



Thought Leadership and Brand Awareness: Launching Fair Music

SITUATION ANALYSIS

The reach of the Internet and the emergence of new digital technologies have transformed virtually every aspect of the music industry for fans and creators alike. While consumers enjoy vastly increased options, these market disruptions are presenting a range of important challenges for creators, producers and distributors of music. While some artists – like Taylor Swift – made it clear they weren't going to stand for unfair treatment, the majority don't have the name brand recognition or reach to make their cases, and the current infrastructure doesn't provide artists with the compensation they deserve.

The Berklee Institute for Creative Entrepreneurship (BerkleeICE) decided to tackle this issue head on. With the help of Version 2.0, the institute spearheaded an initiative to explore the shortcomings of compensation structures within the music industry. To drive awareness for **BerkleeICE** as a thought leader and center of innovation – and to introduce the concept of “Fair Music,” **BerkleeICE** turned to Version 2.0 to launch and roll out their report.

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PROGRAM PLANNING AND STRATEGY

Working directly with the **BerkleeICE** team, Version 2.0 developed a 12-week plan, detailing the steps necessary to generate awareness of the issue and the solutions posed by the *Fair Music* report. The plan included campaign pillars in media relations, social media, speaking engagements and thought leadership, framing the report findings in a way that would shake the music industry to its core.

Upon receiving a draft of the report, Version 2.0 provided expert guidance on the plan's final details and shaped the vital content as a pre-pitch aimed in order to set up initial briefings prior to the official report release. Inspired by the report's innovative solutions and insights into the shocking current state of the music industry and its payment structure, the team fervently set about promoting its release.

Having identified the best and most effective spokespeople from the **BerkleeICE** team, Version 2.0 began aggressive proactive outreach, offering exclusive interviews to top-tier targets in the business, music and technology verticals. Pre-launch briefings were set up with targets such as **Bloomberg, NPR and Billboard**, and the Version 2.0 team provided professional media training to designated **BerkleeICE** spokespeople, prepping them on the correct vernacular and providing helpful tips for interviews.

Once pre-launch briefings were underway, the Version 2.0 team established a more detailed media target list, prepping for the official release of the report and its findings. Leading up to the release, the team made recommendations, including one to tease report findings on social media in order to generate more



widespread buzz. Finalizing the news release, the team prepped for the official announcement, re-engaging pre-brief targets for anticipated coverage and prioritizing day-of targets.

As expected, the report generated tremendous buzz, ranging from the music to technology industries, and opened up an important dialogue for all those involved in the music industry. Coordinating, managing and staffing countless briefings, both **BerkleeICE** and Version 2.0 recognized how well-received the content and discussion was to the industry and kept the conversation going.

In response to the report release, **BerkleeICE** planned to hold an event at District Hall in October – the *Fair Music Forum* – with thought leaders and influencers from the music and business industries in attendance. Version 2.0 promoted the event, going back to reporters who covered the report release and inviting them to attend. The successful event served as an open forum for leaders, artists and media to discuss the report's findings and the dramatically changing music industry. Once again positioning **BerkleeICE** as the brain power and thought leader spearheading the charge for a more transparent payment structure, the Version 2.0 team managed coverage of the event and wrapped up the *Fair Music* campaign.

DOCUMENTED RESULTS

The campaign resulted in more than 60 pieces of coverage for **BerkleeICE**, spanning a variety of verticals, including business, music and local press. Coverage began the day the report was released in July 2015 and has continued over the course of several months, generating press for **BerkleeICE** on a regular basis. Highlights include [Bloomberg](#), [Billboard](#), [Forbes](#), [The Guardian](#) and [NPR](#).

The New York Times

theguardian

billboard

npr

Bloomberg

Forbes

C-SPAN

In addition to the straightforward coverage of the *Fair Music* launch, music legend and **Talking Heads** frontman **David Byrne** mentioned the influence of the report in a powerful op-ed in [The New York Times](#) that ran in the weeks following the official release. The impact of the coverage spanned far beyond what **BerkleeICE** hoped to achieve; not only were they thrilled with the top-tier press coverage, but the Institute also received more donations than ever before as a result.

The campaign established the report and its findings as ground-breaking, and industry-altering, but also established the **BerkleeICE** team as go-to thought leaders for the music business. Opportunities with top-tier outlets – such as **The New York Times**, **Billboard**, **Forbes** and **C-SPAN** – stemming from the initial outreach on the report, have increased visibility for **BerkleeICE** and generated longer-term, impactful awareness of the program's innovation in the business of music.

Footnote: Following the campaign's conclusion, Version 2.0's efforts were acknowledged by **Bulldog Reporter** in its annual [Media Relations Awards](#) in the "Best Education/Public Service Campaign" category.