## Boost Your Success with Color

Color is the first thing we notice when we see a sign, ad, or logo. Whether we consciously think about it or not, color affects our mood and sets the contexts for our reactions to what we see. I, Paul, became aware of the influence of color when I was president of a research organization that among other subject, investigated the difference wall color had on how people interact in a room. In this same vein, research done by HubSpot showed 21% more people are more likely to click on a red button than a green one.

This finding is not an accident because red grabs our attention and conveys energy, excitement, and a sense of urgency. That’s just what retail and food service companies that typically have red logos like Target, K-Mart, Nabisco, Red Bull and Kellogg all want. The more intense the red trigger more emotional impact.

Blue, on the other hand, suggests credibility and stability. It’s a calming color, often the dominant color used by medical, healthcare, dental, corporations, and often companies such as AT&T, Dell, HP, IBM, Ford, and American Express, companies that want to inspire our trust.

The color green suggests something natural, calm, hopeful and youthful. Green is also associated with money, health, freshness and wealth. Lighter greens are more calming while deeper green are associated with financial matters. It’s the choice of companies like Starbucks, Whole Foods, John Deere that use green as their dominant color.

Black is a bold color. It suggests formality and luxury and is thus used in marketing expensive items, such as Tiffany jewelry and Apple computer. Black is used to create a sense of authority. Construction, manufacturing, marketing companies are among those that typically identify themselves with black the dominant color.

The color yellow suggests sunshine, optimism and youth. Companies like Best Buy, McDonald's, Hertz, and Shell employ yellow as their dominant color to capture this mood.

To use color to the advantage of your business, here are some suggestions.

* Tailor your color choice to the age, gender, and interests of the kinds of customers you want. Study the colors that are typical for your type of business. Look at websites, signs, and color ads in magazines, particularly in your industry’s trade magazines. Chances are you will find a dominant color for your industry. Once you select a principal or main color, stick with it.
* When selecting a second color, choose one that make the main color stand out. For example, think of the UPS logo – the gold letters stand out against a brown background. Typical combinations are a dominant color like red, blue or black paired with white, yellow or black, i.e. red with black or yellow with red.
* Limit the number of colors you use. 95% of top brands use only one or two colors. Some examples of companies that have multiple colors in their logos are NBC, Google, and eBay – companies that serve highly diverse customers. The colors most used by top companies are blue (33%), red (29%), black or gray (28%), and yellow or gold (13%). Less frequently used colors are orange (Gulf, Firefox), purple (Welch's grape juice, Hallmark) and pink (Mary Kay).
* Try different hues, tints, shades, and tones for the colors you choose and keep in mind that color in the print world differs from digitized color.

In working with a client who is starting a business as a Karate instructor, we determined that black is most typical color for karate organizations and schools. So he chose that with as yellow an accent to make the black stand out.

If you have an existing logo and brand identity, it may be time to tweak it for greater success and then make certain you carry your color identity on everything you produce to market your business: presentations, business cards, letterhead, web sites, flyers, etc.

*Paul and Sarah Edwards (www.elmstreeteconomy.com) are the authors of 17 print books. Their new release in the Working From Home Interactive Encyclopedia.*