



**NOT YOUR AVERAGE JOE:
HOW SPOTIFY EXPERIENCED THE EXTRAORDINARY JOE**



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Tell the truth



Prove it with action



Listen to stakeholders



Manage for tomorrow



Conduct public relations as if the whole enterprise depends on it



Realize an enterprise's true character is expressed by its people



Remain calm, patient, and good-humored

Some publics expect platform companies to embrace freedom of speech, effectively hindering platform companies from filtering misinformation. The impact will be amplified exponentially if the content creator is an influencer with a colossal follower base. This poses a significant challenge for platform companies, particularly with handling its Public Relations affairs involving a prominent Key Opinion Leader (KOL)



KOLS

Key Opinion Leaders & Influencers

Significance of the Case



The public perception associates both the platform and exclusively contracted KOLs together



Value: Wake-up call to raise awareness for platform enterprises to treat their major contractors as internal “assets” in terms of public relations

Implication: Companies that have contracted with famous people as their exclusive partners will have an opportunity to contemplate what they should focus on to prevent such a crisis from emerging



- Co-founded in 2008 by Martin Lorentzon and the current CEO Daniel Ek
- Digital music, podcast, and video service that provides access to millions of contents from creators all over the world

***Our mission is to unlock the potential of human creativity
—by giving a million creative artists the opportunity to live off their
art and billions of fans the opportunity to enjoy and be inspired by it***
Core Values: Innovative, Sincere, Passionate, Collaborative, Playful

Spotify CEO: Daniel Ek





Joe Rogan is an exclusive \$200 million contractor with Spotify offering The Joe Rogan Experience. In an episode of his podcast, there was COVID-19 misinformation, which caused controversy to Spotify as it is the platform where the podcast was hosted. After this case went viral, Spotify did not take any action at first. However, as this case caused some negative movements, Spotify changed its stance

Case Timeline



Dec. 31, 2021

Jan. 12, 2022

Jan. 24, 2022

Jan. 30, 2022

An episode containing COVID-19 misinformation with Dr. Robert Malone was released on Joe's podcast

270 US medical experts sent a concern letter to Spotify

Neil Young, a Canadian American singer, threatened Spotify to remove his music from its platform

Spotify finally published its content policy regarding COVID-19

Jan. 31, 2022

Jan. 31, 2022

Feb. 5, 2022

Feb. 6, 2022

Joe Rogan issued an apology to Spotify and told its public that his podcast had included false information

India Arie, an American singer, resurfaced clips of Joe Rogan using the N-word on his podcast

Joe Rogan apologized for using the N-word in public

Spotify CEO apologized to the employees and announced that Spotify would invest \$100 million in historically marginalized groups

Celebrities

- **Spotify Boycott**

Neil Young and some other celebrities threatened to remove their own music from Spotify, which did not take any action against Joe Rogan. India Arie accelerated the boycott movement by resurfacing the video clip of Joe Rogan using the N-word on The Joe Rogan Experience

Neil
Young



Joni
Mitchell



India
Arie



Government

- **Interference**

After Spotify posted the COVID-19 disclaimer page, White House press secretary Jen Psaki called on Spotify to do “more” in the fight against misinformation in her routine press conference



White House urges Spotify to take further action on Joe Rogan: 'More can be done'

Psaki says Spotify disclaimer is welcome, but platform could actually fight misinformation



Jen Psaki speaks about Joe Rogan controversy and says 'more can be done' by Spotify

Competitors

- **Apple Music**
Posted a maneuver by tweeting that they are the home of Neil Young's entire music catalog
- **Rumble**
Offered \$100 million for Joe Rogan to bring his shows without censorship to its platform



Spotify Users (1)

- **Spotify Boycott Hashtags**
#CancelSpotify, #DeleteSpotify, and #ByeSpotify went trending on Twitter. Moreover, the niece of Donald Trump, Mary L Trump, tweeted that Joe Rogan's show should be removed from Spotify not only because of the COVID-19 misinformation it is spreading but also for being racist



Mary L Trump  [@MaryLTrump](#)

Spotify should get rid of Joe Rogan's show not just because he spreads COVID disinformation but because he is a racist.

