

TOPSPIN[®]

brand/design audit

Presented by
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2013/14

p3.....	1. lay of the land	p30.....	4 summary & suggestions
p4.....	1.1 company overview	p31.....	4.1 summarizing the data
p5.....	1.2 stakeholders	p32.....	4.1.1 summarizing the data
p6.....	1.3 market competition	p33.....	4.2 suggestions: standards guide
p7.....	1.4 current offerings	p34.....	4.3 need for consistency and strength
p8.....	1.5 topspin d2f model	p35.....	4.4 suggestion: logo suite
p9.....	1.6.1 future offerings		
p10.....	1.6.2 future offerings	p36.....	5 example logo suite
		p37.....	5.1 overview
p11.....	2. visual representations	p38.....	5.2 Topspin logo
p12.....	2.1 history of current logo	p40.....	5.3 Toppsin logomark
p14.....	2.2 anatomy of current logo	p42.....	5.4 Platform logo
p15.....	2.3 logos, icons & names	p44.....	5.5 Platform logomark
p16.....	2.4 icon usage	p46.....	5.6 Artistlink logo
p17.....	2.5 identities from online properties	p.48.....	5.7 Artistlink logomark
		p.50.....	5.8 icon sets
p19.....	3 brand identity		
p20.....	3.1 current usage of company name	p.52.....	6 conclusion
p22.....	3.2 internal understanding of company name	p53.....	6.1 going forward
p24.....	3.3 internal understanding o company's brands		
p26.....	3.4 employee clarity of brand standards		
p27.....	3.4.1 employee clarity of brand standards		
p28.....	3.4.2 employee clarity of brand standards		



***H**ere's a snapshot of Topspin to date. Who we are, who we serve, what we offer, our competition and where we're going next...*

1. lay of the land

Topspin Media is made up of a passionate group of music lovers, film nerds, marketers, and developers who wake up every day inspired to help artists find new fans, promote their work, and sell new products. Our mission is to create an artistic middle class.

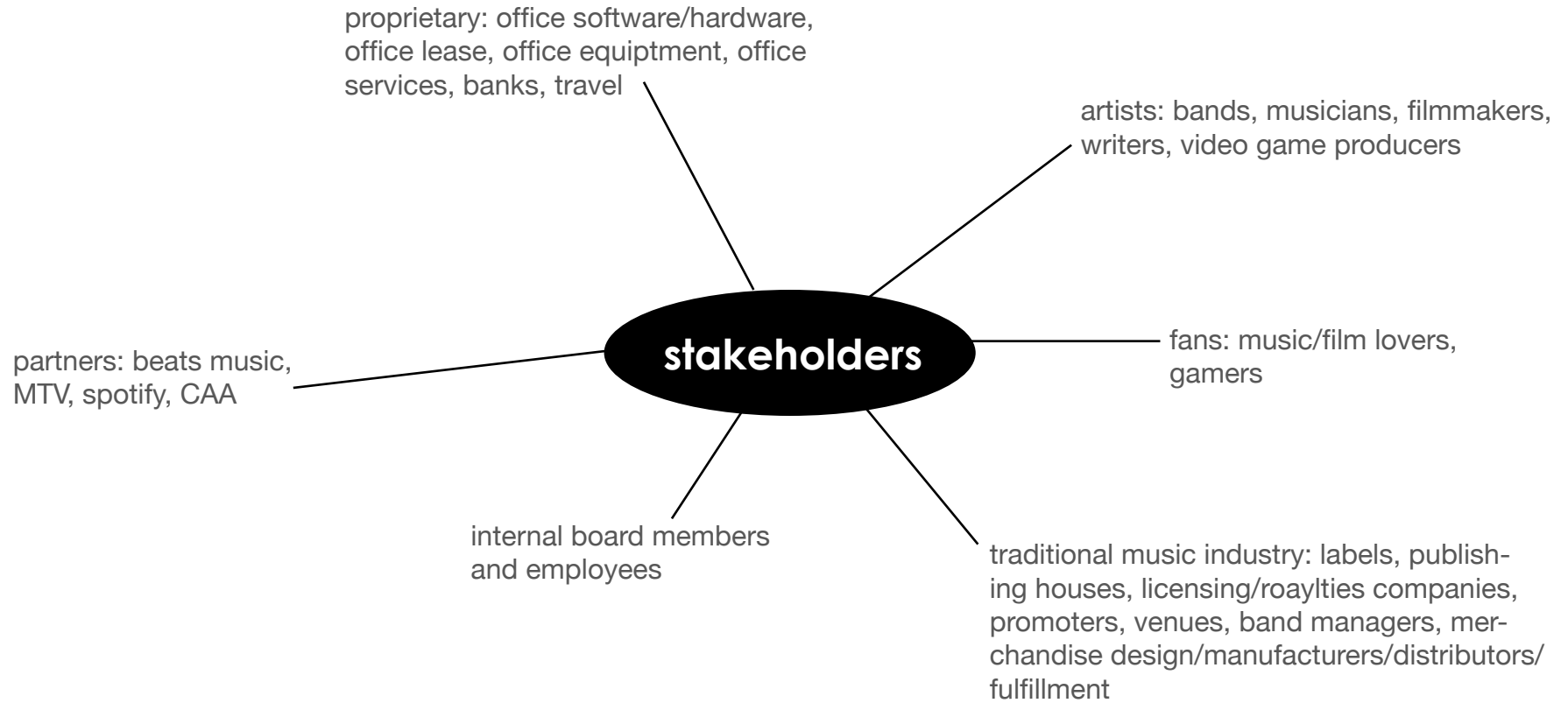
Nielsen recently estimated that the music industry is losing as much as \$2.7 billion in overall value by not better targeting music fans with more creative products. The Internet has created an attention economy, where distribution is easy but attention is scarce. Success is now determined by the strength of an artist's connection to their audience. At Topspin Media, we build software for artists to establish lasting and meaningful relationships with fans, communicate with them around the web, and sell far higher-value products in return.

