



VETYVER

Sensory Geek Sheet

HOW
DOES
YOUR
BRAND
FEEL?

SENSORY BRANDING

The communication industry is focussed on sight, and it has been estimated that as much as 83% of contemporary culture is focussed on the purely visual. Yet our emotions are stimulated by all five primary senses: hearing, touch, taste and smell as well as sight, (and in fact up to 16 other less well known senses). It pays to pay attention to the way customers experience the world, and your brands, not just the way they see them.

We are regularly asked for more information about the senses and why they should be considered as part of communications. There have been studies across countless fields proving the power of the senses over emotion, behaviour, psychology, neurology and decision making.

In short, the senses drive us, they inform everything we do and so the way you appeal to the senses needs to be tailored to the desired outcome.

This is what we do at Vetyver. With no particular bias or application here is some food for thought.

A close-up, slightly blurred image of a golden coin. The coin features embossed text in three lines: 'PEARS' at the top, 'RANS' in the middle, and 'SPARENT' at the bottom. A central emblem, possibly a crown or a similar symbol, is embossed in the center of the coin. The background is a warm, golden-orange color.

Smell opens a treasure chest of memories

SMELL

Smell is linked directly to the limbic system, the primal and emotional part of the brain. It has the strongest power of recall, connecting directly with memories and emotions. Smell triggers an EMOTIONAL response before we are even conscious of its presence.

Smell can control the ways people FEEL about and respond to their environments. It has been shown to reduce stress by 38%, frustration levels by 56% and anxiety by 63%. It also has the power to increase alertness, productivity and accuracy in work environments.

From affecting how we feel, it is only a small jump to affecting how we BEHAVE. Sales figures have been proven to increase with careful use of scent: and one study found that gambling in a casino setting increased by 45% in response to a deliberate application of scent.

Smell also affects our PERCEPTION: for example of value, it has the power to dramatically alter perceived price, with the smell 'adding' 40% to the perceived value of a product. It has also been proven to alter our perception of time, making 1 minute 'feel' like 45 seconds and stretch to 1 minute 45 seconds.

SMELL

We log sound and smell with the emotion attached to them the first time they are experienced, which is why a smell can instantly TRANSPORT us back into memories and TRIGGER emotions.

Some smells are very personal, but some are more generic and part of collective experience. Knowing the demographic and CULTURAL makeup of your customers is essential to promote successfully promote nostalgia. Whereas 1970s babies cite Playdoh, baby boomers won't, but something more generic like grass, or ice cream, will evoke happy childhood memories for most people.

If something smells good, the product is perceived as good. Is this conscious manipulation, or simply making sure that your product fits with the customers expectation? People can be suspicious of smell and sensitive to it, so it must be used with sensitivity to ensure it promotes a sense of trust and AUTHENTICITY.

A black and white ultrasound image of a fetus in a curled position, likely in the womb. The fetus is the central focus, showing the head, torso, and limbs. The image has a grainy, high-contrast appearance typical of medical ultrasound. The text "Sound is a primitive force of nature" is overlaid in the center of the image in a white, monospaced font.

Sound is a primitive force of nature

HEAR

Our response to sound is **PHYSIOLOGICAL**. What we hear affects our heart rate, blood pressure, breathing rate and the release of hormones. It even incites the startle reflex. Listening to music has been used to reduce perceived pain and has been used as part of healing from ancient Greece, to WWII and US Veteran hospitals.

Unlike sight, we cannot close our ears or noses, so sound, (like smell), demands an immediate emotional response. Sound design is a great way to distract and stimulate memory and imagination and it transcends language and verbal communications.

There are few life events that do not include music or sound: weddings, funerals, religion, celebrations, walking, working and all our relationships. In very simple terms, humans **ENJOY** music. Experiments have shown time and time again, that people buy more, give things better reviews, and generally feel better in situations where music is played, in comparison to places without it.

Sound defines mood, tone and pace and in turn our **BEHAVIOUR**. The slower the music the longer you linger, the faster the beat the faster you move and think. Music has been shown to dramatically decrease crime in public spaces.

HEAR

Using sound can have great COMMERCIAL benefits affecting pace, spending and traffic flow in retail environments. The slower the music the more people shop, the more people eat, the more time they stay. For instance restaurant bills can be increased by 29% with a change in music tempo.

The staggering effect that sound has on the other senses should not be over-looked, it alters our PERCEPTION of reality, of time, taste, smell, sight, space. As an example, a fast tempo can make people move faster or perceive something as sweeter. A bubbling stream or seascape increases perception of freshness, whilst at the same time creating a sense of calm and thoughtfulness. The possibilities are subtle, inventive, and endless.

Choosing the right genre, pace, voices and design parameters instantly engages distinct AUDIENCE groups: repetition for dementia sufferers, high frequencies and beats for teenagers and so on. But it shouldn't be forgotten that a great deal of what we 'hear' is gained through tone of voice, stories, words and narratives and the power of words should never be overlooked.

Audio can also be very a powerful mnemonic: think Intel Inside, mmm Danone, McDonald's (whistle "I'm Lovin' It"), Gare du Nord, Looney Toons, British Airways.

