

## **Scientific evaluation of Sound Branding as an integrative part of brand management**

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ABSTRAKT: Sound Branding has undergone a dynamic development in the last five years. It includes all artificially produced sounds that were used arbitrarily and standardised until now. The potential lies in the creation of brand confirmed sounds that put the customer in a positive mood at every contact point and bind him to the brand. Sound Branding can contribute to the achievement of the goals of the brand management, so that a coordination of the Sound Branding to the identity of a brand is the basis. Still, the effect of Brand Sounds has hardly been researched yet, which is contradictory, but may be due to the fact that music is regarded matter of course. Due to this lack of research, it is difficult to give the acoustic part a similarly high ranking among brand managers like visual design. As the multi-sensory perception of a brand receives more understanding and Sound Branding also contributes to unconscious binding, the sensitivity for acoustic brand management is now developing as well. Due to the increasing knowledge about the effect of sounds, the purposeful usage of Sound Branding is gaining importance in the design and communication of the brand. Sounds have an activating effect, trigger emotions that intensify perception, and strengthen the brand in memory.

### **Introduction**

One could say Sound Branding is new but has much history. Already the church used sounds to identify and convey certain content several thousand years ago. Ringing bells were used among other things to signalize church services already

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back then. (Spehr, 2009). Similar instances could be found on historical town markets. There, the market vendors called out to raise interest for their products. (Tauchnitz, 1990).

Today, music is used to create a certain atmosphere in stores, however more than that even in television and radio advertisement. (Tauchnitz, 1990). Advertising content is underlined with music to increase the recognition value. Using music in advertisement spots is not a new thing in itself, but the strategic planning and control of it depending on the brand strategy is. (Steiner, 2009).

For brand managers, structured Sound Branding in the framework of the brand communication is an important aspect as it contributes to the influence of the consumers. (Groves, 2009). For a long time, the consistent enforcement of acoustic brand management was neglected. Sounds and music were mainly used only based on a subjective feeling. (Konrad, 2007). Due to the increasing knowledge about the effect of sounds, the purposeful usage of Sound Branding is gaining importance in the design and communication of the brand. Sounds have an activating effect, trigger emotions that intensify perception, and strengthen the brand in memory. (North - Hargreaves 2008).

Sound Branding has undergone a dynamic development in the last five years. It includes all artificially produced sounds that were used arbitrarily and standardised until now. The potential lies in the creation of brand conform sounds that put the customer in a positive mood at every contact point and bind him to the brand. Sound Branding can contribute to the achievement of the goals of the brand management, so that a coordination of the Sound Branding to the identity of a brand is the basis. (Steiner 2009).

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### **Changed communication conditions as an approach for Sound Branding**

Due to the constantly increased number of brands, the decreasing quality differences and the flood of information on the consumers, brands must set

themselves apart from the masses over their image in order to be perceived by the consumer. (Steiner 2009). In order to gain the attention of the consumer it is necessary that the brand offers the largest benefit at this certain point in time. (Krugmann – Langeslag 2009). This is where Sound Branding comes in. It creates an emotional added value that has a positive influence on the brand evaluation, increases recognition of the brand and has a positive effect on the brand image. In order to convey criteria for positive brand evaluation it is advantageous if these match the existing brand scheme.

Requirement for the mediation of a holistic brand image is a coordinated brand communication strategy. The many communicative measures are coordinated with each other and with the brand. The characteristics of a brand that are determined in its identity are transformed into acoustic elements in order to form a matching acoustic brand identity. (Steiner 2009).

In order to counteract the reduced advertising efficiency due to limited perception capacity of the consumers, Sound Branding Elements can be purposefully used in consistent acoustic brand management. Sound Branding has an active effect also during unconscious sensory perception, as one cannot turn off hearing. Acoustic stimuli are characterized by low cognitive processes and can therefore be easier processed than visual stimuli. (Treasure 2010).

Especially in case of consumers with low involvements, the unconsciously conveyed emotions can have a positive effect on further processing. (Kroeber-Riel, Weinberg, Gröppel-Klein, 2009). Due to the low quality differences, brands differentiate themselves mainly over communication, which must pose to be the emotional added value for the consumer. As music triggers emotional effects it is ideal to link emotions to the brand resp. with the positioning content of the brand, in order to trigger matching associations with the brand. It is important to match the sounds to the brand so that sounds do not have a negative effect and damage the image. An attractive look as it is already indispensable in visual design is necessary to avoid reactance. (Bronner 2009).

Due to the increasing experience orientation of the consumers, designing a brand world that allows the consumer to experience it with all senses is important. (Meffert, Twardawa, Wildner, 2001). The increased multisensory addressing emphasizes the necessity of strategic acoustic brand management in which the acoustic stimuli are attuned to each other and to other stimuli. (Bronner, K. (2009).

