

## Chapter 2: PERCEPTION

### CHAPTER OBJECTIVES

After reading this chapter, students should understand why:

1. Perception is a three-stage process that translates raw stimuli into meaning.
2. The design of a product today is a key driver of its success or failure.
3. Products and commercial messages often appeal to our senses, but because of the profusion of these messages, most of them will not influence us.
4. The concept of a sensory threshold is important for marketing communication.
5. Subliminal advertising is a controversial—but largely ineffective—way to talk to consumers.
6. We interpret the stimuli to which we do pay attention according to learned patterns and expectations.
7. The field of semiotics helps us to understand how marketers use symbols to create meaning.

### CHAPTER SUMMARY

After reading this chapter, students should understand why:

*Perception is a three-stage process that translates raw stimuli into meaning.*

Perception is the process by which physical sensations, such as sights, sounds, and smells, are selected, organized, and interpreted. The eventual interpretation of a stimulus allows it to be assigned meaning. A perceptual map is a widely used marketing tool that evaluates the relative standing of competing brands along relevant dimensions.

*The design of a product today is a key driver of its success or failure.*

In recent years, the sensory experiences we receive from products and services have become a high priority when we choose among competing options. Consumers increasingly want to buy things that will give them hedonic value in addition to functional value. They often believe that most brands perform similarly, so they weigh a product's aesthetic qualities heavily when they select a brand.

*Products and commercial messages often appeal to our senses, but we will not be influenced by most of them.*

Marketing stimuli have important sensory qualities. We rely on colors, odors, sounds, tastes, and even the “feel” of products when we evaluate them. Not all sensations successfully make their way through the perceptual process. Many stimuli compete for our attention, and we do not notice or accurately interpret the majority of them. People have different thresholds of

perception. A stimulus must be presented at a certain level of intensity before our sensory detectors can detect it. In addition, a consumer's ability to detect whether two stimuli are different (the differential threshold) is an important issue in many marketing contexts, such as package design, the size of a product, or its price.

*Subliminal advertising is a controversial—but largely ineffective—way to talk to consumers.* So-called subliminal persuasion and related techniques that expose people to visual and aural messages below the sensory threshold are controversial. Although evidence that subliminal persuasion is effective is virtually nonexistent, many consumers continue to believe that advertisers use this technique. Some of the factors that determine which stimuli (above the threshold level) are perceived include the amount of exposure to the stimulus, how much attention it generates, and how it is interpreted. In an increasingly crowded stimulus environment, advertising clutter occurs when too many marketing-related messages compete for attention.

*We interpret the stimuli to which we do pay attention according to learned patterns and expectations.*

We do not attend to a stimulus in isolation. We classify and organize it according to principles of perceptual organization. A *Gestalt*, or overall pattern, guides these principles. Specific grouping principles include closure, similarity, and figure-ground relationships. The final step in the process of perception is interpretation. Symbols help us make sense of the world by providing us with an interpretation of a stimulus that others often share. The degree to which the symbolism is consistent with our previous experience affects the meaning we assign to related objects.

*The field of semiotics helps us to understand how marketers use symbols to create meaning.* Marketers try to communicate with consumers by creating relationships between their products or services and desired attributes. A semiotic analysis involves the correspondence between stimuli and the meaning of signs. The intended meaning may be literal (e.g., an icon such as a street sign with a picture of children playing). However, it may be indexical if it relies on shared characteristics (e.g., the red in a stop sign means danger). Meaning also can be conveyed by a symbol in which an image is given meaning by convention or by agreement of members of a society (e.g., stop signs are octagonal, whereas yield signs are triangular). Marketer-created associations often take on lives of their own as consumers begin to believe that hype is, in fact, real. We call this condition hyperreality.

## CHAPTER OUTLINE

### I. Sensory Systems

- A. **Sensation** refers to the immediate response of our sensory receptors (eyes, ears, nose, mouth, fingers) to such basic stimuli as light, color, sound, odors, and textures.
- B. **Perception** is the process by which these sensations are selected, organized, and interpreted. The study of perception, then, focuses on what we add to these raw sensations to give them meaning.
  1. People undergo stages of **information processing** in which stimuli are input and stored. People only process a small amount of information (stimuli) available to them. An even smaller amount is attended to and given meaning.
  2. As shown in Figure 2.1, the perceptual process is made up of three stages:
    - **Exposure**
    - **Attention**
    - **Interpretation**

\*\*\*\*\**Use Figure 2.1 Here*\*\*\*\*\*

3. External stimuli, or **sensory inputs**, can be received by our brains on a number of channels.
  - The inputs picked up by our five senses constitute the raw data that begin the perceptual process.
  - External stimuli can trigger memories from the past.
  - The unique sensory quality can help differentiate a product from the competition.
  - The resulting responses are an important part of **hedonic consumption** (the multi-sensory, fantasy, and emotional aspects of consumers' interactions with products).

### II. Hedonic Consumption and the Design Economy

- A. Consumers want to buy things that will provide hedonic value in addition to doing what the product is designed to do, and will reward companies that produce great designs with loyalty.
- B. FMRI (functional magnetic resonance imaging) research showed faster reaction times to aesthetically pleasing packages.
- C. In the era of **sensory marketing**, companies pay extra attention to the impact of sensations on product experiences.
  1. A **sensory signature** is the sensory impression a brand leaves in people's minds.
  2. **Vision**
    - a. Marketers communicate on the visual channel through a product's color, size, and styling and rely on visual elements in advertising, store design, and packaging.
    - b. Colors can create feelings of arousal, stimulation, relaxation, and so on.
      - i. Red can create feelings of arousal and stimulate appetite, red backgrounds perform better when consumers have to remember details, and women in red are rated as more attractive by men than those who where blue.

- ii. Blue can create more relaxing feelings, consumers do better at imaginative tasks when they are presented on blue backgrounds, and products presented against blue backdrops are liked better than products shown against red backdrops.
- iii. Black is associated with power and mourning.
- c. Some reactions are learned through but others are not.
  - i. Women are drawn toward brighter tones, perhaps because females see color better than males.
  - ii. Older people prefer white and bright tones, perhaps because colors look duller to older people.
  - iii. Hispanics prefer brighter colors, perhaps because of intense lighting conditions in Latin America.
  - iv. Some cultures do not have words that correspond to colors available in other cultures.
- d. Color (and the choice of **color palette**) is a key issue in package design.

*Discussion Opportunity—Demonstrate how the package color affects expectation of what is inside the package. You might consider putting together a brief experiment using various products and manipulating the color. How can a marketer use color?*

- e. Some color combinations come to be so strongly associated with a corporation that they become known as the company's **trade dress**, and the company may even be granted exclusive use of these colors (for example, Eastman Kodak's defense of their use of yellow, black, and red in court).

*Discussion Opportunity—Ask: What colors can you think of that are uniquely associated with a particular company or a product? Give at least three illustrations. Have you noticed any confusing similarities with these companies or products?*

- f. Fashion trends strongly influence our color preferences. Firms produce **color forecasts** of trendy colors for manufacturers and retailers.

**\*\*\*\*\*Use Consumer Behavior Challenge Here \*\*\*\*\***  
**Apply #3**

- 3. Dollars and Scents
  - a. Odors can stir emotions or create a calming feeling. They can invoke memories or relieve stress.
  - b. Fragrance cues are processed by the limbic system, the most primitive part of the brain and the place where immediate emotions are experienced.
  - c. Recent developments in the use of fragrance include scented clothes, scented stores, scented cars and planes, scented household products, and scented advertisements.

*Discussion Opportunity—Ask students to consider their most favorite and least favorite scents. Before class, consider your own as well. Then, engage the class in a discussion about whether or not such scents affect product purchase or avoidance.*

4. **Sound** can affect people's feelings and behaviors.
  - a. **Audio watermarking** is a term to describe when producers weave a sound/motif into a piece of music that acts like an earworm we compulsively hum.
  - b. **Sound symbolism** is the process by which the way a word sounds influences our assumptions about what it describes and attributes like its size.
    - i. Consumers are more likely to recognize brand names that begin with a hard consonant (K or P).
    - ii. Phonemes (vowel and consonant sounds) are associated with perceptions of large and small size.

