

Please PIPEDOWN

The source for news about the campaign for freedom from piped music.

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The first newsletter

I often daydream of meeting together with 29 other people at a large grocery store. Each of us would select a shopping cart and we would all go to the manager's desk. One of us would ask that the manager please turn off the store's piped-in music for just an hour so that all 30 of us could shop in peace. Should that grocery store manager not be willing or able to turn the music off, as a group we would simply leave the shopping carts where they were and leave the store. I suspect the power of organization would persuade some retail owners that no, we don't all want the constant piped-in music in order to spend money. A nice daydream.

In my decade or so of asking, begging, demanding, bribing, and letter writing in order to get the piped-in music turned down (or better yet turned off) I have made several observations. One of the conclusions I have reached is the realization that the mere asking for this consideration from management and employees often produces the desired result. On a few incredible occasions the person with the power over the volume control actually has turned off the music! Retail, healthcare, and other management will never consider turning it down or off if no one ever asks them.

The focus of this newsletter is to encourage everyone to remember to ask. Politeness is key. We always need to use the word "PLEASE". We need ways of explaining why the music is a problem to us and why we would benefit from it being down or off. Our requests to turn down or turn off the music are reasonable requests. To make these requests reasonable and be heard requires us to learn to speak diplomatically and avoid inciting conflict with our requests. That in turn takes knowledge and support from others who feel the same way.

I hope to use this newsletter to provide news and information to help us all ask retail, restaurants, healthcare providers, and others to "Please Pipedown"

What to call IT

In this newsletter are references to "Piped" music. I kept with the term "piped" although there are numerous terms for the excessive music filling stores, restaurants, offices, and other places open to the public or where we work. It has also been referred to as background music, program audio, acoustic wallpaper, and aural litter to name a few. There are even less kinder terms used by many who are simply fed up with the noise and nuisance of piped-in music.

Comment cards

Comments cards are available to help when asking businesses to please turn down the music. These are modeled after the Pipedown comment cards and similar cards available from the Right to Quiet Society and Noise Free America. I have a limited number of these printed at this point in time and I can provide more of them to those who send a SASE.

News from readers

With each newsletter, I would like to receive feedback from readers. This can include personal triumphs and challenges, reference to recent news articles about piped-in music, opinion pieces from the news or the web, newspaper comics that address the issue, and any other news or references from the popular media. Other suggestions are welcome as well.

Advice: A consultation before using professional services.

When meeting with healthcare or other service providers, consider scheduling a consultation meeting. In that meeting, discuss the types of services you expect to need in the next months or years. Ask if the organization could accommodate another need, that of a music-free time period. In exchange, tell the person in charge that you would be willing to adjust your schedule to allow them to accommodate you.

My husband and I began this approach with our dentist. We had the perfect opportunity to meet a new dentist who was taking over the practice from a retiring dentist of ours. The practice had an open house, which we attended and where we met the new dentist. At that time we decided we would try a consultation before continuing to use that dental office.

We met in private with the dentist. We told him of the work we expected to need on our teeth in the upcoming year. He examined our history in his inherited records. We offered to be the first patients in the day, to come at lunch time, or to schedule the last appointments in the day. We offered this to minimize the likelihood that anyone would actually want the music on during those specific times of day. We were successful in negotiating quiet periods at the end of the business day where the receptionist would turn off the music for us. On one occasion we had to remind her that we had asked for this accommodation and since it had been pre-arranged she was willing to turn off the music for us. We continued with this dentist and had some major work done on our teeth all because we no longer needed to keep looking for the right healthcare setting.

We used this approach when moving to a new town and needing a new dentist a few years ago. Again, we used the phrase "can you accommodate me", which seems to invoke the correct mindset in all involved in the negotiation. This term implies asking for a reasonable favor from someone who has the power to grant the request. We recommend the use of this specific term during negotiations.

Before, when I was looking around for a new dentist many years ago, I would visit dental offices in medical complex buildings and visit the waiting area. At that time I would talk to the receptionist and simply ask her if it would be possible to have the music turned off during my appointment. At one office the receptionist actually laughed in my face. I also spent some time phoning dentist's offices. On more than one occasion I was told there was no piped-in music in the office only to find out once I got there that there was a radio playing.

The advice is to speak directly to the person who actually has some control over the music and the professional service provider is such a person. Even though the office staff do much of the work, they are directed by the person who has the largest stake in the business. If the person in charge is unwilling to make any changes for a single individual, you know so up front and have the option to continue to seek professional care elsewhere.

This approach seems to work well with smaller businesses. We have not tried it on larger organizations or national chains. Franchises often have requirements for the business owner to play a specific kind of music and that business may not be willing to accommodate anyone.

Bibliography

[The Power of Place: How Our Surroundings Shape Our Thoughts, Emotions, and Actions](#), By Winifred Gallagher. Poseidon Press, New York. 240 p , also in Paperback by HarperCollins Publishers, 1994 and 2007

In the works

Upcoming planned activities include working on a tri-fold brochure that summarizes the goals and desires of USA based Pipedowners, to be included in future newsletters. Suggestions from readers are strongly encouraged.

Quote

"I object to background music no matter how good it is. Composers want people to listen to their music, they don't want them doing something else while their music is on. I'd like to get the guy who sold all those big businessmen the idea of putting music in the elevators, for he was really clever. What on earth good does it do anybody to hear those four or eight bars while going up a few flights." Aaron Copland, quoted in [Classic Essays on Twentieth-Century Music: A continuing Symposium](#), by Richard Kostelanetz and Joseph Darby ISBN 0028645812. (Source: Wikipedia)