

THE UNIVERSITY OF ALABAMA ADVERTISING & PUBLIC RELATIONS

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BRAND OVERVIEW



BRAND HISTORY

1972: The First Fan Fair

The first Fan Fair was held in 1972 and hosted 5,000 fans at Nashville's Municipal Auditorium. The next year, attendance doubled, and by 1982, the festival had grown so large that they had to move it to the Nashville Fair Grounds (CMA Fest History).

1990s: Country Music's Biggest Party

Throughout the 1980s – 90s, Fan Fair grew larger and larger; it became Nashville's Signature Country Music Event. It was known for meet-and-greet and signing events from country's biggest stars (CMA Fest History).

2001: Major Rebrand

Fan Fest 2001 was the first year that the festival was held in various venues in downtown Nashville instead of at the Fair Grounds. It would also be held over a long weekend instead of during the week, and they kept the fairgrounds as a campsite for attendees. In 2004, Fan Fair became "CMA Music Festival" to change negative perceptions, embrace the CMA brand, and appeal to a larger audience (CMA Fest History).

2006: Established CMA Foundation

The CMA Foundation was established to help fund K-12 music education. Each year, CMA Fest donates a portion of ticket sales to the CMA Foundation. As of 2019, the CMA Foundation has donated \$27 million to music education programs across the country (Fest Flashbacks).

2019: Most Recent CMA Fest

Over 50,000 country music fans travelled to the 2019 CMA Fest, which was held at 11 stages in downtown Nashville and featured over 300 artists. This Fest set the record for money generated for the city at \$65 million (Sutton, 2019).

2020-2021: COVID-19 Pandemic

Over the past two years, CMA Fest has chosen to cancel due to the COVID-19 pandemic. The organizers had hoped that the event would be possible in 2021, but it became obvious that it would be unsafe for artists, attendees, and employees. CMA Fest is honoring both 2020 and 2021 passes at CMA Fest 2022 (Fest Flashbacks).

2022: CMA Fest Returns

Country Music's Biggest Party returns June 9-12, 2022. There will be artists playing during the day at various venues around downtown Nashville, then the big finale every night will be held at Nissan Stadium. Located in the heart of the Music City, CMA Fest has the potential to be the biggest, most desirable country music festival in the country (Fest Flashbacks).



Customers

In the past, CMA Fest has had attendees from every U.S. state and 37 countries. International fans account for 10% of attendees. In 2015, 17% of international attendees were attending CMA Fest for the first time. Countries represented in 2016 included: Argentina, Australia, Brazil, Canada, Chile, China, Czechoslovakia, Finland, France, Greece, India, Israel, Italy, Japan, Mexico, Russia, Saudi Arabia, Spain, South Africa, South Korea, Sweden, Switzerland, Turkey, the U.K., and Venezuela (CMA Fest, 2018).

CMA Fest's primary target audience is country music fans from diverse backgrounds, returning CMA Fest attendees, first time attendees, and live music fanatics. According to the 2019 Post-Festival Attendee survey, 35% of attendees were Millennials, 40% were of Generation X, and 25% were of the Boomer generation. The post-fest attendee survey also revealed that 55% of attendees were four-day pass holders and 27% were free attendees. On average the attendees stayed foro 3.5 days over the course of the four-day festival. 50% of attendees were new and 50% were returning attendees. Customers aged 35 and over preferred classic country, rock, oldies, and pop music while attendees under 35 expressed a broader interest in music genres. 40% of attendees were from the south and southeast region of the U.S. Attendees expressed that they enjoy discovering new music and artists during their time at CMA Fest.

Overall, 2019 CMA Fest attendees were satisfied with their experience. According to CMA's Country Listener Audience report, 72% own homes, 51% are employed full-time, 49% are employed as executives, 47% have households with children, and 35% have graduated college. The psychographics for the typical country music listener are: 82% use smartphones, 64% spend more than 5 hours online weekly, and 53% visit social networks multiple times a day. Attendees want to have a memorable country music experience with both alcoholic and non-alcholic drinks, quality food, plenty of clean bathrooms, and a diverse variety of vendors.

Competitors Direct Influence

The industry competitors for CMA Fest broadly includes all music festivals, but we have identified five festivals that compete more directly with CMA Fest.



Carolina Country Music Festival

CMA Fest's main competitor is the Carolina Country Music Festival. It is located in Myrtle Beach, South Carolina, the same region as Nashville, and it occurs on the same dates.





Taste of Country Music Festival

Although it is only three days, Taste of Country is also occuring on the same dates as CMA Fest on June 10-12. Taste of Country takes place in upstate New York, so it is outside the main region that CMA Fest would be targeting.



Stagecoach Music Festival

Stagecoach is the country music sister event to Coachella. Held in Indio, CA, Stagecoach is one of the only country music festivals on the west coast. They feature country, bluegrass, and folk artists.



Bonnaroo Music & Arts Festival

Like CMA Fest, Bonnaroo takes place in Tennessee; it is located about an hour outside of Nashville. The Bonnaroo lineup typically offers a wide range of genres, and is one of the larger music festivals in the U.S.



Mountain Jam Music Festival

Mountain Jam occurs during June, and is the longest running festival in the northeast. It is located at the site of the original Woodstock Music Festival.

Indirect Influence

Competitors that exert indirect influence are those that satisfy the consumer's basic need. In the case of CMA Fest, that includes other music festivals.



Music Midtown Music Festival

Music Midtown is located in Atlanta, GA, so it is another festival option in the southeast. However, it is a smaller festival than CMA Fest, as it is only two days.



Hangout Music Festival

Hangout Music Festival is located in Gulf Shores, AL directly on the beach, which could be attractive for consumers. It takes place for three days at the beginning of the summer over a weekend.



Coachella Music & Arts Festival

Coachella is one of the biggest and most well-known music festivals in the world. It is a quintessential music festival, but is in California, which might be further than consumers are willing to travel.





Lollapalooza Music & Arts Festival

Lollapalooza is another big music festival. Located in Chicago, IL, Lollapalooza could be in the consideration set for consumers located in the eastern U.S.

Collaborators

CMA Fest has many collaborators and co-branding opportunities for the festival. These brands typically have their own activations in the festival footprint where consumers can interact with the brand and make purchases. For example, in 2019, CMA Fest collaborated with Chevrolet, Durango Boots, Playstation, Xfinity, Maui Jim, Crocs, MLB, Hunt's Brothers Pizza, Kretchmar Deli, Geico, First Aid Beauty, Firestone, Martin Guitars, US Bank, Texas Pete Hot Sauce, Budweiser/Bud Light, Nitto Tires, Pure Leaf, ABC, Hanes, and Monster Energy (CMA Fest Gallery, 2021). Each of these brands offered consumers a unique, memorable experience, and it can be expected that the brands which collaborate with CMA Fest in 2022 will offer similarly unique experiences for consumers that enhance their whole festival experience. When collaborating with brands and sponsors, giveaways are a great way to boost fan and sponsor engagement.

