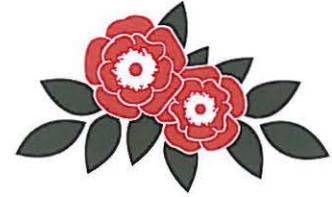


NEWS RELEASE

UNIVERSITY
— OF CENTRAL —
LANCASHIRE



Music while you wait

Have you ever wandered into that record shop in town and promptly hurried back out, driven backwards by the force of loud, uptempo dance music? Have you ever endured that interminable wait at the supermarket checkout, a captive audience to the beat of unrecognisable pop tunes. Have you ever wondered about the influence of background, or even foreground music on our everyday lives? Marketing lecturer Steve Oakes, from the University of Central Lancashire is doing just that and focusing in particular on the way that music can make us behave in the service environment.

Steve, a jazz guitarist, is lucky enough to be able to combine his hobby with his work in the University's Department of International Business and Accounting. His research interests focus upon the way in which background music can affect customer responses within advertising and service environment contexts. Although influenced by factors such as customer age and gender, research has shown that variations in tempo and style of background music can influence satisfaction levels and purchase behaviour of consumers in different contexts (e.g. supermarket shoppers and restaurant diners).

Whilst younger punters are attracted to the clubland environment of the town centre record shop, older customers may prefer a setting with quiet background music, allowing them to browse at their leisure. Music itself can even influence customers' perception of waiting time.

"Music is a powerful tool," says Steve Oakes. "The actual tempo of background music can be used to make people think that they have queued for a shorter length of time, and no music at all can cause customers to believe that they have waited longer." Steve is currently using students at the University in his latest experiment, having tested them for their reactions to background music varying in tempo as they waited to enrol for their new courses.

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21 March 2002

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Note: For further information, please contact Steve Oakes, in the Department of International Business and Accounting on tel: 01772 894705, or Pamela Culley in the Media Office on 01772 892486.