

\_best  
**AUDIO BRANDS**



[www.bestaudiobrands.com](http://www.bestaudiobrands.com)

# WELCOME TO BEST AUDIO

## BRANDS 2020: the first worldwide ranking of Sonic Identities

**THIS IS THE DECADE OF AUDIO.** Driven by the internet of things, Sonic Branding is developing extensively. As the proliferation of smart speakers and other screenless smart devices continues to grow and audible content such as podcasts is on the rise, consumer relationships with brands are increasingly shaped by sonic experiences. How are brands taking advantage of sound and music for a consistent brand experience across a multitude of touchpoints? This is the question we asked ourselves and set out to answer with Best Audio Brands.

As in 2019, for our 2020 study we have objectively and comprehensively evaluated audio brands based on measured KPI's and estimated Return-on-Investment. Just like visual branding, Sonic Identities require strategic thinking and investment.

To ensure our Best Audio Brands Ranking 2020 is as comprehensive in scope and analysis as possible, we partnered again with two key players in media and brand communication: Storyclash, who provided insights on social media trends in real-time and Veritonic, an AI-based audio effectiveness testing company. Who are the top performers 2020? What are the best audio strategies? And what can we learn about the changes from 2019 to 2020? On behalf of amp, we wish you an enjoyable read.

Sincerely yours,

**MICHELE ARNESE**

*Global CEO, Creative & Strategy Director*

**ULI REESE**

*Partner, Global CMO*



## **\_THE IDEA BEHIND THIS RANKING and the team of experts who created it**

### **\_FOR DECADES, TV COMMERCIALS**

**WERE BELIEVED** to be the perfect format to create a bond between customers and brands. According to this line of thought, the earlier a brand reached the customers through its visual identity, the stronger the bond was. Although TV continues to be a key medium, recent studies show that consumption of other forms of electronic and especially audible media continue to increase. In the U.S. alone, adults 35-49 spend more time per day on smartphones than any other age group. Adults 18-34 spend over half of their daily media usage with digital media. Half of all adults stream audio through their smartphones each week and 28% of U.S. households own a smart speaker<sup>8</sup>.

U.S. weekly podcast listeners averaged seven podcasts per week<sup>2</sup>. Research supports, that younger consumers engage more with brands that carefully consider their Sonic Identity and over 70 percent of young adults believe that they develop a better understanding of a brand's personality through how the brand utilizes music<sup>9</sup>. Today, as we move away from screens and linear television viewing and interactive voice technologies becoming a bigger part of daily life, brand visual identities are getting less attention from consumers. To establish brand recognition, it is therefore more important than ever for brands to think about how they sound.



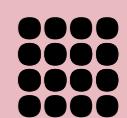


**\_THE WORK IS  
THE RESULT of an  
interdisciplinary team**

In our Best Audio Brands 2020 ranking we see an indicator that strong brands that have been using their Sonic Logos for years, if not decades, are starting to use them less consistently. This begs the question: Why? Having only one Sonic Asset such as a Sonic Logo is not a strategy anymore that fits the rapidly changing landscape of digital and physical touchpoints. Brands need a holistic Sonic Identity that is both recognizable and adaptable across the entire customer experience and journey. Looking at Best Audio Brands 2020 it is clear that brands that have embraced a holistic Sonic Identity are indisputably reaping the benefits that come with it.

**Sincerely yours,**

**BJORN THORLEIFSSON**  
*Senior Strategist (Team Lead)*



# OUR PARTNERS

**STORYCLASH** is a social media monitoring solution. Brands, agencies and publishers monitor their brand and competitors, track their owned and earned media and find content trends as well as influencers with Storyclash. Everything in real-time.



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## Social media monitoring & Social listening

Monitor social conversations to understand your brand impact.  
Easily organize your KPIs with smart reports.

Try Storyclash now

### The challenges of social media monitoring

Conversations on social in real-time	Monitor your brand impact	Social reporting is time-consuming
Missing out on online conversations can harm your brand and sales. Discover what people are saying - in real-time.	How is your brand impact on social media? Which channels are delivering which results?	Social reporting is complex, time-consuming and expensive. Join us on the other side. Make reporting easy again.
<a href="#">Start monitoring now.</a>		

**VERITONIC** is the audio effectiveness company. Being the first analytics platform built to quantify the value of sound, Veritonic scores and benchmarks audio creative to produce fast, robust evidence around the sonic brand elements, voices, music and scripts that influence audiences the most. As a result, the world's leading audio platforms, brands and others leverage the most memorable, persuasive audio -- in everything from podcasts to streaming/radio ads -- to cultivate deeper relationships with customers through sound.



**VERITONIC** The Sonic Truth™

Solutions ▾ Product ▾ Company ▾ Resources ▾ Dashboard Book a Demo

**Solutions for Brands**

## Capture consumers with a new, sonic certainty.

Veritonic insights put the power of objective data behind all of your creative decisions for the first time. Be confident that your decisions about audio marketing yield the best possible results and support your holistic brand experience.

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## ABOUT **THIS REPORT**

### TREND INSIGHTS

**IN 2019, WE INTRODUCED THE BEST AUDIO BRANDS RANKING** to gain a better understanding of how brands are using sound. The ranking is designed to **identify strong and weak** audio performers, determine **missed strategic opportunities** and **provide actionable solutions** to boost a brand's audio value and Return on Investment.

To ensure that the Best Audio Brands ranking includes the most useful selection of brands, for 2020 amp has again focused on the top 100 brands as chosen by Interbrand in its influential best global brands ranking. In this way, we hope to add another essential layer to the understanding. The Best Audio Brands 2020 study shows significant differences in the performance of a number of brands versus 2019, including previous top performers.



# WE ANALYZED BRAND CONTENT

## published over the course of 2019

**SIGNIFICANT DECREASE IN THE USE OF SONIC LOGOS.** Brands who have a Sonic Logo used it in an average of 32.5% of the material they put on-air, while in 2019 the Sonic Logo was used in 56% of the material. This current trend shows that just **a Sonic Logo is not enough** for building brand equity, and brands also recognize this. The decrease is further supported by the fact that often the Sonic Logo, the sound and music used for video content don't align and create an audible disconnect – which could be solved by leveraging custom tracks and compositions.

