VERITONIC

Audio
Logo
Index

2020

Brand Power Reexamined

Veritonic is the audio intelligence platform.

The Veritonic Audio Logo Index is the only annual ranking of the sonic signatures of top consumer brands. The report analyzes consumer response to audio logos — including how memorable they are, if they're correctly associated with the brand, emotional resonance, and more.

This year's Audio Logo Index, our fourth edition, comes at a unique and complex time in history. For those of you reading this long after the initial bout of Covid-19 made social distancing and Zoom parties a staple of modern life, you'll likely remember how it also sent the marketing world into a bit of a tailspin. While this is of secondary concern next to the more serious impact of the pandemic, the implications for businesses are very real.

From a pure branding perspective, companies are thoroughly reexamining the "right" way to represent themselves, from what they say in an ad, to the tone it should convey, to whether their brand name should even be included in parts of their sonic identity. The more strategic ones are also looking ahead to when things get back to "normal" and how much different their new normal will have to be.

So, while this year's Audio Logo Index reveals a lot of perennial brand power and some smart modifications in general, it also looks a bit at how some brands adjusted their sonic identities to our current reality.

It's a further testament to just how important sound is in creating the most powerful connection between consumer and brand — maybe now more than ever.

Scott Simonelli, *CEO & Co-Founder*

Methodology

The Veritonic Audio Intelligence Platform analyzed 56 of the top consumer brand audio logos across US and UK Markets.

The platform first processed the files using Machine Listening and Learning ™ algorithms to identify trends, strengths and weaknesses. It then captured the reactions of over 3,400 people across the US and UK in Q1 2020. Panelists were carefully selected to reflect US and UK census-representative distributions of age, gender, ethnicity, and race.

The platform also collected household income and a variety of other demographic and psychographic data.

Panelists listened to each audio logo and scored it based on a range of attributes (e.g., "happy"), and were asked if they remember the logo. They were also asked to identify the brand and industry for each logo, and their degree of familiarity with the logo. For recall, panelists were contacted 48 hours after their initial exposure to the logos to test how well they remember them. The speed at which respondents recall the logo was also tracked.

The platform calculated the Veritonic Audio Score (overall score) and all component scores of each audio logo by combining emotional response, 48-hour recall, and engagement data.

"

Our hope was that this audio logo would have staying power as a lasting brand cue for Liberty Mutual. We're happy to see that playing out in our data and Veritonic data.

Jenna Lebel, *CMO, Liberty Mutual*

Executive Summary

Liberty Mutual took the top spot this year

1 Audio logos from **Liberty Mutual** and **State Farm** took top honors in the U.S. with the highest Veritonic Audio Scores — 88 and 87, respectively. In the U.K., **McDonald's** and **Haribo** logos tied for first place with a score of 88.

While cross-channel spend and frequency in the market are clear drivers of brand favorability, leveraging the brand name in marketing also had a strong influence.

2 Leveraging the actual brand name in audio logos continually proves to be a strong tactic for driving positive response, and this year was no exception.

Most notably, **State Farm's** reintroduction of its brand name into its sonic tag, after relying more heavily last year on a word-free melody, helped propel it to the number two position this year — an astounding 14-point jump. **Nationwide**, eliminating words from its sonic identity, saw its brand association score drop over 25 percentage points.

3 Insurance again proved itself to be the sector to beat in the U.S., with sonic logos comprising 40% of the top ten. In the U.K., QSR was again the top-scoring sector.

While still literally "Financial Services," removing Insurance from the broader category moved Finserv to second-to-last place among all audio logos. **HSBC's** low score may be due to the fact that it was introduced recently and had limited time in market, resulting in low recall. In the U.K., the **McDonald's** logo, continually strong, buoyed the QSR sector.

4 Some brands altered their sonic presence (both how it's leveraged in ads and the audio logo itself) to be more sensitive to the COVID-19 crisis, and consumers have responded well.

Those alterations, in which companies (including **State Farm** and **Home Depot**) sacrificed a bit of sonic identity consistency for a more relevant message and tone, left listeners with either a more favorable or neutral impression of the brand.

