AUDIENCE xSCIENCE 2019

Does Highly-Awarded Audio Creative Sell?

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Good Creative Sells:
Award-Winning Audio Drives Strong Business Outcomes

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Largest-ever study of award-winning audio creative

Radio commercial quality and brand and sales effect are strongly linked. Creative yields powerful results, driving 50% of all sales lift, according to Nielsen. Creative impacts sales lift more than media.

What makes a radio ad good or bad? Westwood One's audio creative best practices outline step-by-step recommendations for optimal impact, but we wanted to learn more. Now, in an exclusive creative study conducted in partnership with audio testing experts VERITONIC, we examine what is arguably the "best of the best" in the audio world by focusing on ads from the most prestigious advertising and creative award shows in the Audio Effectiveness 2018 Report for Creative Excellence Awards.

Largest-ever study of award-winning audio creative

VERITONIC evaluated 164 radio ads from the 2015-2018 finalists and winners for the Radio Mercury Awards, as well as the Cannes Lions and Clio Awards. These industry-celebrated ads were evaluated against emotional responses and purchase intent using an enormous sample of 6,003 respondents. Here's what the study revealed:

Award-winning ads boost purchase intent significantly

High-quality audio creative that wins awards significantly out-performs the average audio ad. VERITONIC calculated the difference in purchase intent before and after exposure to the audio ads.

Award-winning ads score significantly higher for difference in purchase intent than the VERITONIC audio average

Top brand ads ranked by difference in purchase intent			
Audio spot	**Difference in purchase intent**	**Audio spot**	**Difference in purchase intent**
VocaliD	28	Lysoform Day 8 Birthday Party	18
MO Heart Center Walking Growing Old with Mom And Dad	26	Publix Markets Missing Words	18
Shyp Nephew's Birthday	26	Ulti Mattress Lowest Price Or It's Free	17
Kolping Society of Cincinnati Festival	25	Oasis Center International Shots	17
Shyp Mother's Day	23	Cooper Disposal Grandma	16
Wabi Sabi Obsession	22	Schweppesville Orchard of Citrus Trees	16
Cantina Laredo Valentine's Day	22	Direct Energy Fridge	16
Hippo App Neighborhood	21	Exchange Bank Oxymoron	16
Cantina Laredo Cinco de Mayo	19	VERITONIC audio average	6

Source: Westwood One | VERITONIC Testing of US-focused radio award winners at Cannes Lions (2018), and Clios (2018), Radio Mercury Awards (2015-2017 winners only, 2018 finalists and winners).

