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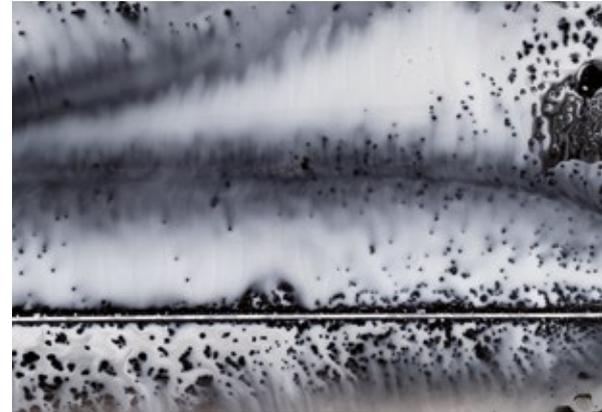
We create chemistry

BASF North America Color Report For Automotive OEM Coatings 2017

Blue and gray shades point to increased growth

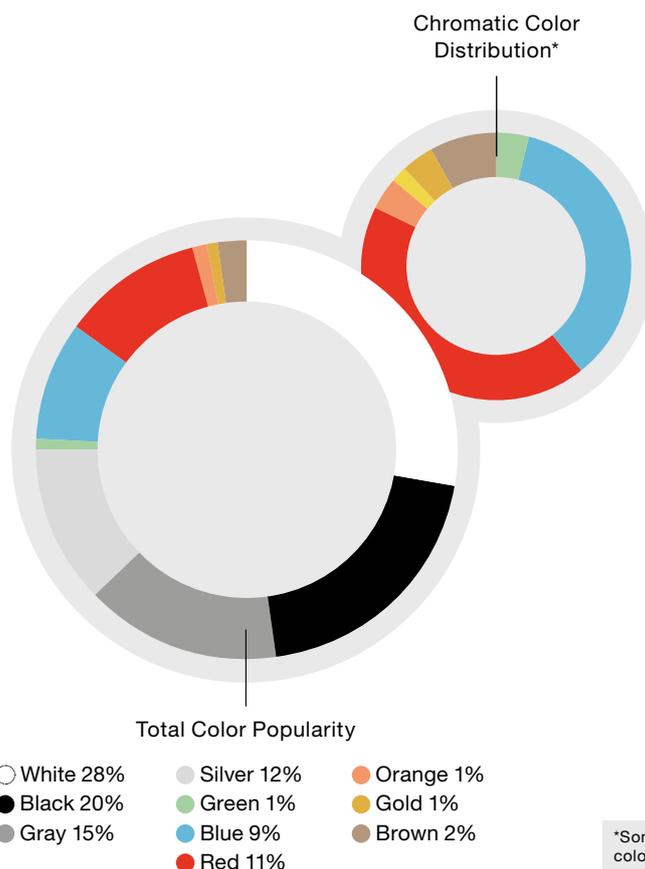
Color. It evokes feelings and desires. It reflects our personality and reveals our emotions. The BASF color designers have been studying automotive color design and trends for many years. They understand what influences color and, more importantly, how to blend technology and design into beautiful coatings for vehicles.

In North America, vehicle colors are dominated by the achromatics – white, black and silver/gray. With the new pigment technologies and BASF’s ingenuity, these colors continue to push the envelope with special effects that shimmer and shine to reveal a variety of finishes for vehicle owners to swoon over.



Red and blue are the key chromatic colors in North America. The blue color space is very versatile and can achieve a large diversity of shades, ranging in lightness, saturation and subtle hue changes. Other colors, such as orange, are showing up in the analysis. These shades provide more options for the consumers to tie in to their particular preferences.