SEE

Sight is our DOMINANT sense, it affects the way we perceive space, sound, smell and taste. Western history was shaped for some three thousand years by the introduction of the phonetic alphabet, a medium that depends solely on the eye, shifting focus from our other senses to our vision. If what we smell, hear or touch does not correlate with what we see, it becomes confusing and uncomfortable. Try the McGurk effect here.. We process much of the information we receive through our eyes, so sensory design needs to consider the impact and RELATIONSHIP with sight at all times.

Colour has an intimate relationship with all the other senses. If a strawberry sweet is green, we struggle to identify the flavour correctly. We enhance and 'create' taste references by mere colour and suggestion. Whiskey tasters in a green room will all cite grassy notes, and sweet notes in a pink room, for exactly the same whiskey.

SEE

We carry a complex set of ASSOCIATIONS with colour and our response to it is physiological and emotional. Baker Miller pink is a specific tone of pink developed by the US Navy to help treat PTSD by suppressing respiration and heart rates.

Studies have shown that a room with a view (whether urban or natural) resulted in quicker recovery, release rates, better mental health, lower perceived pain and even reduced requirements for analgesics post-surgery.

TASTE

Taste is INTEGRAL to our lives yet it's frequently overlooked. It works hand in hand with smell and it directly affects our nutrition intake, energy and mental wellbeing. It is one of our greatest JOYS and activities. Loss of this sense leads quickly to depression, isolation and weight loss and our relationship with food and taste when malfunctioning are the source of many disorders and health problems such as anorexia, diabetes and obesity.

Eating and drinking are not only essential, they lie at the heart of every family, COMMUNAL activity, ceremony and celebration. Taste is FUEL at the heart of life and society and it should be integral to any experience. Food and drink are SYMBOLIC and CEREMONIAL: from popcorn at the cinema to traditional Japanese tea ceremonies; from birthday cakes to breaking bread; from raising a toast to tequila shots. Food and drink are the way humans connect with one another. A kitchen table is a powerful emotional object, not because it fulfils a function, but because it is where families congregate and interact.

TASTE

Our mouths are one of the most INTIMATE areas of our bodies. Feeding somebody is an act of generosity, alluring and powerful. Offering people the opportunity to feed themselves with something special and delicious creates an emotional bond.

Without smell we cannot taste flavour, in fact what we taste is 80% smell. But sight and sound also heavily influence what we taste. An understanding of this and the wider sensory environment can massively improve the experience of a brand, as well as recognising that it can be a valuable and seductive asset as part of a brand experience.

Taste can play a leading role.

FEEL

From the moment we are born we EXPLORE the world around us by touch. Touch can lower blood pressure, heart rate, and cortisol levels, stimulate the area of the brain central to memory, and drive the release of a host of hormones and neuropeptides that have been linked to positive and uplifting emotions. The PHYSICAL and emotional effects of touch are far-reaching.

We JUDGE quality and function by assessing materials, shape, texture, volume, function, mass and weight. Touch transcends language and logic, it is visceral. 49% of consumers choose a car on the way it *feels*. Touch is intimate and personal and has the power to make our hearts race.

How a space is laid out and furnished and what materials are used affects the acoustics, social dynamics, journey, pace, comfort and movement. And don't forget we react quickly to temperature, feeling comfort or lethargy in response to warmth depending on the level and source of heat (fire or radiator) and shiver in response to cold materials and environments.

The feel of products can also become a powerful identifier, in the form of balance, shape and form. Think about Toblerone, a 50 pence piece, the KitKat foil and snap, the old Smartie lids, Orangina glass bottle, 'Shake the bottle wake the drink' Absolute Vodka, Apple headphones, products and cables...

FEEL

Journeys through space and time encompass all of the senses and contribute to the way an experience FEELS. Our senses do not exist in isolation, and if the sensory experiences do not correlate and interrelate they will feel uncomfortable and suspicious. Successful multi-sensory design ensures that the sensory experiences are working well as a whole.

All these sensor elements make a difference to the way your customer perceives your brand. Delight in them and create an exciting and engaging experience that seduces.

This is a quick crib sheet. There is a lot of research and science proving the power of multi-sensory experience, but for us it comes down to LOVE. If you create memorable moments, moments of joy, multi-sensory extensions of your brand, customers will be seduced and choose to return.

V E T Y V E R

We are a sensory agency and our focus is to develop and improve the entire sensory experience. We are driven by brands and their audiences and the opportunities to strengthen the bond between the two. That journey can take us anywhere and every project is different, but here is an overview of our work:

SENSORY AUDIT & MAP: In order to consciously control your space, it is critical to get a clear snapshot of how it is experienced. Audits often highlight some surprising discoveries.

DISCOVER

We research, we forge research partnerships, and interview customers, staff and stakeholders.

MULTI-SENSORY DESIGN

Across all the senses (and channels) we conceptualise, design, curate, create.

IMPLEMENT

Installation, technical, production.

INSPIRE

We offer workshops, lectures and presentations about sensory for internal training and general interest.

CONSULT

We offer strategic and creative consultancy across when and how to engage the senses including guidelines on audio, olfactory, tone of voice, customer experience, F&B.

Our principles for sensory design are authenticity, intensity, quality, suitability, and sensory balance. Our experience in brand strategy, brand management and creative direction underpins everything we do. We have specialist consultants in each field and draw on our extensive black book of perfumers, musicians, chefs, mixologists, cross-modalists, neuroscientists, curators, directors, experience architects, designers, photographers, artists, producers, creatives and experts in each area.

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HOW DOES YOUR BRAND FEEL?