



THE SOUNDOUT INDEX: Personality Edition

Exploring and measuring the importance of brand personality in sonic branding.

September 2021

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**“Music is the shorthand
of emotion.” — Leo Tolstoy**

- Recognising that genuine product advantages have narrowed over time, brands are increasingly interested in building emotional bonds with consumers.
- Marketeers instinctively understand that ensuring emotional fit between core brand assets and the brand itself is of fundamental importance.
- Music is the most potent driver of emotions, yet many brands remain deaf to the opportunities that music unlocks; others run with a sonic identity that is fighting the brand personality, making the brand equity less distinct and harder to recall and understand.
- In this report we reveal how 135 leading brands are performing and offer an infinitely variable and non-generic personality framework to measure the match between any brand personality and any musical asset.

A key job for marketers is to get attention for their brand, or what Byron Sharp calls “mental availability”¹

In the old days we assumed that attention would be granted by offering a differentiated product or service. However, most players in any market know and can deliver against the top preference drivers in their category, with largely similar research and technologies. So genuine product differentiation is rare and even if someone makes a breakthrough, it can normally be copied pretty quickly.

Also it's now widely appreciated that people have better things to do with their lives than spend time thinking about your brand and they do not apply considered, rational logic to the vast majority of their daily decisions². Emotion trumps function when it comes to getting people's attention. To quote Maya Angelou:

“people will forget what you said, people will forget what you did, but people will never forget how you made them feel”.

Arousing feelings is something great storytellers have been doing for millennia, and we can learn much from their craft. Most will say that a key requirement is to get under the skin of the characters involved. What are their motives, values and personality? When it comes to brand storytelling

(a.k.a. advertising), one of these characters should be your brand. Otherwise, it's not very good advertising.

This is why determining the personality of your brand is so important. It's an aid to being more interesting. And establishing an asset that triggers this personality is an aid to being more easily recognised. Be aware that not all assets are equal - an IPSOS analysis in 2020 indicated that creative that used an audio asset was over 3x more likely to be in the high performing tercile than creative that relied on visual assets alone³.

Hence, it's a privilege to be invited to introduce this outstanding work which reinforces the credentials of SoundOut as pioneers in understanding and measuring the role of music in establishing your desired brand personality. It's a subject that is not only fascinating but also a guide to increasing the effectiveness and efficiency of your brand communication.

Simon Thong
Founder Director at Revel Consultancy



¹Byron Sharp – How Brands Grow (2010) ²Daniel Kahneman – Thinking Fast and Slow (2011) ³Adam Sheridan – The Power of You - IPSOS views (2020)
– Why distinctive brand assets are a driving force of creative effectiveness.

1. Introduction

This report explores the role of personality in sonic branding, and sonic logos in particular. We:

- **Examine why personality is so important in sonic branding and how this differs from visual branding;**
- **Explore how personality can be robustly measured in sonic branding;**
- **Reveal how the appeal of the core brand has a material impact on the ability of a sonic logo to become a distinctive brand asset; and**

- **Look at how 135 leading US and UK brands perform in matching the personality of their sonic logo to their core brand personality and how effectively their sonic logos have adopted the brand personality.**

The findings in this report are based upon a robust personality matching technology (BrandMatch) developed in partnership with Goldsmiths, University of London, via a project involving over 500,000 consumers and hundreds of musical assets. Full details of this technology and the academic approach that underpins it can be found in the Appendix.



Distinctive brand assets

A distinctive brand asset ('DBA') is any element within your brand identity that is unmistakably recognized as belonging to your brand that elicits associations that are "on-brand". These include and are not limited to colors, shapes, sounds, fonts, taglines, packaging, logos, tones of voice, brand characters, and celebrity endorsers.

They are psychological cues that immediately trigger a brand association in the mind of the consumer, with the brand name (if included in the DBA) being either secondary or unnecessary.

Until recently the bulk of brand investment has been largely into visual but with the rapid rise in voice interfaces, audio search and podcasting, more and more brands are recognising that audio is increasingly an untapped opportunity to build emotional brand connections with consumers.

In music there are a few well-worn examples, e.g. Intel, Netflix, Windows, McDonald's 'I'm lovin it', that have truly achieved DBA status.

If your sonic logo is to become a DBA, people need to hear it in isolation and immediately think of your brand, and only your brand. If this is not happening, your sonic 'brand' is not yet a DBA, it is simply a marketing asset.



1. Executive Summary

1. **Sonic branding is not a brand saving strategy.** But it is an effective way to accelerate existing momentum. If your brand is struggling, a new sonic identity is unlikely to help.
2. **Personality match is essential to achieving DBA status.** The closer your sonic personality is to the actual personality of your brand the faster it can become a distinctive brand asset ('DBA'). A consistent personality builds authenticity, and authenticity underpins trust.
3. **The goal is to create a sonic identity that most effectively triggers an instant brand association.** Not to build a standalone sonic brand. Success is measured by how rapidly the sonic identity assumes the personality of the parent brand with consumers who make the brand connection.
4. **Don't obsess about the competition.** Distinctiveness in audio branding is about being individualistic and owning your own unique brand personality. Being distinctive for the sake of it is not a sound sonic strategy.
5. **Benchmark against a realistic personality.** If your aspirational brand personality is far removed from your actual brand personality the resulting sonic identity will not resonate with consumers and may struggle to ever achieve DBA status. Measure both.
6. **Don't put lipstick on a pig.** If people do not have a positive view of your brand it is hard for your sonic logo to forge a close fit with your brand. The data clearly shows that consumers must be positively disposed to your brand before an emotional link can be made. A strong Net Promoter Score (or other brand appeal rating) has a material impact on the successful execution of a sonic strategy.
7. **A stitch in time saves 9.** The higher the initial personality match to your brand, the higher the personality match becomes when the brand association is made. Relatively modest brand investment in ensuring and testing a close personality match when creating a sonic identity will repay itself many times over in terms of the long term marketing investment required to create a sonic DBA.

8. **If it ain't broke....** Don't ever replace an effective sonic logo. Sonic logos that have achieved distinctive brand asset ('DBA') status are like hen's teeth. They take years to embed themselves in the consumer subconscious and in the process will have relinquished their own personality and assumed the personality of the brand. By all means tweak them, extend them, localise them and create derivative sonic assets - but never at the expense of the core brand association.
9. **Don't flog a dead horse.** If your sonic logo remains largely unrecognised after several years and your sonic personality is not drawing closer to the personality of your brand then it is not contributing to your brand equity. If you have a sonic branding strategy then either it's not working or its being ineffectively implemented. Don't be constrained by tweaking/refreshing the existing sonic assets. Start again.
10. **Melody is a near universal emotional language.** If you nail a sonic personality in one territory it is likely that it will work globally (with a couple of notable exceptions). Think about localising the same melody through different instrumentation or other approaches.



3. How do visual logos become distinctive brand assets?

Some visual logos rely primarily on the name (plus color and typeface) alone:



Others are not only universally recognisable but leverage an alternative cue to forge an indelible connection to the brand itself – say what you see and you have the brand:



We don't for a moment associate seashells to Shell or fruit to Apple. The logos above have lost any intrinsic personality they may possess and simply become visual shortcuts to the brand itself.

A belt and braces approach is to combine both, employ the same visual technique but also add the name of the brand, providing two powerful cues to the brand itself. It's a bit of a cheat and an admission/fear that the logo without the brand name has not quite made it as a distinctive brand asset:



So visual logos primarily employ a combination of visual and semantic cues and color/creative design elements that are all designed to trigger an immediate brand affiliation. The more psychological cues you can provide at the same time, the more effective the logo becomes at ensuring that the brand affiliation is both recognisable but also memorable over time. This is essential if the goal is to build a DBA.

With audio logos it is of course impossible to deliver similar cues (visual or written) and so audio designers must exploit other psychological cues to trigger the subconscious association with the brand itself. The principles are the same but the approach is necessarily different.

While including the brand name in an audio logo is undeniably effective (and used by around a third of mainstream sonic logos) this does not make it a distinctive brand asset – shouting your brand name in the ear of the consumer is about as subtle as Coca Cola printing 'this is a coca cola bottle' on its iconic image. The asset itself must do the work unprompted to qualify as a DBA.

Where audio excels is in its uniquely powerful ability to communicate emotion and personality. As a result, ensuring that a sonic identity is closely aligned with the brand personality is the most powerful mechanism to accelerate attribution to a brand and ultimately achieve DBA status.

4. Why is personality so important in sonic branding?

A DBA has one overarching purpose: to trigger an instant subconscious brand association. The look or sound of the identity is ultimately far less important than its ability to trigger brand association - and with it the dopamine hit of brand values and personality.

It follows that the more effectively a brand asset pulls that trigger, the more effective it will be in triggering brand association. The human mind is brilliant at subconscious association – a smell that brings memories flooding back or a song that drags you back 10 years to a particular time and place. The stronger the association, the greater the impact.

Through brute marketing force and unlimited budgets, marketers can force just about any pavlovian association they like - but this is neither cost effective or effective per se. Just as marketers and filmmakers can supercharge a video with music that soaks the storyline in appropriate emotion, the same can be done with sonic branding.

