

Sensory Marketing in Retail : Why Not All Five?

Prof Mukta Srivastava, Lecturer, Ms. Gunjan Singh, Lecturer
Allana Institute of Management Sciences

Abstract

Senses are the physiological capabilities within organisms that provide inputs for perception. The present article talks about how the five senses play vital role so far as customers' preference and purchase decisions are concerned. In the current scenario, the retailers are imbining just two or three senses into their services in order to generate favorable emotions and feelings towards them and trying to make them closer to the customers. But this strategy has become common; therefore some unique practices need to be adopted in order to be the market leader. With the help of a primary study done in five major retail stores in Pune city, an attempt has been made to highlight the importance of including all the five senses into the services of a retail outlet. The paper concludes that a retail outlet with all the five senses becomes a lively store, and hence an asset not only to the retailer but to the customers as well.

Keywords: Five Senses, Sensory Marketing, Retail Outlet, Retail Services.

A. Introduction :

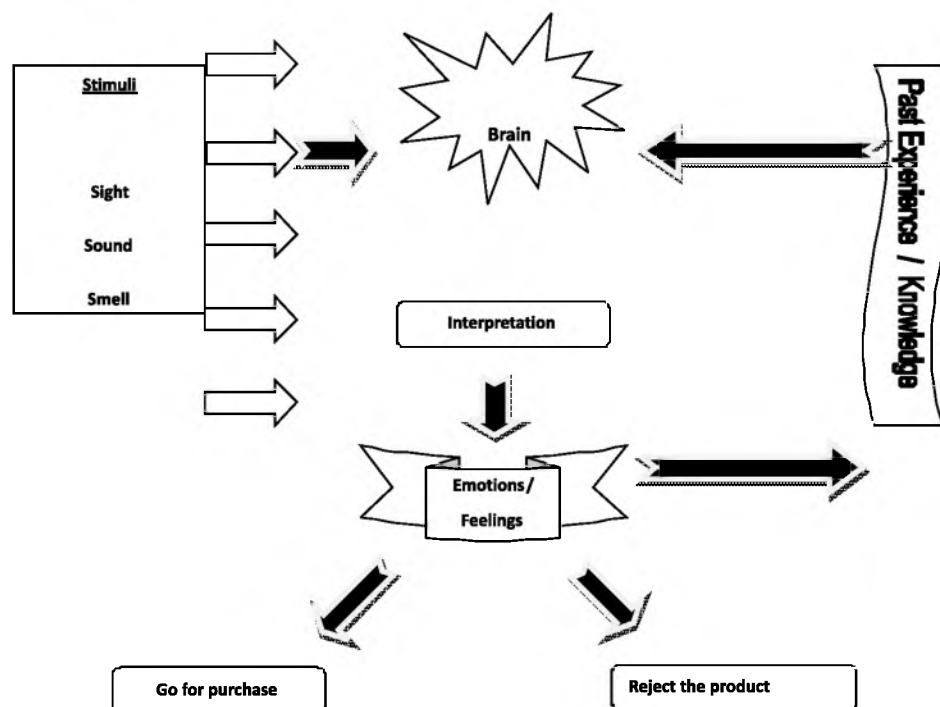
What an awesome smell! How noisy it is! It tastes great.

Look at that! How soft! When we hear, or even use these statements, we probably don't even think about why we are using them. Well, it is because of our senses. Without us even knowing, our sense organs (eyes, nose, ears, skin, and tongue) take information and send it to the brain for processing. Without senses, we would not be able to smell, see, hear, taste, or touch anything. We can not even imagine life without senses.

Senses are the physical means by which all living beings smell, see, hear, taste, and touch. All living beings get information about the outside world and within the body through their senses, and senses become extremely important. We have five main sense organs. They are the eyes, nose, ears, tongue, and skin.

How do we sense?

Stimuli produced from our senses go to the brain through our nervous system. Our brain detects these stimuli, analyzes them and ultimately gives the interpretation which depends upon the past experience and beliefs. According to those interpretations, emotions/feelings emerge; which now help the person in taking his decisions regarding the purchase/consumption of a particular product (See Figure I).





After consumption, the emotions/feelings of satisfaction/dissatisfaction are transferred to the brain and help in taking decision for the next purchase. This is how senses induce emotions/feelings, which indirectly decide about the product selection/purchase.

A. What is Sensory Marketing?

The sensory marketing is the set of all the variables of action controlled by the producer or retailer to create, around the product or service, a specific multi-sensory environment, either through the product itself or the communication or the environment in the selling point [4].

According to SAM Sensory and Marketing Group, “Sensory Marketing is an effective tool in gaining sensory consumer insights for your marketing strategy. It measures and explains emotional consumer decision-making by variability of products, concepts, packaging, and marketing mix scenarios to ensure long-lasting success” [5].