It's yet another reason for us to [#DeleteSpotify](#).

Check out my new podcast--available everywhere you listen--except Spotify 😊



podcasts.apple.com
The Mary Trump Show: [#DeleteSpotify](#) on Apple Podcasts
Show The Mary Trump Show, Ep [#DeleteSpotify](#) - Feb 2, 2022

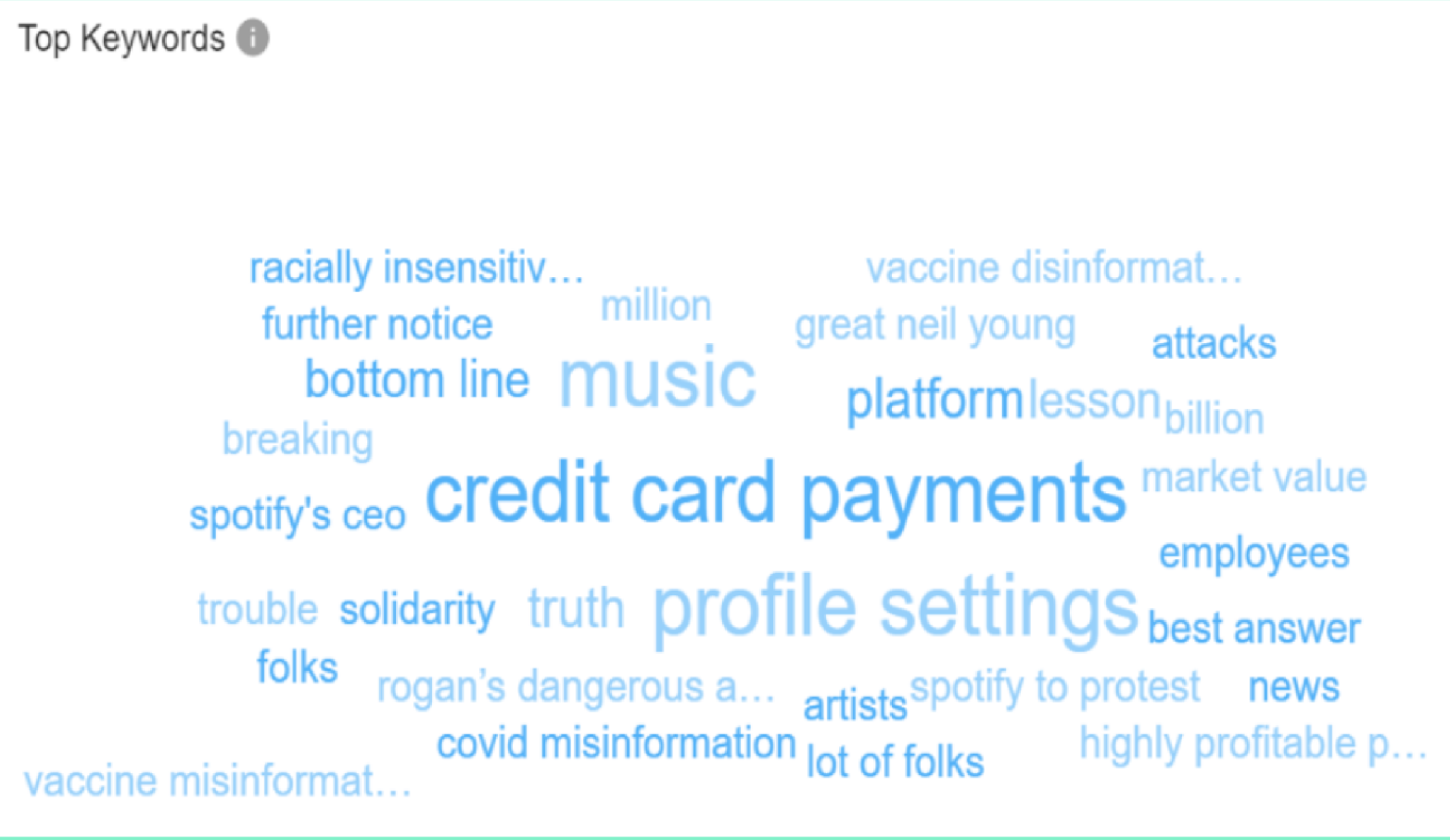
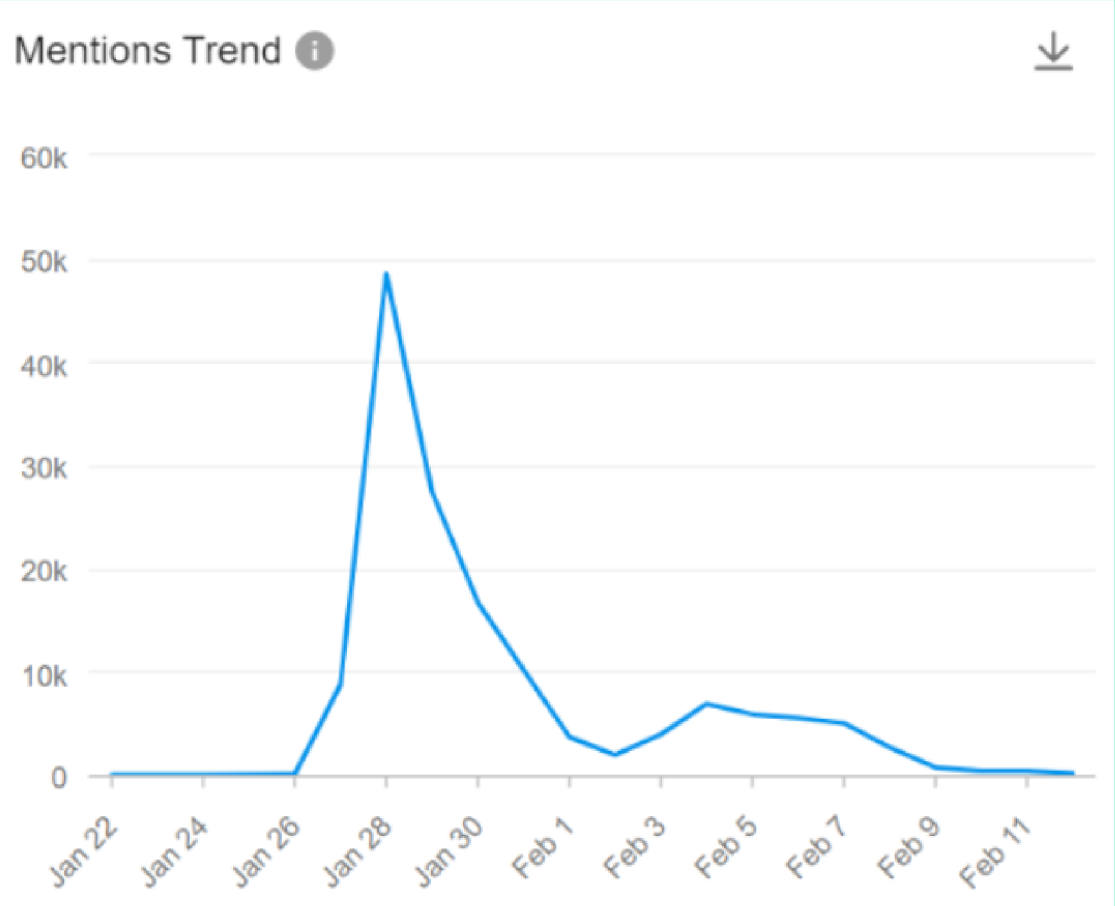
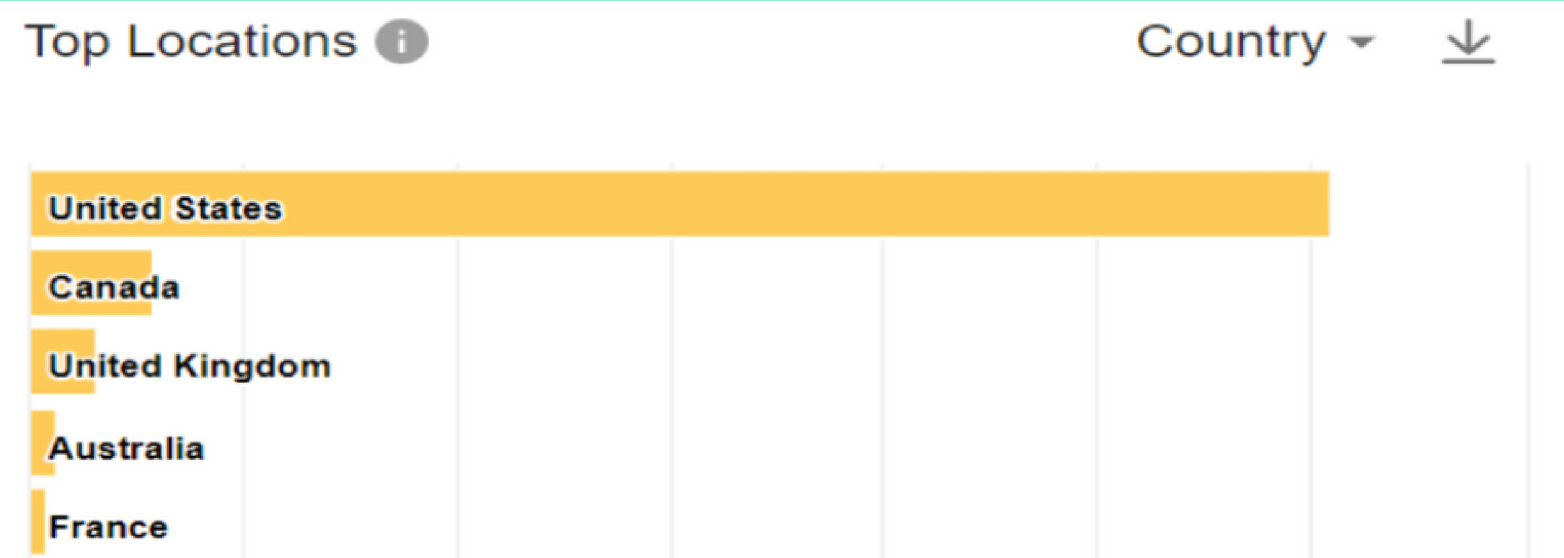
12:06 AM · Feb 3, 2022

