**PRAGUE SCHOOL OF CREATIVE COMMUNICATION**
**Department of Marketing and Communication**

# BACHELOR'S THESIS

## The use and importance of social media marketing in HipHop/Rap

**2025**

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**Creative Marketing and Communication**

# The use and importance of social media marketing in HipHop/Rap

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**2025**

## Declaration:

I declare that I have elaborated my bachelor's thesis independently and that I have listed all the sources and literature from which I have drawn. I confirm that all submitted copies of my bachelor's thesis correspond to the electronic version in the UCC information system and I agree that the thesis will be made available to the public for study and research purposes.

In Prague on: Author's signature:

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I am truly thankful for his patience and for all the effort he put in to help and motivate me.

**Abstract:**

This study examines the growing importance of social media marketing in the HipHop/Rap industry. This study highlights how social media platforms, such as Instagram, Tik Tok, YouTube and many more, have transformed from traditional marketing , such as radio appearances and handing out mixtapes to people in the community. Using case studies of rappers like Drake, Travis Scott and Megan Thee Stallion, this research identifies key marketing strategies for modern day rappers, while also pointing out the future marketing of the genre. This thesis also addresses the challenges an artist has to face in maintaining authenticity in the world of rapid growing social media and algorithms. There is not much research on specifically rap marketing and this study offers valuable insights for artist and industry professionals that are looking to leverage social media for long term success in modern rap.

**Keywords:**

HipHop/Rap,Trends, Social Media, Fan Engagement,

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# Introduction

The title of my thesis 'the use and importance of social media marketing in HipHop/Rap', reflects on my personal and educational interest, as these two interests interact with each other. I am interested in this topic, because I do rap and study marketing. I am intrigued by how the rap game has grown over the years, it started in the streets of New York with basic equipment and now is a global genre that connects with its listeners and the crucial role social media marketing plays for modern day rappers. This thesis will include my personal interests with the aim to provide a detailed analysis of trends, strategies and the use of social media marketing in HipHop/Rap. The aim of the thesis is to conduct a trends survey for HipHop/Rap marketing. I think this thesis will help to show why social media marketing is so important in modern rap.

Social media has revolutionized marketing strategies across many industries and HipHop/Rap is one of them. Social media is one of the most, if not the most important type of marketing for rap artists, as it helps them to connect with their fans, promote their songs or their concerts/shows. Before social media, rappers marketed themselves by distributing mixtapes, performing at local events, graffiti and word to mouth as promotion. To gain exposure, rappers would also go on radios, appear in magazines or tv shows and their music videos being on MTV helped a lot. HipHop marketing has evolved with the evolution of technology, apps such as Instagram, Tik Tok, Twitter and YouTube have become main tools for artists to share their music, connect with their fans and expand their personal brand.

The aim of the thesis is to analyze the trend analysis of HipHop/Rap through social media marketing, exploring different strategies used to promote or connect with the artists.

It will also show specific marketing approaches that have contributed to the success of certain artists or albums and what was done and how it led to their success.

***Current Situation:***

Social media is the leading platform for marketing in HipHop/Rap. For example, 3 rappers that had successful marketing campaigns recently are Travis Scott, Megan Thee Stallion and Drake. All three rappers have used innovative campaigns to reach their reach and achieve viral success.

For example, Travis Scott album release 'AstroWorld' with its campaign received huge success and was one of the most iconic examples of social media marketing in Hip Hop. For start, the image of the album was a theme park like image, which featured Travis Scotts head and through his social media he used tactics to engage with millions of fans. The partnership with Fornite has also helped a lot as he performed a virtual concert, which opened the door to many future rappers and showed a clear connection between HipHop and gaming.

Next on the list is Megan Thee Stallion, who made a 'Savage Remix', which featured Beyonce. Outside of featuring Beyonce, the song gained a lot of attention due to a viral Tik Tok dance challenge for the song. The song's success was mainly driven by the algorithm, which pushed the song into people's FYP (for you page), which helped reach a larger audience. Megan's active posting on social media, especially Instagram and Tik Tok (which is considered the best apps to use, to reach the largest audience), played a crucial role in making the song viral.

Last on the list is Drake and his song God's plan. Drake is probably the best rapper at using social media marketing, as he understands what listeners are looking for and is very clever with the use of marketing to market his music. God's plan was another masterclass by Drake, not only in social media, but also in traditional media. In the music

video, Drake is seen giving away money to people in need, giving away millions of dollars. The entire process was documented and then shared on social media platforms. The campaign went viral and generated a lot of fan engagement as well.

***Evaluation of the Current Situation and Gap:***

Social media has helped HipHop artists to connect and engage with their fans directly and helped them create unique and viral moments. Every rapper likes to use different platforms for different things, but most viral moments happen through Instagram and Tik Tok. As with everything, there are advantages and disadvantages of this. As mentioned above, there are some advantages, but some negatives can include authenticity/originality, as a lot of rappers use same/similar trends to gain views. Another disadvantage is trying to hit the algorithms and nowadays rappers tend to come and go quite quickly, some are also known to be one hit wonders. Old school legends of the rap game, like Eminem, Snoop Dogg, Dr.Dre, etc. have been in the game for 20+ years and are still relevant, but modern rappers tend to be relevant for 2-3 years and then drop off, without exceptions, such as Drake, Travis Scott etc.

Even though social media marketing in HipHop is the new hot topic, there is not too much research on it. There is a bit of research, but mainly individual cases, such as specific rappers, or the partnership between brands and rappers. There is also a lack of information on different social media platforms on their impact on the rap game. Main research talks about the music industry, but not HipHop. This thesis will help fill out these gaps, by focusing only on HipHop/Rap and focusing the analysis on current trends in social media marketing with the genre and examining successful campaigns and challenges, while also predicting the future for the genre.

***Prediction of trends that can affect hip hop music industry and marketing in the future***

The prediction for future social media marketing includes an increased use of AI, for example, helping video clips and offering more of a personalized marketing experience, while also helping with algorithms. Next is Virtual Reality, this will help to reshape fan engagement, as they will feel like they are at the concert, from the comfort of their home. Influencers and fans, it is trending now and will trend in the future, creating viral moments, such as the viral challenges on TikTok. Another idea for future prediction is NFT's or Special Cards, Donald Trumps already uses this marketing tool and it is only matter of time, before rappers start to use it regularly as well. Lastly, the focus on platform specific strategies, as rappers will understand more about these platforms, they will maximize their understanding for each app and have unique features for each app and focusing on some upcoming apps, to have an upper hand.

***Identify the importance of the proposed research:***

This research is important for both academic and practical reasons. Academically, it closes the gap on the existing literature, by focusing specifically on social media marketing in HipHop/Rap, as usually these researches focus on the overall music marketing, but not specifically on HipHop/Rap. Practically, it provides information/recommendations for rappers, marketers and experts with valuable insights about opportunities and challenges and how to effectively use social media for promotion, engagement and build their own personal brand.

***State the research problem/questions***

***Problems:***

- Social media has changed the marketing in HipHop/Rap, which has replaced traditional methods with digital-first strategies
- Limited research focusing specifically on only HipHop/Rap with social media marketing.
- Maintaining relevance as a modern rappers, figuring out algorithms and being original
- Future trends in social media (nobody knows, it's an educated guess)

***Questions:***

- How has social media marketing reshaped the HipHop/Rap Industry?
- What are the most effective social media strategies used by rappers to promote their work/shows and how to effectively engage with their audience
- How do these marketing techniques contribute to the success of the artists - songs/albums
- What trends will affect the HipHop genre in the future, through social media marketing

***State the research aims and/or research objectives***

***Aims:***

- Analyze different social media marketing strategies used by rappers
- Look at the role that social media has in the success of specific HipHop/Rap albums, songs and artist
- Predict future trends in social media marketing in HipHop/Rap

***Objectives:***

- Examine shift from traditional to digital marketing in HipHop/Rap
- Identify marketing strategies from successful social media campaigns
- Provide insights into specific approaches and future trends

***Hypotheses:***

- Social media marketing has a major role in the success of certain rappers, albums or songs, as it increases visibility, hits target audience and increases fan engagement
- The most effective social media platforms tend to be instagram and tik tok, as reach tends to be the largest on these apps.
- Future social media marketing trends would include AI-Driven campaigns, personalization of content and VR concerts, these will most likely have a significant impact on the marketing. And of course, dance challenges on TikTok.

***Structure of the thesis:***

***Introduction:***

- Topic overview and background
- Importance of social media marketing

***Theoretical Section:***

- Historical Background: Brief history of marketing in HipHop/Rap and the growth from brooklyn streets promotion to modern day rap and digital campaigns
- Current marketing leaders (can also include past marketing leaders): Top Agencies, artists, albums etc.

- What apps are relevant and also the demographic of the audience (and the demographics of the audience in general)
- Old School vs New School HipHop/Rap.

