Integrating Audio Branding into the Marketing Curriculum: A Model

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Abstract

Want to turn the volume up in the Marketing classroom? Use audio. It's attention getting and engaging. Where should it be added? In branding.

Keywords: audio branding, marketing education

Introduction

Music has been successfully incorporated into curriculum in numerous settings (Kelstrom 1998). It is being used in the management classroom where "music is becoming more and more widely utilized to enhance the dynamism and excitement of any management education in this age of infotainment" (Wheatley 1998, 342) and in the sociology classroom where popular music is used for teaching interactive introductory sociology courses (Ahlkvist 1999). Music can be an anchor point for teaching principles of marketing (Tomkovick 2004, 111). Why? Because boredom in the classroom is on the rise. It has been shown to reduce academic engagement, motivation, and attention in a marketing classroom (Mercer-Lynn et al. 2014). Elements of the marketing classroom environment such as the individual professor and the nature of the classroom are attributed as principal causes of boredom and the use of experiential activities as a solution (Dugan et al. 2019). Audio (including music) is both engaging and experiential (Rozen 2019).

The volume on audio has been turned up with the advent of streaming music and podcasting. Edison Research reports 67% of Americans (189 million persons age 12 or older) listen to streaming audio (including AM/FM) each month; the figure is highest among persons 12-24 at 91% (Edison 2019). The RIAA reports revenues from streaming music platforms grew 30% year-over-year (2017-2018) to reach $7.4 billion, contributing 75% of total revenues for 2018 (RIAA 2019). The global recorded music market grew by 9.7% in 2018, the fourth consecutive year of growth. IFPI's Global Music Report 2019 showed total revenues for 2018 were US$19.1 billion.

Podcasting has added to the resurgence of audio. "It's the hot thing in audio. Ad spending is forecast to grow to $534 million in 2020" (Ely 2018). The 2019 Infinite Dial Study by Edison Research and Triton Digital showed that among the U.S. population ages 12 and older, the total number of people who have ever listened to a podcast passed 50% for the first time. "This is a watershed moment for podcasting—a true milestone. With over half of Americans 12+ saying that they have ever listened to a podcast, the medium has firmly crossed into the mainstream," noted Tom Webster, Senior Vice President at Edison Research. One-third of the population reported having listened to a podcast in the last month, representing 90 million monthly listeners (Edison Research 2019).

Justifications, Definitions, and History

Justification

Audio branding is hot…

> The Best Audio Brands Ranking 2019 has been developed by global sound branding agency amp, using a rigorous analytical process which quantifies audio brand performance against a range of criteria such as trust, recognition, engagement and efficiency. The analysis provides a picture of how effectively brands are extending their audio presence beyond advertising, sonic logos or "jingles" into interactive digital platforms where audio enhances brand recognition, engagement and findability. McDonald's and Disney were ranked as joint top performers in the Audio Brand Index, each achieving a score of 51/100 points available. Intel, Apple and Coca-Cola rounded off the top five audio brands, whilst the likes of Shell, Netflix, Nescafé, Google and Amazon made the top ten, with Amazon and

Google profiting greatly from the impact of their interactive voice technologies.

Brands such as Spotify, Facebook, Huawei, Honda, Adobe and Visa, ranked amongst the least recognizable audio brands, despite the growing range of digital platforms across which they interact with consumers. (amp 2019)

Definitions (w/Table)

Audio Branding describes the process of brand development and brand management by use of audible elements within the framework of brand communication. It is part of multi-sensory brand communication and holistic brand design. Audio Branding aims at building solidly a brand sound that represents the identity and values of a brand in a distinctive manner. The audio logo, branded functional sounds, brand music or the brand voice are characteristic elements of Audio Branding. (ABA 2019)

Audio branding is the approach of using unique, proprietary sound and music to convey a brand's essence and values. Just as visual branding defines a brand using color and shape, audio branding defines a brand through sound and music. (Hayzlett 2014)

Audio branding can involve music and sound logos. The music logo is a short distinctive melody or other sequence of sound, mostly positioned at the beginning or ending of a commercial. Some famous ones include Wheaties, Intel, T-Mobile, and more recently Mastercard and Pandora. Steve Keller, Pandora's sonic strategy director, describes Pandora's new logo as "delight" (Slefo 2019).

The sound logo is typically an environmental or usage sound connected to the product. These include Coca-Cola (pop of a bottle opening, the fizz, the crackle as ice meets the drink, the ahhhhh), Harley Davidson (V-twin engine), MGM (lion roar).

