continental is one of the most renowned suppliers of vinyl materials, globally delivering surface materials for the automotive, furniture and construction industries for 150 years.

Through its expert competence and in-house know-how, Continental's automotive supply chain operates from 16 sites in China, Germany, India, Mexico, Poland, Spain and the USA, serving some of the world's largest OEM's, delivering cost-efficient yet premium materials with the highest demands on end-product quality.

THE CHALLENGES

Through multiple mergers through history, this business unit has grown to a global giant with operations in more than 60 countries with 5,400 employees. With a broad product range and an international presence comes flexibility in where and how to produce for any given customer, but side effects also include administration, inventory and logistical challenges. Continental currently holds stock of thousands upon thousands of actively used colour standards. Ensuring that each production site has timely access to relevant and high-quality standards that supports the highest of demands that their customers has come to expect is challenging and costly to say the least. Adding on top of that is the large instrument fleet currently in use by Continental with more than 40 spectrophotometers used daily to ensure consistent production quality in various stages of the manufacturing and colour development process.

THE SOLUTION

Reaching the right results with speed and agility and at the right cost is key to the success when working with the demanding customers within the automotive industry.

NCS Colour AB and Continental initiated a collaboration to address two key challenges that they faced:

- How to enable fast and cost-efficient digital communication of colour standards in a global manufacturing network?
- How to ensure the highest and most consistent end-product quality when working with a large spectrophotometer fleet of varying models, age, and conditions?

Through the cloud-based colour communication and quality assurance platform CAPQ, Continental correlated a first part of their spectrophotometer fleet to improve the inter-instrument and inter-model agreements. This was critical to partially enable them to digitize their colour standards, allowing real-time communication between manufacturing plants and the headquarter while at the same time increasing end-product quality.

THE RESULT

By connecting their instrument fleet and partially digitizing their standards, Continental saves valuable time, frees up internal resources while at the same time increasing the quality. The cost of just measuring the physical standards in all relevant instruments was calculated to more than 300 full workdays per year, not including the cost of logistics and time lost in iterations during colour development processes.

“CAPQ’s flexibility and easy workflows enables us to move our colour processes into Industry 4.0, allowing us to work with unparalleled ease without sacrificing the high product quality that our customers have come to expect.”

ANDREAS SIEDLER, PROJECT LEADER OPERATIONAL DEVELOPMENT COLORS.

Some of the benefits that Continental leverages are:

- Secured digital colour standards
- Increased quality through improved inter-instrument agreement
- Time saved compared to physical workflows

With the click of a button, Continental will be able to communicate colour standards from any given factory to another without any lead time, and with the advanced data correlating algorithms in CAPQ, all their instruments will be completely aligned, ensuring accurate measurement results can be compared across instruments, enabling objective colour decisions.

The next step following this project is to invite Continental customers to also use CAPQ, to draw even more benefits from the digitized colour communication, such as online QC (Quality Control) assessment and real-time collaboration.

For more information about how CAPQ can help you with digital colour management, please contact NCS Colour.

info@ncscolour.com