

ENHANCING INTERNATIONAL MARKETING COURSES WITH MUSIC

John J. Lawrence, Department of Business, University of Idaho, Moscow, ID 83844-3178; (208) 885-5821

ABSTRACT

This paper describes the benefits of playing international music during the 10-15 minutes before international marketing classes begin for students arriving early. This simple class enhancement, coupled with a map for students to look at or an appropriate question to ponder, can turn the few minutes before class into valuable learning time and have a positive influence on students' attitudes toward the class.

INTRODUCTION

Music is a powerful mood and behavior influencer, making it an important tool in the marketer's toolbox (Bruner 1990). Music has been shown to affect consumers' preferences for products (Gorn, 1982), consumers' moods and purchase intentions (Alpert and Alpert, 1988), consumers' emotional responses to television commercials (Wintle, 1978), consumers' perceptions of retailers (Herrington, 1994), consumers' perceptions of wait times (Zakay, 1991), consumers' evaluations of services when waits are involved (Hui et al., 1997), and consumers' pace of travel through a store (Milliman, 1982, 1986). Most of us are probably aware of the many uses of music as a marketing tool and have probably discussed these uses in a consumer behavior or a promotion or a retailing class. How many of us use this tool in our own classrooms?

The classroom in which you teach is probably just like every other classroom on campus. It's equipped with desks, a chalkboard, an overhead projection system, and a heating/cooling system that doesn't work very well. Students begin to arrive 10 to 15 minutes before class starts. While they wait for class to start, some chat with friends about who won the game last night or what they are going to do during the upcoming weekend or how hard it was to find a parking space today. Others get comfortable and start to drift off. When the time to start class arrives, you clear your throat and say good morning. Those dozing wake up (more or less), those talking turn their attention to you, the class starts, and the learning process begins.

It's the same classroom, only there is something

different. As students enter the room before class, they are greeted by the sounds of Ana Caram singing bossa nova jazz in Portuguese. On the overhead is a rather odd looking map of the Atlantic basin from a Brazilian perspective. The students who arrive early aren't talking as much about the game last night or what they are going to do next weekend, they are talking about Brazil. One or two students have been to Brazil and start talking about what the country is like. Other students turn to hear more about their classmates' experiences. Some students stare quizzically at the map and realize that maybe the U.S. isn't at the center of everybody's maps. You can see several of the students who usually doze off during this time tapping their feet and waking up. You turn off the CD player, say good morning and turn to a class that is awake, thinking internationally, and that has already started learning.

In which classroom would you rather teach international marketing? It takes very little effort to create the second environment, and the rewards can be significant.

THE BENEFITS OF MUSIC

For the past two years, students attending my international business classes have been greeted by the sounds of music. Each day, the music is from a different country. I arrive 15 to 20 minutes before class with a portable CD/tape player and start playing that day's selection. Most days I have a corresponding map projected on the overhead as students arrive, and I occasionally pose a question about the country to encourage further discussion among students. I choose the music to match what I will be doing in class on that given day. For instance, if I'm going to discuss international franchising using Kentucky Fried Chicken in China as an example, I play music from China. I occasionally match the music to some significant current international event in the news that week.

The benefits of this simple class enhancement have been numerous:

(1) **The music puts students in an international state of mind.** It stimulates students in a way that

mornings. It also often gives me a little extra energy going into the class.

CONCLUSION

The environment in which we deliver a service is an integral part of the service offering itself. Many of us, however, fail to do anything about the environment in the classrooms in which we teach. Music has been described as a key component of the service environment (Bitner, 1992). While we may have little influence over most of the conditions in our classrooms, we can add music. I have found the music to be a very positive addition to my international business classes, and comments on my student evaluations indicate that students enjoy the music and that it has a positive effect on their attitude toward the class. So if you are looking for a way to put your students into an international state of mind going into your international courses or if you want student learning to begin ten minutes earlier each class period or if you want to stimulate student interest in other parts of the world or if you just want your students to be awake when your classes start, try playing music.

REFERENCES

- Alpert, J.I. and M.I. Alpert, (1988). "Background Music as an Influence in Consumer Mood and Advertising Responses." In T.K. Scrull, (editor), *Advances in Consumer Research*. Honolulu, HI: Association for Consumer Research, 485-491.
- Bitner, M.J. (1992). "Servicescapes: The Impact of Physical Surroundings on Customers and Employees." *Journal of Marketing*, 56 (April): 57-71.
- Bruner, G.C. (1990). "Music, Mood, and Marketing." *Journal of Marketing*, 54 (October): 94-104.
- Danzer, G.A. (1996). *Discovering World History Through Maps and Views*. New York, NY: Harper Collins College Publishers.
- Gorn, G.J. (1982). "The Effects of Music in Advertising on Choice Behavior: A Classical Conditioning Approach." *Journal of Marketing*, 46(1): 94-101.
- Herrington, J.D. and L.M. Capella (1994). "Practical Applications of Music in Service Settings." *The Journal of Services Marketing*, 8(3): 50-65.
- Hui, M.K., Dube, L., and J.-C. Chebat (1997). "The Impact of Music on Consumers' Reactions to Waiting for Services." *Journal of Retailing*, 73(1): 87-104.
- Milliman, R. (1982). "Using Background Music to Affect the Behavior of Supermarket Shoppers." *Journal of Marketing*, 46 (Summer): 86-91.
- Milliman, R. (1986). "The Influence of Background Music on the Behavior of Restaurant Patrons." *Journal of Consumer Research*, 13 (September): 286-289.
- Wintle, R.R. (1978). "Emotional Impact of Music on Television Commercials." Unpublished Doctoral Dissertation, University of Nebraska.
- Zakay, D. and J. Hornik (1991). "How Much Time Did You Wait in Line? A Time Perception Perspective." In J.-C. Chebat and V. Venkatesan, (editors), *Time and Consumer Behavior*. Montreal, Quebec: University of Quebec at Montreal.