OVERALL SCORES (US)
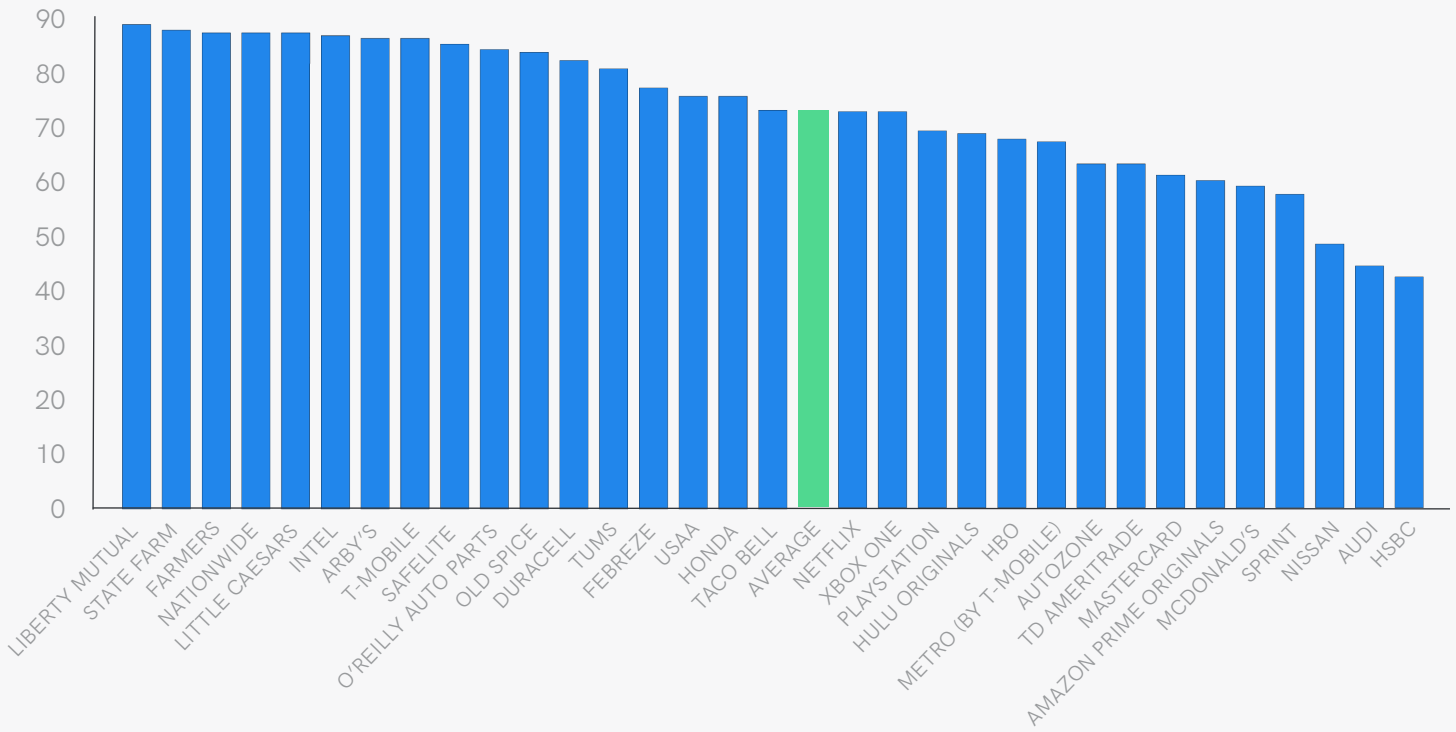
OVERALL SCORES (UK)

