

The De Villiers Chocolate Experience

***A roll-out sensory retail branding
experience strategy***

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Declaration

In accordance with Regulation 4E of the General Regulations (G.57) for dissertations and theses, I declare that this thesis, which I hereby submit for the degree Master of Interior Architecture (Professional) at the University of Pretoria, is my own work and has not been previously submitted by me for a degree at this or any other tertiary institution. I further state that no part of my thesis has already been, or is currently being, submitted for any such degree, diploma or other qualification.

I further declare that this thesis is substantially my own work. Where reference is made to the work of others, the extent to which that work has been used is indicated and fully acknowledged in the text and list of references.

Nicola-Louise Saunders
2015

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Thank you to my God, for without His strength and guidance none of this would have happened.

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Abstract

More and more, consumers are buying products online as a convenient alternative to traditional shopping. This massive shift means that brick-and-mortar retail stores could eventually become obsolete (Walker, 2014).

Although the concept of experience design is already entrenched in the designer stores of first world countries, the developing countries of the world are fast on their heels. As a result, retail design becomes the largest factor in governing the experience of the store, product and brand and needs to be considered carefully by everyone involved in order to create a specific image in the mind of the consumer.

Branding, sensory marketing and environmental psychology principles can be used as a basis for the design of a retail roll-out program for De Villiers Chocolate that will create a memorable experience in the mind of the user

