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## Colorism in the Makeup Industry

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### Abstract

*According to the Statistics Portal, the annual revenue of the cosmetic industry in the U.S. is \$84 billion. Makeup is a growing industry that's only getting bigger as the time goes on. Women are spending big bucks to look good. According to the DailyMail, one in three women admit they refuse to leave the house without makeup on. Foundation is one of the most sought-after makeup products. A woman can apply foundation and little else yet look like she has a full face of makeup. Most brands opt to make a wide range of shades for lighter women and less for darker tones. So, with makeup being such a staple in a woman's life, why aren't makeup brands catering to all skin tones?*

The makeup industry has ignored the fact that women of color wear makeup and purchase high-end products. In 2017, a brand called Fenty Beauty was created by singer Rihanna, who took the world by storm with this unique brand. The brand released matte foundations in 40 shades at \$34 a bottle. The whole beauty industry was in awe at the wide range of colors. Rihanna herself even said during the launch: "That was really important for me. In every product I was like: 'There needs to be something for a dark-skinned girl; there needs to be something for a really pale girl; there needs to be something in-between.' There's red undertones, green undertones, blue undertones, pink undertones, yellow undertones — you never know, so you want people to appreciate the product and not feel like: 'Oh that's cute, but it only looks good on her'" (Quinn). There was finally a

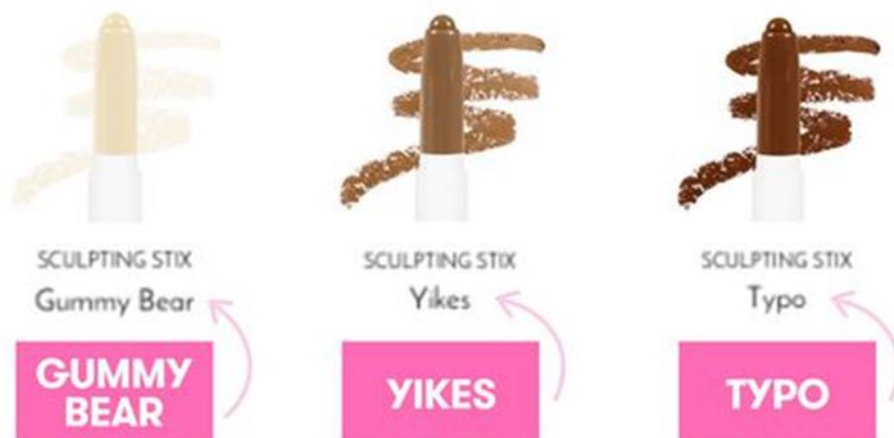
foundation for pretty much every skin tone without having to mix colors.



Immediately people all over America were rushing into Sephora stores to purchase the foundation. What shades sold out the fastest? Darker skin tones (Mackenzie). This alone proves to the world that women of color

do wear makeup and will pay the price for a perfect match. Shortly after Fenty Beauty released their foundations, other big-name companies followed suit. This included Estee, MAC, Tarte, and NYX. Brands realized catering to all skin tones does pay off. But with the release of darker shades comes some problems.

Brands were releasing darker tones in makeup for the money and not because they cared if women with darker skin had options for makeup. When the brand Colourpop created their Sculpting Stix, they experienced some controversy. The sticks are used to contour and highlight a person's face. When it came to picking names for their darker tones, they were called names like "Yikes" and "Typo". Those names imply being a darker skin tone is a problem or negative. There are a billion words in the word to use for colors, but "yikes" and "typo" were the ones they picked. The choice of names wasn't wise at all for the Colourpop brand. Social media had a field day with the inappropriate names ultimately causing the company to change the names, then discontinue the product completely.



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