COLOR SCHEMES

EIGHT RULES FOR BUILDING A COLOR SCHEME

1. Figure out the purpose

- Think about why you are choosing the color palette and for what kind of client.
- Investigate color meanings and associations

2. Review color basics

- Make sure you have reviewed basics such as hue, saturation, intensity, an the ways in which colors affect each other in relationship.
- Study layouts you like to analyze possible palettes for the current project.

3. Choose dominant color than accent colors

- Decide an overall background color, or color for the largest areas first. Then select possible accent colors.
- Sometimes the accent color is fixed. For example, a client may have a corporate color that must be used. In that case keep the accent color in mind when selecting the dominant color.

4. Select shades, then vary them

- Because the shade of a color heavily impacts the overall impression, decide what feeling must be conveyed—bright and cherry, or perhaps serene and dignified.
- Note that colors of the same hue but of varying shades and tints can look very different and still remain harmonious.
- Varying the shades of hues to create contrast of light and dark can be effective and dramatic.

5. Look at compatibility of hues

- Having selected a preliminary color scheme and considered a variety of tints and shades, look at the overall compatibility of colors.
- Is the contrast pleasing? If not go back to refine the palette with intermediate hues. For example, when green is selected as the dominant color, perhaps red-orange would work better than pure red.

6. Limit the number of colors

- With a palette now chosen, review the number of colors.
- Two or three colors are usually enough. Four must be chosen with care, while five may be too many.
- Sometimes budget limitations as well as aesthetic considerations narrow the palette for print.

7. Put the colors into action

- Put the colors in use in a few typical pieces required by the client. Look how they work together. If the color palette is successful, your designs will be harmonious. If not, further refinements are warranted.

8. Keep a logbook

- Once you have found color palettes that work, document them in your journal. Paste in color chips and include the client's name and a project description. The logbook will serve as a reference when choosing future color palettes.
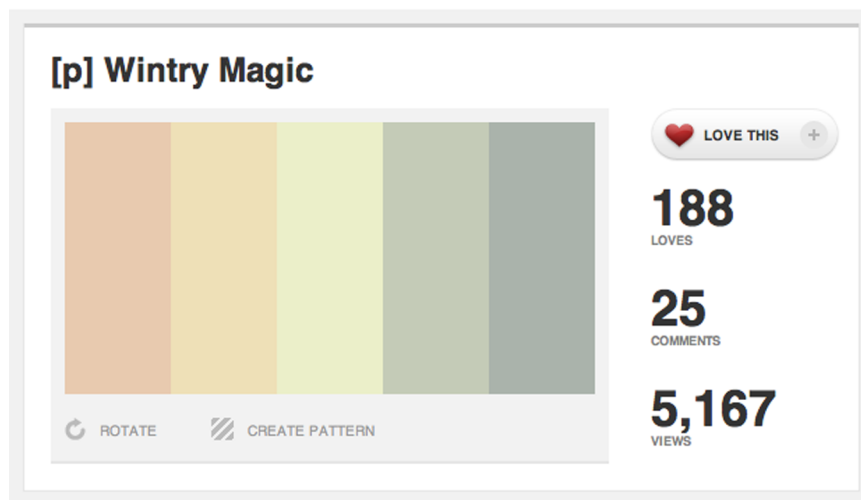
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Helpful websites:

a) http://www.colourlovers.com/

b) http://colorschemedesigner.com/

c) http://www.colorjack.com/sphere/