Company

The mission statement of the Country Music Association is to "Heighten the awareness of Country Music and support its continuous growth domestically and internationally." The well-executed marketing communication for CMA Fest brings awareness of the broader CMA mission to its target audience.

The Ultimate Country Music Fan Experience began in 1972 as Fan Fair, which drew 5,000 fans to Nashville's Municipal Auditorium. Since then, the legendary CMA Fest has become the city's signature Country Music event. In 2019, CMA Fest featured more than 300 performances on 11 official stages — all to benefit music education. Since 2006, a portion of proceeds from CMA Fest has been given to music education initiatives supporting students K-12 across the U.S. through the CMA Foundation (Fest Flashbacks, 2021). Founded in 1958, the CMA was the first trade organization formed to promote a type of music. In 1961, CMA created the Country Music Hall of Fame to recognize artists and industry professionals with Country Music's highest honor.

More than 7,300 music industry professionals and companies from around the globe are members of CMA. The organization's objectives are to serve as an educational and professional resource for the industry and advance the growth of country music around the world. This is accomplished through CMA's core initiatives: the CMA Awards and CMA Fest. CMA Fest allows consumers to experience a wide range of high-quality country music entertainment. CMA Fest creates the ultimate country music fan experience through iconic



artist performances, country music traditions, and support for country music education (CMA Fest, 2016).

The CMA Music Fest website is a custom WordPress site with mobile-first mentality that celebrates the high energy of the CMA Fest atmosphere in a clean and easy-to-navigate website layout. Usually, with the festival selling out well in advance each year, the main objective for the site is to notify fans on all the artists and their schedules, always staying up to date with any last minute changes. It also informs festival goers, visitors, and locals on the free, open activities to all. Clear stage sorting, constant Twitter updates, integrations with Aloompa's festival app for robust scheduling, easy to use FAQs, and heavy sponsor presentation make this user-friendly and a system that works well for both sponsors and fans (CMA Fest, 2016).

Context

Economically, many people and businesses are still recovering financially from COVID-19, but the high demand for attending social events that were once prohibited due to COVID-19 heightens the value of attending music festivals. Technologically speaking, CMA Fest uses the official Country Music Association's Facebook, Twitter, and Instagram to promote the event.

The website <u>www.cmafest.com</u> is an information hub for the festival where consumers can purchase tickets, explore photos and videos of past CMA Fests, and find answers to questions they may have regarding the festival. If consumers need additional information, CMA Fest also uses email and phone communication, which is listed on the website.

Socioculturally, many country musicians are openly speaking up about their political values and beliefs including their opinions on the COVID-19 vaccine. This could potentially affect the line-up, reputation, and the number of CMA Fest attendees. Throughout the history of CMA Fest, attendees were overall satisfied with the environment of CMA Fest and have been very successful in this area with providing attendees with food, vendors, and activities that closely align with attendees' interests.



Customer Value

Functional Value

CMA Fest creates functional value to its customers by signaling the performance of its offering: elite country music entertainment. Through taglines like "Country Music Biggest Party" and "The Ultimate Country Music Fan Experience," the brand is often interpreted by its audience as a signal of the highest quality of country music entertainment. The lineup quality, ranging from legendary country music stars to up-and-coming pop-country singers to everything in between, not only ensures that a customer's music taste will be compatible with a performance at the event, but that it will be the best country music has to offer. The functional value of CMA Fest is ultimately defined by its high-quality entertainment.

The design of the CMA Fest, located right in the middle of Downtown Nashville, also creates functional value for its consumers. The convenient accessibility to food, souvenirs, historic sites, bars, and other facilities provides customers with a well-functioning and seamless experience. The functionality of the entire experience including entertainment quality and design adds value for attendees.

Psychological Value

The entire event is primarily fueled by the customer's emotional experience provided by the event. The brand attracts the most dedicated country music fans with 99% to 100% of attendees listening to country music monthly or more often (CMA Fest, 2019). With over tens of thousands of fans attending from diverse backgrounds, this festival brings an audience together that shares one thing in common: a love for country music. CMA Fest attendees value the sense of connectedness and community through their attendance by knowing that no matter the crowd they gravitate towards, other country music fans are standing right there beside them enjoying the moment as well.

In a similar sense, the emotional value of belonging to the CMA Fest community also gives customers the value of self-expression. Being a consumer of the brand enables individuals to express a part of their identity or lifestyle that may otherwise be difficult to show to others. Engaging with this festival, allows consumers to convey their unique personalities to friends, families, social media followers, and even fellow attendees. In addition to allowing consumers to reveal their individuality, CMA Fest also creates psychological value by empowering customers to highlight their socioeconomic status. According to the 2019 CMA Fest Attendee Profile, 63% of attendees had a household income of \$75,000 or more. The ability to attend this event calls attention to the financial capability of the consumer, which often affords the psychological value of increased self-esteem and satisfaction from the social status it may provide.



CMA Fest creates customer value by conveying a sense of moral gratification from contributing to society. CMA Fest is unique in that its performers donate their time to so ticket proceeds can directly benefit high-quality music programs across the country through the CMA Foundation. This may not be the most significant psychological value addition for some attendees compared to the other benefits discussed in this section, but it still gives consumers the mental benefit of helping society or benefitting the greater good.

Most importantly, customers value the joy and excitement the entertainment at CMA Fest provides. A weekend full of seeing iconic performers, hanging out with friends, adventuring around Nashville, and finding new artists evokes emotions such as excitement, anticipation, happiness, and escapism. Ultimately, CMA Fest elicits an effective response from its customers and creates value by causing them to experience a wide scope of positive emotions ranging from the exhilaration of favorite artists about to perform to the joy of taking a break from reality.

Monetary Value

The price of the festival is comparable to other popular festivals, with the passes ranging from \$235 to \$1,433 depending on the level of amenities the consumer is interested in. While the prices may be similar to other festival brands, CMA Fest is one of few that lasts four days and that offers a wide range of free performances. The typical festival is three days with the purchase of a ticket being required to access all events, so CMA Fest brings financial benefits to its customers by offering more entertainment for a great price.

Company Value

Strategic Value

Many of the strategic benefits of the CMA Fest brand ultimately lead to monetary benefits, but its direct impact is not immediately related to its monetary results. Since CMA Fest creates a large amount of customer value, it also generates incremental demand for the company's offerings. It is an attractive experience for the consumer, so the brand continues to facilitate the use and purchase of CMA Fest's offerings. This leads to greater repurchase frequency, as shown by 50% of the 2019 CMA Fest attendees being returnees (CMA Fest, 2019).