Data across all car segments



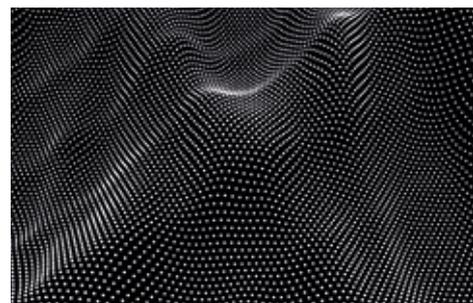
Electric vehicles – Achromatics are still preferred

And what about electric vehicles? BASF is particularly interested to see whether this class of cars will be colored an entirely different way, given the impression it has made on the overall market. At this early stage in electric vehicle development, it seems the achromatics are still preferred – although gray/silver appears to be more popular than white or black. BASF designers will continue to monitor this trend.

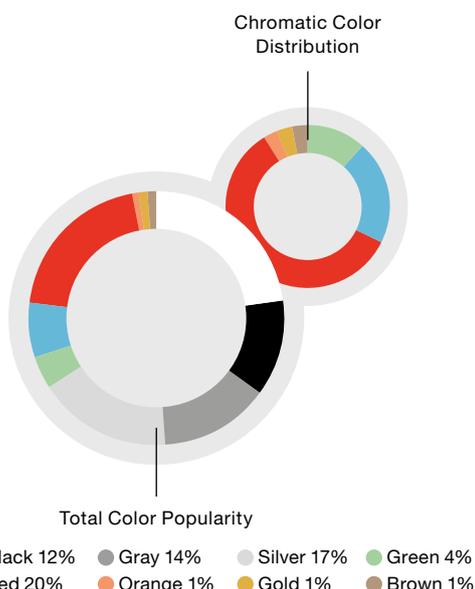
As you will see, this report reveals the importance of SUVs in North America and the influence of color in the various vehicle body styles.

Overview of automotive segments

Interesting information can be gleaned by analyzing the popularity among the various car body shapes. Each segment offers a snapshot that sheds light on which colors parallel preferences in other styles, and what may differentiate consumer buying patterns for these types. Designers look to offer the right choices in color that cater to perceptions as well as aesthetics for these segments.



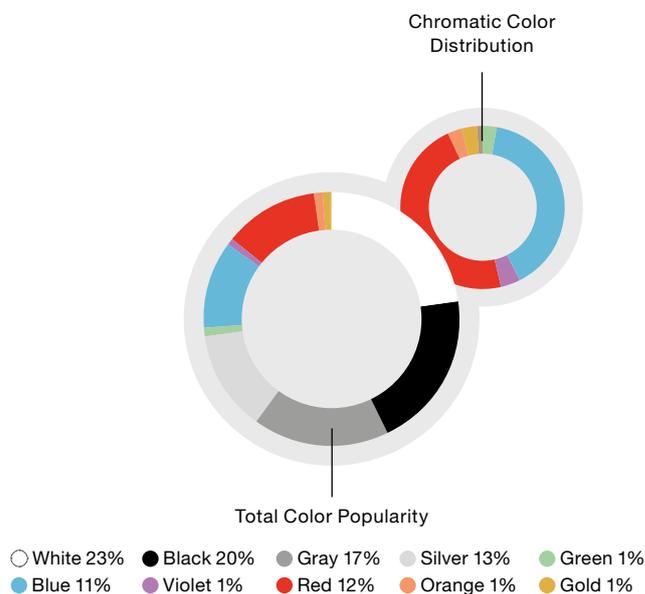
Subcompact



The subcompact area historically has a higher amount of more bold, saturated colors than is the case for larger cars and SUVs. The mix of brighter colors mirrors the demographics of buyers for these cars, who tend to be optimistic fun-seekers and enjoy showy colors. Red colors are strong in subcompacts, offered with bold metallic and non-metallic shades. Advances in paint-layering technology and colorant developments are clearing the way for beautiful reds to decorate these cars. The achromatic colors remain strong as well, reflecting the futuristic look that all car buyers seek.



