



“Every second of our lives, we make subconscious decisions based on the perceptions of our senses.”

Click to Zoom In

# Good sense

Appealing to your clients' senses  
BY MICHAEL BARTON, CR.PHOTOG., CPP

Every second of our lives, we make subconscious decisions based on the perceptions of our senses. There is no better way to make a positive impression on clients than by appealing to all five.

A cluttered studio, prints hung randomly on white walls, the lovely hum of fluorescent lighting, the faint odor of yesterday's lunch—perhaps none of these factors is a deal breaker, but they sure make a bad impression, and on a deep, subliminal level that no sweet words can rewrite.

Walking into a high-end hair salon is like entering a sensory haven. The staff dress fashionably, their hair is perfect, and they are well groomed to the fingertips. The salon walls, seldom white, are decorated with beautiful framed art. Mood music is playing, pleasant aromas waft by your nose, and the lighting is flattering yet functional. The receptionist offers you a beverage, and you're soon relaxing into a neck rub, then enjoying the warm water bathing your scalp. You had to wait two weeks to get an appointment, but

this isn't a haircut, it's an experience, a sensory treat that's worth paying *that* much for.

The experience hits all five senses, and elicits a sense of something you can't quite put your finger on. Whatever it is, it makes you feel good. Photographers can give clients an experience in sense-around, too.

Appeal to the sense of sight with well chosen colors, high-impact frames that complement your images, lighting that highlights your work and defines spaces with a pleasing ambience, and with orderliness throughout.

Appeal to the sense of smell. Do it gently with regard for sensitive noses. Candles and incense can work if used sparingly, fresh coffee smells good to most everyone, peppermint and cinnamon liven up the mood, fresh popcorn smells tantalizing. How about fresh flowers in the changing room?

Appeal to the sense of taste. Got a fridge? Stock it with soft drinks and chilled water, flavored or sparkling or just plain refreshing. Nothing says customer service like, “What

can I get you to drink?” Put out candy in a pretty dish and a salty snack or two.

Appeal to the sense of touch. A warm handshake is a good thing. Touching is a strong way of communicating, but play it by ear, take your cues from the individual's body language. Before you get personal enough for a hug, appeal to the tactile sense with the fabrics on your furniture, the texture of the countertops, everything a visitor is likely to touch.

Appeal to the sense of hearing with music. Music is a subjective pleasure, so have a variety of royalty-free music on hand to suit various tastes and create moods conducive to a pleasant experience. Having a large collection to pull from means that you can make your studio *their* studio at the push of a button.

When all of the senses come together, clients will feel a sense of comfort that will make them linger and call them back.

*Michael Barton's studio, Indigo Photographic, is in Batavia Ill. ([www.indigophotographic.com](http://www.indigophotographic.com)).*