

# Identifying Professional & Cheap Paints

Why you don't know Pro Paint from DIY Paint and neither do we.

If you're a professional painter like us, you have no idea how to tell DIY paint from professional paint when it's being sold. There is no information printed on a can of paint that suggests it contains quality ingredients. Choosing paints based on "PRO" or "Professional" printed on the can is insufficient. We wish it could be that simple. We've all seen "PRO" and "Professional" on cans of \$10 to \$18 paint. Would that make a \$65 gallon of paint, SuperPro?

Knowing what each ingredient brings to the paint can help us make better decisions. Unfortunately, the ingredients

are not printed on the can in a way that allows us to distinguish quality ingredients from lesser-quality ingredients. It does no good to know the ingredients of a good quality paint if we cannot identify the ingredients in the can.

In order to improve profits, we must learn about product strengths and weaknesses. But first, we need to identify what they are one by one and how each impacts performance. With over 30 performance characteristics found in paints that assist in producing high-quality results in the least amount of time, how do we know which are most important?

# PRORESULTS

## First, the basics

In the world of professional painting, various advantages distinguish us from other painters. As paint contractors, the only way we can determine whether a paint product is worthwhile is to use it. Since there is no indication on the label that the paint contains high-quality ingredients, there is no level of confidence when purchasing paint.

By keeping a list of product strengths and weaknesses, we can make educated buying decisions, allowing our business to operate more efficiently. Nobody enjoys re-painting entire walls because a product touched up poorly. Applying products teaches us which ones to use and which ones to avoid. As our product selection improves, so will our quality and profits.

If we're going to put forth enormous preparation efforts before applying 100 gallons of paint to a customer's job, we want to make certain the paint applied is beneficial to us and the customer before applying it. Consequently, the most beneficial features for a painter also benefit the customer.

You almost certainly already have your favorite paints. But are your favorite paints providing the most bang for the buck? Often, painting systems and product selection separate one painting contractor from another when each is licensed, bonded, and insured.



# HOW TO ACHIEVE PRO RESULTS

Pro results don't just happen, we create them.

Painting for the sake of painting with any paint under the assumption that any paint will do can prove to be a costly mistake. If you've been painting for any length of time, you're familiar with the complexities of the coatings industry. It truly is a science. If it were easy, we could just pick a bonding primer and hope it sticks.

We've all experienced product failures and incompatibilities, and sometimes we never fully understand the failure or the cause. A product failure analysis by the manufacturer can take up to 6 months for results to come back. Meanwhile, we have a job to finish this week.

Evaluating paints side-by-side over various surfaces exposes strengths and weaknesses. What one manufacturer considers "good flow and leveling" may differ entirely from another. What you consider "good flow and leveling" may be entirely different from that of another painting contractor.

A comparison of products that "hold gloss" exposes some very interesting meanings of the same word. Making product choices based on excellent "stain blocking" abilities that are difficult to sand can also prove to be a costly lesson learned.

The capabilities among paints under certain situations can be black and white, but they are difficult to decipher in other scenarios, and sometimes by that time, it is too late. A product that "sands easy" and "holds gloss" can be an expensive price to pay if the product has poor adhesion. Features such as "bonding," "sealing," "holds gloss," "excellent adhesion," "stain-blocking," "sands easy," and so on, are only fair points of reference to narrow down buying decisions.

## What is important to you?

As you know, priming for the sake of priming is certainly no guarantee of a good result. In order to achieve professional results, we need to evaluate products and use that information to our advantage. Product selection is not about what is important to you; it's about what is important for the specific job.

All jobs pose varying degrees of challenges and requirements; therefore, what is important for each job always changes. We need to educate ourselves on the different performance characteristics of the paint and apply it the right way, in the right place, at the right time, and for the right reasons.

If you ask 100 paint contractors what is most important in paint, you'll get a great variety of answers spanning the 30+ characteristics found in paint. The reason for this is that people answer the question out of context. The question should never be asked. Rather, the question should be related to a specific scenario, such as "What is important when painting kitchen cabinets?" All of a sudden, answers change, and they should.

Considering there are 30 characteristics collectively working together to make up a good gallon of paint, how can we limit the answer to one? Specific job requirements expose the complexities of which of the 30 characteristics found in paints are important right now. Certain self-priming interior trim paints achieve a higher level of gloss 3x faster, are more durable, adhere better, and block stains better than some well-known primers.

# THE PAINTERS PARADOX

Producing quality with intent, efficiently

## Painting with purpose

The best paint ever made will not produce the best result in the hands of someone with limited experience. The best painters are prevented from achieving quality results, which they are capable of if they paint with inferior products. It's apparent that both "experience" and "product" are necessary. The quality of both "the painter" and "the product" has a bearing on the quality of the end result and the time it takes to produce it.

Though both painter and product are necessary, the quality of the painter is most important. The best paint products won't bring about the best results in inexperienced hands. Quality painters can do things with inferior products that inexperienced painters cannot do with the best ones. Only so much can be achieved

with inferior products, despite their level of competency.

## The bottom line

We must be able to address customer questions and expectations with solutions. The customer's job is not a testing facility. The most reliable painting systems can be compromised by inferior products or the wrong product choices. A quality product is what drives production, and systems are likely to fail without understanding product limitations. The last thing we want is a customer reliving a poor product choice over and over. Our services will not be referred by the customer.