So if your brand has a strong and well defined personality, to cement the strongest association as rapidly as possible, your new sonic identity needs to closely resonate with the emotion/personality of your brand. Consistency is one of the key pillars of brand building and projecting a consistent personality is no exception.

Furthermore, a matched sonic/brand personality will also sound and feel authentic – and authenticity is the foundation of trust.

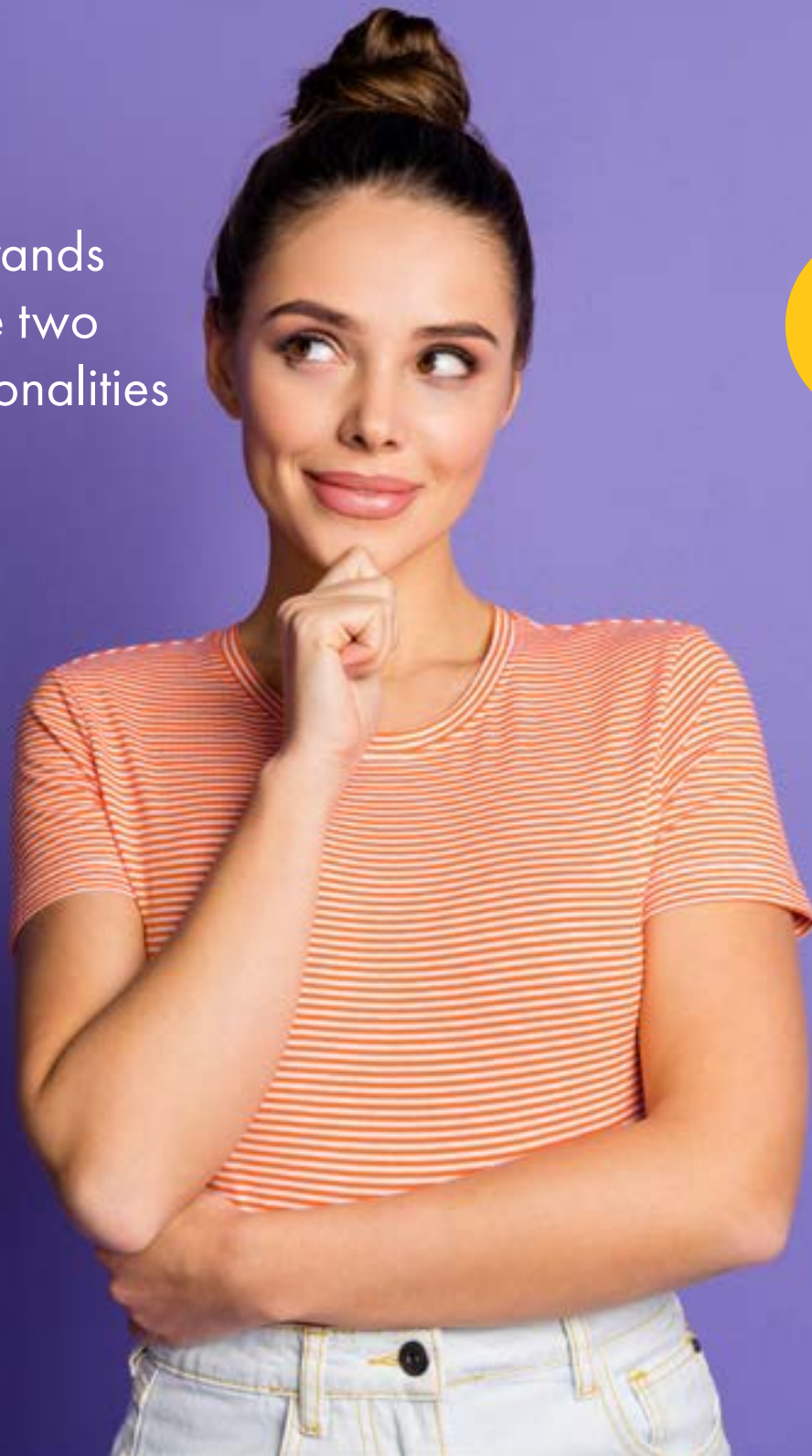
Personality match is fundamentally important.

This is particularly important in music because, as Tolstoy put it, 'music is the shorthand of emotion'. Music can instantly and subconsciously communicate emotions and personality in a way a visual logo can almost never do and in a way that is vastly stronger and more sophisticated than an image. Music is potentially the most effective brand asset you will ever create to do this.

In the same way as The Sex Pistols would never be chosen to play out the closing credits to Downton Abbey, your sonic identity cannot be divorced from the personality of the brand. Indeed it must start life as close to the personality of the brand as possible. Then, for an extended period, be played alongside other brand assets (commercials, visual logo etc) to ensure that the consumer will, if asked, consciously (and unconsciously) attribute the sonic logo to the brand on a standalone basis.

However, all brands are not equal. Some are significantly better placed, whether by sector or resources, to rapidly forge this sonic logo/brand association, while others are at a distinct disadvantage. This is a fascinating subject, now backed by data, that we will cover in much more detail in our next report on 'Market Penetration'.

5. Brands have two personalities



Aspirational

Brands have two personalities. The first is defined by the brand managers – this is invariably aspirational and, unless you are Apple or McDonald's, almost certainly unattainable.

This is expressed in various ways – often as a brand archetype – e.g. 'Caregiver', 'Ruler' or 'Persuader'. While this is painfully two dimensional and unnuanced, it does help pigeonhole the brand personality into (one of typically 6-12) personality boxes that it is relatively easy for marketers to work within - despite the fact that it handicaps the ability of a brand to project a truly distinctive (i.e. individualistic) personality.

Many brands eschew archetypes (in all their varied frameworks) and instead rely on a blend of key attributes (typically 3-8) that they believe define them. On the basis that a few key attributes do tend to underpin each brand archetype this is a quasi-archetype methodology; however while more nuanced than archetypes, it is inherently more risky. Giving brand strategists and managers free reign to pick attributes that can be misaligned or even diametrically opposed can result in an uncomfortable personality mix that may feel inauthentic to consumers and all but impossible to effectively communicate with music.

Actual

Then there is the actual brand personality - as Jeff Bezos observed: "Your brand is what other people say about you when you're not in the room."

This is the 180-degree view of brand - not what the brand wants to be but what it actually is in the minds of consumers.

Generally distinctiveness in branding is considered a good thing, many say it's essential, but in audio branding being distinct for the sake of it is not a rewarding strategy. In our last report on [sonic effectiveness](#) we revealed that distinct sonic logos are actually less effective than non-distinct ones.

Distinctiveness in audio branding is about being individualistic, owning your own unique brand personality.

Many brands seek to audit the sonic personalities of their competitors to ensure they are different. We would argue that this is unnecessary - if their personality is indeed indistinguishable from their competitor's then they have a more fundamental brand issue, sonic personality similarity is a symptom, not a cure.



**"Your brand
is what other people
say about you
when you're
not in
the room."**

— Jeff Bezos



6. Which personality should you target — aspirational or actual?

Almost without exception, the target personality chosen as the benchmark for sonic branding is the brand team's aspirational version (whether archetype or attribute driven). Ever ambitious, human nature dictates that the brand team truly believe that they can and will deliver that aspirational personality over time. But the reality is that the vast majority of aspirational brand personalities will never be recognised by consumers - either because they are entirely out of kilter with the actual brand personality, or because they reach for a strength of character unattainable by almost any brand.

It follows that if the new sonic identity is beautifully aligned with the aspirational personality it may not resonate with the actual personality (in the minds of consumers) and it may be harder to forge that critical association with the brand itself.

And remember forging that association is just about all that matters in sonic branding. Once the link is made, the intrinsic personality of the musical composition should, and will be, extinguished.

To accelerate the ease with which the sonic identity triggers brand association you should take into account the actual personality when defining the personality benchmark.

Yes, the sonic asset should be used to help lead the consumer to your aspirational personality, but if it is too far removed the consumer will not associate your aspirational personality with your actual brand personality and you risk coming across as schizophrenic.

Don't forget, we're not trying to build the sonic logo into a standalone brand, we are striving to create a sonic composition that most effectively triggers an instant brand association. Once achieved the personality of the sonic brand will be entirely consumed by the personality of the brand itself. If, over time, the aspirational personality is achieved then the perceived personality of the sonic logo will also evolve to match this.

If you are into Formula 1 motorsport, hearing [this audio](#) immediately triggers motorsport racing thoughts. If not, it's simply a great track by Fleetwood Mac. If you try and force the alternative association in your brain, you may struggle.

7. How do you measure brand personality?

As mentioned above, brand personality is often managed in terms of archetypes (classic, NeedScope, Decode, Rasas etc) or attributes, and, while these are rather constricting frameworks, it is a well understood and practiced methodology.

But managing brand personality is fraught with subjectivity and managing is not measuring. So to create a robust measurement methodology, we teamed up with Professor Daniel Müllensiefen from the Music, Mind and Brain research group within the Psychology department at Goldsmiths University (and 500,000 consumers). From this collaboration came a powerful new brand personality measurement tool, powered by consumers but rooted in 25 years of academic research and science. We call it BrandMatch - and it does what it says on the tin.

