Sensory marketing, neuromarketing, & consumer psychology: Leveraging neuroscience-inspired multisensory design for competitive advantage

International Summer Course 2017
July 17th-22nd

General Information:
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Course Description:
This course is designed to introduce students to the world of product and packaging innovation, sensory marketing, neuromarketing, as well as to the latest in contemporary consumer psychology. During the sessions, numerous examples of the successful use of cognitive neuroscience in business (both in Colombia and internationally) will be discussed (as well as a number of well-known failures). Those on the course will be introduced to the relevant concepts, techniques, and research tools from the fields of experimental psychology, consumer psychology, and neuroscience. The focus will be squarely on the food and beverage, home and personal care (HPC), and fast-moving consumer goods (FMCG) sectors. However, insights gained from these areas will be applicable, and will be extended during the course itself, to other areas such as over-the-counter (OTC) pharmaceuticals, household electronics (white goods), store atmospherics, hospitality, etc.

I will do my best to convince those taking the course of the fact that neuroscience-inspired design and product innovation is now occurring in many different aspects of our daily lives, if only you know where to look. That said, given all the hype surrounding the field of ‘neuromarketing’, it is sometimes hard to know quite what to believe. I hope to give those attending the course the necessary background knowledge, tools, and confidence to separate fact from fiction, in this rapidly-growing and fascinating area. By the end, I hope that those taking the course will have become much more familiar with the evidence-based, neuroscience-inspired, multisensory design approach and will be able to start leveraging some of the insights gained to their own field of endeavor, whatever that may be.
### Class Schedule

Monday – Friday (excluding Thursday): 6pm-9pm ; Saturday: 9am-12 noon and 1pm-4pm

### Student Learning Outcomes:

As a result of participating in this course, the students will gain a working knowledge & understanding of:

- Sensory marketing, what it means, and why it has become so popular recently;
- Relative strengths and weaknesses of the various neuromarketing techniques;
- Neuroscience-inspired design techniques and outcomes;
- Multisensory atmospherics as it applies to a wide range of public/commercial spaces;
- Multisensory design as it relates to product packaging;
- The emerging field of synaesthetic marketing, labelling, logo, and brand name design.

### Policies and Requirements:

Students in this course will be evaluated based on their performance on the following components: 1) Timely attendance at all classes, 2) Asking questions and engaging in debate in class, 3) Group class presentation, and 4) Multiple choice / short answer questionnaires.

**Assignments** are due when allocated, regardless of your presence or absence. It is your responsibility to meet the deadlines set.

**Attendance:** This course has interactive and participatory aspects and contains both individual and group elements. Your presence, involvement, and contributions are regarded as an essential part of your creative learning and as equally essential to the learning of others. Attendance, preparation, and participation are expected and are included in your final evaluation.

### Grading:

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<th>Assignment/Grading Item</th>
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<td>Multiple choice / short answer test 1</td>
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<td>Multiple choice / short answer test 2</td>
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<td>Group presentation at end of course</td>
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Active contribution to class (e.g., asking questions; answering questions; bringing relevant examples to bear from the Colombian marketplace)  |  25%
---|---
Total  |  100%

Policy on Incompletes: An Incomplete grade is not an option that you can select because you find that you weren't able to get everything done. The purpose of an incomplete is to provide a reasonable time extension for a student who cannot complete the course requirements by the usual time because of some bona fide emergency (e.g., an illness requiring hospitalization, etc.). Incompletes are generally unproductive for both the student and the instructor. They should be avoided if at all possible.

Extra Credit: Extra credit is not available in this course.

**Academic Misconduct Policy:**

Certain student behavior will result in the lowering of the course grade by at least one point/level. These behaviors include, but are not limited to: The use of mobile phones during class; Turning up late to class; Intentional disruption, obstruction, or interference with the process of instruction; Dishonesty, including cheating, knowingly furnishing false information, or plagiarism.

According to APA's publication manual (1994), detailing behaviour around Plagiarism: "Quotation marks should be used to indicate the exact words of another" (p. 292). "Each time a source is paraphrased, a credit for the source needs to be included in the text." (p. 294). The key here is not to present the work of another as being your own. Otherwise, it is considered AS plagiarism.

