

Wavemaker



Today in Media

Sounds Great!

The Secret To Making
Your Audio Content
Work Harder

June 2022



Sonic Branding 101:

It's how your brand shows up in audio, not where

*Sound is the first sense that develops in our biological system. We process it on both a conscious and unconscious level. Even the most insignificant sounds can impact the things we do and the way we feel. As marketers, we want the sounds our brands make to resonate with the consumer. When we see the same logo and messaging repeatedly, we connect with a brand. Audio marketing, on the other hand, relies on non-visual markers to connect with us. This distinct approach is called a **Sonic Identity**.*

A successful sonic identity embodies who or what the brand is, how or why it is portrayed, and most importantly, the emotional and psychological effect that it invokes.

The power of sonic identity isn't just validated by brand health metrics, it's validated by science. We have biological proof that sound moves you in ways that no other sense, or media channel, can.

Intel's signature 'bong' did not become the most recognizable brand signature overnight; it took years before audiences recognized it. Now – that melody is the most known sonic identity worldwide.



Sonic Identity

is the translation of a visual brand into audio using dimensions of sound to brand products or services.

1. Pandora - <https://www.sxmmedia.com/insights/neuroscience-proves-that-adjacent-content-increases-ad-recall>

Sound's Power To Influence

Just like a logo, a brand's sonic identity is key to bringing its business, service, or product to the top of consumers' minds.

Our brain remembers sounds, jingles, and slogans more than visual logos. It takes time to create the association and recognition of a sound to a specific brand, which is why it requires an approach with keen attention to detail.

In a Pandora and Neuro-Insights study, audio was 36% more memorable than the established norms for a TV commercial.

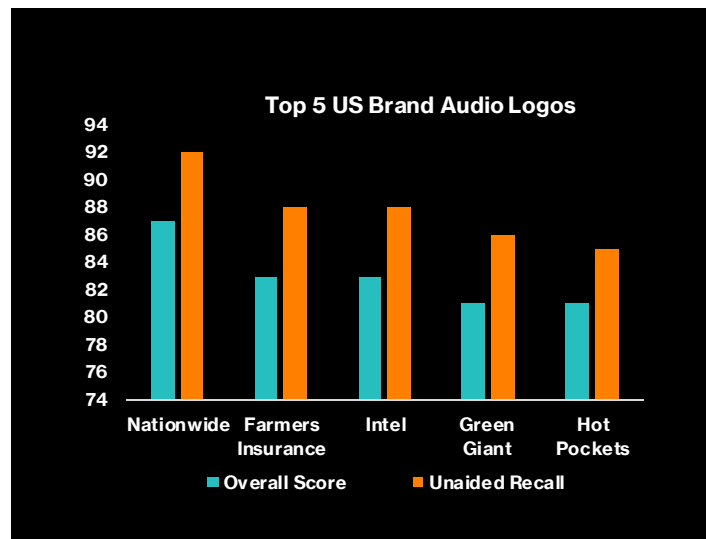
Memorability happens to us on a biological scale. The auditory system develops early on in human maturity - so when a sound first enters our ears, we process it on a primal level and even develop an associative feeling or action to specific sounds. The sounds of rolling waves, rumbling thunder, or falling raindrops can put a person to sleep. Music or singing can release oxytocin, which can lower stress and anxiety.

Sound can also create a positive association with memories or emotions. The feeling you get when you hear sonic identifiers - such as Netflix's "tadum" or McDonald's "I'm Lovin' it" - is usually one of excitement, familiarity, and safety.

"Veritonic, a marketing analytics platform for commercial music, surveyed more than 2,600 panelists in October 2016 and asked them to listen to audio logos selected from Interbrand's Best Global Brands ranking, the Dow Jones Industrial Average, and the S&P. Panelists were asked to record their emotions as the logos played and were asked about the feelings the audio evoked. They were then contacted 48 hours later to test recall of audio logos. Panelists' emotions and engagement were also tracked using Veritonic's patent pending EchoTime technology. Each brand's overall 1-100 score in the ranking combines unaided recall, plus emotion categories including: Excited, happy, approachable, authentic, confident, empowering, innovative, likable, reputable, simple, trustworthy, and unique."

