

The Renegade Musician

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Dedicated to misfits, eccentrics, and renegades.

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The Renegade Musician

Stepping Out of the Shadow of the Old Music
Career Model

DAVID ANDREW WIEBE

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Introduction

The starving artist stereotype has been perpetuated through the ages. We even have tortured genius archetypes like Vincent van Gogh to point to whenever it's convenient. People wrongfully assume he lived out a tragic, penniless life – *because* he chose art – when in fact he was just an eccentric recluse who liked to paint and didn't care for people all that much. Who's to say that wasn't perfect for him?

But it gives your parents and teachers reason to say, "Becoming an artist is impractical. If a genius like van Gogh couldn't do it in his lifetime, what chance do you have? Go to school, get good grades, and find a good job. That's your path to security."

If your parents or teachers are still saying that, though, they're probably Gen X or older. Millennials were born into a much different world, and intuitively, they have always known the flaws of the crumbling traditional model. They have always sought to do things their way. Play by their own rules. Seek fulfillment outside the accepted norms. Free themselves from the shackles of societal expectations.

It's plain to see where the old model has failed. We see it in the eyes of those who've gone before us. To follow in their footsteps is to play right into the cycle of insanity, most of which amounts to survival and a slow death devoid of dreams. "Whatever doesn't kill you makes you stronger" is a cliché the traumatized can't afford to perpetuate.

Now, it's all well and good to do things your way, play by your rules, and seek fulfillment on your terms. But you *can* take it too far, and for all the good the creator economy has done, it has also turned otherwise normal people into slaves of a different kind – live streamers twerking in tight hotpants at the camera, gamers speed-running decade-old games for the rest of eternity, and bloggers mind-numbingly churning out “how much money I make on Medium per second” posts by the hour.

Some people like what they do. I can't come down on them for that.

But to liberate yourself from the Matrix without violating your values and principles requires a radical shift in mindset and approach. Freedom without restriction is a step beyond self-employment. It's a step beyond leaving one form of slavery only to walk into the hands of another.

Why do Artists Starve?

Creativity has been devalued, and we can't let it slip further.

Creativity is crucial to a child's development. It teaches them valuable problem-solving skills, and it can even aid in the development of social skills.

Creativity is highly valued in the workplace. Business without creativity isn't just boring. It's rigid and dogmatic. Self-important even. It's stale and unappealing.

Most importantly, creativity is divine. That may seem a bold statement, but if God himself created the world we occupy, then to imitate Him (create) is a Godly act.

If creativity is so valuable, then, why does it continue to be devalued? Why do artists starve? Who's responsible?

If a man is appointed king but refuses to take his throne, it leaves the people no choice but to appoint another man king.

What I'm saying is – artists have yet to step up to their rightful place, which is on the throne.

Give an inch, they'll take a mile. Artists have given more inches than anyone would consider wise or prudent.

When there are dollars available, why do we settle for pennies?

There is no space for laziness, apathy, and self-righteousness. Not anymore.

COVID-19 wasn't just a health crisis. It was an identity crisis. There is always a spiritual parallel to the physical. One reflects the other.

You were not meant to live off the scraps left behind by the trailblazing warriors. You were meant to enjoy equal or even greater spoils. You've fought for them. Now you must claim them.

Trying to get Spotify to pay us one cent per stream is *not* the fight. The fight is for equity in Spotify, because without our content, where would they be? We deserve equity, and we shouldn't have to ask for it. We're entitled to it.

We must shake off stereotypes. We need to stop giving an inch when others come to take a mile. We need to bear metaphorical arms and stand together. We need to be willing to become a new kind of musician – a Renegade Musician.

What is a Renegade Musician?

A renegade is someone who deserts and betrays an organization, country, or set of principles.

What I seek to desert, betray, or disrupt, is not a specific organization or country. But the principles by which artists have operated for decades. Centuries, even.

You and I know that we are so much more than entertainers. To be fair, the value of an entertainer can easily be in the millions (just look at Hollywood).

Author Matt Haig said:

Music doesn't get in. Music is already in. Music simply uncovers what is there, makes you feel emotions that you didn't necessarily know you had inside you, and runs around waking them all up. A rebirth of sorts.

Author and professor of neurology Oliver Sacks said:

Music can lift us out of depression or move us to tears – it is a remedy, a tonic, orange juice for the ear.

We aren't just entertainers. We are also healers.

The work we do is of greater importance than modern medicine because modern medicine has somehow forgotten what we've understood from decades and centuries of testable, observable, repeatable, evidence. It has become about dictates and rules, not about wellness and health. Anyone who says current circumstances have nothing to do with politics hasn't understood this distinction.

Why should artists starve? For that matter, why should anyone starve when there is an overflowing abundance of supply for everyone?

In his book, *God Wants You to Be Rich*, author Paul Zane Pilzer makes a bold claim – that there is more than enough wealth in the world for every person on our planet to live in abundance.

We don't need to convince anyone of our value. We need to internalize it. We need to feel it and live it. Then we will command what we are worth.

Confidence carries with it an aura, and that is how we should carry ourselves. With a sense of confidence and sureness that precedes any fight over cents when we should be claiming the dollars that are already being made off our efforts.

Welcome, Renegade Musician.

The Renegade Musician is a concept.

The American Dream is a concept. You know what it is, without explanation. I am a Canadian, and even I know what it means.

But trying to explain it to someone who was brought up with different values is sure to be an uphill battle. Where do you even begin?

You can't just say "It's about 1.93 kids, a golden retriever named Charlie, and a white picket fence."

You and I know that it's about equality, opportunity, and the freedom to pursue and achieve your highest aspirations.

A concept that's well understood in Japan but is largely misunderstood and over-explained in English-speaking countries is "Ikigai."

I grew up in Japan, so I know without a shadow of a doubt that Ikigai simply means "a reason to live (that shifts with priorities)." There are no accompanying Venn diagrams. It's a simple concept that hardly requires explanation, especially if you grew up with it.

The Renegade Musician is a concept. Which is to say, it's not easily explained, but one knows when they see one and are

one. It's a way of life. This is better understood through the chapters that follow.

The Renegade Musician is a philosophy.

As with the arts, philosophy continues to be devalued over time. This has led to brainless compliance and blind acceptance of what is plainly illogical, harmful, and even dangerous.

“Philosophy” has mostly fallen in the hands of loudmouthed controlled opposition who appear to be on our side but are infiltrators among the virtuous.

It’s time to reclaim the vitality of philosophy, along with the arts.

Why would we continue to quote Socrates through the millennia if his realizations were insignificant? Even *Bill & Ted* seemed to have self-awareness by comparison.

No one seems to be willing to have open discussions about life and possibilities anymore. Everything that requires blind compliance by the masses is now labeled “science” as if the truth were ever about labels.

Having hosted a TEDx-style community in which we encouraged open philosophical discussion about the nature of truth for a couple of years, I can honestly say apathy has gotten the better of the human spirit. Our weekly events rarely attracted more than a few, maybe 20+ on the odd night. When spirituality, science, and philosophy are among the most fascinating topics humanity has to offer.

Is it any wonder that politics have turned to dictates and orders when it should stand for principles that protect and serve humanity, everyman? Why does it feel like we’re being

treated as guinea pigs for mass experiments, then? Politicians are supposed to be our employees, not the other way around. Currently, technocratic socialistic dictatorships are quickly forming, right under our noses.

I'm not advocating for anarchy. Far from it.

But in a world where the official narrative is the only one allowed, no free-thinking person is safe from unprompted persecution. It's already getting out of hand.

Open discussions can lead to new realizations. They can lead to a fresh perspective. They can lead to a reasonable and meaningful compromise, and ideally a better, improved way of doing things.

Plus, people get to be heard. When we are listening to one another, we are really listening to ourselves. It would be a strange thing not to value our thoughts, opinions, and feelings. So, it's a strange thing not to value another.

The Renegade Musician is a philosophy. Because, as I said, philosophy must be a priority again. We must sharpen our intellectual saw once more if we expect to contend with those who seem hell-bent on bringing our world to ruin. Author Edward Bulwer-Lytton got it right – the pen *is* mightier than the sword.

I hate the expression, but it seems to fit – we need to *give a shit* again, on every front.

A new kind of musician needs to embrace a new kind of philosophy. There's no breakthrough available in clinging to the past, only in understanding it. The breakthrough comes in having the intellectual capacity and superiority to argue for what is right and good for artists and all humankind, not just what is good for some.

The Renegade Musician is an ideal.

Not an ideal as in, “Oh, he’s so idealistic – that will never happen.”

An ideal as in, “This is the way the world can be.”

The fact that I would need to make this distinction goes to show how little confidence we have in ourselves and how little trust we have in anyone making lofty promises.

We have fallen for the lie that life is what happens to you, not what you make of it. By contrast, taking responsibility is the enlightened, empowered path.

We are preoccupied with the daily struggle of trying to make an income and staying afloat financially, rather than living by the values we hold near and dear to our hearts. Living in alignment is a near-impossible task when faced with mounting financial pressure from every direction. If Pilzer is right about the abundant riches available to everyone, it means this pressure is largely engineered.

But more to the point – if you say your number one value is your family, but you wake every morning at 6 AM without fail to go to work and give the best part of your day to your job, then your number one value is your work. I’m sorry, values are reflected in your actions, even if your intentions say otherwise. Stop fooling yourself and face the cold, hard truth.

In a world with overflowing, unlimited abundance, the system is the issue. We can’t usher in a new system, nay, a new *era*, without a unified front. Not a front built on unanimous, unquestioned agreement. A front built on a diversity of beliefs, views, and perspectives.

Artists have the power to change the world. No, not love.
Artists.

Because to create is divine. When we create, we express love and all that is by default. Don't separate what need not be separated.

We've already tried politics, education, and religion. They do not work. They only enslave people. Their purity has been diluted, and what was once good is now toxic and deadly. It results in division, and it pits us against each other as if we were on opposing teams.

The true solution lies in the hands of independent artists and business owners – creators.

When we connect with our fans and add value to them, we do more for their lives than we can even imagine.

When we share our music, our lives are enriched. They are saved. They are offered the inspiration to carry on another day and the courage to face an uncertain tomorrow.

No more lying down when we should be charging ahead. We make a difference in people's lives. We are entertainers but we are also healers. We save lives. The work we do should never be considered anything less than essential. *Never.*

The Renegade Musician is a movement.

Finally, and most importantly, the Renegade Musician is a movement.

It makes no difference if it's a concept, philosophy, or ideal unless musicians like you take ownership and proudly self-identify as a Renegade Musician.

But we'll get there. Now it's time to step out of the shadow of the old music career model to become a new kind of musician.

Resources

Creativity is crucial to a child's development

<https://medium.com/@MazuFamily/the-value-of-creativity-43e655cc6572>

God Wants You to Be Rich by Paul Zane Pilzer

<https://davidandrewwiebe.com/godwantsyourich>

Important Note

I write like I talk, and I say what I think. I do not kowtow to current political or “politically correct” views, or for that matter, capital S Science, which in my opinion has grown into a virtual cult. Much to the chagrin of my publisher and editors, I have not taken the time to write or edit this book using passive, neutral, democratic language to appease anyone and everyone who might stumble upon it and be tempted to read it.

I do not expect you, or for that matter anyone to agree with me. I am merely expressing my opinion, as I might be liable to do if you and I were casually talking over a cigar and whiskey in one of our backyards.

This is a freedom afforded to all of us. We do nothing to benefit each other playing shallow games of peek-a-boo like hapless daters who are convinced they can't lose one more date if they ever have a hope of getting the validation they seek, to determine what one might think about the other's views on gender, race, vaccinations, or other “controversial” matters.

I have already said that it's good we all have different views, and if you somehow missed this, re-read the introduction. We can all get along and even forge powerful alliances, despite differing opinions, and that is what I am ultimately suggesting.

But *most* pertinently, this is *NOT* a political book. Yes, it includes *some* political comments, and that is intentional, but all efforts have been made to include relevant, useful, actionable

strategies and tactics that have the power to transform your artistic career. This forms the bulk of the reading.

If you are easily offended, if you're faint-hearted concerning any real work required to achieve your goals, if your identity is so fragile that you think it might collapse upon itself and necessitate decades of therapy to recoup reading one more sentence, I heartily encourage you to throw this book out, forget about it, and find another one.

Part I: The Cold, Hard Truth

If you want to get a grip on reality, you must be willing to face the cold, hard truth.

Most of us are in denial. We're unwilling to face what's right in front of us.

We complain about being single, unwilling to address the 30 lbs. we've gained.

We complain about our set being cut short when the crowd was quickly dwindling.

We complain about the slap-dash job our PR representative did when we weren't even willing to provide her with the information, she requested to be able to do her job.

Now, you can't assume mutual inclusivity with any of these examples.

Being single and being 30 lbs. overweight have nothing to do with each other. Plenty of people will admit to carrying more weight than they would like and are in relationships or are even happily married.

There could be a connection between your weight and confidence level, though.

Your set being cut short could have had more to do with the event than anything you did. If you know anything about events, you know that organizers run a tight ship, lest they go

overtime, paying out-of-pocket techs, vendors, and venue fees they weren't prepared to dole out.

The PR company and the lack of professionalism they exhibited? Well, that one might be on you, buddy...

(To be fair, a good PR company would still know where to look online to find the information they need, assuming it's been posted somewhere.)

You think I'm pointing to isolated incidents of flawed thinking under duress, and I'm *not*. We all take these shortcuts all the time! We are quick to say, that because of X, Y happened, when the two may be completely unrelated, mostly unrelated, or only a small part of the equation.

How many things do you claim to know that are nothing more than hearsay, opinion, or assumption? If you're a newshound, I would argue that most of what you've recently consumed is about as valuable as a leaf on a lollipop.

A Renegade Musician wouldn't ever settle for such fuzziness. Because they realize the majority are all doing the same thing, getting largely the same results, give or take.

To enjoy different results, to end up on a different boat (maybe a luxury cruise), one must be willing to do things differently. They must be willing to face the cold, hard truth.

Accurate Thinking

The journey of a Renegade Musician begins with accurate thinking, a concept espoused by personal development legend and *Think and Grow Rich* author Napoleon Hill. Because most artists are *not* thinking accurately.

Google the best way to market your music, and you're probably going to come away thinking you need to be using social media more.

Google PR and you will find other artists complaining – “It’s much too expensive to be worthwhile.”

Google “touring” and you will read the sob story of a band who barely broke even on their latest 120-day tour across the United States.

It’s not that these experiences aren’t true. It’s not that you can’t learn something from them.

It’s that anecdotal evidence, opinions, and assumptions are insufficient when making up your mind about what and what not to do in your music career.

Until you’ve tried something for yourself, it shouldn’t be considered anything other than an untested theory. You simply won’t know unless you try. Things you’ve written off could still work. Things you’re trying now could end in disaster. That’s accurate thinking.

All things being equal, I suggest having a bias towards success. But you’re not rooted in accurate thinking if you think you’re

entitled to it, and that failure is not a possibility. Hope for the best. Plan for the worst.

If you truly believe social media is the best way to promote your music, then go all in for the next five years. Accept no substitutes and shut out all distractions. Show up daily to do the work.

But don't leave your brain at home. Striving without strategy is an exercise in futility. If you want to be successful on social media, you must be willing to learn, test, measure, adapt, and iterate. Anything less is peeing outside of the toilet bowl.

“Use contests and promotions to engage your audience.”

Really? Why does that work?

You've got to question it. Know why it's going to work for you. Or try it for yourself and track the results (then you have something to go on). Otherwise, it's just speculation.

Name an area of your music career – songwriting, composing, booking, live performance, pitching playlists, posting to YouTube, bookkeeping... literally *anything*. And I can almost assuredly say you have untested assumptions robbing you of the success you truly deserve.

The good news? You were smart enough to pick up this book, and now you have an advantage that no one else has. You can unravel the myths and embrace the truth. Congratulations. You're transforming into a Renegade Musician.

Qualities of a Renegade Musician

A Renegade Musician is a new kind of artist. That means she possesses qualities most do not.

Here are the key qualities a Renegade Musician exhibits:

Growth Oriented: You wouldn't be here if you weren't growth-oriented, so give yourself a pat on the back. A Renegade Musician knows to invest in herself. She recognizes that personal development is her customized map to navigating inevitable landmines on the battlefields ahead.

Critical Thinker: Renegade Musicians question everything – politicians, the mainstream media, their parents, their teachers, their coaches, themselves, and even this book. If it doesn't make sense, they discard it. They're not going to rush into decisions without having done their due diligence, and they know what *due diligence* means.

Resilient: Renegade Musicians wear their struggles like a badge of honor. They don't give up easily. They keep pounding on the doors they've been waiting to open when everyone around them has long since given up hope. But they are not afraid to adjust course when there might be other doors. Renegade Musicians don't use hope as a strategy. They stay in motion.

Good Financial Sense: Renegade Musicians know when to save, and when to spend lavishly. Their financial acumen is hard gotten because they don't fear experimentation or losing

money, let alone debt consolidation or bankruptcy. If it means they'll be better off in the long run, they're willing to take risks.

People Skills: In every strategy, people come first, not tactics. Who do you need to connect with? Who can help you? Who can introduce you to an investor? Long, hard roads of grinding can be circumvented with a single connection. By contrast, posting to social media and waiting for a miracle could prolong the pain. Renegade Musicians know this, so they develop their people skills and extend a friendly hand to everyone they meet.

Entrepreneurial: Author James Altucher says “An artist must also be an entrepreneur. That’s it. Those *are* your choices.” Renegade Musicians don’t wait for permission. They don’t wait for someone to discover them. They choose themselves.

Problem Solving: Renegade Musicians can see that there is a way other than the road everyone else is taking. Good “renegade instinct” is forsaking the majority and following one’s path (also read the sections that follow – The Top 5% and The Top 2.5%). Question everything. There are other ways of achieving your goals, and they may even be faster. The “other ways” may be the *only* way.

Shrewd: Saving money is savvy. Earning an income is shrewd. Shrewdness is a more desired quality. A Renegade Musician understands how to manipulate her circumstances to achieve desired outcomes. She understands that she’s not the only one who wants things – others want things too, and she knows that helping others get what they want can help her get what she wants.

Skilled Marketer: A Renegade Musician is willing to develop herself into a skilled marketer. She understands that no one will ever be as invested as she is in her music career. She knows that she is the most qualified person to invent

creative marketing strategies to propel her music forward. She knows that boring marketing will get her nowhere.

Leadership: A Renegade Musician steps up where others take a seat. They're proactive in developing connections, setting up co-writes, and partnering with companies. They don't wait around for things to happen. They are leaders in their communities, just as they are leaders in their lives and their careers. They take responsibility.

Contribution: Renegade Musicians understand that where education, religion, and politics have failed, they will succeed. Artists (specifically *entrepreneurial* artists) will change the world, and the way to change the world is to be a contribution, an individual of esteemed value.

The Top 5%

The late, great author and radio speaker Earl Nightingale said:

Out of 100 people who reach retirement age at 65, four will be financially independent, one will be wealthy, and nine will be broke.

Only 5% of people will ever amount to anything on a financial scale. That is the cold, hard truth. And that was a long time ago. This stat has mostly been trending downward since Nightingale quoted it decades ago.

But what made the difference? Why were the 5% successful?

Nightingale says the 5% followed their path. They didn't attempt to please others. They held to their values and beliefs. They blazed their trail.

Reality Transurfing author Vadim Zeland put it this way:

Do not watch how other people walk their path to success or try to keep up with them. Do not give in to the herd instinct. You have your own calling. The majority take the roads well-trodden but true success is achieved by the few who refuse to follow the rule “do as I do” and independently treat their own path.

First, you must know that you're following your path. Is music it? I'm not saying it isn't, but you must *know* that it is, and that can't be a superficial “Yeah, I guess so” kind of knowing. Either you karate do, “yes,” or karate do “no.” You karate do “guess so,” get squished like grape.

Second, you've got to follow your path. That's what's going to make you interesting, noteworthy, and remarkable. That's what's going to make you successful. Don't rehash what's already been done. Don't try to replicate Top 40 music. Be you. Identify what's unique about you and draw it out in your music.

"Oh, but D.A., that Nightingale crap is old self-help stuff. It doesn't apply to the life of a musician. Nightingale was speaking to people with stable jobs. People don't have that anymore."

You wanna tussle? Okay, keep reading...

Resources

The Strangest Secret by Earl Nightingale

<https://davidandrewwiebe.com/strangestsecret>

Reality Transurfing Steps I-V by Vadim Zeland

<https://davidandrewwiebe.com/transurfing>

The Top 2.5%

Music Times published an interesting piece in 2014 showing that 0.2% of artists are “mega” stars, 0.9% are mainstream, 1.4% are mid-sized, 6.8% are “developing,” and 90.7% are undiscovered or unknown.

0.2% mega stars + 0.9% mainstream + 1.4% mid-sized = top 2.5%

There's your top 2.5%.

There's a dynamic playing out here and make no mistake. You could take poets, visual artists, dancers, whatever, and you will see the same distribution. As Nightingale says, in any group of 100 people, only one will be wealthy, and only four will be financially independent.

Or, in author and marketing guru Dan Kennedy's words:

... only 5 percent really are living and experiencing anything close to what most would consider a successful, prosperous kind of lifestyle.

Now, you're probably wondering what it is you're supposed to do with this. Go cry in a corner? Toss the Fender Stratocaster in a garbage can and call it a day? Smash your head through your drumheads?

No, you're a Renegade Musician. You're better than that.

What we need to take away from this is that 95% of people are categorically doing it *wrong*. That's why I continually

emphasize – if you see everyone moving in the same direction, turn and run the other way! It's the *only* way to save yourself and to create the life you desire through music.

The majority categorically *do not* have the life they want, and they can't show you how to get it either.

As KISS' Gene Simmons says, you're not going to make any friends going your way. But you may earn a greater income.

What do we do to get to where we want to go? We observe the 95% and act differently because even if they are well-meaning, they are clueless.

Resources

If you're a musician, chances are you're totally undiscovered, says a new study

<https://www.musictimes.com/articles/3563/20140121/youre-musician-chances-totally-undiscovered-new-study.htm>

Renegade Millionaire by Dan Kennedy and Lee Milteer
<https://davidandrewwiebe.com/renegademillionaire>

Sex Money Kiss by Gene Simmons
<https://davidandrewwiebe.com/sexymoneykiss>

The Spotify Delusion

If you're an intelligent musician, then you already understand well what I'm about to share. Otherwise, your bubble is about to burst.

The figures that follow mostly come from a [2020 Rolling Stone article](#) and a [2022 Music Business Worldwide article](#) (you can find the links in the resources section below), but you can double-check the facts for yourself – that's the responsible thing to do.

Spotify's mission, which they've repeatedly insisted on publishing in their annual results is:

... to unlock the potential of human creativity by giving a million creative artists the opportunity to live off their art.

Bear this in mind as you read what follows.

Currently, the top tier Spotify artists, numbered 43,000, account for 90% of streams. That's just 4.3% of the one million creatives Spotify is supposed to be liberating (is this distribution starting to look familiar yet?).

What Rolling Stone goes on to explain is that the top 43,000 are earning \$963 million of the \$1.07 billion generated for all artists. That's essentially \$22,395 per top-tier artist, per quarter. These financial figures are based on projections, but we don't expect they're too far removed from reality.

In 2020, Spotify's creator base was three million. That number has more than doubled in two years to eight million.

But sticking with the three million for just a moment, if you subtract the top tier 43,000, you're left with 2,957,000 non-top-tier artists who are making just \$12 per month, on average. To make more than that, you'd need to join the top 1.4% of artists on Spotify.

For Spotify to ever reach its goal of helping one million artists, 957,000 artists would have to join the top tier. When is that expected to happen?

Even as Spotify's creator base continues to increase, the figures aren't going to change. It will always be the top 1.4% of artists benefiting most from the platform. 1.4% of eight million is 112,000 artists, not quite three times the 43,000 referenced earlier, and not anywhere near the same ballpark as the one million they want to create an opportunity for.

I'm a fan of another dynamic known as the Pareto Principle, or the 80/20 rule. It shows that 80% of outcomes come from 20% of causes. This rule can be used to your advantage, and I will be addressing how later.

But here's a stat you won't like – *nearly 80% of artists on Spotify have fewer than 50 monthly listeners.*

The 80/20 rule isn't just a rule. It's more of a law. It plays out like clockwork in virtually every domain.

Look, for your sake, I hope you and I transition into the "top tier" Spotify artist club. But accurate thinking dictates that this is exceedingly unlikely, and we would be wasting our time trying to get there, especially when there are better things we could be doing.

Why industry, business, and even independent artists continue to clamor around Spotify is anybody's guess. Shills and charlatans pushing Spotify strategy are partly to blame.

But we can't blame Spotify. Returning once again to the famous stat cited by the legendary Earl Nightingale, only one in 100 will become wealthy and only four in 100 will become financially independent. The same dynamic will continue to play out again and again, regardless of platform or their stated mission. It will play out regardless of your chosen artistic path. It's a law.

95% of independent artists clamor around Spotify. Because they're clueless.

Here it is in a big, flashing, neon-red stop sign:

DO ANYTHING ELSE.

I don't care whether it's gigging and live performance, direct response advertising, or eCommerce. There are better ways of earning an income from your music that deserve more of your attention (and, of course, there are more strategic routes as well).

Don't give Spotify 80% of your attention, because if you do, it will only ever amount to 20% of your results. Flip the script. Give Spotify and streaming platforms 20% of your attention and dedicate 80% of your time to high-value tasks. Even writing songs is a better use of your time. Streaming royalties are the cherry on top, and if they amount to more than that, you're in the top echelon of artists. If that's you, you're welcome to throw this book into the trash bin.

Don't be discouraged. We will be looking at your best alternatives throughout this book. For now, see this through the lens of accurate thinking. To know what to embrace, you must know what to betray.

Resources

Spotify Dreams of Artists Making a Living. It Probably Won't Come True

<https://www.rollingstone.com/pro/features/spotify-million-artists-royalties-1038408/>

Nearly 80% of artists on Spotify have fewer than 50 monthly listeners

<https://www.musicbusinessworldwide.com/over-75-of-artists-on-spotify-have-fewer-than-50-monthly-listeners/>

The Story of Six Artists

In 2022, I had the opportunity to lead multiple marketing discussions for a community project I was involved in. The goal was to get a sense of the team's social media and online footprint as well as who they knew could be a potential contact or resource for the project (media and press, community influencers, etc.).

I interviewed six accomplished artists – musicians, poets, and writers. Here are some key facts I uncovered:

Out of six artists, 100% had websites.

This is a heartening stat. Each of the artists took their work seriously enough to take the time and resources necessary to set up a website. If you know anything about my work, then you know I take this seriously.

Unfortunately, **none of them have a clear purpose for their website**. For the most part, they've treated their sites as static, informational brochures.

It's no wonder most artists don't see any value in setting up a website and would rather dedicate more of their time to social media. *They don't get results with their website because their websites aren't set up to get them results.*

Highlight and underline this:

Your website is a high-performing conversion tool and sales engine if utilized correctly, and it will outperform social media on its worst day. But again, I stress, *if utilized correctly*.

A Renegade Musician uses their website to:

- Grow their email list
- Get people to listen to their music
- Get people to book them
- Sell their merch and products
- Demonstrate authority, influence, and credibility

Their website's layout, design, and content are all oriented around a singular goal (usually one of the above). On a plain, white, and grey website, they would have a big, bold, orange button on every page screaming out, “LISTEN TO OUR LATEST RELEASE” and the link would take their listeners directly to a page where they can enter their email address to listen to the songs. Beneath the MP3 player would be another button with an enticing, irresistible offer – “GET YOUR LIMITED-EDITION MERCH BUNDLE FOR \$15.”

(This is not a conversation about your website's color scheme or design, by the way – it's a conversation about what your website is intended to accomplish.)

There are too many distractions on social media. You get to set up your website however you want (preferably in a strategic manner). Once you get your people coming to your website, there's a far better chance you can lead them to do what you want them to do.

If your website isn't oriented around a singular objective, do something about this *now*. Choose your objective and build your entire website around getting your visitors to do what you want them to do. Get them on your email list and convert them from email subscribers into customers.

100% of artists didn't have an email list.

If you're not planning to build an email list, why do you even have a website? You do realize that your email list is your retirement plan, right?

Every year we seem to go back and forth on email, and whether it's still relevant.

And every year we come to the same damn conclusion, that email outperforms social media in every conceivable way.

Here are some key findings from a Mailmunch article (you can find the link in the resources section below):

- 60% of marketers believe email outperforms social media, while 40% felt they were two different beasts [and 95% of people still don't know what the hell they're talking about].
- If you have 2,000 Facebook fans, only 120 fans will see each post you publish. If you have 2,000 X followers, only 40 followers will see each tweet. But if you have 2,000 email subscribers, on average, 21.73% of your list will open your messages. That's 435 people (rounded up)!
- When sharing a link in an email, you can expect a 3.57% click-through rate. Meanwhile, Facebook offers an average click-through rate of 0.07%, and X 0.03%.

Even Mailmunch seems to get some of the stats garbled, so we're not sure they know what they're talking about either. What we do know is the sources they cited are credible. These stats aren't new – they're consistent with all the research we've done, and they've stayed this way for well over a decade.

I don't know what's going to happen next. I don't have a crystal ball. But at least for the immediate future, my money's still on email.

Note that this is not a big, red stop sign shouting, “DON’T USE SOCIAL MEDIA.” Email and social media complement each other quite nicely (*if done right*).

But you don’t get to keep your social media following. You never know when the platform’s algorithm will change, when they’ll update their terms and conditions, or when they’ll shadow-ban or delete your account completely. In the age of “disinformation,” I would not trust a platform to keep my profiles, accounts, pages, or groups active, let alone safe.

You need an email list. It’s the only sensible backup plan. But it’s not just a backup plan. It’s *the* plan. It’s the only way to reach more people, create a relationship with them, and get more clicks. It’s the only way to ensure you have a contact list when a platform like TikTok dives, and it will.

Get as many of your followers to join your email list as possible. *Now*. And keep doing it. Don’t forget to send weekly updates. Tell them Uncle Dave knocked some sense into you.

Five out of six artists didn’t think they had any press or media contacts.

There are many ways to promote a local event, but getting coverage in media (papers, radio, newsletters, etc.) is a good way to get widespread exposure for less effort.

When we asked our artists and production team whether they had any press or media contacts, only one artist responded affirmatively.

Understand – these artists hadn’t started their careers yesterday. I don’t think there was anyone with less than a decade of experience.

With all the people who had reached out to them over the years for comment, five out of six artists didn't think they had press or media contacts.

When we followed up the question with whether they knew any local bloggers, podcasters, influencers, YouTubers, or small independent creators, all responded affirmatively, and some even referenced the names of program directors at college radio.

See, you don't need to know award-winning journalists, celebrity hosts of a breakfast show, or for that matter, Oprah, to be able to say you have press or media contacts. There's a very good chance there are a few in your extended network already, some of whom you've previously interacted with.

If you can't think big, think small. Think of people who do interesting things. Those are the people you need to identify and connect with ongoingly.

Comb through your email archives *today* and identify all the people who've reached out to you for comment in some capacity. Make a list of these contacts and make them a part of your ongoing follow-up plan whenever there's something major happening in your career (new release, tour, music video, etc.). Remove people from the list if they ask to be removed.

Out of six artists, only one was actively exploring new platforms and opportunities.

It seems like just yesterday the only relevant social media platforms were Facebook, X, and YouTube. Fast forward to today, and the number of platforms (with staying power) is rapidly mushrooming.

In the last two to three years, the demand for free speech platforms has increased as never before, leading to the growth and proliferation of platforms like Odysee, Rumble, BitChute, Telegram, Truth Social, BrighteonSocial, Parler, MeWe, and Minds.

Some of these, like Odysee and Rumble, are Web3 platforms, much like DeSo (I'm a fan of DeSo and all they're attempting to create).

Live streaming? Check out Twitch, BIGO LIVE, Widsom, and Clubhouse.

Interested in writing? Try Medium, NewsBreak, Substack, Steemit, HIVE, and CloutPub.

If you're not actively seeking new opportunities, what are you doing? Waiting for MySpace to make a comeback? Pining for the day Facebook will recapture its former glory? They say you shouldn't bet against Mark Zuckerberg, but I don't think Meta's plan to take over the web is going to be accomplished through Facebook. Another platform, perhaps.

To my point, Vox reported that Facebook lost roughly half a million global daily users in the fourth quarter of 2021 alone. I think that number is much higher.

I'm not asking you to spend all your time finding new platforms. But we each have a responsibility as Renegade Musicians, to understand something before we jump to conclusions about it. Because Sally said it sucked eggs (say that 10 times fast) is not a good enough reason to write something off. You need to go and see it for yourself. You don't get to call yourself informed if you don't do your homework.

We need to practice accurate thinking, especially here.

If you don't know something, either commit to experiencing it firsthand or admit you don't know and move on.

Resources

Email Marketing vs. Social Media: Why Should You Care?
(2022)

<https://www.mailmunch.com/blog/email-marketing-vs-social-media>

Facebook is Shrinking

<https://www.vox.com/recode/2022/2/2/22915110/facebook-meta-user-growth-decline-first-time-metaverse-mark-zuckerberg-tiktok-competition-earnings>

Part II: Unfollowing the Majority

You've examined the facts. You know the cold, hard truth.

But still, you wonder to yourself – “What am I supposed to do with this? How am I supposed to become the 5%?”

You now know that it begins with forsaking all that the 95% are doing because they are experts in mediocrity, not in excellence. And if you think that's extreme, Kennedy says most people are idiots doing idiotic things. I don't hate people, but I do tend to agree.

You know that you must practice accurate thinking, letting go of hunches and assumptions, and leaning instead on the factual, empirical, tested, and proven. Firsthand experiences are far more valuable than hearsay or opinion. Accurate thinking, though, is understanding that sometimes your experiences and memories are faulty, too.

But even I admit that's not enough. You can know that walking for an hour per day is good for your health and still not do it. You can know that eating healthy is a good thing to do, and still not know how to prepare a balanced meal. You may know that you should build an email list but get caught up in comparison shopping Email Marketing Services, never deciding on one.

The temptation to join the 95% in booking gigs at dive bars, posting “check out our music” endlessly to social media, fixating on Spotify listener count, and mailing out flaccid cold

call pitches is always going to be there. Don't think this temptation is ever going to go away.

Most of the crowd is at the bottom of the mountain, and they're ready to dissuade you from climbing at a moment's notice. The higher you climb, the fewer companions you will have. Following the majority offers solace and comfort going it alone does not. For renegades, loneliness is par for the course and a badge of honor. For most, however, it's too great a sacrifice.

A change of habits and behavior is not enough. We're human, and human beings quickly revert to familiar states.

Thus, what we require is an internal shift – a shift in identity.

When we go from saying, "I'm the kind of person who books dive bars" to "I'm the kind of person who books high-paying shows because I know my value," and believe and act on it, everything changes. That's how to initiate an identity shift. Say, "I'm the kind of person who..." and fill in the blank.

In the pages that follow, you will discover the mindset of a Renegade Musician.

Be Your Biggest Fan

Most Musicians Don't Care About Their Music & Expect Others to Care – You Are Your Own Biggest Fan

If you owned a Ford dealership, would you drive a Chevy?

Of course, you wouldn't. If you owned a Ford dealership, you'd make money when people bought Fords. So, you'd be a proud owner of a Ford and you would drive it everywhere you went. You'd get acquainted with the product range. You'd familiarize yourself with the benefits of driving a Ford. You'd study the psychology behind buying and selling. You'd become a student of why people buy cars, and what needs or pains they're solving when they buy cars. You'd share your knowledge with staff and employees. You'd be a product of the product, and you'd naturally be more passionate about Ford. You'd share your passion with everyone you met because you'd know how great Fords are, and because you'd have a vested interest in succeeding.

This is *not* how most musicians think about their music.

I've seen it firsthand...

They get sick of working on their music. They actively criticize it. The moment they're out of the studio, they never want to hear it again. There's no conviction, no passion, no sense of value or urgency. Yet, in many cases, this is the only product they have. Even though they should have a vested interest in their art, and they're more qualified than anyone else to share

it, spread it, and sell it, they crush their chances of success by succumbing to cynicism, jadedness, low self-image, and even contempt. I get that familiarity breeds contempt, but this is a bit much.

I don't know how you're ever going to create the life you want through music if this is your attitude.

Especially since most successful musicians end up playing their early hits for the rest of their careers!

Look at Britney Spears or Christina Aguilera. Have they even done anything since their heyday? I mean, technically, yes, they have released new material since the 2000s, but the songs they're most known for stem from their early efforts. It's the same with most acts.

We didn't come to hear your new songs, Neil. We want to hear "Rockin' In The Free World" again!

If you hate your music the moment you're finished tracking, how in the world are you going to fulfill on hundreds of tour dates? How are you going to endure hundreds of press requests and interviews? How are you going to give the release the legs it needs to stand on? The answer is you can't, and you won't!

If you're not going to be the greatest evangelist for your music, you can't expect anyone else to do it for you.

Here's the mentality you should have...

You should be willing to playlist all your music, put it on repeat, and play it in your house and car all day long. You should be the first to buy all your releases, all your merch, and all your concert tickets. You should go to all your shows, show up early, stay late, and shake hands until you've got callouses. You should be so excited to share your music and message with the world, that it's the first thing you think about in the

morning and the last thing you think about before your head hits your pillow. You should be posting all the time, sharing all the time, connecting all the time, adding value to others, and expressing unfaltering optimism and enthusiasm for your music, because it's your blood, sweat, tears, heart, and soul on display. Genuine optimism is contagious because there isn't a lot of it out there. Passion is how we transform the world around us.

Why wouldn't you? You're the one that benefits most when you invest in your music.

I still remember the time I gave my first solo album to the owner of a guitar store I taught at. I wanted him to review it and tell me honestly what he thought about it.

So, after he listened, I asked.

He said, "Oh, don't make a mockery out of me man. The guitar playing on this thing is insane! What are you trying to prove? Get out of here."

I couldn't believe it. That's not how I felt about my release. I didn't get that kind of reaction from most.

But that experience planted a seed. I recognized that I needed to be my biggest fan. No one else was going to do it for me. No one could follow suit if I didn't show them the way. If I didn't become the leader, and teach people how to engage, they would never learn. I'd be leaving everything up to chance. Even if my dance sucked, if it was contagious enough, others would join in.

Business owners feel the same way about their businesses. They see the greatness in it, even when no one else does. It doesn't matter whether they fix sinks, sell clothing, or help people cope with anxiety. They're passionate about what they do. They understand the difference they make in their world. They can't imagine doing anything else. They're deeply

connected to the purpose behind their work.

If you've lost passion, don't believe in your ability to succeed, or have forgotten why you do what you do, clear your schedule, and become present to one thing – *your purpose*.

What difference do you want to make in the world? What impact do you want to have? Why do you exist, and why do you do what you do?

Your answer need not be complicated. But it should connect with you at a heart level.

Take ownership of your music. Your music is your product. Your product solves problems. It eases pain. It helps people escape from their difficult, painful, boring lives. It saves lives. Connect with your *why* and put some urgency on it.

50% Music, 50% Business

Most Musicians Don't Concern Themselves with Boring "Business Stuff" – You Work on it Daily Because You Know it Will Advance Your Career

Study well – the term “music business” has two words in it. The first is music. The second is business.

From this, you've already discerned that the music business is 50% music and 50% business (you're smart, that's how I know you've discerned it).

Spending time creating is crucial for every musician. But no matter how difficult or boring, to have a successful career in music, you must work on the business side of it. Most musicians neglect this and never develop any acumen.

Most musicians think business is B.S. They believe if they just spend enough time making music and performing that someone will eventually notice and discover them. They refuse to take ownership of their careers, and beyond hoping and praying to be discovered, they aren't invested in their success.

If they ever do get signed to a record label, they will be in for a rude awakening, because labels require artists to handle the business aspects of their career.

Even as an independent, chances are, when you're ready to build your team, you won't be working less. You'll be working harder than ever to ensure your team is busy, well-paid, and happy.

Personally, after 10 years of practicing guitar, learning to sing, writing songs, self-producing, contributing to compilations, recording and releasing music, performing, and teaching, I hadn't experienced much breakthrough in my career.

My breakthrough came in 2011 when I joined two network marketing organizations. I started devouring the training material – books and CDs. I found the missing key.

It was simple, but for me, it was revolutionary. Revolutionary enough for me to start Music Entrepreneur HQ, Content Marketing Musician, a blog, a podcast, and a YouTube channel. Then I wrote books, developed a print newsletter, created courses, and launched an online academy.

These are some of the things I discovered in network marketing:

Long-term mindset. Legitimizing your business. Working daily towards the accomplishment of your goals. Tracking your progress. Becoming debt-free. Reinvesting in your business.

That's when I finally started to see what had gone wrong in my career. I didn't have a long-term mindset. I didn't validate my product before launching it. I didn't work daily towards my goals. I didn't track my progress. I wasn't debt-free, and I certainly wasn't reinvesting in my career.

That summer, I was interviewed on TV and performed at a local festival. I even went on a mini-tour with a couple of other songwriters. That was just the beginning of great things to come.

How did that happen? I applied what I was learning in business to my music career.

Everyone you want to work with sees themselves as a business. So, you put yourself at an advantage when you conceive of

yourself as a business and act like one. You put yourself at a disadvantage when you don't. Most musicians don't.

Jay-Z's infamous rhyme from Kanye West's "Diamonds From Sierra Leone (Remix)" nailed it:

I'm not a businessman. I'm a business, man.

Exactly. *You* are a business.

If you are satisfied with where you are in your music career, change is unnecessary. But if you think more is available and know it's within your grasp, then you must embrace business – negotiation, marketing, accounting, and more. Find your strengths and work in them. Identify your weaknesses and seek help.

Marketing is Your Business

Most Musicians Think it's Their Job to Make Music – You Know There's Something More to it

What are you in the business of?

It might seem like an odd question, but it's important.

Take a moment to think – what kinds of answers would you instinctually come up with?

“I'm a performer.”

“I'm an entertainer.”

“I'm a songwriter.”

This is all true and well, but friend, you aren't in the business of performing, entertaining, or writing songs. These may be your primary revenue drivers, sure. But that means performing, entertaining, and writing songs are your products, not your business.

Just in case – *you are not in the business of music, either.* And this is not a trick question.

Am I in the coaching business because I sell coaching? Or am I in the info-product business because I have books and courses? What about the web development or graphic design work I do?

Hold the phone – do I have multiple businesses?

Again, we're talking about products and services, not the business I'm in.

Have you given up yet?

Turns out, we are all in the same business. **We're in the business of marketing.**

We should all have products and services. They are the crystallization of the value we offer the world. They should be packaged, bundled up, and priced to offer the best possible experience for our customers.

But having products makes no difference. I have plenty of products. Many of them don't sell daily, let alone on a monthly or annual basis.

Don't you have music releases no one listens to? Case closed. You're not in the business of recording, gigging, or merchandise. I'm not in the business of coaching programs, online courses, or independent music campaigns.

We're all in the business of marketing. So, we need to develop ourselves into strong marketers.

This may seem intimidating, but it can also be a liberating rebirth of sorts. Today can be the first day you acknowledge yourself as a marketer. Because without marketing, there are no customers, and without customers, you're not going to have an income. The income is in marketing.

The best music in the world will reach no one without marketing, except maybe on a fluke.

If you want to separate yourself from the pack, accept that you are in the business of marketing.

Inspect What You Expect

Most Musicians Think They Can “Hand it off” – You Know That You Can’t Take Your Eyes off the Prize for a Damn Second

I'd considered this manuscript largely complete when I had a brief exchange on X with a fellow musician that alerted me to another crucial topic I had to address.

I posed the question to my following, “What are you most excited about working on right now?”

To which he replied, “Working with an artist development team. NOW I don’t have to do and know everything.”

Whoa Nelly, do we have something to talk about? You bet your little caboose we do!

Now, I'm not specifically saying this is an issue with the artist who responded to my tweet. It could be that he is very smart and knows well the implications. But I have a sneaking suspicion most artists don't, and that will not do for a Renegade.

It's time to go through item by item so we're on the same page here...

Chart Your Progress

I can admit that I enjoy this bit of weekly administrative tedium as much as the next guy, but it's a recurring theme in the material I've studied, so it bears repeating:

Absent any other change, if you begin tracking your progress, your career will improve.

You can replace the term "career" with "performance," "productivity," or even "business," and the statement would still ring true.

What this means is this:

If you check in on your streaming stats every Friday at 2:00 PM, and you logged 42 streams this week, next week, when you check in, that number is going to go up.

Automatically or magically? No. Without effort? No. Consistently and every single time? No.

But the subconscious programming of logging into your dashboard, checking the stats, logging them in a graph on a piece of paper (better than a spreadsheet), and repeating this process will make it so. Over the long run, you will see the numbers increase.

Not doing this? Leaving it to others? Unimaginable!

Okay, I jest. A bit.

But if anyone other than you is reporting, you'd better do the following:

- Double-check the numbers to ensure their accuracy
- Know where the numbers are coming from and ensure they aren't misreported

- Use the numbers to identify next steps (which is only worthwhile if they're accurate!)

You would *think* this wouldn't be an issue in an age when *everything* is digitized, but there are still ways to falsify reports.

I'm a foodie, so I don't like to think about it, but eating at a restaurant is the equivalent of getting a stranger to cook your meal, having no idea what's going into that big salad.

Most of the time, there are no consequences. Some of the time, there are minor consequences – bloating, gas, indigestion. And on rare occasions, you get food poisoning. Are you starting to get the picture?

If you're not counting the beans, someone else is, and even the people you think are most trustworthy are liable to cook the books to give themselves a raise. But we'll get to that.

Manage Your Money

You can't get by, especially in the treacherous music industry, without learning how to manage your financial resources. This point is reinforced several times throughout this book, but if I leave it to chance, I know I'm going to get some "woe is me" letters from artists who thought they were well on their way to superstardom when in fact they were halfway done digging their way to bankruptcy.

