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# **A Quantitative Analysis of the Factors Attributed to Gold, Platinum, and Multi-Platinum Records by Debut Artists: 1999-2008**

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There is an adage in the music business that only one out of twenty artist releases will ever make money for its record label. That is a five percent success rate. This adage might beg the questions: how can record labels better predict the success of the acts they sign? What are the marketing indicators that will help determine the potential of success during a record campaign? Given the tremendous investment by the major labels to break musical acts, one would think they would apply every scientific measure known to man to improve the chances of success. How many spins at radio does it take for a rock act to get to 500,000 units sold? How many tour dates does a country act perform before turning platinum? Do rap acts appeal to more than one video music channel format? Once signed, every decision by the label will influence the success of the artist. This paper will quantify some of the common factors that appear to have the greatest influence on the success of releases from debut artists over the period 1999-2008. We will establish a list of marketing benchmarks for artists in five genres: rock, pop, rap, country, and R&B by examining radio airplay, touring, video airplay, and sales trends for debut artists who have achieved Gold, Platinum, and Multi-Platinum status. The paper will appeal to music industry professionals and academics. Artists, artist managers, booking agents, talent buyers, radio programmers, and video music channel programmers will use the results as a guideline to qualify their decision making processes. Record label marketing, sales, radio/video promotion, and touring executives will reference the benchmarks to help make educated marketing decisions. Academics in the field of music business will be able to use the study to apply the established benchmarks as a teaching tool for their students to best understand the plight of a developing artist.

This study analyzed 225 Gold, Platinum, and Multi-Platinum records by debut artists that sold a total of 366.4 million units. These records included 734 songs which received 110 million spins on terrestrial radio, 580 music videos which aired 490,400 times on broadcast music video channels and 9,500 tour dates which entertained 52 million fans across the United States.

## Previous Research

Some research has been conducted into the makeup of a hit song (Dhanaraj and Logan 2005, Kasha and Hirshhorn 1990, Burns 1987). While the importance of a good song cannot be overstated, the focus of our research is not on the creation of the music but on the marketing efforts and exposure of the recording. As practitioners, we like to think that much of the difference in sales of an artist can be attributed to the business choices and success of the marketing efforts as well as the artist's talent.

Chung and Cox (1994) adopted the stochastic model of Yule (1924) and Simon (1955) as the process underlying the consumer's choice of artistic products. "Their model predicts that artistic outputs will be concentrated on a small number of lucky individuals," and it does not require superior or differential talents among the artists (Giles 2005). Similar to the research here, Chung and Cox's study focused on artists who had records that were certified Gold by the Recording Industry Association of America (RIAA). They found support for the Yule-Simon form of "superstardom" among Gold Record awardees in the United States.

Giles (2005) also investigated "superstardom" of U.S. artists measured by the number of weeks the song spent on the Billboard Hot 100 chart, and also in terms of the number of "number ones" achieved by the most successful artists.

The Yule-Simon model and the Giles (2005) study rely on Rosen's definition of superstardom. Rosen said that superstardom exists if, "...relatively small numbers of people earn enormous amounts of money, and seem to dominate the fields in which they engage" (Rosen 1983, 449). A key aspect of superstardom, according to Rosen, is that small differences in ability are translated into large differences in the level of success.

One of the underlying assumptions of the Rosen study, the Giles study, and the study at hand is that all the artists have some minimum level of talent. Rosen, however, says that small differences in talent must explain the differences in sales, and thus income, for superstars. Giles

(2005) ultimately rejects Chung and Cox's (1994) stochastic model and concludes that superstardom is not just a matter of luck.

Adler (2006) implied that talent was not as important as the social consumption of music in determining a hit. More importantly, Adler finds evidence rejecting Chung and Cox's (1994) Yule distribution as an accurate predictor of superstardom, for while the model works well at lower levels of sales it does not capture the outcomes at the highest levels, i.e., the true superstars (Spierdijk and Voorneveld 2007).

The historic concept of a superstar may be like art—I know one when I see one. Clearly, no single set of numbers can measure the construct. Indeed, the entire concept of “superstardom” may be disappearing if current market trends continue. While downloading from the internet has turned music into a valueless public good, other forms of music consumption remain private, limited, and profitable. This is where the industry needs to focus its marketing efforts. Those outlets—radio airplay, live concert performances, and broadcast music videos—are essential components in all marketing efforts today and are therefore the primary focus of this research.

## Methodology and Data Sources

The research presented here is limited to debut artists, acts releasing their first album on a nationally-distributed record label in the United States. Specifically, the research focuses on the debut artists who achieved Gold, Platinum, or Multi-Platinum RIAA certification status on their first releases during 1999-2008.

The top certification level for each release was obtained from the RIAA's web site, which lists all certified Gold, Platinum, and Multi-Platinum releases through the RIAA's searchable database (<http://www.riaa.com/Goldandplatinumdata.php?table=SEARCH>). There were 1,530 RIAA certified releases from 1999 to 2008, which included artists from all genres of music but did not include reissues or compilations. We checked the discography of each of the 1,530 certified releases on [allmusic.com](http://allmusic.com) to determine which albums were debut releases. If the artist was previously self-released or released on a small, independent label and prospectively released or re-released through a major label or an independent with major label distribution, the artist was treated as a debut release. For example, Fall Out Boy released *An Evening Out With* through a small independent label, Uprising Records, in 2003, and later that year released its certified

Gold record *Take This To Your Grave*, through Fueled By Ramen. Thus, Fall Out Boy's *Take This To Your Grave* was included in the research study. Similarly, Evanescence released *Origin* on independent label Bigwig Records, but was also included in this study as a debut artist.

Concentration on an artist's debut status ensures that the data did not include potential residual effect from previous album sales and was not impacted by earlier sales trends, radio airplay, broadcast music video plays, and touring. Further, artists who had previously established careers, either as solo performers or part of a duo or group, are not considered "debut artists" in the research. For example, Velvet Revolver includes former members of Stone Temple Pilots and Guns N' Roses. Therefore they did not qualify as a debut artist, even though their debut release *Contraband* sold almost two million units in the United States, according to Nielsen SoundScan.

The top selling Gold, Platinum, and Multi-Platinum records by debut artists were culled out of the tens of thousands of releases from 1999-2008. In 2007, there were nearly 80,000 CD and digital releases in the U.S. and over 54,000 of those were in CD format. During the period from 1999 to 2008, only 1,530 records (not including reissues, compilations, etc.) were certified Gold, Platinum, or Multi-Platinum by the RIAA, ranging from 150 to 210 albums per year. 20 to 25 percent (30-45 releases) of these 1,530 certified records were released by debut artists annually.

Data were initially collected on every debut release from 1999 to 2008. After reviewing the results, records in the specialty genres (gospel, jazz, classical, etc.) were eliminated to narrow the findings to include the five popular music genres—rock, country, pop, R&B, and rap. Empirical evidence in the form of sales numbers, tour statistics, and radio and video airplay was both accessible and quantifiable for these popular genres. In the period from 1999 to 2008, 225 debut records in these genres achieved Gold, Platinum, or Multi-Platinum status (see Figure 1).

