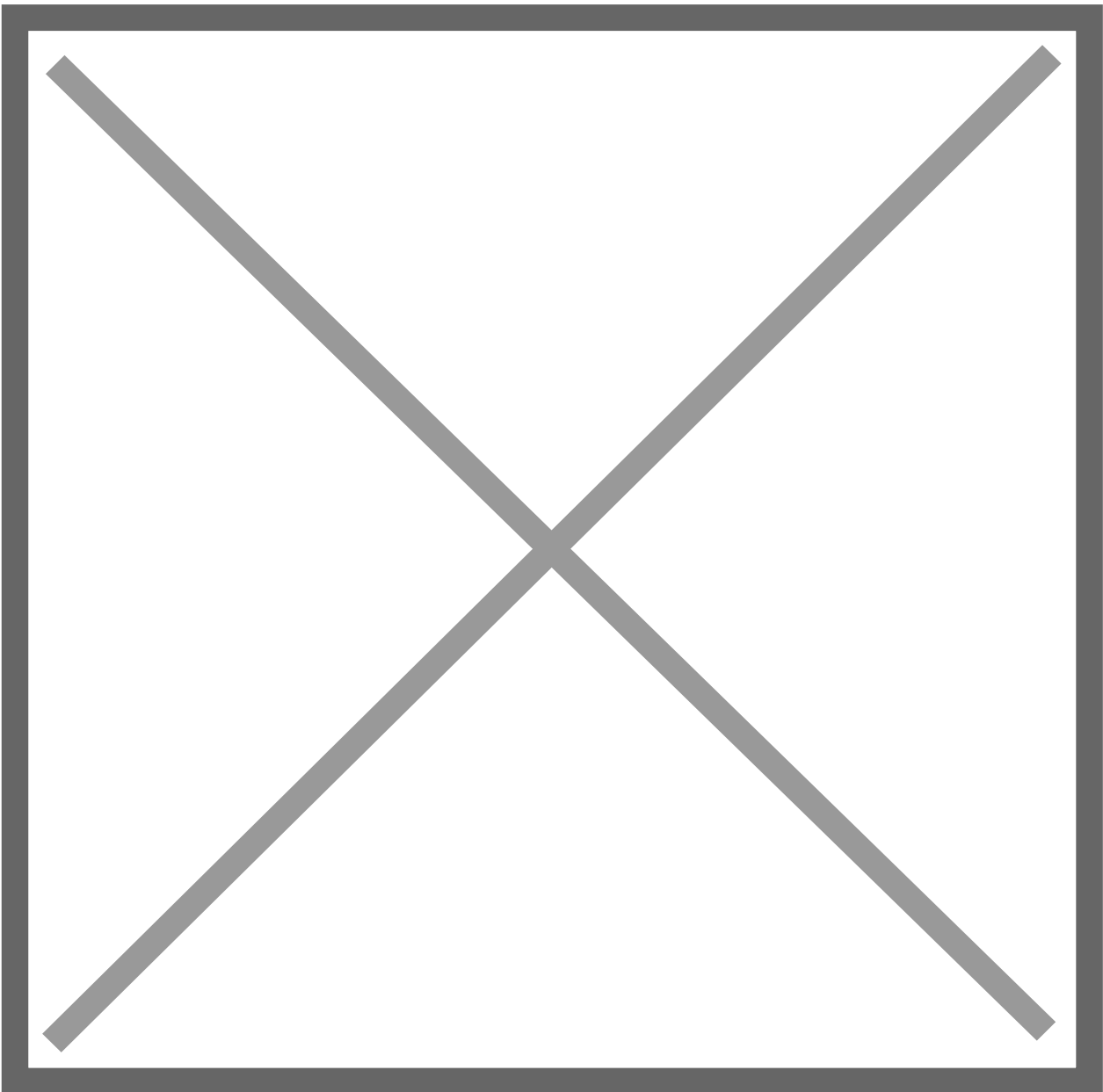




Brands that Make Bold Choices with Their Music

Description



Music in adverts has the power to affect the audiences emotions and make an advert widely memorable. Choice of music also has the potential to mark a brand as bold. Through choosing a different, braver type of music, such as music that does not fit to the message of the advert or a music genre that is not necessarily associated with the brand, a brand can stand out from the rest as different.

Such seemingly ill-fitting or brave choices can prove popular with audiences by standing out as more meaningful and changing the ideas the audience held of what the brand represented. So what constitutes a brave music choice? We had a look at some of our favourite examples from past advertising:

The Unexpected:

Through using music that does not seem to fit with a brand's image, adverts can surprise audiences and also produce adverts that are still talked about a decade after their release.

Take for example, Levi's advert 'Odyssey', which uses a piece of classical music by German composer Handel.

Levi's 'Odyssey'

Song: Sarabande

Artist: Handel (re-score by John Altman)

Agency: BBH

Levi's is seen as a youthful brand, as well as a representative of a cool, younger audience. According to [Micael Dahlen et al \(2010\)](#) Levi's targets itself to an adaptive and ever changing 'rebellious' audience, who is finding their own identity. In the 50s, the brand teamed up with [James Dean](#), to make their jeans iconic in American youth culture. Nowadays, the brand still targets younger audiences, such as [millennials](#) through social media marketing.

