

Making the brand memorable

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It's enough to turn any brand manager into a nervous wreck.

Research by Saatchi & Saatchi X in the United States reveals about 80% of shoppers decide what brand they will buy only when they get to the store.

Even more alarming, 50% of brand switching happens at the shelf.

"People don't switch brands in front of a billboard," says Arkansas-based Andy Murray, chief executive of Saatchi & Saatchi X. "But they do switch in front of a store shelf.

"When we look at this space and talk about advertising, the fragmentation of media, trying to do holistic advertising and all the touch points – they are all common buzzword areas.

There's not a brand out there today that can afford to take what's happening in the retail space lightly

"We say the store and the screen are the most strategic media of the modern era. You can't treat a billboard and a store as the same idea.

"Only about 12% of the items on a shopping list are identified by brand name," Murray says.

Saatchi & Saatchi X is part of the global Publicis Groupe. It was formed by Saatchi & Saatchi in 2004, growing out of shopper marketing agency ThompsonMurray.

Founder Murray says the agency represents brands and retailers and uses many of the tools of marketing to achieve its goals.

"We are not tool-centric," Murray says during a visit to Auckland. "We will do things execution-wise, from looking at whole store areas and how they are designed, how shoppers navigate a space, how categories are managed and developed, what they say to the shopper and how they communicate."

Murray says retail is a tough game.

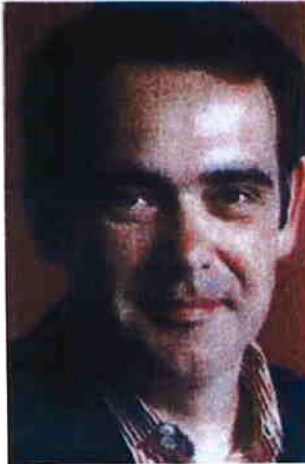
"The power curve has moved from where it was, say, just 10 years ago.

The power has progressively moved from the brands to the retailer to the shopper, Murray says. He says people are doing more research using tools such as the Google search engine.

The ability to get more information and make comparisons creates a high expectation for retailers to fulfil, Murray says.

"Today, the shopper has so much more information at her fingertips. You have to give her a shopping experience that meets her needs. She won't stand for the crowded aisles, the long lines, the dirty bathrooms, shelves that are all out of whack, lighting that makes her look harsh, and music – where else are you going to get Phil Collins, except in a grocery store?"

"The whole idea of what shopping is, is a frustrating space for her at the moment," he said. Shoppers are bombarded with choice. More choice often means more confusion.



Andy Murray: There is so much choice it can get really frustrating

"There is so much choice it can get really frustrating," Murray says. "Go to the toothpaste aisle and you'll have 70, 80, 100 choices of toothpaste. This creates complexity for her. It's not organised in a way that allows her to make those choices fast and easily. So she's overwhelmed and becoming more overwhelmed by what she is finding."

Saatchi & Saatchi X works with retailers and brands, "but mostly with brands that trying to cut through the clutter."

Murray says areas such as package design become critical in encouraging a shopper to stay loyal to a brand or to choose the brand while standing in the shopping aisle.

"The problem is that most marketers have the people doing package design sequestered in a part of the company that is not

connected to the shelf," he says. "You put these brands in the context of a competitive set and they get creamed because they blend in.

"Or the packaging doesn't really help the shopper decide 'Why is this worth the price? Does it communicate?'" Murray says. "We see this over and over again."

He says the market appears ready for shopper-marketing organisations such as Saatchi & Saatchi X. "We've had 30%-40% growth each year for the past seven years where most of the agency world is struggling," Murray says. "There's a real need for strategically looking at the store and how to connect with shoppers.

"Retail marketing is not a new idea – if you approach it the way it has been approached – it's a tactical thing. It's execution, it's displays, it's shelf graphics, it's shelf wobblers – that sort of thing," he says. "But looking at shoppers in a store has not been viewed as a strategic idea."

Murray says it is essential to approach the retail environment with the same discipline and strategic point of view that consumer advertising has used to approach other media.

"Go to any marketer and you'll find a consumer research group, but you won't find a shopper research group.

"There's not a brand out there today that can afford to take what's happening in the retail space lightly. They can't spend enough on television to win that battle."