

DRIVING SALES THROUGH SHOPPERS' SENSE OF SOUND, SIGHT, SMELL AND TOUCH

The Author

Brenda Soars is a specialist in using people's sense of sound, sight, smell and touch to create enthusing environments that influence behaviour, boost revenue and make communications work better.
www.soundenvironments.co.uk

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Abstract

The current economic gloom need not spell financial disaster for the retail sector. Consumers will simply become more discerning as they spend their limited resources. The savvy retailer will invest in understanding shopper needs and motivations to create an enhanced shopping experience by moving beyond simple POP displays and signage, where 'minor plus est', through to shoppers' sense of sound, sight, smell and touch which will have a clear impact on decision-making, store choice and spend. This paper reviews research gathered over several years and it considers how significant increases in sales can be achieved by attention to shopper 'sightlines' and movement through each retail space; how neuro-imaging is starting to make sense of our reactions to products; how Virtual Reality can save money and how a well-designed study is a cost-effective means of ensuring environments are right for shoppers. The latest sensory approaches are also assessed together with thoughts to ponder for the next decade including a word of caution for all to ensure success does not come at the detriment of our planet. This paper is essential reading for all operating in the retail sector.

Our sense of sound, sight, smell, and touch have a powerful effect on us, and psychological research is just beginning to explain some of the physical, cognitive, social and emotional effects. Sensory stimuli can influence environments, improve the shopper experience and change the nature of behaviour in ways beyond our consciousness. People perceive the world through all their senses simultaneously, so the more sensory an experience, the more engaging it will be. The right sensory stimuli, if applied appropriately, can calm, relax, de-stress, energise, improve mood, influence decision-making and hence the propensity to spend. It can also have a positive influence on waiting time.

According to Tarlok Teji, Lead Partner UK Retail at Deloitte, “linear thinking and refinement worked in the 90s, but will need to change in order to engage the 21st century shopper. Retailers have got to build in some innovation of value to meet the needs and wants of today’s customers.” Being more thoughtful about creating experiences using the senses is clearly outside of linear mode.

Recent research has revealed that a customer who dwells for 40 minutes is more than twice as likely to purchase as someone who spends 10 minutes. Additionally, shoppers who hang around longer spend, on average, twice as much. (*H.B. Maynard & Co, 2007*). Successful experience strategies to get shoppers to hang around and spend more at Macy’s in the US included expansion and visual enhancement of fitting room waiting areas.

Customers have so many choices – how do retailers get them to shop in their stores? Above-the-line communications (advertisements and online marketing) might be spot on in many cases, but are retailers really listening to shoppers and harnessing the power of below-the-line (point of purchase) and through-the-line schemes (the senses)? Not forgetting what drives shoppers in this era of many to many communications when social media means we are even more connected?

Some outstanding sensory environments

Some companies have clearly begun exploring sensory enhancement to their retail space, for example, the music, colours, lighting, décor and coffee aroma of upmarket coffee outlets such as Starbucks and Caffé Nero are designed specifically around customer needs. Research by Nespresso found that 60 percent of sensory experience of drinking espresso comes from the retail environment, so they launched a chain of upmarket coffee outlets partially to enhance the appeal of their home-prepared product.

Harrods recently ran an exhibition of the senses – an innovative means of increasing footfall to the store. Each of six lifts was treated with a different sensory experience. The ‘Sound’ lift had a specially commissioned piece by Michael Nyman to demonstrate the physical effect of a confined space; micro lasers directed beams of light on Swarovski crystals in another; different smells, including the scent of a new car, were emitted at the touch of a button in a further lift; the ‘taste’ lift provided the opportunity for customers to create their own ice-cream flavours; the ‘tactile’ lift demonstrated the challenges that face the sight impaired; and the ‘sixth sense’ lift was for ‘Cosmic Ordering – the potential to grant wishes.

Apple with its ‘come and play’ feel and Nike with its sporty imagery both express their brands superbly through their store environments. Shoppers feel they are inside the brand; it is like an interactive emporium where they are welcome to browse at their leisure.

