

# Branding through Sensory Marketing



## Management

KEYWORDS :

<b>Dr. Vinit Dani</b>	Associate Professor, Symbiosis International University, Range Hills Road, Kirkee, Pune-411020
<b>Mrs. Vanishree Pabalkar</b>	Assistant Professor, Symbiosis International University, Range Hills Road, Kirkee, Pune-411020

### Sensory Marketing: The power of the senses

Commonly, branding is associated with every graphical stimulus that characterizes a specific brand; that is, its logo, colours, images, icons, characters, etc., as well as the transmission of its values through these. However, this is a quite limited appreciation of what the term represents. Let's say that traditional marketing, as well as other related disciplines has been somewhat unfair to reduce branding to a purely visual expression, being such a fundamental and important variable to the success of a company, brand or organization.

As part of a strategy of differentiation and positioning, modern

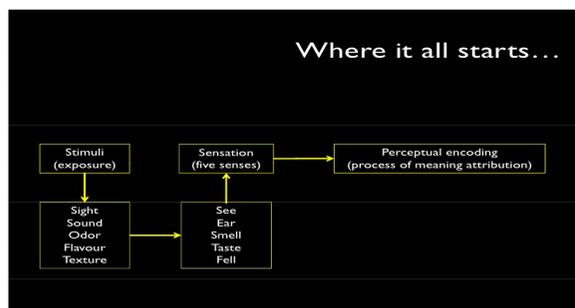


marketing begins to make use of tools that would have never thought in the past, starts to break traditional schemes, and thinks laterally in order to expand and solidify the mental territory each brand occupies in our brains as consumers. One of such tools is known as sensory marketing, i.e. the exploitation of the senses through stimuli designed to be directly related to a particular brand.

### Sensory branding:

*"People spend money when and where they feel good."* (Walt Disney)

Mainly, the customer's choice for a product will be conscious, depending on its characteristics and benefits. However, there is an unconscious process in choosing a particular brand, depending on inner motivations.



Companies have to be aware of the inner process in the buying behaviour. This is the reason why some of them use the sensorial marketing. The most inner process in people behaviour is the one linked to the different senses of the body: the sight, the smell, the touch, the hearing and the taste. In order to communicate what the brand is able to bring to the customer, the company can try to touch its unconscious feelings. In the branding con-

cept, there is what some call an "emotional logic" which refers to the cognitive side of people. Indeed, humans are rational but also emotional and hedonist in the sense they can make choices depending on their feelings. They can choose a brand according to its personality, its values and the experience they live with. According to some classic marketing principles, it is important to focus on the sight and the sound to communicate the identity of a brand. However, as explained in next theoretical part about the poly-sensorial marketing, it is also essential to integrate the other senses to create an emotional atmosphere to have different "touch points" in order to give an experience of the products and the brand to the customers. This enables to touch different points of memory in order to be remembered by the customers.

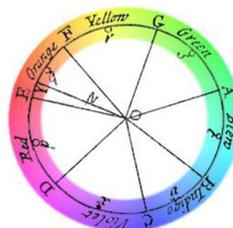
The more they can experience the product, the more they will be able to remember its benefits and its brand.

The considerable advantage of sensory marketing is that it includes many different practices and enables marketers to select them regarding to the impact it has on consumers. The smell diffused, the music or sounds played, the freedom to touch given to consumers and the finely-worked design are elements that help creating a consistent and attractive retail environment for natural cosmetics. Every sense can be stimulated differently and impacts consumers' behaviors. Previous research showed that a pleasant smell persists in consumers' memory and has the capacity to increase expenditures, that music can influence the pace of shopping and the attractiveness of a shop, that color can be associated to a meaning or that there are different levels of touch, presenting different goals in obtaining information.

Overall, the sense of touch appeared to be very important, being hedonic, making consumers having fun. Sense of sight and hearing seems to be neglected by consumers since they do not bring novelty in the selling process as the use of scent could. Likewise, all women believe that they spend more time and that their purchase desire increases in a natural cosmetics shop stimulating their senses. This awareness enables us to confirm the power of sensory marketing to increase desire and shopping duration.

