

Smarketing: Putting your money where your nose is

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Marketers and retailers are finding increasingly ingenious ways to lure prospective buyers to their products. And, according to Dr Roland Goldberg, a senior lecturer in marketing at the North-West University (NWU), your wallet is more closely connected to your nose than you might think.

One of his fields of expertise is retail atmospherics, which includes scent marketing. Goldberg explains that he is flabbergasted by retailers who still use outdated forms of marketing like the distribution of flyers, newspaper advertisements and billboard messages.

“The fact of the matter is that traditional vehicles of marketing have become totally redundant and ineffective. Even via social media platforms like Facebook and Twitter it is becoming increasingly difficult to reach the consumer, especially if the target market is not well defined,” says Goldberg.

“We need to become more strategic and penetrate on a subconscious level. Appealing to a consumer’s senses is the primary method we as marketers use to get our message across,” says Goldberg, referring to television and radio advertisements, among other things.

“ *The ideal is to go beyond that. The ideal is to appeal to multiple senses simultaneously.* ”



Dr Roland Goldberg

“My research has indicated that consumers make certain brand associations with specific smells. When one smells a specific aroma, you link that to a brand, and this then aids brand recall. It also allows you to lure consumers to your shop or to your product.”

In a study, conducted by Goldberg and his team at high-end fashion stores in South Africa, it was found that there is a discernible link between smell and a consumer’s decision-making process, brand association and recall. It also subconsciously affects a consumer’s approach or avoidance behaviour. Do they enter a store or do they walk past it? The team also found that a pleasant aroma increases browsing time and the likelihood that a consumer will purchase a product.

Brands should, therefore, aim to affect as many of a consumer’s senses as possible.

“Due to factors such as perceptual blocking and selective perception we do not notice the traditional vehicles of marketing any more, or we do not notice them after a certain amount of time has passed. Let us say you are driving from Johannesburg to Cape Town and you start feeling queasy as you enter Colesberg because of something you may have eaten. You are not going to notice fast food or fashion advertisements, but rather those for medical treatment, be it for a doctor or a pharmacy. That is what we call selective exposure. You look at what you need.

“In order to penetrate consumers’ perceptual vision, one needs to think bigger, better and out of the box. Especially during these pandemic times, one really needs to stand out and make a statement to gain market share. Consumers have limited resources and they are very careful about where and how they spend these resources during these times,” Goldberg

concludes.

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