*Discussion Opportunity—Have students close their eyes and picture themselves shopping at a mall (you might give them cues to help this visualization along). As they are doing this, tell them that they should consider that the store is completely silent. After a few seconds, have them share how this affected their experience. Then ask: What are other ways marketers might use sound to stimulate your purchasing?*

5. **Touch** has been shown to be a factor in sale interactions.
  - a. People are stimulated or relaxed by sensations that reach the skin.
  - b. Some view touch like a primal language, one we learn well before writing and speech.
  - c. Touch or **haptic** senses appear to moderate the relationship between product experience and judgment confidence; i.e., people are more sure about what they perceive when they can touch it.
  - d. The Japanese practice, **Kansei engineering**, is a philosophy that translates customers' feelings into design elements.
6. **Taste** is influenced by biological factors (taste receptors) and cultural factors (the image and values associated with food influence how we experience taste).

*Discussion Opportunity—Ask students the following: What is your favorite “new” taste? Give an illustration. How did you discover this new taste? What stimulus influenced you the most to try this “new” taste? How could marketers use this information?*

### III. Exposure

**Exposure** occurs when a stimulus comes within the range of someone's sensory receptors.

\*\*\*\*\* *Use Consumer Behavior Challenge Here* \*\*\*\*\*  
**Discuss #3**

A. Sensory Thresholds

1. The science that focuses on how the physical environment is integrated into our personal, subjective world is known as **psychophysics**.
2. When we define the lowest intensity of a stimulus that can be registered on a sensory channel, we speak of a **threshold** for that receptor.
3. The **absolute threshold** refers to the minimum amount of stimulation that can be detected on a sensory channel (the sound emitted by a dog whistle is beyond our auditory absolute threshold, for example).

\*\*\*\*\* *Use Consumer Behavior Challenge Here* \*\*\*\*\*

*Discuss #1*

*Discussion Opportunity—Ask students to consider how the absolute threshold is an important consideration in designing marketing stimulation. Then have them give illustrations.*

4. The **differential threshold** refers to the ability of a sensory system to detect changes or differences between two stimuli.
  - a. The minimum difference that can be detected between two stimuli is known as the **j.n.d.** or just noticeable difference (e.g., marketers might want to make sure that a consumer notices that merchandise has been discounted).
  - b. A consumer's ability to detect a difference between two stimuli is relative. A whispered conversation will not be noticed on a busy street.
  - c. **Weber's Law** demonstrates that the stronger the initial stimulus, the greater the change must be for it to be noticed. Cereal boxes need to be vastly different sizes for consumers to notice. Similarly, most retailers believe that a price discount must be at least 20 percent for consumers to notice or to react to it.

\*\*\*\*\* *Use Consumer Behavior Challenge Here* \*\*\*\*\*

*Apply #2*

*Discussion Opportunity—Ask the class to write down the price of the following goods on a piece of paper: (a) a gallon of 2% milk, (b) a Big Mac, (c) a pair of top-of-the-line Nike tennis shoes, and (d) a Chevrolet Corvette. Then see if they can figure out the differential threshold they have for these goods. (See how much price would have to change before they would actually know it.) Ask them why it is different depending on the price of the product in question.*

- B. **Augmented Reality (AR)** refers to media that combine a physical layer with a digital layer to create a combined experience (e.g. 3-D films, smartphone apps). Augmented reality techniques are executed using the web, kiosks, and mobile phones.
- C. **Subliminal Perception** is perception that is below the threshold level. It occurs when the stimulus is below the level of the consumer's awareness.
  1. Though the topic has received its share of notoriety, there is virtually no proof that this process has any effect on consumer behavior. Most examples of this technique are not subliminal; in fact, they are quite visible.

2. **Embeds** are tiny figures inserted into magazine ads via high-speed photography or airbrushing that are supposed to exert strong but unconscious influences on readers.

*Discussion Opportunity—Find an example of what you perceive to be a subliminal message. Explain your rationale to the class and show the product or message.*

3. Does subliminal perception work? Within the marketing context, most agree the answer is “probably not.” Effective messages must be very specifically tailored to individuals, rather than the mass messages required by advertising. Other discouraging factors are:
  - a. Individuals have wide differences in their threshold levels.
  - b. Advertisers cannot control many important variables (such as viewing distance from the television screen).
  - c. Viewers must give their absolute attention to the screen—most do not.
  - d. The specific effect cannot be controlled—your thirst will not make you buy “Pepsi.”

\*\*\*\*\**Use Consumer Behavior Challenge Here*\*\*\*\*\*  
**Discuss #2**

*Discussion Opportunity—Bring in a small can of Jolly Green Giant mushrooms. At one time, the mushrooms on the front of the can seemed to spell “SEX.” See if students can find their own examples of embeds. What do they think of this technique? Under what circumstances would “subliminal stimulation” be of benefit to society?*

#### IV. Attention

- A. **Attention** refers to the extent to which processing activity is devoted to a particular stimulus.
  1. Consumers are often in a state of **sensory overload** or are exposed to far more information than they are capable or willing to process. Today, the average adult is exposed to about 3,500 pieces of advertising information every single day.
  2. As of 2010, more than half of teens report that they engage in **multitasking**, or processing information from more than one medium at a time.
  3. How do Marketers Get Our Attention?
    - a. Networks try to engage viewers with original content during commercial breaks.
    - b. **Rich media** advertisements online use movement to get viewers attention (e.g. LowerMyBills.com silhouetted dancers).

\*\*\*\*\**Use Consumer Behavior Challenge Here*\*\*\*\*\*  
**Apply #4**

*Discussion Opportunity—Ask: What do you think are the characteristics of the best banner ads? Give an illustration.*

- c. Teaser ads start a story on television and ask you to go to the website for the rest of the ad.
- d. Doing something novel/unexpected
- B. **Perceptual selection** means that people attend to only a small portion of stimuli to which they are exposed. Personal and stimulus factors help to decide which stimuli will be received and which will be avoided.
  - 1. **Personal Selection Factors** reflect a consumer's **experience**, the result of acquiring and processing stimulation over time, which influences how much exposure to a particular stimulus a person accepts.
    - a. **Perceptual filters** include **perceptual vigilance** (consumers are more likely to be aware of stimuli that relate to their current needs) and **perceptual defense** (consumers may not process or distort the meaning of a threatening stimulus).

*Discussion Opportunity—Ask students to think of examples when they have used perceptual vigilance and perceptual defense. Think of examples and circumstances when advertisers consciously are able to overcome these effects in consumers. Identify the techniques that might be used to break through these barriers.*

- b. **Adaptation**, the degree to which consumers continue to notice a stimulus over time, is another personal selection factor. The **intensity** (less intense), **duration** (lengthy), **discrimination** (simple), **exposure** (frequent), and **relevance** (irrelevant) of stimuli affect (increase) the likelihood of adaptation.
- c. **Stimulus selection factors**, or the characteristics of the stimulus itself, also affect what we notice and what we ignore.
  - i. We are more likely to notice stimuli that differ from those around them (e.g. messages that create **contrast**).
  - ii. Altering size, color, position, or novelty can create contrast.

\*\*\*\*\*Use Consumer Behavior Challenges Here \*\*\*\*\*  
*Apply #1 and #5*

*Discussion Opportunity—Bring four magazine ads, one that illustrates each of the four contrast methods demonstrated in the chapter and discuss in class.*

## V. Interpretation

- A. **Interpretation** refers to the meaning that we assign to sensory stimuli. Two people can see the same event but their interpretation can be completely different.
  - 1. Consumers assign meaning to stimuli based on the **schema**, or set of beliefs, to which the stimulus is assigned.
  - 2. **Priming** is a process where certain properties of a stimulus typically will evoke a schema that leads us to evaluate the stimulus in terms of other stimuli we have encountered that are believed to be similar.
  - 3. Identifying and evoking the correct schema is crucial to many marketing decisions, because this determines what criteria will be used to evaluate the product, package, or message.



4. **Package schematics** may influence consumer feelings about the contents of a package for better or worse.

*Discussion Opportunity—Ask: What might be the schema for (a) a tuxedo, (b) a hair dryer, or (c) a calculator to be used in school?*

**B. Stimulus organization** occurs as we relate incoming sensations to those already in memory, based on fundamental organizational principles.

1. These principles are based on Gestalt psychology—meaning is derived from totality of a set of stimuli. In German, **gestalt** means whole, pattern, or configuration.