Pick a boy band, any boy band (especially those who started in the late 90s), and they will tell you how leaving their accounting to someone else bit them in the ass aggressively and repeatedly.

Sure, things turned out okay for the Backstreet Boys and NSYNC, but that doesn't mean it's how it ended for all the other copycat acts that popped up around the same time. You just don't hear about it because their names don't get clicks.

If you're not the one moving your money around, then I'm sorry to say, someone's already got a hold of your paycheck and there's a good chance you won't be seeing most of it.

Most would probably think this overwrought, but whenever I receive money, I follow these steps at my earliest convenience:

- Write it down on my calendar pad
- Type it into a Notepad document (and later a spreadsheet)
- Update the monthly total on my whiteboard
- Say "I'm a money magnet. Thank you, thank you, thank you!" per T. Harv Eker

Corollary to that, *beware of the contracts you sign*. You may already be in a deal where 120% of your advance needs to be repaid, and 99.9% of your music income goes directly into the producer's pocket and not even know it. You think I'm kidding, and I'm not.

If you don't direct your income, someone else will, and because money likes to flow, it can disappear fast, regardless of your preferences.

You'd better know what deal you signed, or there won't be a recourse.

Know Your Thieves

Study after study and statistic after statistic show that 80% of theft within a company, organization, or institution occurs internally. Meaning – your staff or your vendors (not your customers) are your greatest cause for concern.

Congratulations on finding an artist development team. Now you've got a *whole other* problem to manage.

There are problems on either side of the equation, of course. You can have “broke problems” or you can have “rich problems.” I prefer the latter.

But just because someone is “looking after you” doesn’t automatically mean they aren’t also looking after your mad stacks, if you get my meaning.

I don’t mean to instill in you any more fear or mistrust than you already have. What I’m saying is that you need a manager, and that manager ought to be you. Inspect what you expect.

Delegate everything that can be reasonably delegated without incurring catastrophe. You have my blessing! But there is at least one thing – and realistically, more than one thing – that should *never* be delegated, and one of those things is your checkbook.

Control the flow of your money and do it at the earliest convenience, preferably *the moment* it comes in. Money flows, and it has its reasons for moving in the direction it does, so learn to move quickly before irreversible, undesirable choices are thrust upon you.

Your Fans – Your Currency

Most Musicians Only See Likes, Views, and Listener Counts – You Know That Wealth is in the Customers

You understand that your monthly Spotify listenership is made up of *real people*, right? Those aren't just numbers. Each number represents a real person with real feelings, real problems, a real life. We must remember this.

The same goes for email subscribers, digital sales, X followers, and any other figure neatly and conveniently stowed away in a graphically enhanced online dashboard with pie and bar charts secured behind login credentials.

The wealth is in the customers, so you can't afford to treat them as faceless, unfeeling robots. Understand – if you one day become wealthy, it will be a result of the relationships you cultivate.

Dale Carnegie says the most magical word in everyone's vocabulary is their own name. Don't be like the big conglomerates that refer to people by their alphanumerical customer IDs. You should know your biggest fans' names by heart.

Renegade Musicians have a responsibility.

Your first responsibility is to get visitors to your website. Second, to convert visitors into email subscribers. Third, to turn email subscribers into customers. Fourth, to continually nurture your email subscribers (even those who never buy), and especially your customers.

All things being equal, those who've spent money with you, even \$1, are more valuable to you than those who've never bought anything. When you have something new to sell, your hottest prospects aren't people you haven't met yet – your hottest prospects are people who've already bought from you. Marketing to your existing customer database will not only save you money (attracting new fans can be expensive), but it will also help you earn a better income.

You can do more for your fans. You can surprise and delight them and cultivate loyalty. Customer service is the key that will unlock the door to your wealth, and the only thing it requires is time.

For example, you can:

- Record and send 30-second smartphone videos to new customers
- Send handwritten “thank-you” notes (yes, by mail)
- Send surprise packages to long-time fans (e.g., T-shirt, ballcap, buttons)
- Sign merch and shake hands before and after shows
- Hold surprise AMAs, Q&As, listening parties, etc. exclusively for customers
- Recognize your top fans on social media (fan spotlight)
- And more

Artists who've endlessly toured dive bars should understand well the value of lead and customer nurturing. They've had to scrape and claw for every fan they've ever converted. It can take days of touring just to find one new fan.

Today, we take it for granted that our following will increase, our email subscribership will grow, and fans will come to our website to purchase our merch without us even lifting a finger (the good thing about selling online is that you can be selling even as you're asleep – heard that one before?).

But remember – we’re all on an equal footing. If it’s easy for you to do, it’s easy for other artists and bands to do, too. To surpass common results, you must be willing to do uncommon things.

Other artists are your collaborators and cooperators, not your competition. Even so, you can’t do what they’re doing and hope to achieve outstanding results.

The thing that’s going to take you over the top, the thing that’s going to make you remarkable, the thing that’s going to ensure you’re succeeding while others are struggling is *relationship* – in other words, customer service.

... But All Relationships Matter

A Renegade Musician prioritizes their inner circle first, but they also keep up with anyone and everyone, because they understand that people change, and years down the line they will still need fans, friends, and investors. They will still want a rich social life.

Don’t end up 65, broke, and lonely. That’s when people start to give up on the very idea of living. It’s preventable. All it takes is sending a few text messages on your lunch breaks starting today. Keep up with people.

Be generous and genuine. If you can be of service and value to others, don’t hesitate. Don’t expect anything in return. If you help enough people, somewhere down the line when you need a helping hand, you may look up to find many extended in your direction.

Ask More (This Will Change Everything)

As much as I hate the saying, “the squeaky wheel gets the grease,” it’s true.

Most of us are afraid of asking too much, too often.

But what do all successful people have in common? They ask for what they want.

If you haven't been asking anyone for anything in a while, then start making five asks per day for the next 90 days. It doesn't need to be anything big. It could be:

- Can I use your basement as a rehearsal space?
- Could I guest post on your blog?
- Would you like to do a YouTube collaboration?
- We're stuffing CDs into envelopes today, can you come help?
- Could we get an extra 10 minutes of stage time to play our intro video?

Ask, ask, ask. Most people are just waiting for the call. You have no idea what breakthroughs await you.

If you do this, your career will transform in 90 days.

Resources

How to Win Friends and Influence People by Dale Carnegie
<https://davidandrewwiebe.com/winfriends>

You Are Your Association

Most Musicians Only Care About How They're Perceived – You Know That Hanging Out with the Right People is Critical to Your Success

There's one fundamental, inescapable truth about being an artist (and for that matter, a human being) that can either uplift or plague your entire existence (that means *the rest of your life*) – it's **your association**, the people you hang around.

You are the culmination of your five closest friends and the books you've read – no exceptions. You act like your friends, you think like your friends, you sound like your friends, you even look like your friends after a while – guaranteed. Show me who you hang around, and I will know more about you in minutes than if I spent hours giving you the third degree.

And if you said, "I don't read books," you're like the 95%. The exact stat is that 27% of adults in the U.S. didn't read a book in 2018. A single. Damn. Book. Don't tell me you can't pick up a copy of *Think and Grow Rich* and read a page or two while on the throne.

On the other hand, CEOs, on average, read a book per week (now *that's* 5% behavior – no wonder they're executives).

It might be time to rethink your downtime. If you're like most, you've got TV, movies, YouTube, or video games on continuous rotation five to eight hours per day. Be honest. Substitute just 30 minutes with reading inspiring, relevant material and you will make massive leaps in your development

– in your job, music career, relationships, and life. Most people don’t do this and don’t make any leaps. Test it out for yourself.

The reading habit is easy enough to cultivate. It’s not hard to find good books. The harder part is parsing your social circles.

Here are the two things you must know about association:

Develop Your Inner Circle

You must choose and cultivate your inner circle wisely. If you think otherwise, study marketing guru Dan Kennedy’s *No B.S. Business Success in the New Economy*.

The exact formation doesn’t matter much – the point is you have a small inner circle of people who are allowed to speak into your life (coaches, mastermind group, spouse, etc.), followed by increasingly larger circles that you give decreasing amounts of weight to – 1) experts and specialists, 2) go-betweens, 3) vendors and providers you trust, 4) colleagues and peers, and 5) Facebook “friends,” people you randomly bumped into that one time, and so on (Kennedy humorously labels this circle “Dialogue with the Dead”).

The key distinction is – if people in your inner circle offer any criticism, it’s to make you better. It’s constructive feedback. If people in the outermost circle offer criticism, it’s mostly mutterings of the mundane, complaints of the complacent, and indeed, dialogue with the dead.

You can’t erect literal fences around each circle, nor can you completely prevent interaction with people in all categories. It’s a fool’s errand for artists, public figures, and celebrities. I’m not even asking you to make lists of where all the people you know fit in.

The question is, “Who do you listen to?”

Just because we're Renegades doesn't mean we get to cancel everyone. Canceling is the opposite of what we should do. Let's do everything with love.

But you are a rare individual, and it's also a rare individual who will be able to offer anything of value. Jesus had 12 apostles, and if your inner circle is any bigger than that, you're saying you're better than God.

Elevate Your Friends or Find New Friends

The choice is twofold. You can elevate your friends, or you can make new friends. Both choices aren't necessarily easy.

I have mostly chosen the former throughout life, knowing full well it's the longer path. As you can imagine, no matter how much you care about the people in your life, not everyone responds to the call to be better.

"My best friend will join my mastermind group and commit to reading a book per month," you think, and it turns out they'd rather watch a movie with their boyfriend. Or wash their hair. Or literally anything else.

I have spent weekends with friends where a couple of them sat around going, "I feel like we should be doing something other than watching movies or playing video games. I feel like we should be creating something." As we proceed to watch movies and play video games for the rest of the weekend.

(I always knew full well that they were looking at my considerable body of work, wishing they'd put the time and effort into creating something for themselves.)

I like spending time with friends and appreciate the rare diversion. You can see that I'm not dogmatic in my adoption of the inner circle concept. But as I said, the occasion referenced

was a “rare” diversion, and I would not get advice concerning my work ethic from any of the friends referenced.

Time is always a constraint, but at least it’s democratic. We all get the same 24-hour deposit, every single day, as well as the choice of what to do with it.

People can put the time into creating something for themselves, or they can watch a screen all night. Be a creator or a consumer. I shouldn’t need to tell you which Renegade Musicians are.

Bottom line – you can encourage others to be better, but you can’t force them to be better.

Some of my friends did choose themselves, fortunately, and they are among my best friends. I used to be the one urging them to elevate. Now, they’re the ones tugging at me with intensive yearlong leadership programs, hypnotherapy, vegan diets, meditation apps, and more. They light a fire under my butt. I always wanted to surround myself with people like that, and my wish came true. Now I’ve found the people I will be joining on the beaches of the world.

The other choice, as noted, is to find new friends. Notice I said nothing about ostracizing your old friends or cutting ties with them. It’s simply not the Renegade way. Burning ships may be necessary, but burning bridges rarely is. As you pursue a new path, though, it’s a virtual guarantee that most of your social circle will not follow you into the unknown. The mainstream media leads the sheep, and most will not accept you as their shepherd, even if you’re a prophet.

Yes, it can be a lonely road. But that’s what it means to be a Renegade. Choose to wear it as a badge of honor and accept no substitutes.

As for where to look...

There's probably a couple on Facebook you befriended long ago who started an eCommerce store, a motivational speaker you randomly followed on X or someone at the gym you go to who's wealthier than God because of their Etsy store.

You may not be able to get together with these people all the time, let alone introduce them to each other. But you can follow them, read, and comment on their posts, buy their eBooks, and surprise them with well-placed gifts (also see the section on Dream 100 in Part III).

Ultimately, your association is a matter of who you spend time with, and there are different ways of spending time with people. Physical meetings may be preferred, but virtual meetings are more practical. Tweets, podcast episodes, and video conferences can't hug you, but they can at least hold you accountable for the goals you've set for yourself.

Certainly, don't go without where supply is abundant. At times, it might be better to find comfort in a fling than wait until you find an equally ambitious life partner. But always be cautious of who you're taking advice from, and always be willing to question everything.

Resources

21 Captivating Reading Statistics and Facts for 2022
<https://comfyliving.net/reading-statistics/>

Most CEOs Read A Book A Week. This Is How You Can Too (According To This Renowned Brain Coach)

<https://www.inc.com/brian-d-evans/most-ceos-read-a-book-a-week-this-is-how-you-can-too-according-to-this-renowned-.html>

No B.S. Business Success in the New Economy by Dan Kennedy

<https://davidandrewwiebe.com/nobseconomy>

The Dangers of Single Source Dependency

Most Musicians Waste Their Advances on Partying & Illicit Substances – You Know That One of Anything is a Position of Compromise

In business, two is one. eCommerce titan Ezra Firestone calls this Noah's Ark Principle.

Do you have two computers? I do. I have three – a Mac Book Pro, an ASUS laptop, and a custom PC desktop. On the road, the two laptops come with me. If any of the computers fizzle out, I have two others I can fall back on. Even if I'm traveling, I have at least one other computer I can use as a backup.

Chances are I can extract whatever data I need from the machines that fail (as I've done before). Just in case, I've got a tablet and two smartphones as well.

One of anything is a position of compromise. One internet connection. One customer. One team member. One income source. If you lose any of those things, in the blink of an eye, you could lose your entire career or business.

Sounds like an exaggeration, especially concerning lost internet connections, but imagine sitting in a virtual conference to discuss your new record contract, and just as you're about to sign on the dotted line, the internet cuts out and you have no way of getting in touch with the label. To add insult to injury, the connection doesn't return for a full month. That opportunity is gone, friend.

If that's not real enough for you, let me put it in terms I'm sure you'll grasp – if you only have one guitar, and you bust the headstock, the show *can't* go on, man. Duct tape isn't going to save you.

Yes, cover the basics – batteries, capos, strings, drumsticks, bows, cables, stands, microphones. Buy extras and load them into the tour van. But also think bigger. Invest in an extra guitar, extra amplifier, extra cabinet, extra drum set, extra PA system, extra lighting kit, and a backup power generator. Gigs have fallen through or ended abruptly for lesser reasons.

The dangers of single-source dependency, however, go well beyond. Let's go back to the idea that you only have one customer. Again, in terms you'll understand – the only gig you've got is the one at the local pub, bro.

"This is a great gig. Good pay, good food, good crowd. Let's just keep playing it and save up the income earned to pay for our next album," said far too many artists who didn't know what to do when booking changed hands, the venue stopped playing host to music acts, the venue stopped paying, or the venue shut down entirely. It can happen, it has happened, and it's more common than you think.

(Yes, there are some definite parallels with social media too.)

Now, I would love a gig that paid well, fed me well, and promoted me voraciously. I would also love to kick it back and play that gig for the rest of eternity, especially if it kept growing my email list. But I practice accurate thinking. And accurate thinking says I should have not one, not two, but many backup plans because I never know when this gig might fall through. I should have established relationships with multiple other venues already, and a long list of other venues I could research and potentially perform at within a five- to six-hour driving radius.

In good times, venues will throw money at you. In bad times, they won't even let you step in the front door to play your best song for a fee. I know, because I've made significant gigging income in good times, and I've had to seek out different opportunities in bad times. I've even dealt with crooked managers who pulled the plug on a gig halfway through and never paid us.

So, when I say you need multiple sources of income, I'm not being cute (though Asian girls always like to tell me I'm cute on my live streams). I am trying to help you see that, at any moment, your royalties, gigging fees, or merch sales could decrease and even disappear. If you're dependent on any one of these and don't have another income stream developing, you'll have to start from scratch.

Ideally, you would always have more than one primary income stream and more than one backup income stream. Millionaires have an average of seven income streams – that's an excellent number to aim for.

I had the best coverage from 2014 to 2016 when I divided my time between article writing, theater tech work, music instruction, gigging, community building, and my own business. Theater tech work was casual, and there wasn't always work for someone with limited experience. There was a seasonal aspect to guitar instruction too. But one thing would always pick up when the other tapered off.

I managed the organized chaos, but admittedly it did get a little crazy, and I haven't been able to keep that kind of schedule since – either because I've had no desire to, or because I avoid a burnout pace like the plague (or in modern vernacular – I avoid it like it was COVID-19).

I didn't need that kind of coverage forever, either – my writing work started getting lucrative enough to where I was able to step away from what I no longer wanted to do, opting to work

completely from home. I haven't looked back since 2016. That's when I started self-producing new solo material as well.

The Noah's Ark Principle is a great place to start for most business essentials – backup internet connections, backup team members, backup computer networks, etc. In business, two is one.

But two is insufficient when it comes to income streams, customers, and gigging opportunities. You need more, and you must dig your well before you're thirsty.

The Independent Music Career Cake

Most Musicians Chase Shiny Objects – You Anchor Yourself in the Proven

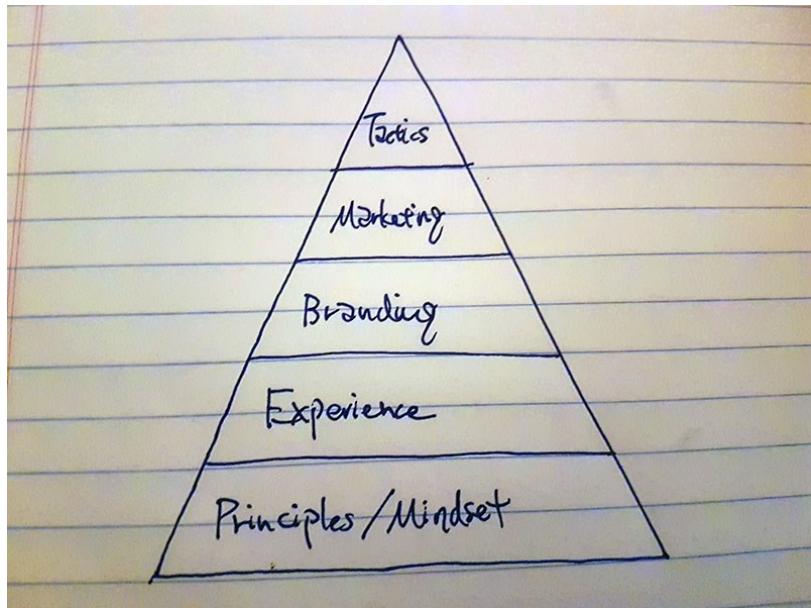
“Dude, TikTok is blowing up. We’ve got to make something and quick!”

We’ve all felt that way, regardless of the trend.

Back in the day, it was MySpace, Facebook, and YouTube. Then came Kickstarter, Instagram, and Snapchat. Now we’re seeing the explosive growth of TikTok. If you have a few years behind you, then you know well what I’m about to say. If you’re new to this, then study well – trends come and go (just like musical trends), and social media platforms, by definition, are all trends.

This isn’t just a conversation about social media, though. There is enough space dedicated to social media in this book as it stands.

This is a conversation about the multi-layered pyramid-shaped cake I baked. I call it the **5 Layers of Independent Music Success**. It offers a mile-high view of what matters most in selecting effective actions. So, don’t get frustrated with me when I don’t get into specifics. This is all meant to be high-level.



Let's start at the bottom, or the largest layer.

- 1) First, we have **principles**. A principle is a truth you can fall back on no matter the circumstance. Whether in easy or dark times, a principle is reliable. As Renegade Musicians, we must be guided by principles first and foremost. In everything we do, we want our actions to be dictated by accurate thinking.
- 2) The next layer is **experience**. Experience isn't always as dependable as principles. But one can inform the other. All things being equal, experience is more reliable than hearsay or opinion. We can test things for ourselves to determine whether they work for us. It's far better than trusting something we heard secondhand from a friend who saw it on television last week.
- 3) Next up the ladder is **branding**. Branding is your reason for existing, your purpose, and the difference you want to make in the world.

It's a little speculative, though, given that your branding can attract a fan base never intended.

Case in point – Nirvana frontman Kurt Cobain didn’t like that the jocks he hated so much in his formative years were coming to Nirvana shows banging their heads to “Smells Like Teen Spirit.”

We brand to polarize and exclude audiences. But there will be those who like our music and come to our shows anyway, even if they don’t identify with our tribe. I’ve been apolitical most of my life, but I still get a kick out of Dead Kennedys and Rage Against the Machine, mostly because of their music, not because of their political stance.

Developing your brand is critical if you wish to be effective in marketing. Once you’re clear on your identity and what you want to accomplish, details concerning your marketing start to take care of themselves.

4) Next up is **marketing strategy**, and as you know by now, marketing is your business. But your marketing must be anchored by principles with a *complete bias towards what works*. That also means you must be willing to discard the ineffectual, no matter how much of a pet project or “baby” it becomes.

Course correction will be necessary, and that’s where experience is a great teacher (if we listen to it).

We don’t want to read some articles online and conclude that social media contests are the best way to grow our fan base, with no proof, no evidence, and no experience to back it up. Further, if it would be out of character with our branding, we should think twice about running a contest.

5) Finally, we have **tactics**. We started this chapter by talking about tactics. TikTok is not a principle. It’s not even a marketing strategy. It’s a tactic. It will make sense for some artists and bands to take advantage of it because their audience is on TikTok – they enjoy new music, and actively visit Spotify and other platforms to check out new artists. That

will not be everyone, and not every artist or band will benefit from a presence on TikTok.

We need to drill down to know whether TikTok will even be worthwhile for you.

If I don't know, at the very least, what your branding is, then I categorically cannot tell you whether TikTok is something you should dedicate any time to.

Or you can be like the 95% that build a following from scratch on every new platform that comes along and lose it the moment the service declines in popularity or shuts down completely. There's no strategy in it but I still hear creators whining about YouTube demonetization, COPPA this, shadow ban that. Sadly, I don't know if they will ever accept the wisdom of building their own platforms and email lists instead of relying on the social media gods (probably mostly bots) to grant them a favor. Don't be like the 95%.

For brainless fun, I occasionally watch MxR Plays, an Asian couple with a YouTube channel reacting to memes. They got two strikes by YouTube for putting Gordon Ramsay's face on a bikini-clad girl. How ridiculous. Like that, they lose some of the audience and income they built up and are forced to move to another channel.

Either way, the five layers can be further simplified as 1) principles, 2) marketing, and 3) tactics. This is how Kennedy defined them in *Renegade Millionaire*. When it comes to music careers, though, branding is the bridge between principles and marketing that will streamline your approach to marketing and tactics.

Resources

266 – The 5 Layers of Independent Music Success

<https://davidandrewwiebe.com/5-layers-independent-music-success/>

In Service of Your Future Self

Most Musicians Try to Live the Rock Star Lifestyle Before They've Earned it – You Prepare for the Future

Being in service of your future self is a Stoic principle, but I think it's something the Greeks and Romans got right. We shouldn't become too preoccupied with satisfying our every whim and desire in the immediate. Accurate thinking dictates that long-term investments are not only wise, but necessary to fully enjoy our musical passions, and ultimately our lives.

We can take this from a few angles, so let me break it down.

Do Something Daily to Grow Your Music Career

Kennedy says there are a couple of things he does daily without exception. One is to spend an hour writing his next book. The other is to do something to help him generate future business.

Today, Kennedy is 67 years old. He nearly lost his life in 2020. With ongoing health concerns, I don't know whether he keeps to the same schedule anymore.

But I want you to think long and hard on this – *what's one thing you can do every single day that will lead to future opportunities in your music career?*

There's a good chance the answer will be connected to marketing, but it isn't always obvious. For now, it should suffice to say that you need to do things that work. As for what to do, refer to Part III.

Plan for Anniversaries

This is something I wish someone told me before I even got started in music.

Anniversaries in your music career come around much quicker than you might expect.

Five years. 10 years. 20 years. The milestones seem to breeze on by after a while. In just four years (as of this writing), my first solo album, *Shipwrecked... My Sentiments* will be 20 years old. Whoa. If I don't start planning soon, I will miss a valuable opportunity to reprise it.

There isn't much point in resurfacing releases that never had any traction. But if you have a release that caught on with your fans, it would be well worth considering releasing a 10th-anniversary version, possibly even 20th- or 30th-anniversary versions as you approach those milestones. Remaster the tracks, or even re-record them. Write a few bonus tracks in the style of that album and include them in the anniversary edition.

One of my early goals as a musician was to be prolific. I had friends who were releasing an album's worth of new material each year, so I thought that's what I should be doing too.

But music isn't all about reinventing yourself. Remember the Pareto principle? 80% of your results come from 20% of your effort. For most artists, that means their first two to three albums.

Long after you've moved on, written other material, and completed life works you had to scrape and claw for, fans will

still be singing, talking about, and wanting to hear, your first few albums, repeatedly.

To create something with artistic merit, you'll want to continually reinvent, evolve, and be as prolific as possible.

But if you want to have a sustainable music career, it's about showing up and giving the fans what they want – even if it means recycling old material, releasing the “same” album until you're blue in the face (like AC/DC).

Also, remember – you can get a *ton* of mileage out of a single song or release:

- Live version
- Acoustic version
- Reharmonized version
- Electric version
- Electronic version
- Electronic remixes
- Instrumental version
- Updated 10th, 20th, 30th, and 40th anniversary versions
- Blues version
- Jazz version
- We could go on...

Check out Richie Kotzen's catalog. He seems to get a ton of mileage out of his old material.

Save Up for Retirement

At 55 years of age, Glenn Jacobs is the mayor of Knox County in Tennessee.

But you will know him best as the seven-foot-tall, 300-lbs. giant WWE wrestler, Kane, “brother” of The Undertaker.

There is a dark side to everything, including professional wrestling. Case in point – plenty of wrestlers and stars have gone broke since leaving WWE – Scott Hall, Lex Luger, X-Pac, Kamala, Sunny, and Hulk Hogan, among others.

Sure, most have landed on their feet. But Kamala literally lost his feet – he had to get both legs amputated due to diabetes and high blood pressure. Ongoing medical treatments proved too costly, and they were too little too late. Within nine years of getting his first leg amputated, Kamala, or James Arthur Harris, left this world.

But getting back to Jacobs, he knew all too well the fate of most athletes. In the NBA, you're considered “over the hill” if you're over 30 (if you forget, don't worry, the commentators will remind you every few minutes). The legendary Michael Jordan retired for the second time from basketball, and for good, after a short run with the Washington Wizards, at age 40. He likely would have kept going, though, if not for his knee injury.

There aren't many opportunities in professional sports (especially in competitive sports) for anyone over 40, except for maybe special appearances, commercials, and endorsement deals. If one played their cards right, maybe they'd end up a commentator, coach, or owner of a team. But these are best-case scenarios – exclusive jobs reserved for the most accomplished. Think of it this way – teams in the NBA can carry up to 15 players during the regular season, but they can only have one head coach.

Jacobs decided to begin investing early, even appearing on The James Altucher Show to talk (very intelligently) about it. He knew that the wrestling gig wasn't going to last forever. And, of course, he's got his political career now.

Most of us don't even want to face the idea that we will continue to age and one day may not be able to engage in our passions in the same capacity we used to. But time will pass.

It's a fact of life. If you do everything right, you can keep your health, your limbs, your figure, and your mental faculties. But whether because of anxiety and depression, illness, accidents, physical and mental limitations, or otherwise, at some point, you may not be able to do what you're able to do now.

We take it for granted that music is one of those rare professions in which you can play until the cows come home, like blues legend B.B. King. But this isn't a guarantee.

Look, you may never "retire." But there will come a season in your life where you're living very differently than you are now. Your income-earning abilities could end up being severely limited.

Think ahead. Invest in your future self. No one is too good to invest.

This is not a book about how to manage your finances and invest your income, but I don't want to leave you to figure it all out for yourself either. From all the research I've done, the long and short of it is this:

Investigate life-cycle funds, also known as target date funds. They automatically allocate your funds across different asset classes, aim for aggressive growth while you're young, and adjust to a more conservative portfolio as you age.

Never rely on government-funded pension programs, superannuation, 401(k), company-funded retirement initiatives, or the equivalent. Accurate thinking dictates these will be gone, or you won't keep a job long enough for superannuation or matching contributions to amount to much. Or the funds you accumulate will be done and spent on emergencies before you can even leverage them later in life.

Take advantage where you can, but these vehicles should not be thought of as secure retirement plans. You need a different

investment vehicle to have a comfortable life in your waning years.

Resources

15 Wrestlers Who Went Broke After Leaving The WWE
<https://www.thesportster.com/wrestling/15-wrestlers-who-went-broke-after-leaving-the-wwe/>

Master Time

Most Musicians Reminisce on “Glory Days”— You Make the Most of the Time Available to You Now

Time mastery is the very essence of the Renegade way.

Most people pat themselves on the back for another “long, hard” eight-hour workday at the office where they were productive for a whole two hours and 53 minutes (see article cited in the resources section).

Look, I know jobs are hard, and it isn’t my intention to make light of that. But here, too, we must invite accurate thinking to illuminate our paths.

Most days I work anywhere from 10 to 12 hours, and the notion of being productive for only a quarter of that time is a thing of the most horrifying nightmares. I’m behind on projects as is, and the consequences of failing to show up and produce on any given day would be angry clients, exhausting conversations, and lost income.

I can get away with the occasional “off” scatterbrained day, half-day, or “putting out fires” day. I even take one day off per week. But if I “winged it” for more than a few days, I could find myself in hot water.

Business is messy, though, and if it isn’t, you’re probably playing too small.

Now, I'm not saying that this is the model to follow. I'm the kind of person that thrives on variety and opportunity. Most people would look at what I do and feel very unsettled if they weren't on their way to having a heart attack.

I'm not advocating for my approach to building a music career or business, nor am I saying you should follow my example.

What I'm saying is you're nowhere near as industrious and effective as you could be in the time available to you. You can do more. But your access to greater productivity must be unlocked.

You Can't Master Time Without Energy

We need to give ourselves the best possible shot at making the most of the time we have. The only way we can do this is by setting aside time for breaks, rest, meditation, sleep, vacation, refueling, and exercise.

As I've been living out of Airbnbs for three months, I've been making it a point to walk for an hour per day at 2 PM. It took a bit of experimentation to figure out that I didn't want to walk at 3 PM, because at that time of day, kids are getting out of school, and I like to walk and think alone. The less traffic and noise on the trails, the better. You learn from your mistakes.

The point is you've got to put breaks into your schedule and follow through on the intentions you've set to the best of your ability (because it's always easy *not* to step away from the desk for 15 minutes of meditation). Even with a neatly organized, time-boxed Google Calendar, you're still not going to do everything at the time you set out to do it. You're not going to do it all perfectly. But as it has been said:

... plans are useless, but planning is indispensable.

You must determine what you're going to do with your time. But it's not going to do you any good to obsess over the

glitches in your day. That just makes you want to give up on planning altogether. If anything, *plan* for glitches in your day, and say a word of thanks when they *don't* happen.

So, what must we do to ensure we're always at our best when it counts?

- **Breaks.** Get up and walk around the block, go to the bathroom, make tea, and spend time away from your desk and devices. Also, listen to your feelings. If you're tired, in a bad mood, or sad, you're not going to do your best work. Steal away for a couple of hours, even a few days if possible. Go to the beach, head out to the mountains, or play golf.
- **Rest.** Studies suggest people can't focus for longer than 90 minutes at a time before requiring a 15-minute break. Resting goes hand in hand with what was already said about breaks, but if you want to take midday naps or spend 30 minutes playing a video game, build this into your routine.
- **Meditation.** I like to meditate for at least 15 minutes per day. The health benefits alone are worth the effort. You can experiment and see what works for you. But I don't see much point in complicating the process. Find a guided meditation or meditation track you like on YouTube, close your eyes, and breathe. Don't make it more complicated than that.
- **Sleep.** Increasingly, studies show that *at least* eight hours per night of sleep is a requirement. Any less and we don't function at optimal levels, and long term, our health suffers. It sounds extreme to some, but before falling asleep, I take magnesium and Somno-Pro, turn on a fan, put on my sleeping mask, and insert earplugs, preferably in a cool, dark room.
- **Vacation.** To live like no one else can, we need to be willing to live like no one else will for a while. So, cast aside any notion of the two-week vacation. It doesn't make sense for the Renegade. It will either be too much

time away from your passion or not enough time to fully recover from the managed chaos that is your life. Consider taking a few days (or a full week) off every quarter instead, especially if you're grinding out 10- to 16-hour days (these have a way of becoming unsustainable). And if some rare opportunities come up to go on a family vacation, or to visit a country you've always wanted to travel to, seize it. I regret not going to Mexico with my family in 2014, but don't regret spending over two weeks in Japan in 2017.

- **Refueling.** Refueling, of course, refers to eating, and eating is necessary for living. We all know we need to eat healthily and that this is easier said than done. My naturopath recommended to me a balance of organic grains and beans, vegetables, and meats, preferably *all* cooked. It's good to mix up what you're eating daily too. A very easy way to fulfill this intention is to make soups and stews, which is where a pressure cooker can come in handy. But if in doubt, consult a trusted source. I am not a nutritionist or physician.
- **Exercise.** I make it my goal to walk at least 6,000 steps per day. Many days I will exceed that number. On rare occasions, I will come well under. I have since added pushups and sit-ups and have seen immediate results from the effort. I can't tell you what to do here. It depends a lot on how much time you have available and where you plan to exercise. You might have an excellent workout regimen already, in which case, congratulations. But if you don't, implement one. And if you can, mix things up. Engage in walking, weight training, cycling, and hot yoga. Also, don't let a one-hour workout expand to fill three hours with idle dilly-dally, slowly tying your gym shoes, spending 30 minutes in the shower, etc. Get in, get out, unless it's your day off.

Don't Reinvent the Wheel

We're artists. We *love* to follow inspiration and start things from scratch.

But we must adjust. Starting from scratch is messy. It's costing us time, and time is costing us income. This puts a ceiling on what we can accomplish on a given day. And weeks, months, and years are just days added up.

I'm not suggesting that you suppress your creativity. Far from it.

But just as building a house begins with a blueprint, you should have pre-built frameworks for activities you carry out regularly. In other words, if you know you're going to be doing it more than once, make a template, swipe file, checklist, or framework for it. This is good backup planning too – you can give your checklist to a band or team member when you're not able to handle the task or want to delegate it.

You're smart enough to figure out how and where this will apply to your situation, but I will offer a few examples to get you started:

- **Email templates.** There are certain types of emails you will be sending repeatedly – booking requests, playlist pitches, thank-you messages, and so on. Gmail lets you easily store all your email templates, but if you're not using Gmail, you can always make Word or plain text docs. One caveat – please, for the love of God, *don't forget to personalize all your emails*. Even if the gist of the message is going to be the same, adhere to best practices – address the email to the right person, compliment them, deliver your win-win value proposition, etc. I'll be talking more about pitching later.

- **Lyric sheets.** You could treat it like a letterhead – add your logo to the top with a place to add the title and the date you began working on the song. If you want, you could create a space for the names of the writers and contributors, too. Custom lyrics sheets could be great for archiving, posterity, and even for making a book about your band’s history.
- **Custom DAW templates.** Getting ready to fire up a new project in your DAW? Nowadays, not only do DAWs come with pre-loaded templates, but you can also customize and create your own. This should save you a lot of time setting up and labeling tracks for all the instruments you intend to record. Even bands that experiment widely with synth sounds generally utilize close to the same number of channels across projects.

Move with Urgency

I’m a laid-back guy. Some have even referred to me as the “master of Zen.”

But behind the scenes, I’m not thinking to myself, “No worries – there’s always more time.” I’m doing what I can do today to advance the projects in my queue.

My laptop desktop wallpaper reads:

Your future is created by what you do today, not tomorrow.

I didn’t go looking for this. It found me.

I have several rules I follow. For instance, I only dedicate one hour per day to email and communication. I batch all the emails, messages, and calls I possibly can in that one hour, moving as fast as I can (not to the detriment of accuracy, mind), because I know I will only have an hour to return messages.

It's nice to think there will always be more time to do what you need to do. You might look at your schedule on Thursday and say, "Look at that, it's 2 PM and I only have one thing left to do. It's not even due until Monday. I've worked hard. I'm going to reward myself and chill the rest of the day."

I get it. These opportunities may be rare. But you can't possibly know how you're going to be feeling tomorrow, let alone what will happen between Thursday and Monday. Move with urgency, especially if you've got energy left over. New opportunities could show up tomorrow and then you will wish you had completed the task on Thursday.

The 95% always put things off until tomorrow, next week, next month, next year, next decade, or next lifetime. There are times to take a step back, but you don't want laziness to become habitual.

Identify "Good Enough"

This is another doozie for creatives. We want everything to be "perfect." When we deliver a film score to a client, a demo to a label, or a YouTube video to our fans, we want everything to be just right.

Look, there is a time and place for making something as good as you possibly can make it. Unfortunately, I know far too many artists and creatives who are held back by perfectionism. They never get around to their first blog post let alone launching their website. They never get around to their first song let alone their full studio album.

I'm happy to offer coaching to anyone who's stuck, but I can't steer a parked car. You've got to get your vehicle in motion. Then I can help you adjust the course.

Once you've overcome the perfectionism trap, and you've spent a few years developing your skills, the next step is to determine what's "good enough" in every situation.

If your financial ledger contains all the data but you're not happy with how the columns look and want to use bold fonts and add color, you've passed the point of "good enough."

If you promised an acoustic number to one of your crowdfunding pledgers, and you've captured all your parts in pristine studio quality but proceed to add synth and organ parts that were never a part of your intended deliverable, you've passed the point of "good enough."

Again, there is a time and a place for overdelivering. Do it when you can. It is *very* Renegade to overdeliver. But I don't know too many people who say "Look at all the time I have leftover" at the end of the day.

Your "good enough" will be above and beyond in the eyes of most.

Now we've covered every aspect of developing a Renegade mindset from a macro level. But sometimes it's hard to see the forest for the trees, which is why we'll be spending the remainder of Part II addressing the micro, in quick bitesize chunks. These nuggets of wisdom should serve as reminders and help reinforce the new ways of thinking you are now adopting.

Resources

In an 8-Hour Day, the Average Worker Is Productive for This Many Hours

<https://www.inc.com/melanie-curtin/in-an-8-hour-day-the-average-worker-is-productive-for-this-many-hours.html>

Five ways science can improve your focus

<https://www.bbc.com/worklife/article/20170925-the-surprising-tricks-to-help-you-focus-at-work>

Somno-Pro

<https://davidandrewwiebe.com/somnopro>

Investing in Your Growth

Most Musicians Don't Invest in Tools Like Books & Courses to Advance Their Careers – You Actively Seek Growth Opportunities to Spend Your Money on

If you're reading this now, you've already proven to yourself that you're actively seeking growth opportunities to invest in.

But this is a rare trait.

Musicians will spend thousands, even tens or hundreds of thousands of dollars on a college education (easily \$10,000 to \$40,000 per year), recording an album (\$40,000 – \$50,000 anyone?), festival entry fees, or CD and vinyl replication.

Yet when it comes to buying a \$15 book or a \$90 course, they freeze up. “That's too expensive, I can't imagine investing that amount of money in my career. Let me figure it out for myself.” What's up with that?

Most schools and courses don't equip you with the tools necessary to build a successful music career. They may teach theory, how to play an instrument, sing, compose, or write songs. It's the rare program that gets into digital marketing, setting up a website, building a social media following, booking shows, initiating independent radio or PR campaigns, or anything related to career growth.

Some of the best use of your time in school is growing your network. If you build the right connections, you will have gigs and opportunities lined up long after you leave with a

certificate, diploma, or degree. If not, you will be starting completely from scratch with no guidance or direction.

The institutions will happily take your money and give your rear end the boot after you graduate.

Whoever said a good education would lead to a good job was living in a world where they could be chosen by another. Today, you've got to *choose yourself*. No one is going to permit you to pursue your dreams, and no one is going to lift you out of poverty to success.

Almost every program that claims to help you do this has a unilateral interest in slowing your progress up the rungs. They will ask you to take another test, invest another \$3,000 into the “next level,” publish articles, or do other things to gain your “proper credentials.” And even when you do upgrade, you’re only going up one of 33 levels...

Here's the rub:

Schooling has a definite start and end. Self-education doesn't.

I have spent at least \$2,000 to \$3,000 per year on my personal growth since 2018 and have consistently spent hundreds in the years prior.

How much of a rut do you want to dig before you commit to yourself?

I get antsy if I feel stuck in my work for more than six months to a year.

You're willing to live in the same rut for years, even decades before you consider something off the beaten path (where most of the good stuff is). After six months of feeling stuck, I'm chomping at the bit and willing to spend almost anything to address my pain!

Renegade Musicians intentionally steer clear of the beaten path. Remember the 95%?

You can't be mad about "money lost" investing in yourself because the onus is on you. If you didn't get anything out of the book or program you bought, you probably weren't looking for answers to begin with. It's a rare info product that's total B.S. and doesn't contain a few nuggets of gold, even from the shills and charlatans I've warned about.

By purchasing *The Renegade Musician*, you have already proven to yourself that you're the type of person who invests in themselves. Now go and make good on that investment. If you keep at it, you will turn yourself into an appreciating asset that gets better with age, with each passing year.

Novel Input

Have you ever noticed how you tend to tune out conversations you're not interested in or don't align with?

I'm the same way.

But I'm training myself to listen to conversations of all kinds, especially if they are happening among very successful people.

One of the ways to ensure you are more productive than ever is by becoming a voracious consumer of novel input – things you generally don't think about, look at, or do.

Yes, consume as many articles, books, podcasts, videos, and courses as you can, on topics you don't generally explore. Seek mentorship too.

But also go outside. Get your input from a vast array of people from different walks of life. As much as possible, find people who are *doing things*. Start conversations if you can. Nonchalantly eavesdrop if you can't.

If you want to become a limitless well of ideas and creativity for personal and creative expansion (and increase your income while you're at it), this is it. This is the way.

Prioritizing Your Growth

Most Musicians Think Reading Books and Listening to Podcasts is a Waste of Time – You Know That Learning Inspires Ideas & Helps You Build Your Career

Most musicians refuse to invest in themselves.

Now, don't get me wrong. Charlatans and shills abound in every niche, and the music industry has had a long tradition of artist exploitation. You shouldn't trust everyone. If anything, your mistrust is well-earned.

But in the personal development field, there are multiple experts with a proven track record – Earl Nightingale, Napoleon Hill, Norman Vincent Peale, Brian Tracy, Zig Ziglar, Stephen Covey, Dale Carnegie, Jim Rohn, Tony Robbins, Wayne Dyer, and many others. It's a buffet; you're welcome to whatever whets your appetite.

You don't need to buy into everything they say, let alone hang on to their every word like they were imparting a rare word from God himself. A Renegade Musician can think for themselves.

As KISS's Gene Simmons said in his book *Sex Money Kiss*, if you think for yourself, you might not make more friends, but you will make more money. I wholeheartedly agree.

More importantly, if you aren't actively listening to positive voices, by default, you're leaving space for negative ones.

The world is overwhelmingly negative. Most of Netflix and YouTube are negative. The news is negative. Politics are negative. Even your friends and family, in a certain light, are negative. I'm not dishing on any of them. But accurate thinking dictates that 95% of people are at least oblivious.

Human beings weren't designed to handle this level of negativity! We need a lot of positivity to rinse out the negative, and the world isn't set up to meet these needs.

Jack Zenger and Joseph Folkman wrote an article titled *The Ideal Praise-to-Criticism Ratio* in the Harvard Business Review and found that the ideal ratio is five to one. Five positive comments for every negative comment. That's what we require, at minimum, to stay positive. Good luck finding that on the news.

Personal development never struck me as important until I started interviewing people like Tommy Tallarico (North America's most prolific video game composer) and Derek Sivers (CD Baby founder).

(I'm aware that Tommy Tallarico has been "exposed" as a stretcher of truths, so you're welcome to take that part with a grain of salt.)

Talking with them, I realized they had an undying enthusiasm for life. They woke up early and stayed up late to engage in their passions. They were committed to learning and growing. They were eager to share their knowledge with others.

Most of the superstars you see on TV didn't get there by accident. Many were part of feeder programs. Some already had an "in" with the elite class. That, combined with a strong work ethic and the willingness to shake off failure led them to where they are today. But it's the rare artist that slips through the cracks and makes it on talent alone. You've got to have an eager, enthusiastic fan base, even if it isn't huge. Only then will the decision-makers and gatekeepers turn to look your way.

If you don't have a strong mindset, you will want to give up, and you probably will.

Self-help is not B.S. It's preparation for your eventual success. It's understanding that there is a field full of landmines, and the only way you can correctly navigate them is by investing in yourself – learning how to overcome obstacles and challenges.

If you want to develop complete immunity to criticism, you'll merit a read of Chin-Ning Chu's *Thick Face, Black Heart*. But be warned – this is *advanced* training material.

Resources

The Ideal Praise-to-Criticism Ratio

<https://hbr.org/2013/03/the-ideal-praise-to-criticism>

Thick Face, Black Heart by Chin-Ning Chu

<https://davidandrewwiebe.com/thickfaceblackheart>

Reinvesting in Your Growth

Most Musicians Get Drunk on Booze & Don't Put Their Earnings Towards Career Growth – You Reinvest Aggressively

Most musicians make \$50 at a gig and promptly go to celebrate at Denny's after the fact.

Ouch. That one hurt a little, even for me.

Look, how you spend your money is up to you. But a Renegade Musician has a higher sense of purpose when it comes to their income.

If there's something they don't know, they find a resource that can help them. They seek out answers instead of expecting them to magically appear at their doorstep.

If all your money is going towards booze, food, and afterparties, you may as well go back to college (for the college experience). You've got to reinvest the income you've earned into your music career if you want to have any hope of growing. That's what it means to treat your music like a business.

I was once chatting with a Calgary singer-songwriter at a gig I had organized, and he said people often wondered how he was able to release an album every year without fail, especially considering the rather high cost. He said the reason he was able to do it was because he saved every penny he earned from music. I don't know too many musicians who can say that. Even I wasn't that savvy back then.

But you don't just want to be savvy. You want to be shrewd, because a Renegade Musician knows how to manipulate circumstances to their advantage, maximizing every deal they cut. They play to win, and as much as possible, avoid or minimize loss.

