

HEADING:

Digging Into the Senses

SUBHEAD:

Finding new ways to generate better ideas during our design process.

IMAGE 0 - Left

Caption: *Releasing the Senses Collage*, **Carmela Cammisuli**

ESSAY:

The roles in a design agency are traditionally divided into different functions and disciplines to assist a client or brand successfully. Some roles in an agency include: Account management who are the contact to the client; the buyer who predominately assists in finding clients and media; a strategist who focuses on the research; and the creatives who are the idea generators. Each role is essential and works together to better meet the needs of a client better. Throughout a design process, the most critical part of any project is not the people who work there, but the insight that is developed for the client's project. The importance of insight into the design process allows an agency to grasp a better understanding of the customer and the marketplace. It provides a crucial connection to generating better ideas faster.

IMAGE 1

Caption: *Collection of Sensory Box Predictions*, **Carmela Cammisuli**

To fully understand any insight on any topic, it is essential to find out how insights are generated. Some strategies for pulling insight are through quantitative and qualitative research which allows strategists to understand better how the marketplace works and moves. One approach that I find is the most successful and most unthought-of is the connection between our sensory system and the emotional connection. By tapping into the psychological and tactile connection that users have with a product or brand can allow for a user to have a more personal experience with our brand. Bill Bernbach, who was an American Creative Director of international advertising agency DDB, once said:

"At the heart of an effective creative philosophy is the belief that nothing is so powerful as an insight into human nature, what compulsions drive a man, what instincts dominate his action, even though his language so often can camouflage what motivates him."³

His belief of tapping into a consumer's personal beliefs and lives has only proven success with his company and his work.

With such a busy world of print, web, digital and social, it is no longer effective to hit consumers with just pretty images and type. Strategically planning, we can always assume what the best time and location are best for our target and correctly position ourselves accordingly, however winning over our consumer's hearts and minds is trickier. As designers, we must analyze not only the consumer's behavior but also the environment, mindset, and personal passions¹. This can be achieved successfully by connecting to the five senses: smell, touch, sight, sound, and taste.

According to researchers Dr. L.D. Rosenblum, new studies reveal that there is surprising power and reach to our senses⁴. Our brains use complete forms of perceptual information of which most people are unaware of⁴. But how much of our sense do we really use? Dr. L.D. Rosenblum says that we use 83.0% of Sight, 11.0% hearing, 3.5% smell, 1.5% touch and 1.0% of taste⁴.

By allowing our sensory system to engage in a way that can possibly become more meaningful, the more easily we can connect and learn from them. Raw information enters our brains and eventually create meaning from previous experiences and past knowledge⁴. If we are mindful of our sense, we can use them to our advantage to help stimulate our minds and generate more insight and creative ideas.

Designers need to find ways to unlock the less-conscious part of our brains and find ways to integrate all five senses (touch, sight, taste, smell, sound) into our methodological approach to gather more powerful insights². For example, sight is one of the strongest out of the 5 senses. With sight, we are capable of seeing movement, colors, shape and multiple volumes of light. This allows us to experience the world in a more visual aspect. Touch will enable us to feel objects, texture, temperatures which will enable us to make connections and further investigate how an object lives. It is evident that when senses are used together, they allow for a stronger interpretation of what an object inevitably, is. We can all make judgements while using our sense as a unit. What if there was a way to alter our senses, to use them differently, to put insights further?

There are ways to gather insights by unleashing a pathway into the less-conscious parts of our brains. By using something called disruptors, we can dig deeper into the way we think and process ideas and insights further than what we may see, touch and smell². Disruptors are a way to force people to think outside of ordinary, to downplay the top-of-mind responses and to play with the multi-sensory experiences. We do this by separating our senses from how we typically use them

and forcing us to use them differently².

IMAGE 2

Caption: *Sensory Box*, **Carmela Cammisuli**

An example of this is called the “Touch and Describe” exercise. In a small experiment, I created a box that was covered and concealed, and on the inside of this box I built a miniature abstract sculpture that was non-identifiable. Once the box and object were created, I had asked people to place their hands into the box and feel the object with their hands. The purpose of using an abstract non-identifiable sculpture, was to have a clear feel of an unknown object and to make the user trust their sense of touch. Different textures were used to allow the user to try and identify the object with past experiences of texture that they may have encountered. During this process, they were asked what they had felt or what they were feeling. Once they were comfortable with the shape of the object, I then asked them to draw what they had felt. Once they completed their drawing, the object was revealed. Most of the users’ reactions were shocked and surprised and had variations of answers as to what the object was. In this experiment, the disruptor was that the only tool they were allowed to use were their sense of touch. If this were to be used to generate insight on a brand or client, the descriptive words could be used as the baseline for developing ideas and insights. For example, if they used a word like sticky, this could create an insight on how the product is used or how users thought sticky was a negative, as they didn’t like the way it felt.

IMAGE 3

Caption: *The prediction process*, **Carmela Cammisuli**

There are many different types of disruptors and techniques that can help provide better access to the five senses. They can help dig deep into the minds of users and help impact design and how consumers really experience and think about things. These tools can help broaden the language between our senses and insight and further create an experience that is remembered through our design; it just depends on how far you’re willing to dig in the less-conscious mind and explore your senses.

FOOTNOTES:

¹ Caro, Lilliana. “Using the five senses to connect with consumers during the holiday season.” *Ad Age*, 19 Sept. 2016.

2 Fader, Susan. "It's Just Common Sense: Accessing All 5 Senses to Enrich Research Insights." Insights Association, Fader & Associates, 28 Apr. 2015, www.insightsassociation.org/article/it%E2%80%99s-just-common-sense-accessing-all-5-senses-enrich-research-insights.

3 Higgins, Dennis, and William Bernbach. The art of writing advertising. Advertising Pub., 1965.

4 Rosenblum, Lawrence D. See What I'm Saying: The Extraordinary Powers of Our Five Senses. 2010.

BIO:

Carmela Cammisuli is a designer, art director, and an abstract expressionist artist. She is currently pursuing her Master of Design at York University in Toronto to advance her knowledge in design and to pursue teaching in the future. Carmela has obtained a Certificate in Arts and Design Foundations and a Diploma in Graphic Design from George Brown College. She continued her studies and completed a Bachelor of Creative Advertising from Humber College. Aside from her love and passion for art and design, Carmela also likes to explore the realms of abstract art, idea making, creative writing, sports, and traveling.

LINKS:

website — www.mentionme.ca