In this chapter, branding, sensory marketing and environmental psychology will each be discussed in terms of their definition and background, and how they relate to each other and to interior design.

3

# Theoretical Background

# 3.1 Branding

Every minute of every day, we interact with brands and branding on an intimate level. From the type of coffee we drink to the places we go, we use brand names as an indicator of wealth, quality and value, and we use them in a similar fashion to place ourselves into a social hierarchy based on the brands we choose (Gronewald, 2007). But what is a branding and how can we use it in interior design?

## 3.1.1 History

Brands have been around since the time of the ancients, where the illiterate people of places like ancient Rome, Egypt and Greece used symbols to denote ownership of their commodity goods stored in a sea of barrels in large warehouses. These symbols were linked back to a specific family house and were often burnt into the timber of the storage container, or into the skin of owned slaves. The practice of using symbols to denote ownership lasted until the fall of the Roman Empire, when commerce and craftsmanship declined rapidly as people tried to survive under the rise of feudalism (Landa, 2006).

From around the 11th century A.D., feudalism began to decline and trade began to increase between the East and West. Trades and craftsmanship once again become popular ventures which resulted in the establishment of craft guilds, some of which still survive today. Here the art of branding

continued, as craftsmen such as stone mason had to mark each stone block they took from the rock. The blocks with a specific mason's propriety mark were counted collectively and the mason was thus paid per block, as it were (Landa, 2006). Thus the marks of ownership eventually became marks of craftsmanship.

Around the same time period, China's Sung Dynasty boasted the invention of the inverted block press which allowed for mass printing of wrappers, banners, lanterns, pictures and signs. With the increase of trade between the East and West, this technology eventually filtered through to the West which led to the emergence of town criers handing out leaflets, and the birth of advertising (Landa, 2006 and Millman, 2012).

Then in Germany, 1448, Johannes Gutenberg created the Gutenberg Printing Press and printed media suddenly became easier to distribute to the masses. In 1625, in England, the first advert was printed in a newspaper and companies started to create slogans for early advertising campaigns, and by the 1700's stamped logos and trademarks had become standard practice, leading England to create the first ever copyright laws (Landa, 2006 and Millman, 2012).

Then with the rise of the Industrial Revolution the world of brands and branding suddenly exploded into an exciting and prosperous age. With the development of mass production, goods were easier and cheaper to produce

and sell in large quantities, and the focus of manufactures shifted from commodity goods to packaged parity goods with a "sealed freshness". Similarly advertising became more cost effective for companies to make use of and England's first dedicated advertising agencies were formed in the early 1800's (Landa, 2006 and Davis, 2009).

In 1870, Robert Gair invented the folding paper box, allowing manufacturers add personality and useful information to the product which significantly increased the product's desirability and manufacturer's profits (Landa, 2006). This also allowed the companies to inject and express social values into the running of the business itself, adding further definition to the brand and value to the associated products. Companies like Cadburys were often family owned and run, and are often still run according to these family values today. As a result, advertising, branding strategies and market research blossomed under these conditions, growing until World War I (Davis, 2009).

War equalized people across the social hierarchy and with nobody having any disposable income, the world of advertising was turned into creating propaganda for the war effort of both WWI and WWII. However, by the 1980's advertising once again boomed and by the 1990's branding had become an essential part of any business. The 1990's also ushered in the rise of the online stores that are so prevalent today (Davis, 2009). Due to the



*Figure 3.1.1 Stone mason markings. Taken from (Top to Bottom); Thatcher & Davis, 2003; Vaid, 2003, pg. 8, and edited by Author, 2015*



# BRANDING

BRAND = THE SUM TOTAL OF ALL FUNCTIONAL AND EMOTIONAL ELEMENTS OF ALL BRANDED ENTITIES (PRODUCT / SERVICE / COMPANY / GROUP)
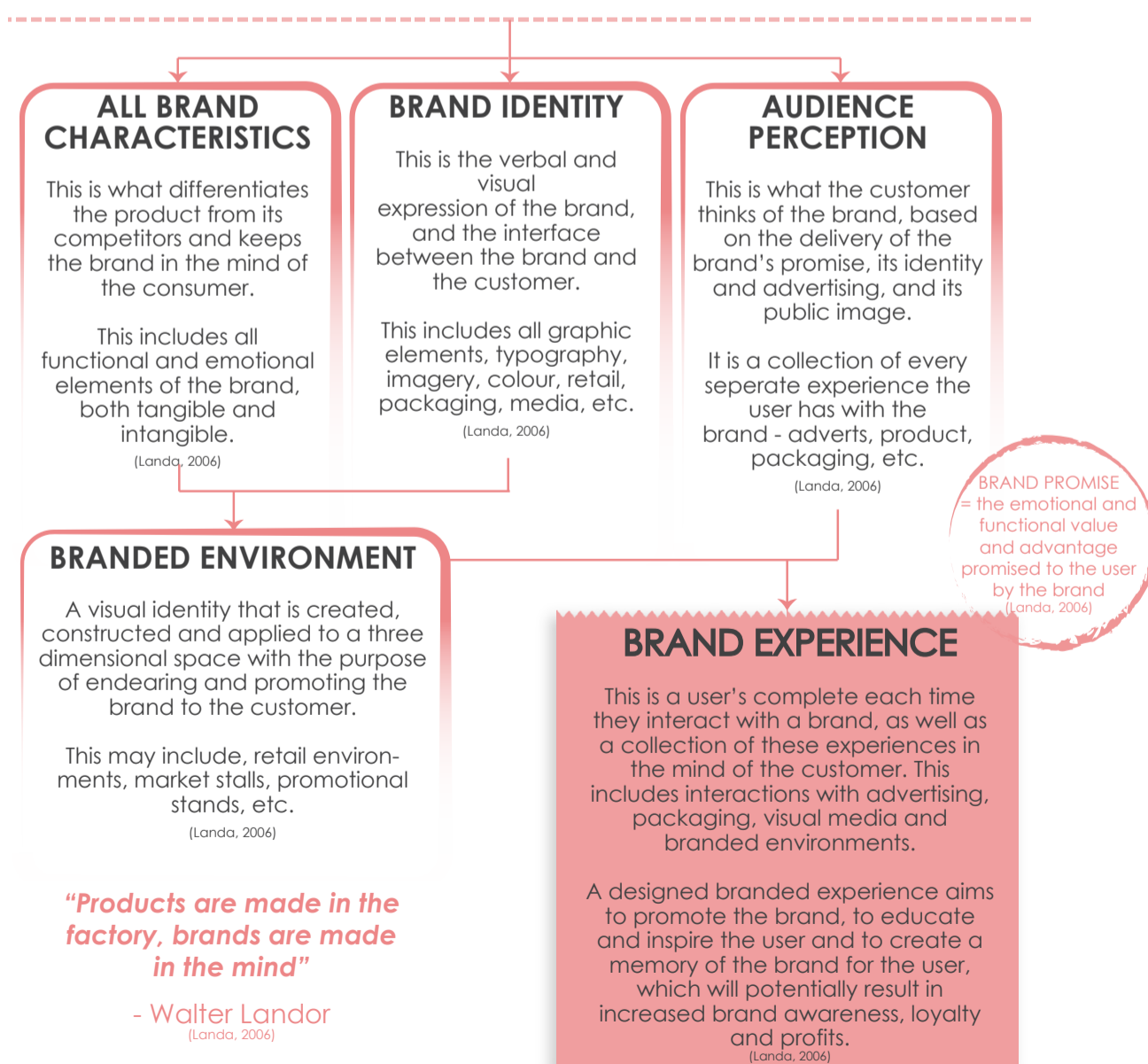
### ALL BRAND CHARACTERISTICS

This is what differentiates the product from its competitors and keeps the brand in the mind of the consumer.

This includes all functional and emotional elements of the brand, both tangible and intangible.
(Landa, 2006)

### BRAND IDENTITY

This is the verbal and visual expression of the brand, and the interface between the brand and the customer.

This includes all graphic elements, typography, imagery, colour, retail, packaging, media, etc.
(Landa, 2006)

### AUDIENCE PERCEPTION

This is what the customer thinks of the brand, based on the delivery of the brand's promise, its identity and advertising, and its public image.

It is a collection of every seperate experience the user has with the brand - adverts, product, packaging, etc.
(Landa, 2006)

BRAND PROMISE = the emotional and functional value and advantage promised to the user by the brand
(Landa, 2006)

### 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)

*"Products are made in the factory, brands are made in the mind"*

- Walter Landor
(Landa, 2006)

### BRAND EXPERIENCE

This is a user's complete each time they interact with a brand, as well as a collection of these experiences in the mind of the customer. This includes interactions with advertising, packaging, visual media and branded environments.

