

HOW COLORS DEFINE OUR WORKPLACE



“Goals of color design in an architectural space are not relegated to decoration alone”

Workplace design is, by nature, multi-faceted. The role and function it provides involves elements that go beyond just physical spaces. It also includes elements that have a direct effect on our moods, emotions and behaviours.

Among the most prominent and noticeable of these is : **COLOR**

It is impossible to think of the best workplaces in the world without thinking of colors within them. They reflect the vibe of the workplace—and affect the feelings of the employees, in terms of creating a sense of place that provides a structural solidity. Our brain, after all, reacts in different ways to the color that we see around us. It is far more than just a simple visual aspect.

It is important to note first the various factors on which color relies . Those are:



CONTEXT



QUALITY



QUANTITY



DENSITY



INTENSITY



COMBINATION



LIGHT

Workplaces often have people of different psychology, genders and age groups. Hence colors have to be thought out in terms of how they will be arranged and presented in the workplace to make them more palatable for everyone.

How Do Colors Convey Meaning?

Now we come to a bigger question: We have noted the purpose that colors represent. But how do they convey meaning? Colors can convey meaning in two primary ways:

Natural Association

Colors naturally bring about associations with them that are based on mood, emotions, feelings—and these are important considerations in designing spaces.

Psychological Symbolism

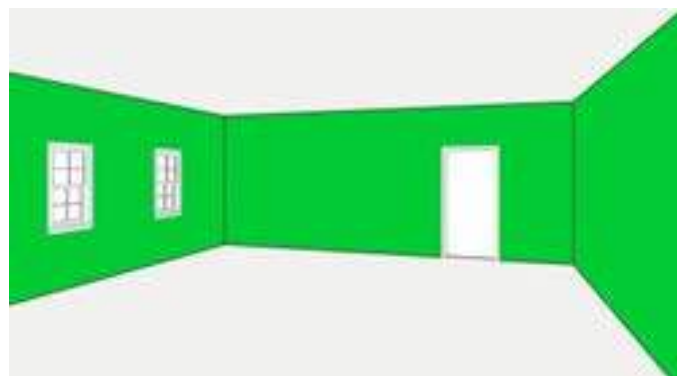
Colors also have various psychological connotations to them that play their part in affecting how employees feel and behave. They are also an important consideration in design.

GREEN

represents

- **Harmony**
- **Growth**
- **Renewal**
- **Energy**

The color has extremely strong associations with nature. And nature has a healing touch. When we think of nature, we namely think of elements like: grass, trees, forests—and a plethora of flora and wildlife. The tranquil nature of the color will add a lot to workplaces—and help employees keep a balance between the mind, body and emotions. This harmonious synchronicity is what will help build and maintain a vibe that is sorely needed to counteract the times in which employees are most definitely feeling the pinch of uncertainty and anxiety.



Walls

COOL, SECURE, CALM, RELIABLE, PASSIVE, IRRITATING IF GLARING (ELECTRIC GREEN)



Floor

NATURAL (IF NOT TOO SATURATED), SOFT, RELAXING, COLD (IF TOWARDS)



Ceiling

PROTECTIVE, REFLECTION ON THE SKIN CAN BE UNATTRACTIVE.

