



The Secret Power of Sound

22 Sonic Branding
Insights for 2022

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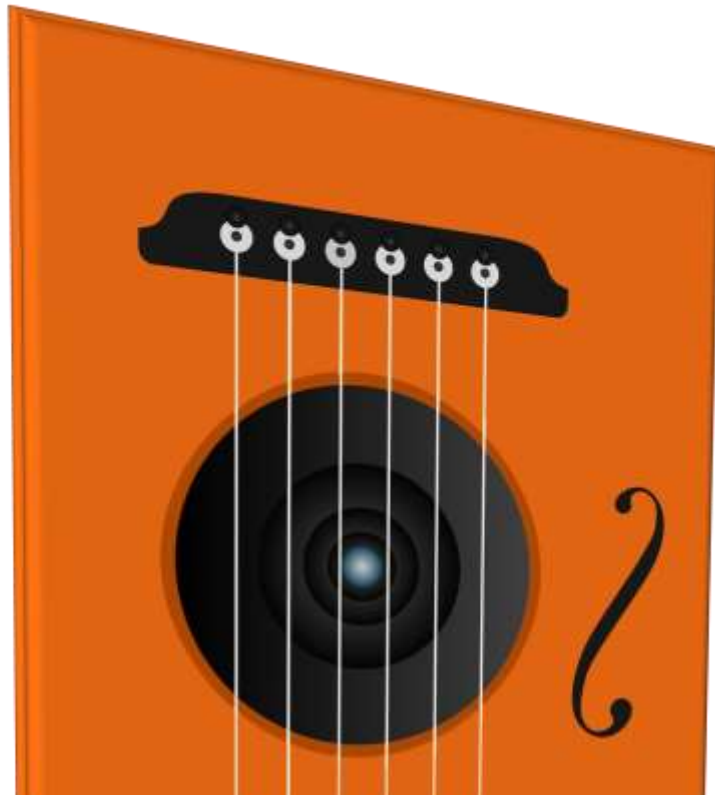
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" Sounds give you sensory input that is not limited by field of vision. "

~ Seth Horowitz, author of *The Universal Sense: How Hearing Shapes the Mind*

Introduction

The Importance of Sound in Branding & Advertising

We humans hear anywhere from 20 to 100 times faster than we see, says neuroscientist Seth Horowitz. Moreover, everything we perceive with our ears colors every other perception and conscious thought we have. In fact, sound gets in so fast that it modifies all the other input and sets the stage for it.

And sound is quickly routed to parts of the brain that deal with very basic functions—"precortical areas" that are not part of the wiring for conscious thinking.

These are places where emotions are generated.

Emotions are evolutionary "fast responses"—things you don't have to think about. They're rapid delivery systems in the brain.

Sound drives emotions. That's why it hits you in the gut.

Horowitz likens the brain to a "really wet, sloppy drum machine" that desperately seeks rhythms. It not only seeks rhythms but also patterns in pitch, too—that have a mathematical regularity and that capture the brain's attention.

As a result, sound gets into your head and stays there.

Sound is rich with patterns that carry information. And when the brain processes sound, it actually resonates with it, like a tuning fork that's been struck.

That's the reason why sound has the ability to create indelible memories.

So, the ChromeOrange Media sonic branding squad wants to know... Is your brand ready to use sound to gain unfair competitive advantage?



Advertising Expenditure

Projections for 2022 - 2024

The Covid-19 pandemic ushered in an era of heightened consumer distraction. In fact, despite an initial falloff due to the pandemic, Zenith Media forecasts 14% growth in digital adspend in 2022, 9% in 2023, and 10% in 2024.

These forecasts are ahead of those published by Zenith in July 2021, when it forecast 19% growth in digital adspend in 2021 and 10% in 2022.

The rise of the digital economy has also stimulated other forms of advertising, including brand campaigns on television and out-of-home, where digital brands are now prominent. After the step-change in digital media consumption and ecommerce last year, it is forecast to reach 0.77% in 2021 and 0.80% by 2024.

This will be the biggest rise in advertising's share of GDP since the late 1990s.

And this growth is global, with adspend in all regions now well above pre-pandemic levels, and all expected to achieve healthy growth over the next few years.

Zenith forecasts the fastest growth between 2021 and 2024 to come from Central and Eastern Europe and the Middle East and North Africa, with average annual growth rates of 12.2% and 10.0%, respectively.

*Global
adspend will rise
to \$873 billion
by 2024.*

~ [Zenith Media](#) December 6, 2021

**Social adspend
will rise to \$225 billion
by 2024, when it will
account for 26.5% of
all advertising...**

~ [Zenith Media](#) December 6, 2021

Social media will be the fastest-growing channel between 2021 and 2024, with an average annual growth rate of 14.8%, closely followed by online video at 14%.

This will be happening while social media continues to become more competitive. Zenith expects social adspend to reach \$177 billion in 2022, overtaking television at \$174 billion. Social adspend will rise to \$225 billion by 2024, when it will account for 26.5% of all advertising, followed by paid search at 22.5% and television at 21%.

Social platforms are also embracing commerce and are developing new advanced interactions between brands and consumers. Brands can use self-serve tools to create Augmented Reality (AR) experiences and then distribute them through targeted advertising, which can effectively lift awareness and intent to purchase.

What this means is that all brands—B2B and B2C—must make **differentiation** a priority.



The Role of Sound in Branding & Advertising

Marketing and branding have long been visual in nature. Every brand manager knows what their brand's logo looks like. Every marketer is familiar with their brand's textual messaging. But what about sound?

Sound is one of the most underutilized—or at least overlooked—brand differentiators.

Yet, research has shown that sound can enhance brand recall by as much as 96%.

Sound is not only underutilized—and overlooked—it's also *underrated*. For many content creators, sound just fills up the emptiness—like an umbrella in an umbrella stand.

But in 2022, it's time for marketers to seriously consider not just how their brands look and feel—not just how their content reads, but what their brand messaging **sounds** like. In a world where audio is becoming an increasingly important marketing tool, the strategic use of sound could prove beneficial for brand marketers who are willing to allocate resources for an audio brand strategy.

