

The Fan Journey

Just like the artist cycle, there is a fan journey. It is helpful to be aware of this to build better relationships with your fans, have better insight into where they originate, and make predictions in streams and ticket sales.

In a broad sense, there are five steps to this journey. They are discovery, intrigue, testing, evaluation, and commitment. By understanding these steps, you can map out exactly how you will move them through the process.

Discovery

It used to be that an artist needed to be discovered by someone influential in the music industry who would propel them to stardom. Hundreds of thousands of artists still pursue that means. But we think it could be done differently as well. We believe that you don't need to be signed with a big label to build some attention around yourself. This can be done online by finding like-minded people who enjoy the same music as you or offline by building friendships that support what you are doing. Those people will ultimately promote your work to other people who also like to listen to this kind of music. As you can see, your work starts spreading to a bigger audience, and at some point, you can fill a bar or even a club with people and create a sustainable business. We are here to support you with every step of professionalizing your career during that process.

Intrigue

Hearing your music is no longer enough for the people that discovered you. In the past, radio bombarded the listeners with only a limited number of songs. The listeners had few choices, so they learned to love what was familiar. In today's market, listeners have thousands of ways to discover their favorite artists and have millions of songs to choose from. Artists are not only fighting off other original artists for listeners' attention. They compete with past catalogs of hundreds of thousands, if not millions, of 'familiar' songs.

To cut through that clutter and get listeners to pay attention, an artist must give listeners a reason to want to hear and know more. When an artist performs live, they get to interact with the audience. They show their personality and can share their artist DNA. These things generate intrigue and cause people to look an artist up online, listen to more of their music, and engage with them in many ways.

Online, an artist must do the same thing. He must create the desire to know more. That's often impossible on a strictly-music site like Spotify. That is where the discovery and research occur, but it does not cultivate intrigue. Artists must do online precisely what they do on stage – show their personality, share their interests, and ask fans to take the next step in their journey. This is most often done through social media sites. And the artist who masters this is well on his way to developing a loyal fan base.

Testing

This 3rd step occurs when the listener decides they want to know more about the artist. He will listen to more music online. He will look for the artist's website and other online presences. He will watch videos as well. This is all done to seek a deeper connection with the artist – the same connection that an artist can generate in a live performance. This is why it is so critical for artists to do two things:

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- First, they must entice listeners in the 'Intrigue' phase to learn more about them. They will often not do it without seeing or hearing a call to action. They must be led. That is why calls to action are critical wherever an artist has a presence. The goal is to move the fan along on the journey.
- Secondly, the artist must ensure that their branding is solid and accurate. This is important so the fan in 'test mode' gets a very compelling picture of whom the artist is outside and inside the music. It must go beyond just intriguing the fan. It must rope them in.

Evaluation

In this phase, the fan evaluates three things:

1. Are you are someone they relate to on multiple levels?
2. Are you someone who wants to build a deeper relationship?
3. How deep do they want that relationship to be?

It is the artist's responsibility to help the fan make these decisions. This happens by allowing them to get involved on a gradually deeper level. It might start by getting the fan to join the mailing list. Getting an email address should be considered the first step in a deeper relationship because it allows the artist to share more about themselves personally and market it.

The artist can provide multiple ways for their new fans to engage and 'test the waters.' It can be in the form of an invitation to view exclusive 'fan only' content. It might be asking them to watch a live online concert. Then he might ask them to come to a show, buy a CD or some merch item that costs a little money. If the fan is happy at each level of engagement, they will most likely be ready for a more robust relationship with the artist. The artist's responsibility is to ensure the fan has a better-than-expected evaluation phase.

Commitment

The final portion of the fan journey occurs when he decides to 'go all-in.' This means they are willing to spend more time and money on the artist than he does on most other artists. This can come from traveling to attend the artist's shows, hiring the artist to perform at a house party, generously supporting the artist's fan-funding campaign, or becoming a patron of the artist. This often entails becoming a huge substantial online supporter and promoting the artist and his shows. It might extend into buying much higher-end merch or one-of-a-kind items with a high perceived value to the fan.

At this level, the artist has successfully cultivated a super-fan. The artist's responsibility is now to show his appreciation by continually interacting with the fan, even personally. The artist must fight just as hard to keep his super-fan as he did to move him along the journey. These super fans will be appropriately treated if appropriately treated; these super fans will support the artist for years to come.