

The Sound of Success: How Music Shapes Marketing and Brand Identity

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Abstract: *Music transcends borders, cultures, and generations, uniting people through shared emotions, experiences, and memories. Whether through ragas, serenades, or religious rituals, music channels feelings, shapes thought processes, and influences decision-making. This impact is also evident in marketing, where music plays a crucial role in helping brands stand out in an increasingly crowded marketplace. Amidst the noise of competition, music quietly and effectively shapes brand identity. It acts as a subtle, yet powerful tool that allows brands to communicate their values and connect with audiences in more personal and innovative ways. In this article, we explore how brands leverage music to enhance their identity and engage with consumers.*

Keywords: Music, brand identity, Marketing by Music

1. INTRODUCTION

In today's highly competitive market, brands are constantly striving to find innovative methods to stand out and engage with consumers in meaningful ways. One powerful tool that has gained prominence is music, known for its universal appeal and ability to evoke strong emotions. Music has the unique capability to connect with consumers on a deeper level, making it a valuable asset for brands aiming to create lasting impressions. This article explores the strategic use of music in brand communication and its role in enhancing customer engagement and fostering brand loyalty. To begin with, we look at the psychological foundations of how music influences human emotions and behavior. Research in this area suggests that music can trigger emotional responses, influence moods, and even alter perceptions. These characteristics make it an effective medium for brands to convey their values and messages in ways that resonate with consumers. By tapping into the emotional power of music, brands can create stronger associations with their identity, helping to differentiate themselves in a crowded market. Next, we examine how music is applied in various brand communication strategies. From advertisements and jingles to background music in stores or online platforms, the use of carefully selected music can enhance the overall customer experience. The right choice of music not only aligns with a brand's image but also has the potential to improve customer recall and recognition, making it a critical component in brand identity. Moreover, by integrating music that reflects the brand's core values, businesses can build a deeper connection with their audience, ultimately increasing consumer loyalty and advocacy.

So, music plays a significant role in shaping brand communication and marketing strategies. As brands continue to seek ways to connect with consumers on a personal level, the emotional resonance and universal language of music offer a powerful means of achieving these goals. Through thoughtful and strategic use, music can enhance brand identity, drive engagement, and build long-lasting relationships with consumers.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

Music has a unique ability to tap into emotions and communicate meanings that other forms of communication often cannot. In marketing, this sets music apart, as it can evoke those deep, intangible feelings that conventional methods like images or spoken words may struggle to reach. Music has the power to influence moods, create memorable experiences, and build emotional connections — all crucial for attracting and engaging consumers. A few seconds of music can leave a lasting impression, shaping how a brand is perceived. Music is not just background noise; it's a powerful psychological tool. It has the ability to shape our emotions, thoughts, and behaviors. By altering the tempo, rhythm, or melody, marketers can subtly influence how consumers feel about a product or brand. Whether it's energizing, calming, or nostalgic, music plays a critical role in how we experience and respond to marketing messages.

Why Are We So Addicted to Music (The Dopamine Effect)? Hearing a good song your brain releases the pleasure, reward and motivation chemical called dopamine. Which is also why the right song can lift your spirits or give you a flood of memories. Brands understand this, and use music to trigger these feel-good emotions that make consumers crave a stronger association with them.

Familiar Melodies that Stick with Us? You know how some catchy jingles stay with you for years? That's no accident. Melodies that we recognize release reward-producing dopamine in our brains, helping to strengthen our memory and recognition. This branding strategy can quite easily bring to mind Microsoft's five-note chime or the "I'm Lovin' It" jingle from McDonalds. When a buyer comes to the moment of purchase, this repetition ensures brands stick in their minds and they think it is memorable information.

In the Mix: Forms That Stir The Soul? It hits you right in your heart; music does not just sit and linger within your ears. In addition, The Journal of Consumer Research conducted a study that said the type of music used in advertising has been significantly associated with how consumers view the ad, as well as the product. Fast songs get us pumped, happy and good slow ones make us feel warm,

fuzzy feeling or make you want to reminisce of something past. Coca Cola and Apple, for example, pull together soundtracks that evoke the feelings they want tied to their brands thereby making a stronger case for consumer action (or inaction) while ensuring greater recall. In short, music is a secret weapon that brands use to capture attention, evoke emotions, and ultimately, influence behavior. It's not just about what you hear—it's about how it makes you feel.

