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Motives and Guidance for the Use of Sensory Marketing in Retailing
-The Case of Nature & Découvertes-

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Abstract

The competition within the retail industry enters a white-hot stage. In order to please customers, retailers are using variable methods to strive for market shares. Creating pleasant physical environment where customers enjoy coming to (Georges Olivereau in Engel 2010), plays a vital part in determining customers’ satisfactions, their visit duration and intention to revisit the store (Turley and Fugate 1992), helping retailers to differentiate and providing brand experience. Consequently, new marketing technique has emerged, sensory marketing, which stimulates the five organs of human (visual, sound, scent, touch and taste).

The authors of this thesis will answer why and how sensory marketing should be used in stores. The purpose is to find the reasons as well as the circumstances sensory marketing should be used and implemented properly to create a coherent sensory atmosphere that would benefit the retailers. Professionals’ recommendations as well as the case of the French retailer Nature & Découvertes who successfully applies the five senses into the store atmosphere, will be used to answer these questions.

At the end of this thesis, the authors summarise the motives and the different aspects to take into account when implementing sensory atmosphere inside a synthetic model (Figure 20). Four steps are described as well as the potential benefits for the retailers.

**Key Words**: Sensory marketing, Retail, Nature & Découvertes, servicescape, experience marketing
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1. Introduction

➢ Background
The competition within the retail industry enters a white-hot stage. In order to please customers, retailers are using variable methods to strive for market share. Some goes for big advertising investment, attractive campaigns and non-stop promotions. When these are not enough, increasing customer added-value by providing pleasant shopping experience becomes a useful way for retailers to differentiate themselves and provide a unique brand experience. In other words, creating pleasant physical environment where customers enjoy coming to (Georges Olivereau in Engel 2010), plays a vital part in determining customers’ satisfactions, their visit duration and intention to revisit the store (Turley and Fugate 1992). Based on this, a new marketing technique, sensory marketing, has emerged, which stimulates the five senses of human (visual, sound, scent, touch and taste). In this paper we are defining sensory marketing according to the definition of Expressens (2011): a mean not an end in itself, which enable retailers to re-enchant consumption, and provide of long term sensory mark on the customer.

➢ Problems
As described in the background, retailers are increasingly conscious of the importance of their store atmosphere. Surprisingly, only a handful of them are using complete sensory marketing. The question is why?

Furthermore, very few academic researches have been conducted on the subject to guide retailers in the management of their store environment. There is an obvious research gap between the call of some scholars and the studies conducted: Bitner (1992) suggests that “it is important to recognize that the dimensions of the environment […] as a holistic pattern of interdependent stimuli”. Similarly, Harris and Ezeh (2008) state that “customers respond to the environments in a holistic manner”. This concern is also stressed by Lee and Brand (2005) who propose that studies of the relationships between environmental influences and
human behaviour should be integrated in a holistic setting; in order to have better understanding about the dynamics of environmental impacts on customers’ attitudes and behaviours. However, the current research studies on senses focus merely on one or two simultaneously. As Harris and Ezeh (2008) state, one of the limitations of most of servicescape/store environment literatures is “they (both empirical and conceptual) […] focused on single servicescape elements”. And Tombs and McColl-Kennedy (2003) also mention that empirical studies of multiple environmental effects are rare and largely limited to the study of two environmental variables, such as music and scent.

Consequently, “little is known about the global configurations of aspects of the servicescape” (ibid) and retailers rely mostly on the “try and see” to create their store atmosphere, without having clear guidance from academic research concerning how sensory marketing should be implemented.

➢ Purpose and Research Question

The purpose is to find the reasons as well as the circumstances sensory marketing should be used and implemented properly to create a coherent sensory atmosphere that would benefit the retailers. The authors of this thesis will answer the following question: Why and how sensory marketing should be used in stores?

Professionals’ recommendations as well as the case of the French retailer Nature & Découvertes who successfully applies the five senses into the store atmosphere, will be used to answer these questions.

➢ Further Structure of the Thesis

Chapter 2 Theories regarding experience marketing, servicescape and senses are introduced in this section. The emergence of experience marketing is presented, as well as the importance of servicescape in retailing and current theory concerning the five senses applied to purchasing behaviour.

Chapter 3 In this section, the methods are motivated and explained, including how the research is carried out and the data analysed. Further, the problems faced during the data collection are described.
Chapter 4  In this data findings chapter, the information we collected from professionals as well as from the study of Nature & Découvertes, are presented. These include interviews, questionnaires, company documentation and press article from specialised-press. This section is the empirical base for the authors’ further analysis.

Chapter 5  In the analysis part, links between theory and information presented in chapter 4 are drawn. Research questions are answered by providing a guidance model at the end.

Chapter 6  Main conclusions are drawn in the final chapter as well as recommendation for further studies.
2. Theoretical Framework

This chapter provides the necessary theories that will support the analysis of the empirical part. In order to offer a clear and comprehensive view of sensory marketing, the relative concepts about experience marketing and servicescape (Bitner 1992) are introduced in the beginning. Pine & Gilmore (1998) found that more and more companies, including retailers, are willing to satisfy customers by offering real shopping experiences, in which senses play a major role. As the five senses are the main parts of store environment (i.e. servicescape), a comparison and connection is stated between the two. Further, important theories about the five senses are introduced in perspective of retailing and marketing fields.

2.1 Experience Marketing

Despite common amalgam, Sense and experience marketing are not synonyms. The first one deals only with senses only while the second one is much broader and involves the whole experience of a consumer (sense, employees, events...). Sense-marketing is de facto, part of experience marketing (Pine & Gilmore 1998). Not all retailers using sensory marketing can be qualified as doing experience marketing. Indeed a retailer using odour spray to suppress a negative smell in its store is doing sense and not experience marketing (Rieunier 2009).

Figure 1: Link between the concepts of sensory marketing and experience marketing (Rieunier 2009)

In the following section, we will present the characteristics of experience marketing and then which aspects should be taken into account when building a successful experience.
2.1.1 Breaking away from traditional marketing

According to Schmitt (1999), a new vision of marketing, based on four characteristics, has emerged.

“ Tradition marketing and business concepts offer hardly any guidance to capitalize on the emerging experiential economy. Traditional marketing has been developed in response to the industrial age, not the information, branding and communications revolution we are facing today.”

➢ Customers are rational and emotional animals

During the past century, customer decision-making had been seen as a logical problem which involved the very well known steps “need recognition, information search, evaluation of alternatives, purchase and conception” (Schmitt 1999). This vision of the customer completely ignores the emotional part of human being, existing along his capacity to reason logically. As Holbrook and Hirschman (1982) discussed, customers are not complete rational animals and are frequently driven “toward the pursuit of fantasies, feelings, and fun”. One should see human being as: “[an animal] whose physical and mental apparatus for generating sensations, thoughts and feelings evolved by natural selection to solve the problems faced by their evolutionary ancestor” (Schmitt 1999).
Methods are eclectic

On the contrary of traditional marketing methods and tool based mostly on “analytical, quantitative and verbal methodologies” (Schmitt 1999), experiential marketers need to use several of them, ranging from eye-movement technologies to brain focusing techniques; in artificial or real environment. Everything depends on the objective aimed; the author mention that the methods used “are often ideographic (i.e., customized for the situation at hand) rather than nomothetic (providing the same standard format to all respondents)” (ibid).

Consumption is a holistic experience

The experiential marketers should not only consider service or product independently but also take into account the whole consumption experience of the customers. Seeing the offering from a global customer experience perceptive actually blurry the product/service categorization and help to identify competitors. Schmitt (1999) takes the example of McDonald: the competitors are not just a burger food chain competing against other ones like Burger King, but also all the other “quick bite” (food on-the-go) and “hang-out” services (place to hang around with family and friends). Moreover, the experiential marketer must also take into consideration the general “socio-cultural consumption vector” to understand what McDonald stands for in a society more and more striving for a healthy lifestyle and thus be able to position the brand.

Customer Experience

Traditional marketing focus on functional features and their benefits, but experiential marketing is much broader than that. Indeed, experiences are “sensory, emotional, cognitive, behavioral and relational values that replace functional values”, that marketers must take into account (Schmitt 1999). Welcome to the experience world!

2.1.2 The emergence of the experiences economy

Nowadays, customers are in “transition from satisfying needs to fulfilling aspirations, desires and dreams” (Morgan et al. 2009) and are undoubtedly looking for new experiences. From the company point of view, with the commoditisation of services, “customer perceptions of competitive advantage diminish, as it does in satisfaction” (Petkus 2002); but customer experience is a new mean for differentiation (Johnston & Kong 2011). According to Pine & Gilmore
(1998), the experience step is the phase of economical development. The first was commodities, then goods, then services and finally experiences. They claim that experiences are as different from services as the last ones from goods: “Economists have typically lumped experiences in with services, but experiences are a distinct economic offering” (Pine & Gilmore 1998).

**Making distinction with service**

While goods are being defined as tangible and services intangibles, experiences are memorable; which make them quite different from the previous ones. Indeed, memories touch the “affect” of the individual, and the experience exists only in his mind. Consequently, experiences are highly personal and two people having the same staged ones might not live it the same way, since “each experience derives from the interaction between the staged event […] and the individual’s state of mind” (Pine & Gilmore 1998). The two authors further explain that most service companies wrap their offering into experience to draw in new customers “by offering fun activities, fascinating displays, and promotional events” that they define as “shopertainment” or “entertaining” (ibid); but very few are reach the pure experience step.

**The economic existence of experience**

The economic existence of experience can be well presented by the fact that people after a concert or visiting a museum they enjoyed, are willing to purchase objects linked to this moment, at a higher price than what the object would worth by itself. These objects become a physical memory of a positive experience. “The price points are a function less of the cost of the goods than of the value the buyer attaches to remembering the experience” (Pine & Gilmore 1998). Moreover, according to Pine & Gilmore (1998), entrance fee would be the
condition for a true experience, which means that people do not pay for the service itself any-longer but for entering a stage, being part of the offered experienced.

2.1.3 What makes an experience successful

➢ *The four realms of an experience*

An experience can be categorised according to two dimensions that are customer participation and environmental relationship. Customer participation is the degree of interaction with the offered experience: active or passive participation. Nevertheless, one can never be completely passive since just the facts of him being there affect the experience “*they contribute to the visual and aural event that others experience*” (Pine & Gilmore 1998). The second dimension is the connection with the environment which range from absorption to immersion. The immersion takes into account more environmental parameters such as the sight, sounds, smells that surround them.

We thus obtain four realms in which we can divide experiences. The dimension of entertainment is related to *senses*, while the educational one relates to *learning*, the escapist realm is linked to *doing*, and finally the aesthetic one involves just being there (Petkus, 2002). According to Pine & Gilmore (1998), the best experience includes all the aspects of the dimensions. Just like a service or good, managers need to research, design and develop their experiential offering around a common theme. Too many retailers *talk about “the shopping experience” but fail to create a theme that lie the disparate merchandising presentations together into a staged experience*” (ibid).
How to build successful experience?

Choosing a theme for the store is important since it conveys to the customers representations of the company. Schmitt and Simonson (1997) have discussed the dimensions that must be taken into account in the experience mix to target a special audience. First of all are the time and space dimension in which the theme is anchored. Then comes the technology dimension and the authenticity one “the use of original VS imitative representations” (Petkus 2002). And finally is the scale and scope of the display.

Moreover, the theme must be “concise and compelling” (Pine & Gilmore 1998) which means that it does not need to be written but must encompass the different designed and staged elements. It is important since in most cases, a lack of consistency in the theme might lead to an unpleasant experience just “because some architectural features have been overlooked, unappreciated, or uncoordinated. Unplanned or inconsistent visual and aural cues can leave a customer confused or lost” (Pine & Gilmore 1998).

The five senses are enhancer of experience and thus should be used to support the theme. “The more senses experiences engage, the more effective and memorable it can be” (Pine & Gilmore 1998). The customer must live fully the experience and the senses are the interaction between the individual and the environment. Finally, companies should take into account feedbacks in order to improve continuously the experience (Petkus 2002). As we have seen previously, the scenery of an experience has a great importance for its success. In the case of retailing, one must thus take into account the servicescape aspect of an outlet.
2.2 Servicescape

According to previous literatures, sensory marketing has a close relationship with servicescape. Kotler (1973) states that “the atmosphere of a particular set of surroundings is describable in sensory terms” which include perceptions that are visual, aural, olfactory and tactile. Bitner (1992) mentions that ambient conditions influence the five senses. Brauer (1992) says that spatial layout and functionality, sign, symbols and artefacts, from a facility planning and management point of view, are commonly referred to interior layout and design, referring to the visual aspect of sensory marketing. Based on these, we think it is necessary to review the relative concepts of servicescape, which can give us a guide to analyse the five senses and have a deeper understanding of sensory marketing in retailing fields.

2.2.1 Servicescape and retailing industry

Retailing such as supermarket, grocery, clothing/jewellery store and hypermarket usually require customers to stay in a certain extended period in the physical environment, no matter whether customers have the intention of purchasing or just come for leisure and relaxing. In retailing industry, “servicescapes are an important tangible component that provide cues to customers and create in immediate perceptual image in customer’s minds,” mentioned by Lin (2004).

How to design and plan physical environments is no longer a new topic in service marketing literature. Bitner (1992) stated that “the physical environment can serve as a differentiator in signalling the intended market segment, positioning the organization, and conveying distinctiveness from competitors.” Turley and Fugate (1992) further mentioned that the perceived quality of the servicescape plays a vital part in determining the satisfactions of consumers, which as a result, influences how long they are willing to stay in the environment and also their purchase behaviours, as well as whether they intend to visit the stores again. Wakefield and Blodgett (1996) also proved that the satisfaction linked to the servicescape was found to have “a positive effect on customer’s repatronage intentions and the
length of time customers desired to stay”. He suggested that managers should keep evaluating the quality of servicescape through “visual inspection, customer feedback, and competitors’ comparison”.

Lin (2004) evaluated servicescape from the effect of cognition and emotion. He advised that in order to create a pleasant servicescape for customers; researchers should focus not only on the influence of “interior attributes on customer behaviour”, but also on the “analysis of consumers’ psychological processing and evaluation”. To do so, researchers need to “view the entire servicescape holistically” (Lin 2004).

