

**By this point you may be wondering** how to incorporate scent into your marketing plans to boost the emotional impact of your brand or product. Well, why not learn it from the big guys? There are many organizations that have already designed signature scents to match the preferences and perceptions of their target customers, and they are now expanding their scent strategies to include marketing collateral, scent-embedded products, packaging, and various advertising mediums. And in this section, we're going to show you how you can do the same.

Imagine the effects of a Starbucks gift card enhanced with the aroma of a rich coffee blend. Think of a Godiva gift certificate, laden with the constant provocation of a dark chocolate scent. Envision a Home Depot credit card laced with the fragrance of cedar, or an Outback Steakhouse gift certificate wafting up the spicy aroma of its famous blooming onion. These marketing items are no longer *mere* transactional tools. Now they also serve as marketing triggers, by tripping emotional wires in the brain, inducing fond memories, and activating and eliciting desired responses in the mind and body. Stirring up an emotional response with scent can strengthen the bonds of brand loyalty.

Most people are creatures of tradition. I drank Maxwell House coffee for most of my life, as my parents did. It took a long stay in Europe to realize that I actually had a choice over quality coffee beans. Sales of cars, detergents, retail stores, lawnmowers, and power tools benefit from loyalty and tradition. When I opened a regional branch of Wizard Studios in Puerto Rico, I learned a lot about the strength and importance of tradition.

In our event business we always used Makita or Bosch power tools. My U.S. crews overwhelmingly voted these to be the most durable on the market. Yes, we could burn them out with exhaustive use, so we bought them by the case, but they were the “best product,” according to our experience. Yet, while equipping my new crews in Puerto Rico, I discovered that they absolutely refused to use Makitas and insisted on Black & Decker. In our industry, Black & Decker was better known for consumer use. But I couldn’t argue with the brand loyalty that my crews had with Black & Decker—or with Sears branded products. These island roadie natives had a long-standing tradition with these two brands, and these were the brands of their friends and their fathers.

Big brands come with longstanding traditions. If we have been using a Nokia phone, we are likely to buy another. If we are used to one operating system, we want to stay with it despite the computer. If we think that we look good in a certain designer’s duds, we continue to buy them because we believe she understands our body type and taste. However, this is the multisensory century. This is not our parents’ world where all it took to market a product was face-time, impressions and mind-share. There are too many products and too many choices for the consumer of today.

We no longer have to know a lot about our customer, we actually must know him. He has to look at our brand not as a choice amongst others, but as a personality and a possible friend, one with whom there is a possibility of having an enduring relationship. The idea is to intrigue your customer with your character and story, and to do this, you need to view your branding strategies as a performance. You are in the business of entertainment. Are you looking for a long-running series of command performances or a one-night stand?



## Chapter 10

# What's Your Whiff Factor?

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**You could have the most amazing product** that the world has ever seen—even better than sliced bread or the little blue pill—yet if you fail to tell others about it, or fail to communicate its features and benefits, you most likely will be the proud owner of a fantastic idea that never made it in the marketplace. Accept that you need to have a marketing strategy.

Every person and every business has a brand—an appearance or identity in the world. If you wouldn't think about going around half-dressed, why would you fail to “dress” your brand? Your logo, style, and corporate culture denote who you are to your customers and employees. The elements that display your brand image are evident at every turn in your business. Once you have added the emotional element of a branded signature scent to the mixture, you'll view it as an integral part of the whole package. Where and how you incorporate scenting denotes your Whiff Factor.

### ***Incorporating Your Brand New Scent***

The simple fact is that every business has a brand and must advertise its brand, otherwise the brand will be poorly perceived. In the past, when hearing small business owners boast, “I don't advertise,” I must admit that I've wondered if this might be the reason that these exclusive entrepreneurs' enterprises have remained small and

never realized their full potential. Perhaps they defined advertising differently than I do. So let's clear this matter up. Anyone who stays in business for a reasonable length of time does advertise—we all do—whether it's through word of mouth, promotions, discounts, and product or service trials, or through the more conventional means of print, television, radio, and online ads, brochures, coupons, POP displays, or other avenues.

