The Importance of fragrance in signaling consumer emotions product effectiveness & supporting product development.



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Background

Fragrance is a key driver of liking for many product categories, especially personal care. In addition to being a desirable product attribute, fragrance signals product quality and efficacy. Fragrances are uniquely also able to connect at an emotional level, either recalling fond memories or creating new ones. Further fragrances can change the way a person feels. The emotional response to fragrances is powerful. Positive fragrances can reinforce product benefits, making a person feel relaxed, pampered, refreshed or energized- whereas negative fragrances can recall an unpleasant experience, leaving them bored or anxious. Given this power companies need to look beyond simple liking and fit to concept when selecting product fragrances.

Sensegen- the Taste, Smell and Beauty division of Blue California, a leading biotechnology enabled flavor and fragrance house, collaborated with Curion to assess the emotions and perceived benefits related to 30 fragrances, utilizing Curion's well validated Emotions & Benefits platform. Sensegen wished to develop a bank of fragrances that were both well liked and reinforced the desired emotions and benefits of their product categories. To support holistic design, in addition to emotions, participants rated fragrance descriptors, associated product benefits, and colors.

This research illustrates how fragrances can be designed to elicit emotional and functional experiences that reinforce, not only product design and function, but also positioning and communications.

Methodology

Fragrance & Benefits Testing: In line with Russell's Circumplex Model, Curion has identified 39 emotional descriptors found to reliably predict consumers product emotions over time, products, consumer groups and even countries
Method: 3 Day Sequential Monadic Central Location Test (CLT)
Stimuli: 30 market & prototype Fragrances designed to cover a wide sensory space
Recruit: 150
Sample: N=~150 male and female consumers aged 25-55
Date: November 2022
Location: New York Metro (Old Bridge, NJ)

Key Findings

Results confirm previous research (and the circumplex model) with the major emotional dimensions being positive vs negative valence (liking) and energy/arousal level. The most liked fragrances are associated with nourishing and nurturing benefits while the least liked are associated with repair.

Top Tier Performers:

- The top performing fragrances have similar trends for descriptors, positive emotions, benefits, color, and applications:
  - Descriptors: fresh, clean
  - Emotions: happy, refreshed, feel good – fragrances can be either energizing or calming but not both
  - Benefits: clean, moisturizing/hydrating, everyday use and nourishes
  - Applications: hair shampoo, hair conditioner and hand soap
  - Colors: purple, red, and orange

Less Preferred Fragrances:

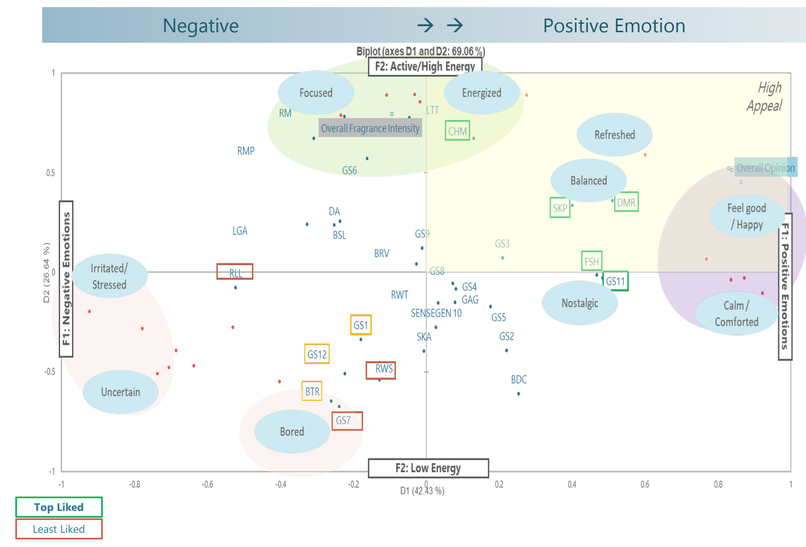
- The bottom performing fragrances have similar trends for descriptors, emotions, benefits, and applications:
  - Descriptors: chemical, medicinal, synthetic, clean, herbal
  - Emotions: uncertain, calm, irritated or bored
  - Benefits: clean, everyday use, medicated, scalp care
  - Applications: hair shampoo, hair conditioner, hand soap, bar soap
  - Colors: brown and grey

Fragrance Emotions

Key dimensions separate Positive *emotional valence*, (Happy, loving and pampered) from Negative (Irritated, stressed, uncertain), and *Arousal* level, i.e., High Energy (energized, active, focused) and Low Energy emotions (bored, uncertain, calm).

