

SOUND OF MUZZAK

Background music that reflects a brand's values evokes a wide range of positive emotions among customers, and increases overall satisfaction not to mention sales, finds Retail Focus.

Text: Gemma Balmford

Playing background music that is a good fit for the brand can increase customer well-being and hike sales, according to a new study by HUI Research and Spotify-backed company, Soundtrack Your Brand. By analysing a pool of nearly two million unique transactions at 16 restaurants of a major chain over a five-month period, the researchers found that playing a carefully selected mix of music increased sales by more than nine per cent, compared with playing random popular songs.

'When done right, music has a major positive effect on sales, largely stemming from guests purchasing more items such as desserts and sides,' says Professor Sven-Olov Daunfeldt, who led the study. 'Play the wrong music and you just might find that you're alienating that very same customer and selling significantly less.'

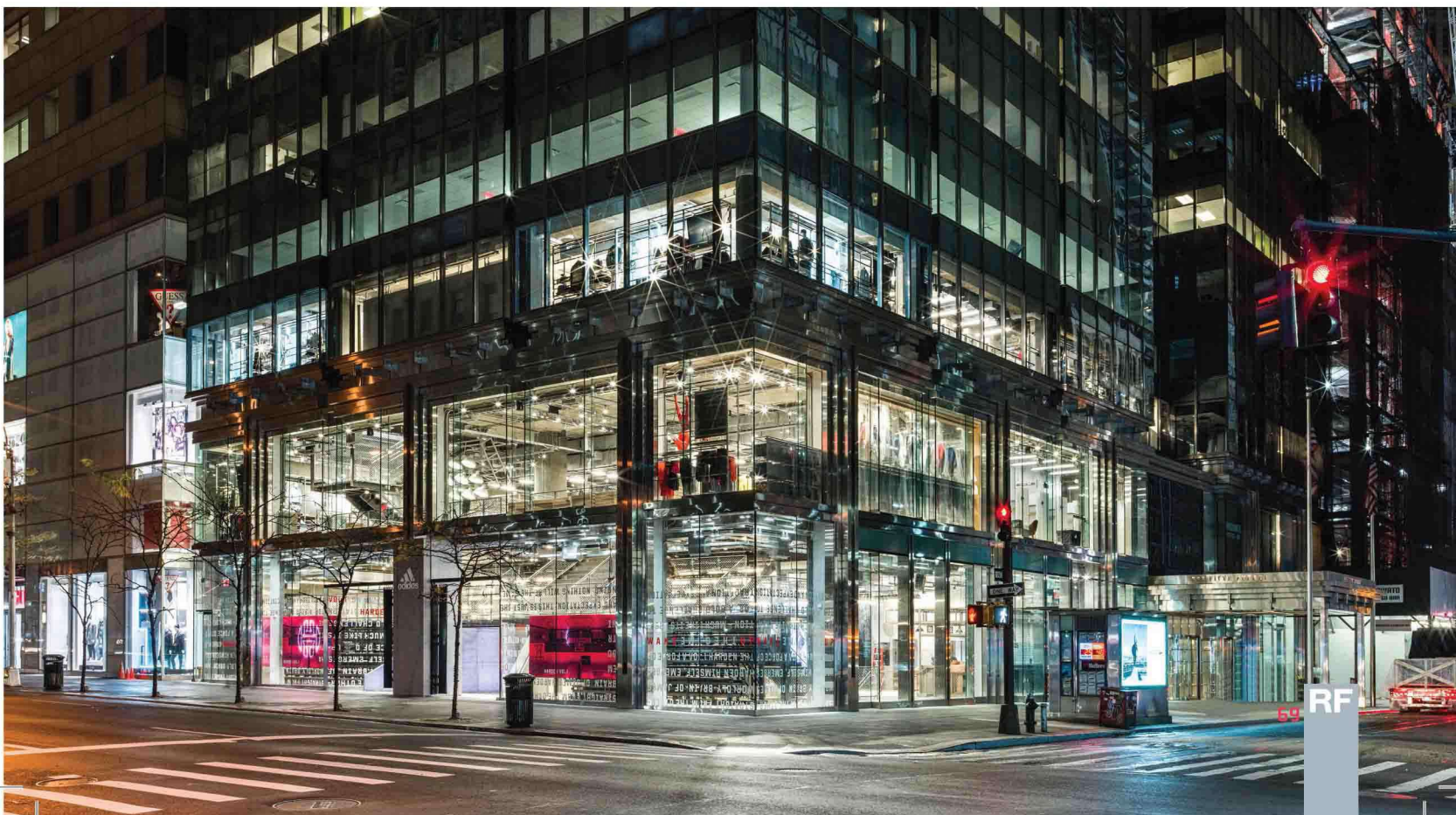
Just like any interior design component, music can improve and alter the shopping experience. Of all sensory inputs, humans are found to respond quickest to sound. 'It's the sense that reaches the brain first and functions as an organiser for the rest of our senses,' says Ola Sars, CEO and co-founder of Soundtrack Your Brand, which counts Aesop, TAG Heuer, Wagamama and GANT among its clients. 'We think music is often overlooked as part of brands' design strategies. As much as music can improve an experience, bad music can ruin that same experience and alienate customers, so one has to work hard to get it right.'

