

PQI[®] Counterpoint

INFORMATION ABOUT SELLING QUALITY PAINT TODAY

ISSUE 1 / 2004 >>

**QUALITY
PAINT
A WINNER!**

**PAINTING
NEW
SUBSTRATES**

**SALES
TRAINING
PAYS**



ASIA PACIFIC ISSUE

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- Answers to FAQs about paint and painting

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QUALITY REALLY DOES SELL



The PQI message that selling quality paint pays is strongly supported by the results of market research by leading industry consultants, Archer Consulting Group.

The survey found that quality paint is the fastest growing segment in the paint, sealants and accessories market, and accounts for 78 cents in every dollar spent on paint.

What does that mean for you?

As a retailer, you need to stock quality paint, quality accessories and sell the quality message if you are to capture your share of the largest segment in the paint market.

Capturing your share not only requires quality products on your shelves but, most importantly, people who have the skill set to effectively convey the right messages to your customers.

Product knowledge is important but won't close a sale if staff have little or no selling skills. Conversely, selling skills alone won't make up for a vacuum in product knowledge.

Inside, Roger Sayers of Australian Retail Services explains how training your sales staff can make a real difference to your business...and bottom line.

Also inside, our colour guru, Kim Chadwick, brings you up to date with some significant changes in colour direction.

Egged on by the plethora of lifestyle TV shows, your customers are more confident about colour but the way they decorate their homes and colour choices may reflect a need for comfort and security in uncertain times..

Plus we unravel some of the mysteries of when and where to use primers and sealers, take a look at what you need to recommend for painting new substrates such as EIFS, and answer another swag of your customers' questions.

There's a lot of good information in here for paint retailing professionals but, if you need anything more, visit our websites (www.paintquality.com.au and www.paintquality.co.nz) to find the answers.

It's all part of our commitment to provide you with the information you need to be able to confidently service your customers.

MICHAEL BERESFORD
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Cover

Research by Geoff Dart of Archer Consulting Group has found that quality paint is the fastest growing segment in the \$2.4 billion paint market. See story page 10.

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PAINTING today's

Once there was a time when most exterior building surfaces that needed painting were either timber, brick, galvanised iron and, occasionally, stucco or rough cast cement.

Then came the advent of a range of materials designed to provide low maintenance exterior protection... powder coated aluminium window frames, vinyl coated weather boards and fibre cement are examples.

Today, a new substrate called EIFS – exterior insulation and finish system -- is increasingly being seen on our buildings, particularly in residential developments.

Many home owners believe these new substrates can't be painted when, in fact, they can.

Furthermore, these substrates often will benefit from a coat of paint because it can provide a longer life, a more attractive surface and change the colour so that it complements other parts of the building or trimwork.

So let's look at what your customers need to know about painting these exterior materials to improve their appearance and provide increased protection.

By the way, don't forget to remind your customers about safety when they are preparing and painting surfaces.

They should wear eye and skin protection at all times and a dust mask if wire brushing or sanding is required.



FIBRE CEMENT

An old favourite has once again become one of the fastest growing exterior claddings. Fibre cement is a versatile, cost effective, relatively lightweight and durable material that is being offered in an increasingly wide range of new profiles. It may be supplied factory-primed, to be painted prior to or after construction.

The technology behind it is nearly a century old. What once incorporated asbestos as the fibre now utilises a mixture of cellulose fibre, cement and sand.

Surface preparation

Before painting, be sure that all cracks and joints are properly sealed with a quality acrylic or paintable siliconised acrylic sealant.

Do not seal the side or bottom edges unless directed by the manufacturer.

Treat any mould or mildew with a 3:1 water to bleach mixture, leaving it on for 20 minutes before rinsing the surface thoroughly by hose or power washing. Do not use high pressure power washing or sandblasting because it may damage the surface.

Remove any old paint exhibiting poor adhesion by carefully scraping, wire brushing or power washing with plain water.

Priming

A quality exterior water based acrylic masonry primer, or a self-priming

100% acrylic paint is recommended for a prime coat on fibre cement.

Even if the surface has been pre primed or painted, a prime coat is recommended to ensure you have best adhesion and uniformity of the finish coat.

This is especially important for the application of darker coloured paints that show great variations in sheen if the

underlying surface is not well sealed and uniform.

Painting

After the prime coat, apply a top quality 100 percent acrylic water based paint that is recommended for masonry surfaces.

A low sheen finish will give maximum uniformity plus good resistance to the weather, while glossier finishes should give greater resistance to mildew, but can show up imperfections in the substrate.

A second coat is not essential but it will increase the life of the paint job.

Another possibility for fibre cement is an elastomeric wall coating (EWC). EWCs bridge small cracks that may form as a result of temperature changes.

These are generally applied by professional contractors, and if you do recommend an EWC, let your customer know they need to apply it in two heavy coats so that it has



NEW substrates



the film thickness needed to bridge the cracks.

There are some coatings not recommended for fibre cement, including oil based paint and stains. Also, your customers should not paint over silicone sealants, although siliconised acrylic sealants can be painted.



EIFS

(Exterior Insulation and Finish System)

One of the latest systems, EIFS is a multi layered wall cladding that provides excellent energy efficiency and much greater design flexibility than many other exterior substrates.

First developed in Europe in the 1950s, EIFS are used in commercial projects while, increasingly, the systems are being used in residential applications.

Typically, EIFS consists of:

- An insulation board made of polystyrene foam or similar which is attached by adhesive or mechanical means to the wall;

- A durable, water resistant base coat applied on top of the insulation and reinforced with fibre glass mesh for added strength; and
- A textured finish coat that incorporates an acrylic polymer binder.

For extra protection, a topcoat of acrylic paint can be applied over the texture coat.

After prolonged exposure in harsh urban environments, the surface may become soiled and stained, or the owner may simply want to change the colour, necessitating a re paint.

Surface preparation

Follow the same basic surface preparation to treat mildew and remove dirt, dust and old paint as for other types of masonry.

However, you'll need to advise your customer to take extra precautions:

- Double your efforts to thoroughly seal all cracks, joints, seams and other openings by applying a quality acrylic sealant on day one followed by a second application the next day;
- Use plain water without any cleaning agents or bleach when power washing; and
- Take care the water pressure is not too strong because it could damage the surface or drive water into the material.