### **Relevant literature as a basis to determine the term Sound Branding**

As structured Sound Branding is still at the beginning of its growth, the terms are not yet thoroughly defined. Mainly, the synonyms Audio

Branding, Sonic Branding or Acoustic Branding are used. (Demirci, C., Köckritz, J. (2010), page 25 f) The article on hand uses the uniform term Sound Branding, as Sound is the general title for everything relating to hearing. (Steiner, P. (2009), page 31 ff) It includes all acoustic events like noises, sounds and language. (Raffaseder, H. (2009), page 103) Sound Branding includes the creation process of an acoustic brand appearance by the coordinated use of Sound Elements. The brand receives a sound character based on the characteristics of the brand identity. (North, A., Hargreaves, D. (2008), page 265)

These are assigned matching sound elements in order to give the brand an acoustic personality. The Sound Branding Process encompasses the design of all acoustic elements that are associated with the brand or are communicated by it. (Steiner, P. (2009), page 36 f) It describes the integration of Sound Branding elements in all measures of design and communication that serve differentiation to the competition, recognition and memorability of the brand. Sound Branding can be used throughout the entire customer experience chain. Next to acoustic communication, it includes the design of product sounds based on the brand values. Like the design of the brand name, the visual logo or the product, it can contribute to marking an order. In order to guarantee a holistic brand perception it is necessary to integrate

Sound Branding in the brand management and to rank it similarly high as the visual brand appearance. (Steiner, P. (2009), page 31 f) Addressing a further sense reinforces the brand message. Acoustic brand management describes the strategic process of acoustic brand communication. It includes the buildup, the realization, communication and maintenance of an acoustic identity, the Sound Identity. Acoustic brand management targets the creation of a positive acoustic brand image. (Steiner, P. (2009), page 37)

The acoustic identity serves the orientation for the usage of the sound elements. It forms the starting point for brand presentation. (Bronner, K., Hirt, R. (2009), page 12) If the acoustic identity relates to the entire company, this is called Corporate Sound as pendent to Corporate Design. As part of the Corporate Identity it includes the sound design for the entire company. (Straka, M. (2007), page 10) It is derived from Sound Branding. (Westermann, C.-F. (2010), S. 33)

The Brand Sound draws the attention to the brand and reflects its identity. Among other things, the Brand Sound includes the Sound Logo, the Brand Song and the Brand Voice. (Bronner, K., Hirt, R. (2009), page 11) Requirement for successful Sound Branding is the integration of the Corporate resp. Brand Sound in the Corporate resp. Brand Identity and their harmonious coordination. (Steiner, P. (2009), page 37 f) This identity approach is important so that sounds can trigger emotions and associations with the brand. Therefore, following brand

management goals can be guaranteed. As all events outgoing and perceived from a brand are a part of it, acoustic stimuli also belong to the brand, which is why they are coordinated with the brand identity. The characteristics of a brand identity that include the origin, competences, vision, values, personality and the type of service of the brand are realized in a Brand Sound Identity and are expressed in the Brand Sound. (Krugmann, D., Langeslag, P. (2009), page 70 ff) The Sound Identity includes sound values like pace, rhythm, instruments and melody. (Bronner, K. (2009), S. 83) The determination of these parameters determines the frame for continuous usage of the elements and possible variations.

### **Goals of Sound Branding**

Sound Branding serves the identification of recognition of the brand in the framework of its communication. (Spehr, G. (2008), page 193) by linking the Sound Branding elements with the existing brand scheme associations to the brand can be triggered upon stimulation. (Roth, S. (2005), page 95) The music can be used as stimulation or association. Sound Branding sets the brand apart from competitive brands. (Bronner, K. (2009), page 95)

It directly mediates information about the brand in a verbal and instrumental way. As the intake of information is also done unconsciously, brand knowledge can be consistently expanded. (Groves, 2009). The increasing brand value contributes to the achievement of global brand management goals. (Schmidt, D., Vest, P. (2010), page 53)

Beyond that Sound Branding increases the perception of the brand by linking sounds with the positioning content. It serves the anchoring of brand experiences in the subconscious of the consumers. Brand Sounds support the increase of attention. They target the stimulation of activating and cognitive processes and the formation of preferences. (Tauchnitz, J. (1990), page 5) Sound Branding is used to bind the consumer by conveying a sense of well-being. Pleasant sounds that mirror the brand identity serve the identification of the company reps. the brand.

Every point of contact between the brand and the consumer has the potential to trigger positive emotions and to create an emotional added value for the consumer. Instead of standard and unfitting melodies on hold, they can leave a positive impression with a pleasant sound. Background music in the supermarket supports longer stays of customers, company-own ringtones increases employee satisfaction.

Product sounds are used systematically to convey the benefit and quality of the product additionally over the dimension of sound. (Kastner, S. (2008), page. 2) The goals of Sound Branding are based on the brand management goals, as

Sound Branding is used in the framework of brand management. (Steinhagen, C. (2008), S. 27) This means in order to successfully create an acoustic image of a brand, the sound design must be based on the brand identity. Goal is the increase of the image and thus the brand value. The binding of consumers and employees to a brand serves the support of turnover and contributes to the success of the company. (Krugmann, D., Langeslag, P. (2009), page 71 ff) A variety of Sound Branding elements contributes to the achievement of the determined goals due to the coordinated application at every point of contact.

