3D In-store Design

## Towards meaningful brand experiences in physical in-store environments. By Janneke Zuidhof

Master's Thesis in Communication Studies

Abstract

The purpose of this research is to provide insight in how to design for three-dimensional in-store environments in creating effective touch points from a brand perspective. To investigate how physical commercial spaces can affect the consumer-brand relationship, an exploratory field study was conducted, along with two experiments in 'real life' environments.

This research advocates for a consumer-centric approach in designing for physical in-store environments. In the first experiment, we show that for effective in-store communication, it is crucial to speak to consumers' needs, instead of presenting (technical) product features alone. Furthermore, consumers' shopping motives turn out to moderate this effect.

The second experiment shows that in-store communication design should be brand-congruent (i.e., in line with the brand identity) in order to be most effective in building the brand and increasing purchase intentions.
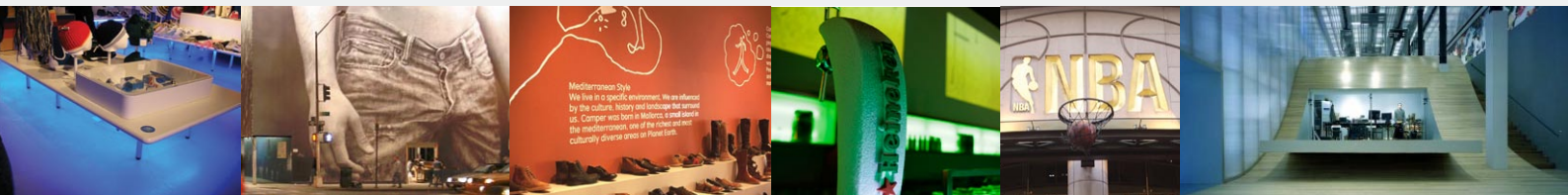
About this thesis

This thesis is based on an extensive field study combined with two experimental research studies in in-store communication design, taking place in 2006 and 2007. The research was conducted in the Netherlands and the United States (New York), in cooperation with Philips Design, the University of Twente, and a number of other people and companies. Three different documents came out of this graduation project: (1) this master's thesis, (2) a report for Philips Design, and (3) a summarizing report for all companies and people who cooperated in the field study. To request one of the other reports, please contact the author.

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By Janneke Zuidhof

Master's thesis in Communication Studies

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PHILIPS

At the heart of an effective creative philosophy is the belief that nothing is so powerful as an insight into human nature, what compulsions drive a man, what instincts dominate his action, even though his language so often camouflages what really motivates him.

BILL BERNBACH

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Acknowledgements

Prologue

From the start, I considered the graduation project for my master's thesis as *the* opportunity to dive into something of my own interest, without any time constraints. With a full time world of deadlines already glimpsing at my horizon, I decided to take the time on this one and get as much as possible out of it, both for the sake of the result of the research as for my personal development.

Over the years, during my two studies in communications, I already did quite some research in the field of advertising and branding. Driven by an interest and curiosity in human-brand relationships, I chose to focus on the ultimate place where human beings and brands are in live and 'face to face' interaction: the store floor. Specifically, I was interested to explore the potential of the physical store environment for brands, to build their relationships with consumers. The main objective was to see the function of three-dimensional in-store communication design in this process. Personally, I find it very fascinating to see how human beings can evolve relationships with non-human objects like products and brands. On the following pages, I try to solve some pieces of this puzzle.

With this research, I aimed to deliver something that would not only be relevant and interesting for academics, but to address issues that are 'hot' in practice as well. Therefore, I started out with an extensive field study, to see what was going on in the practice of retail. Besides a lot of reading, I spoke to different 'experts' who are somehow involved in the practice of in-store communication design.

In return for the research outcomes, I convinced over 30 brand managers, store managers, retail architects, communciation specialists, and advertising experts, in the Netherlands and in New York that it would be useful to meet. All together, this provided loads of valuable insights in how the current practice deals with in-store environments.

Along with these interviews, I went out on the streets for several 'shopping trips'. Not to go shopping, but rather to observe shopping environments, and the way people interact with these environments, and the products and brands in it.

The field study turned out to provide a useful point of departure for the experiments that followed. And that is where Philips Design came into play. They offered me a one-in-a-million chance to build a total of four real life, three-dimensional environments in order to test the hypotheses.

Despite the fact that the entire project took more than a year, it certainly was worth the effort. In which I have learned a lot.

I tried to reflect all the learnings in this document, and to make it interesting and inspiring for you as a reader, whether you are an academic or a practictioner. If you have any questions or comments, do not hesitate to contact me. I am always in for a discussion.

To accomplish great things,
we must not only act, but also dream,
not only plan, but also believe

ANATOLE FRANCE

Although consumers can block out traditional communication messages,
they are incapable of blocking out their experience of the environment
that they are in.

ALEC ZABALLERO
(TPG Architecture, New York)

Introduction

The 'brick-and-mortar' in-store environment

The three-dimensional in-store environment is one medium that has gained much attention over the years. From department stores to little boutiques and from hypermarkets to flagship brand stores, we see them in all different shapes. With one constant: they are always there.

Physical stores are not only interesting from a sales perspective, but from a branding perspective as well. In other words, besides for merchandise, the store is thought to be capable of building the consumer-brand relationship too. In today's consumer culture, where people are constantly being bombarded with all kinds of advertising messages 24/7, the store environment offers one of the few possibilities to get the consumer in a three-dimensional environment that is entirely controlled by the brand. To repeat the words of Alec Zaballero, principal of TPG Architecture in New York: "Consumers cannot block out their experience of the environment that they are in".

Brands invest massive amounts of money in creating the right store environment to draw consumers in and get them handling over their hard-earned cash. The systematic connection between design and brand management can in turn be traced back to the 'corporate image' work performed by design agencies like Lippincott & Margulies in the 1950s (Arvidsson, 2005). Since then, loads of different store concepts have been launched. Some of them were very successful, while others seem to have missed 'it' completely.

The big question here is: what works? How can the store environment function as a meaningful touchpoint (i.e., platform where the consumer and the brand meet each other) to evoke a brand experience that builds the brand? That is one of the main challenges that will be tackled in this thesis.

What exactly are we talking about?

The in-store environment comprises various elements that are able to influence human emotions, cognitions, and behaviors, as shown by many researchers in the field of environmental psychology and atmospherics (e.g., Baker, Grewal & Parasuraman, 1994; Donovan & Rossiter, 1982; Mehrabian & Russell, 1974). To indicate the potential of the physical store environment Kotler (1973, p. 48) argues that "the atmosphere of the place is more influential than the product itself, in the purchase decision".

He coined the term atmospherics to describe the design of store environments to produce certain effects in the shopper (Kotler, 1973). This definition is consistent with Bitner's (1992) definition of "servicescapes" as "the manmade, physical surroundings as opposed to the natural or social environment" (p.58).

Over the years, several researchers categorized the elements that make up the in-store environment. Kotler (1973) distinguished his atmospherics in visual, aural, olfactory, and tactile dimensions. Bitner (1992) divided the physical surrounding in ambient conditions, space/function, and signs, symbols, and artifacts. And a review of Turley and Milliman (2000) uncovered external variables, general interior variables, layout and design variables, point-of-purchase and decoration variables, and human variables. Under these atmospheric variables, a number of subcategories are distinguished, like colors, lighting, music, scent, and artwork. All together, it shows that there are many variables that can be used to influence consumers' in-store experiences, and along with that, their affective, cognitive and behavioral reactions.

In this research, we address the overall physical in-store environment. That is, everything within the three-dimensional space that can be observed by the eye. This ranges from the flooring and carpeting, colors, materials, and placement of merchandise, to the in-store advertising, signs, artwork, and price tags. We chose to take this perspective because we believe that all elements together make up the in-store experience, and should therefore work together. This approach is in line with the Gestalt psychology that claims that 'the whole is more than the sum of its parts' (e.g., Koffka, 1935). However, the fact that we focus on the physical environment means that we primarily focus on the visual, three-dimensional design of the environment. So variables like sales persons, temperature, scent, and music will not be addressed here.

Conceptual design

Despite the large amount of research on the relationship between atmospherics and consumers reactions, there is hardly evidence on the way in-store design affects consumers' responses towards products and brands that are being promoted in the environment. It is this potential of the store design, to communicate the product- and brand message that makes the store an interesting touchpoint from a branding perspective.

To address this issue, we approach environmental design not as a static 'thing' that evokes the same reaction in every situation. Rather, we speak of 'conceptual design', where design is considered as a means to communicate a certain message. This implies that a red wall, or a wooden floor, for example, can evoke different

reactions in different situations. It all depends on how the elements work together and what message the overall 'picture' communicates to the shopper.

A second implication of thinking about stores as non-static objects is that consumers' reponses to the environment also depend on the specific consumer. with his/her needs, motivations, and other individual factors. It is this interaction between the store environment and the individual shopper that is thought to result in a certain in-store experience, as will be discussed later on in this thesis.

Consumers' shopping motives

Whether is it to purchase a product or just to 'look around', people shop for a reason. They always walk over the store's threshold with a motive. We propose that the communication message that the in-store design conveys should understand, and speak to these motives in order to be most successful.

Problem statement

The main research question that is investigated is the following:

How can physical in-store environments be designed in order to build meaningful relationships with consumers?

This main question is split up in three sub-questions:

Study 1

1. How does the communication concept (product-centric vs. consumer-centric) in the physical store environment affect consumers responses towards the promoted brand?

2. How do consumers' shopping motives moderate consumers' responses towards the promoted brand?

Study 2

3. How does congruency between the interior design and the brand identity affect consumers' responses towards the promoted brand?

Objective

The key objective is to gain more insight in how to design for in-store environments so that they are capable of building the brand, both on the short and the long run.

This should give brands a hold to make successful use of the in-store touchpoint. From an academic point of view, the current research helps to increase the knowledge of the interaction between consumers, brands, and products in three-dimensional spaces.

Theory and practice connected

In order to serve both practice and theory, the two fields are very closely tied in this research. For example, the problem analysis was not only accomplished by an academic review, but comprised a field study as well. This field study took place at various locations in the Netherlands and in the United States (New York). This study included over 20 interviews with various experts in the field of in-store communication, like store managers, brand managers, communication experts, retail architects, etc. These interviews aimed to analyze how practice makes use of the in-store environment and to discover the main problems that should be solved in order to design in-store environments in the most successful way. The interviews were completed by a 'shopping trip' through the current retail formats, to see what the retail practice really looks like. This field study was matched with a literature review to explain what is going on in practice from an academic point of view.

All insights together led to the point of departure for two experimental studies, in which a total of four real-life store environments were mimicked. This was realized in cooperation with Philips Design, the design agency of Philips Electronics NV.

Philips Design

With the launch of 'Sense and Simplicity' in December 2004, a new business strategy was born, intended to place the consumer back at the heart of the business within Philips. To express this corporate mission, CEO Gerard Kleisterlee stated: "Philips aims to develop meaningful solutions by an improved understanding of how people want to use technology as a natural part of their lives. In the same spirit, Philips Consumer Electronics aims to provide "the most rewarding digital entertainment, communication and information experiences possible, with the customer at the heart of business creation, and 'winning experiences' as a value proposition" (see: Andrews, 2003).

The main reason for Philips Design to cooperate in this research project is grounded in the fact that the in-store environment is a touchpoint that Philips invests millions of euros on every year. However, despite these enormous amounts of money, there is only limited knowledge about how to strike the right chord with consumers. In other

words, the knowledge within Philips about effective in-store communication, resulting in return on investment, is still immature. One thing that Philips Design was specifically interested in, was the question how to extend the consumer-centric business strategy of 'Sense and Simplicity' to the in-store touchpoint.

This thesis

The first chapter of this thesis includes a snapshot of the current reality in the retail field. In chapter two we continue with a literature study in which the current situation is analyzed from an academic perspective, grounded in several fields (e.g., consumer psychology, environmental psychology, anthropology, semiotics, and design studies). This leads to the point of departure for the experimental studies, accompanied by a conceptual model. But before we go on with the experiments, some benchmarks from practice that illustrate the point of departure, will be presented in chapter three.

In chapter four and five, the hypotheses are tested in two experiments. Then, in chapter six the overall findings and implications are presented. Finally, in the back of this research, a summary (in English and in Dutch) can be found, followed by the reference list, appendices, and information about the author.

If you offer a solution, then sell a solution, communicate a solution

MARC CHELNIK

(Bang & Olufsen, New York)

Part 1- Exploratory study

1. What is going on in retail?

In this kick-off, we present a glimpse of the reality in the current retail practice. With this approach, we aim to discover the need for the present research from a practical point of view. The content for this chapter was collected during a field study in both the Netherlands and the United States, in which several professionals were interviewed and a number of stores were visited. This field study served as the basis for the literature study that follows in the next chapter.

1.1 Traditional mass retail

In traditional mass retail, we see that retailers tend to overload their stores with as many units as possible to reach the highest sales per square meter. Shelves and walls are packed with products, and the communication around it is often loaded with technical features and specifications. And due to the price war, mass retailers almost exclusively fight it out on price. However, it is highly questionable whether price differentiation generates loyalty in the long run.

Christopher Enright, chief technology officer of IconNicholson in New York that implemented the RFID-technology in Prada's famous Epicenter in Manhattan, described the current situation in mass retail as follows:

"We are stuck in a Wal-Mart environment: Minimum amount of service, maximum discount on the price. You [as a consumer] cannot find what you want, do not know where it is, and what the difference is with other products."

All together, this approach leaves manufacturers hardly any room to differentiate their brands other than on basis of the price and functional product properties.

Fig. 1.1. Just another teleivison wall at a well-known mass retailer in consumer electronics

1.2 Flagship brand stores

As a reaction to the strict rules of mass retailers, manufacturers increasingly started to take control of their own brands, by building mono brand stores. As Alec Zaballero, principal of TPG Architecture in New York says:

> "The idea of sticking up large, bright signs and stacking merchandise high has been replaced by smarter store design awareness."

And TPG's portfolio is indeed dominated by brand names, like Nintendo, DKNY, Louis Vuitton, Hugo Boss, and NBA.

We see that brands like these build huge and expensive spaces, covered with beautifully designed displays to seduce consumers, and to differentiate from their competitors (see Fig. 1.2). However, when asking brand managers and retail architects how their brands are translated to the three-dimensional in-store environment, it appears that in most cases, it is no more than the brand's two-dimensional style guide that is extended to the three-dimensional design of the store.
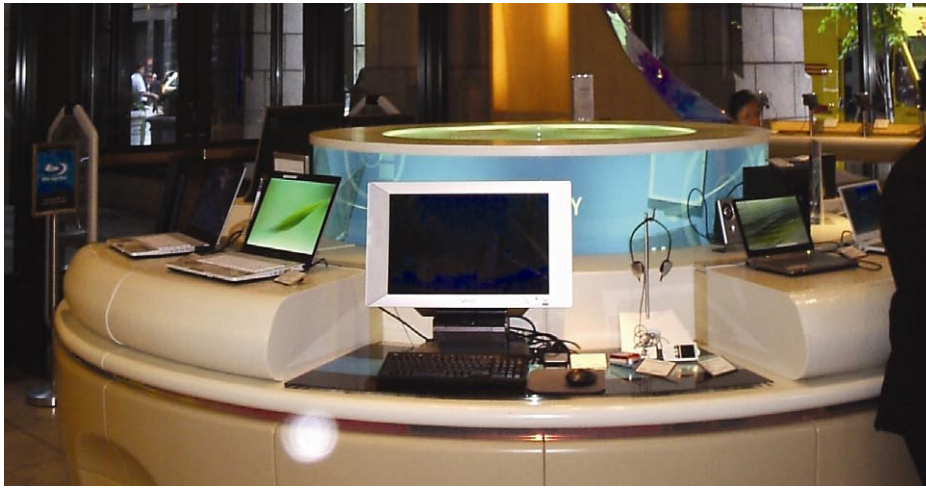
Fig. 1.2. Display in Sony Style Store (New York)

As Majorie Dijkstal, strategist at KejaDonia, a Dutch design company stated:

"Too often, design is only used as an interface. It doesn't connect to brand's core philosophy."

It might work in getting people over the threshold, because they recognize the brand, but the store design often does not tie to the brand's core values. If there is any interaction going on in the stores, it is only on a product level. The field study revealed that most brands that have their own store do not make fully use of the benefits of the three-dimensional space in order to empower the relationship between the brand and the shopper. When we compare for example the flagships of Puma, Nike and Adidas' sports performance label (see Fig. 1.3), we see that the stores differ in style, but the communication concept is all the same. Too often, flagship stores are no more than three-dimensional advertisements, in which shoppers are confronted with the brand's signature, but cannot truly experience and interact with the brand in its core.

Fig. 1.3. Flagship brand stores of Adidas, Nike, and Puma (New York)

The need to establish for in-store branding might also depend on the product category. For example, there is a good chance that symbolic brands that produce products like clothing etc. might benefit much more from putting effort in the development flagship brand stores, than functional brands that deal in products like light bulbs. But no matter what the product is that the brand produces, we believe that it is always worthwile to search for the best way to communicate the brand- and product message through in-store design.

1.3 Experience marketing

In 1999, with the publication of Pine and Gilmore's (1999) famous book, a new concept was born: Experience marketing. Since then, loads of initiatives are thrown onto the market to overwhelm consumer by engaging all their senses. Many companies and brands started to approach 'experience' as the new marketing tool, and started to create their own 'experiences'.

Experience marketing is derived from the entertainment industry, including its pre-staged and hedonic nature. The ultimate goal here is to immerse the consumer in an environment, full of entertainment, fun, and escape routes from daily reality. Along with the concept, many of today's 'brand experiences' seem to have copied these goals as well. Many brands and authors (e.g., Baron, Harris & Harris, 2001; Bryman, 2004; Holbrook & Hirschman, 1982; Kozinets, Sherry Jr., Storm, Duhachek, Nuttavuthisit & Deberry-Spence, 2004; Pine & Gilmore, 1999; Wolf, 1999)) have taken concepts like Disney as the great example of how to do it right when it comes to marketing and branding.
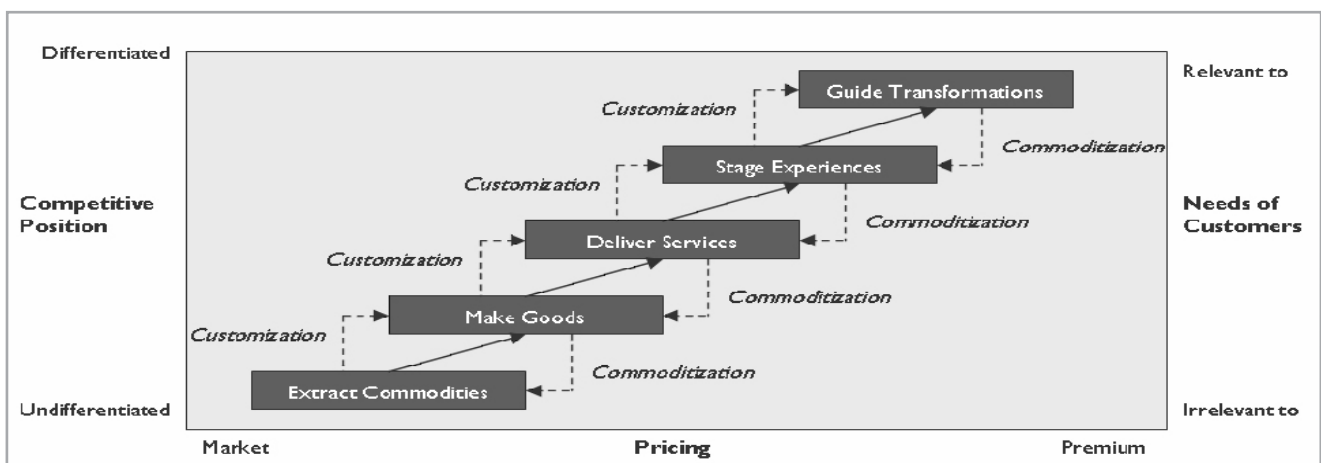
Fig 1.4. Progression of economic value (Pine & Gilmore, 1999)

Where the experience economy initially was meant to be a reaction to the commoditized world (see Fig. 1.4), it became to be treated like a commodity itself. Some brands event went so far as to claim being an experience, by putting it literally on their facades (see Fig. 1.5).

