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The Consumer Case for Authenticity of On-Screen and Print Reproduction of PANTONE® SkinTone™ Colors

The consumer case for visual representation and diversity in retail.

Representation and diversity are now an expectation that customers have across all the products, media and entertainment they consume. It is no longer acceptable for companies to continue with status quo as there is demand to create a space, products and services that serves the diverse makeup of the people that inhabit it. This means that people would like to see products and services that they can see themselves in authentically and *visually*. Additionally, representation allows for a more emotional and stronger connection to products and/or services - when customers see themselves and that they are represented – this also results in positive returns for the businesses who prioritize this.

For example, research by Accenture in 2017 shows that 68 - 70 percent of Millennials are more likely to choose a brand that demonstrates inclusion and diversity *in terms of its product range* ([source](#)). As the largest living generation, this demographic cohort commands 24% of U.S. retail electronics spend.

Pantone's strength is visual - helping designers and businesses see colors the way that they're intended. What we have seen is that this also becomes true for how people need to be accurately represented visually. This paper will highlight how visual representation and diversity, especially accuracy and diversity of skin tones is paramount for technological advancements and business growth.

D&I Market Drivers

The Economics Behind D&I

The annual US spend on retail electronics exceeds $270 billion, and the youngest Gen Z demographic cohort represents the largest annual retail electronics spend according to Epsilon Data Management (source).

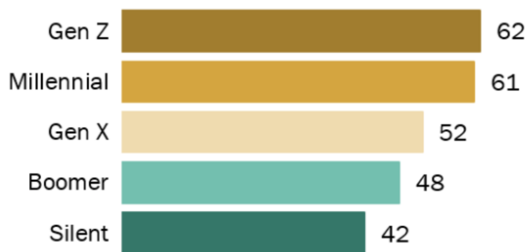Annual Generational Share of U.S. Spend: Retail Electronics

Silents 6%

Gen Z 26%

Boomers 22%

Millenials 24%

Gen X 23%
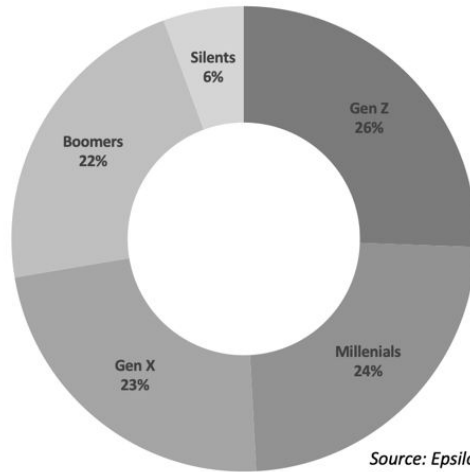
Source: Epsilon Data Management, LLC 2019

Younger generations see increased diversity as good for society

% saying increasing racial and ethnic diversity is a good thing for our society

Gen Z	62
Millennial	61
Gen X	52
Boomer	48
Silent	42

Source: Surveys of U.S. adults ages 18 and older conducted Sept. 24-Oct. 7, 2018, and U.S. teens ages 13 to 17 conducted Sept. 17-Nov. 25, 2018.
"Generation Z Looks a Lot Like Millennials on Key Social and Political Issues"

PEW RESEARCH CENTER

What's more, Gen X, Millennial, and Gen Z consumers demand that brands truly represent equality and inclusivity. Research from PEW indicates racial and ethnic diversity is a positive factor *with most generations*, including a majority of those surveyed beyond Gen X (source).

According to Gartner, Gen Z ranks diversity 13 places higher and inclusion 11 places higher than older generations rank them, when asked to rank the values that matter to them.

Value Rank Comparison Between
Gen Z vs. Older Consumers

▲ **+13**

diversity
I am always open to ideas, people and
cultures that are different from my own.

▲ **+11**

inclusion
I believe equal consideration and inclusion
of others advances the culture.

Source: Gartner Consumer Values and Lifestyle Survey, October 2018: out of 50 values.
Base: Gen Z Consumers vs. Older Consumers (Millennials, Gen X, Boomers and Matures).

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Gartner

Gartner concludes that in general, younger consumers expect to see the same diversity they experience in their homes and communities reflected in the products and businesses they support (source).

Benneton, the Italian fashion brand, featured models from diverse ethnic backgrounds in their advertisements during the 1990s. This emphasis contributed to the company's success and consumer loyalty to their brand.

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How Authentic Skin Tones in Television and Film translate to better customer experiences.

As the data highlights the importance for all demographics to create products that highlight diversity, this also highlights the importance of accurately representing skin tones. While, technology is supposed to be seen as objective, a lot of photography and film have been programmed to easier portray lighter skin tones.