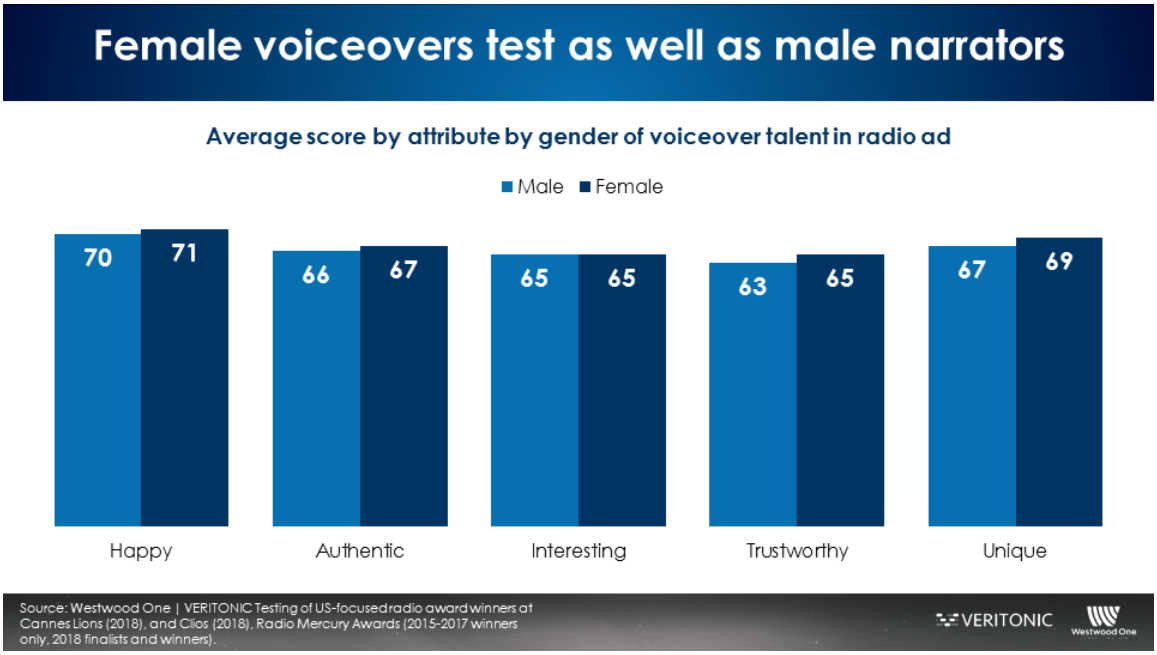
VERITONIC Westwood One

The VERITONIC benchmark, or average score for audio spots for difference in purchase intent, is 6. The award-winning creative drove purchase intent with much stronger scores. The highest ranking ad, a spot for voice technology company VocaliD, scored a 28 in difference in purchase intent. Missouri Heart Center and shipping company Shyp each scored a 26.

Compared to the VERITONIC average, award-winning creative scores significantly and consistently higher.

Female voiceovers are a huge opportunity for advertisers

Multiple studies have revealed that female-voiced creative is preferred by women and elevates brand images. VERITONIC's testing of award-winning creative yields similar results.



Compared to ads voiced by men, those that feature a female voice performed as well or better for happiness, authenticity, trustworthiness, and uniqueness. They also scored on par across all other emotional metrics.

The study also revealed that very few of the ads tested in the study utilized female voiceovers. Of the total ads tested, 70% featured male voiceover talent while only 4% were voiced by a woman.

The opportunity for advertisers? More female voiceovers can drive sales. After all, women drive almost all purchase decisions in households, according to an IPG study.

Serious ads generate 75% more purchase intent than humorous ads

It's easy to assume that making consumers laugh is a good thing. And it is – but advertisers have to tread lightly. In a 2018 Neuroscience Study, Nielsen found that engagement with an ad erodes swiftly after continued exposure. The joke wears out quickly. No wonder Geico continually changes creative.

Serious messaging has a 75% higher purchase intent

Serious spots had a higher average impact on purchase intent than humorous spots. One conclusion is that humor may be risky.

Average difference in post-exposure purchase intent by style in the Cannes Lions, Clios, and Radio Mercury Awards	
Humorous	6.2
Serious	10.9

Source: Westwood One | VERITONIC Testing of US-focused radio award winners at Cannes Lions (2018), and Clios (2018), Radio Mercury Awards (2015-2017 winners only, 2018 finalists and winners).

VERITONIC found that compared to humorous ads, serious AM/FM radio commercials had a stronger impact on whether consumers would buy the product.

While humorous ads resulted in a 6.2 lift in purchase intent after exposure to the ads, serious ads performed better, yielding a 10.9 uptick.

Humor is an undoubtedly great creative component, but it can be risky. To avoid weakening impact, humorous copy should be changed frequently as engagement and performance plummet quickly upon repeated exposure.

Ads with disclaimers win creative awards and drive purchase intent

Many brands are leery of the sound of disclaimers in audio ads, but the impact isn't what they think.