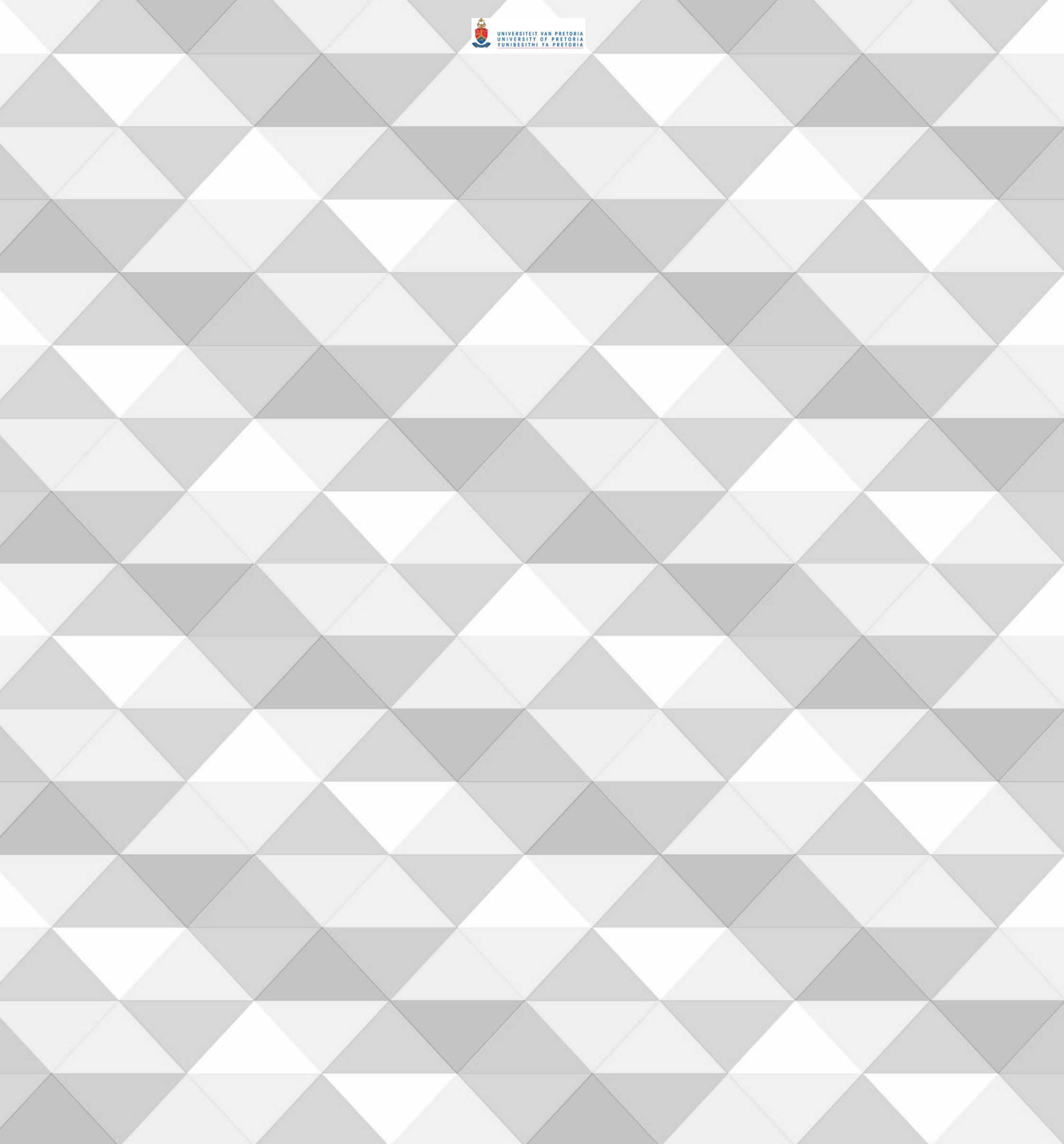
Ekserp

Verbruikers koop al hoe meer dikwels produkte aanlyn as gerieflike alternatief vir die tradisionele manier van inkopies doen.

Hierdie geweldige verskuiwing beteken dat [baksteen - en- sement] fisiese winkels uiteindelik uitgedien (Walker, 2014) kan raak.

Hoewel die beginsel van ervaringontwerp reeds verskans is in ontwerper winkels van eerstewêreldse lande, volg die ontwikkelende lande van die wêreld vinnig op hul hakke . Gevolglik word kleinhandelontwerp die grootste enkele faktor in die beheer van die ervaring van die winkel, produk en handelsmerk, en moet dit versigtig oorweeg word deur almal wat betrokke is ten einde 'n bepaalde beeld by die verbruiker te skep.

Die skep van die handelsmerk, sintuiglike bemarking en die toepassing van omgewingsielkundige beginsels, kan as basis gebruik word vir die ontwerp van 'n kleinhandel uitrolprogram vir De Villiers Chocolate, wat 'n onvergeetlike ervaring in die gemoed van die gebruiker sal skep.



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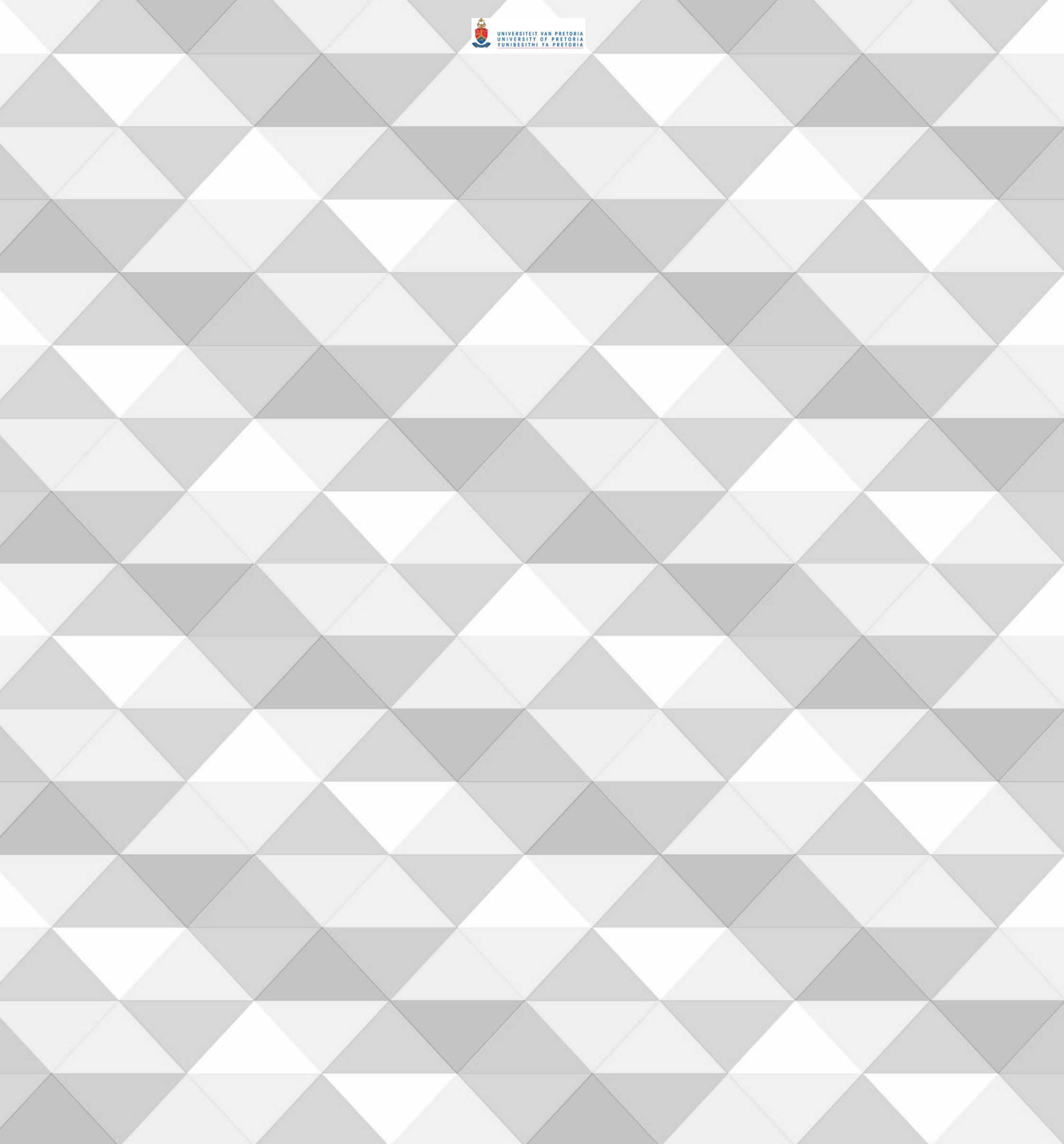
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Glossary

