



The Psychology of Color in Dental Marketing

Joel Harris, CEO of ADA Intelligent Dental Marketing explains why color in your dental practice and its marketing materials is more important than you may think.

Whether it's your logo, practice brochure, website, wall art or other materials, you'll be making **important color choices**. What colors have you chosen for your practice marketing materials? What were your reasons for making the decision? Was it because you just liked those particular colors, or did you have a particular marketing message in mind? Even though visual appeal is an important consideration, your **color choices send a message** to the people who view them. Hopefully, this short article will help you learn what that message might be.

Certain colors not only **enhance** the appearance of an item, they also **influence behavior**. Never underestimate the impact that the colors you use will have on your target audience. It's no accident that Campbell's Soup has used the same four colors on labels for years and years. (Just by mentioning Campbell's Soup, I'll bet an image of that label popped into your head!)

Have you noticed that most **fast food restaurants** are decorated with **vivid reds and oranges**? It's no accident that these colors show up so frequently. Reds and oranges **encourage** diners to eat quickly and leave—and that's exactly what fast food outlets want you to do. Even though market researchers have made an entire science out of identifying the effect colors have upon consumers, I've tried to simplify it for the purposes of dental marketing. Here goes:



Black. Black is the color of **authority and power**. Black clothes make people appear thinner. It's a **somber color** or sometimes associated with evil (the cowboy in the black hat was almost always the "bad guy"). In North America, black is associated with **grieving**. Black is a **serious** color that evokes strong emotions. It's easy to overwhelm people with too much black and in most cases black really has **no place in dental marketing**.

White. For most of the world this is the color associated with purity, cleanliness and elegance. White can be used to project the feeling of superiority or high-tech excellence. Because white is not technically a color but rather the lack of color, it is more of a complement to other color schemes. In dentistry, white can send a strong message of healthy teeth or cosmetic esthetics.

Gray. Gray is most associated with the **practical, time-less, middle-of-the-road, solid** things in life. Too much gray leads to feeling mostly nothing, but a bit of gray will add that rock-solid feeling to your product. When used improperly, gray is associated with **old age**,

death, taxes, **depression** or a lost sense of direction.

Red. Red is the color of **energy**. It's associated with movement and **excitement**. People completely surrounded by red find their heart beating a little faster and often report feeling a bit out of breath. Wearing red clothes will make you appear a bit heavier and certainly more noticeable. Red is not a good color to overuse, but using a spot of red in just the right place is a smart way to underscore a message. A red tie with a navy blue suit and white shirt adds just the right amount of energy and **creates attention**.

Pink. Although red is used at holidays that are about **love and giving**, the true color of love is pink. Pink is the most calming of all colors; often, dangerous criminals are housed in pink cells because studies show that pink drains energy and calms aggression. Pink can be a very **effective** color in **dental marketing**, especially when combined with masculine colors.

Blue. Ask people to name their favorite color and a clear majority will say blue. Much of the world is blue. Seeing the color blue actually causes the body to produce chemicals that are **calming**. Over the ages, blue has become associated with **steadfastness, dependability** and loyalty. People tend to be **more productive** in a **blue room** because they are calm and focused on the task at hand. Blue is a favorite color used in dental marketing because it conveys so many important messages.

Green. The color of growth, **nature** and **money** is green. A **calming** color also, it is very pleasing to the senses. Dark forest green is associated with terms like **conservative**, masculine and wealth. Hospitals use light green rooms because that color too is found to be calming to patients. It is also the color associated with envy, good luck, generosity and fertility. It is the traditional color of **peace**.

Yellow. Cheerful yellow, the color of the sun, is associated with **laughter, happiness** and good times. It has

the power to speed up our metabolism and bring out some creative thoughts. Yellow can be quickly **overpowering if overused**, but in sparing amounts in just the right place it can be an effective tool in marketing success. Used improperly, yellow can send the opposite message of white, healthy smiles.

Orange. The most flamboyant color on the planet! It's the color tied to fun times, happy and energetic days, warmth and organic products. It is also associated with **ambition**. There is nothing even remotely calm associated with this color. Orange is associated with a **new dawn in attitude**.

Purple. Purple is the color of robes worn by kings and queens. This **royal** color is associated with **wealth, prosperity** and rich sophistication. Purple can create an air of mystery, **wisdom** and respect. In combination with blues and greens, purple can be a very effective dental color.

Brown. This color is most associated with **reliability, stability** and friendship. More and more consumers are likely to select browns as their favorite colors. Brown is the color of the earth itself and can create a feel of well-being. Browns and earthy colors communicate a message of being **non-corporate** and **down-to-earth**. Browns combined with other subtle colors can make a great identity for certain dental practices.

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Joel Harris is a co-founder and President of ADA Intelligent Dental Marketing located in Salt Lake City, Utah. His company provides powerful marketing tools to help dentists grow their patient base, increase the profit and improve their image. Joel is also the author of the book, Breakthrough Dental Marketing.