

7

Conclusion

7.1 Conclusion Summary

At the beginning of this dissertation, it was asked how we as designers could create a three dimensional brand experience that promotes brand loyalty and awareness and a profitable future.

It was also hypothesized that a combination of branding, sensory marketing and environmental psychology principles could be used together in order to accomplish this. To investigate how this could be done this dissertation has looked at how these three elements can work together in order to produce a memorable and positive brand experience for the user.

This has resulted in the creation of a potentially successful end product as a roll-out program for DV Chocolate that embodies the 5 Ideals identified in the brand analysis, as well as the brand's essence by growing, exploring and exploiting the customer experience.

It also is hoped that De Villiers Artisan Chocolate will benefit from this dissertation and design proposal as it grows in both local and international markets, potentially using this design as a point from which they can build their brand identity so that it reflects its artisanal qualities and its luxuriousness to both the local and international tourist markets.

In addition to this, this dissertation has looked at how König's Imaginal Interior (2015) methodology can be understood, used and implemented successfully and it is my hope that this dissertation may serve as a guide for future students in how to go about designing a retail interior.

It will not be possible to fully assess if, as well as quantify the extent of this design's success at building brand awareness, loyalty and profitability without fully implementing the applied roll-out strategy in the real world. However, based on the theoretical portion discussed the indications are that this project will have a positive impact on the brand's positioning and identity, and will result in a successful outcome in the long run.

Through the research I have done in the theoretical fields mentioned and research required for the design work, I have also looked at the role of the interior architect in the retail design sector.

I have come to the realization that the realm of retail design is far wider than I could have ever imagined, requiring a number of specializations for implementation.

Whereas my original plan was to just design a retail concept store I had to change my approach to expand the design an entire look and feel that could form a basis for DV Chocolate's new brand identity.

Once that was achieved I had then apply to apply it across a number of scales to ensure a consistent image of the brand was created.

Unfortunately, from my experience it is my opinion that interior architects currently do not play a big enough role in the retail industry sector.

They are often overlooked and it is my belief that many businesses could have benefited significantly - both financially and in terms of brand awareness - if an interior architect specializing in retail design had been consulted.

It is also my belief that retail design needs to become integrated into the interior architecture syllabus and tertiary institutions, even if only to give students a brief understanding of what is involved in creating a retail store.

It has been my experience that designers tend to fall into a specialization too early on in their career. Often this is a factor of the commercial pressures and end up 'learning on the job'. However there is so much involved in designing for the retail industry that this information needs to become part of the industry's accessible body of knowledge.

This knowledge needs to be supplemented by other professional and industry specific disciplines, using branding, marketing and environmental psychology as examples which that are often ignored in the interior design industries.

The design profession as a whole needs to feel comfortable accessing and drawing from this information so that they can exploit it and use the information to make a more positive and successful world in which to live.

In conclusion, over the last year I have gained a much greater appreciation for retail design and the role that we as interior architects can play in this growing industry.

I look forward to further educating myself in the realm of retail design in the years to come - putting theory into practice - improving others experiences in the world around me.

7.2 Further Recommendations for De Villiers Chocolate

In addition to the design of the roll out programme there are a number of elements that DV Chocolate management should consider so to keep the brand image consistent across all platforms, examples of which are listed below.

- » The type of music played in store should be investigated and considered with a specialist's input. It is envisioned that the music should be upbeat and subtle, creating a warm and enjoyable atmosphere for the customer.
- » The current uniform should be relooked at and made consistent, fashion forward, comfortable and professional for all staff in order to create a consistent brand image.
- » Staff should be sourced from the local communities for any particular store.
- » All staff should undergo extensive and continuous training in customer relations and in the running of the store. All staff should understand and be able to answer any questions about the DV Chocolate; its heritage; its non-profit affiliates; the cocoa and chocolate making processes; DV Chocolate's manufacturing process and chocolate's Aztec origins
- » Management needs to continuously investigate new and innovative customer experiences for the Experience room. Some suggestions can be seen in the graphics below. The experiences should be kept short and to the point – long enough to build a relationship with the customer but short enough to move larger numbers of people through during peak times.
- » Management should also look into potential seasonal promotions of merchandise or experiences that can be advertised and exploited annually.
- » Management can also consider other promotional events such as bringing in celebrity chocolatiers or chocolate artists, holding competitions, potentially hosting book signings, etc. This then brings the potential for additional merchandise such as different books, etc., which will help to rotate the merchandise and provide new and exciting elements for return customers.



Figure 7.1: Potential Paid Customer Experiences for the Experience Room. Images taken from (from Left to Right): De Villiers 2, 2015; Trip Advisor 2, 2015; Highball HooDoo, 2015; Dolce Vita Spinelli, 2013; De Villiers 2, 2015

7.3 Further Recommendations

- » In the beginning of this dissertation, it was proposed that we can create a positive brand experience that promotes brand awareness and profit margins by harnessing the knowledge imbedded in branding sensory marketing and environmental psychology.
- » It was found that for the full engagement of all the senses, a project takes a full team of designers, marketers and branding specialists in order to full implement a project. This is especially important on a practice level where output has a much shorter deadline than this project. Thus the knowledge and use of levels of association, environmental psychology, etc. need to become second nature to designers in this field in order to apply principles quickly and effectively.
- » It was also found that concepts such as building brand awareness and loyalty cannot be tested in the real world due to need for physical implementation of the project prior to testing.
- » In addition, it was found that the project cannot function alone, and needs to be supported by elements that the designer has less control over, such as the customer service program or seasonal marketing efforts.
- » However, based on the research conducted throughout this project, the project can be a successful one that will benefit DV Chocolate by creating a positive brand experience for the customer, thus building brand awareness and profits
- » Further research however needs to be conducted by the discipline in the retail sector, and this content then needs to be consolidated and become accessible for retail designers to actually use.
- » The discipline also needs to expand its horizons and further study, realise and integrate elements of other non-related disciplines such as marketing and psychology into our body of knowledge.
- » Findings further indicated that interior architects or designers do not get included in the retail strategy for companies at an early enough stage, if at all and the discipline needs to adjust its approach in this area by providing a background in retail design to designers at a student level in order to change the perception of retail design in the industry.

7.4 Contributions

- » As research for this project was conducted throughout the design process, the project has much to offer in terms of both research content and design methodology.
- » This project contributes to the interior disciplines body of knowledge in the realms of branding, sensory marketing and environmental psychology
- » This is done especially through the literature review where information has been consolidated from a number of sources and has been presented as a set of guidelines from which future designers can work.
- » This project also contributes towards a new approach for DV Chocolate in the retail sector in terms of both future growth and a cohesive look and feel for future representations of the brand.
- » This project can be considered a contribution to the proofing of König's methodology, illustrating that his methodology is useable and does result in relevant outcomes in terms of both research and design.
- » This dissertation also contributed a practical and implementable action plan that illustrates how König's methodology can be used in a real life context.

7.5 Further Conclusions

- » In conclusion, it is hoped that DV Chocolate will be able to harness the information and design outlined in this dissertation and use it to benefit the future of their company as it grows in both local and international markets.
- » I have come to the realisation that the realm of retail design is far wider than I could have ever imagined, requiring the input of a number of specialisations for successful implementation.
- » It has also been concluded that retail designers need to play a greater role in the retail industry and that a body of knowledge in this area of the discipline needs to be built as an accessible collective that all designers can draw from.
- » I have gained a much greater appreciation for retail design and the role that we as interior architects can play in this growing industry.
- » Lastly, I look forward to further educating myself in the realm of retail design in years to come by putting this theory into practice and improving the experiences of users on different levels.

