

Advocating on Behalf of Music Creators

An Interview with Lisa Farris, Chief Digital Officer, Recording Academy

EDITORS' NOTE Lisa Farris oversees the evolution of the organization's digital media platforms and supports its mission through omni-channel strategies and execution. Prior to joining the Recording Academy, Farris served as Chief Digital and Brand Officer for MetricVision; Co-Founder of Get This, a technology that leveraged audio recognition to shop video entertainment; Chief Marketing Officer for Move, Inc.; Senior Vice President of Strategic Marketing at Universal Music Group's eLabs; and Vice President of Strategic Marketing and New Media at MCA Records. Farris currently serves as a mentor for entrepreneurship students at Loyola Marymount University and advises a summer financial literacy program taught to high school pupils by the University's students. She holds a degree in marketing and economics from Rutgers University.



Lisa Farris

Will you provide an overview of the Recording Academy and how you define its mission?

The Recording Academy is dedicated to ensuring that recording arts remain an indelible part of our shared cultural heritage. We advocate on behalf of music creators and honor music's history while investing in its future through education. We support the music community in times of need through MusiCares, and every year we celebrate artistic excellence with the GRAMMY Awards.

Will you highlight the evolution of the organization's digital media platforms?

As a 63-year-old organization, there have been several iterations as digital media evolved. During the 20 months I have led digital media, our focus has been on enhancing insights and analytics, while connecting audiences with the core tenants that drive our purpose across digital platforms. This includes leveraging our social channels and GRAMMY.com, in addition to creating successful digital campaigns, such as Behind The Record, to support our focus around advocacy, celebration, education and service.

What are the keys for the Recording Academy to transform and innovate digital experiences?

As a membership organization, the Recording Academy's main objective is to support and celebrate music while amplifying the voices of creators. Our digital experiences are primarily nested in these objectives. We leverage digital transformation and innovation to improve productivity and effectively reach and engage music audiences while pursuing new opportunities for the Academy and its members.

How is the Recording Academy creating innovative ways for music creators to thrive during the pandemic?

This past March, the Recording Academy moved quickly to create the COVID Relief Fund with MusiCares in order to support the music community during a time when significant sources of income, such as live music, had been postponed indefinitely. MusiCares was able to help tens of thousands of people, with many companies and artists giving back by hosting digital events and live-stream performances, as well as developing digital donation platforms.

Our advocacy team and MusiCares worked around the clock to support creators, ensuring that information and resources were disseminated through webinars and social media. In late April, we realized that the pandemic would last longer than anticipated, but that this unprecedented time also presented opportunities for the music community to explore. Utilizing new technologies and leveraging digital growth opportunities, we created the Pro>Sessions in collaboration with Berklee's Institute for Creative Entrepreneurship. The Pro>Session series has reached an average of 30,000 people per session. The series brings together technology, platforms and new approaches while highlighting artists and creators who are using this time to innovate and create new revenue.

How important has it been for the Recording Academy to build relationships with technology partners to further drive innovation and improve experiences across all digital touchpoints?

We're constantly collaborating with technology companies who are innovative and have a shared vision that supports music creators. Candidly, there have been many tech companies who have tried to build their businesses off the backs of music creators or have used music as a loss leader. We actively support and work with those who actually value music and creators.

How do you measure success for the Recording Academy's digital initiatives and how critical are metrics to track impact?

This past year, our insight and analytics team built a platform called Symphony, which leverages tableau to display insights. The Symphony dashboard collects more than a half a million data points that provides our marketing team and organization with insight and business intelligence, which allows us to track impact and make informed decisions. ●

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