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# The Benefits of Utilizing Earned Media for Emerging Pop Music Artists: A Case Study in Music Publicity

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**The Benefits of Utilizing Earned Media for Emerging Pop Music Artists:  
A Case Study in Music Publicity**

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**Submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements  
for the Master of Arts in Public Relations  
Seton Hall University  
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SETON HALL UNIVERSITY  
COLLEGE OF COMMUNICATION AND THE ARTS  
GRADUATE STUDIES

APPROVAL FOR SUCCESSFUL PRESENTATION

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## THE BENEFITS OF UTILIZING EARNED MEDIA

### **Dedication**

Thank you, Dr. Koehler, for your continued guidance and for always believing in me.  
Thank you also to my parents, my family, my boyfriend, and my dog for your unwavering love and support throughout this journey.

## THE BENEFITS OF UTILIZING EARNED MEDIA

### **Abstract**

Publicists play a significant role in achieving the short-term and long-term career goals of emerging pop music artists. Therefore, this study researches earned media within the pop music industry through a case study that analyzes the publicity strategies used by the teams of three successful pop music artists. This study finds that publicity is a cost-effective solution to the problems of declining music sales and the need to stand out in a saturated industry, and it provides seven best practices that are supported by industry professionals for publicists to use when creating campaigns that generate awareness and establish reputation.

*Keywords:* earned media, publicity, PESO Model, pop music, emerging artists, word-of-mouth, third-party credibility, best practices, case study

**Table of Contents**

**Dedication..... iii**

**Abstract..... iv**

**Chapter 1: Statement of the Problem..... 1**

    The Decline in Music Sales..... 2

    The Need to Stand Out..... 4

    Purpose of This Study..... 5

**Chapter 2: Literature Review..... 8**

    Can a Music Artist Be a Brand?..... 8

    Integrated Marketing Communications..... 9

    The PESO Model..... 10

        Owned media..... 11

        Earned media..... 12

            Word-of-mouth..... 14

            Third-party credibility..... 15

        Shared media..... 16

            Social media..... 17

        Paid media..... 19

    Theoretical Overview..... 20

        Source credibility theory..... 20

        Fandoms..... 21

        Social identity theory..... 22

    Strengths and Limitations of the Literature..... 23

# THE BENEFITS OF UTILIZING EARNED MEDIA

<b>Chapter 3: Methods.....</b>	<b>26</b>
Case Study.....	27
Sample.....	29
Data collection.....	30
Data analysis.....	32
Process of Artifact Validation.....	33
Limitations of the Research Design.....	34
Summary of Methods.....	35
<b>Chapter 4: Findings.....</b>	<b>36</b>
Justin Bieber.....	36
Alessia Cara.....	39
Dua Lipa.....	42
Summary of Findings.....	45
<b>Chapter 5: Discussion.....</b>	<b>48</b>
Recommendations and Benefits.....	48
Create owned media content to be linked with earned media.....	49
Develop an official website to be linked with earned media.....	50
Write press releases.....	50
Pitch new music to bring about album and performance reviews.....	51
Secure earned media placement (and summarize it in a press kit!).....	52
Utilize social media to generate word-of-mouth.....	53
Highlight unique characteristics.....	54
Artifact Validation.....	54



## THE BENEFITS OF UTILIZING EARNED MEDIA

Limitations of the Study.....	56
Suggestions for Future Research.....	58
Conclusion.....	59
<b>References.....</b>	<b>62</b>
<b>Appendix A: Email with Created Artifact and Prompts Sent to Validators.....</b>	<b>70</b>
<b>Appendix B: Completed Coding Sheet.....</b>	<b>71</b>
<b>Appendix C: Original Artifact.....</b>	<b>72</b>
<b>Appendix D: Comments from Artifact Validator #1.....</b>	<b>76</b>
<b>Appendix E: Comments from Artifact Validator #2.....</b>	<b>77</b>

## Chapter 1

### Statement of the Problem

The music industry is one of the fastest growing industries in America, and it has become a billion-dollar global business because of the overwhelming demand for music consumption (“U.S. Music Industry - Statistics & Facts,” n.d.). As a result of the industry’s rapid growth, more than 7,500 artists are signed to major record labels while tens of thousands of others are signed to independent labels (“How Record Labels Invest,” n.d.). Behind each of these music artists is a team of dedicated individuals who are working to help these artists achieve success in their careers. With this being said, the role of the publicist has become increasingly important in helping represented music artists, especially those that are up and coming, achieve success through generating awareness for their brands and also establishing their reputations in the industry. In fact, according to Akbarian (2010), the publicity teams of music artists can even make or break their careers. With artists so heavily depending on the efforts of their publicists, it is imperative that these publicists not only understand the inevitable challenges that are faced by upcoming music artists in the industry but also understand what strategies are necessary to overcome these challenges and help these artists achieve their goals. Once publicists are made aware of these issues and the approaches that could be taken to combat them, they can then implement strategies to earn rewarding earned media placement.

Two of the major challenges that all emerging music artists face when trying to achieve success in their careers are the overall decline in music sales and the need to stand out from other artists in the industry. Based on the information found when researching these challenges, it is clear that implementation of public relations (PR) strategies serves as a solution for each of these problems.

## THE BENEFITS OF UTILIZING EARNED MEDIA

### **The Decline in Music Sales**

Technological advancements such as paid and unpaid music streaming services have caused a serious decline in both physical and digital music sales. With the accumulation of over 35 million U.S. music streaming subscriptions and the influx of \$5.7 billion in digital music revenue as of 2017 (Sherman, 2018), streaming has become the primary way for individuals to access music in the digital world. Sisario and Russell (2016) further this point by explaining how CDs and digital downloads have been abandoned since streaming has become the dominating platform among the public. Various streaming services, such as Spotify and Apple Music, have essentially eliminated the need for listeners to purchase an artist's music. After subscribing to these services, often for a small fee, individuals can listen to almost any song or album they want to with limited to no restrictions.

While the ability to digitally purchase music has only slowed physical music sales, streaming has accelerated the decline in the purchasing of music overall. Discussing the impact that streaming has had on music sales, Legaspi (2018) explains that downloads have suffered the biggest decline with “a 25 percent drop in digital downloads revenue, which came in at \$1.3 billion in 2017” (par. 3). Additionally, Christman (2018) explains that digital album sales “fell to 66.4 million units in 2017 from 85.1 million units in 2016, which meant its revenue fell accordingly, reaching just \$623.7 million, as opposed to \$818.8 million in 2016. Percentage-wise, that represents a 22 percent drop in units and a 23.8 percent decline in revenue” (par. 7). Considering the recent effect that streaming has had on physical album sales, Christman (2018) also states that “the decline in physical album sales slowed year over year, down 3.7 percent in revenue to just below \$1.5 billion from the prior year's total of \$1.55 billion” (par. 8). Although

## THE BENEFITS OF UTILIZING EARNED MEDIA

this seems like a rather small decrease, it is important to know that physical music sales have already been on a continuous decline since the early 2000s.

Although revenue in the music industry remains 40 percent below peak levels, paid subscriptions to these music streaming services have boosted revenue to levels that have not been seen in the industry for over a decade (Legaspi, 2018). Since digital and physical music sales continue to decrease each year, streaming platforms now represent a majority of the industry's revenue with paid subscriptions bringing in over \$4 billion for the first time since its development (Legaspi, 2018). Despite the current model that shows minor improvements to revenue each year, Sisario and Russell (2016) believe that music industry revenue could never return to where it once was over a decade ago.

The decline in revenue presents a challenge for upcoming music artists as there is less money for music labels to spend on artist promotion. According to the International Federation of the Phonographic Industry (IFPI), "a record company can spend between \$200,000 and \$700,000 trying to break an emerging artist in a major market" ("How Record Labels Invest," n.d.). In total, record labels can spend an estimated \$4.5 billion a year in discovering and also developing upcoming artists (Christman, 2018). With only so much money being put aside for artist promotion, declining promotional budgets mean that artists now depend greatly on their publicity teams to maintain their visibility and relevance through strong campaigns and media influence (Markell, 2013). In other words, with less money available for record labels to promote their newly signed artists through paid advertisements, publicity has become an important and more cost-effective strategy in generating awareness and building reputations for upcoming music artists.

## THE BENEFITS OF UTILIZING EARNED MEDIA

### **The Need to Stand Out**

While the rise of the digital era has provided countless new communication-based opportunities for music artists, the technologies that have resulted have also presented them with new challenges to overcome as well. Specifically, these developments have made the music industry vast and inclusive by giving newer artists the opportunity to have their music heard when there may have been little to no chance before. Additionally, because of the Internet, new artists now have the opportunity to reach a bigger audience while even connecting and engaging with fans on a one-to-one level. Despite these various opportunities for growth, the digital era has allowed for the industry to become “a saturated and crowded place” (Walenga, 2017, par. 3). In addition to signed artists sharing their music online, unsigned artists trying to land record deals also flood the digital music landscape. With this being said, music artists must stand out from the others, especially from those within their genre, in order to establish a name for themselves in the industry and ultimately achieve their goals.

The Recording Industry Association of America (RIAA), which is the leading trade organization supporting the music industry, frequently discusses the challenges within the industry since it creates, manufactures, and distributes nearly 85 percent of all legitimately recorded music that is produced and sold in the United States (“About RIAA,” n.d.). In a company blog post discussing the evolution of the industry in the past year, Cary Sherman, the Chairman & CEO of the RIAA, examines the challenges faced by music artists and their teams in today’s digital world. Coupled with the issue of decreasing revenue, Sherman (2018) emphasizes that “the Internet offers countless opportunities to distribute music, but with millions of songs and tens of thousands of albums released annually, it’s increasingly difficult for artists to break through and be discovered by fans” (“#Labelsatwork,” par. 3). Sherman (2018) also

## THE BENEFITS OF UTILIZING EARNED MEDIA

explains that record labels need to help artists, especially those that are upcoming, stand out in the industry by elevating their music to the next level.

The publicity teams that are representing these upcoming music artists play a major role in helping them to stand out in the industry and also in elevating them to the next level. In order to achieve recognition and success for artists, publicists have to showcase their clients in new and innovative ways. For example, publicists in the music industry could find elements or features of these artists that are not currently offered in the market and incorporate them into their pitches about the artists (Markell, 2013). Trying to be discovered in an industry that relies on awareness and individuality, music artists need publicists on their teams who are going to work creatively to help advance their careers.

### **Purpose of This Study**

The decline in music sales and the need to stand out from other artists have prompted further research on how publicists can overcome these challenges through publicity efforts, specifically focusing on earned media strategies. In explaining the roles of publicity and earned media in this study, Burgess (n.d.) outlines the relationship between the two by stating that “earned media, also referred to as media relations, word-of-mouth, PR or publicity, is an unpaid brand mention or recognition such as a news article, published interview, or online review by a third party” (par. 4). Therefore, the major objective of this earned media focused study was to investigate which publicity strategies are most effective in helping upcoming music artists, specifically in the pop genre, achieve their short-term and long-term goals of gaining relevancy and building their reputations. Therefore, this study aimed to address the following research questions:

## THE BENEFITS OF UTILIZING EARNED MEDIA

RQ 1: Which publicity strategies are most effective in generating awareness for emerging pop music artists?

RQ 2: Which publicity strategies are most effective in establishing reputations for emerging pop music artists?

In order to answer these research questions, the researcher conducted a case study of earned media in the pop music industry that compares the publicity strategies of three successful pop music artists. After collecting the necessary data, the researcher then analyzed which publicity strategies are necessary and effective in allowing upcoming pop music artists to achieve similar success. Using the data collected from the case study in conjunction with the information found in the literature review, the researcher then created a PR-focused artifact. Further explained, this artifact is a guide of best practices that is grounded in a public relations practical model, known as the PESO Model, and tied back to communication theories focusing on credibility and identification with an artist. The artifact is also supported by evidence from the research and by industry perspective which was acquired through a validation process. The primary goal of this artifact is that it will be used by publicists when they are creating strong publicity campaigns for upcoming pop music artists moving forward. This study as a whole also provided an important opportunity to advance the understanding of how earned media plays such a significant role in the careers of successful pop music artists.

The overall structure of the study takes the form of five chapters, including this introductory chapter. In the next chapter, the literature is reviewed in the following sections: music artists as human brands, integrated marketing communications, the PESO Model and the four types of media that it encompasses, and how source credibility and social influence theories are related to publicity in the music industry. The third chapter is concerned with the

## THE BENEFITS OF UTILIZING EARNED MEDIA

methodology that was applied for this study, while the fourth chapter presents the findings of the case study with a focus on the publicity strategies that were used for the artists who were analyzed. Finally, the fifth chapter provides a critique of the findings, discusses the comments that were made by the professionals who validated the artifact that was created as a result of this study, and concludes with a brief summary of the study.



## Chapter 2

### Literature Review

Many music industry professionals wonder what the necessary steps are to establish successful careers in music for their artists. Even though everyone's definition of success is subjective, numerous individuals in the industry are left questioning, "What is it that catapults artists to super stardom? How do some artists bring together millions of fans, while others spend decades trying to get discovered?" (Akbarian, 2010, par. 2). Some say that having the right connections, and even luck, play a role in the success of some of these music artists. However, publicity may play an even bigger role than some are led to believe as "PR generates value far above and beyond album sales" (Akbarian, 2010, par. 5) by giving these artists influence. Because publicity plays such a significant role in the careers of these music artists, this literature review addresses how the PESO Model provides the basis for developing strong publicity campaigns. Therefore, the literature review discusses each type of media found within the model, with a special focus on earned media, to explain how each contributes to the goals of generating awareness and establishing reputation for emerging pop music artists. Tying this practical model to communication theory, source credibility and social identity theories are also discussed in their relation to the elements of awareness and reputation.

