WHY EXPERIENTIAL MARKETING WORKS: BRAND RECALL AND THE SENSES
Experiential marketing allows brands to connect with consumers in a much more personal way than most other forms of marketing. It's a known fact that people buy from people, experiential campaigns help to give a personality to brands or products and cement the consumers perception of the brand. Consumers are bombarded with advertising on an almost constant basis. Events and experiential that increase engagement with consumers allow brands to break through the clutter of advertising messages resulting in much higher levels of product recall.

The more brands can engage with people’s senses in a meaningful way, the higher the level of product recall and brand loyalty they’ll achieve:

• Just seeing a product will result in some degree of recall.
• Adding a catchy tune or memorable tagline could increase this further.
• Moving on from this into the realms of product sampling or experiential marketing campaigns that engage with sight, sound, touch and taste, can see product recall soar.
Although experiential marketing campaigns can be very good at engaging with consumers and triggering product recall, many fail to connect with all of a person’s senses. Our findings show that this is a mistake.

**ENGAGING ALL OF THE SENSES**

Emotions play a huge role in the buying decision process. Therefore, by creating emotional connections with consumers, brands can have a huge influence on both brand loyalty and buying decisions.
Our sight is the most powerful of all our senses. It takes as little as 45ms for the human brain to detect an object using the sense of sight and we process visual information 60,000 times quicker than the written word.

Visual cues have a fast impact on a target’s judgement of any brand/marketing event. Even if the sense of sound is first used to discover an event, they will almost certainly then seek to ‘see’ the activation before making the decision to engage.

Ensuring you appeal to a consumer’s sight both when they first see your event and when they are drawn closer is vital.

Sight also forms an important part of product recall. Studies show that a consumer who has seen a product is far more likely to choose it over a competitor at point of purchase. This is true even in when the person can’t actually remember having seen the product (Bornstein, 1987).

HOW SIGHT TRIGGERS AN EMOTIONAL RESPONSE

McDonalds’ iconic logo the ‘Golden Arches’ has become globally recognisable and just a glimpse of the logo anywhere can invoke a strong emotional response, that leads to a desire to eat at their restaurants.
Why experiential marketing works: Brand recall and the senses

Smell of our emotions are generated by the sense of smell. 75% of our emotions are generated by the sense of smell.

This fact alone is reason enough to try to connect with a consumer’s sense of smell in marketing campaigns. Experiential marketing campaigns can take a leaf out of product sampling and demonstration campaigns with regards the sense of smell.

While our reaction to the sense of smell is much slower than our reaction to visual triggers, once recognised, smell has a longer lasting impression on our emotions, therefore, the potential for increased product recall.

The sense of smell can also be used to influence the consumer’s perception of time direction. For example, a study carried out by Spangenberg, Crowley & Henderson revealed that although the presence of an enjoyable ambient smell didn’t affect the physical time spent in a retail outlet it did nevertheless trigger a reduction of the perceived time that had elapsed in the mind of the consumer. This dropped from 11 minutes where no scent was diffused to 9.6 minutes where a scent was diffused.

In a similar vein, Kotler also discovered that ambient scent has the potential to increase product sales, by creating positive mood states.

HOW SMELL CAN TRIGGER AN EMOTIONAL RESPONSE

The very nature of the store environment at The Body Shop means that as soon as someone enters one of their stores, their sense of smell is engaged by a complex mix of targeted aromas.

Taking this further, The Body Shop stores feature ‘try before you buy’ product stands. This helps consumers to create further connections with products, by extending their sensory engagement to include sight and touch.
Taste sensations play a hugely important role in people’s lives. Working on a physical, social and also deeply emotional level, hence the term ‘comfort eating’.

The actual taste that people perceive is actually strongly related to their other four senses, which play a major role in enhancing the taste sensation. This is partly why appealing to multiple senses is so effective at creating emotional reactions.

Additionally, the human brain often associates eating and drinking with positive memories — a very good reason for taste to be included as part of a marketing campaign whenever appropriate.

**Taste’s Effect on Emotion**

People either love or hate Marmite. It’s likely that any experiential campaign that includes engaging with taste would trigger strong, memorable reactions.

Unilever actively encourage the polar opposite responses to Marmite, running a plethora of TV ads featuring both people who love, or hate the taste of Marmite, pushing emotional engagement even further with their controversial ‘Love it, Hate it, Just Don’t Forget it’ TV ads.
Touch can deliver much more simultaneous information compared to most other senses. Just as well, considering our skin is the largest organ of the human sensory system.