A designed branded experience aims to promote the brand, to educate and inspire the user and to create a memory of the brand for the user, which will potentially result in increased brand awareness, loyalty and profits.
(Landa, 2006)

*Figure 3.1.2 Diagram discussing branding theory showing how Brand Experiences and Branded Environments can be derived from the three elements that make up a brand (Brand Characteristics, Brand Identity and Audience Perception). Author, 2015 and Landa, 2006.*

growth and spread of mass production and communication channels across the globe, brands have since gained the ability to live across borders and generations, as overtime, brand image and company message have become synthesized. Today, brand, logo, experience and aesthetic have all become essential tools used in combination to increase market share (Vaid, 2003) and essentially, the company's profit margin.

## 3.1.2 Brands, Branding and Branding Strategy

Through history, a brand has become more than just a name or a logo. Today's brand is a combination of all the tangible and intangible elements that make up the full personality of a company (Davis, 2009) and includes all the branded components of the company, e.g. group, service, product, etc. (Landa, 2006). As a totality, the brand is the sum of all the emotional and functional aspects of a brand and can be divided into three interdependent elements – Brand Characteristics, Brand Identity and Audience Perception (Landa, 2006) – that work together to form a cohesive image in the mind of the consumer, as can be seen in Figure 3.1.2.

Brands feature in every spectrum of our lives, and they can be split into two main, interdependent categories – corporate brands

and consumer brands. Corporate brands is often the company itself, or the company that acts as an umbrella brand for a number of consumer brands. Consumer brands therefore are products or services that are easily recognizable by the consumer. These consumer brands include service, consumer products, industrial products , retail brands, etc. (Vaid, 2003). These two concepts are not mutally exclusive, and often one cannot survive without the other. As an example, Coca Cola is a brand recognised across the globe as a dark, delicious carbonated soft drink. However, Coca-Cola corporate owns and produces not only Coke and its variations but also Mazoe, Minute Maid, Powerade, Just Juice and Bonaqua, among others, (Coca-Cola, 2015) many of which the consumer would never recognise as or associate with a Coca-Cola product. Thus Coca-Cola Corporate functions as an umbrella company for these other smaller consumer brands.

Branding, in contrast to a brand, is the process by which the brand's image becomes associated with a set of values in the mind of the buyer (Vaid, 2003) and involves most of the marketing and design elements that the company has in place, from logo design to general marketing and retail design (Davis, 2009). The result of branding allows the customer to create an emotional bond with the brand and thus aims to increase brand loyalty and awareness within the consciousness of that consumer (Vaid, 2003).

To do this, very often a branding strategy is created to provide guidance to the company, advertising agencies and designers that need to move the company forward. Interestingly, the process of creating a brand strategy closely aligns with Königk's thesis, "Imaginal Interpretation of Interior Design's Methods of Cultural Production: Towards a Strategy for Constructing Meaning", as seen in Figure 1.1.

Firstly, the designer, as a part of the branding team, should research and analyze the brand in terms of competition, typology, brand promise, brand essence, brand personality, brand positioning and differentiation elements (Landa, 2006) and much of this information can be gathered from the company itself. Basically, this initial analysis is done to discover the strengths and weaknesses of a brand, any potential opportunities for the brand and what makes the brand different from its competitors.

This then acts as a starting point for the designer, as a basic creative brief that intends to solve a particular problem. The team should work together to create a viable and engaging concept that embodies the brand's essence identified through the analysis, and this concept can consist of a number of constructs that, when synthesized, form a cohesive whole.
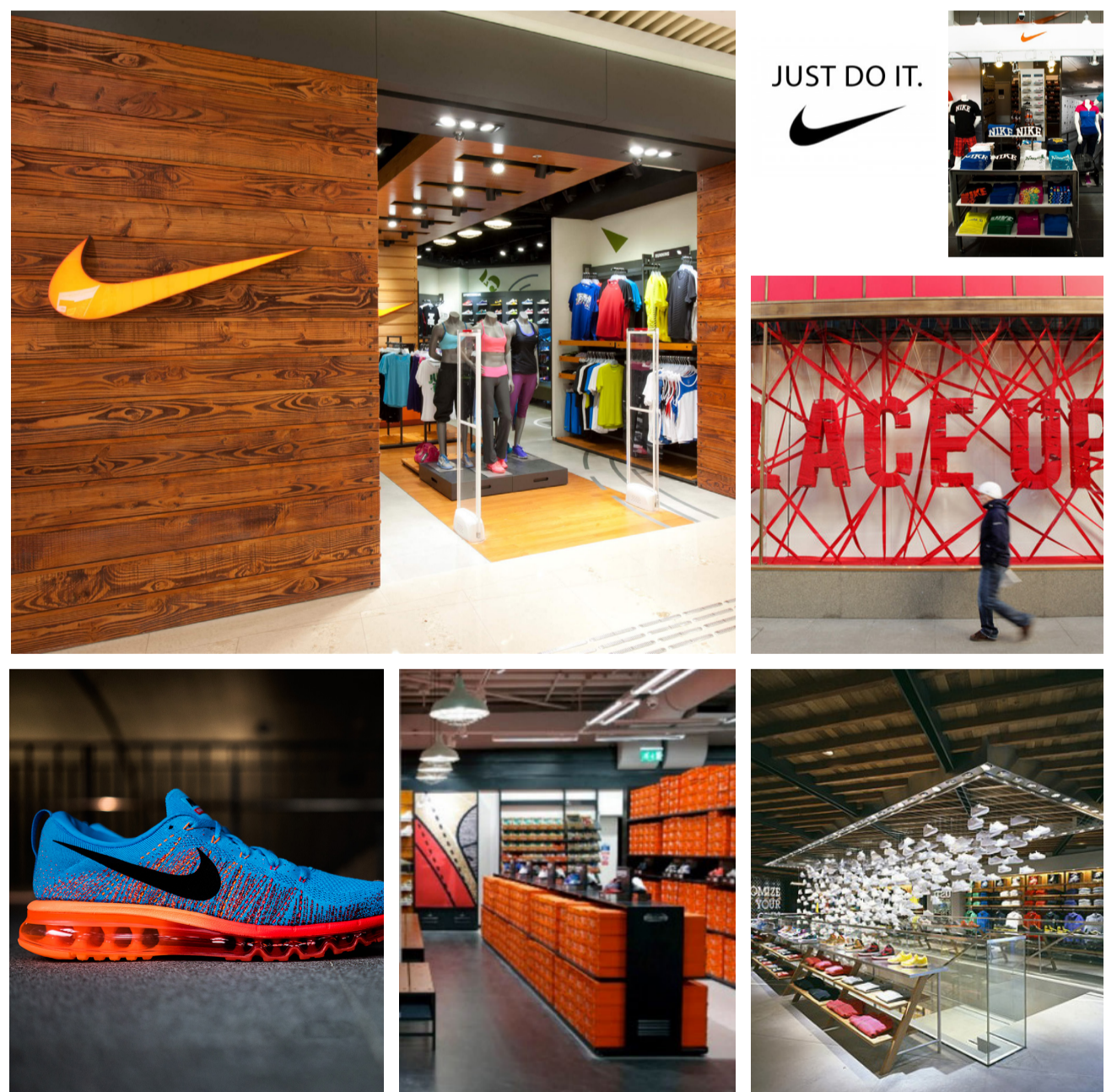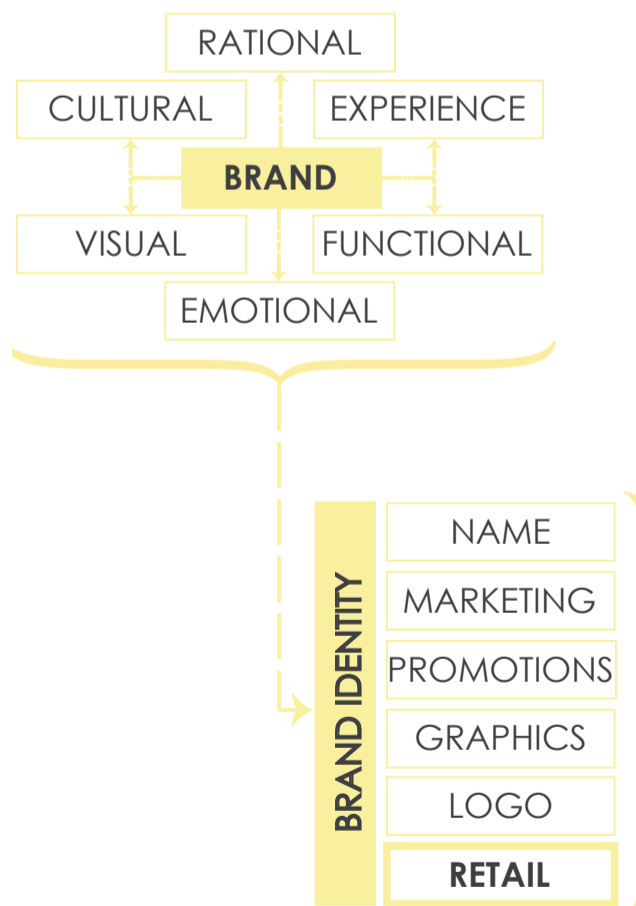


Figure 3.1.3 Diagram  showing how retail forms a major part of the brand and its identity as a whole. Diagrams taken from Landa, 2006 and adapted by Author, 2015.