Our collaboration with Goldsmiths continues to this day and the latest release of BrandMatch is fully optimised for sonic branding and marketing.

**BrandMatch
enables a brand
to define its own
unique personality
and calculate the
percentage match
to any musical
composition.**

8. BrandMatch - measuring the personality match between a brand and any sonic asset

BrandMatch is derived from a huge benchmarked dataset that we generated by testing hundreds of sonic logos and anthems with 500,000 consumers in 2020. This dataset enabled us to map and measure the interrelationships between 212 distinct brand attributes – effectively mapping the DNA of music.

In close collaboration with Goldsmiths, University of London, we analysed this data using advanced dimensionality reduction techniques, and were able to statistically identify the subset of attributes that best captured the personality profile of a music composition. This identified 14 core attributes that, correctly weighted, captured over 95% of the emotional variance of the entire 212 attribute set.

These 14 attributes sit at the heart of BrandMatch, as we can test a brand asset against only these 14 attributes to determine its personality profile. Using factor analysis, we condense this insight into a “BrandMatch profile”, composed of 6 key components against which a near infinite number of sonic personalities can be mapped against any brand, voice over, or other brand asset.

To calculate the BrandMatch we first ask the brand to define its personality using a 0-10 scale for each of the 14 core attributes. This becomes the benchmark against which all musical options are tested. We then ask consumers to replicate the process while listening to the music to be tested but without any brand association. The data is then processed, combining both the amplitude and shape match of each component, to generate the plot and calculate the BrandMatch.

The result is an infinitely variable and non-generic personality model that allows a brand (or brand users) to define its own unique personality and calculate the percentage match to any musical composition.

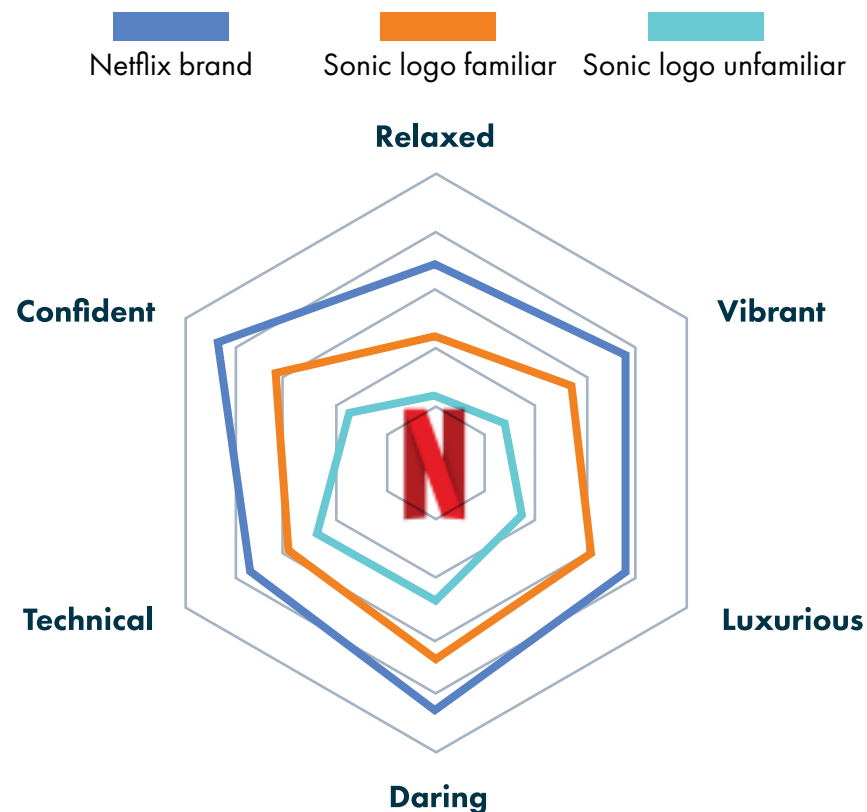
Full details of this technology and the academic approach that underpins it can be found in the Appendix.

While the tool enables a near infinite definition of any personality type, it also maps to any desired brand archetype system, ensuring it can also be translated into a brand’s chosen personality language if required.

While BrandMatch is predominantly used in strategic sonic branding projects, it is increasingly used to ensure personality match between brand and soundtrack selection for commercials as well as voice over actor selection.

An example:

The following plots the Netflix brand (as defined by consumers) against their “Ta Dum” sonic logo. The turquoise plot is the personality of the sonic logo as defined by consumers not aware of the brand association. The orange plot is the sonic logo personality as defined by consumers who make the brand association.



It is immediately apparent that the perceived personality of the sonic logo for those aware of the brand association is close (84%) to the personality of the Netflix brand, while for those not aware of the brand there is a greatly diminished BrandMatch (54%). For those familiar with the Netflix brand association, the intrinsic personality of the sonic logo has been all but appropriated by the Netflix brand.

This 30% uplift in **BrandMatch** between consumers who do not register the brand connection and those who do is a key metric. As the brand personality is static, this represents the extent to which the brand association has moved the perceived personality of the sonic logo for those who make the connection.

It should also be noted that this uplift is in no way indicative of how successfully the brand has penetrated the market, it is purely a measure of how far the personality of the sonic logo moves when the brand connection is cemented with consumers.

Our next report on ‘Market Penetration’ will focus on how deeply brands have achieved market penetration.

Netflix brand / familiar with sonic logo 84% BrandMatch

Netflix brand / unfamiliar with sonic logo 54% BrandMatch

BrandMatch uplift 30%

9. Key metrics

The analysis that follows is based on detailed inputs from over 60,000 consumers across the US and UK markets to enable us to measure the BrandMatch between the 135 brands and their in-market sonic logos. US brands were tested in the US, UK brands in the UK.

Key metrics are as follows:

Sonic logo personality

The perceived personality of a sonic logo is measured separately with consumers unaware of the brand association and with those aware of the brand association – in this way we can measure the extent to which the brand association has evolved the perceived personality of the sonic logo. The logos were rated using BrandMatch attributes (derived from the 200+ attributes underpinning them) and the resulting plot quantitatively captures over 95% of a brand's personality.

Brand personality

This was measured in entirely separate studies by exposing consumers to the visual logo of the brands and asking consumers to rate each brand on the key BrandMatch attributes derived from the [200+ attributes](#) underpinning them (as detailed in the Appendix).

Net Promoter Score

Net Promoter Score is a widely used market research metric that takes the form of a single survey question asking respondents who are familiar with the brand to rate the likelihood that they would recommend a company, product, or a service to a friend or colleague. We included Net Promoter questions in the brand personality survey.



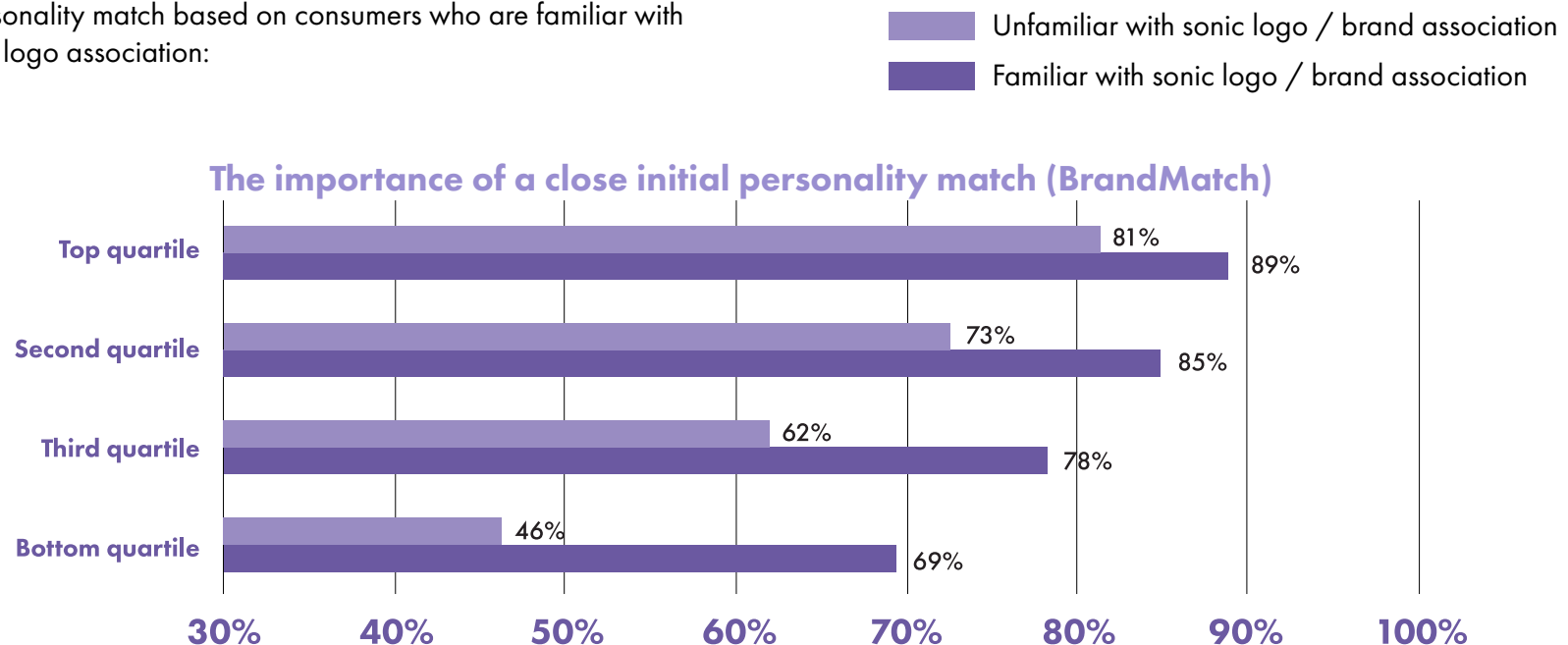
10. The importance of creating a sonic logo with a close personality match to your brand

If the sonic logo is going to adopt the personality of the brand over time, is the initial personality match important? The data reveals that the initial personality match is of critical importance. The lower the initial personality match the lower the potential final match will be.

