

Soundtrack your life

VIBE REPORTER

THE debate about whether to source new music from CDs or the Internet continues, but while you're thinking about it, consider yet another option.

Retailers are now turning to experts to mix soundtracks for their stores with the right music to attract youth brands, choosing tunes that reflect the brand's unique and individual style.

Called "audio branding" it's all about taking a research-driven approach to finding music that appeals to your consumer target market and creating a bespoke shopping experience.

Internationally, this approach is used by the world's top retailers like H&M, Nike and Abercrombie & Fitch.

Locally, the trend is being pioneered in South Africa by DMX Music for brand leaders like

Woolworths and @home.

From a youth culture perspective, the approach is so successful that the latest dance music tracks are being released in store and young customers flock to these points of purchase to be exposed to the latest music trends.

For brands with more mature customer sets, the goal is creating a backtrack that fits their customer segments from a geographic, demographic and time perspective.

"Music is strongly cognitive, and research shows that it has a powerful impact on business environments," says Craig Cesman, chief executive officer of DMX Music in South Africa.

"Music can be used to enhance brand recall, augment brand loyalty, increase the amount of time that consumers

spend in store, and strongly influence the experience they have. More importantly, music can influence consumer behaviour and attract new customers to stores."

He continues: "Internationally, in-store music has evolved into a science and if you walk into Abercrombie & Fitch, which is a strong youth brand, you'll hear the latest dance music tracks before they air on radio, creating a hot, rebellious, youthfully fast-paced feel for the trendy brand."

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Apart from the chains already mentioned, brands such as Virgin Active, Southern Sun, Primi Piatti and Dros have also signed up, so it's worth listening out for a custom-made aural experience next time you go out to eat or work out.

