

A Promise in a Bottle

▲ Supermodel Christie Brinkley helps launch a new perfume which, she says, "celebrates real life rather than fantasy."

"Perfume," says expert perfumer Sophia Grojsman, "is a promise in a bottle." That promise might be reflected in a perfume's name: *Joy*, *Pleasures*, or *Beautiful*, for example. Millions of dollars are spent on the marketing of a perfume, trying to get customers to connect luxury, attraction, or attitude to a fragrance.



▲ A young girl enjoys the smell of an Easter lily. Aromas such as flower scents have a powerful effect on our emotions and memory.

Even without all the marketing, fragrance has power over our thoughts and emotions. Some scientists insist that memory and smell are especially closely linked. Certain aromas have the power to call up deep memories. Perfume makers are aware of this and use aromas that can touch us deeply.

The Power of Aromas

Of every ten new perfumes put on the market, perhaps only one will succeed. It's risky to try, as a company introducing a new fragrance can easily run through a budget of 20 million dollars. Profits, however, can be very high. One successful fragrance, *CK One* from designer Calvin Klein, made 250 million dollars in its first year.

In the perfume world, an essence is a material with its own special aroma. Some are natural, derived from flowers, plants, or wood, for example. Others are synthetic[1] copies of rare or difficult-to-obtain essences. According to perfume authority Harry Frémont, a good fragrance "is a balance between naturals and synthetics. Naturals give richness and roundness; synthetics, backbone and sparkle."

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Luxury scents ▶ are displayed like museum pieces at the Sephora perfume superstore in Paris.

Image and Marketing

Sephora is France's leading perfume store. In a store of shining stone, metal, and glass, famous perfumes are displayed and guarded like works of art in the nearby Louvre Museum.[2] Salespeople are dressed entirely in black, and each type of perfume is sold in a distinctly shaped bottle. In perfume sales, the emphasis is on presentation at least as much as on the product.

France's main competitor in the global perfume market is the United States, where image is all-important. The recent launch in the U.S. of one cologne for men, named after basketball star Michael Jordan, was preceded by a flood of TV commercials and talk show appearances by the player to create plenty of excitement and hype.

If you're confused about which perfume to buy, perfumer Annie Buzantian offers this advice: you really can't get an idea whether a perfume works or not until you wear it. "It's like the difference between a dress on the hanger and a dress on your body," says Buzantian. And Frémont adds, "Your first impression is often the right one."

[1] A man-made material that is not natural but rather made with the help of science is **synthetic**.
[2] The **Louvre Museum** is a world-famous art museum located in Paris, France.

▼ In perfume sales, the presentation is at least as important as the product.



▼ Women at a perfume company in New York test a new range of scents on a male co-worker. The team tests up to 2,000 scents every year.



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Reading Comprehension

A. Multiple Choice. Choose the correct answer for each question.

Main Idea

1. What is the main idea of the first paragraph?
a. The perfume industry uses marketing to sell an idea.
b. The name is the most important feature of a perfume.
c. Perfume provides joy, pleasure, and beauty to customers.
d. The perfume industry makes promises it can rarely keep.

Vocabulary

2. In line 16, the phrase *run through* is closest in meaning to _____.
a. use completely
b. move into
c. produce
d. earn

Detail

3. According to Harry Fremont, good fragrance is a balance between _____.
a. flower and wood essences
b. plant and man-made essences
c. rare and difficult-to-obtain essences
d. natural and man-made essences



▲ A civet

Detail

4. According to the author, in perfume sales, presentation is _____ the product.
a. at least as important as
b. much more important than
c. nearly as important as
d. not as important as

Did You Know?

Civet, an essence derived from material taken from under the tails of civet cats, has long been valued as an ingredient in perfume.

Inference

5. What is probably the main reason that Sephora's perfumes are so well guarded?
a. Each bottle is worth over 1,000 dollars.
b. The store has been robbed many times.
c. It is a way to impress customers.
d. French stores are normally well guarded.

B. Matching. Match the headings with the paragraph they describe.

1. Paragraph 2 ___	**a.** American-Style Marketing
2. Paragraph 3 ___	**b.** The Power of Fragrance
3. Paragraph 4 ___	**c.** Secret Ingredients
4. Paragraph 5 ___	**d.** High Risks, Great Rewards
5. Paragraph 6 ___	**e.** A Stylish Shop

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