What every retailer should know about the way into the shopper's head

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Keywords

Retail management, Consumer psychology, Brain, Eyes

Abstract

Retail sector companies often overlook the positive contribution psychology could make to their success. At a time when more decisions than ever are made in-store, any media must provide a pathway to the purchase that is subconsciously triggered and therefore it would be a wise move to spend more on below-the-line and through-the-line strategies. A key challenge is to create an environment where the shopper perceives a one-to-one relationship with the store; to optimise the shopper's time; to make it appear as if the ranging, and categorisation of products has been personalised just for them; and by attention to this, retailers will deliver an experience the shopper will want to repeat. So what is the smartest technique to pinpoint what they really want? By using a combination of brain imaging and eye scanning technologies to delve into the mind of the shopper, the desired insight could be within reach.

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Definitions

(1) Shopper psychology - interaction with the environment and brand in-store. Experiential aspects.
(2) Consumer psychology - this includes:
- environmental influences (culture, family, media, peer pressure, gender roles, identity, etc.);
- impact of emotions, symbols, mood, etc.; and
- satisfying consumer needs and desires.

Along with economic and social trends, time is the biggest single factor for changes in shopping behaviour over the last 30 years. Many people now work longer hours, have less leisure time, shop in more stores and spend less time in each of them. A recent European study found that, of the 23 billion shopping occasions last year across Europe, 39 per cent were carried out in less than 15 minutes and the average spend was €25. Therefore it is no surprise that retailers are, quite rightly, looking at smaller formats. Marks & Spencer has recently announced a plan to have a total of 150 Simply Food (convenience) stores by March 2006, where sales per square foot are exceeding the average for food in general. The first Simply Food format opened in 2001 and is positioned for easy access by commuters, with a product range applicable to that type of shopper.

A project over 12 countries worldwide investigated how people behaved across a variety of retail environments and found the store format tended to drive the behaviour more than culture, although culture did account for the spatial dynamics. In the USA the spatial scale is different - they are happy to drive a long way to a hypermarket with perhaps 115 checkouts to do all their shopping, whilst UK shoppers prefer to generally get most of their needs in five-six outlets - hence different behaviour to the USA. When Carrefour opened their first hypermarket in Tokyo, customers were quite happy to queue at first as it was a novel

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experience shopping in a hypermarket, but within six months they stopped shopping there, as they got tired of queuing and could not deal with the size of store.

The aim of this paper is to highlight some of the psychology-based rationale behind shopper actions in-store and reveal how attention to these aspects could provide a win-win situation for both the retail sector and the shopper. It will explore the role of conceptual categorisation; the theory of queuing; how orientation metaphors can be used as locational cues; the reasoning behind how shoppers fluctuate between demand/mood and script/routine shopping; how colour, music, and aromas can influence mood and choices; shopper needs, instilling a sense of the brand; the latest methodologies for delving into the shopper's psyche plus some classic retailer faux pas.

Categorisation

It all starts with the brain - due to its intricate nature with its various channels, paths and synapses between nerve cells and muscles to link all parts, our brains allow us to recall and draw on experiences to assist our choices and minimise mistakes. This is all part of our survival mechanism (with links back to man as hunter/gatherer) and hence we use these heuristics instead of spending our lives frozen in thought over every decision or judgement.

Our brain cannot cope with everything instantly, so in a supermarket for example, our eyes are constantly sweeping around, taking in everything. We have to deselect 80-90 per cent at any one time in order to concentrate on the task we are doing and that is one of the reasons why categorisation is so important to us.

The organisation of knowledge is one of the oldest and most researched areas of cognitive psychology. The initial approach had its origins in the theories of the Greek philosopher, Aristotle, who found categorisation very difficult. Everyone internalises their individual interactions with the world and these are then stored in memory as mental representations. Conceptual categorisation has a role to play in all cognitive activity as it links to language, perception and memory - in fact nothing would make sense without concepts. Categorisation minimises the number of items stored of each concept without jeopardising mental representation (which is known as cognitive economy). The benefits of developing these common labels for everything are that it eases cognitive processes such as communication, perception, planning of actions and memory storage. Therefore conceptual categories play a central role in cognition and have been aptly described as "the coinage of thought" (Johnson-Laird and Wason, 1977, p. 169). So it is no surprise that if categories in-store do not hold what a customer is used to, it can cause confusion and takes a while to assimilate. Hence the store needs to provide information to assist the customer. To head office, it might make complete sense to change the content of categories or completely alter the layout of a store to increase sales, but to the customer it can be a catastrophe. It can lead to customers getting disproportionately annoyed as it interferes with their shopping and is beyond their control. If people are on time they smile as they are less stressed - the reverse are unhappy shoppers who might switch loyalty.