Brand	A brand is the name given to a company, product or service that denotes ownership to a particular party. A brand has 3 main elements – 1. All of the brand's tangible and intangible characteristics; 2. the brand's identity; and 3. the audience's perception of the brand (Landa, 2006).	Commodity Goods	A product that is so basic in nature that it cannot be physically differentiated from competitive items in the mind of the customer. Often sold in barrels or crates, examples of commodity goods include apples, beef, currencies, grain, gold, electricity, etc. (Vaid, 2003).
Brand Awareness	This is how accurately a consumer can recognize a particular brand (Vaid, 2003).	Concept Store	Also known as a flagship store, a concept store is typically a store that is the newest, largest, most exciting, most prominent, most recognizable and most well-known for a particular brand (Farfan, 2015).
Brand Essence	The personality and message behind the brand (Landa, 2006) or the fundamental characteristics that can be used to define the brand (Vaid, 2003).	Differentiation	The elements that make the brand's product or service different from its competitors (Landa, 2006).
Brand Experience	This is the experience had by a customer every time he or she interacts with the brand. This includes every time the customer sees the logo, buys the product, hears about the product, interacts with the product, etc. (Landa, 2006).	Environmental Psychology	This is a field of psychology that studies the relationship between people and the built environment (Kopeck, 2012)
Brand Identity	A brand's identity involves all the graphic and auditory aspects of the brand and how the brand uses these to portray themselves on a public level. This includes elements such as the logo, business card, signage, etc. (Landa, 2006).	Experience Store	Similar to a concept store, an experience store would be the largest store in a roll-out program, focusing on creating an interactive, tangible experience for the customer.
Brand Personality	A brand personality includes are the personable attributes of a brand that the brand wants to embody (American Marketing Association, 2015).	Marketing	Marketing revolves around providing the customer with the right product, at the right time, in the right quantity and at the right price so that customers will be inclined to buy the product. Marketing achieves this by utilizing and manipulating the 4 P's – promotion, place, price and product (American Marketing Association, 2015).
Brand Positioning	This is a stance that a brand makes in order to ensure differentiation in the marketplace. It usually includes both the intangible and tangible experience created by the brand that helps customers differentiate the brand from their competitors (Norambuena, 2015).	Outlet Store	When compared to a concept store, an outlet store can be considered a normal retail store that is consistent with the brand strategy and brand identity that can appear in any shopping area. This store type will focus more on sales than experience and will be considerably smaller than a concept store.
Brand Promise	The functional or emotional advantage that the brand promises the user (Saris-Brandon, 2014)	Parity Goods	Parity goods are goods that are equal in terms of value and purpose; and these are often differentiated from one another by packaging, advertising, etc. (Landa, 2006)
Branding Strategy	This involves creating an action plan using the brand's differentiating factors to build a positive relationship between the customer and the brand. The brand strategy also acts as a governing map ensuring that the brand experience remains consistent (Black Coffee, 2015)	Roll-Out Program	A roll out program is a retail strategy that allows for the design of the look, feel and personality of a store that can be adapted to fit any location or purpose, i.e. rolled out across the country. This ensures a consistent brand image across the city/country/globe. It also involves showcasing the brand on many retail levels. A good example of this strategy is the one implemented by Desigual who showcase their brand through Desigual Stores, Outlets and Points of Sale (Desigual, 2015).
Brand Values	These are the values, ideals, ethos and principles that the brand uses to govern itself and its tangible and intangible outputs (Financial Brand, 2015).	Sensory Marketing	Sensory Marketing is a marketing strategy that uses the customer's senses to appeal to them, thus encouraging them to buy the product (American Marketing Association, 2015).
Branded Environment	A visual identity that is created, constructed and applied to a three dimensional space with the purpose of endearing and promoting the brand to the customer. This may include, retail environments, market stalls, promotional stands, etc. (Landa, 2006)		
Branding	This is the process of creating a brand, including the brand's identity, branding strategy, brand name, advertising, etc. (Landa, 2006).		



