



ETHAN S. ALTSHULER

HOT TOPIC

PROCESS BOOK

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IDEATION & RESEARCH

I analyzed Hot Topic's band/music artist line of merchandise through identifying the appropriate target markets based off age demographics and interest in terms of music genres, established artist presence and level of fanbases.

Hot Topic selects a niche of artists, i.e. alternative rock, pop punk or emo, some of whom are mainstream like blink-182, My Chemical Romance, Metallica, along with marketing lesser well-known bands or artists who are only known well within certain demographics and music scenes like the Vans Warped Tour, and markets them on their merchandise with the goal of ultimately increasing their artist presence.

Additionally, this approach helps attract customers who are already fans of those artists, or even fans of rock music in general, by providing them with accessible merchandise, as well as creating the opportunity for new customers to discover these artists and become potential fans.

It was imperative to analyze some of the top trending sellers from Hot Topic's line of music merchandise, specifically emo outfit My Chemical Romance, who have been pioneers in the industry and successfully managed to maintain their presence through merchandise during their six-year disbandment from 2013 to 2019.

IDEATION & RESEARCH

Upon conducting additional research while viewing Hot Topic's brand of artist merchandise both in-store and online, I concluded that a decent portion is predominantly printed on black. Graphic designers take elements from either album covers, affiliated logos or motifs, and aestheticize them in a way that would look presentable to the consumer upon being printed on cotton. i.e., the edges of album covers would be distressed, along with certain environmental elements being added or modified to further enhance the artist's overall theme and mood. Pictured here are visuals of the actual album cover for System of a Down's album Toxicity and Hot Topic's product of merchandise licensed to that album and artist, which has been modified with both an atmosphere and distressed track listing.

ACTUAL ALBUM COVER



REDESIGNED GRAPHIC ON MERCHANDISE





DESIGN DEVELOPMENT

It was crucial to advertise Hot Topic's brand of music artist merchandise in a way that would put people on edge and attract them to shop for this line of merchandise either in-store or online. A lot of music artists, especially those who fit into Hot Topic's primary target audiences of alternative rock, emo, pop punk and metal fans, would stylize their album covers, tour posters or stage backdrops with a torn paper style aesthetic as a way to appropriately match the vibe of their music and brand image. Therefore, it would be wise to be consistent with using that same style aesthetic when advertising this line of merchandise.

Upon creating this ad campaign, it was imperative to use pictures of artist merchandise belonging to iconic classic rock artists whose music and industry presence has spanned for decades and has remained present as of today as a way to reach wider audience demographics besides teenagers and younger adults.

It was also imperative to use black as the primary color of choice for the paper for presentability purposes, especially when promoting these ads on mobile devices, along with having the torn edges be white to distinguish the paper textures from the background images. The same would apply for using a distressed background to replicate the traditional grunge aesthetic upon showcasing the catalog of artist merchandise online.

PROMOTIONAL
AD ROUGHS



PRODUCT PRESENTATION ROUGHS

MY CHEMICAL ROMANCE *MOST TRENDING*



BLACK PARADE T-SHIRT

\$16.73 - \$19.53
XS / SM / MD / LG / XL / 2X / 3X
(Listed in men's sizes)
100% cotton, wash cold; dry low
Available online & in select store locations



BOARD GAMES T-SHIRT

\$16.03 - \$18.83
XS / SM / MD / LG / XL / 2X / 3X
(Listed in men's sizes)
100% cotton, wash cold; dry low
Available online & in select store locations

BROUGHT YOU MY BULLETS TRACKLIST T-SHIRT

\$24.90 - \$28.90
XS / SM / MD / LG / XL / 2X / 3X
(Listed in men's/unisex sizes)
100% cotton, wash cold; dry low
Available online & in select store locations



DANGER DAYS PLANET T-SHIRT

\$16.03 - \$18.83
XS / SM / MD / LG / XL / 2X / 3X
(Listed in men's sizes)
100% cotton, wash cold; dry low
Available online & in select store locations



BLACK PARADE LOGO TIE- DYE T-SHIRT

\$18.83 - \$21.63
XS / SM / MD / LG / XL / 2X / 3X
(Listed in men's/unisex sizes)
100% cotton, wash cold; dry low
Available online & in select store locations



THE BLACK PARADE CREST T-SHIRT

\$16.03 - \$18.83
XS / SM / MD / LG / XL / 2X / 3X
(Listed in men's sizes)
100% cotton, wash cold; dry low
Available online & in select store locations

