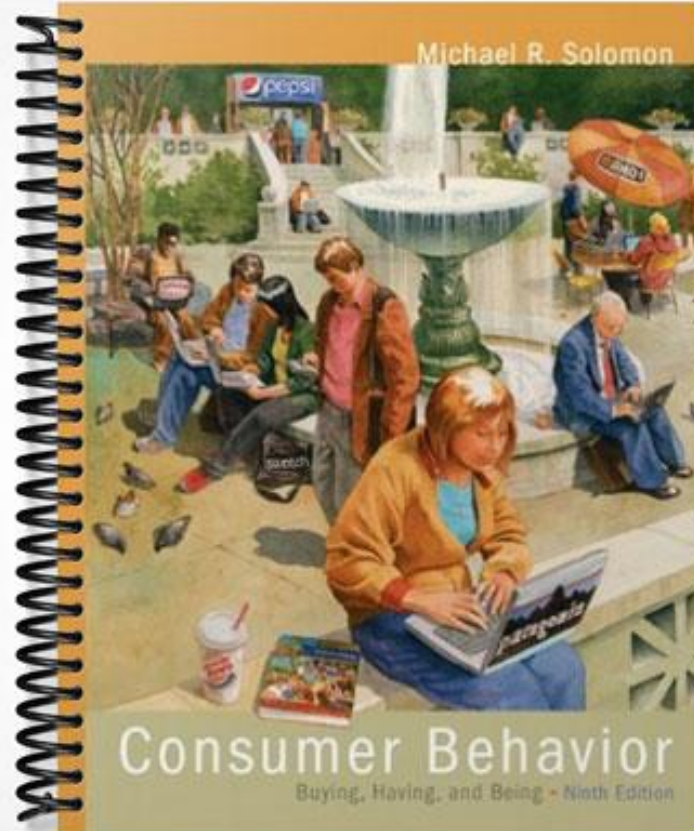


SOLUTIONS MANUAL



Chapter 2: PERCEPTION

CHAPTER OBJECTIVES

When students finish this chapter they should understand that:

- Perception is a three-stage process that translates raw stimuli into meaning.
- Products and commercial messages often appeal to our senses, but we won't be influenced by most of them.
- The design of a product today is a key driver of its success or failure.
- Subliminal advertising is a controversial—but largely ineffective—way to talk to consumers.
- We interpret the stimuli to which we do pay attention according to learned patterns and expectations.
- The field of semiotics helps us to understand how marketers use symbols to create meaning.

CHAPTER SUMMARY

Perception is a three-stage process that translates raw stimuli into meaning.

Perception is the process by which physical sensations, such as sights, sounds, and smells, are selected, organized, and interpreted. The eventual interpretation of a stimulus allows it to be assigned meaning. A perceptual map is a widely used marketing tool that evaluates the relative standing of competing brands along relevant dimensions.

Products and commercial messages often appeal to our senses, but we won't be influenced by most of them.

Marketing stimuli have important sensory qualities. We rely on colors, odors, sounds, tastes, and even the “feel” of products when we evaluate them. Not all sensations successfully make their way through the perceptual process. Many stimuli compete for our attention, and we don't notice or accurately interpret the majority of them. People have different thresholds of perception. A stimulus must be presented at a certain level of intensity before our sensory detectors can detect it. In addition, a consumer's ability to detect whether two stimuli are different (the differential threshold) is an important issue in many marketing contexts, such as package design, the size of a product, or its price.

The design of a product today is a key driver of its success or failure.

In recent years the sensory experiences we receive from products and services have become a high priority when we choose among competing options. Consumers increasingly want to buy things that will give them hedonic value in addition to functional value. They often believe that most brands perform similarly, so they weigh a product's aesthetic qualities heavily when they select a brand.

Subliminal advertising is a controversial—but largely ineffective—way to talk to consumers.

So-called subliminal persuasion and related techniques that expose people to visual and aural messages below the sensory threshold are controversial. Although evidence that subliminal persuasion is effective is virtually nonexistent, many consumers continue to believe that advertisers use this technique. Some of the factors that determine which stimuli (above the threshold level) do get perceived include the amount of exposure to the stimulus, how much attention it generates, and how it is interpreted. In an increasingly crowded stimulus environment, advertising clutter occurs when too many marketing-related messages compete for attention.

We interpret the stimuli to which we do pay attention according to learned patterns and expectations.

We don't attend to a stimulus in isolation. We classify and organize it according to principles of perceptual organization. A *Gestalt*, or overall pattern, guides these principles. Specific grouping principles include closure, similarity, and figure-ground relationships. The final step in the process of perception is interpretation. Symbols help us make sense of the world by providing us with an interpretation of a stimulus that others often share. The degree to which the symbolism is consistent with our previous experience affects the meaning we assign to related objects.

The field of semiotics helps us to understand how marketers use symbols to create meaning.

Marketers try to communicate with consumers by creating relationships between their products or services and desired attributes. A semiotic analysis involves the correspondence between stimuli and the meaning of signs. The intended meaning may be literal (e.g., an icon such as a street sign with a picture of children playing). Or it may be indexical if it relies on shared characteristics (e.g., the red in a stop sign means danger). Meaning also can be conveyed by a symbol in which an image is given meaning by convention or by agreement of members of a society (e.g., stop signs are octagonal, whereas yield signs are triangular). Marketer-created associations often take on lives of their own as consumers begin to believe that hype is, in fact, real. We call this condition hyper reality.

CHAPTER OUTLINE

I. Sensory Systems

- A. Sensation refers to the immediate response of our sensory receptors (eyes, ears, nose, mouth, fingers) to such basic stimuli as light, color, sound, odors, and textures.