#### **Can a Music Artist Be a Brand?**

In order to examine the effects of earned media on a brand, it is important to first understand that the scope of what determines a brand can be broad. Brands are present within every industry, which means that brands are not limited to companies that solely produce manufactured goods or provide services. However, the concept of a brand extends as far to include those that are solely human, meaning that individual persons have the opportunity to

## THE BENEFITS OF UTILIZING EARNED MEDIA

develop their own brands. A human brand can be defined as “any well-known persona who is the subject of marketing communication efforts” (Thomson, 2006, p. 104). It is important to illustrate how upcoming pop music artists can be categorized as brands when discussing how to acquire publicity for them. Therefore, when it comes to music, “the industry is characterized by music artists (*brands*) offering their music (*products*) to listeners (*consumers*)” (Saboo, Kumar, & Ramani, 2016, p. 525). Compared to brands that provide goods and services, human brands are unique since they can directly interact with their consumers as well as engage and build emotional bonds with them (Saboo et al., 2016). Despite this difference, publicists representing either human or traditional brands can use an array of media tools, which are coordinated under the umbrella of integrated marketing communications (IMC), in building brand awareness and establishing reputation for their clients.

### **Integrated Marketing Communications**

Transitioning from one-sided mass communication, brands have been implementing IMC methods to more effectively generate awareness and establish reputation for their products and services. Focusing on communication and strategy aims, IMC is defined as “a strategic business process used to plan, develop, execute, and evaluate coordinated, measurable, persuasive brand communication programs over time with consumers, customers, prospects, and other targeted, relevant external and internal audiences” (Shultz & Kitchen, 2000). Due to increased competition in the marketplace, brands have been pushed to integrate IMC strategies into their communication efforts to provide consistent messages to their audiences and to shift their overall focus to the consumers (Takalani, 2015). IMC has also allowed for user-control with content production, which is important since the media and advertising agencies have long served as gatekeepers for what gets produced and disseminated to the public (Mulhern, 2009). Therefore,

## THE BENEFITS OF UTILIZING EARNED MEDIA

IMC has become an important focus for public relations professionals who are trying to acquire media exposure for their clients.

Strategic communication, which encompasses both IMC and public relations, is an important area of focus in the discussion of IMC's relevance to the acquisition of earned media. Pursuit (2013) explains that, similar to IMC, strategic communication "considers not only who constitutes a public but also what actions and communication members of a public engage in to arrive at a conclusion" (p. 39). Therefore, the implementation of IMC strategies allows brands to move away from basic advertising, otherwise known as paid media, to engage in more comprehensive forms of media, which can be found within a public relations specific model known as the PESO Model.

### **The PESO Model**

The process of building awareness and establishing reputation for a brand is carried out through various forms of media. This process, known as the PESO Model, merges together the four types of media – paid, earned, shared, and owned (Dietrich, 2018). In 2014, this model was developed and launched by Gini Dietrich, a leader within the PR industry and CEO of integrated marketing communications firm Arment Dietrich. Upon learning about the importance of having a named process within a service-based business, Dietrich (2018) wrote that she wanted to develop a framework for how public relations professionals should think about the field. The PESO Model proves that the work of public relations professionals is integrated and measurable, helps practitioners to establish authority in their work, and provides them with the opportunity to be viewed as thought leaders and experts in the field (Dietrich, 2018).

Necessary to the study of the PESO Model is the understanding of its name. Although the model seemingly begins with paid media, it is emphasized that the process does not follow the

## THE BENEFITS OF UTILIZING EARNED MEDIA

order as it appears in its given title. Dietrich (2018) further explains that if she “were to order the media types in order of importance, from a communications perspective, it would be OESP—owned, earned, shared, and then paid” (p. 5). However, the PESO Model received its name since it is the most memorable way to recall each of the media types (Dietrich, 2018). Therefore, this literature review follows the order of importance designated by Dietrich when analyzing each type of media and not the order signified by the name PESO.

The PESO Model is at the heart of understanding earned media. Therefore, this literature review examines the effects that the various types of media found within the model have on the generation of brand awareness and the establishment of brand reputation. Additionally, the following review of research aims to examine how each of the types of media play a role in acquiring publicity for an upcoming music artist, discusses which forms of media are the most effective and beneficial throughout the process, and analyzes source credibility and social identity theories which attempt to explain why.

**Owned media.** A major area of interest within the field of public relations is owned media since its creation is an essential factor in acquiring publicity for a brand. Developing owned media, which is the content that is created and managed by brands, is the first step that all publicists must take before they can attempt to obtain earned media for a brand (Dietrich 2018). Examples of owned media, according to Dietrich (2018), are websites and blogs. When it comes to owned media, it is about controlling the message, telling it in a way that is requested by the brand, and owning the content and the platform it occupies (Dietrich, 2018). Owned media provides brands with content to be shared on social media and allows the public to know the value that each brand provides (Dietrich, 2018). For all brands, their owned media should help them establish a presence, both on and offline, that reflects their identity, goals, and values.

## THE BENEFITS OF UTILIZING EARNED MEDIA

When it comes to establishing one's brand in the music industry, it is imperative that all artists have various forms of owned media, including an official website. According to Beeching (2010), websites of music artists are considered important facets of a more comprehensive web presence, and each should explain who the artists are and what they want to communicate to audiences about their music. Baym (2009) also mentions the importance of establishing an online presence through the implementation of an official website since each links to all other sources of information for an artist. Therefore, an official website serves as a "home base" for fans who want to find the most complete information about artists and their music, and it is also a hub where all social networking sites can connect (Beeching, 2010). These websites are unique to every artist since layouts and content can be customized according to the identity that each artist wants to portray to fans.

Promotional materials are another form of owned media that artists and their publicists can create in the process of establishing reputation, and these materials are also an essential factor in generating publicity and solidifying an artist's brand. According to Beeching (2010), the most basic forms of promotional materials are bios, photos, and demo recordings. As a part of the branding process, these materials should clarify an artist's identity, mission, and reputation (Beeching, 2010). The process of branding consists of communicating effective and consistent messages to a targeted audience, and the promotional efforts that result from branding are about articulating an artist's true self and not putting up a false front (Beeching, 2010). Branding through promotional materials allows an artist to stand out among the thousands of other artists trying to establish reputations for themselves in the industry.

**Earned media.** Central to the entire discipline of public relations is the concept of earned media, and the process of acquiring earned media can be begun once owned media has been

## THE BENEFITS OF UTILIZING EARNED MEDIA

created. Earned media “mostly comprises results from traditional PR methods and outreach, such as media coverage, press and customer reviews, and word-of-mouth” (“PESO,” n.d.). One of the first steps in acquiring publicity for a brand is to marry the owned media to the earned media, and then pitch the story to media outlets and blogs with a higher domain authority than the brand itself (Dietrich, 2018). The process of pitching to the media involves identifying keywords and outlets that would have an interest in the brand and then creating a pitch that is supported by owned content (Dietrich, 2018). In other words, it is the publicist’s responsibility to make sure that the earned media directly connects and leads to the owned media that has been created for the brand. For example, a pitch about the brand should contain a link to the brand’s official website.

Pitching to the appropriate newspapers, magazines, and digital industry outlets is necessary in generating publicity for a pop music artist. The process of pitching begins with writing press releases, which are used effectively when they are focused on newsworthy events that are timely and relevant, such as an event or product release (Aland, 2017). According to Howes (2010), the practice of pitching and securing placement in relevant media outlets endures because of the value that PR practitioners, their clients, and business people perceive from these placements. The pitching process in music is very similar to that of other industries since publicists will develop a press kit that contains press releases, photos, and the artist’s music to be sent to media contacts, and then they will follow up with phone calls in order to not only generate further interest in their client but also to secure media placement (Beeching, 2010). These follow up phone calls also allow publicists to foster relationships with these important media contacts. As a result of pitching to these media outlets, publicists engender word-of-mouth communication about and establish third-party credibility for their artists.

## THE BENEFITS OF UTILIZING EARNED MEDIA

***Word-of-mouth.*** Earned media generates word-of-mouth communication, which has come to be known as “the most powerful force in the marketplace” (Silverman, 2011, p. 20). According to a Nielsen report that discusses consumer reliance on word-of-mouth messages in the decision-making process, “92 percent of consumers around the world say they trust earned media, such as recommendations from friends and family, above all other forms of advertising” (“Consumer trust in online,” 2012, par. 2). The source which the earned media stems from then becomes an important element regarding the impact that it has on these individuals. Silverman (2011) posits that these personal word-of-mouth messages are so prominent to individuals because they “confirmed the truth and relevance” (p. 20) of the information they were being told. Silverman (2011) further writes, since word-of-mouth communication is tailored to the individuals who are participating in it, individuals “pay more attention to it because it is perceived as more relevant and more complete than any other form of communication” (p. 73). Therefore, individuals are more likely to engage with a brand if they heard about it from a credible source, such as a friend or relative or media outlet that they trust.

Earned media within the entertainment industry helps to increase brand awareness most effectively since it generates word-of-mouth communication. Based on a study conducted by Lovett and Staelin (2016), earned media assumes an enjoyment-enhancing role, which means that engaging with the brand will anticipate future experiences, such as socializing. In other words, the basic human desire to socialize and converse with others will lead to word-of-mouth communication (Lovett, Peres, & Shachar, 2013). Additionally, the fact that earned media assumes the enhancing-enjoyment role “reflects why engagement can be so important to branding, that is, that these interactions lead people to become more involved in the brand” (Lovett & Staelin, 2016, p. 144). Then, as brands become more relevant to the public, they will

## THE BENEFITS OF UTILIZING EARNED MEDIA

be more likely to spark conversation (Lovett et al., 2013). Therefore, this study reveals that individuals will engage with a specific form of entertainment, or in this case specific upcoming pop music artists, to discuss them further with their peers, thus increasing word-of-mouth communication surrounding these artists.

***Third-party credibility.*** Earned media is often viewed by the public as news, which means that “it has credibility that is lacking in most advertising” (Lane, King, & Russell, 2005, p. 36). This phenomenon is known as third-party credibility, and Guth and Marsh (2007) define it as when “appearance in an uncontrolled news medium lends credibility to a story, because the media are neither the sender nor the receiver but an independent third party” (p. 585). When compared to the third-party credibility established by news stories, the advertisements of paid media are viewed as less credible sources of information since they are created and paid for by the brand with the interest of selling its product or service (Straughan & Zhao, 1996). Since placement on trusted outlets validates owned content and establishes third-party credibility, each mention in the press increases the credibility of the brand and builds up the brand’s reputation (Kim, 2018).

The third-party endorsement associated with earned media makes content more memorable and favorable for individuals when compared to the advertorial content of paid media. This view is supported by O’Neil and Eisenmann (2017) who write that publicity about a good or service is perceived more favorably to consumers since the journalists reporting the story are considered more credible and objective than a paid advertisement. Similarly, Cameron (1994) writes that publicity has an advantage over advertising due to the greater credibility provided by publicity. In his study of editorial versus advertorial copy, Cameron (1994) proved that individuals have a slightly higher level of recognition memory when it came to a message that



## THE BENEFITS OF UTILIZING EARNED MEDIA

was communicated through an editorial as opposed to an advertisement, therefore helping to build relevancy and establish reputation. As with word-of-mouth communication, the source of the information becomes an important element in the engagement of consumers and their awareness of a brand.

When comparing the results of earned media to those of paid media, a pop music artist benefits greater from the former because of the third-party credibility it establishes. According to Beeching (2010), “because it’s written and edited by professional journalists” (p. 182), earned media, such as a news article, is more credible and holds more weight than a paid advertisement. When placement is executed correctly, an upcoming pop music artist can see success in sales as well as branding that can guarantee awareness of an artist in the public eye (Markell, 2013). With this being said, perhaps the most important job of a publicist is to secure earned media placement in reputable and relevant outlets.

**Shared media.** As a result of the Internet, shared media is fast becoming a key instrument in acquiring earned media. The Public Relations Society of America (PRSA) explains that the most basic form of shared media is social media, which is where the created content will be discussed, interacted with, and passed around among different audiences the most. Although the PRSA defines social media as shared media, it has also been defined in research as both owned media and earned media depending on context. Social media that is generated, controlled, and shared by a brand on its own online social networking platforms is known as owned social media (Colicev, Malshe, Pauwels, & O’Connor, 2018). On the other hand, earned social media is “the brand-related content that entities other than the brand—typically the consumers— create, consume, and disseminate through online social networks” (Colicev et al., 2018, p. 39). Since social media is one of the most flexible types of media, it has come to incorporate all four types

## THE BENEFITS OF UTILIZING EARNED MEDIA

of media that compromise the PESO Model. Furthermore, because of the rise in popularity of new digital media and the decline of traditional print media, social media has become a valuable tool for publicists who are trying to generate awareness and establish reputation for a brand.

***Social Media.*** The relevancy and importance of social media in the music industry can be gauged from looking at the current metrics of social media engagement. For example, six out of the ten most followed accounts on Twitter are music artists (“Most followed accounts on Twitter,” 2018), and five out of the ten most followed accounts on Instagram are music artists as well (“Instagram accounts with the most followers,” 2018). As one of the most important tools in the music business today, social media has not only brought success to many music artists but also continues to bring in new fans and revenue (Tavel, 2012).

A study conducted by Dewan and Ramaprasad (2014) reveals that social media platforms assume the dual role of sharing information and opinions about the music as well as the artist sharing the music itself. According to Dewan and Ramaprasad (2014), this dual role allows individuals to have “many alternatives for discovering new artists, sharing recommendations, and consuming music” (p. 102). Also, Tavel (2012) indicated that social media has been able to produce results that other forms of media could not, such as “new geographically identifiable markets, increased ticket sales, an effective feedback system through which to better their product, and a method of discovery for up-and-coming bands” (p. 21). In other words, social media has provided extensive access and numerous opportunities to artists, both upcoming and established, that were previously unavailable to artists in the past.

While social media has provided fans with the opportunity to discover new music, it has also allowed artists to connect with their fans all over the world in various and unique ways. Forms of interaction between fans and music artists, which would otherwise be impossible

## THE BENEFITS OF UTILIZING EARNED MEDIA

offline, have been made possible because of the Internet (Galuszka, 2015). With this being said, social media platforms establish a connection between fans and their favorite music artists, which grants these consumers immediate access to artist information (Tavel, 2012). Before the Internet, location once played a major role in how fans engaged with music artists. However, the Internet and social media have allowed music artists to expand their connections with fans on a global scale. Verboord & van Noord (2016) support this point in their study on the impact of geography and social media on pop music artists' media attention when they write, "since the importance of physical proximity to dominant production apparatuses as well as audiences is declining, and thus location becomes less important in popular music" (p. 60).

