

NeuroFocus Reveals Groundbreaking Role That ‘Little Moments of Luxury’ Play in Economically Distressed Times, Introduces Luxury Perceptual Framework

New Methodology For Marketers Seeking Recessionary Solutions Measures Consumers’ Subconscious Responses Across Eight Dimensions to Brands, Products, Packaging, In-Store Displays, Advertising, and Customer Service

For Immediate Release

BERKELEY, Calif. – July 6, 2010 -- As the economy sputters, the brain seeks relief in what the world’s leading neuromarketing company has identified as “little moments of luxury.” This finding lies at the core of the new Luxury Perceptual Framework that NeuroFocus has developed.

In an interview aired on “ABC World News With Diane Sawyer”, NeuroFocus founder and Chief Executive Officer Dr. A. K. Pradeep described these ‘little moments’ as meaningful markers within the subconscious mind. The company created the Luxury Perceptual Framework (LPF) from research studies that have detected this phenomenon in consumers’ precognitive responses to its clients’ brands, products, packaging, in-store marketing, advertising, and customer service across numerous categories around the globe.

In announcing the introduction of the Luxury Perceptual Framework, Dr. Pradeep said, “This phenomenon is universal among human beings, and we see its effects in many business fields as well. The brain values and therefore seeks out even small amounts of pleasure and satisfaction in daily life. In times of economic strife, that subconscious pursuit of luxury becomes harder to satisfy, so our implicit luxury pursuit strategies change. We adjust to and attach more value to ‘little moments of luxury’ that enable us to feel as though we’ve experienced something rewarding amidst our stressful daily lives. The Luxury Perceptual Framework appears to function across geographies, cultural/ethnic/racial sectors and socio-economic levels. The LPF is a truly global phenomenon.”

Dr. Pradeep added that, “This finding has deep implications for brand development, product design, packaging, elements of in-store marketing, and offers guidelines for creating the most effective advertising, especially for marketers who want to stand out among the messaging clutter today.”

The eight dimensions of the Framework include:

Dimension 1: MORE – Be it volume, size, or quantity, offering just a little more than what is normally regarded as “necessary or needed” causes the subconscious to make the association with luxury. This response applies to McMansions, king size beds, a value pack with a super sized meal, gigahertz on a computer, megapixels on a camera, horsepower in a car, or diamonds in a watch bezel.

Dimension 2: VARIETY – The actuality or illusion of choice--offering a variety of features or entities to choose from--enables the “expression of self”. Such variety is perceived by the subconscious mind as a representation of luxury. Color or fabric choices, aroma or herb choices, toppings and menu choices, ram/storage/processor choices, dvd/nav/leather/color choices, and day/date choices are examples of the stimuli that can evoke this response and perception. Dr. Pradeep explained that “the ultimate in personal luxury is personal expression, and luxury is the freedom to express who we really are.”

Dimension 3: PURPOSE – Linkage to a socially respectable cause--the connection to an elevated purpose--provides the luxury of a sense of nobility. Linking soap and cars to environmental stewardship, linking cameras and computers to recycling and waste prevention manifests a sense of purposeful living, where our everyday lives seem to have broader and deeper meaning in an otherwise occasionally confusing, contradictory, and often stress-filled existence.

Dimension 4: RARE and UNIQUE – The luxury of possessing the “one and only”, or qualifying as one of a select few to own or experience something--from collectible toys to antique cameras, one of a kind automobiles, the Hope Diamond, or limited edition premiums from fast food restaurants—causes the subconscious to respond in similar fashion. The brain aspires to possess what is perceived as the unique, rare, unavailable--brought to the forefront in “Avatar”, when the pursuit was for ‘Unobtainium’.

Dimension 5: TIME and LABOR – The prize of “hand-crafted”--the mental notion that someone labored with their bare hands to make something for you, be it beer, furniture, or a Rolls Royce—evokes a subconscious perception of luxury. The combination of time plus labor in crafting something ‘special’ equates in the precognitive mind to luxury. This can be defined as a sort of sweat equity value that the subconscious assigns.