Colour and shape are often used to discern what things are. Large icons can be employed to direct shoppers to a category, for example, a large yellow and gold roll of film could be used for the film/camera category. Using words can confuse as these are processed by a different part of the brain to graphics, which goes back to before language. At that time our survival depended on categories, as early humans used movements and large shapes to discern if there was danger. These reflexes have been assimilated over time and passed on genetically. Genetics is also considered the reason why right-handed people tend to turn left when entering a store - our ancestors used to present their strongest side when defending against a predator. Conversely, left-handed people tend to turn right.

Queuing theory

Queuing is another activity widely considered as genetically programmed. If there is a queue there must be something worth having at the end of it, could it simply be survival? According to evolutionary psychology, these theories date back to early humans when those who copied the behaviour of others tended to live longer as they avoided

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threatening predators and hence were more likely to survive and produce offspring. In that way the behaviour was passed on. But some such as Steven Rose of the Open University consider it unlikely that queuing can be linked to genetic evolution (Horrie, 2002). Nonetheless, it remains an interesting theory particularly for those on the nature side of the nature versus nurture debate. Findings of recent research in Europe were mentioned in an interview with John Cox. The research found that in petrol stations with a convenience store, customers are more likely to do some shopping if there are between two to five people in the queue, but if there were over five or under two they would be more likely to join the queue as quickly as possible. As mentioned above, the most likely factor is time constraints.

Orientation metaphors

Brands are landmarks or cues that mean something to us. If a shopper spies purple in the confectionery aisle, they tend to think Cadbury; whilst the Kellogg's Cockerel might best depict cereals. Interestingly, according to leading shopper psychologist John Cox, out of the 22 grocery brand leaders of the 1920s, 19 are still brand leaders today. Brands have energy and power and when in stress mode shoppers tend to fall back on these brands for comfort. Hence the brand leader is the orientation metaphor for the whole category. Through filming, ID Magasin has found that 20 per cent of most categories are signpost brands. Also 70 per cent of all skin care purchases in a supermarket are made by looking at the brand leader, whereas in a department store where expert advice is on hand, customers would be more likely to ask for assistance.

Demand/mood shopping

Shoppers tend to fluctuate between demand/mood shopping (conscious behaviour where they ask for advice) and script/routine shopping, when they know exactly what they want, do not even look at the price, and can parallel process; in fact they are sub-consciously making selections. In this mode, shoppers tend to buy more products and should not be interrupted as they are happily getting their shopping done quickly within their time limitations.

The product category can influence awareness of time, for instance, if shopping for clothes or other such "pleasurable" category, time tends to expand and therefore they do not recognise time is passing. Conversely, in negative mode a person will be more conscious that time is dragging. Could these theories move retailers to provide entertainment in the queue to make that element of the trip a more pleasurable experience and, in doing so, increase sales? The ultimate for any retailer is to make the shopping experience so congenial the customer will want to repeat it, as has been proven most effectively at Bluewater.

Even though many retailers are aware of these issues, shoppers are constantly confused and frustrated at the point of sale as the store environment is not conducive for shoppers to get on with the task of shopping. Instead retailers are enforcing negative tendencies as they continue to misunderstand categorisation, associated products and adjacencies. It might be logical to place cat and dog food adjacent to each other; wine from red to white and dry to sweet, but in the case of confectionery should snacks be next to biscuits or coffee/tea. Associated products allow us to traverse. The convenience store chain Seven-11 in Japan (*c*.50,000 outlets - two-thirds of which are in Tokyo) has some particularly interesting adjacencies. The breakfast-type adjacency consists of fresh orange, milk, coffee, cereal and bowls, all neatly in one fixture. Such time-of-day shopping strategy finds magazines first in flow in the morning; rice bowls at midday; and videos, beer and sake in the evening. Another Japanese convenience chain AM-PM makes enthralling use of colour from the logo (AM in yellow, PM in dark blue) through to every category in-store. The stage has been set, first, the logo colours inform the shop is open all day and once inside every category is made prominent with graphic shots, for example a vibrant shade of orange with images where the fruit is, snacking occasion imagery where the rice bowls are. Hence the customer can locate their requirements with ease (mission accomplished, hence they feel happy) and feel excited and enticed by the colours and images, which collectively enhance the total