Principles include:

- The **closure principle**—people tend to perceive an incomplete picture as complete. We fill in the blanks.
- The **principle of similarity**—consumers tend to group objects that share similar physical characteristics.
- The **figure-ground principle**—one part of a stimulus will dominate (the figure) while other parts recede into the backdrop (the ground).

*Discussion Opportunity—Ask: When you walk through a room when Wheel of Fortune is on, do you find yourself stopping to solve the puzzle? When you hear “Less filling . . .” what do you think of? Give illustrations that demonstrate how advertisers can use or must be aware of (a) the closure principle, (b) the principle of similarity, and (c) the figure-ground principle.*

2. The Eye of the Beholder: Interpretational Biases
  - a. The stimuli we perceive often are ambiguous—it is up to us to determine the meaning based on our experiences, expectations, and needs.
  - b. We project our own desires and assumptions onto products and advertisements.

**C. Semiotics: The Symbols Around Us**

1. For assistance in understanding how consumers interpret the meanings of symbols, some marketers are turning to a field of study known as **semiotics** – the field that examines the correspondence between signs and symbols and how we assign meanings.
2. From a semiotic perspective, every marketing message has three basic components:
  - a. The **object** that is the focus of the message (e.g. Marlboro cigarettes).
  - b. The **sign** is the sensory imagery that represents the intended meanings of the object (e.g. the Marlboro cowboy).
  - c. The **interpretant** is the meaning derived (e.g. rugged, individualistic, American).

\*\*\*\*\***Use Figure 2.4 Here**\*\*\*\*\*

3. Signs are related to objects in one of three ways:
  - a. An **icon** is a sign that resembles the product in some way (e.g. Ford Mustang).
  - b. An **index** is a sign that is connected to a product because they share some property (pine tree on Spic & Span, shared property of fresh scent).

- c. A **symbol** is a sign that is related to a product through either conventional or agreed-upon associations (Dreyfus Fund lion represents fearlessness/strength).
4. **Hyperreality** occurs when advertisers create new relationships between objects and interpretants by inventing new connections between products and benefits (e.g., equating Marlboro cigarettes with the American frontier spirit). **Reverse product placement** (where fictional products that appear in shows become popular in the real world) is an example of hyperreality.
- D. Perceptual positioning is important because our evaluation of a product is the result of what it means rather than what it does. Our perceptions of this meaning are the basis for the product's market position.
  1. Perceptions of a brand consist of:
    - Functional attributes (e.g., its features, its price, and so on).
    - Symbolic attributes (its image, and what we think it says about us)
  2. **Positioning strategy** is a fundamental part of a company's marketing efforts as it uses elements of the marketing mix to influence the consumer's interpretation of its meaning.
  3. There are many dimensions that can be used to establish a brand's position:
    - Lifestyle (e.g. Grey Poupon has a higher class condiment)
    - Price leadership (e.g. L'Oreal sells Plenitude in discount stores)
    - Attributes (e.g. Bounty paper towels are "the quicker picker upper")
    - Product class (e.g. Spyder Eclipse is a sporty convertible)
    - Competitors (e.g. Northwestern Insurance is "the quiet company")
    - Occasions (e.g. Wrigley's gum as an alternative to smoking)
    - Users (e.g. Levi's Dockers target men 20s-40s)
    - Quality (e.g. Ford "Quality is job 1")

\*\*\*\*\* *Use Consumer Behavior Challenge Here* \*\*\*\*\*

***Discuss #5***

*Discussion Opportunity—Ask students to think of a case where a product has been positioned recently (i.e., new product introduction or re-positioning of an existing product). How was it positioned? What new market was pursued? How did you find out about this position or how did you discover the position?*

## End-of-Chapter Support Material

### SUMMARY OF SPECIAL FEATURE BOXES

#### 1. CB As I See It

Professor Aradhna Krishna explains the importance of *sensory marketing*, which he defines as “marketing that engages the consumers’ senses and affects their behavior.” Products and businesses can develop a **sensory signature**. What sensory characteristic of the brand’s product sticks with consumers? This can be the basis for the sensory signature.

#### 2. Marketing Pitfall

Companies are shrinking package sizes instead of charging more. Sometimes these packaging changes are positioned as healthier, more portable or more environmentally friendly. The result is a higher price per oz. of product for consumers.

#### 3. Marketing Pitfall

People who use a DVR are more likely to fast-forward past ads that are not interesting. Ads that start with a captivating story are more likely to hold the audience than those that get to the point quickly.

#### 4. CB As I See It

Professor Larry Compeau identifies **behavioral pricing** as the area of research that considers price an information cue that is perceived and interpreted. Some consumers use price as an indicator of quality. Price may lead to different judgments based on the context, which is one reason sellers use a **reference price** along with the selling price to provide contextual information so the consumer’s perceptual processes work in the seller’s favor. Consumers should be protected from exaggerated reference prices and other deceptive practices.

#### 5. The Tangled Web

Gap misjudged consumers’ attachment to its old logo when it introduced a new one in 2010, resulting in a public outcry via the blogosphere. The company was initially excited about the buzz, but ultimately yielded to consumers and brought back the former logo.

## REVIEW QUESTIONS

### Individual

1. Define hedonic consumption and provide an example.  
*Hedonic consumption is the multi-sensory, fantasy, and emotional aspects of consumers' interactions with products. The Owens-Corning Fiberglass Corporation was the first company to trademark a color when it used bright pink for its insulation material and adopted the Pink Panther cartoon character as its spokes-character. Harley-Davidson actually tried to trademark the distinctive sound made by a "hog" revving up.*  
(3 minutes, Chapter Objective 2, AACSB: Reflective Thinking, Course Learning Outcome 3)
2. Does the size of a package influence how much of the contents we eat? Provide an example.  
*Yes. When pouring or eating foods from larger boxes, these boxes suggest it is appropriate or "acceptable" to eat more than smaller ones—and we do! An example is a family size bag of chips or a case of beer.*  
(3 minutes, Chapter Objective 6, AACSB: Reflective Thinking, Course Learning Outcome 3)
3. How does the sense of touch influence consumers' reactions to products?  
*Moods are stimulated or relaxed based on sensations reaching the skin, whether from a luxurious massage or the bite of a winter wind. Touch has even been shown to be a factor in sales interactions (holding an item makes a consumer feel attached to it; touch can increase tips/coupon redemption). We are more sure about what we perceive when we can touch it.*  
(3 minutes, Chapter Objective 3, AACSB: Reflective Thinking, Course Learning Outcome 3)
4. Identify and describe the three stages of perception.  
*Exposure occurs when a stimulus comes within the range of someone's sensory receptors. Attention refers to the extent to which processing activity is devoted to a particular stimulus. Interpretation refers to the meaning that we assign to sensory stimuli.*  
(3 minutes, Chapter Objective 2, AACSB: Reflective Thinking, Course Learning Outcome 3)
5. What is the difference between an absolute threshold and a differential threshold?  
*The absolute threshold refers to the minimum amount of stimulation that can be detected on a given sensory channel. The differential threshold refers to the ability of a sensory system to detect changes or differences between two stimuli.*  
(1 minute, Chapter Objective 4, AACSB: Analytic Skills, Course Learning Outcome 3)
6. Does subliminal perception work? Why or why not?  
*Some research by clinical psychologists suggests that people can be influenced by subliminal messages under very specific conditions, though it is doubtful that these techniques would be of much use in most marketing contexts. Effective messages must be very specifically tailored to individuals, rather than the mass messages required by advertising.*  
(2 minutes, Chapter Objective 5, AACSB: Reflective Thinking, Course Learning Outcome 3)

7. “Consumers practice a form of ‘psychic economy.’ ” What does this mean?  
*Psychic economy is picking and choosing among stimuli to avoid being overwhelmed. How do they choose? Both personal and stimulus factors help to decide.*  
 (3 minutes, Chapter Objective 5, Course Learning Outcome 3)
  
8. Describe two factors that can lead to stimulus adaptation.  
*Five factors can lead to stimulus adaptation:*
  - **Intensity:** *Less-intense stimuli (e.g., soft sounds or dim colors) habituate because they have less sensory impact.*
  - **Duration:** *Stimuli that require relatively lengthy exposure in order to be processed tend to habituate because they require a long attention span.*
  - **Discrimination:** *Simple stimuli tend to habituate because they do not require attention to detail.*
  - **Exposure:** *Frequently encountered stimuli tend to habituate as the rate of exposure increases.*
  - **Relevance:** *Stimuli that are irrelevant or unimportant will habituate because they fail to attract attention.*
 (2 minutes, Chapter Objective 5, AACSB: Reflective Thinking, Course Learning Outcome 3)
  