Dimension 6: ME – Personalization. A monogrammed set of cuffs, a personalized set of license plates, or a burger with your name etched in mustard – if it is customized to you, and is therefore intimately connected to you, the brain attaches a luxury valuation to it. The personal recognition can be as simple as answering a caller with their name, and knowing their likes and dislikes (pioneered in the hospitality industry). Personal recognition symbolizes luxury in the subconscious.

Dimension 7: CARE and DETAILS – This is where flourishes come in. The tying of the bow on a package, the insight that a cup of coffee may need a cardboard holder...the attention to small details triggers a significant response within the subconscious that links directly to luxury. A focus on little but meaningful nuances or extra steps translates as care, and that perception becomes a hallmark of luxury.

Dimension 8: AESTHETICS – Beauty is indeed in the eye of the beholder, and when that stimulus is transferred from the occipital lobe to the prefrontal cortex where it is assessed, the brain assigns higher value to it. Higher aesthetic value is automatically equated with luxury. Exemplary aesthetic qualities that stand out to the subconscious include simple, harmonious, proportional, and clutter-free environments. Less is indeed more for the brain in this context. Aesthetic values may be subjective in some respects, but for the subconscious, they are meaningful markers of luxury.

Dr. Pradeep explained that brands that leveraged some or all of these LPF Dimensions stimulated consumers to make the linkage between their product, package, or service and the subconscious association with luxury. He added that, “Enabling that consumer impression to attach to products and services creates additional levels of brand value that consumers also voluntarily assign, and that in turn helps gain long-term marketplace success against the competition.”

Among the most recent evidence of the power of the LPF in economically distressed times, he cited the repeatedly successful launches of Apple products such as the iPad and iPhone. Long lines outside Apple stores not only reflect Apple’s intuitive application of many of the LPF dimensions for its products, but also for its store designs, packaging, advertising, and customer service. “The brain has rewarded Apple with some of its greatest gifts: attention, emotional engagement, and memory retention. No wonder then that it has become a world leader in consumer technology,” Dr. Pradeep said.

“Smart marketers who look for ways to fulfill our universal but deeply-submerged yearning for luxury, especially in difficult economic times, are likely to reap rewards in terms of purchase intent and brand loyalty,” Dr. Pradeep added. “We know that because we see it in our studies, which capture and measure those subconscious responses and others on a daily basis. The Luxury Perceptual Framework also provides a landmark pathway into understanding how consumers respond to superior service levels, the same way that our Brand Essence Framework captures a brand’s core attributes at the subconscious level. It may be that the LPF forms a fundamental game plan for the battle of the brands--and those brands that tap into our ever-present search for satisfaction, even through the ‘little moments of luxury’ that NeuroFocus uncovered, can gain an outsize marketplace advantage.”

NeuroFocus is the world leader in EEG-based, full brain measurement of consumers' subconscious responses. Its client list includes several of the world's largest companies, and its normative databases far exceed in size and scope those of any other neuromarketing company.

Dr. Pradeep's book on neuromarketing, "The Buying Brain", will be published this summer. In it, he offers a number of never-before-published frameworks and action plans based on NeuroFocus' groundbreaking research into consumers' subconscious responses. Marketers can follow these guidelines to create brands, products, packaging, in-store marketing materials and environments, and advertising that will appeal most powerfully and effectively to the brain.

About NeuroFocus

The world's leading neuromarketing firm, NeuroFocus (<http://neurofocus.com>) brings advanced neuroscience knowledge and expertise to the worlds of branding, product development and packaging, advertising, in-store marketing, and entertainment. NeuroFocus clients include Fortune 100 companies across dozens of categories, including automotive, consumer packaged goods, food and beverage, financial services, Internet, pharmaceutical, retail, and many more sectors. Entertainment category clients include major companies in the broadcast and cable television and motion picture industries.

Headquartered in the U.S. and operating globally through offices and NeuroLabs in the UK and Europe, the Asia/Pacific region, Latin America, and the Middle East, the company leverages Nobel Prize caliber and Doctorate-level credentials in neuroscience and marketing from the University of California at Berkeley, MIT, Harvard, Oxford, Columbia University, and other leading institutions, combined with executive business management and consulting experience. The Nielsen Company is a strategic investor in NeuroFocus.

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