Priming

For best adhesion and uniformity of finish, apply a quality exterior water based masonry primer or premium self-priming acrylic paint.

Painting

Apply a top quality, 100 percent acrylic, water based exterior paint that is recommended for masonry surfaces. A low sheen paint will provide good moisture-vapour permeability while shielding the building from the elements..

An EWC may be applied if recommended by the installer.

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FACTORY – PAINTED METALS

These materials usually have a factory applied paint or powder coated finish and are often glossy. Examples are factory coated steel and galvanised steel sheeting, or powder coated aluminium. After years of weathering, the coating may release a chalky powder and the glossy finish fades.



Surface preparation

Prepare the surface by:

- Treating any mildew with a 3:1 water to bleach mixture, leaving it on for 20 minutes before rinsing thoroughly with water;
- Removing any white, powdery oxide with a non metallic scouring pad;
- Eliminating any gloss by lightly sanding glossy areas with a fine (#220) sandpaper; and
- Removing all dirt, treated mildew and dust by washing with a detergent solution and rinsing thoroughly, or by careful power washing.

Priming

Where the factory finish is intact and in good condition, it should be washed clean before re-painting, generally without the need for a primer.

But where the bare metal is exposed, apply a coat of a corrosion inhibiting primer suitable for the particular type of metal. Check the manufacturer's recommendations.

Painting

Apply a top quality, 100 percent acrylic, water based paint.

VINYL AND PVC

Increasingly, window frames, railings, decking, fascias and fences are being made from PVC or mixtures of cellulosic material with PVC, polypropylene, polyethylene or nylon. These mixtures are sometimes referred to as 'plastic wood' or wood/polymer composites.

After years of weathering, released pigment, or chalk, may appear on the surface, detracting from the appearance and requiring painting.

Surface preparation

Prepare the surface by:

- Treating any mildew with a 3:1 water to bleach mixture, leaving it on for 20 minutes before rinsing thoroughly with water;
- Lightly sanding glossy areas with a fine (#220) sandpaper and wiping off residual dust;
- Scraping off any paint that is not adhering to the surface; and
- Removing all dirt, treated mildew and dust by washing with a detergent solution and rinsing thoroughly, or by careful power washing.

Priming

For best adhesion and uniformity of finish, apply a quality exterior water based acrylic primer.

Prime and paint all cut edges and ends of the polymer/wood composite.



Painting

Apply a top quality, 100 percent acrylic, water based exterior paint in a low sheen or gloss finish depending on the desired appearance.




A second coat is beneficial as it will increase the life of the paint job.

Avoid painting rigid vinyl substrates with a colour that is darker than the original because it will absorb the heat of the sun and is likely to warp irreversibly.

For decking, steps and walkways, apply a quality exterior water based acrylic deck paint and allow to dry for several days before use.

Regardless of whether your customer is applying paint to one of the newer or more traditional substrates, don't forget to remind them there are no shortcuts.

They still need to prepare the surface properly, use quality tools, apply a quality product designed for that substrate, and apply it under the right conditions. 

Key Selling Tip

- ▶ Many people think you can't paint some of these 'new' substrates
- ▶ Let customers know that premium acrylic paint can:
 - improve the appearance
 - change colour to complement the rest of the building or update it
 - give long lasting protection

Sales training?

Bah, humbug...

By Roger Sayers and Debra Templar, Directors of Australian Retail Services, a leading provider of quality, person-to-person skills, knowledge training and expert consultancy services to the retail industry.

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"What's the point of training my staff? I no sooner train them and they leave."

This is the lament we hear so often from retailers and our answer is always the same: "Your choice then is to train them and run the risk of them leaving, or NOT train them and run the risk of them staying..."

The truth is: As a store, you're either getting better or getting worse and, in order to succeed, you need a store that is clean, well organised, properly merchandised and with salespeople who are trained well and WANT to sell.

TRAINING TO IMPROVE SALES

We hasten to add, though, training for the sake of training – with no means of measurement – is a waste of time and money.

What is the point of spending time training people if you don't measure the improvement in your business?

The only reason to ever do sales training is to improve a sales statistic.

Let's assume you are about to open a new store. The product is

displayed beautifully, the store is organised and as clean as can be and all the elements are in place for you to really sell and expand the business. The key element missing is: SALESPEOPLE

Salespeople are there to get shoppers to become buyers with products that stay sold! (No looking up and seeing yesterday's customer returning with the product in their arms).

THREE AREAS OF SKILL

In the simplest of terms, there are three general areas in which a salesperson must be trained in order to succeed:

- Operations;
- Product knowledge; and
- Selling skills

Each area supports the others in enabling the salesperson to maximise their success on the sales floor.

(continue next page)



If a salesperson has mastered the operational side of the business, but is not comfortable or competent on the sales floor, then they won't succeed as a salesperson.

If a salesperson has highly developed selling skills, but lacks product knowledge, they won't be able to answer customers' questions and their success will be limited.

If a salesperson has thorough product knowledge but lacks selling skills, they will more likely fail during crucial phases of the selling process (asking questions, attempting to add-on, up-sell or 'bundle', closing the sale) and will be unable to maximise their sales potential.

Without skill in each area, the salesperson is not likely to survive on the sales floor.

HOLD PEOPLE ACCOUNTABLE

If, on the other hand, a salesperson is the top salesperson in the store, they can't be better than the best. Sure, even top salespeople can get better but why are you even worried about that? Get off the backs of your top performers and work on your weakest links.

Reaching sales goals is the benchmark for determining the success or failure of your team. No longer should opinions affect your judgement about the ability of your salespeople to perform. They either reach their goals or they don't.

TEAM LEADERSHIP ROLE

The primary responsibility of the store manager is to help each salesperson reach and then exceed the minimum sales performance standard.

The bottom line is gross sales. It should be noted that organisations with a high number of discounted sales may compensate salespeople based on margin. Therefore, margin is the bottom line as well.