### **Elements of Sound Branding**

The Sound Logo is the acoustic image of the visual logo that serves the identification of the brand, triggers associations with the brand and conveys emotions. (Groves, J. (2009), page 47) Due to the exact design of simple and short series of sounds, it targets fast learning and remembering. (Steiner, P. (2009), page 39 ff) The length of the Sound Logo is usually one to three seconds. (Kilian, K. (2010), S. 49) In order to facilitate learning, the acoustic logo is communicated in combination with the visual logo and also serves to mark offers – on an acoustic level. (Steinhagen, C. (2008), page 27) The compliance with the visual logo triggers facilitated associations when one of the two logos appears. In order to successfully create a Sound Logo it should be flexible in design and unique compared to competitive brands and match the brand. The fit of the brand is guaranteed by the brand characteristics serving as basis for the design of the Sound Logo and the brand message is therefore conveyed in just a few seconds. (Steiner, 2009). With the characteristic of uniqueness the protection of the brand plays a role, in order to create differentiation to competitive brands and protect it against imitators. (Bronner, K. (2009), page 84) Among other things, the flexibility refers to the adaptation of the instruments, the music style and the pace to the different situations and areas of application. The variation may only be done to the extent that the Sound Logo remains recognizable and the effect and statement are maintained. (Steiner, P. (2009), page 39 ff) The Telekom for example successfully derived a Sound Logo from the visual logo, consisting of three dots, the T, and a further dot to the right of the T. It consists of five tones in sequence, whereas the fourth tone for the T is slightly higher. This is a simple but effective realization as it is very easy to remember. The continuous use of the Sound Logo in all channels in which the brand is communicated, and the variation of the instruments depending on the area of application has created a well-known acoustic logo that prevents negative reactions due to variation. (Bronner, K. (2009), S. 84 f)

A special form of the Sound Logo is Jingles. They mainly occur as toned advertisement slogans, supported by melody and rhythm, like the Haribo

Advertisement Slogan „Haribo macht Kinder froh und Erwachsene ebenso“. (Steiner, P. (2009), page 43 f) This simple illustration supports the intake and spreading of information and leads to fast recognition. (Ringe, C. (2005), page 40 f) Next to jingles with singing, they can also be designed completely instrumental, which make a clear differentiation to the Sound Logo more difficult. (Bronner, K. (2009), page 86)

The Brand Song is a sound element that has the structure of a song.

Among other things, this includes a verse and chorus. (Steiner, P. (2009), page 45 f) The Brand Song usually goes over the entire time of the advertisement. It strengthens the brand message and influences the attitude of the consumers. (Bronner, K. (2009), page 86.) The Brand Song is created by adapting famous pieces of music to the brand and situation or is composed explicitly for the brand based on the brand identity. (Treasure, J. (2010), page 70.) The orientation by the characteristics of the identity creates a positive effect, as the brand and song are linked with each other and if one of the two elements is perceived it triggers associations with the brand.

The Brand Song „Sail away“, song by Joe Cocker, was attuned to the brand attributes freedom and adventure that are also illustrated with the sailing ship. The musician underlines the holistic brand appearance, as the same characteristics are associated with his coarse voice.

The Brand Voice is a significant Sound Branding element that can be used in many ways at every point of contact with the consumer and thus increases the recognition of the brand. (Treasure, J. (2010), page 70.) It can be used with or without visual appearance. Voices without visual appearance are called off-voices. The Brand Voice is used for the spoken brand name or advertisement slogan among other things, and used in combination with the visual and acoustic logo. (Lehmann, M. (2009), page 99 ff.) It speaks for the brand and embodies it. Like with the Brand Song the brand is associated with the personality of the speaker voice and vice versa. The characteristics and expression of the Brand Voice characterize the tonality and the basic tone of the advertisement. They have an effect on the attention of the consumer and trigger emotions that have a positive influence on the perception and the processing of information. (Bronner, K. (2009), page 87.) The effect of the Brand Voice depends on the awareness for the consumer and his experiences with it and on the medium itself. (Lehmann, M. (2009), page 99 ff.) Requirement for an influential Brand Voice is the fit of personality of the Brand Voice and the personality of the brand. (Steiner, P. (2009), page 47.) To achieve the desired effect, determining the speaking rhythm, the intonation and the pace is important. In order to guarantee the fit to the brand identity and continuous realization in different media, the Brand Voice is attuned to the brand identity like all other branding elements. It should be designed such that it can unfold its effect

in the branding elements of the acoustic brand management and is attuned to it. (Bronner, K. (2009), page 87.) The voice of the Ikea-speaker for example is unique due to the Swedish accent and immediately triggers associations with the Swedish furnishing ideas by Ikea. (Roden, I. (2009), page 73.)