Each debut record was assigned to the appropriate genre after consulting with Sean Ross of Edison Media Research, [allmusic.com](http://allmusic.com), and the record's placement on industry charts. Table 1 shows examples of records from each genre. Most artists examined were an obvious fit for each of their genre assignments—Buckcherry (rock), Pitbull (rap), Jill Scott (R&B), etc.—but there were a few artists that appealed to multiple genres. For example, Linkin Park sings and raps rock songs. The overriding default characteristic (outside of industry charts and genre category as posted

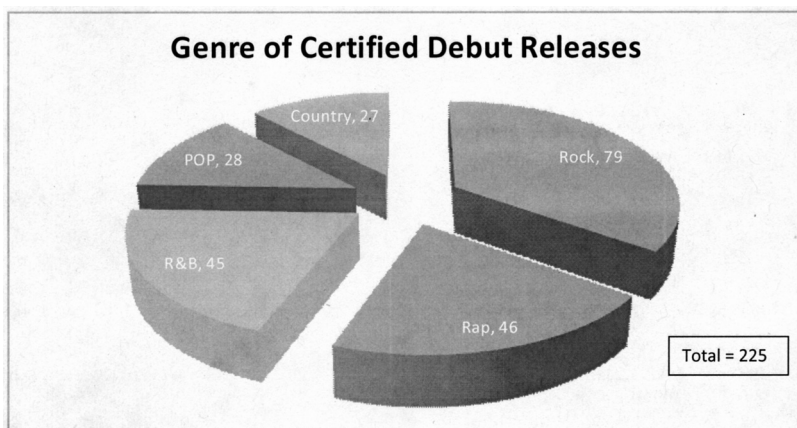


Figure 1. Genre of certified debut releases.

Genre	Artists
Rock	Buckcherry, Keane, Flyleaf, Coldplay, Evanescence, and Linkin Park
Rap	Cassidy, Pitbull, Ja Rule, and Eminem
R&B	Amerie, Floetry, John Legend, and Jill Scott
Pop	BBMak, Dream Street, O-Town, and Britney Spears
Country	Julie Roberts, Phil Vassar, Little Big Town, and Ras-cal Flatts

Table 1. Example artists from each genre.

on allmusic.com) was the act's appeal to a radio format.

The specialty genres such as gospel, electronica, jazz, and classical encompass only a small segment of Gold, Platinum, and Multi-Platinum debut artist releases, and would not have provided a representative sample for the purpose of this study.<sup>1</sup> Previous research found that statistics related to specialty music are difficult to find in the trade press and many of the specialty music labels do not keep track of their own marketing expenditures (Rolston and Di Benedetto 2002).

Data from Nielsen SoundScan (sales), Broadcast Data Systems (video), Mediabase (radio), and Pollstar (touring) were analyzed. The 225 certified records in the five popular genres (rock, rap, R&B, pop, and country)

sold a combined total of over 366.4 million units from 1999 to 2008 (see Table 2).

734 songs from the 225 certified debut records received at least 1,000 spins on the radio for a total of over 110 million spins. The 225 records accounted for 580 music videos (minimum of 100 spins per song), a total of 490,400 video spins and 9,500 tour dates with a total audience of nearly 52 million fans.

Radio Research: Findings

Mediabase data provided all the information for the radio component of our research. 734 songs received a minimum of 1,000 spins each<sup>2</sup> at commercial and non-commercial terrestrial radio stations, from the pool of 225 debut artists. A total of 110,100,000 spins at radio were accounted for during the course of this study. The average number of songs per artist that achieved a minimum of 1,000 spins was 3.93. Thus, each debut act achieving Gold, Platinum, or Multi-Platinum status during 1999-2008, achieved traction at terrestrial radio with almost four songs per album (SPA). The average number of spins per song (SPS) for all songs that received over 1,000 spins was 150,396 and reached an average audience of 956,221,530 listeners per song and 6,700 listeners per spin (LPS). 48% (349 of 734) of songs reached the Hot 100 Chart, 13% (97 songs) reached a top ten position on the Hot 100 Chart, and 3% (19 songs) reached number one on the Hot 100 Chart.

	Percentage of Certified Records (No. of Releases)	Percentage of Records Sold	Units Sold
Rock	35% (79)	41%	148,550,593
Rap	20% (46)	15%	56,754,995
R&B	20% (45)	19%	69,037,957
Pop	12.5% (28)	14%	50,782,449
Country	12.5% (27)	11%	41,263,455
Totals	100% (225)	100%	366,400,000

Table 2. Album sales by genre (1999-2008).

All Gold and Platinum certified artists received airplay from a minimum of 2.5 songs per album (SPA) to a maximum of 3.8 SPA, averaging 3.2 SPA for songs receiving a minimum of 1,000 spins. Platinum and Multi-Platinum artists received minimum airplay on 3.6 SPA and maximum airplay on 6.5 SPA. Overall, an average of 5.32 SPA achieved traction on terrestrial radio by Multi-Platinum debut artists.<sup>3</sup>

### **Airplay: Songs Per Album (SPA)**

All genres, with the exception of R&B, maintain a general progression upwards in the number of songs receiving airplay from each album (SPA) at each certification level that gained traction at radio. For example, Gold and Platinum Country artists receive airplay of 3.5 SPA (Gold and Platinum), 3.7 SPA (2x Platinum), 4.5 SPA (3x Platinum) and 6 SPA (7x Platinum). R&B remained relatively flat with a 3.75 to 4 SPA at most certification levels.

### **Airplay: Spins Per Song (SPS)**

The songs associated with this study received an average of 150,000 spins per song (SPS). The lowest certification level's average SPS is Platinum rap at just over 35,000 SPS and the highest SPS is 4x certified rock at over 2.3 million SPS. Rock songs average the highest SPS, averaging over 215,000 (for all certification levels) while rap received the lowest average SPS at just over 75,000 (all certification levels). Pop and R&B received comparable spins per song at 127,000 and 137,000 respectively. Country received just over the average SPS at 160,000 spins per song.

The average SPS for all genres at the Gold and Platinum levels was 86,300. At the Multi-Platinum level (2x and higher) the average number of spins more than doubled to 180,892 SPS (109% higher than average SPS for Gold and Platinum). A look at the changes in spins by genre shows that most of the 109% increase came from the rock genre (165%), but rap (127%) and R&B (104%) also more than doubled their spins from Platinum to Multi-Platinum certification levels (see Table 3).

### **Airplay: Audience Per Spin (APS)**

As noted, the average audience per spin (APS) for all songs in the study is 6,700. Rock, pop, and country records receive an approximate APS of 5,000 to 7,000 per spin, just below and just above the average, respectively. Rock averaged the lowest APS at 5,500 while rap and R&B



Genre	Gold and Platinum	Multi-Platinum	Change
Rock	96,541	255,822	+165%
Pop	112,764	149,432	+33%
R&B	75,085	153,520	+104%
Rap	43,405	98,741	+127%
Country	103,966	188,946	+83%

Table 3. Average spins per song by certification level.

averaged the highest APS at 7,500 and 8,500 respectively. Multi-Platinum R&B acts averaged the largest APS at 9,300. Rock averaged the most spins but reached the smallest audience while urban maintained the largest audience base per spin.

## Hot 100 Chart Activity and Positioning

From the pool of 734 songs by debut artists (with a minimum of 1,000 spins), 48% of the songs appeared in the Hot 100 Chart. Rock acts had the lowest percentage of songs (33%) in the Hot 100 chart and pop acts had the highest percentage (65%). R&B and country each had 59% of their songs appear in the Hot 100 Chart. 45% of rap songs appeared on the Hot 100 Chart.