Fig. 1.5. Facade of Heineken experience center (Amsterdam, the Netherlands)

Although this might attract consumers and could make full use of the three-dimensional environment, the question is if this approach does the brand any good on the long term. Concepts like entertainment, fun, and amusement refer to instant gratification, instead of long-term benefit. It is highly questionable if consumers' real needs and motivations to join in a relationship with the brand are satisfied here. We state that simply amusing consumers does not communicate the relevance of the brand peoples' daily lives, because unless the brand its core business is in the entertainment industry, it does not relate to the brand its core values, its right to exist.

1.4 Online shopping

In all the attempts to influence the consumer on the store floor, the consumer itself increasingly seems to block out all communication messages, to switch over to another world. A virtual one. With the rise of the internet and other digital technologies halfway through the nineties, an enormous shift in the consumer-brand relationship has taken place. The communication landscape has changed from a push- to a pull orientation, thereby placing the power increasingly back into the hand of the consumer. Christopher Enright (chief technology officer IconNicholson, New York) explained this trend by referring to the 'Amazon feeling':

"Amazon knows who you are, what you bought before, what you like, recommends you other things that other people bought with this product…something you don't get in current Wal-Marts."

Internet enables people to communicate whenever, wherever and with whoever they want. The web connects them to each other and to information and services all over the world – and even further. Numerous web sites enable consumers to evaluate various products and brands on the reviews of current users and objective experts. Practically everything is available online, just a mouse click away. And whether it comes from around the block or from China, it is delivered to your door the next day.

1.5 Now what?

Now, does this mean that marketers should give u all efforts to attach consumers to their brand and get them into the brick-and-mortar stores, because on-line consumers take care of everything themselves? According to the interviewed retail architects, Alec Zaballero (TPG Architecture), Randall Ng (Fitch), Leandro Artigala (Point Design), and Michael Neumann (Michael Neumann Architecture), the answer is no. They all claim that people still need the hands-on shopping experience.

However, the practice in the brick-and-mortart retail landscape and the shift to online shopping do indicate the need for a shift in our current retail landscape. Therefore, retailers and brands should understand what drives consumers, get insight in what motivates them to go shopping, and communicate a message in their store design that speaks to consumers' real needs.

2. Towards a consumer-centric approach on in-store communication design

In this section, we try to find some answers to the questions that were posed in the previous chapter. Therefore, we turn to the existing academic literature. This leads to a conceptual model and three hypotheses that serve as the point of departure for the experimental studies, which can be found in part two of this thesis.

2.1 Towards an interactive perspective

To understand what is going on in the store, we have to understand how brands come to live, and how the relationship between brands and consumers is established. With a basis in the communication theories, three different perspectives can be distinguished here.

2.1.1 Producer-centric, push-driven perspective

According to brand equity gurus like Aaker (1996) and Keller (2001), brands are built through advertising, marketing, product placement, staged events, and a number of other communication tools. This perspective on communication and branding can be traced back to the communication theories from around 1950, where the information theory (e.g., Shannon & Weaver, 1949), and magic bullet theory (e.g., Davis & Baron, 1981; Severin & Tankard, 1979) became popular. These theories were push-driven and saw the consumer as being a passive receiver in the communication process. Despite the fact that this perspective - in theory - has been rejected by both theorists and practitioners, it is still shimmering through in our daily reality. We especially see that happening with mass retailers, who push their products onto the market, without paying attention to the individual consumer.

2.1.2 Individual-centric, pull-driven perspective

On the other end of the spectrum there is the individual-centric perspective that approaches the individual consumer as being in total control of his/her feelings, thoughts and behavior. According to advocates of this perspective, communication

messages can only play an informational role, and only when consumers choose to make use of them. The expectancy-value theory (e.g., Fishbein & Ajzen, 1974), which perceives behavior as a function of the expectancies one has, and the value of the goal towards which one is working, is one theory that falls in this category. This theory is in line with Ajzen's (1991) theory of reasoned action, which suggests that a person his/her behavior is determined by the intention to perform the behavior and that this intention is, in turn, a function of his/her attitude towards the behavior along with the subjective norm. Theories in this field regard the consumer as a logical thinker who solves problems to make purchase decisions. This perspective is pull-driven, and places all the power in the hands of the consumer.

2.1.3 Interactional perspective

However, for a relationship to truly exist, the partners must collectively affect, define, and redefine the relationship (Hinde, 1979). This involves (1) reciprocal exchange between active and interdependent relationship partners; (2) the provision of meanings to the persons who engage them; (3) a range across several dimensions and in many forms, providing a range of possible benefits for their participants; and (4) evolvement and change over a series of interactions and in response to fluctuations in the contextual environment (Hinde, 1979). Although this insight is based on research in the interpersonal domain, it turned out to be valid in the consumer-brand context too (Fournier, 1998).

From this point of view, both the manufacturer and consumer are considered as being active participants. And it is in the interaction between these two actors, that the brand comes to live and gets its meaning. Here, the brand becomes a true *gesamtkunstwerk*. The term originally refers to totally integrated opera performances, and was coined by the musician Richard Wagner, and knowing that makes the concept even more clear.

2.1.4 Meaningful brand experience

This interactive perspective on communication provides a useful backbone for what experience really means. In addition to the experience marketing trend that we see in current practice, Boswijk, Thijssen, and Peelen (2005) argue that experience is more than just 'excite me', 'feed me', and entertain me'. It is a continuous interactive process of doing and undergoing, of action and reflection, from cause to consequence that provides meaning to the individual in several contexts of his/her life. Experiences are not static quantities like products. They occur in a process in which interactions take place in a certain setting – whether or not a physical one – between the individual and other people, including perhaps the offering party, which can be an economic one (Boswijk et al., 2005).

Unfortunately, current research in the communications, marketing, and consumer behavior literature largely ignores the experience concept. Fortunately, two other theories can help us out here. These can be found in the semiotics and social cognitive theory.

Social cognitive theory

The social cognitive theory (e.g., Bandura, 2001; Graham & Weiner, 1996) assumes that three factors: environment, people, and behavior, are constantly influencing each other. Environment refers to the factors that can affect a person's behavior. This can be a social and physical environment. Together with the situation, the environment provides the framework for understanding behavior. The situation refers to the cognitive or mental representations of the environment that may affect a person's behavior. The situation thus is an individual's subjective perception of the reality.

Semiotics

The second theory that sheds a light on experience can be found in semiotics. This theory describes how people affectively and cognitively interpret the signs that they interact with in their everyday life. The mental interpretation process is separated in three different stages or categories (Peirce, 1991). These categories comprise (1) the representamen that consists of the concrete physical aspects and attributes of the design, like colors, materials, etc.; (2), the object, which is the spontaneous impression that the product evokes in the user; and (3) the interpretant, i.e., the subjective meaning or experience of the product that the person constructs when mentally connecting the representamen and the object in a context.

Summarized, experience then means the personal, subjective reception and interpretation of sensory cues that trigger ones senses. The reception stage refers to the stimulation of the senses. In the interpretation stage, those signals are interpreted by the brain, resulting in affective, cognitive, and behavioral responses. And through an interactive process, the brand is experienced and gets its meaning in the consumers' mind.

2.1.5 Philips' experience model

Philips, the Dutch electronics giant that participated in part two of this research, developed a model that is based on this interactional approach of experience (Andrews, 2003). This model (see Fig. 2.1.) describes the emerging participatory mode for interaction between the consumer and the brand over time, and through multi-channel touchpoints. It introduces the concept of a 'zone of potential' within which the company and the customer can meet and extend their relationship. The zones of potential are determined by the brand positioning, and therefore tie to the brand's core business.
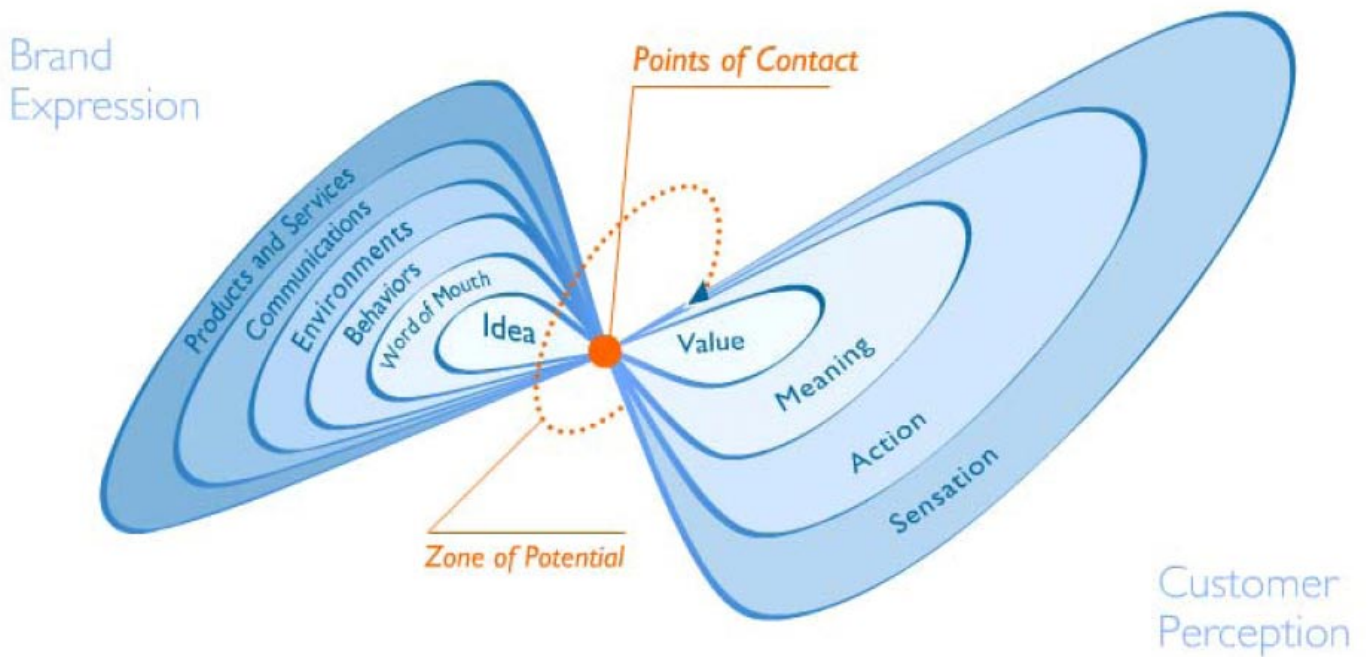
Fig. 2.1. Philips' experience model (Andrews. 2003)

2.2 Consumers' shopping motives

The interactional perspective requires a deep insight into the consumer and what moves him/her. As Michael Neumann, principal of Michael Neumann Architecture stated it:

"What you really have to understand is who the customer is. It requires a lot of studying before you're as a brand able to build a close relationship with consumers."

2.2.1 Utilitarian versus hedonic motives

In the academic literature, we almost exclusively find consumers' shopping motives categorized in utilitarian versus hedonic motives. (e.g., Arnold & Reynolds, 2003; Babin, Darden & Griffin, 1994; Holbrook & Hirschman, 1982). Here, the utilitarian motives point towards a need to purchase products and a search for functional product properties, whereas hedonic shopping motives comprise the search for (instant) amusement, fun, and entertainment. This experiential perspective is phenomenological in nature and regards consumption as a primarily subjective state of consciousness. Althoug we support the assumption that shopping contains numerous intangible and emotional costs and benefits that must be examined before we can understand the consumption activity fully (Holbrook, 1986), we believe that the value of consumption is not hedonic in nature. Or at least, from a brand perspective, if you really want to add something valuable to peoples' lives, you should not try to build the relation on amusement, hedonism, and instant gratification. Because wih this 'quick wins' strategy,

there is hardly any chance that the consumer will experience your relevance for them on the long run.

2.2.2 Motivation theory

What we try to say is that the underlying human needs are largely forgotten in the experiential perspective. Based on Maslow's (1943) theory of human motivation, we take a goal-oriented perspective on human behavior, that goes deeper than utilitarian or hedonic motives. Maslow developed a theory of what he called *self-actualization*.

Self-actualization he saw as the ultimate goal in human life, and achieving it was like climbing a ladder. At the lowest level of his *needs hierarchy* (See Fig. 2.2) were the basic requirements as food and shelter. Only when individuals were secure in these, they would be able to progress to a higher level, comprising independence and autonomy, friendship, love, and esteem. When these have been achieved, the individual could ascend to the highest level of all, the one of self-actualization.
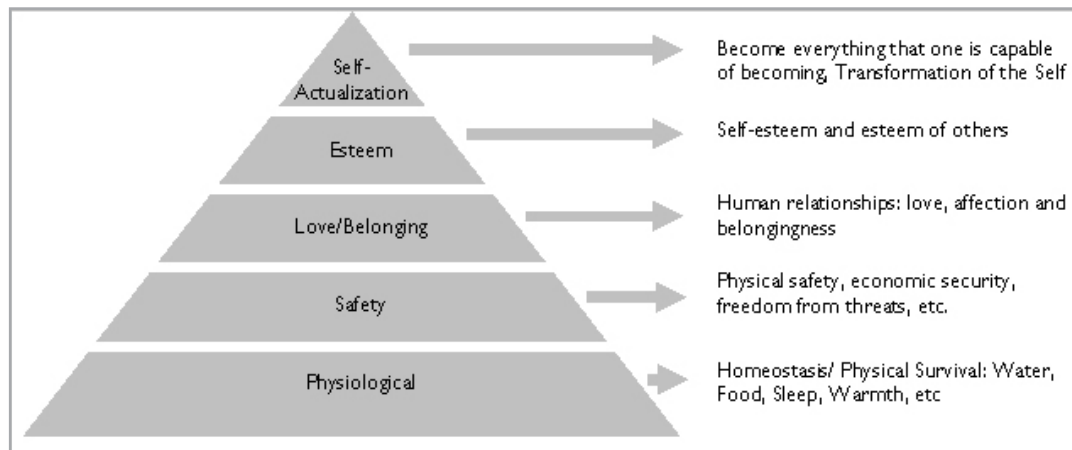
Fig. 2.2. Maslow's (1943) needs hierarchy

Self-actualzation refers to a transformation of the self, self-fulfillment, or the tendency to become everything that one is capable of becoming (Goldstein, 1939, p. 383). This latter level is an almost mystical state (Hoffman, 1992), which could be glimpsed through what Maslow calls 'peak experiences' (Maslow, 1970).

This hierarchy does not mean that basic needs, like sleep and safety, dissapear once they become realized. They are never enduringly satisfied. For example, even in today's wealthy Western world, people still need their 'daily bread'. Therefore, the hierarchy should be approached in terms of decreasing percentages of satisfaction as we go up in the hierarchy (Maslow, 1943).

Although it is questionnable whether or not peoples' consumption behavior and shopping motivations directly refer to the fulfillment of the highest level of self-

actualization, the underlying thought of the goal-oriented human nature is very valuable in consumer research. The manifest goals might change from time to time, but the final goal remains the same. That is, people are looking for solutions, and ways to become who they want to be.

2.2.3 Consumer-centric communication

Therefore, marketeers have to think of what really makes their brand and products relevant for consumers, how they provide a solution to their needs. Because in the end, consumers do not purchase products for their (technical) specifications. We believe that people buy products because it satisfies their experienced need somehow. To quote Leandro Artigala, designer at Point Design, New York:

> "One of the key things in retail is that consumers have to feel that they're in the environment that they are looking for"

And Marc Chelnik, store manager of five Bang & Olufsen stores in New York:

> "Don't just market product features. If you offer a solution, then present a solution, market a solution."

We expect that the answer to meaningful in-store design can indeed be found in the communication of solutions to peoples' needs. This consumer-centric approach moves away from both the product-centric perspective in which only functional, utilitarian product features are communicated, as well as the existing experiential perspective, which focuses on hedonism and amusement as the ultimate value. Instead, this perspective builds on the true value of brands and products in satisfying consumers' needs. This leads to the following hypothesis, that will be tested in the first experimental study, which can be found in chapter 4:

H1: Consumer-centric in-store design that communicates solutions to consumers' needs positively influences consumers' responses towards the promoted brand.

> "Every project should start with the brand positioning., We go through a phase in the beginning to totally understand who the client is, what the brand is, and what they stand for.
>
> (Randall Ng, Fitch New York)

2.2.4 Self-congruity

Recent research on the consumer-brand relationship (Aaker, Fournier, & Brasel, 2004; Fournier, 1998; Thorbjörnsen, Suphellen, Nysveen & Pedersen, 2002) revealed that consumers tend to evaluate a brand by matching it with their (actual or ideal) self-concept. This matching process is referred to as *self-congruity* (Sirgy, 1982; 1986). Self-congruity plays an important role in purchase motivation and brand loyalty (Malhotra, 1988; Kressmann, Sirgy, Herrmann, Huber, Huber & Lee, 2006; Sirgy, 1985).

Although the self-congruity theory is now mainly used to explain how peoples' personality traits predict their responses towards objects, communication messages, etc., we also see a relevant link to the motivation theory that was discussed before (see Page 32-33). Consumers' tendency to evaluate brands by matching it to their (actual or ideal) self-concept matches with consumers' goal-oriented nature to satisfy their present needs (actual self), and ultimately, to become who they want to be (ideal self). Then. self-congruity does not refer so much to the individuals' personality anymore, but rather to the individual's need, that drive him/her to perform a certain behavior, like walking over the store's treshold and joining in an interaction with the brand in the store. In this light, self-congruity refers to the extend to which the communication concept of the in-store design is congruent to consumers' shopping motives. Therefore, we propose:

H2: When the communication concept of the in-store design is congruent to consumers' shopping motives, this will positively influence their reactions towards the promoted brand.

2.3 Environmental psychology and atmospheric effects

Mehrabian and Russell (1974) can be seen as the foundings fathers of the field of environmental psychology. Based on the stimulus-reponse paradigm, they approach the physical space as the stimulus that causes some response. Specifically, the Mehrabian-Russell environmental psychology model assumes that the environment evokes emotional reactions (i.e., pleasure, arousal, and dominance) along with responses of approach and avoidance.

Donovan and Rossiter (1982) applied this model to retail environment. They found that experienced pleasantness of the in-store environment was a significant predictor of willingness to spend time in the store and intentions to spend more money than originally planned (Donnovan & Rossiter, 1982; Donnovan, Rossiter, Marcoolyn & Nesdale, 1994). And with them, many other researchers have investigated the role of physical store environment in affecting consumers' emotions, attitudes, and behavior. See Turley and Milliman (2000) for an exclusive overview on the effects of atmospherics.

