



Natalie Tan

# Emotions

## Lead Shoppers

### to the till



Goods displayed together enable shoppers to find solutions. By pairing certain items, customers feel emotions such as comfort, excitement and intrigue.

Have you ever set out to the mall to pick up a present for a friend, a pair of new runners or a new alarm clock, and ended up with an entire outfit you just had to have, new placemats that went so well with your dining room décor and that funky thingamajig that you always wanted, even though you are not exactly sure what purpose it really serves?

Many shoppers will return home with their purchases and wonder why on earth they bought what they did. An overwhelming desire to acquire overcomes even the most rational of shoppers and indeed, a theory developed after five years of research confirms this.

Unity Marketing, a Pennsylvania-based consulting firm believes that how shoppers feels about a product is the driving force behind opening their wallets. This is more influential than their need for an item and even if they can afford it. More succinctly, the propensity\* to purchase a product can be described with the formula  $*P = (N+F+A) E^2$  where N is the need for the product, F being the product's desirable features, A its affordability and E the emotion guiding the decision.

This is closely related to the ideas put forth by neuroeconomics. In retail, shoppers' emotions can be strongly tied to a particular brand. How a shopper interprets and responds to these emotions is likely the tipping point in deciding to buy.

This is a gold mine that many retailers are not yet tapping into. Although an affordable price tag may be considered a strong selling point, it is only an additive element in the grand scheme, whereas emotional attachment is exponential.

If retailers can understand and capitalize on this theory, the likelihood of both men and women making purchases will

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rise significantly. Though this formula is believed to apply to both men and women in all their purchasing decisions, there are particular areas where this is more noticeable. This formula merely confirms what we all know regarding a woman's love of handbag shopping or a man's excitement in acquiring gadgets.

So how can it be applied to your own retail environment? If emotion is what

drives sales, then a retailer must provide the trigger for these emotions. In the case of a furniture retail business, York Furniture, adding decorative accessories that convey an aspiration meant furniture was no longer just furniture. Instead it became part of a lifestyle, of how owning such pieces would get the shopper closer to their ideal living space. Though the furniture retained the same quality and affordability, how the shopper emotionally perceived it changed completely.

Within one week of York Furniture complementing their furniture with accessories and decoration to elicit such responses, they sold eight suites. Now don't those results just make a retailer emotional?

With this example, take a walk through your store. Why do people purchase your items, to make their lives easier, to feel better, to look better or to solve a problem? Give shoppers a way to address these issues, display the goods in a way that will spell out the solution. Connecting with shoppers on an emotional level and being invited to take part in their lives by guiding them to the solution, will result in a positive shopping experience for customers and increased sales for the retailer. Sounds like everybody wins! ■

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