

Hakuhodo launches Chapter-I, a joint venture with CJ ENM, to create new IP in the global music market

Co-producing *Unpretty Rapstar: HIP POP Princess*, a survival audition program for a global idol group, as the first project

Tokyo—August 19, 2025—Hakuhodo Inc., a leading integrated marketing and innovation company headquartered in Tokyo, is pleased to announce the launch of Chapter-I, a joint venture with CJ ENM, a Korean company active in the entertainment business, to initiate collaboration with the objective of creating new business in the global music market. As the venture's first project, the companies are co-producing *Unpretty Rapstar: HIP POP Princess*, a survival audition program to witness the birth of a global girl group.



In recent years, the global music market led by K-pop has evolved from mere consumption of music into a diversified business model built on deep fan engagement. Against this backdrop, the two companies are incorporating Chapter-I to create music IP that resonates with, and enriches the life of every *sei-katsu-sha*¹ across the globe, in addition to producing hit tunes and celebrity artists. With the meaning of: “I open the first chapter of my dream,” Chapter-I symbolizes a brand-new start for the two companies and the direction we will follow throughout this joint venture.

Combining the creativity and marketing knowledge centered on *sei-katsu-sha* insight developed by Hakuhodo, and the wealth of experience in the global entertainment business, track record in the production of audition programs and networking power of CJ ENM, which is known as a global IP powerhouse, we will undertake a variety of global music business ventures, revolving around the creation of IP that reflects market needs and *sei-katsu-sha* insight. Specifically, we will offer total experiential value related to entertainment, ranging from content planning and development to digital marketing to facilitate experiences and empathy among fans, the development of artists, music composition, as well as live performances and merchandising.

As the initial project, we will produce on CJ ENM's Mnet a joint Japanese-Korean survival audition program to form a global girl group called HIP POP Princess. The project seeks to uncover a new generation of world-class artists equipped with rapping, dancing and producing skills. Mobilizing former production team members for blockbuster programs in Korea including *Unpretty Rapstar* and *Street Woman Fighter*, we will create a story-filled audition experience that *sei-katsu-sha* will want to relate to. The program will be aired from October 2025.

¹ “*Sei-katsu-sha*” is a term we use to describe people not simply as consumers, but as fully rounded individuals with their own lifestyles, aspirations and dreams.

Through the Chapter-I venture, Hakuholdo and CJ ENM are committed to exploring growth opportunities in the global music IP business while offering new entertainment experiences for *sei-katsu-sha*.

■ Corporate profile of the new company

Trade name: Chapter-I Inc.

Commenced operation: August 2025

CEO: ko seohyun

Business activities: Planning and business development of global entertainment IP based on *sei-katsu-sha* data

■ About CJ ENM

CJ ENM is a leading entertainment company incorporated in Korea in 1995. CJ ENM's entertainment division has pioneered new horizons in K-culture across the global entertainment industry including media content, music, movies and performing arts.

In addition to the Oscar-winning film *Parasite* and the Tony-winning musicals *Kinky Boots* and *Moulin Rouge!*, the company has planned, produced and distributed numerous TV programs including globally acclaimed survival series such as *PRODUCE 101*, *I-LAND* and *BOYS PLANET*.

CJ ENM also manages numerous globally active artists including ZEROBASEONE, a global boy band representing the fifth generation of K-pop, and Jo Yuri, an actress and artist in the Netflix drama series *Squid Game*. In addition, the company operates: Studio Dragon, which boasts a dominant track record in drama production; Fifth Season, a global studio based in the US; CJ ENM Studios specialized in K-OTT content; TVING, a leading OTT platform in Korea; Mnet, a music channel specialized in K-pop; and Mnet Plus, a global K-pop content platform, producing and distributing a wide variety of content. In addition, CJ ENM delivers the distinctive appeal of K-culture to its fan base across the globe through KCON, the world's largest K-pop fan & artist festival, and MAMA Awards, the world's largest K-pop awards.

Official website: <https://www.cjenm.com>

■ About Hakuholdo

Founded in 1895, Hakuholdo is an integrated marketing solutions company headquartered in Tokyo, Japan. With offices in 20 countries and regions, and over 10,000 specialists working in Japan and around the world, the company is the core agency of Hakuholdo DY Holdings, one of the world's top 10 largest agency companies according to *Ad Age's* "Agency Report 2025."

Sei-katsu-sha insight is the foundation for Hakuholdo's thinking, planning, and brand building. It reminds us that consumers are more than shoppers performing an economic function. They have heartbeats. They are individuals with distinct lifestyles. Hakuholdo introduced this term in the 1980s to emphasize its commitment to a comprehensive, 360-degree perspective on consumers' lives.

With *sei-katsu-sha* insight as its cornerstone, Hakuholdo combines creativity, integrative capabilities, and data and technology to play a leading role in evolving companies' marketing activities and generating innovation for the completely digitalized era. This enables the company to impact and provide value to *sei-katsu-sha* and society. Renowned for its creativity, Hakuholdo has won the Grand Prix at Cannes Lions International Festival of Creativity twice, and was named Network of the Year at ADFEST 2021.

To learn more, visit: www.hakuholdo-global.com

Media contact:

Corporate Public Relations Division

koho.mail@hakuholdo.co.jp