



The Music-Preneur Mindset Podcast

Ep63: Quit Making Music For Everyone

You're listening to Episode 63 of the Music-Preneur Mindset Podcast.

Hello! You're listening to [Episode 63: Quit Making Music For Everyone](#).

I'm your host, Suz - a mindset coach helping music professionals get clear on their goals and find the time to get it all done while maintaining a healthy work/life balance.

I'm also the host of The Music-Preneur Mindset Summit - a 2.5 day music conference in Long Beach, NY at the end of Sept and if you're a fan of this podcast you're going to LOVE this in-person event, but more on that later, so keep listening!

First, I want to address something that I've been wanting to talk about on this podcast for a while now, and then I realized, "Hey, it's MY podcast, I decide what we talk about, so why not do it now?!"

It's about a nails-on-the-chalkboard type moment I have whenever an artist says, "My music is for everyone." Because, no, it's fucking not.

Nothing is for everyone. Unless you're air, clean water, or shelter, you're not for everyone. Not everyone likes coffee, not everyone likes Game of Thrones and not even everyone likes Beyonce. That's just how the world works.

While it may seeemmm from the outside perspective that these more mainstream, global treasures are marketed for all people they're actually not - because that's not how you grow a brand.

Even Beyonce, over the years it's clear she has begun making music and speaking her mind with no worry if it turns other people off from her music. She'd prefer it that way - it's not about getting everyone on earth to listen to your message, it's about getting the *right* people to listen

to your message.

There are groups of people she will never win over, nor would she want to - she's fine cultivating her bey-hive of super fans who her message speaks to.

Every time you say your music is for everyone you're telling people you have no idea who your music is for and you're just hoping something sticks and it resonates with anyone.

It's kinda like the saying, "Stand for nothing and you'll fall for everything." If you don't take a stand and loudly and proudly make known who your fans are, consumers will never understand where to put you.

And that's your issue with it, isn't it? You don't want to be "put" anywhere. You don't want to be pigeon-holed, you don't want labels, you don't want boundaries because boundaries kill art, right?

Well, here's the thing - boundaries, as I always say, give you more freedom than you realize. Without them, you're unrecognizable and un-relatable to people. We are all animals and when an animal doesn't recognize something it avoids it - it's basic survival instinct.

You need reference points, stories that connect, some form of familiarity for people to understand they can trust what you're putting in front of them. Not to mention, nothing feels special to someone when eeeeevvvvveerrrryyoone likes it.

Think back to when you were in high school and you "discovered" that awesome emo punk band. You were one of the first people to really tell others about them, you went to all of their shows, their roadies even knew your name.

But then all the people you told about them told their friends about them and then their notoriety grew. All of a sudden you were less enthused about them. You didn't have that intimate connection with them that you once had and your excitement began to wane.

Any ringing bells?

Everyone enjoys feeling like they have a little best-kept secret and even though you're excited to see a band you love succeed, it's bittersweet because now you're sharing that secret with more people. But it's the bands and artists who still work at building an intimate community, no matter the size, who are able to keep those original super fans around.

And you need those rabid, engaged super fans who feel intimately connected to your message to be willing to tell others about you so those people can become super fans and so on.

Even as you grow to larger crowds, however, your music still won't be for everyone. You'll always need to remain clear and specific in who your audience is, even as it grows and even as it changes.

There are a number of reasons I think artists say, "My music is for everyone."

For one, it makes them feel as if that's the fastest way to global domination. If the music is for everyone then they have a huge pool of people to market to and telling everyone to listen to their music will be the fastest way to gain a huge following.

Another reason seems to be that admitting someone or some group of people wouldn't like their music would somehow be the same as admitting it's bad music, which is so NOT the case. Making something that someone or some group isn't a fan of means just and only that - they are not a fan of it. It doesn't mean it's not deserving of fans.

And saying it's for everyone isn't a way to boast about how great it is. Saying it's for everyone doesn't make it sound like your music is too good to miss; it makes it sound like it's not strong enough to resonate with anyone specific.

Again, stand for nothing and you'll fall for everything, right? Music is the same - if it's not turning someone off it's not turning anyone on in a big enough way.

A third reason, and the main one in my humble opinion, that musicians market their music to "everyone" is not so much laziness but rather overwhelm and overthinking where to even begin to define their market.

If it's for everyone then they can aimlessly talk about their music to whoever they come into contact with because in their head it's a 100% probability that they'll create a new fan.

