



URBAN
OUTFITTERS
+
Music

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Creative Development Research
April 23, 2015

URBAN
OUTFITTERS



Introduction & Goal of Research

Since 1970, Urban Outfitters has maintained a top position in the retail market as a supplier of alternative clothing and lifestyle products. In recent years, the brand has increasingly attached itself to the music industry, effectively connecting the persona of an UO customer to the ideals of freedom, rebellion, and personal expression. With music as a centerpiece of Urban Outfitter's marketing strategy, the brand has turned to us to greater amplify its communication tactics within key demographics.

After extensive research of both the brand and its customers, we decided to build a campaign that would promote Urban Outfitter's most pivotal music product category: vinyl records. In this report, we will relate the process of our research and the resulting positioning strategy as well as next-round creative development research. Ultimately, we will provide final recommendations for a communications strategy that will promote awareness and sales of Urban Outfitters' music products.

Background & Strategy Recap

Vinyl is making a comeback, and having a record collection is no longer just a nostalgic memory. Since 2008, vinyl sales have risen from two to nine million annually. Additionally, vinyl sales rose by three million from 2012 to 2014 alone.



Urban Outfitters has a vast selection of vinyl records, record players, and music products that align with the increasing demand in this category. We want to create awareness that Urban Outfitters has music products, and to attract those looking to start their vinyl collections so that they can see the selection that Urban has to offer. Based on our initial research, we determined that our target audience is adults between the ages of 18-34 who have started a record collection recently or are looking to begin one. They already listen to music on many other mediums, but are drawn to the uniquely physical experience of dropping a needle and playing a record. Though they appreciate this uniqueness, they know they're not music experts, and aren't afraid to shop at a chain store or mall to find the products they want. So what's the strategy to reach this audience? With its expansive selection and many locations, Urban Outfitters is the non-intimidating and accessible place for first-time vinyl buyers to build their collections.

After conducting our initial research and developing a strategy to move forward with, we presented our findings to the creative teams. We briefed them on vinyl industry trends, the target audience, and our strategy, and provided them with key tone words for their campaigns. After the presentation, we provided each creative group with our creative brief, and met with them to further discuss and answer any of their initial questions about our strategy.



Methodology

After the creative teams presented their concepts, we began plans to talk to the target audience in order to understand their opinions and attitudes towards each creative idea. We wanted to take a general census of our target audience to gain insights about overall feelings towards the ads, and decided that the best way to do this was through an online platform. Since creative development research is very visually-based, the image feature available on Google Forms made it the best online platform for our survey. We created a brief survey that included a screener for age and intent to purchase a vinyl record, and then assessed general music behavior, attitudes towards vinyl records, and then opinions about each creative concept. We promoted the survey online through social media and email, and collected twenty survey responses.

We also recognized the importance of talking to our target audience on a deeper level. To truly understand the thoughts and ideas behind our target audience's feelings towards the advertisements, we created a goal to conduct six in-depth interviews. Each 12-15 minute interview began with the same screener as our survey (one question about age and one question about potential intent to purchase vinyl), and then explored each individual's music behavior, and attitudes towards each creative concept. Three of the in-depth interviews were conducted with



individuals that passed the screener for our target audience, and three other in-depth interviews were conducted as intercept interviews with customers shopping in the music section of the Urban Outfitters store in Philadelphia.

Execution Assessments & Recommendations

In all six of the in-depth interviews, respondents felt the *Live Your Music* advertisement was unclear. None of the respondents recognized the vinyl record on the wall, and most did not even know it was a record. Four of the six interviewees stated the ads could be misperceived as furniture ads.

“This is trying to sell the same thing, am I correct? Where is the product?”

“Even though it says, “live your music,” it just doesn’t deal with music.”

“Looks like a promotion for Urban Outfitters home goods.”

“I definitely don’t think this is communicating anything about music at all. This is more like apartment decorating to me.”

