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IMC Case Study (Part 1)

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Public Relations Management

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## Part 1

- PR Audit SWOT

Big Time Rush is a North American boy band that gained fame through a Nickelodeon television series. The group was formed in 2009 and consisted of members Kendall Schmidt, James Maslow, Carlos PenaVega, and Logan Henderson. The TV show "Big Time Rush" followed the fictionalized lives of the band members as they navigated their way through the music industry. In addition to the success of the TV series, Big Time Rush released music albums featuring songs that they performed on the show. Some of their popular tracks include "Boyfriend," "Windows Down," and the theme song for their TV show, "Big Time Rush." The band became known for its popular television series and catchy music, which led to gaining a substantial fan base, especially among the younger audience. While the TV series came to an end in 2013, the members have pursued individual projects, and as of the latest information available to me in January 2022, they reunited for a comeback tour in response to ongoing fan demand.

Strengths: Big Time Rush has a dedicated and large fan base acquired during their years on Nickelodeon. The band's ability to maintain this fan loyalty over the years is a significant strength. By maintaining a loyal fan base, they were able to sell out both shows in Chicago and New York City. By maintaining a loyal fan base, they were able to sell out Madison Square Garden and sell over 300,000 tickets. "When setting up a brand partnership, companies should aim to appeal to loyal customers just as much, if not more, than new customers. Visual Objects found that 43% of consumers would try a co-branded product from a company they already liked." (Objects, V., 2021, August 24). 71% of consumers enjoy co-branding partnerships, encouraging more companies to market products together. PR Newswire: press release distribution, targeting, monitoring, and marketing.

<https://www.prnewswire.com/news-releases/71-of-consumers-enjoy-co-branding-partnerships-en-couraging-more-companies-to-market-products-together-301361260.html>)

As Big Time Rush gained international fame, they also established a strong global presence. This recognition provided opportunities for the band to attract diverse audiences during their comeback tour. This led to a strong fan base in Mexico, where they then toured shortly after.

They released Spanish songs, which created a larger variety of audience members which created more room for sales. They were wildly successful as they sold out multiple of shows and had a much greater turnout than expected. By globalizing their market, they were able to be more successful in their tour. “To navigate the complexities of international music markets, artists and industry professionals need to adopt a global mindset. Understanding the cultural nuances, preferences, and trends of different regions can help tailor marketing campaigns and target specific audiences effectively. “ (By: Yellowbrick. (2023, August 28). Exploring international music markets: A globalization perspective. Yellowbrick.

<https://www.yellowbrick.co/blog/entertainment/exploring-international-music-markets-a-globalization-perspective>) Utilizing platforms like TikTok demonstrates the band's adaptability to new and influential digital marketing channels. By using TikTok and other forms of social media, they could reach their target audiences and maintain relevance. (1,335,850 impressions served, 18,352 clicks for ads) “Social media is almost as common as word of mouth and TV/radio ads for learning about brands or companies. One in three consumers say it’s their preferred way to learn about brands going forward, with Gen Z being the demographic most likely to learn via social media” (Kenan, J. (2023, May 12). 20 public relations stats to know for Better Communications Outcomes in 2022. Sprout Social.

<https://sproutsocial.com/insights/public-relations/> )

Weaknesses: Some issues that came about during their comeback tour were how they had a limited number of tickets and shows and were not able to accommodate all of their fans who wanted tickets. This led to a large number of fans who were upset. Many fans complained about tickets being overpriced, as well as Ticketmaster crashing. “Sixty-one percent of U.S. consumers (61%) will avoid buying from brands with negative reputations...Even if one company maintains a positive reputation, a partner's negative reputation can damage them..” (Objects, V., 2021, August 24). 71% of consumers enjoy co-branding partnerships, encouraging more companies to market products together. PR Newswire: press release distribution, targeting, monitoring, and marketing.

<https://www.prnewswire.com/news-releases/71-of-consumers-enjoy-co-branding-partnerships-encouraging-more-companies-to-market-products-together-301361260.html>) In this case, using Ticketmaster may not have been the way to go. One fan even went to start a petition for Big Time Rush to add more shows. This fan went on to start a petition with over 500 signatures saying “There are many Big Time Rush fans who would love to see BTR in concert again, but with the difficulty in attaining tickets, unfortunately, many fans won’t be able to unless more tour dates are added.”( Sign the petition. Change.org. (2021, July 21).