Sonic Branding Statistics

- Consumers are 46% more likely to choose your brand over the competition if you associate recognizable sound with it.
- Research shows that sonic brands increase repeat purchase by 39%.



Most marketers are well-versed in the traditional branding tropes —color schemes, logos, slogans and ad copy—and spend billions on them. Yet few seem to understand the innate emotional power of sound and music in building a brand identity.

When our human ears hear a sound, they transmit it to the brain, where echoic memory stores it for about **4 minutes**. In that short time, the mind makes and stores a record of that sound so that it can be recalled after the actual sound has stopped. This process is ongoing, whether you are aware of the sounds or not. Eventually, the sound makes it way into our long-term memory.

And that's the true power of sonic branding.



Sound Will Increasingly Influence Consumer Behavior and Perception

Adspend is expected to show an annual growth rate (CAGR 2021-2026) of **10.55%**, resulting in a projected market volume of \$9.8 billion by 2026. And, specifically, audio ad dollars are expected to grow by 6.4%, reaching **\$17 billion**, benefited by digital platforms (i.e., podcasting).

The Digital Audio Advertising segment is expected to show an adspend growth of 0.6% in the mobile segment in 2022. In fact, 76% of total adspend will be generated through mobile in 2026.

And the number of listeners is expected to top 1.56 billion users by 2026.

There will be an anticipated increase with broadcast radio listening as commuting returns to pre-COVID norms.

While the potential audience for ads will be large, in a crowded audio advertising space, marketers need to be more concerned than ever with brand differentiation.

That's where sound offers the greatest promise.

Sound is a powerful vehicle for influencing behavior and perception. Auditory neural pathways are less complex than their visual counterparts, so people react to sound 10 to 100 times faster than they do to sight.

It's no surprise, then, that companies like Visa, Mastercard, and Netflix have made enormous capital investments in their audio logos. And Nationwide took a bold leap in 2021, expanding its "Nationwide is on your side" sonic brand into full-fledged, custom-composed advertising music featuring jazz vocalist Jill Scott.

That's because they know that sound has a powerful ability to tell the brand story in a way that evokes emotion.



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The Rise of Voice Technology

Voice technology has not only made life easier for consumers, but it has also given marketers the opportunity to capitalize on sonic branding. Studies of vocal expression on the brain suggest that audio tones can transmit messages that transcend language and cultural barriers.

But, a [Canadian survey](#) of 2,000 participants found that in the era of smart devices, the average human attention span has fallen from 12 seconds in Y2K to 8 seconds today.

This means that brands are engaged in a fierce competition for consumer attention.

Some brands are more eager than ever to battle the odds.

- Back in 2019, audio streaming service **Pandora** debuted a sonic logo to accompany the music streaming service's "Sound On" brand campaign. The three-second audio branding is perhaps best described as a couple beats and a vocal "Whoa-a-wah." It emphasizes the emotional response that can emerge from a seconds-long composition associated with a brand.
- The Chinese ride-sharing company **DiDi Chuxing** added a notification sound on its app to let users know drivers are on the way—using sound so that riders wouldn't have to check for visual, on-screen notifications for the service.

Sonic Branding and Music Will Play Key Roles in Phygital Experiences

In 2022 we expect brands to think seriously about extending their sonic brand strategies into virtual worlds, considering the role that identifiable and reassuring sound and music can play in virtual marketing, transactions and service provision.

The Metaverse is still in nascency, but we expect brands to accelerate investment in more immersive connections with consumers. Expect to hear sound branding play a key role in immersive or virtual brand experiences.

For example, Louis Vuitton is blazing the path ahead, creating a virtual world game that delivers an experience in which beautiful sound design plays a pivotal role.

As this trend continues, brands will need consistent and identifiable audio branding to maintain consistency and recognition across channels.

Sound branding will also embrace “phygital”— the integration of

the physical world and the digital world. We expect that brands will embrace the concept of phygital experiences, juxtaposing brand sound and music from digital channels to the physical world and back again.



The concept of a phygital club, using live streams and virtual reality (VR) experiences, is considered a serious alternative to purely live experiences.

Look for sonic branding and music to play a central role in phygital brand experiences. And as a result, brands will begin to consider phygital as a united realm through which brand marketing, including their audio presence, must work seamlessly.

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Audio NFTs Will Revitalize the Music Industry & Power Brand Promotions

Non-Fungible Tokens (NFTs) are beginning to be seen by some as an important part of the transactional infrastructure of our digital lives. They are also beginning to influence the music industry. As NFTs offer new distribution and revenue opportunities, music creators can, for the first time ever, earn on every iterative version of their music.

The idea that consumers could digitally own unique output from musicians as NFTs signals interesting opportunities for brands, as well. For example, allowing brands to work directly with artists themselves to create custom material to be used in marketing or brand promotions. Or, brands might create and sell custom-branded audio or immersive experiences. It's no stretch to think that brands will soon begin offering NFTs as purchase incentives or even bake them into redemption options for rewards programs.

Beatport, the world's largest download and streaming tech platform for electronic music DJs, announced in late 2020 the first ever NFT audio/visual curated collection, "Music for Future Dance Floors," featuring exclusive and unreleased tracks from world-renowned artists including Sasha, Charlotte de Witte, Boys Noize, Pan-Pot, Nic Fanciulli and Sama' Abdulhadi, with stunning accompanying visual art from Leif Podhajsky.

In January 2022, Beatport followed this by announcing a partnership with PIXELYNX, the new (metaverse) gaming venture from electronic music mavericks Joel Zimmerman (deadmau5) and Richie Hawtin, and the release of Synth Heads, a unique series of generative NFTs based on much-loved analog synthesizers. Due to launch any day now, Beatport is paving the way in terms of building long-tail NFT platforms that will eventually help guide brands into the space.



Brands Will Increase Experimentation With Short-form Music and Branded Sound

The rise of TikTok is indicative of how short-form music memes and hashtags are the currency of daily interaction with friends and family. People are using sound as a primary tool for virtually talking to each other and expressing their feelings.

