

Turn On the Iconicity

Finding your true voice in a changing world.

RETAIL CAN BE A CHANNEL WHERE THE CONSUMER IS LOOKING TO LEARN, BE ENTERTAINED AND BE DELIGHTED, ALL WHILE MAKING A SOCIAL CONNECTION.

WE LIVE IN A WORLD of 24-hour news and unfettered access to and from others through an array of ever-expanding wireless devices, continuing the blur between “my time” and “their time.” Media, whether print, electronic or broadcast, are becoming increasingly fragmented, with more of the public receiving its information from a medley of blogs that stream to us on a daily basis.

Retail can be a channel that addresses that need where the consumer is looking to learn, be entertained and be delighted, all while making a social connection. This requires “iconicity,” that combination of visual cues that creates a personality so distinctive it becomes proprietary to the brand, with the store as an alternative media channel, transcending the more rational elements of price and convenience.

A recent study indicated that in the past, we thought we retained up to 10 percent of what we were exposed to. But now, with so much more

stimuli, we actually recall only a micro-fraction of that amount. And what we do retain is mostly visual, indicating that a visually focused experience is key to being memorable.

Iconicity finds its roots in images and experience. Successful stores effectively become an “environmental blog” where the consumer and retailer “post” their thoughts of the day in the form of product, communication and experience.

Shared “emotional languages” of experience influence what we really “see” and “hear.” Is the consumer’s sense of your environment memorable? Or is it one that fails to register and is quickly discarded? In other words: Are you iconic?

See below for examples of retailers we’ve worked with to successfully achieve this iconicity.

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Iconicity as simplicity: first impressions.

“Solution zones” for Verizon Wireless implicitly speak to various targeted consumers. The new environment transitions customers from the customary high-pressure category, focused on devices and transactions, into one that brings together solutions and encourages sampling and interaction with the store’s associates, products and service plans. This helps consumers feel more understood.



Iconicity as community: a welcoming attitude.

The centerpiece of a new prototype for Borders focuses on readers’ lifestyles, as opposed to book categories. So at the same place you find a book about Tuscany, you might select a book of Tuscan culinary delights or Italian opera or language CDs.



Iconicity as unity: a multi-channel brand characteristic.

For Brookstone’s latest store evolution, the design-focused core merchandising zones flow from the entry exhibit space through to the rear of the store, highlighting key categories featured within the mailed catalog and e-commerce web site.



Iconicity as clarity: Is the brand in focus?

The bold use of The North Face branding vocabulary and its highly recognizable logo immediately create a sense of energy, dominance and authority to the entering consumer. ▀