



WHAT EVERY MARKETER NEEDS TO KNOW ABOUT AUDIO BRANDING

Everything you need to know to start using sound more effectively in your business immediately. Learn how to engage your audience, minimize advertising spend and increase profits today.



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What can I do with this E-Book?

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Introduction

A recent *Sounds Like Branding* survey concluded that 97% of brand managers from companies like Pepsi, BMW and Apple believe that music can strengthen their brand but only 38% had created a sound strategy. If you manage a brand that is looking to grow and prosper, you must take advantage now before the soundscape around us becomes as saturated as our visual space.

To help you take charge, this guide will show you what goes into creating a compelling audio brand. Of course this means the brands you manage will be stronger, have more effective advertising, and see a boost in profits.



What is Audio Branding:

Audio Branding is the strategic and consistent use of sound and/or music across all brand touchpoints in a way that establishes an auditory identity for that brand.

This means that organizations who implement audio branding strategies have a consistent sound in all of their communications. These brands also ensure that the music and voice actors selected to represent their brand are congruent with the principles and ethos of the company.



Why Use Audio Branding?

Audio Is Emotional

They say the key to motivating a customer to buy is to get down to their emotions. Music and sound is instinctively ingrained in our minds from the time before we are born. Without knowing it, sound influences us every day.

Audio Helps Tell A Story

Sound is powerful. It helps clarify our surroundings both emotionally and physically. Sound truly has the power to put us in our place.

Audio Branding Is International

Probably the coolest part about audio branding is that it's an international identifier for your brand.

For example, if you listen to a radio commercial in Italy, and don't understand a single word... but you hear dum da da da dum you'll know instantly that that commercial was for a computer and that Intel is inside.



Creating An Effective Audio Brand

The Importance of Congruence - As a brand manager, you understand that one of your biggest challenges is to communicate with complete honesty. Being congruent, aligning perception with intent, is key to being successful in today's market.

What consumers see, feel, touch, taste, and hear must align with their expectations in order to fully optimize a brand. By taking the extra effort to ensure your brand is aligned across all five senses you will reap the rewards in sales and brand likability.



What consumers see, feel, touch, taste, and hear must align with their expectations...



Touchpoints

A touchpoint is any place or point where a customer interacts with a brand.

The first task is to find out where your customers currently interact with your brand. Here are the most common touchpoints where an audio brand can be found:

- Telephone, on-hold/IVR and voice messaging
- Radio
- TV
- In-Store: announcements, displays and music/stereo systems
- In product
- Production area: music for staff and ambient noise
- On the Web: podcasts, YouTube and company Web site
- Training and sales DVD
- Events: conferences, seminars, and product launches

Now that you have a list of your current touchpoints, you must find a way to keep your sound consistent across all channels. This will be explained in more detail later in this guide.



TIP:

Some of these touchpoints may not be used by your brand right now but they could be a large part of your marketing mix in the future so take a minute to think through your prospective opportunities.



Attributes of an Audio Brand

Similar to visual identity, audio branding uses specific characteristics that when combined make up the whole audio identity. The three parts that make up an audio brand are voice, music, and ambient sounds. In fact, these three things make up the entire human auditory experience.

Voice

A brand voice is likely to be the most important part of your audio brand program. This is because it allows people to become familiar with your brand quickly.

Think about it this way, when you pick up the phone and you hear an unfamiliar voice you automatically become defensive, however, if the voice on the other end of the phone is a family member then you will more likely respond favourably.



20%
**of purchases are
made because of
something the
customer heard
while on hold.**



Another reason why the brand voice is important is because of how often it will be used within a brand. Most companies have a voice for their commercials, telephone system, training videos, and store announcements. Keeping these consistent becomes easier when using a singular brand voice.

Examples: Gieco, Koodoo

Music

Simply throwing the latest chart topper into a commercial doesn't count as brand building. You must use instrumentation and style consistently between campaigns in order to breed familiarity.

Examples: Audi, Rolex, McDonald's

Ambient Sounds

This attribute is missed by most but it can be forgiven because it's usually the hardest to control. Things like street noise, clinking glasses, and crying babies all contribute to ambient sounds.