Below we split the 135 brands into 4 quartiles (based on the closeness of the initial personality match between each sonic logo and each brand – i.e. consumers unaware of the sonic/brand relationship). We then compare that with the personality match based on consumers who are familiar with the brand/sonic logo association:

The higher the initial personality match to your brand, the higher the personality match becomes when the brand association is made.

While a poor personality match on inception can be overcome to some extent by a brand association, it is unlikely to ever outperform a sonic logo that started life with a stronger intrinsic personality match.



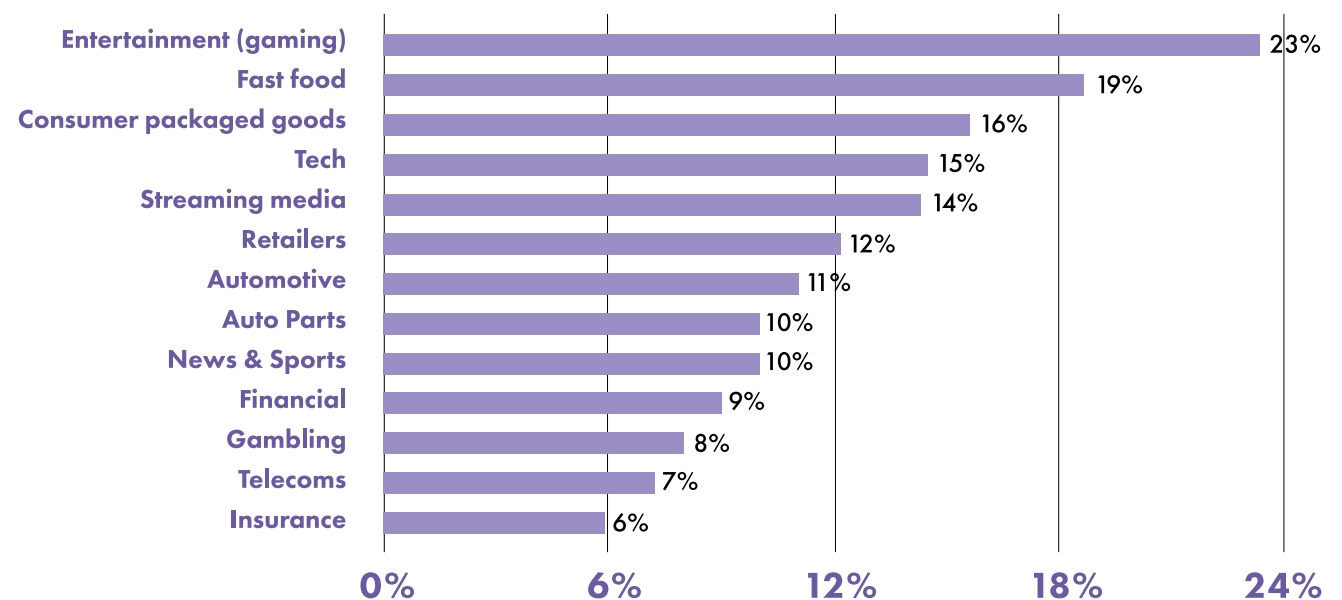
11. The impact of industry sector

The ability of a sonic logo to adopt the personality of the brand is materially impacted by industry sector. Some industries are intrinsically better positioned to drive sonic awareness.

The top 5 are all intensely consumer focused, typically enjoying multiple positive touchpoints with consumers – whether through sustained advertising, frequent face to face engagement or, for gaming and streaming media, opportunities to reinforce the sonic brand on almost a daily basis.

Conversely there are industries that few of us enjoy interacting with and do so significantly less frequently. Who enjoys buying car parts, or financial products? Insurance even less so (except for price comparison sites). Furthermore, companies in these sectors have far less frequent touchpoints with consumers and, when they do connect, it is rarely at a moment where the consumer is feeling waves of elation about the interaction. The grim reality is that companies in these sectors will struggle to turn their sonic identity into a DBA, however much they try or spend.

Uplift in personality match by sector



Despite all the fanfare, Mastercard are still very early in their sonic branding journey and currently are only seeing a modest uplift in personality match (currently 10%) with consumers familiar with their sonic logo. However as they push their sonic logo as a 'success' notification at every transaction point we would expect this to improve over time. This is a smart strategy to repeatedly associate the logo with the positive emotion of completing a purchase and it will be interesting to see how Mastercard's uplift improves over time.

12. The impact of consumers' love for a brand

In our initial analysis we could not seem to make sense of some of the outlying results. For some brands the brand association had a huge impact on the perceived personality of the logo, while for others it was very muted or, in a few cases, even negative.

So we set our data scientists to work to see if any other factors were closely correlated with the overall personality uplift of the sonic logos. And we found one overwhelming factor that was closely correlated to how strongly the personality of the sonic logo moved towards the personality of the brand: The Net Promoter Score or NPS.

High NPS = High personality match uplift

On an industry basis, there is an 81% correlation between having a high NPS and a high uplift in personality match. Conversely, having a negative NPS significantly impacts the ability of a sonic logo to assume the parent brand personality.

Looking at the overall impact based on NPS bands it is clear that if the NPS is below 0 a brand will struggle with increasing its personality match through brand association; and this in turn will make it significantly harder for the sonic logo to significantly improve its personality match over time: It follows that if your brand has a strong NPS, then your sonic logo has a better chance of swiftly assuming the personality of the parent brand and becoming a distinctive brand asset. However if your NPS is poor it may be considerably harder to achieve this.

Furthermore, this sounds intuitively right – in the world of music, if you love a particular artist you will seek out their music and easily make the mental connection between the artist and the song. Conversely if you are not fond of an artist or indeed a new song then you will not consciously – or subconsciously – easily make that connection.

NPS Score	Uplift in BrandMatch
50 or more	18%
25 to 50	16%
0 to +25	15%
0 to -25	8%
-25 or less	-1%

¹ as a sense check we also measured the correlation of the NPS with simple 0-10 appeal ratings for each of the brands and revealed a huge 84% correlation between brand rating and NPS score.

13. The impact of including the brand name in the sonic logo

Music creatives often rage at a brand's insistence on including the spoken or sung brand name in the sonic logo on the basis that it limits the flexibility of the sonic usage and can even demote the asset to an audio strapline. However, as with visual branding, it is a powerful cue to accelerate the attribution of the logo to the brand.

Looking at our 150 sonic logos, 51, or 36%, include the brand name and overall those with the brand name enjoy an average BrandMatch uplift of 8% against 3% for those without the brand name.

When we focus on only those brands that have a Net Promoter Score of greater than 0, the uplift is an identical 13% for those who do and those who do not include the brand name.

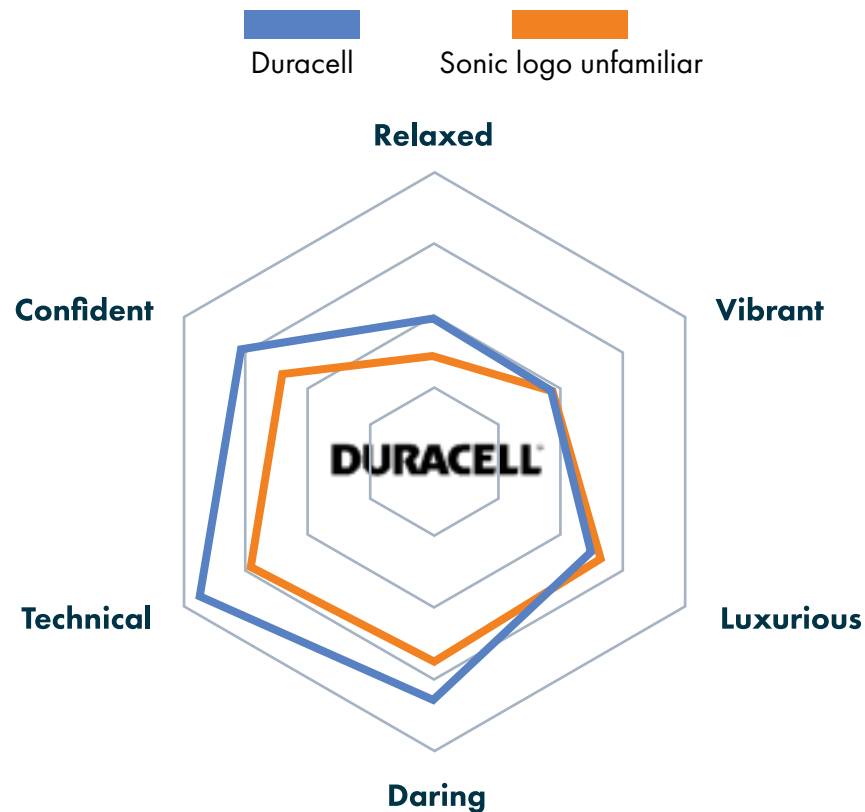
Including your brand name may be a smart move if you want to accelerate the speed at which people associate the sonic identity with your brand (see our next report on Market Penetration) - but for those that do make the association it does not increase the personality match uplift.



