
**WHAT
AUDIENCES DID
VANS UNLOCK
FROM 23 YEARS
OF SPONSORING
WARPED TOUR?**



Vans was founded in 1966 by the brothers Paul and Jim van Doren alongside Gordon Lee and Serge Delia, together they released the first Vans skateboard shoe under the simple name “#44”. Over fifty years later with a business revenue of \$2.9bn recorded in 2017, Vans has become an international youth footwear staple.

From the offset, Vans was always credible within, and purchased by, the skateboarding community, but the brand recognised that their existing strategy would not facilitate brand awareness with mainstream audiences. In the mid 90’s, Vans entered into one of the most successful music-led brand partnerships ever, which was undeniably a huge contributor on the brand’s journey toward achieving global recognition.

When Kevin Lyman kicked off the first Warped Tour in June 1995 in Boise, Idaho, he had no idea he was launching what would become the world’s most iconic youth music festival. Ahead of the festival’s second year, both Vans and Calvin Klein approached Lyman with partnerships in mind - Lyman chose to reject the fashion behemoth in favour of the skate shoe brand.

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THE WORLD’S MOST ICONIC YOUTH FESTIVAL

CREATING THE VANS WARPED TOUR, COMMENCED A 23-YEAR JOURNEY



At the time, Vans had ambitions to continue building the brand but had identified the need for a crossover platform that would allow Vans to be seen by a bigger section of the youth market without alienating the skateboard scene. Becoming the headline partner and creating the Vans Warped Tour, commenced a 23-year journey, enabling Vans to build a credible association with music and share some of its skateboarding culture with a broader audience. Vans' involvement along with other youth culture brand partners such as KINC client, Monster Energy, not only helped to keep ticket prices low, but also facilitated an initiative where attendees could bring their parents in for free, enabling attendance by first-time festival goers and cautious parents as well as 'Rad Dads'. Vans started the festival program at 11am and finish at 8:30pm, again with the younger audience in mind.

In its first year the festival had focused on electric alternative rock, but in the years that followed the genres expanded and bands like Bad Religion, No Doubt, Blink-182 and even Katy Perry, travelled extensively and built their name as part of the Warped Tour. Vans slowly became synonymous with the bands and music genres that were featured at Warped Tours and on the flip side, the Warped Tour began featuring half pipes and skateboard demos. Vans became the Warped Tour essential shoe and year by year, Vans grew to become the lifestyle shoe as we know it today.



Consistency played a massive part in Vans' successful association with the Warped Tour. Being a partner for 23 years and activating the festival brand across the US and globally, ensured youth audiences in multiple key markets were exposed to and experienced Vans' perspective on music. Vans contributed stages, branded tents for fans to meet their favourite artists, stickers and other giveaways and importantly created partnerships with key bands, allowing them to create their own shoe designs to be sold in stores.

The combining of longevity, brand authenticity and connecting to people emotionally have been the staples to Vans' activation of their Warped Tour partnership. Youth audiences who experienced Vans through Warped Tour, are today up to 23 years older and many have grown-up as loyal brand fans. 2018 brings an end to the Vans Warped Tour journey but its legacy as the longest running touring music festival in North America and the largest traveling music festival from the United States will endure. It has undoubtedly played a large part in building the Vans brand and sales globally. Warped Tour gave underdogs a voice and millennials an escape to the ongoing political climate and their daily grind. Vans' association with music genres such as punk and hip hop, are deeply rooted in rebellion against political powers and the establishment, elements that have also added to the brand's youth credibility and appeal.

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Warped Tour helped Vans unlock a more mainstream youth culture audience. As skateboarding was also a definably Californian culture, music also gave the brand more geographical scope across the US and world-wide. It has been confirmed that 2018 will see the final Warped Tour events.

The musical heritage Vans has achieved with Warped Tour over the past 23 years, has opened the door for other current day music pursuits to be explored, especially the House of Vans concept, Vans owned and branded music, art and skateboarding venues. For years to come, the Vans Warped Tour will be upheld as a pinnacle example of authenticity, legitimacy and relevance in music brand partnership.



**...UNLOCK A MORE
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CREDITS <http://www.boardsportsource.com/2018/02/20/vans-reports-19-revenue-growth-americas-europe-fy2017/>

Document prepared by:
Paul Knipe - Founder & Managing Director
and Annkatrin Siegl - Music Account Exec

GET IN TOUCH:
hello@kinc.com
+44 (0) 207 226 8787
www.kinc.com