



# Audio Landscape 2024

Bauer Media



# Foreword

Janne Turunen  
Sales Director



Uncertainty in our time creates a need for security and permanence. We discussed the topic with brain researcher, professor **Minna Huotilainen** and heard that audio can be a health act that creates well-being. As many social media channels increase anxiety, audio stands out with the opposite effect. Voice is also a huge resource for brands to do a lot of good.

*“We may not pay enough attention to how fundamentally the sounds around us affect us. We can consciously create sound environments that support attention and well-being – why not use this means?”*

Minna Huotilainen, Brain Scientist, Professor, University of Helsinki

Audio is strongly present in the everyday life of Finns. In its various forms, audio reaches 98 percent of Finns every week. Versatile listening also provides the marketer with more versatile ways to reach and influence. FM and digital audio are media environments that many are familiar with, and a new kind of opportunity has also grown to take advantage of audio advertising in Retail Media, and to speak to people with an audio near the time of purchase. Bauer Media’s Total Audio easily connects these interfaces to the advertiser’s use.

The Attention Economy Study, published by Lumen and Dentsu in 2023, compared the attention time received by different media, and showed that audio is on average at its own frequencies compared to advertising; the attention seconds received by audio were 56% higher, and the impact of audio on brand remembrance was 8% more effective. Therefore, it is worth utilising audio and thinking of audio as a holistic part of all advertising. More than a third of Finnish advertising contains audio.

After listening to the audio market, we wanted to compile the most interesting observations for the marketer into Audio Landscape 2024 content. Enjoy as is, or piece by piece.



# Audio Landscape 2024

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- ▶ **Domestic audio market**  
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Ismo Heikkilä



# Audio is a health act

Minna Huutilainen  
Brain Scientist, Professor  
University of Helsinki



Sounds attach us to a place and space, bring us a sense of security, encourage and create well-being, but do not interrupt or force us to do anything.

We may not be able to pay enough attention to how fundamentally the sounds around us affect us. We can consciously create sound environments that support learning, attention, and well-being – so why not use this tool to improve our daily lives, learning, work and well-being?

As a brain researcher, my ears have always been interested in the auditory cortex: auditory memory, auditory attention and processing of sounds in the brain, what's more interesting than that! And, of course, the hearing system has a very special function in the brain, as it is able to save our cognitive capacity for more important tasks<sup>1</sup>.



# Sounds attach us to a place, creating a sense of security

The environment is monitored by the auditory sense, and pre-conscious, automatic functions of the brain are sufficient for this task<sup>2</sup>. For example, a person sitting at work or in an educational institution is immersed in reading or writing, but the hearing system does notice that the elevator arrives (ding), someone walks in the corridor (pattering), and the guy sitting close by struggles with his own task (sigh). You may hear faint music from a distance. None of these sounds will interfere with your reading or writing task, quite the contrary. Sounds attach us to a place and space, bring us a sense of security, encourage and create well-being, but do not interrupt or force us to do anything.

Except, of course, a fire alarm or a phone notification to signal a message – but those sounds are specifically designed to divert our attention from what we were doing and direct it to a fire or an extremely important message<sup>3</sup>.

In the visual system, the situation is very different. When watching a movie, we are forced to accept the hero's specific looks or, for example, the landscape as it is in the film, but the same story in the form of an audiobook or reading opens the possibility to imagine all of these things as we perceive them.

*This kind of imagination is brain-activating, well-being-boosting, and imaginative, while visual input easily turns brain activity into a reactive, recipient position.*

This is most evident when watching social media videos. If you look at one short video after another, you are more and more hooked in your brain to the expectation that in a few seconds a new video will start with funny, interesting, mind-blowing, infuriating, or delightful content. Video after video. After a couple of hours of this kind of a social media marathon, I feel like I've eaten a kilo of sweets. One sweet at a time, of course. Yes, even the audio content can be addictive, good music or a great audiobook lovely to listen for a long time, but the feeling of having consumed too much of it is less common than with video content. So could the skillful use of audio work as an act of well-being?



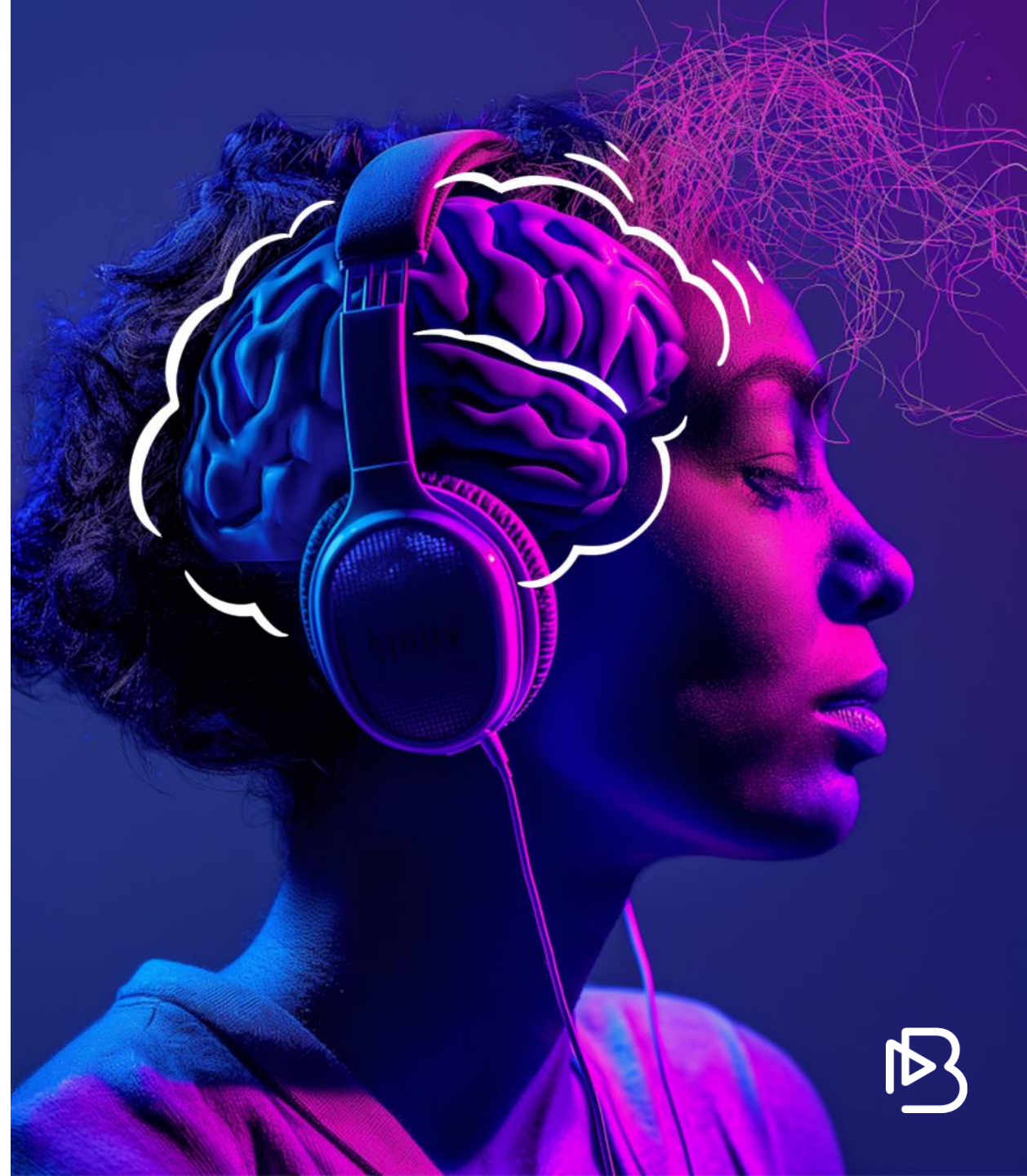
# Music is like an impulse to the brain that produces well-being

Music activates the brain extensively<sup>4</sup>. The first sound heard arrives from the ears and the nuclei of the hearing system to the auditory cortex, where its basic features can be analysed. At the same time, however, sound is analysed in the brain's reward system and emotional network, which recognises the emotions expressed by music and evokes new ones. Music also fosters attentiveness – just listening to music activates the processes of memory and attention<sup>5</sup>.

