

Ain't nothin' like the real thing...

If I were to start singing the beginning of the Queen song Bohemian Rhapsody ... 'Mama, just killed a man.....' a great many of us would have no difficulty in continuing the song. Yet Bohemian Rhapsody is more than 30 years old. Conversely, if I started reciting the words of the company mission statement, we might have a greater problem finishing the 'lyrics'. How does music help us remember things?

Recall the 'Real Thing' advert for Coca Cola? The hugely successful 'Cornetto' campaign for Walls Ice Cream? Going way back, we had Hoover's great chorus line 'It beats as it sweeps as it cleans' – pure rock! The Philosopher Kant said music is the language of the emotions (or was it Madonna?!). Certainly music touches many of us at a much deeper level than a Powerpoint presentation. What is the crucial effect of music in helping us connect with products and services in a world where we are bombarded by sound and vision?

The Performing Rights Society have noted the effects that music has on our emotions, moods and behaviour. Music has been used to bolster courage before battles, sing babies to sleep, improve romantic attraction and to accompany rites of passage through life. In Nazi Germany, music was carefully selected for use at mass rallies to generate patriotic emotions – rather like a Bruce Springsteen concert but with a darker context. Michael Jackson was chosen to encourage the political leaders of Nicaragua to give up their struggle (I don't think they played 'Beat it') Apart from such extreme uses, it is clear that music allows us to directly affect people's emotional centers, bypassing their rational and logical centers. Perhaps this explains why so many bankers listen to rock music?

However the effects of music on people is complex – what seems calming to some may evoke a mood of depression in others. To someone who likes Morrissey or Leonard Cohen, they may find their music and words uplifting, witty or cathartic. So someone that does not like them, the effect may be to create a mood of hopelessness and negativity.

3M – Marketing, Music and Media

In the UK, recent figures suggest that in the order of 11.3 million people listen regularly to BBC Radio 1, 10 million to BBC Radio 2, 6.2 million to Classic FM and 1.9 million to Radio 3. We do live in a Rock 'n' Roll era! However, fragmentation of the media industry means that we must find ever more global musical messages if we are to reach all the people all of the time. For example the average American is exposed to more than 1600 commercials every day, often accompanied by music.

As a consequence companies are more likely to climb on the back of a ready made piece of music rather than building something to order these days. There is less risk in this – the music will have already conveyed a set of feelings and aspirations to a particular segment of people, which can be researched and analysed. Thus, by attaching the company's brand, product or service to that piece of music, there is a more than fair chance that there will be an extension of these attachments to the product or service that is linked with them.

Key Points



Marketers therefore become interested in the theme tunes that define a generation's hopes, fears, aspirations and fantasies etc.



They also recognize that pop and rock music are themselves transient vehicles for conveying messages to consumers and adjust their strategies accordingly.

We offer engaging seminars on marketing either as a straightforward interactive lecture or with the inclusion of musical examples to stimulate your entire cortex. Why not book us for your next conference, or company event?