Social media has provided new channels for earned media to populate. Therefore, Facebook, Twitter, and Instagram are useful social media channels for upcoming musicians to utilize to connect with their fans and to generate awareness for their brands. In addition, "their enormous network also creates the opportunity to develop 'buzz' around a new artist or, even more effective, have a song or video spread virally" (El Gamal, 2012, p. 22). Furthermore, social media has fueled the progression of word-of-mouth communication through fans posting about new music artists on their own profiles. Unique from other forms of media, social media allows fans who are emotionally invested in music to use their own networks to promote upcoming music artists and their concerts (Tavel, 2012), which helps to generate awareness among targeted audiences. In addition to posting about music and upcoming events, Galuszka (2015) explains that "using new technologies enables fans to express their preferences and opinions directly to other fans and to the general public" (p. 27). As previously mentioned, individuals are more likely to engage with artists once they have been recommended by a reliable source, such as friends or other fans, which gives these artists credibility and further builds their reputations.

## THE BENEFITS OF UTILIZING EARNED MEDIA

Therefore, earned social media plays a major role in both generating awareness and establishing reputation for upcoming pop music artists.

**Paid media.** Research has shown that advertising, otherwise known as paid media, does little in establishing reputation for a brand. Appropriately termed, paid media is media that is created and then paid for by a brand to be displayed over various communication channels. According to the PRSA, examples of paid media include both the established forms of advertising, such as TV and radio ads and billboards, as well as modern forms of advertising, such as paid social media results and buying email lists. Explaining its role in the PESO Model, Dietrich (2018) writes that “paid media includes paid social media advertising, content syndication and distribution, and lead generation email campaigns” (p. 30). Forms of paid media advertisements can appear in reputable media outlets, such as newspapers and magazines, but they often appear separate from the articles written by professional journalists. Similarly, advertisements that appear on social media are often labeled as sponsored, therefore individuals know that whoever posted the endorsement did so because they were paid to do so.

While paid media does little in establishing reputation for a brand, it does assist in generating awareness for the brand. According to a study conducted by Lovett and Staelin (2016), paid media assumes a reminding role, which means that the constant exposure to paid advertisements increases the prominence of the brand within a person’s memory. Furthering this idea, Howes (2010) writes that “respondents indicated a slight preference for gaining product information from an advertisement over a news story; convenience and accessibility were seen as positive attributes of advertising” (p. 12). Although advertisements can often be viewed as implausible, their presence can communicate information about and notify consumers of a brand.

## THE BENEFITS OF UTILIZING EARNED MEDIA

There are various forms of paid media found within the music industry, and advertisements for performances and recordings can be found both online and offline. Traditionally these types of advertisements would appear in newspapers and magazines in small text boxes alongside articles, but the modern day equivalent to these advertisements can be found on the sides of webpages (Beeching, 2010). Advertisements can sometimes be a financial burden since “paid advertising in the more prestigious newspapers and magazines is extremely expensive and therefore beyond the means of most emerging artists. Online advertising can be much less expensive, but it has not been proved effective for promoting performances” (Beeching, 2010, p. 182). For this reason, the role of earned media has been increasingly important for upcoming pop music artists who are trying to get their name in the media.

### **Theoretical Overview**

There are two theories that lend evidence to the studies whose results prove that earned media is more effective than paid media. When coupled with the PESO Model, source credibility theory provides an explanation as to why earned media is preferred over paid media by consumers when it comes to their perception of reputation and awareness of a brand. Furthermore, social identity theory provides an explanation for the necessity of earned media in the development of reputation and awareness for upcoming pop music artists. When these theories are viewed together, they lay a foundation for the rationale presented in this study.

**Source credibility theory.** Through the classification and description of the various types of media, the importance of a source’s credibility was a recurring theme throughout the literature. First developed by Aristotle, the theory of source credibility was rooted in persuasive speaking and influencing the thoughts and beliefs of audiences (Umeogu, 2012). The theory over time developed and has become a fundamental concept within the communication discipline,

## THE BENEFITS OF UTILIZING EARNED MEDIA

more specifically in public relations. As we understand it today, source credibility theory posits that, when a source is presented as credible, receivers of its message are more likely to be persuaded into engaging with a brand (Hovland, Janis, & Kelley, 1963). According to Umeogu (2012), the two guiding elements that influence source credibility are perceived expertise and trustworthiness of the source. Since studies have indicated that earned media demonstrates higher levels of third-party credibility than paid media, this theory explains why publicists would want to implement earned media tactics when generating awareness among fans and establishing the reputations of their artists in the industry.

**Fandoms.** In order to understand how social identity theory and the emergence of fandoms have played a role in the development of publicity for a music artist, it is necessary to understand how fandoms within the music industry form. As defined by Baym (2007), a fandom is a “collective of people organized socially around their shared appreciation of a pop culture object or objects” (p. 2). Gray, Sandvoss, and Harrington (2017) expand upon this definition to make it relevant in the music industry by describing fans and music lovers as individuals who refuse to accept the anonymity and limited involvement of audiences and thereby characterize their participation with personal connections and deeper feelings. Since “music forms an important part of identity development and maintenance for many people” (Thompson, Lamont, Parncutt, & Russo, 2014, p. 573), members of these fandoms have even come to identify themselves with the musical artists in a personal way.

Members of these fandoms who have come to identify with artists have often fueled word-of-mouth communication surrounding music artists. According to Gray et al. (2017), members of these fandoms wanted to understand these artists as authentic people as well as share a more intimate bond with them; therefore, they would go beyond their role as fans to become

## THE BENEFITS OF UTILIZING EARNED MEDIA

significantly involved through activities such as research and Internet discussions. Therefore, it is important for music artists to provide information for these fans that goes beyond what is found in paid advertisements. According to Baym (2009), artists are recommended to provide fans with resources, such as their back story and relevant personal information, that allows these fans to continue the activities they participate in with other fans.

**Social identity theory.** In attempting to offer an explanation as to why these fans may prefer to learn about upcoming artists through earned media as opposed to paid media, social identity theory explains the ways in which artists must first become relatable to fans. According to Littlejohn and Foss (2009), social identity theory's core principle is that "people are motivated to maintain or achieve a positive social identity, but that positive social identity results from the standing of one's in-group vis-à-vis other groups" (p. 896). In other words, this theory discusses how a part of people's personal identities can be constructed from their membership in various social groups. These groups can form when an artist's music is relatable to several individuals who are experiencing similar life situations or possess similar social and cultural identities, which allows them to more closely align themselves with and essentially become fans of the artist while simultaneously forming a community among themselves.

According to Saboo, Kumar, and Ramani (2016), social identity theory explains that consumers who closely identify with a brand value the feeling of oneness they associate with that brand. The authors extend this description to include that "consumers also identify with human brands such as music artists, where they perceive, feel, and value their belongingness with a music artist and engage in a range of social media behaviors" (Saboo et al., 2016, p. 525), such as sharing information about the artist on their own social media profiles. People in these groups are able to identify with music artists because, according to Thompson, Lamont, Parncutt, and

## THE BENEFITS OF UTILIZING EARNED MEDIA

Russo (2014), “music is completely woven into the fabric of people’s lives... It provides the focus of, or the soundtrack to, countless social situations and can also provide refuge or solace in private moments” (p. 573). As a means for individuals to develop their personal identities, music communicates messages of emotion, thoughts, politics, relationships, and physical expressions that allow fans to connect with one another as well as the artists themselves (Thompson et al., 2014). Since a fan’s personal identification with a pop music artist can generate earned social media and word-of-mouth communication, individuals who can relate to the message that is being communicated not only become aware of the artist but may also eventually join the fandom supporting that artist. For this reason, publicists should always include relatable, personal information about artists in the creation of owned media.

Earned media in the form of publicity and social media are also important places for fans to learn about a music artist’s personal background. Discussing the importance of knowing an artist’s background, Baym (2009) writes that the identity that an artist puts forward in music and promotional materials should be matched with what is portrayed both online and offline. When it comes to publicity, earned media, such as an interview of a pop music artist conducted by a relevant media outlet or TV show, allows for authentic conversations and interaction with clients and brands (Rudawsky, 2011). Through these connections, fans are able to more closely identify with emerging artists as opposed to simply seeing paid advertisements about an upcoming release or event.

### **Strengths and Limitations of the Literature**

A large and growing body of literature has investigated the various roles that the different forms of media can assume in certain situations. For example, O’Neil and Eisenmann (2017) specifically study the classification of each of the four types of media and how the classification



## THE BENEFITS OF UTILIZING EARNED MEDIA

of each impacts the source's credibility and consumer behavior. Another study by Colicev, Malshe, Pauwels, and O'Connor (2018) compared owned and earned social media to determine the business effects of social media and discover if brand awareness, purchase intent, and customer satisfaction can improve shareholder value. Furthermore, Cameron (1994) studied the effects that earned media (editorials) and paid media (advertisements) have on recognition memory in individuals. Investigating media in the entertainment industry, a study by Lovett and Staelin (2016) examines how earned, paid, and owned media act together in reminding, informing, and enhancing enjoyment for individuals when it came to a newly-aired television program. Specifically focusing on media in the music industry, a study by Dewan and Ramaprasad (2014) examined the trend of new media replacing traditional media in sharing information within the music industry and the effects that this phenomenon has on music sales. Additionally, a study by Saboo et al. (2016) examines how consumer social media activities effect the sales of music artists. Initial observations suggest that there may be a link between the media consumption habits of the public and the superior role that earned media assumes over paid media.

Based on the research that has been reviewed, this study adds to the existing body of literature as it analyzes the application of owned, earned, and shared media in the development of upcoming pop music artists. Despite the amount of research that has previously been conducted, the researcher has not come across a study that investigates the application of these types of media, which then results in the creation of a guide of best practices for publicists to utilize when creating publicity campaigns. Therefore, there are several important areas where this study makes an original contribution to the growing body of knowledge on the benefits of earned media and more specifically on how the identified strategies can be utilized by publicists

## THE BENEFITS OF UTILIZING EARNED MEDIA

in the music industry to better prepare campaigns that achieve the short-term and long-term goals of emerging pop music artists.

The next chapter illustrates the research process through a discussion of the study's methodology and research design. The sample of the study is identified and discussed in further detail in addition to the process of data collection and analysis. Also explained in the next chapter is the process of artifact validation, the limitations of the research design, and a summary of the methodological process.

## Chapter 3

### Methods

As identified in the statement of the problem, this study aims to determine which publicity strategies are most effective in combatting the issues of declining music sales and the need to stand out in the industry to achieve the short-term and long-term goals of upcoming pop music artists. Therefore, the methodology that was applied sought to answer two central research questions. First, which publicity strategies are most effective in generating awareness for upcoming pop music artists? Second, which publicity strategies are most effective in establishing reputation for upcoming pop music artists? By focusing on the four media types presented in the PESO model and also applying source credibility theory and social influence theory, this study provides further insight into how publicists can use these theories and practical model to help emerging pop music artists achieve success in their careers. In addition, the goal of this study was to use the collected data to create a guideline of best earned media practices, which is also supported by industry perspective, for publicists to implement into future publicity campaigns for the pop music artists that they represent.

According to the literature, earned media strategies are more cost-effective compared to those of paid media. Additionally, earned media strategies are also more beneficial for those who are trying to achieve relevancy and positive reputations. Therefore, qualitative research methodology was applied in this study in order to explore the phenomenon of publicity in the music industry more deeply and to more fully understand how specific trends in earned media can affect the short-term and long-term career goals of upcoming pop music artists. More specifically, the chosen methodology allowed the researcher to examine existing trends in earned media through an analysis of pop music artists who have already achieved success. Through the

## THE BENEFITS OF UTILIZING EARNED MEDIA

analysis of pop music artists who have already transitioned from emerging to successful, the researcher was able to determine which publicity strategies are most beneficial in the success of future upcoming pop music artists. The application of qualitative methodologies was found as a suitable approach in identifying and analyzing these earned media trends as this type of research aims to understand why individuals and groups think and behave in the ways that they do (Keegan, 2009). Furthermore, according to Thomas (2006), this study lends itself to an inductive approach as it allowed for findings to emerge from the recurring themes in the collected data.

In this chapter, the methodological process is defined and explained in relation to its ability to answer the research questions. Furthermore, the remainder of this chapter outlines the study's rationale for the research method selection and the research design. The chapter also provides a discussion of the sample, data collection and analysis process, and validation process for the artifact that was created as a result of this research. Then, the chapter concludes with the limitations of the study as well as a summary of the methods.

### **Case Study**

The primary method applied in answering the research questions was a case study. The term case study, which encompasses a multitude of definitions since the method can be carried out in a variety of ways, "has become increasingly associated with an in-depth exploration of a particular context using largely qualitative methods within interpretive enquiry" (Stake, 1995, as cited in Hammond & Wellington, 2013, p. 17). While case studies can involve face-to-face interactions, they do not always need to involve first-hand accounts as researchers can present cases that are based on secondary data analysis (Hammond & Wellington, 2013). With that being said, both successful and unsuccessful cases can be analyzed and compared, in which conclusions can then be drawn. In order to get a comprehensive understanding of certain media

## THE BENEFITS OF UTILIZING EARNED MEDIA

phenomena, the researcher deemed this method as appropriate for this study as “it can produce an in-depth analysis of phenomena in context, support the development of historical perspectives and guarantee high internal validity, which is to say that the observed phenomena are authentic representations of reality” (Gagnon, 2010, pp. 2-3). Therefore, the evidence used in the development of the case should be an accurate depiction of real-world situations.