With the help of event memory, we identify familiar music and related events, places, situations and people. Music also activates areas of the brain related to movement: the brain kind of models how the music we hear could be danced to or how the musicians move when playing.

Music is like an impulse that makes the whole brain active and produces images, well-being and modelled movement. Music moves.

Sources: <sup>4</sup> Sihvonen, A. J., Särkämö, T., Leo, V., Tervaniemi, M., Altenmüller, E., & Soinila, S. (2017). Music-based interventions in neurological rehabilitation. *The Lancet Neurology*, 16(8), 648–660. <sup>5</sup> Särkämö, T. (2020). Musical leisure activities to support cognitive and emotional functioning in aging and dementia: A review of current evidence. *Music and Dementia*.



# Sound awakens memories created through different senses and takes you to a familiar, personal experience

In 1992, an Italian research team led by Prof. **Giacomo Rizzolatti** reported an amazing discovery: neurons involved in the planning and execution of movement were activated in the brain, even though we were just watching someone else do something, not yet doing anything ourselves<sup>6</sup>. The cells were named *mirror cells*, because they allow us to mirror each other's actions. So the brain automatically and continuously (without thinking about it) models what others are doing and why<sup>7</sup>.

When we watch another person walking, drinking coffee or even nodding, our brain models that activity and is able to predict many things related to the other person's movement, such as speed or duration of movement. However, mirror cells are also active when we only hear someone doing something<sup>8</sup>.

The sounds of steps in the corridor also reveal what kind of shoes the walker is wearing and what their mood is, as well as whether they are in a hurry. When we hear the sounds of an activity, it is easy for us to imagine ourselves in the place of the person doing the activity. How would I feel if I walked so fast in such squeaky shoes? (I'm out of breath just thinking about it.)

The sounds take us to a place and in a situation where that sound could have been generated by us: me starting a classic walk towards the sunset, me throwing some water on the sauna stove of a summer cottage, me having coffee on a pier listening to the gulls scream.

*Mirror cells lead us back with sound to our own experiences that have taken place even years ago.*

This is due to the *Hebbian* nature of brains<sup>9</sup>: cells that fire together, wire together. What we have heard, seen, even tasted and smelled, merge into one whole. There is no separate image of an apple in the brain, but an apple is accompanied by the sound, smell and taste of biting it. When you sense one of these, it also takes your other sensations there – the “heard image” takes you back to your own familiar experience.

Sources: 6. Di Pellegrino, G., Fadiga, L., Fogassi, L., Gallese, V., & Rizzolatti, G. (1992). Understanding motor events: a neurophysiological study. *Experimental brain research*, 91, 176–180. 7. Rizzolatti, G., & Craighero, L. (2004). The mirror-neuron system. *Annu. Rev. Neurosci.*, 27, 169–192. 8. Galati, G., Committeri, G., Spitoni, G., Aprile, T., Di Russo, F., Pitzalis, S., & Pizzamiglio, L. (2008). A selective representation of the meaning of actions in the auditory mirror system. *Neuroimage*, 40(3), 1274–1286. 9. Song, S., Miller, K. D., & Abbott, L. F. (2000). Competitive Hebbian learning through spike-timing-dependent synaptic plasticity. *Nature neuroscience*, 3(9), 919–926.



# Domestic audio market: Audio reaches 98% of Finns weekly



**Maria Lehto**  
*Data & Insight Strategist*



**Heli Montonen**  
*Planning Manager*

Audio is strongly present in the everyday life of Finns – 98% listen to at least one audio format every week. Radio is the most accessible audio media with an overall reach of 85%. Commercial radio reaches 67 per cent weekly in the age group 9+. The weekly reach of commercial radio is as high as 80 per cent in the most consumption-powered target group.

In addition to FM radio, digital audio has also established itself, reaching 82% of Finns on a weekly basis. Listening to digital audio is strong in all age groups, and especially in people under 30; as many as 98% of the age group listen to digital audio on a weekly basis.

Although the advertising market declined in 2023 compared to the previous year, radio's advertising investments remained at the 2022 level. Investments in FM radio advertising and digital advertising sold by radios (Total Radio) amounted to EUR 71.1 million. Delightfully, digital advertising on radio grew the most from all media compared to the previous year, by 45 per cent.

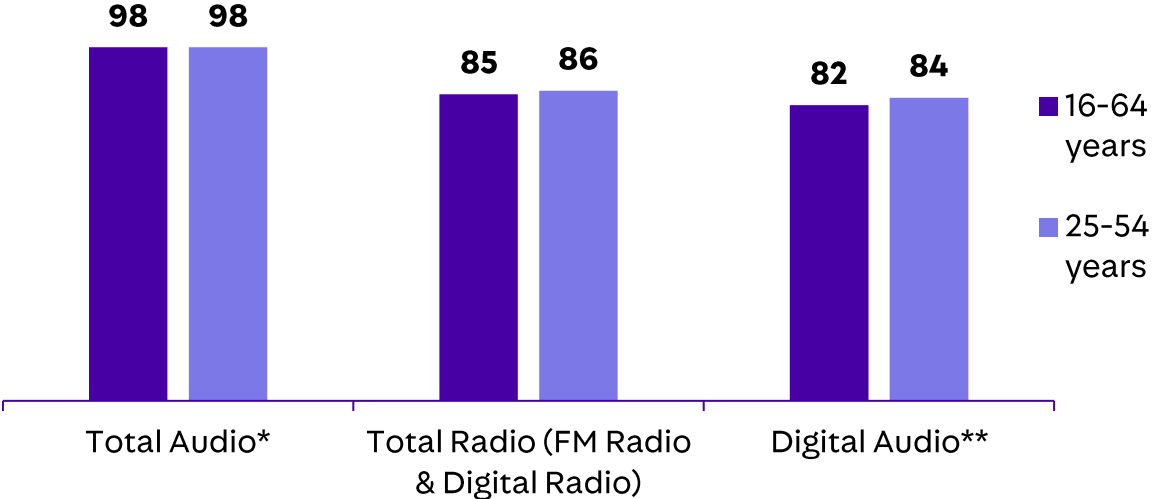
In 2024, the marketer will have more versatile means at their disposal to comprehensively reach and influence using the versatile audio interfaces. For example, Bauer Media's Total Audio product reaches listeners via audio, in addition to FM and digital audio media, as well as mobile games, also in Retail Media.





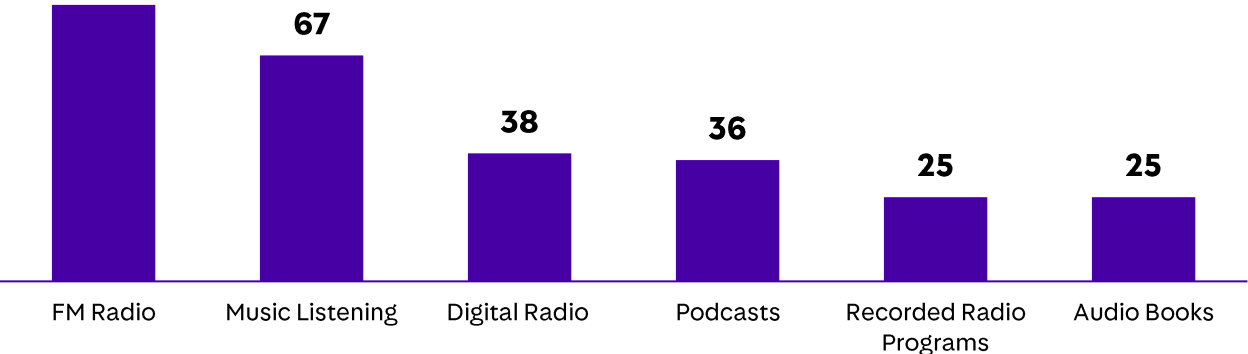
# Radio is the most accessible audio media, digital audio is also mainstream

Weekly reach by media combinations



- ▶ 98% of Finns listen to at least one audio format every week.
- ▶ Radio is the most accessible audio media from media combinations as well as individual media types.
- ▶ Digital audio has become mainstream – 82% of Finns listen to it every week
- ▶ Digital audio reaches well in all age groups, reach is higher in younger people
- ▶ 98% of 16–29-year-olds listen to digital audio every week.
- ▶ The weekly reach of digital audio for the oldest age group, 55–64, is 60%.