57% of songs on Multi-Platinum records appeared on the Hot 100 Chart. Rock had the lowest percentage of Multi-Platinum songs that appeared in the Hot 100 Chart (44%). Rock was also the only genre below the 57% cumulative Multi-Platinum average. R&B and rap Multi-Platinum artists had 61% and 65% of their songs appear on the Hot 100 Chart, while country and pop were the highest at 70% and 79% respectively.<sup>4</sup>

## Weeks to Hot 100 Peak Chart Position

Rock (56 weeks) and country (39 weeks) acts took, on average, the longest to reach their Hot 100 Chart Peak Positions. Rap and pop peaked the quickest at an average of 22 weeks. R&B fell in the middle at 28 weeks.

## Average Peak Position: Hot 100 Chart

Pop (#17) and R&B (#22) had the highest average peak position in

the Hot 100 charts and country had the lowest peak position at #46, while rock and rap averaged #29 as the highest peak position on the Hot 100 charts.

Top 10: Hot 100 Chart

As previously stated, 13% of all songs from the study reached the Hot 100 Top 10 Chart Position. Country had the fewest songs make the Hot 100 Top 10 (2%). 28% of the pop debuts made it into the Hot 100 Top 10, followed by R&B with 20%. Rap and rock debuts hit the Hot 100 Top 10 about 10% of the time (see Figure 2). These numbers are summarized in Table 4.

Number 1 Songs: Hot 100 Chart

From the pool of 734 songs, only 3% (19 songs) reached #1 on the Hot 100 Chart. R&B and pop accounted for nearly three-quarters (74%)

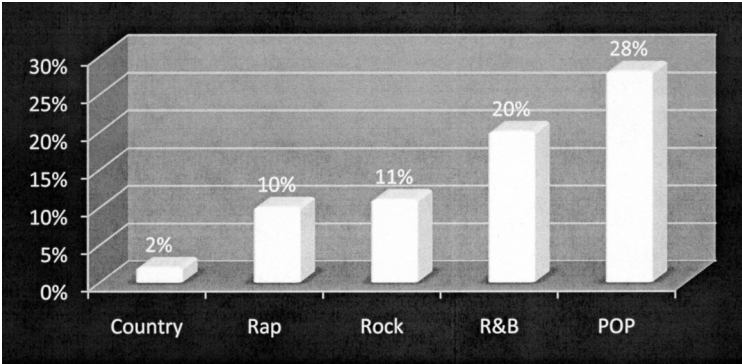


Figure 2. Percent of certified debuts in the Hot 100 Top 10 (by genre).

Genre	% of Songs in the Hot 100	Reach Top 10 of Hot 100	% of songs that reach #1 on Hot 100 Chart
Country	59%	2%	1%
Rap	45%	10%	1%
Rock	33%	11%	1%
R&B	59%	20%	5%
Pop	65%	28%	8%

Table 4. Hot 100 songs, top tens, and number ones.

of all debut #1 songs (14 songs). Country and rap had one song each on the Hot 100 while rock had three Hot 100 #1 Songs. This does not mean they did not reach the #1 position in their respective, genre specific charts.

### Radio Station Formats

Hit radio station formats (CHR, AC, Hot AC) were the predominant outlets for songs from all genres with the exception of country. 88% of all country airplay appeared exclusively on country radio music formats. Only two of the twenty-seven certified debut Gold, Platinum, and Multi-Platinum country artists crossed over to non-country formats (Carrie Underwood and Taylor Swift). 81% of pop, 68% of rap, 58% of rock, and 52% of all R&B songs were played on various hit radio station formats.

Almost half of pop artist airplay (47%) came from CHR with AC, Hot AC, and Rhythmic combined for a total of 34%. Of note, only 22% of total airplay from rap artists derived from urban radio formats. Hit/Rhythmic formats (which are more pop leaning) accounted for the majority of rap airplay (41%). 36% of R&B artist airplay was generated from Mainstream Urban and Urban AC formats. Similar to rap, rock acts only accounted for a cumulative average of 31% of airplay from their own genre, rock radio formats. However, lower level certified rock acts (Gold, Platinum, 3x Platinum) relied on the rock formats, attributing 45% of total airplay to Active, Alternative, and Mainstream Rock formats.

### Average Audience Per Song

Perhaps the most impressive numbers from the radio data is the number of impressions a hit record received through terrestrial radio (see Table 5). The smallest average audience was for Gold rock records with an average audience of over 311 million impressions. Rap had similarly low numbers for Gold records, averaging just over 371 million impressions. Country Gold records averaged over 602 million impressions and pop had the largest impact with over 840 million. These numbers are not unexpected. Rock radio, like the rock genre, is highly fragmented limiting the number of stations willing or able to play some releases. Rap, because of its less than family-friendly lyrics may send its fans looking for alternative outlets that have uncensored versions which the FCC would not permit to be aired on the radio. Alternatively, popular country music is easily found on most of the two thousand plus country music formatted stations ([http://newsgeneration.com/radio\\_resources/stats.htm](http://newsgeneration.com/radio_resources/stats.htm)). Pop, by definition, is the

most popular music and typically is played on a large number of stations of various formats. The artists with the most radio spins in each genre are shown in Table 5.

Genre	Artist	Title	Spins	Impressions
Country	Carrie Underwood	<i>Before He Cheats</i>	767,387	4,880,000,000
Pop	Natasha Bedingfield	<i>Unwritten</i>	924,615	5,730,000,000
R&B	Alicia Keys	<i>Fallin'</i>	738,280	5,660,000,000
Rap	Nelly	<i>Ride Wit Me</i>	422,917	2,890,000,000
Rock	Dido	<i>Thank you</i>	1,098,785	7,470,000,000

Table 5. Highest spinning artist/genre.

### Sales Research: Findings

According to the RIAA, in the period from 1999-2008, 225 debut records achieved Gold, Platinum, and Multi-Platinum status in the following categories: rock (79), rap (46), R&B (45), pop (28), and country (27). Nielsen SoundScan reported a total of 366.4 million records sold by these 225 acts during this time.

### Number of Weeks to RIAA and SoundScan Certification

The average number of weeks it took for all 225 records to achieve RIAA certification was 88 (approximately 1.75 years) and the average number of weeks it took to sell through to the highest certification level via SoundScan monitored sales was 107 (just over 2 years). Therefore, it took approximately 22% longer for the RIAA certified records to sell through. However, 36 records (16%) did not achieve sales in the amount of the highest certified RIAA sales level; they were shipped to retail and gained the RIAA certification status but did not achieve that level in actual sales. Some records were far below the RIAA certification level, for example, Britney Spears had an RIAA certification of 14 million but sold just over 10.5 million records to date.

R&B, rap, and pop records achieved their RIAA certification levels in the shortest average time. R&B achieved RIAA certifications in 67 weeks,

rap in 71, and pop in 73. Country and rock spent the most time getting to their highest RIAA certification levels, 105 and 126 weeks respectively.

Similarly, Gold and Platinum R&B, rap, and pop RIAA certified records achieved certification long before rock and country artists. Pop artists achieved Gold and Platinum certification in an average of 19 weeks, while rap and R&B received certification in 24 and 26 weeks respectively. At a pace almost three times slower, rock and country records reached their certifications in 62 weeks and 68 weeks, respectively (182% longer with a 23 week average compared to 65).