Remember what we said earlier in this book—sound evokes emotion.

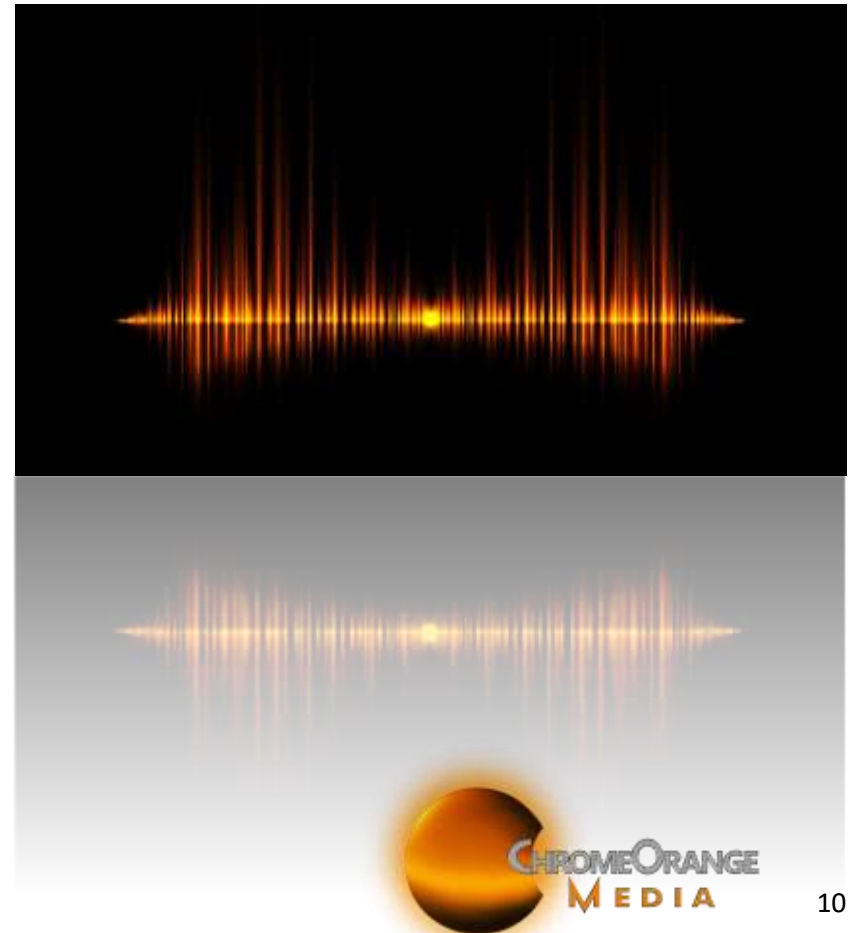
In particular, TikTok has established a powerful influence over the music industry, with 15-second video segments of some songs registering billions of views. Sound branding can make a brand stand out on TikTok in the sea of overused, familiar music.

And it can also evoke an intimate bond with the brand's customers.

In 2022, we predict that brands will increase their experimentation with short-form music, and branded sound that works across a 15-second format brevity will become increasingly important in a world shaped by diminishing attention spans and the desire for passing entertainment and stimulus.

The spectrum of opportunities for brands to engage with people is widening—not only crossing borders between physical and digital realms, but also mixing together different elements of our daily experiences.

Music and branded audio experiences will, we believe, play a pivotal role in enabling people to recognize, trust, and enjoy brand experiences in emerging, immersive media and technology. In 2022, we will see the start of an exciting period of experimentation in sonic branding and marketing.





The Rise of Interactive Audio

Imagine that you're developing a racing game where you drive through various cities. Normally, you would have audio tracks that would represent each different city and various utility screens. These audio tracks would play from start to finish and normally loop over and over as long as the user is present in that environment.

But with **interactive audio**, we could have the music adapt to changes in the environment. How about decreasing the tempo and changing the instruments and style? We could go from a techno sound to smooth jazz as we exit the city and hit the freeway.

In movies, the music generally takes on a slightly different role. The intent is to create a particular mood or atmosphere relevant to what's happening or what is about to happen. In a perfect situation, we would build tension or suspense and then transition right into the event, guiding the emotion of the user.

The ability to do these types of things and more and do them seamlessly—this is what we mean by interactive audio.

Interactive audio involves the input of action to effect sound, mostly Human-Computer Interactions. The input could be sensory data from human interaction with devices such as cameras, microphones or mobile phones, to name a few.

Interactive audio:
sound or music that
plays a dynamic
part in the user's
experience.

**“The field is
broad and
demand is high”**

~ [Mike Steventon](#)

[dBs Sound & Music Institute](#)

This information is used to drive audio, sound characteristics and behaviors. Within 3D virtual environments, the sound will change, depending upon actions or events that are triggered.