***Practical:***

- Trends survey; pick 5 of the best respondents from the Hip Hop Industry professionals based on their diversity of opinion and understanding and their importance in the rap game
- Audience Demographics: The survey results highlight the answers of different types of people in the rap industry, different types of ages, while also including different roles within the rap industry (rappers, producers and DJ's)
- Marketing Effectiveness: Respondents will answer different types of questions regarding different types of marketing and their views on what they deem as important types of marketing and what they see as non important

***Methodology:***

- Research Approach: Mixed, get information from case studies research/books but also magazines, blogs or videos
- Data Collection: Successful marketing campaigns, comparative rappers with high and quality usage of social media vs the opposite, find some data online
- Research: Online information or data and statistics

# Chapter 1: The Evolution of HipHop/Rap Marketing

This chapter explores how HipHop/Rap marketing has evolved, from the grassroots like giving out mixtapes and street art to what it has become today, which is digitally driven strategies by social media, streaming platforms and brand collaborations.

## 1.1 Introduction to HipHop/Rap marketing evaluation

The evolution of marketing in the HipHop/Rap scene has changed a lot from the beginning, it has shifted from the grassroots promotions to now, digital-first type of marketing strategy. Early versions of marketing relied on physical distribution, such as live performances, word of mouth, newspaper, billboards, and so on. As technology evolved, so did the marketing, now it was possible to be marketed on television, radio and in modern/current times the most powerful types of marketing is social media, as it is the cheapest to market on and has the biggest reach, since most people who own a phone have social media and the access to see the marketing done by the artists. Social media platforms, such as Instagram, Twitter, Tik Tok, Youtube and many more platforms, now allow artists to communicate directly to or with their audiences, which gives the artists the ability to share their own music, do some behind the scenes videos/content, post their personal life stories, posts they want to post, such as reposts, their photos, snippets of music videos and so on, questions to what the fans want to hear and much more. To add to that, social media has also introduced some new strategies for rappers that benefit from using social media, for example viral marketing (do something that makes them go viral, such as doing things that are trending on those particular platforms), collaborations with influencers and with other rappers (it does not have to include only rap or music) and also user generated content as already mentioned, which has truly become a must for modern day rappers and their marketing tactics, because being a rapper is not only about music

nowadays, it's also about the ability to gain fame/virality, so you can bring a wider range of audiences, newcomers or get as many involved as possible, which will then translate those people into views and engagement in their music.

### 1.1.1 Introduction to History/Evolution of HipHop

HipHop, which originated in the 1970s in the Bronx - New York area, emerged as a cultural exchange between the Black, Latin and Caribbean youth and was heavily influenced by local and police brutality. The Pioneers of this Genre and the likes of DJ Kool Herc, Grandmaster Flash and Africka Bambataa started to experiment with different types of techniques during parties, these techniques have included experiments with ''turntable techniques, scratching, freestyles, and improvised vocals based on Jamaican "toasting", which would be a foreshadow and/or foundation for what Rap/HipHop will become and its culture. In 1979, Sugarhill Gang released a HipHop record called 'Rapper's Delight', which to this day is still considered to be the first ever HipHop record and it has been featured on the Top 40 on the USA Billboard, which has helped the genre get it's much deserved spotlight. Throughout the 1980's, HipHop has really picked up its pace and started to be recognized even more and the same can be said about the artists. Artists such as Run-DMC, L.L.Cool J, and Public Enemy used and imported more complex technique/s, like for example the use of drum machines and sampling. This period was also crucial for the genre not only in the USA, but it also started to get traction globally, in countries like the UK, Australia and even Japan. After the 80's, which has really helped to put Rap on the map, came the 1990's, which many interpret as the HipHop Golden Age. Again, like in the 80's there were some new things introduced into the game, such as gangsta rap and this era has also helped to create some legendary names in the game, most notably Tupac Shakur, The Notorious B.I.G, Nas and Snoop Dogg, which are still listened

today by many listeners. Not only was this decade a huge success for the name of the genre, but it was also the decade where it became a major Commercial success, as by this time, HipHop was very well known and rappers were very marketable for the market. The 90's was just the start to what Hip Hop has become now 'a dominant cultural force'. Then came the 2000's, which by this time skyrocketed the genre's name. Rappers from the 2000's Era, are widely considered as the best to ever do it. Big names, such as Lil Wayne, 50 Cent and Eminem emerged in this era of HipHop and these rappers helped to revolutionize the music game again even more, with the rise of the early internet and mixtapes. Lil Wayne and 50 cent have benefited hugely from these new innovations, as they gained a lot of popularity through mixtapes, without being under a major label, which showed the world you don't need a label to become famous. Then came the 2010's, the children of the legendary Era's (90s - 00s). In this decade, as with the world, the hot thing was the improvement and use of the internet. Some big household names even today came from this Era, rappers such as Drake and Cardi B gained their fair share of fame and global prominence. These performers gained a lot of traction through platforms that are still used today, such as Spotify, Instagram and Youtube and with the internet, people can watch and listen to their favourite artist, even if they are on the other side of the planet, it was truly the start of the global engagement Era. Today, rap continues to evolve even further, social media platforms that were at the beginning of the 2010's Era, are now considered to be vital for modern rappers and engagement has become more important than ever before. Today's rap is also evolving and moving towards the future, with the rise of virtual concerts, streaming and viral challenges. Notable names to come out of this Era are the likes of Traviss Scott, Lil Pump and Megan Thee Stallion. (MasterClass, 2021). Modern day rappers focus a lot on digital platforms, which help them expand their reach and stay in touch with their fans, which gives a more personalized connection. Today's rap, even

though criticized by many that the quality was better before, there is no denying that modern rap is the most listened genre on the planet (Unchained Music Team, 2024)

## 1.2 Traditional Marketing Strategies in HipHop/Rap

Before the digital era, HipHop/Rap artists leveraged traditional marketing techniques to gain fame and build their images and fanbase. Some of the most used methods included:

**Mixtapes:** One of the most used methods, by rappers, who are not famous and are trying to get their music heard is by distributing physical copies of their music to random by passers, friends or people they know, usually the tactic was to create some type of buzz in their community/neighbourhood and grow from there. The rappers handed out their mixtapes for free or sold it at a local record store, which helped independent artists gain traction. The mixtape culture played a crucial role in helping many rappers get their fame and launch their careers, for example the so called 'innovator' of mixtape culture 50 Cent gained a lot of traction, same as Lil Wayne, who got major attention from his mixtapes like Dedication mixtapes and Drought mixtapes. These two rappers are considered the legends of the game today and these were their formats that they used to connect with their listeners before they had any label deals. (Spence, 2019)

**Graffiti and Street Art:** Pictures, murals, posters and graffiti & tags, were all used to promote their upcoming songs, albums, concerts/shows and other events or a way to collaborate the rap and graffiti artists and do something together, like for example the 1982 New York Rap Tour, which has united the graffiti and hip hop artists. This type of street marketing was particularly effective in cities, such as New York and Los Angeles. New York is where HipHop started and LA was a major role player for Hip Hop and art such as

graffiti and street dancing were considered to be part of Hip Hop culture. The major artists who benefited from the graffiti and street art culture were mainly Nas and Jay-Z. (Museum of Graffiti, 2023)

**Live Performances and Radio Appearances:** The HipHop underground scene thrived in open-mic battles (Eminem is very known to start his rapping career this way), clubs performances and radio freestyles. Stations such as Hot 97 and the Breakfast Club (which are still relevant to this day) played a crucial role for new and upcoming rappers and to give them a voice and a shot to be seen and grow their fanbase and overall helped the genre to be heard by many people. 1980's and 1990's radios helped turn LL Cool J, MC Hammer, Bell Biv Devoe and Vanilla Ice, into household names.

**Television and Print Media:** Magazines were another big hit for rappers marketing to get their name out there. Magazines such as The Source and XXL were major players in making rappers into household names. These magazines provided exposure, while MTV Raps brought the HipHop genre into the mainstream audiences. Other television shows such as BET's Rap City and 106 & Park also played a crucial role in promoting new artists and music videos to broader audiences. These television programs didn't help just by showing audiences music videos and the music part of an artist, but it also helped to shape the rappers personas, while print media offer a more in depth information about the rappers, such as interviews, album reviews and exclusive photos that help to connect the reader/fan to the artist. Some of the iconic magazine covers included the likes of Tupac, Biggie and Jay-Z. Lastly on the list is, late night talk shows, commercials and guest appearances on popular TV shows/series. These were also very important to old school rappers, because it didn't just show the music part, but more into the real life of who the artist really is as a person and on the other hand, it gave the rappers an opportunity to expand their likeness and visibility. (Show Discipline, 2023)

## 1.3 The Shift From Traditional to Modern (Digital) Marketing

Since the shift from traditional to digital marketing, with the rise of the internet and streaming services, HipHop/Rap marketing strategies have also shifted. Even though it could be considered that some traditional marketing, if used today may still be beneficial to the rapper and help him gain some fans, it cannot compete with the digital marketing, which has a much higher reach and potential to grow that reach into fans. In the early rise of the internet, the emergence of MySpace in the early 2000's allowed artists, such as Soulja Boy to build their followings without being under a major record deal (the goal of old school rappers was to get a big record deal, as that guaranteed fame and money), but now, you can get fame and money even without a label deal, for example the Suicideboys (Ruby & Scrim) are independent and aren't owned by any record deal and they are very famous. Another app that had helped revolutionise exposure is YouTube, it was one, if not the first app to make rappers famous for putting videos of them or music videos online without a third party involvement and helped some major rappers gain their following via YouTube.