The gap between pop/urban and country/rock began to close at Multi-Platinum certification levels. R&B (88 weeks), pop (100 weeks), and rap (102 weeks) reached their certification levels in approximately 41% more time (96 week average compared to 136 week average) than country (124 weeks) and rock (148 weeks).

### **First-Week Sales**

The average first-week sales for rap and pop artists was highest amongst the five genres. Rap artists averaged first-week sales of over 136,000 and pop acts averaged first-week sales of over 114,000 records. R&B acts averaged at 102,000 while country and rock followed at 40,000 and 33,000 respectively.

The average first-week sales for all Gold and Platinum certified artists was just over 70,000 records with the majority of acts selling between 19,000 and 35,000 units. Multi-Platinum artists averaged over 154,000 sales during the first week of release.

### **Top Sales Week from Release Date**

The average top sales week for rap, R&B, and pop acts occurred within the first twenty weeks from the release date. 83% (38 of 46 records) of rap releases, and 62% (28 of 45 records) of R&B debut releases, achieved peak sales during the first week of release. Thus, 73% (66 of 90 records) of all debut urban (rap, R&B) artists' peak sales took place during the first week of the release. Only 37% of country artists and 15% of rock acts peaked during first-week sales. However, of the twelve Gold certified country artists, 66% registered their peak sales during the first week.

### **Top Sales in One Week (Peak Week Sales)**

The average top-weekly total album sales for all five genres had a

relatively narrow range compared to the first-week average sales. Pop topped the highest sales week average with over 295,000 units. Rap came in a close second with a top sales week average of 233,000. Rock's average top-week sales total was 192,000, R&B was 167,000, and country came in last at 154,000 units.

Gold-certified pop, rock, R&B, and country records' top-selling week averaged less than 100,000 units sold. Gold-certified rap records averaged just over 100,000 units at the highest one-week sales. The average number of records sold during the top-selling week was over 385,000 units for all genres at the highest certification levels (6x, 7x, 9x, 10x, and 14x Platinum). Rock artists had the highest Multi-Platinum peak-week sales average at over 500,000 records sold. Pop sold 479,000 and country sold 400,000 records during their respective top-selling week. Rap and R&B rounded out the numbers at 322,000 and 240,000 units sold during their top-selling week.

### **Billboard 200 Chart Peak Position**

All certified records broke at least the top 75 of the Billboard 200 Chart. Rap held the highest cumulative Billboard 200 Chart peak position with an average position of #5. R&B followed with an average peak at #9. Pop records peaked at an average of #10, rock at #17, and country at #28. All records achieving 3x Platinum certification peaked in the top five of the Billboard 200. The average peak position for all records achieving above 3x Platinum was #3 on the Billboard 200.

### **Number of Weeks on the Billboard 200 Charts**

Country and rock artists spent the longest time on the Billboard 200 charts, averaging 84 weeks per release at all certification levels. R&B records exited the quickest at 57 weeks, rap records lasted 61 weeks on average, and pop records appeared an average of 62 weeks. A range of genres found their way onto the Billboard 200 for over 100 weeks at their highest certification levels. 3x, 5x, and 7x Platinum country, 8x and 14x Platinum pop, 5x and 9x Platinum rap, and 7x and 10x Platinum rock acts continued on the Billboard 200 for over 100 weeks. There were no R&B records that maintained 100 weeks on the Billboard 200 (75 weeks was the longest an R&B act stayed on the chart – India Arie).

## Video Research: Findings

Broadcast Data Systems (BDS) provided information for the video research aspects of this study. 19 of the 225 debut artists did not receive video airplay.<sup>5</sup> The remaining 206 artists generated 523 songs that received a minimum of 100 spins each at broadcast music video channels. A total of 490,400 music video spins were accounted for during the course of this study. The average number of songs achieving a minimum of 100 music video spins per debut artist was 2.54. Thus, each debut act achieving Gold, Platinum, or Multi-Platinum status during 1999-2008, achieved traction from an average of 2.5 videos per album (VPA). The average number of spins per video (SPV) was 937.

### Airplay: Videos Per Album (VPA)

As certification levels increased from Gold to Multi-Platinum, the amount of video airplay from each album (VPA) also increased (see Figure 3). For example, in the pop genre, Gold and Platinum artists received airplay of 1.71 and 2.42 VPA, respectively; 2x Platinum artists averaged 2.33 VPA; 3x Platinum artists averaged 2.5 VPA; and the top certified acts (8x and 14x Platinum) averaged a VPA of 4.

All Gold and Platinum certified artists received airplay from a range of 1.7 to 3.25 VPA. Country Gold and Platinum artists received exceptional music video airplay, averaging 3.15 to 3.25 VPA respectively. All Multi-Platinum artists received a range of video airplay from 2.5 to 4 VPA. Several Multi-Platinum certification levels received airplay from an average of 4 videos per album, which is the most amount of VPA that any single artist garnered in this study. They included: rock (4x, 6x, and 7x Platinum), rap (9x), R&B (6x), country (3x), and pop (8x, 14x). Rap, R&B, and pop's average of 4 VPA took place at the highest RIAA certification levels.

### Airplay: Spins Per Video (SPV)

The songs associated with this study received an average of 937 Spins Per Video (SPV). The lowest certification level's average SPV was rap and pop at 726 and 770 respectively. Country videos were exceptionally higher than the average, clocking in at 2,117 SPV. Rock and R&B came in near the mean at 1,045 and 983 SPV respectively. Unlike radio, the average video spins per certification level did not increase as certification levels increased. The higher certification levels have, on average, a 21% to 117% increase in total spins, but the increase was not consistent