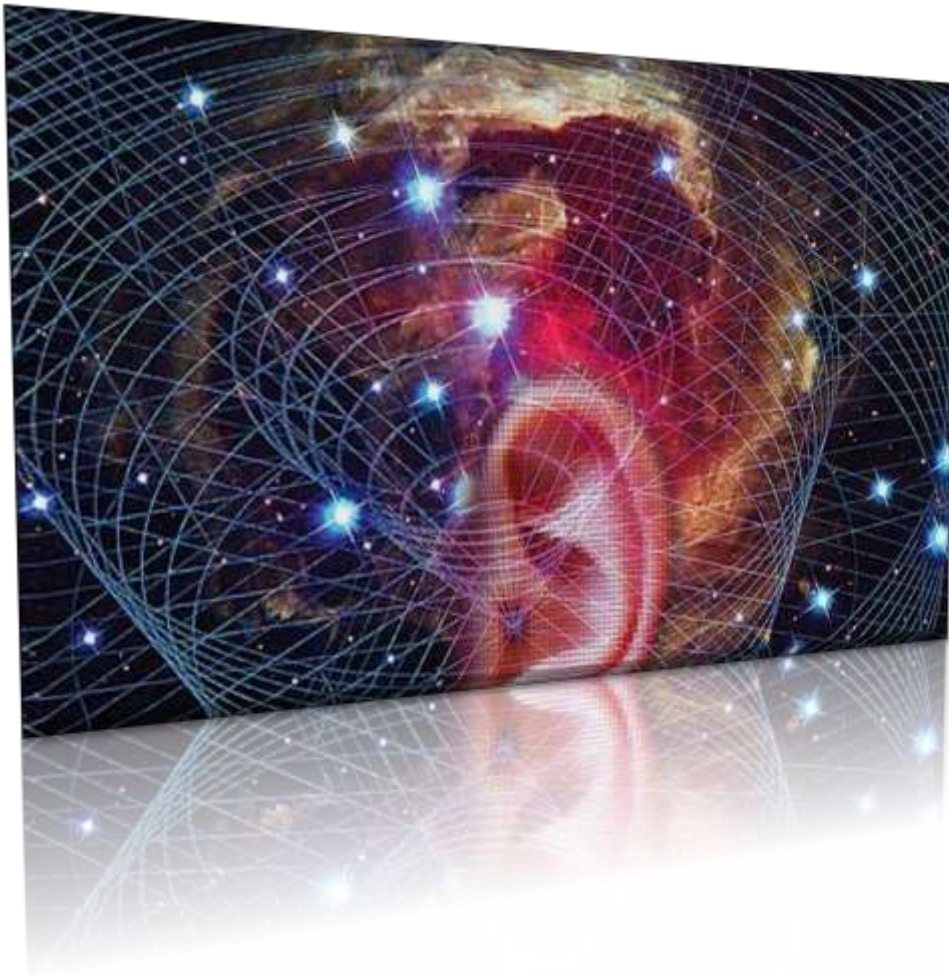
In the past decade, interactive marketing has become the norm, and while visual design has dominated, in the past year, we've seen experiments with interactive audio:

- M&M's Bite-sized Beats campaign includes a collaboration with singer Jessie J in which users choose musical loops to create their own song, and a combination of loops unlocks a Jessie J music video.
- Fedex's interactive SoundTrack lets users create a personalized song to “soundtrack” their package's journey.
- The BBC is creating voice-based interactive stories for Alexa and Google Home.



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The Rise of Audio-Based Experiential Brand Activations

As brand activation budgets grow, we're seeing a trend toward audio-focused experiences.

In collaboration with artist h0nh1m, Nike created an immersive audio installation in the spirit of its Air VaporMax sneaker, which generates unique soundscapes based on bioanalytics of the user's skin temperature and environmental humidity.

Automotive brands are also getting in on the action:

- At a Panorama Festival, Toyota's brand activation involved its new C-HR wired to be a musical instrument played by users. Bang on the center console, or slam the dashboard for a live drum kit effect.
- Jaguar upped the ante with a gigantic installation in Tokyo where SUVs controlled music tracks by driving around a cylindrical structure, like larger-than-life a turntable.



Boosted Engagement With All Forms of Audio

It shouldn't come as any surprise that audio is "in" again. Covid restrictions around the world have boosted engagement with all forms of audio, and that represents a major opportunity for brands.

According to Adweek, an estimated [95.6% of Americans](#) aged 13+ listen to some form of audio in their daily lives, which amounts to 270 million people listening daily. And, according to streaming service Pandora, people listen to four hours of audio content every day.

As more and more content and devices come out, audio listenership will continue to evolve. Listeners in 2022 are content-obsessed and hyperconnected.

According to [eMarketer](#) estimates:

- The time US adults spent with digital audio recorded an 8.3% growth for a total of 1 hour, 29 minutes per day.
- Digital audio accounted for 11% of total media time per day for US adults in 2020 and will account for 11.7% in 2021 or 1 hour and 34 minutes per day.
- In 2022, the average time spent listening should rise to 1 hour and 37 minutes per day.
- Active digital audio listeners spent 2 hours and 5 minutes per day on audio in 2020 and will likely add another 5 minutes in 2022.
- More than 70% of US adults listened to digital audio content at least once a month in 2020 and 91.7% of this occurred via mobile.

“Audio is the evolution and future of content.”

~Ron Jaworski, Co-founder & CEO of Trinity Audio

...the most immersive media format that triggers memorability, trust, and connection.

Audio has become an increasingly important brand content format for marketers, with more brands creating podcasts as part of their owned content strategy.

GE Podcast Theater illustrates how a brand can connect aurally by sponsoring story-driven content.

And NASA is leveraging podcasting to expand its audience beyond science enthusiasts. With listeners tuning in to podcasts for original stories, spin-offs, and extra content, there has never been a better opportunity for branded audio to shine.

As a hands-free medium that can follow listeners throughout their day, audio is a powerful way to reach people. It also offers a unique way to cut through the visual clutter and increase personalization, convenience, and loyalty with targeted, meaningful content.

As evident by the data, people are willing to listen for a variety of reasons, but perhaps the most important is that audio is the most immersive media format that triggers memorability, trust, and connection, beating out ad-based video on demand, digital video, linear TV, and social media.





Audio Will Play an Increasingly Significant Role in Retail

As music and sound effects waft through the air to lure shoppers, they also help enhance a retail store's image. Sound engages a customer's attention all the time. As soon as you look away from a sign, it's no longer top of mind. But sound is always there—it stays with you as you walk around the store. And as it stays with you, it ignites the brain's emotion center. And that's the best promotion any retail store owner could employ.

But retail store music must be an appropriate fit for the store's primary target audience. It's the reason why the music played in Bath and Body Works stores is different from the music played in Abercrombie & Fitch.

In order for sound to have a positive effect on consumer buying behavior, it's got to be the right fit.

Studies have shown that appreciated music makes almost 4 out of 10 people stay longer in a business in a public place. Further, 31% of all people return, 21% recommend the business to others, and 14% buy more.

In fact, consumers are **46% more likely to choose your brand** over the competition if you associate recognizable sound with it.

