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Publisher: Routledge

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The International Review of Retail, Distribution and Consumer Research

Publication details, including instructions for authors and subscription information:

<http://www.tandfonline.com/loi/rirr20>

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Published online: 06 Jun 2013.

To cite this article: Brian I. Spaid (2013): Profiting from our past: evoking nostalgia in the retail environment, The International Review of Retail, Distribution and Consumer Research, DOI:10.1080/09593969.2013.801359

To link to this article: <http://dx.doi.org/10.1080/09593969.2013.801359>

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Profiting from our past: evoking nostalgia in the retail environment

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(Received 25 July 2012; final version received 29 April 2013)

A conceptual typology of nostalgia triggering product and experiential variables in the retail environment is presented. Place, promotion, price, and product triggers are identified and indexical and iconic authenticity are used to explain their potential impact. Nostalgic products are distinguished by the combination of historical or modern qualities of brand, brand identity, and product performance. Managerial implications and future research directions are provided.

Keywords: nostalgia; authenticity; environmental factors; context effects; shopper marketing; experiential retailing

Recent years provide countless examples of marketers vying for the consumer's attention through nostalgic appeals. Cadillac dusts off its image to the strains of Led Zeppelin (Walker 2002), HBO promotes its 1920s period drama *Boardwalk Empire* by running a vintage train in New York City's subway system (Nudd 2011), and the National Basketball Association and other sports leagues grab attention and additional merchandising dollars with their nostalgic 'throwback' uniforms (Lukas 2012).

Why has nostalgia marketing become so popular? Marketing literature proposes a few theories. One, some research shows that the trend stems from the opportunities presented by marketing to large consumer cohorts, for example baby-boomers. As consumers age, they become increasingly nostalgic and use these feelings as another element in their consumer decision-making process (Stern 1995; Unger 1991). Two, nostalgia tends to increase as consumers become more dissatisfied with their present life and seek to revert to the past (Hirsch 1992). Challenging times, for instance the recent recession, are most likely to result in successful marketing messages that allude to a better, simpler past. Three, a preference for nostalgic products is also driven by a need to belong. Individuals for whom a need to belong is paramount (often driven by external factors such as economic or other challenges) show an increased fulfillment of this desire after consuming nostalgic products (Loveland et al. 2010). Finally, the current focus on sustainable living (i.e., living simply and in balance with nature) and embracing products with simpler ingredients (e.g., eliminating high fructose corn syrup) naturally lead us to think of the products that we enjoyed in our past, a time we often characterize as simpler and idealized.

Marketing research has shown that nostalgia can lead to other behaviors and responses noteworthy to marketing managers. It has been shown to affect consumer preference (Holbrook 1993a; Loveland et al. 2010; Schindler and Holbrook 2003), lead to exploratory behaviors (risk taking, variety seeking, and curiosity) (Orth and Bourrain 2007), motivate

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aesthetic consumption (Goulding 2002), delineate market segments (Holbrook and Schindler 1996), influence charitable giving (Merchant and Ford 2008), affect attitudes toward advertising (Muehling and Sprott 2004), and define brand meaning (Braun-LaTour et al. 2007).

Perhaps no place is nostalgia more on display than the retail environment. With countless retailers and brand manufacturers routinely vying for the attention of the shopper and with 76% of purchase decisions made in-store (POPAI 2012), retailers and manufacturers understand the importance of attracting the attention of shoppers. Evidence shows that nostalgia marketing in retail works too. In 2011, sales in the UK for nostalgic candy products grew over 20% compared with only 1.6% for the category as a whole (Lucas 2011). Other evidence shows that shoppers who purchase nostalgic products actually purchase more than their usual amount, and they tend not to stray to other brands within product categories (Nassauer 2011).

Despite the importance of nostalgia and the effectiveness of nostalgic appeals occurring within retail environments, we have little understanding of the variety of methods that retailers and manufacturers can use to evoke nostalgia in the shopper. Addressing this need is important because as retailers and manufacturers look for new ways to differentiate their products, services, and environments, nostalgia represents an important vehicle for incremental growth and deeper connection with shoppers. This becomes especially critical as retailers and manufacturers work together on in-store promotional campaigns utilizing the multi-faceted techniques of shopper marketing (Shankar et al. 2012).

This research also addresses a number of important gaps in the literature relating to nostalgia and retail. Existing research on nostalgia has largely neglected the retail environment as an important catalyst in evoking nostalgia. While a number of studies have focused on the evocation of nostalgia as a result of product interaction or the experience of a specific environmental variable (e.g., music), this research brings together all of the pertinent variables present in the retail environment for a broader perspective on the phenomenon. Also, unlike the previous research that focuses on in-store situational variables (Belk 1975) or environmental variables (Turley and Milliman 2000) in isolation, this research takes a more holistic approach to studying a phenomenon with retail ramifications.

The purpose of this research, therefore, is to provide a typology of experiential and product-related variables capable of evoking a nostalgic reaction in the shopper and to provide theoretical explanations for their effects. First, a background on nostalgia is provided by examining extant definitions, investigating its connection with emotion, evaluating its different forms, exploring its general triggers, and considering its connection with authenticity. Next, a typology of nostalgic triggers is proposed with categories driven by a generally accepted marketing concept. Finally, a discussion of managerial implications is included and a number of theoretically driven research propositions are provided to guide future research.

