

SpaRetailer

INSIDE THE HOT TUB INDUSTRY

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Making Beautiful Retail Music

Your hot tub retail store can become more inviting by engaging your customers sense of sound.

When you walk into almost any retail shop, you are greeted not only by sales people but also by the sound of music over the speakers. For years, retail locations – including grocery and department stores – have been luring customers with tunes and your hot tub store should be no exception.

According to Sean Horton a producer and branded music/technology advisor at **PlayNetwork**, a company that specializes as an entertainment provider and brand consultant providing media solutions for clients, their company believes “music is the driving force behind retail branding and without it the product remains ambiguous, dull and boring. The most successful brands in the world...rely heavily on music as a way to attract and hold onto their customers.”

People often react when their senses are engaged, so using music as a tool to keep customers in your store could be beneficial. “Music plays a vital role in the overall experience that someone has in any environment and can impact time spent in the store (which has a direct correlation to likelihood to purchase as well as amount purchased), overall mood, loyalty/repeat visits and increases the likelihood for word-of mouth advertising/referrals,” says Brian McKinley, vice president of marketing at DMX, a company that designs business environments.

However, you should be aware of some things before investing in a sound system such as copyright laws and what type of music is best for your store. Copyright laws are everywhere and music is no exception, you cannot just play anything in your retail space. Instead, you may have to adhere to rules and regulations as well as pay a fee. Keep in mind though that not all music requires licensing; you can find out if laws apply to your store by contacting a company that collects licensing fees and distributes royalties. One such company is Broadcast Music, Inc. (bmi.com), whose extensive database provides retailers access to millions of songs.

Alternatively, if you prefer, you can play music in your store through a commercial music service such as XM Radio's business program, XM for Business. Costs typically include a one-time activation fee and a monthly service charge. The service pays the licensing fees rather than your business.

Once you have music in your store remember to keep the volume set to a comfortable level, you do not want to have to yell over the music to give a sales pitch. You also want to keep the store's environment pleasing and customer friendly, so avoid songs with profanity. According to McKinley, “Data shows 40 percent of consumers have left a store because of the music (i.e. it wasn't targeted for them or 'wasn't right'), so it is a critical marketing component to consider.”

You can look at the demographics of your customer base to select music that caters towards them. Use age and gender to your advantage. Horton says PlayNetwork builds their clients' song libraries by asking questions and listening to their individual concerns and needs.

When it comes to deciding the genre of music to play in your store, evaluate the environment you have created. If you have gone for a more tranquil space, play spiritual or jazz music. Both have a soothing quality and can help relax customers. For stores with a tropical theme, one with tiki-bars or outdoor furniture, select island or beach music. This can include songs from the 1950s and 1960s that have more of a rock-and-roll feel like the Beach Boys or the song "Wipeout." If you do not have a theme for your store, think about playing adult contemporary music, as most customers will recognize the songs.

Horton also adds, "Music is the most powerful creative medium in the world. Music has no cultural boundaries and is the soundtrack to everyday life across the world. Music is also a very subjective art form and the right music can speak to customers more effectively than any sales pitch or ad could ever do."