!

Introduction

1.1 Background

"Designing for experiences is fundamentally about people, their activities, and the context of those activities"
 (Anderson, 2014)

Across the globe, the dynamic between consumer, company and retail space is evolving. More and more, consumers are buying products online as a convenient alternative to traditional shopping. This massive shift means that physical brick-and-mortar retail stores could eventually become obsolete (Walker, 2014).

Online shopping allows the consumer to shop at their convenience, often on the go or from the comfort of their own home. This is seen as a far more pleasurable event than the task of shopping in a mall and although these excursions can still be enjoyable, more and more consumers are turning to online shopping sites which can be fitted easily into our busy schedules. Shopping online can even be argued as the better alternative due to the wealth of information on the internet that allows the consumer to familiarize themselves with the product, read reviews and review price comparisons, all with only a few clicks – far more information than can be gleaned from in-store staff. This often makes the customer feel more confident in their purchases (Walker, 2014). Thus the demand for online stores and market space continues to grow at a rapid pace.

But there is one role that can only be fulfilled in an actual shop visit, a need that the internet will never be able to fulfill – the need for a tangible interaction with the product or company. Thus the role of the physical store in the retail narrative is changing to keep up with the trend of increased online purchasing. Brick-and-mortar are no longer merely points of sale, but should rather be considered as showrooms (Chang, 2013) – a location for the customer to touch, feel, smell, and experience the product on an appreciable level. In a world where customers crave experiences (Chang, 2013), shops can once again thrive by refocusing the stores from sales to providing an experience that the customer will remember, thus adding value to the experience, product and brand as a whole. In fact, it is this experiential factor that is what now allows brands to differentiate themselves from their competitors, as product differentiation is becoming less pronounced (Petermans & van Cleempoel, 2007).

According to Chang (2013), "creating retail as a theatre of experience, is where retail is pointed" and South Africa is no exception. Although the concept of experience design is already entrenched in the designer stores of first world countries, the developing countries of the world are fast on their heels. Across the developing world, the wealthy middle class is growing and consumers are beginning to embrace a "western" lifestyle and the prices and brands of products are becoming more and more important in the decision making process as luxury items suddenly become affordable (ATKearney, 2014). As a result the retail markets are beginning to realize the opportunities in offering specialized and rare products that will now appeal to these "globally minded citizens". With over 200

shopping malls and as Africa's 7th fastest growing, and most sophisticated economy, South Africa is one of the besting developing countries for niche markets to flourish in (ATKearney, 2014).

As a result of the increased competition between brands and between internet and brick-and-mortar stores, the design and theory behind retail design is becoming more prominent (van Es, 2011). Retail design involves combining both tangible and intangible elements in order to transform a retail brand into an engaging retail store that is contextually appropriate (Petermans & van Cleempoel, 2007). It is thus important to remember that retailers have two main goals when they open the doors to the public that designers need to be aware of – firstly to increase their profits through sales, and secondly to build brand awareness and brand value in the public eye (Brigham, 2013). These two elements are interdependent as the stores profits cannot increase without increasing the public awareness of the brand, but this cannot happen without the funds to support advertising, marketing and retail development, thus creating a loop that will only dissolve with the death of the company. In addition to having to be aesthetically pleasing and conceptually relevant, retail designers also need to ensure that stores will perform on both a functional and commercial level, within a certain budget and according to regulation (Petermans & van Cleempoel, 2007).

So, if an interior is created by manipulating both material and volume (Königk, 2015, p. 48) while considering the relationships between the consumer, object and space, retail design – as a branch of interior design – must involve these manipulations and considerations too, although the purpose of retail interiors is not necessarily inhabitation but rather to make a profit. Intended to influence and arouse the interest of the customer (Gronewald, 2007), the physical store can play as much of a role in the perception of a product's value as the role of the product itself (Petermans & van Cleempoel, 2007). The store then needs to be able to market both itself and its merchandise in such a way as to build confidence in the brand because customers will immediately make subconscious associations between product, price, brand and store identity which will ultimately affect their purchase decisions (Petermans & van Cleempoel, 2007).

