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Music Entrepreneurs in the Twenty-First Century: A Case Study on the Career of Jay-Z

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The MEIEA Journal occasionally features outstanding student papers. This undergraduate research paper was written by Leanne Perice, a recent graduate of Indiana University.

Introduction

A music mentor of mine once told me “overnight success” takes about seven years to transpire. While he may have been misguided a decade ago, to achieve artistic stardom today means breaking the norms and the boundaries of the past. The make-up of a contemporary music career has undergone fundamental changes over the past fifteen years. These changes are linked to the tremendous technological advancements that have shaped the music industry in recent decades. The main impacts can be observed in the new ways artists create, market, and brand themselves as well as the altered infrastructure of the record labels and the models they employ.

To obtain success in the twenty-first century, artists need to acquire additional skills beyond creating art. When examining the careers of the top artists today, it is clear that entrepreneurship and artistry complement each other and are essential to building successful careers. Making albums and selling records is simply not enough.

This thesis will examine the career path of Shawn Carter, better known as Jay-Z, one of the most successful hip-hop moguls and entrepreneurs in the world. The successful lifestyle brand that Jay-Z has created results from a combination of artistry and entrepreneurship termed strategic brand management. This case study will trace the career of Jay-Z while extracting lessons on how to help emerging artists establish successful brand partnerships and careers. Lastly, I will use my research to forecast the direction the music industry is moving in and how artists can adapt by entering and dominating in other industries as well.

Historical Background

Music has and will always be fundamental to human life. While the media have cast a negative shadow on the industry as being on the “verge of collapse,” to build new beginnings we must understand its current foundation. In the past thirty years the music industry has experienced drastic changes. The format of recorded music has evolved from vinyl records, to 8-track, from cassette, to CD, to MP3 digital downloads and now AAC file technology (Costello, 1). Each of these technological changes over the past three decades directly altered the industry as it stands today. While the listening formats and the devices have evolved, the distributors and record labels were forced to adapt to the changes as well.

In 1978 Philips and Sony worked together to create a uniform standard for a Compact Disc that made LPs irrelevant and outdated. In 1982 record companies put forth a worldwide statement to ensure that all CDs would be able to play on all CD players. Next came the birth of the MP3 format in 1990 (Taintor, 1). The MP3 compresses digital audio files by a factor of twelve to a size that can easily be shared between computers with minimal degradation to sound quality. Lawsuits started to appear in the mid-1990s when technology allowed people to easily pirate digital music. In 1995 people started streaming audio across the internet and in 1997 the first attempts to sell music on the internet surfaced. In 1998 the RIAA decided to take legal action against those downloading copyrighted songs by suing 1, 977 individuals for sharing music illegally on file-sharing sites (Menta, 1).

In 1999 Napster was created and changed the music industry always and forever with the debut of peer-to-peer file sharing. Shawn Fanning and Sean Parker launched Napster and were the first to offer extensive lists of popular music in a comprehensive online database. Napster was forced to shut down in July of 2001 and pay millions for damages and future royalties. However, other peer-to-peer file sharing services appeared in its place, altering how everyone accessed new music and still directly affected sales of CDs (Taintor, 1). After Napster the music industry waged a losing war against digital piracy. Although similar legal battles were won, the current demand for pirated content remains at an all-time high (Taintor, 1).

The changes in technology that altered the format and platforms by which people accessed and listened to music also had a direct effect on the infrastructure of the record industry. While most record companies did not survive the initial changes of the industry, by the end of the 1980s the ones

that did were referred to as the “Big 6” and then in 1998 the “Big 5.” The larger labels over time consolidated further and with a recent merger of EMI with UMG it has reduced the major labels to the “Big 3” to include, Universal Music Group, Sony Music Entertainment, and Warner Music Group.

All of the advancements in digital technology created difficult conditions for the record labels. The progress in technology has enabled new artists to build their own careers and rely less on major labels to create sophisticated recordings. General manager of Octone Records, David Boxenbaum, makes an interesting statement, “No one makes illegal copies of albums that nobody wants to hear.” Boxenbaum continues to explain that even when artists are succeeding in the marketplace today, they are still selling a fraction of previous hit records. In response to music piracy, both the major and independent record labels have been attempting to compensate for falling CD sales by actively pursuing alternative models and techniques.