Marketing is integral to every type of business venture and individual. We market ourselves every day through appearance, demeanor, style, presentation, and responses—and we market our businesses in much the same way. No matter what your profession (doctor, lawyer, furniture manufacturer, real estate agent, or computer repairman) you are marketing your services—for if you aren't, you will soon be among the unemployed. In that case you'll *still* be forced to market, only with a paper cup and a cardboard sign!

With this concept in mind, let's briefly examine several of the many applications where *scent* marketing can make an impact on your efforts. As we work our way outward from the corporate office to the consumer, we'll be identifying strategic areas where your scented brand can make an indelible emotional mark.

### ***The Lobby and the Boardroom***

Once you have established your own unique branded signature scent for your business, products or services, it is only logical that you create a complete scent script for the entire brand experience. Just as you script your receptionist's phone responses for initial verbal contact with your customers, and put no small effort into designing the visual aesthetics of your waiting room or lobby—assuring a good first impression from visitors—it is equally important that the first impression of your brand be simultaneously imprinted with a scented communiqué.

Let's assume that after a short tour of the various offices and divisions in your business, you accompany your clients into the boardroom for your presentation and ultimate pitch. Wouldn't it make sense to touch the emotions of your clients with the pleasing waft of your scent while appealing to their judgment and decision making process?

Furthermore, clients aren't the only benefactors of your company's scent, for brand loyalty can be imprinted upon employees, suppliers, and partners during the run of ordinary business, or during strategic negotiations while seated in the boardroom.

### ***In the Field***

In most organizations, only the biggest clients visit the home office. Remaining business is done in the field. Sales representatives are equipped with collateral: business cards, brochures, product sheets, catalogues, and sample kits. Although it is up to the human resources department and designated trainers to select the quality of personnel that represent your brand, you can enhance your sales reps' presentations by equipping them with a signature-scented collection of marketing media. The technology exists to scent all kinds of printed materials, including plastics.

The business card is the ultimate statement of credibility for a salesperson. Usually it is the first symbol of a company that a potential client encounters after a hello and a handshake, thus making it an important medium through which you can communicate your brand. Scented business cards are a natural opportunity to mold the perception you intend your customer to develop. It is an unequivocal ally for your troops in the field.

Scent marketing will be distributed through all series of marketing paraphernalia. Accoutrements of business like sales brochures, letterhead, catalogues, product data sheets, white papers, and other printed information should also be branded with your organization's signature scent.

Why would you go to the trouble of scenting marketing collateral? Because, as it sits submerged within endless stacks of other paper and brochures, the scent's strategic nimble legs and wafting tendrils will be much more difficult to ignore.

This strategic style of branding covers every category of promotional item. Pens, key chains, calendars, bookmarks, cigar cutters, hats, tee shirts, and golf balls, and the entire promotional product inventory can be scented. Through them, a symbol of the emotional bond now sits upon the customer's desk, as well as in his pocket; a subtle scented

reminder that returns his focus to your brand. As these items lay in your client's cluttered office, they will be calling out for attention, and speaking to the client's emotions and perceptions. These same items may make it into your client's pocket, home, or even onto the golf course.

Wouldn't it be nice to know that your clients think about you on their days off?

### ***In the Consumer's Home***

Today most consumers learn of products and services from the comfort of their La-Z-Boys or while surfing the Web on a home computer. Although televisions, computers, and musical devices are only slowly catching on to the power of delivering scented messages, there are many other avenues through which you can deliver your scented brand to their doorsteps: magazines, newspapers, and coupons, for instance. Perfumers have long been using scented advertising in magazines to offer potential customers a whiff of their products. Now other businesses are also taking the plunge by incorporating microencapsulated scents into their magazine ads. These ads release scent when touched. More and more printers and publishers are embracing this trend.

Newspapers have been primed for scent marketing. Advertisements that morning readers once may have overlooked, can now call out from the page—demanding attention wherever they may be placed. Scented “advertorials” and vanity articles can now move up the ladder to the ranks of the examined. They have 136 percent more chance of being read, instead of only being afforded a passing glance.