In order to attract first-time vinyl buyers and those who are relatively new to vinyl to Urban Outfitters, the ad needs to be relatable and communicate the appropriate message. If people are unable understand what the ad is selling, the advertisement must be adjusted to have a clearer understanding. If the ad placed less emphasis on the furniture, and included a more familiar album, the ad would be



more effective. Two respondents believed if different artists were used, the ad would be clearer.

Despite the communication issues, some respondents found the ad visually appealing. They felt the ads design was attention grabbing.

“It’s really cool, and it’s very Urban Outfitters.”

“Yes, it is very creative.”

“Well there are a lot of things going on in the ad, so I would want to analyze it and read the words to figure out what it’s all about.”

The design components of the ad are the strongest takeaways from the ad, however the ad’s communicability must be altered to develop an effective advertisement.

The opinions of the respondents was overwhelming positive regarding the *Drop In* advertisement. Many felt it matched the Urban Outfitters lifestyle, and stood out through its color scheme.

“The colors stand out. It’s edgy too.”

(When asked if the ad is attention grabbing) *“Definitely. I think it has to do with the green color popping out and the Adele girl.”*

(When asked if the ad is likeable) *“Yeah, yeah. I feel like you could do a lot things with [this idea].”*



The *Drop In* ad was not only visually appealing, but also very relatable to the respondents. This was largely due to the use of Adele, a highly recognizable musician for Urban Outfitters shoppers within the targeted age demographic. She, along with the design of the ad, gave the ad a modern feel, which resonated with the respondents.

“(This ad shows) that vinyl has updated music choices.”

When asked about the likelihood of ad influencing purchase, one respondent said, *“In some ways, probably because it has a new artist out on the cover. So, it would make me think that they have other [new] artists available on vinyl.”*

When asked what the ad says about vinyl records, another respondent said, *“that they’re modern”* and that the ad matched the Urban Outfitter’s brand because of the *“scenery and the model”* and because it *“actually has one of the (Urban Outfitter’s) records in it.”*

The ad’s visual appeal combined with its ability to communicate a clear message made the ad effective. The ad is alluring with its ability to fuse a vintage product with a modern musician. The green color scheme grabbed the attention of our respondents. These factors, combined with little negative feedback, indicate that this advertisement may have the greatest likelihood of success.



The *Feel It* campaign ads received many mixed reviews during our research.

The ads were considered appealing to some, but were also believed to not be as eye-catching as the other campaign's ads.

"It's appealing, but [there's] nothing special about it. It's dull."

"Music-wise, it doesn't really draw attention... doesn't really pop."

Two respondents felt the ads' copy "Feel It" was clear and worked well with the visual, while two other respondents had difficulty understanding the line. Some stated the copy was also too small and difficult to notice. As for whether the ads matched the Urban Outfitter's brand, three respondents claimed that it did.

"I think it fits well just because it doesn't have a lot of context to make it not fit.

But it doesn't have enough to make it say oh yeah, this is definitely Urban Outfitters."

"I mean it does... only because they have the furniture that's displayed in the image and the stuff that they sell at their store. It's very unique and I know it's Urban [Outfitters]."

Despite a lack of intriguing qualities that the other ad campaigns possess, these ads are somewhat strong in creating an image relative to the Urban Outfitters brand. One of the respondents preferred the ad featuring a person over the other two because it made the ad more relatable by offering "a human touch." For this reason,



adding models to the ads may be an opportunity for this campaign to thrive. The ads do incorporate elements that are associated with Urban Outfitters, but the addition of models to each ad could make them more captivating. They could also use records that the target audience is more familiar with. The ad featuring the Adele record created discussion on Adele being an influencer that can draw someone into the store. If people are exposed to an artist they are familiar with in an Urban Outfitters ad, they may be more likely to enter the store because they know that they'll find something that they've heard of and like.