Green Indoor Plants



Biophilic Walls



Green Furniture

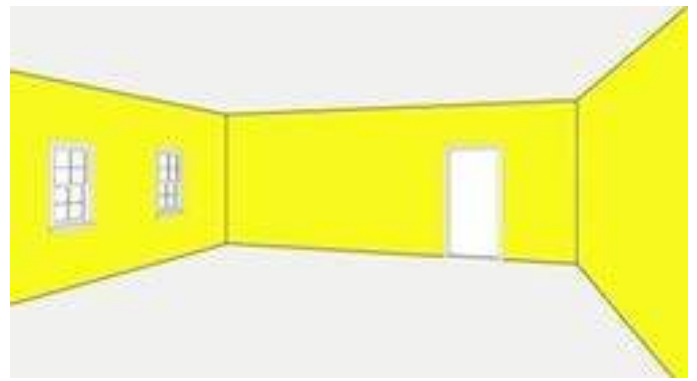


YELLOW

represents

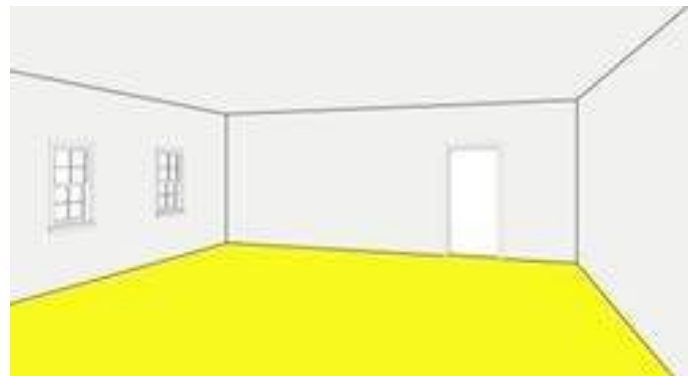
- **Warmth**
- **Excitement**
- **Simulation**
- **Luminosity**

The color radiates happiness and joy. It is a positive color that simulates mental activity. It displays warmth, excitement and positivity. It is a highly suitable color for environments that involve creative activity—something that the best organizations always require. It can also add to the accommodating vibe that workplaces are trying to create within themselves. Employees need to feel that they are in a good place, and this color will go a long way into inculcating this feeling.



Walls

WARM (TOWARDS ORANGE), EXCITING TO IRRITATING (HIGHLY SATURATED)



Floor

ELEVATING, DIVERTING



Ceiling

LIGHT (TOWARDS LEMON), LUMINOUS, STIMULATING

Cafeterias



Cabins



Collaboration Spaces

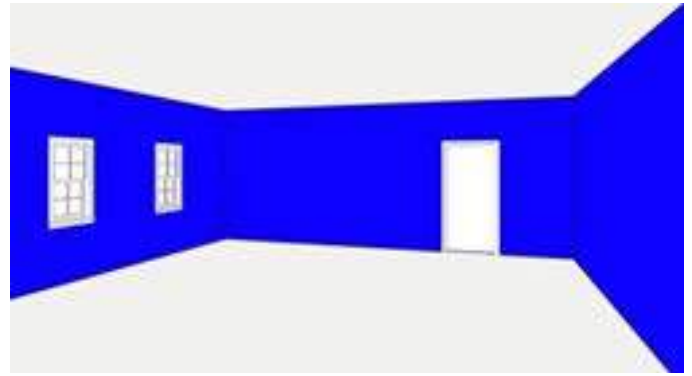


BLUE

represents

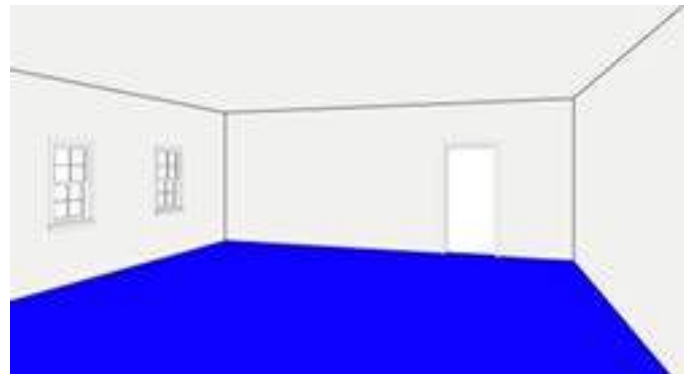
- **Coolness**
- **Effortlessness**
- **Encouraging**
- **Calmness**

The color helps inculcate moods of calmness and serenity. It lowers the blood pressure and slows down the heart rate. It creates a relaxing atmosphere that directly creates a better state of mind—eventually having a direct effect on the employees’ mental state, eventually helping the process of ideas flowing freely and continuously. It goes deeper than that, though. Stronger shades of blue, in fact, support cognitive processes directly—while lighter shades improve concentration. Blue has always been a dominant color in prominent areas of the office, and that will remain so.