It’s common for people to judge a product’s quality by touch. The feel of an item when held can have a huge impact on how it is perceived in terms of quality and robustness. Being able to both see and touch an object results in being able to make judgements about the object being examined much faster and with less effort.

ENGAGING WITH TOUCH

If you are in a pitch-black room and are handed a modern smartphone the likelihood is you will know it is a smartphone you are holding.

However, while you are unlikely to be able to distinguish between a Samsung, LG, HTC or Nokia device you are highly likely to know when you are holding an Apple iPhone due to the perceived extra build quality of the device.
Sound works mostly on the emotional part of the brain, and less on the rational part. Sound provides marketers with an efficient way to create an atmospheric impact on a consumer’s general mood.

In fact, sound “Has an immediate and, to a large extent, cognitively unmediated effect on recall and emotions” (Gobé, 2001), meaning sound can trigger emotions with consumers without the consumer first filtering and processing the sounds.

Furthermore, listening to pleasing music can cause an endorphin release, generating further sensations of pleasure and increasing a person’s positive perception & memory of a brand experience.

The use of sound in marketing goes beyond relaxing music or catchy jingles. The way that a message is communicated, the words used, even the tone of voice, can have a huge impact on how the person remembers, and feels about, the brand interaction. Staff should be well trained in both the brand’s tone of voice and the purpose and goals of the experiential campaign.

ENGAGING WITH SOUND
Marks & Spencer’s marketing slogan, ‘It’s not just any food, it’s M&S food’ invokes a feeling of glamour while also raising your appetite even if you just hear the phrase and don’t see an advert (print or video).
Why experiential marketing works: Brand recall and the senses

As this document has highlighted, the greater the engagement with a consumer’s senses, the higher the chance of success, it’s important to note that the engagement mustn’t come across as strained or contrived, as this can have the opposite effect.

That’s where strategy and experience come into play. By understanding your (or your clients’) product and place in consumer’s hearts & minds, it’s possible to work out the best sensory strategy.

For example, Apple may find taste & smell difficult senses to engage with – and there’s a good chance even if they did, it would come across as a gimmick iPhone that smells of pine forests or Apple Stores that smell of, well, apples?! This isn’t a problem for Apple though, they know their weaknesses, but also their strengths. Apple focuses strongly on the visual sense, as well as touch – iPhones and iPads are very tactile and pleasing to hold. People literally can’t wait to ‘get their hands on’ the latest gadgets Apple produce.

What’s important, therefore, is understanding your brand, your products AND how they relate to the consumers lives, so that your experiential campaigns match the use of sense to the brand.

WHICH SENSES APPEAL TO YOU?
At a very early stage in strategic planning, ensure you’re considering how you can engage with all of a person’s senses.

Brainstorm lists of the various sensory touch points:

**Hear**
When will they hear the brand event – what will they hear and how can we sculpt this? What audio is right for this experience & the sensations we want to trigger?

**Sight**
At what point will they catch sight of the event, how can we make the activation more appealing at a distance?

**Experience**
What will appeal to those who are close by, attracting them to the experience? How can we improve this?

**Touch and Taste**
What opportunities are there to engage with their sense of touch & taste? (the more you can win them over with sight & sound, the more likely you’ll draw them close enough to engage with touch & taste).

**Consumer**
How does the experience fit into the consumer’s day? What may attract them in the morning might be different in the afternoon and the location can have a big effect too.
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EXPERIENTIAL MARKETING... WHERE'S THE SENSE?

A study on the effects of engaging a consumer's senses

89% Of consumers agree that live events are the most effective medium to increase their product understanding.

67% Of people exposed to an engaging activity tell someone else about it.

96% Of consumers were more inclined to purchase following participation at a brand event.

74% Of people engaged by a brand event had a more positive opinion of the brand/product as a result.

84% Of brand experiences increase repeat purchase.

WHY IT'S VITAL TO ENGAGE WITH A CONSUMER'S SENSES:

75% Of our emotions are generated by the sense of smell.

People process visual information 60,000 times faster than they do written words.

OUR SKIN

Is the largest organ system. It’s common for people to judge a product’s quality by touch.

TASTE

The human brain associates eating and drinking with positive memories.

SOUND

The sense of sound works mostly on the emotional part of the brain.
IF YOU'RE AS CURIOUS AND EXCITED ABOUT GREAT IDEAS AS WE ARE, GET IN TOUCH.

Drop us a line by saying:
hy@wearehyphen.co.uk
or call us on +44 7711 462 717

Hyphen
Waterslade House
Thame Road
Haddenham
HP17 8NT