As a result, retail design becomes the largest factor in the experience of the store, product and brand and needs to be considered carefully by everyone involved in order to create a specific image in the mind of the consumer.

1.2 Research Question and Hypothesis

Unfortunately there appears to be a lack of a body of knowledge in this area and designers are often overwhelmed with the different theories that can be taken from seemingly unrelated disciplines and applied to retail design.

Retail design in South Africa is a very small but growing part of the country's retail industry and subsequently there is a growing demand for more effective retail design, and clients have higher expectations of the final product or retail store (Chang, 2013).

So what supportive theory can we draw from and how we use this to design with, i.e. **how do we, as interior architects and designers, create a three dimensional brand experience that promotes brand awareness, loyalty and a profitable future for De Villiers Chocolate?**

Although retail design has become a more prominent subject of research in recent years (van Es, 2011), it is interesting to note that the discipline of interior design does not yet have a body of theory dedicated to the creation of retail environments. Still in its youth, retail design has however been gaining momentum in other fields such as retail management, marketing and psychology, all of which have already been researching the relationship between human behavior and the interior environment (i.e. lighting, volume, furniture, texture, etc.). But space designers in all realms have made little effort to access and integrate this research into their current body of knowledge, and there has recently been a call for the Interior disciplines to create and regulate a better body of theory in this realm (Petermans & van Cleempoel, 2007).

From the research that has been done, it has become apparent that some of the best retail designs are those that provide interesting and memorable experiences for their guests. These experiences should influence the customer's mood, follow a narrative and add value to their lives through education and memory (Brigham, 2013). In order to create this experience, however, designers need to create shop interiors that appeal to the customer's senses and emotions, thus creating memorable relationships between the customer and the brand resulting in increased brand awareness and loyalty (Petermans & van Cleempoel, 2007).

But *"the experience of space is not solely visual; instead it acts in concert with other senses. Smell, sound, temperature, and touch alter & change our perception of space"* (Königk, 2015, p. 51). Each of our senses and associations will build a separate part of the experience puzzle, and thus a number of disciplines can be called upon to form a basis of information to move forward from.

Therefore, the hypothesis for this dissertation is that branding, sensory marketing and environmental psychology principles can be used as a basis for a retail experience store and roll-out program that will create a memorable experience in the mind of the user, in order to increase brand awareness, brand loyalty and future sales through the design of a roll-out program for De Villiers Chocolate.

1.3 Methodology

"Interior design produces culture through synthesis, proximity, associations, timeliness and technification."
(König, 2015, p. 140)

As mentioned above, the thesis will follow the methods outlined in Raymund König's thesis, "Imaginal Interpretation of Interior Design's Methods of Cultural Production: Towards a Strategy for Constructing Meaning" (König, 2015). König's thesis investigates how interior design can contribute to the creation of culture by analyzing various representations of interior design objects or artifacts (IFI, 2015) with specific focus on the use and analysis of photographs as vessels containing cultural information (König, 2015, p. 55), and suggests that that generating meaning is a valid method that can be used in the design process (König, 2015, p. 216).

Similarly in this dissertation, the project will generate meaning in the design for De Villiers Chocolate through the use of associations and symbolism imbedded in old Aztec cultural elements, which are based on photographs, drawings and narratives discovered through research. The Aztec basis for the store is derived from the introduction of this history into the current De Villiers Chocolate experience, as discussed in later chapters. This generation of meaning aims to educate the customer in the history of chocolate and add to the social constructs based in the realm of shopping by allowing for spaces of social interaction.

This mini-dissertation will also function as an example of the method in use and will contribute to the above thesis research as a whole, as well as serving as an example to future researchers on how the method can be utilized. Furthermore, the structure of this dissertation will also loosely follow this method to ensure a logical flow of information for the reader.

The method, summarized in Figure 1.1, can be explained as follows:

1. Create a basic Company Profile of the Client

– This is an additional step that I have added to allow myself to ground the initial analysis. It allows the researcher to understand the functional and emotional aspects of the brand, prior to discovering who the target market would include, i.e. discovering who you are selling for vs. who you are selling to. This would typically only be included for commercial projects, but can be adapted to any sector.

2. Identify target market and model inhabitant

– This step involves identifying who your space is aiming to accommodate, and identifying what needs to be included to achieve their satisfaction. The researcher can even create a fictional number of characters that the designer can use to base the store's design around (König, 2015). This will include all users of the space including customers and staff, and the differing user types imbedded within. These elements, with the program, will

be discussed in the concept and design chapters as each store type will be catering to a different target market.