Understanding nostalgia

Nostalgia defined

Though differing definitions of nostalgia permeate the literature, all are in agreement that nostalgia involves some form of reflection on the past. Davis (1979) offers the view that nostalgia is used as a mechanism for maintaining self-identity as one progresses through a series of major life transitions (e.g., childhood to puberty, single life to married life, work life to retirement, etc.) and Belk similarly notes that 'we tend to be especially concerned

with having a past when our current identity has been challenged' (1990, 669). Further, nostalgia has been identified with a discontentment with the present and a rejection of change (Lowenthal 1985) and with a 'sense of loss that the past is not going to return' (Merchant and Ford 2008, 15). Thus, the past recalled through nostalgia is defined by a reaction to change, especially permanent change, rather than a fixed passage of time.

Additional extant definitions elucidate nostalgia further. Nostalgia has been described as a 'sentimental or bittersweet yearning for an experience, product, or service from the past' (Baker and Kennedy 1994), a 'bittersweet yearning for the past' (Hirsch 1992), a 'wistful pleasure, a joy tinged with sadness' (Werman 1977), and 'a happiness-related emotion... thought to invoke sadness because of the realization that some desirable aspects of the past are out of reach' (Wildschut et al. 2006). Nostalgia provokes, therefore, an affective state more complex than simply positive or negative; an ambivalent emotion best described as 'bittersweet.' Most of the above definitions also seem to agree that nostalgia also includes a *desire* for this bittersweet past. Thus, nostalgia incorporates both a bittersweet reflection on and yearning for the past.

But this does not account for what Davis describes as a 'positively toned' (1979, 18) evocation of the past. So often nostalgia paints a picture of the past that subdues any negative components for an overall positive affect. As Davis states, the 'hurts, annoyances, disappointments, and irritations, if they are permitted to intrude at all, are filtered forgivingly through an "it was all for the best" attitude' (1977, 418). This imagined and hypothetical version of the past (Belk 1990), also referred to as hyperreality (Stewart 1988), accounts for feelings of nostalgia for 'the good old days' when they were anything but: veterans nostalgic for war-era experiences, seniors nostalgic for their depression-era childhoods, Civil War reenactment, etc. Will Rogers nicely summed up mankind's propensity for hyperrealism when he quipped, 'Things ain't what they used to be and probably never was.'

From a review of the literature, a clearer definition of nostalgia has emerged. Nostalgia is a positively toned, cognitive yearning for the past that elicits a bittersweet affective state. From a marketing perspective, however, nostalgia offers more complexity. Next, we explore possible emotions involved and the variety of ways that nostalgia may manifest itself in consumers: through unique personal experiences, imagined histories, or shared group experiences.

Shopping, emotion, and decision making

Extant research shows the first reaction to any new environment is often affective (Ittelson 1973), and for shoppers, the retail environment is a powerful driver of emotional reactions (Machleit and Eroglu 2000). These emotional responses are often induced by a variety of in-store atmospherics including store design (Yoo et al. 1998), color (Babin et al. 2003), music (Yalch and Spangenberg 1993), and many others.

Emotional reactions also play an important role in decision making (Loewenstein and Lerner 2003). Extant research has shown that emotional drivers unrelated to the decision at hand can significantly influence judgment and choice (Lerner and Keltner 2000), in instances where emotion is attenuated, either innately (Damasio 1994) or through experimental means (Wilson et al. 1993), the quality of decision making is degraded, and when emotion is included, decision-making models have increased explanatory power (Mellers et al. 1997). Our reliance on emotion in the decision-making process also means that our decisions are not always rational. Individuals commonly make use of heuristics to simplify the decision-making process (Tversky and Kahnemann 1974), sometimes making

decisions that defy logic. This can also be seen within the retail environment when emotional in-store decision drivers override the rational elements of pre-purchase planning (McNeil and Wyeth 2011).

With an emotional component at its heart, nostalgia – in all its forms – is a useful mechanism to precipitate emotionally driven in-store decision making. Next, we will describe those various forms of nostalgia and how they differ.

Forms of nostalgia

There is general agreement in the literature concerning the presence of at least two forms of nostalgia: personal nostalgia and vicarious (or historical) nostalgia (Holak and Havlena 1992; Stern 1992; Wildschut et al. 2006). Another form of nostalgia, collective nostalgia, is the product of marketing research specifically (Baker and Kennedy 1994; Holbrook 1993b). These three forms of nostalgia help describe how individuals make sense of nostalgic appeals and why those appeals are effective.

Personal nostalgia

Personal nostalgia is rooted in an individual's autobiographical, experienced memory. In keeping with the 'positively toned past' characteristic of nostalgia, this autobiographical past is an idealized past (Stern 1992). Nostalgia for childhood, for example, 'does not depend upon an actual happy childhood, but, rather, on the reconstructed fiction of one' (Stern 1992, 16). Personal experience, rooted in an individual's memory, is more intense than culturally defined experience, rooted in a shared imagination (Stern 1992). Further, because more intense experiences breed more powerful memories (Merchant and Ford 2008), personal nostalgia is likely more effective as a marketing vehicle because it speaks to an individual's more immediate memory rather than an imaginative recreation of an experience.

Vicarious nostalgia

Vicarious nostalgia (Goulding 2002, 2001; Merchant and Ford 2008) does not rely on personally experienced memory, but rather an 'imaginatively recreated past' (Stern 1992). This imagination can be fueled by artistic depictions of the past (e.g., movies, plays, and books), artifacts (e.g., museum exhibits, antiques, and older products), and family and cultural histories (e.g., stories and legends). This form of nostalgia 'expresses the desire to retreat from contemporary life by returning to a time in the distant past viewed as superior to the present', specifically, 'a time before the audience [of nostalgia] was born' (Stern 1992), it represents a 'yearning for traditional, conservative, and community values of bygone eras' (Merchant and Ford 2008), and 'a sentimental or bittersweet yearning for the indirectly experienced past and may be remembered through the eyes and stories of a loved one' (Baker and Kennedy 1994). This form of nostalgia is also variously referred to as 'historical nostalgia' (Holak and Havlena 1998, 1992; Stern 1992), 'intergenerational nostalgia' (Davis 1979), and 'simulated nostalgia' (Baker and Kennedy 1994).

