

SENSORY MARKETING FROM THE PERSPECTIVE OF A SUPPORT TOOL FOR BUILDING BRAND VALUE

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Abstract. A brand is one way to distinguish products from each other, while simplifying consumers' decisions in choosing an appropriate product. Brand building is not just about design but also strategy, which is even more important in the process. The result of brand building is the potential to represent a certain value for the company. However, sustaining and improving a brand's position in the market is not a simple process in the current competitive environment. Therefore, there is scope for application of new marketing strategies such as sensory marketing. Sensory marketing represents a way for companies to influence consumers' senses (sight, hearing, smell, touch, taste) and evoke the emotions affecting their buying behaviour and perceptions of the product or brand. The aim of the article is to provide a literature review on the issue from several foreign and domestic authors. It discusses the essence of a brand, brand value, sensory marketing and also analyses its use as a support tool for building brand value in practice through secondary research data. Based on this, in conclusion, the authors highlight the benefits of using sensory marketing for building brand value, including ensuring loyalty of standing customers as well as gaining new ones, building a successful brand and positive perception of the brand and product by users.

Keywords: sensory marketing; brand value; consumer; emotions; buying behaviour

JEL Classification: M30, M31

Introduction

The brand currently performs a very wide range of tasks and it has great importance not only to the brand owner but also to every market entity. Therefore, the brand represents a certain added value for the product. It makes it easier for consumers to make purchasing decisions, reduces purchase risks and confirms the producer that a product or service meets customer needs and fulfils its expectations in the same quality as the product declares. Therefore, a strong brand is one of the most valuable assets of the company and also a very effective tool in a competitive battle (Salaga *et al.* 2015). It is very complicated and costly to get customers who are faithful to another established brand (Podhorska *et al.* 2016). If they know what they can expect from verified branded products, it is challenging to get them to try another brand, even though these products can be even better (Lizbetinova 2017). This forms a barrier to entry into the market by potential competitors and makes it much more difficult for the current competitors.

Each brand goes through several periods of its life cycle when it gains or loses the value or loyalty of consumers. Based on this, we can claim that the favour and loyalty along with the brand image are the essence of brand value. The brand can be marked as successful when, among other things, it awakens and leaves some emotions to the customer. One reason is to stimulate the consumer's senses that are directly linked to the limbic part of our brain, responsible for memories, feelings, pleasures or emotions. It's just the senses through which a company can be unique and specific in its area, build a brand and image, differentiate itself from competition, and secure the loyalty of its customers.

The aim of the article includes to provide a literature review on the issue from several foreign and domestic authors. It discusses the essence of a brand, brand value, sensory marketing and also analyses its use as a support tool for building brand value in practice through secondary research data.

The primary source for writing the post was secondary data. In their processing, mainly general scientific methods were used, such as analysis, synthesis, deduction, induction and comparison.

Literature Review

The issue of the brand and its value is currently dealt with by many foreign and domestic authors. According to the American Marketing Association, a brand is a name, term, design, symbol, or any other feature that identifies one seller's good or service as distinct from those of the other sellers. Keller (2007) defines the brand as a further dimension of the product that distinguishes it from other products. Kotler (2011) perceives the brand as the declared product quality. Schmitt (2012) represents a consumer-psychological model of the brand with the possibility to test using both traditional methods and consumer neuroscience. He (2012) examines the identity of the brand, the relationship of the customers to the brand and the acquisition of their loyalty.

The brand value for the consumer lies in the trust in the unmatched quality of the product at a stable price, advantageous purchase, product satisfaction, brand communications with consumers, traditions, customer's associations with a particular brand, the prestige given by using the product and so on. Associations that a consumer deals with in connection with the brand are such an abstract aspect that contributes to the brand value creation and can be both positive and negative.

Leek and Christodoulides (2012) define brand value as the value of goods and services, as well as added value (functional and emotional) from the brand. According to Aaker (2003), the brand value is a set of assets or liabilities linked to a brand's name and symbol that adds to or subtracts from the value provided by a product or service. However, in addition to these standard items, the value of the brand and the company is also made up of extensive intellectual property, goodwill and last but not least, the price of brands that they have in their portfolio.