Weekly reach by media type 16–64 years.



\*Total Audio includes FM radio, internet radio, radio programme recordings, podcasts, listening to music and audiobooks  
 \*\*Digital audio includes online radio, radio programme recordings, podcasts and music listening

Source: This is how Finns listen 2023, Nepa



# Audio makes up over a fifth of the media consumed daily by Finnish people

## Other 21%

Social media  
Mobile games  
Other internet use  
Movies in a cinema

## Total audio 21%

Radio during broadcasting  
Radio over the internet  
Music streaming services  
Audio and podcasting services



## Total print 14%

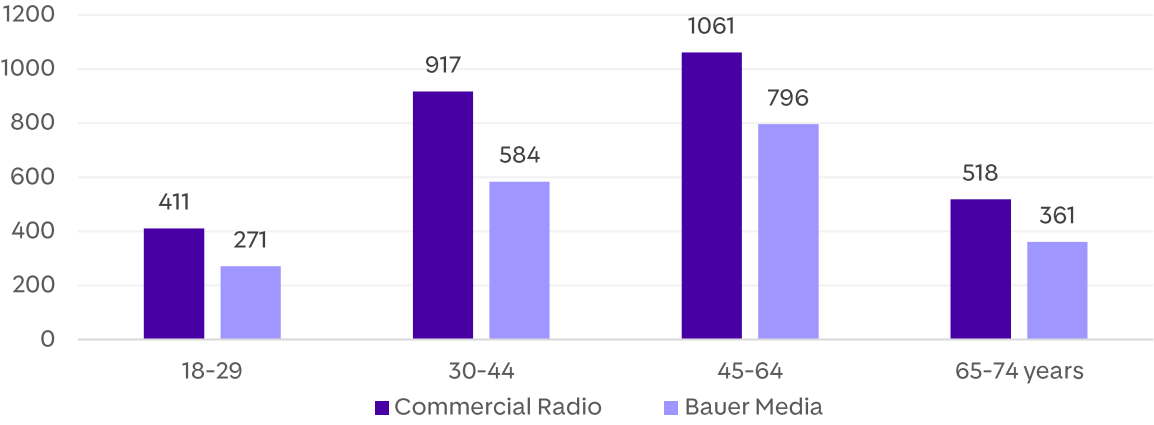
Newspapers, tabloids, free newspapers  
printed newspapers, tabloids, free newspapers,  
online services, magazines, printed magazines,  
online services

## Total tv 44%

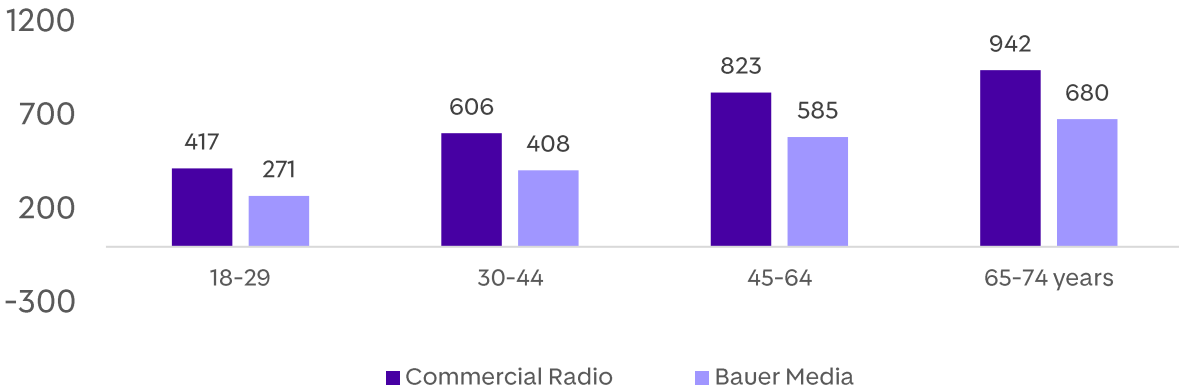
Television, paid television  
linear television  
online television, SVOD  
video services

# Commercial radio reaches all age groups, with active-age listening times of up to 12 hours per week

Reach (per week)



Listening minutes (per week)



Reach of commercial radio (per week)

- ▶ 67% of Finnish people (9+)
- ▶ 57% of young people (18–29-year-olds)
- ▶ 76% of people in active age (30–64-year-olds)

Time spent listening to commercial radio (per week)

- ▶ Finnish people 11 h 39 min (9+)
- ▶ Young people 6 h 57 min (18–29-year-olds)
- ▶ People in active age 12 h 3 min (30–64-year-olds)

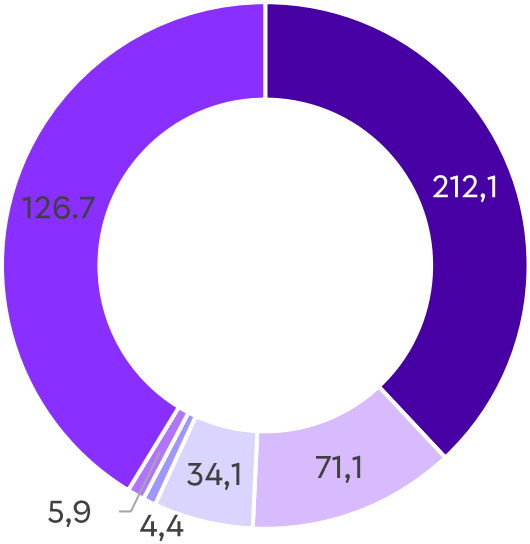
Finns (9+) listen to commercial radio every day for 2 hours 45 minutes. The long listening times enhance the effectiveness and impact of advertisement.

Source: KRTonline annual report 2023



# More than a third of advertising contains audio

Amount of audio advertising in different media in 2023  
(EUR 000)



■ TV ■ Radio ■ Instream video ■ Outstream video ■ Movies ■ Some\*

In 2023, advertising investments totalled approximately EUR 1,336 million. More than a third of advertising investments were spent on audio-based advertising – almost EUR 500 million.

Therefore, you should think of audio as a comprehensive part of all advertising and utilise audio as much as you can in all media.

- ▶ The attention seconds of audio are 56% higher and the effect of the audio on brand recall is 8% more effective compared to other media groups.

