

Survey reveals music trends rocking young urban Asian consumers

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Convenience, convergence and growth opportunities from connecting with consumers are the three big trends driving the consumer music market in Asia according to the Branded, MTV and Synovate Music Matters survey released today at the 2007 Music Matters Asia Pacific Music Forum in Hong Kong.

In research that explores how passionate young urban Asians are about music, what music-related activities they engage in and their attitudes towards a digital music future, Synovate surveyed 3,857 respondents aged 15 to 34 years in China, Hong Kong, India, Indonesia, Korea, Malaysia, the Philippines, Singapore, Taiwan and Thailand.

Convenience

Synovate Director Media Research Asia Pacific, Craig Harvey, said that the Music Matters survey shows Asian consumers are as passionate about the digital technology they use to access and play music as they are about the music itself.

"Asian consumers are widely embracing digital music technology, using computers, MP3 players and mobile phones to make their music more convenient and accessible, ensuring they can listen to their preferred music choices when and where they want," Mr Harvey said

"Significantly, 51% of consumers said they would listen to music more if they owned an MP3 player or music-playing mobile phone, emphasising the importance of digital technology in making music more convenient and driving consumer demand."

Across the region, 56% of consumers had played music on a computer in the past month while 53% had played music on an MP3 player in the past month.

However, despite the strong emergence of digital convenience, MTV Networks Asia VP Research & Planning, Ian Stewart said traditional methods of music delivery should not be discounted, with digital technology living side-by-side with traditional forms of music in some Asian countries.

"Digital music may equate to more convenient music, but one third of all consumers across Asia still watch music videos on television almost every day, with a further 25% watching music videos on television two to three times a week," he said.

"In countries such as India and Indonesia, where internet penetration can pose a problem, television is a particularly important medium for consumers to access music, with 67% of Indians and 35% of Indonesians watching music videos on television almost every day, the highest rates regionally."

Convergence

As digital technology becomes increasingly prevalent, consumers are now demanding that their computers and mobile phones also serve as one-stop music shops.

"Convergence is a significant trend in the Asian music industry, with fifty seven per cent of consumers regionally indicating that they are ready to replace their MP3 player or iPod with a music-playing mobile phone," said the Executive Director of Branded, Jasper Donat.

“The importance of the mobile phone for playing music is also seen in music download figures, with more than one quarter of consumers regionally (27%) having downloaded and saved a song to their mobile phone in the past month and 63% agreeing that the music industry should be working with telecommunications companies to deliver music via mobile phone,” he added.

Males aged 15 to 24 (32%) are most likely to download songs to their mobile, with consumers in China (39%), India (33%) and Malaysia (33%) more likely than consumers in other countries to have downloaded songs to their phones.

Mr Harvey noted that the most enthusiastic demand for converged devices came from the emerging economies in Southeast Asia, with Malays (75%), Thais (66%), Filipinos (65%) and Chinese (65%) the most likely to demand such convergence.

“In developing economies, consumers' limited incomes mean choices are usually not just between brands, but between purchasing one product or another.

“With mobile phones such an important means of communication in many of these countries, a phone that also plays music removes the need to choose between products and effectively provides these consumers with more ‘bang for their buck’,” Mr Harvey added.

The consumer connection – opportunities for industry growth

Mr Harvey said the Music Matters survey ultimately revealed great opportunities for savvy, consumer-driven music marketers to take the initiative and interact with Asian consumers on a more regular basis.

“While Asian consumers engage in many music-related activities and use the internet and computers to listen to and access music, there are big gaps in their use of the internet to read and learn about music and the frequency with which they experience live music.

“Music industry organisations hoping to have a more personal, ongoing relationship with their Asian consumers should be looking to take advantage of these gaps by providing access to engaging, relevant, local music content on the internet that helps shape consumer music tastes and develop strong brand loyalty,” he said.

Sixty percent of consumers regionally said that they never read about music online with consumers in many internet savvy countries including Korea (64%), Singapore (57%) and Taiwan (46%) never using the internet to read about music. A further 57% of respondents regionally said they had not visited a website for music related activities in the past month.

“The Asian music market holds great potential. With the right approach to engaging Asian consumers via the mediums they use most – the internet and television – the music industry can help shape and direct consumer choices and develop a loyal, enthusiastic market that presently remains relatively untapped,” Mr Harvey said.

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