

The **Marketing Superstar Award** honors a marketing campaign that was innovative and thought-provoking. Candidates can be from any sector of the industry and campaigns can be physical or virtual.

## Submission #1

### **Lecrae's "Reconstruction"**

*Reach Records*

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For over two decades, Lecrae has been a defining force in hip-hop, pioneering the mainstream acceptance of faith-rooted rap while building Reach Records into one of the most successful fully independent labels in music. As a four-time GRAMMY Award-winning artist and cultural bridge between Christian and secular audiences, his career has consistently challenged assumptions about where faith-based hip-hop belongs. That legacy set an unusually high bar for Reconstruction: an album that proved how a movement-shaping artist could meaningfully re-engage his audience in a changing cultural landscape after a longstanding career.

Reconstruction moved beyond a traditional album rollout and became a shared process of rebuilding trust, identity, and connection between artist and audience in real time. Arriving at a pivotal cultural moment, following years of public faith exploration, a highly anticipated album years in the making, and a rare cultural nod from Kendrick Lamar, the campaign demanded more than conventional marketing. Rather than centering the rollout on algorithms or one-way promotion, Reach Records introduced a series of innovative, direct-to-fan and community-driven activations that redefined how fans could participate in an album campaign during a streaming and low-attention span era. Through intentional experiences that rewarded loyalty, encouraged participation, and fostered ownership with fans, Reconstruction demonstrated that when artists and labels prioritize community, engagement deepens, momentum compounds, and fans become advocates, culminating in the album earning two GRAMMY nominations in 2026.

Additional Links:

[https://musicbiz.org/wp-content/uploads/gravity\\_forms/262-db054cf91a16a4b9e28f4293c2fdac/2026/01/Marketing-Superstar-Award\\_Reconstruction.pdf](https://musicbiz.org/wp-content/uploads/gravity_forms/262-db054cf91a16a4b9e28f4293c2fdac/2026/01/Marketing-Superstar-Award_Reconstruction.pdf)

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## Submission #2

### **Alfredo 2 project release**

*ESGN LLC/ ACL Records / Virgin Music Group*

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The Alfredo 2 campaign, themed around Italian and Japanese visuals, cool pop-up moments, the Alfredo 2 movie, custom Alfredo sauces, action figures, a video game tie-in, and more, significantly elevated Freddie Gibbs' long-term career by deepening fan engagement and expanding his creative footprint, leading to his biggest debut to date and first #1 Billboard Independent Album. The immersive rollout positioned him as a multidimensional artist, not just a rapper.

Core elements included a cross-platform storyline that fused music, film, gaming, and comics into one themed world and experiential activations including ramen pop-ups, listening parties, and film premieres. These activations in Los Angeles, Tokyo, London, São Paulo, and more translated online buzz into real-world global engagement.

The Alfredo 2 launch was designed as a narrative-driven case study, beginning with a leak of the artwork to generate organic buzz, followed by a teaser implying Freddie Gibbs and the Alchemist were opening a restaurant, sparking curiosity and blurring the lines between music, film, and food. The campaign continued with Alfredo 2 film premieres, the "1995" track and official album announcement, global activations, the "1995" music video premiere with OOH billboard and streaming support, a sequence of major drops such as video/game/comic releases, and finally a tour announcement. The result was a cohesive, multi-city, cross-media rollout that transformed a fictional premise into a rich consumable universe through multi-format storytelling and transmedia participation. The campaign also laid the groundwork for brand partnerships and multimedia ventures, reinforcing Freddie's value beyond music alone.

Laylo activations captured 50K+ fan contacts, building a direct audience pipeline for future tours and releases. Social media and press coverage combined direct fan engagement, strong narrative control, and wide discovery, driving presaves, merch sales, and live attendance. X delivered high-impact engagement, with over 58K posts, a Hashmoji campaign that led to the #5 trending topic in the US on release day, and 1.9M+ impressions from Freddie's own posts. Instagram, supported by Meta's \$60K boost, generated 14.2M views across key Reels. Meanwhile, high-profile press drove credibility and scale, with coverage across Billboard, Pitchfork, Hypebeast, and more than 20 outlets, amplifying the film, tracklist, and release, introducing Freddie to broader audiences and attracting tastemakers and collectors with the buzz around exclusive vinyl variants and art-driven installations.

