



Color:

The Marketing Tool of the Century

Angie Ping, Associate Editor

Color affects everything. If you go to the car dealership and they don't have the mineral gray color of the car you want, you will probably go to another dealership before settling for the same car in red. When you walk down the aisle at the local grocery store and try to decide what to get for dinner, your eyes are drawn to some items based on the color of the packaging.

Similarly, color affects facility managers because employees might search for other employment if they don't enjoy the environment where they work.

Working in a color-centric society, facility managers need to be aware of the importance of color in everything from office walls to building exteriors.

"Color is the marketing tool. People are always making buying decisions based on what color a product is. This is true of everything from office furniture to a bag of chips," said James Martin, owner of The Color People, a Denver based architectural color consulting firm.

Bicycles for adults are now being built with green tires, proving that even the most utilitarian items are being sold by color. Color adds value and marketability while creating customer satisfaction.

Employees are typically more sat-

isfied in their jobs if they have pride in their workplace, according to Martin. If all of the elements of an environment work together it conveys a sense of concern to the customer or employee and satisfaction is likely to increase.

"I worked for a large apartment company here in Denver and the offices were nicely colored and pleasant. People felt good working there," Martin said. "One day I got off of the elevator on the wrong floor. It was the floor that housed the offices for these EPA. The offices were gloomy. They looked lifeless and created a feeling of dullness."

The color of a work environment makes a huge difference in how employees feel. One company for which Martin consulted allowed their employees to have input into the colors of the office.

Giving employees the chance to contribute created a tremendous amount of satisfaction at the workplace among the staff. This translated into loyalty because employees like the environment and felt that management valued their opinions.

"You want to go with a color that has a softened edge," Martin said. "Don't rely heavily on trends in color.



You want something that is comfortable. Very forward trends are likely to be more intense."

Interior spaces in offices should use colors that have lasting appeal to avoid having the offices look dated. By using a less trendy color the space will remain marketable. The trend colors for 2006, determined by The Color Marketing Group, a not-for-profit association of 1,300 color designers, are more fashion-oriented, said Martin, who is also on the board of directors of the organization.

"Using color correctly can really make a marketable difference," Martin said. ■