

# **BRAND sense**

**Build Powerful Brands through  
Touch, Taste, Smell, Sight,  
and Sound**

*Based on  
Millward Brown's  
global study linking  
branding and  
sensory awareness*

**MARTIN LINDSTROM**

**FOREWORD BY PHILIP KOTLER**

# Advance Praise for *BRAND sense*

**"*BRAND sense* is a landmark work that explains what the world's most successful companies do differently, integrating all five of the senses—touch, taste, smell, sight, and sound. The book will transform the way marketers approach the entire concept of branding."**

**—Charlie Bell, CEO & Chairman, McDonald's Corporation**

**"Martin Lindstrom, one of branding's most original thinkers, reveals how to break out of the two-dimensional rut of sight and sound, and connect emotionally with all five senses. His book provides data and insights that will surprise even the most savvy brand watcher."**

**—Robert A. Eckert, CEO & Chairman, Mattel, Inc.**

**"Martin Lindstrom has a talent for big ideas. In *BRAND sense*, he brings new ideas to life using real examples from leading companies around the world. *BRAND sense* introduces new dimensions to the art and science of brand management."**

**—Alex Hungate, Chief Marketing Officer, Reuters Group**

**"Creative, insightful, compelling. It will help you cut through the mass of commercial clutter and develop a powerful brand."**

**—Torben Ballegaard Sorensen, CEO, Bang & Olufsen Worldwide**

**"*BRAND sense* breaks new ground with an insightful view of how marketing to all five senses can transform the way you build your brands."**

**—Andre Lacroix, CEO & Chairman, EuroDisney**

**"It contains a treasury of ideas for bringing new life to your brands."**

**—Philip Kotler, from the Foreword**



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**I**n perhaps the most creative and authoritative book on sensory branding ever written, international business legend Martin Lindstrom reveals what the world's most successful branding companies do differently—integrating touch, taste, smell, sight, and sound—with startling and measurable results.

Based on the largest study ever conducted on how our five senses affect the creation of brands, *BRAND sense* explains Martin Lindstrom's innovative six-step program for bringing brand building into the twenty-first century. The study, covering more than a dozen countries worldwide, was conducted exclusively for this book by Millward Brown, one of the largest business research institutions in the world. Drawing on countless examples of both product creation and retail experience, Lindstrom shows how to establish a marketing approach that appeals to all the senses, not simply the conventional reliance on sight and sound. Research shows that a full 75 percent of our emotions are in fact generated by what we smell, and the author explains how to capitalize on that finding. Included are innovative tools for evaluating a brand's place on the sensory scale, analyzing its future sensory potential, and enhancing its appeal to reach the broadest base of consumers. Lindstrom lists the top twenty brands for the future based on their sensory awareness. (The top three: Singapore Airlines, Apple, and Disney.)

Among the book's many fascinating factual highlights are the following:

- That gratifying new-car smell that accompanies the purchase of a new car is actually from a factory-installed aerosol can containing “new-car” aroma.
- The Kellogg's trademarked crunchy sound and feel of eating cornflakes was created in sound labs and patented in the same way that the company owns its recipe and logo.

- Singapore Airlines has patented a scent that is part of every female flight attendant's perfume, as well as blended into the hot towels served before takeoff, and which generally permeates their entire fleet of airplanes.
- Starbucks' sensory uniqueness is far less strongly associated with the smell and taste of coffee than with the interior design of its cafés and its green and white logo.

Hailed as the "World's Brand Futurist" by the BBC, Martin Lindstrom is one of the world's top entrepreneurial visionaries. He has changed the face of global marketing with twenty years of hands-on experience as an advertising CEO and adviser to Fortune 500 companies. Firmly steeped in scientific evidence and featuring sensory secrets of the most successful brand names, *BRAND sense* reveals how to transform marketing strategies into positive business results that no brand builder can afford to ignore.