Alfredo 2 launched with 43.9 million streams in Week 1, more than four times higher than Freddie's previous album, *You Only Die 1nce*, and over double the debut of 2020's *Alfredo*. Alfredo 2 continued to outperform those previous albums, amassing 120.8 million streams in the first 8 weeks—more than the combined totals of *Alfredo* and *You Only Die 1nce* in that time frame—and showing strong stream retention with weekly streams at least double those of *Alfredo*, reflecting sustained audience

engagement beyond launch and long-term listening momentum. User-generated engagement was strong, with 9,800 playlist adds by Day 70, a 55% increase compared to Alfredo's 6,300 adds at the same point. Alfredo 2 also surpassed the first Alfredo album on the charts, topping Billboard's Independent Albums Chart, hitting #4 on Billboard's Top Rap Albums and #13 on the Billboard 200, as well as appearing on charts across 15 markets globally.

Ultimately, all the campaign elements, both digital and in-person, came together to create a compelling and unique world-building experience where fans actively engaged.

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### Submission #3

#### **§UICIDEBOYS§**

*The Orchard*

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The §uicideboy§ Thy Kingdom Come campaign united UGC-driven awareness pushes, precision DSP targeting, and striking OOH to turn §uicideboy§'s underground following into measurable streaming, commerce growth and the highest Billboard charting debut from the duo.

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The marketing campaign for Thy Kingdom Come by §uicideboy§ was a powerful, multi-channel campaign that combined digital strategy with authentic grassroots momentum. Embracing the duo's signature themes of darkness, addiction, and emotional rawness, the campaign elevated their album vision through fan-powered content, street activations, and a cinematic visual series. Released via G59, this album was their highest-charting debut reinforcing §uicideboy§' status as one of the most influential forces in independent music.

Following the strong themes of the album title 'Thy Kingdom Come' the tracklist and featured artists were revealed alongside visuals of the duo and their collaborators depicted in stained glass church windows, adding a symbolic and dramatic layer to the announcement.

Two singles were released as official music videos on the §uicideboy§ YouTube channel. "Now and at the Hour of Our Death (Feat. Bones)" and "Monochromatic" amassing over 7.2 million views. To visually expand on the album's themes, a three-part trailer series delving into the spiritual themes of the album in New Orleans was released. Upon the record's release, the album was released on YouTube with a corresponding lyric video for each track on the album.

On release day, we sent a G59 newsletter to 632K fans featuring streaming links, exclusive vinyl offers, a YouTube playlist of album trailers, and Grey Day tour ticket links.

Our paid media strategy turned fan passion into commercial impact by leveraging authentic UGC as ad creative. We spotlighted retail partners like Target, Amazon, and Urban Outfitters using this fan-generated content in an effort to keep advertising authentic and boost organic engagement across social platforms. College Marketing activations reinforced this grassroots approach with reps spotlighting their favorite vinyl variants and §uicideboy§ tracks, resulting in over 3.3M impressions. Top user-generated content was also shared with the artist and label to identify potential engagement opportunities. Spotify Marquee extended this momentum by targeting super, moderate, and light listeners.

To amplify the digital push, we ran premium OOH across key markets, with digital and static billboards featuring the duo's childhood photos, a striking creative choice that juxtaposed their name with imagery

evoking the themes of reflection and legacy at the heart of Thy Kingdom Come. We also set up Thy Kingdom Come vigils in key cities, with College Marketing Reps replicating this at over 130 locations on campus, at record stores and in local lifestyle spots. These vigils featured prayer candles, posters and prayer cards.

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Our biggest breakthrough was realizing how powerful fan-generated content could be when put at the center of the campaign. For a duo whose brand is built on raw authenticity, leveraging UGC as ad creative not only drove stronger engagement but also made the advertising a natural extension of the \$uicideboy\$ community. This approach turned fans into ambassadors, fueling reach and resonance in a way that traditional creative could not.