Vicarious nostalgia may explain why nostalgic appeals that feature products or narratives from distant pasts are still effective despite the consumer's lack of personal experience with the past in question.

Collective nostalgia

A third form of nostalgia, collective nostalgia, was found specifically within the marketing literature. This form of nostalgia 'represents a culture, a generation, or a nation' (Baker and Kennedy 1994), any group of individuals that are nostalgic for the same things (Holbrook 1993b). Collective nostalgia, then, is really a form of nostalgia market segmentation (Holbrook and Schindler 1996). In other words, it is a grouping of those individuals attracted to the same cultural icons, but it does not change the personal nature of the experienced emotion itself. Collective nostalgia has significant utility within marketing as a method to collectively target a particular group of shoppers (e.g., baby-boomers) based on that group's collective connection to the past.

The preceding forms of nostalgia help us understand how nostalgia manifests itself in a broad sense, but provide little insight into how nostalgia is actually activated in the consumer. To understand this, we must explore nostalgic triggers.

Nostalgia triggers

What causes an individual to feel nostalgic? To answer this question, we must identify and understand the triggers of nostalgia. Nostalgia triggers have been an especially fruitful area of research in the past 20 years. Studies have looked at objects (Belk 1988, 1991, 1990; Korkiakangas 2004), scents (Braun-LaTour et al. 2007; Hirsch 1992; Orth and Bourrain 2007; Waskul et al. 2009), food (Bordi 2006; Mannur 2007), negative affect (Wildschut et al. 2006), music (Baumgartner 1992; Holbrook and Schindler 1989; Marchegiani and Phau 2012), movies (Holbrook 1993a; Holbrook and Schindler 1996), tourism locales (Frow 1991), museums (Kavanaugh 1983; Korkiakangas 2004), public sporting events (Benson 2005), second-hand products (Guiot and Roux 2010), and even the future (Ybena 2004). To explore the range of triggers capable of evoking nostalgia, we take a thorough look at how our various senses may play a role.

Sensory stimulation

Unsurprisingly, nostalgic events are triggered through our senses. Sight and touch were seldom mentioned in the literature, perhaps due to how closely we link these two senses with tangible objects, i.e., it makes more sense to refer to objects directly rather than through the senses with which we most commonly perceive them. The nostalgic triggers included in this typology focus on these senses, but a mention of how the remaining senses may operate to induce nostalgia within the retail environment is warranted.

Sound has received considerable attention as a trigger of nostalgia within the marketing literature. Holbrook (1993b) touches on the powerfully evocative nature of sounds through the words and music of his cherished recordings. Holbrook and Schindler (1989) also provide evidence for 'formative years of music preferences' that help shape the future nostalgic music triggers of consumers that are so often mined by nostalgia-themed radio stations (e.g., 'Best hits from the 80s!'). One can also closely associate a piece of music with a specific event or time of life such that the music becomes a powerful trigger for the memories of that past time (Baumgartner 1992) and music takes on 'the emotional tone of the personal experience with which it was associated' (Baumgartner 1992, 619). Whether retailers use music independently to evoke a nostalgic response remains to be seen. The retailer Past Times uses a variety of period music to help underscore the many products of different historic eras it sells, though the music serves an incidental function as it works in conjunction with the period products themselves,

fixtures, and signage (Brown 1999). Themed restaurants such as Johnny Rockets also utilize music as an important ingredient to evoke nostalgia, but in tandem with other impactful elements.

Smell is an especially rich subject of nostalgia (Belk 1990; Braun-LaTour et al. 2007; Hirsch 1992; Holbrook and Schindler 2003; Orth and Bourrain 2007; Waskul et al. 2009). Hirsch (1992) found that almost 85% of both men and women reported nostalgia evoked through the olfactory perception and while a variety of smells served as triggers of nostalgia, food-related smells – reported by 23% of respondents – were an especially potent trigger. Physiologists may have a persuasive explanation for a smell's capacity to evoke emotional response: 'Anatomically, the nose directly connects with the olfactory lobe in the limbic system – that area of the brain considered the seat of the emotions' (Hirsch 1992, 391). Our sense of smell, it turns out, may have a shortcut directly to our emotions. Research has shown that the intentional deployment of pleasant smells in the retail environment can lead to increased sales (Fitzgerald Bone and Scholder Ellen 1999), with many anecdotal results showing that scents will make shoppers hungrier and thus more likely to buy. One New York supermarket has even gone so far as to have smell generators installed that waft the smells of chocolate, grapefruit, and baked rosemary focaccia with the goal of driving increased shopper spending (Sanburn 2011). Thus, the ramifications of smells in the retail environment are more related to driving hunger and may only serve as an incidental trigger of nostalgia.

