

BY LAYCI GRAGNANI



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## Color Can Make the Difference

“You are the future.” If you’re part of the Millennial generation, it’s very likely that you’ve heard that phrase used before because we *are* the future of this industry. Over the past five years, the horticulture industry has really looked towards this generation for advice. It’s true! Industry professionals have been leaning on the younger folks and asking their opinions on how to get 20 and 30-somethings into the garden center, how we use social media and most importantly, what’s trending?

We hear people talk about trends all the time and one trend that’s overlooked quite often is that the younger generations know a lot about color trends. We’re in the color business, so we should know about color trends, right? Color is a powerful tool in the marketing world and knowing the trends allows you to provide what consumers are looking for. You don’t have to be a trendsetter or read fashion magazines; you just need to know how the power of color can be used in our businesses.

If you haven’t heard of Pantone or the Color Marketing Group, I highly suggest Googling those terms. You’ll be blown away with the amount of information that you can find out about color on both of their websites. For nearly 50 years, Pantone has been inspiring design professionals with products and services to help color the world. Numerous times throughout the year, inspiring color palettes are released for home and fashion trends. For example, every fall they announce a palette of colors for the following spring fashion color report. You’ll start to see these selected colors in everything from kitchen utensils to scarves, the following spring in every retail store.

Why would color trends from young people change the future? I mentioned earlier that the industry is trying to find ways to get the 20 and 30-somethings into the garden centers and color trends might be the answer that everyone is looking for. This target audience is likely to be buying their first home and they

want curb appeal. I know that I care about color trends and I want my yard to be more colorful and trendier than any of my neighbors’ yard (that could also be because I’m a plant nerd as well). If our industry looks closely at the color trends and creates displays that are based off the current trends, there’s a good chance that we’ll capture this audience with an emotional connection.

Color sells. The right color sells big-time. Whether the color is being displayed on the plant or the pottery, bringing the right hues and accessories can really jazz up your retail display and grab customers’ attention. There are a handful of garden centers in the country that do color displays very well and they cross-merchandise with pottery or garden tools. When you walk into a garden center and there’s a beautiful display of bright red geraniums and petunias along with red pottery and red gardening gloves, you can’t help but buy all four items! The number one visual sign at retail is color—it beats sound, smell and texture. Eighty-five percent of shoppers place color as a primary reason for why they buy a particular product and I’m sure that you would agree with that, too.

Keep it simple. If you’re going to focus on the color Dazzling Blue—which is one of Pantone’s colors for 2014—you don’t need to flood your display with blue products. All you need is a splash of color to get the message across. For retailers, selling is the art of persuasion and there are many factors that influence how and what consumers buy. A large part of every decision is based on visual cues and the strongest and most persuasive color.

Color trends and inspiration can be found everywhere in our everyday lives. Whether you’re standing in line at the grocery store or walking down the aisle at Target, color trends are used everywhere. We live in a big world of color and we should embrace it as much as we can. I hope that everyone’s creative juices are flowing now and you all will start to look at color with a different perspective. **GT**

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