Most researchers filtered a couple of elements (i.e., atmospherics) out, to get a hold on the environment. Academics investigated for example the influence of colors on human emotions (e.g., Bellizi, Crowley & Hasty, 1983; Crowley, 1993), the effect of order and complexity in the arrangement of atmospherics (e.g., Gilboa & Rafaeli), how illumination influences consumer behavior (e.g., Summers & Hebert, 2001), and how music (e.g., Milliman, 1986; Yalch & Spangenberg, 1988), scent (e.g., Spangenberg, Crowley & Henderson, 1996), and consumers' personal characteristics (e.g., Areni & Kim, 1993) lead to certain affective, cognitive, and behavioral responses.

The great amount of research that has been conducted on atmospherics are very valuable in revealing the various elements that should be taken into account when designing for three-dimensional environments. However, two questions remained remained unanswered in our analysis of the existing academic literature here. First, the different investigations often show conflicting results. This implies that environmental design is not just a matter of throwing a coin in, and getting your result out. Or, to speak in terms of store design, painting a wall red, and getting happy shoppers automatically in return.

The second problem is that hardly, if any, research has been conducted from a branding perspective, i.e., how the store environment influences consumers brand experience, or how the environment works together with the brands other touchpoints, like advertising. As Ron Cijs, retail watcher at Pluspoint, Rotterdam (the Netherlands) pointed out:

"A great store concept is like a story well told. Design is a consequence of the store that you make up" That story can be found in the combination between the brand with its core values, and the needs of the target group"

The current research tackles this problem by starting from a brand perspective. This led to the first two hypotheses. What remains is the question how the in-store environment ties to the brand's other touchpoints, i.e., points where the consumer and the brand meet.

2.3.1 Similarity principle

To address this issue, we propose a second kind of congruency. One that refers to the Gestalt psychology, which assumes that "the whole is more than the sum of its parts" The Gestalt psychologists introduced the 'similarity principle' that predicts that objects that share visual characteristics are perceived as belonging together (e.g., Koffka, 1935). In this light, we assume that if the design of the in-store environment is congruent to the design of the brand's other touchpoints, this will lead to a stronger position of the brand in peoples' minds. In the end, consumers' relationship with

the brand is built over time, and through different locations, and the more these touchpoints are perceived as 'matching together', the stronger and more consistent peoples' image of the brand will be. That is why we coin a third hypothesis, that will be tested in the second environmental study, as can be found in chapter 5 of this document.

H3: The more congruent the in-store design is with the brand identity (and thus to other touchpoints), the more consumers' responses towards the brand will be in line with the brand's identity.

2.4 In-store brand experience model

As a summary of the theory and the hypotheses that were presented in this chapter, we developed a conceptual model (See Fig. 2.3), which serves as the point of departure in the experiments that will follow in chapter four and five.
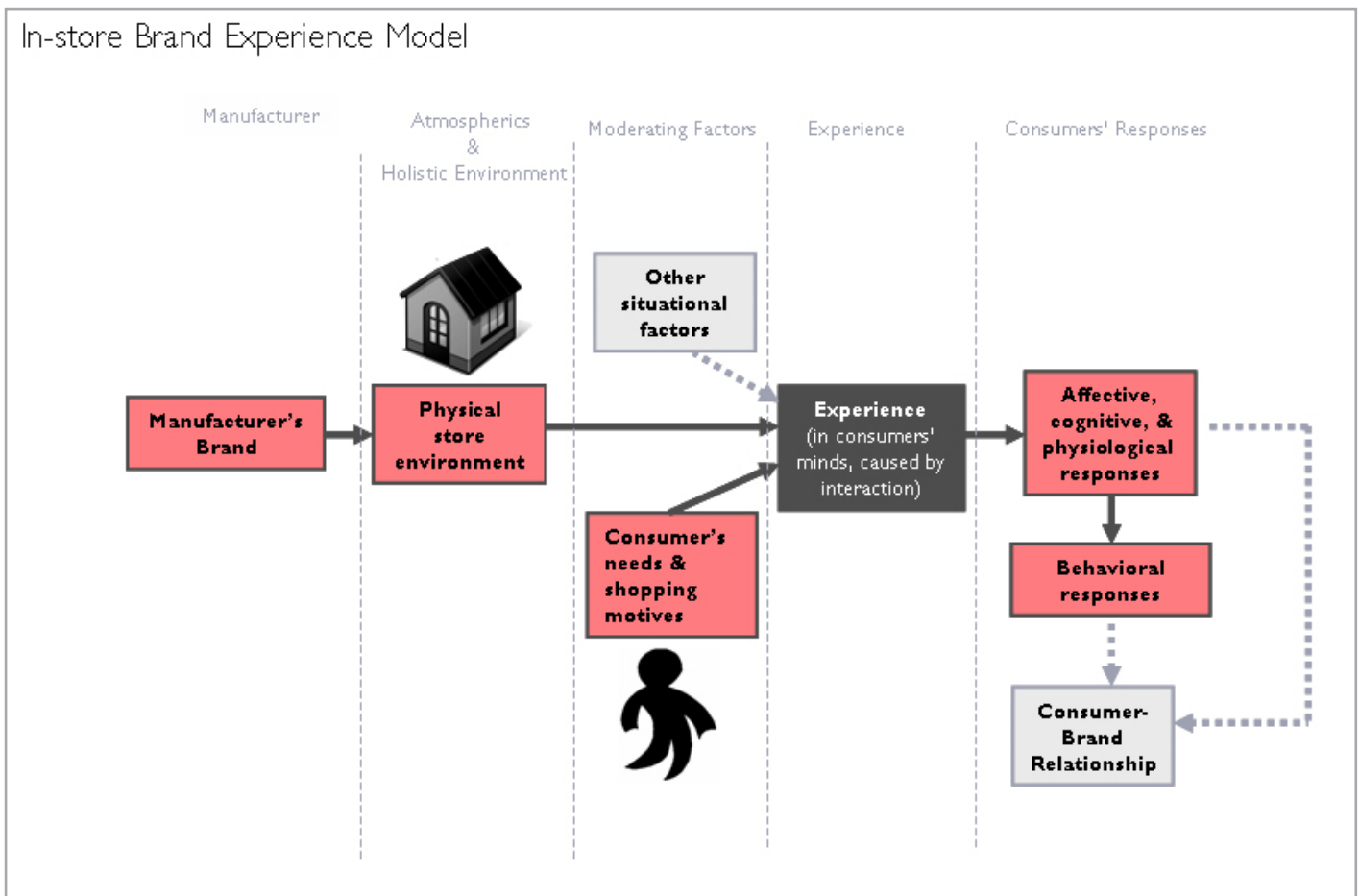
Fig. 2.3. The in-store brand experience model

2.4.1 Explanation of the model

1) The physical store environment is not a stand-alone thing. Rather, it is based on the brand identity. This implies that in-store design, too, is not a stand-alone thing, but a means to communicate a the brand's message.

2) The interaction between the brand (through the in-store design) and the consumer, leads to the experience. This is not a pre-staged 'concept', but takes place in the consumers' body and mind, as a result of the interaction.

3) The in-store experience is also influenced by other factors, like other consumers in the store, staff, etc.. that is not investigated in the present research. However, it is included in this model because we acknowledge that the consumer and the in-store environment are not the only two things that affect the experience.

4) Although the 'experience' itself cannot be measured in the current research design, it is expected to result in affective, cognitive, physiological, and behavioral responses can, and will be measured.

5) All together, these responses are assumed to add to the consumer's overall experience of the brand, that evolves over time, and through all the touchpoints where the consumer and the brand meet. This too, is reflected by a light grey box, because it falls outside the scope of the current research.

"The physical space is the only place where you have 100 percent control over the band and the messaging and the media. So that space is and has to be the true manifestation of the brand. And because the brand eventually exist in people's minds, you have to understand it mentally, and everything you do with the physical space relates to that, then it will work."

(Randall Ng, Fitch New York)

3. Benchmarks from practice

In the field study, several existing store concepts were discovered, that served as good illustrations of the conceptual model that was presented in the former chapter. Here, some of the most inspiring examples are shown.

3.1 Apple

Category: Consumer electronics

In the Apple stores (See Fig. 3.1) we see a very good synergy between the in-store environment, the brand, and the products. The design of the interior and exterior of the store directly reflect the transparent and stylistic identity that we see in the products as well. Apart from this, Apple provides consumers the possibility to try all products out in the store, relevant workshops and events are organized, visitors get the chance to interact with each other and with the staff at the genius bar (who is the genius here?), who can help you out with all your Apple questions. And of course, the Apple products can be bought in this store. It is really the Apple world that you step inside here.

Fig. 3.1. Apple store, 5th avenue, New York (United States)

3.2 Abercrombie & Fitch

Category: Clothing, footwear and accessories

Abercrombie & Fitch (See Fig. 3.2) successfully addresses both consumers' ratio and emotion in their flagship store at fifth avenue. Targeted at teenagers who are legally not permitted to go out to night clubs yet, this store mimics the trendy club scene. Although the loud music, dark atmosphere, and controversial images might scare off older people, the target group loves it. It is a good combination of building brand equity in consumers' minds together with stimulating sales.
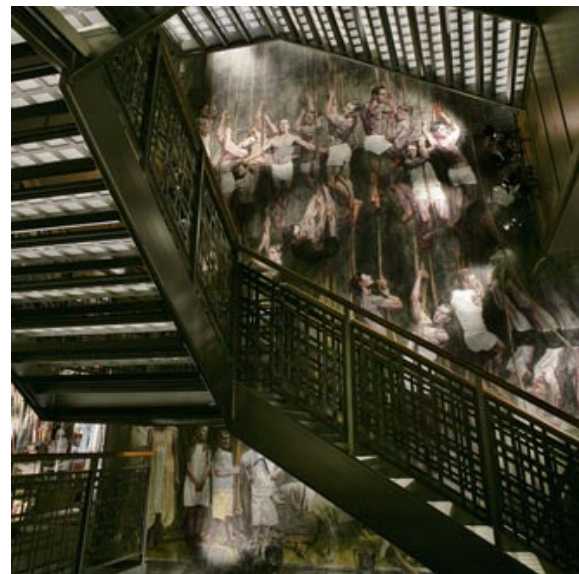
Fig. 3.2. Abercrombie & Fitch, New York (United States)

3.3 Prada Epicenter

Category: Clothing, footwear and accessories

In cooperation with Rem Koolhaas (Dutch architect, Office for Metropolitan Architecture), Prada created a flagship store that is meant to reposition the brand in its broadest social and cultural context (See Fig. 3.3). Its primary objective is not to sell products, but to build brand equity. This was realized by the creation of a minimalist, museum kind of environment. It has to reflect the transcendence of commerce and culture. Like at night, when the store is closed, the built-in stage can be used for all different kinds of performances.
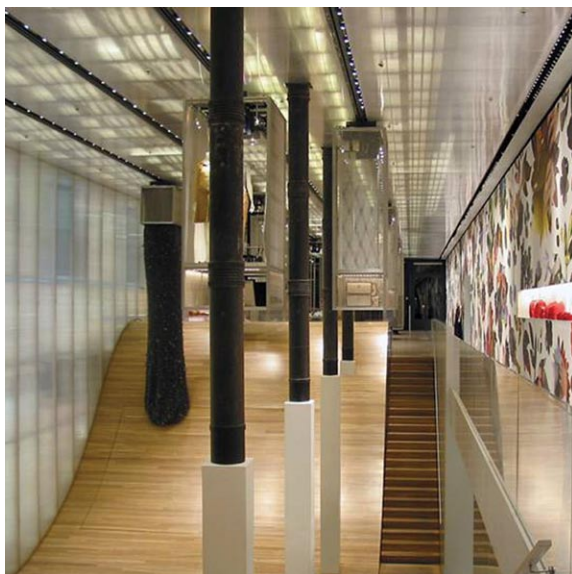
Fig. 3.3 Prada's Epicenter, New York (United States)

3.4 Levi's

Category: Clothing, footwear and accessories

In this flagship store (See Fig. 3.4), we find a good example of an interaction between the consumer and the brand that ends up in a co-production of the product. Derived from the 'shrink to fit' campaign, a tub is installed in the store, where consumers' can go into with their new pair of jeans. Then, after 20 minutes, people walk into the blow dryer booth and walk out with a unique, tailor-made product.

Fig. 3.4. Levi's flagship store, San Francisco (United States)

3.5 Adidas Sports Heritage

Category: Clothing, footwear and accessories

Authenticity is very important when it comes to in-store branding. This was also the starting point in Adidas' sports heritage store (See Fig. 3.5). The store design refers to a flea market, which is relevant, because this store only captures limited editions, made of special fabrics. As with the original flea market, people who shop in this store will end up with a unique product. So the store concept really tells a story that is relevant for the brand and the products that are being sold here.

Fig. 3.5. Adidas sports heritage store, New York (United States)

3.6 Camper

Category: Clothing, footwear and accessories

With its temporary concept stores (See Fig. 3.6), Camper proved that a good idea does not necessarily have to cost a lot of money. What they did in their stores was painting one wall red, the other walls white, with a glass wall at the front. On the red wall, they placed their brand message, whereas on the white walls, all visitors could write down their own 'brand message' with special '100% Camper' text markers. Here the in-store environment is literally co-created with the consumer.

Fig. 36. Camper, Barcelona (Spain)

3.7 IKEA's Manhattan Marketing Outpost

Category: Home appliances and furnishings

With their marketing outpost in Manhattan (See Fig. 3.7), IKEA wanted to get the inhabitants of Manhattan to their store in New Jersey. Therefore, they hired a space with a minimum of square meters. For the period of a year, the store was dedicated to another theme every three months. In IKEA Sleeps, IKEA Cooks, etc. people could see a glimpse of the 'real' IKEA, and shuttles had to transport people to the 'real' IKEA in New Jersey. This use of the store as a 'launch campaign' turned out to be a great success.

Fig. 3.7. IKEA's temporary Manhattan marketing outpost, New York (United States)

3.8 NBA store

Category: Entertainment and leisure

In the NBA store (See Fig. 3.8), the world of basketball comes alive in all its facets. The store itself is designed literally as a basketball court, where people can buy NBA merchandise, try a shot, compare their lengths with that of famous basketball players, or sit down on a couch to watch their favorite match. Consumers are invited here to both actively and passively experience the world of NBA.

Fig. 3.8. NBA store, New York (United States)

3.9 Starbucks Salon

Category: Food and beverages

Learning: Last year Starbucks launched the Starbucks Salon (See Fig. 3.9) as a temporary concept to develop a meaningful 'third place'. Third-places are conducive to informal conversations and casual friendships, where patrons imbibe a comforting sense of community, camaraderie, and social engagement (Oldenburg, 1989). They are places where people, who do not necessarily know each other can socially interact in a public sphere. The salon provided a stage for upcoming artists, musicians, etc., to communicate the 'urban' feeling that Starbucks wants to communicate.
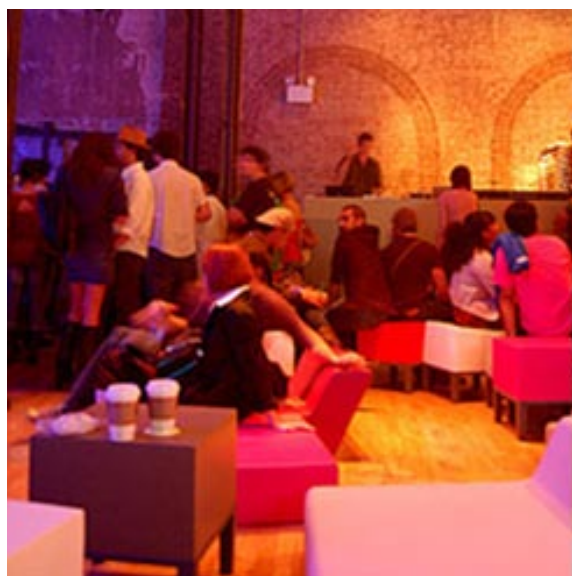
Fig. 3.9. temporary Starbucks Salon, New York (United States)

3.10 Culture Bière – Heineken concept store

Category: Food and beverages

The store (See Fig. 3.10) was successfully launched as an introduction campaign to increase the brand's awareness and invite the Parisians to start drinking beer in a high-end and trendy environment.
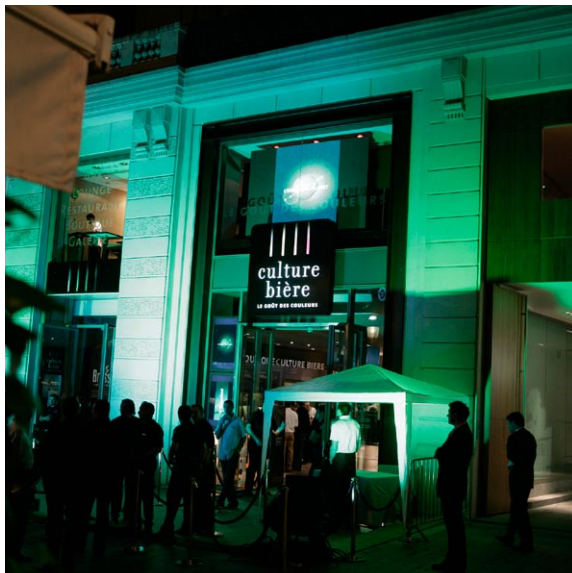
Fig. 3.10. Heineken's Culture Bière, Paris (France)

3.11 Kasikorn Bank

Category: Banking, investment and insurance

A store does always exist in a certain culture. Although the brand message might be used globally, the 'words' that should be used (i.e., the specific design) should be carefully applied to the culture it is designed in. With Kasikorn bank (See Fig. 3.11) we see that the designers (Point Design Inc., New York) applied the design to the color palette of the Thai culture.

