



# Color on Your Sales Floor

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Choose hues that support  
your brand, target market  
and products.

Color, when combined with lighting, is one of the most powerful elements of design. Chosen wisely, colors you use in your store can create a successful selling stage for your products and can have a positive effect on your customers' emotional response to your business.

As a creative, you likely have combined colors in a myriad of ways with beautiful outcomes. However, selecting and applying colors to a shopping environment is a different matter. Color affects consumers physiologically, mentally and emotionally.



Dutille's Jewelry Design Studio located in Lebanon, NH, utilized their brand colors on two walls in the back of their store to lure customers back to their "idea bar". The navy blue is their main color and the lighter blue is their accent color. The rest of the store used a warm taupe as a neutral. The ceiling tiles were also a warm neutral color which helps make the space feel bigger since the ceiling is not very high. *Photo from owner, Jude Dutille. Design by Retailworks, Inc.*



This yellow wall in the produce department of Outpost Natural Foods in Mequon, WI, accentuates the bright colored fruits and vegetables on display. It's also a warm color that draws customers to this department from the entrance of the store. The ceiling is a nice unpainted silver/grey metal, which is fine for the higher ceiling as it tends to disappear. *Photo by Jon Helminiak. Store design by Retailworks, Inc.*



These teak and pink walls inside the Kids Dentist office in Mequon, WI, create a playful yet relaxing space for the younger clientele. Teal is one of the cooler colors, which serve to relax people, and pink, although a derivative of the powerful warm color, red, is diluted with white and is actually known to calm people. *Photo by Holley Bakich. Design by Retailworks, Inc.*

## SELECTING A PALETTE FOR YOUR STORE

When selecting your store's color palette, consider your brand, target market and products. Which colors will best support your brand, appeal to your customer base and showcase your products in the best way?

Start with the color of your logo, branded marketing materials and shopping bags. These represent your brand. Every interior color palette should have

- » A dominant color (the main color used in your logo).
- » An accent color that supports the dominant color.
- » One or two neutral colors.

Not every dominant brand color is appropriate as a wall color; for instance, a deep forest green on a business card may not translate well onto a wall, so maybe a lighter version of the green would be more visually appealing.

## HOW TO USE THE COLOR PALETTE

Put the dominant color on walls you want to attract attention, perhaps behind the checkout counter, at the back of the store, in a specialty department, to showcase a special finished quilt—wherever you want to make a statement. This color will attract the eyes from a distance, then watch the feet follow the eyes.

Use the accent color for trim, the front of the checkout counter, in signage, on shopping bags and for other pieces.

Cloak the rest of the store in neutral colors, and that doesn't just mean white. Creams, tans, beiges, grays and taupes are all great alternatives to white. Neutrals work well when pairing a darker version with a lighter version to create a subtle difference between areas.

## CEILINGS

If you want to add color to your ceiling, keep in mind its height. Ceilings 9 to 10' high should be painted with lighter neutrals. Higher ceilings, like those with exposed trusses and spiral ductwork, can be a bit darker, but never black as that makes for an oppressive environment. Don't go darker than a medium charcoal or taupe. You want to create an uplifting, inspiring selling space. When you select a color for your ceiling, be sure to hold it over your head, and imagine the light source being below it to avoid picking a color that is too dark.



**CLOCKWISE FROM ABOVE**

Cotton Patch Quilt Shop (University Park, FL) painted a feature wall green, its main brand color, which also serves as the store's neutral background. Logo shopping bags reinforce brand colors. The bright pink, the brand's accent color provides a focal point when entering the store.



**WARM VS. COOL COLORS**

Warm colors such as reds, yellows and oranges energize people. Red is the most powerful of all colors, so use it carefully; too much can be distracting. Cool colors such as blues and greens are universally liked. They are comforting colors and help consumers slow down and relax. Purple and orange can be controversial colors; some people love them but others find them distasteful. If they're one of your main brand colors, use them judiciously inside your store.

**COLOR PAIRING**

When pairing colors, keep the saturations similar. However, for complementary colors on the color wheel (blue and orange, purple and yellow, green and red), the saturations have to vary a bit or the colors will create an uncomfortable visual vibration. Light saturations such as pastel colors don't work well in a retail setting as they tend to come off as weak and ineffective; however, selecting one or two for a baby/children's department is OK, as long as they work with your main brand colors.

**LIGHTING**

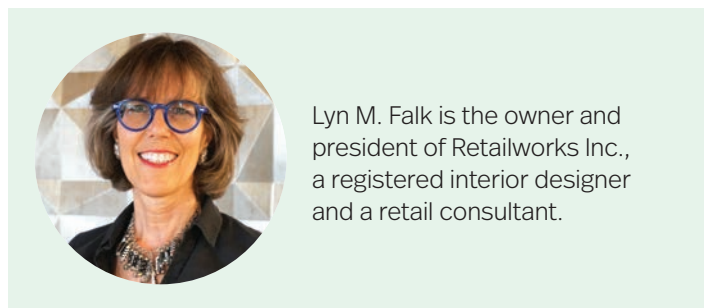
Be aware of how lighting affects the colors you choose. The difference between warm lighting and cool lighting can be dramatic when it comes to the way a color reads in a space. Lamps with whiter light output (around 3500 kelvin) and a color rendering index (CRI) of 85 or above will ensure your colors look their best.

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**TRENDS**

If you're a fashion-forward craft store, you can bring trendy colors in as accent colors, as long as they work well with your brand colors. Select a specific spot to showcase the colors, such as in a display of merchandise, the latest quilts using the color combinations, or new fibers, paints and other product lines.

With any powerful tool, be careful how you use it. If you choose too many colors without a plan, visual chaos will occur, and customers may find it difficult to stay and shop. The right color combinations can strengthen your brand, keep your target market engaged, direct traffic and showcase your product lines.



Lyn M. Falk is the owner and president of Retailworks Inc., a registered interior designer and a retail consultant.