



**BUSINESS
FURNITURE**

COLOUR TIPS

A relatively accurate method of forecasting colour trends in the small office home office (SOHO) environment is to look at four influencing factors: economy, fashion, the environment and current events.

Economy: Depending on one's budget, it may be difficult to justify the cost of a trendy colour scheme and pricey accessories, especially since some fashion trends may become out of date just as quickly as they come into fashion. Where price is an issue, it is best to rather choose colour palettes with the long-term view in mind.

A classic conservative palette with an eye towards "refreshing", not "redoing", now becomes the basis for design trends.

When taking the long-term design approach into account, the most flexible way of transforming a room's look instantaneously, and keeping it in line with current trends, is to give it a new coat of paint.

Muted metallics with a satin sheen or a brushed finish are becoming increasingly popular, as are textured paint finishes because they add an extra dimension to the room.

Another method of transforming a room's look is to create a colour accent or a feature wall, which creates the impression of a structural change without there being any construction undertaken.

Popular textured paint finishes in residential and retail environments are white, stone or sand looks, although they seem to be less relevant for commercial spaces. In traditional commercial environments neutral-based hues in a flat finish still dominate.

Greens have a touch of yellow and range in hue from olive to pear, while greys continue to be an important backdrop for accent colours.



Critical Colour Trends

Trend tracking is about more than spotting the next colour, fabric or hot designer. Sure, black may be back, and miniskirts may re-conquer the catwalks, but the arena of taste is infinitely more complicated than that. In other words, fashion in all its variety, excitement, and pioneering business models is just another part of the world of people trends.



COLOUR TIPS

Stronger colours appear in smaller proportions and it is the use of these colours that adds visual interest to a colour scheme.

Fashion: Fashion is the easiest and least expensive method of changing a room's look, given the size of SOHO's. The Spartan colour palette of the 1990s featuring putty, taupe, greys and blacks has given way to a prettier, more optimistic palette of pinks and blues that are clearly visible in residential designs nowadays. Looking ahead the colour palette is showing a global warming trend with colours heating up to include yellow-based terracottas, corals and red-based blues.

The greatest aspect about incorporating accessories into a SOHO space is that they are disposable and inexpensive in the greater scheme of things.

Today's commercial accessory trends focus less on the "place" and more on the "person". Looking back over the decades, framed prints with motivational sayings were big in the 1980s, just as miniature Zen rock gardens desk fountains were in vogue in the 1990s.

The Environment: A definite trend in the design of residential homes is to integrate the exterior with the interior, primarily through the use of expansive glass windows or walls. However, in the SOHO environment, one can also bring the outdoors in through the use of natural colours. As an example one could imagine the green of ancient forests combined with warm golds and infused with a hint of copper.

The cold, sterile interiors often associated with Zen and minimalist décor have been heated up with just a hint of warmth. Gone are the latte and mocha browns of the 1990s. The millennium has seen







brown morph from the mundane to the mystic by adding a touch of purple giving it a more complex undertone.

Sheer fabrics shot through with metallic or opalescent fibers have inspired a whole new family of tinted greys. A nuance of grey in any palette provides a serene environment.

Current Events: Major global events have had a tremendous impact on the colour palette. The need to feel safe in any environment has shifted a large portion of the palette to blues in all shades.

A recent colour marketing group study indicated that every industry has reported a growing sense of blue. Sea blues and glass blues represent a need for freedom and independence. Trends are only trends in so far as they work in a given environment. Other considerations including climate, culture and traditions also have a strong influence on the colour scheme selected.

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