



# BUYOLOGY

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amygdala - An almond-shaped  
of small structures near the  
region. The amygdala plays a  
role in regulating emotions



THE BIG STORY | BY JOSH WIMMER

# five senses, one brand

## How does my jewelry taste?

That question sounds nonsensical. But if you want to take your marketing to the next level, it's one you should be asking yourself — along with *how does my jewelry look? how does it sound? smell? feel?*

We use our five basic senses every day. But too often, especially in the jewelry business, we use them passively (letting things happen to us, rather than making them happen for others) and separately (focusing on one, particularly sight, while the other four modes of perception fall by the wayside). And even when we do think about, for example, sound, it's closer to an afterthought than a strategy — the music you play in your store is *nice*, of course, but can you say anything beyond that?

You should be able to, says branding expert Martin Lindstrom, author most recently of *Buyology*. In his book *Brand Sense*, Lindstrom explains how some of the world's most successful companies take advantage of all five senses to create holistic messages, as well as how some of them don't, but ought to.

His data comes largely from multinational corporations, but there are plenty of ways for even an independent retailer to apply Lindstrom's ideas. In fact, says Ruth Møllergaard, a principal at GRID/3, a New York design firm that specializes in jewelry stores, independents might be best suited to put them to use. "If you go to the average shopping center, you could be almost anywhere in the country, because the big stores themselves are not in any way even regional," she says. "One of the advantages that independent jewelers have is that they can differentiate themselves locally."

A few stores already do, but could stand to fine-tune and better integrate their methods. And many don't at all. Either way, if you're looking for an edge in — need we say it? — today's economy, start asking how your jewelry tastes. Really, it's the *sensible* thing to do.

# sight

**LET'S START WITH THE BASICS.** “If you have a logo, use it everywhere,” Møllergaard says. “You get postcards from a store, and they have different things going on every time. It’s confusing.” A memorable logo — think Apple, Coca-Cola, or Mercedes-Benz — creates instant recognition.

Even simpler than a logo is color. What woman’s heart doesn’t go pitter-patter as she unwraps a present to see a robin’s egg blue box? You don’t have to be Tiffany & Co. to take advantage of it, either: At the Yellow Door, in Brooklyn, NY, everything leaves in, naturally, a yellow box. “Yellow box, yellow ribbon, yellow bag” says owner Jonathan Zemmol. “It seems to have created a certain cachet among our customers.”

Some methods aren’t so obvious and can even be

## TRY THESE

- If you run newspaper or magazine ads, feature your customers wearing their latest purchases. Ritualize the process by making it a contest and asking clients who buy pieces you want to promote if they’d like to sign up. Unify the campaign by shooting at a specific location or having them strike a particular pose.



- You want people coming in and looking at everything, right? So plan a “Where’s Waldo?”-type customer daily contest within your store by hiding something that’s concealable yet recognizable in a showcase or elsewhere. Make it an annual tradition that clients look forward to.

counterintuitive. At Desires by Mikolay in Chappaqua, NY — where the slogan is “Experience Jewelry,” reflecting owners Scott Mikolay and Tara Caverzasi’s deliberate decision to engage all the senses — the lighting might not be what the typical designer would recommend. “Instead of traditional bright jewelry store lights, we used ambient lighting to give the store a very SoHo feel,” Caverzasi says. “It’s warm and sexy, with tones of copper and soft orange. That might seem like a bad business move, as it’s not the best light to show off the jewelry, but it really creates a much more interesting aesthetic. I always say to my customers, ‘If you like the piece in this light, wait till you see it in the daylight!’ So it actually helps offset buyer’s remorse. At other stores, customers see the jewelry at its best in the store, and then go home and wonder where the brilliance is they fell in love with.”

At Sturhahn Jewelers in Quincy, IL, a gas fireplace off to the right of the showroom is decked out with photos from past generations in a successful



*The Yellow Door in Brooklyn, NY, uses its namesake hue to make a bright, simple and memorable statement inside and out.*

attempt to evoke a homey living room. “As a longtime family-owned business,” says owner Steve Sturhahn, “when we moved out to the busy main thoroughfare in

town, we didn’t want people to think we’d changed and gotten away from our roots.”

The converse works, too. It’s obvious to customers at either Worthmore Jewelers location in Georgia that the company has begun doing double duty as a fine-art dealer because, well, there’s art on the walls. “When we opened our new store in May, the space originally was a folk-art gallery, and as we were cleaning it up, we had three or four people come by and say, ‘Oh, are you a new gallery?’ And eventually I thought, well, we love art, we’ve got walls, and from there, it just blossomed,” says owner Harris Botnick. “The art goes with the jewelry, and on top of that, it constantly gives us a new look, because we change it throughout the year.”



*At Desires By Mikolay, lighting is about creating ambience first, and illuminating the jewelry second.*

# sound

**T**HE MUSIC WE PLAY IN THE STORE is all European material that's normally played in boutique hotels or lounges," Caverzasi says. "Again, it just adds to the sexiness of the store and the feeling that you're being transported. We're often running to the back to write down the name of a song and artist for a customer. It definitely reflects my taste, but I also often push it beyond my tastes, because it's crucial to stay fresh, young and cutting-edge."