Key Learnings

1
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State Farm jumped 14 spots to number 2
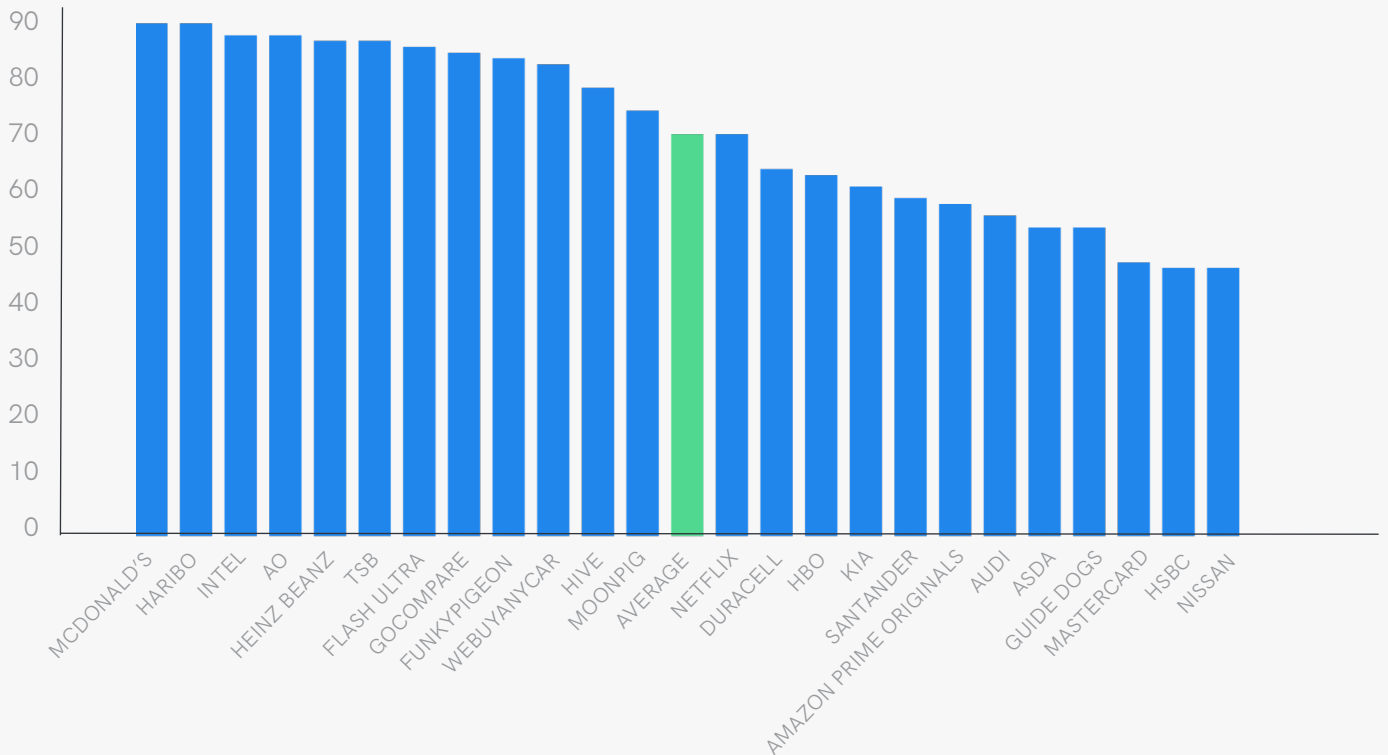
Liberty and State Farm Lead the Pack

Insurance giant **Liberty Mutual** claimed the number one audio logo in this year's Index, jumping up six spots from last year. **State Farm** was close behind, moving up 14 spots from last year's position to number two. **Farmers Insurance, Nationwide, Little Caesars,** and **Intel** were all fast followers.

▶ *Listen to the Liberty Mutual logo.*

Their high Veritonic Audio Scores map fairly directly to high recall (average score of 94) and familiarity (average score of 87.7), due in part to their longevity and frequency in market.

Conversely, some brands clearly suffered from a lack of market presence. Several sonic logos, from **HSBC** and **Audi**, not only couldn't be properly tied to the brand; a majority of respondents said they had never even heard them.

Despite another decrease in overall marketing spend last year, Intel's audio logo performed best across markets (US and UK, as well as Australia, assessed in its own report), a testament to its inherent melodic strength and familiarity.

Little Caesars' audio logo was one of this year's biggest movers, jumping 13 spots to number four. Much of this may be driven by increased familiarity (third highest in the index) as a result of the more impactful way they started delivering their sonic tag ("pizza pizza") in more recent ads — slowed down, more distinct and clear, with less sonic and visual clutter around it.

In the **UK, McDonald's** and **Haribo** logos tied for first place with a Veritonic Audio Score of 88. It's the second year in a row of strong performance for the McDonald's whistled logo in the UK (#2 in last year's index). Their US logo, a new sung version, paled in comparison, dropping from the top 10 into the bottom five this year.
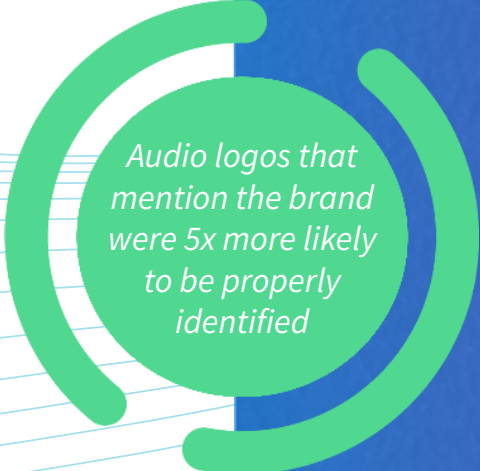
2

Say my name... a lot

The benefit of leveraging the brand name in an audio logo — and the detriment of not leveraging it — was more apparent this year than ever. **State Farm** was the big winner here; while last year's logo used only a non-vocal melody, this year the insurance leader reintroduced the brand name into the mnemonic, a decision that **catapulted it 14 positions** to number two in the index. That overall score was driven by high numbers for recall and familiarity, as well as the highest correct **brand association** in the index (81%).

▶ *Listen to the updated State Farm logo.*

▶ *Listen to the 2019 State Farm logo.*

Overall, audio logos that mention the brand had five times the proper brand association than those that don't.