Fig. 3.11. Kasikorn bank (Thailand)

3.12 Orange 201 (London, UK)

Category: Consumer Electronics

This is another example of a co-created concept store (See Fig. 3.12). Visitors can take pictures by using the mobile cameras in the store, which will then be sent directly to the frames on the wall
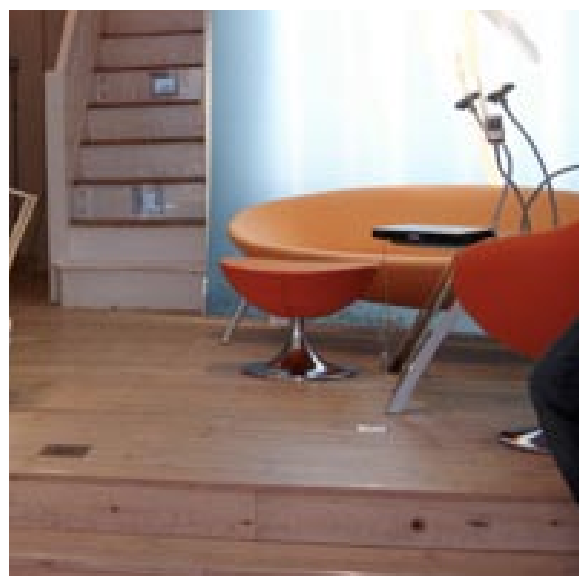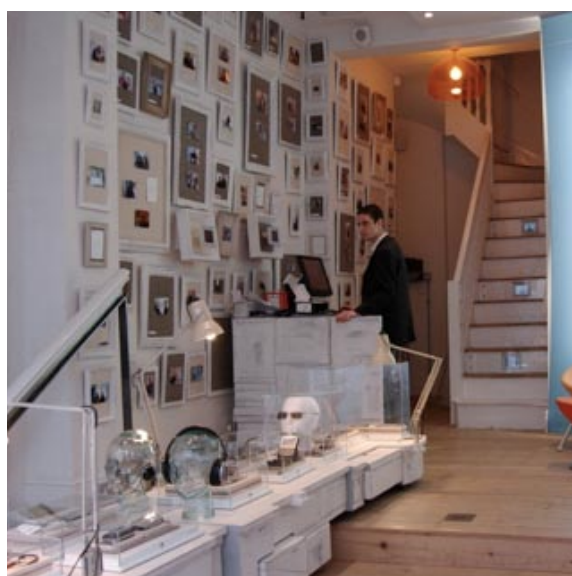
Fig. 3.12. Orange 201, London (United Kingdom)

3.13 60daysofspace – Blend guerilla store (the Netherlands)

Category: Lifestyle

In a temporary guerilla store that traveled through several cities in the Netherlands, Blend made its lifestyle magazine literally 'tangible' in cooperation with various brands, artists, etc. (See Fig. 3.13). This led to a successful introduction campaign.
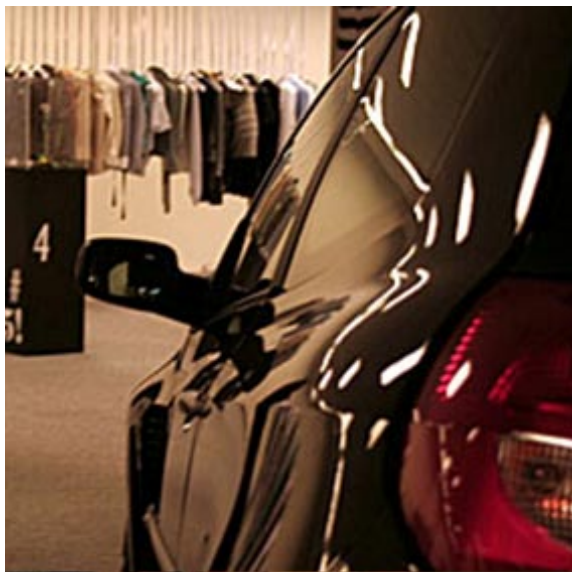
Fig. 3.13. Blend's '60daysofspace' guerilla store (The Netherlands)

3.14 Bacardi/55DSL

Category: Food and beverages / Clothing, footwear and accessories

Bacardi and 55DSL (by Diesel) joined in a temporary concept store (See Fig. 3.14)
that was created to inspire consumers to throw their own 'home party'. Here, the
brands and consumers connect on basis of their 'shared interests'. These brands
chose a theme that is a rising trend within their target group at the moment and
extends their brand identities too.
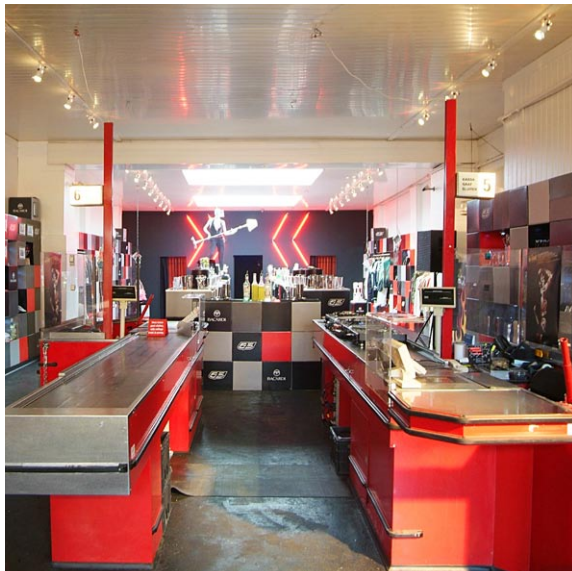
Fig. 3.14. Bacardi/55DSL's temporary concept store, Amsterdam (The Netherlands)

"You can say the right thing about a product and nobody will listen.

You've got to say it in such a way that people will feel it in their gut.

Because if they don't feel it, nothing will happen."

BILL BERNBACH

Part 2- Experimental research studies

4. Consumer-centric in-store design examined

In chapter two, we hypothesized (1) that consumer-centric in-store design that communicates solutions to consumers' needs positively influence consumers' responses towards the promoted brand, and (2) that when the communication concept of the in-store design is congruent to consumers' shopping motives, this will positively influence their reactions towards the promoted brand. These predictions are examined in this first experimental study.

4.1 Method

4.1.1 Participants and design

A total of 154 (N = 154) Dutch individuals (81 males, 73 females) participated in this study. Their age varied from 18 to 60 years with an average of 39. All participants were recruited among the visitors of the public library in Eindhoven. Participation was voluntary and respondents were rewarded with a pair of head phones.

The design of the study consisted of a 3 (communication concept of in-store design: product-centric/product&consumer-centric/consumer-centric) x 2 (shopping motivation: product-oriented/consumption-oriented) between-subjects design. Dependent variables included experienced pleasure, product attitude, brand attitude, purchase intention, and purchase motivations.

4.1.2 Independent variables
Consumer-centric in-store design.

In order to measure the effect of consumer-centric in-store design, we compared this with in-store design that was not consumer-centric, i.e., product-centric. The consumer-centric design focused on the communication of how the brand and its products provide solutions to consumers' needs. In addition, the product-centric design focused on the communication of (technical) product features alone.
To see the effect of a combination between consumer-centric and product-centric design, we added a third level, which was meant to communicate both solutions as product features (see Fig. 4.3 to 4.5 on page 58).

Consumers' shopping motives.

Participants were primed with either a product-oriented or a consumption-oriented shopping motive, by showing them one out of two advertisements prior to their entrance into the environmental conditions (see Fig. 4.6 on page 59). These levels match to the classical distinction of utilitarian versus symbolic shopping motives (e.g., Babin et al., 1994; Holbrook & Hirschman, 1982), but replaces the hedonistic character of the symbolic motives, by a more meaningful approach. Product-oriented consumers refer to the people that shop for utilitarian and reasons, i.e., in order to purchase a product. They evaluate products and brands on their functional product features.

Consumption-oriented shoppers, on the other hand, tend to evaluate products on their symbolic cues, i.e., the value that products and brands can add to their daily lives. For this latter group, the product is not a goal in itself, but a means to reach the individual's own personal goals.

4.1.3 Dependent variables

Pleasure

Participants evaluated their mood by Mehrabian and Russel's (1974) PAD-scale that measured their experienced pleasure, arousal, and dominance, by a total of nine items. A factor analysis (see Table 4.1) revealed the three factors. However, Crohnbach's alpha of this instrument indicated only the first factor (i.e., pleasure) fairly reliable (Cronbach's alpha = .73). The items were measured on 7-points rating scales, ranging from strongly disagree (1) to strongly agree (7).

Table 4.1. Results of the factor analysis for 'mood'

	1 Pleasure	2 Dominance	3 Arousal
Satisfied	0.81		
Happy	0.79		
Cheerful	0.67		
Relaxed	0.60		
Free		0.73	
Controlling		0.73	
Dominant		0.68	
Jittery			0.87
Wide-awake			0.67

Note: only loadings > .6 are presented

Brand attitude

Participants evaluated their attitude towards the promoted brand (i.e., Philips) on a scale that was derived from directly from the brand's positioning and has been

validated in a number of former research studies within Philips that used this scale. In line with the brand's pillars (i.e., designed around you, easy to use, and advanced), plus one overall factor (i.e., simplicity), our factor analysis revealed a total of four factors (see Table 4.2).

Designed around you passed the reliability test (Cronbach's alpha = .79), and was thus included in our analyses. For advanced, we removed the item 'Philips is an innovative brand' after it turned out to decrease the reliability of the scale. The remaining two items (i.e., 'Philips exceeds my expectations' and 'Philips' products deliver the best results) correlated (Pearson's correlation = .69), as did the two items for the factor 'easy to use (Pearson's correlation = .72). The 'simplicity' factor was not reliable. All items were measured by means of 7-points rating scales, ranging from strongly disagree (1) to strongly agree (7).

Furthermore, participants' perception of Philips compared to eight other consumer electronics brands was measured. These other brands were: Bang & Olufsen, JVC, LG, Loewe, Panasonic, Samsung, Sharp, and Sony. Here, participants were asked to rank the brands from 1-9, ranging from most favorable (9) to least favorable (1).

Table 4.2. Results of the factor analysis for 'brand attitude'

	1 Designed around you	2 Advanced	3 Simplicity	4 Easy to use
Philips' products increase the quality of my life	0.87			
I feel familiar with Philips' products	0.79			
Philips understands my needs	0.67			
With Philips' products, I can reach what I want more quickly	0.63			
Philips makes me feel comfortable with technology				
Philips makes my life easier				
Philips exceeds my expectations		0.77		
Philips is an innovative brand		0.73		
Philips' products deliver the best results		0.63		
Philips makes smart products as simple as possible			0.89	
Philips stands for simplicity in the area of technology			0.85	
Philips' products have a clear function				0.82
Philips' products are easy to use and operate				0.82

Note: only loadings > .6 are presented

Product attitude

To evaluate participants' attitude towards the promoted product, within the environment, we matched the global attitude measure (Engel, et al., 1995), and a product attitude scale that Bellizi et al. (1983) used in a study on the effects of color in store design), in order to get a scale that was relevant for the product that we used

in the current study. None of the factors that were revealed by the factor analysis was reliable, so we continued the analyses with the separate items. These items comprised: 'modern' (modern-outdated) 'reliable' (reliable-unreliable), and 'price value' (expensive-cheap). This was measured by means of 7-points rating scales.

Purchase motives

We measured people by means of an open-ended question for their purchase motives when shopping for a television in general. That is, the criteria that they consider as important, and thus evaluate the product on. With this question, we wanted to explore how consumers' motives change because of their interaction with the environment. In a content analysis, we first divided participants' answers in either one of two categories, a product-oriented group and a consumption-oriented group. The number of motives that people mentioned in each category was summed up and noted in the two categories. Then, we compared the averages of the participants in the product-centric environment with the averages of the participants in the consumer-centric environment by means of an ANOVA.

Purchase intention

Finally, participants' purchase intention was measured by asking them for the likeability that they would indeed purchase this specific product (a Philips flat screen television), if they were intended to buy a flat screen television. This was measured by means of 7-points rating scales, ranging from very unlikely (1) to very likely (7).

4.1.4 Stimulus materials:
In-store Design

For the environments in study 1 we built three real-life in-store environments in a labatory setting. The first environment was product-centric and totally focused on the communication of product features (see Fig. 4.3). We placed four –working- televisions on the walls. These were the Philips Ambilight television along with a comparable product of Samsung, Sony and Panasonic, so that people would be focused on evaluating the product features. We kept the walls white and added signage, price tags and other product-focused communication material to the environment that you also see at traditional mass retailers, like MediaMarkt.

The second environment was half product-centric and half consumer-centric (see Fig. 4.4). We changed the 'Philips wall, by removing the logos, painting it and adding some furniture to it, so that it would look more like a living room environment. We chose for a living room concept because it refers to the actual use or consumption of the product, and shows it in an environment where consumers can picture it in. The wall with the other TVs was kept the way it was, so that people would still be able to

Fig. 4.3. Product-centric in-store design*

Fig. 4.4. A match between product-centric and consumer-centric in-store deisgn*
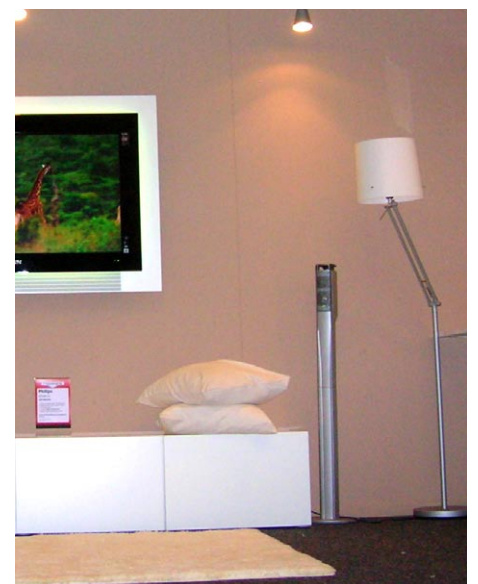
Fig. 4.5. Consumer-centric in-store design*

More images can be found in the appendices

evaluate the television on their (technical) product features.

The third room was designed to be totally consumer-centric (see Fig. 4.5). The entire room was designed as a living room, with only the Philips television left. There was no information on product features. This room was entirely dedicated to communicate the use- or consumption value of Philips and the Ambilight TV, so that people would be able to see the benefits of having this TV in their own living room.

Shopping motives

We manipulated consumers' shopping motives by showing them an advertisement of the television just before they entered the environment. Half of the people were shown a product-oriented ad, and the other half faced a consumption-oriented ad (see Fig. 4.6), in order to set their mindset. The product-oriented ad only showed a picture of the product, along with a number of (technical) product features, and a call for direct purchase. The consumption-oriented ad, on the other hand, displayed a picture of the television in a use situation, along with a description of different consumption situations and the emotions that they evoke. The headline here was centered on delivering a solution (translated: "Television as it is meant to be"), and opposed to the product-oriented ad, did not include a call for purchase.

Fig. 4.6. Product-oriented ad (left) and consumption-oriented ad (right).

4.1.5 Procedure

Before entering the environment, participants were given an instruction in which they were told that their television broke down, and that because of that, they were looking for a new one. Next, they were primed with one of the two advertisements for the Philips Ambilight Television (see Fig. 4.6). After watching the ad for approximately one minute, participants were guided into one of the three environmental conditions (depending on the one that was running at that moment), where they stayed for two minutes. After that, they were asked to complete a questionnaire. Finally they received a pair of head phones and a 'thank you' for their cooperation.

4.2 Results

To test our two hypotheses, we explored the main effects of the in-store design on participants' responses along with how participants' primed shopping motives interacted with these results. These analyses were conducted by ANOVA's. A first exploration into the interaction effects yielded that they primarily could be found in the variance between the mixed environment and the consumer-centric environment and that the product-centric environment had the lowest score in both groups. Therefore, we decided to remove the product-centric environment in our analyses for interactional effects.

4.2.1 Manipulation check

As a manipulation check, we measured how participants evaluated the environment as being consumer-centric. This was measured by the items: focus on product experience (versus focused on product features), emotional (versus rational), and rich (versus sober). Cronbach's alpha indicated a fairly reliable instrument (Cronbach's alpha = .75). An ANOVA made sure that our consumer-centric store environment was indeed the most consumer-centric one ($F_{(1,153)} = 13.03$, $p < .05$). Inspection of the means revealed that, as intended, the product centric environment was least consumer-centric ($M = 4.45$), whereas the consumer-centric environment had the highest mean ($M = 5.69$). And, in line with these outcomes, the environment in which consumer-centric and product-centric were combined, ended up somewhere in the middle ($M = 4.79$). This latter environment will be referred to as the *mixed environment* in the remaining part of this report.

4.2.2 Pleasure

This analysis yielded a main effect for experienced pleasure ($F_{(1,153)} = 3.67$, $p < .05$), with the highest mean for the consumer-centric environment ($M = 5.42$), when compared to the product-oriented environment ($M = 5.04$), and the mixed environment ($M = 5.36$).

Although the results point towards an interaction effect (i.e., a higher experienced pleasure in the mixed environment for the product-oriented people, and a higher experienced pleasure in the consumer-centric environment for the consumption-oriented people), the ANOVA showed that this effect is not significant.

4.2.3 Brand attitude

A total of three ANOVA's revealed that the consumer-centric environment leads to the most positive scores on brand attitude (see Fig. 4.7a). The factor 'designed around you' showed a significant effect (F (1,153) = 4.46, p < .05), with the highest means for the consumer-centric design (M = 4.79), when compared to the mixed environment (M = 4.70), and the product-centric environment (M = 4.22).

'Easy to use' gave a similar result (see Fig. 4.8a) that was also significant (F (1, 153) = 3.76, p < .05). Again, with the highest score for the consumer-centric in-store design (M = 5.54), and the lowest for the product-centric design (M = 5.08). The mixed version ended up in between (M = 5.47).

The ANOVA for 'advanced' (F (1,153) = 3.72, p < .05) indicated that people perceive the brand as being least advanced in the product-centric environment (M = 4.13). As we look at the results for the mixed environment (M = 4.69) and the consumer-centric environment (M = 4.36), we see that on an overall basis, the brand is perceived as being more advanced in the mixed environment (see Fig. 4.9a).

For designed around you and easy to use, no interaction effects were found. However, the results do indicate that the consumer-oriented participants' responses towards the brands were more positive than the responses of the product-oriented participants in the consumer-centric environment (see Fig. 4.7 and 4.8)

For advanced, we found a marginal interaction effect (F (1,100) = 2.76, p > .10). That is, participants with a product-oriented shopping motive evaluated the brand as more advanced in the mixed environment (M = 4.81) than in the consumer-centric environment (M = 4.18). In addition, people with a consumption-oriented shopping motive evaluated the brand as more advanced in the consumer-centric environment (M = 4.61) than in the mixed environment (M = 4.57).