**Martin Lindstrom** founded his first advertising agency at the age of twelve. Today he is one of the world's most distinguished branding experts, whose blue-chip clients include Disney, Pepsi,

Philips, Microsoft, Mars, and Mercedes-Benz, among many others. Lindstrom is a former global COO of British Telecom–LookSmart and a former BBDO executive; he also founded and was CEO of BBDO Interactive Asia and cofounder of BBDO Interactive Europe, both of which grew to become their region's largest Internet-solution companies. A popular speaker internationally, in 2004 Lindstrom was featured at conferences in 40 countries.

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**Martin Lindstrom**

*Foreword by Philip Kotler*

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*Tell me and I'll forget,  
Show me and I might remember,  
Involve me and I'll understand.*

—BENJAMIN FRANKLIN

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# Foreword

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*Philip Kotler*

Marketing isn't working today. New products are failing at a disastrous rate. Most advertising campaigns do not register anything distinctive in the customer's mind. Direct mail barely achieves a 1 percent response rate. Most products come across as interchangeable commodities rather than powerful brands.

Yes, there are still powerful brands: Coca-Cola, Harley-Davidson, Apple Computer, Singapore Airlines, BMW. These corporations have learned how to make their brands live in the customers' minds. A brand, of course, must at least deliver a distinctive benefit. No amount of dressing up will make up for this lack. All of the aforementioned brands deliver a distinctive benefit.

But distinctive brands require something more. They have to be powered up to deliver a full sensory and emotional experience. It is not enough to present a product or service visually in an ad. It pays to attach a sound, such as music or powerful words and symbols. The combination of visual and audio stimuli delivers a  $2 + 2 = 5$  impact. It pays even more to trigger other sensory channels—taste, touch, smell—to enhance the total impact. This is Martin Lindstrom's basic

## FOREWORD

message, and he illustrates it beautifully through numerous cases with compelling arguments.

Most companies take the easy way out to market their brands. They buy a lot of expensive advertising and make clichéd claims. The companies Martin describes are much more creative. One of the main reasons to read this book is that it contains a treasury of ideas for bringing new life to your own brands.

## CHAPTER 1

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# A Cottage Industry Turns Professional

**JANUARY 14, 2004 WAS A LANDMARK** in the life of Sydney-born teenager Wilhelm Andries Petrus Booyse. It was a day that passed unnoticed by most, but it proved to be the highlight of Will's life. He lay face-down on a firm table and submitted his neck to the pain of the plastic surgeon's laser.

The doctor worked slowly and diligently, carefully obliterating the tattooed bar code with the letters G-U-C-C-I neatly etched underneath. The beam followed the shape once so carefully duplicated from the Gucci Corporation's printed guidelines. Bit by bit the tattoo was removed. The process was painful, but it marked the end of Will's obsession with the Gucci brand—an obsession he had taken to the outermost limits. Gucci had become more than a brand. It was, in Will's words, "My one and only religion."

I first met Will in May 1999, when his Gucci tattoo was brand spanking new. He had, he believed, formed a lifelong relationship with the brand. Lifelong turned out to be only five years. In that time, the brand was no longer just a brand. For Will it had become a "person" whom he could relate to, admire, and be supported by. This

relationship gave him the energy he required to get up each day and go to school. It gave him a sense of his own identity.

He talked about Gucci as a family member, not as an expensive fashion product. He could expound at great length about the designs, the colors, the feel of the fabrics, the texture of the leather, and the distinct smell of the perfumed Gucci environment.

By the time Will removed the Gucci bar code from his neck, he had the sense that the brand was losing its grip. What was once perceived as the ultimate brand, made in heaven, seemed to be slipping. Will was not alone in his perception. Gucci's lack of innovation and dated advertising campaigns suffered a final blow when Tom Ford, Gucci's head designer, unceremoniously decided to go his separate way.

Additionally Will had found another path to follow. The Australian Navy beckoned, offering him another sense of family and identity. A lot of his newfound mates sported tattoos as well, but they generally chose the name of the vessel that they called home for six months each year.