Get involved in your financial life and reinvest in your music career. Eventually, you will have the kind of buying power most musicians only dream about. You'll be able to take out Facebook ads, rent out community centers or churches, and hire session musicians. There are so many possibilities. Let your imagination run wild.

If you save up a year's worth of income (not expenses, *income*), you will never feel pressured to take on projects you don't want to take on again. You'll be freer to pick and choose and have the financial strength to live the life you want – a life full of freedom, joy, and adventure.

Most musicians don't have the depth of vision to see what's possible. That's why they can't see that far ahead. It's why they settle for instant gratification instead of long-term fulfillment.

There's a time and place for living it up. But I think that every celebration should have a purpose. If all you're doing is partying because you're alive, as many do, you haven't done anything to earn or deserve that moment. But if you work hard and attain your goals, there's a reason to celebrate. You reinforce good habits by rewarding the good behaviors you want to keep. Even when it comes to something seemingly insignificant like a celebration, Renegade Musicians are intentional and discerning.

If you keep reinvesting, you can keep growing.

If you spend your money foolishly, you kill your seed money. Your seed money needs to be reinvested in your business.

You Are an Opportunity Machine

Most Musicians Think the Only Opportunities Available are the Ones They Find in Forums & Magazines – You Create Your Opportunities

The reason most musicians think opportunities are limited is because they're all chasing the same ones.

They're too lazy to do their homework, so they look at where everyone else is playing and hope they can get booked in the same venues. When the waiting list is months long, they give up or settle for lesser opportunities (of the dive bar variety).

This doesn't just apply to gigs. It applies to every area of one's music career.

Most musicians are small thinkers. They're too lazy to spend any time laying the groundwork for connecting with influencers, agents, managers, educators, artists, labels, and more.

It's never been easier to find who and what you're looking for. So, what up?

You and I are looking at the same social media. But where I'm seeing the opportunity, you're only seeing hot asses in thongs (be honest).

When I was asked to perform at a certain notorious bar in Calgary (notorious because musicians rarely made any money

there), I had to stop and think. If I did everything on their terms, I would walk away with \$20 to \$50 for a hard night's work (which I would have to split with my band).

Instead, I stated my terms. We would bring opening acts. We would bring a doorman (so the bar couldn't fudge the numbers). We would plan the entire night. And we would convince them that this was all their idea. It worked.

Thanks to the groundwork we laid, the venue was packed out the night of the performance, and everyone in the band (three of us in total) walked away with over \$100 each. That was after we paid the opening acts what they were owed. Not a lucrative night, but not bad for 45 minutes of work.

The venue still managed to mess with us, though, because a birthday party had booked a table that night, and they got a free show. We ended up having to turn away some of our friends and fans at the door because capacity had been reached. We could have been even more profitable if the venue hadn't found a loophole in our plan.

Either way, do you see what I mean when I say, "manipulating circumstances to your benefit?"

Opportunities are everywhere. You can book shows in places no one even thinks to (hair salons, yoga studios, libraries, homes, etc. – I have organized shows in some of these locations). You can get a third-party investor involved in a co-write. You can distribute your music exclusively through your paid fan club.

Why do things the same way everyone else is doing them if you have the clarity of mind to see that most of them don't know what the hell they're even doing?

God blessed you with mental faculties. Use them.

Focusing on What Matters

Most Musicians Are Quick to Jump on Trending Social Networks & New Platforms – You Focus Ruthlessly on the Things That Matter & Work

The trend of the day is always alluring, and among musicians, there seems to be a bias towards the new and exciting, be it Telegram, Clubhouse, Medium, TikTok, BIGO LIVE, or otherwise.

True, fortune favors the bold, and some early adopters do reap the rewards, but they are usually the exception and not the rule.

Even if you do become a TikTok star, if you don't know how that's going to translate to real business results, all you've done is become an influencer (and a surprising number of influencers have no clue what they're supposed to be influencing!). You've got to be able to connect the dots.

It's worth setting aside some time to see what the new platforms are all about. But as with most opportunities, accurate thinking dictates they're not going to propel you to stardom overnight.

Further, if you're expecting that they're all going to be around a few years from now, or that they'll be just as easy to monetize as they are today in the future, you've got another thing coming.

What happened to Myspace, Vine, or Google+? Plenty of social media platforms were supposed to be the Facebook killer but ended up being more like a loud fart in a packed train.

Sure, some of these platforms mutated or became something new (MySpace is still around), but I don't know of one that has recaptured its glory days.

While everyone was going gaga over Instagram and Snapchat, I was busy building my website to over 800 visits per day. I don't know what kind of return on investment (ROI) you got on Instagram or Snapchat, but my return on creating content and building an audience was *insane*.

Don't try to do it all. Renegade Musicians are wary of spreading themselves thin and understand the value of giving a worthy endeavor their full attention.

If social media is what you want to master, then gain traction with one platform before adding another. Have the grit and determination to get good at one thing before rushing off to try something else. In the short run, you might miss out on some opportunities, but in the long run, you will create a stronger foundation and come out on top.

This applies to everything you do. You must be able to prioritize and focus on what matters. Do less and focus more on the few things you need to do well.

Establishing Your Platform

Most Musicians Put All Their Eggs in One Basket (Like Instagram) – You Prioritize Home Base & Build Out Your Platform

What is the trend of the day?

As I write this, it's platforms like Substack, Patreon, Medium, Twitch, Clubhouse, TikTok, and Telegram. In the future, it will be something else. That's a guarantee.

If you can't take subtlety, let me bludgeon you over the head with a dose of reality (spoiler alert):

All these platforms are going to follow the same trajectory. There will be early adopters and a few success stories. Everyone will jump on the platform. The algorithm will change, and it will get harder to grow an audience. From there, it will just keep getting harder and harder, until everyone jumps onto a new bandwagon, the platform gets shut down, it gets discontinued by the provider, or it wastes away in internet obscurity. Rinse, repeat.

In the meantime, artists are losing the audiences they worked so hard to attract and build over months and years. Didn't anyone think to come up with a backup plan?

I've been teaching this for as long as I can remember but listen well – *begin building your email list TODAY*. That's your backup plan, retirement plan, or “I'm serious about making my music my living” plan.

Now, I don't take issue with any of the platforms of the day or even the ones to come.

But a Renegade Musician knows that when they're building on someone else's property, they're building on rented land. Sure, they take advantage of the space available. But they prioritize building their platform. They build assets – two things – a website and an email list.

How many Facebook groups have been deleted? How many YouTube channels are getting demonetized or outright banned? How many personalities and content creators are getting shadow-banned and de-platformed by Amazon?

I don't know about the future, but as I write this, that number is sky high, mostly because of the pandemic, as well as the insane politics and censorship it has brought to the fore.

In 2020, as lockdowns were beginning, my friend was looking to post a meme about past pandemics on Facebook. Before he could even post, Facebook alerted him that no one would see his post.

I'm sorry, but if you still think building exclusively on rented land is a good idea, you're out of your gourd. Censorship can only be exercised by publishers, not social media platforms. And yet we stand by and allow it to happen. We cast our vote by playing by their rules instead of creating and living by our own. We devalue our constitutions and charters of rights by adhering to values other than freedom.

You need a space you own and control, and you need it now. You need to build it into a robust empire with rich multimedia content, music, merch (a store), and calls to action to join your email list. You need to be aggressive in growing it, and patient in seeking results.

Your home base is crucial to your success. It doesn't just help you book shows, as one of my young musician friends so

naively said. It protects you against loss. It's risk management of the highest order. It's also your perpetual sales engine if you do it right.

If your website isn't doing that for you, it's because:

- You're sending people to social media and streaming sites instead
- You're not adding content to your website ongoingly
- Your website isn't oriented around a singular objective
- You're not putting any effort into growing your email list
- You're not selling music or merch on your website

Don't Shortcut the Shortcut

Most Musicians Complain & Haggle Endlessly Over Price – You're Eager to Pay Whatever Price is Necessary to Get a Quality Product

Most musicians don't want to pay a cent for anything.

Ever heard the saying, "You get what you pay for?"

Well, if you don't pay for your information, you aren't just getting low-quality, "who gives a crap who wrote it" freelancer word salad, you also aren't taking it seriously enough to produce a breakthrough in your career in the first place.

Knowledge isn't power. Wisdom is. Wisdom is knowledge applied.

Most musicians are too cheap, too lazy, and too scared to test.

You're not a Renegade Musician if you aren't a go-getter.

Imagine ordering 200 CDs for your next release. You pay the studio engineer. You pay the mastering engineer. You pay the graphic designer. But you *don't* pay for the physical CDs. Somehow, you manage to find a service that replicates CDs for free.

Then, imagine when your order finally arrives at your door... what's this? A *picture* of 200 CDs?!

You got what you paid for.

If this all sounds esoteric, then know that some have fallen for a similar scheme on eBay, where they bet on the latest iPhone without reading the fine print: “Note: You are betting on a *picture* of the phone.”

Don’t try to shortcut the shortcut. You could easily get scammed, especially in today’s economic climate.

The sooner you’re willing to pay for your education, services, and team, the sooner you can progress in your music career. If you make a big deal about costs now, things aren’t going to get any easier down the line. There will only be a bigger price to pay.

In due time, you’ll need to pay for your domain name, hosting, Email Service Provider, app subscriptions, advertising, graphics, photography, videography, merch, CD replication, studio time, mixing and mastering, and even team members. The costs are only going to mount and grow.

Get used to the idea of finding the best tools and people for the job. Get used to spending more on your career. You can only build more tolerance in this area by committing first and problem-solving later.

Today, spending \$100 might seem like a lot. In time, you’ll drop \$1,000 in one go without blinking an eye.

Developing Your Leadership & Empathy

Most Musicians Can't be Bothered to Send a Simple "Thank-You" Note – You're a Leader in Your Community, Online & Off

If you can't be bothered to connect with fans on X, leave a reply on a blog post, or listen to a 10-minute podcast, I don't know how you ever expect to get anywhere in your music career. It's baffling.

I'm sick of it. We need to change the music business culture, and it starts with us. We need to build relationships, partnerships, communities, and collaborations. We need to be leaders in our communities. We shouldn't be kicking back, drinking beers, and being armchair philosophers on the sidelines.

If you're serious about supporting indie music, don't just talk about it. Buy albums from artists and bands in your scene and share them with your friends. That's being in alignment with your values. To do it the other way is just cognitive dissonance.

If you're serious about supporting indie authors and coaches, don't just talk about it. Buy my books and services. If mine aren't a good fit for you, find someone else you resonate with. That's being in alignment with your values.

Don't be a talker. Be a doer. Be a difference maker.

A Renegade Musician doesn't run from work. They embrace it. Because they know the difference they can make in the world. They aren't selfish. They're willing to share in their success and bring others out into the spotlight. They're willing to work together with others to build a scene, start an open mic, create a community, host workshops, and more.

Working with others is fun, fulfilling, and rewarding. It can produce astounding results never anticipated.

In Calgary, there's a successful, award-winning singer-songwriter and his name is Troy Kokol. Although he isn't *required* to give back, he does so by hosting local songwriter workshops and by teaching other musicians how they can become better songwriters.

Let's create a culture of paying it forward. Imagine the impact. That's the kind of stuff I get excited about.

If we keep taking it up the butt, guess what? Artist exploitation isn't going to get better. Give an inch and they'll keep taking a mile.

We could create a world where artists *don't* starve. If that doesn't get you up in the morning, then I don't know what will. That's what gets me up in the morning.

Don't wait for someone else to do it. It starts with you!

Resources

142 – How to Succeed as a Songwriter – with Award-Winning Singer-Songwriter & Producer Troy Kokol

<https://davidandrewwiebe.com/142-how-to-succeed-as-a-songwriter-with-award-winning-singer-songwriter-producer-troy-kokol/>

You're the Only “Fact-Checker” That Matters

Most Musicians Parrot Information from the Mainstream Media – You Value Your Intuition Over Outside, Negative Voices

Forget fact-checkers. They’re probably Facebook and Google bots anyway. At best, they’re teenagers in their mom’s basement pulling “facts” from Wikipedia. Wikipedia: Fact or Fiction, anyone? Mostly column B.

If “because I saw it on TV” is the best reason you can come up with for knowing something, you *don’t* know. And yet people pretend to have done their research and due diligence. Give it up already. You haven’t done squat.

Want to know what I spent three hours per night doing during the pandemic? REAL research. Add that up – that’s at least 2,190 hours. I didn’t just hound the WHO and CDC websites like an obedient little puppet. I checked sources far and wide – mainstream, independent, and even the conspiratorial and obscure. I don’t spend quite as much time on this now, but my mindset hasn’t changed.

99% of what you hear on the news is a blatant lie. They catastrophize every event, so they can get you to click on a headline and buy into their panic-inducing, false flag narrative. To add insult to injury most are a carbon copy of the other, reading off the same damn script. Look for the evidence – you will find it.

Did you get sick during the pandemic? No shit! Fear and stress are the silent killers, and the mainstream media did a great job of traumatizing you. Stress is the cause of 90% of illness and disease. Again, look it up.

You need to know what's going on in the world. I get that. But see if you can get a news brief instead of staying glued to your TV or smartphone all day long. A summary of the day's events in 30 minutes or less. 10 minutes would be ideal. You've already learned the impact of negative on your life. It's time for a change.

If it's not impacting you in the immediate, what's the value in fixating on it?

If you want to be a successful musician, you've got to learn to trust yourself, and that's *never* going to happen if you keep letting yourself get gaslit by media companies with a profit motive. They've got the hypnotized masses wrapped right around their finger.

You've got to be able to listen to your intuition and trust yourself enough to follow it. That happens with practice. First, you've got to get away from the voices screaming murder.

Something in me told me that my first book, *The New Music Industry*, would sell better than any product I'd created before it. I was validated. Six years later, that book still has legs, and it continues to inspire musicians all over.

If I hadn't followed my intuition, I would have put off that project for longer. Maybe I would have never completed it. Writing a book is a daunting task!

But I stuck with it. A year after the book came out, I started The New Music Industry Podcast, which was another solid move.

Following my impulses has paid off in droves – monetarily, or experientially.

Don't let all the other voices crowd out your own. You've got to be able to hear yours. You've got to be able to listen for ideas, insights, impressions, inspiration. You've got to be able to trust your intuition. You can. It's not magic.

Even if you're wrong, at least you trusted yourself. That will increase your self-confidence no matter what.

Resources

The New Music Industry

<https://davidandrewwiebe.com/newmusicindustry>

Question Everything

Most Musicians Buy into Everything They Hear on the News – You Develop Your Ability to Think Critically by Questioning Everything

Not everything you hear repeated by your parents, teachers, social circles, newscasters, celebrities, artists, mentors, or others is necessarily true.

There are a lot of things that *sound* right but may only apply to certain people or situations. Since one of the few things we can count on in life is change, even accepted standards and norms shift with time.

You should question everything, even what I say.

Because whatever you have yet to confirm for yourself is just hearsay and speculation. Truisms won't ring true until you have an experience that matches up with them.

For example...

“Love is blind,” they say. But if you haven’t had that experience of falling madly in love, then you might have a hard time understanding what that means. It remains conceptual and theoretical to you. Until you’ve fallen head over heels for someone, you won’t know what that feels like. You won’t know *why* or *how* love could be blind.

Most musicians are content to accept and parrot what they hear on the TV or in a classroom. Things they’ve never confirmed for themselves. That’s dangerous.

“There’s not much money in the music industry. I heard that from a well-known session player.”

Well, that’s not what I heard from Troy Kokol. And there are plenty of no-name artists earning six figures thank you very much. Not everyone will get there, but the opportunity is available.

You get roped in because you question nothing. You accept what you hear from the confused 95%. What you accept becomes your reality.

If you’re going to make it in the music industry, you’ve got to develop your B.S. radar. You’ve got to be able to spot a liar and be able to walk away from a deal when it just isn’t right.

Critical thinking isn’t just essential to navigating the industry. It’s essential to your survival. It may sound ominous, but if you can’t think for yourself, you may not even make it through these times. The ability to think for yourself has never been more crucial.

I’m not teaching you to be jaded and cynical. But you’ve got to be able to look at everything critically. A Renegade Musician doesn’t accept everything at face value. They go deeper and do their research. They aren’t satisfied with one source. They explore many before concluding.

I recently read a blog post via Derek Sivers that put this all into gentler, friendlier terms. I’ve put the link in the resources section below.

Resources

make believe
<https://sive.rs/mb>

Paying the Price

Most Musicians are Cheap & Unwilling to Spend Money on CDs & Merch – You Know a Good Investment When You See it

Whether it's studio time, CD replication, graphic design, or advertising, many musicians haggle and try to get the best deal on everything.

There's a time and place for negotiation, and you'd better be ready for it. But if you'd like people to stop asking you to work for free, for a reduced rate, or an honorarium, you should stop asking others to do the same.

It may seem foreign to you now, but studio engineers are real people, and they have bills to pay. Some have families to support. Studio gear isn't free. It's quite expensive.

The same could be said for web and graphic designers, photographers, session musicians, dancers, beatmakers, and anyone else you might hire.

Don't cheap out unless you want others to be cheap with you. You get what you give.

Spectre Sound Studios' Glenn Fricker has a hilarious ongoing video series on stupid musician texts. You might want to watch a few of those.

A Renegade Musician knows what products and services are worth. Because they've taken the time to educate themselves. They have greater respect for those who dare to charge what

they're worth, because one day, if not today, they hope to be able to charge what they're worth too.

If you aren't charging what you're worth, you're getting taken advantage of. Some organizers, bookers, or clients won't even take you seriously *unless* you're charging more!

You can find consultants who charge \$60 per hour. You can also find consultants who charge \$5,000 per hour.

There isn't that much difference between the two. Usually, it's that the lower-priced consultants don't have the guts to charge more and figure out how to deliver \$5,000 of value.

If you keep thinking "cheap," then you're never going to realize your worth. That's sad. Discouraging. Frustrating.

Not all prices are worth paying. There are trolls, scammers, and snake oil sales.

But discernment is a skill. If you can't figure it out right away, you will smarten up after losing a pretty penny. Experience is a great teacher.

A Renegade Musician, though, doesn't give up after losing a bit of money. They learn from the experience and move on. They find something else that's worth putting their money into.

You won't go far if you aren't willing to try.

Networking & Collaboration

Most Musicians Loiter & Wallflower – You Network & Engage Like Your Life Depended on it

I booked three artists and bands for the event.

The first showed up, acted professionally, and interacted like a normal human being.

The second decided to wallflower, never exchanging a word with the organizers or sound tech. They had to be called to the stage when it was their turn to play. No one even knew they were there or who they were until they were called up (how they managed to hide in a small venue for that long is still a mystery to me...).

The third and final artist didn't even show up. He decided, at the last minute, that the company sounded sketchy. "You're dealing with me, not a company," I told him later. Suddenly, he changed his tune – "Please consider me for future events." Too late.

This is a true story, and I even got chewed out for it by my colleague. The event fell apart in my absence.

At one point, Music Entrepreneur HQ was getting 800 visits per day.

Even then, the musicians who actively participated in discussions, responded to emails, purchased offers, or took any action of worth were in the decided minority.

It's not in fashion to connect with or rely on others. Most creatives let fear get in the way of connecting, so they don't even try. They end up bottling and internalizing damaging emotions in the process. They're traumatized.

But we must take responsibility, even for our trauma. That's what a Renegade Musician does.

Do you want to look back on years of stagnation in regret, wishing you had met people, interacted on social media, and joined communities?

Unless you're actively building your audience and taking the time to nurture them, your circle of influence is only going to get smaller with time, not bigger. If you take no action, I guarantee you will have fewer people supporting you, sharing your work, or purchasing your offers, with each passing year. Your career is not going to explode out of nowhere for no reason and with no effort. Success is a planned event.

Networking and collaboration aren't that hard.

Don't get me wrong. You will meet jerks. Some will do a quick "hit and run," throw their business cards or sales pitches at you before quickly finding the next person to accost. You may even end up trusting a few backstabbers that rob you of precious time and money.

You've got to do it anyway.

Remember – the essence of networking is *making friends*. That's it. But you've got to do it like your life depended on it.

Because of the effort I'd put into networking (I made more mistakes than I care to mention – I even had the police called on me once), I ended up getting hooked up with band leaders who either booked shows for me or referred me to prospects without my direct involvement. After a while, I left booking in their capable hands, because my attempts were fruitless.

When the economy was good, earning \$1,000+ per month as a performer was easy. We played shows all over.

None of that would have happened if I hadn't gotten to know people.

It all started simply. At first, I made it my goal to have one conversation per day. I increased that number gradually over time, to where I was talking to five-plus people per day, often having meaningful conversations with at least one or two of those five. I kept doing that for four years.

But remember what I said. Networking is about being a friend to others. A friend listens. They ask questions. They add value.

A friend doesn't pitch and run. They don't spam or scam. They don't backstab. And they certainly don't ask for anything unless they've made a deposit in that friendship – a favor completed, a hand lent, a deed done. A friend also doesn't keep score or expect anything in return.

A Renegade Musician understands that connections are invaluable. They understand that their next sale or gig will come through someone they know. They know that bigger opportunities, like getting signed to a label, are going to come from people they know.

Building connections requires time and effort. You will need to remain patient with the process. But once your efforts lead to opportunities beyond your wildest expectations, you will be grateful for having put in the legwork, just as I was.

Long-Term Mindset

Most Musicians Only Care About How Their Gig Went Last Night – You’re Always Thinking Ahead & Identifying What’s Next

Many musicians only think in terms of “good enough.”

Start a website?

“Check, I set up a Wix site in a few seconds.”

Make a blog?

“Sure, I secured a Blogger account.”

Start a band fund?

“Nah, we can do that later.”

Musicians aren’t organized. They’re scattered. They don’t know what to focus on, and even when they do, they somehow end up choosing the wrong tools, platforms, or methods for the job (starting your website on Wix and blog on a separate platform makes *NO* sense).

They end up wasting a lot of time on activities that produce no results, thinking that they’ve somehow found a shortcut or saved money by doing everything themselves. Meanwhile, they’ve lost countless hours to things that don’t work, don’t get results, and don’t hold up over the long haul. Hours that could have been spent writing and recording.

Odd, because I thought time was worth money. And of the two, I thought time was more valuable.

One of the reasons I encourage musicians to read *The Magic of Thinking Big* is because it spells out this principle in no uncertain terms. Buy quality goods. They will last longer and be of greater value to you.

Simple. But how many of your friends do this? Do *you* do this?

Most musicians don't know how to think long-term. They've never been taught to, and frankly, they don't see the value in it.

Have you ever heard the expression "Every overnight success was 10 years in the making?"

Turns out there's some credence to it because Billy Talent, Metallica, and even the legendary Beatles took 10 years to break through (and they became the most influential band in existence).

Recognize that a sensible 10-year plan is going to include bonding time, regular health checks, and maintaining relationships with your bandmates, team, stakeholders, and whoever's involved. Sometimes, hiring expensive counselors (as Metallica did), is also necessary. Bands don't stick together by accident. It takes some serious work. It's like a marriage, and whenever someone doesn't feel appreciated, it starts falling apart.

When I got started in music, I wanted it all *now*. I wanted to go on tour, play at festivals, give radio interviews, appear on TV, put together a live DVD, start a solo career, start side projects, and more.

I got to do all those things eventually. But they didn't happen all at once, and they certainly didn't happen on my timeline.

Most of my bands fell apart within 18 months.

To become better at thinking long-term, you must be able to identify what the goal is. You can have many goals, but you should only have one goal at a time. You could also think of it as having several milestones on the way to your big goal.

For instance, if you were looking to become a millionaire, your first step wouldn't be to learn how to invest. It would be to become debt-free. Because you've got a much greater chance of making it on a debt-free foundation. Strong foundations make all the difference.

It is easy to lose sight of the goal, mainly because it can take a long time to accomplish. Having too many ideas makes it harder to focus.

But if you don't commit to progress, your time and energy will be divided every which way, and you won't gain momentum in any area of your career. If you've got 10 things on your to-do list, all of them may need to be done, but only two or three of them are needle movers. I can guarantee you that.

People equate options with freedom. That's a myth.
Commitment is freedom.

Once you're committed, options can't distract you anymore.

Do things in service of your future self. Plan. Organize.
Promote.

Resources

The Magic of Thinking Big by David J. Schwartz
<https://davidandrewwiebe.com/thinkingbigus>

Part III: Your Renegade Marketing Blueprint

A Renegade Musician is nothing without a marketing plan.

A good portion of this book has been dedicated to the cold, hard truth and developing the proper mindset. That's for good reason. Without a shift in identity, you won't see yourself as a go-getter. You won't see yourself as the kind of musician who does what no other artist will to access the spoils few ever do.

But with your identity shift either in progress or nearing completion, we still need an action plan. Otherwise, we'll quickly revert to old habits.

It might seem like a distant memory now, but I want you to reflect on all you've discovered to this point – especially The Top 5%, The Top 2.5%, and The Spotify Delusion.

Doing what others have done will only get you what the other 95% have already gotten, give or take a few. You can't turn back now. You've been red-pilled, and there's no way to plug back into the Matrix.

There's *always* more competition at the bottom than there is at the top. The gig for the 1,000-person venue isn't anywhere *near* as heavily hounded as the gig for the 100-person venue. Even fewer compete for the 10,000-person venue.

Remember – the Renegade Way is a fundamentally different mindset and approach to building a music career, and marketing is at the heart of it.

Music is not your business. Marketing is. Marketing is what creates an income. It's the key to the kingdom.

So, there are only two choices – 1) become a better marketer, or 2) hire people who are skilled at marketing. I would argue there's only *one* choice – do both! You are the most qualified person to market your music, and you will always care more than anyone else, but if you don't build your team, you'll either be grinding non-stop, or you'll be tempted to give up before the race even begins.

Let's begin with you. Let's install the new knowledge and beliefs necessary to establish a solid marketing foundation and grow your influence ever outwards.

Once you know what to do, showing others the way becomes much easier. You could, for example, share this section of the book with your team, so they also become excellent marketers.

Your Music

I've received many messages and emails over the years asking for feedback. Artists assume that, since I have something of value to say about most things, I must be able to offer them intelligent, well-thought-out advice concerning their music.

If it's a genre I don't like or don't understand, and if I have no reference point for it, chances are there is *very little* I can offer by way of intelligent comment.

If I can gather that you are still developing as an artist, releasing your "kindergarten" and "grade school" three-chord wonders, my best advice is generally "practice, practice, practice." These phases are important to your development. Gaining studio and stage experience is well worth it.

But if you're convinced that you're crapping gold while you're still in early development, you are delusional. You may be able to revise and add depth to the songs you wrote when you were a teenager later, but you'd be crazy to think they're good as is.

80% of your ideas suck. Accept it.

Aside from that, I'm afraid my interest in music is limited. I don't mean to say I'm not interested in music. I love music. But there is far too much content available for me to have heard it all. I won't always know who you're emulating, who you're supposed to sound like, or who you've been influenced by, just by listening to you. These reference points are key, especially if I'm going to be reviewing your music (something I rarely do these days).

I listen to all genres of rock and hard rock, some metal, some alternative, pop, EDM, funk, blues, R&B, soul, instrumental, and more. That's a broad range, and I'm still clueless about plenty, especially having grown up in Japan.

The foundation is always *getting good* – at the very least, *getting good enough* that you're not limited by your technique or music theory knowledge.

Kurt Cobain may not have been a virtuoso guitarist (some would argue he deserves a place in the top 10 guitarists – I'm not so sure), he may not have had a thorough education in music theory, but by most accounts, he is considered a genius. He knew how to express himself through his instruments and lyrics, and that was enough. He knew how to write great songs.

Beyond that, I will share a few pieces of advice that have rung true for me. I may not be able to tell you what music to play or how to play it to attract the biggest fan base possible (focus on getting good). But I do know how I can help you maximize your impact.

Streamline for the Sake of Your Development

Former CD Baby Founder Derek Sivers is a 12- to 16-hour day kind of guy. Anything that he takes seriously, he focuses ruthlessly on. He knows well the value of having a singular focus on what he wants to achieve.

Your early days in music will largely consist of practice. Practicing (and strangling) your instrument. Developing your vocal technique. Writing bad lyrics. Arranging bad songs. Jamming with other musicians who don't know what the hell they're doing.

Again, this is an important phase, and it can be a lot of fun. One shouldn't despise small beginnings.

But the sooner you streamline your life to focus on music, and the more time you spend on it, the quicker you will be ready for the studio and the stage.

As I said earlier in the book, if you can stash away a year's income, you'll be able to do things most people only dream of doing. Spending 10 hours per day at music and two to three hours per night as a bartender? It's outside-the-box thinking, but it can be done, and it has been. Just don't tell anyone that's what you're doing, because they will tell you that you're crazy and that you should get a haircut and get a real job (the 95% want to keep you on their team, and *badly*).

Even if you can't save a year's income, you can streamline – sell your house and move into an apartment, sell your new car and buy a 10-year-old, cancel the Netflix subscription, and so on.

Make Great Music

Every serious and ambitious musician aspires to make great music so I'm not sure this is a "tip" so much as a reminder.

Music may not be our business (marketing is), but it is our product, and we should take pride in our product.

Marketing something you aren't excited about isn't much fun, and you're probably not going to go far with it either.

If your live shows are humdrum, and your recordings aren't world-shattering yet, remember one thing – most things concerning the technical aspects of your music will fall into place with time and experience.

As you keep writing, jamming, rehearsing, performing, and recording, you will get better. It may seem unimaginable now but trust me – you will start to feel more comfortable on stage, writing hooks will get easier, your vocals will sound better,

your drumbeats will get tighter, and your guitar solos will have flare and fury. So long as you are committed to practice and healthy self-critique, you will improve.

Hang in there. It's a slog, and unfortunately, even if you are part of the 5% club, you could easily end up working with people who aren't (as I have), and that can be discouraging. But you've got to keep going. Replace band members or start a new project. Go solo if you must. Just keep going.

Live music production is still well worth the investment, as great shows rarely happen by accident. But if you aren't feeling at home on stage yet, you're probably not ready for live music production anyway.

The only other note concerning making great music, which also can't be considered a "tip," is to make marketable music.

I can already see you rolling your eyes, saying to yourself, "Okay, D.A., you talk a big game about being a renegade, doing things differently, and thinking outside the box, but when it comes to making music, you're telling me that I've got to sound like Lady Gaga or OneRepublic?!"

No. *Hell* no.

I said marketable music, and that's a very broad scope. There's an audience for atonal piano music for crying out loud. I was originally going to say the only thing there isn't an audience for is pure noise, but there too, I'm wrong – I have literally helped create and promote an avant-garde / experimental music event where our host created noise with modular synthesizers for 15, 20 minutes straight.

The only requirements to being marketable are that:

- You are good at what you do

- You're willing to keep improving (and adjust course as necessary)
- You know there's an audience for your music
- You have realistic expectations about the size of the audience for your music and how that will translate to income, large or small

Ironically, some of the best-selling independent music is usually *very* niche.

Most independent artists are at risk of going too broad – not going too narrow.

I will still hold my ground and say erecting a micro-niche (like post-banjo breakbeat funk core Celtic abstract blues) is not a career strategy (more like career suicide), but all things being equal, “soothing 432 Hz music for horses” is going to find an audience faster than “rock music for living humans.” There are plenty of people who love and own horses and would enjoy seeing their majestic pets mellowing out to soothing music.

Recognize that there is another path – which is to choose a common genre and to differentiate through your marketing.

But niche or broad, assuming there's an audience for it, one is not better than the other. Either way, you should enjoy what you do and put a real strategy behind reaching your chosen audience. Find them first, and if your music is remarkable, your fans will help you evangelize.

Legitimize Your Business

Legitimizing your business can be defined as getting to your first dollar. In the past, I never saw any reason to expand on this definition.

Then, accurate thinking prompted me to do a double take.

“What if musicians think that, because their sister bought their music, they’ve legitimized their business?”

Family and friends are usually supportive. It’s their job to buy your CD, even if they secretly think you stink.

But you know the situation is much worse when delusional contestants show up on *The Voice* to show off their off-time, off-pitch, undeveloped croaking skills.

Now, reality programming, by definition, is fake. Every moment is scripted. If you’ve never heard that before, now you know.

But it’s not so hard to believe there are people out there who think they’re good enough to jam with Dave Grohl when they don’t even know what key signatures are. I know someone like that.

What I’m getting at is this:

To know without a shadow of a doubt that you’ve legitimized your business, you’re going to want to get a sale *and* a repeat sale from the same fan. Then you know you’ve got something.

It’s nice to have some grassroots support from family, friends, and the community at large, but it’s not the true measure of whether your music will fly. The true measure is whether someone becomes a fan, spends at least \$1 with you, and returns to purchase something else. Then you are fully legitimized.

Qualities of an Effective Marketing Blueprint: The ARRCS System

If it's not a principle, it's a strategy; if it's not a strategy, it's a tactic. I know we talked about this earlier, but it's worth reinforcing.

As we look to share our work with the world, we must be crystal clear about what effective marketing means. By defining what it is, we can also clearly identify what it isn't, and that's a crucial step. If you want to be the 5% and not the 95%, you'd better know what the 95% are doing.

We all have a history with marketing, whether shallow or deep, which forms an impression, as well as assumptions about what we should and shouldn't do, what's working and what isn't working, and so on. Depending on your experience, you may want to empty your head now to ensure you get something from the following pages. Approach this as though you're a student and will come away with better-quality takeaways.

An effective marketing blueprint should have the following qualities. To be fair, this is more an ideal than a certain future outcome, as all the stars must align for the following qualities to be present in your marketing. The good news is – you now have a target to shoot for.

Automatable

This isn't to say all your marketing activity should necessarily be automated, and realistically, you can't even if you wanted to. I know that artificial intelligence and machine learning are supposed to take over the world like in *The Terminator*, but we're not at the point yet where you can leave robots to do all the work. I'm dubious of marketing that doesn't involve real human connection anyway.

What I'm suggesting is that your marketing should get to the point where it's predictable. If you do A, you can get B result. Therefore, doing more of A is what's going to lead to more of B.

For instance, let's say posting to Facebook gets you more email subscribers. It's a crude, unrealistic example, but if that's working for you, I'd love to see what you're posting that's so enticing to your fans.

When you know A leads to B, it means, at least to an extent, that it's worth automating.

I'm not saying it's easy getting to that point. There's usually a ton of trial and error, and even when you do uncover a winning formula, it needs to be updated periodically. But this is the ideal. We want to know that our marketing system is so dependable that we can count on it to deliver results. Only results-generating activity is worth automating.

Consistent

There is something to be said for a consistent voice, consistent message, and consistent brand. These are key to keeping the artist-fan connection solid. If you post something that seems inconsistent with the identity you've established, it can create a disconnect and even a backlash.

With marketing, though, we want to get to the point where we know the exact activity, as well as the exact quantity of said activity, that will lead to meaningful results.

I'll offer an example from the network marketing world. In network marketing, you can grow your business by 1) expanding your base of clients and 2) sponsoring independent business owners.

Some people do extremely well at building a client base and generating a substantial passive income by placing phone calls, sending newsletters, and focusing on building relationships with their customers every month.

Most of the business owners who make it big in network marketing, though, are those who duplicate themselves and sponsor and train independent business owners. When these new business owners are trained well, they will buy products, establish several customers, and sponsor independent business owners of their own. Before you know it, your organization is multiplying and even growing exponentially. You don't get to sit back and watch as this happens, though, because to be able to keep claiming your bonuses, you've got to keep sponsoring people in your own business too (they call this "growing your width").

So, let's say, for example, that you want to sponsor two new business owners per month. What kind of work ethic would that take?

These numbers are all made up, but for argument's sake, we'll say you need to contact 50 people to book 20 personal interviews. 20 personal interviews result in 10 people coming to a board meeting. Out of those 10, five immediately disqualify themselves ("I don't want to come to these board meetings – there's *how many* per month?!" or "Don't invite me again, I'm washing my hair that night"). Out of the remaining five, only two are sharp and prepared enough to

join the organization. You sponsor these two and you're excited to be growing!

If you know that you've got to contact and invite 50 people per month to sponsor two, you've got a consistent marketing plan. It sounds like an insane amount of work, but at least there's no mystery to the process. You know what you've got to do to grow your business now. You can be consistent.

As Patreon CEO Jack Conte said so well, "Everything in life is a funnel." Meaning – to book an appointment with a doctor today (your conditions for success are that you book an appointment, with a doctor, today) you might need to call 10, talk to five, and find the one who can book an appointment an hour from now.

The point is – if you had a Bandcamp sale today, how did that happen? Five tweets, two Facebook posts, and an email campaign? Great, now we know what it takes to get one sale. Test it again and see if it works. If it keeps working, awesome, it's time to scale the activity.

Repeatable

You're probably seeing how each of these qualities stack on top of each other.

Carrying over the example from earlier, we know what resulted in a Bandcamp sale – five tweets, two Facebook posts, and an email campaign. The question is, can we replicate those results? If we do those things again, will they reliably result in a sale?

There are many factors affecting the outcome. Maybe people aren't paying attention to social media on the weekends. Maybe the type of content you posted was the key that unlocked the door. Maybe you got lucky.

Either way, we need to know whether it can be done again using the same basic process.

There are no guarantees in marketing, so results will vary from day to day. But let's say the process works three out of seven days per week. To me, that would be a win! You've got a formula that works, and now your only job would be to keep planning out great content, seven days per week (knowing that, on average, it won't work three to five days per week – you've got to keep posting to get repeatable results).

When a marketing blueprint isn't repeatable, it's just annoying. You end up having to go back to the drawing board to figure out what's going to work.

But it is also crucial that we test, and think of everything we do, even the things that don't work, as *testing*. Coupling things in this manner helps us keep our heads and prevents us from going crazy when it's the 10th marketing campaign we've tried, and we're still seeing a horrible conversion rate.

You will do things that aren't repeatable, of course, whether it's appearing on a popular talk show or opening for Ariana Grande. You might make repeat appearances, but it likely won't be more than once per year.

Most of what you do will be repeatable.

Results Producing

As I've said so many times before, the goal of marketing isn't likes, shares, and comments (also known as "vanity metrics") – it's income. Marketing activity must be tied to results.

Artists sometimes have trouble with this hard demarcation, but anyone can get likes, shares, and comments. Influencers have insane engagement metrics. Does it mean they're making bank? You'd be surprised how aggressively mediocre income some influencers make. That's accurate thinking.

A big social media following can help you generate amazing opportunities but one thing it's not guaranteed to do is generate an income.

Now, I'm perfectly fine with you setting marketing goals around engagement and exposure. That's not the issue. The issue is whether you have a plan mapped out – a customer journey – to ascend people from strangers to followers, followers to fans, fans to email subscribers, email subscribers to customers, customers to repeat customers. That's the journey we must have a process for, no matter how crude.

You will know whether a marketing plan is working by keeping an eye on bottom-line results. If it's not resulting in an income, it's not working. If it's not working, adjust the course, and don't delay.

Patience is not a bad quality, but I don't advise doing what I did – blogging daily for nearly two years – waiting for results that might not show up until much later.

Scalable

So, we know the key activities that lead to a sale. But if we wanted to go from three sales per week to 30 sales per week, how would we go about that? Double the amount of content we're posting? 10x it?

Wouldn't that just turn our fans off?

The trick here would be to increase our reach. Get our message in front of more people – the kinds of people who've been following us on social media. The kinds of people who've been joining our email list. The kinds of people who've been listening to our music and buying our merch. Hmm... where would we procure such data from, and where should we feed it to? I wonder...

Besides social media and search remarketing ads, we could also guest post, buy shout-outs from influencers, give radio interviews, engage in YouTube collaborations... work our way in, or buy our way in (more on this later).

If you know the right things to do, marketing is always scalable. But it may require overcoming some fears around spending money, because not everyone is going to be excited about letting you guest post, appear on their podcast, or come on their TV show to talk about your new album, especially for free.

In the long run, you'll probably need hired help to execute the many things you will be doing.

The general rule is – if you have time but no money, make content (work your way in). If you have money but no time, advertise (buy your way in).

Overload The System

The ARRCS system is well worth studying but putting it into practice for an artist can be like a pigeon trying to solve a Rubik's Cube.

I have one piece of good news – there is a way to short-circuit the system, and this method will work no matter how dumb or clumsy you fancy yourself. It's not for the faint of heart, but you're not reading this book if you're worried about the condition of your heart (I hope). If you're willing to put in the work, you will find what follows enlightening, so here it is...

As the story goes, when Dan Kennedy was getting started as a consultant, one of his clients was a successful chiropractic practice manager (whom he did not name). This manager was famous for rapidly establishing new practices in different markets and making them profitable, a feat many considered difficult if not impossible.

This manager had it as his target to attract 72 new patients a month. People in his industry would come around asking what *one thing* he was doing that enabled him to get these results, to which he would always respond:

“I don’t know one way to get 72 new patients monthly. But I do know 72 things I can do to get one new patient monthly, and I do all 72 of them.”

Having 72 things to do would mitigate single-source dependency, and not all of them necessarily need to work well. Some may be seasonal (like Black Friday or Christmas sales). Some may only be effective after a gig, live stream, or when other conditions have been met. It doesn’t matter. It’s not about the effectiveness of one tactic, because when you’re doing 72 things, the strategy is greater than the sum of its parts.

You may not need to do 72 things, because your goal might not be to get 72 new listeners, 72 new gigs, or 72 sales per month (each of which would probably require varying amounts of work). But if you want to get 30 of something in 30 days, you should identify what 30 things would bring at least one and commit to doing those 30 things.

When I contemplated this concept, I came up with 15 things that, if acted on monthly, I was sure would lead to at least one book sale, course sale, or coaching prospect.

What 15 to 72 things should you be doing? Give this some thought, but not too much thought, because your action plan is laid out in the sections that follow.

Pitching the Right Way

You've read about the qualities and the mindset of a Renegade Musician. If you need a refresher, bookmark this page and revisit the section titled "Qualities of a Renegade Musician" paying special attention to what was said about people skills.

Communication is at the foundation of your success. You don't need a vast pool of vocabulary to draw from. You don't need to be impeccable in your delivery, avoiding "um," "ah," and dead air. You don't need to spend years in Toastmasters International honing your speaking skills (unless you want to). You don't even need to be able to deliver a message in a sequential, organized fashion like a motivational speaker.

The key to successful communication is transparency and vulnerability – a certain something society has come to identify as *authenticity*.

You can be as polished as you want, but people have heard the slickest, most elegant pitches already (well, people like me have, anyway). They're growing wise to the psychological tactics in play. More than ever, authenticity is going to trump 4k cameras, 50 mm lenses, blurred "bokeh" backgrounds, and fancy lighting. In an age where everyone's a coach, marketer, or entrepreneur, raw, unedited, smartphone videos can win.

For our marketing blueprint to work, we're going to need to build on a solid foundation. The foundation we need to establish is in pitching.

I'm not going to sugarcoat it. We've got a mountain to climb, but if you're willing to follow, no matter the inclination or

change in weather, you're going to master a skill that will benefit you in every area of life. Not just in music, but also in your career or business, spouse or significant other, dating, parent-child relationship, or otherwise. That is the case because better communication improves every area of your life.

In this section, I will be referring specifically to pitching through email, text, instant messages, and the like. But it's safe to say the general principles hold regardless of the medium. You can use the same techniques in oral presentations, meetings, or even everyday conversations and see results.

It should also be said that I'm not the ultimate pitchman. The best pitchmen and pitchwomen have inevitably wound up in jail (e.g., Kevin Trudeau, Jordan Belfort, Vince Shlomi, etc.). But people pitch me almost every day, so I have a very good handle on what *doesn't* work.

Throughout this book, you've learned a great deal about me, my voice, my beliefs, and my values. You know I'm imperfect and fall short at times. Even if I don't know all the right things to do, will you opt to join me on this treacherous uphill journey to becoming a better pitcher?

(See what I did there? *That* was authentic.)

Address Your Message to the Right Person

Laziness does you no favors in pitching. It doesn't matter whether you're pitching a festival organizer or program director.

I can't tell you how many emails I've gotten that open with, "Hey Music Entrepreneur HQ," "Hey team," "Hey," or worse – "Hi Bob" (who's Bob?).

For lack of a better way of saying this, it pisses me off when I don't see my name on the first line of the email, and I can almost assure you it's no different for people like Ari Herstand or Dave Kusek.

My name is David Andrew Wiebe. I'm quite easy to find. There's plenty about me on the internet. I've published a ton of content on a variety of sites, I've got nine books, and over 40 songs digitally distributed.

If you don't address your email to me personally, I'm instantly worried. I'm worried because you probably haven't done your homework, and any pitch that follows is sure to be selfish and potentially on the far extremes of irrelevant.

Except in situations where you absolutely cannot find someone's name, you *don't* open your email with "to whom it may concern," "greetings XYZ team," or "Hi!"

If you just spent an hour searching for someone's name and couldn't find it, you should acknowledge that in the opening of your email – "Hi, I'm so sorry, but I couldn't find your name. I'm reaching out because..."

There's always a way to be thoughtful, respectful, and polite. This level of vulnerability and creativity will win people over.

Fundamentally, though, as writer Dale Carnegie said, the most magical word in anyone's vocabulary is their name. Use it!

Compliment (the Right Way)

Having addressed the email to the appropriate party, the next step is to offer a genuine compliment.

Again, laziness will do you no favors here.

If there is no compliment in the message, again I'm worried. I'm thinking, they don't like me, or they don't like me all that

much, and yet they want something from me? This can't be good. It's already starting to sound like a scam.

But the generic, non-specific compliments aren't much better – “Hey I really liked your web page,” “Your website has some supreme articles,” “It's clear that you're an authority on your subject matter” (yes, they *literally* say “your subject matter,” never addressing what that subject might be – you think I'm kidding, and I'm not).

(My former podcast co-host Anna once laughed at me for literally quoting a young lady who sent me a message reading, “Wanna do something naughty?” Yes, she *literally* and *explicitly* said “something naughty,” not referring to any specifics.)

If you can't reference anything specific, I'm immediately skeptical. Have you ever looked at my website? Did you read a blog post or listen to a podcast episode? If so, you should be able to point to something I've worked on and how it impacted you.

