

Now Hear This!

We're spending more and more on marketing and securing fewer and fewer results. Last year, marketing budgets increased 7 percent. But effectiveness decreased 2 percent! We need something else. Fancier TV spots, snappier graphics, and more frequent e-mail won't do the trick.

Something's missing.

Let's step back and think about who we are: sentient beings. Do we make the most of the five senses? How can we strategically use them to build brands?

I've been working for the past two years on what has become the largest study ever conducted on our five senses. BRAND sense, also the title of my latest book, is an analysis I conducted in partnership with research institute Millward Brown on the importance of the five senses to brand building.

The power lies in details. Most of us have heard Nokia's classic ring tone. It's installed in every Nokia phone. It's become such a regular feature of everyday life; it's now featured in mainstream movies, such as "Love Actually." BRAND sense research reveals Nokia's ring tone has become one of the most well known in the world. An astounding 74 percent of Europeans and 46 percent of American consumers recognize it and associate the tone with the brand.

Do the math. Every Nokia cell phone is set to ring with Nokia's ring tone when it leaves the factory. A fair percentage of Nokia users aren't technically minded, meaning over 20 percent never change the ring tone. Nokia's signature rings on. To date, Nokia has produced some 400 million-cell phones. The average cell phone rings 11 times per day. This means about 80 million people hear over seven hours of the Nokia tone each year. Every time these phones ring, Nokia touts its brand.

Last year, Intel spent over \$100 million promoting its brand and tune. The BRAND sense survey reveals a 56 percent awareness of the Intel tune worldwide. Nokia didn't spend a penny, but its results are about the same.

Use of sound online is still in its infancy. Just as it took a decade to get the hang of effectively using graphics and navigation, we'll probably have to wait another 5 to 10 years before sound is integrated naturally in the online environment. But hear this: The question isn't whether it'll appear, but when. And inspiration for the potent use of sound will come from the offline world.

We now take for granted the Microsoft tune that plays every time we start Windows. BRAND sense analysis tells us more than 60 percent of consumers

across the world recognize that tune. Day in, day out, close to 1 billion people hear it and expect to hear it -- a phenomenon that gives us a glimpse of what's to come.

Soon, sound will be a natural part of the experience as we navigate a brand's Web site. The welcome tune will be just one part of the repertoire. There'll be a confirmation sound when you purchase a product, sounds to accompany activation of icons and downloading files. Integrated, functional, useful branded tunes will become meaningful signifiers of action, as natural as the click and whir of a camera, the turn indicator in a car, and the error signal on an Apple computer.

The challenge won't be to integrate sound on the site. Instead, it'll be to leverage the benefit of sound so it not only helps a user navigate but also establishes a branded experience, securing as much recognition as Nokia's and Microsoft's notes have achieved.

It's early yet, but so it was when Microsoft and Nokia, some 10 years ago, first released their tunes. Now, these brands are reaping the rewards of having secured ownership of a



sound known throughout the world, all virtually free of charge.

Listen up! You better get going and find your aural signature. Identify your branded sound. It makes sense.

Further Information

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