9. Define a “schema” and provide an example of how this concept is relevant to marketing.  
*Consumers assign meaning to stimuli based on the schema, or set of beliefs, to which the stimulus is assigned. An applied example of a schema is given in the opening vignette to the chapter when Gary is revolted at the thought of warm milk.*  
 (3 minutes, Chapter Objective 6, AACSB: Analytic Skills, Course Learning Outcome 3)
  
10. “The whole is greater than the sum of its parts.” Explain this statement.  
*Gestalt roughly means whole, pattern, or configuration, and this perspective is best summarized by the saying “the whole is greater than the sum of its parts.”*  
 (3 minutes, Chapter Objective 6, Course Learning Outcome 3)
  
11. List the three semiotic components of a marketing message, giving an example of each.  
*The **object** is the product that is the focus of the message (e.g., Marlboro cigarettes). The **sign** is the sensory image that represents the intended meanings of the object (e.g., the Marlboro cowboy). The **interpretant** is the meaning derived (e.g., rugged, individualistic, American).*  
 (3 minutes, Chapter Objective 7, AACSB: Reflective Thinking, Course Learning Outcome 3)
  
12. What do we mean by the idea of hyperreality? Give an example that is not discussed in the chapter. How does this concept differ from augmented reality?  
*Hyperreality refers to the process of making real what is initially simulation or “hype.” Advertisers create new relationships between objects and interpretants by inventing new connections between products and benefits, such as equating Marlboro cigarettes with the American frontier spirit. An example that is not discussed in the chapter is the Mad Men line of clothing at Banana Republic. Augmented reality is different because it refers to media AR adds a digital layer to a real, physical layer to create a combined*

*experience (e.g. 3-D films, smartphone apps), whereas hyperreality takes something that is not real and makes it real.*

(5 minutes, Chapter Objective 6, AACSB: Analytic Skills, Course Learning Outcome 3)

13. What is a positioning strategy? What are some ways marketers can position their products?

*A positioning strategy is a fundamental part of a company's marketing efforts as it uses elements of the marketing mix (i.e., product design, price, distribution, and marketing communications) to influence the consumer's interpretation of its meaning. Marketers can use many dimensions to carve out a brand's position in the marketplace. These include:*

- **Lifestyle:** *Grey Poupon mustard is a "higher-class" condiment.*
- **Price leadership:** *L'Oréal's Noisôme brand face cream is sold in upscale beauty shops, whereas its Plenitude brand is available for one-sixth the price in discount stores—even though both are based on the same chemical formula.*
- **Attributes:** *Bounty paper towels are "the quicker picker upper."*
- **Product class:** *The Mazda Miata is a sporty convertible.*
- **Competitors:** *Northwestern Insurance is "the quiet company."*
- **Occasions:** *Wrigley's gum is an alternative at times when smoking is not permitted.*
- **Users:** *Levi's Dockers are targeted primarily to men in their 20s to 40s.*
- **Quality:** *At Ford, "Quality is job 1."*

(5 minutes, Chapter Objective 2, AACSB: Reflective Thinking, Course Learning Outcome 3)

## CONSUMER BEHAVIOR CHALLENGE

### Discussion Questions

#### Individual

1. Many studies have shown that our sensory detection abilities decline as we grow older. Discuss the implications of the absolute threshold for marketers attempting to appeal to the elderly.  
*It would be wise to begin this exercise by identifying the particular senses and the ways in which they decline, as the consumer gets older. Once this has been done, students should brainstorm to develop a list of the ways that a message may not be received or interpreted correctly. Students might be encouraged to develop a matrix, placing the senses down the left-hand side and forms of communication across the top. The matrix then should be filled in with descriptions of how communications may fail and how these failures could be avoided. For example, print advertisements aimed at an older audience could use larger type; radio and television ads could decrease the pace of information presented and slightly increase the volume to allow older recipients to more fully process the information; and retail stores and restaurants could increase lighting.*  
 (7 minutes, Chapter Objective 4, AACSB: Analytic Skills, Course Learning Outcome 3)

2. If some forms of subliminal persuasion may have the desired effect of influencing consumers, do you think the use of these techniques is ethical? Explain your answer.  
*Many students will consider the use of subliminal persuasion to be unethical. Accordingly, a discussion could focus on why subliminal messages are undesirable. An interesting issue to raise may be how, or even if, subliminal persuasion differs from other advertising that consumers are exposed to every day. Once these differences have been noted, the discussion could turn toward analyzing the reasons why individuals react negatively to subliminal persuasion. Students who believe the use of these techniques is ethical should be encouraged to develop their arguments so that those representing each side of the argument might see the opposing view. Regardless of the position adopted by the majority of students, be prepared to stimulate discussion by developing an argument in favor of the use of subliminal messages. This argument could center on the idea that subliminal persuasion might result in less “clutter.” Arguing for its effectiveness, the amount of advertising could decrease overall.*  
 (10 minutes, Chapter Objective 5, AACSB: Ethical Understanding and Reasoning Abilities, Course Learning Outcome 3)

3. Do you believe that marketers have the right to use any or all-public spaces to deliver product messages? Where would you draw the line in terms of places and products that should be restricted?  
*This question needs to be split into two parts: 1) whether marketers have the right to use any public spaces and 2) whether they have the right to use all public spaces. These are the two extremes on the issue, and the students will most likely find themselves somewhere between complete and unlimited access for marketers on one hand and complete and total ban on the other. A key concept in this discussion is the definition of “public spaces” and, therefore, a common definition should be adopted early in the*

*discussion. To develop their position on this issue, students should be encouraged to list both appropriate and inappropriate places for product messages and offer reasons why each place should be categorized in a particular way. See if they think signs on the highway should be eliminated. If they agree, ask them how they would ever find McDonald's!*

(10 minutes, Chapter Objective 5, AACSB: Analytic Skills, Course Learning Outcome 3)

4. The slogan for the movie Godzilla was "Size does matter." Should this be the slogan for America as well? Many marketers seem to believe so. The average serving size for a fountain drink has gone from 12 ounces to 20 ounces. An industry consultant explains that the 32-ounce Big Gulp is so popular because "people like something large in their hands. The larger the better." Hardee's Monster Burger, complete with two beef patties and five pieces of bacon, weighs in at 63 grams of fat and more than 900 calories. Clothes have ballooned as well: Kickwear makes women's jeans with 40-inch-diameter legs. The standard for TV sets used to be 19 inches; now it is 32 inches. Hulking SUVs have replaced tiny sports cars as the status vehicle of the new millennium. One consumer psychologist theorized that consuming big things is reassuring: "Large things compensate for our vulnerability," she says. "It gives us insulation, the feeling that we're less likely to die." What is up with our fascination with bigness? Is this a uniquely American preference? Do you believe that "bigger is better"? Is this a sound marketing strategy? *This question comprises multiple questions. The first, "What's up with our fascination with bigness?" is very general and should spark some general comments or discussion. If anything specific is to come from this particular question, students should be directed to theorize as to "why" people in the United States prefer bigger sizes. The second question, "Is this a uniquely American preference?" can only really be addressed when students have a concept of product size in other countries. Thus, foreign students and students who have lived or studied abroad will be a good resource here. Another option if assigning this question as an at-home project is to have students research product sizes in other countries to make comparisons. It might be helpful if you give a few specific products for them to research, such as soft drinks, automobiles, and televisions. The third question, "Do you believe that 'bigger is better'?" should be directed toward whether or not larger sizes benefit the consumer. The final question examines whether super-sized products benefit the marketer. (Possible At-Home Project Idea)*

(10 minutes, Chapter Objective 4, AACSB: Analytic Skills, Course Learning Outcome 3)

5. Playmobil toys recreate real-life settings such as a police station or hospital. A new offering the company calls Security Check Point features armed airport security officers, a metal detector, and an X-ray screening machine. Some parents protested; one wrote this comment on Amazon.com: "I applaud Playmobil for attempting to provide us with the tools we need to teach our children to unquestioningly obey the commands of the State Security Apparatus. However, unfortunately, this product falls short of doing that. There's no brown figure for little Josh to profile, taser, and detain." A Playmobil executive comments, "The whole premise behind Playmobil toys is to familiarize the child with the realities of life through play. If you are taking a child for a first flight to Florida from New Jersey to visit grandparents, you say, 'This is what the terminal looks



like, and when we get here we have to take our shoes off and walk through security.’ ”

Where should toymakers draw the line between reality and play?