**BRANDS DECREASED** the amount of stock music in their videos: 58% stock in 2019 down to 47% stock in 2020.

**INCREASE IN THE USE OF VIDEOS WITHOUT MUSIC.** With the advent of digital 6-10 sec short story formats we have seen an increase of silent videos: 4% in 2019 and 11% in 2020. **Silent videos are a missed strategic opportunity** for brands to build recall, trust and other relevant attributes that contribute to brand awareness. Sonic should provide an

opportunity to create memorable sonic mnemonics even for short form video content. Silent videos and the decreased or inconsistent use of Sonic Logos are, in most cases, the reason why some brands dropped down the ranking this year. Sonic Logos, as valuable Sonic Assets, contribute to one of the pillars we consider for our evaluation: Customer Trust.

**Customer Trust increases with consistent use of Sonic Logos** over time and decreases with less usage. For most brands, there was also no audible compensation for this missing Sonic Asset.

**VOICE HAS BECOME AN INCREASINGLY IMPORTANT SONIC ASSET.** We found consistent use of voice and voice technologies across Apple, Google and Amazon. Therefore, we can safely say that **voice contributes in connecting a consumer with a brand** because it creates intimacy and trust. In fact, the 2020 U.S. Top Brand Intimacy Ranking has shown that these three brands (Amazon, Apple and Google) rank within the Top 15 thanks to their use of voice. Amazon, Apple and Google ranked first, third and fifteenth respectively<sup>7</sup>.



The Best Audio Brands report is built on methods of evaluation and leverages a solid set of research tools to establish the annual ranking.

#### **\_ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE EVALUATION.**

Working alongside our partner, Veritonic, we measured the emotional impact, uniqueness and memorability of audio assets. Veritonic uses machine learning and listening to help brands assess the effectiveness of their audio assets, drawing on real-world consumer responses to provide analysis on emotional response, recall and purchase intent.

**\_EXPERT PANELS.** We conducted in-depth panel interviews with experts in the field, including amp employees, respected composers and experienced audio researchers. These experts evaluated audio assets based on qualities such as brand fit, uniqueness, flexibility and memorability.

**\_EXTENSIVE DESK RESEARCH.** Drawing on amp's collective expertise, we analyzed brand content published over the course of 2019. This consisted of expert analysis of audio assets used across digital channels, television, products and customer service lines, among others. The analysis also considered how much owned, custom, licensed and stock music was used, as well as how well established these and other Sonic Assets were (the "history factor").

## **\_OUR APPROACH:** The key pillar of the Best Audio Brands Ranking

#### **\_SOCIAL MEDIA MONITORING AND ANALYSIS.**

We partnered with the social media monitoring company Storyclash to measure brand engagement online, including views, fan/brand interactions, subscriptions and number of followers. Our findings revealed that, despite the industry "noise" around audio, even the best performing global brands have yet to employ a truly holistic, and efficient, Sonic Branding strategy. With sonic set to be an increasingly important asset for brands to engage with consumers, this is the time to develop and implement these strategies. This ranking aims to fill in the existing knowledge gaps around Sonic Branding and provide the top-tier audio benchmark for brand leaders to measure themselves against.



# WHY SONIC BRANDING enhances business performance

**THE IMPORTANCE OF STRONG BRANDS AND BRANDING IN ENHANCING THE PERFORMANCE OF COMPANIES** has been understood for the better part of a hundred years. Today brand performance is universally recognized as intrinsically linked to business performance. When we think of brands, we think of logos, products, advertising and digital services. But **the power of brands** is also consciously and subconsciously **driven by the music and sounds** we associate with them. This has always been important - academic studies show that brand engagement is far stronger when audio is treated

as an equal and essential aspect of the brand. **Sound and music have a far more direct influence over our subconscious, decisionmaking mind.** Today, we can hear brands and expect to hear them more and more. Smart speakers, apps and digital service interfaces increasingly determine our experience of brands as good, bad, memorable or forgettable. In this environment, brands need a coherent Sonic Brand Identity. A **clear brand purpose and authenticity** are also important elements that influence how well a brand engages with consumers. In this sense, **sound is one of the**

**most powerful tools in a brand's arsenal.** Not only does it build an emotional connection with consumers, sound is also able to significantly shape the customer experience, **building brand loyalty, recall and trust over time** and by repetition. Moving towards a future where screens will not always be the most prevalent medium, brands will find that a coherent audio strategy, which complements their visual, social and cultural equity, is essential to establishing or maintaining their competitive advantage.



**AMP HAS FOCUSED ON THE TOP 100 BRANDS** as chosen by Interbrand in its influential Best Global Brands Ranking 2020

**BUT WHAT DOES A GREAT BRAND SOUND LIKE AND HOW DO YOU ACHIEVE IT?** To fill this knowledge gap, we've analyzed the performance of the world's top brands to create a benchmark for Sonic Branding globally. amp's Best Audio Brands ranking provides insights into the world's best audio branding examples and identifies where the opportunities for improvement are. Our analysis embraces the full spectrum of audible touchpoints brands can employ: from music used in audio-visual productions to sound in physical brand spaces and voice interactions through smart devices.



# \_WHY EFFECTIVE AUDIO STRATEGIES depend on the creation of a Sonic DNA

## **WHEN BRANDS CONSISTENTLY APPEAL TO MORE THAN ONE SENSE, BRAND LOYALTY INCREASES.**

Before diving into the ranking, it is important to first provide an overview of the history and craft involved in Sonic Branding.

Sonic Branding uses sound strategically to shape brand experiences and communication. Simply put, a **Sonic Identity** is the acoustic equivalent of a visual identity, something that all brands invest in without question. As such, a Sonic DNA takes into account the brand values, tone of voice (personality) and overall purpose to form a connected Sonic Brand Identity.

Investment in Sonic Branding should be focused on the long-term objective of growing and building assets that can be used flexibly across all touchpoints along the customer

journey. However, thinking strategically about Sonic Branding is a relatively new concept. There are many terms that relate to the discipline: Sonic Branding, audio branding, audio mnemonic, acoustic branding, Sonic Identity system, and others. All of these connect to the same idea creating an audio experience that will complement the visual identity and enhance brand engagement. To date, many brands have approached the creation of Sonic Assets on a short-term or tactical basis without exploring the opportunities and rationale for a strategic approach. It is worth noting that **sound has the unique ability to break through the clutter and evoke emotions beyond the means of visual communication.**

In the past, Sonic Branding was a synonym for the Sonic Logo that used to drive brand

awareness across a limited number of TV or radio advertising placements. These are the so called jingles or shorter melodies we are all familiar with, used to enhance memorability in the era of broadcast media. Brands have also experimented with "corporate Sonic Identities", using a set of static audio elements or single melodies, designed to achieve instant recognition. However, this **single melody approach falls short of achieving meaningful results** in a world dominated by multi-channel media and a vast range of social and service-technology platforms all vying for our attention. In such a complex and challenging environment, a far more comprehensive approach is needed to keep pace with technology and customer experience developments and help build sustainable brand equity.