14. Top performers

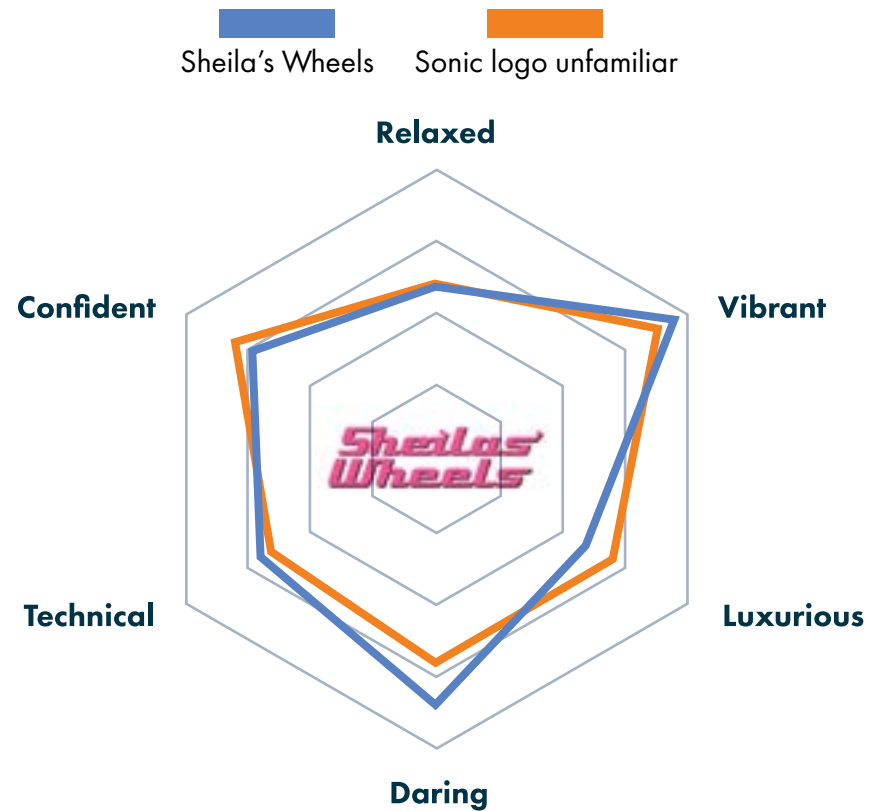
We have 3 performance tables for each of the US and UK:

1. The personality match for those unfamiliar with the sonic logo/brand association, i.e. the intrinsic personality match. These are brands that have done a great job of creating a sonic logo that truly mirrors the personality of their brand and, with great execution, stand a good chance of creating a true sonic DBA. Many have already done so.



US Ranking where consumers are not familiar with the sonic logo

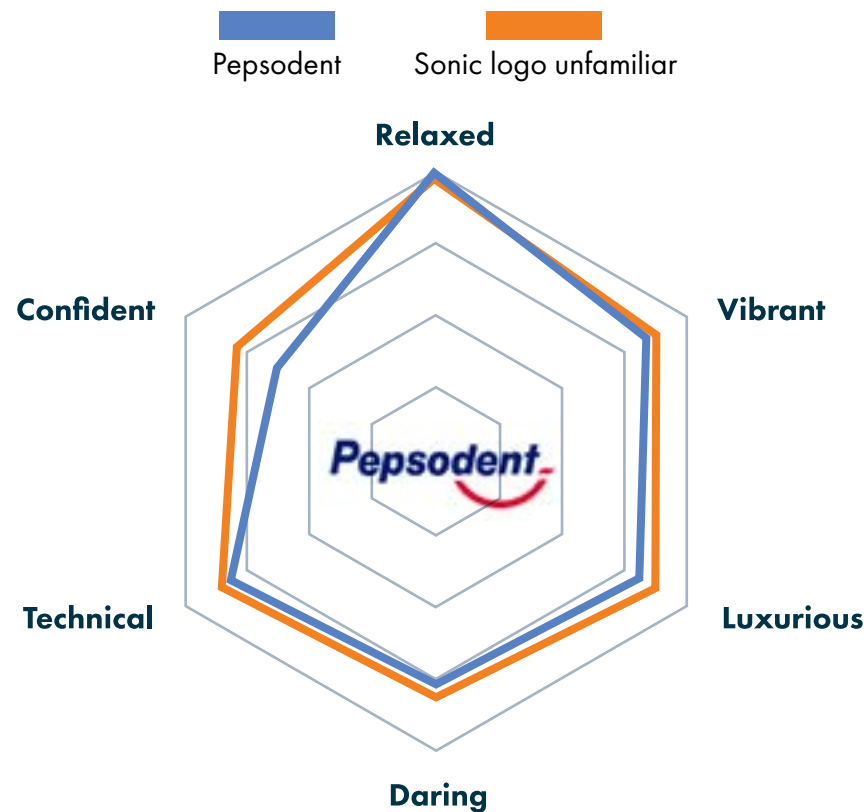
US Rank	Brand	BrandMatch <small>Unfamiliar with sonic logo - no brand association</small>
1	Duracell	89%
2	The General	85%
3	Chili's	84%
4	Pepsodent	83%
5	AutoZone	83%
6	O'Reilly	83%
7	Farmers	83%
8	State Farm	82%
9	Huggies	82%
10	Sprint	82%



UK Ranking where consumers are not familiar with the sonic logo

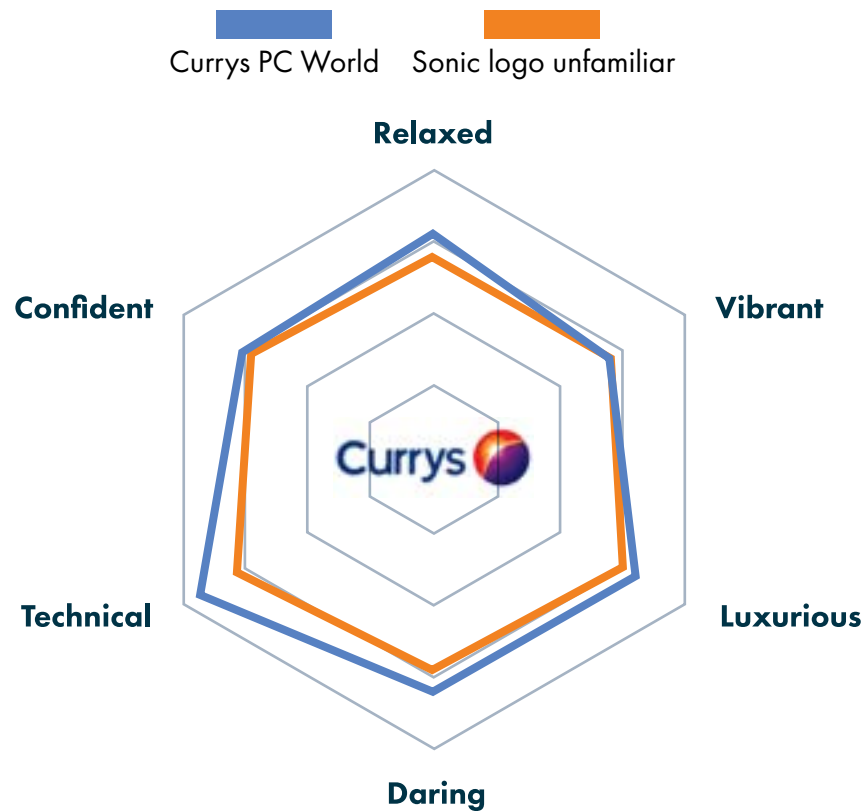
UK Rank	Brand	BrandMatch Unfamiliar with sonic logo - no brand association
1	Sheila's Wheels	92%
2	TSB	87%
3	ASDA	87%
4	O2	86%
5	Currys PC World	84%
6	Just Eat	82%
7	We Buy Any Car	81%
8	Guide Dogs	77%
9	Mazuma Mobile	77%
10	Moonpig	76%

