

Music in Advertising: An Overview of Jingles, Popular Music
and the Emotional Impact of Music in Advertising

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A Senior Thesis submitted in partial fulfillment
of the requirements for graduation
in the Honors Program
Liberty University
Spring 2016

Acceptance of Senior Honors Thesis

This Senior Honors Thesis is accepted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for graduation from the Honors Program of Liberty University.

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Abstract

Music is used extensively in advertising. Thus, it is surprising that so little research has been conducted on the emotional effects of music in advertising. Industry research has focused on the informational processing model, which measures how effective an advertisement is based on recall and understanding. However, beyond influencing thoughts and behavior, music tugs at the heart and leaves a lasting mark.

This thesis gives an overview of how music has been used in advertising, and delves into the emotional impacts of music in advertising. This thesis also explores the creative process behind choosing the right music for an advertisement, and takes a look at a tool called the “Semantic Differential” that facilitates the process.

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Music has shared a close partnership with advertising throughout history. One of the popular uses of music in advertising is through jingles – catchy tunes praising a product or brand. Another example of music in advertising is through the use of popular music in TV or radio commercials. To fully understand why this partnership exists and how music in advertising affects consumers, one must first understand the definition of advertising.

Advertising falls under the umbrella of marketing and plays a unique role alongside public relations and branding. With the rise of social media and hyperconnectivity, traditional definitions of these fields have slightly blurred. Instead of operating as separate entities, these fields now collaborate to reach their audiences with a consistent brand story through different media outlets.

Noricks (2013) said that traditionally, the goal of marketing is to drive immediate sales, and all marketing tactics usually have the company's bottom line in mind. In a similar way, advertising is meant to persuade customers to make an actual purchase. Companies allocate big budgets towards advertising and expect a high return on investment. EMarketer (2014) estimated that advertisers would spend nearly \$600 billion in advertising in 2015. However, return on investment is not always immediate.

In public relations, it takes time and continual effort to build relationships with consumers, the media, and within a company. Furthermore, a brand is not just built upon a campaign or big publicity stunt. Rather, branding is a time-consuming process of forming

a brand image and telling a brand story. These are long-term investments that companies make in order to become successful.

With the convergence of various fields in communications, advertising now plays a bigger role than just persuading customers to buy a product. Advertising combined with public relations and branding persuades a customer to buy into a brand, build a lasting relationship with the brand, and make repeated purchases with the brand.

Advertising has gone from traditional platforms like television and radio to new media platforms, such as social media networks and video streaming services. Since consumers are bombarded with advertisements, a successful advertisement has to be creative, persuasive, and on-brand to leave a lasting impact. The general population does not “yearn for ads” (Tellis, 1998, p. 121), so advertisers need to find creative ways to grab and keep the attention of customers. Advertisements must also be persuasive in order to drive sales or increase positive brand image. Lastly, advertisements need to be on-brand because it is easy to get confused between the brand being advertised and other brands within the category. Advertisers need to maintain a consistent brand story, feel, and style to make sure that customers make the correct association.

Many aspects make an advertising campaign successful, and music is one of them. Choice of music plays a major role in the success of commercials on television, radio, and other digital platforms. This is because music not only has the power to influence thoughts and behaviors, but also leaves a lasting, emotional impact on viewers.

Why Music Is Used in Advertising

Music is used in advertising because it provides an additional dimension to the existing spoken or visual narrative of advertisements. Binet, Müllensiefen, and Edwards

(2013) said, “Music can help to gain attention, create desired moods, change the pace of an advertising narrative, facilitate brand and message recall, improve attitudes towards brands and, ultimately, influence purchase behaviour” (p. 10). Shevy and Hung (2013) proposed that music combines with other factors like visuals, storyline, words and sounds to exert “a persuasive influence through cognitive and affective processes” (p. 311). On certain occasions, music has even taken center stage to become the focal point of successful advertisements through emotional storytelling.

Examples of successful advertisements include Nikon’s “I am” commercials, Cadbury’s “Gorilla,” and John Lewis’s “The Journey” (Binet, Müllensiefen, & Edwards, 2013, pp. 11-12). Binet, Müllensiefen, and Morrison (2015) said that in these advertisements, music was not an afterthought or “audio garnish,” but was a “crucial ingredient” for success (p. 4). Music helped to carry the narrative in these advertisements as well as impact viewers in ways that would be impossible in the absence of this crucial ingredient. Binet et al. (2013) estimated that “getting the music right can increase sales effectiveness by as much as 30%” (p. 13), and these advertisements are perfect examples of how the right music can directly affect an advertisement’s success.

Not only does music increase sales effectiveness, it also helps to foster brand image. Lang (2015) noted, “Corporations use music to shape consumer experience and purchasing behaviors, to build emotional connections with consumers, and to enhance the corporate brand image” (p. 1). Shevy and Hung (2013) said that music in advertising is similar to ambient music, and helps to create a mood and “portray a venue, occasion, activity, or type of person” (p. 321). Because of these benefits, Shevy and Hung noted that music is used “as a means of persuasion in love, political messages, and commercial

advertising” (p. 311). Music is able to become tightly knit with a brand and gives consumers a connection to the brand’s story at a deeper level.