The fruit drinks company Innocent has launched grass and daisy chillers, which have already doubled sales for many of their stockists. This “touchy,

feely” approach adds differentiation and excitement to a fast growing category.



Louis Vuitton gained much media coverage when they used a giant LV valise to hide the scaffolding during the construction of their Champs Elysee Store in Paris. Such a high impact attraction generated free publicity, with a positive impact on the launch budget.

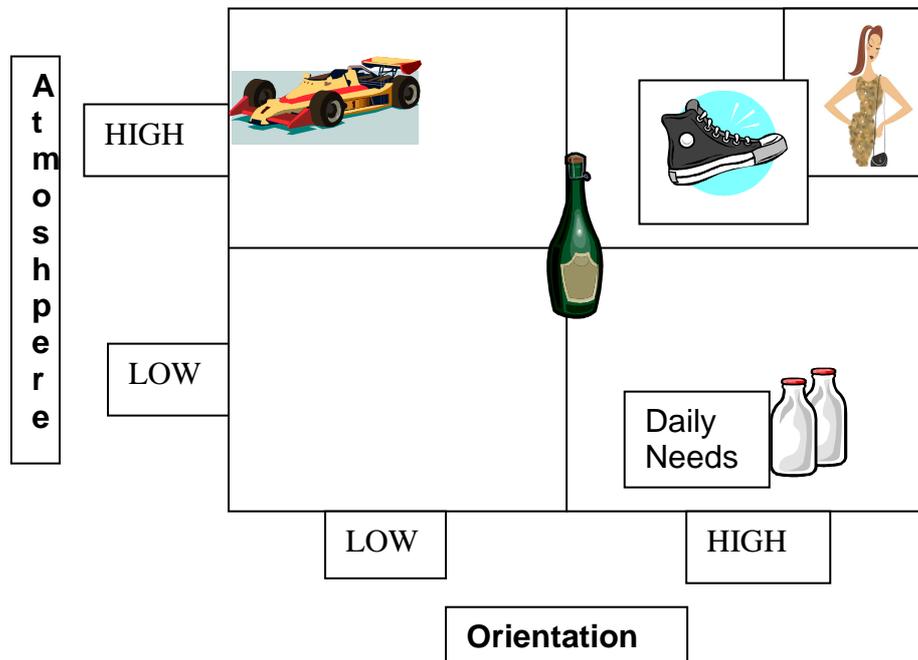
So what works and what doesn't – clearly not clutter? And to optimise communications, there is a need to tailor to the individual shopper.

Understanding the Shopper

The shopper arrives in a particular state of mind and with a mission/purpose. There are three principal types of shopper missions:

- **Task/needs shopper** – this mindset is driven by need and therefore requires a pathway to the purchase and perhaps some inspiration along the way. Decision-making tends to be driven by frequency and/or complexity of purchase, for example, milk being a frequent purchase would require little decision-making. The behaviour of shoppers in auto-mode can still be influenced by external stimuli.
- **Complex purchase shopper** - champagne is a more complex decision, so the shopper is likely to benefit from the right atmospherics and additional POP marketing material to aid the process. Similarly, to purchase a car, there are three dramatically different stages: research, deliberation and confirmation, followed by the purchase process
- **Recreational/browsing shopper** – this mindset is actively seeking inspiration; orientation is not such a big deal and there's a huge opportunity to provide the right atmospherics to entice the shopper to linger and purchase. It is often argued that browsers are of no intrinsic value to retailers but browsing has been proven as a significant form of consumer behaviour and a big opportunity for retailers (Lombart, C, 2004).

The interplay of atmosphere and orientation:



Psychology of the shoppers' mindset

Human beings constantly see, hear, feel, smell and think – this is the basis of our physiology. Most of what we do has evolved over time and is deep-rooted. Our mindspace is full of experiences, emotions, memories, future plans and above-the-line communications viewed, which can be triggered for a plethora of reasons that then translate to particular behaviours. In a retail environment it could be recreating a visual cue from an above-the-line campaign; a calm soundscape, which could make shoppers feel good and perhaps even reverse a negative feel in the fitting room; or inspiration from an innovative textural and visual POP experience such as Innocent's.

