



The Music-Preneur Mindset Podcast

EPI9: Why YOU Are the Brand



You're listening to Episode 19 of the Music-Preneur Mindset Podcast.

Hey there! You're listening to Episode 19 - Why YOU Are the Brand.

I'm your host, Suz - a mindset coach to help music-preneurs build sustainable careers in music.

I've been thinking a lot lately about what frustrates people the most. What keeps them up at night, what causes them to stress eat and snap at their friends because they're so exhausted with life?

You ever think about those things?

I don't recommend it... it can drive you crazy, because there are so *many* frustrations out in the world and we can't cure them all!

I soon became frustrated thinking about frustrations! But then I took a deep breath in and said, "Ok, one thing at a time, Suz." You know I love a good mono-tasking session.

I tried focusing on one thing that stood out to me as a frustration of musicians. The one thing that did strike me was the feelings that come up for many music-preneurs when they go to market their music:

They don't like doing it!

At. All.

They rather be doing ANYTHING else than selling their music to others.

Do you ever feel that way?

Do you ever feel like, "Man, I was put here to play, not to put on a dog and pony show to move units & streams!"

Yea. That's fair. I get it.

But... it'd also be nice if music could be your main source of income, no?

Enter: the frustration.

So I thought about it some more, people watched online for a bit, and took notice of a few things. The main thing many musicians get wrong is they make it all about the music.

I know, enter eye-rolls here. But follow me for a second on this...

When you make it all about the music... music that is unfamiliar to the people you're sharing it with... there's very little for them to connect with and so they don't often engage.

They also don't engage because the musicians *themselves* hate marketing for the same reason it's not working for their fans - they don't *like* making it all about the music.

They feel spammy and car-salesman-y and pretty much a broken record {pun intended}. They know they need people to be aware they have new music out so the clear next step is to tell as many people as possible, as many times as possible, about it, right? The music is the product - you market a product to sell a product, no?

Here's the thing, marketing isn't about products.

You'll never see an advertisement for a new TV show or film that doesn't include, "From the producers who brought you..." or, "From the star of..." That's because marketing is about people.

It's about giving people something that will solve a problem for them or enrich their life in some way. But people are human, and humans - like any animal - don't react well to the unfamiliar.

So be new... but be familiar... hmm. How does that work?

Same way it works for those TV and film trailers - they'll never act like the product is an old or recycled idea {although many are}, but they'll tie people to the project who the intended audience is familiar with and trusts.

If a movie did well at the box office and that same director goes on to direct a new film no one has ever heard of, the audience feels as if they can

trust the film will be good because the same director did a great job last time.

The new movie could suck - through no fault of the director. It could be a poor script or a lack of chemistry between the cast - every director has their duds - but people will take a chance on it based on the director's track record, and often little else.

It doesn't mean the movie isn't important or of any value - on the contrary. The movie is EVERYTHING - the reason everyone involved works so hard - it's all for the sake of creating a great film.

But the marketing is about getting people to buy into something NEW.

And for that reason, it can't be about the movie, but about the *people* involved in the movie. That's who the audience has a connection to and trusts.

When YOU are the brand, not your music, you're able to focus on connecting with fans on a personal level, allowing that familiarity to build.

Common household items, like sandwich bags for instance, don't need a marketing campaign based around the people who brought you the convenience of plastic wrap. Sandwich bags aren't new and they serve a pretty clear necessity for many families.

But think about perfumes, high-end clothing, magazines, sports games - what do their marketing campaigns all have in common? They all have celebrities as the face of their brands.

In order to get people tuning into things they don't *need*, but clearly enjoy, there needs to be a larger pull to get most of them paying attention and paying period.

Sure, you'll have super fans who only care about the music and don't need to be warmed up before pressing play. That's because they already feel that connection - and it didn't happen overnight - connections take time to build.

The goal should be to turn as many people from your audience into super fans as you can, but you've got to start somewhere, right?

So I hope by now I've made my case that a human component is needed in order to create that deeper trust factor with your followers.

But what does that ultimately look like? How do you "sell yourself" without feeling like you've "sold out" or simply just shared too much?

Last week I spoke about the [Importance of Setting Boundaries](#). It's definitely important to set boundaries on things you will or won't share before you start launching into marketing yourself.

Are your kids off limits? Will you make a hashtag for your pet? Are you a highlight-reel-only poster, or will you be getting super vulnerable with your audience?

In addition, what's the overall message you wish to convey? What is the mission of your music? What's the larger theme?

Your focus or message may change album to album or single to single, but what's the over-arching commonality in the music you create? Is it to empower? Empathize? Inspire? Rebel against the status quo?

Why do you make music?

Sticking to a few key concepts in your messaging will help create consistency and a message people can get on board with. Just as with any boundaries, when people know the parameters of what they're getting into they're more likely to trust in their decision to get involved.