Summary and Next Steps

Each execution effectively communicated the idea of experiencing the physical aspect of vinyl, but the final creative must continue to convey this message alongside the accepting and helpful recommended tone while maintaining the overall feel of the Urban Outfitters brand. Therefore, we recommend a final creative concept based off of the well-received "Drop In" executions but features a cooler, newer album than Adele's *21*. This album must resonate with consumers who enjoy popular music, but think of themselves as cultural explorers. Recommended examples include Sky Ferreira's *Night Time, My Time* as well as popular soundtracks of films such as *The Fault in Our Stars* and *The Perks of Being a Wallflower*. In addition,



notable classic rock albums may be featured. Social media executions must remain highly visual, and will be most effective if focused on the

physical experience of vinyl, rather than the visibility of the Urban Outfitters logo and branded products. Finally, the color scheme of creative must be playful, bright, and eye-catching, as best demonstrated in the “Live Your Music” executions.



Appendix



Fig. 1 Execution 1, Print, A. Phifer, A. Guerin (*Tested Execution*)

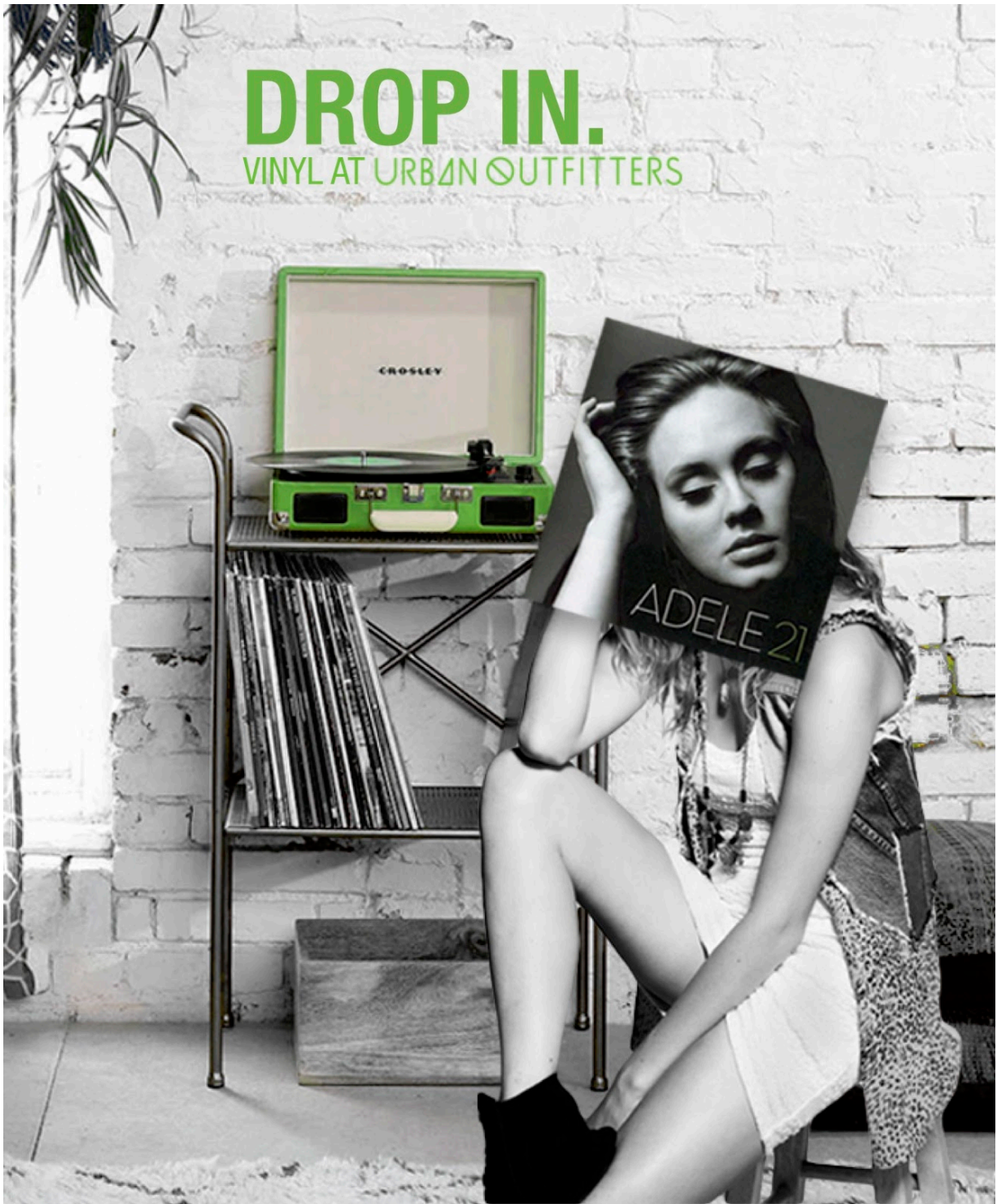


Fig. 2 Execution 2, Print, E. Mihalik, L. Kershner (*Tested Execution*)



Fig. 3 Execution 3A, Print, K. Koslop, L. Wonkeryor



Fig. 4 Execution 3B, Print, K. Koslop, L. Wonkeryor (*Tested Execution*)