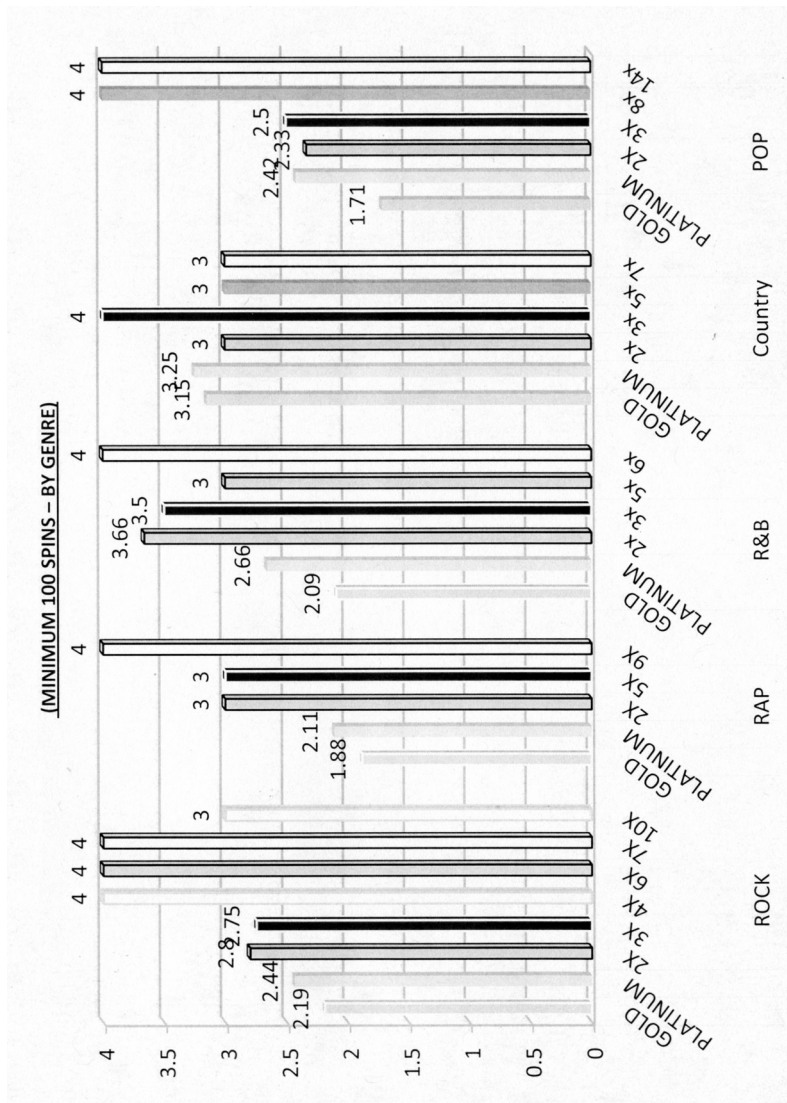


Figure 3. Average number of videos per album.



from the lowest to highest certification levels throughout each genre (see Table 6). For example, Gold certified pop artists averaged 779 SPV and Platinum pop averaged 908 SPV, but the average SPV for 8x Platinum and 14x Platinum dropped to 853 and 445 SPV respectively. The only exception to this trend was country—the higher the certification status, the higher the number of spins.

	Gold and Platinum Average (SPV)	Multi-Platinum Average (SPV)	Percent Change
All Genre	861	1,264	47%
Rap	452	982	117%
Rock	683	1,166	70%
R&B	714	1,118	56%
Country	1,618	2,367	46%
Pop	843	667	-21%

Table 6. Spins per video (SPV) by genre.

### Video Formats: Findings

The impact of music videos on television is more difficult to assess. Some channels have not been broadcasting for the entire length of the study (1999-2008) (Fuse and MTV-Hits), and some channels have changed formats during the period (MTV2, MTV3). Other channels have shifted focus from playing primarily music videos to playing long-run programs (MTV, CMT). Some observations, however, are very clear. First, country music videos, especially more traditional country music, were played almost exclusively on CMT and GAC. Of all the country records investigated, only two Multi-Platinum artists, Carrie Underwood and Taylor Swift, crossed over to any of the pop networks. R&B videos dominated the VH1 Soul channel and BET but also appeared nearly as often on MTV and MTV Hits. Rap videos fared best on BET, but poorly on VH1 Soul, and better than anticipated on Fuse (5-20%). Perhaps rap records are too graphic for VH1 Soul? Rap still relied heavily on MTV and MTV2 for a large portion of its exposure (approximately 50%), especially at Multi-Platinum certification levels. Second, Fuse played a larger percentage of rock videos than its more established rival MTV2 at all levels of certification. Both networks aired a healthy percentage of Gold records, but Fuse aired about

25% more, making it a better prospect for getting airplay. Similar patterns were observed for Platinum and Multi-Platinum records as well. Finally, rock videos relied heavily on Fuse and VH1 gathering 31-55% of total video airplay at each certification level.

### **Touring Research: Findings**

Information about 9,511 shows gathered from Pollstar tour reports made up the data for the touring component of this study. 66% (6,324 of the 9,511) of these shows were performed by rock acts; the second largest share was country acts with 1,284 (14%). There were 837 shows (9%) by R&B acts, 6% (598 shows) by pop, and the smallest percentage of live performances was by rap artists (5%, 468 shows).<sup>6</sup>

### **Average Number of Shows**

Gold and Platinum artists (all genres) performed an average of 22 shows prior to RIAA certification. Multi-Platinum acts (all genres) averaged just under 100 shows (98) prior to certification. Rock acts averaged the most Gold and Platinum live performances, playing an average of 64 shows prior to certification. Country artists averaged 31.5 shows and R&B, pop, and rap acts performed infrequently with an average of 11.5, 11, and 5 shows respectively, prior to Gold and Platinum certification. The gap closed at Multi-Platinum certification status. Rock was still the leader with 137 shows on average, country came in a close second at 102, pop acts played 87 shows, rap acts played 78, and R&B played 64.

### **Average Number of Headlining Shows (AHS)**

58% of the 9,511 shows performed from 1999 to 2008 (all genres and all certification levels) were headlined by debut artists. Pop acts failed to headline the majority of shows until they reached superstar status (e.g., Christina Aguilera and Britney Spears). Only 4% of shows prior to 8x and 14x Platinum status were headlined by pop acts. At superstar status (8x and 14x Platinum), pop acts headlined 87% and 95% of their shows. Rock acts headlined the largest percentage of shows across the board. Nearly 50% of shows were headlined by Gold and Platinum rock artists (43% and 48%). At Multi-Platinum status, rock acts headlined about three quarters of their performances—Average Headlining Shows (AHS) of 72% (6x), 78% (7x), and 82% (10x), respectively. Thirty-nine rap acts were certified Gold and Platinum during 1999-2008. These artists played a combined to-

tal of only eleven shows reported to Pollstar prior to certification, headlining two of these eleven performances. The percentage of headlining shows for country artists was consistent from certification to certification level; country acts ranged from 16% to 49% AHS at all levels of certification. R&B headliners remained in the 28% to 31% range for all certification levels with the exception of Alicia Keys who headlined 82% of her shows prior to 6x certification status.

### Average Attendance Per Show (APS)

The average attendance for all genres and all certification levels was 7,896 per show. Rock acts averaged the lowest attendance per show (APS), with 5,275 while pop had the highest with 11,179. Country averaged 8,945 APS and rap averaged 8,209. R&B finished just ahead of rock at 6,799. The average attendance per show for each genre and certification level tended to follow a general progression upwards as certification levels increased. The lowest APS was rock Gold and Platinum at 3,200 and 3,300, respectively, while the highest APS was pop Platinum (12,250), 14x Platinum (14,220), and 2x Platinum (16,975).

### Radio Analysis

Although we live in an increasingly internet-based world, radio is still a vital tool for marketing recorded music. The research here shows that in all five genres investigated, the higher the certification level, the more songs from that album are played on the radio. On average, rock acts received the highest spins per song (SPS) (215,000) and rap songs received the fewest SPS (75,000). It appears that rap acts were less radio dependent, deriving promotion from endorsements by affiliated parties (e.g., producers, other artists). Explicit content and the transient nature of marketing efforts likely also affected radio airplay. Rap records had a shorter life cycle as indicated by their highest one-week sales, the earliest average peak sales week, and the fewest number of weeks on the Billboard 200. Rock and urban (R&B, rap) acts appeared to benefit most from moving from Gold and Platinum certification to Multi-Platinum certification as evidenced by the near doubling of spins per song (SPS). Conversely, one might conclude that rock and urban were saddled with the burden of having to double their SPS to achieve Multi-Platinum status. We cannot say conclusively which is correct because we have not determined which is the cause and which is the effect.

The average audience per spin (APS) for all genres was in the range of 5,000 to 7,000 impressions. This is comparable to the average concert attendance for all genres (7,800 attendees per show). The number of listener impressions per song clearly demonstrates the power of radio. The most played artists from each genre received 500,000 to 1,000,000 spins, reaching 2.8 to 7.4 billion listeners with just one song. The cumulative average number of impressions through radio for all genres was over 900 million per song. Rap was the only genre that fell far below the average with just over 500 million impressions. The spins and impressions for the top played artists in each genre are summarized in Table 7.