*This is a great question to include in class discussion because it will generate strong opinions from students. Connect responses to chapter material, with an emphasis on the interpretation of the stimulus, and connect it with the next chapter pointing out that the Playmobil approach provides learning opportunities for children.*

(10 minutes, Chapter Objective 6, AACSB: Ethical Understanding and Reasoning Skills, Course Learning Outcome 3)

6. Augmented reality applications may reach the level of sophistication where we observe almost everything through the screen of our smartphones in order to receive an “enhanced” experience. Do you view this as a positive development or a problem?  
*Augmented reality can add value to a consumer’s experience by allowing consumers to apply an additional layer of data/images to their existing views, which can deepen the consumer’s understanding of the product/product features. Marketers can use this additional layer to provide customized products and/or promotional offers. However, AR can also serve as a distraction from the real life sensory experience and may result in information overload. Some students may mention privacy concerns, as the provider of the AR experience can track information about their preferences, or because ultimately AR technology may allow others (including sellers) to recognize and find information about them as they walk down the street or into a store. It may also lead to unwelcome offers (spam) from marketers.*

(10 minutes, Chapter Objective 4, AACSB: Reflective Thinking and Ethical Understanding and Reasoning Skills, Course Learning Outcome 3)

### **Application Questions**

#### **Individual**

1. Interview three to five male and three to five female friends regarding their perceptions of both men’s and women’s fragrances. Construct a perceptual map for each set of products. Based on your map of perfumes, do you see any areas that are not adequately served by current offerings? What (if any) gender differences did you obtain regarding both the relevant dimensions used by raters and the placement of specific brands along these dimensions? ***Perceptual map is included here and in the chapter summary under objective one, but it is not in the chapter any more.***  
*Have the students start this project by listing a number of descriptive words that are or could be used when positioning perfumes in the market place. Have them ask the respondents to position various perfumes on the map according to their impressions of the perfumes selected. For the part of the question about areas that are not adequately served by the current offerings, students should identify “gaps” in the map and determine whether filling the gap will add value to the target consumers. Students may also want to create a separate perceptual map by gender to help analyze the differences. (Possible Field Project Idea)*

(20 minutes, Chapter Objective 1, AACSB: Analytic Skills, Course Learning Outcome 3)

2. Assume that you are a consultant for a marketer who wants to design a package for a new premium chocolate bar targeted to an affluent market. What recommendations would you provide in terms of such package elements as color, symbolism, and graphic design? Give the reasons for your suggestions.

*Most students will recognize that the label (package), the weight of the product, and the brand name of the product are combined to communicate the image of the product. In this exercise, the students are examining a premium product targeted to an affluent market. Obviously, the suggestions developed by students are likely to reflect their own experiences. What needs to be added to the discussion of product labels and names is: (1) the colors that will augment the desired premium image, (2) the smell that is associated with candy, (3) the sound of the candy wrapper in your hand, and (4) the symbolism that may be used to position the product in the consumer's mind. The issue of symbolism may provide the best avenue for discussion, and a broader discussion of how symbols can be used in advertising and promotion would be helpful.*

(15 minutes, Chapter Objective 3, AACSB: Reflective Thinking, Course Learning Outcome 3)

3. Using magazines archived in the library, track the packaging of a specific brand over time. Find an example of gradual changes in package design that may have been below the j.n.d.

*You might give a few hints here. For example, Aunt Jemima, the Morton Salt Girl, and Betty Crocker are trademarks that changed over time. j.n.d. can be found in ads. Package changes include Ivory Soap, Kellogg's Rice Krispies, and Campbell Soup. Students can simply examine automobile ads to see how styles of a particular car have changed over the years—the body is the car's package. (Possible Field Project Idea) This question needs to be assigned with appropriate time to complete the work. The examples found may mirror the changes in design for the Pepsi logo.*

(  
20 minutes, Chapter Objective 4, AACSB: Reflective Thinking, Course Learning Outcome 3)

4. Visit a set of websites for one type of product (e.g., personal computers, perfumes, laundry detergents, or athletic shoes) and analyze the colors and other design principles employed. Which sites “work” and which don't? Why? Look through a current magazine and select one ad that captures your attention over the others. Explain why this ad attracts you.

*See if the students will notice how similar many of the products and brands are in terms of shape, weight, color, and size as depicted on the websites. A good way to approach this project is to pick a mainstream product such as an Apple computer (because of its bright colors). Be sure to have students state what they mean by “it will work” (a success) and how this was measured. Have one or two students go online to demonstrate how they approached this project. (Possible At-Home Project Idea)*

*After students have indicated what ad caught their attention, probe to see if there are any other reasons. This is a good opportunity to remind students about what ads are likely to get their attention because of personal factors and stimulus factors (contrast and novelty are discussed in #5). Ask the class if any other aspects of the ad struck them. (Possible Field Project Idea)*

(20 minutes, Chapter Objective 5, AACSB: Analytic Skills, Course Learning Outcome 3)

5. Find ads that utilize the techniques of contrast and novelty. Give your opinion of the effectiveness of each ad and whether the technique is likely to be appropriate for the consumers targeted by the ad.

*Opinions will vary here. Some people like novelty in most everything, while others want people to be more serious. You should look for students to identify different ways marketers create a contrast, and for students to recognize how contrast (including novelty) is used to get their attention and overcome advertising clutter. (Possible Field Project Idea)*

(15 minutes, Chapter Objective 5, AACSB: Analytic Skills, Course Learning Outcome 3)

## CASE STUDY TEACHING NOTES

### Chapter 2 Case Study: The Brave New World of Subway Advertising

#### Summary of Case

Since 1999, a new segment of out-of-home advertising has been developed. Various agencies around the world have pioneered a technology that allows for static images placed in subway tunnels to appear as full-motion commercials. This represents one of many developments in recent years to break through ad clutter to capture consumers' attention with a novel type of advertising in a place that consumers do not expect it. The ad medium is rolling out in subway tunnels of major cities worldwide. The most notable part of this new development is that public reaction has been overwhelmingly positive. Transit officials, agency representatives, and corporate advertisers alike have been given kudos for turning dark and dreary tunnels into something entertaining for commuters.

#### Suggestions for Presentation

This case could be assigned as an out-of-class or in-class activity. As an in-class activity, it might be more effective to have the class read it, then break them into small groups to discuss the questions. This is because a good response to the questions would require a consideration of various chapter concepts. The small group discussion could then be followed up with a large group review.

The discussion questions indicate that this case can be most appropriately tied to the section in Chapter 2 that covers the concept of attention. However, the flexibility of the case would allow for some application to the sections on exposure (Which of the five senses does this ad type appeal to most? What are the implications of this for advertisers?) and interpretation (How does placement of an ad in this context affect positioning? How does the nature of different target segments of subway riders affect interpretation?). Thus, this case can be used to illustrate the entire process of perception as explained in the chapter.

This case allows for the psychological processes of perception to be linked to real-world marketing implications. One item of interest not mentioned in the case that may be brought up during discussion is how this unique appeal to the perception processes of consumers has created value for multiple constituencies:

- The consumers—the positive reception indicates that the ads have entertainment value during an otherwise boring commute.
- The media agencies—these agencies are new ventures carving out a multi-million dollar industry. The cost of subway ads ranges from \$35,000 a month to \$250,000 a month depending on the route.
- The advertisers—there is no shortage of promotional choices for corporations and non-profit organizations. However, subway tunnel advertising gives marketers one of the few options that breaks through ad clutter in such a way that the consumer wants to see the ad, not to avoid it.

- The transit agencies—most metropolitan transit agencies are struggling with ever tightening budgets and with the balance of fare prices and demand. Many are therefore searching for additional revenue streams such as concessions or advertising. Although in-station and in-train advertising has been around since the early 1900s, subway tunnel agencies are forecasting that a single transit company (which would receive between 25 percent and 60 percent of the revenues) could earn as much as \$200 million over 5 years.

