

Award Details:

Name of category entered: Trade Body Campaign

Title of work: The #FixStreaming campaign:
Putting money back into the hands of British artists

Company name: Lodestone Communications

LODESTONE

Fix
Streaming

WORKS ACADEMY THE #BROKENRECORD CAMPAIGN Musicians' Union mu

THE MUSICIANS' UNION - THE #FIXSTREAMING CAMPAIGN: PUTTING MONEY BACK INTO THE HANDS OF BRITISH ARTISTS

Budgets and cost-effectiveness

£50,000 consultancy fees. All earned media and social media.
No media or advertising spend.

Brief from client

Musicians' livelihoods were shattered by the pandemic, with the inability to perform live and in the recording studio. This highlighted the importance of streaming as a way for musicians to earn a living. Streaming has created huge opportunities, but a gap in the law means that most streaming income ends up in the coffers of record labels, streaming platforms, and digital giants, rather than in the hands of the musicians. These multinational corporations did exceptionally well during the pandemic, compared to performers, songwriters and composers who earn on average £23,000 a year during normal times. The campaign to #FixStreaming was aimed at addressing these injustices, to ensure more money ended up in the hands of our fantastic UK artists.

Key objectives

- Build political support for the Musicians' Union's #FixStreaming campaign
- Create a media buzz about the lack of revenue earned by artists and our solution to #FixStreaming
- Secure regulatory intervention to investigate the market and enable reform

Key metrics from the campaign

- 44 Conservative MPs signed our letter to the Prime Minister calling for reform
- 42 cross-party MPs attended our musical rally in Parliament Square to raise support for Kevin Brennan MP's Bill
- 25 cross-party MPs spoke in the parliamentary debate on the Bill
- 250 artists, musicians and songwriters signed our letter to the Prime Minister calling for reform
- 14 cross-party MPs attended our House of Commons reception the night before Kevin Brennan MP's Bill was debated
- 185 pieces of coverage were secured
- 1 tweet from the grave from John Lennon (via the Estate of John Lennon)

Strategy:

Social listening, political auditing and message testing with MPs made it clear the streaming market was not understood by political stakeholders. Musicians were seen - even during the pandemic - as wealthy. Our industry research showed that the record labels had strong contacts and were lobbying hard for the status quo. We needed to cut through the complexity, bring legendary and emerging artists together to show unity and build a cross-party coalition of MPs to call for change. We achieved this by:

- Developing a clear campaign ask: We called for "two words in the Copyright, Designs and Patents Act to be changed", which would modernise the law so that today's performers receive a share of revenues, just like they enjoy in radio. For context, songwriters earn 50% of radio revenues, but only 15% in streaming. Our message was referenced by MPs, the DCMS Select Committee, a Private Member's Bill and in national media coverage.
- Awareness-raising: We amplified our messaging by securing media moments across broadcast, nationals, trade media and political websites. We placed OpEds, interviews and pushed out clipped content across our social media channels using our political and musician supporters. The campaign received rolling headlines and over 185 pieces of coverage.
- Celebrity involvement: We recruited 250 diverse artists - from Sir Paul McCartney and The Rolling Stones to Emile Sande and Scouting for Girls to call for change. Our letter was sent to the Prime Minister and was covered in national media.
- Public affairs engagement: We built a coalition of 44 Conservative MPs - including Rt Hon Esther McVey MP (former Secretary of State for Work and Pensions), Rt Hon Jeremy Hunt MP (former Secretary of State for Health), Rt Hon Andrew Mitchell MP (former Secretary of State for International Development) and Rt Hon Maria Miller MP (former Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport) - and they wrote a letter to the Prime Minister using our campaign asks. We worked with Labour MP, Kevin Brennan, supporting the submission of his Copyright Private Member's Bill, while briefing other political stakeholders - including the DCMS Select Committee and driving campaign messaging. To support Kevin Brennan MP's Bill, we organised a reception in Parliament ahead of the debate and secured key parliamentary attendees - including Rt Hon Esther McVey MP, Toby Perkins MP (Shadow Skills Minister), Julie Elliott MP (Member of the Digital, Culture, Media and Sport Select Committee), Sir Peter Bottomley MP (Father of the House) and Pauline Latham OBE MP - and the keynote speech was delivered by Joan Armatrading CBE.

Creativity:

- “We Could Be Heroes” on Parliament Square - We held a musical rally in Parliament Square in November 2021 to raise the profile of the Private Member’s Bill supporting this campaign. Our supporters - artists, musicians and songwriters - joined together with over 40 politicians to sing David Bowie’s “Heroes”. Politicians who attended included Rt Hon Esther McVey MP, Julian Knight MP (Chair of the Digital, Culture, Media and Sport Select Committee), Rt Hon Damian Green MP (former Secretary of State for Work and Pensions) and Kerry McCarthy MP (Shadow Transport Minister). The rally created content for broadcast media, social and print media.
- Out for Special Delivery - Our letter to the Prime Minister was hand delivered to No10 by Rt Hon Esther McVey MP, Kevin Brennan MP and the Deputy General Secretary of the Musicians’ Union.
- The Ghosts That We Knew - We also encouraged our supporters to use their social media channels to promote the campaign. We managed to get John Lennon to tweet from the grave via the Estate of John Lennon.

Outcomes:

Objective: Build political support for the Musicians’ Union’s #FixStreaming campaign

Achieved outcomes:

- The Digital, Culture, Media and Sports Select Committee released a report calling for a “complete reset” of streaming, endorsing the #FixStreaming campaign’s key asks around the need for a fairer settlement on streaming revenues).
- Parliamentary time was secured for Kevin Brennan MP’s Private Member’s Bill received support from 23 cross party MPs - including Louise Haigh MP (then Shadow Secretary of State for Northern Ireland), Mike Amesbury MP and Seema Malhotra MP.

Objective: Create a media buzz about the lack of revenue earned by artists and our solution to #FixStreaming

Achieved outcomes:

- Consistent headline and over 185 pieces of coverage including in the Times, the Times Radio, the Telegraph, the Financial Times, the Daily Mail, the Guardian, the BBC, BBC Newsbeat, BBC Radio, 4, BBC Radio 5, BBC Radio 6, BBC Radio Wales and Westminster Hour.

Objective: Secure regulatory intervention to investigate the market and enable reform

Achieved outcomes:

- The Competition and Markets Authority (CMA) announced its intention to launch an inquiry into the domination of the major music label groups (October 2021)
- The Government committed to conduct in-depth research into the merits of a system of equitable remuneration (December 2021)
- Major labels - Warner Music Group and Universal - have written off historic debt for artists that will put millions of pounds of royalties back in the pockets of artists (April 2022).

