

RETAIL RAINBOW: HOW COLOUR AFFECTS CUSTOMERS

In an era where the in-store experience is everything, colour sets the tone. Sarah Dunn examines the impact of four different retail colour choices – trend-driven pink and green, and classic grey and black.

Resene marketing manager Karen Warman says colour is crucial to the effect of a retail store, but it's important to remember that there's no one 'right' colour for every retailer.

"[The right colour for you] is the right colour to suit the energy and personality of your retail store, and of the customers who shop in the store."

She says it does pay to remember a few colour rules, however. "Screaming bright colour" works outside, but retailers should tone it down inside and provide a "rest spot" where the colour lets up.

It's also important to factor the longevity of any given colour scheme. Some colours can date quickly, so Warman advises retailers to introduce trend-led colours in parts of the store which can be easily changed.

Brand colours should be timeless, Warman says. This doesn't necessarily mean that they must be neutral – Resene's ColorShops were once all grey and averaged "a complaint a week" about the colour scheme.

"Customers wondered why we didn't embrace some colour since we sold colour."

Most of the complainants felt that grey didn't adequately reflect Resene's identity as a paint firm. When the company switched to its current vibrant green, 'Resene Groovy', on the stores' 'splat designs' the complaints stopped.

"Your approach to colour has to suit your business identity," Warman says. "Green has proven to be the perfect choice for us – teamed with black it signals quality, it reinforces our commitment to environmentally-preferable products and sustainability, it appeals to a wide range of customers, looks clean and is an enduring colour that we could grow into and continue to use for many years."



Paint it black

Barkers made a bold move when it used extensive black accents in its fit-out for Barkers Lambton Quay, also known as 'The Chambers'. The black used was Resene Nero, which was paired with Resene Alabaster and Resene Quarter Gravel.

Glenn Cracknell, Barkers general manager of retail and operations, shared some insights into the project.

Tell us about what drew the Barkers design team towards black accents in the store. Because of its size, we wanted to darken the store itself to make better use of spotlighting in particular areas. It also offers a less intimidating environment for customers to browse before making buying decisions.

Was that a controversial decision? Even just a few years ago, black was considered a very bold choice. Absolutely and in the early days of the store being opened we had to do remedial work to ensure there was enough more heavily lit areas so that customers could see the true colour of the garments.

In your opinion, what effect has the black accents had on the way the store feels? It definitely adds to the theatre of the store's interior environment, and helps to pull what would be a large expanse in lighter colours, back to an environment that offers more of a journey of discovery.



Think pink

Pink is the colour of the moment right now. Not just any pink – you might know it as 'Tumblr Pink' or 'Scandi Pink', but a spectrum of soft, warm shades of pink have colonised Millennial-targeted spaces to such an extent that it's been coined 'Millennial pink'. Currently, dusky pinks like 'Dawn Chorus' and 'Rascal' are popular at Resene, as well as bold magenta-pink 'Irresistible'.

Resene's Karen Warman says pink tends to be used in retail for stores targeting female shoppers: "Most females, even if they don't personally like pink, will see strong use of pink as a signal that this may be a female focused brand."

At the Newmarket outlet of Auckland interiors retailer Collected, one of several themed display areas has been painted a striking Resene 'Petite Orchid'.

Interior stylist and owner of Collected, LeeAnn Yare, explains what the pink contributes to Collected.

Tell us why you selected this colour for your store. With a hashtag of #youcaneverhavetoomuchcolour, Collected is all about colour. We chose to liven up our warehouse style retail space by using blocks of colour, which gave us specific areas with interesting backdrops for merchandising, inspires our customers with ideas around how to use colour, and generally creates a happy and positive environment.

How does it make you feel? Do you think it has the same effect on customers? Happy! I love pink, especially this shade, and in my opinion it's a colour most people love but are a little afraid to use. Our customers have engaged really well with it, and realised it's not at all scary.