### **Suggested Answers For Discussion Questions**

1. Based on the principles of attention presented in this chapter, explain why this new wave of subway ads is expected to be so effective.

*This case is suited for illustrating various aspects of the perceptual process, including sensation, exposure, attention, and interpretation. However, the concepts that best explain why this new advertising medium should initially be successful are the stimulus selection factors of position and novelty that contribute to attention. With respect to position, subway ads come into full view, right outside the windows of subway trains where many riders are likely to be gazing. The concept of novelty exerts that stimuli that appear in unexpected places tend to grab attention. Certainly, these ads should at least initially be unexpected on the dark walls of subway tunnels. These things alone will contribute to higher than normal levels of attention, which should have some effect on memory retention.*

(20 minutes, Chapter Objective 5, AACSB: Analytic Skills, Course Learning Outcome 3)

2. Using the same principles, what should the ads' creators consider to avoid the potential burnout of this medium?

*Obviously, if novelty is the biggest playing card for this advertising medium, then this should wear off. This is especially true because the image panels for these ads are placed physically in the subway tunnels. They will likely remain in place for at least a month. Many subway riders are regulars. This means that they will see the same ad day after day. It will not take long before they no longer look. Additionally, after riders become accustomed to the ad medium itself, subway tunnel ads will not be any different from any other type of advertising as far as the attention-grabbing benefits.*

*It is also speculated by some that the positioning of ads where riders are likely to be looking may produce negative reactions. Some riders gazing out of subway windows may enjoy the darkness as a form of relaxation or mediation.*

*Drawing upon other concepts from the chapter, in becoming familiar with these subway ads, riders are going through "adaptation" and are likely to notice them less. That is, unless the powers at be do something to change the nature of the ads. Slight variations on an advertisement with a similar theme can reinforce the message across multiple impressions but still reduce the potential for habituation.*

(15 minutes, Chapter Objective 5, AACSB: Analytic Skills, Course Learning Outcome 3)

## **Additional Support Material**

### **STUDENT PROJECTS**

#### **Individual Projects**

1. Visit a department store through its perfume/cologne/cosmetics section. Do the scents have enough of an appeal to motivate buying? Does it appear that each of these is appealing to the sense of smell in a strategic manner?  
*For most shoppers, perfumes, colognes and cosmetics may be an impulse purchase. The products are important to the department stores because they tend to have high margins. In fact, students should have difficulty remembering discounts associated with these products – companies are more likely to use a gift with purchase as an enticement because they do not want to deteriorate their brands' images. Department stores often position these products near the main entrance to entice shoppers to "sample" products that were not on their lists. Frequently, the individuals who sell the products in these sections work for, and receive special training from, the companies they represent (as opposed to the department store). From a sensory perspective, the companies often use special lighting and attractive images, including attractive salespeople, in addition to the scents, to help attract additional attention to the area and position their offerings.*  
(10 minutes, Chapter Objective 2, AACSB: Analytic Skills, Course Learning Outcome 3)
2. Ask students to find three ads that contain symbolism. Examine the symbols and discuss the meaning the symbols convey. Encourage the student to identify the different types of signs used in the ads and the product qualities being communicated by each. Additionally, find a symbol that might not or should not be used in advertising in the cultural context of America. Why would you not utilize it?  
*The three types of signs discussed in the chapter are icons (signs that resemble products), indexes (signs connected to products because they share a property with the product), and symbols (signs related to the product through conventional or agreed-upon associations). You may ask students to find an ad that represents each of these three types of signs to help reinforce the differences between them. Just as the examples will vary, so will the product qualities being communicated by each type of sign. Students will also find different examples of symbols that might not or should not be used in the cultural context of America. Look for students to identify why it would not be culturally acceptable, and use the exercise as an opportunity to connect their examples to the concept that our reactions to stimuli are often a function of our cultural backgrounds.*  
(30 minutes, Chapter Objective 3, AACSB: Reflective Thinking, Course Learning Outcome 3)
3. What are the symbols of "green marketing"? Students need to review then and opine whether or not they are effective.  
*On the most basic level, companies' uses of the color green, and its associations with environmental protection and the widely recognized symbol for recycling are likely to come up. However, the discussion is likely to go beyond the recycling symbol and the use of the color green because the use of symbols in green marketing (identified in chapter*

*one as marketing practices that promote a firm's efforts to protect or enhance the natural environment as they go about their business activities) is a hot topic that may stimulate debate among students. Some companies use symbols associated with well-recognized environmental organizations. However, students may recognize that there are also an overwhelming number of green marketing symbols associated with green marketing that were created by individual firms that may be confusing to consumers because they lack meaningful and verifiable criteria for what makes the product eligible to be associated with the symbol (e.g. CBS EcoAds). To help students prepare their opinions about whether or not the symbols are effective, you may want to direct them toward the FTC's Green Guides.*

(20 minutes, Chapter Objective 3, AACSB: Analytic Skills, Course Learning Outcome 3)

4. Here is a field project that students always like. Have students (you might have only one or a few students do this as a special or alternative assignment) photocopy or print a collection of brand/product symbols (an alternative would be to have students create a PowerPoint presentation with images inserted to be projected in the classroom for all to see). Then have this student quiz fellow classmates to see if they can recognize the product or company. This will show students how effective symbols are and how much involuntary learning has taken place in their life. You might give a reward to the student who had the **most** correct responses.

*Student examples and recognition of the symbols will vary. You can connect the exercise to the concepts of perceptual vigilance and talk about the cultural meaning associated with the symbols. For a twist on the exercise, you may ask students to find international symbols for brands that are available in the United States to discuss how and why they are different.*

(30 minutes, Chapter Objective 3, AACSB: Reflective Thinking, Communication Abilities, Course Learning Outcome 3)

5. Here is a tough assignment for an undergraduate. Ask students to spend an afternoon watching a popular soap opera or an evening watching a favorite television show. Ask them to be particularly observant of the various products and services that are used as props during the show. Do these products or services have any symbolic value? How would viewer perception be different if alternative brands or even generic brands had been used? To what extent are the props shown or mentioned? Are they used to help develop the plot? How?

*You can relate this project back to the idea that consumers often use products for what they mean instead of what they do. Props and set design are an important part of character development because they can help quickly create an image and a background for the character. Similarly, consumers use products to help communicate something about themselves or their identities. Students may also recognize that product placements are used frequently in today's media to break through the clutter associated with other advertising and to overcome challenges associated with consumers fast-forwarding through ads using their DVRs. In some cases, these products may be mentioned as part of the story line (e.g. an episode of Friends that has a story line about an apothecary table from Pottery Barn; Toyota's discussion of product*

*attributes/demonstration of safety features/self parking cars during the story line of Bones, etc.).*

(75 minutes, Chapter Objective 7, AACSB: Reflective Thinking, Course Learning Outcome 3)

6. Have students visit a grocery store and pick out five products. They should identify how each appeal to the five senses. How are they the same? How are they different? To what extent do any of them appear to be strategically designed to appeal to the five senses?  
*This project is a good way to reinforce the five senses and how marketers use appeals to each. Due to the popularity of sensory marketing as a way to differentiate products, students will be able to find a wide variety of products that appeal to the five senses. It is important to look for students to identify similarities and differences in the use of the appeals, and how the appeals relate to strategy, as the analytical aspect of this exercise.*  
(30 minutes, Chapter Objective 3, AACSB: Reflective Thinking, Analytic Skills, Course Learning Outcome 3)

7. Visit a few student-targeted websites (www.facebook.com, www.myspace.com, etc.) and a few websites that target senior citizens (www.aarp.com, www.senior.com, etc.). Are there any differences in the sensory (especially visual) strategies employed by these sites? Can you draw some generalizations?  
*You may choose to do this as part of your presentation in class when you discuss how age affects the way consumers respond to colors. Students may also identify a difference in font size. You can also talk about the use of text and how it relates to perceptual filters. The sites targeting seniors have longer copy, especially when compared to a status update from a friend on Facebook. This suggests a greater motivation to read about the issues being discussed (and perhaps a longer attention span).*  
(30 minutes, Chapter Objective 3, AACSB: Analytic Skills, Course Learning Outcome 3)

8. For this project, each student should keep a log of all the advertising information that they are exposed to in a single hour when they are out in public. They should keep track of the quantity, and not try to note the names or descriptions of each. From memory, what are some of the ways that companies attempt to get their ads noticed?  
*Students may identify ads that are repeated frequently. You can relate this to the idea of adaptation, and ways that companies try to avoid adaptation (making the ads more intense, shorter, more complex, and more relevant to the consumer) and ways companies try to break through the clutter by creating contrast (varying size, color, position and novelty). In addition to the stimulus factors, you can also use this exercise to talk about personal factors that affected which ads they were exposed to and which ads they paid attention to during the course of the hour.*  
(30 minutes, Chapter Objectives 4 and 5, AACSB: Reflective Thinking, Analytic Skills, Course Learning Outcome 3)

9. Send students to the library (they may need directions!) and have them look through several foreign magazines. How are the advertisements different from those in the United States? What sensory cues (based on the advertisements you see) seem to be cultural in nature? See if you can find an ad that is for the same product but done differently



between the United States and some other country and comment on the differences (besides language).

