



**Choosing the right color combo for your business and brand is important—here's how to get it right**

by Jaclyn Peresetsky

## Perfect *palette*

**C**olor is one of the first things the eye notices. In fact, color has incredible psychological powers that evoke emotions within milliseconds. What does this mean for your business's bottom line? Plenty.

Choosing colors for your business may be one of the most important decisions you make. Your color scheme should be a big part of attracting ideal clients to your business. People make many decisions based on emotion, so your color selections should be based on more than a quick decision or an afterthought. They should be part of your overall marketing strategy so you convey the right message and feeling from the very start.





To get started, ask yourself what your business really stands for. Decide what tone and emotion you want to convey.

It's important to remember you'll use these colors to create an experience for your clients whether you are developing content for social media, designing your storefront, defining your clients' experience, or producing marketing materials. Here are some things to keep in mind when selecting and using color in your business.

#### **WHO DO YOU WANT TO BE?**

Your colors make a strong statement about your brand's promise and your company's personality. To get started, ask yourself what your business really stands for. Decide what

tone and emotion you want to convey. Determine what emotions you want to evoke. For example, if you want to evoke a feeling of adventure and rebellion, your brand's color palette will likely be bold with stark contrasting colors, like orange and black—think Harley Davidson. However, if you want to induce a feeling of peace and love, a pastel color board can express what you imagine.

#### **WHO ARE THEY?**












You may think your business should appeal to everyone, but "everyone" is much too broad. "Everyone" is an unreachable demographic. If you don't identify your ideal clients, your messaging and services will be scattered and may end up not targeting anyone.

Once you define your target market, your next step is to determine what is meaningful to them. You may think you know what they would like, but do you really? Consider what that perfect client is attracted to. Are they young creative types? If so, try using something that stands for innovation, like red or yellow. Are they in their retirement years and looking for trust? You may want to steer



# Colors, Emotions, and Meaning

As you select your colors, remember they have meaning and evoke emotions

-  **Black:** Associated with elegance, formality, mystery, power, and strength. Black can add depth and a sense of grounding when combined with other colors.
-  **Blue:** The color of the sky and the sea. Associated with tranquility and calmness. Symbolizes sincerity, trust, wisdom, and truth.
-  **Brown:** The color of the earth. Associated with dependability, friendliness, genuineness, and simplicity.
-  **Gold:** Associated with success, money, and wealth; it can evoke comfort and quality.
-  **Gray/Silver:** Has similar connotations to black, evoking dignity, wisdom, and responsibility. Can also mean clean, precise, and modern.
-  **Green:** The color of nature. Symbolizes fertility, freshness, growth, harmony, and safety. It's a restful color that suggests endurance and stability.
-  **Navy:** Tends to feel masculine. Associated with expertise, stability, and tradition.
-  **Orange:** Combines the energy of red and happiness of yellow. Associated with attraction, creativity, enthusiasm, health, joy, and stimulation. Considered a sporty color and is used in a lot of athletics.
-  **Purple:** A unique color that combines the stability of blue and energy of red. Associated with royalty, purple symbolizes dignity, luxury, power, and wealth.
-  **Red:** An emotionally intense color. Associated with danger, energy, passion, power, and strength. It's highly visible, enhances metabolism, and increases breathing and heart rate.
-  **Yellow:** The color of sunshine, yellow produces a warming effect, arouses cheerfulness, stimulates mental activity, and generates muscle energy. Associated with happiness, intellect, joy, and vibrancy.

toward a classic color such as navy. Are they stressed-out business professionals who would appreciate a palette of soothing, calming colors? Think soft blues or greens.

When you know what matters to them, you can use that information to guide your brand color decisions. This is where you may have to take your opinion out of the mix, and focus on what will attract your customers.

## MAKE SOME DECISIONS

To create a color palette, select a main shade and at least 2-3 complementary colors. These secondary hues will provide depth and diversity. For example, our spa's main color is turquoise, and we use navy and an array of taupes and grays ranging from light to medium. This variety gives us plenty of options to use when we design our locations, marketing materials, and signage. We created this palette so clients would feel like they are lounging by the ocean in pure relaxation and calm, while the beautiful sunshine is light and white when it's reflected off the water. Much of our furniture is shiny white combined with some sun-bleached wooden pieces.

## TAKE A TEST DRIVE

Create a vision board that showcases your color palette. Cut and paste pictures you see in magazines that reflect the overall feel you envision. Use markers, crayons, paint samples, or anything you have to showcase your colors.

Once you have selected your brand colors, the testing begins! Conduct a little survey to see if they really resonate with your best clients. Be sure to do this before you spend money and time creating your logo and other marketing materials; redoing a mistake like this wastes precious time and money.

Do not ask for feedback from your cousin, neighbor, or hundreds of Facebook friends, unless they represent your target market. They will all have opinions, but unless they are your target market, their opinions don't really matter. Stay focused on your market. This process needs to give your brand a clear color identification that attracts the right customer base.

Finding your unique color palette can be an exciting, yet daunting endeavor. Just keep asking questions and learn what inspires your target market. This research will not only enable you to have the perfect look and feel for your brand, it will also help you run your business in a way that is more aligned with your vision and what your customers want. This kind of focus is what leads to a strong and successful business. ☺

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