### 1.3.1 Key Digital transformations include:

**Streaming Services:** Throughout the years, with the development of technology and the evolution of HipHop/Rap music, so has the consumption of music. Platforms such as Spotify, Apple Music and SoundCloud have become the main source of music consumption , which shifts the marketing focus towards playlist placement and the algorithm reach. Just doing music is not enough in rap anymore, online reach has become one of the most vital traits for rappers today, artists now use data analytics for streaming platforms to tailor their promotional strategies and reach the target audience they aim for more effectively.

**Social Media Influence:** Social Media is another key trait for rappers to have in today's stage of the genre, platforms such as Instagram, Tik Tok, Twitter, Youtube and other types of social media platforms have become an essential tool for artists to have. Social media helps with direct engagement from the artist to the fan and is used as one of the main sources to promote music or other types of promotions like brand, challenges and other types of promotions, which then help the artist image or music grow stronger. For example, DJ Khaled, 21 Savage and Drake, used their own different methods and figured out a unique way to get attention on social media and maximize their reach. DJ Khaled was known as the 'Snapchat King', he posted hundreds of posts on snapchat, where he was showing his every day to day life, which got the rapper a lot of views, which helped Khaled to be more popular. 21 Savage got a lot of attention online, from creating a beef with Tyga, through Kylie Jenner. 21 Savage posted many pictures of Kylie on his Instagram account and wrote comments, such as "I'll take Kylie Jenner from Tyga" and even changed his Instagram profile picture to the face Kylie Jenner. The beef between the two rappers has gained a lot of traction online and social media, as music fans find rap drama and beef entertaining, which then can be used as one of the best ways to promote the rapper ''it brings a lot of attention to the artist in a good way. People will start talking about the artist, might even start listening to them, or maybe even become a fan. In addition, this promotes fan engagement in so many other ways, Memes have been created regarding this beef and Instafram has transformed into a battlefield for Tyga fans vs 21 Savage fans. This type of fan engagement keeps artists relevant and trending". Drake is one of the biggest faces of modern HipHop and is very smart when it comes to marketing/promoting his music online. One of the examples of this, is when Drake posted about his song 'Sneaking (feat.21 Savage) - Single by Drake' Overall, Drake is active on Twitter, now known as X, due to him getting positive feedback and engagement. Over

time, Drake has realized that posting on Twitter gets him higher numbers for views and engagement and has continued to do so, as he frequently posts his songs and/or albums on the platform and as DJ Khaled is known as the king of Snapchat, Drake is known as the king of Twitter/X. Specifically, the song 'Snealkin' got him around 9000 reposts, which is considered to be a very high number on 'X'. (Hearn, 2016).

**Brand Collaborations:** Another important trait for rappers to have in the modern age of rap music is brand collaborations. Brand collaborations are not only about doing an ad for those brands and getting money, but as mentioned above, it's also about getting traction, recognition and helps to build the rappers personal image or to promote their recent rap song/album, which in return helps them build a personal image. Rappers increasingly leverage in brand partnerships for cross-promotions, for example Travis Scott's collaboration with Fornite or McDonald's. In Fortnite, Travis Scott was featured in the game as a character and also did a virtual concert for the company, which Snoop Dogg participated in as well, which was a huge success. The Travis Scott x Fortnite marketing campaign shows how marketing has changed and evolved, especially compared to the beginnings of rap. As mentioned on the blog written by Medium, this marketing strategy has reached tens of millions of customers/players in the game '' The first performance of the event brought together more than 12 million Fortnite players. We then measure the gigantic short-term impact of this marketing strategy. The long term is just as formidable. We must therefore take into account the articles published on the subjects on the Internet, and the different replays available on Youtube which will certainly be viewed a few million times thereafter'' (Anguis, 2020). Same as the Fortnite marketing campaign, 2020 was the year for Traviss Scott as in the same year Travis dropped the collaboration with McDonald's, which was also considered a huge success. The main selling point for the rapper was his Travis Scott menu, which was named after him the 'Travis Scott Meal'

which included a Quarter Pounder with cheese, fries, and a Sprite. According to the New York Times, the special Travis Scott Meal' was not the only thing the partnership offered, but also some type of merchandise, which was mainly included/available on the US. market. ''There are umpteen T-shirts — some insert Scott's imprint name, Cactus Jack, into the Golden Arches; some are inspired by early 1990s sports aesthetics. There are rugs, a lunchbox, socks, a tie, a $90 McNugget body pillow. As with most of Scott's merch, it's well-designed, colorful, playful. The brown work jacket with 'Billions and Billions Served' embroidered on the back ($128) could have been right out of a dawn-of-the-'90s Beastie Boys video'' and with no brainer, this came in with an actual advertisement, which was represented as a television commercial, played by an action figure, that was spoken in the real voice of the artist. These collaborations serve as a new type of marketing in the rap genre, which is very effective if done correctly, especially with the younger generations, which on the other hand helps the artist grow and expand his reach beyond just traditional rap music, into a mainstream consumer market. (Caramanica, 2020)

**Direct Artist to Fan Engagement:** As it will be further discussed in more detail and the benefits direct fan to artist engagement brings in Chapter 4, platforms such as the Patreon, Discord and OnlyFans allow rappers to build their own unique and dedicated communities towards their music, which also helps rappers to monetize their music through exclusive content, where the customers usually has to subscribe, to follow the rapper's life, where it is not seen anywhere else or other things happening around the rapper. Independent rappers/artists now have the leverage of online, where they can build themselves up from scratch, without needing another major player in the industry, such as a label to carry them everywhere they go, this is usually done through the loyal fan base the rapper has built. In return, this fan base helps to market the rapper, while also supporting the performer financially, by buying the rapper's brand/clothing and other products.

***Key Advantages of Social Media for Hip-Hop Artists***

- **Direct Fan Interaction** – Artists communicate directly with fans via Instagram **Live,** Twitter, and TikTok comments, fostering deeper connections.
- **Virality & Algorithm-Driven Reach** – TikTok, Instagram Reels, and YouTube Shorts prioritize engagement over follower count, allowing independent artists to go viral (Swanson, 2022).
- **Cost-Effective Marketing** – Social media provides free promotional opportunities, reducing the need for costly advertisements.
- **Cross-Industry Collaborations** – Hip-Hop artists partner with brands, video games, and influencers to expand their audience.

***Conclusion:*** The evolution of HipHop/Rap marketing reflects a broader view of the transformation in music, culture and technology within the genre. From the grassroots origins, such as mixtapes, graffiti and street performances to what it is now, global digital strategies involving social media, streaming platform and marketing, such as brand partnerships and how the rap genre has consistently adapted to those new marketing techniques. Traditional marketing laid the starting foundations for artists visibility and community based growth, while now modern approaches focus more on virality and accessing the maximum reach online, direct fan engagement and algorithm driven exposure. These modern shifts did not only change how rappers wrote their own music, but also how they shaped their public image/brand and helped to connect with their audiences worldwide. Today, being a successful rapper is no longer only based on how lyrically good the rapper is or under what record label he is in, but now it is required to understand online trends, the culture relevance, and audience interaction. As this chapter has shown, marketing in HipHop is now more dynamic than ever before and the integral part of an artist's career.

## Chapter 2: Analyzing Current Leaders and Audience Demographics

In the next chapter the analysis will focus on current leading rappers on the scene such as Drake, Lil Nas X, Tyler the Creator. What the analysis shows is what creative techniques their marketing strategies employ and some other creative marketing techniques viable for music marketing.

### *2.1 Introduction; The Role of Social Media Marketing in Hip-Hop/Rap.*

The Rap/HipHop industry has drastically shifted/evolved in the last 2 decades and social media marketing has become one of the most crucial tools for artists for their promotions and audience engagement. While in the early 2000s the popular thing every rapper strived for, was to sell mixtapes, get featured on the radio and attend television, like MTV or TV shows to help them boost their artistic careers, in today's rap it is much easier to get famous or so called '5 minutes of fame'. Today's rappers can launch and sustain their careers almost entirely just by using social media. Social media platforms like Instagram, Tik Tok, Youtube and Twitter play a significant role in determining where will become successful or not, while also helping the artist with their reach, fan engagement and overall market success, for example selling his merchandise.

### 2.2 Social Media as the Dominant Marketing Tool in HipHop/Rap

Nowadays, Social Media is considered to be one of the most effective marketing tools for HipHop/Rap artists for establishing and promoting their personal brand online, because it is so easy to reach many people and is also easy to use. (Labrecque, Markos & Milne 2011.) or (Rosenfeld, P, 2024). According to Statista, there will be about 5.2 billion users in 2024, which is more than 50% of the earth's population, as there are approximately 8 billion people, according to worldometer. That means, the potential reach of the artist is massive, much bigger than a tv or radio appearance can offer, it is quicker and easier to

use, while it is also free to use and promote on social media. ‘’It’s clear that the rising dominance of social media has had a dramatic effect on the music industry, it’s not only changed the way we consume content and interact with artists but also its forced an entire industry change the way it markets to consumers.” (SocialB, 2018). Social media has changed how music is marketed, especially in rap, which thrives on digital engagement and virality moments. Unlike the 2000s, where rappers had to rely on the old school, traditional marketing, rappers can now launch and have their music career success just on social media.