1,093 Retweets 117 Quote Tweets 4,519 Likes

Public Responses

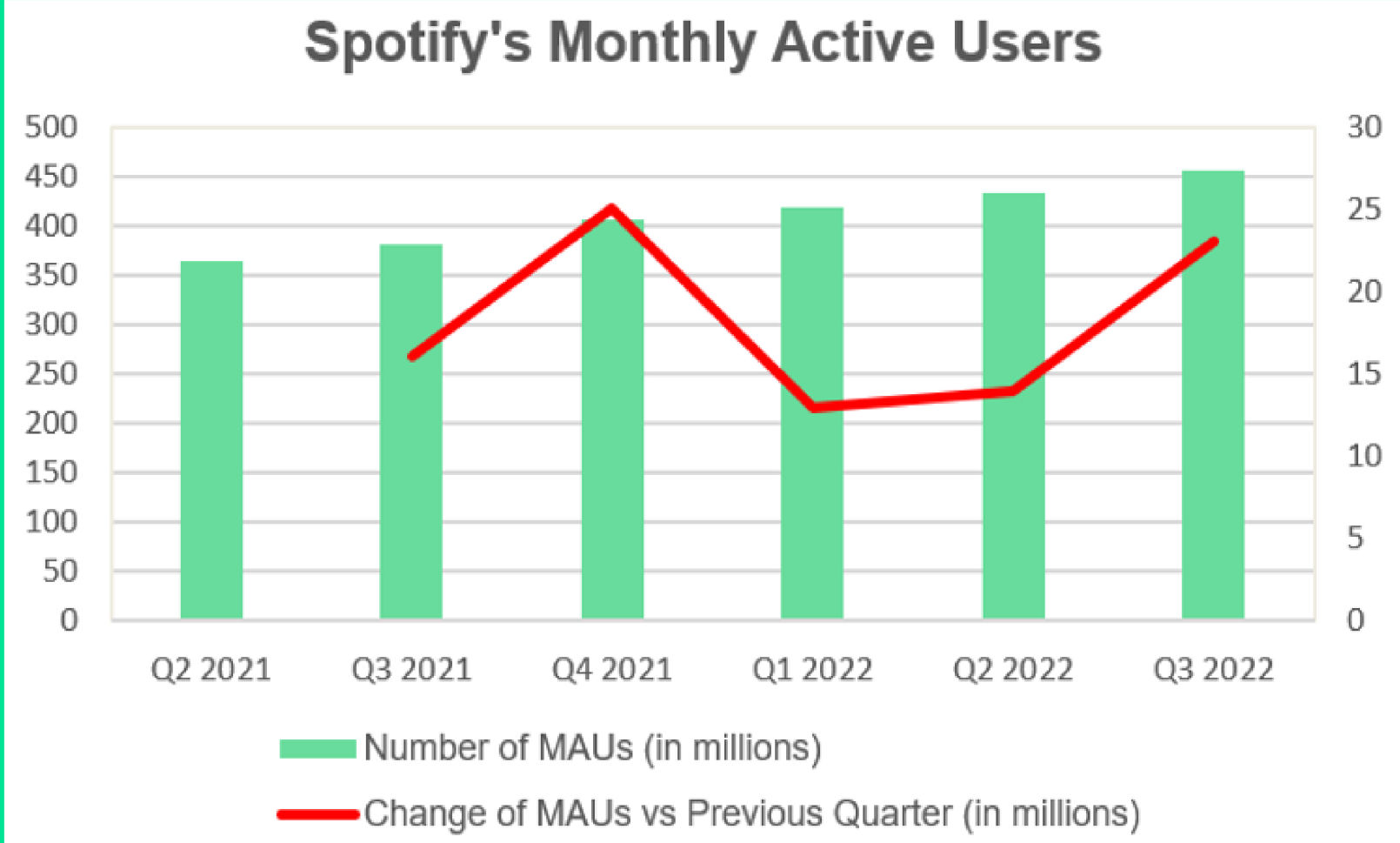


#ByeSpotify
#DeleteSpotify
#CancelSpotify



Spotify Users (2)

- **Monthly Active Users' Change**
According to Spotify's Quarterly Results, the number of monthly active users grew by only 13 million in Q1 2022, which is a significant drop in the growth trend it always had in the previous quarters (Spotify, n.d.-c)





Listen to stakeholders

Spotify finally acknowledged the feedback from its stakeholders, particularly the medical and scientific communities, and published its platform content policy

COVID-19 Guide

The latest on the coronavirus vaccines.

Find information about the coronavirus (COVID-19) vaccines. Tap here and go to the World Health Organization.