By accepting this contract, students agree that papers may be submitted to plagiarism detection software. Papers will only be submitted if there exists a suspicion of plagiarism. Students may receive a zero for a written assignment if plagiarism is identified.

**Expected Classroom Behavior:**

Participate in class activities; Respect the diversity of cultures, opinions, viewpoints in the classroom; Listen to fellow students, professors, and lecturers with respect; Be prepared for class discussion/presentation (in English).
COURSE SYLLABUS

Introduction to the key themes covered in this course. Explanation of what a psychologist is doing in a business school? Brief summary, of the sorts of things that I have been doing for business and which sectors have I worked in over the last 20 years?

1: Sensory marketing

Sensory marketing – engaging with all of your customer’s senses. Why is ‘sensory marketing’ such a hot topic now? What are the theoretical motivations / underpinnings of this whole new approach to marketing? In this class, a number of illustrative examples will be provided of the potential of sensory marketing, including everything from choosing the music and fragrance to go with you Starbucks (sorry Juan Valdez) coffee in the morning, and from mobile phones to banks (e.g., Helm Bank in Centre Andino). We will also look at some of the many examples where the sensory marketing approach has been used in advertising. We will discuss examples such as the ‘Scratch’n Sniff’ mobile phone and many more.

This session will also provide an introduction to the psychology and neuroscience of multisensory perception. Concepts to be covered in this session will include, sensory dominance, multisensory integration, the hierarchy of the senses, and the rules of perception. I will also look at the confusion of the senses seen in people with synaesthesia. We will discuss how it can, and in some cases already is, being applied by marketers when writing synaesthetic advertising. How can you advertise the benefits of a truly multisensory product in the newspaper or on TV (e.g., where you can only directly stimulate the consumer’s eyes or ears). We will look at adverts from many different companies from Marriott Hotels through to Givaudan that either appeal directly to the consumers’ senses and/or use synaesthetic copy to do this more indirectly. Examples include phrases such as ‘softness you can smell’, this is ‘a sharp cheese’, ‘crispness that you can hear’, or Carulla’s recent ‘Una fiesta para los sentidos’ etc.

I will also critically evaluate current approaches to multisensory branding/positioning/product design. I will show how neuroscience findings can, and increasingly are, being used in media campaigns to help support, launch, and promote a wide variety of different products. Numerous examples will be provided from my work with marketing companies.

Finally, in this first session, I will summarize the key rules of multisensory integration and interaction, and introduce the sensory snapshot technique.

Some discussion questions

1) If you were to export a Colombian product abroad, that consumers outside this country knew nothing about, how would you use the multisensory (sensory marketing) approach to product design in order to convey the message of what your product is all about?

2) On the basis of what you have heard about so far, take a trip to the supermarket or browse online. If you were hired as a consultant, for a FMCG or HPC company, and you were asked to innovate. Which products would you choose and why? What sort of multisensory modifications to the product design
would you suggest and why? Can you find any examples of what you would consider as particularly poor sensory design?

3) Use one of the methodologies discussed in class (such as the sensory snapshot method) to evaluate the multisensory profile of a product or service of your choice.

**Background reading**


* I am happy to provide an electronic (pdf) copy of any of my articles referred to in these materials (or in the classes).

**2: Neuromarketing**

The focus of the second class will on the topic of neuromarketing. A huge amount has been written about neuromarketing in recent years. (In fact, more Colombians Google this term than in pretty much any other country!) But is all the hype justified, or is much of it just hot air – another example of what some have branded recently as ‘neuromania’?

In this class, I will take a look at what neuromarketing can and, just as importantly, cannot do. I will discuss the strengths and weaknesses of the various approaches to studying the mind and brain of the consumer (including functional magnetic resonance imaging, event-related potentials, etc.). I will review the insights, advantages, limitations, costs, and benefits of these new approaches to understanding the mind of the consumer. I will also briefly discuss the various alternative non-verbal response measures that can be used to try and get a better understanding of the consumer, everything from skin conductance to gaze monitoring, pupil dilation, etc.