Despite the evident influence of music, advertisers fail to acknowledge its importance, and they often pay minimal attention to the subject. Binet et al. (2013) suggested that “conventional advertising research probably underestimates the effects of music, because some operate below the radar of consciousness and some only emerge at the social level” (p. 13). A lot of past research regarding music in advertising has focused on how well advertisement messages are recalled, while neglecting to consider how advertisements make people feel. Since emotions are subjective and harder to quantify, advertising researchers often shy away from finding out the affective influence of music in advertising. However, in order to move forward, advertisers must move beyond the quantitative effects of music in advertising, and delve deeper to find qualitative insights on how music influences emotions, which in turn affects brand image and buying behaviors.

The Information Processing Model

In *50 Years using the wrong model of TV advertising*, Heath and Feldwick (2007) examined the prevalence of the information processing (IP) model in advertising and how it downplays the role of emotions in advertising. The core assumption of the IP model is that an advertisement “must communicate a clear (i.e., verbally describable) message about the product or service” (p. 31) in order to be effective. The success of the advertisement is determined by how well the message is “recalled,” “believed,” and “understood” (p. 31). The IP model has greatly influenced the advertising industry, and many practitioners still hold to this model. Heath and Feldwick (2007) had this to say about the IP model:

The most convincing evidence of the dominance of the IP model comes from the study of agency or client creative briefing forms. Almost all require a statement of ‘proposition’ or ‘message’; and those that do not, use language such as ‘What is the one thing we want to say?’ (p. 33)

The heart of the IP model is to have one central message that sticks with the customer and leads him or her to buy a product. In many cases, the IP model has presented a structured method for advertisers to come up with a themed and focused campaign. Having one central message or tagline is a good starting point for advertisers, and the IP model further encourages advertisers to sell a product based on factual benefits. However, often it takes more than a catchy tagline and information to make the sale happen.

Heath and Feldwick (2007) presented their case by looking at a 1999 snack food commercial that was “accompanied by a pop song and meaningless gibberish lyrics” (p. 29). Surveys before the ad’s launch showed that it had low “relevance,” “ease of understanding,” and “persuasion” (p. 29), which are terms used in the IP model, but the advertiser chose to run the ad due to time constraints. Surprisingly, the ad and the song resonated with customers, and helped to increase the brand’s market shares (Heath & Feldwick, 2007). The ad’s success implied that advertisers were wrongly measuring the effectiveness of an ad, and further thought had to be put into the subject of music in advertising.

The success of advertisements has been historically measured by cognition instead of emotion. According to Ambler (1998), “When you get marketing and advertising research showing that logical persuasion (cognition) is important, probably the reason is that they did not measure anything else” (p. 501). Heath and Feldwick added that “the

problem is compounded by the difficulty of isolating and measuring the impact of non-cognitive elements on the feelings and behaviour of the target market” (p. 42).

Many of the measurement techniques used within the IP model use self-reporting tools such as surveys and questionnaires. Advertisers then try to gauge an ad’s effectiveness by how well the viewers can recall the message or how much attention was paid to the ad. However, Heath and Feldwick (2007) said that these self-report answers are not accurate, as “people have no idea at any moment how much ‘thinking’ they are doing” (p. 43). Furthermore, advertisers cannot simply assume that higher recall equals greater effectiveness of an ad or positive association with the brand. In fact, measuring sentiments instead of message recall may prove to be more insightful.

Rational messaging informs customers about a product, but it usually takes more than information to convince customers to buy a product. Binet et al. (2015) referred to a 2007 analysis showing ads based “on rational messaging tend to be less effective than those based on emotional priming” (p. 2). They also said, “Most pre-tests and tracking studies focus on how well people notice, remember and understand what ads say. But if some of the most effective ads work without saying anything, then it implies we are probably measuring the wrong things” (p. 3). Based on a 2013 study, Binet et al. (2015) claimed that one defining benefit of emotional priming is that it brings long-term gains, while rational messaging focuses on influencing immediate sales. For brands looking to gain loyal, passionate customers, emotional priming is the way to go. Rational messaging ads can convince customers for a one-time purchase, but a brand needs to influence and delight customers at deeper levels of emotion in order to gain a long-term following.

Music has the power to bring out those emotions and influence customers at a deeper and sometimes unconscious level. Binet et al. (2015) found that “[e]ffective ads triggered significantly more and stronger emotional reactions; and the same ads with music were experienced as significantly more emotional than with the music track removed” (p. 6). However, this is no big secret, because Hollywood has understood how music heightens “the emotional impact of visuals...ever since sound was introduced” (Binet et al., 2013, p. 13). From the “dramatic violin motif accompanying the shower scene in *Psycho*” to the “minor second leitmotif used to reference the shark in *Jaws*,” these films would not be effective without music acting as the narrator and driving force (Shevy & Hung, 2013, p. 324).

It is common for music in advertising to be disregarded and treated with less importance. However, Heath and Feldwick (2007) put it plainly when they say, “visuals, sounds, symbols, music, gestures, context and a host of other things are not aids to recall or attention (or ‘engagement’), but exist in their own right as central elements in communication” (p. 51). Just as Hollywood pays great attention to every piece of music used, advertisers need to give music the credit it deserves. It is not time to throw out the IP model, but it is time for the emotional priming model to be considered equally important, if not more important on certain occasions.

The History of Music in Advertising

After viewing the impact of music on affecting emotions and driving behavior, the next thing to do is to look back in history to see how music was used in advertising, as well as look forward to where music in advertising is headed.

The Forefathers of the Jingle

Long before the thirteenth century, people would buy, sell and trade necessities and luxuries. Imagine a street full of loud merchants, each trying to sell his or her goods to passersby, shouting over one another and making bold claims about their goods. To cut through the noise and clutter, merchants needed to think outside the box for ways to gain customers. One way that merchants drew in customers was by singing songs or reciting rhymes about their products (Taylor, 2010).