On the above, we can say that brand value is measured by the consumer's willingness to buy or not to buy the brand's products. The measurement of brand value is strongly linked to loyalty and it measures segments starting with loyal users, ending with those who can move to the brand from competitors.

Tracking the development of consumer buying behaviour and their perception of brand value offers space for new marketing strategies, including the sensory marketing.

Nowadays, the topic of sensory marketing is very current in order to gain a competitive advantage. The essence of sensory marketing is dealt with by several world-renowned authors, who explore it not only from a marketing point of view, but also from a psychological or sociological point of view.

Significant foreign authors include, in particular, the American professor Krishna, who is considered as a pioneer in sensory marketing. In the publication *Sensory Marketing: Research on Sensuality of Products* (2011), she describes how sensory aspects of products, that is, touch, taste, smell, sound, and appearance of products affect our emotions, memories, perceptions, preferences and choice of product consumption.

Swedish writers Hulthen *et al.* (2009) deal with the shift from mass marketing to the sensual. Lintelle (2014) provides a general framework for the impact of senses on consumer perceptions. Danish author Lindstrom (2010) shows how companies can appeal to five consumer senses. Derval (2010) helps understand and reveal consumer behaviour and preferences in the field of senses, fine-tune their location and assortment for each market. The American authors Batra *et al.* (2016) point to the importance of design in creating consumer desires for products. Bercik *et al.* (2016) deal with customer behaviour at sales points that is affected by the surroundings and feelings of well-being. Other renowned authors in the field of sensory marketing are Streicher and Estes (2016), dealing with the touch, highlight the importance of touching products before the actual purchase decision. Huang (2015) deals with the perception of food and beverages. He indicates that the colour of food or drink has effects associated with consumer emotions and consumers' existing expectations. Miletu *et al.*

(2016) explore emotions and their impact on consumers and their decision-making processes. Pereira *et al.* (2016) deal with the continuous development of marketing, especially by addressing the minds of consumers. According to them, sensory marketing expects not only addressing consumers' minds, but also influencing consumer emotions. They detected the impact of senses in relation to the brand, which determine the strong effect of sensory marketing in relation to the mark. They also provide information that companies should take into account in their marketing strategies in the field of sensory marketing. Kardes *et al.* (2010) deal with sensual marketing in terms of emotional, behavioural and mental impact on the mind of the consumer.

Among the renowned home authors belong Rybanska *et al.* (2016), who emphasize globalization in individual markets, consider sense marketing as a new marketing technique based on synergy between product or brand and consumer, using human senses. We can also mention Vysekalova, one of the most acclaimed Czech authors in the field of advertising psychology. In the publication *Psychology of Advertising* (2007) and *Marketing Emotions* (2014), she focuses on sensory marketing and its impact on customers, answering questions about what the customer prefers, how he is influenced by the image, sound or other aspects of sensory marketing.

Most Slovak authors agree that it is necessary to create a synergy between the different aspects of sensory marketing, that can create a positive image of the company and of course of the brand, not only for their consumers but also for the company itself.

Based on the above and other publications, we can choose a few definitions of sensory marketing.

According to Soars (2009), sensory marketing is a marketing that focuses on understanding consumer's perceptions. It is a process that starts with exposure to consumer's senses to stimulus and the way consumers analyse, interpret and respond to these suggestions. These activities are used to create a marketing plan, which aims to design products and brands in a way to interest the consumer. They are a key factor for consumer awareness of product and brand awareness.

According to Lindstrom (2010), sensory marketing represents a marketing focused on human senses that have not been given enough attention in traditional marketing. Each person's senses are diverse and relevant to his shopping behaviour and purchasing experiences. By means of senses, each individual is aware of and perceives the world around him, and also the products offered by the company. For this reason, marketers get information and other insight into the human senses they use to make the business more successful and the customer more satisfied. By acting on the customer's senses, a company can create a deeper and more personal relationship with customers and thus, with appropriate tactics, increase sales and reach the goals of the business.