Botnick will second that, especially as he develops the gallery aspect of his business. For Worthmore's art events, he's brought in high-energy DJs from Atlanta's club scene to get the proverbial party started, thanks to help from the store's art director, Ashlei Thomas. "I've worked in the gallery industry since I was 16," the 24-year-old Thomas says, "so a lot of them I know from there, and I'm also fortunate to know some of the better DJs from the big clubs." Rocker Johnny Colt, who's performed with bands the Black Crowes and Train and who's a Worthmore customer, handled the turntables for a recent bash. "As the night goes on," Botnick says, "it turns into a real party."

A more low-key alternative holds sway at Goldsmith Gallery Jewelers in Billings, MT, where a baby grand player piano is tucked into the outer corner of the 2,500-square-foot showroom. "As a kid growing up, I always had a fascination with them," says owner Scott Wickam. "Not that I was a piano player, but you

## TRY THESE



- Have a great slogan or jingle, or a sound bite from a funny ad? Turn it into a custom ringtone. It doesn't take too much technical savvy — instructions are online — and it can be done on the cheap or for free. Post it on your website for download, with a note that customers who come in and show it's on their phones get a small amount off their next purchase.

- If your community has musical talent, sponsor an annual collection of songs by local artists. These days, that doesn't necessarily mean having to pay to press a bunch of CDs — services like CD Baby will distribute MP3s online.

know, you go into Nordstrom and there's always someone playing the piano in there. I can't afford to have someone come in and play all the time, but this is a good substitute. You can get a lot of variety: rock 'n' roll, country — with a piano, it can be a little bit of everything." He laid down around \$12,000 for the instrument, but since then, costs have been minimal — \$60 to \$100 to get it tuned once a year, and \$30 to \$60 apiece for discs of music.

Think about sound from a design standpoint, too, Mellergaard says. "Because so much of a jewelry store is hard materials, with glass showcases and so on, absorption is important, so there aren't a lot of echoes," she says. "That's not music, but it does contribute to calm and a feeling of a place you want to be."



*The baby grand player piano at Goldsmith Gallery Jewelers in Billings, MT, is music to clients' ears — and eyes.*

# touch

**W**ICKAM'S PIANO DOES MORE than just make pretty noises, of course — it makes people want to play it, too. “We have a guy who’s probably close to 90 who comes in to play it all the time,” he says. “He tells me I have the best piano in town.” The gentleman in question doesn’t actually buy anything, Wickam confesses good-humoredly, but he’s not alone in his pursuit: The piano is visible from the street from two sides, so people walking by, especially those with kids, see it and are spurred to come in and tickle the ivories.

A couple of equally high-precision instruments, although slightly faster ones, were the centerpiece of a recent Worthmore



• The sitting area at Sturhahn Jewelers in Quincy, IL, offers guests a chance to warm up both literally and, thanks to a book of photos of the store’s history, to the company as well.

## TRY THESE

- Is the coffee table in your sitting area covered with magazines? Stow them off to the side to make room for a custom jigsaw puzzle. They’re available at a reasonable price online and can be made from, for instance, a photo of your store or your most clever ad.
- During the holiday season, if your shop sports a Christmas tree, stock it every morning with low-cost wrapped presents (candy, gift certificates), not just for kids but for all your customers.



• gallery event: Because one of the featured artists’ work was sports-themed, Botnick says, the store brought two racing motorcycles in to the middle of the showroom. “It was just really stimulating for the customers,” he says. “They were all sitting on the bikes, taking pictures.”

• Julie Sather-Browne was thinking more regionally when she moved Sather’s Leading Jewelers in Fort Collins, CO, into its new location in February 2007. “Our fireplace is part of the main showroom, but off to the side,” she says. “When you sit down, you’re facing the fire, so if it’s snowing outside, you feel like you’re sitting in a lodge in Vail. You just kind of want to sit and melt.” And in front of the fireplace at Sturhahn, a homemade history book in an elegant binder rests on a table, for visitors to page through at their leisure.

# TOUCHING ON SENSORY BRANDING

If you want to get a real feel for the philosophy and methods behind sensory branding, you’ll have to sniff out Martin Lindstrom’s *Brand Sense*. If you’re just looking for a taste right now, though, we hear you. See below.

**1 Branding is becoming holistic.** The most successful brands have moved beyond name recognition and simple emotional appeals. They’re steeped in rituals that involve the whole person.

Think of fans lining up at Apple Stores worldwide for new iPhones. By constantly reemphasizing and building on familiar aspects of your brand, you can make opening a present from your store a



# smell

**A**FTER HEARING A SURFEIT of compliments about how good her bathrooms smelled, Sather-Browne purchased another automated scent dispenser to cover the showroom, as well. Her scent of choice is in keeping with the store's alpine motif. "We have kind of a nature-cinnamon smell for most of the year, and we switch to pine for the holiday season," she says. "I think you have to match your brand. Obviously, for example, lilacs would not go in our store."