According to Taylor (2010), street cries, the forerunners of jingles, were songs or lyrics that merchants would sing or shout to gain the attention of customers (para. 3). These street cries were used by wandering merchants, who may have been trying to sell their goods to strangers away from home. Songs or poems were a great way to break the ice and draw people's curiosity. Taylor (2010) said that the history of street cries goes back further than the thirteenth century, which was when the first records of street cries with musical notations were made. He mentioned that one of the early collections of French polyphony, called the *Montpellier Codex*, contained an example of street cries that said, "Frese nouvele! Múre france!" meaning "Fresh strawberries! Nice blackberries!" (para. 3).

Another precursor of music in advertising was found in early vaudeville. According to *Virtual Vaudeville* (2004), vaudeville was "the first truly modern form of popular entertainment" in America that became prominent in the 1880s. It played a similar "role in people's lives that radio and later television would for later generations" ("What is vaudeville?" para. 1). Huron (1989) said that a typical vaudeville performance consisted of various kinds of presentations, including singing and dancing. Between performances,

advertisements in the form of sales pitches were introduced, and music served to “candy-coat” the advertisements (para. 13). These sales pitches fit in with the overall feel of a vaudeville performance, and the music helped to keep the pitches entertaining (Huron, 1989). This concept of using music to make an advertisement more captivating and less of an interruption has been carried on by advertisers to this day.

Around the same time when vaudeville was enjoying prominence in the U.S., another predecessor to the jingle emerged — sales pitches in verse without music (Taylor, 2010, para. 4). Taylor (2010) noted that this form of advertising “became popular at the end of the nineteenth century, when they were frequently used in print advertising and displayed in streetcars” (para. 4). These advertisements would contain rhymes or poems praising a product and would feature eye-catching visuals to draw attention. Frank Presbrey, who wrote a book on advertising in 1929, claimed, “Probably in no other ten-year period have we had so many new songs that nearly everybody knew” (Taylor, 2010, para. 4). Little did Presbrey know that the jingle was on the horizon and would lead to an even greater influx of widely popular songs.

According to Taylor (2010), one of the sales pitches in verse that became wildly popular was soap brand Sapolio’s “Spotless Town” (para. 8). This particular sales pitch in verse was referenced on stage, in the news, and in public speeches; it was even made into a play. Taylor noted that because of this success, Sapolio earned a lot of money and word of mouth credibility as a brand. Seeing the success of these sales pitches in verse, Taylor (2010) said that Proctor & Gamble even started a contest for these pitches in 1892, and monthly winning pitches were printed out with illustrations in 1893 and 1894 (para. 5). Bates (1896) summed it up in *Good Advertising* by noting, “It is astonishing how some of

the things that we think the silliest will stick in our minds for years” (p. 201). Some of the most successful sales pitches in verse were almost nonsensical. However, this supports the idea that an ad does not need to necessarily convey clear information or facts in order to be catchy and effective.

The Golden Era of the Jingle

Taylor (2012) recorded that the rise of the jingle came after the challenging times of the Great Depression. Since advertisers had budget cuts and employee layoffs, advertisers were forced to come up with cheaper strategies that produced greater returns for customers. Fox (1997) said, “Hard times meant a hard sell” (p. 120), so advertisers began to incorporate a more direct selling approach. Taylor (2012) credited these challenges to the birth of jingles, which are full-length theme songs specifically written to promote a brand or product.

Before World War II, radio time was sold in bulk (Taylor, 2010). This meant that companies would buy a whole program slot, and advertising agencies would fill that slot with entertainment interlaced with advertisements for those companies. Taylor (2010) said that “the entire program served as an advertisement, frequently with the sponsor’s name in the title” (para. 22). In 1936, Lehn and Fink commissioned Eddie Cantor - a radio star and salesman, to broadcast a song during a Pebecco toothpaste program slot (Taylor, 2010). According to Reginald T. Townsend, an account executive of the agency that produced the program, this song was such a hit that there were thousands of requests for an encore. Townsend called this a “caroled commercial,” which was one of the early forms of the modern jingle (Taylor, 2010, para. 37).

Taylor (2010) also brought attention to a 1939 radio program, called “The Life and Love of Dr. Susan,” which contained jingles sung by Frank Luther (para. 39). These jingles were slightly different from the modern jingle because they were short songs that were not repeated. Because of that, this early form of jingles did not stick with listeners, but acted more as entertainment within an advertisement - similar to how music served to candy-coat sales pitches in early vaudeville.

According to radio scholars, the first genuine standalone jingle was “Try Wheaties,” a jingle for Wheaties breakfast cereal that aired in 1926 (Taylor, 2010, para. 44). Unlike the previous two examples that had more of an entertainment factor, “Try Wheaties” had the specific goal of selling a product. It also stood alone as a commercial and was not part of a radio program, which was unusual for radio advertisements at that time (Taylor, 2010). The jingle went like this:

Have you tried Wheaties?

They're whole wheat with all of the bran.

Won't you try Wheaties?

For wheat is the best food of man.

They're crispy and crunchy

The whole year through,

The kiddies never tire of them

and neither will you.