Sensory marketing can be applied in various fields of business. Using sensory marketing, a company can influence consumer's purchasing perceptions, whether for both new and current products. It is used almost everywhere, so consumer's senses are influenced without the consumer's being conscious (Lindstrom, 2005).

According to the Czech author Vysekalova (2007), sensory marketing is also associated with sensory marketing of the brand, which represents a type of marketing appealing to all senses in relation to the brand. It uses all the consumer's senses that touch its emotional level. Brands can thus distract the emotional association in the minds of consumers, thereby achieving a sensory experience that is described as an individual perception of products and services or other requirements in the process of shopping, as well as the image that attacks the human mind and senses.

According to SAM research (2016), sensory marketing is based on the fact that most consumers are buying impulsively, which means that shopping is not a rational business, but rather, it is based on consumer emotions.

Providing customers with unique and memorable experiences to establish a positive customer-brand relationship has become one of the key challenges for brand managers. However, it is still little known about how the sensory marketing lead to build strong brand value for customer.

Therefore, Wiedmann *et al.* (2018) conducted an empirical study in a distinctive service industry, luxury hotels, that provides a good role model for learning about an approach that targets all senses.

The main goal of the study was to better understand the causal relationships among multisensory marketing, brand experience, customer perceived value and brand strength. The results of the study show that multisensory marketing is an important means to establish brand experiences that reflects in the brand value perceived by customer. And that's what creates brand strength.

Several other authors agree on the same. According to Rybanska *et al.* (2014), sensory marketing is a revolutionary new development based on creating the concept and the brand image (including the brand value) and building the perfect synergy between product and consumer leading to increased consumption. It means, more the senses are engaged in relation to a specific brand means a greater chance in gaining the customer.

Whether the above-mentioned authors are devoted to sensory marketing from marketing, sociological or psychological view, with specialization on one or more of them, largely they agree that traditional marketing tools are no longer sufficient for consumers. The market offer is very wide, and so, the consumer becomes indecisive when choosing a product or brand. They point to the fact that consumer's senses and emotions are one of the major factors influencing consumer's buying decisions while their importance has been underestimated by marketers for a relatively long time.

Therefore, companies need to be unique and distinguish their products and especially their brands from the competitors with the possibility of using individual aspects of sensory marketing. Selected authors also appeal to the proper and correct application of sensory marketing tools, with which a company can ensure long-term trust and loyalty of its customers, a unique marketing strategy and successful building of the brand value. At the same time, they get feedback from consumers, which is a prerequisite for effective customer relationship management and satisfaction of their needs and expectations.

Because sensory marketing is based on the use of the consumer's senses, we can characterize its individual components as follows:

- Visual marketing is based on the fact that the view is the most used sense in marketing, which is the most stimulated by environment. Choosing colours, shapes and product materials is important for organizing a sales place, implementing a promotional campaign for key success or failure factors that must be well understood by marketers to attract a consumer.
- Audio marketing is based on the fact that sound has a significant influence on the mood of the consumer and thus his shopping behaviour. Linking music and advertising correctly ensures that the consumer remembers it easily. Music plays an important role in promoting the identity and the atmosphere of a business company in accordance with the client's business.
- Aroma marketing is based on the fact that the smells that the human nose feels give rise to certain stimuli in the brain responsible for creating emotions and memories. Unlike sight, smell produce much more emotional experiences and thanks to the smell, we recognize them and specify for a long time.
- Tactile marketing is based on the fact that human skin has several million sensory receptors to help us perceive materials, weight, smoothness, simplicity or complexity of products. The sense of touch plays an important role with regard to the design of packaging, the consumer can test whether a product has the required and expected properties, and also to persuade the quality of this product. It also perceives the overall atmosphere and the individual elements of the environment, because touching is one of the main factors driving a sense of well-being.
- Taste marketing is an important part of sensual marketing that allows a company to differentiate itself from competition. In particular, it includes promoting on-site sales in the form of tastings. By means of taste receptors, consumers can specify tastes and what they like on the basis of taste sensations.

In general, when sensory marketing is applied, the condition is that the intensity of the stimulus should be above the threshold of perception, and the consumer must be in the state of average attention. It should also be noted that if the product and respectively the brand influences more senses at the same time, the consumer perceives it more intensely and leaves deeper emotions in him.

