

The Design of a Color

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Abstract

The color of a brand is walked through several phases from initial selection through the final analysis to understand how well it has met the brand needs. Several steps are described: the associated strategic decisions; how to align the color with a product/brand's attributes/voice; what are the customer segmentations and geographical positioning; and trend influences and competitive landscape.

Importance of Color

The correct color for a brand can mean the difference between success and failure of a product or an entire company. People make up their minds within 90 seconds of their initial interactions with a products, and about 62-90% of the assessment is based on colors alone.¹ The presentation will outline examples of good and bad color selection.

Case Study: the Selection Process

A case study will be presented where three fictitious brands are developed. Each brand will have the same name, but differences will be shown as they vary across a seven element selection process. This description of this process will review and compare each brand based on the following core elements used to make a color decisions:

- ☐ *Target audience.* Is it aligned with the customer? Color can be demographical sensitive. Does the color account for this?
- ☐ *Brand objective.* Does the color align with what the brand owner wants it to be?
- ☐ *Brand attributes / brand voice.* What does it stand for? Does the color support this?
- ☐ *Competitive position.* What is the competition doing? Does the color align or differentiate the brand?
- ☐ *Geographical positioning.* Does geography play a role in this market the brand is attempting to penetrate?

- ☐ *Industry trend influences.* Does the color help make the brand look current or outdated?
- ☐ *Challenge/opportunity.* What does color come to serve or achieve for the brand?

Analysis of the Color

A new scoring method has been developed to aid in the selection process describes above. This framework includes the examination of:

- ☐ *Ascetics:* Is the color trendy, and appealing? Is it in harmony, with the brand?
- ☐ *Context sensitivity:* Given all the other requirements, is the color compatible, usable, and acceptable?
- ☐ *Competitive:* Consider the color voice and affinity.
- ☐ *Functionality:* From a production point of view, is the color cost effective and consistent?

References

1. Satyendra Singh, (2006) "Impact of color on marketing", Management Decision, Vol. 44 Iss: 6, pp.783 - 789

Author Biography

Leslie Harrington received her MBA from NYU (2002) and her PhD in business strategy in (2006). During her 30 years tenure working the color field, she was Director of Color and Design for Benjamin Moore Paints. Her current position at The Color Association of the United States focuses developing the next shift for color as it pertains to trends and forecasting, in the support of selecting the right colors for products, brands and built environments.