

A PERCEPTUAL APPROACH TO MARKS & SPENCER'S FOOD ADVERTS

Advertising inundates people on television, on social networks, on their computers, tablets and mobiles. In a currently cluttered advertising environment in which slots are excessively costly, businesses struggling to increase their market share, marketers and advertisers must find new ways of capturing our attention.

In this context, the aim of the upmarket food retailer M&S is twofold: selling its name as well as its commodities which basically means attracting customers into its stores and more visitors to its website. And as food staple is mostly unsophisticated, the ads have to be compelling and innovative in order to make the produce desirable, capture the spectators' attention and trigger their instincts.

This paper, based on Marks & Spencer's adverts featuring naked produce like fruit, vegetables, meat, fish, ingredients of all sorts and a number of mouth-watering processed foods too, is intended as an insight into the visual and auditory cues they contain as well as into their mise-en-scène. Product dramatization processes like shape alteration, miniaturization, oversizing, thinning, abundance, profusion, simplicity and minimalism will be examined. The notion of rhythm will also be addressed as the same music's beat accompanies all the adverts from the campaign. The titles of the adverts (e.g. 'Adventures on the Big Day', 'Adventures in Christmas', 'Adventures in Wonderfood') will also be studied from a linguistic point of view and through their relations to the festive calendar, special events, seasons or food types.

This corpus of adverts will eventually be confronted to the results of recent studies in the domain of consumer neuroscience that have thrown new light on the criteria that make adverts more effective, as effectiveness is definitely the aim to be reached to ensure long-term memory encoding which is strongly correlated with decision-making.

Keywords: food, advertising, sensory inputs, visual and auditory cues, neuromarketing

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Web site

Foodfilm

<http://www.foodfilm.fr>

Palette pour Marie-Madeleine Martinet (2016)

A Perceptual Approach to Marks & Spencer's Food Adverts



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M&S Food “Adventures in Food” campaign

- Rolled out in September 2014 to support M&S’ Food business as the brand was moving on from its mid-2000s “Not Just Any Food” campaign which, thanks to its seductive voice-over and close-up shots of a chocolate pudding, gave birth to the phrase ‘food porn’.
- Media: TV, print, OOH (out-of-home media is advertising that reaches the consumers while they are outside their homes: billboards, street furniture,...) and social media
- Ended mid 2016 (putting an end to a 16-year relationship with Rainey Kelly Campbell Roalfe, Young & Rubicam Group)
- 22 adverts – Length: 11 to 31 sec

M&S Food “Adventures in Food” campaign

- RKCR’s Creative Directors: Pip Bishop, Chris Hodgkiss
- Rather low-budget campaign
- 18 months of hard work in a small room in Paris
- Designing team composed of:
 - 2 French film-makers: Michael Roulier, Philippe L’homme, Paris-based Food Film production company
 - 2 home economists (professionals trained in the science and art of home management)
 - a helper
 - two advertising executives

1.	Adventures in the Harvest	2016	0:31
2.	Adventures in Fiesta	2016	0:31
3.	Adventures in Aroma	2016	0:21
4.	Adventures in Rhythm	2016	0:31
5.	Adventures in Wonderfood	2016	0:41
6.	Adventures in Stars	2015	0:21
7.	Adventures in Glitz	2015	0:21
8.	Adventures in Surprise	2015	0:31
9.	Adventures in Britishness	2015	0:21
10.	Adventures in Tea-Time	2015	0:21
11.	Adventures in Seaside	2015	0:21
12.	Adventures In Sizzle	2015	0:21
13.	Adventures in Autumn	2015	0:31
14.	Adventures in Spice	2015	0:21
15.	Adventures in Fire	2015	0:21
16.	Easter Adventures in Berries	2015	0:11
17.	Easter Adventures in Chocolate	2015	0:31
18.	Taste of the British Isles	2015	0:41
19.	Easter Third Off Roasts	2015	0:11
20.	Chicken Curry	2015	0:21
21.	Italian Recipes	2015	0:21
22.	Adventures in Ice	2014	0:21