Topspin Media offers full service from our in-house agency, Creative Services. Topspin's Creative Services manages campaign production from start to finish - executing campaigns from the idea phase through to fulfillment. We partner with Alliance for merchandise fulfillment needs and work with promoters and box offices for ticketing.

After years in the business we've identified the value of Topspin users and our artists' fans. In an online world filled with "noise" Topspin artists' fans are responsive and dedicated to supporting bands who choose the direct-to-fan model. Topspin Media is continuously building more effective ways for artists to reach and share with this active demographic.

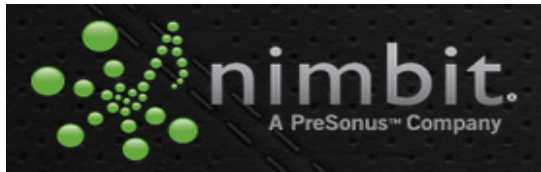
Topspin is dedicated to offering tools to artists for free and will always continue to do so. As an artist's fanbase grows Topspin's tiers grow with them. Artists big and small are able to pull value from the Topspin Media suite of tools and services. If it's creating new fans or reaching a large existing fanbase - Topspin Media offers the most industry-competitive solutions on the market.

Topspin Media is made up of 6 board members, twenty five fulltime employees, several freelance designers, developers and a few paid interns. At roughly thirty members and growing Topspin Media is music and film creators/lovers who genuinely devote themselves to helping artists grow their fan base and make money.



lay of the land

1.2 stakeholders



While the market is becoming more crowded, Topspin Media has seven years of experience in building and marketing powerful, effective direct-to-fan tools. It is the most visible of the companies who offer D2F - due in part to the highly public profile of Ian Rogers - and has become a thought leader in the digital arena. Topspin is an efficient marketing machine, offering best practices and case studies to showcase its expertise.

However Topspin Media definitely has competition. Bandcamp appears to have some advantages: it has a small staff and has kept overhead low, it does not charge a monthly fee and it has built a strong, grass roots following by continuously improving the product based on user feedback. Nimbit and ReverbNation both have long histories and a good amount of expertise. Bandbox and Root Music offer plug-ins/widgets that operate similarly to some of Topspin's. Google has recently presented Artist Hub through Google Play which offers a thorough platform for artists to sell on through Android devices. For die-hard indie DIY D2F fans CashMusic is a striking option run by artists for artists and not-for-profit.

lay of the land
1.3 market competition

Brands:

Topspin / Topspin Media: *Company Name/s*

ArtistLink: *Software --the control panel connecting your music, videos, and products to music sites and services world-wide. It also includes tools to drive traffic to your website and other places on the web where new fans are found, no coding required. In early stage of offering an ad exchange program as well as paid ads.*

Topspin Platform: *Software --The direct-to-fan sales and marketing platform chosen by creative professionals who want to promote and sell films, albums, merch, tickets & more.*

Services:

Creative Services: *In-House Agency --working with the biggest artists in the world to produce high performance direct-to-fan efforts top to bottom.*

From strategy, creative design, fan club ticketing and management to 100%-of-house ticketing and holistic online marketing.

Fulfillment: *Pro fulfillment for everyone. No kitchen tables.*

Whether you ship 100 orders per minute or per year, we've got you covered with the best infrastructure and experience in the business. Every Topspin plan can use the same warehouse as artists like Kid Rock, The Aristocrats, Beastie Boys and Amanda Palmer. We get orders to your fans quickly and take care of any support issues along the way.

Labs:

Postage: *Send automated emails after purchase.*

Inventory Report: *Create email alerts for low stock and view all physical inventory*