[Learn about COVID-19](#) [Learn more](#)

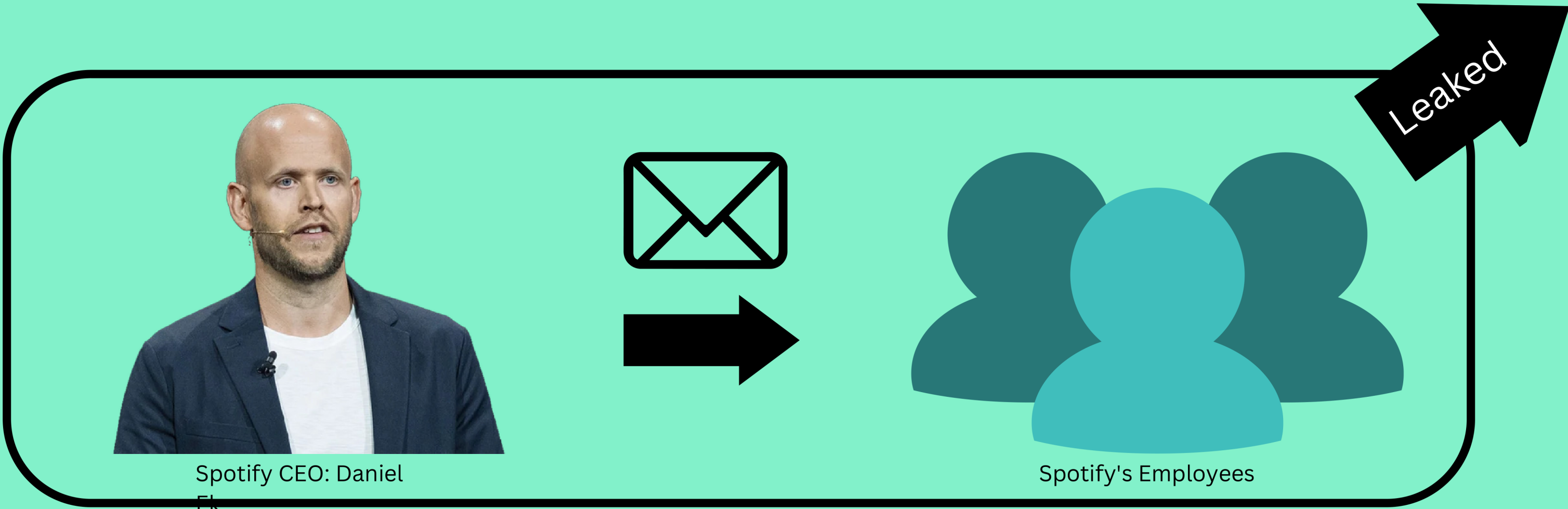
THE JOE ROGAN EXPERIENCE
#1900 STEVE-O
Steve-O is a stunt performer, comedian, actor, podcaster, and author. His podcast, "Wild Ride with Steve-O," and latest book, "A Hard Kick in the Nut..."
Nov 17 · 2 hr 51 min

THE JOE ROGAN EXPERIENCE
#1899 YANNIS PAPPAS
Yannis Pappas is a stand-up comedian, actor, and writer. He's also the host of the "LongDays with Yannis Pappas" podcast. Watch his special, "Mom Love,..."
Nov 16 · 3 hr 23 min



