

JINGLES, EXTINCT?

Have you ever daydreamed, only to have your mind wander off to strange places? Even more disturbing, have you ever found yourself tooling around all the while singing a jingle like it was a Grammy winning ballad?

Truth is, we all do it. That is why I was bit confused the other day when I spoke with someone from a high-powered, national ad agency on this very subject. After some discussion with the creative director, the conversation ended with her stating, "Jingles are a dying breed." I couldn't believe what I was hearing. In fact, this same idea was being floated by other ad agencies I'd spoken with just weeks prior. But is it true? Will jingles become extinct?

Before we travel down that road, let's first do the "full disclosure" thing.

I happen to have a degree in marketing and have worked in the adverting industry for many years. In fact, I was a partner in an ad agency before founding Dailey Sound Vector Media - a creative services firm (www.dsvmedia.com).

Hence, I have some very strong views on the subject - some biased, most grounded in experience and third party research.

The Truth About Jingles

Fact is, jingles aren't going anywhere. They've been incredibly effective since the early 1900's. They've stood the test of time. There are many reasons why these little power-packed tunes carry such a big stick. But we'll shorten the list to 5:

1. **Entertaining.** Jingles are fun (sometimes annoying, I know). But they add an appeal that a spiel from a pudgy company president could never summon. After all, most people are not that excited about watching commercials, at least make it entertaining.
2. **Memorable.** According to studies, brands will be revered for years to come due to the memory-etching that takes place with jingles. Why else would we teach our children the alphabet with song? Music and clever words bring info back to our minds lightning fast
3. **Brand Establishment.** Over the years countless companies, both large and small, have put their money on a catchy tune. Examples range from the sleazy used car guy in a clown suit up to multinational soda companies. These jingles have and are being used for "branding" - a consistent means of delivering the identity of a company to the public.
4. **Infectious.** Music, at times, plays in our mind like a broken record. Don't believe me? Apparently, you've never been a victim of Frosty the Snowman. You desperately want to stop hearing it in your head, but the repeat button has been super-glued in the "on" position. The point is, what advertiser wouldn't want their brand on "repeat" in the mind of the consumer - free advertising, right?

5. **Ad Ninjas, Yah!** Jingles are like ninjas in the night. They slip in, and you don't have a clue that they are there. That's because music is something our mind embraces readily. Someone in our industry once said that there are no mental defense mechanisms for jingles. Think about it. Even the stupid, hokey tunes slip by. Hence, you whistle a tune that, technically, annoys you. Remember, Frosty the Snowman.

Ad Agency Conspiracy?

So if jingles do all of these magical things, why would an agency with billings reaching 100 million say that jingles are dinosaurs?

Like every other industry, you wind up with trends. The current trend happens to be the old co-branding technique (for all of you ad buffs). What I mean is that two brands join forces in one ad to help one another. In this instance, it's the music industry and Widget World.

You see, with the advent of illegal digital file sharing, the music industry has been losing its shirt on sales. Huge record companies can no longer rake in all of the dough from physical CD sales. So what do they do? They've adapted. They market themselves alongside any given widget for additional revenue.

Every time you hear a popular tune in a car, cell phone, video game or fashion commercial, know that big money is involved for the use of that popular tune. It's called, "sync rights" - the money paid for synchronizing a popular tune with the ad of Widget Global or whatever.

Bottonline On Jingles

So when it comes down to it, popular music is being used by ad agencies for "targeting" (another term from marketing-101) and the "cool factor" (totally made up phrase).

Does popular music sell product? In my estimation, no. And there are a number of studies that support my view on this.

So back to the main question. Are jingles a dying breed? Absolutely not.

Sure. They aren't nearly as appealing as a top Billboard song, but they've been working for decades and will continue to do so. Do jingles need to evolve? Without question. Because at the end of the day, any worth-while ad campaign is about moving product and punching-up a brand. A well-crafted jingle can do it far better than most tools out there. But like everything else - it must be done right.

What do you think works best?