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There's growing buzz building about sensory branding. Sensory branding stimulates a consumers' relationship with a brand and cultivates an emotional connection that opti-

the use of a green tea and lemon-grass infused scent in their lobbies and cappuccino and mochaccino-infused scenting in their Morsels coffee cafes.

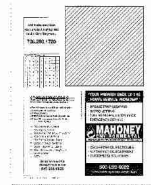
Focusing On Sensory Exploration and Indulgence

mizes brand loyalty. Throughout its history, Omni Hotels, which creates genuine, authentic guest experiences at 45 distinctive luxury hotels and resorts in leading business gateways and leisure destinations across North America has stood for premier quality of service. The brand has ranked highest in guest satisfaction by J.D. Power and Associates several times in recent history. In 2006, Omni Hotels & Resorts was a pioneer in offering sensory branding as part of their public space amenities with

"When Ambius met with us to discuss their scent branding offering, we were

already very familiar and comfortable with what scent branding could offer our guests," said Stephen Rosenstock, Senior Vice President of Brand Standards for Omni Hotel & Resorts. "Omni has become recognized in the hospitality industry for using an innovative, sensory approach to ensure an engaging and comfortable environment for our guests. We turned to Ambius to provide the products and services we were seeking as we evolved the program and sought to customize

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the scents in our properties based on the destination's particular ambience - we refer to it as the "local color" - we are looking to create for each."

The luxury hotel brand issued a Request for Proposal to leaders in the scent marketing sector for the delivery of a scent branding program to provide an even dispersal of a subtle, fresh scent evocative of plants. "We sought a signature scent that was not overtly masculine or feminine but that evoked a subtle freshness," said Rosenstock. "We want guests to recognize the fresh scent in the lobby, as perhaps, stemming from the lush greenery. Our goal is to positively engage the senses of our guests at every opportunity. Further, from a delivery

perspective, it was also important that the scent is dispersed evenly and not clustered in hot-pockets in certain sections of the lobby."



Lobby of the Omni William Penn Hotel in Pittsburgh, PA

"Just as Muzak has been a true partner in helping us create memorable aural experiences for guests

in our hotel lobbies with upbeat music in the morning which evolves to relaxing jazz-infused tunes in the evening, we wanted our scent branding company to be our true olfactory partner," said Rosenstock. "Each hotel in our portfolio has a distinct profile in keeping with the essence of the particular destination which demands different sensory elements. It was important that each hotel determine the scents that best reflect their unique property."

"We presented Omni Hotels & Resorts with an extensive test run of the Microfresh system," said Daria Snyder, National & Sales Design Consultant for Ambius. "Over a period of several months, we demonstrated a wide variety of scent offerings and different-sized units to adequately cover certain areas of the hotel. Omni required a behind-

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the-scenes scent branding system that provided an even availability of scent whether you were behind a pillar, in a distant corner or in the middle of a hotel lobby. We determined our HVAC/duct work system provided the Omni properties with optimal brand scenting in their lobbies, elevator banks, guest corridors and conference rooms.” During the summer of 2009, Omni Hotels & Resorts selected Ambius to be their new scent branding partner, effective December 2009.

Daria Snyder and her team visited with management from each Omni property to determine their unique scent profile and how each hotel could optimize scent branding. “Working with each hotel’s budget and unique

local profile, we made scent program recommendations. It was important for each property to have scent autonomy as an optimal scent brand.” Each hotel determined



The Ambius system works with ducted HVAC air handling systems.

their favored scents via in-house focus groups testing a wide variety of Ambius-recommended scents. “Omni associates enjoyed experiencing a wide variety of scents and determining which custom varieties were right for their particular property,” said Snyder.

“Many of the hotels also employ our seasonal scent branding program which provides new scents each season, with even a special holiday scent in December,” adds Snyder. “Plus, the Microfresh systems we have installed are completely behind-the-scenes and not in the hotel guests’ line of vision.”

“As scenting lifts morale and creates a sense of well-being, some hotel patrons may even want to indulge in their own favorite scent that promotes relaxation

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or alertness,” says Snyder. In that vein, Ambius is making individual scent branding units available to members of Omni Hotels’ Select Guest@ loyalty program. “A guest who desires a ‘fresh cotton’ scent or spa-infused ‘green grass,’ for example, can receive on-demand scent branding,” says Snyder.



Ambius Cube available in individual guest rooms.

“Of the five senses, smell is the most powerful trigger of emotions and memories,” said Rosenstock. “Since the implementation of the Ambius Microfresh scent branding program at our hotels, we have received positive feedback from our guests. Guests continually comment on the cleanliness and freshness of our lobbies, hallways and meeting rooms. While most guests cannot put their finger on the origin of the scent, some guests attribute the fresh aroma in our lobby areas to the lush foliage.”

“Our ambient scenting system results in a holistic, inspiring and memorable atmosphere which complements and reinforces Omni’s mission to exceed the expecta-



While not being able to put their finger on the origin of the fresh scent in the lobby, most guests attribute the scent to the fresh foliage displayed throughout.

tions of guests. We’re extremely pleased to partner with like-minded companies who understand the role that scent can play in creating a unique experience,” said Jeff Mariola, Ambius divisional managing director. ■■