

Sensory marketing and conceptual fluency in “green” marketing campaigns.

Short article by
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Sensory marketing and conceptual fluency in green marketing endeavours.

Sensory marketing involves developing creative, engaging methods to enable consumers to experience the brand in a way that is more organic than traditional marketing strategies. Although sensory marketing may be primarily concerned with the five senses, we can take it a step further and factor in perception, which takes perception as important because our cognitive judgements (preferences, aversions, biases and ultimately decisions) regarding a brand and the relevant associations with it are only formed after a sensory experience of the brand/ product has occurred. Typically, it has been thought that multi-sensory marketing (marketing that uses product related or ambient related sensory cues) is only effective when all of the senses are catered to; for example in a restaurant all aspects of the person's experience are catered for from visual experiences through food presentation, all the way to the auditory experience through the music playing in the background. The environment is designed to stimulate the senses and create a positive association with dining. That said, current studies show that even a single sensory attribute can be targeted to elicit a favourable product evaluation. The process of cognitive evaluation is mediated by the idea of '*conceptual fluency*'. Conceptual fluency is likened to implicit cues about a brand or product and to how these cues inform biases about a particular product. For example, it is important to keep tabs on social movements to maintain conceptual fluency that supports the brand position. Using the wrong cues can lead to brand aversion, as in cases of sensory incongruence. This blog post examines the effects of using the colour green to demonstrate how a brand can convey its commitment to sustainable practices.

The brain is geared to make associations, especially when emotional or semantic recall is involved. Sensory marketing considers the semantic associations that strategies may evoke and ensures they align with the brand or product. By exposing consumers to sensory stimuli that complement the product or service, we reinforce positive associations with the brand. One might consider this a labour-intensive form of marketing, and even some of the sensory attributes can be utilised to transfer positive attitudes. (Fürst, Nina and Binder, 2020) found that even if you are only using a single sensory attribute, you are able to utilise conceptual fluency to market products and transfer positive attitudes to the brand, even if you don't completely encompass the consumer (Fürst, Nina and Binder, 2020). There are times when appealing to a single sense might be more practical than committing to a multi-sensory marketing strategy. Their study illustrates how products with packaging expected for the product can lead to easier processing and more favourable product evaluation when one retrieves sensory information about the product.

Conceptual fluency in inductive reasoning

The fluency model implies that advertising exposure enhances the ease with which consumers recognise and process a brand. In turn, this increased perceptual fluency leads to consumers having more favourable attitudes toward the brand" (Lee & Labroo, 2004). Thus, conceptual fluency enhances brand salience, particularly when someone is seeking brand-related products or services (Dantlgraber, Kuhlmann, & Reips, 2019). It is important, then, for a brand to be mindful of the impressions made by the conceptual cues it communicates, especially in light of how social movements influence consumers' judgements.

Trends impacting individual consumer decision-making

The U.S. market for body-and earth-friendly products is estimated at more than \$200 billion. In a 2007 survey, eight in 10 consumers said they believe it's

important to buy green products and that they'll pay more to do so (University, 2020).

Colour effects in green advertising.

Lim, Baek, Yoon, and Kim (2020) confirm that the colour 'green' is associated with an eco-mentality, and that when brands embody this colour, they imbue their products or services with sustainable practices. This is an example of when the visual cue of colour is used to inform consumer perception by using empathy

towards the environment and transferring it to the product. It is essential to emphasise that this association incites brand associations. Subtlety may be a deciding factor in successful market strategies, as when consumers feel that marketing attempts aren't sincere or are overdrawn then strategies might work to harm brand perception (Seo, Scammon, 2017). When customers aren't receiving the message intended by the brand/product, this is known as brand incongruence. Marketing to sensory cues in an incongruous way can lead to negative brand evaluation.

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