Figure 3.1.4 Collage of images showing the translation of the Nike brand through from product to retail environment. Taken from (Clockwise from Top Left) : Solutions for Sport, 2014; NIKE, 2015;  Outletaholic, 2013; Dima, 2010; Posnegative, 2010; K2 Consultancy, 2014; Hypes Are Us, 2014

## A. Brand Experiences

One of the main constructs to consider is how to activate the consumer, in order to create brand loyalty and awareness. This is an especially prevalent concern in the retail environment where a customer's first major interaction with the brand is their visual perception of their retail store, which functions as an image of the brand (Riewoldt, 2002), and thus forms a large part of the brand identity (Vaid, 2003) as seen in Figure 3.1.3.

But in today's world, especially on an international scale, a branded environment is simply not enough. With the continuing and rapid rise of internet shopping in first world and developing countries (Walker, 2014), retail stores can no longer be merely visual representations of a brand. Retail stores need to become so much more. Stores need to become the showrooms of the online stores where the customer can come in and touch, smell, see, and sense the product on any level before going home and ordering the product from the comfort of their couch (Chang, 2013). And in order to do this successfully, the retail designers of today need to look closely at the concept of brand experiences.

A brand experience occurs at any point a customer interacts with a brand. This includes every time the customer sees the brand's logo, every time they hear the brand's name, every time they see the brand in the news, every time they go into the store, every time they see the brand online, every time they interact with the brand on social media… essentially every time the brand comes up in the customer's mind. These experiences even include interactions between the customer and the brand's packaging, advertising and other branded environments (Landa, 2006). Each experience creates a web of connections in the mind of the user, that come together to form an image of the brand in the mind of the consumer. Thus, a brand experience is every time a customer comes into contact with the brand, as well as a collection of these experiences that form an impression of the brand in the mind of the customer.

Positive, negative or neutral, these brand experiences can change a customer's entire attitude towards a product or brand, which can seriously affect the company's profits. Therefore, an integrated branding program (Landa, 2006) is an essential element that needs to be designed on every level in order to add value to the company as a whole. This added value can take many forms but entertainment and education are the elements mostly used on a retail level (Ardill, 2014).

Nike (figure 3.1.4) is an excellent example of a company with a strong and successful branding strategy that has been translated through every experience the customer has with the brand. With a focus on the athletics and sporting industries, the Nike swish is now synonymous with upmarket sports apparel and, sports events, sporting codes and charities that revolve around helping communities

through sports initiatives. The brand's identity is translated effectively and consistently across all platforms including visual media, television advertising and other branding opportunities. Every time the customer sees the Nike swish as a symbol of quality sports gear, the brand becomes prominent in the mind of the consumer, creating a consistent brand image across every level.

It is also important that people have an emotional response to the brand experience, because if your senses are touched and you have an emotional response towards a product or brand, you are more likely to remember it and buy it again at a later stage (Landa, 2006).

Thus, a designed brand experience aims to promote the brand, to educate and inspire the user and to create a memory of the brand for the user which will potentially build brand awareness, loyalty and profits (Landa, 2006). It is also important to realize that the primary objective of a brand experience is not to sell the product or service, but to create a fascination with the brand (Riewoldt, 2002) that will keep the customer coming back for more.

## B. Cultural Heritage

Another brand construct that is important to the designer on a conceptual level includes what strengths, other than their differentiating elements, that the brand has at its disposal (Landa, 2006). These may include many different strengths such as celebrity endorsements, education, family values, or environmental consciousness. It may be more emotional aspects as well, such as understanding a mother's predicament, or using humor at the core of the brand's personality. These strengths form a major part of the brand's perspective and thus can greatly influence any design concepts.

In terms of DV Chocolate, one of the main strengths, other than their focus on education, is their research and focus on the history behind the creation of chocolate. Thus as a designer, I looked at this history and the embedded intangible cultural heritage as inspiration for the store's aesthetic and functional elements.

Intangible cultural heritage includes the traditions, practices, skills and knowledge, and associated cultural spaces and artifacts that communities, groups and individual recognize as part of their cultural heritage that have been passed down through the generations (UNESCO 2, 2015). Cultural heritage may also include monuments, oral traditions, social practices, performing arts, rituals, legends, and the knowledge and skills of traditional craftsmanship (UNESCO, 2015).

It is also possible that intangible cultural heritage in one community or region may be similar to that of a region on the other side of the world. As a result, intangible cultural heritage doesn't question whether a specific tradition or practice is specific to a particular

culture. Rather, cultural heritage is used to encourage a sense of identity, community and responsibility which inspires global cohesion amongst communities (UNESCO, 2015). It was interesting to note through the research done at the conceptual level illustrated in Chapter 5, it was discovered that elements of the cultural heritage of the Aztec and the African people overlapped in many areas, especially with artistic elements such as patterns colours and craft.

What is important however, is how to safeguard this intangible heritage for future generations to understand. This safeguarding involves transferring of knowledge, meaning and skills to younger generations, but also includes initiatives that document this heritage, research, promotion, preservation, or transmission of it (UNESCO, 2015). In this vein, the DV Chocolate design aims to revitalize (UNESCO, 2015) it, by using old practices in new and innovative ways, thus potentially raising awareness about the birth of chocolate and the Aztec culture, and adding to the efforts to conserve what is left of this cultural heritage.

## C. After Conceptual Development

After the branding, marketing and retail design team comes up with a cohesive concept that will be integrated across all brand experience levels, the concept needs to be applied to a store layout or project, and then implemented and produced as an actual, physical store where the customer can interact with the brand at a tangible level.

In terms of this dissertation, the concept will be applied across the brand experience levels investigated, but will not be implemented on a physical level.

## 3.1.3 The Ethics of Branding

What we need to remember is that, shopping - whether it's used as a means to relax, and excuse to get out of the house, a functional journey or a frustrating irritation (Underhill, 2000)– is an necessity for all of us and therefore branding plays an integral part in our everyday lives and will continue to do so in the future. Branding can have a major impact on both society and the individual and so all of the consultants need to act professionally and ethically in their conduct towards  any project.

There are many ways to act ethically in the realm of branding and retail design, including creating designs that are true to the client's values and product (Messedat, 2009); being realistic and ethical towards the client in terms of communication, schedules, costing, etc.; using materials and processes that are ecologically sustainable or friendly; and by considering the audience of the project in terms of cultural beliefs or practices, etc. It is important to remember that we as designers cannot make our client companies ethical, we can only encourage the ethical behavior of both client and consumer through our designs.

But the most important ethical consideration is figuring out how to be truthful and attractive to the customer, rather than manipulating them into a specific behavior (Saris-Brandon, 2014).

Unfortunately branding and the culture of consumerism have often garnered a bad reputation over the last century, a stigma generated when the medicine men of old sold "cures" to the unsuspecting public, all of which did nothing to cure their ailing bodies (Landa, 2006). This negative reputation has lingered over time and for this reason, brands are often seen as charlatans angling for the customer's money. These stigmas can also be influenced positively or negatively by the individual's perception, economic status or religious beliefs (Saris-Brandon, 2014).

While the branding and retail industries cannot eradicate this stigma, a certain middle ground can be achieved where branding can be used to positively achieve a particular goal. For example, branding can be used to promote the purchasing of a particular product but it can also be used to promote social causes, charities and other organizations. In this way both the company and the charitable organization benefit as the company's corporate social responsibility efforts can be accounted for economically and the company can build a positive brand image of an ethical, responsible and caring brand in the mind of the consumer and the public, thus building the brand's integrity. Simultaneously, the charitable organization gains funding, free advertising and increased public awareness about a specific cause (Saris-Brandon, 2014).

To achieve this middle ground is the branding industries' major goal because the world of today cannot survive without it. Branding drives local, national and global economies (Saris-Brandon, 2014), and without spending the economy would collapse (Underhill, 2000), people would become unemployed and millions would starve to death.

This delicate system of branding, people and economy, and the push and pull of consumerism, have been intertwined for centuries already, as can be seen in the "Fable of the Bees", a poem written by Bernard Mandeville in 1714 (Millman, 2012), functioning in this dissertation as Appendix B.