Taste is also addressed extensively in the literature. Bordi (2006) exposes how taste directly taps into feelings of nationalistic nostalgia by examining a trend in Mexico for the consumption of 'authentic' Mexican food by the country's middle and upper social classes as globalization homogenizes their culture. Marketers commonly tap this sense when they capitalize on the nostalgic draw of original product formulations such as Mexican Coca-Cola (Walker 2009) and Dr Pepper from Dublin, Texas (The Associated Press 2009), or even the return of brands from the past, for example when Mars recently reintroduced the candy Treets in the UK because the candy maker had seen 'an ever-increasing consumer hunger for pre-recession memories and the serene days of childhood' (Montague-Jones 2009). Taste, however, is rarely encountered directly within the retail environment beyond occasional food sampling. A nostalgic response is most likely to occur as the recollection of a product's taste is made. Thus, for taste, the consumption of the product itself is most likely to be the nostalgic trigger, and this happens relatively infrequently within the retail environment.

The previous categories of nostalgic triggers may help us understand how the shopper's attention is piqued, but we also need to understand what factors are at play that make nostalgic products and messages attractive to shoppers. Next, we discuss a theoretical perspective that addresses this issue.

Nostalgia and authenticity

For many consumers, the attraction to nostalgic products lies in their inherent authenticity (Belk 1990). Rather than being a combination of specific properties, authenticity is a 'socially constructed interpretation of the essence of what is observed' (Beverland and Farrelly 2010, 839) or an individual's perception of what is genuine (Rose and Wood 2005), and it stems from the reinforcement of the goals that individuals seek from this perceived genuineness (Beverland and Farrelly 2010). Authenticity is often sought by consumers as a balm against modern social and consumptive activities that lack depth or originality (Leigh et al. 2006). Both nostalgia and authenticity are the by-products of personal experiences

and social interpretations. Where they differ is nostalgia is a cognitive and affective appraisal of some experience or object filtered through an interpretation of the past, whereas authenticity is a cognitive interpretation of the genuineness of that experience or object.

Beverland and Farrelly (2010) identified three authenticity goals – control, connection, and virtue – that may help determine the efficacy of a nostalgic appeal. Control is associated with the consumer's sole control over his/her decisions and mastery of consumption experiences that help meet those aims. From a retail perspective, this would be manifested in an environment that provides tools or experiences that assist the shopper in consumption activities without usurping the shopper's 'personal sovereignty' (Beverland and Farrelly 2010, 842) over the experience. For example, a retail environment that allows shoppers to customize their products would provide an experience with more control and thus would likely feel more authentic to the shopper. Feeling connected with others, a community, or cause was also a goal that helped define a sense of authenticity. Consumers that feel connected with a product, brand, or experience – or sense of congruency between the product, brand, or experience and its historic or cultural narrative – evaluate the product, brand, or experience as more authentic. For example, a restaurant that goes out of its way to create a period-specific environment but ultimately fails to follow through with period-specific food would be deemed less authentic than a restaurant that carefully considers the congruency of both. Finally, virtue embodies the 'truthfulness' a product, brand, or experience exhibits with regard to the set of morals or standards with which it is associated. In other words, does the product, brand, or experience demonstrate a 'purity of motive' (Beverland and Farrelly 2010, 846)? If a retailer requires its employees to wear the traditional uniform worn for decades, this detail would be seen as more authentic than another retailer merely utilizing period costumes. The traditional uniform is seen as a truthful statement, the period costumes a clever ruse.

Grayson and Martinec (2004) divide authenticity into two categories: indexical and iconic. Objects or products that have a 'factual and spatio-temporal link with something else' (Grayson and Martinec 2004, 298) have indexical authenticity. In the retail context, this would be products that are deemed authentic because they are tied to their past through some verifiable means. Iconic authenticity, on the other hand, is embodied in products that are 'perceived as being similar to something else' (Grayson and Martinec 2004, 298). The authenticity of these products would be based more on how they look, their perception of authenticity, rather than a factual connection. An example will demonstrate the difference between these two forms more clearly.

The historic cane sugar formulation of Dr Pepper would be considered indexically authentic because its origins can be tied to the bottling company in Dublin, Texas that, up until the end of 2011, had produced the soda in its unique packaging non-stop for 120 years. It is unlikely that the same soda produced at another bottling plant would be deemed as authentic, despite it being produced with the exact same formulation and by the Dr Pepper Snapple Group. The tie with the past is broken and the new version can be verifiably distinguished from original. From an iconic standpoint however, a majority of consumers might consider the Dublin product less authentic because its packaging and flavor are dissimilar to the Dr Pepper formulation they know.

Because retailers and manufacturers are making product, environmental, and messaging decisions whose nostalgic content will be parsed by shoppers and consumers, these decisions will likely communicate authenticity in varying degrees and may differentially affect shoppers' goal-directed behaviors as a result. Both forms of authenticity (indexical and iconic) and the three consumption goals (control, connection, and virtue) are relevant to this study, but Grayson and Martinec's (2004) work outlines

authenticity in a way that retailers and manufacturers can use to make decisions with more nostalgic impact. Beverland and Farrelly's (2010) findings are more important for an understanding of how authenticity impacts the shopper, which is beyond the scope of this study.

A typology of nostalgic triggers

Nostalgic triggers within the retail environment can take many forms. This typology organizes these triggers into four broad categories familiar to any marketer, the '4 Ps' (place, promotion, price, and product), otherwise known as the marketing mix (Borden 1964). This organizational scheme is apt because it provides a managerially relevant list of nostalgic triggers in a form used by many marketing managers to guide their marketing decisions (Table 1).

Place

Retrosapes

Just as Disneyland's Main Street USA is designed to evoke a romantic nostalgia for a hyperreal version of an American small town, some retail environments are designed to transport the shopper to a different era. The cohesive use of store variables – product selection, architectural detail, interior design, signage, and other sensory stimuli – is not only a way to make a positive impact on a retailer's image (Kent and Kirby 2009), but it is a powerful tool for the communication of nostalgia.

