



Smells Like Good Business to Me

If you are sensitive to scents, I am one of those guys you'll hate. No, I am *not* talking about a personal odor - at least I hope not!

Ages ago when I was studying for my doctorate in psychology, I was struck by a body of research on olfaction and memory. Olfaction being the overly scientific word for the process by which we experience smell. Most of that research looked at how smell influences mood, evokes pleasurable or unpleasurable emotions, triggers distant memories, and either increases alertness or soothes us into relaxation.

Fast forward to 2005 and the breakthrough work of fellow consultant Martin Lindstrom. That year Martin, who was kind enough to later endorse one of my books, wrote [BRAND sense: Sensory Secrets Behind the Stuff We Buy](#). *Brand Sense* has inspired me to look for ways to deeply and emotionally connect customers to the brands with which I've been fortunate enough to work.

Through the years, I've assisted brands (particularly in retail and hospitality) as they explore their "unique scents" that are then shared via commercial fragrance systems. In a recent, [New York Times article](#), Spence Levy, president of [Air Esscentials](#), reports that the trend toward "brand scents" is expanding into the home market:

"Our company grew rapidly because when we would put a scent into a Sonesta hotel or

a Ritz-Carlton or a Melia resort, guests would go up to the front desk and ask how they could get it...<As such> the home market has grown 35 percent a year for us every year since we started in 2007."

I'm not suggesting you need to bring the scent of The Ritz-Carlton Hotel Company to your home or even to your business. My takeaway is simple - **most business owners underestimate the power of effective sensory activation when creating emotionally engaging customer experiences.** Applied research on "atmospherics" like scent, music, lighting, and temperature are worthy of your consideration. Spend some time learning about how curated, and hand-picked background music [increases sales at brands like Starbucks](#) or explore the [impact LED lighting might have on buyer behavior](#).

In my book [The Starbucks Experience](#), I opined "everything matters" and "retail is detail." **This month I am suggesting, that even for online retailers, "emotional triggers" matter.**

What sensory or atmospheric elements might you leverage to forge deep emotional connections with your customers more effectively?

Timeless Wisdom

"You are the sum total of everything you've ever seen, heard, eaten, smelled, been told, forgot - it's all there. Everything influences each of us, and because of that I try to make sure that my experiences are positive."

- Maya Angelou

From the Blog:

Tools for Design Thinking

If you are not familiar with design thinking, much of the groundbreaking work has come from the website and software design arena.

Customers are thought of as "users" of the technology, making it the UX (user experience) as opposed to the commonly used term CX (customer experience).

Visit the Interaction Design Foundation for:

- 5 Stages in the Design Thinking Process
- Design thinking e-book

Shedding Your Implicit Bias: It's Time for Design Thinking

Isn't the world amazing! Despite the recent floods, nuclear tension, and political divide in the

United States, I continue to be in wonder of the kindness and compassion demonstrated by absolute strangers to flood victims. I also marvel at the way so many people graciously navigate the underlying tensions of our time and find common ground. But I'll admit it. I am biased to see the world through an optimistic lens. (Looking back I suspect I learned it from parents who insisted, "If you can't say something good then say nothing at all.")

Biases, Biases Everywhere - Explicit and Implicit

We all have biases - mine certainly is not better than yours (if you're pessimistic there are many situations where I wish I had a smudge more of that).

Biases come in handy. They serve as shortcuts to help us make sense of new situations or information. [Continue reading the full blog post.](#)

Personal Note of Gratitude Concerning Support and Hurricane Irma

As many of you know, the bulk of my team and I are based in the St. Petersburg, Florida area. When Hurricane Irma was tracking toward Florida, your outpouring of support overwhelmed us. Thank you!

My team and I were spared the worst of the storm, but our thoughts and prayers go out to communities across the US (and the world) who haven't fared as well in the face of so many natural disasters and wildfires. May we all find the calm...

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be 'Kelly Michelli', centered on a white background.

