



MARKETING ON A SHOESTRING BUDGET

This is the sixth in a series of articles intended to help chapter marketing teams maximize their “bang for the buck”, particularly when faced with a limited budget. Last time we introduced the Psychology of Color. This time I want to turn attention to developing effective marketing materials by broadening our knowledge on the use of color.



CHAPTER 6: Introduction to Color Theory

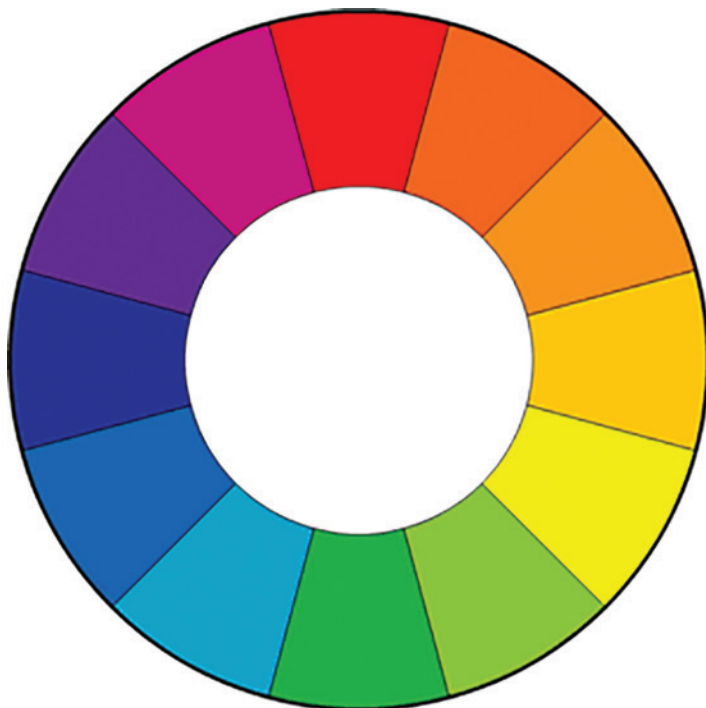
With colors you can set a mood, attract attention, or make a statement. You can use color to energize, or to cool down. By selecting the right color scheme, you can create an ambiance of elegance, warmth or tranquility, or you can convey an image of playful youthfulness. Color can be your most powerful design element if you learn to use it effectively.

Colors affect us in numerous ways, both mentally and physically. A strong red color has been shown to raise the blood pressure, while a blue color has a calming effect. Being able to use colors consciously and harmoniously can help you create spectacular results.

The Color Wheel

The color wheel or color circle is the basic tool for combining colors. The first circular color diagram was designed by Sir Isaac Newton in 1666.

The color wheel is designed so that virtually any colors you pick from it will look good together. Over



the years, many variations of the basic design have been made, but the most common version is a wheel of 12 colors based on the RYB (or artistic) color model.

Traditionally, there are a number of color combinations that are considered especially pleasing. These are called color harmonies or color chords and they consist of two or more colors with a fixed relation in the color wheel.

