Chapter 11
Retail Design Brand Experiences through Merging Art, Design, and Science

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ABSTRACT

This work explores retail design from a user experience approach to discuss how consultancies integrate art, design and science in commercial design to create memorable brand experiences. This demand to build a theoretical framework that explores research based user experience and branding in order to facilitate the introduction of key theoretical terms. Subsequently, it examines the relation between art and science within the realm of design in practice. Then, it is possible to choose case studies in which their brands exhibited different approaches to create a coherent identity throughout different touch points when designing their commercial spaces. The aim is to enable professionals to have a holistic view and balanced approach on the design of retail stores considering physical and virtual visual and spatial branding touch points.

INTRODUCTION

The chapter has four sections. The first section theoretically examines user experience approach in commercial design. It discusses how organizations create co-experiences that reflect emotional responses, expectations, and motivations of a brand. The following section centers in analyzing commercial design from a brand cultural perspective. It inquires how a brand permeates the visual (or sensorial stimuli) and spatial space and how does it transcends and transits from the physical world to the digital arena and vice versa. The third section explores the intrinsic relation between art and science and design and how this trans disciplinary interplay encourages the creation of unique experiences in commercial design. An awareness of these possible interactions allows generating unique experiences around the brand identity. The last section reviews case studies located on different parts of the world in order to exhibit a variety of approaches to holistic brand value using sensorial physical and digital experiences in commercial design.

User Experiences in Commercial Design

In a globalized world, technological advances have impelled societies to gain access to and share information from geographically and cultural remote regions. This new reality has enabled organizations to enter new markets and compete with other transnational and local businesses using different means of communication to connect with consumers (either users or customers). They require new interactions that allow their prospect consumers to play other roles beyond mere users or observers. For example, consumers can become “prosumers” using information technology to produce what they purchase and/or consume (Beom Kim et al., 2009). They can also be “expeririers”, where they seek out to try, test, experience, and/or prove events, occurrences, or moments that leave a lasting and meaningful impression.

Human beings have expectations about the products and services that they interact with in their everyday life. If these products or services do not fulfill their desired expectations, then consumers or customers can consider other options available in the market. Organizations need to go beyond their customer relationship management (CRM) data accumulated online and offline to identify customer needs and wants. They need to consider other means to unveil a person’s behaviors, attitudes and emotions toward a product, service or process/system. The quality of an experience depends on the breadth and depth of interaction that consumers or users have with products or services and how profoundly these touch their life. This means that enterprises have to concentrate in examining how people respond to events that happen daily and how these actions or inactions dictates what they buy, eat and think. These series of behaviors lead consumers to act in a seemingly involuntary way creating a habit. Organizations can funnel their efforts towards understanding people and how they might behave in order to create (product) outcomes that influence their behavior and thus induce them to acquire new habits. They have to design physical and digital means that allow them to bond with users through co-experiences, emotional responses, expectations and motivations.

This fierce competition has provoked that organizations start adopting a user-centered design since the moment they design their products/services until their disposal. This approach will allow them to understand and prioritize those needs before, during and after they interact with them (Brown, 2008). A user experience approach can be described, as the sum of physical and virtual interactions that a consumer, user or customer has with a product or service offered by an organization. The aim is to improve these experiences throughout cohesive brand interaction in each of their main touch points. Organizations are accountable to plan and design those physical and virtual instants of interaction, named designable touch points (DTs). These DTs depend on the design discipline that defines the production of their specific tangible or intangible outcomes. The above presupposes the fulfillment of the following criteria, usefulness, usability, learnability, aesthetics, and emotions, in their products or services.

Figure 1 exhibits the five designable touchpoints, space design, product design, identity design, advertising and graphic design, and new media design, that generate intangible and tangible experiences (Kyongsill et al., 2013). Each of these DTs has a series of areas of expertise that assist in creating tangible or intangible outcomes relevant for the experience desired. These specializations are not limited to architecture or design, as they require also sociology, psychology, visual communication, computer science, cognitive science, etc. Depending on these areas is possible to produce specific outcomes like in-store, product, print, email, social network, web, and people (service) that assist to have a coherent user experience throughout all the interactions created by the brand. This kind of collaborations are evident when consumers interplay with spatial scenarios and visual commercial design locations such as offices, retail stores, restaurants, lobbies, and public spaces. Interior designers are key participants...
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