



Choosing the Correct Primer

LESSON OBJECTIVE: Review the different types of paint primers so employees know to recommend the correct primer for a customer's project.

ESTIMATED COMPLETION TIME: 5 minutes

HOW TO USE: The lesson includes a PowerPoint presentation. The trainer's notes will offer notes for each slide, but you may elaborate on each as much as you wish.

BEFORE THE PRESENTATION: Remind employees that primer is one of the basic add-on sales for a painting project. When a customer comes in to buy a gallon of paint, always ask if that customer needs primer. Remember that not all primers perform the same function. Recommending the correct primer will ensure a job well done and a happy customer.

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Introduction

- Do your customers seem confused by all of the different types of paint primers on the shelf? In this lesson we'll help you recommend the correct one.

Slide 2

Primers Solve Problems

- First, remind your customers of a primer's function. Primers help solve different types of problems that might cause the top-coat of paint to fail or not perform properly. Primers block stains and odors, seal porous surfaces, hide unwanted colors and neutralize glossy surfaces.

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Engage the Customer

- Start by asking the customer about the type of surface he or she is painting so you can figure out what problems that surface might have. Now you can recommend the correct primer.

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Always Read the Label

- Of course, before you recommend a primer, always read the primer's label. Some primers perform multiple functions, while others are for a specific purpose.

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Types of Primers

- Here are some of the basic types of primers.

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Stain-Killing Primers

- Stain-killing primers cover all types of stains that can bleed through the topcoat of paint. Recommend this type of primer for covering up stains like crayons, water, smoke and grease. Some of them also block odors, such as pet and smoke.

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Shellac-Based Primers

- Shellac-based primers are best for difficult stains, such as those from water and fire damage. Recommend them for interior woodwork and for spot-priming knots on exterior wood.



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Drywall Primers

- Drywall primers are specifically formulated for new drywall. The mud used on drywall seams soaks up paint differently than bare drywall, which can cause dull areas on the surface after it's painted. Primer solves this problem by creating an even surface for the paint.

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High-Build Primers

- A high-build primer is thicker than regular primer to fill in minor imperfections on the surface.

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Wood Primers

- For priming wood, recommend a latex- or oil-based primer, depending on the manufacturer's instructions. A stain-blocking primer is best for painting redwood or cedar.

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Block Filler

- Block filler fills in the pores on unpainted concrete block to smooth the surface.

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Metal Primer

- You should recommend a metal primer for preventing rust on metal surfaces.

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Bonding Primer

- Bonding primers will stick to shiny and glossy surfaces, such as glass, tile and metal, so they can be painted.

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- These are some of the common primers you should know. Remember, a good primer is essential to a successful painting project, so make sure your customers get the correct one!

CLOSING COMMENTS: Recommending the correct primer is part of good customer service. If the customer does not have the correct product for the job, the project could fail.

ADDITIONAL DISCUSSION POINTS: Review the different types of primers you have in your store. You might even want to bring sample cans from your stock to the training session.

Review some other key points about primers not covered in the presentation.

- Oil-based primers may have higher levels of VOCs, or Volatile Organic Compounds. They have traditionally been superior for covering up tough stains. However, there are some water-based products on the market that claim to be as tough as oil-based primers.
- Water-based primers are easy to clean up and are nearly odorless.
- Many primers can be tinted. A tinted primer means that the top-coat will have a better hide with fewer coats.
- Paint-and-primer-in-one is a popular product. This combines the paint and primer in one step. Read the labels carefully, as a separate primer may still be necessary for covering tougher stains and odors, or for specialty jobs.

ADDITIONAL TRAINING: To learn more about the products in the paint category and how to sell them, have employees take the Paint & Decorating department in NHPA's Basic Training Course in Hardware Retailing. Go to yournhpa.org for more information.