Few retailers understand the task-base or mindset of the shopper and hence many stores are bland confusing environments for the shopper to navigate through, although there are some new store concepts such as Spar in Central Dublin which are designed around clearly signposted shopper missions.

Shoppers often have a sound conscious reason for making a purchase but subconsciously emotions play a huge role. Make them feel happy. Mood is the main contributor to any individuals' mindset and retailers are yet to grasp its potential value to the bottom line. Getting to grips with the unique aspects of shopper missions is a starting point. The time of day, day of the week, location and generic customer profile all hold the key to ensuring an appropriate experience that engages particular shopper clusters. Depending on the type of retail outlet, on a weekday morning there might be many Mums with under fives and retired couples browsing or doing a top-up shop, whilst at

lunchtimes there might be office workers; in the evenings young singles grabbing something for dinner, whilst the weekends generally bring a more diverse array of shoppers throughout the day. Each of these shopper clusters has a different set of needs and will respond to an entirely different set of sensory experiences. This is the challenge for the retailer to identify. Most importantly, each situation is unique, so what works in a supermarket in the centre of Coventry is unlikely to have the same success in a similar outlet in Slough.

Every environment has sounds, sights, smells and textures even when devoid of music, lighting and signage. Crafting it to fit the people in that space pays huge dividends. Shoppers will be more likely to spend if they feel good about themselves in their interaction with that environment and they will want to revisit. By running a bespoke study, retailers will discover what works best at each location.

So there is a real need to think through the transition of shopper clusters throughout each day.

UNDERSTANDING HOW TO MANIPULATE SENSORY ENVIRONMENTS

Sight

Explicit content	Subconscious
Signage Digital formats POP	Colour Gobo projections Lighting

There are clear advantages, but it is easy to misuse. “Content isn’t king if no one’s looking”, states Ivan Clark of Kinetic, a company which understands how to communicate with people on the move, – he is spot on. Grabbing customers’ attention with signage, visual cues from above-the-line communications and images is fine provided the simple rules of ‘minor plus est’ (less is more), and appropriateness are applied. If too many screens and other communications vie for our attention at one time, this sensory clutter tends to confuse and customers will randomly deselect or totally ignore.

The relationship between the shopper and the environment stems from selective attention. Our short term memory span is limited to around seven chunks, each roughly equal to a word or familiar unit of information (Miller, 1956). Further research by Simon (1974) found that each chunk could be a familiar phrase and subsequent studies found a link to attention allocation. Therefore it is futile to bombard shoppers at the point of sale, as too many stimuli result in the information being discounted (Moray 1993). Further research by Simons (2002) warned about deviating customers’ gaze with other distractions.

A study by Alexandria, the Virginia-based Point-Of-Purchase Advertising International, found that POP advertising can generate a 6.5 percent increase in incremental sales. POPAI also reports that products can reach three to four

times initial sales when POP advertising is used, in a manner that adds value for the shopper, as part of a promotional campaign.

One major UK retail chain found that sometimes it is best to leave things simple, such as the soft drinks aisle, where hanging signage would make it too complex for shoppers.

According to Martin Kingdon, POPAI UK & Ireland director general, “the importance of Point of Purchase to the shopper should not be underestimated. In the current economic climate, an increasing number of savvy shoppers are searching out in-store promotions to save money. However, thoughtless and scatter gun approaches remain rife

Picture the central aisle of a leading grocery multiple with 15 huge identical banners that darken the whole environment. But why? According to Richard Saysell, MD and co-founder of the retail marketing company, Creo, retailers are continually using too much high level signage simply because it’s easy to get compliance. Retailers need more conversations with shoppers to get a grip on their journeys. He also highlights a wine promotion placed next to plant pots – “totally loony”.

Gondola ends each featuring the same offer with generic signage at the top - but why? So many inappropriately positioned gondola ends do not influence the shopper decision but simply interrupt their journey. Not very useful to find more of a product if a shopper has already made the purchase decisions within that category. The idea should be to ease the shopping process.