The CMA Fest brand also amplifies the impact of overall marketing tactics. For example, since this brand is high-quality, attractive, and well-known compared to other counterparts, such as Rock the South, CMA Fest enhances customer perceptions of the company's offerings. CMA Fest's power, history, and attractiveness in the country music arena make customers more willing to pay for this brand, search for this brand, and bypass more convenient festivals just to participate with their favorite one. Customers are also likely to react more favorably



to incentives and communication from the CMA Fest brand and ignore the competitive or lesser-known festival brands.

CMA Fest also ensures greater collaborator support. Since the festival is spread across downtown Nashville, tremendous strategic value is created for the company. Due to the strength of this brand, collaborators benefit from participating in the CMA Fest events and promotional activities. As a result, the firmly branded company is in a position to negotiate better agreements with bars, venues, and other brands resulting in a better network and greater promotional support.

The strength of this brand also provides strategic value to the company by facilitating the hiring and retaining of skilled employees. People who resonate with the CMA Fests brand's philanthropic value, entertainment experience, connection with the country music industry, and many other premier qualities will place a premium on working for the company. As a result, this company probably finds it easier to attract and retain talented employees. As a result of facilitating the recruiting, hiring, and retaining of talented employees, the strong CMA Fest brand can also enhance the company culture and increase productivity.

Monetary Value

As mentioned previously, the high customer demand for this branded festival experience gives CMA Fest the ability to command higher and competitive prices which naturally leads to higher sales revenue, and can translate into higher company profits. While these profits are not solely for company gain, it still allows for the company to generate more money to donate to the CMA Foundation. Similarly, customers' affinity for CMA Fest, as shown with the high customer return rate, enables the company to arrange better financial terms with its collaborators. This leads to increasing the company's profit margins.

The CMA Fest brand increases the valuation of the company. The ability of the brand to generate incremental net income creates monetary value for the company. The CMA Fest year after year has proven to be successful with at-capacity crowds and record-breaking attendance. The assumed and estimated success of the brand is large. The future value of the cash flows that are likely to be generated by this brand brings added monetary value to the company.

Collaborator Value

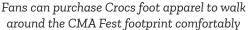
Strategic Value

CMA Fest is Nashville's largest annual tourism event. In 2019, the nightly concerts in Nissan Stadium were sold out with more than 50,000 attendees each night (CMA Fest Delivers, 2019). This type of power along with the brand's loyal customer base can generate awareness and eventually incremental demand for collaborators carrying products and services associated



with the event. For example, at the 2019 CMA Fest brands such as PlayStation, Maui Jim Sunglasses, Durango Boot, Bud Light, Crocs, and many more were featured across different







Fans take turns playing the latest games at the Sony PlayStation activation inside Fan Fair X

locations and platforms at the festival. These brands got the chance to interact and make their brand familiar with the loyal CMA Fest audience by selling their products, giving free samples, and even launching text-to-win campaigns (CMA Fest Gallery, 2021).

In addition to helping increase the demand and awareness for collaborators' offerings, CMA Fest also creates collaborator value through co-branding. Through the partnership with a strong band like CMA Fest, collaborators' brands are strengthened. The credibility and attractiveness of the CMA Fest brand can spill over to its collaborators, benefiting the partner long after the event is over. It also adds another dimension to the collaborator's image while increasing the relevance of the brand across a greater range of needs and occasions. For example, the partnership between Xfinity and CMA Fest helps make both brands more



Tens of thousands of fans ride the co-branded escalators at Fan Fair X presented by Xfinity



Chevrolet offered fans free rides around the CMA Fest footprint in a fleet of their latest models

prominent and more relevant across a broader range of entertainment occasions. In a similar vein, CMA Fest and Chevrolet's co-branding efforts added another dimension to the vehicular brand's image by adopting the following slogan for the festival weekend: "Official Ride of Country Music" (CMA Fest Gallery, 2021).



Monetary Value

CMA Fest creates monetary value for collaborators by generating incremental revenues and profits. The high customer demand and loyalty for the CMA Fest brand can lead to increased sales for entities collaborating with the brand. For example, in addition to increasing the appeal of Xfinity and Chevrolet's offerings, cobranding with CMA Fest allowed them to increase their sales directly at the event or indirectly through the generation of quality leads from the event. According to Nashville Convention and Visitor's Corp., the 2019 CMA Fest generated a record-breaking \$65 million in direct visitor spending (Sutton, 2019). The CMA Fest's consumer base has great purchasing power, and the brand's collaborators can often receive the financial benefits of it.

Positioning Statement

For consumers who want to experience a wide range of high-quality country music entertainment, CMA Fest provides the largest four-day country music festival right in the heart of Music City. Unlike other music festivals, CMA Fest dedicates itself to creating the ultimate country music fan experience through iconic artist performances, country music traditions, and the development of country music education.





BRAND INVENTORY



BRAND DESIGN

Brand Identifiers

Brand Name

CMA Fest's name is a descriptive acronym that depicts the service category and key benefits associated with the company's service. The Country Musical Association Fest originated in 1972 under the name, "Fan Fair", and has evolved into what it is today. In 2004, CMA officially renamed the event to CMA Music Festival in order to change negative perceptions, embrace the CMA brand, and expand its appeal to a larger fan base (Vamonde Nashville, n.d.). For short, the company now brands the festival with the name CMA Fest. The name has become so popular the festival attracts fans from all around the United States and has expanded into attracting country music fans from around the world.

Logo

The CMA Fest wordmark logo attempts to encompass the thrilling, friendly, and exciting environment its summer festival strives to provide to country music fans. In past years, CMA Fest has incorporated symbols including images of the skyline of the city of Nashville, guitars, and musical notes. For the upcoming festival in 2022, the CMA Fest logo incorporates the name in bright red and blue with a bold typeface and fun script font. The date and location of the event is also included in the logo with a dark blue, bold sans serif font. The symbol of a yellow horizon overarches the text which makes the brand seem warm and inviting, as well as conveying a summer-time feel. However, the musical elements are not incorporated into the logo; they only appear in the graphics. If CMA Fest incorporated a musical element into the logo, it could better convey the importance of music to the Festival.











BRAND DESIGN

Brand Colors

CMA Fest uses four primary colors in their brand communications. These four colors represent the fun spirit of CMA Fest. The colors are bright and vibrant, and convey a summer-time feel.



Brand Motto

CMA Fest's motto is "The Ultimate Country Music Fan Experience." Its motto claims category leadership on country music festivals by claiming that it is the best experience for country music fans to attend. The CMA Fest motto directly relates the essence of the brand to its customers.

