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The Psychology of Color



What Is **Color Psychology?**

Color psychology explores how color influences human behavior and decision-making. These emotional associations also vary by culture or personal choice, so keep this in mind when strategizing for specific audiences. Retail brands should reflect on what they wish to convey and strive to create that specific image to incentivize consumers to "need" or "want" to purchase a product or service. Aligning the correct feeling or association tied to a color with your audience is paramount for successful sales, as color makes an intense impression.

What do different colors represent?

How can they best resonate with audiences?



RED

Red is one of the most powerful colors.

It evokes passion, power and energy.

Associated with bravery or love, red can also signify anger or aggression.

Red can serve as a warning.



Brands should consider whether red will spark the intended impression for audiences due to its strong impact. Use it when you want to pack a ‘punch’.

ORANGE

Orange is warm, bright and confident.

It insinuates bravery or denotes a creative force.

Orange can cause frustration or tiredness.

An eccentric color, orange can be seen as quirky.



Orange is associated with ‘child-like’ qualities, but it may depend on the shade, such as burnt orange’s mature warmth or bright neon orange’s exciting vibe.

YELLOW

Yellow is a happy color that resonates with youth.

It is warm and closely associated with the sun.

Yellow is favored by extroverts and optimists.

It can cause anxiety or hesitation.



Places of learning, like schools, often use yellow paint for their walls to stimulate attention. Try using yellow to evoke awareness and energy into an audience.

GREEN



Green is the color associated with plants and natural landscapes.

It can represent wealth/money, health or freshness.

Green can actually cause boredom.

Many health brands opt for green in their materials as it reflects their core mission of living well.

BLUE



Historically, the color blue has been associated with masculinity.

It is calming and peaceful, emanating security, trust and strength.

Blue can convey a steeliness or coldness.

Blue's many shades, from purplish indigo to greenish teal, tell many different stories. Ensure your choice of blue represents your intended emotional invocation.

PURPLE



Purple tends to leave an impression of wisdom, wealth, or sophistication.

This color can connote an elevated product or service experience.

It can also represent moodiness or excess.

Purple invites an opportunity to indicate luxurious, high-end experiences. Historically, it was associated with royalty.

PINK



Pink has typically been associated with femininity.

It is thought of as imaginative or different.

Pink can come across as childish or immature.

A pink ‘overload’ can potentially turn certain customers away. Decide which amount of pink best fits your intended customer base.

WHITE

White is spacious, clean and simple.

It can emanate innocence or it can be boring and plain, depending on how it is used.

White is a symbol of intelligence, professionalism, and cleanliness.



White can create a crisp and sophisticated look when used with other colors.
Try experimenting with minimalistic ‘white space’ aesthetics to modernize your brand.

BLACK



Black is a basic color that holds elegant properties.

It can convey endlessness or mystery.

It can represent strength.

Black can be combined with other colors to create an intriguing and powerful impression.

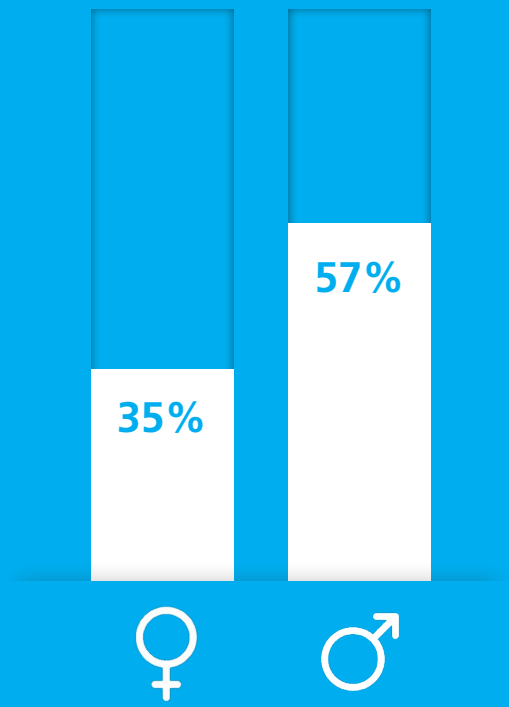
Some more useful and interesting facts about colors:

90%

Colors alone can influence up to 90% of an initial impression.

People perceive colors differently depending on their gender and culture.

Colors **increase brand awareness** by **80%.**



Blue is the favorite color
of 35% of women and 57% of men.

Colors affect people's **behavior, mood, and stress levels.**

Color influences **85% of shoppers' purchase decisions.**



93% of shoppers focus on visual appearance alone
when considering a purchase.