*Students may identify the use of color and images are different across cultures. Culture may also dictate a difference in the use and effectiveness of sexual images as an attention-getting device. Foreign websites for magazines and foreign advertisements on YouTube.com may also work for this exercise.*

(30 minutes, Chapter Objective 3, AACSB: Multicultural and Diversity Understanding and Analytic Skills, Course Learning Outcome 3)

10. While viewing one hour of television, what types of companies focus the most on factors that might affect “perceptual vigilance” in their advertisements? Have students write about examples of instances when they have used or experienced “perceptual vigilance” and “perceptual defense.” Have them share their experiences with the class.

*This exercise is similar to the suggested discussion topic associated with perceptual vigilance, which is when consumers are more likely to be aware of stimuli that relate to their current needs. Marketers may try to connect their products with current needs (e.g. clothing retailers and mass discount stores talking about how the products can be used for back to school) or use the stimulus techniques (attention getting devices) designed to overcome perceptual barriers. Students may be more comfortable identifying examples in which other people have engaged in perceptual defense, since it may be difficult to identify or remember examples where they chose to avoid or distort a stimulus that was unpleasant to them.*

(75 minutes, Chapter Objective 5, AACSB: Reflective Thinking and Communication Abilities, Course Learning Outcome 3)

11. Assign students to find illustrations of the “closure principle,” the “principle of similarity,” and “figure-ground principle” in any marketing promotional or packaging material. Have them share their findings with the class.

*This exercise is related to the recommended discussion activity associated with Gestalt psychology, and can be used to help students prepare for the discussion. It also helps students recognize and remember the differences between the concepts. For the closure principle, students should look for examples where there is something left out. Fill in the blanks are the most common, but some companies are using “cliff-hangers” and alternative endings on their advertisements, asking consumers to go to a website to complete the advertisements. The principle of similarity describes how consumers group objects based on their characteristics/what they have in common. The figure-ground principle (where one part of a stimulus will dominate while the other recedes into the background) may be the easiest for students to find, since many marketers apply it to make the product or a feature stand out.*

(30 minutes, Chapter Objective 6, AACSB: Reflective Thinking and Communication Abilities, Course Learning Outcome 3)

12. For this project, students will need to pay attention. The student needs to notice and identify a piece of marketing material to which they have adapted and generally do not pay attention. Discuss the five factors of adaptation in relation to this particular piece of marketing material.

*The five factors students should identify are intensity, duration, discrimination, exposure and relevance. Less intense, longer, simpler, irrelevant ads that students are frequently exposed to are more likely to result in adaptation. For example, students may identify an out of home advertisement they pass every day.*

(30 minutes, Chapter Objective 5, AACSB: Reflective Thinking, Course Learning Outcome 3)

13. As part of your class preparation, devise an experiment that can be done in class to demonstrate **perceptual selection**. You might even review the psychology and consumer behavior literature for ideas.

*This activity is something you can prepare or something you can ask a student to prepare. There are YouTube videos (e.g. the one with people passing a basketball where a gorilla walks across the room) and examples of ads in presentations that are posted on SlideShare that may provide you (or students) with a head start. A Google search will lead to thousands of examples. That said, sometimes the ads that appeal to the instructor or an individual student has never been noticed by others in the class because they do not participate in the activity, have a cat, etc.*

(30 minutes, Chapter Objective 5, AACSB: Reflective Thinking and Communication Abilities, Course Learning Outcome 3)

14. Examples of hyperreality are becoming increasingly common in our society. Have each student locate (either through their own observations or through reviewing articles in the popular and trade press) an example of hyperreality. Is the example chosen one in which the marketer strategically facilitated the “hyperreal” phenomenon, or did the transition occur independent of the marketer? How does the chosen example contribute to the relationship between the product and the consumer?

*This activity is related to review question #12. Hyperreality occurs when advertisers create new relationships between objects and interpretants by inventing new connections between products and benefits. Students may identify reverse product placements in their examples of hyperreality. Encourage students to answer each part of the question. In particular, look for students to go beyond identifying hyperreal examples to the analysis of the relationship between the product and the consumer.*

(30 minutes, Chapter Objective 7, AACSB: Reflective Thinking, Course Learning Outcome 3)

### **Group Projects**

1. Develop a print and/or video ad for a product/brand that includes as many of the sensory stimuli as possible in order to convey the environmental message.
- Students will require some time to prepare their ads. Remind them to think about the one message they want to get across and to think about how they can use the stimuli to help break through the clutter. Print ads are generally easier to prepare, but many students have video functionality on their cell phones and share videos online, so finding equipment may not be as challenging as it used to be. Video will allow students with the opportunity to include auditory stimuli, while a print ad may provide students with the opportunity to appeal to the sense of touch.*

(120 minutes, Chapter Objectives 3 and 5, AACSB: Reflective Thinking and Communication Abilities, Course Learning Outcome 3)

2. Collect a variety of packages of children's and adults' breakfast cereals. How different are the j.n.d strategies for each market? Catalog various j.n.d strategies utilized and state whether they are likely to be effective for any other products. If your group were marketing the cereal, what would you have done differently?

*Students may want to go beyond the current packages available on the shelves to look for historic images of packages, which are readily available online. Frosted Flakes and Lucky Charms are popular examples that have changed over time. Students should look not only at the colors and words used on the packaging but also at how marketers draw attention (or choose not to draw attention) to product changes like package size, the addition of nutrients, and promotional offers.*

(90 minutes, Chapter Objective 4, AACSB: Reflective Thinking and Analytic Skills, Course Learning Outcome 3)

3. Have three or four students identify a list of five products that are very functional (or utilitarian). Then, have them locate three examples of each product that focus on the emotional or hedonic form more than the core function.

*Because marketers increasingly rely on aesthetics to differentiate products, students should be able to find examples in product categories that can be very utilitarian (i.e. cleaning products, food, clothing, medical care, security systems, home computers) but have added sensory appeals to emphasize the hedonic aspects of the consumption. Look for students to identify that the hedonic forms of products emphasize the multi-sensory, fantasy, and emotional aspects of consumers' interactions with products.*

(90 minutes, Chapter Objective 2, AACSB: Reflective Thinking, Course Learning Outcome 3)

4. Ask a group of students (seven to eight each) to list their favorite advertisements. Look at the lists. What do these ads tell you about the person that responded or the group as a whole? What do these ads do differently to increase perception or remembrance? What percentage of the ads was sexually oriented? After your respondents have given you their lists, be sure to ask whether they use the products displayed in the "favorite" ads. Comment on your results.

*The student examples will vary. Look for the students to explain both how and **why** they vary. Ask them to make inferences about the individuals based on the ads they selected. Students should identify similarities and differences, and tie their conclusions to perceptual selection and stimulus factors discussed in the chapter.*

(90 minutes, Chapter Objective 5, AACSB: Analytic Skills, Course Learning Outcome 3)

5. Have students (in small groups) go to various local restaurants and find menu items they would never eat. Describe these items (such as fried squid). Students should next demonstrate how perception might alter these biases. What could be done to make these "taboo" foods more acceptable? They should consider such areas as name changes, peer pressure, health benefits, and informational ads. Report the results in class.