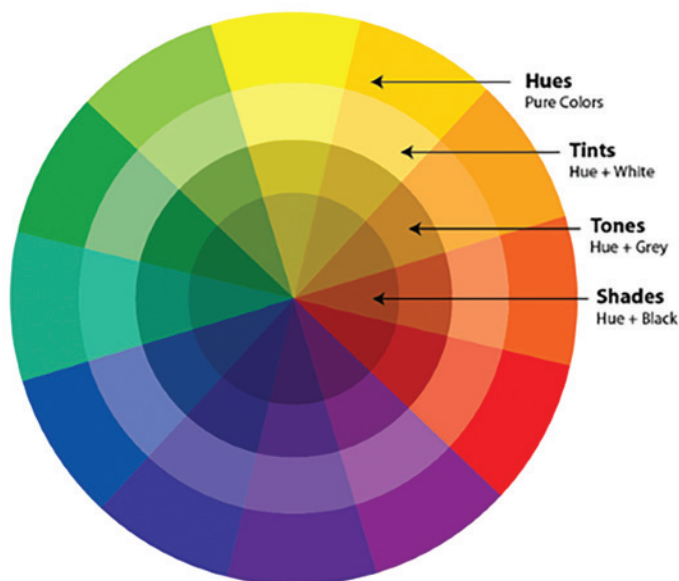
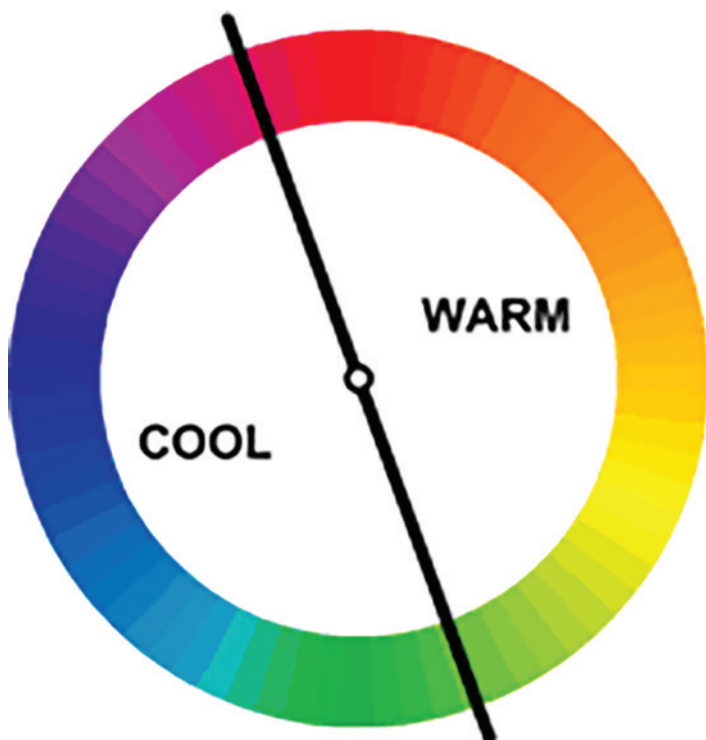
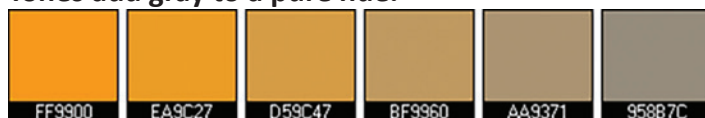


Primary, Secondary and Tertiary Colors

In the RYB (or subtractive) color model, the primary

colors are red, yellow and blue. The three secondary colors (green, orange and purple) are created by mixing two primary colors. Another six tertiary colors are created by mixing primary and secondary colors.

Tones add gray to a pure hue.



Color Harmonies

Basic color chords based on the color wheel

Warm and cool colors

The color circle can be divided into warm and cool colors. Warm colors are vivid and energetic, and tend to advance in space. Cool colors give an impression of calm, and create a soothing impression. White, black and gray are considered to be neutral.