But in most typical paint stores, it doesn't matter if a salesperson made one sale of \$500 and another made

“Reaching sales goals is the benchmark for determining the success or failure of your team. No longer should opinions affect your judgement about the ability of your salespeople to perform. They either reach their goals or they don't.”

10 sales that totalled \$500, the end result is the same. And if that \$500 qualifies for success, it doesn't really matter how it was achieved. Both salespeople deserve the success and the praise that comes with it.

Raising the performance level of your team is the key. Salespeople need better advice to improve performance than just 'sell more'. By tracking your figures, you get an insight into how the individual salesperson can sell more.

You never coach the results (in sales). You coach what caused the result.

A team with new team members who have little experience in sales requires a great deal of assistance from their manager in order to eventually succeed in the world of retail paint selling.

DEVELOPING SALES SKILLS

Here is a logical order in which to develop sales skills:

Conversion rate

Your first step in developing a salesperson's skills is to teach them how to sell something -anything - to as many customers as possible. This is critical in building the self-confidence necessary to develop further.

When salespeople feel no pressure to make great sales but, instead, to just make sales, they experience 'wins' immediately and begin to believe that they can do the job.

If they are worrying about selling add-ons, up-selling or handling objections to a more expensive item whenever there is a cheaper alternative, they are less likely to succeed.

Average sale

The second step in developing a salesperson's skills is to work on increasing their average sale by selling more expensive items and/or adding on. The salesperson should already have the confidence necessary to do so now. All it takes now is a little time and practice for them to master this area.

Personal trade and referrals

Building a following of customers is the mark of a great salesperson. There are so few salespeople in retail that truly have developed a following and those salespeople are among the top producers within their industries.

We all know that it is much easier to make a sale with a repeat customer and much easier to sell them more. So it makes sense that building your own personal trade within the store would allow you to produce much more.

CORRECTING PROBLEMS

Now, let's look at some of the causes of low sales:

Low average sale

Failure to create value in the demonstration of more expensive items is usually, but not always, due to a lack of product knowledge.

A lack of effective questioning could also be the cause, as the salesperson is not matching the needs of the customers in the demonstration because they don't know what the needs are.

Failure to even show more expensive items could be the result

“The only reason to ever do sales training is to improve a sales statistic.”

How to double your sales in nine weeks

Let's look at a real retail case study.

This is a store with approximately 10 staff, open seven days per week with a combination of full-time, part-time and casual labour. The staff offer a high standard of customer service, are pleasant and willing.

The problem is that none of them have ever been trained on how to sell. They've never had the opportunity to think through the sales process and develop specific skills for specific steps in the selling.

After taking part in a sales training course, the store went from weekly gross sales of \$12,300 to \$28,107 over a nine week period and their average sale increased from \$62.76 to \$76.59.

In addition to this, the average Items Per Sale is 1.3 – week, after week.

Sales per hour have risen from \$69.89 to \$151.93

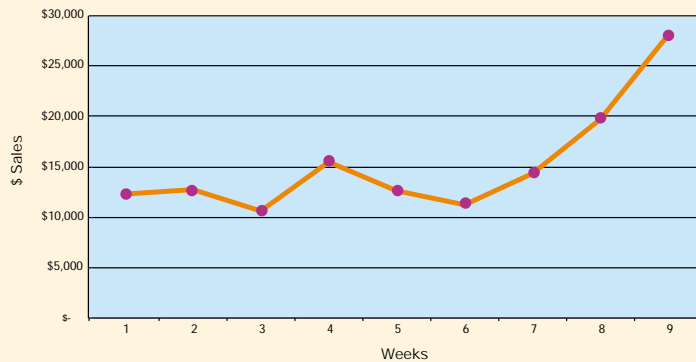
The store has moved from being a store that sells XY product to a sales driven store that utilises XY as its product to generate sales .

The major change? Skilled, trained staff now bring this competence into their already excellent service centred culture. This store is kicking goals!

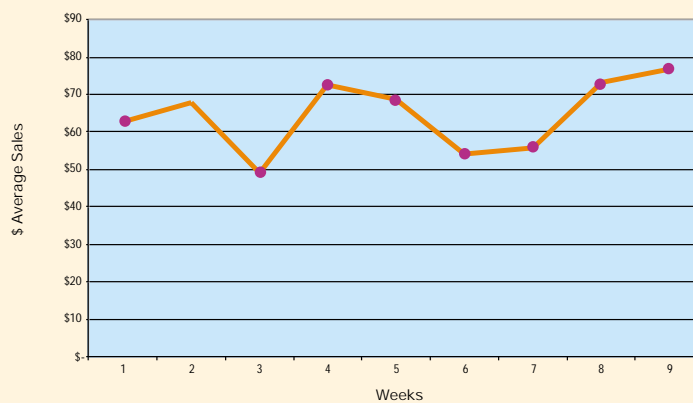
And the morale of the store? High. Why? They now understand what they're doing and know that they are very good at what they do.

Will this breed complacency? I don't think so as all staff are committed to improving their statistics on a daily, weekly and monthly basis.

SALES \$ OVER 9 WEEKS



AVERAGE SALE



of either a lack of product knowledge or the belief by the salesperson that they're not worth the extra money.

Low items per sale

The salesperson may have a lack of confidence in selling add-ons. This is usually characterised by low average sales.

Product knowledge is a possible cause, but a lack of skill in selling can also cause a salesperson to feel incapable of selling anything, let alone more than one item.

Failure to even show add-ons is an obvious cause of low items per sale. If you don't show it, you can't sell it.

Unsuccessful attempts to add on are usually due to a lack of questioning, since the salesperson may not choose to add on a very logical item. If the salesperson finds out more about the customer's intended use of the item during questioning, the chance of discovering a logical add-on is enhanced.

The salesperson may not create enough value on the add-ons. Even if someone suggests additional merchandise, it may not sell itself.

Add on sales are more likely to be successful when your customer's mind is open to a range of possibilities before they make a commitment on the primary item.

The salesperson may be far too concerned about saving customers money instead of selling them everything they could possibly want to go along with their main purchase. This could be because the customer has indicated that money is a problem or the salesperson just doesn't believe the additional items are really necessary.