B. Perception is the process by which these sensations are selected, organized, and interpreted. The study of perception, then, focuses on what we add to or take away from these raw sensations to give them meaning.

1. People undergo stages of information processing in which stimuli are input and stored. Unlike computers, people only process a small amount of information (stimuli) available to them. An even smaller amount is attended to and given meaning.
2. As shown in Figure 2.1, the perceptual process is made up of three stages:
 - Exposure
 - Attention
 - Interpretation

******Use Figure 2.1 Here******

3. External stimuli, or sensory inputs, can be received on a number of channels.
 - The inputs picked up by our five senses constitute the raw data that begin the perceptual process.
 - External stimuli can trigger memories from the past. The resulting responses are an important part of hedonic consumption (the multisensory, fantasy, and emotional aspects of consumers' interactions with products).

II. Hedonic Consumption and the Design Economy

A. Sensory Marketing: Harnessing Perception for Competitive Advantage

In recent years the sensory experiences we receive from products and services have become an even larger priority when we choose among competing options. A new era of sensory marketing is born – companies are paying extra attention to the impact of sensations on consumers' product experiences.

B. Vision

1. Marketers communicate on the visual channel through a product's color, size, and styling.
2. Colors can create feelings of arousal, stimulation, relaxation, and so on. Some reactions are learned through culture but others are not.
3. Color is a key issue in package design.
4. Some color combinations come to be so strongly associated with a corporation that they become known as the company's **trade dress**, and the company may even be granted exclusive use of these colors (for example, Eastman Kodak's defense of their use of yellow, black, and red in court).

Discussion Opportunity—Demonstrate how the package color affects expectation of what is inside the package. You might consider putting together a brief experiment using various products and manipulating the color. How can a marketer use color?

*******Use Figure 2.2 Here *******

*******Use Consumer Behavior Challenge #8 Here *******

Discussion Opportunity—Ask: What colors can you think of that are uniquely associated with a particular company or a product? Give at least three illustrations. Have you noticed any confusing similarities with these companies or products?

- C. Odors can stir emotions or create a calming feeling. They can invoke memories or relieve stress.
1. Fragrance cues are processed by the limbic system, the most primitive part of the brain and the place where immediate emotions are experienced.
 2. Smell is a direct line to feelings of happiness, hunger, and even memories of happy times (such as childhood years).
 3. Ad companies spend about \$80 million per year on scent marketing; the Scent Marketing Institute estimates that number will reach more than \$500 million by 2016. Recent developments include scented clothes, scented stores, scented cars and planes, scented household products, and scented advertisements.

Discussion Opportunity—Ask students to consider their most favorite and least favorite scents. Prior to class, consider your own as well. Then, engage the class in a discussion about whether or not such scents affect product purchase or avoidance.

D. Sound

Many aspects of sound affect people's feelings and behaviors.

Discussion Opportunity—Have students close their eyes and picture themselves shopping at a mall (you might give them cues to help this visualization along). As they are doing this, tell them that they should consider that the store is completely silent. After a few seconds, have them share how this affected their experience. Then ask: What are other ways marketers might use sound to stimulate your purchasing?

E. Touch

1. Though much research needs to be done in this area, moods are stimulated or relaxed on the basis of sensations of the skin. Touch has been shown to be a factor in sales interactions.

2. Some view touch like a primal language, one we learn well before writing and speech.
3. One study found that product judgments by individuals who do not normally possess a compulsion to touch products (low autotellics) are influenced by the feel of a package.
4. Touch or **Haptic** senses appear to moderate the relationship between product experience and judgment confidence; i.e., people are more sure about what they perceive when they can touch it. For instance, fragrance and cosmetics containers in particular tend to speak to consumers via their tactile appeal.
5. The Japanese practice, **Kansei engineering**, is a philosophy that translates customers' feelings into design elements.
6. People associate the textures of fabrics and other surfaces with product qualities (e.g., smooth, rough, silky, etc.).
7. Table 2.1 summarizes some tactile-quality associations.

*****Use Table 2.1 Here *****

F. Taste

1. Our taste receptors contribute to our experience of many products, and people form strong preferences for certain flavors.
2. Specialized companies (called “flavor houses”) try to develop new concoctions to please the ever-changing and demanding palates of consumers.
3. Changes in our culture also determine the tastes we find desirable.

Discussion Opportunity—Ask students the following: What is your favorite “new” taste? Give an illustration. How did you discover this new taste? What stimulus influenced you the most to try this “new” taste? How could marketers use this information?

III. Exposure

Exposure occurs when a stimulus comes within the range of someone’s sensory receptors.

***** Use Consumer Behavior Challenge #3 Here *****

A. Sensory Thresholds

1. The science that focuses on how the physical environment is integrated into our personal, subjective world is known as **psychophysics**.
2. When we define the lowest intensity of a stimulus that can be registered on a sensory channel, we speak of a **threshold** for that receptor.
3. The **absolute threshold** refers to the minimum amount of stimulation that can be detected on a sensory channel (the sound emitted by a dog whistle is beyond our absolute threshold, for example).

***** *Use Consumer Behavior Challenge #1 Here* *****

Discussion Opportunity—Ask students to consider how the absolute threshold is an important consideration in designing marketing stimulation. Then have them give illustrations.