**\_THE SECRET OF A GOOD  
SONIC IDENTITY LIES IN THE  
COMBINATION of creative  
flexibility and brand recognition**

**\_CREATING A BRAND SONIC DNA.**

At amp, we are convinced that an **integrated and flexible approach to Sonic Branding is key to tangible success and a strong Return on Investment.**

We have developed a tried and tested approach to creating a truly multi-faceted Sonic DNA. This strategy employs Sonic Watermarking to generate brand recall, while simultaneously providing the creative freedom to write and produce authentic branded audio assets. By continuously deriving Sonic Assets from a unique Sonic DNA, the brand's core Sonic Identity is reflected across all audible

touchpoints, from soundtracks to application sounds. Derivative elements are also created on-demand, in line with the brand's objectives and needs for specific customer experiences.

**Imagine a piece of music** that is used in many different ways, not just edited in length, but broken down into its components and **recomposed to suit all scenarios of the brand experience.** This approach creates both unity and diversity. A powerful, consistent, holistic sonic experience flexes and flows wherever people hear and encounter it.



**IT HAS BEEN MORE THAN 60 YEARS SINCE WE HEARD THE FIRST JAMES BOND SOUNDTRACK, but it still feels just as fresh and identifiable with each new interpretation**

**LONGEVITY AND FLEXIBILITY.**

Last year we already introduced the James Bond Sonic Identity: It has been more than 60 years since we heard the first James Bond soundtrack, but it still feels just as fresh and identifiable with each new interpretation. This is because the James Bond brand has invested heavily in its own Sonic Assets, creating a core Sonic DNA and adapting it to the zeitgeist with each film. Brand recall, memorability and flexibility are powerful properties of this well-rounded Sonic Identity.

By taking this approach, the James Bond brand has been able to ensure that every dollar invested in audio, is a dollar invested in building brand equity. As a result, it has been able to successfully communicate the brand for decades and scale the sonic brand across geographies and time.



**DESIGNING AN AUDIO**

**EXPERIENCE.** Often overlooked, sound also plays an important role in product design, considering its significant impact on the customer experience and the immersive customer experience it can help create.

This is particularly important when today's sophisticated interfaces allow for more fluid and meaningful interaction between brand and consumer. We live in a world where technology is increasingly integrated into our daily lives, and voice interfaces are changing the

way in which we interact with brands. In this environment, brands will need to identify and treat their audio blind spots, particularly when they cannot compensate with their visual identity.

For tomorrow's consumer, audio is no longer a "nice to have" but an essential brand asset. Sonic DNA-based Sonic Branding can help brands create a cohesive audio environment in which voice and music are powerful tools to drive the customer experience and engagement.



# \_BEST AUDIO BRANDS system and methodology

**THE BEST AUDIO BRANDS RANKING** is specifically designed to identify strong and weak audio performers, determine any missed strategic opportunities and produce actionable solutions to boost a brand's sonic equity and Return on Investment. Based on our experience, **we have identified six key pillars that comprise a Sonic Brand Identity.** These pillars cover different aspects of brand management: From brand relationship quality, to consumer-based brand equity and the brand experience. For data acquisition and calculation of the KPI's we leveraged artificial intelligence-based evaluation, expert panel analysis, extensive desk research as well as social media monitoring.



## **\_CONSISTENCY, UNIQUENESS AND FLEXIBILITY of audio brand assets are essential factors for a successful Sonic Branding strategy**



### **\_CUSTOMER TRUST**

Trust = Consistency + Time. The consistent use of recognizable Sonic Assets builds trust and ensures a connected brand experience across all

audible touchpoints. A Sonic Identity contributes to brand equity by building strong emotional relationships, which in turn drive long-term customer loyalty and value.

For each brand's Customer Trust score we analyzed the consistent use of high-quality Sonic Assets. For this, we researched the use of owned music and Sonic Assets, how long these assets had been used by the brand and the consistency of use of the assets across multiple touchpoints and markets.

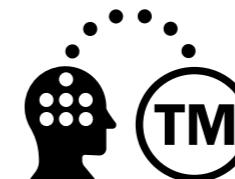


### **\_CUSTOMER BELONGING**

Stock music does not incentivize consumers to bond with a brand. Uniqueness, authenticity and relevance do. When a brand has a Sonic

Identity with these three traits, and uses recurring Sonic Assets created by real musicians, it's much easier for consumers to connect with a brand on a deeper level and feel a sense of belonging with the brand community.

In order to assign a Customer Belonging score to each brand in the ranking, we evaluated the quantity of stock music used (which has a negative impact), the uniqueness of the Sonic Assets used at different touchpoints, the overall brand fit of the sonic and the quality of customer engagement across social channels.



### **\_CUSTOMER RECOGNITION**

Consistent and unique Sonic Assets are essential if you want your brand to be recognized across all audible touchpoints. This means going beyond

a static "Sonic Logo", and instead leveraging core Sonic Assets from a bespoke Sonic DNA. These core elements can be used across several environments to create a holistic and consistent Sonic Identity; from soundtracks to advertisements, product sounds to hold-music for customer hotlines.

Our Customer Recognition score was developed based on the quantity of owned music and the number of Sonic Assets each brand possessed, the number of Sonic Assets actually used and the uniqueness and memorability of the sound employed at different touchpoints.



## **A PERFECT AUDIO BRAND SCORES HIGHLY ACROSS ALL PILLARS** by using dedicated audio brand assets derived from a bespoke **SONIC DNA**



### **CUSTOMER ENGAGEMENT**

This pillar takes into account how customers react to and interact with the brand. Strong interactions on digital media and the use of high-quality authentic music and sound that reaches the relevant target groups and suits the current trends is key.

Our Customer Engagement score was based on the number of video interactions and views on social media, the overall quality of sound and music used and the quantity of stock music used (which had a negative impact).



### **CUSTOMER EXPERIENCE**

To create an excellent customer experience across all audible touchpoints, brands must ensure they are producing audio assets of high quality. If the brand gets this right, audio is able to impact customers on a profound emotional level boosting long-term brand equity and consideration on the path to purchase.

In order to assign a Customer Experience score to each brand in the ranking, we assessed: the consistency of Sonic Assets used across different touchpoints and markets, the flexibility of those assets to different use cases, the amount of custom and licensed music used, as well as the overall quality of the sound and music used.



