
The dynamics of fragrance marketing

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The success of a product is due to many factors. Whether the product is instinctively developed, or developed around a given set of criteria, the coherence of the complete product concept contributes to that product's success.

One of the major problems we find in our industry is that of communication in regard to fragrance requirements. The other elements that contribute to the total product—packaging, promotion, advertising, positioning and distribution—are more clearly defined, while fragrance is always more difficult to tie in. The success of tomorrow's product will depend upon the successful translation of the marketing criteria into the fragrance concept. Naarden has studied the role marketing has played in past fragrance launches as far back as the 1800s and how its role has evolved through the years. We have developed a new presentation around the total product concept in an effort to better ensure the development of fragrances that will be future market successes.

The perfume business has over the last two centuries evolved into a major industry. During the 1960s and 1970s it enjoyed enormous growth. In fact, the perfume industry was so successful that, for a while, it was thought to be recession proof. However, as a proliferation of fragrances entered the marketplace, the percentage of successful ones compared to the number of entries has become low. Competition grows fiercer, and social and economic changes affect our business more and more.

The consumer of the 1980s is a new person—aware, sophisticated and quality conscious. She selects a fragrance not only by its scent, but also its packaging, promotion and positioning. The slightest conflict in these elements will create a subconscious phenomenon of rejection and hinder the success of the new product. Therefore, we have examined the history of the perfume business from a marketing perspective and have studied the "evolution of fragrance marketing."

Prior to the 1800s, perfumery was in its artisanal stage. Court perfumers created perfumes that were simple and unsophisticated. Perfumers created special scents for their select clients. Glass makers

created special bottles to suit the taste of individual perfumers.

It was only around 1800-1850 that the industrialization occurred creating an emerging market which enabled the development of companies such as Roger and Gallet in 1806, Lubin, and Guerlain in 1828.

The years 1850-1900 were the emancipation of industrialized perfumery (development of Western society). This was the Victorian Age, when society was guided by a strict moral code. Women were to be seen and admired, but not heard. Elegance, creativity and taste were the most important criteria in fashion. Ribbons, frills, flowers and flounces predominated. There was daywear, evening wear and sportswear.

In the perfume industry, the number one criterion was scent. Because it was so important, scent had to be something easy for the consumer to comprehend, something familiar. This led to the dominance of simple, natural fragrances all created around either one flower or a very simple floral bouquet. Even today, the heart of every woman's fragrance is still a basic floral accord.

The 1900s heralded a new era in art, fashion and technology. In the years 1900-1920, the world saw some of the most striking artistic breakthroughs. Picasso and Braque launched cubism. Crafts were equally creative. Faberge delighted the aristocracy with his elegant flowers, figurine groupings and Imperial Easter Eggs and Lalique became famous for his molded glass perfume bottles. In the United States, the Wright Brothers and Henry Ford were making the technological advances which were soon to change the very nature of society. Then came World War I and everything changed. Politics, society, even people themselves. The war forced women to play a new role in society and their dress reflected this role. The practical nature of trousers, overalls and uniforms worn by working women were translated into the short skirts and slacks which became part of everyday fashion.

The number one criterion in fragrance marketing was still scent, but consumers were becoming more sophisticated in regard to name and presentation. This was the beginning of marketing perfume as a luxury item and with it came the emergence of fash-

ion houses as fragrance launchers. The new fragrances reflected both the greater technological abilities of the perfumers and the growing importance of presentation and name. Fragrances no longer bore a generic name, but one which expressed a feeling, a mood and a place.

In 1905 Francois Coty was the first person to market a fragrance in a crystal Lalique bottle with a silver label when he launched *L'Origan* which utilized the newly developed chypre accord. In 1919 Guerlain tagged on a spice note and introduced *Mitsouko*.

By the end of the 19th century the amber accord had already been developed, followed by the animal accord. This led to the floral-amber-animal scent of *Jicky* by Guerlain in 1889 and *Après l'Ondee* in 1898, also by Guerlain, although it wasn't until the 20th century that amber accords really became popular. With the development of certain aroma chemicals which were not distillable from the natural flower, such as Amyl Salicylate from clover, we begin to see such fragrances as *Quelques Fleurs de Houbigant* (1912). Development quickened and the oriental accord followed with *L'Heure Bleue* by Guerlain (1913).

