

# HOW ESP COLOUR IS FUTURE-PROOFING ITS BUSINESS

## AT A GLANCE



**Industry:**  
Commercial Print &  
Manufacturing



**Joined ESCP:**  
2025

## CHALLENGES

- Meeting high ethical standards for a global brand tender
- Futureproofing for ESG and compliance

## SOLUTIONS

- Social Impact Assessment
- Tailored improvement plan
- Expert guidance

## HIGHLIGHTS

- Enhanced reputation with existing and potential clients
- Improved internal policies
- New processes supporting health surveillance and ESG strategy

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**Sam Purchase**

Director  
ESP Colour

Talk to ESP Colour’s Director, Sam Purchase, and you’ll find a business with a clear sense of where it’s going. With roots dating back to the 1800s, the company has continually evolved and now employs a cutting-edge approach that “has seen us grow 20% year on year for the last five to ten years”.

As well as investing in artificial intelligence to accelerate estimating, ESP Colour has developed in-house workflow tracking tools and partnered with tech innovators to improve quality, automation, and SLA compliance.

“Our strategy is to be the most efficient tech-led print manufacturer in the world,” Sam states. “It sounds ambitious, but there are not many, certainly in the UK, that have the capability and drive and vision that we do. We’re progressive, we’re innovative, and we’re proud to have engaged with ESCP to help us on that journey.”



# RAISING THE BAR ON ETHICS AND COMPLIANCE

This commitment to continuous improvement recently unlocked a significant new opportunity for the business, which specialises in high-quality, fast-turnaround commercial print — from brochures and catalogues to packaging, signage, and personalised products — serving global brands, retailers, and e-commerce platforms.

It came with a clear condition, however: “We were pitching for work with a global toy and gaming brand,” explains Sam. “They’re one of the biggest names out there, and being ESCP-certified was a non-negotiable requirement for their suppliers.”

Here was the chance to sharpen the company’s ethical credentials, strengthen internal systems, and become even more aligned with global standards. “We didn’t hesitate to sign up,” Sam says. “Undergoing ESCP’s Social Impact Assessment was a great way to prove we’re ethical and sustainable, and support existing customer requirements.”

## IN-DEPTH EVALUATION AND ACTIONABLE INSIGHTS

A practical, affordable evaluation tool, the Social Impact Assessment helps suppliers, manufacturers and vendors identify strengths and areas for improvement across social compliance, staff welfare, governance, and risk management. It covers areas such as working conditions, wages, health and safety, grievance mechanisms, and human rights due diligence.

ESP Colour brought in its full senior management team to take part in the online self-assessment, which was followed by an independent expert evaluation via video call. Shortly after, the company achieved certification and received a tailored improvement plan that highlighted key opportunities to refine internal practices. “The whole process was incredibly smooth and took a couple of weeks, from start to finish,” says Sam. “We found the ESCP team to be responsive, supportive and clear.”

One of the first actions was updating a 96-page staff handbook, the company’s cornerstone document covering policies, training and procedures for all new starters across three advanced production sites. The revised version now incorporates clearer guidance on employee welfare, grievance procedures and compliance, ensuring staff at all levels have consistent, accessible information and a shared understanding of expectations.

THE PROCESS

Amongst other improvements was the introduction of a new health surveillance programme, engaging a third party to monitor hearing and blood pressure for factory workers, particularly those operating machinery. These checks not only promote staff well-being but support compliance and insurance risk management.

While the assessment highlighted areas for improvement, its clear scoring and benchmarking also helped to reflect ESP Colour's strengths. "We scored 100% in some areas, like staff engagement and external supplier communication," Sam notes. "That was a great validation of the culture we've built: open, collaborative, and committed to doing things the right way."

## STRATEGIC VALUE THAT GOES BEYOND CERTIFICATION

What began as a requirement for a single client is now delivering broader value and opening doors to new business, says Sam: "The benefits of certification under ESCP are four-fold: it's saving us money, time, ensuring adherence to corporate standards, and providing a return on investment. The actual fee was minimal in comparison to the value it delivers.

"There are some big global brands in the ESCP network that are actively looking for ethical suppliers. Being part of the programme helps to set us apart from industry competitors. It's a credential that reassures prospective clients, strengthens our credibility, and saves time during procurement conversations.

"Beyond that, if legislation changes or a client asks for something we're not sure about, we know we can reach out to ESCP for guidance. They're a lot more than auditors; the relationship is more like a partnership, with the feeling coming across strongly that they genuinely want to help us."

## LOOKING AHEAD

Staying at the forefront of tech-led, responsible manufacturing takes more than ambition, but requires structure, consistency and accountability. And ESP is committed to maintaining its certification and building on the strong foundation already in place. The certification now sits alongside ESP's wider portfolio of accreditations, including ISO 9001, ISO 14001, and FSC. "It's all part of showing that we take these things seriously. Next on our radar is B Corp," says Sam.

"It would be easy in the sometimes chaotic world that we live in for a busy company to let things fall by the wayside. Having ESCP to ensure that we're monitored on our processes, procedures, policies and staff well-being is really important. They're a support blanket that will help us continue to grow in a way that's sustainable and ethical."



## A FLEXIBLE & COST-EFFECTIVE SOLUTION



The Social Impact Assessment is designed to work for suppliers of all sizes, in any industry, anywhere in the world. Delivered remotely, it's available in multiple languages and built to be both accessible and scalable. With a single fixed cost and no hidden fees, it offers a clear, affordable way for businesses to benchmark their practices, build trust with clients, and take practical steps toward stronger, more sustainable operations.

For manufacturers like ESP Colour, facing rising expectations around ESG but limited time and resources to respond, the assessment offers a realistic, achievable starting point.

[learn more](#)

## What does the Social Impact Assessment cover?

Our Social Impact Assessment offers a comprehensive evaluation of how your suppliers manage labor standards and social responsibility. It covers key areas such as working conditions, wages, health and safety, grievance mechanisms, and human rights due diligence. The assessment is built to verify existing management systems, highlight gaps, and provide actionable insights to drive continuous improvement. With clear scoring, benchmarking, and tailored recommendations, it gives you the tools to support suppliers, meet regulatory requirements, and enhance social performance across your entire value chain.



**Complaint Management  
& Resolution**



**Internal Involvement &  
Communication**



**Management of Beyond  
Tier 1 Suppliers and  
Contractors**



**Corrective &  
Preventative Actions**



**External Verification &  
Stakeholder Engagement**



**Policies, Procedures &  
Implementation Teams**



**Risk Assessment &  
Monitoring**



**Training**