

A close-up photograph of a person's mouth. The lips are coated in a dark, rich red lipstick. The surface of the lipstick is heavily textured with fine, multi-colored glitter particles that catch the light, creating a sparkling effect. The background is a soft, out-of-focus skin tone.

# VETTYVER

*top 10 mistakes in sensory branding*



# FEEL

We decipher the world around us instinctively, using all our senses to inform us and our response is emotional and subconscious. Yet it's been said that over 75% of human culture is visual.

Using sound, smell, taste, touch and experience has the capacity to define and deepen our emotional relationship with brands. Used well, it increases brand experience, return rates, loyalty, experience, recall and revenues.

Where traditional branding focusses on the rational, sensory branding has the capacity to go straight to the heart.

So does it follow that the greater the sensory experience, the better the bond? No. Connecting your customers to your brand sensorially is about far more than adding a scent to your shop or reception area. It is a delicate and complex process. Gimmicks will be seen for what they are.

Here is our list of Top Ten mistakes in sensory branding.







# 10

## BEING CARELESS

How does your brand FEEL? How does it smell, sound, and taste? Developing your brand sensorially is not just about what you add, it's about knowing how your brand is experienced already and consciously orchestrating the experience. Where is your shop, what do your products naturally smell like? What are the sounds, action and journeys that are part of the experience of consuming that? Which sense should be dominant at what time?

Many brands are not aware of their sensory experience or impact and discover useful surprises when they take the time to think about it.

# 9

## OVERWHELMING

No sense exists in isolation. What we hear affects perception of touch, taste, safety. What we see and hear affects our perception of taste. Seeing a picture of a mountain CAN actually make the water taste cleaner and red lighting can make a bun taste sweeter. It is essential to consider the interplay between the senses. But agencies offering single sensory services frequently forget to consider their interaction with, and impact on the other areas.

But remember, nobody wants to walk into an environment where all your senses are assaulted and there is no space to think, feel or explore: it can be overwhelming and triggers our instinct to fight or flee. Strike a balance.

Used well, one sense can enhance perception and experience of another, together they should work in harmony.





## BEING INAPPROPRIATE

It has been said that NOISE is sound that is out of place, something unwanted and inappropriate to surroundings.

We have subconscious expectations about what environments should feel like. If sound or smell doesn't correlate with the environment, it jars.

The subtle scent of spring flowers might be perfect for launching Spring Womenswear Collection 2015, or a light face cream, but the same floral would be off-putting in a bakery or restaurant.

Sound, smell and sensory stimulation are always charged with meaning. Whether in the form of a cacophony or silence, it should always be appropriate to the environment.

## NEGLECTING STAFF

7

Employees are the face of your brand and frequently define perception of it. Don't forget your staff, they are key to delivering a sensory brand experience. Tone of voice, body language and movement are all areas that can be developed as well as your uniforms, processes, scripts and rewards.

Staff also have to live and work in the physical environment daily, so considering them is essential when designing commercial spaces or defining an approach to sound or scent. If they are being aggravated by repetitive music or too much stimulation, that will come through loud and strong.





## FOLLOWING THE CROWD

Buying off the shelf solutions is missing the point. A brand has a positioning, a set of values and a story and the way your brand behaves should reflect that in every way. Scents and sounds should be designed specifically to reflect your brand in the same way your logo and colour palette do. If you buy generic solutions or mimic the competition you will lose your point of difference.

The After Eight pouch; the Toblerone mountain; the pop of a Snapple; the pitch of a Ferrari or smell of a Bentley; the colour of a Tiffany box; the sonic mnemonic of Intel. It is the unique signifiers which distinguish your brand and allow people to fall in love with it. Everything you do should strengthen your brand narrative and that's what makes it unique.

Always seek an opportunity to stand out.

## 5

## FORGETTING DIVERSITY

Our responses are formed by our background and personal experiences. Cultural, social, age and geographic differences can be extraordinary. In Britain we associate the smell and taste of cucumber with dark green, but the Spanish are more likely to match it with red, the colour of gazpacho. In Brazil, lemons are green. Young people are able to hear notes at higher pitch than older people. They are also better equipped to absorb and cut through complex multi-sensory 'noise'. Those born pre-1950 tend to reminisce about natural smells such as grass and those in the 70s cite Playdoh and Crayons. The list is infinite.

The link between smell, sound and memory is well known and a single scent can evoke a spectrum of responses both personal and collective, so clever sensory strategy designs for both.





# 4

## BEING CLICHED

Everybody knows that the smell of cooking coffee or baking bread is supposed to increase sales and help you sell a house. The Science backs this up. But the trigger of this smell can also activate people's skepticism, making people feel they are being manipulated into a purchase and so have a negative effect.

Rather than pump out a synthetic smell of bread outside a bakery, design the shop so the natural odours can waft enchantingly into the street. Rather than pump the perfume of pine into a pharmacy to evoke associations of cleanliness, use pine based cleaning products or natural pine shelving. The box fresh factory smell of trainers is part of the joy, don't mask it.

Being authentic is critical. If the intention is to fool customers it frequently won't. But if the intention is to create a more positive engaging experience, customers will feel and enjoy it.

# 3

## BEING UNTOUCHABLE

9 out of 10 consumers believe that trying a product through experience is the best way to get information on the brand, so the focus should be on getting customers to touch, taste and try.

Texture, weight and fit play a critical role in the purchasing clothes; visual appeal and smell critical to buying food; smell and touch to cosmetics and so on. It might sound insultingly obvious but packaging, security and store design frequently create barriers between your customer and your products. It is hard to fall in love with something before you've experienced it.

Remember 9 out of 10 cats prefer Whiskers (sorry that one was for the UK audience).





## 2

### FORGETTING TASTE

Taste is one of our most cherished senses and our relationship to food and taste is complex, habitual, ritual, seductive, social, private and ceremonial. Consumption is deliberate, active and direct, not ambient like sight, sound or smell. It can become an integral part of an experience (think popcorn at the cinema) and it offers scope to enhance experiences and increase time lingered.

It is also important to consider the theatre and ceremony attached to eating and drinking from tea in Japan, to sweets distributed on take-off, from to drive-throughs to delicatessens. Taste is a powerful tool and is frequently overlooked.





## IGNORING INSTINCT

The traditional notion of the 5 senses was originally conceived by Aristotle but humans are programmed with many more tools for understanding and experiencing the world around us.

Temperature, spacial awareness, intuition, balance, health, emotion, experience, relationships, expectation, drama, culture, community: they all play a part in our perception, trust and experience. Businesses with targets and shareholders frequently forget to think and feel as a person, put themselves in someone else's shoes and to trust their intuition.



# VETYVER

VETYVER is a Sensory Agency. We offer strategy, creative and implementation services across all sensory areas. Every project is different. We are driven by your brand and your customers and the opportunities to strengthen the bond between the two. That journey can take us anywhere.

We have developed signature fragrances, ambient scents and toiletries; composed sonic mnemonics and brand tracks; re-written call centre scripts; developed global music strategy; created soundscapes and playlists; trained staff to understand and perform the brand values; developed service level standards; reviewed business processes; developed tone of voice guidelines; cast and recorded voiceovers; produced brand films and theatrical performances; explored unique tactile product features; carried out photography shoots; and commissioned installations and performances for public spaces. The possibilities are endless.

Our extensive experience in brand strategy, brand management and creative direction underpins everything we do. How does your brand feel?

Contact [feel@vetyver.co.uk](mailto:feel@vetyver.co.uk) for more information or visit [www.vetyver.co.uk](http://www.vetyver.co.uk)



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