Case study research has been used in similarly designed studies, both within and outside the field of public relations. In fact, the use of case studies has been proven a popular research method in public relations as, according to Cutler (2004), “case studies make up as much as a third of the research in public relations journals” (p. 366) and “are widely used in textbooks and form the basis for industry awards” (p. 366). For example, within the field of IMC and public relations, a study conducted by Higgins (2017) explores how public relations and marketing departments are ineffectively structured in private, nonprofit higher education institutions in the United States as a result of increasing confusion on how to best structure the respective departments at these institutions. Focusing specifically on the music industry, there are several studies that have been conducted by researchers who utilize the case study research method to arrive at their findings. For example, a study by Salo, Lankinen, and Mäntymäki (2013) applies case study research when analyzing multiple sources of information to answer what the general motives are for using social media and how they are related to music consumption. Additionally, Barber (2010) uses case study research in order to study the relationships between commercial radio formats, audience research, and music production. However, despite the popularity of case study research within the field of publicity and within the music industry in general, the researcher was unable to find a study that used case study research to analyze publicity within

## THE BENEFITS OF UTILIZING EARNED MEDIA

the music industry. Therefore, the research presented in this study is addressing a gap within the literature by making a valuable and unique contribution to the field.

After identifying that there are two approaches to conducting a case study, the Analytical Approach and the Problem-Oriented Approach, Monash University (2007) explains that “a successful case study analyses a real life situation where existing problems need to be solved” (p. 1). Therefore, for the purpose of this study, the conducted case study followed the problem-oriented approach according to the reference guide created by Monash University (2007). Based on the research outlined in the statement of the problem, the identified problems that guided this original research were the decline in music sales as a result of streaming and the need to stand out from other artists from within the same genres. Using the guide, which details the eight sections that are necessary to analyze the case being studied, the researcher used the identified problems to determine recommendations and solutions that should be implemented, which will be discussed in the concluding chapter.

**Sample.** According to Cutler (2006), “case research that gathers a variety of data from multiple campaigns, using reliable and valid designs, could prove a powerful tool for researchers” (p. 374). Furthermore, English (2005) explains that a “case study should use multiple sources of evidence to increase validity” (p. 17). Therefore, this case study analyzes which publicity strategies are considered solutions for upcoming pop music artists through selected musicians from within the same genre who were once facing similar problems. By analyzing the earned media strategies that were used by the publicity teams of these artists, the researcher can narrow down which allowed these artists to overcome similar issues.

The sample for this case study consists of three pop music artists who have each reached similar milestones in their career throughout the last decade, which is between the years 2009

## THE BENEFITS OF UTILIZING EARNED MEDIA

and 2019, while still in the process of achieving relevancy and establishing their reputations within the pop music industry. Regarding the release of their first albums, these artists have achieved chart-ranking releases, have experienced social media growth, and have been recognized in the industry as successful pop music artists through their nomination and reception of several prestigious awards. With this being said, eligibility criteria for this study required artists to have either been nominated for or won the Best New Artist category at the Recording Academy's Grammy Awards. The accomplishments celebrated by each of these artists demonstrate a trend and also act as relevant indicators for their selection in this study.

The Grammy's Best New Artist award holds significance as "one Grammy is awarded to recognize music's most promising new talent in the coveted Best New Artist category" (Hertweck, 2018, par. 1). Artists who have previously received this honor are Mariah Carey, Christina Aguilera, Alicia Keys, Maroon 5, John Legend, and Adele, "with all since enjoying long, prolific careers" (Hertweck, 2018, par. 1). While there are many relevant pop artists during this decade who fit these criteria, these artists were selected for this study based on the information that was available and accessible to the researcher at the time the data was collected, which is before the week of February 17, 2019. The selected artists, in alphabetical order by last name, are Justin Bieber, Alessia Cara, and Dua Lipa.

**Data collection.** The reference guide that was developed by Monash University (2007) directed the overall process of collecting data for this study. As suggested in the guide, after first identifying the problems that all upcoming pop music artists face and the selected artists who previously overcame these problems, the researcher then collected information about the various earned media strategies that were used by publicists as solutions to these problems for the artists they represented. In collecting data for each artist, the researcher consulted multiple sources of

## THE BENEFITS OF UTILIZING EARNED MEDIA

information in order to get a comprehensive list of implemented publicity strategies, focusing specifically on earned media. Some of the sources that were collected were the press kits that were available on record labels' websites, featured articles, cover stories, interviews, album and performance reviews, the official websites for each artist, multiple sources of owned and social media, and numerous articles written about the success of each artist. These sources were found through Google searches that included the names of the artists that were paired with keywords, such as the type of media being researched or the name of their first album release. For example, "Justin Bieber" followed by "social media" was one of the searches made in order to collect the links of his official accounts as well as any feature stories that may have been written about his social media usage throughout his career. The researcher made sure to search similar keywords for each artist that was analyzed.

When it comes to the type of outlets that were consulted in this study, news media outlets on an international, national, and local scale were collected in addition to several trade media outlets as well. Since national media outlets cover a wide range of news topics and attract a large and diverse audience, they are often considered top-tier by media professionals. On the other hand, trade media "is targeted to a specific industry, profession, trade or business. While readership numbers are lower than that of top-tier publications, trade outlets are a trusted source of information, and 100 percent of the content directly pertains to a particular industry" (Clark, 2018, par. 5). Sources were limited to what was available online due to availability and access to the researcher, so the types of sources that were consulted were digital versions of newspaper and magazine articles, blogs, and multimedia news organizations. The researcher only collected sources that were available on the Internet to the general public in order for the study to be replicated by someone that only had access to these same tools and resources.



## THE BENEFITS OF UTILIZING EARNED MEDIA

Once the sources of information were selected and compiled, a coding sheet was created with specific categories in order to organize the data that was available in these sources. The categories included the artist's name, the link to the source, the media strategy that was utilized in that source, the outlet's name, the media type, and the potential benefit that this media strategy could have on an artist's career. When categorizing each source according to media type, the researcher followed the definitions that were provided by Dietrich (2018) in her discussion of the PESO Model. Therefore, media placement in international, national, local, and industry outlets were categorized as earned media. Promotional materials and content that was created and controlled by an artist's team was categorized as owned media, and social media accounts were categorized as shared media. The reader should bear in mind that paid media and advertisements were not considered since the study is focused solely on publicity strategies. The benefits of the strategies were identified by the researcher after looking up the reach that each source has, which then determined the potential that this type of media has in helping emerging pop music artists achieve their short-term and long-term goals.

Data was collected following the Problem-Oriented Approach established by Monash University (2007) until the researcher was able to discover recurring themes among the three selected artists to provide solutions and recommendations for the case at hand.

**Data analysis.** The process of analyzing the collected data began with identifying which media strategies were similarly used for each artist while also taking note if there were any unique characteristics that were emphasized in the data for each artist as well. In other words, the researcher analyzed the data by searching for recurring themes in the category titled "media strategy" of the coding sheet and while also searching for which unique characteristics, which makes each artist stand out from their peers in the industry, were emphasized in these media

## THE BENEFITS OF UTILIZING EARNED MEDIA

strategies. As a result of this analysis, themes were generated and then further analyzed to determine which thematic media strategies answered which of the posed research questions. Therefore, through this data analyzation, the researcher was able to identify which publicity strategies were beneficial in generating awareness and which were beneficial in establishing reputation for emerging pop music artists.

In analyzing the data to answer the posed research questions, which attempt to answer which media strategies generate awareness and which establish reputation, the researcher developed definitions in order to determine which of the strategies accomplish which of the goals. These definitions were generated for the purpose of categorizing each of the themes that were found. According to Michaelson and Stacks (2014), awareness in public relations is defined as “a metric that provides indication of the how much people have heard of a brand, client, issue, etc.” (p. 210). Therefore, strategies that make the artist more known to the public were categorized as those that generated awareness. Michaelson and Stacks (2014) define reputation in public relations as “an outcome variable often used as a dependent variable in research dealing with the public’s perception of an organization’s credibility, trustworthiness, or image based on the organization’s behavior” (p. 245). Therefore, strategies that build up an artist’s credibility or image were categorized as those that established reputation.

### **Process of Artifact Validation**

In addition to the information that was collected from the literature, the findings from the case study were used to create a guide of best practices which could be consulted by publicists who are representing and creating campaigns for emerging pop music artists. In order to determine whether this created artifact is considered an effective tool, it was distributed to two professionals who have influence within the pop music industry in order to be validated. One of

## THE BENEFITS OF UTILIZING EARNED MEDIA

these individuals work professionally in the publicity department at a major record label, and the other is a communications executive at a mass media company that is considered a leader in the entertainment industry. The individuals selected to validate the artifact and contribute their insights were carefully selected by the researcher so that the artifact was validated according to what is considered standard by leaders in the industry. In addition, these validators will remain anonymous throughout this study.

The artifact was sent to these publicists through email accompanied by three prompts (see Appendix A) in order to encourage responses in a timely manner. The prompts that were offered questioned the artifact's overall value and generalizability as well as provided the opportunity for general feedback on the researcher's recommendations. Their responses, which are discussed in detail in the concluding chapter, ranged from validation to suggestions for future development. By receiving commentary from experienced and knowledgeable public relations professionals from within the music industry, the validity of the produced artifact is strengthened and now holds further value in the industry.

### **Limitations of the Research Design**

The research design that has been used in this study to answer the research questions is limited because of the boundaries that were set during the research process. For example, the decade of years spanning 2009-2019 has seen numerous pop music artists who have made the transition from emerging to successful. With this being said, there are dozens of pop artists who have also been nominated for or won the Best New Artist category at the Grammy Awards. While any of these artists could have been used as evidence in this case study, only three pop artists were selected for this study since they had the most accessible information online. Furthermore, the study is limited by the time period that was selected as only a span of ten years was considered

## THE BENEFITS OF UTILIZING EARNED MEDIA

during the research process. This decade was chosen as it is the most recent and therefore provides the most current evidence of earned media trends in the industry. Finally, the study is limited since only digital versions of media were considered during data collection. While additional data could have been collected if print versions were also considered, the researcher chose to only include what was available online because these versions were the most accessible to the researcher at the time of the study

### **Summary of Methods**

In order to answer the research questions, the researcher conducted a case study that sought to provide solutions to the problems that upcoming pop music artists face when trying to achieve their goals. Focusing specifically on earned media in the pop music industry, the researcher contributed supporting evidence from three pop music artists who were also once striving for success in order to propose recommendations for emerging artists in the future. Drawing on the information found in this case study and in the literature, the researcher then created a list of best practices for publicists to consult when working with an emerging pop music artist. Finally, the created artifact was distributed to industry professionals for validation on its effectiveness.

In the next chapter, the findings for each artist in the sample that resulted from the case study are discussed in detail. In addition to a summary of the findings, the researcher also provides an examination of the themes that were identified by categorizing which publicity strategies answered each of the research questions that were posed.

## Chapter 4

### Findings

After the collection and organization of the data, the completed coding sheet (see Appendix B) was analyzed in order to identify and categorize the strategies that were implemented by the teams of the selected pop music artists during the releases of their first albums. These strategies were used as solutions in combatting the problems of declining music sales and the need to stand out among other artists. Therefore, these strategies were used by publicists in order to generate awareness for the artists as well as establish their reputations. Through comparing the strategies from each artist, the process of analysis primarily focused on the themes that emerged from the data as well as what characteristics were unique to each artist. The themes were generated as a result of all three artists having the same media strategies put in place to help them achieve their short-term and long-term goals. Also, unique characteristics of each artist that were highlighted by the publicity teams when promoting their respective artists were also considered.

In the next section, the findings are broken down according to each artist. The discussion should connect the success experienced by each to the thematic strategies that were consistent among all three in the sample.

#### **Justin Bieber**

An artist who overcame the problems that relatively all emerging pop music artists face at the beginning of their careers is Justin Bieber, who has become an international popstar since the release of his first project in November 2009. Bieber released an extended play (EP) titled *My World*, which debuted at #6 on the *Billboard* 200 chart and later peaked at #5, before releasing his first full-length album. Less than a year later, Bieber experienced even greater success with

## THE BENEFITS OF UTILIZING EARNED MEDIA

the release of his first full-length album, *My World 2.0*, which debuted at #1 on the *Billboard* 200 chart in March 2010 making him “the youngest solo male artist to achieve this feat since Stevie Wonder in 1963” (Caulfield, 2010). Through pitching Bieber’s newest releases to some of the most notable industry and national media outlets, his publicity team was able to secure earned media placement for him in the form of album reviews. The data reveals that at least three industry outlets reviewed the album, which were *Billboard*, *Rolling Stone*, and *Consequence of Sound*, as well as one national outlet, which was *The Washington Post*.

In line with this idea of the acquisition of earned media, data revealed several other earned media strategies that were implemented, which were feature and cover stories, interviews, TV performances, and press releases. Similar to the album reviews, these feature and cover stories were found in both industry and national media outlets. For example, *The New York Times* ran a feature story detailing Bieber’s success thus far, while *Billboard* ran a cover story explaining how he went from an average boy to the latest pop music sensation. Appearing on morning, mid-day, and late-night television shows, Bieber also participated in numerous interviews and gave just as many performances on several of the major networks. For example, he was interviewed by Ellen DeGeneres for the release of both his EP and his first album in addition to performing on her talk show both times. Bieber also performed songs from these releases on both *Today Show* and *Saturday Night Live*. In order to announce these performances and interviews, press releases were written to inform various audiences. Press releases were also used by Bieber’s publicity team to announce the acoustic version of his album as well as his first headlining tour for his EP and album. These press releases connected owned media to earned media through the addition of official press images as well as links to Bieber’s official website and social media accounts.

## THE BENEFITS OF UTILIZING EARNED MEDIA

In addition to the earned and owned media strategies implemented by the publicity team surrounding the campaign for Bieber's first album, there were also several efforts made on social media in order to combat the issues faced by emerging pop music artists. Music professionals and journalists say that Bieber's rise to fame happened very quickly due to the rise of social media. After being discovered on YouTube by Usher, Bieber signed a record deal with Island Def Jam Recordings later that same year in October 2008. Because of Bieber's early beginnings on YouTube, most individuals attribute his initial success to his efforts on social media platforms. Especially after landing a record deal and having access to a team of experts at his record label, websites like Twitter, Facebook, and YouTube were all used to help Bieber gain relevancy as an artist and to grow his fan base for the longevity of his career.