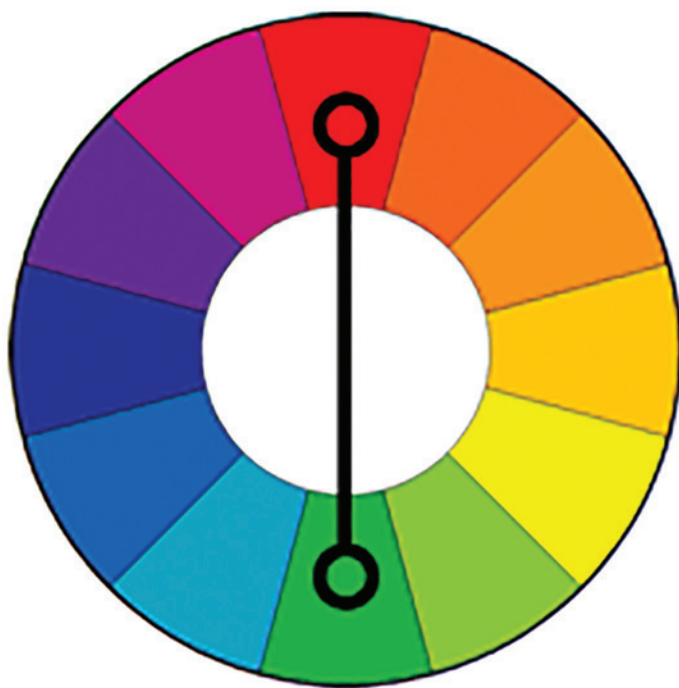
Tints, Shades, and Tones

If a color is made lighter by adding white, the result is called a tint. If black is added, the darker version is called a shade. And if gray is added, the result is a different tone.

Tints add white to a pure hue.



Shades add black to a pure hue.



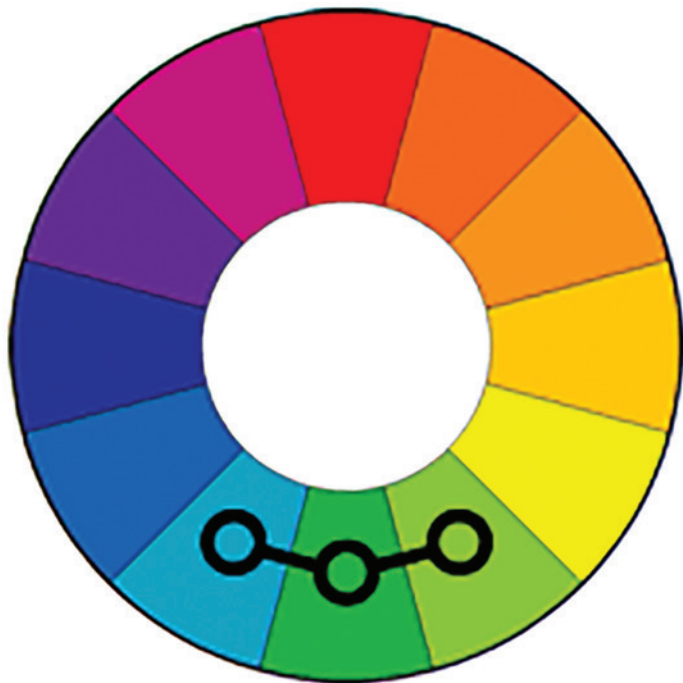
Complementary color scheme

Complimentary colors are any two colors that are opposite each other on the color wheel. For example, blue and orange, or red and green. The high contrast of

complementary colors creates a vibrant look especially when used at full saturation. This color scheme must be managed well so it is not jarring.

Complementary color schemes are tricky to use in large doses, but work well when you want something to stand out. Alternately, you can use tints and shades here; a lighter tint of blue contrasted against a darker orange, for example.

Complementary colors are really bad for text.



