

Sense what you are missing

Are you using natural avenues to engage show visitors correctly? Business development manager of Sejuiced, **Sylvia Garvin**, hopes you are.



Walking an exhibition is thirsty work, so give visitors a reason to stop by the stand

Exhibitions are an ideal way to promote your brand face-to-face, but in these competitive spaces it's hard to ensure you stand out from the crowd. Multi-sensory marketing allows communication of your messages in a variety of distinctive ways.

A sensory experience will draw attention to your stand, engage

visitors and keep them talking with you for a substantial period of time. Our five senses heavily influence human behaviour, mood and memory, and could be the key to creating a lasting connection between your brand and a customer.

The senses of sight and hearing have always played a major part in marketing. But, in a live

environment, using touch, taste and smell can create a deeper relationship with a potential client once you've qualified them as a target.

Grasping your brand

Researchers at Massachusetts Institute of Technology have found that touch holds one of the strongest



feature

pull on our emotions. Not only does touch let us connect with an environment or object, researchers found that the decision a person made was affected by objects they were touching at the time.

In one experiment, participants were asked to make hypothetical cash offers to a car dealer. When the first offer was rejected, they were asked to make a second. People sitting on a soft chair gave a second offer that was 39 per cent higher than those sitting on a hard chair.

Researchers concluded that "the hardness [of the chair] produced perceptions of strictness, rigidity and stability, reducing change from one's initial decisions". It's definitely worth getting comfortable furniture out for price negotiation meetings.

It's well known that touch directly stimulates purchasing behaviour. If a customer in a shop is able to pick up a display object, the longer they keep hold of it, the more likely they are to purchase it.

In an exhibition environment, it's particularly important to create a

customer experience on your stand if your offering is intangible or cannot be showcased.

You know it makes scents

Information received through the senses of smell and taste reaches an instinctual part of the brain. Smell is particularly remarkable as it has the ability to trigger memories almost instantaneously. Many first encounters we have with smells occur during childhood, so the smell of strawberries could remind someone of a first summer holiday.

Tapping into these memories can put your customers in a good mood and affect their feelings towards your brand.

I've read that odour memory lasts longer than other sensory memory, so presenting your brand with a distinctive scent means that when consumers next smell that fragrance, they should recall your brand.

Work as a team

Our smell and taste receptors work together to create flavour, so these

two senses combined form a complete taste experience. Tim Jacob, from Cardiff University's School of Biosciences, states: "Memory and emotion remain closely linked to flavour preferences throughout our lives."

Stimulating a variety of senses at once can produce extremely favourable results in learning. On average, there is 10 per cent retention of information from an oral presentation and 35 per cent for a visual one.

But via a combination of the two, the information remembered from a presentation after three days increased to 65 per cent.

Informing an audience about your brand clearly and directly, while also influencing mood and emotion through the senses, places your brand in both the conscious and subconscious memory.

By offering an experience that goes beyond a few chocolates or a cup of tea, the memory of you and your brand could stay with visitors long after they leave the exhibition.

Garvin's five ideas for stimulating the five senses

Touch: Visitors tire easily walking around the endless rows of stands. An on-stand massage facility could release some of the tension and a grateful visitor should leave the show with a positive impression of your organisation.

Sight: We absorb 83 per cent of all information visually, so it's essential that your stand captures your visual identity. Be bold with your design and colour schemes to draw visitors' attention. A more subtle approach is to tap into the influence colour has, with a bright red evoking a sense of excitement, while pink shades are relaxing. This

will have a subtle affect on the way visitors feel on-stand.

Sound: Sound marketing is used by retailers across the world to influence perceptions of their brand. Tapping into the cool laid-back heritage of New York City, Starbucks and Pret-a-Manger both favour jazz music in their stores. Playing music in a VIP area of a stand provides an opportunity to immerse visitors in your brand's personality. Next time they hear that tune, it might just take them back to that day.

Smell: Offering hot towels scented with lemon grass will refresh and relax your visitors. Using a familiar and comforting

scent will put your visitors at ease. Vanilla is a popular fragrance and has been proven to decrease stress and anxiety. Scenting your stand could calm a frantic crowd, relaxing visitors and weary staff alike.

Taste: The exhibition hall environment can work against you keeping visitors interested; the heat of the overhead lights can make the room hot and stuffy. Refresh visitors by incorporating branded drinks into your exhibition strategy. In addition to providing welcome hospitality, you'll also create a distinctive taste experience that could be synonymous with your brand.

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