The poem follows the story of a beehive, where all bees come together to moan and complain about the vices of their peers. The bees' god, Jove, hears the bees' complaints and so eliminates all the vices from society. As a result the hives begin to decay. The bees are too honest, and so no bargaining is done and no profits are made. Slowly, many of the aspects of this vice free life begin to lose their luster. Law no longer becomes necessary and there are no luxuries to enjoy as indulgence is considered a vice. Unemployment increases and the hive begins to stagnate. Eventually the hive is attacked by the bees' enemies and the bees are driven out of their hive and their society falls apart (Millman, 2012).

The poem is a satirical and paradoxical comment on the functioning of British society after the start of the Industrial Revolution. This was time where suddenly commoners were able to improve their standing through an accumulation of wealth and material things rather than through the restrictive right of birth. The poor were able to emulate a grander life and consumer spending created a whole new way for people to convey status (Millman, 2012). It is interesting to note that in this way, branding and owning branded products actually equalizes people (Saris-Brandon, 2014), as anybody, not only the rich by birth, can achieve status through the accumulation of wealth and this status is then validated by brands (Landa, 2006).

Written over 300 years ago, Mandeville's poem is still relevant today. Then as today, it can be recognized that the vices of society such as consumption, selfishness and indulgence actually create a breeding ground

for creativity, ingenuity and employment, leading to a better life for both rich and poor (Millman, 2012).

The vice of consumption is generated by the desire for self-actualization, recognized as the pinnacle need in Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs, as seen in Figure 3.1.5. We use the consumption of brands to gain a level of status and temporarily fulfill the need for self-actualization (Landa, 2006), and the brands we consume stand for values, and communicate images, promises and ideals that we use to form our identities (Riewoldt, 2002). But the relief of fulfilling this need is short lived, which sends us out to buy more than we need all over again (Landa, 2006).

It is evident at this point, that all of these components work together to form a delicate eco-system. For without the need for self-actualization, we would not need brands and their products.

Without brands and consumerism there would be a lack of awareness resulting in a reduced demand for goods and services. Reduced demand would in turn result in reduced consumer spending and potentially lead to unemployment, and unemployed consumers lack the spending capability required to feel fulfilled.

In conclusion, we need brands and consumerism in order for society to survive and flourish, and our role as designers is to harness the creativity available to create designs that benefit not only the brand but the individual consumer and society as a whole.

### 3.1.4 Conclusion

Through this investigation, it can be seen that branding is an integral part of our everyday lives. However, in order to implement branding strategies and make brands successful by raising public awareness, we have to look at other fields of design and study in order to build our design repertoire and increase the effectiveness of our designs.

In terms of this dissertation, I aim to look at how customers currently interact with and experience the DV Chocolate brand on an Interior Architecture level and how these can be better designed in order to promote brand awareness and loyalty. In order to do this I have looked at sensory marketing and environmental psychology as tools that designers can use to create a memorable experience for a brand. These two elements will be briefly discussed hereafter, and branding, sensory marketing and environmental psychology will all play a role in the final design product.
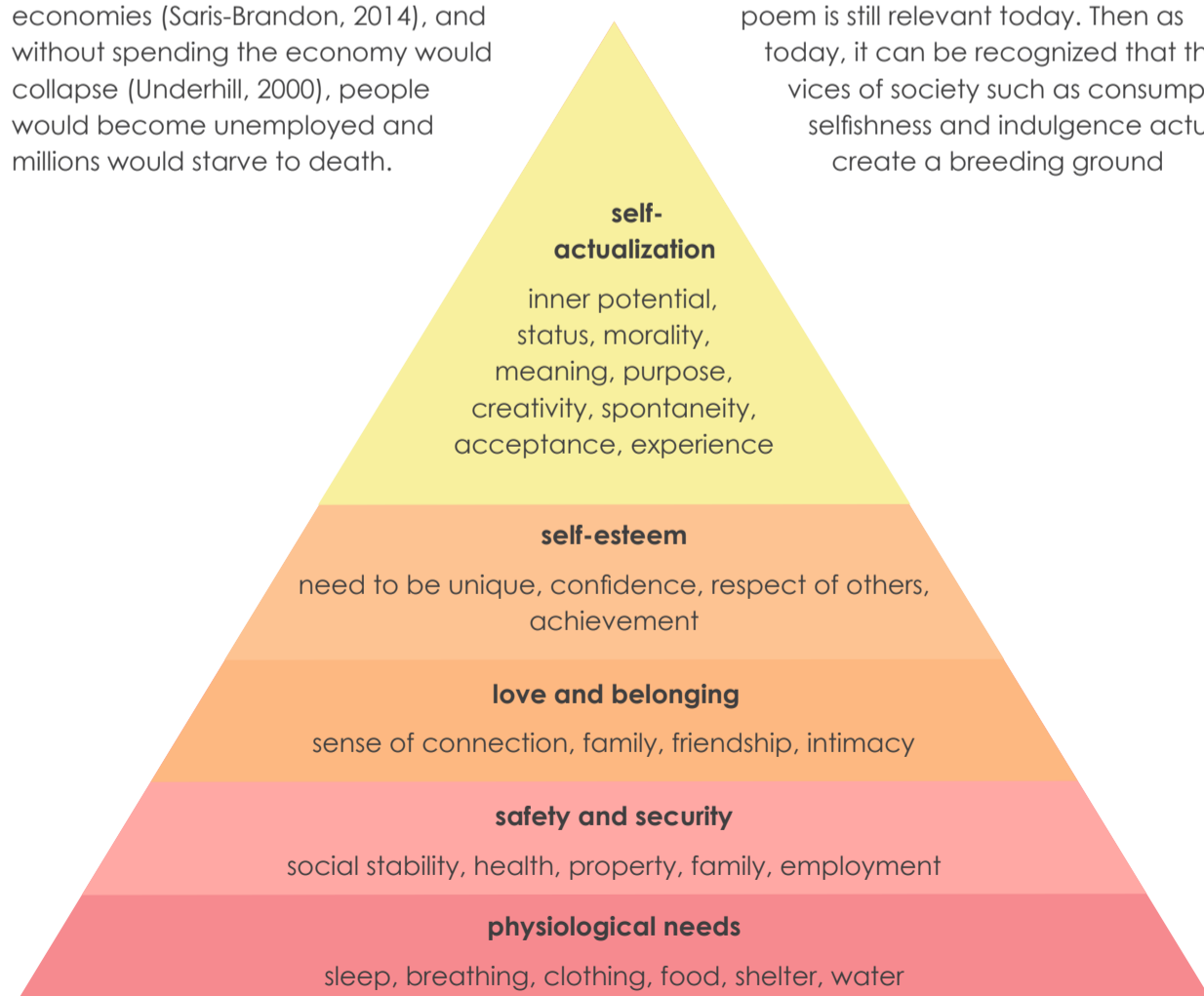


**self-actualization**
inner potential, status, morality, meaning, purpose, creativity, spontaneity, acceptance, experience

**self-esteem**
need to be unique, confidence, respect of others, achievement

**love and belonging**
sense of connection, family, friendship, intimacy

**safety and security**
social stability, health, property, family, employment

**physiological needs**
sleep, breathing, clothing, food, shelter, water

*Figure 3.1.5 Diagram showing Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs; taken from: Research History, 2012 and adapted by Author, 2015.*

# 3.2 Sensory Marketing

In order to create awareness about any brand, the company needs to market its products and services. The marketing department has a more direct interaction with the customer than the branding team and thus forms a major component when considering branding strategies and customer experience.

Entire industries have been centred around this concept of marketing and advertising, and typically a marketing manager or consultant will be part of the branding strategy team. With the aim of marketing being to draw in new customers and turn them into recurring customers, the marketing manager's short and long term marketing strategy will fall under the branding strategy, as all strategies need to work in harmony to reach the customer consistently.

In order to market the product there are a number of avenues that the marketing manager can exploit in order to bring awareness of the product to the customer, as can be seen in Figure 3.2.1. One of the most significant of these is retail design, which involves designing a store in order to make a profit, as well as a range of in store activities used to promote the product in store. This is often linked to impermanent pop-up stores and in store promotions which rarely allow for interaction with the customer or with their experience.

In summary, where branding requires the retail store to create an image of the brand in the mind of the user, and marketing takes that

image and sells it to the customer as an even more attractive prospect in order to increase sales and generate profits. Both of these requirements need to be taken into account by the store designer in order to produce a successful store that benefits the brans.

To sell or promote the product or service to the customer, the marketing manager has a number of strategies to draw from, including sensory marketing.