2.2.2 Servicescape and five senses

➤ **Dimensions of servicescape**

We quoted the dimensions of servicescape from Bitner (1992):

- “Ambient Conditions: refers to background characteristics of the environment such as, lighting, music, temperature and scent. Great numbers of empirical studies in consumer research proved that the ambient factors, such as music, scent, influence customer responses.
- Spatial Layout and Functionality: spatial layout means the ways in which machinery, equipment, and furniture are arranged, the size and shape of those items, and the spatial relationships among them. Functionality refers to the ability of the same items to facilitate performance and the accomplishment of goals.
- Signs, symbols and Artifacts: signs can be used as labels, for directional purpose and to communicate rules of the behaviour.”

In addition, as Wakefield and Blodgett (1996) remind that there are other servicescape factors complementary to the primary elements of interior layout and design. These are the “layout accessibility”, “facility aesthetics”, “seating comfort”, “facility cleanliness”, “electronic equipment and displays”.

➤ **Dimensions of servicescape and five senses**

According to Kotler (1973), the term atmospherics refers to “the effort to design buying environments to produce specific emotional effects in the buyer that enhance his purchase probability.” He
defines visual as colour, brightness and layout; aural as volume and pitch; olfactory as scent and freshness; and tactile/touch as softness, smoothness and temperature, the dimensions of store atmosphere. By combining dimensions of servicescape and elements of sensory marketing, we have Figure 5 to demonstrate the connections and comparison of dimensions of servicescape and five senses. This figure proves the strong connections between the two from a visual perspective, which help us to have a deeper understanding of servicescape and sensory marketing.

As we can see in Figure 5, “sight is the most seductive sense of all”. (Lindstrom 2010) It is overall impression of what we see from the retailing stores. It includes lighting, layout, symbols, artifacts and so on. In this way, sight represents one part of the ambient conditions, the large part of spatial layout and functionality as well as signs, symbols and artifacts. As to sound and smell, there is no doubt that they belong to ambient condition according to the theory mentioned above. The exceptions are taste and touch. They are also the elements consist of “background characteristics of the environment” (Bitner 1992). However, taste and touch cannot be fulfilled without the involvements and responses of customers. Therefore, only one part of them is included in ambient conditions. At last, all the five senses and physical parts of servicescape are “evaluated through cognitive, effective and emotional processes of customers” (Lin 2004), and finally reach customer responses and behaviours.
2.3 Sensory Marketing

2.3.1 Visual

According to Kotler (1973), visual included layout, brightness and colour. They are store environment cues that effect customers’ mood and purchasing behaviours. Visual aspect of a store must be considered to match four different functions, according to Roullet (in Rieunier 2009). First, the alert function: The store should contrast with its surrounding to catch consumer attention even from far away. Second, an attracting function: the store must be able to make people willing to explore it, through its appearance. Then, the well-being function, meaning making easier for consumers to find the products and information they need. Finally, the coherence of the visual aspect with the offering and customer expectations (linked to the store positioning).

- **Layout**

“Layout is the main visual design cue that influence customers’ expectations of their efficient movement through a store” (Titus and Everett 1995 in Baker et al. 2002). Summarize from the previous literatures, there are three perspectives in general that influence customer’s perceptions and purchase behaviours, which researchers have been studied most. These are: layout and “information rate” (Spies et al. 1997), layout and customers’ moods, and layout and “merchandise evaluation” (Baker et al. 2002).

**Information rate:** Careful and simple store displays helps people “to orientate, to find the way and understand signs, to get the feeling of personal control and mastery” (Bitner 1992 in Spies et al, 1997). According to Spies et al. (1997), “the successful layout of a store depends on whether the store has a clear concept, can customers find products easily, is different departments are clearly separated from each other and does not get lost”. Studies by Barth (in Spies et al. 1997) find that certain layout were especially attractive to customers. As most customers “move through the store in a counter clockwise direction with their attention being concentrated on the wall-sides” (Ibid), they tend to avoid turns and rather reluctant to accept any attempts to divert the direction in which they are going.
**Moods:** Poorly designed stores (e.g., a confusing store layout) may cause “psychic costs” to consumers (Baker et al. 2002). Spies et al. (1997) also suggested that poorly designed store environments may decrease the pleasant shopping experience and thus deteriorate customer’s moods. On the other side, a pleasant store design (providing good lighting and colours) provides people a nice shopping experience, useful information and stimulate the purchase motivations; especially for customers who are strolling around (ibid). In addition, they also said that store display also effect money spending for “spontaneous purchases”.

**Merchandise evaluations:** Baker et al. (2002) stated that the proper store design has positive effect on “quality and value of merchandise” in the stores. Mazursky and Jacoby (1986 in Baker et al. 2002) indicate that store’s interior pictures are a vital cue (even more weighted than price cues) that consumers use to evaluate merchandise quality and judge the stores as “high-image” or “low-image”. For example, Heath (1995) tested that customer’s perceptions of overall food quality partly depending on the cleanliness of rest room in a restaurant. On the other hand, a high image store design leads to correspondingly high expected prices i.e., customers are willing to pay higher price.

➢ **Lighting**

People’s perceptions about definition and quality of the space can be effected directly by the type of lighting in the environment, including “the awareness of physical, emotional, psychological, and spiritual aspects of the space” (Kurtichand and Eakin 1993 in Lin 2004). According to Mehrabian’s (1976) as cite from Areni and Kim (1994), a highly level of lighting will bring high arousal to people and make them feel “stimulated, jittery and alert”. On the other side, people in a non-arousing environment “will feel relaxed, calm, sluggish, or sleepy.” Furthermore, highly aroused people will behave “increased heart rate, muscle tension, and lowered skin temperature”. In this way, lighting is an extremely important determinant in the environment.

Nevertheless, the question whether retailers can influence the shoppers visiting duration by selecting different in-store lighting levels is still open. Markin et al. (1976) suggested
that retailers should implement soft lighting to reduce the arousal level of customer if they want the customers to pay more attention on products. On the opposite side, Areni and Kim (1994) found that shoppers have less interest in “visually oriented activities” (i.e. checking prices, reading labels, etc.) when in-store lighting levels are lower; i.e. consumers examined and handled more merchandise under brighter lighting. This confirms the findings of Summers and Hebert (2001), where consumers touched more items with an additional light display.

In addition, Kotler (1973) stated that consumer’s perception of store image dependent on the conditions of in-store lighting. Gorn (1982) used the example of a wine shop to indicate that the soft lighting was a clue in relating to merchandise quality evaluation: soft lighting may imply high quality. And by combining other environment stimuli, Steffy (1990) in Yin (2004) suggested that environments in which the “lighting is designed to harmonize with furniture and accessories are perceived as more pleasant than environments in which lighting does not harmonize with other elements of the room”.

**Colour**

Colour, as a visual part of the physical environment, can bring “certain autonomic biological reaction, create certain emotional response, and obtain attention” (Bellizzi et al. 1983). The responses to colour are “immediate, direct and evoked rather than deliberated or mediated” (Schachtel 1943 in Gonzales 2005). For example, experiments show that warm colours such as red and yellow are “physically stimulating”, whereas cool colours such as blue and green relax and calm (Bellizzi et al. 1983).

Research has shown that colours have an important function when it comes to stimulate people’s moods and emotions (Lin 2004). The author proves that cool and warm colours have different effects on consumer response. For example, in Bellizzi et al.’s (1983) research, “subjects perceived red and other warm environments as negative and tense” when ask about store environments. They also indicate that even though “these environments were bright and colorful; [subjects] also considered them to be less attractive and less peasant than cool-color environment”. Bellizzi et al.(1983) and Yildirim et al. (2007) also found that consumers are
influenced more favourably by blue environment which trigger higher purchase rates. Concerning warm-coloured background, it has the propriety of eliciting attention and attracting people. In this sense, as to the exterior and window display colour, Bellizzi et al (1983) suggested that the colours must draw the customer’s attention and lead them into the store.; and warm colours could be preferable in this perspective.

**Colour and Culture:** The responses and perceptions to colours are also different in relation to culture even though the relation between these two aspects is “still largely under-researched” (Chebat and Morrin 2007). Indeed, the authors find different effects of the décor schemes on products quality regarding consumer subculture segment: French-Canadians responding more to the warm colour décor manipulations and Anglo-Canadians responding more to the cool ones. In addition, Chebat and Morrin (2007) also concluded that preferences and responses to colours can be different in relating to age, gender, nations and personality.

**Recommendation for Retailers:** To avoid an over-colourful medley, “expert recommend the usage of three colours maximum, the main one should cover 80% of the surfaces” (Roullet in Rieunier 2009). Indeed, it is recommended to consider that a significant portion of the population has visual problems which make them difficult to perceive colour. The number of people in France affected is estimated to 2.5 million (Roullet in Rieunier 2009).

Consequently, coloured décors can be used in order to effectively manage consumers’ product quality perceptions. It is a way to establish a unique competitive advantage for malls and retail stores (Chebat and Morrin 2007). However, stores should balance the “attraction power of colour to customers while maintaining customer comfort” (Bellizzi et al. 1983).

**Signs and symbols**

There is another visual environment stimuli that have been increasing used in retail stores: the TV screens. The uses of screens networks have made digital signage available as an “effective, easily controlled communication medium” (Dennis et al. 2010). According to them,
digital signage content can be both designed to offer useful information such as community information or store special offers, and also to influence on consumers’ emotions positively (e.g. pleasant scenes). Although the cost of installation can be very high, the digital signage has a “manipulated effect on the internal surroundings leading to improvements in consumers’ perceptions of the mall”. (ibid)

2.3.2 Sound

According to Lindstrom (2010), “Sound generate mood, which create feelings and emotions and customer cognition”. The use of sound i.e. music in retail environments, is an atmospheric component that influence customers’ shopping attitudes and purchases behaviour (Eroglu et al., 2005). According to previous researches, we summarize the following two perspectives regarding the consequences of music that have been most discussed by researchers in their studies.

- **Music and time duration**

  Numerous experimental studies conducted in natural settings have shown that the structural components of various types of background music such as sound level, tempo, style/genre and complexity affect the time of consumer staying in stores. Based on previous studies, Garlin and Owen (2005) use meta-analysis indicating that “slower tempo, lower volume and familiar music” lead customers staying marginally longer than when “the tempo or volume are high, or the music less familiar”. And higher volume and tempo, and less liked the music result to longer perceptions of time duration for customers. On the contrary, Kellaris and Kent (1991) found that when customers enjoy the music played, the longer the time seems to stretch. In addition, concerning the tempo of the music affecting the perception of waiting time, Yalch and Spangenberg (2000) proved that time seemed longer for the respondents if they were hearing familiar rather than unfamiliar music in a department store and supermarket respectively.

When it comes to waiting time, a slow-tempo was the only scenario which lead to an under-evaluation of time waited by the consumers, even-thought the authors note that “the relationship eroded when actual waiting time exceeded 15min” (Oakes, 2003). The author also
stressed that “satisfaction, positive disconfirmation of expectations, and relaxation” (ibid) were positively impact by the use of slow-tempo music.

➢ Music and customer attention

When it comes to the effect of music on customer attention, scholars’ findings contradict to each other. For some “the higher arousal, the deeper the attention” while one the other hand, “highly arousing music may hamper information processing and that soothing music helps concentration”. (Chebat et al. 2001). Indeed, the authors found that “the cognitive activity is triggered by soothing music, which seems to be the optimal level of arousal” and thus “cognitive effects of music stem from its capacity to attract attention” (Chebat et al. 2001). Indeed, retail music must not “attract so much attention onto itself that the advertisement’s central message is ignored” (Macklin 1988 in Chebat et al. 2001) nor distract the customers from the product offered to them, which will “reduce […] vigilance and information processing and, in turn, recall” (Macinnis & Park 1991).

The role of music in drawing attention on the products offered as been raised by North et al. (1999) where the authors found that in a supermarket, playing French music had a positive effect on French wine selling, while playing German music had the same effect on the German ones. Consequently, “fitting the music with the environment and the products offered is also proving to be important since non-congruence might have a negative impact on consumers” (Chebat et al. 2001). The authors give the example of a regular travel agency and the use of classical music: “they pretend to be something they are not” (Chebat et al. 2001).

Nevertheless, the evaluation of music may vary a lot between individual of same culture and social class but of different age since music has the power of being evocative.

➢ Music and consumptions

Generally speaking, music exerted a positive effect on customers money spending. Milliman (1982 in Guéguen and Jacob 2010) finds that in supermarket the traffic flow of the in-store customers is slowed when slow music (60-73 beats per minute) is played rather than faster music (93-110 beats per minute). He finds also that playing slow music also increased the sales. Caldwell and Hibbert (1999) evaluated that in restaurant, the slower music can lead to the increasing of the average length of stay and amount of
money spent. In addition, the style of background music also has an effect on the customer consumption. Wilson (2003) summarized that choosing the right type of music can be used by restaurants and stores to create a specific atmosphere which is different from the ones of competitors. He also suggested that stores that “play upbeat or upmarket music may be able to charge higher price”.

➢ Music and retail brands

Beverland et al. (2006) worked on the effects of music played in-store on the perception of the retailer brand. They found that music was an important clue for customers having no previous brand experience to evaluate the positioning of the retailer. Furthermore, music “helped build emotional connections between the consumer and the brand. Such connections are believed to be central to experiential marketing” (Beverland et al., 2006). Scholar stressed that music inconsistent with the positioning of the brand might trigger a loss of status “leading to reduced stay time or exit, or for new-to-brand consumers, store avoidance” (Beverland et al. 2006). They state that for most retailers, misfitted musical environment can be easily fixed by re adapting the music to the customers, but in the case of what they call sincere brands like body shop, “misfit could challenge the brand’s legitimacy, resulting in a loss of status and declining equity” (ibid).

To conclude, music environment in stores have various effect on the customers emotions, cognition and behaviour which “influence service quality perceptions” (Sweeney and Wyber 2002) as well as the store offering, the retailer brand, and the overall experience. Nevertheless, “positive effects of in-store music do not occur in isolation from other-in-store variables and the brand’s position” (Berverland et al., 2006)

2.3.3 Scent

The application of smells in stores has been developing rapidly for the past decade. Already in the first part of the 90’s, the industry of environmental fragrance was having a turnover of around one billion dollars (Morrin & Ratneshwar 2000). Odours and fragrances are known to have powerful effects on people: “Odors are often associated with objects, events and persons. They stir up happy or sad memories” (Chebat & Michon 2003).
Furthermore, on a financial point of view, store fragrance “is probably among one of the least expensive techniques to enhance shoppers perceptions” (Chebat & Michon 2003). The success of a retailing use of in-store fragrance is beneficial to the shopping experience only if harmoniously implemented with the other aspects of the environment. Indeed, if it is not the case, it loses all its benefits and in some cases can even create a negative effect on the overall perception (ibid). Sprangenberg et al. (1996) suggested that the effect of fragrances is minimal when the products displayed have a utilitarian nature; consequently, it will be more efficient in pleasure-oriented offering. Indeed, Knasko et al. (1990) find that customers stay longer in average within a fragranced jeweller, for instance. Furthermore, Fiore et al. (2000) demonstrate that “The addition of a pleasant and appropriate fragrance to the product display” has the highest positive impact on the customers.

