

What's in a song?

By Elizabeth Ortega, Principal of ECO Strategic Communications

Lawyers are said to be risk averse. We know why we expect our lawyers to be cautious, but in today's competitive market, we also want them to be innovative. We demand outside-the-box thinkers who know when it's time to throw the three pointer or pass the ball--most often, a split-second decision. How can we merge two incongruent personality traits? Let's focus on how we can infuse thoughtfulness with creativity.



The music effect.

Think of the moment you hear your favorite tune, the song that rocks your world and catapults you to greatness. Writer Emily Holland's [piece](#) on how music affects athletic performance cites a study that found "listen-

ing to motivational music did encourage people to take more risks." Listening is a key factor in any communication strategy and it all starts with you. It's entirely possible that leadership coaching is effective because the coach serves as the sounding board to the leader and the process becomes a mirror that reflects back. So, a song is an intimate dialogue with yourself.

This inner concert can pull you out, up, or simply help you release your inherent creative being.

Listen to your inner child.

My young son is working on basketball skills. He's got the first step down: Practice, practice and more practice. He's working hard to

ramp up his game and in doing so, he includes music. He throws shots and dribbles and jams to his “it” song. Watching him reminds me that children are pure and simple. As he moves, squeals and chants, he knows his “go-to” song, “I Believe I Can Fly,” will motivate him to jump higher: “If I can see it/Then I can do it./If I just believe it/There’s nothing to it.”

Push self-awareness.

Holland’s piece found “tasks that require high skills, as was the case in our study, may be less malleable by external influences,” according to researcher Paul Elvers of Goldsmiths, University of London, and the University of Hamburg. Thus, it would not be optimal to rock out to your favorite beat while framing a legal strategy or organizing key evidence. With this basic understanding, we know that while we cannot chew and talk at once, we can take a break to reach higher heights. We can push our limits outside of our professional tasks by removing ourselves from the daily grind.

Keep on growing and growing.

Next time you’re preparing to exercise your legal powers, shake it up a bit. Start by re-

membering what you enjoyed doing when you were a kid. I suspect just thinking about it brings a smile to your face. Think of that era and let that sound permeate your space at some point during your routine. No one has to know you sang your heart out in the shower. You can even vocalize hip-hop lyrics quietly (getting arrested isn’t part of the plan) as you run. And if you’re lucky, you may whip up a meal while channeling your favorite tune -- right before you tackle your next case.

About the Author

Elizabeth Ortega is principal of [ECO Strategic Communications](#), A Miami-based marketing agency that focuses on achieving lawyers and law firm’s leadership goals in competitive markets around the world. Consistent with her leadership counsel to lawyers and in unison with clients, she recently co-founded [The International Academy of Financial Crime Litigators](#), a collaboration of experienced public- and private-litigation professionals working with the Basel Institute on Governance to expand worldwide access to solutions in economic crime cases.



SOLUTIONS