Methodology

The aim of the article is to define the theoretical basics of brand, brand value, building the brand value and sensory marketing from the viewpoint of several foreign and Slovak authors, to analyse and to point out the use of sensory marketing as a support tool for building brand value in practice. Based on the results of the analysis were highlighted benefits of using sensory marketing for building brand value, including ensuring the loyalty of standing customers as well as gaining new, a successful branding and positive perception of brand and product by users.

The basic sources of research were secondary data obtained from companies' reports, statistical rosters, published reports in print and electronic media of professional publications. In the processing of the data, mainly general scientific methods such as description, comparison, analysis, synthesis, deduction and induction were used.

Results

Sensory marketing is becoming increasingly important for companies in Slovakia and abroad, precisely because of the acquisition of competitive advantage. Whether it is the sale of tangible products or services, by influencing the consumer in an imaginative way and acting on his senses, the company can shape the overall atmosphere in order to create a good relationship of the consumer to the brand and the product.

The main reason for the use of sensory marketing to build a brand and increase its value is the ever-increasing competition that makes sensory marketing a way of differentiating from other competitors. Another reason for the use of sensory marketing is the mass development of e-commerce; so, the stone stores need to find a way to develop the features that the Internet does not have (Moravcikova 2017). The advantage of stone shops is the possibility of tasting, smelling, touching products, or pleasant atmosphere at the point of sale.

Based on the above, we can summarize the possibilities of the individual components of sensory marketing in order to build the customer relationship to the brand and its perception of brand value.

Visual marketing is based on the fact that consumers are able to perceive shapes, forms, colours, dimensions, movements and distances between objects. Also, in recent years, scientists have pointed out that the way in which the product is presented, it means how it looks, is an important factor for the consumer. When building a brand value, choosing colours and logos is one of the most important decisions to influence consumers in a positive way and remember them for a long time. In practice, brand selection represents a number of attempts to sort consumers' responses to individual colours. Up to 90% of all product reviews are based on the colour, depending on the product. Colours and shapes are the first way of identifying and differentiating. And the fact that individual brands have their own colours has its own justification because colours are easy to store in the customer's memory. For example, Coca-Cola and its red-white, the same colours KFC or the red-yellow Mc Donald logo (Singh, 2006). We can argue that consumer behaviour and brand perception are largely influenced by colours. The colours affect not only the person, but also the relationship, and the opinion about the brand is also important. The colours and overall colour of the brand, logos, product is important, but more important is the colour suitability of the product.

Audio marketing is based on the fact that sounds are a part of everyday life of each and every one of us. We can hear them at every step; they affect our behaviour and our mood. Music is easy to access and has many uses in marketing. But compared with the use of audio marketing in Slovakia and abroad, Slovakia lags behind. When we compare internationally with other developed countries (for example, Switzerland or Germany), we can safely say that traders' awareness of the possibilities of using music in marketing is much higher in those countries than in Slovakia. Music puts great emphasis on sales. Its goal is to influence the mind of the customer so that he can buy the product. Studies have also been carried out to find out what kind of music best suits the different places of sale. For example, classical music will enhance the quality of the wine cellar. It has also been shown that when salespeople play French music in their shop, more French wines were sold because the customer

was affected by the music that was playing in the wine trade. Music also influences the time that a customer spends at the point of sale. Fast music increases customer turnover and slows the cost of each individual customer. The international trade chain Tesco uses the Store Media services in the Slovak market, namely a music program, which makes it easier to shop for customers in its business chain every day. The use of music is also important in advertisements. Many transnational brands use sounds and melodies that customers remember. As an example, we can mention the Magnum ice cream, which uses the sound of cracking chocolate in the commercials, when it comes to the ice cream bar; the Coca Cola brand, which uses the sparkling sound of a drink when the consumer opens it and then pours it into the glass. Each of Mc Donald's customers well knows the well-known slogan 'I am lovin it'. Mc Donald combines sound in conjunction with the sound, and thus, uses it in its marketing to influence the senses and memory of consumers.

