SENSORY BRANDING AND MARKETING IN STIMULATING THE RELATION BETWEEN THE BUYER AND THE BRAND

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Abstract: Classical marketing is becoming less effective. Senses and emotions, as well as a buying mood, the atmosphere of the place, where the decision to purchase is made by a buyer have key importance in stimulating both the creation of shopping behaviours and the consumer – brand relationship. The use of sensory (sensual) branding is a departure from the 2D brands, communicating through sight and hearing, towards the 5D brands, which affect the five different human senses. Sensory marketing and branding enable building a relationship with the brand, keeping the brand awareness alive, increasing sales, and exceeding the competition to a higher extent. New technologies create and strengthen the space of the buyer's experiences with the brand. The neuromarketing research shows that emotions play a significant role when making the purchasing decisions.

Keywords: sensory marketing, sensual brand, emotions, purchasing behaviors, neuro-marketing.

1. Introduction

The holistic approach to the sensory marketing involves all five of human senses, which results in providing buyers with a specific range of sensory experiences using all the five senses and affecting their purchasing decisions. To some extent, sensory marketing supports the process of marketing communication. Brand, which affects the five senses takes on this individual and distinctive character against competitive brands. Understanding the importance of senses regarding their influence on the human brain and evoking emotions related to the receiving of specific stimuli are of key importance for the development of the sensory marketing and sensual brand strategy. The synergy effect of senses increases the impact on purchasing decisions, perception of brands and the buying mood. What becomes an additional challenge is adjusting the sensory (visual, auditory, olfactory, tactile, gustatory) strategy and respective stimuli to buyers' preferences to produce the desired sales effect.

The aim of the discussions conducted by the authors was to present the concept and tools of sensory marketing compared with the potential of influencing the sensory branding, aimed at inducing certain purchasing decisions and building a relation with the brand. Authors of the article used the modern theory of sensory marketing concepts, research findings, including the neuromarketing-related ones as well as the sensual brand market application references.

2. Atmosphere of the place and its importance in sensory marketing

The task of the sensory marketing creators is to express the brand identity and the goodwill to create such a sensual image, which will affect the five human senses (Krishna, 2011, p. 9; Grzybowska-Brzezińska, Rudzewicz, 2013, p. 69). Sensory marketing uses the well-perceived actions aimed at evoking certain associations and reactions (Hultén, Broweus, van Dijk, 2011, p. 12; Lindstrom, 2009, p. 10). American Marketing Association defines sensory marketing as techniques that aim to seduce the consumer using senses and to affect their emotions and behaviours. S. Rieunier understands it as a set of all activity variables controlled by the manufacturer or retailer to create this specific, multi-sensory environment related to the product or service, or through the product itself, the message or the point of sale environment (Valenti, Riviere, 2008, p. 8). Formation of the term "atmosphere" dates back to the first half of the seventeenth century as a combination of two Greek words $\alpha \tau \mu \delta \zeta$ (atmos) – water vapour and $\sigma\varphi\alpha i\rho\alpha$ (sphaira) – sphere. It was initially used to determine the planet activity zone. The development of science has given the term "atmosphere" a new meaning, hence the word is also understood as a zone of gases, the coating surrounding the Earth. Its metaphorical sense has been used since the eighteenth century to describe the atmosphere, the emotional colour of the space (Wala K., 2018). The term "atmosphere" defined by the American Marketing Association indicates the physical characteristics of the place of sale, such as architecture, layout, signs and displays, colour, lighting, temperature, noise and smell. It is to create an image in the mind of a customer. The term "atmosphere" understood as a concept of the consciously designed space was introduced to the marketing by P. Kotler as early as in 1973. The space perceived in such manner was to generate certain emotions and behaviours of buyers. Sight, hearing, touch and smell are said to be the atmosphere perception channels. In the opinion of P. Kotler the atmosphere elements include: in the area of sight: colour, brightness, size, shape; in the area of sound: volume and pitch; in the area of smell: the colour of smell, freshness; in the areas of touch: softness, smoothness, temperature. On the other hand, Rieunier S., when approaching an issue of the atmosphere components, includes taste as one of them and recognises the atmosphere elements as the following factors: visual ones: the environment colours, materials, lights, the place layout, cleanliness); auditory ones: music, noises; olfactory ones: natural aromas, artificial fragrances; tactile ones: materials,

temperature, weight; and gustatory one: food samples (sampling) (Högskola, Halmstad Marketing Dissertation, 2008, p. 9).