So just try Wheaties,

The best breakfast food in the land (Taylor, 2010, para. 49)

“Try Wheaties” was simple, straightforward and effective. According to an advertising manager for General Mills, half of the sales for Wheaties breakfast cereal in 1929 were made in areas where the jingle was aired (Taylor, 2010). This jingle displayed what Fox (1997) called a “hard sell,” because it contained simple truths about the product being sold and had the simple message of “just try Wheaties” (para. 26). On a side note, this jingle was derived from the chorus of a 1919 hit song “Jazz Baby,” made popular by Marion Harris (Taylor, 2010). During those times, it was quite typical for advertisers or radio producers to take a familiar tune and write new lyrics to it.

The next major game changer in the modern jingle came in 1939 and was called “Pepsi Hits the Spot.” This jingle was the “first nationally broadcast standalone singing commercial to catch on” (Taylor, 2010, para. 49). In fact, *Advertising Age* named this Pepsi campaign as “#14 of 100 advertising campaigns of all time” (Taylor, 2010, para. 49). This jingle, which was also called “the most famous oral trademark of all time,” transformed broadcast advertising and paved the way for the modern jingle to take center stage in the jingle’s golden era (Taylor, 2010, para. 49).

Walter Mack, who became Pepsi’s president in 1938, said that the jingle was “something different. It was amusing, entertaining and catchy” (Taylor, 2010, para. 49). The jingle was 30 seconds long, but the composers first wrote it as part of a 15-second spoken commercial. Taylor (2010) said the composers reasoned that “it would take at least that long for an irritated listener to get up and turn off the radio” (para. 49) (It is interesting to note that composers at that time considered the possibility of ads to irritate listeners. Therefore, this is something that modern advertising and music practitioners

need to keep in mind when making music selections). Following the completion of Pepsi's jingle, the only problem was to get the commercial to air on the radio.

As mentioned before, radio stations did not lease out air time in small time slots. When Mack approached NBC to air the commercial, the smallest time slots they were willing to sell were in five-minute blocks (Taylor, 2010). Undeterred, Mack found a small radio station in New Jersey that needed money and bought 30-second slots and 60-second slots to air the ad. Taylor recorded that after "Pepsi Hits the Spot" was aired for two weeks, sales were up in the areas that heard the jingle, so Mack's agency looked for more stations to air the jingle. Finally, the jingle became so popular that big stations like CBS and NBC gave way and sold Mack the small time slots he wanted. This change in mindset signaled the start of standalone jingles (Taylor, 2010).

In 1942, a survey showed that "Pepsi Hits the Spot" was the "best-known tune" in America (Taylor, 2010, para. 50). By 1944, "the New York Times reported that the jingle had been played more than a million times and was still being heard daily on 350 stations" (Taylor, 2010, para. 50). Pepsi's jingle was similar to "Try Wheaties" because it was to the point, convincing and catchy. What made "Pepsi Hits the Spot" one of the best jingles of all time was the fact that it was easy to learn, which made it possible for even children to sing it. Here are the lyrics for it:

Pepsi-Cola hits the spot,

Twelve full ounces, that's a lot.

Twice as much for a nickel, too.

Pepsi-Cola is the drink for you! (Taylor, 2010, para. 50)

According to Taylor (2010), Pepsi's jingle sparked a brand new interest in the field of advertisement jingles. Agencies that specialized in producing jingles were formed, and musicians took on jingle writing as a way to catapult themselves into stardom. Taylor (2010) noted that one such musician that rose to fame through jingles was Barry Manilow, who wrote "Stuck on Band-Aid" and State Farm's "Like a Good Neighbor" (para. 1). According to Manilow, he found it easier to connect with his audiences who were already familiar with his jingles, and from that initial contact he was able to further showcase his craft and grow a fan base (Taylor, 2010).

Taylor (2012) credited the popularity of the jingle to its ability to transform a "hard-sell pitch" into a "sugarcoated musical treat" (p. 90), and it is no wonder that jingles were used for decades as an important tool in advertising. There was so much enthusiasm for jingles that there were even weather jingles and jingles that told the time of day. However, with the influx of jingles flooding radio stations, it only took a few years for people to start complaining about how annoying jingles were getting, pointing back to the concerns of Pepsi's jingle composers. Not every jingle was a hit, and some were downright terrible. In 1944, the New York Times radio station WQXR "banned singing commercials [because they] were apt to create ill-will among listeners and ultimately work to the disadvantage of the advertiser" (Taylor, 2012, p. 89).

While the jingle is still around today, its usage has become reserved for more specific functions within commercials and advertising campaigns. According to Lindström (2010), jingles used to be the music of choice in television and radio advertisements because they were informative and catchy. However, with the influx of brands and advertisements, viewers no longer pay as much attention to advertisements. Jillson (2014)

said that “[a]ll of these factors have contributed to increased attention to emotional appeals in commercials, which may help to explain the increased use of popular music in television advertisements over recent years” (p. 4).

In the past, one reason why advertisers preferred to use original jingles or music instead of copyrighted music was because copyrighted music cost more money, and there were many restrictions on how the music could be used (Taylor, 2010, para. 28). However, around the late 1980s, licensing costs began to fall, which spelt the decline of the popular jingle (Naish, 2014). In the place of jingles came an increased use of contemporary or popular music in advertising.

What Followed the Fall of the Jingle

Originally, popular music was meant to be listened to and enjoyed by the general public (Lang, 2015). However, Lang said advertisers began to see that there were substantial benefits in using popular music for commercial purposes. For one, popular music resonated with listeners who already knew the songs, and brands could easily be associated with successful songs. Secondly, using popular music in advertising not only benefited the brand, but brought publicity and revenue to the artist whose music was being used. According to Naish (2014), “The career of Edwin Sharpe and the Magnetic Zeroes was given a helping hand by the appearance of their song ‘Home’ in the Peugeot 2008 ‘Crossover’ ad, which led to the song’s re-release and significant additional airplay, sales, and new fans” (para. 11).