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Seamless fusion of deep thematic storytelling with fan-driven authenticity and high-impact visuals. By aligning every element, from stained glass-inspired visuals and New Orleans-rooted video content to grassroots vigils and UGC-powered advertising, with the album's spiritual and emotional themes, the campaign created a cohesive, immersive world that resonated deeply with fans while maintaining \$uicideboy\$'s underground ethos.

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Additional Metrics:

Billboard 200 (#4)

Billboard Hot 100 (#54)

Rap Albums (#1)

Hot Rap Songs (#6)

Spotify Debut Albums (#1)

+632k to newsletter list

Lyric videos for Thy Kingdom Come have accumulated 14M cumulative views

+ 10k YouTube channel subscribers since release

+1.2M followers across social media platforms

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#### Submission #4

##### **Russell Dickerson**

*The Orchard*

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Russell Dickerson fourth studio album "Famous Back Home" showcases his fearless evolution as both an artist and storyteller, and captures who Dickerson is at his core: a hitmaker, husband, father, and proud hometown hero. This marketing campaign tapped into each of his artist narratives from audience development and college marketing to creative content and live shows - engaging fans at every touchpoint.

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Russell Dickerson's fourth studio album Famous Back Home showcases his fearless evolution as both an artist and storyteller, and captures who Dickerson is at his core: a hitmaker, husband, father, and proud hometown hero. The marketing campaign leaned into these themes through fan-first experiences, digital ads, college outreach, and elevated content.

Kicking it off with "Happen To Me," we launched an epic flyaway sweepstakes to NYC for Russell's sold-out Pier 17 show with a chance to meet him in person. With over 13.6K entries, it became his biggest giveaway yet and boosted his mailing list by 50% in just four weeks. We kept the momentum going with a second flyaway tied to the Famous Back Home album pre-save, giving fans another shot to win. The campaign brought in 31K+ visits and 22K+ pre-saves, tripling his mailing list since January – a massive 152% jump. Online, "Happen To Me" sparked over 25K Reels and 81K TikToks, with a viral dance challenge reaching fans well beyond the country community. Russell's consistent social presence has amassed 188M+ views since February, with standout collaborations including the Jonas Brothers and Savannah Bananas. His top-performing video hit 2.8M+ views.

We began by driving early awareness of the lead single 'Happen To Me' that captured both engaged fans and new audiences. Then, we layered in pre-save and pre-order campaigns for the upcoming album release, supported by sweepstakes incentives and the high-energy Steve Aoki remix single, which gave us a chance to engage Spotify listeners with Marquee pushes and tease fans interactive formats like Carousels and Instant Experiences on socials. Our always-on approach ensured Russell's fans were engaged at every touchpoint while consistently expanding his audience leading into the album release. This comprehensive release strategy ultimately drove 23M impressions, 13M video views, and over 2M engagements.

College Marketing Reps welcomed students back on campus with Russell Dickerson hats and bandanas. By teaming up with campus run clubs, Greek life, and their peers, we engaged student life at over 100 locations and brought the 'RD Party' directly to the heart of the 18-24 demo. Digitally, we spotlighted "Love That I Love You" and "Happen To Me," adding to the album momentum on both Instagram and TikTok with students sharing and streaming all things Russell. The campaign continues to evolve, with

reps continuing collaborations with campus organizations to keep the excitement alive through digital and on-the-ground engagement.

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Our “aha” moment came when “Happen To Me” started gaining real traction on TikTok and Meta, the first teaser racking up over 200K views a full month before the songs release. Every video leading up to the announcement saw similar momentum, signaling that we had something special on our hands.

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What made this campaign unique was the extraordinary level of fan engagement both online and at his sold out shows. Russell’s fans leaned in across Instagram and TikTok, driving massive participation through the "Happen to Me" dance challenge and sharing moments from the Russellmania live shows. No matter what Russell posted, fans responded with an outpouring of likes, comments, shares, and their own creative content.