- **Scent and customer’s emotional responses**

Knasko et al. (1990) note that companies should be careful when it comes to the impact of scents on customer and demonstrate that customers “are emotionally and physically affected by the imaginary presence of an odor” (Chebat & Michon 2003). Knasko (1990, 1995) also show that the use of pleasant fragrances within stores has a positive impact on the visit length of customers, but scents impact also positively on the customers evaluation of the store as well as the products offered (Chebat & Michon 2003); thus making them more willing to visit the store (Spangenberg et al. 1996). On the opposite, Spangenberg et al. (1996) find that the use of scents in retail did affect neither the time spent in the environment nor customer mood. Morrin and Retneshwar (2000) go further since they found that not only the mood was not affected but neither was the clients’ arousal.

- **Scent and Customer’s spending**

Whether or not store fragrance has positive effect on customer consumptions depends on different scenarios. Chebat and Michon (2003) stated the customer mood within retail “contributes very little (although the contribution is significant) on spending”. Fiore et al. (2000) after conducting their study, have shown that fragranced displays “may enhance the sales and profit margin of certain products” if used appropriately and “resulted in statistically significant differences for purchase intention and price subjects we willing to pay for the product” (ibid).
On the contrary, Knasko (1990, 1995) finds that the use of pleasant fragrances within stores did not have any impact on customers total spending. Nevertheless the author suggests that expensive goods (for example jewels in his research) are at the source of the limited effect of fragrance on purchase likeliness (Knasko et al. 1990). Similarly, Fiore et al. (2000) explains that scent “did not significantly enhance global attitude” toward the offering. Nevertheless, the authors note that the study has not been conducted in real retail environment; and the thesis authors note that most of the studied sample where student under 25, which might have a utilitarian vision of purchase due to limited income and thus less sensitive to the environment while making purchase decision.

### Scent and product perceptions and branding

The impact of fragranced environment on the perception of the offering has been proved. Fiore et al. (2000) suggest that the promotional environment is impacting the customers’ evaluation of the intangible qualities of the merchandise, since “intangible qualities of the conception experience maybe be key contributors to the product selection and purchase decision” (ibid). Indeed, Knasko (1992) and Spangenberg et al. (1996) conclude through their studies that the pleasant (or unpleasant) aspect of store fragrances is transferred to the perceived object by the customers.

Moreover, one aspect of product is branding, and Morrin & Ratneshwar (2000) have been working on the impact of ambient scent on brands. They found that “ambient odour caused subjects to expend additional processing efforts on unfamiliar brand stimuli [and thus] exhibited superior recall for the unfamiliar brands” (Morrin & Retneshwar, 2000). The authors compare also their results with Spangenberg et al. (1996) and conclude that “pleasant ambient scents improve evaluations much more markedly for objects that are either not familiar or not well liked”, even if most of the subjects are not even noticing that the environment is perfumed.

To conclude, researches on odour in retail shows contrasted results. Even though proper fragrances can increase customer satisfaction and evaluation of the store, managers must carefully adapt it harmoniously with the others; otherwise the result on the customers
can be mediocre, or even negative. One explanation for this might be the pricing and/or very own nature of the products offered, which must be taken into account.

Furthermore, fragranced environment must be handled with care by the retailer as Chebat & Michon (2003) mention: using a scent linked to a specific product might boost its sales, but will “jeopardize the sales of other products”. Consequently, the ambient odour should fits with all the displayed products within the store. Manager must also take care of the “small number of consumers [who] may have allergic reactions to the particular fragrance ingredients that may result in avoidance of the product or store” (Fiore et al. 2000)

2.3.4 Touch

As we know, skin is the largest organ of the body. Additionally, “the elements comprising the skin have a large representation in the cortex of the brain.” (Lindstrom 2010) Therefore, touch/tactile input plays an important role on the perception and cognition of customers’ purchase behaviours. That is why Underhill (1999 in Peck and Childers 2003) states: “we live in a tactile deprived society, and shopping is one of our few chances to freely experience the material world firsthand”.

➢ Touch and product offering

Tactile is an important aspect for product evaluation. Customers have a preference for the products in stores they are allowed to touch (McCabe and Nowlis 2003 in Grohmann et al. 2007), “especially products for which tactile input is important for evaluation (e.g., clothing, portable electronics)” (ibid). The availability of tactile input is particularly vital in affecting consumers’ judgement on the texture of the objects such as “roughness, hardness, temperature and weight” (Klatzky et al. 1993), which provide unique product information that cannot get via visual observations.

Furthermore, tactile input affects the evaluations of products’ “quality levels” (Peck & Childers, 2003). Grohmann et al. (2007) demonstrates that tactile input has “a positive effect on the evaluation of products with characteristics best explored by touch (e.g., softness, texture), particularly for high quality levels”. For this reason, retailers are advised to allow consumers to
touch products on the spot, since it results to more favourable. Furthermore, enabling consumers to manipulate an object has been proved to increase the emotional attachment to it. Indeed, Shu and Peck (2011) say “psychological ownership can be increased through touch for objects that are not legally owned”.

- **Touch and perception of the store**
In addition, touch can also be based on the layout, equipment and furnishings of the stores (Bitner 1992). Touch creates familiarity with the store; it's the bridge between the image of the store and customers. A store can use a soft red carpet which takes part in the well-being of consumers; comfortable ground encourages more dawdling. In restaurant, the weight of the handled forks and spoons, the thickness of touched glasses, the texture of the napkin, the comfort of a chair can greatly bring pleasure to the meal. (Sensory and Environmental Marketing 2006)

In summary, stores must recognise the importance of tactile input for shoppers: “Touch is not only an important source of information to consumers, but also in product judgments and decision making” (Peck and Childers 2003).

**2.3.5 Relations between senses**

In the previous part we have talked about the effects of individual pleasant stimuli on consumer behaviour. However consumers perceive store environment, i.e. servicescape, holistically and react to a physical setting depending on overall configurations (Mattila and Wirtz 2001). According to Demattè et al. (2006), an increasing number of researches noted that “the information perceived through one sensory modality can actually affect people's perception of stimulus attributes associated with the other sensory modalities”. Thus in this part, we are going to discuss the relationships between different senses.

- **Scent and music**
Strategically speaking, manipulating environment's arousing qualities by scents and background music can differentiate retailers’ stores from similar competitors. (Mattila & Wirtz 2001) The scholars indicate that when ambient scent and music are in harmony, customers perceive the quality of environment significantly more positive, are attracted
by the merchandises, extend longer duration time, stimulate purchase behaviour and enhance shopping satisfaction. Mattila and Wirtz’s (2001) proved that setting the store with “low arousal scent” (Lavender) together with slow tempo music led to “higher evaluations than using that scent with high arousal music” (ibid). And playing fast tempo music had a “more positive effect on approach behaviours” (ibid) when the store was presenting with grapefruit (high arousal scent) instead of Lavender.

In addition, Mattila and Wirtz (2001) also pointed that the positive feeling from the combinations of scent and music can be more difficult to induce in task-oriented stores (e.g. grocery stores) than stores that are patronized for more entertain purposes. Because the “novelty and stimulation of a particular music and scent combination might wear off relatively fast” (ibid), retail stores that pursuing for heavy fluent visitors’ patterns might not be the best choice for these types of “environmental manipulations” (ibid).

As to the impact of scent and music on consumer perceptions of time duration and distance travelled in retailing, McDonnell’s (2007) research about scent and music on the waiting line is to the largest extent improved customer perceived better service quality when scent is introduced in waiting line and a further significant improvement is obtained when music is combined also. Regarding customers’ emotions and discomfort, scent indeed decreased the angry level according to customers. However, Morrin et al (2009) noted that retailers should not simply assume that making environments more pleasant will make shoppers loose track of time. Only when “a pleasant atmospheric element elicits a positive affective response”, then it may “speed up the consumer’s internal clock and make it seem as if more time has passed and more distance has been travelled” (Morrin et al. 2009).

➢ Scent and colour

Recent research of Gottfried and Dolan (2003) in Demattè et al. 2006) show that the manipulations of visual stimuli (i.e., complex pictures) influence objects olfactory information processing. They report that “people detected the presence of an odour more rapidly and accurately when a semantically congruent picture was presented at the same time (e.g., the picture of a double-decker bus when smelling the odour of diesel)”. This analysis is from psychology point
of view, however, no further literatures regarding the implications of scent and colour in perspective of retailing and marketing were found.

- **Scent and Touch**

Demattè et al. (2006) are the first to demonstrate a connection between scent and touch. They set up two experiments where fabric are perfumed with two different odours (Animal, Lemon) and participants are asked to rate the softness of the fabrics, even though they are all physically alike. The result is that “lemon fabric” is thought to be softer. The experience is reproduced with Lavender smell, and leads to the same result. Finding this link between smell and touch, the scholars explain that it might come from “a process of associative learning” (ibid) where people associate the pleasant smell with a good experience and thus impacting positively on the perception of the fabrics. Indeed, Lavender and Lemon are broadly used in cleaning products which might impact on the perceived quality and cleanliness of the fabric. “‘pleasant odour’ = ‘better product’ (i.e., most effective, softest, and cleanest)” (ibid).

- **Odours and Retail Density**

Michon et al. (2005) have made research on the impact of odours & retail density on consumer perception of shopping centre. They found that ambient odours have a variable impact on mall perception, depending on the people density. For example, when there are few people in the mall, odours (lavender or citrus in this experiment) have a negative impact on customer mall perception. At medium density level, citrus has the best effect whereas it is the case of Lavender at high density level, even though citrus remains stable. The authors point out that “the positive effect of ambient scent on shoppers’ perception of the mall atmosphere is observed only at medium retail density level” (Michon et al. 2005).

Holistically speaking, even though customers perceive the stimuli separately, it is the ensemble of stimuli that determine their responses to the overall environment (Holahan 1982 in Mattila and Wirtz 2001). Therefore it is said that the ambient stimuli is one of dimensions when the holistic evaluations happen (ibid).
3. Research Design and Methodology

3.1 Research Design

The purpose of our thesis is to discuss why and how sensory marketing can be used in stores; specifically, the reasons and the manners retailers using sensory marketing. According to these objectives, our study can be seen as a descriptive research since the problems are “structured and well understood” (Ghauri and Grønhaug 2010).

Based on the research question, we conclude the following three points before deciding what methods we are going to use. First of all, the research is from the perspective of retailers; therefore, qualitative methodologies should be chosen instead of quantitative methodologies, more customers oriented (e.g. large number of questionnaires to customers). Secondly, in order to get a holistic point of view about the usage of sensory marketing in retail, different external entities have been considered into the research such as advertising agencies, retail associations and so on. Thirdly, a successful case of sensory marketing is introduced to give practical guidance to the research. Fourthly, customers’ responses to sensory marketing are also taken into consideration in relation to the case study. (See Figure 6)

Figure 6: Framework of research design and methodology
3.1.1 Case study approach

Yin (2003) mentioned that in general, case studies are recommended when they come up with “how” or “why” questions. “The essence of a case study, the central tendency among all types of case study, is that it tries to illuminate a decision or set of decisions: why they were taken, how that were implemented, and with what result” (Schramm 1971 in Yin 2003). Since our research question is “why” sensory marketing should be used, and “how” it can be implemented, we decided to use a case study as the main approach for our thesis. Furthermore, as we focus on the holistic view of sensory marketing by integrating all the five senses, due to the limited time and economic condition, it is impossible for us to create an experimental/real scenario involving all the five elements, and measure the effect on customer behaviours. Therefore, a case study is the best choice for this research. Further, Ghauri and Gronhaug (2010) advise students to use the case study approach if “there are too many variables to be considered, which makes experiment methods inappropriate.” Therefore, we choose the case of Nature & Découvertes (Nature & Discoveries) - a famous retailer in France whose business is to sell a wide range of products related to Nature; from tea to toys, via gardening tools and cosmetics.

3.1.2 Qualitative Approach

Beside the case study approach, we also used a qualitative one as main research method. According to Bryman and Bell (2007), qualitative research is usually implemented by “participant observation”, “qualitative interviewing” or “personal, organizational and public texts and documents”. Our study is mainly conducted by interviews with a Nature & Découvertes store manager, sensory marketing specialists in professional sensory marketing, professionals from advertising agency and retail association. Moreover, internal/published documents, reports as well as on-spot-observations are also used. In addition, we also have semi-structured interviews with customers inside Nature & Découvertes store. The interview is based on YES or NO questions regarding the reflections of the store atmosphere as well as some open questions, aiming to acquire their attitudes and feedback towards the store atmosphere.
3.2 Data Collection

3.2.1 Primary data

- Primary data in the case study:

According to Ghauri and Gronhaug (2010), a case study often includes data collection from sources such as “verbal reports, personal interviews and observations” as primary data source. In addition, the data referring to “attitude and opinion”, “intentions”, “motivations and behaviour” can also be seen as primary data (Ghauri and Gronhaug 2010). In our case, we categorize the customer questionnaires to the primary data.

In the study, “interviews and direct observations” (Yin 2003) are used as primary data for the case study of Nature & Découvertes. We have interviewed a store manager in one of the Nature & Découvertes stores in Paris suburb. The interview aims at finding out the operational aspects about the implementation of sensory marketing in the store. Questions are categorized in groups such as store mapping, sensory evolutions, and customer behaviours.

Regarding the customer questionnaires, we choose three Nature & Découvertes stores in different locations of Paris. In order to get different social groups of customers, interviews are carried out in various period of the week (Saturday afternoon/ Monday evening/Thursday morning). Thirteen people inside the stores have accepted to answer our questionnaires, ranging from twenty to sixty year old. The questionnaires aim at acquiring data about customers’ individualized perceptions towards the store and trying to evaluate the influences of the holistic store atmosphere on their behaviours.