Advertisers were not interested only in pop stars. Advertisers began to look out for rising indie music – music that is not mainstream, commercial or popular music, because this kind of music could form an unstained association with a brand or product. One such

example was the use of Nick Drake's song "Pink Moon" in a 1999 Volkswagen commercial because Drake's music was able to capture the "essence" of the Volkswagen brand (Beech & Gilmore, 2015, p. 146).

According to a study done by Allan (2008) that analyzed over three thousand prime-time commercials, out of the commercials that used music, 14% used popular music, 5% used jingles, and 81% used needledrop music. While using popular music and jingles can produce meaningful connections between music and brand, a majority of modern advertisers prefer to use needledrop music. Needledrop music, or background music, can be simply defined as "generic, prefabricated, multipurpose musical beds" (Shevy & Hung, 2013, p. 312). This kind of music is used because it is cheaper than licensing a popular song or composing a new jingle, and requires minimal work in terms of editing.

Music licensing is now a big sector that even impacts industries outside of advertising. According to Josh Sanburn, "In 2011, world-wide licensing revenue from synchronization fees (i.e., money paid to use music in advertising, movies, television, etc.) was \$2.5 billion" (Allan, 2014, p. 27). Binet et. al. (2013) wrote, "Many of the most popular and effective ads of the past 10 years have been built around music" (p. 10). Music has shaped the way people view advertisements and will continue to play a major role in affecting emotions and influencing behaviors in the field of advertising.

Types of Music in Advertising

Music is an essential part of culture. The kind of song a person listens to speaks volumes about his or her personality and preferences. Music provides social currency, which is something highly valued by the young generation. Berger (2013) explained that

social currency is about having valuable insights about a specific topic, which allows individuals to participate in trending conversations or become the expert in those conversations. Knowing the latest artist gossip, following new music releases and attending live concerts are all examples of social currency.

Furthermore, music is universally popular because of the way it can be tailored and personalized. There are so many genres and preferences for music style, that it is possible for anyone to find a group of like-minded music lovers. Jillson (2014) wrote that music “has substantial social benefits because it can display a person’s sense of self and uniqueness while also providing him or her common ground with those with similar musical tastes” (p. 4). Because music has social currency and can be personalized, it has pervaded modern culture and become an indispensable part of life.

Music is particularly important to the young generation. A 2009 Deloitte survey noted that “[e]ighty percent of millennials regularly search, download and listen to music over the Internet” (*Adweek*, 2012, para. 7). Since then, more avenues for music listening have emerged, the most recent being music streaming services such as Spotify, Apple Music and Pandora. These services have made music more accessible and available, prompting people to rediscover their love for music.

According to a music report by Nielsen (2015), online music listening increased by 12% in 2015. In fact, Nielsen noted that Americans “streamed 135 billion tracks in the first half of 2015 alone” (p.3), which was 90% higher than the previous year. An interesting find by Nielsen was that 65% of teens discovered new music by word of mouth (p. 4). This supports the concept that music is a great way for young people to gain social currency. Since music plays such a huge role in the lives of people, it is vital for

advertisers to be on the forefront of music trends in order to stay relevant. Following are the various ways that music can be used within advertising.

Ambient music

Before examining how music is used in commercials, it is valuable to take a look at the effects of ambient music — music played in the background to create a setting or atmosphere. At first, ambient music was known as piped-in music, and Muzak was the most well-known company that began using ambient music to serenade “patrons of hotels and restaurants in the 1930s” (Beware of Beethoven, 2014, para. 2). Many studies have shown that different kinds of ambient music produce different buying behaviors, and similar principles can be applied to music used in commercials.

Jacob, Guéguen, Boulbry, and Selmi (2009) found that romantic music encouraged customers to spend more money on flowers than when pop music or no music was being played. Yalch and Spangenberg (1993) noticed that classical music made shoppers more sophisticated in their wine choice and prompted shoppers to buy more expensive wines compared to when Top-40 music was played (p. 29). Shevy and Hung (2013) found that the effectiveness of music can even be determined by gender, with women preferring soft, slow music and men responding positively to loud, fast music (p. 328). In another case, music “ameliorated the emotional evaluation of the environment for consumers waiting for a service; this, in turn, led to” consumers approaching a store or organization (Andersson, Kristensson, Wastlund, & Gusrafsson, 2012, p. 554). Perhaps phone operators should look into using relevant music — instead of the default and monotonous on-hold tunes, to put callers in a better mood.

Mehrabian and Russell (1974) showed how music creates an environment that influences “an individual’s emotional reactions: this in turn, affects an individual’s behavioral responses to either approach or avoid the environment” (p. 553). Furthermore, Guéguen and Jacob (2014) noted that music is more effective when the ambient music rationally represents the product being sold (p. 30). Sadly, “Many store owners do not know whether music really influences consumer behaviour at all and therefore play music ‘just because everyone else does’” (Andersson et al., 2012, p. 559). In the same way, many advertisers do not understand the influence that choice of music has on the effectiveness of a commercial.

Researchers from Goldsmith and adam&eveDDB said that getting the music right in advertising can increase the effectiveness of an advertisement up to 30% (Binet et al., 2013). A lot of advertisers treat music as an afterthought, thereby wasting precious potential for an advertisement to be effective. Because of time constraints, advertisers do not always have the luxury of screening through multiple music pieces, and sometimes have to pick a music bed, insert it onto a commercial and call it a day. The next form of music in advertising facilitates this process, and is called needledrop music.

