

FIVE-DIMENSIONAL BRANDING FOR COMMUNICATION DESIGNERS:  
AN APPLICATION OF SENSORY DEVELOPMENT

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By

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FIVE-DIMENSIONAL BRANDING FOR COMMUNICATION DESIGNERS:  
AN APPLICATION OF SENSORY DEVELOPMENT

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## **DEDICATION**

I would like to dedicate this body of work to the one person in my life who has been a constant support, my wife. The one who has heard my complaints, shared in times of happiness, dusted me off from my failures and celebrated in my successes. Kaily, I could not have done it without you. Apart from the many unexplainable and continual goals I set and the unimaginable reasons behind them, you fully stand beside me and support me. You are the reason why this is all a success. I love you.

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## **ABSTRACT**

### **FIVE-DIMENSIONAL BRANDING FOR COMMUNICATION DESIGNERS: AN APPLICATION OF SENSORY DEVELOPMENT**

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**SUPERVISING PROFESSOR: CLAUDIA RÖSCHMANN**

Brands are as personified as the audience for who they are designed. Brands follow users home on the Interstate, shine through screens in their living rooms, cook an audience's meal, entertain them and tuck them into bed. Despite traditional boundaries, brands are now creating opportunities to create meaningful experiences with their audiences through sensorial exploration. It is the job of the designer to communicate these elements to a specified audience. Sensory branding not only creates synergy, it connects an audience to multiple vehicles of experience, creating multiplied value (Lindstrom, 2005, pp. 31 - 32). Value, therefore, becomes more important than the sensory experience itself.

This research focuses on sensory brand building's existence and usage. It will be based upon a project-focused initiative founded upon a five-dimensional tool that will be used as an easily processed resource for design students. Undergraduate Communication Design students will be the participants in the research, as the online tool will be administered to them in a classroom setting. Curious students will be given the opportunity to make informative decisions based upon a model of multi-sensory brand building that will create scenarios established by chosen sensory elements for a particular brand. Since the research and project will both be based upon a five-dimensional model, the focus on the interactive tool will be upon the process of aligning cohesive sensory elements in as an application to elevate brand experiences. The online resource will have multi-sensory elements, however it is not intended to be a multi-sensory experience alone.

The process of building multi-sensory elements that inform, educate, and elevate brand experiences is the focus that is explored and defined individually. The conclusion of the tool's usage will produce data to yield results that can be analyzed to support the objective. The online resource is designed to help elevate a student's awareness of sensory branding to be used for future clients outside of the classroom.

## CHAPTER I

### INTRODUCTION

“The future belongs to a very different kind of person with a very different kind of mind—creators and empathizers, pattern recognizers, and meaning makers” (Pink, 2006, pg. 1).

According to Martin Lindstrom, author of *Brand Sense*, (2005) “In the future brands will increasingly be owned by the consumer” versus brand-makers (pg. 4). This notion is not a foresight to another emerging trend in Visual Communication, but a practice and an application that has proven to be successful and will continue to shape the landscape of contemporary brands. The human senses, composed of sight, sound, touch, taste, and smell, are connected to an audience through sensory cognition by the brand experience.

Once a consumer’s basic needs are met, as they currently are with many members of affluent societies in the West, the drive “to look for meaningful and emotionally satisfying experiences” will occur (Brown, 2009, pg. 111). Due to the advanced nature of technology’s rapid evolution to meeting speed and convenience, these needs are met with expectancy and ease. Products and services no longer fight for attention on shelves of a marketplace, but on digital screens that are fixated within the palm of a user’s hand. Despite the sophisticated emotional advancements in contemporary society, consumers

are “seeking even more dimension” in the products and services they trust (Diller, Rhea & Shedroff, 2008, pg. 13). The reason lies in the fact that a brand can carry out more of a medium beyond just a visual stimulation—it can become a multi-sensory experience, one that will embody the brand to create new levels of meaning and communication toward a target audience.

It is why Singapore Airlines is not just an ordinary plane carrying passengers abroad, instead it is a five-dimensional experience in flight travel. Along with the consistency of visual themes, logo usage and color palettes, Singapore Airlines has patented an aroma that sets them apart from the competition and complements the airline’s service and quality (PSFK, 2010, para. 1). Flying is now more than just a method of transportation, it is an experience that meets and exceeds passengers’ needs.

Nordstrom’s employs a pianist to play while consumers shop, creating an uplifting and inviting atmosphere within the retail environment (Diller, Rhea & Shedroff, 2008, pg. 115 - 116). Sound creates a bridge between perception and value, defining the sound of Nordstrom’s brand substructure.

The Motion Picture industry is exploring the science beyond marketing to the senses of the audience. *Avatar* “allowed the audience to touch and feel—literally” while being submerged into the action of the movie (Banerjee, 2011, para. 1). Audiences were stimulated beyond pure three-dimensional visuals and state-of-the-art sound technology; they became part of the storyline due to how the three-dimensional visuals intertwined with sound and touch.

Ferrari has built a theme park in Abu Dhabi that features state-of-the-art technology through a multi-faceted experience that educates the audience on the story of

the brand (Banerjee, 2011, para. 4). The park houses the world's fastest rollercoaster, traveling at “149 mph in 4.9 seconds” (MailOnline, 2010, para. 3). This purposeful simulation is congruent to the G-force that is experienced within a Formula One car (MailOnline, 2010, para. 3). Did Ferrari mention it is all indoors?

Apple elevated their brand through union of a new product that has revolutionized both business and pleasure combined with an authentic experience to their growing audience (Diller, Rhea & Shedroff, 2008, pg. 15). The iPhone redefined the cellular phone industry. The navigational structure of an iPhone is now common language and the standard for applications commanded by touch. This notion of utilizing touch as a navigational standard is present in many types of media apart from the cellular phone industry. It has created a common language alone, independent from the words and sounds upon which traditional communication was founded.

The human senses are nothing new. However the way that brands, media, and technology are interacting with humans is making more sense than ever. Despite this tangible phenomenon, less than ten percent of charismatic brands are utilizing technology to their advantage toward their target consumers (Lindstrom, 2005, pg. 205).

Students immersed in this new wave of media and how their role as future professionals working in a continuously evolving role became of interest. The majority of mainstream media failed to realize the true possibilities that sensory branding could bring, simply because no one had fully discussed its relevance and potential. If Communication Design students are indeed the larger majority of this growing industry, why then is this topic being left out of many classrooms?

The fact is that students can build brands based upon sensory cognition and transcend this understanding into their professional careers. The online tool, SENSE, has

been created for this purpose and is based upon research of sensory branding and development. Students are immersed in many of the foundations of brand building, such as defining a target audience and building an identity system. However, the idea that these same brand foundations can be experienced through sensorial avenues, uniquely and individually by brands large and small is new and often hard to grasp fully.

SEN5E, the online tool, will aid in this understanding. The objective is for Communication Design students to understand the role of sensorial relationships in brand development and how to use these multipolar attributes to build successful brand experiences. Through simulation learning, students will learn the principals and the process of sensory brand building. Through a series of questions and phase building, they will understand how synergy is created to gain multiplied value that produces an experience. Qualitative data will be delivered from the administrated session to support the objective.

The end result will be that undergraduate Communication Design students can comprehend how to apply these new ideas to their own work for future employment and future clients. The addition of this multidisciplinary skill set would benefit any advertising agency or firm globally. The simulated model of educating, applying, and implementing sensorial facets within the chapters found in SEN5E will encourage students to build ideas differently and more broadly with technology and digital tools. Critical thinking and synthesis will be necessary as they are grouped with problem solving in order to define understanding. Students will move beyond traditional brand foundations (i.e. visual identity, associations, differentiation, etc.) and discover the

realization of the humanistic element that connects all facets of life globally—sensory cognition.

### Thesis Organization

This Thesis is organized into eight sections. The Preliminary Research section will outline brand foundations and offer a background into sensory branding as well as outline how this phenomenon is being used to build brands. The Statement of the Problem section will discuss primary issues associated with traditional visual dominance, the design industry's accustomed perspectives and undergraduate student issues. This leads to the Brand and the Five Senses section; an individual overview of how each sense plays a role in shaping brand experiences. In the Sensory Branding and Experience section, the role of synergy and creation of experience are discussed. Experience then leads to meaning, and meaning into consumer behavior. The Methods section discusses the design and development of the online tool, SEN5E. Its role, naming, process and usage in this study will be examined. The tool's experience and data will be discussed in the Results section. Qualitative results gathered from the administrated session given to students will be discussed to determine its fulfillment of the objective. The Conclusion section will discuss how the results will tailor insights into future development of sensorial applications and how these outcomes can derive into several avenues of future research.

## CHAPTER II

### PRELIMINARY RESEARCH

Brand. It is everywhere. It is constantly evolving, continually shifting, engaging audiences into conversations, and transcending across global boundaries. It connects a user to a product and a business to a service. Not only is differentiation important, it is a requirement—audiences are simply attracted to it. Just as the human eye selects apart differences in line, shape, and color, brand is able to do the same from one to another (Neumeier, 2006, pp. 34 - 35). In turn, all brands, as different as they are from each other, are all based upon one delivery, the creation of perceived value. Value derives from a brand's benefits, resulting in increased loyalty.

#### Brand Foundations

The understanding of brand is complex, but it's existence and functional purpose is simple. Marty Neumeier, author of *The Brand Gap* (2006) summarizes this effectively in stating “A brand is a person's gut feeling about a product, service, or company” (pg. 2). It is based on emotional ties that create rational conclusions about one's willingness to create a relationship with a product, service, or company (Neumeier, 2006, pg. 2). The relationships that are formed between an entity and consumer stretch globally, and every brand will feel different for every consumer.

As of today, brand marketing has shifted its appeal from what something does to how something makes one feel—and most importantly into defining an individual buyer's beliefs (Neumeier, 2006, pg. 38). This shift in consumer mindset has aided in the

technological efforts that allow brands to live with personified definitions (Neumeier, 2006, p. 38). Just as people are remembered by reputation, personality and outward characteristics, so are brands—personified. Personification of a given brand is essential since a brand itself “is the expression of an offering's personality and ideally, it unites all components of a company's offering into an easily recognizable form” (Diller, Rhea & Shedroff, 2008, pg. 94). This is especially true for the brands consumers cannot live without, known as charismatic brands. Nike, Apple, and Starbucks are examples of companies with products and services that “people believe there is no substitute” (Neumeier, 2006, pg. 19).

The result of effective branding foundations derives from a product’s benefits to the hands of a consumer that establishes equity and value. The phenomenon of brand itself stems to be “connecting good strategy with good creativity” (Neumeier, 2006, pg. 149). Brand is part of the human experience—but this extends beyond visual observations and dives into the visceral cognition of the consumer.

### Background of Sensory Branding

Senses have been tools for discovery since the inception of time. The world would not be the same without sensorial stimulation. It is a navigational system, an olfactory guide to understanding, and a directional translator to one’s surroundings. It is possible to have one sense define an experience, but even more powerful when combinations begin to occur. The notion that each element needs the other to form communication defines the notion of cross-synergy theory (Lindstrom, 2005, pg. 127). Cross-synergy theory is rooted in the idea that “principals that are involved in traditional brand communications apply when building a multisensory brand platform” (Lindstrom, 2005, pg. 127).

Examples of cross-synergy theory are evident in the relationship between sound and taste, touch and smell; the potential for combinations of these senses in specific environments are left to the imagination. A message's depth is not measured by its size or sound, it is "supported by appealing to several senses" through the creation of synergy. With an increase in positive synergy, a connection can become stronger between brand and consumer (Lindstrom, 2005, pg. 103). Therefore, cross-synergy theory is the basis—the linking agent for synergy between the senses.

The role of the visual problem solver has changed throughout the decades, and will continue to change. Daniel Pink, author of *A Whole New Mind: Why Right-Brainers Will Rule the Future*, has defined the current era as the Conceptual Age, in which abundance and automation have given rise to the creative thinker (2006, pp. 48 - 49). "The main characters now are the creator and the empathizer" (Pink, 2006, pg. 49). Due to affluence, technology, and globalization, society as a whole has moved from an Agricultural Age, to an Industrial Age, to an Information Age, leading to the Conceptual Age (pp. 48 - 49). The result is that humans have "progressed from a society of farmers to a society of factory workers to a society of knowledge workers" (Pink, 2006, pg. 50). Let the harvest begin.

Technology is now able to carry out the sensory experience more than ever in the Conceptual Age through means that were not easily obtainable a decade ago. With this shift in contemporary media it is viable that reality must exceed consumers' perception (Lindstrom, 2005, pg. 108). The benefits must outweigh the expectations and the activation of brand recognition must take place by engaging the senses.