***Key factors that contribute to the dominance of social media marketing include:***

**Virality and Algorithm -** Platforms such as Tik Tok, Instagram reels help songs go viral, thanks to the trends, challenges and understanding the platform's algorithm and posting frequently on the app. Youtube also helps with a rappers success in music and it is also very important to understand the algorithm, so that the rapper can have a larger audience reach. For example, the Tik Tok algorithm pushes content based on engagement, trends or audio rather than how many followers the account has, this is mainly due to FYP (For Your Page), where the viewer sees videos from accounts they don’t follow. TikTok decides on what it will show to the viewer and predicts what he may like, based on their previous videos they watched and liked, this is a benefit for artist who may be independent and have low amount of followers, to give them a chance and gain visibility by the masses (Swanson, 2022)

**Direct Fan Engagement -** Unlike traditional media, where fans can only watch the artist, social media allows artists to directly or indirectly interact with their fans, either by replying in dm’s or under a post or creating a story/post to reply or announce to their fans about something. At the end, these tactics create and strengthen fan loyalty to the artist,

while it also helps to increase their brand visibility and people get to know the rapper more as a person, rather than a God, who they follow and admire, which also brings more connectivity between the artist and his fans.

**Cost-Effective Promotion -** Again, compared to traditional media and traditional marketing, which can become quite pricey for the artist, especially if they want to promote their marketing on a big/famous TV program or a TV show. Social Media provides the artist with a low cost, but high impact way to promote their music, show or brand/merchandise and don't have to spend as much, while also most likely have a higher reach. The artist can decide between posting and marketing their product for free and organically or they can pay for paid ads, which helps with a higher visibility to the social media users. Rappers mostly opt to social media, instead of spending thousands on advertisement via traditional media, rappers usually post on their social media and try to post viral content to reach as many fans/viewers as possible.

**Cross-Industry Collaborations -** Lastly on the list is collaborations with other rappers, artists, brands, companies or social media influencers. This is one of the most popular ways to market their music or brand, as it almost always guarantees a higher reach and unlike just hitting the reach viewership through the rapper, they can now hit the viewership through the other rappers, artists, brands, companies or influencers. For example, the collaboration between Traviss Scott and Fortnite, was a major success, Travis Scott was featured in the game, which helped to make his brand image more popular and most probably get a new generation of people who may not know about Travis Scott to listen to him, Cross Industry Collaborations have helped HipHop's reach well beyond just music.

## 2.3 Successful Social Media Campaigns by Rappers in the Industry

### 2.3.1 Drake: Marketing & Virality

Drake is a master at using emotions and storytelling in his marketing and his music videos, he uses these tactics to maximize his social media engagement, which in turn helps him to get numbers and connect him with his fans.

God's Plan (2018): Instead of focusing on a regular music video that most rappers do, Drake used his talents in marketing to make a genius move to get as many views and engagements as possible. Drake had a budget of around $1 million dollars to donate to people who are in need of that money. Drake was seen giving out 1000's of dollars to random people, which was shown in the music videos. The music video was shot in Miami, near a school, which added to the effect of emotional marketing and helped the song gain a lot of traction (Chuba, 2018).

- **Social Media:** Drake is not only a genius in marketing for music, but he is also a genius in social media marketing. Drake capitalizes on the memes that are made about him, which he replies to, reposts them or posts something on his social media regarding those memes and turns them into funny posts/moments, which helps him to build a personal connection with his fans, as they feel they know Drake better (on a personal level). Drake is a master at seeing potential moments that can turn into viral moments and emphasizes these, which in turn helps him gain traction and build his personal brand (Nemirovsky, 2025). For example, Drake has a song and the name of the song is; In My Feelings, and there is a part of the song, where the has a line that says ''Kiki, do you love me…'' (Drake, In my Feeling, 2018), this part of the song is the most catchy part and has turned into a viral challenge on

TikTok, which is known as the Kiki Challenge and was used worldwide by TikTok users and celebrities/influencers, which helped Drake to get more engagements like views, likes and comments for the song.

### *2.3.2 Lil Nas X: Meme Culture & Digital Virality*

It could be argued that Lil Nas X, is one of the best case studies on how to build a music career entirely based on social media and internet culture. From the start of the rappers career, lil Nas X has understood the value of meme culture and that it could lead to viral moments, which in return he could use to his advantage due to the social media algorithm.

**Old Town Road (2019):** Lil Nas X first touch of fame was with the release of 'Old Town Road', which led to a huge success and also had many remixes by other singers/rappers, which made the song blow up even more. The song had a genre blend between rap and country and the song even sounded cowboy like music. The song was mainly promoted on Tik Tok where it blew off, Lil Nas X mainly used the platform's short-form type videos to create memes and trends about the song, most notable was the Yeehaw challenge, the challenge was to transform into cowboys once the beat of the song dropped. All this effort resulted in Old Town Road, Topping the Billboard Hot 100 in 2019, for a record breaking record of 19 weeks, which in return made it one of the most successful songs in the modern music history

### *2.3.3 Tyler The Creator: Creative Control & Brand Identity*

Tyler The Creator stands out from the rest of the Hip Hop artists, not only due to music, but also due to his unique personality and approach towards marketing and visual storytelling. Tyler is also different from the rest of the rap artists, because Tyler The

Creator does not follow trends, but rather does it his own unique way. Tyler creates immersive brand experiences through his music, fashion, visual and social media presence, while maintaining his own creative control over every detail.

IGOR Album Rollout (2019): When Tyler The Creator was promoting his Grammy-winning album 'IGOR', he relied on minimal, but effective social media campaigns about the release of the album. For example, Tyler teased his audience with cryptic visuals, snippets of the songs and surreal footage on platforms like Twitter and Instagram. The common tactic in modern rap is to post as much as possible, but Tyler did the opposite of not posting frequently and instead of overly explaining the project to the audience, he let the visuals and the music speak for itself, this helped to market the album and build up hype around it through mystery and artistic aesthetics. Another aspect, which built up on this even more was when fans responded, by creating memes and deep analysis, about the album, which sparked even more attention on the rapper and his album. The last part to this successful campaign is through the unique style of Tyler The Creator, the aesthetic consistency of the rapper across his videos, outfits and stage designs, creating a brand experience that extends beyond just music.

***Conclusion:*** As talked about in the previous Chapter, the evolution of social media has dramatically reshaped the HipHop/Rap industry. The shift in power of promotion and audience engagement from traditional media to digital platforms online. In the early 2000s, aspiring rappers relied heavily on radio invitations, television appearances and mixtape distribution. In the modern days, these types of traditional methods have been replaced by accessibility and virality on platforms, such as Tik Tok, Instagram, Youtube, Twitter and many more. Social media offers rappers the ability to build their brand, connect with their fans and market their work with minimum financial investments. There are some key elements for the digital platforms, such as algorithm - driven virality, direct fan

engagement, low cost promotion and collaborations have all made social media into the dominant marketing tool in the HipHop/Rap genre. Successful campaigns by rappers like, Drake, Lil Nas X and Tyler the Creator, highlight the different ways all these strategies can be used, from emotional storytelling, to meme culture, to a more visual aesthetic and brand consistency to maximize each rapper maximum reach for his own type of music. As shown in these case studies, success in today's rap scene is increasingly defined not only by the musical talent, but also by the artist's ability to use modern digital marketing. Social media does not simply complement a rapper's career, but it can help create one. Going forward and understanding and leveraging social media dynamics, will remain as the essential part to any artist looking to thrive and be successful in a fast and trend driven world of the genre.

## Chapter 3: Case Studies of Successful Campaigns

Social media has become a leading force in music marketing, especially in Hip Hop, where trends and online engagement often drive a song or album's success. This chapter examines the outstanding campaigns of Travis Scott and Astroworld and Megan Thee Stallion song Savage Remix. By analyzing both of these campaigns, we'll uncover the different types of tactics both artists used.

### 3.1 Introduction: Learning from Success – Case Studies in Social Media Marketing

As talked about in previous Chapters, social media has transformed marketing in music, especially in Rap where viral moments and digital engagement have become vital to a rapper's career. This chapter will focus on two particular stand out campaigns: Travis

Scott - Astroworld (2018) & Megan Thee Stallions Savage Remix (2020). Both of these campaigns exemplify how two Hip Hop artists used social media platforms to gain major attention for the albums and how engagement online, transcribes into views and success of the album. With the analysis of the two campaigns mentioned above, it can be studied how these particular campaign strategies contribute towards the effectiveness of the album and social media and compare their unique approaches to understand what made them so successful.

## *3.2 Case Study 1: Travis Scott's Astroworld Campaign*

The Astroworld album rollout and marketing campaign for Travis Scott, became an example on how to effectively merge music, social media and brand identity together for the marketing campaign of the album. The album was released in 2018 and it is more than just an album, it had an immersive cultural experience and social media played a crucial role in its success.