History (With Timeline)

Kotler (1973) first suggested that brands needed to manage their atmospherics including music because they are influenced by emotional and sensual cues in the environment. Bruner (1990) provided a review of music and marketing until that point. Allan (2007) filled in the sound advertising gap. Bitner (1992) added the term servicescapes to the discussion as a descriptor of the physical environment. Allan (2008) updated the sound retail literature. Gustafsson

(2015) provided an extensive review of sound branding literature. In 2017, Kotler said that today's atmospherics music should be designed for devices (like smart speakers) as well as spaces and called from more attention. Minsky and Fahey (2017) began with a new definition of audio (sound, sonic, acoustic, branding) branding. It is "the language of the brand based on its "essence, voice, values, promise, and personality" (3). The future of audio branding also includes smart speakers (Amazon, Google, etc.). The future of branding strategy is audio.

Course Integration and Implementation

Part 1: Target Audience and Course(s)

Who: Undergraduate Marketing majors and minors

Where: Principles of Marketing and/or Consumer Behavior in the branding chapter

Part 2: Teaching Strategy

Begin with the traditional discussion of branding. Most textbooks first define brands (name, term, sign, symbol, or a combination of these that identifies the maker or seller of the product); and brand equity (a set of assets or liabilities linked to a brand's name and symbol that adds to or subtracts from the value provided by a product or service). Then, the conversation typically moves to strategies to build the brand. This typically includes brand personality (a set of human characteristics that are attributed to a brand name. A brand personality is something to which the consumer can relate; an effective brand increases its brand equity by having a consistent set of traits that a specific consumer segment enjoys). This is where audio branding can be introduced.

First it should be defined; second, examples can be given and solicited. Third, strengths and weaknesses of this type of branding strategy can be entertained. Fourth, activities can be designed to actually audio brand a brand or service, potentially the university. When placed in a textbook the section may look like this:

Audio Branding - The use of "audible elements within the framework of brand communication" (ABA). Also known as sonic branding, sound branding, and acoustic branding. It is the systematic creation of an entire audio language for the brand based on its essence, vision, values, promise, and personality and includes audio logos, branded functional sounds, brand music, or the brand voice. (Minsky and Fahey 2017, 3). It has also been called BrandSound™ which includes sonic logo, brand music, brand voice, earcons, and scoundscapes. (Treasure 2011)

Potential Inclusion in *Marketing: Real People, Real Choices* (Solomon et al. 2020).

Figure 9.65 *Snapshot* /Audio Branding

Audio logos. "By some estimates, it's played once every five minutes somewhere in the world. A simple five-note mnemonic tune composed over 20 years ago that, with the help of a clever marketing slogan, helped Intel become one of the most recognizable brands in the world. Intel had a problem.

Here's the story: A rapid development cycle meant microprocessor speed and capability were advancing quickly, but manufacturers weren't keeping up with the cutting edge. Manufacturers were reluctant to upgrade from the 286 chip to the 386, and consumers didn't know enough to care. Instead of continuing to market to manufacturers, the company decided on a new approach. In 1989, Dennis Carter, Intel's then-marketing chief led a pilot program in Denver that targeted consumers with a simple billboard campaign that became infamously known inside and outside Intel as the Red X campaign. The campaign was a success, but Intel would soon need a way to replicate the results on a much larger scale, and for a newer medium. This would lead to the genesis of the Intel Inside campaign, launched in 1991 with the now-famous Intel swirl logo. Then in 1994, Intel was ready to expand to television, presenting a new set of challenges. "Nobody was going to run a 30-second ad with the logo there the whole time, it would look stupid. An audio component seemed like it would work really well," Carter said.

Walter Werzowa was hired. An Austrian native who'd achieved a measure of fame in the '80s with the electronica band Edelweiss, which sold more than 5 million records. Following the group's disbandment, Werzowa moved to the United States to study film music at USC. "The sound needed to convey reliability, innovation and trust," Werzowa said. He says the "***Intel Inside***" tagline triggered a melody in his head, and those were the notes that became the Intel bong sound: D-flat, D-flat, G-flat, D-flat, A-flat. The rhythm, he says, was inspired by the syllables of the tagline. Since the original jingle premiered in 1994, Werzowa says he's updated it every two to three years. Thus far in his commer-
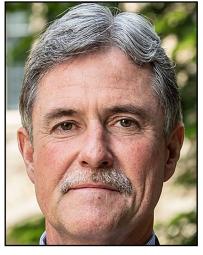
cial career, Werzowa's biggest hit is the Intel audio mark. He declined to say what he earned for creating it, but called the amount "not really amazing." Werzowa said, "if I would have kept the copyright [to the audio mark], I'd be a millionaire right now." (Intel 2014) (See also Co-Op Advertising, p. 448)

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