### *Brand recognition*

The Sequence of Cognition is composed of recognition of shape, color, and language of a brand identity. The brain acknowledges and reads forms and shapes first, then color to identify differentiation, and language to complete the process (Wheeler, 2006, pg. 9). Just as color, form or language can be connected to a brand identity instantly, so can sensory elements such as sound, taste, touch, or smell. A greater level of recognition can be achieved when two of these sensory elements are combined, rather than relying on the Sequence of Cognition alone.

Interestingly enough, a brand's "strong sensory uniqueness is distinct enough for users to recognize without the usual logo or typography cues" (Lindstrom, 2005, p. 31). Sound can trigger a link from a brand to a consumer without needing a visual. Intel's specific tone, based upon four simple notes, is an immediate recall for anyone in the technology and consumer electronics market. The majority of the population has never seen an Intel chip, however they recognize what Intel products sound like. Coca-Cola may be notorious worldwide for using the color red, in addition to utilizing a distinctive bottle that has a unique form with consumers since 1915 (Lindstrom, 2005, pp. 39 - 40). In fact, according to Steve Heyer, preceding chief operating officer, Coca-Cola is more than taste, "Coca-Cola is a feeling" (Lindstrom, 2010, pg. 154). This is because "brands tune their sensory profiles to evoke emotions that best fit the brand's positioning" (Lindstrom, 2005, pg. 138). Can quality be achieved through sound? Can a certain smell evoke technology? Certainly, a brand's position and recognition can come to fruition through touch, taste, smell, and sound rather than relying on sight alone.

### *Benefits of Sensory Branding*

Sensory branding's purpose is to provide "a systematic integration of the senses" in communication, products, and services. This stimulates a user's imagination, intensifies the product and bonds consumers to the brand (Lindstrom, 2005, pg. 103). Technology has become brand's new partner in aiding in the continual change of perception as new devices are introduced to cater to specific audiences' different needs. Sensory branding can be experienced in a subway, on a plane and in the palm of a user's hand. Five-dimensional branding is an intensified brand experience—one that cannot be gained by the amplification of one individual sense. Brand experiences connect audiences to what they want most—meaning. Consumers, therefore, are essentially the living brand personified. Brands that lack sensory appeal lack depth in connecting human extensions into the product or service. The advantages of creating a brand based upon sensory appeal are unique, memorable, instantaneous, and support human-centered design.

### *Creation of Synergy*

Senses that bond with one another not only create a heightened state of cognition for an audience, they also become catalysts in the creation of synergy. Synergy is key for senses to interact and bond with consumers, creating memorable experiences.

Elements that remain separate from one another are independent from the creation of one idea, one goal. Synergy occurs when multiple elements integrate with one another, creating a new union, a new form that is constructed of these individual parts creating a sum. The sum thus becomes the catalyst for progression, the multiplied value that is gained by a consumer. Sensory brand building offers "an opportunity to confirm and enhance the brand promise" while creating "a strong emotional bond with consumers"

(Lindstrom, 2005, pg. 163). A single sensorial element living alone in a physical space will only exist as far as its capability extends. It is not until the sensorial element combines with another to create accumulative value, tapping into brand foundations, creating an experience utilizing multiple intersections. One plus one does not become two, it becomes eleven (Neumeier, 2006, pp. 70 - 71).

Unlike the 1950s and 1960s, value is not measured by how low a price can drop, value is now measured by the emotional bond created between consumer and product (Lindstrom, 2005, pg. 169). This traditional premise has shifted; therefore the approach of building a unique brand in the 21<sup>st</sup> century should also.

#### Utilizing Sensory Cognition to Build Brands

With the increase of continual information in combination with the speed of change, consumers become candidates toward using sensorial appeal (Banerjee, para. 3). The engagement of sensory comprehension is powerful and most of all—instant. Consumers live in the Age of Instant, self-created to achieve a get-it-now lifestyle motivated by instant messaging and instant gratification, all at the press of a fingertip. Touch activates action. Smell triggers recognition. Taste creates differentiation. Audible tones identify a visual within the mind's eye.

Instantaneous emotion plays a role in how users perceive brands through the senses by building associations and recognition from a parent brand to its extensions. Lindstrom (2005) declares “Increasingly consumers are expressing a more multidimensional desire incorporating a complete sensory approach” for the brands with which they come in contact (pg. 68). In fact, “Sensory branding might very well prove to be the link that binds the mother brand to her extensions” (pg. 130). In a world hinged

upon value, convenience, and speed, immediacy is key. Sensorial immediacy combined with value is a breeding ground for synergy's endless possibilities.

## **CHAPTER III**

### **STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM**

Humans have acquired and developed sensory faculties since the beginning of time; it is part of the chemical construct creating distinction and individuality between tangible objects, spatial relationships, and physical environments every second, every day. The notion that brands, like humans, can be personified through increasing sensory awareness and viability is not a new discovery, however it is also not popularly applied where it is needed most. 83 percent of advertising seen on a daily basis is supported by sight alone. The remaining seventeen percent is divided among four other senses that compete for an equal share of the experience, decreasing the potential of synergy (Daye & VanAuken, 2010, para. 2). According to a study by Interbrand, less than ten percent of the world's top two hundred brands are utilizing sensory branding to their advantage (Lindstrom, 2005, pg. 205). This appalling fact reflects the poor results of a brand's usage and neglected possibilities of their sensory building potential. Moreover, designers and marketers do not realize there is even an opportunity for this potential to occur with the brands they service. Since the inception, placing strategic emphasis on communication lies at the responsibility of designers and marketers. The absence of sensorial elements in the market leaves people with limited or no options beyond traditional visual dominance (Lindstrom, 2005, pg. 83).

#### **Why Sensory Branding?**

Contemporary society has arrived at the Digital Age, where abundance of messaging, overcrowded visuals, and advertising consistently competes for a consumer's

attention continuously. It is estimated that consumers encounter 3,000 advertisements a day (“Advertising: It’s Everywhere,” n.d., para. 1). The onslaught of content is nothing short of information assault and is attributed to the fast-paced lifestyle and protocol that contemporary society demands of performances. Can sensory branding become the needed solution that distinguishes between society’s overwhelming visuals? How can sensorial brand experiences redefine, decrease, or balance the statistical number of overabundant messaging?

Just as memories hold individual value, the same remains true for sensory perceptions and remembrance (Lindstrom, 2002, para. 8). Consumers will engage with and remember a brand by how it feels, sounds, tastes, and smells. The effectiveness of this occurring frequently is still to be discovered. “Brands are hovering in the wings, as an audience of our highly receptive senses sits in a darkened theater, anticipating a marketing show that hasn’t begun” (Lindstrom, 2002, para. 8). For many brands, the potential to create sensorial appeal is truly an anticipated element, an underutilized resource that is currently nonexistent.

#### Traditional Visual Dominance

“Cognitive scientists estimate that more than half the brain is dedicated to the visual system” therefore the value of creating strong visuals is paramount for efficient and immediate understanding (Neumeier, 2006, pg. 88). Despite this fact, brand recognition is also gained through comprehension of sensory awareness, and to that end, more so than relying on visuals alone. Traditional practice in design toward emphasizing strong visuals is evident. Designers should strive to communicate with all five senses

rather than relying on the most frequently used—the visual sense, the brain’s favorite sense.

The rise of the visual and decrease of the four remaining senses is nothing short of a growing epidemic founded upon traditional methodology within Design and Advertising. Consumers have grown accustomed to experiencing only sight and sound when viewing commercials from their living room television versus within a tailored environment of that brand itself. The investment of a brand is spent on the traditional assemblage of visuals. This alone decreases the significance that can be placed on the other four remaining senses.

Dollars and sense can be best described as “dollars and cents” upon the effectiveness of media placement for a client in regards to return and investments (Framus, 2009, para 3). The funds that are invested in commercials based on visual and sound enabled media are estimated to be “between one hundred fifty million and two billion” (Framus, 2009, para. 6). These commercials do not provide an increased amount of financial return due to the audio that does not link back to brand values to enhance the overall visual effect (Framus, 2009, paras. 6 - 8). What marketing experts and designers failed to remember is that sensory branding creates “an opportunity to confirm and enhance the brand promise and create a strong emotional bond with consumers” (Lindstrom, 2005, pg. 163). The absence of this notion creates a missed opportunity to place synergy into the brand itself. Failing to produce these results only decreases the overall outcome of a brand’s sensorial composition and the end result is just another attractive commercial—another large visual on a large television screen.

Until brand values can be gained through sensory relationships within a consumer’s perspective, the limitations, as well as the outcomes, are currently predetermined. If products on the Internet could be smelled by simple mouse clicks or

tasting could be sampled by what is on a television screen, the possibilities for branding on a sensory level could be endless. Despite the limitations of modern technology, the growth of emerging new methods of innovation in commercials may lead to better ways to channel brand-building dollars. This would minimize the massive onslaught of the visual itself to better balance sensorial relationships. Above all, consumers are not yet equipped with the knowledge “to handle this phenomenon of total sensory appeal” at its fullest capacity at all times (Lindstrom, 2002, para. 8). It is only through technology that these sensorial endeavors are to become reality. However, a foundational comprehension of how senses affect brands needs to be gained first by the makers of communicative media. It begins with communicators of tomorrow, today’s designers.

#### Increased Graduates, Decreased Competencies

Each year, an estimated 40,000 Visual Communication Design students graduate and flood the United States job market. This number is also compounded with the amount of entry-level opportunities being outweighed by the amount of graduates (Heller, 2005, para. 1). Many students do not embrace the concept of branding until they are out of school, working with clients in a design or advertising environment. According to brand strategist Marty Neumeier of Neutron, (2006) “Branding is being used more as a service term than an actual application that extends beyond a client’s logo, color system, or company typeface” (Neumeier, 2006, pg. 1). The comprehension of this fact becomes integrated into the design practice for many designers once they are outside of the classroom. The roots of a student’s misconception of the subject of Brand can be traced back to a collegiate environment where less emphasis may have been placed on the definitions and depths of branding in general, much less how to do so through the senses.

Designers are responsible for creating visual spaces and effective communication to designated audiences. How can they decrease the amount of emphasis placed on sight in order to allow the other senses to increase to create a balance? Design students immersed in art and design education are the next generation of visual communicators. How can integrating the fundamental elements of human sensory organization become a primary objective of practice in brand building before departing to an industry based on continual technological and global change? It can begin at the collegiate level. When students are equipped to approach branding with a sensory-based strategy—one that combines more strategic knowledge—they are prepared to handle the complexities within designing meaningful brand experiences.

In a world embracing interactivity and visual messages, consumers are assaulted with a daunting amount of information daily. Communication lives within this overcrowded space, therefore “a new vision with an emotional basis is required” to increase communication as a whole (Lindstrom, 2005, pg. 3). Multisensory integration into brands is essential for development and differentiation, creating individual experiences tailored toward specific audiences. The responsibility lies upon marketers and designers to find new ways to differentiate brands from competitors in order to continue forward (Lindstrom, 2005, p. 138). “Companies miss the point if they think of experiences simply in terms of multisensory expressions of brand, looping in previously underserved senses like sound and touch” (Diller, Rhea, & Shedroff, 2008, pg. 21). The creation of synergy is needed in the conversation between brands and consumers. Brands are missing the opportunities, design education is missing the curriculum, and students are missing the comprehension of sensorial expansion.

## CHAPTER IV

### BRAND AND THE FIVE SENSES

Sensory cognition shapes the way brands are perceived by sight, touch, taste, smell, and sound. As brands combine associations and differentiation, brands that are constructing sensory cognition into their experiences are paving the road for a very exciting, expansive frontier. Contemporary culture thrives in an economy based upon experience “in which people shift passive consumption into active participation” (Brown, 2009, p. 110). In addition, the experience must be equal or outweigh the product itself to meet the demanding expectations of the consumer. However, no matter how elaborate the sensory experience is, it is a company’s “common sense that matters most” when utilizing sensory cognition to elevate the experience (Clegg, 2006, para. 18).

Branding through the senses moves beyond just feeling and emotions, instead they become a physical embodiment of the brand. Sensory synergy is replacing traditional repetition of visual dominance (Lindstrom, 2005, pg. 17). The following exposition discusses a closer investigation of the application and utilization of sensory branding to elevate consumer experiences today.

#### Visual

“The sense we rely on mostly is sight” (Neumeier, 2006, pg. 34). The visual system categorizes results based upon prior experiences, making it easy to discern

differences. Once realization of a visual is gained, associations toward meaning begin (Neumeier, 2006, pg. 34 - 35). Since such a large emphasis has traditionally relied on the visual, sight must do its diligence to introduce the consumer's world to the consumer.