One of the most widely studied aspects of music in marketing is its ability to evoke emotions. Research suggests that music can significantly alter a consumer's emotional state, which, in turn, affects purchasing behavior. For example, Alpert and Alpert (1990) found that background music in stores can create an atmosphere that influences customers' moods, leading them to stay longer and make more purchases. Similarly, a study by Kellaris and Kent (1993) demonstrated that music tempo and rhythm have a measurable impact on consumer emotions, with faster-paced music often creating excitement and slower music inducing calmness.

Music has also been shown to play a key role in brand recall and recognition. Research by Yalch and Spangenberg (2000) found that consumers are more likely to remember a brand when the music used in advertisements is consistent with the brand's identity. Music with strong associations, such as jingles or well-known songs, can become strongly linked to a brand, making it easier for consumers to recall the product when exposed to the music in the future. This has led many companies to invest in signature tunes or jingles, aiming to create long-lasting auditory associations.

Another significant area of study involves the effect of music on consumer decision-making processes. Research has shown that background music can influence consumers' perceptions of product quality, price, and even the overall shopping environment. Milliman (1986) conducted a famous study on the effects of background music in restaurants, finding that slow-tempo music led to longer dining times and higher customer spending. Music not only affects the emotional state of the consumer but also plays a subtle role in guiding their decisions without them even realizing it.

In online and digital marketing, music is increasingly used in e-commerce websites, advertisements, and social media campaigns to enhance user engagement. Studies have shown that music can encourage consumers to interact with digital content for longer periods, thereby increasing the likelihood of a purchase or brand engagement.

3. FINDINGS

3.1 *The Cultural Influence of Music*

Music is not only about feeling, its linked to the identity of people and their cultures. Music genres strike chords with particular cultural groups, and brands have become adept at leveraging music to connect with those communities. Take the worldwide ascent of hip-hop, this broad social move was peculiarly maneuvered by brands searching up to startle youth, urban gatherings. Music only speaks to that brand voice, but it is also the social values, traditions and current movements in music cultural landscape;

positioning music as one of the most powerful content marketing vehicles for a brand expression.

The sound is the soul of cultures. blockchain music When catered with right sound, brand can resonate directly to its consumers and take the product one step forward into audience lives. Music has long played a role as a kind of common currency; be it pop, rock, jazz or hip-hop, genre becomes the idiom through which to discuss values and aspirations — and social bonds. Luxury brands might be more likely to choose classical or jazz music for instance, which make them look sophisticated and exclusive, while some might chose from the latest trending genre in music if your target is younger people.

A prime example of this is the "Nothing Beats a Londoner" campaign from Nike, that so cleverly played on the UK grime culture. Nike chose to use grime, a genre inspired by the experiences of Young Londoners, as it resonated well with their target audience. By showcasing grime artists from their locality such as Skepta, along with the journey of young female athletes and so on, Nike showed its audience that it knows who they are, and it cares about them. The music wasn't a mere accompaniment; it was pivotal to the way we were telling our stories and made this campaign culturally relevant, allowing Nike to connect with its audience in different ways.

3.2. *Using Music to Build Your Brand*

A brand is more than just a logo and the color palette; it has to do with the vibration of a brand and its influence that touches emotions in audience. Music helps to establish the emotional relationships that make brands both recognizable and unforgettable. But when it works, music can provide a brand with a tangible emotion, space and connection that will definitely make people feel more connected to the brand they patronize.

It is a step further of brand identity, that uses a signature sound or musical melody to elicit an immediate association with the brand. It even goes past just visuals to the level of auditory memory...which may be more powerful. A true sonic brand will become synonymous with the brand itself, elevating an ordinary sound to a trait that reverberates through the minds of consumers.

Probably the most iconic example of sonic branding is Intel's five-note jingle. Such is the close association of this sound with Intel that at the mention of it, we are instantly transported in our minds to everything its utterance implies: profound technological advance and innovation, grounded in quality — without any image for back-up. This is the power of sonic branding: creating a brand that resides in the consumer's mind through and identifiable auditory cue.

Netflix 2 Second Sound Effect (Ta-dum)The next great piece of sonic branding is the two-second "ta-dum" sound that precedes all original programming on Netflix. At times, a sound that was originally created to mimic the feel of going to a movie theater has morphed into an auditory cue that immediately evokes anticipation. The second listeners hear it, they know they're about to start a new TV series or movie. It does more than just open with sound: it is part of Netflix's

implied value proposition of a high-caliber entertainment experience.