Adventures in Food

- a TV campaign showcasing M&S's healthy food offering
- unveils the M&S's healthy food range
- the footage shows fresh fruit and vegetables being sliced, diced and blitzed into juices and soups
- quick-fire images of M&S food moving against a black, sometimes white, background, giving the impression the food has a life of its own

Key features

- Overflowing arrays of edibles
- Elegant and vibrant food arrangements
- Distance from the tangible reality of food
- No or minimal text
- Strapline 'Only M&S'

Perceptual issues

- Roughly 30 percent of neurons in the brain's cortex are devoted to vision, compared with 8 percent for touch, and 2 percent for hearing. The senses of smell, taste and hearing are processed in the sides of the brain (in the temporal lobes)
- Unlike other senses, human vision is processed in the back of the brain (in the occipital lobe)
- Regions are specialized for different visual tasks
 - visuospatial processing
 - color differentiation
 - motion perception

Ads that are best at staying within a viewers' long-term memory and affecting their future behavior

Data from Consumer neuroscience research company Neuro-Insight (2016)

Creative criteria

Efficiency is increased by

- mix up pace, sounds, breaks, and pauses
- are driven by their soundtrack

- 20%
- 14%

Food in Rhythm

- “We wanted something playful, cheeky, vibrant and pacey”
- Instrumental version of "Rather Be" by Clean Bandit, an English electronic music group Light tempo of 121 beats per minute
- A violin, video game-style synth blips, a slow bass, piano
- The track was the most downloaded in 2014 in the UK and was n°1 in the charts for a month
- “infuriatingly catchy soundtrack” (*Daily Mail*)

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=-P2ZgYSZpig>

A D V E N T U R E S
— IN —
A U T U M N

Bringing food to life

- Fantastic camerawork & novel filming techniques
- Great creation work
- No computer-generated images or special effects added afterwards in a studio
- The main trick is time-lapse photography: speeding things up or slowing images down, which creates a peculiar effect of motion
- The message is the mise en scène and the ingredients do the talking

Food in Motion

Gvili Yaniv, in *Food Quality and Preference*, 2015

- Depictions of food with implied motion lead to enhanced evaluations of both freshness and appeal

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=K24f3yoZPqc>

A D V E N T U R E S
— IN —
T H E H A R V E S T

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=gm7BPK-6Y_w

A D V E N T U R E S
— IN —
W O N D E R F O O D

Thinness means Healthiness

Courteny Szocs, “Tasting in 2D: implications of food shape, visual cues, and oral haptic sensory inputs”, 2015

“one way to nudge consumers towards healthier consumption might be through cutting foods into thinner pieces/slices or molding the foods into shapes that have a smaller surface area”

Thin layers of healthy fruit and veg



<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=JYu3LjgnT9s>





Wayne Thiebaud (1920-) American painter

Elegant arrangements of foods



Adventures in spice



Satiation from sensory simulation

Study by Jeffrey S. Larson, *Journal of Consumer Psychology*, April 2014

- Considering a food, engenders spontaneous simulations of the taste of that food item, which by itself is enough to produce satiation
- If consumers see too many ads that cause such sensory simulations, the ironic effect could be a decreased enjoyment of the advertised food when it is eaten
- However, it has also been repeatedly shown that variety increases energy intake

Digital satiation

**“Eating with our eyes: From visual hunger to digital satiation”
Charles Spence & al. Crossmodal Research Laboratory, Oxford**

- “Intriguingly, visual exposure to food images can also induce satiety: Similar to the gradual reduction of hunger that is seen during actual consumption, even just the simulation of consumption can reduce hunger.”
- “Young children’s liking for vegetables can be increased simply by exposing them to pictures of those vegetables”
- “The pleasure of viewing food on a screen now even exceeds the pleasure associated with seeing real food; particularly in the case of obese people.”

