

2024

Best
Audio Brands



THE BEST AUDIO BRANDS OF 2024

Welcome to the 6th edition of amp's annual report, Best Audio Brands – the result of thorough evaluation of hundreds of brands' sonic strategies across various touchpoints in the past year.

Using tools such as our advanced AI-driven Sonic Radar® and the Sonic Hub® ecosystem, together with meticulous research from the amp team. Our scientific testing and collaborative thought leadership ensure a data-driven, unbiased approach. This year, explore our exciting collaborative research with Spotify, with new data highlighting the growing recognition of sound's value amongst marketing professionals, and discover how brands can navigate the ever evolving AI landscape in our interview with WPP's Chief AI Officer, Daniel Hulme.

Join us as we celebrate the trailblazers in sonic branding and identify opportunities for improvement across various sectors.

Sincerely yours,

Björn Thorleifsson
Director of Research &
Insights, amp

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CONFUSED BRANDING

TUNING OUT TIKTOK & INSTAGRAM

By Megan Robinson

In recent years there has been a distinct and widening separation between the way brands are connecting with consumers through traditional ad content and social media platforms. Despite the increase in brands creating sonic identities, the same separation is occurring with brands' use of sound.

Brands such as Duracell and T-Mobile use their sonic logos consistently on TV, in podcasts, and on YouTube, but never on Instagram or TikTok. Social channels often appear sonically neglected, featuring little to no brand-owned sound as brands opt instead to take the 'easy' route and use generic in-app trending sounds.

One obvious explanation for the lack of sonic identities on social media is the incessant and relentless brand reliance on memes and trending sounds. While brands can execute their own trend campaigns effectively - such as [e.l.f Cosmetics](#) which created hugely successful viral trends on social platforms with an original song - unfortunately, this is a rare brand example.

Using trending audio only makes brands

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Using a distinctive sonic identity might just glow-up a brand TikTok account, instead of making users cringe with ceaseless, worn-out memes.

blend into the sea of other creators using the same sounds and attempting the same trends. The meme style, 'oh the intern took over the Instagram account,' utilized by Duolingo and Ryanair was once novel and hilarious, but has quickly become predictable and commonplace.

Brands need to think outside the box and take a fresh approach to social marketing if they want to connect with potential buyers through these booming platforms.



How can brands convince consumers to click? It starts with sonic recognition and cross-channel consistency. Using a distinctive sonic identity might just glow-up a brand TikTok account, instead of making users cringe with ceaseless, worn-out memes.

SPARKING CREATIVITY WITH AI IN THE AGENCY WORLD

AN INTERVIEW WITH WPP'S CHIEF
AI OFFICER AND CEO OF SATALIA,
DANIEL HULME



*AI doesn't have intent. Humans have intent.
We decide how AI and emerging technologies
will change our lives.*

The topic of AI and its various uses has dominated news headlines for the better part of the past 12 months. As the Chief AI Officer at WPP and CEO of Satalia, this will come as no surprise to you. In our rapidly shifting innovation-obsessed efficiency-driven world, what role does music play in galvanizing inspiration? What music do you listen to when you need to spark some creative revelation?

Humans are fully immersed when all our senses are activated, and like any muscle, our brains are at their best when engaged and energized. Music and sound are one of the most exciting frontiers for AI. AI can help us understand how people experience each other and the world around us. It can help us understand what to provide people with to activate, inspire, and influence. And it can be used to elevate the human experience to new levels.

Whilst some people prefer serenity, I'm personally at my creative best when immersed by a symphony of sight, sound, and physical activity, which typically includes cheesy love songs from the 90s :)

At amp, we pride ourselves on human creativity, how can we, and other agencies, see AI more as a tool and less as a threat?

AI doesn't have intent. Humans have intent. We decide how AI and emerging technologies will change our lives. At WPP we believe in the power of creativity to make better futures, and we're using AI across everything we do to enhance human creativity.

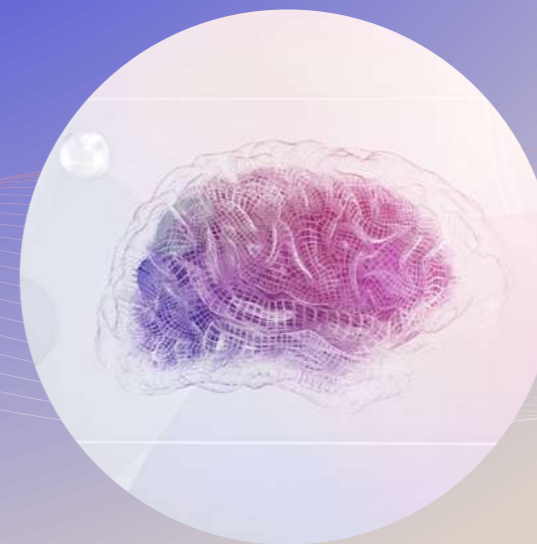
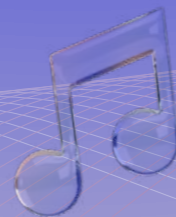
I've been building AI solutions for over 25 years. The solutions have enabled people to contribute in ways that are more purposeful, impactful, and aligned with the values of their companies. AI is an enhancer and amplifier of creativity, and I'm personally extremely excited about the amazingly creative things humans will come up with over the next decade.

What is the most exciting and impactful advancement in AI technology for the creative industry in recent years, and how might brands and agencies utilize this to their advantage?

Large Language Models (LLMs) are not just great at creating content, they are amazing at representing how people perceive content. For the first time ever, we can now build 'brains' that can simulate how people think and feel about content. This allows us to not just predict activation and influence but also create and curate even more inspiring experiences. At WPP we call these Audience Brains.

How do you foresee Generative AI helping brands more effectively connect with their consumers, and how might Generative AI music play a part in this? There have been two types of AI leading the conversation on the musical front: generative and analytical. Can you explain the difference between these two, and detail how you see the future usage of these separate entities?

LLMs are just going to keep getting better at creating content, particularly sound and music. We call these Brand Brains. Audience Brain helps us understand how that content is perceived, but you also need traditional machine learning and analytics to predict and explain activation. The combination of LLMs and more traditional types of AI are helping us understand the world and customers in new and exciting ways, allowing us to create even more inspiring experiences.



You have spoken quite a bit about building “brand brains” in an effort to expedite the ad production, creation, and asset implementation process. How might sound play a role in these “brand brains,” and will sonic brand guidelines be key for brands to establish before experimenting with this cloud-based concept?

Brand Brains create brand-specific, production-grade, differentiated content. This applies as much to audio as it does to written copy, images, or video. We’re already building Brand Brains that deeply understand the interaction between words, images, and sound. For brands to adapt and react to a rapidly changing world, they need to be able to create amazing content extremely quickly. That’s the vital role of a Brand Brain.

With AI copyright laws currently being notoriously different around the world, how do you see brands being able to tackle this fluid landscape?

At WPP we have well-established policies and governance procedures to ensure that we are using appropriate models in the right place across our value chain. We have a dedicated team of people engaging with pretty much every mainstream LLM, as well as early-access from our technology partners, to embed and utilize them across the entire marketing stack safely and responsibly. This is something I’m incredibly passionate about and I will continue to ensure that WPP is leading the way in the safe and ethical use of AI.