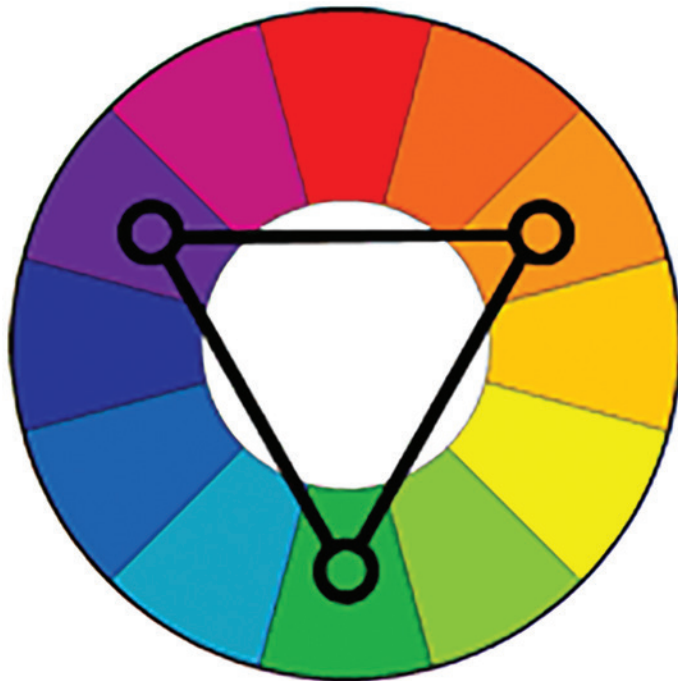
Analogous color scheme

Analogous color schemes use three colors that are next to each other on the color wheel. They usually match well and create serene and comfortable designs. For example, orange, yellow-orange, and yellow.

Analogous color schemes are often found in nature and are harmonious and pleasing to the eye.

Make sure you have enough contrast when choosing an analogous color scheme. Choose one color to dominate, a second to support. The third color is used (along with black, white or gray) as an accent.

It's best to avoid hues, as they can be jarring; instead, focus on using tints of analogous colors. Also avoid combining warm and cool colors in this theme.



Triadic color scheme

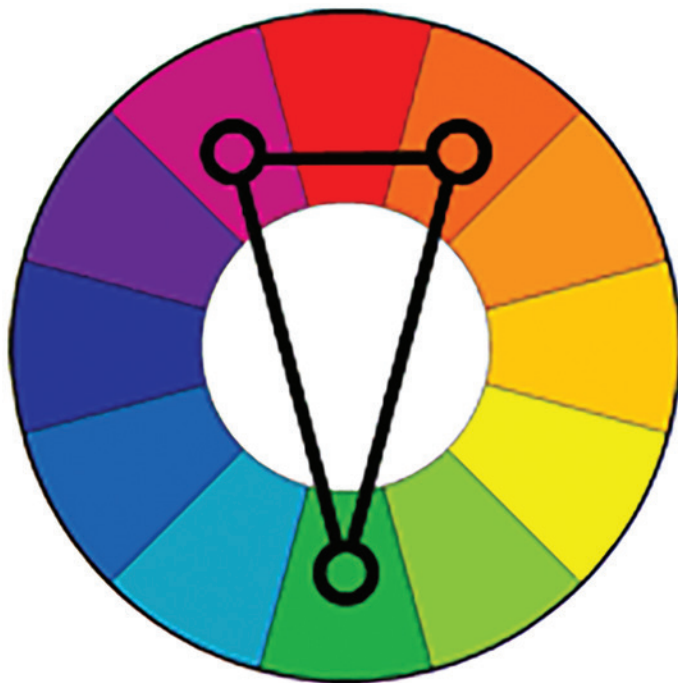
A triadic color scheme uses three colors that are evenly spaced around the color wheel. For example, red, yellow, and blue.

Triadic color schemes tend to be quite vibrant, even if you use pale or unsaturated versions of your hues.

To use a triadic harmony successfully, the colors should be carefully balanced - let one color dominate and use the two others for accent.

