

Retail paint guide: How to help your customers choose the right colors





Color, a topic you may be all too familiar with the trials and tribulations of, is a challenge that spans many industries, from paint to apparel to plastics and beyond. But color is tough to get right, whether you are a customer shopping at a paint store or someone who matches color every day. In this guide, we will cover:

- What makes color so challenging?
- What questions should you ask your customers when discussing colors?
- What tools do you need in your paint store to help customers get color right?



Can you trust your eyes when it comes to color?

With so many variables at play, color can seem like a moving target to control. Each person’s eyes see color differently. Add to that all the factors that alter how we see color: altitude, mood, age, and of course light are only a few of them:

-  **Light:** Probably the most prevalent, and most well-known factor in color discrepancy, is that different lighting changes how we see color. This is because our perception of color is altered by the light reflected off of it.
-  **Altitude:** Studies have shown that reduced oxygen levels at high altitudes create changes in our vision.
-  **Age:** As you age, the muscles in your eyes weaken, causing your eyes to see color less accurately.
-  **Mood:** Our mood affects us psychologically, which, depending on the severity, can also affect our perception, including that of colors.

It’s no wonder we have trouble keeping color accurate and consistent. But that doesn't mean it's any less important to get color right at your retail paint store.



TALK TO YOUR PAINT STORE CUSTOMERS ABOUT COLOR

To ensure your customers have the best experience possible, you want to get the color right the first time, every time. You also want them to leave excited about their experience and the knowledgeable staff they worked with. A smooth experience buying paint means your store will be top-of-mind the next time they have a paint project.

Everyone who works with paint in your store can play a role in this. Here are some questions to ask your customers. You will want to make sure everyone is equipped to answer these and other common questions about color and guide them in the right direction:



1. What is the lighting like in the room where they plan to paint?

This may not be a factor they considered, but it will impact the look of their walls. You want to make sure that impact is a positive one!

2. What other colors are in the customer's room?

From furniture to accent walls, surrounding colors can impact the look of a customer's paint choice. Through expertise and tools, store staff can help them create a cohesive vision.



3. What gloss level do they have in mind?

This can also impact how a color looks on the wall. Educating customer on the relationship between gloss and color appearance can go a long way in making sure they are happy with their choice.

BEHIND THE SCENES: SETTING UP A GREAT RETAIL PAINT ENVIRONMENT

When it comes to running a successful paint store or paint department, there are a lot of factors you can control.

One of these is store lighting. It's best to let as much natural light as possible into your store. Since artificial or low lighting can alter our perception of color, using natural lighting will ensure colors are seen in their true form. In spaces that must use artificial lighting, make choices that are as close to natural light as possible.



Something else you can control? Technology. Let's take a look at the different tools available for your retail store next.

COLOR LOOK-UP AND COLOR MATCHING — WHAT'S THE DIFFERENCE?

To keep customers happy, you want to provide the color they need the first time, and do so fast. There are a number of tools available to make sure your customers get exactly what they are looking for. These tools can loosely be divided into color look-up and color matching devices.

COLOR MATCHING

Color matching allows paint stores to use specialized instruments and software to formulate the exact color of paint to match a paint sample or object (paint chip, floorboard, etc.). These instruments can also connect to your paint dispenser for a seamless paint sales from start to finish. With these tools are you finger tips you can match any color a customer brings in - even ones that aren't on your chip rack.

DYLON
A03
Lilac

L 45.333
a 19.568
b -14.009
LRV 15

Datacolor instruments and software commonly found in retail paint stores include:

👉 Datacolor 200

- Affordable benchtop tool
- Precise color measurement: capturing the true spectral fingerprint of any color
- Built-in calibration data & error indicator

👉 Datacolor 20D

- Lightweight, portable device
- Use it in-store or take it to a job site
- High accuracy measurement matches that of benchtop spectrophotometers
- Measures a variety of shapes, sizes, and textures
- Simple plug-in setup and intuitive user interface

👉 Datacolor 45G

- Lightweight, portable device
- Built-in 60° Glossmeter for gloss control
- Bluetooth® support allows easy measurement on the shop floor

👉 Datacolor Paint Software

- Easy-to-use software
- Customize to your preferred workflow, navigation, and store logo
- Flexible formulas in the unit of measurement of your choice
- Easily filter and search customer order history



COLOR LOOK-UP


1. THE TRADITIONAL WAY

Browsing through physical paint color swatches in-store is still a popular option for customers who are looking for inspiration in their color choice(s). It allows customers to scan a variety of colors and brands all at once. This method presents so many options, though, that it can also be overwhelming. The ability to combine paint samples with a color look-up tool can help customers narrow these options and make a decision faster.



2. COLOR LOOK-UP TOOLS

We have already established that our eyesight can't always be trusted when it comes to choosing colors. Thankfully, tools are available that let you scan any object and access a selection of the closest paint colors from a range of paint brands. This is a great option used by both contractors and DIY painters alike to simplify the decision-making process. It can inspire their project and point them in the right direction. Keep in mind that these tools aren't designed to give you an exact match based on the color data of your sample. But if it's inspiration you are after, they are a perfect way to plan a project.

An affordable and highly accurate option for color look-up is the Datacolor  **ColorReader** and ColorReaderPRO.

BENEFITS:

- Small hand-held device is ultra-portable
- Precise color identification instantly
- Helps painters select a color faster
- Identifies paint colors found on everyday objects (like pillows and curtains)
- Allows users to substitute colors with their go-to paint brands
- Connects to an app that stores all color scans for quick reference
- Easily create palettes for complimentary colors





The Case for Investing in Retail Paint Color Tools

The above tools and tips can make all the difference in the efficiency of your store, which is good for not only your bottom line, but customer loyalty as well. It is a simple, but dramatic way for your paint store to stand out with the latest technology and best customer experience.

Need help making the case for digital color tools? We created [👉 a Retail Paint Solution ROI calculator to showcase what's possible.](#)

STREAMLINED PRODUCTIVITY & PERFECT COLORS

REDUCE TIME & COSTS, LESS WASTE

Finally, identify the tools that make sense for your customers' needs and your goals. These tools, in combination with quality paint products, handling, and lighting options, will create the best results for both. Our team is here to help you navigate color control in the retail paint industry. [👉 Reach out to us here to learn more about the ways we can help.](#)



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