### **RETURN ON INVESTMENT (ROI)**

The final, sixth pillar, is Return on Investment. What does a brand gain for the money spent on audio assets? Can a shift in strategy streamline spending, whilst boosting brand equity?

We estimated the ROI (efficiency) of every dollar spent on music and sound for audio-visual content on digital and TV. This is then measured against our benchmark of a brand that owns their Sonic Identity and uses unique and reusable Sonic Assets strategically across all audible touchpoints.

In order to create a Return on Investment ranking, we drew on social media monitoring, extensive desk research as well as our inside knowledge regarding music production costs. A perfect audio brand scores highly across all pillars by using dedicated audio brand assets derived from a bespoke Sonic DNA.





# 100 BEST AUDIO BRANDS

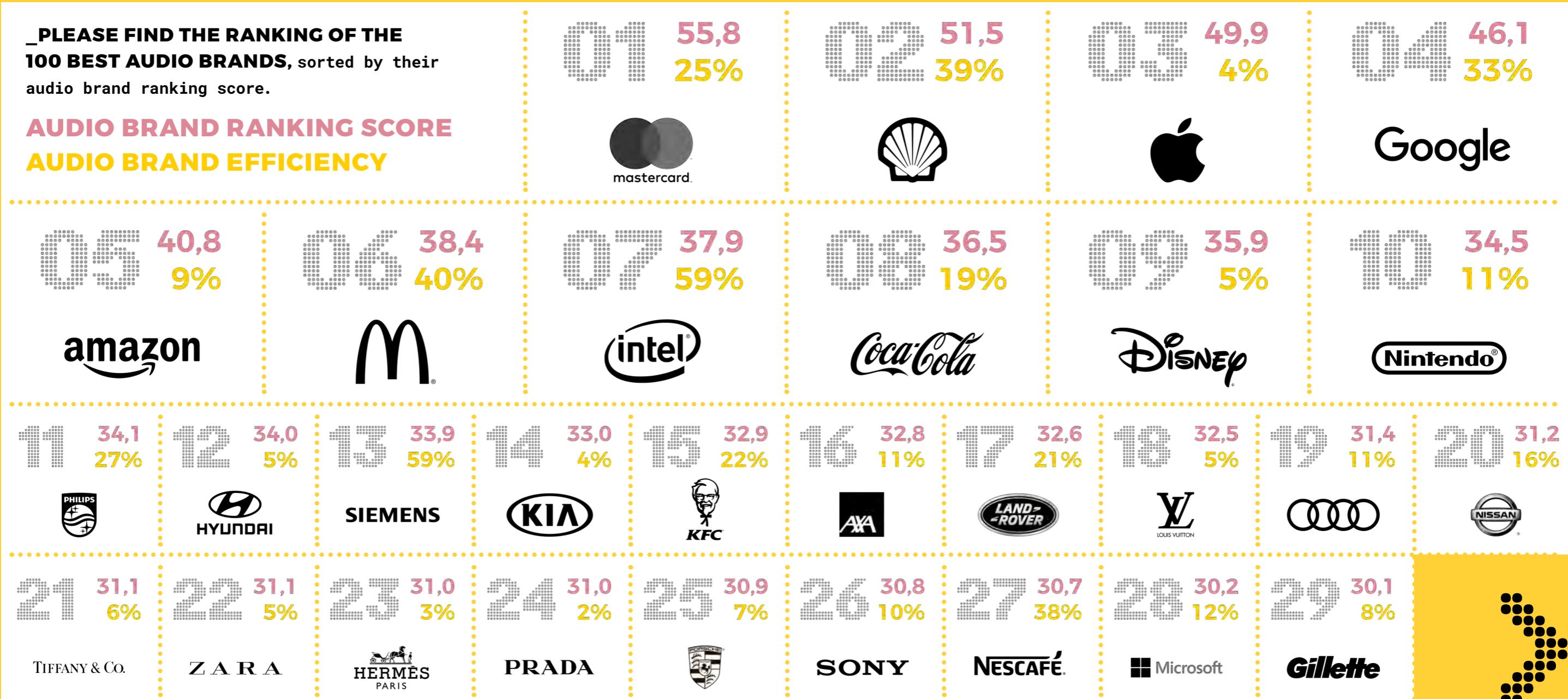
THE 2020 RANKING:  
a new Top 10  
and key insights



# 100 BEST AUDIO BRANDS

**PLEASE FIND THE RANKING OF THE 100 BEST AUDIO BRANDS**, sorted by their audio brand ranking score.

**AUDIO BRAND RANKING SCORE**  
**AUDIO BRAND EFFICIENCY**



**\_OF THE 100 BRANDS COVERED IN THE 2020 RANKING, only 19% can be said to be using sound effectively and even among the top-performing audio brands there is significant scope for improvement<sup>1</sup>**



<sup>1</sup> An effective use of sound creates brand equity. The equity is being calculated by taking into account the % of owned music, the use of Sonic Logos and the years a brand has been building up equity. As the overall usage of Sonic Logos has been dropping it is understandable that this number has been dropping as well.