Have your feelings about it changed since you installed it? I love it even more, the intention was to regularly swap the colours out, but this shade of pink is a breath of fresh air, even as I am writing this it is pouring with rain outside, but that corner of the shop is light and bright and fun!

Grey matter

Grey is a truly neutral colour. The Sky Tower Retail Store was fitted out by Spaceworks in a palette inspired by New Zealand's natural scenery, and the Sky Tower itself. Two blue-greys, Resene Sorrento and Resene Undercover, dominated the interior, accompanied by warm beiges meant to recall New Zealand's golden sand beaches; sea blues; forest greens; and a pohutakawa red.

All greys have subtle undertones which often aren't appreciated until a whole wall is painted, says Resene's Karen Warman. The right grey will depend on what you're selling and who your desired customers are – for a cosy feel, chose a grey with a red undertone, or for something more sombre, pick one with a blue undertone.

Warman answered some more specific questions about using grey in retail interiors.

What kinds of colours should grey be paired with? Does it really go with everything? Grey really does go with most colours, but it's important to make sure that the undertone of the grey matches the other colours you are pairing it with. E.g. A grey with a red undertone will suit other warm colours. A grey with a blue undertone will usually suit other cooler colours. If you pair a cooler colour with a red based grey, this will make the red based grey look even redder.

Is grey "classic" in the same sense as white or is it to be considered another trend-driven colour?

All colours are trend driven. Even though white or off white may seem to be the default option for many, the type of white still changes. We have seen creams, beiges and now we are onto blackened whites and greiges (grey beige).

Greys are currently very on trend and have taken over from the browner palette that was previously more popular. Deep grey is also a popular alternative to black.

When choosing for most retail stores, choose a colour scheme that suits the image you want to portray, your merchandise and your customers (both current and potential). In most

cases this won't necessarily be the most trendy colours.

Choose a timeless colour palette that can be easily dressed up for the season and the current trend colours. You can dress it up with a painted feature wall or walls that change regularly, like Freedom Furniture does, add accessories, and paint feature furniture and fittings.

When incorporating new colour trends we always say to think of your wardrobe. When the seasons and trends change you don't throw out everything and start again. Instead you bring in new elements, a new coat to dress up the enduring classics you already have.



Green light

The Pantone colour of the year for 2017 is 'Greenery' – a vibrant, fresh lime green. Pantone describes Greenery as being symbolic of new beginnings, terming it "nature's neutral".

Resene's Warman says with most people spending more than 90 percent of their time indoors, we are seeing a growing trend of the outdoors coming in. Most customers find nature calming, but as with any strong colour, retailers don't need to use bright greens everywhere to make a statement – Warman recommends pairing it with good lighting and using it on areas such as a ceiling or a broken wall space.

"Greens have an innate sense of calm that can relax a busy shopper and encourage them to slow down and spend more time in store," she says.

Palmer's garden centres use a similar tone – Resene 'Palmer's Green' as part of their branding and

fit-outs nationwide. It's been used since the 1990s, and paired with a bright 'Palmer's Pink' since 2012. The company is currently undergoing a rebrand where all 14 Palmer's stores are updating to this green and pink, which were formerly used predominantly in the Palmer's Planet-branded outlets.

Ester Dawbin, senior marketing assistant of Palmer's explains Palmer's Green's pull.

Palmer's Planet interiors use really bright, strong colours. Why were these colours chosen? The bright green has been carried through over the past 25 years as not only a nod to our history, but also because of its strong associations with nature. Green is associated with growth, vitality, new life and freshness – all features we believe resonate strongly with our

garden centres and the act of gardening itself.

The bold pink was adopted in 2012 to modernise and add vibrancy to the brand. We believe the pink complements and stands up against the bright green and has freshened up the interior space.

What kind of effect do you think they have on shoppers? We receive a lot of feedback that our stores provides a great modern shopping experience. We want customers to feel inspired and motivated when they walk in store, and we believe these colours truly help create this ambience, which is why over the next year all our stores will be updated to feature both the bright green and bold pink. **R**