Record labels continue to test new ways of perfecting alternative models by engaging in various agreements with social networks like YouTube’s Vevo and MySpace. These agreements are based mostly on licensing agreements in streaming music videos for a share of advertising revenue (Africa Music Law, 1). Other models that generate great success for labels are 360 deals. The 360 deals, also referred to as “multiple rights,” are a pact that emerged in an early iteration of the deal British pop singer Robbie Williams signed with EMI in 2002 (Leeds, 1). All major record labels, and even a few independents, now use 360 deals. In this model for developing talent, the artist shares not only his or her revenue from album sales but also concert, merchandise, and other earnings with the label in exchange for more inclusive career support. For example, The Pussycat Dolls, who are signed to Interscope Records with a 360 deal, shares income from the group’s marketing spinoff Dolls-themed nightclub presently in Las Vegas with the label. Previous to this new deal, Interscope would not have been able to receive a percentage from this income source (Leeds, 1). The potential of a 360 deal grows with the popularity of an act, as they attract either loyal fans who will buy tickets, or attention from business partners who might help market spinoffs, like a fragrance.

Now labels require that they own and control the artist’s “official” website and may generate revenue from those websites by selling advertising. Many contracts in this new model also permit the sale of merchandise

created by the label using album artwork or other label-owned materials (Hussey, 1). Neither of these activities would have been included in most recording contracts a decade ago, and if artists want to benefit from such revenue, they must negotiate those terms in their contracts. This new model also requires that artists pay a portion of their touring and merchandise revenue to the record company (Hussey, 1). In the earlier years of the music industry, touring and merchandising revenue was very important to artists as their main source of income. Artists are also receiving lower benefits from digital sales and streaming than they did from CD sales. Such changes are the most prevalent new terms in current record contracts.

As traditional revenue streams and marketing tactics are proving to be less effective, “Strategic Artists Brand Partnerships” are becoming more important and beneficial. If coupled correctly, brand partnerships will complement and enhance 360 deals for both the artists and labels. While general music consumption has increased over time, physical music consumption has been in decline. Live music costs have significantly increased, forcing music owners to seek new revenue models and partnerships to subsidize costs (Pantoja, 1). The Music Marketing Forum is part of the MIDEM conference. It studies effective and currently-practiced methods for partnerships between music owners and brands. The MIDEM conference and debate consists of the leading music and brand leaders who attempt to establish common criteria for the creation of profitable partnerships. While partnerships between music owners and brands are still relatively new, the success of past and recent partnerships allow for general guidelines to emerge and for predictions about its future impact on the industry to be made. While Jay-Z is a prime example of an artist who has had success with partnerships, his were initiated due to his entrepreneurial instinct before branding became a trend. By outlining his extensive business career decisions with branding, I was able to draw several similarities on how he operated his own ventures with the criteria for branding defined by MIDEM.

Further, the concept of strategic artist branding is a revolutionary tool and model that can help guide musicians’ careers in the twenty-first century. I will use Jay-Z’s career as an example of how an artist uses brands in tandem with his or her music to create partnerships that are able to transpire into a musician-turned-mogul with a tangible lifestyle fans could “buy into.” By highlighting his noteworthy career decisions along with his partnership choices, I will be able to provide an exemplary case

study on the combination of entrepreneurship and artistry needed for artists to succeed in the contemporary music industry. Further, by tracing his exceptional career it will become evident that what made him successful can be used as a model for emerging artists.