Marketers have long understood that the physical retail environment – the servicescape – can have a significant impact on shopper behavior (Bitner 1992; Sherry 1998). Servicescapes that are designed to evoke nostalgic responses give shoppers the feel of a by-gone era and often serve as amusement attraction as much as shopping destination. These retrospective-oriented servicescapes are referred to as 'retrosapes' (Brown 1999).

Retrosapes function through the use of negentropy, the 'imposition of a sense of narrative order that an establishment . . . can structure on the consciousness of those within it' (Kozinets et al. 2002, 22). This order is achieved by emphasizing the environmental factors that evoke the desired nostalgic effect and deemphasizing the inevitable anachronisms of a modern retailer. Retrosapes may tap into a shopper's personal or vicarious nostalgia depending on the age of the shopper.

Mast General Store is one such retroscape. Mast carefully controls the many environmental and product variables that give rise to an overall sense of an old-timey general store. Wide plank flooring, brass fixtures, by-the-pound candy in barrels, old-fashioned toys, and kitschy decorative items create a cohesive impression of a by-gone era designed to elicit vicarious nostalgia. These same in-store elements increase iconic authenticity, but knowing the retailer has been in business for over 100 years selling largely the same products increases its indexical authenticity. Similarly, the restaurant chain Johnny Rockets creates a service environment carefully designed to evoke the past. The recreation of an archetypal 1950s diner likely appeals to baby-boomers through personal nostalgia while their children may be engaged through vicarious nostalgia. But whereas iconic authenticity is high due to the convincing environmental details, indexical authenticity is low because this particular restaurant chain has no real connection to its recreated past.





Retrosapes may be best understood if they are viewed as a form of experiential retailing. Experiential retailing focuses on the creative combination of merchandising and hospitality and is composed of the five key concepts: experiential consumption, symbolic

Table 1. Typology of nostalgic triggers in the retail environment.

	Definition	Authenticity	Exemplar
<i>Place</i>			
Retrosapes	A service environment designed to transport the shopper to an earlier era	Indexical and/or iconic	 McDonald's Asheville, NC
Heritage areas	Historic preservation areas intended to conserve cultural landscapes	Indexical and/or iconic	
<i>Promotion</i>			
Sentimental messages	Promotional messages designed to arouse a nostalgic response through an emotional appeal	Indexical	'Baking Together Always Tastes Better'
Nostalgic events	Retail events purposely designed to evoke nostalgia	High indexical	Tesco 1960s Store
<i>Price</i>			
Heritage pricing	Retaining pricing from an earlier era to communicate brand, product, or retailer history.	Indexical	
Throwback pricing	Promotional pricing intended to remind shoppers of brand, product, or retailer history.	Iconic	
<i>Product</i>			
Resurrected brands	Relaunched historical brands with updated brand identity and features	Low indexical and iconic	

(continued)

Table 1 – (Continued).

	Definition	Authenticity	Exemplar
Retro branding	Modern products with revived historical brand identities	Indexical	
Throwbacks	Historical recreations of modern products with historical brand identities and product formulations	Indexical	
Classic products	Products with functional and design characteristics unevolved from the past	Indexical and iconic	
Homeland products	Products sold outside their normal contexts to connect expatriate shoppers to a home culture	Iconic	

consumption, entertainment retailing, themed retailing, and cross-shopping (Kim 2001). Many of the retailers that use retrosapes as an affective mechanism to leverage additional profits from their customers have also likely utilized many of the concepts of experiential retailing.

Heritage areas

For many retailers, choosing a location for their business is a difficult, yet crucially important decision. This decision can be complicated when a chosen location falls under the control of a heritage area. While not strictly related to evoking nostalgia within the retail environment, these areas are designed to 'preserve historic and cultural landscapes' through cultural conservation, historic preservation, heritage tourism, and other community goals (Prola 2005, 1) and may significantly impact a shopper's experience. Additionally, heritage areas

anchor collective memories by providing tangible evidence of the past. People visit them to 'get in touch with history' in a very real, literal sense. They want to see for themselves rather than accepting the second-hand evidence of history books, other people's narratives, or media representations (Barthel 1996).

Modern signage and architecture are eschewed for period-consistent details that tap into vicarious nostalgia for a recreated past. Authenticity would likely be gauged by the location's actual connection to the past and whether it stays true to the standard of architecture used in the area. If a business had occupied the same building since the time period of the heritage area, the business would have high indexical authenticity. If the business had only just moved into the building or it was new construction to give the impression of the heritage area's time period, it would exhibit iconic authenticity.

The Biltmore Estate in Asheville, North Carolina and its adjacent heritage area, Biltmore Village, serve as an apt example. When a local McDonald's franchise decided to remodel its aging facilities, it found that it needed to bring its architecture in line with the surrounding Biltmore Village. After two failed attempts at submitting period-inappropriate architectural plans to the historic resources commission, McDonald's sought the advice of an architect with experience designing for heritage areas. The architect was able to convince McDonald's that they

were really not going to be competing with other fast-food franchises but with Biltmore itself, and the more they looked like and felt like they were already on the grounds of the estate, the more they would be perceived as part of that whole period. (Hogan 2006)

This McDonald's is now touted as the 'world's classiest McDonald's' and part of its success is due to the seamless integration within its heritage area and its ability to evoke nostalgia for a shared past.