## 3.2.1 Sensory Marketing Explained

Sensory marketing is a strategy that appeals to the customers' senses in order to seduce them, thus influencing their behavior towards, and experience with a particular product or service. The focus is therefore put on the five human senses – sight, smell, sound, touch and taste – and the these senses need to work in harmony with other aspects of a store or business such as customer service etc., in order to create a positive brand experience for the consumer (American Marketing Association, 2015).

This strategy has been based on the idea that we can only experience the world around us through our 5 senses (Underhill, 2000, p. 167) and that it is more likely that the customer will remember the brand if their senses are engaged in the process of buying the product (Hussain, 2014). Our senses are the instinctive

way that we as humans perceive any stimuli from outside of the body and marketers will create an environment in order to harness these instincts so to sell a product that appeals to the customer's senses.

For these reasons, more and more brands are going a step further than using just visual and auditory advertising in order to promote their product and create a lasting and emotional bond with consumers by creating a positive brand experience (Hussain, 2014).

A good example of sensory marketing in practice is the Cadbury's Joyville pop-up experience (seen in Figure: 3.2.1). The Joyville Chocolate Fountain campaign, was a marketing strategy implemented in countries across the world, including South Africa that fully engaged all five of the customer's senses. Firstly the fountain was a *visual* spectacle that drew customers in from a distance. Then, the fountain had a number of *auditory* elements as well, such as the tubes that emitted the sounds of flowing chocolate situated around the central fountain or the actual fountain itself that played music in addition to the sound of falling liquid chocolate. The *olfactory* senses are involved through the smell of the melting chocolate and customers were allowed to buy (*touch*) liquid chocolate, thus adding the element of *taste* (Berkowitz, 2012). As a whole, this was a sensory spectacle to behold and many are still talking of the memory of that fountain today, thus enforcing the fact that sensory marketing can create a positive brand memory in the mind of the user.
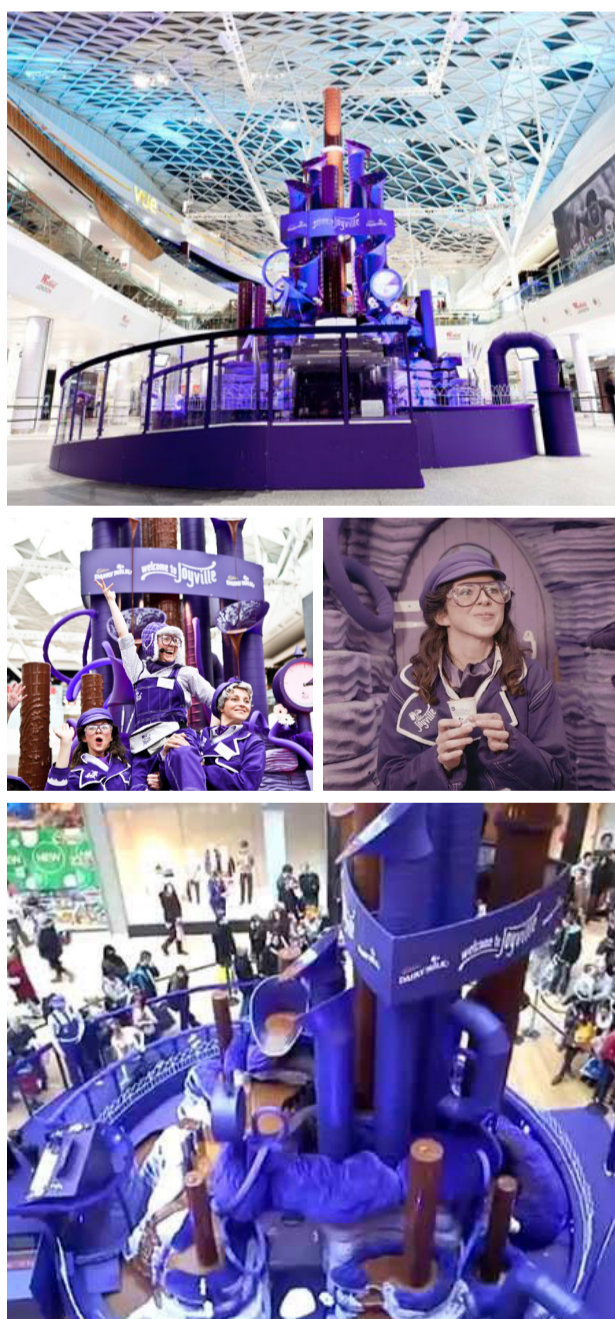


*Figure 3.2.1 Collage of images showing Cadbury Joyville campaign. Taken from Berkowitz, 2012*



# MARKETING

MARKETING = GETTING THE RIGHT PRODUCT IN THE HANDS OF THE CONSUMER AT THE RIGHT TIME, THE RIGHT PLACE AND IN THE RIGHT QUANTITY IN ORDER TO MAKE A PROFIT. (WA, 2015)
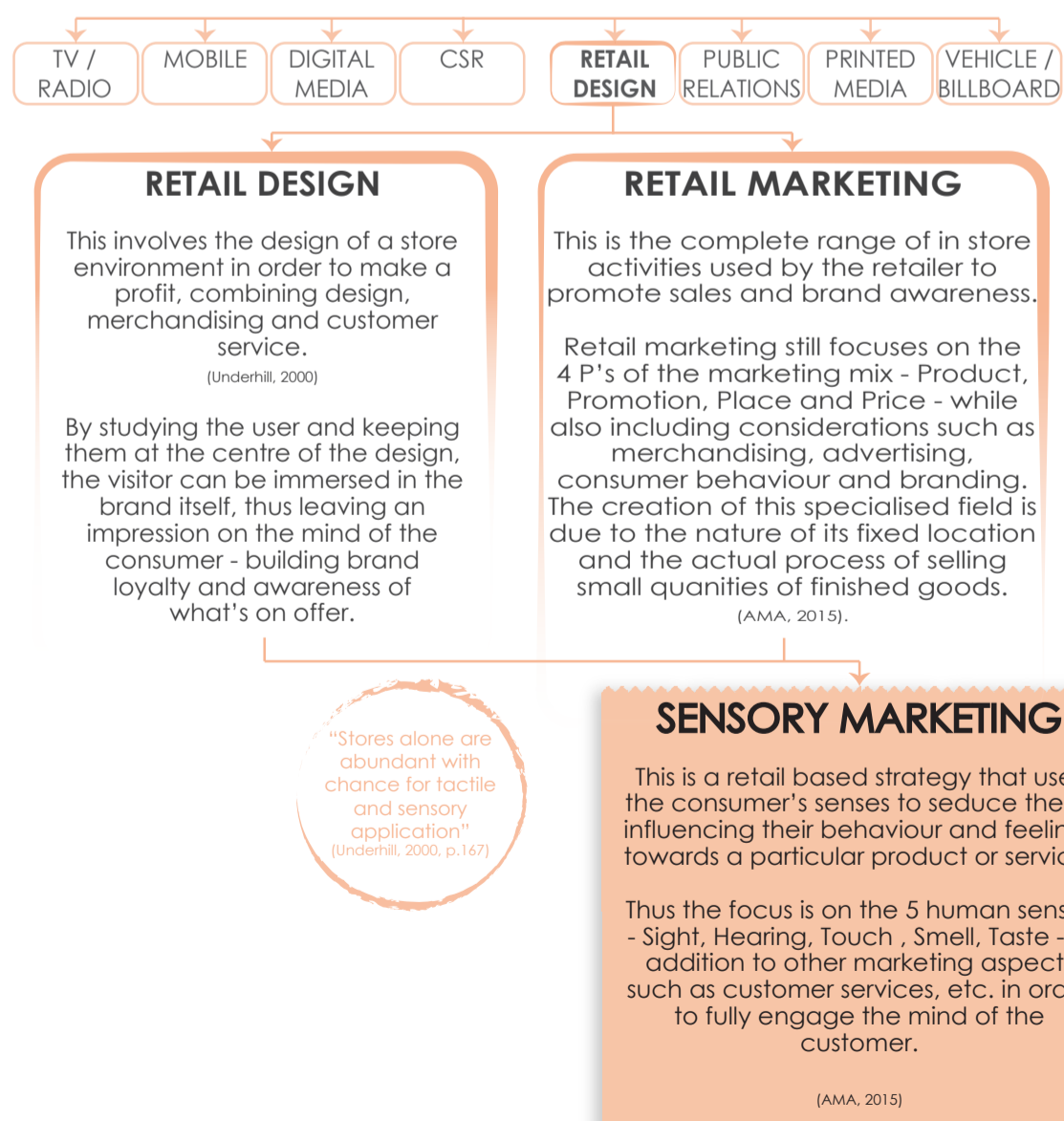
TV / RADIO | MOBILE | DIGITAL MEDIA | CSR | **RETAIL DESIGN** | PUBLIC RELATIONS | PRINTED MEDIA | VEHICLE / BILLBOARD

## RETAIL DESIGN

This involves the design of a store environment in order to make a profit, combining design, merchandising and customer service.
(Underhill, 2000)

By studying the user and keeping them at the centre of the design, the visitor can be immersed in the brand itself, thus leaving an impression on the mind of the consumer - building brand loyalty and awareness of what's on offer.