3. Generate and Saturate the Utterance –

This step aims to create a content base through the analysis and organization of an interior's embodied meaning (König, 2015). It involves a cyclical examination of interior artifacts' first and second order meanings and then the organization of the analysis into a manageable and interpretable content base from which to move forward. First order meaning involves the artifact's functional and obvious meaning, the meaning first grasped at a glance by the user. Second order meaning however, includes any additional associations, feelings or ideas created in the mind of the user, whether or not they are conscious of them. This can extend to third and fourth levels of meaning depending on the number of levels of association that can be connected to a particular artifact (König, 2015). A number of different elements have been identified as suitable for analysis but the appropriateness of each will vary from project to project. Creating a point of departure for the researcher, these include the current interior and the related synthesis, proximity, association, timeliness,

and technification; brand elements; packaging; product; typology; competition; functional elements; current experience; etc. It is important to note the meaning of the following broad and encompassing terms which feature widely across both this dissertation and König's thesis. The following five concepts form the backbone of the Imaginal interior, have been formed through thorough analysis, and can be adapted across most fields of design.

- Synthesis* – The concept of synthesis involves taking all associated meaning involved through proximity, timeliness, association and technification, and combining them into a whole that can be considered to have its own imbedded, more complex meaning. There are two parts to this concept; the dominant Synthetic method involves creating meaning through combining other components, and the Decorative method which involves the action of adornment (König, 2015).
- Proximity* – Proximity relates to the meaning created through the placement of objects in relation to one another within a space in order to form meaning, patterns or

