

## The Hobbit (Warner Brothers)

### Study goals:

- 1) To better understand the role audio plays in successful television commercials that have had sufficient time and budget to generate high levels of awareness
- 2) To quantify audio and visual's role in triggering brand identification in these commercials

Methodology: Television commercials from top U.S. advertisers were de-branded with all audio and visual "brand" mentions stripped out. Online interviews were conducted with 300 consumers (A21-54). Two groups of 150 respondents were served 14 clips comprised of a mix of the de-branded television commercials and audio-only versions of the commercials.

One of the tested ads was for:

Brand	Television Ad	Length (secs)
The Hobbit	Coming December 14	:21

Fieldwork for this commercial was conducted December 10-13, in the days leading into the U.S. premiere of The Hobbit in theaters on December 14, 2012.

First question: After exposure to the de-branded TV commercial clip or audio of that clip, respondents were asked "Name the company or brand you think the clip was for?"

	Video Exposure			Audio Exposure		
	Adults	Men	Women	Adults	Men	Women
The Hobbit	85%	86%	83%	69%	77%	62%

Nearly 7-in-10 consumers were able to identify the advertiser after exposure to the audio-only version of the TV clip, and that ratio was higher among men (8-in-10). These numbers approximate those who were exposed to the de-brand clip of the actual television commercial.

**De-branded television exposure: Brand Triggers**

Question #2: At what point did you realize what the brand was? What visual or audio clue led you to recognize the brand? Was there an “aha” moment?

31% of the respondents who correctly attributed the ad to The Hobbit said they knew it when they saw the Gandalf character:

when i saw <b>gandaff</b>
As soon as I saw <b>Gandalf</b>
From the very beginning. <b>Ian McKellan's Gandalf</b> face gave it away first thing.
at the beginning when I seen the <b>first actor</b>
<b>Gandalf</b> is unmistakable.
AT the instant the clip started and I saw <b>Gandalf</b> , I knew what it was.
<b>Gandalf</b>
When I saw <b>Gandolf</b> and then the hobbits.
Immediately. I recognized <b>Gandolph</b> in the opening scene. I know about the movie and have kept up with the info about.
I saw <b>Gandolph</b>

26% of the respondents who correctly attributed the ad to The Hobbit said they knew it when they saw other characters including Bilbo Baggins:

When I saw the <b>little creature</b>
As soon as I saw ' <b>the Hobbit</b> ' character. I don't know his name.
When I saw the <b>hobbit</b>
<b>bilbo baggins</b>
When I saw <b>Bilbo Baggins?</b> and the little guy.
the <b>characters</b>
THE <b>CHARACTERS</b>
The visual more than the audio, especially when <b>the characters</b> were present
when I saw one of the <b>main character</b> of the movie
When I saw the <b>characters in distinguished costumes.</b>

The third question respondents to the TV clip were asked was: How did the video make you feel? Did it trigger any emotion?

43% of the respondents who correctly attributed the ad to The Hobbit said they were excited to see the movie:

<b>Excited</b>
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<b>can't wait</b> to see the movie
I <b>wanted to run to the movie theatre</b>
It was interesting. <b>Made me want to see it.</b>
<b>eager</b> to see this movie
<b>Excited</b> to see movie
It gave me a sense <b>adventure and thrilling action.</b>
I have seen the harry potter movies with kids. This movie <b>looks interesting</b> as well
<b>READY FOR THE JOURNEY!</b>
<b>Excitement, wonder, adventure.</b>

**Audio-only exposure: Brand Triggers**

Question #2: At what point did you realize what the brand was? What visual or audio clue led you to recognize the brand? Was there an “aha” moment?

49% of the respondents who correctly attributed the ad to The Hobbit said it was when Bilbo Baggins was mentioned:

When he says, ' <b>my name is bilbo baggins</b> '
When I <b>heard Bilbo Baggins</b> that's when I knew
I suspected from the first line, but was sure when I <b>heard the name Bilbo Baggins.</b>
<b>Bilbo Baggins</b>
when the character said his name <b>billbow baggins</b>
' <b>my name is Bilbo baggins</b> '
<b>Bilbo Baggins</b>
When I heard the name <b>Bilbobaggins</b>
When he <b>said Bilbo Baggins</b>
<b>Bilbo baggins</b> name was said

31% of the respondents who correctly attributed the ad to The Hobbit said it was due to Gandalf's voice:

<b>gandalfs voice</b>
right at start, <b>Gandalf's voice</b> (Ian somebody)
<b>Gandalf talking.</b>
<b>ian mckellans voice as gandalf</b>
It's <b>Sir Ian McKellen!</b>
The <b>voice of Gandalf.</b>
<b>Ian McKellens voice</b>
<b>Ian McKellen's voice.</b>

When <b>Ian Mckellen started speaking.</b>
<b>Gandalf's voice</b>

Respondents to the audio responded as follows to question #3: How did the clip make you feel? Did it trigger any emotion?