The company has developed its own model for matching individual brands with music, called Soundscan. 'Typically, we don't want to tie brands to specific music

genres, rather we attempt to find a unique sound for each brand that spans across several types of music and genres,' explains Sars. 'The essence of our model is how we translate brand attributes into specific musical keywords. It's equally important to decide what the brand is as to decide what the brand is not.'

Sometimes, playing no music at all is better than playing random popular music, argues Sars. In 2016, M&S announced that it was switching off background music in a number of its stores in response to feedback from customers and staff. Waterstones has a similar policy. >

Below: PlayNetwork counts the adidas NYC flagship among its clients.



'EVERY SENSORIAL CUE, INCLUDING SOUND, IMPACTS THE EXPERIENCE' MOOD MEDIA



Above: PlayNetwork has helped to unify the digital and physical spaces for NYX Cosmetics in the US by creating an entertainment media ecosystem that infuses NYX Professional Makeup stores with music and digital technology.

Right: Spanish fashion brand Mango has partnered with media engagement company, Shazam and Mood Media to let customers choose what music they would like to play in store.

entertainment media ecosystem that infuses NYX Professional Makeup stores with music and digital technology.

Meanwhile in Europe, Spanish fashion brand Mango has partnered with media engagement company, Shazam and Mood Media to let customers choose what music they would like to play in store. The mobile marketing solution, Shazam In-Store is available in Mango stores across Spain, and enables customers to access the retailer's playlists and choose the songs they would like to play in store while shopping.

'Mango has been the first fashion brand in Europe to offer a unique musical experience to its customers thanks to Shazam In Store and our recently launched feature, Social Mix,' says Valentina Candeloro, marketing director international at Mood Media. 'This innovative feature allows in-store customers to view in real time the store's playlist and select the songs they would like to hear next, with the most popular song rising to the top.'

'With 78 per cent of consumers declaring that they would like to influence the music played in stores and the number going up to almost 90 per cent when looking at Generation Z, brands like Mango demonstrate they are listening to what their customers are asking for, allowing them to play in an engaging playground, safe and coherent with their brand's essence,' adds Candeloro.

'The rise of the digital world has created a need in consumers for sensorial experiences and emotion connections: we don't just want to buy a brand, we want to engage with it and experience it. It's not a one-size-fits-all though, agrees Candeloro. 'Every sensorial cue, including sound, impacts the experience so the music we choose for our clients has to reflect the brand DNA and values as much as its customers' taste.' **RF**

while Waitrose, Lidl and Aldi are also free of piped music.

'One size does not fit all,' agrees Craig Hubbell, CEO of in-store entertainment company, PlayNetwork. 'When brands stay true to their core roots and truly understand their customers, the role of music becomes more clear.'

According to Hubbell, crafting the perfect brand sound is a combination of knowing the customer and then combining music expertise, programming skills and analysis, licensing requirements, marketing knowledge and instinct to truly enhance physical, digital and experiential space to increase customer engagement. The company's client list includes Pret a Manger, Anthropologie, Victoria's Secret, Starbucks and adidas, including the New York City stadium-inspired flagship, which opened in December. With creativity, sustainability and authenticity at the core of its new retail concept, adidas appointed PlayNetwork to translate these ideas through music and high fidelity sound across all of its US stores, including adidas NYC. Each music strategy is programmed and managed by PlayNetwork music supervisors, who partner with the adidas team to align segmented playlists with core messages, campaigns, products, and environmental attributes for each store type. For the adidas NYC flagship, this includes a fresh mix of contemporary rap, stylish R&B, brand-sponsored musicians and exclusive underground sounds from artists that can only be heard at adidas.

In addition, PlayNetwork has helped to unify the digital and physical spaces for NYX Cosmetics in the US by creating an

