COLOUR DEVELOPMENT

25,000 NEW FORMULAS INTRODUCED EVERY YEAR

The variety of different effects and shades from OEMs is increasing - glass flakes, high chroma Scarlet Red and Spectral Silver are some examples. Axalta addresses these challenges by developing annually up to 25,000 new colour formulas in its colour labs around the world.

In Europe an average of 100 new formulas each month come out of the colour lab, and in Shanghai, China, it’s almost 500. There are additional Axalta colour labs in Tlalnepantla in Mexico, and in Front Royal, Virginia, USA. In all the labs the colour development process is standardised so that they produce the same colour results.

“It’s our job to provide refinishers with the right colour needed to deliver an accurate and productive paint repair.”

Ann De Clerck, Axalta Colour Marketing EMEA

HOW IS A COLOUR DEVELOPED?

1. COLLECT INFORMATION

It is vital when developing colours to find out which ones will appear on which models in the coming year. So Cromax compiles the OEM colour standards and the car manufacturers’ colour ranges for all new colours.

2. A REFINISH FORMULA REGARDLESS OF THE SHADE
There are more colours than just the official colour standard. Variations can occur between different OEM production sites, and when the vehicle has spent several years on the road. In order to gain the complete colour variant picture, the colour marketing department even collects car parts. Alternate formulas and services formulas are then created.

3. WORKING WITH PIGMENT MANUFACTURERS

The colour team is in close contact with pigment suppliers, to help ensure that we can address colour trends immediately and introduce new pigments pro-actively.

4. COLOUR DEVELOPMENT

There are a few stages to developing a colour. A special, proprietary software is used for much of the process. First, colour lab technicians use a microscope to identify the type of effect flake and the colour readings are taken using a digital spectrophotometer. Then,
5. SPRAY SAMPLES

The software produces an initial colour formula proposal. The proposed colour formulas are applied using standardised application methods. This helps to ensure that all colour labs apply the material using the same methods and it also helps to replicate body shop conditions.

6. CONFIRMATION UNDER DIFFERENT LIGHT CONDITIONS

The colour sample, once dry, is compared with the colour standard. Because different types of light can have a significant impact on colour, we then check the new colour under varying light conditions. To produce the required, accurate final colour formula, the colour specialist, with the help of the software, may need to carry out additional corrective steps.

7. FROM THE LAB TO THE BODYSHOP
Once the colour is completely accurate, its colour formula is entered into the ChromaWeb or ColorNet Pro software so Cromax refinishers can access it. The Fan Deck update then follows later.