4. The **differential threshold** refers to the ability of a sensory system to detect changes or differences between two stimuli.
 - The minimum differences that can be detected between two stimuli is known as the **j.n.d.** or just noticeable difference (e.g., marketers might want to make sure that a consumer notices that merchandise has been discounted).
 - A consumer's ability to detect a difference between two stimuli is relative. A whispered conversation will not be noticed on a busy street.
 - **Weber's Law** demonstrates that the stronger the initial stimulus, the greater the change must be for it to be noticed. Cereal boxes need to be vastly different sizes for consumers to notice. Similarly, most retailers believe that a price discount must be at least 20 percent for consumers to notice or to react to it.

***** *Use Consumer Behavior Challenge #7 Here* *****

Discussion Opportunity—Ask the class to write down the price of the following goods on a piece of paper: (a) a gallon of 2% milk, (b) a Big Mac, (c) a pair of top-of-the-line Nike tennis shoes, and (d) a Chevrolet Corvette. Then see if they can figure out the differential threshold they have for these goods. (See how much price would have to change before they would actually know it.) Ask them why it is different depending on the price of the product in question.

B. Subliminal Perception

1. Most marketers are concerned with creating messages above consumers' thresholds so they can be sure to be noticed. **Subliminal perception**, however, is perception that is below the threshold level. It occurs when the stimulus is below the level of the consumer's awareness.
2. Though the topic has received its share of notoriety, there is virtually no proof that this process has any effect on consumer behavior. Most examples of this technique are not really subliminal; in fact, they are quite visible.
3. Embeds are tiny figures inserted into magazine ads via high-speed photography or airbrushing.

Discussion Opportunity—Find an example of what you perceive to be a subliminal message. Explain your rationale to the class and show the product or message.

4. Does subliminal perception work? Within the marketing context, most agree the answer is "probably not." Effective messages must be very specifically tailored to individuals, rather than the mass messages required by advertising. Other discouraging factors are:

- Individuals have wide differences in their threshold levels.
- Advertisers can't control many important variables (such as viewing distance from the television screen).
- Consumers must give their absolute attention to the screen—most do not.
- The specific effect can't be controlled—your thirst will not make you buy “Pepsi.”

*******Use Consumer Behavior Challenge #2 Here *******

Discussion Opportunity—Bring in a small can of Jolly Green Giant mushrooms. At one time the mushrooms on the front of the can seemed to spell “SEX.” See if students can find their own examples of embeds. What do they think of this technique? Under what circumstances would “subliminal stimulation” be of benefit to society?

IV. Attention

- A. Attention refers to the extent to which processing activity is devoted to a particular stimulus.
1. Consumers are often in a state of sensory overload or are exposed to far more information than they are capable or willing to process. Today, the average adult is exposed to about 3,500 pieces of advertising information every single day.
 2. Many younger people have developed the ability to **multitask**, or process information from more than one medium at a time.

******* Use Consumer Behavior Challenge #9 Here *******

Discussion Opportunity—Ask: What do you think are the characteristics of the best banner ads? Give an illustration.

- B. Perceptual selection.
1. Because the brain's capacity to process information is limited, consumers are very selective about what they pay attention to.
 2. The process of **perceptual selection** means that people attend to only a small portion of stimuli to which they are exposed. Personal and stimulus factors help to decide which stimuli will be received and which will be avoided.
 3. One factor that determines how much exposure to a particular stimulus a person accepts is **experience**.
 4. **Perceptual filters** based on our past experiences influence what we decide to process.
 - **Perceptual vigilance**—consumers are more likely to be aware of stimuli that relate to their current needs.
 - **Perceptual defense**—people see what they want to see and vice versa.
 - **Adaptation**—the degree to which consumers notice a stimulus over time.
 5. Several factors lead to adaptation:

- Intensity
- Duration
- Discrimination
- Exposure
- Relevance

Discussion Opportunity—Ask students to think of examples when they have used perceptual vigilance and perceptual defense. Think of examples and circumstances when advertisers consciously are able to overcome these effects in consumers. Identify the techniques that might be used to break through these barriers.

C. Stimulus Selection Factors

In general, stimuli that differ from others around them are more likely to be noticed (remember Weber's Law). This contrast can be created in several ways:

- Size
- Color
- Position
- Novelty

*******Use Consumer Behavior Challenges #6 and #10 Here *******

Discussion Opportunity—Bring a magazine illustration of each of the four contrast methods demonstrated in the chapter and discuss in class.

V. Interpretation

- A. Interpretation refers to the meaning that we assign to sensory stimuli. Two people can see the same event but their interpretation can be completely different.
1. Consumers assign meaning to stimuli based on the **schema**, or set of beliefs, to which the stimulus is assigned. **Priming** is a process where certain properties of a stimulus typically will evoke a schema that leads us to evaluate the stimulus in terms of other stimuli we have encountered that are believed to be similar.
 2. Identifying and evoking the correct schema is crucial to many marketing decisions, because this determines what criteria will be used to evaluate the product, package, or message.

Discussion Opportunity—Ask: What might be the schema for (a) a tuxedo, (b) a hair dryer, or (c) a calculator to be used in school?

B. Stimulus Organization

1. One factor that determines how a stimulus will be interpreted is its assumed relationship with other events, sensations, or images. Our brains tend to relate

- incoming sensations to others already in memory based on some fundamental organizational principles.
- These principles are based on Gestalt psychology—meaning is derived from totality of a set of stimuli. In German, *gestalt* means whole, pattern, or configuration. Principles include:
 - The **closure principle**—people tend to perceive an incomplete picture as complete. We fill in the blanks.
 - The **principle of similarity**—consumers tend to group objects that share similar physical characteristics.
 - The **figure-ground principle**—one part of a stimulus will dominate (the figure) while other parts recede into the backdrop (the ground).