### *Areas of application*

Sound Branding can be used in different media with which the brand is communicated. Among others, it is used in classic radio or television advertisement, in telephone holding lines, on the Internet, at fairs, in shops or directly on the product. The selection of the right Sound Branding elements therefore depends on the medium in which the brand appears, on the brand itself, and on the content that is conveyed. Thus, the medium and element must be determined for every brand and context.

Sound Branding in radio advertisement is assigned a significant effect. The intake of information usually takes place unconsciously. Consistent acoustic brand design can increase the awareness and convey content. Fast recognition is learned through unconscious allocation of the sounds to the brands upon repetitive presentation.

The buildup of intended atmospheres through sound design is very important. The music influences how long customers stay in the store, and gives the store an individual personality and recognition value depending on the instrumentalisation. (Steiner, P. (2009), page 49 ff.)

The communication of the brand over the actual product may contain musical elements over packaging and sounds when using the product. (Kilian, 2010). A differentiation between the acoustic product design which deals with the sounds when using a product and the Sound Branding on products within brand communication is not easy. The lines are thin and tend towards Sound Branding that conveys brand characteristics.

For example, psychoacoustic analysts examine the idea sound of an engine at Porsche and design it so that it mirrors the values of the brand. The brand stands for sportiness, which the engine also supports with its typical Porsche sound. (Bronner, K. (2009), page 82 f.) Next to the external touch points the internal contact points are important for the identification of the employees with the brand and the company. This can be done by a company hymn at employee celebrations, through music on the elevator or by an individual sound for turning on and off computers. (Steiner, P. (2009), page 49 ff.)

### *Sound Branding in advertisement*

Especially in television advertising, music takes over significant tasks. It conveys emotions and creates an intended atmosphere. (Pepels, W. (2005), page 107.) It gives the visual content acoustic support so that images and matching sounds are linked. The characters of brands can be supported with sounds upon visual appearance. As images can also trigger associations in speech, linking is advantageous for recognition. (Schwender, C. (2001), page 123 ff.) In summary, music is used in advertisement to increase awareness and trigger positive attitudes, which have a positive effect on further information processing and product evaluation. (Klüh, H. (1998), page 131 f.)

Not every sound that is used in advertisement is a Brand Sound. For example music joins scenes in advertisement and balances the sense of time by varying the pace. (Schwender, C. (2001), page 123 ff.) Sound Branding elements in advertisement are these elements that are linked with the brand identity and mirror them. They make remembering the brand easier. A structured Sound Branding process is indispensable for controlled usage of different elements in the areas of application.

### *Sound Branding Process*

Sound Branding describes the organization and realization of attuned sound elements based on the brand identity. As strategic Sound Branding is only done professionally by companies and Sound Branding agencies since recent times there are no fixed design rules like with visual design. (Kastner, S. (2009), page 120.) Until now, the consumer is simply addressed on the visual level and receives inconsistent brand information regarding acoustics. (Kastner, S. (2008), page 2.)

A structured process is therefore necessary to ideally realize the brand identity in an acoustic form and convey it to the consumer in a uniform manner. The complex Sound Branding process includes the creation of a Sound

Identity. (Roden, I. (2009), page 75.) The derivation of this identity serves the consistent and uniform addressing of the consumers in all relevant media the brand communicates with.

It gives the brand added value that leads to image increase and leaves recognition characteristics in every acoustic medium. (Steiner, P. (2009), page 54 f.) The exact course of creating a Sound identity varies and depends on the company and the agency that support the process.

Within the company the brand management and designers of the brand are integrated in the process to elaborate the brand elements to be realized. The support of a Sound Branding Agency is required for professional realization of acoustic elements via musical parameters. Agencies usually work together with internal

psychologists, creatives, composers and external market research institutes. The agency assumes the mediator role between brand experts and composers that translate the brand identity into acoustic elements.

The Sound Branding process shall be divided into three phases preparation, performance and implementation. The preparation phase is done by a Sound Branding Agency in cooperation with the company.

### *Preparation*

Prior to the development of a new Sound Identity the former brand shall be reflected and analyzed. The brand identity as image of the company is compared with the brand image from a consumer viewpoint and deviations are recorded. (Roden, I. (2009), page 76.)

If sounds have been used in association with the brand, they should be examined and possibly adapted if necessary. (Ringe, C. (2005), page 57.) The most important visual, acoustic, olfactory, tactile and gustatory brand characteristics and conveyed brand images are determined. Subsequently, it needs to be examined whether and how these are to be realized into acoustic characteristics. The characteristics must be designed such that they trigger associations with the brand. (Kastner, S. (2009), page 126.) The acoustic positioning is determined. The next phase includes the analysis of competition. Existing Sound identities of the competition are focused on and looked at to determine options for differentiation. (Ringe, C. (2005), page 57.) Based on this, the previously determined acoustic positing is corrected.