Nationwide's decision to go the other way and eliminate all words from their sonic brand led to a staggering 28-point drop in proper brand association. Similarly, **Autozone**, which declined substantially last year because it had dropped its name from its sonic tag, did not heed that warning; it again scored among the bottom 10 logos.

Audio logos that mention the brand were 5x more likely to be properly identified
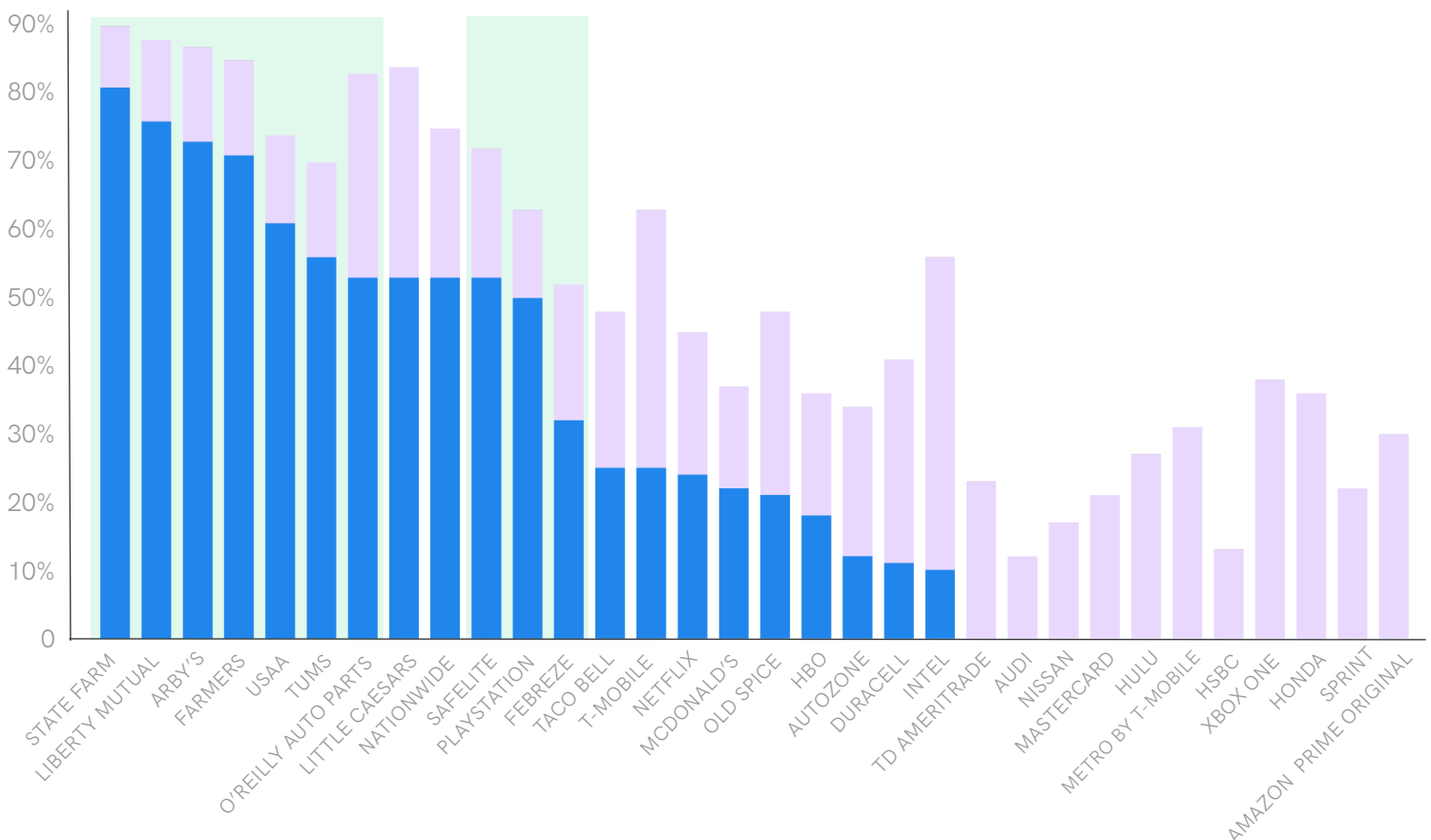
This isn't to say that logos without brand names included can't be memorable; **Honda**, **Duracell**, **Intel**, **Old Spice, and T-Mobile** all scored high for recall and familiarity. But memorability without proper brand identification (only 0-25% for each of the above) is obviously of limited value; a majority of respondents said that they "recognize this sound but do not know what brand it is for."

