



HEARTBEATS *international*

TAKING THE RISK OUT OF MUSIC

Brands and bands have been bedfellows for generations, sometimes uncomfortably. We speak to Sarah Tinsley from our Heartbeats network to find out how we can de-risk working with music by applying a more rigorous insight and planning process.



Sarah Tinsley, Heartbeats International Network

For years brands have been using music in their marketing communications in a myriad of different ways with varying levels of success, but the current economic climate is forcing both brands and talent to reconsider the way they forge relationships. “It’s about effectiveness now” says Sarah Tinsley, “brands now need bang for their buck. They want impactful integrated multi-media campaigns that connect and resonate with their target audience. They also want reasonable campaign costs & clearly demonstrable ROI. Music has not typically been able to deliver in these conditions & this has left many brand owners disillusioned or frustrated.”

THE CHALLENGES IN WORKING WITH MUSIC

Music can be a minefield. On the surface music rights can seem a difficult landscape to navigate with various stakeholders for each individual artist often seemingly pulling in different directions. Creative talent can prove unreliable to build multi-million campaigns around and more often than not, brands end up simply not getting what they want. “Brands frequently feel short-changed by their experience of working with music, either because they can’t secure the artist or the necessary rights that they require to deliver more integrated campaigns’. This often results in frustration & wasted time and resources

“Music stakeholders can often push their priorities onto the brand without understanding what the brand objectives are, meaning that brands often end up working with the wrong talent simply because they have a record or a tour to promote” says Tinsley “and typically not all the key stakeholders are identified and consulted with at the outset which proves a costly oversight as they have far greater negotiating power once a campaign has been launched. It is critical that brands understand their objectives and campaign requirements prior to entering into negotiation with music stakeholders to ensure that all their needs are met and budgets are well managed”

THE NEED FOR PROFESSIONALISM

It's not just the music industry that lacks objectivity when selecting suitable campaign partners. "Science often goes out of the window when it comes to talent selection; artists are chosen simply because stakeholders within the brand or their agency like them with little or no understanding of whether the artist connects with the desired target" says Tinsley, "not naming names, but there's been some high profile campaigns lately that have got this spectacularly wrong".

Brands can often be seduced by the fame of an artist "Celebrity can be an incredibly powerful device, but so can working with emerging artists. Newer talent can often be better rights enabled and more willing to assign labour. Before deciding which route to adopt a brand should first understand their objectives and their consumer's relationship with music and then decide on the what type of talent they work with. If you get it wrong it can be costly financially, but also to detrimental to your brand as consumers and fans will see it as a brash commercial enterprise. Their needs to be a strong personality fit between the artist and the brand for the partnership to be viewed as acceptable in the eyes of the consumer".

BACARDI & GROOVE ARMADA



Brands are becoming increasingly aware of the positive effect music can have on their brand image. This was demonstrated most effectively by the recent partnership between Groove Armada and Bacardi, of which Tinsley was a key protagonist during her tenure as Global Marketing Manager at the brand. "Research demonstrated that we achieved 33 percent awareness and 77 percent positivity scores amongst our target audience.

What was even more remarkable was that we were able to generate these results without any paid for media investment. The perfect fit between both partners enabled us to create stories in the media which were intrinsic to both brand's DNA; as this innovation story was compelling for media, we were able to broadcast the message across multiple channels thus driving awareness of the

campaign. Ultimately, we were able to achieve an equivalent media value of more than 1000% of the initial budget & therefore delivered substantial return on our investment.”

A NEW WAY FORWARD FOR THE MUSIC INDUSTRY

It's not just brands that benefit from brand and music partnerships, so says Tinsley. Even before the credit crunch the record business was in crisis, so artists are looking for ways to compensate for falling record revenues. They're also looking for new ways to reach new and existing audiences as marketing budgets are slashed.

“A good manager knows how to monetise an artist's fans, and many brands have marketing clout and collateral beyond that normally available to traditional labels”. An artist forming a partnership with the right brand can reap huge benefits, not only in terms of raising awareness (try searching Groove Armada in Google Analytics), but also in achieving their broader strategic and creative objectives. “The value that a brand can provide an artist with should not be underestimated or overlooked” suggests Tinsley “brands should clearly articulate the benefit of the campaign to the artist stakeholders in order to achieve more favourable terms and fees”.

TAKING THE RISK OUT OF MUSIC

So how do you harness all the opportunities music affords without encountering the pitfalls? No matter in what capacity you intend to utilize music you need to first consider the strategic role of music in brand communications and to clearly establish objectives at the outset. Secondly, brand owners & agencies should clearly define the sonic personality of the brand and ensure any music fits perfectly to this DNA & appeals to the target audience.

“Taking the risk away is isn't rocket science” says Tinsley “in order for a partnership to be successful you first need to understand what each party's objectives are. You can then design a campaign and negotiate a contract with these objectives at its very heart at the same time, understanding in advance what metrics you're going to apply to ensure each objective is met and hey presto, you're on your way to success”.

HOW CAN YOU DE-RISK WORKING WITH MUSIC?

- Clearly establish objectives at the outset**
 - Understand the requirements of the campaign prior to entering artist negotiations**
 - Know the artist audience profile & ensure it matches with the campaign objectives**
 - Ensure a strong personality fit between the artist and the brand**
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ABOUT

Heartbeats International is a brand communication agency specialised in helping brands connect with audiences through music. From their offices in Stockholm, Tokyo and New York they are on a mission to make hearts beat everywhere.

Sarah Tinsley is the former brand experiential manager of Bacardi and overall responsible for the Groove Armada project. Before that she was working as brand manager for Red bull. Sarah is a part of the Heartbeats International network of professional creative's from around the globe.

For more cases and work from Heartbeats visit: www.heartbeats.fm

To learn more about music's role in branding visit: www.soundlikebranding.com

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