

>> The realm of senses The age of Sensory Communication

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The world, brands, products, services... everything exists outside us! And it is through our senses that we are capable of receiving, understanding and assimilating them. Thank to our senses we interact with brands and products. Thanks to all of our senses.

It is impossible not to distinguish the red pantone 185 or a specific font. But when our experience is not only seeing but also feeling the coldness of the can in our hands, hearing the sound of the pull-tab opening, smelling the characteristic scent and finally enjoying the first gulp feeling the bubbles exploding in our mouth, in that exact moment, we are feeling the unmistakable sensory experience of a Coke. An easy memory to recall.

Sensory marketing shows an evident reality which has always been present but to which we have never paid enough attention: the sensory nature of communication.

There are different reasons that make citizens/consumers' behaviors follow their senses, but it is mainly because they recall strong and memorable emotions. What do we think of when we see a paper ball,

golden-metalized and rough? We will probably experience a pleasant feeling, the taste of chocolate and almonds in our mouth and we will specially feel like standing up and grabbing a Ferrero Rocher (another one!)

Understanding senses and their role in citizens and consumers' behavior is nowadays essential for marketing and communication professionals since they can use this knowledge to make their messages reach their consumers more efficiently. What is surprising is that this interest in senses is relatively new. In the past, most manufacturers used to ignore the sensory aspects of their products. Brands first appeared and gained importance in the 70s, but companies were only interested in their logo and visual.

We had to wait until the following century, which offered a new context in which experiences gained importance, there was brand supremacy and emotions recovered their importance, to find a growing interest in knowing and using the sensory potential of products and brands.

When talking about products, anything that emphasizes and highlights their sensory experience makes the products more attractive. For example, the gum Trident 5 Sense "awakens your senses" and its package highlights its intense flavor. The sound of the Axe deodorant spray is an evidence of its undoubtable strength. Another example is the iPod Touch by Apple. Through its name, it focuses the attention on a sensory aspect which is not the sound or the image (although it is an audio and video player). It is completely focused on the touch and the experience our fingers will feel when touching the player. Its success lies in the fusion of the product performance and the ability to place it in front of us (and our fingers) in a very clear way. The "no-touch" iPod would not have been the same.

There is no doubt sensory clues help highlighting the product and messages' characteristics. However, we live in a world where there are endless brands and identifying and distinguishing them is clearly a challenge. Therefore, the real interest of senses is not focused on the product but on the brand. For this reason, the real objective is creating strong and memorable brands.

A logo is still an option for the brand to be real for the consumer: but nothing else. If our goal is to have a special place on the consumer's hearts (or minds), we need to raise clear, great and memorable sensory impressions. An identity requires sensory characteristics that represent, evoke and symbolize the brand. We call it a *sensory signature* and it applies both, advertising and communication.

There are some brands that have great sensory signatures and that have already conquered us. It is very likely that when we read "Solán De Cabras" we picture, instead of the logo, the distinctive blue bottle as well as the hardness of the plastic. The sensory signature of the brand uses several senses.



There are numerous examples and they all recall the senses of sight, hearing, smell, taste, and touch. All North Americans can easily recognize the greenish 1837, instead of the logo, and it comes to a point where we use expressions such as "Tiffany Blue", "Barbie pink", the Intel melody, the sound of a Harley Davidson, the taste of Nespresso coffees, the smell of Hollister...

When a sensory aspect evokes a Brand or Company it means that there has been an experience that has remained in the consumer.

The sensory aspects put together the brand with feelings, emotions and memories. You can learn the name of a brand, but the sound you make when eating Pringles is something you experience and remember, and it creates an impression that gives an identity to the brand. The so-called *sensory signature*.

The sensory experiences are the way we interact with the world. They live in the products and are the basement for the brand. It is time to enjoy the opportunities they offer.



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