

Bad Boy Seeking Distribution

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Hip hop rap entrepreneur Sean Combs has begun looking for a new distributor for his Bad Boy record label, whose catalog includes recordings by Mase, Carl Thomas and the late rap icon Notorious B.I.G., according to music executives who have been briefed on the matter.

Representatives for Bad Boy, whose albums have been distributed by Vivendi Universal since 2003, have been meeting with executives at several major labels to pitch a new agreement. Mr. Combs's contract with Vivendi Universal runs for another year, the executives said. One executive whose company is evaluating Bad Boy said a deal could be worth as much as \$30 million for a multiyear contract.

Mr. Combs had to settle for a distribution deal, valued at more than \$20 million, when he signed with Universal after he was unable to persuade a major company to buy part of his label. Since then, Bad Boy has had a spotty track record, with strong sales of albums like "Bad Boys II" but disappointing results from artists like Mase, Loon and Carl Thomas. Mr. Combs, through a spokesman, said Bad Boy has had "a great relationship" with Universal.

Representatives for Universal declined to comment.

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