# Insights

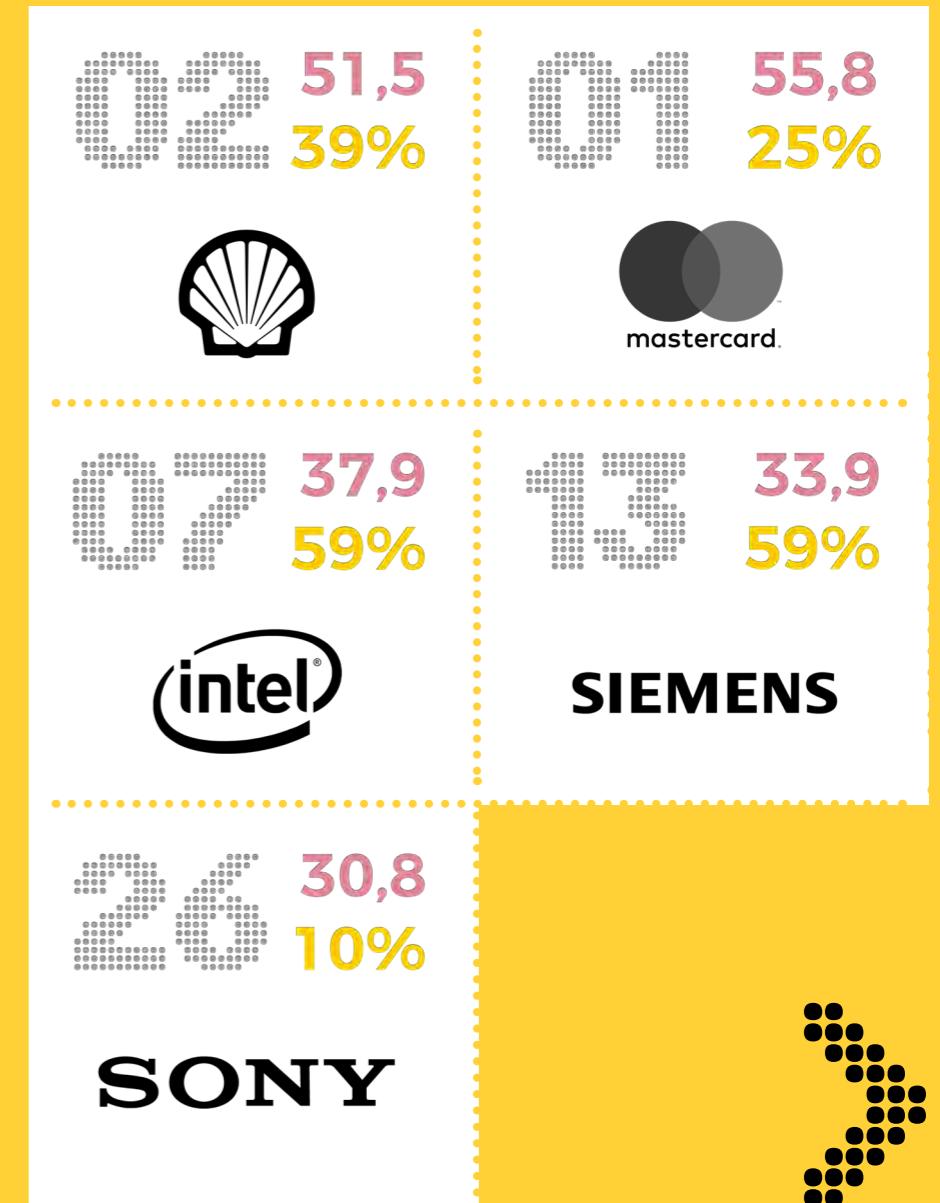
## **TOP 5** Strategy Performers: Shell, Mastercard, Intel, Siemens, Sony

**WITH THE RISE OF SMART SPEAKERS** and the use of audio search, how will brands position themselves best and how will they facilitate customer transactions? Will brands be able to leverage a halo of trust established through long-term exposure to consumers?

**Consistent use of Sonic Assets builds trust**, which is half the battle when it comes to driving long-term customer value in an increasingly fragmented, com-

petitive landscape. Think of the vast number of options people have online in sectors such as technology, FMCG, media, entertainment, and telecommunication. Even brands such as Intel and McDonald's, which have established strong recognition and reinforced trust through Sonic Branding, will need to adapt their audio strategy to embrace the changing digital landscape we all live in. **Brands are using their Sonic Logos less consistently,**

**supporting our claim that using a single Sonic Logo across new service media and new audible touchpoints may not be as effective as recent studies have proven<sup>1</sup>.** Other brands, such as Mastercard and Shell, will face a similar challenge. While Shell has invested in a robust audio branding strategy, comprising of several assets, the brand must ensure it sounds authentic if it is to build customer trust in the long term.