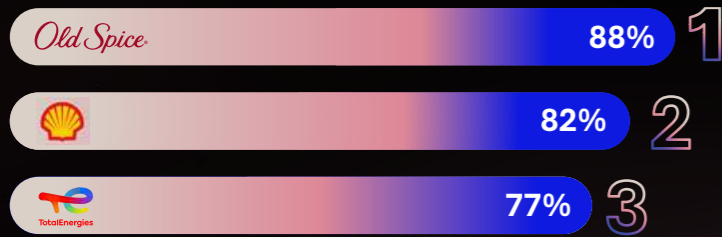
Daniel Hulme

Chief AI Officer, WPP and CEO, Satalia – a WPP company

Daniel Hulme (PhD) is a globally recognized expert in Artificial Intelligence (AI) and an investor in Emerging Technologies. He’s the CEO of Satalia, an award-winning company that provides AI products and solutions for global companies such as Tesco and PwC. Satalia exited to the world’s largest marketing company in 2021, WPP, where Daniel is now the Chief AI Officer; helping define, identify, curate and promote AI capability and new opportunities for the benefit of the wider group and society. He is co-Founder of Faculty AI as well as an advisor to responsible AI and AI assurance startups such as Holistic AI.

INSIGHTS

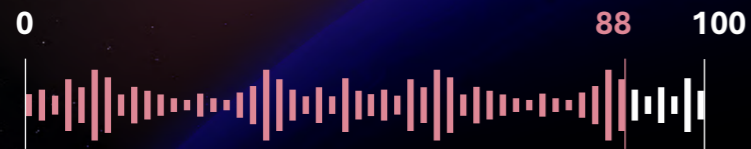
SONIC LOGO USE



→ This year, **95** of the brands in our **top 100** had a sonic logo.



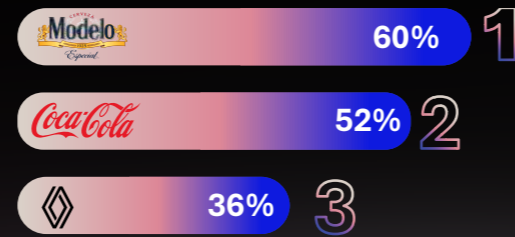
→ **88** brands out of the **top 100** have had a sonic logo for at least a year.



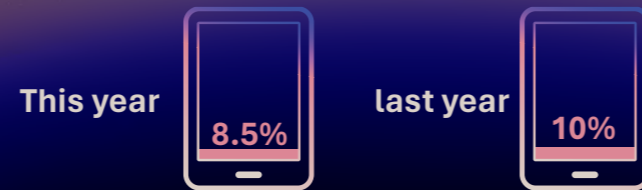
→ **All three sonic logo-free brands** in the top 25 (Burger King, The Home Depot, and Mercedes-Benz) focused heavily on branded music in place of a sonic logo.



LICENSED MUSIC USE



→ Licensed music featured in **8.5%** of digital content from brands this year, down from **10%** last year.



→ **19** brands in our ranking used no licensed music at all.



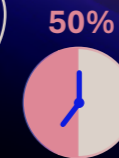
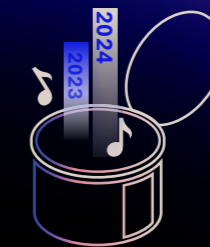
→ The biggest spenders came from the **CPG sector**, specifically the sub-industries of **Beverage and Alcohol**.



STOCK MUSIC USE

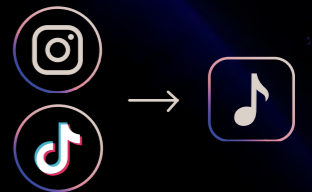


→ Stock music was used, on average, in **55.5%** of all material by brands this year, an increase of nearly **10%** from last year.



→ **63** brands used stock music at least **50%** of the time, which is **15%** more brands than last year.

→ **A large proportion** of stock music use comes from social media in-app music catalogs.



ICON OR SYMBOL, WHICH IS BEST FOR BRANDING?

ICONIC SONIC STARTS WITH STRATEGIC SYMBOLISM

By Rex Hirschhorn



Snapdragon's new sonic logo is all heartbeats and clicks: is this the most generically 'human' logo yet?

BESTAUDIOBRANDS2024

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Brands must steer clear of easy icon-based sounds, and trade these for strong symbolic sonic assets.

While brands must show up sonically in the most accessible touchpoints for consumers, that does not mean that brands should sound like prototypical versions of those given touchpoints. For example, if every time someone walked into a bank a “cha-ching” sound played, no individual brands would become connected to that sound. Instead, the sound would serve as an indication that someone has entered a bank. This is why finding a sonic identity that matches your specific brand identity, and not an entire industry, is crucial.

Our research has revealed that brands across industries frequently turn to two specific sounds in their branded sonic assets: the doorbell or the heartbeat. These two sounds are both recognizable and are often associated with positivity and warmth. Brands regularly want to associate

with life, health, safety, and comfort, and these attributes can create a more human and personal connection with consumers.

While these characteristics may exist within a brand's ethos, are the literal sonic icons necessary for portraying them? No! Iconic music, like Jimmy Hendrix's raging version of the “Star-Spangled Banner,” performed in protest of the Vietnam War, can be extremely effective messaging, however, this representative musical approach is not ideal for capturing the full set of nuances that encapsulate a brand. Symbolism, on the other hand, tends to be more effective. For example, T-Mobile's sonic logo does not sound like a ringtone, but 84% of people know it belongs to that specific cellular brand.

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While the concept of iconicity can be beneficial for UX/UI sounds, it lacks the uniqueness to drive brand association.

While the concept of iconicity can be beneficial for UX/UI sounds like the iPhone lock button, which mimics the sound of an actual lock, as a sonic logo, it lacks the uniqueness to drive brand association.

Newcomers like [Homes.com](#) and [Snapdragon](#) entered the sonic sphere in 2024 with respective icon-driven sounds. The inability to own the generic sound of a doorbell or the sound of a human heartbeat firmly places these brands at a sonic crossroads: should they

rebrand to avoid blending into the bland? Brands like Lowe's and Audi may run into issues soon as additional brands entering their respective industries may further utilize generic icon-based sounds, rendering these sounds even less brand-specific. Sonic branding is a marathon, not a sprint; brands must steer clear of easy icon-based sounds, and trade these for strong symbolic sonic assets derived from direct brand attributes and moods.

While symbols may be defined as arbitrary independently, this does not mean they are meaningless. They may be more meaningful to brands due to their inability to be associated with anything external. Symbolic meaning runs deeper and associations are not attached to generic actions, rather they are specific and learned attributions. It may require additional legwork in the beginning, however, the best way to be an iconic sonic brand is through sonic symbolism.

References:

1.amp Super Bowl Research 2024/Foodbev Media





*MUSIC IS TIMELESS,
and because music is timeless, it'll have an appeal forever.
What you're doing in music is essentially creating a series
of frequencies that resonate with the mind and heart.*

-Raja Rajamannar, CMO, Mastercard



Sorted by Sonic Score

THE RANKING

BEST AUDIO BRANDS 2024

BEST AUDIO BRANDS 2024

THE RANKING

11 41.6	12 39.7	13 38.5	14 37.9	15 37.7	16 37.4	17 37.2	18 37.1	19 36.4	20 34.7
									
21 34.3	22 30.8	23 30.6	24 30.3	25 28.4	26 28.3	27 27.5	28 27.2	29 27.1	30 26.5
									
31 25.5	32 25.2	33 25.0	34 24.0	35 23.8	36 23.4	37 23.2	38 22.6	39 22.5	40 22.4
									
41 22.2	42 22.1	43 21.9	44 21.7	45 21.6	46 21.5	47 21.4	48 21.4	49 21.3	50 21.3
									

*Find the full list of 100 brands at the end of the report.

MASTERING SONIC BRANDING

INSIGHTS FROM MASTERCARD AND SHELL

By Austin Coates

Mastercard and Shell have both made significant strides in sonic branding, showcasing the power of sound in enhancing brand identity and presence. Since Mastercard unveiled its sonic identity in 2020, they have consistently led the Best Audio Brands ranking. Shell has shown remarkable progress and innovation, establishing a strong sonic presence and steadily climbing the ranks.

