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It's all about the music



Traditional marketing is dying. Studies show that 75% of consumers actively avoid all type of advertising, whether it's on TV, billboards or the Internet. The audience is increasingly more and more fragmented, more critical and harder to reach.

At the same time people are spending more time on social media networks. Places where music is an engine for interaction. Could music branding be the golden ticket for tomorrow's marketers?

If Facebook was a country it would be as big as Brazil. With more than 200 million unique visitors a month, Facebook is the unchallenged giant on the social network stage. Adding the 125 million monthly Myspace users and the eight million monthly users of Twitter, we understand why this new online continent is of the highest priority for brands and marketers. The question is how you get in when traditional advertising is not doing the job?

Social media services connect people. They facilitate interaction between people and offer new forms of engaging in conversations with more people than ever imagined. Social networking is built up around three elements; the ability to socialize in an interactive environment, to engage in conversations that span almost the entire globe and new forms of expressing identity on a much larger stage.

The same elements also make up the traditional cornerstones of music and music listening. Music is and has always been a socialization tool. Music stirs up conversation. Psychological research also tells us that music works as a social marker for individuals. Something that lets us define who we are and who we want to be. Sharing the same aesthetics means music has come to play a very important part in the world of social media.

But music also drives social media. A survey from Entertainment Media Research shows

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that 53% of users actively surf social networking sites to find music, while another 39% have embedded music in their personal profiles.

A study by JP Morgan released earlier this year shows that sharing and searching for new music is one of the major reasons (after meeting, finding and talking with friends) why people spend time on these platforms. As a result music applications are popping up everywhere. Just take a look at Twitter. Services such as Blip.fm, Twisten.fm and Wizz are all focused on using Twitter to find, share and listen to music.

Without doubt music is a very important fuel in social media relations. But how can brands benefit from this? People all over the world are already talking. The question is how brands can become part of the conversation.

Music branding is about creating brand associations and recognition in the mind of consumers. By connecting brands and bands, brands can reach target groups that previously have been unavailable.

Successful music branding initiatives such as Bacardi's partnership with dance act Groove Armada, Red Bull's Academy and Proctor & Gamble's joint venture with Def Jam

Recordings to create Tag Records shows us that a strategic approach on music can and will work.

Music branding, if done right, offers brands a new way to catch customer attention, and create stronger emotional ties. By closely linking a brand to a certain artist, service or genre, brands can create positive and strong brand associations. In the Bacardi/Groove Armada case the company let the artist tell the story of the brand through music. This way they caught the audiences' attention, engaged them in activity and connected to them on a more emotional level

Music and social networks fill the same basic functions. Brands that connect to music therefore have the opportunity to unlock the true marketing potential on the social network continent.

It lets the brand take part in the discussions and get the attention that traditional advertising could never do. And in the end, if done right, it offers a way to turn target groups from consumers to fans.

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