Genre	Artist	Title	Spins	Impressions
Country	Carrie Underwood	<i>Before He Cheats</i>	767,387	4,880,000,000
Pop	Natasha Bedingfield	<i>Unwritten</i>	924,615	5,730,000,000
R&B	Alicia Keys	<i>Fallin'</i>	738,280	5,660,000,000
Rap	Nelly	<i>Ride Wit Me</i>	422,917	2,890,000,000
Rock	Dido	<i>Thank You</i>	1,098,785	7,470,000,000

Table 7. Spins and impressions – most played song – per genre.

Nearly half of the 734 songs appeared on the Hot 100 Chart while 75% of Multi-Platinum songs made the Hot 100. 13% of all the songs in this study reached the Top 10 in the Hot 100 Chart. It is not too surprising that only one country single made it to #1 on the chart. Only two country songs made it to the Top 10 of the Hot 100 and they were both Carrie Underwood singles. What *was* surprising was that rock had the lowest percentage of songs on the Hot 100 Chart (41%). R&B and pop had the largest percentage of songs on the chart—and the strongest presence on the Hot 100 Top 10 Chart. This strong presence can be used by record labels to further leverage the success of an album. Rock and country took the longest to reach their peaks on the Hot 100 Chart, while pop and R&B acts got there faster and peaked higher, on average, than the other genres.

The evaluation of radio station formats was also revealing. Country artists received airplay almost exclusively on country formatted radio

stations. Only two country singles crossed over and received airplay on CHR, Hot AC, or AC formatted stations. Similarly, pop artists were played predominantly on CHR stations (50% of all their spins) and secondarily at AC and Hot AC stations (30 to 40% of spins). Most of the remaining spins came from Rhythmic formatted radio stations. R&B airplay was distributed pretty evenly across Mainstream and Rhythmic Hit formats and Mainstream and Urban AC formats. R&B picked up some spins from Mainstream and Hot AC. Rap artists received most of their airplay on Hit Rhythmic radio (41%). The remainder of the airplay came from Mainstream Hit and Mainstream Urban radio stations.

The primary radio outlets for rock singles were Mainstream Hit and AC formats. Hot AC, AC, and Mainstream Hit formats combined accounted for nearly 60% of all rock spins. As mentioned previously, rock spins accounted for less than one-third of all the spins for debut artists (31%). This percentage was even lower when comparing spins at only the Multi-Platinum levels.

## Sales Analysis

It took an average of 21-24 months (84-96 weeks) for acts to reach their highest Gold, Platinum, and Multi-Platinum RIAA certified status. These releases took an additional 19 weeks to be recognized via Nielsen SoundScan at that same level. Rock and country acts took the longest time, on average, to reach their certification levels (126 weeks and 105 weeks, respectively). Urban (R&B, rap) took the shortest (67 weeks), and pop (73) fell in the middle.

Gold and Platinum country and rock records took nearly twice as long to reach their peak certification weeks while Multi-Platinum country and rock records peaked 41% faster than urban and pop acts (96 weeks compared to 136 weeks).

This pattern appears again in the average first-week sales for releases from each genre. Rap (136,000), pop (114,000), and R&B (102,000) averaged the highest first-week sales while rock (33,000) and country (40,000) were much slower out of the gate.

73%—an astounding 66 of 91 releases—from R&B and rap artists experienced their highest one-week sales total during the first week of release. It appears that if urban records do not come out of the gate strong, they may not have a chance to succeed, according to the data we examined. Only 37% of rock and 15% of country records' peak sales occurred

during the first week of release. Also of note was that some of the biggest selling records in urban and pop sold significantly more than rock and country during the first week of release. Top pop acts Ashlee Simpson, Christina Aguilera, and Britney Spears sold a combined average first-week total north of 250,000 units, according to SoundScan. Top selling R&B acts (Alicia Keys and Sisqo) sold a combined average first-week sales of 180,000 and rap artists Eminem and Nelly averaged over 265,000 units during the first week. Rock's top sellers, Linkin Park and Norah Jones, averaged just over 27,000 first-week sales and two of country's top selling debut artists during 1999-2008, Taylor Swift and Big & Rich, averaged only 26,000 sales during their first week out. Rock's top RIAA certified debut sellers (Evanescence, Norah Jones, and Linkin Park) averaged peak sales during week 54, over one year after the release of their respective albums.

The top average sales amount, which is an average of the top selling weeks from all artists (as opposed to the week of top sales total or first-week sales average), has less separation from genre to genre. Rock, which averaged the lowest first-week total and invariably took the longest to reach its peak sales week, came in third (ahead of R&B and country) averaging a top sales week of 192,000 units. Pop acts had the highest one-week total sales average of 295,000 while R&B and country came in fourth and fifth at 167,000 and 154,000, respectively. Rap came in second with 233,000 records.

Success on the Billboard 200 Chart is an early indicator that debut artists will gain Gold, Platinum, or Multi-Platinum status. Nearly all certified records charted (221 of 225 acts) appeared on the Billboard 200 top selling chart. Most acts will reach the Top 100 and an average peak position near the Top 10 on the Billboard 200. The 225 acts reached an average chart position peak of #13 on the Billboard 200 charts. 3x Multi-Platinum acts averaged a Top 5 peak on the Billboard 200 Charts. Rock and country Gold and Platinum records received the lowest average peak position and had the least correlation with the Billboard 200 peak chart position. 14 of the 225 records (16%) reached #1 on the Billboard 200 Charts. None of the 27 country acts, 3 rock (all 2x Multi-Platinum), 2 rap, 7 R&B, and 2 pop acts reached #1 on the Billboard 200. Only one Gold-certified act (R&B—Omarion) charted at #1.

The number of weeks each act appeared on the Billboard 200 chart further demonstrated the differences between rock/country and urban/pop

acts. Rock and country acts appeared on the Billboard 200 Chart 40% longer than urban/pop acts. Multi-Platinum rock and country acts appeared on the Billboard 200 for an average of over 100 weeks. Conversely, there were no R&B acts that maintained a Billboard Top 200 position for more than 100 weeks. A slower time-line applied to country and rock sales; they came out of the gate slower and they stayed on the Billboard 200 longer, eventually reaching similar plateaus as urban and pop acts.

## Video Analysis

Unlike radio, there was not a consistent increase in the average Spins Per Video (SPV) from the lowest to the highest certification level for each genre (except country). Therefore, a higher certification level did not necessarily indicate an increase in SPV.

For example, in the rock category, 3x and 4x Multi-Platinum (1,200 SPV) received more SPV than 6x Multi-Platinum (804) and about the same as 7x (1,500) and 10x (1,243) Multi-Platinum. Country was the only exception to the five genres, exhibiting a gradual increase in SPV from certification to certification. Country progressed from 1,551 SPV (Gold), to 1,664 (Platinum), 1,893 (2x Platinum), 1,939 (3x Platinum), and 3,285 (5x Platinum), and only dropped down at 7x Platinum to 2,351 SPV.