As print circulation has stumbled and declined, newspaper publishers may find their own reasons to add aromas to their marketing efforts. Wouldn't it be interesting if readers looked forward to the Wednesday food section, not just to search out the latest recipes, but also to take a little whiff of the week's selected dish? The travel section could be complemented with a scent from any chosen destination. And any pleasant smelling aroma should be able to offer a lift to the ever dismal and shrinking classified section. Here's a question to

ponder in the editorial room: What should your op-ed page smell like? In fact, what do politics smell like . . . really?

Just a few more ideas on collaborative print advertising: *Sports Illustrated* swimsuit edition—tanning oil; *Car and Driver*—leather, rubber, and race car oil, *Condé Nast Traveler*—aromas reminiscent of specific destinations, like Greece, Bermuda, and the Yucatan Peninsula. Any publication could increase its presence on the newsstand by making a collaborative effort with its advertisers. This spectacular form of advertising can have consumers picking up your latest issue just to check out the scent.

The local yellow pages could offer more than block ads, red print, and tenured placement, for the owner of a corner pizzeria might be willing to increase his odds of attracting customers by taking out a scented ad. Other types of local businesses that could benefit from scented ads are lawn services, auto dealerships, dry cleaners, swimming pool companies, and plumbing services, which could all get a boost while their customers' fingers are doing the walking.

The final goldmine of in-home advertising lies a few feet outside the door, at the mailbox. Direct mail is big business and it doesn't seem to be going away any time soon. One of the leading American suppliers in this business, Valpak Direct Marketing Systems, which is headquartered in Largo, Florida, mails out more than 20 billion offers in 528 million familiar blue envelopes on behalf of 66,000 advertisers each year.<sup>1</sup> That represents a lot of trees and a lot of business owners. If the calculated rate of redemption could be increased 10, 20, or even 50 percent by the placement of scented ads, it would easily prove to be a great marketing strategy.

### **Public Spaces**

You can undoubtedly attract more attention to your billboards, posters, banners, and outdoor signage if you add aroma to them. Of course, roadside billboards are neither a cost effective, nor efficient way to deliver scent messages to drivers. But you should not ignore areas where pedestrian traffic flows, where smaller billboards, street signs, and banners meet high traffic patterns. Fashion and food

advertisements employing a seductive scent strategy can literally stop people in their tracks.

It is important to choose the right method of delivery, perhaps from an embedded scent release system or a machine delivery—you may need expert help to decide—but take note of this application, for it will soon make the grade.

Posters, banners, and outdoor company signage can all become more noticeable by adding an aromatic element. The recent deluge of digital signage in public spaces can expect to engage more consumers with a scented message.

### ***On Premises***

Once you have lured consumers to your home turf—the place where they buy your product or experience your service—you can implement your scent strategy through any number of mediums. Aromas can be diffused from POP displays, end cap booths, stand-alone kiosks, aisle displays, digital and conventional signage, and the shelves (from a device placed next to the price sticker or straight out of a coupon dispenser).

Once customers select an item in that particular setting, they can bring it up to your register, present a signature-scented affinity card to receive your club discount, then use your signature-scented credit card to pay for their purchase—and maybe even pick up an equally fragranced gift card for a loved one back home. They could receive a scented receipt—or not. It depends on how emotional you believe they'll become over the bill.

The relative importance of scenting your affinity cards, credit cards, gift cards, and gift certificates lies in the fact that consumers now carry brand messages with them wherever they go. These types of branded items are valued by the customer, carried on his person, or brought into his home. When strategically scented, an affinity card is no longer just a tool for transactions, but carries a subtle message reaching directly into the consumers' brain. It creates a stronger emotional bond between the customer and all of the products that the brand offers.

A card like this is not just a branded piece of plastic planted deep inside someone's purse, but a subtly scented marketing trigger that

holds its nose to the grindstone, perpetually working to increase loyalty to your brand and possibly trigger an increase in your sales.

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### ***Full Coverage vs. Point of Purchase***

No matter what study you read, if an aroma proved to influence consumers in a specific manner, most likely the scenting was seamless. Seamlessness means that there are no gaps in coverage. To brand your environment with a special scent, it makes sense to completely immerse the environment, instead of merely offering a whiff at the front door. You'll need to cover the entire public space.