Low Sales Per Hour

Low sales per hour are usually due to one or more of the above statistics being low. Your best strategy is to increase the sales per hour by over-coming the other deficient statistics. Q

Key Selling Tip

- ▶ Measure and monitor your sales statistics
- ▶ Build confidence by developing selling skills
- ▶ Instill product knowledge and the benefits of selling quality
- ▶ Don't forget add-on sales





Quality Paint is fastest gr

A survey of Australian hardware retailers has found that quality paint is the fastest growing segment in the \$2.4 billion market for paint, sealants and accessories.

According to the survey, the quality segment of the market has remained very stable over the past three years and accounts for 78 cents of every dollar spent on paint.

Leading management consultants, Archer Consulting Group, carried out the market research between December 2002 and April 2003.

The survey found that the quality brands segment - defined as more than \$40 for a four litre container - grew by almost 8% in sales value during 2002 compared with the previous year.

This compares to an average increase for all paint price segments of 5%.

By contrast, sales of cheaper paint were on a downward trend - 16% less in 2002 than in the previous



Total Paint Sales(\$) by Price Point (Based on 4L container)

| Segment | Buyer Expectations | \$'000 Sales | | | % Change over previous year |
|-------------|--|--------------|---------|---------|-----------------------------|
| | | 2000 | 2001 | 2002 | |
| Under \$30 | The cheapest paint primarily used for rental properties. | 58.4 | 121.5 | 102.1 | (16.0%) |
| #30-\$39 | Private labels where quality is reasonable but expectations not high. | 186.9 | 182.3 | 178.6 | (2.0%) |
| \$40-\$49 | Well known brand at a good price and delivering value in the minds of the users. | 443.8 | 461.7 | 497.6 | 7.8% |
| \$50 & over | Proud owners who feel their homes deserve the best and are also fashion conscious. | 478.9 | 449.5 | 497.7 | 7.8% |
| TOTAL | | 1,168.0 | 1,215.0 | 1,276.0 | 5.0% |





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Geoff Dart

Painting segment

year. The cheaper paint category is where the retail price is \$30 or less for four litres.

PAINT DRIVES HARDWARE

"Paint continues to be a key driver for hardware retailers," said Geoff Dart, Principal Consultant at Archer Consulting Group.

"People do more painting and decoration than any other Do-it-yourself (DIY) project, and I think the trend will continue.

"Increasingly, consumers these days want their living environment to reflect personal choices in fashion and lifestyle.

"This interest is reflected in the rapidly growing number of home improvement and lifestyle programs we see in the media that attract huge viewing audiences."

According to Geoff, it is a trend that is likely to continue unabated because Australia lags behind the USA and UK in per head expenditure on home improvement products.

DIY GROWING

"The DIYer and handy person are still the greatest areas of growth and opportunity," he added.

Overall, the survey revealed that the market for hardware and building products grew by 4.5% over the past year to a record high of \$24.4 billion.

Who does the buying?

Even though there is a strong indication that DIY will continue to be the source of growth, 62% of sales of all hardware products were to trade customers compared with 38% in retail sales. In 2002, this amounted to \$15.1 billion in trade sales versus \$9.3 billion in retail sales.

However, in paint and related products, the situation is more balanced with an almost 50:50 split between the two.

The corporate hardware channel has shown the greatest growth over the past two years and accounted for 19%, or \$240 million, of total paint sales in 2002 with projections of 21% by 2005.

However, paint company-owned stores, including trade centres, have maintained their position as sales leaders with 37% of the total paint market, or \$471 million in 2002, a figure that is expected to grow steadily.

Second to the paint-company stores channel in the survey was paint specialists, which accounted for 20% of all paint sales and just pipped the corporate hardware group with 19%.

Along with these three channels, the major franchised hardware group sector also grew its paint sales over the previous year. It appears that the channels, which lost ground, were the non-aligned, privately owned hardware stores, and the department stores.

While paint and related products recorded increased sales figures, the other standout categories were gardening/nursery, building materials and plumbing.

TRENDS IDENTIFIED

Fuelled by the buoyant market for new home construction, renovations and additions, the survey identified several trends, including:

- Smaller housing blocks with reduced areas for lawn;
- A higher incidence of new housing;
- Continued growth in the renovations and additions segment of the housing market;
- An increase in lifestyle driven projects, such as those related to outdoor living and entertainment;
- The increasing importance of the female consumer in buying and usage of hardware and building products; and
- A more informed consumer base, assisted by the proliferation of lifestyle programs.

According to Geoff Dart, retailers need to heed the increase in consumer spending on home improvement products and services, and make the purchase decision as easy as possible.

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MERCHANDISING A FACTOR

“Good merchandising and store layout are critical factors in capturing a share of this buoyant market.

“Our research indicates consumers are looking for information and education. While it is not new, one of the areas highlighted in the research was a desire for more in-store demonstrations.

“Continuing that theme, they also wanted manufacturers to improve labelling and provide more comprehensive information on the pack.”

What of the future?

Some of the trends that came out of the survey include:

- There is an increasing use of information technology as both retailers and suppliers look for more efficiencies through effective planning and a greater understanding of customers;

- Rationalisation is possible because there are many suppliers with similar products, a plethora of brands and little differentiation in product, price and positioning;
- Lifestyle media programs have made consumers more aware of decorative products and their usage for the interior, and more recently, the exterior; and
- Indoor fashions and trends are now moving outdoors with an increase in garden decoration and

DIY projects such as pergolas, decking and water features.

“The survey indicates there are a number of issues arising from the increasing pressure of well educated consumers who demand a wide range of products, good service and competitive pricing,” said Geoff Dart.

“The growth in the quality paint segment of the hardware market is an indicator that, in a small market, one of the answers for hardware retailers will lie in a focus on quality.” Q



Geoff Dart and Tricia Reardon, Director of Marketing and Operations at Archer Consulting Group, review the survey results.

Don't blot your reputation by recommending inferior paint

When a customer asks you why they should pay a little more for a top quality interior paint, there are a couple of good reasons for recommending the best.

Stain resistance is one of the most important attributes of interior paints. They need to be able to stand up to children's grimy hands and occasional spills...all quite normal wear and tear in a busy household.

