

COLOUR CHARACTERISTICS



COLOUR INTRODUCTION

Colours are a powerful tool in design of buildings and spaces. Designed in combination with texture and pattern, and selected with purpose, colour can evoke strong emotional and behavioural reactions.

Perception of colour is heavily influenced by gender, cultural background and personal associations, but there are consistencies across most of your visitors that we can use to construct effective spaces.

Colour influences people's perception of your brand and product, and can put them in the right mood to purchase. Using your brand colours across your space helps customers trust that you are genuine and that your product will live up to your marketing because you have a consistent message. That message also helps them perceive your product's value and quality.

The secret to successful use of colour is its ability to connect all the elements in the space into a unified message. The combination of colours, intensity, texture and quantity balance is vital. Colour experts such as artists and designers are trained in understanding the application of colour and how they can affect our decisions, emotions and behaviour, and can advise on the best use of colour in your space.

WARM & COOL

A BASE PALATE

While colour reactions are not universal, in general red hues are perceived to be warming and blues are cooling. The intensity, combined with texture and weight can create varying effects.

WARM SPECTRUM

Generally, warm colours are reds, oranges and yellows. Used with texture and variation, these colours can help with motivation, energy, increase heart rate and metabolism, and provide a warm comfort or intense concentration for short periods.

As highlights, warm spectrum colours are eye catching. They can inspire energy and intense interest.

Used in large, solid areas warm colours can become too intense. Over use of red can produce over excitement, tending to aggressiveness. Yellow is cheerful but can quickly become exhausting and has been tied to eyestrain.

COOL SPECTRUM

Generally, cool colours are blues, purples and greens. These colours are deep and expansive, and used with texture and variation, they can help with calm, serenity, deep thinking and creativity.

As highlights, cool spectrum colours are grounding. They can inspire calm, a sense of sanctuary or freedom.

Used in large, solid areas cool colours can become too deep. Over use of blue can produce sadness and depression. Green is fresh and purple mystical, but they can become sickly and oppressive.



RED

Intense

Hot, exciting

Arousing, passion, exciting, bold, fearless, appetite

Can be opulent and luxurious

Symbolises wealth and success, happiness and luck

Increased adrenaline and intensity

Great for afternoon and night-life spaces

Attention grabbing

Fast paced dining / drinking spaces

Too much can be too hot, too energetic



BLUE

Calming

Space, stillness, depth

Lowers the pulse, calms the mind

Thinking deeply, reflection, security, serenity

Best in spaces with great natural light

Great for using range of hues together

Used for large spaces & ceilings creates volume

Outward thinking - big picture thinking, groups

Looking to the sky, expansiveness

Too much blue - heavy, drowning, too still, inactivity



GREEN

Refreshing

Tranquil, quiet, easy to focus, restful, comfort

Invokes mother earth, fertility, healing

Flexible but reliable

Great for lounging spaces, long term spaces

Encourage kindness and sympathy

Light greens are fresh

Dark greens recharge and build optimism

Too much green - jealousy, frustration



ORANGE

Energetic

Exciting, cheerful, stimulating, dynamic
High energy and active spaces, kinetic spaces
Keeps people from lingering too long
Used to signal caution or change
Social communication and movement
Used when attention is critical for short periods
No ambivalence to orange - love it or hate it
Too much - over-stimulating, stressful
Some countries symbol of wealth



WHITE / GREY

Pure

Innocence, pure, simplicity, clean,
Harmony, can be mystical
Open ideas, efficient, organised
Grey- conservative, calm, passive, flexible
Classic
Never ages or goes out of style
Can be paired with any colour
Too much - stark, sterile, isolating
Some cultures white is a symbol of death



BLACK

Compelling

Confidence, powerful,

Mystery, secrecy

Elegance, dignity

Great for tall ceilings & naturally lit spaces

Bold, classic

Creates mystery and mood

Can be used as a base to showcase colours

Too much - absence of light, scary, grief, death

Symbolises success in some cultures



PURPLE

Exclusive, Elusive

Dignified, refined, regal, status symbol

Spiritual, inspirational, dramatic

Luxury, supernatural, rare, exotic

Magical, electric

Honour and courage

Great for intimate spaces

Encourages small groups

Can be used to create mystery

May symbolise death and spirit



PINK

Playful

Fresh, sweet, comfortable

Playful, loved

Joyful, quirky

Great for accent and surprise spaces

Delicate and refined

Youthful, upbeat

Too much - passive sleepiness followed quickly
by agitation



YELLOW

Spirited

- High-spirited, cheerful, increases metabolism
- Stimulates the nerves and purifies the body
- Uplifting, fun, happy, rebellious
- Encourages creative thinking and conversation
- Great for outdoor spaces
- Good for eye catching, delightful details
- Pairs well with natural materials
- Too much causes eye-strain
- In China, yellow is associated with pornography



BROWN

Organic

Earthy, natural, practical, organic

Neutral, bare, wholesome

Nurturing and strong

Warm paired with with neutrals and whites

Great for naturally lit spaces

Texture creates relaxed atmosphere

Too much - dull

COLOUR IN PRACTICE

How to effectively apply colour depends on your brand. Warm and cool colours can be used together in many cases, but the first step is understanding the characteristics of each one. Using each colour to its advantage is best practice. Balance is key when combining colours with textures, patterns and surrounding elements in a space or design.

Start with your brand character and explore what that means for your space. If you don't know your brand character, take our quiz and start your journey. Getting the application of colour right can create powerful stories that resonate with your customers, visitors and guests.

Explore more
S2architects.com.au
(08) 7231 5470