The enhanced composition of atmospheric factors presented by L.W. Turley, and R.E. Milliman distinguish five categories including: external factors (e.g. size and colour of a building, architecture, environment, an exhibition window), internal factors (e.g. scent, music, temperature, light, cleanliness, colours etc.), layout and design (arrangement of the space, direction, location and the exhibition of goods etc.), a point of sales and decorations as well as the human factor (the employee characteristics, uniform, crowd, privacy) (Wal, 2018).

Atmosphere is also frequently understood as a specific combination of its elements. The fact that they have a direct impact on the nervous system of buyers is used to stimulate certain parts of the brain to evoke a desired response in the field of emotions and behaviours resulting from a proper selection and concentration of the atmosphere components. The challenge lies in recognising the relation and the extent to which a combination of the specified atmosphere elements should be formed to achieve the desired response of buyers by stimulating their behaviours. It is of great importance in relation to the expected range of the increased period of time spent by the buyer at a point of sale, an increase in the number of impulsive buying tendencies and ultimately to the increase in sales. Reactions to the atmosphere may vary, since they are determined by gender, age, culture or experience of buyers (Wal, 2018).

The research shows that 2/3 of the purchasing decisions have been taken when in a shop. Half of the respondents indicate that the corresponding atmosphere may incline them to remain at the point of sale longer. For that reason, atmosphere is regarded to be the main reason of the sensory marketing (Maleszka D., 2018). Modern marketers are coming to understand that referring to many senses reinforces the communication, the message concerning the brand, and for that reason it has become the tool so frequently used by them.

2.1. Sensory marketing tools

In order to succeed in applying the sensory marketing strategy it is significant to stimulate the greatest possible number of sense, optimally five ones, in buyers and to evoke the desired response and positive sensations by the applied stimuli/atmosphere elements.

Sensory memory is of great significance in this respect, because it enables the buyer to memorise e.g., the experience quality and at the appropriate moment to recreate and associate it with a particular brand, situation, person or product. The effect of sensory memory is to create an emotional bond with the recipient and to evoke desire to purchase the brand/product.

Sense of sight. M. Lindstrom states that "efficiency and precision of the eyes and brain are incomparable with any device that has been invented up to now" (Lindstrom, 2009, p. 133). Most people regard sight to be the most important receptor and trust the vision-based perception entirely. The importance of the sight as a sense has been confirmed by the fact that human eyes, as an organ, represent two-thirds of all the sensory cells of the human body.

Sight enables an individual to distinguish differences between objects in terms of their size and colour, colour intensity, to capture contrast, evaluate the distance from the objects being observed, as well as to identify both their movement and the movement direction (Grzybowska-Brzezińska, Rudzewicz, 2009, p. 69). Taking into account the marketing perspective, it is of great significance in terms of perceiving new products, interior design of a point of sale, as well as the customer service and the employee dress code. In order to create visibility and expose identity of both the brand and the organisation it is necessary to visualise sensual experiences. When being visualised, the sense of sight is of crucial importance in the process of building and maintaining brand awareness as well as in creating its image. Visual chaos, as well as a great number of images surrounding people weaken the stimuli affecting their vision and subsequently make them pay much less attention to them at present (Lindstrom, 2013, p. 120-121). The product is estimated to have only 0.06 seconds to draw the attention of a prospective buyer to itself in the large-area store.

Sense of hearing. Sound has for a long time been present in marketing messages and the brand communicating manners, as well as in the process of informing about the organisation and its products, usually with the use of the radio and television. Currently, the Internet has also become a space for the sound-based communication exposure. Technology development enables sound to be incorporated within a variety of advertising systems in such an innovative way, which facilitates drawing the attention to the marketing communication.