Stain resistance is the ability of the paint to avoid retaining the dirt and stains that may get on it during normal use.

A related property, stain removal, refers to the ease with which stains, dirt or grime can be removed from the painted surface.

Both of these properties are related to the toughness and porosity of the paint film, which

depends on the type and level of the binder used.

In this regard, higher quality interior low sheen wall paints offer good performance in terms of stain resistance because they contain more binder than flatter or budget priced paints.

Generally, the higher the binder content, the harder it is for stains to penetrate the surface of the paint.

Top quality 100 percent acrylic paints are resistant to household cleaners, so the paint lasts longer, even after the stains have been removed.

When recommending a quality interior paint, remember that the gloss or sheen level also has an effect on stain resistance and removal.

As a rule of thumb, the higher the gloss, the better the stain resistance. Q

STAIN RESISTANCE QUALITIES OF INTERIOR PAINTS

| Paint Sheen | Stain Resistance |
|-------------|--|
| High Gloss | Most stain resistance but highly reflective and highlights surface imperfections. Used for trimwork. |
| Semi Gloss | Good stain resistance, cleans easily. Ideal for wet areas. |
| Low Sheen | Good stain resistance, better than flat paints. Ideal for living areas. |
| Flat | Porous finish can trap dirt and make cleaning difficult. Good for ceilings. |

A PRIME opportunity to increase customer satisfaction

Primers and sealers can improve the appearance, performance and longevity of a quality paint job. But deciding when and where to use them remains a mystery to many people.



Today customers are presented with more choices than ever before. As well as the traditional method of using one coat of a primer or sealer followed by two topcoats, some leading brands now offer a self priming topcoat as an alternative system in exterior protection!

So here's a prime opportunity to help them make the right choice, increase your sales and ensure return business because your customer is satisfied with the end result.

PRIMERS COME FIRST

Primers are often the first layer of paint applied to a bare surface, and are specially formulated to perform several valuable functions.

Primers help topcoat paints *adhere better* by providing a more uniform surface to grip to than the bare, unpainted substrate.

Primers also give the colour and sheen of the finished paint job a more *uniform appearance*, particularly where the substrate being painted is porous or uneven.

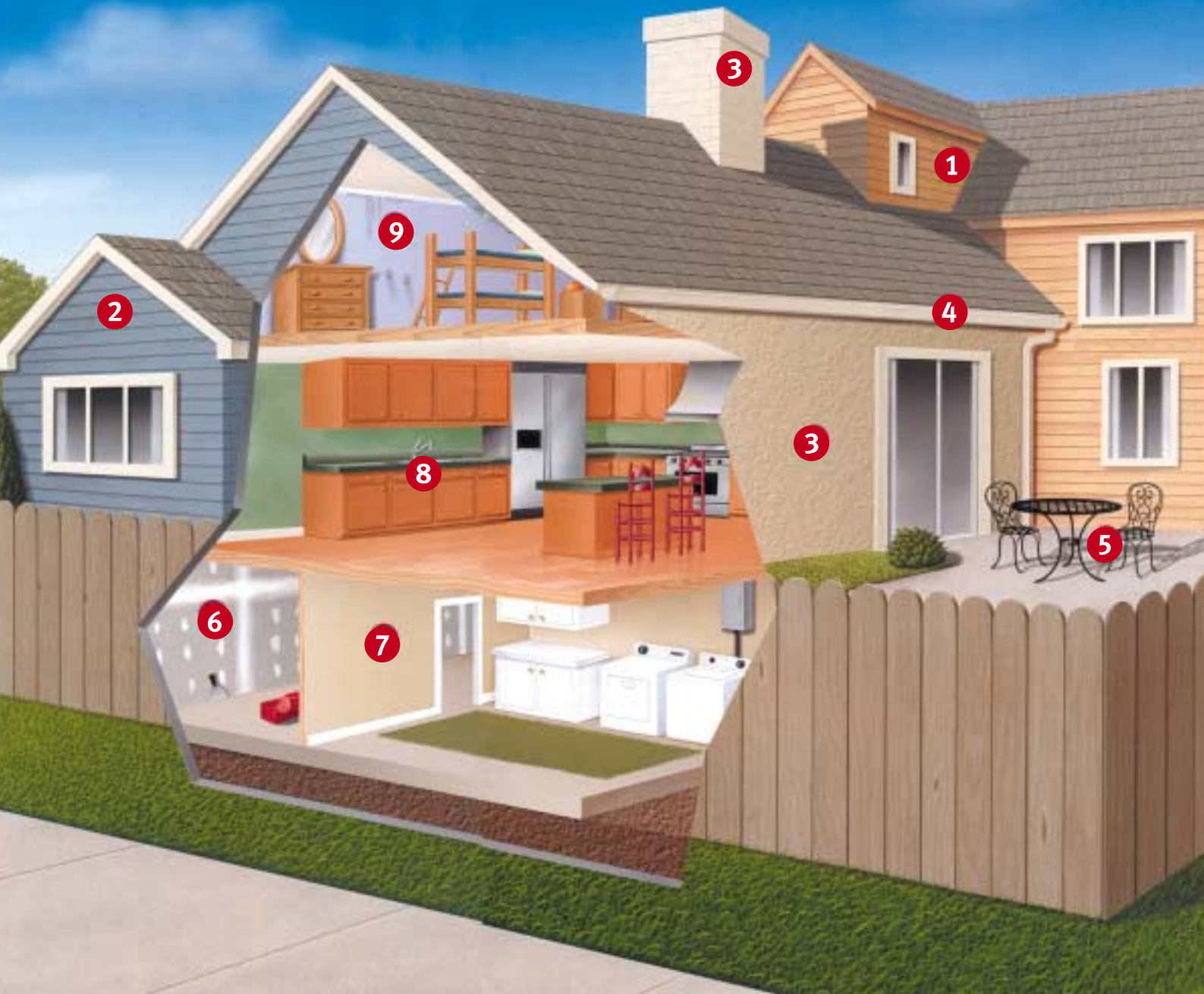
A third, key function, is that the correct primer will help to *prevent stains* coming through from the substrate and ruining the appearance of the finished paint job.

