

# soundbranding

**The connection between investment and emotion**

**BIRGITTE RODE**

**PREFACE BY  
JUDY HERMANSEN**

***BRANDING WITH SENSE.....***

**YOU CAN CLOSE YOUR EYES  
- BUT YOU CANNOT CLOSE YOUR EARS**

# ***Soundbranding***

## ***The connection between investment and emotion***

by Birgitte Rode

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<b>PREFACE</b> .....	9
<b>WHY SOUND IN BRANDING</b> .....	11
<b>BRANDING WITH SENSE</b> .....	23
<b>Chapter 1: THE CHANGE FROM BRAND QUALITY TO BRAND PERCEPTION</b> .....	29
What is it worth...? .....	34
Brand equity... .....	38
<i>Brand image and identity</i> ... .....	40
<i>Brand awareness and its evolution</i> ... .....	43
Branding vs. Naming... .....	64
<b>Chapter 2: SOUND BRANDING</b> .....	69
Evolution of music... .....	72
Multisensory branding... .....	75
Visual logo, Sound or Both... .....	83
Marketing through sound... .....	87
<b>Chapter 3: CHALLENGES IN SOUND BRANDING</b> .....	93
Business barriers... .....	96
<i>Stakeholders and Unfamiliar standards</i> .....	97
<i>New demands (education, creativity and cultural support)</i> .....	98
<i>Clients</i> .....	101
<i>Design, web and advertising agencies</i> .....	102
<b>Chapter 4: HOW TO GET THERE...</b> .....	103
<b>Chapter 5: CASE STUDIES</b> .....	111
<b>SUMMARY</b> .....	145
<b>GLOSSORY</b> .....	149
<b>LITERATURE</b> .....	155
<b>This book's intentions...</b> .....	157
<b>Acknowledgements</b> .....	159
<b>About the author</b> .....	165
<b>Notes</b> .....	167

***Why does music “touch” us emotionally? It doesn’t make sense.***

*This is a profound mystery which I cannot begin to ponder. Perhaps you can help? Think of it: technically speaking, music is just a collection of sounds interspersed with silence. But every human being knows of pieces of music that really “touch” him or her emotionally. These emotions can be very strong, and transport you to another “place”. How is it possible that a mere collection of sounds gets associated in our brain with memories, experiences, emotions, stories, images, feelings...? Why can we even cry when hearing a particular piece of music or even a fleeting, short succession of a few notes?*

*It’s totally bizarre. I don’t understand. It makes no sense, as far as I can see.*

Sense? No, because:

- *(Apparently) there’s no “utilitarian”/“economic” value to music.*
- *(Apparently) there’s no biological/evolutionary advantage -- we are hunters and gatherers, with some brutally uttered noises we should get by well while hunting mammoths and elephants.*
- *There seems to be no real social value either (as some music can be too private, and a singular fragment may touch a single person at a strictly single, private moment)*
- *Maybe there’s a neurological advantage (releasing energy in excessively charged neurons, or something to that extent...)*

*In any case: how can we ever explain the fact that music “touches” us and generates “feelings” that can touch our entire body and make us shiver?*

*- Laurens Rademakers*

# **PREFACE**

Although, there is plenty of literature on visual branding, sound branding remains a fairly undescribed phenomenon. Even though, the branch is becoming more and more widespread, we still lack literature targeting those working with sound branding. The practitioners in this innovative field share many different backgrounds, but also a deficiency of theoretical basis. Birgitte Rode's book makes a contribution to the field by providing their creativity with a professional context, which is absolutely mandatory when working with branding strategies and brand management. It reflects that she has carried out sound branding for quite some time and has collaborated with a variety of clients - and that she generously draws on her own experiences. However, though practice and execution are the book's focal point, Birgitte Rode also introduces theory from, for instance: music, psychology, and branding, which helps to deepen the understanding of the important aspects of the subject. This is a great strength of this book together with affluent examples and cases that illustrate the key points.

Execution of sound branding is always embedded in the overall branding strategy, and therefore, it is highly appropriate that the book also contains a brief survey of general branding theory. Creative 'sound-people' or musicians are likely to benefit greatly from an introduction to branding and marketing concepts that will prepare them for working with advertising agencies and brand managers. It is a valuable and 'gentle' push into the professional world of sound branding.

Birgitte Rode herself has a vocational background in music as her own initial foundation for working with sound branding – and

thus, a 'lived-experience' approach permeates the entire book, which redounds to its high level practicality.