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experience (known as "collective experience").

Psychology of colour

Research has shown that colour does affect our moods and tends to manifest itself in our choices. As a vehicle for purchase, loyalty, many forms of communication and symbolism, it is a powerful resource that should be embraced by all in the retail sector; as AM-PM has done with their logo through to every aspect of the experience.

We use colour, shape and context to identify things and any analysis will depend on a combination of all three factors. Therefore the effects noted in Table I should be considered as generalisations, which require expert interpretation.

Sonic marketing

In addition to colour, visual merchandising and lighting; music can be a further influencing component on shoppers' responses and purchase decisions at point- of-sale as it is an additional form of communication. The power of in-store music has been highlighted in a few studies since the early 1980s. Morrison (2001) pinpointed the success of the US lingerie chain Victoria's Secret where evidence revealed shoppers' unconscious had been motivated by the playing of classical music, in fact it was more influential on decision making than the product itself:

> . . . it created a prestigious store atmosphere, leading to a customer perception of higher merchandise and service quality.

In this case such a positive impact on a customer's mood brought about by the music has manifested itself in the purchase decision. A study by Bruner (1990) found that a customer's mood in-store does affect purchase as a direct result of the music and Alpert and Alpert (1990) also attributed uplifts in sales specifically to music. So in a way it could be the music that transports a customer, but due to individual difference, it has to be the right tempo (Milliman, 1982) and volume (Yalch and Spangenberg, 1990), and most importantly it must be a neat fit for the target audience in order to create the ideal mood for purchase. An upbeat tempo would work well in a trendy fashion outlet but would probably have a negative impact on sales in a bookstore. A study carried out by Leicester University (Hargreaves and North, 1999) found sales of French wines increased when French music was played in the wine aisle of a supermarket and likewise for Italian, Spanish, etc.

Aroma marketing

Smell is the quickest way into the brain. According to research by Spangenberg *et al.* (1996), the use of aromatic (experiential) marketing solutions can impact positively on behaviour in-store. Customers perceived that they were in the store for less time when pleasant aromas were used and they also found it improved:

- the perception of customers as to the evaluation of the store;
- the perception of customers as to the store's environment;
- the perception of customers as to the merchandise;
- the perception of customers as to specific products;
- the intentions of customers to visit the store; and
- purchase intentions for specific products.

Some scents are purported to have positive effects to reinforce the brand, engage customers and provide other beneficial effects on shopper mood and demand. The following provides some examples:

- Sweet basil - lifts mood, improves mental clarity and memory;
- Bay - relieves nervous exhaustion and melancholy;
- Sage - relieves stress, guilt and hostility;
- Clove - aphrodisiac qualities and relieves fatigue;
- Ginger - relieves confusion, loneliness and anxiety;
- Grapefruit - uplifts, energises and refreshes;
- Lemon - balances, refreshes, uplifts, relieves distrust and apathy;
- Lime - cheers, uplifts and purifies;
- Nutmeg - invigorates and stimulates the mind, improves self-image and an aphrodisiac;

