

Changing moods

— Mood Management is on the rise

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In a world where everything, and everyone is connected, events or individuals can make a big impact. They can generate a trend or a prevailing mood among individuals or within a community.

The role of Mood Management is to manage these messages that are capable of altering mood states in which designers and brands interact.



Susanne Piët, author of *Mood Management*, outlines the frame of mind of the world in which the citizen and the consumer are currently moving. « The consumers' confidence has been compromised, the state's debt is rising, regulations are being tightened, bankruptcies are taking their toll, loans are on the decline, people are losing their jobs and society is taking on the extra burden.» This is the austere environment within which the designers and brands are operating and offering their products to customers.

In the mood?

Arousing emotion is a characteristic that a large number of products share in the current world economic climate. But the emotions are short-lived. However, when they do last, a strong trend normally follows suit. Susanne Piët explains that « the 'mood' is a trend, an enduring state of mind or an experience which filters and changes the interpretation of emotional stimuli experienced

in real-life. The mood can soften or intensify a view on the environment, the world or one's self. The mood can block or stimulate energy. The mood can also be contagious. » So trends or moods have an important socio-economic impact. Through these trends, individuals determine, for example, the choice of security and past intimacy, within the family... Or, they become more assertive, take on work or personal commitments and are open to innovation.

General Mood Manager

In a world where insecurity and busy schedules have the upper hand over piece of mind, the consumer tries to manage his moods himself. To do this, he turns among other things to social or illegal drugs; sensory stimuli like incense or music; social contacts or a behaviour where 'slow' is undoubtedly an increasing phenomenon. But shopping is also part of this, as Susanne Piët explains: « Buying can be an act of Mood Management, like an addiction

that stimulates a mood, a therapeutic intervention, shock therapy, a purification of the mind... » The brands, services, cities and products can serve individuals who are searching for a specific mood. Mood Management is like a tool for meeting general requirements relating to security, dignity and purchasing power. Or a form of liberation that brings contentment, satisfaction and control.

Meeting moods

The customer's mood is more likely to influence his choice than his loyalty. « The customer is not a permanent part of the same target group, he regularly changes his identity. The current motivation to do or not to do certain things as a citizen or consumer comes above all from the need to change ideas. » Susanne Piët explains that the challenge therefore consists of approaching the consumer in the appropriate way. « Business success depends on an adequate or non adequate response to our needs. » This highlights the need for a user-centric approach to design. « If you really want the brand to integrate into our consumer lifestyle, the interaction between environment and mood is essential. » This is why a platform where the brand and the consumer can meet is a good idea. From a 'flagship' and a presence at festivals to an internet community, there are a number of existing ways to entice the customer into becoming a brand partner. The use of bright colours, intoxicating smells or amusing shapes contribute to a successful approach. This is where the designers intervene.

Setting the mood

When you enter into the average supermarket, what hits you, more than anything else is the sterile environment the products are presented in. Here and there, an article stands out. As a customer, you don't usually stay long in this type of environment. And it's the same story in other stores. The IKEA's, H&M's, Harrod's and others of this world implement strategies that no longer satisfy the contemporary customer. Moods are created, and worlds take shape. The chaos and the crowds prevail all over the city and in public places. The airports, that give us access to the world are places where we say goodbye, and not necessarily places we're keen to stroll around in. The user searches for calm areas and experiences (visual) that compliment their mood of choice. The city can also benefit from Mood Management. When project, function and environment meet it creates an ambiance where there is less alienation and criminal activity, and reduces general distrust. Utopia or confidence full of hope for the future? That depends on your current state of mind.

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