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# Color Forecasters Predict Bright Future

**C**olor affects almost every purchase we make. It affects the way we feel and think about a product.

The colors you use to promote your business can dramatically affect your sales. For example, when designers at Berni Corp. changed the background on Barrelhead Sugar-Free Root Beer to beige from blue, consumers said it tasted more like old-fashioned rootbeer served in frosty mugs.

What do your company colors convey? How do they reflect the advancement, growth and upbeat spirit of the coming millennium?

In an interview with *Graphic Design:usa* editors, Melanie C. Wood, president of the Color Marketing Group, said that as we move toward the millennium, colors used in industry, interiors, fashion, services and communications will become brighter, happier, livelier and more fun—in keeping with a sense of optimism generated by the event, as well as by a buoyant economy.

The Color Marketing Group is the premiere color forecasting association in the U.S.—consisting of 1,500 professionals from various industries whose job it is to advise their companies on color direc-

tions, and ultimately, on what colors will sell to consumer and business groups. As a group, they forecast general color trends with the goal of “translating” these general trends into “saleable” colors.

## Adventures Ahead

Wood predicts that as part of the new optimism, people will not “play it

safe” when it comes to colors, but will take more risks with livelier colors and combinations. She sees that trend being shown in the growing popularity of retro colors and styles of the 1930s, '40s and '50s.

Alan Surbaugh, Sales Promotion Manager for Unisource Paper Co. affirms this finding. “There was a big push for soft colors, but within the last 6-8 months we’ve seen retro colors including a lot of earthy browns,” he says.

“Paper is the platform on which designers place colors,” says Jim Sebastian, President of Design Frame and author of a paper promotion called *Psychological Aspects of Color*. Therefore, the predicted trends apply more to the colors being applied to paper than they do to the paper colors themselves. “Paper colors are designed to be fashionable, but also to accept colors that will be fashionable this year and next,” says Sebastian.

## Some Interesting Color Facts:

According to *The Unseen Spectrum of Color*, an article by Constance Sloggatt, exposure to certain colors can affect heart rate and muscle strength. For example, some jails are starting to use the color pink because they’ve found that it slows the



heartbeat and calms a person. According to Sloggatt, "Research has also shown that volunteer fundraisers who wear pink find donors more receptive and generous."

### 1998 Color Forecast:

With regard to the 1998 Consumer color palette—Susan Iverson and Michelle Lamb, co-chairs of the 1998 Color Forecast Committee, have identified three main themes:

- A move toward the colors of the '70s with '90s updates such as new combinations of colors or new materials.
- A new interest in whiter and brighter hues, softened for a more livable personality. Explains Lamb: "The hues may be softened by using texture, by washing down a color or by using a color to accent."
- A growing interest in brighter, more saturated colors that may sometimes find themselves veiled, as though looking at the color through a diffused filter.

The forecast for the 1998 Contract Color Directions Palette, says the CMG, bridges the present and the future with a passage to a brighter, cleaner palette. The consensus palette here reflects the influences of yellow

and red, the emergence of, 'color-full' neutrals, brighter colors and the reappearance of primary hues.

"It's a very optimistic palette," comments CMS Contract Color Directions co-chair Susan Sugar. "It reflects the blending of the existing with the new, and reintroduces the generational 'Youth Colors' of the '60s and '70s, but with new freshness."

The palette, they say, is being driven by a variety of design, cultural and marketing influences including:

- Constructed colors and finishes developed through layering, textures & washes.
- Ethnic interests, particularly Asian and Latin.
- Water's impact on the palette, as seen through the aquatic colors.
- The impact of retro styles from the '30s, '40s and '50s.
- The need for colors to have versatility and longevity in the marketplace.
- The melding of Consumer and Contract palettes as the office and home become one.
- The impact of technology on colors themselves and by shortening the development cycle. As for

the direction of these colors, Kay Gosline of the Monsanto Company and Ann E. Hurley of Hurley Designs, Chattanooga, co-chairs of the 1999 Contract Commercial Color Forecast, note that neutrals remain strong and tend to be darker, cleaner and complex, but not gray. Red's influence on the palette, they say, will likely remain dominate, while yellow's influence is beginning to diminish.

In addition, fashion has influenced the palette with deep browns reminiscent of real leather and wood, and the environment contributes with hues of subtle "field" greens, more yellow and "optimistic" tones suggestive of new growth. Blue is an important component of the palette, as are water influences, perhaps hinting at the "Age of Aquarius," with mid-range and red-influenced tones.

Now that you have a little added color knowledge, have fun creating. Experiment to find the colors that work best for your company.

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## CMG Commercial/Contract Palette Forecast for 1998\*

### Apache

A centered rich red—not too yellow, not too blue.

### Expearment

A clean, versatile mid-tone green

### Purplexed

A rich, red-purple, ethnic and exotic

### Fool's Gold

The essence of blond-gold, burnished with green, reminiscent of the aged qualities of old world coins, both in flat and metallic finishes.

### Cortez

A rich brown-based apricot, with a strong European influence.

### Zuni

A liquid turquoise, reminiscent of swimming pools.

### Frontier

A soft, red based brown

### Ghost Town

A soft, powdered white.

### Mantis

An acidic, lime-yellow, from the retro influence of the '50s.

### Phoenician

A rich, Mediterranean blue.

### Hi-Ho Silver

Gray with a silver touch, evocative of brushed chrome, both in flat and metallic finishes.

### Camelback

A classic, yellow influenced beige

### Palo Verde

A yellow-based, ethereal sage green.