Table I

Colour	Effect
Red	Attention grabber
	Denotes action
	Strong masculine appeal and can be used to play down femininity
	Can escalate the body's metabolism
	Exciting, full of energy and vitality
	Powerful
	Vibrant, passionate – has been known to raise the blood pressure in some cases
	Red has a tendency to make people spend more
Yellow	Generally the first colour the human eye notices
	Cheerful
	Used for mental stimulation
	Combination of yellow background with black text has high memory retention and legibility (research by Pantone)
	Ego, optimism
	Increases self-esteem – but beware of overuse as this can counter the effect
	Relaxation (lighter shades)
	Dark shades can be overpowering
Blue	Calming – has been known to lower blood pressure (light blue)
	Encourages reflection and logical thought and has the tendency to make people spend less
	Intellectual
	Dignity (dark blue)
	The favourite colour of most adults and, interestingly, bees
Green	Relaxing and quiet (dark greens)
	Reassuring
	Perfect balance (no visual adjustment is needed to see it) – it is the centre of the colour spectrum
	Stimulating and uplifting (bright greens)
	Health
Brown	Homely
	Earthy
Violet	Contemplation
Pink	Feminine
	Soothing (reddish pinks)
	Sexy
Orange	Fiery passion and physical enjoyment
	Sensual
	Physical comfort
Black	Sophistication
White	Innocence
	Peace
	Can be cold and sterile, but adding hints of silver and blue can bring warmth

Source: Various including: The Red Agency (Australia), "Psychology of colour" (*Daily Mail*, 26 May 2001)

- Sweet orange - brightens mood, calms and reduces stress, relieves apathy and worry;
- Peppermint - energises, brightens mood, relieves shock, apathy and helplessness;
- Tangerine - soothes and calms nerves, relaxes, heals inner issues and emotional trauma; and
- Vanilla - relieves stress, anxiety and calms (source: Lempert, 2002).

Hierarchy of shoppers' needs

For shoppers to achieve the nirvana of fulfilling their dreams, retailers must inspire them to be positive, smart shoppers. It is the smart, inspired, positive shoppers who stay longer and purchase more, due to the psychology of the perception of time. On the contrary, if in negative mode, they will leave early, they will grab and go, or even worse will simply get out quickly, might abort the

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purchase and, in either case, perhaps never shop there again. Retailers can create heaven or hell for the shopper - it is a symbiosis between the shopper and the environment. If the connection is not made, it is the retailers and all along the supply chain who are the losers. Shoppers like to feel they have chosen the product offer. It is the retailers and manufacturers who have turned people into promiscuous shoppers. The shopping experience and saving time are as important to a shopper as money. If a person is enjoying the shopping trip, has purchased what they planned to buy faster than anticipated as everything was to hand, they will be in positive mode, and hence more likely to reward the retailer by browsing and buying more. It is a symbiosis between what we are doing as a shopper and what the retail environment is doing to the shopper. Retailers and suppliers must understand this multi-dimensional, psychological model - the retail environment must match the mood and motivation of each shopper from design of the fixture to the adjacencies, product mix, shelf edge walkways etc.

This is reminiscent of a quote made by Churchill: "We design our buildings - thereafter, they shape us." So we are shaped by our environment wherever we are. Much of our behaviour in-store is learned - self-service shopping was an entirely new concept in the mid-twentieth century and shoppers had to learn how to do it. In much the same way, as mentioned before, shoppers learn the spatial map of their local supermarket and hence get disoriented if changes are made, which in turn impacts on their shopping behaviour.

University College London (UCL) is in the process of carrying out research (Sim-Store2 Project) using artificial life (A-life) information agents programmed to simulate shopper behaviour. This will eventually enable retailers to test different designs to optimise store layouts around shopper needs.

The relationship between the shopper and the environment has much to do with understanding selective attention, but the span of attention is limited to around seven chunks (each roughly equal to a word or other familiar unit of information). Miller (1956) used memory span tests to find this is the maximum that short-term memory (STM) is able to deal with at any one time. Further research by Simon (1974) found each chunk could be a familiar phrase and other studies since have found a link to allocation of attention. Therefore it is a mistake to bombard shoppers at point of sale as found by Moray (1993) who stressed that too many visual stimuli can result in shoppers locking out much of the information presented. Shopping is carried out in semi-conscious mode, as it is learned behaviour and this takes the strain off attention thus allowing more capacity. By moving products around in a supermarket, for example, more attention has to be paid to locating products, which has an adverse affect. According to Phillips and Cox (1999), this breaking down of conventions, if too radical, means that reliance can no longer be made on automatic behaviour, but must divert attention away from shopping to cope with the unfamiliar environment. Previous to this, Park *et al.* (1989) had found shoppers using unfamiliar stores had to direct most attention to navigation.