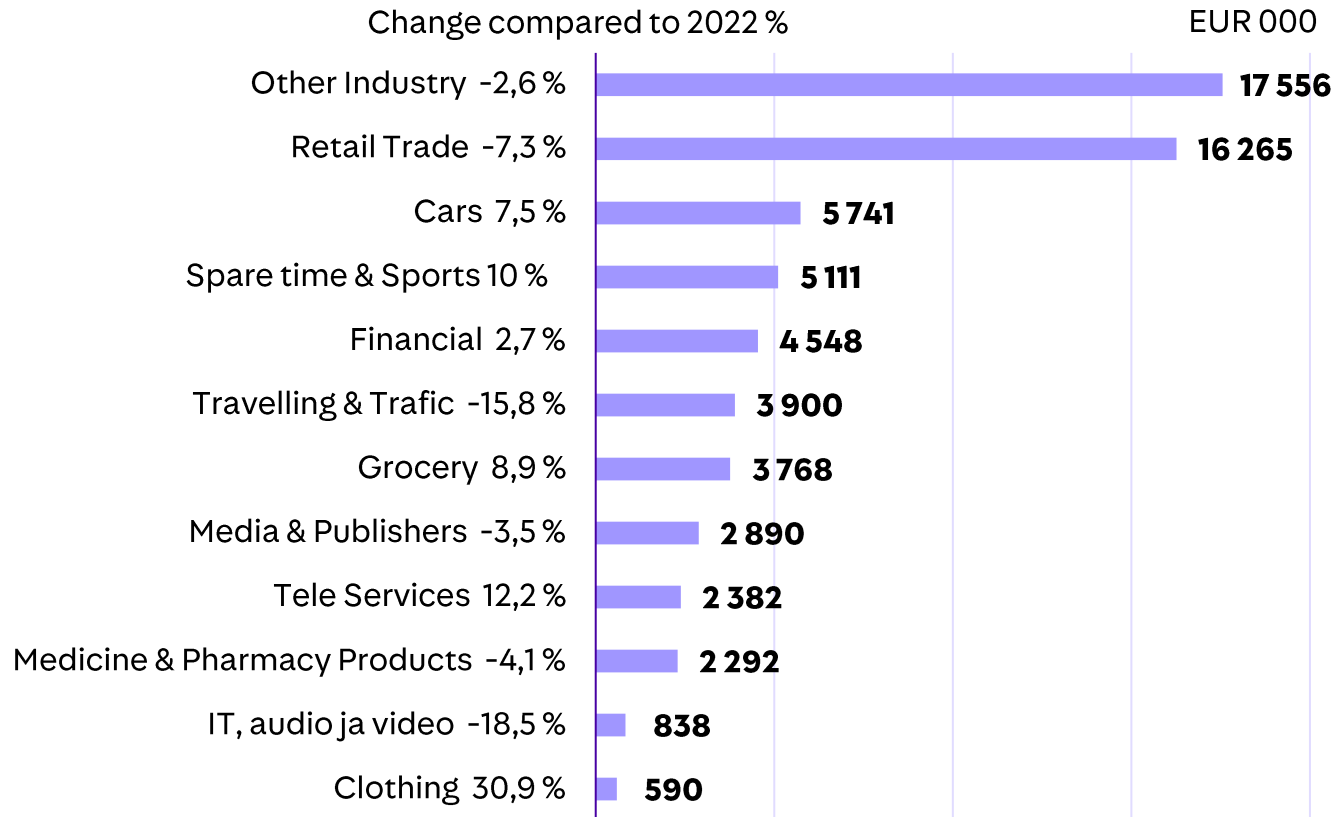
\* The amount of audio advertising on social media is based on the media agency's estimate that approximately 55% of all social media advertising contains audio.

Sources: Kantar advertising investment year 2023, Attention Economy Study 2023, Lumen/Dentsu



# Advertising investments in audio at the pace of previous year

Investment in radio advertisement by industry in 2023



The year of advertising was challenging and the market declined, but Total Radio's\* investments remained at the previous year's level.

- ▶ The investment in Total Radio was EUR 71.1 million in 2023.
- ▶ The share of FM radio advertising was EUR 66.4 million and digital advertising EUR 4.7 million.
- ▶ Digital advertising on radios grew by 45% and was the largest of all media when compared to 2022.
- ▶ Radio advertising accounted for 9% of domestic media advertising.
- ▶ In media marketing that includes search engine and social media advertising, the percentage of radio advertisement was 5%.

\*Total Radio includes FM radio advertising and digital advertising sold by radios.

Source: Kantar Ad Intelligence 2023



# Industries that invested well above average in audio advertising

In 2023, five industries invested clearly above average in audio advertising. Industries and share of audio advertising in media advertising:

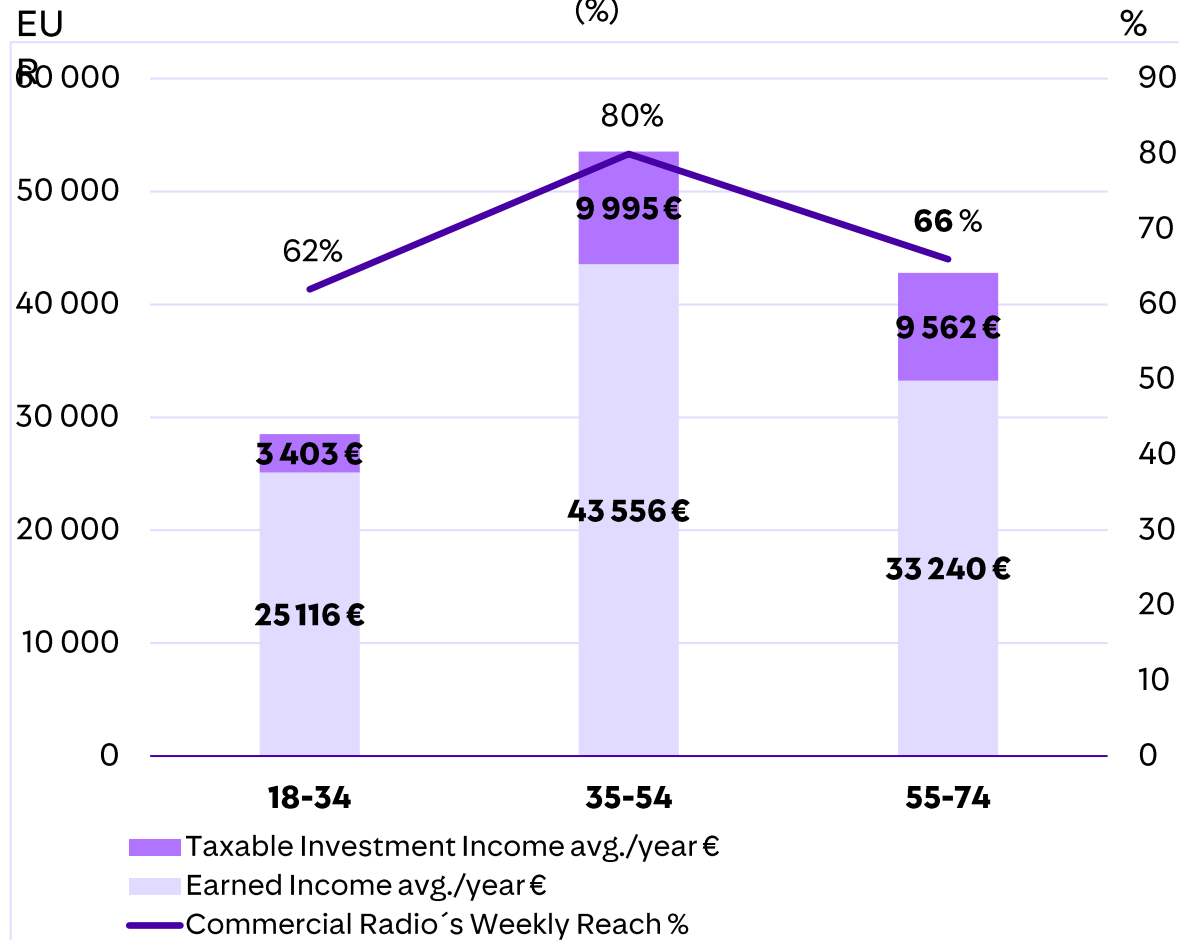
<b>13%</b>	Leisure and sports
<b>12%</b>	Financial sector
<b>12%</b>	Travel and traffic
<b>11%</b>	Teleservices
<b>10%</b>	IT, audio and video

Source: Kantar Ad Intelligence 2023



# Massive audio reach in the age group with the most consumption power

Annual income of Finnish people (average) and the reach of commercial radio



- ▶ Commercial radio reaches 80% of the 35–54-year-olds' age group with most consumption power on a weekly basis.
- ▶ The combined reach of FM radio and digital audio among people aged 35–54 is 99% on a weekly basis.

Sources: Finnish Tax Administration 2024: Earned income and capital income for the year 2022, KRTonline annual report 2023, This is how Finns listen 2023, Nepa.



