



**Case Study:**

Honda – Honda Stage

Year: 2023



This case study was prepared for the client Honda for Honda Stage to find a compelling way to maintain a meaningful connection with younger, first-time buyers. It was developed and designed by Orca. In the Content Creator and Consumer Engagement Strategy category, it won bronze.

## Executive Summary

The COVID-19 pandemic brought on many challenges for Honda. With little-to-no inventory, the brand had to present a plan to appeal to younger, first-time car buyers. With this target market in mind, Honda devised a plan to combine emerging music with cultural authenticity. From this idea, Honda Stage was born.

Bringing together diverse emerging artists with GenZ and Millennial music aficionados, Honda Stage surpassed view benchmarks by 142%, gaining 58.2 million views. The campaign featured a three-day TikTok hashtag campaign starring Rauw Alejandro, which brought 4.9 billion views in the U.S. and sparked the creation of 1.7 million videos. This initiative has led to record engagement, making it Honda's most successful campaign to date.

## Definition of your challenge

The COVID-19 pandemic caused supply chain issues across many industries, particularly including the auto industry. Due to these production setbacks, category inventory was down 50% from the previous year.

While competitor brands such as Toyota and General Motors decided to focus on share of voice, Honda needed to invent a strategy that would engage its younger, culturally refined potential audience in a creative way.

Though the competition was outspending Honda significantly when it came to traditional media channels, Honda had the advantage of earning credibility among 18- to 34-year-olds seeking culture through the media with its collaborations with rising music artists, like Rauw Alejandro.

## The Key Insight & Strategy

First time buyers represent a large portion of Honda's business, and it was imperative to stay connected and engaged with them without Honda's biggest asset, the vehicles. Millennials (25-34) and Gen Z (18-24) account for a large portion of Honda's potential customers. For this reason, staying top of mind with this demographic is of utmost importance. This diverse group has strongly resonated with culture their whole lives and have developed a sharp eye for real content when compared to paid advertisements. Creating a genuine online "moment" that aligns with their passions is key to engaging with them rather than generic ad-like content.

A huge piece of culture within these younger generations revolves around music. This inspired Honda to breathe new life into their already existing music platform by including popular artists in Reggaeton, Rap/Hip-Hop, Latin pop, and many others that already resonate with the younger generation. It was logical to conclude that these generations will engage with something they are so passionate about.

## Execution

Honda Stage set the foundation for the brand to double down on its commitment to hot new emerging artists from diverse sections of different music. The Honda Stage artists and content were curated in order to have something for everyone while also being culturally authentic and engaging. Honda achieved this by partnering with music brands in order to identify the best new up and coming artists. With the artists in place, the next step was getting the content to thrive with engaged fans. Honda also wanted to communicate a level of brand safety whilst maintaining the authenticity of the music in order to still resonate with the young potential buyers of Honda.

One way this was brought to life was by utilizing a three-day Tik-Tok hashtag challenge with the up-and-coming Rauw Alejandro. This challenge featured a 16-count dance and invited young fans to show off their moves. To help this challenge gain traction, we selected five popular Tik-Tok stars of varying walks of life to be a part of the challenge thus pooling together a larger audience.

## Results

Honda Stage exceeded expectations by 142%, achieving 58.1M views over the year compared to 24M views the previous year. The performance of three artists- Rauw Alejandro, Flo Milli and Nathy Peluso- exceeded targets by an impressive 190%, posting a combined total of 43.3M views, attesting to the potency of our tailored content methodology executed via TikTok, Twitter, Instagram, and Snapchat. To illustrate, a three-day TikTok campaign showcased Reggaeton star Rauw Alejandro, attracting a staggering 4.9 billion U.S. views (233% above expected levels) and prompted the creation of 1.7 million videos by his enthusiastic

fans. Beyond achieving fantastic viewership, we kept audiences engaged with an average interaction rate of 1.58%. Overall, Honda was successful in its approach to resonate with young, new drivers, even in the absence of any car sales.

### **Industry Impact**

The most significant insight arose from the devastating effect of COVID on the automotive supply chain (and all other supply chains). Honda, a preferred choice among first-time car buyers, found itself without any product to offer. Nevertheless, it promptly pivoted to deliver a different value to their key consumer segment: genuine cultural importance. Consequently, it has asserted itself as an expert in a field that holds significant relevance for culturally diverse Gen Z and Millennials - the exploration of fresh music. Above all, the crucial lesson from this case is that resonating with diverse audiences through the shared passions and preferences can result in amazing engagement and impact, even when there are no products for sale.