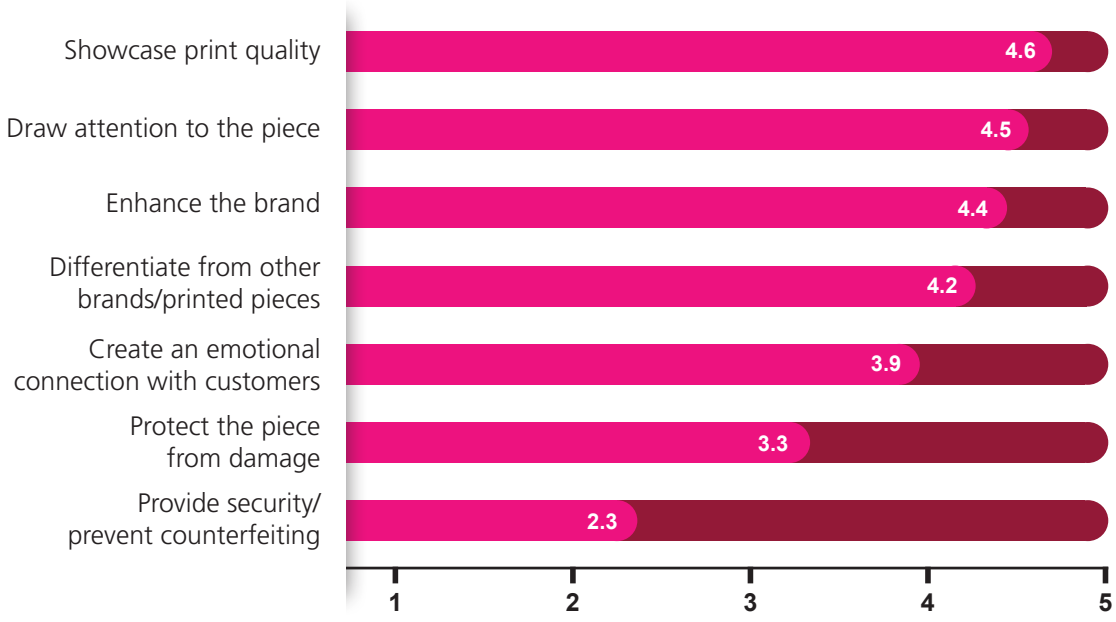
Source: Review42.com

Budget for color
because consumers love it

Retailers should allot for color in their marketing and printing budgets; audiences' eyes are drawn to color because it adds intrinsic excitement to products. And going beyond standard color to add special inks and colors can really make a lasting impression. Forty-three percent of respondents report spending most of their budget on standard CMYK (Cyan, Magenta, Yellow and Black), while 28% of marketers dedicated their budget to CMYK+ (i.e., the four standard process colors plus an additional effect like metallics, spot colors and/or glossy coatings).



How important are the following factors when designing/buying printed pieces for your company?



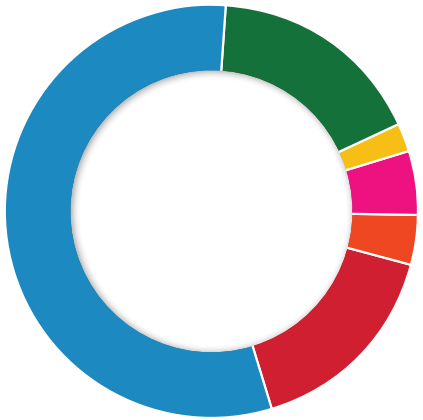
Source: *Beyond CMYK: The Use of Special Effects in Digital Printing*, Keypoint Intelligence 2016

Go Beyond CMYK

In its Beyond CMYK study, Keypoint Intelligence asked print buyers in the United States and Western Europe about the importance of key factors related to print enhancements when buying or designing print. The results show that using CMYK+ on marketing pieces enhances print quality, grabs attention and elevates a brand, in that order. Other factors include differentiating a piece, creating an emotional connection, protecting the piece from damage and preventing counterfeiting (use of an IR or UV ink).

Extra Cost for CMYK+

On average, how much extra do the jobs requiring CMYK+ cost in relation to standard CMYK?



56%
6% to 10%

17%
1% to 5% more

2%
Doesn't cost more

5%
Don't Know

4%
Over 20% more

16%
10% to 20%

N= 100 Respondents in the Retail Industry who spend money on CMYK process color

Source: *US Vertical Vision Study*, Keypoint Intelligence 2020



Stand Out From the Crowd

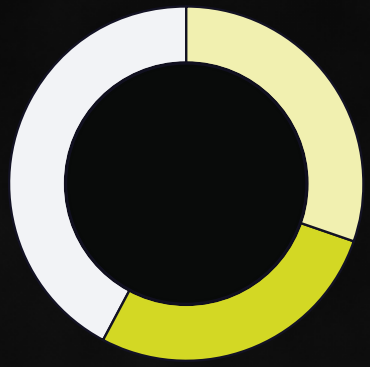
On average, these respondents also report that CMYK+ jobs cost approximately 8.7% more than standard CMYK print, despite its 28% percent of budget makeup, even alongside standard color print. This is because these special effects add a panache and inherent value to printed retail communications that even the most well-finessed standard CMYK print cannot touch. These enchanting hues can make a splash when printed on different substrates featuring unique embellishments. Gold, for instance, can denote luxury or wealth; thus, it is ideal for higher-end products. Silver can convey a holiday vibe or a steely strength, depending on the product. Neon colors can drive excitement with their bold, intense hues. Neon can enhance a "throw-back" campaign, for example. Promoting a returning trend from the 1980s with neon can resonate with that target demographic.



Print Spend Devoted to **Black & White vs. CMYK**

How much of your print spend is devoted to the following?

43%
CMYK



31%
Black & White

28%
CMYK+

N= 121 Respondents in the Retail Industry responsible for creation, management, or purchasing of marketing/promotional collateral

Source: *US Vertical Vision Study*, Keypoint Intelligence 2020







Summary

It is important to remember that people perceive colors subjectively and according to their gender, identity and culture. So, though certain qualities are generally, broadly assigned to certain colors, this is not a hard-and-fast rule for everyone. However, brands should take color qualities into consideration and determine which color(s) or combinations thereof represent their products and services, but mostly which will resonate with their audiences and convert a prospect into a customer. The best colors draw customers in and keep them engaged.

Talk to your print service provider about maximizing color choice for your printed promotional collateral and discover options you may have never thought of before.

This article was produced by Ricoh Business Booster exclusively for Ricoh Graphic Communications Customers.

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