

How music helps memory and retail marketing

Music helps marketers create rich brand-driven experiences within the retail environment, creating strong brand recall and heightening the consumer-brand connection says Craig Cesman, CEO of DMX Music Africa.

The retail industry is incredibly competitive with companies vying for increasingly slim margins while seeking to enhance brand and market loyalty. Many retailers operate in heavily traded niche markets yet need to ensure that products and services resonate with their customers for repeat purchase and to create strong brand loyalty.

While products and services can readily be forgotten, experiences form the rich fabric of what life and memory are made for most people – and locked into memory is music.

Music is one of the most engaging and emotionally powerful stimuli throughout the ages. Listening to music can have a strong effect on a person's mood, thinking and even their physiology, which is why certain songs remind people so vividly specific memories. Music can easily evoke powerful memories, and create strong new associations.

Retailers and brand marketers are beginning to understand the relationship between music, branding and the in-store experience and how to turn an ordinary retail encounter into a memorable event that promotes the retailer's brand while creating a place where consumers want to spend more and more time.

Good atmosphere means good sales

Shopping is a very sensory experience and research shows that there is a direct link between a store's atmosphere and its financial performance. A recent study by Leo J. Shapiro and Associates shows that shoppers respond to atmospheric elements both consciously and unconsciously. This study shows the extent of the connection between "store atmospherics" and the store's performance.

The research indicates a majority of consumers (63.3%) recall being influenced by a store's atmosphere to buy more or spend more time in a store. The statistics further reveal that customers of all ages are receptive to atmospheric influences. Higher-income shoppers, women and consumers who shop more frequently are also more likely to say they remember being influenced than, respectively, mid-to-low-income shoppers, men and those who make 0-2 trips to the store each week.

The choice of music in a retail setting has serious consequences in the mind of the consumer in both positive and negative ways. Almost 20% say music has encouraged them to spend more time in a store; this result increases to 27% for shoppers between the ages of 21-39. The wrong music can have adverse results. More than 40% say music has encouraged them to leave the store altogether. Older shoppers aged 40 and above are much more likely to walk out if they don't like the music.

Making the connection with music

Clearly this shows that music is as important to the overall shopping experience as lighting, product placement and promotion, in-store branding, the in-store ambience as well as the attitude of, and professionalism of, sales people.

Retailers like Abercrombie & Fitch, Nike, H&M, Guess and Body Shop have come to understand the relationship between consumers and their sensory experiences, as well as the ability to create a personal connection with customers through music.

From a local perspective, @home has been huge success in the brand strategy, which has been partly borne out by the positive feedback they have received from customers, and the rapid growth of the brand. "We have found, through the feedback that our customers offer us, that they experience the music as uplifting," explains @home's Procter. "We get consistent compliments from customers. The huge popularity is because the music we play makes the shopping environment very relaxed and pleasurable. Some customers actually start singing along to familiar tracks and the music just seems to

relax, soothe and break any tension customers may feel when they walk into our stores. The music has added tremendous value to the shopping experience,” says Procter.

Creating a sense of ‘belonging’

Because music and memory are so intimately intertwined, music can create an ambience where customers feel they belong and create a loyal brand connection. In addition, because of music's ability to trigger recall and to create strong emotional and visual imagery, it can help create a tangible expression of a unique brand.

That is why in commercial environments, smart retail leaders are integrating consumer lifestyle behaviour with the goals and strategies of businesses to build memorable brands. Through audio branding these retailers achieve this while entertaining customers, motivating staff and creating extraordinary commercial environments.

For more than 35 years, DMX Music has been an industry leader in the development and engineering of audio branding and the broadcast of multiple dedicated music channels to home users.

Key to the company's success, in both home and commercial environments, is a research-based understanding of the relationship between consumers and their sensory experiences, as well as the ability to create a personal connection with customers through music.

An integrated approach

In commercial environments these insights into consumer lifestyle behaviour are integrated with the goals and strategies of businesses to build memorable brands, entertain customers, motivate staff and create extraordinary commercial environments through audio branding.

DMX's customers represent top global industries and brand leaders and include Abercrombie & Fitch, Nike, H&M and Guess. Some local clients include @home, Virgin Active, Southern Sun, Primi Piatti, Dros and Sun International.

As a global leader in digital music programming, DMX offers access to one of the world's largest digital music libraries, delivering more than 500 styles of non-stop music via a variety of platforms worldwide.

For home users DMX provides over 40 uninterrupted narrowly formatted music channels on DStv including rock, pop, dance hip-hop, R&B, jazz, classical, opera and many more. From the oldies to the latest cutting-edge music – there's something for every occasion and musical taste.

DMX Music is a privately owned company founded in 1995 and based in Johannesburg, South Africa. It holds the exclusive Africa-wide distribution rights for DMX Music's international content. DMX Music distributes music and visual services worldwide to more than 10 million homes and 200,000 businesses with a worldwide daily listening audience of more than 1 million people.

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