**Key Strategies Used in the Astroworld Campaign**

**Event Driven Marketing:** One of the main standouts about the Astroworld campaign was its live events and its strategy. As mentioned before, one of the examples of this strategy included a digital live concert performance in the video game 'Fortnite', which attracted well over 12 million players. Another example could be the 'Wish You Were Here Tour', which wasn't just a concert tour, but it was a theme park inspired live experience. The tour was designed to create the vibe of a nostalgic amusement park in particular, referencing the 'Six Flags Astroworld' in Houston, which the rapper grew up on. The Amusement Park opened on June 1st 1968 and closed on October 30th 2005, this is the Amusement Park the rapper referenced in his album, many of his interviews and even songs. (Coastoons, 2021)

Each tour destination featured carnival rides, rollercoaster visuals, fireworks and designs that gave fans the visual, like being on the roller coaster/theme park. This creative feature brought the AstroWorld tour to life and gave an immersive experience to the fans in the audience, making them feel like they are inside an actual Astroworld theme park and what Travis saw, as a small kid and his experience in the park. The Astroworld tour did not only create an unreal experience for the fans, but it also generated a massive buzz on social media, with fans posting photos, videos, vlogs, reaction videos and so on about the show. This helped Travis to build his image even further, as these videos had gained a lot of traction online and also made the whole Astroworld tour experience into a one big viral marketing event for Travis.

What made Astroworld such a big hit is, because it did not feel like just an album, but it became a cultural moment, showing it's more than just an album. The blend of physical events and features with heavy digital visuals helped deepen the connection between Travis and his fans, which further helped him to grow his brand image and fan loyalty.

**Teasers and Immersive Visuals:** The build up to the album and Astroworld experience started even before the album was released. The hype leading up to the album's release was filled with cryptic visuals and clues across social media. This created a sense of mystery surrounding Travis Scott and his new album, which helped to hype up the album, as fans couldn't wait for the release. Travis used Instagram, Twitter and Snapchat to release images of the Astroworld theme park concept, which further helped to build upon the buzz surrounding the album.

**Strategic Collaborations:** Throughout the Astroworld campaign, Travis Scott made several key collaborations with major brands, such as Nike and McDonald's, which

helped to build up the Astroworld experience beyond just music. The Astroworld merchandise collection, along with the special Astroworld menu at McDonald's (the ''Travis Scott Meal''), further helped to make the Astroworld brand more than just an album, as Travis and Astroworld was everywhere you go, when you go buy food, go look at some sport clothing and on social media, it almost felt like you lived in the Astroworld world. The ''Travis Scott Meal'', allowed fans to buy into the experience physically, not only virtually, which also helped the project to get a boost in engagement online, with people sharing themselves with the meal. It also helped Travis potentially get new fans from the younger generation, as McDonalds gets a lot of visits from children and families. (Destefano & Takanshi, 2025)

**Audience and Social Media Engagement:** As mentioned above, Travis Scott used various social media to engage his fans and engage with them, teasing the Astroworld rollout and sharing snippets and videos of his new music. Travis also involved his fans a lot, by directly encouraging his fan base to share their experiences, photos and videos of the Astroworld merch, concert experiences and other things as well, which created a ripple effect that promoted the album organically.

As mentioned before, Travis also involved his fans with the Astroworld experience through Gaming and Virtual Events. The Fornite concert was a new hit on the market, as he was one of the first if not the first to do so and it drew a lot of digital fan engagement. It allowed Travis Scott to step foot into a massive global audience of gamers, many of whom may never heard his music before and same as the collaboration with McDonald's, it helped Travis to build a new fan base from the younger generation, which could be huge for his success and longevity as a rapper. The success of this event demonstrated how games and gaming platforms can be seen and used as a powerful tool, not only for gaming,

but also for marketing, as it can help with reaching new audiences, untapped markets and creates special and unique experiences.

**Effectiveness and Insights:** Overall, the Astroworld campaign can be looked at as a massive success for the Rapper. The campaign garnered millions of views, stream and overall engagement across many platforms. The integration and marketing of virtual reality, gaming and brand partnerships not only did they boos the albums reach and many people heard of it, but it also solidified Travis Scott's status as a cultural figure, today, Travis is seen as one of the best marketable public figures and recently even did a collaboration with FC Barcelona (football club). The campaign's ability to blend in music with entertainment, gaming and social media made it into one of the most innovative marketing strategies in Rap history.

## 3.3 Case Study 2: Megan Thee Stallion's Savage Remix Campaign

The second case study on this list is Megan Thee Stallion and her 'Savage' remix, which featured Beyonce (2020). This case study is another great example of how social media can be used to amplify a song's success and how it can boost its engagement on social media. The song on its own was already a hit, but it was the way Megan used social media to her advantage to make it into a bigger hit then it would be without it. Megan's use of social media and particularly TikTok, was the main reason why the song blew up so much and helped it become a viral sensation.

**Key Strategies Used in the *Savage Remix* Campaign:** Megan Thee Stallion and her team strategically used TikTok to promote the song 'Savage', by encouraging her fans and people on the app to participate in a dance/challenge, which is known as the '#SavageChallenge' (The Shorty Awards). The Savage challenge took off and blew up when TikTok users began to create their own version of the dance, including the lyrics of

the and the choreography. As already mentioned, the song on its own would've blown up, but what made it even more viral was the challenge, it helped the song gain traction and lead to a widespread social media engagement. Like Travis Scott and his Astroworld album, this challenge helped Megan to discover new fans from social media, who otherwise may never heard of the song and overall helped her gain engagement from the younger generations or social media savvy audience.

**Celebrity Endorsement:** The remix of Savage, which featured Beyonce, which was a collaboration between the two musicians, brought even more attention to the song. Beyonce's presence on the remix of the song generated an even bigger buzz, but what truly made it bigger was her involvement on social media, which gave the campaign an additional traction in virality. Beyonce posted a TikTok of herself dancing to the song, which in a matter of short time went viral. This was just another additional feature, which helped the song grow in virality and made it bigger, fans and influencers began to use the song for their own TikTok videos, which helped with the reach and engagement of the song online. Beyonce and Megan The Stallion, also done couple of concerts together, like for example, when Beyonce brought up Megan Thee Stallion to the stage in her hometown of Houston (Kreps, 2023)

**Engagement with Fans:** Megan's direct engagement with her fans was another big reason for the success of the song and the Savage remix campaign. Megan interacted with her audience frequently and also with other influencers who participated in the TikTok challenge, Megan reposted and responded to their challenges and their videos, showing off the creativity of her fanbase. This personal engagement was important for the success of the song as well, as the fans grow a deeper connection and don't see the artist only as an artist, but also as someone who cares about their audience and helps to build a connection to the rapper, even if it's only through social media, it also makes the fans feel like they are

part of the song or the campaign, which further helps with the success of the song and the rappers image.

**Audience Engagement:** The TikTok platform is famous for blowing up some rappers, like for example Lil Nas X, with his song 'OldTown Road', where Tik Tok blew up the song, many videos and challenges were made about the song and helped the rapper grow a new and large audience to see his music that later became his fans. Something similar happened with Megan Thee Stallion and her song 'Savage'. The Tik Tok challenge created a viral loop of content, where (as noted before), fans, influencers, celebrities and collaborators participated in the challenge, which created a content around the song and helped to boost the songs virality. Megan later used this virality of content to maintain visibility and kept the momentum going for as long as possible. The algorithm of Tik Tok is very important to help and get as much engagement as possible, especially the FYP (for your page), which shows videos to the user, based on who the follower follows, what type of videos he likes, comments on and shares, basically, FYP shows videos to the user, which they think they will be interested in. Another thing that helps a video blow up is how many followers the creator has (in this case, Megan Thee Stallion), how many people like the video (especially the first minutes and hours after posting it), how many people comment on the video and how many people share it, another thing that helps the song blow up is trends, challenges and people making videos about your video. At the time of the Savage Challenge, it was a trend at that time, therefore a lot of people have seen it and made videos with it, which helped tremendously for the song's success and virality. (Lang, 2025).

**Effectiveness and Insights:**The Savage Remix campaign showed how TikTok can be used to boost a song into a mainstream success. Simply, by leveraging the viral potential of social media platforms and fan generated content, Megan Thee Stall showed how to turn a song into a cultural phenomenon and/or cultural moment. The use of Tik Tok and the

strategies mentioned above, such as fan engagement, user generated content, collaborations and in Megan's case, the combined involvement and collaboration with Beyonce, demonstrates the power of social media for modern rappers and the success of their songs, while also building and maintaining the songs momentum.

