

The Seven Step Game Plan To Musopreneurship

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As a musician and music business consultant, one thing I always say at the start of my talks is that **'being a respected musician requires good talent, but being a successful musician requires good marketing.'**

This game plan will get you there. Here's a quick synopsis to help you get going.

Step 1: You need a compelling vision. Where are you going? What's your legacy in this world? What do you want your music to achieve? What does your music stand for? Your vision is your driving force. Your vision forms your character. Your vision gives you direction. It shows you the path forward. Sit down and write this all out.

Step 2: You need to create a roadmap. You need to create a map of where you want to go, what you want to achieve and then put in the smaller steps you need to meet. Ask yourself at each point, "what do I need to do to get to the next step?" and make a note of that action point. Create a complete A to Z chart of what you need to do. Let this document be the inspiration to take you forward.

Step 3: Start building buzz about your brand and identity. Your vision has given your music business meaning and reason to live - now get people talking about you. Start a blog at www.wordpress.com. Start doing something regularly that'll get people interested. Start a conversation with your podcast or vidcast show at www.blip.tv. Get onto www.Twitter.com and start twittering. Start a Facebook fan page. Get them interacting with you. Building buzz is the best way to get your audience ready for when you release your music product to the market.

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Step 4: Start and continue growing a mailing list of people interested in your music and music business. This isn't something you do once; you do it every single day for the rest of your life - that's how you will know you have people interested in what you are about and then get them to purchase something later on. Set up a mailing list at your website, Myspace, Facebook and everywhere else. Offer them something free for signing up (eg: a couple of free tracks? ticket to a gig?).

Having a mailing list is the most important thing with your marketing because as an independent musician, it is probably the only way you can measure how many real fans you have. If not, how will you know? For example, if you have 1 person on your list, you potentially have one sale for your next product. If you have 1,000 people, you have 1,000 potential sales.

Step 5: Research your audience for your products. Don't release a product (eg: CD, download, DVD, merchandise, gig, etc) until you know it's something your audience really wants. Ask as many people as you can - your mailing list, your friends, your family, your associates, etc. Questions such as "what does my music do for you?", "in what way could I do more?", "in what capacity would you spend money on this music?" "what kind of products are you interested in?", etc. Think specifically about what you want to know, devise a few questions and then get out there.

Step 6: Release a product. Once you've done your research, make a decision on what product you want to release, have a big enough mailing list to account for enough sales, you're ready to launch. Build up the buzz, get people talking about your product, interact with other people who can help with your product and then... launch it.

Step 7: Repeat steps 5 & 6. As an independent musician, you're going to want to do as much research as to what your audience wants and give it to them. There's really no space for just throwing out whatever you feel and seeing if there's people taking out their cards for you - that'd be a waste of money. And it's definitely not smart thinking.

Whether you realize it or not, this is how big record labels operate. Most independent musicians don't see that - they just jump to do what they feel like and then complain of no money.

Follow a proven game plan and you'll go where you want to go. This is one that I've seen work over and over again.

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