Focus less on trying to get everyone to love your music and focus more on doing everything in your power to make it easy for people to decide if they wanna roll with you or not.

If not, great! You've figured out who's NOT for you and you'll get closer to finding the people who ARE for you.

Know what you stand for and be clear as day in telling others what you stand for so people who believe in the same things can stand with you.

Beyonce has built an empire around female empowerment. She also sings about relationships, dancing at parties, and hints about her personal life that everyone wants to dissect.

You won't hear her sing about crying alone in her corner because her boyfriend left her - that would be off-brand. Doesn't mean she's never done that, maybe she has, but that's not the brand she built.

Metallica may be really sweet, teddy bear guys when they're at home with their families, but they're not going to dress, talk, or act like Ed Sheeran. They didn't build a brand off of being the sweetheart some girls dream of dating - they're rock/metal badasses that some girls dreamt of dating.

You don't need to be one-dimensional, but you do want others to be able to identify where you fit in their world. It doesn't mean you can't grow as an artist and change your message over time, on the contrary.

Staying true to who you are and what you stand for is what is going to allow you to experiment with different genres, collaborators, etc. and still keep the same fans on board with what you're doing.

Whenever I talk to clients about promotions and building their fanbase I always pick up on their hesitation to "sell themselves." It feels almost as if I'm asking them to "sell out."

That's always been a funny phrase to me - don't you want to sell out? Sell out your shows, sell out of CDs {at least back in the day}, sell out of merch?

But I understand, there's always been a weird energy around monetizing art. However, if you're looking to make a career out of being a musician, you've already kissed that altruism goodbye!

You may feel like you've poured your heart and soul into your latest single and you want people to focus on it and love it as much as you do. You don't want them to get distracted with what Netflix shows you're a fan of or what your favorite cereal is - I get it.

But I want you to keep 2 things in mind when that thought creeps up:

#1 You're not going to build a career on one song {unless you're Vanilla Ice}

#2 You already know you hate repeating yourself and spamming people about that one song over and over and you're dying to find other things to say on social media... and so here's the solution to your frustrations!

All of this can be overcome with simple shifts in one's mindset.

First of all, think back to being a little kid who loved music. Didn't you want to soak up EVERYTHING you could from your favorite artist? Every interview, every magazine cover, every concert? It was more than the music - it was the energy of the artist themselves.

Secondly, what's more authentic than sharing with your fans the person behind the lyrics and melody? What's deeper than sharing a piece of

yourself with them that was responsible for creating the art they're enjoying?

Centering your posts, newsletters, FB Lives, etc. around a few common themes or an overarching message not only builds consistency and trust but makes YOUR life a lot easier because doing so will help make a lot of decisions for you.

Decision making - UGH - I know - the thing we all hate doing the most.

Not sure what to post next? Think of your message. Choose a theme from that message, Google it, find an image that comes up in the search, and share it. Find an image with a quote or write something of your own in the caption re: how that image makes you feel.

Not sure which single to release next? Which one most aligns with your message? Which one has the strongest brand influence? There. Done. Chosen.

Leading with your message and the things that make you YOU, rather than leading with your latest single, afford you many more opportunities to have interesting things to say that connect with your audience, beyond, "Follow me on Spotify!"

So if the thought of "branding you" is new to you - take some time to sit with the points I've laid out here today.

Decide for yourself what it means to “sell out” and get clear on what is holding you back about sharing more of yourself with your audience.

You don’t need to sign up for a reality show to connect with your audience - again - boundaries. But what parts of your life can you share? What can you tell your audience that let’s them know, “Yea, I’m just like you!”

In Episode 15 I shared my thoughts on [Why No One Cares](#). A lot of that had to do with not feeling as if they have something to say about what you shared.

Make it easier for them to have something to say.

In order for them to have something to say about your music they need to hit play. In order for them to hit play they have to feel as if they trust where/who the music is coming from so they don’t worry it’ll be a waste of their time/attention.

Think about when you’re scrolling through on social media. Are you more likely to comment on a friend’s post or a promo ad?

Are you more likely to comment on a post regarding a celebrity you like or a post that focuses on a topic you know nothing about?

Your fans are no different.

Promoted content does not need to directly be about the product. Make it about you and what you stand for so others have something to comment on and get behind.

If you're not sure where to begin with branding you and your message, I've got you covered.

I've included in the show notes a free download of ***Selling My Soul Self Workbook***. Use [this workbook](#) to ask the deeper questions of what it is you stand for and the message you want to share with others.

You'll then find it easier to connect with like-minded people and before you know it you'll have a community of people waiting to be impacted by your message!

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As always, feel free to email me at any time: suz@therockstaradvocate.com.

If you're looking to get clarity on your next steps, find time to balance everything on your plate, or you'd like to learn how to connect better with your fans, let's talk!

Until next time, Rockstar! Have a wonderful week and I hope to see you back here next Wednesday so we can get grounded to get rising! Take care.