The most preferred fragrances (Daily Moisture, citrus/Herbal, SG11) make consumers feel happy satisfied, refreshed, soothed and pampered.

Less preferred fragrances make consumers feel Irritated, bored or uncertain (Relaxing Lavender, Beauty Repair).

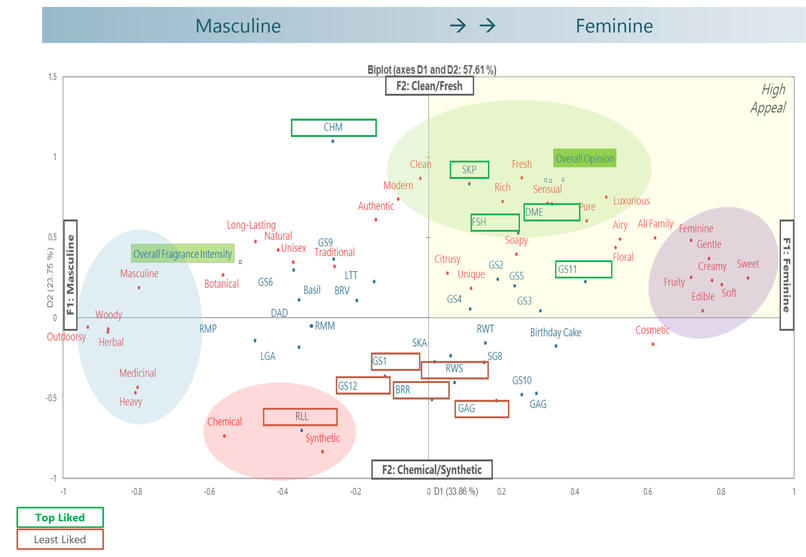


Fragrance Descriptors

Key dimensions separate *Feminine* (gentle, creamy, family) from *Masculine* (woody, botanical, outdoorsy) fragrances and *Clean/Fresh* fragrances from *Chemical/Synthetic*

The most preferred fragrances (Daily Moisture, citrus/Herbal, Sea Kelp) are described as feminine and clean and fresh.

Less preferred fragrances are Synthetic, Chemical and Heavy (Relaxing Lavender, Beauty Repair)

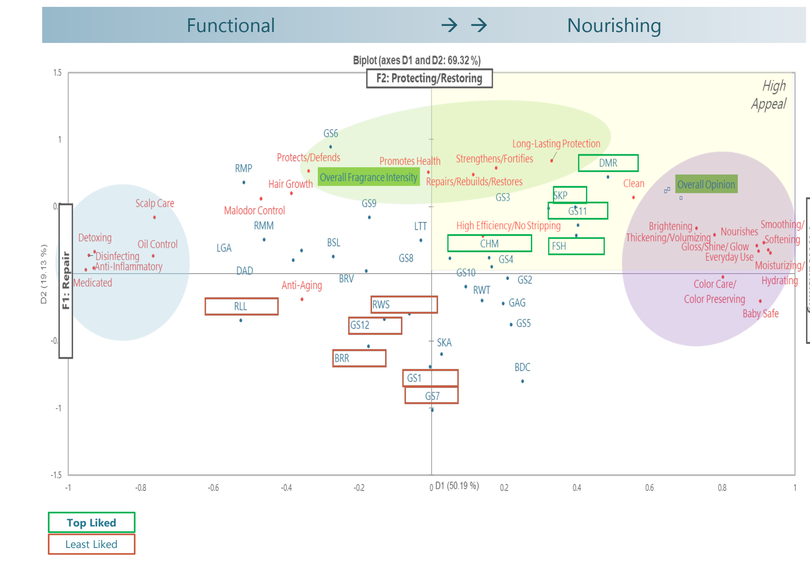


Perceived Fragrance Benefits

Key dimensions separate *Nourishing* fragrances (moisturizing, softening, baby safe) from those associated with *Repair* (disinfecting, medicated, detoxing) and fragrances perceived as protecting or restoring from those that are not.