World War I was followed by a period (1920-1940) of increased prosperity, the building and development of new industries and expanding international trade. The hardships of the war were over and the world wanted to forget: in France—*Les Annees Folles*—in America—*The Roaring '20's*. It was the birth of the jazz age and the great escape. Society was rebellious and fun-loving. The flapper had arrived. She swore, smoked and flirted brazenly. Then came the crash of the stock market precipitating a worldwide economic crisis.

The years between the wars were a time when women were becoming more fashion-conscious than ever and French designers began exerting their greatest authority—Chanel, Schiaparelli, and Patou. Fashion became simple and clean. Designer fragrances were becoming even more dominant. As the creativity of prestigious fashion houses was enhanced by the possibility of still more complex notes made available to the perfumers, fragrances became more sophisticated.

This was an extremely important moment in the evolution of creative perfumery because it was the first time that an aroma chemical, such as the aldehyde, was used for its own fragrance character, rather than for its similarity with natural products. So we see in 1920 Coco Chanel's pioneering *Chanel No. 5* using the aldehydic note. At the same time, fragrance starts to become a lifestyle product, although the word lifestyle as it relates to fragrance, had not yet been invented. *Chanel No. 5* was followed by *Arpege de Lanvin*, *L'Aimant* by Coty, and *Je Reviens* by Worth, all floral aldehydes.

The development of hydroxycitronellal, which gives us the lily of the valley note, not attainable from the natural flower, led to two new fragrances by Caron—*Fleurs de Rocaille* (1935) and *Le Muguet du Bonheur* (1936).

The world was at war (1940-1950) and life was dangerous and uncomfortable. Major worldwide shortages made not only luxuries, but also necessities difficult to obtain. The made-up look was out and in came the era of the brisk, scrubbed appearance. Fashion was no nonsense—suits, slacks, and work clothes predominated.

Then came the armistice. The pendulum swung back and people went wild. In 1947, Christian Dior introduced the new look. Rounded shoulders. Full, feminine busts. And hand-span waists above enormous, spreading skirts. It was a time of great extremes and eccentricities. Name, image, presentation—these were the important factors in the launching of any fragrance (more important than comprehension of scent). Designers, backed by the strong fashion statement of the cinemas, became the highest authority for the mass population. Over 60% of the significant new fragrances were presented by designers, while less than 40% were presented by the traditional perfumery houses. It was no longer important to understand what the scent represented, but whom it represented. Freed from the necessity of producing an easily understood fragrance, perfumery experienced its greatest period of creativity. This is the era when we find the development of perfumery's most extreme and, in some instances, complex notes: green notes as utilized in *Vent Vert* by Balmain, fruity notes as in *Femme de Rochas*, and the chypre-animal-woody complex as exemplified by *Miss Dior* by Christian Dior and *Bandit de Piguet*.

In the post war years (1950-1960), the world's economy was expanding. People had money to spend and manufacturers were helping them spend it. Consumerism was in its embryonic stage, led by those important messages from radio, tv, and movies. Fashion now assumed a universal importance. It became a language, a form of group identification. This was the era of the A-line, the H-line and the trapeze line dresses. New territories were explored, big businesses were established.

Perfumery, too, became big businesses as a proliferation of new fragrances appeared on the market. Comprehension again became important as the emphasis returned to nature and floral fragrances. The designer name was still significant, but it was beginning to lose its magic as designers found it increasingly difficult to impose their wishes on society. Marketers now relied on presentation to sell their product. This was an era when models became stars and fragrances promised subliminal pleasures.

Perfumers now had the raw materials available to create very complex accords. Although florals dominated, other notes including green, fruity and chypre accords were utilized to give fragrances their uniqueness—*Le De* by Givenchy, *Memoire Cherie* by Elizabeth Arden, and *Cabocharde* by Gres. And in 1959 Estee Lauder introduced *Youth Dew* in which a rich, floral accord was surrounded by oriental-amber and spicy notes.