‘Feed family for a fiver’ – a great bit of marketing, but on a huge banner close to the exit it makes no sense; a recipe stand at the exit; likewise. An opportunity is on the approach to the entrance, but few grocery retailers make use of this space. Some stores have underground car parks with escalators to the entrance, but few use this as a marketing opportunity. Conversely, the brain ignores most things on entry to the store. According to Richard Saysell, “once shoppers hit the inner door there’s a different mindset, heads are down and they’re off and running.”

Consider this in the light of: the cost of shoppers ‘missing’ in-store promotional offers currently estimated at £400m in lost sales in the UK and mainly due to poor in-store POP. In-store offers and promotions are hard to find as a result of poorly sited or non-implemented in-store P-O-P material.

Pinpoint the essence of the brand and instil this at the point of sale. A great example appears in Robert Winston’s book ‘The Human Mind’:

“Once during a hot summer I was driving over an Alpine pass. At the very bottom of the pass I noticed a simple advertisement on the bend. It was one word advertising a local brand of mineral water. I looked away and concentrated on the tricky business of negotiating the pass, with its many bends and twists. The process was rendered less enjoyable than I’d hoped, in part because of the relentless beating sun, and also because I had landed

up behind a very slow farm vehicle which, in addition to belching out thick, black fumes, also happened to be carrying a load of gently baking pigs' manure. I was hardly enjoying myself. Then about half way up the mountain pass, I saw another sign. This time, the name of the brand of mineral water was repeated – alongside a very simple picture of a bottle of the product. From that point onwards, I became aware of a powerful thirst. I grew utterly unconcerned about the tractor in front of me, the pounding sun or the time my journey was taking. The thirst had taken over – and the only thing that concerned me was finding some means to quench it, as soon as possible.

At the top of the pass, there was a small car park set up so that people could enjoy the view. There was also a small café and – like someone staggering in from the desert – I made a beeline for it. The waiter asked me what I'd like. I immediately mentioned the mineral water whose advertisement I'd seen. As he went away, he laughed. And, then, as I settled into my seat, I realised why. Everyone else in the café was drinking the same brand of mineral water. When it came, it was expensive. It tasted like any other mineral water too. But it didn't matter. Two strategically placed little signs had convinced me, and a whole café full of other motorists, that what I most wanted was a glass of fizzy mineral water.”

Digital in-store

Digital in-store has the potential to boost sales revenue and increase performance. As a means of communication it is only valuable if targeted in the right manner. Complex messages will be ignored and, as for too many screens; is the short-lived additional advertising revenue from a throng of screens worth the risk to customer loyalty? Digital screens are versatile enough for messages to be varied to suit the audience and they would also work well in a slow-moving queue, although it would be wise not to include sound.

Creating compelling content can be expensive and therefore the cost of the media can outweigh the return on investment. Ivan Clark, the MD of Kinetic warns against getting too carried away with the technology – “screens behind the deli counter would look good, but would sufficient numbers of shoppers be stimulated by them to make the sums stack up.”

China is rolling out digital media in such a rush they are not paying heed to mistakes already made. TV style content in malls might be novel at first for them, but it will soon start to irritate.

Evolutionary psychology explains much of our behaviour such as why placing screens too high is futile. Tesco learned this with 'Tesco TV'. Our neck muscles are not designed to look upwards, which can be traced back to early humans when danger was less likely to come from above.

Gobo projections can be used to change the direction of shoppers as the general reaction is to walk around them. There is much potential to flex

window displays in line with missions and product availability. Whatever is projected needs to be relevant to the passing customers in order to attract attention – half price strawberries and cream might work during one time slot whilst a happy hour featuring 30 percent off all wines would boost sales in another.

Colour

Research has shown how colour influences our moods and manifests itself in our choices. RGB (Red/Green/Blue) low energy lighting provides a host of low cost possibilities to vary mood as it can create any shade on the colour spectrum. Yellow is generally the first colour the human eye notices and light blue has been known to lower blood pressure. However, whilst most shades of blue have a calming influence, some encourage reflection and hence have a tendency to make people spend less. By varying lighting levels and colour it is possible to influence how long shoppers linger too.