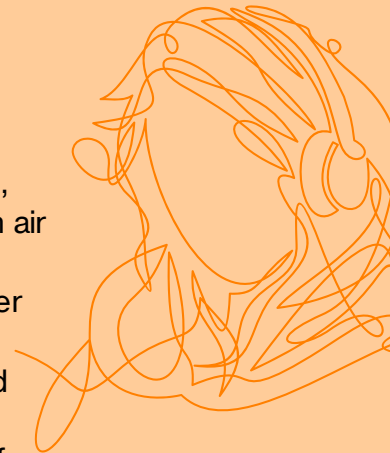
When creating a sonic identity, brands must keep in mind the effect it will have on their audience. A positive sound will unlock a new level of consideration and brand loyalty from consumers.

Studies have shown that the barrage of sounds we are exposed to each day, including the ones we do not notice, can have an immense impact on our well-being.



Positive Association

Nationwide's jingle, which has been on air for 50+ years is a sonic identity leader when it comes to **unaided recall** and scored big on evoking feelings of happiness and excitement.



Did you know?

Our memories differ based on our sight and sound senses



Iconic memory

Storage of
what we see
.5 – 1 second long



Echoic memory

Storage of
what we hear
2 - 4 second long

Sound gets in before other senses changes our perspective

Beyond advertising and brand association, what we listen to affects how we spend our money. If the auditory cues of slot machines dinging, winning chips falling or people cheering disappeared from a Las Vegas casino, revenue would drop 24%.

In 2021, Edison Media Research released its *Share of Ear* study which found that Americans' daily time spent listening to audio grew 9%, equating to 21 minutes more than the year prior, for a total of 4 hours per day. Brands that play where consumers are engaging and having positive audio experiences can bend the curve in their favor.

Despite this emotional connection and the fact that audio consumption has increased over the years due to the rise in podcasts, smart home devices, and other auditory channels - advertisers aren't racing to follow their audiences to these environments.

1. YouTube: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=yvxQ2fQg10>

Creating a sonic identity need not be rushed, it requires audience consumption data, ideation, and a true understanding of a brands core values.



If the audiences are listening, why aren't brands following? When should brands and their agencies invest in their sonic identities and make their investments work harder?

The answer is simple: **Right now.**

Sonic identities are not a new form of advertising; they have been tested and proven to be reputable for brands throughout time. And now is the time to build sustainable sonic identities.

Creating a sonic identity with impact

Sonic identity takes time to grow. The goal is to create a sound that allows consumers to immediately connect the first few notes with the brand. The first step to create a sonic identity is audience insights and strategy ideation. The below will help guide and inform the transformation of a brand's thinking from one that just thinks about pumping out audio creative, to one that creates a locked and loaded sonic identity.



Brands should consider multiple sounds working together to create an immersive experience that can impact everyone on a macro level.

A Sonic Identity

Tells a story through audio's unique ability to evoke vivid mental imagery that is specific to everyone's unique experience

Uses audience insights to understand subconscious perceptions associated with the brand

Understands the endemic consumption habits of your audience.

Ideates around brand associations within a specific music genre or sound effects that align with brand personality and messaging

