

Color Trends

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Influences in Color Popularity

Besides the psychological aspects of color, societal influences in color popularity are as follows:

1. **Consumer Age:** The largest market right now is the Baby Boomers (50+). Once a person reaches 50 years old, their eyes do not see colors as clearly. The cooler colors such as blues, greens and violets start to blend – it's hard to make a contrast between the colors. When designing for this market, a strong color distinction needs to be made in the marketing materials. One idea is to bring opposite colors into the design.
2. **Culture:** The Latino/Hispanic market is bringing popularity to their food (hot peppers are now a standard food in ads) and music (Santana). The designs for this market use warmer colors such as reds, yellows and oranges muted with black, navy or brown in the color.
3. **Art:** Consumers are more sophisticated and culturally aware. For example, the artist Francesco Clemente got a lot of press for his exhibition so people became familiar with him. He recently did an ad for Absolute Vodka that was very noticeably a Clemente design – using Mediterranean colors.
4. **Social Issues:** A big concern is the preservation of water so the blues/aqua's unconsciously become part of thinking – we're drawn to it. Blue is the color of the Millennium. Psychologically blue represents dependability – the sky is blue and very dependably here every day.
5. **Political Issues:** Color trends usually last a couple of years, but after 9/11 color trends are sticking around longer – hanging on to the past. Vintage/Retro (subdued colors) became very popular in 2000 and are still a color trend. Consumers want to remain connected to the past.
6. **Entertainment:** After Shrek and Monsters Inc., yellow-green was a favorite for kids not only because their favorite characters were this color but also because their parents hated the color. Yellow-greens are still popular but they are now becoming grayer. The sophisticated/medieval colors of Harry Potter influenced Heinz to introduce a purple and a green ketchup. Color trends are prolonged by the life of a book, into a movie and onto the shelf as a DVD.

Color Food Chain

As color popularity goes, it usually starts on the runway with fashion (including designer home furnishings) then goes to the rest of the designs in advertising. That is starting to change with the information/trend overload (internet) accessible to all. International color experts gather twice a year to talk color and in the past, America would watch and follow European trends, but now eyes are starting to look at America.

Brown, From Dirt to Robust

By successfully designing and marketing a product, a color can have a whole new life in consumer awareness. UPS turned the color brown around with their sleek brown and white advertising. Starbucks followed by creating ads with their rich colored coffee with robust flavor

and in one ad included a beautiful chocolate Lab. Brown on the fashion runways, has given it a life in the evening. People used to describe brown as dirt, now the color is rich and robust.

Past Color Trends

In the 70s, green was a hit. Everyone went out and purchased olive green appliances such as refrigerators and ovens. By the 80s, no one wanted to see the color green anymore. Designers went to the opposite end of the color wheel and made mauve the color of the 80s. With the social awareness of taking care of our environment/ecology, the 90s brought popularity to green. When people mention a green company, we automatically think that the company is environmentally friendly.

Today, now that consumers have sharpened up and realized that they have choices, one color does not stand out among the rest. Consumers demand a variety.

The Palette for 2004

1. Connections: These colors are influenced by 9/11, patriotism. They include colors such as hunter green (nature), denim and navy blue and reds. The Swedish colors of blue and yellow are also in this group, some thanks to the Ikea invasion.
2. Retrospective: Retro colors – in the middle range, dusted, muted, grayer colors.
3. Discretion: Influenced by Feng Shui and Wabi Sabi, a philosophy rooted in tradition, honor and history. Look to nature and use colors that appear recycled – weathered, oxidized.
4. Diversity: This is the Hispanic/Latino influence, toned down (not bright) warm colors (reds, yellows, oranges with black, navy or brown ink seeped into the color).
5. Elan: Inspired by Europe (particularly the French), it's a happy palette, happy life of brightened pastels. Think of a tan/brown waffle cone with strawberry or pistachio ice cream – that's Elan.
6. Renewal: Monochromatic, using one color family (various shades) and including a neighbor color (on the color wheel). For instance mauve, taupe, dusty blue, metallic, champagne beige, pewterized silver, stone blues.
7. Enlightenment: Add a touch of pastel to white, very light colors, neutrals. How about Martha Stewart and her sea foam greens?