

VIVID COLORS

They say opportunity can take many forms. This time, for the Color Marketing & Design team, it started out as a boat. But it turned out to be much more.

Not long ago, Sherwin-Williams' color consultants helped a nonprofit group in Pittsburgh select colors for a boat, a "floating classroom" to teach environmental awareness. Before long, the colors became driving force to help the group shape its public identity.

"We chose the colors with the intent that they'd be suitable for our logo and re-branding," said Karl Thomas, executive director of RiverQuest, the organization that recently launched their \$3 million flagship vessel, Explorer.

"The colors will be a distinctive identity for us for decades," he said. "The boat helped drive our group's re-branding process."

The two Sherwin-Williams colors, Commodore blue and Outrageous Green, are present on everything from RiverQuest's logo and advertising material to even Thomas' business cards.

First of its kind

The 90-foot, 150-passenger vessel was designed using the Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design (LEED™) process, the global standard for green buildings. Thomas said this is the first boat of its kind internationally. Sherwin-Williams' environmentally friendly marine paints were specified for this purpose.

When Kelly McCrone of Color Marketing & Design became involved in the project, the clients were planning to keep the boat primarily white, with green and blue accent stripes.

Using photo imaging technology, McCrone played with some

bolder ideas – "and color started taking over the whole vessel," she said. Over the course of a month, she presented about 15 design variations.

The bulwark (solid metal railing around the deck) and combing (around the top of the boat) are Commodore blue; the mast and the wide "boot stripe" just above the water line are accented with Outrageous Green.

The railing around the second deck was painted Nuance white – the band of color with the logo and artwork was a vinyl wrap that was later applied to the surface.

Green light

When coming up with the color scheme, McCrone resisted the urge to go heavy on the green, because the wrong color green can look dingy in muddy water – "and you never know where a boat like this will be traveling," she said.

The boat is used for youth education programs in math and science, and for public tours centered on topics such as environmental sustainability, and its hybrid diesel propulsion system. It serves the Western Pennsylvania region, along with portions of West Virginia and Ohio.

Next summer, the group plans to take the Explorer on a 950-mile stretch of the Ohio River to the Mississippi, Thomas said.

Their environmental mission sends a strong message – and packs a visual punch as well.

"This is an example of what happens when we show what color can do to a space," said Sheri Thompson, Sherwin-Williams Director of Color Marketing and Design. "The project can just evolve."

FLOAT THIS BOAT