Rock and rap artists received the greatest increase in SPV when moving from Gold and Platinum to Multi-Platinum. Multi-Platinum rock acts increased 70% to an average of 1,166 spins and rap acts moved up to 982 video spins, an increase of 117%. The most played videos from each genre were: rock/The Killers (2x), country/Gretchen Wilson (5x), rap/Kanye West (2x), R&B/Ciara (3x), and Pop/The Pussycat Dolls (Platinum). The relationship between video and radio differed within these results. Three of the five most played songs via radio for each genre consisted of the top-selling artist certification for each genre. Carrie Underwood, Alicia Keys, and Nelly were the top selling artists in their respective genres and also had the most played radio songs within their genres. None of the songs with the highest video traction in each genre attained the highest RIAA certification within the genre (see Table 8).

However, the average number of music videos per album did increase at each certification level—demonstrating a relationship with radio's upward trend at higher certification levels (see Figure 3).



Genre	Artist	Song	Spins	RIAA
Rock	The Killers	<i>Mr. Brightside/</i>	4807	2x Platinum
Country	Gretchen Wilson	<i>Redneck Woman</i>	4030	5x Platinum
Rap	Kanye West	<i>Jesus Walks</i>	3759	2x Platinum
R&B	Ciara	<i>1,2 Step</i>	3301	3x Platinum
Pop	Pussycat Dolls	<i>Don't Cha</i>	2479	1x Platinum

Table 8. Top played music videos.

## Touring Analysis

Rock acts dominated the touring component of the study, maintaining a two-thirds share of all shows prior to their highest certification dates. Rock acts had a 35% share of all the certified records in this study but almost double the share of tour dates (66%). Rap acts accounted for the least amount of reported shows at 5% while pop (6%) and R&B (9%) followed suit. Country acts played the second most of all reported shows (14%) prior to the highest RIAA certification date. Gold and Platinum rock acts certified their RIAA sales status at an average of 55 and 69 weeks, and during this time they performed an average of 64 shows. Thus, rock acts performed an average of two U.S. tours consisting of 30 dates or more prior to Gold and Platinum certification status. Country averaged half of rock at 31 dates while touring had little bearing on R&B (12 shows), Pop (11 shows), and Rap (5 shows), all of which had limited touring exposure prior to Gold or Platinum certification.

58% of all shows were headlined by the artists in the study. Rock acts headlined 66% of their tour dates; rap, 35%; and country, 33%. R&B acts headlined 29% of all shows with the exception of Alicia Keys, who headlined 82% of her tour dates. Only 4% of pop acts (Gold, Platinum, 2x, and 3x Platinum) headlined shows, but 88-95% of shows at the superstar level (8x, 14x Platinum) were headlined by touring pop artists. At Multi-Platinum status, all five genres maintained a presence on the road, playing a range of 64-132 shows prior to their highest certification status. Rock acts headlined nearly 71% of their shows at this level. Pop acts boasted the highest average attendance per show (APS) at 11,179. Most pop tours were packaged arena and amphitheater performances with superstar headliners and various support acts. These venues generally had a capacity of at least 10,000. Rock averaged the lowest APS at 5,275 indicating that they will “bang it out” on the club level, playing more dates, to fewer



people, in smaller rooms.

## Conclusion

The recorded music industry is responsible for generating billions of dollars annually but little research has been conducted to establish benchmarks of achievement and quantitative trends among successful artist releases. Additionally, artist development has become a thing of the past. As the pressure to succeed in the music industry continues to be impacted by technological advances, there is less time and patience for recording artists to find an audience.

In this paper, we analyzed the factors inherent in a debut artist record release campaign for popular music acts in five genres (rock, pop, R&B, rap, and country). We categorized each artist by genre and RIAA certification status so that we could understand the trends and establish benchmarks for success. We analyzed four important criteria for a debut artist to achieve Gold, Platinum, and Multi-Platinum certification status: sales, radio, video, and touring. These elements, essential components of a record marketing campaign, are quantifiable for the purpose of research.

We found that the average lifespan for a successful release is 21-24 months. Nearly all acts appeared on the Billboard 200 Chart, and Multi-Platinum artists reached the Top 75. Pop, rap, and R&B artists begin at higher sales levels but spend the least amount of time on the Billboard 200 Chart, while rock and country acts spend more time on the Billboard Charts on their way to their highest certification levels. All genres gained traction on terrestrial radio with an average of four different songs from their records. Within each genre, the higher the certification level, the greater the number of songs and spins on radio. For Gold and Platinum certified records, the average was just over three songs per album while Multi-Platinum artists received airplay from over five. Each song received an average of over 150,000 spins per song, reaching a little less than 1 billion impressions per song. The top-played artist in each genre received 500,000 to 1,000,000 spins and reached 2.8 to 7.4 billion listeners, demonstrating the power and reach of terrestrial radio. Rock acts averaged the most spins per song while rap acts averaged the least. At Multi-Platinum status, all genres doubled their spin counts. Half the songs reached the Hot 100 Chart but a select few made it into the Top 10, and even fewer reached #1. Country and pop artists received the bulk of their airplay within their respective formats while Hit Music Formats (CHR, Hot AC, etc.) domi-

nated the bulk of total airplay by rock, rap, and R&B artists.

Among the albums in this study, the average number of songs per album appearing in music videos was 2.5, and the average amount of spins per song was 950. The average number of spins per song in music videos did not increase as certification levels increased. However, the number of music videos per artist *did* increase as certification levels rose. Therefore, more songs from each album obtained traction from broadcast music video channels, but there was no increase in the average spins per song as certification levels increased. Country music videos were the exception, receiving a larger rate of spins per song, and maintaining a higher song per album ratio. The top-played music videos were not from the most successful selling artists in each genre. Rock acts trended towards airplay from VH1 at higher certification levels while R&B connected with VH1 Soul. Country artists followed radio's trend and received the majority of music video airplay from CMT and GAC.

Rock and Country acts toured early and often, playing many shows at different sized venues while working to achieve their certification status. Most Rap and pop artists did not tour until achieving Multi-Platinum certification status. Nor did they headline live performances until reaching superstar status. Conversely, rock acts headlined 66% of all their shows and country followed suit by headlining 33% of the time.

## Benchmarks of Achievement

One of the goals of this study was to establish benchmarks of achievement for each genre and at each level of sales certification. Table 9 outlines the benchmarks established for the research categories (sales, radio, video, and touring) and for the musical genres addressed in the study. The table compares Gold rock to Gold country, Gold rock to Platinum rock, and Platinum rock to 4x Platinum rock artists. It also demonstrates the differences between each genre and the relationship that marketing and sales have to achieving Gold, Platinum, and Multi-Platinum status.

## Future Research

A comparable study could be conducted on the releases of established artists, thus enabling a comparative study between developing and established artists. A study tracking the success of the sophomore releases from the artists included in this study will help us gain an understanding of the marketing factors associated with the "sophomore slump." Our re-

search examined the record company's traditional marketing tools—radio, video, and touring. Perhaps the addition of new media, particularly blogs, social networking sites, and the mobile marketplace, would improve our ability to make strategic management decisions in today's digital environment. Finally, the addition of publicity efforts, and the impact of non-video television appearances (such as live performances and interviews), would complete the arsenal of traditional marketing tools.