# Bauer Media's Total Audio has the most reach in Finland

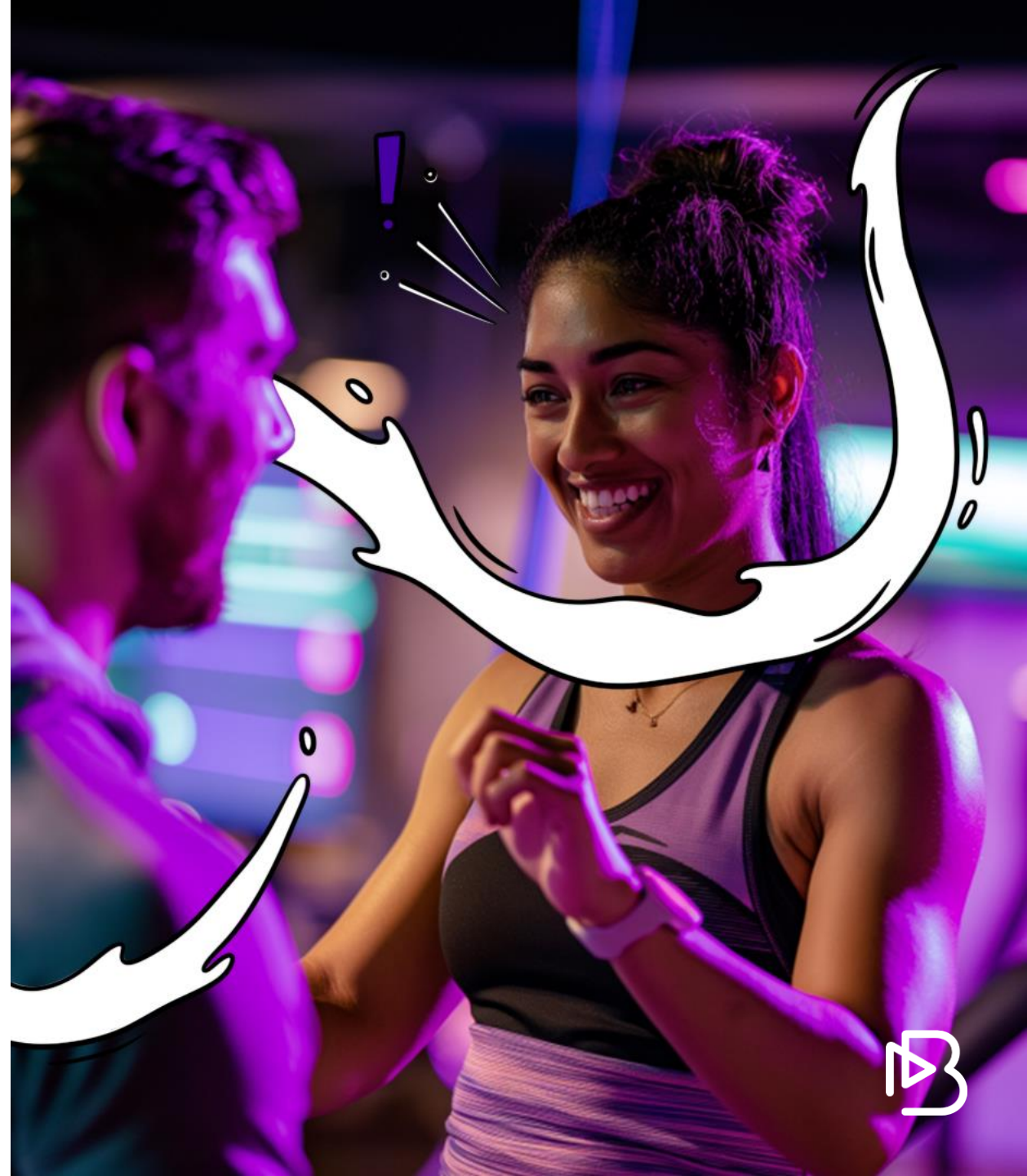
A lot of time is spent listening to audio, and audio reaches almost every Finn. Bauer Media wants to enable the advertiser to have the means to reach and influence with audio in all situations and interfaces. Total Audio reaches up to 3 million Finns every week.

Bauer Media's Total Audio product utilises audio's comprehensive and versatile interfaces in FM radio and digital Audiostream, as well as in the new audio Retail Media, covering more than 200 retail spaces across Finland.

Total Audio brings power and impact to the campaign:

- ▶ Wide coverage and sufficient playback on FM radio.
- ▶ Good attention when it comes to focused listening to digital audio.
- ▶ Product preferencing close to the time of purchase with audio in Retail Media.

Sources: Mind Kuluttaja January–June 2020 Consumption, free time and media; KRT 5–10/2023 and Population structure 2022, Statistics Finland





# Audio should not be the missing piece of the digital plan

Laura Björkskog  
Head of Digital Ad Operations



The success of digital audio continues. Alongside impact and comprehensive reach, the ease of buying\* and good, constantly evolving targeting opportunities influence advertisers to become more interested in digital audio. So it is no wonder that the 2023 media investment figures show a 45% increase in digital advertising of radio as the largest media group.

Audio should not be the missing piece of the digital plan. Digital audio reaches commercially interesting target groups well and listening is focused – a real dream spot for an advertiser!

Bauer Media's Audiostream advertising network offers the most versatile digital audio coverage on the market. In fact, Audiostream has become as large in terms of reach in the millions as, for example, the largest commercial radio station in the country, [Radio Nova](#). Through Audiostream, the advertiser reaches *On Demand listeners* of podcasts, online radios, music streams and mobile games.

The benefits of digital audio advertising also include high ad retention: our digital audio advertising network, Bauer Audiostream, has an average through-listening rate of 95%.

\*Buying digital audio is easy. For example, from the offerings of Bauer Media, you can make a direct campaign purchase, or alternatively buy the whole as Total Audio or programmatically through your own DSP.



# New in 2024!

## Audio advertising in mobile games

With mobile gaming network [Odeeo](#), our digital audio advertising network Bauer Audiostream also offers advertisers access to the media day of people playing mobile games.

Audio advertising in mobile games enables the player to have an uninterrupted gaming experience. Odeeo has developed advertising together with the players themselves, and the players are enthusiastic about audio advertising.

*Audio advertising is more user-friendly than other forms of advertising and does not interrupt the gaming experience itself.*

There are great examples of mobile game advertising in the world. One worth mentioning is the recruitment campaign of the aviation industry, which is suffering from a pilot shortage, in which the airline recruited route pilots with audio advertising from mobile games.



# Bauer Media's Total Audio has the most reach in Finland

Retail Media is a fast-growing audio advertising channel. In addition to FM and digital audio, Bauer Media's Total Audio reaches your audience in Retail Media, close to the time of purchase, covering more than 200 retail premises across Finland.

Bauer Media's nationwide Total Audio product offers the widest audio coverage on the market, up to 3 million per week. The weekly reach in the 25–54 age group is 68 per cent.

*The impact of audio and long listening times, combined with the impact of audio also close to the time of purchase, provide excellent starting points for launch campaigns, for example.*

Total Audio brings power and impact to the campaign:

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Sources: Mind Kuluttaja January–June 2020 Consumption, free time and media; KRT 5–10/2023 and Population structure 2022, Statistics Finland



# On the throne of effectiveness – the currency of memorability

Antti Pehkonen  
*Head of Creative*



Will there be a sound if a tree falls in the forest and no one is there to hear it? And will there be an impact if your marketing message does not address the target audience? The answer to both is obvious. The answer to the ancient Buddhist riddle was found by researchers of the human sensory system, and the latter has been witnessed by us all – either as marketers or consumers. There is too much stale advertising.

So, what can you do to make advertising effective? Basically, all advertising is unwanted, so if you're going to crash a party, it's best to bring some champagne with you. The words of **Bob Thacker**, former Chief Marketing Officer of OfficeMax, apply not only to traditional advertising but also to content marketing: you have to impress and invest in quality. And when it comes to audio content connections with audio influencers, it is a good idea to reserve two bottles. Nothing bloodstains the ear canals as badly as a commercial content message that sounds ingenuine.



# Currency changes as you move from ad breaks to content

What does an impressive audio content collaboration consist of? For the past few years, I have been writing and talking to our customers about the [formula for effectiveness](#). In short: creative idea x reach x audio influencer content x multi-channel distribution and implementation. The functionality of the formula has been proven in practice several times, but if the doctrine had to choose the element that most affects the end result, it would be the audio influencers and their content.

Why is its role so important? When you jump from advertising breaks to content, the currency changes as well. CPTs, LTRs, and terpts are important, but when it comes to impressive content, the metric is memorability. What kind of experience does the listener have? What kind of impressions does the content create, and what kinds of messages that affect activity and behaviour change are generated by the audio influencers of radio programmes and podcasts?

*The important thing is not to think about what a marketer wants to say through audio influencers, but what your target audience would like to hear.*

It is the essence of recall and impact.