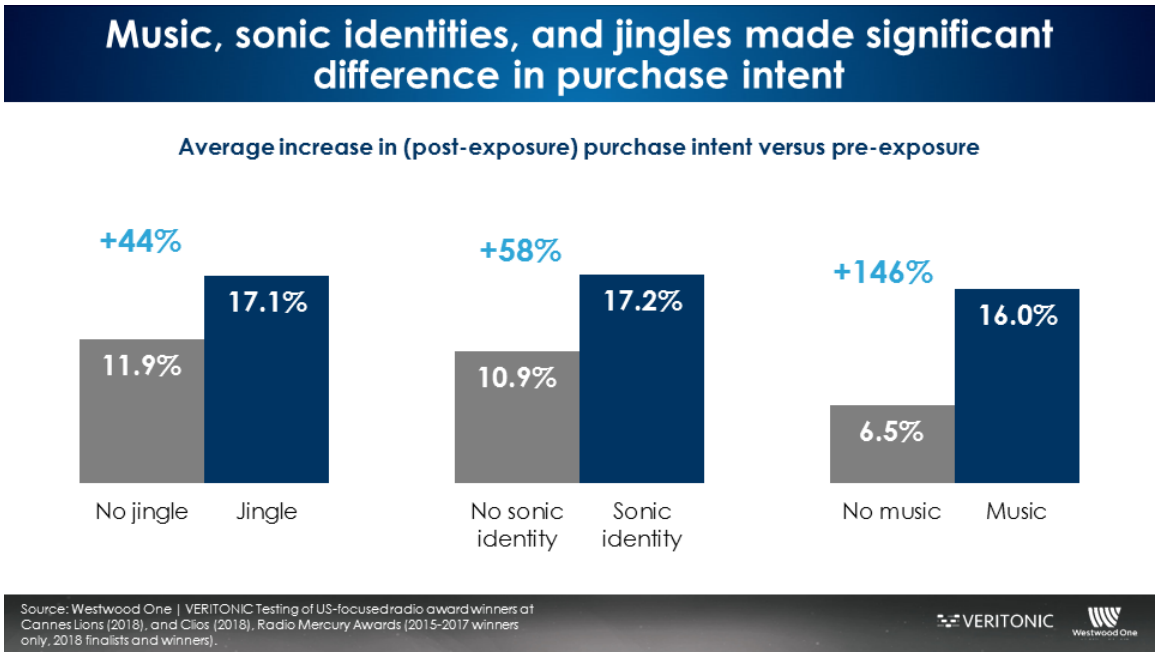
In May of last year, we partnered with VERITONIC in the largest creative study of auto dealer association (so-called tier two auto) radio ads ever conducted. One of the key findings was that having a disclaimer didn't impede ads from performing favorably. In fact, tier two auto ads with disclaimers tested +23% better than the VERITONIC average of all ad categories. In market consumers found the information in disclaimers to be very useful.

In testing the award-winning creative, VERITONIC found similar results. Though it was rare to hear an award-winning ad with a disclaimer, the radio spots that had them were not negatively impacted. Three ads with disclaimers won awards and tested well.

Clients who legally need to disclose information need not fear the disclaimer in their audio ads. Creatively, they resonate just as well with consumers, especially those that are in the market.

Music, sonic identities, and jingles are major drivers of purchase intent

A powerful way to create recognition and emotion with audio creative is through sonic branding, the strategy of using sound to differentiate a brand. Examples of sonic branding include music and jingles, two factors used by half of the ads tested.



29 of the 164 ads tested included a jingle, or a song with lyrics written explicitly for a brand. 59 used a sonic identity, a distinctive music or audio element that is consistently used for the brand.

The use of "audio logos" had a positive impact on purchase intent. **Ads that utilized jingles, sonic identities, or music in some way saw larger increases in purchase intent across the board.**

Ads with music saw a +146% increase in purchase intent post-exposure versus ads without music. Brands would be well-served to use these creative elements to enhance the sales effect of their radio ad.

Superior creative delivers superior business outcomes

In the book *How Not To Plan: 66 Ways to Screw It Up*, Les Binet and Sarah Carter revealed groundbreaking work from Peter Field, the "godfather of marketing effectiveness," who used campaigns from creative awards found in The Institute of Practitioners in Advertising (IPA) Databank to analyze the relationship between creativity and effectiveness.

According to Field's analysis, "Ads that win creative awards are much more effective than ads that don't … **Ads that win creative awards are 11 times more efficient at selling stuff than other ads."**

The book further explains the two reasons why award-winning ads work. "Highly creative campaigns get people talking, on and offline, about the brand and the advertising. This amplifies direct effects of the campaign. The second reason is more

controversial. Ads that win creative awards tend to be high on emotional impact and lower than average on rational content."

Scott Simonelli, Co-founder and CEO of VERITONIC, states, "Westwood One continues to steer the ad market toward greater success by creating new insights like these. As always, we're proud to provide the platform that grounds this intelligence with solid evidence, and helps brands make more informed decisions as a result."

Creating audio ads worthy of winning awards is time well spent. Through this analysis of celebrated audio creative, we know that how an ad sounds can make a huge consumer impact for brands.

Key findings:

- Award-winning ads boost purchase intent significantly
- Female voiceovers are a huge opportunity for advertisers
- Serious ads generate 75% more purchase intent than humorous ads
- Ads with disclaimers win creative awards and drive purchase intent
- Music, sonic identities, and jingles are major drivers of purchase intent
- Superior creative delivers superior business outcomes