

BRIGHT AND BOLD

Make everyday parties solid sales in your store

By Abby Heugel | Managing Editor

The fact that solid color products are popular in most party stores is nothing new. Not only do they offer a wide variety of options that appeal to most consumers year round, but they are the perfect complement to any theme. This means retailers won't be stuck with "leftovers," as solid color products can always be used for future occasions.

What is new this year is the prevalence of bright and bold colors on everything from plates and

cups to costumes and balloons. For retailers who jump on this trend, the green is sure to follow.

A Bright Idea

Manufacturers took note of this trend and introduced lines specifically more bright and bold. Dawn Kirschner, creative director of tableware for Unique, said solid colors are the core of Unique's business, so taking advantage of this trend was definitely an emphasis for them this year.

"We developed a complete Decorative Dots program that features our top six colors (Hot Pink, Lime Green, Royal Blue, Ruby Red, Black and Sunflower Yellow) and a simple dot pattern that we incorporated across 13 key components," Kirschner said. "The ability for retailer and consumers to mix and match these core items (napkins, tablecovers, cello bags, flag banners, loot bags, treat boxes, paper straws, hats, latex balloons, crepe streamers and paper chains) with their solid color program means incremental sales for the retailer and an opportunity for the consumers to get creative."

Kirschner suggested retailers merchandise the Decorative Dots program next to their solid color program and cross merchandise wherever possible while helping to educate the consumer on what and how to pull a party together.

Creative Converting's most recent product offerings integrate the bright and bold trend through pops of bright red, blue and yellow mixed with hot pink and lime green.

"Our most requested colors are our tried-and-true, basic primary colors — red, blue and yellow," said Kacey Curry, associate communications manager for Creative Converting. "Staying on the bright and bold trend,



The “Birthday Leopard Zebra Patterns” Microfoil Balloon from Pioneer combines bold colors with the ever-popular zebra design.

hot pink and lime green also are popular choices and profitable colors for retailers.

“Three of our new ensembles — Sugar Buzz, Mod Circles and Bright & Bold — are some of our brightest and boldest yet,” Curry continued. “Sugar Buzz puts a twist on the trend by using brighter pastel color options, and Mod Circles layers the bright, bold colors with a funky geometric pattern.”

Curry added that they focused on this trend when designing the Bright & Bold ensemble, so the pattern mixes bright colors with bold prints, like polka dots and stripes, to create a fun and trendy collection.

When it comes to balloons, Pioneer has taken the timeless icons of stars, polka dots, florals, smile faces and hearts and replaced the traditional color schemes with the bright opaque colors.

“We’ve also added that extra punch of color and mixed

textures to introduce new baby, birthday and love themes that brighten and freshen the overall look of everyday occasions,” said Lisa Bennett, Pioneer’s product management director.

Bennett said the bright neon trends from a few years back have shifted slightly to citrus and tropical colors that are more realistic and can play off each other for multiple party atmospheres.

“Our customers requested a bright yet ‘cool’ color to pull together with the ‘warm’ lemon yellows, lime greens, tangerines and magenta color palette,” she said. “Caribbean Blue latex is a perfect example of a most requested color product. It’s not too green or too blue, but blends in very well with unexpected pairings to freshen the bright and bold looks of 2013.”

For Lizz Jelsma of Dan D Party in Cheyenne, Wyo., they have had a huge increase in requests for lime/neon green.

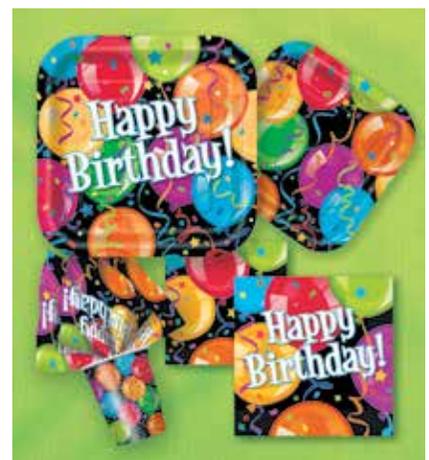
“This color has always been popular, but now more than ever,” Jelsma said. “We also have been special ordering in a lot of neon pinks and oranges; so much so they are now going to be colors we house on the showroom floor. We’ve incorporated the most popular neons with our rainbow of solid color items in our showroom. These have

gone from being a special order to part of our inventory.”

I See a Pattern

When it comes to popular everyday patterns, it’s still all about the animal prints. Jelsma agreed, saying animal prints and neons are all the rage for any party — graduations, weddings and birthdays alike — but that peacock feather prints have taken their area’s party scene by storm as well.

“Animal prints have their own display opposite our solid colors and are highly decorated to demand every customer’s attention,” Jelsma said. “We have an entire showroom wall dedicated to solid colors, now including the ever-popular neon colors. We also have smaller displays around our showroom for items such as animal and other prints.”



Unique predicts designs with bright and bold colors like their “Bravo Birthday” ensemble to be popular in 2013.



Creative Converting's "Bright and Bold" pattern mixes bright colors with bold prints, like polka dots and stripes, to create a fun and trendy collection.

Unique's top patterns from last year include Breezy Birthday, Cosmic Birthday, Party Style and Bright Birthday.

"Since designs with bright bold colors and graphic/ impactful designs seem to be the trend for this year, we expect Umbrellaphants Pink and Blue, Zebra Passion, Busy Bees, Lively Lady Bugs, Farm Friends, Birthday

Stripes and Bravo Birthday to be some of the new favorites," Kirschner said.

Creative Converting's top everyday party pattern continues to be Ladybug Fancy. This pattern is primarily red, one of their most popular solid colors, and uses the geometric polka dots of the ladybug to create bold pattern found throughout the tableware and décor.

When displaying and merchandising these items, Curry suggested retailers create bright and bold displays by using the merchandising to showcase how layering lots of bright colors in different bold patterns can create a fun party scene. Display as many coordinating color options as possible with bright and bold collections, and since these collections have a variety of colors, the customer should be shown the many matching solid options.

"Trendy merchandising options include creating backdrops with crepe paper streamers in a variety of colors and hanging different sizes and colors of honeycomb balls over a display table," Curry said. "The more color the better!"

Bennett agreed that retailers shouldn't be afraid to mix and match solid-color assortments and patterned products together to show customers how to integrate products for a layered look that pulls the party theme and décor together.

"For example, pairing the zebra animal print in black and white with any bright color palette adds depth and drama to any special occasion," Bennett said.

And remember that any day can be a special occasion. Help make that day bright and bold! **P**



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