Research reveals that a great deal of effort went into creating an online presence for Bieber. Before being signed to a record label and releasing his first album, Bieber was said to have "five videos on YouTube, with the highest viewed having about 70,000 hits" (Enbar, 2010, par. 5). Now (as of February 2019), Bieber's channel has over 40 million subscribers, and it also has hundreds of videos with billions of views, with one video alone having three billion views. This is not the only social media platform where Bieber experienced a growth in engagement and following. In addition to his YouTube account, social media accounts on Facebook, Instagram, and Twitter were also created to help Bieber gain relevancy. These accounts provided an outlet for the artist to communicate important information about his life, upcoming events, and future releases. A unique strategy in Bieber's career was the direct connection he had with his fans on these social media platforms, specifically on Twitter. ACH Communications (2012) discusses how Bieber, in addition to following fans and responding to their tweets, would even arrange for dedicated fans on the platform to meet him. An interview between Schawbel (2011) and Bieber's

## THE BENEFITS OF UTILIZING EARNED MEDIA

manager, Scooter Braun, further reveals this connection by discussing how Bieber's social media accounts were primarily used to directly communicate with the consumers, the fans. Before his first album, "Justin opened a Twitter account and spent over a year interacting with fans and uploading more homemade videos to YouTube. By the time his album debuted, he already had millions of fans" (Enbar, 2010, par. 5). Now, Bieber has over 105 million Twitter followers, over 104 million Instagram followers, and over 77 million Facebook likes on his page.

Evidence of overcoming the challenges of relevancy and reputation can be seen through the accomplishments that Bieber celebrated in the years surrounding the release of his debut EP and first full length-album. For example, an analysis conducted at Northwestern University of the Top Twitter Trends in 2010 revealed that Bieber was among the most tweeted people in 2010 with more than 75 percent of sentiments being positive (Spain, 2011). In addition, Google's annual Year in Search (2010) analysis revealed that Bieber was the #1 search in the entertainment and people categories that same year. In addition, along with various award nominations and wins, Bieber also became a Grammy-nominated artist with his nomination in the Best New Artist category for the 2010 Grammy Awards.

### **Alessia Cara**

Another artist who overcame the problems that relatively all emerging pop music artists face at the beginning of their careers is Alessia Cara. Similar to Bieber, Cara also released an EP, *Four Pink Walls*, in August 2015 before the release of her first full-length album, with the EP reaching #31 on the *Billboard* 200 chart. Before the release of this EP, Cara landed a spot in the top five on *Billboard*'s Emerging Artist chart, which ranks the "most-shared artists who have fewer than 50,000 Twitter followers, and who have not appeared in the top-50 of *Billboard* Hot 100" (Hill, 2014, par. 1). After spending some time on this chart, Cara was no longer considered



## THE BENEFITS OF UTILIZING EARNED MEDIA

an “emerging” artist as a single from her EP entered the top 50 of the *Billboard* Hot 100 chart and later peaked at #5 a few months after the EP’s release. Then, Cara’s first full-length album, *Know-It-All*, was released in November 2015 and later peaked at #9 on the *Billboard* 200 chart. In order to announce her first album and her first headlining tour, press releases were drafted and pitched to various media outlets across the country for media placement in order to communicate to targeted audiences. Each of the press releases included owned media content, such as an official bio, official press photos, and links to her official website and social media accounts. Cara’s album was also pitched to reputable media outlets in advance of its release to be reviewed. The data collected reveals that Cara’s album was also reviewed by national outlets, such as *National Public Radio* (NPR), as well as industry outlets, such as *Billboard* and *Pitchfork*. Additionally, a sold-out performance where she sang music from her album was reviewed by *The New York Times*, a reputable media outlet on a national scale.

To further combat the issues of gaining relevancy and establishing a reputation, Cara’s publicity team implemented other strategies into the campaign surrounding her first album, including feature and cover stories, TV performances, and interviews. The feature stories that were analyzed come from national media outlets, such as *The New York Times*, and industry media outlets, such as *Billboard*, *SPIN*, and *Harper’s Bazaar*. These stories focus on Cara’s rise to fame as well as highlight her unique style. Standing out from other artists in her genre, Cara emphasizes the fact that she is an “outsider” through her music, fashion, and beauty choices, which is discussed in-depth in these features. While the cover story in *Billboard* touches on her unique characteristics, the story focuses more on her Grammy-nomination for Best New Artist at the 2018 Grammy Awards. In addition, Cara had her debut TV performance on *The Tonight Show Starring Jimmy Fallon*, where she sang songs from her first album. Following this

## THE BENEFITS OF UTILIZING EARNED MEDIA

performance, *Rolling Stone* interviewed Cara about her experience on the show, her unique style, and her journey thus far in the pop music industry.

Social media was used in conjunction with these earned and owned media strategies to help Cara achieve her goals. Often compared to Bieber in terms of being discovered, Cara used YouTube to her advantage as she also landed a record deal with Island Def Jams in 2014 after posting several covers to the video-sharing social media platform. An interview with *Glamour* discusses how Cara used YouTube to showcase her talent, which laid the groundwork for her budding pop music career. According to *CBS News* (2018), in addition to connecting with fans by demonstrating her personality and talent in her YouTube videos, she is also accessible to her fans on other social media platforms “where she often responds directly to fans” (par. 24). With this being said, platforms such as Facebook, Instagram, and Twitter were also used by Cara and her team to communicate with fans as well as keep them updated of important information, upcoming live events, and future releases. After only having a few hundred thousand followers on Twitter during the release of her first album, Cara now (as of February 2019), has almost 1.3 million Twitter followers, 2.5 million Instagram followers, and almost 900,000 Facebook likes on her page. Furthermore, when she was discovered from YouTube, she had only 31,000 subscribers, and she now has just over three million.

Throughout her career, Cara reached several milestones that distinguish her from other artists in the pop music industry. Aside from winning her nomination at the Grammy Awards for Best New Artist in 2018, Cara also won a Juno Award for Breakthrough Artist of the Year in 2016 as well as a Juno Award for Pop Album of the Year in 2017 for her first album. Spotify also declared that Cara’s highest-charting single, “Here,” was the most viral track in the United

## THE BENEFITS OF UTILIZING EARNED MEDIA

States in 2015. Additionally, by earning a place on Spotify's top ten most-streamed female artists on a global scale in 2017, Cara earned four top 10 hits on the *Billboard* Hot 100 chart.

### **Dua Lipa**

The artist in this sample who most recently overcame the problems that relatively all emerging pop music artists face at the beginning of their careers is Dua Lipa, who is also categorized as an international pop star. Although a British singer/songwriter, Lipa has become quite relevant in the United States (US) during 2018. Shortly after signing a record deal with Warner Brothers Records in 2015, Lipa released several singles in order to prepare for the release of her first full-length album. In June 2017, her self-titled debut studio album, *Dua Lipa*, was released and later peaked at #27 on the *Billboard* 200 chart. After this release, Lipa continued to release songs as singles in order to further promote the album. Out of all the singles released from the album, "Blow Your Mind (Mwah)" peaked at #72 on the *Billboard* Hot 100 chart, "IDGAF" peaked at #49, and "New Rules" peaked at #6. Another notable accomplishment is that each of these songs, as well as her first single "Be The One," all reached #1 on *Billboard*'s Dance Club Songs chart. Similar to Bieber and Cara, Lipa's album was reviewed by multiple reputable media outlets. Since Lipa is a British artist, her album was reviewed by international media outlets from Britain, such as *The Guardian*. Additionally, Lipa's album was also reviewed by industry media outlets, such as *NME* and *The Young Folks*. In addition to these album reviews, several of Lipa's performances during her first US headlining tour of the album were also reviewed. For example, there was a review from *The Guardian*, which is the international media outlet from Britain, as well as multiple reviews in local media outlets in the US, such as *NJ.com*, *Miami New Times*, and *The Los Angeles Times*.

## THE BENEFITS OF UTILIZING EARNED MEDIA

Lipa's global press kit, which is available on the press website for Warner Brothers Records, revealed all of the press placement and social media metrics for the artist during the campaign surrounding her first album. Earned media strategies, such as feature and cover stories, TV performances, and interviews, were also used by Lipa's publicity team in order to help her achieve her goals. Similar to the other two artists in the sample, Lipa also had feature and cover stories in both national and industry media outlets. Like Cara, Lipa's cover story was in *Billboard*, a reputable industry media outlet, and it highlighted her Grammy nomination for Best New Artist at the 2019 Grammy Awards. Lipa was also featured on a supplemental cover for *British Vogue*, accompanied with a cover story, in November 2016. In addition to several national media outlets, such as NPR, *Forbes*, *TIME*, and *The New York Times*, the industry outlet *Billboard* also ran multiple feature stories about Lipa. While these feature stories focused on Lipa's success, they also discussed her unique sound. Pareles (2017) describes the artist as having a voice with pungency and husky power, and Buli (2016) describes her music as "catchy, with a dabble of swagger" (par. 2). In terms of TV performances, like Cara, Lipa's debut TV performance was also on *The Tonight Show Starring Jimmy Fallon*, and like Bieber, Lipa also performed music from her album on *Today Show*. The press kit also reveals that Lipa was interviewed by industry outlets, such as *NYLON*, in order to further advance her album.

Lipa's press website features all the owned media, such as official press photos and official bio, that was used during the campaign surrounding her first album. In addition, the various press releases that were written in order to announce upcoming milestones in Lipa's career were also featured. Each release linked all of Lipa's owned content, such as links to her official website and social media accounts, to the earned media. For example, the press release that announced that Lipa's album was officially out not only discusses the album and lists

## THE BENEFITS OF UTILIZING EARNED MEDIA

various upcoming events where Lipa was going to perform the songs from the album, but it also had links to Lipa's website, Instagram, Facebook, and Twitter as well as the link to digitally purchase her album. Other press releases were written to announce that her single went #1 in the UK, her headlining US tour, and a music video for a song from the album.

Social media was used in conjunction with these earned and owned media strategies to help Lipa achieve her goals. Using these social media accounts, Lipa connects with her fans and announces important information, upcoming events, and music releases. Actively using these accounts to connect with her fans, Lipa's following across multiple platforms grew. For example, an article from 2016 indicates that Lipa once had 70,000 followers on Instagram, and now (as of February 2019), Lipa now has almost 26 million Instagram followers. This platform has the most significant growth in followers for Lipa. Similarly, the press kit states that, during the campaign for her first album release, Lipa had over 116,000 Twitter followers and 340,000 Facebook likes on her page. Now, she has three million Twitter followers and almost four million Facebook likes on her page. Additionally, Lipa once had only 150 million views on her YouTube videos in total, and now she has billions of views, with one video having over one billion views on its own, and almost 10 million YouTube subscribers on her channel.

First discussing her success in the United Kingdom (UK), she was the most-streamed female artist in the UK in 2018 on Spotify and Apple Music. This is the second year in a row she held this title as she was also the most-streamed female artist in the UK in 2017. Shifting to the achievements she celebrated in the US, Lipa earned a place on Spotify's top ten most-streamed female artists on a global scale in 2017. Continuing this pattern of success, she was also the second most streamed female on a global scale in 2018, second only to Ariana Grande and coming before artists such as Cardi B and Taylor Swift ("The Top Songs," 2018). Furthermore,

## THE BENEFITS OF UTILIZING EARNED MEDIA

her self-titled debut album was also the fourth most streamed album of 2018, the only female within the ranked top 5, among male counterparts such as Drake, Post Malone, and Ed Sheeran (“The Top Songs,” 2018). In addition to these accomplishments, Lipa also received international recognition at various award shows throughout the United States and Europe. For example, she went on to win her nomination for Best New Artist at the 2019 Grammy Awards. Furthermore, at the 2018 Brit Awards, which is the biggest awards ceremony according to UK public opinion (Cliff, 2017), Lipa was awarded British Breakthrough Act and British Female Solo Artist. As detailed by these achievements, it is clear that Lipa has transitioned from an emerging artist in the pop music industry.

### **Summary of Findings**

The data analysis and the artist comparison resulted in the development of seven themes that were consistent throughout the dataset. These themes were identified as each were strategies that were used in the campaigns of all three music artists that were analyzed. The themes are: (1) create owned media content, such as official press photos and bio, to be linked with earned media and used for promotional efforts; (2) develop an official website to be linked with earned media; (3) write press releases to announce latest projects; (4) pitch new music to journalists to bring about album and performance reviews; (5) secure earned media placement, such as feature and cover stories, TV performances, and interviews, in national and industry media outlets; (6) utilize social media to generate word-of-mouth communication, to keep followers and fans updated on the latest releases and events, and to grow following; and (7) highlight unique characteristics that allow artists to stand out from others in their genre. Examples of unique characteristics that were identified for the selected artists are as follows: Justin Bieber has a unique relationship with his fans on social media, Alessia Cara has a unique style and identity

## THE BENEFITS OF UTILIZING EARNED MEDIA

that is shown through her appearance and her music, and Dua Lipa has a unique sound that distinguishes her from other pop females. The findings that are presented in this chapter, which are discussed further in the upcoming chapter, were also used in the creation of the artifact that was later sent for validation to professionals in the music industry.

These themes were then analyzed based on the definitions of awareness and reputation mentioned in the previous chapter. Table 1 summarizes these findings by identifying the publicity strategies that could be used to generate awareness as well as the publicity strategies that could be used to establish reputation. Although separated into two categories, this does not mean that strategies that are listed as establishing reputation do not also generate awareness for the artists, and vice versa.

Table 1	
<i>Strategy Categorization</i>	
<b>Generate Awareness</b>	<b>Establish Reputation</b>
Write press releases to announce latest projects	Create owned media content, such as official press photos and bio, to be linked with earned media and used for promotional efforts
Utilize social media to generate word-of-mouth communication, keep followers and fans updated on the latest releases and events, and grow following	Develop an official website to be linked with earned media
	Pitch new music to bring about album and performance reviews
	Secure earned media placement, such as feature and cover stories, TV performances, and interviews, in national and industry media outlets
	Highlight unique characteristics for each of the artists that allow them to stand out from other artists in their genre

## THE BENEFITS OF UTILIZING EARNED MEDIA

The next and final chapter discusses the potential benefit that each of these strategies could have on the careers of emerging pop music artists. In addition, the limitations of the study, possibilities for future research, and a summary of this study will conclude the paper.