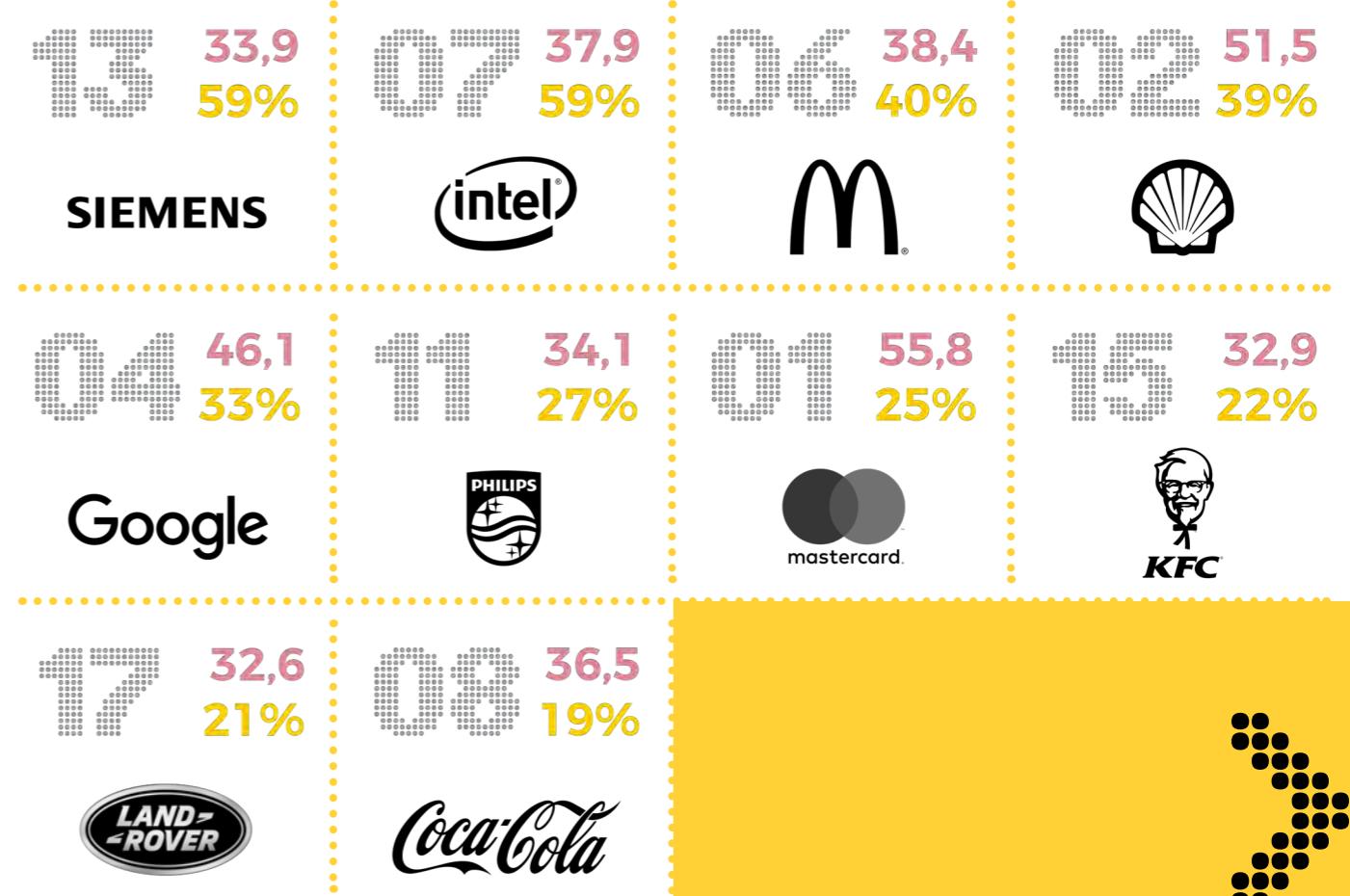
# Insights

## MOST EFFICIENT BRANDS in the Top 25

**WITHIN THE RANKING**, there are several brands (such as **Siemens**, **Mastercard** and **Shell**) that have embraced a holistic sonic strategy to various degrees. **They own audio assets that work well together, resulting in a higher efficiency score.** What is perplexing is that we see a **drop in efficiency year over year.** One of the reasons for this is a sharp drop in the use of Sonic Logos, with **brands that use a Sonic Logo in their content dropping from 56% last year down to 32.5% today.** Pioneers in the use of Sonic Logos such as Intel and McDonald's decreased their usage from 95% to 50% (Intel) and 95% to 44% (McDonald's). In order to ensure long-term effectiveness, brands must be able to adapt their Sonic Assets to a variety of

storytelling, touchpoints and use cases along the customer journey, to deliver the most relevant customer experience and increase or sustain customer trust. **A sonic strategy revolving around a single asset such as a Sonic Logo is not flexible enough to be used across the multitude of different touchpoints.** Brands that commission owned music and adaptable Sonic Assets are investing money in their long-term audio identity, instead of simply renting one. **The more owned assets a brand uses, the more adaptable and efficient their Sonic Identity becomes.** This is because they are able to customize their assets to different touchpoints more easily, while remaining recognizable no matter the context.

AUDIO BRAND RANKING SCORE  
AUDIO BRAND EFFICIENCY



# Insights

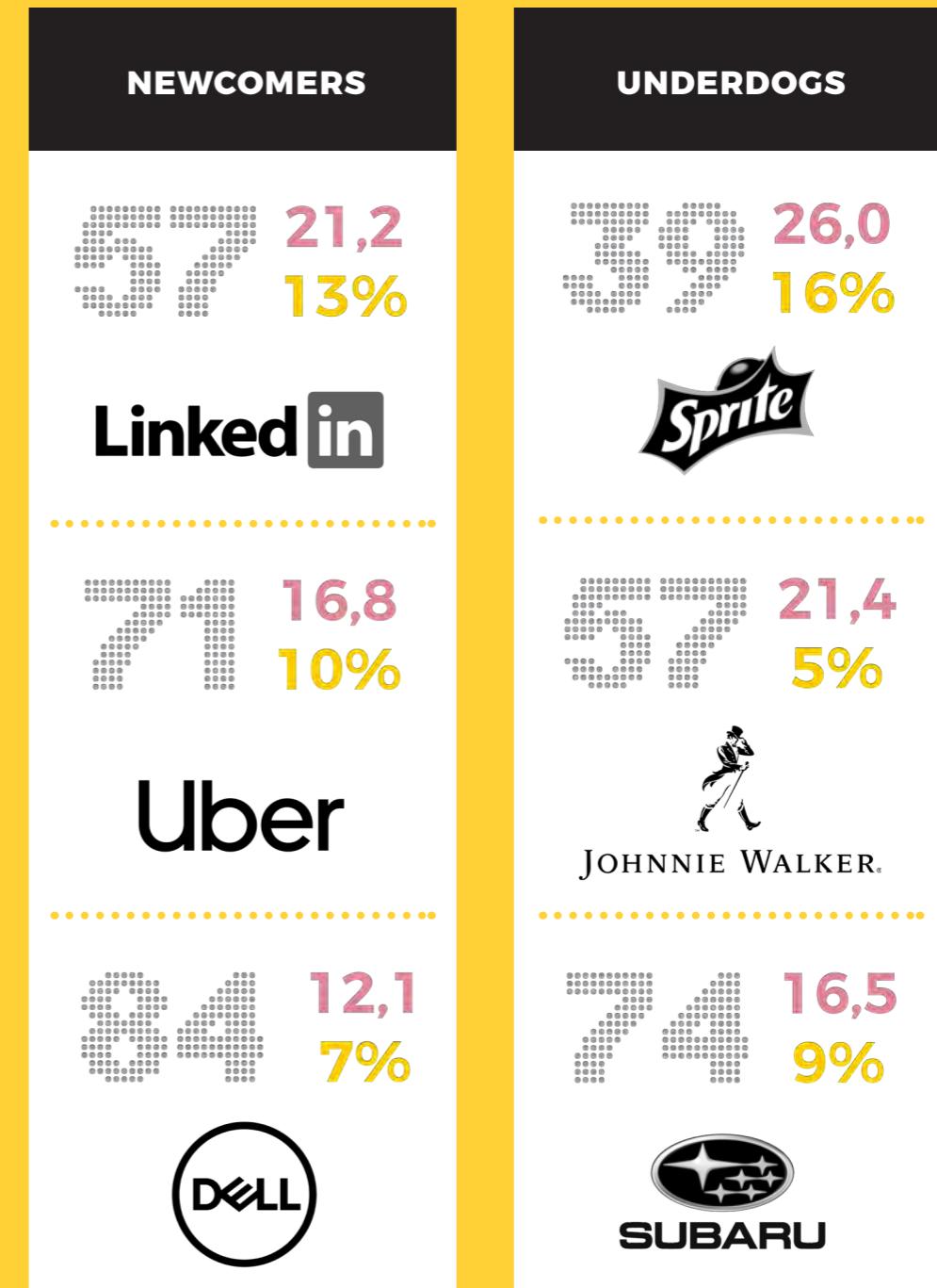
## Interbrand NEWCOMERS and UNDERDOGS

### INTERBRANDS LATEST NEWCOMERS AND UNDERDOGS.

When we started with the first Best Audio Brands study in 2019, we drew from Interbrand's highly respected Best Global Brands Index, which we felt provided a recognizable and credible selection of brands to study from an audio perspective.