Split-Complementary color scheme

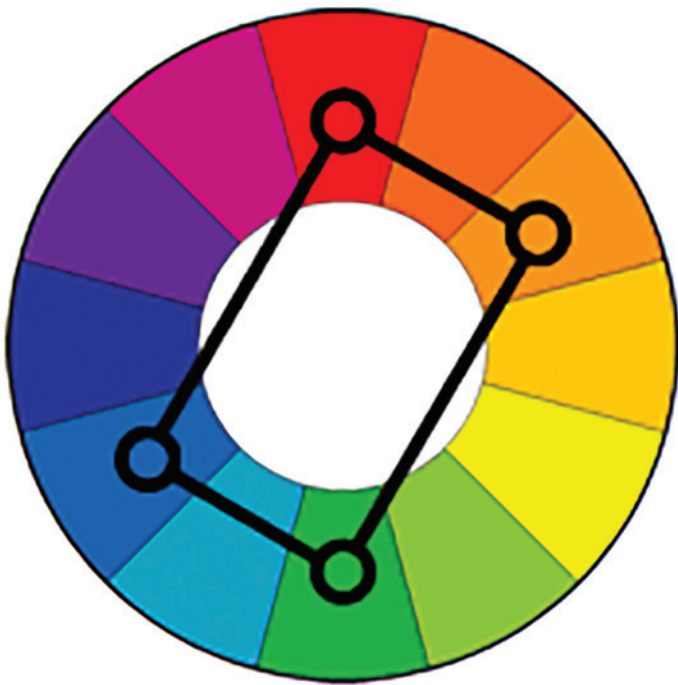
The split-complementary color scheme uses three



colors and is a variation of the complementary color scheme. In addition to the base color, it uses the two colors adjacent to its complement. For example, blue, yellow-orange, and red-orange.

This color scheme has the same strong visual contrast as the complementary color scheme, but has less tension.

The split-complimentary color scheme is often a good choice for beginners, because it is difficult to mess up. That's because you get contrasting colors, but they aren't as diametrically opposite as complimentary colors.



Tetradic (rectangle) color scheme

The tetradic or rectangle color scheme uses four colors arranged into two complementary pairs. For example, blue and orange is paired with yellow and violet.

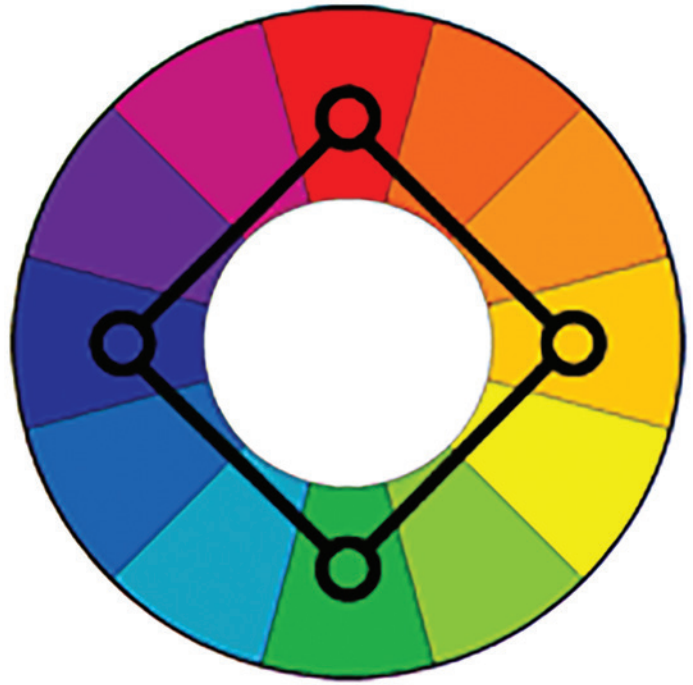
This rich color scheme offers plenty of possibilities for variation, but is also the hardest to balance.

Tetradic color schemes works best if you let one color be dominant. Avoid using pure colors in equal amounts.

You should also pay attention to the balance between warm and cool colors in your design.

Square color scheme

The square color scheme is similar to the rectangle, but with all four colors spaced evenly around the color circle. For example, red, blue, green, and yellow.



Square color schemes work best if you let one color be dominant. Again, avoid using pure colors in equal amounts.

You should also pay attention to the balance between warm and cool colors in your design.

Properly Using Color Theory

Use contrasts to reduce eyestrain and allow readers to focus their attention on specific items. Vibrancy can dictate the emotional response users have to your design.

For example, choosing brighter colors can lead users to feel more energetic, which can evoke better responses and reactions in advertising.

But for a website that is information-intensive, you may find that a darker color theme will make it easier for readers to process all your data.