Sound

Retailers who use in-store music tend to pay little attention to what is transmitted when and where or the quality of the acoustics. The impact is clear. We've all had a shopping experience where the music was so loud and/or jarring you felt a need to get out.

Research has established that the characteristics of music such as tempo, rhythm and principal key play an influential role. Studies have revealed the influence on purchase decision, dwell time product perception and store choice. Shoppers will linger longer and spend more.

- At Principles (2005) the introduction of a tailored music policy increased sales by 12 – 18 percent within 3 weeks of introduction, and stores with music were rated 15 percent higher than Principles' stores without music. A key element was the 'tailored' approach – one size does not fit all. The positive impact on shopper mood manifested itself in the purchase decision.
- Music played in the US lingerie chain, Victoria's Secret was more influential on decision making than the product itself. (*Morrison, 2001*)
- In-store music affects product choice (North, Hargreaves & McKendrick (1997)
- The more uncertainty about a purchase, the more positive an impact music can have (Duncan Herrington J, 1996)
- The positive influence of music on customer mood in-store has been found in earlier studies by Bruner (1990) and Alpert and Alpert (1990), who both also attributed uplifts in sales specifically to music.

- Because of its potential impact on atmosphere, background music may influence choice between stores of the same type. (J. Baker, M. Levy, and D. Grewal, 1992)
- A correlation was found between music, emotion and purchases – customers were more favourably disposed to a product when in a good mood. (*Gardner, 1985*)
- Supermarket sales increased 38 percent with slow music compared to fast music. (Milliman, 1982)

The Journal of the American Medical Association also recognises the influence of the right sound: “*music has long been recognised as a powerful communicative force that affects attitude, mood, emotions and behaviour.*”

The key is getting the right fit for the target shopper to ensure the ideal mood for purchase. Abercrombie and Fitch might pulsate with the latest sounds from Moby to arouse and excite its core customer-base to purchase, whilst a calmer soundscape would probably work better for the 25+ shopper in Banana Republic.

One UK retailer tried transmitting opera in a few of its outlets. Not a wise move, as this genre is synonymous with unhappy endings, which they discovered to their cost.

There is no need to restrict transmitted sound to music; some businesses are experimenting with ambient soundscapes such as birdsong and water. The term ‘soundscape’ was formulated by the Canadian sound artist, R Murray Schafer and can best be described as an auditory landscape, or the combination of sounds in any location. There is nothing wrong with silence, if that proves the best option for an environment. In all cases it is crucial to test the effectiveness for the people in the space. .

Sound will never create the right impact without attention to the acoustic parameters of the space. In some outlets semi-audible music can be heard just above the din from the street. Autogain controls, which vary the sound levels according to the amount of ambient noise, would help. Julian Treasure, in his book *Sound Business* recommends using autogains rather than leaving volume control to staff: “I have come across the latter in several retail situations and it is far too prone to abuse. If one person’s favourite track comes on they may turn the system right up and then leave it there, inappropriately deafening customers; alternatively if the store gets very busy the carefully designed soundscape may be drowned by ambient noise and all the staff may be too busy to notice.”

So music can influence the disposition of shoppers and manifest itself in choice of store, propensity to purchase, basket size and intent to repatronage.

Smell

Of all the five senses; smell is the closest linked to emotions because the brain's olfactory system detects odours, fast-tracks signals to the limbic system and links emotions with memories. Smell is particularly powerful as it allows the brain to be occupied with other thoughts. Knasko (1989) and Lipman (1990) found ambient aromas increased customer dwell time. More recently, Gueguen, Petr, (2006) diffused lavender essential oils and lemon essential oils in a restaurant over three Saturday evenings. When lavender essential oil was dispensed both dwell time and the money spent increased. Lemon essential oil saw no improved productivity at all. This is related to the psychological effects of the oils, as generally lavender is considered to be calming whilst lemon is refreshing and energizing.