Jay-Z's Career

Shawn Carter, known as “Jazzy” in his neighborhood growing up, shortened his nickname to Jay-Z while trying to break into the music world. Before Jay-Z tried to secure a record deal, he was a member of a rap group named “Original Flavor,” which helped develop his skill, technique, and sound. Then in 1995 Jay-Z made his first notable decision as an artist: rather than waiting to sign with a major record label like other aspiring rappers, he created his own independent label called Roc-A-Fella Records with Damon Dash and Kareem Biggs. While this was an extremely risky strategy, Jay-Z knew if he cut out the middleman he could ultimately make more money for himself (*Biography of Jay-Z*, 1). Jay-Z believed he had a gift that was worth sharing with the world. He knew he had the ability to sell millions of records and his confidence was supported in 1995 when he landed a distribution deal with Priority Records, which was owned at the time by EMI Group. With the backing of a major distributor, Shawn Carter released his first album *Reasonable Doubt* in 1996. *Reasonable Doubt* reached number 23 on *Billboard's* album chart and is considered by many fans “an undisputed classic and a crowning achievement” (*Biography of Jay-Z*, 1). Shawn Carter released his second album titled *In My Lifetime, Vol. 1* in 1997 which peaked at number three on the *Billboard* album chart, significantly selling more units than his prior album.

The first lesson that can be learned here is that as an artist one must believe in one's talent even when others fail to recognize or support it. Jay-Z believed in himself and was able to produce his first album with a distribution deal that he landed from his belief and pursuit in his abilities. Further, networking and the ability to connect with others is also a desirable trait to create a successful career.

When analyzing the release of his second album, several business decisions made on behalf of Jay-Z explains his growing success. First, Jay-Z brought on a new team of individuals to help produce and market his album, which included Puff Daddy and Teddy Riley. Both Puff and Teddy were industry leaders, which helped build Jay-Z's credibility in the music scene and elevate his production quality. The lesson here is that artists

should experiment with new and different producers to enhance their work and to gain credibility. It is also important for artists to absorb information from mentors and surround themselves with talented team members.

Next, Jay-Z understood that while rap was extremely popular and profitable, his style of “gangsta-rap” only reached and interested a rather small portion of the fans listening to rap. Thus, Jay-Z took his same message but altered his sound to become more “pop-rap.” This decision doubled the size of his audience. Many lessons can be learned from this stage of his career. Jay-Z saw a trend and an opportunity and rather than conform, he adapted. Emerging artists need to understand the message of their music and the demographic it will appeal to. Jay-Z was able to recognize a trend and was able to expand his audience by altering his sound. It is important for artists to understand themselves, their music, and their audience from the start and keep track of how it changes as their careers progress.

A year later, Jay-Z put out another album marking his shift further into pop-rap with *Vol. 2: Hard Knock Life* in 1998. This album separated Jay-Z from other rappers at the time, driving him into superstar status as his album debuted at number one on the Billboard 200 chart, went to number one on the R&B/Hip-Hop Albums chart, and received a Grammy Award for best Rap Album in 1999 (*Biography of Jay-Z*, 1).

That same year, Shawn Carter spotted another trend that expanded his brand into a lifestyle. In Jay-Z songs he would often give shout-outs to Iceberg Apparel; Carter noticed that sales of Iceberg products increased significantly because of this. Carter approached the executives of the company, explained his influence on their brand, and offered to formalize an endorsement deal or equity stake to further their relationship. Not understanding the big picture of Carter’s request and the possible impact of this artist/brand partnership deal, the executives declined. Carter saw this as an opportunity. Instead of giving shouts out to other brands and drive their business he decided to create his own clothing line called Rocawear (*Biography of Jay-Z*, 1). Rocawear became an extension of Jay-Z as he created and designed the clothes, which intrigued his fans and attracted others interested in fashion to become a part of the Jay-Z world. This business decision allowed fans to embrace Jay-Z’s lifestyle for the first time, a lifestyle that was previously only accessible to them through his music.

In 2007, Jay-Z made another smart business decision and sold Rocawear for \$204 million dollars to the Iconix Brand Group. Iconix is a

company that markets brands with a pioneering new brand management model focused on design and lifestyle marketing. CEO of Iconix Brand Group Neil Cole commented on the deal explaining, “This is the largest acquisition Iconix has made and Rocawear is a brand that is increasing in market share and has extraordinary potential for growth. The leadership team is already in place to fulfill our mission and we will maintain complete continuity within the business by having Jay and his team in charge of all product development, licensing, and marketing” (Rhett, Starrene). By selling his brand, Jay-Z was able to make a significant amount of money, and by staying in control of the marketing and final products, Jay-Z’s pioneering leadership strategies and his loyalty to his creations are exemplified.