The discoveries on the topic can be useful for companies in the field who want to implement an effective sensory strategy, targeting a specific age range. The advice of researchers to shops wanting to target the older range of women to insist on the sense of touch, playing with materials, textures and giving the freedom to touch. Also, they should adopt a low music volume not to irritate clients. Diffusing a nice smell is certainly a relevant strategy as well.

A scientific and marketing approach of the five senses



**Vision**

Vision is the most powerful sense since the connection between brain and eyes is really fast: it takes 45 milliseconds for humans to detect a visual object (Herz & Engen, 1996). Sight is indeed a sense that seems to be the most important, as 80% of the information that human get are transmitted through this sense. In a store, the layout, colours, lights, and shapes are determinant to attract consumers, create a visual identity and an atmosphere.

Goethe's and Newton's theories of colours help to get a better understanding of the human visual perception and outline the importance of this element in the visual judgment.



These elements are a great part of the creation of a pleasant atmosphere and ambience. The layout of the store can be included in a sensory practice as well since it appeals to sight.

We can appreciate logos, corporate colors, characters and other graphical tools with which one can identify a specific product. It's rare a person who does not recognize the Apple logo, the golden arches of McDonald's, the white wave on the red background of Coca-Cola, etc. The list goes on and on. These elements, so far, are the epicentre of all business strategy in most corporations. However, this is changing. A study described in the book "Buyology - Truth and lies about why we buy" (Lindstrom 2009) showed how branding like Marlboro, suffering the brunt of the ban on advertising on many places of the world, decided to invest in the atmosphere of bars and nightclubs with motifs of their brand identity: images of horses and beautiful landscapes on the displays of such centers, mountain-shaped seats, images of racing cars (Marlboro is known for its sponsorship of this important branch), among others. This paid juicy profits resulting from the consumption of cigarettes- and this without having to use their logo.

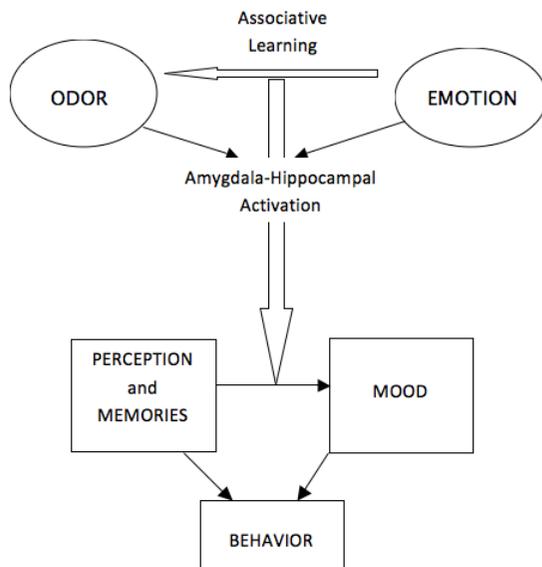
**Olfaction**

*"You can close your eyes, cover your ears, refrain from touch, and reject taste, but smell is a part of the air we breathe."* (Lindström, 2005)

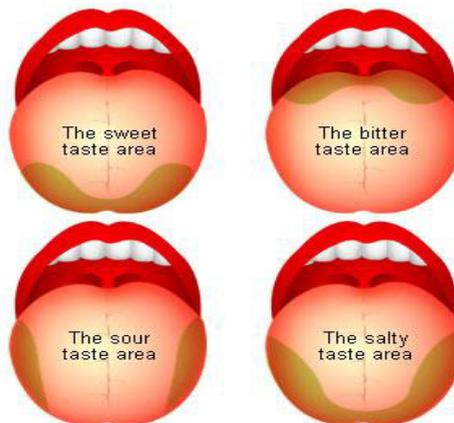
As Lindström emphasized, smell is certainly one of the most important and sensitive senses, especially concerning cosmetics. 75% of our emotions are generated by this sense, which has a strong impact on human memory (Lindström, 2005). That plays an essential role and can become an asset in brand differentiation, creating a signature scent, as explained in the previous part. Indeed, the use of scent in a retail market place promotes products, sets a mood and positions a brand. This statement has been discovered in recent years only and is now largely used through ambient scent. Kotler believes that ambient scent has the potential ability to create positive mood states, so a favorable store, and products evaluation, which leads eventually to higher sales revenues. Thus, one can wonder if scent really influences consumers' behaviors and how it is done.