Bleach: *HTML Email For Media widget*

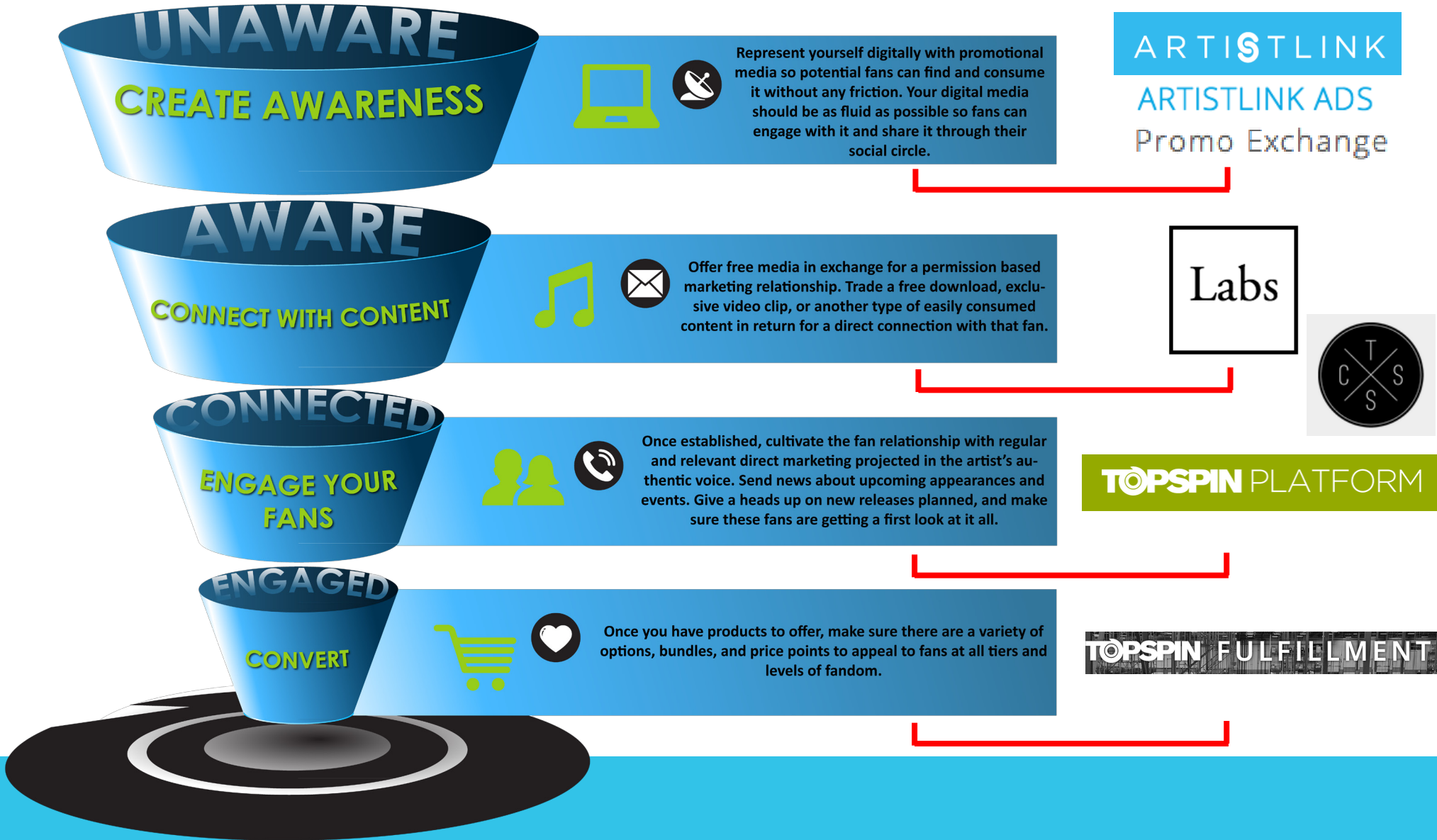
Download Anywhere: *Set your Email for Media widget to download or confirm from anywhere.*

Link Builder: *Creates share links*

iFrame Anywhere: *Create a link that will pop open an iFrame on top of any page on the web.*

TicketScan: *Topspin's iPhone ticket scanner*

lay of the land
1.4 current offerings



lay of the land
1.5 topspin d2f model

Set to launch: self-serve ad buying platform



Topspin Media has grown to be able to offer ads. The current beta launch includes promo-exchange which allows artists to swap ads on each others' pages to grow their fan bases and earn points toward more free impressions as well as paid ads that can be ordered through the company's sales team. Soon the purchasing of ad and various placement packages will be automated. On top of that they are working with Spotify and Beats Music to offer merchandise sales placement directly inside these two streaming apps.

lay of the land
1.6.1 future offerings



ARTISTLINK

PROMOTE YOUR MERCH ON SPOTIFY

Vinyl + Download

[HTTP://ARCADEFIRE.COM](http://arcadefire.com)

REUPLOAD IMAGE

GET STARTED

PREVIEW

Direct from Arcade Fire
Vinyl + Download

Buy Now

YOUR PROMOTIONS ON SPOTIFY:

Official Merchandise

Direct from Arcade Fire
Vinyl + Download

On Tour

OCT 29
Arcade Fire with The Reflektors at Venue TBC (October 29, 2013)
Venue TBC, Los Angeles, CA, US

Albums

The Suburbs Deluxe 2011

1	The Suburbs	5:15
2	Ready to Start	4:16
3	Modern Man	4:40
4	Rapoco	3:57
5	Empty Room	2:52
6	City With No Children	3:12

Recommended Demarco

Paul McCartney View Spotify Profile
Followers 305,161

Overview Related Artists Biography

Popular

01 Live And Let Die 4,113,899
02 Save Us 219,930
03 Queen's Eye 252,233
04 New 475,462
05 Ringo 22,185

Official Merchandise

Direct from Paul McCartney
Wings Logo Tee

Buy

Profile

EMINEM Buy Merch

Follow

DISCOGRAPHY

LATEST RELEASE

BERZERK ART T-SHIRT
Exclusively from Eminem

Buy



Set to launch: artist merch offers on Spotify & Beats

lay of the land

1.6.2 future offerings

What is the current look of Topspin?
Where do these names, logos, styles and icons live?