Evokes emotions consistently across media channels

Remains consistent across all media touchpoints, but especially in audio

Builds character association and communicates who the brand is

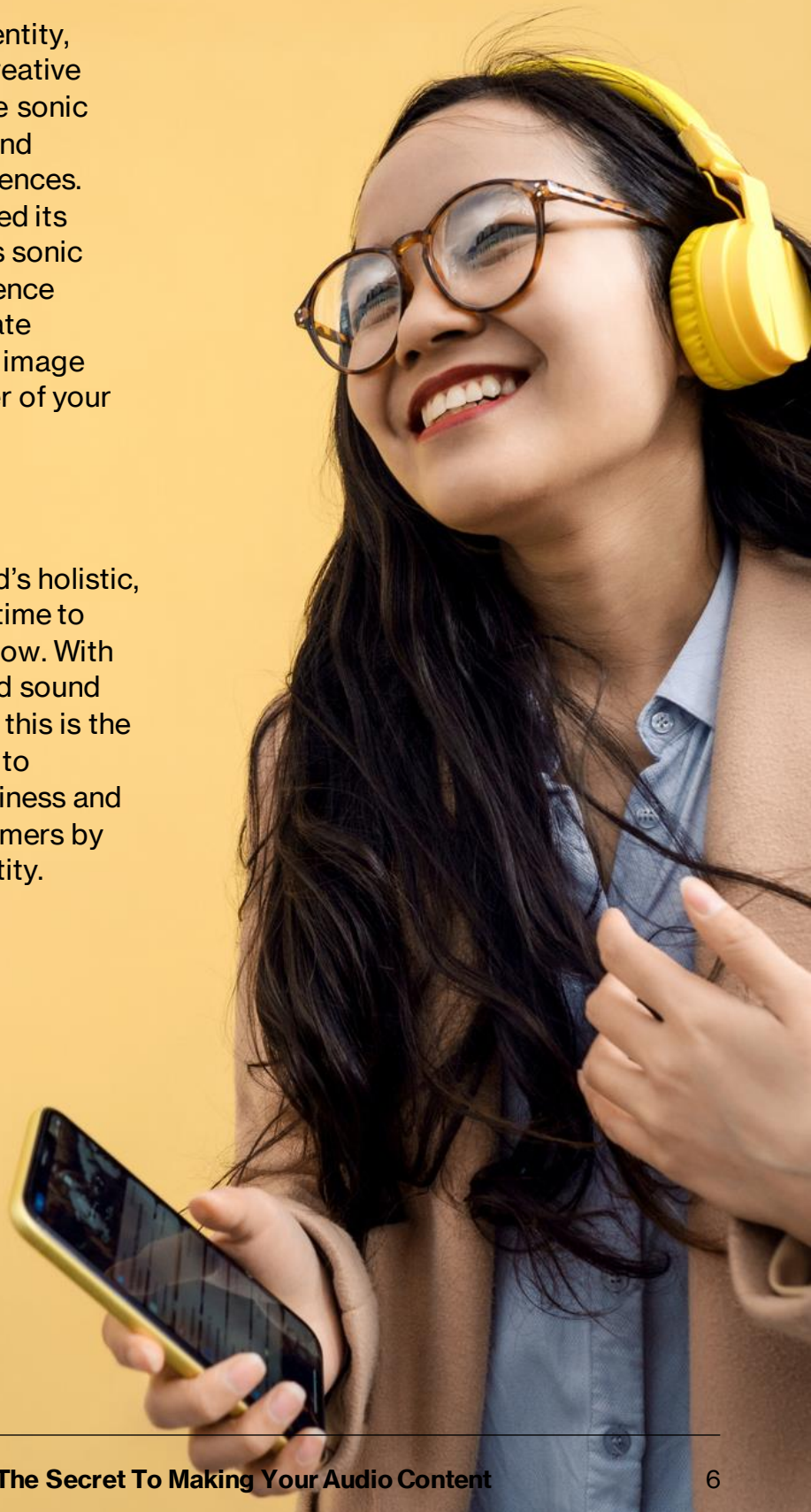
Provides the listener with a sense of agency – it is not happening to your audience but with your audience.

Leaving A Sonic Impression

When developing a sonic identity, consider the strategy and creative needs required to ensure the sonic identity is clearly designed and effectively reaches key audiences. Once the brand has packaged its values and personality via its sonic identity, make sure the audience develops an almost immediate association with the brand's image and messaging in the theater of your consumers' mind.

Why It Matters

Audio is essential to a brand's holistic, full-funnel media plan. The time to develop a sonic identity is now. With consumption on the rise and sound being incredibly impactful – this is the perfect moment for brands to positively provoke their business and methods of reaching consumers by investing in their sonic identity.



Beyond A Media Strategy

Factors To Keep Top Of Mind

01

Let it Sing! Strategically mix your audio content and media partnerships to plan across channels and contextual messages to align within the audio space. Consider creating campaigns with songs, brand jingles, audio influencers (i.e., radio personalities or podcast hosts), or voice skills (Artificial Intelligence that embodies the brand)

02

Reinforce emotional connection through repetition. Pay attention to the formats where your audience is spending the most time listening Leverage technologies that will help brands identify sonic spaces consistent with your brand.

03

Use Protection! Much has been said about brand safety, but little about how to protect sonic identity. Think about how your brand should monitor the deployment of its sonic identity to ensure it does not fall into the wrong hands of competitors



Provoking Growing Winning

**For any questions or more
information contact:**

Jesse Noll
Associate Director, Content
Jesse.Noll@wmglobal.com

Gabriella Koppelman
Manager, Content
Gabriella.Koppelman@wmglobal.com

Wavemaker

www.wavemakerglobal.com