

Music to our ears, dollars in our pocket

The sounds in your store affect both shoppers and employees

(Part two of a two-part series on music in the pharmacy)

I ended my last column (May 2001) with the statement: "Music—the universal language—can improve our health, our workspace, our shopping environments and our bottom line. All we have to do is listen."

Since then, the question I'm asked most is: "Which music? Which style will provide the desired results: lowered anxiety in the waiting area, increased focus in the dispensary, and more spending by our frontshop clients?"

That's not an easy question to answer, because it's not as simple as playing classical vs. jazz, or rock vs. easy listening. While all music is made up of the same basic elements (including rhythm, melody, tempo, volume, pitch and texture), the most important elements to the field of music psychology are rhythm and tempo.

British sports psychologist Costas Carageorgas puts it this way: "All forms of human locomotion, human movement, are rhythmical, and music somehow parallels those movements." Carageorgas has found that synchronizing music with exercise increases athletes' endurance.

You can apply these discoveries in your pharmacy. At least one national supermarket chain has tested the impact of tempo on shoppers' behaviour. By slowing the tempo of their in-store music they slowed down their customers too, allowing them to spend more time—and more money—in the store: 39.2% more on average!

That's what happens when you slow people down, but what happens when you use music to speed people up? You can, in fact, use music to increase the rate of work while providing the perception to your employees that they are working less.

What music has this power? As I noted above, it's not an easy question to answer. Music as diverse as Stevie Wonder's *Superstition*, Berlioz's *La Marseillaise*, or Michael Jackson's *Beat It* can be used to energize people. To improve focus you could use Beethoven's symphonies, The Modern Jazz Quartet's *Blues on Bach* or Pat Metheny's *Question and Answer*. Uplifting music can be anything from most swing and big-band jazz music, to the Beatles' early music (1962-66) or Motown (Marvin Gaye, or Diana Ross & The Supremes).

When workers' normal afternoon slump meets the afternoon shopping rush, you'll need something to wake you up. Again you can use any style of music. Aaron Copland's *Appalachian Spring*, Peter Gabriel's *Passion*, The Byrds' *Greatest Hits*, Joni Mitchell's *Court and Spark* or jazz from Charles Mingus, Dizzy Gille-

but there's still work to be done, try something to invigorate you while helping to clear your mind: *Led Zepelin IV*, Kate Bush's *Dreaming*, Patsy Cline's *Greatest Hits*, Beethoven's *Symphony #9*, Mussorgsky's *Night On Bald Mountain* or Igor Stravinsky's *Rite of Spring* should all do the trick.

When the day's finally over and you want to relax, try Bach's *Brandenburg Concertos*, Carole King's *Tapestry*, James Taylor's *Greatest Hits*, Beethoven's *6th Symphony* (especially the 2nd movement), Mozart's *Symphony #40*, Bach's *Goldberg Variations*, or any Nat King Cole, Billie Holiday or Chet Baker, as well as anything by Joao Gilberto or Antonio Carlos Jobim.

As you can see, the selection is endless, and it's not by style but by informational content, rhythm, tempo, etc. The easiest and probably best approach to use in your business is to contract with a specialist like Muzak, AME or AEI. This type of music, generically known as "Muzak," is usu-

ally derided for exactly the reason it's successful: there's very little variety. Whether you're trying to get people to relax or to focus, abrupt changes in speed, volume or even texture can result in too much attention on the music. "Muzak" uses familiar melodies that have been softened, and which are played in a specific progression (including sections of silence) based on a scientific approach to background music.

Background music is indeed what you want. People who demean background music should be reminded that many compositional masters, including Handel, Haydn, Mozart and Beethoven, composed music specifically to serve as a background for aristocratic dinners.

Many pharmacists rely on a local radio station to supply their background music, which may be doing their business more harm than good. The radio can actually be a distracting force for cognitive processes (like checking, DUR and counselling).

The environmental music specialists, on the other hand, promise appropriate music programming that will improve problem-solving skills, enhance creative thinking and improve the use of time allocated for cognitive tasks.

Why don't you turn down the radio and give them a call? They might be able to turn your instore music into profits and productivity. ❁

Wayne Caverly, a professional musician prior to his career serving pharmacy, is president, McKesson Automation Canada (formerly BakerAPS Canada) in Dorval, Quebec and its pharmacy design component Solutions by Design (formerly AutoPharm). He is also executive director of The Efficient Pharmacy Institute, and a contributing author to Pharmacy Management in Canada (2nd edition, 1998). This column is excerpted from The Efficient Pharmacy: By Design (a work in progress).



EFFICIENCY BY DESIGN

by Wayne Caverly

spie or Bud Powell are all different styles, but they have the same effect on productivity.

At the end of the day, when your body and mind want to wind down