Discussion Opportunity—Ask: When you walk through a room when Wheel of Fortune is on, do you find yourself stopping to solve the puzzle? When you hear “Less filling . . .”, what do you think of? Give illustrations that demonstrate how advertisers can use or must be aware of (a) the closure principle, (b) the principle of similarity, and (c) the figure-ground principle.

C. The Eye of the Beholder: Interpretational Biases

The stimuli we perceive often are ambiguous—it’s up to us to determine the meaning based on our experiences, expectations, and needs.

D. Semiotics: The Symbols Around Us

- For assistance in understanding how consumers interpret the meanings of symbols, some marketers are turning to a field of study known as *semiotics* that examines the correspondence between signs and symbols and their role of consumer behavior because consumers use products to express their social identities.
- From a semiotic perspective, every marketing message has three basic components:
 - The **object** that is the focus of the message.
 - The **sign** is the sensory imagery that represents the intended meanings of the object.
 - The **interpretant** is the meaning derived.
- Signs are related to objects in one of three ways:
 - An **icon** is a sign that resembles the product in some way.
 - An **index** is a sign that is connected to a product because they share some property.
 - A **symbol** is a sign that is related to a product through either conventional or agreed-upon associations.

- Hyperreality** occurs when advertisers create new relationships between objects and interpretants by inventing new connections between products and benefits (e.g., equating Marlboro cigarettes with the American frontier spirit).

***** *Use Figure 2.3 Here* *****

F. Perceptual Positioning

1. A product stimulus often is interpreted in light of what we already know about a product category and the characteristics of existing brands. Perceptions of a brand consist of:
 - Functional attributes (e.g., its features, its price, and so on).
 - Symbolic attributes (its image, and what we think it says about us)
2. **Positioning strategy** is a fundamental part of a company's marketing efforts as it uses elements of the marketing mix to influence the consumer's interpretation of its meaning.
3. There are many dimensions that can be used to establish a brand's position:
 - Lifestyle
 - Price leadership
 - Attributes
 - Product class
 - Competitors
 - Occasions
 - Users
 - Quality

******* Use Figure 2.4 Here; Use Consumer Behavior Challenge #5 Here *******

Discussion Opportunity—Ask students to think of a case where a product has been positioned recently (i.e., new product introduction or re-positioning of an existing product). How was it positioned? What new market was pursued? How did you find out about this position or how did you discover the position?

End-of-Chapter Support Material

SUMMARY OF SPECIAL FEATURE BOXES

1. CB As I See It

This CB box discusses sensory marketing. Products and businesses can develop a sensory signature. What sensory characteristic of the brand's product sticks with consumers? This can be the basis for the sensory signature.

2. ECONsumer Behavior

In tight economic times, consumers want more for their money. This translates into stronger fragrances in products, because consumers believe the product is better if it smells like it works.

3. Marketing Pitfall

The California Milk Processor Board had to remove cookie-scented advertisements at five bus stops in San Francisco after several groups complained about the smell.

4. Marketing Pitfall

The A&E television network used an audio spotlight to project a message when people walked by the ad.

5. Marketing Opportunity

Phillips' AMBX system includes sensory experiences for the player.

6. Marketing Pitfall

People who use a DVR are more likely to fast-forward past ads that are not interesting.

7. ECONsumer

Even when consumers slow down spending due to tough economic times, marketers introduce new products in order to have a reason to communicate with customers.

8. CB As I Live It

This box is about schemas and priming. When we interpret a situation, we naturally go to our existing schemas to understand what we should expect.

9. Marketing Pitfall

The LA Times ran an ad recently for the television show, Southland, on the front page of the newspaper. Critics bashed the newspaper for crossing the line between marketing and reality.

REVIEW QUESTIONS

1. Define hedonic consumption and provide an example. *The Owens-Corning Fiberglass Corporation was the first company to trademark a color when it used bright pink for its insulation material and adopted the Pink Panther cartoon character as its spokesperson. Harley-Davidson actually tried to trademark the distinctive sound made by a “hog” revving up. These responses are an important part of hedonic consumption, the multisensory, fantasy, and emotional aspects of consumers’ interactions with products.*
2. Does the size of a package influence how much of the contents we eat? *When pouring or eating foods from larger boxes, these boxes suggest it is appropriate or “acceptable” to eat more than smaller ones—and we do!*
3. How does the sense of touch influence consumers’ reactions to products? *Moods are stimulated or relaxed on the basis of sensations reaching the skin, whether from a luxurious massage or the bite of a winter wind. Touch has even been shown to be a factor in sales interactions. We’re more sure about what we perceive when we can touch it.*
4. Identify and describe the three stages of perception. *Exposure occurs when a stimulus comes within the range of someone’s sensory receptors. Attention refers to the extent to which processing activity is devoted to a particular stimulus. Interpretation refers to the meaning that we assign to sensory stimuli.*
5. What is the difference between an absolute threshold and a differential threshold? *The absolute threshold refers to the minimum amount of stimulation that can be detected on a given sensory channel. The differential threshold refers to the ability of a sensory system to detect changes or differences between two stimuli.*
6. Does subliminal perception work? Why or why not? *Some research by clinical psychologists suggests that people can be influenced by subliminal messages under very specific conditions, though it is doubtful that these techniques would be of much use in most marketing contexts. Effective messages must be very specifically tailored to individuals, rather than the mass messages required by advertising.*
7. “Consumers practice a form of ‘psychic economy.’ ” What does this mean? *Psychic economy is picking and choosing among stimuli to avoid being overwhelmed. How do they choose? Both personal and stimulus factors help to decide.*
8. Describe two factors that can lead to stimulus adaptation. *There are five factors that can lead to stimulus adaptation:*

