CMYK SUGGESTIONS FOR PHOTOGRAPHERS

When you get that great opportunity for your images to be published, here are some guidelines to help.

CMYK ..... C is for Cyan, M is for Magenta, Y is for Yellow, K is for black.

Historical fact K is used to represent black because B could easily be confused for Blue.

If possible you should use a profile supplied by your printer. Please ask them.
If possible ask your printer what total ink limit (dmax) you should give him.
The total ink is important because it will help you to choose what cmyk profile to use for conversion. In addition it will keep your image from turning to mud (too high limit)

In PhotoShop I recommend converting by using image/mode/convert to profile.
This way you can be sure what profile you are selecting.

The most common problem I have seen are colorcasts in the white and neutral areas.
Here are some suggestions for neutral areas.
The profile I am using for this demonstration is USWebCoatedSWOP
This profile is a safe bet if you have no other profile to use.

- **Catch light** - areas of no detail (chrome, spectral highlights) should read C=0, M=0,Y=0, K=0
- **Highlight** - Lightest area of detail (white shirt) should read C=2, M=1,Y=1, K=0
  Or C=4, M=2,Y=2, K=0
- **Midtone**- Gray card should read C=52, M=44,Y=44, K=8
- **Shadow**- Darkest area with detail C=75, M=68,Y=68, K=90
  (This will give you a total ink (dmax) of 300)
- In most cases it is not a good idea to go over 95% in any one color. Higher than that and your color is too saturated, and you will loose detail.

Memory colors are those colors that most people expect to find (blue sky, green grass, red apples, and yellow bananas.

- **Cyan** – Areas such as sky should have little or no Yellow. Yellow in the sky will dull down the color.
- **Yellows** – Should have very little or no Cyan in them. A little Magenta may be necessary for detail.
- **Reds**- Should have a Cyan component and maybe a little Black for detail.
  Contrary to many beliefs, sport car red actually has a good amount of Cyan and Black.
  This is to show detail and shape within the red areas.
  If you remove the Cyan and Black to make the Red brighter, your red car will now look flat and lifeless.
- **Blue**- Watch out for excessive Magenta in Blues. Do not let your Magenta component go over 80% or your nice blue car will go purple.
- **Green**- Always have at least an 11% Magenta component in your green grass (plants and trees). If you remove too much Magenta to make your greens brighter your nice green lawns will have a day-glow solarized look to them.
- **Skin tone** – There should be a small amount of Cyan in the lightest area of skin.
  Usually the Yellow component is higher than the Magenta. If the Magenta is higher your subjects will look sunburned.