The 1960s were revolutionary—social unrest, the

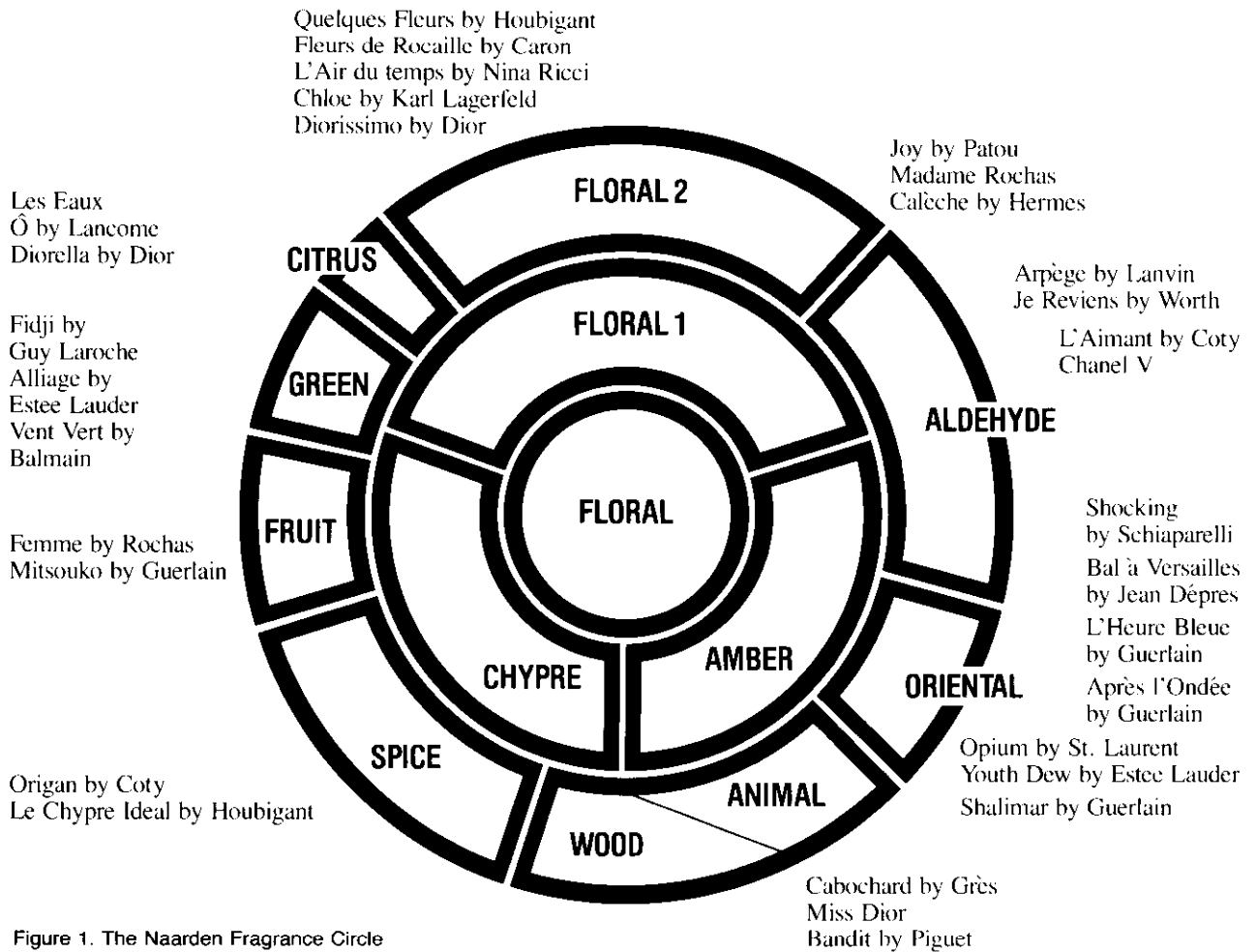


Figure 1. The Naarden Fragrance Circle

youth movement, and a strong emphasis on ecology. Consumers began to tell marketers what they wanted. And what they wanted was simplicity. Clothes were designed to be functional—slacks, jeans, pret-a-porter. Along with this casualness there was a new liberality. Men wore their hair long. Women's fashions became even more daring—peek-a-boo, see-through, and the mini-skirt.