Similarly, in the **UK**, the majority of the top half of logos include the brand name. **GoCompare** and **Heinz** logos had the strongest brand associations (80% accurate). Similarly, Heinz saw the highest level of correct **industry association** (82%).

In an era when many brands are opting for a less-is-more approach on the visual front — with, for example, businesses like **Mastercard**, **Starbucks** and many others opting for word-free logos — including brand names in their sonic tags clearly only helps them.
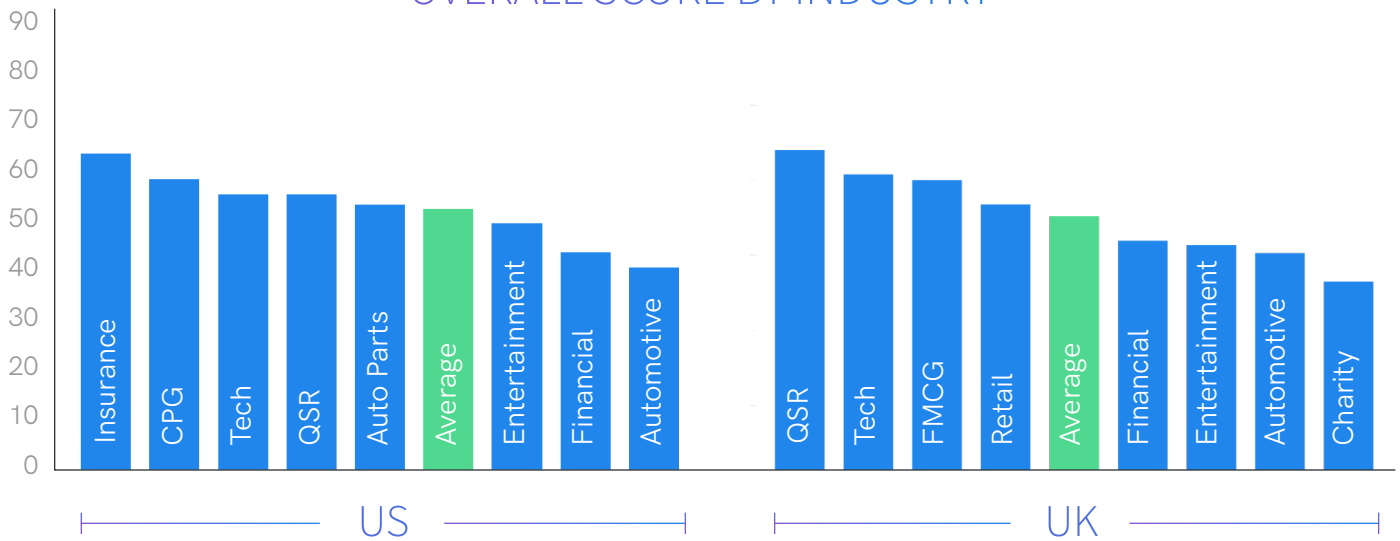
BRAND IDENTIFICATION (US AUDIO LOGOS)

■ CORRECTLY RECOGNIZED   ■ INCORRECTLY RECOGNIZED   ■ LOGOS THAT INCLUDE BRAND NAME

OVERALL SCORE BY INDUSTRY

Chart: bar chart showing scores by industry.

US bars: Insurance ~63, CPG ~58, Tech ~55, QSR ~55, Auto Parts ~53, Average ~52, Entertainment ~49, Financial ~43, Automotive ~40

UK bars: QSR ~64, Tech ~59, FMCG ~58, Retail ~53, Average ~51, Financial ~45, Entertainment ~44, Automotive ~43, Charity ~37

US — UK

3

Insurance Brands Win

Insurance brands proved that selling something typically regarded as a little boring doesn't equate to having a boring brand; it was again the top-performing sector. **Liberty Mutual, Nationwide, State Farm, and Farmers Insurance** logos were all among the highest scorers, with an average Veritonic Audio Score of 86.5 — **a 13-point jump** from last year.

Other Financial brands didn't fare quite as well, for a variety of reasons. **HSBC** likely didn't get a fair shake; introducing their new audio logo only recently meant it had less time to establish itself in the marketplace, making it less familiar to people. **Mastercard's** less-than-stellar performance is harder to pinpoint. Its sonic brand launch — a comprehensive mix of anthem, shorter tags and even a pop song — was arguably one of the most discussed branding initiatives of the year. It's possible that the array of facets and versions across markets made it harder for

the pure, short audio tag (which also does not include the brand name) to stick in people's minds.

Audio logos in the Automotive sector — an industry typically perceived as a bit more exciting than insurance — again did poorly, with an average Veritonic Audio Score of 55 (**Honda** was the category exception with an overall score of 75). The evidence around why is very clear in this case: the logos had only 0-3% correct brand identification, are in most cases non-melodic, and don't mention the brand.

