



Advice

# Psychology of Selling

## What's that smell?

### How retailers can utilize scent to increase sales



MANY SCIENTISTS BELIEVE that our sense of smell has the strongest link to our emotions and memories. More than visual, tactile, sound and taste, our ability to discern odours is tied directly to our emotions and memories.

Shopping is more of an emotional endeavor than an objective or financial one, so the fast connection to our emotions and memories that scent delivers is very powerful.

But can scents actually be used to increase sales? Yes, but be sure to avoid scents that trigger allergic reactions. Stick to natural scents that don't contain any artificial additives. (Beware that many products, even those labeled natural, may contain chemicals like formaldehyde, petroleum distillates, limonene, esters and alcohols which can also trigger eye and respiratory tract irritation, headaches,

dizziness and even memory impairment.)

Research the way different smells make us feel before choosing a signature scent for your store. For example, pleasant ambient scents, such as lavender, can influence shoppers by creating a positive mood, reducing perceived wait times and helping to build brand recall, while the scent of cinnamon can have a calming effect.

Gas stations in California are testing scent cannons that blast the smell of fresh coffee into the area around the gas pump when a car approaches, a technique which has resulted in a 300 per cent increase in coffee sales. Many hotels also use scent cannons to deliver a signature scent to the lobby and hallways. And then there's the hip clothing chain Abercrombie & Fitch who uses so much scent (and dim lighting) to keep the over 25-year-old customer out. And scent cannons aren't just for the big guys – affordable options start at \$250.

Instituting a signature scent for your store is something to seriously consider. Over time your customers will remember the scent of your store and every time they smell that scent they'll think of you. ■

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