Yin (2003) defines direct observation as “making a field visit to the case study site”. During our research, we have visited different Nature & Découvertes stores in Paris. The main purpose of this direct observation is to understand the overall experience of five senses, for example how the items are displayed, what are the common and differences between
stores, what type of scents and music are used, and how the customers behave accordingly. All of these help us to get an overall impression about the retailer, which are precious when analysing the case together with all the materials we collect.

Other Primary Data

Besides interviews with Nature & Découvertes, we have two other interviews and a sensory marketing conference as primary data. One of the interviews is with a manager at POPAI (the global association for marketing at retail), which is specified in giving retailing members marketing suggestions and opinions. The interview is about the motivations and the implementation of sensory marketing within the retail sector. The other interview is with a manager at Publicis retail, an advertising agency. The manager gives us expert opinions regarding the usage of sensory marketing and his point of view about Nature & Découvertes.

In addition, we have also attended the professional Sensory marketing Conference in Nantes, France on the 21 of April 2011. It is an open conference in form of conversations between specialists and audiences. The specialists include a strategic integration expert, an executive of Nature & Découvertes, a team from an agency specialised in olfactory marketing, and a sensory qualitative researcher among others.

3.2.2 Secondary data

Secondary data are rather easy to access and relatively inexpensive information that students can gather for writing thesis (Bryman & Bell 2007). According to Ghauri and Grønhaug (2010), secondary data includes internal sources such as reports from different departments; but also external sources such as books and articles, research reports and general statistics. Thanks to the helps from management of Nature & Découvertes, Publicis Retail and POPAI, we get access to internal reports that helping us in our research. We also use open-access secondary data such as related publications and research reports.
3.3 Data Analysis

One of the data analysis strategy suggested by Ghauri and Grønhaug (2010) is “departure from data- let inspection of the data result in explanation”. We analyse the data based on our research questions “Why” and “How”. In this part, theories are integrated and highlight analysis and achieved results.

As shown in Figure 6, data from professional specialists and organizations bring answer to the “Why” question. Based on the interviews, conference and secondary data we have, the first part of analysis presents the internal motivations for using sensory marketing and also forces from external factors.

The second part is the “How” by analyzing and discussing the case study. As Yin (2003) mentioned, “analyze the case study data by building an explanation about the case”. From the observations and interview with the store manager as well as other materials we collected, we summarize four steps for implementations of sensory marketing: it start from “define the store concept”, go through “create congruent theme”, until “implement the congruent theme”, i.e. building the holistic customer experience, and finally to “make customer to come back” and generate brand loyalty. During the third step: “implement the congruent theme”, we analyzed the five senses in details by illustrating how Nature & Découvertes carrying out sensory marketing. At the same time, practical guidance are also given regarding how to successfully implement sensory marketing within the stores.

The third part further discusses Nature & Découvertes as part of experience marketing and the overall results of sensory marketing. Finally, we provide Figure 20 to summarise the whole analysis part. The feedbacks and responses from customers go through the whole analysis.
3.4 Validity and Reliability

In case study method, we take into account the following design tests:

**Construct validity** refers to “the establishment of correct operational measures for the concepts being studied” (Kidder & Judd 1986 in Yin 2003). The case study tactics of construct validity according to Yin (2003) are “multiple sources of evidence” and “establish chain of evidence”. During the case study, we have collected the sources about Nature & Découvertes not only from the perspective of the company, but also taken into consideration the opinions of customers and independent professionals. This way, we have a clear and comprehensive vision about the implementation and result of sensory marketing of the store.

External validity refers to “the establishment the domain to which a study’s finding can be generalized” (Kidder & Judd 1986 in Yin 2003). In other words, can the results of a case study be applicable to another case? We use the single-case study method--Nature & Découvertes, since it is one of the few retailers we have found that have successfully work around the five senses in store. This paper aims to draw a model (Figure 20) regarding the research question-why and how, and replicate the model to other stores about implementation of sensory marketing.

Concerning qualitative methods, external reliability means “by which degree a study can be replicated by other entities”, i.e. in our case, can other retailers replicate the model of Nature & Découvertes? Internal reliability refers to “the members of the research team and their internal agreements about what they see and hear” (LeCompte and Goetz in Bryman & Bell 2007). Validity refers to whether “you are observing, identifying, or measuring what you say you are” (Mason 1996 in Bryman & Bell 2007).
3.5 Problems that We Faced

There are also problems and difficulties during data collections. For example, we scheduled to have another interview with a fragrance company who designs fragrances for stores. However, the contact person of that company was absent at our phone appointment, and did not answer our repeated calls and emails during the following weeks. In addition, few professionals were willing to allocate time to answer our questions; most professional we contacted didn't reply our phone calls and emails.

Further, customers in Nature & Découvertes were quite reluctant to answer questionnaires when they were shopping. It was rather hard to find customers willing to take few minutes to answer our questions. Nonetheless, we have obtained 13 answers, providing a good range of age and gender.
4. Empirical Findings

Based on the primary and secondary data and material we have collected, the empirical findings present the qualitative information for research conduction. The structure of this chapter solely summarises the collected arguments and data according to aspects that will be used in the further analysis of the authors. First of all, we are going to present the benefits and difficulties of sensory marketing as well as in which circumstance sensory marketing is suitable. The second part is about how to use five senses concretely from a professional point of view. The third section is the presentations of how Nature & Découvertes is implementing sensory marketing. Later, customers’ feedback from questionnaires towards Nature & Découvertes is presented. The final part is about the success and limitations of sensory marketing.

Such structure provides clarity to the readers in order to understand the authors’ analysis, which will be presented in Chapter 5.

4.1. Why Using Sensory Marketing?

Executives of Expressens (branch of ACIES Consulting Group, specialist in innovation advisory) drew a definition of sensory marketing: it is a mean, not an end in itself, which enable retailers to re-enchant consumption, providing a long term sensory mark on the customers. Nevertheless, retailers must be very careful in using the appropriate sensory offering since customers are very sensitive to the dissonances between the brand and the experience that is proposed (Expressens 2011). Retailer should be aware that “customers are more informed, more exigent, and versed in marketing techniques” (Naked France 2011). This is why “the transverse aspect of senses innovation” must be taken into account as “Sensory offering can make customers come but also make them run away” (ibid).

Why sensory marketing emerged these past decades is explained by Eric Carabajal, executive at POPAI (Global Association of marketing at retail) “We are all consumers, we are changing our consumption habits to more zapping, less and less loyal to a brand, and a brand is easily
forgettable after all. Sensory marketing will help remembering the brand and can take many aspects and this is why it is hard to define what sensory marketing is” (Carabajal 2011).

4.1.1 An answer to a change in consumer habits

Using punctual events are used to draw customers into stores, called “the Waouh factor” (Engel 2010). For example shopping malls hold fashion events, where customers are made-up, relooked and photographed. However for Georges Olivereau (creative manager at Dragon Rouge Advertising agency), “customers will get tired of such events” (Engel, 2010). Retailers should strive for longer vision elements in the stores.

Most retailers have reached this conclusion that nowadays the trend is to provide pleasant places where customers enjoy coming to (Georges Olivereau in Engel 2010). As he says “On the contrary of Internet, which answer an immediate need, the store is a fabulous living place where we come to rummage, to look around” (ibid). This is what it is called “retainment”, a mix between retailing and entertainment; and in order to make store more pleasant “sensory marketing is broadly used. Soft music help fighting against stress, pleasant scents improve customers journey, the lightning enable to segment spaces” (Engel 2010).

Consequently, “Since the end of the 90s, the use of sensory marketing intensified and got more structured. Intense competition leads retailers and brands to find new way of differentiating” (Daucé in Billon 2010).

4.1.2 A way to strengthen the brand

Using senses to create brand identity is a powerful tool according to Claude Nahon (in Billon 2010), the CEO of Mood Media (a leading in-store media company). According to Billon (2010), “Sensory marketing enables brands to work on their image, at the store level. Retailers are more and more conscious of the importance of introducing senses within their outlets. [...] It is the contribution to the soul of a store. Stimulating senses takes part undoubtedly in the brand incarnation and contribute also to the loyalty and the creation of ties with customers who are more brands disloyal”.
Sensory marketing can be seen as a “back to the roots” trend, as Cécile Poujade (Advisory Manager at Saguez & Partners, brand identity consulting) states “we are coming back to the essence of retailing: take the customers into account, providing them with a clear and pleasant environment” (Engel 2010). When sensory marketing must be implemented “Our start point is the story we want to tell about the brand. Then, we look how we can express it through sensory marketing”, she says. Moreover, sensory marketing is for Martin Piot (Design Executive for W&Cie) “tomorrow’s retail marketing: do not try to improve a unique vision, but go talking to different types of consumers” (ibid).

4.1.3 Happy customers means increased spending

Martin Piot further approves this renewal of store concept: “We are sure that stores will become places extremely service-focused […] Customers are looking in the stores everything they could not have on internet: la quality of the salesman, touching the product.” (Engel 2010) Indeed, by trying to immerse consumers into the store “universe”, retailers are “trying to catch their attention on the goods and services, bringing comfort to the consumers, and differentiating” (Daucé in Billon 2010). Providing “sensory marketing reassures consumers, improves purchase decision and create a reference for the customer” (Carabajal 2011). “The main result of a musical & fragranced stage the increasing feeling of well-being and perceived quality within a store, which leading consumers to stay longer and thus increasing potential purchase” (Billon 2010).

Philippe de Mareilhac, CEO of Market Value design agency, put an emphasis again on sensory marketing as a tool and not as an end in itself. “The real sensory marketing, it is the product experience; it is how to use the product […] because finally, the essence of a store is to create an experience around its wares” (Engel 2010). The main handicap of using senses to promote the retailer offering is that “it is very hard to quantify clearly the results of sensory marketing itself” (Billon 2010). Nevertheless we can note the case of the cosmetics retailer Yves Rocher which has increased its turnover by 30% after refurbishing 40% of its 550 French stores and making senses are core component of the new stores concept (ibid).
4.1.4 Is sense-marketing always suitable?

According to Eric Carabajal (Manager at The Global Association for Marketing at Retail), there is a difference depending on the nature of the offerings: “a pleasure product is led mostly by impulsive buying, while utilitarian products will emphasis on its features. They’ll be difference in the lightning and within the store display” (Carabajal 2011). Indeed “the implementation of sensory marketing is used only with an offering, a store configuration that fits with this tool, since it is rather hard to implement”. Many anecdotes can be found about unsuccessful application. “For example, in a fruits department of a supermarket, they had the idea of implementing strawberry fragrance to boost sales, but it appears to be too ‘chemical like’ for the customers, leading to the opposite results on sales” (ibid).

Indeed, sensory marketing is “a lot of work since screens have to work, the smell must be spread at the right time, lightning must always be right…. it is easier to mess up with the environment than actually succeeding. The fragrance level is hard to manage also within a store; they should not be any distracting odours around and not too strong. Indeed when the customer is going to perfume stores, he knows he will be facing numerous strong fragrances, but in the case of Nature & Discoveries for example, it is not what the customer is looking for”(ibid).

Eric Carabajal also states that it is not always necessary to offer sensory experience to customers: “when it comes to outdoor retailer, it is quite pertinent to use sensory marketing to promote the brand universe, as long as you have a strong, differentiate offering […] but they are lot of retailers that does not use sensory marketing and are really successful” (ibid). He adds “for me it can be a fashion, to create the event and also to position the brand globally. There are plenty of brands which are selling very well without using sensory marketing” (ibid) Concerning the case study that will follow, Eric Carabajal explains “Nature & Découvertes have been one of the first to implement sensory marketing and have played heavily on it because their offering is suitable for it”. “Nature & Découvertes is right to use it as part of their global strategy, but after a brand which does not have a nature aspect, it would not be of great interest” (ibid).
4.2 Sensory Marketing

4.2.1. The major role of music in retailing

“Today, it is unthinkable to consider a silent store. [...] Sound-scapes are studied carefully and the theme will be different depending on the customer flow, the period of the day, of the week, the store location” (Billon 2010). It is a powerful tool for retailers according to Michaël Boumendil, CEO of “Sixième son” (an agency specialized into sound identity). Since “music is the language of emotion according to Kant, the brand must benefit from this language to display its message with clarity and singularity” (Boumendil 2010). For example, the jeweller “Cartier broadcast in their store and sound signature, created by his agency based on its values and inspiration sources. It is a projection of the Brand DNA [...]. We want that even with their eyes closed, customers know where they are” (Engel 2010). For this reason “Play-lists are part of the brand vision and thus must be integrated to its communication” (Naked France 2011).

But this has not always been like this. Until the middle of the years 2000, retailers were praising “impersonal music that would make no waves”, however nowadays a “new revolution [...] makes music and sounds enter the brand strategy and customer experience. Just like the visual identity and the graphic universe of a retailer, sounds and music must contribute effectively to the identification, the differentiation and the appreciation of the brand” (Boumendil 2010).

Indeed, Store music contributes to the connection between customers and the brand, within an increasing competitive environment” (Boumendil 2010). And it is thus important to carefully consider the appropriate music and its consistency: “The sound brand identity must be found on every contact points with the customers” (Engel 2010).

To face this evolution, retailers and brands seek the expertise of companies like Mood Media, No.1 sensory marketing solution in Europe (MoodMedia 2010). As its CEO, Claude Nahon says “we own one of the biggest music databases in the world. All type of retailers use these sound-scapes” (Billon 2010). Managing sound and music is a hard choice depending on
target group tastes. The volume of the music must also be considered. It is usually recommended to keep it as background. Indeed “music too loud can make customers run away. But at the same time, Abercrombie & Fitch use it loud because it fit with the concept and the market segment” (POPAI 2011).

4.2.2. The use of screens

For the past few years, screens have flourished within outlets. Retailers are warned against this trend: “Beware: it is not about putting screens everywhere, or customers will grow tired since they are already stuffed with screens” (Engel 2010).

Nevertheless, using screens in stores offer advantages, as Eric Carabajal explains “We have made a research in 2008 of TV display within a Travel Agency, and it has decrease the perceived waiting time of the consumer. It also impacts the sales of products, but one must note that we were into a specific sector”. However, he also points out the limits: “there is no big national study in France proving that dynamic display has an impact on sales. We just know that it is a complementary tool to traditional tools. The best combination is a message on the screen with the traditional displays within the store. […] Advertising display won’t be effective unless there is a real communication around it” (Carabajal 2011). The location and size of screens are also important. “We observe that most of the screens are actually at the exit by the cashier, but it is too late since the purchase as already has been made. There are also screen at the store entrance but they basically just have customer interest for few seconds. It also happen that there are smaller screens within the aisles but dedicated only to one product (demonstration, explanation…). Within store in cities center, screens can communicate about the store…. but the customer is already inside the store and in the brand universe” (ibid).