## RETAIL MARKETING

This is the complete range of in store activities used by the retailer to promote sales and brand awareness.

Retail marketing still focuses on the 4 P's of the marketing mix - Product, Promotion, Place and Price - while also including considerations such as merchandising, advertising, consumer behaviour and branding. The creation of this specialised field is due to the nature of its fixed location and the actual process of selling small quanities of finished goods.
(AMA, 2015).

"Stores alone are abundant with chance for tactile and sensory application"
(Underhill, 2000, p.167)

## SENSORY MARKETING

This is a retail based strategy that uses the consumer's senses to seduce them, influencing their behaviour and feelings towards a particular product or service.

Thus the focus is on the 5 human senses - Sight, Hearing, Touch , Smell, Taste - in addition to other marketing aspects such as customer services, etc. in order to fully engage the mind of the customer.

(AMA, 2015)

*Figure 3.2.2 Diagram discussing how sensory marketing fits into the retail marketing and retail design strategies. Author, 2015.*

## 3.3 Environmental Psychology

### 3.2.2 Conclusion

In conclusion, it is clear that sensory marketing and experience can create an emotional connection between a customer and a brand that is capable of influencing the buying decisions of the consumer (Vaid, 2003). Sensory marketing is an exciting and growing marketing strategy in South Africa and one makes sense in terms of designing an experience based store for De Villiers Chocolate.

Due to the similarities between sensory marketing and environmental psychology, the effects of appealing to each sense will be discussed in the next section.

Everywhere you go, a person's thoughts, feelings and actions are influenced by their surrounding environment, whether it is at home, at work or in a retail environment. Based on the effects of the environment on the psyche of the individual, a person will create certain perceptions and associations about a space or object, which will in turn influence their actions (Kopec, 2012).

Although this happens in every location across the world, this relationship between space and psyche is even more important in the retail sector where a negative connotation formed in the mind of the user directly impacts the company's profits (BUILT, 2008). This is an especially important concern when the store is a three dimensional representation of a brand that is supposed to market itself, its product and its brand. In this case, a poor perception of a retail store can lead to a poor perception of the brand itself, thus leading to a distrust in the company and lowered brand loyalty and lowered sales and profits.

These perceptions are obviously subjective to the customer and can be based on any number of things such as the customer's belief system, preferences, gender, age, personality, status or past experiences (Kopec, 2012). In addition to these, a customer's perception of a brand or store will also rely heavily on the service in store and the brand's ability to fulfill their brand promise. Unfortunately, all of these factors are not under the designer's control. What the designer can take control of, however, is the design of the store by
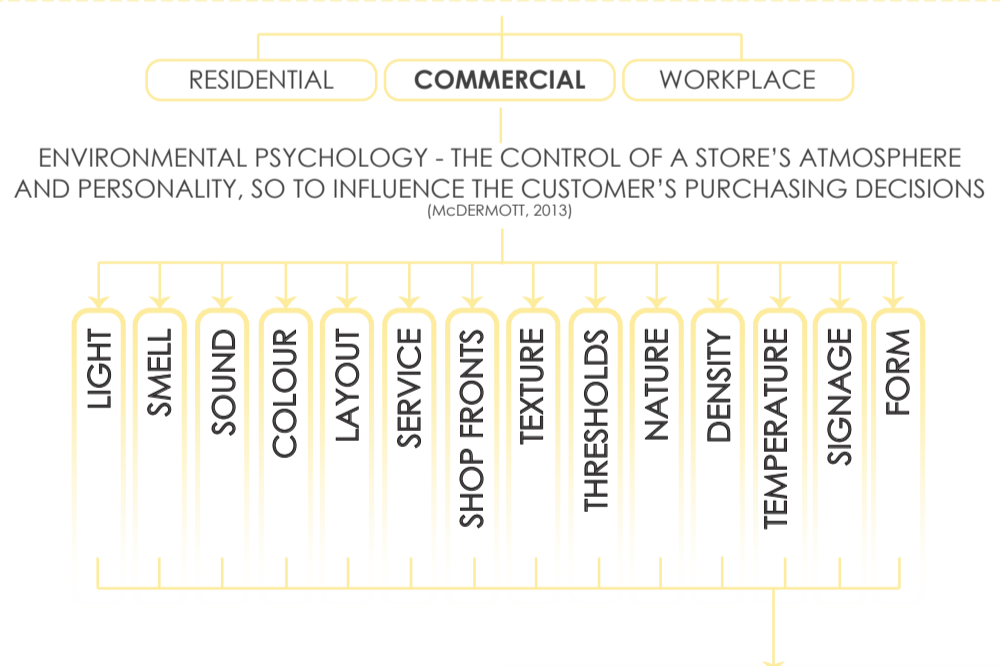
designing it in such a way as to invoke specific feelings and actions from the customer while in store in order to try and create a positive image in the mind of the user.

Due to the experiential nature of interior design (Königk, 2015), it is up to us as designers to find ways to alter the experience in order to create both positive brand experience and profitable outcomes. The design of the store is also important from a proprietor's perspective as the main objectives of a store are sales and brand awareness and if the store is perceived as a negative environment, customers will not return. As a result, more and more companies are trying to create better and more positive retail environments to increase customer satisfaction, encourage customers to return, increase brand awareness and potentially increase profits.

### 3.3.1 Environmental Psychology or Atmospherics Explained

Environmental psychology (often referred to as atmospherics) involves all the tangible and intangible elements of a store's design that can be controlled by the designer so to influence the buyer's behavior and achieve a profitable result (Eroglu & Machleit, 1993). It involves designing according to sensory stimuli in order to elicit an emotional response in the customer so to positively influence their buying behavior (Kopec, 2012).



# ENVIRONMENTAL PSYCHOLOGY

RESIDENTIAL · **COMMERCIAL** · WORKPLACE

ENVIRONMENTAL PSYCHOLOGY - THE CONTROL OF A STORE'S ATMOSPHERE AND PERSONALITY, SO TO INFLUENCE THE CUSTOMER'S PURCHASING DECISIONS
(McDERMOTT, 2013)

LIGHT · SMELL · SOUND · COLOUR · LAYOUT · SERVICE · SHOP FRONTS · TEXTURE · THRESHOLDS · NATURE · DENSITY · TEMPERATURE · SIGNAGE · FORM

*"... the longer a shopper remains in store, the more he or she will buy. And the amount of time a shopper spends in store depends on how comfortable and enjoyable the experience is."*

*- PACO UNDERHILL, 2006*

## ENVIRONMENTAL PSYCHOLOGY

In this case, this refers to all the tangible and intangible elements of the store design that can be controlled by the designer in order to influence buyer behaviour and receive a profitable result.

This would include the design and control of form, texture, colour, layout, music, smell, and customer service among other aspects.

(Eroglu & Machleit, 1993)

*Figure 3.3.1 Diagram discussing the components of Environmental Psychology. Author, 2015.*

In practice, environmental psychology is often used to differentiate between one store and another. The design of both the interior and exterior of the store not only attract the customer into the store but also convey to the customer a range of information on the quality and value of the product or brand (Kopec, 2012). In this way, environmental psychology works in tandem with the branding and sensory marketing strategies to market both the brand and the product, creating a positive brand experience for the user. Where branding and marketing are more programmatic and idealistic in nature, environmental psychology tools form the pragmatic backbone of the retail design.

There are multitudes of atmospheric aspects or tools that a retail designer can draw on in order to influence buyer behavior, many of which can be linked to the buyer's five senses. These include smells or aromas; textures that you can touch; music or other sounds that you can hear; temperature that you can feel and a number of visual aspects such as light, colour, storefronts, signage and form all of which can influence a customer's perception of a space. Other more subconscious aspects include things like density and perceived crowding; store layout; thresholds and customer service. All of these need to be considered both individually and holistically by the retail designer in order to create a holistic and engaging experience for the customer's senses, so to create a positive and lasting brand memory in the mind of the consumer. It is also worth remembering that an ambivalent user might not remember or form a connection

with a good retail experience, but a negative retail experience will never be forgotten (Kopec, 2012).

An example of environmental psychology in action can be clearly seen in the design of theme parks, such as Orlando's Walt Disney World (Figure 3.3.2). Walt Disney World and its subsidiary theme parks around the world are built and designed with the specific objective of seducing and fully engaging the mind of the visitor, fully submerging them in a different, escapist reality for a while. Each subsection of every park is created to immerse the visitor in the fantasy of another world, time or movie, which gives the visitor a warped perception of time and encourages this visitor to spend more money for this 'once in a lifetime' experience.