The sound is to single out the advertising message and to focus attention on it. Practical uses of the auditory stimuli affecting the sense of hearing involve audio advertising, jingles, sound logo of a brand/company, voice characteristic for the brand communications, phone sounds specific to the certain mobile phone brands as well as music associated with a particular brand. Slow music makes buyers remain at the point of sale even up to 18% longer and may increase the purchasing decisions by 35% (Grzybowska-Brzezińska, Rudzewicz, 2009, p. 70). When it is appropriately selected, it favourably affects both the customers' well-being and their purchasing tendency. This is how the brand atmosphere is created. Millward Brown research has shown that more than 65% of buyers change their mood when simply being influenced by the received sounds. Both the pace and repertoire of music influence the behaviours and tendency to spend money.

Sense of smell. The human body responds to the olfactory stimuli very quickly. They reach directly into the brain at a pace much faster than the impulses provided by other senses. The volatile substances, causing olfactory sensations, reach the brain from where they are subsequently transmitted to the limbic system. It is the structure system of the brain, which regulates emotional behaviours. According to D. Rock, the limbic system gets easily stimulated (Rock, 2011, p. 149). The sense of smell affects both the memory and the emotional state of people. The aroma, which accompanies the event, makes its near-photographic image be stored in the human memory. Furthermore, it is the smell, which enables one to recall memories associated with it. Smell and taste are described as chemical

senses, which are closely related to each other. Research has proved that a pleasant fragrance improves the mood by 40%, especially when the scent is associated with a happy memory (Lindstrom, 2009, p. 121). Psychologists P. Aarts and J.S. Jelinek, who explored the subconscious impact of smell on emotions and human behaviours, have referred to it as the Hidden Memory of Scents. This confirms the theory indicating that smell is one of the factors influencing either the buying decision-making process or using a specific product. Smell is the associative sense. Responding to scents is associated with the events memorised along with the smell. This is referred to as the Proust effect. This also involves the effect of exposure, namely "the more known something is, the more appreciated it becomes". Research has shown that 80% of men and 90% of women identified their intense memories when triggered by smells and which resulted in strong emotional reactions. Scent stimulates buying decisions faster and affects higher loyalty to specific brands (Maleszka, 2018). The significant role of the sense of smell is also observed when brands are accepted by buyers. Smell is being increasingly used as a branding medium by marketers (Lindstrom, 2009, p. 122). The use of scent marketing (aromamarketing) is targeted to create a pleasant atmosphere at the point of sale/service or work, to make people spend more time in these places when shopping or working. Just like in the case of the following premium car brands: Audi, BMW, Mercedes or Volvo – they are characterised by the specific fragrance used in the production of the subsequent models (Kuczmar-Kłopotowska, 2014).

Sense of taste. Scientifically, taste is seen as the chemical gate leading to the brain. That is enabled by the number of approximately 9,000 taste buds, which enable recognition of hundreds of chemicals. Science indicates that all people are born with a natural preference for a sweet taste and avoidance of a bitter one, since the latter has for ages been associated with poisons (Walewski, 2018). An average inhabitant of the Earth is able to distinguish the taste of approx. 4.000 substances. Taste buds transfer information concerning the type of taste, salty, sweet, sour and bitter, to the brain. The bitter taste is the most sensitive and the most complex one and may involve up to 25 different receptors. Since 1985, when the existence of another taste "umami" was recognised, it has been distinguished in, amongst other, soy or fish-based sauces, as well as in the so-called "Chinese soups". They are greatly enriched with its source - the monosodium glutamate, which affects all of the taste buds, enhances and improves other flavors, as well as increases the culinary attractiveness of dishes. Taste is also referred to as a "near sense", because it cannot be used at a distance. Taste identification, including appetite, is affected by mood (Hulten, Broweus, 2011). It may be disturbed, e.g., by certain drugs or hormones and it varies with age. Taste buds are stimulated by the scent. Taste is closely associated with smell, shape and colour. Products are rarely marketised through taste. "Taste is not structured, it cannot be proved" (Lindstrom, 2009, p. 122). Many experiences are the result of olfactory sensations.