This is especially important with water based topcoats, some of which may be vulnerable to stain bleed without the correct primer.

And specialist primers are also available to prevent rusting or corrosion of metal surfaces.

SEALERS PROMOTE UNIFORM APPEARANCE

Sealers can provide some of the same functions as primers, but are primarily used to seal porous



surfaces, such as plaster and plaster board. They prevent absorption of the finishing coat so that it will have a uniform sheen or gloss.

They also help protect masonry topcoats from efflorescence or alkalinity, and can be used to help seal out moisture.

WHEN TO USE A PRIMER OR SEALER?

Your customers should always use a primer, sealer or self priming exterior topcoat when:

- Painting a new surface, such as timber and masonry;
- Repainting an uneven or badly deteriorated surface; and
- Repainting a surface that has been stripped back to the original substrate.

Primers and sealers always

perform best when the surface has been properly prepared and is free of dust and dirt, loose or flaking paint and any other contaminants.

RECOMMENDING THE RIGHT PRODUCT

Primers and sealers are available in water based and oil based forms for both interior and exterior applications.

Which primer or sealer do you recommend?

In most cases, you can confidently recommend top quality, 100 percent acrylic water based primers and sealers because of their performance and convenience.

However, for certain surfaces such as steel, hard or chalky plaster, and tannin rich timbers subject to

staining, an oil based primer may be appropriate.

In any case, different paint manufacturers have formulated specialised products for specific applications so it is important to check the label or ask an expert salesperson to ensure it is the right product for the job.

EXTERIOR APPLICATIONS

In Australia and New Zealand some leading brands offer self priming exterior topcoat paints.

These top quality 100 percent acrylic paints are formulated to provide the tannin blocking capability of a primer together with the exterior durability expected of a premium topcoat.

Here are some general guidelines for exterior applications:

1 NEW AND UNPAINTED TIMBER

Bare timber, such as weatherboards, should always be primed or painted within two weeks of exposure to the weather to keep the timber surface from deteriorating and reducing adhesion.

For most timbers, a quality water based acrylic primer or a self priming acrylic topcoat is recommended.

If the timber is prone to staining, an oil based timber primer may be an option. These provide excellent tannin resistance but are slower to dry, more difficult to clean up and can become brittle over time.

Where timber has weathered and gone grey, it is important to prepare the surface before painting.

Preparation involves scraping and sanding the surface thoroughly to remove the deteriorated fibres, otherwise adhesion will be compromised.

2 PREVIOUSLY PAINTED TIMBER

If the paint is in good, sound condition, it just needs to be washed down.

If it has deteriorated, all loose paint should be scraped off and the rough edges feather sanded. Any bare spots should be sanded thoroughly and dusted off. In addition, as much chalk as possible should be removed.

If the old paint is still adhering well, priming can be beneficial but is not absolutely necessary.

3 MASONRY

On new masonry or older surfaces that are very porous, recommend a water based primer, sealer or self priming paint.

Water based acrylic paints are ideal for masonry because they resist alkalinity and are less prone to blistering because they allow the moisture vapour to escape through the paint.

4 GALVANISED IRON

Remove any white, powdery oxide using a non metallic scouring pad.

Generally, apply two coats of top quality self priming acrylic paint but, in salty or corrosive environments, such as the seaside, a coat of a specialised acrylic galvanised iron primer is a wise precaution.

Oil based paint should never be applied directly on to galvanised surfaces because it will become brittle over time and crack and peel.

5 FERROUS METAL

Remove any loose rust using a wire brush, rinse with turps and let dry.

Then apply one or, for ultimate rust protection, two coats of an oil based metal primer.

INTERIOR APPLICATIONS

There is a range of primers and sealers for interior applications, each designed for a specific surface. They are formulated to assist adhesion, assist in getting a smooth topcoat by filling surface imperfections, and to prevent porous substrates from absorbing the topcoat.

6 PAPERFACED PLASTERBOARD

The paperfaced sheets of plasterboard and the gypsum-based compounds used to join them smoothly together have surfaces of quite different porosity.

Water based acrylic sealers and undercoats are designed to provide a uniform surface for the topcoat to be applied to, and to prevent its absorption into the surface. This helps to give the finish coats an even appearance free of patchiness.

Like most undercoats, a coat of sealer can also provide additional hiding.

7 HARD PLASTER

Older homes often have hard plaster walls that have been trowelled on and oil based sealers provide excellent adhesion to this type of surface.

It is important to remind your customers to wash away any chalky or loose deposits from the plaster walls prior to starting work.

Once the oil based sealer has dried, an acrylic topcoat can be applied.

8 INTERIOR TIMBER

Interior timber, such as doors and trimwork, can be primed with either oil based primer or water based acrylic primers.

Oil based primers provide excellent adhesion and a smooth surface for topcoating but are inconvenient because of the lingering odour and slower drying time.

On the other hand, water based acrylic timber primers are more convenient to use and save time because they have little or no odour, dry faster and cleaning up is easier.

9 STAINS

Stain blocking primers and sealers are designed to cover stains and prevent the stain bleeding through to the topcoat.

Specialist stain blocking products are available to deal with specific stains, so it pays to check the label carefully.

There are few issues in painting that cause more confusion than when to use a primer or sealer. Hopefully, a little more knowledge about the subject will help you put your customers at ease...and provide a sales opportunity. ☺



Kim on colour

The confident

For as long as I have been working in this field, my chant has been that the consumer lacks confidence with colour.

Not any more. Resulting from the wealth of inspirational visual information available today – mainly from magazines, lifestyle shows on TV and an ever increasing amount of colour display material from paint manufacturers – the consumer is inspired and ready to paint.

Today, the consumer is confident! The choice of paint colour and type has become one of the primary decorating decisions and it is being embraced with gusto.

Where once it was homeware items like cushions, throws, table

wear and knick knacks that provided a seasonal change of colour to a room, feature walls are now being considered for this role.

The colour can be changed to suit a mood, season or new couch, or simply because an exciting new colour card has hit the market inspiring people to experiment with new finishes such as stone, sand, suede, colour washes or the new high chroma colours now available.