44% of the respondents who correctly attributed the ad to The Hobbit said they were excited to see the movie:

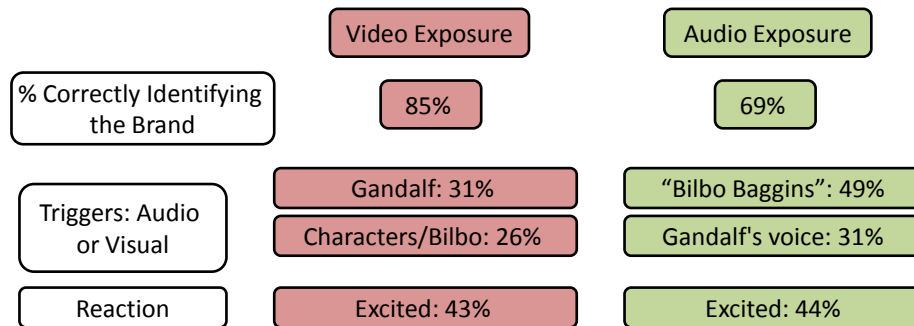
<b>Eager</b> to see it.
The music was <b>inspiring</b> immediately and I became <b>excited</b> once I placed the Gandalf voice
<b>Eager</b> , I have been looking forward to this movie
<b>Excited, anxious</b> to see this movie, <b>happy</b> the book the Hobbit is a favorite of mine, <b>can't wait to see movie</b>
i got a little <b>excited</b> ... i'm <b>eager</b> to see this movie. i immediately saw the new zealand expanse
<b>excited</b> about the movie
<b>anticipation – excitement</b>
<b>Excited!</b>
I <b>would like to see The Hobbit</b> , but I would rather it just be a single film.
<b>Excitement</b>

There were also references to being able to visualize the television commercial after exposure to only the audio clip:

<b>Mental image of the commercial</b>
<b>Pictured the characters</b> in my head
<b>I could see the TV commercial</b>
It <b>made me think of the commercial</b>
I <b>saw Gandalf and the shire and the Hobbits</b> . It was exciting
I <b>envisioned the commercial</b> ...I have seen it a few times
<b>Images from the previews</b> I have seen on TV and online
It made me <b>picture scenes</b> from the movies
<b>Memories of the Lord of the Rings</b>
I <b>pictured the Lord of the Rings movies</b> where I remembered the voice from

**Summary:**

# The Hobbit



In the absence of any visual cues, auditory cues alone can generate brand identification metrics that rival visual cues, as other senses compensate for the lack of any visual stimulation. An example of this is illustrated when in the absence of any visual stimuli, 80% of the respondents to the audio clip referenced the Gandalf's voice or the name Bilbo Baggins as the "aha" branding moment, versus only 57% referencing "seeing" Gandalf or any of the characters in the TV clip. The Gandalf's voice and the name Bilbo Baggins served to effectively fill any void that might have been presumed to have occurred due to the lack of any visual stimuli.

Importantly, the ability of audio to trigger visual is also clearly seen in the comments above where numerous respondents after exposure to only the audio clip mentioned being able to "see", "picture" or "think off" the television commercial.

For those respondents exposed to the audio-only version, 49% cited the name recognition of Bilbo Baggins as the trigger for identifying it for the movie, The Hobbit. This is not a surprise. However, nearly 1-in-3 persons cited the voice of the wizard Gandolf as the trigger. His voice is extremely recognizable as he was a main character from the previous movies. What is interesting to note, many respondents even referenced the actor himself, Sir Ian McKellen, rather than his character.

Physiological impact: The excitement generated by both the video and audio were nearly identical with over 40% of respondents saying they are eager to see the movie. This suggest

that sound (whether the voice of a character, background music, etc) can inspire and motivate consumers as effectively as the visual.

**Conclusion:**

These findings are particularly impressive in light of the fact that the audio clip used in this study was lifted verbatim from the TV commercial. If enhancements/modifications were made to reflect an audio-only form of delivery, it would likely lead to an even more impressive audio result. Additionally, both the audio clip and the TV clip were equally adept at communicating anticipation/excitement to go and see the movie.

The data strongly suggests primarily due to the Gandalf's voice and the name Bilbo Baggins, that the audio components of the Hobbit television commercial are as effective in generating brand awareness as the television commercial itself. Many of those exposed to the audio clip were also able to visualize the actual television commercial experiencing what is known as "imagery transfer". Overall it appears as if the audio aspects of the commercial had been sufficiently ingrained in the minds/psyche of the consumer to consider having audio based mediums to play a more important role in communicating The Hobbit's commercial messaging.