



The Lightning Flash

The quarterly newsletter from Lightning Labels, the leader in digital label printing

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4 Color Theory Tips for Designing Effective Labels

From the Desk of Steve Smith

Time Moves On - And So Do I ...

It is with very mixed feelings that I must use this column to announce my retirement from Lightning Labels. On one hand, I am able to look forward to a more relaxed lifestyle and extra time with my family (even if my wife is less optimistic about that than I am). Conversely, I will assuredly miss the never-ending enjoyment and pride that being part of this company has endowed upon me.



In a relatively short seven years, Lightning Labels has grown from a nervous startup to the most widely recognized digital label printer in the country. This would never have been possible without the best team in the business, nor without the support of you - our loyal customers. The ride has not been without occasional bumps along the way, but we've seen off many competitors and survived the recession with aplomb. The team is in place and the company is perfectly situated to continue serving you in the future.

My sincere thanks to you all, and best wishes for your own success.

Steve

Steve Smith
President

1. Make Color Psychology Work To Your Advantage

Have you ever noticed that clear blue skies put you in a good mood?

Or that meetings held in plain white rooms make you sleepy?

If so, you have experienced the powerful influence color has on human emotions.

The study of this phenomenon is called color psychology, and it is becoming increasingly recognized as an important factor in consumer purchasing behavior.

Color psychology is one of several concepts you should consider when incorporating color into your product label designs.

Because your product label is one of your most important marketing vehicles, the colors you choose for it have the potential to make or break your sales.

Here is a list of colors and the emotional and physiological responses commonly associated with them.

As you read this list, I encourage you to consider the emotions you hope to evoke in your product's target markets.

What colors are associated with these emotions? Are you currently incorporating these colors into your packaging and marketing materials?

If the answer to the last question is no, you might want to consider giving your packaging and marketing materials a color make-

over - starting with your product labels.

- WHITE: Relaxation, security and complacency. Feelings of lightness.
- PINK: Tranquility, relaxation and - in some cases - fatigue.
- GREEN: Peacefulness, happiness, and relaxation. Also has the potential to reduce blood pressure.
- LIGHT BLUE: Comfort, spirituality and relaxation.
- BLUE: Creativity and happiness. Safety.
- DARK BLUE & GREY-BLUE: Sadness OR security. Trust. Very popular in business due to associations with trust.
- RED: Everything from energy, warmth, and sensuality; to danger, mistakes and failure. This color has the potential to literally increase one's heart rate.
- LIGHT YELLOW: Cheerfulness, optimism, spontaneity and hunger.
- BRIGHT YELLOW: Irritability. Danger.
- YELLOW-GREEN: Nausea.
- PURPLE: Introspection, sensitivity, prestige and security.
- ORANGE: Clarity, vitality, and hunger.
- BROWN: Relaxation, passivity, security, vitality and - in some cases - depression.
- BLACK: Virility, rationality and stability; as well as hopelessness and sorrow.

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4 Color Theory Tips For Designing Effective Labels

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2. Pair Text & Background Colors Together in Legible Combinations

Choosing legible combinations for your text and background colors can be daunting if done haphazardly. If you follow a few basic principles of color theory, however, it is a very manageable process.

The key to successfully pairing text and background colors is contrast – contrast between lightness and darkness, also known as value – and contrast between hues. The greater the contrast, the greater the legibility of your text. Increased contrast also minimizes eye strain and results in a more aesthetically pleasing design.

The most successful designs pair text and background colors that have a large amount of contrast in both hue and value. Complementary hues provide the greatest amount of contrast, and are located directly across from each other on a color wheel. A super-easy method for selecting text and background colors is to pair a dark color from the bottom half of a color wheel with a light one from the top.