Fig. 5 Execution 3C, Print, K. Koslop, L. Wonkeryor



Social Media Executions

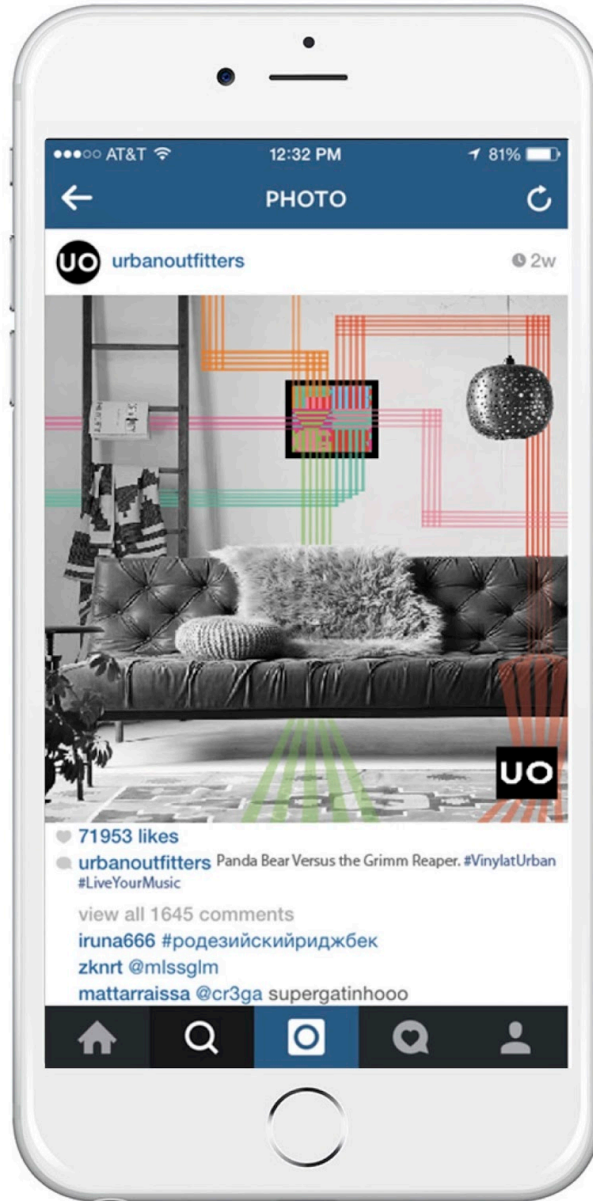


Fig. 6 Execution 