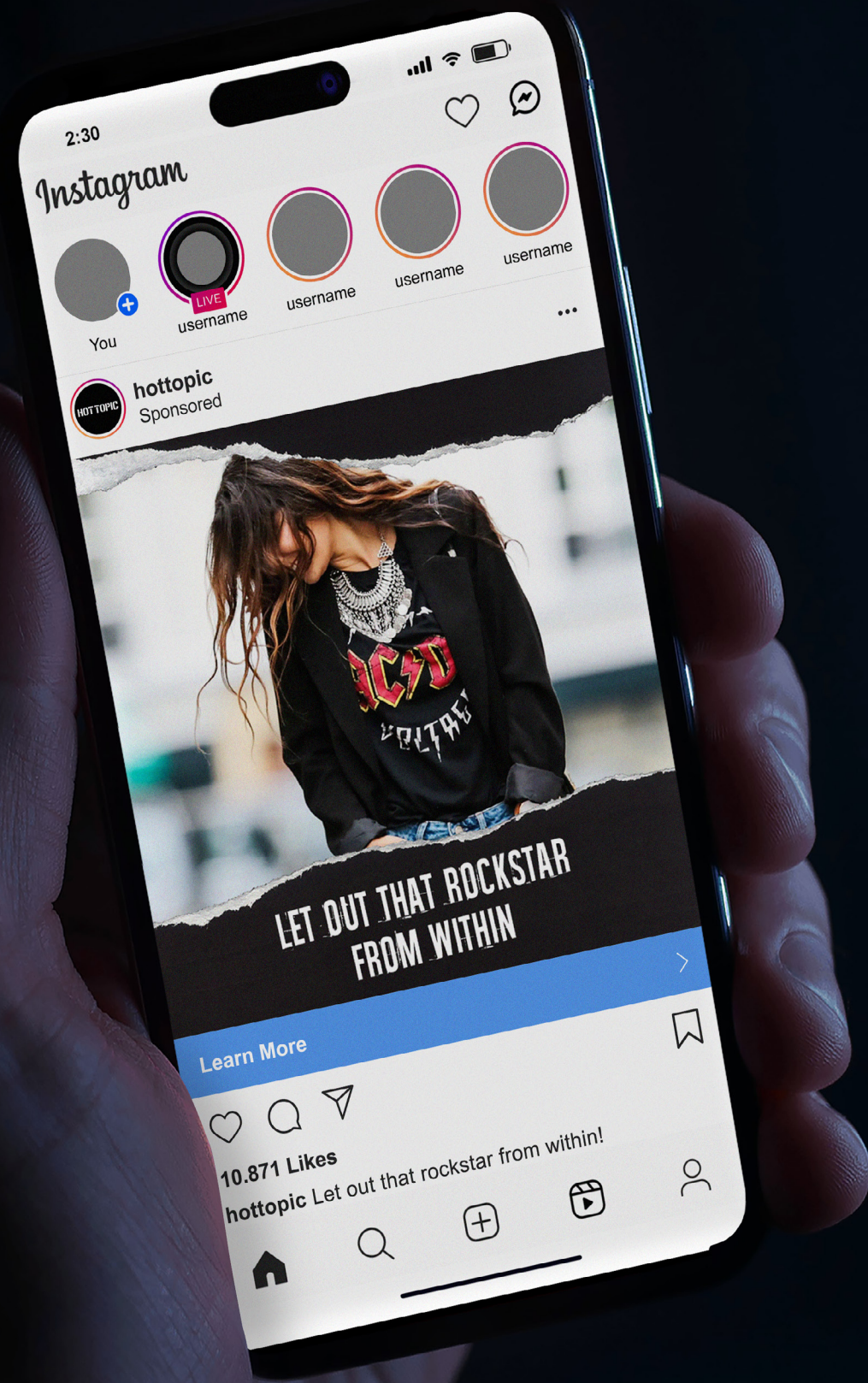
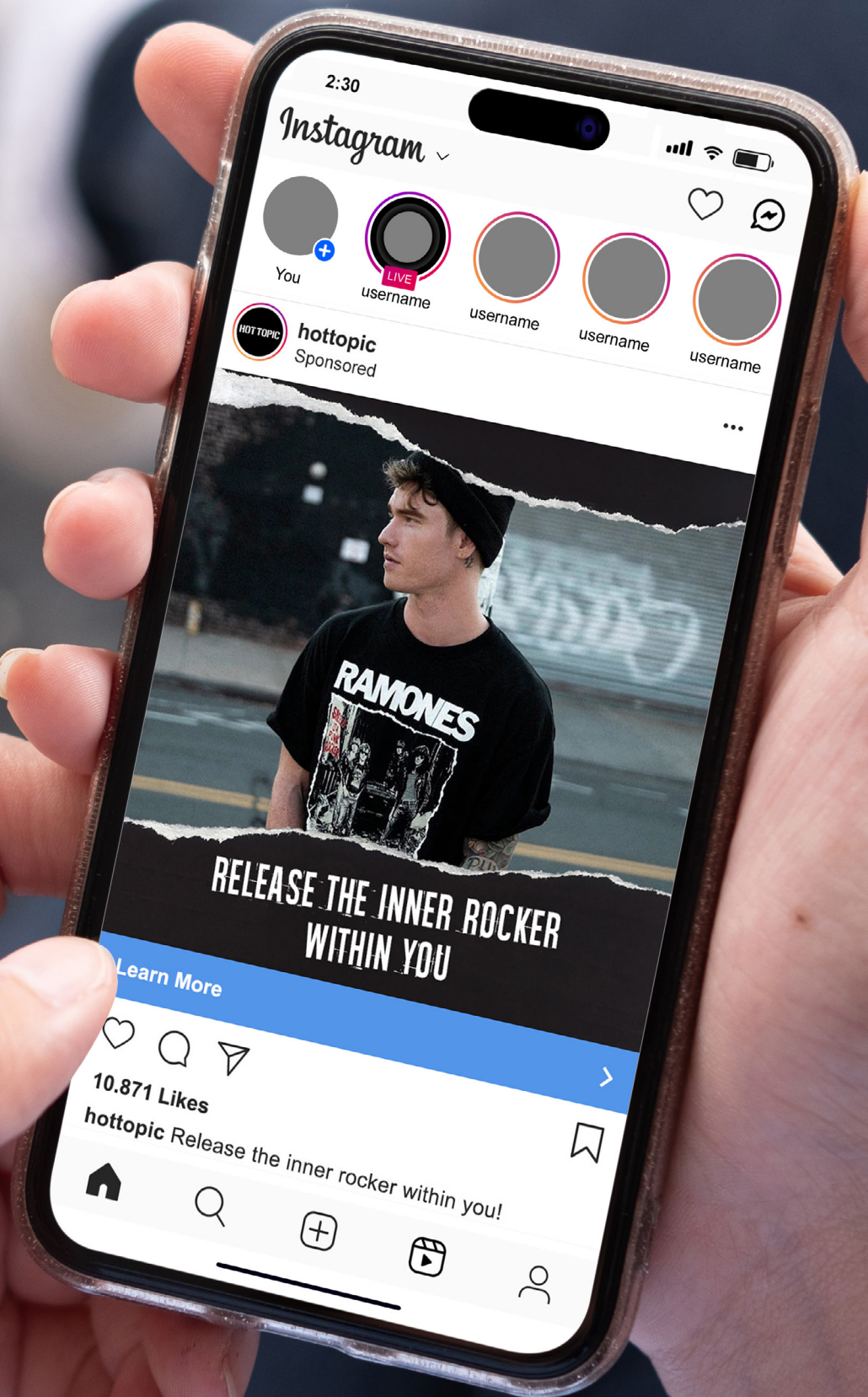
FINAL SOLUTIONS

Consumer engagement was a key factor that played a leading role into the success and effectiveness of the ad campaign for Hot Topic's music artist line of merchandise. I wanted these ads to be easily relatable to fans of rock music and accessible to as many audiences as possible, which is why I chose to launch this ad campaign across social media and have printable posters to display in-store.

A strategic marketing approach would be to use visuals of young models posing as actual rockstars who are not only wearing this line of merchandise, but are also staged in an environment that would accurately reflect the rock scene.

The goal was to not only create awareness in Hot Topic's music artist line of merchandise and drive sales, but to also encourage their target audience to become more expressive with sharing their passion of music and fandom of certain artists.

In other words, I wanted these shirts to have a profound impact on customers that would resonate with them in a way as if they were metaphorically stepping into the same shoes as the rockstars they idolize and channeling that same energy.





BE LIKE THE ARTISTS
YOU ASPIRE TO



HOT TOPIC

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my chemical romance

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Price ▾



BLACK PARADE T-SHIRT

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(Listed in men's sizes)
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BROUGHT YOU MY BULLETS TRACKLIST T-SHIRT

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