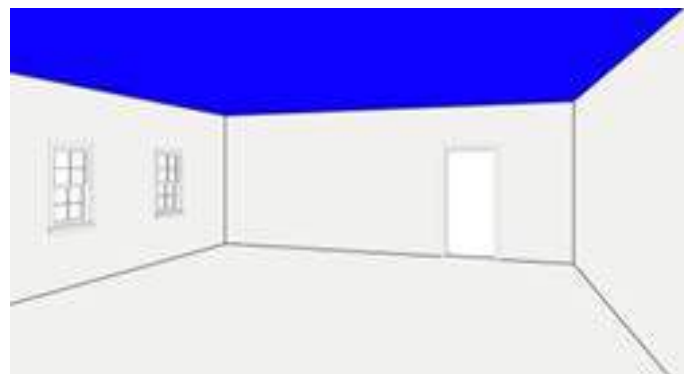
Walls

COOL AND DISTANT (IF LIGHT),
ENCOURAGING AND SPACE DEEPENING
(IF DARK)



Floor

INSPIRING FEELING OF EFFORTLESS
MOVEMENT (IF LIGHT), SUBSTANTIAL
(IF DARK)



Ceiling

COOL, RECEDING (IF LIGHT), HEAVY AND
OPPRESSIVE (IF DARK)

Meeting Rooms



Recreation Areas



Work Areas

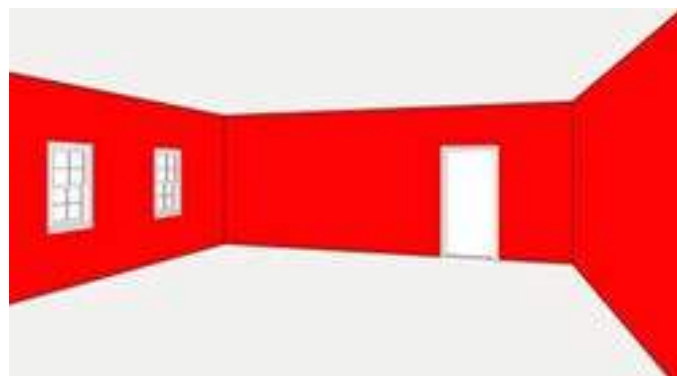


RED

represents

- **Excitement**
- **Passion**
- **Energy**
- **Action**

This color represents a sense of dynamism and intensity; alongside a sense of passion and energy. Something that a workplace always needs. Employees can benefit a lot from its intense qualities. The overall aura can help keep them inspired, motivated and driven at all times. Being one of the most powerful colors, it is best used for furnishings—and as a feature color to highlight certain spaces that often require to stand out. It is worth noting that red should be used in moderation—as overexposure can lead to people experiencing headaches, increased respiration and higher blood pressure.



Walls

WARM, LUMINOUS



Floor

ACTIVATING, MOTION-ORIENTED



Ceiling

STIMULATING, ATTENTION-SEEKING

Cabins



Lounge Areas



Work-stations



“Color is an incredibly effective triggering tool. Color is a factor of our existence.”

Le Corbusier

How Designers Think ‘Color’

Interior designers have always grasped the importance of color, and how it inculcates a sense of mood and place in an environment. Designers will need to take into serious consideration what sort of colors will contribute to a feeling of psychological safety and health within the environment. Once that is done, they will need to apply them within the design to create happiness and productivity. With that in mind, it will come down to designers themselves. They will have to make a choice; or rather, three choices.

- *What is the function/ purpose/ use of the space?*

Colors have to be places in spaces that they are most suited for. They should have a purpose to their presence. As workplace design trends shift towards a recalibration of the office floor, there is no question that colors will also need to be rethought of. Each place in the workplace is different and will require color needs. There needs to be thought and consideration put into which color to place where.

- *Who is the end user of the space?*

Before deriving color schemes for an interior space—it is important to inquire the usage of space, alongside their needs and attitudes. Who are the people who will inhabit the space? How many people occupy a space? What is their age group? What is their psychological mindset? Do they have special needs? If so, will that require special design considerations? Both demographics and psychographics play a vital role in color considerations.

- *Where is the location of the space?*

Location also matters. Color schemes are definitely going to be varied for spaces that are different in temperature and weather. They will differentiate themselves across a broad spectrum—from hot, cold, bright to dull weather—the color corresponding to them will be varied too. The exact location and climate of the area needs to be surmised exactly before deciding on what colors will work and how.



Examining Color as a Design Principle

The ‘Principles of Design’ apply to colors too. To quote 99designs: design, overall, is “different” from art—all because it has a purpose. It is not only about creativity. It has to generate tangible and measurable results. And since color is such a vital part of workplace design—it is all but vital that there needs to be a specific reason that it needs to exist where it usually does.

