

# ColorProse™

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## Getting To Acceptability

*Acceptability* of matches between submitted fabrics or garments versus an agreed-upon standard has received widespread industry attention over the years.

Thankfully, modern methods and communication have reduced the likelihood of persistent acceptability problems. However, in the rush of getting garments to the retail shelf in a timely fashion, buyers are still regularly faced with accepting “best we can do” matches.

Many times, a “best can do” submit clearly disappoints both buyer and seller, but obligations and deadlines to deliver and stock the shelf can compromise a normally sound decision.

*“As one astute observer has said, the consumer is more interested in whether his purchase “dances together,” not if it meets color difference criteria.”*

There are two big steps in getting to acceptability, and undoubtedly, countless smaller ones. The first is to have an engineered color standard. Archroma Global Services makes the leading brand in Engineered Color Standards<sup>SM</sup> (ECS).

An ECS, developed in cooperation with a retail company, guarantees that at the dye-house level, a reasonable shade match can be achieved using globally available dyes meeting the retailer’s requirements for

metameric match and fastness. The ECS development process eliminates many potential downstream problems.

Second, the designers and color managers, buyers and sellers in the supply web have to reach agreement on what constitutes an acceptable color difference, that is, when is a match a match. The retail company is the “channel captain” of the apparel supply process, and should assume responsibility for defining acceptability. With properly defined tolerances, the acceptability decision becomes automatic in the majority of cases.

By far the majority of “automatic acceptability” tolerances rely on instrumental color difference evaluation.



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Typically, a color difference between standard and submit of **less than** a certain value is an automatic approval within the supply web. A color difference of **greater than** a certain value is an automatic failure, and color differences between the two automatics are referred to qualified color professionals for decision.

The choice of color difference formula, the availability of instrumentation, training and experience, as well as communication processes all affect the success of the process.

One of the most challenging aspects of establishing automated acceptability based on color difference formulas is to understand that they attempt to define the color difference so that it agrees with the **average observer**.

Typically, over a wide range of color differences, some observers will consider a given color difference acceptable, and others will reject it. The good news is that the smaller the color difference in question, the higher the probability observers with normal color vision will find the difference acceptable.

The challenge for the process manager is to find the correct balance between tight enough tolerances to avoid glaring problems, yet loose enough to avoid frustrating the garment production and supply process.

Happily, it seems safe to say that the average consumer is far more lenient regarding color differences than the color professional. The consumer doesn't have a standard to compare to his purchase!

As one astute observer has said, the consumer is more interested in whether his purchase "dances together," not if it meets color difference criteria.

**Bottomline: If the consumer doesn't like it, it sits on the shelf!**

**Let Archroma Global Services show you how Engineered Color Standards can give you a distinct competitive advantage.**

**Contact us at 1-888-705-4536 or email us at [Archroma.Services@Clariant.com](mailto:Archroma.Services@Clariant.com).**