

## DMX creates the right brand music for @home

There's an old retail adage that says: "Retail is in the detail". In highly competitive retail markets it is becoming crucial for stores to create unique, on brand environments that invite customers back for repeat purchases and that drive sales. No retailer understands this better than @home, the leading homeware store that is part of the Foschini Group.

"It is crucial to create an in-store atmosphere in any retail environment," says Bruce Procter Marketing & Operations Executive for @home. "Music has an ability to lighten up the atmosphere in-store and is something that customers really relate to. Our music selection is extremely focussed and distinctive and has afforded our chain brand consistency and distinctiveness."

Launched in May 2002, @home is well accepted in the marketplace as the market leader in the homeware market sector with 41 @home stores located nationwide. Customers enjoy enhancing their homes with @home's fashionable offer covering the Eat, Sleep, Bath, Cook and Live categories, and since the brand's early beginnings sonic branding has been managed in-store for @home by DMX Music.

"The homeware industry is competitively traded in South Africa," says Craig Cesman, Chief Executive Officer of DMX Music, South Africa. "@home realised very early that they wanted to create a unique, consistent and differentiated in-store environment. It was crucial in our work with @home to offer the right music with the right technology solution for their stores to ensure that a unique brand sound was consistently played in their stores across the country helping to create the distinctive

brand @home has become best known for."

The solution was to create a bespoke music programming for @home that would be delivered in store by DMX's ProFusion platform. "The ProFusion platform provides digital-quality music in a robust high-performance system offering hands-free consistent service to the retailer. Using this technology DMX is able to offer retailers an unparalleled selection of demographically targeted music styles with original artists' songs. DMX manages the complete end-to-end process meaning that music delivery is very easy to manage, yet can remain uniquely differentiated," explains Cesman.

"Our success is not based on delivering music, but delivering the right music to affect customer behaviour. DMX understands how consumers perceive stimuli via human senses. What people see, hear, and smell will impact how they act, how they feel, and most importantly how they connect with a brand. At the very core is a musical understanding that is the direct result of research & testing through partnerships with some of the biggest brands in the world like Nike and Abercrombie & Fitch. This enables us to create unique music signatures used by brands like @home to define themselves."

The mix for @home incorporates various jazz styles, Rat Pack and golden oldies which appeal to a mature market segment, but which is finding increasing favour with younger markets. The mix speaks directly to @home's demographic segment and finishes off the stores relaxed ambience which affords customers a distinctive and comfortable shopping experience while offering innovative products and new in-store brands with a strong focus on fashion, style and quality.

According to Procter the reason for using DMX was driven by the need to create the right audio experience for @home in store. “We basically needed consistency in all of our stores and our greatest challenge was to stop our staff from sabotaging that consistency and ultimately the customer experience, by playing music that they wanted to listen to.”

The success of @home’s sonic brand strategy is borne out by the positive feedback they have received from customers, and the rapid growth of the brand. “We have found, through the feedback that our customers offer us, that they experience the music as uplifting,” explains @home’s Procter. “We get consistent compliments from customers. The huge popularity is because the music we play makes the shopping environment very relaxed and pleasurable. Some customers actually start singing along to familiar tracks and the music just seems to relax, soothe and break any tension customers may feel when they walk into our stores. The music has added tremendous value to the shopping experience,” says Procter.