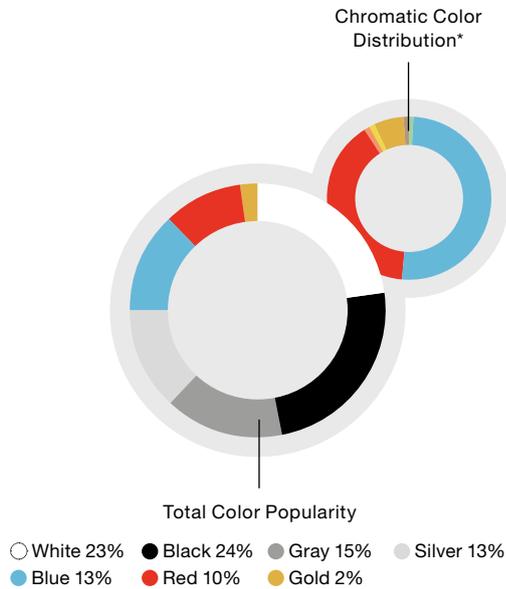
Compact + Midsize



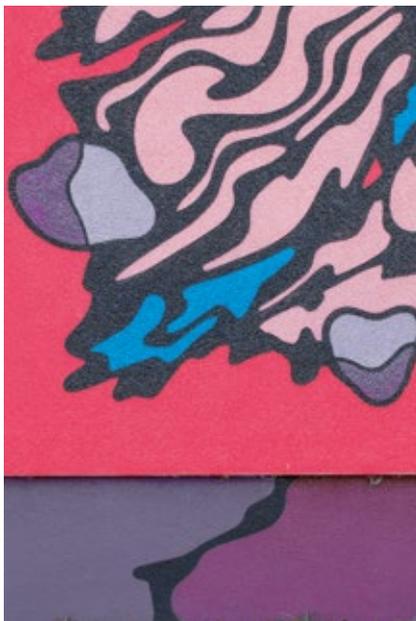
It is the desire for cutting-edge technology in cars that makes silver/gray, black and white so popular for mid-size cars. As color is very personal and “emotional”, the connection that buyers associate with light colors and metallics speaks unmistakably to high-tech. This segment will continue to help define how the color of new mobility in the automotive world will unfold.



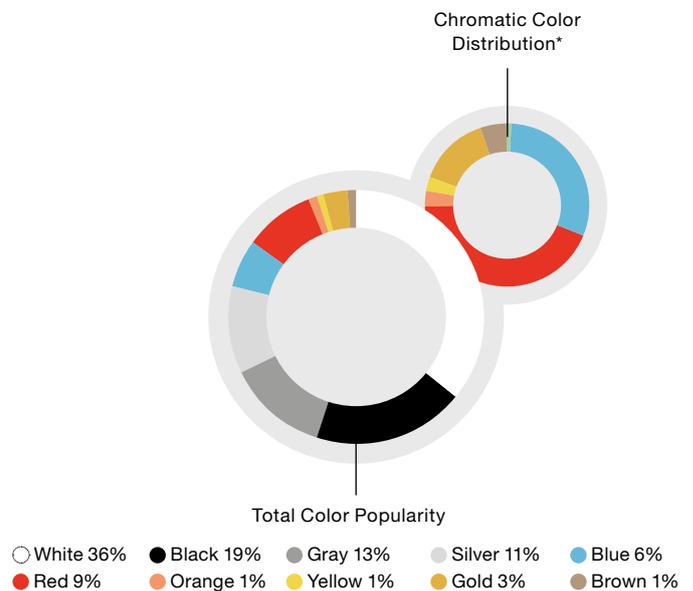
Large



There are two prevalent themes in this segment: first, perhaps not surprisingly, dark colors like black run very strongly, and secondly, red and blue show an uptick in popularity. This can be explained by the power, elegance and sophistication of darker colors usually associated with premium vehicles. In addition, cars in this segment, due to their higher price tag, are coated with more expensive and complex colors. Browns and beiges show up more in this area too.



Pickup



Seen primarily as utility vehicles, minivans and pickups are dominated by the color white, followed by black and silver/gray. One interesting takeaway to note – despite the pickup’s perception of “utility,” many trucks in North America have evolved into higher-end vehicles. While the color white may be associated with utility, there is a decoupling between the primary vehicle function and the perception of the white “workhorse” truck, leading drivers to project utility in their minds rather than on the road. It seems, however, that the potential for that use is still important to them.

