In terms of branding, we’re ahead of the game in the record industry, but not compared to top sports agencies. You can continually raise the bar when you don’t just challenge yourself on music industry competitors.”

EMI Music UK CEO Andria Vidler is no slouch when it comes to smartly teaming up her product with top brands. But even she admits that when it comes to using its content with outside commercial entities, the music industry is behind the curve.

It was an opinion drilled home by Richard Moore, CEO of PR and sponsorship agency Capitalize, at a recent Brand & Music Partnership event at Henley Business School, a master of the institution’s new MBA course for the Music Industry.

Capitalize’s clients include Puma, Bacardi and Ray Ban – and Moore believes that compared to their sporting equivalents, music rights holders are throwing away significant potential income by simply being too choosy.

Moore provided figures from Price Waterhouse Coopers’ Sport & Entertainment Outlook 2013-2015 which showed total sponsorship revenues of £43 billion were available, with sports companies commanding £31 billion of that figure. Music limped home by claiming less than 10% of the total.

“That’s a massive disproportion between music and sport, which to me shows a massive opportunity for you guys,” he said. “In my opinion, music hasn’t even touched the sides.”

“A huge chunk of brand investment in third-party rights is currently with sport – 70%. That should change. The music industry has an opportunity to very aggressively tap that sector, to learn what sport has done over the many years in which it has embraced brand partners, and to apply it to your industry in a way that has your DNA running through it. For me, music should be 70% of the pie.”

Moore said that music rights holders’ attitude to the brands they’re willing to team up with limits the potential revenue being brought into the industry – pointing to financial services and banking as an area with huge potential global sponsorship revenue gains.

“I’m not sure your industry is prepared to embrace them,” he commented. “The insurance sector desperately needs your world – you offer rich and engaging content that allows them to have a dialogue with their consumers about something other than bloody insurance. That’s your strength.

“Are you really prepared to go with those brands? I’m not sure you are yet. All the calls I get from the music sector are ‘What could Puma, Ray Ban or Martini do with us? Great, but they’re sexy and aspirational brands, I don’t get anyone saying ‘What could we do with Thames Water or Aon Insurance’.

Not everyone in the audience agreed that music
FEATURE MUSIC AND BRAND PARTNERSHIPS

"I was with Arsenal FC recently and it really struck me how they presented a five-year plan in minute detail. There are very few artists and managers who are really committed to that [timeline]. That's not a criticism, it's an observation." Peter Palmer, AEG

"Even before Plo Greeng's second album was recorded, he and [manager] Jez Mcdone were talking about how brands could get their music out to a wider audience and be consistent with the artist's values - in live as well as recorded, streaming, etc." Palmer suggested that artists could be shown more of the upsides of brand partnerships by their teams.

Universal Music is one of the few music entities which has engaged with a financial group on a brand partnership level - and done so on a long-term basis. Its global new business director Rob Goydoski said that the company's deal with Société Générale bank in France was initially signed on a three-year basis - and because it is focused on a roster, rather than an artist, it Lessons concerns over individual acts are not being kept on certain conditions. The deal has since been renewed twice over.

"For us it's about building long-term partnerships and using our whole expertise," he explained. "Yes, we provided content and marketing assets [to the client]; showcases, meet and greets and things you'd expect from a label. But the bank was finding it hard to attract new customers.

"Music brings brand awareness, so for everyone who signed up to the new [universal-affiliated] bank account, we got a great Isaac. Traditionally it cost them £30 to attract a new customer. We were able to do it for a fraction of that."}

Many in the room felt that a manager, rather than a label, might be the best party to initially approach an artist with a potential brand deal - especially in cases when a commercial group was keen to work with particular talent.

Lawyers pointed out that artists may not comprehend the finer commitments of a deal unless it's delivered by management alongside a legal rep. They warned that without legal protection from the start of a deal, brands could make career-damaging demands of artists which they were not expecting.

Alexa Case, head of Magna, LLP said he had witnessed global PCFs, he had discussed deals with major artists and end up confused by the limitations of music rights. One such company believed they would be able to ask their customers to remix an artist's work, only to discover it wasn't part of the original agreement.

Others argued that sports teams had the luxury of signing brand deals as a 'brand' themselves, without having to worry about individual opinions as much as the music industry.

Capitalizer's Moore was upbeat about music's potential to improve its brand-affiliation operation in future, but said there may be a cultural obstacle the industry as a whole has to overcome first.

"I look at Radio 1's Hackney Wick, and you seem to be pretty good at giving stuff away," he noted.

"I'm not sure that's actually that sensible in reality. I see free concert tickets, free music on Radio 1, free CDs on magazines. Culturally, brands don't like that too much. At the moment, I'm not sure music as a proposition is doing itself any favours."