Research by Spangenberg et al. (1996) found the use of aromatic marketing solutions can have a positive impact on behaviour in-store. Shoppers perceived their dwell time was less when pleasant aromas were used; that it improved their overall perception of the environment and merchandise; had a positive influence on their purchase intention and the likelihood to revisit the store. They also noted that when "feminine scents" were used, sales of women's clothes doubled; as did men's clothes when masculine scents were diffused. This underscores the importance of matching gender-preferred scents to the product. Both men and women browsed for longer and spent more money when a fragrance specific to their gender was used to scent the store atmosphere. Aroma preferences tend to be cultural and they can be generation-specific too, so the target market at each location will need to be pinpointed precisely.

Scents can be used to get shoppers to linger, to evoke emotions and to purchase. Casinos use them to put their clientele in a spending mood; and browsing shoppers spent 14 percent more in a Montreal shopping mall when a pleasant citrus aroma was utilised. A flagship electronics store on the upper west side of Manhattan also effectively used a fruit fragrance to entice customers into the store and to purchase a product. The drinks company, Diageo has used Juniper berries to influence gin purchase as it triggered the experience.

The success of coffee outlets in book shops is well renown, but some combinations do not work as one coin operated launderette chain discovered in the US when they introduced a bar – the smell of soap suds and beer did not work for their customers.

Smell has rightly been highlighted by Advertising Age as one of the Top 10 trends to watch.

Touch

In fashion and furnishings so much decision-making is tactile. According to Siemon Scamell-Katz, founder of TNS Magasin, shoppers are trying to picture

through touch, the weight of cloth and how it would feel to wear, so touch fuels emotions for rational decision-making.

Wooden tables are often used for display as they tend to prompt shoppers to touch items on them, thereby increasing the likelihood to purchase.

Paco Underhill, the shopping behaviourist, has used video cameras to research touch and one interesting finding has been the “butt brush” theory that shoppers are likely to be irritated if touched from behind, for example by stepping back in a narrow aisle.

Innocent’s use of grass covered fascia’s and flowers develops an association with the countryside, that’s fresh, tactile and fun that has already proven to grow the brand, increase sales and in addition there’s a host of ways to develop its sensory dimension further.

So peoples’ sense of touch plays an important decision-making and behaviour role in the retail environment.

The Retail Space

As the entire retail space, or store layout, forms part of a shopper’s visualscape it can influence the entire experience and hence the propensity to spend. Professor Alan Penn of UCL, in his paper on the complexity of the elementary interface, reflects on the impact Ikea’s store layout has on its shoppers’ missions: “they accept a power exchange as they step over the threshold.” In fact they are channelled on a set route, which delays their mission, with visual messages formulated around design, and the whole experience finally culminates in a marketplace and generally a queue for the checkout. Due to this process, along the way shoppers buy so much on impulse as they feel they should treat themselves due to the delay and in many cases due to time limitations they don’t want to repeat the experience again too soon. It has been found that 67 percent of purchases in Ikea’s market place are made on impulse (reported in Kazim, 2004). There are short cuts around, but our forward-facing vision makes them difficult to locate.

Alan Penn focuses much of his research on understanding how the design of the built environment affects patterns of behaviour and in his opinion “there’s a lot to be said for thinking through more intelligent and sensory store formats to make the shopper feel good and boost spend.

Anna Rose, an architect and urban designer at Space Syntax believes accessibility and layout to be at the heart of functioning in any space. The study of shopper movement using Visual Graph Analysis (VGA) calculates where ‘sightlines’, what people can see from any point within a space, are strongest.

One major retail outlet had twice as many customers at weekends, but only a 60 percent increase in sales as in many areas shoppers could not move so freely and there was much evidence of congestion and the consequent “butt

brush". The solution was to look at circulation and reallocate merchandise layout in relation to people flow

Technological Advances

Technology provides the potential to accurately measure effects, but these methods can be costly. Neuro-imaging has opened up the ability to peer inside heads and test shopper responses by studying brain activity. Previously researchers have had to rely on customer responses after the event, not the best approach when so much is unconscious. Customers often simply respond with what they think you want to hear. Many decisions we make are not rational but simply reactions to our emotions and hence can be hard to verbalise, particularly when out of context.