“Hey David, I've been reading your book, *The Music Entrepreneur Code*. Great read so far! Something that caught my attention was the process you laid out for managing your finances. I was wondering – do you still use the same system?”

Perfect. Why is this perfect? Because:

- I know you bought my book
- I know you've been reading my book
- You're interested enough to ask a follow-up question
- The question being asked is something others may have wondered and could be answered in a future post

If you can't find something you like about someone, why are you pitching them? Failing that, you at least need to start pretending to like people and hope that you can “fake it until you make it.”

As much as possible, though, offer a real, genuine compliment that demonstrates you know what you're talking about.

Get to the Point / Pitch

Suspense is only good in novels, music, theatrical performances, movies, TV shows, and video games – basically, entertainment.

By the second or third paragraph of your email, I should be crystal clear on why you're contacting me and what you're asking for, with no delay or suspense.

It's okay to gush a little, I will accept that if it's specific and genuine. But otherwise, get to the point.

Most people only care about what they're going to get out of the interaction, when they should be focused on how the opening paragraphs come across to the recipient.

This is where pitches can quickly fall apart.

“We want to partner with you” sounds good in theory, but it’s incredibly vague. It’s basically saying, “I haven’t done the work of figuring out how we can benefit each other, so you figure it out for me.”

Most pitches involve a lot of back and forth without all the added mystery of me trying to figure out what it is you want from me. The extra padding is unnecessary.

“Oh, you wanted to guest post? Why didn’t you say that in your first message!”

This isn’t to say “I want to guest post on your website” is a good pitch. It’s selfish and crude. Unless you’re a music business expert, a direct request like this is going to fall on deaf ears.

I have multiple templated responses depending on the person asking as well as what they're inquiring about, so knowing what's being asked greatly increases efficiency on my end. But understand – these templated responses were created as a matter of survival, mostly to navigate the clueless majority who contact me. I've got to get through my emails one way or another, and let me tell you, I'm not always polite to the clueless.

Delaying your pitch or masking it in weird language is the furthest thing from thoughtful.

"I've been listening to your 'Hot R&B' playlist on Spotify, and I've got to say, I'm hooked! Based on what I'm hearing, I think you'll enjoy our latest single, 'Hey Baby' too. Here's the link:
_____."

Again, you're not trying to pump anyone's tires. You want your messages to be genuine! You wouldn't say "I'm hooked" if you weren't really hooked, got that? You'd better damn well be listening to that playlist because you will easily be found out if you aren't.

But aside from that, this is mostly a solid pitch. It is, however, missing a critical ingredient. The next step is to...

Find the Win-Win

Stop being selfish! You're not the only person on the planet who wants things. Even billionaires want things. It's human nature. We're always looking to rise to the next level in life.

Stop pitching like you're the only one in the room. You aren't! The pitch is about the person you're pitching to. It's not about you. If you can't think of why your pitch is a win for the recipient, *don't send the email*. No, I'm not joking.

When I talk about doing your homework or legwork, this is what I mean. You should have identified something important to the person you're pitching to.

Let's use me as an example:

As I write this, I'm running a teaser campaign for Elite Players: Newsletter. You wouldn't need to dig far and wide to know that this is what I'm focused on. I've got teaser posters going up on Instagram and daily blog posts on Steemit documenting the entire journey.

Sure, it might take you 20 minutes (as opposed to five minutes) to find all the information you'd need to pitch me, but I can guarantee you the pitch will be better received if it seems like you know what's going on.

You are better off sending three thoughtful pitches per day versus spraying and praying 20 every so often.

"I noticed that you're currently promoting Elite Players: Newsletter. I can't wait for the launch, and I will be the first to buy it when the cart's open! On a related note, I just released my new album and would love three shout-outs from you on Instagram. We'll be sure to share your Elite Players: Newsletter teaser posters with our stories. How does that sound?"

How does that sound? It sounds terrific! Not only do I know I will have you as a future customer, but I also know that you're willing to help me get exposure. Of course, I will give you a few shout-outs and I will even put a little extra marketing muscle behind them, so you get maximum benefit.

You don't want to be a doormat. But if you go the extra mile without asking for anything in return, trust me, you'll make an impression.

How hard is it to figure out what someone else wants? Not that hard. If you can't figure it out after an hour of digging online, then you can ask – “We’re really interested in having our music placed in your film, because we think it would be a match made in heaven. Here’s the link: _____. Is there any other way we could help you with the project? We really want to see it succeed and can’t wait to see it when it comes out, regardless of whether you use our music.”

Then, be a person of your word. If they ask you to be an extra (which usually implies waiting around for hours just to capture 30 seconds of footage), or they need you to come to a location to haul some props, do it!

By the way, please don’t templatize any of the material I’m giving you here. That will immediately diminish its usefulness. There’s nothing the industry hates more than templated pitches. For god’s sake, craft your own. I know you won’t wake up tomorrow and suddenly find you’re like Bryan Harris of Growth Tools (who may well be the pitch king of the internet), but even Harris meticulously edits his pitches before sending them out.

Use Images & Graphics

If there’s a good reason to use images or graphics in your messages, do it.

I used to think that this was a no-no because messages with attachments would land in junk or spam folders.

But if the image or graphic can point to results you can generate for the person you’re pitching to (e.g., traffic graph), it can boost engagement.

I’m generally not impressed by people pitching to be on my podcast, but when they have a one-page media kit showing their impressive social media following, I’m thinking they must be pretty damn serious about the pitch. I’m also

thinking, if they share the podcast episode, it will get some good engagement.

There might be other reasons to include images or graphics in your emails – something that caught your attention, an error that needs fixing, for adding clarity to your message, or otherwise (a picture is worth a thousand words, right?).

If there is no reason to include any graphical content, don't. But if it would support the content of your message, do it every time.

Polish the Pitch

Just because you have the right pieces in place doesn't necessarily mean your email is ready to send. Editing is where the real magic happens. Read and re-read your email while trimming down the fat.

Also, self-diagnose with these questions:

- Can you shorten your message without sacrificing clarity? This is worth doing.
- Can you remove filler words – “that,” “whether or not” (*whether* is good enough), “in order to” (just a fancy way of saying “to”), etc.?
- Can you use more compelling words? “Critical” is better than “most important,” “horrifying results” is going to draw more curiosity than “good sales figures,” and “unparalleled match” is more eye-popping than “good collaborative partnership.”
- Can you make your pitch clearer?
- Can you make a stronger, more compelling pitch? The first pitch you come up with usually isn't the best one. Edit!

Be Politely Persistent in Following Up

Don't be surprised when you don't hear back from someone you've pitched to in the first one to two weeks. It happens all the time. You're asking someone for their time and attention, and if you've got a weak pitch, you're pushing your luck.

But if you know you've got a good pitch and think you may have been overlooked, follow up politely.

How many times depends a lot on the situation, so it can't hurt to do your research – pitching to music supervisors, playlist curators, reviewers, etc. for thoughts on when to follow up and how often (again, if you don't know, ask!).

But following up once or twice after two weeks of silence is perfectly normal.

Don't say – “Why didn't you get back to me? What's your problem? You arrogant prick.”

That's not polite.

Don't “bump the thread” or start an entirely new thread (it just causes confusion and creates more clutter in one's inbox).

Don't communicate through multiple channels (phone, email, WhatsApp, social media, etc.) unless asked. Don't follow up with, “I know you must be busy, but did you see this?” How much of a narcissist are you?

Never say “I know you must be busy...” if you're going to pitch anyway. An acknowledgment alone will not lighten their workload. You're a jerk if you think noticing their busyness makes you a genius. Don't pitch at all if you want to respect their busyness.

Think creatively. There might be a way for you to help them get caught up with their emails.

In my early days as a guitar teacher, I worked for an in-home music lesson service. I noticed that the owner was always a little behind on administrative tasks – processing payments, booking new students with teachers, returning calls, etc. There were times when I called in to arrange a meeting, and I would get voicemail and a notice saying the mailbox was full.

When I brought it to the owner's attention, he asked, "Okay, so what are you getting at?" I said, "Look, I'm just saying, maybe you could use a little help. I need a bit of extra income, the admin work is not getting done, so why not hire me to help you? I could help you get up to date."

He rejected my offer, choosing instead to live with the problem. I later learned that he may have been running an unscrupulous business, charging students who'd long since canceled their lessons, keeping the money to himself.

It's no wonder he didn't want me at the office rummaging through his spreadsheets and books. It would have revealed him for the crook he was!

But the point is I saw a way to fix the problem, and I offered to help.

Nothing is stopping you from extending a helping hand or suggesting a resource if it makes sense.

Anyway, instead of saying "You must be really busy," say something along the lines of, "We haven't heard back from you, but we're really looking forward to collaborating with you and can't wait for the green light. If you need the original message, we'd be happy to send it again. Thanks for all that you do. Can't wait to connect."

Short. Concise. Direct. Respectful.

Don't be self-important in your follow-up. Remember – pitching isn't about you!

Pitching Challenge: Do This Immediately

The time to stop playing it small is now. You're a Renegade Musician. You're a cut above. And now you know just enough to be dangerous.

I want you to go through your email archives and tally up the number of career-related emails you sent out last year. The book will wait.

How many emails did you send? 20? 100? 352?

Whatever the tally was, I challenge you to 10 times that number this year. If you believe in yourself and you're serious about your music career, it shouldn't be any skin off your back.

For those who've been wondering how they're going to separate themselves from the 95%, this is one very practical way to do it. Make better pitches and make them more often starting today.

If you're not sure who to pitch and build relationships with, read the sections on Dream 100 and PR & Publicity.

Building Your Home Base

Hopefully, by now, you've accepted that you need to build your home base.

Leverage social media to the maximum extent possible, push the posting limits, and mine for as much engagement data as possible, so you know how to connect with your audience.

But *do not* advance three squares, do not collect \$100, and do not utter a word unless you've committed to setting up a website, even if it means hiring me to do it.

With that, let's cover the technical details. What tool should you use to build your website? What content should you put on your website? What should you prioritize – visitors, subscribers, sales, or something else? Should you get someone else to build your website?

That's what we'll be covering here.

How do I Build My Website?

There are two things you need to build your website:

- A domain name
- A web host

Oftentimes, web hosts allow you to purchase domains without leaving their website, so that makes this process easy.

I recommend setting up with SiteGround, as I have found their service to be reliable, their customer service excellent, and

their hosting super fast. Their dashboard is easy to use, and they are affordable too.



Once you've got your domain set up, install WordPress, and you'll be off to the races.

I will admit that there are better tools out there for building multipurpose websites. I love KLEQ, and it's what we're using on Content Marketing Musician. I still use WordPress for the dozen or so other sites I manage, mind you.

The only issue with KLEQ is that it's a pro-level solution, and it carries a pro-level price tag, placing it out of reach for musicians just starting. If you're on my email list, though, you will get notifications when KLEQ goes on sale, which it does, a few times per year.

Anyway...

I can't get into the specifics of how to use WordPress here. If you're ever lost, YouTube is your best friend, as there are *plenty* of tutorials available. It took me a few months to get comfortable with it, especially after coding by hand and building websites on Movable Type and Joomla for years.

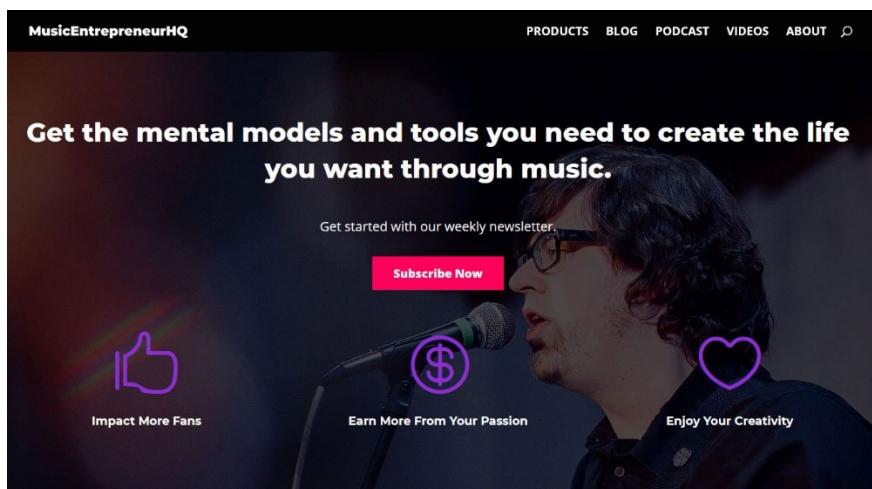
Fortunately, WordPress' complexity is less than just about any photo and graphic image editing software or video editing application you can name. It shouldn't take you months – maybe a few days, a couple of weeks at most.

That said, I will point you to a tool that can make customizing your website significantly easier.

Elegant Themes has a WordPress theme called Divi that makes it stress-free, even for beginners, to design and layout their website exactly how they want it to show up on the web, entirely from scratch. They even have a ton of professional pre-made layouts and templates. Divi costs a bit of money, but it's well worth it.

Yearly access is just \$89. I bought lifetime access to all their products for \$249 because I didn't want to keep paying. Rest assured, it's more affordable than KLEQ.

I've had clients take over the development of their websites directly from me, because of how easy Divi is to use.



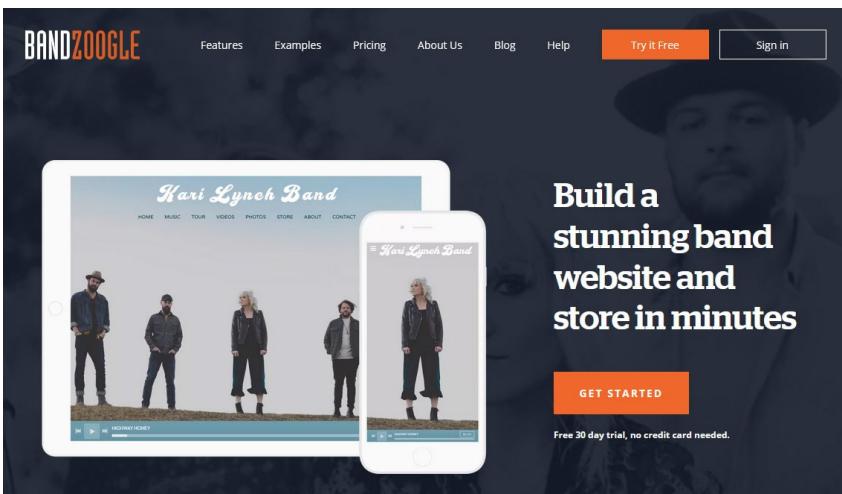
Music Entrepreneur HQ, circa early 2022.

I have one other solution for those who say to me, “David, I’m not technically savvy, *nor will I ever be*. Isn’t there an easier way to build my website?”

Yes, there is. It’s called Bandzoogle.

They make it easy for you to build exactly the kind of website I recommend, and their pricing is frankly bonkers.

You can get started on their Lite plan for just \$8.29 per month (includes hosting!).



I once had a middle-aged artist come to me with this exact concern, and I built her Bandzoogle site for her from scratch. I found it easier than anything I’ve ever used. It took some patience, but once she saw just how easy it was to use, she was 100% on board!

What Goes on My Website?

Think of your website like an Electronic Press Kit (EPK).

The main components of an EPK are:

- Artist bio
- Music
- Promotional photos
- Tour dates
- High-quality videos
- Relevant media
- Achievements
- Links to your social media
- Contact details

These are the main elements to add. A well-organized website with the right materials increases your chances of getting coverage for your music.

For instance, a top-notch “copy and paste” bio makes it easier for the press to cover you, because it cuts down on research for them, and takes the guesswork out of their efforts.

Now, if the term “high-quality” puts you off, *do the best you can right now*. You can always upgrade your content later, right? Everyone’s got to start somewhere.

Either way, your WordPress site (assuming you’ve chosen WordPress as your solution) is a dynamic SEO machine. Meaning – it would be a shame to set up a digital business card / promotional pamphlet and never touch it again. You’re not going to get the most from your website that way. Adding a blog to your site is word to the wise.

I’ll talk more about publishing later, but the main way to keep your site fresh is by adding new content to it regularly.

So, that about covers what goes on your website. But you might be wondering how your website should look.

Well, like him or hate him, I often point to Michael Bublé’s website as a shining example of a great artist website:



To be fair, you could probably sample the website of any artist who's signed to Reprise Records because they are equally good. Someone at their label knows what they're doing!

Here's an important takeaway from this layout – all the important stuff is **above the fold**.

“Above the fold” means *what's visible before you start scrolling*.

Take a close look, and you will see the following elements above the fold:

- Music player
- Social media links
- Logo
- Links to news, media, music, tour, shop, fan club, biography (main menu)
- Banner showing the latest news / updates
- An email capture form

That's perfect. Model that.

As an advanced tip, *only provide links to pages you want people to click on*. It may sound obvious, but most websites are over-cluttered with links to pages that do nothing to add value or boost income. You should only guide users to pages where you have the potential to benefit from their engagement – follows, subscription, income, or otherwise.

On Content Marketing Musician, 80% of the links are all income-generating links, either directly or indirectly.

If you can't get that exact layout nailed, it's okay. Do the best you can right now.

Also, we'll talk more about modeling later (most of Part III covers the idea of modeling in some shape or form), but if you're looking for more artists or websites to model, also refer to the section on Dream 100. If their website doesn't have the above elements, though, it's not a good one to model.

Your Artist Bio

There isn't much I need to say about press kit items like artist photos, high-quality demos, and music videos. Most artists understand well the importance of this media.

One area where most are clueless is their bio. There's more to be learned from what not to do than what to do but either way, let me cover off what you must know to have an effective bio.

First, it would be wise to prepare a few different versions – by that I mean 1) a tagline, 2) a one-paragraph, 3) a two- to three-paragraph, and 4) a comprehensive (make it as long as you want) website version. You'll be adding your bio to your website and social media sites, sending it to PR agencies, sharing it with bloggers, and more. Some require more information, some require less. Sometimes you have a character limit (depending on the platform), and sometimes you don't.

Prepare different versions so you can manage your brand and don't have to start from scratch every single time.

Second, clarity trumps cleverness. Too many bios try to paint a word picture without homing in on reference points the reader will understand. “Atomik Penguins paints gooey chocolatey soundscapes with unique and awesome explosive guitar hooks and lemony scented, danceable drum grooves.” Okay, so you make... ethereal fusion funk metal? No? Damn. I tried my best.

If I can’t figure it out, think about how much more confused a new music reviewer, journalist, or reporter is going to be.

I know that Derek Sivers advises having a catchy tagline you can share with anyone, but that’s primarily for *in-person* use. You should have this at the ready, always, so when people ask you what sort of music you make, you don’t spit out, “uh... it’s like rock but not... and it’s fun and fast.” Boring. Dead air, um, dead air. Not going to catch anyone’s attention.

“We make relaxed, island party music for people over 50.” Sounds like it might be along the lines of Jimmy Buffett. It’s not my jam, but people who are into the escapism lifestyle will come to your show, guaranteed. It’s okay to exclude some. Some of the people you exclude will show up anyway, as I mentioned earlier.

The written word is a little different, and we need to be clear on that distinction. I’m not saying you can’t inject your bio with humor, personality, and color. I’m not saying you can’t use an attention-grabbing catchphrase, either. Please, make it fun to read. Avoid clichés if you can. But when describing your music, do something like this instead:

“By taking the best parts of Metallica, Megadeth, and Slayer and fusing it with the melodic hooks and pop sensibilities of Harem Scarem, Def Leppard, and Bryan Adams, the Atomik Penguins return with their latest album, *Nuklear Drop*.”

Great. Why is this great? It contains common reference points most will easily understand. We know who you sound like as well as who you've been influenced by. But don't say it if it isn't true. Don't say you sound like Bob Dylan if your band's music is closer to Periphery. You don't benefit from the association.

Next, do not treat your bio as a long list of credentials or a résumé. Yes, it's a good idea to weave prominent quotes, achievements, and accomplishments into your bio. It's okay to say, "Winner of the 2019 This is Not a Real Contest Open Mic, Atomik Penguins have had a widespread influence on their local scene of New York, New York..." (though you should always reference real events).

But don't make that your entire bio, listing one accomplishment after another (After winning the KRAP-FM radio contest, he went on to play a show at XYZ Bar and Grill. Then, he was invited to play at the No One Gives a Crap, Why Are You Still Reading This Festival... etc.). It doesn't say anything about you, your story, what you stand for, or for that matter, your music. Also, remember that you can always neatly summarize all your accomplishments in a sidebar with a bulleted list.

Tell a story instead. This is what most artists hide from. They don't want to talk about their addictions, their dead cousin, the atrocious accident they were in five years ago, or any of the skeletons in their closet. I'm sorry to say, this is what people are going to be drawn to, so leaving it out is doing yourself and your fans a major disservice. Share your story, and what you're going to find is that a) you're not alone, and b) you're going to magnetically attract people who can relate to that aspect of you.

If it evokes an emotional reaction, it's good. If it makes someone laugh, cry, angry, or anything in between, you've tapped into the zeitgeist.

Finally, *do not* end your bio with something generic like, “Atomik Penguins are a force to reckon with, and 2023 is shaping up to be another busy year full of explosive activity” (It hurts my soul just to type this).

Every band does this, and it’s tacky. It’s vague, uninteresting, and self-important.

Plus, what if you never update your bio again? It’s not going to make any sense when it’s 2025 and you’re still talking about 2023.

In most cases, you could simply remove this paragraph, and your bio would be much tighter. If you want to say something of substance, though, try a call to action:

“Atomik Penguins hosts a monthly AMA on the third Friday of the month at 7:00 PM PST. Click [here](#) to sign up to be notified of their next AMA and join in on the fun!”

It’s better to get the reader to do something after reading your bio than it is to end it with a limp mic drop. No mic drops are necessary. Say something about your fans instead. Tell them why they should be interested. Be of value, give something away, or tell them how to connect with you.

What Actions Should I Prioritize on My Website?

So, what’s the number one thing to prioritize on your website?

Getting visitors is good. But you’re going to get a lot of people coming to your website who never do a thing (sadly). Invesp says the average conversion rate for a website is 2 to 10%. There are many factors affecting the outcome, but the point is – don’t hide in a corner and cry if only two in 100 people do anything meaningful on your website. It’s normal.

Getting sales would be awesome. But few people just drop by a website to buy something. You have a much better chance of getting someone to listen to your music versus getting them to buy it sight unseen.

So, the main thing to prioritize is **getting email subscribers**. And there is no one right way to do this. Different methods work for different people.

You can do as Bublé does and put generic email capture forms on your site (while testing all locations – header, sidebar, footer, in-content, etc.). You can leverage tools like Leadpages to create button-triggered popups (one of my favorite things to do – KLEQ also has built-in button-triggered popups). You could set up a squeeze page. You could do a combination of these methods.

So long as you're focused on collecting email addresses, you're focused on the right thing.

Even Taylor Swift, who's been taking the music industry by storm, prioritizes the collection of email addresses on her site:



That should tell you something.

Can I Get Someone Else to Build My Website?

Yes.

Most artists get stuck on the “how” of things.

Trust me, you don't want to get stuck there. Because you will never reach your goals. There is simply too much for you to do.

You want to start thinking in terms of *who* not *how*.

Whenever you're too busy, overwhelmed, exhausted, overloaded, or confused, you need to seek out someone who can help you.

There is someone out there who's been through what you've been through, someone who can coach you through your troubles, or someone who can take over some of your responsibilities to ease your burden.

(Do you think I design my eBook covers? No way.)

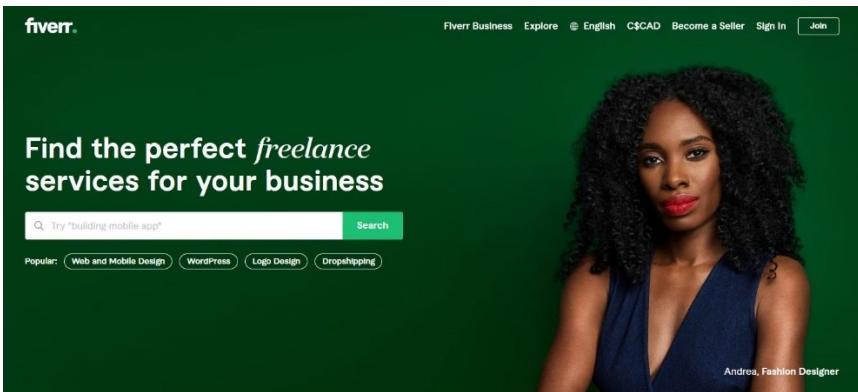
Plus, you'll be able to act and move so much faster with a team!

It could be a family member, friend, or acquaintance. It could be a freelancer or an agency. It could even be me if you've got a budget. There are different ways to skin a cat (as horrible as that expression is).

Everyone says to use Upwork or Freelancer to find competent virtual assistants, and yes, I have had some success with these sites.

But I'd also like to show you a couple of other lesser-known resources.

The first is Fiverr.



The value proposition of Fiverr used to be that you could hire a freelancer at \$5 a pop.

You can still hire freelancers affordably today, but Fiverr has grown into a fully-fledged freelancer marketplace over the years. You can find freelancers, from across the world, at a variety of price points.

The second site you should add to your bookmark folder is Funnel Rolodex (now Funnel Builder Marketplace).



As of 2024, Funnel Rolodex is called Funnel Builder Marketplace.

Freelancers on Funnel Rolodex are well-acquainted with the needs of the creator, creative, and entrepreneur – graphics,

copywriting, advertising, and more. I've had multiple friends who've found great coaches and graphic designers on Funnel Rolodex.

Working with knowledgeable people can take a lot of the guesswork out of trying to explain to your freelancer what you need – oftentimes, the people on Funnel Rolodex already know!

So, if you ever find yourself getting stuck on “how,” recognize that you’re focused on the wrong thing. Start thinking in terms of “who” instead! This will serve you well in all areas of your music career.

Website Challenge: Do This Immediately

If you don’t already have a website, commit to getting your domain and hosting set up today. It should only take a few minutes.

The Advanced & Esoteric

The Renegade does what most others won’t do. They go the extra mile.

In this chapter, as well as in all the marketing chapters that follow, I will be sharing about the “advanced and esoteric” – marketing strategies and tactics that have the potential to work but owe more to outside-the-box thinking than to concrete results.

While what I’m about to share will appear exciting, enticing, and sexy, there are no guarantees that it will work. Further, there is a slight chance that these tactics will actively *work against* you. Please read well before you come back to me later saying, “D.A. told me to do this, and it didn’t work.” I’m *discouraging* you from trying the following unless you have

the resources, and it makes good strategic sense to pursue wild and crazy ideas.

With that out of the way, we can talk about advanced and esoteric techniques for growing and augmenting your website.

Build a Website Network

In the past, I talked about the “sister site” concept. The idea was to build a site that’s complementary to your own. I originally got the idea from pianist David Nevue and his Music Biz Academy cohort, Christopher Knab. This is advanced enough already, because you’ve got to think in terms of parallel niches, complementary industries, and strategic partnerships, to be able to pull it off and benefit from it.

Let’s say, for example, that you make 432 Hz music for horses. Well, could you create a blog or forum that attracts and serves the horse-lover community? And could you then introduce them to your music (not in a bait and switch kind of way, but in a “Hey, by the way, I also wanted to let you know...” kind of way)? If you’re great at building online communities (I have friends who are amazing at it – it’s not one of my strengths), then this could be a very viable way to introduce your music to more people who would be interested in it.

Long-term, you wouldn’t need to run the site yourself. Remember – *who not how*.

But why just build one site when you could build a dozen or a hundred? Setting up one complementary site is so passé, man (I manage a dozen or more sites myself).

Look, I don’t want to dwell on this, because if you do it the wrong way, search engines will hate you, and you’ll end up having to start from scratch. There are some serious SEO consequences, especially if you interlink all the sites you own in an unnatural, spammy way.

While most will tell you to steer clear of Private Blog Networks (or PBNs), if you do it the right way, you can still benefit from multiple websites. To avoid being “caught,” you would need to put your sites on different hosts, use different WordPress themes, use aliases on different sites, and again, avoid interlinking them in an “unnatural” way (the fastest way to being caught).

It's a tremendous amount of work, of course, and unless you've got the time and resources to dedicate to it, you're much better off focusing on one website, regularly publishing the type of content that will attract fans, short- and long-term. Yes, a blog is still a good idea (but I'll get to that).

There is a tool that would make managing multiple WordPress sites easier, though. It's called CMS Commander, and from CMS Commander, you can update the plugins and themes running on your sites, manage comments, post updates, and more, all from a central dashboard.

If this is something you want to take on, find documentation that lays out how to do it the right way. If you don't, search engines will penalize your entire network, which defeats the purpose of website networks altogether.

Helpful Website Tools & Resources

Tools:

- **SiteGround:** One of the best web hosting services available as of this writing. Ideal for those who want to set up self-hosted WordPress installations.
<https://davidandrewwiebe.com/siteground>
- **WordPress:** Chances are you will never have to install WordPress yourself. Most web hosts have one-click installations. <https://wordpress.org/>
- **Elegant Themes:** Creator of great WordPress themes, especially their Divi Theme, which makes it easy for

even newbies to set up their website however they want.
<https://davidandrewwiebe.com/elegant>

- **KLEQ:** The best all-in-one website, course, and membership builder.
<https://davidandrewwiebe.com/10xpro>
- **Bandzoogle:** Bandzoogle offers hosting alongside a powerful and straightforward website builder with all the tools you need, including email capture, eCommerce, tour calendar, and more. You don't need hosting but be sure to bring a domain.
<https://bandzoogle.com/>
- **Leadpages:** One of many landing page builders that help you collect more email addresses. Their popups have been especially effective for me. A generic signup form is nice, trigger-based popups and pre-optimized squeeze pages are better. <https://www.leadpages.com/>
- **ConvertKit:** My top recommended email service provider for creatives. Grow your list, manage your list, send campaigns, and more.
<https://davidandrewwiebe.com/convertkit>
- **Upwork:** A relatively "formal" portal for hiring freelancers. It can be good for one-offs, but it's especially useful for hiring freelancers to handle simple tasks long-term. <https://www.upwork.com/>
- **Freelancer:** An excellent destination for hiring freelancers, especially for one-off gigs (e.g., graphical banner, album cover, etc.). You can set your budget upfront and choose from dozens of freelancers, who will submit their work before you even pay.
<https://www.freelancer.com/>
- **Fiverr:** A freelancer marketplace. You can find a variety of freelancers at different price points. Simply enter a relevant keyword in the search (e.g., lyric video, blog post, voiceover, etc.) and select a freelancer you like. <https://davidandrewwiebe.com/fiverr>
- **CMS Commander:** Manage multiple WordPress sites from a single dashboard. Update themes and plugins,

manage comments, post updates, and more.
<https://cmscommander.com/>

Resources:

- The Average Website Conversion Rate by Industry
<https://www.invespcro.com/blog/the-average-website-conversion-rate-by-industry/>

Harnessing the Power of Sales Funnels

Your home base is critically important. Don't let anyone tell you otherwise.

But there is another type of website that can help boost conversions – be it attendees, subscribers, sales, or otherwise!

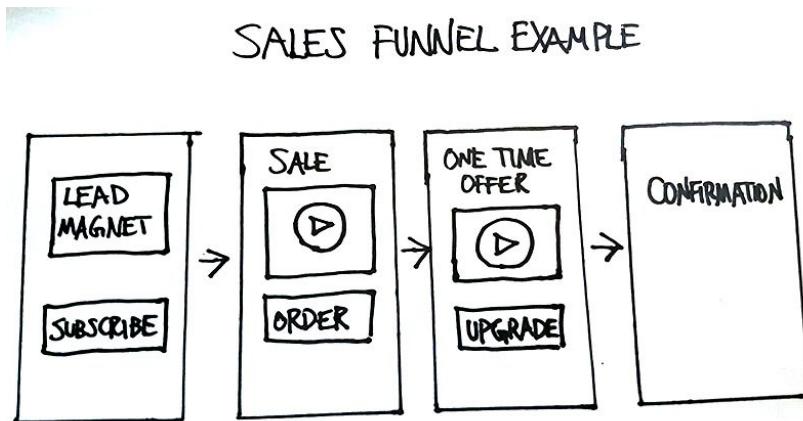
It's called a **sales funnel**.

It would help if you used sales funnels as *part* of your strategy, not *as* your strategy (though some people do). I'll come back to that later...

What matters most is that you understand their appeal and power by the end of this section, not that you know exactly how to build one. Because let me tell you... You won't be able to crank these out at scale until you've built a few.

So, here is an overview of the exciting world of sales funnels.

What is a Sales Funnel?



I drew this... but it was based on Russell Brunson's drawings.

A sales funnel is a website, but it's a *different kind of website*.

You may have encountered one already and have even bought from it (although you may not have been aware of what it was you were looking at).

There's a simple explanation for all this.

Do you know how a lot of websites are cluttered and confusing to look at (let alone use)?

They have a ton of links and banners and graphics on them, and because there are so many options to choose from, maybe you click around for a while, but eventually give up, and move on to another site, am I right?

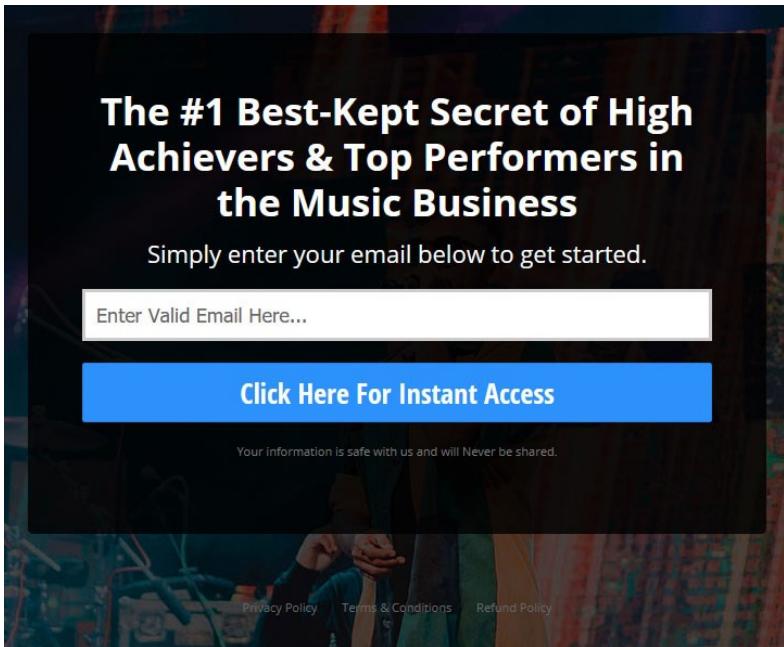
The screenshot shows a website layout for 'Partners In Rhyme'. At the top, there's a navigation bar with links for Home, Free Midi Files, Your Account, View Cart, and Products. Below the navigation is a search bar labeled 'SEARCH FOR MUSIC AND SOUND EFFECTS' with a magnifying glass icon. To the left, there's a sidebar with categories like Royalty Free Music Tracks, Royalty Free Music Collections, and Free Sounds, Music & Video. The main content area has three main sections: 'Free Background Music', 'Midi Background Music Archives', and 'Free Royalty Free Midi Music'. The 'Free Royalty Free Midi Music' section contains links for Auld Lang Syne, Blues, and Lullaby, each with download buttons for Midi and Mp3 formats.

This site is incredibly difficult to use...

Well, a sales funnel, at every step, gives the user *just one thing to do*, so they are never confused.

The first step is to download a lead magnet, opt-in bribe, or email capture – something so irresistible people can't help but enter their email address to grab or download. It could be an eBook, EP, podcast collection, secret video, or otherwise.

By the way, while the download should be irresistible (i.e., use a killer headline), you shouldn't spend too much time developing the content on the inside, because what most people do with something like a PDF is open it, scan over its contents, and never look at it again.



This was the first step in my First-Time Coaching Special funnel... The only thing the user can do to proceed to the next step is enter their email address.

After that comes the sales page. Once the user has opted in for your lead magnet, they are presented with something they can buy – usually in the \$10 to \$100 range.

Some funnels will even ask users to pay for shipping at the first step so they can send out something physical for free (like a book, MP3 player, or T-shirt). This is called a “free + shipping offer.”

At that point, the customer has their card out anyway, so presenting them with something else to buy is just good business.

The last step in the funnel is a one-time offer. Users are presented with the opportunity to upgrade their order with additional resources. One-time offers usually cost two to three

times the value of the original offer, and they are just like they sound – once the user has left the page, they won't be able to find it again (well, if they were sneaky and dug in their internet history, they might be able to, but modern software lets webmasters block people who've already been to a page once, so there are no guarantees).

That said, your funnels can have more than three steps – I have been through funnels that had seven or eight steps.

One more thing...

Sales funnels are made to look *very* sexy nowadays, but fundamentally they are based on something that has been around for centuries – direct response marketing.

In its previous incarnation, it looked something like this:

- There's an ad in a magazine promoting an enticing free offer
- The customer calls the number or mails the address in the ad requesting a free report
- The customer receives the free report and is convinced that elevating their relationship with the company is the right decision
- The customer buys what the company has to offer
- The company follows through with upsells, downsells, cross-sells, etc.
- Now that the company has the customer's contact information, it can continue to engage, nurture, and convert that customer recurringly

When talking about sales funnels, we are *not* talking about anything more complicated than that! It's the same thing, just that advertising now happens on Facebook, and people are brought to a website when they want to download the free report, buy the product, upgrade their order, etc.



Russell Brunson is the unquestioned king of funnels.

How do I Build a Sales Funnel?

There are three tools that, to me, make the most sense for building funnels.

The first is Leadpages. They've got a lot of great templates, and their technology is tailor-made for collecting email addresses.

Leadpages · Product · Templates · Pricing · Resources · Log in · Start Free Trial

Turn Clicks into Customers

Leadpages helps small businesses connect with an audience, collect leads, and close sales. Easily build websites, landing pages, pop-ups, alert bars, and beyond.

[Start a Free Trial](#) [Watch It Work](#)

If you want to sell products using Leadpages, you'd need the Pro plan at \$99 per month, which is moderate.

To me, the main downside of Leadpages is a lack of control. While their templates are configurable, you may not be able to set them up exactly the way you want them to look. That means you'd need to settle for whatever templates they have.

Then again, if the templates are proven, why mess with a good thing? And that goes for funnel-building broad strokes.

The second option is ClickFunnels.



There's Russell again...

For most people, ClickFunnels will probably end up being the go-to option.

The cheapest ClickFunnels plan is \$97 per month, which is still more than reasonable (it lets you create up to 20 funnels and 100 pages).

That said, ClickFunnels is notoriously broken in some regards and can be kind of hard to use (good thing they have technical

support). I have a friend who got frustrated with ClickFunnels and finally decided to go over to SamCart. He swears by it.

ClickFunnels 2.0 is supposed to fix all the issues with their outdated software, and they've got a good thing going, but it's not yet complete. So, only time will tell...

The third option is the one I already mentioned – KLEQ.

The screenshot shows the homepage of 10XPro.io. At the top, there's a banner with the text "For a limited time, get 30% off on your first 5 months. Ends 04/23! Save now!". Below the banner, the 10XPRO.IO logo is on the left, and a navigation bar with links for FEATURES, ABOUT, PRAISE, PRICING, FAQ, BLOG, and LOGIN is on the right. The main content area has a green header with the text "Finally! All the tools you need to build your online business in ONE easy solution". Below this, there's a section titled "Membership Sites" with the subtext "SIMPLIFY Your Online Business! Save Money & STOP Struggling With Tech!". Two buttons are present: "START MY TRIAL NOW" and "SEE A DEMO". To the right of the text, there's a screenshot of a computer screen displaying a lead capture form with a play button icon and the text "FREE! Discover How to Launch and Grow Your Online Business With My Free Marketing Tips".

KLEQ (formerly 10XPro) is absolutely the ideal solution, given just how easy, customizable, and powerful it is.

It's not just a funnel builder – it's an all-in-one website, course builder, membership site solution, and conversion machine. Which means you'd never need to build a separate website and sales funnel. You could have it all in one place. You don't need a Patreon. You don't need a stupid Linktree. You can have something legit, something you own.

KLEQ also allows you to create a better backend customer experience than the alternatives.

At \$197 per month, though, unless you're already making an income on your fan base, KLEQ could be cost-prohibitive.

What Should I Include in a Sales Funnel?

Naturally, you're probably asking yourself things like...

- What do I give away?
- What do I sell?
- One-time offer? Do I need to make even *more* products?

And I will tell you right now that there is no one-size-fits-all solution.

So, *don't overthink this.*

The only thing I would avoid is the temptation to sell something cheap in the hopes that your conversion rate will go up. I see many music educators teaching this, and *it just doesn't make sense.*

Musicians tend to think that everyone else's spending habits are the same as theirs, so they deem their buyers broke ass... (e.g., "I'm going to go set up a funnel where they can grab something for free, buy some buttons for \$5, and then a T-shirt for \$10.") It hurts... 

All that hard work promoting your funnel for an email address and just \$15? Ouch, man. Ouch. You can't put any money back into advertising with that kind of budget.

Accurate thinking dictates your prospects and customers have *significantly* more money to spend with you.

I know women in their 30s who drop \$100 to \$200 per day on food, makeup, and entertainment without batting an eye.

So, unless your customers are musicians, see if you can make at least \$30 to \$40 of profit on your offer (you can charge up

to \$100+ if your offer's strong), and an additional \$100 to \$300 on your one-time offer.

Keep in mind – if you're promoting your funnel with ads, the money is usually made on the one-time offer. You break even on the initial \$10 to \$100 sale.

Here are some thoughts on what you can give away:

- Digital download of your music
- CDs (get fans to pay for shipping)
- T-shirts, hats, buttons, posters

Then, you can sell:

- A merch bundle
- Your entire catalog of music
- A combination of merch and music
- Sheet music and guitar tabs
- Vinyl

For more ideas, refer to this blog post:

Should I Start with a Single, EP, or Album for My First Release?

by David Andrew Wiebe | Aug 18, 2020 | Creativity



There are so many other things you could sell. Get creative.

How to Create an Irresistible Offer

You can have an awesome product that never sells. You can also have a terrible product that sells like gangbusters.

How could that be?

Well, it has a lot to do with how irresistible your offer is.

Now, I'm not suggesting you create a terrible product with a candy coating. That's snake oil sales at its ugliest.

But you could also put all your blood, sweat, and tears into something amazing that no one buys. And that can be shattering. Having done this one too many times myself, I would love to be able to help you avoid it.

Here are some thoughts on creating an irresistible offer.

Know Your Audience

Whether common sense or trite, I feel like I'm beating a dead horse whenever I bring up the topic of audience research. Which is why I sometimes skip right by it.

But it must be said because you're not going to rack up sales with a tone-deaf offer. You must know who your offer is for, what problem it solves, and why your audience is going to buy it.

It's like if someone came to Music Entrepreneur HQ and pitched a guest post about the environment (oh wait, this actually happened!). Why would we publish something so off-topic?

Though many musicians are environmentally conscious, trying to sell them your recycling services is going to prove an uphill battle, bud. You couldn't be more tone-deaf if you tried.

What are musicians interested in? Growing their fan base. Getting listeners for their music. Bringing a crowd to their shows.

There might be an opportunity to sneak in some tips about reducing their carbon footprint in an offer that covers one or more of the topics just mentioned. But it would be best to assume no opportunity because you want your content to be focused and targeted. The few clicks you get probably won't benefit your business.

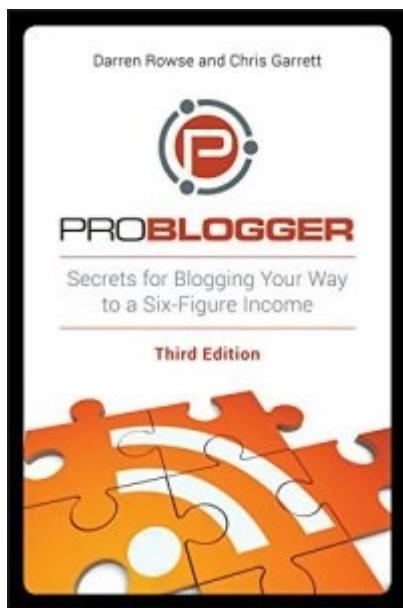
Who is interested in recycling services? That's what you'd want to figure out before pitching your offer.

In like manner, if you wish to create an irresistible offer, you must know your audience and how your offer solves their problems.

Good news. You can always go and ask them.

Make it Valuable

Australian blogger Darren Rowse co-authored *ProBlogger: Secrets for Blogging Your Way to a Six-Figure Income* with Chris Garrett.



This book has instant magnetism for anyone who a) blogs and b) wants to make money blogging.

I bought a copy many years ago because both A and B applied to me.

As I began reading it, I soon figured out that there were no secrets (at least none which I didn't already know), so the book

quickly lost its appeal. But the copy hooked me and that got me in the door. I don't regret the purchase.

Consider what would be valuable to your audience.

Are business consultants looking for more clients? Almost always!

Are podcasters looking to build a bigger audience? Unless their name is Joe Rogan, and they're just doing it for fun, the answer is yes!

Take an investigative approach to figuring out what your audience truly desires. Don't assume.

Once you know your audience and the problem you're solving, it's just a matter of wrapping it in a sexy outer coating.

Let's go with the podcast example. You could name your product:

How to Grow Your Podcast Audience

Or...

How to 10x Your Podcast Audience in 90 Days or Less

Which seems more attractive to you?

The latter is more specific and makes a big, time-bound promise that's harder to ignore.

Even better if you can add a "without" at the end of the sentence, like this:

*How to 10x Your Podcast Audience in 90 Days or Less
Without Social Media*

Build Authority & Credibility

Again, I feel as though I'm beating a dead horse here.

But as I thought back on my purchases over the past year, I found I bought most from those I knew, liked, and trusted.

But no matter who you are, if the offer is right (e.g., "I've got back pain I'm looking to solve *right now*"), and the price is fair, resistance is futile.