When Jay-Z decided to create his own clothing line in 1999, it was the same year that marked the recorded music industry’s peak in terms of CD sales (Nettwerk, 3). Whether this was a coincidence or not, Jay-Z expanded his name into a brand right as the industry for CDs was plummeting and major CD retailers such as Tower Records and Virgin Megastores were forced to shut down. Carter’s decision to venture into the clothing industry occurred at the perfect time.

This stage of Shawn Carter’s career further builds on the model I am describing. It is often said among tastemakers and managers that artists who succeed in the industry are the ones that rap or sing about what they know and have experienced. At this point, Jay-Z knew clothes and knew what his fans would like as well. By spotting this trend, and watching the sales of Iceberg apparel increase, he knew he had the ability to increase his income and expand his brand. It is important to note, that when the executives of the clothing label turned down Jay-Z, he had the confidence in himself to pursue his idea. His label was successful because it was an extension of his life, taste, and music. If emerging artists are able to communicate to their fans their true interests and beliefs, it sets them up for potential partnerships later in their careers.

Further, while working on his clothing brand, Carter did not stop making music, he understood that his music would only enhance Rocawear and in 2001 he released *The Blueprint*. *The Blueprint* solidified Shawn Carter’s position as a leader in the rap scene, especially the debut of the song *Takeover*. This song, which was directed at Nas and Prodigy, ignited one of rap’s most famous feuds. This feud caused several back and forth attack songs on each side and created massive publicity for both

Jay-Z and Nas as they both were rapping for the imagery and title, “King of New York.” Whether this feud was real or not, it engaged fans and kept the culture of hip-hop thriving. In 2005 after five years of the rap feud, at Jay-Z’s concert titled “I Declare War” he instead shocked his fans and declared peace with Nas. The two hip-hop stars took the stage together at the Continental Airlines Arena and embraced the audience together ending their battle. This decision to declare peace instead of war is a prime example of Jay-Z’s ability to be a leader and even more a metaphor on his life. The Jay-Z from the projects in Brooklyn declared the war, however the sophisticated businessman and entrepreneur declared peace, showing that change and forgiveness is essential in life to fans, extending his brand beyond music.

The lesson at this point is a willingness to embrace change. People are often quick to label an artist as a sell-out. However, change is what keeps the industry alive and artist careers thriving. It is important how artists accept, understand, and internalize their progress for it will affect the longevity of their careers. Jay-Z was able to stay focused on his chosen concept. Understanding his affect on his fans, he demonstrated maturity when he decided to declare peace with Nas. He became a role model for his fans by directing them in positive ways. This decision was extremely helpful to Jay-Z as it gave him the credibility to move forward in his career and to continue to rap about his life and his experiences as they changed, keeping his fans interested and his music fresh.

Following his collaborative path, Jay-Z partnered with the Roots for an unplugged album in 2001 and with R. Kelly in 2002. He then went on to release *The Blueprint 2: The Gift & The Curse* in 2002 and *The Black Album* in 2003. Later in 2003, Jay-Z branded himself again. He took one of his passions—sports—and made it part of his life and revenue stream. Jay-Z who is a proud Yankees fan and has courtside tickets for The Cavaliers, Knicks, and Lakers, decided to assemble a basketball team. His team, which included LeBron James, played in the Entertainers Basketball Classic (EBC), and he then became a co-owner of the New Jersey Nets. This is noteworthy as it demonstrates the importance of creating meaningful partnerships based on personal interests. While assembling a basketball team, Jay-Z also became the first non-athlete to acquire an endorsement deal for Reebok. According to NPD group, the \$13.5 billion athletic shoe industry grew by 2.6% in 2003 with the majority of growth in consumers aged eighteen to twenty-nine after the release of Reebok’s S. Carter line,

Jay-Z's birth name (Rafalko, 1). Further, in 2003 Jay-Z extended his career and brand by opening a nightclub called the 40/40 Club. He borrowed the term 40/40 from baseball; it is used to describe players who achieve forty home runs and forty stolen bases in a season. Jay-Z partnered with Desiree Gonzalez and Juan Perez, and built clubs located in New York City, Atlantic City, and Las Vegas.