Product Design

CMA Fest's ticket design has changed throughout the years starting with the generic paper ticket, and since moving to a lanyard CMA Fest attendees wear throughout the festival. Lanyards vary depending on how many days fans decide to attend the music festival. Lanyards include bar codes that are scanned at gates to the stadium, and also include the location of attendees seats in Nissan Stadium. Emblems in the past on the lanyard have represented the CMA Foundation Benefiting Music Education, Fan Fair Experience, and also a call to action to download the CMA Music Festival application.



Brand Referents

CMA Fest brand referents include the concepts of: ultimate country music festival, notable country music performers, vacation, Nashville, adventure, and lively entertainment. Even though CMA Fest does not exclusively own these concepts, by making them a key element of its brand design and constantly associating them with the CMA Fest brand in its communication, the company links these to its brand. When consumers think of CMA Fest they may immediately associate it with these concepts that are included in the prevailing communication themes of CMA Fest.



BRAND DESIGN

Evaluating Brand Identifiers

CMA Fest's brand identifiers are memorable and unique. Its name attracts country music fans and is descriptive of the service it provides. The logo comprises a unique combination of fonts, colors, symbols, and event information that effectively visually identifies and differentiates the brand from other festivals. It conveys to consumers the exciting, friendly, and cheerful spirit of the festival itself. The CMA Fest motto is effective in that it articulates the brand mantra to its target audience in a way that identifies the brand, differentiates it from its competitors, and creates unique customer value that is automatically identifiable. The CMA Fest ticket design elements, including the overall look and feel, indicate the source of the product and distinguishes itself from other festival's products. The brand's identifiers can be used across different media channels and aligns with the overall positioning of the brand and the image it aims to establish in customers' minds as the number one country music festival. The brand referents noted are relevant concepts that become ingrained in the customers' minds and makes the CMA Fest brand more relevant to customers. Ultimately, CMA Fest's brand design is distinct and articulates the elements that embody the brand.



BRAND COMMUNICATION

Brand Media Outbound Media

CMA Fest uses the official CMA social channels like Facebook, Instagram, and Twitter to promote its brand to a large audience. With 2.5 million Facebook followers, more than one million Instagram followers, and 839,200 Twitter followers, social media promotion allows the brand to have a larger reach than its more regionally targeted promotion efforts. Examples of CMA Fest's social media promotion are announcing the dates of its festival, announcing the lineup, and encouraging fans to purchase tickets.



The Country Music Association Instagram posts promotions for CMA Fest



Durango Boots partners with CMA Fest on Twitter to promote a contest

As CMA Fest representatives mentioned in the client interview, most marketing efforts are regionally targeted. Some cities are specifically prioritized by the brand, including Nashville, Chattanooga, Memphis, Atlanta, and Indianapolis (Personal Communication, 2021). CMA Fest places signage and advertisements throughout Nashville to promote the festival. The signs vary in size, design, and location. Some sign designs in past years announced the

lineup, highlighted the festival's partnership with CMA Foundation and other collaborators, or welcomed guests to the festival.

CMA Fest also uses commercials to promote the televised version of CMA Fest which airs each year on ABC. CMA Fest also utilizes corporate brand and marketing partnerships during the festival. CMA chief marketing officer Damon Whiteside explained that "the heart of CMA Fest is supporting new music and artist discovery, and we do that through our many engaging marketing and brand partnerships" (Highest Fan Engagement in CMA Fest History, 2018). Through its partnership with many popular brands, CMA Fest promotes itself while emphasizing its goal of supporting new music and artists.



Kiosks are placed throughout the CMA Fest footprint to communicate information, like the lineup and map



BRAND COMMUNICATION

Inbound Media

Information about CMA Fest can be found by customers who are actively seeking information about the festival through online search platforms like Google or YouTube. Additionally, customers can interact with CMA Fest through phone communication or email communication to receive relevant information about the festival. During the festival, attendees can use the CMA Fest application to create a custom schedule, look up the lineup and artist profiles, and find other information about the festival.

Message Appeal

CMA Fest communicates its brand with both information-based and affect-based message appeals. The brand uses an information-based appeal by sharing information about the festival like the line-up, the dates and times of the festival, and other relevant information. CMA Fest promotes the benefits and key offerings of the festival and utilizes endorsements from celebrities and its sponsors within the brand's messaging. CMA Fest uses affect-based appeals by developing content that plays on the emotions of love and excitement from attendees.

Brand Communication Evaluation

CMA Fest effectively communicates its brand identity through social media, regionally targeted advertisements, commercials, and corporate brand and marketing partnerships. The brand's promotional mix is simple, cohesive, and creative in targeting the brand's desired target audience. However, with social media communication specifically, the brand's strategic focus is often outshined by the larger Country Music Association brand. Because CMA Fest does not have its own social media accounts, its messaging can be hidden by other CMA branded content.

CMA Fest effectively uses corporate brand and marketing partnerships during the music festival, but the brand's efforts are less apparent during the months before the festival begins. The brand's use of regionally targeted advertising is original and creative, and aligns with the brand's desire to communicate with its target audience - of which, 40% is from the southern U.S. However, because former CMA Fest attendees have represented each state along with several other countries, this regional advertising can limit the brand's reach. Overall, CMA Fest has a successful brand communication strategy, but the brand has an opportunity to expand its efforts and fully capitalize on its success.



BRAND IDENTITY EVALUATION

A brand's identity consists of the tangible and intangible characteristics that make the brand what it is – it's how the company wants the brand to be perceived by its consumers. We conclude and evaluate the brand CMA Music Festival using the Brand Evaluation Matrix:

Externalization

•

Physique

bold and bright color, the use of a Sharpie-like marker font makes it laid back, yet lively

Personality

relaxed, fun, passionate friendly, caring

Relationship

Entertaining country music fans, connecting them with other fans, and creating life-long memories

Culture

Internalization

Nashville's largest annual tourism event, CMA Fest is a traditional country music hot spot

Reflection

Country music lovers and their friends

Self-Image

Participants want to have unique and exciting country music experiences

Physique

The physical characteristics of CMA are bold and bright color, their usage of a "sharpie-like marker" font makes it laid back, yet lively. Many people would argue that music festivals have built up their own identity through a history of shared beliefs, sociopolitical agendas, stories passed between friends, and now social media with which even the best graphic design in the world can't compete. However, there's always a balance between traditions and trends. To create a trend, logos certainly must have the ability to attract customers. When we're thinking of some popular brands, we don't just think about their products, instead, we think of their brand as the same as their logos. In fact, the logo of CMA Fest does not stand out enough for newer audiences to memorize. A few country music elements could be considered to incorporate to redesign the logo. For example, other music festivals have more appealing logo designs. Making the CMA's logo special and distinguished can possibly lead to increasing its popularity. It may be best to grab to show CMA Fest's personality shining brightly amongst festival goers as an icon.