Aroma marketing is a powerful tool for triggering emotions in consumers. Information that the customer perceives by the smell influences directly and immediately upon his decision. Surveys have highlighted the fact that smell can change the mood of the consumer, especially when the consumer is waiting for it. For example, the American Barnes & Noble chain smells like new books and fresh coffee beans. This is how they try to release their clients. Studies have also shown that clients are more willing to buy if the product blends with a pleasant smell, but it is also possible to induce a negative reaction to the client if the smell of the place of sale is unpleasant. Tests and studies have also shown that women and men tend not to stay too much in the area that smells as opposite sex. Nowadays, with many opportunities, there are specialized companies who are able to suggest the right combination of aspects of sensory marketing, such as a combination of smell just for a particular business. At the same time, it is important to note that the aroma marketing is not just about creating the atmosphere but also about appealing to the potential customers with a pleasant smell. Successful international trade chains have long known that the smell of chocolate and the scent of freshly baked bread increases the sales of products in supermarkets. In clothing stores, such as in Bershka, a lot more trousers are sold since then, when pheromones of selected fragrances are used and dosed every two hours. Sony uses just the smell of vanilla and mandarin to attract consumers, the coffee shop uses the scent of freshly brewed coffee and the Sheraton hotel chain with jasmine, figs and spice clove. In Italy, the hotel chains use creative marketing, so each floor of the hotel can be smelled with another floral scent.

Tactile marketing relates to the use of materials, technologies to improve the sale of products and services through tactile sensations. Touch contributes to building the relationship between the product and the consumer, which is formed through contact. A positive touch experience mainly concerns information such as the value, durability and functionality of the products. Product touch is an important part of product sales. Companies also give importance to the consumer's attention on the shape of products. The shape is another way of selling products based on its tactile properties. For example, Coca-Cola bottles are closely linked to their familiar shape and the way they fit into their hands. Mc Donald also uses hamburger wrappers, fries and other products that each customer can identify. Customers recognize well-known brands with colours and shapes. If a company wants to sell a product with an unusual shape, it's a good idea to try this form on multiple target groups. If the seller gets a positive answer, he knows he has a unique shape for a marketing campaign. Another important part of the touch for companies is the weight of products. Weight talks to the customer about the resilience and strength of the product and the ease and simplicity of use. An example is furniture. It is generally known that if the furniture is heavy, it is considered to be more valuable. The customer recognizes that the furniture is made of quality wood and not light wood chipboard. The use of sensory marketing in this area is used, for example, by Decodom, whose products are characterized by high quality.

Taste marketing is used mainly in the food sector. Many food businesses are just starting to realize the importance of influencing consumer's senses and subconscious minds. In a recent study investigated by the well-known pioneer of sensual marketing Krishna (2011), the effects of sensations in food advertising were investigated. It was found that food in advertising increases the taste of people and also affects the amount consumed by the consumer. For example, the image of biscuits helps consumers identify and get memories, raises the taste of biscuits, creates a lively mental image and a

pleasant experience that results in a positive response. While businesses in the food industry spend billions on advertising each year, marketers do not use the potential of sensory marketing well enough. Krishna (2011) suggests that even simple changes in visualization and text can produce delicious ads that cause the consumer to taste food. Taste marketing is not only used in the food industry but is also justified where the products are getting close to the consumer's mouth. We can mention, for example, a well-known Italian cosmetics brand Pupa, which produces lipsticks with different flavours, thus giving consumers a pleasant feeling and taste. Other brands that use fragrances and flavours in their products include, among others, Mary Kay, LR or Avon. Also known fast food restaurants realize the power of taste, smell and other sensory aspects of marketing, which is reflected in their mass attendance.

In practice, we meet with a number of successful cases of building brand value through sensory marketing. Many other companies are aware of the importance of consumer empowerment, to a large extent. Dunkin Donuts in South Korea conducted a campaign that focused on the hearing and smell senses of consumers by playing business melody in city buses, where the sprayer also acted on the smell by coffee aroma. The campaign's results were favourable as the sales of the brand increased by 29%.