Establishing your authority is still important, though, so we should consider:

- How do you become known by your target audience?
- How can you be seen favorably by them?
- What signals would they be looking for?
- What achievements, accomplishments, or experience would speak to them?
- How could you position yourself uniquely in the market?

These are critical questions, and they all deserve thoughtful answers.

Any information you can provide that would build you up in the eyes of your target customer is going to help reduce their resistance to buying.

Also, be prepared to drop fun facts and tidbits about yourself in your copy or presentations. There will always be people in the audience that can relate to:

- Your love of your pet

- Your marital status
- Your ability to speak another language
- Your disabilities or diseases
- Your religious background
- And so on

More isn't Always Better

Writing definitive long-form guides has been shown to be effective.

This statement is problematic.

Yes, it was the wont of yesteryear marketers, and to an extent, it still has its place. It can certainly help with SEO.

But let's look at this through the lens of an offer.

For instance, *77 Marketers Reveal Their Top Marketing Secrets for 2024* could seem overwhelming to prospects.

It depends, at least somewhat, on who the featured marketers are. But chances are I won't know all of them, I won't heed all their advice, and I probably won't gain much by listening to all of them either (focus is spelled Follow One Course Until Success).

Even if you find you get a high conversion rate with an offer like that, chances are your engagement rate will suffer. That's not what you want unless you're after a "quick buck."

The *77 Marketers...* offer would work best as a lead magnet.

If you focus on helping your audience, get quick wins, and stack on those, you will find your info products more engaged.

Although I'm all for sales funnels, big bonus stacks with inflated value and gigabytes of content aren't universally appealing. I recently bought a self-development program that was especially alluring to me, but the six- or seven-step funnel made me think, "My god, if there's this much to learn on the subject, categorically I will never succeed in this area of life." That's not the reaction you want from your customers.

Assume people want fast results, and if you can get them wins upfront, they will stick with you for longer. It's all about whether to play the long game or the short game, and the long game is more fulfilling and profitable.

Get the Pricing Right

The final piece of the puzzle is pricing. As with every other component of the offer, pricing strategy is something we could easily drone on endlessly about.

But let me ask you this:

How could pricing *not* play a part in creating an irresistible offer?

It's critical. It's part of the appeal.

I'm far more likely to buy a \$600 course for \$7 (something I literally did a couple of weeks ago) than to purchase it at full price, even if I thought the value was there.

This isn't to say you should go as cheap as you can. In a race to the bottom, Walmart is the *only* winner (and let me emphasize – *ONLY*). Remember that.

The bonus stack is certainly part of the appeal, but you've got to get it right.

Nathan Barry is famous for creating three-tier offers like the following:

The screenshot shows a landing page for choosing a package. At the top, it says "CHOOSE A PACKAGE". Below that are three options:

- JUST THE BOOK FOR \$39**
Get a digital copy of Authority—the book that has helped hundreds of creators earn a combined millions of dollars in revenue.
 - The book in PDF, ePUB, and Mobi formats
 - The audio book[BUY NOW FOR \\$39](#)
- THE COMPLETE EDITION FOR \$199**
 - The book in PDF, ePUB, and Mobi formats
 - The audio book
 - 14 case studies from successful Authority authors
 - Photoshop book cover templates
 - 90 day launch plan
 - 9 video tutorials
 - 11 expert interviews[BUY NOW FOR \\$199](#)
- THE STRATEGY EDITION FOR \$499**
Includes everything in the complete edition plus a one-on-one call with Nathan to review your launch plan and audience strategy.
Spend an hour of time to make sure you don't waste months or years building the wrong audience.
[BUY NOW FOR \\$499](#)

As you can see, there's *real* value in the bonus stack. This is what you're shooting for.

An irresistible offer is usually in the \$10 to \$100 range.

But that isn't to say it can't be at any price. It simply depends on the value you're offering.

So, if you:

- Understand your audience
- Create a valuable offer
- Build your authority and credibility (and presence) with your audience
- Show your audience how you can solve their problem
- Price your offer at a rate your customers would be delighted by

You've got your irresistible offer.

Will Sales Funnels Save My Music Career?

No, they will not.

Beware of shills and charlatans, because if you get in earshot of them, they will try to sell you on the idea like they just drank *way* too many Red Bulls. 

To get results with funnels, you need to:

- Get traffic to your funnels (we'll talk more about this shortly)
- Give away something people want (lead magnet)
- Sell something people want
- Use amazing videos and copy to sell your offers
- A/B test the crap out of everything (including call-to-action button colors) until your funnel is optimized

This is where you've got to think in terms of "who not how," because optimizing a funnel can quickly become all-consuming.

That's why I suggest using sales funnels as a tactic, not as a strategy. It's going to take some time to set up an effective funnel. Even Russell Brunson says most of his funnels don't work on launch day. Further tweaking is required.

Build up your home base, and then send traffic to your funnel. Use it as a tool to grow your email list first, and your income second.

In this chapter, I've only scratched the surface of the surface of funnels. If you want to go deeper, there are some resources I recommend (later in the chapter) but understand – even skilled marketers spend *ages* studying and testing funnels and

sometimes get nowhere. The concept itself is honestly more valuable than the tool.

As I've shared elsewhere in this book, a customer who spends at least \$1 with you is worth more to you than an email subscriber who's been with you for 10 years and hasn't even come out to a free show. A funnel is an excellent way to think about developing a linear customer journey that turns website visitors into subscribers and paying customers.

For the time being, it's more than sufficient that you know what sales funnels are, how they work, and how you can use them to your advantage.

Sales Funnel Challenge: Do This Immediately

You don't need fancy tools to build your first sales funnel. I would hold off on ClickFunnels or KLEQ until you've got at least 1,000 email subscribers.

So, what I want you to do now is build a janky "ghetto" funnel (it can work much better than you might think!).

The first goal of any sales funnel is to collect email subscribers. If you haven't chosen your Email Service Provider already, then go to this link to get signed up with ConvertKit now:
<https://davidandrewwiebe.com/convertkit>

Now, as your first step, I want you to create a call to action and place it on every page of your website (usually, the bottom of the page works well – visitors are looking for something to do after they've read a blog post, listened to a track, or watched a video). Again, keep it simple. It could be something like:

"Join our email list now to get exclusive updates from our band and \$15 off our entire music catalog."

Once someone new has signed up to receive emails from you, manually send them an email inviting them to buy your music catalog on Bandcamp (along with their \$15 discount code).

Note: if you know how to set up an autoresponder / automated email for new people who join your list, you can do this now. But the idea here is to keep our ghetto funnel as simple as possible. There's *nothing* wrong with sending emails manually until you get to the point of having to send dozens of emails per day.

Finally, record a bonus call-to-action audio that comes bundled with your music catalog. In this bonus audio, invite your audience to take one more step with you. Something along the lines of:

"If you've listened to this point, it can only mean one thing – you like what you're hearing. Thank you so much for listening. We appreciate you. I just wanted to let you know that because you listened to this track, you're entitled to \$15 off our merch bundle. I want to invite you to go to atomikpenguins.bandcamp.com now to claim your stylish hat, T-shirt, and buttons for \$15 off. Again, that's atomikpenguins.bandcamp.com. Thanks again for listening."

Done. You've got yourself a ghetto funnel and you're off to the races.

The Advanced & Esoteric

When it comes to sales funnels, most things have already been done. The craziest ideas have been tried, and in most cases, they've gone off like lead balloons.

At the core, funnels are not meant to be complicated. As much as creating a complex series of upsells, downsells, and cross-sells seems like a good idea, marketers with *the best results always seem to be those who keep it simple*.

Think of it this way – the greater the complexity employed, the more variables there are to consider, the more bases there are to cover, the greater the chance there will be holes in your strategy, and you will leave income on the table. You're better off perfecting a simple three-step sales funnel trunk than trying to tend to its many branches.

Some of the highest performing eCommerce sales funnels don't sell anything different at each step – they sell the same bottle of supplements or goop, except in greater quantities (i.e., more bottles at greater discounts). I just bought from a sales funnel like this the other day – and I ended up with two bottles when I just wanted to try one.

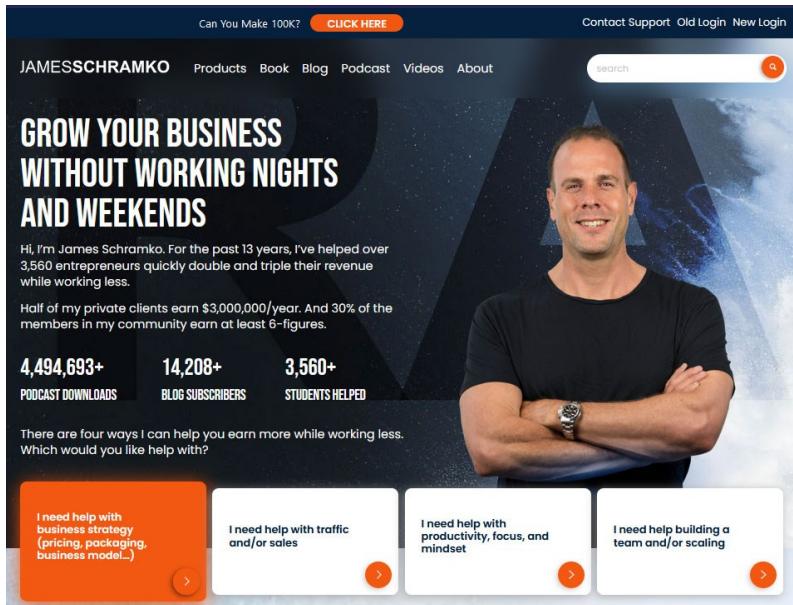
If the customer is already sold on the supplement, why would they turn down more, especially at a deep discount? If you sell the same thing at each stage of your funnel, you don't have to do a new sales job on your customers at every phase. The process is in motion, the wheels are turning, and the customer is already sold – don't leave income on the table when there's no reason to!

Now, sales funnels are powerful tools for turning otherwise ordinary offers into irresistible ones, just as I've explained throughout this chapter. But I'm a contrarian, so I feel it my duty to point something out. Here's something I know not everyone is going to agree with:

Rather than seeing your potential customers as sheep that must be herded down a single corridor, I advise setting up *multiple* corridors they can choose from – merch bundles this way, digital download bundle over here, music lessons at the opposite end, etc.

For this to work well, you will need to be crystal clear on which corridor is right for whom. But if you do this part right, you can create a better customer experience and earn a greater income.

You could call this a “choose your own adventure” hub. My coach, James Schramko, likes to call it the Chocolate Wheel. See how his website has four primary pathways for newcomers?



Upon arriving at James' website, the user can choose the problem they're struggling with and be matched up with the appropriate solution.

To me, this is a more humane approach to marketing than trying to get everyone to go through a single sales funnel. Think of the front desk team at a car dealership. They can guide you to the appropriate department depending on your needs – parts, service and maintenance, showroom, etc. Funneling everyone through the showroom before they can access any other department causes confusion and frustration.

“Wait, I’m here to get a new key fob, and I need it urgently! I’m not looking for a new car.” Meanwhile, the headlines and videos are screaming at them – “Get \$1,997 off all 2025 models!” They can’t find what they’re looking for, so they go

elsewhere to pay \$200 for a new key fob, from a store that's better at directing them to the right department more efficiently.

You're going to leave income on the table if you don't direct your customers to the appropriate department, and fast.

When you only have one sales funnel, there's only so much you can do. As you discover more of what your customers want from you, you can set up new sales funnels to serve those desires. Each sales funnel can direct visitors to solutions matched to their needs.

Helpful Sales Funnel Tools & Resources

Tools:

- **Leadpages:** A powerful email collection and landing page platform with many built-in tools. Using their infrastructure, you can build sales funnels too. But since you will need to be able to accept payments, you'll want to purchase their Pro plan, at \$99 per month.
<https://leadpages.com>
- **ClickFunnels:** One of the first online applications that was built specifically for the creation and ongoing management of sales funnels. While it is a great piece of software, it's old and cumbersome (some would even say "broken"). <https://clickfunnels.com/>
- **SamCart:** For online course creators, SamCart is nearly unparalleled. It's more affordable than ClickFunnels, and it's easier to use.
<https://samcart.com/>
- **KLEQ:** The best, easiest to use, and most expensive all-in-one website, funnel, course, and membership site builder. <https://davidandrewwiebe.com/10xpro>

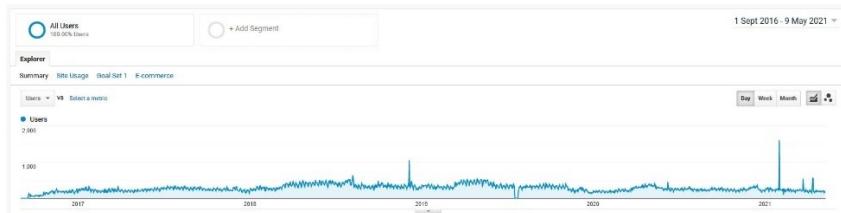
Resources:

- **DotCom Secrets by Russell Brunson.** If you want to go deeper into the various types of sales funnels you can create, then this is your definitive guide. Beware, though, because you can spend *way* more time on this than is artistically responsible.
<https://davidandrewwiebe.com/dotcomsecrets>
- **KLEQ Review – Funnel Builder, Online Courses, Membership Site Solution.** My thorough review of KLEQ, with examples of musicians who've used it successfully, as well as positive third-party reviews. KLEQ was formerly 10XPro, make no mistake.
<https://davidandrewwiebe.com/10xpro-review/>

Publishing

One of my favorite ways of getting traffic to my website and sales funnels is through publishing / content.

This chart might explain why I'm such an advocate (even with the occasional spikes and dips):



Music Entrepreneur HQ's traffic rose from nothing in 2016 to over 600 sessions per day in 2018.

Content doesn't require money, just sweat equity.

There are three types of publishing:

- Blogging
- Podcasting
- Vlogging

I'll be covering each of these in the sections that follow.

The long and short of it is that you're going to want to pick one and commit to regular publishing.

Video is probably the best way to connect directly with people, but that doesn't mean blogging and podcasting don't work,

and if you're more comfortable with one of those, it's generally better to go with something you can sustain than not.

Many artists begin working on content with great vigor and excitement only to drop off the map the moment they discover how much time and effort it takes. If you're not going to keep to it, don't do it.

What Should I Publish?

This falls under the category of “easy to overthink.”

The best thing to do is what Gary Vee suggests... *document your journey!*



via GIPHY

WHAT EXACTLY IS AN NFT?

NFT stands for “non-fungible token,” but what the hell does that actually mean? Check out this [comprehensive beginner’s guide from One37](#), but I’ll give you a breakdown from my own POV here:

Your journey is uniquely yours, and no one is exactly like you. The one thing you know better than anyone else is your story.

Create an emotional connection with your audience. Tell your story and be willing to share little facts about yourself.

Here are some interesting tidbits about me:

- I was born in Canada, but I grew up in Japan. I'm bilingual (i.e., I speak Japanese).
- I have mimicked a variety of sounds (like police sirens) and voices (impressions) since I was a child.
- Some of my guitar heroes include Jimi Hendrix, Eddie Van Halen, Nuno Bettencourt, and Pete Lesperance.
- I have struggled with generalized anxiety disorder.
- I have podcasted for over 12 years.
- My all-time favorite sitcom is *How I Met Your Mother* (save for the last season...).
- Action RPGs and Metroidvanias are my favorite types of video games.

Why bring *any* of this up? Does it even matter?

Think about it...

In any crowd, some people can relate to different aspects of who you are.

Some might relate to anxiety. Others may have grown up overseas.

The trick is to be relatable. Being transparent and dropping little hints about yourself gives you a way of relating to more people who might not hear anything else in what you're sharing.

Of course, it's well worth studying your audience before you "drop knowledge" on them. The best speakers in the world do the work of finding audience-to-message fit.

Share generously. That's your unique selling proposition. The one thing your competition doesn't have is you.

How Often Should I Publish?

Russell Brunson claims that *publishing daily for a full year will solve all your money problems.*

Audacious claim!

I ended up publishing daily for nearly two years and all I can say is... *expect a roller-coaster ride.*

Look, publishing is great. It's free save for the time you put into it. And people do appreciate your content, especially when it's high quality.

But publishing daily is incredibly aggressive, and the results are speculative at best.

See if you can get into the habit of publishing at least once per week (create the habit) and ramp up your efforts from there.

Alternatively, follow Noah Kagan's Law of 100.

Publish 100 of something, and by that time, you will figure out three things:

- Whether it's sustainable
- Whether it's enjoyable
- Whether it works

And don't forget:

Who not how. If you can't figure out how to edit your podcasts or videos, if you need attractive-looking header graphics for your blog posts, or if you're not sure how to publish on WordPress... find someone who can help you with the process.

3 Types of Publishing

There are three ways to publish. In this section, we look at each and explore where to put your content.

Blogging

The best place to publish your written content is on your blog.

You control your blog, and you can easily back up your content. It's not going to go missing unless you can't pay your hosting bills, and even then, you can save everything to your hard drive in Word docs.

When you publish to your website, you stand to benefit most from Search Engine Optimization (SEO). We honestly don't need to talk much about SEO, though. If you do the things talked about in this book, your SEO will be solid.

The only problem? Unless you've already got quite a bit of traffic to your website, no one's going to read your stuff.

So, you might want to publish to Medium as well.



The screenshot shows the Medium homepage with a yellow background. At the top left is the Medium logo. At the top right are links for 'Our Story', 'Membership', 'Write', 'Sign In', and a 'Get Started' button. The main headline 'Where good ideas find you' is displayed in large, bold, black font. To the right of the headline is a large, stylized pyramid composed of numerous small, white, illegible text snippets. Below the headline, a sub-headline reads 'Read and share new perspectives on just about any topic. Everyone's welcome.' followed by a 'Learn more' link. A 'Get Started' button is located at the bottom left. On the right side of the page, there is a 'TRENDING ON MEDIUM' section with six numbered articles:

- 01** Node.js Node.js 16 available now Apr 20 · 4 min read
- 02** Coby Lefkowitz No, We're Not In A Bubble Apr 20 · 9 min read
- 03** Barack Obama Today, A Jury Did the Right Thing. But True Justice Requires Much More. Apr 20 · 2 min read
- 04** Florina Muntenescu in Android Developers Room auto-migrations Apr 21 · 3 min read
- 05** Matt Charnock in The Bold Italic California's Best Bet to Beat This Drought? A South Pacific 'Super Typhoon' Apr 21 · 3 min read
- 06** M.G. Siegler in 500ish The Apple Show Apr 20 · 11 min read

Medium has been described as the “Instagram of writing.”

Not in the sense that girls let their butts hang out and guys show off their muscles (or their guitars if they have no muscles...).

More so in the sense that you can get a lot of views on your posts without spending months and years trying to build up an audience.

Medium lets you “import” your story from other blogs, so you can hit two birds with one stone – publish to your blog first and then import the story to Medium.

Podcasting

Podcasting is another great way to communicate with your audience.

If you feel like you’re better at talking than writing, it’s a promising opportunity.

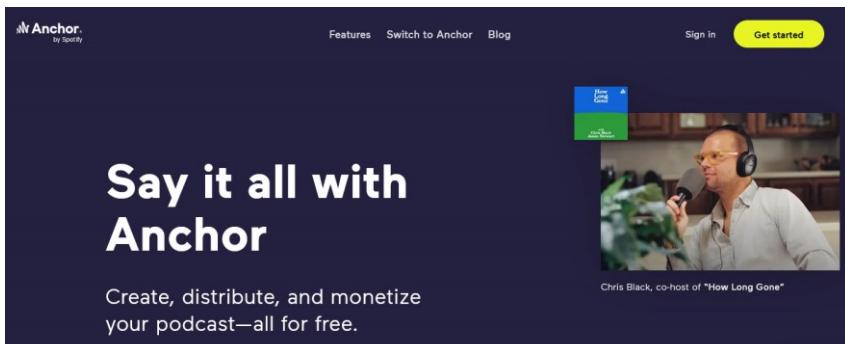
Having podcasted for over 12 years, I can tell you honestly that it’s not an easy way to grow a following.

That said, if you *did* publish podcast content daily for 365 consecutive days, you would blow a lot of podcasters right out of the water. At this point, The New Music Industry Podcast has been around for six years, and it doesn’t even have 300 episodes.

The best place to publish your audio content is on your blog. If you’re using WordPress, take advantage of the PowerPress Podcasting plugin by Blubrry.

But if you’re only going to publish to your blog (you know the rest...).

The easiest way to grow an audience is by publishing to Anchor (by Spotify).

The screenshot shows the homepage of the Anchor by Spotify website. At the top, there's a dark header with the "Anchor by Spotify" logo, navigation links for "Features", "Switch to Anchor", and "Blog", and buttons for "Sign in" and "Get started". Below the header, a large dark banner features the text "Say it all with Anchor" in white, bold, sans-serif font. Underneath, a subtext reads "Create, distribute, and monetize your podcast—all for free." To the right of the text is a small video thumbnail showing a man with glasses and headphones speaking into a microphone. Below the thumbnail, the caption "Chris Black, co-host of 'How Long Gone'" is visible.

There is one unfair advantage podcasting provides. The people who listen to you are far more likely to buy from you because they get to know you and feel more connected to you. While reading a blog post may only take a few minutes, someone who likes your audio content will happily listen to you for 30 to 60 minutes at a time.

Vlogging / Video

Video content is huge.

Most people spend about five to six hours per day watching videos, and I would venture to guess those numbers only rose through the pandemic.

If you are “put together” most days, video is a great way to publish.

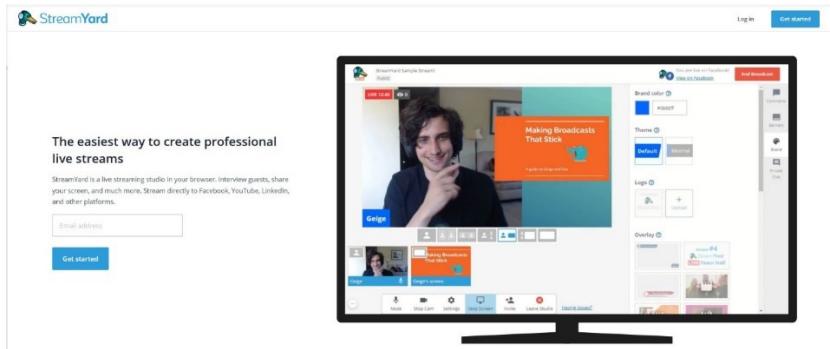
But even if you aren’t great on video, and want to get better, it’s worth a try. It’s how a lot of your favorite creators got started, guaranteed.

The best place to publish your video content? Your blog, of course.

But you already know why that might not get you the best results in the immediate...

You probably *think* I'm going to say publish to Facebook or YouTube, right? Well, sure.

But if you utilize a tool like StreamYard, you can live stream to multiple platforms simultaneously...



Here are all the places you can stream to using StreamYard:

- Facebook page
- Facebook group
- Facebook profile
- LinkedIn page
- LinkedIn event
- LinkedIn profile
- YouTube channel
- Periscope
- Twitch
- And even custom channels (Vimeo, LiveStream, etc.) ...

You can only stream to one destination at a time if you're on their Free plan, but you can stream to three destinations with their Basic plan (\$20 per month), and eight destinations with their Professional plan (\$39 per month).

You can even download your live streams, cut them up into clips, and roll them out one at a time elsewhere (like X and Instagram) after the fact. So, this is a powerful way to create a ton of content in one go.

Adapt to Your Liking

Some marketers and gurus do the above but go about it quite differently.

Here's an example:

- Go live on Facebook for 10 minutes per day
- Edit Facebook Live and publish it to YouTube a week later
- Write a short-form weekly blog post (200 to 300 words) and publish it on their Facebook page
- Create quote cards based on the blog posts and publish them on Instagram three times per week

There are dozens of iterations on this. You can do more, you can do less.

Whatever you can consistently do, and whatever gets results is what you want to repeat. So, never fear experimentation and if necessary, try many approaches to figure out what works for you.

Publishing Challenge: Do This Immediately

It's time to create your first piece of content.

As much as I have stressed "Don't overthink it," I know full well the tendency is to do just that.

Look, everyone sucks at this when they're first getting started. But you will get better if you stick with it. That's why Noah Kagan's Law of 100 is so on point.

All I want you to do now is to share your story. How did you get started? Why did you get into music? What motivates you today?

It doesn't need to be a lengthy piece. It doesn't need to be polished. The only goal is to publish. Whether it creates a connection with your audience, or whether anyone even sees it is mostly inconsequential. You only have so much control over that. What you do have control over is creating and publishing content.

Think of it this way – if you publish once per day for the next year, you'll create 365 new opportunities to be discovered by your audience. A Renegade *would* do this.

The Advanced & Esoteric

It has taken a while for businesses to accept that they require a "publishing division" to engage visitors, build trust, and convert them into customers. What the stats show now is that over 1/3 of websites include a blog. 100% adoption will probably never be a reality. It takes time and resources to publish relevant, value-adding content ongoingly, and it won't make sense for certain types of websites (sales funnels, for example, do not benefit from clutter, and rather suffer from a scattered focus).

What the clueless 95% don't seem to notice about the time it takes to produce blog content is that social media is effectively the same deal. You might spend an hour or two writing one blog post per week, but wouldn't it take you the same amount of time, if not more, to prepare two to three social media posts per day?

Why the comparison? Because most “expert” sources always seem to conclude that blogging only has one disadvantage – it takes more time. That’s not true at all. If you focus on blogging, you can produce less content and get more bang for your buck long term. Tweets last 18 minutes, Facebook posts last five hours, Instagram posts last 21 hours, and YouTube videos last 20+ days. How long do blog posts last? Two years (arguably longer).

Don’t forget that a blog post can turn into multiple tweets, several Facebook posts, numerous Instagram quotes, and even a video.

Producing custom content has other advantages. See the following:

- Blogging leads to 55% more website visitors
- Businesses that blog have 126% higher lead growth than those that don’t
- Prioritizing your blog increases your chance of making money off it by 13x

Now, ideally, we should be doing both. But in a world where you can only prioritize one? Make content. As I said earlier, videos can be turned into smaller clips you share on social media later, so it’s like hitting two birds with one stone. Most people start from scratch on every platform instead of taking what they’ve already got and reworking it to fit their chosen channels.

Remember – there is no time to start from scratch. By the time you’ve made 50 videos, you’ll have more content to repurpose than you can even imagine.

Now, in terms of advanced and esoteric strategies, most things have already been tried. Daily blogging? Check out Seth Godin. Daily podcasting? John Lee Dumas. Daily YouTube videos? Oliver Foot tried it for 30 days with increased views, watch

time, and revenue (but nothing too crazy given the effort required).

There are still some rather interesting things you can try, though, so let's delve into those.

Repurposing Your Content

This is an advanced strategy and not an esoteric one. It has already been shown to work, so you can do it without prejudice.

Strip the audio from your videos, and you will have a podcast. Get your podcast transcribed, and you will have a blog post.

It can work in the opposite direction as well (i.e., starting with a blog post). Record yourself reading your blog post, and you will have a podcast. Import the audio into your video editor, add some music, stock footage, and captions, and you will have a video.

You can appeal to different audiences by offering your content in different, appropriate formats.

Some tools can speed up the process, but I want you to know that repurposing content in this manner takes considerable time and effort.

If in doubt, ask who not how.

Syndicating & Distributing Your Content

This one is a little bit of column A (advanced) and a little bit of column B (esoteric).

Syndicating content isn't a new idea by any means. It's common practice in radio and on TV, where one show will appear on different channels (or different stations). Getting the rights to run a show might involve paying a generous

licensing fee to the creators, but it's not exactly hard to see why you might want to have a hit sitcom like *Friends* on high rotation on your channel, because you're guaranteed an audience.

Streaming services like Netflix and Prime Video license quite a bit of content, but they also make their own.

It's not all that different in the world of newspapers, magazines, and newsletters. You don't think the content department starts from scratch every single time they're about to cobble together a new issue of their publication, do you? No, they edit or rewrite existing pieces used in other media, repurpose speeches and presentations, license other great content they've come across, and more.

I was recently asked by a magazine editor whether they had my permission to publish one of my articles in their next issue, and I was more than happy to oblige. See what I mean? They didn't start from scratch. They took something someone else had already written and reformatted it to fit the media.

Even this book, while large chunks were written from scratch, none of it was without a clear intention and outline. Multiple sections were borrowed from existing blog posts or course material.

Syndicating and distributing content works similarly on the web as well. Now and again, I get emails from Hypebot or Indie on the Move asking me whether they can syndicate one of my pieces to their blogs, and I always oblige.

Doing this the “right way” involves adding what's called a “canonical tag” to your HTML code (because Google doesn't like “duplicate content”), but this is not hard to do. Based on my experience, Google's duplicate content rule seems to apply more to the same page appearing on the same website, not the same page appearing on different websites.

You won't need to mess with any coding if someone else is republishing your piece, just so you know, even though you might want to check to see whether they're using a canonical tag.

Anyway, the point is there are countless places you can either distribute (e.g., social media), or syndicate your content to (social media, third-party blogs, magazines, and more).

Distribution and syndication used to be a huge part of our strategy at Music Entrepreneur HQ, and we did see some results with it. But it is easy to waste a lot of time and resources on it too, so it should either be left to your "low energy" task list for the weekend or the hands of a capable virtual assistant.

Here are but a few places you can syndicate your content to (without having to work your way in – more on this in the next chapter):

- Blogger
- Feeding Trends
- Ghost
- HIVE
- Jimdo
- Joomla
- LinkedIn
- Medium
- Steemit
- Tealfeed
- Torial
- Tumblr
- Weebly
- Wix
- WordPress.com (separate from your self-hosted domain)

If you're going to do this yourself, be sure to add a canonical link to where the original piece was published.

You can also publish unique content to these channels (note: these may not accept content that's been published elsewhere):

- CloutPub
- News Break

And here are many of the places you can distribute your content to (e.g., with a description and a link):

- Brighteon.social
- DeSo
- Facebook
- Gab
- LINE
- LinkedIn
- LiveJournal
- Messenger
- MeWe
- Minds
- Parler
- Pinterest
- Plurk
- Telegram
- Truth Social
- Tumblr
- VK
- WhatsApp
- X
- XING

This is just the tip of the iceberg. If you're thinking more expansively, you could be syndicating and distributing your content in other ways too:

- Audio hosting platforms (like SoundCloud)
- File sharing and storage tools (like MediaFire, DepositFiles, KeepandShare, etc.)
- PDF & document sharing sites (SlideShare, Issuu, Scribd, etc.)
- Press release distribution services (PRWeb, eReleases, Newswire, etc.)
- RSS feed submission sites (Flipboard, Twingly, OnTopList, etc.)

There are even some great tools that let you put some of this on autopilot.

Also don't forget – you can get your content on other people's blogs (also known as guest posting).

But this is where, like I said, it gets to be a little “out there.”

I'm still just scratching the surface of the surface here, but now that you have the right mindset, you should *never* be in demand for places to share your content again. That's even more reason to start with a great piece of content before promoting it. Promoting substandard content is a waste of time and resources, even if you are trusting your virtual assistant team to handle the bulk of it.

Video Distribution

We've already talked about content syndication and distribution, and this tactic is just an extension of that. The main difference is that video distribution is less speculation, as there is plenty of evidence to show that it works. It is, in fact, one of the easiest ways to double, triple, or even 10x your viewership with minimal effort.

The “video content = YouTube” association is strong but make no mistake – most social media platforms are prioritizing video content as never before and are just waiting for you to upload your content natively to their platforms as well. They'd

much rather have you do this than share links to YouTube, which their algorithms won't prioritize.

Each of the platforms has some limitations, so you may not be able to upload all your videos everywhere (especially longer videos), but here are the main sites to consider along with their max video length:

- Facebook – up to 240 minutes
- Instagram – up to 10 minutes
- LinkedIn – up to 15 minutes
- TikTok – up to 10 minutes
- Twitter/X – up to two minutes and 20 seconds
- YouTube – up to 15 minutes by default, over 15 minutes for verified accounts

You can also upload your videos to sites like BitChute, Brighteon, D.Tube, Odysee, and Rumble, but your mileage will probably vary if your political leanings aren't conservative or libertarian, and your content doesn't in some way resonate with this audience. The one exception might be Odysee, which feels a lot like YouTube did about 10 years ago.

Helpful Publishing Tools & Resources

Tools:

- **Google Analytics.** A powerful tool for tracking website traffic. Don't go too deep into this because the software was not designed for human consumption (unless you're a computer engineer). Learn a few basic functions and leave it at that.
<https://marketingplatform.google.com/about/analytics/>
- **Medium.** The “Instagram for blogging.” Publish to your website first and import your stories into Medium. You’re almost guaranteed additional traffic for the minute or two this requires. <https://medium.com/>

- **PowerPress Podcasting plugin by Blubrry.** If you're going to be podcasting and publishing your content on WordPress, this is the plugin to get. Blubrry will track your podcast stats, and show you all the places you can distribute your content to – Spotify, Amazon Music, iHeartRadio, etc.
<https://wordpress.org/plugins/powerpress/>
- **Anchor.** Publish your podcast / audio content directly to Spotify using Anchor. <https://anchor.fm/>
- **StreamYard.** My favorite live-streaming software. Multi-stream, use custom branding and banners, invite viewers to join your stream, and more.
<http://streamyard.com/>
- **Otter.ai.** Otter.ai offers unlimited AI-powered transcribing at an affordable rate. A great tool for transcribing podcast / audio content. <https://otter.ai/>

Resources:

- **The Top 24 Business Blogging Statistics You Need to Know in 2022.** If you still don't know why content matters, read this.
<https://nealschaffer.com/business-blogging-statistics/>
- **How Long Does Content Last and How Frequently Should You Post on Social Media?** Social media posts have a depressingly short lifespan compared to blog content.
<https://sprocketwebsites.com/Blog/how-long-does-content-last-and-how-frequently-should-you-post-on-social-media>
- **30 Days Daily Uploading... Results?** What can you expect to happen if you publish videos to YouTube 30 days in a row (note – accurate thinking says it's not the same as publishing to YouTube for 365 consecutive days).
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=oTvKvW8Y7bY>

Dream 100

Now for one of the most critical marketing subjects of all – your Dream 100. You've probably heard, by now, that the music business is a people business. When you think about it, though, all businesses are people businesses.

The question then, is, who do you connect with and what do you do with the connection once it's been built? Even if you know you should be growing your network of contacts, if you don't know how you could end up feeling like you're lost in the desert without a compass.

If you've ever asked yourself how to earn more money as a session player, get better gigging opportunities, or get your music placed in a film, the most sincere and accurate answer is "It's all about relationships." Many of your music career goals are on the other side of key connections.

Here's your framework for networking.

What is Dream 100? Why Would I Want to Build it?

Chet Holmes was the first to conceive of the Dream 100 concept (that I'm aware of – it could have been David Ogilvy), with marketers like Russell Brunson further popularizing it.

So, what's the big deal, and how does it work? To create your Dream 100, you want to make a list of 100 people (influencers, brands, businesses, etc.) in your niche or industry that have access to your target audience. You aren't required to stop at

100, but you also aren't required to have 100. Bryan Harris, founder of Growth Tools advocates starting with 50. If that's less overwhelming to you, start there.

But why would you do this? What would be the point of identifying 50, 100, or more people that have access to your audience?

To build a relationship with them, and ultimately, to collaborate with them.

For instance, if you're a hip-hop artist and getting a mention from Snoop Dogg would boost your career (it would, wouldn't it?), you'd add Snoop Dogg to your list.

No, you can't build a relationship with Snoop Dogg and get a shoutout from him overnight. But give it time. If you keep interacting with his social media content, send him gifts, and connect with his crew, you'll get on his map.

Billionaire **he who shall not be named** once said:

Most people overestimate what they can do in one year and underestimate what they can do in 10 years.

To get results from the Dream 100, you've GOT to have a long-term game plan.

At one time, marketer Russell Brunson was just a splattered fly on the windshield of legendary author, coach, and speaker Tony Robbins. Today, they are business partners. How? Russell kept interacting with his content, buying his products, and sending him gifts. Russell even bought the domain Mastermind.com for \$600,000 USD to gift to Tony and his partner Dean Graziosi.

How to Create Your Dream 100 List

“I can’t even think of 10 people or companies to add to my list let alone 100!”

Give yourself some grace here.

I’ve been in the music business for over two decades and am well aware of the players. Sure, some have come and gone, but I’m constantly culling my list to keep it tight. Making my Dream 100 list was easy.

But I can appreciate that creating your Dream 100 might take some time. It doesn’t need to take weeks or even months (you’re likely overthinking it if it does), but you might need to sit down for half a day or maybe even a full day to identify possible connections.

I’m a blogger / writer / author. So, it makes sense for me to connect with just about any entity in the music business that has a blog.

Performance Rights Organizations (PROs), music distribution companies, online mastering services, magazines, service providers who sell to musicians, and music educators are all worthwhile connections for me.

If you’re a musician, you might target booking agents, managers, record labels, songwriters, and maybe even better-known artists. No reason you couldn’t target blogs, reviewers, and magazines too! In the long run, there are probably artists you dream of one day collaborating with, and these should go in your Dream 100 too. You can also add artists who’ve influenced you, or artists who you sound like.

Here are some additional tips to help you build your Dream 100:

- Search social media – you can find people and groups in your niche by entering relevant keywords into native search
- Listen to podcasts – you'll figure out who's who in your space relatively quickly
- Subscribe to magazines – pay attention to the ads as well as the names that come up in articles

I think the main thing that'll stop you from creating your Dream 100 is fear. Fear of wasting time, fear of doing it wrong, fear of reaching out, and so on.

My suggestion?

Instead of worrying about failing, let yourself dream. Maybe you won't be able to get on Lady Gaga's radar today, but surely if you kept showing up (without being a stalker), she'd take note of you a few years down the line.

Aim high! Include people or companies on your list you think are well beyond your reach right now.

Like I said earlier, Russell Brunson had Tony Robbins on his list for a long time before the two ever ended up working together. The point is – they ended up working together!

But Dream 100 isn't all about the long game. I'll talk more about this as we go.

How do I Connect to My Dream 100?

In general:

- Follow them on social media and comment on their posts

- Join their Facebook group (if they have one – they usually do)
- Get on their email list
- Buy their products (they're more likely to interact with customers)
- Surprise them with gifts (lumpy mail campaign – make sure it's something they'd want to receive!)
- Keep current with them

Now, here's a gimmie for those who've made it this far in the book (and there are a few gimmies scattered throughout Part III of the book, to help you access some free publicity and marketing – better keep reading!).

Add me to your Dream 100. I'm permitting you right now. Connecting with me won't be that hard. I'm always open to featuring success stories on my blog, podcast, or YouTube channel. If you've benefited from this book, I want to know what you've been able to accomplish because of reading it. My contact information is in the back of the book.

By the way, if you're going to send me gifts, make them business books. 😊

The gifting part of the strategy is particularly powerful if you nail it. Again, you must think in terms of what someone on your Dream 100 would like to receive, not what you'd like to receive.

I understand gifts can cost money, which is why we must gift strategically. Think of it like an independent radio campaign. An increasing number of radio stations are accepting digital submissions now, but the majority still require physical CD submissions. It costs something to mail out 200 CDs, but the simple act almost always results in radio play on a few

stations. There's also an intangible Return on Investment (ROI) because those you've sent a package to start to recognize and remember your name. But again, it may take time.

How do I Model My Dream 100?

Modeling what your Dream 100 is doing allows you to increase your reach on social media. I'm not convinced success on social media is all about content, because there are inevitably other factors like the person posting it, past engagement on posts, whether what you're sharing is on brand for you, and so on. But if you really want to make the most of social media, you've got to be willing to continually optimize and iterate your content game. Noticing what your Dream 100 is doing and the posts that catch your attention are a good way to do that.

But there is one thing we need to be crystal clear on – modeling is *not* copying.

No marketer in their right mind would tell you to copy anyone, because copying could get you into a lot of trouble (cease and desist letters, legal action, burned bridges, damaged reputation, and so on). Plagiarism is a bad color for anyone.

Anyway, the best way to ensure you're making the most of your time on social media is to watch what your Dream 100 is doing, and preferably, *only* what your Dream 100 is doing.

The problem is, right now, you're following all kinds of randoms on social media, and it's not adding one bit of value to your career or life. They're taking up mind space and not even paying rent!

So, go and follow your Dream 100 on the social media site(s) you use most, and unfollow or mute everyone else (by the way, you don't need to *unfriend* anyone to do this).

That way, whenever you log in to social media, you will *only* see what your Dream 100 is up to, easily be able to interact with them, *and* see what posts are performing well.

When you see something that's working, model it in your own marketing efforts.



Music distribution company TuneCore is on my Dream 100. This Instagram post had disproportionately more likes than other recent posts of theirs (nearly 1,500!). I could easily model this. Take an artistic black and white photo with my photographer, add a quote that reflects my brand, and done!

How do I Collaborate with My Dream 100?

There are two ways to work with your Dream 100.

You can **work your way in...**

Or **buy your way in.**

Let's look at each.

Work Your Way in

Commenting on social media posts, joining email lists and Facebook groups, buying products, and sending gifts will get on your Dream 100's radar. A relationship will begin to form.

Taking the relationship to the next level and discussing collaboration is a matter of timing but always remember that it's a natural extension of your outreach efforts.

I recently had a music catalog management company like and comment on one of my tweets. I replied, thanked them, and mentioned that if they had a blog, I'd love to put together a guest post for them.

They responded favorably, and before I knew it, I was direct messaging them, working out the details.

It may seem as though Dream 100 is a complicated framework, but honestly, it can be as simple as that. Sometimes, you hit it off with someone right away, and the collaboration forms very quickly.

Be active in your niche. That will ensure that like-minded people see your posts. Be proactive in reaching out when the opportunity presents itself. Speed is of the essence! Don't wait for others to get in touch, either. You're a leader, remember?

I also like to pitch at least one blog on my Dream 100 per day (although I don't always get around to it) to see if they'd be interested in a guest post.

Maybe you could pitch one YouTuber per day and see if they'd be willing to swap videos with you.

Buy Your Way in

So, you've exhausted every channel of communication. You can't get in touch with someone on your Dream 100 no matter how hard you try. Emails don't get responded to. Pitches don't get answered. Social media comments go nowhere. You've sent gifts and bought a few products, but even that doesn't seem to get an "in" with them.

What now?

Here's the **sneaky** cool part. There is **ALWAYS** a way to **buy your way in**.

Some of the people on your Dream 100 are bound to have ad space on their website or magazine. Meaning – you could buy an ad.

You can buy retweets on X, mentions on Instagram, ad spots on podcasts, and more.

(Don't let a service do this for you. You do the legwork. Find the right influencers, reach out to them, and ask how much they would charge for a share or mention.)

Yes, it costs money. But if you've got a new release to promote, for instance, being able to get it in front of your dream audience would be worth the price.

You can also think about it this way:

You can approach blogs that rank high in search for desired keywords and pay them to put your ad on their site. You can reach out to YouTube creators who rank for desired keywords and pay them to put your link in their description. You can find an active email newsletter with thousands of subscribers and pay them to add your link to their next campaign.

Disengage the governor switch and the ideas will begin to flow!

But let's say you've exhausted all those opportunities too. Maybe the shout-outs are too expensive. Maybe Green Day's website doesn't have ad space. Whatever it is.

You can still retarget people who go to Green Day's website with ads.

There's *no such thing as exhausting your options*. Where there's a will, there's a way. You can *always* buy your way in, and if you can't get through the front door, you can use the backdoor.

Master the Dream 100

Whether it's an Instagram post, a shout-out on TV, a mention in a podcast, or otherwise, getting on the radar of your Dream 100 can give a massive boost to your promotional efforts.

To master the Dream 100, you need to master communication. Be structured in your activities. Know how to go about tasks and do them efficiently. I've covered communication extensively in Part II as well as an earlier section on pitching.

Dream 100 doesn't need to take up hours of your time. If you're efficient, you can see exactly what your Dream 100 is up to, communicate with them, and model what they're doing in all of 15 to 30 minutes per day. Seriously.

But you will need to stay organized. You'll need structures around you to ensure you're doing the right things long enough consistently.

Master Communication

I've seen the way some of you communicate and... how can I put this discreetly? You're a little inexperienced.

So, here's a tip. Go read Dale Carnegie's *How to Win Friends and Influence People* cover to cover. Then, read it again.

You're going to fail miserably at Dream 100 if you have no empathy, and that's a rare trait these days. A Renegade Musician knows how to develop rare traits that will help them succeed.

Dream 100 Challenge: Do This Immediately

I understand that making a list of 100 of *anything* can seem like an overwhelming task... So, here's what I want you to do:

Go and make a list of 10 now.

Keeping an eye on 100+ companies, brands, and people will take practice. You're better off starting simply and selecting 10 to follow now.

Follow the steps outlined earlier – follow the 10 on social media, leave thoughtful comments on their posts, join their email list, join their Facebook Group, buy their products, and send them a gift.

By the way, you will have built a profitable relationship with many of them before you've ever spent any money with them.

The Advanced & Esoteric

I don't think there's anything creators Chet Holmes and Russell Brunson haven't covered in their books and training about Dream 100.

For some, though, a different framing may prove helpful.

For example, if you have a hard time thinking in terms of Dream 100, you could simply make lists of blogs, radio stations, venues, or all the above.

Much of this work is already done for you in directories like The Indie Bible, so there's no need to start from scratch.

Always remember, though, that it's not about laying claim to a huge database of contacts, but rather about building relationships with key people. Spraying and praying, firstly, goes against everything The Renegade Way is about, and secondly, some partnerships are bound to be of greater benefit to you than others. You've got to prioritize accordingly.

Helpful Dream 100 Tools & Resources

Tools:

- **Spreadsheets.** You don't need anything fancy here – just a good old spreadsheet. For Windows, there's Excel. For Mac, there's Numbers. If you've got a Google account, there's Google Sheets. Pick your poison for tracking your relationship with your Dream 100.

