

## **The Science Behind Colour: Web Designer Shares Inside Information.**

Choosing appropriate colours for your website is as important as deciding on a company name or even what products to sell. Lilac may be *your* favourite colour but it could remind your customers of their Nan. Not so good if your business is selling bespoke clothing for Visigoths.

When it comes to colours, web designers rely on established design practices. Think about iconic companies like Coca-Cola, the Royal Mail or Tesco. What colours immediately come to mind when you read those words? Coca-Cola is bright red, the Royal Mail bright red and yellow and Tesco red and blue. These colour choices are no accident but rather the product of hours of demographic research and endless consultations with focus groups.

You can you create a successful website, colours chosen appropriately, without spending a fortune on designers. The big boys have spent the money already. All you have to do is learn from their work and your website is sorted.

### **Website Colour Theory**



**Primary colours, red, blue and yellow** are the basis from which all other colours are created. Every single colour you can imagine is the result of mixing varying amounts of these three colours. These colours are used often in marketing because they immediately capture our attention. Next time you are doing the shopping, have a look at the products on the shelf to see how primary colours are used on packaging.

**Secondary colours are purple, orange and green**, and are made by mixing two primary colours together. Red and blue make purple, blue and yellow make green and yellow and red make orange.

**Tertiary colours** occur when primary and secondary colours are mixed together. For example, blue and purple mixed together make blue-purple. Orange and red make red-orange.

### **How To Choose Website Colours**

When you choose your website colours, it's called creating a palette. You can take your inspiration from your logo or use a bit of colour psychology to help your readers along the path to being your customers.

There are two different ways to create a palette. The first is by using **analogous colours** and the second is by using **complementary colours**.

**Analogous means colours that are next to each other on the 12-part colour wheel.** Yellow green, yellow and yellow-orange are all analogous colours, for

example. Using colours in this fashion creates a sense of calm and relaxation. Both Waitrose and Somerfield use green and yellow-green for their logo. They are somewhat forgettable because there is little contrast but a palette like this works well for those favouring a minimalist design. Analogous colours work well with a blog because they are not visually intrusive and create a nice, relaxing reading environment.

**Complementary colours are opposite to each other on the colour wheel.** Primary colours are complementary and create the feeling of strength and stability. Remember our iconic companies from earlier? Tesco uses blue and red and the Royal Mail red and yellow. Simple, strong and reliable.

Adding **secondary colours** to the mix means your choices are red and green, blue and orange and purple and yellow. Sainsbury's uses blue and orange in their store. Although the combination is not as immediately strong as Tesco's red and blue, orange is known for its ability to convince people to buy things. Perfect for a shop.

**Tertiary colours** give you even more variety and contrast. Yellow-green for example complements red-purple, just as blue-purple does yellow-orange. It is more difficult to think of companies that use tertiary colours for their branding because they are not as strong as primary or secondary colours.

Like we were talking about earlier with the Visigoths, it is important to research your target market carefully. Orange does encourage people to buy things but bright orange is difficult for the eye to deal with on a computer screen and will likely send potential customers to another site that doesn't offer such a visual assault. Also, if you are planning to sell aromatherapy candles and your market is middle-aged women, orange is not really helpful for creating a relaxed shopping experience.

In the next part of this series we will look in depth at the psychology behind colours. Websites designed with these principles in mind, can really help boost your sales.