1, Instagram, A. Phifer, A. Guerin



Fig. 7 Execution 1, Facebook, A. Phifer, A. Guerin

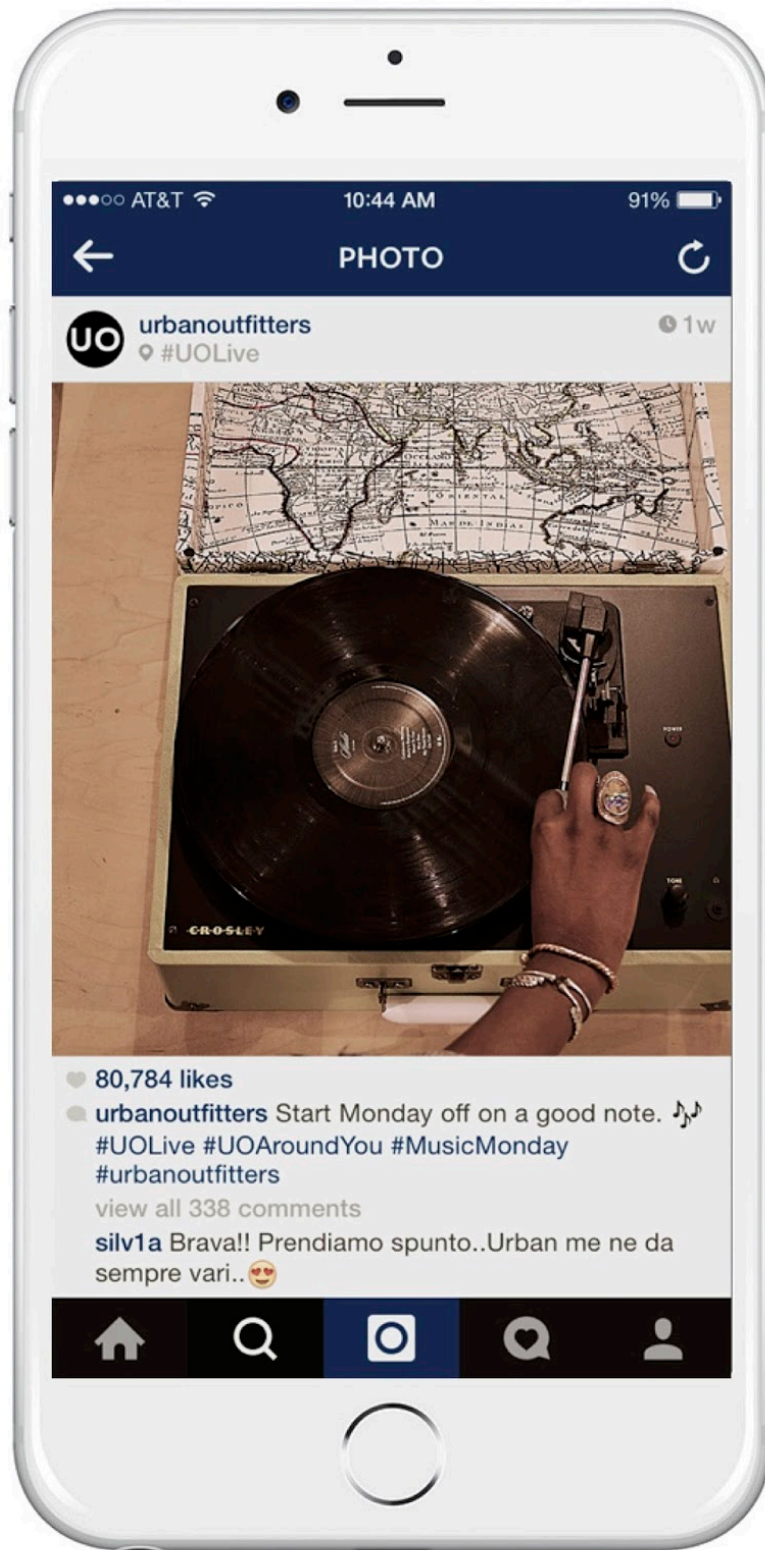


Fig. 8 Execution 