Although this effect is not significant, it does explain the result that we found in the main effect of the environment on this item (i.e., the fact that people perceived the brand in the mixed environment as more advanced than in the consumer-centric environment). As we see here, this effect only holds for the product-oriented group (see Fig. 4.9).
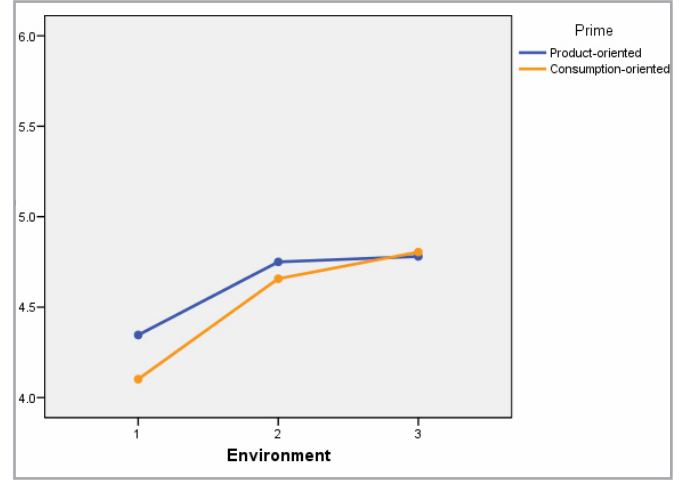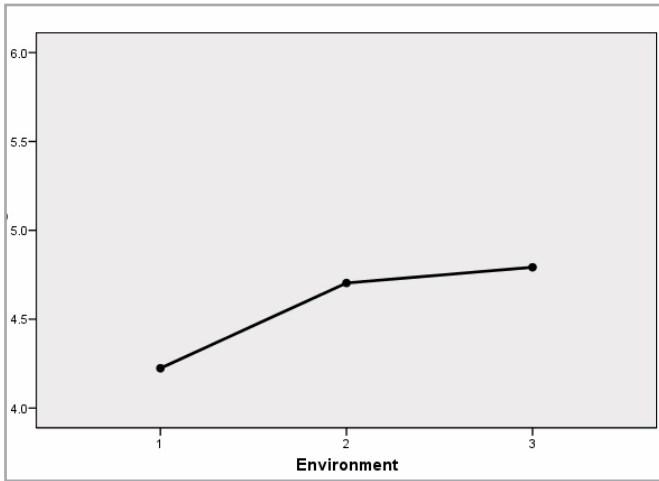
Fig. 4.7 a (left) and b (right). Results of ANOVA's for 'Designed around you'
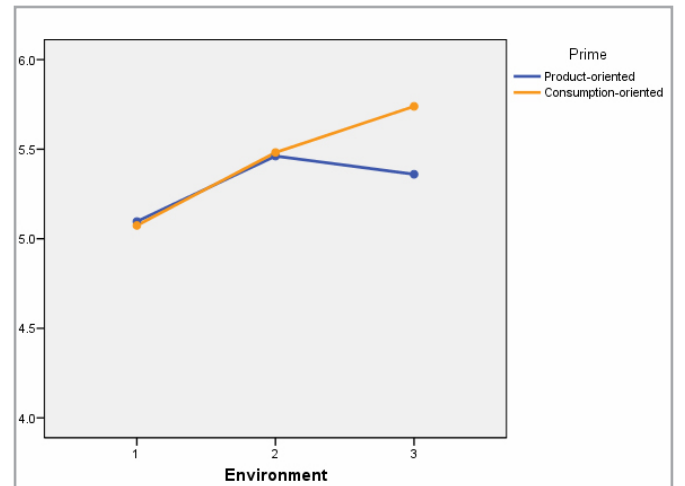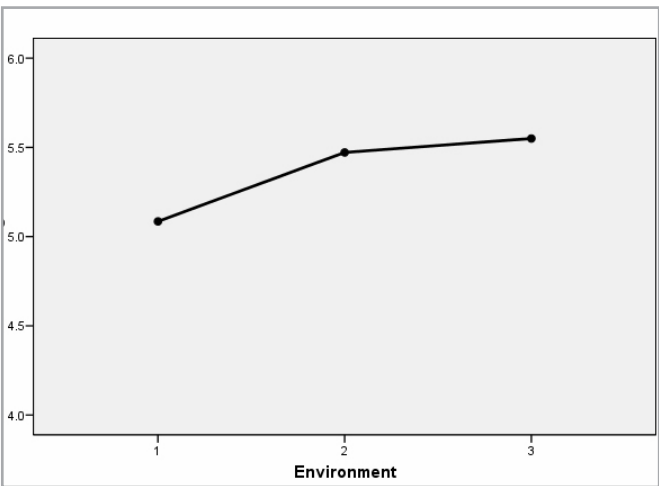
Fig. 4.8 a (left) and b (right). Results of ANOVA's for 'Easy to use'
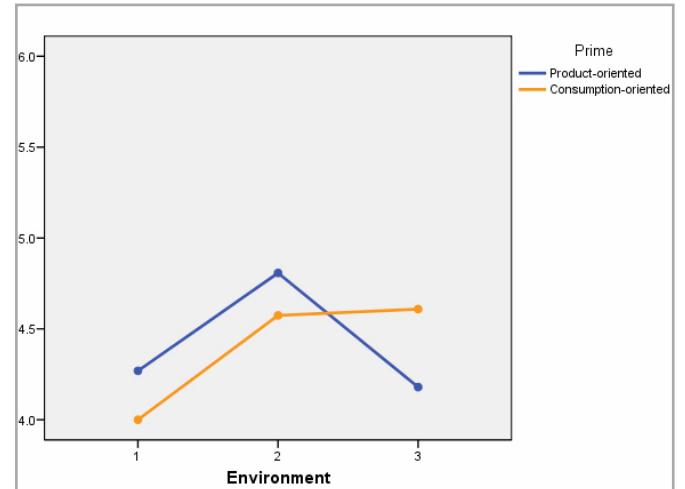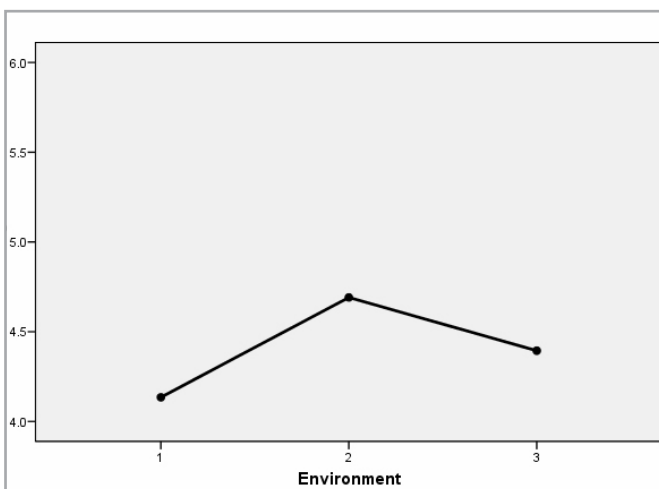
Fig. 4.9 a (left) and b (right). Results of ANOVA's for 'Advanced'

Participants' perception of the brand between competitive brands revealed the following result (see Fig. 4.10). Note that only participants who completed the entire ranking were included in the analysis ($N = 79$). The graph shows that, although Philips is perceived as being number 1 in all environments, their position increases as the store design becomes more consumer-centric. An ANOVA showed that this effect was significant ($F_{(1,78)} = 3.40$, $p < .05$), with means ranging from lowest in the product-centric environment ($M = 6.77$) to highest in the consumer-centric environment ($M = 8.04$). The mixed environment, again, ended up in the middle ($M = 7.79$).
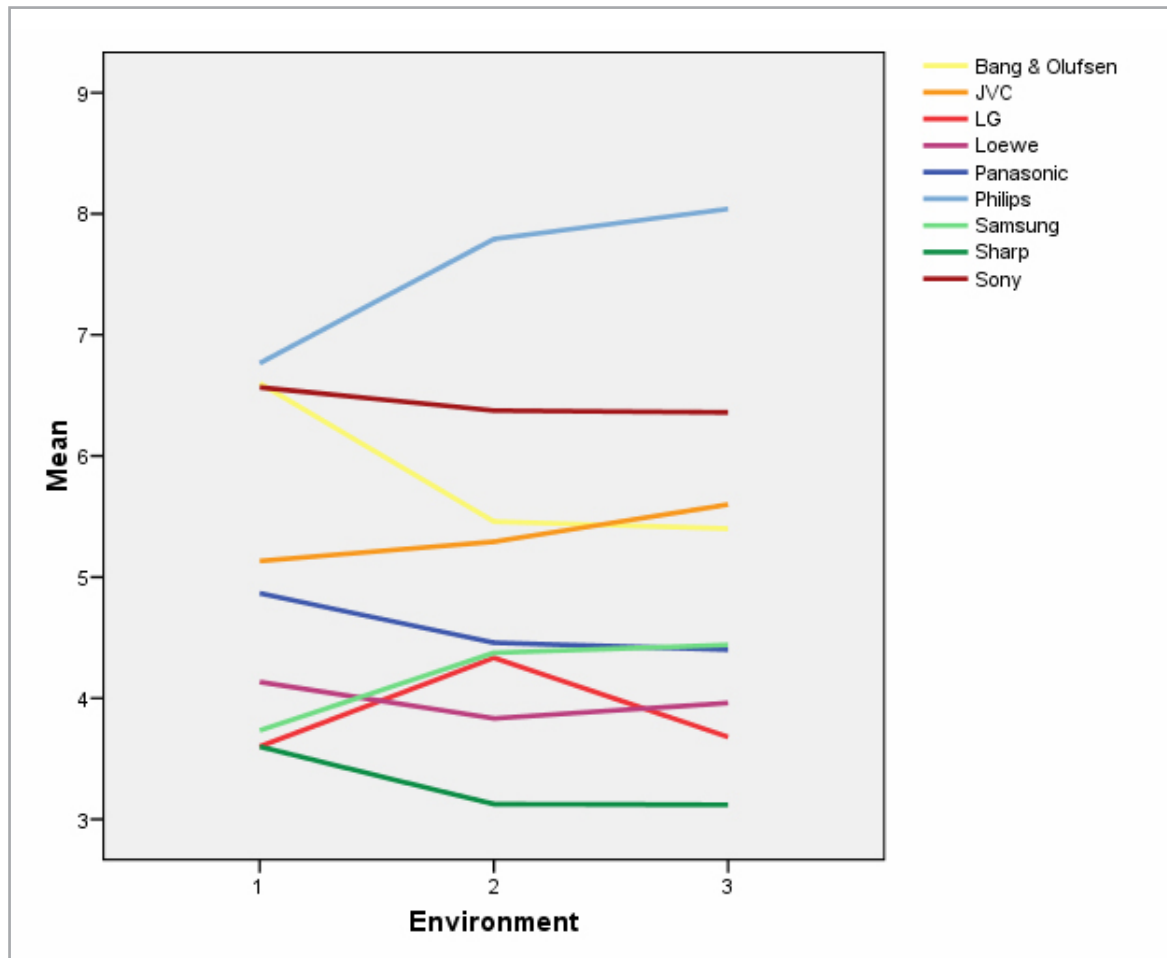
Fig. 4.10. Results of brand ranking

4.2.4 Product attitude

The ANOVA's yielded only marginal main effects on the items 'modern' ($F_{(1,153)} = 2.45$, p .<10), and 'reliable' ($F_{(1,153)} = 2.84$, $p < .10$). People evaluated the product as being most modern in the consumer-centric environment ($M = 6.52$), followed by the mixed environment ($M = 6.45$), and the product-centric environment ($M = 6.21$). However, we did find an interaction effect here ($F_{(1,100)} = 8.83$, $p < .05$). People with a product-oriented shopping motive perceived the product as more modern in the mixed environment ($M = 6.62$) than in the consumer-centric environment ($M = 6.32$). The group with a consumption-oriented shopping motive judged the product

as less modern in the mixed environment (*M* = 6.45) than in the consumer-centric environment (*M* = 6.74) (see Fig. 4.11).
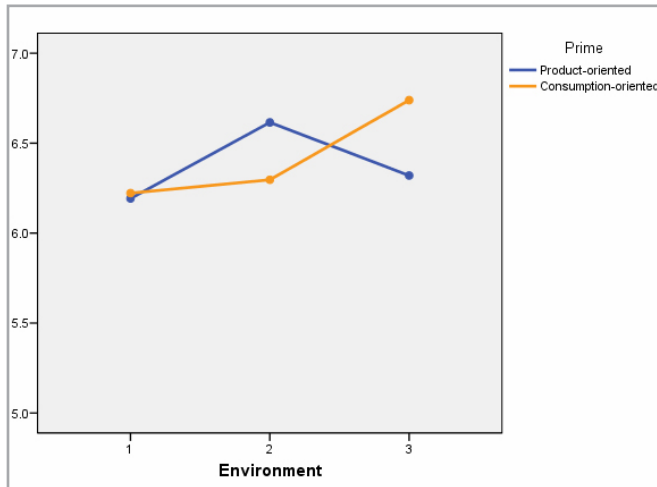
Fig. 4.11. Interaction effect for the product's perceived modernity.

For the perceived reliability of the product, we see about the same trend in the results. That is, the highest score for the consumer-centric environment (*M* = 5.44), followed by the mixed environment (M = 5.38), and the product-centric environment (M = 4.92).
 The interaction effect showed the same as the interaction effect for 'modern' too. However, this effect was neither significant, nor marginal.

An ANOVA performed on the item 'price value' (i.e., the product's perceived expensiveness) showed a significant effect ($F_{(1.153)}$ = 4.73, p < .05), with the highest mean for the consumer-centric environment (M = 5.94), followed by the mixed environment (M = 5.68), and the product-centric environment (M = 5.25) (see Fig. 4.12). No interaction effect was found here.
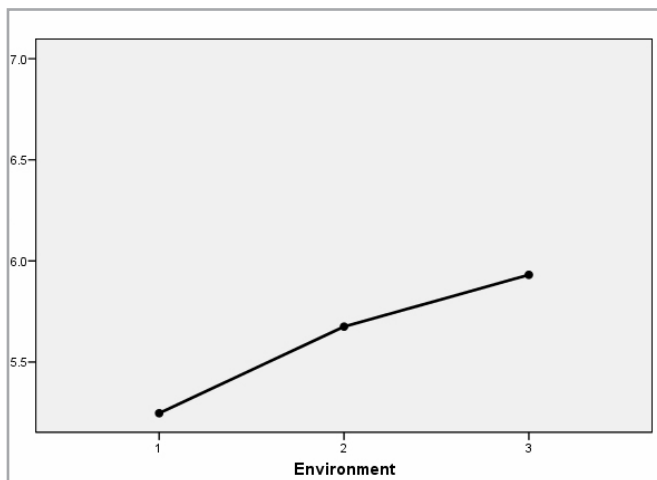
Fig. 4.12. Main effect for the product's perceived price value.

4.2.5 Purchase motivations

Before conducting any variance analyses, we split up the criteria that people wrote down as answer to the question of what they thought of as important criteria for a new television, into two groups. The first groups comprised the product-oriented purchase motivations (e.g., pixel quality, HD-Readiness, etc.). The second group included the consumption-oriented purchase motivations (e.g., design, fit into home interior, ease of use, etc). Next, we conducted two ANOVA's to discover the variations in how many criteria participants wrote down in each category.

The ANOVA for the product-oriented criteria or purchase motivations shows a significant result ($F_{(1, 100)} = 4.62$, $p < .05$), with the highest score in the product-oriented environment (M = 2.42), and the lowest score in the consumer-oriented environment (M = 1.88) (see Fig. 4.13).

The result for the consumption-centric motivations was even bigger ($F_{(1,100)} = 25.60$, $p < .05$). Here, the mean for the product-oriented environment was far less (M = 0.43) than the mean for the consumption-oriented environment (M = 1.17) (see Fig. 4.13).
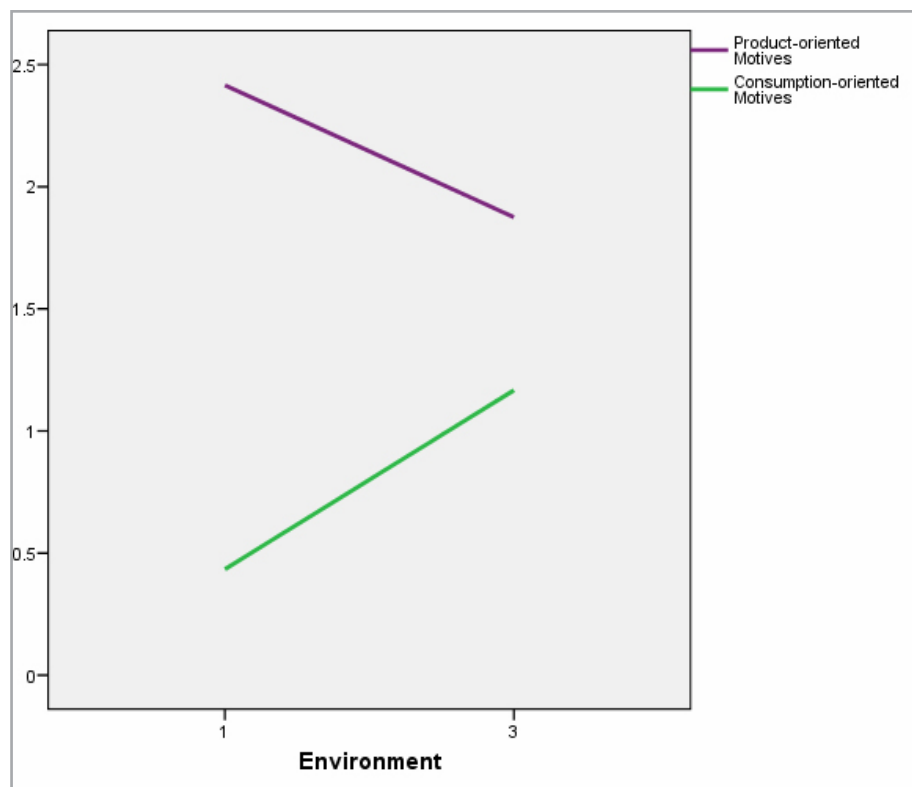
Fig. 4.13. Results of the product-oriented (purple line) and the consumption-oriented purchase motivations (green line)

4.2.6 Purchase Intention

The ANOVA for purchase intend revealed no significant main effect. On the first sight, we also could not find any interaction effects. However, when we took a closer look on the outcomes, we saw a patron in the product-oriented and the mixed environment. There appeared to be a high variation between the individual scores in the consumer-centric environment. After discussing this patron, we concluded that this could be due to the fact that this environment was not perceived as a purchase environment and therefore, did not lead to any effects in purchase intentions. On basis of this assumption, we removed the consumer-centric environment from the analysis, and continued with the remaining two environments in analyzing this variable.

The ANOVA now yielded an interaction effect for purchase intention ($F_{(1,105)}$ = 4.04, $p < .05$). Specifically, we see that the environment specifically affects those people with a product-oriented shopping motive (see Fig. 4.14). Their purchase intend was significantly higher in the mixed environment ($M = 4.81$) than it was in the product-centric environment ($M = 3.62$). In addition, the environment did not really seem to influence the purchase intend of those group consumption-oriented shopping motive. Compared to the variation in the product-oriented group, the mean in the product-oriented environment ($M = 4.89$) did not differ very much from the mean in the consumer-centric environment ($M = 4.67$).
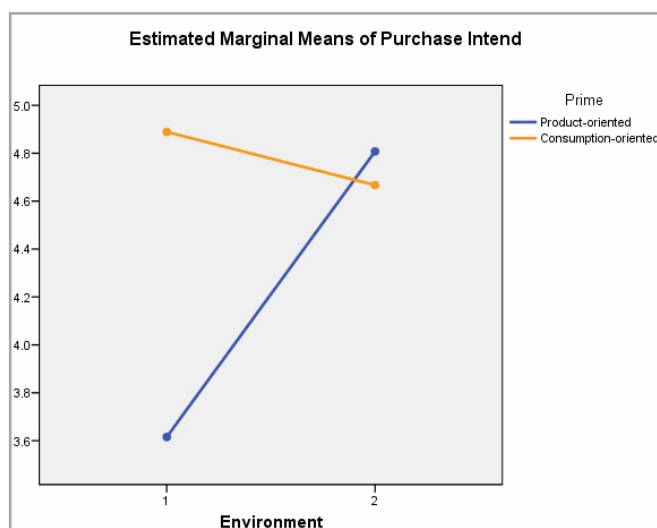
Fig. 4.14. Results for purchase intention

4.3 Discussion

The results provide significant evidence for both hypotheses. First, consumer-centric in-store communication design is shown to have a significant impact on consumers' responses. When compared to a product-centric environment, the consumer-centric level turned out to be able to affect not only consumers' mood and product attitude, but brand attitude as well. Despite the fact that we used a very well-known brand in our study, the physical store environment still affected peoples' perception of the overall brand.

Another noteworthy fact is the effect of the environment on consumers' purchase motives (i.e., the criteria that people evaluate products on, before their purchase). The results show that consumers' motives do not only affect their experience, but that the environment is able to affect individuals' motives as well.

Besides these main effects, consumers' shopping motives appear to interact with the environment in influencing consumers' affective, cognitive and behavioral responses. On a brand level this interaction was not significant enough to speak of a true interaction effect, but we do see differences between people with a product-oriented shopping motive and those with a consumption-oriented shopping motive. In all cases, the mean scores of the consumption-oriented group are higher in the consumer-centric environment, than the mean scores of the product-oriented group.

