Listen to Consumers

The fourth annual Audio Branding Congress was held on December 11, 2012, in the UK for the first time after previous events in Germany and the US. The host was Oxford University, and the venue was the prestigious Oxford Examination Schools. Witnessing demand within the audio branding industry for increased emphasis on market research, testing and validation, the event was focused with the motto “Listen to Consumers.”

This Yearbook contains articles about the Audio Branding Congress 2012 and its presentations. Included is a comprehensive summary article, impressive jury-selected award case studies of brands like Nokia, Dell, Harrods, and The Linde Group, an article of keynote speaker Professor Charles Spence about the future of synaesthetic marketing, contributions from the scientific Call for Papers 2012, and a documentation of the branch study Audio Branding Barometer 2012 among others. Additionally, an International Directory of Audio Branding suppliers is included.
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AUDIO BRANDING ACADEMY

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Audio Branding Congress 2012 Summary

Alex Moulton
eyeball

Introduction
The fourth annual Audio Branding Congress was held on December 11, 2012 at Oxford University. Attendees gathered on a crisp wintery day at the beautiful Oxford Examination Schools building in anticipation of an engaging day of presentations, discussions and socializing. With dozens of return attendees and a large number of new faces, this year boasted the largest attendance and greatest international representation in the four years of the Audio Branding Congress.

Witnessing demand within the audio branding industry for increased emphasis on market research, testing and validation, the Audio Branding Academy focused the event with the motto "Listen To Consumers." Audio Branding Academy founders Dr. Cornelius Ringe, Kai Bronner and Rainer Hirt welcomed the audience and thanked the supporters, partners and Oxford University hosts. With only a hint of irony, Ringe explained that they had listened to their own consumers in choosing the event theme after receiving excellent feedback from past years.

The Academy's mission to foster exchange between scientists, scholars, students, practitioners and experts has grown substantially year upon year. After the 2011 Congress held at Columbia University, New York City, where 15 countries were represented, Ringe announced that this Congress included attendees from a record 21 countries.

Next to be introduced was Julian Treasure, moderator for the day's proceedings. An eminent sound expert, author and chairman of The Sound Agency, Treasure welcomed the audience warmly and delivered
Audio Branding Congress 2012 Summary

an engaging introductory talk on the importance of listening. Even with noise pollution becoming an increasingly significant issue, Treasure noted that brands are often tempted to "shout over their competition" in attempts to stand out. Referencing several related studies and empirical evidence about cluttered sound environments, Treasure challenged the room of audio branding industry experts to be “champions of listening.”

Enhancing Multisensory Experiences and Brands Through Sound

Co-host and returning speaker Professor Charles Spence took the stage, ready to update the eager audience with his latest research. Representing the Oxford University Department of Experimental Psychology, Professor Spence has established his Crossmodal Research Lab as a leading source of research on the confluence of cognitive neuroscience and marketing.
Diving quickly into a survey of practical, real-world examples of using sound to enhance product experience, Professor Spence began with recent developments within the food industry. Citing examples such as New York chef Zakary Pelaccio’s playful pairings of recipes with songs, or Spence’s own “Sound of the Sea” experiments at The Fat Duck restaurant in conjunction with audio branding company Condiment Junkie. Spence also shared a collection of sonic and crossmodal cues found in current print advertising campaigns.

The Crossmodal Research Lab has produced fascinating research linking specific tastes in the human palate to notes, chords and musical arrangements. Professor Spence has also found commonalities across species, noting similar hedonic and aversive reactions in human babies, chimpanzees and even mice.

With growing demand in the marketplace for enhanced gastronomic experiences, Professor Spence reported more intriguing trends; expert bartender “mixologists” pairing music with drinks, a “gin & sonic” cre-
ated by a chef specializing in molecular gastronomy, a mobile app produced in conjunction with his department that enhances the flavour of potato crisps and even a chef who is experimenting with serving dishes on a mobile tablet device to create a synesthetic dining experience. Spence predicts more multisensory products and experiential advertising for the near future as marketers and producers seek to create new and exciting experiences for their consumers.

The Role of Consumer Research in Audio Branding

The second presentation of the day was given by Professor Nancy Puccinelli of Oxford University’s Saïd Business School. Turning the conversation from the experimental use of sound to the more pragmatic approach of the advertising industry, Professor Puccinelli presented a wide body of research in the field of social psychology.

Citing her studies on the persuasive power of music along with consulting work for major international brands, Professor Puccinelli impressed upon the audience that carefully considered music choices based on mood, instrumentation and arrangement can successfully enhance audi-
ence perception of a product. Equally important was her finding that incongruous music used in TV advertising has a range of effects on the audience, from no effect at all to a detrimental, disengaging emotional response.

Professor Puccinelli next summarized her continuing research on the congruity of sound in marketing. With recent studies based around the use of music to induce consumer mood and choice, along with current research on the critical importance of sound during retail promotional periods, she gave insightful examples of how brands should pay particular attention to sound in point of purchase environments. Recounting specifics on the use of holiday-themed music in shopping areas, her research has lead her to believe that holiday music can overwhelm consumers and hurt sales. Her hope is that this important finding should encourage brands to pay more attention to the mood and psychological perceptions of their purchase environments.

Audio Branding Barometer 2012

Returning to the Congress as a representative of the Audio Branding Academy, Dr. Klaus Frieler shared the results of the 2012 Audio Branding Barometer. Conducted online in September/October 2012, the study gathered market data from 33 agencies in 12 countries, a similar sample size to previous years.

The results showed continued growth from a nascent industry. Most agencies offering audio branding services are still under 10 years old, half starting within the past six years, while employing under 20 people. 95% of budgets remain under USD $100,000 but revenues were up by a third and agencies are optimistic about continued growth.

Along with other compelling data collected on evolving business models and service offerings, the basic definition of the term “audio branding” is also in flux. Participants in the survey placed more emphasis this year on process, strategy and identity without relying on comparisons to the world of visual branding. Dr. Frieler’s interpretation of this new direction was that as the practice of audio branding continues to
Audio Branding Congress 2012 Summary

grow in perceived significance around the world, audio branding companies are becoming more confident about their field and the relevance of their offerings to clients.

Klaus Frieler

Product-Related Sounds Speed up Visual Search

Dr. Klemens Knöferle, co-host and colleague of Professor Charles Spence, presented the Oxford University Crossmodal Research Lab’s current findings on consumers’ experiences in visually cluttered environments. Recent studies show that shoppers are only able to process a very small fraction of the visual stimuli presented to them. This fact, combined with increasing numbers of product choices, sums up the types of new challenges that marketers are faced with to make their products stand out. Knöferle’s team was curious to discover how the effects of sensory modalities other than vision – primarily audio cues – could facilitate in the visual search for objects in a retail setting.

By creating a number of tests to measure the effects of sound and scent, Knöferle has collected data that supports his theory that logical