### Too Blue

A saturated red-based blue, clear and vibrant.

### Black Tie

A sueded, elegant black.

\*Using the PMS color chart, we can help you find colors that match the descriptions of the CMG forecast.

# The Idea Corner



**H**ave you ever considered how many colors you can get out of a job that's run in one color of ink? Believe it or not, you can get at least three: the color of the ink, the color of the paper and different shades of the ink.

Let's look at paper color. Many people assume that their letterhead, flyers, programs etc. need to be run on white paper. Why use white when there are so many eye-catching colors you can use? We can help you select a paper color that will complement the ink color(s) you choose.

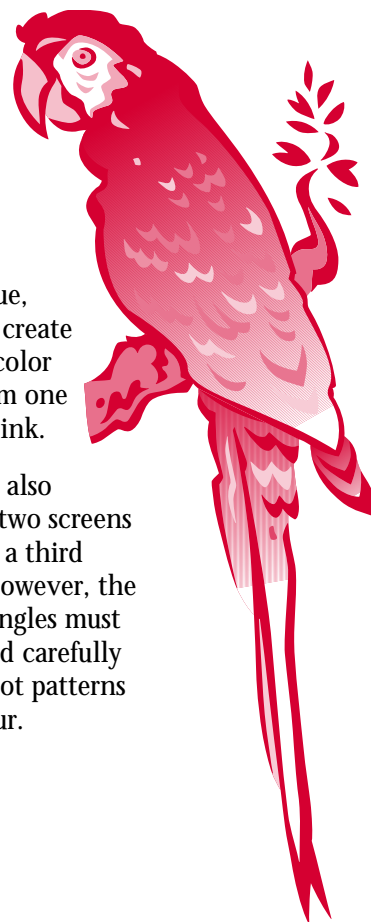
## Maximizing Your Color Choices

Now consider ink color. Many people cling to black ink as though it's the only choice for any job. This simply isn't the case and severely limits creativity.

Determine what will give you the most color for the least cost. For example, suppose you run a job on a brilliant yellow stock with a heavy blue ink. The translucent nature of the ink makes the blue appear green. By screening some of the printed areas, you allow even more of the yellow to show through, creating a lighter shade of green. Using this

technique, you can create a three color flyer from one color of ink.

You can also overlap two screens to make a third color. However, the screen angles must be placed carefully or odd dot patterns can occur.



## WORDS

A Vocabulary Of The Graphic Arts

**spot color** – A small amount of a color used to accent certain parts of a page. It is often used to draw attention to a particular element of a layout such as a picture or headline.

**active white space** – Clearly intended white space that appears around and between copy and graphics.

**background tint** – Overall coverage of paper with a light colored ink or a screen tint. Also called base color. Printers use background tints to simulate colored paper. The blue of blue pages in telephone books comes from a tint printed on white paper, whereas the yellow of yellow pages is the color of the paper itself. *Graphically Speaking by Mark Beach.*

**color control bar** – Small blocks of color that usually appear on the side of a press sheet. They give the press operator a guide against which to check the accuracy of colors.

**color break** – A change of colors usually indicated on a tissue overlay.

**overprint** – A color made by printing two of the process colors (yellow, magenta and cyan) on top of one another to form red, green, and blue secondary colors.

**varnish** – A thin protective coating applied to a printed sheet to protect the image and improve appearance. *The GATF Glossary of Graphic Arts Terms.*

**reverse** – Type, graphic, or illustration reproduced by printing ink around its outline, thus allowing the underlying color or paper to show through and form the image. Also called knockout and liftout. The image 'reverses out' of the ink color. *Graphically Speaking by Mark Beach.*

## Tricks & Tips

**M**any designers throw caution to the wind, become very creative and before they know it, totally lose their audience. Creativity is important, but don't let it come at the price of clarity. Here are some important tips:

1. When you use large amounts of reverse type the reader can become easily distracted. This often results in messages that get overlooked.
2. Choose backgrounds carefully. Certain color combinations will not give you a good amount of contrast. This will result in hard to read type. Two examples would

include: green type on a blue background and red type on a pink background.

3. Remember that the more complex the background, the harder it will be



to read type that is superimposed over it.

4. Avoid any type size, style or color that causes the reader to strain or that cuts reading speed or comprehension. Anything that a reader cannot clearly see will be set to the side for later reading if you're lucky. Otherwise, it may be thrown away.
5. Make generous use of white space. Many people believe that in order to get their money's worth they must fill an entire page with copy. Yet, white space is one of the best ways to attract readers to your message.

Applying these techniques will help you produce promotional pieces that will get read.

## Q&A Questions And Answers

**The other day I called in to check what I need to bring with me for you to print my job. I was asked to bring my PMS number and a printed sample of what I want. What are PMS colors and why do you need a sample?**

**W**hen mixing inks, all printers follow a system called PMS-Pantone Matching System. This allows printers all over the world to use one formula to develop a specific color. It

also ensures that when a buyer purchases printing he or she is certain of what he or she will receive.

Sometimes PMS books can be faded or numbers can be misread and the wrong color gets printed. Therefore, we always recommend that you bring in a sample of the exact color you want so there is no misunderstanding.

Each page of the PMS book has small printed swatches of ink. They are presented in a logical sequence. For example, a section of the book might have all shades of red, starting with deep hues, and proceeding to light hues.

## What's PMS?

PMS books show how a color looks on coated and uncoated papers. It gives you a choice of hundreds of colors.

