



The Raphael Report

**Observations on marketing,
advertising, sales and
promotions
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What This Country Needs Is A Good Five Senses

Thomas Riley Marshall was Vice President of the United States under Woodrow Wilson. One day, when presiding over a session of the Senate, he was listening to a tedious debate on the needs of the country. He leaned over to John Crockett, chief clerk of the Senate and said, "What this country needs is a good five cent cigar."

Since I'm no cigar smoker – *five cents* or otherwise – I would rather concentrate on the five senses of touch, taste, sound, smell and sight. I have long concluded all that direct mail (and, in fact, much advertising) needs to appeal to our five senses. Special attention to one, all or any combination will contribute to the success of your marketing program. There is one plausible substitute...but we will leave that for you to discover at the end of this article.

TOUCH: Menswear retailers tell us when they include a swatch of fabric in their mailers, sales increase. Some manufacturers of men's shirts make available to retailers small swatches of different shirt fabrics: plain oxford, pima, pinpoint oxford, etc. The retailers can use the swatches in a catalog or direct marketing piece. It's a great incentive for customers to buy when they can feel the actual fabric.

TASTE: Manufacturers do the same with food. They send samples through the mail directly to consumers or give allowances to supermarkets for coupons or "sampling" in the stores.

The supermarkets credit their customers' coupons. But many of them take sampling beyond manufacturer allowances. They have sampling stands throughout their store for you to try the newest cheeses, just-arrived fruit, gourmet sauces and grilled meat and chicken and/or more for you to pick, choose and sample. Customers happily graze, eating their way around the aisles. Sales of these products will not only increase but often double or more that day.

Why they work: Once you sample a product and like it, the odds increase dramatically the item will appear on your next shopping list.

HEAR: Never underestimate the power of your customer hearing a recommendation for your products or services from a friend or family member. Even though telemarketing has become a bad word because of some abuses, it is still a powerful selling tool when you call your own customers, especially after sending them a direct mail piece.

Here's why this works: Tests show that whatever percentage of response you receive from a mailer, the response doubles or more when you follow up to those who did not respond to your mailer with a telephone request for them to buy the same product.

SMELL: Walk into any supermarket. Chances are the bakery is just to the right as you

make your way past the entrance. The natural instinct is to breathe in those pleasant odors and buy.

Our favorite story of this technique was when a Tennessee supermarket found a company that made ink whose smell would match any recognizable odor. A store could use this ink in their newspaper ads to simulate the smell of the products they sold. The supermarket decided to run weekly full page ads of a specific produce item with headlines like this: "Bananas so delicious you can actually smell them." By holding the paper close to your nose you inhaled the scent of bananas. The scent remained for about 12 hours. The next week was strawberries. The following week, lemons. The last promotion was for oranges. However, the night before the ad ran, the advertising manager of the supermarket received a call from the production man from the newspaper.

"The orange scent hasn't arrived," he said, "And so you have two choices: either run the ad without the smell or run a blank page." The ad manager hesitated, then reluctantly decided, "Run the ad without the smell." The ad ran with the headline, "Oranges so delicious you can actually smell them."

For the rest of the week, when people shopped the supermarket they told the produce manager, "Y'know, you finally got the smell right. Now THAT was oranges!"

Open any magazine with a significant women's readership. See the perfume ads with the slightly sealed tab. Unfold the tab and the fragrance fills the room. (Warning: this can be a turn-off to those with allergies. My wife wrote a letter to her favorite magazine complaining about an overbearing scent in the last issue and threatened cancellation if it continued.)

SIGHT: TV channels that sell merchandise, like Home Shopping Network and QVC, sell billions of dollars of products by "sight." What sells best? Jewelry is high on the lists. Hard goods, stereos, sunglasses all sell well. Clothing is more difficult because it involves fit and sizes and people prefer to touch the merchandise.

But often, your marketing message needs to be expressed in words alone. And luckily, words alone *are* capable of expressing all the senses. Here's how:

TOUCH: You tell the reader the products are analogous to something they readily understand. The cloth is smooth as silk, the beard as rough as sandpaper.

TASTE: Ask your reader to imagine sucking on a lemon and their lips will quickly purse. Tell them to visualize Thanksgiving turkey with the slightly crisp baked meat, the tender vegetables, the whipped creamy potatoes ... and they will "sense" the taste.

HEAR: You can talk to your reader with words that are as low as a whisper like this. Or as **LOUD AS THIS!**

SMELL: The odor of chestnuts roasting, the scent of just-baked apple pie from the oven, the strong scent of garlic.

SIGHT: The art of seeing is the art of reading. Remember that in the beginning ... there was the word.

So the next time you prepare advertising for your business, ask yourself, "Does it make any senses? Which of the five does it use?" The more you use, the greater your chances for success.

And when it DOES work - well, congratulations. *Have a cigar!*