Coca-Cola is a brand known worldwide for its visual dominance displayed with the combination of two colors: red and white. The visual identity of Coca-Cola is employed consistently through its core colors and distinguishable typography. The result creates recognition that has stood the test of time (Lindstrom, 2005, pg. 20).

Children who cannot even speak complete sentences can base the visual of the golden arches of McDonalds to an association of value. "A giant yellow arch indicates the proximity of cheeseburgers" (Tischler, 2005, para. 8). Not only has this American fast food chain created value for children across the globe, their audience has learned their first words when the golden arches are seen, "Happy Meal."

Despite the fact that sight dominates the majority of an audience's sensory receptions, it does not outweigh touch, taste, smell, and sound in importance. In fact, the visual sense needs to be minimized in order for synergy to be created. It is in many ways the gatekeeper, however the key lies buried within the other senses' capabilities when brought to the surface.

### Touch

The idea of using touch as a means to create functionality has moved beyond a trend, it has become secondary nature in how consumers communicate. Apple's acclaimed iPod, iPhone, and iPad are not just successful products, but simplistic examples of how users are gravitating toward the incorporation and utilization of touch as a functional means for communication.

When did touch become the navigational proponent? Within the last five years, the cellular telephone industry has received a boost in profitability and popularity. Nokia pioneered more user-friendly navigation to consumers by introducing an icon-based system, creating a new language upon its own. With each purchase, the language and usability of Nokia's interface became substantially rooted in the behavior of its' audience (Lindstrom, 2005, pg. 36). "Navigation is one of the most powerful ways for a brand to bond with the consumer" because it mimics the way the brain follows an action for a reaction (Lindstrom, 2005, pg. 107). An increase in sustainable profit sharing among other cellular telephone brands rapidly shifted when a sleek, lightweight product based upon touch was revealed—Apple's iPhone.

Color and the materials used in the manufacturing process does not determine the level of quality, instead Apple relies on the functional attributes of a basic human capability—touch. Despite the urging necessity for humans to stay connected at all times, the sensation and need for control is utilized by touch alone. One small touch immediately connects the user to a restaurant via an application to reserve dinner, discover traffic conditions while talking to their spouse, and review incoming emails simultaneously. Touch becomes a productive, multitasking, self-gratifying experience instantly.

The iPhone was only the beginning for the sensation of touch to take force among technology users. Apple extended this control to consumers by introducing finger gestures. These simplistic gestures turn into definable actions that give instruction to computers and technological devices. One motion on a track pad opens a new application whereas, placing two fingers and dragging downward scrolls through live pages.

Functionality and touch are among the collective research application designers consider when producing unique solutions that maintain productivity. Intelligence, control and convenience lie in the fingertips of the consumer.

Ford Motor Company has transformed the driving experience and increased the loyalty of new buyers in the development of its “signature interface elements” in all future vehicles (IDEO, n.d., para. 1). The result is a simplistic, quality-enhanced system based on touch that utilizes multiple screens, embraces Wi-Fi and web applications, and is based on Microsoft’s SYNC system. Ford is creating “memorable digital interactions” that indicate the accessibility and control of human-centered design within a contemporary vehicle traditionally used only for hauling and towing (IDEO, n.d., paras. 1-5).

It was touch that set the stage for alternative music group Atomic Tom one morning aboard a New York subway train. Equipped with only their cell phones and musical ambitions, Atomic Tom sang their hit song “Take Me Out” for a random audience using only musical applications on their iPhones. Their cell phones took on roles as a microphone, a guitar, a bass guitar, and a drum set rather than a calling device. The video of Atomic Tom aboard the New York subway gained popularity for the creative venture this group of musicians undertook, displaying the versatility of the Apple brand, and showing a global audience how touch navigation and creativity continues to influence the evolution of cellular phones in contemporary culture. Not to mention it was all recorded on an iPhone using nothing less than touch to create and upload the video (AtomicTomVEVO, 2010).

The idea of incorporating touch into daily functions such as education and productivity are now a reality. Microsoft's unveiling of Future Vision, a technological tool built upon convenience and a user's surroundings, shows how the future will be shaped by increased technology intertwined with daily functionality that stretches beyond the global spectrum. Mostly generated through touch navigation, the system is fully integrated through children's school to business advantages and the understanding of the world through screen functions that produce action.

(<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=g9JBSEBu2q8>). One thing that Microsoft failed to show was Apple's role in the development of Future Vision, consequently because Apple has been a competitive innovator of technology inspired by touch.

“How a brand feels has a lot to do with what sort of quality we attribute to the product” (Lindstrom, 2005, pg. 87). Habit and touch play a role together in which consumers are motivated by how a product in a specific category may, or should feel against other competitors (Lindstrom, 2005, pg. 35). Therefore, despite the fact that a new product within a category may be uniquely better, consumers will choose what is comfortable and memorable to them based upon habit rather than trying something foreign. The material of the cork of a wine bottle or the steering wheel of a car are representations of how tactile qualities shape the sensory attributes of the brand. In fact, “49 percent of consumers” are motivated toward potential purchasing decisions based upon how their hands feel on the steering wheel of a given car (Lindstrom, 2005, pg. 87). Brands of car manufacturers have “moved beyond stylish design and powerful engines in order to make the car a multisensory experience” (Lindstrom, 2005, pg. 93).

Coca-Cola's authenticity is rooted in its contour glass bottle form dating back to 1916 when it was first introduced and trademarked (The Coca Cola Company, n.d., para. 6). Touch becomes the catalyst for generating impressions that link the consumer to their childhood memories (Lindstrom, 2005, pg. 148). Coke, most commonly consumed in either a plastic bottle or aluminum can, has truly lost a potential appeal into what makes it "the real thing" (Lindstrom, 2005, pg. 148). In this case, "the real thing" is not as authentic as it once was.

Sony is currently working on the development of a mouse that feels the online space that the user points to by the delivery of "images, text and animation directly to the fingertips" (Lindstrom, 2005, pg. 199). Manufacturers of LCD televisions are now building models with touch panels. This allows users to "feel" the brand in much of the manner of the direction cellular phones have ventured, yet "giving the screen a tactile quality" (Lindstrom, 2005, pg. 200).

Beyond digital prevalence, a recent study conducted by Millward Brown proves that an increased emotional value is placed upon viewers when paper material versus digital media is held. Interestingly enough, users responded more emotionally when presented advertisements on paper versus seeing it digitally (Neuromarketing, 2010, paras. 1 - 4). Advertising online can carry a multitude of advantages such as animation or video, although a stark reality of human nature is that digital ads cannot be tangibly touched. Until users can smell and touch what is on a computer screen, this distance will remain divided between these two outlets.

## Taste

Just as sight and touch can activate brand recognition, so can taste. Even though taste may not be a frontrunner of sensory appeal when compared to sight, touch, smell, or sound, its purposes of sensory definition are rooted in the brands willing to take the leap into positioning what is already their key benefits. This is mainly due to many large food brands not knowing that sensory branding can elevate their benefits and brand experience, producing a much larger idea beyond the taste of their product. A small majority of sensory pioneers in the food category are setting the stage for future expansion and popularity.

Kellogg's has discovered the distinctive relationship between taste and an audible crunch, enabling the brand to increase the sensory perceptions with consumers along with their established visual, smell, and texture of their cereal products (Lindstrom, 2005, pg. 12). Consumers eating this specific label of cereal may not know that they are tied to the sensorial components of Kellogg's, but their taste buds are.

Colgate, the toothpaste giant, has patented their specific taste of their product. Although their toothpaste is the only product line to have their distinct taste, Colgate has not ventured into applying this specific sense into their other line of products, thus missing a sensorial opportunity (Lindstrom, 2005, pg. 30). Colgate's "strong sensory uniqueness is distinct enough for users to recognize without the usual logo or typography cues" (Lindstrom, 2005, pg. 31).

Coca-Cola's distinctive flavor is savored worldwide. It has traveled more distance in taste than any global brand. Coca-Cola's specific taste is branded with distinctive ingredients that produce loyalty, satisfying thirst that establishes a tribe stretching

intercontinental boundaries. Beyond the uniqueness of Coca-Cola, Lindstrom (2005) quotes Steve Heyer, former Chief Operating Officer for Coca-Cola, stating “Coca-Cola is a feeling” (pg. 154).

The possibilities in the future are wide open for taste to popularize its sensory awareness, mostly due to the small amount of brands that are utilizing taste’s strengths as a proponent for brand activation.

### Smell

Since “taste and smell are closely related” synergy can begin to work immediately, unifying an experience (Lindstrom, 2005, pg. 29). Chances are that something will taste just as good as it smells. Despite these similarities, the olfactory system “is estimated to be 10,000 times more sensitive than taste” (Lindstrom, 2005, pg. 29). That monumental number is also contender to the dominating popularity of sight because “of all the senses, smell is the most persuasive” and therefore, most marketable (Lindstrom, 2005, pg. 83). According to Lindstrom, (2005) “Dr. Trygg Engen of Brown University conducted studies that contradict earlier findings about the predominance of vision, and concludes that our ability to recognize scents and odors is much greater than our ability to recall what we have seen” (pg. 97). Despite the fact that 83 percent of sensory experience goes directly to vision, this fact confirms the importance that smell places upon brand perception.

Various supermarkets in Northern Europe have connected pipelines from the interiors of bakeries to the exterior walls to carry the aroma of fresh bread to greet consumers upon arrival (Daye & VanAuken, 2010, para. 3). The sound a specific food item makes when being eaten is also of major importance, both to consumers and brand

makers. The food industry will continue to focus on designing the smell of the product and the sound of the packaging when preparing strategic sensorial choices (Lindstrom, 2005, pg. 200).

Starbucks is reclaiming the desired smell consumers should be greeted with upon arrival. The company plans to “replace manual espresso makers” with the automated Mastrena that will produce consistency and quality with every cup (Dooley, 2008, paras. 1-4). The Mastrena is also “seven inches shorter than the current manual machines” allowing baristas to smile and communicate with the purchaser, increasing the level of comfort between worker and consumer within the establishment (Dooley, 2008, para. 6). Coffee shops in general understand the power of olfactory marketing. The smell of fresh ground coffee is indeed the differentiator and benefit of a given brand or business. Starbucks understood this premise when they officially removed breakfast from their menu altogether. The reasoning behind the departure of their egg and cheese sandwiches was due to the fact that the smell competed with their legendary aroma of fresh roasted coffee within the environment of the restaurant (Neuromarketing, 2008, para. 1).

Technology has now made it possible for brands to “own” their own fragrance by producing distinct, unique smells that attribute to identification for the consumer (Lindstrom, 2005, pg. 99). This extends from household goods to cars. P&G’s Fairy dishwashing liquid has revamped the ingredients within its product, transforming the mundane task of washing dishes “into a sensuous indulgence” (Clegg, 2006, para. 9). The reason behind this fact is that there is a 40 percent improvement in mood when a fragrance taps into a person’s memories recounting happiness (Lindstrom, 2005, pg. 101). It certainly worked in Nissan’s case when the car giant studied how scent could

alleviate boredom by creating a distinctive aroma that is manufactured into their vehicles. By evoking the senses, Nissan has created a proactive step in increasing safety for drivers through sensory stimulation (Banerjee, 2011, para. 6).

What does technology smell like? When consumers entered Samsung's concept store that is located in New York, they were greeted with a new olfactory sensation permeating from the retail store that referenced fragrances of Calvin Klein or CK One. Customers noted that the store itself evoked a sense of freshness, stimulation and relaxation at the same time. Samsung's signature fragrance embodies the smell of emerging technology in the fast paced environment it is positioned within (Tischler, 2005, paras. 1 - 6). Brands that are perceptive to the idea of sensory branding will elevate their brand experience and tie a definitive scent with their offering. This scent will later recall value for a consumer through associations. Just as an identity can be recognized by sight, a brand must be distinguished by scent as well.

“Scents evoke images, sensations, memories, and associations” (Lindstrom, 2005, pg. 92). Consumer arousal is created on the conscious and unconscious level through settings of mood created by music and fragrance. Sound and smell deliver stimuli that tie directly to the brain's memory centers (Equal Strategy, 2008, para. 3). Brand-makers should not underestimate the power that scent has on the human mind, as that becomes the catalyst to forming emotions based upon perception.

### Sound

As the future progresses and organic interactivity becomes just as defined and experienced beyond traditional print, sound will play a defining role in the creation of brand comprehension. “As bandwidth increases, sound is quickly becoming the next

frontier for brand identity” (Lindstrom, 2005, pg. 116). Sound defines the mood of the consumer in conjunction with their activities and experiences with the brand.