- **Intensity:** *Less-intense stimuli (e.g., soft sounds or dim colors) habituate because they have less sensory impact.*
 - **Duration:** *Stimuli that require relatively lengthy exposure in order to be processed tend to habituate because they require a long attention span.*
 - **Discrimination:** *Simple stimuli tend to habituate because they do not require attention to detail.*
 - **Exposure:** *Frequently encountered stimuli tend to habituate as the rate of exposure increases.*
 - **Relevance:** *Stimuli that are irrelevant or unimportant will habituate because they fail to attract attention.*
9. Define a “schema” and provide an example of how this concept is relevant to marketing. *Consumers assign meaning to stimuli based on the schema, or set of beliefs, to which the stimulus is assigned. An applied example of a schema is given in the opening vignette to the chapter when Gary is revolted at the thought of warm milk.*
10. “The whole is greater than the sum of its parts.” Explain this statement. *Gestalt roughly means whole, pattern, or configuration, and this perspective is best summarized by the saying “the whole is greater than the sum of its parts.”*
11. List the three semiotic components of a marketing message, giving an example of each. *The **object** is the product that is the focus of the message (e.g., Marlboro cigarettes). The **sign** is the sensory image that represents the intended meanings of the object (e.g., the Marlboro cowboy). The **interpretant** is the meaning derived (e.g., rugged, individualistic, American).*
12. What do we mean by the idea of hyperreality? *Hyperreality refers to the process of making real what is initially simulation or “hype.” Advertisers create new relationships between objects and interpretants by inventing new connections between products and benefits, such as equating Marlboro cigarettes with the American frontier spirit.*
13. What is a positioning strategy? What are some ways marketers can position their products? *A positioning strategy is a fundamental part of a company’s marketing efforts as it uses elements of the marketing mix (i.e., product design, price, distribution, and marketing communications) to influence the consumer’s interpretation of its meaning. Marketers can use many dimensions to carve out a brand’s position in the marketplace. These include:*
- **Lifestyle:** *Grey Poupon mustard is a “higher-class” condiment.*
 - **Price leadership:** *L’Oréal’s Noisôme brand face cream is sold in upscale beauty shops, whereas its Plenitude brand is available for one-sixth the price in discount stores—even though both are based on the same chemical formula.*
 - **Attributes:** *Bounty paper towels are “the quicker picker upper.”*
 - **Product class:** *The Mazda Miata is a sporty convertible.*
 - **Competitors:** *Northwestern Insurance is “the quiet company.”*

- **Occasions:** Wrigley's gum is an alternative at times when smoking is not permitted.
- **Users:** Levi's Dockers are targeted primarily to men in their 20s to 40s.
- **Quality:** At Ford, "Quality is job 1."

CONSUMER BEHAVIOR CHALLENGE

Discussion Questions

1. Many studies have shown that our sensory detection abilities decline as we grow older. Discuss the implications of the absolute threshold for marketers attempting to appeal to the elderly.

It would be wise to begin this exercise by identifying the particular senses and the ways in which they decline as the consumer gets older. Once this has been done, students should brainstorm to develop a list of the ways that a message may not be received or interpreted correctly. Students might be encouraged to develop a matrix, placing the senses down the left-hand side and forms of communication across the top. The matrix then should be filled in with descriptions of how communications may fail and how these failures could be avoided. For example, print advertisements aimed at an older audience could use larger type; radio and television ads could decrease the pace of information presented and slightly increase the volume to allow older recipients to more fully process the information; and retail stores and restaurants could increase lighting.

2. Assuming that some forms of subliminal persuasion may have the desired effect of influencing consumers, do you think the use of these techniques is ethical? Explain your answer.

Many students will consider the use of subliminal persuasion to be unethical. Accordingly, a discussion could focus on why subliminal messages are undesirable. An interesting issue to raise may be how, or even if, subliminal persuasion differs from other advertising that consumers are exposed to every day. Once these differences have been noted, the discussion could turn toward analyzing the reasons why individuals react negatively to subliminal persuasion. Students who believe the use of these techniques is ethical should be encouraged to develop their arguments so that those representing each side of the argument might see the opposing view. Regardless of the position adopted by the majority of students, be prepared to stimulate discussion by developing an argument in favor of the use of subliminal messages. This argument could center on the idea that subliminal persuasion might result in less "clutter." Arguing for its effectiveness, the amount of advertising could decrease overall.

3. Do you believe that marketers have the right to use any or all public spaces to deliver product messages? Where would you draw the line in terms of places and products that should be restricted?

This question needs to be split into two parts: 1) whether marketers have the right to use any public spaces and 2) whether they have the right to use all public spaces. These are the two extremes on the issue, and the students will most likely find themselves somewhere between complete and unlimited access for marketers on one hand and complete and total ban on the other. A key concept in this discussion is the definition of “public spaces” and, therefore, a common definition should be adopted early in the discussion. To develop their position on this issue, students should be encouraged to list both appropriate and inappropriate places for product messages and offer reasons why each place should be categorized in a particular way. See if they think signs on the highway should be eliminated. If they agree, ask them how they would ever find McDonald’s!

4. The slogan for the movie Godzilla was “Size does matter.” Should this be the slogan for America as well? Many marketers seem to believe so. The average serving size for a fountain drink has gone from 12 ounces to 20 ounces. An industry consultant explains that the 32-ounce Big Gulp is so popular because “people like something large in their hands. The larger the better.” Hardee’s Monster Burger, complete with two beef patties and five pieces of bacon, weighs in at 63 grams of fat and more than 900 calories. Clothes have ballooned as well: Kickwear makes women’s jeans with 40-inch-diameter legs. The standard for TV sets used to be 19 inches; now it’s 32 inches. Hulking SUVs have replaced tiny sports cars as the status vehicle of the new millennium. One consumer psychologist theorized that consuming big things is reassuring: “Large things compensate for our vulnerability,” she says. “It gives us insulation, the feeling that we’re less likely to die.” What’s up with our fascination with bigness? Is this a uniquely American preference? Do you believe that “bigger is better”? Is this a sound marketing strategy?