The propensity towards decision making at the point of sale was first recognised by Stern (1962) and is an indication of individualism in consumer behaviour.

Brilliant ad - can not remember the name of the product! Sometimes the imagery can be so compelling that few do remember. The same goes for verbal messages "It's tasty, tasty, very very tasty, it's very tasty" - what is IT? Customers do not tend to make up their mind at the TV stage, even though they might be interested in the product. Recall simply does not work unless retailers instil the essence of the brand at the point of sale (see Table II). The customer saw the ad, but emotionally the mission, motivation and mood of that person is completely different in-store. In the past, particularly in the 1950s (following publication of Vance Packard's book *The Hidden Persuaders* (Packard, 1957)) psychologists played an important role in most advertising campaigns. Much money could be saved if retailers and manufacturers once again made use of psychologists' expertise. The US psychologist John M. Henderson has found people tend to turn visual messages into more abstract images, and also that high degrees of contrast

Table II Instilling essence of brand

Below-the-line	Through-the-line	Above-the-line
Point of sale	Sonic	Adverts
One-to-one (e-mail, etc.)	Aroma	Online banners, etc.

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and textual changes fixate a customer's gaze best. Research by Simons (2002) has revealed advertisers need to use all cues to draw attention to the product and not deviate the gaze with other distractions. Another study (Haugtvedt, 2002) on recycling has found emotional ads can work better than cognitive ones. Could this also be the case for certain (or even all) product categories?

Consumer behaviour is a cyclical model (see Figure 1) - manufacturers and retailers need to ensure their product remains firmly in the loop.

As *c*.80 per cent of purchase decisions are made at the point of sale, then above-the-line marketing has got to move more towards below-the-line, perhaps helped along with a hint of through-the-line. Most marketers and advertising agencies consider it a risk to move towards below-the-line as they feel it is not measurable. But many omit to provide a relevant trigger in-store or might even make the faux pas of providing an irrelevant trigger that simply confuses the customer so they are unable to relate the ad to the product. Evaluation of below-the-line requires new thinking: ID Magasin is one organisation that has devised a model to evaluate the effectiveness of point of sale on ROI (return on investment) - it is multi-dimensional based on context, format, location and cluster:

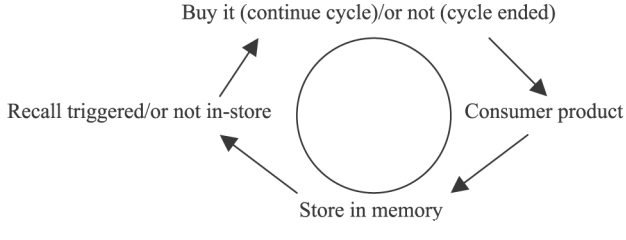
- Does the POS work in all formats?
- Sales might be good, but will it work in different formats?
- What's the difference between a temporary campaign, a semi-permanent one or a permanent?
- What type of user is the campaign attracting: new users, trialists, loyalists, repertoire users (prefer a wardrobe of products) or switchers? - We are all in any one group at any one time.

Knowledge is built by category and brand over time, taking account of such factors as compliance in store, i.e. how/if the store utilised the material.

Any media must provide a pathway to the purchase (P to P) that is subconsciously triggered in-store (around 80 per cent of decisions are subconscious) and hence instantly engages the customer. If it has to be consciously triggered it wastes time or it could even create a barrier to buying (B to B).

When it comes to new product development (NPD) - a process that can take two years, consumer opinion will be researched thoroughly, but no attention is paid to the shopper in-store. NPD teams need to work alongside experts on shopper behaviour to ensure their product has the right visibility and impact at the shelf edge. The marketing team then makes the mistake of trying to build awareness with 95 per cent of the spend on above-the-line, with a meagre 5 per cent below-the-line. Much money could be saved if they took time to understand how shoppers actually make purchase decisions (as outlined above).

Figure 1 Cyclical model of consumer behaviour



New methods of delving into the mind of the shopper

As demonstrated here, the mental life of the shopper is not neat and orderly. The mind can be likened to a massive filing cabinet of information and schemas logically ordered and associated for the individual. When we come upon something unfamiliar we tend to use the information in one schema (known as "anchoring") to make sense of the new experience. Customers tend to have a spatial map of shops they frequent and hence their adverse reactions if things are moved around - most notable in supermarkets.