Relationship

CMA Fest is a great opportunity to get people together through music and enjoy comprehensive music-centric entertainment with those who have the same music preference. Therefore, CMA Fest can entertain country music fans, connect them with other fans, and create life-long memories. Moreover, as streaming becomes one of the most popular ways to listen to music, sales of tickets and merchandise make up the bulk of fans' expenditures on



BRAND IDENTITY EVALUATION

music. Artists make money through live concerts, and audiences are willing to pay to meet and create special connections with them. This is to say that the participants strengthen these relationships not only just for their own networks of family, friends, etc. For example, they can establish new relationships by making new friends. They already have things in common, one of which is that they share a similar liking to singers or even better, they can interact with their favorite artists together.

Reflection

We define our target market clearly as any country music fan who is interested in events like festivals. Moreover, the music lovers' friends and families could also potentially be our target market. According to the 2019 Post-Fest Attendee Survey, the attendees' age range mostly consists of Generation X, or those that have been classified to be 41-56 years of age, thus being categorized as being middle-aged. This result is fine because their ages won't limit the number of attendees. However, in the long run, the middle-aged generation will become older. How they're able to attract the younger generation of audiences, will be the main key of sustaining the legacy of CMA Fest.

Personality

CMA Fest has historical beginnings dating back to the early 70's. Since then, the festival has experienced continuous growth. Over 300 artists were featured at the most recent CMA Fest, which took place in 2019 (Fest Flashbacks, 2021). Attending CMA Fest means connecting to people and having a fun time with friends. Therefore, the personalities of CMA Fest are relaxed, fun, passionate, and lively. Moreover, since 2006, a portion of proceeds from CMA Fest have been given to music education initiatives supporting students K-12 across the U.S. This shows that CMA Fest cares about charity and education. Thus, the personalities of CMA Fest are also friendly and caring.

Culture

In reference to CMA Fest being well-known, it is Nashville's largest annual tourism event. The four-day country festival offers traveling needs for their attendees. Moreover, CMA Fest creates monetary value for collaborators. For instance, the 2019 CMA Fest generated a record-breaking \$65 million in direct visitor spending (Sutton, 2019). In 2006, the CMA Foundation was established to help fund K-12 music education. Each year, CMA Fest donates a portion of its ticket sales to the CMA Foundation. Without a doubt, CMA Fest is an important, yet iconic activity, and represents itself as the genre of classic country and as a hotspot for new artists.



BRAND IDENTITY EVALUATION

Self-Image

Participants who attend CMA Fest anticipate the joy, excitement, and entertainment by enjoying the performances, hanging out with friends, and adventuring around Nashville. The lineups for CMA Fest aren't just about bands, but art, food, and typically the pursuit of anything "immersive." The popularity allows people to signal that they're a part of major cultural moments, as the ability to attend a music festival (and broadcast one's experience on social media) has become an experience that many covet. The positive emotions and memories that attendees create at CMA Fest shape the unique and exciting country music experiences. People who attend CMA Fest will be perceived as music lovers that are relaxing, fun, socialized, and interesting.





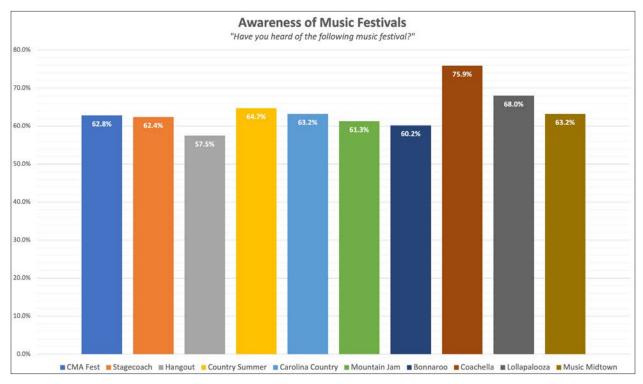
BRAND EXPLORATORY



BRAND AWARENESS

To measure brand awareness, we analyzed survey data regarding recognition, recall, and top-of-mind. Brand recognition refers to the participant being able to recognize your brand in a group of brands. Brand recall refers to the participant's ability to recall the brand without any assistance. Finally, top-of-mind refers to the brand being the first brand that the participant recalls when asked about the market that the brand competes in.

Upon analyzing survey data, we determined that 62.8% of respondents recognized CMA Fest, so they had at least heard of the festival before. However, both recall and top-of-mind for CMA Fest were zero. This indicates that CMA Fest needs to raise its brand awareness among consumers, and increase brand affinity so that consumers think of CMA Fest before other festivals.



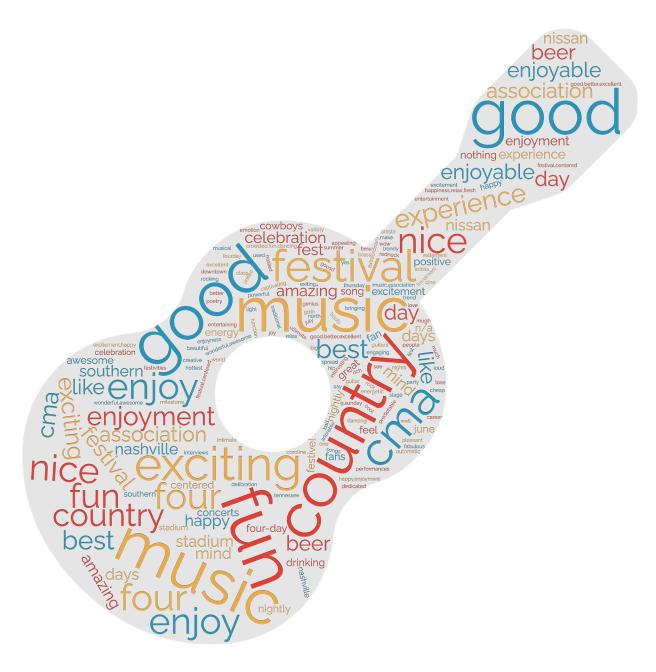
Compared to other music festivals, CMA Fest is pretty average compared to the smaller festivals in the consideration set. Coachella and Lollapalooza scored highest, which makes sense since they are such large festivals and are known for drawing large crowds. Compared to other country music festivals – Stagecoach, Country Summer, and Carolina Country – CMA Fest ranks third as far as awareness goes, but all four festivals fall in a 2% range of each other. Overall, compared to other music festivals, CMA Fest could improve on their general awareness, but they did not score as low as some other festivals.



BRAND ASSOCIATIONS

Implicit Associations

Word clouds can help us understand how consumers are perceiving the brand; what comes to mind when they think of the brand? The top words for CMA Fest are: good, music, country, and fun. These are positive associations, which is a good sign for the brand's perception at the moment.





BRAND ASSOCIATIONS

Explicit Associations

To evaluate CMA Fest brand's implicit associations, we found what types characteristics predict the likelihood of those more likely to attend CMA Fest in the next three years or talk about CMA Fest.