This question comprises multiple questions. The first, “What’s up with our fascination with bigness?” is very general and should spark some general comments or discussion. If anything specific is to come from this particular question, students should be directed to theorize as to “why” people in the United States prefer bigger sizes. The second question, “Is this a uniquely American preference?” can only really be addressed if and when students have a concept of product size in other countries. Thus, foreign students and students who have lived or studied abroad will be a good resource here. Another option if assigning this question as an at-home project is to have students research product sizes in other countries to make comparisons. It might be helpful if you give a few specific products for them to research, such as soft drinks, automobiles, and televisions. The third question, “Do you believe that ‘bigger is better’?” should be directed toward whether or not larger sizes benefit the consumer. The final question examines whether super-sized products benefit the marketer. (Possible At-Home Project Idea)

5. Playmobil toys recreate real-life settings such as a police station or hospital. A new offering the company calls Security Check Point features armed airport security officers, a metal detector, and an X-ray screening machine. Some parents protested; one wrote this comment on Amazon.com: “I applaud Playmobil for attempting to provide us with the tools we need to teach our children to unquestioningly obey the commands of the State Security Apparatus. But unfortunately, this product falls short of doing that. There’s no

brown figure for little Josh to profile, taser, and detain.” A Playmobil executive comments, “The whole premise behind Playmobil toys is to familiarize the child with the realities of life through play. If you’re taking a child for a first flight to Florida from New Jersey to visit grandparents, you say, ‘This is what the terminal looks like, and when we get here we have to take our shoes off and walk through security.’ ” Where should toymakers draw the line between reality and play?

This is a great question to include in class discussion because it will generate strong opinions from students. Connect responses to chapter material, pointing out that the Playmobil approach provides learning opportunities for children.

Application Questions

1. Interview three to five male and three to five female friends regarding their perceptions of both men’s and women’s fragrances. Construct a perceptual map for each set of products. Based on your map of perfumes, do you see any areas that are not adequately served by current offerings? What (if any) gender differences did you obtain regarding both the relevant dimensions used by raters and the placement of specific brands along these dimensions?

Have the students start this project by listing a number of descriptive words that are or could be used when positioning perfumes in the market place. Have them ask the respondents to position various perfumes on the map according to their impressions of the perfumes selected. (Possible Field Project Idea)

2. Assume that you are a consultant for a marketer who wants to design a package for a new premium chocolate bar targeted to an affluent market. What recommendations would you provide in terms of such package elements as color, symbolism, and graphic design? Give the reasons for your suggestions. Using magazines archived in the library, track the packaging of a specific brand over time. Find an example of gradual changes in package design that may have been below the j.n.d.

Most students will recognize that the label (package), the weight of the product, and the brand name of the product are all combined to communicate the image of the product. In this exercise the students are examining a premium product targeted to an affluent market. Obviously, the suggestions developed by students are likely to reflect their own experiences. What needs to be added to the discussion of product labels and names is: (1) the colors that will augment the desired premium image, (2) the smell that is associated with candy, (3) the sound of the candy wrapper in your hand, and (4) the symbolism that may be used to position the product in the consumer’s mind. The issue of symbolism may provide the best avenue for discussion, and a broader discussion of how symbols can be used in advertising and promotion would be helpful.

You might give a few hints here. For example, Aunt Jemima, the Morton Salt Girl, and Betty Crocker are trademarks that have changed over time and can be found in ads. Package changes include Ivory Soap, Kellogg’s Rice Krispies, and Campbell Soup.

Students can simply examine automobile ads to see how styles of a particular car have changed over the years—the body is the car’s package. (Possible Field Project Idea)

3. Using magazines archived in the library, track the packaging of a specific brand over time. Find an example of gradual changes in package design that may have been below the j.n.d.

This question needs to be assigned with appropriate time to complete the work. The examples found may mirror the changes in design for the Pepsi logo.

4. Visit a set of Web sites for one type of product (e.g., personal computers, perfumes, laundry detergents, or athletic shoes) and analyze the colors and other design principles employed. Which sites “work” and which don’t? Why? Look through a current magazine and select one ad that captures your attention over the others. Give the reasons why.

See if the students will notice how similar many of the products and brands are in terms of shape, weight, color, and size as depicted on the Web sites. A good way to approach this project is to pick a mainstream product such as an Apple computer (because of its bright colors). Be sure to have students state what they mean by “it will work” (a success) and how this was measured. Have one or two students go online to demonstrate how they approached this project. (Possible At-Home Project Idea)

After students have indicated what ad caught their attention, probe to see if there are any other reasons. Ask the class if any other aspects of the ad struck them. (Possible Field Project Idea)

5. Find ads that utilize the techniques of contrast and novelty. Give your opinion of the effectiveness of each ad and whether the technique is likely to be appropriate for the consumers targeted by the ad.