Subsequently, the media in which sounds can be used and that corresponding to the technical specifications are determined.

The timeframe for the completion of the Brand Sound, the budget and personnel and legal basics are agreed upon between the agency and the company. (Kastner, S. (2009), page 126.)

### *Performance*

In the phase of performance the results of the agency are presented to the responsible parties in the company and discussed. Subsequently, the goals of the Sound Brandings are determined and the musical parameters of the single Sound Branding elements are defined.

The concrete tasks and goals of the communication can for example include triggering emotions and fast recognition of the brand. The brand benefit and the functions through the sound realization are defined. Orientation, trust or satisfaction can be beneficial factors. (Kastner, S. (2009), page 126.)

In the determination of the musical parameters by orientation by the identity characteristics, cooperation with music psychologists is recommended. The

right selection of the sound elements can be done based on their effects on the consumer. A coordination of the single elements to each other and on the brand identity is necessary for a uniform perception. (Steiner, P. (2009), page 55 ff.) Prior to production tests are conducted with the musical parameters like rhythms, tone sequences and timbres.

In creative briefing, all information that is relevant for the production of the Sound elements is summarized and forwarded to the internal and external sound designers. The information includes the background of the creation of the Brand Sound and the objective target of its application. Beyond that, an exact description of the target groups and the tasks and requirements that the new Brand Sound must fulfil. All Sound Brand elements are produced based on these briefings.

### *Realization*

In the realization phase, a comprehensive and representative market research analysis is planned and conducted. Objects of the research are the associations triggered by the Sound Branding. The Sound Branding elements are corrected based on the results. In order to guarantee consistent usage of the Brand Sound and to prevent false applications, rules for usage are determined and recorded in a manual. Different variations of the single elements for different contexts should also be recorded there in order to ensure the determined functions and effects. Regular controls ensure smooth usage of the Sound Branding elements. (Roden, I. (2009), page 78.)

Up to two years may go by in order to create a comprehensive sound appearance of the brand. A conflict point in the process is the rethinking of the agencies and companies. The responsibility of the design of the music lies with the professional Sound Branding agencies that work together with sound designers and composers instead of advertising agencies as before.

As music is able to trigger significant effects, professional sound design in cooperation with psychologists is necessary. Sound design based on the brand identity is guaranteed with the cooperation with the companies. Those responsible for the brand in companies must internalise the necessity to employ sound experts. The effects of music may be known, but it often fails due to the budgets not being provided.

A further significant point is a detailed briefing and the analysis of the brand, so that the sounds correspond to the requirements of the brand. Brand values and sound designations must be defined in detail, coordinated by the agency with those responsible for the brand and presented in samples. (Kastner, S. (2009), page 121 ff.) The described process includes the ideal and holistic realization of Sound Branding. Many companies use single elements like Sound Logos and Brand Songs. A comprehensive realization of different Sound Branding

Elements including Brand Voice, background music and further elements conveys a brand image that is different from the competition in many ways.

A positive example is the Telekom. The Telekom determined all touch points, Sound Branding elements and their context related variation options in a manual. This ensures a varying and at the same time consistent presentation of the brand. (Demirci, C., Köckritz, J. (2010), page 24.) With the versatile usage the Telekom achieves the right effect for every contact point.

### *Functionality of the Sound Brandings*

Sound Branding describes the process of creation as well as the care of an acoustic brand identity. Musical parameters are determined based on the brand characteristics. They form the basis for the functionality of Sound Branding.

Among other things, musical parameters are used purposefully to convey emotions. Hereafter the effect of music is explained as starting point of Sound Branding. (Steiner, P. (2009), page 36 f.)

An acoustic stimulation filters acoustic characteristics like pitch and timbre within ten to hundred milliseconds, which allows nonverbal acoustic information to be processed faster than a verbal acoustic message. This fact emphasizes the enormous potential of acoustic design next to visual design. The linking of acoustic stimuli to whole images, like for example melodies is done within one hundred to two hundred milliseconds. This means that music can unfold its effect within the shortest time and it therefore ideal for usage in the framework of brand communication.

Music conveys information that can be rational or emotional. (Krugmann, D., Pallus, D. P. (2008), page 27 f.) It triggers moods and images. (Levitin, D. J. (2006), page 191.) It is general knowledge that music can change or support moods. (Bruhn, H. (2009), page 21.) This phenomenon becomes visible already when listening to a CD. Single musical parameters can trigger different emotions and moods and create intended atmospheres. (Demirci, C., Köckritz, J. (2010), page 13.) Music is usually perceived as pleasant if the listener knows it and the musical parameters correspond to the familiar pieces. (Schramm, H. (2008), page 141.) To trigger a happy mood, paces can be fast, the rhythm accentuated and the timbre can be light. If the design rules are considered, it is also possible to transfer this onto Sound Branding. (Steinhagen, C. (2008), page 36 ff.)