“Music makes new memories, evokes the past, and instantaneously can transport you to another place” (Lindstrom, 2005, pg. 74). Brands like McDonalds, Nokia, NBC, MGM, Microsoft and TMobile have established success by creating audible formats that connect with the listener’s emotions and create connections (Framus, 2009, paras. 9 - 12).

The focus on visual and sound have been featured as a repetitive duet for many brands, especially in terms of commercial promotion versus the audible outcomes by the brands themselves. The natural sounds that are created by a specific brand create more of an impact than sounds created in commercials. According to Lindstrom, (2005)

“emphasis is placed on the crunch we hear and feel in our mouths rather than the sound effects we hear in commercials” (pg. 12). Interactions with sound also extend away from the commercial media and into the product itself, as in hearing the signature Harley Davidson sound while driving or opening a can of Pringles chips (Framus, 2009, para. 17). Can a brand own its sound in the natural world?

The innumerable amounts of ambient sounds are not as defined and owned as created sounds manufactured by brands. In contrast direct sounds in nature, “Intel has built a powerful global brand that is meaningful to consumers even though they cannot see it or hold it in the hands” (Brown, 2009, p. 139). Intel does this through sound and repetition of specific four syllable tones that ties back to the brand value. Not one consumer has ever “seen, heard or touched” this product, however Intel has built its brand strategy upon a definite sound its global audience can recognize (Lindstrom, 2005, pg. 81). Amazingly, Intel’s identity becomes an audible source before the visual is even seen.

Framus notes that price and product features are great as benefits to the consumer's eye, but "Apple's start-up sound, the Yahoo yodel and the THX signature reach us on a much deeper level" (Framus, 2009, para. 16). They create the way consumers feel even without a visual. They define the brand's values and benefits in an audible format.

"The ring tone revolution is upon us" and brand is immediately recognizable in less than 30 seconds via mobile device (Wheeler, 2006, p. 116). It is objective and subliminal at the same time. Nokia's popularity has increased, and it's not due to impressive visual promotion. On the contrary, it is the tune of the cellular phone that has become an identifier for its audience. According to Lindstrom (2005) "a cell phone rings around nine times a day. The average length of the ring is about eight seconds, leaving a person exposed to more than seven hours of ring tones a year" (pg. 78). This figure can be multiplied for all of the other cellular manufacturing giants including Apple, Samsung, LG, Motorola and HTC.

Acura has developed a "branded car sound" that "purposefully transmits a low-frequency vibration to the door itself" upon closing the car door of the TSX model. This sets Acura apart from other competitors and also defines a sound that creates an audible sense of quality (Lindstrom, 2005, pg. 75). Looking closer, the Acura TSX's sound was crafted from "a multidisciplinary team consisting of sound engineers, product designers, and psychologists" that confirmed the enhancement of "trust, safety, and luxury" into the benefits of the brand (Lindstrom, 2005, pp. 75 - 76). Amazingly enough, those benefits only needed to be expressed with a single action, a single sound.

“As smell is connected to memory, so sound is connected to mood” (Lindstrom, 2005, pg. 21). Disney transports the audience by creating environments “designed to capture the hearts of children and waken the child within each adult” (Lindstrom, 2005, pg. 74). This is shown through the experience of playing specific sounds throughout targeted areas of the theme park to tie in a universal concept of travel and discovery within the user experience.

“Howard Schultz built Starbucks into a global brand on the insight that ambience is as important to coffee drinkers as caffeine” (Brown, 2009, p. 182). By using space and environment, not to mention the sound of carefully selected music with the combination of fresh grounds, Starbucks has a definable, yet desirable brand experience based on expected value. This value builds retention that drives demand through consistency within the environment in any Starbucks visited nationally.

As Anita Wheeler, author of *Designing Brand Identity* (2006), states “Music can transcend cultures and language” (Wheeler, 2006, p. 117). This fact is very interesting since humankind is united through color, form and consequently—sound. Sound is powerful and clearly provides cues to the personality of a brand (Lindstrom, 2005, pg. 77). These audible cues signal a response to a consumer, either arranged organically by nature or created by a company, producing action.

Understanding a brand’s sensory appeal extends beyond the consumer and begins with the brand. It is up to brands themselves to make the decision to promote their sensorial attributes, these can either be organically or by means of creation. Consumers may remember the label, shape or color of a product, however, their experiences will always outweigh materialistic touch points and transcend consumers into a heightened

state of awareness.

The need for an experience must outweigh the monotonous, ritualistic habits gained by consumers. Active participation takes place in restaurants, retail stores, grocery aisles, and other physical environments. It is up to the idea makers (i.e. designers, advertisers, marketers, etcetera.) to bring these experiences to fruition, introducing new concepts to be gained through creative exploration. “Emotions matter in marketing because they can help explain why people behave as they do and why they remain loyal to a brand” (Lindstrom, 2005, pg. 154). Loyalty attributes to the longevity of value. Without value, a brand is just another lost product on the shelf, an old solution based on a diminished existence. Sensory cognition may be the bonding agent needed for human centered design. When the needs, wants, and limitations are thoughtfully planned in the design process and experienced sensorially, an action will force a reaction.

## CHAPTER V

### SENSORY BRANDING AND EXPERIENCE

Beyond brand associations, differentiation, and identification lies brand experience. A brand experience defines the nature of a brand's offerings and value, and many times the experience becomes the value. The combinations of a brand's benefits with experiences create an instantaneous connection between consumer and brand, establishing value. The experiences that occur at conceptual theme parks are congruent to the participatory tactics embedded within retail environments; even present in the palm of a user's hand. It is the experience that bonds memory to value.

At its core, "design is about delivering a satisfying experience" and "creating a multipolar experience in which everyone has the opportunity to participate in the conversation" (Brown, 2009, pg. 192). These conversations occur globally, all at momentous speeds that connect users to brands. As Tim Brown, author of *Change by Design* and President of IDEO eloquently stated, (2009) "When we sit on an airplane, shop for groceries, or check into a hotel, we are not only carrying out a function but having an experience" (Brown, 2009, pg. 110).

#### The Formation of Synergy Through the Senses

Every brand experience is assigned specific senses to help cater to the cognitive aspects of curiosity and discovery. It is human nature. The aspiration to gain understanding of new environments via sensorial stimuli is shared by consumers across the spectrum. Since "functional benefits alone, it seems, are no longer enough to capture

customers or create the brand distinction to retain them” it is the experience itself driving consumers to brands, creating retention (Brown, 2009, p. 112).

Cross-synergy theory denotes the idea that each sensorial element needs the other to exist in order to form increased communication (Lindstrom, 2005, pg. 127). Like this multiplied form of communication, experience is dependent upon human interaction. Without human interaction, experience does not exist. Through multiplied value, synergy unites the user with an experience, creating instant gratification. Technology has the ability to outweigh tradition, forcing these experiences to be conjured with the combination of sound, taste, touch and smell against visual reliance.

When synergy is formulated through the senses, experience is created. Experience develops meaning, which in turn establishes behavior. The behavior of a consumer is characterized by their understanding of the experience. This full circle premise encompasses how branding through the senses is imperative to future expansion of not only brands, but also humankind.

### Creation of Experience

Designers are categorized for designing advertisements, products, experiences, and many other nouns. Tim Brown quotes Bill Moggride, a fellow founder of IDEO stating (2009) “We are designing verbs, not nouns” (pg. 134). This reminder serves purpose for designers to design verbs that propose action for people, places and objects. This is the basis of interaction design, the understanding of how an audience should encounter an experience. Verbs function for nouns.

It begins with an idea—the creation of experience. Experience can be defined “simply as the sensation of change” (Diller, Rhea & Shedroff, 2008, pg. 18). Ideas for a

created experience may sound great at infancy, however if they are not carried through correctly, they are merely empty notions catering to a superficial premise. “For an idea to become an experience, it must be implemented with the same care in which it is conceived” (Brown, 2009, p. 124). Ideas that become experiences are crafted with emotion serving as a basis to influence and substantialize a concept.

More than an emotional connection—brand is driven by experience. Experiences are manufactured by the environments created by brands—and they do it well. Niketown, Victoria's Secret, and Central Market are some of the leaders of expectant experiential brands (Lindstrom, 2005, pg. 74). Apple would have never become what it is today without deciding to take its' products out of computer retailers and into their own stores, customized to compliment their products and services in a unique way. It is now a model that many brands desire to follow (Diller, Rhea & Shedroff, 2008, pg. 96). Sensory experiences are shown everywhere, from the ambience of retail stores contributing to touch, to the satisfaction of eating a certain brand of chocolate, experiential planes are created (Kumar, 2010, paras. 1 - 8).

“If Starbucks was just a cup of coffee rather than an experience, it would not be so easy to stretch the brand across geographies, locations, and products” (Lindstrom, 2005, pg. 158)? When most restaurants built their interiors to get customers in and out, Starbucks built the opposite. They want customers to spend the day in their environment and cater to the audience’s lifestyle specifically. Brands that understand the importance of creating an appeal for differentiation will continue to build retention with their audience, and in some cases a new language—Starbuckian.

Through building an experiential space, offering differentiation and increasing loyalty through consistency, the benefits become personified and connect with an audience on a meaningful level. Brands that have discovered this notion have found ways to turn their benefits into an experience and not a product.

Experience is the communicating distance between consumer and product. It unites a brand's capabilities into a definable instance driven by participation. It is purveyor of meaning, the verb for the noun, and the reaction to the action.

### Experience and the Creation of Meaning

Experiences can be manufactured in the environments created by brands. The rush of energy walking along a sidewalk in downtown Las Vegas, hearing Harley Davidson's unique sound upon starting the engine, and Google's ever-present uncomplicated user interface, yet robust search capabilities are just a few examples of experiences created by brands (Diller, Rhea & Shedroff, pg. 19). It could be seen as though consumers do not possess too much control over the experiences they encounter, since brand makers create the majority of these experiences. Rightfully so, if brands can control the experience, they can control their intended meaning. On the contrary to this notion, Lindstrom states (2005) "In the future brands will increasingly be owned by the consumer" versus brand makers (pg. 4). This is due to the consumers' need for meaning in the products they affiliate with and purchase.

"Emotional brands not only support who we are, but also provide a tangible means of transformation into what we aspire to be" (Lockwood, 2010, p. 108).

Experiences are different from a service of a company. In contrast to receiving benefits, experiences are "staged to be memorial, personal, and sensorial" (Lockwood, 2010, pg.

233). Experience and meaning create emotional connections with an audience and is the deciding factor of the brand's success with an audience. Consumers are continually in search for meaning in a world where usability becomes prominent and consumers' demands rise beyond convenience and low prices.

The idea of experiencing a product or service is nothing new, however the idea of utilizing sensory branding within multiple dimensions is. The idea of creating an involvement or act is most common across sensory endeavors (Kumar, 2010, paras 4 - 5). Every consumer has an individual level of involvement with a brand. However, what if these involvements could be streamlined to create a unified experience across an entire audience, forcing a repetitive experience and meaning, thus repetitive value?

Brown (2009) mentions Whole Foods Market's success at creating participation as the motivator of experience. The importance to experience is present at every Whole Foods Market through the relationship of applying the brand's meaning to one's life via "fresh produce displays, the free samples" to the importance of "healthy living" (p. 116).

Starbucks possesses elements that compose a "multisensory orchestration" that creates a unique, memorable and desired experience that will retain consumer loyalty (Lindstrom, 2005, p. 157 - 158). Even though the audience all may appear different in reasoning for being at a given location, it is the ambience and guaranteed environment they crave more than the taste of coffee, creating importance. One would argue that the environment and overall experience within Starbucks is more effective than the product itself. With subdued lighting, imperfect wooden chairs, and subdued background music Starbucks creates a less intimidating experience than an overabundance of stainless steel and sharp edges (Lindstrom, 2005, pg. 158).

Financial institutions have also ventured into the realm of sensory brand building. By serving a warm smile, a firm handshake and a hot cup of coffee, the feeling of customer loyalty is gained through humanistic characteristics. Banks are not as clinical as they were a decade ago, and are succeeding in making “cozier, friendlier, lighter, more welcoming and more branded environments” for their customers (Lindstrom, 2005, pg. 202).

There are over 6 billion people sharing the planet, all sensory driven, all looking for meaningful experiences (Diller, Rhea & Shedroff, 2008, pg. 64). In the action to “consume experiences, not things” participants are able to create more meaning into their lives (Pink, 2006, pg. 92). “Brand becomes an important asset in differentiating the experience” (Diller, Rhea & Shedroff, pg. 95). Brand experiences connect audiences to what they want most—meaning. Tribes, the target audience of a brand, are the personification of understanding and exhibit the value and promise of an entity. Consumers, therefore, are essentially the living brand personified.