Music in advertising has one more function apart from making the advertisement unforgettable—it evokes feelings that lead consumers to act. This includes a TV advertisement, a digital promotion, or even the experience in a retail outlet. Music is a convenient tool for companies to communicate ideas and ideas and feelings to the audience.

Speaking of marketing, telling a story is its indispensable essence, while music is the heart and the soul. It elevates the peaks and downfalls of the ad's story making it visually more than just images. The intersection of the perfect song and the perfect narrative results in an ad that does not only captivate an individual while on view, but rather long after the last sound is heard.

John Lewis appears to identify the dominance music holds in advertisements more than other brands. Their Christmas adverts for each year have in most cases been centered around music dynamics. For instance in the year 2019 they showed a touching version of Bastille's 'Can't Fight These Feelings'. In the background during this song was playing where a baby 'dragon' was trying to fit into the human world. The viewer could easily connect with and feel for the little creature based on how deep the emotions went into this cover song itself though it might have escaped some ears that catch attention quickly. Resultantly there was an advert created that sold beyond giving presents but instead symbolized holiday time as captured uniquely by only its maker whose name is almost synonymous with as a brand that values family, connection, and heart

Budweiser, in its 2015 Super Bowl commercial, tells us the story of a small dog that could not find its way home back then its mother sang "I'm Gonna Be (500 Miles)" by Sleeping at Last. Both in terms of the music chosen and its cadence, the sentimental tone resonated with the core message in the video by bringing out a stronger connection between a pet and his/her master. This wasn't just another cute dog ad as it left a lasting impression on people regarding its heartfelt content during and after big game days even up to date. Budweiser effectively employed the sentimentality of its lyrics to emphasize brand values such as trustworthiness, companionship, and timeless relationships.

How to Use Music to Elevate Your Ads

Choosing music that reflects your brand's emotion is crucial for intensifying the message you want to convey. The music should align with the emotional tone of the ad—happy music for upbeat, joyful messages, and more somber, emotionally deep tracks for serious themes. The right choice of music strengthens the emotional connection and helps the audience resonate with the brand on a deeper level.

Pairing music with storytelling creates a lasting impact. Brands like John Lewis and Budweiser have mastered the art of combining music with narrative, using songs that enhance the emotional journey within their commercials. It's not just about selecting a popular track, but finding the perfect fit that elevates the story and makes it memorable long after

the ad ends. This integration creates a sentimental experience that viewers carry with them.

Using music to create emotional peaks and valleys helps guide the audience through different stages of the story. Whether building up to a climax or pausing for reflection, the right music can amplify the intensity of the moment, making it more enduring in the minds of viewers. When music touches the heart and stirs emotions, the advertisement becomes more than just a sales pitch—it becomes a memorable, emotionally engaging experience that fosters brand loyalty.

Music in Retail: Shaping Consumer Experience

Music plays a powerful role in shaping consumer experiences, especially in physical spaces like retail stores. It serves as a mood enhancer, creating an atmosphere that aligns with the brand's identity. By carefully selecting background music, retailers can influence consumer behavior and purchasing decisions. For example, calming music might encourage customers to browse longer, while upbeat tracks can energize the environment, prompting quicker purchases. This strategic use of music enhances the overall shopping experience, making customers feel more connected to the brand, which can lead to increased sales and customer satisfaction.

The Influence of Tempo and Volume

The tempo and volume of in-store music may unconsciously affect how long customers remain in a store and how much they will spend. Indeed, studies show that with slower-paced music, customers are more likely to linger longer, whereas fast-paced upbeat music enhances energy and increases pace.

Abercrombie & Fitch is just one of those apparel brands that built their in-store experiences with music appeals to them being youthful and fashion-forward. With this loud, bass-heavy music, a darkly lit environment, and of course the brand's signature scent, the environment is more that of a nightclub rather than any traditional retail store. This sensory experience, in turn, helps Abercrombie create its identity as a very trendy and edgy brand for the consumption of younger consumers.

Starbucks On the other end of the spectrum is Starbucks, the chain with strategically planned playlists filling the atmosphere with warmth and relaxation. The coffee giant encourages customers to take their time and not hurry up while in the store with mellow, acoustic music. By creating this homey atmosphere, Starbucks really enforces their brand identity as a welcoming "third place" where customers can unwind between home and work.