It is always a laudable initiative to pass on one's experiences and insights - especially when they fall on such an uncultivated field as soundbranding. Use the book as a reference book or read it from cover to cover – it is both entertaining and educational.

Enjoy!

Judy Hermansen  
*Network Manager Brand Base*

This is an example. The total number of pages that is shown is limited.

For creating and maintaining brand awareness two parts of advertising can be applied: the medium and the strategy. The medium is the vehicle used to convey a message, while the strategy is concerned with how the message is designed to influence a potential customer.

Due to the nature of the traditional media and mass media up until the middle of the 2000's, the communication between companies and customers was a one-way exchange of information. The consumers were approached through TV, radio or print, and it was not possible for the consumer to implement a response to the message they were confronted with in the daily advertising. This has changed now, due to the establishment of social media. Social media offer the customers the capability of providing feedback, perceived as either an advantage or an inconvenience for companies. Because of the technological paradigm shift, this novelty has dramatically affected the advertising agencies selling advertising in traditional media such as newspapers, TV, and radio. As a result, the existing business models were challenged. Since the arrival of the internet-driven communication platforms, the traditional media have become less attractive for clients to use. After the Danish TV monopoly breach, huge financial amounts have been invested in TV commercials, but with tides changing, the companies themselves can turn into communication channels through social media, where their communication and video will be available 24/7/365. In this way the companies will eliminate significant costs, paid for a limited time slot on the radio, a few lines in a newspaper column or a small amount of airtime on TV. Generally, the interaction between customer and company has become more informal and has thus created new communication challenges. It is important to 'be there'

when the client has the need for your product, to have transparency, involvement and relevance, and be open-minded towards the strategy of using the social platforms as an instrument for advertising. However, as stated, the evolution of the social networks can also be a huge threat for companies. Unhappy and unsatisfied customers are enabled and have the opportunity to write what they want, when they want. If involved in something less fortunate, companies can become the recipient of what is described as a ‘shitstorm’. Being the process where people, producers or others receive mass criticism through the media (often through the press, Facebook and Twitter), the shitstorm can be caused by anything from association with celebrities, nature, animal-protection to child labour. This can usually be avoided with a strict communication strategy, where the communication from the director all the way to the manufacturer is clear, so there are no misunderstandings.

One of the most shocking examples of a shitstorm was when Danske Bank, represented in 9 countries around the Baltic Sea, launched their new advertising campaign, New Standards, in 2012. The campaign caused a loss of 135.000 clients.

Thursday the 29th November, 2012 Danske Bank released the following statement:

*“The advertising campaign New Standards will be adjusted. We have on Thursday, the 29th November, decided to delete that part of our advertising campaign showing photos from the ‘Occupy Wall Street’-movement. We do this because we have incited negative reactions from many people who expressed the opinion that we are misusing the Occupy name, amongst them the ‘Occupy Wall Street’-movement itself.*”

and act. If you smile, there is a good chance you might actually become happy. The same happens, if you start dancing around. The traditional view would propose that any behaviour, such as dance and smiling is merely the outcome of a person wanting to dance or being happy. However, the opposite is true as well.

Consider how you would express an emotion as a dance or movement. If you think of anger, the movements might be very forceful, abrupt and erratic. These are the same keywords that you can attribute to angry music. Think of the emotion “sad” now. You may find that your movements become slower and less forceful. This is the same you would expect from a sad song like one might find in the blues music or music in minor. To end on a high note, let us now consider ‘happy’ - big swooping motions, lots of energy and a general lightness. Once again, the same traits we find in music if we were to select a happy melody.

A very clear cut way of witnessing these dynamics is through cartoons and animated movies. These have the benefit of only conveying what the artist has put down on paper. If a character is to be convincing, a skilled artist knows which movements and dynamics to employ to arrive at the desired effect. Furthermore, the music that is going to be featured in the production is always pre-recorded. This is an effective practice introduced by Walt Disney and used by producers to ensure the tight synchronization of picture and sound as well as ensure the high standards of the animated film.

### **Multisensory branding...**

The idea of multisensory communication, in relation to branding, came to the world’s attention with the release of Martin Lindstrom’s book ‘BRANDsense’ 10 years ago. In it, the expert argues for how

companies can create stronger brands by relying on multiple sensory touchpoints - the brand should be identifiable via taste, touch, smell, sight and sound, which applied together, are much more powerful than just one influencing factor. If marketers want to fortunately brand a product or a company, the most effective way would be to engage all the senses in the process. When done successfully, the method delivers sensory marketing (a technique used to seduce the customer by employing all the senses for greater influence over feelings and behaviour).

