



## A MULTI SENSORY APPROACH TO HELPING CUSTOMERS FALL IN LOVE WITH YOUR BRAND



### INTERVIEW WITH SIMON FAURE-FIELD

Brands find it increasingly difficult to differentiate and connect with their target market. With 83% of marketing budgets being spent on commercial communication that appeals to one sense – our eyes, 75% of our decisions are based upon what we smell and there's a 65% chance of a mood change when exposed to positive music.

Bland service centres, uninspiring bank branches, plain vanilla retailer outlets, traditional passive merchandising displays, jazzy colour palettes, bright lights and one-off price promotions just aren't ringing the cash registers like they used to, says British brand consultant, Simon Faure-Field – Asia's only "brand atmospherics" guru. Based in Singapore, he heads Equal Strategy whose mission is to introduce environmental brand marketing – a 360 degree marketing experience - to the region's businesses, brands and retailers. Editor, Jeffrey Gomez, speaks with Simon to find out what exactly is tickling the senses of the consumers these days.

**For a long time now visitors to places of businesses have been treated to business-designed music to appeal to consumers but you're taking that further with fragrance. Tell us about that.**

It's the first time in Asia that any brand consultant has explored combining the two and we actually use a scientific and systematic approach. As humans we are affected by the appeal of our surroundings, which actually tend to affect our behaviour. So for example, a wine shop was comparing the effect of playing top 40's music versus classical and jazz, and they actually found that the volume of sales didn't increase between the two, but they did find that when people listen to classical music they tend to select more expensive wines.

There is another study of supermarkets where they compared using no music, low-tempo music, and high-tempo music. Well the summary of that was if you're using low-tempo music the customers actually slowed down, became more relaxed and more impulsive. So by using low tempo music in the supermarket they found that sales increase by 38.2%.

If we look at the application of fragrance, Nike once conducted a study where they have two identical sets of trainers, one pair was located in a room that had been lightly fragranced, and the other room had not. They would send consumers in to look at each of those two pairs of trainers and when they came out they asked them which trainers they had a preference for. It was found that the consumers actually preferred the trainers from the scented room. They were even prepared to spend 10 to 20 dollars more as compared to trainers in the unfragranced room. So that gives you some research as to how music and fragrance can really help improve customer experience and increase the bottom line.

This is a global trend which really all started in the hospitality industry. Westin, who are a part of the Starwood Group, two years ago started diffusing a signature fragrance in all of their hotel lobbies and they coupled that by standardising the music in all the lobbies as well, so whenever you went from a Westin property anywhere in the world you actually have a consistent experience.

**And how widely is this branding tactic being used in Asia today?**

What we're finding in Asia is that brands want to express more of their Asian brand elements. One of the big banks we are working with recently renovated their flagship branch with an Asian theme so the tables, for example, have curved corners that represent Asian warmth. They are also using different textures and materials that represent the different Asian nationalities. We are diffusing an Asian based ginger flower fragrance in there so when you walk in to the branch you smell and experience this Asian fragrance which is absolutely beautiful and we have that coupled with low tempo Asian music. So this actually creates a very holistic experience for customers which reflect their brand positioning as Asia's specialist bank.

We also found the new generation of boutique hotels are early adopters of these practices. In Singapore, we applied these techniques to Singapore's first luxury boutique hotel called Naumi. If you go to the hotel's website you'll see this property which is very clean, modern and stylish. We used a ginger and lime fragrance which complements the overall tone and feel of their property and we've also provided music styling by the infinity pool in the roof which overlooks various key landmarks in Singapore. We also provide music in the corridors to mask background noise coming from the rooms for guests who are walking to their rooms.

Another property we are working with is M Hotel. We used a ginger and lily fragrance that's coupled with music styling in their lobby. Another of the outlets we're working with is its Café 2000. This particular food and beverage outlet has quite a wide range of moods and activity levels across the day so if you going there for breakfast, it's very busy, mid morning's very quiet, lunch time is extremely busy all the way through to the afternoon where the activity level tails off before it peaks again in the evening. So we segmented the day into 13 different time blocks and we've styled the music and tempo to fit the mood of that time of day and by tapping into our 5 million track library of licensed music. This means that this client also benefits from having a nice variety of music throughout the day.

Across the Middle East we're working with Raffles Hotel which recently opened a new property of a fusion of Asian and Middle Eastern heritage. We carried out music styling in the main lobby area as well as the three of the outlets to reflect each of the different unique qualities of those areas.

**What are some of the other avenues you have been employing to get your clients' brand message across to the consumers?**

Brands need to use an integrated approach across their various touch points to engage their customers. For example if you have a creative advertisement in print or on television, it's crucial that the customers have an experience that matches the perception created by the advertisement when they visit the property, or even when they place a call to the company. So our approach here is to look at using the right sort of music that's going to soothe the caller, so that it reflects the brand values and positioning. We also look at integrating interlace messages as a great way to inform, inspire and entertain callers when they are on hold. This would educate them on your business, and further reinforce your brand message about who and what you are. We see this as an imperative to moving businesses forward.