

Benefits of using music in your business



Brand Perception

Music is an important factor when considering the way you wish your customers to perceive your business. The study below takes a look at the effects music can have on the image of a business.

Study: The study was conducted in a branch of Sports Division (a sport retail chain) to measure the extent to which customer's perception of the store rated when different styles of music were being played. Customers were asked to complete questionnaires.

Results: The responses indicated that, while customers declared music was unimportant, music actually influenced their perception of the store's atmosphere. Customers thought the store was 'cool and modern' when upbeat, fast tempo music was played, but when slow rock music was played customers thought the store was 'tired and dull'.

A. North, D. Hargreaves and J. McKendrick (1997) - The perceived importance of in-store music and its effects on store atmosphere

Music creates atmosphere

Music can be used to differentiate two otherwise similar establishments by producing variations in their atmosphere. This may allow the establishment to attract different types of customers.

Study: Customers were presented with a list of 11 characteristics, and were asked to rate the bar on each using a scale from 0 ('The bar definitely does not possess this characteristic') to 10 ('The bar definitely does possess this characteristic') depending on the type of music (or no music).

Results: The results provide clear evidence that different musical styles and also the volume of the music influenced customers' perception of the bar. The research provided some evidence that the nature of the customers' perceptions of the bar was related positively to their perception of the music. For example, the more that customers perceived the music as being 'invigorating', the more the bar was also perceived this way.

Dr A.C. North, David J. Hargreaves, and Jennifer McKendrick (1998)

Influence customer behaviour

By considering the music that you play you can influence the way your customers behave within your shop or store.

Study: The study involved monitoring the sales of French & German wine within a large supermarket. At alternate times French & German music was played.

Results: When French music was played the results showed that French wine outsold German wine 3:1. However when German music was played, German wine outsold French wine 2:1. When questioned, customers professed to being unaware of the effects.

A. North, D. Hargreaves and J. McKendrick (1997) – Instore music affects product choice

As well as the extra takings generated from entertainment events, music can also influence customer choice and how much they are prepared to spend, for example:

Study: Research was undertaken to investigate how stereotypical French and German music can influence the selection of French and German wines. Over a two week period French and German music was played on alternate days at an in-store display of evenly priced wines.

Results: French music led to French wines outselling German wines 3:1 and the German music led to the German wines outselling the French wines 2:1.

When customers were questioned leaving the store they were unaware of any effects and denied any influence from the music.

A. North, D. Hargreaves and J. McKendrick (1999) - The Influence of In-Store Music on Wine Selection

Attracting and prolonging customer visits

There is a link between tempo of music and the activity of customers in different settings.

Study: Slow and fast music was played in a supermarket and the time it took customers to move between two defined points in the store was measured.

Results: Customers moved slower when slow music was played, taking 128 seconds, and faster when fast music was played, taking 109 seconds. Interestingly and perhaps because of the longer time spent in store, more money was spent under the slower music condition.

Millman (1982)

Increase staff productivity

Playing music within your business can also affect your employees as well as your customers. By considering the tempo of the music that you play you can influence the speed in which your employees work.

Study : The study involved 72 staff working in a data input area of a voucher processing centre. Over the course of the three weeks staff were exposed to fast, slow and no music.

Productivity was assessed through two automated measures taken from the centre's computer system. These recorded the number of vouchers processed every half hour and the total number of vouchers processed each day.

Results : On the days when fast music was played, over 22% more vouchers had been processed against the days when slow music had been played. Over 12% more vouchers were processed on the days when fast music was played, against days when no music was played.

A. North, D. Hargreaves (1999) – Music Tempo, Productivity and Morale

Boost employee morale

It has been proven that playing music within your business can lead to a happier workforce.

Study: As part of the previous study employees were asked to complete a questionnaire at the end of each day, after being subjected to the different types of music. This was to determine if playing music within the workplace affected their morale.

Results: From the questionnaire that had been completed by employees throughout the three weeks of the study, it was clear to see that playing music within the workplace had a positive effect on levels of music. Below are some of the comments from the questionnaires:

When fast music was played:

"The music was very motivating"

"The music was really lively and improved work"

"There was a good atmosphere"

When no music was played:

"It was boring"

"I felt lethargic"

"Bring back the music"

A. North, D. Hargreaves (1999) – Music Tempo, Productivity and Morale

Enables customers relaxation

When visiting leisure and fitness clubs, whether it is a gym or a health spa, there are certain areas that are designed for relaxing in. Some gyms have in-house treatment centres which are designed for a relaxing experience. Also, in changing rooms and bar/restaurant areas this is an opportunity to relax after working out and socialise with others.

Study: A study performed on a sample group of 80 patients aged between 18 and 65, who were undergoing "a crown preparation procedure" with a dentist, highlighted the link between music and the increased levels of immunoglobulin A (IgA) in the listener. Saliva samples were taken before and after the procedure.

Results: Showed that listening to music during the procedure had a significant positive effect on the S-IgA (salivary immunoglobulin A) levels in females. However, there were no significant effects on the male participants. The researchers concluded that listening to music may significantly lower levels of anxiety and stress of female patients during such procedures.

Goff, L. C., Pratt, R. R. & Madrigal, J. L. (1997)