Needledrop music

In Allan’s (2008) research of prime-time advertisements, 81% of advertisements that used music employed needledrop music. Of those ads, Allan found that needledrop music was particularly popular in fitness and health advertisements. Needledrop music refers to the background music in ads, and it plays a role similar to ambient music in creating moods and environments. There are many online libraries of needledrop music that advertisers can choose from, which is perfect for advertisers looking for a cheap and

efficient solution. With needledrop music, advertisers can license the songs they want online and do not have to deal with record labels or complicated forms of copyright laws.

Since music plays a secondary role in many advertisements, needledrop music is usually the way to go. The challenge for advertisers is to find needledrop music that draws the attention of viewers without overpowering the main message or theme of the advertisement. There is a fine line between what Day, Lin, and Huang (2009) described as the “arousal inducer [and] the distractor” (p. 130). Therefore, while it may be easy to just insert a piece of music onto a video, advertisers need to be more intentional when choosing the piece of music for an advertisement. In fact, it may be beneficial to have a music track in mind before even filming the advertisement. When needledrop music helps tell an advertisement narrative without stealing the limelight, then the advertiser has done his or her job right.

Jingles

Jingles are “short tunes that explicitly promote a product or a brand” (Lang, 2015, p. 2). While needledrop music usually takes a supporting role, jingles are the star of the show. Alexomanolaki, Loveday, and Kennett (2007) found that jingles used in TV ads improved implicit learning and increased a viewer’s recall of words and images. Jingles can become engraved in people’s minds without them realizing it. This can lead to earworms, which are tunes that repeat involuntarily in a person’s mind (Williamson, Liikkanen, Jakubowski, & Stewart, 2014). If a jingle has a positive connotation, this spontaneous recall may encourage people to buy a product, which is the goal of most advertisers.

Many early jingles made a mark, and some of them were so influential that they are still being used today, including “Stuck on Band-Aid,” State Farm’s “Like a Good Neighbor” and “Nationwide is on Your Side.” However, many other jingles missed the mark and caused jingles to become seen as an annoyance or a marketing gimmick.

Nowadays, people have shorter attention spans and higher irritability, so they shut off their attention whenever they see or hear irrelevant ads. This is especially evident online, where people can skip and block ads, giving jingles even less of a chance to make an impact.

This is why there has been a decline in the use of jingles in advertising.

As seen in Allan’s (2008) research, up to 5% of advertisements still employ jingles, which implies that jingles can still be effective if relevant to the product and target audience. Allan said that jingles are most likely to appear in fast-food advertisements, probably because fast-food brands tend to be more quirky, which fits with the jingle. Nevertheless, advertisers who employ jingles must be tasteful when doing so, or customers will be turned off right away. Jingles can be one-liners that are short, or they can be part of an advertising narrative that is sung instead of spoken. Some advertisers have made jingle commercials that mimic theatrical performances or a music video, providing entertainment value for people to keep watching. The bottom line is that jingles must be entertaining and not annoying in order to make an impact and leave an impression on the customer.

Popular Music

Since licensing costs for using popular music in advertising started to fall in the late 1980s, an increasing number of advertisers have employed popular music in their commercials (Naish, 2014). Automotive marketers often use popular music in their

commercials because “a strong music strategy means a greater likelihood of reaching influential young drivers,” (Allan, 2014, p. 27). Nevertheless, it took some time for bands and artists to open up to the idea of marketers using their music in commercials.

In the 1980s and 1990s, bands and artists who allowed advertisers to use their music were frowned upon by their fans (Naish, 2014). In fact, these bands and artists were seen as traitors that were selling out to commercialism, which was considered “a breach of artist integrity” (Allan, 2008, p. 406). Regardless, many of these artists achieved success in their musical career due to the exposure and opportunities they received.

According to *Adweek* (2012), some of the reasons why popular music has been so effective in advertising is because it gives marketers “millennial currency” and relevance, while gaining musicians new audiences and extra income (para. 3). *Adweek* (2012) called this union of popular music and advertising “a marriage of convenience” (para. 3). In fact, Allan (2008) said that the “increasing employment of popular music in commercials does not just enhance advertising’s function, but reaps benefits for the recording industry as well” (p. 406). More than 30 years later, this generation has grown accustomed to the use of popular music in advertising and now view artists as “selling in” rather than selling out (Allan, 2014, p. 44).

It takes effort on the advertiser’s part to find a band or artist whose music resonates with the brand. The choice of popular music plays a big role in determining a commercial’s success or failure. Using popular music “can be risky because it is well known and, therefore, more likely to elicit both positive and negative emotions” (Jillson, 2014, p. 8). Furthermore, a failed advertisement can put a dent to a company’s bottom line, because “a well-established act would likely charge at least six figures for a brand to

use a hit song for a national TV commercial” (*Adweek*, 2012, para. 27), before even considering the production and distribution costs. For advertisers without that kind of budget, they can opt for the cheaper route of using indie music.

Indie Music

Indie music is anything that is not mainstream, commercial, popular music. Indie bands and artists have not yet made it big, so an opportunity to be featured in a commercial is not such a bad thing for them. Melilo (2004) said that artists “need advertising as much as advertising needs them” (Allan, 2008, p. 406). Because of this, “indie artists... are now peddling life’s less-sexy products, like hard detergent and health insurance” (*Adweek*, 2012, para. 3). For advertisers, using indie music can be more beneficial than using popular music because indie music is less known and has less of a positive or negative attachment to it. This allows an indie music track to be uniquely tied to a brand or product. Furthermore, an indie track would probably cost advertisers four to five figures, which is way less than a regular pop song would cost (*Adweek*, 2012).