### Meaning and Behavior

Meaning is the predication of behavior, since importance upon significance encourages an action or impulse that creates change. “When a company can evoke meaning through its products or services, it is tapping in to what people value most in life” (Diller, Rhea & Shedroff, 2008, pg. 29). The need for acceptance is prevalent in contemporary society since “everyone, everywhere feels the need to belong” (Lindstrom, 2005, pg. 178). Without meaning, experiences are just presentations without substance. In the case for sensorial branding, the absence of meaning leaves a void where synergy’s response is left shadowed by a larger entity. This is equivalent to the apathy displayed in

the current design industry toward understanding and utilizing sensorial insertions more frequently, and more effectively.

Consumers may be shopping for the best bargain, a well-known brand, or even a heightened status, however Neumeier argues that, “audiences want more than logic” (2006, pg. 78). Brand experiences are desired and meaning is required.

A reaction turns to an action “when people's experiences match their expectations” thus “their loyalty increases” (Neumeier, 2006, pg. 136). Beyond the brand experience lies the need for significance, the inward message that an audience searches for. Significance is value, which in turn drives behavior. It is why people “bond with products, services, and brands based on their experience of them and how they evoke meaning into their lives” (Diller, Rhea & Shedroff, 2008, pg. 29).

The brands an audience associates with become a defining tool in the purveyance of priority. They become part of the audience and how they construct meaning within their lives (Diller, Rhea & Shedroff, 2008, pg. 25). The actions of an audience rely on their instinctual needs to adapt to the world around them. In many cases, behaviors motivated by brands are more of a psychological purchase than a physical, tangible procurement. “In countries with advanced consumer markets where products and services are already designed to meet sophisticated emotional or identity needs, customers are seeking even more dimension” (Diller, Rhea & Shedroff, 2008, pg. 13).

Meaning is made by the intersection of significance and the need for acceptance. Every tribe member that supports any brand, from Nascar to Nordstrom's, is searching for meaning behind the brand experience. Making meaning is important to reach new

levels of cognitive states in any environment where brand purveyance is needed to create an action. The measure of the meaning will determine the measure of the behavior of a consumer.

### Behavior Changes and Adaptation

Consumers live and thrive in the Conceptual Age where the sum of speed and convenience equals immediacy. Immediate gratification for an audience is a necessity since increasing speeds continue to appease the demand for change. In many cases, the activities of a consumer on a mobile device are no different from being in a physical space—it is virtually realistic in nature.

The world is “witnessing the emergence of the interactive consumer” (Lindstrom, 2005, pg. 196). Just as one would define sight, this new audience is accustomed to viewing the globe through a computer screen. Communicative actions, once driven by arms and legs, begin now with a mouse and track pad. The quality of communication is now tailored to become “shorter, quicker and more direct” (Lindstrom, 2005, pg. 196). Clicking, dragging and tapping via finger gestures is common knowledge for communication from infants to aged adults. Immediacy has reshaped the way society communicates.

Never before has there been a time as now, in the 21<sup>st</sup> century, for sensory branding to take a leading role in digital adaptation and consumer behavior. Navigational structures and the devices that are communicated upon will continue to change as technology continues to support evolution. The core of communication itself is behavior, since actions speak louder than words (Turner, 2011, paras. 2 - 3). Active participation is

adaptation in an ever-changing landscape of media, creatively defining purpose for the individuals next in line.

### Neuromarketing to Global Audiences

Even though brand experiences are contained by individuals in their personal and local settings, they are connected to a larger, global endeavor. According to contemporary statistics, there is an estimated 6,500 languages in the world today (Bignell, 2009, para. 5). This may seem like a startling fact to many, but even with all of these languages, there are only five senses. Five unique senses can transcend cultural boundaries. Five inheritable senses that every human being has can overcome communicative boundaries, uniting ideation and comprehension without even needing language's assistance. Just as too much emphasis is placed upon the visual sense, a larger emphasis is placed upon language to reach global audiences. Sensory branding can be the bridge that unites these challenges, pushing them beyond a language and tapping into basic human understanding.

## CHAPTER VI

### METHODS

The creation of SEN5E was developed to serve the purpose of educating undergraduate Communication Design students on the importance of sensorial relationships in building successful brands. The method was designed in the form of a website that would introduce topics in a simple and meaningful way while embracing interactivity and producing valid data.

#### Simulation and Experience Based Learning Models

Simulation is not a new learning method, however it is effective for educating beyond traditional standards (Prensky, 2007, para. 7). The way technology intertwines with simulation can always be new, ever changing and essential for introducing new topics to support a hypothesis. The benefits of using simulation are simple, it “requires no other technology than the ability to think” and problem solve (Prensky, 2007, para. 7). Simulations are not physically intensive, only mental and take place one’s mind, via hypothetical scenarios (Prensky, 2007, para. 7).

Simulation aids in the understanding of complex issues (Prensky, 2007, para. 9). The process allows an individual to model complex behaviors while extracting data upon which to base assessments. Students are able to learn about a complicated subject in a controlled setting, “make a wide variety of assumptions and changes and see the results (Prensky, 2007, para. 9). All undergraduate students are aware of computer tests and simulation models through prior experiences in various educational systems.

To this degree, simulations are popularized every day in many professions ranging from city planners, financial traders, weather forecasters, military planners, doctors, ecologists, engineers, and scientists (Prensky, 2007, para. 10). Why not designers?

If “simulation is real-world experience” why not appeal to real-world experiences where it matters most—inside a classroom (Prensky, 2007, para. 10).

#### SEN5E, The Online Tool

The project came into fruition from an independent study on the intersection and influence of sound and brand visuals. The emphasis of prior research focused on how a viewer can immediately recognize a given brand based on sound and a typeform from a generated brand visual. Since sensory cognition is part of the human experience and ubiquitous brands are within an audience’s physical and mental space, an exploratory study into the intersections of brand and sensory cognition began.

During initial research, one question became the salient objective upon which to base data. This question being: how does one apply this notion of sensory branding into a tool that is easily adaptable, self-regulated and easily digestible? Since brand is complex, the tool needed to be simple, direct and target a collegiate audience’s attention. It had to be interesting and educational. The ending objective of the online tool was to educate undergraduate design students of the role of sensorial relationships in brand development and how to use these multidimensional attributes to build brand experiences.

The result was SEN5E. The goal of SEN5E was to create a simulated based learning tool that would move beyond traditional learning models where generic test taking through question answering produces myopic results. Instead, the tool’s answers will produce qualitative results, supporting the objective of the research.

The end result gives Communication Design students an opportunity to transform one-dimensional design into brand activation by understanding the role of five-dimensional brand building through sensory cognition in an effective and comprehensive manner.

### *Naming*

Once a direction for the online tool was decided, the process of naming the tool took effect. Through independent brainstorming sessions and wordlist generation, many names came to the forefront for consideration. Some of the options were Simu5ence, MakeSen5e, Experi5ence, BrandSen5or, and SEN5E (see Figure 1).

**SIMUSENSE**  
**MAKESENSE**  
**EXPERISENSE**  
**BRANDSENSOR**  
**SENSE**

*Figure 1. Introductory Naming Options*

From the names created, the idea of substituting a numerical “5” for the character “S” became of interest for its efficient read and direct correlation to the human sensory

system. The interjected numerical “5” was placed in the same options from Figure 1. With the addition of the numerical “5”, the identity began to take on a new form, as shown in Figure 2.

**SIMUSEN5E**  
**MAKESEN5E**  
**EXPERISEN5E**  
**BRANDSEN5OR**  
**SEN5E**

*Figure 2. Refined Introductory Naming Options*

SEN5E then became the name of the tool for its' easily understandable and direct underlining concept. As shown in Figure 3, this was then intertwined with a typography treatment, thus creating the one word trademark. The domain name ‘designwithsen5e.com’ was then the universal resource locator (url) for online visibility. The domain name is action-oriented, implying that a double meaning within the name. This being that designers should use ‘sense’ in combination with ‘sensory’ aspects of the name itself.

The logo for SEN5E features the word "SEN5E" in a bold, sans-serif typeface. The letters "S", "E", "N", and "E" are rendered in a dark grey color, while the numeral "5" is highlighted in a vibrant red. The characters are closely spaced, creating a cohesive and modern brand identity.

*Figure 3. SEN5E Identity*

### *Designing*

The design of SEN5E was to be engaging, yet clean in order to let the content of the tool make an impact versus overcomplicate the design. Since the subject matter needed to be easily digestible, so should the design. The design of the frames matched the typeface direction of the identity, organized with subtle hints of visual facts, interwoven with one or two paragraphs per frame for light and easy accessible reading.

In addition to the overall design, the decreasing of the visual was introduced to increase the awareness of the content, (as seen in Figure 4 and Figure 5) localizing all the communication solely on the typography alone. The minimizing of the visual also supports the argument running prevalent throughout the research and objective of SEN5E; therefore it was also important that the tool's design decisions followed this same formula from a literal perspective.