Special-effect finishes add dimension to any colour and, because people are increasingly intrigued by products and spaces that heighten the sensory experience, pearlescent, metallic and textured finishes are growing in demand.



SEARCHING FOR PARADISE

(literally a place of bliss)

In the past year, we have seen indications that people are re-evaluating their priorities and getting back to things they consider to be really important – family, friends and self. Although there were signs this was happening before terrorism turned our world upside down, the heightened need for security has accelerated this trend.

It has become socially acceptable to resist the frenetic activity we recently welcomed and the practice of adjusting our lifestyle according to the trends. Instead, people prefer to surround themselves with memories, keepsakes and personal belongings that are important to them and help to create their own safe and secure space.

Family photos, collections and objects of meaning can become art in themselves and will be proudly displayed. Everyone is at work building his or her own form of Utopia. A completely personal vision





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consumer

of paradise whether it be inside or out.

The country romance trend mentioned in the last edition is merging with this idea of paradise – creating special spaces in the home to reflect, reminisce, display, write or read.

And colour is the tool used to define these areas by merging all the materials into a whole statement of the space. Paint can renew an old desk or chair, revive the walls, floors and ceilings and give a face-lift to objects such as photo frames and storage boxes.

Colour selection has become very personal; there is a strong emergence of pinks, soft purples and greens being used in combination as they create a natural harmony and are softly feminine and embracing.

This palette can also be deepened to seducing reds and fresher, yellow kissed greens. Floral motifs, hand stitched details, and whimsical embroidery appear on fabrics and are offset by delicate, light infused pearl paints.

ISLAND LIFE

Not far removed from the idea of paradise is the next trend – Island Life – a place of retreat. In an atmosphere reminiscent of Gauguin's paintings of Tahiti, the pace of life in the South Pacific is translated in paint to create serene, peaceful spaces within our own homes.



Turquoise and aqua are the colours of the sea and the sky and, as we gain a greater appreciation for the quality and preservation of our air and our water, we will use these colours in abundance.

Colours are used to capture the emotion, the essence of island life. They are refreshing and calming colours that reflect the carefree nature of long beach walks or lazy sun drenched afternoons by the beach.

This is very much a colour story with refreshing pool blues contrasted against pure white; and sun bleached pastels richly contrasted with very bright or even fluorescent highlights. Whether watery, atmospheric or dependable, blues are invigorating yet familiar and very popular.

BRINGING THE OUTSIDE... INSIDE!

Gardening is a world mega trend with billions of dollars being poured into products and services for the great outdoors.



The outside is becoming as important as inside with sections of the garden being given the same consideration as rooms in our homes. Everyone recognises that the garden is now an extension of the home providing more 'room' for living.

The emphasis is on colour in the current trend of bringing the influences of the garden into our home and office.

While there is still heavy use of grey – from Charcoal to Silver – accent colours such as persimmon, aubergine, mustard, olive, chocolate and aqua, trigger the greys and are used readily in combination.

Warm earthy oranges, terracottas and yellows, continue to be popular exterior colours, exempt from trend influences, due to their comforting familiarity. In the past, yellows and reds, in particular, have been difficult to use for the exterior due to light fastness and opacity problems.

Now with high chroma colours available from some premium paint brands, it is possible to use almost

“One of the most compelling things about paint colour is its power to dramatically affect how people feel. Colour is emotion and new colour in our home, whilst giving us the opportunity to express our individuality, can also bring us comfort and peace of mind.”

any colour for the exterior and their superior performance means you don't need three or more coats to achieve full coverage. It also allows you to use much cleaner, brighter colours outside broadening the scope for our colour enthusiastic public.

Hot pinks, lime greens and turquoise blues, together with softer pastel lavenders and greens, are being applied to every possible surface. Premium quality 100% acrylic exterior paints provide the UV resistance which helps give these exciting colours the durability needed.

Walls in render, timber, brick and masonry and, most importantly, the suburban timber paling fence - are all being transformed with colour.

Inspiration comes from tropical destinations where indoor/outdoor living is a way of life. Outdoor showers mimic Balinese resorts or Aussie beach showers, and water features are becoming an essential item. Blue washed spas, teal rendered walls, lime green splashes, purple and green mock walls all represent the explosion of colour we are seeing in the garden.

Timber decks and walkways, slatted screens and fences are all growing outdoor features and will probably boost the demand for timber paint products. Used readily with stone for paving or feature walls, natural materials are merged with painted walls to create vibrant and exciting gardens.

WOOD AND ALL THINGS BROWN

Another area of growing interest is floor stains. There is a great demand for darker stains in a range of browns from chocolate to softer walnuts, and blacks and charcoals.

Traditionally, staining timber floor boards has been avoided but now the new technology floor stains have advanced to make the staining process more consistent.

Gloss levels on floors are predicted to drop to a satin or matt finish to give a slightly more rustic or lived in feel. The lower gloss level is also easier to maintain.

Darker floors are contrasted with white walls for a gallery feel to a larger space, and create the backdrop for a feature wall of colour and texture to become the artwork itself.

Lighter, almost bleached timbers also rank highly with limed washes making a comeback. Whether light or dark, we are seeing timber grain running in a horizontal direction for feature walls and joinery items. This follows the trend of timber slats being used in the same orientation both inside and out.

One of the most compelling things about paint colour is its power to

dramatically affect how people feel. Colour is emotion and new colour in our home, whilst giving us the opportunity to express our individuality, can also bring us comfort and peace of mind.

One of the warmest, most comforting colours is brown and it is as strong as ever.

Browns are affected by almost every colour group. Soft, almost chalk like browns with a slight pink tinge, yellowed tan and toffee colours, aubergine and khaki green influences, and the full café set including espresso, weak skinny latte to creamy mocha with Frangelico! And the colours need to be as tactile as they are drinkable – enticing to look at and to touch.