In the recent years, Beech and Gilmore (2015) noted that there has been a “gradual disappearance of jingle-writing and rearranged music” (p.146). Instead, they have noticed a “rise of trendhunters – cultural intermediaries whose task it is to discover the most interesting music, preferably from the far margins of popular music, which can be placed in marketing contexts” (p.146). Indie music falls into this realm, and trendhunters are often looking out for music that has not yet been stained by popular culture. Sometimes, finding such a piece of music requires trendhunters to dig into the past, as was the case when Volkswagen found a jewel in Nick Drake’s “Pink Moon” (Beech & Gilmore, 2015).

Nick Drake was a genius songwriter and guitarist, but he struggled to make a mark in his lifetime. Gritz (2014) said that Drake was known to some in the music industry, but never made it to the big stage, mainly because of his dislike for performing. 25 years after Drake's death, Volkswagen decided to use his song "Pink Moon" for a car advertisement, which became a hit and made the Billboard Hot 100. From there, Nick Drake's music began to resurface, and he became famous after his death – the mark of a true artist. Nevertheless, the reason that "Pink Moon" was used was because Volkswagen thought that "Drake's music [conveyed] an 'essence' of the brand" and contained a fresh sense of authenticity" (Beech & Gilmore, 2015, p. 146).

Volkswagen is not the only brand that has made good use of indie music. *Adweek* (2012) noted that "During the 2000s, Apple, for one, cultivated a countercultural image when it became practically synonymous with breaking new artists, such as Feist with her '1234'" (para. 4). Converse took it a step further in 2012 by opening Rubber Tracks, a recording studio that "gives away recording time to low-profile bands, no strings attached" (*Adweek*, 2012, para. 18). This goes to show the influence that indie music has had on advertising and the major role it will continue to play in the industry.

Audio Logos

People often associate brands with various components. According to Jillson (2014), a brand is made up of all the "signs, symbols, phrases, and other components that distinguish a company's products from that of its competitors" (p. 7). One of those components can be an audio logo or sound trademark – "a distinctive melody or other sequence of sound, mostly positioned at the beginning or ending of a commercial" (Lang, 2015, p. 2). Lang (2015) also mentioned that "The National Broadcasting Company

(NBC) chimes were the first sound trademark to be officially accepted by the US Patent and Trademark Office” (p.2). Audio logos are simple, catchy and easy to recall. While a visual logo gives a viewer cues about what the brand is and what to expect, an audio logo triggers the same kind of response through auditory senses. This is why audio logos are able to stand alone perfectly in radio advertisements or complement visual logos on screen.

Using audio logos is a form of audio branding, which can also be called sonic branding or sonic identity. Audio branding is defined as the “formation of cognitive associations between music or other sounds and a logo or other symbol” (Shevy & Hung, 2013, p. 324). Similar to trendhunters, audio brand designers strive to come up with a unique tune or sound that represents the brand well and summarizes the essence of the brand in a short few seconds. When done right and replayed over time, an audio logo can trigger memories and emotional responses from the listener, making it a powerful advertising tool.

With all these types of music in advertising – ambient, needledrop, jingles, popular, indie and audio logos, there is not one that is better than the other, but each one plays a different role and works well for a specific type of commercial or audience. Since so many resources are poured into advertising, advertisers should not neglect the musical aspect of commercials because getting the music right can increase a commercial’s effectiveness and build positive brand image.

Musical Fit

Every piece of music has a different feel, tempo, melody and instrumentation. Thus, each one produces a different impact on the listener. It is important to place

emphasis on choice of music because “not every piece of music works for every ad, and industry as well as academic researchers agree that the fit between music and brand or ad is crucial” (Binet et al., 2013, p. 11). With so much music, it may be difficult to find the perfect piece of music that goes along with an advertisement. However, spending the time to find it will set the advertisement apart from its competitors, and will portray a brand’s excellence and increase positive brand image.

Adam&eveDDB, a leading communications agency, is a forerunner in the area of finding the perfect piece of music in advertising. One way that adam&eveDDB showcases its dedication is by taking time to sift through many musical pieces before settling on the perfect one. Platinum Rye’s Arnold Hattingh, who is also adam&eveDDB’s music supervisor, said that the agency “went through nearly 300 different tracks” before settling on a song for Android’s “Leefest” ad (Bucks music group, 2015, para. 2). The impact of adam&eveDDB’s dedication is also seen in the success of artists whose music has been used by the agency. Binet et al. (2013) noted that after Gabrielle Aplin’s *The Power of Love* was featured in John Lewis’s 2012 Christmas ad, it became a number one hit in Britain. According to Binet et al., many other songs featured in John Lewis ads have become popular, “resulting in millions of radio plays, downloads and single sales” (p. 13). Binet et al. also said that the popularity of these songs have “prompted people to seek out the original John Lewis ads,” gaining more than 10 million YouTube views (p. 13).

Adam&eveDDB’s success in this area stems from a partnership with the psychology department at Goldsmiths University of London. Together, they have conducted extensive research on the impact of music in advertising. Müllensiefen (2015) from Goldsmiths University said that music is most effective when it fits a brand (“Music,

Brands & Advertising”). The method that he uses to determine musical fit is a quantitative tool called the Semantic Differential. Müllensiefen described the tool as a personality test for music, where testers rated how “loving,” “angry” or “peaceful” a piece of music is. Brand managers on the other hand, also filled out ratings for how they wanted their brand to be perceived. This produced what Müllensiefen calls brand profiles and music profiles. The closer the match between both profiles, the better the musical fit and the more effective an advertisement will be.

