



SENSORY MARKETING – A TOOL OF PROMOTION

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ABSTRACT

Today the consumer is looking for an emotional connect with the brand and is taking the functional attributes for granted. The stimulation of five senses is now considered a good way to develop a connection between the customers and the brand. As this concept is new therefore the amount of research related to its importance and impact on brands is limited. This study is oriented to find out the scope of sensory marketing, how brands can use sensory marketing as a tool of promotion. The study is purely based on qualitative method. Interviews have been used; the collected data has been analyzed. The analysis shows that there is a certain lack of awareness regarding the name but it has been concluded that the sensory marketing is to have an edge important in today's world of fierce competition and its usage by brands is growing.

KEY WORDS: Sensory Marketing, Visual Marketing Auditory Marketing, Olfactory Marketing, Tactile Marketing, Gustative Marketing

1. INTRODUCTION

In today's marketing arena, Holistic marketing approach is the implementation of design and development activities that helps to identify the scope of marketing environment. In the contemporary world marketers cannot achieve the goals by using only traditional approaches of marketing. Keller (2008) suggested that age-old marketing mix using 4-P's are not enough packages to tackle current marketing strategies. In modern times an increasing importance has been given to affective aspect with brands trying to encourage consumers through brand feel. In

1980's, A paradigm shift took place in the field of marketing from transactional marketing to relationship marketing that is all about customer relationship maintenance and making sure of repeat purchase, thus aiming at long term objectives (Peck et al., 1999). On the contrary, sensory marketing sets right the process with consumer experiences in the focus. These very experiences tend to be emotional, cognitive, sensorial, relational, and behavioral dimensions. This aims to form adequate product with proper packaging and design and later on to adjust them attractively in a particular commercial market. The consumer thus behaves accordingly to emotions and impulses, more than his reason.

Rieunier (2002) asserted that approaches of sensory marketing aims to cope up with shortcomings of the traditional marketing that is too realistic. Classic marketing is dependent on the concept of rational consumer, where his behavior is broken in reasonable and well-defined steps, and in authors perception the competition answers his needs. Over a period of time, marketer's strategy seems to appear much more progressive. During 1950's, colors were used by brands, in both designing as well advertising of products as promotion was mostly carried through the use of posters. After some time music was introduced in commercials (through the TV spots vision) as in point of sales. At present one cannot imagine point sales without background music and almost 99% advertising focus lies on what we see and hear (Lindstrom, 2005). Thanks to technical advertisement, it was during 1970's that the first blind advertisement test appeared and as such brands were capable to modify the product value and adjust to consumer preferences. The use of smell is the fresh version aimed to reach out to the consumer. This was first introduced in 1990's when artificial smell was used and now updated to USB smell-printer. This suggests that olfactory marketing is getting popular with each passing day with more people putting it to test. And now the situation is such that the marketers have understood that the message would be strong only if more senses are appealed to.

Kotler (1973), it is imperative of brands to position products in a different way so as to suit the assortment or the price. The author explained the significance of physical environment of sales on the consumer's behavior and provided a framework where atmosphere was seen as "the creation of a consumption environment that produces specific emotional effects on the person, like pleasure or excitement that can increase his possibility of buying".

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

THE EVOLUTION OF SENSORY MARKETING

Marketing is looked up as an entry to an era when concepts and ideas are being reconsidered. Also it has been seen that traditional form of mass marketing are no longer the common choice. Advertising is also no longer the sole savior (Hulten et al., 2009). Sensory marketing as a concept began to be seen as a major tool few decade's ago. Kotler (1973) recognized improvements in business thinking and also recognized that people in there purchase decision-making, responded to more than solely the service or tangible product being offered. He also added the thought of atmosphere and the total product aimed at advertising, packaging, warranties, financing, services, images, and pleasantries along with the place where products were consumed or bought also is of strong importance. The kotler's research further asserted that in few cases in the purchase decision, the place's atmosphere is more persuasive than the product itself. "In certain cases, the atmosphere is the primary product". The significance of the atmosphere is further highlighted in the following parts (Bitner 1986; Donovan et al., 1994; and Chebat&Michon, 2003).

But, in spite of all the research study, it is not that easy to associate a sound meaning of this concept and also recognize the pioneering researcher of this field, thus tackling various modern views seems to be the best method to elaborate this new field's scope.

3. SENSORY MARKETING

Filser (2003) described "sensory marketing as "set of various actions controlled by the producer and/or the distributor in order to create a specific multi-sensorial atmosphere around a product or a service, through the characteristics of the product itself or through communication towards the product or the service". Further Hulten et al., (2009) was of view that sensory marketing can be used strategically to sort out firms values and identity to the long term objective of brand awareness creation and further cementing a sustainable brand image. Rieunier (2009), sensory marketing is simply "the utilization of atmosphere factors on a retail point (5 senses) in order to engender affective, cognitive and behavioral reactions in the customer's mind (Good mood, happiness, thought, speediness of circulation, time spent, social interaction....) that provoke buying intentions".