Moreover, when the focus of the questions shifts in the direction of the product (product attitude and purchase intention), we see that the interaction of the shopping motives becomes significant. Here, product-oriented consumers respond more favorably to the product and show a higher purchase intend in the mixed environment, which communicates both product features and solutions.

Finally, in none of the analyses, the product-centric in-store environment (i.e., the one that communicated product features only) came out best.

5. Brand-congruent in-store design examined

In this chapter, a second experimental study is presented. This study is aimed to answer our third hypothesis, which assumes that the more congruent the in-store design is with the brand identity, the stronger consumers' responses towards the brand will be. Again, the graphs of the conducted ANOVA's can be found in the appendices.

5.1 Method

5.1.1 Participants and design

A total of 93 (N = 93) Dutch individuals (46 males, 47 females) participated in this study. Their age varied from 18 to 60 years with an average of 38,4. Similar to study 1, all participants were recruited among the visitors of the public library in Eindhoven. Participation was voluntary and respondents were rewarded with a pair of head phones.

The design of the study comprised a between-subjects design, with one independent variable: in-store design (brand-congruent/brand-incongruent) Dependent variables included brand attitude and purchase intention.

5.1.2 Independent variables

Brand-congruent versus brand-incongruent in-store design

In order to measure the effect of in-store design that is congruent with the brand, we compared it with an environment of which the in-store design was as much incongruent with the brand as possible. This led to two environments: one that was brand-congruent, and one that was brand-incongruent.

5.1.3 Dependent variables

Brand attitude

To measure the brand attitude. the same scale as in the first study was used. However, a factor analysis showed somewhat different factors (see Table 5.1).

The first factor, 'designed around you', passed the reliability test (Cronbach's alpha = .78), and was thus included in the analysis. For the second factor, 'advanced', we removed the items 'Philips' products have a clear function', and 'Philips' products are easy to use and operate, because these items did not belong in the factor 'simplicity'. We included 'simplicity' in our analysis, after the factor turned out to be reliable (Pearson's correlation = .73). The remaining two measurements (i.e., 'easy to use', and 'advanced') did not pass the reiliability test, and were therefore not included in any further analysis. The items were measured by means of 7-points rating scales, ranging from 1 (strongly disagree) to 7 (strongly agree).

Table 5.1 Results of the factor analysis for 'brand attitude'

	1 Designed around you	2 Simplicity & Easy to use	3 Advanced
Philips' products increase the quality of my life	0.85		
I feel familiar with Philips' products	0.83		
With Philips' products, I can reach what I want more quickly	0.72		
Philips makes my life easier	0.61		
Philips understands my needs			
Philips makes me feel comfortable with technology			
Philips makes smart products as simple as possible		0.76	
Philips' products have a clear function		0.74	
Philips stands for simplicity in the area of technology		0.72	
Philips' products are easy to use and operate		0.63	
Philips is an innovative brand			0.73
Philips exceeds my expectations			0.70
Philips' products deliver the best results			

Note: only loadings > .6 are presented

Purchase intention

Participants' purchase intention was measured by asking them for the likeability that they would indeed purchase this specific product (a Philips flat screen television), if they were intended to buy a flat screen television. This was measured by means of 7-points rating scales, ranging from very unlikely (1) to very likely (7).

5.1.4 Stimulus materials:

Pretest

A pretest was conducted to determine the stimuli that should be used in order to get a brand-congruent and a brand-incongruent in-store design. Therefore, a total of six environment were created, three that were expected to be more or less congruent with the Philips brand identity, and three that were expected to be more or less incongruent with the brand identity (see Fig. 5.2).
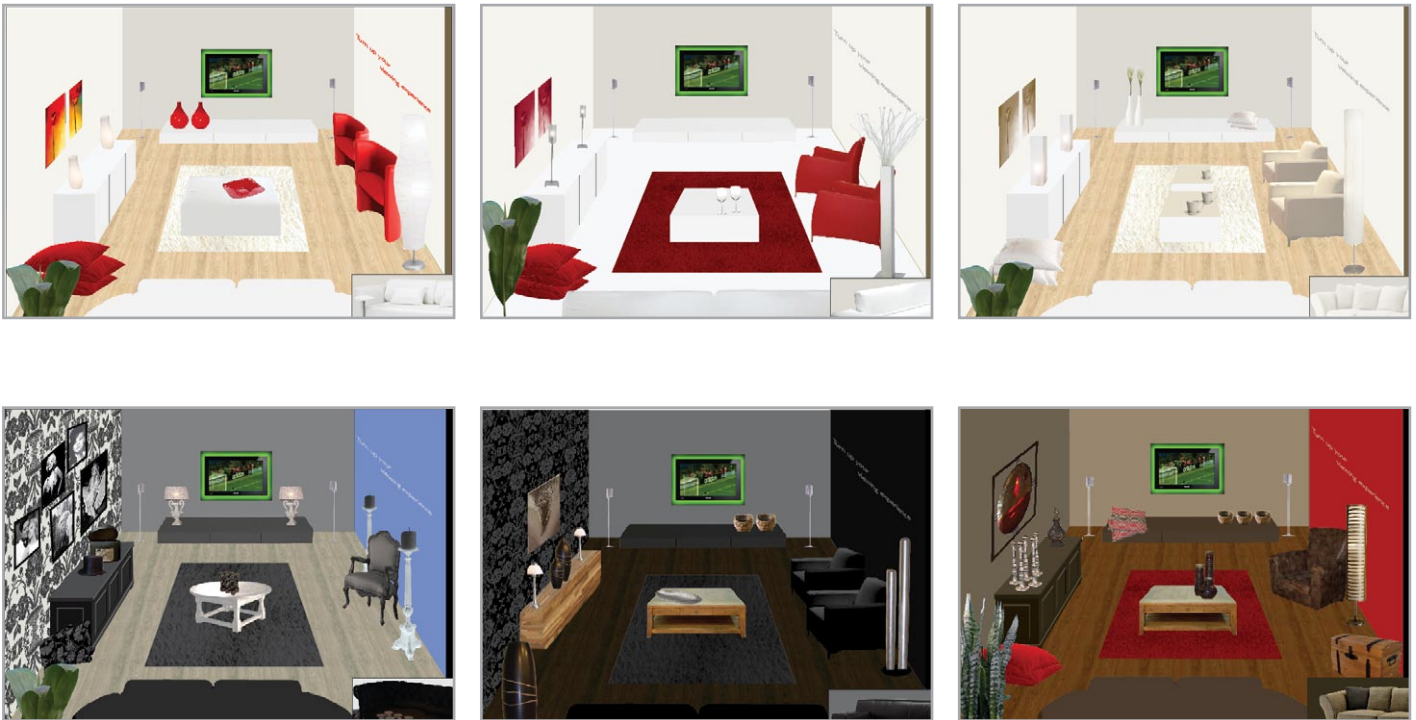
Fig. 5.2. The stimulus materials for the pretest.

Next, a total of 20 participants were recruited in the public library of Eindhoven, the Netherlands. These people were exposed to the two-dimensional prints of these environments and asked to evaluate all six environments on the Philips brand look and feel. This scale is developed by Philips and represents various characteristics that the communication design should meet in order to be congruent with the brand. The items that were used in this study comprise: light, bright, alive, open, spacious, inviting, truthful, authentic, distinctive, and unique. Participants evaluated these items on 7-points rating scales, ranging from strongly agree (1) to strongly disagree (7). Cronbach's alpha of this instrument indicated a reliable instrument (Cronbach's alpha = .86).

Next, and ANOVA was conducted., which revealed a significant difference between the environments ($F (1,19) = 14.43$, $p < .05$). The results show hardly any difference between the first three - brand-congruent- environments (M = 4.97, 5.00 and 5.00). The lowest mean (M = 2.98) was found in the environment in the middle of the second row in the figure (see Fig. 5.2). Therefore, we translated a combination of the three brand-congruent environments into 1 real-life environment, and translated the environment that scored lowest to a brand-incongruent real-life situation.

In-store Design

For the brand-congruent level of the in-store design, the same environment as the consumer-centric one of the first study was used (see Fig. 5.3) For the brand-incongruent one, we created a second environment with the same build-up as the brand-congruent one, but with the use of different materials, colors, and shapes (see Fig. 5.4).

Fig. 5.3. Brand-congruent in-store design (in the appendices, more images can be found)
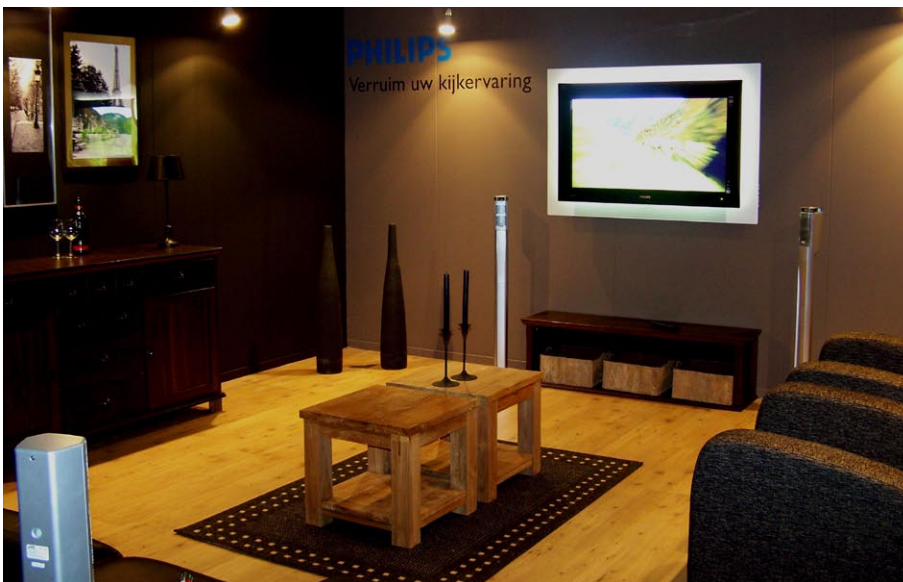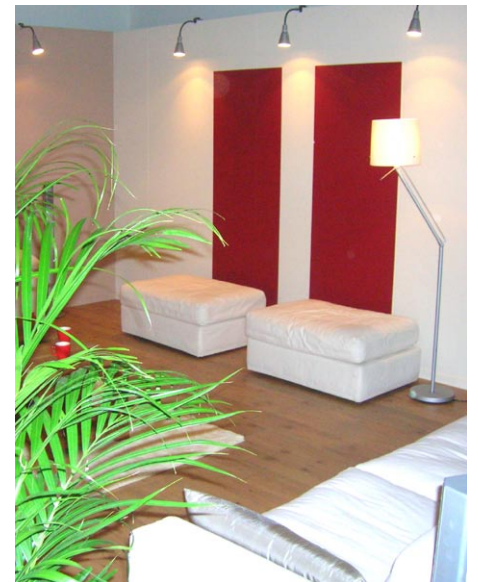
Fig. 5.4. Brand-incongruent in-store design (in the appendices, more images can be found)
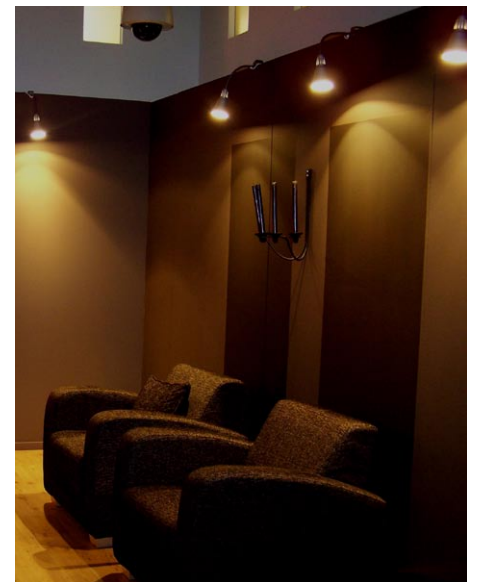
5.1.5 Procedure

The procedure was similar to the first study, despite that fact that we removed the priming procedure in this study. Before entering the environment, participants had to read an instruction in which they were told that their television broke down, and that because of that, they were looking for a new one. Next, they were were guided into one of the two environmental conditions (depending on the one that was running at that moment), where they stayed for two minutes. After that, they were asked to complete a questionnaire. Finally they received a pair of head phones and a 'thank you' for their cooperation.

5.2 Results

5.2.1 Brand attitude

A total of two ANOVA's revealed that the brand-congruent environment led to the most positive scores on brand attitude (see Fig. 5.5). The factor 'designed around you' showed a significant effect (F (1,92) = 4.62, p < .05), with the highest means for the brand-congruent design (M = 4.80), when compared to the brand-incongruent (M = 4.39),.

'Simplicity' gave a similar result that was also significant (F (1, 92) = 5.01, p < .05). Again, with the highest score for the brand-congruent in-store design (M = 4.96), and the lowest for the brand in-congruent design (M = 4.48).
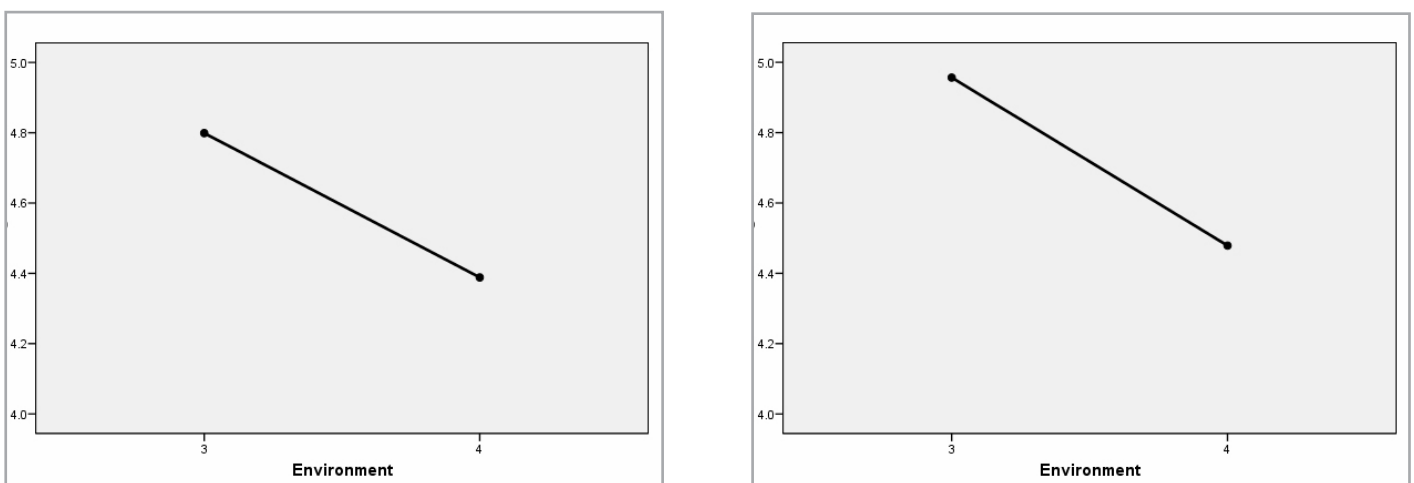
Fig. 5.5. Results for brand attitude

5.2.2 Purchase intention

The ANOVA for 'purchase intention (F (1,92) = 4.84, p < .05) indicated that peoples' purchase intention increases in an environment that is congruent with the brand identity (M = 4.67), because the mean in the brand-incongruent environment was significantly lower (M = 3.91).

5.3 Discussion

Our hypothesis that brand-congruent in-store design leads to more favorable responses among consumers was proven by the research results. The outcomes show that brand-congruent design is not only capable of strengthening consumers' brand attitude (and thus long term brand loyalty), but is able to affect direct purchase intend as well (i.e., short-term sales).

6. Key findings
& design implications

The main objective of the present research was to get more insight in how physical store environments can be designed in such a way that they build the brand, both on the short and the long run. Our investigation revealed that the physical in-store environment indeed is not only capable of affecting peoples' emotions and attitudes towards the environment and the products, but even towards the brand and evaluation criteria on which the products are judged.

In this chapter, the key findings of the research will be presented. Then, we continue with a general discussion, in which the value of this research, possible alternative explanations for the results, and limitations of this research will be reviewed. We also discuss the generalization of the present results to other product categories, brands, and cultures. We close this chapter with an overview of the implications for the design practice.

6.1 Key findings

6.1.1 Consumer-centric in-store design

Our research moves away from a product-centric approach by showing that the more consumer-centric the character of the in-store design is, the more positively it influences consumers' emotions and cognitive reactions towards the product and brand that are being promoted in the store. As a brand, to build a relationship with consumers, it turned out to be best to focus the in-store design on the communication of solutions, instead of the communication of (technical) product features. This solution should be relevant to consumers' real needs to have a positive affect for the brand on the long run. That is because the reason of existence for brands, ultimately lies in how they contribute to peoples' lives in satisfying their true needs. And as stated, that is more than delivering instant gratification or amusing people.

In other words, the communication between the consumer and the brand should be based on the core of the brand, what it is that the brand essentially has to offer. And that is more than just a list of product-features. This might seem common sense, but the current practice shows otherwise, like we saw in chapter one of this thesis. At one Dutch mass retailer that deals in consumer electronics, we also find a

very product-centric way of communication and in-store design (see Fig. 6.1.). The figure shows three TV walls of competing brands. What we see is that, despite some differences in the use of colors, all these brand communicate the same: product-features. And that is all they do. This does not give the consumer any clue about what it *means* to him/her.

Fig. 6.1. Three TV walls at a mass retailer in consumer electronics, the Netherlands

With this kind of communication, brands definitely will not stand out between their competitors. So, instead of copying each other, brands should dare to differentiate themselves on basis of who they really are, what they really have to offer. And that is what should be communicated in the in-store design.

6.1.2 Interaction

The results also revealed that a consumer-centric approach might not always mean that the in-store design should only focus on the communication of solutions. Dependent of consumers' shopping motives, a consumer-centric approach might also include that information about product features should be included in the design. Specifically, the results indicate that, when consumers are indented to directly purchase a product, the results indicated that it is wise to add information about the product characteristics to the communication design too. However, even in these situations, consumers' apparently show the highest purchase intentions, when the in-store design communicates the product benefits in solutions too.

All together, these results point to an interactional relationship between the brand and the consumer in the in-store environment, in which consumers' brand experience not only depends on the store design, but on their individual mindset too. Consumer-centric in-store design then, means that it all depends on the 'reason' why the brand and the consumer meet, why consumers' start interacting with the brand. Brands, therefore should not only participate on consumers' overall needs that can be satisfied by their products, but also on the specific needs that consumers have at the moment that they face the brand and its products.

6.1.3 Brand-congruency

In order to be most effective from a branding perspective, the in-store design should also be congruent with the brand's other touchpoints, and thus with the brand's identity. Based on the principles of the Gestalt psychology, 'the whole is more than the sum of its parts'. This implies that the different touchpoints should reinforce each other by making use of the specific benefits of the medium, but at the same time communicating the same brand message, based on the brand's identity. In that case, the brand image in consumers' minds is empowered through time and space, along different communication means.

6.2 General discussion

Despite the new insights that the present research delivers, it is far from complete. In the following section, we will shortly discuss some of the other possible explanations for the results and limitations of this research, and how future research can add to this.

