THE “TOUCH IT AND LET THE STORY BE TOLD” WORKSHOP DESCRIPTION

This workshop is aimed to become an inspirational platform for small fashion retailers, who want to improve their retail environment and bond with their customers in an entirely different level. Humans are able to impair or even shut down four of five senses, but the sense of touch is the only one that exists passively all the time. Knowing that, retailers can play with their communication with customers the entire time. They can reconstruct the retail environment, which translates the idea behind the brand, they can modify their marketing approach and include sensory cues in it, or they can simply make shopping experience fun and enjoyable. This workshop is created for retailers, who want to make a change and transform shopping experience; it will give the push in the right direction to make the first step.

In order to accomplish that, the workshop will include several parts:

- **Lectures**, where different topics will be covered. This part will be entirely informative, when participants will have possibility to gather information and inspiration from the examples taken

- **Interactive experiment**, where participants will have opportunity to take part in a blind experiment

- **Discussions**, where little groups will be formed to work on the brands and their possibilities to evolve in sensory shopping experience.

Each division will either inform or interact with the participants, and create a solid base of information, as well as give an inspiration to each one of retailers to make some change in their retail environment.

The workshop will start with a short introduction about the topics and its relevance. Then we will continue with informative lectures, which will provide participants with knowledge needed for the rest of the day.

The first lecture “**Human senses. The sense of touch**” will be a brief introduction on five human senses with an emphasis on the sense of touch. It will talk people into the way the senses are constructed and what role they play in human's everyday life. The concept of perception will be presented with examples and research studies done around this.

The second lecture “**Touch to experience**” will give thorough information about the consumer’s need for touch. It will present a concept of ‘Need for Touch’ scale created by researchers Joanna Peck and Terry L. Childers, talking into two kinds of people and their perception of touching products. It will give deeper explanations of people, who are high in Autotelic need for touch and who – in Instrumental need for touch, and differences in their shopping experience and behavior. This information will allow participants analyze their customers from this point-of-view and give some insights on how to work with both type of people.
Further, the third lecture “Human senses and the brand” will give profound background information on sensory marketing and its development. There will be presented all sorts of examples of the brands performing sensory marketing, giving an insight on the creative cases and inspiring retailers to start think of their own brand. It will present different studies conducted on sensory marketing and its relevance on building a brand image, as well as briefly talk people into retail environment’s influence on consumer behavior.

Then we will move on to the blind experiment “Touch the brand”, which will give participant’s some insights on how materials can be linked to the brand concepts. This experiment that has already been tested for my final graduation project consists of a blind test booth with 10 different materials within it. These samples were chosen with certain material properties, triggering the perception of hardness, temperature and texture. Then there are four non-existing fashion concepts that are presented verbally to each participant. The experiment asks to listen to the brand concepts, touch and get to know the materials and link a few samples with each concept. This type of experiment, where vision is entirely excluded, tests people's perception of certain things and lets think about materials in a way it hasn't been done before.

After the lectures and the experiment there will be a room for “The sense of touch and MY brand” discussions, where participants will be in randomly selected groups and will be given time to generate ideas of how the haptic experience could be implemented in their own brand. This discussion time will give a possibility to come up with specific materials that could translate each brand’s values and inspire, as well as getting inspired.

According to Edmund Rolls (1999) “touch can give a tactile stimulation and feeling of pleasure that activates people's brain, influencing feelings and behavior”, which shows the importance of this topic. It is another way how to connect with customers and provide a pleasant shopping experience that eventually can lead to a higher customer loyalty and perhaps to higher revenue.

Note: Please find a leaflet and a schedule of the workshop attached at the back.

10:00 Arrival and registration

10:30 Introduction

11:10 Coffee break

11:30 Lecture “Human senses. The sense of touch”

12:30 Lecture “Touch the experience”

13:30 Lecture “Human senses and the brand”

14:30 Lunch break

15:30 Experiment “Touch the brand”

16:10 Discussions “The sense of touch and MY brand”

17:30 Open discussions in informal atmosphere