Sense of touch. Man would not be able to function properly without touch. It is perceived by skin. Touch is sensed and registered by the brain due to the sensory receptors located in the

skin. Temperature, humidity, pain, smoothness, roughness, softness, sharpness and movement may all be experienced by man. Touch is psychologically significant in the process of establishing and deepening relationships with another person. In view of biology, the superficial (exteroceptive) sensation, represented by the touch and vibration sensation and by the reception of pain stimuli and temperature is distinguished. On the other hand, the deep (prioproceptive) sensation is a sense of orientation related to one's own body position. This feeling enables receiving information concerning both the body position and its movement. The proper visual and spatial coordination is determined by an efficient system of the deep sensation. From the marketing and sales perspective, the sense of touch is regarded to play an important role in perceiving both the products themselves and their quality, especially in the process of buying, inter alia, cars, food, clothing, electronic equipment, because the decision to purchase results from the physical contact with the product. Both the material and surface used to manufacture certain products are of great significance in the touch-based sensations. Equally important are weight, softness/hardness, shape and temperature. In communication, the materials used in the product constitute a significant factor of identity and of building associations with strength, naturalness, cosiness. It is frequently observed that before the customer ultimately chooses and buys the product, they touch it (e.g. bedding, clothes, shoes, underwear, ceramics, furniture, cosmetics) in order to check its high-quality workmanship (Grzybowska-Brzezińska, Rudzewicz, 2009, p. 71). The studies performed by M. Linstrom found that tactile sensations are an important criterion when purchasing a car for 49% of the respondents as it is connected with touching the steering wheel and all the switches, whilst for only 4% respondents they are considered to be irrelevant (Lindstrom, 2009, p. 110). Tactile sensations are also significant in terms of services. This is related to the importance of packaging service perception, which is understood through the atmosphere, equipment of the place where it is provided and the customer service. The examples include the warm, cosy interior, characteristic for the slow food restaurant, and the ascetic one of the fast food ones.

3. Sensory branding - the concept and application of sensual brands

For ages, the object of interest for researchers, marketing practitioners, and many others, has been the response to the question on the manner, in which the buyers make purchasing decisions as well as on the type of stimuli and their way of influencing the purchasing choices? Why are certain brands bought more willingly than others? How do recipents respond to advertising? The concept of neuromarketing is associated with applying the measuring tools used in the analysis of psycho-emotional behaviours of people to the marketing stimuli optimisation process. Neuromarketing is based on the knowledge regarding the brain being used by people to make decisions. The main hypothesis in the neuromarketing

assumptions is that people make purchasing decisions following emotions rather than rational thinking. The neuromarketing research, which is being increasingly applied, is to provide a complement to the traditional methods of measurement. These studies focus on categorising an emotion along with the intensity the emotion is expressed with when the brain is exposed to an advertising communication, or products, packaging and other facilities. The elements of a testing method combination, frequently used for this purpose, which enable such observation are: electroencephalography (EEG), GSR (the galvanic skin response study) and the eye movement observation. Application, as described by M. Lindstrom, of the most sophisticated brain imaging tools, i.e., fMRI and the advanced version of electroencephalograph (SST – Steady State Typography), allows to register the brain changes in real time. The study started in 2004 and chaired by Dr Gemma Calvert has shown, inter alia, that posting the images of cancer victims on cigarette packs does not only discourage smokers from the cigarette buying and smoking, as was expected, but contrarily, it stimulates the region of the brain referred to as its pleasure centre (nucleus accumbens). When the body desires something, the specialised neurons within the nucleus accumbens area give light (e.g., when there is a craving for alcohol, nicotine, sex, gambling, drugs) (Lindstrom, 2009, p. 110). It has become understandable, e.g. in the process of product placement. The research conducted in the USA has shown that this particular type of sponsorship must be integrated with the program storyline or the movie plot in a clever and sublime way in order to increase the brand profitability. The product must also make sense within the story. If both the brand and its product do not intersperse with the movie content they will be ignored by viewers. For the recipients to memorise the brand, it must be of a significant role in the scenario. Discovery of the mirror neurons, responsible for, amongst other, our imitating of other people turned out to be a groundbreaking issue. "Mirror neurons play the same role in psychology as DNA in biology". (Lindstrom, 2009, p. 62). They are responsible for people's unintentional imitation of others (we smile when seeing happy and become sad in the presence of the hurt ones). This is of great significance in the context of stimulating the behaviours of buyers through brand messages and communications. Mirror neurons also correspond to human empathy by providing impulses to the limbic system (representing certain emotions as well as the adjustment to other people's feelings and behaviours) (Lindstrom, 2009, p. 65). Use of the mirror neurons enables the recipient to be excited with sensations resembling the actual touching of the advertised product. Knowledge concerning the response to mirror neurons results in creating the kind of advertising which activates this type of cells (Chmielewska, 2018). The study conducted by the Oxford professor, Ch. Spence, on synesthesia, a neurological condition, in which sounds are perceived as fragrances, scents as colours, flavours as sounds, has shown that "the high-pitched sounds and the piano-related sounds are associated with a sweet taste. On the other hand, low frequencies and brass instruments are connected with a sensation of bitterness. To provide an example – Starbucks commissioned Spence to select a piece of work, that would enhance the taste of coffee. Sound of the defined letters may also evoke appropriate sensations. For that reason, the deliberate use of the "I" letter in the IKEA or LIDL names is associated with cheap shopping. Associations are also evoked by shapes, e.g., the symbol of a star placed on the beer packaging is combined with a beverage.