It is interesting to observe how Jay-Z expands on his successful initiatives, proving that the limits to engaging in your passions are only the ones you create. This business decision exemplifies that you can never own too much of what you love.

With many simultaneous projects occurring in 2003, Jay-Z made his next smart business decision by marketing his brand to the fullest extent. When Jay-Z assembled a basketball team, he rented a bus for them to tour in, branded the bus with an image of his recently designed shoe for Reebok, while playing his music at the games and on their way to his club to celebrate after their games (Balderama, 3). Furthermore, in 2004 Jay-Z announced to the world he was retiring from recording music and accepted the offer to become president of the hip-hop label Def Jam. As the label's president, Jay-Z used his knowledge to build other emerging artists' careers. He was responsible for launching the careers of Young Jeezy, Ne-Yo, Rihanna, J. Cole, and several others. Jay-Z is also responsible for revitalizing Mariah Carey's career with her Grammy-winning Def Jam release of *The Emancipation of Mimi* (Adaso, 2). By Jay-Z taking this role as president, he was able to shape the talent entering the industry. With Jay-Z's loyal fan base he knew that his fans would also support anything or anyone he approved of, providing him and his label extra credibility. An emerging artist should understand that by helping others, you in turn keep building your fan base and continue to expand your brand.

Another notable career choice made by Jay-Z was when he resigned as Def Jam President in 2008 and signed a \$150 million deal with Live Nation, one of the biggest deals in the music industry and in his life, according to Billboard.com. Live Nation will contribute \$5 million each year to his overhead costs for five years while giving him \$25 million to finance his external investments and acquisitions, plus \$10 million per album for a minimum of three albums. The deal also includes \$20 million for associated rights that include publishing and licensing. Other artists who signed similar 360 contracts include superstars Madonna and U2 (McCarthy, 1). In Jay-Z's hit single *On To The Next One* he raps, "I don't get dropped, I

drop the label.” This lyric is in reference to him leaving Def Jam to form the venture Roc Nation with Live Nation. Live Nation Entertainment, originally a spin-off of Clear Channel, was formed from the Ticketmaster and Live Nation merger and is the leading concert promotion company controlling promoting, selling tickets, food and drinks, parking, releasing albums and managing artists (Leeds, 1). Live Nation’s deal with Jay-Z reflects and cements their beliefs that Jay-Z is a marketable and profitable brand. While Jay-Z closed an important chapter of his career, he took an opportunity that afforded him more success and more opportunities to open the next one.

Jay-Z announced on May 14, 2012 in Philadelphia that he will be headlining and curating the line-up for Budweiser’s “Made in America” festival that will take place on September 1 and 2, 2012. When he announced this festival, he said that before he agreed to this commitment he posed two questions to himself, the first, “Will this be great?” And second, “Will this help push the culture forward?” (Kaufman, 1). With festivals becoming extremely popular and profitable, Jay-Z is tapping into a market that he knows will be successful and curated a line-up based on the markets he wishes to target. He is one of the first artists to headline and curate the line-up of his own festival. Jay-Z chose artists he has worked with, artists he manages, and other talented musicians, mixing many genres for crossover appeal.

The lesson that can be learned here is entrepreneurship. With festivals being extremely popular, Jay-Z knew he had the resources, connections, and ability to curate and headline a festival that would appeal and as he said, “push the culture forward.” By integrating the top acts from all genres into one festival, Jay-Z will now be able to extend his brand to music festivals. Artists need to understand that when they have the ability to be proactive in the industry, they should utilize their connections to keep fans and the culture moving forward.

While Jay-Z’s career is still far from over, his ascent to being one of the most recognizable artists and entrepreneurs can be replicated by future artists. While many decisions at each stage of his career were extremely risky what prevails is an effective model and story of success. And while his career of superstardom can never be replicated exactly, generalized methods emerge that can help emerging artists shape their careers.

