

## The Power of Color

*Take inspiration from these six companies who don't paint by the numbers.*

Roses are red, and exhibits are blue. For years, exhibit color selection was almost that simple, making for some color-bankrupt exhibit halls. But now that's changing, with very colorful results.

When choosing exhibit colors, many exhibitors want to stick with the old standby, corporate blue, because it's neutral, safe and uncontroversial, according to Joe Viamonte of Viamonte Design. But it's not always the best choice. When a company needs a new exhibit, Viamonte will guide it toward color choices that reflect the company's message instead of automatically choosing the corporate hues.

"If the logo has too much of one color and is used throughout the booth, it may fight the product, presentation or the marketing message," says Viamonte. The color of the exhibit is the first thing an attendee sees, and it should properly set the mood and the image of the company. For example, let's say a company is introducing the hottest technology at the show. An exhibit filled with sky-blue panels would do little to communicate that excitement; bright yellow and bold red would do a better job, Viamonte forecasts that bland blue exhibits are soon to be a thing of the past, thanks to the growing use of colored lighting and emerging computer design technologies. "Painting with light turns the exhibit into a canvas, and you can dramatically change the mood of the exhibit by switching colors," Viamonte says. "The versatility of this technology allows exhibit color to change every second, minute, hour or by the show."

Through the increased use of computer-technology, designers are discovering "new" colors and translating them into palettes. Viamonte believes the color trends for 1998 will be these "in-between" colors. "Bright colors are currently 'in' because of the millennium. I see colors getting brighter but not the classic primary colors," says Viamonte. "We will see more bright in-between colors that are variations of the primary colors that have not been used in exhibiting before."

Recently, Viamonte has seen some wacky combinations of color and faux finishes on show floors, "I don't cringe anymore at bizarre color choices as long as it ties in well with the marketing message," says Viamonte. He found an example of this at PC Expo in New York. A software company called Caravelle had a small, out-of-the-way exhibit but drew attention by using glowing yellow and corrugated cardboard texture. "The corrugated cardboard resembled puzzle pieces, and the bright yellow color looked like it was lacquered over the cardboard," says Viamonte. "The exhibit color ties in really well with Caravelle's Web site and its piercing yellow, wolf eyes corporate logo."

*-By Kathleen McLaughlin, staff writer.*

*Reprinted from Exhibitor magazine, Exhibitor Publications, Inc., Rochester, Minnesota. All rights reserved*

## Color Cues

Your exhibit color choices send a strong message about your company image. When adding color to an exhibit, try to keep these rules in mind:

**Black portrays power.**

**Gray encourages creativity but can be perceived as dirty.**

**Brown is interpreted as informal.**

**White signals purity and honesty.**

**Red attracts the eye, is high energy and has a tendency to make people uncomfortable in a short period of time.**

**Orange attracts the eye but conveys "cheap."**

**Blue has a calming effect and encourages fantasy. However, in large amounts blue can put an audience to sleep.**

**Silver, gold and platinum indicate top-dollar products.**

**Yellow brightens but if used too much can cause attendees to become cranky.**

**Green helps surroundings become more familiar and is associated with nature and money.**

*Source: Wagner Institute of Color Research*