



Color in Environments

Color can have a profound psychological and physiological impact on the human experience, and in particular on users of the built environment. The goal of the IACC/NA is to use color in a more effective way and to create more human, user-supportive environments through the educated application of color.

Exteriors

Color and architecture go hand in hand. Form first reaches the human eye through color, and as a characteristic of perception, cannot be separated from form. Color is the language of form, and is also the language of emotions. As the architect Professor Sune Lindstrom pointed out, "With every particular architectural product is the spontaneous emotional reaction that is of importance to us".

Through exterior color we influence our townscape and interact with our surroundings by way of the cultural associations, as well as the emotional associations of color.

Exterior colors can:

- Modulate a building's appearance and bring it in harmony with it's surroundings
- Differentiate, contain, unite, equalize, and accentuate elements
- Make a building appear pleasant or oppressive, well proportioned or distorted, stimulating or monotonous
- Give individuality to buildings that exhibit the same or similar design

Restaurants and food service

In the restaurant business success rests on four conditions: food, service, price and restaurant's ambiance. As long as food and service are good and the price is fair, the more inviting restaurant will always be more successful.

The more inviting restaurant is the one that arouses the appetite through multi-sensory stimulation. Studies show that color appetite behavior is stimulated and dependent on smell, the thought of food, and most of all by sight - "We eat with our eyes," as the saying goes. Therefore the uses of color in restaurant design should emphasize color's psychological association with appetite, as well as smell.

Color may be used to stimulate the appetite, as well as present the desired restaurant image such as: chic bistro, family restaurant, or fast food establishment. Psychological appeal, distinction, the feeling of harmony and sense of identity are always linked to products that sell, and that also applies to food service establishments as well.

Industrial work environments

Studies, including those conducted in the field of industrial psychology, point out that poorly designed conditions in industrial work environments can lead to monotony and boredom, resulting in fatigue, lack of motivation and negative interaction and accidents. This affecting not only the overall work climate, but ultimately the quality and quantity of production.

Although manufacturing oriented business are as diverse as the products they produce, the functional principles of color regarding vision and safety, are common denominators for a purposeful use of color in industrial environments.

Correct color specifications will:

- Improve perception, thereby protecting the eyes from unnecessary strain
- Increases efficiency and minimize errors by reducing monotony, irritation and premature fatigue
- Increase safety and improve orientation
- Partly compensate for specific problems, such as noise, heat, cold, odor, dryness, moisture through the subjective influence of color.

Offices

It is evident that the efficiency of office employees is directly related to their work setting. Employers must provide an environment that is physically and psychologically supportive of their

employees. Satisfaction with the work environment is closely associated with job performance and overall job satisfaction.

Modern, efficient offices depend on experts in the field of "human factors", whose recommendations are critical in regard to ergonomic factors, such as efficient space planning, noise, lighting, etc. However, it takes the color specialist to set the correct mood and image, using objective guidelines in creating an office that is also a tool to aid employees in their task. It is the color specialist who pays close attention to the relationship between color, visual efficiency and comfort, which is essential in today's offices with heavy VDT use.

Homes and Personal Living

The pace of modern life is fast and stressful and requires that today's home provide rest and relaxation. What constitutes 'rest and relaxation' for one person might be different for another. When planning colors for a living space the color designer should explore the individual clients personality, his or her relationship to color and his or her response to visual stimulation, as well as considering lifestyle needs.

Designing a personal living space demands the utmost knowledge of "color psychology" because color is a key element in personalizing the living environment. The designer, trained in color psychology, is able to gain greater understanding of his or her client and apply that knowledge to the color design. Color's psychological effects can then interact with the individual personality and support the function of each space within the home.

Schools

A school's physical environment has a powerful psycho-physiological impact on its students. Appropriate color design is important in protecting eyesight, in creating surroundings that are conducive to studying, and in promoting physical and mental health. Many cases of irritability, premature fatigue, lack of interest, and behavioral problems can be attributed directly to incorrect environmental conditions involving poorly planned color and lighting.

In addition to the physiological factors operating in the relationship between color and visual ergonomics, the psychological factors, must also be considered in regard to different age groups

and their individual development stages. The successful design of ambient conditions within an education environment should always be based on the scientific knowledge of the psychophysiological effects of color and light.

Healthcare

In 1978, the United States Department of Commerce-National Bureau of Standards workshop on "Color in the Health Care Environment" stated, "Medical facilities represent perhaps the most critical category of buildings in need of proper criteria." Dr. Thomas Sisson, who headed the workshop, concluded that the way color is often specified in hospitals is "... inconsistent and potentially detrimental to the feeling of well-being by the patient."

Today a substantial body of knowledge exists to ensure therapeutic color specifications. Color plays an important role in one's experience of a healthcare facility as competent, efficient and "caring." Color can enhance the healing process and inspire user confidence only when specifications are based on interdisciplinary knowledge, not on changing design styles or variable tastes.

Correct use of color can:

- Facilitate medical diagnosis and surgical performance
- Maintain "stimulatory balance"
- Support the healing process

Marketing

Marketing is the "activity" involved in moving goods from the producer to the consumer, including selling, advertising and packaging. It also includes the advertising of services which means communicating a successful corporate identity and image. Advertising requires communicating effectively to arouse the desire to buy a product or use a service.

Experts agree that non-verbal communication (including "visual" communication) accounts for the highest percentage of communication. Color is a powerful communicator because of its symbolic, associative, attention-drawing, and mood-creating effects. Color can communicate the nature of a

product - it's effectiveness, or present the image of the trust-worthiness of a service. Color can visually satisfy consumer expectation to gain consumer acceptance.

Advertising without color is unthinkable, and advertising without an understanding of the psychology of color is ineffective.

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