In the **UK, QSR** was the best-performing industry, driven by the **McDonald's** winning audio brand, with Tech following close behind, driven by **Intel** and **Hive**. Similar to the US market, Automotive brand logos were among the bottom performers.

▶ *Listen to the McDonald's UK logo.*

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4

Brand Consistency Takes a Back Seat in Tricky Times

As if sonic branding wasn't a complex enough puzzle as it is, this moment in history (the fourth month of the Covid-19 pandemic as of the release of this report) is forcing marketers to reassess what it means to be a strong, reliable brand. Several (some ranked in this Index, some not) made key alterations to their sonic presence as a result, both in ads and the sonic tags themselves.
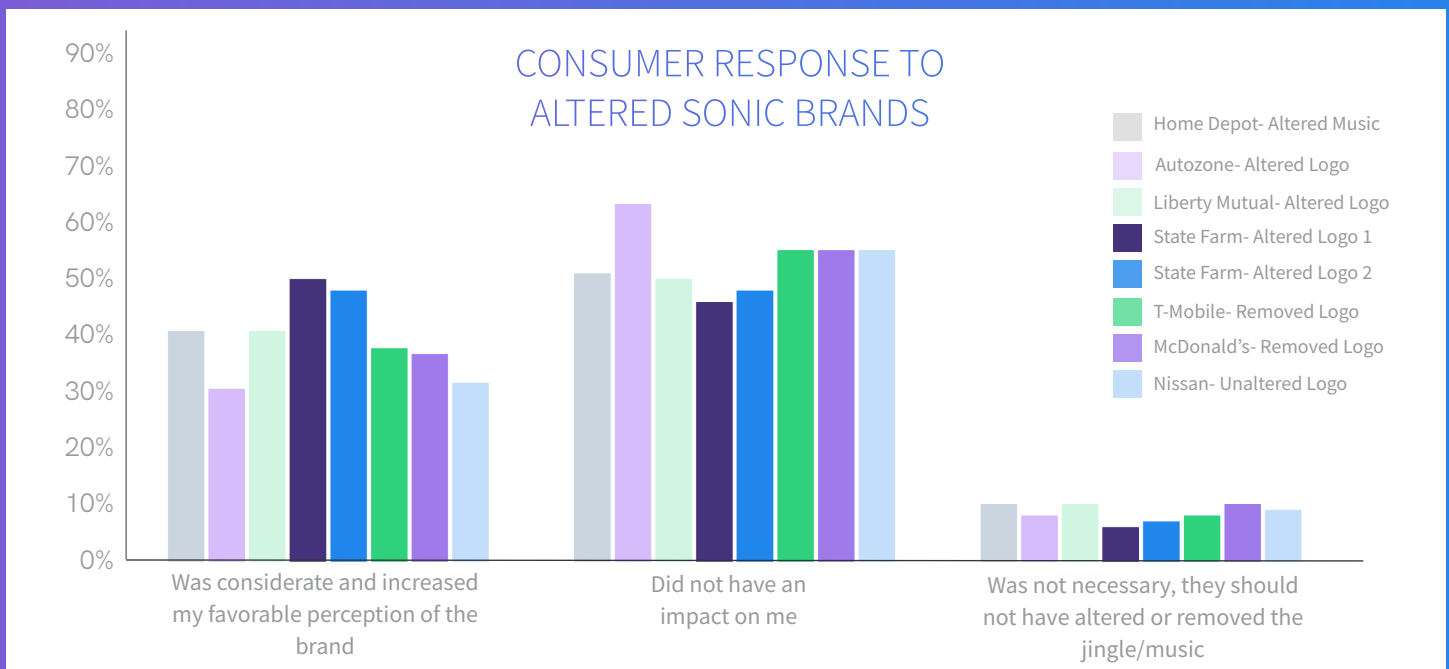
State Farm, as is evident from other findings across this report, seems to have really gotten things right over the past year. In this case, as they rolled out ads with messaging generally about being "there to help," they accompanied those spots with a 'softening' and slowing-down of their iconic brand melody, and in some instances even changed that melody at the beginning of ads.

All of the modified ads are **among the highest-scoring Insurance ads across the platform**. When asked about the impact on brand perception, **nearly 50%**

of respondents said that State Farm's adjusted ads in particular "increased their positive perception of the brand."

Similarly, **Home Depot** chose to sacrifice their iconic brand theme/music for a more sensitive tone/music in their Covid-related ads, alongside similar messaging around how they're "here to help." While pre-Covid spots scored higher for recall, the new set of ads all scored well above the benchmarks for the Home Improvement sector.