4.2.3 When stores need perfumes

According to Mood Media, “up to 80% of people having judged a retail scent pleasant are willing to visit it again; does not matter the sector in which they operate” (in Billon 2010). Nevertheless “Scents are still under-used in retailing in Europe, with only 5% of the retailers using it” but this figure should reach 20% by 2013 (ibid). Another advantage is that consumers are losing
track for time in an olfactory environment and stay there 10 to 15% longer (POPAI 2011).

This emerging activity can be observed by the increasing number of fragrance design companies offering this service to their clients: “brands and retailers are setting up, with the help of specialist, environments that include a scent dimension” (Billon 2010). After the saturation of visual marketing, and the explosion of sound marketing, it is natural that Retailers and brands enter the olfactory one as “this sense is still under used in the brand communication” states Clément Jeanjean, CEO of Scentys Fragrance System (ibid).

Nevertheless, designing fragrance for brand is not always necessary. In the case of the cosmetic retailer Yves Rocher that we have mentioned previously, “we finally preferred to let the different scents of the products we sell exhale, like the ones of the raw wood of our furniture, we did not want to disturb the environment with one extra fragrance” says Véronique Gohmann, Marketing and International communication executive at Yves Rocher (ibid).

Expressens, specialized in olfactory branding, explains the method used to design brand fragrances. Before starting the work itself, the team needs to translate the brand itself (an emotion) into a “Fragrance, Aroma & texture” (Expressens 2011). The company disposes of an olfactory map by dividing into four different aspects of the brand: among which, the sensibility (relationship with the brand, brand's imaginary), situational (how the place, space, time is perceived), physic (logo, retail activity). These different aspects enable Expressens to draw the brand profile which will be an analysis tool for the strategically guidance and the base for the creation of the fragrance itself. Once we have this brand DNA, four steps leads to the final fragrance. First, a sensory auditing is conducted with questionnaires “if the brand was a flower...?” Then, the information is extracted from the questionnaires and four to five fragrance drafts are created. Third, experts select three final scents which will be presented to the client, during the fourth step. (Expressens 2011) Of course, a fragrance must be complex and must not be known to be unique: “Banana or Strawberry scents does not bring any gains” (ibid).
4.2.4. The role of colours

Colour as such, does not have a great impact on sales. “It is not because we would use a red display that it would sell more than a black one” (Carabajal 2011). “It usually carries out the colour of the brand and the universe of the brand. For example, for Milk, it is common to use blue or green, while for perfume it will be more on red & black; the reflection will be more by product universe & brand than colour themselves” (ibid). Moreover, “the position of the displaying and maybe the shape might play a role; but the success is mostly linked to the coherence with the brand and thus the colour of the brand is the one used” (ibid).

4.2.5 Touching

It is now accepted by retailers that customers need to touch the products to access the products. It is also an advantage against Internet where, by definition, nothing can be touched. “Orange phone company has, for example, rethought completely their store to give “freedom to touch”. Indeed, in most of the phone store we cannot manipulate the products, which is a main handicap on daily touching product”, which is truly a positive experience for the customers. (Carabajal 2011)

4.2.6 Taste

According to Carabajal (2011)), “Food offering, in supermarket for example, improve buying experience, and has a real impact on the sales” because customers are coming to buy food, when it comes to non-food retailers, shoppers might be reluctant to spontaneously try food sample or drinks because that is not what they are looking for. Moreover, it is believed that “taste influences purchasing renewal” (POPAI 2011).

4.3 The Case of Nature & Découvertes

4.3.1 Background of Nature & Découvertes

Nature & Découvertes (Nature & Discoveries) blew its 20 candles in 2010. It employs 1095 people in 2008, generating a turnover of 180.7 million euro (a yearly growth of
13.37%) within 80 stores (Nature & Découvertes 2009). All the stores are located in major French cities as well as a handful in French speaking ones in Belgium & Switzerland. It is targeting “urban segment who wish to reconnect with Nature” (Nature & Découvertes 2010)

The concept is inspired from a store the founder François Lemarchand discovered in the US created by a natural sciences professor. The couple Lemarchand being green militant, they sold the previous retail chain they owned, “Pier Import”, to dedicate their time to this new idea : Nature & Découvertes (Piron 2007). The values defended by the retailers are “the knowledge, respect of nature but also its protection” (Nature & Découvertes 2011)

The offering of the retailer is quite broad including different product universes ranging from tea to toys, via gardening tools and cosmetics. “We compete with retailers that are specialized; without having their selling space. Our stores have in average 3000 items offered on 300sqm. If I take the ensemble of gardening, we have 200 items versus several thousand at Truffaut [garden retailer]. Consequently, we must compete by focusing on our positioning: nature […]. [Customers] know that we do not provide all the catalogue of Truffaut but they will be able to find original gardening items and an answer to specific needs”, explains Françoise Vernet, former Marketing executive at Nature & Découvertes (In Rieunier 2004).

By its positioning at the crossroad of different product offering, Nature & Découvertes does not have direct competitors. Following can be found a schema representing the positioning of the retailer against two other retail chains, specialized into the distribution of household items. Since its foundation, the retailer differentiates itself. Indeed, while most of the store in the end of the 80s and during the 90s displayed “crazy colours, over lighted with flashy staff and aggressive prices, Nature & Découvertes was and still is exactly the contrary, cozy ambiance, cool music, dark atmosphere” (Piron 2007).
4.3.2 Sensory marketing in Nature and Découvertes

The store concept have been oriented towards nature, it naturally occurred to “touch the five senses of our customers, and thus being close to what can be found in Nature […] we are submerged by scents, sound and landscape[…] this is what we wanted to reproduce within our stores, mainly so that our customers feel great within” (Nature & Découvertes 2010). Consequently, the sensory marketing strategy was set up since the very beginning of the store brand.

“The two senses the most stimulated at Nature & Découvertes are smell & hearing thanks to the sound of water and sound-scape” (Rieunier 2004). This seems to please customers since “without them, Nature & Découvertes would not be the same store” (Rieunier 2004).

However, the concept always needs to be re-invented since “olfactory and gustatory remains under-exploited senses […] They remain our main cards to play with the visual [of the store], we need to continuously adapt to new techniques, competitors improvement and the expectations of the customers” (Rieunier 2004). But what the retailer is striving for since its foundation and the different generation of stores is “the coherence of the environmental offering” (Nature & Découvertes Executive 2011).
Visual

Of course, the visual is the first element that makes a customer enter a store. “Visual identity is one of the pillars of the retailer since the beginning. “There is actually a whole department dedicated to it within the firm” (Nature & Découvertes 2010). Indeed, “this department thinks about the different materials that need to be used within the store like raw materials and natural ones like wood, ground”, but also in everyday operations to display the products in a way to tell stories to our customers. We wish to show through our visual identity that our products have a meaning” (ibid).

Visually, “Nature & Découvertes is perceived [by the customers] as a kind of Alibaba’s cave, where numerous original products are piled” (Rieunier 2004) and even though this highly stimulating visual has a positive connotation, it creates “the difficulty to communicate via texts within the stores. Indeed, we have noticed that the signs are not really read by the customers; this ones being focusing on the products and the environment. We maintain however a minimum of written messages, but we have few hope that it would reach them” (ibid).

But the question is that do the customers see all of this? “Customers give a great importance to lightning. On the contrary, they do not necessarily have consciousness of the extended use of wood in our displays or the front wall of our stores made of Burgundy’s stones, despite our effort to use natural materials and our partnership with craftsmen”. Françoise Vernet, former marketing executive of the retailer, remained positive “it is not a big problem because all of these aspects contribute to the overall experience”, which positions the store (Rieunier 2004).

As it is shown in Figure 8, when it comes to the layout, the store manager explained that “when the store is build, the positions of the different universes are taken into account, for example the Garden is always on the right. Nevertheless the different section are fix and do not move. However, there are seasonal factors that comes into account within the universes” (Store Manager 2011). Moreover, the “movement of customers within the store is 90% the same” (as we can the directions of arrow in the Figure 8) (ibid), which shows that the store has been design to take the customer into a journey through the different universes.
From our own observations of a Nature & Découvertes in Paris suburb (see schema above), the main colours used are mostly green and brown. The walls are in two different tones of green, representing leaves on the walls. The floor is made of light brown Cotto tiles. Several plants and fountains can be found in the store. From the store entrance, the kid corner cannot be seen and it use different colour code since the walls in that space are warmer (red walls) and display colourful items. Nevertheless, there are some differences according to the different Nature & Découvertes store: some keep the main green dominance, even in the kids’ corner for example. When it comes to the screens, small ones can be found in the aisles to promote DVD. Some bigger ones can be found at the waiting points such as the cash-out, the jewellery stand broadcasting corporate news about Nature & Découvertes. At last, a big screen in the centre of the kids section presenting Nature and cultural documentaries, from our own observations.
As seen previously, the musical environment is of first importance for the retailer. “When we created the store concept, the object was to make the stores like Nature oasis, peaceful places away from the noisiness of the city. This is why the idea of broadcasting ‘soft’ music came naturally to us” (Nature & Découvertes 2010). The store manager told us that they receive “playlists from a company’s server that is taking care of it on the behalf on Nature & Découvertes” (Store Manager 2010). Indeed, “Nature & Découvertes works exclusively with the music label Vox Terrae [Earth Voice]. It is Vox Terrae who makes the selection of music that play in store every month” (Nature & Découvertes 2010). The use of such sound-scape “make people feel good in our stores, they are not stressed as they would be in a big store. Customers come to us to relax” (ibid). But when it comes to the consequences on customer behaviour, sound-scape “influences certainly the customers’ state of mind. We do not know to which level it influences the products choices” (ibid).

The Nature & Découvertes Executive (2011) of “Pays de Loire” country explains that stores are given both autonomy and dependence. Dependence means there is a need of unity within the different stores but also autonomy in the choice of the play-lists. Indeed, he states that the same type of music after 4hours is annoying for the employees. He usually observes that in the morning it is usually nature sounds, and more rhythmic in the evening. Of course, during rush time, it is incoherent to broadcast “birds sounding” and thus zen music is usually preferred (Nature & Découvertes Executive 2011).

Along with the sound-scape, the scent-scape is one of the main points mentioned by customers when referring to the retailer. As Françoise Vernet, former marketing executive explains “we have conducted qualitative research on a population not really familiar with the brand […] out of twelve people of the interview group, seven spontaneously mentioned the fragrance as a motive for entering Nature & Découvertes” (Rieunier 2004). “In a lot of our outlets, we spray cedar scent outside of the store; people passing by the shopping mall are thus first attracted by the scent, and then by the general offering” (ibid). (See Figure 9)
But first of all, the comprehensive use of fragrances is “justify by the fact that we sell scents. It is thus natural that we diffuse some. […] Just like music, the objective is to create an atmosphere close to the nature, […] reminiscence of either Nature odours or scents of our childhood” (Nature & Découvertes 2010). However “just like the music, it contributes certainly to the well-being of our customers […], but no studies has proved that is increased purchasing decisions” (ibid).

When it comes to the fragrances used within the store, Françoise Vernet explains that the year 1996 has been a major change, since then “we exclusively use Esteban cedar”. Indeed, cedar scent is rather “woody” and thus linked to Nature. Customers have well integrated this specific scent: “our studies have shown that indeed, when smelling this fragrance, they think of Nature & Découvertes. However, they are generally not able to put a name on the scent: they do not identify it as being a cedar scent” (Reunier 2004). Nevertheless, customers are looking for a broader offering of scent. “We have thus developed eight new fragrances linked to childhood, the range being called “memory of a moment” […]. The demand for this fragrance was proved to be high. We have thus decided to use them within the store” (ibid).

From 1999, “our range was enriched and our stores started using these fragrances anarchically. The result, we had a true cacophony of scents! […] Since 2000, we give orders to the stores concerning the diffusion of the fragrances: they have to use in November either the cedar scent or “Evening and winter tales” one” (Reunier 2004). This has been confirmed by the store manager who told us that the switch between the different scents is “not during the day, but during the month. The fragrance is thus adapted to the seasons. We use a more flowery note in spring, while a more warm and cosy one in winter” (Store Manager 2011).

Nonetheless, we must thus make the clear difference in the use of scents within Nature & Découvertes. The Estaban cedar scent is the brand identity fragrance while the others, or “memory of a moment” are “linked to the customer expectations, wishing to be remembered of their childhood and moments strongly linked to this period of their life” (Reunier 2004)
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Description / Imaginary</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Sieste sous le figuier</strong>&lt;br&gt;Nap under the fig tree</td>
<td>Green and fruity fragrance, starting on a slightly floral background; very green, woody and bitter, rounded by a very sweet note referring to the fig and wild peach.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Nature après la pluie</strong>&lt;br&gt;Nature after the rain</td>
<td>Fresh scent and very light; starting with notes of citrus and water on a woody-balsamic background, with hints of roots, soil and forest.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Veillées et contes d’hiver</strong>&lt;br&gt;Evenings and winter tales</td>
<td>Warm, powerful and spicy Fragrance composed of cinnamon wood, sweetened by fruity tones, and fresh and sweet orange peel.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Petits goûter d’automne</strong>&lt;br&gt;Small savours of autumn</td>
<td>This fragrance is sweet &amp; balsamic, starting with hot chocolate on a background of vanilla and honey; with slight accents of orange and dried fruit. A scent that inevitably evoke the savours of fall, when, returning from a walk in the woods, you can enjoy some treats in the warmth of your home.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Soir d’été en Provence</strong>&lt;br&gt;Summer evening in Provence</td>
<td>Smell very fresh, green grass, reminiscent of freshly cut grass, leaves, ivy and lavender strides. Basic notes slightly flowery, softening and harmonizing the whole composition.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Secrets d’enfance</strong>&lt;br&gt;Childhood secrets</td>
<td>A delicate and tender scent recalling childhood. Combining the sweetness of milk and softness of almond to the velvet of fine grains.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Figure 9: Examples of Fragrance used in the store with descriptions (Adapted from Nature & Découvertes 2011)

- **Touch**

Nature & Découvertes is also attached to the freedom to touch, even thought the brand do not put a special emphasis on it. “*Touching is not particularly developed, except in the display of all goods (except jewelries and fragile items) on shelves or podiums in front of their packaging. Our customers enjoy this and often mention this strong connection with our products*” (Rieunier 2004)

- **Taste**

Within the store can be found in self-service herbal tea. It is the same recipe in all the stores and composed of 7 different plants. “*Many consumers would like to buy this herbal tea but we have decided not to sell it. It has indeed to remain as a gift and without any commercial underlying: it is a present, not a tasting to condition purchasing behaviour*” (Rieunier 2004). So, to develop the “taste-scape” of Nature & Découvertes the best way would be create a food
section; however “we have thought of a tasting place (tea bar, herbal tea) to promote our products and create one more space of conviviality, but we don’t plan to open a real food space. Food offering remain punctual and in phase with seasons and commercial themes to which the products could be linked” (ibid).