<https://www.change.org/p/big-time-rush-big-time-rush-add-more-tour-dates> )well as others who went upon different social media platforms that included Twitter, Tik Tok and on Big Time Rush’s as well as the members' instagram. Another negative backlash they received is that they were trying to appeal to a new market, instead of appealing to their loyal fan base by having collaborations with people like Dixie Damelio, who has a completely different kind of audience. “New statistics suggest that if you are targeted in your marketing communications, then you can increase sales by 20%”(Clay, G., 2022, March 11). Target audience: Identify yours to improve

PR and marketing. Class.

<https://class-pr.com/blog/target-audience/#:~:text=If%20you%20want%20to%20increase,It's%20a%20no%20brainer.> )

Opportunities:

Collaborating with current popular artists or brands in the music industry who have the same target audience can expose Big Time Rush to a new reach of people and create a buzz around their reunion. They collaborated with Dixie D'Amelio, but she is a new and growing artist with a younger audience. Instead of collaborating with her, they would have done better if they had collaborated with an artist who shares a similar target audience and would be interested in their music, instead of shooting for new customers. “43% of consumers would try a co-branded product from a company they already liked. Additional research shows that increasing customer retention rates by 5% can increase profits by [up to 95%](#).” (Objects, V., 2021, August 24). 71% of consumers enjoy co-branding partnerships, encouraging more companies to market products together. PR Newswire: press release distribution, targeting, monitoring, and marketing.

<https://www.prnewswire.com/news-releases/71-of-consumers-enjoy-co-branding-partnerships-encouraging-more-companies-to-market-products-together-301361260.html>)

By collaborating in a strategic partnership, which could include joint performances, endorsements, or even co-writing with contemporary musicians, they could have done much better in sales. “71% of Consumers Enjoy Co-Branding Partnerships”

(Objects, V., 2021, August 24). 71% of consumers enjoy co-branding partnerships, encouraging more companies to market products together. PR Newswire: press release distribution, targeting, monitoring, and marketing.

<https://www.prnewswire.com/news-releases/71-of-consumers-enjoy-co-branding-partnerships-encouraging-more-companies-to-market-products-together-301361260.html>)

Another opportunity they could have taken is a virtual concert. Especially in response to global events like the COVID-19 pandemic, it opens up opportunities for Big Time Rush to host online events, reaching fans worldwide and providing an alternative revenue stream. An example is when Travis Scott did this in his Fortnite performances and gained “more than 1.5 million followers in 7 days across Instagram, Facebook, Deezer, Soundcloud, Spotify, and the demand for his physical concert tickets 419%”. (Kocalyesim. (2022, January 12). Virtual Concerts as a Marketing Tool. Music and Metaverse.

<https://www.musicandmetaverse.com/post/virtual-concerts-as-a-marketing-tool#:~:text=It%20is%20proven%20that%20this,physical%20concerts%2C%20and%20bring%20attention>). As this was proven to work, this would be a good move for Big Time Rush.

Threats:

Negative feedback and perceptions among fans about the band's motivations and staleness pose a threat to the success of the comeback tour “Negative reviews succeed in chasing away customers from your business to your competitors. Research shows that one negative review drives away [22%](#) of prospects” (Yes, negative reviews can impact your business but you can overcome. CMG Local Solutions. (2019, September 24).

<https://www.cmglocalsolutions.com/blog/yes-negative-reviews-can-impact-your-business-but-you-can-overcome>.) The music industry's competitive landscape, including the emergence of new artists and changing consumer preferences, poses a threat to Big Time Rush's sustained success. “91% of music artists go undiscovered” (Ulloa, N. (2019, October 28). 91 percent of all artists are completely undiscovered. Digital Music News.

<https://www.digitalmusicnews.com/2014/01/17/nbs/> ) With the music industry being diluted, they have to stand out to be successful. External factors such as global events or trends, like the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic, may impact the band's ability to tour and engage with their audience in traditional ways “ 43% of professionals said COVID-19 and the events of 2020 significantly disrupted their communications agenda.”( Kenan, J. (2023, May 12). 20 public relations stats to know for Better Communications Outcomes in 2022. Sprout Social. <https://sproutsocial.com/insights/public-relations/> )

## **IMC Campaign Overview:**

### **Situation:**

Big Time Rush is facing the need for an Integrated Marketing Communication (IMC) campaign due to a mix of opportunities and threats in their comeback tour. The obstacles and opportunities are both proactive and reactive. Proactively, they aim to leverage their existing strengths and opportunities to maintain and expand their fan base. Reactively, they need to address negative perceptions and overcome weaknesses to ensure the success of their tour.

### **Target Audience(s):**

Dedicated Fans (Demographics: Age 18-30, Psychographics: Passionate about Big Time Rush):  
Targeting existing fans to ensure continued support and attendance.

