



The Music-Preneur Mindset Podcast

Ep48: The Importance of Calling Your Own Shots

You're listening to Episode 48 of the Music-Preneur Mindset Podcast.

Hello! You're listening to [Episode 48: The Importance of Calling Your Own Shots](#).

I'm your host, Suz – a mindset coach helping music professionals grow their creative talents into full-fledged businesses by getting clear on their goals and next steps.

The most important difference between a DIY musician and a music-preneur is one's mindset. It's the difference between seeing music as the only focus and seeing the music as the vessel to impact other people's lives and make a *living* around creating that impact.

I started in this industry over 15 years ago and hands down the one thing that sets the successful musicians apart from the rest (signed or unsigned) is the understanding that this is a *job* and that there is a business to run.

It's like I always say – if you don't want to learn the business of the music industry then you should embrace your art as an expensive hobby – and there's 100% nothing wrong with that.

But if you're looking to do music full time, to leave your day job behind, to disprove the notion that creatives are poor, struggling freelancers then you must learn to get comfortable calling the shots in your own career.

While a large part of running your own business is about delegating, there's a

The Music-Preneur Mindset Podcast (c) 2019 The Rock/Star Advocate, LLC All Rights Reserved.

www.therockstaradvocate.com/podcast

difference between delegating and giving up all control hoping someone else fixes all of your problems.

“Can’t somebody do this for me?” is the most common line I hear when speaking to artists. Everyone on the business side of things hears this on repeat. So many of them point to this very outcry to say that musicians are lazy. I don’t buy that. Being a musician is not easy – especially with everything that is expected of you in today’s market.

I see this lament of “why can’t someone else do it?” coming from a place of fear and overwhelm – a place where confidence in the knowledge and power you already possess is low and the thought of taking on more is paralyzing.

And I can 100% sympathize with that. We discussed in [Episode 11](#) that Fraud Talk we all experience at times – that voice that says, “Who the hell do you think you are trying to succeed in that way?”

It’s common to wonder why you, as a creative, should even bother attempting to understand the business side of things. For centuries musicians have been trained to believe they don’t know any better and others need to make their decisions for them while they “stick to the music.”

Many times your resistance to embracing all of the business tasks reflects exactly what this industry has trained you to be – reliant on those who “know better.”

The truth is, you have more talents and more abilities than you may think, if you only gave yourself a chance to flex those muscles. We learn by doing, but if you assume you don’t know any better you’ll never take action on those matters.

As a music-preneur it’s important to learn about each of the various aspects of your career before you delegate those areas to others. First, it will enable you to know if the person you’re hiring is doing right by you. Second, your team will look to you to

lead them to where you want to go. If you leave everything up to others on your team you won't be chasing your dream, you'll be fulfilling theirs.

For many musicians recording cover songs is a thing one does to gain followers and get more attention on their own music. If you don't want to build an entire career off doing covers why would you want to build a career blindly following other people's directives?

If you allow the course of your career to be blindly directed by the say so of others why not allow your music to be written by others as well?

I'm not saying there's anything wrong with performing covers or being a work for hire musician. My point is more so that you have the power to take control and ownership of your business just as you do your music.

Another reason, aside from fear and overwhelm, that you may default to looking to others to tell you what to do next and how exactly to do it is decision fatigue. It's a real thing and it's extremely common among entrepreneurs.

I myself can tell you when I'm around friends and they ask what I'm in the mood to do or what I think we should have for dinner I respond with an exasperated, "I don't care, please decide for us."

That's because all day long I'm making decisions about everything. Sure all adults make a lot of decisions each and every day from what to eat to what to wear, what route to take to work etc., but once at work many are told fairly explicitly what to do, how to do it, and when to have it done.

For entrepreneurs, you have to first decide what work needs to be done, then decide what work needs to be focused on first, then what steps should be taken to complete that work, when that work should be done, how it should be done, what

should come next...we haven't even gotten to actually doing the work, the list goes on. The deciding never seems to end! No wonder you rather someone else call the shots.

I've referenced many times on this show Napoleon Hill's observation from his renowned book, *Think & Grow Rich*, that successful people make quick decisions and they tweak them slowly. Meaning they act, reflect on data, adjust, and act some more.

I took that observation to heart over two years ago and keep it in mind when I'm dragging my feet. It's served me quite well and I'm a firm believer that if musicians could empower themselves to be more decisive when it comes to the business of their music they would be more successful.

I believe in this so much I'm currently working on a book that dives into that whole topic much more deeply – but more on that at a later time...

For now, I have a feeling you may be wondering how the hell you're supposed to make decisions about things you don't yet know about, or know enough about, to make sure the decisions are well thought-out.

"What's wrong with seeking out help from an expert or hiring someone to handle things that are beyond my understanding?" you ask.

I hear ya. I can see how trying to succeed using just the knowledge you have now would sound fruitless.

But, as I said before – I agree it's important to delegate and to continue learning from others. In fact I dedicated an entire episode to this very belief in [Episode 39 – The Team That Makes the Dream Work](#).

What I'm encouraging in *this* episode is to challenge yourself a bit before you start

searching elsewhere for answers. I want to empower you to look within first and begin learning how to trust your own instincts even when they may be at odds with what an “expert” is telling you to do. Always be in touch with your WHY and what you want from your career.

Make sure the decisions you’re making, the steps that you’re taking – make sure they’re all in alignment with your why and your goals. If not be sure to take whatever action is necessary to right the course.