What if you are considering pairing black and white together, or black or white with a color? How do you decide which combinations are the most successful, and which ones should be avoided? One solution is to choose a pairing from the top of this list:

- Black on Yellow (most legible)
- Black on White
- Yellow on Black
- White on Black
- Blue on White
- White on Blue
- Green on White

- White on Green
- Red on White
- White on Red (least legible)

3. Take Advantage of Free Online Tools That Simplify the Process of Choosing a Color Scheme

Choosing colors for your custom labels doesn't have to be a tedious process. There are plenty of online tools out there today that can help you choose just the right look. When creating your labels, there is often a base color that you want to include – It might be the color of your logo, or a color that fits with the product you are selling. The question is what colors you should put with this base color. Here is a brief roundup of a few online tools that can help you put together color schemes for your labels:

Kuler: Developed by Adobe, Kuler allows you to create your own color schemes as well as check out color schemes created by other users. Like many of these tools, Kuler will show you the most popular schemes created by users.

<http://kuler.adobe.com>

COLOURlovers: This site describes itself as a resource for monitoring and influencing color trends. COLOURlovers has a very useful feature that lets you find color palettes based on keywords. Like Kuler, it features the most popular colors as voted on by the site's "lovers," and also spotlights emerging color trends.

<http://www.colourlovers.com/>

ColorBlender: This site is a little different in that it lets you tweak your color palette on the fly by dragging a button across one of the red, green or blue channels. ColorBlender does not make you register to use any of its features and is a simple, intuitive website that will blend matching colors for you. If you want a site that is very quick to master, check out ColorBlender.

<http://www.colorblender.com>

4. Send Your Digital Label Printer CMYK Artwork Files

CMYK, also known as four color process, is the standard image color mode in the printing industry for reproducing full color images. The acronym represents the colors used in four color process printing: cyan, magenta, yellow and black.

But wait, you might ask, why isn't the acronym CMYB? The answer is two-fold.

The first reason is that the "K" in CMYK represents the color black, but actually stands for the black "key plate" all printers used before the advent of digital printing (which doesn't use printing plates). The black printing plate was called the key plate because it contained all the artistic detail or "key" information for a print. It contained much more detail than the cyan, magenta, and yellow plates.

The second reason has to do with avoiding confusion with another very popular color model, RGB. This acronym stands for red, green, and blue and is how computer monitors and televisions represent color. Even though no one refers to the black plate as the key plate anymore, the four color process model has retained the acronym CMYK in order to avoid confusion with the RGB color model.

Most digital printing presses (including the ones here at Lightning Labels) only handle CMYK. If you send us your label artwork files in RGB or another image color mode, we will have to convert it to CMYK in order to print it. This could cause extreme shifts in how the colors in your label designs appear when printed.

If you have any concerns about how the colors in your finished labels will appear, you might want to take advantage of our free "press proof" offer. A press proof will allow you to see exactly how the colors in your finished labels will appear before your label order goes into production.

~ Christy Correll

Customer Focus

Heidi Leist
Lemongrass Spa
Pine, CO



About seven years ago, Heidi Leist and a friend threw a spa party just for fun. The party was such a hit with everyone that the experience inspired Heidi to create her own products to sell at spa parties. She thought it would be great if people could make a living doing something they truly enjoyed from their own homes.

It wasn't long after that party that Heidi launched Lemongrass Spa from her home. Working out of the kitchen and basement, she experimented with different formulations of bath and body products to find ones that were not only rejuvenating, but pleasing to the senses as well.

Because Heidi was pregnant with her second child at that time, she was extremely careful to avoid putting anything potentially toxic on her skin and read practically the entire product label for any beauty product she picked up in a store, looking for only the healthiest ingredients.

In light of this, it only made sense that Lemongrass Spa's initial product line was

created from only the most natural, nurturing ingredients Heidi could find.

The decision to go all-natural turned out not only to be good for Heidi and her family, but business as well. Today, Lemongrass Spa (located in Pine, Colorado) is a thriving company with more than 500 sales consultants nationwide. Remaining true to the philosophy the company was founded on, Lemongrass Spa products are made of ingredients that are 97 to 100 percent all-natural, and are completely free of phthalates, an ingredient found in some beauty products that has been linked to cancer. With the exception of a few essential oils and base butters, all of the ingredients used in Lemongrass Spa products come from the US.