Music can even influence the pace of customer flow through a store.

By contrast, the wrong music or sound associated with a brand—particularly music and sound that is irritating—**makes 44% of people leave a business.**

What's more, after they leave, **38% won't come back.**



And what about silence?

A startling **32-41% of consumers** say they would react “negatively” or “very negatively” to silence.



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Playlist Marketing Tips

1. **Curate and share your storefront playlist.** Create a public Spotify playlist and update the cover art with your company's branding and promote it on your socials.
2. **Create an event playlist.** Create custom playlists for events and holidays.
3. **Create a themed playlist.** Create Spotify playlists that spell out a message using song titles. Look at how [Wendy's used this technique](#).

Brands Will Increasingly Leverage Playlist Marketing

Over 400 million people worldwide pay for music subscription services like Spotify and Apple Music, and major brands are taking notice. In particular, they've found a way to use Spotify playlists to reach target Millennials and Gen Z, for whom music is the number one passion.

Some examples of this burgeoning trend include :

- Calvin Klein and Reebok put together music collections to showcase new products.
- In the "Sound of Rum" campaign, Bacardi collaborated with Major Lazer on a co-branded limited edition rum along with a slew of soundtracks that tell the brand story.
- Volvo created a playlist from music used in advertisements.
- Kentucky Fried Chicken in France put together a Spotify playlist appropriately dubbed "Bucket Bangers," featuring songs from Kanye West, Madonna, The Beastie Boys, and more, all of which reference the fried chicken legend.

The goal in creating playlists should be less about selling products and more about showing customers and potential customers that your company appreciates the music they like and that you want to give them a great listening experience.



The Rise of Acoustics-Based Near-Field Communication (NFC)

Google's Tez and Microsoft's Dhvani are examples of acoustics-based near-field communication (NFC). And while these tech giants are big players, transmitting data via inaudible audio frequencies is only beginning.

NFC technology brings actionable intelligence to everyday consumer engagements. Data acquired from NFC interactions provides deep insights into a customer's offline behavior, which is enabling marketers to open a direct channel for delivering dynamic experiences to customers who have opted in. Marketers can then prompt customers to learn more about the products they purchase, launch videos, enter contests, and much more.

The analytics gained via real-time customer interaction helps marketers improve the customer experience by sharpening customer segmentation and providing more relevant, targeted content in future interactions.

NFC enables new ways to find, bond with, and retain customers throughout the consumer journey. For instance, engagement data gathered from NFC-enabled smart liquor bottles revealed the unforeseen popularity of a company's beverages in a market that it hadn't previously targeted. The actionable information and increased visibility into its supply chain helped the craft distillery modify its marketing programs and expand its distribution network.

Brilliant NFC Campaigns

- **Samsung** ad campaigns with NFC posters
- **Lexus** NFC-embedded print ads
- NFC posters on store windows drove customers straight to **Ralph Lauren's** new launches
- NFC posters that helped customers find the closest **KFC**

*The global NFC market is expected to have a significant compounded annual growth rate of 21.30% and reach a market size of **\$23.82 billion** (USD) by 2023.*

In retail settings, NFC tags or labels are used to launch unique experiences on Apple or Android smartphones, while cloud-based analytics track consumer interaction before, during, and after a sale.

Acoustics-based NFC requires only a microphone and a speaker, thus eliminating tags and chips. This advance allows devices to communicate with one another, while simplifying and securing functions like payment via sound. Chirp and LISNR are two emerging companies that are facilitating it.

How can your brand deploy this?

One of the best ways is to leverage the natural tendency of the consumer to want to interact with the marketed product. When used properly, NFC campaigns are a dynamic, interactive way for a brand can engage with their target market.

Frictionless peer-to-peer content sharing possibilities are dwarfed only by opportunities for brands to transmit content over audio messaging. NFC gives companies a whole new dimension of advertising that traditional methods can't match.





Audio UX & UI Strategies Will Become Integral Strands of Audio Branding

Until recently, the product development process would very rarely include a considered approach to sound. The realization that products, apps, websites and digital experiences all contribute to the consumer impression and perception of a brand has led brand builders to look at sound across all these interactions.

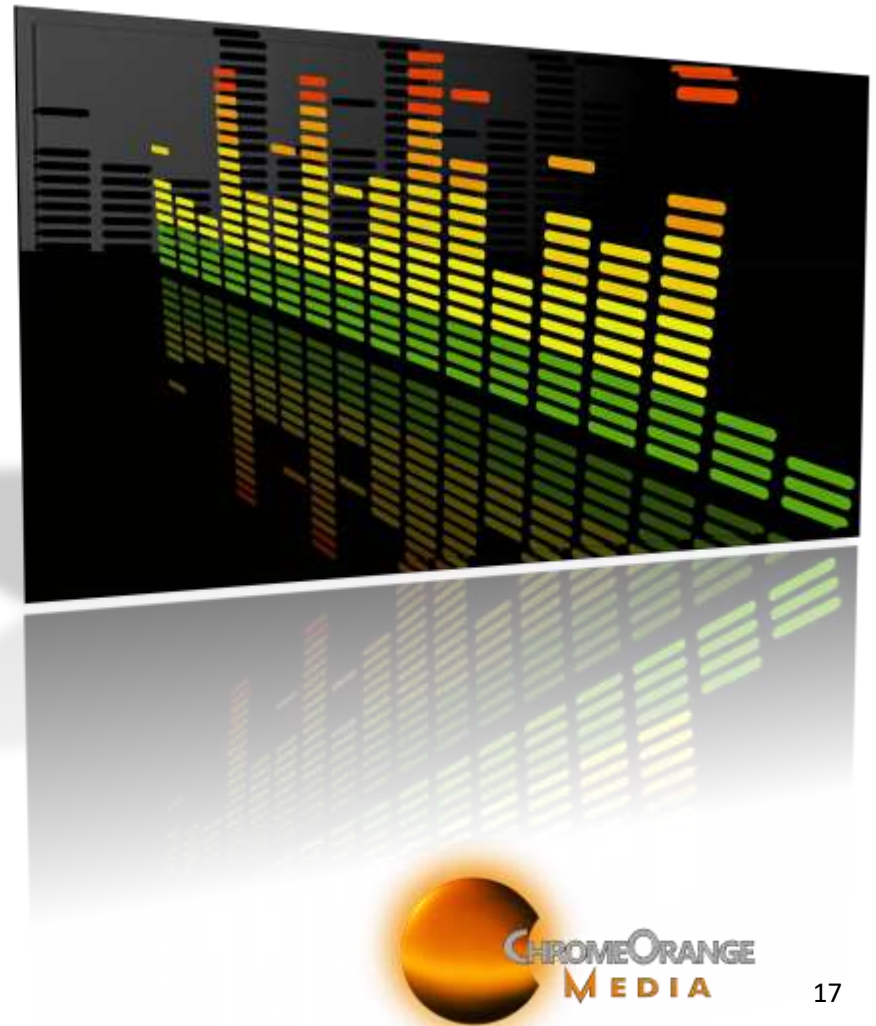
A newly received email in your inbox, an error message on your fitness app... even that telltale chirpy click that lets you know you've made a keystroke on your phone. It's all audio. And, done the right way, that audio serves as a constant reminder of the brand we're interacting with.