For example, Sarah Lewis New York Times reporter highlights how racial bias was inherent in photography through the use of "The Shirly Card". She states, "Light skin became the chemical baseline for film technology, fulfilling the needs of its target dominant market. For example, developing color-film technology initially required what was called a Shirley card. When you sent off your film to get developed, lab technicians would use the image of a white woman with brown hair named Shirley as the measuring stick against which they calibrated the colors."

Now it is important for technology to incorporate accurate depiction of skin tones and change technology to do so. Companies like Google are creating products that are inherently more inclusive – i.e. The new Pixel 6 and Pixel 6 Pro claim to have the 'world's most inclusive camera with the skin tones of people of color in mind.`

Leading colorists for television and film also agree that high-quality skin tone colors are critical in film and television. Marina Starke (*Media University Stuttgart*, Germany) shares popular opinions in THE VISUAL APPEARANCE OF SKIN IN MOTION PICTURE (source).

> *Skin tones are important when it comes to audiences "connecting" with the characters. There have been a number of times when we've gone for a certain kind of grade, often a desaturated look, and we have had to pull back from it due to people feeling less connected with the characters.*
> - **ADAM INGLIS** (Senior Colorist, *freelance,* London UK)

> *The quality of skin, especially in motion pictures, is an important factor in character development, even for reality shows or news anchors. The skin is the cover of the book. I would say that just like the grade of a film or program overall, a good skin tone is one that perfectly reflects the character it reveals.*
> - **KEVIN SHAW, CSI** (Senior Colorist / CEO, *Finalcolor*, UK)

> *Quality skin tones for me means these subtleties in reds to yellows are seen.*
> - **PARKER JARVIE** (Senior Assistant Colorist, *Company 3*, Chicago, US)

> *I think just accuracy with skin is definitely something that makes skin tones look good to me. Skin tones look good to me when they're proper and correct.*
> - **SEAN COLEMAN** (Senior Colorist, *Company 3*, Los Angeles, US)

How Pantone is aiding technological advancements for representation and inclusiveness in film and television.

Pantone provides a universal language of color that enables color-critical decisions for designers, producers, brands, and manufacturers. Pantone is recognized globally as a trusted and familiar color system used across many vertical markets, including graphics, fashion, packaging, architecture, cosmetics, industrial design, furniture, consumer goods, corporate branding, and more.

The Pantone Matching System® (PMS) was launched in 1963, is today relied upon by over 10 million creative professionals and is trusted by a majority of leading global brands to identify their logo and brand colors.

PANTONE Validated

Authentic reproduction of color underlies a core value sought by today's consumers. Pantone offers Pantone Validated evaluation of various display and print devices to assess the device's capability to best simulate the full range of real-world Pantone colors.

This assessment delivers a report of the results, and via a license agreement, qualified solutions can be marketed using the increasingly familiar PANTONE® Validated logo mark.

Pantone Validated status helps technology brands better connect with customers who care about color quality. Pantone technicians have qualified over 500 product models from leading global suppliers of various display and print technologies as meeting the rigorous Pantone Validated requirements.

PANTONE SkinTone Guide

Pantone developed the PANTONE SkinTone Guide a decade ago as the first scientifically based guide for matching and reproducing lifelike skin tones. Based on thousands of human skin measurements from a diverse range of ethnicities and age groups, the PANTONE SkinTone Guide catalogs 110 discrete and unique skin tone colors.

The PANTONE SkinTone Guide has been used for a wide range of applications in medicine, cosmetics, imaging, product development, 3D printing and more.

According to market research, realistic reproduction of the wide variety of skin colors is also an important feature in entertainment, digital content creation, digital photography, cinematography, design and other on-screen applications.

PANTONE Validated for SkinTone

Pantone has extended Pantone Validated status to include evaluation of the specific Pantone SkinTone Colors.

Achieving Pantone SkinTone Validated status helps display and print technology companies appeal to younger generations of consumers who appreciate products that realize authenticity in the display of real-world colors, and that accurately represent the world's palette of skin tones, as validated by Pantone, the world's leading color authority.

As Pantone is focused on color accuracy within all products, the goal with Pantone Validation for Pantone SkinTone™ brands can be better aligned with the inevitable and important inclusive future by:

- Faithfully reproducing the full range of Pantone Colors and SkinTone Colors
- Aligning your business goals and company values with D&I initiatives
- Instill color confidence for creative professionals
- Sharing this authenticity with consumers

For more information, please visit pantone.com/validated.