You know more than you think you do and NO ONE is more of an expert on you than you. So before you go crying that all of these other people have more expertise than you, you already have plenty of expertise on who you are and what’s best for you. Own that.

I always warn musicians at conferences to sift through the advice they’re given from panelists and decide which pieces of the advice they’ll keep and which parts they’ll decide aren’t for them. Doesn’t mean the advice is bad or wrong, it just means which pieces of that advice fit *your* situation? Because advice is rarely a one-size-fits-all kinda thing.

For example, I always interject on a panel (possibly to the dismay of the other panelists up there with me) when I inevitably hear the question from the audience “what should I do first?” and an expert from the panel doesn’t first ask where the artist is in their journey and what they are hoping to accomplish.

If there’s a bio writer on the panel they’re gonna tell you you need a bio written before anything else. If there’s a merch designer on the panel they’ll tell you you can’t succeed without great merch. If there’s a photographer up there they’ll tell you it all starts with great photos, and so on.

And again, they may not be wrong – but it all *depends* on your goals and where you’re at in your career at this moment in time, not to mention a bunch of other

qualifying factors that are unique to you.

I don't believe panelists are only out to sell what they're hawking, your success be damned – I think majority of them are trying to be helpful and do truly believe their advice is right. After all, at least they're passionate about what they do and believe in the importance of what they offer.

In addition, in an effort to be helpful they're going to default to what they know best and if bio writing is what they know and telling you you need a bio isn't necessarily wrong and certainly not a bad thing, that's what they'll tell you.

In my opinion, if you decide to pay \$250 or whatever the price is to have someone write your bio and you later realize that \$250 could have gone to something more crucial at that particular point in time that's not on the bio writer – that's on you.

You can't fault them for believing a bio is crucial to every artist's success. Even though I encourage, as industry experts, we always start with qualifying questions in order to give the most appropriate answers, it's not our responsibility to determine where you are in your journey.

It's up to you to ask the right questions. A better question to ask would be to first explain where you are in your career and where you hope to go and THEN ask the panel what recommendations they have for your next steps.

That's what I mean by calling your own shots. If someone tells you professional photos are the next thing you need to focus on don't simply take that advice and act on it because someone you believe to be more qualified than you told you that's what you need.

Ask yourself what needs to be done to reach your goal(s). I'm sure a lot needs to be done. Ok, well now prioritize. What *feels* like a top priority? If you're really stuck look to other artists who have been where you are – what lessons did they learn?

What did they do first? What would they do now in your position after learning some lessons?

Definitely seek out expert advice but only after you've given it some thought. It's ok to question the source of the information – does the advice make sense to you or does it feel motivated by the hopes of making a sale?

Does the advice conflict with what you feel is right? Don't be afraid to say screw it to the expert advice and go your own way even if you're wrong – hell, especially if you're wrong. Learn some lessons and gain a deeper understanding of what the correct course of action is.

When I was 20 or 21 and in the midst of quitting my job at one of the record labels for the 5th time (yea, I quit the same job 5x, you can hear all about that in [Episode 2](#) if you missed it), I went to an event hosted by Landmark to hear Russell Simmons speak about this new book, *Do You*.

Even though I believe in paying one's dues (and believe me I did for many years) I always had my own way of doing things and I always wanted to call my own shots but often talked myself out of it (see: quitting the same job 5x) because I believed who the hell was I to think I knew better than my superiors?

I asked this question to Russell – how do you know when to listen to yourself vs. what the industry vets want you to do? His answer was simple – do what you feel is right (Do You, get it?) and if you're wrong try again and if you're still wrong try again and if you're wrong after that try something else – whether that's the advice of others or something different.

His point was to stay true to what feels right and not get caught up in the fact that you might be wrong. All being wrong is going to do is teach you something and enable you to get better at deciphering what your gut is trying to tell you.

I don't always believe in my talents but there's one skill I've always known to be my saving grace as I've built and rebuilt businesses in this industry – I don't have a fear of making mistakes. I have many other fears but I'm fine with making mistakes and I've even become quite good at making them in public, as anyone who's attended my live webinars knows – I'm NOT tech savvy so if you want a live display of trial and errors come watch me try to coordinate a camera and chat box at once next time...

And I want the same for you – minus the tech issues. I want you to act boldly and own your mistakes and confidently filter the advice you're given.

Take what makes sense for you and throw out the rest. It will serve you well once your decisions have higher stakes and the buck ends with you. Take the time now to get good at understanding what your gut is telling you.

You are the only expert on you therefore you know better than anyone what's ultimately right for your career and if things take a wrong turn no expert, coach, or team member out there is going to accept blame for what happens in your career so you might as well call the shots if you're gonna have to shoulder the blame for the mishaps anyway.

If you're not sure how to sift through advice and information out there for the taking I invite you to visit the show notes page – www.therockstaradvocate.com/ep48 and download my 3-Question Expert Audit Cheatsheet.

In it I walk you through 3 things you should consider when searching for and taking advice. You may find you already have the answers or you do need help but you'll find it on your own terms.

I thank you for listening and I hope you feel empowered to start calling more shots! Let me know what shot you're gonna call this week!

Head on over to www.therockstaradvocate.com/ep48 and let me know your thoughts in the comments section! And while you're there be sure to check out the additional 'rock'sources and download my freebie – the 3-Question Expert Audit Cheatsheet.

If you're looking to figure out your next steps, find time to balance everything on your plate, or work on your decision-making skills, let's talk!

Email me at anytime: suz@therockstaradvocate.com

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