In order to create memories and impact, audiences should be taken to places they've never been before. Here, audio and audio influencers have a big opportunity. With the help of audio storytelling, the target audience can be transported to the worlds we want in a familiar company.

*When a new topic is presented by a favourite audio influencer, it is easier to internalise the topic thanks to the trust that has already been created.*

One of the experts in the subject area is Talent Coach **Anssi Honkanen**, who coaches Bauer Media's content creators and delves into impressive speechcommunication in more depth in his own writing titled [Puheviestinnän taito on supervoima](#) ("The skill of voice communication is a superpower"). When asked about the effectiveness of commercial audio content, he highlights the concept of the emotional level. What kind of emotional level programme creators create for their listeners, and how is that emotional flow maintained throughout the programme? In this case, commercial content must also fit in this same stream, so that the listener's flow and emotional level does not break.



# Genuine flow of emotions led by audio influencers

Sounds easy, but what explains the effectiveness? Why do radio station and podcast hosts influence our behaviour and opinions so strongly? One of the reasons is the intimate nature of audio as a media. On audio platforms, people communicate with people from the same level. An audio influencer is like a good friend; a trustworthy and funny pal who can genuinely listen. And even if it's been a while since your last encounter, you always know what to expect from the other.

In digital audio, this effect is amplified by headphone listening. An undisturbed and personal media consumption experience is also included in the follow-up studies of the campaigns, both due to the increase in attention value and purchase intent.

Let's go back to the original riddle of a tree falling alone in the forest. The topic is interestingly discussed by **Joni Martikainen** in his book titled *Älä usko kaikkea mitä ajattelet* ("Don't Believe Everything You Think"). Sound does not exist in a reality outside the human perception system. There are only pressure wave changes in the atmosphere, from which the brain creates a simulation. If there is no one to hear, there is also no sound.

The same goes for influencing with audio – make sure your story is heard and remembered.



# Voice communication skills are a superpower

Anssi Honkanen  
Audio Talent Coach &  
Audio communication instructor



Have you ever wondered how much of the effectiveness of your communication is lost? Our unaffected communications lie in meeting rooms, homes, advertising breaks – everywhere we communicate with each other. When speaking, the loss of impact arises from assumptions such as “When a person hears, they listen” or “When a person listens, communication is effective”.

I coach and train audio personalities for my work at Bauer Media. The impact of voice communication fascinates me greatly. If successful, audio communication can be like a superpower that you or your brand will be remembered for. Feeling and authenticity are conveyed through speech as such, while drawing attention and making an impression are things that can be practiced. Professor **Minna Huotilainen**, brain researcher at the University of Helsinki, examines the means of speech effectiveness through brain functionality in her article [Audio on terveysteko](#) (“Audio is a health act”): *“Storytelling activates the theatre of the mind. The listener’s own audio illustration work is brain-activating, wellbeing-enhancing and imaginative”*. We have also noticed this together with our audio personalities, stories and metaphors evoke emotions related to the information, making communication more personal, easier to understand and memorable.

Was the spoken line a gift for the listener? I often ask this question to our radio hosts. If so, what did the listener receive as a gift that was meaningful to them? This question usually leads to a fruitful discussion about whether or not the gift was put together well. I think the metaphor of giving a gift is great for evaluating voice communication. For whom is the package going, what should be included in the package and what should be taken into account in the delivery of the package.

I want to share my thoughts on the means of effective voice communication in a little more detail. I also serve an impressive voice communication checklist, which we use in our daily lives with our voice communication professionals.



# Recognise the need – only a meaningful message will be remembered

The first thing to do is to identify who our package is going to – *who we are talking to*. What things are relevant to them and why do they need our communication. Once we identify the recipient's needs, it's time to make a package of the content.

You can think about what makes the contents of your package valuable through the idea of a gift. Be critical and realistic with this reflection!

- ▶ Could I offer a solution to the problem the listener is experiencing?
- ▶ Do I convey useful, new information to the listener, or perhaps a new perspective on a familiar subject?
- ▶ Can I surprise them and offer something that will make their day better?

Next, it's time to design a delivery method for your gift package – *that is, how you talk*. Before arriving, the package goes through the so-called door model, which I have outlined in connection with the training of our audio personalities, to illustrate the path taken by the message package.





# Knock, knock – will the doors of communication open?

## 1. DOOR – Attracting the listener’s attention

Here are a few ideas for a strong start:

- ▶ Question addressed to the listener
- ▶ Strong emotion-evoking sentence/claim/sound
- ▶ Providing a response in 8 seconds to why the listener should focus on your content

## 2. DOOR – Breaking down biases, mistrust and defences

If the listener is not receptive to your communication, influencing becomes difficult. Then what can you do to gain the listener’s trust? The audio conveys the feeling as it is, so you should at least think about the following:

- ▶ Do you convey the impression that you sincerely want to help the listener?
- ▶ Does your message support the listener’s sense of safety?
- ▶ Are you credible and authentic in your communication?

It is also worth considering at this point, in what kind of communication situations have you noticed your own defences turning on?

## 3. DOOR – Benefits for the listener

The third door to communication opens when your communication is easy to understand and meaningful.

- ▶ Communicate with a listener-oriented approach
- ▶ Help the listener understand why your message might be helpful to them. Stories and metaphors attach a feeling to the information, making communication more personal, easier to understand and memorable.

## 4. DOOR – way to the heart of the listener

Once you have gained attention, overcome resistance and created meaning for the listener, pay attention to the following:

- ▶ What kind of thoughts do you want to awaken in the listener?
- ▶ What would increase the listener’s interest in hearing more?



# Impressive voice communication checklist

## ✓ **Identify who you are messaging to**

Who do you want to impress? What is important to the listener and why they benefit from your message? Is there anything special in the listener's life that you could take into account in your communication?

## ✓ **Start strong**

Consider how you can reach your listener's attention quickly, what is the reason to focus on your content?

## ✓ **Take into account possible rejection, distrust and biases**

When you can show that you are on the same side as the listener, they are not listening from a defensive position. Increasing the sense of security tends to lower defences. Make sure that the audio is pleasant and comprehensible to the listener.

## ✓ **Determine the clear value of your communication to the listener**

How does your message improve the listener's life? Remember to be listener-oriented. It's not about what you want to say, it's about what your listener gets. How can you convince your audience that your message is relevant?

## ✓ **Engage your listeners in action**

Engage your message so that the listener understands how they can utilise of your message. The end of communication is often the most important place to exert influence, so be especially clear about it. What do you want your listener to remember, how you want them to act? Why should they return to the matter you are communicating about, what added value will you bring to them in the future?

## ✓ **Think carefully about the structure of the communication**

Since it is difficult for the listener to achieve concentration, focus only on the essentials. Clearly define your core message. Consider the arguments and perspectives that support the core message. Start by giving a reason to listen, give the listener the essentials, and stop so that the listener easily remembers the essentials.



# AI rushing to the audio market

Lauri Domnick  
Head of Audio Branding



The use of audio in advertising is increasing, the conceptualisation of audio advertising is growing and more and more visual advertising is taking influences from audio. All this indicates that in 2024, audio cannot be ignored.

Audio is among the most cost effective media. For this reason, we are witnessing growing audio investments, especially from brands that are traditionally strong TV advertisers. Because audio does not mean “just radio”. More than a third of all Finnish advertising contains audio, and the number of audio interfaces is constantly growing.

The year 2024 brings with it even more audio advertising utilising artificial intelligence in one way or another. Especially in tactical advertising, artificial intelligence will enrich and facilitate productions. Advertising becomes more real-time and dynamic, as artificial intelligence enables, for example, daily or even hourly changing advertising that takes into account, for example, the store’s stock balance, the prevailing weather, the daily price or the **traffic situation on a certain road section.**

Above all, however, 2024 is a year of experimentation and new learning in terms of artificial intelligence. The first audio ads produced with AI are unlikely to be the ones to collect rewards for their stunning creative implementations (of course, I hope I’m wrong). This year is about trying something new, researching, analysing and then developing.

**What other opportunities does AI offer in audio?** We talked about the topic in the event *Vaikuttavan audiomarkkinoinnin avaimet, vol. 10* (“The keys to effective audio marketing, vol. 10”).