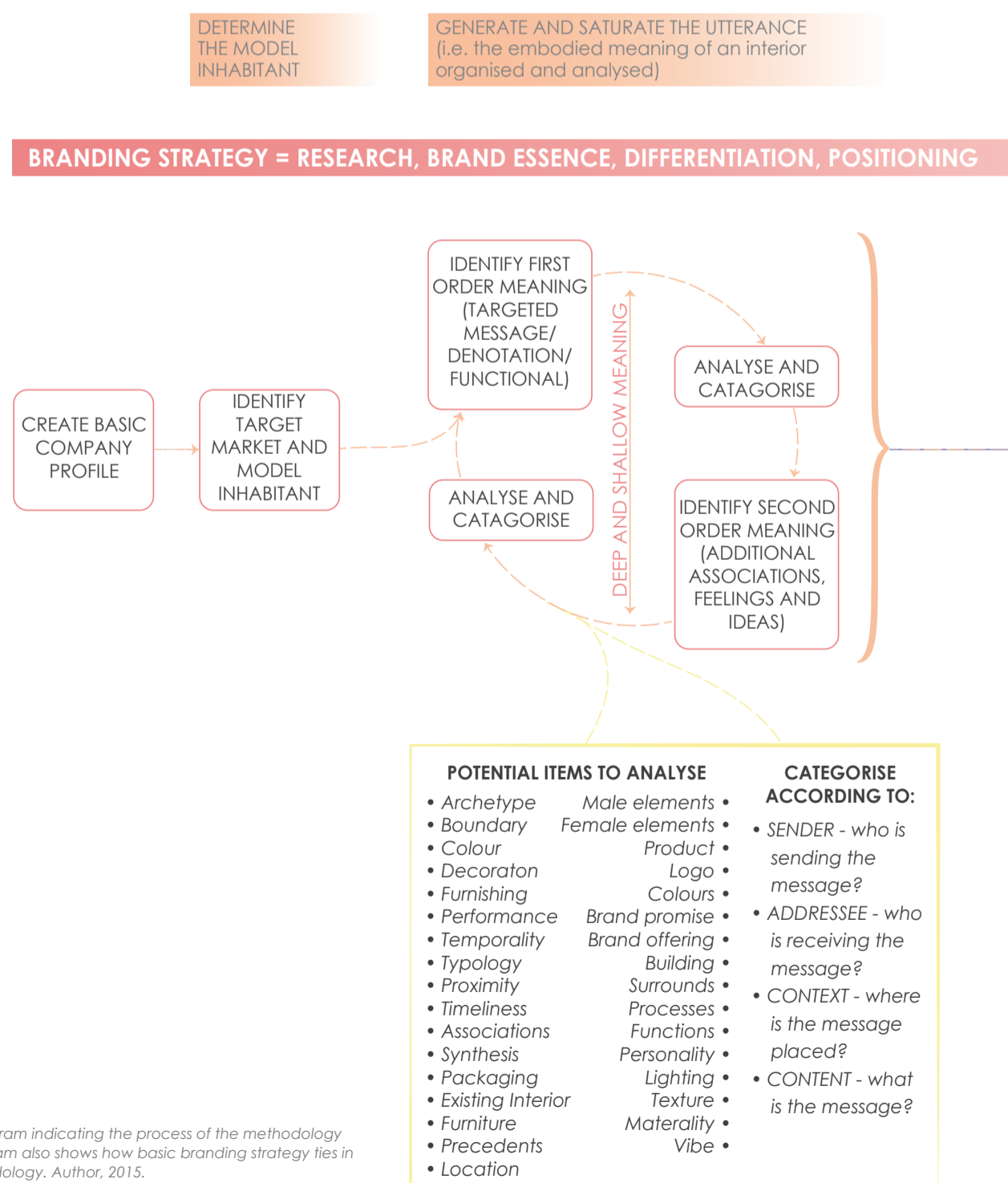


Figure 1.1 Diagram indicating the process of the methodology followed. Diagram also shows how basic branding strategy ties in with this methodology. Author, 2015.

- arrangements (Königk, 2015).
- c. *Timeliness* – Timeliness relates to the concepts of changing over time and of worldliness. These concepts relate to meaningful customs and traditions that have been handed down across generations that are repeatedly reconstructed, keeping them in existence. Furthermore, timeliness allows the contemporary interior artifact to be grounded within a specific context which will add another layer of meaning. This concept has three constituent parts, the Iterative method, which creates meaning through repetition; the Temporal method which is the dominant theme and involves worldliness and timeliness; and the Traditive method, which relates to the customs, traditions and conventions passed down through generations (Königk, 2015). It is clear that this method also closely relates to the ideas of cultural heritage, a concept that will be briefly explored at a later stage.
- d. *Associations* – This category involves creating meaning through the creation of connections in the mind between different components.

The concept combines two similar concepts – the Associative method involves the connections in the mind between separate components; and the Semiotic method involves that which infers meaning (Königk, 2015).

- e. *Technification* – Technification involves the physical, tangible expression of meaning, providing technical expression of the meaning created in the other categories. This links with the concept of synthesis, implying the creation and assembly of a synthetic and cohesive artifact. Technification involves two concepts, those being the Formal methods which involve the actual form and aesthetic appearance of the interior object, whereas the Technical method involves areas such as applied science and mechanical arts, all of which are combined to form a cohesive interior object.

4. **Synthesize the Message** – With this in mind, the content base will include a number of identifiable connotation groups, which will then either be reinterpreted or used as a base to generate new meaning, or both (Königk, 2015). Here, meaning can be generated similarly to the way it was

analyzed – through synthesis, proximity, timeliness, and association to create a new utterance. Then, this meaning or content is embodied in an interior through dissemination, and expressed physically through technification (Königk, 2015).

5. **Spatial Expression** – Finally the meaning is embodied in an interior artifact that expresses the message in a spatial, volumetric and inhabitable manner, where the levels of meaning can be interpreted by the end user through inhabitation (Königk, 2015). This artifact can then form the basis for a new researcher to start the whole process again.

Note that although the method is expressed linearly, the researcher can and should move back and forth along the line, adding to the research and analysis already accumulated. Doing this can have a large impact on the design and can be used to great effect in keeping the design consistent in its resultant message.