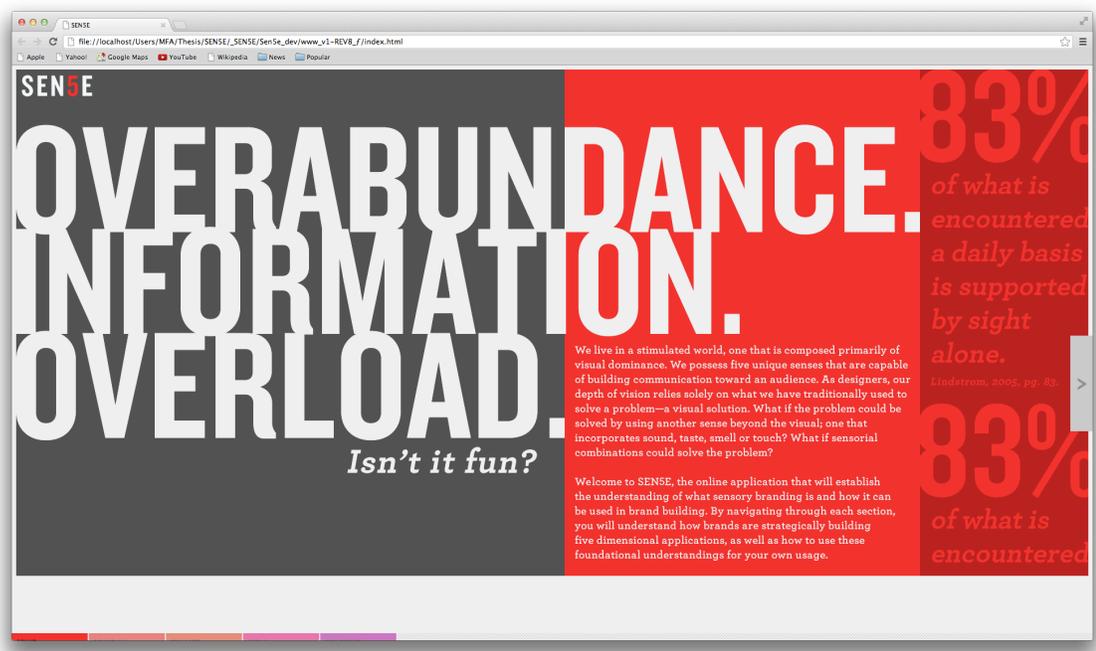


Figure 4. SENSE Part One User Interface Design

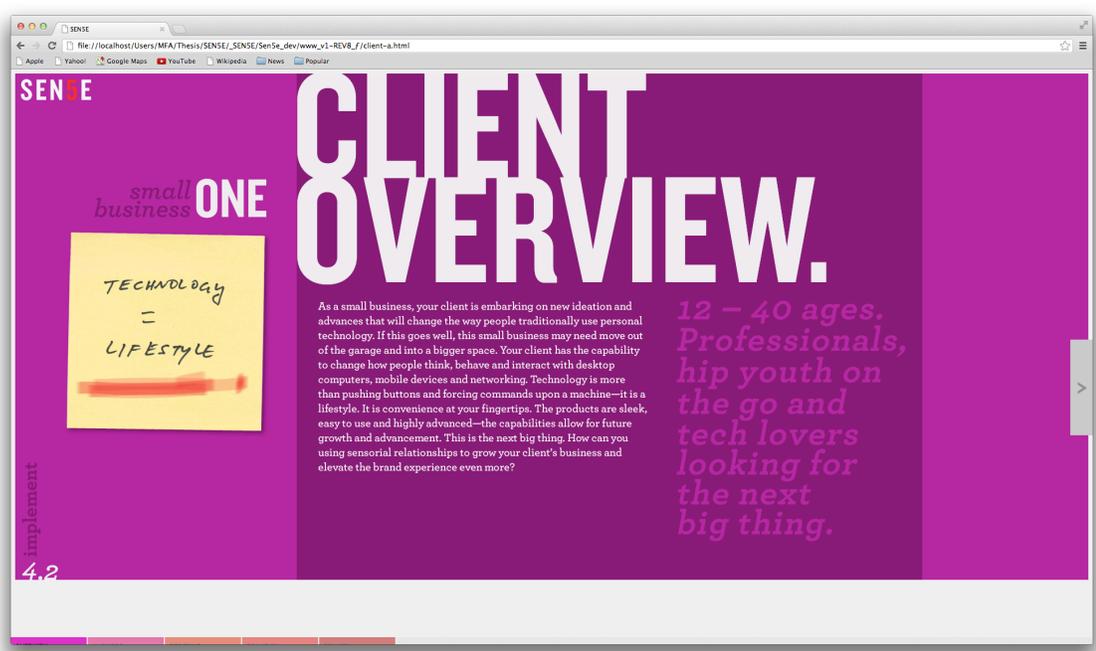


Figure 5. SENSE Part Two User Interface Design

*Process*

The structure of SEN5E is divided into two main parts. The first part is categorized into five sections composed of an Introduction, Brand 101, Educate, Apply and Implement. Within each section of Part One, a series of five frames are designed for the student to read and garner quick understanding of the topic. The tool is written in first person to appeal to the viewer on a personal level, inviting them to embrace the information. After nineteen frames of reading, the student encounters the Implement section. It is at this point that the individual has a choice to pick a small business client to work with and transform. By selecting options that only range by industry, not specific names, students go into this process with the intent to work with a small business needing sensory development. Here, the tool splits from its' linear nature and goes into five different directions, all dependent on which of the five clients are chosen.

Part Two of the tool's process is expanded from this point and the simulation begins. Students are confronted with a series of five questions outlining their recommendations for sensory progression for their chosen client, their chosen brand as shown in Figure 6 below. The objective is to find relationships of synergy that are created between multiple senses. The evaluation of sensory branding begins by identifying the stronger sensory elements, how they affect other senses, and the overall concept of building the sensory brand being constructed.

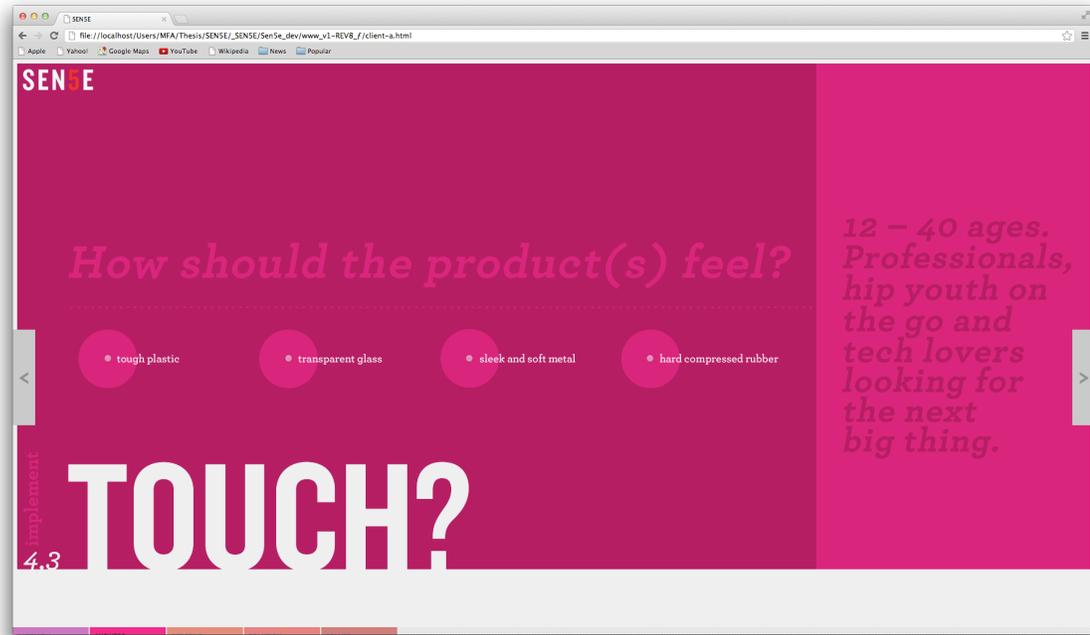


Figure 6. SENSE Part Two Sensory Set Questions User Interface Design

After the initial round of recommendations are answered, the student reaches a climatic point where they realize the small business they were working with was in fact a much larger, charismatic brand. Once this is realized, the student should have a startling realization that their work for their once imagined small business was indeed a larger, self-identified global brand. The underlining principle to be discovered by the student is that sensory brand building foundations that apply to global brands can also apply to small businesses. Would the sensory touch points that were assigned to a small business also be applied in the same way to the newly recognized global brand? Why or why not?

The user is then confronted with the same series of questions as before, however this time they are aware of the large brand they are now working with versus their initial thoughts. They answer the same simulatory questions again, this time approaching their answers from the standpoint of their discovered client. The results are based on how their

answers compare and contrast from the original set of questions, and why they differed. Once students reach the end of the online tool, they are confronted with a series of parenthetical questions that produce qualitative data. This qualitative data is emailed to the administrator to find themes and relationships between the answers scored. From the data received, the administrator will be able to graph results and discuss findings that derive from SENSE, thus supporting the objective.

### *Site Map*

As discussed, the tool is composed of two main parts, Part One and Part Two. Within Part One, there are four main sections, Brand 101, Educate, Apply, and Implement. Within each of these sections are five individual informational frames. Part Two is composed of the selection of a client from five choices. Within each client selection is a Client Overview that leads to the first set of five Sensory Questions. Once the first set is answered, the Redefinition area is loaded in which a student realizes who their unidentified, small business client actually is. The second set of Sensory Questions are given, leading to an area of five Qualitative Questions that takes the user to the Ending.

The numerical number of “five” is repeated throughout in the number of frames and sections, to enhance the description of “five” in a human’s five senses. When the sitemap is viewed as a whole, as shown in Figure 7, these repetitions are clearly shown. The repetition of this number is on the subconscious level, but ties back into the idea and design of the SENSE identity itself.

Part One: Introduction

Brand 101

Frame 1: What is Brand?

Frame 2: How do consumers interact with brands?

Frame 3: Associations

Frame 4: Differentiation

Frame 5: Human Experience

Educate

Frame 1: Touch

Frame 2: Smell

Frame 3: Taste

Frame 4: Sound

Frame 5: Sight

Apply

Frame 1: Synergy

Frame 2: Experience

Frame 3: Meaning

Frame 4: Behavior

Frame 5: Going global

Implement

Part Two: Client Overview

Client A: Apple

Client B: Mini Cooper

Client C: Starbucks

Client D: Converse

Client E: Whole Foods

Answers: Sensory Questions Set 1

Redefine: Culmination Area

Solution: Sensory Question Set 2

Solved: Qualitative Questions

Ending

*Figure 7. SEN5E Site Map*

*Development*

SEN5E is developed with the integration of multiple web languages of HTML, CSS, JavaScript, PHP and jQuery. HTML, Hyper Text Mark Up Language, is the backbone language of the site. It holds the content comprised of visuals and text within a structure defined by CSS, a formatting system composed of Cascading Style Sheets. Cascading

Style Sheets target the way elements align within the HTML, allowing for positioning and scalability between users on smaller or larger screens. JavaScript allows for many of the functional applications to occur, including any animation and rollovers experienced. jQuery is a complex library of many JavaScript functions characterized in a simpler way when loaded programmatically. Since jQuery is in many ways replacing Flash media, it was imperative that the site be built with more web 2.0 standards in language, functionality and usability. Since data submitted from students needed to be transmitted into one string of information via email, database support was not needed. The form generated code within the HTML and was sent via PHP data submission scripts. Javascript form validators were implemented for each client, within each question. This would ensure that all answers were selected before the data was submitted in order to capture all unique, and comprehensive data. Each web language served a different role in the process, design and development of SEN5E.

The website was created for usage on desktop computers only, since mobile and tablet users were not needed for the research experience. If visited, a message would appear informing the user that a mobile or tablet site was currently not available. A mobile site would not format and function the same as a desktop version, therefore, if a mobile friendly version were to be built, a mobile application would make more relevancy for future development of SEN5E. This could also evolve into a tablet application for SEN5E versus a scaled down version of the site that would lack scalability of content and congruency for device testing. For the needs of the research, and to keep the experience of the site and data relative, the design was geared for desktop online experiences in a classroom only, in a controlled environment all on identical machines for

accurate measuring purposes. The undergraduate students that first used the online tool were also testing subjects for future research on this topic and the technique of strategies that was built into development and functionality.

### *Brand 101*

Within Part One, the first section is Brand 101. Brand 101 is an overview that explores the psychology of brand and defines brand. Since many of the students being tested are at the junior and senior level, they have an existing knowledge of brand foundations and brand development. The five frames in the Brand 101 section is meant to be a quick refresher to the fact finding and information collecting at a moment's glance.

### *Educate*

The Educate section is an outline of each human sense and how they each relate to brand communications. It gives prominence to how touch, taste, smell, hearing, and sight affect an individual's thoughts, feelings and actions. The Educate section sets up the argument by defining the context and purpose of the research with definitions and question asking. Through easy to understand case studies, the reader begins to understand how the physical world around them has affected their brand affiliations in positive or negative ways. Students conclude the section wondering why more brands today are not utilizing their true sensory potential to help elevate their experience. The idea of brand is complex, understanding basic human senses are simple. Many of the characteristics described in the case studies are often overlooked, yet become new topics open for analysis.

### *Apply*

The definition of brand can be summarized in a simplistic definition, sometimes its' complexities are often overlooked. This also reigns true of how senses and brand

foundations are combined. The Apply section focuses on the science behind sensory branding. The importance of experience is explained, and how this integrates into meaning and consumer behavior. The argument is also firmly reintroduced to the student, which gives relevance to a problem they will soon be able to solve. Topics in synergy, experience, meaning, and behavior are outlined and become the summation of all prior information encountered. The student is encouraged to reexamine how much emphasis is placed on the visual sense and to take an active role in allowing audiences to become part of a sensorial conversation. This serves as sensory preparation before they are emerged in the simulation qualities of the tool itself and learn how to apply strategy to prior knowledge.

### *Implement*

The implementation section greets students with five sticky notes, being the five client choices. Students are only shown descriptive, short headlines for each client, next to the headline directing them to pick a small business to work. The clients, as appeared as small businesses, are Whole Foods Market (health), Mini Cooper (automotive), Starbucks (lifestyle), Converse (apparel), and Apply (technology). Where these charismatic brands identify fully after the first set of Sensory Questions, students are then taken into a Client Overview for their selected small business and the process begins. Students venture into this process with the notion that their efforts are for a small business but soon realize their work has equaled a large, easily recognizable brand. If the same questions were to be asked again, would the answers be the same? Why or why not?

Should sensory brand building efforts be any different in global brands than small businesses? Can these same principals be applied to any brand of any size in any cultural

setting? If senses truly combine all cultures into one human category, the possibilities are literally at one's fingertips.

Through a simulated experience, SENSE explores the topics, possibilities, and outcomes for sensory branding. Not only is it an introduction into uncharted territory for undergraduate students, it expands one's capabilities for future, realistic brand building scenarios. Students participating in SENSE will leave with understanding of how sensorial relationships in brand development endeavors create definable experiences. The educational outcomes produce meaningful results through interactivity, much as the devices that our target audience has to connect themselves to the brands they own and use sensorially.

## **CHAPTER VII**

### **RESULTS**

The research extended into the classroom, as undergraduate Communication Design students were challenged to participate in SEN5E. The comprehension of sensory branding's existence and importance to be gained, their findings recorded as data for analysis. The results stem from the online tool, which encompasses the research as an interactive whole as a simulatory learning module. The experience and results determined findings, as well as discovering the meaning behind them.

#### **Experience of SEN5E**

SEN5E was administered to undergraduate students on October 2, 2012. Professor William Meek, M.F.A. administered the test openly to a classroom of nineteen students all within a controlled environment within an academic setting. The classroom was essential since all nineteen operating systems were to be identical, and prove against any predetermined digital biases for experience. All Macintosh computers had congruent operating systems, as well as the same twenty seven-inch display screen, from which the design format of SEN5E had been designed. Each student was introduced to the background of sensory branding, and that SEN5E was a tool for the expansion of this idea. Students were then directed to [designwithsen5e.com](http://designwithsen5e.com) to begin the process. No time limit was ordered, however students were mindful that it would take an estimated thirty minutes to navigate through the site from beginning to end.