So why herbal tea but not coffee, since it is also part of the product sold within the store? The store manager (2011) answers “we want to be convivial. [...] tea is made of plant, linked to physiotherapy. [...] we drink coffee to get some energy whereas tea is more for sharing with someone.” Furthermore, the former marketing executive illustrates that “our recent qualitative interviews reveal that three customers out of twelve speak [about the tea] spontaneously. This offering is an integrated part of our concept, since the foundation of the firm” (Rieunier 2004).

The retailer claims it has “counted more offered tea in the store than check out” (Nature & Découvertes 2009). Nevertheless, in our questionnaire to customers, that can be found further below, a crushing majority said they do not take tea when they visit the store. The reasons are that they don't think of it, they don't know, or they don't like it. Eric Carabajal further explains “Nature & Discoveries is not inside a food universe; when you have food offering in a supermarket, the consumer has already made the choice of buying food and thus is much more open to the idea and willing to try new products. In this case, we are in a different universe where one does not come necessary for drinking tea. Another explanation could be the self-service; maybe it would be better with someone giving you a cup directly” (Carabajal 2011).

➢ *Further comments on the overall sensory offering*

Respecting the seasons in the store contribute to the natural aspect or the store as well as renewing the product offering. Indeed, the store manager indicates that “There are several best selling products, depending on the product universe. I will not tell you which ones, but they change according to the season also”. (Store Manager 2011)

But more than the customers, employees must be taken into account since they spend most of their time in the outlet, which might create some difficulties. The store manager
states that it does not create any problem on the employees’ side. Furthermore, she observes that the contact between salesmen and customers is really good “people don’t have any real needs, they come for the pleasure. The relation with the customers is thus extremely favourable for contact. Customers enjoy the place and have a great brand perception before their visit, which helps a lot” (Store Manager 2010). Nevertheless, only “20% of people stepping in the Nature & Discoveries stores are buying products” (Piron 2007) to compare for example with 50,3% at IKEA in South-east Paris (Di DIO 2008).

4.3.3 Customers’ Feedback on Nature & Découvertes

Concerning the results of questionnaire, Nature & Découvertes of course has “interviews with customers in collaboration with Mimésis Institute. They described our concept experience as a coming back to the original nature, a kind of Eden. Several told us that they took time out of their lunch time to pay us a visit and thus get a puff of nature and quietness” (Rieunier 2004).

➢ The store atmosphere and personal emotions

“If Nature & Découvertes was an animal?”-This question intends to see the imaginary behind the experience at Nature & Découvertes and the personal interpretation of the overall environment. The brand communicates heavily on nature, but people might have a different perception of what nature is. We have use two dimensions Common/Exotic and Wild/Domestic to categories the personal imaginary linked to Nature & Découvertes’ environment (See Figure 10).
In the questionnaire, two out of thirteen of the interviewees mention the Turtle as an emblematic animal for the retailer. Indeed, the turtle is the logo of the firm, and represent “constancy and durability” (Nature & Découvertes 2009). We have gotten from the other interviewees different answers, ranging from domestic common animal to exotic ones. The feline is mentioned twice but in two different approaches, the first one positive and the other one more contrasted (Lackadasical). Most of the answers refer to the terrestrial animals. Two groups can be gathered in the common animals, domestic animals such as rabbit and cat; and wild European forest ones such as bear and deer.

Is Nature & Découvertes an experience?

In question: If you had to give me one or two adjective to describe how you feel when you leave the store, what would it be? (Figure 11) Shoppers are asked to describe with two adjectives how they feel inside the store. The results are presented classified according to two aspects: positive-negative and also the passive/active connotations of such feelings. The numbers represent the number of time the same adjective was used.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Negative Feelings</th>
<th>Positive Feelings</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Active</td>
<td>Intruding</td>
<td>Interested, Curious, Amazed</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Passive</td>
<td>Oppressed (2)</td>
<td>Calm (4), Zen (2), Relax (5), Cosy,</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Agreeable, De-stressed, Quiet and Serene</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
According to the question: *What strikes you most in the Atmosphere of Nature & Découvertes?* (Figure 12) When it comes to specific sense customer like most, some customers have been more precise like “wood smell” or “bird sounds”. Finally, some consumers spontaneously mention the product offering such as “new products” and “diversity of the offering”.

![Figure 12: “what strikes you most in the atmosphere of Nature & Découvertes?”](image)

Figure 13 shows the further questions concerning the memorability of the customer experience in Nature & Découvertes, its educational aspects and finally the store atmosphere value for the customers.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>13 interviewees answer the questionnaires</th>
<th>Yes</th>
<th>No</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Do you remember your first time at Nature &amp; Découvertes?</td>
<td>5 (38.46%)</td>
<td>8 (61.54%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Do you think visiting Nature &amp; Découvertes is educational?</td>
<td>8 (61.54%)</td>
<td>2 (13.38%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>If a supermarket was offering the same products, would you go there?</td>
<td>3 (23.08%)</td>
<td>9 (69.23%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Do you often take a cup of tea when you visit the store?</td>
<td>1 (7.69%)</td>
<td>11 (84.62%)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Figure 13: Further questions regarding customer experience in Nature & Découvertes*
4.3.3 Link between product offering and the store atmosphere

![Pie chart showing product categories.]

**Figure 14: “Which type of Product do you often buy in Nature & Discoveries?”**

Regarding question—Which type of Product do you often buy in Nature & Discoveries? (Figure 14) The total number of answers is superior to the number of interviewees since we take into account all spontaneous answers. We can say that fragrance items such as incense and essential oils represent more than the third of the answers. Lightning covers also candles (fragrance or not) and lamps.

When it comes to customers’ feedback on what to improve in the stores, 46% of the customers do not know what to answer but still 38% mention the lack of space is a major problem. This problem seems to have been taken into account by Nature & Découvertes, with the third generation of store that has just open in April 2011 in Paris Montparnasse is much bigger and roomy than the previous version of the store (Nature & Découvertes Executive (2011)). Walking paths were broadened, more wood is being used and the company continued its pedagogic role with “did you know that...?” questions within the store, aiming at both adults and kids (Nature & Découvertes Executive 2011). The remaining answers are wish for the brand to keep on with more interesting products and more public events.
13 interviewees answer the questionnaires

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Question</th>
<th>Answer</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
<th>Answer</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
<th>Answer</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Do you have a specific product in mind when you visit the store, or you are just wandering around?</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>(76.92%)</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>(7.69%)</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>(15.38%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Overall offering Specific offering</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Do you check out the overall offering or just the few objects you are interested in?</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>(76.92%)</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>(23.08%)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Often Rarely Never</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Do you usually purchase products during your visits?</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>(23.08%)</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>(61.54%)</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>(15.38%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Store Website Both</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Would you consider using Nature &amp; Découvertes website for purchasing product or you'd rather come to the store?</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>(69.23%)</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>(7.69%)</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>(23.08%)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Figure 15: Further questions regarding the link between product and atmosphere

4.4 Success and Limitations of Sensory Marketing

4.4.1 How can the success of Nature & Découvertes be explained?

“According to Lemarchand [Nature & Découvertes’s CEO], the success is due to a non specialization of the offer, the assortment is very big, competitors were ultra specialized with discount price” (Piron 2007). This focus on products is also pointed out by Eric Carabajal, customers “would come even though Nature & Découvertes would not put that much effort into [sensory marketing] and come for the products” (POPAI 2011).

But Jacques Piron goes further (Piron 2007):

“A According to us three more reasons explain the good results:

✓ A green mood which is getting bigger day after day, a craze to understand nature and to save the planet from the urban population

✓ Nature & Découvertes is aware of the demand of the client, more information, and more advice so well trained staff is a basic element for the company.

✓ An extremely good store display, soft lights, cool music and no aggressive promotion!”

Furthermore, we can note that one of the characteristics of Nature & Découvertes is the absence of advertising. “Nature & Découverte does not have any communication in the usual way, no press ad, no TVC, no internet banner etc. The banner wants to a proactive speech. That means they set up many operations to illustrate their philosophy, to make their thoughts more concrete. They are
aware that their activity cannot be limited to sell products; it’s more a state of mind than a supermarket of green stuff. That’s why they organized many events or they support a lot local activity” (Piron 2007). From that perspective, stores act as the major communication tool between the consumer and the retailer, it becomes thus important to transmit the brand value through it, and sensory marketing is one of these elements. The manager tells us the recipe: the “advertising is the store, the teams and word to mouth, no commercials. It works well since we have now over 80 stores in France (Store Manager 2010). “The more initiatives we take concerning products, marketing and visual identity, the more customers flow in” (Nature & Découverte 2010). Furthermore, “according to studies […], Nature & Découvertes enjoys a strong notoriety among a large segment of the population” (ibid).

4.4.2 The limitations of sensory marketing applied to retailers

One of the limits of sense-marketing is the difficulty to quantify its impact on sales. As Eric Carabajal (2011) says “Retail store REAL in Germany, part of Metro group, has been working on the concept of the future supermarket, and they played on the lightning according to the product offered, with different lightning if you are in the fruits or meats department, for example, but they are not serious study on the result. Sensory marketing is more about trying. It is a little bonus for the customer and is a differentiation mean for the retailer. But is there result on sales? No we don’t know” (ibid). “At the same time, Sensory marketing provides a greater comfort for the customer which virtually might lead him to visit more often the store, but there are no studies on the subject” (ibid). This lack of information is also raised by the retailer itself “the sensory dimension is transversely studied but has not been the focus of a study, strictly speaking” (Rieunier 2004). Moreover, the cost of such technology is also to take into account. “Sensory marketing is also something rather expensive to set up, mostly found in Flagship stores which do not aim at earning money but to promote the brand” (POPAI 2011).

But this lack of financial result is easily explainable according to the executive of Expressens “Sensory does not sell, but communicates” (Expressens 2011). Nature & Découvertes also states they are not looking for direct financial benefits in the use of sensory marketing “The olfactory, additive and visual dimensions are part of our identity. We do not
aim for financial gains. What we are after, is to be state-of-the-art, surprise our customers so that they feel like coming back in our stores" (Nature & Découvertes 2010).

Indeed, what makes people come (and come back) to a store is first of all the products, thus sensory marketing does not explain everything. “Lot of retailers follows our lead by broadcasting music and fragrances and working a lot on the product display. Certainly it brings customers into the stores. But what makes them buy, it is something else: the product quality, its originality, its utility […] and the fact that this product has a meaning” (Nature & Découvertes 2010). Indeed, as the former marketing executive of Nature & Découvertes mentions “Our customer come first to buy original presents, the sensory dimension is important but not a major selection criteria for the consumers” (Rieunier 2004).
5. Analysis and Discussion

In this chapter, the authors will analyse the arguments and data collected in the previous section; in order to answer the research questions: why and how retailers should implement sensory marketing. The authors will process the main arguments raised in chapter 4 by professionals, and summarise them into the following figures (Figure 16-19). These will be put in relation with theories, in order to build a synthetic model which is presented at the end of this section, showing the findings of this thesis.

5.1. Why Using Sensory Marketing?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Motives for using sensory marketing in retail</th>
<th>Press</th>
<th>Conference</th>
<th>Interviews</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>- Expansion of Internet.</td>
<td></td>
<td>- A need to re-enchant consumption</td>
<td>- Changes in customer habits (Customers are less loyal to brands, internet)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- A way to differentiate.</td>
<td></td>
<td>- A communication tool more than a selling tool</td>
<td>- Sensory marketing reassures the customers, improve purchase decision, create a reference for the customers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Customer are gradually tired of punctual events and should have long-term views (“retainment”)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>- A way to communicate around the brand image. (Sensory marketing does not provide unique vision but also a communication tool with customers)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Increase feeling of well-being</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Increase the quality perception</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Customer stay in average longer</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Increase potential purchase</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Limitations of sensory marketing</th>
<th>Press</th>
<th>Conference</th>
<th>Interviews</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>- Sensory marketing is not an end but a way to create experience around the products</td>
<td>- Customers will pick up dissonances</td>
<td>- Depend on the product nature (pleasure is mostly impulsive buying)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Hard to quantify clearly the results</td>
<td></td>
<td>- Can make people come, but also can make them run away</td>
<td>- Need to have a strong differentiate offering</td>
</tr>
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<td></td>
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<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Figure 16: Synthesis of the motivations & Limitation of Sensory marketing
Based on the data collected, Figure 16 presents the limitations of sensory marketing as well as its motives, which can be divided into external and internal factors, answering the question “Why”.

5.1.1 External factors

Changes in customer habits: Nowadays, customers are frequently driven “toward the pursuit of fantasies, feelings, and fun” (Holbrook & Hirschman 1982). They are more informed, more critical and decreasingly loyal to brands.

Internet: the popularity of online shopping can also be threats against retailers operating stores. Consequently, a back-to-the-roots effect started: retailers are not only about providing goods which can be purchased at cheaper price on the web, but they can make stores a lively place by stimulating customers senses, creating scenery around their offerings: re-enchanting consumption.

Competitions: To draw shoppers into their stores, retailers often use punctual events aiming a creating customer experiences. Nevertheless, sensory marketing is anchored into a longer term vision, aiming to bring customer comfort, higher quality perception, and a tighter connection with the retailer imaginary. Beside, increasing numbers of retailers are using sensory marketing: for example, according to Billon (2010), the usage of scent by European retailers is expected to reach 20% by 2013, comparing to the currently usage of 5%, which requires the retailers to keep up with the competitors offering.