Furthermore, each and every part of each sub-section, right down to the types of screws and floor finishes is designed to create a positive and authentic atmosphere that encourages spending both time and money in the park. The measures taken to encourage this are very subtle and are unnoticeable to the unobservant eye but each and all of the elements work together to form an atmosphere of excitement. For example, the floor surfaces differ vastly to achieve specific outcomes – outside areas, food courts and other transit areas are paved with hard materials to encourage people to move through certain areas faster, whereas stores alongside these are outfitted with thick plush carpets that sooth the visitors sore feet, thus encouraging them to linger and spend more on merchandise to lengthen the pain relief of

their tired soles. Even the layout of each park is designed with the visitor's psychology in mind, cleverly supplying food stops around the park, so that just at the point where visitors will start to get peckish there will be snacks to be found at high prices.

To continue this discussion, a number of examples of environmental psychology tools and their potential effects on the consumer have been briefly investigated below. There are many, many ways of influencing buyer behavior and thus only a few examples will be mentioned.

## 3.3.2 Environmental Psychology Tools

### A. Smell

» Since humans take over 23 000 breaths every 24 hours, our olfactory sense is one of the most important elements to consider (McDermott, 2013).

» Because the olfactory sense is connected to the body's limbic system (i.e. the part of the brain that directly affects your moods and emotions), smells have the greatest effect on customers' moods (McDermott, 2013). 75 % of our emotions are generated by smells and thus olfactory senses are the most impressionable, responsive and memorable of the five senses, invoking memory instinctively (Hussain, 2014) as the mind links a specific odor to a particular memory or object (McDermott, 2013).

» The odor can either be pleasant or



*Figure 3.3.2 Collage of images showing environmental psychology in Walt Disney World, Orlando. Taken from (Clockwise from Top Left) : Mini Travellers, 2015; Jones, 2013; Jones, 2013; Wdpromedia, 2010 ; T&G Construction, 1997; Ford, 2013; Creative Arts Inc, 2011*

unpleasant, and this directly affects the mood of the customer. But it should be noted that even pleasant smells that are too intense become unpleasant (McDermott, 2013). By introducing a scent into an area, designers can create the illusion that a space is bigger, fresher, brighter and cleaner than it really is (Kopec, 2012, p. 303).

» The smell should also be consistent with the product being sold in order to not confuse the consumer's mind, i.e. a chocolate shop should smell like chocolate; or a coffee shop should smell like coffee (McDermott, 2013).

## B. Sound

» People are naturally attuned to sounds and noise and their relative associations. This is almost a subconscious sense and does not need the full attention of the customer in order to make an impact (Hussain, 2014).

» Similarly to the sense of smell, sounds can also evoke memories or associations in the mind of the user, and this is why advertising has become both visual and auditory (Hussain, 2014).

» The use of sound can both retract and repel customers (van Es, 2011), depending on its volume, frequency, tempo, context, pitch and source (BUILT, 2008).

» For example, slow music causes customers to browse or eat more slowly (Hussain, 2014), loud music makes people spend the same amount of money faster, and classic music makes the product seem more expensive (Lubin, 2011). Music with a moderate tempo will produce the best level of arousal for shoppers (Kopec, 2012). Similarly, music that is familiar makes people feel as if they have spent longer in the store than they actually have, whereas unfamiliar music would encourage the customer to linger in the store longer (Live & Breathe, 2010).

## C. Texture

» With over four million sensory receptors in our skin, our sense of touch is a valuable consideration (Hussain, 2014) as it adds a level of authenticity to an interior and therefore the related brand.

» For example, natural materials or materials that mimic these generally tend to sooth the psyche (Green, 2012)

» Also, reflective surfaces play a large part in influencing behaviour. Reflective surfaces tend to attract people's attention and slow them down so they can pay more attention to the products being displayed (Underhill, 2000, p. 158).

## D. Temperature

» Temperature can widely affect the comfort level of any space, and is typically a concern addressed in retail stores where a drop in temperature in store will encourage a customer to buy winter clothing and vice versa (Gronewald, 2007).

## E. Form

» Form can easily cause relaxation or stress depending on the form in question (Green, 2012).

» Angled walls or visually floating items subconsciously increase the viewer's tension and excitement and therefore need to be used only in the appropriate context such as in a stadium, etc. (Green, 2012).

» On the other hand, suspending elements from the ceiling can add to the atmosphere of the space while breaking up the volume, creating a sense of relaxation and breathing room (LEASE AFRICA, 2013).

## F. Light

» Light falls under the visual sense category and it plays a large role in the personality of a store and the perception of a product in store.

» In order to affect the customer's mood or perception, the customer's retina gathers information about the lighting conditions, and sends this feedback to the pineal gland, which produces more or less melatonin based on the lighting conditions – the darker it is, the more melatonin that will be produced, the sleepier you will get. Melatonin also has an effect on the hypothalamus which is the part of the brain that controls a person's appetite, mood and sleeping patterns (Chait, 2014).

» In order to combat this, retail stores tend to be light and bright in order to prevent the production of melatonin and increase interest and arousal in the store itself (Brigham, 2013). Clothing stores especially use light to create excitement by using illuminated shelving displays, lighting accents and light contrast in order to create the impression of value (Chait, 2014).

» Fast food chains also use bright lights in order to excite customers and to get them to move quickly in and out of the store. Restaurants on the other hand, use warm and muted light to provide a sense of intimacy for the customer, allowing them to relax, stay longer and increase their bill (Chait, 2014). Similarly restaurants also tend to use natural lighting such as candles or lanterns on the table to enhance the mood of the customer and create an intimate atmosphere (BUILT, 2008).

» The colour or temperature of the light used also plays a large role in the atmosphere of a store. Bright white light tends to render colours well and makes a space feel large and clean, whereas a warmer, more yellow light will make a space feel more welcoming and intimate (Chait, 2014).

» Using coloured lights is also becoming a popular trend in the retail industry, but this must be used carefully because the hue of the light can positively or negatively affect the customer's behaviour and perception of the store based on their own associations with a particular colour (Chait, 2014).

## G. Colour

» Colour is the most obvious and one of the most influential elements within a space, and it can truly make or break the success of a retail store. This is because we rely

heavily on our sight to gather information, acting as the primary source for our brain to gather data from (Morton, 2010).

» This is especially important in a retail setting where first impressions are what will often decide whether or not the customer will enter the store. Subconscious first impressions are made in the first 90 seconds after initially sighting the store, and more than half of that impression is based on the colour of the store that can be seen (Hussain, 2014).

» Using colour gives the designer the means to subtly convey a message or meaning without the use of words. A single image of the store can provide the customer or viewer with a lot of information, in a short space of time and, if used consistently, colour can actually increase brand awareness and recognition by up to 80% (Morton, 2010).

» Colour alone can change the atmosphere of a space and can hence be described as a subtle messaging system (Kopec, 2012) that will encourage certain customer behaviors or actions. For example, natural woods will make an environment feel warm and cozy, encouraging them to spend more time in store (Kopec, 2012).

» In terms of influencing customer behavior, the use of certain colours can attract a customer's attention, cause them to linger or speed up, affect their perceived value of a product or space, or increase stimulation to cause a higher level of excitement around a product (van Es, 2011).

» The hue or tint of the colour used in a retail environment can influence both the customer's reaction to a space and their perception of the brand associated with this space.

- **Red** hues for example, can stimulate the customer, giving them more energy and attracting their attention. This colour encourages action and will make the customer make quick decisions and move quickly through the store (Roselt, 2015). Red is also often associated with danger and this reduces the customers' ability to make analytical decisions while encouraging quick impulse purchases (Morin, 2014).

- **Pink** is a softer hue and has a more calming effect on the viewer depending on the tint (Roselt, 2015). Often pink s a calming colour that drains the user of the space of their energy (Morin, 2014).

- **Orange** and other peachy colours can be used to create a warm, inviting and creative environment for the user. It is also considered a social range of colours as orange tends to encourage conversation, and it is often used in restaurants as it increases the user's appetite and digestion (Roselt, 2015). People also generally associate orange with things that are inexpensive or low cost and therefore the use of orange should be considered carefully (Morin, 2014).