Google Analytics, an online tracking device that can be placed on websites to provide detailed reports on site usage, was added to the Main page, as well as all Client category pages for observation. Geolocation, browser usage, click rates, user behavior, and much more can be viewed after users visit a site to produce results. A screenshot of the Google Analytics Dashboard can be seen in Figure 8.

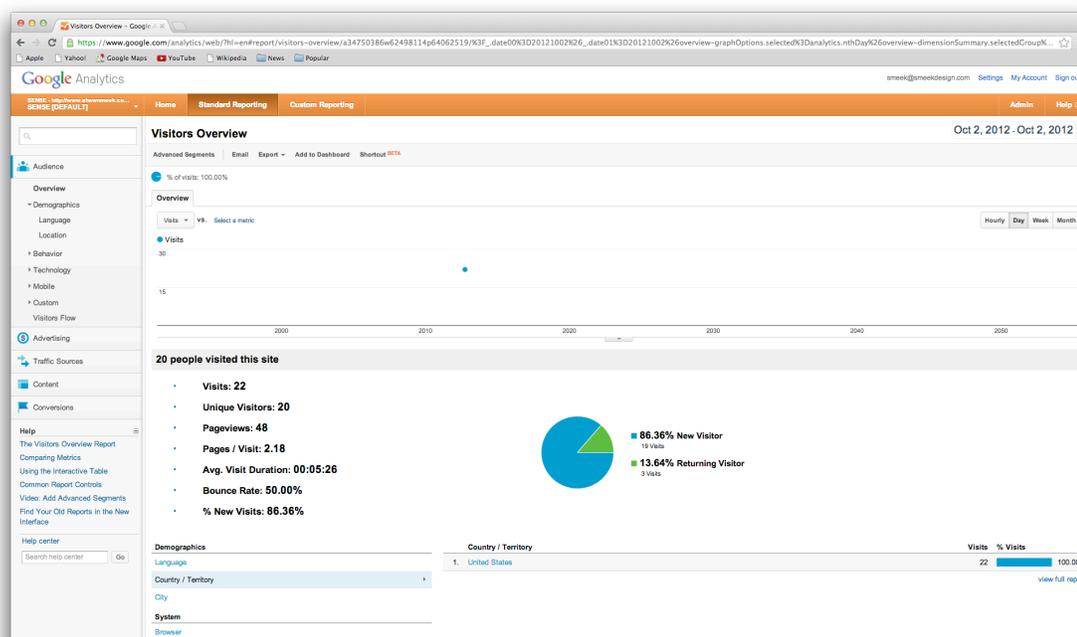
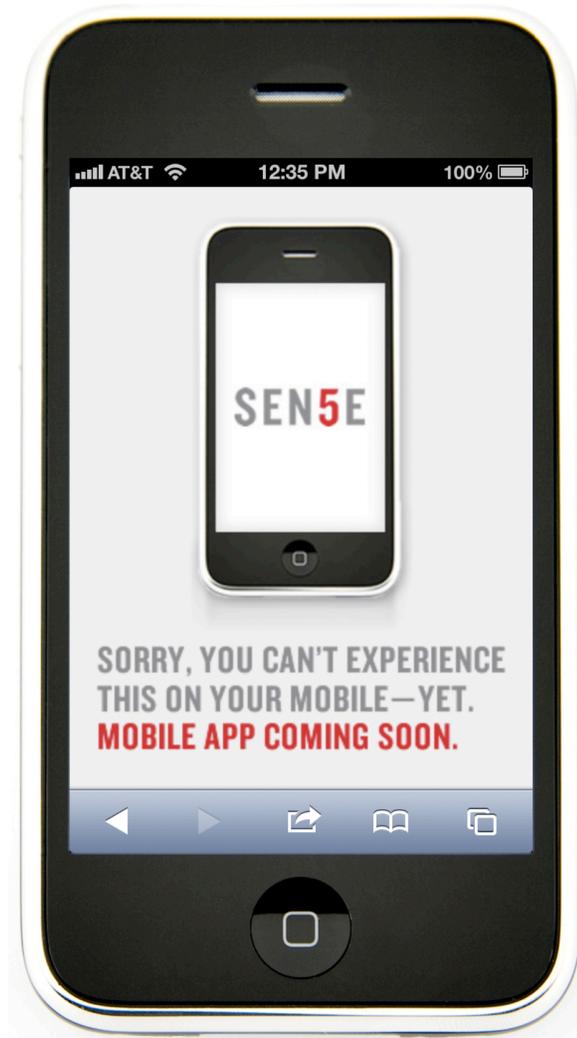


Figure 8. Google Analytics Dashboard, October 2, 2012

As reported on October 2, 2012, SEN5E had 22 visits. Within these 22 visits, 20 were unique users, meaning individuals from different machines and locations. A visit can be multiplied depending on the amount of times a user comes to a designated web page, however a unique visitor can only be assigned once to determine new versus returning visitors. The results also observed 86% of visitors were new and 14% were returning, meaning that a few students must have exited the site and returned for unknown reasons. All results determined that users were on congruent Macintosh operating systems using

browsers ranging from Firefox (68%), Chrome (27%), and Safari (5%). The fact that these contemporary browsers were used over a more dated browser (Internet Explorer or Netscape) supports a more successful online experience. The data also indicated that two students tried to access SEN5E on their cell phone, however were greeted with the message as shown in Figure 9, reformatting when turned in landscape or portrait mode.

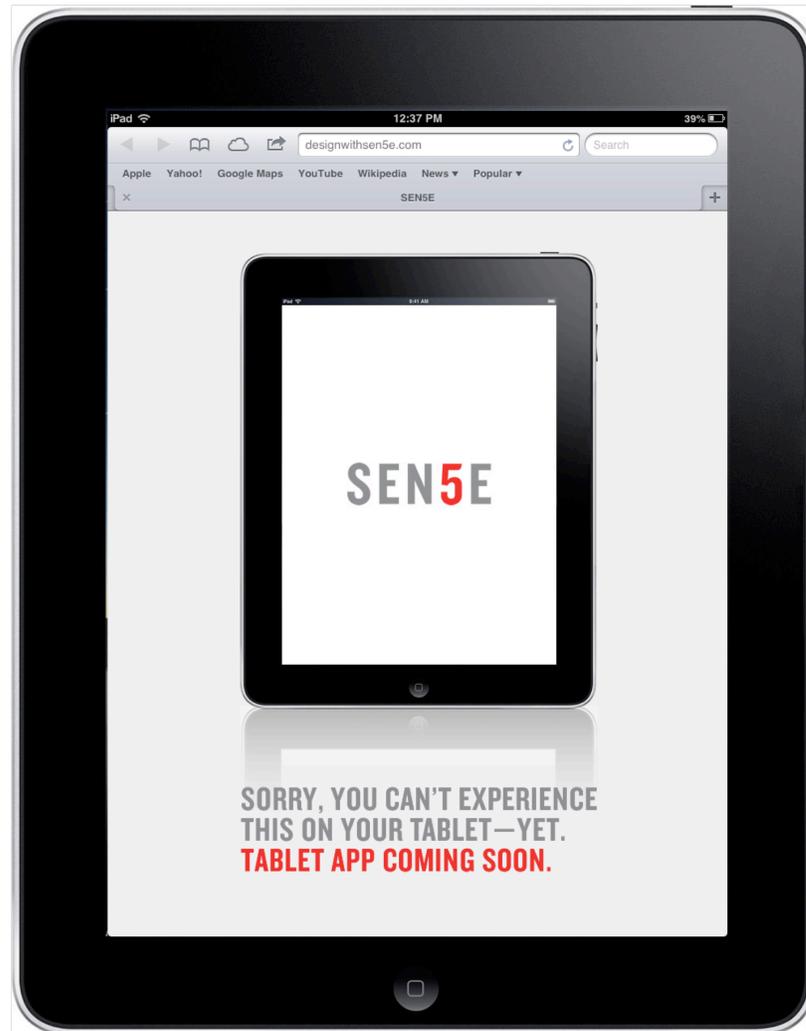


*Figure 9:* SEN5E Mobile Notification

The same would hold true if SEN5E was accessed on a tablet device, such as an iPad, shown in Figure 10. Upon future research, and for the sake of the capabilities of touch

that a tablet or mobile currently can undertake, applications would need to be developed for SEN5E for these devices versus a transformation of a desktop site to a mobile site.

The experience just would not be the same, thus the results.



*Figure 10.* SEN5E Tablet Notification

Congruency for experiencing SEN5E had to be relevant for all users, especially within the classroom environment within the University for equality among the results. In addition, it is notable to report that two different students tried to access the site via

mobile device during testing, though a twenty-seven inch monitor was available for use. Perhaps the immediacy of seeing the site at a smaller size was prerequisite for curiosity?

The final report noted that nineteen individual experiences were recorded throughout the websites' entirety at 601 - 1800 seconds. This denotes that indeed, students spent an estimated thirty minutes of time from beginning to end, confirming the hypothesis of time engagement. This is an example of conquered attention since a typical site is viewed only 10 to 20 seconds before clicking away to another destination.

Since Part One of SEN5E is linearly ordered, the visuals seen are congruent among all users. Beyond this point, frames begin to cater toward the specific client of choice as the student selects the small business to work with. Since each user chose a different client to work with, the results support the chosen direction within Part Two of SEN5E. The data table below serves evidence to what was chosen globally:

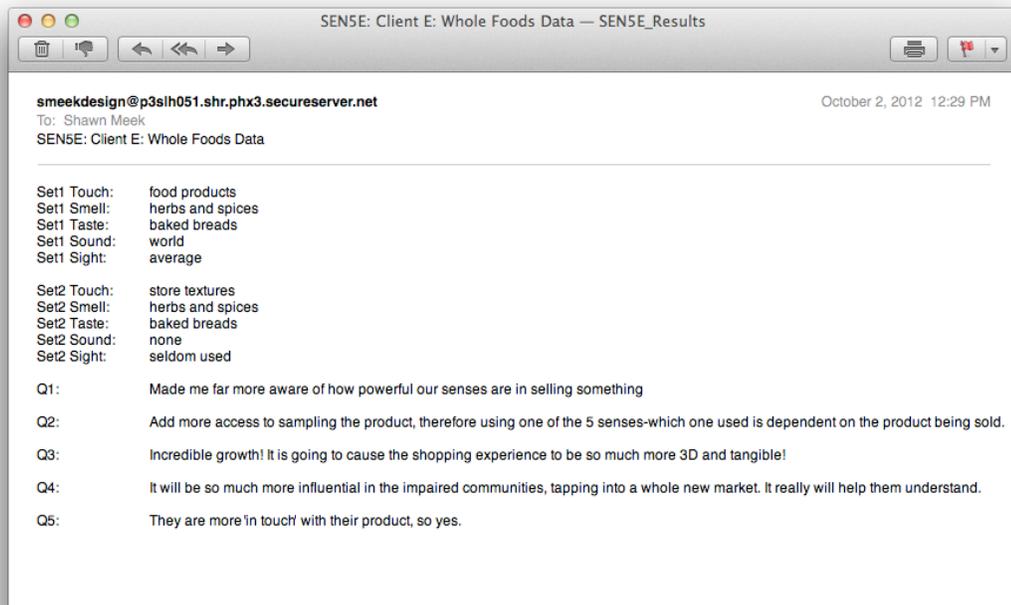
*Table 1. Client Selections*

<b>Industry</b>	<b>Client</b>	<b>User visits</b>
Technology	Apple	5
Automotive	Mini	2
Lifestyle	Starbucks	4
Apparel	Converse	3
Health	Whole Foods	7

It was observed that there were 21 visits for the total of five categorical clients, yet only 19 users partaking in the online tool. This can be attributed to the belief that 2 students had changed their direction midway through a specific client, going back to the Implement stage in order to discover what another option would take them to. From the 19 students engaged in the online functions of SEN5E, only 11 students submitted answers and completed the experience.

#### *Students' Responses to Sensory Questions*

Interesting patterns in data emerged from the results of the individual sets of questions. Students were tasked with going into the first set of Sensory Questions (Answer) with the thinking that all answers were sensory development questions for a small business. The realization that their responses were really for a charismatic brand was known when they reached Culmination Area (Redefine). Their answers were then challenged to be the same or change as they entered the same set of examination the second set of Sensory Questions (Solution). Figure 11 exhibits the generated data screen that was sent electronically via email for each submission from SEN5E.