# Audio advertising trends around the world

Ismo Heikkilä  
*Creative Director*



The 2023 audio advertising trends are a logical extension of the trends of recent years. The international audio world is really interesting at the moment, even though it's been a while since the revolution. The great years of European audio hype revolutionised thinking more generally, and we are still enjoying the ripe fruits of this quake.

The audio hype in 2016–2018 rose above all with the arrival of smart speakers and Alexa in Europe. Apple's Siri had democratised speech control for a few years already. Another thing that was significant for the phenomenon was the breakthrough of podcasts and audiobooks on different platforms. In addition, the importance of audio branding has been constantly increasing. As a result, the diverse possibilities of using audio and, above all, the fact that audio has a huge impact on the marketer in a world saturated with visuals were observed.

I listened to the competition winners from Cannes and Eurobest, and the biggest trend is still thinking about audio more broadly. Audio influencing both directly and with technology, responsibility and the return of humour are the trends in audio advertising from around the world. The first versions of these trends are already beginning to emerge in Finland, but there is certainly still time to stand out with this type of activity before others follow. Would your brand be the one that takes a step towards bolder audio activities?



# Trend 1:

## Direct effect of sound

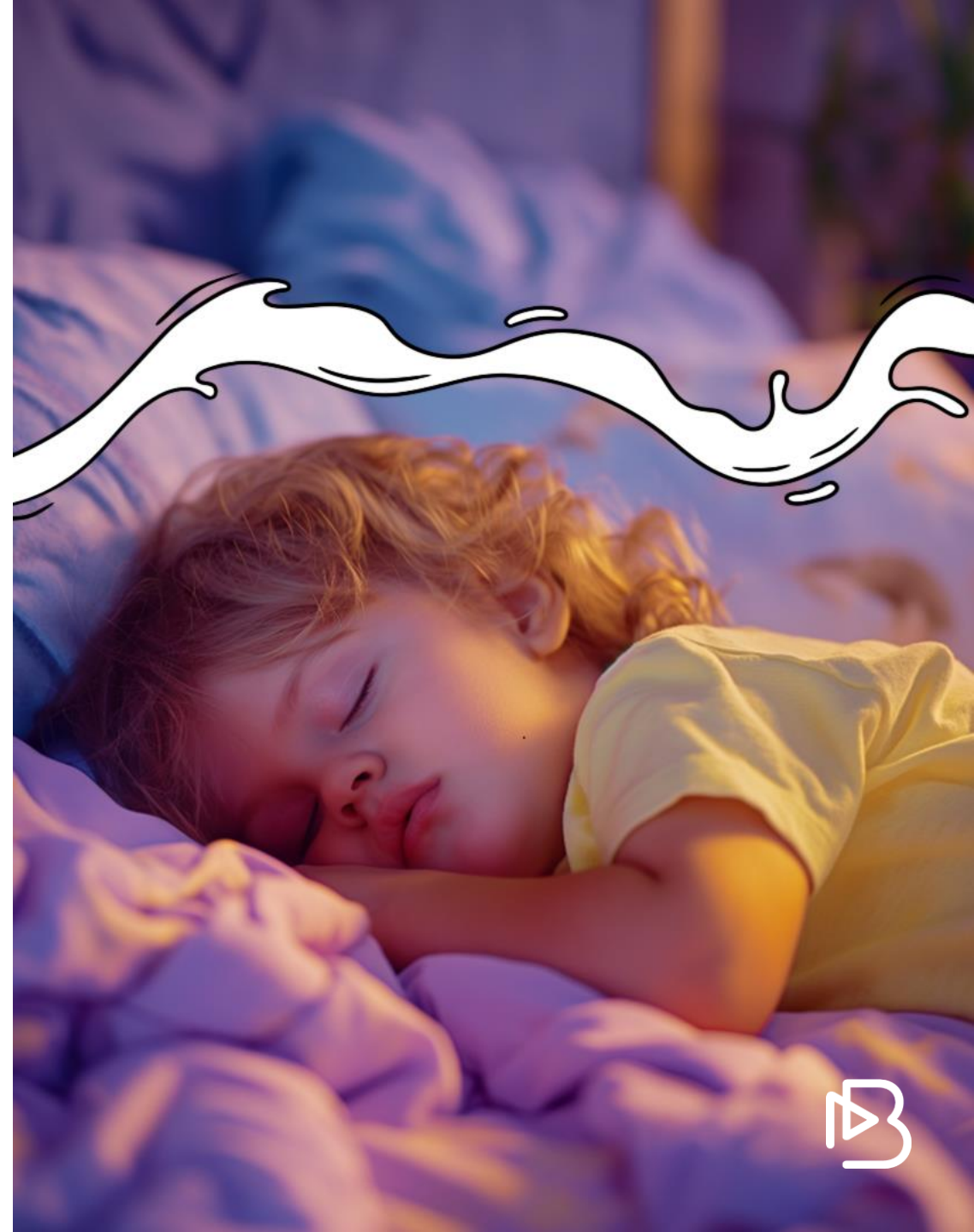
Winning jobs at Cannes and Eurobest involve thinking about audio more broadly. The winning entries take advantage of effectiveness and cross-media in a fantastic and thoughtful way. At least a couple of trends can be noticed in the use of effectiveness.

The first of these is direct voice influence. This trend often uses a scientific starting point and focuses on facilitating or improving something chosen with a certain kind of audio, music or voice.

- ▶ **The Most Beautiful Sound** makes the sound of a dying cancer cell audible to strengthen patient resilience. An important help in healing is if something invisible can be made visible. Or, in this case, audible. Harvard Medical School isolated the sound of a cancer cell, and the Berklee School of Music made an entire album of music based on the sound of cells dying for The American Cancer Society (ASCO).
- ▶ **Frequencies of Peace** was a touching concept. The Babyshop, the largest nursery store in the Middle East, has funded a lullaby developed by a group of music therapists and neuroscientists that helps children who are in the midst of and traumatised by the war in Syria fall asleep at night.

Another trend in influencing with sound is combining sound with either new technology or other media, or both.

- ▶ A good example of this is the AI-based, **Life Saving Radio made by Klick Health for surgeons**, which optimises accuracy and focus in operating theatres with the power of scientifically researched and carefully selected music.
- ▶ **Samsung's Unfear concept** utilises the noise-cancelling properties of headphones to protect people with neuropsychological syndromes from anxiety. The handset can be used to select certain sounds that often trigger people, such as a dog barking or the sirens of emergency vehicles, and to turn them off.



## Trend 2: Audible responsibility thinking

It is easy to see from the previous examples that responsibility is a megatrend that is also related to the competition winners. A very large part of the award-winning work was in some way related to the implementation of responsibility thinking in its various forms. It's nice to see that audio isn't isolated from the rest of the world or marketing.