Be respectful of your patrons. Full immersion does not necessarily mean using a highly noticeable or overbearing fragrance. It merely implies the complete coverage of an area. Your concentration levels need to be adjusted in accordance with the environment in which they are being diffused, otherwise you may cause displeasure. You can deliver a concentration just above or even below the customer's awareness level.

I point out the full coverage factor because many scent delivery systems offer only minimal coverage. For retailers truly wishing to scent their store environments, such technology is insufficient. If you are excited at the potential of increasing the duration of your customers' in-store visits with the appeal of a scented atmosphere, logic dictates that you deliver the essence throughout the store. This is common sense. Would you even think of branding your environment with partial lighting or partial flooring, or by playing music in only select portions of the environment? One would hope not. Full coverage is important when delivering a signature scent intended to represent the store's brand.

For regional or localized scenting to trigger specific effects, you need only create a seamless atmosphere within that locality. If you seek to scent a POP display, or one specific department, or an enclosed environment, a lower coverage delivery system would be adequate for your needs.

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### ***Scented Packaging***

The next element of branding lies in product packaging and in the products themselves. The brand can be offered in a seamless fashion throughout all aspects of a company's messaging. The packaging and print may be laced with a branded scent, or an aroma may be released as the package is opened. The product itself will then continue the branding script, with microcapsules of scent embedded on the surface.

Large food companies are jumping into the olfactory-packaging field. Soon you will be able to scratch and sniff the outside of a bottle of barbecue sauce to get a whiff of the contents. From cookies and sweets to sauces and soups, scented packaging is in its infancy. It's truly amazing that the results of millions of dollars of research spent in perfecting flavors and fragrances for food products over the years remains bottled up inside the package upon the store shelf—and only realized once the product is finally purchased and taken home. The new paradigm in marketing is to offer a little teaser of the product, enticing the buyer with fragrant packaging.

Scented packaging is not merely the territory of food and beverage products. Consumers have been opening shampoo bottles and dish detergent containers in the aisles of stores for many years to take a whiff. This new marketing paradigm will extend to toothpaste, personal care products, dog food, and virtually every corner of the supermarket. The manufacturer now has an opportunity to show its wares and tell its story—relating directly to the consumer's emotions—right from the shelf.

An entire spectrum of product packaging is in its infancy. One day we may open up our new computer, DVD player, video game, lawnmower, barbecue grill, or linens, and receive a pleasant scent of the brand that lies inside. It's easy to imagine smells that could be used effectively to brand a barbecue grill, lawnmower or linens, but it will take a bit more brand strategizing for Apple, Dell, and other electronics suppliers to develop a scent.

### ***On the Road—Tradeshows, Freestanding Exhibits, and Product Launches***

The final frontier of your scent marketing strategy lies wherever

your brand travels, in the community and at industry events. Traveling road shows, trade shows, product reveals and launches, and even shareholder meetings should be taken into consideration as a part of your full multisensory brand strategy. Whenever your logo appears, the environment should look, sound, and *smell* like your brand. Once you have entered the scent dimension, it is imperative to continue reinforcing the brand experience at every level and through every possible medium.

Conventions are ripe opportunities for scent branding. There is no better way of capturing the attention of a multitude of distracted attendees, than to waft a pleasant scent into the air, beckoning individual brains to pay attention to the product before they ever actually encounter it. At one trade show event, Whiff Solutions displayed its services to a group of over 15,000 attendees.<sup>2</sup> We released a rich, flavorful aroma called “Chocolate Addiction” into the environment that radiated outward more than 100 yards. You can imagine the attention generated as the attendees followed their noses to the booth. For three days, we experienced hordes of inquisitors, two and three deep, first attracted by scent, then captivated by the idea. Of course we expected this response, and therefore we rewarded our guests with a rich array of foil wrapped chocolates. Our purpose was simply to demonstrate how well scent marketing works, even though we used a desire trigger as a simple solution.

