

Website Brand and Colors Research

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The human perception of color as it relates to marketing is one of the most intriguing and controversial topics in business branding. In fact, very little is known or has been properly studied by reputable scientists. Information available is mostly anecdotal and should be taken with a grain of salt. Nevertheless, researchers have concluded that people choose products within 90 seconds of their initial interactions with them, considering mostly color. In other words, color can absolutely be used to influence emotions and feelings, and ultimately affect consumer behavior patterns. So, what color palette works better for particular brands or products? What are the “best” colors to use in your business website or online marketing?

When listening to advertisers and marketing gurus, we recommend taking a very “skeptical approach” to any “expert advice” about the use of color in your brand, especially online. Instead of using unreliable data, we like to use a more scientific/methodical approach. The idea behind this study was to analyze what colors the most influential brands in the world like to use in their own websites. For this study, we looked at the websites for the world’s 100 most valuable brands in 2014, published by Forbes. Forbes measures brand value based on each company’s financials. You can find the complete list here: <http://www.forbes.com/powerful-brands/list/>

Across all industries, the most commonly used color is white. White represents about 42% of

the total color usage in websites. In marketing, white is associated with light, space, balance, and cleanliness. White space can be used effectively to draw attention and highlight content. The next most commonly used color is gray, with 21% of total color usage. In marketing, gray is associated with neutrality. Too much gray can lead to feeling mostly nothing. It is no fluke that white and gray dominate the color usage in professional design since they allow content to be accentuated and be the focus of attention. Black represents about 18% of total color usage. Black evokes strong emotions, and it is also used to accentuate content due to the high contrast capability with white and “light” colors. The average percentage of blacks, whites and grays combined (BWG) is a whopping 81% (2.84% margin of error with 95% confidence). Aside of BWG, the rest of the color usage is about 9% for reds and purples, 6% for browns, and 4% for yellows/oranges, greens, and blues. Most of the accentuated content in websites is of other colors rather than BWG (about 19% of total). These study’s results are compatible with the long-term believe in professional design to use empty space (white, neutral or “negative” space) for effective design and page layout.

To sum things up, first, if you believe the top valuable brands in the world are doing things right, it means your main content should occupy no more than 20% of the total layout. Second, you should use white, gray and black generously to accentuate your main content. Last but not least, to choose colors in general, a good place to start is to be within reasonable ranges of palettes your potential customers are expecting and used to looking at.

Read more at <http://www.candamo.org/articles/>

Average Color Distribution per Industry