Receiving real time feedback also became a powerful tool, allowing us to see exactly what resonated with his top fans. For example, we doubled down on the fan sweepstakes, which reinforced how excited his fans were to show up when given the invitation. This two-way conversation with fans turned this campaign into a real collaboration, transforming engagement into action!

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Key Metrics:

Social Growth over the last 6 months:

Instagram: 581K (+80K)

TikTok: 457K Followers (+121K)

Facebook: 234K (+71.6K)

YouTube: 251K Subscribers (+11K)

Spotify: 578.2K Followers (+44.4K)

Total Views: 188M+

Engagements: 3M+

USA Charting

Famous Back Home Charting (as of Sept 8)

#7 Current Country Albums

#15 Current Digital Albums

#15 Digital Albums

#31 Independent Albums

#55 Current Album Sales

#39 Internet Albums

#186 Billboard 200

"Happen to Me" Charting

Radio Airplay — Two Week No. 1

#101 Top 200 Song Consumption (peak #60)  
Hot 100 – Peak at No. 28 (as of Sept 9/23)

US Radio  
TWO WEEKS AT No. 1 in the US PLUS No. 1 at SXM

Canada Radio  
FIVE WEEKS AT No. 1 in CANADA

UK Radio  
Four Weeks at No. 1 in the UK  
'Happen To Me' will be #10 on the UK Country Radio Airplay chart this week - it has received over 2,851 plays resulting in 16.76m tracked audience impressions.

AU/NZ Radio  
'Happen To Me' has re-entered the Hot50 Country chart this week at #32, off the back of album release Rolling year, 'Happen To Me' has had 1,426 plays resulting in 4.06M total impressions to date.

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## Submission #5

### Peppa Pig

*Magic Star/The Orchard and Hasbro*

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To celebrate the arrival of Peppa's new baby sister 'Evie', Magic Star worked with Hasbro on a music campaign to showcase the joy of welcoming a new family member as well as Peppa's dedication to becoming a worldwide recognised pop star!

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Not known for music, Peppa's growth as an artist has focused on creating a pop-ier sound for families to enjoy in their daily routines as well as supporting the brand on soundtracking key moments.

It could not be denied that the arrival of a new baby sister would be PIG news. To amplify this amazing moment, Magic Star and The Orchard collaborated with Hasbro to develop a music strategy to match this significant milestone.

With Magic Star's expertise in the children's genre, we knew there were many moments of a pregnancy where music could be a vital aid. This culminated in a campaign which stretched from February to June with various touchpoints focused on different parts of the pregnancy journey. Such as:

- 'Mummy Pig's Meditation Mix' (an EP with ambient style music perfect at finding a moment in calm in your day)
- 'How Big is the Baby Now?' (a track showcasing Peppa's curiosity about how quickly a baby grows during the pregnancy with tongue-in-cheek ad libs from Mummy Pig)
- 'Evie!' (an ode from Peppa announcing her new sisters name!)
- 'Peppa Meets the Baby' (an album of original songs celebrating the joy and changes a family experiences when they welcome a little one)
- 'Peppa Meets the Baby: The Deluxe Album' - (deluxe version of the album including two brand new tracks, where Peppa sings about her first few months with her new sister)

The campaign achieved some firsts for Peppa Pig, including:

- First play of the track "Evie!" on the Scott Mills Breakfast Show on BBC Radio 2
- The Spotify UK team created a custom social content piece where Peppa went into Spotify's London office to pitch her new song "Evie!" herself!
- Out-of-home support from Amazon Music during the week of release in London

This was supported with paid elements including:

- A two-phase digital ad campaign targeting US and UK audiences. Phase one built catalog awareness where as phase two drove conversions via retailer-specific targeting.
- Influencer strategy, focusing on families, with over 20 creators
- Partnership with 'Come Round' to curate 'music parties' with 400 families in their own homes in the UK

This success of the campaign and the subsequent growth of Peppa's catalog demonstrates how powerful music campaigns can be when brands and music strategy work together, as well as how the children's genre can reach beyond its intended audience to drive pop culture moments relevant for all.

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Securing the bespoke Spotify UK content piece alongside Scott Mills' confirming he would have the first play of the single 'Evie!' on the BBC 2 Breakfast Show.

