
Teaching Hip Hop Marketing

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Abstract

Hip Hop is the world's most listened to, most pervasive, and therefore most powerful music genre. However, when asked the question – "What is Hip Hop?" – who can give a clear response?

This cultural force bloomed in the decaying corners of the early 1970s, amalgamating diverse sonic sources (funk, disco, R&B, reggae) alongside street art, party culture, and the natural need for youth self-expression. Hip Hop culture emerged as a legitimate avenue for disenfranchised youth to self-discover, connect with others, and access unprecedented economic opportunity.

With this paper and succeeding works, I am seeking to pioneer the academic study of Hip Hop Marketing. This field is as old as the genre itself, evidenced in the cataclysmic event that is recognized as Hip Hop's "Day One," the Campbell family's "Back to School Jam" on August 11, 1973. Party promoter and high school student Cindy Campbell hired her older brother, the popular DJ Kool Herc to DJ a party in their building's community room. Charging 25 cents for ladies' admission for 50 cents for the "fellas," Cindy Campbell was intimately attuned to the potential value of Hip Hop as a commercial enterprise.

Fast forward a half-century and the highest grossing Hip Hop professionals are taking home annual earnings of eight or nine figures. How did Hip Hop rise from a Bronx inferno to become a global phenomenon worth billions of dollars and rising? Furthermore, by examining the topic of Teaching Hip Hop Marketing, we seek to uncover what roles current collegians can play in shaping the expanding Hip Hop marketplace.
