Ultra Violet is the New Black

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The color purple has long been associated with royalty, so perhaps it should come as no surprise that Pantone’s color of the year for 2018 -- the year of the next royal wedding -- is PANTONE® 18-3838 Ultra Violet, a blue-based purple. But this particular shade of purple has associations beyond royalty, wealth, and power. According to Pantone, this Ultra Violet purple is “nuanced and full of emotion,” symbolizing “experimentation and non-conformity, spurring individuals to imagine their unique mark on the world, and push boundaries through creative outlets.”[1]

Brand owners have long understood and capitalized on the ability of color to convey the brand’s meaning and emotion to consumers. From “legacy” marks and long-term trade dress built around a single color, to products selectively tinged with colors in tune with the marketplace’s collective mood, color captures a share of the consumer psyche. If you are looking to refresh or infuse your brand with the creativity and imagination of PANTONE 18-3838 Ultra Violet color, here are few things to consider before adopting this, or any other color.

• Just because this color is “new” to 2018, it may not be new to one of your competitors. As with any proposed color or mark, a clearance search should be conducted to determine whether it is available for use, short- or long-term, with your goods and services.

• If color is already a protected aspect of your branding, and you plan to step away from your current color in favor of another for a limited period of time, check your trademark registrations for the current color to see if they are due for maintenance during the “off-use” period. If so, consider adopting the new color for only select models/SKUs of your product line, or apply the new color to only part of the product’s packaging, or to a label or hang tag. And if you’re a service provider, thoughtful application of a new color to your web page may be more easily changed and economical than, say, a run of business stationary in a new color.

• Bear in mind that the color of interest may have an industry- or product-dependent meaning. In the pharmaceutical industry, for example, colors can be used to designate different drug strengths or forms, or can function as proprietary trade dress. Check with industry and regulatory teams before adopting a new color to confirm that it is neither misleading of the nature of your product, nor likely to create the potential for consumer confusion or even harm.

Here’s to PANTONE 18-3838 Ultra Violet living up to its meaning for consumers and brand owners alike in 2018!

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