Music is not only responsible for the unconscious transporting of emotions, but also supports the processing of spoken information. (Steiner, P. (2009), page 73.) Because of this, words that follow a musical sequence are processed better and faster if they fit to the music. Based on the effect of single musical parameters the music is selected purposefully in order to support the conveyance of important information relating to the brand. (Steinhagen, C. (2008), page 28 ff.)

Music is a strongly emotional way of communication, which increases the probability of influencing the consumer in combination with the visual presentation. (Steinhagen, C. (2008), page 28 ff.) As one has to listen, the consumers are influenced unconsciously, sometimes also consciously. (Ringe, C. (2005), page 31.) This advantage over visual presentation serves the faster learning of the brand and its message, as less repetitions are needed. (Steinhagen, C. (2008), page 28 ff.) Music can have a negative effect if the music takes attention away from the brand because it activates too strongly, or does not match. Ideally, the music emphasizes the core message. (Brosius, H.-B., Fahr, A. (1998), page 43.) Beyond that music stimulates the nervous system, which is responsible among other things for the regulation of the pulse and breathing. (Treasure, J. (2010), page 67.) Thus, music stimulates the planning of actions, like for example dancing and singing along. As the music is heard as a whole, attention must be paid that the single musical parameters match when putting it all together. The music heard as a whole is perceived differently and strongly than its single parts. (Köhler, W., Pratt C. C. (1971), page 7 f.)

Due to lacking literature about Sound Branding and the fact that music in combination with the brand and its identity has previously been used mainly in advertisement, the following section explains the functionality of music in advertisement. Conclusions regarding the functionality of Sound Branding are based on these functionalities. In advertisement, acoustic elements interact with other design elements, which may cause the overall effect of the advertisement as a whole may deviate from the effects of single components. Music in advertisement may be part of the acoustic brand communication if it is attuned to the brand. This effect cannot be transferred to the functionality of Sound Branding to one hundred percent. (North, A., Hargreaves, D. (2008), page 265.) The effect of Sound Branding goes beyond this. The reason is the variety of the areas of application. Next to the consumers, employees can also be infrequence for example. (Bronner, K. (2009), page 90.) Sound Branding serves the construction of an emotional connection between the brand and the target groups. Strategically designed sounds trigger associations and communicate brand content over sounds. (Spehr, G. (2009), page 32.) Sound Branding is used to generate awareness and emotions as recognition characteristics and to shape preferences regarding the brand. (Steiner, P. (2009), page 78.)

### *Activation*

Musically designed advertisement spots show a higher activation potential than advertisement without music. The activating effect that is allocated to music is probably based on the musical parameters like rhythm and pace, as fast rhythms

increase attention for example and trigger vegetative reactions. These may be an increased heart rate or blood pressure. Subsequently, literature talks about possible activation. (Steinhagen, C. (2008), page 30.) After repeated presentation it could be assumed that the reaction could wear off, which is objected by music psychology. Minor keys trigger a surprise effect when they are heard for the first time, initiating an activation. Hearing it more often, the consumer acts like the first time he heard it, as Minor keys are generally unusual and create a sad mood. (Schwender, C. (2001), page 118 ff.)

In case of an ideal fit between the design of the music, the text and the image, the activating effect is increased. This is founded on the increasing effect when addressing several senses at the same time. Thus the acoustic stimulation increases the effect on consumers in coordination with other stimuli. (Lindstrom, M. (2007), page 166.)

### *Emotions*

Next to the activating function of the Sound Branding, emotions can be conveyed and conditioning processes can be linked with the brand. (Ringe, C. (2005), page 33.) Tauchnitz calls the basis for this assumption the hemisphere model.

The human brain is divided into two halves, each responsible for processing different information. The processing of spoken information is mainly done in the left hemisphere. If the information is visual or musical, they are usually processed unconsciously in the right half, which is also important for the further processing of emotions. Harmonious music, melodies and rhythms are usually processed in the right half. If the degree of cognitive activities increases as usually happens in people with musical knowledge, the left half is used. (Tauchnitz, J. (1990), page 31 f.) It is not possible to separate the processing exactly, as the processing of spoken or musical information always uses both halves of the brain – with to different extents. This processing depends on the involvement and attention of the person listening. (Steinhagen, C. (2008), page 28 ff.) Processing musical and emotional impressions in the same hemisphere enables the mediation of emotions through musical parameters. (Roth, S. (2005), page 105.) By using Brand Sounds, desired emotions are triggered that associate brand characteristics. (Steinhagen, C. (2008), page 28 ff.) The simplified hemisphere model is partially doubted due to the complexity of emotions. (Kenning, P. (2007), page 24.) Addressing both halves of the brain through spoken and visual design or sounds is most efficient for processing information. (Linxweiler, R. (2004), page 47.)

Emotional acoustic stimuli trigger needs beyond that, that the brand resp. the product can satisfy. Emotionally designed advertisements are remembered better, for example, as emotional stimuli have an activating effect and positive influence

on the further processing of information. If the Brand Sound triggers an activating effect, this can also be transferred to improved processing and remembering information. (Brosius, H.-B., Fahr, A. (1998), page 63 ff.)