## 3.4 Comparison of Astroworld and Savage Remix Campaigns

**Similarities: Cross - Platform Engagement:** Both the Astroworld and Savage Remix campaigns used multiple types of social media platforms and not just one, in order to get the highest reach possible. Travis Scott mainly got his attention through Instagram, Twitter and Fortnite, while on the other hand, Megan Thee Stallion mainly focused on Tik Tok. While, these two rappers mainly focused on their main types of social media platforms, like for example Megan Thee Stallion and Tik Tok, she still posted on other platforms, like Instagram about the song, but both rappers understand their strong suits and what platforms have the highest potential to boost their campaign, it does make sense that Megan mainly focused on Tik Tok, because her song is more of a fun type song, the song itself is more of a trendy type song, she isn't as well known a rapper like Travis Scott is, plus the audience for the Savage Remix song and the Tik Tok audience is probably more connected to her music rather than Travis music. While on the other hand, Travis is one of the most famous rappers, his songs are followed by serious rap enthusiasts and his Astroworld album wasn't seen as a fun project that you could make dance videos about, but is considered to be more of a serious project, which a lot of fans, which are not even fans of Travis admire, therefore, his focus on Instagram makes more sense, while the fortnite concerts were seen as revolutionary, which has not been seen before by anyone else.

**Fan Participation:** With both of these campaigns, it was not only the rappers doing all the work to get seen and get a high reach, but it was also the fans of these artists that helped them. Both campaigns leveraged up on user generated content to drive the engagement up for both of these projects, the strategies were slightly different as Megan Thee Stallion strategy was to blow up on Tik Tok with her challenge, reposts and get her song to be trending on Tik Tok, while Travis strategy was being so innovative, that fans share their experiences and thoughts about everything regarding the album on social media.

**Celebrity Collaboration:** Both campaigns also featured some exciting and high profile collaborations to boost their visibility. Travis Scott collaborated with very well known brands, such as Nike, McDonald's and Fortnite, while Megan Thee Stallion worked with one of the most famous artists 'Beyonce' and also worked with some other creators on the platform to post their own version about the Savage challenge. Both of these artists' collaborations drew large amounts of audiences and most likely, also new audiences to their campaign, not only that, but since both of these rappers worked with well known collaborations it also added to their credibility about the project as these collaborations are well known and well trusted by their own fan base or customers.

**Differences:**

**Platform Focus:** While it was mentioned that Megan Thee Stallion also used Instagram and other platforms to promote her Savage Remix campaign, the campaign was mainly focused on Tik Tok to get her reach, while Travis Scott and his Astroworld campaign, was utilized into a more diverse mix of platforms and not focus mainly on one platform. As mentioned before, Travis did not only use social media, but in addition used gaming and live events in addition to social media, which made the Astro Worlds

campaign into a more immersive and multi dimensional, it could be said that Megan was hoping her song will blow off due to algorithm and trends, while Travis Scott had everything planned out and wanted to truly make a shift in the Hip Hop world, but that is understandable because Astroworld is an album, while Savage Remix is a song, therefore the planning, time and resources put into these two campaigns would always differ, as a song is just a song, but an album is very important and personal for a rapper .

**Target Demographics:** It is already hinted above in the similarities section, where it is written why Megan focused more on Tik Tok, while Travis focused more on a diverse set of platforms, but it is important to get into more details to fully understand the reason behind it. The Astroworld campaign reached a very broad audience, it did not focus on one social media platform, one age demographic or on only the fans of Travis, but it more focused on almost generally everyone, the target demographic included gamers (usually younger audience), music fans and also brand enthusiasts, these three different targets, already include different age groups. In contrast, the Savage Remix campaign was more focused on a more specific type of demographic, which included a younger audience and Tik Tok - centric audience, the age group engaged in this campaign usually included Gen Z and Millenials, as the younger generation tends to use Tik Tok the most and are more likely to participate in the challenges and videos.

**Conclusion:** In conclusion, both the Astroworld and Savage Remix campaigns can be seen as successful and a lot of that can be attributed to the help of social media. Both of these campaigns were successful, because both Travis Scott and Megan Thee Stallion understood the power of social media and fan engagement, while also understanding their fan base and strengths, which helped both artists to strategies what to do and how to market it, but unlike the typical marketing, which includes paid ads on the television and social media, both artists chose to have their fan base do the marketing for them on social

media, by sharing their experiences, thoughts, challenges or in general videos about the projects. What both rappers did very well is use these following steps towards their strength and help to boost their campaigns in reach and engagement; both rappers used, viral moments, collaborations and platforms that best suited their target demographics, both Travis Scott and Megan Thee Stallion were able to elevate their brands and their music even further, due to these strengths. The key takeaway from both of these campaigns is the importance of utilizing and using the right social media tools the right way, engaging and encouraging in fans participation and creating content that resonates not only with their fan base, but also with the broader audience. These strategies can serve as a blueprint for future social media marketing in the HipHop/Rap industry.

# Chapter 4. Practical Part: Survey Results and Analysis – The Role of Social Media Marketing in HipHop/Rap

In this part of the chapter, it will be explored what the results of the survey were, who answered the questions, their relevance in the hip hop genre and why are these answers important and what we can take from them,

## 4.1 Introduction to Survey Results

To better understand the role and importance of social media marketing in the HipHop/Rap industry, a survey was conducted among many members of the music industry (rappers, producers, DJ's and other musical professionals). The main goal of the survey was to collect first hand insights on how people in the music industry perceive branding, social media, technological trends, authenticity, what they feel like is the most and least important for a rapper, importance of technology in music in the future and some

questions regarding marketing and other personal questions. It is also important to note that the survey was filled out by many other rappers, artists and other musical professionals, but only 5 were chosen to have a better detailed understanding of what these rappers and industry professionals think about the questions that were asked. These 5 artists were picked based on their fame and influence in the rap scene, while also keeping diversity between them (not everyone is a rapper, different ages and different answers). The 5 people that were chosen are; Parrfem / DJ Nuff, Icy L (DJ & Rapper) / Patrik Icy L (Rapper), Leonarco (From the rap group - Želvy Ganja), Haades Pes (Rapper) and Manuel - BcYouHeard (Group of Producers and Beat Makers).

## 4.2 Profile of Respondents

This section of the practical part will provide a deeper look into the background of the five respondents. By exploring their individual roles in the Rap scene, it will be easier for the reader to understand and get a better idea of the types of people that the survey includes and the significance of these artists in/for the HipHop/Rap genre.

### 4.2.1 DJ Nuff/Parrfem

Jiří Stabla or also known as DJ Nuff is a DJ & Rapper originating from Havířov, in the Czech Republic. Parffem started his music career as a DJ in techno and tech-house as early as 1999, he regularly performed on the Stodolni Street and also other major Czech clubs, such as Roxy and SaSaZu. The DJ then permanently moved to Ibiza and landed gigs at some top venues such as Space Ibiza, Privilege, Bora Bora, Café Mambo, Nikki Beach and many more (EuroZpravy, 2016).

Radio presence & residencies:

- Hosted his own show **'Allergen'** in Ibiza 'Global Radio', he later stated ''I'm the first Czech & Slovak to get on a big radio like this"
- Had regular sets at both indoor and outdoor megaclubs, such as Ushuaia ANTS (Fikotova, 2016)

**Parrfem - The Rapper**

- Jiří switched into a rapper and also his name, known as Parrfem, which is his rap alter ego. In September 2022, Parrfem released his own debut rap album with the well known producer 'Space Coupe'. On 19th of June 2025, he released his newest album 'Casino Mixtape'
- Parffem is also a very good friend with one of the most successful Czech Rappers 'Smack' from the well known label 'A51' and have a couple of songs together, like for example, 'NPSM 2'.

### 4.2.2 Icy L/Patrik Icy L

Patrik Pražák, also known as Icy L, is another rapper on this list that is very well known in the Czech Rap Scene. Patrik comes from the city of Cheb, the area is also known as Sudetenland, which the rapper refers to in his songs quite frequently. Icy L is also part of a rap group, known as DvojlitrBoyzz. The rapper started rapping when he still attended school in Cheb and also became an IT specialist, which he quit a couple of months ago, to fully focus on his rap career. (Havlinkova, 2025)

**Music Style & Projects:**

- Patrik Icy L style is more of an underground style, as he likes to use the dirty sounds of rap or even likes to 808 bass on his beats.

- Some of his most interesting projects include; ‘Icy L Je Nemocnej’, ‘Petr Rychlý EP’, ‘Stále Nemocnej’, ‘Raider’, and ‘From Zero To Hero’
- Popular tracks include the likes of; ‘Rvrx’, ‘Nejsi Swagger’, ‘Standa Řezáč Swag’, ‘Kratom Krazy’, ‘Backstage’ and ‘Bandana’.

### 4.2.3 Haades Pes

Another well respected rapper in the Czech scene is Haades Pes. Haades is from Litoměřice, in the Czech Republic. The rapper made his first waves on the Rap scene around 2005, where he participated in a rap competition, known as ‘Utkej se v Rapu’. Haades is part of a very well known Rap group, which calls itself ‘ZNK’ and every member of the group used to release music under one Youtube channel, where Haades had a couple of songs, which had well over one million views, but were later deleted by Youtube and then reposted, losing many of the views the songs had before.