## **Chapter 5**

### **Discussion**

When faced with the issues of declining revenue as a result of a decrease in music sales and the need to stand out in an already saturated industry, emerging pop music artists rely on their publicists to implement innovative campaigns to achieve their goals. Literature has revealed that publicity, over advertising, has proven to be a cost-effective and beneficial way for these new artists to bring about awareness of their brands and establish their reputations in the industry. Therefore, this study intended to determine which publicity strategies would prove to be necessary and beneficial for upcoming pop music artists and their publicists to implement when trying to generate awareness, establish reputation, ultimately achieve success. Through the use of a case study of earned media, the researcher analyzed the strategies that were previously used by the publicity teams of three pop music artists who have already achieved success in the industry. The case study revealed seven key strategies that were implemented during the campaigns of all artists in the sample surrounding the release of their first albums. These findings, also supported by the literature, were then suggested by the researcher as recommendations to be consulted by publicists who are representing emerging pop music artists.

In the following sections, the researcher's recommendations and their potential benefits are discussed in further detail. Additionally, comments from industry professionals are presented in order to strengthen and validate these recommendations. Finally, the study concludes with a discussion of the limitations of the study, suggestions for future research, and a brief conclusion.

### **Recommendations and Benefits**

The findings from the case study were critical in the creation of the researcher's artifact (see Appendix C), which is a guide to generating awareness and establishing reputation for

## THE BENEFITS OF UTILIZING EARNED MEDIA

emerging pop music artists. Using the information found in the literature in conjunction with the findings from the case study, the researcher was able to compile a list of best practices for publicists to consult when working with an upcoming music artist within the pop genre. The guide contains seven best practices, which were implemented by the publicity teams of all three music artists in the sample, and are further supported by the evidence in the literature review. These best practices are the researcher's recommendations to combatting the previously mentioned issues of declining music sales and the need to stand out among other artists.

Each of the following recommendations contains a detailed explanation of the strategy, supporting evidence from the literature, and the potential benefit that each strategy could have for an upcoming pop music artist.

**Create owned media content to be linked with earned media.** When working with upcoming pop music artists, it is important to create materials that could be linked to publicity and promotional efforts. The literature reveals that the most basic forms of promotional materials are bios, photos, and demo recordings, which are used throughout the branding process to communicate an artist's identity, mission, and reputation (Beeching, 2010). Therefore, these owned media materials are important as they help to solidify an artist's brand and allow the artist to become relatable to individuals. Furthermore, as seen within the literature, social identity theory explains that consumers who identify with these pop music artists perceive, feel, and value their belongingness with them, which causes these consumers to become fans of the artists over time. The development of artist branding is then crucial in achieving the long-term goals set by the artists, especially in regard to their reputations. Overall, the benefit that creating owned media has for upcoming pop music artists is that these materials help individuals connect what

## THE BENEFITS OF UTILIZING EARNED MEDIA

they are viewing with the artists and their brands. In addition, it begins to establish reputations for these artists in the pop music industry.

**Develop an official website to be linked with earned media.** Publicists should ensure that official websites are established for the emerging pop music artists that they represent using the owned media that has been created. The literature explains that an official website serves as a “home base” for fans to find the most complete information about artists and their music, and it is a hub where all of their social networking sites can connect (Beeching, 2010). While these websites serve as the source of all official information pertaining to the artists, they should also communicate upcoming tour dates where individuals could see the artists live as well as provide links to sites where consumers could stream or purchase their music. Publicists should ensure that they include the link to these websites in all media pitches as this allows whoever is covering the artists to acquire a more thorough understanding of who the artists are, where they come from, and what they stand for in their work. Therefore, the creation of official websites is essential and beneficial to emerging pop music artists as they further build their brands and establish their reputations.

**Write press releases.** When announcing upcoming projects or events for emerging pop music artists, publicists should be drafting press releases to be sent to the media. As seen within the literature, Aland (2017) explains that press releases are used effectively when they are focused on newsworthy events that are timely and relevant, such as an event or product release. Once drafted, publicists should then use these releases when pitching to journalists at various media outlets, especially when artists are releasing new music or announcing a headlining tour. Additionally, these press releases could also be sent through a wire service where they could be picked up by multiple media outlets in numerous cities. Therefore, press releases are beneficial

## THE BENEFITS OF UTILIZING EARNED MEDIA

to emerging music artists since they provide the opportunity for media coverage in national, industry, and local media outlets in both digital and print formats. Overall, this type of coverage generates public awareness of upcoming pop music artists in relation to what they are working on or where they might be performing in the near future.

**Pitch new music to bring about album and performance reviews.** Accompanied by the respective press releases, publicists could pitch the new music of emerging pop artists to specific and targeted media outlets. Publicists could also invite the writers from these outlets to upcoming performances of the artists. The literature review discusses this pitching process when explaining that it is very similar to that of other industries since publicists will develop a press kit that contains press releases, photos, and the artist's music to be sent to media contacts (Beeching, 2010). This strategy's intent is to potentially have a review written about the artist's work in a reputable media outlet. This strategy is supported by source credibility theory in the literature when Hovland, Janis, and Kelley (1963) explain, when a source is perceived as credible by a targeted audience, receivers of its message are more likely to be persuaded into engaging with the brand that is discussed. For example, *Billboard* is a reputable music industry media outlet, and they only review select albums on their website. When asked why they did not review a specific album, the media outlet responded by saying, "... hundreds of new albums are released each week and arrive at *Billboard's* offices, all seeking print and online reviews and/or mentions... *Billboard's* experts choose various titles to review based on retail and airplay potential, as well as artistic merit" ("FAQ," n.d.). With this being said, album and performance reviews could be very beneficial for emerging pop music artists since positive reviews by reputable media outlets could further establish their reputations in the industry.

## THE BENEFITS OF UTILIZING EARNED MEDIA

**Secure earned media placement (and summarize it in a press kit!).** In addition to the album and performance reviews, other forms of earned media are necessary to achieve the goals of an upcoming pop music artist. Therefore, publicists should also pitch their pop artists to various media outlets in order to land an opportunity for these artists to showcase their talents or tell their stories to a vast yet targeted audience. These placements include, but are not limited to, feature stories, cover stories, interviews, and TV appearances. These media placements could be in national, industry, and local media outlets, and TV appearances could include morning, afternoon, and late-night television shows. Then, after all the publicity is clipped, publicists should assemble these placements into a press kit to highlight the publicity that the artist has earned. As evidenced by the literature, the process of pitching and securing placement in relevant media outlets endures because of the value that PR practitioners, their clients, and business people perceive from these placements (Howes, 2010).

Since there are so many opportunities for earned media, there are various benefits that upcoming pop music artists experience through these placements. National media outlets, although not really targeting a specific audience, have the potential to reach millions of people at once. For example, *The New York Times* has a reach of about four million total subscribers with three million of these subscribers being digital-only (Peiser, 2018). Additionally, *National Public Radio* (NPR) receives about 40 million monthly website visitors (“About NPR,” n.d.). On the other hand, industry outlets, otherwise known as trade outlets, are also necessary for emerging pop music artists. According to Amendola Communications (2018), trade outlets communicate to a targeted audience, have legitimacy as they are highly respected by industry insiders, and allow for a greater opportunity for article placement. Important industry media outlets for upcoming pop music artists to be featured in are *Billboard*, with 18 million unique digital visitors

## THE BENEFITS OF UTILIZING EARNED MEDIA

(*Billboard*, 2018), and *Pitchfork*, with 6 million unique digital visitors (*Pitchfork*, 2019). When it comes to TV performances, morning news shows like *Today Show* with over 4.1 million average viewers (Katz, 2019) and late-night talks shows like *The Tonight Show Starring Jimmy Fallon* with just about 2.5 million viewers (Welch, 2019) have also proven necessary for artists to showcase their talent to a large audience. With this being said, achieving placement in both national and industry media outlets as well as performing on national television shows can not only generate awareness for emerging pop music artists, but it could also further build their reputations in the industry.

**Utilize social media to generate word-of-mouth.** Publicists should also ensure that official social media accounts are established for their artists across various platforms to be used to communicate important information about new releases and upcoming events. Furthermore, social media has also provided upcoming pop music artists with the unique opportunity to directly engage with their fans, leading fans to continuously share about these artists on their own profiles and generate word-of-mouth communication. When used in innovative ways, social media can help upcoming pop music artists become relevant topics of conversation on these platforms, thus generating awareness for their brands. With this being said, the literature reveals that Facebook, Twitter, and Instagram are the most useful social media channels for upcoming musicians to connect with their fans since these platforms can develop ‘buzz’ around a new artist or even have a song or video spread virally (El Gamal, 2012). Therefore, these social media platforms have proven to be beneficial for upcoming pop music artists because they give these artists the opportunity to connect with billions of users on a global scale. For example, Facebook has over 2.27 billion monthly active users (Abbruzzese, 2018), Twitter has 126 million daily

## THE BENEFITS OF UTILIZING EARNED MEDIA

users (Twitter, 2019), and Instagram has one billion people using the app every month with 500 million of these users singing onto their accounts every day (Clarke, 2019).

**Highlight unique characteristics.** When publicists are implementing any of these earned media strategies, it has become increasingly important that they first identify uncommon attributes with their artists that separate them from other artists in the industry. As seen in the literature, it is important for publicists to incorporate elements or features of their artists that are not currently offered in the market in their media strategies in order to help their artists achieve their goals (Markell, 2013). In other words, once these unique characteristics have been identified, they should be emphasized in all media pitches and highlighted throughout all communications. While these characteristics can help artists to stand out from other artists in their genre, these characteristics can also help to further establish their reputations in the pop music industry as these characteristics become a part of their brands.

### **Artifact Validation**

Although the creation of the artifact is grounded in theory and supported by research, the researcher sought further validation on its effectiveness and value in the pop music industry. In order to receive this validation, the researcher sent the artifact to two individuals, one who works professionally in the publicity department at major record label and one communications executive at a mass media company that is considered a leader in the entertainment industry. These two individuals were deemed as appropriate to review the artifact because of their expertise in music publicity in regard to acquiring earned media for emerging pop music artists as well as their expertise in entertainment communications with overseeing media relations and external communications.

## THE BENEFITS OF UTILIZING EARNED MEDIA

The created artifact was sent to the validators through email and contained three prompts in order to encourage timely and focused responses from the validators. The prompts questioned the artifact's value and generalizability and also asked the validators for any additional feedback that they might have regarding the recommendations that were suggested by the researcher.

The comments that were received from validator #1 (see Appendix D), who works in the publicity department at a major music label, validated the artifact's value and generalizability in the industry. According to validator #1, even though the music industry is constantly evolving, the recommendations that have been posed as a result of this research are valuable for emerging pop music artists in the modern era. Within the response to the first prompt regarding value, validator #1 stressed the importance of staying in contact with the social media teams of these emerging artists and finding unique characteristics that help them stand out. Furthermore, these comments recognize that even though all artists have different music and stories, these recommendations are also generalizable across emerging pop music artists. When asked if there was any additional feedback about the recommendations, validator #1 indicated that establishing relationships with the media is essential in helping artists achieve their goals. Therefore, this recommendation is something for publicists to consider when they are representing emerging pop music artists.

Similarly, the comments that were received by validator #2 (see Appendix E), who works in the communications department at a mass media company specializing in entertainment, also validated the artifact's value and generalizability in the industry. By explaining the importance of having a strategic communications plan to help build the awareness and reputation of artists, validator #2 is ascertaining that the recommendations which have been made as a result of this research are valuable in the industry. Furthermore, validator #2 indicates that these



## THE BENEFITS OF UTILIZING EARNED MEDIA

recommendations are also generalizable since there are a handful of key strategies that are necessary when publicists are trying to achieve the goals of emerging artists. When asked if there was any additional feedback about the recommendations, validator #2 indicated the importance of measuring the success of publicity efforts that were implemented. Even though these publicists may be implementing the strategies that are necessary in generating awareness and establishing reputation for an emerging pop music artist, it does not mean that these strategies are having the desired result. Therefore, through measurement, a publicist will be able to see whether or not the campaigns for these artists were successful.

### **Limitations of the Study**

The current study focused on earned media strategies that proved to be useful for upcoming pop music artists in regard to awareness and reputation. However, this research is limited because it is narrow in scope, focusing only on specific elements. For example, this study solely focuses on the success of pop music artists as it is beyond the scope of this study to examine the other genres of music that are not included in this research. Although pop is one of the most dominating genres of this generation, other relevant genres that were not considered in this study were hip-hop/rap, R&B, alternative, rock, country, and dance/electronic. While this does not say that some of these findings cannot be applied to upcoming artists of other genres, this study specifically analyzed the earned media strategies that were utilized by the publicity teams of pop music artists during their careers. Therefore, the findings from this study, and the recommendations in the artifact, are specifically directed toward upcoming music artists in the pop genre.

This study is also limited as it neglects to analyze the opinions and media consumption habits of the public. This is important because, while publicists could effectively secure media

## THE BENEFITS OF UTILIZING EARNED MEDIA

placement for the artists that they represent, this does not mean that the public is engaging with the communication as expected. In order to achieve the desired outcome when it comes to publicity, it is important that publicists understand the current trends in media consumption of their targeted audiences. Continuing with this idea, this study is also limited as it neglects to analyze fan perspective. Perhaps more important than the public, fans play a significant role as they are the ones who are directly supporting the careers of these upcoming music artists. Additionally, they are the ones who have the potential to further advance an artist's goals through word-of-mouth communication. A full discussion of the media consumption habits of the public and of the fans also lies beyond the scope of this study.

