

ALPA[®]
OF SWITZERLAND

ALPA Corporate Sound



Corporate Sound at the Top

A Background Report of the Sound-Makers

Developing an acoustic identity for ALPA is not an easy task. In a defined process – from initial discussions and content definition through mood-board composition right across to Alphorn sound recordings – we were able to guide ALPA and their future Corporate Sound systematically to its destination. The finished acoustic presentation addresses precisely defined tonal values such as Swissness, tradition, potential, perfection and purity, and so represents the ALPA brand almost perfectly.

Initial investigation and familiarizing with ALPA

Prior to first customer contact, soundcube made enquiries of ALPA on the internet to acquire an image of the company, its products and the people behind it. In a first creative-associative exercise, a few short atmospheric charms were produced to give ALPA a first impression of what a 'brand sound' might be like. Some of these initial elements have survived through the whole process right to the final Corporate Sound.

Acquisition Contact

At the initial meeting with Ursula, Thomas and André we spoke first about the subject of Corporate Sound and its relation to Corporate Identity. We next discussed areas for its application and the content that should be communicated. Apart from a generally usable acoustic brand mark, and a so-called "mother-soundscape" as is a type of elaborate brand-sound supply, it is at trade fairs that the sound will be required. ALPA, convinced of the advantage of a Corporate Sound, then placed their order with us.

Initial Meeting

At an additional meeting with ALPA we searched still more intensively for identity-forming units and aspects of the company. The instrumentation was discussed and the Alphorn soon prevailed. Through its character and strength of association this instrument was thought best suited to represent important aspects such as Swissness, folklore, simplicity (yet an instrument for professionals all the same), size, potential and even irony.

Research and Moodboards

The information gathered so far was next deepened and expanded with further re-

search, including an extensive questionnaire that all staff members of ALPA completed jointly. In a next step, the accumulated data was used to develop musical mood-boards. These are sound sketches that try to round-up and contain the searched-for identity. We tried to develop the sketches in several basic directions, offering ALPA still more choice and decision power. The sketches also yielded first variations for an ALPA logo.

Mood Meeting, Mood Production

In a following meeting, ALPA was presented with the moods and the tentative logos. Within a few days, ALPA had decided on a preference and after the positive and negative aspects of the moods had been discussed, we could start work on the preferred mood. We could then develop the mood into a 12-minute mother-soundscape. At this stage, the sound-world was expanded compositionally as well as in sound-design.

Alphorn Recording

During the pre-production phase, the tuba gave us some slight uncertainties in regard to the main instrument of choice, the Alphorn. However, the successful recordings confirmed our instrument of choice very quickly. Under the direction of Hannes Kumke, soundcube and Ruedi Linder (member of the formation „hornroh“) met at „Sound und Klang“ at the beginning of February to tackle the compositionally fairly simple yet technically demanding recordings with the Alphorn. The problem was that the lowest tone of the future ALPA-Logo, an F, is the lowest playable tone on the F-alphorn. The alphorn is an instrument with natural tones that cannot produce a clearly-defined tone as can do instruments with flaps or keys. While this is in itself a demanding requirement (still more so since the tone must be produced as smoothly and as evenly as possible), aspects such as stability, evenness, balance, clarity and professional standards must not be open to doubt. In addition to this requirement there was another. The original mood board had been composed two half-tones deeper and the ALPA-family had already grown used to the deep, comfortable, sonorous sound of the draft version. To compensate for a possible loss of these aspects, Ruedi (despite or perhaps because of a head cold) succeeded in playing the deep F once more. He even managed to go an octave deeper than before, but he could not hold the new low tone stable for more than a few seconds. In the end we agreed with ALPA that the aspect of human-

ity and naturalness would not diminish the core statement of ALPA (this question has not been definitively cleared-up until today).

Logo Generation and Documentation

After an intensive period of trial listening, ALPA accepted its Corporate Sound. The acoustic essence distilled was then formed into an ALPA main-logo with a variation on it adapted for the internet.

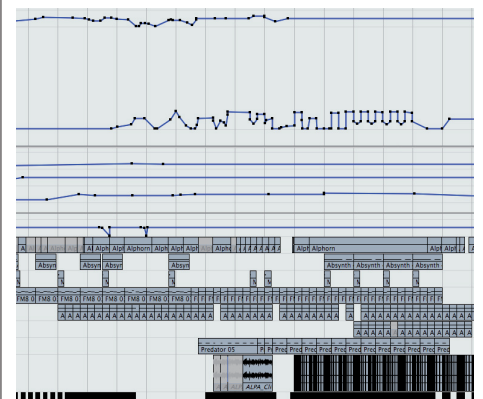
At the conclusion of the documentation, the musical and psychological operating instructions as well as the rules and implications of Corporate Sounds were noted.

In accordance with the nature of a Corporate Sound, we will continue to monitor the development of ALPA itself just as we will the reactions of ALPA's customers to the new acoustic image. Doing so, we will be able to correct remaining problem areas and to translate new developments in the brand's identity into the music.

We look forward to this!



Ruedi Lindner playing the Alphorn



Cubase session

Links

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alpa.ch

online since 1996

ALPA Capaul & Weber Ltd
Neptunstrasse 96, P.O. Box 1858
CH-8032 Zürich / Switzerland
www.alpa.ch

Phone: +41 (0)44 383 92 22
Fax: +41 (0)44 382 01 80
alpa@alpa.ch