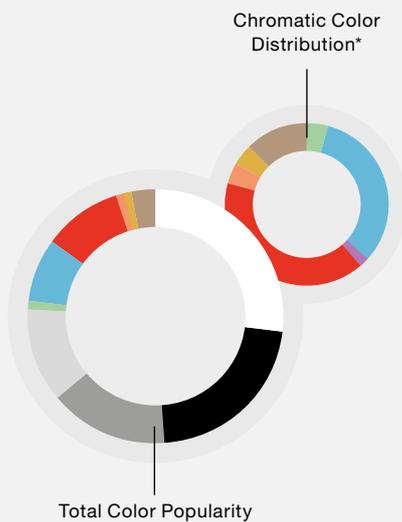
*Some colors are shown only in the chromatic color range because their percentage is too low.

SUV special - Increasing diversity of shape and size

It is perhaps well known that the SUV segment remains very strong in North America. After all, this vehicle class offers many advantages for its drivers, from its commanding road presence to providing space and comfort for multiple passengers. SUVs come in an ever-increasing diversity of shapes and sizes, furthering their appeal. OEMs continue to make advances to overcome the technical challenges of fuel economy and driver safety, given the bulkier profile of the vehicle. Affordability, both in vehicle price and gasoline cost, make this segment attractive for many buyers, including more and more millennials.



SUVs



○ White 27% ● Black 22% ● Gray 15% ● Silver 12% ● Green 1%
● Blue 8% ● Red 10% ● Orange 1% ● Gold 1% ● Brown 3%

*Some colors are shown only in the chromatic color range because their percentage is too low.

For these reasons, the segment is enjoying an upswing in global popularity. Less seen as a true “off roader,” the SUV continues to be viewed as the car with versatility – for urban areas as well. The practical and technical focus of these models is reflected in color popularity.

White, black and gray remain strongly in the forefront, as color designers seek new ways to connect to what consumers see as the future look of cities. These so-called achromatics connect visually to the urban landscape, and well-designed color innovations augment the technical sophistication this segment is hoping to portray. This works in two ways: a simplified palette doesn’t distract from the technology feel; and achromatic colors can be pushed into metallics of varying coarseness or well-grounded solid shades.

Other reasons also may account for the color popularity rankings. White can range from an elegant pearlescent tone to something very utilitarian and understated. It retains less heat than other colors because of its reflective nature, and many drivers are convinced that it even “looks” cleaner. For blacks and grays, the ability to offer multiple color positions provides the manufacturers tools to offer high-end vehicles a sophisticated look or present a solid, minimalist look to simpler, more practical SUV models.

Rounding out the popularity discussion for SUVs, a smaller but not insignificant popularity remains in chromatic colors, with both blue and red running strongest in consumer preference. As with achromatic colors, the ability to make expressive, saturated shades brings an appealing look to the segment. Additionally, blue colors can be made to look lighter or darker, too.

Trend competence and innovative color concepts

BASF's Coatings division has an excellent sense of trends, predicting which colors will play a key role in the mature automotive market. Every year, the designers at the Coatings division create 65 new and unique color inspirations for its automotive color trends collection. These take cues from cultural shifts and technology influencers that will help guide color choices three to five model years in the future. The special ability of BASF in bringing aesthetic trends and developing them into highly-engineered coating formulations suitable for application makes it truly a leading color innovator.

Hundreds of colors are currently on the North American market. With automotive technology growing increasingly towards new mobility trends, exterior color creation takes on new dimensions. In addition to trendy colors, a deeper push into functional coatings continues to grow. Finding the right combinations of pigments and effect pigments enables new solutions for sustainable coatings.



“Our trend research shows the continued importance of the achromatic color space, dominated by white, black and gray. It’s critical for us to innovate in these areas, so we look for unique ways to find colors that capture the essence of the customer’s brand and how it helps define the shape of the car.”

Paul Czornij, head of Design North America