The principles of design are defined as:



BALANCE



CONTRAST



EMPHASIS



SCALE & PROPORTION



RHYTHM



UNITY



HARMONY

Most, or all of these considerations will come into mind when we use colors in our design. The value of each aspect will weigh heavily on the overall thought process. The colors not only need to be suited perfectly; they need to be present in their perfect form—in order to create the desired effect to the people in the space.

Example: ‘Shades’ of color always give different perception than the original color.

‘Red’ might not be ordinarily associated with creativity, but other shades and tints of ‘Red’ can be.

Color choices in the built environment should not be made only through personal preference—but through the knowledge and benefits that certain colors can bring to the environment. It is the designer’s job to educate his/her self on what the best possible color is for each situation.



How Colors Can Contribute to Branding

While we discussed various spectrums of colors (Red, Green, Yellow, Blue)—it is not preordained that those will be the only ones designers will get to work with. Branding colors are often an important part of design—and more often than not, they come into play when designing a space. Designers need to carefully observe the available branding colors—and make the most of their positive qualities.

This is just about the perfect opportunity for designers to take the initiative and explore the positive qualities of various other colors that is there in their clients' catalog. They can also take the initiative to educate their clients that branding color is a powerful element—especially in these difficult times. Speaking of branding, as has always been the case, color actually improves brand recognition by 80%. This eternal fact will need to be taken into consideration even in these difficult times. Colors can play the dual-sided role of both enhancing the present environment and ensuring that the brand remains a recognizable presence and doesn't lose face value in these difficult times. The right colors will, hence, play an empowering role in strengthening the brand and the organization as a whole. Team leaders and managers need to take initiative and communicate this particular fact to their respective teams.

Why Colors Should be 'Health Positive'

It should be a topmost priority for architects and interior designers to see colors in terms of how they add to the mental and physical health of employees. The right colors should provide beneficial aspects to both employees and employers—in terms of helping fortify the mental health, resilience and fortitude of the employees.

Design considerations regarding color often involve various aspects (spacing, location, temperature). They should also, however, be based on how their employees will be the best they can. After all, the goal is not only to make the best-possible workplace, but one that brings the best out of the employees. Health and wellness have been a major concern in terms of workplace design for a long time. It is always time for designers to put on their thinking caps—and start thinking about what lies ahead.



CASE STUDY

Color of the Year 2021

Illuminating
13-0647

Color of
the Year
2021

PANTONE®

&

**Ultimate
Gray**
17-5104

A marriage of color conveying a message of strength and hopefulness that is both enduring and uplifting.

"Practical and rock solid but at the same time warming and optimistic, this is a color combination that gives us resilience and hope. We need to feel encouraged and uplifted; this is essential to the human spirit."

- Leatrice Eiseman, Executive Director at the Pantone Color Institute

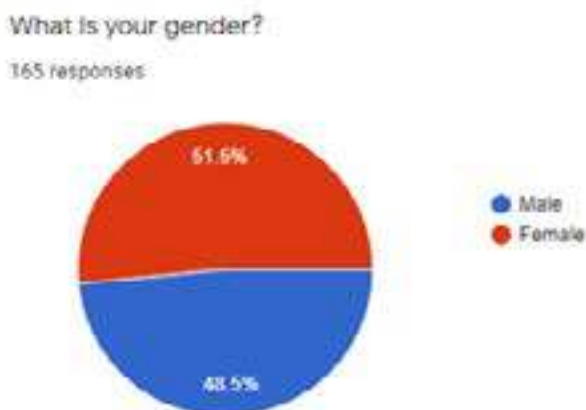
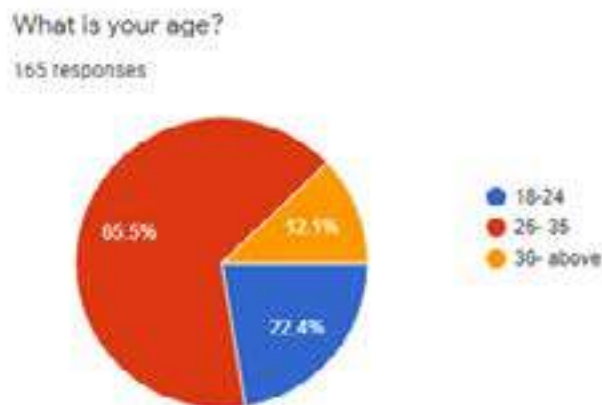
- The Ultimate Gray + Illuminating combination injects creative confidence into interiors.
- It is easy to apply on any material, in form of textures and finishes
- The combination is aspirational and gives us hope.