Resources:

- **Growth Tools.** A powerful resource, focused specifically on pitching, creating strategic partnerships, and getting more exposure for your business. Hands-on coaching included. Expensive.
<https://growthtools.com/>
- **The Ultimate Sales Machine by Chet Holmes.** The incomparable original. *The Ultimate Sales Machine* focuses on 12 key areas of improvement for every business, including, of course, the Dream 100 strategy.
<https://davidandrewwiebe.com/ultimatesalesmachine>
- **Traffic Secrets by Russell Brunson.** A good portion of the Renegade Musician marketing blueprint was inspired by Russell Brunson's *Traffic Secrets*, which is an excellent resource on how to drive more traffic to your sales funnels.
<https://davidandrewwiebe.com/trafficsecrets>

- **How to Win Friends and Influence People by Dale Carnegie.** A must-have for better communication and relationships. Do not be put off by the title. The information is solid.
<https://davidandrewwiebe.com/winfriends>
- **The Indie Bible.** An extensive directory of bloggers, radio stations, venues, and more.
<https://davidandrewwiebe.com/indiebible>

Social Media

Having come to this point in the guide, you already know more about digital marketing and social media than you even realize.

So, we don't need to spend an eternity on the topic, despite how expansive it might appear.

But let me bring it all together for you, so you don't end up wasting all your time and energy on things that don't matter and don't work...

Determining Your Focus

At the top of 2021, I declared that my social media focus would be on two platforms, with an ancillary focus on a third.

I chose Medium and X as my primary channels, and YouTube as my secondary one.

I still posted to Facebook, Instagram, Pinterest, and a dozen or so other sites somewhat consistently, but where do you think I saw the greatest growth and traction?

Medium, X, and YouTube, of course. Surprise, surprise.



David Andrew Wiebe
Founder of Music Entrepreneur HQ. Download your free guide: <https://www.musicentrepreneurhq.com/join>

Published in Abundance Attraction · Pinned •

So, Who Are You Anyway?

Why you're here (there is a reason)



I appreciate your interest!

Hey, I'm David Andrew Wiebe.

My Medium following has grown to over 1,000 followers.

I don't know who you've been learning from to this point, but if they're telling you to be everywhere or post 30 times per day, stop listening to them *immediately*.

To create traction on any platform, you must focus. Choose two, *maybe* three channels, and execute at a high level. Leave the rest alone. You can't do it all.

Just planning my tweets for the week takes me a few hours and posting daily to Medium takes *at least* an hour. Nowadays, I have a team member schedule all my tweets. All I do is test out a bunch of platitudes to see which gets a reaction and save the ones I want to be scheduled for later.

At first, I was quite excited about scheduling my tweets, but as it started to sink in that I was spending 10 hours per week planning and publishing the content, I realized it was 10 hours I couldn't spend elsewhere. When you say "yes" to one thing, you're always saying "no" to something else.

If you want to do more, ask who not how. You need volunteers, fans, community members, freelancers, or virtual assistants to help you grow a more expansive social media presence.

But you should always weigh the benefits against the costs as well.

Understand the Platform

Before you dive into writing hundreds of tweets and scheduling them out in 10-minute increments, there's a critical action step you should take that most people don't:

You must study up on the platform you're going to be posting to.

Why was the platform created? Who was it created by? Where did it come from? Where is it going?

I'm not necessarily asking you to do a deep dive, but without a clear picture of why the social platform exists in the first place, you aren't as likely to succeed with it. The more you can align with the intentions and goals of the platform, the better you will tend to do with it.

But merely understanding the platform's foundations simply isn't enough. That's why you must know where it's coming from *and* where it's going.

Content and posting habits always evolve. In the early days of YouTube, for instance, you may have been able to post random clips from your day and monetize your channel with ease. Nowadays, it requires considerably more intentionality. Even if your production values aren't on par with the top channels, you must stand for something, have a voice, and create on topics people are searching for (search engine optimization or SEO is a big deal on YouTube, Instagram, and elsewhere these days).

Similarly, most platforms deprioritize link-based posts in their algorithm. Generally, they're looking to keep people on their platform, not send them away. This doesn't help you, the independent creator, but learning to work within such an ecosystem is the only way you can expect to be successful on social media.

Gather Intelligence

So, you know that you've got to focus. You know that you should research the history of a platform, as well as where it's been and where it's going. But this may not tell you which platforms to use.

Now, you can use whatever platforms you want, at least on an experimental basis. I still like to try things out myself before deciding one way or another.

But it's a bad idea to be in 100% experimentation mode when you need all your marketing efforts to count. Content takes time to create, and scheduling it is repetitive and mind-numbing too. It's a tremendous amount of work to continually test, optimize, and reach increasingly larger audiences with your content. Most people don't have time to waste.

One of the reasons the Spotify delusion is so poignant here is that musicians often push users to the platform without even knowing whether those audiences listen to music on Spotify!

Spotify is big, sure, but so are Apple Music and Amazon Music. I found a surprising number of people listen to my music on Apple Music.

Either way, I'm going to make a resource recommendation here that's going to make your life a lot easier. It's called Songwhip. Songwhip is a free service that will automatically find your music across all the platforms and bring it under one umbrella, with links to all the platforms. All you've got to do is

enter your album, song, or artist link (e.g., from Spotify) into Songwhip, and it will do the rest of the heavy lifting.

But getting back to gathering intelligence, one of the most useful tools is Similarweb. I've recommended this tool in some of my other books and courses, but it really is a thing of beauty, so far as surface-level research is concerned.

Let's say you know your band sounds like Maroon 5. Well, would it be fair to assume most of your audience would be on the same social networks Maroon 5 fans already use?

To see which platforms, drive the greatest engagement, all you'd have to do is enter Maroon 5's website (www.maroon5.com) into the Similarweb search bar, and you will not only learn where their fans like to hang out online, but you will also get valuable information like age, gender, and location.

If you're curious where Maroon 5 sees the most action, by the way, it's YouTube by a huge margin at 97.28%, and Facebook a distant second at 2.72%.

While this data isn't going to grant us instant access to the stages of the Grammy Awards, we can at least build a hypothesis on it, that YouTube and Facebook are good places to be if we sound like Maroon 5, and that we should probably run retargeting ads too.

Keep in mind, though, that you aren't limited to researching one band or artist. You can investigate as many as you want, thus forming a clearer picture of what's going to work for you.

Social Modeling

No matter what you're doing online, you can model other, more successful people and get results. And nowhere is this more applicable than on social media.

This is something that should have been made clear in an earlier section on Dream 100, but in case you're still a little foggy, I'll summarize the key points:

- **Curate your social media feeds.** Mute or unfollow those who are not in your Dream 100 (you don't need to unfriend anyone), so you can easily see what your Dream 100 is up to when you log into social media, make notes on what's working for them, and interact with them the moment you log in.
- **Model your Dream 100's top-performing posts.** Leave the guesswork behind and create posts that are like theirs (no plagiarizing!). Also, model their posting cadence (how often they post and when).
- **Model your Dream 100's profiles.** Check out their bio, profile picture, cover art, and so on. See what you can learn from them and if there's anything worth modeling.

AppSumo's Noah Kagan is on my Dream 100, and whenever I'm looking for ideas on what to post to Instagram, I often reference his posts:



Noah Kagan @noahkagan

However weird or niche your interests are, you can create a business around them on YouTube. Rasta Cooking, Chess, Fish Tanks... you name it.

Noah Kagan @noahkagan

- businesses you can start for \$0:
 -) Rent your sh*t on Facebook Marketplace
 -) Sell baked goods using your social pages (hire mom)
 -) Package & sell "experiences" to our friends

Noah Kagan @noahkagan

- How does a company go from GOOD to GREAT?
1. By building a flywheel (exponential growth model)
 2. By hiring the right people and setting them up for success
 3. By only pursuing opportunities that fit 'the hedgehog concept'
 4. By hiring & training 'Level 5 Leaders'



Noah Kagan's Instagram posts. I can easily check to see which have gotten the most likes and comments and model them.

There is nothing easy, nothing automatic. But strategy trumps haphazard experimentation every time. We've all got to start somewhere, and that might mean publishing some inferior content. But if we're willing to struggle through the early stages and keep getting up to bat, our efforts will pay off in droves.

You've got to be aggressive, though. Musicians hear "testing" and go, "Oh, I should post three posts and wait a month to see which does best." No, I'm not talking about a few posts. I'm not talking about a dozen posts. I'm talking about hundreds if not thousands of posts, even if it means creating dozens of variations on the same posts.

Just be sure to give your followers a break. Don't test different headlines, captions, and hashtags on variations of the same post on consecutive days. Space things out to ensure you're still doing right by your followers.

Trending Social Networks

As I write this, users are flocking to social and publishing channels like Clubhouse, Substack, TikTok, Patreon, Medium, and others.

As we seek to create our online empires, shiny objects are going to keep popping up left, right, and center.

How much attention should we give these? Is it worth dropping everything we're doing to create a following on a new platform, where the algorithm is more amenable towards us?

There are different schools of thought on this, but I think the most balanced view is 80/20.

Spend 80% of your time on the platforms you've already put a lot of time and energy into and spend 20% of your time experimenting with new platforms as they come along.

The goal here isn't to become the next Gary Vee. It's to get results for your music career. So, set aside the notion that you've got to "be everywhere" or that it's even an effective use of your time.

(And if that's still the direction you want to go in, ask who not how.)

Give yourself some time and space to experiment. But don't worry about trying to be the first to a new platform. Their algorithms change, people eventually lose interest, and then disseminate to other platforms anyway.

But you won't know unless you try, so try plenty!

Social Listening

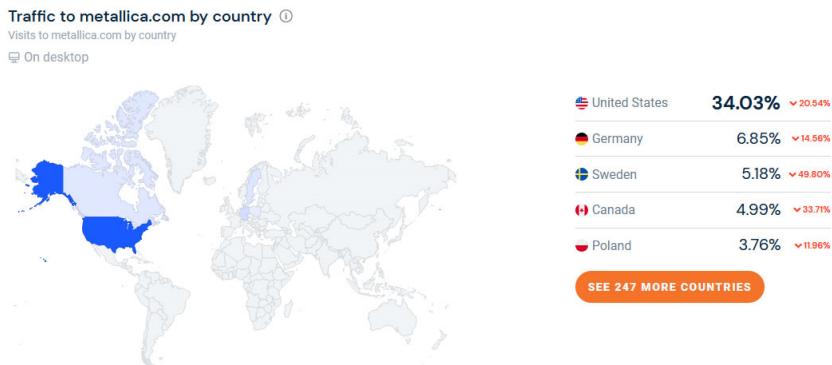
Social listening can be a powerful tactic, not just for gaining a better understanding of your audience, but also for crafting

effective posts, following relevant hashtags, keeping tabs on opportunities, and more.

There are a few things we need to cover here, so let me break it down into manageable bite-size chunks.

Your Audience

Demographic data is useful – in other words, the age and gender of your audience, where they’re located, what they’re interested in, and so forth. This data is easy to find using tools like Similarweb.



Demographic data via Similarweb. I typed in Metallica’s website as an example, but the idea here would be to enter a popular artist’s site (someone you’ve been influenced by or sound like – Dream 100) and analyze their data.

What’s even more useful is *psychographic* data. Just so we’re clear, we’re not talking about mental health here. I’m not a psychologist. We’re talking about *what your audience is interested in*. People sometimes get this confused, so make no mistake. In context, “psychographics” is a marketing term, as much as it might apply to other disciplines.

Let's say, for example, there are a lot of dog lovers in your audience. Well, mirroring that interest in your content would naturally begin to attract a similar audience to your social media channels, right?

So, posting the occasional photo or video of your dog should be part of your strategy.

What I'm saying is – you can keep tabs on your fans, see what they're posting, comment on their photos, and mirror their interests. This is how you start to figure out the psychographics of your audience, on a granular level. You watch what they're posting.

Hashtags

I would suspect that you already know a little bit about hashtags. On certain networks (like Instagram), they can help you reach new audiences and get more attention and engagement on your posts.

It stands to reason that tagging your posts with relevant, popular hashtags could help you get more exposure for your posts, right?

A great tool you can use to discover trending hashtags is Hashtagify.me.

The screenshot shows the homepage of Hashtagify.me. At the top, there is a navigation bar with links for Find, Popular, My Hashtags, My Users, About, Pricing, Help, Blog, and My Account. Below the navigation bar, a large blue header features the text "Boost your #success through hashtag marketing". Underneath this, a subtext reads "Monitor your performance, exploit the best hashtag suggestions and identify Twitter influencers. All in one place." At the bottom of the page, there is a search bar with fields for "Search Twitter Hashtags", "Twitter Suggestions", and "Instagram". A user profile section shows the name "marvel" with a bookmark icon. To the right of the search bar are two buttons: "Search" and "Track". A small note at the bottom states, "If you want to get suggestions for your posts, start the free trial and track your Twitter account."

Simply click on “Popular” in the menu, and you can access the most popular hashtags instantly. The only downside is that Hashtagify.me used to be free, and now it’s not. It will only let you see a few trending hashtags at a time unless you’ve upgraded to a paid plan. Fortunately, there are other tools out there if you go looking for them.

(Don’t forget that you can model your Dream 100 here too.)

But the other thing you can do with hashtags is monitor them.

For example, let’s say you’ve had some success finding opportunities with the #festival hashtag. Since you’ve gotten results from this already, it would be nice to be able to see whenever someone posted something with that tag, wouldn’t it?

Good news – you can monitor hashtags on X using a tool like X Pro.

6

#musician

 **Massimo** @MassimoSongs 2m
Good evening ladies and gentlemen.
Need some never heard sound?
Music and voice?
Spoil your ears with
@MassimoSongs
All instruments, production and
vocals by myself
#music #spotify #musician
#MuseBoost #indiemusic

open.spotify.com/artist/177TrGb...

1 2 ...

 **Fiddly Dicking Show** @FDicking 2m
Let's start Monday off with some
[@carltvreeland](#) We love this guy and
you will too. **#fiddlydicking**
#sexdrugsrockandroll #comedy
#musician #yoga #author #bedtime
#puffthemagicdragon

...

I monitor the #musician hashtag, as it is the most popular among musicians, and it gives me easy access to my audience.

There are different tools for different networks of course. The point would be to get in the habit of monitoring hashtags that help you further your career.

Groups

One final opportunity we should discuss here is groups – especially Facebook groups.

Facebook isn't exactly the shiny, vibrant community it used to be, but let's remember that a lot of the new social media sites also have group functionality, so groups will continue to be relevant for the foreseeable future.

You're a musician. So, recognize that there are groups for every artist you sound like and have been influenced by (Dream 100). And realize that some of your future fans live in these pockets. You don't need to build from scratch – take advantage of the clusters of fans that have already gathered around their favorite artists and bands.

If, for instance, you end up recording a Hall & Oates cover, you should share that track/video with Hall & Oates fan groups. You'd want to do this politely, and maybe even appeal to their ego (e.g., ask the community what they think of your new cover), but if you do this right, it's an easy way to gain new fans.

Naturally, what was said earlier about listening applies here too. You can listen to the discussions and topics that are frequently shared in these groups and feed them into your media endeavors.

If you don't know how to extract an audience from a social media group, hire an expert. They know how to do this with speed.

Social Media Challenge: Do This Immediately

The social media land grab is fierce. Whether you plan to use all accounts aside, consider registering your chosen username with every social media platform you can think of. Otherwise, it's a virtual guarantee that someone else will snag it, and you won't be able to register it later, at least not without paying for it.

The Advanced & Esoteric

We could get quite esoteric with social media if we wanted to. But most of what you can do, I've already covered in the Publishing section, and in the tools and resources section that follows.

Helpful Social Media Tools & Resources

Make great content, share it, track results, and iterate based on your learnings. It hardly sounds like a tip let alone a strategy, but I have read the best books on social media, and regrettably I cannot say that they offer a whole lot more direction than that. To drone on and on about what is fundamentally a moving target is to do you a disservice and undo the simplest and most direct explanations I've already given. Social media will change, and it will keep on changing.

Success in any domain is a matter of focus and hard work. The more time you dedicate to a specific vertical, the sooner you will hit gold. That's why shiny object syndrome rarely serves the Renegade.

Whether you intend to use social media as the primary delivery system for your content or utilize it as a tentacle to reach into different communities to drive traffic back to the octopus head (your website) is up to you. That said, multiple

time-saving tools will boost your efficiency and help you do more in less time.

Even the following are moving targets and could change or disappear in the years that follow, but so long as there's a dedicated community for a platform, there will always be tools to assist with your success.

Here are several tools I've found worthwhile (I covered some of these earlier):

Free

- **Songwhip.** It's not exclusively a social media tool, but Songwhip is an excellent free service that automatically creates music links to all platforms.
<https://songwhip.com/>
- **Creator Studio.** Facebook's free tool for scheduling posts on Facebook and Instagram. One of the cool things about it is you can post a single video across multiple Facebook pages.
<https://business.facebook.com/creatorstudio/>

Paid

- **Similarweb.** Similarweb is free up to a point, and for most of the research you will be doing, the free version will be more than sufficient. Use it to learn about artists you sound like or artists you've been influenced by and their audience demographics, best-performing traffic channels, and more. <https://www.similarweb.com/>
- **Hashtagify.me.** Free up to a point, Hashtagify.me can help you discover trending hashtags on platforms like X and Instagram. <https://hashtagify.me/>
- **MeetEdgar.** What if, instead of creating and scheduling new posts every so often to keep your social media queue loaded, you could store all your social media posts in a library? And what if that library

automatically pushed content to your chosen social channels at times of your choosing? This is exactly what MeetEdgar does, and it connects to multiple destinations – Facebook, Instagram, LinkedIn, Pinterest, X, and WordPress. <https://meetedgar.com/>

- **OnlyWire.** One of my favorite low-cost paid tools, OnlyWire lets you explore advanced and esoteric marketing territory without much of the risk. You can connect to 20+ leading social media platforms and syndicate your content to them without all the manual hassle. Some of the processes are even automated. <https://www.onlywire.com/>
- **X Pro (formerly TweetDeck).** A premium X scheduling tool, X Pro also lets you monitor conversations based on keywords and hashtags. <https://pro.twitter.com/>

PR & Publicity

There's a difference between PR (public relations) and publicity. Although I agree with the sentiment, I find it confusing, so I'm putting both under one heading. I don't think you will be any worse off for adopting a similar mindset. You'll understand why in a moment.

I've been giving you what may appear to be a "crash course" in marketing, but we've already paved the way in Part II. So, if Tony Robbins is correct in his assessment that 80% of success is psychology, you already have a stronger foundation in everything we're covering here than you even know.

In the past, PR was all about spending a pretty penny on an agency to help you get your music out into the world and pray and hope that something would come of it. Most of the time, a budget of \$1,000 to \$5,000 would turn into a couple of blurbs on blogs, a writeup in a magazine, and an interview on a small podcast – if you were lucky. A greater budget would, hopefully, translate to more.

While you can still pay for PR, and sometimes get a good return, today, you can also become a PR engine unto yourself. Everything you need to be able to initiate and self-manage a PR campaign is right at your fingertips. It can take a lot of tedious back and forth, but if you're thinking "who not how," you can circumvent the management of spreadsheets, writing of press releases, and even the sometimes lengthy pitching and follow-up process.

Even better, much of what you need to know about PR, you've already learned – pitching, modeling, Dream 100... If you've

made it this far into the book, you've got a better foundation in marketing and PR than 80% of artists. You could do amazingly at PR without me saying a word more.

There are still some specifics we should cover, though, so let's dive in.

Press Releases

Press releases used to be a great way to grab the attention of the media. In the early days of the internet, if you wrote one, distributed it through a press release distribution service, and it was halfway interesting, you got a few media inquiries.

I think it's fair to say the media is still hungry for great stories, but they either go through different channels, or they skim through the majority. Ever been annoyed by junk mail, spam email, or telemarketer calls? Well, the media got their share of spam too, and they're sick of it.

Today, you've got to pre-qualify to be of any interest. This part is not ridiculous. What's sometimes ridiculous is the criteria you must meet to be eligible – e.g., "your business must have an annual revenue of at least \$250,000" – as if that's a common everyday occurrence among independent artists, creators, and entrepreneurs. Most of us would be happy just making a living doing what we do, and that amounts to about \$30,000 to \$50,000 per year, for most.

Look, there's nothing wrong with paying a bit of money to have your press releases distributed. It's not as though there aren't good services, or that there isn't any benefit. We'll even be looking at a few benefits later.

But one of the main benefits of press releases now is that if you do it right, you can rank for a chosen keyword. Trying to rank for a generic term like "marketing" is a fool's errand, but ranking for your branded keywords (artist name, album name, tour name, etc.)? Well, that's well worth the price of

admission, and unless there's major competition, there's an opportunity to own your terms.

Another more direct approach is to personally email your press releases to interested parties. You'll probably get more leverage out of your news releases this way because you can use and re-use the content over and over (something you're heavily discouraged from doing on your blog, for example). This is what it looks like to do PR today, to *personally* distribute your press releases to your contacts.

Caution: I said to send your releases to *interested* parties. Make no mistake – **I'm not interested in receiving your press releases.** They make me yawn. Pitch the right way and I will respond, but *never* send me press releases. I will discard them mercilessly.

Anyway, whether it's a program director, music supervisor, playlist curator, or media person, if they've previously reached out to you for comment or have expressed interest in what you're up to, you could ask their permission to send your press release to them. Don't be pushy, don't spam your entire address book with press releases, and be willing to admit defeat when someone tells you they're not all that interested in you after all, and that they were just buttering you up. Don't worry – you might be able to reengage these people later.

How to Write a Press Release

This is very basic. Do *not* overthink your press release. There are generally better things to do with your precious time, and if possible, the writing of press releases should be handled by a capable third party. You could hire me, but I generally charge anywhere from 20 cents to a dollar per word nowadays, just so you're aware.

But whenever you have anything newsworthy to share – album release, tour, merch additions to your store, etc. – you should put together a new writeup. The smallest of occurrences can

be, and should be, turned into news items. If in doubt, think *who not how*.

Here are the press release writing essentials:

- **Keep it to 300 to 500 words.** If you go over, expect that your release will not get read, unless it's the most gripping primer anyone has ever seen. Also, you will pay a higher price for distribution if your word count is higher.
- **Write in third person.** This is often a requirement of press releases, but either way, talking about yourself in the third person tends to build credibility because it's as if someone else is writing about you. If you get someone else to write your release, though, it would be even more authentic.
- **Address who, what, when, where, and why.** Of these, remember that *why* is the most critical part.
- **Insert a quote.** You can quote yourself (e.g., Atomik Penguins band leader Jake Atomik says, “It’s the most explosive release to date, with huge guitars, huge vocals, huge bass, huge drums, huge everything!”).
- **Inject your personality.** You’ve got to break some rules to stand out, even if it leads to some backlash. Google “The Most Amazing Press Release Ever Written” and see what Mitch Delaplane did to arouse laughter and gain mass exposure in the process. When writing releases for Music Entrepreneur HQ, we always try to think in terms of what’s going to get people’s attention.

Press Release Distribution

Remember an earlier section on content syndication and distribution? Well, there isn’t a shortage of press release distribution services out there either, both paid and free.

I don't want to go too crazy here, because bottom line – you're going to get more mileage from your news releases by sending them directly to interested parties than spraying and praying.

Further, the setup process for distribution services can be a little daunting, especially if you've never used a press release service before or don't understand the concept. It's not worth spending that much time on.

Also, most PR distribution services will not accept news releases you've already published elsewhere (there is *always* power in exclusivity, especially in PR).

PRWeb is still one of the best paid services available, but EIN Presswire and IssueWire are also worth a look.

One of my favorite free distribution services is PRLog, even if the setup process is a little tedious. We always seem to get a lot of views whenever we publish there (though we've only seen diminishing returns since our first release).

Services like PR.com (kind of a “freemium” service), NewswireToday, and Online PR News (also a freemium service) might be worth checking out for free distribution.

Your PR Database

Your PR database should be made up of people you're seeking to build a relationship with long-term.

If you're not sure where to start, open a spreadsheet and log all the following categories:

- Who have you reached out to, who has or hasn't replied to your pitch or inquiry, who hasn't asked to be removed from your contact list?
- Who has personally reached out to you for comment (journalist, freelance writer, blogger, podcaster, YouTuber, community builder, or otherwise)?

- Who do you know in your network that has a content channel of their own (blog, podcast, YouTube channel, newsletter, social media group, etc.)?
- Who do you know in your community that has a content channel of their own?
- Whose articles have you come across online, that talk specifically about your genre of music, locale, or interests and hobbies?

Remember – here, too, the Dream 100 strategy applies. So, if you can't think of anyone (go back and read *The Story of Six Artists* if you've somehow convinced yourself that you don't know anyone), consider who you'd like to build a relationship with instead.

These are the people you're going to be sending your press releases to. But that's not the focus. Relationship building and value creation are the focus. Get to know these people by following them on social media. Look for ways you can serve them (e.g., "Hey, I noticed you missed XYZ in your article and I thought it would be valuable to cover it in your next one"). Don't blast your press releases at them but also don't be afraid to send them when you're looking for coverage. We need to find a meaningful middle-of-the-road. Be shrewdly tenacious.

Don't forget to manage your database continuously. Update your contact list, prune those who don't want to receive your messages or have moved on to a different career, keep tabs on the last time you contacted each person, etc.

Your Publishing Channels

In the flurry of uncoordinated activity, many artists *completely* forget that they can use their publishing channels to generate press and exposure. Here I will briefly cover what these opportunities are.

Publish Daily

Huh? I thought we were talking about press opportunities here.

It may seem revolutionary to some, but even today, publishing can increase your visibility and lead to press and media attention.

Earlier, I mentioned how businesses like Hypebot and Indie on the Move reach out to me periodically to share my content on their blogs.

Well, just today, I had someone reach out from the Film & Television Music Guide asking whether they could use my article on *How to write an award-winning film score* in their magazine.

These opportunities aren't guaranteed, but they don't come up at all if you don't go to bat. With publishing, it is a numbers game, and the more times you step up to the plate to swing at the ball, the greater the chance the media will come knocking at your door.

Best of all, publishing doesn't need to take more than 30 to 60 minutes per day. It will take practice to get to that point, but if you don't do it, you're missing out on one of just four online traffic sources.

Publish Your Press Release to Your Blog

If you do not plan to use a distribution service, you can publish your news releases to your blog.

And if you know how to use canonical links (it's not hard), you could publish the same release to destinations like Blogger, LiveJournal, and Medium (but only if you're using them as part of your marketing mix).

Repurpose Your Press Release

A bigger piece of content can always be broken down into smaller bits.

You can create tweet quotes, Instagram quotes, and Facebook snippets out of your press releases.

You could even read the press release and turn it into a podcast episode or video.

Fundamentally, this is all press release distribution services do anyway. They take the news release and put it in a bunch of different places like PR sites, blogs, groups, forums, and so on (with canonical links). You can do this yourself for even greater mileage.

It is getting into advanced and esoteric territory a bit, though, especially as you begin exploring the greater traffic spaghetti bowl. The trick would be to target a few key channels or have a virtual assistant do all the work of spreading your message on your behalf.

Use Upside Down Press to Your Advantage

For instance, if you're publishing a blog post about top 10 reverb VST plugins, you could reach out to every company on the list letting them know that they've been featured in your post. If you embed YouTube videos for each plugin, you could reach out to each YouTuber letting them know that they've been featured in your blog post.

Results aren't guaranteed, but this can drive a lot of traffic to your blog posts, increase social shares, help you create future partnerships and opportunities, and more.

My best tip here would be to be specific with your ask. "Hey, your video has been featured in our latest article" doesn't seem to go anywhere. "I would love for you to share our article with

your following” is more specific. Also, refer to an earlier section on pitching.

It's All in the Follow Up

Although we've covered the importance of following up in the pitching section, it's well worth reinforcing here.

First, you should expect to have to follow up in most instances. If you knew what my inbox looks like, you'd understand why. Most people get more messages than they know what to do with. But the barrier to entry is low because most people pitching have no idea how to do it well. If you pitch well, you will immediately stand out.

Second, you shouldn't automatically expect rejection when you haven't heard back. It's perfectly normal if someone doesn't get back to you right away, and following up once or twice, in a friendly manner, is expected from someone who cares about the outcome of a conversation (i.e., that's you – you should *always* care about the outcome of the conversation, especially for you to have initiated it in the first place).

Third, I said to follow up *in a friendly manner*. NEVER follow up with “get back to me, you jerk.” You assume too much. You've made up some story in your mind about what it means that they didn't get back to you. Most of the time it doesn't have anything to do with you or what you've been imagining. You're not being rejected by your eighth-grade girlfriend, and that trauma should be left where it is – firmly in the past.

My mindset is – if I made a good enough pitch, I'll hear back! Otherwise, I've made it hard for them to get back to me, so the onus is on me.

One of the biggest pieces of dating advice for men is to never get too fixated on one woman. As difficult as it can be emotionally to curtail your obsession, doing so will increase your chances of getting the girl. Otherwise, you could be

perceived as creepy and possibly even a stalker, and this never works in your favor (i.e., walk away if this ever happens). You should always have more irons in the fire, hooks in the pond, and arrows in the quiver, however you want to say it. This dilutes neediness and desperation, which are never attractive qualities.

This is not a conversation about genders and dating, though. What I'm saying is – PR is the same way. If you've got 1,000 hooks out there, and you get 100 bites, you won't care about the other 900 who didn't bite.

Collect & Use Your Press Clippings (ALL of Them!)

It's amazing to me how often this concept is completely lost on most artists.

Please, underline, highlight, and inscribe this core truth on your brain:

One piece of great marketing can be used, reused, and abused to skyrocket your presence, credibility, and growth.

The reason this should be a little more obvious is because the career of an artist is predicated on repeating a performance over and over. They perform the same songs, every night, for 200 to 300 dates at a time, perhaps in a different order and with the occasional addition, subtraction, or cover. The next tour is much the same, except with maybe a few new songs.

What's the point? Everyone has YouTube, so they don't need to come to your show to see it! It doesn't matter – people know that watching from their couch is not the same as going to a concert in real life. If you've got a working live show / touring model, you've got a great piece of marketing that should be used, reused, and abused until the cows come home. No need to get creative here. Keep doing what works.

Whenever a client asks me:

“The ad we put together three months ago is still working, but I really *feel* like people are starting to tune out. I want to make something else.”

Feelings have no place in a marketing campaign. So, I end up having to exert great force in convincing them to *keep running the damn ad!*

I know it’s difficult, but you’ve got to put your marketer hat on when you’re marketing. Your artist hat is going to try to convince you that you need to get creative and keep coming up with new ideas when the old ideas are still generating steady, repeatable results (remember the ARCCS System?). It goes for live shows and ads as much as it goes for selling merch and social media posts.

I recently had a situation come up, just like the one described. We’re currently in the process of promoting a community event, and the leader asked if we should perhaps lay off on the gas pedal for a week. But the analytics showed our social media campaign was still selling tickets. There was no reason to stop. Fortunately, it didn’t take much convincing to get him onboard, at least on this occasion.

I know, I know. By now you’re probably asking yourself, “How does this connect to press clippings?”

It may have been a long walk for a short drink, but I need you to understand that great press clipping can send you through the stratosphere.

Yet, artists don’t bother collecting quotes and testimonials let alone publishing them on their website.

You’d think they might keep a record of online destinations where their music has been covered, backing up the article,

podcast episode, or video, just in case it goes down someday, so they still have it in their archives.

You'd think they'd link up to these pieces from their website to build credibility with the industry and audiences at large.

Most artists don't do *any* of this, even though it takes very little time or effort once they've got the quote in their possession (even if it took hard work to earn that quote).

A great quote from Gene Simmons, Justin Bieber, or Snoop Dogg, is a great quote period. Use it, reuse it, abuse it. It could carry you the rest of the way (you've only got so many decades to go). Share it on your website, on social media, in your one-sheets and press kits, and anywhere where it elevates your status in the eyes of the reader.

Don't bother asking to be featured on my show (or anywhere, for that matter) unless you intend to show off the press you've worked so hard to earn.

Get the Interview

If there's anything else to cover about PR, it would be this:

PR is generally about getting and giving the interview.

Of course, you might get a blurb in a magazine, a blog review, a writeup in an entertainment rag, or something else that doesn't require much direct input on your part (besides sending your EPK to inquirers).

But the goal of most PR is to get the interview – whether on radio, TV, podcasts, YouTube channels, or otherwise.

Some authors have figured out that physical book tours are not only exhausting and time-intensive but generally ineffective. You meet five people in one town, 20 in the next, three in the other, only to sell 30 books and sign 23.

Sound familiar? It's because music tours often take the same form.

What are authors doing instead? They're opting to stay home, booking virtual meetings with podcasters, and jamming out "podcast tours."

Am I saying this is the new model for artists? Not necessarily. What I'm saying is that viable interview opportunities exist in the domain of podcasting, and the more you do, the better you're going to get at it, and the more it's going to benefit your career.

Giving interviews is one of my favorite things to do. But that isn't always the case for artists, especially those who haven't been media trained and are nervous to appear in a video never mind be grilled by an interviewer.

So, let's put that worried mind to ease and talk more about the specifics of the interview.

My Best Interview Tips

Also, reference an earlier chapter on pitching. The framing for the interview is key, and if a win-win hasn't been reached in advance, you can bet that the interview isn't going to go as well as it could (unless the interviewer happens to be an absolute fanboy or fangirl).

I get pitched all the time, and no surprise, I rediscover weekly that 95% of people don't know how. They tell me outright that they want to promote their thing on my podcast. How does that help me? Interviews take work. They require preparation, editing, and time. Unless you've got equal or greater value lined up for me, I'm not heavily incentivized to promote you on my podcast let alone my blog. I may have done this out of the kindness of my heart in the past, but those dues have been overpaid, and someone's karma bank is well into overdraft.

The check better be in the mail, or I'm going to get grumpier than I already am.

It's not a take-and-take world. It's mostly a "give without expecting anything in return" world. That's how you show up and continue to show up on people's radar. Bad reputations are easy to create, but good reputations take time.

With that, here are my best interview tips:

- **No gum.** Please, do not chew on air. EVER.
- **No food.** Do not eat on air, unless you absolutely must, and only while the interviewer or other speakers are speaking (mute your mic or move off-axis).
- **No sniffing.** Use tissue paper before going on air. Irrigate your nose if you must. But avoid incessantly sniffing while the tapes are rolling. Not only could this communicate the wrong thing, high frequency sounds like sniffing and chewing bother people's ears (especially mine!), and worse, someone might have to edit out dozens of those suckers later (what a nightmare).
- **Find your voice.** This one is tough. But even I've been turned down by interviews for not having consistent answers to questions. Professional interviewers like it when they can count on you to answer the same question in the same way. They like it when your answers are practiced and rehearsed (with some room for improvisation) because they can get away with editing less. It's counterintuitive, but it's a good idea to ask for the list of questions in advance to formulate your answers. This can help you alleviate some nervousness, and it will help you land more opportunities. Gee, it's almost like a live performance. Who would have thought?
- **Share stories.** Learn well from what was said earlier about your artist bio. No one cares what you've accomplished. Sadly. What they care about is you being

relatable. They want to know what you've been through. They want to hear your stories. They want to know your secrets. You're welcome to keep your deepest, darkest skeletons in the closet, but you should always share something real, genuine, authentic, transparent, or vulnerable about yourself. ALWAYS. Fangirls of K-Pop boy groups go crazy over the slightest of details, even if it's just Yoon's favorite color. Dan Kennedy's rule is that either a story or a joke (something humorous) should be told every three to five minutes. Practice that.

- **Pause.** The temptation will be to fill pauses with "ah," "um," "so," "but," "and," and so forth. You will sound more practiced and professional if you pause to think instead of leaning too heavily on filler words. There's nothing wrong with the occasional "um" but it can get to be a bit much when it happens every other sentence. I know from having to edit my podcast that it's annoying to have to split the clip, drag, and crossfade dozens of times to make the interviewee professional sounding. A good interviewer will patiently listen to the end or help you finish a thought anyway. So, pausing is good form.
- **Talk about the interviewer.** You've been invited onto someone else's show. If you know nothing about them and it comes across in the interview, it will be clear to them that you're only there for selfish reasons. Sure, some people will want to interview you because of who you are and what you've done. But understand well – there is virtually *no one* who will hate you for referencing something about *them*. It could even create a bond and result in you being invited back onto their show. Prepare well.
- **Talk about your fans.** Yes, you will have plenty of opportunities to talk about yourself and what you've accomplished. But don't just talk about yourself. Acknowledge your fans every opportunity you're given. It's because of them that you even have a career. Show your gratitude.

- **Give a call to action.** Most interviews should end with, “Do you have something new coming up,” “What would you like to share with our audience,” “Is there anything else you’d like to say in closing,” or equivalent. NEVER say “no.” Even if you literally *do not* have a show or release coming up, the answer should always be, “We set up a custom landing page for your listeners, and you can find it at XYZ.com,” “Go to our website to download our latest release,” “We’d love for you to follow us on Spotify,” or something of the kind. Use the opportunity to capture emails or *at least* gain followers.

PR & Publicity Challenge: Do This Immediately

If you’ve read to this point and followed my directions, most of what you need to do, you’ve already done. But if you haven’t done any of the following yet, the time is now:

- Identify at least 30 to 50 possible PR contacts (including those you have a prior relationship with) and log them in a spreadsheet
- Write, edit, and send your first pitch
- Write and distribute your first press release
- Politely follow up with those who haven’t gotten back to you after a week or two
- Identify and establish your publishing channels – use them strategically to get more PR
- Collect all your press clippings and begin using them in your marketing

The Advanced & Esoteric

I’ve hinted at the advanced and esoteric throughout this section, but that doesn’t mean there isn’t anything left to cover. So, let’s look at some advanced and esoteric PR

strategies that could launch you to the moon or send you straight to the gutter.

Don't forget – for as much short-term upside these strategies can generate, they can also cause long-term harm. Use at your discretion.

Money Robot Submitter (& Other Article Submitters)

For as long as marketers have known that traffic exists somewhere online, they have used various tactics to get seen in key destinations. Back in the day, it was services like Yahoo! GeoCities, EzineArticles, Squidoo, and the like.

Articles – even poor-quality articles – could be used to generate backlinks to your website, and because search engines prioritized sites with more backlinks, you could rank using “grey hat” strategies like article spinning. Article spinning is where you turn one article into many by substituting certain words and phrases with different ones.

For better or for worse, those days are long since over. But two things remain true about what I just said – 1) traffic exists somewhere online (you don't need to build it), and 2) backlinks do increase your search engine rankings (but now it's exclusive to *quality* backlinks).

Anyway, it was in those early, Wild West days of the internet that various submitter tools, like Magic Submitter, or new alternative Money Robot Submitter, were developed, released, and utilized by marketers.

The overall concept of submission tools hasn't really changed.

Money Robot Submitter lets you blast (yes, it should be thought of as a *blast*) your content out to Web 2.0 blogs, Web 2.0 profiles, social networks, social bookmarking sites, web

directories, Wiki articles, press release sites, article directories, forum profiles, and RSS submission sites.

Like I said – that traffic spaghetti bowl is verifiably *huge*.

Submission tools, though, always cost money. Plus, there is the risk that using them will *hurt* your SEO efforts rather than help them.

If you're going to use an app like this at all, a) follow the instructions set out by the creator, and b) don't link back to your primary site. You should always use (sacrifice) a secondary site you don't care much about, just in case search engines sniff you out and decide that you're not an Atomik Penguin anymore. Ouch.

Helpful PR and Publicity Tools & Resources

Tools:

- **PRWeb:** The best paid PR distribution service.
<https://www.prweb.com/>
- **EIN Presswire.** Another popular paid PR distribution service. <https://www.einpresswire.com/>
- **IssueWire.** Paid PR distribution service that delivers your news to various major websites, search engines, and 150+ media outlets. <https://www.issuewire.com/>
- **PRLog:** One of my favorite free press release distribution sites. Setting up a new account with them can be tedious, so users beware.
<https://www.prlog.org/>
- **PR.com:** Another worthwhile “freemium” press release distribution service. <https://www.pr.com/>
- **NewswireToday:** Old school press release distribution service with free and paid options.
<https://www.newswiretoday.com/>

- **Online PR News:** Press release distribution service with packages ranging from free to \$549.
<https://onlineprnews.com/>
- **HARO:** Connects journalists to sources, and sources to journalists. It's free to receive a daily email with three media opportunities per day. You may not qualify for many of these opportunities, but at least you can keep tabs on those that exist.
<https://www.helpareporter.com/>
- **SubmitHub:** If you want to pay a bit of money to put your PR efforts on autopilot, SubmitHub is well worth a look. Your mileage will vary, as with anything else, but you'll be hard-pressed to find another PR tool that's tailor-made for artists. You can use their service to connect with bloggers, Spotify playlist curators, YouTubers, radio stations, labels, and more.
<https://www.submithub.com/>

Resources:

- **Free PR by Cameron Herold and Adrian Salamunovic.** A great modern take on becoming your own PR engine. <https://davidandrewwiebe.com/freepr>
- **Your Band Is A Virus by James Moore.** Independent Music Promotions' own James Moore shares his best tips on PR for artists.
<https://davidandrewwiebe.com/virusus>
- **The Ultimate Guide to Music Publicity by Ariel Hyatt.** You honestly can't go wrong with *any* Ariel Hyatt book. Buy one, buy all, devour.
<https://davidandrewwiebe.com/musicpublicity>

Online Advertising

Advertising is a traffic faucet you can turn on or off with the push of a button. Of course, ads are cash-hungry and usually require ongoing optimization. Most advertisers waste quite a bit of cash on their first few ads trying to figure it out, though the data they accumulate is worth it.

But if we enter the arena with a sound mind, paying attention to our treacherous surroundings, there's one fundamental conclusion a Renegade should arrive at:

There's no sense in reinventing the wheel, and in no domain does this ring truer than in advertising.

Whether it's going to the library and studying magazine ads that have kept running for months and years on end (that means they're making money) or spying on the Facebook ads of your favorite internet personalities, we should not strive to be original but instead strive to model what has a proven track record.

Advertising is fast becoming essential for getting any kind of exposure online, and it needs to be a part of your marketing mix.

Why You Need Advertising

Just five to 10 years ago, you may have been able to publish content to your blog and social media and get views, likes, shares, and comments. There are still opportunities to be tapped, sure, but it's getting tougher by the day, and even if

users do come for the content, there's no guarantee they will turn into leads or customers. 2 to 5% is considered a "good" conversion rate for a website, and that means you've got to generate a ton of traffic to get people to subscribe and buy.

That doesn't mean you need a huge audience to make a good income, though. The only people saying that are the ones trying to shove a \$1 product down their 30 email subscribers' throats. If you're a Renegade, you'd better have a *range* of products, from \$1 to \$10,000 (and recognize that \$10,000 is *not* the limit).

Today, marketing is a different game, mostly consisting of video content (especially YouTube) and advertising.

Here I'm going to republish an article that originally went live on Music Entrepreneur HQ in September 2021, in which my close friend, Wolf, shares why advertising is so important in today's digital climate.

Wolf (The Original Creative) Shares Why Digital Advertising is Critical for Artists Frustrated with Organic Reach

How do you stay top of mind with your following? How do you continue to grow your fan base, even as you're trying to stay connected to your existing fans?

There are many ways to reach your fans and convert new ones. But there's a clear demarcation between what works and what doesn't.

Recent conversations on organic reach have highlighted the fact that as a new artist who has yet to establish themselves, counting on Facebook, Instagram, YouTube, and other platforms to get your message out is a losing battle.

We caught up with Wolf from Gaki Music so he could share his perspective on digital advertising and why it's critical for artists.

Who are you and what do you do?

I am Wolf... the original creative. I started off as a multi-instrumentalist freelance musician. I play the guitar, bass, drums, and piano.

I played guitar and bass professionally for a few years and was booked to play at the Roundhouse, Sadlers Well, Camden Lock, Ministry of Sound, Dingwalls, Beck Theatre, Fairfield Halls, Richmix, Bussey Building, African Spitalfields Market, and many other venues performing with many acts. I shared the stage with Ms Banks, Suli Breaks, Infecta, Alicai Harley, Jacob Banks, Shakka, host turned radio presenter Remel London, just to name a few.

I also worked for Sony Music UK. When at Sony, I worked alongside the A&R department and the marketing team, involved in many campaigns including that of a Brit Award Winning Artist and nominees as well as backstage at an event held at the popular Pop Brixton with performers including Nadia Rose.

I have worked alongside many Artists in various roles including the guitar technician for Ghetts' performance at the O2 Arena for a Snoop Dogg concert. Other artists on that lineup included Chip (formally known as Chipmunk).

During my time in the music industry, I noticed that there was a huge knowledge gap around effective promotion of grassroots music artists, which I endeavor to fill. Having learned from my music industry mentors, who have worked with a large range of artists including Lauryn Hill, JLS, Joss Stone, Professor Green, and others, I decided it was time to go out on my own path and create a game-changing business.

I set out to help bridge that gap and provide services to fellow musicians by sharing what I've learned in the last decade in the music industry from my own experience. I support them in getting to the point in their careers they dream of being.

What is Gaki Music? What pain point does it solve for artists?

Gaki Music is a digital advertising music agency specializing in promoting artists using the power of digital advertising.

Artists tend to struggle with getting from obscurity to visibility, getting trapped in the dreaded > 1,000 club on Spotify, and not having enough live sales in the form of tickets and merch.

Gaki Music helps artists generate more income streams, raise awareness for their brand by getting it in front of the right people, sell more merch/tickets, etc. to help grow their fan base. Many artists struggle with this, and I offer a full-stack solution that helps service them.

How important is digital advertising for artists in the post-content-shock era?

Essential. You will not get far just with organic promotion. The internet is way too saturated for that – you need a way to cut through the noise (no pun intended but it was there!).

Nowadays, if you aren't using some form of paid advertising – heck, even any form of paid promotion – you will really, really struggle.

In saying that, even if you are using paid promotional means but you aren't using it effectively, and you are just “spending to spend” and you don't know what you're doing, don't have a suitable strategy with the right plan and intention behind it, then that won't get you far either.

