

## Virgin Active Works Out With DMX Music

Global fitness leader Virgin Active is pioneering audio branding to transform the company's clubs into experiences where consumers will enjoy staying true to their workout routine.

In the highly competitive local gym industry, fitness destinations are seeking to carve distinctly different experiences within their gyms and to recreate the environments into a unique consumer experience. Because of the researched effect that music has on mood and behaviour, audio branding or the strategic use of in-gym music can help brand owners achieve the creation of a fitness destination where consumers enjoy spending time and where staff enjoy working.

Virgin Active is not only South Africa's leading fitness brand, it is also pioneering fitness environments through the use of audio branding and demographically targeted music that is set to augment brand loyalty amongst its customer base, through the creation of consistently enjoyable experiences. The net sensation is an interactive consumer encounter in which the brand is purposefully and consistently translated into the ultimate gym experience.

According to research by Nielsen Media Studies some 80% of gym members stated that music and videos make "workouts more enjoyable" while 82% stated that entertainment "is a good thing" for facilities to offer. That is why when Virgin Active wanted to use sound to enhance the customer brand experience, they approached DMX.

For more than 35 years, DMX Music has been an industry leader in the development and engineering of Audio Branding and the broadcast of multiple dedicated

music channels to home users. Key to the company's success, in both home and commercial environments, is a research-based understanding of the relationship between consumers and their sensory experiences, as well as the ability to create a personal connection with customers through music.

In commercial environments these insights into consumer lifestyle behaviour are integrated with the goals and strategies of businesses to build memorable brands, entertain customers, motivate staff and create extraordinary commercial environments through Audio Branding.

"It just made sense for us to implement a digital music system in order to avoid having to look after and secure a comprehensive inventory of CD's," says Rick Jaffe (Virgin Active's National Operations Manager). Virgin Active, operates DMX's satellite offering, in over 79 Virgin Active clubs throughout the country. "It is far easier to operate DMX Music's satellite offering, as opposed to purchasing piles of CDs. The satellite offering, also provides the option of changing the music genre to suit the demographic of people who come to train at different times of the day" says Jaffe.

Jaffe maintains that music is crucial to the customer experience, to build brand loyalty and to create an environment where staff enjoy working. "Music is a proven mood enhancer and it is an energy giving medium. We find that it creates a relaxed or vibrant mood that is definitely conducive to a satisfactory workout session. Music creates a comfortable space by taking the silence away, while lifting people's spirits and forming an integral part of the training classes." Some 120 000 members pass through Virgin Active gyms daily in every province in

South Africa. To cater for regional and demographic music preferences, but ensure that the music remains on brand, DMX Music's satellite offering enables Virgin Active club managers to specify the choice of channel which is varied from club to club.

Historically, Virgin Active were using a combination of CD's and radio, which proved difficult to maintain because the company had to continuously purchase new music, the result being that a limited variety and range of music, made it difficult to cater for everyone's tastes. The utilisation of radio, as a music medium, created numerous limitations that made it impossible to control the flow of music, with the constant interruptions of DJ's and advertising breaks. "There was very little or no variation", says Jaffe, explaining: "We experienced wear and tear that came from utilising CD's and the music itself was static and lacked freshness. We had no control at all over the type of music that would be featured on the radio and were thus unable to provide favourable music to different demographic targets. From an HR perspective a staff member had to always be by the relevant equipment to control the music". DMX Music offered an elegant solution through the company's satellite music offering which provided Virgin Active outlets countrywide a comprehensive, yet distinctive bouquet of music, with the objective of providing a consistent music offering from gym to gym. Further to this, DMX's music format supplies Virgin Active with consistent and uninterrupted genre specific music, adding to the enjoyment factor of the ultimate gym experience. "Music adds a fresh and motivating element to any work environment, and is conducive to productivity. Overall we have found that DMX's product enhances the mood of members, which makes everyone's jobs happier,

more productive and more satisfying." DMX Music is a privately owned company founded in 1995, based in Johannesburg, South Africa, that holds the exclusive Africa-wide distribution rights for DMX Music's international content. DMX Music distributes music and visual services worldwide to more than 10 million homes and 200,000 businesses with a worldwide daily listening audience of more than 100 million people.