This year Dell, LinkedIn and Uber made their way into the ranking at the expense

of Johnnie Walker, Sprite and Subaru. Out of the three new brands that entered the ranking, LinkedIn scored highest in Best Audio Brands, ranking at number 56. Out of the three brands, that unfortunately did not make it into this ranking, Sprite scores the highest and would have ended up ranking in 39th place, which is an improvement from last year's ranking at the 52nd spot.

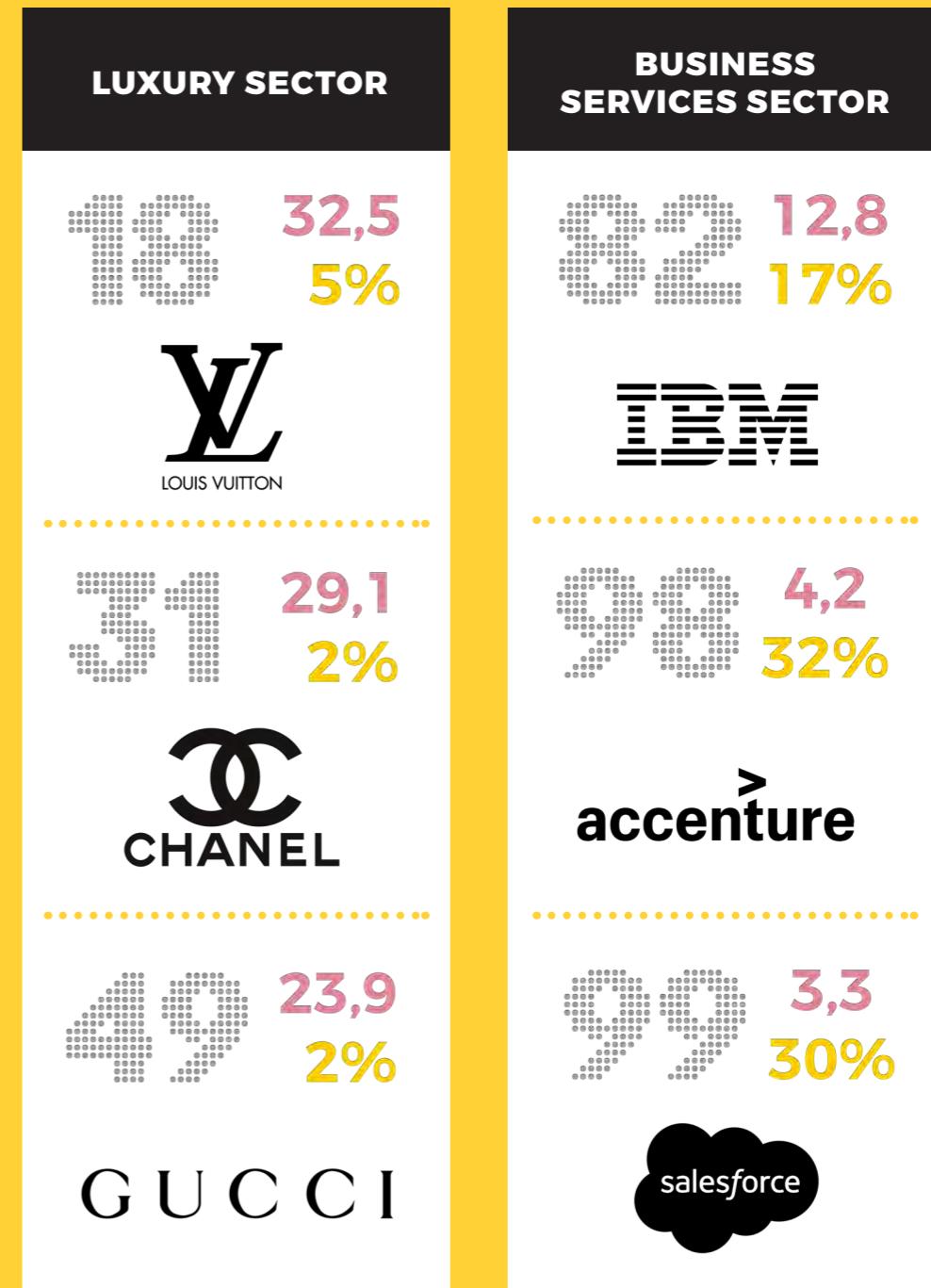


# Insights

## SIMILARITY OF BRAND SCORE within sectors: Luxury and Business Services

**WHEN LOOKING AT DIFFERENT** industry sectors within the ranking, it is evident that brands within certain sectors score similarly. For example, the brands within the Business Services Sector rank at the bottom of the index from places 82 to 99. The Luxury Sector, on the other hand, as a

group ranks between places 18 to 49. This shows that brands within the same sector have very similar sonic strategy. Mastercard and AXA are exceptions as they are among the top performing brands while the 10 other brands within their sectors rank from places 58 to 91.



# Insights

## BRANDS OF BEST AUDIO BRANDS 2020

### focus on Storytelling & Emotions

#### **\_THE AFFECT-AS- INFORMATION HYPOTHESIS POSTULATES**

**that the judgments** an individual makes are based on their emotions<sup>3</sup>. **The fastest way to have an emotional impact on consumers is through sound.** Humans can hear faster than they can see, taste, smell, or feel. Once a sound wave reaches your ear, your brain can recognize it in just 0.05 seconds<sup>5</sup>. That is ten times faster than the blink of an eye. We humans are not rational beings, we are influenced by our emotions. Many brands focus on storytelling to engage with consumers on an emotional level. **The Best Audio Brands 2020 report found that one musical style was pervasive throughout many different brands and types of videos:**

#### **Emotional Piano-String-Ensembles.**

Brands are aware of the fact that sound contributes to affect-generation and bias and use Emotional Piano-String-Ensembles to evoke feelings like grief, empathy and caring. This lets assume that many brands consider this musical style to be

the trigger of these emotions. However, **it is not the genre or style of music that triggers emotion: It is the different elements within the music that evoke different feelings.** For example, syncopation, that is when a note anticipates a beat, creates surprise and excitement in the human brain<sup>6</sup>.

This mistake in the approach to the emotional connection can be found in the wide majority of all existing sonic strategies. **The question is not "does hip-hop fit to the brand", but rather "how does the brand sound in the hip-hop musical domain".**

To gain the best results in storytelling, brands have to be fully aware of the impact of music on the human brain: It is not only the hearing that is influenced by sound; Sound also affects all other human senses. That is why it is more important than ever for brands to invest in sound and focus on a proper Sonic Branding strategy.