2. We then have the brands that, through a combination of starting with a sonic logo closely matched to their personality, or by successfully hauling the personality perception towards their brand personality now have a sonic logo that truly mirrors their current brand personality:



US Ranking where consumers are familiar with the sonic logo

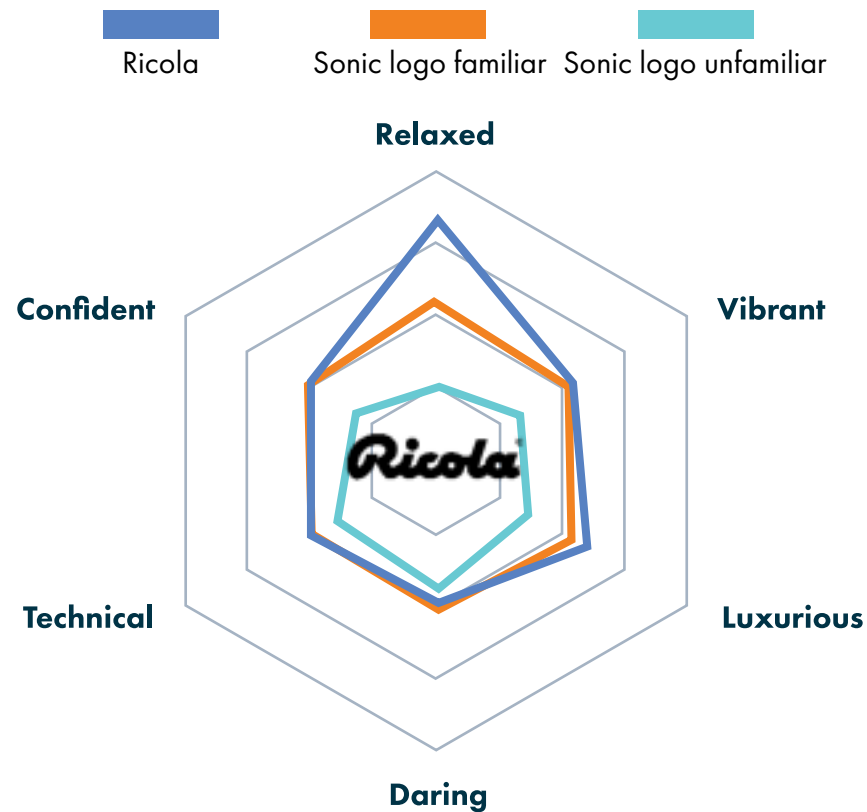
US Rank	Brand	BrandMatch Familiar with sonic logo - brand association
1	Pepsodent	96%
2	Hyundai	95%
3	Audible	94%
4	Huggies	94%
5	Red Robin	94%
6	Ricola	93%
7	Sprint	92%
8	Volkswagen	91%
9	PBS	91%
10	Intel	91%



UK Ranking where consumers are familiar with the sonic logo

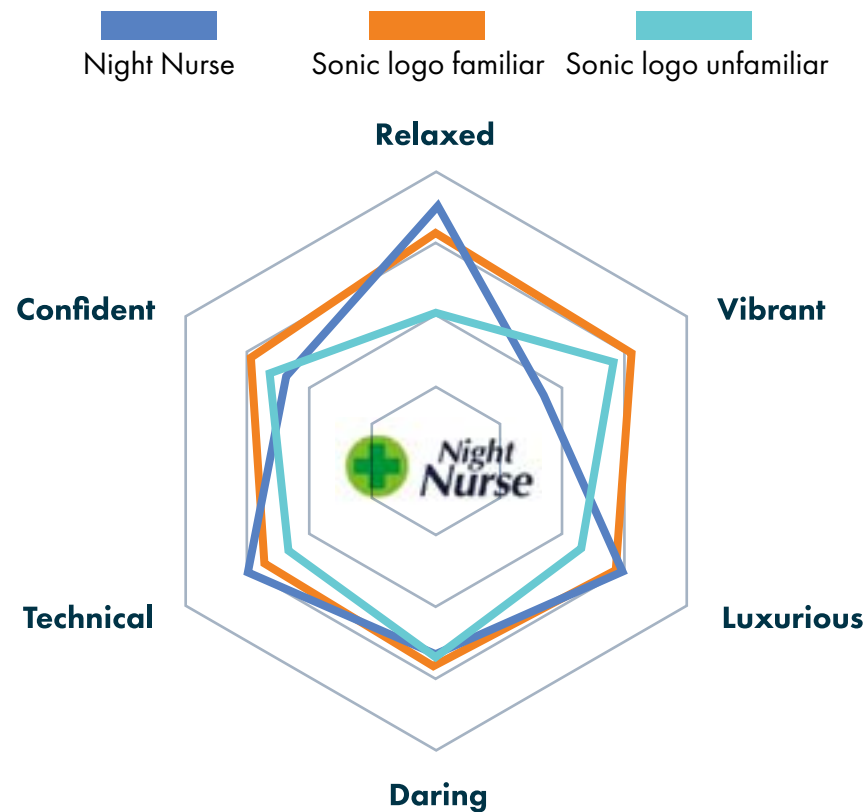
UK Rank	Brand	BrandMatch Familiar with sonic logo - brand association
1	Currys PC World	95%
2	ASDA	91%
3	Guide Dogs	91%
4	Just Eat	90%
5	Funky Pigeon	90%
6	TSB	90%
7	EE	89%
8	Sheila's Wheels	89%
9	Mazuma Mobile	89%
10	ETX Capital	88%

3. Finally, we have the brands who have achieved the highest personality match uplift, indicating how far the perceived personality of the sonic logo has been transformed by the brand association. Typically due to a combination of a strong brand but more often due to the appalling intrinsic personality match they started with:



US BrandMatch uplift with brand association

US Rank	Brand	Personality match uplift with brand association
1	Ricola	52%
2	Michelin	48%
3	Little Caesars	45%
4	Nintendo Switch	34%
5	Southwest Airlines	34%
6	Cooper Tires	30%
7	Netflix	29%
8	Chicken Tonight	28%
9	Xiaomi	28%
10	Nvidia GeForce	27%

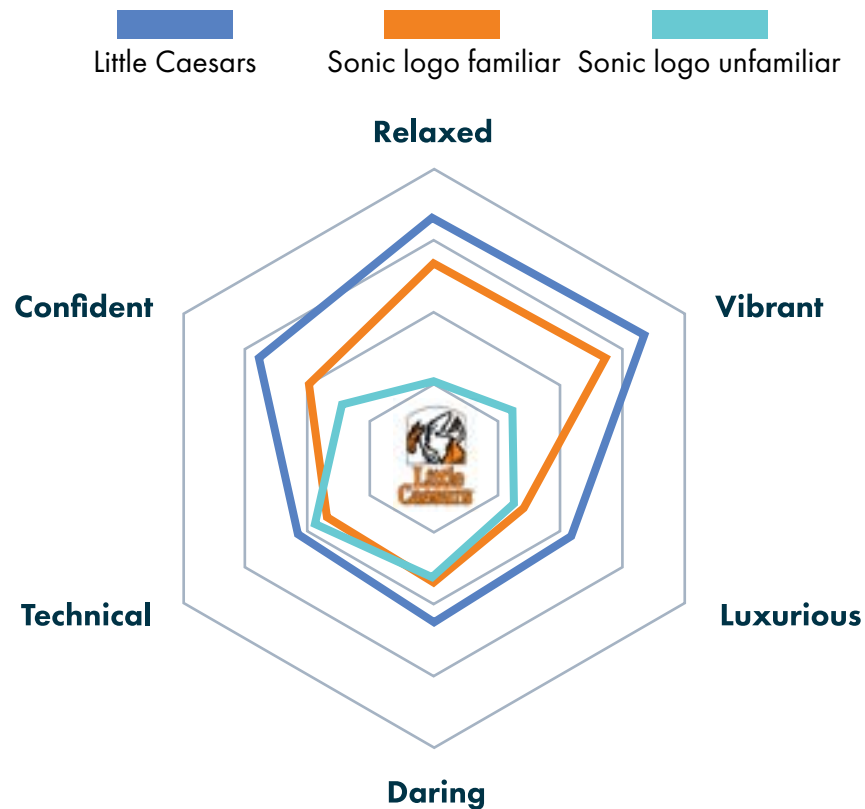


UK BrandMatch uplift with brand association

UK Rank	Brand	Personality match uplift with brand association
1	Night Nurse	32%
2	Heart FM	32%
3	Funky Pigeon	30%
4	Oak Furnitureland	30%
5	ETX Capital	26%
6	Haribo	23%
7	What3words	21%
8	Compare The Market	19%
9	Hastings Direct	18%
10	Cinch	18%

To visually illustrate how brands can over time transform a poor matching sonic logo to one that closely matches the brand personality we can look at Little Caesars.

All is not lost if your sonic logo starts far removed from your core brand personality, Little Caesars has had to work hard to achieve personality fusion and has been rewarded with a strong personality match by sticking with its 'Pizza Pizza' logo for over 40 years:



But even after 40 years the sonic logo/personality match still falls some way short of many brands that ensured a close personality match from day one. Brands can spend many years and millions of dollars transforming a poorly matching logo into one that finally resonates with the brand - time and investment that could be significantly reduced by ensuring a strong personality match from inception.