First of all, we acknowledge that our experiments are a simplified version of reality. As shown by the in-store brand experience model, which was presented in this thesis, we are fully aware of the fact that consumers' in-store experience depends on more factors than just the store design and their consumption- versus product-oriented shopping motive. Here future research would be very valuable in extending our understanding of consumers' in-store brand experience. The model that was presented in this research might then serve as a basis for future research.

Second, we ascribe the results to the extent in which the in-store design communicated solutions to consumers' needs that the brand satisfies with its products. However, there is a possibility that the results can be ascribed to the fact that the design our 'consumer-centric' environment was appreciated more because of other reasons. Although we are quite convinced of the value of consumer-centric in-store design that communicates how the brand provides solutions to consumers' needs, this assumption might need more than just one research study to provide more evidence for this claim.

Third, we focused on the effect of the total environment in the present research. It might be worthwhile to test the contribution of different elements, like colors and materials, to the total in-store experience.

In the fourth place, more research into consumers' shopping motives is needed. In our experiments, we primed subjects with shopping motives. For future research, we

suggest to investigate real shopping motives that consumers hold in real shopping situations. Furthermore, consumers' motivations to go shopping and join in a relationship with the brand were not deeply analyzed prior to this research. Although we did provide evidence for the fact *that* consumers' motives affect the in-store experience, more research is needed in *how* that exactly happens.

In our experiments, we only distinguished two levels of conceptual in-store design (i.e., focus on product features versus focus on solutions to needs). Our results revealed that the 'perfect' combination between the communication of solutions versus the communication of product-features differs per situation. Future research should provide more insight in this balance.

A prerequisite for brand-congruent communication to be successful is that the brand identity and the visual brand identity (the 'look and feel') match, so that the style of the design really fits to who and what the brand aims to express. In the current research, we made use of an existing brand (Philips), and used the look and feel and fit with the brand identity to measure it on, without pre-testing the content of it. Future research should provide more insight on the link between the brand identity and the visual in-store design to reinforce our findings.

6.2.1 Generalization to other brands, and products

As said before, consumer-centric design does not mean that all brands and products should exclusively focus their in-store design on the communication of solutions instead of product features, or create entire rooms or walls for every single product, as a prerequisite to be successful. The best store design also does not only depend on consumers' shopping motives and what their preferences. Of course, retailers, brands, and designers have to deal with such things as costs and benefits.

The implication of our research results to other brands and products depends also on the nature of those brands and product. However we assume that the consumer-centric approach can be extended to all brands, because it is a strategic rather than an operational construct, the impact it has is expected to differ per brand and product category. It is possible that the effects are stronger for transformational and symbolic brands, than they are for informational and functional brands.

And the same holds for products. In this research, we made use of a flat screen television, but would the results have been the same when we chose to use light bulbs for example? Because, in addition to a flat screen television, when people shop for light bulbs, people usually grab them out of the shelf with a minimum amount of conscious thinking.

However, also with a simple product like a light bulb, shopping motives might be important. Consider for example the possibility that one is shopping for a light bulb to create a romantic effect in the living room. Than, this person might be served with a whole other in-store design. And of course, we all know the walk routes in the IKEA. When looking for inspiration, the walk can be pretty pleasant. However, when you arrive at the cash desk and suddenly realize that you forgot one little decoration article, the route can suddenly evolve to a walk of frustration.

All together, future research should be conducted to get more insight in the value of these results for different categories of brands and product. Yet, we repeat that we expect this consumer-centric way of thinking to be relevant in all cases, when it is operationalized the right way.

6.2.2 Generalization to other cultures

We also assume that the insights of the present research can be extended to other cultures, and is therefore universally applicable. This does not mean that the execution of in-store design can be extended worldwide. Again, it is the way of thinking that we mean. That is because it starts on the point where the needs and values of humans and brands meet one another. With this starting point, it is thought to be possible to communicate a global brand message. Next, it can be executed in communication instruments – like in-store environments – on a local level. To provide more evidence here, we also suggest that further research would be useful.

6.3 Design implications

Consumer-centric in-store design should always be the starting point for successful in-store communication. This can be seen as a strategic approach, where you analyze what the consumer's overall needs that are served by the brand and its products. Furthermore, the consumer's manifest needs are important, because they determine the shopping motives. A good example can be found in the Apple stores. Apple organizes its stores not on basis of its product range, but on basis of consumers' fields of interests (e.g., photos, children, etc). With as result the highest sales per square meter, as compared to any other brand or store concept.

Then, what follows next is a creative concept. Instead of designing a loose concept, the point of departure should always rest in the attempt to involve relevant meaning in the in-store design.

The present research also implies that there is no 'best practice' or benchmark that is effective in every situation. Conceptual design means that design is not an end, but a means to get the brand and the product message across. And it depends on many factors, like the character of the brand, the product, consumers' shopping motives, etc., how that should be communicated in the physical store environment.

Finally, the findings implicate that it is highly important to make sure that the in-store design is congruent to the design of the brand's other touchpoints. However, this does not mean that the design should be copied from other touchpoints. The challenge here is to make full use of the benefits of the three-dimensional environment.

The deeper the root, the more beautiful the flower

HAKAHODU,

(Japanese advertising agency)

Summary

The three-dimensional in-store environment is a medium that has gained much attention over the years. Physical stores are not only interesting from a sales perspective, but from a branding perspective as well. Besides selling products, physical in-store environments can function as a very valuable platform where the consumer and brand meet each other and establish a relationship.

The objective of the present research is to get more insight in the interactional relationship between the in-store environmental design and consumers, and how that process affects consumers' in-store experience, thereby leading to certain responses towards the products and brands that are being promoted in the store.

In chapter one, we start by looking at what is going on in the world of retail right now. By discussing the current reality in traditional mass retail, mono-brand stores, and experience centers, we see that today's retail is dominated by a product-centric perspective. That is, in-store design often is centered on the product, instead of communicating the means of the product for individual consumers. The 'experience trend' was initially meant to move away from this perspective, but instead of addressing consumers' real needs and how the brand and product provide meaningful solutions to these needs, its main goal often seems to lay in concepts as amusement, fun, entertainment, escapism….so providing instant gratification. And in a time were online shopping rapidly grows, it is very hard for brick-and-mortar retail stores to keep being relevant to consumers.

In the second chapter, we explore the communication process that takes place in in-store environment. On the one hand, brands can use stores to influence consumers. Research has shown that the in-store environment comprises various elements that are able to influence human emotions, cognitions, and behaviors.

But there is more, because on the other hand, in-store communication is not a one-way process. We suggest an interactive relationship, where the consumer is an active participant as well. The in-store brand experience then, is a result of the interaction, and besides the environment, largely dependent of the individual shopper, with his/her needs and motives. This chapter concludes with an in-store brand experience model, in which this interactive vision is visualized.

In chapter three we continue with a total of 14 benchmarks that were derived from our field study. Each of these benchmarks illustrates the in-store brand experience model in one or more ways.

In chapter four and five, two experimental studies are described in which our hypotheses are investigated. In chapter six, the key findings and implications of these studies are presented. The results provide evidence for our interactional approach. Specifically, we deliver proof for the fact that the overall environment is not only capable of influencing affective and cognitive responses towards the environment and the products in the environment, but is capable of influencing consumers' brand attitudes too.

Furthermore, we show that brands should really consider consumers' needs and shopping motives, when designing for in-store environments, because they turn out to affect the way consumers' in-store brand experience..

All together, instead of focusing on a product-centric approach in in-store design, that focuses on the communication of product features, this research advocates a consumer-centric approach. That is, in-store design should focus on how the brand and its products satisfy consumers' needs in a relevant way. The message of the design should focus on presenting solutions, because that, in the end, is the reason why consumers step into relationships with brands. Then, insight in these needs and (shopping) motives is the key to successful in-store communication design.

Samenvatting

De driedimensionale winkelomgeving is een medium dat over de jaren heen veel aandacht heeft gekregen. Fysieke winkelomgevingen zijn niet alleen interessant vanuit een verkoopoogpunt, maar ook vanuit het perspectief van 'branding'. Behalve voor de verkoop van producten kunnen driedimensionale winkelomgevingen fungeren als een waardevol platform waar consument en merk elkaar ontmoeten en een relatie opbouwen.

Het doel van dit afstudeeronderzoek is om meer inzicht te krijgen in de interactieve relatie tussen in-store design en consumenten, en hoe dat process de beleving van mensen beinvloedt, daarmee leidend tot zekere reacties op de producten en merken die gepromoot worden in de winkel.

In hoofdstuk één starten we met het bekijken van de huidige retailpraktijk. Door de hedendaagse realiteit met betrekking tot massaretailers, 'mono-brand' winkels en 'experiences' te analyseren zien we dat het huidige retaillandschap gedomineerd wordt door een productcentrische benadering. Met andere woorden, in-store design is vaak gericht op producteigenschappen in plaats van op het overbrengen van de waarde van producten en merken voor individuele consumenten. De 'experience trend' was oorspronkelijk bedoeld als een tegenhanger voor deze benadering. Maar in plaats van behoeften van consumenten en hoe merken en producten deze behoeften op een relevante manier bevredigen, lijkt het primaire doel hier vaak te liggen in het leveren van amusement, fun en entertainment…directe gratificatie dus. Daarnaast blijkt dat in een tijd waarin online winkelen razendsnel groeit, het voor de fysieke winkels erg moeilijk is om relevant te blijven voor consumenten.

In het tweede hoofdstuk verkennen we het communicatieproces dat plaatsvindt in in-store omgevingen. Merken kunnen winkels inzetten om consumenten te beïnvloeden. Onderzoek heeft aangetoond dat de in-store omgeving diverse elementen bevat die in staat zijn menselijke emoties, cognities, en gedrag te beïnvloeden.

Toch is in-store communicatie geen eenrichtingsverkeer. Wij gaan in dit onderzoek uit van een interactieve relatie, waar de consument ook actief in participeert. In-store merkbeveling kan in dit licht gezien worden als resultaat van die interactie, die behalve van de omgeving, ook voor een groot deel afhankelijk is van de individuele shopper,

met zijn/haar behoeften en motivaties. Dit hoofdstuk eindigt met een in-store brand experience model, waarin deze interactieve visie gevisualiseerd is.

In hoofdstuk drie presenteren we 14 voorbeelden die naar boven kwamen in het praktijkonderzoek. Elk van deze voorbeelden illustreert het één of meerdere aspecten van het in-store brand experience model.

In hoofdstuk vier en vijf worden twee experimentele onderzoek beschreven waarin we het model en de hypotheses uit hoofdstuk twee testen. In hoofdstuk zes worden de belangrijkste bevindingen, een algemene discussies en de designimplicaties hiervan gepresenteerd. De resultaten bieden het bewijs voor de 'consumer-centric', interactionele benadering, waarin de essentiële behoeften van de consument centraal staan. Ze leveren bewijs voor het feit dat de omgeving niet alleen in staat is de reacties ten opzichte van de omgeving en de producten in die omgeving te beïnvloeden, maar dat de omgeving bovendien in staat is om de responsen ten opzichte van merken te beïnvloeden.

Daarnaast wordt aangetoond dat merken absoluut de behoeften en motieven van consumenten in ogenschouw moeten nemen bij het ontwerpen voor in-store omgevingen, omdat die de in-store merkbeleving significant beïnvloeden.

Samengevat pleit dit onderzoek voor, in plaats van de focus te leggen op productgericht in-store ontwerp, voor een consumentengerichte benadering. Dat betekent dat in-store design zich zou moeten richten op hoe het merk en de producten daaronder, op een relevante manier de oplossing bieden voor consumentenbehoeften. De boodschap van design moet zich richten op het presenteren van oplossingen, omdat dat uiteindelijk de reden is waarom consumenten relaties aangaan met merken. En inzicht in deze behoeften en motivaties is de sleutel tot succesvol in-store branding en communicatiedesign.

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Interviewed field experts

Company	Name	Function
Adidas (New York, US)	Marc Vromen	Retail marketing manager
Bang & Olufsen (New York, US)	Marc Chelnik	Managing director of 5 stores
Bang & Olufsen (Naarden, NL)	Maarten Swildens	Retail architect Benelux
Bang & Olufsen (Naarden, NL)	Irith Storms	Marketing assistant Benelux
DST Experience Communicatie (Baarn, NL)	Marcel Goossens	Principal and partner
Fitch (New York, US)	Randall Ng	Principal
Gant (Eemnes, NL)	Frank van Hall	Director marketing and operational activities
Grolsch (Enschede, NL)	Tom Huijskes	Senior brand manager
Heineken Experience (Amsterdam, NL)	Maarten Wijdekop	Manager a.i.
IconNicholson (New York, US)	Christopher Enright	Chief technology officer
Isto Group (Ridderkerk, NL)	Roland Bouhuys	Real estate developer
Jaguar (Beesd, NL)	Ton van der Vleuten	Dealer development manager

Company	Name	Function
Land Rover (Beesd, NL)	Ton van der Vleuten	Dealer development manager
KejaDonia (Schiphol, NL)	Majorie Dijkstal	Strategist
Michael Neumann Architecture (New York, US)	Michael Neumann	Principal
Peugeot Experience (Utrecht, NL)	Jasper Peddemors	Head identification and merchandising
Pluspoint (Rotterdam, NL)	Ron Cijs	Retail watcher
Point Design (New York, US)	Leandro Artigala	Designer
Puma (Leusden, NL)	Perry Laukens	Marketing manager
Sony (Badhoevedorp, NL)	Bart Panman	General manager communications
TBWA Brand Experience Company (Amstelveen, NL)	Antonie van Schendel	Managing partner
TPG Archtecture (New York, US)	Alec Zaballero	Principal

Appendices

1. Images of the stimulus materials for the experiments

2. Article that was written for Elsevier Retail, a Dutch retail magazine, after the field study in New York

3. Article that was written for Emerce, a Dutch marketing and innovation magazine, after the field study in New York

1. Images of the stimulus materials

Images study 1 - product-centric environment

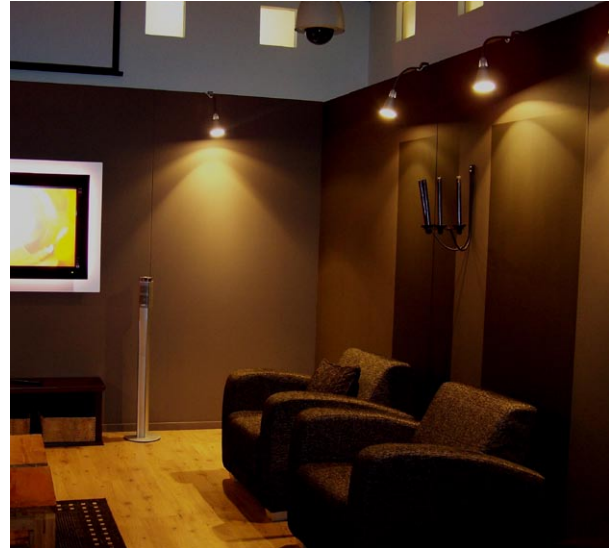Images study 1 - match between product-centric and consumer-centric environment

Images study 1 - consumer-centric environment.

And study 2 - brand-congruent environment

Images study 2 - brand-incongruent environment

Advertisements that were used as prime for consumers' shopping motivations

Ad 1 (Philips Cineos)

Televisie zoals het bedoeld is...

Met de Cineos Flat TV van Philips wordt televisiekijken pas echt wat het moet zijn.

Dankzij het Ambilight-effect waant u zich in de bioscoop terwijl u gewoon comfortabel

thuis op de bank kunt blijven zitten – of liggen, wat u maar wilt.

Gemaakt vanuit de behoefte van mensen, Om te ontspannen, te lachen, te huilen, te

leren, kippenvel of het juist warm van te krijgen.... kijken wordt een intense beleving

Verrijk uw momenten met vrienden, familie, of gewoon even een avondje alleen. Kom

het beleven en u wilt nooit meer terug naar 'gewone' tv.

Verruim uw kijkervaring

PHILIPS

Ad 2 (Philips Cineos 42PF9831D)

Philips Cineos
breedbeeld Flat TV met
Pixel Plus 3 HD en
Ambilight Full Surround

107 cm
LCD met geïntegreerde digitale tuner

CINEOS
42PF9831D

Ongeëvenaarde productprestaties.

Kom naar de winkel en koop 'm vandaag

nog

- Clear LDC voor een zeer scherpe beeldweergave
- Digital Media Reader met PC Link
- High Definition WXGA-scherm met een resolutie van 1366 x 768p
- Geschikt voor kwaliteitsvolle HDTV-weergave
- Compate lambda-/4-subwoofertechnologie voor een krachtige, diepe bass
- USB-poort en geheugensleuf voor directe weergave van multimedia
- Tweevoudige HDMI-ingang voor een volledig digitale High Definition-verbinding

PHILIPS

2. Article for Elsevier Retail
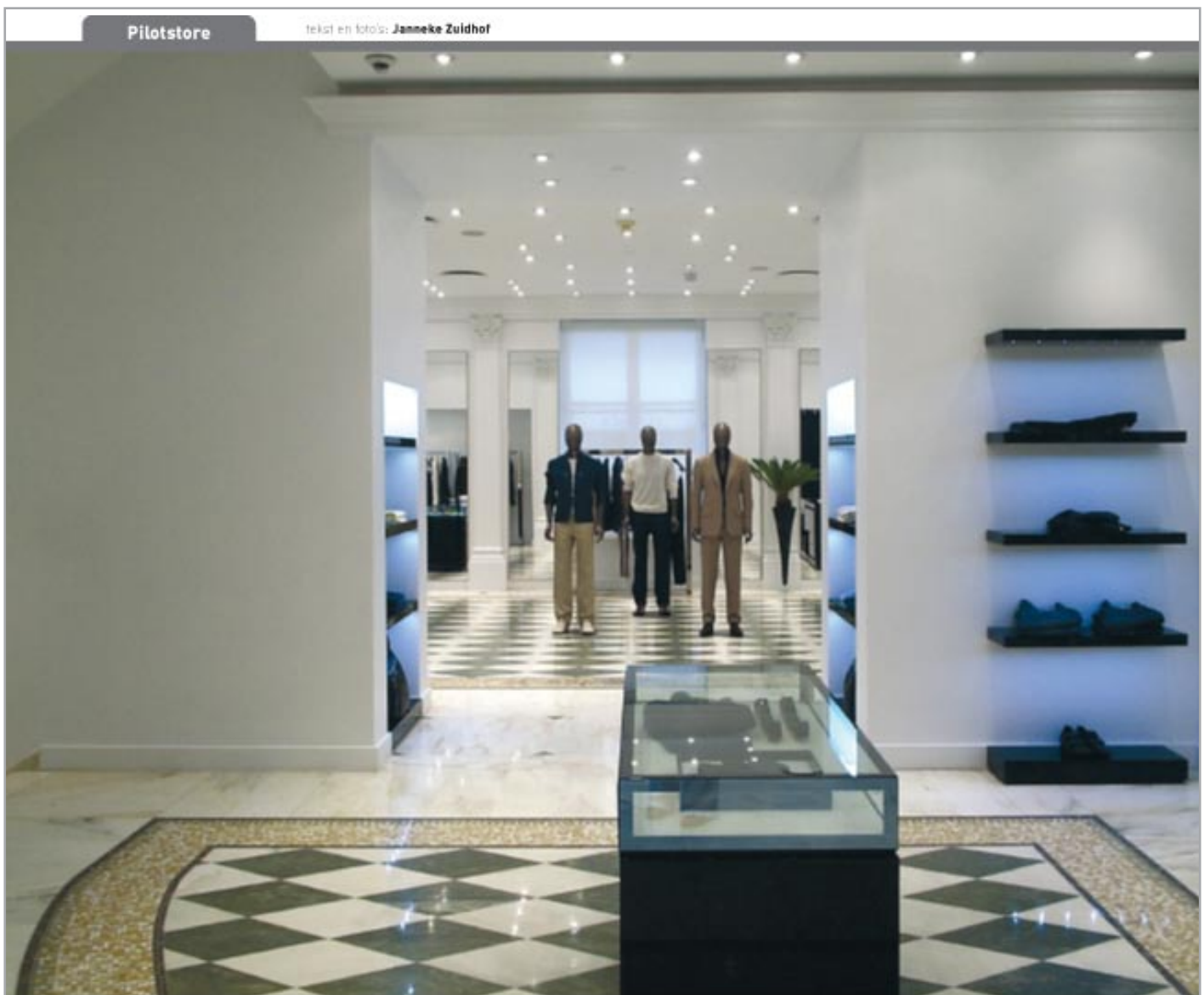
Het paleis van Versace, één van de high-end fashion winkels op Fifth Avenue, waar alle materialen tot in de details luxe uitstralen.

