

Case
Study


George Ezra

Authentic UK talent making global waves

George Ezra is undoubtedly one of the biggest breakout UK artists of the last five years. With his distinctive baritone voice and varied musical influences, together with his authentic, honest approach to sharing his music, the Columbia-signed artist has won fans around the world.

Columbia's Head of Marketing, Alex Eden-Smith, explains how, when first working with Ezra, his musical talent and authenticity formed a key strand of the label's initial strategy: "It was very important that he wasn't seen as just another singer-songwriter. He's an incredibly talented guy with a really distinctive voice; the sole aim had to be to bring that out."

Ezra's first single, *Budapest*, reached No. 3 in the UK charts, and made the Top 40 in the US. The single was followed by Ezra's first album, *Wanted On Voyage*, which topped the charts in the UK, broke the Top 20 in the US and went Top 10 in multiple countries. Global sales stood at just over two million in March 2019.

With one album under his belt, and a steadily growing fanbase, Columbia, together with Ezra, began to plan for the follow-up. *Staying At Tamara's*, was released in March 2018. It reached No. 1 in the UK where it was also the biggest-selling artist album of 2018.

Eden-Smith describes the approach to the second campaign: "We continued to highlight his personality, his

natural wit and irreverence, something that comes across effortlessly in his relationship with his fans."

It was this desire to allow Ezra's personality to shine through that led to the idea of developing content that went beyond his music.

"George is a big podcast fan and came up with the idea of producing a series of podcasts where he holds conversations with a range of different musicians (guests included Elton John, Nile Rogers and Ed Sheeran). We

were really keen to support him and made it a centrepiece of the campaign. It allowed him to not only get his personality across but also to bring in the fans of other artists and bring them back to his music. It's an engagement loop, if you like."

Podcasts are just one of the tools in a kit that has had to expand exponentially to meet the demands of a new kind of audience, explains Eden-Smith: "You have to constantly think about the brand-new George Ezra fan who heard their first song yesterday; what's their experience going to be? For them it's a discovery, and you have to give them ways of finding out who George is.

"Ultimately, the most important thing for us was to trust George's instincts – to enable him to create the music he wants to, whilst finding the tools to help him reach a bigger audience. The conversation was never about making him something he's not, but about celebrating and promoting all the best sides of George."



Alongside getting his music out to as many people as possible, the goal was to continue to highlight his personality, his natural wit and irreverence, something that comes across effortlessly in his relationship with his fans.

ALEX EDEN-SMITH
Head of Marketing,
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