Music in Digital and Social Media Campaigns

In the digital age, music has become a crucial element in social media and content marketing strategies. Platforms like TikTok, Instagram, and YouTube have integrated music deeply into their ecosystems, allowing brands and creators to use sound to enhance content, boost engagement, and drive shareability. Music is not just an accessory to content but often the core driver of its emotional appeal and virality. On TikTok, for instance, trending songs are the foundation for

many viral challenges and creative posts, making music selection essential for increasing reach and participation. Similarly, Instagram Reels and Stories leverage music to create dynamic, memorable content that resonates with viewers, encouraging them to like, comment, and share. YouTube, with its vast audience and visual storytelling capabilities, also benefits from music that sets the tone and reinforces the message of the content.

By integrating the right music into digital campaigns, brands can evoke emotions, create stronger connections with their audience, and make their content more impactful. This can lead to higher engagement rates, better brand recall, and more significant consumer interaction. Music helps content stand out in crowded social media spaces, making it more likely to be shared across platforms, extending the brand's reach. As social media continues to dominate the digital landscape, the strategic use of music will remain a key factor in successful content marketing, helping brands not only capture attention but also create lasting impressions.

Viral Success through Music

TikTok has probably been at the forefront of this disruption in how brands use music for marketing. Its viral challenges and soundtracks have opened up new avenues for brands to connect with audiences, in particular, the Gen Z audience. Case Study: Ocean Spray and Fleetwood Mac's "Dreams" A viral TikTok video from 2020 featuring a man skateboarding and drinking Ocean Spray while listening to the song "Dreams" by Fleetwood Mac put brand awareness and sales in high gear. That fully organic video received millions of views and rejuvenated interest in both Ocean Spray and that 1977 hit song. Ocean Spray did capitalize on that viral moment by centering its social media content based on that trend. Pretty good example of how music can bring in viral success.

Chipotle and TikTok Challenges Chipotle has taken advantage of trending challenges on TikTok, which most of the time are based on some music or another, for outreach to younger audiences. Fast casual restaurant chain Chipotle creates branded challenges to popular songs and encourages user-generated content, increasing brand visibility and engagement in a fun and interactive way.

3.3 Best Practices in Using Music for Marketing

To fully unlock the potential of music for marketing, brands must utilize a strategic approach. Following are some of the best practices on how to make use of music to enhance brand identity and consumer engagement:

Know Your Audience

First of all, in choosing the correct music in marketing, understanding your target audience's preference and habit is elemental. A deep knowledge of your audience's taste will enable you to choose music that actually resonates and engages them more effectively than other forms of expression.

Music can significantly enhance engagement by emotionally connecting with the target audience, making the marketing message more appealing. For example, using popular hits or trendy songs that resonate with younger

audiences, such as those on Gen Z's favorite playlists, can increase the shareability of a campaign and even help it go viral. Additionally, incorporating familiar music allows brands to relate more closely to their audience's lifestyle, building trust and reinforcing brand loyalty. This relatability helps brands appear more in tune with their consumers' preferences, solidifying their presence in the market.

However, there are downsides to consider. Overemphasizing music that appeals to one segment, such as fast-paced pop tracks for younger audiences, can alienate other customer groups like older consumers who may not connect with such music. Moreover, the licensing costs for popular music can be prohibitively expensive, especially for smaller brands with limited budgets. To avoid these issues, conducting audience research through surveys, social media analysis, or focus groups can help identify musical preferences. Selecting music that complements the product's message is crucial; for example, classical music may suit a luxury brand, while upbeat tracks are more fitting for fast-food marketing.

Consistency is Key

Consistency, through either a jingle, sonic logo, or even a genre, helps to solidify brand identity across every touchpoint. This in turn makes the brand experience so much more cohesive, easily remembered, and recognizable.

One of the major advantages of using music in marketing is enhanced brand recognition. When a brand consistently uses a jingle or specific sound, listeners can easily associate that sound with the brand without needing to see any visual cues. Iconic examples include the Intel sound or McDonald's "I'm Lovin' It" jingle, which immediately trigger brand recall. Furthermore, consistent use of music across various touchpoints, from TV ads to in-store playlists, helps create a unified brand identity. This cohesion strengthens consumer trust and fosters long-term loyalty, as the brand becomes a familiar and trusted presence in the consumer's life.

