

Chapter 71

Sensory Branding: Branding with Senses

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ABSTRACT

This chapter presents sensorial branding approaches in practice and theory. Senses play a vital role in human life. We understand almost everything in life through senses. Sensory branding is an approach through which marketers create better experience of brands. Our senses are our link to memory, which can tap right into emotion. Using senses and their effect on understanding the consumer paves the way for an enriching experience of brand, discriminating their personality, creating a core competence, more interest, preference, and customer loyalty. Sensory branding is the marketing strategy that is investigating the emotional relationships between consumer and the brand through senses. Two cases presented in the chapter are on Starbucks and Apple Inc., which highlight their sensorial strategies for stimulating consumers' relationships and fostering a lasting emotional connection that retains brand loyalty.

INTRODUCTION

In the branding literature, the concept of brand identity is defined as a unique set of brand associations that a firm can create or maintain. It may involve a value-proposition with functional, emotional or self-expressive benefits. It does not matter whether the associations are tangible or emotional/symbolic or both (Anselm & Kosteljik, 2008). The sensorial and emotional linkage between brand and consumer has been proposed as important in building strong brands. It has also been confirmed in research that consumers look for and buy emotional experiences around what has been bought and no longer buy products and services alone (Brembeck & Ekström, 2004; Ratneshwar & Mick, 2005).

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ORGANIZATION BACKGROUND

Starbucks

Starbucks Coffee Company, founded in 1971 is headquartered in Seattle, WA and operates in 37 countries around the world. The backbone of Starbucks' business is its company-operated retail stores. Starbucks has employed a strong differentiation strategy in order to turn a traditional \$.50 commodity into a \$4 experience. Starbucks' governing principles are based on three strategic stances: the third place experience, creating a human connection, and providing a quality everyday experience for customers.

Today, Starbucks welcome millions of customers through their doors every day, in more than 17,000 locations in over 50 countries.

History of the Organization

1971 : Starbucks opens first store in Seattle's Pike Place Market.

1982: Howard Schultz joins Starbucks as director of retail operations and marketing. Starbucks begins providing coffee to fine restaurants and espresso bars.

1983: Howard travels to Italy, where he's impressed with the popularity of espresso bars in Milan. He sees the potential to develop a similar coffeehouse culture in Seattle.

1984: Howard convinces the founders of Starbucks to test the coffeehouse concept in downtown Seattle, where the first Starbucks Caffè Latte is served. This successful experiment is the genesis for a company that Schultz founds in 1985.

1985: Howard founds Il Giornale, offering brewed coffee and espresso beverages made from Starbucks coffee beans.

1987: Il Giornale acquires Starbucks assets with the backing of local investors and changes its name to Starbucks Corporation. Opens in Chicago and Vancouver, Canada.

1988: Offers full health benefits to eligible full- and part-time employees

1989: Total stores: 55

1990: Starbucks expands headquarters in Seattle

1991: Becomes the first privately owned U.S. Company to offer a stock option program that includes part-time employees.

Opens first licensed airport store at Seattle's Sea-Tac International Airport

1992: Completes initial public offering (IPO), with common stock being traded on the NASDAQ National Market under the trading symbol SBUX.

1993: Opens roasting plant in Kent, Wash. Announces first two-for-one stock split.

1994: Total stores: 425

1995: Begins serving Frappuccino blended beverages

Introduces Starbucks super-premium ice cream.

Announces second two-for-one stock split.

Opens roasting facility in York, Pa.

1996: Begins selling bottled Frappuccino coffee drink through North American Coffee Partnership (Starbucks and Pepsi-Cola North America).

Opens stores in: Japan (first store outside of North America) and Singapore.

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