



5 reasons why your music choice is impeding your campaign's full potential

Description



As music supervisors, we have come across many blends of music selection in ads over the years. While real mismatches are rare, we see examples where music does not play its supporting role to the fullest extent in the ad. We thought we would put together a list of some common reasons why your music choice may keep your campaign from taking off.

1. Putting music last in the production process

It might sound blasphemous to music people, but we see that music is often the last choice in a production process, and â?? following that â?? setting the music budget as what is left from the production budget after storyboards, edit, talent and VFX have been booked. Extra spendings for additional shoot days etc. can decrease this music budget even further.

The budget available necessarily becomes the predominant force in the music search which in turn may lead to a very limited choice of music available. A choice that often has to be a bad compromise. If music is not considered for its own right, all efforts will be put into finding music that fits â?? instead of finding music that makes you stand out.

Ideally, you should already think about music in the scripting phase. This will come with several advantages:

- having an idea of what music creatively will fit the bill will help to finetune the interaction between images and music even better, as it offers the opportunity to have the music choice already in mind at the shoot. We have several clients, where directors prefer to have the music playing at the set to get a feeling and inspiration of what tracking shot, tempo etc. may fit best.
- with the musical mood/direction being set you can get a feeling of what time it would take to obtain the music or the music rights. If e.g. your creative idea requires a womenâ??s choir singing custom lyrics, you can account for the days/weeks of recording in your scheduling
- you can allocate the required budget to license the music or have it produced

Tracks & Fields can help you to find the right song for you and give you a ballpark cost early in the process. [Just get in touch!](#)

2. Using the same music as your competitors

If an ad of one of your competitors is very successful, you may be tempted to use the same song as playing in that film. But donâ??t do it! By taking this â??shortcutâ??:

- you miss the chance to stand out. Music has a great power to tell your story in a way that no other element can. If you use music, make it count! Using music in the same setting/setting up shots in the same way will not give you enough leeway to create your own unique look and feel.
- you may simply be overlooked. Audience attention is very limited, and if your ad sounds the same as your competitors, viewers may think itâ??s just a reminder of the ad they saw a minute ago
- the music may not be consistent with the overall idea of your campaign. Furthermore music choices may vary between countries/cultures, while music can also change its meaning or association dramatically over time. That means you stand out â?? but in a negative way. The music, together with the product and its attributes will form a â??triangleâ?? that has to work as whole. We have seen adverts where just one of these three components is weak / awkward, and it sticks out like a sore thumb.

3. Involving a certain song in your imagery without clearing the rights first

â?| leading to a bad compromise if you canâ??t get it licensed.

Using a song as part of your ad can come in various flavours, e.g. people dancing to it, singing the song or using lyrics in the imagery. Keep in mind that this will not only tack you to a certain creative choice, but more importantly leaves you in a unpleasant negotiation situation. If a song is tied to your ad in that way, licenses are generally higher (e.g. if the song becomes part of your storyline, ad title or subtitle). The other party will quickly find out that you have no other choice and can quote on the even higher end of the scale. If worse comes to worst it may take too long to clear the rights or â?? worst case â?? even be impossible to license the song at all. Songwriters may object to advertising uses at all, or because the link between the ad and the song being too tight.

If that happens you have to find a replacement song that more or less fits the scenes, re-edit the imagery and kind of make the creative idea still work.

Using songs as part of the ad can be a powerful tool, but make sure beforehand, that the song will be available.

4. Falling in love with that famous mood song

You fall in love with that music piece in the mood film or mood board and feel itâ??s the perfect music choice for your ad. That feeling even gets stronger with every time you are watching the mood film. We know various cases where a famous mood song was used in the mood film and also in the work-in progress versions. Itâ??s in the nature of the process that by doing that all parties listen to that particular song over and over again up to a point where itâ??s been seen as the one and only soundtrack to the ad. You should always keep in mind that the perceived fit is often strongly related to the popularity of the song and the frequency you already heard it in connection with your film.

Donâ??t get us wrong â?? thinking about music right from the start is what we suggest. But your choice should be based on how well the song supports the story the ad wants to tell. Especially when your budget does not account Iggyâ??s â??The passengerâ??. That will undoubtedly lead to a bad compromise just as in the section above.

5. Asking only friends and family for feedback

Asking for feedback from your music-loving friends and family is a good start, but keep in mind that they all have a preference for music. They may simply decide based on their personal taste instead of your target groupâ??s preferences or conveyance of brand attributes.

While testing ads with test groups is quite common, the interaction between music and imagery is rarely focused on in this process. If you are unsure, you can set up an A/B-test with two versions of your ad involving your first and seconds choice in music. Or alternatively, if music is more of a key element of the ad, you can set up music-only test involving music you are considering.

In any case itâ??s advisable to get feedback people from your marketing team, your creative agency or external professionals, such as music supervisors. People, that can judge music independently of their music taste.

There are many reasons why music choice for ads can cause music not to be as effective as possible. This article has listed some of the most common reasons as well as ways to avoid them happening again. If you have any questions or need help in your project, just [reach out to us](#).