Dauce (2006) view regarding sensory marketing is that, “marketing declension aiming at stimulating purchase and creation a bond between a brand and its customers thanks to the stimulation of the 5 senses as part as the actions done on a product, its related distribution and communication”. Thus one could point out that the sensory marketing intends to seal in the under doings of traditional marketing, where the latter seems to give full attention to products rational elements. The sensory marketing thus centers on connecting consumption to happiness and not only through being beneficial but with the creation of senses.

4. SENSES FROM THE MARKETING PERSPECTIVE

4.1 VISUAL MARKETING-VISION

The most powerful of the senses is vision, the cooperation between eyes and brain is considered to be much better than any tool ever invented (Winter & Winter, 2003). Arnold et al., (2004), revealed that 70 percent of the receptors of the body’s senses are eye allocated. It is also the most seductive of the senses often overtaking others, thus it has been the most traditional sensory stimulus used in marketing (Lindström, 2005). It is the first communication tool used. In commercials, the concept of packaging or retail shop, visual features are the most important communication element nowadays (Hulten et al., 2009). In the perception of brand, vision plays an important role as has been shown by various studies that person exposed to a product prefers it over other similar choices, even in situations where the person doesn’t remember seeing the product (Bornstein, 1987). The factors that tend to affect the brand through vision are design, logo, lighting, and use of colors. In fact it is believed that vision is dependent on light as colors are mere distribution of various wavelengths analyzed by particular visual system (Wolfe et al., 2006). It must be considered that it is hard for visual elements to adjust as they are very stable and efforts to change them need to be on continuous basis, however video being an exception.

4.2 AUDITORY MARKETING- HEAR

Brands using music same to their brand identity have 96% chances to be recalled (sound) (McCann, 2010). Nokia as smashed brand has been able to create a distinct sound that is recognized by most of the individuals. Lindstrom (2005) conducted a study and said that about 65 percent of the world’s population would relate to Nokia’s melody just on hearing the tune. Sound influence on perception of consumers is very huge. Various studies have assessed the impact of background music on the consumer behavior. North et al., (1999) asserted “Music can

prime the selection of certain products by stimulating customers to recall related knowledge. Feelings of pleasure intensity and customer perceptions generated from background music effects can also enhance or create customers' attitude towards the store and/or its elements." (Garlin et al., 2006.). The behavioral sound effects are very important to the business context. It has been gauged that up to 28 percent of business can be driven away by retail environments by playing wrong music type. Looking from an objective point of view, brands with clear positioning do easily identify the appropriate targets can stream music in accordance to the clients mood.

4.3 OLFACTORY MARKETING- SMELL

"Nothing is more memorable than smell"; the smell is always related with different emotions (Arnould, 2004). Lindstrom (2005) stated that smell drives feelings of almost 75 % of people. He further asserted that smell is the most responsive and impressionable of all the 5 senses. Various other studies have stated that fragrance has a very high remembrance over time that it hits directly into parts of brain that govern emotions and memory (Miller et al., 2006), thus for stimulating the recalls various companies are putting efforts to duplicate smell so as to have an impact upon the consumer buying behavior.

4.4 TACTILE MARKETING-TOUCH

"Public objects are usually considered bad and dirty to touch. But when we come across one of those small signs saying, "Please don't touch", what we want to do? We want to touch it" (Gobé, 2010).It is seen that consumers like to hold, feel and touch the new product only because they wish to experience it more prior to deciding to purchase it or to purely have the chance of relating to the product much before owning them. With the packaging of the product comes the developing of the sense of touch. Innocent, a fruit drinks company launched daisy and grass chillers, resulted in doubling of sales for their stockiest (Soars, 2009). Gobe (2010) was of view that for him the lower the brand recognition, more the customers tend to query about the product by touching it. In fact by doing so they ensure its quality and it becomes more important while exposed to unfamiliar products. The products material and weight are important sensory process parameters. Our emotions get influenced through the texture of a material leading to impact on our perception (Schmitt & Simonson, 1997). In practicality once while touching a product you feel more attached towards it and more willing to own it. Lindstrom (2005) argued that the brand feeling is closely related to the product quality perception.

4.5 GUSTATIVE MARKETING- TASTE

According to Lindstrom, brands managing to fit in taste have undoubtedly built a very solid brand platform. Further on Martin states that “close to 16 per cent of the Fortune 1000 brands could add taste to their brand platform, yet almost none have so much as given this cursory glance” (Lindstrom, 2005). As our eating is closely related to our survival, taste seems to provide the basic function among any of the five human senses. Taste and Smell are closely related and referred to as the chemical sense (Korsmeyer, 2002). And, ‘different tastes are distinguished by various combinations and a more sophisticated sense of smell’ (Lindstrom, 2005 p. 28). It is possible to expose a person to aroma without tasting it but it is rather impossible to taste anything without smelling the same (Lindström, 2005), the case experienced when eating a delicious meal during flue.