*Figure 11.* SEN5E Data Example

In comparing answers, it is intriguing to see what options were the same, and which were different, client-to-client. On the contrary, attention is needed to be given when all answers end of matching from Sensory Questions 1 to Sensory Questions 2. The matching results have been documented in Table 2 below:

*Table 2.* Sensory Question Results Matching Comparison

<b>Student Answer Quantity</b>	<b>Total Matched</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
Students who answered the same for all	4	36%
Students who answered 4 of the same	1	9%
Students who answered 3 of the same	1	9%
Students who answered 2 of the same	4	36%

*Table 2. Continued*

Students who answered 1 of the same	1	9%
Students who answered different for all	0	0%

To take one step further, cross sections have been indicated client-to-client in Table 3 below:

*Table 3. Client Specific Sensory Question Results Comparison*

Client	Matching Answers from Sensory Set 1 and Sensory Set 2				
	5 matching	4 matching	3 matching	2 matching	1 matching
Apple	1	1		1	
Mini					
Starbucks	2			1	1
Converse	1				
Whole Foods			1	2	

The variables indicate action from Sensory Set 1 to Sensory Set 2. Even though health industry choosing students, Whole Foods, had the most visitors, the lifestyle category summarized by Starbucks had more submissions. Of the answers matched, 36%, an additional 36% were answers that held 2 of the same from each set. Answers matching four, three and one carried an individual 9% for each category. Not one student answered differently among all the answers, client to client.

### *Visualizing Meaning from Results*

The research concludes that there are two entirely different routes of data analysis from the results gathered, one that supports complete matching answers and one that sustains 20% of the answers being the same. Surely the questions themselves are objective, but the site subjective. The process linear, yet the results organic. What does this all mean?

If 36% of the students answered all of the questions as matching elements from Sensory Set 1 to Sensory Set 2, the following can then be concluded. This category of students are as follows:

1. The student holds the belief that a small business can have the same sensory model as a large business.
2. The student had preconceived brand associations in mind while they answered the questions from Set 1, thinking of established brands in correlation to the small business recommendations.
3. The student developed matching answers due to the education applied to their common knowledge of traditional branding studied in Part One.

On contrasting levels, if an opposing 36% of test results show only a maximum of 2 matching answers from Sensory Set 1 to Sensory Set 2, the following can be concluded:

1. The student holds the belief that a small business can have sensory developments as a large business, just different in how they are projected.
2. The student was able to experiment with sensory exploration more than students who matched all the answers. Students who had different answers allowed themselves to paint a very unique display for their client without being influenced by preconceived brand associations.

3. The student distinguished sensory strengths for the small business, while identifying different strengths for the larger entity.

Overall, both categories would agree that a small business can be just as effective sensorially as a large corporation or brand. Although a small business may have fewer funds to invest into an idea, they are able to maintain a more defined, targeted environment to enhance the audience and experience than a larger, if global, brand. The accountability of the experience is lessened by the small business due to the direct nature in which they are marketing.

### Qualitative Results

Beyond building an individual sensory brand through answering suggestions for each client, it was important to also gather perceptions from the students regarding their direct experience and new understandings from the online tool. All five simulatory clients would lead students to five final questions, in which they were requested to type parenthetical answers. The parenthetical data would also be sent along with the answers from Sensory Set 1 and 2 to the researcher's inbox. This new trajectory of data produces qualitative results that determine the success or failures of this research.

Each question was asked in order to heighten and narrow the research of SEN5E and the topic of sensory branding, as the data needed to be used for verification of the research. Thematic elements were pulled from the questions in order to validate the hypothesis and solidify the objective. Students were asked the following questions:

- 1) How has the challenge to employ your senses for the purpose of multi-sensory design changed your outlook of traditional branding?
- 2) How can brands utilize their true sensorial brand potential in consumers' daily

interactions?

- 3) How will sensory branding combined with the increasing speed of technology shape brand experiences in the future?
- 4) How can five-dimensional branding change the way visually or sound impaired consumers understand brand awareness?
- 5) Can a small business utilize sensory branding efforts better than a large business?

Explain how.

#### *Qualitative Response #1*

Students reported that SENSE opened new doors to expanding their design sensibilities. The responses indicated that they are more inclined to think about five-dimensional branding now versus traditional branding based upon sight alone. Sensory awareness was heightened in promoting a product, therefore, creating an experience. Experience comes from awareness. Awareness stems from the user's ability to perceive something different in their environment. SENSE and the idea of sensory branding has allowed an introduction of a new set of tools and options these undergraduates can consider upon departing into their careers.

#### *Qualitative Response #2*

Students were asked how brands could utilize their true sensorial brand potential in consumers' daily interactions. The results focused on the brands' responsibilities to understand how to better market themselves to consumers sensorially. Students agreed that more implementation was needed in the marketplace today, mostly this is due to many brands not realizing their true sensorial potential.

Students confirmed that sensorial experiences in the marketplace do not achieve a

mainstream level, and research may prove otherwise if it was to be so. Students comprehended how to align demand with a brand's benefits and then drive that message via sensory appeal. Placement of a brand combined with specific senses that help consumers identify with those sensations would be crucial.

The term synergy was used often, and this may have been a new definition for students to grasp. Synergy's importance was discussed through brands' need to understand atmospheres better, and how to design for an audience within a given environment. It has to be more about visual design. Smell, touch and taste need to be over sight and sound. Experiencing synergy between more senses versus relying on one alone to do all the communicating. Discovery and differentiation are ambassadors of this new frontier.

#### *Qualitative Response #3*

Students were asked how sensory branding, with the increasing speed of technology, shape brand experiences in the future. The results confirmed that interactivity would be increased by the consumer in terms of demand and engagement. Technology, combined with sensory experiences in the future will become more advanced and individualized. This would produce a heightened level of engagement particularly if brands are finding more seamless ways to integrate into user's lives.

#### *Qualitative Response #4*

Students were asked how sensory branding could change the way visually or sound impaired consumers understand brand awareness. A common thread among the answers reflected that despite blindness or deafness, an individual is still able to find ways to connect to brands. This could be due to limitations within the created atmosphere to

become heightened to allow touch and smell to conquer sight or sound. Recognition was able to be established, if not universally, despite any impairments.

In fact, sensory branding could become so influential it could open an entire new market, tapping into impairments and changing the way products feel in order to establish specific brand recognition. This confirmed that students viewed impairments to not be a discouragement or an obstacle in gaining a sensory brand experience, but a new problem for designers to address.

#### *Qualitative Response #5*

When students were asked if a small business could utilize sensory branding efforts better than a larger business, the majority answered yes. This was due to a uniformed response that a small business possesses a strength over a large business: defined community.

Target marketing and audience building does occur, mostly strategically, for a large brand, but students answered that small businesses would be able to place more emphasis on understanding a small segment versus a larger. With a defined market, a defined sensory appeal could be implemented easily and effectively. By focusing on a narrow focus of products and services from a small business, a defined brand experience could drive a consistency a larger brand would be trying hard to keep up.

This finding is especially interesting because at this point in time only large global brands have challenged the human senses in this way. Small businesses may be too busy looking at larger corporations for inspiration, when the answer may lie at their fingertips—literally.

### Conclusion of Results

The rise of the visual and traditional dominance was addressed through the introduction of applying sensory foundations to brand building strategies. This created awareness of the topic and students were challenged to think on a deeper level. Students realize that marketing dollars could be better spent on sensory explorations versus traditional mediums depending on the client and message to be conveyed. Students gained the knowledge of sensorial exploration and expansion as well as the importance of brand experiences, emotional ties, and the existence of synergy between combined senses. The objective, that undergraduate Communication Design students could develop strategic relevance for utilizing sensory cognition in brand building efforts, was met. The answers themselves prove to support the objective, thus validating the existence of SENSE as a classroom application of advanced education.

If the number of increased graduates entering an oversaturated field cannot be altered, perhaps the scope of their capabilities can. By increasing their awareness and skill set, schools could create designers that are more adaptable to contemporary industry specifics and redefine the standard of emerging designers from academic backgrounds.

## **CHAPTER VIII**

### **CONCLUSION**

As brand relevancy intersects with sensorial appeal, the future is limitless canvas of possibilities. Regardless to the fact that the world will continue to be filled with more advanced, consumer-related products, the way that humans navigate and interact with these goods will change. The clicking action from a fingertip will be changed to a blinking of an eye. Voice activation will be replaced with facial gestures. Printed magazines will animate and scroll with the dragging of a finger. Motion will one day replace “traditional” sensorial navigation, becoming the offspring of action related commands versus touch control navigation. New sensorial relationships will come to fruition as technology and brands intertwine, forcing consumers to become even more connected to their surroundings.

#### **Limitations of Research**

Some limitations that appeared in the research were involvement from the original 19 students participating in SEN5E. Despite the 11 students that submitted, no relative data support why the other 8 did not. As Google Analytics indicated, 8 other clients were visited, however those 8 did not submit fully. Was this due to the amount of time needed to complete the test or a lack of attention and effort? Was there a technological error in the testing environment, which prohibited these 8 from submitting? Results show that the students that participated and submitted data entered the same clients as those who did not submit, therefore it is difficult to believe that it was an error within the tool

itself. Since predictions of involvement and voluntary action from these students participating on October 2, 2012 could not be coerced, accountability for negligence cannot be assigned without proper cause. However, from the 11 results confirmed research was able to be conducted, data to be extracted, and conclusions to be created.

### Implications of the Research

Based on the research and outcomes of SENSE, behavior, engagement and understanding were observed. Behavior was observed in the willingness to experiment with an idea that was new to the student, especially in an academic setting where influences and design development are continuously progressing. Engagement in the thinking involved from a learning perspective of the importance of sensory development and the relevancy it promoted from a small business to large business comparison. An understanding in the data that was submitted electronically provides verification of the students' directives and confirms the objective of the research.

This study makes several significant theoretical contributions. First, the study provides insight into how visual dominance is observed and practiced by art and design schools, the design and advertising industry and audiences in the public sector. Secondly, the study challenged the capability of sensory cognition from a small to a large business. Human behavior and understanding of foundational senses to communicate an idea require nothing more than the art of being, versus monetary contributions for an advanced idea. Specifically, this research found that 72% of participants had matching belief systems in branding recommendations client-to-client, small business to large brand. This indicates that this large majority is of one likeness in sensory model beliefs, while the remaining 18% are much more diversified in creation. While the study did not specify race, ethnicity, or test specific human senses individually, the findings suggest that continued exploration in communicative behavior of a targeted audience and design

experience are necessities for the future. Services, products, environments are all part of the brand experience that can be brought to a holistic level of engagement through innovation by the original creator—the designer, the thinker.

#### Future Research

The research discussed in this body of work is only the beginning to a larger idea to be unfolded in new, extensive domain. If SEN5E was taken from an online space and into an application domain, the opportunities for awareness and adaptability would be increased. A congruent mobile and tablet application could be developed, forcing touch upon the navigation of the sensory tool. That experience of understanding sensory relevance could be heightened if experienced on a device that used touch for navigation commands. In an industry where device creation, and how those devices are controlled, is ever changing and evolving, the possibilities for future research extends as far technology enables.

Until users can smell, taste and touch what is on screen, screen based simulations will only benefit the visual and audible senses. Until virtual reality exceeds reality, the limitations for on-screen learning remains limited. It is only a matter of time until technology can support sensorial appeal to this degree, especially in learning brand building through virtual simulation, allowing the user to actually smell what scent would match a specific brand.

There will always be boundaries separating technology and information congruency. It is the job of the communicators, the critical thinkers, and the frontrunners of technology to challenge the current belief system and reintroduce how behavior is interwoven with technology. Users have only begun and the wide-open frontier is inviting.

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## VITA

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After graduating in 2005 with a B.F.A. in Communication Design from Texas State University-San Marcos, Shawn has worked in the Advertising and Design industry in San Antonio, Texas. Companies he worked for include Rio Design, Clockwork Studios, Causality and BradfordLawton. His work has been featured in publications such as *Graphis 100 Best Annual Reports 2012*, *Graphis New Talent Annual 2012*, *Logo Lounge 7*, *Logo Lounge 6*, *Logo Lounge Master Library: Shapes and Symbols*, *The New Big Book of Layouts*, *Logolicious*, and *CMYK*.

In 2009, Shawn taught at University of Incarnate Word and at Texas State as an Adjunct Instructor. He has continued to teach at Texas State as an Adjunct Instructor alongside working full-time, freelancing and pursuing a Master of Fine Arts degree from Texas State.

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