Mastercard's sonic strategy as a global payment processing brand is to ensure that its branding is heard at every touchpoint where money is spent. This year, Mastercard officially implemented branded assurance at check-out in more than 300 million

PoS systems¹ worldwide. Additionally, Mastercard has reinforced its sonic branding strategy by featuring it within branded events such as the Grammys, the Brit Awards, the UEFA Champions League, and more. These partnerships allow Mastercard to highlight its branded sound to millions of viewers worldwide. However, these partnerships do come with some implementation limitations on partner-generated content and use of sonic and must be managed strategically to spotlight branded sonic at key moments.





Shell, on the other hand, implements its sonic branding across traditional advertising and digital content. Unlike Mastercard, Shell does not utilize any sonic UX/UI at payment touchpoints but has been successful in connecting with diverse markets through variations of its sonic identity. For instance, Shell created a unique sonic variation for a [Louisiana Bayou and wildlife conservation](#) video, demonstrating the brand's ability to tailor its sound to specific contexts. However, these variations in sonic identity watermarking could be more pronounced to appeal to a broader audience.

Both brands can make strategic developments for continued success.

Mastercard can enhance its strategy by ensuring all of its partnership content incorporates some form of its sonic identity. Even in settings where branded music is not feasible, a sonic logo can maintain brand presence. Shell can also build on its approach by leveraging sonic branding at secondary touch points such as fill-up screens or PoS systems. This will help Shell establish a more consistent sonic presence.

By refining their strategies in these ways, both Mastercard and Shell can strengthen their sonic identities and continue to compete effectively in the Best Audio Brands ranking. We look forward to seeing and hearing the continued sonic success of both brands.



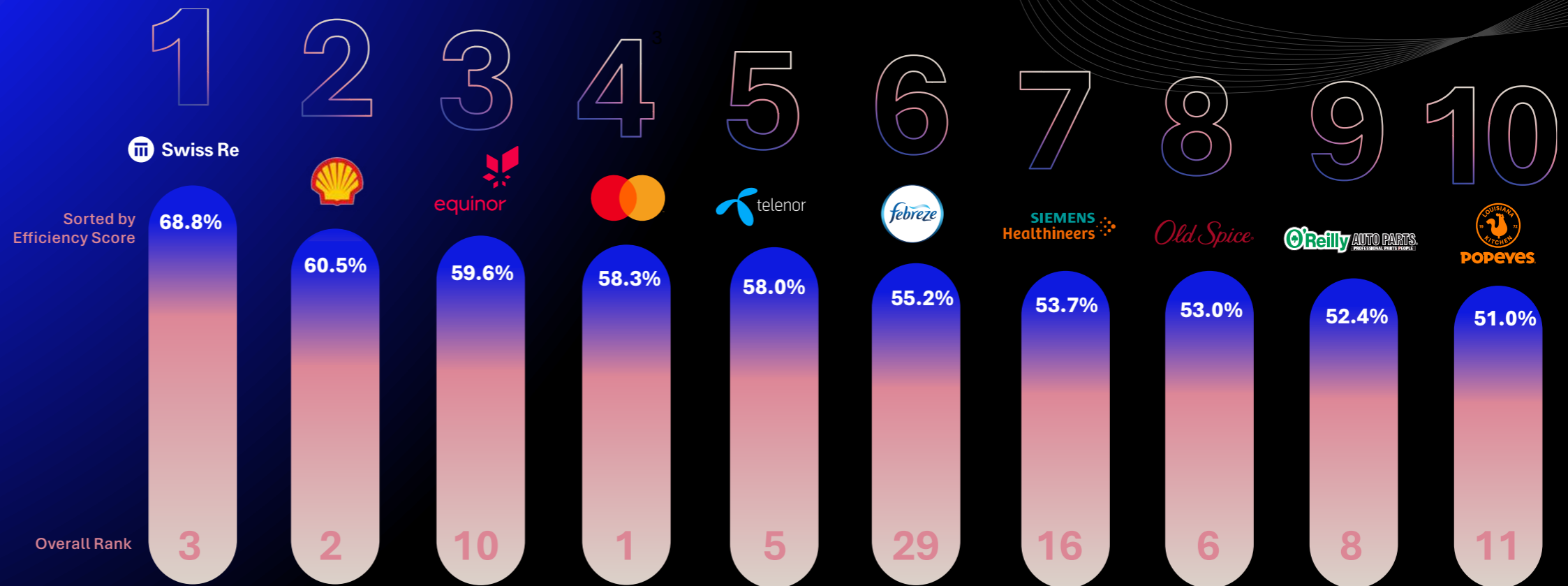
Partnerships do come with limitations, and must be managed strategically to spotlight branded sonic at key moments.

References:
1.adage.com

INSIGHTS

THE TOP 10 MOST EFFICIENT BRANDS

- Efficiency is calculated by considering a brand's Best Audio Brands ranking against the estimated annual spend. Brands with poor sonic performance in tandem with high expenditure receive a lower efficiency score, while the opposite leads to a higher score.
- 9 out of the top 10 most efficient brands rely on more than just a sonic logo in the execution of their sonic strategy. The 10th, Febreze, has used branded music in the past.
- Swiss Re claims first place with 50% use of branded music.



A SONIC GIRL IN A VISUAL WORLD

By Hannah Cahill & Rex Hirschhorn

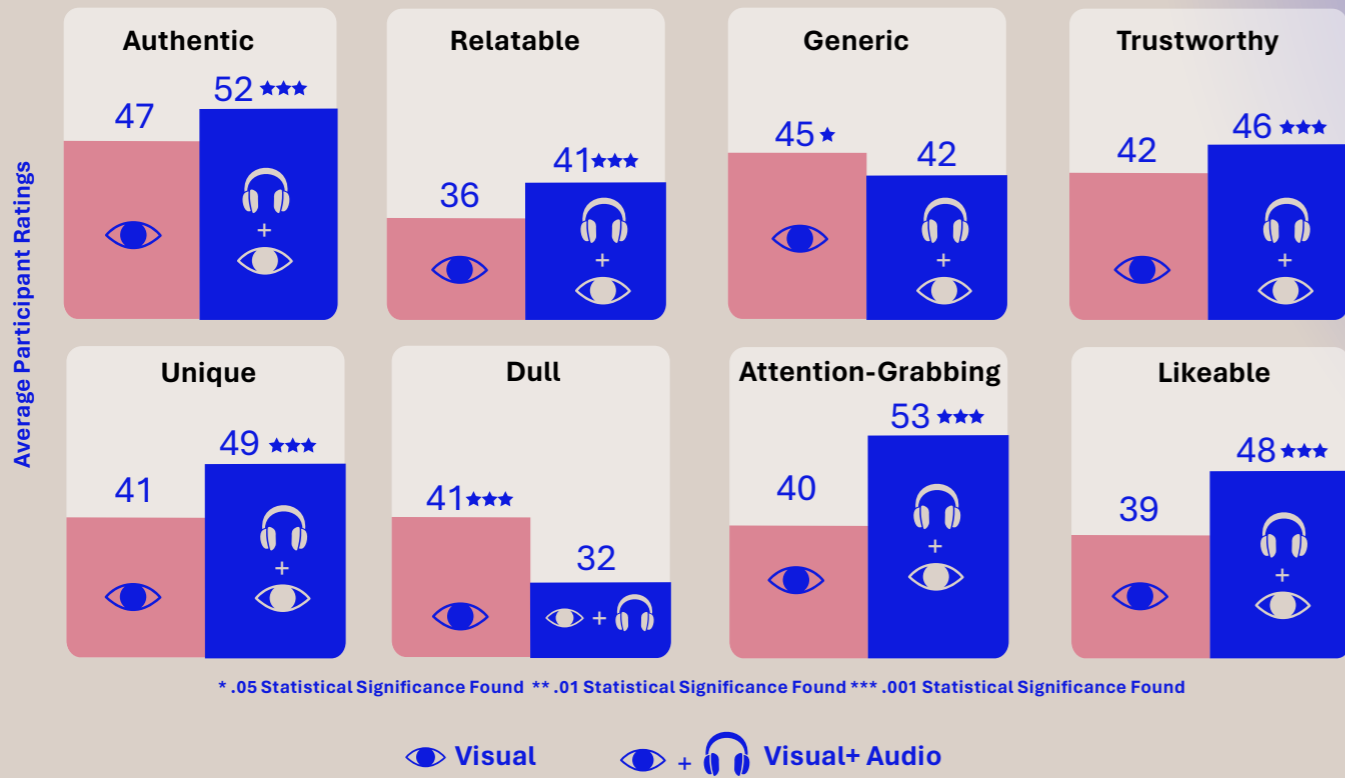
We asked 300 USA-based participants to listen to and watch a selection of visual logos, both with and without the accompanying sonic logo. Each participant presented with one version of these for 15 separate brands, three of which were fictional brands whose identities were created specifically for this research. We then asked these participants to rate these assets on a handful of brand attributes that tend to be ubiquitous for brand perception: Authentic, Relatable, Trustworthy, Unique, Attention-Grabbing, and Likeable. We also tested two negatively associated terms no brand would want to be identified as, Generic and Dull.