Little Caesars brand / familiar with sonic logo 78% BrandMatch

Little Caesars brand / unfamiliar with sonic logo 34% BrandMatch

BrandMatch uplift 44%

15. Rankings

Full Results US



Rank	Brand	Name in sonic	BrandMatch: familiar with sonic logo/brand association	BrandMatch: unfamiliar with sonic logo/brand association	Personality match uplift
1	Pepsodent		96%	83%	13%
2	Hyundai		95%	78%	17%
3	Audible		94%	76%	18%
4	Huggies		94%	82%	12%
5	Red Robin	Y	94%	79%	15%
6	Ricola	Y	93%	41%	52%
7	Sprint		92%	82%	10%
8	Volkswagen		91%	68%	23%
9	PBS		91%	80%	11%
10	Intel		91%	76%	15%
11	20th Century Studios		91%	68%	23%
12	Duracell		91%	89%	2%
13	Campbell's Soup		91%	78%	13%
14	Home Depot		91%	80%	11%
15	Travelers		91%	71%	20%
16	Avocados From Mexico	Y	91%	80%	11%

Rank	Brand	Name in sonic	BrandMatch: familiar with sonic logo/brand association	BrandMatch: unfamiliar with sonic logo/brand association	Personality match uplift
17	Imodium		90%	77%	13%
18	T-Mobile		90%	76%	14%
19	AutoZone	Y	90%	83%	7%
20	The General	Y	89%	85%	4%
21	ESPN		89%	81%	8%
22	BMW		89%	72%	17%
23	O'Reilly	Y	89%	83%	6%
24	Chili's	Y	88%	84%	4%
25	McDonald's		88%	67%	21%
26	Nissan		88%	69%	19%
27	HSBC		88%	75%	13%
28	TD Ameritrade		88%	73%	15%
29	Philips		87%	76%	11%
30	Hot Pockets	Y	87%	81%	6%
31	LeapFrog		87%	77%	10%
32	Ford	Y	87%	75%	12%

Rank	Brand	Name in sonic	BrandMatch: familiar with sonic logo/brand association	BrandMatch: unfamiliar with sonic logo/brand association	Personality match uplift
33	Cooper Tires		86%	56%	30%
34	THX		86%	78%	8%
35	HBO		86%	77%	9%
36	Activia	Y	86%	71%	15%
37	Folgers	Y	86%	72%	14%
38	Taco Bell		86%	61%	25%
39	Visa		85%	65%	20%
40	State Farm		85%	82%	3%
41	Arby's	Y	84%	74%	10%
42	Warner Bros		84%	80%	4%
43	Mernards	Y	84%	71%	13%
44	Netflix		84%	54%	30%
45	Goldfish	Y	84%	72%	12%
46	Southwest Airlines		83%	49%	34%
47	Daisy	Y	83%	77%	6%
48	Paramount +		83%	74%	9%

Rank	Brand	Name in sonic	BrandMatch: familiar with sonic logo/brand association	BrandMatch: unfamiliar with sonic logo/brand association	Personality match uplift
49	TCL		83%	79%	4%
50	HULU Originals		83%	66%	17%
51	Oreo		83%	63%	20%
52	Febreze	Y	83%	67%	16%
53	Farmers	Y	83%	83%	0%
54	MasterCard		82%	72%	10%
55	Apple TV+		82%	70%	12%
56	Nvidia GeForce		82%	55%	27%
57	Xiaomi	Y	82%	53%	29%
58	Sonos		82%	73%	9%
59	Disney		81%	68%	13%
60	Showtime		80%	68%	12%
61	Green Giant	Y	80%	59%	21%
62	USA Today		80%	73%	7%
63	LG		79%	75%	4%
64	Deloitte		79%	60%	19%

Rank	Brand	Name in sonic	BrandMatch: familiar with sonic logo/brand association	BrandMatch: unfamiliar with sonic logo/brand association	Personality match uplift
65	Little Caesars		78%	34%	44%
66	Coca Cola		78%	57%	21%
67	AXA		78%	52%	26%
68	Sony		78%	61%	17%
69	AT+T		78%	67%	11%
70	Tuneln	Y	78%	54%	24%
71	US Bank		77%	63%	14%
72	Peacock		77%	60%	17%
73	Flash	Y	77%	53%	24%
74	Youtube Originals		76%	62%	14%
75	Samsung		76%	55%	21%
76	Porsche		76%	58%	18%
77	Pepsi	Y	75%	60%	15%
78	USAA	Y	74%	66%	8%
79	Chicken Tonight	Y	74%	45%	29%
80	Shell		74%	47%	27%

Rank	Brand	Name in sonic	BrandMatch: familiar with sonic logo/brand association	BrandMatch: unfamiliar with sonic logo/brand association	Personality match uplift
81	Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer		73%	55%	18%
82	Chuck E. Cheese		73%	52%	21%
83	Klondike	Y	73%	49%	24%
84	Apple Mac		71%	56%	15%
85	Finastra		71%	61%	10%
86	Liberty Mutual	Y	70%	68%	2%
87	Audi		70%	59%	11%
88	Chevron		69%	56%	13%
89	Xbox One		69%	59%	10%
90	Michelin		69%	21%	48%
91	Old Spice		64%	57%	7%
92	Coca Cola (acoustic)		62%	50%	12%
93	NBC		61%	39%	22%
94	KAY	Y	60%	56%	4%
95	Nintendo Switch		60%	26%	34%
96	PlayStation	Y	56%	29%	27%

Rank	Brand	Name in sonic	BrandMatch: familiar with sonic logo/brand association	BrandMatch: unfamiliar with sonic logo/brand association	Personality match uplift
97	Tums	Y	55%	46%	9%
98	Disney+		53%	37%	16%
99	CBS		53%	55%	-2%
100	Gillette		41%	40%	1%

Full Results UK



Rank	Brand	Name in sonic	BrandMatch: familiar with sonic logo/brand association	BrandMatch: unfamiliar with sonic logo/brand association	Personality match uplift
1	Currys PC World		95%	84%	11%
2	ASDA		91%	87%	4%
3	Guide Dogs	Y	91%	77%	14%
4	Just Eat	Y	90%	82%	8%
5	Funky Pigeon	Y	90%	60%	30%
6	TSB		90%	87%	3%
7	EE	Y	89%	72%	17%
8	Sheila's Wheels	Y	89%	92%	-3%
9	Mazuma Mobile	Y	89%	77%	12%
10	ETX Capital		88%	62%	26%
11	O2		86%	86%	0%
12	What3words		86%	65%	21%
13	Haribo	Y	86%	63%	23%
14	KIA		85%	73%	12%
15	Moonpig	Y	84%	76%	8%
16	Premier League		84%	71%	13%

Rank	Brand	Name in sonic	BrandMatch: familiar with sonic logo/brand association	BrandMatch: unfamiliar with sonic logo/brand association	Personality match uplift
17	Compare The Market		83%	63%	20%
18	Checkatrade	Y	83%	75%	8%
19	Bella & Duke	Y	81%	64%	17%
20	Foxy Bingo		81%	76%	5%
21	Play OJO	Y	80%	65%	15%
22	Aquafresh		80%	69%	11%
23	We Buy Any Car		79%	81%	-2%
24	Oak Furnitureland	Y	78%	49%	29%
25	Night Nurse	Y	78%	45%	33%
26	GoCompare	Y	77%	71%	6%
27	Cinch		74%	56%	18%
28	Tesco		72%	64%	8%
29	Lloyds Bank	Y	71%	62%	9%
30	Heart FM	Y	70%	38%	32%
31	ABTA Travel Asscoiation		69%	61%	8%
32	AO	Y	68%	53%	15%

Rank	Brand	Name in sonic	BrandMatch: familiar with sonic logo/brand association	BrandMatch: unfamiliar with sonic logo/brand association	Personality match uplift
33	Pearl & Dean		68%	52%	16%
34	Santander		51%	42%	9%
35	Hastings Direct		50%	32%	18%

16. Conclusion

While sonic branding is a brave new world for many brands, it cannot and should not be ignored.

The power of music to entertain and connect has been used for generations by artists, movie producers and advertisers to create emotional impact, supercharge feelings and forge emotional bonds.

Music artists and labels obsess about releasing songs that people like, that reinforce the authenticity of the artist, and that builds the artist's brand. While music cannot communicate trust, it does build authenticity if it projects the same personality of the artist.

And authenticity is the foundation of trust.

Brands are finally waking up to the emotional depth and breadth of music and beginning to harness its unique power to support and strengthen the emotional connection with consumers.

Until recently there have been no quantitative tools to measure music personality, but, if you have read this far, you will appreciate that this has now changed. As a result, BrandMatch increasingly sits at the heart of many of the world's most ambitious strategic sonic branding projects.

Looking ahead...