Characteristics of those most likely to attend CMA Fest:

- Those who are fans of country music.
- Those who are fans of children's television programming.
- Those who are fans of college football.
- Those who build models (trains, planes, etc.).
- Those who attend concerts.
- Those who are fans of the NFL.

Characteristics of those less likely to attend CMA Fest:

- Those who are fans of comedy television programs.
- Those who value staying active.

Characteristics of those most likely to talk about CMA Fest:

- Those who are fans of children's television programming.
- Those who are fans of the NFL.
- Those who enjoy alcoholic beverages at an outdoor event.

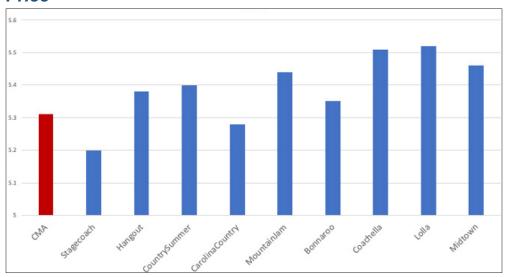
Characteristics of those less likely to talk about CMA Fest:

Those who value being adventurous.



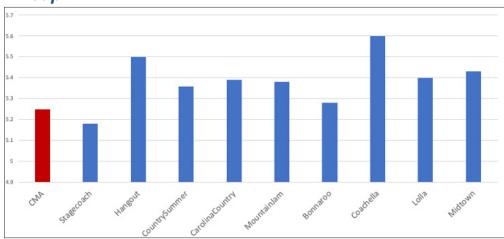
To evaluate brand image and attitude, we compared the rational and emotional perceptions of CMA Fest among its consumer base compared to its leading competitors. We gathered this data through a survey distributed via Amazon mTurk to about 200 respondents. We compared the means of respondent perception of many variables, including: price, lineup, crowd, music variety, organization, excitement, experience, style, and perception.

Price



When comparing the means of price perception among respondents, CMA Fest was one of the less expensive options compared to other competing music festivals.

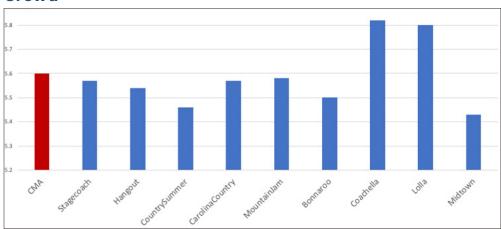
Lineup



We asked respondents about their perceptions of the lineup, and CMA Fest scored second lowest. CMA Fest is known for being for country music lovers, so that is the main genre for the festival. However, if CMA Fest wants to increase its market share for music festivals, they will have to bring more variety and big names to the lineup.

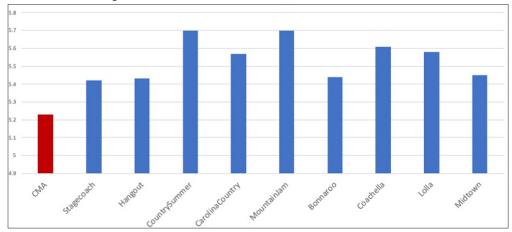


Crowd



We asked respondents for their perceptions of crowds at competing music festivals on whether the crowds were large or small. CMA Fest scored approximately in the middle, which is a good position; you don't want to be so crowded that people can't move comfortably, but you still want some crowds because that shows demand for the festival.

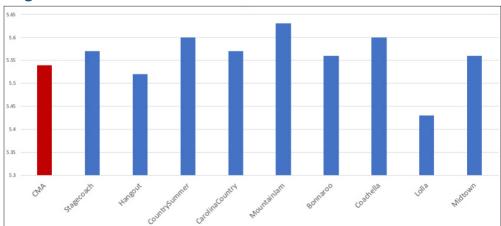
Music Variety



When asked about music variety at the festival, CMA Fest scored lowest among its competitors. This could be a purposeful decision by the leadership at CMA Fest since it is a country-music-focused festival, but if CMA Fest wants to gain more of the market share, they need to add more variety to the lineup and advertise that they are doing so to draw in consumers who may not think that CMA Fest is something they would enjoy.

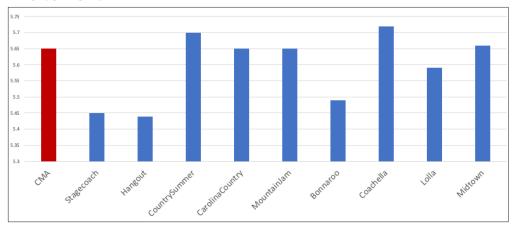


Organization



To evaluate organization, respondents were asked about their perception of the overall organization (well-organized or not) of the festival. CMA Fest scored relatively high, which is a good sign; people want to attend a well-organized event, especially one such as a music festival where they are trying to enjoy themselves.

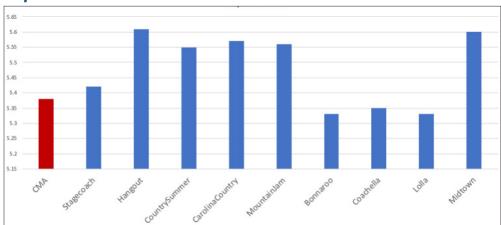
Excitement



We asked respondents to evaluate their perceptions of music festivals based on how exciting or boring it is, and CMA Fest scored high compared to other competitors. Generating excitement around music and arts festivals, and keeping that excitement going during the event, is of the utmost importance in order to maintain positive perceptions of the festival.

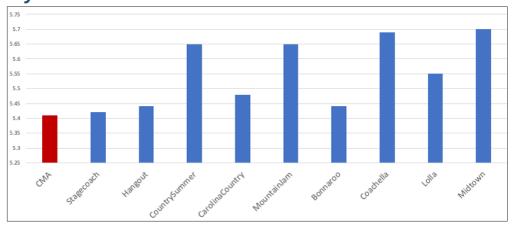


Experience



To evaluate experience, respondents indicated whether they felt the festival was a more stressful experience or relaxing experience. CMA Fest scored on the lower end, which shows that the general perception of CMA Fest is more relaxing than stressful.

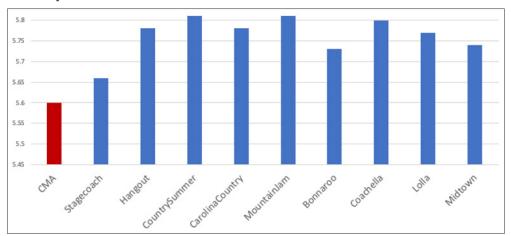
Style



"Style" refers to whether the festival is more classic or modern. Respondents indicated that CMA Fest is more classic than modern, which is not necessarily negative, and could be a point of differentiation among the competition.