Advertisers should take note of the innovative work being pioneered by adam&eveDDB. Binet et al. (2013) said that most agencies still employ “the classic creative team of copywriter and art director” (p. 10), which usually emphasize the words and visuals. However, they said that there is a growing need for “dedicated music or audio specialists” (p. 10), who are professionals at picking up music tracks that catch on. An advertisement or graphic usually has a one-time impact, and rarely do people return to watch an ad or admire a graphic. Songs, on the other hand, can be replayed countless times and leave a lasting impression on listeners. That is why more research should be done in the area of music in advertising.

The Creative Process of Music in Advertising

A lot has been said about how music is just an afterthought in the creative process of creating an advertisement. However, even though music is often chosen at the end of the creative process, that does not mean that advertisers should take it less seriously than other parts of the process. In an interview about John Lewis’s 2013 Christmas ad “The Bear and the Hare,” adam&eveDDB’s chief strategy officer David Golding said that the agency usually chooses the music only after viewing the video (“Insight and Strategy”).

The process that follows is finding a suitable song and getting it recorded. Golding said that in “The Bear and the Hare,” the company got various artists to record it before finally picking the one that resonated the most with the video, which happened to be Lily Allen’s version.

To date, Lily Allen’s song for the advertisement has received over 11 million hits on YouTube. Because of the song’s popularity, people would search for the original ad online, and adam&eveDDB estimates that this free media exposure boosted the campaign’s effectiveness by 75 percent (Binet et al., 2013). According to Naish (2014), “Impactful use of music requires creatives, planners, and clients to work in partnership to choose the right track” (para. 2). In addition to that, agencies often reach out to music agencies, recording studios and music artists in order to come up with the best piece of music.

Daniel Müllensiefen, who acts as adam&eveDDB’s scientist in residence, has had experience as a music practitioner in the advertising industry and can relate to struggles that other music practitioners face. Müllensiefen (2015) said that the first step for music practitioners working on an ad is to receive a brand profile, which educates them about the culture of the brand being promoted (“Music, Brands & Advertising,” 2015). The next step, the music brief, is where things get tricky because marketing teams are usually made up of people who are not music savvy. Because of that, Müllensiefen noted that music briefs given out to music practitioners are often vague and not very helpful to the creative process.

Müllensiefen gave some examples of music briefs given to music practitioners, such as “I’ll know it when I hear it,” “Give me something premium,” “Upbeat with a

crescendo,” “not too modern and not too old.” The best example is, “Can we get Coldplay to do a demo?” (“Music, Brands & Advertising,” 2015). This shows the level of ignorance shown by marketing teams in regards to the process of making or finding music. There is a lot of room to grow in terms of communication between the music department and the advertising agency. In order to bring music in advertising to the next level, there needs to be more mutual understanding of the subject and something to bridge the gap.

That is where the Semantic Differential comes into play. As mentioned before, this method of rating music and brands allows advertisers to find the best fit, which leads to increased relevance and effectiveness. According to Müllensiefen, though, the music that fits best with a brand or ad does not necessarily end up as the final piece of music chosen (“Music, Brands & Advertising,” 2015). Many factors weigh into the final decision, such as the music’s availability, its cost and whether or not it is used by competitors. Nevertheless, the Semantic Differential provides marketers with a range of music options that will fit a brand or advertisement, and advertisers have to weigh the pro and cons for each piece before coming up with the final decision.

The Future of Music in Advertising

Music has come a long way since the time of street cries and jingles. Only recently have advertisers become aware of the big role that music plays in advertising, and more and more advertisers are beginning to pour resources into this area. In the future, music will continue to play a major role in pulling the heartstrings and influencing the behaviors of customers. With the arrival of smart technologies, music will become even more targeted and relevant.

In recent years, marketers have placed an increased emphasis on artificial intelligence and programmatic advertising. According to Shani (2014), these approaches to digital advertising speed up the process of distributing advertisements and also increase the effectiveness of the advertisements. Shani (2014) explains that artificial intelligence is able to analyze large amounts of data, and predict what advertisements will be relevant to a specific individual. He also says that programmatic advertising conducts all ad buying and distribution using machines, which frees up marketers to focus on other aspects of their campaigns. In a nutshell, artificial intelligence and programmatic advertising are able to serve individuals targeted, relevant ads in real time and using minimal resources.

Now, people already receive targeted ads that are specific to their preferences and lifestyles. Just imagine the Semantic Differential bringing programmatic advertising to a whole different level. Not only will people receive ads on things they care about when they view the ads, they will even hear songs that were specifically chosen for them. The Semantic Differential will create profiles for music, brands and people, and pick the perfect match, which will increase an ad's relevance and performance. By serving up ads paired with music people love, advertisers will have a better chance to pull and attract rather than to push and annoy.

In advertising, some things come and some things go. Technologies can become outdated, but music is one of the rare things that characterizes humans and won't be leaving any time soon. In a fast-paced world, the challenge is to expect changes in music and adapt to them quickly. Five years from now, perhaps music will be used in a totally different way, and advertisers will just need to be flexible and learn to innovate. From

street cries to jingles, from needledrop music to popular music, from audio logos to indie music, what will the advertising world see next?

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