Hoe zet je een formulemerk neer? En hoe laat je de klanten dat merk ervaren? Elsevier Retail zoekt de antwoorden op deze vragen in het walhalla voor retailers: New York. "Als retailer is het een must om tegelijk psycholoog, socioloog en antropoloog te zijn."

Van strategisch design naar merkbeleving

Retailparadijs New York

New York levert veel antwoorden op de vraag hoe je een brand store neerzet. En vooral hoe de klant dat merk beleeft. Hoewel dat in de praktijk complex blijkt, zijn ieder geval vijf punten essentieel. Zoveel is duidelijk: een beleving claim je niet, dat bén je.

1. Ken het merk

Retailarchitecten, designers, store managers - iedereen is het hierover eens: de basis voor een volledig aan het merk gewijde winkel ligt in het merk zelf. Dit betekent dat je moet starten met de klassieke merkanalyse: merkwaarden, positionering - alles. "Je moet het merk helemaal begrijpen, er helemaal in opgaan", vindt Michael Neumann van het gelijknamige architectenbureau. "Als we werken voor Michael Kors, willen we Michael Kors in eigen persoon ontmoeten. Hij is de kern van het merk." De brand store moet geen opgepimpt bedrijfsverhaal worden, maar de authenticiteit en originaliteit van het merk weerspiegelen.

2. Psycholoog, socioloog en antropoloog

De dingen die klanten dragen, kopen: alles fungeert als een signaalsysteem. We hebben merken nodig om te definiëren wie we zijn, om onze waarden uit te drukken. Dat is de behoefte waar brand stores op inspelen, vindt Alec Zaballero, medeoprichter van het New Yorkse bureau TPG Architecture. Zijn bedrijf heeft enkele bedrijven van naam in de bekende Fifth Avenue als klant. "Merken gaan steeds meer lijken op personen waar consumenten een relatie mee aangaan. Als retailer is het daarom een must om tegelijk psycholoog, socioloog en antropoloog te zijn. Je moet in staat zijn om met het juiste store design, de juiste reacties teweeg te brengen."

Naast alle demografische en psychografische data is het ook belangrijk om 'on the streets' te zijn - daar waar het gebeurt. "Want", zo zegt Randall Ng, president van Walker Group-Fitch, "alleen met een diepe kennis van de drijfveren, waarden en behoeftes van consumenten, kun je als brand store echt een functie hebben in het leven van mensen".

Michael Neumann Architecture heeft bij het ontwerpen van een winkelconcept voor een nieuw kledingmerk, Martin + Osa, heel goed gekeken naar de doelgroep, die daar tussen de 25 en 40 jaar ligt. Toen ze zagen dat mensen uit de doelgroep de behoefte hebben om elkaar te ontmoeten, besloten ze de heren- en dameskleding niet op aparte afdelingen, maar door elkaar te hangen. Dat moet de interactie tussen beide seksen verhogen. "Ook kwamen we zo op het idee voor een bar en - het klinkt

Het ontwerp van deze Adidas-winkel lijkt op een vlooi-
enmarkt, omdat dat voorheen de enige plaats was
waar de producten te koop waren. Dit verhaal krijgt in
de winkel vorm door grote, lage tafels, waar de pro-
ducten kriskras door elkaar liggen en het gebruik van
natuurlijke materialen als glas en beton.

Het exterieur van het paradepaardje van Nike,
Niketown, in New York refereert aan een tempel. Met
een knipoog naar oranje, rechtsonder op de foto.

Article Elsevier Retail page 4

Tips voor New York

Bezienswaardige brand stores in New York:
Adidas Sports Performance Store (610 Broadway)
Adidas Sports Heritage Store (136 Wooster Street)
Burton Store (106 Spring Street)
Samsung Experience (Columbus Circle)
Prada Epicenter (575 Broadway)
Puma Black Store (421 W. 14th Street)
Toys 'R Us (Time Square)
Victoria's Secret (34th street & Broadway)
Brand store-paradijs 5th Avenue

❮ Computerfabrikant Apple weet voor
een goed samenspel te zorgen tussen
merk, driedimensionale ruimte,
product en consument.
❯

home

❮ De NBA Store aan Fifth Avenue is door
TPG Architecture ontworpen in de
vorm van een basketbalring. Van een
wedstrijd bekijken in de zithoek tot
zelf actief een balletje schieten: het
merk kan hier in de volle breedte wor-
den beleefd.De NBA Store aan Fifth
Avenue is door TPG Architecture ont-
worpen in de vorm van een basketbal-
ring. Van een wedstrijd bekijken in de
zithoek tot zelf actief een balletje
schieten: het merk kan hier in de volle
breedte worden beleefd.

Geen verkoop, alleen merk-
beleving in de Samsung
Experience, in het Time Warner
Center, aan Columbus Circle in
New York.

"Toen we een opdracht vanuit Thailand
kregen voor de Kasikorn Bank, zijn we
eerst begonnen met een studie van de
Thaise cultuur", vertelt designer Leandro
Artigala. "Zo bood de cultuur ons het kleu-
renpalet voor de bank."
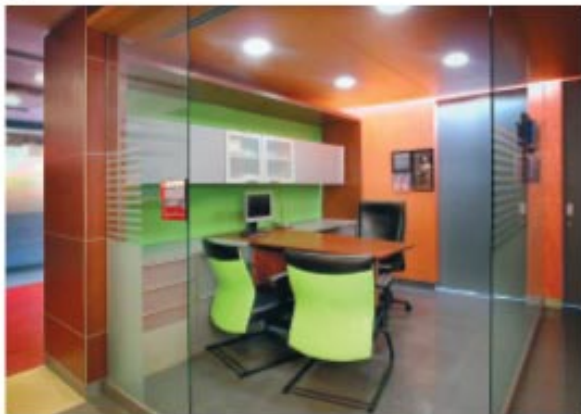
'It's the lifestyle that sells'

absurd - zelfs paskamers waar men met z'n tweeën in
kan", lacht Michael Neumann.

3. Een goed verhaal

In New York lijken alle store designers en retailarchitec-
ten het erover eens: "It's the lifestyle that sells". Polo
Ralph Lauren was één van de eerste merken die een life-
style ging verkopen en daarmee zijn producten maakte.
Met succes, zo bleek, toen mensen zich ermee gingen
associëren en aspireren.
Toch houdt retailstrateeg Ron Cijs van Pluspoint er een
andere visie op na: "Ik begrijp wel wat ze bedoelen, maar
lifestyle suggereert iets heel groots, terwijl brand stores
vaak niet zo veelomvattend zijn. Ik zie een brand store
meer als een goed verteld verhaal." Dat verhaal is te vin-
den in de relatie tussen het merk en de doelgroep, daar
waar de waarden van beide partijen bij elkaar komen. Op
basis daarvan wordt een verhaal gecreëerd.

Een winkel die dat begrepen lijkt te hebben is de Adidas
Sports Heritage Store, die onder meer in New York te vin-
den is. Het ontwerp van winkel refereert aan een vlooien-
markt, omdat dat voorheen de enige plaats was waar de
producten te koop waren. Dit verhaal krijgt in de winkel
vorm door grote, lage tafels, waar de producten kriskras
door elkaar liggen en het gebruik van natuurlijke materi-
alen als glas en beton. Ook de producten, veelal gelimi-
teerde collecties met originele materialen en productie-
processen, passen in het verhaal.

4. Strategisch design

Het design van de brand store is een uitvloeisel van het
verhaal. Een merk kan prima sturing geven aan de bele-
ving van de klant, hoewel menselijke percepties subjec-
tief zijn. "Mensen nemen dingen op gelijke manieren
waar", stelt Alec Zaballero. "Bepaalde kleuren veroorza-
ken bepaalde emoties en nauwe ruimtes intimideren ons.
Dat heeft alles te maken met psychologie en inzicht in
consumentengedrag. Daar moet je inzicht in krijgen en
dat vervolgens weten toe te passen. Want de manier

Voor onder meer de lezers van Elsevier Retail organiseert Anthony Snoeks Study Trips een retailreis naar New York. De inschrijfdatum is verlengd tot 1 november 2006.
Meer info: mutual.interest@orange.nl of 06-54284023

Prada Epicenter. De concept store van Prada aan 575 Broadway in New York, en ontworpen door Rem Koolhaas, van het alom gerespecteerde Office for Metropolitan Architecture uit Rotterdam.

waarop je ruimtes ontwerpt, is daarop gebaseerd."
In de Nederlandse designwereld lijkt deze gedachte nog wat minder gebruikelijk. Nederland is meer het land van grafisch design, waar minder communicatieve kwaliteit in zit. Met uitzondering van enkele merken die design wél tot een beleving hebben weten om te zetten, zoals cosmeticamerk Rituals, dat door alle zintuigen aan te spreken een bijna Zen-achtige sfeer oproept.

5. 'Almost perfect'

Om een winkelconcept internationaal te ontwikkelen, moet je beginnen bij de universele basis. Ook daarvoor biedt 'het verhaal' uitkomst, omdat dat immers de kern is waar de relatie tussen het merk en je doelgroep ligt. "Het verhaal vormt dan het abstractieniveau dat wereldwijd toegepast kan worden", zegt Ron Cijs. Het concept blijft hetzelfde, alleen de manier waarop je de store ontwerpt kan dan verschillen per locatie. Dat dit niet altijd goed gaat, bewijst Marc Chelnik, store manager van vijf Bang & Olufsen-winkels in NY. "In Denemarken is 'almost perfect' een goede slogan, omdat natuurlijk niets écht per-

'Een beleving claim je niet, dat bén je'

fect is. Hier in New York vragen mensen wat er dan mis is. Ze wanen zich bij 'almost perfect' aan de rand van de afgrond."
"Wij lezen niet alleen designboeken, maar ook boeken over de cultuur," vertelt designer Leandro Artigala van Point Design. "Toen we een opdracht vanuit Thailand kregen voor de Kasikorn Bank, zijn we eerst begonnen met een studie van de Thaise cultuur. Zo bood de cultuur ons het kleurenpalet voor de bank. In andere culturen zou het waarschijnlijk niet werken, maar in Thailand doet Kasikorn het erg goed."
Om consumenten echt een beleving te bieden is er één allesoverheersende voorwaarde, samengevat in het woord 'relatie'. Want uiteindelijk draait het in de brand store om het perfecte samenspel tussen merk, driedimensionale ruimte, product en consument. Een goed voorbeeld daarvan is de winkel van Apple. Daar kun je met recht spreken van 'more than a store'. ●

3. Article for Emerce

NIEUWE VERHOUDINGEN IN DE RELATIE MENS-MERK

Tête-à-tête

Henry Ford kon zijn T-Ford nog verkopen met 'kies elke kleur, zolang het maar zwart is', maar met de huidige pimp-cultuur is dat achterhaald. Emerce vond een plaats waar producent en consument elkaar recht in de ogen kijken: *de brand store*.

Het begon allemaal met Nike-ID, waar je als consument vanuit de gedachte 'Perfection is personal' de mogelijkheid kreeg om online je eigen schoen te ontwerpen. De relatie tussen producent en consument is radicaal aan het veranderen. Anno

2006 is het credo van *'take it or leave it'* verschoven naar *'make it or I'll leave'*.

Vroeger waren geografie, inkomen, geslacht en leeftijd de belangrijkste determinanten op basis waarvan koopgedrag werd vastgesteld. Omdat

mensen steeds gecompliceerder worden, bestaan dergelijke segmenten amper nog. Individuen stellen gaandeweg hun eigen identiteit samen. Wat dan voor de marketeer interessant is, zijn de momenten waarop consument en merk elkaar ontmoeten. De brand

store, een fysieke winkelomgeving die helemaal gewijd is aan één merk, biedt daarvoor een uniek platform, omdat dat één van de zeldzame plaatsen is waar beide partijen elkaar letterlijk tegen het lijf lopen.

Ceremonie

Hebben consumenten in een tijd waarin alles via internet te krijgen is, inclusief zeeën van productinformatie en kopersrecensies, nog wel behoefte aan fysieke winkels? Alec Zabbalero, principal van TPG Architecture denkt van wel: "Hoewel mensen steeds meer producten online aanschaffen, zijn het toch de merken die zowel een winkel als een e-shop hebben, die het het beste doen. Winkelen is een fundamentele sociale activiteit, waar mensen simpelweg niet zonder kunnen."

Toch moet er dan wel wat veranderen met het gros van de *brick-and-mortar stores*, ziet Christopher Enright, technology officer bij IconNicholson, het Amerikaanse zusterbureau van LostBoys: "We bevinden ons in een Walmart-achtige retailomgeving – minimale service, maximale korting. Personeel is in de loop der jaren wegbezuinigd, waardoor de servicegraad bedroevend laag is en producten moeilijk te vinden zijn." Hij vervolgt: "Ja, en dan is internet en het Amazongevoel een aantrekkelijk alternatief. Amazon weet wie je bent, wat je leuk vindt en wat je eerder gekocht hebt. Het is helemaal op jou afgestemd. Je bent nummer één."

Ferrari

Die één-op-éénrelatie tussen merk en consument, daar draait het om. In een brand store moet je het merk kunnen voelen, ruiken, proeven, zien en horen. Pas dan kun je als consument je eigen emotionele band met het merk ontwikkelen – een persoonlijke relatie. Niet de producten, maar de beleving staan centraal. "Ferrari heeft dat goed begrepen", legt Leandro Artigala van Point Design uit. "Boven de technische specificaties van de auto als het acceleratievermogen en de topsnelheid, richt het zich op de beleving. Geen kooptransactie maar een ceremonie in een loungeomgeving, inclusief video's, pre-

sentaties – alles. En aan het einde krijg je je autosleutels."

Ook in de Samsung Experience, op de derde etage van het Time Warner Centre op Columbus Circle in New York, staat de merkbeleving centraal. Een beleving die je niet alleen ondergaat, maar waarin je als consument ook een actieve rol hebt. Zo worden bijvoorbeeld de nieuwste digitale videocamera's uitgeleend om ze zelf in Manhattan uit te proberen. Bij terugkomst in de winkel kun je je filmpje op dvd branden en als souvenir mee naar huis nemen. Zo creëer je als consument, in interactie met Samsung, een unieke beleving van het merk.

Wat futurist Alvin Toffler in 1970 al voorspelde, lijkt werkelijkheid te worden. In zijn boek 'Future Shock' lan-

'Het Amazon-gevoel: jij bent nummer één'

ceerde hij de term 'prosumer', wat duidt op een éénwording van producent en consument. Omdat beleving altijd relatief is, kan die nooit door de producent geclaimd worden. Het merk kan hoogstens het platform bieden, de juiste ambiance waarin de relatie met consumenten tot stand komt en verder ontwikkeld kan worden. Een tot in details doordacht *store design* is daarbij van levensbelang, omdat elke fysieke omgeving waar een mens in terechtkomt, een bepaalde reactie teweegbrengt.

Intelligent concept

"Een merk dat dat heel slim heeft aangepakt, is het Spaanse schoenenmerk Camper", aldus retailstrateeg Ron Cijs van Pluspoint. Camper huurt continu voor korte tijd leegstaande panden om ze als *guerilla store* in te zetten. Men zet er een glazen pui in, verft één muur rood en de overige muren wit. Op de rode muur komt vervolgens het verhaal dat de merkidentiteit weergeeft. Met behulp van rode '100% Camper'-markeerstiften worden bezoekers vervolgens uitgedaagd om hun eigen verhaal op de witte muren te schrijven of te tekenen. "Zo bouw je samen aan het merk", stelt Cijs. "Een winkelconcept

met een hoge mate van intelligentie." En de volgekalkte muren getuigen dat het werkt.

Ook in het vooruitstrevende Prada Epicenter in de Newyorkse wijk Soho speelt de persoonlijke relatie met de consument een hoofdrol. Prada wilde met dit Epicenter zowel een verkoopomgeving als het merk in zijn volle breedte neerzetten. Daarvoor werden technologische middelen ingezet, maar niet zómaar. "Technologie moet niet concurreren met de winkel, maar erin verweven zijn", vindt Christopher Enright van IconNicholson, het bedrijf dat de rfid-technologie in de winkel heeft geïmplementeerd. "Prada is een sobere, klantgeoriënteerde omgeving waarin de technologie de merkboodschap niet mag verstoren. Het is geen circus. Het moest zo onzichtbaar en hulpvol mogelijk zijn, gericht op het verhogen van de beleving, tot in de paskamer toe." Alle producten kregen rfid-tags, die door knappe jongens in driedelig kostuum gescand kunnen worden, met behulp van de computertjes die ze bij zich dragen. Vervolgens kan met deze computers de content worden aangepast op de negentig plasmaschermen die verspreid tussen de producten hangen. Zo kan de verkoper je door middel van het scannen van een artikel direct alle informatie laten zien over de kleur, de materialen, originele schetsen, catwalkvideo's – wat je maar wilt. Daarnaast kan voor klanten een Prada-card worden aangemaakt, zodat zij bij binnenkomst in de winkel direct worden herkend. Doordat informatie over voorkeuren, wensen en eerdere aankopen op deze kaart kan worden opgeslagen, kan een servicegraad bereikt worden die tot nu toe enkel voor *celebrities* was weggelegd. ■

Broek aan, in bad

Het spijkerbroekenmerk Levi's heeft de interactieve relatie tussen producent en consument op een creatieve manier gerealiseerd, door als introductiestunt in de *flagship store* in San Francisco de 'Shrink to fit'-commercial uit 1986 nieuw leven in te blazen. Net als in de commercial was er een bad in de winkel geplaatst, waarin klanten met hun nieuwe Levi's-spijkerbroek, onder luid gejuich van het overige publiek, plaats konden nemen om de broek te laten krimpen. Na het bad stond er een blower klaar, zodat de klant vervolgens met zijn unieke jeans de winkel uit kon lopen.

About the author

Janneke Zuidhof was born on October 17, 1983 in Harderwijk, the Netherlands. She received her Bachelor in Communications in 2005, and went on with her Master's in Communication Studies at the University of Twente, the Netherlands.
During the final stage of her graduation project, she was employed at Philips Design, as an internee. In July 2007, she joined Brand Republic, an advertising agency in Utrecht, as creative strategist.

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