The Coke v. Pepsi study (McClure et al, 2005) revealed the power of neuro-imaging. In a blind test, the prefrontal cortex – the brain region for enjoyment - of participants lit up more for Pepsi than for Coke. In the second condition, the same participants were informed what they were drinking and the brain region for memory – the hippocampus and the prefrontal cortex both lit up thereby revealing a preference for Coke.

Simulating environments can be an ideal way to test the effect and save money, as found recently by 20th Century Fox when an array of potential posters were superimposed across a 'virtual' Paris. After gathering customer feedback, much expenditure was saved as the wording was able to be fine-tuned and it was discovered that far fewer sites would be needed. Neuro-imaging is still in its infancy, but Siemon Scamell-Katz estimates that 33 percent of what shoppers do in-store will be possible to replicate in VR within 2 or 3 years and this could include the sensory dimensions.

Innovations also open up further possibilities of boosting sales through sensory measures. Second generation technology is starting to create new types of sensual experiences according to an article in Advertising Age (3 July 2008), with "five-dimensional" magazine adverts now possible incorporating visuals with movement, sound, aroma and touch. Could this hold possibilities for in-store?

A further interesting approach comes from the American sound artist, Bruce Odland who uses tubes of aluminium to capture ambient noise, such as traffic, which is tuned to transmit as musical notes in public spaces. Much of his work is large scale, but it does open up possibilities of providing an engaging attractor for the retail environment too.

RFID 'Magic' mirrors are now available that read the RFID tag on clothing in the fitting room and display associated information such as availability and advice on accessories. A sales assistant can also be requested by touching the mirror. It even has the capability to transmit the shopper's image to a friend's mobile or email address and there's also a version that displays an image of the shopper in the clothes without the need to try them on.

Will users of imaginary worlds such as 'Second Life' start to develop a new mindset? If so, they could easily embrace virtual shopping creations such as 'Near London', recently reported in The Sunday Times (28 Dec 2008), and due to open in Autumn 2009. It plans to engage shoppers with a 3D replica of London's West End where they will be able to view and purchase goods in an environment that even mimics the current weather conditions, provides newspaper hoarding that link to the latest headlines and features other shoppers as beams of light. A link to Facebook will advise if a person's friends are present too.

On our journey through life we constantly build on our basic mindset, so eventually consumers could embrace this type of experience. The main barrier at present is probably our need for touch. A study in 2003 (Citrin, A.V., Stem Jr, D.E., Spangenberg, E., & Clark, M. J) found women showed a higher need for tactile input, when making product evaluations, compared to men. The higher returns of online purchases are due mainly to inaccuracy of colour and fit.

Technology moves so fast and it's not always a neat fit for some environments or shoppers, so exploit the benefits whilst paying heed to the implications. Running a study is a cost-effective way to develop an engaging, compelling and memorable environment that drives sales as it is in tune with your customers' needs.

Vision 2018

Some thoughts to ponder about possible developments over the next decade:

- All ads going 1-1 with more relevance to the individual, as they will be based on previous choices and actions.
- Digital will be omni-present but not minority report. Omni-present will talk to all the audience in that environment but give flexibility to up-sell through mobiles devices.
- Out of home media will become more important as technology becomes the enemy of in-home media.
- The brains of people under 25 have started to change shape so they will increasingly become more capable of dealing with 3 or 4 sensory inputs at a time and hence future generations will be able to cope with higher levels of sensory input.
- Technology will make it easier to control sensory dimensions and link it to the people in the space through, for example: heat detection; by generating a sound field to cancel out ambient noise or to acoustically isolate a zone.
- With growing pressure on world resources we need to ensure strategies are in place for reducing environmental impact. At a recent conference Richard Reeves, European Business Speaker of the Year 2007, stressed: "If success comes at the cost of our planet, it is not a success worth having at all." There are many initiatives to assist businesses –

these include the POPAI green project www.popai.co.uk/greenproject and envirowise www.envirowise.gov.uk.

With the advent of computers with the capability to infer a person's mood, how long will it be before we could deliver truly tailored communications - perhaps we need to draw up guidelines now between innovation and intrusion, as already, so much of what we experience is outside of our control?

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MD of Creo Retail Marketing

Tarlok Teji

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