

Adverts work best when appealing to all senses

Food adverts that appeal to our eyes as well as our tastebuds are more successful because they appeal to more than one of our senses, research has found.



Adverts such as Marks & Spencer's 'Not Just' campaign are the most successful because they appeal to taste as well as sight Photo: REUTERS

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Big firms spend billions of pounds a year on food advertising, but a new study suggests those advertisers are missing out if their ads only mention taste and ignore our other senses.

Adverts such as Marks & Spencer's 'Not Just' campaign are the most successful because they appeal to taste as well as sight.

University of Michigan authors Ryan S. Elder and Aradhna Krishna claim tapping into our other senses can actually increase consumers' taste perceptions.

"Because taste is generated from multiple senses - smell, texture, sight, and sound - ads mentioning these senses will have a significant impact on taste over ads mentioning taste alone," said Mr Elder.

In their experiments, participants were randomly assigned to view one of two ads. One ad was designed to appeal to multiple senses - for example, a tagline for a chewing gum read "stimulate your senses" - while the other ad mentioned taste alone, "long-lasting flavour".

After sampling the gum, the participants listed thoughts they had regarding the item and then rated the overall taste.

Mr Elder added: "The multiple-sense ad led to more positive sensory thoughts, which then led to higher taste perception than the single-sense ad. The differences in thoughts were shown to drive the differences in taste."

The results were repeated with potato chips and popcorn.

The authors believe their research can help advertisers reword ad copy to lead to significant differences in taste.

Mr Elder added: "These results are of great value not only to food advertisers, but also to restaurants, as the descriptions contained within menus can actually alter the taste experience.

"Further, companies can implement the findings into product packaging information to alter the taste of products consumed in the home.

"In an increasingly competitive marketplace, ensuring positive consumption experiences is critical to success."

Their research has been published in the latest edition of the Journal of Consumer Research.

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