Opinions will vary here. Some people like novelty in most everything, while others want people to be more serious. (Possible Field Project Idea)

CASE STUDY TEACHING NOTES

Chapter 2 Case Study: The Brave New World of Subway Advertising

Summary of Case

Since 1999, a new segment of out-of-home advertising has been developed. Various agencies around the world have pioneered a technology that allows for static images placed in subway tunnels to appear as full-motion commercials. This represents one of many developments in recent years to break through ad clutter to capture consumers' attention with a novel type of advertising in a place that consumers do not expect it. The ad medium is rolling out in subway tunnels of major cities worldwide. The most notable part of this new development is that public reaction has been overwhelmingly positive. Transit officials, agency representatives, and corporate advertisers alike have been given kudos for turning dark and dreary tunnels into something entertaining for commuters.

Suggestions for Presentation

This case could be assigned as an out-of-class or in-class activity. As an in-class activity, it might be more effective to have the class read it, then break them into small groups to discuss the questions. This is because a good response to the questions would require a consideration of various chapter concepts. The small group discussion could then be followed up with a large group review.

The discussion questions indicate that this case can be most appropriately tied to the section in Chapter 2 that covers the concept of attention. However, the flexibility of the case would allow for some application to the sections on exposure (Which of the five senses does this ad type appeal to most? What are the implications of this for advertisers?) and interpretation (How does placement of an ad in this context affect positioning? How does the nature of different target segments of subway riders affect interpretation?). Thus, this case can be used to illustrate the entire process of perception as explained in the chapter.

This case allows for the psychological processes of perception to be linked to real-world marketing implications. One item of interest not mentioned in the case that may be brought up during discussion is how this unique appeal to the perception processes of consumers has created value for multiple constituencies:

- The consumers—the positive reception indicates that the ads have entertainment value during an otherwise boring commute.
- The media agencies—these agencies are new ventures and are carving out a multi-million dollar industry. The cost of subway ads ranges from \$35,000 a month to \$250,000 a month depending on the route.
- The advertisers—there is no shortage of promotional choices for corporations and non-profit organizations. However, subway tunnel advertising gives marketers one of the few options that breaks through ad clutter in such a way that the consumer wants to see the ad, not to avoid it.

- The transit agencies—most metropolitan transit agencies are struggling with ever tightening budgets and with the balance of fare prices and demand. Many are therefore searching for additional revenue streams such as concessions or advertising. Although in-station and in-train advertising has been around since the early 1900s, subway tunnel agencies are forecasting that a single transit company (which would receive between 25 percent and 60 percent of the revenues) could earn as much as \$200 million over 5 years.

Suggested Answers For Discussion Questions

1. Based on the principles of attention presented in this chapter, explain why this new wave of subway ads is expected to be so effective.

This case is suited for illustrating various aspects of the perceptual process, including sensation, exposure, attention, and interpretation. However, the concepts that best explain why this new advertising medium should initially be successful are the stimulus selection factors of position and novelty that contribute to attention. With respect to position, subway ads come into full view, right outside the windows of subway trains where many riders are likely to be gazing. The concept of novelty exerts that stimuli that appear in unexpected places tend to grab attention. Certainly, these ads should at least initially be unexpected on the dark walls of subway tunnels. These things alone will contribute to higher than normal levels of attention which should have some effect on memory retention.

2. Using the same principles, what should the ads' creators consider to avoid the potential burnout of this medium?

Obviously, if novelty is the biggest playing card for this advertising medium, then this should wear off. This is especially true because the image panels for these ads are placed physically in the subway tunnels and will likely remain in place for at least a month. Many subway riders are regulars. This means that they will see the same ad day after day. It won't take long before they no longer look. Additionally, after riders become accustomed to the ad medium itself, subway tunnel ads won't be any different than any other type of advertising as far as the attention-grabbing benefits.

It is also speculated by some that the positioning of ads where riders are likely to be looking may produce negative reactions. Some riders gazing out of subway windows may enjoy the darkness as a form of relaxation or mediation.

Drawing upon other concepts from the chapter, in becoming familiar with these subway ads, riders are going through "adaptation" and are likely to notice them less. That is, unless the powers at be do something to change the nature of the ads.

Additional Support Material

STUDENT PROJECTS

Individual Projects

1. Visit a department store through its perfume/cologne/cosmetics section. Do the scents have enough of an appeal to motivate buying? Does it appear that each of these is appealing to the sense of smell in a strategic manner?
2. Ask students to find three ads that contain symbolism. Examine the symbols and discuss the meaning the symbols convey. Encourage the student to identify the different types of signs used in the ads and the product qualities being communicated by each. Additionally, find a symbol that might not or should not be used in advertising in the cultural context of America. Why would you not utilize it?
3. What are the symbols of “green marketing”? Students need to review them and opine whether or not they are effective.
4. Here is a field project that students always like. Have students (you might have only one or a few students do this as a special or alternative assignment) photocopy or print a collection of brand/product symbols (an alternative would be to have students create a PowerPoint presentation with images inserted to be projected in the classroom for all to see). Then have this student quiz fellow classmates to see if they can recognize the product or company. This will show students how effective symbols are and how much involuntary learning has taken place in their life. You might give a reward to the student who had the **most** correct responses.
5. Here is a tough assignment for an undergraduate. Ask students to spend an afternoon watching a popular soap opera or an evening watching a favorite television show. Ask them to be particularly observant of the various products and services that are used as props during the show. Do these products or services have any symbolic value? How would viewer perception be different if alternative brands or even generic brands had been used? To what extent are the props shown or mentioned? Are they used to help develop the plot? How?
6. Have students visit a grocery store and pick out five products. They should identify how each appeals to the five senses. How are they the same? How are they different? To what extent do any of them appear to be strategically designed to appeal to the five senses?
7. Visit a few student-targeted Web sites (www.facebook.com, www.myspace.com, etc.) and a few Web sites that target senior citizens (www.aarp.com, www.senior.com, etc.). Are there any differences in the sensory (especially visual) strategies employed by these sites? Can you draw some generalizations?