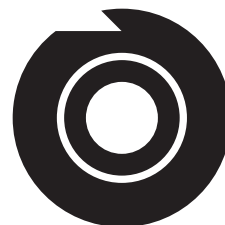


2. visual representation



TOPSPIN™

When Topspin first began the pink and black header logo was created by Peter Brambl. The original Topspin Platform was built with lots of black and pink that matched with this logo.



The Topspin icon was taken from the main logo and used as a substitute logo when an icon was required. (Today this icon is being used frequently in many places from being a placeholder in e4m's to the site's favicon to the site's loading throbber.)

2007

2009

2010

2011

Once the company had more resources they simplified the color scheme of the Topspin Platform UX. The new back-end had blue accents that in turn were used in the new logo.



TOPSPIN

In 2011 Topspin launched GoDirect which was a project to overhaul the original Topspin Platform. Programming deficiencies left this project flat and from then on the office has all but banned the use of the Lobster font.

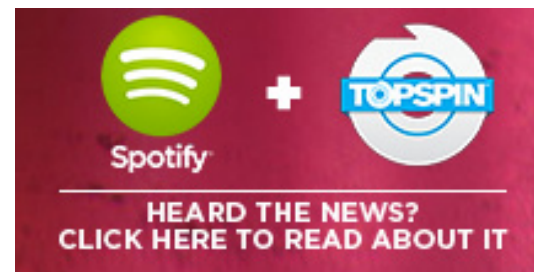


TOPSPIN *GoDirect*

visual representation
2.1 history of current logo



The round logo with the topspin text going through it was used for a marketing campaign in the fall of 2011. Up until now it has had little use but currently resides on the website alongside the Spotify logo showcasing the Spotify/Topspin partnership.



2011


As Artistlink developed a strange triangle occurred; there was Topspin (company), Topspin (software) and Artistlink (software). It became clear that there needed to be distinction. Though not thought of as an official logo this treatment is used exclusively on the current site for Topspin Platform.

TOPSPIN PLATFORM

2013

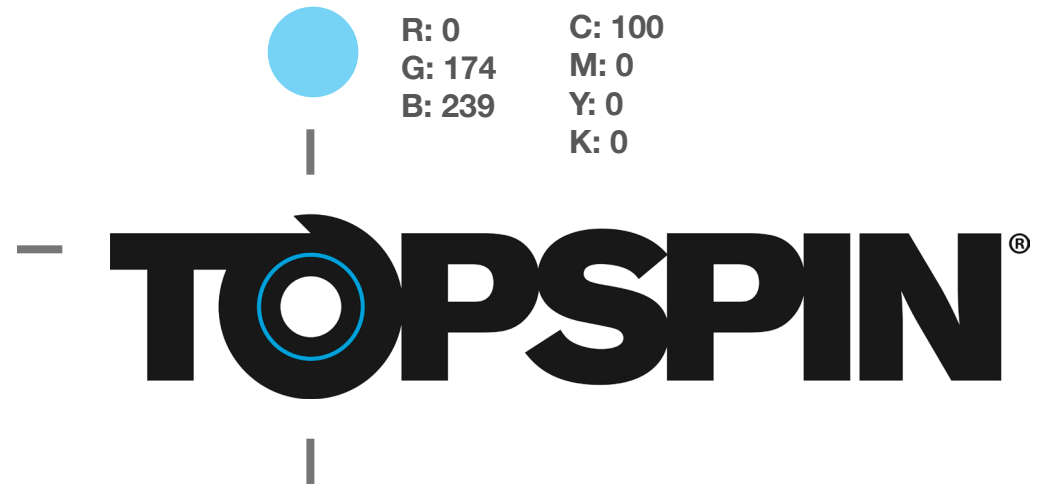
Though GoDirect didn't land Artistlink was erected from its ashes. With a new team of developers Artistlink is quickly becoming Topspin's leading product.

ARTISTLINK
BY **TOPSPIN**

top·spin/'tāp,spin/ *noun*

1. a fast forward spinning motion imparted to a ball when throwing or hitting it, often resulting in a curved path or a strong forward motion on rebounding.

Gotham celebrates the attractive and unassuming lettering of the city. Public spaces are teeming with handmade sans serifs that share the same underlying structure, an engineer's idea of "basic lettering" that transcends both the characteristics of their materials and the mannerisms of their craftsmen. They're the matter-of-fact neon signs that announce liquor stores and pharmacies, and the proprietors' names painted majestically on the sides of trucks. These letters are straightforward and non-negotiable, yet possessed of great personality, and always expertly made. And although designers have lived with them for half a century, they remarkably went unrevived until 2000, when Hoefler & Frere-Jones introduced Gotham.