We routinely rely on sound to tell us when we've succeeded, when we've made a misstep, when to move on and what to do next. It's audio built for user interface (UI) and user experience (UX), and it's redefining the relationship between brands and their consumers. In 2021, Mastercard, Visa and Amex all added sound to point-of-sale transactions to create feelings of safety and security.

As consumers increasingly expect to receive audio cues during their interactions with brands, we predict that a growing number of brands from a wider range of categories will invest in their own unique audio UX as digital commerce.

Determining when and where sound should exist will become even more important as more interactive experiences are developed, cars become more silent and voice controlled UI becomes more prominent. We want to make all those experiences sound the best that they can.

At the end of the day, the goal is to give the brand a voice so powerful that, like a favorite hit song on Spotify, **people will listen for it.**



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Brands Will Invest in Voice Experience (VX)

As we progress alphabetically from “U” to “V” in our trending terminology, designing the user experience of voice is vital. Brand communication is, quite literally, becoming a dialogue as consumers converse with voice assistants in the comfort of their own homes and vehicles. In-store experiences are even more accessible at home, thanks to Smart Speakers, as we invite brands into our living rooms.

Sonic branding was born out of necessity in the Golden Age of Radio, although it wasn’t until the year 1950 when the NBC “chimes”—the NBC sonic logo—became the first [purely audio service mark](#) granted by the U.S. Patent and Trademark Office (USPTO).

We’ve now come full circle as we once again gather around a speaker for what many call Radio 3.0.

According to [The Smart Audio Report](#) from National Public Media, 65% of users indicate that “they wouldn’t want to go back to life without their Smart Speaker.” Moreover, 30% of Smart Speaker owners say their speaker is replacing time spent with TV.

As nearly one-third of these participants stop looking in favor of *listening* for content, marketers need to prepare themselves for a **voice-first future** and invest in a **voice experience (VX)** for their brands.



Audio-First Experiences Will Reshape Social Media And Marketing

Attest's third annual US Media Consumption Report revealed that [92.6% of Americans](#) spend at least part of their day using social media, which effectively makes it the America's most popular content consumption medium.

The report also states that "Americans are listening to more radio this year. In addition, for the first time since this report was launched, more than half of consumers say they listen to podcasts (55.9%)."

That means more than half the U.S. population, or over 165 million people, are accessible via podcasts, which deliver audio-first experiences. With the average podcast offering several ad spots, this becomes incredibly valuable audio real estate for brands.

Audio-first mediums provide ample room for audio advertising, which isn't tuned out the same way visual advertisements are. A shockingly-low 14% of Internet users report noticing visual display ads when scrolling through social media or visiting websites, which means that approximately 86% of ad spend on visual ads is wasted.

And in a survey conducted by Voices, 35% of respondents stated that they have a goal of brand awareness in 2022.

We're seeing brands take action toward that goal, using

81% of listeners have taken action after hearing audio ads during a podcast.

Source: [Spotify research](#)

sound as a driver. For example, in 2021, Dunkin' Brands focused on their digital audio advertising strategy and piloted a symphonic ad campaign that was hugely successful, growing engagement by an impressive 238%.

Keith Lusby, VP of Media for Dunkin', says the symphonic ads created "a seamless, personalized ad experience" and contributed directly to the success of the campaign.

Spotify has even presented research evidencing that, "A staggering 81% of listeners have taken action after hearing audio ads during a podcast. These actions include researching a product online, connecting with the brand on social media, and talking about the brand with others."

Audio-first experiences, like podcasts themselves, podcast advertisements, and Clubhouse chats, will help bridge the gap and lead us into a new, more authentic age of social media and marketing while providing ample opportunities for effective advertising.

86% of ad spend on visual ads is wasted.

Source: [LinkedIn Pulse](#)



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The Social Audio Boom

For brands that seek an honest and open dialogue with consumers, social audio could present some really exciting opportunities. First and foremost, social audio presents brands with opportunities to become thought leaders and entertainment providers.

Using one of the new social audio platforms, brands can host their own conversation, providing content of real value to audiences. Over the coming months, more and more brands are going to be looking at social audio as part of their content strategies.

Facebook's Live Audio, Twitter Spaces and Spotify's Greenroom have all launched in the past few months and since then we've seen a flurry of competitive announcements from the major players.

Social audio is not an entirely new phenomenon. Audio room apps such as Dizhua, TT Voice, and Yalla have been growing in popularity for a while.

But Clubhouse is the platform that really kickstarted social audio, and they've had huge live audiences for their Oprah Winfrey events. Launched in April 2020, Clubhouse now has over 10 million users and recently announced its Creator First program to accelerate the growth of audio content on the platform.