Furthermore, this study is limited as a result of the sources of media that were collected as data and then analyzed. During the research process, the researcher chose to use only sources that were able to be accessed online by the general public. This decision was made deliberately in order that the current study could be recreated to test its reliability. This means that traditional sources which are usually viewed in print, such as newspapers and magazines, were accessed electronically for the purpose of this study. However, this does not mean that all media placements that appeared in print were also made available online. Therefore, the researcher may have potentially missed some key media placements as well as some differing media strategies as a result of their unavailability in a digital format. For example, out of all three artists in the sample, only Dua Lipa's press kit was able to be accessed online through Warner Brothers Records' press website. While the record label of the other artists, Def Jam Records, did have a press website, it did not provide the press kits created for them during their first album campaigns. Press kits may have been created for these artists for internal use, but they were not considered in this research since they were not made available to the public.

### **Suggestions for Future Research**

While the previous section discusses the various limitations of this study, this section discusses the numerous opportunities for future research that either build on the current study or reduce the limitations mentioned above. The primary focus of this study was to determine which publicity strategies would benefit upcoming pop music artists when trying to generate awareness for their brands while also trying to establish their reputations in the industry. By using the case study method, the researcher was able to determine the various earned media strategies that were utilized by the publicity teams of three pop music artists who have already achieved success in regard to these goals. Then, the researcher was able to identify recurring themes among the artists in the sample in order to answer the research questions. With this being said, case study research is beneficial to the practice of public relations as it identifies previously used and fundamental strategies that are necessary in achieving the goals and objectives set by represented clients. Therefore, future studies can apply the same methodical framework in numerous ways to explore other aspects of the current study. For example, using the case study method, future studies could research artists in other genres. By conducting a case study of artists that are not from the pop music genre, future studies could identify whether similar strategies could be used to advance the careers of upcoming music artists from these other genres. Additionally, case study methodology could be applied with the inclusion of print media sources to determine whether the same findings hold true.

Although the case study method is a valuable research tool for publicists, future studies could also apply different methodology in order to integrate the perspective of targeted audiences, such as the fans of pop music. Since the fans are primarily responsible for the success of music artists, especially those that are up and coming, their insight has proven to be valuable.

## THE BENEFITS OF UTILIZING EARNED MEDIA

For example, a study could research the media consumption habits of fans to see which channels of media they best engage with when it comes to finding out about a new artist. Fans could be questioned through a survey or interview in order to explore their preferred media outlets and strategies for engaging with media. Through researching the media preferences of targeted audiences, publicists who are working on a campaign could determine the best strategies to apply when trying to achieve the goals of their artists. The purpose of including the perspective of fans would be to ensure that publicists are implementing strategies that align with the expectations of the audiences they are targeting.

### **Conclusion**

This paper presents a thorough explanation of the research conducted. In chapter 1, the statement of the problem and the purpose of this study are introduced. With the problems being the decline in music sales and the need to stand out in a saturated industry, the purpose of this study was to identify publicity methods that could prove to be solutions to these issues for upcoming pop music artists. The research questions addressed the short-term and long-term goals of these artists, which deal with generating awareness and establishing reputation. In chapter 2, a review of the literature is provided. The topics that are discussed are human brands, integrated marketing communications, and the PESO Model and each of its media types. In addition, the theoretical overview discusses the theories of source credibility and social identity. The intent of the literature review is to ground this study in theory and further tie it into public relations practice. The review of the literature affirms the assumption that was made in chapter 1, which is that earned media, compared to paid media, is a cost-effective and beneficial way to solve the issues that relatively all emerging pop music artists face at the start of their careers.

## THE BENEFITS OF UTILIZING EARNED MEDIA

Chapter 3 outlines the methodological process that the researcher used to answer the research questions posed in this study. A case study of earned media was conducted to analyze the strategies that were used by pop music artists who have already transitioned from emerging to successful. This qualitative study collected data from three artists who have all either been nominated for or won the Grammy Award for Best New Artist. Data in the form of publicity strategies used during the first album release campaigns of Justin Bieber, Alessia Cara, and Dua Lipa were collected and organized using a coding sheet. The coding sheet identified the type of media, the source of the strategy, and the benefit that the strategy had for an emerging pop music artist. Analyzing the data that was collected, the researcher found themes in the media strategies that were present in the campaigns of all three of the artists that were sampled.

Chapter 4 revealed the findings from the case study in regard to the research questions that guided this study. Seven fundamental publicity strategies were identified, each of which either generated awareness or established reputation for an upcoming pop music artist. According to the definitions provided by the researcher to categorize each of these strategies, those that were found to generate awareness were utilizing social media and writing press releases. Also, those that were found to establish reputation were creating owned media content, developing an official website, pitching new music, securing earned media placement, and highlighting unique characteristics. Finally, chapter 5 provided a discussion of the results by tying each recommendation back to the literature and discussing the potential benefits that each strategy has for emerging pop music artists. This chapter also provides the limitations of the study and suggestions for future research.

While there is no secret public relations formula for bringing success to emerging pop music artists, these strategies have proven to be necessary for achieving the short-term and long-

## THE BENEFITS OF UTILIZING EARNED MEDIA

term goals of these artists. When implemented effectively, these recommendations are beneficial for pop music artists who are making the transition from emerging to successful in today's digital age. However, while this research has identified the strategies that have been used previously by pop music artists, further research with differing perspectives could potentially identify new strategies to be used in the industry. In conclusion, the artifact that has been created as a result of this research has been validated as a valuable tool by industry professionals to be used by publicists who are currently representing emerging pop music artists that are looking to achieve success.

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## Appendix A

### Email with Created Artifact and Prompts Sent to Validators

**Brianna Bell** 

Validation of Publicity Recommendations

To:

---

Good morning,

Attached to this email you will find the original artifact that I created for my master's thesis. The artifact is a guide of best practices in publicity with the goals of generating awareness and establishing reputation for emerging pop music artists. Based on your experience in the publicity department at a major record label, please respond to the following prompts regarding the artifact:

1. Do you think the recommendations have value in the industry?
2. Are the recommendations generalizable across artists?
3. Please provide additional feedback or suggestions for future development regarding my recommendations.

I look forward to receiving your responses, which will remain anonymous in my project. Thank you for taking part in the validation process.



MP Artifact for  
Validation.pdf

# THE BENEFITS OF UTILIZING EARNED MEDIA

## Appendix B

### Completed Coding Sheet

Artist	Source	Media Strategy	Outlet	P/E/S/O Media	Benefit
Justin Bieber	/defjampress.com/artist/justin-bieber	creation of owned media to connect to earned media	label	owned	helps individuals connect what they are viewing with the artist
Justin Bieber	https://www.justinbiebermusic.com	official website to act as a hub of information	label	owned	allows individuals to connect with artists on socials and events, buy merch, stream music
Justin Bieber	e.com/music/music-album-review	featured in reputable industry outlet / album review	Rolling Stone	earned	circulation - 1.5 million
Justin Bieber	syn/content/article/2010/03/22/album-review-justin-bieber	featured in reputable national media outlet / album review	Washington Post	earned	circulation - 80.8 million
Justin Bieber	com/articles/review/1069495/justin-bieber-2010-04-album-review-justin-bieber	featured in reputable industry outlet / album review	Billboard	earned	18 million digital visitors
Justin Bieber	nd.net/2010/04/album-review-justin-bieber	featured in reputable industry outlet / album review	COS	earned	300,000 - 500,000 Daily Page Impressions
Justin Bieber	nytimes.com/2010/01/03/fashion/justin-bieber	featured in reputable national media outlet / feature story	NYT	earned	three million paid digital-only subscribers, four million total
Justin Bieber	aredjr.com/2009/10/12/justin-bieber	feature story about TV performance during EP release	Today Show	earned	over 4.1 million average viewers
Justin Bieber	www.youtube.com/watch?v=c0ns	video of interview with Ellen for release of EP and album	Ellen	earned	around 4 million viewers
Justin Bieber	asic-news/justin-bieber-sings-acts	featured in reputable industry media outlet / feature story for TV performance (album)	SNL	earned	average 7 million viewers
Justin Bieber	board-cover-story / http://ocean	featured in reputable industry media outlet / cover story	Billboard	earned	18 million digital visitors
Justin Bieber	nt/music/index.ssf/2010/03/justin-bieber	press release / connecting owned and social to earned	NJ.com	owned -> earned	can be picked up by multiple media outlets
Justin Bieber	ny-biery-my-worlds-acoustic-album	press release / connecting owned and social to earned	PR Newswire	owned -> earned	can be picked up by multiple media outlets
Justin Bieber	inside-the-brand-of-justin-bieber-creator	featured in reputable national media outlet / feature story / unique social	Forbes	social	followers generating buzz / grow fan base / generate word-of-mouth through fan engagement
Justin Bieber	/02/what-i-learned-about-pr-fron	article about unique social media strategy to connect with fans	ACH Communications	social	followers generating buzz / grow fan base / generate word-of-mouth through fan engagement
Justin Bieber	6307/bid/6345/social-media-mar	discussion of social media metrics	Blogspot	social	discusses his growth in engagement and following
Justin Bieber	https://www.facebook.com/JustinBieber	Facebook account - details important info & events - connects to owned	Facebook	owned social	2.27 billion monthly active users
Justin Bieber	https://twitter.com/justinbieber	Twitter account - allows artist to more directly connect to fans	Twitter	owned social	126 million daily users
Justin Bieber	https://www.instagram.com/justinbieber	Instagram account - additional platform for information	Instagram	owned social	ability to connect with over 1 billion people
Justin Bieber	https://www.youtube.com/user/justinbieber	Youtube account	YouTube	owned social	ability to connect with billions of people all over the world
Alessia Cara	/defjampress.com/artist/alessia-cara	creation of bio and photos to connect to earned media	label	owned	helps individuals connect what they are viewing with the artist
Alessia Cara	http://www.alessiacara.com	official website to act as a hub of information	label	owned	allows individuals to connect with artists on socials and events, buy merch, stream music
Alessia Cara	rt/music/review-alessia-cara-voice	featured in reputable national media outlet / performance review	NYT	earned	three million paid digital-only subscribers, four million total
Alessia Cara	215/11/05/454316272/first-listen-alessia-cara	featured in reputable national media outlet / album review / highlights uniqueness	NPR	earned	monthly unique visitors online - 40 million
Alessia Cara	articles/review/6753923/alessia-cara	featured in reputable industry outlet / album review	Billboard	earned	18 million digital visitors
Alessia Cara	ifork.com/reviews/albums/21247-alessia-cara	featured in reputable industry outlet / album review	Pitchfork	earned	6 million monthly unique visitors
Alessia Cara	ews/alessia-cara-on-tonight-show	featured in reputable industry outlet / TV debut story	Rolling Stone / Jimmy Fallon	earned	circulation - 1.5 million / about 2.5 million viewers
Alessia Cara	n/story/watch-alessia-cara-review	featured in reputable industry outlet / feature story	Glamour	earned	11 million unique monthly users online
Alessia Cara	ews/singer-songwriter-alessia-cara	featured in reputable news source / feature story / connect with fans on social media	CBS	earned	followers generating buzz / grow fan base / generate word-of-mouth through fan engagement
Alessia Cara	es-powerful-new-single-scars-to-you	press release / connecting owned and social to earned	PR Newswire	owned -> earned	can be picked up by multiple media outlets
Alessia Cara	asia-cara-announces-november-13	press release for 1st album / connecting owned and social to earned	Umic	owned -> earned	can be picked up by multiple media outlets ... ex: Billboard
Alessia Cara	features/a17096/why-alessia-cara	featured in reputable industry outlet / unique style	Harper's Bazaar	earned	about 700,000 digital visitors
Alessia Cara	juice/6678428/alessia-cara-interview	featured in reputable industry outlet / unique style	Billboard	earned	18 million digital visitors
Alessia Cara	re-feature/7533432/grammy-pre	featured in reputable industry outlet / cover story	Billboard	earned	18 million digital visitors
Alessia Cara	/20/arts/music/alessia-cara-speak	featured in reputable national media outlet / unique style	NYT	earned	three million paid digital-only subscribers, four million total
Alessia Cara	v.spin.com/2015/06/alessia-cara	featured in reputable industry outlet / unique style	SPIN	earned	affiliate of Billboard
Alessia Cara	https://www.facebook.com/alessiacara	Facebook account - details important info & events - connects to owned	Facebook	owned social	2.27 billion monthly active users
Alessia Cara	ref_src=twsrc%5Egoogle%7Ctwc	Twitter account - allows artist to more directly connect to fans	Twitter	owned social	126 million daily users
Alessia Cara	www.instagram.com/alessiacara	Instagram account - additional platform for information	Instagram	owned social	ability to connect with over 1 billion people
Alessia Cara	rtube.com/channel/UC5Z8BdKd4v	Youtube account	Youtube	owned social	ability to connect with billions of people all over the world
Dua Lipa	r.com/wp-content/uploads/2018/02/dua-lipa	creation of owned media - official bio and press images / press kit, clippings, releases	label	owned	helps individuals connect what they are viewing with the artist
Dua Lipa	https://dualipa.com	official website to act as a hub of information	label	owned	allows individuals to connect with artists on socials and events, buy merch, stream music
Dua Lipa	british-sensation-dua-lipa-sing-bl	feature story about TV performance during album release	Today Show	earned	over 4.1 million average viewers
Dua Lipa	56239040?list=979904eba79f7513	feature story about TV performance during album release	Jimmy Fallon	earned	about 2.5 million viewers
Dua Lipa	ts/year-in-music-2017/8071063/d	featured in reputable industry media outlet / cover story	Billboard	earned	18 million digital visitors
Dua Lipa	s/columns/chart-beat/8095360/d	featured in reputable industry outlet / feature story	Billboard	earned	18 million digital visitors
Dua Lipa	3/06/541592438/yearning-for-an	featured in reputable national media outlet / feature story	NPR	earned	monthly unique visitors online - 38.6 million (17 international and 17 domestic)
Dua Lipa	http://press.wbr.com/wp-content	press release / connecting owned and social to earned	label	owned -> earned	picked up by outlets in every city
Dua Lipa	http://press.wbr.com/wp-content	press release / connecting owned and social to earned	label	owned -> earned	picked up by outlets in every city
Dua Lipa	https://www.nme.com/reviews/dua-lipa	featured in reputable industry outlet / album review	NME	earned	around 300,000
Dua Lipa	https://www.forbes.com/sites/dua-lipa	featured in reputable national media outlet / unique sound	Forbes	earned	audience readership - 6.7 million
Dua Lipa	http://time.com/collection-post/dua-lipa	featured in reputable national media outlet / feature story	TIME	earned	world's largest circulation for a weekly news magazine
Dua Lipa	https://www.nytimes.com/2017/02/03/arts/music/dua-lipa.html	featured in reputable national media outlet / feature story	NYT	earned	three million paid digital-only subscribers, four million total
Dua Lipa	https://www.theguardian.com/r/dua-lipa	featured in reputable international media outlet / performance review	The Guardian	earned	148 million unique browsers worldwide
Dua Lipa	https://www.npr.org/2016/08/31/dua-lipa	featured in reputable national media outlet / feature story	NPR	earned	monthly unique visitors online - 40 million
Dua Lipa	https://www.theyoungfolks.com/dua-lipa	featured in reputable industry outlet / album review	The Young Folks	earned	70,000+ Unique Monthly Visitors
Dua Lipa	https://www.theguardian.com/r/dua-lipa	featured in reputable international media outlet / album review	The Guardian	earned	148 million unique browsers worldwide
Dua Lipa	https://www.nj.com/entertainment/dua-lipa	featured in reputable local media outlet / performance review	NJ.com	earned	helps to bring awareness to local markets
Dua Lipa	https://www.miamiherald.com/entertainment/dua-lipa	featured in reputable local media outlet / performance review	Miami New Times	earned	helps to bring awareness to local markets
Dua Lipa	https://www.latimes.com/entertainment/dua-lipa	featured in reputable local media outlet / performance review	LA Times	earned	helps to bring awareness to local markets
Dua Lipa	https://models.com/work/british-sensation-dua-lipa	featured in reputable industry outlet / cover story	Models.com	earned	circulation 220,000
Dua Lipa	https://nylon.com/articles/dua-lipa	featured in reputable industry outlet / interview	NYLON	earned	helps artist become more relatable to fans
Dua Lipa	https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCaM	Youtube account	YouTube	owned social	ability to connect with billions of people all over the world
Dua Lipa	https://www.facebook.com/dua.lipa	Facebook account - details important info & events - connects to owned	Facebook	owned social	2.27 billion monthly active users
Dua Lipa	https://twitter.com/DUALIPA?ref	Twitter account - allows artist to more directly connect to fans	Twitter	owned social	126 million daily users
Dua Lipa	https://www.instagram.com/dua.lipa	Instagram account - additional platform for information	Instagram	owned social	ability to connect with over 1 billion people



