



SNEWS Outdoor

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Outdoor

Product Colors Influenced by Fashion, Nature

Featuring: Insights from Erik Hamerschlag

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Have you ever wondered how your suppliers choose colors for their products? Or to what degree the fashion industry influences outdoor and fitness apparel? Maybe you got some answers from Jeanine Pesce, the senior active editor for Stylesight, a color trend monitoring service, at her Outdoor Retailer Winter Market seminar in January. In case you missed it, SNEWS has some insight for you.

Erik Hamerschlag, product manager at Osprey, said his company spends a lot of time looking at color, because it's an important business decision. "It's not a scientific thing and it's not pure art either," Hamerschlag said. "There are business concerns about risky/fun colors versus safe/salable colors and open questions about what particular users are looking for."

Stylesight said the main trends for the fall and winter 2012 season come from the human body and nature. "The rawness of nature and the human body in its purest form were two huge influencers for the fall/winter 2012 season," Pesce said. "We explored the organs and the circulatory system so there was an abundance of saturated red shades.

"Now more than ever, I think we can clearly see how the outdoor industry is being influenced by the fashion community, in terms of color, silhouette and design direction," Pesce said. "Consumers are embracing more complex color combinations that the fashion world has come to rely on, so designers have the ability to take more chances and deliver a product that is more cerebral."

While the catwalk may be a good source of inspiration for outdoor apparel designers, there's one last factor that plays into the color decision. "History is always a good guide," Osprey's Hamerschlag said. "People tend to continue buying what they bought in the past." And the past is full of products in go-to classic colors, such as neutrals, blacks and blues. Pesce said she expects to see more of manufacturers go back to these staples in the future due to the increased demand for performance fabrics.