I will discuss a number of neuromarketing case studies that I have conducted on behalf of companies such as *Unilever* over the years. We will also dwell on the great Pepsi vs Coke neuromarketing study and what it, along with similar studies, tell us about the mind of the consumer. Ultimately, I will argue that one needs to distinguish carefully between academic and commercial neuromarketing.
We will look at the various roles that the findings of neuroimaging studies can play, everything from as a marketing tool in its own right, through to the use of such findings in product claims support and advertising, as in: ‘This product reaches those parts of the brain that other brands simply cannot reach’. We will also look at cognitive neuroscience and the media. Examples will be provided where the neuroscience able can be used to gain column inches for your product in the media. The various limitations of neuromarketing will also be highlighted.

While much of this class will downplay the potential impact of these new technologies, I want to end on a more positive note by reviewing some of the latest exciting predictive neuromarketing results, which often incorporate the combined methodologies approach to predict large-scale consumer behaviour on the basis of small scale neuroimaging studies.

**Background reading for this class. Read one (or more) of the following:**


**Questions for discussion**

1) Just how valuable is neuromarketing research? Has its potential benefit/impact been oversold? What would you point to as the most successful examples of neuromarketing to date? What are some of the key limitations?

2) How could you use neuromarketing, in a company of your choice, to gain knowledge about your consumers or clients? What would be the limitations that would need to be born in mind?

**3: Neuroscience-inspired design**

In this session, I want to highlight some of the problems that traditional consumer research can get one into (research that very often relies very heavily on the results of focus groups). We will address the question of why you should not necessarily always believe what the consumer says. We will come across the various problems that one runs into when relying on introspection? I will introduce the various tools and techniques now being provided by psychology and neuroscience to help more of those working in business to engage in neuroscience-inspired multisensory design. I will discuss one of the most exciting new paradigms and techniques that many marketers and product developers/innovation specialists need, and want, in order to assess which sense is really driving their consumers’ perception of their products and services. The notion of ‘choice blindness’ will also be discussed, and sensory design the development of more effective warning signals for car drivers through to coffee machines that make better tasting coffee because they sound better.
I will illustrate with numerous concrete examples how the rules of multisensory integration are being used by a number of fast-moving consumer goods (FMCGs) companies in order to help improve the multisensory design of many different products – everything from electric toothbrushes to deodorant sprays, and from washing powders to skin creams. A number of case studies will be provided from my consultancy work over the years with companies such as Unilever, Procter & Gamble, Baiersdorf, Gillette, and LG Electronics, Oakland Innovation etc.

**Background reading**


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### 4: Multisensory atmospherics

In this session, we will look at store atmospherics and unpack the notion of the *experience economy*. I will review the evidence demonstrating that the multisensory design of the places in which we shop, exercise, and consume can have a dramatic effect both on what we choose to buy, how much we choose to spend, and how much we like/remember the experience. The potential benefits associated with enhancing the multisensory appeal at the Point-of-Purchase (PoP) will be discussed. I will demonstrate with examples of enhanced multisensory appeal from shopping centres to hotels, from clothes stores to fast-food outlets, and from cosmetics stores through to retail electronics. We will see how little insight most of us have about the impact that the environment actually on our decision-making and purchase behavior. I will extend the discussion of atmospherics to working environments and beyond.

I will pay particular attention to the importance of the atmosphere of the spaces in which we consume food and drink. I will provide examples of the effects of changing the lighting, the music, and even the background fragrance on the multisensory product experience. Along the way, I will attempt to resolve the *Provencal rose paradox* – why it is food tastes so much greater on holiday than when you get it back home. Recent case studies with sonic branding agencies and clothing corporations will be discussed. I will also review the evidence concerning the impact of the multisensory environment on work performance and well-being based on my consultancy work with international fragrance and paint companies.

**Some discussion questions**

1) It is clear that knowledge concerning multisensory atmospherics is applicable to the design of goods but could it also be valid for the service industry? How? Can you provide an example of something that either has been done or could be done in the Colombian marketplace regarding services?
2) Choose a successful example of atmospherics being congruent with your product (e.g. Andres Carne de Res?) and another example of incongruent atmospherics, and explain what is right and wrong in each case.