The composer Wüsthoff works on design characteristics of songs. He talks about an emotional settling time that the listener needs to be emotionally addressed by the music. In average, this time is between one and two seconds. (Wüsthoff, K. (1999), page 9 ff.) Due to the emotional charging of background music, Brand Songs and Jungles, emotions can be triggered purposefully. They can be varied by different musical parameters. Joy for example can be created by a face pace, an accentuated rhythm and a light timbre. (Steinhagen, C. (2008), page 38.) The emotions triggered by the music are associated with the brand. (Roden, I. (2009), page 66.)

According to Koelsch, simple emotions can be triggered within milliseconds. He emotions that are triggered by an emotion are mainly of a more complex nature, like for example the sportiness of a BMW, so that the sound elements often do not trigger emotions right away. Sound Logos that are usually only one to three seconds long target the activation of the consumer and the recognition of the brand by linking with the existing brand scheme. Music in advertisement usually includes longer songs like Brand

Songs, background music or jungles as more complex emotions can be expressed.

### *Perception and memory*

The perception of a brand or product is positively influenced by the additional application of music. Depending on the music style the music has a certain character that can support the brand identity. Beyond that, the music taste also has influence on the brand perception. A negative mindset towards the used Sound Branding elements can be transferred to the brand and its image. The positive and differentiated perception of a brand in target group oriented and identity conform usage of the single elements is advantageous. (Tauchnitz, J. (1997), page 170 f.) If these are used consistently, they can be learned and linked with the brand. (Krugmann, D., Pallus, D. P. (2008), page 28.) Sound Branding elements promote the recognition of the brand, as brand characteristics are associated with the sounds when they are heard. This effect is partially disputed, as capacities in the brain are occupied when listening to the sounds that limit the intake of brand content. (Ringe, C. (2005), page 30.) For example, studies of Meißner show a poorer memory performance with the integration of music in the advertising message. Influential factors like basic activation of the consumer and involvement were not sufficiently considered. Most studies confirm improved memory when using music. (Tauchnitz, J. (1997), page 169.) As Brand Sounds

are mainly perceived unconsciously, they do not block any capacities in the brain with cognitive processes. (Ringe, C. (2005), page 31.) as several studies show, music has a positive effect mainly during unconscious processing, meaning with little attention. (Tauchnitz, J. (1990), page 25 f.) Jingles promote memory, as the sung text triggers a catchy song. If the text is left out, usually the instrumental version will be enough to trigger association with the brand, resp. the text. Next to the Jungles, using easy rhythms is effective because the listener does not need to construct new forms due to the even arrangement and is therefore able to learn the associated brand associations faster. (North, A., Hargreaves, D. (2008), page 256 f.) The key characterizes the listening behavior of the listeners, if it is composed in Major. (De la Motte-Haber, H. (2002), page 245.)

Advertisements using unclear melodies are perceived by the consumers as more pleasant and exciting according to studies by Stout and Lecken by than those using clear melodies. This allows the conclusion that lower involvement resp. unconscious processing of the music generates a more positive effect. (Steinhagen, C., (2008), page 56 ff.)

### *Mindset and behaviour*

The extent to which Sound Branding can change the mindset depends on the degree of musical emphasis of the brand message resp. message in the advertisement. Background music for example does not support content but generates a pleasant atmosphere. (Tauchnitz, J. (1997), page 170 f.)

To achieve economic goals that show in buying behavior among other things, a positive mindset of the consumer must be generated first. The advertisement effect model ELM handles the influence of communication on the mindset of the consumer that was subjected to the communication.

Consumers with little involvement require especially characteristic formal features of communication, reps. Music in order to influence the mindset. (Steinhagen, C. (2008), page 38 f.) Studies by Park and Young prove the improved effect with little involvement as well as support of the message in content and form through music. (Tauchnitz, J. (1997), page 170.) This is especially important in the media TV and radio. This, music is one of many factors and may contribute to changing the mindset, as it triggers emotions that have influence on the further processing of information. (Steinhagen, C. (2008), page 38 f.)

If the consumers show high involvement this leads to a cognitive relief in the processing of information if the design of music and the brand message are coordinated. Te purposeful usage of music can serve the influence of consumer behaviour. (Treasure, J. (2010), page 68.) By conducting studies, a prolonged stay in restaurants or shops was generated when using slower music. (Demirci, C., Köckritz, J. (2010), page 12 f.)

In general it seems difficult to prove the effect of music in advertisement.