However, there are challenges associated with relying too heavily on specific music. The repeated use of the same sound or style over time can become creatively limiting, making it difficult for brands to evolve with changing musical trends or tailor their tone for different campaigns. Additionally, overexposure to the same jingle or tune can lead to audience fatigue. When a piece of music is heard too often, it can lose its impact, and in some cases, it may even become annoying to the audience, diminishing its effectiveness in brand communication.

Emotional Alignment

When selected carefully, music can evoke the desired emotional response in consumers, enhancing the overall tone of the message. Brands can leverage music to intensify emotional impact, creating a deeper connection with their audience. By applying tone-of-voice variations through music, leading brands ensure that their communication evokes the right emotional resonance, leaving a lasting impression. For example, uplifting music might inspire motivation, while soft, sentimental tunes can create a

heartwarming atmosphere, making the brand's message more memorable and impactful.

One of the primary advantages of aligning music with a campaign's emotional goal is the stronger connection it builds with the consumer. When the right tone is used, music can help the brand express deeper emotions, leading to stronger emotional engagement and better brand recall. A heartwarming or nostalgic melody, for instance, can make an ad feel more sentimental, driving emotional responses that resonate with viewers. Emotional connections in advertising are often linked to stronger purchase intent, as consumers are more likely to buy products when they feel a meaningful emotional bond with the brand.

However, there are risks if the music does not align with the campaign's emotional tone. A misfitting musical choice can lead to dissonance, creating a confused or even negative reaction from the audience. For example, overly upbeat music in a serious or emotional campaign could distract from the intended message. Additionally, cultural and emotional misinterpretations can occur when the emotional cues of music resonate differently across cultures. What may evoke strong emotions in one region could fall flat or alienate consumers in another, making it critical for brands to carefully study their audience before selecting music.

Cultural Relevance

Culturally relevant music can create powerful connections between a brand and its audience by resonating with the values, traditions, or current trends of a particular community. When brands incorporate musical elements that reflect the cultural background of their target audience, they present themselves as more authentic and relatable. This sense of alignment helps a brand appear closer to its consumers, making its message feel more organic and personalized. By understanding the cultural context, music can become a bridge that deepens emotional engagement, helping the audience feel that the brand truly understands their identity and values. For example, using traditional music or modern popular songs that align with local culture helps build a more intimate relationship between the brand and the community.

One of the significant benefits of culturally relevant music is its ability to resonate more strongly with specific demographics. When a brand uses music that reflects the cultural background of its target audience, it strengthens the connection and makes the brand feel more inclusive and aligned with the audience's values. This sense of inclusion increases brand authenticity, as the brand demonstrates an understanding and appreciation of the culture it represents. As a result, consumers are more likely to trust a brand that respects and celebrates their cultural identity, which can lead to higher brand loyalty and stronger emotional bonds with the audience. By using culturally relevant music, brands can successfully communicate that they are in tune with the local community, leading to enhanced customer trust and engagement.

However, brands must exercise caution when incorporating culturally specific music, as there are risks associated with misusing or misunderstanding cultural

symbols. One of the major concerns is cultural misappropriation, where a brand uses culturally specific music without a deep understanding of its meaning or value, potentially offending the very audience it seeks to engage. This misuse can result in accusations of exploiting culture for commercial gain, leading to negative publicity and damaging the brand's reputation. Moreover, focusing too much on one cultural group could alienate other potential customers, limiting the brand's appeal to a broader audience. To avoid these issues, brands should aim for a careful balance between cultural relevance and universal appeal, ensuring their music choices connect with their target audience while remaining accessible and respectful to others.

4. CONCLUSION

To marketers, music is far more than mere background noise; it's a powerful tool in shaping brand identity, enhancing consumer experiences, and evoking emotional connections. When brands understand and harness the psychological, cultural, and emotional impact of music, they can craft marketing campaigns that resonate deeply with their target audiences. Music has the unique ability to create memorable experiences, cut through the noise of saturated markets, and foster stronger emotional bonds between consumers and brands. By strategically selecting music that aligns with a brand's message and audience preferences, companies can significantly enhance brand loyalty and recall. In today's digital age, where consumer expectations are constantly evolving, the use of music has become an essential element in standing out and creating lasting impressions. Whether through carefully chosen soundtracks for ads, signature jingles, or the music played in-store or online, the auditory experience plays a critical role in shaping perceptions and driving consumer behavior. As digital platforms continue to dominate, the role of music in branding and marketing will remain a vital cornerstone for businesses aiming to connect with their audiences on a deeper emotional level.

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