



What does your brand smell like?

By Tracy Pepe

When managing your brands, the goal is to use new ways of interacting with, and engaging your customers. However, most brands usually end up doing more of the same thing - advertising that appeals to either or both audio or visual senses.

When it comes to marketing, a more effective tool offers a much deeper and long-lasting level. Smell Sells. It is a fact that the average human is 100 times more likely to remember a scent over something seen, heard, or touched. In fact, “memory for odor is markedly resistant to time, easily accessed and tends to be characterized by a degree of emotion, clarity and vividness.” (Laird 1935; Engen & Ross 1973; Hertz and Cupchik 1992)

For the last twenty-five years, various studies have been conducted to prove how scent enhances ones memory and causes consumers to spend more money. Such conclusions are supported by research from the Sense of Smell Institute, which found that “people can recall smells with 65 per cent accuracy after a year, while the visual recall of photos sinks to about 50 per cent after only three months.”

Developing high-impact and impressive visual and audio communications is something all brands should strive for, however, by adding the senses of smelling can create a deep-rooted communication. Scent Marketing helps to differentiate a brands positioning. This tool adds longevity to branding and marketing efforts improving the return on investment while for consumers it makes the decision making process easier. Unfortunately, many brands have yet to discover ways to implement their brand scent into campaigns. “Playdough” is a great example - the aroma is very distinctive offering a key smell pad to consumers. Consumers who played with “Playdough” as a child, usually have a specific memory - fun like, creative, but ‘Playdough” the brand has failed to implement scent within their branding strategies - leaving the scent imagination to the consumer.

Unfortunately, many marketers have the incorrect impression that Scent Marketing is new - it is not. For decades, various major brands across the globe have used scent as a key touch pad for their brand. For example, Johnson & Johnson Baby products have a very specific aroma. The fragrance contains notes of vanilla and milk, aromas that suggest comfort and trust. Singapore Airlines matches the aroma in the cabin with the interior color scheme and the uniforms worn by flight attendants. Kernels Popcorn Company ensures popcorn is made at key times of a mall shoppers experience - the smell of fresh popcorn is a key subconscious clue to consumers to buy popcorn while they shop.

Recently a Canadian Grocery Retailer conducted a pilot of scent marketing. The purpose of the

pilot was to assess the impact of a specific fragrance on buyer behavior in specific areas of the stores. The results were fascinating.

The client selected Dry Diffused Scented Banners as the application for the Scent Marketing. The Sillage, or scent trail creates an environment so customers linger longer. The objective of this "scent trail" is to have the customer follow their nose until they find the source of the aroma this behavior occurs on a sub-conscious level.

The key behaviors noted in the pilot are referred to as " Stop and Seek." Such behavior includes - eyes darting, eyebrows raise, and eyes widen to mention a few. The most obvious of these behaviors is a person stopping in the scent trail. One hundred and forty-five of the 289 observed shoppers (or 50%) stopped in the scent trail.

The pilot also demonstrated various consumer buyer behaviour such as "Sudden Stop". This is when a customer is 'power shopping'. They are walking quickly, usually with a list in hand, and moving to target items very deliberately with no browsing. As they approached the scent trail, power shoppers would suddenly stop, this behavior lasted on average for twenty seven seconds.

The next common behaviour noted is referred to as "Circling". This is when a customer is casually shopping. Walking at a more sedate pace. Stopping frequently to read labels and looking at products. When they arrived in the scented section, these people would circle the scent trail - twice, three times, up to five times. Through each circle, they would specifically return to the scented banner. They did not double back on their path elsewhere in the section.

The final behaviour observed was noted as - "Smelling the Box". This pattern was most frequently observed when two people were shopping together. One individual is focused on the task, and the other aimlessly wanders directly to the scented area and would then exhibit one or all of the following - smells the product, smells the banner, or smells related products. The wanderer then calls the other shopper over to the area.

One key observation that was demonstrated is the "Halo Affect." By scenting an area with a similar key scent attribute - there is a direct sales lift on all products. For example, if a vanilla note is used in a bakery area than all sweet goods will benefit from the aroma. This could be true if the smell of linen or cotton is associated with laundry care.

Adding scent to a store seems to be an easy solution. It is easy to fall into the trap of thinking that buying off-the-shelf aromas and implementing them the same day can create a scent experience. However, scent marketing is only effective when the fragrance emphasizes the brand and is strategically planned within a holistic campaign. Unfortunately, many marketers do not know what their brands smell like. The aroma needs to be faithful to the core brand message - after all, it is only this, which sets you apart from your competition.

The discussion has come up about what would be the smell of Mac Brand? Most people who have pondered this question, think the smell of an apple is a direct fit. However a fruit note would not

support this brand in fact it would probably kill it. Better scent branding would include a fragrance with metallic notes that offer sharpness, combined with top notes that jump out, possibly found in accords of fresh linen or cotton. A Mac aromatic experience should suggest new, excitement and creativity.

Developing A Scent Brand experience should be based on the core brand identity. The fragrance should ensure that the aromatic message is unique, hard to imitate and appeal to the particular market segment. So the next time when your considering advertising that appeals to audio and visual senses - SMELL again!

PROMOTIONAL Ideas And Case Studies

To view additional ideas, branded promotional products, sports apparel and marketing materials please visit us at www.fcmmktg.com. FCM can help you develop and design customer retention programs. Thank you.