8. For this project, each student should keep a log of all the advertising information that they are exposed to in a single hour when they are out in public. They should keep track of the quantity, and not try to note the names or descriptions of each. From memory, what are some of the ways that companies attempt to get their ads noticed?
9. Send students to the library (they may need directions!) and have them look through several foreign magazines. How are the advertisements different from those in the United States? What sensory cues (based on the advertisements you see) seem to be cultural in nature? See if you can find an ad that is for the same product but done differently between the United States and some other country and comment on the differences (besides language).
10. While viewing one hour of television, what types of companies focus the most on factors that might affect “perceptual vigilance” in their advertisements? Have students write about examples of instances when they have used or experienced “perceptual vigilance” and “perceptual defense.” Have them share their experiences with the class.
11. Assign students to find illustrations of the “closure principle,” the “principle of similarity,” and “figure-ground principle” in any marketing promotional or packaging material. Have them share their findings with the class.
12. Ask students to choose any two restaurants or pubs that are frequented by friends. Have them measure their image profiles by asking ten fellow students or friends to write a list of descriptive words that apply to each restaurant or pub. It will be easier for the subjects if the students provide the subjects with a list of potential descriptions. What conclusions can be drawn from this data?
13. For this project, students will need to pay attention. The student needs to notice and identify a piece of marketing material to which they have adapted and generally do not pay attention. Discuss the five factors of adaptation in relation to this particular piece of marketing material.
14. Have students find examples of an icon, an index, and a symbol. Differentiate between the three items.
15. As part of your class preparation, devise an experiment that can be done in class to demonstrate **perceptual selection**. You might even review the psychology and consumer behavior literature for ideas.
16. Examples of hyperreality are becoming more and more common in our society. Have each student locate (either through their own observations or through reviewing articles in the popular and trade press) an example of hyperreality. Is the example chosen one in which the marketer strategically facilitated the “hyperreal” phenomenon, or did the transition occur independent of the marketer? How does the chosen example contribute to the relationship between the product and the consumer?

Group Projects

1. Develop a print and/or video ad for a product/brand that includes as many of the sensory stimuli as possible in order to convey the environmental message.
2. Collect a variety of packages of children's and adults' breakfast cereals. How different are the j.n.d strategies for each market? Catalog various j.n.d strategies utilized and state whether they are likely to be effective for any other products. If your group were marketing the cereal, what would you have done differently?
3. Have three or four students identify a list of five products that are very utilitarian. Then, have them locate three examples of each product that focus on the emotional or hedonic form more than the core function.
4. Ask a group of students (seven to eight each) to list their favorite advertisements. Look at the lists. What do these ads tell you about the person that responded or the group as a whole? What do these ads do differently to increase perception or remembrance? What percentage of the ads were sexually oriented? After your respondents have given you their lists, be sure to ask whether they use the products displayed in the "favorite" ads. Comment on your results.
5. Have students (in small groups) go to various local restaurants and find menu items they would never eat. Describe these items (such as fried squid). Students should next demonstrate how perception might alter these biases. What could be done to make these "taboo" foods more acceptable? They should consider such areas as name changes, peer pressure, health benefits, and informational ads. Report the results in class.
6. Have student groups find three examples of brands or companies that have made changes to their products (i.e., retail chain re-designing their stores, a new logo, etc.). Have them discuss how the concept of "just noticeable difference" might affect consumer perceptions of these changes. Are the changes something that the marketers wanted to be noticed?
7. Have groups of students (five to six each) think of how to demonstrate the principles of "absolute threshold" and "difference threshold" to the rest of the class. Have them develop this exercise and perform it.

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Individual Assignments

1. Visit **www.globalgreen.org**. What are some of the sensory cues they are utilizing in order to attract your attention to various subjects/topics and ads?
2. Go to **www.tvguide.com**. On the opening Web page, how many ads (including pop-ups) do you notice? Compare and contrast the approach of each ad to exposure, attention, and interpretation. Comment on how the consumer goes through these steps when coming in contact with each ad. Provide an illustration of your description.
3. Go to **www.toyota.com/prius**. Prius has focused its promotional efforts on the Internet and other non-traditional media. Is this Web site a good way to promote a car? In terms of concepts of perception, why or why not?
4. Go to **www.leapfrog.com** or **www.pbskids.org**. These sites are designed to facilitate learning amongst children. Compare and contrast these sites for sensory stimulation, attention value, and ability to promote a sale of the product. How are semiotics used on these sites?
5. Go to **www.bose.com**. Bose promises that once you listen to their Quiet Comfort 2 headphones you will never be satisfied with another comparable unit. Determine the competitive advantages and disadvantages of the Quiet Comfort 2. How does the company use sensory stimulation to promote the product? What key words can be used to evoke a response from consumers? Is the Bose approach effective? Explain.

Group Assignments

1. Go to **www.crutchfield.com**. Spend some time becoming familiar with this Web site. The group should evaluate the Crutchfield's strategy. What is it? What do you think will be the long-term result of the strategy you just described? How is the organization using exposure, attention, and interpretation to its benefit? What does the group think will be the secrets of success for Crutchfield? The seeds of failure? Which symbols should be used to ensure success? Which should be avoided?
2. Go to **www.apple.com**. Your group assignment is to analyze how Apple used color and design to differentiate the iPod line from other mp3 players. Give illustrations of what was done. Was this a good strategy? What target markets were pursued? How did Apple use exposure, attention, and interpretation to their advantage? What are the criticisms about the iPod line? Can color and design overcome these criticisms? Is Apple using some of these same strategies for its iPhone brand?