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The Power of Color in Mainstream Media



If you happened to catch a recent episode of TV's zany medical sitcom, "Scrubs" (April 12th, NBC), then you probably enjoyed a chuckle or two as the characters explored the power of color in their workplace. The janitor of the fictional Sacred Heart Hospital requests a new uniform in a new color. (He has grown tired of his dark grey shirt and trousers.) His new uniform soon arrives: we notice that it is the same style as before, but the color is now a soothing robin's egg blue. Immediately, the man's colleagues perceive an improvement in his demeanor. Gone is the image of the troublemaker/instigator/loner that he formerly portrayed. They no longer find him frightening which

confuses him. Even birds apparently feel comfortable in this presence, as they light on his shoulders whenever he goes outdoors to relax.

Blue is America's favorite color. It soothes and reassures us. Medium shades of blue complement most skin tones. People in general feel happy and find it easy to trust someone when they wear blue.

The writers of the sitcom took this idea one step further when they included a segment on the importance of accessories. To illustrate their point, they chose the character of the attorney who is an offbeat/sad/misfit type. One day, he decides to wear an orange tie to work. Approaching the chief of surgery, he complains that people are yelling at him and punching him. It seems that they hate his orange tie. As if to accentuate the problem, two more doctors glance at the attorney and promptly hits him.



Orange is a color that most people find irritating. Produced by combining red (which raises the observer's blood pressure) with yellow (which is a powerful color and difficult to ignore), the color of orange arouses the emotions of the viewer. It can be an excellent choice for clothing worn while engaging in outdoor sports and other fun-in-the-sun activities. But, in an

indoor environment such as an office or a hospital, the wearer usually discovers that he or she is not being taken seriously. Colleagues may even be mildly irritated by the orange clothing and attempt to avoid contact with the wearer.

The power of color in our clothing is a concept to which the mainstream media in this country are beginning to pay attention to. I believe we will begin to see more references made to the meaning of colors that are worn everyday. This knowledge will contribute to the enhancement of the individual's personal power and effectiveness.

Linda Thomas AICI, CIP, Corporate Image Advisor and author of **My Closet, My Boutique: How to Organize Your Image**, designs training for companies who wish to encourage their employees to present themselves as positive, professional, and effective. For a list of programs and products, visit Powerful Appearance web site.

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