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Audio Coffee: keeping drivers safe through the power of sound

This week's egtabite demonstrates how the clever use of radio can both advertise a brand and have a positive impact on road safety. An award-winning campaign by the creative agency Serviceplan for the German coffee importer and restaurant franchise Deli Star used an unusual property of sound waves to create an extraordinary promotion that raised the brand's awareness, increased sales and may even have saved a few lives at the same time.

The concept

This campaign was developed in conjunction with the research institution Infrasonics, and it was built around an innovative audio technique called binaural beats. When sound is delivered in stereo so that each ear receives a slightly different pitch, the human brain tries to equalise the difference, and in doing so the brainwaves start to vibrate at a frequency corresponding to that difference in pitch. If, for example, a tone with the pitch of 425Hz is played in the left ear, and a tone with a pitch of 440Hz is played to the right, the brainwaves begin to vibrate at 15Hz, the difference between the two.

This has the effect of inducing a heightened state of consciousness in the listener, making them more alert. Hence why this campaign was labelled the world's first audible coffee!

Infrasonics spent a year researching binaural beats, refining the technique so that it could be used in cars. The agency Serviceplan then worked with several international artists to produce specially designed pieces of binaural beats music, called Audio Coffee Tracks, which were then played out during the night on the Munich-based radio station ego FM in order to help drivers avoid the risks of tiredness at the wheel. The tracks were also distributed on limited edition CDs, available in Deli Star's coffee shops.

The results – a breathtaking success!

All 2,500 CDs were sold out in a couple of days, with 12,000 downloads online. Aside from the considerable attention generated in the press and online portals, the campaign generated real business outcomes: Deli Star saw its website traffic increase by 370%, and it enjoyed a boost in sales of 40%, thanks to a radio campaign that reached a quarter of a million listeners.

Audio Coffee was recognised with several international awards, including The New York Festival 2015, The Cristal Festival 2014 and the Eurobest Festival of Creativity.

Why this matters for egta members

Audio is an immensely powerful medium, and the boundaries of its application are constantly being pushed. This campaign demonstrates how the neurological effects of sound can be harnessed, not only to help drivers stay awake while on the road at night, but also to increase sales of a consumer brand. Radio offers this opportunity to innovate to advertisers of any size, from multi-nationals to independent coffee shop chains, something that would only be possible for the biggest brands on TV, print or digital. The case of Audio Coffee also highlights radio's position as a medium in constant reinvention, and one that is well placed to embrace technical evolution.



Background info

Please click on the links below to access the relevant documents:

» **Campaign video at Eurobest** (please click [here](#))