Adding fuel to the growing social audio fire, Twitter has announced a record-and-tweet option for Twitter Spaces, and TikTok has unveiled a range of partnerships to make it easier for brands to tap into audio on the platform.

Spotify has also launched its audio offering—Greenroom—signaling the platform's intention to move beyond music streaming.

LinkedIn, Slack and Reddit are also working on audio offerings.



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Electric Vehicle Engine Synthesis

According to a research firm BloombergNEF, as quoted in [Axios](#), global sales of electric passenger vehicles are projected to surpass 10.5 million this year, about 4 million above 2021 levels, as the tech grows more mainstream.

But since electric engines run silently, new audio territory has emerged around how sound affects road safety.

Audi has a head start in engine synthesis, given their tremendous investment in audio over the years—recording every sound made by every part of each vehicle manufactured by Audi.

Following Audi's lead are companies like Nissan, which is pushing boundaries with musical sonifications of its concept cars.

The National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA) has spent a number of years developing guidelines for hybrid vehicle engines, to standardize minimum decibel levels, frequency range, and audio cues that are important to pedestrians and those who are visually impaired.

The Rise of the Audio Strategist

A whole new role—Audio Strategist—has begun to emerge and grow in importance as the most forward-thinking advertisers adapt to prioritizing audio on a par with visual brand assets.

Audio Strategists utilize specialized knowledge to articulate the complex and layered emotional messaging that audio can provide, working in tandem with other channels to ensure that sonic branding, part of a complete audio brand strategy, takes center stage in companies' brand and marketing strategies, rather than remain an afterthought.

Consistent brand identity and an understanding of the role audio plays in wider marketing plans will be key signifiers in this new world. Audio Strategists will translate the abstract qualities of brand and company attributes into actionable insights.

Choosing the right song, sound logo or voice to represent your brand can demonstrate genuine understanding of your brand's target consumers as well as their values, perceptions, expectations, and needs.

“Melody, harmony, and rhythm create connection points to current or past experiences and emotions.”

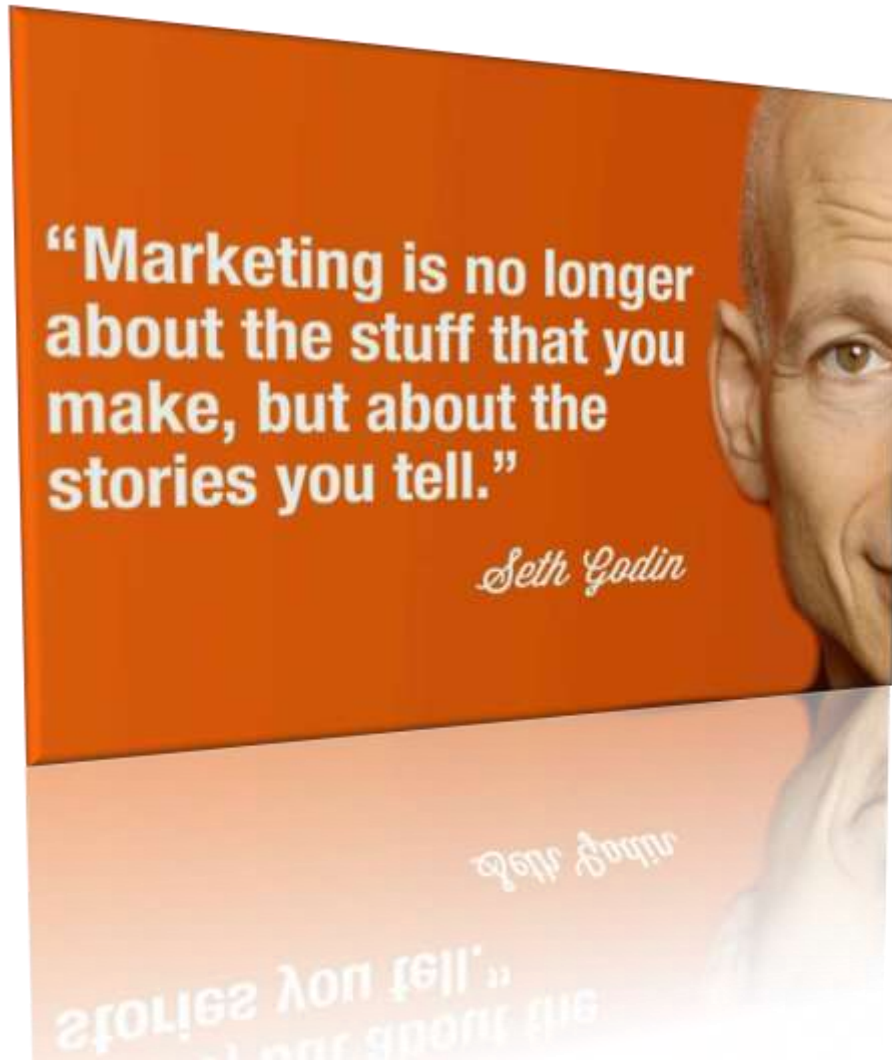
~ The ChromeOrange Media Audio Strategy Team



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The Increasing Importance of Sound in Emotive Storytelling

Sound has the power to evoke visceral emotional responses in the temporal lobe of the human brain in the same way that smell and taste do. Indeed, sound can elicit a full range of emotional responses in listeners and contributes to the success of the audience experience.

Moreover, sound increases the immersion of the audience in the story, adding credibility to the narration and generating emotion. Sound can also establish a setting, develop characters (think Progressive's Flo and Liberty Mutual's Limu Emu and Doug), and advance a storyline.

Studies have suggested that listeners react emotionally to sound and that emotional responses to sound depend on the interpretation and meaning (i.e. - relevance) that listeners attribute to it.

In 2022, we will increasingly see brands harness this **secret power of sound** in order to create greater emotional connections with their audiences, particularly the Millennial and Gen Z generations. But brand loyalty tends to be a low priority for these consumers, so making use of sound's power to provoke an emotional response will be the best way to forge a more lasting connection with them.