5.1.2 Internal factors

Potential results: From empirical part we know that there are two reasons for using sensory marketing. First of all, sensory marketing is a way to strengthen the brand. According to Claude Nahon (in Billon 2010) sensory marketing can create brand identity. As we know, store environment is an important cue that providing the first image of the brand to customers. That's why Bitner (1992) also state that the store physical
environment act as a differentiator and conveying distinctiveness from competitors. Moreover, “Sensory marketing enables brands to work on their image, at a store level” (Billon 2010). Consequently, sensory marketing plays a vital role on brand building through stores. Secondly, sensory marketing has a positive effect on customer spending. Turley and Fugate (1992), Wakefield and Blodgett (1996) note that the perceived quality of servicescape effect the satisfaction level of customers, which finally influence the duration of customer staying, customer purchase decision as well as their intentions to revisit the store.

However, these results presented above are only potential since they have not been proved by quantitative researches.

**The nature of the offering** can be a motive or an obstacle, which means sensory marketing must coherent with the nature of the products offering. For example, Sprangenberg et al. (1996) suggest that the effect of fragrances is minimal when the products displayed have a utilitarian nature and it will be more efficient in pleasure-oriented offering. In the case of Nature & Découvertes, we have found from the questionnaires that customers are not striving for utilitarian products, since most of the purchases were done in regarding home fragrance products; and customers came into the store without any specific products in mind. Visiting Nature & Découvertes is thus not a store one goes in particular but more a spontaneous decision. Furthermore, Eric Carabajal (2011) also explains that the use of sensory marketing makes sense in special cases, such as out-door retailer for example or in the specific case of Nature & Découvertes.

**The positioning** of the retailer must be taken into account also. Sensory marketing is part of the store servicescape which gives clue to the shopper about its positioning. Sensory marketing is not cheap to implement as Eric Carabajal noted that this technique is used mostly in flagships. A company focusing on price leadership might thus have no particular needs for it.
A communication tool: Sensory marketing should not be seen as a direct way to increase sales, but as a communication tool with customers. It is a communication canal that conveys significant information from retailer such as their concerns about customers’ well-being, the core value of the company as well as the image of the store and the brand. Company need to think about whether or not they want to use sensory marketing as a communication tool. For example, Nature & Découvertes make good use of sensory marketing and all its communications are done through the stores and its website. The firm does not use any commercials outside stores to promote its brand. Thus, the stores become the main communication bridge between the retailer and customers.

Specifically, sense-marketing undoubtedly participate to the retailer's communication around the imaginary of the brand and create scenery for the offering. Nature & Découvertes use sensory marketing as a media to communicate with different customers since the perception of the sensory environment has been interpreted individually. We indeed found that only a minority of interviewees mention the retailer's logo (a turtle) as an animal representing the brand, despite its presence on the store front wall, and on the purchasing bags etc... Instead, people had an individual representation of what Nature & Découvertes was for them; even though the theme of Nature has been perceived by everyone.

5.2 How to Implement Sensory Marketing

In this section, we will summarise and analyse the steps of implementing sensory marketing by studying the case of Nature & Découvertes.

Figure 17 shows the advantages and recommendations in terms of five senses from professional perspectives. Specifically, the advantages demonstrate the functions of each sense also act as evidences to support the operations of sensory marketing in Nature & Découvertes. The recommendations are the instructions for retailers when implementing sensory marketing.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Benefits and Advices on each sense</th>
<th>Press</th>
<th>Conference</th>
<th>Interviews</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Visual</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Music</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Emotional language benefits to the brand</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Must be integrated into the communication strategy (contribute to the identification, differentiation and appreciation of the brand)</td>
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<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>- Retailer must have music consistency with the customers</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Choice depend on the target group</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Scent</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Decrease time perception</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Impact memorization of the brand</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- 80% Customers are willing to come back in the store if scent is pleasant</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Retail fragrance should be related to the brand imaginary</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Must be complex</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Taste</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Has a real impact on sales if food retailer.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Taste influence purchasing renewal</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Touch</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Customers need to touch</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Advantage compare to internet</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Positive experience for the customers</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Figure 17: Benefits and recommendations on each sense by Sensory marketing professionals**

Figure 18 presents the whole case of Nature & Découvertes including where is the store concept from, how they develop the theme and finally the details in operations of sensory marketing within the store. Combining with theories, the case of Nature & Découvertes will be integrated into the four steps of implementing sensory marketing that we are going to discuss further down.
### How is Nature & Découvertes implementing sensory marketing?

| Objectives                                      | - Customers well-being  
|                                                | - Must be coherent with the environmental nature of the offering |
| Targets                                        | Middle level of urban segment who wish to get close to nature |
| Value                                          | Knowledge, respect and protection of the nature |
| Store concept                                  | Reconnect with Nature |
| Theme                                          | Nature: make the stores a nature oasis. A peaceful places away from the city |
| Visual                                         | - Different defined universe: creation of a path through the store followed by 90% of the customers  
|                                                | - Use of Green and brown as major colour; plants and fountains. Warmer colours such as red walls are used for the kid section.  
|                                                | - A special department of the firm is dedicated to the visual aspects of the store such as the material used and so on.  
|                                                | - Screens are used. Some small ones in the aisles are used for promoting a product, some at the waiting points such as the cashier, jewelry stand. Finally in the kids section showing documentaries. |
| Music                                          | - Mostly soft music are used (Nature sounds, zen & ethnic music).  
|                                                | - Playlists are managed from a music label firm and renewed every month.  
|                                                | - Independence is given to the store concerning the playlist choice.  
|                                                | - Certain patent are observed such as Nature sounds in the morning, zen music during rush hours. |
| Scent                                          | - Esteban Cedar is used as brand scent (woody smell and linked to Nature) and is sprayed outside the store  
|                                                | - A ranged of fragrances have been design, representing the theme “memory of a moment”  
|                                                | - Orders are given according to the scent used in the store, mostly on a monthly basis, and are related to the seasons. |
| Touch                                          | - Products are displayed outside their packages  
|                                                | - People are free to manipulate the objects without security cables  
|                                                | - Exception of fragile items and jewelry. |
| Taste                                          | - The idea a food section was raised but it was kept a punctual & seasonal offering  
|                                                | - The tea offering is integrated part of the concept  
|                                                | - Tea is free and not available for sale. |

**Figure 18: Synthesis of Nature & Découvertes’ sensory offering**

Moreover, Customers’ perspectives to the overall sensory marketing in Nature & Discovery will also be taken into account as feedback (as shown in Figure 19).
Customer's Feedback on the Case of Nature & Découvertes

### Spontaneous Visit
- More than 75% of the interviewees said they do not have any specific product in mind when visiting the store. Wish show that the visit is spontaneous and driven by hedonistic more than utilitarian motives.

### High Time allocated
- More than three quarter of the interviewees declared that they look at the overall offering of Nature & Découvertes; showing the important time allocation given to the retailer.

### Environment Perception
- Fragrances was the first thing to be mentioned by customers, followed by the holistic impression of the atmosphere and the sound-scape.
- Visual is not spontaneously mentioned

### Individual Brand Perception
- Individual representation of the brand that might vary considerably from one person to another.
- The logo of the company in most cases, does not come to the customers’ mind.

### Differentiation
- 70% of the respondent declared that they would not go to a supermarket to buy the same products; and the same number declare preferring going in the store rather than going on the website to by products.

### Low Purchasing
- More than half of the respondent declared purchasing rarely items in the store. Most of the items purchased are incenses and essential oils.

### Experience Marketing aspects

#### Rather high Memorability
- Around one third of the interviewees declared remembering their first time in Nature & Découvertes.

#### Educational
- Only 2 people out of 13 said that Nature & Découvertes was not an educational store.

### Nature & Découvertes own studies

#### Feed backs on Senses
- **Visual:** People do not pay much attention to texts within the stores, and do not necessarily realize the extended use of wood in our displays.
- **Scent:** More than half of the interviewees mention the fragrance as a motive for entering the store. The fragrance of Nature & Découvertes is recognized by most people, but they are not able to identify it as cedar.
- **Touch:** Customers enjoy being able to manipulate objects and mention the strong connection with the store products

![Figure 19: Synthesis of customers’ feedback in Nature & Découvertes](image)

#### 5.2.1 Step 1: Defining the store concept

Nature & Découvertes is not the only shop that offers perfumes, gardening and hiking items as well as children's toys on the market, but what makes it special is its strong store concept compared to other retailers. We summarise two factors that may influence the
definitions of concept. They are firstly, what is the company value, secondly who is your
target group. The values of Nature & Découvertes are firmly anchored with nature,
which need to be transposed in atmosphere designing. Furthermore, the targeted group
of the company is middle class urban people who wish to get close to nature, which lead
to the store’s middle class price positioning.

5.2.2 Step 2: Creating a congruent theme

A congruent theme is the key for the whole process. It has significant connection with
store concept and also through the theme the retail can create pleasant customer
experience by implementing sensory marketing. Finding a theme for the store is
important since it shapes the customer perception about the firm (Schmitt & Simonson
1997). The theme must be precise, concise and special emphasis must be given on the
five senses since they enhance of the experience. As we mentioned that the store concept
of Nature & Découvertes is to reconnect with nature, the theme is to make the stores an
nature oasis- a peaceful places away from the city (Rieunier, 2004); a place where
customers can feel like they were in nature. This way, what customers get are not only the
products, but also an idealised piece of nature and a place to relax.

5.2.3 Step 3: Implementing the theme

According to Schmitt (1999), experiences are “sensory, emotional, cognitive, behavioural and
relational values that replace functional values”. In order to create a holistic sensory marketing
environment that lead to pleasant customer experience, congruent theme is the key.
During the process of design and implementation, sensorial synergy, cultural preferences
and constant evolution of atmosphere should be taken into account.

Pine & Gilmore (1998) said the more senses engaged, the more effective the shopping
experience. Nature & Découvertes uses all the sense at diverse degrees as we can see in
the following analysis of the case study. All senses are based on the foundation of the
theme: Nature.
Visual:

From outside: Stores features of Nature & Découvertes illustrates Roullet's (2009) “alert function” of visual cues. Indeed, by using Burgundy stone for the front wall, the store successfully contrast itself with the surrounding, which makes the store eye-catchy in shopping malls.

Store layout: The clear layout within the store, with its clearly separated product universes (such as cosmography, children's section, home decoration wares, and so on), helps customers to orientate and find the products they are looking for (Spies et al. 1997). Our observation also confirm the study of Barth (in Spies et al. 1997 stating that most customers move in the store counter-clock wisely and with special attention on the wall-sides. The store architecture suggests a path around the different universes aiming at encouraging the consumers to look at the overall offering and also to canalize the customer flow, within rather small stores. As shown in the map of the store (Figure 8), the centre of the store is filled with product displays which create several small displays within the store. According to the customer’s feedback, they think more space inside the store is needed.

Colours: The case study also follows the recommendation of Roullet in Rieunier (2009) concerning the use of three colours maximum with one covering 80% of the surface. Besides, according to Eric Carabajal (2011), the colour of the environment should be coherent with the brand, thus use the colour of the brand. The main colour of Nature & Découvertes is green which coherence with the concept- “reconnected with Nature”. It covers around 80% of the whole environment. Brown and red, are the other main ones used: brown symbolised the colour of earth, and red for children’s section. The uses of red for the kids department also illustrate the need to adapt the colour according to the age (Chebat and Morrin 2007) since they seem to be more attracted by bright colours.

Lighting: In general, Nature & Découvertes implements soft lighting within the store. As Markin et al. (1976) suggested that soft lighting reduce the arousal level of customer,
which makes them calm down and relaxing. Moreover, Nature & Découvertes put additional light display (Summers and Hebert 2001) to displays some products that they want customers to pay more attention to. In this sense, consumers are said to examine and handle more merchandise under brighter lighting (Areni and Kim 1994). In addition, another function of soft lighting is it implies high quality of the products (Gorn 1982), which improve the customer's perception towards to image of store (Kotler 1973), in our case the products of Nature & Découvertes.

**Screens:** Screens are effectively and widely used in Nature & Découvertes (as seen in Figure 8). Screens have variable sizes and are located in different places within the store. They are broadcasting company & products information, as well as educational documentary, confirming the important role of digital media as an important communication medium (Dennis et al. 2010). To shorten the customer waiting time, screens are located at queuing places and communicate around the retailer events, and public relations.

- **Music:**

According to Boumendil (2010), music is the emotional language of the brand. “And the brand must benefit from this language to display its message with clarity and singularity.” This way, the music within store must “contribute effectively to the identification, the differentiation and the appreciation of the brand”. Based on targeted group of Nature & Découvertes, soft and light music related to nature were chosen. The music changes during the day; for example, Nature sounds (birds singing) are played in the morning and zen music during rush hours. Based on previous research, the level, tempo, style/genre and complexity of the background music affect the time of consumer staying in stores. According to Garlin and Owen (2005), the music of Nature & Découvertes store can lead customers stay longer as they are using “slower tempo, lower volume”. In addition, Oakes (2003) also stressed that the slow-tempo music can improve customers’ “satisfaction, positive disconfirmation of expectations, and relaxation”.

65
In addition, the music is not randomly selected but designed by a music label firm, specialised mostly into nature & new-age (Nature & Découvertes 2010). The music-fit helps to build the emotional connections between consumer and the brand (Beverland et al., 2006). Moreover, the soothing music helps customers to concentrate (Chebat et al. 2001) and the sound-scape of the store music has the advantage of not attracting customer attention, and thus not providing a time frame, leading to a longer store visit.

➤ **Scent:**

Scent can be a strong competitive advantage for retailers if it is used properly. As Fiore et al. (2000) showed, “a pleasant and appropriate fragrance to the product display” has the highest positive impact on the customers. In Nature & Découvertes, nature-evocating fragrances have been designed for the stores and changes almost every month, linked to seasons (Store Manager 2011).

Scent also impacts on the memorisation of the brand. According to Morrin & Retneshwar (2000), “ambient odour caused subjects to expend additional processing efforts on unfamiliar brand stimuli [and thus] exhibited superior recall for the unfamiliar brands”. The store selling original products that are not known by the general public might benefit from it. According to the results of the questionnaire, more than half of the interviewees mention the fragrance as a motive for entering the store. The fragrance of Nature & Découvertes is recognised by most people, even though they are not able to identify it as cedar (Rieunier 2004).