With a youthful, rebellious audience, it would be expected that the advert would feature a pop or rock song from an upcoming band. Much to the audience's surprise and also to rival industry [ad experts](#), classical music was used instead. As Canadian classical music monthly [La Scena Musicale](#) explains, classical music is usually used to portray nostalgia or comfort, such as in airline adverts. It's also used in perfume adverts to evoke luxury.

Through using classical music, Levi's turned their head against stereotyping their target audience 'thought to only enjoy rock or pop'. The advert would go on to win awards for the advert composer, John Altman, as well as win the gold prize in film at the [2002 Cannes Lions](#) and winning various awards at the 2002 D&AD awards, including for [use of music](#). According to [The Guardian](#), the advert also led Levi's sales to surge by over 200%. For Levi's then, choosing unexpected music would lead to a very successful advert campaign.

Nike 'Endure'

Song: Hurt

Artist: Johnny Cash

Agency: Wieden+Kennedy Amsterdam

At first Nike's advert seems to send completely the wrong message, with a depressing sync license and images of athletes failing to perform well or in physical pain. The use of Johnny Cash's "Hurt" does not seem to fit with the brand, which typically encourages people to perform their best and reach unexpected limits.

However, through using an unexpected song, which the audience already had fixed emotions and opinions about, the brand was able to portray another side to motivation and the sport brand. Nike is not just there for the moments of success and glory, but also for the moments of pain when it is hard to continue. The use of a depressive song marked a brave choice by Nike, the music could have led to negative associations between the audience and the brand. However, in this case the music portrays strength to continue despite the pain.

Innovative Genres:

Aside from using unexpected genres for audiences, such as classical music for the younger people, brands can also make bold steps by using genres of music not typically heard of in adverts.

Weetabix "Dancer"

Song: A New World

Artist: Mord Fustang

Agency: Bartle Bogle Hegarty, London

British cereal brand Weetabix made headlines in the UK and [abroad](#) when they used a dub-step track in their advert. The genre proved a brave choice for Weetabix, which made the move from boring breakfast food to cool in the [eyes](#) of many.

The use of a dub-step track by music producer Mord Fustang was an innovative decision on the part of the cereal brand, which as a breakfast food was never associated with clubbing music. But through bringing a dub-step track to TV advertising, the brand was not only able to break conventions of what is usually heard in a cereal advert, but also broke the stereotype of what little girls can do by featuring a phenomenal 9-year old UK street-dancer, Arizona Snow.

Lacoste's "The Big Leap"

Song: You & Me ft. Eliza Doolittle (Flume Remix)

Artist: Disclosure

Agency: BETC

In a similar approach to the Weetabix advert, Lacoste's "The Big Leap" features a genre not typically heard of in perfume adverts. The sync license of an electronic remix by Flume of a popular Disclosure track marks a change from other perfume adverts, which use softer music that does not deflect too much from the story of the advert but adds to the feeling of sensuality. Lacoste's use of electronic music builds into the story, portraying the anxiety and anticipation of the first kiss.

The advert would go on to win [multiple awards](#), including Silver at the 2014 Cannes Lions.

Kronenbourg 1664's "Slow the Pace"

Song: Ace of Spades

Artist: Motorhead

Agency: BBH

In an unexpected use of a heavy metal track, Kronenbourg 1664 managed to convince Motorhead to re-record ‘‘Ace of Spades’’ as an acoustic track with [half the speed of a blues song](#) for their 2010 ‘‘Slow the Pace’’ advert. The change of genre came as somewhat of a shock for Motorhead fans, as the band does not often, if ever, play acoustically. Speaking to [music magazine Q](#) on how and why the song was re-written acoustically, the late singer Lemmy Kilmister said: ‘‘It’s a sign that we got paid a lot of money’’.

Such an innovative change of genre for the Kronenbourg advert worked particularly well for the adverts message, which portrays that Kronenbourg beer is better and more full of flavour when the pace of drinking is slowed down and savoured.

Altering perception of a brand:

In other cases choosing an unlikely genre can also lead to the creation of a new brand identity and re-invention of a brand for a different audience.

New World ‘‘Next Day’’

Song: Lazy Eye

Artist: Silversun Pickups

Agency: Colenso BBDO

Together with youthful characters, the story of the day after a one-night stand, and a rocky sync license, the New Zealand based supermarket chain New World makes grocery shopping look cool in their ‘‘Next Day’’ advert.

Through the use of an alternative rock band, Silversun Pickups, the supermarket stands out from other supermarkets, reinventing itself as a not just a regular boring place to shop, but a cool, exciting place to explore on a date. With music that you would expect to hear in a fashion advert, New World is able to alter the audience's perception of what a supermarket is, setting the brand apart from competitors.

Mercedes-Benz's A-Class

Song: Y-Shape

Artist: Damien Damien

Agency: Jung Von Matt

In 2012, Mercedes-Benz made the move from luxury car brand to the car of a new, younger generation with their new A-Class range. The brand reinvented themselves as accessible to a younger generation through multiple marketing initiatives, including marketing campaigns on [Instagram](#) and interactive [Twitter](#) campaigns.

The reinvention of the brand was not just fronted on social media, but Mercedes also made the re-branding move in their TV advertising campaigns. In these campaigns, music signalled the reinvention of Mercedes. To demonstrate Mercedes was accessible to a younger generation, and not just their parents, the A-Class advert sync licensed a dub-step track by songwriter and music producer Damien Damien. The decision to feature a popular, youthful genre, that would not typically attract older audiences, spoke directly to younger audiences and was effective in re-inventing the brand.