Aradhna Krishna defines it as "Marketing that engages the consumers' senses and affects their behaviors" [3]. In short we can describe Sensory Marketing as:

“Sensory Marketing refers to engaging the senses of the customer (Existing/Prospective) in such a manner that he/she feels strongly attached to the brand and connects that to his/ her personality. This helps in creating a unique image of the brand.”

B. Sensory Marketing in Retail: Why should a retailer go for all the five senses?

In today's scenario, retailers are playing with just two/three senses to generate favorable emotions/feelings for their product and services and trying to make them closer to the customers. But sometime these senses get saturated as all the competitors follow the same and the chances to be the market leader diminishes.

If a retailer uses all the five senses together to generate the positive stimulation, the chances of getting selected by the consumer will be more as the probability is higher in that case.

Suppose, there are two retailers X and Y; dealing in a same product. Retailer X is including just two senses (visual and touch) for promoting its product; and retailer Y is making use of all the five senses.

Now assume that there is one group of customers for whom the smell of the product is the major factor for choosing the product. Who will win the race in that case? Undoubtedly it is retailer Y, as it has imbibed all the five senses into the product. Hence if we have a bag full of all the attributes, we can easily cover the whole range of customers and have a positive response in maximum cases.

Thus, to analyze the real situation on the hand, a survey was conducted using an interview schedule in five various retail outlets in Pune.

C. Importance of the Study

In the study, consumers' attitude towards various senses stimuli in a particular retail outlet and towards a particular retail outlet if it includes all the five senses in its services has been analyzed. The significance and benefits of the research may be listed as below :

1. Since the study has been done on the end users, it will be very beneficial for the retailers as they will be able to understand the psyche of consumers and can build their products and services accordingly.
2. It will be of benefit for the retailers as they will be able to know whether customers will respond favorably if they include all the five senses into their services and can frame their strategies accordingly.
3. Last but not the least; the study will work as a basis for future research as well. Hence it will be of great importance for academicians as well as researchers.

D. Review of Literature

1. Kotler[2] in his article 'Atmospherics as a Marketing Tool' had mentioned the need for brands to position them differently. He explained the influence of the point of sales physical environment on the behavior of the customers and considered the creation of atmosphere as the most important strategic way of differentiation for retailers.
2. Amanda[1] in her article 'Retailers, CPG Partners Making Sense Out Of Sensory Marketing' studied that-
 - One of the challenges retailers and consumer product marketers face is how to keep campaigns fresh and different, while compelling consumers to take interest in products.
 - Recently, the buzz is all about making sense out of marketing—with sensory marketing.
 - Hershey's Chocolate significantly spurred sales at point of purchase with Scent Air Technology installed in vending machines in California tourist locations.
 - Traditional and historical marketing and advertising have focused primarily on visual impact, but a new-found focus on the sense of smell is definitely having an impact in the retail arena.
 - The sense of smell is a goldmine for marketers, says Harald Vogt, Founder & Chief Marketer of Scent Marketing. “The frontal part of the brain is responsible for decision making — and our sense of smell goes right into it,” says Vogt.
3. Valenti et al.[6] in their Marketing Dissertation 'The Concept of Sensory Marketing' found that
 - For many marketers (and consumers), the affectivity, perception and pleasure are more important than the price,



- In the 50's, brands first worked on the colors, the design of the products or the advertisements as most of the promotion was made by posters. Then, music has been introduced, in commercials and in the point of sales.
- Smell can play a role in the recognition of the restaurants, of the brand.
- The role played by the music, the paintings, the colors and the smell in a restaurant is of importance to create a coherent atmosphere.
- Sensory marketing could be integrated in many marketing strategies in the future as it gives to companies "something more" than others, than the competition.

E. Objectives of the Study :

Based on the Literature Review and the gap found, following objectives have been framed:

1. To examine the consumers' attitude towards various senses stimuli in a particular retail outlet.
2. To study the customers' attitude towards a particular retail outlet if it includes all the five senses in its services.

F. Hypothesis :

For Research Objective 1

H0: The consumers' attitude towards various senses stimuli present in a particular retail outlet is unfavorable.

For Research Objective 2

H0: There is no significant relationship between customers' attitude and the presence of all the five senses stimuli in a particular retail outlet.

G. Research Methodology :

• **Sample Design:** The present study is based on the primary data which was collected from 250 sample respondents (50 respondents shopping at 5 different retail stores). These 250 respondents were selected by using convenience sampling technique.

• **Data Collection:** Data Collection was done using an interview schedule.

• **Data Collection:** Data Collection was done using an interview schedule.

• **Area and Period of the Study:** This study is confined to Pune city (Maharashtra, India). The study was conducted in 5 different retail stores i.e. Shoppers Stop (Camp), Lifestyle (Viman Nagar), Brand Factory (Camp), Westside (Camp), and Globus (Camp) during the months of June-July 2011.