And we have only just started. Music, and sonic logos in particular, are perfect weapons to deliver subconscious cues - we don't have earlids - and music in branding and marketing is rarely consumed consciously. It's most often a subconscious addition to the main event - whether that is a movie, a commercial or simply background noise. It is therefore the subconscious response to music (both in branding and marketing) that now needs to be quantified and measured.

Since May 2021 we have been working on an ambitious project (funded by the UK Government's Innovate fund) with the world leading music psychologists at Goldsmiths, University of London to create an equivalent sonic DNA emotional map of the purely subconscious impact of music on consumers. This will utilize new implicit testing methodologies targeting the system 1 type processing. We are also investigating the ability of consumers to recognize and recall sonic branding assets with rigorous techniques from cognitive science research. Again involving over 500,000 consumers, this will, for the first time, enable branding experts and marketers to identify music that best delivers the subconscious emotional cues that both resonate with the brand personality but also drive propensity to buy.

Watch this space...

Appendix: The science

While we have tested over 500,000 music tracks for record labels, radio stations and independent artists for almost 15 years, we've always wanted to understand the dimensions of sonic personality. So, in 2020, in partnership with Goldsmith University's "Music, Mind and Brain" research group, we decided to run one of the largest audio experiments ever designed in the history of music psychology.

Over several months, we collected more than 500,000 reviews of 250 sonic assets against 212 attributes. Respondents from all over the English-speaking world (65% USA, 23.5% UK and Ireland, 7.5% Canada, 4% Australia and New-Zealand) provided over 6 million attribute ratings. The sonic dataset is composed of 130 logos and 120 anthems, all professionally produced and never published, which makes them free of any brand association.

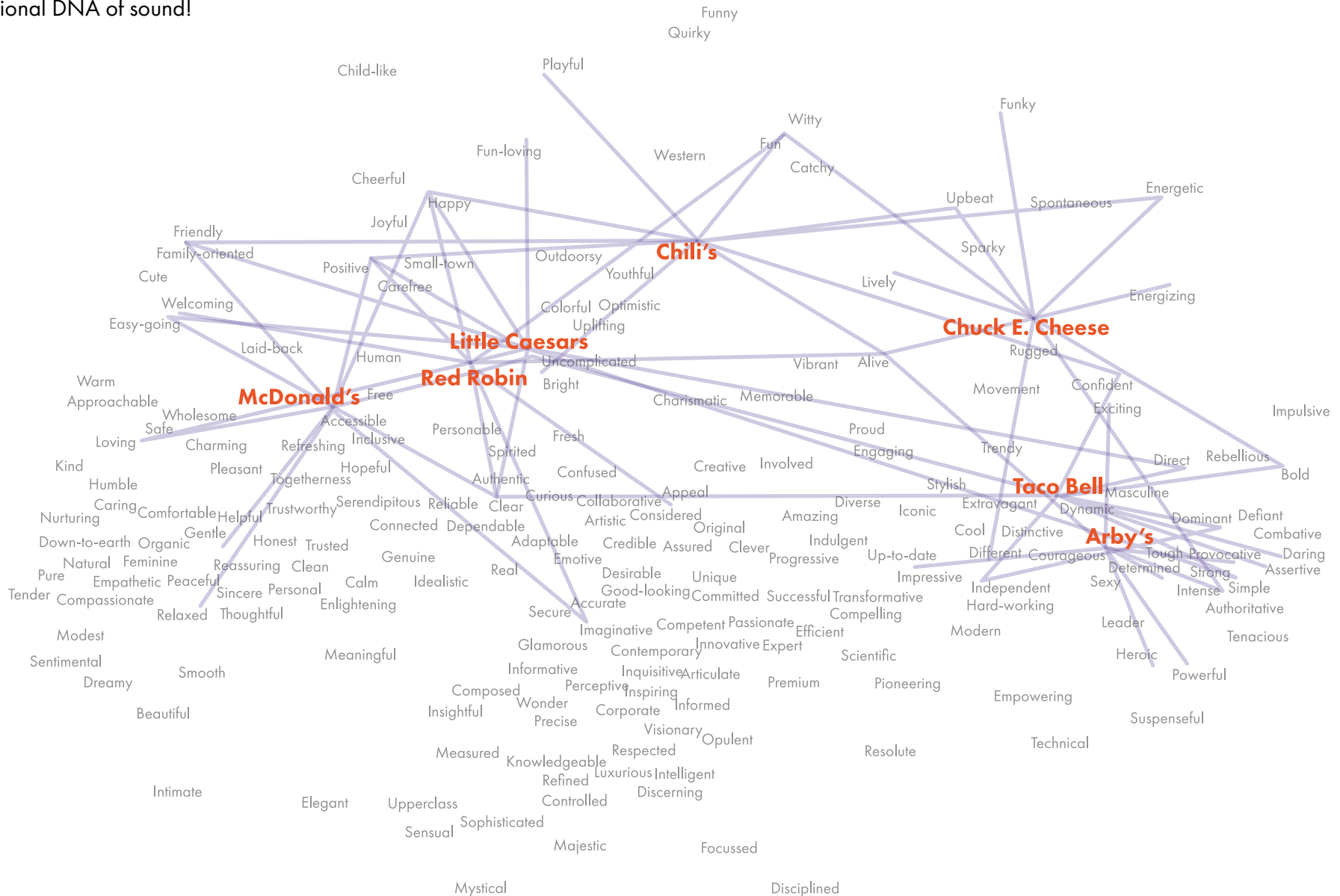
Over a 6 month period, our reviewers were asked to rate how much they liked the audio (giving us a measure of its "appeal") and to what extent they would use the following attributes to describe it. Each asset was tested 20 times over, each time against 12 different attributes. The data took months to collect.



The attributes underpinning BrandMatch						
Accessible	Clever	Dependable	Extravagant	Imaginative	Personable	Technical
Accurate						Tenacious
Adaptable	Collaborative	Desirable	Family-oriented	Impressive	Personal	Tender
Alive	Colorful	Determined	Feminine	Impulsive	Pioneering	Thoughtful
Amazing	Combative	Different	Focussed	Inclusive	Playful	Togetherness
Appeal	Comfortable	Direct	Free	Independent	Pleasant	Tough
Approachable	Committed	Discerning	Fresh	Luxurious	Positive	Transformative
Articulate	Compassionate	Disciplined	Friendly	Majestic	Powerful	Trendy
Artistic	Compelling	Distinctive	Fun	Masculine	Precise	Trusted
Assertive	Competent	Diverse	Fun-loving	Meaningful	Premium	Trustworthy
Assured	Composed	Dominant	Funky	Measured	Progressive	Uncomplicated
Authentic	Confident	Down-to-earth	Funny	Memorable	Proud	Unique
Authoritative	Confused	Dreamy	Gentle	Modern	Provocative	Up-to-date
Beautiful	Connected	Dynamic	Genuine	Modest	Pure	Upbeat
Bold	Considered	Easy-going	Glamorous	Movement	Quirky	Uplifting
Bright	Contemporary	Efficient	Good-looking	Mystical	Real	Upperclass
Calm	Controlled	Elegant	Happy	Natural	Small-town	Vibrant
Carefree	Cool	Emotive	Hard-working	Nurturing	Smooth	Visionary
Caring	Corporate	Empathetic	Helpful	Optimistic	Sophisticated	Warm
Catchy	Courageous	Empowering	Heroic	Opulent	Sparky	Welcoming
Charismatic	Creative	Energetic	Honest	Organic	Spirited	Western
Charming	Credible	Energizing	Hopeful	Original	Spontaneous	Wholesome
Cheerful	Curious	Engaging	Human	Outdoorsy	Strong	Witty
Child-like	Cute	Enlightening	Humble	Passionate	Stylish	Wonder
Clean	Daring	Exciting	Iconic	Peaceful	Successful	Youthful
Clear	Defiant	Expert	Idealistic	Perceptive	Suspenseful	

The results unlocked unique insights about the relationships between these attributes in a sonic context, meaning we can now literally map the emotional DNA of sound!

Using multidimensional clustering of the attribute correlations, we built an attribute map on which we can position any brand audio asset.



Using advanced dimensionality reduction techniques, we further analysed the data to identify the subset of attributes that best captured the personality profile of a music composition. This identified 14 core attributes that, correctly weighted, captured over 95% of the emotional variance of the entire 212 attribute set.

These 14 attributes sit at the heart of BrandMatch, as we only need to test a brand asset against these 14 attributes to determine its personality profile. Using factor analysis, we condense this insight into a “BrandMatch profile”, composed of 6 key components against which a near infinite number of sonic personalities can be mapped against any brand, voice over, or other brand asset.

To calculate the BrandMatch we first ask the brand to define its personality using a 0-10 scale for each of the 14 core attributes. This becomes the benchmark against which all musical options are tested. We then ask consumers to replicate the process while listening to the music to be tested but without any brand association. The data is then processed, combining both the amplitude and shape match of each component, to generate the plot and calculate the BrandMatch.

In addition, using machine learning on our 6 million data points, we have built statistical models that can reconstruct accurate scores for any of the 212 attributes from our 14 core attributes. As a result, by testing a sonic asset against just these 14 core attributes, we can now predict all 212 attribute scores for any new asset with over 97% precision.





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