

# Madison Avenue's Musical Giveaways

## Advertising Mailbox

By **BRIAN STEINBERG**  
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Q: What is with the many CD music compilations I keep getting? I've gotten one from an Armani store, one from a new apartment building, and I've seen them from auto dealers. At this rate, we will not need iTunes or Napster anymore.

--Murali Doraiswamy, Chapel Hill, N.C.

A: Sounds like you've got a case of slipped discs. Madison Avenue likes these musical giveaways because compact discs and DVDs make for appealing -- and portable -- entertainment that interested consumers can take with them on their travels and even pass along to friends.

What's more, marketers find this sort of gambit inexpensive compared with other methods of outreach, says Allan Steinmetz, chief executive of Inward Strategic Consulting, a Newton, Mass., marketing-strategy consultancy. Promotional CDs and the like appeal to sports, entertainment and movie marketers, apparel companies, personal-electronics firms and auto makers, says Mr. Steinmetz, with business-to-business categories, packaged-foods marketers and pet-food advertisers among those who haven't fully embraced this sort of thing.

Still, as your letter suggests, too much of anything can become trite and hackneyed -- not a great thing for advertisers looking to be hip. Another question: In an era where music and entertainment are increasingly transmitted

and downloaded via the Internet, is a simple CD as alluring as it once was? Perhaps, but soon it might require something extra -- the feel of something burned "just for you," or content unavailable anywhere else.

As broadband penetrates more homes, and more advertisers latch on to this marketing trick, even a promotional CD will have to carry with it a little more allure, or drive consumers more directly to a larger effort. Let's see who sings this sort of song in the months to come.

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