The beautiful thing about Gaki Music is that we do all of that for you and have the power to target the right people. We tailor each campaign to the artist. No two campaigns are identical!

With years of experience and study of this promotional channel, in addition to observing and analyzing the changes as they happen, we have managed to “hack the system” in favor of YOU, the artist.

What do you see as missing for artists in the realm of digital advertising that you provide?

Everything to be honest... This is such a new space with technology only being widespread for the last 20 to 25 years, and digital advertising only really becoming a player in this space in the last 10 to 15.

Also, historically the Music industry has opposed tech [enter Napster, Limewire, and iTunes] and resisted it for far too long when they could have been thinking about how it could benefit the artists and their music.

Generally, the music industry has fully tapped into the power of digital advertising. Although there are more ambassadors for digital advertising in the music industry popping up here and there, the main thing with most of them is this: They either teach you how to do it yourself – which takes a lot of time, and with things changing so often, such as algorithms and iOS/OS, it can be a lot to keep up with – as well as being quite a technical thing, which not everyone likes or can wrap their head around. On top of that, most importantly – it takes away from the time you could be writing, recording, and performing your music as you should be prioritizing.

Secondly, some that provide the service have such a high price entry point that many independent and grassroots artists can't afford it. With Gaki Music we handle it for you, so you can

spend your time focusing on the music and our prices start from a way more affordable point than some others.

What Advertising Platforms Are There?

This is an important question, and the reason that's the case is that, as with content syndication and distribution, there is a near-endless array of advertising opportunities for those with money to spend. You may have assumed that Google and Facebook were all there was, but I'm here to tell you that these are just the tip of the iceberg.

While I will cover some of the “off the beaten path” options later, we must start with the tried and true, the bread and butter of online advertising. In most cases, these are the platforms you will be utilizing to advertise online:

- Google / YouTube
- Facebook
- Instagram
- LinkedIn
- Pinterest
- Amazon
- Microsoft
- TikTok
- Snapchat
- X

Any advertising platform or opportunity that falls outside the above should be considered advanced, esoteric, or a combination thereof.

Of course, this is subject to change, and there could be a newcomer that upsets the whole cart by the time this book is published. Platforms may change, but advertising opportunities will always be available.

Modeling Profitable Ads

Besides making notes on the ads you randomly come across on the internet and in papers or magazines, you should intentionally spy on the ads others are running and take inspiration from them.

Reinventing the wheel is pointless, especially in advertising. We want to find ads that are working and model them. “Get creative” would be horrible advice here.

When left to our own devices, we fear offending people, being too “in their face,” too omnipresent, too saturated. Unless your name is Vanilla Ice or Phil Collins, though, you either have an inflated ego, or you’re too scared to do the work that’s going to make you successful, I’m sorry to say.

As Kennedy says, if you’re not pissing people off by noon, you’re probably not making bank.

So, let’s talk about modeling profitable ads.

How do we know an ad is profitable? Simple – it keeps running month after month, year after year.

Sure, some big companies are known for wasting huge marketing budgets on pointless advertising, but you wouldn’t model their ads unless there was a good reason to. There isn’t much you can learn from big companies.

For the most part, you’re going to be spying on the ads other artists and industry are running, and basically, no one in the music business keeps running ads that aren’t generating an income.

(To be fair, they do update their ads periodically when they are waning in effectiveness.)

Did you know that you can easily find and spy on ads your peers are running by going to their Facebook page? The exact process to follow will probably vary depending on when you're reading this (ever notice how Facebook likes to update their interface haphazardly?).

But as of this writing, you can:

- Go to the page whose ads you want to spy on
- Scroll down to the Page Transparency section on the left, or find the About section and click on Page Transparency
- Click "See all"
- Find the Ads From This Page section, and click on "Go to Ad Library"

The image shows two side-by-side screenshots from a Facebook profile page for the band Metallica.

About the ad (Left):

- Metallica** (Profile picture)
- Sponsored (Text)
- ID: 519334873287818 (Text)
-
- METALLICA.COM (Text)
- 2020 Helping Hands Benefit Show Poster (Kii) (Text)
- \$20 (Text)
- Shop Now (Button)
- This ad has multiple versions (Text)
- 1 of 8 (Text)
- Small thumbnail images of other ad versions are shown below the main one.

About the profile (Right):

- Metallica** (Profile picture)
- [@Metallica](#) (Text)
- 36.6M followers • Musician/band (Text)
- [@metallica](#) (Text)
- 9.2M followers (Text)
- See ads (Text)

Spying on a Metallica ad is as easy as one, two, three...

As with anything else, though, we still need to a) gather ideas, b) model them (don't copy), and c) test them. There are no

guarantees in advertising or anything else. I'm simply helping you shortcut the longer, harder road of reinventing the wheel.

Harness the Unparalleled Power of Retargeting

I could talk about the specifics of each advertising platform, how they work, how they're different, how to use them, and more. Unfortunately, that's not a good use of our time, because ad platforms change much too rapidly. By the time this book gets published, large chunks of what I cover could be completely obsolete. It's the same reason I've focused on principles and strategy as opposed to tactics throughout Part III.

If you're convinced you need to learn it and do it yourself, then do yourself a massive favor, purchase a Udemy subscription, and take as many courses on online advertising as possible. This *is* the shortcut.

The crux of our advertising strategy, anyway, revolves around retargeting, at least to the degree that it's still allowed and still works (recent updates to operating systems, as Wolf pointed out earlier, now play very heavily into our ability to reach everyone with such ads).

What is retargeting? Well, have you ever looked at an item on Amazon, only to have that same product follow you around the web – Gmail, Facebook, YouTube, the blogs you visit, and more? That's retargeting, and you *can* pay for the same exposure.

Retargeting is remarkably effective at snagging low-hanging fruit.

I once had a free consultation with a fellow marketer. He noticed that I had a podcast, and he told me, "Spending a bit of money on retargeting your website visitors would be a great

way to grow your podcast. You could post an ad saying, ‘Hey, did you miss this?’ or something like that. It wouldn’t even cost that much.”

Why is that the case? Because people only give their attention to the hyper-relevant. They may “see” something, but is it registering? You might have a new podcast episode, a new book, or a new music release on your website. But are people seeing it? It depends on their reason for visiting your site in the first place, but it’s safe to assume that it’s in one eye and right out the other for most (I know that’s not an expression but let me have it – I’ve been typing for months).

Naturally, your superfans and regular subscribers will have seen your new thing. Most of them will probably snatch it up within a month of it becoming available. But that’s a very small percentage of the total fan base pie (never mind the larger, total available market pie).

Since the open rate on most email campaigns is about 20%, if you had 1,000 subscribers, it means there would be 800 people who are unconscious, unaware, slobbering on their Cheeto-stained shirt, in one eye and out the other (okay, okay, they’re not zombies).

I’m not saying you’re going to convert the other 80% of your email list, especially when you still haven’t managed to convert the first 20% (and by that, I mean *all* the first 20% – you will have converted *some*, no doubt). What I’m saying is, there are *definitely* a few people, probably dozens of people, *maybe* hundreds of people, who would also buy if it was top of mind for them. It *becomes* top of mind for them when ads keep following them across the web.

Sure, it would be nice if you didn’t *have* to. But that’s like saying you wish you didn’t have to shower every day... personal hygiene is paramount to cultivating a good personal reputation.

You need retargeting because people don't read, don't listen, don't watch, and even when they do, they're still thinking about a million other things. Get in their face, show up often, be omnipresent, and you *will* convert more.

Retargeting can be used in a variety of fun, sneaky ways. But what follows should only be considered broad strokes. Take what you learn, experiment, and gather data.

Retargeting Your Fans

When retargeting your fans, there are three major buckets you should be thinking about:

- Your website visitors
- Your email list
- Your social media followers

There are subsets of each as well, and it's generally word to the wise that even if you want to retarget all groups at once, you're much better off running separate campaigns for each group, because it makes it measurably easier to track your results.

For instance, if we ran three separate campaigns for each bucket, we'd be able to see which drove the most sales. You might assume that it would be uniform across the board, but that's rarely the case.

For example, you might see 10% conversion from website visitors, 22% from your email list, and 3% from social media followers. I'm just making up numbers here, but you get the idea.

This type of data could (and should) inform your advertising campaigns moving forward. If you sent the same ad to the three buckets and one outperformed the others by a huge margin, you'd want to increase your spend in that ad, while reducing spend or divesting in the less effective.

Another option, of course, is to put a different ad in front of the segments that aren't converting as well, to see if they respond better to something else.

Don't forget, too, that a high-performing ad can grow stale, at which point you should consider divesting or putting a new ad (and possibly a new offer) in front of that audience.

Now let's take a moment to unpack each of the above categories.

Your Website Visitors

Many people are visiting your website besides your fans, whether you realize it or not. Even if you aren't seeing huge traffic to your site daily, you'd be surprised to find what percentage are completely new to your site.

Sure, some of them aren't interested in what you're doing, and may never be. But then there are plenty of people who've never stopped to listen to your music, that might become fast fans once they've had the opportunity to hear you.

The problem is we often assume the opposite – that if they came to our website and did nothing, they must hate us, want to sue us, and are actively looking for creative ways to make our lives miserable. So, we don't even try.

But like I said earlier, retargeting helps us capture low-hanging fruit, so take comfort in the knowledge that you're probably wrong about your pessimism. Most people just aren't paying attention, and you need to wake them up. Never fear sending direct messages either because most people are waiting to hear from you.

Your Email List

You can take your entire email list, upload it to an ad platform, and retarget everyone who's subscribed.

This would be a terrific way to remind everyone of your forthcoming tour, for example. Even if they've already got their ticket, people sometimes forget to attend and like to get reminders.

But we can go even more granular, and it starts to get magical.

For example, you could segment out the 80% of people who are *not* opening your email campaigns and retarget them with your ads. The other 20% are more engaged and probably don't need as much of a reminder when you come out with new music.

If you're launching a new product, then you could also segment out those who've already bought. That way, only the people who *haven't* bought would see your ads.

See what I mean? It gets magical.

But as with anything else, if you're going to separate your email list into segments, you don't want to run one ad campaign for all of them. You want to run separate ad campaigns for each segment. You get better data that way.

Your Social Media Followers

Again, you could retarget your entire following on every platform, but that wouldn't be as effective as:

- Segmenting them by platform (Facebook, Instagram, X, etc.)
- Segmenting them by account, profile, page, or group
- Segmenting them by posts they've engaged with

We can get super granular, yet again.

The point is – we need to form a hypothesis and then test it. Trust me when I say even the best ad gurus do the same thing. They a) formulate an idea of what's going to work, b) make a

ton of content, c) test it in front of a plethora of segmented audiences, and d) adjust the course based on campaign results. Rinse, repeat. A better strategy, as far as I can tell, does not exist.

This brings me to a critical point – *you've got to monitor your campaigns*. I know it's tedious, but daily check-ins are essential. I used to think you had to run campaigns for 30 days to even have a working ad and enough data to make decisions, but that isn't true.

Unfortunately, you've got far too many headwinds to contend with – bots clicking ads, people outside of your targeted geographic region who don't even speak your language, competitors out to sabotage you, and more. These all waste your ad budget and make your campaigns less effective.

You're going to waste some money figuring out what works anyway, but all things being equal, you're better off optimizing your ads and filtering out bad audiences as you go, especially if you don't know what's going to work yet.

The best option – find an ad expert and hire them to do the work.

Retargeting Artists You Sound Like / Have Been Influenced by

This is central to our strategy when we're looking to grow our fan base or maintain good “list hygiene.”

By that I mean, for better or for worse, people will come and go. Even if it's just to replace three old fans with three new ones, advertising is part of maintaining your following.

Of course, growth is far more exciting than maintenance. But there is a nuance we need to be mindful of.

Retargeting your fans is effectively getting a message in front of a warm audience, an audience that's already predisposed towards you, even if only slightly.

Retargeting artists you sound like or have been influenced by is getting your message in front of a cold audience. Not a frigid one, because you do have something in common, but a cold one, nonetheless.

Again, it's tedious, I know, but where you might be able to get away with, "Hey guys! We just came out with a new release and want to invite you to follow us on Spotify" (I *never* recommend saying "hey guys" in a video, ever, because it's impersonal...) with your fans, you'll want to do some relationship building with audiences who don't know you.

You have a good foundation in this already, though. Remember an earlier section on pitching?

If you have content that serves as a good introduction to your music and brand (could be a video interview), great. If not, you'll have to create the content, but this is good material to have at your disposal anyway.

By the way, in our testing, talking head videos performed better than music videos or even live performance videos.

Always keep in mind, though, that growth costs more than nurturing your existing fan base. You need to balance the two. If you don't keep getting in front of your existing audience, you will start to lose them. Your existing audience makes for the best customers, so losing them is expensive also. If push comes to shove, prioritize the people you have an existing relationship with.

Online Advertising Challenge: Do This Immediately

If you haven't already identified who you sound like or who you've been influenced by, the time is now.

Understand that there's huge opportunity on the other end of understanding your musical esthetic. Not just in terms of retargeting, but also in identifying pockets of social media audiences that could be interested in your music. Moreover, a tool like Similarweb is virtually of no use to you if you don't know who to look up.

If you don't understand your music, your marketing will suffer, plain and simple.

This would also be a good time to familiarize yourself with advertising platforms. As I said before, they change much too fast for me to be able to provide additional information here. But you probably won't be using all of them anyway. For most artists, Google and Facebook cover the spectrum, and there are *plenty* of experts ready and willing to run and manage your ads for you.

If you don't have any plans of advertising for a while, then don't do in-depth research. It will only frustrate you later when the platforms change again. Go broad strokes for now and deep dive when you're ready.

The Advanced & Esoteric

Besides the scams and "way off the beaten path" ad platforms, it's safe to say that advertising works across the spectrum. The part that people have some trouble figuring out is how to get someone's attention, hold their attention, and pique their interest enough to make them want to go sign up or buy something.

Advanced and esoteric strategies mostly fall under the categories of hacks and exploits, most of which are corrected and updated too frequently to be useful for our purposes. Even if you don't do *anything* wrong, Google and Facebook still seem to like banning users from running ads at their discretion, so let's not invite unwelcome attention from their silly robots.

What I want to cover here is the myriad of other advertising opportunities that exist.

Other Advertising Opportunities

There is a near-endless number of options when it comes to online advertising opportunities.

In some ways, it's silly to separate different "channels," because, at the end of the day, they are all forms of advertising. Not to mention, not all organizations agree on the terms used to describe the channels / media, and they overcomplicate what can fundamentally be boiled down in a much simpler manner.

The main takeaway is you should never want for anything. If you've got money to spend, and know where to spend it, you can get your music and message out into the world at scale with speed.

It's far more important that you know who you're talking to and invest in crafting a message that will resonate with them.

Blog & Website Advertising

As we looked at earlier, there are ways to *work your way in* with your Dream 100, and there are ways to *buy your way in*. So, here we're specifically looking at ways you can buy your way in.

When it comes to blog and website advertising, broadly, you can pay for:

- **Link insertions.** You can get greater exposure to specific pages on your website by offering to pay for a link insertion on an existing piece of content on a target website. Note that some website owners don't like this and will reject link insertion proposals outright. It's also considered "grey hat," especially if there is no disclosure on the post as to how the link got there.
- **Sponsored content.** Kind of like guest posting except you pay to have your content shown more prominently on a chosen website. It may be marked "sponsored content," but if it's written in the voice of the publication, most readers won't even notice, assume it's an endorsement of the site they're reading the content on, and respond to the call to action. Many third-world marketers seem to be under the mistaken impression that any mention of sponsored content would ruin their chances of getting the results they're looking to get when this myth has been obliterated in study after study, but oh well. Most will remain clueless.
- **Display advertising.** A display ad refers to any ad using visuals, like graphics, photos, or videos. There are ad networks that can serve your display ads across a wide array of blogs. The problem is that your content is going to be shown "god knows where," and your conversion rate is sure to be low. Unless you're paying peanuts for these ads, you're just wasting a dime. So, when and where you want to be more strategic, you can personally pick the blogs and websites you want to advertise on, reach out directly, and pay for display ads.

Remember. While you can have an ad network distribute your advertising more broadly, and this might even sound good to you, you're going to waste a lot less money targeting destinations where you *know* your audience gathers.

Yet again, proof that you are the best person to handle your marketing. Ad networks are not going to do this work for you, and even some of the best agencies probably won't go this granular on your behalf.

Newsletter Advertising

Growing your email list should be your ultimate goal, but let's face it – it takes time. You've got to entice people to join in the first place, and then you've got to nurture your list long-term. Yes, it's worth doing, and yes, it needs to be done, but what if you want greater reach sooner?

This is where newsletter advertising comes in, also known as “renting email lists.”

If you're convinced that email marketing is one of the best ways to reach an engaged online audience fast (and it is), you will love this tactic.

Most if not all your Dream 100 have an email list of their own, right? So, you can either a) pay to have a series of pre-crafted emails shown to their audience, or b) request that they craft a series of emails on your behalf.

The cost will vary depending on the size of their list and whether you've built up a relationship with them, but newsletter advertising is often well worth the cost.

Shoutouts

Referring once again to your Dream 100, who would you love to get a shoutout from, and on what platform?

You can pay to have shoutouts (and shares) on Facebook, Instagram, X, YouTube, on their podcast, and more. It's a quick way to get in front of an audience you're targeting.

The main thing to avoid would be overpaying for a shoutout. Most accounts that are a level above you should only request \$30 to \$60 per retweet or shoutout, as an example. That number, of course, could be considerably higher on accounts with hundreds of thousands and even millions of followers.

Generally, it's best to request a shoutout on a platform you've already been growing an audience on.

Native Advertising

As I said earlier, advertising terms can be confusing.

“Native advertising? Does that mean I’m advertising on my website? Does it mean I’m advertising to Indigenous people in my region?”

Of course not.

Native advertising refers to those enticing, “clickbait” headlines and pictures you see at the bottom of articles (e.g., “These Wedding Photos Are NSFW”). They look as though they could just be links leading to other articles on the same website, but they usually aren’t. Someone paid to have their content shown there.

Native advertising won’t be of much use to you unless your content benefits from eyeballs. This type of advertising can send a lot of traffic, but that traffic won’t necessarily convert to email subscribers or customers. They’ll scan the article, look at the photos, watch the video, and then move on.

That’s why many of the sites advertising using this method are serving ads on their website, to generate ad revenue.

Anyway, on the off chance that this type of advertising could work for you, you can check out services like Outbrain and Taboola to serve your ads.

Other

There could be something I missed here but by now you should already be thinking *way* outside the box. You're now more of an advertising expert than you even know, and you're well-poised to find opportunities on your own.

Start simply, test frequently, monitor spend, and adjust as needed.

Helpful Online Advertising Tools & Resources

Tools

- **Google Analytics.** If you don't have a Google Analytics tracking code installed on your website, do that now. The data you collect can inform your advertising in meaningful ways. Don't go too far down the Google Analytics rabbit hole, though, because it's a complicated platform. At most, dedicate yourself to learning just the Google Analytics essentials. There are plenty of articles covering this, so Google it.
<https://marketingplatform.google.com/about/analytics/>
- **Similarweb.** Again, we can spy on our peers with Similarweb, noting their audience demographics, traffic sources, similar sites, and more. This data can also be helpful as we look to set up our ad campaigns.
<https://www.similarweb.com/>

Resources

- **One Million Followers by Brendan Kane.** It's supposed to be the story of how Kane built a massive following in 30 days, but large sections of the book focus on other people's strategies and selling the reader on Kane's services. That said, when Kane finally opens

the kimono, you do get to learn how he made it happen. As with anything else, though, you'd need to work your butt off just to follow his example, never mind growing your following to the level he has. This would be good supplemental reading, but you should not make it your strategy unless you're convinced that building a large social media following is the only way, and you don't mind spending a pretty penny getting there.

<https://davidandrewwiebe.com/onemillionfollowers>

Streaming

Streaming is not a veritable money-printing machine. I refuse to acknowledge it as such. But there's one thing I can't deny – it's a powerful marketing engine. For *some* artists, it can generate a decent income too.

To write off streaming completely would be to shirk music distribution services, and that's something I simply can't do. Just the fact that these services make your music available on all major platforms is still amazing to the average person and because of that, for artists, it's a credibility builder.

(I also had a great time at the 2019 DIY Musician Conference – an event that wouldn't exist without CD Baby.)

As with anything else, if streaming is used strategically and smartly (and I emphasize that word *smartly* here) in your marketing mix, it can contribute significantly to email list growth, digital sales, merch sales, turnout at gigs, and more. Indirect revenue potential, though, *far* outweighs direct revenue potential. Smart musicians would get their priorities in order.

But like a ping-pong game in motion, we need to keep hitting the ball back across the table to stay in it.

“Thanks for coming to our show. Please take a moment to get your phone out and stream our latest single on Spotify.” Yes, ask your fans to do this then and there, even if it's just for 30 seconds.

I'm not talking about hacks here; I'm talking about marketing integration. Lead people from Facebook to your landing page to sign up for your email list. Then, send them a piece of direct mail with their customized discount code and URL to buy your merch bundle. On the post-purchase "thank you" page, make a call to action asking them to stream your album on Spotify. I'll be talking more about this later in the chapter on offline marketing (don't skip it), but you can also refer to the section on sales funnels.

Are you getting this? This is not about following the exact sequence I laid out. It's about thinking strategically about where to send people and when. Rushing into selling is like rushing into marriage, and while I've heard that can work for some folks, most people like to know whether their date slurps their soup weirdly before making a lifelong commitment to them. Build up to the sale!

Above all, prioritize *owning* your audience, not leaving it to chance with some flash-in-the-pan social network that could cancel, ban, or delete you in a New York minute.

If you're going to focus on anything, focus on the acquisition and conversion of fans. Because fans will stream your music. Otherwise, you're trying to hack algorithms, manipulate numbers, or meditate your way to a fan base. You're trying to get something for nothing. I'm sick of hearing it let alone saying it, but *hope is not a strategy*.

Show me 100 warm bodies and we can motivate and mobilize them (especially from the stage). Show me your computer screen and I'll know for sure none of this book has landed for you (unless we're looking at a fan list you own and have access to). We can't turn air into listeners. You need *real* relationships with *real* people and a *real* connection to inspire movement in a desired direction. I can't do that for you. You've got to put in the legwork.

Think of this chapter as a bonus chapter. I didn't have to write it. But you were going to digitally distribute your music anyway. Admit it.

What I'm going to advocate for is a strategic, targeted, streamlined data-based approach to growing your following and listenership on streaming platforms.

A Data-Based Approach

If we're going to focus on streaming at all, we should train ourselves to make data-based decisions. Too little data, and we're not going to have much decision-making power, but once you're seeing 50 to 100 streams per day, you've got concrete numbers to work with.

Spotify and streaming analytics are quickly becoming a commodity, and you can access quite a bit of data for free. Besides Spotify for Artists, some of my favorite tools include:

- **Beatchain.** Connect your streaming and social media accounts, and Beatchain will show you how your fan base is growing, where your fans are located, your top performing social media posts, related artists, playlists, and potential playlists. Beatchain will even offer some recommended actions to help you on your growth path.
- **Viberate.** Viberate is the IMDb of the music industry. Data is their bread and butter! Spotify Analytics by Viberate is a neat tool. The free Lite plan only gives you access to so much data, but there are some unique features like career health and career performance charts. You've also got the standard fanbase distribution, fanbase evolution, fanbase growth, audience map, and similar features.
- **artist.tools.** Stop spending all your time looking for playlist opportunities and the contact information of curators. This process requires far too much time and effort to be worth it. Use a virtual assistant and / or

artist.tools instead. This platform lets you search playlists by keywords / genre, and audience size. It will also let you know how to contact the curator – via email, Instagram, or both. You’ll need to pay a small fee to get access to all the features.

Now, this all sounds magical, and it’s great. But if we don’t interpret our data correctly, if we don’t know what to do with it, or if we don’t act on it, we’re better off without it. Data alone, just like knowledge alone, doesn’t possess the enchanted ability to boost our music careers.

If we get lazy and rely exclusively on automation, AI, and machine learning, it’s all for naught.

Reality check:

Currently, at best, machine learning is 100 overpaid people in a room evaluating and deciding what the machine should do better and trying in vain to teach it (with an emphasis on “trying,” since AI can only “learn” in bite-sized chunks). We are so far away from true AI sentience, that it’s not even funny.

I would love to sit back and tell you that the music career of the future will mostly be automated, allowing artists to focus on what they do best. I think it’s far more likely that a) music careers will become harder to build than before, or b) music careers will become obsolete. Spend enough time with Klaus, and you’ll understand the future the radical elites have mapped out for us. For all its flaws, AI is already capable of creating great-sounding music, and it turns out you don’t need a soul for it to have a soul.

The takeaway here is to make informed decisions regarding your music career, and any relevant data we can get our hands on can help set us on a growth path.

Utilizing Built-in Marketing Tools

Bruce Lee said:

I fear not the man who has practiced 10,000 kicks once, but I fear the man who has practiced one kick 10,000 times.

There are several lessons ripe for the picking in this quote, but the one I want to stress here is the importance of the fundamentals.

In their frenzy to exploit new platforms, artists run around like headless chickens trying to get everyone and their dog to listen to them on Spotify. Playlists! Ad campaigns! Instagram Stories!

A calm, level-headed approach to Spotify (and streaming in general) will likely result in better coordination, and therefore, better long-term results.

Let's start with the basics (while dipping our toes lightly into the advanced and esoteric).

What follows isn't in a specific order. Rather, it should be carried out with urgent concurrency:

- **You can share artists, albums, and tracks.** Providing your prospects and fans with direct links is better than asking them to search for you on Spotify or TIDAL. Grab your links and share them. You can add them to your website or even generate QR codes for print and digital marketing.
- **You can embed artists, albums, and tracks.** It's amazing to me how many artists don't do this. Instead of telling people to "go fetch" on Apple Music or Deezer, they could literally embed their music on their discography page, or even in the sidebar of their website. Think you might get a few more streams this

way? Try it. Also, this means your music can be embedded anywhere – on blogs and websites across the web. You can do this yourself (Blogger, LiveJournal, Medium, etc.), and you can ask other bloggers to do the same. DeSo There are many channels when you start digging.

- **You can add your music to your own playlists.**

You do care about, and support your music, don't you? Rather than expecting others to add your music to their playlist, take the lead and set the example. Then, ask those close to you to add your music to their playlists too. More on this later.

I get that most of this is quite “basic,” but that’s just it. Most artists aren’t even doing the above before chasing some other shiny object or algorithm exploit. Start with what you can do internally to promote your music. Then, move outward in concentric circles.

Spotify Pre-Save Campaigns

Pre-save campaigns can help you gain some needed traction for your new music, right out the gate. Plus, it takes a minimal amount of time, and it’s something you can easily action while you’re busy at work with other key tasks in your music career. So, I don’t see much harm in it.

But let me reinforce – you’re to carry out your marketing activity in urgent concurrency, not in orderly perfectionism. Don’t take a step. Action all steps. Don’t aim for perfection. Get into motion and stay there. Those in motion capture more opportunity than those standing still because course correction is only applicable to vehicles in motion.

The idea behind a pre-save campaign is to get as many people as possible to listen to your track, for as long as possible, upon its release. Likes and saves contribute to an algorithm boost. It can help with getting playlisted too, and playlisting, as I

understand it, also contributes to better performance with the algorithm.

Pre-saving can serve as a reminder for your fans, increasing the likelihood that they will stream your release on day one. That's not a license to be lazy, mind. If you don't share your release via your website, email, and social media, at least, you're kidding yourself.

So, you can probably guess that you're going to need a marketing plan to go along with your pre-save campaign. It's futile to post once to Instagram and hope and pray that everyone will jump on board.

You don't just launch things – you build excitement for them.

But I'm not going to go through a long list of actions, because this section *is* your action plan. Highlight it, underline it, mark it up, and make notes. Your job isn't to figure out how it works. Your job is to *action* it.

That said, you will need to follow these basic steps to ensure your pre-save campaign even takes shape:

- **Digitally distribute your music.** Use CD Baby, TuneCore, Ditto Music, or DistroKid. You can choose what you like, don't overthink it. If you want to support me, then use my link in the resources section below to sign up with Ditto Music.
- **Claim your Spotify for Artists profile.** They're even letting posers like me get that verification checkmark, so it must not be that hard. Joking aside, you will need to claim your profile if you want anyone to pre-save your release.
- **Set up your Songwhip Pro account.** Songwhip Pro is only \$6 per month, it's very easy to use, and it integrates with all streaming sites. If your music distributor already has pre-save campaign technology, use it. Otherwise, use Songwhip. To get your pre-save

set up, go to Create Page and click on “Presave” in the upper right-hand corner. Enter the name of your forthcoming release. Upload your artwork. Publish your page, and tweak it as desired.

- **Share your Songwhip page.** No one can pre-save anything if you don’t share it with them. Make sharing your Songwhip pre-save page a priority while you’re building excitement for the release.

That’s it.

Once your release goes live, upgrade your Songwhip prerelease page to a live album page, so it will populate all your live links.

Playlisting

You may have come to this section hoping and praying for a detailed playlisting strategy, but I’m sorry to disappoint. I’d much rather see you spend a bit of money and put this process on autopilot than waste undue time and energy on it.

Your assignment here is to:

- Hire a virtual assistant and train them to use artist.tools to find viable playlisting opportunities for you.
- Set aside a monthly budget for SubmitHub and get them to match you up with opportunities.

This, to me, is the most efficient way to get playlisted and even generate other great opportunities.

I did make note of other quality services, though, and you may want to explore them:

- Playlist Push
- Boost Collective
- Indie Music Academy
- SpacdeLoud

- Playlist-Promotion.com
- UseViral
- Orion Promotion
- SubmitLink

The only other worthwhile avenue is to network mercilessly because your connections can and often do lead to new opportunities, not just in playlisting, but in licensing and placements, sponsorship deals, gigs, and more. All things being equal, though, I bet these will be worth more to you than a playlist placement.

Streaming Challenge: Do This Immediately

If you haven't already, purchase a monthly subscription with your favorite streaming platform.

I know this may seem contradictory to previous advice, but there's nothing more disingenuous than the cognitive dissonance that will come from not supporting the platform you want to build a following on. If you're not going to purchase a subscription, don't promote your music on said platform.

When I was serious about publishing to Medium, I bought a monthly Medium subscription.

You want to remove *all* mental blocks to your success, not some of them. And this includes paying full price for the services and products you require. Take advantage of sales, yes, but support independent creators if you wish to be supported as an independent creator yourself. Don't argue with the price – problem-solve and find a way to pay it.

If you have a problem with streaming and won't be distributing your music, don't sit around and complain. Be bold. Boycott and take it to the picket lines.

The Advanced & Esoteric

People are trying all kinds of crazy things to hack the streaming algorithm. I don't recommend using most tactics, as you never quite know when they will stop working. You can even have your music pulled from a streaming platform or be banned outright.

I had the original version of "Don't Wait Too Long" pulled from Spotify, supposedly because they detected the use of bots. No, there were no bots, I saw to it that the song was on high rotation on all my devices 24/7. Spotify didn't like that.

Either that or someone launched a botnet attack against me. It wouldn't be the first time.

Regardless, you're taking your fate into your own hands with streaming platforms, just as you are with social networks. You can be banned, deleted, or canceled just for having a different opinion than the majority. Let me remind you – you're a Renegade, so you *do* have a different opinion than the majority.

Release More Music

This isn't esoteric at all, it's just advanced.

Look, I don't know who's telling you that you're going to be a big Spotify star one day. Probably Chris.

But I don't know how any artist expects to get anywhere with streaming without releasing as much music as they can as frequently as they can. It's like hoping you're going to win the lottery without buying a lottery ticket (and that's not an admonition to start buying lottery tickets!).

You've got to have quality-based benchmarks, sure, but in today's market, it's hard to survive without quantity-based

benchmarks – how many songs you release in a month, week, or day!

If you want to succeed on streaming platforms, you've got to release more music. So, always keep a notepad at your side. Write down lyric snippets, musical ideas, or guitar tabs as they come to you. I do this all the time.

You can string together ideas later. For now, capture *everything*.

Release Only 31 Second Songs

I can't possibly recommend this strategy, but apparently, it has worked for some.

Spotify has a 30-second algorithm rule, which suggests that the first 30 seconds of the track matter most to Spotify. A stream isn't counted or monetized if a listener doesn't listen for more than 30 seconds.

What some artists figured out was that they could release tracks that were only 31 seconds long. That way, listeners were practically forced to listen for the entire duration out of sheer curiosity.

I think this tactic falls under the category of “don’t try,” but hey, it’s a free country.

Erect Playlisting Spiderwebs

Besides the 30-second rule, some suggest that Spotify pays close attention to songs that are getting playlisted more. It makes sense.

In saying that, the quality of the playlist probably plays a part.

Either way, to create your playlisting spiderweb, you'd partner with friends, family, fans, and other independent artists. You'd teach them how to playlist music if they don't already know

how and ask them to make 10-track playlists with at least one of your tracks in it. It would be in your best interest to instruct them to listen to these playlists, too, of course. Since you're a leader, you would do the same, creating playlists to support your music and the music of others.

This isn't guaranteed to get you a lot of plays. It's more so a way to guarantee that your tracks are playlisted heavily but on playlists followed by very few people, or no one at all (of course, you could promote your playlists with advertising).

This is *probably* more advanced than esoteric. Probably. Just don't come back to me later saying I endorsed this tactic. I'm cautioning you right now.

Helpful Streaming Tools & Resources

Tools:

- **Beatchain.** A great tool for finding career opportunities. <https://beatchain.com/>
- **Viberate.** The IMDb of the music industry. <https://www.viberate.com/>
- **artist.tools.** Use this to find playlisting opportunities. <https://www.artist.tools/>
- **Songwhip.** A free tool that will automatically compile all your live music links for you and create a page you can share with your fans. Especially handy when you don't know where your audience listens to you most. Songwhip Pro is affordable and perfect for simplifying the process of pre-save initiatives. <https://songwhip.com/>
- **Ditto Music.** A UK-based music distribution service with expanded reach. As with DistroKid, you can pay a small yearly fee to release as much music as you want in a year. <https://davidandrewwiebe.com/ditto>

Offline Marketing

Now that you have a solid foundation in digital marketing, you're bound to do better at offline marketing than most.

But why would you want to do any kind of offline marketing at all?

Following in the footsteps of artists who've gone before you, you should know well how heavily business cards, flyers, posters, and other materials have been used to promote shows, tours, and new music releases.

The main difference is that we can be much more targeted in our activity than in the past. Spray and pray is a waste of resources and a bad use of your time, just as reinventing the wheel is.

Business cards can be given to the people who come to your shows (with a call to action on the back). Flyers can be sent via snail mail to targeted lists. Posters can be placed where your fans literally like to hang out.

You don't need to leave everything to chance or take wild stabs in the dark with offline marketing, and you shouldn't.

You can use QR codes, send recipients to personalized landing pages, or even make direct offers with a special discount. Tracking is much easier than it seems (an argument could be made that offline marketing is *easier* to track), and if you're planning to integrate your offline marketing efforts with online marketing, I would recommend installing Google

Analytics tracking codes on your websites too (this is a good idea either way).

Having endured repeated, humiliating failures with digital marketing (though I've had my successes too), I can't stress enough the importance of real-world connections, real fans, a real presence in the real world, etc. Online metrics (especially vanity metrics) are at best hallucinations and will see you making ill-informed decisions in the real world. The real world is where the rubber meets the road.

Integrate Online & Offline Marketing

What most internet marketers won't tell you is that they actively integrate online marketing with offline marketing to drive traffic, engage their audiences, nurture their leads, and retain their customers. It's hidden from plain sight until you sign up for their services and receive a physical thank-you note from them in the mail, in addition to a birthday card on your birthday, without fail.

You can also turn to the example of *The Tim Ferriss Experiment* or Ramit Sethi's *How to Get Rich*, however successful or unsuccessful they may ultimately be deemed. Their example demonstrates, in daylight clarity, how little they rely on a single media channel, and how they aggressively take their messages to where there could be a good media-to-market fit.

Getting someone to do something online is all about "go fetch." Even when it comes to a digital download of your album, it's largely self-serve. Download it to your hard drive and listen to it. People have more digital "shelfware" than you can imagine, and they may never open much of anything.

It's not for you to worry about a product that never leaves its digital shrink wrap, but all things being equal, someone who listens to your album is sure to become a better long-term prospect than someone who doesn't.

Offline, you can show up where your audience is instead of trying to get them to come to where you are. A timely card, letter, or even CD would do a better job of ensuring the desired action is taken by your leads than asking them to click, download, or log in. Plus, people value physical goods more highly than digital goods.

Thank-you cards, newsletters, and books are among your best engagement tools, but of course, CDs and merch are bound to work too. When your fans periodically receive print materials and physical materials from you, they become more loyal, stay subscribed for longer, and buy more from you.

It may seem tedious to implement, but in marketing, sophistication is good. Sending a new customer who just bought a few merch items a real-world thank-you card (not just an email) is a great way to get them to come back to your online store to buy more.

You can send your website customers direct mail. You can get those who receive your direct mail to visit your website. You can do it all in a targeted, personalized way that leads to productive action. That makes it highly trackable.

Think outside the box. There are countless opportunities to engage online and off and mixing the two is a surefire way to plug the leaks that are making it impossible for you to capture all the income-generating opportunities you could be tapping into.

When they say you can generate a good income from a small list, this is what “they” really mean – proactively looking for all the opportunities to charge for a service or product that would solve a problem for your audience.

Understand Offline & Traditional Marketing Channels

Artists who say they can't find any opportunities to market their music offline in a smart, targeted way simply aren't looking hard enough, or are too intimidated by the research required to even begin.

Print? There are newspapers, magazines, and newsletters.

Broadcast? Films, TV, and radio.

(Admittedly, with the introduction of YouTube, streaming services, internet radio, and the like, the lines between online and offline are blurring.)

Advertising? Billboards, signage, benches, and screens.

(Despite the workload involved, I'm really surprised by how few musicians take advantage of screens – it would virtually solve the problem of your audience not being able to hear you from the stage at your gigs, or for that matter, you having to sell them on the idea of buying your merch. You could have a video do this all for you – put your band name, website address, social links, and merch promotions on high rotation – and it wouldn't even be that hard to create.)

Direct mail? Lists (which you can rent or buy).

No matter the channel, you probably don't need more data than you already have at your fingertips to make a dent. If you don't have the physical address of all your email subscribers, you should give them a reason to give it to you (e.g., "Hey, we wanted to send you our new ballcap. We just need your address." – basically, a free + shipping offer).

What was said earlier about online-offline integration also applies – you can send people who saw your TV appearance to a specific page on your website (e.g., "Attention: Viewers of

XYZ Talk Show..."). If your music was featured in a film, you could post a story on Instagram with a link to where people can hear the music. Again, many possibilities.

Taking the time to identify all the offline channels available should go without saying. I've already pointed out most of them, but don't stop there. Take it upon yourself to make a spreadsheet, log every possible opportunity you see, work your way through each of them, track all the results, keep the winners, and ditch the losers. That's how you optimize your marketing.

The Foundation of Offline Marketing Success

Besides what I've already covered here, you know most of what you need to know to be effective at offline marketing channels already:

- **Pitching.** The media are interested in anything they can turn into a story. If you do most of the work for them, you increase your chances of being featured in papers, magazines, newsletters, and other print materials. Make win-win propositions and you will get results.
- **Modeling.** Never start from scratch. Crafting magazine ads, for instance, might seem intimidating. There is legwork involved, but the process of arriving at an effective ad is straightforward – spend a weekend at the library, dig up every magazine you know your audience reads, and look at the ads that keep running month after month. If they keep running, it means they are profitable and worth modeling.
- **Dream 100.** Identify who has access to your audience. Work your way in or buy your way in. Buying your way in with offline channels is generally more expensive than online channels, but if you do it right, you will

have better quality and easier-to-track results than with online marketing.

Live Performance

Live performance has long been a staple in the careers of successful musicians, and a more immediate form of marketing is hard to find. You're in the same location as your audience, at the same time, performing your best material in front of them, and if you're smart, you're collecting their email addresses and selling merch to everyone in the room.

But there's the prevalent mistaken notion out there that to be a successful artist, and to earn an income, on any scale, you must perform live. This simply isn't true anymore.

As evidenced by the fact that I haven't dedicated an entire chapter to live performance (it would have been redundant, especially if you've read my other books), I would have dedicated a lot more space to talking about gigging, playing live, and touring if I thought it was the best or only way to make it in music. It's not.

You've got more tools and resources at your fingertips than ever (you know this well if you made it this far into the book), and the time to begin taking advantage of them is NOW.

That said, performing is one of the reasons many musicians get into music.

If you want to sign with a label, you've still got to tour mercilessly, play for a crowd of one to 50 at every venue (bigger audiences if you can attract them), and grind it out until you've got enough recognition that there are audiences of hundreds and thousands waiting for you in major and minor markets. But there's no need if you want to remain independent, use live performance strategically to build a connection with your audience, impact fans, and drive a

significant income, especially when combined with other activities.

It would be so much better to play a show for the 200 Chicago superfans on your email list than it would be to schlep out to markets in the middle of nowhere Idaho where you have three fans waiting for you in a ratty community hall, right?

(Please don't send me any hate mail Idahoans – I love Sandpoint and Coeur d'Alene.)

Using everything you've learned to this point; you can easily make this happen. It's simply a matter of using your brain and the tools at your disposal.

The one thing I wouldn't hesitate to invest in, though, is live music production, and no one's better equipped to show you the ropes than Tom Jackson and any of his well-trained minions.

Live performance, when done correctly, should have the effect of compelling your audience to rush to your merch table, sign up for your email list, buy three pieces of merch, shake your hand, and get you to sign their CD before leaving the venue – not prompting them to leave before the show's over, immediately forgetting your name, forgetting to visit your website, and never thinking about you again.

How do you ensure you have the right effect on audiences? By investing in live music production.

This horse does require some further flogging, though – people need a *reason* to show up, and they *also* need a reason to fall in love with you. It's not so much the music you're playing as it is the overall experience you're delivering. It's also about your personality and how attractive or magnetic it is. That's what people are coming for. Think about it. About the only people going to see Dream Theater are musicians, and those curious enough to witness their virtuosity in person.

What is your audience walking away with? That's what you need to focus on.

Live music production will help you figure this out.

When it comes to booking, though, venues are not in scarce supply, and when it comes right down to it, just about anywhere can be a venue. So, if you can't find a comprehensive directory for your area, build one yourself, even if you never end up booking at some of these venues. This includes:

- Bars
- Pubs
- Clubs
- Coffeehouses
- Restaurants
- Hotels
- Churches
- Wedding chapels
- Festivals
- House concerts
- Community halls
- Theaters
- Movie theaters
- Skateparks
- Libraries (you laugh, but I've literally performed in a library once, and on a library stage on another occasion)
- Guitar / instrument stores
- Schools, colleges, universities

Not to mention, nowadays, you've got a bazillion options for live streaming, which you can roll into your live gigging activities.

Beyond that, I don't need to say too much. If you enjoy performing, I can't stop you from hitting the stages of the world and giving it everything you've got. Most of what you

need to know, you will learn from experience – be it set up, sound checking, monitoring, backline, booking, teardown, or otherwise.

(Just don't show up at Coachella without a hot clue how to plug your guitar in... never mind, they probably won't book you at Coachella if you don't already have a great live show. But you know what I mean.)

The one thing you will *never* learn by experience is how to produce a great live show all on your own. Get help and get it figured out.

Radio

We made a big deal about radio in the past, but even today, no doubt appearing on the radio can lead to instant, widespread exposure.

A shrewd musician, though, would consider all angles to making radio appearances, not just engaging in classic independent radio campaigns. They would approach the entire ecosystem strategically.

Chiefly, that would mean:

- **Finding a win-win.** Also, review the section on pitching. This will increase your chances of getting what you ask for.
- **Refusing to start from scratch.** Use a directory like The Indie Bible to identify viable opportunities instead of spending hours scouring the internet for radio stations and contact information. This also means discarding some opportunities outright, because they are either a) too difficult to obtain, or b) too far a stretch to ever work (like a death metal band appearing on Christian radio).
- **Repurposing mercilessly.** If you give an interview, ask for the recording. Barring that, download it from

the radio station's website when they turn it into a podcast. Barring that, tune in when your interview is set to go live and use a cassette recorder to capture the interview. Barring that, get a friend to record your live interview with a microphone against a speaker. This is content, and there are countless ways to repurpose it as part of your marketing mix. I assume you enjoy staring at blank screens if you don't repurpose your interviews.

With that in mind, let's look at some of the best ways to leverage radio.

DIY Independent Radio Campaigns

This process is no longer a big mystery, and it's so simple that there's no point in waxing eloquent on it.

Here's the outline for a classic-modern hybrid DIY radio campaign:

- Identify 200 community, independent, and college radio stations that are accepting submissions (especially if they are known to play your style of music)
- Prepare 200 envelopes, label them, and include your CD and one sheet (if your CDs are shrink-wrapped, remove the cellophane)
- See an earlier section on pitching – you'd better address these envelopes to someone specific, not “dear radio,” or “108.1 FM K-RAP” unless you can't find any other information
- Also prepare your digital submissions – you'll probably find, during the research phase, that some stations are either accepting digital submissions or prefer to receive your music that way
- Save up to pay for shipping and send out your 200 CDs
- Follow up in two weeks (call, if possible, email if not) and ask whether the station is playing your music

- Whether “yes,” “no,” or “we haven’t gotten around to it yet,” thank them for their time
- If they’ve passed on your music, you can ask why, but most of the time, the answer will be vague (avoid the temptation to argue) – “It doesn’t fit our format,” etc.
- A shrewd artist would also actively promote the fact that they’re being spun on certain radio stations (give real-time updates when your song is being played, tweet about it, add it to the list of stations playing your music to your website, etc.) – this shows the station that you might want to work with them again, and you do!

Interviews / Performances

Being interviewed and / or performing on the radio can be a great way to stimulate interest in your music. It can even be a great way to get more radio airplay, as most stations like to play the music of the artists they’re interviewing.