On a spending level, does scent increase the amount of money spent in a shop? Research has shown that it could have a positive impact on sales depending on the condition and on the people. Expenditures are rising among contemplative shoppers who did not make unplanned purchase.

The process of associative learning (Herz, 2010)



Through this part explaining the sense of smell, one can notice that the impact of ambient scent is rather uncertain. The emotional reaction to a smell depends on the receiver since it evokes individual memories based on past experiences. Thus, a scent can be positive for someone and negative for someone else. Besides, it depends a lot on culture. Also, to be effective in creating a pleasant environment, congruency is really important. Scents have to be relevant and have to match with the product sold and the context.



**Taste**

When speaking about our live experience, food is the topic that comes up the most. Indeed, even when coming back from holidays, what we have eaten is always an existing experience we like to share. Food and taste sensations have an important role in human lives, on a physical, survival, social and even emotional level. Eating and drinking are associated to happiness and positive memories, which stress that taste aspects should not be neglected by marketers. Moreover, adding taste or offering food or drink in a store increases the value and the perceived benefits by customers, which differentiate the brand positively in their mind. In this extend, gustative marketing is a fruitful area which is promptly growing.

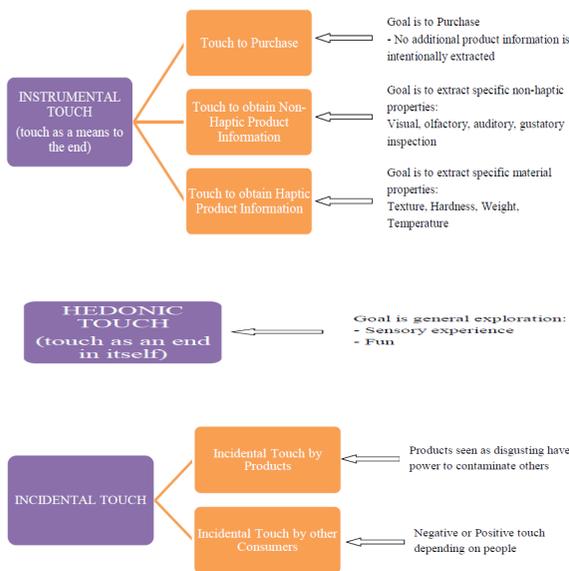
However, even if the mouth is the first taste receptor, taste is much more complex. Actually, all the tastes that human perceive are related to the other senses, vision, audition, smell and touch. This fact has a real importance in the targeted market: since it is tricky to evoke taste through cosmetics, the other senses will play a significant role to enhance the small efforts made in this sensory area.

First, taste is strongly linked to **smell**. The odour of a product is an important driver of taste perception which is mostly due to the proximity between the nose and the mouth. Concerning cosmetics, companies have a little power to use some gustative marketing strategies. However, marketers are investigating new opportunities and found some possibilities with lipsticks. Indeed, many brands e.g. L'Oréal try to launch some fruitful lipsticks with strawberry or other flavours. Innovations are even made on creams and non-testable products to appeal to the gustative sense: chocolate smell for body cream or perfume (new fragrance named Chocolate).

**Haptics**

Touch is an important sense that has been recognized for centuries but often forbidden in business. Who has never heard parents telling their children "Please, do not touch!?" Touching products in a shop seems to be an irresistible urge for children. People often judge a product or material on its smooth, fluffy or silky texture. A pleasant texture appeals to a feeling of well-being. The sense of touch is also the most important one for blind people. Through their high developed sense of haptics, term which refers to the "active seeking and perception by the hands", they can capture information and have a clear idea of how the environment looks like. This concept of seeking information on a product by touching is a potential area for marketing and point-of-purchase atmosphere.

Taxonomy of touch, explained partly thanks to the Exploratory Procedure can be presented to distinguish between three different types of touch in consumer's behaviour:



Taxonomy of touch in consumer behaviour

**Audition**

Life is a constant cacophony of auditory information. Each day, individuals are exposed to an incredible quantity of sounds, which make sears an over developed organ. From the jingle of a radio station to the familiar Microsoft tone that you hear when turning on your computer, marketers succeeded in arousing our subconscious, shaping our thoughts, judgments and behaviours. Sounds have an important role in product features and in a retail environment. Companies can resort to auxiliary sounds that are attached to a product or a service. Auxiliary sounds gather two sub-sounds-categories: ancillary and ambient sounds.