Visuals have dominated the branding world for many years, while sonic branding has lurked in the shadows. However, as the world of audio in marketing grows, and brands find new ways to both standardize and purposefully implement sonic across touchpoints, it will become more crucial for audio and visuals to productively coexist.

At amp, we may be sonic experts, but we recognize that branding is a holistic experience that requires precise, purposeful, and cohesive multi-sensory stimulation to drive effectiveness. To better understand the impact of sound in this holistic brand equation, we took a deeper look at the most commonplace aspect of our work - the sonic logo.

THE IMPACT OF SONIC ON VISUAL LOGOS

Audiovisual logos are considered far more effective across the board.



“
While we live
in a visual world, graphic
branding is not being
utilized to its full potential
floating in a silent void.”

Results clearly show that simply adding a sonic logo to a visual asset can significantly enhance its effect, with the audiovisual logos being considered by far more effective across the board.

While we live in a visual world, graphic branding is not being utilized to its full potential floating in a silent void. As visual logos have dominated the space for generations and often hold a great amount of brand equity, changing these assets can

be difficult. For brands that want to modernize perception, a sonic logo is the perfect solution to this conundrum.

While it is not up to brands to unmute consumers’ devices, sound-on platforms like TikTok, Instagram, and YouTube have become standard locations for reaching audiences. With the rise of these platforms, a lack of audio with visuals can feel uncomfortable and cause cognitive dissonance knowing that audio is normally featured.

We wanted to explore the concept of congruence even further, as the sonic logo provides an opportunity to double down on brand values featured in visual content. One other visual aspect that has become crucial in the modern visual branding world is motion. Even though sound cannot be seen, music is often described using directional vocabulary like up or down, or with pace terminology like faster or slower. This is because music and motion are tied together even in a metaphorical sense. When paired with visuals, motion can cause a great deal of cohesion.

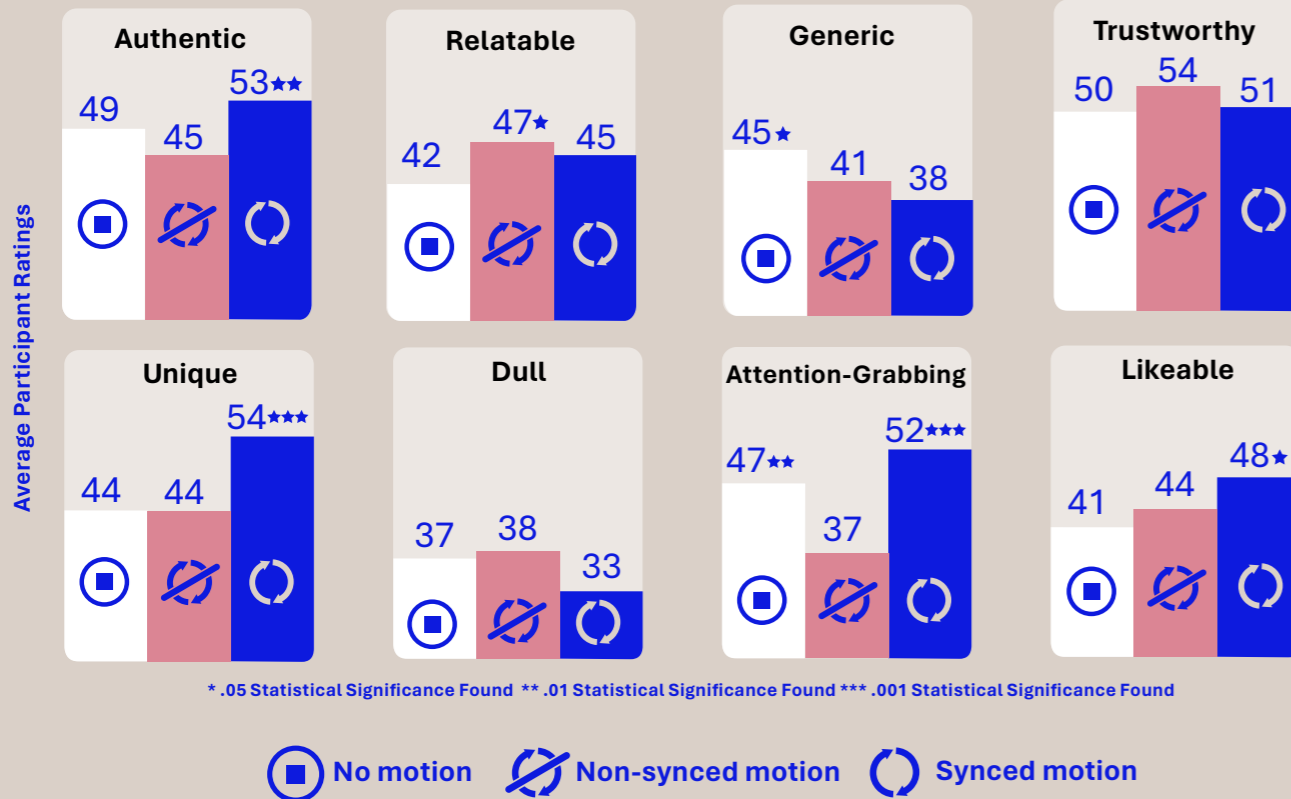
We asked 300 more US participants to rate the same attributes as the first study, but this time to examine only the three fictional brands which all had A/V logos with different types of motion: no motion, non-synced motion, or synced motion.

intel



Creating cohesion and synchrony between all touchpoints and branded assets is becoming an entry requirement for brands.

Logos with synced motion were rated consistently better across all attributes.



Our results demonstrate the importance of matching sonic components with a visual identity. Logos with synced motion were rated consistently better across all attributes in comparison to motionless, and non-synced motion logos. This came as no surprise, as humans do generally “favor synchrony over asynchrony.” Humans having their expectations met, like a sonic logo matching the motion of a visual, is an evolutionary bias that has been researched extensively: “We like to predict right because our brain rewards us for predicting correctly as a result of the survival mechanism.”

Creating cohesion and synchrony between all touchpoints and branded assets is becoming an entry requirement for brands. Those brands that ignore interconnectivity and congruence may run into issues down the line.

In a world progressing more and more into the auditory space with podcasts, audio accessibility, and sound-on platforms, brands need to think about the bigger picture. Audio and visuals should not be treated as entirely separate entities.

