

Emotional Triggers In Visual Merchandising Strategies

Psychological Advantage

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It's impossible to ignore the fact that modern media are now becoming increasingly prevalent in our shops and shopping centres. However, although it's not yet exactly certain how to assess their effect on customers and their buying behaviour, there are many indications that the effects of these media cannot be regarded separately from other factors at the POS. For some time now, a wide variety of industries have been testing whether, and how, these media actually affect sales in their shops. But this is still difficult to evaluate. Working with context-dependency, perception processes and emotions is the key to success in this endeavour.

Psychologists break down perception processes into various stages: sensation, organisation, identification and classification. Whereas sensation, in our case seeing, is a physical process, organisation, identification and classification are subconscious or cognitive processes. Cognitive processes take place in our subconscious mind. They are generally quick and safe (because we know our way around our own environment!) We believe what we see.

Emotions have a huge influence on us. They affect all our actions and behaviour. Feelings affect how we perceive something or someone, our attention, our assessment of risks and our decision-making. At the same time, emotions also influence our retention of information.

Neuroeconomists at the University of Münster established that, when confronted with our favourite coffee or beer, our reason switches off and the regions in our brain linked with emotions and feelings take over the decision-making process. In his book 'Brain Script' (2004), the psychologist Hans-Georg Häusel makes the point that products or services that do not trigger emotions are of no value to the brain.

Whichever decisions we make, they are necessarily a mixture of rational and emotional elements. So what does this mean for our business at the POS – the point where 65% of all purchasing decisions are made?

Associating emotions with the product enhances not only our

The success of modern self-service technology might seem like a purely logical equation – if the machine does what the customer needs, then the solution will be a success. But psychologists are now showing that true customer reactions are based on far more primitive emotional responses.



Polygon's Advertiser is designed to cater to both the 'physical' and the 'cognitive'



perception, but also our memory. The association of product, information and emotion has the greatest influence. In order to reach the customer, we need a mature and well functioning technique, as well as a winning design. We have to

touch the customer personally, to inform and inspire them. However, we can only do this if all the necessary parts slot together to form a single unit.

The new technologies also enable us to use moving images. In other words, we can tell stories about the products onscreen, but we can also use the same medium to communicate prices and special offers to the customer.

Since we can use modern terminals to intervene interactively, we are able to have an individual effect on the customer so that they feel actively involved. However, this strategy is only successful if the terminals appeal to the customer. Consequently, a suitable design is just as important as user-friendly operating elements. Experience

tells us that apparently minor details can have a great effect, which is why Polygon, for example, took such pains to take every aspect of the recognised customer behaviours we have already discussed into account before launching their new Advertiser solution.

You don't have to be a visionary to predict that modern technology will sweep across the POS. However, its success will depend on how well we succeed in filling it with high-quality, and carefully chosen, content and design and the extent to which the context is in keeping with the goods or services.

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