*Students will have different foods that they would never eat. They will also be able to report on existing examples that were once taboo but are now socially acceptable (e.g. sushi). Students may expand their search and get ideas about repositioning products by looking at companies that introduce their "exotic" foods in new countries. For example,*

*students may look at how nuts from the United States have been renamed and introduced to a broader audience with recipe contests and advertising campaigns in China.*

(120 minutes, Chapter Objective 6, AACSB: Multicultural and Diversity Understanding and Communication Abilities, Course Learning Outcome 3)

6. Have student groups find three examples of brands or companies that have made changes to their products (i.e., retail chain re-designing their stores, a new logo, etc.). Have them discuss how the concept of “just noticeable difference” might affect consumer perceptions of these changes. Are the changes something that the marketers wanted to be noticed?

*Students should recognize that marketers want some changes to go unnoticed (e.g. smaller package sizes, less oz. per package for the same price resulting in an increase in price) while marketers want other changes to be noticed (product improvements, logo redesigns, lower unit pricing). The exercise helps draw additional attention to the trend where food inflation is hidden by smaller (sometimes marketed as healthier or more environmentally friendly) packages, which students may find interesting. Students may enjoy playing “detective” to find variations in products they may not have noticed in the past.*

(60 minutes, Chapter Objective 4, AACSB: Reflective Thinking, Course Learning Outcome 3)

7. Have groups of students (five to six each) think of how to demonstrate the principles of “absolute threshold” and “difference threshold” to the rest of the class. Have them develop this exercise and perform it.

*Students should recognize that the absolute threshold is the minimum amount of a stimulus an individual can detect, while the difference threshold is the minimum difference between two stimuli an individual can detect. Students are likely to use light or sound to demonstrate the absolute threshold. For difference threshold, students are likely to use touch (e.g. the difference between the weights of products) or visuals (e.g. different package sizes, differences in icons/graphics/colors), but may also use taste, sound, or scents.*

(60 minutes, Chapter Objective 4, AACSB: Reflective Thinking and Communication Abilities, Course Learning Outcome 3)

## eLAB

### Individual Assignments

1. Visit **www.globalgreen.org**. What are some of the sensory cues they are utilizing in order to attract your attention to various subjects/topics and ads?  
*The most obvious response will be the use of visual cues. Color, size of headlines, font style, and use of motion may be mentioned among the visual cues. Students may try to connect the use of color to what they learned about color in the chapter. The website also offers videos, which engage users with sight and sound. Since the website is a destination and the Internet is a lean forward medium, it is likely that consumers who go to globalgreen.org are motivated to pay attention to the messages (or they would not visit the website).*  
 (20 minutes, Chapter Objective 3, AACSB: Analytic Skills, Course Learning Outcome 3)
2. Go to **www.tvguide.com**. On the opening Web page, how many ads (including pop-ups) do you notice? Compare and contrast the approach of each ad to exposure, attention, and interpretation. Comment on how the consumer goes through these steps when being exposed to each ad. Provide an illustration of your description.  
*Student responses will vary. In some cases, most of the advertising space on the website (top, side and bottom) will be occupied by a single sponsor. Student responses should differentiate between the parts of the process that occur - exposure, attention and interpretation - and should note personal and stimulus factors that affect the perception process at each stage.*  
 (20 minutes, Chapter Objectives 4, 5, 6, AACSB: Analytic Skills, Course Learning Outcome 3)
3. Go to **www.toyota.com/prius**. Prius has focused its promotional efforts on the Internet and other non-traditional media. Is this website a good way to promote a car? In terms of concepts of perception, why or why not?  
*Students will have different opinions about whether the website is a good way to promote a car, so look for ways they support their opinions with the concepts of perception. For example, students may talk about perceptual vigilance, the website's ability to create a sensory experience, and how Toyota uses the website to shape consumer perceptions in order to position the Prius.*  
 (20 minutes, Chapter Objectives 6 and 7, AACSB: Analytic Skills, Course Learning Outcome 3)
4. Go to **www.leapfrog.com** or **www.pbsskids.org**. These sites are designed to facilitate learning amongst children. Compare and contrast these sites for sensory stimulation, attention value, and ability to promote a sale of the product. How are semiotics used on these sites?  
*Students should recognize that the websites have different goals – leapfrog.com sells educational toys, and pbskid.org promotes (sells) educational programs (using games and videos). The target audience for the two websites varies as well. PBSkids.org is more visually oriented and has audio cues when you scroll over the items, which may be helpful for young users who cannot read (who are included in the target audience for many of the programs). On the other hand, leapfrog.com sells products, so although it*

*also has a separate community for parents, parents are probably the main target audience for the site. In terms of semiotics, students may answer this part of the question by identifying the object, sign and interpretant of the marketing messages on each site. For example, they may identify the books at leapfrog.com as the object, the leapfrog as the sign, and the interpretant as the ability to jump ahead/make progress (leapfrog) using the object. Alternatively, the students may identify icons, indices, and/or symbols on each website.*

(30 minutes, Chapter Objectives 5, 6 and 7, AACSB: Reflective Thinking, Course Learning Outcome 3)

6. Go to **www.bose.com**. Bose promises that once you listen to their Quiet Comfort 3 headphones you will never be satisfied with another comparable unit. Determine the competitive advantages and disadvantages of the Quiet Comfort 3. How does the company use sensory stimulation to promote the product? What key words can be used to evoke a response from consumers? Is the Bose approach effective? Explain.  
*Students should take the time to read the copy and watch the video about the Bose Quiet Comfort 3 headphones and form opinions about Bose's approach. Look for students to explain why they feel the Bose approach is/is not effective in a way that relates back to the content from the chapter (e.g. creating contrast, perceptual positioning). Students should also identify the keywords the company currently uses and evaluate their effectiveness. If they feel the keywords are not effective, students should come up with their own keywords. The fact that the headphones cancel out noise makes hearing an important sense related to the promotion of the product.*

(20 minutes, Chapter Objective 3, AACSB: Analytic Skills, Course Learning Outcome 3)

### **Group Assignments**

1. Go to **www.crutchfield.com**. Spend some time becoming familiar with this website. The group should evaluate the Crutchfield's strategy. What is it? What do you think will be the long-term result of the strategy you just described? How is the organization using exposure, attention, and interpretation to its benefit? What does the group think will be the secrets of success for Crutchfield? The seeds of failure? Which symbols should be used to ensure success? Which should be avoided?  
*Crutchfield.com sells electronics online. When the group reviews the company's strategy, they should consider whom the company targets, how they position their offerings, and how the elements of the marketing mix are used to support this positioning. (One element you may want to point students toward in the marketing mix is the service that goes along with the product dimension.) To analyze the potential long-term results, students may find it helpful to examine each of these aspects in light of the market and the competition. This analysis should be the foundation for their recommendations regarding symbols.*

(30 minutes, Chapter Objectives 4, 5 and 6, AACSB: Analytic Skills, Course Learning Outcome 3)

2. Go to **www.apple.com**. Your group assignment is to analyze how Apple used color and design to differentiate the iPod line from other mp3 players. Give illustrations of what

was done. Was this a good strategy? What target markets were pursued? How did Apple use exposure, attention, and interpretation to their advantage? What are the criticisms about the iPod line? Can color and design overcome these criticisms? Is Apple using some of these same strategies for its iPhone brand?

*The iPod and the iPhone are found on different sections of the website. For the first part, students should identify the use of the visual appeals and iPod's use of color to differentiate its mp3 players. Some students may remember the iPod campaign, which showed silhouettes of iPod users, with the distinctive ear buds, against backgrounds of various bold colors. Students may connect the campaign to their understanding of contrast, a way to get consumers' attentions. Colors were also used to help distinguish the brand's personality and aid in the interpretation process. It will be covered later, but as products get into the growth stage of the product life cycle, companies are more likely to come up with different variations of the product to satisfy increased consumer demand and distinguish the offerings from increased competition. Early criticisms about battery life may have been addressed by a consumer's willingness to purchase a newer iPod, available in additional colors/designs with increased memory/functionality. On the other hand, the iPhone is available in white and black. Apple has chosen to differentiate the iPhone from other smart phones based on functionality (the fact that it has retina display high resolution screens and provides a built in iPod with iTunes). However, students may recognize that consumers can distinguish their iPhone from other iPhones visually with accessories (from third parties) like skins, by customizing their display, and by customizing their applications, even though these add-ons are not unique to iPhones.*

(20 minutes, Chapter Objectives 2, 4, 5 and 6, AACSB: Analytic Skills, Course Learning Outcome 3)