Perception

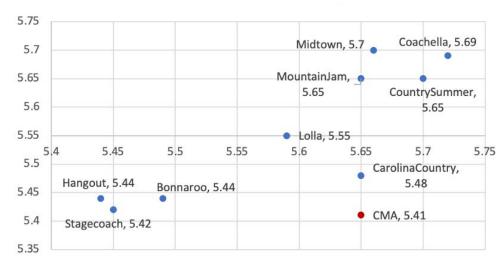


To evaluate perception, respondents were asked to indicate how positively or negatively they thought about a specific music festival in general, and CMA Fest scored the lowest. This question might be influenced by people's first impressions or geographical factors. In fact, this item shows the overall evaluation of the music festivals, which means further research is needed to make CMA do better to increase its reputation.

Perceptual Maps

For our perceptual maps, we chose four important variables to compare: price, excitement, style, and perception.

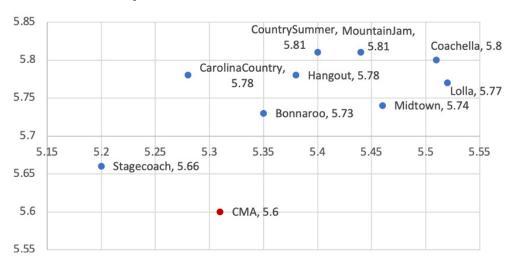
Excitement vs. Style



This perceptual map shows that CMA Fest scored high on excitement, but lower on style.

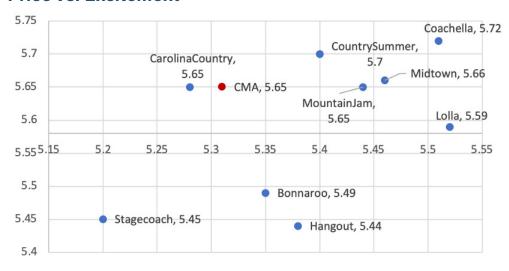


Price vs. Perception



This perceptual map shows that CMA Fest scored lower on pricing, and lower on perception.

Price vs. Excitement



This perceptual map shows that CMA Fest scored lower on pricing, but higher on excitement.



Summary of Results

From the analysis of brand image and attitude, overall, compared to other music festivals, CMA has advantages such as being well-organized and exciting. The price may be another advantage which is lower than most music festivals. In contrast, the results that are worth concern are that compared to other music festivals, CMA Fest is considered less trendy and lacks music variety.

Because the option for the trendy item is from classic to trendy, the result of CMA Fest getting the lowest score does not exactly mean it is not popular; it might be that CMA Fest is different from other festivals. Classic could be a great feature and attract its market as well. However, to appeal to more new audiences and younger generations, how CMA Fest could expand its music variety is worth consideration.

Moreover, CMA's excitement score is higher than average, but its experience score is lower than average. There might be several possible reasons cause this result. Nevertheless, CMA could think about how it can improve its experience score. For example, initiating more relevant activities to create a memorable atmosphere or discounts for group participants.

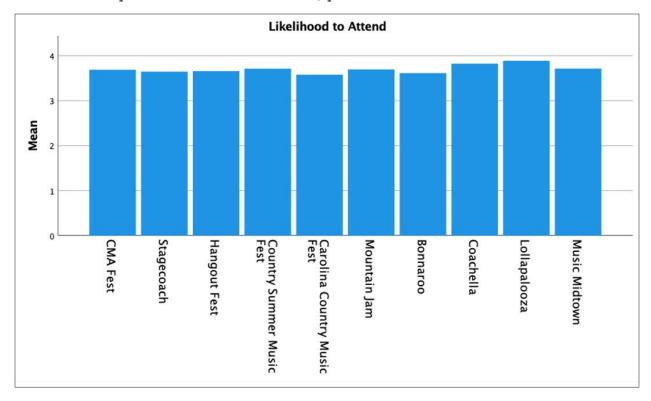


BRAND AFFINITY

To evaluate brand affinity, we analyzed consumer loyalty of CMA Fest through survey respondents' intent to attend CMA in the future and likelihood to discuss the brand with friends and family. We then compared the consumer loyalty of CMA Fest to its competitors. Respondents answered questions on a scale from 1 – extremely unlikely to 5 – extremely likely.

Likelihood to Attend CMA Fest

We analyzed the likelihood of consumers to attend CMA Fest within the next 3 years. Consumers' average likelihood to attend was somewhat likely. The average for consumers who have heard of CMA Fest before was slightly higher while the average for consumers who have not heard of CMA Fest before was slightly lower than the average. Additionally, the average score of consumers who have attended CMA Fest was higher than the overall average, and the average for consumers who have not attended CMA Fest was lower than the overall average. Each group was within the range of being neither likely nor unlikely OR somewhat likely to attend CMA Fest within 3 years.



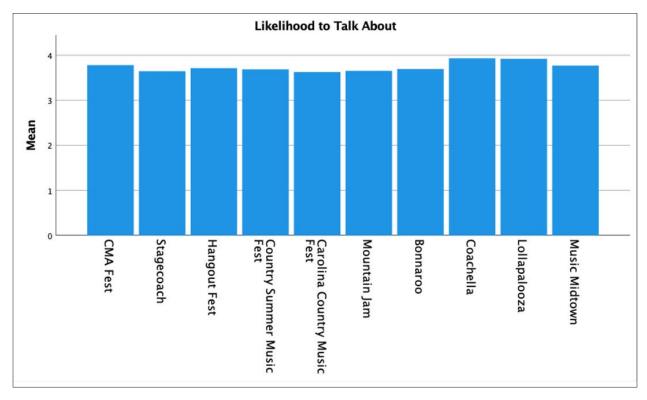
When comparing the respondents' likelihood to attend each festival, CMA Fest aligned closely with each of its competitors. CMA Fest ranked the sixth highest in respondents' likelihood to attend the festival. Respondents, on average, said they were neither likely nor unlikely OR somewhat likely to attend each festival.



BRAND AFFINITY

Likelihood to Talk About CMA Fest

Additionally, we analyzed the likelihood of consumers to talk about CMA Fest with their friends or family. The average consumer is somewhat likely to talk about CMA Fest. The average likelihood of consumers who have heard of CMA Fest before was higher than the overall average, while the average for consumers who have not heard of CMA Fest before was slightly lower than the overall average. The average likelihood for consumers who have attended CMA Fest was higher than the overall average, and the average for consumers who have not attended CMA Fest was lower than the overall average. Each group was within the range of being somewhat likely to talk about CMA Fest with their friends or family.