In 2006, TV advertising for the Swedish Volvo brand was made as part of the Ford Motor Company. It was commercially broadcast on Swedish TV4 channels under the theme 'The Sixth Sense'. This automaker wanted to point out that if a person drives a car, it is obvious that he uses at least three human senses, namely sight, sound and touch. Volvo understood the importance of senses and spread the message that Volvo is a car that should be perceived as 'The Sixth Sense'. For a driver, it is a pleasure to drive such a car. Volvo takes care of safety and also the extraordinary driving experience. And why the sixth sense? For example, because Volvo feels when it is near the threat of collision with another vehicle, it feels near threat and then automatically slows down.

In an attempt to get people to pay attention to public service announcements, Metro Trains in Australia created a viral awareness campaign. First, they wrote and released a song on YouTube. This then led to a Tumblr site, a book, radio airplay, outdoor advertising, a smartphone game, a karaoke video, and posters that called for people to take a safety pledge. The response was phenomenal, and the impact was tangible. The campaign transformed dull safety announcements into something memorable and enjoyable; and it changed people from being passive consumers into active participants (Villiers 2016).

The popular brand Netflix has achieved success when it effectively applied multi-sensorial. The Netflix Switch dims the lights, silences calls, orders take-aways, and turns on the man's shows. It transforms the concept of Netflix and chill into a reality. People have to build the switch themselves, which makes this a relatively exclusive experience that requires knowledge and skill in electronics and programming (Villiers 2016).

Meet South Africa, a tourism brand, uses many visual clues among others to immerse the viewer in the world of South African sensory experiences, such as the feeling of sand between toes, salty ocean air on face, the rush of surfing, and the intricate detail of textured art, the rhythmic sound of drum and dance and language, the earthy aroma and taste of wine and fruit. This is a multi-sensorial experience of South Africa that does not depend solely on sight (Villiers 2016).

Ibiza Sublimotion, as the well-known and most expensive restaurant in the world, offers its customers a truly multi-sensory experience, combining their meals with a digital environment that changes with food. Thanks to its creativity and the use of senses, it is reserved a few months in advance. Its aim is to awaken the senses of customers, bringing them back to forgotten memories, whether it's fear, laughter, joy or nostalgia.

Starbucks, in building brand value, chooses the same scent of freshly prepared coffee and all playlists or specific materials that make a lasting impression on the consumer. These sensory marketing elements are so identical in branches around the world. Choosing the same device, music, scents should help the consumer immediately identify the brand, no matter what nationality the consumer is.

These cases are only a fraction of the successful use of sensory marketing in practice, with the aim of building and respectively, strengthening the brand value. Based on the above, we would like to point out that the perspective of sensory marketing as a support tool for building brand value or reinforcing it in the eyes of customers is well founded.

Conclusions

Nowadays, building a strong, competitive position and securing success in market is not at all easy for companies. One of the most effective ways is to promote sales through senses.

So, when the entire marketing world talks about customer experiences and focuses on creating emotional interconnection between brands and customers, the sensory marketing is an effective way to ensure the loyalty of current customers as well as new ones, while also providing customers with a unique shopping experience. It is also important for successful branding, positive consumer perceptions and brand value-enhancing tool for customers. Using multiple sensory experiences ensures better connectivity with consumers in a world that is full of traditional visual and audio ads and marketing campaigns.

In sensory marketing, expectation is the driving force of success. The first look at the product offers expectations of form, material and smell. If these expectations are not met, it means expectations are not responsive to sensory perception, the consumer is surprised by this sensible mismatch. This then affects the experience with the product. If product experience exceeds expectations, consumers often evaluate the experience as positive. If the interaction is inadequate, experience is often considered negative. That sensory mismatch also affects brand value rating. Consumers' brand perceptions is based on the mentioned interactions with the brand.

On the basis of the above, we can summarize that the use of sensory marketing as a supporting tool for building and hence strengthening brand value perceived by customers has many benefits: 1) increasing the number of customers and thus increasing sales; 2) obtaining a competitive advantage; 3) strengthening the value of the brand perceived by customers; 4) strengthening the market position of the brand; 5) increasing consumer awareness of the brand; 6) improving the effectiveness of the brand's product sales; 7) improving brand image; and 8) achieving customer loyalty.

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