It would be word to the wise to propose an interview / performance with any station that’s chosen to add your music to their playlist, though it can be a little impractical, especially if the stations are spread out geographically and require your physical presence for the content (see next section on radio tours).

Some radio stations operate as they always have, but you will also find that many are forward-thinking and know well the importance of new media like podcasts and YouTube. It’s only to your advantage to work with stations that publish their content to multiple channels, but that isn’t to say you shouldn’t work with radio stations that don’t.

The point is – you should be ready for anything. Live, in-studio performances complete with a multi-angle camera setup, cramped live rooms with barely enough space for a guitar, and even awkward, latency-prone performances over Zoom. All opportunities lead to exposure just the same and should not be weighted differently without just cause.

Radio Tours

Gaining the support of radio stations, program directors, and (sometimes) radio personalities / DJs can make a big difference in your music career. Most people who are in radio are in radio because they're passionate about music and other forms of creativity.

A radio tour can help you build a better relationship with the stations that are already playing your music while broadening your reach. Radio stations may not hold the keys to massive mainstream success or anything like that, but many are very well connected locally and might be able to get your music into the hands of other stations, venues, DJs, managers, agents, influencers, and decision-makers. They may be able to help you get gigs too.

If you're going to plan a radio tour, then there are a few things you should be mindful of:

- Just because it's a radio tour doesn't mean you only need to stop at radio stations. If you can, plan three shows in every market, and earn a bit of gig money while you're getting the exposure. You can also book house concerts on your tour. You don't need to tour on a loss! Take advantage of resources like Concerts In Your Home at: <https://concertsinyourhome.org>
- Be flexible. Some stops will get canceled. But as you tour through different towns, build connections, and appear on different stations, opportunities will show up. If you're proactive, you could hit up local bloggers, interviewers, and podcasters for added exposure. Chances are you will be adding more dates to your calendar than not, so be as flexible as possible, go with the flow, and have fun.
- Promote the damn thing. Look, I say this lovingly. Do *not* – I said do *not* – book a radio tour unless you plan to share it with your fans, post the dates on your website, write up tour diaries, post photos to Instagram,

make vlogs, or some combination thereof. This isn't just excellent content – it's a way of showing that you care. You are thankful for the support you're getting, aren't you? Also, this should be non-negotiable – send a thank-you note to every station that lets you inside their doors.

Offline Marketing Challenge: Do This Immediately

Just because online marketing is sexier doesn't mean it's more effective than offline marketing. "Oh, you're looking to promote your music. Just post to social media man," said only the greenest of creatives who think they're entitled to viral success. If you're going to do this at all, don't count on viral success. Either engineer it or discard it as a possibility and plan to grow in a calculated, sustainable way.

The best thing you can do for your career is look for ways to engage your fans offline (in addition to online), as it will stimulate loyalty, keep them engaged for longer, and result in greater income.

I've given a few examples already. Try something like this:

Send an email to your fans saying, "Hey, I noticed you hadn't claimed our merch bundle yet. Here's your discount code to get 40% off." They'll have to enter their mailing address to order the bundle. Once you have their address, send a thank-you note via postal mail, along with another offer – "We just came out with a brand-new T-shirt design, and we think you're going to love it. Go to this URL to get 20% off in the next 14 days: www.yourbandtshirt.com).

The Advanced & Esoteric

Most advanced and esoteric offline marketing tactics revolve around publicity stunts and guerrilla marketing. On this, I will

defer to Bob Baker. You will find a book recommendation in the tools & resources section below.

Helpful Offline Marketing Tools & Resources

Tools:

- **The Indie Bible.** They've got directories for just about everything you can think of – radio stations, venues, publicists, Spotify, YouTube, booking agents, and more, for a nominal fee.
<https://davidandrewwiebe.com/indiebible>
- **Onstage Success.** Get live music production assistance directly from Tom Jackson, one of his many skilled minions, or pre-packaged info products.
<https://onstagesuccess.com/>
- **Concerts In Your Home.** A network artists can join to be booked for house concerts.
<https://concertsinyourhome.org/>

Resources:

- **Guerrilla Music Marketing BUNDLE by Bob Baker.** A killer compilation on guerrilla music marketing. This volume gives you everything. Also, anything via Baker is well worth reading.
<https://davidandrewwiebe.com/musicmarketingbundle>

The Hall of Renegades: Your Story Here

Throughout this book, you've read the stories of those who've embraced their inner renegade.

As Earl Nightingale said, success and finding your path are practically inseparable. Wherever you find someone who's reached a level of success you only aspire to, you will find someone who listened to their inner self and went after their dreams instead of following the herd or getting caught up in the semantics of a SMART goal. They went against the grain.

As great as the examples in this book are, I want to hear from more of you. I want to know what you were inspired to do after reading this book, and how it turned out. You are a future case study of this guide and all associated material.

I don't need any validation that it works. I know it works. When you wake up every day excited about what you do, you increase your productivity and output, you action multiple strategies and tactics with urgent concurrency, and you track the results, growth is the natural outcome.

Rather, I want to put you in the spotlight. Even a modest success is worth documenting. It increases the belief in people just like you, that they can also get after it and get it. Because they can!

As for how to contact me, refer to Appendix I: Gimmies, where in addition to joining The Hall of Renegades, you will find

other worthwhile opportunities you can take advantage of now.

Conclusion

And so, we must find the path to empowerment and shun the path to stagnation and decline. If you aren't growing, you're dying.

The roadmap to success is available, but the journey will be unprecedented, and it won't be comfortable. Living into our fullness, we'll be challenged at every turn.

We won't get to where we need to go acting selfishly. We'll need to work together to conquer our challenges and adversaries.

We'll need to engage where we used to fall back. We'll need to stand our ground where we used to give in.

We starve not because we were destined to starve. We starve because we don't ask for what is already ours.

A new kind of musician won't just benefit themselves or music in general. They will benefit the world. What an amazing place the world would be if artists were the leaders, tastemakers, influencers, and movers and shakers of their communities.

We have forgotten the fulfillment and joy that comes from serving others. And we need to get back to the simplicity of caring and giving. Yes, that includes leaving a note of thanks on the blog posts you read and get value from. Because that's what a leader does.

The only question now is whether you're willing to own up to your power. The power you already possess.

Don't let fear get the best of you. That's the path to apathy. Whenever confronted with fear, remember that you're taking back the ground that was always yours.

You are a Renegade Musician. Own it.

Appendix I: Gimmies

I mentioned a couple of unique opportunities in this guide that are exclusive to *The Renegade Musician*. I invite you to begin taking advantage of these immediately.

Arctic Sunburn Records

At ArcticSunburn.com, we highlight all my solo releases, as well as other musical projects I've had the pleasure of being involved in.

But in addition to my releases and a “friends” page where you can find other projects I’ve been a part of, we also have a “recommended” page where we put a spotlight on musicians just like you.

If you have digitally distributed your music, you qualify to be featured on Arctic Sunburn Records. Send a link to your music here: david@dawcast.com. Be sure to put “Arctic Sunburn” in the subject line of your email so I know you’ve read this book.

Once your music goes live on our website, share it. It’s the only way we grow together.

Share Your Success Stories

How did *The Renegade Musician* change your career and/or life? I want to know! If you have a success story you’d like to share, please email me: david@dawcast.com.

Note: *I am only accepting legitimate, verifiable success stories*, though I pass no judgment on the magnitude of success. This means that taking your sales from three to 10 CD units per month might seem small in the grand scheme of things, but to me, it's a breakthrough worth documenting. I want to hear about it.

Your success stories will turn into blog features, podcast interviews, or video interviews, depending on the medium best suited to the content.

Appendix II: Music Entrepreneur News Interview

An early copy of *The Renegade Musician* was sent to Music Entrepreneur News, an offshoot of Music Entrepreneur HQ I had a hand in forming many years ago. After installing new leadership, I walked away from the publication. Since then, the blog has moved to Blogger (instead of a custom domain name). Nowadays, it updates relatively infrequently. When they do update, though, it's usually compelling. They've also been very generous in keeping and sharing a lot of my content on their site.

Either way, they found the new book compelling enough to reach out to me directly for an interview, which I was more than happy to give. Here's the Music Entrepreneur News interview in full.

This interview has been reprinted with full permission from Music Entrepreneur News.

Thanks for joining us today, David, and for sharing your latest book with us.

Thanks for having me. It's nice to be able to connect again.

What our readers may not know is that *The Renegade Musician* is the eighth book [at the time] in a series of

best-selling books written by you specifically for musicians and creatives with the mission of creating the life they love through their art...

You nailed it! Thank you for acknowledging that.

I love that we're making a difference for artists and musicians. That's really what this journey has been all about from day one. When I started to see that there was not one way, but many ways to creating the life you love through music, I couldn't help but share everything I was learning with artists along the way.

...and we think it might be one of your best books yet.

I tend to agree, though "best" is always kind of a subjective thing.

As creators, we're always supposed to say our latest creation is our best creation, regardless of how it turned out, right? But I say this with the utmost sincerity that I do think this is the best book I've written, and I'm excited to see how readers respond to it and what they get out of it.

We are fully expecting that it will raise some eyebrows too.

Right. On that point, not to get too controversial off the bat, but are you fearful that your readers will outright dismiss the book because of its political leanings?

We all discard books for a myriad of reasons. Sometimes the book is boring, or long. Sometimes it's not delivering on its promise. Sometimes we're waiting for a "good" part that doesn't appear to be forthcoming.

I'm a little weird in that I can't discard a book I've started reading, but if I don't think it's of much value, I will skim it.

Anyway, to focus on the political aspect of *The Renegade Musician* is to miss the forest for the trees. By definition, renegades reject the norms. What rejecting the norms does for people is that it helps them achieve more personal autonomy. A person with autonomy will accomplish immeasurably more than someone who feels constrained by the chains of societal rules, expectations, and laws – of course, I'm not saying that one should go out of their way to break the laws. That's just foolish.

But the book is about leading the reader on the journey, so they internalize the fact that even if they've failed dozens of times before, with the right guidance and direction, they can still succeed. That means going through an identity shift, and identity shifts require that our beliefs are shaken and challenged along the way. Without some upheaval, we won't learn to adapt and believe in our capacity to overcome, which is critical to personal success.

The book itself is not political. It carries with it a strong message, but it's not intended to be taken as "You'd better believe what I believe, *or else*." I believe we can have unity in the cause without the need for thought policing.

One of the biggest mistakes politics and science have made in the last few years is that their message has become "We're right, *or else*." This is dictatorial, even cultish behavior. Politics and science are supposed to be ever-evolving.

But if you were cornered, and you had to define your political beliefs, would you say that it's completely in alignment with what you've shared in *The Renegade Musician*?

Well, I know what you're aiming at. The answer to it is a little complicated, but if you'll indulge me a bit, I think I can offer a mostly satisfactory answer. And I know you're probably going to ask about "dictatorial and cultish" later, so let me roll my answer into one.

Through the COVID-19 pandemic, it felt like politicians and the media were intentionally creating a rift among people – gender, race, masks or no masks, vaccinated or unvaccinated, and so on. I've also been using the term "team dynamic" to describe it, because it's kind of the same animosity people feel for each other when they're cheering for different hockey teams – Calgary Flames vs. Edmonton Oilers, as an example. There's a history of rivalry between the two teams. I don't mean to downplay what happened by pointing to it as "team dynamic," mind you. I think we can agree that it was far more insidious during the pandemic than it is now.

What I'm saying is that it was hard not to take sides, because the whole thing was kind of a social experiment to see how people would respond to an array of compromising situations, engineered or not, intentional, or not. "The way it turned out in hindsight," as it were.

But we do have a major problem in politics, namely that there are essentially two diametrically opposed parties whose message *has* been engineered to attract a specific type of audience. Sure, there are parties with shades of grey in between, but most of the time they are nothing more than swing votes.

What I realized is that there may be different parties with differing messages, but when push comes to shove, they're all the same.

Before English missionaries arrived in Japan, hot spring bathing facilities were always coed. There were separate

entrances for men and women, but on the inside... everyone bathed in the same water. And of course, in Japan, that means naked.

Politics are the same. The debates are there for show. There may be separate entrances for Democrats and Republicans, but at the end of the day, they're entering the same political theatre. Which is why I say in the book that there is no political solution to the world's problems, which are very much ongoing. If anything, politicians are increasingly becoming disconnected from reality.

And, to recall a point I raised in the book, I question everything, even my own perspective on the matter. So, to me, saying you "saw it on TV" and declaring it true is insufficient, because you're talking about companies and organizations that benefit from you clicking on their provocative headlines. For them, there's a decided financial interest in spinning the truth and less of an incentive to deliver on the concrete facts.

Politicians, science, and media have never had a monopoly on truth. It simply doesn't work that way. It's horrifying to think to some, but even "experts" are acting on the best information available, not on an infallible set of unshakable facts and standards.

So, you continue to question your conclusions, even after entering a post-pandemic world? I heard that during the pandemic you were engaging in political commentary and research for three hours per night...?

That's correct. I researched every "side," every angle, every outlandish theory and so-called conspiracy... I learned that conspiracy means "a secret agenda kept between two or more parties," and to that extent, you can't deny that such a possibility exists. There are probably many of them. I've made

plans with people I've never revealed to anyone else, and best to my knowledge, no one knows about them. That's a "conspiracy," at least by definition, even if it has nothing to do with pandemics or the rich getting richer. I'm not talking about anything malicious here, just so we're clear. I'm saying there are things about my business and projects only one other person knows about.

So, it's not even hard to imagine there were some conspiracies playing out during the pandemic. Whether they were related to the pandemic, or some other agenda is a whole other matter.

But as it relates to the book, you really can't become a renegade without questioning everything. There are many prevalent thoughts, attitudes, and behaviors that people parrot without realizing they're not the unique little snowflakes they thought they were. They're simply regurgitating the programming they were exposed to. It's subtle, and overt, an attack from every direction. Independent thought is *very* hard to cultivate with all the programming going on.

At any given moment, 95% of people are all moving in the same general direction and will basically have the same outcomes in life, give or take a few. If you want a different life, you've got to do different things.

Which sounds like a harsh truth.

Right. But we do need to be mindful of the fact that many people don't really aspire to more, and actually, there's nothing wrong with that. It's okay to want comfort. It's okay to spend your life on "Netflix and chill." Who am I to judge?

But if you want to create the life you love through your art, well that's a whole other thing, isn't it? Like I said earlier about identity shifts, you can't do this thinking the way you've always thought. You're bound to get the same results you've always

gotten. A definite, brute force attack must be perpetrated on your old life if you wish to be the 5% and not the 95%.

And that's really the crux of Part I in *The Renegade Musician*. Part II expands on how we can initiate the necessary identity shift.

Thanks, you made the segue for me. In Part II of the book, you hold to the notion that a musician isn't a musician, they're a marketer. A baker isn't a baker, they're a marketer. I think this could be challenging for artists to accept, but what does this look like in practice?

First of all, it needs to be said that this realization comes directly from the genius mind of Dan Kennedy. In fact, *The Renegade Musician* would not have been possible if not for his book, *Renegade Millionaire*, though I think he referenced the idea that we're all marketers in another resource.

Anyway, as the owner of Music Entrepreneur News, I think you understand well just how difficult it can be to cut through the noise, stand out, and get your content or your products seen by the people who count. You know you have something worth sharing, but finding the right audience and getting your work in front of them? It's really tough until you get a formula dialed in!

I'm a musician coach, and I've helped numerous musicians find an angle for their marketing. This can streamline their efforts, but as you can imagine, it can take a lot of digging to find the angle that's going to work.

The only way I can offer hands-on advice like this is if I'm coaching someone directly. Otherwise, the best thing I can do is provide options, as I have done in *The Renegade Musician*. Part III is dedicated exclusively to the subject of marketing,

and there are enough ideas packed into it that you would almost never run out of media, channels, or tactics.

So, the only thing left is this “acceptance” piece you speak of, right?

Well, the only way to take your career by the horns and gain control over it is with marketing. Your income depends entirely on your abilities as a marketer. And the most qualified person to market your work is you! You know it better than anyone else.

And if you’re still in doubt, check out the They Might Be Giants documentary *Gigantic (A Tale Of Two Johns)*. Sometimes, even the most powerful labels have no idea how to handle you as an artist. So, waiting for a record contract is out. Becoming a marketer is in.

You address productivity in a pretty significant way in the book. I find your approach refreshing, and I don't think I've seen it laid out the way you have before.

Thanks! I think it's important that we look at tired ideas from fresh perspectives. And, importantly, productivity practices must be applicable to be worthwhile.

I don't take issue with the Law of Attraction, but there is a lot of stuff out there that in effect says believe and it will happen, assume and it will happen, feel good and it will happen, and so on. I can tell you categorically that's not how I've managed to write eight books since 2015. It didn't happen by accident!

The other extreme is dangerous too, though. If your plan involves working 18 hours per day and sleeping four, well, I hear some people can do that... Tommy Tallarico, for example. I got to interview him in my early days.

One theory is that these types of people are so driven by passion that they can't help doing it, which I buy, at least to an extent. But the other theory is far more likely, which is that they have a sleep mutation most of us do not. So, following in their footsteps is more likely to land us in a hospital bed than the pinnacle of an "ambitious creative mountain." Drinking excessive amounts of caffeine and not sleeping will catch up with you, and in my experience, it catches up fast! Productivity hinges on your well-being.

Inhuman productivity is certainly a tenant of being a Renegade Musician, but let's do it sustainably. Let's look at time as a finite resource. Let's take care of ourselves. Let's move with speed and be satisfied with "good enough" so we can quickly move from project to project... these are but some of the things covered in more detail in the book. Some of it probably won't make sense unless you read the book, though, so user beware.

To change the subject a bit, we heard about your efforts with the new Elite Players: Newsletter, but we didn't hear much about the recently released book, *The Music Entrepreneur Companion Guide*. Is this the first major publicity push you've done for a book in a while?

Actually, they're all kind of interconnected, so let me explain, and thanks for bringing this up!

I knew I would be launching Elite Players: Newsletter sometime in 2022. But as we were getting ready for the launch, I realized I wanted to build excitement for it instead of merely releasing it to the world.

There are different tracks of thought on this. Some marketers say launches are essential. Others say they don't work. Still others talk about how unsustainable they can be because they

require a huge upfront push. It's all about the hustle! And of course, I have my own experience with them as well.

Well, either way, I felt there was good reason for us to tease the release, especially as I had been absent from the content game this past summer.

So, we set a launch date about two months into the future, and because *The Music Entrepreneur Companion Guide* was nearing completion, I thought it might be fun to do a simultaneous release – sorry for the weird visual there. But nowadays, when we come out with a new product, we generally offer a bonus stack, and the book, I knew, would be a shoo-in as a bonus.

But then I thought, “Hold on a minute... *The Renegade Musician* is also waiting in the wings. If I put off working on the book, I don’t know when I’ll be able to launch next.” *The Renegade Musician* was about 30% done. So, I thought, “Wouldn’t it be crazy if we launched two books at once?!”

I’m not sure if it had the impact, we wanted it to have, and as you know, *The Renegade Musician* has been slightly delayed... but launching everything together was a fun idea, and at the time, I was thinking to myself, “the more outrageous, the better!”

Plus, it meant that we could streamline our marketing efforts somewhat, pushing people towards one offer instead of three.

But to answer you more specifically, you’re right, I think the last publicity push we did was for *The Essential Guide to Creative Entrepreneurship*, although we did promote *The Music Entrepreneur Code* heavily to our audience.

Certainly, no one can argue with your work ethic...

No, I don't think so. I mean, they could if they wanted to, but let's just say I've had quite a bit of practice writing, editing, and formatting books by now, and I've got processes, templates, swipe files, and more to help me get the job done faster. It's not about doing it fast per se, but when you have things to say, messages you want to share with the world, you can't afford to sit around waiting for tomorrow, you know what I mean?

You're probably going to be seeing *way* more books from me in the coming months and years.

And I followed your story this past fall on Steemit. I mean, I caught bits and pieces of it. The journey to launch Elite Players: Newsletter didn't exactly strike me as a good time, so it's not surprising to me you didn't get the response you hoped for. A lot of stuff happened to you, and I'm not sure I know the half of it.

That's a big factor, yeah.

But all you can do is laugh about this type of stuff, right? When I started on this path, I had no idea what I might be going through on the journey to launching the newsletter. I was thinking it would mostly be smooth sailing. How wrong I was!

Probably most people in their right mind would have thrown in the towel and run home to their parents if they had gone through the same sequence of events. It was nuts. I'm not in the right mind, which is probably how I managed to survive.

I'm not going to dwell on it though. The story is going to be chronicled in a future book.

Oh, awesome.

Yeah. It will probably be called *Digital NO-Mad* or something like that. No dash mad.

But to summarize, here's what happened:

I was living with friends in South Surrey. They had to move back to China. At that point, I had been living out of Airbnbs for about three months, and now I was facing the possibility of returning to that lifestyle.

But I wanted to see if I could find a home. My prospective girlfriend at the time wasn't going to go for anyone who wasn't a little more settled, so I thought to myself, "Maybe it's time..." I went to apply for one suite in Surrey, and although I was apparently on the short list of people to be chosen for it, someone else found favor with the landlord first.

Then, I went to check out a different basement suite in Surrey. I didn't notice it right away, but there was something a little off about the landlords. They'd chosen me to move in, but when I sent them an e-transfer – I was told later, by the way, that this is not how it's done, you're supposed to give your landlord post-dated checks in exchange for the keys to the suite – the transaction was marked fraud by my bank.

The next morning, I had to go to the bank to get a new card. But suddenly I couldn't make any online transactions.

In the meantime, the fraud department at the bank was investigating the matter, and they marked the transaction fraud a second time. At that point, I knew to back out of the tenancy agreement. I wasn't sure at that point yet, but I'm pretty sure now the landlords were elaborate scammers, so I managed to escape that situation mostly unscathed... if not for what happened next.

I got my card replaced again, but I still couldn't make payments online. I couldn't book an Airbnb.

So, I booked a hotel for the weekend. It was a little more expensive, but I thought I would wait a couple of days to see if my card would start working.

No dice. I was quickly running out of money and options. I sent a text over to a friend in Vancouver and didn't hear back. My last resort was to buy tenting gear and to find a place where I could camp for a couple of nights. It didn't pan out, and I was quickly losing daylight.

My mom sent me some money to find a hotel for the night. But it was September long weekend, so all the hotels in Fraser Valley – Hope, Harrison Hot Springs, etc. were booked up. Plus, many places wouldn't let me book without a credit card, which was proving a sticking point.

I think I finally found a hotel that let me book without a credit card around 2:00 AM that night, in Langley.

The next day, my friend in Vancouver got back to me, and she let me stay at her place for a few weeks, for a reasonable fee. I finally managed to get the issue with my card sorted out during my stay.

In the meantime, though, I was sued by a credit card company. So, that set my consumer proposal into motion.

Most of that happened between mid-September and mid-October, like maybe in a 30- to 50-day timeframe.

Wow...

Yeah, life is unpredictable, especially when you make big commitments. I feel like it's always been that way.

But that's just the CliffsNotes version, so you know plenty of other things happened along the way.

By the way, Elite Players: Newsletter sounds awesome. I can't wait to subscribe. What can you tell us about it?

Well, I know that in this day and age, people are going, “A *print* newsletter? Really?!”

But you can go back even just 10 or 20 years and see that this was a critical part of a business’s activity. The recurring income is part of it. But anyone looking to establish themselves as a celebrity, even if it was just among their existing followers, would give interviews, write books, start newsletters and magazines...

And there are still some notable personalities like Dan Kennedy and Russell Brunson putting out print newsletters, right? Like, not just one but they offer several newsletters on different topics and deliver fresh content every month?

Exactly. It’s not as outdated a concept as one might think. If anything, I think it’s becoming very *now* again. You can see the digital newsletter trend going crazy right now, of course, but I like to zag when others zig, so the print newsletter represents a good opportunity to stand out from the crowd. It costs more, and it’s not as easy to create, which is why a lot of people *aren’t* doing it.

I know people are quick to declare the death of print, but that’s simply not happening. People keep saying the radio will be dead, too, and the stats show that something like 88% of Americans still listen to the radio.

Honestly, it's just an attention-grabbing headline, right? Every other year, it seems like Mitch Joel is declaring the end of blogging. At this point, it's probably strategy, not the true end of blogging. Maybe the end of specific aspects of blogging.

So, to get back to your question, we understand well the attraction to *new* things. Updated things are kind of cool, but they're nowhere near as magnetic as new things. And the newsletter is the perfect medium for delivering a fresh dose of new to our subscribers every single month.

We also found that while educational content is good, it can tire people out and leave them feeling a little overwhelmed, so we've switched to injecting plenty of personal stories, examples, and emotions into the newsletters. It's the adage that "people are more interested in your new kitten than your best how-to content," you know what I mean?

So, most of the time, I think our subscribers are the first to hear about the latest occurrences in my life and our business. They're getting an inside look into everything – something not everyone gets access to following my blog or even our various updates at Music Entrepreneur HQ.

There are so many private conversations happening, be it team meetings, before and after podcast interviews, coaching sessions, or otherwise. I can't reveal everything from these conversations, but it's safe to say the newsletter comes with rich, vivid, juicy details you're simply not going to find elsewhere.

Also, before I forget. I'm not the only one writing for Elite Players: Newsletter and our skilled and knowledgeable partners and contributors are covering a variety of topics. It's meant to be an extension of our independent musician academy, Elite Players: All Access Pass, so in many ways it's

just as valuable. And although it's kind of a cheesy tagline, *it's like a paper seminar that arrives in your mail each month.*

Speaking of which, we heard rumors that you were going to be setting up a three-tier subscription model for Elite Players: All Access Pass at different price points.

Wow, I don't know how you could have possibly known that. You're really in the know! That's incredible.

So, here's the deal:

Now that we have the Elite Players: Newsletter, we feel the timing is right to launch a three-tier model for Elite Players. Of course, it won't be called Elite Players: All Access Pass. Each tier will have its own name. As cliché as it is, it will probably be Platinum, Gold, and Silver or something along those lines.

We've had Members Only Audios for a while as a standalone product, and that is technically the entry point into the Elite Players ecosystem. So, we'll be looking at making that our Silver plan, possibly with access to one or two other modules.

The Elite Players: Newsletter will be available only to Gold and Platinum members, though it will be available as a standalone product too. Platinum, of course, will be the All Access Pass, so really the only thing we need to create is the Gold level. I think we have a reasonably good idea of what that's going to look like, and it shouldn't prove too laborious to create.

But I have a lot on my plate, so I'm certainly not making any promises as to when it will be done.

So, you've got another book in the works, as well as a three-tier model for Elite Players on the docket. Is there anything else we should know about?

Business is all about making promises and delivering on them. We haven't delivered on all our promises through the years, and we're doing everything we can to make this right.

Which can only mean one thing, right?

Flashes of Elation?

Right. Again, I'm not committing to timeframes, but *Flashes of Elation* is definitely on the radar, and I think there's a good reason to prioritize it now. That's about all I'm going to reveal about it, but you'll soon find out why it's pretty top of mind for us.

As always, we appreciate you taking time out of your busy schedule to talk with us. This is going to be a monster piece of content when all is said and done, and it's loaded with value. Do you have any closing remarks you'd like to share with our audience?

Thank you for having me and thanks for doing what you do. Publishing takes effort no matter in what capacity, and most people doing it have a day job. Or they do it because it is their day job.

We've got a lot of great things coming at Music Entrepreneur HQ, but I really do want to emphasize that *The Renegade Musician* was a special project to me, and the book itself probably won't be the end of it.

In the meantime, though, I really want to hear what people are accomplishing. What are they getting out of the book? What results are they producing? How has it helped them?

I encourage everyone with a story to reach out to me because it will form the foundation of the work we do with the book moving forward.

Thanks again for your time, David.

Thank you.

Appendix III: One Harsh Truth You Must Face About Music Monetization

Featured below is the first article ever written for the Elite Players: Newsletter by yours truly, *One Harsh Truth You Must Face About Music Monetization*. I've included it in full for your reading pleasure.

Depending on when you're reading this, subscriptions may be closed.

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<https://www.davidandrewwiebe.com/newsletter>

He's been burning the candle on both ends. And what I admire about that is he's one of the few people I know who gets it. He's willing to do what it takes to make his music career dreams a reality.

I don't think he sees it as a sacrifice. He loves what he does, he's worked hard to get to where he's at, and he's achieved a degree of success in his endeavors as a teacher, producer, and artist.

In his own words, he's achieved "mid-tier" status with Spotify.

The reality is, if you're making *any* money on Spotify, you're doing well. So, he's correct in his self-assessment.

But the only way he's been able to get to that point is by reinvesting in his music. Heavily. His takeaway isn't anything to write home about.

"Making money in music is hard," he shared with me in one conversation.

I know well what he's talking about. I don't just have personal experience or anecdotal evidence to back it up. I've looked at the cold, hard numbers and have seen exactly how hard it is to make anything close to a living wage from Spotify.

But I must emphasize – *from Spotify*.

I know how heavily the industry is invested in Spotify. It trickles down to the smallest of hopeful independent artists attending music industry conferences where they are admonished to make Spotify their greatest priority.

I still remember when Canadian blue-eyed soul artist Remy Shand came out of hiding after a long absence to begin releasing music under the pseudonym Canary, eventually returning to his more familiar moniker, Remy Shand.

I was lit up by what I heard, and I think it's one of the reasons I got so excited about releasing singles and EPs again in 2016. Shand was releasing sketches and demos, and that gave me the courage and permission I needed to do the same. Showing up consistently became my new M.O., not trying to do it right.

"If I just released more prolifically, maybe I'd have a chance at making a decent income in streaming too," I thought to myself. Of course, I had no idea whether Shand himself was earning anything worthy of his creative expression.

It's easy to get caught up in the hype. There's nothing wrong with it. It's human.

And even though releasing more prolifically will give you a better chance at growing your Spotify following, it's a long road to the bank. It's the furthest thing from strategy, especially if you don't have other pieces of the artistic career puzzle already slotted together.

The recipe for artistic success is out there, and it is possible to reverse engineer it, but the couch-to-big-screen dream tends to blind young artists from the realities of exploitation.

As I've shared before, finding a good musician coach is not as straightforward as following the first face you see on Instagram and clinging to them as if a god unless you're especially lucky. Shills and charlatans, sadly, are often the most visible on these platforms, not the true blue.

There's a bridge we must cross as artists. Unfortunately, it's not easy because it requires a paradigm shift.

Having gotten to the other side of it, it feels to me like a quick jaunt across a suspension bridge at the park. But to artists who've come this far trusting the often-empty promises of the music industry, it will appear more like a long, lonely, treacherous journey across a tightrope over the Grand Canyon.

There's Always More Room at the Top

Betraying the norm isn't easy. To achieve personal success, there's a mountain to climb. But most artists are gathered at the foothills, where they will stay for the rest of their careers. Either it will not occur to them to climb higher, distant growls will scare them away, or they'll come tumbling down from higher up, never to attempt the scaling of the mountain again. "Don't go up there," they'll warn, "it's too dangerous."

The further and higher you go, the fewer people there will be to accompany you on your journey.

But there is good news. The further and higher you go, the less chance you'll be drawn back into the familiar, like crabs in a bucket. Plus, there's always plenty of room at the top.

The paradigm shift, though, begins with one simple, almost inconceivable realization, that *there are other ways of monetizing your music career*. Ways other than music streaming. It sounds absurd, it sounds crazy, and yet I can't tell you how many artists are stuck on "streaming pays nothing" and can never make the mental leap from where they are to where they want to go.

From my vantage point, I can see that there are dozens if not hundreds of possible income sources. From my vantage point, I can see that for the same amount of work, artists put into promoting themselves on streaming platforms, they could easily be earning 10 if not 100 times what they're currently earning if they were just sitting in the right vehicle.

I'm not better. I've simply spent more time identifying all possible vignettes of opportunity.

So, what's missing? What can you do to rise above circumstance? How do you reach new vistas?

Acceptance

There's no moving forward without acceptance. Not lying to yourself. Not bottling up or shoving it down. *Accepting everything*, exactly as it is.

This isn't to suggest that Spotify is fundamentally evil. They have it as their mission to liberate a million artists, and who knows, one day they might just do it. But that's a mission

statement, not a fact. It's an intention, not a reality. Truthfully, it has no bearing on your ability to succeed as an artist.

So, getting to the next step requires your full acceptance. Your acceptance that what you're doing now isn't working, that your current coach or mentor might not know what they're talking about, that there are other ways, and that better income sources outside of streaming do exist.

Acceptance is also crucial because artists sometimes feel like they've wasted years of their lives with their ladders set against the wrong building. So, sunk cost hits them like a ton of bricks and they have trouble walking away from the abuser.

But let me reassure you that this happens to virtually everyone. We've all stayed in relationships for longer than we should have because we did not see ourselves as deserving of anything better.

Once you've accepted that there's another building, you can adjust your ladder accordingly and you don't even need to postmortem the hell out of it.

Patience

You probably didn't learn how to ride a bike in a day. It's obvious to you now, but at one point it probably seemed an insurmountable obstacle.

How do you go from not being able to do something to being able to do something? By trying and failing.

But it's not failure alone that shows us the way. It's a willingness to learn from failure and adjust that makes the difference. It's a willingness to fail forward that illuminates the path.

Trusting in the streaming model as anything other than icing on the cake is a failure to face the cold, hard truth.

There is no shortcut from where you are to where you want to go. There's a transformation that needs to occur between single-source dependency and multi-source security. It can't happen overnight.

The more teachable you are, the faster the progress you will make. But don't expect it to happen in an instant. Have patience with the process.

Willingness

A willingness to change. A willingness to learn. A willingness to explore new options, to fail forward, to persevere through the inertia and discomfort everyone experiences in the early stages of a new venture.

No one was given a preset amount of willingness. At any moment, we can choose to be more willing or less willing. But we may need to give up what we think we know to get there.

If you want to see your music career with fresh eyes, you must be willing to give up the need to be right. Stubbornness won't serve you if you're earnest about tracking down new paths to success.

Pressing on Through the Fire

We can all overcome great obstacles. We're more capable than we often give ourselves credit for.

I've survived a major earthquake, the death of my father (when I was 13), my cousin committing suicide at 18, persistent migraines, generalized anxiety disorder, agoraphobia, being sued by creditors, filing for consumer proposals, and much more.

Life is difficult. But I stand before you a happy, healthy man.

Paradigm shifts aren't easy, either. I know well the pains and ills of cognitive dissonance. I spent a summer in bed depressed, because I lost the girl, my business, and my faith, all in one go.

But you can overcome it, and you will be better off for it.

What should you do to overcome limiting beliefs? *Whatever it takes!*

Several factors matter a great deal in making an income from music. A firm grasp of these will take you to heights never anticipated.

The Vehicle Matters

People say passive income doesn't exist. Or if it does exist, it's the result of hard work – there's no "sitting and waiting" for money.

The second sentiment is correct. I've received substantial consecutive checks from the Amazon Associates and Amazon KDP programs. Mailbox money sure is sweet! It's not always consistent or reliable, but to this day I am still rewarded for work completed months and years ago. And I'm only getting better at capitalizing on my content.

Intellectual property isn't where the real income is, but that's another topic for another time.

Either way, it illustrates the point well that your chosen vehicle matters. One email campaign is one email campaign. But there's a huge discrepancy between sending your fans to Spotify to listen to your music versus sending them to a \$12.95 free plus shipping offer. It's the same amount of work, with *very* different results.

Visual Capitalist says it takes roughly 229 streams just to make a dollar on Spotify. If your email list has 300 subscribers, you'd need almost all of them to listen to your track once on Spotify just to make a dollar. Let me repeat – *a dollar!*

You automatically make more if just one of your 300 subscribers takes you up on your \$12.95 free plus shipping offer. Conventional wisdom says every email subscriber is worth \$1 per month, so if you excel at relationship building and making offers to your fans, your email list of 300 is worth *at least* \$300 per month.

It's simple math, but it's astounding how we all get caught up in hype instead of applying a bit of simple logic to the problem. Accurate thinking is boring, but it's the dividing line between the shrewd and the average.

Marketing Matters

Many artists are under the impression that if they (artists) build it, they (audiences) will come.

It's a nice catchphrase, but it would be more accurate to say:

“If you build it, and promote it, they will come.”

Marketing, for better or for worse, is another paradigm shift that can take some time. It took the better part of five years for one of my best friends to accept that heading up marketing initiatives was an essential *and* fun part of growing her business.

I've sold hundreds of copies of *The New Music Industry*. I've helped crowdfund \$15,000 for a jazz album. I also helped sell 188 tickets for a recent 200-seater artistic community event.

How was any of this achieved? Through marketing.

There's the occasional artist, creator, blogger, or podcaster who finds success without spending a dime on advertising, but they are the exception and not the rule. Or marketing was so baked into their project, that they made it seem effortless.

The truth is most if not all your favorite “independent” artists that exploded in popularity had support from a label in some capacity.

Without the right vehicle, though, it's quite likely you will get frustrated with marketing. Because you will spend untold hours promoting something that may never have the potential to reward you at your desired level of remuneration.

Marketing holds the key to the income you want to generate. But knowing what to market is just as crucial, to avoid the insanity cycle of promoting things that don't even reward you with a cent per click!

Relationships Matter

I've had good years and bad years as a session musician. But I've earned as much as \$800 per gig, in a time when even some world-renowned session guitarists were having trouble charging more than \$120 for an hour of their time.

How did this happen? I can tell you right now it didn't happen because of how amazing I am. Sure, I've received my share of praise as a guitarist, but there are plenty of YouTube musicians who blow me clear out of the water in their virtuosity and speed. The bar is higher than it's ever been.

Most opportunities, really the *best* opportunities, for me, have come through relationships. Some relationships have been worth thousands if not 10s of thousands of dollars to me.

Dollar signs are not the reasons I built relationships. I appreciate my friends, collaborators, and partners just as

much if not more so for the people they are and the joy they've brought to my life. But I made an effort to connect, and that's the point.

If you find that making money in music is hard, it could very well be because you haven't found the right people to hang around with yet. That's fine, and it's not your fault, but you should not delay in beginning your search.

Stack the Deck in Your Favor

Spotify may well become the go-to source for everything audio. They are poised to take on Apple and Amazon, and they may even succeed. If there's a reason to be excited about the platform, that would be it. That doesn't mean your earning potential on Spotify is about to improve in a significant way.

Odds are stacked against creators. Most platforms, including Spotify, require you to drive massive volumes of traffic if you expect to be compensated for your participation. You take all the risk while the platform almost unilaterally benefits from the addition of your content.

You need 1,000 subscribers to monetize your YouTube channel – and when you finally get there, you'll only make \$5 per day if you're lucky. On TikTok, you need a minimum of 10,000 followers to monetize your account. Medium only pays \$4.32 to \$8.19 per 1,000 views. At every turn, you're stepping into ecosystems that do not favor you, the independent artist.

You can take a stab at it, just as I've done with InfoBarrel, Medium, YouTube, Odysee, Rumble, DTube, DeSo, Steemit, BIGO LIVE, and others. So long as it doesn't take over your life, experimentation is encouraged.

But while some of these platforms have doled out \$20 here, and \$30 there, I have never earned anything substantial on rented land where the deck is stacked against me. I shouldn't

complain about “passive” income, but the content I’ve pored over has swallowed up hundreds of productive hours I will never get back.

Again, while I’ve taken to experimentation, I don’t have much faith in the idea that one day I will go viral on any one platform, at least not to the point of earning an income that’s proportional to the effort invested.

Meanwhile, I can rely on my websites to earn me hundreds if not thousands of dollars in direct revenue, and five figures in indirect revenue. How do I know? My financial statements from the last six years tell me so. Even my affiliate marketing initiatives out-earn the “pennies on the dollar” model espoused by major platforms.

If you were looking to earn \$10,000 in the next three months, which of these two methods would you choose?

1. Sell 10,000 singles for \$1
2. Sell a live performance bundle for \$2,500 to four clients

It’s grade school math, yet artists are choosing A much of the time because they’re afraid to ask for B.

The vehicle matters.

Then comes the question of how to accomplish B, and that comes down to marketing.

This means identifying your prospects, designing a value proposition, and crafting your pitch. You’re not going to be able to sell a \$2,500 bundle to just anyone. But if you know who you’re talking to, why they should work with you, and you can make a convincing case for your offer, you’ll find buyers. Your pitch may not be accepted every time, but that’s how business works. If your value proposition and offer are right, there will be takers.

Again, “if you build it, and promote it, they will come.”

Marketing matters.

“But no one else is doing anything like this.”

Inaccurate. No one in your network or immediate social circle is doing anything like this *that you know of*.

Plenty of artists are beginning to think differently about their revenue model, and as they gain more confidence, they are taking bigger and bigger leaps.

So, it’s time to upgrade your association. Find artists who are:

- Making and selling high-ticket offers
- Earning a killing from a minimum viable audience
- Forward thinking in their approach to monetization

Better yet, find a coach or a mentor and ask for expert guidance. By doing so, not only are you showing the universe that you’re serious about your commitment to earning an income from music, but you’re also affirming to yourself that you’re the kind of person who goes the extra mile in achieving personal success. And I don’t know many people who don’t go the extra mile that end up there.

Big thinkers realize that time is short and small goals are wasted on the young and timid. Think big, act now, move with urgency.

Relationships matter.

Two paths are staring back at you. One leads back to the familiar. The other leads to levels not yet reached. Which path will you take?

Resources

How Many Music Streams Does it Take to Earn a Dollar?

<https://www.visualcapitalist.com/how-many-music-streams-to-earn-a-dollar/>

Next Steps

Thank you and congratulations on purchasing *The Renegade Musician*.

If you made it this far, you truly are the elite among the elite. I acknowledge you for your commitment to your success in music.

Your growth journey, however, doesn't end here. Your next steps are as follows:

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(Pre-)Order *Flashes of Elation*

Properly understood, sensitivity is a gift. But it may not feel that way at first. Having gone through a long series of disappointments, many artists come away crushed, feeling as though they are cursed to endure heartache and sadness for all eternity.

Sensitive creatives feel deeply about everything. It's what makes them excellent artists, whether it's writing heartfelt song lyrics or channeling their anger into a breathtaking painting. But coping with the roller-coaster highs and sewer tunnel lows can be deflating, and it has left many an artist lost and confused. Troubled by problematic personal relationships and recurring financial nightmares, many end up feeling as though they don't even know their place in the world and no one will ever understand them.

What's required, says *Flashes of Elation: Navigating the World as a Sensitive, Creative Soul* author David Andrew Wiebe, is a better understanding of self. When you understand your strengths, weaknesses, tendencies, and idiosyncrasies as a sensitive, creative soul, a brand-new pathway opens, as if a bright light spontaneously turning on in an utterly dark room.

Flashes of Elation features 50 essays detailing Wiebe's journey and discoveries in candid detail, from anxiety attacks to finding those rare flashes of elation that make you feel like you're on top of the world. Any artist looking to accomplish more, create an independent income, overcome discouragement, understand themselves better, and improve interpersonal relationships owes it to themselves to pick up a copy of this book to find their path to fulfillment and empowerment.

Flashes of Elation is slated for a December 31, 2024, launch. If you're reading this before then, you can pre-order the book at Amazon by following the link below. If it's after the noted date, you can order your preferred version (Kindle, paperback, hardcover, and eventually, Audible) here:

<https://www.davidandrewwiebe.com/flashesofelation>

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And, as always, I’d like to thank *you*, the reader, whoever you may be – fan, follower, friend, extended family member, sibling, parent, or even stranger. This would not be possible without you.

Let's Stay in Touch

If you'd like to find out more about what I've shared with you in this book, head on over to:

DavidAndrewWiebe.com

From blog posts to podcasts to videos, there's so much more for you to learn and discover that will help you on your journey.

If you have any questions or comments regarding this book, feel free to email me at david@dawcast.com. I'd love to hear from you.

I look forward to connecting with you on social media as well:

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X: [@davidawiebe](https://twitter.com/davidawiebe)

May this book bless you on your musical journey.

About the Author

David Andrew Wiebe is the award-winning composer of *The Nobody Prayer*, best-selling author of *The New Music Industry* and *The Music Entrepreneur Code*, community builder and co-founder of The Indie YYC, and experienced artist coach with over 15 years in podcasting.

He was a staff writer for Music Industry How To and its larger network of sites for over nine years. He still writes or edits the occasional piece for Bandzoogle. His content has been seen far and wide on the most prominent music business blogs – DIY Musician, Hypebot, Indie on the Move, Sonicbids, Music Think Tank, Flypaper, Symphonic, Independent Music Promotions, Celebrity Access, Drooble, Music Marketing Guy, and Sessionville, among others.

As an artist, Wiebe has played to audiences of up to 200 people on over 300 occasions across Western Canada. He's published 49 songs and is an experienced guest or session guitarist and producer.

As a coach, he's helped artists create winning crowdfunding, social media, and independent radio campaigns. His ability to drill down on what matters to an artist, what makes them unique, and suss out the best marketing strategy for them is a point of much praise and attention. But he is perhaps best known for his ability to help artists, creatives, and even entrepreneurs find their focus, a true challenge in a world overflowing with shiny objects.



Find more: <http://www.DavidAndrewWiebe.com/>

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Essential Books by David Andrew Wiebe

The New Music Industry

The Essential Guide to Music Entrepreneurship

The Essential Guide to Creative Entrepreneurship

Start Your Year the Right Way

The Music Entrepreneur Code

The Music Entrepreneur Code – 2022 Edition

The Music Entrepreneur Companion Guide

Productivity, Performance & Profits Blackbook

Digital NO-Mad

Available at: <https://www.davidandrewwiebe.com/books>

Essential Musical Works of David Andrew Wiebe

Shipwrecked... My Sentiments

Fragments

Don't Wait Too Long

Hope

Waves

Your Eyes Give It Away

Christmas Surf

Fire Your God

No Escape

Nowhere Even Near

Spirit Searcher, Vol. 1

Guided Meditation for Transformation

The Nobody Prayer (Original Soundtrack)

Makeshift Romance

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