Will summed up his experience with Gucci: "The admiration I had for the Gucci brand was stronger than any other person I knew. For me, Gucci was more than a brand—it was my personal companion. When I entered a Gucci store, I felt like I was in heaven. Everything about the place made me feel at home. The atmosphere of luxury, the lighting, the design, and the music. I suppose the status that this gave me amongst my friends made me an exclusive member of this distinct brand community. In the time that I wore the Gucci tattoo, people approached me constantly and made me feel the center of the universe.

"I don't know what happened, but one day I woke up and the magic was gone. Gucci failed to excite me as it always had. The only thing that remained was the tattoo I'd had done so willingly five years before. So despite the pain of removal, I felt it had to go."

As frightening, shocking, or intriguing as Will's story might sound, my meeting with him sparked the first sensory branding research project ever conducted. It was a five-year mission which involved hundreds of researchers and thousands of consumers across four continents. We sought to understand the rationale behind behavior like Will's.

Will was a living breathing example of what marketers ultimately aspire to when they create a brand. He also was a perfect test subject in our quest to understand the dynamics of strong branding used correctly—and incorrectly. What was it that made a kid base his life on a brand? What components of the brand formed such a magnetic connection? And then, at what point did the brand fail? How did obsessive belief turn into disappointment?

We went out and asked all kinds of questions of people who have particular affinities for various brands. They willingly, and kindly, shared their passions. This invaluable information led me to conclude that if branding wishes to survive another century it will need to change track. More communication in an already overcrowded world simply won't do it. A new vision with an emotional basis is required.

I realized that a brand would have to become a sensory experience that extends beyond the traditional paradigm, which primarily addresses sight and sound.

Another aspect of the new branding that I gleaned from Will is that a brand should create a following similar to the obsessive commitment of sports fans or even, in certain respects, to the faith of a religious community. The bond it forms is the social glue that links and unites generations of people.

Religion, however, is only one side of the story for the next generation of branding. In order to have a viable future, brands will have to incorporate a brand platform that fully integrates the five senses. This sensory platform will reveal the very belief—or significant following—necessary to create a brand philosophy. Without taking comparisons to religion too far, we can see its relevance for some points of sensory branding.

## ***Branding: The Next Generation***

The concept of branding is already undergoing dramatic changes. New technologies have allowed us to go beyond mass production and to mass customize brands. Currently brand manufacturers own

their brands. This is changing. In the future brands will increasingly be owned by the consumer. The first signs of this shift appeared in the late 1990s. I documented this phenomenon in *BRANDchild* and named it MSP—Me Selling Proposition.

In the 1950s branding belonged to the USP—the Unique Selling Proposition. This ensured that the physical product, rather than the brand, was the core differential. By the 1960s we began seeing the first signs of true Emotional Selling Proposition (ESP) brands. Similar products were perceived as different primarily because of an emotional attachment. Think of Coke and Pepsi. The consumer tends to drink the “label” rather than the cola. During the 1980s the Organizational Selling Proposition (OSP) emerged. The organization or corporation behind the brand in fact became the brand. It was the organization’s philosophy that distinguished it from others. For many years Nike subscribed to this form of branding. The internal spirit of the company was so strong that its employees became the main ambassadors for its brand.

By the 1990s brands had gained enormous strength in their own right, and the Brand Selling Proposition (BSP) took over. The brand was stronger than the physical dimensions of the product. Think Harry Potter, Pokémon, Disney, or M&M’s. The brand name is found on sheets and toothbrushes, wallpaper and makeup sets. Books and movies aside, the consumer has become more fixated on the brand than the stories.

The world of communication constantly changes. Interaction has become one of the main catalysts. The concept of interactivity has forced us to rethink each and every communication, evaluating and designing it for the ever-demanding consumer. Technological innovation paved the way for MSP brands, which saw consumers taking ownership of their brands. The Canadian brand Jones Soda is a good example of this phenomenon. Consumers design their own label, which Jones Soda guarantees to distribute in the designer’s local area. Nike and Levi’s websites offer to customize any of their models exactly to your need and size.