Promotions

Sentimental messages

Sentimental messages are in-store messages or promotions designed to arouse a nostalgic response through an emotional appeal. The nostalgic content in these messages can be self-contained, and they may or may not be used in conjunction with nostalgic products. Typically, sentimental messages implore shoppers to rekindle childhood experiences or maintain communal traditions, and these messages are effective because they often appeal to personal nostalgia by evoking salient lived experiences.

The evocation of these experiences is usually accomplished through self-referencing – processing information by relating it to oneself – which has been shown to increase attitudinal and cognitive responses and lead to greater message recall (Burnkrant and Unnava 1989). Self-referencing can also take the form of narrative transportation, where an individual's personal narrative stories are used to interpret the meaning behind persuasive attempts (Escalas 2004, 2007). The result is a message that evokes a powerful memory and a nostalgic response.

The authenticity of these messages will be judged by the congruency of the message with its source. In other words, if a message based on a product or activity could be tied to a manufacturer or retailer with a long history with that product or activity, the message would have high indexical authenticity for the shopper.

A recent example demonstrates the ability of sentimental messages to evoke nostalgia through self-referential narrative stories. A grocery retailer displayed a holiday aisle end cap stacked high with baking products designed to convince shoppers to partake in holiday baking with the message, 'Baking together always tastes better.' The promotion also featured images of mothers and children baking. This combination of message and visual is an effective means to prompt shoppers to recall their own experiences of baking with family and long for these simple, nostalgic activities to reconnect with their loved ones. But at the same time, this particular message would likely elicit very low levels of authenticity from shoppers because the message was not tied to a specific manufacturer known for baking products or supporting baking activities.

Nostalgic events

Whereas sentimental messages may obliquely allude to nostalgia, nostalgic events make no effort to hide the fact that they are purposely designed to evoke nostalgia in the shopper. These events are perhaps one of the strongest tools that retailers have to evoke nostalgia in shoppers because they utilize multiple sources of nostalgia-inducing variables simultaneously. Nostalgic events often take the form of a retailer taking a 'step back in time' to give shoppers a sense of what the retailer looked like at a certain point in its history. These events may, however, be the least practical from a retailer perspective as they require precision coordination between retail elements (e.g., product, price, place), likely at great expense, and could be perceived as a purposeful attempt to manipulate shoppers. These events are probably best at building brand perception of the retailer by reminding shoppers of retailer history to appeal to shopper loyalty.

Because nostalgic events are designed to recreate past retailing experiences, they will likely demonstrate high indexical authenticity. This is especially clear when one considers that nostalgic events with their concomitant nostalgic elements such as throwback products, vintage prices, and period store designs and decorations each individually evoke nostalgia.

Consider a nostalgic event orchestrated by Tesco in England (*Daily Mail* 2013). For the annual Goodwood Historic Motorsport and Aviation Event, Tesco opened a temporary retail location mimicking their retail presence from the 1960s. Shoppers were treated to period products, store design and decoration, employee uniforms, and even vintage cash register technology.

Price

Though relatively uncommon, retro pricing can be an effective means of capturing the attention of the shopper. Retro pricing, however, cannot exist solely on its own as a

nostalgic message is required to communicate the significance of the price. Without the nostalgic message, a retro priced product would just be uncommonly inexpensive, not nostalgic. There are two approaches to retro pricing, heritage pricing, and throwback pricing.

Heritage pricing

Heritage pricing can be used to communicate the history behind a product by retaining the pricing from an earlier era. This emphasizes the indexical authenticity of the product by underscoring the product's connection with the past, which will evoke personal or vicarious nostalgia depending on the era of the pricing used and the age of the shopper. For instance, the famous Los Angeles landmark restaurant Philippe's has priced its coffee at nine cents for over 35 years and used vintage designed posters to advertise this heritage pricing. Some patrons have even been convinced that the nostalgic posters that advertise the pricing were just artifacts from the restaurant's past: 'I thought that was just an old poster! I didn't expect it to be 9 cents!' (Rojas 2012).

Throwback pricing

Throwback pricing is promotional and used to highlight products that are themselves nostalgic or to draw attention to an important milestone in a brand's or retailer's history (e. g., 100th anniversary). The authenticity of throwback pricing is dependent on the shopper's perception of whether the pricing is congruent with pricing standards from that era, thus demonstrating iconic authenticity. For example, Playboy Magazine's October 2011 issue featured throwback pricing with the headline 'Special 1960s Price: This Issue Only 60 Cents!' This particular issue was cross-promoted with NBC's latest TV show, The Playboy Club, by featuring an actress from the new show on the cover in 1960s 'Bunny' attire (Day 2011).

The irony is that many nostalgic products are often priced at a premium due to their limited release and sometimes unique product formulations. Retro priced products, therefore, are likely used as loss leaders designed to attract attention and spur incremental sales.

Product

Resurrected brands

The human life cycle is often used as a metaphor to talk about brands – their inception, growth, maturity, and in many cases, their death (Groucutt 2006). For some discontinued service marks or product names, death is followed by a subsequent reintroduction, or resurrection, to generate sales by leveraging latent brand equity. Brand resurrections are pursued because shoppers will recognize the brand, though they may forget the product's specific embodiments. 'The longer a brand is dead, the more flexibility you have to relaunch it in a new way' (Fast Company 2011). In other words, resurrected brands leverage shopper recognition without the need to rely on obsolete products.

Resurrected brands are often updated to modern tastes, functionality, or levels of efficacy. They are, in effect, 'relaunched historical brands with updated features' (Brown et al. 2003, 19). These products effectively marry past presentation with modern performance. Brown, Kozinets, and Sherry (2003) offer an insightful look at resurrected brands by observing them through the lens of literary criticism, tying Allegory (brand story), Arcadia (idealized brand community), Aura (brand essence), and Antinomy (brand

paradox) together into what they call the 4As of retro branding. They use the term ‘retro brands,’ but for clarity and because we identify retro branding as a distinct nostalgic trigger, the term resurrected brands is used here.

