



A Profitable Touch

Imagine you're sofa shopping. You're first drawn by looks—a sofa's color, pattern, shape. But as you walk closer, what sense drives you to fully engage with it? Touch. If it feels right to your hand then your body, it's likely right for you. No matter how gorgeous that sofa looks, if you don't make a connection with how it feels, it won't end up in your living room.

This simple scenario illustrates the power behind haptics—the science of applying touch (tactile) sensation. This term is derived from the Greek word *haptain*, which means, “to fasten,” and is often used in the computer industry for developing computer applications. But the scope of haptics is much broader, as it's proven effective in building brand awareness and boosting sales.

The power of touch works in marketing because it fills a basic human need. That need is hard-wired in our brains to touch and feel the world around us. Though we have touch (tactile) receptors on every inch of our bodies, the ones on our hands have the most. When we come in contact with an object, our receptor-rich hands are usually what we first use to make a connection. And once we touch something, we form a judgment immediately.

According to neuroscientist Dr. David Eagleman, “...touch represents a powerful form of non-verbal communication. Our sense of touch plays a fundamental role in daily life, from learning about objects to communicating with other people.” In fact, Dr. Eagleman collaborated with Sappi North America to create a two-part piece entitled [A Communicator's Guide to the Neuroscience of Touch](#).

Part one of this downloadable resource is the “Haptic Brain.” It covers how the human brain is constantly processing data from the senses. Touching something fires off tiny electrical impulses through the brain's neurons. What our hand touches, our brains transform into a sort of cerebral pattern that defines our experience. For example, if you touch something soft and fuzzy, your hand makes a connection with your mind that elicits a feeling of comfort. Touch a burning flame and your mind recognizes that “painful” connection from your hand immediately.

The second part of this resource, “Haptic Brand,” looks at how touch impacts a brand's perception and success. It exemplifies how some of the world's most renowned brands use the power of touch in communications effectively and in a way that's distinctively their own. Case in point is how the *World Wildlife Foundation* creates an engaging sensory experience with bold images, photographs and production techniques in their *World Wildlife magazine* that puts our wild world right in readers' hands.

The Print Connection

The power of touch in branding and marketing isn't exclusive to “touchable” products like sofas, fabrics or foods. The world of print and direct mail also offers opportunities to make lasting connections with recipients. Especially with direct mail, as it's often a brand's chance to introduce itself and make a lasting impression with a potential customer. For instance, say a new carwash wants to attract residents. This carwash is different from its competition in that it incorporates





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a unique drying technique that's spotless, especially on windows. To reach recipients more effectively, its direct mail piece features a tight shot of a shiny car with water spots embossed on the paper stock itself. This one-two sensory "punch" lets recipients see and feel the distraction of spots on a just-washed vehicle

How to Tout Touch in Your Marketing Efforts

The carwash scenario is just one way print can be used to enhance a recipient's sensory connection. There are countless combinations that deliver a more touchable experience in direct mail and other printed materials based on considering these types of techniques and products:

Take stock in stock. Though most projects have tight budget restraints, it pays to splurge a bit on a more sensory-pleasing paper stock. Explore papers with added weight or textures, such as fiber-added envelopes, or envelopes with a groove or laid finish. Remember: cheap and flimsy feels cheap and flimsy and conveys cheap and flimsy.

Leveraged by labels. Adding a label to a printed piece not only gives it added dimension; it creates another avenue for exploring the senses. For example, a metallic label adds visual appeal, and a scented label incorporates another powerful sense in marketing—smell.

Engravely important. Engraving is an effective way to call attention to key messages or images in a marketing piece. It also showcases a particular design, and gives a piece an added level of quality and distinction.

Think ink. Experiment with thermochromatic inks that change colors when touched, or raised inks that add a touchable dimension. These techniques, combined with an eye-catching color palate, will be sure to snag a recipient's attention.

A coating of many colors. From a spot of slick UV to a velvety smooth Soft Touch, coating can really enhance a piece's "touchability factor." And when a coating works in tandem with the right color selection, you again create a piece that piques interest and delivers results.

Emboss is boss. Actually debossing is, too—adding either of these techniques can give pieces a more touchable and memorable 3D feel.

When you or your customer is ready to apply the power of touch let us help you maximize your efforts with unique direct mail ideas and engaging envelopes and labels, contact us at wsel.com/contact for more information.