Tell the truth

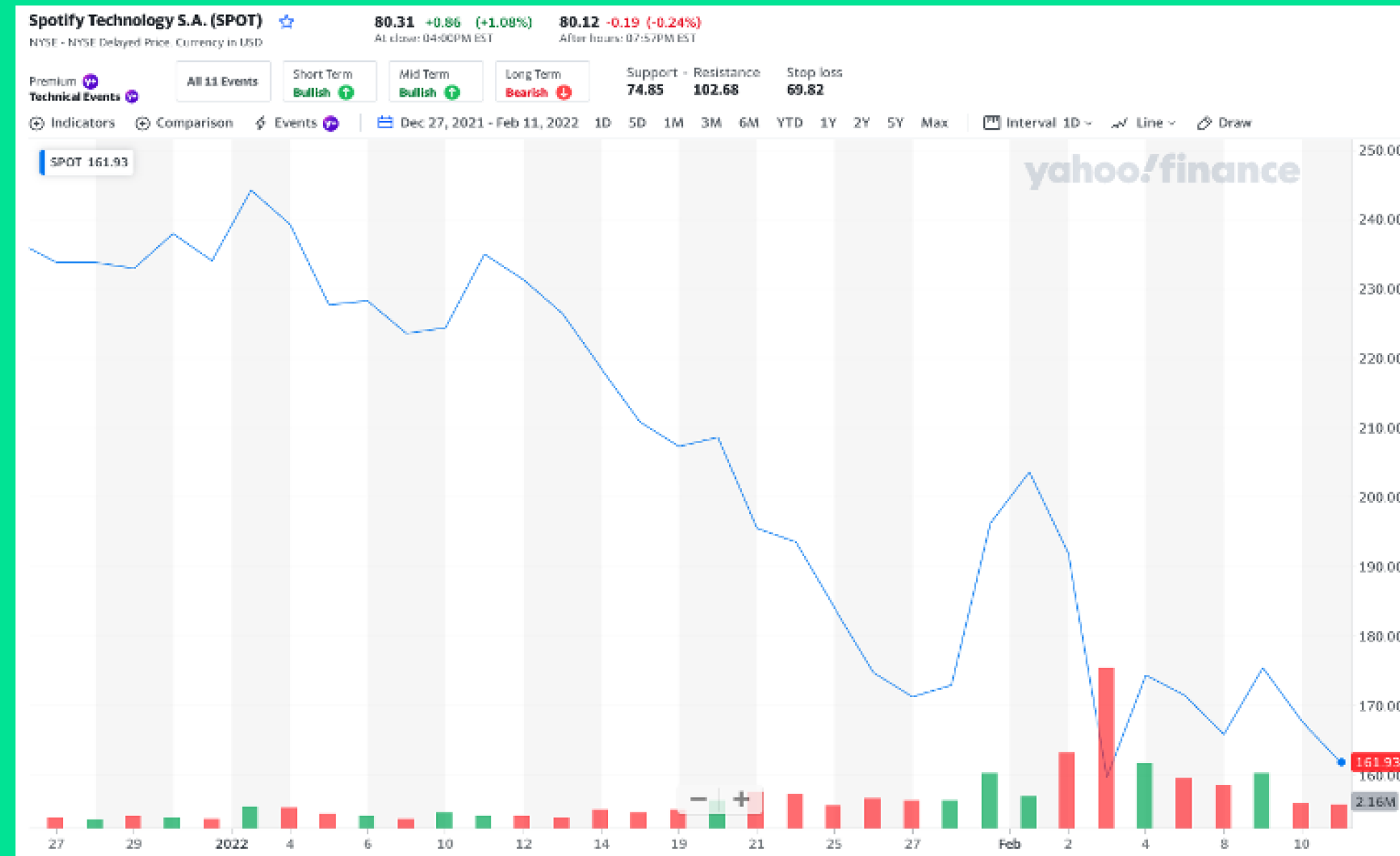
In a leaked internal letter, Spotify CEO, Daniel Ek apologized to the employees and announced that Spotify would invest \$100 million in music content from historically marginalized groups



Spotify CEO: Daniel Ek

Spotify's Employees

Financial Impact



Since the year 2022 started, Spotify's stock lost almost 25% of its value until the end of January. The stock price started decreasing, particularly after January 10, when 270 US medical experts showed Spotify their concern about the COVID-19 related-content on The Joe Rogan Experience