While brands that did not build sonic assets at brand inception should of course continue to create them, new or reimagined brands would be best off creating them together with their visuals, in order to emotionally connect better with consumers. After all, in the words of Madonna, “If they can’t raise my interest, then I have to let them be.”

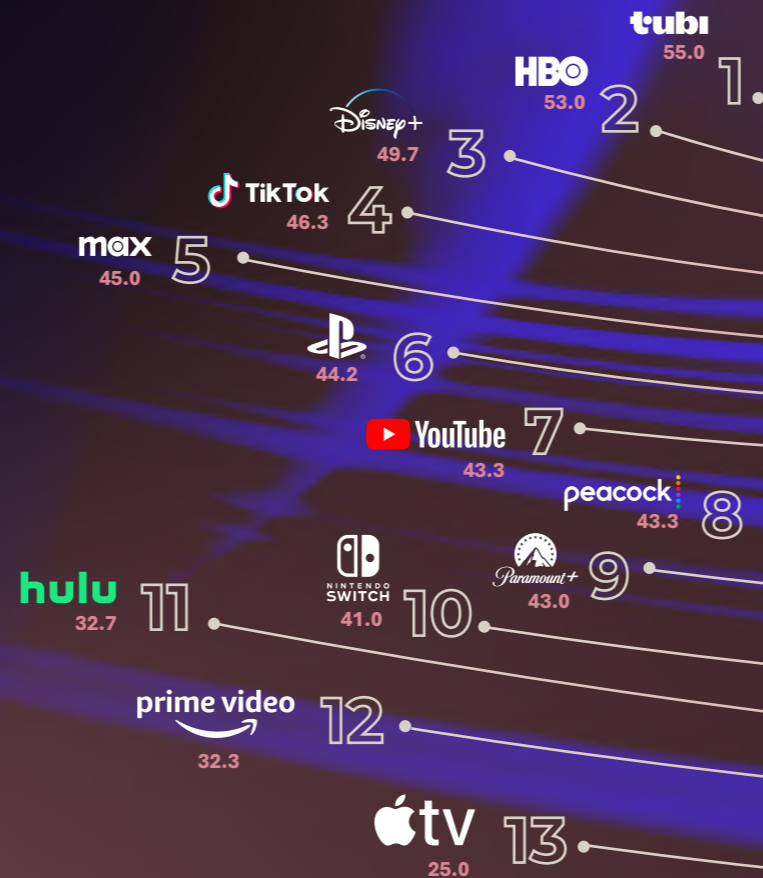
- References:
1. Watkins, 2018
 2. Huron, 2006

THE MINI MEDIA RANKING

THE NOT SO VARIED SONIC LOGOS OF MEDIA BRANDS

This year we have taken a different approach to media brands. Why? Because many of these brands have elements of a sonic identity such as a sonic logo which is used well, but the use of music from their TV shows or video games can impact their music type usage.

So this year, we decided to remove them from the main ranking and rank only their sonic logos, using Sonic Hub®, amp's suite of AI enhanced sonic tools. Our score is based on the average of Memorability, Uniqueness and Familiarity.



We also analyzed them creatively which you can see visualised here. Click on the logos to hear them.

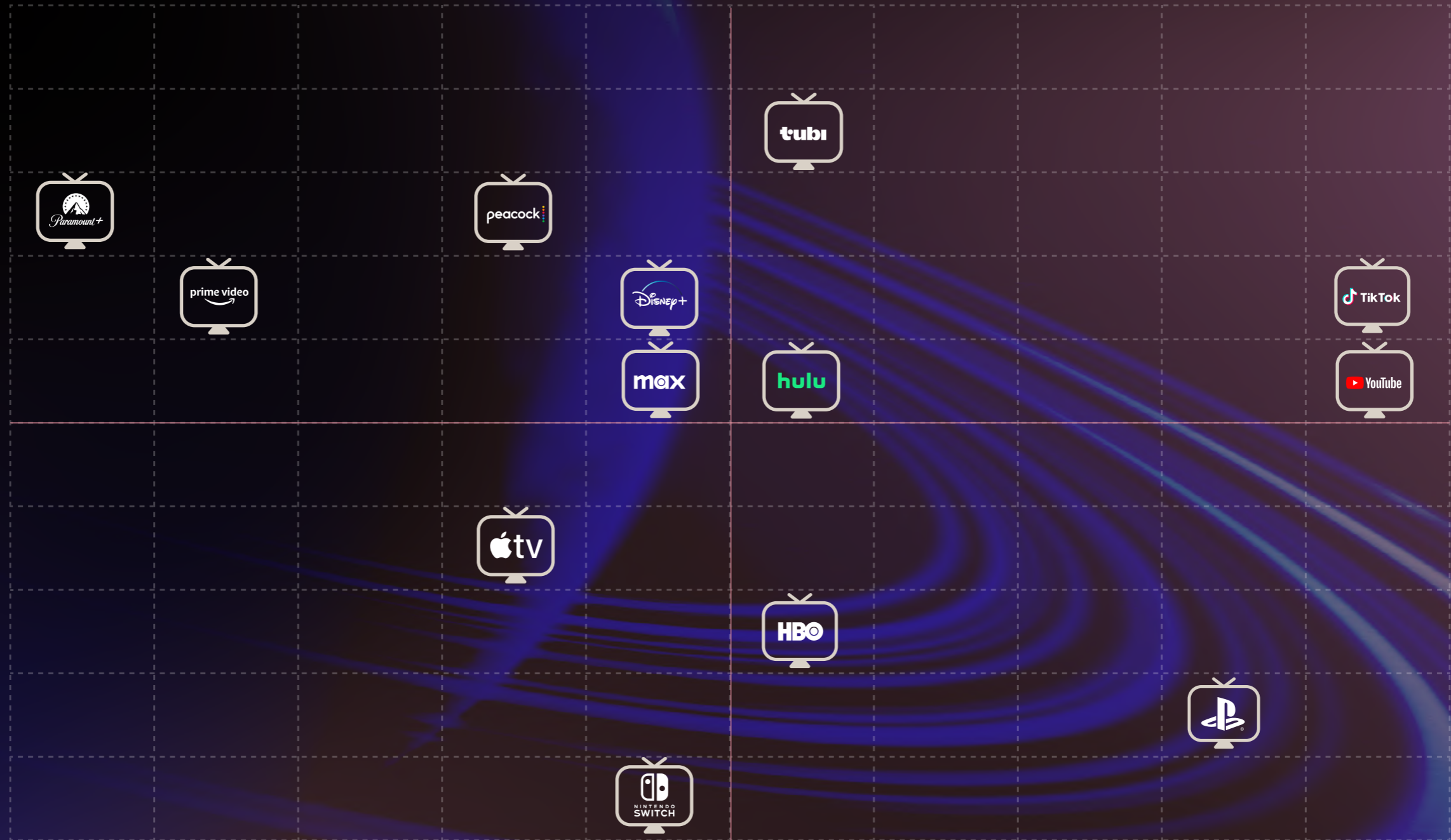
To read our in depth creative analysis of all these sonic logos and why many of them are so effective, head to our website [here](#).



Natural sounds



Melodic




Synthetic sounds




Non-melodic


INSIGHTS WHO ARE THE BEST NEWCOMERS?




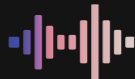
Brand: **Telenor** Industry: **Telecom** 





Rank **5** Age **1** yr


Sonic Logo Use:  **37%**

Branded Music Use:  **27%**


Strength:  Telenor recently expanded their existing sonic logo into a fully-fledged sonic identity.


Weakness:  Despite **82%** of content using either branded or custom music, Telenor only used the sonic logo in **37%** of content this year.


Brand: **Equinor** Industry: **Energy** 





Rank **10** Age **1** yr


Sonic Logo Use:  **38%**

Branded Music Use:  **40%**


Strength:  Equinor's sonic logo fits the brand well, with a pulsating sound which is fitting for its goal to appear modern and progressive while the industry shifts focus towards sustainability.