In general, music does not only influence the pace of shopping. It also has a considerable effect on time perception: in the presence of liked music, the perceived time durations increase. Thus, these authors deduced that "time does not necessarily fly when having fun". It comes from the fact that music perturbs individuals' internal clock. Feelings of anxiety, stress or physiological arousal have the power to speed up the "ticking" of our internal clock and makes time seems longer.

The conclusion one can draw is that "music improves shoppers' affective response to the environment and increases their perception of both elapsed time as well as distance travelled in the mall."

In the natural cosmetics field, companies can resort to many sensory marketing strategies in order to enhance their image given through their mission statement, to create a pleasant atmosphere which may influence customers' behaviours, and thus, to foster sales and success. All the five senses are elementary to build a consistent environment and to ensure the chance of success of the implemented strategy. An idea of nature can be developed for each sense: natural colours and materials, scent of plants, sounds of nature as music, etc.

**REFERENCE**

Online Database: | EBSCO: | <http://www.eurojournals.com/finance.htm> (EBSCO) - Factors affecting Individuals' Bank Choice - 18th Dec 2012 | <http://ehis.ebscohost.com/ehost/detail?sid=5dc15e2f-394c-416c-9590-04113ba0e60d%40sessionmgr112&vid=1&hid=115&bdata=jnNpdGU9ZWhvc3QtG12ZQ%3d%3d#db=iih&AN=15893281> - 18th Dec 2012 | <http://ehis.ebscohost.com/ehost/detail?sid=6f6dad8e-8e82-4afc-823b-f54fc50827ef%40sessionmgr104&vid=1&hid=115&bdata=jnNpdGU9ZWhvc3QtG12ZQ%3d%3d#db=a9h&AN=48368054> - 18th Dec 2012 | <http://ehis.ebscohost.com/ehost/detail?sid=b2f76d6b-035e-40fc-98ab-270216fd5282%40sessionmgr111&vid=1&hid=115&bdata=jnNpdGU9ZWhvc3QtG12ZQ%3d%3d#db=a9h&AN=20377734> - 22nd Dec 2012 | <http://ehis.ebscohost.com/ehost/detail?sid=f4c23613-fed7-4c6c-8551-b27c41a22ea8%40sessionmgr111&vid=1&hid=115&bdata=jnNpdGU9ZWhvc3QtG12ZQ%3d%3d#db=inh&AN=10380809> - 22nd Dec 2012 | <http://ehis.ebscohost.com/ehost/detail?sid=2a286e2d-acfb-44c4-954d-58b09cb4c5b9%40sessionmgr113&vid=1&hid=115&bdata=jnNpdGU9ZWhvc3QtG12ZQ%3d%3d#db=a9h&AN=60419252> - 22nd Dec 2012 | Website: | <http://www.marketingsemiotics.com/pdf/semiotics.pdf> - 12th Dec 2012 | <http://morethanbranding.com/2012/04/13/sensory-marketing-and-branding-the-power-of-the-senses/> - 12th Dec 2012 | <http://www.slideshare.net/03995/sensory-marketing> - 12th Dec 2012 | [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Sensory\\_branding](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Sensory_branding) - 12th Dec 2012 | <http://www.palgrave.com/PDFs/9780230576575.pdf> - 18th Dec 2012 | <http://www.qualitylogoproducts.com/blog/sensory-marketing-marketers-bond-through-5-senses/> - 18th Dec 2012 | [http://www.mintinnovation.com/links/docs/Sensory\\_marketing/The\\_concept\\_of\\_sensory\\_marketing.pdf](http://www.mintinnovation.com/links/docs/Sensory_marketing/The_concept_of_sensory_marketing.pdf) - 18th Dec 2012 | | Journals: | Sensory marketing on the natural cosmetics market, AUTHORS: MARINE LIÉGEOIS, School Business and Engineering, Halmstad | Lindström. (2005). Broad sensory branding. Journal of Product & Brand management, Volume 14 | McDonnell. (2007). Music, scent and time preferences for waiting lines. International Journal of Bank Marketing, pg 223-237. | Books: | Kotler. (2000). Marketing Management Millennium Edition. | Lindström. (2005). Brand Sense