New Audiences (Demographics: Ages 13-18, Psychographics: Interested in contemporary music and pop culture): Expanding the fanbase by reaching out to younger audiences through collaborations and digital platforms. Media and Industry Influencers (Demographics: Age 25-45,

Psychographics: Influential in the music and entertainment industry): Leveraging partnerships and collaborations to amplify the band's presence in the industry.

## **Objectives**

### **Awareness**

Increase brand awareness among the target audience by 20% through strategic collaborations with popular artists and influencers. By the end of 2023, track a 20% increase in online mentions, social media impressions, and media coverage related to Big Time Rush's comeback tour. Enhance global recognition by 20% through the release of Spanish songs and targeted marketing in key international markets. Utilize TikTok and other social media platforms to reach a wider audience, aiming for a 20% increase in engagement metrics (likes, shares, comments) during the first three months of the tour. Achieve a 20% improvement in engagement on social media platforms by May 2023, as measured by analytics tools.

### **Attitude:**

Shift perception among new audiences (ages 13-18) from neutrality to excitement, aiming for a 20% increase in positive feedback towards Big Time Rush's music and comeback tour. Conduct pre- and post-campaign sentiment analysis to achieve a 20% increase in positive sentiments by the end of 2023. Address negative feedback from existing fans by resolving ticketing issues and improving customer satisfaction, targeting a 20% decrease in negative reviews and complaints. Implement customer service improvements by, leading to a 20% reduction in negative reviews on various platforms by the end of the year. Foster a sense of

nostalgia and loyalty among dedicated fans (age 18-30) through exclusive behind-the-scenes content and personalized interactions, aiming to increase in fan loyalty. Measure a 20% increase in fan engagement, loyalty program sign-ups, and attendance at exclusive fan events by the end of the comeback tour

**Action:**

Increase ticket sales by 20% for their next tour, targeting both dedicated fans and new audiences through strategic pricing and promotions. Implement targeted promotions and secure at least three strategic partnerships with well-established brands or artists that share a similar target audience, aiming to enhance the band's credibility and reach. Host a successful virtual concert with a minimum of 500,000 attendees, providing an alternative revenue stream and increasing global reach. Achieve a minimum of 500,000 virtual attendees for the concert, measured through online ticket sales and live streaming views..

**Other sources**

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<https://www.hypebot.com/hypebot/2022/10/inside-big-time-rushs-tiktok-marketing-success-case-study.html>

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<https://www.iconvsicon.com/2023/02/06/big-time-rush-announces-massive-u-s-tour-and-unveils-cant-get-enough-single/>

## Part 2

### Recap:

Big Time Rush, a North American boy band, has embarked on a comeback tour following their Nickelodeon fame, presenting a mix of strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats. Their dedicated fanbase, global presence, and adaptability to digital platforms stand out as strengths, leading to successful shows and album sales. However, ticketing issues and attempts to appeal to a new market created some challenges, leading to some disappointment among fans. There are opportunities that can be taken by strategic collaborations with artists who share a similar target audience, as well as exploring virtual concerts to reach a broader fanbase. Threats include negative feedback and industry competition. The IMC campaign's goal is to make the most of what this campaign did well and fix any problems they have, both before and after they happen. Targeting dedicated fans, new audiences, and influencers, the campaign focuses on increasing awareness, shifting to more positive attitudes, and driving proactive actions like an increase in ticket sales and virtual concert attendance. Measuring success includes

monitoring online mentions, social media impressions, sentiment analysis, and engagement metrics. Overall, the campaign strives for a successful comeback tour for Big Time Rush.

### **Key Value Proposition:**

Big Time Rush's key value proposition revolves around playing to their dedicated fanbase, global recognition, and adaptability to new and evolving digital platforms. The primary message of the campaign revolves around keeping their dedicated fans satisfied, winning through their loyalty and nostalgia, while also attracting new audiences. The campaign emphasizes strategic collaborations with popular artists and influencers, the release of Spanish songs to reach a diverse audience, and the use of currently popular social platforms like TikTok to maintain relevance. Supporting messages include addressing fan concerns by having improved customer service and by resolving the ticketing issues they encountered, fostering a sense of nostalgia and loyalty among already existing fans, and reaching new audiences through promotions and virtual concerts. Overall, the key value proposition revolves around the band's strength, adaptability, as well as commitment to providing a memorable experience for both existing and new fans.

### **Strategies & Tactics:**

Strategy- Public Relations: Earned Media

Big Time Rush used earned media in several ways. The band participated in exclusive interviews with reputable outlets, discussing their journey, the comeback tour itself, and their commitment to fans. These interviews included appearing on news programs like the Today show as well as other types of interviews that were released on news-media platforms such as Billboard. These interviews built up anticipation for the comeback tour as well and showed

authenticity within the band. Press releases were utilized to announce tour details, as well as new and exciting collaborations.