5. METHODOLOGY

There are many different ways in which the research problem can be presented and analyzed however after going through the methodology there is one method that is closest to the answer the researcher is looking for. This part of the research will mainly deal with the method that is going to be used to conduct the research. It will enable the researcher to follow a controlled research process and thus it will give reliability, coherency and importance to the empirical study. Then, to define the type of research method it will use and the reason for a particular method and how it fits with the objectives,

- The first set of question deals with the sight: why did you select those materials, colors, decoration, light and layout?
- Then comes sound and choice of music: do you think music is important? Who is selecting it? If you are selecting it then what is the criterion to choose the particular music and what are your expectations from it?
- Then smell is addressed: How do you manage the smell in your store (do you try to neutralize, spread them?) Have you got a system to spread smells outside of your store? How would you manage or control the smell in the store (do you try to spread or neutralize them?)
- Then the questions related to taste are asked. Do you believe taste is important and is there a scope of using this technique in your store?

- Finally touch is addressed: is there a scope for the customer to touch the product? Can a customer have a feel of the product? All these questions were asked, however according to the response or reaction of respondents, few other questions brought more accuracy.

6. EMPIRICAL DATA DESCRIPTION

The general concept of sensory marketing in theory is something that interviewed store managers do not really know or at least, are not aware of. But, still when talking with them, it appeared that the problem is just related to the concept's name. Indeed, after having explained the concept with practical examples, some of the interviewers admit using it, in a way. Most of the respondents knew how the five senses' stimulation could be important for the customer general satisfaction. The first sense the report suggested was the sight: every interviewed brands explained that the decoration, the colors, the paintings were set to give personality to the brand. Furthermore, it creates a special atmosphere which is either unique or in line with other stores (for Ozone Garments and 7c's). Find the right atmosphere, which can fit the best with the kind of customers the brand want to reach, is one of the aims suggested. Facilitate the recognition of the brand is another one. Some of the respondents even hire special designer on this task. Concerning the auditory marketing techniques, the answers were diversified again. The music is of importance and some brands interviewed have even a special CD for their place. The most caring of them plays different music at different time of the day in order to interact with the customer mood, to fit with it. Whatsoever music from a radio, from their personal choices or music imposed by the company owning the brand, the aim of it is, according to the managers thought, to make the customer feel in the right place. Except for one of the respondent (the other side cafe), the use of the smell is not done on purpose among the interviewed brands. They are aware of the importance that such techniques can have for the customer. Coming to the taste factor, there was a varying feedback. Some brands especially related to food think that taste it is a direct and integral part of their business. While as brands like bank, Music world did not have much scope to use it. The brands did not know about the touch marketing and had limited scope of using it. It just happened in store and wasn't the direct part of their strategy. Finally, the concept of sensory marketing, although being used partially among the brands interviewed, collected the agreement of everyone: it is important; it can play a role in giving a particular atmosphere to the brand.

Respondents	Use and awareness of sensory marketing	Use of sight / vision marketing	Use of auditory marketing	Use of olfactory marketing	Use of tactile marketing	Use of gustative marketing
MUSIC WORLD	NO	YES	YES	NO	NO	NO
J&K BANK	NO	YES	NO	NO	NO	NO
7 C'S	NO	YES	YES	NO	YES	YES
THE OTHER SIDE CAFE	NO	NO	YES	YES	YES	YES
OZONE GARMENTS	NO	YES	NO	NO	NO	NO

7. ANALYSIS OF THE EMPIRICAL DATA

In many different ways, studied brands appeal to the senses of customers, sometimes on purpose, sometimes not. Among them, some illustrate the theories exposed in the literature review. First, the fact that every respondents admitted to care about the atmosphere of their place, by managing some of the factors of environment, endorse the Kotler's point of view about its major importance in the differentiation process. Atmosphere is one of the most important ways of differentiation in the highly competitive market, brands are attentive to it.

7.1 VISUAL MARKETING TECHNIQUES

Mostly, the choice of the visual factors is pertinent. The other side cafe for instance, chose the maroon color for its walls: even if it is not on purpose, this color is highly adapted to this kind of coffees, teahouses. The light colors used in Ozone garments, that softened the luminosity of the place, fit with the will to increase the well-being sensation of the customer.