The Topspin icon represents a spinning motion

visual representation
2.2 anatomy of current logo

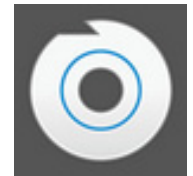
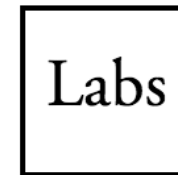
TOPSPIN[®]



TOPSPIN PLATFORM



ARTISTLINK



ARTISTLINK
BY **TOPSPIN**

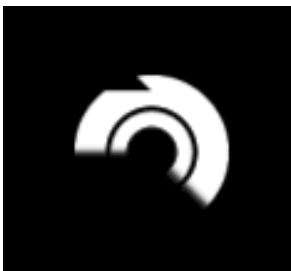


TOPSPIN FULFILLMENT

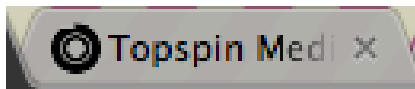
ARTISTLINK ADS

Promo Exchange

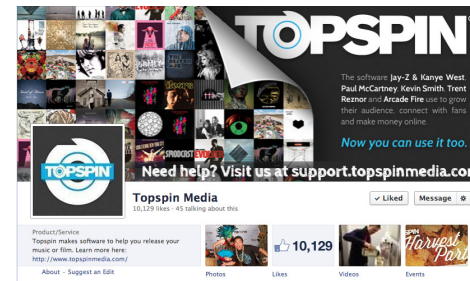
visual representation
2.3 logos, icons & names



Loading Throbber



Favicon

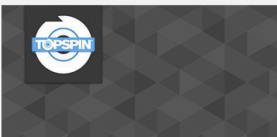


Facebook Icon



YouTube

- Popular on YouTube
- Music
- Sports
- Gaming
- Education
- Movies
- TV Shows
- News
- Live
- Spotlight



topspinmedia's channel

Home Videos Discussion About Search

CHANNELS FOR YOU

YouTube Icon



ArtistLink Support
@ArtistLinkHelp

This Twitter is for reporting support issues to ArtistLink, which powers the Artists.MTV platform.
Santa Monica, CA · support.topspingodirect.com

Twitter Icon 2



Topspin
@topspinmedia

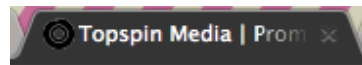
Topspin is a technology platform for direct-to-fan marketing, management, and distribution. For customer support, please go to t.opsp.in/fansupport
Santa Monica · topspinmedia.com

Twitter Icon

visual representation
2.4 icon usage

Logos From Home Website:

<http://topspinmedia.com/>



Logos From Artistlink Website:

<http://www.artistlink.com/>



ARTISTLINK ADS
Promo Exchange



ArtistLink Administrator

Last updated 12 days ago

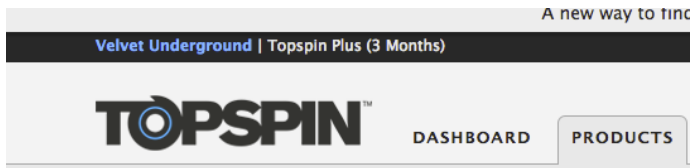


visual representation
2.5 identities from online properties

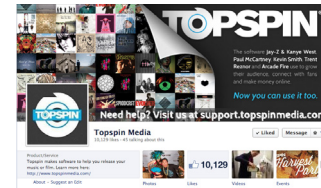
Logos From the App:

Identity on Social Media Sites:

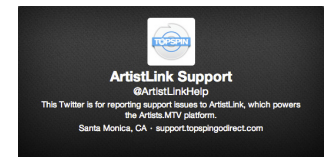
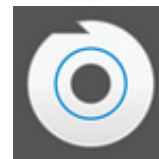
<https://app.topspin.net/admin>



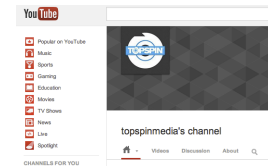
<https://www.facebook.com/TopspinMedia>



<https://twitter.com/topspinmedia>



<http://www.youtube.com/>



<http://vimeo.com/topspinuser/topspinmedia>



visual representation



How is Topspin brand being interpreted? Are the visual standards communicated to and being adhered to by employees? Is there consistency and strength in the brand?

3. brand identity

WAR OF THE NAMES

Topspin Media

mostly used for web address, email address, official business name

©2013 Copyright Topspin Media, All Rights Reserved

Stakeholders, i
ies like **Topspin Media** and Ba
to be the domain of record lab
ong them. But unlike most of t



Topspin Media
November 15



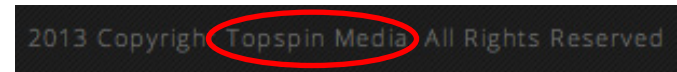
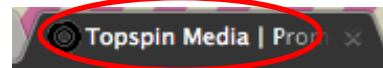
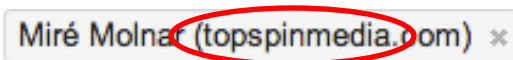
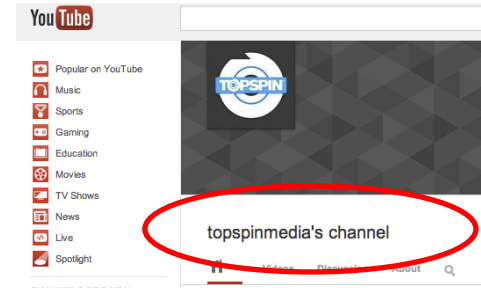
Topspin Media

What is your refund policy?
Jonny Young October 08, 2012 • Merchandise / Refunds

Trying to unsubscribe?
Miranda Degnan Feb 22 • Memberships / Signing Up And Getting Started

Tracking information is unavailable
Miranda Degnan Feb 22 • Merchandise / Where's My Stuff?

