



Getting a reaction

To capture consumer purchases, brands must invest in an outstanding point-of purchase experience that stimulates all the senses

In the modern world, brands are frequently challenged with capturing consumer loyalty, and, in a crowded market place, it is essential to find ways to set themselves apart from the competition.

Delivering a stand-out experience in-store provides this opportunity. Point of purchase is part of the experience, and suppliers are required to design, innovate and provide a fresh approach to evoke consumer emotion.

Point of purchase is where your brand-building is tested; on average, consumers will spend only six seconds seeking a preferred brand before settling for an alternative.

A retail experience that evokes the right emotions within the target audience is vital. To create this, we need to understand these emotions. Consumer preference stems from positive emotional associations. With 65% of communication being non-verbal, an experience should span all the senses.

As consumers become more aware of green issues, point-of-purchase agencies also need to ensure that their campaigns have a clear conscience where protecting the environment is concerned, in order to avoid negative emotional responses.

At Valley, we have developed research techniques that enable us to analyse the consumer emotions, both conscious and unconscious, that combine to create an unforgettable experience. We use these discoveries to map the consumer journey at an emotional level while looking at how different stimuli are received by the consumer at each stage.



This gives brands an insight into the role played by the retail experience in the customer journey, enabling them to improve their chances of success.

We go beyond the traditional point of purchase approach to look at the communication tactics already in place and find ways to provide a more holistic offer. These might include staff training, online guides and 'mystery shopper' checks. As technology and environmental considerations develop, we are combining this with interactive point of purchase.

One example of how digital interactive in-store experiences can benefit brands, and why staff commitment is paramount, is our work with LG Electronics. The LG display walls in Dixons stores, which are used to demonstrate LG's LCD products, have been evolving since 2006. In just two years, the displays have progressed from their use as corporate-only visual aids to become the centre of an in-store broadcast programme linked to above-the-line work.

This point-of-purchase activity was launched in May 2008 in 269 stores throughout the UK, including four in Ireland. It has become an incredibly successful tool, born out of Valley's in-depth research and design process, D3.

D3 is the process of discovering, developing and delivering

branded point of purchase activity that works. Through it, we understand much more about the retail environment, the market sector and the end consumer.

In inviting the customer into the LG space, we considered every element involved in the consumer's introduction to, and initial interaction with, the brand. It is essential, at this point, not only to showcase the products and services offered by the brand, but also inspire the consumer to buy into the brand and the product, resulting in both a sale and a brand awareness conversion.

With LG, initial research has already shown that the majority of retail staff prefer the new display wall, with seven out of 10 sales staff more likely to use it than previously. Of those surveyed, 86% prefer the revamped point of purchase, and 69% are more likely to use it when promoting LG products. With such increased sales staff interaction, LG has continued to enjoy increased sales and greater awareness of its brand.

In-store marketing is the most significant tool to drive sales growth. Brands are built in the mind of the consumer, through experiences. Thanks to our fresh, forward-thinking approach, our clients have enjoyed an average sales uplift of 30%, as well as gaining credibility and kudos from unique, eye-catching and innovative retail prominence.

Point of purchase and an overall communication campaign allows brands to maximise the opportunities within the retail environment, which has a strong role to play in creating brand perception, as well as securing that all-important sale. Future winners within the point-of-purchase industry will continue to create those experiences, which are key to building brands. Those who don't will get left behind. ■

James Haggas is joint managing director of Valley

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