Especially in case of low involvement it unfolds its effect. (Roden, I. (2009), page 65.) In case of high involvement an ideal fit of the music and the content to be conveyed must be given to achieve a facilitated cognitive processing of the message. (Roth, S (2005), page 124.) Newer tests regarding the effect of Sound Branding resp. of music in advertisement are rare. The problems of measuring the effect of Sound Branding elements lies in the complexity of musical parameters like pace, rhythm and melody. As these are combined in the framework of Sound Branding and are viewed as a whole, the effect of single musical parameters and therefore deviate from the overall effect. Thus, a generally valid statement is difficult. Beyond that the combination of several Sound Branding elements and depending on the medium further design parameters creates an overall impression whose single components again achieve deviating effects. (Tauchnitz, J. (1990), page 15.) The effect of Brand Sounds is influenced by several factors that must be considered in the design. Next to the design of the musical parameters it depends on the basic activation, the involvement of the consumer and on the personal taste of music. The number of contacts for the holistically perceived brand can influence the memory effect. (Schramm, H. (2008), page 146 f.)

It can be clearly confirmed that music has activating effects and triggers emotions. As supplementary communication measure it promotes the differentiation of the brand and its message and builds up market knowledge. (Steiner, P. (2009), page 81.) The emotional positioning makes sense if the functional characteristics of a brand have no differentiating function. (Tauchnitz, J. (1997), page 171.) As Sound Branding is a young discipline there are no long-term studies that can confirm the effect in different media. (Schramm, H. (2008), page 147.) In order to achieve positive effects the consideration of the requirements is necessary and are shown in the following section.

### **Recommendations for action and requirements to the acoustic design of a brand**

The requirements to a successful realization of the Sound Branding elements depend on the respective brand. In general it is necessary that the sound elements draw attention and activate. The activation can also be done unconsciously.

The fit between the Sound Brand elements and the brand is very relevant. The elements communicate the characteristics and values of a brand in acoustic form and should not contradict them. (Groves, J. 2009). They serve as an anchor for activation of associations and emotions towards the brand.

In order for the acoustic image of the brand to differentiate from the competition, it is necessary to pay attention to a unique and distinct design that can

be easily remembered and recognized by the consumer. A distinct and short logo contributes to this. (Groves 2009). An easily understandable design of the acoustic elements promotes the conveyance of emotions. In order to prevent reactance and drowning in the mass of competition, it is important that the brand adapts to time. The same is valid for the acoustic image. Flexible adaptation options to the respective context and to the area of application keep the acoustic identity up to date. (Groves 2009). Possible sound variations can be recorded in a manual. A continuous mediation of the brand values can therefore be guaranteed.

In order to sustainably strengthen the brand message it is important to address several senses of the consumer.

Requirement for a holistic perception is the integration of Sound Branding into the brand management and the coordination of all design elements. Every point of contact to the consumer provides the opportunity to strengthen the brand impression. Due to the integration of Sound Branding into brand management, the build up and care become the tasks of managing persons. Due to this, decisions can measure up to their significance and fast realization can follow.

As the consumer is subjected to sounds everyday and all the time, a reduction of the Sound Branding to the essential is advantageous. Negative reactions can be triggered by loud noises. The goal is to create a pleasant mood, so that also quietness and be used as an element to escape everyday sounds that are intrusive.

The understanding of music varies in different cultures. Apart from the basic emotions, emotions also vary in intensity and direction. In order to prevent negative reactions consideration of cultural understanding is necessary when designing the acoustic brand image. The described requirements form the basis for the benefit that companies can generate from using Sound Branding. (Krugmann, D., Langeslag, P. (2009), page 76.)

A successful Sound Branding gives each company a valuable added value. A Brand Sound creates the corresponding brand image and triggers emotions that can promote a more intensive perception and faster processing of the brand information. The brand experience is a main success factor to create preferences. (Steiner, P. (2009), page 53.) It can promote loyalty on part of the consumer, which signalises an increased price willingness. (Kilian, K. (2010), page 52 f.)

The Brand Sound poses to be a unique selling characteristics that sets the brand apart from competition and provides the consumer with a multisensory emotional brand experience. (Westermann, C.-F. (2010), page 33 f.) This recognition characteristic facilitates learning about the brand. The consumer must be confronted with the brand less frequently to recognize it or be able to remember it. Advertising efficiency is optimized through Sound Branding, as less costs are generated. Beyond that a successful Sound Branding leads to increased identification on part of the consumer and the employees with the

brand. In summary, the value of the brand grows with a consistent acoustic brand management. (Steiner, P. (2009), page 53 f.)

The effectiveness of Sound Branding is partially questioned. A previously lacking integration of music scientists that compose the matching sounds based on the brand identity does not allow the assessment of exploited potential. The cooperation of them with the brand managers is mandatory for successful employment of Sound Branding. (Bruhn 2009). In order to ensure brand conform realization of the acoustic identity, the inclusion of Sound Branding agencies is necessary. A professional realization is indispensable to prevent reactance that may occur with the false employment of Sound Branding elements. (Groves 2009).

As every company uses media in which a sound appearance is necessary or desired, like on telephone hold or advertisement, the acoustic design of the brand is necessary in order to generate a uniform appearance towards the outside and inside. It is recommended to assign acoustic design the same attention as visual design.

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