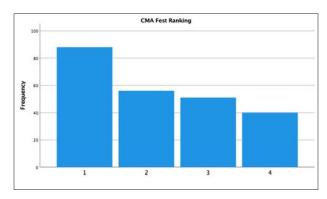
CMA Fest also aligned closely with its competitors on respondents' likelihood of talking about the festival with friends and family. Of the festivals included within the survey, CMA Fest ranked the third highest in likelihood among respondents to talk about the festival with others, following Coachella and Lollapalooza. On average, respondents answered within the range of being neither likely nor unlikely OR somewhat likely to talk about each festival with their friends or family.

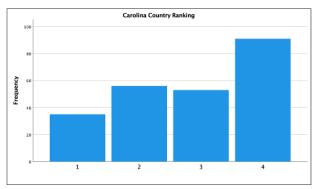


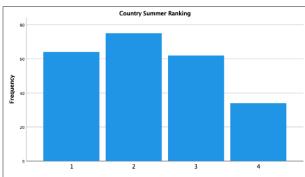
BRAND AFFINITY

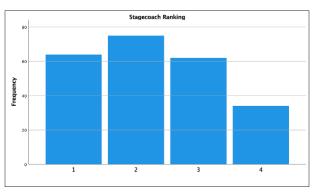
CMA Fest's Ranking Among Country Music Festivals

Of the four country music festivals included in the survey - CMA Fest, Stagecoach, Country Summer Music Festival, and Carolina Country Music Festival - respondents were asked to rank the festivals in order from the most likely to attend (1) to the least likely to attend (4). 33 percent of respondents selected CMA Fest as the number one country music festival they would attend. This is a higher percentage than any of the other country music festivals.













BRAND STRATEGY



PROJECT PARAMETERS



Budget: \$200,000

Timing: January - August 2022

Goals

- Provide attendees with a **high-quality** on-site experience
- Grow consumption of country music post-event
- Capture and leverage data to foster on-going relationships with consumers
- Organically integrate **CMA Foundation** leading up to and during the event to increase donations



RECOMMENDATION ONE

CMA Fest Influencers & Ambassadors

To increase awareness of the festival with younger audiences, CMA Fest will develop partnerships with social media micro-influencers within the Nashville area and with those who have a country music follower base. The influencers will post about CMA Fest on their social media accounts and could be compensated with free tickets to the festival

Awareness

- Owned social media
- · Paid social media ads (Tik Tok and/or Instagram)

Key Component

Micro-influencers will post photos, Tik Tok videos, and Instagram Reels promoting CMA Fest and encouraging their followers to purchase tickets. They will also receive CMA Fest paraphernalia to post with, such as t-shirts, water bottles, stickers, buttons, keychains, etc.

ROI/CTA

- CMA Fest will be tagged in and can repost the influencers' posts.
- Influencers can advertise a personal "creator code" which gives their fans a percentage off of tickets and allows CMA Fest to monitor the success of influencer marketing.

Duration

Leading up to CMA Fest (January - June 2022)



RECOMMENDATION TWO

#WhatMakesYouCountry Contest

To increase awareness of the festival and garner social media presence quickly, CMA Fest will launch a social media competition. Users will be challenged to post about their favorite country memory, using the hashtags #WhatMakesYouCountry and #CMAFest and tagging @cmafest in the post to enter to win two VIP CMA Fest tickets.

Awareness

- Micro-influencers participate in the competition
- · Owned social media
- Media advisory

Key Component

People utilize the hashtags #WhatMakesYouCountry, #CMAFest, and tag @cmafest in their posts to win two free VIP tickets to CMA Fest. This will increase traffic to CMA Fest's new social media accounts and lead to an increase in awareness of the festival.

ROI/CTA

- CMA Fest will measure the amount of people that entered the contest and repost entries on their social media.
- CMA Fest will track website traffic generated before, during, and after the competition.
- CMA Fest will measure the number of followers, engagements, and impressions generated by the competition

Duration

Social media accounts that are specific to CMA Fest should be set up as soon as possible, on popular socials like Facebook, Instagram, Twitter, Tik Tok, and Snapchat. The #WhatMakesYouCountry contest will occur before CMA Fest (January - March 2022).



RECOMMENDATION THREE

CMA Fest Tailgates

Due to the likelihood of an NFL Fan attending and talking about CMA Fest, we recommend sponsoring and promoting branded tailgate tents during the NFL playoff season. Attendees will be asked to enter their email via a QR code to win free Bud Light beer and CMA Fest merchandise. In order to keep costs low, we suggest leveraging CMA Fest's existing relationship with Bud Light.

Awareness

- Media advisory
- Radio advertising spot
- Owned social media

Key Component

CMA Fest hosts tailgate tents at NFL playoff games to give the attendees a glimpse of the lively, fun, and entertaining culture they can expect if they attend CMA Fest.

ROI/CTA

With the emails collected at each tailgate, launch an email campaign to spread awareness of CMA Fest and ask for donations to the CMA Foundation.

Duration

Before CMA Fest (During NFL Playoff season, January - February 2022)



RECOMMENDATION FOUR

CMA Foundation Donation Display

We plan to build a huge sign by using CMA letters with photos of their charity related to music education. It will be an eye-catching display that attendees will want to take pictures with. Next to this sign, we have a digital board to show how many people have donated so far. A donation boost is next to the sign and digital board, that calls for participants to donate to CMA Foundation to help fund music education. Showing the actual amount people donate might cause unnecessary comparisons, so instead we will display the accumulating number of people who are willing to donate this year. At the same time, we will show the total monetary donation amount from last year to encourage people to donate. We want to let people know that any amount is meaningful, no matter how much money a person can donate. If you want to be part of it, come, donate some money and take a picture to tell the world that you love music and support music education!

Awareness

- Media advisory
- Owned social media
- · Attendees will see it while walking around the festival

Key Component

Using large CMA letters with charity photos, and the digital display board to attract people to donate to CMA Foundation.

ROI/CTA

- · Attendees post their photos to social media
- · CMA Fest posts photos on their owned social media
- Encourage attendees to donate to CMA Foundation

Duration

During CMA Fest (June 9-12, 2022)



RECOMMENDATION FIVE

CMA Fest's Country Clash

One of CMA Fest's priorities is nurturing country talent, so the weekend before the festival CMA will host a battle of the bands at a local Nashville bar. All up and coming country artists are invited, and if they win they get free tickets to the festival and get to perform on stage. Locals will vote for their favorite performance through the CMA Fest app and the final winner will be chosen by CMA Fest organizers all on the same night.

Awareness

- Media advisory
- Owned social media
- · Signage around Nashville

Key Component

The one-night CMA Country Clash competition invites nation-wide country artists to Nashville to compete for the opportunity to perform in front of a large live audience on stage at CMA Fest.

ROI/CTA

- · Generate awareness for the festival
- Allow emerging artists the opportunity to play on a large stage
- Foster home-grown artists in Nashville
- Launch an email campaign with the emails collected from the voters on the CMA Fest App

Duration

Before CMA Fest (Spring 2022)



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