



Case Study: OTTO – Music Ideation & Strategy (T&F Insights)

Description



Brand

OTTO

Territory

Germany

Awards



CLIO
AWARDS



eurobest



CICLOPE



cresta
international advertising awards

The case

Exploring every musical path for a Christmas story about time

In Germany, OTTO is a major online retailer. For a Christmas campaign, Heimat Berlin created an animated film built around a simple insight: during the holidays we rush to finish work, shop and tick off tasks, but the most precious gift we can give is our time.

Music was central to making that idea land. The agency had already tried several approaches before bringing Tracks & Fields in, and deliberately kept the brief open: interpret the previous OTTO film, follow loose guidelines (prefer instrumental, cinematic, nothing famous, most likely no vocals), and show what the music could be rather than executing a narrow prescription.

What the industry playbook suggested

In a campaign like this, the standard playbook would often split the work across multiple parties and narrow the creative field early:

- One team doing “mood” research for instrumental scores.
- A separate composer or production house handling original music.
- Another party negotiating rights if famous tracks enter the conversation.

Each discipline would be treated as its own lane, with handoffs between them and limited room for wildcards such as well-known songs or choir reinterpretations. That can keep things tidy, but it also adds coordination and timeline risk, and reduces the chances of discovering unexpected directions that cut across research, rights and production.

What our infrastructure unlocked

Tracks & Fields approached OTTO’s brief as a wide-angle exploration, backed by infrastructure that isn’t limited to one discipline. They could research existing music, negotiate and clear famous tracks, commission custom composition and organise cover recordings – including multiple choir sessions – all within a single, coherent process and challenging timeline.

Key elements:

Broad, structured research: They drew inspiration from movie scores, ranging from traditional orchestral to very modern and experimental, and used an internal model that maps music genres to target audiences. One insight was OTTO customers’ strong love for 80s and 90s pop – not an obvious fit with the initial “instrumental, cinematic” guideline, but a potential creative lever.

First round of research (multiple proposals edited under the final film, separated by beeps; originally each a full-length proposal):

This round mostly followed the agency's guidelines, but also introduced wildcards: famous tracks and pieces with vocals. The agency's reaction made clear those wildcards mattered, they became especially excited about trying famous songs reimagined as choir versions.

Second round of research - famous tracks, closer in tone: In the second round, to help everyone imagine what could be done with well-known songs, Tracks & Fields avoided presenting the standard original recordings where possible and instead found versions closer to the desired tonality, pointing directly at how choir treatments could feel.

Second round of research:

Parallel custom composition: At the same time, they produced a piece of original music as a second direction, ensuring the creative didn't depend on one idea alone and that there was a strong bespoke option if rights or fit became problematic.

Original composition direction:

Rights, demos and choir production under one roof: The agency picked several favourites. Tracks & Fields then negotiated usage rights for the copyrights, recorded choir demos to hear how the chosen songs would work exactly in the film context, and finally organised the full choir recordings once everyone was confident in the direction.

Final film:

Because research, rights, composition and recording all lived inside one infrastructure, the process stayed coherent even as it moved across very different musical paths.

The result

Tracks & Fields's integrated approach made it possible to turn an open brief into a highly crafted, emotionally precise soundtrack: a choir-driven version of a popular song that felt both cinematic and intimate, perfectly aligned with a Christmas narrative about time and presence.

The film went on to win numerous awards for Best Use of Music, including Gold at Ciclope and the Golden Award of Montreux, Silver at ADC, Bronze at the Clios, and shortlists at One Show, New York Festivals, Cresta Awards, Eurobest, Music & Sound Awards and the German Advertising Film Award. It became the most talked-about Christmas campaign in Germany that year, and the full-length version of the song was downloaded around 70,000 times.

The agency's trust in a single, end-to-end music partner meant there was no need to juggle multiple vendors. When the creative director was moved to tears hearing the pre-final version, everyone knew the journey across research, rights and production had landed exactly where it needed to.

If you want your next campaign to utilize its full creative potential, from emerging artists to

famous songs, from custom scores to choir covers, Tracks & Fields can hold the full process together so bold ideas stay executable.