3.1. Sensory branding – creating the sensual brand

Marketing and brand management require a change in approach. It is estimated that as much as 8 in 10 of the new products fail in the first quarter of their presence on the market; in Japan, the ratio is even higher and it amounts to 9.7. As it has been estimated by the IXP Marketing Group, approximately 21 thousands of new brands are launched to the market annually, whilst, 52% of brands and 57% of individual products decline after a year (Lindstrom, 2009, p. 35). Sensory Branding (experiential, sensual) is an important direction of changes towards the XXI century development of branding. In its essence, the experiential brand is based on the following beliefs:

- sensual sensations stimulating emotions have a greater impact on people's behaviours than reasonable arguments,
- the product may be assimilated to a sum of sensory experiences (through sight, hearing, smell, touch, taste), which results from touching/using the product,
- the brand identity also creates the space, where the brand is experienced, the environment, where the brand is exposed as well as the atmosphere of the space. The service space, referred to as "service landscape" is understood as a space in real terms, including stationary shops, shopping malls, cinemas, travel agencies, restaurants, hotels and in virtual one online shops. This is not only the space to make transaction, but to create the brand image as well as to experience, namely to sense the brand.

Foundations of the sensory brand include:

- expressions embedded in a rich brand identity, aimed at buyers, receiving incentives as specific sensations using the five senses; they are also the way to reveal the soul of the brand, to expose its essence. What is recommended here is the holistic approach, also referred to as the 5D model of the brand, which engages all the five senses and affects the buyers in both emotional and rational manner;
- personalisation and individualisation of the communication the more significant is to build a relationship with an individual client than with a homogeneous market segment and to engage them through a dialogue or an experience;
- brand identity is generated through the desired, from its perspective, styles of life, consumption and personality of buyers. This is the basis for creating the space and atmosphere of a contact with the brand through the service- and trade- providing places and commercial events associated with a particular topic. According to

M. Lidstrom, sensual branding currently enables the creation of the strongest relationships between the brand and the buyer ever seen (Lindstrom, 2009, p. 135). Brands should aim for sensory perfection. It is possible only if the brand is provided with a specific potential, formed by: 1. application of the sensory elements, which are already present in the existing activities (the goal is to optimise the brand foundation. A stronger foundation is created by more sensory elements, which contribute to forming and strengthening the relationship with the client); 2. the synergy effect between the sensory elements – creating this effect is necessary for the brand. The research results conducted by NASA show that the strong synergy effect is observed between human senses. It is possible to double the branding communication effectiveness with the use of sensual synergy; 3. innovative sensory thinking allows to exceed the competition; 4. Sensory consequence as a reflection of all the brand values typical only for the brand itself – sound, colour, logo, smell, shape, design. This is one of the most significant brand foundations. It allows to generate the brand trust, as well as to attract and retain the loyalty of buyers. The elements significant in this respect are the brand history, its tradition and rituals; 5. sensory authenticity – composed by the subjective factors (reality, relevance, ritual, repetition); 6. definite and positive sensory associations with the brand - indicates controlling a specific sensory experience by the brand. That is the manner in which 1% of the largest world brands operate; 7. permanent development of all the sensory elements – including identification of all the potential sensory factors that may be associated with the experiencing and using of the brand products, and subsequently with their selection and the reduction of the ones, which may harm the brand, as well as the selection of the most positively important ones; 8. Brand breakdown – if the logo is hidden, will the brand still remain characteristic and recognisable. Breaking down the brand into the sensory elements (name, symbol, language, shape, colour, image, navigation rules, ritual, tradition, service, behaviour, sound), as well as obtaining the synergy effect, which results from the composition of all the elements and the manner they are managed. Each of these elements should be independent and easy to be broken down, which means constituting individually a characteristic element of its identity. The research conducted by M. Lindstrom in 18 countries has shown the increase in brand loyalty by 30% if more than one sense of a buyer is involved, and by 70% if three senses are integrated together.