What is the best way of finding out about shopper preferences? Some might suggest we should simply ask customers, but this method has its flaws as most customers find it hard to explain the reasons. Most of these actions and thoughts are unconscious and hence inaccessible. Research by Holdbrook and Hirschmann (1982) found behaviour can not be fully understood outside the context in which it occurs.

Also, when asked a question in a survey or as part of a questionnaire, customers might answer in a way they feel is pertinent - this is known as post-rationalisation (rationalise - to

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indulge, often unchallenged in excuses for, or explanations of behaviour about which one feels guilty or uncomfortable). Other issues are around timing: if you want to ask customers questions about their shopping trip, is it best to approach them at the beginning when it is impossible for that customer to predict where they are going or at the end of the trip, to recall all they have done? Even in focus groups researchers can only get a subset of information as customers are not able to access their unconscious activity. The menu of events for shoppers is more complex than 20-30 years ago - now there is more searching for a comfort zone therefore it is not so planned. So what are the alternatives for delving into the shopper's unconscious - how can pathways be accessed and barriers removed? This requires a different measure.

The Mind of the Market Lab at Harvard University has been investigating the cognitive unconscious to assist marketers to unravel its mysteries. Gerald Zaltman believes the path to a customer's unconscious lies in metaphor as it assists them to access their true feelings. According to Zaltman (in an interview in *Relationship Journal*, Vol. 1, 2003, p. 7), the origins of his method lie in his fieldwork in Nepal:

> We asked people in remote areas of the country who had never used a camera to take pictures expressing different aspects of their lives. We developed these pictures, went back to the very people who took them, and had them explain their meaning. What became very evident very quickly was that rich, complex stories were embedded in these photographs. The photographs were entry points allowing people to take us on a journey into the complex mental life behind their daily experiences. This, then, caused me to try to develop a more systematic way of using visual and other sensory imagery as a way of helping people explore their subconscious thoughts and feelings.

Gerald Zaltman's latest book *How Customers Think* was published in February 2003 (Zaltman, 2003).

Research into neural processes, carried out by a team led by Rose and Swithenby of the Open University (*Journal of Neural Plasticity*, Vol. 8 No. 4) has found which areas of the brain tend to control consumer decision making. This emotive research has provided a major opportunity for marketers. Radically different patterns of brain activity were found and it was apparent these were dependent on individual preference. It was noted that conscious decision making relating to strong preference took place in the right parietal cortex and hence if an item was more familiar perhaps due for example to a strong advertising campaign, this could have a positive effect on purchase behaviour. This type of research requires the use of positron emission tomography (PET) scanners (as used in hospitals) and hence is not very practical, although it is still useful for comparative responses between brands. Interestingly gender appeared to be an issue as the results of men were less conclusive than those of women.

At a time when around 80 per cent of new products fail, marketers and advertisers are mindful of how brand research can equate to subsequent purchase behaviour, PET scanners can be used to measure activity in different parts of the brain based on variations in radio-active glucose levels, which manifest in darker patches in the active areas. It was Tulving (1989) who used a related method that suggested distinct parts of the brain are used for thinking about different information in long-term memory (LTM). The precision of PET scanners is limited to a 60-second period of time, which is considered a limitation. Some would also say use of such an atypical device as a PET scanner could impact on results, as the study would have taken place in an artificial environment. The same could be true of using a 3D virtual environment. But it is only through such experimentation that advances can be made. In the last decade the studies in cognitive psychology involving PET scanners have increased around six-fold on the previous decade. It is just a matter of time before more advanced brain scanning techniques will be found and if such technology can be both miniaturised and portable it is more likely to have wider application.

Squid magnetometry (superconducting quantum interference device) can produce a more accurate image of brain activity as it measures the magnetic field of a group of activated neurons.

