

Rick's Rant—Play that funky music?

The great joy of having a home office is that I don't have to commute to work. The not-so-great joy is that the good wife knows I'm home. For reasons I don't understand, this means I am suddenly available to do all those things I've never done before. Change the laundry. Walk the dogs. Pick up the kid from school. Go to the pharmacy.

Thank goodness I don't have a real job; I'd be exhausted.

My favorite task is grocery shopping and I had an interesting brand experience at my neighborhood HyVee recently. We live just around the corner from both the HyVee and an "assisted living" community, which also features an Alzheimer's unit. (It's comforting to know that I won't have to go far when they decide to put me away.) The retirement home has a shuttle bus that takes the residents to the grocery. As best I can tell, there is some sort of directional beam that signals the bus to head to the store whenever I back out of the driveway, because me and the old-timers are always there together.

HyVee does a nice job of catering to this crowd; their people are always friendly, helpful and patient. They let the bus park right in front of the door. No one ever seems to be in too big of a hurry. It's all very soothing.

But this time, HyVee added a little something extra. As I'm leaving the store and walking to my car, I hear extreme rock-and-roll music blaring from a tent in the parking lot. Wild Cherry (the 1970s pop music sensation) is screaming at me to "Play that funky music, white boy." I have no idea what was happening inside the tent, but I'm guessing they didn't attract many members of the blue-hair set with that choice of music.

If you are going to have music playing at your place of business, make sure it's right for your clientele — not your staff members. As he notes in his book, *A New Brand World*, Scott Bedbury says "Brands are sponges for content, for images, for fleeting feelings."

You can bet they are also sponges for funky music.