If they have a winning personality they may collect a passive follower, but that does not mean they've spread the message of their music; it means they've gotten someone else to think they were cool/nice/funny/attractive enough to loosely stay in touch with online.

And let me be clear, if you want to make money from your music you are not in the business of collecting passive followers; you're in the business of connecting with super fans. Your goal is to identify and engage with people who will be so into you and your music that they'll want to support everything you do - whether in monetary form or in being your loudest and most excited cheerleader online sharing your content and message with others.

All the talk out there on finding your avatar, ideal fan, and the like can feel like it's all based in another language, so many artists avoid it out of fear of getting it wrong. No one likes to feel stupid and marketing and branding take specific skill sets that can take time to learn. I get it.

But just because it feels overwhelming doesn't mean it's not worth breaking down and tackling. And I'm going to show you how in a moment.

First, I want to address anyone who may still be listening to this episode and digging their heels in believing they're going to be some outlier case where they create music that is truly, 100% for just about damn near everyone - they've cracked the code and have created something that is loved by whoever listens to it.

To those people I'd say this:

Number 1: I have a feeling you want fame more than you want to make a living from your music. And that's ok. But there's a big distinction between trying to be famous and aiming to make a living from your music.

If you don't feel fulfilled by a few hundred to a few thousand super fans who invest enough in your music that enables you to live a life that allows you to create and live the life you've always wanted as a creative, if you're always chasing a certain number of people to follow you or praise

your work, then your goals may be a bit different than wanting a career in music.

Don't get me wrong, I'm not asking you play small. It's not about settling, it's about what you're putting your energy and focus into. It's a LOT easier to grow a fanbase when you love up the fans you already have than if you're constantly looking for that number to grow regardless of who's hitting that follow button.

And if that's the case, then stop wasting so much money and time on your music because there are a LOT of easier ways to become famous!

I can go into a whole other conversation about this, so I'll reel myself in and get back to my next point...

Number 2: Fine, don't pay attention to what I'm saying. I'm dumb. What do I know? Fine. Your music IS for everyone. Happy? Ok, so now let me ask you something - how are you getting all of those people to hit play?

After all, what I said earlier about people avoiding what they don't know - that's not my opinion - that's science. And as Derek Sivers so brilliantly illustrated in his TedTalk about creating a movement, a movement isn't created by the person with the message, it's created by the first person who decided to follow the person with the message.

If you haven't seen this TedTalk the link is in the show notes page of this episode, but in a nutshell he showed a video of a person dancing erratically in a park. In that moment the person dancing was not starting a movement, they were simply dancing. And then, they connected with another person sitting in the park who dug what they were doing and that person decided to join in.

At that moment that second person created a movement because they sent a signal out to other people watching in the park that this person dancing was cool to join in with, that this person was onto something that they should want to be a part of - that's your super fan.

You NEED to start specific and niche down in order to find that group who's gonna take your message and brand from music to a movement.

So go ignore my words that your music isn't for everyone - but just know that in order to reach everyone you have to first connect with someone and that someone needs to feel your music was created specifically for them.

Ok... now that I'm done debating with the ether, let me jump into how you do this. If you're totally lost as to how to find your group of super fans I'm going to break it down for you.

When I started my first business as a consultant, before The Rock/Star Advocate, my service list was over 7 pages long, I had 3 or 4 tiers to every offer, I had back-up service lists in case someone came around that wanted something I didn't normally offer, and I approached everyone with the confidence that I could somehow be of value to them.

I made very little money, and while I did good work I wasn't excited about any of the work I was doing. Money aside, I just didn't feel like I was in my element. I was pretty good at a lot of things but I wanted to feel great at something. I wanted to feel like I was stepping into my expertise and with so many services being offered there was no way I had time to become an "expert" at each and every one of those things.

It was also difficult for people to recommend me because no one was exactly clear on what I did. I only got clients if I happened to know someone who needed help and I said, "Oh, I can do that!" But no one was finding me organically.

No one was searching me out because I wasn't known for anything.

Thinking I was able to help everyone was actually a scarcity mindset - because it was based in fear that there wasn't enough money out there, there weren't enough clients to just offer what I was excellent at, so I better offer everything.

It wasn't until I went through a bit of business bootcamp with my business coach that I hired to help me start The Rock/Star Advocate that I realized being an expert in one, specific area enabled others {my movement makers} to have the right tools to tell others about me!

I finally learned the riches were in the niches!

If you needed heart surgery would you rather have a heart surgeon or a general internist do the procedure?