• **Framework and Tools for Analysis:** Data collected through interview schedule were presented in a master table and required sub-tables were prepared. For analyzing the data, One-Way ANOVA, Chi-square Test and Percentage Analysis were applied.

<i>Name of Retail Outlet</i>					
	48 (96%)	43	47	49	-
	46	45	44	46	-
	47	46	44 (88%)	49	-
	39	32	37	40	-
	35	33	35	42	-



H. Data Analysis and Interpretation :

From Table I
After applying One-Way ANOVA in Table I, we get Table II.

Table I*: Attitude towards various senses stimuli in a particular retail outlet

* The numbers given in the table are responses out of a sample size of 50 for each store and they represent only the 'Yes' respondents.

Table II: ANOVA: Calculation of F value

From Table I,
Calculated value of F_{0.05} at (4, 20) degree of freedom = 0.24
Table value of F_{0.05} at (4, 20) degree of freedom = 2.8661

According to F distribution table, with df= (4, 20), F must be at least 2.8661, hence null hypothesis is rejected.

Table II: Do you like the retail outlet if it includes all the five senses in its services? After applying Chi-square Test in Table II,
Calculated value of Chi Square at 5% level of significance

Source	SS	df	MS	F
Among	354.64	4	88.66	0.24
Within	7384	20	369.2	

<i>Senses Stimuli</i>	<i>Yes</i>	<i>Can Not Say</i>	<i>No</i>	<i>Total</i>
<u>Name of Retail Outlet</u>				
Shoppers Stop	22 (44%)	07 (14%)	21 (42%)	50
Lifestyle	39 (78%)	06 (12%)	05 (10%)	50
Brand Factory	30 (60%)	10 (20%)	10 (20%)	50
Westside	33 (66%)	09 (18%)	08 (16%)	50
Globus	36 (72%)	07 (14%)	07 (14%)	50
Total	160	39	51	250

and 4 degree of freedom is 22.27.

Table value of Chi Square at 5% level of significance and 4 degree of freedom is 9.49.

Since the calculated value is higher than the table value of Chi Square, the null hypothesis stands rejected.

I. Findings :

The findings of the study can be summarized as follows:

From Table I,

1. The customers' attitude towards various senses stimuli present in a particular retail outlet is favorable
2. It is obvious that attitude of the respondents towards various senses stimuli in a particular retail outlet is favorable (more favorable in case of Shoppers Stop, Lifestyle and Brand Factory and less favorable in case of Westside and Globus).



3. It is found that none of the respondents from the five selected retail outlets could relate themselves with the fifth sense stimuli i.e. taste as there was a complete absence of this stimuli.
4. 96% of respondents from Shoppers Stop like the ambience of the outlet, 86% like the music, 94% like the smell and 98% like the feel or touch of the outlet.
5. In case of Lifestyle, 92% of the respondents like the ambience and feel of the outlet, while 90% like the music and 88% like the smell of the outlet.
6. 88% of the respondents like the smell of Brand Factory, 98% like the feel, 94% like the ambience and 92% of the respondents like the music of the store.
7. 78% of the respondents from Westside like its ambience, 64% like the sound, 74% like the smell and 80% like the feel of the outlet.
8. 84% of the respondents from Globus like the feel, 70% like the ambience and smell and 66% like the music of the outlet.

From Table II

1. There is significant relationship between customers' attitude and the presence of all the five senses stimuli in a particular retail outlet.
2. 44% respondents from Shoppers Stop, 78% from Lifestyle, 60% from Brand Factory, 66% from Westside and 72% from Globus said that they would like a particular retail outlet if it includes all the five senses stimuli in its services.
3. On the other hand, 42% respondents from Shoppers Stop, 10% from Lifestyle, 20% from Brand Factory, 16% from Westside and 14% from Globus said that they would not like a particular retail outlet if it includes all the five senses stimuli in its services.

J. Suggestions :

Based on the findings of the study, following suggestions can be made :

- The retailers must include all the five senses stimuli into their services.
- In some of the cases, where incorporating all the five senses stimuli is not possible (e.g. the component of taste is absent in case of the selected outlets), the retailers must think about various innovative techniques of embracing all of them into their services.
- Suppose Shoppers Stop wants to include taste as a stimulus, they can go with certain theme, say, chocolate. And they can do their interiors using chocolate color which will in turn help the customers to relate themselves with the taste of chocolate.

K. Conclusion :

"Nothing is so powerful as an insight into human nature, what compulsions drive a man, what instincts dominate his

action, even though his language so often camouflages what really motivates him. For if you know these things about a man, you can touch him at the core of his being." [7]

– Bill Bernbach,

Legendary Advertising Creative Leader

In spite of using few senses, if a retailer uses all the five senses, it will enjoy long term benefits in terms of money as well as the market share.

Including all the five senses to the services of the store and communicating them to the consumer is like giving life to the retail outlet. Only a lively retail store can communicate the exact value to the customers and become an asset to them.

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