**EVERYBODY HAS A STORY (TO TELL)**



# Insights

## **\_100 YEARS OF HARIBO:**

over 57 years of sonic trust

### **FOUNDED IN 1920, HARIBO IS CELEBRATING ITS 100TH**

**BIRTHDAY** this year. Starting with the dancing bear in 1922 and introducing the iconic GOLD-BEARS a few years later, HARIBO's products are known all over the world.

Since 2003, HARIBO has been listed several times by "European Trusted Brands" as the most trustworthy confectioner in the largest annual European consumer study<sup>4</sup>.

HARIBO had some great campaigns to encourage consumer bonding with the brand, such as the cooperative marketing campaign with German airline TUIfly (where they repainted two of their fleet to be 'flying ambassadors'). Besides these campaigns, a main contri-

butor to the success of the brand is the famous HARIBO jingle.

We believe that trust is built over time and the brand HARIBO is a good example of this. Using its recognizable HARIBO advertising slogan "HARIBO macht Kinder froh" ("HARIBO makes children happy") since 1935 consistently, it is no surprise the brand has been acknowledged as the most trustworthy confectioner for consecutive years. The earliest use of its jingle that also includes the addition of "und Erwachsene ebenso" ("and adults too") we could find is from 1963. It has since been translated into all kinds of different languages. With that kind of consistent use of brand assets such as slogans and Sonic Assets, it is no sur-

prise that in a survey conducted by the German TV channel Kabel Eins, the HARIBO slogan was considered the most famous advertising slogan in Germany<sup>10</sup>. This is thanks to its well-known jingle, that has helped children and grown-ups sing and remember the words for over 50 years.

A good jingle evolves over time, and so has HARIBO's, but the classic earworm melody has remained a constant. We are excited to hear how Germany's most famous advertising jingle will sound in a century's time, and whether it will continue to evolve, routed deep into the memory of children and adults alike, on its 200th birthday.



# CONCLUSION

## THE ANALYSIS PROVIDES A PICTURE OF how effective brands are extending their audio presence

**THE 2020 BEST AUDIO BRANDS RANKING** shows that while all brands are using sound and music, their strategies are vastly different, if there are strategies in place at all. **Developing a Sonic Branding strategy is definitely on the agenda for the world's leading brands, but they are yet to determine concrete next steps.**

One of the key findings is the **significant decrease in the use of Sonic Logos**, which are used almost half as frequently as last year. **This illustrates how important it is to rely on more than a single Sonic Asset.** Pioneers in the use of Sonic Logos such as Intel, McDonald's and Coca-Cola's have benefited from them for the past decade but they aren't being used as consistently as they once were, as the media landscape shifts.

As companies have to focus on an increasing number of audible touchpoints, relying on a single Sonic Asset is no longer fit for purpose. **The sonic canvas is growing, and those using a single Sonic Asset will find they face a dwindling Return on Investment, as their assets are unable to adapt to new customer interactions needs.**

Brands such as Apple and Google that made **the top ten, have benefited from their dedicated product sounds and voice capabilities, although they fail to exhibit a comprehensive Sonic Branding strategy** across all channels. The quick rise of Mastercard demonstrates that **companies who want to harness the power of audio can do so relatively quickly by developing a holistic Sonic Identity, based on a Sonic DNA instead of using a single jingle or melody.** Those looking to improve their standing can draw lessons from Mastercard and focus their efforts on developing a holistic sonic strategy. This would enable them to future-proof their Sonic Ecosystem and adapt it to new contexts and customer experiences, some of which we cannot even imagine today.

We have already started working on the next Best Audio Brands 2021 with data from 2020. We are looking forward to seeing how brands that have created a holistic identity, such as Mastercard and Shell, will benefit from the power of audio even further. We are certain that the next Best Audio Brands ranking will present even more surprises and interesting news. Stay tuned!



PAST

FUTURE

# GLOSSARY & References

## GLOSSARY

**SONIC DNA®:** the Sonic DNA is the audible expression of a brand. It sits at the core of a brands Sonic Identity and is the source of all brand specific musical ingredients (brand melodies, riffs, harmonies, voice and instruments).

**SONIC IDENTITY:** the Sonic Identity is the audible equivalent to a visual identity. It is a holistic brand sound ecosystem guarantees a consistency, brand recall and maximum flexibility across all sonic consumer touchpoints.

**SONIC ASSETS:** audible assets derived from the Sonic DNA, tailored to the needs of a specific touchpoint or consumer experience (music tracks, sonic logo, UX/UI sounds, product sounds, voices, etc...).

**SONIC WATERMARKING®:** Sonic Watermarking is the process that weaves in elements of

a Sonic DNA into a custom piece of musical content. In this way, each custom track created can support or emphasize specific storytelling, whilst ensuring clear audible brand recognition.

**AUDIO BRAND RANKING SCORE:** this score is based on five of the six pillars we defined for our Best Audio Brands methodology: Experience, Trust, Belonging, Recognition, Engagement/Satisfaction. The combined evaluation of these factors constitutes the final score. Beyond any sonic brand assets, the score also takes into account product sounds and voice applications.

**AUDIO BRAND EFFICIENCY:** the estimated Return-on-Investment (ROI) of every dollar spent on music and sound for audio-visual content on digital channels and TV. Measured against our

benchmark of a brand that owns their Sonic Identity and uses unique and reusable Sound Assets strategically across all audible touchpoints.

**OWNED MUSIC:** made for and owned by the brand, recognizable across all touchpoints including elements of the Sonic DNA.

**CUSTOM MUSIC:** a piece of music exclusively composed for a campaign or consumer experience.

**LICENSED MUSIC:** licensed music which is part of the world repertoire (non-exclusive).

**STOCK MUSIC:** generic piece of music pre-composed and pre-produced for a broad range of applications (non-exclusive).

**PRODUCT SOUND & VOICE:** the use of sound and voice across products and services to enhance or guide the user experience.

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# ABOUT AMP

## **AMP IS THE WORLD'S LEADING SONIC BRANDING**

**AGENCY**, delivering holistic sonic experiences for global brands, building on its multi-awarded Sonic DNA and Sonic Watermarking approach. With offices in Germany (Munich and Berlin), USA (New York and San Francisco) and Asia (Shanghai and Singapore) amp supports global clients in the finance, automotive, consulting, FMCG and tech industry in making their brands be heard and finding their voice.



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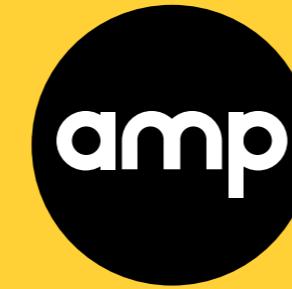
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