People need to trust you're the best at what you do. And as musicians, you're at your best when you stick to your authentic, true sound - no matter what that may be. Audiences can tell when you're phoning it in.

Don't try to mold yourself after someone else's sound just because you believe they're having more success with that particular sound. All it means is that they've come across the right audience for them.

How did I niche down? I started turning potential clients away. I limited the services I offered. I made sure the content I shared all revolved around my main message of self-care and work/life balance in the music industry.

I understand many artists may feel stifled by this. There are many multi-passionate musicians out there who may like to dabble in jazz as much as they enjoy leading a 7-piece swing band. And niching down doesn't mean you have to stifle those various sides of yourself.

But you do have to make a decision. You have to decide what music you're going to monetize and what you're going to be known for on a more public platform and which you'll keep as a side passion.

Even P!NK strays from her typical anthem pop sound to do an acoustic duo project or a feature on one of Eminem's angry rap anthems. You can find your niche without giving up everything that makes you you.

Something, however, needs to be the focus - needs to be what people can sink their teeth into.

In [Episode 62](#) I discussed pivoting. You may decide after building your niche following that you're changing your sound and pivoting your brand towards a new genre. You wouldn't be the first artist to do that and many can do it successfully when it's done with intention and done with a proper plan of rolling out the transition in a way that people can understand.

So if you're afraid to niche down on the chance that you may abandon your current sound, quell those fears. You can always cross that bridge when/if you get there, but for now focus on finding the exact right market that's waiting to devour the music you're doing now.

I niched down by limiting the services I offered, but how do you, as a musician, niche down without limiting yourself musically?

Great question! You limit yourself, instead, to where you hang out and engage with your fans, where you market your music, where you play live, etc.

In today's music scene it's about understanding the lifestyle your music fits into and the lifestyle of your ideal fans.

If you've got a mellow, acoustic vibe - coffee houses and stores like Urban Outfitters and Free People may be where you find your fans. If you're a punk rocker, dive bars, skate parks and piercing shops may be where you find them. Bass-heavy rap? Night clubs, glam fashion hot spots, and sneaker shops may have your ideal fans.

So how does that translate online? Facebook groups! Hashtags! Lifestyle blogs! If you can think of the physical locations and brands your fans interact with then find those brands and hangouts online.

Stop hitting up the music blogs to try and be seen. Go after the coffee aficionado blog sites and pitch them on how your brand message fits right in with their audience and see if they'd do a feature on you! Follow the Urban Outfitter IG account and start engaging with the people commenting and engaging on their posts, follow those people, comment on their posts!

You've got to be that person who gets in front of your niche and starts dancing erratically in the park. All it takes is one in that group to join us enthusiastically and others will follow suit.

Don't talk at them, talk with them. This is a TWO-WAY relationship! Don't expect a follow or a share or a comment for nothing. Building a career in music is so much more than the music - it's about connecting and building community and then lifting that community up and bringing it closer together with your music.

Quit making music for everyone. Be exclusive. Be picky. Be authentically you and own the fact that you're not for everyone. But you're for someone and that someone will tell their someones and so on.

Make your music into a lifestyle and invite the right people to live it with you.

This takes some trial and error and some market research but all that really is is you putting yourself out there and listening to what your current fans are telling you they like. Ask more questions, listen more closely and act accordingly.

As the saying goes, "To the world you may be one person, but to one person you may be the world."

Keeping thinking in a niche-rich mindset and you'll find where you and your music fit best. And if that changes you can adapt with the same approach next time.

What do you say? You with me on this??

Then go on and tell me who YOU make music for - who are your people???

Feel free to tell me in the comments of the show notes page or send me an email - suz@therockstaradvocate.com and let me know how things have been going for you!

If you'd like additional help and support feel free to take a deeper look into Rock/Star Slackers™ and/or join us THIS SEPTEMBER 26-28, virtually or in-person, at The Music-Preneur Mindset Summit.

More information and a link to tickets are available in the show notes page, www.therockstaradvocate.com/ep63. Ticket prices increase Sept 1 and hotel discount deals go away August 26, so don't dawdle, it's almost the end of July already!

You can also find the full list of workshops and panels that will be featured throughout this special weekend so don't miss out!

Head on over to www.therockstaradvocate.com/ep63 and check out more details on this year's Summit as well as everything else I've mentioned in this episode.

And I wasn't playing - I'd LOVE to hear from you! So let me know what you thought about this episode in the comments section or email me directly.

As always, I thank you for listening and I'm here if you have any questions. 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.