

How Colour Branding Affects Businesses

By Denise Turner, ASiD, CID, CMG

Colour is the master communicator. It stimulates all of our senses and conveys messages like nothing else. It warns us of potentially dangerous situations, which is why street warning signs, school buses and fire trucks are painted OSHA Yellow. In addition, Mother Nature's most venomous creatures are also yellow. Colour plays an enormous role in conveying your business' image and can affect your bottom line. According to the Color Marketing Group's research, the "right colour" can increase your brand recognition by 80%, and it is also the reason why people decide to buy 85% of the time.

Just ask these corporations of the importance of creating a strong colour brand. Starbucks is green; Coca Cola is red and any woman will tell you that sparkles come in Tiffany Blue boxes.

Some things to consider when selecting your brand's colour:

- Tie it to your brand's promise.
- It should represent your image and industry.
- Cultural colours and colour psychology are very important. One colour may be appropriate for one market and a disaster in another.

Consider these important facts from the Color Marketing Group experts:

- Colour increases brand recognition up to 80%
- Colour improves readership by 40%
- Colour accelerates learning from 55% to 78%
- Colour increases comprehension by 73%
- Colour ads are read up to 42% more than similar ads in black and white
- Colour can be up to 85% of the reason people decide to buy



Red

blood, fire, heat, competition, emotion, life, energy, passion, good luck, celebration, prosperity, the Goddess Lakshmi

Red is the longest colour light wave. It raises your blood pressure, increases the heart rate and produces adrenalin, which is essential for "fight or flight". Red gets our attention like no other colour; it is aggressive and ready for action. For these reasons, it is a familiar colour for branding.



Pink

sweetness, romance, innocence, femininity

Pink stimulates our sugar cravings, making it a 'must have' branding colour for all things sweet. Pink's message varies depending on its value intensity. Hot pinks convey energy, youthfulness, sexy, fun and excitement. Light pinks are romantic and childlike.



Yellow

sunshine, joy, creativity, optimism, official colour of Malaysian royalty

Yellow is the fastest colour light wave. It is the most visible colour making it a great colour for point-of-purchase displays. Lighter hues help with memory recall, which is why legal pads are yellow.



Blue

water, sky, mystery, heaven, loyalty, trust, sadness

It is commonly used for the colour branding of companies that wish to convey reliability and trustworthiness, hence the phrase 'true blue'. It is an ideal colour for financial institutions, as its message of stability inspires trust.



Purple

Purple-royalty, spirituality, creativity, sensitivity

Purple is the shortest colour light wave, which helps us tap into spirituality and creativity. For this reason, it is favoured by artists and religious leaders. Internationally, purple is the most loved and, sadly, the most hated colour.



Brown

dependable, earth, grounding, stable, harmony, hearth & home

Brown connects us to the earth; it suggests simplicity and stability. It is the perfect colour to ground more vibrant hues. It is a timeless classic and is a favoured colour family because it adds longevity to products.



Grey

boredom, neutrality, ashes, conservative, status quo

Grey is the colour of indecision and uncertainty. It carries the connotation of a lack of strong feelings. In nature, grey provides camouflage, for grey wolves, grey elephants and grey whales.

It is also a camouflage in the business world, for grey suits. Individuals who wish to remain noncommittal while keeping things status quo. If you do not want your business to fade into the shadows, consider another colour other than grey as the dominant colour.



Orange

adventure, extroversion, celebration

Orange is the colour of affordability and makes us eat faster, which is why it is the principal colour of fast food restaurants. Orange throughout Asia has positive associations, hence it is the colour of Buddhism. In North America, orange is associated with Halloween, fall foliage and Thanksgiving. However, pure orange is not a favoured colour in North America; they prefer brown-based oranges such as terracotta.



Green

nature, balance, healing, spring, growth, environment

Green lowers your blood pressure, and the meaning differs with its many hues. Dark greens are associated with wealth and prestige. Brown-influenced greens are associated with ecology, making it an ideal colour for eco-based businesses.



Black

night, sophistication, bad luck, evil, power, classic.

Internationally, black denotes strength and authority; it is considered to be formal elegance. It creates drama and suggests sophistication. Black is good for higher-end products. In Muslim tradition, black is the colour of the Kaaba, the spiritual centre of the Muslim world located in Mecca.



White

calm, purity, sterile, blank canvas, modern

White reflects and amplifies all colours. The human eye views white as a brilliant colour, so it immediately catches the eye in signage. White is associated with sterility and the medical field, as well as weight loss, low-fat food and dairy products. In India, traditional white is associated with God, sacred cows, the highest caste and all things dairy.