Never did we think we'd see Peppa pitching her music herself in the Spotify HQ in the same week as hearing her sing on BBC Radio 2 for the first time!

Such fantastic 'magic moments' with some of the UK's biggest music makers!

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It is rare that a children's artist without a blockbuster movie budget is given time of day with key music tastemakers. However, Peppa's new sibling announcement has become one of 2025's biggest pop culture moments and this was matched with enthusiasm from our key partners.

Key wins saw Peppa's new album blasted on the screens of Leicester Square from Amazon UK's OOH support alongside hearing the new single 'Evie!' given it's first play on National Radio on the Scott Mills Breakfast Show on BBC Radio 2. This was also alongside watching Peppa herself go into Spotify HQ with her favourite teddy to pitch her single herself (which was the first for a children's artist for the Spotify UK team).

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TikTok Search Campaign - TikTok Search ads played a pivotal role in the paid media strategy, driving 405.5k clicks to the orcd.co multi-retailer link and becoming The Orchard's top-performing Search campaign at the time in terms of engagement and link click through rate. Exceptional early performance led to a flight extension from one week to four. The campaign ultimately delivered a 62.93% higher engagement rate and a 73.36% higher link click-through rate compared to prior Search benchmarks.

- August 2025 has been Peppa's biggest streaming month EVER
- 8% growth in catalog streams post the album campaign which has held (and even grown!) since the album launch, which is even more impressive during the summer months when preschool streaming sees a seasonal lull
- The Peppa Pig Theme Tune saw a 14% increase in creations on TikTok when the album launched in May 2025 (it already has over 400K creations on TikTok so this increase was significant!)
- Opened doors at DSPs, who are eager to support on Peppa's next big project having seen the positive result from the marketing support for the campaign this year "

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## Submission #6

### **Hayley Williams, "Ego Death at a Bachelorette Party"**

*Secretly Distribution / Post Atlantic*

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After 20+ years spent fulfilling her band Paramore's contract for Atlantic Records - a contract Williams signed as a mere teenager - Hayley Williams was, for the first time, a fully independent artist. For her sophomore solo album, *Ego Death at a Bachelorette Party*, Secretly Distribution and Hayley Williams delivered massive multi-continent reach, driving charting singles, top-tier media praise, and fan-driven activations - positioning Hayley Williams as an independent global alt-pop icon.

The campaign launched when Williams hand-delivered a CD-R of the tracks "Mirtazapine" and "Glum" to Nashville non-commercial radio station WNXR. The following day, she appeared at Newport Folk Festival with Jack Antonoff and played the single, stoking excitement and speculation from fans in all corners of the internet.

Days after the Newport Folk Festival appearance, Williams launched her collaboration with Good Dye Young, a new shade of "Ego Yellow" hair dye. Buried in the digital receipt customers received was a code to access a secret site where 17 unnamed tracks were scattered across a 1990s-style computer desktop.

On August 1, 2025, Three days after the music appeared on the site, we officially released 17 tracks on DSPs as individual singles and compiled on DSPs as 'Hayley Williams: The Playlist.' Fans were encouraged to make their own track order and the DSP playlists changed daily based on the submissions. Weeks later, Williams' announced that it was in fact a full new album and she'd like fan input on the official track order. Very quickly, she received thousands of submission from across the globe. On August 28, 2025, the official version of *Ego Death at a Bachelorette Party* launched with a new song, "Parachute."

For the physical release on Nov 7, 2025 Secretly Distribution partnered with over 300 Indie Record Stores globally to host Ego Nite events where fans could listen to and purchase the record 2 days before its official release. Events featured bachelorette bar-style karaoke parties, orange juice and free goodies for attendees including tote bags, stickers and a signed CD to raffle as a giveaway.

By the time of the physical release date, Secretly Distribution shipped more than 50k LPs more than double of what her previous solo release, *Petals For Armor*, shipped in 5+ years since release. The album peaked at #1 in the Official UK midweek charts, and saw first week US chart positions including #9 - Indie Store Album Sales, #32 - Top Current Album Sales and #74- Top Album Sales. Additionally, *Ego Death at a Bachelorette Party* is nominated for 4 Grammy Awards: Best Alternative Album, Best Alternative Music Performance ("Parachute"), Best Rock Performance ("Mirtazapine") and Best Rock Song ("Glum").