**Rap Project:**

- Haades first solo was released in 2013, under the name of ‘Duševní Bankrot’, which got a lot of attention in the Czech Republic & Slovakia.
- In 2017, Haades dropped another album, which got a lot views ‘Deep Space 9’
- After a long 5-6 years, Haades made a big comeback, with some of his new tracks such as; ‘Jsem v píči, ale je mi krásně’, ‘Magie’ and ‘Julius Meinl’
- Some of the most famous tracks include; ‘Home Office’, ‘Truman Show’ Ben afFlex', ‘Pulp Fiction' and many more (all of these songs used to have way more views, after they were deleted and reuploaded).

### 4.2.4 Leonarco

Next on the list is Honza, who's rap name is Leonarco. Honza is a young rapper, who started a couple of years ago, with his fellow friends and created a Rap group together, which they named Želvy Ganja. Honza and his team are based in Prague and used to make rap songs, just for fun, but Honza started taking rap more seriously and dropped a couple of new solo tracks and projects and started taking rap more seriously.

**Rap Projects:**

- The first Debut Solo Album Leonarco released was four months ago and was named 'Self - Experiment', where he for the first time, rapped songs without his group and went into experimenting his sound and different ways to choose his future path in rap.
- Some of the best songs from this album includes; 'Self-Experiment', 'Propadám' and 'Čas 4 Ráno' and many more

### 4.2.5 Manuel - BcYouHeard

Unlike the rest of the respondents, Manuel does not rap, nor does he make any songs, but he is a producer, creates beats and mixes n master songs. Manuel is part of a group that calls themselves 'BcYouHeard', it's a group based in Italy, from the city of Fabriano, where the producers live. 'BcYouHeard' started one year ago, but are slowly making their way in the beat market, as they started selling a lot of beats to some up and coming rappers.

**Beat Projects:**

- Italy is very well known for their love for the Trap sound, which BcYouHeard focuses on.
- They also like to focus on other countries. sounds for their beats, such as Florida, Memphis and Atlanta type beats

## 4.3 Demographics and Cultural Involvement

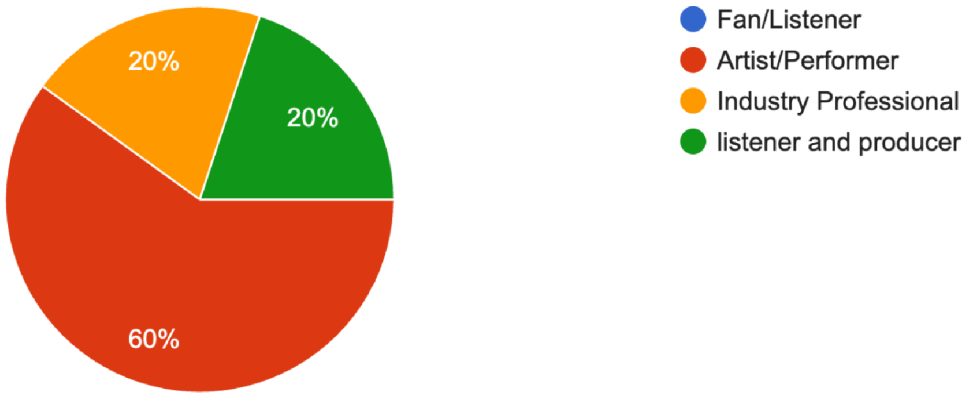
### Q1 & Q2: Age Group & Gender

In terms of gender, I was sadly not able to find any female rappers, as I don't know any. It is a shame, because it would have helped the survey to have a better diversity and a better outlook, which reflects HipHop's history of being predominantly a male-dominated landscape. In terms of age, the survey was able to capture different types of answers, as two people were 18-24 (40%), two people were 35-44 (40%) and one person was 25-34 (20%). The results show that there is a fine line between the different ages in the HipHop/Rap genre.

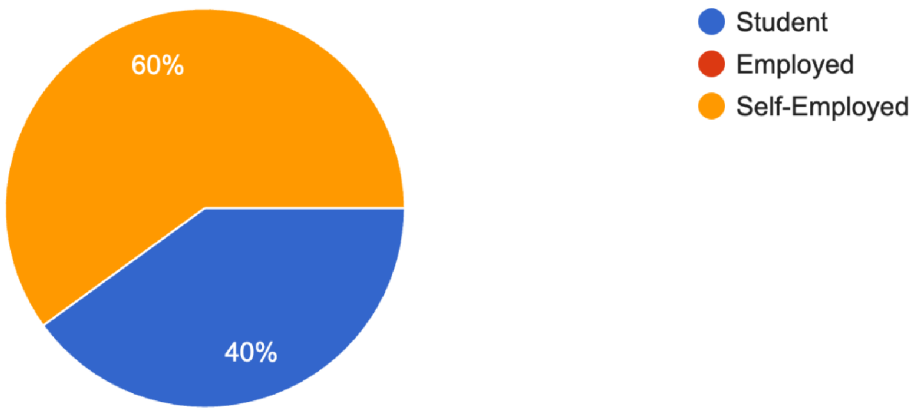
### Q3 & Q4: Occupation and Involvement within the HipHop/Rap Culture

As mentioned in previous sections of Chapter 4, there was a fine mix between artists, industry professionals and listeners/producers. Three people from the survey were

artists, one person was an industry professional and the other was a producer/listener.




What was really interesting about the other question was the occupation they had, which included the options of Student, Employed or Self - Employed. Three of the respondents responded with Self-Employed and two of the respondents were students. What was really interesting about this section was the people in the music, their position and their occupation. What I mean about this is, the musicians that were at the start of their music careers were all students and the artists that had a living or were at the very least well known in the rap genre, were all self-employed and none of the respondents were employed by someone. This shows that a lot of rappers or artists in the music industry start their music/rap career, while they are still students and while the rappers/artists that are already successful in the rap genre prefer to be self-employed rather than employed. It is not something unexpected, as many artists express they need freedom to do what they want in music, so this just confirms, when the musician or producer has the chance to do so, he would rather be self employed rather than employed by someone.




## 4.4 Listening Habits and Platform Preferences

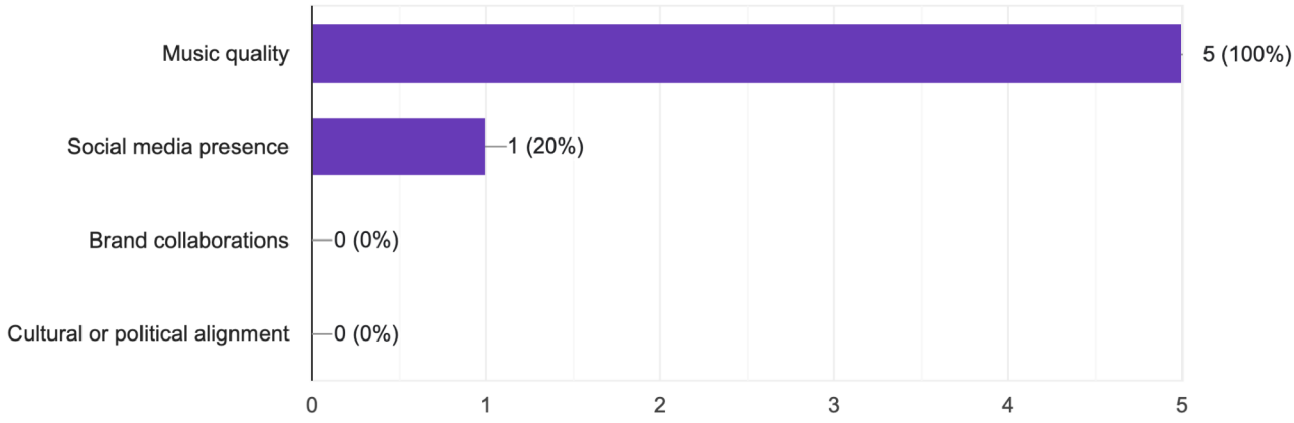
**Q5 & Q6:**

These next two questions on the list are quite important to understand the current situation of the modern rap scene, how music is mainly consumed by the listener or artist and how often they listen to rap in general, not only by the consumers, but also by the creators themselves. Question 5 asked the respondents how often they listen to rap music in general, 40% of the respondents said they listen to rap several times a week, while 60% of the respondents listen to rap daily. What's interesting about this finding is, that even though all of the respondents work within the rap genre, they do not listen to the genre every day and most likely like to keep a mix not only with rap, but also with other genres. Question 6 focused more on the current state of the rap genre and how it is primarily consumed (which platforms). Even though the results were not that surprising as rap is thought of as the pioneer of the new music trends, it was still interesting to see all the respondents answer the same answer, which was that they primarily listen/consume music through streaming platforms, such as; YouTube, Apple Music, Spotify and so on.