The most preferred fragrances (Daily Moisture, citrus/Herbal, SG11) are for everyday use and for nourishing and softening benefits.

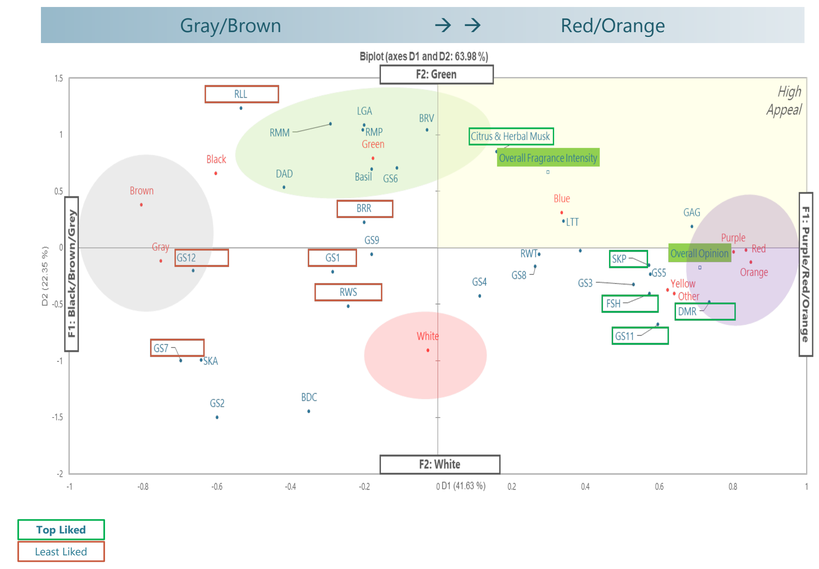
Less preferred fragrances are associated with anti-inflammatory, detoxing or anti-aging benefits (Relaxing Lavender, Beauty Repair).



Fragrance Color Associations

Key Dimension 1 is strongly associated with product liking it separates the most liked fragrances, associated with the colors red, purple and orange, from the least liked fragrances associated with brown and gray.

Key Dimension 2 discriminates samples perceived as Green (Rosemary Mint Purifying, Relaxing Lavender, Lemongrass & Argan, Basil and Density Advanced) vs. White (Birthday Cake, SensGen 2) and is associated with fragrance intensity.

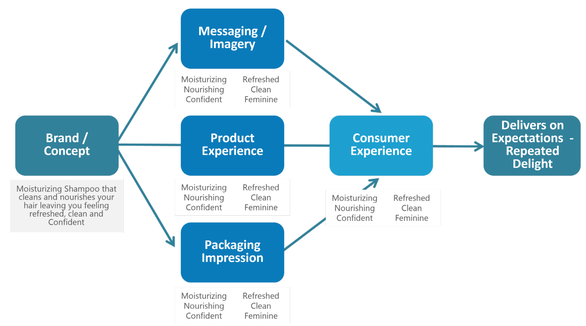


Implications for CPG Brands: A novel way of thinking about Holistic Product Design

Product Emotions & Benefits can be effectively used to align branding, concept, packaging & product to deliver on consumer expectations.

- In uncovering the emotional and perceptual drivers behind a product category, Emotion & Benefits testing can provide clear direction, not only for product design, but also for a more holistic approach to the creation of product, packaging, claims and communications.
- Companies, like Sensegen, understand the importance of Emotions & Benefits and have the ability to create fragrances and products that resonate with consumers fulfill the brand promise and consumer expectations.

For example, a new Moisturizing Shampoo.



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