The idea is not new. Trade show marketers have been using less effective desire triggers for years: promotional giveaways, pretty models, magicians, and entertainers. The difference in this case is that we were communicating with our potential clients' emotions long before they ever spotted us, knew who we were, or what we had to offer. And when we followed up on the event the following week by telephone, we soon found out that our potential clients now called us the “chocolate guys.”

Branded signature scents, thematic aromas, or any pleasant fragrance can be used to grab attention. Desire triggers are appropriate in some circumstances, but you can immediately see how it might get tricky at the National Restaurant Show or anywhere else that you're competing with a multitude of aromas. The evidence shows that

scenting your exhibit will be more effective at capturing attention than many other methods, and can really boost visits if your booth is positioned in a low traffic area.

Sponsored sporting events, industry trade shows, and promotional events should be scented with your brand aroma. A popular promotional technique that's prevalent in the liquor industry may also work for you. Promotional companies are hired to send attractive young women to nightclubs in order to promote new liquors. Many of the trendiest spirits are concocted with an essence of fruity flavors, such as raspberry, lime, lemon, and even pepper. Since the essence of vodka or gin is not an attractive scent for many people, it makes perfect sense to diffuse a fruity aroma into the air. Emotionally the consumer learns to equate the signature scent and attractive women with the product.

Think back to the concept of endorphin branding that was proposed in Chapter 2, "Nostalgia, Mood, and Desire." By presenting your brand scent in combination with the adrenaline rush of a sporting event, thrill ride, or adventure, consumers will be imprinted with a full-blown memory of surprise, excitement, and joy, which will be recalled every single time they smell your brand's signature aroma.

The key to all promotions is actually to "promote" your product: to get it noticed, to get it sampled. And the trick to being noticed in a hustling-bustling atmosphere is to take an approach that will appeal directly to the consumer's brain.

### ***Identifying Your Whiff Factor***

Most of the branding, marketing, and advertising scent applications I have just described could be adapted easily to many business models. Whether your business has a hundred thousand employees or three dedicated workers, you most likely use several of the basic elements already in your marketing strategy. The integration of scent into your already successful marketing plan is relatively simple and one of the most cost effective marketing tools. And as industry leaders increase their appetite for results-oriented scent marketing, the costs of entering the scent dimension will become even more affordable.

The first step in creating an integrated marketing plan for your scent strategy is to identify your present Whiff Factor, the quantifiable percentage of your organization's marketing activities in which scent is *presently* being employed. Take the following brief quiz to determine your company's Whiff Factor.

### ***What's Your Whiff Factor? —A Quiz***

*Instructions:* Consider the ten factors below. Check the box to the left of any item that you currently employ in your business.

- Marketing collateral (business cards/stationary/brochures)
- Promotional items
- Promotional events
- Affinity cards/credit cards
- Gift certificates/redemption programs
- Print advertising/banners/signage
- Point of Purchase displays/in-store displays/digital signage
- Product manufacturing
- Product packaging
- Environments (retail space/offices/waiting rooms/exteriors)

*Scoring:* Each element in the Whiff Factor checklist has a value of 10 percent. Therefore if you are employing scent marketing only in the environment and in product manufacturing (think Starbucks), then you are literally only utilizing 20 percent of your full scent branding potential. That 20 percent may very well be the impetus for a good amount of revenue, but imagine the increase in sales if you raised the bar to 50 percent.

If yours is like a majority of companies, you may have checked off only one or two boxes, or even more likely, none at all. Yet, as the tremendous benefits of scent marketing are realized in the business environment, we will see these individual strategic marketing elements begin to take hold and eventually become a standard in industry.

Return to the checklist and identify the elements that could most easily be implemented into your present marketing strategies—with

a goal of reaching a Whiff Factor of at least 50 percent. These are the areas you should discuss with a scent marketing professional.

Realize that the quality of scent and the efficiency of a delivery system can highly affect the outcomes. Therefore your initial efforts in laying the foundation for scent marketing must be diligent and well conceived. As you begin to employ scent tactics, it is highly recommended to run trials where you can measure their individual impact on business. We'll talk about these and other important considerations in the next chapter, "Four Keys to Creating Your Scent Script."