

MARKETSHARE THROUGH MINDSHARE



A STUDY IN SCARLET?

Published Irregularly, Not Erratically

With apologies to Sherlock Holmes and Dr. Watson, this eclectic dissertation on the color red is a type of study in scarlet. It's actually the result of an anecdotal research study into color conducted by PMG, which can now be published. **Enjoy.**

Let's talk about something we all know and love...THE COLOR RED.

Color plays an immense role in our lives. By nature, color is emotional and dynamic. It is something that unites us and divides us as a species. Red is the color most easily recognized by humans, and as PMG's color survey indicated, red was the most favored color by females...but only the third most favored by males. Red is strong and tends to dominate. Whether expressed in RGB or CMYK, the colorimetry of red is essentially where human visualization starts.

Red is considered a "hot color" and conjures a range of seemingly conflicting associations such as warmth, vigorous activity, passion, sex, romance and strength. Other associations aren't so positive: aggression, annoyance and anger.

And then there is the age old association of red with warfare and carnage. It is rumored that ancient Greek statues of Ares, God of War, were originally painted red. The term "magenta" is derived from the bloody Battle of Magenta (1859) in the War for Italian Independence.

And the color red traditionally symbolizes both Cupid and the Devil.



Red as Everyone's Fave?

Actually, some recent studies show red coming in second overall, usually behind the color blue. But it seems everybody likes red. Ask Woody Allen. He'll tell you that's a fact because red is the color of wax lips. :-)

Who **doesn't** like red? Maybe 1930s era bandit John Dillinger since the infamous Lady In Red betrayed him to Melvin Purvis and the FBI.



Red Is Everywhere?

Just about. In modern society the color red is widely used for identity in corporate, products or services marketing. Red dominates identities throughout international business. Companies like Canon, Staples, Ricoh, ExxonMobil, Xerox, Circuit City, Fuji, JVC, Target and Sharp utilize red in their corporate identity. Consumer products as varied as Coca Cola, Colgate toothpaste, ILLY coffee, Nabisco and Nintendo involve red. And services like CNN, ESPN and Lucent are all red-based in their official identities. Even PMG includes the color red in our logo's swash!



Red As A Web Star?

The trend online is that the logos of many Internet organizations are moving toward the color red. Studies show that this is due in large part to the color's recognizability and relatively faithful reproducibility on a wide variety of computers, phones, iPads and communication devices. YouTube has a red tube, HiTask has a red quote box and organizations such as Fawnt font resource and Zlio feature red. And as PMG designer Megan Lukas points out, "Red is strong and works as a dominant color but also functions well in a supporting role with other colors and gradients."



Are You Hot?

Wear red and you're hot. Red is a stimulant. The ROYGBIV spectrum leads off with red. As a color that can raise human blood pressure and increase respiration, red gets the metabolism churning. As the late great Ray Charles sang, "See the girl with the red dress on." He didn't have to say anything else for us to get the picture.

Red equals power...hence the red power tie for business and the red carpet treatment for celebrities and VIPs.

Red attracts attention. Think of flashing red lights. They denote danger or emergencies. Red traffic lights and red STOP signs both mean "hit the brakes buddy". Red flags grab our attention. The Red Hat Society makes a great fashion statement and now has over 40,000 chapters. But no, el toros in bullfights do not react to the color red in a waving flag, but to the waving motion.



Nature of Red:

Red has many natures. The expression "seeing red" indicates anger and scientifically speaking, stems from the surge of blood to cheek and facial muscles. A "red letter day" is going to be a good one, whereas *Reds* is a great old Warren Beatty film and *RED* is a Bruce Willis, Morgan Freeman flick of recent renown. And if you have a hankering for a chew, Red Man is one of the field leaders. Red Square? Well, this is no place for politics!



Using Red In Society:

Red commands attention and commands action. Designers use red when they don't want a subject to disappear into the background. A little bit of red goes a long way. Small doses are often more effective than large amounts of this strong color. Multiple shades of red and even pink or orange can combine for a cheerful palette.



Language of Red:

The use of red in familiar phrases illustrates how the color of choice might be perceived by others... both the positive and negative aspects.

The Good Reds:

- **Red letter day:** See above
- **Red carpet treatment:** Make someone feel special, treat them as if they are a celebrity
- **Red Rose:** House of Lancaster, winner of the War of the Roses (big tea brand too!)
- **Red sky in the morning:** Sailor's warning; red sky at night, sailor's delight
- **"Red Red Wine":** Bob Marley by way of Neil Diamond
- **Tomato red:** Yummy
- **Lobster red:** Yummy, yummy
- **Wine red:** Yummy, yummy, yummy!
- **Paint the town red:** Party time!



The Bad Reds:

- **Seeing red:** To be angry
- **Red herring:** Something or somebody that deceives or distracts attention
- **Lobsterback Red:** Not so good if you were an American colonist in a past life
- **In the red:** Being overdrawn at the bank or losing money
- **Red flag:** Danger, warning, or an impending battle
- **Red eye:** Overnight, usually an exhausting flight
- **Red tape:** Nasty entanglements
- **Red with rage:** Says it all.



Red People?

Red also has the distinction of being used as a name. Here are a few reds you may know.

- **Red Auerbach:** Greatest NBA basketball coach of all time? 1917 – 2006
- **Red Barber:** American baseball announcer 1908 – 1992
- **Red Berry:** American wrestler 1906 – 1973
- **Red Buttons:** American actor comedian 1919 – 2006
- **Red Cloud:** Chief Oglala Sioux 1822 – 1909
- **Red Foley:** Country artist 1910 – 1968
- **Red Forman:** Character played by American actor Kurtwood Smith (b. 1943) in *That 70's Show*
- **Red Grange:** Football great. "The Galloping Ghost" 1903 – 1991
- **Red Grooms:** American pop artist b. 1937
- **Red Holzman:** NBA coach 1920 – 1998
- **Red Kelly:** Canadian hockey star b. 1927
- **Red Nichols:** American jazz musician 1905 – 1965
- **Red Norvo:** American vibraphonist 1908 – 1999
- **Red Schoendienst:** Baseball Hall of Famer b. 1923
- **Red Rat:** Jamaican reggae man b. 1978
- **Red Ruffing:** Baseball Hall of Fame pitcher 1905 – 1986
- **Red Sonja:** Marvel Mistress to Conan? c. 1973
- **Red Skelton:** American funnyman and actor 1913 – 1997
- **Red Sovine:** American country singer 1918 – 1980



Red Words:

Red is everywhere. These words are synonymous with red or represent various shades of the color red.

Scarlet Claret Maroon Madder Wine Blood Red Redeye
 Cardinal Crimson Carmine Rouge Blush Cherry
 Burgundy Vermillion Rose Strawberry Red Rust
 Ruby Brick Fire Engine Red Titian Red Flaming Red
 Ginger Red Cinnabar Red Lobster Red Flag Venetian Red
 Flame Sanguine Tomato Beet Red Marxist Red Redhead
 Bloody Ruddy Red Ink Code Red Rubine Red Red Alert
 Red Giant Red Herring Paint The Town Red Red Light
 Red-Handed Lobsterbacks

Rojo (Spanish) • Rouge (French) • Vermelha (Portuguese) • Rosso (Italian) • Rood (Dutch)

Why not let PMG put some **color** into your marketing programs? Give us a call.



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Jamie Stanco, President and Founder of Progressive Marketing Group, Inc., is a recognized authority on strategic marketing, messaging, positioning and branding.



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