Organizations across the world, who use this combination, will be distinctly advantaged by considering it into their design. Organizations that do not use it will also be better off when considering it.

ZYETA'S COLOR SURVEY

The following survey was conducted by Supriya Bharati—our in-house architect and the lead for this research. The objective was to gauge the collective mindset of people regarding color. The response was collected from the architects, designers and general people.

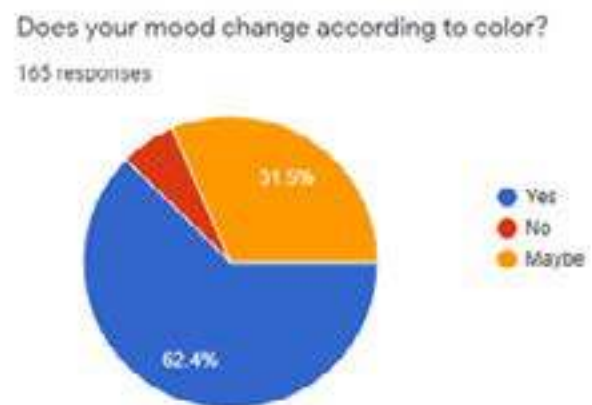
Below are the demographics:



The highest respondents of this questionnaire fell in the age group of (25-35), as shown in the pie chart, which is 65.5%, then followed by the age group of (18-24) with 22.4%. The least though, fell in the age group of 36 and above with just 12% respondents. Female respondents were 51.5%. Male were 48.5%.

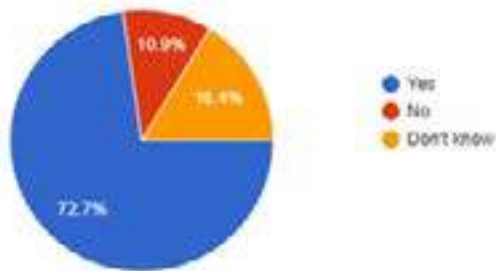
Survey Results

Following are the results obtained in the survey.



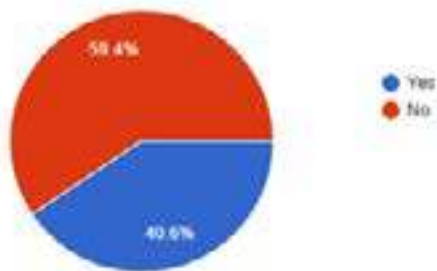
Do bright colors make you more cheerful?

165 responses



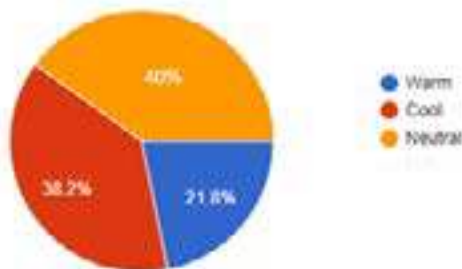
Do darker colors make you feel gloomier?

165 responses



What type of lighting do you most prefer in your workplace?

165 responses



- The survey indicated: Happiness is the Key to Success. 72.7% respondents have confirmed that they feel cheerful in bright and pop-up colored areas. This includes people in the age group 18-36 and above. Only 10.9% respondents did not prefer to be in bright space.
- 59.4% respondents felt gloomier in dark spaces. 40.6% liked the dark shades around them
- Most preferred colors for work place were: White, Blue, Green and Grey. Few respondents preferred shades of these colors.
- Preferred colors which relaxed minds were: White, Blue, Green, Orange, Grey. Distracting colors were: Red, Yellow, Brown, Black and fluorescent colors.

Conclusion

The results of this research support most of the theories, psychological properties and effects of colors on the mood of individual.



Overall Response

- 62.4% respondents said their mood changes after seeing color, 6.1% have no effect on their mood. 31.5% respondents are still confused about their mood variation after being in enclosed color space.

When we asked people why color is important in their life -- 80% people said positive things about color. It showed how color keeps our brain activated and happy.

This is why color matters to us.

DESIGN CREDITS

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