Brand Partnerships

While artist/brand partnerships were once considered evil by many, and even viewed by some as an artist selling out, the contrary views towards such relationships exist today. Brand partnerships not only benefit the artist but branding is also used to offset costs for albums, videos, and tours (Pinchevsky, 1). According to Matt Kurb, a researcher on music management, “A brand is the perceived experience associated with any entity or the sum total of an entity’s marketing efforts” (Kurb, 1). Thus every professional musician is, or has, a brand. Since artists are in fact themselves a brand, it is how they build and manage their image that creates longevity.

As the music industry continues to change, artists and label executives are seeking new and more innovative ways to generate profits. Artist/brand partnerships have proven, when executed properly, to be extremely beneficial for all parties involved. At the advertising festival in Cannes this past summer, acclaimed artist and producer Pharrell Williams said he believes, “Brands are necessary for today’s acts. Brands have gravitated towards the internet’s accessibility much quicker than the recording industry has. So it makes sense. Music is a part of everyone’s senses, memory. What’s a commercial without a song?” (James Midemblog, 2). Laura Lang, from the ad agency Digitas, who was also present at the festival explained, “The future of those partnerships is about using music as a way to connect passions: not just putting music on a thirty-second spot.” Lang also added, “Half of the music industry’s revenue in a few years time could come from brands.” However she adds the role needs to be further defined, for we are at the beginning of a road that can take many directions (James Midemblog, 2). Since the road for artist partnerships is still being paved, it is important that partnerships are fostered strategically and that record label executives understand their artists so they can pair them successfully.

Consciously or not, talented artists have always had strong brands within their music, meaning the messages they communicate with their fans. Fans buy albums because they believe that the artists have something worthy for them to believe in, listen to, and invest their money and time in. Matt Kurb finished his article by posing the question, “Is branding people necessary to be successful?” Matt answered his question by explaining, without creating a brand, the consumer has no experience with which to understand and engage with an artist, or the commercial interests that artist represents. Record labels’ brand partnerships divisions are growing in staff

and in importance because artist branding is more crucial than ever. Living in a society that continuously markets and tries to engage us, music has a powerful advantage in seeking consumer attention. Pharrell also continues his thoughts regarding partnerships by adding, “It’s not about marketing to people, but understanding human psyche” (James Midemblog, 2). Pharrell used the company Apple to reflect the idea of trust when he said, “Steve Jobs could make macaroni and [consumers] would trust him.” While this article was published before Steve Jobs passed, Pharrell hit upon an interesting and important factor in any partnership: trust. When trust is established with a fan base, as Jay-Z has done, the consumers will pay attention to their creations.

Since branding is an essential career element for a talented artist, music labels have designed teams within their companies to help create and execute strategic brand partnerships. These partnerships are developed with artists who are ready to expand their name into a branded lifestyle. While there are many benefits to creating a successful partnership, if poorly created the opposite can emerge. However, when executed correctly, partnerships provide a gratifying experience for all parties involved, allowing target markets to enjoy and feel compelled to support the content being produced. Contrary, poorly designed partnerships can evoke negative reactions from consumers compelling them to react negatively or to quickly forget the weak association of the artists and brands. As seen in Shawn Carter’s career, he first built a solid, loyal fan base and when it grew large enough he simultaneously fostered its growth by partnering with brands and individuals to create content that reflected his interests outside of music. The results were extraordinary as he created a lifestyle with partnerships that were extremely successful.

Fabien Moreau is co-founder of The Hours, an international luxury brand that focuses on marketing collaborations between music and art with major brands to create compelling experiences that sustain lifestyle brand development. According to Fabian Moreau, when musicians partner with luxury brands they help raise their profiles and bring them exposure to an entirely new audience. Fabian continues to explain that similar to lifelong marriage, a musician-brand relationship requires the ultimate pairing. This is why partnerships must be strategically implemented and record labels have more leverage to create such “marriages” for their artists. Labels and companies such as The Hours that have successfully launched partnerships follow a general criterion. From numerous resources such as the MI-

DEM music marketing conference along with analyzing Shawn Carter's various successes with branding, the following is a guide on how to create the ultimate successful artist/brand partnership with an artist.