As the cost of putting a fragrance on the market increased, so did the necessity of its success. Presentation became more complicated and costly, requiring extensive advertising, exquisite signature packaging and store promotions (natural, not simple). This brought about marketing research, consumer testing and the emergence of focus groups which better attuned the perfume industry to the consumer's needs. From a marketing perspective, the most significant fragrance of the decade was Youth Dew. Launched with a gift with purchase tie-in, it revolutionized the marketing of a fragrance.

Sophisticated fragrances which put stronger emphasis on floral accords were Madame Rochas, Fidji, and Norell. Calandre and Rive Gauche both used the

now classical floral aldehyde accord with the addition of modern chypre notes to create a very unique fragrance character. Although Eau Sauvage, introduced by Christian Dior in 1968, was targeted for men, it was responsible for the Eau Fraiche idea of unisex fragrance, and ultimately such women's fragrances as Diorella by Christian Dior and Bigarade by Nina Ricci, introduced four years later, in which the citrus accord plays a dominant role.

The 1970s brought many changes. Rules, roles and religion were all turned upside down. Divorce rates rose. The mood was independent. Women were entering the work force in enormous numbers. Now the word fashion meant different things to different people. New rules of dress were established and designers no longer dictated, they responded. But their names were still important and they began to develop a greater identity with a much broader market segment than ever before.

Fragrances were also reaching a far broader market, therefore, each had to be distinguishable from the multitude of other new fragrances. So American perfumers increased the tenacity and diffusion by em-

Table I

TABLE OF MEAN AVERAGES

ATTRIBUTES	FLORAL									
	CHYPRE			FLORAL I				AMBER		
	AN.	WD.	SPICE	FRUIT	GREEN	CITRUS	FLORAL II	ALDEHYDE	ORIENTAL	AN. WD.
AD. DESCRIPTORS:										
Liberated	3.30		2.50	2.85	3.85	3.25	2.35	2.60	2.50	2.80
Young										
Original										
Confident										
Sexy										
Spellbinding										
Mysterious										
Provocative										
FABRICS:										
Tweed										
Silk										
Velvet										
Cotton										
COLORS:										
Pale Blue										
Red										
Gold										

phasizing one or two raw materials or aroma chemicals. This produced stronger and longer lasting fragrances such as Aliage, Tatiana and Jontue. We also saw the emergence of three significant trends. Musk oil was introduced and became a phenomenal success, designer fragrances proliferated, and the concept of lifestyle fragrances was further developed. Consumers wanted to see themselves reflected in their fragrance. New fragrances were promoted towards the independent, active, exotic and romantic, traditional, or diversified woman.

We have looked at the changing roles of the perfumer, the designer and the consumer. The success of tomorrow's product will depend upon the quality of the concept and how well this concept is translated into packaging, advertising, promotion and distribution. Any product that has an inherent conflict requires an effort on the part of the consumer. Therefore we see a need for a better understanding of the interaction between the fragrance and the other elements of the product which comprise the "total package."

In analysing the fragrance development of the last hundred years, we have built what could be considered as the palette which the perfumer currently has at his disposal (see the Naarden fragrance circle). The palette thus developed only indicates the main dominants in fragrance.

The ideal would be to place around this palette all the elements marketing would use in the development of a total concept: moods, colors, designer materials, packaging materials, and shapes. Once a fragrance concept was developed, one would be able to identify the fragrance areas most suited to the overall concept.

