

# sensory communications

*learning the “language” of non-verbal  
communication*

six degrees

white paper 01

# SENSORY COMMUNICATIONS

*85% of*

*communication*

*is non-verbal*

Clients often tell us that their previous advertising and brand communications looked great, but did not have the kind of impact they expected. Assuming they had a sound brand strategy in place, what could have gone wrong? The simple answer often is that the non-verbal message being presented was just not resonating with the intended target audience.

Research has shown that about 85% of human communication is non-verbal. So, if most of the information we receive is in fact sensory (sight, sound, feel and smell), then it's not hard to see why the typical process used to develop brand communications so often misses the mark: Marketing and communications departments spend considerable resources developing the verbal message, but generally leave the sensory information, the other 85%, up to the creative team to develop. These creative professionals may, or may not, be able to put themselves in the shoes of the target customers and identify the right sensory information that will actually touch the target customers.

If marketers and communicators need further evidence that they should be more focused and systematic about the non-verbal side of communications, consider this:

- *Over 90% of emotional meaning is carried through non-verbal channels*
- *Non-verbal information is believed over verbal information*
- *Most customer purchases are based on emotional, not rational factors.*

## **Okay, so how do you effectively use sensory information?**

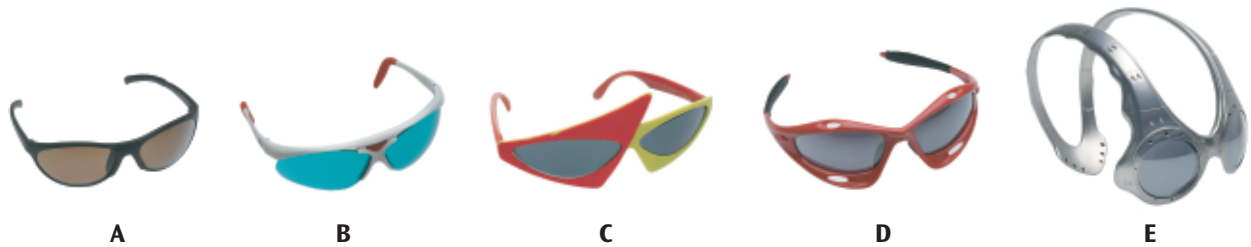
In our experience, it's actually not that complicated. We recommend inserting a sensory research step between the development of your brand or communications strategy and

the development of final communications pieces. The purpose of this research is to uncover what your verbal strategy looks, feels, sounds and smells like to your target customers and what sensory messages will most resonate with them.

### A simple example

Let's say you want to communicate *powerful*, *dynamic* and *unconventional*. How do you determine what that looks like to your target audience?

We would begin by showing representatives of your target audience various items from different categories, such as sunglasses.



We would then ask these respondents to select the one design that feels most *powerful*, *dynamic* and *unconventional*. Let's assume that our respondents most often chose option D from the more than 50 pairs of sunglasses we showed them. This choice, along with the selection rationale, gives us insights into the visual cues that trigger the perception of *powerful*, *dynamic* and *unconventional* among this segment of your target audience.

By repeating this process with other categories (e.g., packaging, fonts, people, voices, architecture, colors, activities, textures, etc), we can build a complete visual/sensory model of what *powerful*, *dynamic* and *unconventional* means to this audience.

This process can be applied across all of the senses, depending on their relevance to the product category. The resulting sensory cues can be used to develop communications materials as well as help guide product design.

We tailor this research process to the project objectives and the category, and have found the process to work equally well with consumers and professional audiences. The resulting sensory cues serve as a sensory creative brief, or guide, for the development of communications pieces that are effective at creating the desired perceptions in the target audience.

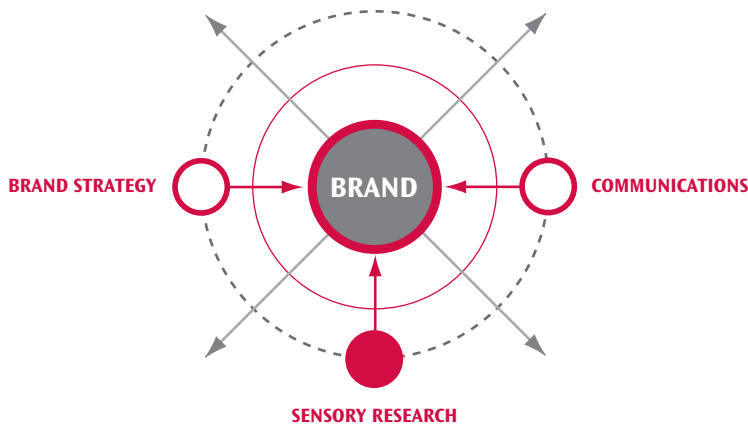
### Why take this extra step?

1. It helps you differentiate your brand in a cluttered market place.

2. It helps inform your creative team regarding which sensory cues will resonate with the target customers, reducing the time needed for concept development and testing.

3. It ensures that your brand or communications strategy is realized effectively.

4. It simplifies the process of selecting a final creative concept.



At Six Degrees, we have seen this type of sensory research turn around unsuccessful advertising campaigns, increase sales, and increase confidence that communications are on strategy.

Imagine how much harder your communications will work for you when you actively manage the other 85% of information your target audience receives!

*six degrees is a sensory branding agency*

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