Additional Links:

[https://musicbiz.org/wp-content/uploads/gravity\\_forms/262-db054cf91a16a4b9e28f4293c2fdac/2026/01/Hayley-Williams-Ego-Nites.pdf](https://musicbiz.org/wp-content/uploads/gravity_forms/262-db054cf91a16a4b9e28f4293c2fdac/2026/01/Hayley-Williams-Ego-Nites.pdf)

[https://musicbiz.org/wp-content/uploads/gravity\\_forms/262-db054cf91a16a4b9e28f4293c2fdac/2026/01/Hayley-Williams-Secret-Songs.png](https://musicbiz.org/wp-content/uploads/gravity_forms/262-db054cf91a16a4b9e28f4293c2fdac/2026/01/Hayley-Williams-Secret-Songs.png)

[https://musicbiz.org/wp-content/uploads/gravity\\_forms/262-db054cf91a16a4b9e28f4293c2fdac/2026/01/Hayley-Williams-CR-R.png](https://musicbiz.org/wp-content/uploads/gravity_forms/262-db054cf91a16a4b9e28f4293c2fdac/2026/01/Hayley-Williams-CR-R.png)

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## Submission #7

### **Give Her FlowHERS Awards Gala**

*Femme It Forward*

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Femme It Forward's 2025 Give Her FlowHERS Awards was not simply an awards show—it was a masterclass in culturally resonant, results-driven marketing. The campaign seamlessly blended purpose with scale, centering women across every layer of the music business while delivering undeniable reach, generating over 1.8 billion impressions across digital, social, press, and experiential platforms. By positioning recognition as a movement rather than a one-night event, Give Her FlowHERS sustained momentum well beyond the stage, fueling conversation, visibility, and influence throughout the year.

What truly set the campaign apart was its holistic elevation of women across the industry spectrum. By honoring iconic executives like Sylvia Rhone alongside powerhouse honorees Ciara and Normani, and breakout artists including Mariah The Scientist, Kehlani, Ravyn Lenae, and more, Femme It Forward reinforced the message that women's power in music exists at every level—from the boardroom to the booth. This multi-generational, cross-role storytelling approach was both innovative and thought-provoking, reframing industry success while amplifying women's contributions as cultural leaders and creative forces.

Beyond visibility, Give Her FlowHERS delivered tangible, long-term industry impact by directly supporting Next Gem Femme, Femme It Forward's mentorship program and one of the largest initiatives of its kind for aspiring women in music. Proceeds and awareness from the awards show fuel a pipeline where emerging talent is paired with top executives from Apple Music, Spotify, CAA, Universal Music Group, Amazon Music, YouTube, and more, transforming marketing momentum into real access, education, and career advancement. This intentional bridge between celebration and mentorship elevated the campaign from awareness-driven to infrastructure-building.

Ultimately, the 2025 Give Her FlowHERS Awards embodies the essence of the Marketing Superstar category—bold, innovative, and measurably impactful. By pairing cultural intention with blockbuster reach, Femme It Forward didn't just market an event; it shifted perception, expanded women's market power, and invested directly in the future of the music industry. With 1.8 billion impressions, executive-level engagement, and a lasting mentorship legacy through Next Gem Femme, Give Her FlowHERS stands as a definitive example of marketing that moves both people and the industry forward.