3.2. Sensory marketing application

Application of the digital signage, also referred to as digital merchandising, narrowcasting or the "digital house exit" is a growing trend within the area of sensory marketing and the sensory brand communication. This is an integrated form of managing the system of electronic displays (digital signage, infokiosks), being the information, advertising and other

communications (through e.g., LCD, LED, plasma display and multimedia projector media). These screens are referred to as public displays. The digital signage system displays are applied as reference to the place in, inter alia, travel agencies, shopping centers, and shopping malls, stores and service networks and airports). Adjustment is significant if the sensory strategy in marketing is to be successful. Fragrance mixtures, playlists, point of sale or service equipment to be applied in interaction with the sensory brands should be selected based on the role of smell, sound and/or touch in the marketing strategy considering the buyers' preferences. Improper adjustment may prompt buyers to a rapid, irretrievable exit from the point of sale.

Sensory marketing has become a business discipline. In Poland, it is still rare to recognise the brands using the full range of its possibilities. Music, scent and digital signage are applied to a very limited extent. The sense marketing, which involves all five senses of buyers, is widely used in the United States, Australia, as well as in the Western Europe contries. The effect of influencing the behaviour of buyers additionally strengthens the application of new technologies and the use of the augmented reality elements, including mobile applications. The currently used tendencies Include the so-called Experience Design. Comprehensive sensory connections and mobile applications, enabling creative and effective communication with the clients, are developed on the request of business customers. The architecture of positive experiences evokes emotions affecting the desired perception of brands (e.g.: virtual fitting-rooms in one of the famous clothing chain for young people). Sensory marketing is also observed on the Internet. The 3D image technology has increased the marketing and visual potential of images. Spatial sound also contributes to the increase in the sensation range. The touch screen technology makes it possible to expand the scope of the two applied senses (image and sound) by the third one, the touch, which results in increasing the buyers' involvement and extending the space of experiencing the brand. It also must be noted that the multi-sensory approach is transferred to the world of advertising in a manner other than before. In the United States the fragrance of a new car model of a well-know brand was promoted in the printed press. According to the research conducted by M. Lindstrom, at the top of the 20 global brands, which use their sensory potential to the highest percentage are: 1. Singapore Airlines (96,35), 2. Apple (91,3), 3. Disney (87,6) (Lindstrom, 2009, pp. 254-256).

Summary

The concepts of sensory marketing and branding, presented by the authors, in relation to their significance and impact on the behavior of buyers, making impulsive purchases and building the brand relationships/bonds are consistent with the current and future challenges of marketers, especially in the context of a high degree of assimilation of many brands and difficulties in ensuring their market success. Some important aspects of the sensory marketing strategy include creating the right atmosphere, composing sensory stimuli in the right and unique adjustment, evoking emotions and shaping the experience space of the buyer. The important thing to consciously create and apply the sensory brands as a model involving all the five senses is to understand the scope and strength of emotional impact on the buyers' behaviour and their purchasing decisions. The research cited by the authors confirms the effectiveness of the presented sensory marketing solutions and strategies with regard to increasing sales and relationships with the buyer. The pursuit of brands to achieve the sensual excellence allows them to exceed the competition. New technologies develop the experience space of the buyer and they also may engage the senses by supporting the purchasing behaviour and strengthening the bonds with the brand. Emotions are an important factor, which influences the behaviour of buyers. The multi-sensory approach is understood as the future in terms of influencing the buyers.

However, in the light of the above considerations, it must be remembered that the offerrelated factors, such as product/service quality, value for money, service, brand integrity and level of innovation, remain significant apart from the application of the sensory marketing different forms and the use of the brand sensory potential.

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