The recent resurrection of the coffee brand Brim offers a useful example. Fifteen years after the brand was discontinued, a small firm purchased the brand rights from Kraft Foods. Rather than reviving the original decaffeinated-only product and its brand identity, the firm created a new line of fortified coffee products with a new logo and packaging (Fast Company 2011). But by developing a new identity, the brand’s ties with its history were cut, thus diminishing the product’s indexical authenticity. Its iconic authenticity was similarly reduced with a product that did not resemble the Brim of the past. The brand name may be recognized, but latent brand equity may be depressed by reduced authenticity. Table 2 illustrates how brand name, brand identity, and product formulation vary depending on their historical or modern qualities.

Retro branding

Retro branding is the act of taking an existing marketplace product and differentiating it with a revived historical brand identity. A modern product is made to look old, but it retains its modern performance and functionality. Retro branded products state their connection to the past by displaying historic brand logos, taglines, or mascots, all of which lead to greater indexical authenticity. At the same time, these products demonstrate low iconic authenticity because product formulations and packaging do not reflect the product as it actually was in the past.

But a disconnection with the past is warranted in some cases. Some products are not suited for exact historical reproductions. It is unlikely consumers would tolerate the reduced performance of products that have undergone significant technological advances in the intervening years between their past and modern versions. Other products, for example foods, can utilize historic formulations that do appeal to consumers and are often used as a competitive differentiator.

Proctor & Gamble recently released retro branded versions of its Tide, Bounce, and Downy brands featuring logos taken from decades-earlier incarnations (Nassauer 2011). These products, however, featured modern packaging and product formulations that ensure modern levels of performance.

Throwbacks

Throwback products are historical recreations of existing products that feature historical or historically reminiscent brand identities and product formulations. These products serve as

Table 2. Components of nostalgic products.

	Brand name	Brand identity (e.g., logo, taglines, mascots)	Formulation (e.g., recipe, performance)
Resurrected brands	Historical	Historical/modern	Modern
Retro branding	Modern	Historical	Modern
Throwbacks	Modern	Historical /modern	Historical
Classic products	Historical	Historical	Historical
Homeland products	Modern	Modern	Modern

alternative nostalgic versions of existing products and often sit side by side with their modern varieties on retail shelves. They are, essentially, product line extensions using historical products. They differ from classic products (below) as many throwbacks carry distinctive labeling that underscore their nostalgic intent and they are often offered in limited release. Throwback products are successful largely because they tap into a brand's history to tout indexical authenticity.

Recent throwback editions of Pepsi and Mountain Dew feature product formulations that use real sugar instead of high fructose corn syrup and feature retro graphics in place of current brand identities. These products have become so successful that their initial production run has been extended indefinitely.

Classic products

Classic products are products with historical brands that appear as they would have in the past, their functional and design characteristics remaining largely unevolved from the original. The products embody one's cultural or personal connection with the past, evoking both personal and vicarious forms of nostalgia. These products also demonstrate a virtuous attachment to a product standard long established. Iconic authenticity is high for these products as they have changed little from their original form and indexical authenticity is high for products with a brand history similarly intact.

The iconic RadioFlyer wagon is an example of a classic product high in both indexical and iconic authenticity. This 'little red wagon' can boast a long, continuous history of over 95 years, which speaks to its indexical authenticity and its unchanged functional and design characteristics lend it iconic authenticity.

Homeland products

Homeland products are products available for sale to shoppers in geographies they would not typically be encountered. The nostalgic content of homeland products has little to do with the product itself, but rather the context in which the product is found. The literal definition of nostalgia, from the Greek *nostos* (homecoming) and *algos* (sorrow, grief), is a painful yearning for home (Davis 1977; Hofer 1988; Werman 1977), in other words homesickness. Homesick individuals often seek out those things that bring them closer to their culture (Bordi 2006). Homeland products – foods especially (Matt 2007) – are a potent way to achieve this.

Homeland products function by evoking personal nostalgia in shoppers, making them long for a 'taste of home.' Thus, they illicit feelings of connection with one's culture. The authenticity of these products lies in their iconic nature; these products remind shoppers of home or a past experience. Many food retailers have capitalized on the 'immigrant attachment to the past' (Mannur 2007, 12) by selling specialty or ethnic products to local minority or expatriate populations. These products can also remind shoppers of products that they may have experienced while traveling and thus make them nostalgic for a past vacation or other cultural experience. Many food retailers stock ethnic food sections with products that may only be familiar and palatable to non-natives (e.g., vegemite brand yeast extract spread).

Discussion

This research provides insights into the broad range of tactics that manufacturers and retailers use to evoke nostalgia within the retail environment. Rather than the limited

conception of nostalgic cues extant in marketing and retailing literature, we reveal multiple categories of nostalgia manifested in a variety of marketing elements.

Important links between the literature bases of nostalgia and authenticity are also made, extending the literature for both topics. The marketing components used to evoke nostalgia are seen as vehicles that amplify nostalgic meaning through their ability to communicate authenticity. Additionally, differences in forms of authenticity (indexical and iconic) are used to describe how nostalgic marketing elements project a real or simulated past, which may differentially affect the strength of the nostalgic appeal. These details are particularly important in light of the recent industry focus on shopper marketing, the 'planning and execution of all marketing activities that influence a shopper along, and beyond, the entire path-to-purchase, from the point at which the motivation to shop first emerges through to purchase, consumption, repurchase, and recommendation' (Shankar 2011). It is likely that nostalgic appeals exert a significant influence on shoppers as they formulate their decisions while they shop. The emotionally charged nature of these appeals may provide a significant source of marketing differentiation that may sway in-store decisions.