#### Additional Links:

[https://musicbiz.org/wp-content/uploads/gravity\\_forms/262-db054cfeb91a16a4b9e28f4293c2fdac/2026/01/GHF-Recap\\_compressed.pdf](https://musicbiz.org/wp-content/uploads/gravity_forms/262-db054cfeb91a16a4b9e28f4293c2fdac/2026/01/GHF-Recap_compressed.pdf)

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### Submission #8

#### **Dead Oceans x Barnes & Noble Label Spotlight Campaign**

*Secretly Group*

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#### VIDEO:

[https://www.dropbox.com/scl/fi/6l2sz1kmacoqu2owkjc8/DOCXBN\\_Revision3.mp4?rlkey=pqrpwu2gfh7vtjb2rdmn9mfuz&st=eid1p03h&dl=0](https://www.dropbox.com/scl/fi/6l2sz1kmacoqu2owkjc8/DOCXBN_Revision3.mp4?rlkey=pqrpwu2gfh7vtjb2rdmn9mfuz&st=eid1p03h&dl=0)

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### Submission #9

#### **Brandi Carlile (Christina Meloche)**

*Interscope*

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Besides being a supurlative industry veteran, the campaign for Brandi was spectacular by every aspect considerable. For Easy Street specifically, Christina dotted every I & crossed every T while bringing us amazing opportunities & ideas we hadn't even thought of. Long live Christina!

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## Submission #10

### **Coolio - Gangsta's Paradise 30th Anniversary Campaign**

*Reservoir Media*

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To celebrate the 30th anniversary of "Gangsta's Paradise," Reservoir's catalog marketing team executed a multi-faceted digital and physical campaign that leveraged creator partnerships, targeted ads, commercial partnerships, and editorial support to reignite the legendary track for existing fans and a new generation of listeners globally.

Most significantly about this campaign, it gave the team the opportunity to reconnect with L.V. —the original singer on the hook of "Gangsta's Paradise." The team was able to meet with L.V., present him with a Spotify BILLIONS plaque, and capture content with him for use in the campaign (which became the highest performing organic content on the Tommy Boy channels ALL YEAR.

For these reasons, this catalog campaign went deeper than remarketing an iconic song; it spotlighted a long-forgotten voice in the making and success of this world-renowned earworm.

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## Submission #11

### Michael Clifford - SIDEQUEST

*Hopeless Records*

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Music fans already know Michael Clifford as one-fifth of the globally recognized pop-rock powerhouse 5 Seconds of Summer. But in 2025, Clifford caught them by surprise when he stepped out on his own with his first-ever solo music. Signing with indie label Hopeless Records, he delivered SIDEQUEST - a deeply personal, sonically adventurous album that redefined expectations and marked far more than just a side project. For Clifford, it was the start of a bold new chapter.

From his debut smash “cool” to standout collaborations with Waterparks and his musical hero Porter Robinson, SIDEQUEST managed to be both wildly eclectic and surprisingly cohesive. Launching a debut album is no easy feat, yet Clifford earned overwhelming industry support, landing on numerous New Music Friday playlists and gracing the covers of Rock Sound, Kerrang!, and other leading publications. Rolling Stone championed his debut single, and even The Grammys took notice, inviting Clifford to perform an intimate set at the Grammy Museum in Los Angeles. As he ushered in this new era, fans and critics alike couldn’t look away.

In June 2025, Clifford announced a special one-night-only show at the iconic Fonda Theatre in LA. It sold out in seconds, and a second date was quickly added. Fans from around the world flocked to Los Angeles, not only for the concerts but also for Clifford’s immersive fan pop-up with COMPLEX, which featured exclusive merch and immersive installations inspired by the album’s aesthetic. As a “fans first” artist - Clifford took fan engagement to another level - with signings and meet and greets at Warped Tour, The Grove, and his own “Michael's Closet” pop-up where fans could thrift from his wardrobe and pose for photos with the man himself. To cap off release week, Clifford launched his own sandwich at IKE’S across the U.S. Yes, the album even had an edible component.

Ultimately, SIDEQUEST wasn’t just Clifford’s first solo record, it was a full-blown cultural event. It cemented his place as an artist beyond his band, and gifted fans an ultra personal piece of his life.

Additional Links:

[https://musicbiz.org/wp-content/uploads/gravity\\_forms/262-db054cf91a16a4b9e28f4293c2fdac/2025/11/IMG\\_8748.HEIC.jpg](https://musicbiz.org/wp-content/uploads/gravity_forms/262-db054cf91a16a4b9e28f4293c2fdac/2025/11/IMG_8748.HEIC.jpg)

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