HORIZON AUDIO

A small guide to sonic branding

Your brand has a visual identity.
It probably has a voice, too.

But what does it sound like?

Music. Sound. Memory. Identity.

THE IDEA

Sonic branding is the use of music and sound to give a brand an identity people can recognise, remember and feel. It is the auditory equivalent of the things we already understand as branding: colour, typography, imagery, language.

> It is bigger than a jingle.

A sonic brand can be a short sound logo. It can be a musical motif, a particular texture, a voice treatment, a recurring rhythm, a palette of instruments, or a whole musical language that travels across a brand’s different spaces.

The important part is not simply having a sound. It is having a sound that belongs to you — and using it with enough consistency that it begins to mean something.

WHY SOUND?

We tend to think of branding as something we see. Sound works differently. Music can create atmosphere, trigger memory and alter the emotional character of an image or message.

Think about the sounds you already recognise without seeing the thing that made them.

A startup chime. A familiar three-note motif. The sound of a particular voice. The first few seconds of a podcast you have listened to for years.

That is the territory of sonic branding.

A SONIC BRAND IS A SYSTEM

One sound can be memorable. A system is what makes it useful.

The strongest sonic identities are not built around one heroic piece of music. They contain a small vocabulary that can change shape while still sounding like the same thing.

SOUND LOGO	A short, recognisable signature. The sonic equivalent of a visual mark.
MUSICAL MOTIF	A melody, interval, rhythm or harmonic idea that can return in different forms.
SONIC PALETTE	The instruments, textures, tones and recording qualities that belong to the brand.
MUSIC LANGUAGE	A broader set of musical characteristics: tempo, mood, harmony, rhythm and genre boundaries.
APPLICATION	How the identity behaves across films, podcasts, social content, events, spaces, products and digital experiences.

> The point is not to make everything sound identical. It is to make different things feel related.

START WITH THE BRAND, NOT THE SOUND

A sonic identity should come from something real. Before choosing instruments or writing a melody, ask what the brand actually is.

WHAT ARE WE?

What do we make, do, believe in or stand for?

HOW SHOULD IT FEEL?

Warm? Curious? Restless? Precise? Playful? Human? Strange? Calm?

WHO ARE WE TALKING TO?

Not demographics alone. What kind of person are they? What do they notice?

WHAT MAKES US DIFFERENT?

What would be lost if our name disappeared and the sound remained?

WHAT SHOULD WE AVOID?

Every identity needs boundaries. Too polished? Too corporate? Too loud? Too familiar?

Then listen.

Look outside the obvious references. The right sonic world might come from a place, a material, a machine, a voice, an old recording, a field sound, a rhythm, or a piece of music that says something about the brand without copying it.

CONSISTENCY WITHOUT BECOMING BORING

A sonic identity has to be recognisable, but it also has to live in the real world. A two-second sound logo and a three-minute film do not have the same job.

> The identity needs room to stretch.

2 SECONDS — A tiny sonic signature.

10–15 SECONDS — A sting, transition or short musical cue.

30–60 SECONDS — A piece of branded content or campaign music.

2–3 MINUTES — A fuller composition for film, documentary or presentation.

LONG FORM — A podcast, film, event, installation or environment.

The same DNA can appear at different scales. The melody can become a texture. The rhythm can become an edit. A sound can disappear almost entirely and still leave its fingerprint.

> Consistency is not repetition. It is recognition.

HOW HORIZON AUDIO APPROACHES IT

I’m interested in sonic branding that feels less like a jingle and more like a world.

That might mean a short sound logo. It might mean a musical theme, a handful of recurring textures, a voice treatment, a sonic palette or a small library of pieces that all belong to the same place.

> The aim is not to make a brand louder.
>
> It is to make it more itself.

A Horizon Audio project can begin with a conversation about the brand, move through references and sonic exploration, and arrive at a practical identity that can actually be used — across films, podcasts, social content, presentations, spaces or whatever comes next.

A TYPICAL SONIC BRANDING PROJECT MIGHT INCLUDE

— Brand / sonic discovery

— Reference and mood exploration

— Sonic direction and palette

— Original musical motifs

— Sonic logo / audio signature

— Flexible music and sound assets

— Usage and application guidance

Not every project needs all of these. The work should fit the brand, not the other way around.

LISTEN FOR IT

The visual identity tells you what a brand looks like.
The sonic identity can tell you how it feels.

If you’re curious about what your brand might sound like, let’s talk.

HORIZON
AUDIO

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