## *The Future World of Holistic Branding*

There's every indication that branding will move beyond the MSP into an even more sophisticated realm—reflecting a brave new world where the consumer desperately needs something to believe in—and where brands very well might provide the answer. I call this realm the HSP—the Holistic Selling Proposition. HSP brands are those that not only anchor themselves in tradition but also adopt religious characteristics at the same time they leverage the concept of sensory branding as a holistic way of spreading the news. Each holistic brand has its own identity, one that is expressed in its every message, shape, symbol, ritual, and tradition—just as sports teams and religion do today.

### **An Emerging Global Phenomenon**

Will's was a good story, a story that reflected some kind of truth that was out there. But stories need to be substantiated in order to reformulate the way we think. So what started out as an idea became formalized into a research project, and what emerged was a solid methodology that could shape the next generation of brand building.

The very foundation of this book and the theory behind it are a direct result of an extensive research project which sought to determine to what extent the religious factor—faith, belief, and community—could serve as the model for the future of branding. The project investigated the role each of our five senses would play in creating the ultimate bond between the consumer and the brand.

With the advent of globalization, every brand can be accessed from any place on earth with a telephone line. In the absence of a line, the cell phone will pick up the slack. Not a single brand is launched these days without an accompanying Web address.

This is the reality that we took on board in deciding that the project would have relevance only if conducted globally. Our multicultural research team involved people drawn from twenty-four countries, speaking eighteen languages. Additionally, the global research had another objective. We wanted to identify trends, and look at the

evolution of local brands to help us create a solid foundation for the implementation of the HSP theory, in order for it to adapt to any market regardless of cultural differences and preferences.

I decided to team up with the global research institute Millward Brown. Their extensive brand knowledge made them an obvious partner for a project of this caliber. *BRAND sense* is the culmination of our extensive study. The idea took seed in 1999 and eventually developed into a global research project that involved some six hundred researchers across most of the globe. It represents the first truly professional brand research effort on a global level.

Research on sensory perception and religious comparisons to branding had never been done before, and we tried our best to remain sensitive to their differences in character, profundity, and ultimate truth. Project *BRAND sense* is therefore a pioneering study. We conducted focus groups in thirteen countries, and performed quantitative tests in three markets. Each country was carefully selected on the basis of market size, brand representation, general product innovations, religious representation, state of brand maturity, and the country's sensory history. We quickly learned that even though a brand is supposedly global, the way local cultures perceive it could be extremely varied. We discovered that the way people use their senses also varies from market to market both in terms of the sensory priority and in sensory sensitivity.

The *BRAND sense* study therefore is a composite of distinct and different markets. For example, we selected Japan, India, and Thailand because all three countries have a well-known history of integrating five senses in their culture and traditions. Some of Japan's most innovative brands often make use of the five senses—for example, when using aroma. The rich design heritage of the Scandinavian countries has made visual identity essential in their communication. The United States and Britain, with their large market size and diverse media, present the biggest challenge in building and maintaining brands. We added countries like Chile, Mexico, Poland, and Spain to our study because of their strong religious and devotional traditions, or because of their history with music and food.

I hope you find *BRAND sense* inspiring and I hope also to introduce you to a new vision for building brands. It's been my intention

to draw parallels between existing cases that will help you rethink the way we will perceive brands in the future. But more than that, I hope you will leave the *BRAND sense* experience with a clear idea of how to proceed with creating a multisensory platform for your own brand.

### **Highlights**

The brand building of the future will move from a two-sensory approach to a multisensory approach. The historical development of brands started with the Unique Selling Proposition (USP), where no two products are alike. Succeeding stages included:

- ❖ Emotional Selling Proposition (ESP), where products were perceived as different primarily because of an emotional attachment
- ❖ Organizational Selling Proposition (OSP), where the organization or corporation behind the brand in fact became the brand
- ❖ Brand Selling Proposition (BSP), where the brand was stronger than the physical dimensions of the product
- ❖ Me Selling Proposition (MSP), which saw consumers taking ownership of their brands.

The future of branding will embrace the Holistic Selling Proposition (HSP). HSP brands are those which not only anchor themselves in tradition but also adopt characteristics of religious sensory experience to leverage the concept of sensory branding as a holistic way of spreading the news.