- **Yellow** has a very divided and varied use and it is one of the most difficult colours to work with. On one hand, yellow can be considered one of the happiest and most uplifting colours, aiding with concentration, increasing energy levels and injecting life into a space (Roselt, 2015). However, very few people actually like the colour yellow (Morin, 2014), and it often needs to be used in conjunction with darker and more stable colours to create a balanced space (Roselt, 2015).
- **Green** is one of the most balanced, well-liked colours in the spectrum, creating both a sense of calm and rejuvenation. It can also be incorporated into any colour scheme or added through accents or planting to create a calm and balanced interior (Roselt, 2015). There also an established association between green and nature, and thus a feeling of growth, so use of the colour green often encourages productivity (Morin, 2014).
- **Blue** is the world's most favorite colour, probably to the calming and relaxing effect it has on our psyches (Roselt, 2015). Blue also has an association with nature (i.e. blue sky, blue water, etc.) which may also add to the peaceful nature of the colour (Morin, 2014). Typically the calm that this installs in the user allows them to build a sense of trust with the brand or interior involved (Morton, 2010).
- **White** often implies peace, cleanliness and innocence, and it encourages the feeling of open space and mindfulness (Roselt, 2015). White is also seen as a more contemporary colour choice and many brands have used it to give a sleek, clean look to their brand's identity. However, if the space is too monochromatic, the customer's mind is allowed to wonder from the product being sold due to a lack of stimulation, resulting in fewer sales (Morin, 2014).

## H. Layout

»  The layout of the store is one of the elements that have the most effect on a customer's in-store experience and it consists of a number of both major and minor elements. There are many, many things to consider when discussing the layout of the store, and only a few will be mentioned below.

»  Firstly, when considering the overall layout of the store, the designer should consider the rule of Invariant Right. This implies that people will always veer to the right hand side of a store first upon entering and therefore the most attractive and expensive stock should be put on the right hand side of a store (Underhill, 2000, p. 76).

»  Secondly is the common problem of waiting time, which is any point at which the customer has to wait for service. If the

customer perceives the waiting time to be long, the customer will become irritated and the customer's brand experience will be damaged. There are ways however of making this time feel shorter, and thus increase customer satisfaction. Examples of this include using interaction of the customer with staff or with an object; providing customers with something to read on the wall; ensuring that the process is logical and easy to follow as chaos adds to confusion and irritation; distracting customers with movies or graphics; etc. Each of these distract the customer from the time period they have waited in line and the perception of time waited is shortened (Underhill, 2000).

»  The next consideration is referred to as the "Butt-Brush Factor" (Underhill, 2000, p. 117). This refers to the fact that women do not have a high tolerance for crowding and density and it makes women feel very uncomfortable if their "butts" are brushed by other customers when they bend over to reach something on a lower shelf. Therefore, it is imperative to design wide aisles and leave a lot of room for customers to move past one another, because if the quarters are narrow customers will not want to spend extended periods of time in store, resulting on lower sales and profits. Another option is to create "catchment basin" nooks and crannies that allow customers to stand out of the way of traffic. This allows them to browse for longer without the threat of the butt-brush factor (Underhill, 2000, p. 118).

»  Following this, shelving solutions can play a role in customer experience. The shelving solutions should be able to accommodate the needs of both the customer and the employee and should allow for a changing variety of display items. Having merchandise that is accessible to customers basically markets itself as customers can physically interact with the product (Underhill, 2000) and other self-service elements such as vending machines or self-service coffee machines allow customers to feel in control of their choices and their buying experience (Benson, 2012). The shelving units should also not block the sightlines across the store, as being able to see over the racks or shelves creates a sense of openness and roominess, which encourages the customer to linger longer in store (Underhill, 2000).

## I. Shopfront

»  A shopfront is often one of the first interactions a customer has with a brand, and therefore it is imperative that a shopfront makes a good first impression (Chang, 2013).

»  A shop window often provides context to what is happening in store and can easily affect the perceived value of the store. For example, many luxury retail brands have fabulous shop windows that even make news headlines. More general retailers put everything and the kitchen sink into their shop windows hoping to draw in customers, but this display of chaos often confuses

the customer where a more simple display would have gotten the point across more effectively (Chang, 2013).

»  Shopfronts should put forward a consistent message across all franchise options and this can easily be done by creating a consistent image in the shopfront (Chang, 2013).

»  The shopfront display should be easily changeable and should stand out from its surroundings and be visible from a distance (Lewis-Hodgson, 2007) in order to make an impact on the customer from their first glance (Chang, 2013).

»  Most importantly however, it should be remembered that the customer will not see the store as a flat image. Walking down a mall corridor, the customer will see the store from an angle and it will subconsciously irritate the customer to have to turn their heads and not focus on where they are walking (Underhill, 2000, p. 79). Thus it is prudent to ensure that all shopfront displays are angled and shopfronts in their entirety are considered at an angle in order to give the customer the most information in the easiest way and encouraging them to enter the store.

## J. Thresholds

»  Thresholds are a device that a designer needs to consider at the entrance of the store especially. A threshold is any transition between spaces that the customer has to go through to get from A to B.

»  Typically the entrance threshold includes the entrance itself and 20 paces into the store (Lewis-Hodgson, 2007). This area needs to be designed to slow the customer down quickly in order for them to start paying attention to the store's contents more quickly. Objects, merchandise and information placed in this initial zone is often lost on the customer (Underhill, 2000, p. 46), and this is why more expensive merchandise is often placed deeper in the store (Lewis-Hodgson, 2007).

»  In order to garner more of the customer's attention more quickly, designers can create a threshold experience in order to slow the customer down more quickly and thus shorten the "landing strip" area (Underhill, 2000, p. 46).

»  This threshold experience can be anything that draws the customers attention, anything from specific lighting around a door way, or a big electronic billboard, or a greeter that stands just inside the entrance welcoming customers into the store (Underhill, 2000)

»  One of the main ways of shortening the threshold distance is the installation of a Power Display. This may take many forms such as a huge horizontal bank of clothing that physically acts as a barrier for the customer, slowing them down before entering the store. This power display can also be a complex change in floor finish, or a large billboard that will cause the customer to pause and have a second look at where they are going and what is in front of them (Underhill, 2000, p. 49).

»  Designers can also push the threshold

beyond the store by starting to sell the experience outside of the shop, which is often done in restaurants (Underhill, 2000, p. 49). However this is very rarely allowed by a mall's centre management due to fire and health and safety concerns.

### K. Nature

» Nature is a difficult element to work with in a retail setting but when it can be used, planting and natural elements promote a positive perception about the associated brand, experience or product (Wolf, 2007).
» Natural elements also increase the perceived value of product or brand and they are consistently associated with higher priced and valued products (Wolf, 2007).
» Very often the natural elements become part of the brand's identity, and planting should thus be considered carefully if used (Wolf, 2007).

### L. Density

» Density and crowding can either encourage or discourage a customer to enter the store. Staying in the store often relies on other aspects such as the store's layout.
» Crowding is subjective to the customer's perception whereas density (the number of actual people in the store) is objective and countable (Kopec, 2012).
» Many factors can influence crowding either positively or negatively by stimulation, temperature, odor, density and noise (Kopec, 2012, p. 304).
» Crowding in a retail environment can be controlled by providing enough space to pass other customers while avoiding the "butt brush factor"; and by providing the customer with a level of control whether it is over their environment or over a process (BUILT, 2008), i.e. a process in store that distracts the customer from their proximity to others or other objects in the space.
» Lastly, it should be noted that although a clean and attractive shop will attract more customers into the store (Kopec, 2012, p. 306), too high or too low a density of people in to store can discourage new customers from entering.

### M. Service

» It should be noted that retail design and atmospherics cannot stand alone in creating an impression in the mind of the user, as every retail design requires staff who will support and uphold the brand image and values while filling out the brand experience for the consumer (Kopec, 2012).
» Not only does good customer service improve customer loyalty (Lewis-Hodgson, 2007), but also increases the perceived value of the product and increases both profits and impulse purchase sales (Underhill, 2000, p. 159).
» The aim of good customer service is to encourage relationship marketing, where customers become part of the advertising campaign by selling the brand through word of mouth (Lewis-Hodgson, 2007).

» Unfortunately this is not an area under the control of the interior designer, however the designer an recommend to the client that the staff should be friendly, knowledgeable, helpful and eager to please. Staff should also undergo regular training to increase their skill level and ensure that the customer experience is maintained on every level.

## 3.3.3. Conclusion

In conclusion, it can be seen that environmental psychology is a wide, overwhelming and ever growing body of knowledge from which designers can draw. Unfortunately, these atmospherics practices are often lost in the rush for completed drawings and many businesses have failed purely because of some fatal flaw in design.

To use environmental psychology, branding and sensory marketing together requires a team of specialists that fully understand how the customer's brain will react to certain influences. The interior architect then needs to be a part of this team in order to reach a successful outcome.  Although complex, it appears that this web between the three theoretical concepts can work cohesively to achieve a successful outcome, and it is my hope to start to show through my design that it is possible to at the very least start influencing customer behavior through design by drawing from these three concepts - environmental psychology, branding and sensory marketing.