

## **In Search of the Experiential Marketing Domain**

*Uditha Liyanage*

### **Abstract**

*An object has to be first sensed before it is cognized, and then liked by the consumer. An experience is predicated on the customer's senses coming into contact with an external stimulus, say, a brand. Treating this sensory contact as the determinant of Experiential Marketing (EM) is flawed. EM is a particular genre of Marketing which entails the customer's "personal, engaging and valued sensory experiences of a brand", as a necessary condition, and the experiential value, in this context, being "terminal or critical to the customer's consumption-decision", as the sufficient condition. Indeed, the Sense-brand of EM comes into being when the consumer's consumption-decision is primarily (i.e. solely or predominantly) based on pleasing the senses, and the resultant emotions. The consumer in EM is, clearly, a hedonist, unashamedly seeking pleasure. Importantly, there are other forms of critical customer value, beyond experiential value, which make EM only one genre of Marketing.*

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**Dr. Uditha Liyanage** is Director, Postgraduate Institute of Management (PIM). He is also a leading consultant and developer of managers, and sits on the boards of a number of leading companies.

*Four stages of EM are identified as the consumer moves from passive to active engagement, and from object to object-in-context generated experience. Marketers steeped in EM should identify the stage at which the consumer is located, and then strategically move the customer to more heightened states of EM. Moreover, it is noted that the consumer will act alone with respect to the object or object-in-context (isolationist) or interact with a product/service provider and/or with other consumers, in the given context (interactionist). Providing a multi-sensory experience, beyond the typical sight and sound sense appeals, and going beyond perception by evoking sensory images that are markedly engaging (imagination), it is argued, are key strategic initiatives of EM.*