Rock – Gold Certification  
Artist Profile & Benchmarks (31 acts)

Radio

- 2.73 songs per artist
- 62,401 spins each song
- 311,102,340 impressions per song
- 14% on Hot 100 Chart
- 61 weeks to Hot 100 Peak Position
- #49 – Hot 100 Chart Peak Position
- 2% songs on Hot 100 Top 10
- 0% songs #1 Hot 100 Chart
- 47% Rock Radio Format
- 42% Hot AC and Mainstream Hit Formats

Video

- 2.19 songs per artist
- 534 spins per video
- 43% MTV/MTV2, 41% Fuse, 10% VH1

Live Performance

- 56 performances
- 27 headlining
- 3,249 attendance per show

Sales

- 55 Weeks to RIAA Certification
- 71 Weeks to SoundScan Certification
- Week 32 – Top Sales Week
- First Week Sales – 26,132
- Peak Sales – 38,919 (One Week Total)
- Peak Billboard 200 Chart Position – #58
- 33 Weeks on Billboard 200

Country – Gold Certification Artist  
Profile and Benchmarks (12 artists)

Radio

- 3.58 songs per artist
- 100,434 spins each song
- 602,373,255 impressions per song
- 51% on Hot 100 Chart
- 43 weeks to Hot 100 Peak Position
- #52 – Hot 100 Chart Peak Position
- 0% songs on Hot 100 Top 10
- 0% songs #1 Hot 100 Chart
- 98% Country Music Format

Video

- 3.15 songs per artist
- 1,551 spins per video
- 57% CMT, 43% GAC

Live Performance

- 18 performances
- 3 headlining
- 5,606 attendance per show

Sales

- 57 Weeks to RIAA Certification
- 88 Weeks to SoundScan Certification
- Week 15 – Top Sales Week
- First Week Sales – 23,053
- Peak Sales – 27,161 (One Week Total)
- Peak Billboard 200 Chart Position – #76
- 28 Weeks on Billboard 200

Table 9. Gold and Platinum Benchmarks.

Rock – Gold Certification  
Artist Profile & Benchmarks (31 acts)

Radio

- 2.73 songs per artist
- 62,401 spins each song
- 311,102,340 impressions per song
- 14% on Hot 100 Chart
- 61 weeks to Hot 100 Peak Position
- #49 – Hot 100 Chart Peak Position
- 2% songs on Hot 100 Top 10 Chart
- 0 – #1 Hot 100 Chart
- 47% Rock Radio Format
- 42% Hot AC and Mainstream Hit Formats

Video

- 2.19 songs per artist
- 534 spins per video
- 43% MTV/MTV2, 41% Fuse, 10% VH1

Live Performance

- 56 performances
- 27 headlining
- 3,249 attendance per show

Sales

- 55 Weeks to RIAA Certification
- 71 Weeks to SoundScan Certification
- Week 32 – Top Sales Week
- First Week Sales – 26,132
- Peak Sales – 38,919 (One Week Total)
- Peak Billboard 200 Chart Position – #58
- 33 Weeks on Billboard 200

Rock – Platinum Certification Artist  
Profile and Benchmarks (25 artists)

Radio

- 3.4 songs per artist
- 130,682 spins each song
- 660,322,350 impressions per song
- 37% on Hot 100 Chart
- 53 weeks to Hot 100 Peak Position
- #39 – Hot 100 Chart Peak Position
- 5% songs on Hot 100 Top 10 Chart
- 1 – #1 Hot 100 Chart
- 42% Rock Radio Format
- 48% Hot AC and Mainstream Hit Formats

Video

- 2.4 songs per artist
- 831 spins per video
- 45% MTV, 24% Fuse, 16% VH1

Live Performance

- 73 performances
- 31 headlining
- 3,340 attendance per show

Sales

- 69 Weeks to RIAA Certification
- 81 Weeks to SoundScan Certification
- Week 39 – Top Sales Week
- First Week Sales – 23,300
- Peak Sales – 56,482 (One Week Total)
- Peak Billboard 200 Chart Position – #32
- 64 Weeks on Billboard 200

Table 9. Gold and Platinum Benchmarks (continued).

Rock – Platinum Certification Artist  
Profile and Benchmarks (25 artists)

Radio

- 3.4 songs per artist
- 130,682 spins each song
- 660,322,350 impressions per song
- 37% on Hot 100 Chart
- 53 weeks to Hot 100 Peak Position
- #39 – Hot 100 Chart Peak Position
- 5% songs on Hot 100 Top 10 Chart
- 1 – #1 Hot 100 Chart
- 42% Rock Radio Format
- 48% Hot AC and Mainstream Hit Formats

Video

- 2.4 songs per artist
- 831 spins per video
- 45% MTV, 24% Fuse, 16% VH1

Live Performance

- 73 performances
- 31 headlining
- 3,340 attendance per show

Sales

- 69 Weeks to RIAA Certification
- 81 Weeks to SoundScan Certification
- Week 39 – Top Sales Week
- First Week Sales – 23,300
- Peak Sales – 56,482 (One Week Total)
- Peak Billboard 200 Chart Position – #32
- 64 Weeks on Billboard 200

Rock – 4x Platinum Certification Artist  
Profile and Benchmarks (3 artists)

Radio

- 5 songs per artist
- 374,054 spins each song
- 2,316,882,600 impressions per song
- 40% on Hot 100 Chart
- 84 weeks to Hot 100 Peak Position
- #11 – Hot 100 Chart Peak Position
- 26% songs on Hot 100 Top 10 Chart
- 0 – #1 Hot 100 Chart
- 4% Rock Radio Format
- 79% Hot AC and Mainstream Hit Formats

Video

- 4 songs per artist
- 1,272 spins per video
- 58% MTV, 11% Fuse, 31% VH1

Live Performance

- 108 performances
- 65 headlining
- 4,488 attendance per show

Sales

- 115 Weeks to RIAA Certification
- 156 Weeks to SoundScan Certification
- Week 71 – Top Sales Week
- First Week Sales – 102,425
- Peak Sales – 211,428 (One Week Total)
- Peak Billboard 200 Chart Position – #4
- 95 Weeks on Billboard 200

Table 9. Gold and Platinum Benchmarks (continued).

## Endnotes

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- <sup>1</sup> Latin artist certification is at a different sales level, making comparisons with other genres more difficult.
- <sup>2</sup> Sean Ross of Edison Media Research recommended looking only at records with 1,000 spins or more. 1,000 spins (10 weeks of at least 100 spins) minimizes the chances of including regional hits that get heavy airplay on just a few stations. It also appears to be a natural break point in the data where songs reach a critical mass and are more likely to appear on the charts.
- <sup>3</sup> Average airplay of songs per album (SPA – min. 1,000 spins) for all debut artists (1999-2008) and all certification levels was 3.93 songs per album. Gold and Platinum (all genres) averaged 3.2 songs per album, and Multi-Platinum (all genres) averaged 5.32 songs per album.
- <sup>4</sup> Note: rock carries the most certified records and therefore is weighted heavier when determining the overall song averages (36% of total songs are rock). This impacts the overall cumulative average for all genres.
- <sup>5</sup> Videos with less than 100 plays were not considered for this study. Video airplay was limited to a minimum of 100 total spins over the life of the song's campaign. Any song that received fewer than 100 music video spins (10 spins per week for 10 weeks) was not included and therefore deemed insignificant toward the impact of the artists reflected in this study.
- <sup>6</sup> Rock acts comprised 78 of the 225 acts in the study, which is 35% of all acts. Therefore, rock's overall numbers, in total, will be reflective of a larger share when computing totals and shares.

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