Weakness:  Equinor only has one branded track, which is used repeatedly, lacking the flexibility to fit any required story.

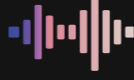
Brand: **St. Jude** Industry: **Healthcare** 




Rank **35** Age **2** yr

Sonic Logo Use:  **15%**

Branded Music Use:  **15%**

Strength:  When St. Jude needs to establish feelings of truth or reassurance, warm choral sounds perfectly reflect St. Jude's values.

Weakness:  St. Jude only utilizes branded music and its sonic logo in **15%** of content, leaving **85%** of content unbranded.

RESEARCH WITH SPOTIFY UNLOCKING PERFORMANCE POTENTIAL WITH THE POWER OF SONIC BRANDING

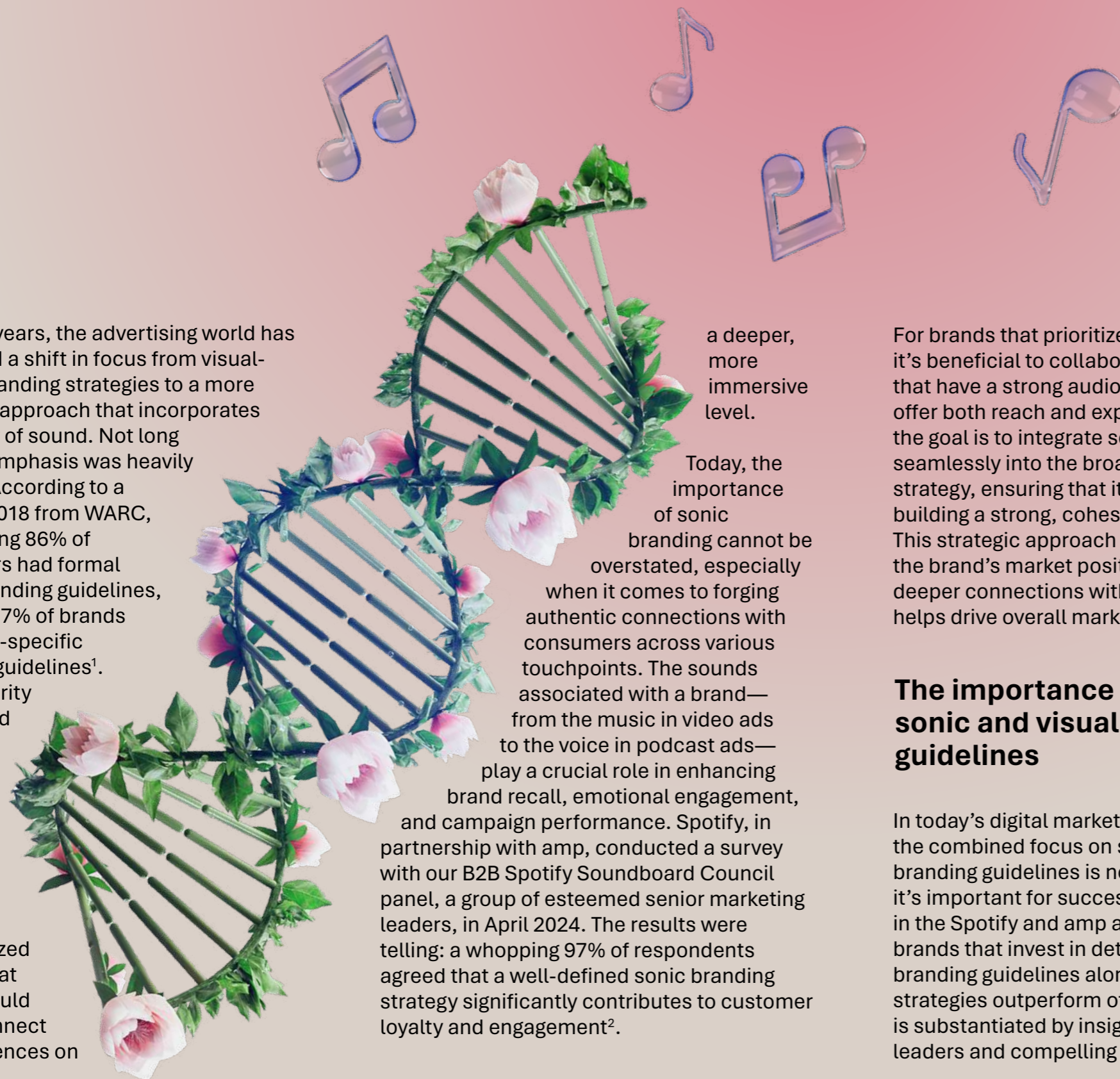
By Spotify

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As consumer behaviors evolve and new technologies emerge, the role of sonic elements in branding has become crucial for creating memorable and effective marketing strategies.

In recent years, the advertising world has witnessed a shift in focus from visual-centric branding strategies to a more balanced approach that incorporates the power of sound. Not long ago, the emphasis was heavily skewed. According to a study in 2018 from WARC, a staggering 86% of advertisers had formal visual-branding guidelines, and only 17% of brands had audio-specific branding guidelines¹. This disparity highlighted an

underutilized avenue that brands could use to connect with audiences on



a deeper, more immersive level.

Today, the importance of sonic branding cannot be overstated, especially when it comes to forging authentic connections with consumers across various touchpoints. The sounds associated with a brand—from the music in video ads to the voice in podcast ads—play a crucial role in enhancing brand recall, emotional engagement, and campaign performance. Spotify, in partnership with amp, conducted a survey with our B2B Spotify Soundboard Council panel, a group of esteemed senior marketing leaders, in April 2024. The results were telling: a whopping 97% of respondents agreed that a well-defined sonic branding strategy significantly contributes to customer loyalty and engagement².

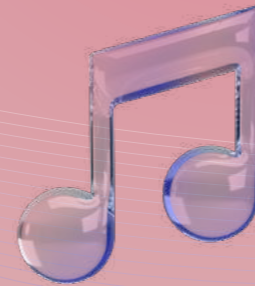
For brands that prioritize sonic branding, it's beneficial to collaborate with platforms that have a strong audio focus and can offer both reach and expertise. Ultimately, the goal is to integrate sonic branding seamlessly into the broader marketing strategy, ensuring that it contributes to building a strong, cohesive brand identity. This strategic approach not only elevates the brand's market position; it also fosters deeper connections with its audience, and helps drive overall marketing performance.

The importance of having both sonic and visual branding guidelines

In today's digital marketing landscape, the combined focus on sonic and visual branding guidelines is not just beneficial—it's important for success. As you will see in the Spotify and amp analysis below, brands that invest in detailed sonic branding guidelines along with visual strategies outperform others. This claim is substantiated by insights from industry leaders and compelling performance data.

Raja Rajamannar, CMO of Mastercard, highlights the effectiveness of multisensory marketing: "Multisensory marketing is the heartbeat of our brand. By making our brand tangible through the senses, we cut through the advertising clutter and create longer-lasting, more impactful connections with people. Our comprehensive Sonic DNA is a key differentiator for Mastercard and propels our brand forward." Similarly, Spotify's Global Head of Advertising Sales, Brian Berner, emphasizes the importance of sonic branding, saying, "Sonic branding goes beyond just a sound; it's an auditory signature that embodies a brand's identity and connects emotionally with your audience at every touchpoint."

Statistical data from Spotify reinforces these points, showing that brands with strong sonic branding achieve a 16% higher incremental Ad Recall and 20% higher Brand Awareness compared to Spotify benchmarks^{3,4}. Furthermore, when looking at lower-funnel performance, these brands also enjoy a 26% higher conversion rate in the U.S⁵. The distinction between custom, owned, and stock music also plays a significant role in these outcomes. Brands using custom or



owned music, where the advertiser owns the copyright to their soundtrack, see a 33% higher incremental Ad Recall than those relying on stock music⁶. This suggests that unique and personalized soundtracks resonate more deeply with audiences.