Am I purchasing through a secure website?
Brad Barrish December 15, 2011 • Payment / Purchasing

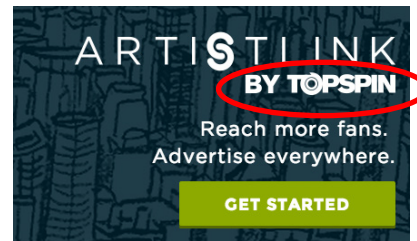
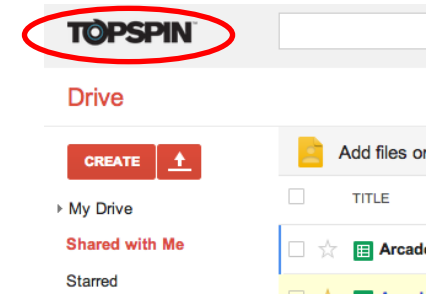
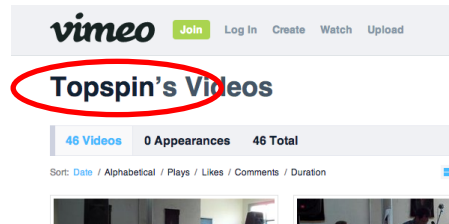
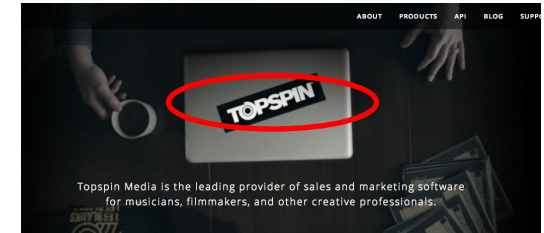
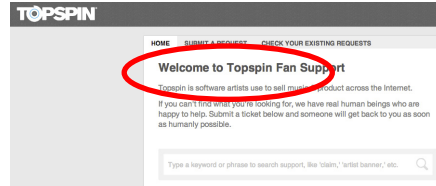


brand identity

3.1 current usage of company name

vs. Topspin

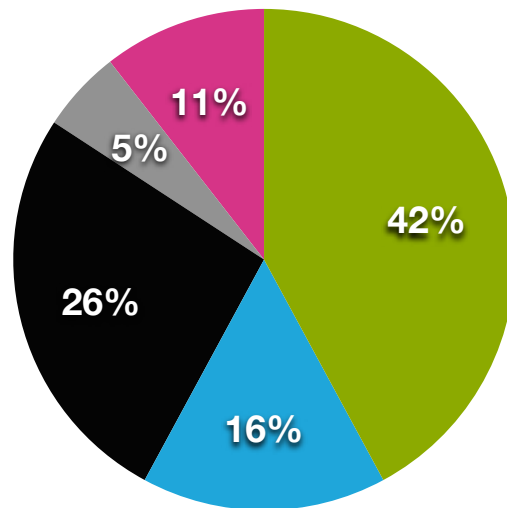
most used internally, logo, casual, most known for



brand identity

Of the 25 employees and 3 interns - 20 responded to the question:

What are the different instances where you would use
“Topspin Media” over “Topspin?”




- Topspin Media for Professional use vs. Topspin for Casual use
- Topspin Media is used when context is needed
- Topspin Media = Company / Topspin = Product
- Topspin Media IS the real company name
- I never use Topspin Media

brand identity

3.2 internal understanding of company name

The majority of employees answered that:
Topspin Media was for Professional use
and **Topspin was for casual use.**