3B, Instagram, K. Koslop, L. Wonkeryor

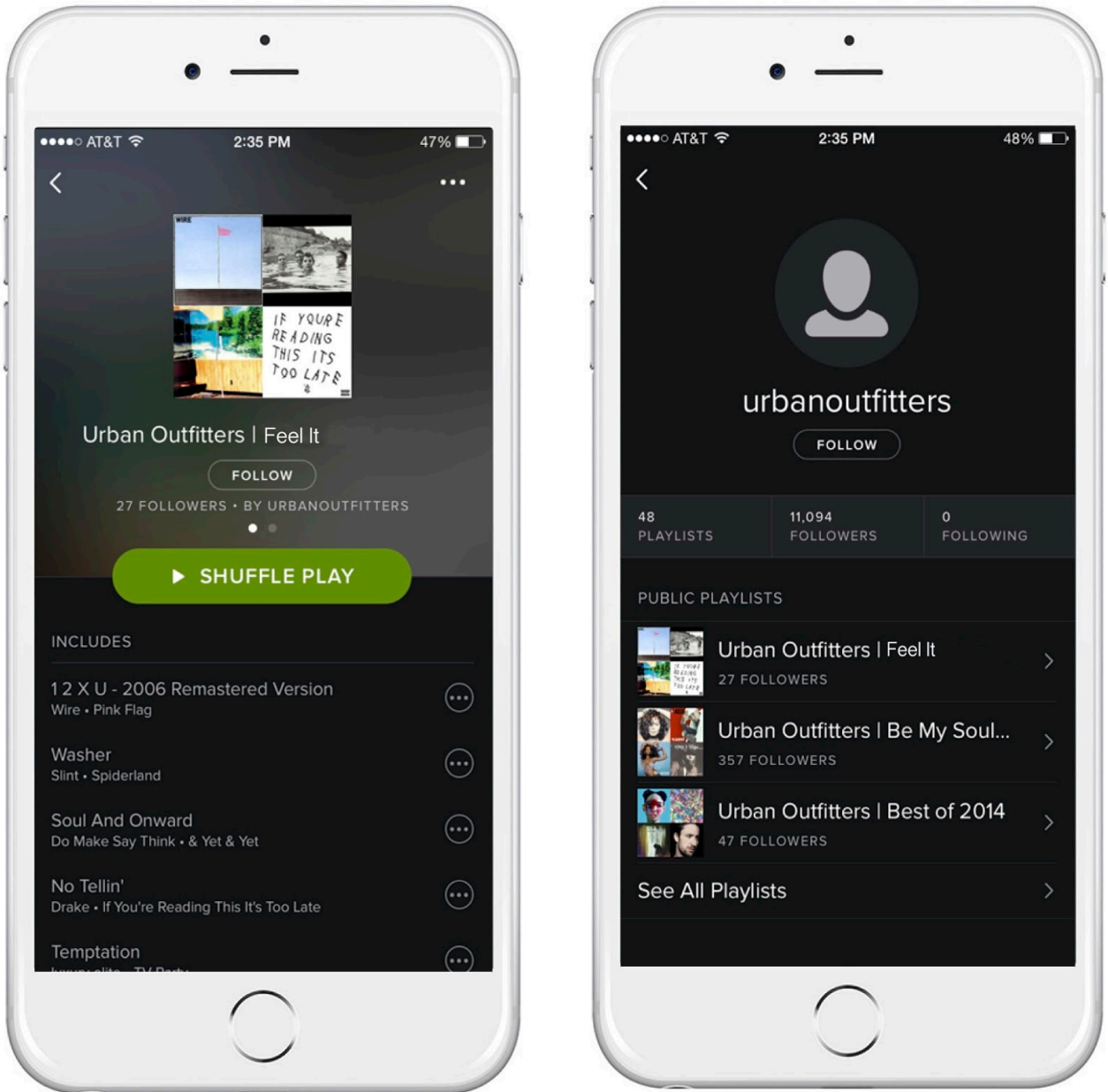


Fig. 9 Execution 3D, Spotify, K. Koslop, L. Wonkeryor



SURVEY QUESTIONNAIRE:

Screeners

What is your age? (Must answer between 18-34)

Have you ever purchased, or are you considering purchasing a vinyl record? (Must answer yes to one of the first two)

Yes, I have purchased

Yes, I have considered purchasing

No, I have neither purchased nor considered

Survey Introduction

Hello, and thank you for participating in our survey. All of your answers will be kept confidential, and used for our research development. You may stop

Have you ever purchased a vinyl record for yourself before?

Yes

No

How many times would you say that you listen to music in a typical week?

0 times

1-4 times

5-9 times

10-14 times

More than 14 times in a week

When you do listen to music, what method do you typically use to play it?

On a digital music device (iPod, etc.)

Music streaming site (Pandora, Spotify, YouTube)

A record player

On your phone

Keeping in mind your previous vinyl record purchases, how likely would you say you are to a buy a vinyl record in the next 12 months?

I have not bought a vinyl record, and I am likely to buy one.

I have not bought a vinyl record, and I am not likely to buy one.

I have bought a vinyl record before, and I am likely to buy one again.

I have bought a vinyl record before, and I am not likely to buy one again.

Please briefly state what you think this ad says about vinyl records:



If you were flipping through a magazine or browsing online, would this ad catch your attention? Please briefly explain why or why not.

Do you generally like this ad? Please briefly explain why or why not.

Do you think the message is clear? Please briefly explain why or why not.

Who do you think this ad is geared towards?

Do you think that this/these ad/s fit well with the Urban Outfitters brand? Please briefly explain why or why not.

QUALITATIVE QUESTIONNAIRE

What do you think this ad says about vinyl records?

If you were flipping through a magazine or browsing online, would this ad catch your attention? Please briefly explain why or why not.

Do you feel that this ad resonates with you? Can you relate to it? Please briefly explain why or why not.

Do you generally like this ad? Please briefly explain why or why not.

What do you think this ad is trying to convey?

Do you think the message is clear? Please briefly explain why or why not.

Who do you think this ad is geared towards?

Do you think that this/these ad/s fit well with the Urban Outfitters brand? Please briefly explain why or why not.

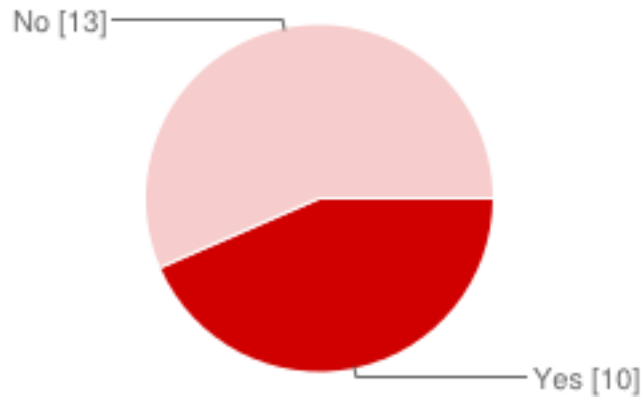
What adjectives would you use to describe the ads?

Do you think the ads message is clear? What is your interpretation of the ads message?