The fact that these iconic companies' sonic branding generated higher recall scores in pre-Covid ads makes sense; then, it was ok for your **brand** to be the emphasis. With a shift of emphasis to **message** and overall effect in the current climate, smart, forward-thinking brands are seeing their strategies pay off. They're effectively saying "this is less about us right now," but knowing that in the long run it will be very much about them, having demonstrated some humility when it really mattered.

CONSUMER RESPONSE TO ALTERED SONIC BRANDS

Legend:
- Home Depot- Altered Music
- Autozone- Altered Logo
- Liberty Mutual- Altered Logo
- State Farm- Altered Logo 1
- State Farm- Altered Logo 2
- T-Mobile- Removed Logo
- McDonald's- Removed Logo
- Nissan- Unaltered Logo

Categories:
- Was considerate and increased my favorable perception of the brand
- Did not have an impact on me
- Was not necessary, they should not have altered or removed the jingle/music

75% of the top 20 logos leverage a melody

5

Melody wins... though not always

Can you sing an audio brand? If you can, they qualify as "melodic" in this index. It signifies that the audio brand contains more than just a static tone or sound effect — **Intel**, for example, qualifies, while **HBO** does not.

In the US, audio logos with a melody outperformed non-melodic logos across the board, with a nearly 15% higher Veritonic Audio Score on average, and 24% higher recall. **75% of the top 20 logos leverage a melody.**

▶ *Listen to the Arby's melodic logo.*

Melody power is even stronger for **UK** logos, with tuneful brands scoring nearly 25% better overall.

Non-melodic audio logos are consistently among the lowest overall performers — **Sprint**, **Nissan**, and **Audi** all rounded out the bottom of the Index after **HSBC**.

But melody doesn't always automatically equal greater success. While the **McDonald's** US logo typically

leveraged an instrumental version of their iconic tune, which scored well, they debuted a "sung" version this year — featuring a low, "gravely" male voice — that sent it from the top 10 in last year's index to the bottom five this year. On the other hand, the legendary brand stuck with a non-vocal melody in other markets (UK and Australia) and did well, with its well-known tune scoring incredibly high for recall (98) and familiarity (89) in the UK.

COMBINING BEST PRACTICES YIELDS THE HIGHEST SCORES

■ With   ■ Without

Veritonic Audio Score (y-axis: 60, 70, 80, 90)

Melody — With ~75, Without ~67
Brand Mention — With ~81, Without ~70
Both — With ~83, Without ~66
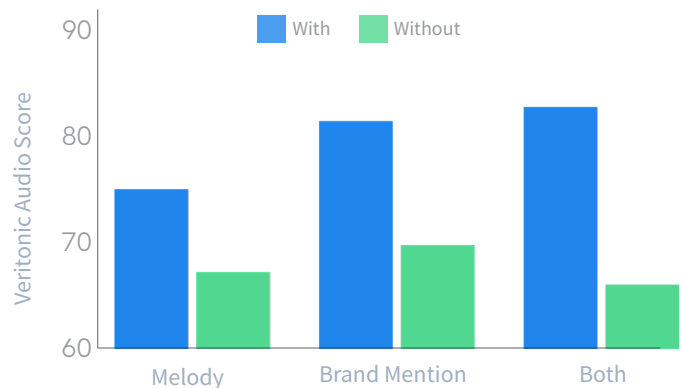
Brand is just one piece of the sonic puzzle

So now you have clear best practices for leveraging an audio logo that will cement your brand favorably in the minds of consumers and make them all loyal, lifelong customers. Audio strategy done, right?! Well, not so fast.

As we all know by now, audio's influential power is everywhere, from the spate of excellent podcasts that just launched as you were reading this, to the interactive voice ads that are quickly going to become a staple of the way we all buy. Investing in some of these tactics is going to be smart for your business — others, not so much. The only way to know where to put your time, money and effort is by measuring everything — the right voices and sounds to use, the right channels to map to your goals, how you stack up against competitors and more — as part of one, holistic audio plan.

The tremendous opportunity that is audio demands that kind of diligence. That's the sonic truth.