Henley's MBA for the Music Industry starts in late September. Visit www.henley.com/mbamusic for more, or contact programme director Helen Gammon directly via helen.gammon@henley.com

looking for a long-term partnership between music and brands

It's all very well saying music companies should be prepared to plan five years in advance on a brand partnership - but is it realistic when the idiosyncratic nature of creative industries are taken into account?

"In an ideal world, of course a long-term approach means more creative ideas but in reality, bands delivering albums is not an exact science," says Ronny Traynor of Vision Artists, which has parlayed the likes of Ellie Goulding, Plan B and Friendly Fires with brands.

"Some take three months, some can take three years. Also, artists evolve and they might not fit a brand in a few years which they go right now. Let's allow bands to plan that they will be in music, and not have to commit to exclusively working with one label or one artist.

"Also, brands should be talking to management rather than labels. Managers have access to artists and know them back to front - what brands they like, when the album's really going to be ready, what football team they support, you name it.

"Labels don't work like that; they sell records and license assets. Sometimes labels see a brand world of selling things they don't have these rights to sell. Managers really are planning long-term now. The best ones are becoming like marketing directors."

Jade Garriott, head of marketing at Bedfosh, adds: "I think having a long-term vision is more important than having a defined five-year strategy. The question of what a band brings and what a brand brings is more relevant right now - you need to work together on an important partnership for both sides.

"Blue chip companies might have a five-year plan, but lots of brands are just receptive to consumers and react to trends - just like an artist or a manager."
NEWS IN BRIEF

NO MORE MR. 'INTERESTING' - STAR BRINGS THE HITS FOR SOLO RETURN

Robbie: never before has so much hinged on one album

Robbie Williams believes that his new album, Take The Crown, will make or break his solo career.

The LP is the star’s first on Universal/Island, after he switched labels last year. His previous eight solo albums were all released on EMI, starting with 1997’s 2.4 million-selling Life Thru A Lens.

Released on November 5, Take The Crown contains tracks including Be A Boy, Shit On The Radio, All That I Want and Losers (featuring Lissie) – plus lead single Candy, co-written with Gary Barlow.

“This is the template for how I should carry on in the future – unless I decide to fuck things up again by being ‘interesting’,” Williams told Music Week.

Basically, now it’s appeared, and we’ve had some reaction, it’s like ‘Oh fuck, yeah, this is what I should have been shooting for’.

The album was recorded in Los Angeles with producer Jacknife Lee, whilst featured orchestra parts were recorded at the Capitol Studios in L.A. As well as Barlow, other co-writers include Australians Tim Metcalfe and Flynn Francis.

They came in and we wrote the album in 10 days,” said Williams. “It has followed like that since Life Thru A Lens, with: Guy [Chambers]. That took 2 weeks to write."

Williams has sold more than 60 million albums in his solo career and won 17 Brit awards – more than any other artist in history.

He rejoined Take That in 2010 and was a key part of their multi-platinum Progress album and record-breaking associated tour – which Williams calls a “busman’s holiday which re-energised me in many, many ways”.

Take The Crown will be Williams’ first album since 2009’s Reality Killed The Video Star, a release which went platinum across Europe, but was also the first solo album of the singer’s solo career not to hit No.1 on the Official UK chart.

Discussing Take The Crown, Williams told Music Week:

“Never in my career has so much hinged on one album. I get this wrong and I’m fucked; I get this wrong and it all goes in another direction.

“Success feels good. When it goes away, it doesn’t feel so good. I’d like to be successful and I’d like to feel good for a bit longer.

“I don’t know how many times I’m going to go to radio and they say, ‘Yay, you’re still young enough and this is still good enough.’ This might be the time they say, ‘We’ve had a rethink…’

“So what I’m saying is, I might get another 10 years out of this [industry], but that kind of depends on this record.

“No-one wants to be a nostalgia artist. I want to keep creating things that I’m emotionally involved with.”

Henley Business School launches one-day seminars

Henley Business School is launching a new series of one-day seminars following the success of a recent Music & Brand Partnership event, CREATIVE DYNAMICS will present a series of seminars and workshops for the music, film, broadcast, content and media industries. It will initially encompass six annual events with a highlights report after each.

The first seminar will arrive on November 7. Called Managing Creatives, it will discuss the environment and culture within organisations.

The news comes ahead of the launch of Henley’s MBA for the Music Industry, which begins later this month.

“Management theory has always focused on traditional organisational structure,” said Henley programme director Helen Gammons (pictured).

“Few companies really embrace creativity and motivate creatives even though their organisation depends on it.”

See page 24 for a report on Henley’s recent Music and Brand Partnerships event