In 2022, advertisers will harness this power by shaping audio content using information known about the target demographic, and to intuitively mirror them—as humans do when interacting face to face.



Brands Will Leverage Music and Sound on TikTok to Connect With Consumers

Sometimes by design and sometimes by good fortune, brands continue to see the role music plays in skyrocketing a brand to the top of the pop-culture conversation. Brands have long realized the importance of sound and the impact that music has on consumers. But now, they are taking a more calculated, strategic approach to the use of sound and music in a shift from branded content to pop-culture conversation.

Think Ocean Spray and Fleetwood Mac's "Dreams." The now-famous skateboarding video by Nathan Apodaca turned Ocean Spray into a worldwide trend. And who could argue music's role in the emotional connection made by that video clip?

Unlike Facebook, Instagram, Twitter and other social media platforms, TikTok is firmly a "sound-on" platform. Sound and music are central—even mandatory—to the enjoyment of the platform.

There is one criteria that defines the music of TikTok—it has to be new. It could be breaking new songs, but it could also be music that is "new" to the TikTok audience. Music that is familiar to Boomer, Gen X, and Millennial audiences is new to Gen Z—the largest TikTok user group.

Classic songs are not the only pieces of music making an unexpected resurgence on TikTok. "I'm Lovin' It," the longstanding McDonald's sonic brand, has become the soundtrack and inspiration for countless consumer-created TikTok videos.



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“Brands must consider sound as a core component of their brand architecture.”

~ Max De Lucia, The Branding Journal
December 8, 2021

Brands Will Form Creative Partnerships with Sonic Branding Agencies & Music Creators

Creative agencies are increasingly bypassing cliché music briefs and references in favor of a more collaborative, creative partnership with sonic branding agencies and music creators. In 2022 and beyond this will result in the implementation of more unique, globally relevant yet underused styles of music.

Recently, Tequila Herradura collaborated on a Pan-African dance track for their brand, which is sung in Shona, the predominant language in Zimbabwe. It serves as compelling evidence that if a classic Mexican spirits brand can embrace rising trends in global dance music by utilizing African rhythms and a foreign language, the future of advertising will be filled with more inspiring, diverse music.

Music and sound are inherently more essential to consumers and marketers than ever with the rise of music streaming, podcasting, global music culture, and voice technology. Many marketers are making bigger investments in quality original music vs “stock” music from production music libraries, as well as exploring or revamping their sonic branding.

We expect this trend to continue in 2022 and beyond.





The Growth of Extended Reality (XR) Experiences

There is a new kind of consumer experience on the horizon: Extended Reality (XR), fueled by the power of mixed reality technology. Mixed reality is the merging of the real world with augmented reality (AR) and virtual reality (VR) to produce new environments and visualizations, where physical and digital objects co-exist and interact in real time.

According to Global Newswire, as quoted in [XRToday](#), the Augmented and Mixed Reality market is set to grow drastically in the next few years. In 2020, the market had a value of around \$376.1 million. This value is set to increase to around \$3.9156 billion—a CAGR of 41.8%.

In 2022 we predict that brands will look to harness the power of this burgeoning trend, which uses motion capture-driven avatars and explorable virtual universes that merge digital and real-world realities to unlock the power of the metaverse.

XR will enable brands to push the boundaries of what's possible in immersive audience experiences. And, of course, sound will play a major role.

Brands can tap into the technology to produce a range of experiences, including immersive pre-vis of films and television shows, music videos, broadcast productions and immersive installations, visualizations, and interactive XR events. Pre-vis is the process used to plan shots, work out scale and timing, show roughly where characters are going to move, and map out how the visual effects (VFX) will fit into an otherwise live-action scene.

All of this will enable brands to provide truly interactive experiences that enable consumers to step into and experience photorealistic realities.



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Audio Will Play an Integral Role in Shepherding the Customer Journey

The customer journey is a core element of the customer experience (CX) with a brand. Creating that experience begins with customer journey mapping—the process of understanding the impact of every single interaction a customer has with your business, as they form a sequence of experiences similar to a journey.

Most customer journey maps include visual and textual content, but, more and more, the strategic use of sound play an integral role in shepherding the customer journey.

A proper audio brand strategy involves looking at your brand's sonic assets and managing that sound experience for every consumer at every touchpoint across every marketing and sales channel.

Sonic branding, as part of a comprehensive audio brand strategy, is your opportunity to weave yourself into the public consciousness and connect with people in places their ears can reach, but their eyes can't always see.

The medium of sound is paramount for attracting and maintaining customer loyalty. Right now is the perfect time for brands to reflect on how they can mindfully and effectively use sound to their competitive advantage.

Because right now, **people are listening.**





Not using sound to bring your brand to life is a bit like trying to win the World Series without a glove or a bat. Sound is a lever you can pull that unlocks powerful brand differentiation. It can quickly and easily move the needle from awareness to interest to decision to purchase—for B2B brands as much as for B2C brands.

And it could mean the difference between going left or right on the shelf—choosing between Coke or Pepsi—when a consumer makes a purchase decision.

The secret lies in sound's amazing power to influence perception and subconscious decision-making. Because sound is stored in echoic memory, it has a greater opportunity to evoke brand recall and recognition than visuals alone have. And that leads to faster decision-making.

After all, if consumers are able to easily recall your brand when they need to make a purchase decision, they will automatically favor it over the competition because, subconsciously, they're already thinking about it.

When you stop to consider the impact of being able to pull a lever that triggers subconscious choice, a complete audio brand strategy that incorporates sonic branding, music and sound design is the best investment any brand can make.

And that includes **yours**.

Contact us today to begin unlocking the secret power of sound for your brand.

Afterword





Headquartered in New York and with offices in Europe, **ChromeOrange Media** specializes in sonic branding, audio brand strategy and audio user experience.

Our sonic branding squad has 30 years of experience bringing together marketing, branding, advertising, songwriting, music production and strategic business planning to build and grow companies and brands.



www.chromeorangemedia.com



New York: +1 631- 648 - 7446

Europe: +359 2 866-9409



info@chromeorangemedia.com