What’s more, use of pleasant fragrances within stores has a positive impact on the visit length of customers, which has been confirm by the questionnaires where customers dedicated quite an extensive period of time in the stores since the crushing majority declared looking at the overall offering. Moreover, scents impact also positively on the customers’ evaluation of the store (Chebat & Michon 2003); thus making them more willing to visit the store again (Spangenberg et al. 1996) since 80% of the customers are willing to come back in the store if scent is pleasant (MoodMedia 2010).
In addition, if scents can positively impact on a product evaluation, it might “jeopardize the sales of other products” (Chebat & Michon 2003). Nature & Découvertes overcome the problem by having a common starting point for both product and sensory offering which is nature; and the scents are not design for a product in particular but for the store as a whole. The main issue raised by the interviewees was the lack of space which can be explained by the small size of the store. This can confirm Michon et al. (2005) research on scent and crowd showed that the fragrances used in the store have a negative impact on customers’ perception of density after a reaching a certain saturation level.

➢ **Touch:**

Enabling customers to touch the products, according to Grohmann et al. (2007) is a good way for consumers to assess them and feel mastery through it. In Nature & Découvertes, products are displayed outside their packages and people are free to manipulate the objects without security cables, even for some expensive electronic such as telescopes. In this way, as Grohmann et al. (2007) states: “a positive effect on the evaluation of products with characteristics best explored by touch (e.g., softness, texture), particularly for high quality levels”. The ability to touch items is indeed the main advantage of retail stores versus internet.

On the other hand, touch also creates familiarity with the store, enabling consumers to manipulate an object, which has been proved to increase the emotional attachment to it (Shu and Peck 2011). We noticed that in the children’s section, the shelf is designed according to the average height of children, from 2 years old to 10 years old, making the toys and books accessible to them. By doing this, “psychological ownership can be increased” (Shu and Peck 2011) between children and the product, which trigger the purchase since kids are prescribers.

➢ **Taste:**

Taste is a common sensory marketing food section in supermarkets and food retailers, in which circumstance sales can be impacted (Carabajal 2011). As part of “reconnected with Nature”, Nature & Découvertes is using a special herbal tea and put the tea-pot in the book section. In this way, the retailers display some values to the customers, the tea
offering, which can be interpreted as “in our store, you are not a customer but a guest”. Furthermore, taste is also said to encourage purchase renewal and thus might impact the customers who can find this tea in Nature & Découvertes stores exclusively.

- **Sensory marketing as a holistic experience**

Combining all the sensory elements and achieve a successful result is not easy. Every atmospheric factor should not only be coherent with one another, but also with the overall environment. For example, according to Chebat and Michon (2003), the success of a retailing use of in-store fragrance is beneficial to the shopping experience only if harmoniously implemented with the other aspects of the environment. Steffy (1990) in Yin (2004) also suggest that “lighting is designed to harmonize with furniture and accessories are perceived as more pleasant than environments in which lighting does not harmonize with other elements of the room”.

In our questionnaires, no interviewee picked up any dissonance in the atmosphere. When asked what strike them the most, store fragrance comes first which can be explained by the relatively under-usage of this sense in retail nowadays. Customer may pay more attention to it by contrast. Then the holistic impression about the store is mentioned, showing that sensory marketing must be done from the customer perceptive, meaning holistically. The sound-scape was also mentioned as important. Surprisingly, while most of the perceived information are visual, it seems to be eclipsed by the others senses. This confirms the studies of Nature & Découvertes, stating that customers do not read texts and pay attention to visual clues. This might show that when there is high environmental stimulus, some information is prioritized over other.

Moreover, when building holistic customer experience, there is also one factor that need to be taken into account: culture preference. Cultural differences can exist such as Chebat & Morrin (2007) pointing out the French Canadians respond better to warm colour décor than Anglo-Canadians who prefer cold ones, showing that sensory preferences might be natural but also learnt. It is common also to note taste differences between countries and it is common knowledge that perfume professionals are changing slightly
their fragrances formula depending on the markets they operating in. We have noted that Nature & Découvertes exists only in French-speaking European countries. They can be explained by languages and logistic reasons among others, but also for cultural reason. Retailers should thus think twice about how to modify the sensory marketing concept to suit customer best in the shoppers in a particular cultural context.

5.2.4 Step4: Making the customer come back

Once customers left the store, they are expected to come back again; and the retailer must renew the experience. The renewal of the experience should provide a long term interest for the shoppers. According to Rieunier (2004), retailers need to “continuously adapt to new techniques, competitors improvement and the expectations of the customers”. In our case, Nature & Découvertes has developed the seasonal concept so that it always brings novelties to the stores and is strongly linked to the circle of nature. The products are renewed; the new music playlists are also introduced every month as well as the fragrances used. These ones are linked to seasons in there evocations such as Evenings and winter tales, small savours of autumn. All these seasonal changes provide customers with different atmosphere and thus slightly different shopping experience at every visit. To keep the sensory atmosphere evolving positively, the retailer should pay attention to customers’ feedback but also to employees who, after all, spend their whole day in the stores. As (Petkus 2002) suggested that companies should take into account feedbacks in order to improve continuously the experience.

5.3 Results of Sensory Marketing in Nature & Découvertes

Through the whole study, we haven’t found any proofs indicating sensory marketing have direct positive impact on the sales neither from the professionals nor the questionnaires since most respondents declared rarely purchasing any items. Only one shopper out of five bought a product during their visit, which confirms that the store is a good place to visit and not to purchase in particular. Indeed, as Billon (2010) states, sensory marketing is about promoting the retailer offering and it’s difficult to quantify clearly its results.
Nevertheless, through the case study, we conclude that sensory marketing can improve the perception of the brand and products, bring comfort to customers as well as serve as a differentiate tool. As it is demonstrated in the case, Nature & Découvertes is popular and enjoy a high brand perception. We have shown that the retailer offer something more than just the products since a high proportion of the customers stated that they would not go to a supermarket or use internet to buy the same products, but rather come to the store. Furthermore, as we have seen all through the analysis, sensory marketing enhances the quality perception of the products themselves by various factors such as the lightning, touching, display etc. In addition, the customer preference for coming to the store can be motivated by the sensory atmosphere as well as by the employee service, which cannot to be neglected. To concluded, a good store atmosphere will makes the retailer a good destination for visiting regularly, which will generate and enhance brand loyalty.

5.4 Nature & Découvertes and Experience Marketing

First of all, memorability is one of the characteristic of an experience according to Pine & Gilmore (1998). According to them, memories touch the “affect” of the individual living it and exist only in his mind. In the questionnaire, one third of the interviewees declared that they remembered their first time in the store. Even though it concerned only a minority of shoppers, there are several steps toward pure experience marketing according to the theory. Nature & Découvertes fills also another aspect of experience marketing: the highly personal aspect of experience (Pine & Gilmore, 1998). We have indeed seen that customers did not perceive their shopping experience the same way. Furthermore, by using the “four realms of experience” of Pine & Gilmore (1998), we observe that Nature & Découvertes fills the entertainment real (use of senses), the aesthetic (people are coming in the store), and educational (a crushing majority of interviewee declared the store to be educational).
What’s more, the logic of Nature & Découvertes matches with the steps given by the scholars on how to build a successful experience: finding a theme for the store is important since shapes the customer perception about the firm (Schmitt & Simonson 1997). The theme must be precise and concise (Nature in our case study) and special emphasis must be given on the five senses since they enhance of the experience. The more senses engaged the more effective the shopping experience (Pine & Gilmore 1998) and Nature & Découvertes uses all of them at diverse degrees.

So to the question is Nature & Découvertes an experience according to theory, we can say that it has some characteristic of it, but in a limited extend. The retailer should be categories as an early stage of experience marketing, mostly relying on senses, and thus should be considered as a “stager” Rieunier (2009) around its products.

### 5.5 Summary of Analysis

In this section, Figure 20 presents the summary of the analysis. In this part, we have found several factors that explain why retailers should use sensory marketing within their stores. External aspects have been found such as the changes in customer shopping habits, pressure from Internet, and development of sensory marketing used by competitors. Further, whether or not choosing sensory marketing is also depending on the internal factors of retailers such as the positioning and the nature of offerings, In addition, communication objectives of the retailers and potential results of successful atmosphere implementation are also the motivations for retailers.

Once the decision has been made, the store concept should be taken into account according to company value, target group and company positioning. All these aspects must be kept in mind when concretely creating the theme on which the store atmosphere should be build.
According to the congruent theme, retailers can create sensorial synergy where senses support one another, which providing a holistic customer experience. Furthermore, the same target group might have different sensory preferences according to the cultural factors, which retailers should also take into consideration. Moreover, all the senses should be opened for evolution in order to provide novelty to customers. On the other hand, constant customers’ feedback is also essential for the evolving process to improve continuously attractive atmosphere. Employees are also important factor to be concerned because they are the persons that expose to the environment for an extensive time and are an important component of the servicescape.

If the holistic sensory atmosphere is successful, the store will differentiate itself from the competition by creating a strong brand imaginary. This will also improve customers comfort and develop a closer bound between them and the retailer, via an individual perception of the brand. Furthermore, according to the analysis above, the atmosphere will showcase the retailer's items, and increasing products’ perceived quality. Finally, even though the results of sensory marketing are still unclear, following our findings, retailers can hope to get benefit from sensory marketing in regard to store revisit, customer purchase and higher loyalty. And these benefits can motivate and encourage retailers continuously as the internal reasons we mentioned in the beginning.
Figure 20: Summary of findings
6. Conclusion

To conclude, this paper presents a synthetic model (Figure 20) concerning the implementation of sensory marketing at retail, from the retailer perspective. In accordance to the research question, the authors have found motives for the use (or not) of a sensory atmosphere within a store, i.e., the aspects to take into account for a successful implementation; as well as its potential results on customers. The success of sensory marketing depends on a well-defined store concept, a congruent theme which integrates synergy senses, and constant renewal of the atmosphere. Moreover, retailers should take into account customers and employees feedbacks to improve itself. Furthermore, using Pine & Gilmore’s (1998) description of experience marketing, the authors conclude that Nature & Découvertes can be classified as an early stage of experience marketing, joining what Rieunier (2009) present as the staging phase, at the crossroad of sense and experience marketing (as Figure 1 shows).

However, we have seen that sensory marketing is hard to set up and might lead to a negative impact on shoppers if not properly implemented. Its adaptation to the target group is also important since store atmosphere draws customers inside, it can also make them avoid the store. Sensory marketing should be considered as the icing on the cake since shoppers come after all, mostly for the products presented (Nature & Découvertes 2010).

Nevertheless, even if the impact of sensory marketing on customers cannot be denied, the direct results are still under-researched, even though the thesis authors identify several ones, based on previous researches and professional testimony.

6.1 Further Research

This paper is based on qualitative data; the findings reflect our observations and the concrete way sensory marketing is implemented. Nevertheless, the authors of the thesis feel that specific quantitative researches on the impact of a complete sensory atmosphere
on customer behaviour (such as customer spending, perception of the products & store) should be carried out, as professionals lack of empirical measurements to evaluate the real impact of sensory marketing. Such research could help to evaluate the economic value of sensory marketing.
Reference


Chebat, J-C., Gélinas, C. & Vaillant, D. (2001). Environmental background music and


*Internal Documents:*


POPAI (2011). *La Multi-sensorialité dans le point de vente*. The global association for marketing at retail. Internal document
Appendix

Appendix I: Interview with Eric Escabajal, manager of POPAI

Bonjour,

En tout premier lieu, merci de nous accorder un peu de votre temps.

Nous souhaitons garder cet entretien plutôt ouvert, et les questions posées ne seront pas forcément exactement les mêmes que celles ci-jointes, mais vous donnent une idée générale de ce que nous souhaiterions savoir durant notre entrevue de demain, Mardi 19 Avril (9.30).

Les motifs pour la mise en place d'une atmosphère sensorielle en magasin

✓ Le marketing sensoriel peut-il être utilisé en toutes circonstances? Si non, dans quels cas spécifiques?

✓ Quels sont les bénéfices de l'utilisation du marketing sensoriel en magasin? Quelles-en sont les difficultés?

✓ Dans quelle mesure l'environnement du magasin influence-t-il l'acte d'achat, la fidélité du consommateur?

✓ Le point de vente étant l'interface principale entre les clients et le distributeur, comment est-il possible de promouvoir sa marque et ses valeurs uniquement à travers du marketing en magasin?

L'application en magasin

✓ Avez vous des exemples d'applications réussies du marketing des sens parmi vos membres?

✓ Dans quelle mesure les médias digitaux améliorent-ils l'expérience du consommateur en magasin? Comment peuvent-ils contribuer à l'atmosphère générale du point de vente?

✓ Comment le display en magasin impact-il la perception des produits, et du magasin en général, pour le consommateur?

✓ Comment s'assurer que l'offre sensorielle d'un point de vente soit bien en alignement avec les objectifs du distributeur? Avez vous des contre-exemples?
Supplément

✓ Quels sont les principales questions soulevées par vos membres en ce qui concerne le marketing sensoriel?

Bien sûr, si vous avez des commentaires, ou un point qu’il vous semblera important de mentionner, nous serions ravis que vous nous en fassiez part.

Merci pour votre participation,

Gildas Aitamer
Quan Zhou
Appendix II: Nature & Découvertes Customer Questionnaire

Atmosphere and Personal Emotions
✓ Si Nature et Découvertes était un animal, que serait-il?
✓ Si vous deviez me donner deux adjectifs pour qualifier comment vous vous sentez dans le magasin, que seraient-ils?

Link between Product & Atmosphere
✓ Avez vous un produit spécifique en tête quand vous venez dans le magasin, ou vous flanez principalement?
✓ Regardez-vous l'offre dans son ensemble ou seulement quelques produits?
✓ Achetez-vous des produits à chacune de vos visites/souvent/rarement/jamais
✓ Quel type de produits achetez-vous principalement ici? Livres, bougies...
✓ Préférez-vous venir en magasin pour acheter vos produits, ou vous pourriez le faire sur le site web Nature et Découvertes?

Experience Marketing
✓ Vous souvenez vous de votre première visite à Nature et Découvertes?
✓ Qu'est ce qui vous a frappé le plus dans l'ambiance du magasin?
✓Trouvez-vous que Nature et Découvertes est éducatif et ludique?
✓ Si un hypermarché vous proposait les mêmes produits que Nature et Découvertes, y iriez vous?
✓ Préférez-vous une tasse du thé offert lors de votre visite? Qu'est ce cela représente pour vous?

Conclusion
✓ Pensez-vous que les produits présentés par Nature et Découvertes sont cohérents avec l'atmosphère du magasin?
✓ Si quelque chose devait être amélioré dans l'ambiance du magasin, selon vous, ce serait?

Merci !