Paint technology is becoming such that we are able to replicate our favourite fabric and upholstery on the walls, floors and ceiling. With the explosion of texture in the paint industry, we will also see an explosion of demand and, like brown, it won't go away for a while yet. ☺



Key Selling Tip

- ▶ Excite your customers by displaying the new finishes in dramatic colours
- ▶ Show pleasing combinations of colour and texture
- ▶ Know the new colours available in premium exterior acrylics and help your customers find them
- ▶ Run a local competition to find the most exciting use of colour by your customers

Customers' questions answered

Q I read from the PQI website that exterior painting should be done when it's over 15°C. How long after application does this guideline apply? For example, the forecast says daytime temperatures will be in the mid-20s but overnight temperatures are just above freezing. Is that a 'go' or a 'no go'?

A Applying paint above the recommended 15°C guideline is the ideal. The minimum application temperature on the label should be followed carefully. This typically is 10°C for acrylic paints. We suggest these points:

1. Do not apply the paint if the air temperature is below the recommended minimum, or is predicted to drop below the minimum, for the next 36 hours.
2. Do not apply the paint if the surface to be painted is below the minimum recommended temperature. For example, if the temperature in the night was 3°C, and the air temperature is now up to the minimum recommended temperature of 10°C at 9:00 am, and you are painting a metal surface, the surface itself is probably too cold.

Q I have a house with a blue/grey exterior to repaint in February and have read that blue fades more than any other colour. What colour can I apply that will last?

A It's not really true to say that blues fade faster than other colours. You will get best colour retention from earthy toned browns (eg ochres, umbers) and colours based on red oxides. These can be darker tones (that is, darkened with some black added); or light tints. In general brighter reds, yellows and oranges do not hold up so well, particularly in sunny exposures, but today, some manufacturers are using very durable pigments and can offer even these colours in premium quality exterior acrylic paints. Acrylic paints resist the effects of UV radiation much better than oil based paints can. Oil based enamel paints tend to become chalky after a couple of years exposure to strong sunlight, and this makes them lose their colour more quickly.

An important precaution when selecting a colour for any outside paint job is to check that the particular colour is recommended for exterior use by the paint manufacturer.

Q Can you paint over an oil based paint with acrylic paint... or is it vice versa?

A The rule of thumb for exterior applications is that, given proper surface preparation, you can apply quality acrylic paints over oil based paints, but not the reverse. However, if you have many layers of oil based paint, stick to using oil on oil.

For interior use, generally, you can paint over an oil based paint with an acrylic, and vice versa. Some manufacturers, however, will recommend a primer when applying an acrylic over oil-based paint.

Q We are planning to repaint our house that was last painted about nine years ago. We have had the house washed several times due to mould growth, all the gloss is gone and, in fact, some of the paint is actually peeling off. We live in Sydney and I would like to know if it is ok to use a good acrylic paint over this oil base after we have sanded any areas that are peeling? What steps should we take to do this correctly?

A You should be able to use a top quality exterior acrylic paint over oil based paint, if the surface is well prepared. (However, if the old paint consists of a build up of say five or more coats of old oil paint, the safest approach is to continue

with oil, because the acrylic paint can lift if the old oil paint is not adhering well.) Be sure to remove any mould (mildew) on the old paint. When removing the mildew, be sure to kill it. A quick treatment with bleach will eliminate the colour but, to kill it, you need to allow the bleach to stay on the surface for at least 20 minutes, or the mildew will not be killed (even though the colour disappears), and it can grow back before long. To treat the area, use a 3:1 mixture of water and household bleach respectively; and leave on for 20+ minutes, reapplying as it dries. Be sure to protect your eyes, breathing and skin, and nearby plants, during application and rinsing.

Scrub or power wash any areas that have dirt or chalk on them, ensuring that the surface is rinsed clean. Check all areas for poorly adhering paint. Scrape off any that is at all loose. Then feather-sand any scraped areas. Any bare wood should be thoroughly sanded and primed with an exterior acrylic primer or self-priming acrylic exterior paint. Choose a top of the line 100% acrylic house paint in low sheen or gloss, depending on the appearance wanted. A second coat will give better appearance and durability. If brushing, get a quality 75mm polyester or nylon brush and don't paint when the temperature is below 10 degrees C., or is predicted to go below this in the next 36 hours.

Q How can I tell whether the old paint on my walls is oil based or water based?

A The easiest way to check this is to rub the surface of the old wall paint with a rag dipped in methylated spirits. The solvent will soften and eventually remove some of a water based paint film but will have little effect on old, oil based paint. Naturally you would only want to do this test on a hidden area, unless you are certain to repaint anyway.

Q I have painted a brick chimney inside my house with white paint, and can now see some irregular, yellowish stains. I've been told that this might be something called "vanadium bleed". Could this be right? I've never heard of it.

A Yes, this could well be correct. Vanadium bleed is a known, but not common, cause of staining when clay bricks are painted with water based paint. It is caused by the presence in some clays of vanadium salts which are water soluble, and can therefore be drawn through a newly applied coat of water based paint, thus leaving a stain or discolouration on the surface of the paint. When it occurs, the stain is usually yellowish, or sometimes brownish. Not surprisingly, it is usually only visually apparent on light coloured paint. Darker and earthy-coloured paint masks the discolouration so that it is not visible.

Apparently it is more likely to occur from light coloured bricks, but since not all sources of clay contain significant concentrations of vanadium salts, most bricks do not display this problem. The problem is that you cannot tell before you paint whether a supply of bricks is likely to show this rare problem or not.

If it occurs, the solution is to seal the bricks or the stained water based paint with a solvent based sealer or undercoat. The solvent based sealer will hold back this type of stain, and you can then paint over it with a quality water based topcoat of your choice - generally a low sheen acrylic finish is best on bricks in most situations. Acrylic water based paints have much greater resistance properties than PVA (or vinyl) based water based finishes.

The difference is in the paint

What's the difference between top quality 100% acrylics and ordinary paints?

For enduring performance in exterior coatings, nothing matches the advantages of top quality 100% acrylic paints, including:

- excellent durability
- greater resistance to peeling and cracking
- superior colour retention
- better resistance to dirt pick up

How do we know?

At Rohm and Haas' global research facilities, we subject paint to its worst enemies – the sun's ultraviolet rays, moisture and dramatic temperature fluctuations.

That's why we know nothing else performs like top quality 100% acrylic paints.

The difference is in the paint.

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