

Scents sell

I was delighted to try the new Cinnabon cookies from Poore Bros. The packaging is good, and the varieties and flavors are right on. Sadly, the Cinnabon experience isn't translated. If you've ever been so much as near a Cinnabon, you know what I'm talking about. The aroma of cinnamon wraps itself around you like a favorite cashmere sweater on a chilly day. It instantly evokes warmth, comfort and luxury.

But I think the Cinnabon experience can be extended to the cookies with the same aromatherapy approach taken with the outlets. Other industries are certainly enhancing their products with food aromas, so why doesn't the industry that's providing the inspiration take advantage of them as well?

Cinnabon cookies, for example, would be greatly enhanced if the foil bag the cookies are packaged in were scented. Imagine the fresh-baked aroma of cinnamon consumers could enjoy.

The packaging industry has several films, closures, inks and package liners — even garbage liners — that can provide an extra whiff of something nice, which I believe can add extra sales.

When it was introduced awhile back, I glommed on to Crest Whitening Expressions Fresh Citrus Breeze toothpaste, in part because of the scratch and sniff patch the company put on the package. The company could take it a step further and incorporate it into its new variety contest. The company is currently asking consumers to vote among Lemon Ice, Sweet Berry Punch or Tropical Exotica for the next variety. Wouldn't the contest have more credibility if consumers at least voted for an aroma to go with a name?

Wm. Wrigley & Co. used scratch and sniff print ads as part of the launch of its new Extra Cool Green Apple chewing gum. I'm told it was a unique flavor to the company, so needed a unique marketing twist.

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On top of that, aromatherapy is continually pervading our lives: It used to be enough for a person to smell clean, now we need to literally smell something clean. We've moved from body and laundry care to household and consumables, everything from air fresheners to cleaning products. Frankly, these industries are tapping into food smells, but I don't see our clever food industry marketers doing enough with aromas.

Glade PlugIns is currently running ads promoting its Create-a-Scent Fragrancer, many with food smells. The commercial I saw showed a woman pairing Apple Cinnamon and Vanilla Garden PlugIns, which had her husband reminiscing about his mother pulling fresh-baked goods out of the oven. Other food-inspired scents to select from include Grapefruit Delight, Tropical Mist and Mountain Berry.

Maybe a savvy marketer can team up with Glade parent S.C. Johnson & Son Inc., for some food aromatherapy. The military, for one, thinks it's a good idea.

When it became clear that soldiers weren't eating their MREs, the military adopted scented liners to enhance the aroma of the food. I haven't seen an MRE for several years, but I remember they could use a visible makeover as well as an aroma makeover.

In his column this month, Pierce Hollingsworth talks about chocolate. He mentions the new ethel's chocolate lounges that are opening. The chocolate, I'm sure is fabulous, but it's the multi-sensory chocolate experience that will determine the concept's success. ■

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