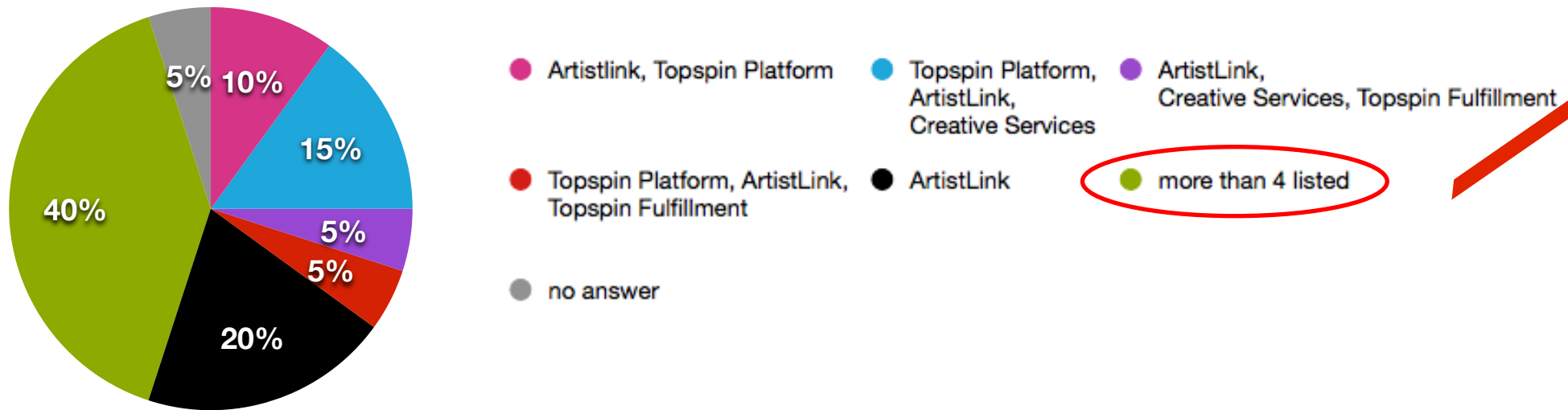


However the true history of the name is that the domain name, topspin.com, was already taken so topspinmedia.com was used instead as the company's url.

brand identity

Of the 25 employees and 3 interns - 20 responded to the question:

Name all the Topspin “Sub” Brands.



brand identity

3.3 internal understanding of company's brands

The majority of employees answered with over 4 different “sub”brand names such as:



“Topspin
Topspin Creative Services
ArtistLink
ArtistLink Exchange
ArtistLink Advertising Program”

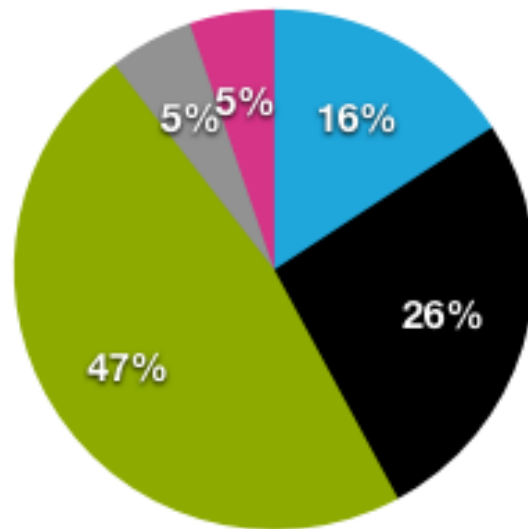
“Topspin
Topspin V1, or Topspin Platform
ArtistLink
ArtistLink Promo Exchange
Topspin Fulfillment
Topspin Creative Services
Topspin Labs”

“Topspin media
Topspin Labs
Artistlink by Topspin
Tickets by Topspin
Powered by Topspin
Powered by Artistlink
alex (Artistlink Exchange)
Promo Exchange”

“Topspin Platform
ArtistLink
PromoExchange
GoDirect”

brand identity

There have been 3 different usages of the Topspin Fulfillment stamp on recent colateral. When asked which version they would use, 20 of 25 employees and 3 interns answered:



● Option 1

TOPSPIN
FULFILLMENT

● Option 2

TOPSPIN FULFILLMENT

● Option 3

TOPSPIN
FULFILLMENT

● Don't have enough info to answer

● Both 1 and 3

brand identity

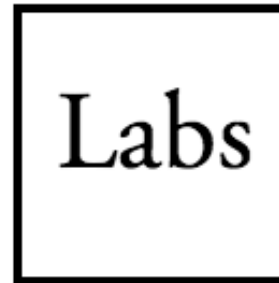
3.4 employee clarity of brand standards

Most employees chose option 3 however there is no company standard in place for this company service. The 3 options shown on the left slide all have existed or currently exist on topspinmedia.com

Below are 5 more Topspin services that employees may benefit from referring to a brand standards guide before deploying:

ARTISTLINK ADS
Promo Exchange

TOPSPIN PLATFORM



brand identity

3.4.1 employee clarity of brand standards

When is the appropriate time to use the Topspin icon below? Explain why?



Favicon or App

For knowledge based articles or older Topspin articles.

Perhaps easier to explain an inappropriate time to use the icon. This just reminds me of V1. Simple and perhaps even a little plain. I would not use this in a sales deck, since it's not as eye-catching as others.

Email Signature

Never on its own. Its not identifiable

ONLY IN SPACE-RESTRICTED USE.

Like always because it is rad and can be used in big or small areas.

When you are within our property already and it is just a branding / iconography standpoint.

Most places, I would expect it to be used in conjunction with our name.

**Never used it.
Don't know.**

brand identity

3.4.2 employee clarity of brand standards

WHEN YOU NEED TO REPRESENT THE COMPANY
AS A SYMBOL IE TWITTER ICON

Never, not clear enough, I was going to say as an icon image but our brand is not that well-known.

I love this icon without any blue in it. It's simple, clean and distinguishable. I feel like it's appropriate to use the icon below all over the place - particularly when someone is already inside of a Topspin workflow/product/lab/etc.

**Most likely never.
Never seen a style guide
so can't really comment.**

not sure.

Software applications, technical docs, favicons, terms, business communications, etc. Serious Topspin.