Reputational Impact

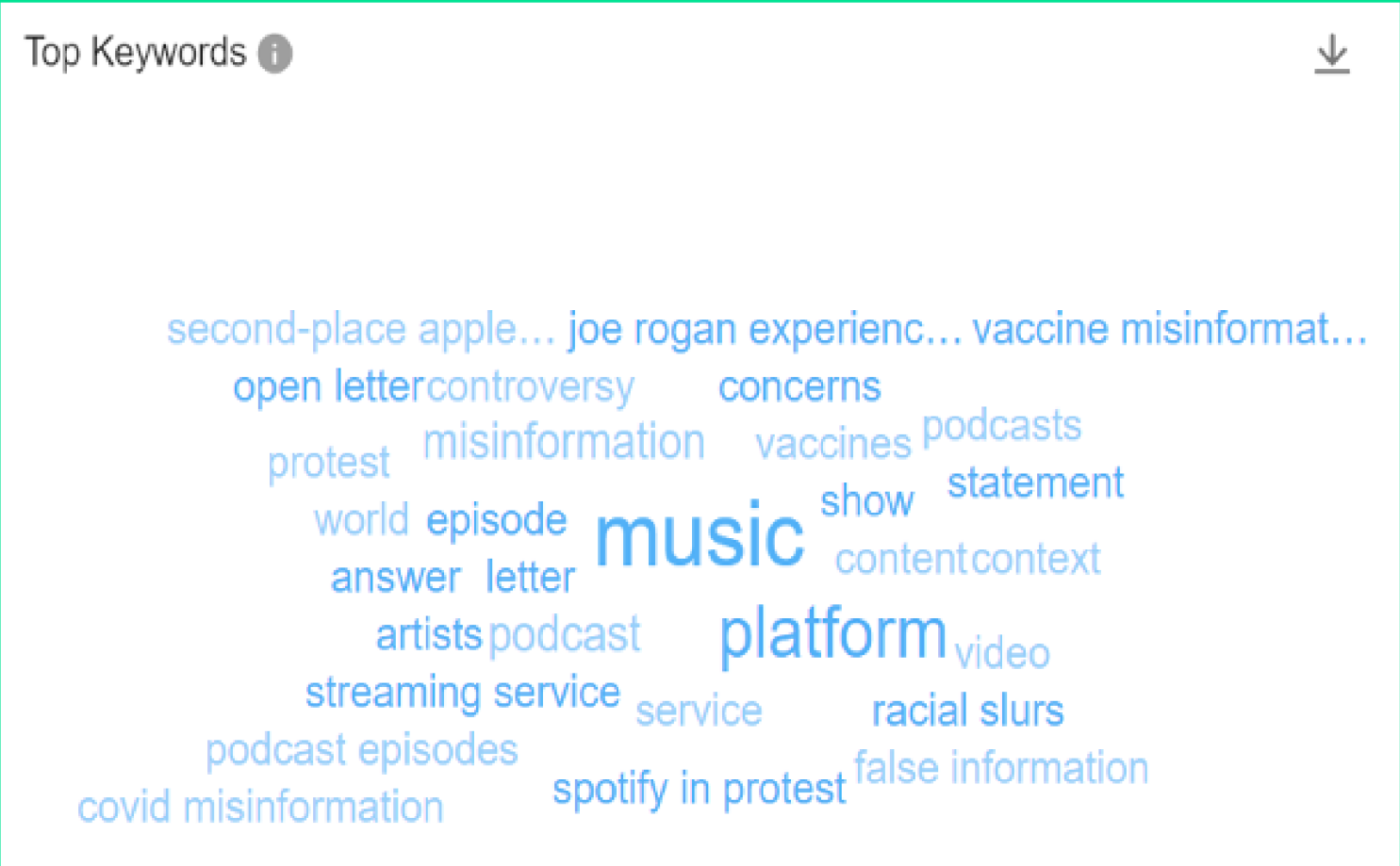


- **News Coverage**

The news regarding the case resulted in a small bump in Mid-January, when the doctors petitioned Spotify

The Washington Post

Forbes Bloomberg





Tell the truth

Insisting on the position as a platform company with no responsibility to its content creators (Spotify, 2022a), Spotify has instead decided to empower safety-related initiatives and being more transparent to the public about them (Spotify, 2022b)



Listen to stakeholders

In a continuous effort to listen to its stakeholders, several months after the crisis, on June 13, Spotify continued to strengthen its safety efforts by launching the Safety Advisory Council (Spotify, 2022b)



Prove it with action

To put its words into action, in October, Spotify announced the acquisition of Kinzen, which focuses on applying advanced technologies to filter harmful content from online communities (Spotify, 2022c)

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