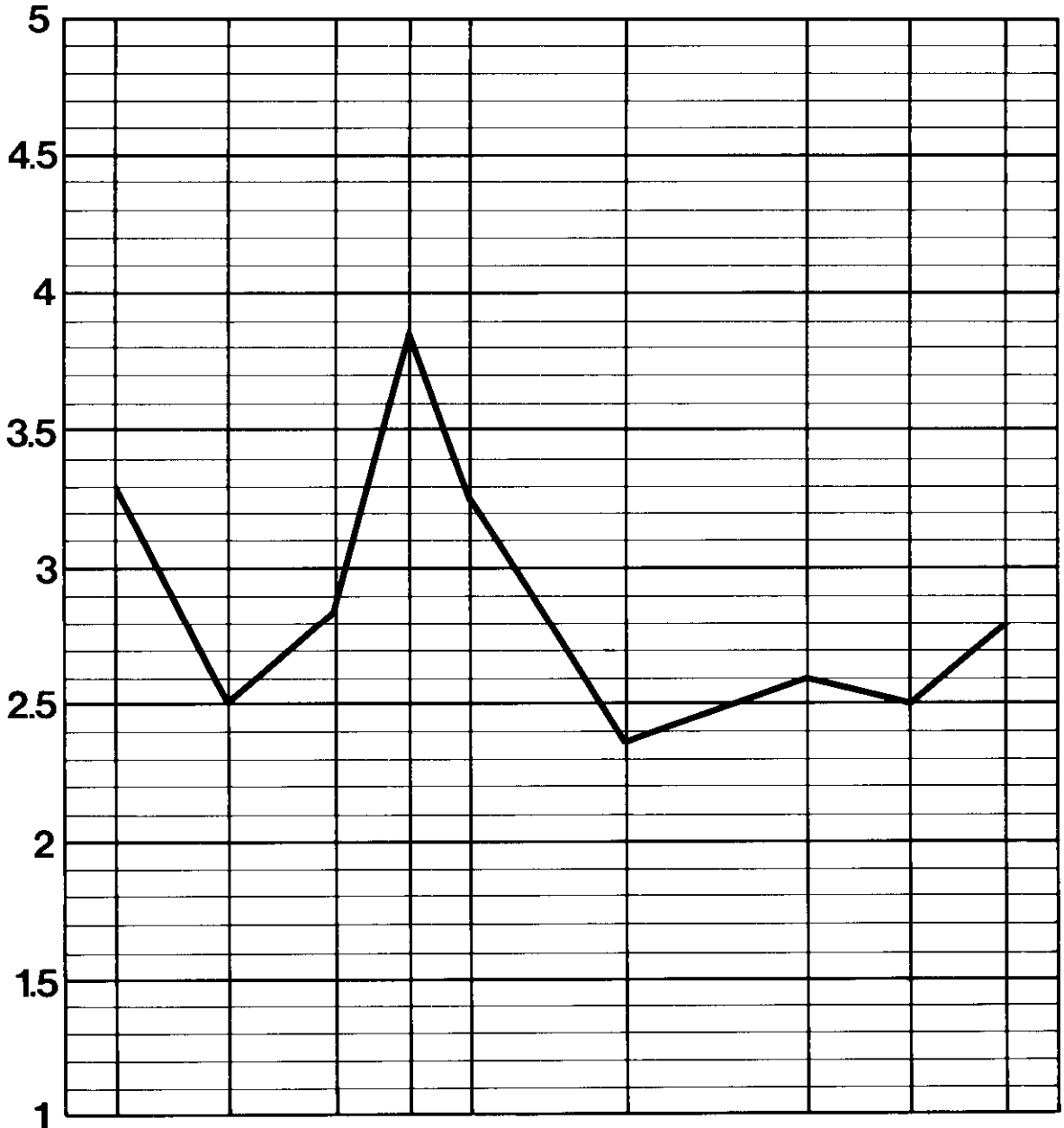
The circle has therefore been translated into a table where each fragrance dominant is presented horizontally and where a selected list of adjectives are presented in a vertical column (see Table I). A consumer panel was then requested to rate each of the adjectives listed, on a scale from 1 to 5, according to its adequacy with each major fragrance area. For example, is a floral-floral-floral considered to be very romantic, averagely romantic, or not romantic at all? A rating of 5 would correspond to a highly romantic interpretation, a rating of 1 would indicate that this fragrance area is not perceived as being particularly romantic (see Table I).

Using these figures a curve indicating how "romantic" relates to each major fragrance area of the palette can be drawn on a table (see Table II).

One is now in a position, provided we are aware in advance, of the characteristics of the product being developed, where a study can be made as to how the adjectives describing these characteristics relate to the fragrance palette. The superimposition of the

Table II

FLORAL									
CHYPRE			FLORAL 1				AMBER		
AN. WD.	SPICE	FRUIT	GR.	C.	FLORAL 2	ALDHYD.	OR.	AN. WD.	



curves of each criterion selected, will in addition clearly indicate which fragrance areas are most coherent with the total marketing concept.

Fragrance suppliers have traditionally developed fragrances with limited knowledge of the components

which characterize the total package. We would like to see the 1980s emerge into an era in which we will be afforded the opportunity of developing highly specialized fragrances; ones which would be finely tuned to and illustrative of the "total package" concept.