

OUT OF HOME

Scented candles color brand identity, foster in-store connections

December 2, 2013



By JEN KING

As fashion labels continue to branch out into the realm of interiors, scented candles can help forge a branded atmosphere similar to an in-store experience.

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Akin to fragrance and personal care lines, a scented candle creates an aroma in the home and gives consumers an entry-point into branded memories. With an accessible price point, aspirational consumers have the ability to purchase a branded candle to establish connections with particular brands.

“A candle is a wonderful segueway from accessories to interiors - it brings in a physical element of a brand, reflected in the design of the candle, along with the intangible scent, which remains ingrained in people's memory,” said Rony Zeidan, president and creative director of [RO New York](#).

“As one becomes familiar with the scent, such as experiencing it in a room, one associates that pleasantness with the luxury brand behind the design and, going forward, seeks out that particular luxury brand for that very reason,” he said.

Branded atmospheres

A branded home interior collection aims to establish a physical connection between

brand and consumer through daily use.

Although the consumer may not wear a pair of Jimmy Choo shoes every day, there is a chance that she have used a Ralph Lauren bath towel or light a Versace candle daily, for instance.

In the most obvious sense, a branded candle can be viewed as a fragrance for the home and allows the brand to enter the personal space of a consumer in ways that apparel, accessories or typical housewares cannot accomplish.

Lighting a branded candle can trigger sensory memories that connect the consumer to the brand. The experience may even become a catalyst for gradually building brand loyalty.



Karl Lagerfeld's candle collection

Similar to having an air freshener that smells like “new car,” consumers attempt to recreate a feeling associated with a brand through sense of smell. Consumers may even purchase candles evocative of what brands use in retail locations.

“The next time you walk into a luxury store, close your eyes and activate your sense of smell,” Mr. Zeidan said. “You will notice that all interiors you enter into have a scent, some more subtle than others.

“Your subconscious has already been triggered to associate a scent with an exact brand, so extending that to a commercial offering and creating a line of candles, is simply a natural exercise of brand awareness,” he said.

Crafted looks

Many luxury brands seeking to expand their portfolio and spark new interest turn to entry-level beauty products as a way to portray the ideal branded look.

Brands that offer a full, multi-faceted collection of products seem to fare better than competitors who offer a singular or smaller product line. By creating a beauty collection, to be paired with ready-to-wear, shoes and accessories a brand is able to create a larger picture for enthusiasts to emulate ([see story](#)).



Michael Kors beauty collection

A brand's signature fragrance works on the same premise as a beauty collection. The fragrance is meant to envelop the consumer in the scent of a label just as a scented candle's objective is to fill a space with the essence of its brand.

"In my opinion it's a similar approach," Mr. Zeidan said. "It's in your environment, and the closer it gets to your skin, the more personal the experience with that specific scent and brand.

"Of course, it is clear that filling ones home with an aroma is a much more all-encompassing experience and embrace of a brand than wearing it for a day, but both approaches are very effective," he said.

Living scents

An issue marketers come across is conveying a scent accurately on social media and through shared videos. If done successfully, consumers will be able to explore a fragrance's elements and essence before coming into a store.

Through the use of social content and interactive Web sites, brands are able to define a fragrance without the consumer actually smelling its notes. Social media brings the fragrance to the consumer by echoing lifestyle and allows marketers to target specific consumer ([see story](#)).

Social media paired with video allows a scent to come to life and enables marketers to present consumers with a living depiction of a fragrance.

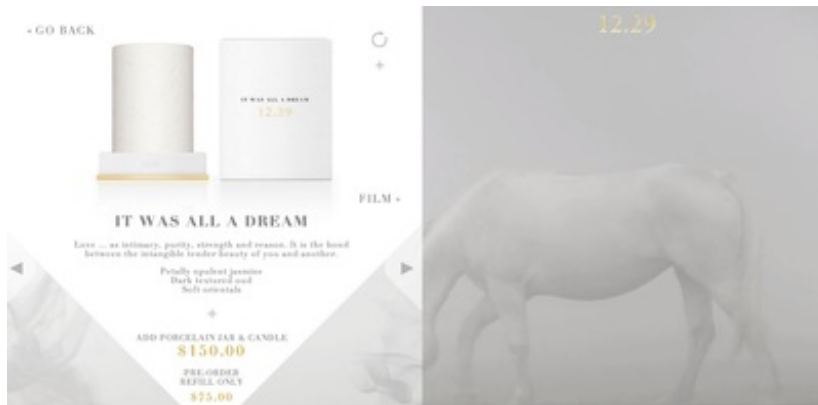
"Because scents are non-tangible elements, they require visual signals, instinctually triggering our thoughts and forcing awareness of our deepest memories," Mr. Zeidan said. "Specifically, moving pictures activate our olfactory mind, and that imagery allows us to rediscover our raw and most primitive of sensory action and memory.

"It is important in a campaign such as this one to bridge that gap between the impalpable aura of aroma and the literality and recognition of a brand and create a harmonious marriage of the two," he said.

"By bringing life to something as abstract as a scent, it becomes necessary to have a very

real vessel, such as a specific brand, to carry it.”

Mr. Zeidan recently worked closely with olfactive brand 12.29 which has curated signature scent identities for brands such as Zac Posen, Jason Wu, Mercedes-Benz, high-end retail environments, exclusive events and hospitality venues. The brand ventured into the interiors sector in November with a launch of its own candle collection designed to be refilled and collected.



12.29 Web site

Mr. Zeidan's firm was responsible for the packaging design and 12.29's ecommerce platform and its visual touch points. The five-piece candle collection from 12.29 is available its Web site for \$150 each and is packaged in a Limoges porcelain jar.

During his work on the project, Mr. Zeidan learned that psychological responses must be taken into account when creating scents.

“12.29 has a distinctive point of view,” Mr. Zeidan said. “The original use of the Limoges porcelain jar, finished with a matte texture, is a bold projection of the scent upon revealing the candle from its telescope handcrafted box.

“When I designed the packaging, with a limited color palette, tasteful accents and elegant typeface, I wanted to keep in mind a serene quality, reflective of the nose behind the brand, further evoked with the right balance of poetry and olfactory psychology expressed through their Web site,” he said.

Final Take

Jen King, editorial assistant on Luxury Daily, New York

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