Martin Lindstrom's study is based on the traditional definition and classical perception of the five senses – Sight, Sound, Smell, Taste, and Touch. The classic senses were defined by Aristoteles (384-322. BC.), and the definition has not been changed since. It is not a mistake using the five senses, but times have evolved and new terms have arrived. Seen from the perspective of the modern cognitive science, the traditional definition of the five senses is a very limited one. Studies and work practices within sensory integration have a long history within the pedagogic world where the definition is based on 7 senses: 3 primary senses and 4 secondary senses.

The senses considered primary are the tactile one (touch), the vestibular one (balance) and the kinaesthetic one (movement), while the secondary senses are as followed – sight, hearing, taste and smell. The capability of detecting stimuli different than those commanded by the most commonly recognised senses is also existent. Pain (nociception), vibration (mechanoreception) and varied internal stimuli (for instance, detecting salt chemoreceptors) are included in these sensory processes.

Be that as it may, the definition of sense is a subject to some debate, resulting in difficulties in identifying the exact characteristics

\* \* \*

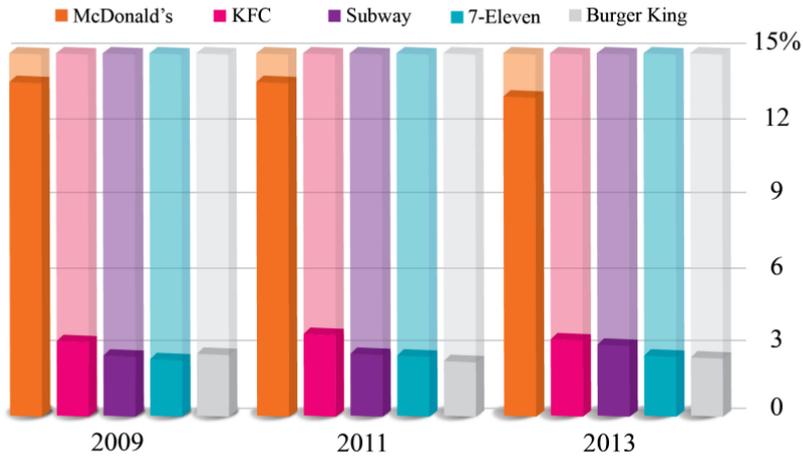


VS.



*Both no-sound concept (Burger King) and highly strategic sound-concept (McDonald's) will be studied, so the beneficial assistance of sound signature when it comes to differentiating a brand and making it more appealing to the masses is recognised.*

McDonald's and Burger King have for many years occupied 1st and 2nd position respectively on the list representing the most attractive Fast Food Franchises. Their competitiveness dates back from the time when the restaurant chains first entered the national fast food market. Due to the superior quality offerings, original recipes, well-planned alliances and perfectly-assessed management tactics both of the companies actively employ, they are in serious battling for more market share and franchises. Being customer-oriented, the two rivals strive to completely satisfy the taste requirements and the preferences of the consumers coming into the restaurants. Performing on many different international markets, McDonald's as well as Burger King face their conditions and objections, and do business in accordance with the eating habits of the native population. However, despite their similarities in the way the business is done, the two firms completely differ from each other in terms of occupied place on the global market and consumer approach.



**Figure 3.3: Top five fast food brands by global market share**

With its consistent market share and head position, McDonald's clearly are the undisputed leader in the industry. Being estimated to possess a brand value of \$37.4bn, this American restaurant chain serves nearly 70 million people every day at the expenses of its 35,000 locations around the world. Such high level of access, compared to the numbers of Burger King (12,000 restaurants), provides McDonald's with greater global awareness and an enviable advantage. This fast food chain is one of the most easily perceived and most recognisable brands in the world. 'What caused this?', one might ask. Is it the quality of the customer service? Is it the atmosphere in the different locations? Or, is it the vast variety of products offered? Even though none of the mentioned contributing factors are insignificant, what directs the success of McDonald's is their branding strategy. The company's marketing budget vastly exceeds that of its rivals. In 2012, the chain spent \$787.5m on advertising while Burger King only used \$48.3m due to the fact the firm primarily focuses on equipment updates. Marketing and

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