#### Strategy: Public Relations – Social Media

By utilizing social media, the band was able to connect directly with fans and build excitement for the comeback tour. Using different social media platforms, including TikTok, the band launched a campaign with creative and relatable content for their fans. This included inside scoop from rehearsals, fan challenges, and collaborations with popular TikTok creators to maximize reach. (Example:

<https://www.tiktok.com/@bigtimerush/video/7309534794780609834?lang=en> )

#### Strategy: Marketing – Sales Promotions

Through the Big Time Rush website, they would offer special offers for users who signed up for email or text updates regarding the latest Big Time Rush news. You could also pay to join their fan club, which had exclusive offers that made fans feel special by having exclusivity, which prompted more people to want to go to the concert.

(<https://www.bigtimerushofficial.com/>) This included discounts on merchandise that was being sold that were exclusive for this tour, as well as early access to tickets.

#### Strategy: Advertising – Paid Media

As well as using earned media, they also utilized sponsored posts and ads on social media platforms. They paid for ads to pop up on on user's feeds. They also would direct their audience to their Big Time Rush website, which had offers, merchandise and more information about their

tour. They also used sponsored posts through influencers, specifically ones with large followings among the younger audience, like Dixie D'Amelio, for example. This allowed the band to tap into new fan bases and create a buzz around the comeback.

### **Evaluation:**

The data given from the announcement from Pollstar of the "Can't Get Enough Tour" provides insights into increased brand awareness. The tour announcement led to significant media coverage, including articles and mentions in different kinds of news sources. The extensive coverage of the tour being covered in the press and on social media platforms shows a successful increase in brand awareness.. The tour's expansion to more than 35 cities, including international locations like Mexico, goes with the objective of enhancing global recognition. The announcement mentions the success of their previous "Forever Tour," averaging 7,192 tickets per show and grossing \$271,238. (Speer, D. (2023, February 6). *Big Time Rush "can't get enough of touring, sets North American summer dates*. Pollstar News. ) As well as including a tour in Mexico. This shows an increase in global recognition. Mentions of "rave reviews" on social media and in the press and sold-out shows, including Madison Square Garden Arena, indicates positive impacts from social media engagement Big Time Rush also had an addition of special guests, Jax and Max.. Max, with over 1.5 billion streams, was also on Nickelodeon, and Jax, a TikTok star with a Billboard Hot 100 chart debut, catered to the demographic aged 13-18. The choice of special guests aligns with the objective of having a positive attitude shift among younger audiences. This recent announcement of the band going on tour again, with more shows available and without the COVID-19 pandemic in place, addresses fan concerns by having more shows available. The successful handling of the "Forever Tour," with a sold-out show at Madison Square Garden, implies a positive response from fans, potentially contributing to a decrease in

negative reviews. While exact measures of certain metrics to measure the success rates are not available, the positive reviews and raves in the press, from fans, and from the band show how some of these adjustments lead to an overall successful outcome. The announcement mentions the success of the previous "Forever Tour," including a sold-out show at Madison Square Garden that moved 12,531 tickets and grossed \$1,109,126. They reference the "Can't Get Enough Tour" being "bigger than ever," which shows a confidence in achieving increased ticket sales. The positive response to past tours and the anticipation for the new tour contribute to an increase in ticket sales.

### **Critical Analysis:**

Big Time Rush's loyal fan base, international success, and adaptability to new and popular digital trends led to a successful comeback tour. Having a combination of traditional media, social media, and influencer collaboration, leveraged a well-rounded approach for this campaign. By expanding to a new, younger, and diverse audience as well as gearing towards loyal fans, the band reached audiences through different channels. The campaign faced challenges such as limited tickets on Ticketmaster, which led to some upset fans. Having other ticketing platforms or additional shows might have addressed these concerns. While collaboration with influencers is valuable, the choice of collaborators who were to reach a younger audience received some backlash. Future collaborations should align more closely with pre-existing loyal fans to maintain authenticity. Considering global events like the COVID-19 pandemic, incorporating a virtual concert option could have expanded accessibility by providing an alternative for fans unable to attend live events. The campaign's success highlights the importance of having a well-rounded IMC approach. It was important to stay true to the band's

strengths, be able to address weaknesses promptly, and adapt to marketing strategies to evolving digital landscapes. The lessons that were learned from Big Time Rush's campaign for the comeback tour can guide future campaigns that may be developed towards success.

## Sources

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