Teddie Gause at Gause & Son Jewelers in North Florida takes the same tack with orange-scented candles. "We live in Florida," she says. "We have beautiful orange trees, and also, it's subtle. You go into department stores, and they have all that sweet-smelling potpourri, and if it's really strong, I just have to walk out."

Mellergaard agrees. "It's the perfumey scents I think one has to be careful of," she warns, "but with that in mind, the olfactory nerves are very powerful. Smell transports you in one second. Even if you don't like, say,

## TRY THESE



• Your store — the one you make smell so good — is just a big box, yes? No reason you can't infuse your gift boxes with the same scent. A quick spray inside the lid before you close and wrap it means the recipient gets another (subtle and pleasant, of course) whiff of where it came from.



This oven at Tivol in Kansas City is big enough to get the whole place smelling like fresh-baked cookies, but small enough to be tucked away.

chocolate chip cookies, it has good connotations."

At Kansas City's Tivol, they think that's true enough to have installed a small convection oven in each of their three stores. "I love to cook, and I love the smell of baking," says CEO Cathy Tivol. "To me, it just makes it more than a luxury retail place — it's one more thing we can do to negate any kind of intimidation barrier." The ovens are reasonably easy to maintain, even when it's busy, she says, and bake a couple dozen cookies at a time. "People love them," she says. "They'll come in and say right away, 'What's that smell?'"

"Purchasing jewelry is an emotional experience — when they purchase jewelry, women will come back and look at an item a couple of times, and men will do research. It's not a split-second decision," says Spence Levy, executive vice president of Air Aroma, which sells fragrance systems. "And smell really ties in to a purchase like that. It's the sense responsible for a huge chunk of our daily emotions, so it will definitely enhance the buying decision."

tradition in your customer's homes.

**2 Laziness helps.** No, that doesn't mean more naps — it just means that if it ain't broke, don't fix it. Again, customers return to the familiar. If possible, instead of abandoning a branding scheme, update it without fundamentally altering it.

**3 Smash your brand.** One of Lindstrom's most important points, it doesn't mean you should destroy your branding scheme, but that if someone



breaks any of your marketing materials into a bunch of pieces, your brand should be recognizable from the fragments. His prime example is the classic glass Coke bottle: See one shattered on the street and you still know what it was.

**4 Aim for synergy.** Not only should you look beyond sight and sound, the two senses most commonly engaged via branding, but all the senses you engaged need to complement each other in a rational way. Think of your brand as a person. What's its personality?



The ever-changing spreads at events at Worthmore Jewelers keep clients coming back, and give up-and-coming caterers a chance to show off their work.

# taste

**E**VEN IF IT ISN'T FEASIBLE to permeate the store with their scent, chocolate chip cookies can't hurt. Michael Zibman, general manager of Windsor Jewelers in Augusta, GA, says a former employer participated in a high-end cookie maker's program that kept a tray full of fresh-baked treats out in the showroom every day. Another store, he says, offered mulled cider in the winter. "The one was a bit more of a challenge," he notes. "You had to buy the cider, lug it in, add the spices and maintain it during the day, and then clean the urn."

A more focused, *spirited* effort was the brainchild of Ashlei Thomas at Worthmore. She asked a friend who's a longtime bartender and culinary student to put together a signature drink for the store's events. "As far as I know, it's a unique recipe," Thomas says. "Everybody asks us for the recipe. I've never had anybody say, 'Oh, this tastes like...' and name what's in it." (For the record, the ingredients are confidential.)

"Since we debuted it, at every event everyone has said, 'Oh, you have the rum punch again!'" Botnick says. "We're always going to have it." He's also tried to tantalize taste buds with more novel refreshments than the standard coffee and cookies. "At one event, we had a milk shake bar, which was a big hit," he says. "It was something people weren't expecting."

Because the business's events have achieved

• a level of local fame, and because of Thomas's contacts, Worthmore has also been able to bring in a wide variety of Atlanta caterers at little to no cost. "It's not really something that's typical," Thomas says, "getting a five-grand spread for nothing. We've just been really fortunate that the parties have been successful enough that the caterers want to do it for promotional purposes." The flip side is that the store doesn't have much say over the menu. "I generally leave it up to them," she says. "Beggars can't be choosers." (It is possible to get a targeted effect on the cheap, too: At the Yellow Door, Zemmol says, the candy dishes are always stocked with lemon Jelly Baby jellybeans.)

And that, of course, is where the real trick lies: Truly taking advantage of sensory branding means not just a high-end experience, but an experience shaped specifically in relation to your store. The key, Mellergaard says, is remembering that. "I have a brother-in-law who's very interested in all kinds of music; he's constantly finding new songs and artists. If he were a jeweler, why wouldn't he introduce that into his business as one of his signature elements?" she asks. "What it allows people to do is bond with you in a way besides a purchasing jewelry mode."

## TRY THESE

- Make it yours. If you're Italian and everybody knows it, offer espresso and panini when you do food instead of just coffee and cold cuts. If your parents used to run the store, serve one of Mom's old recipes, and make sure you say what it is. If you're Greek and it's party time, make sure the caterer has a bottle of ouzo on hand. OPA!

