



Brightly-colored pieces of luggage are often easier to identify in busy airports, making these desirable products for frequent travelers. Image Source: Shutterstock user Nick Starichenko

A traveler has finally reached his destination after a long international flight. He's eager to get to his hotel and relax, but first, he has to wait for his luggage to arrive at baggage claim. The traveler watches hundreds of plain black suitcases circle the baggage claim turnstyle—each one looks almost identical, and his fellow travelers have a difficult time identifying their own luggage in the sea of black and grey. That's when the traveler spots his suitcase; it's a vibrant shade of hot pink that's nearly impossible to miss. He's able to quickly claim it and continue with his day.

An estimated 21.6 million bags were lost at airports worldwide in 2016—that's nearly six bags per every 1,000 airline passengers. And in about 4 percent of these cases, passengers never picked up their luggage from baggage claim.¹ In many cases, this is due to misidentification; either a passenger picks up someone else's luggage by mistake, or a passenger isn't able to locate the luggage on the carousel.

In both cases, having a distinctively colored suitcase may have prevented the mix-ups from happening. This is part of the reason luggage manufacturers are increasingly choosing to create bags that feature unusual colors, making it easier for their customers to identify their suitcases in a crowd. But having more colorful design options also necessitates better color quality control protocols. Color measurement instruments like spectrophotometers can help you create colorful luggage that stands out from other bags on the market.



Reframing of luggage as fashion accessories have led to a proliferation of vibrant colors. Image Source: Shutterstock user Thitirat J13

How Unique Colors Benefit Customers and Luggage Manufacturers

While many customers still prefer to use black or grey luggage, colorful designs are becoming more popular due to both their aesthetic appeal and practical function. In the past, suitcases were primarily viewed as utilitarian objects and were typically offered in a limited range of colors. Today, however, luggage is increasingly regarded as an exciting fashion accessory, which is why many brands are using brighter or more unique colors.

Modern luggage manufacturers often create suitcase shells from scratch, and there's an almost unlimited number of color options available to them. Travel blogger Samantha Brown says that we're in "the dawning of the age of colorful and stylish luggage." She explains, "Hard case luggage has taken this to a new level, with incredible designs that become movable art."² By choosing a color other than black, grey or navy, customers can not only identify their luggage more easily but also ensure that their suitcase matches their personalities and preferences.

For luggage manufacturers, offering unique colors can both help establish brand identity and increase the appeal of their product lines. High-end manufacturers like Louis Vuitton create their

own textiles that prominently feature the hallmarks of the brand, such as their signature monogram logo and brown color scheme.³ However, many manufacturers build their brand and attract business not with a single signature color, but through the variety of their offerings, giving customers appealing choices and [keeping up with color trends](#).

Measuring Color Using Spectrophotometers

Color measurement instruments like spectrophotometers can help you establish your product colors with a great degree of accuracy. Unlike the naked eye, which can be biased when it comes to accurately measuring color, a spectrophotometer allows you to objectively analyze color to ensure consistent evaluation. This means that color assessment will be the same every time, regardless of operator.

The color of your luggage is influenced by a variety of factors, including the type of material you use and how the material is handled during manufacturing. Spectrophotometric color measurement can help you [establish an objective color standard](#) and evaluate your processing methods to ensure coloration is accurate and consistent, taking into account the impact of each process variable. For example, if the color of a plastic suitcase does not meet your color requirements, you may have to modify your pigment ratio in order to achieve the look you want. Similarly, a [soft-sided bag](#) may require a different dye formulation to adhere to your standard. Once you've refined your manufacturing process to achieve the perfect color, you can then continuously monitor color within the production line to identify unwanted color variation.



Color can help your luggage stand out on the baggage carousel. Image Source: Shutterstock user NeoStudio1

Testing Various Materials for Color Cohesion

One of the challenges associated with creating color cohesion in luggage is that each piece of luggage can be made from a wide range of materials. Additionally, disparate pieces of luggage may have to match in color despite being made of completely different materials.⁴ For example, some luggage brands offer both hard-sided and soft-sided cases in a signature color, as this gives their customers more freedom to choose the style that they prefer without having to compromise on aesthetics.

However, each material has its own unique aesthetic qualities, which can present difficulties for color matching. For example, a glossy, smooth plastic sample will appear to be different in color than a matte, textured sample, even if the two are identically pigmented. [State-of-the-art spectrophotometers](#) can help you create consistent color matches between disparate materials, which is essential for luggage manufacturers who want to achieve color consistency within individual products and across a product line. Depending on the type of instrument that you use, spectrophotometric color measurement methods can help you test a wide range of materials, from shiny metals to [woven fabrics](#) to [bold plastic shells](#). Using these tools, you can create colorful, cohesive products regardless of the materials you choose.

HunterLab Experience

HunterLab provides color measurement instruments to seven of the world's top 10 fabric manufacturers, and our instruments are well-designed to meet the demands of the [woven fabric industry](#). In addition to our experience in the textile industry, we also provide reliable color measurement instruments to the [plastics industry](#) and many of the world's top plastics manufacturers use our state-of-the-art equipment to create their high-quality products. [Contact us](#) today to speak with one of our color quality experts and let us help you select the perfect spectrophotometer for your needs.

1. "What Happens to Lost Luggage?", August 22, 2017, <http://www.telegraph.co.uk/travel/travel-truths/What-happens-to-lost-luggage/>
2. "Six Things to Consider When Buying Luggage", January 2, 2014, <https://samantha-brown.com/tips/6-things-to-consider-when-buying-luggage/>
3. "Ten Best Luxury Luggage Lines", <http://www.elitetraveler.com/shopping-lifestyle/best-luxury-luggage-lines/9>
4. "Luggage Materials", <https://www.worldtraveler.com/travel-101/buyers-guides/luggage-materials>