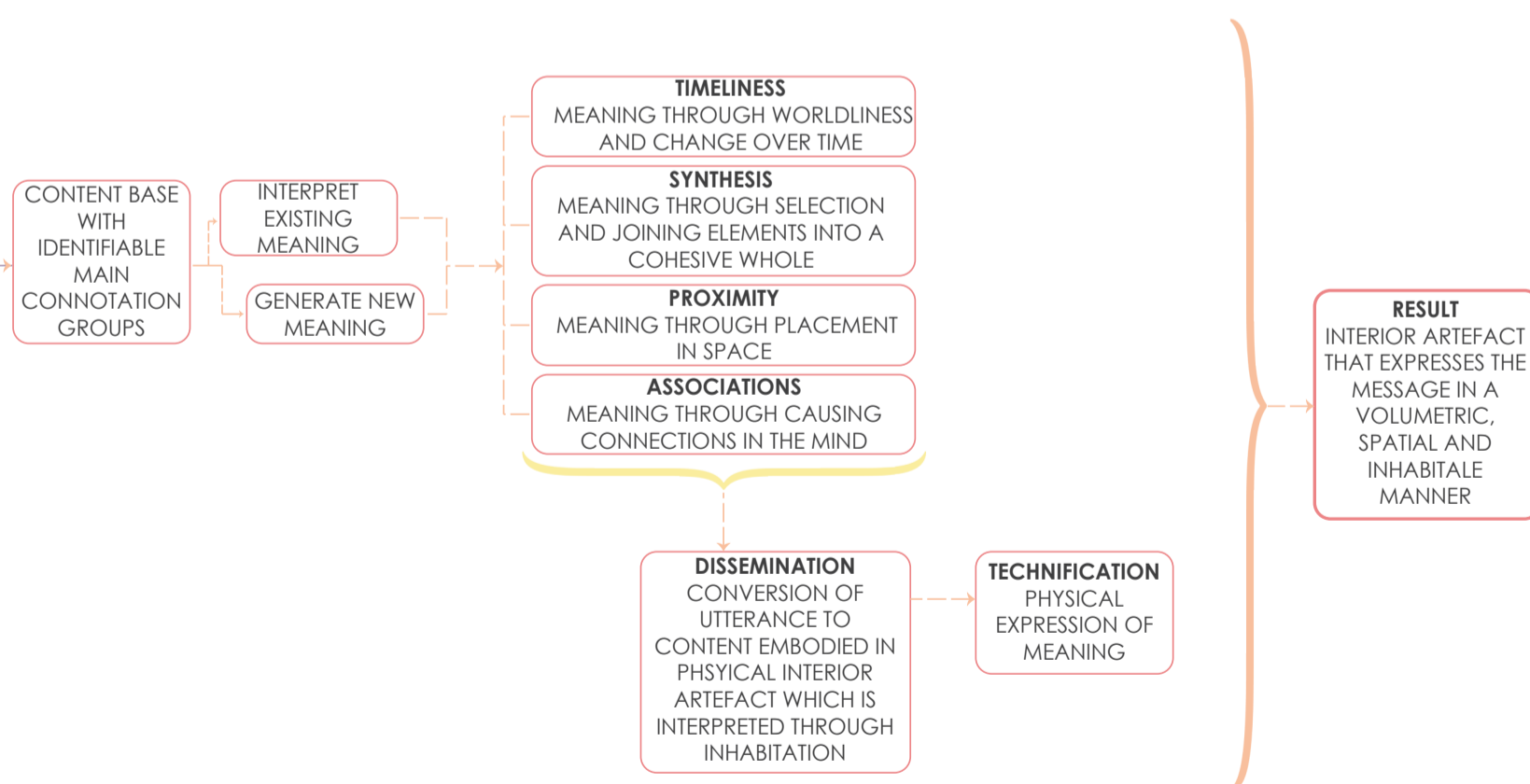
SYNTHESISE THE MESSAGE

SPATIALLY EXPRESS THE MESSAGE

CONCEPT

APPLICATION

IMPLEMENTATION



1.4 Assumptions

- » It is assumed that South Africa will retain a relatively stable economy, and will continue to grow as a developing nation.
- » It is assumed that Johannesburg will remain a popular tourist destination.
- » It is assumed that De Villiers Chocolate (DV Chocolate) will continue to expand and prosper in South Africa.
- » It is assumed that DV Chocolate intends to continue to expand business to Johannesburg and other main cities across the country
- » It is assumed that DV Chocolate will continually be bringing out new chocolate ranges in the future

1.5 Delimitations

- » The study will focus on and be limited to the study of environmental psychology in the retail sector. The study will not focus on environmental psychology in the healthcare, wellbeing, residential or office typologies.
- » The study will focus on and be limited to the study of sensory marketing in the retail sector, in terms of the 3D brand experience and the elements that will benefit it. The study will not focus on other marketing devices or models, such as the design of advertising, marketing strategies, etc.
- » The study will focus on and be limited to the study of branding in the retail, confectionery, and café sector. The study will not focus on will not involve branding in other typologies, such as clothing, accessories, stationary, etc.
- » The study will not attempt to rebrand the company but will rather use the current brand to expand their branding strategies
- » The study will not involve a discussion on semiotics.
- » The project will not focus on costing, or have costing constraints.
- » The project will not look closely at back-of-house operations or other logistics.
- » The project will not include any new graphics or products put onto the market by the company in the year 2015.

1.6 Conclusion

In conclusion the rest of the book will follow along the process of the methodology, first discussing the client, then theoretical background and brand analysis, then the concept, programs and technical resolution will follow.

Please note, that some of the images, where indicated are taken from the poster presentation and should thus be viewed as A0 pages. These are available in the .pdf file provided for larger viewing.

