

National Painting Week Inspires Consumers with Color

Carmichael Lynch Spong and Sherwin-Williams, Jan 1, 2013

Summary: 2013 Silver Anvil Award Winner — Marketing Consumer Products — Retail Stores and Restaurants

Sherwin-Williams declared National Painting Week in mid-April 2012 to drive sales during the busy spring home improvement season and inspire consumers with color and project ideas. In partnership with popular design bloggers and the National Association of the Remodeling Industry, Sherwin-Williams provided homeowners with inspiration through daily colors, painting projects and techniques, remodeling tips and a dedicated Pinterest board. The paint retailer built interest among media and bloggers with local community projects, survey data and a media mailer. In one week's time, Sherwin-Williams saw strong paint sales and garnered 163 million earned media impressions.

Marketing consumer products includes programs designed to introduce new products or promote existing products to a consumer audience.

Full Text: **SITUATION ANALYSIS**

Spring renovation. It's a competitive time for home improvement retailers. For premium paint retailer Sherwin-Williams, standing out in a crowded marketplace with deep discounters during the recession had become an incredible challenge. How could the brand compel consumers to travel to a Sherwin-Williams store to buy paint? By inspiring them in a new way with color and showing them paint is more than just for walls.

To drive sales during the busiest time for remodeling projects, Sherwin-Williams and Carmichael Lynch Spong declared National Painting Week in mid-April 2012. To capture the color conversation, popular design bloggers served up daily painting project ideas and each day new content and ideas were provided through Pinterest.

A partnership with the National Association of the Remodeling Industry and a national homeowners survey about spring painting lent credibility for earned media engagement.

During the promotional period, Sherwin-Williams saw "highest ever" paint sales. In only one week, the campaign garnered more than 163 million earned media impressions and drove more than 35,000 unique visitors to the NPW microsite.

RESEARCH

The campaign was inspired by research-based insights:

Supply consumers with inspiration for their home projects and robustly incorporate color. Consulted findings from Sherwin-Williams focus groups in Chicago and Dallas. Almost all respondents described their DIY paint process in three stages:

1. Sourcing inspiration – through magazines, websites and friends;
2. Deciding on color – considered the most complex part of the process, many consumers

- are open to color advice;
3. The actual process of painting.

Present visuals of real projects to provide range of ideas about what to paint and different uses of color. An audit of 2011 media coverage of home improvement stories showed that most articles lacked visuals of actual projects.

Prompt homeowners to choose a room or item to paint by showcasing a broad range of colors and projects. Telephone survey of 1,594 U.S. homeowners about springtime home improvement showed seven in 10 homeowners believe there is a room or area in their house that is need of painting “right now.”

Develop a microsite, emphasize online placements and leverage DIY/design blogging community. Telephone survey of 1,400 U.S. homeowners showed DIY/decorating websites are consumers’ primary media source for information on home projects.

OBJECTIVES

Sherwin-Williams is the largest producer of paints and coatings in the United States. But Sherwin-Williams premium paint stores face stiff competition from big box retailers – which offer do-it-yourselfers “one stop shopping” and deeply discounted paints. Sherwin-Williams would have to aggressively promote its quality products and color leadership in a new way in order to drive store traffic and sales during the spring renovation season. The campaign was conceived with the following in mind:

- **Sales:** Support strong sales of S-W paint during the in-store sales event from April 20-23.
- **Earned Media:** Raise awareness for Sherwin-Williams paint and color offerings through a strategic publicity campaign that generates at least 100 million impressions between April 16-23.
- **Website:** Create an online destination featuring project and color inspiration and drive 20,000 unique visitors to the website between April 16-23.
- **Blogger Ambassadors:** Provide project and color inspiration to consumers through partnerships with design bloggers, generating at least 500,000 impressions between April 16-23.
- **Social:** Supply consumers on social networks with project and color inspiration; connect with at least 2 million consumers on Facebook and increase Pinterest followers by 15 percent from April 16-23.

STRATEGIES

We employed four main strategies to reach the “do-it-yourself” homeowner:

- Inspire consumers with color in a whole new way by creating an actionable event — National Painting Week — to generate interest in the category and garner conversations about the brand.
- Engage important influencers for the “Do It Right” target — design bloggers — to serve as ambassadors for National Painting Week.
- Partner with a third party organization that lends credibility and neutrality for editorial messaging.
- Create an online destination (microsite) to serve as a consumer and media resource for National Painting Week inspiration and information and use Pinterest as another channel to connect.

EXECUTION / TACTICS

- **Inspiration Calendar:** Provided consumers with daily insights and an inspiration calendar featuring different Sherwin-Williams colors, painting techniques and project

ideas.

- **DIY Design Blogger Program:** Partnered with seven design bloggers; assigned a color of the day and they selected the painting project. Bloggers provided images, shared projects on social channels.
- **National Association of the Remodeling Industry Partnership Activation:** For third-party credibility, engaged Chairman Paul Zuch as key spokesperson for interviews and media materials.
- **Survey:** Conducted in partnership with NARI, a national homeowners survey about spring painting drove campaign insights, prompted timely coverage and informational tips and multimedia assets.
- **National Painting Week Video:** Produced “spring home improvement” video featuring Zuch and Sherwin-Williams color expert Jackie Jordan.
- **National Painting Week Microsite:** Created NationalPaintingWeek.com featuring each day’s color theme, DIY ideas, products, techniques, blogger projects, video and infographic.
- **Pinterest:** Created dedicated board on the Sherwin-Williams Pinterest page, highlighting blogger projects, inspirational images and each day’s color, project idea and technique.
- **Community Projects:** Worked with 10 key markets to highlight community painting projects being supported by store employees. Secured media coverage with employees sharing key messages.
- **Multimedia Assets:** Used primary research findings for messaging platform, news release, satellite media tour, syndicated article and infographic.
- **Media Kit:** Distributed media kit to influential media/bloggers with media materials, paint samples, project inspiration book, as well as a few painting tools.

EVALUATION OF SUCCESS/MEASUREMENT

- **Support sales of Sherwin-Williams paint.**
Result: Sherwin-Williams paint sales were the highest ever during the promotion period.
- **Raise awareness for Sherwin-Williams paint and color offerings by generating at least 100 million earned media impressions.**
Result: More than 163 million impressions were earned in the week. Quality (prominence, depth, product references) far exceeded last year. With bloggers serving as our campaign partners, we saw a spike in consumer conversations about taking on painting projects and using Sherwin-Williams paints.
- **Drive at least 20,000 unique visitors to the website.**
Result: 35,000+ unique individuals visited NationalPaintingWeek.com.
- **Partner with design blogger ambassadors, generating at least 500,000 impressions.**
Result: Seven bloggers generated 610,000+ impressions across their networks. Readers commented on how they liked the paint color, felt it helped stimulate ideas and that they would purchase specific Sherwin-Williams colors.
- **Social: Connect with at least 2 million consumers on Facebook in general and increase Pinterest followers by 15 percent.**
Result: Facebook (outside of the Sherwin-Williams page) generated 2.5+ million views and interactions and Pinterest followers grew by 30+ percent. (Note: Carmichael Lynch Spong does not handle the Facebook page for Sherwin-Williams and the company did not have a Twitter handle at the time of the campaign).

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