3) If you were a sensory marketing consultant, how might you suggest a multisensory PoP would work for that company? Here, you might take electronics, mobile phone, of something from the banking sector (think Helm bank).

4) Do you think that there is scope for unusual ‘sensory’ dining experiences (e.g., ‘dining-in-the-dark’; silent dining, or combining cinema or theatre plus dining) in Colombia?

Background reading


5: Multisensory packaging design

Packaging design has traditionally been considered one of the least exciting aspects of marketing. However, the evidence clearly shows that designing packaging with multisensory appeal can result in increased brand loyalty and greater impact at the Point of Sale (POS). That said, understanding how the brain interprets sensory packaging cues poses a challenge for those working in the fields of packaging development and graphic design. Brand managers want to develop packaging that creates strong emotional attachments between the consumer and the brand, but how can this be done most effectively? And is it really worth the investment?

For too many years now, consumers have been overloaded by eye-catching visual packaging design. But many in the industry don’t realize just how effectively the other senses (especially, touch, smell, sound, and possibly even taste) can be used to deliver innovative multisensory packaging that both captures the attention of the consumer while they are wondering down the aisle of the supermarket, say, or paying a visit to the corner store (or tienda), but also provides functional benefits in terms of enhancing the consumer’s/user’s ultimate product experience. I will highlight the fundamental problem faced by many food companies around the world when they keep product development and packaging innovation separate. Once you realize just how profoundly product packaging (at least good product packaging) can influence product perception you would never think of keeping them separate again.

In this session, the latest evidence concerning both the theory and practice underlying multisensory packaging innovation will be reviewed. The contributions that have recently been made by understanding how the mind of the consumer works will be demonstrated. I will illustrate with a number of successful case studies from my consultancy work with leading global FMCG companies such as Proctor & Gamble, Unilever, Twinings, as well as with some of the world’s leading packaging design companies including Norway’s Elopak and the UK’s Faraday Packaging. A number of illustrative examples where the packaging designers got it wrong will also be highlighted (e.g., as in the case of Frito Lay’s disastrous introduction of Sun Chips in North America in 2010; or Tropicana
OJ’s catastrophic redesign. By the end of this session, I can promise that you will never look at (never mind, feel, smell, taste, or listen to) packaging in quite the same way ever again.

I will end by considering how product packaging might change as ever more of us do our shopping online.

**Homework assignment:** Take a trip to your local supermarket or else browse online. What I want you to do is find examples of the following:

1) Bring along to class (or take a photo of) what you consider to be the most innovative examples of multisensory packaging design. For example, try and find a product that uses colour, sound, smell (e.g., signature scent), tactile features (in terms of the tactile branding of shape and/or texture) or visual imagery innovatively in order to capture a consumer’s attention.

2) Pick (or take a photo of) an example of packaging where you think the design could be improved. Are there any incongruencies regarding the use of colour, sound, smell, tactile features or images that you can find? How would you improve this product’s packaging? Take a standard branded product offering and propose how you could use all the consumer’s senses more effectively to enhance the message.

3. Can you find an example of sensory incongruency being used successfully in the Colombian marketplace. Be prepared to explain why you think the example works when so many others in the past have failed.

We will discuss some of the best examples that the class has found.

**Background reading assignment. Pick one (or more) from the following:**


6: Synaesthetic Marketing

In this session, I want to take a closer look at the emerging world of synaesthetic marketing: Welcome to the whole new world of experience and design, where tastes have shapes, colours have smells use etc. I will introduce the powerful notions of sound and shape symbolism, and illustrate how they are already being used in a variety of world-famous products and brands that you can find in every supermarket as well as in the world of over the counter pharmaceuticals.

We will look at the success of so-called ‘critter brands’ in the world of wine marketing, and consider how to design the best-sounding, most attention capturing, brand name / logo. If there is time, I also hope to delve into the world of labelling, naming, and logo design.

Class task: Take a trip of the wine section of your local supermarket. Analyze the strategies that the marketers are using in order to try and capture the shopper’s attention. How popular are ‘critter brands’ currently in the Colombian marketplace? Is this a marketing strategy that has had its day?

How effectively do you think that shape and sound symbolism are currently being used in Colombia? Discuss with examples?

Background reading