Survey Responses: Full responses available [here](#)

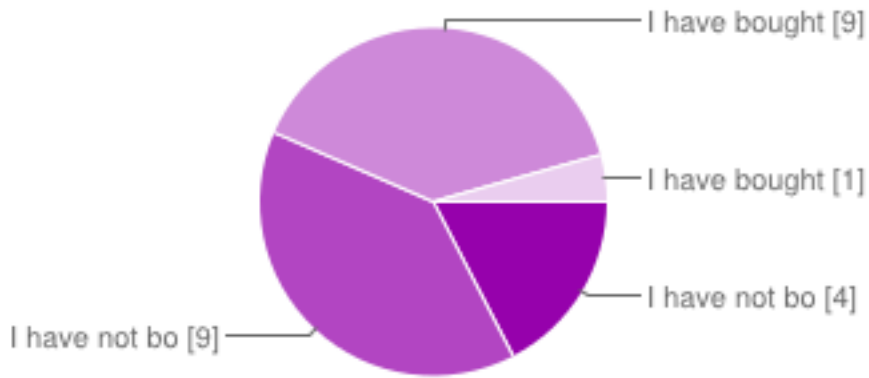
Have you ever purchased a vinyl record for yourself before?



Yes	10	25%
No	13	32.5%



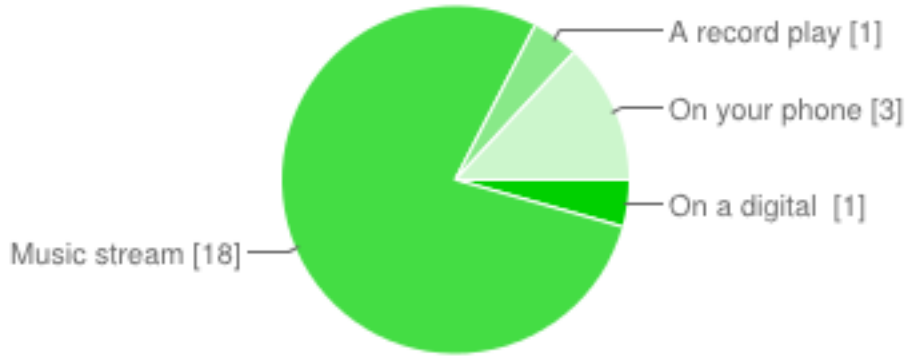
Keeping in mind your previous vinyl record purchases, how likely would you say you are to buy a vinyl record in the next 12 months?



I have not bought a vinyl record, and I am likely to buy one.	4	10%
I have not bought a vinyl record, and I am not likely to buy one.	9	22.5%
I have bought a vinyl record before, and I am likely to buy one again.	9	22.5%
I have bought a vinyl record before, and I am not likely to buy one again.	1	2.5%



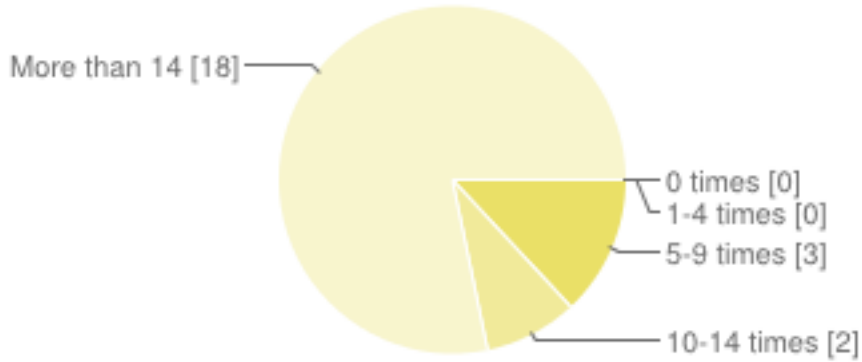
When you do listen to music, what method do you typically use to play it?



On a digital music device (iPod, etc.)	1	2.5%
Music streaming site (Pandora, Spotify, YouTube)	18	45%
A record player	1	2.5%
On your phone	3	7.5%



How many times would you say that you listen to music in a typical week?



0 times	0	0%
1-4 times	0	0%
5-9 times	3	7.5%
10-14 times	2	5%
More than 14 times in a week	18	45%