## Appendix C

### Original Artifact

#### Best Practices in Publicity for Emerging Pop Music Artists

##### 1. Create owned media content to be linked with earned media

Publicists should work with artists to produce materials that will be linked to publicity and promotional efforts, such as official press photos and bios. These materials will allow artists to stand out in their genre, establish their brands, and become relatable to individuals.



Warner Bros. Records. (n.d.). Dua Lipa: Photos & Artwork [Screenshot]. Retrieved from <http://press.wbr.com/dualipa/>

"This whole album is me, who I am and how I want to be seen as an artist," says Dua Lipa. "I want people to really get to know me, so the album is everything that has happened in my life so far, and every song tells a different story."

She may be young, but Lipa has plenty of stories to tell. The London-born child of Kosovar parents, she has already been nominated for awards by the BBC and MTV Europe, and was a finalist for the prestigious "Critics' Choice" prize at the Brit Awards. She also won Best New Artist at the NME Awards, and two European Border Breakers Awards—she was one of only ten global recipients of the EBBA—including the night's biggest prize, the "Public Choice" award, voted on by fans.

Her strong presence onstage (indicated by her European Festival Award for Best Newcomer of the Year) immediately separates her from so many emerging pop acts. But with 3.5 million in global sales, it's her singles that have rapidly established her as a rising star—"Be the One" reached the Top Ten in a dozen European territories, "Hotter Than Hell" hit the Top Twenty in the UK, and "Blow Your Mind (Mwah)" climbed into Billboard's Top 25 in the US. All of this, mind you, before putting out her first album.

Now, with the release of *Dua Lipa*, she reveals the full range of her ambitions—not just the dance-floor fire of her singles, but also a more introspective side. "I've been describing it as 'dark pop' because people have only heard the pop moments, but there are some really dark, singer-songwriter parts that I'm excited about," she says....

Warner Bros. Records. (n.d.). Dua Lipa: Official bio [Word document]. Retrieved from [http://press.wbr.com/wp-content/uploads/2018/04/dua-lipa-bio\\_1491950855550.doc](http://press.wbr.com/wp-content/uploads/2018/04/dua-lipa-bio_1491950855550.doc)

##### 2. Develop an official website to be linked with earned media

Websites that serve as the source of all official information pertaining to artists should be set up using owned media materials. Website links should be included in all media pitches.



Def Jams Recordings. (n.d.). Alessia Cara [Screenshot]. Retrieved March 6, 2019, from <http://www.alessiacara.com/home>

## THE BENEFITS OF UTILIZING EARNED MEDIA

### 3. Write press releases

Publicists should draft press releases that contain links to official websites and social media accounts when announcing upcoming projects or events for artists. Once these releases are picked up by multiple outlets, awareness for the artists will grow.

**DUA LIPA**  
**SELF-TITLED DEBUT ALBUM**  
**OUT NOW ON WARNER BROS. RECORDS**

**PERFORMING AT GOVERNORS BALL**  
**TOMORROW**



Today rising UK superstar **Dua Lipa** releases her highly anticipated self-titled debut album. *Dua Lipa* was co-written by Dua and various collaborators including Stephen 'KOZ' Kozmeniuk (Kendrick Lamar, Nicki Minaj), Emile Haynie (Lana Del Rey, FKA T wigs), Nineteen85 (Drake, Majid Jordan) and Jon Levine (Drake, Nelly Furtado). Recorded between London, Los Angeles, Toronto and New York, *Dua Lipa* is out now and available on standard and deluxe CD, as well as digitally and on limited edition colored vinyl.

After a year of sold out US and international tour dates and over 3.8 million single sales, Dua's debut album release marks a major milestone in an incredible journey for the young Londoner. *Dua Lipa* includes hit songs 'Hotter Than Hell', 'Be The One' and 'Blow Your Mind (Mwah)' along with a number of new songs, including collaborations with Miguel on "Lost In Your Light" and Chris Martin on "Homesick" (See full tracklisting below).

Dua has already received a warm welcome from the press, with *The New York Times* proclaiming "Ms. Lipa is a big-voiced, broad-stroke songwriter and performer who was raised on pop bangers and is now writing her own," *TIME* dubbing her an "elegant pop superstar-in-waiting" and *Harper's Bazaar* declaring "Lipa, whose music is often labeled as "dark pop," boasts deep and sultry vocals, an unexpected sound for a young artist, that float right over her dance-influenced tracks."

Dua is set to hit the stage at Governors Ball tomorrow, kicking off her run of summer performances at festivals across the US including Bonnaroo, Life is Beautiful, and the B96 Pepsi Summer bash in Chicago.

#### **Tracklisting**

1. Genesis
2. Lost In Your Light ft. Miguel
3. Hotter Than Hell
4. Be The One
5. IDGAF
6. Blow Your Mind (Mwah)
7. Garden
8. No Goodbyes
9. Thinking 'Bout You
10. New Rules
11. Begging
12. Homesick

#### **Deluxe:**

13. Dreams
14. Room For 2
15. New Love
16. Bad Together
17. Last Dance

Buy/Stream Dua Lipa:  
<https://ad.gt/dualipadeluxe>

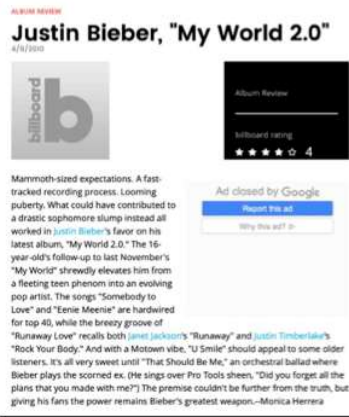
[WEBSITE](#) / [INSTAGRAM](#) / [TWITTER](#) /  
[FACEBOOK](#)

Warner Bros. Records. (2017, June 2). Dua Lipa self-titled debut album out now on Warner Bros. Records [Press release]. Retrieved from [http://press.wbr.com/wp-content/uploads/2018/04/17\\_1498003330804.doc](http://press.wbr.com/wp-content/uploads/2018/04/17_1498003330804.doc)

## THE BENEFITS OF UTILIZING EARNED MEDIA

### 4. Pitch new music to bring about album and performance reviews

Publicists should send the artists' new music, accompanied by press releases, to journalists at specific and targeted media outlets and invite journalists to the artists' shows in order that they could publish a review. These reviews help to establish the artists' reputations in the industry.



Herrera, M. (2010, April 9). Justin Bieber, "My World 2.0" [Screenshot]. *Billboard*. Retrieved from <https://www.billboard.com/articles/review/1069495/justin-bieber-my-world-20>

Dua Lipa has arrived: Meet the dance-pop diva who's dominating NYC (PHOTOS)  
Updated Mar 2, 2017 · Posted Mar 2, 2017



Olivier, B. (2017, March 2). Dua Lipa has arrived: Meet the dance-pop diva who's dominating NYC (PHOTOS) [Screenshot]. *NJ.com*. Retrieved from [https://www.nj.com/entertainment/music/2017/03/dua\\_lipa\\_nyc\\_concert\\_2017\\_review\\_photos\\_video.html](https://www.nj.com/entertainment/music/2017/03/dua_lipa_nyc_concert_2017_review_photos_video.html)

### 5. Secure earned media placement (and summarize it in a press kit!)

Publicists should pitch their artists to various media outlets, including TV shows, in order to secure the opportunity for these artists to showcase their talents or tell their stories. Once all publicity has been acquired, publicists should assemble press kits to highlight all of the publicity the artists have earned. Media placement in reputable outlets will not only bring awareness to these new artists but also establish their reputations through third-party credibility.



Buerger, M. (2018, October 13). Grammys Preview: Post Malone, Dua Lipa & Ella Mai discuss the pivotal new awards season [Screenshot]. *Billboard*. Retrieved from <https://www.billboard.com/articles/news/grammys/8478719/dua-lipa-ella-mai-post-malone-talk-grammy-awards>

## THE BENEFITS OF UTILIZING EARNED MEDIA

### 6. Utilize social media to generate word-of-mouth

Official social media accounts should be established for artists to communicate important information and build their followings. Social media allows artists to not only directly connect with their fans but also generate ‘buzz’ through word-of-mouth communication by followers.

**How has social media helped Justin build his brand, sell merchandise/CD's, and connect with his fans around the world?**

He has become a worldwide phenomenon. You look at so many other acts and they become big domestically and it takes them 2-3 years to start breaking into other markets around the world. Justin went #1 in 17 countries around the world. He went top 10 in 10 more countries. He is the #1 album in Brazil, and India; these are places he's never been to. The reason why is social media. Kids spend more time on there than anywhere else and Justin lives in that space. He might not be able to make it to Brazil next week, but he can talk to you directly on Twitter, which he does. And when I say “talk to you,” I don't mean broadcast a message to millions of people. He literally answers fans directly every single day.

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Schawbel, D. (2011, February 11). Inside the brand of Justin Bieber: An interview with manager Scooter Braun [Screenshot]. Forbes. Retrieved from <https://www.forbes.com/sites/danschawbel/2011/02/11/inside-the-brand-of-justin-bieber-an-interview-with-manager-scooter-braun/>

### 7. Highlight unique characteristics

Publicists should find uncommon attributes with the artists that allow them to further establish their brands and separate them from other artists in the industry. These characteristics should be emphasized in all communications.

Alessia Cara Speaks Up  
for the Outsiders on ‘Here’



Alessia Cara, 18, a Canadian-born singer and songwriter, has a viral smash in her new single, "Here." Chad Siska for The New York Times

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Caramanica, J. (2015, May 19). Alessia Cara speaks up for the outsiders on ‘Here’ [Screenshot]. The New York Times. Retrieved from <https://www.nytimes.com/2015/05/20/arts/music/alessia-cara-speaks-up-for-the-outsiders-on-here.html>

**Appendix D**

**Comments from Artifact Validator #1 (Music Publicist at a Record Label)**

1. The music industry is changing everyday. As of right now, these recommendations are still valid. Nowadays the publicist needs to be in constant contact with an artist's social media team more than ever. You never know when a 911 emergency can pop up or if a message needs to be delivered coming from them rather than the label. You are also always going to want to find the unique characteristics of an artist that will help them stand out from everything else out.

2. Yes, I would say you can generalize these recommendations across different artists. The difference would be the media outlets and writers that you target. Also, the way you would pitch them is different since every artist has a different story / music.

3. I would say you need to also mention publicity is very relationship driven. A good publicist is always in constant contact with the media. It's never you work or talk to them once or twice a year. Media people get so many emails and calls from publicists to the point they can't respond to everyone. But if you have a relationship with that writer or editor, you're more likely to get a response. Also, when it comes to press releases you don't want to put out too many in a short period of time because that will overwhelm the media especially when it's a newer artist. I would say it's best to group releases / any special announcements together into one press release/blast if they occur around the same time.

**Appendix E**

**Comments from Artifact Validator #2 (Communications Professional at Media Company)**

1. Absolutely. Every emerging artist needs to have a strategic communications plan to help build awareness with new fans, while also keeping their existing fans up-to-speed on their new music and upcoming projects. Publicity and word-of-mouth through social media bring a level of unbiased credibility to an artist. This type of unpaid awareness also triggers an increase in music measurement and consumption such as airplay and rising up the charts.
2. Yes, there are definitely a handful of key strategies and tactics that, from a communications standpoint, are imperative when boosting an emerging artist.
3. It's also really important to measure the success of your plan i.e. what were the impressions and publicity value of the earned media placement. Measurement helps determine if a campaign was successful and will influence future emerging artist launches.