The manager of J&K Bank, by selecting "not too light" colors and associated with soft lights, chose the right visual factors of atmosphere for the comfortable feeling he wants to give to the customers. The lights are also an important part of the Music World atmosphere: they let natural light come in and use a soft artificial lightning. This is determinant in the relaxing environment managers created. This is in tune with Gobe's (2010) point of view "stores lighting should be carefully designed to strengthen the brand identity and reflect the brands value. Efficient use of lighting can change an atmosphere at point of purchase and it can also be changed depending upon the various seasons". In 7 c's the strong artificial lights and the colors of the brand room give an intense luminosity to the place.

7.2 AUDITORY MARKETING TECHNIQUES

Not all the respondents revealed having music in their stores. As shown previously, music is an important factor of atmosphere and is the most appropriate for marketers to manage real-time customer's feelings. In 2 cases, the respondents admitted managing the music according to the time of the day with expectations on the customers.

7.3 OLFATORY MARKETING TECHNIQUES

In only one case, the other side cafe an olfactory strategy is used. By diffusing coffee and sandwiches smells from the kitchen to the brand room, the managers expect the customers, by liking it, "to buy more": this concords with Spangenberg, et al., (1996) and Findlay's (2010) work that says that a pleasant smell influences positively the evaluation of the customer on a point of sale and some of its products, the will of buying, as the time spent inside. In another way, the will from the Music World to block the odors from the products can be considered as a pertinent olfactory strategy: since the smells are the major source of sensorial emotions (75% are generated by the smell), to give a smell-neutral atmosphere to the customers in order for them to "fully appreciate" their shopping experience is a grounded strategy.

7.4 TASTE MARKETING TECHNIQUES

This was almost unknown to the respondents they hardly knew what it was in the first place. But there was a positive response from respondents related to food industry as it was directly related to the product they offer and it was the most important sense they targeted. This highlights the windstorm point that mentions that out of fortune 1000 brands, 16% can use sensory marketing.

7.5 TOUCH MARKETING TECHNIQUES

This is very the least known technique among other components of sensory marketing and is hardly used on purpose. From the respondents, only 7c's and the other side café are using it in their stores.

8. BRANDS USE SENSORY MARKETING AS A TOOL OF PROMOTION

This was the main objective of the study. Both literature review and data analysis helped the study to answer the question. It would be nice to give answer in categorizing the brands in three different groups: the first group concerns brands that maximize sensory techniques to attract customers and the second group concerns those which use sensory marketing, more to make a particular atmosphere for existing customers than for attracting new ones. Sensory marketing is

fully used as a promotional advantage in the first group: the main purpose attracting customers, create preference by stimulating the 5 senses of the customer, and develop tools such as artificial diffusers, play different type of music at different time of the day, specific decorations. In the other group, where brands belong to, sensory marketing is not mainly used as a tool of promotion yet; it's something, which comes with the determination to build a particular atmosphere. It is done more so as to retain existing customers in a relaxed environment than to charm new ones. In this group, brands develop more or less sensorial marketing techniques and, at least, develop it inside the store (for customers enjoying the brand) and not outside (for potential customer to be attracted by it).

This study helped immensely in knowing about the sensory marketing. Since the sensory marketing is still partially developed by brands in their overall marketing strategy, the integration of this technique with other marketing strategies will give an edge to brands over its competitors. The knowledge was added during the interview with store managers. They have a very limited time and very tight schedule to allow interviews: the first aim was to find ways to make the interviews as interesting as possible. Because sensory marketing is a very interesting subject, it definitely helped to get the task done. What was also really compelling is the subject itself: it's always exciting to study new techniques, something that hasn't been used fully till date but has a good future or potential.

9. CONCLUSION

The key sought information while conducting this research was information such as knowing the general level of awareness of the brand for the use of 5 senses as a tool of promotion. After that the second objective was to discover the brands-usage pattern for sensory marketing as to determine its usage? How do they use it? In nutshell, the study aims the general thought that the brands in J&K have regarding sensory marketing. First the theoretical analysis of this different technique of marketing was discussed, the literature centered on sensory marketing, its elements, real world application marketing hedonism followed by findings and analysis. To find out whether the idea of sensory marketing as per the research, findings and analysis is known among brands, the sensory marketing is still an alien word for the brands but they would perhaps call it by: developing and creating a special atmosphere in the store. Certainly all the respondents were fully aware of the fact that sensory marketing is very important and can play a vital role in the

process of differentiation. All the respondents admit that the stimulation of 5 senses (sight, sound, smell, taste and touch) was of significance but still, there is something big that's lacking that is the integration of these five sense by any particular brand or the use of particular sensory marketing technique for each sense is not equally established. The most unused of all the techniques is the technique referring to taste and touch respectively. Even though the customer know that smell is important factor in the customer's perception of the place, they only seem to take some advantage from the natural smell to create a pleasant atmosphere, but don't try to condition it in order to attract customers by those techniques.

To conclude, questions that were posed by the study and the results revealed the need of conducting the survey on a big scale (big competition, biggest sample).

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