Initially, brands and music owners usually form partnerships with differentiating approaches, cultures, aims, and expectations. During the process, brands typically seek to realign their values, while musicians usually seek financial, media, and distribution channels. Although each side expects different gains, strategic partnerships will offer both sides five mutually exclusive objectives. The shared objectives include, exposure, market, image, distribution, and revenue (Pantoja, 3).

Based on successful partnership examples, participants at the MIDEM conference have established specific conditions they consider essential to success, all of which can be observed in Jay-Z's partnerships. The first requirement necessitates that the values of the brand, the artists, and the fan base are aligned. When Jay-Z and Reebok decided to design a shoe collection, the partnership made sense for both parties. Next, there needs to be a commitment to the project from all parties involved and a willingness to be flexible along the way. Long-term relationships provide both sides with greater opportunities and sustained benefits while short-term relationships might result in spiked revenue. While Jay-Z did not engage in a long-term partnership, he set up the precedent and model for Reebok to seek other musicians for different campaigns. For example, Reebok just signed deals with musician/rappers, Mike Posner, Rick Ross, and Tyga for their "Icons" collection new campaign, "It Takes A Lot to Make a Classic." The campaign tells the story of each musician as they travel on their journeys to become "a classic in their own right" like a Reebok shoe. The press release by Reebok explains the campaign in further detail:

Through the campaign, Reebok explains to be a Classic takes ambition and relentless hard work to earn respect. Overcoming obstacles, challenges and tackling adversity face on—it's these moments that shape one's life and create the story that defines them. Reebok Classics is celebrating that journey and seeks to inspire the work of creators everywhere through this campaign—passing the torch to all the artists and innovators who have an unwavering hunger and persistence to achieve Classic status. (Martinez, 1)

Further, it is essential to establish ongoing communication between both parties to allow for a well-executed and creative partnership to emerge. A creative campaign should utilize effective marketing techniques and tools that influence consumers and start a dialogue with them. To do so, experiential marketing should be employed so consumers feel part of the project.

Finally, both parties should continuously evaluate the partnership based on their predetermined objectives from the beginning and other assessment tools. Often simple questions such as, “Is the artist’s career worth more after the campaign than before?” and “Would both parties do it again?” are helpful. While these questions are beneficial, it is difficult to measure success and results when quantitative methods cannot measure consumer feelings and reactions. However, with interactive tools such as Facebook and Twitter companies are better equipped to judge consumers’ thoughts, advice, and feedback (Pantoja, 5).

After analyzing Jay-Z’s career it is clear that building a durable, timeless brand will translate into success and sustainability for an artist. He created a blueprint for evolving strategic brand partnerships divisions at major record labels to become familiar with and study. Strategic brand management is now the cornerstone of a lot of successful careers in the music industry. Jay-Z is one of the pioneers in creating one of the world’s most recognizable lifestyle brands. He has the ability to spot trends before they surface and then capitalize on them while increasing value to his brand. By staying focused on his dreams, music, and partnerships he has shown that Shawn Carter is the businessman while Jay-Z is the artist. In Kanye West’s song *Diamonds Are forever*, featuring Jay-Z, he sums up his career in one phrase, “I’m not a businessman, I’m a business, man.”

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LEANNE PERICE, 22 years old, is originally from New Jersey but currently lives in Los Angeles, California. She graduated with honors from Indiana University in May, 2012 receiving her Bachelor of Science in Public Affairs with a degree in Management and a certificate in Arts Administration. Perice also studied abroad at Oxford University's Said Business School in England and Lorenzo De'Medici University in Florence, Italy focusing on international business affairs. Her passion for the music business developed as she grew up but was confirmed when she interned for Interscope Records, Strategic Brand Partnership division.



During her time at Interscope she learned the importance of brand management and artist partnerships, which led her to write her senior thesis on this topic. Perice is also socially active and has been able to combine her passion for charity with music creating fundraisers for RSD/CPRS research and Children of Bungoma a charity in Africa. She hopes to cultivate the next generation of talented musicians by employing her research and beliefs.