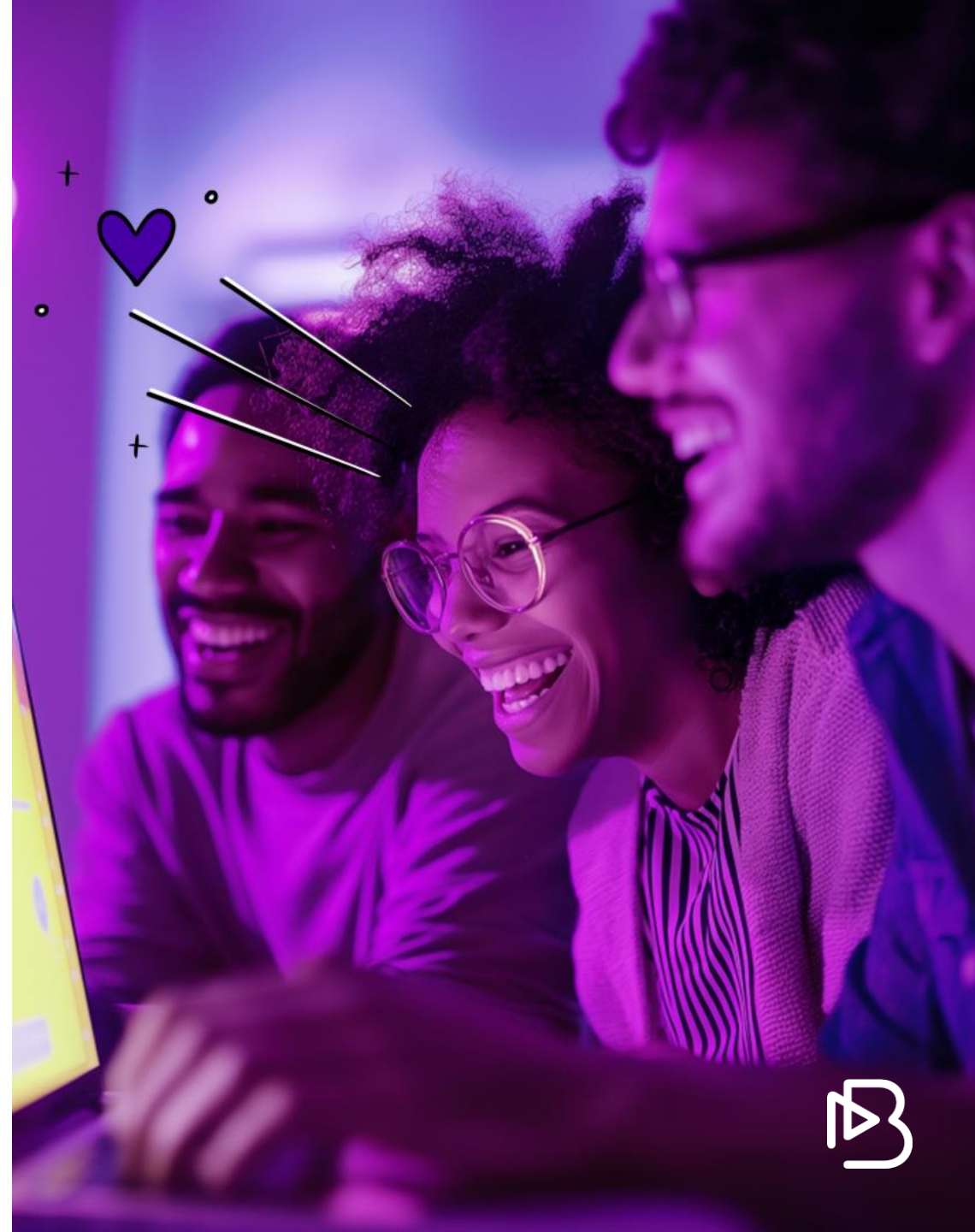
- ▶ The name of the featuring artist of the song by the most famous drag artist and singer in the world, [Brazilian Pablo Vittar](#), was guessed around the world. To everyone's surprise, the song was released as an Open Source entity, in which the songs, three different background beats and videos were separated. This encouraged young queer artists to make their own versions and stand out. Brazil has the highest number of LGBTQIA+ people killed in the world, so awareness raising and encounters are important. The advertiser in the case was the country's largest e-commerce platform Mercado Livre, which, among other things, sponsors Pride.
- ▶ [Missing Matoaka](#) is a remake of the soundtrack to Disney's Pocahontas movie. The work done for Amnesty International corrected the stereotypes and inaccuracies distorted by the Hollywood view with a new replacement soundtrack, which is meant to be turned on in sync when launching the movie.



## Trend 3: Diverse and insightful humour

Humour is back, as I heard from a representative of Cannes Lions in their presentation. As I listened to the award-winning spots, I noticed that humour is not just about telling amusing stories or punchline jokes. Humour is presented as a very diverse, insightful and even subtle contextual interpretation.

- ▶ Winner of seven awards, New Zealand telecoms operator Skinny's **"Phone it in" campaign** bought outdoor advertising and print to create the most effective radio ad. Text-based outdoor ads had instructions to call the operator's number and record a radio ad by reading the ad text. "Skinny is supposed to be as cheap as possible, so this is how we save in the production of radio ads" was the motive of the campaign.
- ▶ **The Boss Sticker** advertisement chronicles moments of horror when mistakes have been made. Skillful storytelling creates familiar situations for everyone. The picture of the manager intended for friends was sent to the work chat including the manager. After each section, it is necessary to take a calming breath. Finally, the boss laughs at the sticker like everyone else, and the breath-freshening mint Halls has been breathing its fresh scent into our ears without us noticing for the entire advertisement.



# Excuse me, does your audio advertising contain humour?

Ismo Heikkilä  
*Creative Director*



The world has increasingly more voices. The era of one single culture is over. Minority rights are related to equality at the heart of responsibility. Our society is polarised, and confrontation is encouraged rather than restrained. How does humour in audio advertising fare in this time when we hear comments like “nothing can be said anymore” around us?

What is humour? I searched for definitions for humour and found a couple suitable ones. Already in ancient Greece, **Plato** and **Aristotle** mention the theory of superiority, according to which it is amusing to ridicule those that are inferior. In the 18th and 19th centuries, philosophers **Immanuel Kant** and **Arthur Schopenhauer** advocated the incongruence theory. The theory defined that humour is the combination of two incompatible things.

In 2003, psychologist **Rod Martin** and his team published their findings on four different styles of humour. They include unifying humour, used as a social connector, self-healing humour, meaning a humorous attitude to life, an aggressive humour that degrades or demeans others and enhances the narrator, and a humour of discouragement, in which the narrator mocks themselves.

The special feature of audio is its speed. The message is heard and passed quickly. In written text, the user can go back and read again, in the communication of the moving image, the viewer’s eyes are also focused on the message. In audio, we can utilise spontaneity. The message may also sound like a quick and fun joke invented in an instant, in addition to a “more written” kind of sense of humour.

Using or creating humour is one of the many tools of audio marketing to get the listener’s attention. As in all marketing communications, the way of speaking must be suitable for the brand as well as the target group, and in addition, the humour must be sufficiently tolerable for others. This usually happens when you don’t offend others, that is, you stay away from the genre of aggressive humour.

Who decides what can be said? What about humour in audio advertising at the moment?





# Who decides what can be said?

Each listener has a subjective idea of good communication as well as a certain freedom of choice in finding content suitable for them. The law and ethical norms dictate the boundaries. On the audio side, as elsewhere, the channels are responsible for their own material, including commercial content. The industry's self-regulatory body is the Council of Ethics in Advertising under the Chamber of Commerce, which, if necessary, distributes notices on advertising that is contrary to good taste. I interviewed Senior Adviser **Tommi Pelkonen**, who is a member of the Council of Ethics in Advertising.

In his assessment, Pelkonen uses a triangle, the corners of which include legality, technical possibility and ethics. Since the first two are probably clear, we elaborated on the ethics. It consists of morals, values and norms. In Western countries, for example, we believe in the following standards: truthfulness, independence, fairness and accountability.

Surprisingly few complaints have been made about ads. In the field of radio advertising in 2021–2023, eight complaints were found in the MEN archive, five of which have received a notice. These were all ads from sex-equipment stores from 2022 and related to showtime before 9pm. Since then, the industry federation Radiomedia has started to regulate ads in the after hours industry itself, and the complaints have stopped.



# Is humour trending in audio advertising?

In the audio series of Finnish advertising competitions, humour performed better compared to foreign competitions in 2023. The trends are cyclical, and the Cannes Lions organisation has already stated that “humour has made a comeback”.

Listening to the results, humour caused more sophisticated chuckles than cathartic laughing. As a simple ratio, it can be said that if in Eurobest and Cannes Lions, humour accounted for 20–30% of the awarded work, in Finland, the situation seemed to be the opposite. As I write this, only shortlists have been published of the number one competitions of the field, *Audiomainoskilpailu Kaiku* and *Vuoden Huiput*, but humour seems to really dominate: for example, three of Kaiku’s 29 short-listed works are not based on humour.

Kaiku’s Chief Judge **Markku Rönkkö** considered this year’s level to be good. He was especially delighted by the skillful and timely use of humour. “The dramatic timing of humour hit the right spot in the best spots from the point of view of brand recall”.

It is still difficult to come up with a good humour that carries the message forward, as it has always been. However, as a reward for performance that requires daring and courage, I feel that the best works will survive and create memorability, as well as increase brand value immensely!

