

Music is money - creating the right customer experience

In the current gloomy economic conditions, businesses have to create the unique in-store experience to attract and retain customers and most importantly - get the biggest share of the customer's shrinking wallet, says Craig Cesman, CEO of audio branding experts DMX Music Africa.

Creating the right customer experience is essential in that it takes a couple of seconds for consumers to decide whether to stay or leave your store.

Snap decisions

In his book, *Blink: The Power of Thinking Without Thinking*, author [Malcolm Gladwell](#) makes the point that people have the capacity to 'thin slice' - the ability to make snap decisions based on very narrow slices of information.

To illustrate this point, the book says Hollywood producer Brian Grazer, who has produced many of the biggest hit movies the past 20 years, used thin slicing in identifying Tom Hanks as a very talented actor. Hanks was then a virtually unknown, having only starred in the TV show *Bosom Buddies*.

"He came in and read for the movie *Splash*, and there in the moment, I can tell you just what I saw," Grazer says. In that instant he knew Hanks was special. Consumers can also tell in an instant if the store atmosphere is not up to scratch.

Connecting through music

According to Cesman, music is revolutionising the connection that retailers are making with consumers and helping to create environments where shoppers want to spend more and more time.

"Therefore if you play the wrong music, which has been proven to hurt sales, customers will be quick in making a decision to leave your store," says Cesman.

He points out that music evokes an emotional connection through the remembrance of a memory or a personal experience driving a strong personal connection between brands and consumers. "Music also acts as a strong consumer behavioural motivator, but also motivates and improves staff service," says Cesman.

Consumers won't stop spending

The South African consumer is currently under siege from the economic onslaught of high interest rates, galloping inflation, high-debt servicing costs and soaring fuel and food prices. But Cesman is adamant that consumers will not stop spending. However, they are likely to be more discerning in terms of where they spend their money and only those companies that offer the right customer experience will thrive.

The research

Cesman contends that the right music can go a long way in enhancing the customer experience and making the customer feel more comfortable. This much is borne out by a UK retail study titled [Store Atmospherics](#).

A key finding of the study is that the choice of music in a retail setting has serious consequences in the mind of the consumer in both positive and negative ways. Almost 20% of the respondents in the study said music has encouraged them to spend more time in a store; this result increases to 27% for shoppers between 21-39 years old.

However, Cesman points out that business should not only look at music when designing a comfortable atmosphere for consumers.

“It is the integration of all the atmospheric elements working together to benefit the shopping experience. It's a 360-degree approach ... but it incorporates staff attitude, the feel of the stores, the connection that customers have with the brand. Mu can play a role in all of these,” he concludes.

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