## 4.5 Branding and Artist Engagement

**Q7: What influences your choice to follow a hip-hop artist or brand? (Select all that apply):**

This part of the Chapter includes very important findings as it correlates straight to the thesis title and the paper work as a whole, as it answers the question of what the respondents and the listeners of HipHop/Rap look for the most in an artist and his rap songs. The question and results are stated as shown below

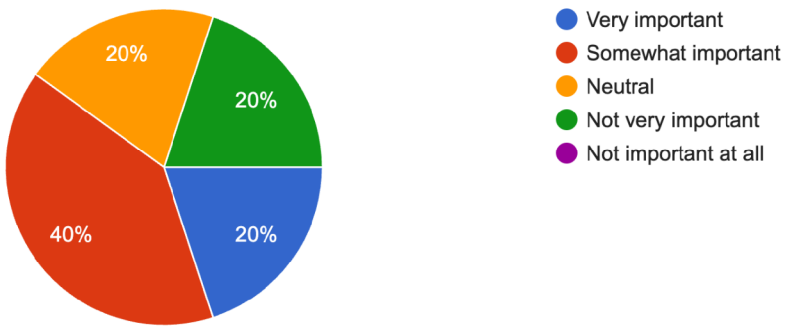



From the chart above, it can be clearly shown that the listeners (in this case the 5 respondents) don't care too much about brand collaborations, nor do they care much about the cultural or political alignment, but what is the most important to them is the quality of music and a little bit of social media presence as well. The listener cares more about how the song sounds, the vibe and quality of the song is more important than anything else. A prime example of this could be Kanye West, Kanye has a lot of loyal fans who love his music, but may not necessarily agree with his personal thoughts, as he is thought of as an extremist with some of his views and anti semitic, even though that may be the case, he is still thought of as one of the best rappers in the world, Kanye still racks up millions of views and people see him as one of the main pioneers of modern rap, as he helped the

genre a lot to move to where it is today, and the chart above proves, that people care more about the music quality over personal beliefs or personal life. The other thing that this chart shows is that some people still care about the rapper's personal life and their social media presence. I feel like this section is more for the younger generations like for example the Generation Z or younger, as these generations grew up with using smartphones and social media on a daily and is part of their life, rather than a listener of HipHop/Rap that is from the older generations such as for example someone from Generation X or maybe even Generation Y. When looking into the details of who was the solo respondent who responded to social media presence, it was a respondent from the age group 18-24.

**Q8 In your opinion, how important is branding for a hip-hop artist's success?**

This question was not only important for the thesis as branding goes hand in hand with marketing of a rap artist, which is very important for the rapper to gain a fanbase or sell his music to achieve a higher reach and success in the rap industry, but also because the results from the survey include a very diverse answer section, which just shows that not everybody thinks, it is as important or it is not important as others may think and it truly depends on the specific individual.



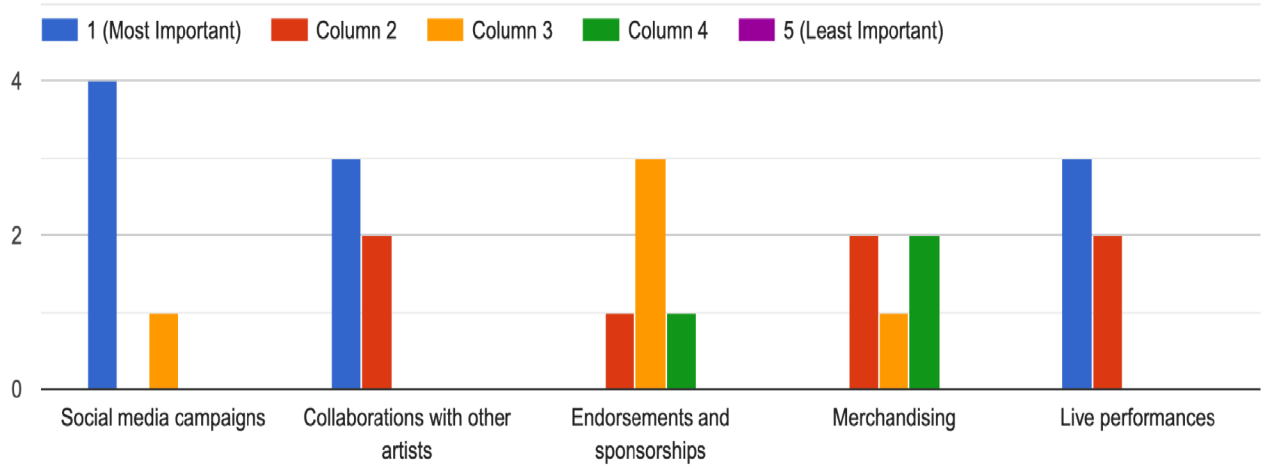

As the results above indicate, nobody thinks that branding is not important at all, everybody understands branding is important for every rapper, as he is selling his image to

the public to see and some people care about the image and some not as much, but from the results shown, it clearly shows that most respondents think it is quite important, except for one who thinks it is not very important. From this result, we can understand why a lot of rappers, like for example, Travis Scott and his Astroworld campaign, why a lot of finances and effort is put into the marketing and visuals, because even though people care about the music quality the most (according to the survey), the branding image of the rapper is also very important, as it helps the rapper to build up name for himself in the industry, which then helps the rapper to sell, songs, projects and shows more successfully, as the name is a big part of what sells and the way they sell it to the listener

**Q9 What elements of marketing contribute the most to the success of a hip-hop artist:**

This question correlates towards the Q7 as well as Q8, as it continues with the questions regarding the types of rappers marketing and how the respondents see them as important or not important. This question will answer, what type of marketing the respondents think is the most important, and least important, as they rank from 1 to 5 (1 being very important, 5 being not very important). Before I show and talk about the chart, I want to be sure the reader fully understands the chart itself. Blue = 1, Red = 2, Orange = 3, Green = 4 and Purple = 5. The types of marketing that were asked to the respondents are social media campaigns, collaborations with other artists, endorsements and sponsorship,

merchandising, and live performances.




Same as Question 8, nobody does not think that any of these marketings are not important at all, all the respondents understand that all types of marketing the rapper does is important, the real question is, what type of marketing do the respondents think is the most and least important for a rapper. On the top of the list of importance, we can see that almost every respondent, except for those that gave it a rating of '3', think that social media campaigns are on the top of the list of importance. In the 2nd and 3rd place of importance in the marketing of a rapper, is collaborations with other artists and live performances, as both of these got the exact same results and both answers only included '1 and 2's', which means the respondents value it as very important. From these two answers, we can clearly see what was said in Question 7 and that is that music quality is still very important for the listener, not only through the headphones, but also at live performances, but also collaborations with other rappers, collaborations are always exciting and good marketing, because you may like both rappers and are excited about the song or they just have a good rap connection, which makes the quality of the song good for the listener, not only that, but collaborations can also invite the rapper into a new audience of listeners, who may have never heard of the rapper before, which can then bring him/her new fans to his/her music

and the same goes for concerts, especially when the rapper is the runner up, before the main rapper, as people went to the concert to see the main rapper, but now hear the runner up and may like his style and become his fans as well, which is considered to be a good marketing strategy. On the last two positions of importance of marketing for a rapper, the respondents voted on endorsements and sponsorships & merchandising. Going back to the previous question again, we can again see the listener cares more about the marketing value of good music over merchandising or sponsorships, basically meaning if you market good music, like through collaborations or a good live performance or when it stays in the musical sphere, people value it a lot more than marketing outside of music, such as merchandising and sponsorships. From the results of the survey, we can see endorsements and sponsorships have a lot of middling answers in the range of 3's, including only one '2' and one '4', therefore a lot of people think this type of marketing is only medium important. Merchandising on the other hand depends more on the individual itself, as the survey shows there were two people who voted it quite high, as a number '2', one person voted it as medium '3' and the other two people voted it as a '4', so not that highly.

## Conclusion:

In conclusion, I think this part of the thesis revealed very insightful answers from the respondents, their backgrounds, listening habits and their personal views on branding and marketing within the rap scene. While the lack of female respondents is a limitation worth acknowledging, the diversity in age and occupation still provides meaningful information about different stages within an artist's career. The analysis clearly showed that streaming platforms dominate the music consumption for the modern listener and, while branding and marketing plays a very important role in a rapper's success, music quality still remains to be the most important thing for most listeners. The survey also showed,

while every type of marketing is important for a modern day rapper, the most successful marketing strategy is the one that is rooted to music itself, such as social media campaigns, live performances and collaborations, were seen much more valuable than the other types of marketings up for offer on the survey, like for example merchandise and sponsorships. Overall, this survey has proven that marketing is very important for a modern day rapper, as it can help him gain new fans, build a larger loyalty among fans and increase his reach to new audiences and so on. These findings form a strong foundation for understanding how artists navigate their careers and build their rap brand in the modern rap scene.

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## Extra Attachments:

**Attachment no. 1.**
**Use of technical means in the preparation of the final thesis (AI)**

| Use | Description | Tool |
|---|---|---|
| **Research - searching for sources** | It helped me find sources, when I couldn't find any | ChatGpt |
| **Resource processing** | N/A | |
| **Work on the text done by AI** | When I was stuck and didn't know what to write about, chat gpt helped me with some ideas, which I then put into my own ideas/words. Basically I used it as a helping tool when stuck | ChatGpt |
| **Work with data done by AI** | N/A | |
| **Visual output** | N/A | |
| **Other** | N/A | |
| | | |

**Description of use:** Basically, I only used chatgpt, to help me out give me ideas, when I couldn't find anything then give me some sources and what I should write about or how I should write it, which I then put into my own ideas or my own words.