

# Creating Maximum Impact with Color

## Color Can Add **“ZING”** to Your Designs -



**V**ibrant colors add an exciting dimension to your advertising and marketing materials.

In my experience, items such as book covers and video/audio/CD/DVD packages need to sell themselves on appearance alone. Often impulse buys, these items merit vibrant colors and attention-grabbing graphics, or else they fade away on the sellers' shelves. By a phenomenally higher percentage, buyers are more likely to purchase products with professionally designed, full-color package designs than those with only one or two colors.

Likewise, an attractive, colorful business card, brochure, or flyer will attract more attention than a black-and-white or single-color design. Nowadays, the price for full-color printing has become much more affordable, and some suppliers specialize in printing specific types of products at very competitive prices.

### Color Psychology

What's the quickest way to create mood without saying a word? Color! Before they read your marketing piece, they see it – and their feeling about your business begins. So it's a good idea to take some time to find out what colors mean – and how they can help sell for you. Once you learn the psychology of colors, you'll be able to add a whole new layer of effectiveness to your marketing materials.

Here's how using certain colors will help you attract a specific target market and evoke the desired response:

### YELLOW

The color scheme you choose for your ad, flyer, or business cards



can help or hurt the overall tone of the piece. For instance, if you own a gift shop, you'd want to work with a lot of yellows, including coral, orange, amber, and gold. Why? Because yellow symbolizes joy – it exudes energy and happiness, and is associated with being welcoming and homey.

### RED

Red – which includes mauve, magenta, crimson, and scarlet – is the color of power, romance, and vitality. It's an eye-catcher, and makes us sit up and take notice. That's why it's so often used in the financial arena when the numbers are going in the wrong direction. Red can also have a physical effect, even raising blood pressure! Use red in your ad when you want people to take action.



### GREEN

If, on the other hand, you need a very friendly, non-threatening campaign, green is your color. Green and its shades – including lime, leaf green, sea green, emerald, teal and sage – symbolize life and nature. It's good for us, and your reader will receive that impression about what you're selling as well. In contrast to red, in the business world, green symbolizes growth and prosperity.



### BLUE/PURPLE

When you need a more serious, classic look that conveys law and order, depend-



ability, and trustworthiness, go for the blue and purple palette – sky blue, ultramarine, violet, purple and azure. These colors work great in certain markets, specifically for older, more mature audiences. It's common in financial institutions, hospitals, and in the legal and medical professions. Purples are also used in spiritual and mystical applications. In the past, purples symbolized royalty.

So what kind of business do you have? Do you sell a product, or a service? Think about your target market, and try to determine what emotion will appeal to them the most. Which colors will they most likely relate to? Try to match that with one of the above color palettes when you're designing your ad.

Next, select harmonious colors that will work with your chosen palette. You've probably noticed harmonious colors in many areas of life – clothing, architecture, interior design, jewelry, gardening, as well as advertising, marketing, and corporate identity.

## Selecting Harmonious Colors

It becomes easy to select harmonious colors if you follow a proven color theory system. The steps below will show you how to create well-planned color schemes based on the "Bourges Color Circle" system.

Color theorist Albert Bourges based his color theory on a circle with 20 hues. The circle starts with a swatch of yellow at the 12:00 position, then moves clockwise through a rainbow of colors. At the 1:00 position you'll see shades of greens, then blues, then purple at the 6:00 position. The circle of swatches continues with shades of reds, oranges, and finally back to yellow at the 12:00 position.



## Complementary Colors

Complementary colors are exact opposites that enhance one another. When you blend the two together, you get neutral black. When used together, they both appear brighter and more exciting. To find complementary colors, just draw a line through the circle from a hue on one side to the hue on the exact opposite side of the circle.



Color scientist M. E. Chevreul discovered that complementary colors create an unusual optical illusion. Stare at a color for several seconds, then shut your eyes. Open them, and look at a white sheet of paper. Immediately an image of the color's complement will appear!

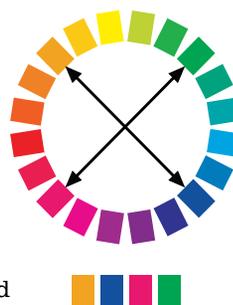
## Split Complements

If you'd like a palette of three colors, first find the true complement of your chosen color; then move one, two or three more spaces away on either side. A split complementary color scheme is usually more pleasing than a true complementary scheme.



## Four Color Harmony

To create a color scheme consisting of four colors, first select a color and its complement, then draw a perpendicular line across the circle so that your lines resemble a cross. This will create a balanced palette of two sets of complements and two related pairs of colors.



Select one of these four hues as your main theme color, then use a small amount of the other three hues to enhance it. For greater visual variety, include darker or lighter shades of these four colors. For more

information about the Bourges color circle and the science of color, see *Color Bytes* by Jean Bourges.

Use color symbolism and color harmony to your advantage. In order to connect with your target market, you need to exploit every possible edge. So put some time and money into market research to learn the habits and preferences of your buyers. This will help you and your designers pinpoint the look, color, and feel that will give you maximum impact. **N**

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