*For websites using our services as a link to?
I am horrible at this survey. I don't get involved with our sites.*

It would be appropriate in situations where the "Topspin" text logo would not fit – e.g. a website favicon, an email-profile image, or at the footer of a text heavy document.

brand identity



Lets gather around this information
and see what it means.

summary & suggestions

In an environment of competing D2F companies Topspin Media stands out by offering comprehensive tools and services that turn the unaware into engaged fans. Topspin's platform is powerful and our corporate culture is both nurturing and innovative. Because of this solid foundation (and by attracting a talented crew) development, partnership and growth are not only possible but sustainable too.



summary & suggestions
4.1 summarizing the data

With so much focused product scalability in the works at Topspin the visual representation is comparatively muddled. The fast pace of a start-up company doesn't lend itself to thorough brand design research and development. By demand, many quickly created logo like add-ons have been implemented to the Topspin "visual suite" with no working style guides for employees to reference.

Examples:



Two currently live ads from the same campaign in 2013/14 using two different company names

summary & solutions
4.1.1 summarizing the data

solution 1.

A brand standards and style guide consisting of all rules around logo usage and complete with locked ai files and/or png's of all approved logos would be most helpful for employees to reference before deploying a new comp, ad or website adjustment.

At this stage in the company's history, it is understandable that logos have been made quickly to fit immediate company needs. However demand is growing for visual representation of Topspin products across multiple platforms and going forward brand strength and consistency will be an ever present need.

solution 2.

A flexible and scalable logo suite could solve existing issues of brand confusion and concurrently guide future designers when quick logo design solutions are needed. Ideally this suite would identify all the sub-brands under the Company's main "Topspin" brand umbrella.



example logo suite

I created this logo suite with scalability and flexibility in mind. By scalability and flexibility I mean that the image would be as strong in a small favicon format as it would in a billboard format. Similarly that it would be just as strong seen as simply it's icon set without logos or just the logos alone without the icons. Different outputs call for different applications and strength of brand should not be effected by these varying needs. Lastly this suite is built to grow with the company and the rules put in place for the sub-brands could be used on future sub-brand logos. Consistency, strength and flexibility - by design...

TOPSPIN

TOPSPIN

example logo suite
5.2 Topspin Logo

The new Topspin logo is exactly like the current logo except that it has the inner circle removed. This change was made so as to be more scalable in both size and usage. The current logo's small inner circle within the Topspin "O" was getting lost at small a small scale.



example logo suite



example logo suite
5.3 Topspin Logomark

The new Topspin logomark is clean and simple. Just the iconic circle with the “in motion” notch cut-out at the top with a flat, black finish and the simple, bold Topspin logo cut-out in the middle. This is the lead Logomark from the Topspin logo suite that the family of sub-brand logos are sourced from.

example logo suite

PLATFORM
BY **TOPSPIN**

example logo suite
5.4 Platform Logo

Despite the fact that it's the original software/meat and potatoes app that Topspin was built upon, Topspin Platform (or "V1" as it's called around the office) does not have it's own official logo treatment to date.

Using the existing approved Artistlink logo as a model the Platform logo has been built to match with a rounded Gotham font and a record like icon in place of the "O" like the Artistlink "S."

example logo suite



example logo suite

5.5 Platform Logomark

The Platform logomark in flat Cyan is congruent with the Topspin logomark utilizing the notched “in-motion” circle with simply the Platform logo cut out of the middle.

example logo suite

ARTISTLINK
BY TOPSPIN

example logo suite
5.6 Artistlink Logo

This is a slightly modified version of the original Artistlink logo. The “S” in Artistlink is derived from the same shape of the Topspin Icon (sans the “in motion” notch as well as the same shape in the Platform Icon. Drawing a parallel between the logos as well as reinforcing the vinyl record iconography.

example logo suite



example logo suite
5.7 Artistlink Logomark

The Artistlink logomark in flat “Topspin green” reflects both the Topspin and Platform logomarks with a slightly different variation of the Artistlink logo cut-out in the middle. The size of the “By Topspin” matches the Platform’s logomark. The linked records that make up the “S” are made much thinner so as to be visible when small.

example logo suite



example logo suite
5.8 Icon Sets

Icon sets for favicons, throbbers, placeholders and various other collateral needs.

example logo suite



conclusion

To conclude, Topspin has a strong office culture and has powerful products that stand out in the market. A design solution that gives foundational sturdiness to the umbrella company brand (Topspin) and builds the two sub-brands (Platform and Artistlink) from this structure - will strengthen the Topspin brand and draw parallels between the two products.

Once this design solution has been determined, a standards guide outlining how to use and how *not* to use the official logos and collateral treatments would need to be created and given to staff - replacing all their current logos on file. All logos and treatments that were previously live would need to be switched over to the new ones replacing

them. Lastly a quick press release about the launch would give the brand a bit of attention and would acknowledge the new visual direction.

Perhaps to some this seems like a lot of work for what might seem like simply creating visual consistency. To this argument I would rebut that in a world where icons are rapidly becoming a universal language it is even more important than ever to be visually represented in a strong, quick simplified way. Ideally the Topspin brand would be identifiable in under one second as a favicon or on a billboard and logo suite would have the ability to grow with the company.