Although Lemongrass Spa no longer operates out of the Leist home, it is still a family business. Heidi's husband, Bryan, and her mom, Karen, have worked alongside her for over five years. Heidi is very involved in the day-to-day operations of Lemongrass spa, including consultant training, product development and marketing. As the company's President, Bryan oversees accounting, commissions, software and logistics. Karen has enjoyed developing products and overseeing the quality control of the skin care line.

Heidi also likes to think that the Lemongrass Spa consultants are part of the company's family, too. Instead of encouraging them to compete against each other, Lemongrass Spa

encourages its independent sales consultants to work together.

"One of the biggest differences between us and other companies is that we offer an incredible amount of training, mentoring, and support," Heidi said.

During the years it operated out of Heidi's home, Lemongrass Spa printed all of its labels on an inkjet printer and cut them out by hand.

"It's kind of funny to think about now," Heidi said. "It was definitely a handmade operation at that point."

When the time came to have their labels professionally printed, a friend recommended Lightning Labels. Lemongrass Spa did at one point try another label printing company, but the service was not as professional as Heidi was accustomed to at Lightning Labels.

Lemongrass Spa continues to trust Lightning Labels with printing their product's most important marketing vehicle (their labels) because the customer focus is "absolutely amazing," the labels are beautiful, durable, and waterproof; and they offer eco-friendly label printing materials that Heidi and her customers can feel good about having on the bath and body products they use every day.

~ Christy Correll



Lightning Labels News

James Lowry Replaces Steve Smith As Lightning Labels Head

Lightning Labels President Steve Smith recently decided to retire, thereby relinquishing the reins of leadership at Lightning La-

bels, LLC. (For more details, see *From the Desk of Steve Smith* on Page 1.)

In light of Steve's retirement, James Lowry is being promoted from Production Manager to General Manager, the new top leadership

position here at Lightning Labels.

James has been the Production Manager at Lightning Labels for the last six months, and will be responsible for the day to day operations of our plant and front office.



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Learning About Labels

How Small Can I Make the Type on My Labels?

This is 4 point Verdana

This is 6 point Verdana

This is 8 point Verdana

This is 10 point Verdana

This is 12 point Verdana

The answer to this question is, of course, it depends. From a label printing perspective, we can print very small type. Our high resolution digital label printers can easily print crisp type down to a font size of just 2 points. However, that doesn't mean you should design your labels with type that small. At that size, no one would be able to read them.

As you can see in the examples above, anything smaller than 6 point type is very difficult to read. Some designers say you should never use less than 10 point type if you want people to read your text. There are some industries, such as alcohol, where you have to

adhere to government guidelines. Most bottles of beer are required to have the surgeon general's warning printed with letters at least 2 mm in height – roughly a 6 point font.

The bottom line is this: For most products, it is up to you to decide how small to make your type. That said, there are a couple of guidelines that will help you create type that is easier to read if you follow them.

For small type, consider placing black type on a white background – or at least make your text dark and your background light. White or light text coming out of a dark background is more difficult to read; and in some cases, it is also more challenging to print – even digitally.

So, two good rules of thumb to follow are: 1) always make your text dark on a light background; and 2) make it as large as possible. Your customers will appreciate it.

~ Peter Renton

A Touch of Humor

A family had twin boys whose only resemblance to each other was their looks. Opposite in every way, one was an eternal optimist; and the other a doom-and-gloom pessimist.

Just to see what would happen, one Christmas their father loaded the pessimist's room with every imaginable toy and game and the optimist's room with horse manure.

That night, the father passed by the pessimist's room and found him sitting amid his new gifts crying bitterly.

"Why are you crying?" the father asked.

"Because my friends will be jealous, I'll have to read all these instructions before I can do anything with this stuff, I'll constantly need batteries, and my toys will eventually get broken!" answered the pessimist twin.

Passing the optimist twin's room, the father found him dancing for joy amidst the piles of manure.

"What are you so happy about?" he asked the optimist twin, whom replied, "There's got to be a pony in here somewhere!"

"Cheers to a new year and another chance for us to get it right."

~ Oprah Winfrey