As an example, imagine you manage a fine dining restaurant where vibe is key to the success of the brand. In this case, it makes sense to keep ambient noise to a minimum. We can use noise suppression techniques to minimize ambient sound and improve the intimacy of the restaurant.

Ambient sounds can also be used as leeway instructions. Things like email indications and successful transaction sounds are perfect examples. In this way, sound can be used to improve the user experience for customers.



Brand Highlight

The car manufacturer Audi is an example of a brand that takes this stuff seriously. The company has painstakingly recorded every sound that each of their cars make. When it comes time to make a commercial, their sound designers simply pull up the correct sound file and load it into the commercial.

Why Would Audi Do This?

Aside from specific audio branding benefits described earlier, Audi will also see savings in time and money because of reduced need to hire sound producers for every commercial they make.



90%

**of television
advertising uses
music.**



Audio Brand Assets

Audio Logo

An audio logo is a signature piece of sound that usually gets played at the end of a commercial. The sound is usually less than five seconds long and is easy to remember.

Examples: Intel, McDonald's and NBC

On-Hold/IVR Systems

Most marketers spend 90-95% of their budget trying to get potential customers to call. Unfortunately, what's left of the budget can leave many people frustrated with the experience.

A good on-hold system can be used to build brand awareness, relax angry customers, and help drive sales. Typically, an on-hold system is created for the customer service department but can be used anywhere incoming calls are accepted.



The average executive spends

60
hours
a year on hold.



One of the most important elements to managing this asset is understanding how tempo, the speed of music, can affect a listener's mood. In most cases, a slow tempo is your best bet.

Lastly, because being on-hold isn't a lot of fun, it can be a good opportunity to show the lighter side of the brand. Make it entertaining to be on hold.

Examples: WestJet, Sennheiser and DNB Bank (Search for Merry Paycheck on YouTube)

Commercial Soundtracks

When creating music for advertisements, it's important that the music fit the brand and what's on screen. Remember, congruency is your secret weapon.

A good audio brand consultant will be able to create the soundtrack but also give your company guidelines for the future.



97%

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believe that music
can strengthen
their brand.**



Audio Style Guide And Voice Profiles

Most companies have a brand guide for their visual assets. An audio style guide and voice profile is a similar document but deals only with the sound of your brand.

Voice Profile - A voice profile is one section of the audio style guide. In it there will be a guide to selecting the right voice for your brand. This can be given to a talent scouting agency but most audio brand companies will help you find the right voice.

Voice profiles should discuss the gender of the speaker, the intonation, nationality, style of the speaker, and speed of the voice.



**Boost advertising
message recall by**

26%

**with the right
music tempo.**



Who Should Create It?

Just like selecting the creatives that help build your visual identity, it is important that you select the right music producers and strategists to help build your audio identity.

Not All Audio Professionals Are Created Equal

Although many audio professionals can create great sounding music and enticing voice-overs, many do not understand brands. Whenever a brand uses one of the features of an audio brand it's vital that it's used correctly.

Remember, the purpose of an audio brand is to develop brand awareness, increase advertising efficiency, and improve user experiences. In this pursuit, it's essential you choose a company that understands how consumers react to audio in relation to your brand.





ABOUT TREBRAND



About TreBrand

TreBrand provides audio brand consulting and music production services to businesses that want a stronger brand and more efficient advertising.

We provide:

- Audio logos
- On-hold/IVR marketing solutions
- Brand voice selection
- Commercial soundtracks
- In store audio programs
- Audio brand style guides

We have most recently worked with the Pillar Nonprofit Network, Vantage One Writing and the Museum of Modern Art in New York.



Learn More

TreBrand invites you to join our monthly e-zine that is packed with many more audio branding and marketing ideas. When you subscribe, you'll receive a bonus gift, "The Psychology of Sound... How it Will Impact Your Bottom Line."

Simply go to <http://trebrand.com> and look for the subscribe form on the right side of the screen for immediate access.

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