Eye mark readers provide a different measure of shopper behaviour. The latest version used by ID Magasin has a "scene" camera built into a cycle helmet - this records the view, and in front of one eye is an infra red beam that reflects on the glass and then on to the cornea of the eye, which tracks the

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movement of the eye. These two dimensions are then combined and analysed by computer. Brain imaging technology can be used to measure brain response to communications such as advertising, branding, and point of sale. It can be employed to investigate attention span, long-term memory encoding and the strength and direction of emotional response (i.e. whether it is positive or negative). Such technology could be combined with eye tracking and thus determine not just what a person is looking at and for how long, but it could also ascertain the person's emotions by measuring brain activity. Is it a strong emotional response, do they feel an affinity; or because it is a commodity line could it simply be a low-level emotional response? Beyond in-store, this technology could have many applications including above-the-line and below-the-line. According to Siemon Scamell-Katz (interviewed in May 2003) "linking the technologies could be huge".

As around 80 per cent of what we do in-store is subconscious and short-term memory (STM) only stores things briefly and then discards them, ID Magasin has found that showing customers a film of their shopping trip straight after, acts as a trigger to things they had thought but had not gone into long-term memory (LTM). In this manner they are able to get much closer to the shopper's actual subconscious decision-making process, which provides deeper insight into why information is discarded.

Closed circuit television cameras (CCTV) are used to track movements in-store - hot/cold spots, pathways, time spent, routing, etc. When filming is taking place at a store, guidelines legislate that signs are prominently placed. Interestingly privacy legislation in some countries such as Sweden and Germany states a company can only watch a film if the shopper gives their signed consent.

Generally filming is combined with exit surveys, which enables measurements such as frequency of visit and frequency of purchase. Shopping missions might also be researched for cluster analysis, in which case the shopper routes would undergo category analysis and in turn this would be linked to need states and category occasions. The big win comes when the retailer understands from these data what the balance of these missions are throughout the week, then they can identify what the high profit missions are and merchandise accordingly.

Behaviour tends to be scripted after four to six times. ID Magasin believes because the changes introduced by them are based on how people are trying to behave, they are making shopping more efficient - some products might be more visible than before simply because shoppers now have the time to notice them. According to Siemon Scamell Katz: "We're helping people to make better choices and to become smart shoppers."

When it comes to redesign of POS, the impact achieved can be significant. Recently ID Magasin made subtle changes to the design of the Camelot "Instants" dispenser (No. 3 brand in UK) resulting in an increase in sales that put multi-million pounds on the bottom line. Redesign of a fixture for the Guinness Stout category resulted in an uplift of 23 per cent for stout and 4 per cent for beer - evidence the category had been built, not cannibalised.

Retailer faux pas (source: from various interviews with experts in shopper psychology):

- Gondola ends not used effectively and end up converting only 3-7 per cent of passing trade.
- Shoppers tend to focus their gaze 15-30 degrees lower than their actual eye level.
- Hanging signs and even plasma screens (as per Tesco's latest in-store advertising network trial) are a complete waste of time. Our neck muscles are not designed to look upwards, which once again can be traced back to early humans when danger was less likely to come from above.
- Displays or other communications just inside the entrance of a store generally go unnoticed as customers are still in transition mode.
- Only 2 per cent of shoppers notice the fascia of a store; 10 per cent the windows; whilst 35 per cent tend to glance through the door.
- In supermarkets bread and milk are often purposely positioned near the back of the store to get shoppers to purchase items en route. What actually happens is that they go post haste to the bread and milk and are generally only in the mode for further purchases on the way to the checkout.

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Conclusion

People are making more shopping trips and spending less time in each store (as per recent European study highlighted above). In addition, most purchase decisions are now made at the point of sale and shoppers need to be presented with a pathway to the purchase triggered at the point of sale. Hence it would be a wise move to spend more on below-the-line and through-the-line strategies. As most in-store behaviour is carried out in subconscious mode, customers are unable to explain their purchase decisions and hence a different measure of behaviour is required. By using a combination of brain imaging and eye scanning technologies, the desired insight could now be within reach.

Many faux pas continue to be made despite much evidence from psychology professionals - all of which should flag an ALERT for the smart retailer. The challenge is to create an environment where the shopper perceives a one-to-one relationship with the store, to optimise the shopper's time, and to deliver an experience the shopper will want to repeat. By addressing these challenges, the win for the shopper is time efficiency; for the retailer it is increased loyalty; and for the brand, an uplift in sales.

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