The impact of effective audio-visual branding is also evident across different industries. Auto brands with robust sonic branding guidelines, for instance, on average see a 35% higher conversion rate than industry benchmarks⁷. This data clearly demonstrates that advertisers who prioritize and meticulously develop both audio and visual branding guidelines are more likely to achieve superior marketing performance. Spotify, with its focus on leveraging sound to enhance brand recognition, offers an ideal platform for brands aiming to make a significant impact

in the digital space. Through thoughtful integration of sonic elements with visual cues, brands can craft more memorable, engaging, and effective marketing campaigns.

Conclusion

The importance of sonic branding in today's marketing ecosystem is increasingly clear. As consumer behaviors evolve and new technologies emerge, the role of sonic elements in branding has become crucial for creating memorable and effective marketing strategies. Sonic branding goes beyond mere background music or a catchy jingle; it is about crafting a sonic identity that resonates with audiences across all touchpoints, enhancing brand recognition and driving performance.

Given Spotify's extensive global reach, brand recognition, advertising innovation, and advanced data-driven insights, we are uniquely positioned to help brands make their audio and visual branding guidelines come to life. This expertise ensures that Spotify not only understands the landscape but leads it, making us an indispensable partner for brands aiming to excel in today's multifaceted media environment.

Citations:

1. Source: [WARC Toolkit 2018](#)
2. Source: [Spotify B2B Community Panel, n=60, April 2024](#)
3. Source: [n=19, Nielsen Brand Effect & Kantar Brand Lift, Global, Q1 2018 - Q2 2023, May 2024](#)
4. Source: [n=93, Nielsen Brand Effect & Kantar Brand Lift, Global, Q1 2018 - Q2 2023, May 2024](#)
5. Source: [n=48, Spotify Ad Analytics, US, Q3 2023 - Q1 2024, May 2024](#)
6. Source: [n=140, Nielsen Brand Effect & Kantar Brand Lift, Global, Q1 2018 - Q1 2023, May 2024](#)
7. Source: [n= 48, Spotify Ad Analytics, Global, Q3 2023 - Q1 2024, May 2024](#)

INSIGHTS SECTORS



CARS

- Half of the car industry lacks branded music
- All the brands in the sector within the top 100 lay claim to a sonic identity, however, it is surprising how inconsistent implementations have been.
- **Audi**, the sector champion, used its sonic logo in less than half of its content.



ELECTRONICS

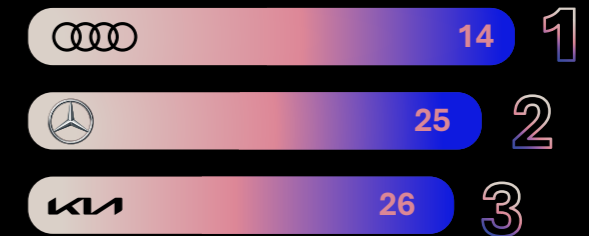
- The electronics industry is defined by its sonic logo usage; an average of only 3.3% of all content contains branded music.
- In previous years, **Apple** led the Electronics industry, however, now it's the only brand on the list without a sonic identity.
- **Xiaomi** scaled the rankings after the launch of its sonic identity; the brand uses its sonic logo in 76% of all communications.



EATERIES

- **Burger King** has risen to the top of this sector with numerous variations of its "Have it Your Way" track.
- Since the inception of our ranking, **McDonald's** has been on a steady decline: sonic logo usage dropped from 95% to 20% this year.
- **Little Caesars** has one of the oldest sonic logos on the list and is a testament to consistency – today simply hearing the word 'pizza' twice in a row makes you think of the brand.

Ranking of top 100



INSIGHTS SECTORS



FOOD & BEVERAGE

- Just like the humble yodel travels long distances across the Alps, **Ricola's** sonic logo has permeated the global zeitgeist with its heightened use and effectiveness.
- Only one food brand in the ranking using branded music (**Avocados From Mexico**), but only in 4% of its content.
- **Coca-Cola** has had many sonic adventures over the years but has yet to invest in a holistic sonic identity to tie the magic together.



INSURANCE

- Last year's best newcomer **Aviva** stumbled over the past 12 months, exhibiting a 78% decrease in sonic logo usage and a 54% reduction in branded music use.
- **Liberty Mutual** scaled the sector ranking this year due to the consistent usage of its sonic identity.
- **Humana's** sonic logo is only 2 years old and is used in 68% of content: the only thing holding them back from a higher score is their lack of branded music.



TELECOM

- **Telenor** is the clear leader in the Telecom sector, exhibiting 47% branded music usage and 37% sonic logo usage,
- Last year's sector leader, **O²**, nearly didn't make this year's ranking due to inconsistent usage of its sonic identity, despite it being less than 4 years old.
- **T-Mobile**, despite having one of the most recognizable sonic logos in the world, only uses it in 31% of its content.





SUPER SONIC TRAVEL

NAVIGATING LOCAL, NATIONAL, AND GLOBAL MARKETS

By Simba Masando

Brands have approached the task of unifying and localizing sonic assets in various ways. When looking at the US market, Texas is a surprising yet notable hotspot for these brand experimentations. Dairy Queen (#72) unveiled a national whistle-based sonic logo in 2022, while simultaneously updating its distinctive Texan “That’s what I like about Texas” jingle with a version by country singer Josh Abbott. This unique case displays the power of sonic branding in enabling brands to transcend regional boundaries while avoiding homegrown customer alienation and maintaining engagement.

Adapting to localized cultural environments is key for brands. However, overlap must occur with the parent brand to secure national or global recall. This cohesion between global and regional markets is vital as can be seen by the scattered sonic branding of the Japanese automaker, Toyota. The carmaker deserted its global sonic logo and inconsistently implemented sonic assets while maintaining and implementing a unique (and unaffiliated) owned sonic identity

in India. With a non-unified sonic brand, Toyota appears scattered. In the globalized digital world, cohesion and connection are required to court the consumer.

To mitigate the risks associated with over-localized and disconnected sonic branding, strategies that maintain a core sonic identity while allowing regional adaptations must be implemented by brands. Melodies, instruments, and moods can all be tweaked to suit local tastes without compromising a truly flexible, global sonic identity. This ensures the brand remains recognizable and emotionally resonant across different markets.

Regional nuances can be sonically acknowledged while maintaining a unified brand message, however this requires highly adaptive sonic assets. A well-conceived, elastic sonic identity that can traverse geographical boundaries and break borders is crucial for brands to maintain a unified brand identity and ensure cross-continental cultural connection.

“

Adapting to localized cultural environments is key for brands. However, overlap must occur with the parent brand to secure national or global recall.

FINAL THOUGHTS

SO, HOW CAN YOU MAXIMIZE YOUR SONIC POTENTIAL? HERE ARE OUR TOP TIPS TO BECOME A BEST AUDIO BRAND

DON'T GIVE UP TOO SOON

This year, we saw quite a few newly inducted best audio brands plummet in the rankings. Consumers cannot be expected to connect to a sonic identity if it's abandoned too soon. Always remind consumers what your brand sounds like!

STAND OUT ON SOCIALS

It is becoming standard to use social media, instead of search engines, for product research, meaning these platforms provide brands with a direct line to consumers. With so many brands using the same tired in-app sounds, using a sonic identity on these platforms instead will set you apart.

UNIFY SONIC AND VISUAL DESIGN

Our research has shown that brands that use sonic with visuals and match them cohesively, outperform brands that don't in almost all attributes. Visuals are powerful. Audio is powerful. Together, they are unstoppable!