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	Veritonic Audio Score	48-hour recall	Authentic	Inspiring	Trust-worthy	Familiar	Happy	Likable	Innov-ative	Unique	Brand Correctly ID'd
Liberty Mutual	88	96	77	72	75	89	78	77	75	77	76%
State Farm	87	96	76	72	78	88	75	78	71	75	81%
Farmers	86	95	76	73	74	87	74	76	72	76	71%
Nationwide	86	92	79	75	79	88	79	82	76	81	53%
Little Caesars	86	93	79	69	75	88	78	78	73	80	53%
INTEL	86	93	77	74	76	86	74	77	77	77	10%
Arby's	85	90	80	72	77	87	78	78	75	82	73%
T-Mobile	85	91	76	74	75	87	79	77	75	78	25%
Safelite	84	90	78	74	79	84	76	80	75	78	53%
O'Reilly Auto Parts	83	90	75	68	73	83	77	76	71	76	53%
Old Spice	83	88	74	74	76	85	82	80	71	77	21%
Duracell	81	87	75	73	73	80	71	73	74	78	11%
TUMS	80	87	71	67	69	83	67	71	67	70	56%
Febreze	76	77	72	72	73	75	79	78	73	73	32%
USAA	75	78	72	70	71	76	68	70	69	68	61%
Honda	75	80	68	66	69	76	68	71	66	67	0%
Taco Bell	72	77	68	61	63	76	63	67	60	65	25%
Netflix	72	71	71	69	68	77	68	73	71	73	24%
Xbox One	72	72	71	71	69	74	68	71	72	72	8%
PlayStation	68	67	69	63	66	76	65	66	67	72	50%
Hulu Originals	68	66	69	68	69	69	68	71	68	71	0%
HBO	67	62	72	68	66	73	67	70	72	74	18%
Metro (By T-Mobile)	66	66	67	64	62	66	65	69	66	67	0%
Autozone	62	57	68	65	64	68	72	71	62	70	12%
TD Ameritrade	62	55	69	67	65	65	71	72	69	70	0%
Mastercard	60	51	68	68	68	62	75	73	66	71	0%
Amazon Prime Original	59	49	69	70	67	67	72	73	70	72	1%
McDonald's	58	56	63	58	57	64	62	65	56	62	22%
Sprint	57	50	63	64	60	63	61	65	64	66	0%
Nissan	48	35	62	59	56	54	57	60	63	68	0%
Audi	44	27	61	62	54	51	64	67	59	64	0%
HSBC	42	24	62	60	54	50	62	64	59	68	0%
Context Average	72	72	71	68	69	75	71	72	69	72	29%

	Veritonic Audio Score	Recall	Authentic	Inspiring	Trust-worthy	Familiar	Happy	Likable	Innov-ative	Unique	Brand Correctly ID'd
McDonald's	88	98	77	69	75	89	80	77	72	78	47%
HARIBO	88	95	77	73	78	89	84	81	72	77	78%
INTEL	86	95	76	74	78	87	72	76	77	77	66%
AO	86	94	75	74	74	85	79	79	71	74	25%
Heinz Beanz	85	93	79	68	79	87	80	77	69	76	82%
TSB	85	94	73	70	76	84	75	75	72	75	52%
Flash Ultra	84	93	72	71	73	85	74	75	70	73	71%
GoCompare	83	94	70	62	70	88	69	62	66	75	71%
funkypigeon	82	92	68	63	69	84	72	67	66	73	19%
webuyanycar	81	90	68	65	70	80	73	72	67	72	17%
Hive	77	85	67	63	67	74	70	69	66	67	19%
Moonpig	73	82	63	58	65	72	63	63	59	65	14%
Netflix	69	68	70	68	70	73	65	69	67	69	34%
Duracell	63	63	63	62	59	61	62	62	63	66	2%
HBO	62	59	66	65	64	65	61	64	66	70	38%
Kia	60	57	63	62	63	63	65	64	63	62	0%
Santander	58	54	65	64	65	57	68	67	62	64	18%
Amazon Prime Original	57	50	65	64	64	63	63	66	65	67	12%
Audi	55	51	62	59	60	56	55	59	62	63	13%
ASDA	53	47	60	56	56	57	63	61	58	61	2%
Guide Dogs	53	46	61	59	59	54	67	64	59	62	0%
Mastercard	47	34	60	58	61	53	66	63	60	63	4%
HSBC	46	37	57	55	56	48	54	57	56	60	4%
Nissan	46	35	58	56	56	52	50	56	61	64	15%
Context Average	69	71	67	64	67	72	68	68	65	69	28%

Listen to the audio logos here

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Veritonic is the audio intelligence platform, empowering marketers to understand and quantify the most effective way to use sound. It's the first analytics platform built specifically for businesses to navigate the audio market easily and maximize the massive opportunity it presents.

From the podcast, streaming, or radio ads that drive sales, to where you stand relative to competitors, to what makes the most resonant sonic brand, Veritonic is one place to answer every critical question about marketing in audio.

Powered by "Machine Listening and Learning"™, the Veritonic platform scores and benchmarks audio assets quickly and comprehensively, guiding brand leaders like Visa and platforms like Pandora to make decisions that cultivate deeper relationships with customers through sound.

To submit your audio logo for consideration in future editions of the index, please contact us at info@veritonic.com.

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