Managerial implications

As we have shown, retailers and manufacturers have a variety of tools at their disposal to trigger nostalgia in the retail environment and there are good reasons for them to do so. One, while retailers have had some success in promoting their store brands (Scott-Thomas 2010), these efforts may come at the expense of promoting the retailer's brand, complicating issues of shopper loyalty. Careful consideration of nostalgia-related decisions may serve to differentiate the retailer's brand in the mind of the shopper. Two, the encroachment of these store brands has led manufacturers to use nostalgic products and messages to remind customers of the history of their brands and subtly announce their brand's primacy in crowded product categories (Nassauer 2011). Three, creating the brand recognition necessary for a new product to succeed over time is an expensive undertaking. Some firms are resurrecting long-dead brands with the hope of trading on their nostalgic draw and latent brand equity (Walker 2008). Four, nostalgia can be used to tie brands to historical milestones (e.g., 100th anniversary) or boost short-term sales of products by cycling product availability (e.g., Disney's Video Vault) (Felten 2011). Finally, given the emotional power of nostalgic triggers and their potential to sway in-store decisions, they may also affect the allocation of in-store slack (mental budgets for unplanned purchases) (Stilley et al. 2010a, 2010b).

Developing nostalgic products, services, or environments, however, will likely be a nuanced undertaking. Managers need to understand the ramifications of decisions that could erode brand equity, such as displaying nostalgic brand identities side by side with their modern equivalent. Additionally, with the increasing importance and popularity of shopper marketing, coordination between retailers and manufacturers warrants more attention. Retailers and manufacturers working together to develop nostalgic promotions could be a powerful and mutually rewarding endeavor. For example, a retailer and partner manufacturers could work together on an in-store promotion that focuses shopper attention on an in-store display intended to drive product sales around a sporting event. This sporting event (e.g., American baseball's World Series) might be promoted with a sentimental message (e.g., 'Summer means you can be a kid again.') linked with retro branded products shoppers may have enjoyed in their youth (e.g., Cracker Jack, Ballpark Frank hot dogs, Coca-Cola). Throwback pricing could also be included on a loss-leader

product to drive further interest and sales. This example serves to demonstrate elements taken from Table 1 and combined in a creative way. By combining these nostalgic triggers, the evocation of nostalgia would likely be stronger, which would likely drive more sales.

Managers should also be sensitive to the authenticity of their efforts and how authenticity impacts the shopper's perception of nostalgic content. Managers will need to balance the decisions required to develop products, services, environments with concerns of authenticity that may undermine those decisions. Because shoppers seek authenticity 'in different objects, brands, and events for different reasons (control, connection, and/or virtue)' (Beverland and Farrelly 2010, 853), it is important to maintain a coherence between the authenticity of the product, service, or environment and the nostalgic message the manager is trying to convey. Not all nostalgic messages will have the same effect when perceived authenticity varies.

Future research

Whereas the included typology offers practical insight into the various ways nostalgia can be triggered in the retail environment, the theories enlisted can also provide a number of useful research propositions, which provide guidance for future research.

Consumers are drawn to nostalgic items because of their inherent authenticity (Belk 1990). Authenticity, therefore, is a useful construct capable of explaining the appeal of nostalgic products, services, or environments. Given this importance, it is likely that products, services, or environments that are better able to communicate their authenticity will have a more significant impact on shoppers' assessments of nostalgic appeals. Thus:

RP1: Authenticity moderates the relationship between a product, service, or environment and shoppers' assessment of its nostalgic impact.

While Grayson and Martinec's (2004) study on authenticity was not able to show that indexical cues have a stronger influence on assessments of authenticity than iconic cues in the context of their study, their reasoning – that authenticity is 'associated with fact and truthfulness' – remains logical and should be tested in this context. In fact, because products often acquire meaning through their histories, it follows that evidence of an item's history should lend it more authenticity. Additionally, studies of consumer contagion (Argo et al. 2008; Newman et al. 2011) show that items with demonstrable ties to others – including others from the past have a stronger appeal than similar products. Thus:

RP2: Products, services, or environments that exhibit indexical cues have a stronger influence on authenticity than iconic cues.

Further, some products, services, or retail environments may have both indexical and iconic authenticity cues. Unless these authenticity cues interact in surprising ways, it follows that products, services, or environments with both cues will exhibit stronger authenticity than those with a single cue. Thus:

RP3: Products, services, or environments with both indexical and iconic cues will have a stronger influence on authenticity than those with a single cue.

Future research will likely also benefit from exploring the effects of nostalgic triggers. To date, manufacturers seem to be concentrating on discrete nostalgic appeals by studying individual nostalgic triggers. Combining triggers in innovative ways may create a stronger nostalgic response and behavioral reaction from shoppers. Experimental research would help determine whether combining multiple triggers would amplify or attenuate nostalgic

effects. A variety of triggers could be tested including retailer sentimental messages with manufacturer products, which might underscore the importance of in-store execution coordination espoused by shopper marketing best practices (Shankar 2011).

Nostalgia has received a fair amount of attention within the marketing literature, but research on its use and effects within the retail environment have been lacking. By identifying the range of nostalgia triggers within the retail environment, it is hoped a new vein of marketing research can be mined to provide further insight into a pervasive and motivating human experience.

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