CONSISTENCY IS EVERYTHING

Sonic branding is not limited to video-based content. In every audible place a brand lives, a sonic identity can permeate. From event spaces to product sounds, brands should seize every opportunity to showcase their sonic identity, and further connect with consumers.



THE FULL RANKING OF THE 100 BEST AUDIO BRANDS 2024

Rank	Brand	Sonic Score	Efficiency Score	Rank	Brand	Sonic Score	Efficiency Score	Rank	Brand	Sonic Score	Efficiency Score	Rank	Brand	Sonic Score	Efficiency Score
1.	Mastercard	84.9	58%	26.	Kia	28.3	29%	51.	Lowe's	20.9	33%	76.	KFC	15.0	19%
2.	Shell	84.2	60%	27.	Hyundai	27.5	38%	52.	BBVA	20.8	42%	77.	T-Mobile	14.9	31%
3.	Swiss Re	60.1	69%	28.	TotalEnergies	27.2	44%	53.	ANA	20.0	19%	78.	Pepsi	14.8	14%
4.	Autozone	58.6	51%	29.	Febreze	27.1	55%	54.	Siemens	19.8	41%	79.	Dove	14.7	25%
5.	Telenor	55.0	58%	30.	Nescafé	26.5	28%	55.	AT&T	19.7	26%	80.	Bounty	14.6	18%
6.	Old Spice	50.0	53%	31.	American Express	25.5	24%	56.	Nissan	19.6	29%	81.	McDonald's	14.1	32%
7.	Burger King	46.6	50%	32.	Michelin	25.2	34%	57.	Oreo	19.5	32%	82.	Aflac	14.0	31%
8.	O'Reilly Auto Parts	44.5	52%	33.	Petronas	25.0	33%	58.	Porsche	19.4	23%	83.	SNCF	13.7	30%
9.	Just Eat/Lieferando/Grubhub	44.0	44%	34.	Wells Fargo	24.0	38%	59.	Honda	19.3	25%	84.	Ace Hardware	13.5	31%
10.	Equinor	42.6	60%	35.	St. Jude	23.8	36%	60.	Chevron	19.0	37%	85.	Farmers	13.4	37%
11.	Popeyes	41.6	51%	36.	Humana	23.4	48%	61.	Charles Schwab	18.9	37%	86.	Campbell's	12.8	25%
12.	Deloitte	39.7	45%	37.	State Farm	23.2	40%	62.	Avocados From Mexico	18.7	28%	87.	KLM	12.7	27%
13.	Little Caesars	38.5	40%	38.	HSBC	22.6	45%	63.	Modelo	18.2	26%	88.	Cricket Wireless	12.4	31%
14.	Audi	37.9	41%	39.	Colgate	22.5	31%	64.	Intel	18.1	29%	89.	Panera Bread	12.2	33%
15.	Sony	37.7	27%	40.	ING	22.4	39%	65.	Apple	17.6	16%	90.	DBS	11.8	20%
16.	Siemens Healthineers	37.4	54%	41.	Bora	22.2	39%	66.	BASF	16.8	36%	91.	Tostitos	11.7	24%
17.	Infosys	37.2	43%	42.	Pilsner Urquel	22.1	42%	67.	Nike	16.2	24%	92.	Orange	11.6	27%
18.	OBI	37.1	48%	43.	Volkswagen	21.9	27%	68.	Nationwide	16.1	31%	93.	Arby's	10.8	24%
19.	Liberty Mutual	36.4	46%	44.	OMV	21.7	50%	69.	Aldi	16.0	24%	94.	Legal & General	10.1	29%
20.	Ricola	34.7	40%	45.	PayPal	21.6	33%	70.	Deutsche Bahn	15.9	28%	95.	McKinsey & Co	9.8	30%
21.	Xiaomi	34.3	38%	46.	Coca-Cola	21.5	28%	71.	UBS	15.8	37%	96.	Duracell	9.5	29%
22.	Aviva	30.8	46%	47.	Lamborghini	21.4	29%	72.	Dairy Queen	15.7	19%	97.	AXA	9.2	20%
23.	Philips	30.6	41%	48.	Roche	21.3	37%	73.	USAA	15.5	25%	98.	O2	9.0	12%
24.	The Home Depot	30.3	30%	49.	Renault	21.3	24%	74.	Singapore Airlines	15.4	27%	99.	Taco Bell	8.7	13%
25.	Mercedes-Benz	28.4	24%	50.	Toyota	21.3	23%	75.	Wayfair	15.3	16%	100.	Tums	8.5	17%

METHODOLOGY

The Best Audio Brands report ranks brands on their holistic use of sound and music over the past 12 months in branding strategy across digital channels and multiple brand touchpoints. The 100 brands that place in our final ranking have exhibited varying degrees of excellence across four key sonic areas:



MUSIC USE

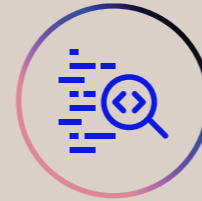
Analysis of music type and source, such as branded, custom, stock, and licensed music.



SONIC IDENTITY PRESENCE

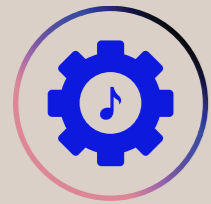
Measurement of the extent to which a brand's sonic identity is utilized across all audible brand touchpoints, if applicable.

+



DATA

For data acquisition and calculation of all KPIs, we leveraged: extensive desk research, AI-based evaluation, market research, expert panel analysis, and social media monitoring.



EFFICIENCY

Derived from a brand's performance in the Best Audio Brands ranking and the cost-effectiveness of its branding strategy.



BRAND FIT & UNIQUENESS

Assessment of how well the sonic assets used fit the brand persona and the extent to which they are unique within the sector.

TOOLS



Sonic Radar

Sonic Radar is an interactive repository containing industry-segmented sonic profiles of thousands of brands. Ideal for brand and media planning, this innovative tool spotlights brand analysis and comparison, providing users with a comprehensive breakdown of industry-wide sound usage. Delivered in an easy-to-digest Sonic Snapshot, the tool analyzes the use of sound and music in brand communications across all channels. This analysis is brand, audience, and metrics-focused, thanks to the help of advanced AI, deep learning algorithms, and manual research.



Sonic Check

Sonic Check is a cloud-based platform used for testing sonic assets in pre-market conditions, measuring their impact on brand recall, authenticity, emotional engagement, uniqueness, and brand fit. Market research techniques, human-like cognitive data-trained models, and AI-driven rapid and real-time testing connect with consolidated data to measure and value brand sentiment. Sonic Check efficiently recommends all viable sound options and confirms optimal decisions for any sonic asset: from short UX/UI sounds or sonic logos to music tracks and soundtracks for commercials and films.

ABOUT AMP

AMP IS THE WORLD'S LEADING SONIC BRANDING COMPANY.

amp utilizes its award-winning Sonic DNA® design approach to create holistic sonic identities for global brands. Leveraging sound, voice, and music, amp builds authentic connections for brands across audible touchpoints, cultures, and audiences. With a diverse portfolio of clients, including Mastercard, Mercedes-Benz, Deloitte, Zurich Insurance, Uber, Klarna, and Kraft Heinz, amp creates and implements 360° sonic experiences and assets. From digital advertising to branded content and user experiences, amp provides creative sonic solutions with the latest developments in tech. amp's **Sonic Hub®** Ecosystem, a revolutionary AI-fueled tool suite built for the entire lifecycle of a sonic identity, helps brands by researching, testing, and creating sonic assets at scale utilizing cutting-edge generative AI and voice technologies. Bringing this data-driven, design-oriented sonic approach to the wider branding world, amp is now part of the advertising, communications, technology, and commerce holding company, WPP, and their brand and design consultancy, Landor.

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