

Tech Tips: Lights, Colors, and Feedback

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THEN THE LIGHT CAME ON:

I was teaching a class at a chemical coating company that had been contracted by a door panel manufacturer for a well-known Detroit car company (one of the big three). A discussion came up about the issue of fading. It was then that I received a vinyl repair epiphany of such magnitude that I still consider myself blessed to receive to this day.

The representative stated that they only used oxide colors in the manufacturing process. One reason was due to the cost and secondly (but most importantly); oxide colors do not react to sunlight. They are known as non-photoreactive. Pure pigments will fade when exposed to UV, but oxide colors stand the test of time. Oxide colors are probably used in many of the car interiors for these reasons.

However, there are times when you encounter a high-chroma color (a color with a high degree of purity, like a really bright red) that oxides will not work. Oxides are muddy colors, like pastels, so they will not work when you need bright, vibrant colors. Time and experience (or should I say experimentation) will tell you this. (Prepare for shameless self-promotion here) Also, all MATRI-X (www.thematri-x.com) professional trainings feature a comprehensive, in-depth look at color theory and the color issues Aesthetic Technicians face everyday.

READER'S QUESTION:

Donald Loomis from New Jersey wanted our thoughts on the use of flexible epoxies for repairs. You picked a great question, Donald! Let's start at the beginning. What is an epoxy?

Epoxies are thermosetting resins. There are two types of plastics, thermoplastics and thermosets. Thermoplastics can be re-heated and re-shaped once formed, but thermosets cannot. Once they have undergone the polymerization process, it's irreversible. Epoxies start as a resin and then are mixed with a hardener. This hardener starts the chemical reaction, or cross-linking. The result is a very strong and rigid material. Most common epoxy resin is produced from a reaction between epichlorohydrin and bi-phenol-A. Additives and modifiers are then mixed to produce the desirable results, such as flexibility or increased adhesion.

The use of flexible epoxies is well-suited and even common for our industry. The question really begs, which one and when? Well that is a good question, one that is deserving of another article. Look for our follow up article next month that will discuss some popular brands of flexible epoxies, and their applications.