



West End Bombers: The Capitol/Nashville promotion lineup celebrates its high batting average at the company's offices. Pictured (l-r) are Mike Dungan, Paige Elliott, Rachel Dobson, John Trapane, Sarah Edmonds, Brent Jones, Donna Hughes, Diane Lockner, Shane Allen, Bobby Young and Steve Hodges.

2011 TOP TEN LABELS

1



13.8%

2



9.4%

3



7.5%

4



7.1%

5



6.2%

6



6%

7



5.9%

8



5.8%

9



5.4%

10



5.3%

LABEL OF THE YEAR

Two years ago, Country Aircheck marked Capitol/Nashville's eagerly sought ascension to Label of the Year by interviewing President/CEO Mike Dungan and SVP/Promotion Steve Hodges. Last year, we reached out to the promotion staff for their memories of another great year. As Capitol rounds the corner on its third straight year atop the chart share heap, we've asked several of the label's artists for their thoughts on the team that's working to ensure their chart success. If this keeps up, we'll eventually be seeking comments from each Capitol staffer's parents, siblings and long-lost childhood friends.



Keith Urban

Only Capitol/Nashville can get a song called "Long Hot Summer" to the No. 1 spot in the month of October! I've known this gang for so long that it's tough to pick out one moment, but what touched me the most this year is having some of them out on the road at my show in Denver. As I was walking into the radio lounge, Hodges and Paige Elliott were standing there, along with several radio guests, to surprise me with a No. 1 cake that looked like an exact replica of the single CD cover. It was a great way to wind down the world tour and one of the sweetest celebratory moments of our collective achievements.



being so focused on every visit to make it as great as it could be. He really taught me that we're not visiting a station, we're visiting people, and that these are relationships I'll have the rest of my life. It's not about the call letters.

The release of "Home" speaks volumes to me about the whole department. They all took their iPads out on the road to play folks the video. That's a lot of work for one song and one artist. We don't go station-to-station anymore, but they're welcome at the shows just like they were crew or band. There are no walls, and I feel really lucky about that. I wish I had a story about a hotel room and a blow-up doll, but I don't.

The Sopranos and everybody's whacking everybody!" It was hysterical.

CK: She almost killed *us* a couple times. She's a scary driver.

Dave Haywood: I think the word is "bad," not scary. A bad driver.

HS: But we love you, Diane!

CK: It was a fun time. The three of us were getting closer through all that, too. And on a serious note, deciding what label we wanted to be part of was the best decision we've ever made.

Mike and everybody over there

let us be artists. If it weren't for them, we probably would never have released "Need You Now" or even recorded it.

DH: A lot of people don't realize the process of how the music gets out there to radio. And the promotion staff is doing that with every artist on the label. The regionals are the ones down in the trenches. We appreciate them very much. We love everybody at Capitol.

CK: And you know when you see John Trapane, he'll say, "Gratuitous trade shot."

HS: He says it every time!

Luke Bryan

It's such a fun thing working with everyone at Capitol, and I've always kept it where the promotion folks can call me and I call them. There's nothing better than when a regional calls about putting a big ol' add on the board. Sometimes it's Shane "Tampa" Allen calling, and that's a special nickname for reasons I'm not really at liberty to explain. We've had a lot of fun through the years. I don't have to get out and ride in rental cars with them as much as I used to – I call that the age of innocence. It's different now, but it's still great to have them bring a radio guy on the bus to hear some music. The reason Capitol is Label of the Year is relationships, and that's about radio and also how they work with artists.



Dierks Bentley

I've never been on another label, so it's hard to compare, but I love those guys. It's like a family and kind of reminds me of Southwest Airlines when Herb Kelleher ran it. I always liked that company because it was a good business model, and the guy at the top was involved in all aspects and made it feel like family. At Capitol, it all starts with Mike Dungan, who's just a great guy who knows people on the radio side and is never absent from what's going on. He passes that through to the whole department. They're just good people.



Lady Antebellum

Charles Kelley: After the ACMs, I ended up throwing Luke Bryan into the water, and then Dierks comes behind me and shoves me into the water. Well, Luke and I decide we're going to pick up Mike Dungan and throw him in there. Most record



label heads aren't going to take too kindly to someone throwing them in the water. Not Mike. It took a lot of us, actually; Mike's a big ol' guy. So, we've got this great picture with Mike Dungan, Luke and myself all in these ...

Hillary Scott: Hugh Hefner robes.

CK: Yeah. We had nothing on underneath and were carrying little glasses of Champagne. It was one of those special moments.

HS: We spent a lot of time, probably two full weeks, with each of the regionals on our first radio tour. I'll never forget all those memories. Charles was watching *The Sopranos* on DVDs, and Diane Lockner looked back at him through the rearview mirror and was like, "Are you angry?" He says, "I'm watching



Darius Rucker

I love all those guys. Steve Hodges and I play golf, but he has a love for Arkansas that borders on insanity. We bet on the Arkansas-South Carolina game ... I lost.

When Jimmy Harnen was leaving I didn't know what was going to happen, but all those guys moved up and are as strong as they ever were. I've seen over the years working with promotion people that some just get jaded. They do the job, but they don't really care. Everyone at Capitol seems to care. Back when we were traveling around to get the first album off the ground, it seemed like they wanted it as much as I did. It's cool to feel like it isn't all on me.

The thing I remember that told me a lot about Capitol really had nothing to do with me. We'd just started working on my first record, and they had Chris Cagle's "What Kinda Gone" out at the time. That record was on the charts for something like 51 weeks. Coming from the Pop world, where you have a two-month window and you're done, seeing a label believe in a song that much was amazing. That kind of dedication really showed me what a great company they are.

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