

How to Start a Career as an Independent Rapper

by

D. Evan Wilson

Submitted to the Department of Arts Management

School of The Arts

in partial fulfillment of the requirements

for the degree of Bachelor of Arts

Purchase College

State University of New York

April 2020

Sponsor: Maria Guralnik

Second Reader: Laura Ricciardi

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How to Start an Independent Rap Career

Why Did I Write This?

Music is my life. In my 7-year journey to turn my passion for hip hop into a career, I have learned from a variety of experiences that contributed to my education in arts management. The path to achieving my career goals has been very similar to that of an archaeologist attempting to find an artifact and only knowing the country where it's located. As I began to be more attuned to the business side of music, I realized that there was a lot of ground to explore. This uncharted territory seemed daunting to cover without having a map.

Bronx-born, I am what many might call a starving artist. In my time of living here, my surroundings have created the need and helped form my hustler mentality. You see it everywhere, from the people selling Icee's off the cart, to the people who manage to sell clothing on a table outside of a clothing store. My town has taught me to work with what I have and that the only way to fail is to stop working.

In August 2019 I released my first hip-hop album titled "Why Not?", the inspiration for which was the realization that because of digital technologies and social media, people all over the world have been able to launch music careers on their own, seemingly without the need of outside help or resources. Being able to successfully answer the "Why Not?"

question, for many artists including myself, requires information, confidence, and experience. This album was made up of some songs from my years studying Digital Music Production at Hostos Community College (2015-2017). It reached a wider audience in part due to the promotion and marketing knowledge and tools I acquired from my years studying Arts Management at SUNY Purchase College (2018-2020).

One of the biggest challenges I've come across in my musical journey is the significant lack of information about the music business that speaks directly to people like me. I have come across many books that focus either on the production side of music or the business side of music. The information on how music and business intersect, particularly for those just starting out, is pretty rare although it is expanding. Career guidance tends to focus largely on the history of the music industry relying on young artists today to connect the dots of how it parallels to today's ever changing industry. The reality is that times and methods have changed radically, effectively making examples from the pre digital days useful only as historical anecdotes or requiring a lot of creativity in translating to contemporary context.

This paper intends to make new artists aware of the work that is necessary once the "masterpiece" has been created. In order to make a living from one's art, strategies need to be developed to ensure financial and promotional success including tactics for how your song will generate money, how it will be easily accessible to the public, and how to turn friends into fans as well as how to find and develop new fans.

The research here is largely a result of reflecting on my own experience attempting to launch a career as an independent rap artist during the period of the last 5 years. I found that

Jonah Berger's *Contagious: Why Things Catch On* and Debra Fine's *The Fine Art of Small Talk*, while not specific to growing careers in music, provided ideas and strategies helpful to developing any creative product as a business.

I hope this paper serves as a map to guide you in starting your career as an independent artist. If you are an artist who is inspired by the glitz and glamour that comes with your standard contract with a major record label, and expecting/anticipating someone to create work for you, then the work here is not meant for you. If you are just starting out with very little support of any kind, then you may find my experience and recommendations useful. The only barrier to your success is remaining open and willing to do the sometimes gritty and tedious work that ensures your creative work finds and excites a willing audience.

While you may not have to be the person to take on all aspects of the business side of your art as your career progresses, it is extremely useful to be knowledgeable and practiced in those key areas, so that you are ready to add the right people to your team -- those who are most able to guide or make the best decisions from both the art and financial perspectives. Your hustle, experience, and drive to be educated is a big part of what ensures your worth and success as an independent music artist in today's highly competitive and constantly changing marketplace.

The “Famous Overnight” Theory

Where to start? As an independent rapper many are under the misconception that they will make a song that is so great that when they post it (usually just on Soundcloud), they expect everyone who listens to it will share it with their friends and their friends will think it’s so good that they will share it with their friends. The goal is for this cycle to repeat until the song has gone what is referred to as viral and now all of a sudden you’re the next big thing. Although this situation has happened to a few artists over the past decade, this story-book approach to career building is unrealistic for most of us and potentially damaging to the longevity of your career.

Through some qualitative interviews with other independent artists in my circle, I’ve further learned that many artists believe that you need to have some sort of music industry connection in order to have any success in promoting your music. The issue with this thinking is it leaves artists extremely susceptible to being taken advantage of by managers and other industry figures who are just looking to make money off of inexperienced and naive talent, rather than actually helping to expand an artist’s career. People who are in the industry can always make more money from exploiting others work More money will potentially be made by the unethical manager or agent the less aware that artist is of the different ways their music makes money.

A popular example of this is the very common 360 record deal that is offered by many major labels. A label might offer this deal not because the artist is so talented, but because his or

her music is easy to sell to the public. So the label will offer the artist a huge loan in the form of a record label advance to an artist in exchange for most (if not, all) of that artist's rights to the royalties of their work. With these rights ownership now in hand, the label is now entitled to the majority of various types of royalties and licensing fees that are generated every time the song plays.

In recent years, increased legal scrutiny and enforcement has enabled independent musicians all over the world to be better able to protect themselves from being taken advantage of by major record labels. By understanding the importance of retaining as much control as possible toward long term viability, career artists are better prepared to ask for and attain key rights to their music, such as copyrights, distribution rights, performance rights and more. This puts today's independent artists in the driver seats of their careers. With the ownership of your music, musicians are in a better position to navigate their careers and better negotiate with major record labels toward a mutually satisfactory arrangement. The information provided in the sections below will discuss ways of navigating the music business as an independent artist. You do not need a "big break" or "a lot of money" in order to have success as a music artist, what you do need is an ability to think outside of the box and to work smarter not harder.

THE MUSIC

So what music should I make?

I would argue that this depends on your goal as a musician. There is nothing wrong with being a person who wants immediate fame, to be known around the world and feel rich in the moment. Should you choose to take this road you should be especially aware of the saying “the faster they rise, the harder they fall.” Mainstream music follows a predetermined songwriting formula with a very consistent and repeatable style that can easily be replicated in order to release more chart-topping music. This is why the top billboard songs aren’t very complex in structure or concept and why so many of the top 40 pop songs can be played using the same chord progression. Another example would be why different labels sign music artists with similar styles of music as their other artists. The formula produces the product (music) that strengthens the label as a brand. Going this route generally requires ceding some type of artistic control and may lead to short term success but is a gamble if you want long term success or artistic satisfaction.

If you don’t want to fit into someone else’s formula, you’re a person who likes to create in their own lane, then you have the mindset of an independent artist. The great advantage that you have as an independent artist is that you can make music that is as versatile and complex as you want it to be. You benefit from the privilege of channeling your inner imagination to the fullest in order to make art that is unique to you as an artist. However, the satisfaction of making music alone won’t keep a roof over your head . If you are also relying on any part of your income from your art and craft, you must also assume the great responsibility of ensuring your music is heard and spread or supported by those well beyond your inner circle.

In taking on the work of ensuring your art is also a thriving enterprise, I've always found it easiest to parallel your mindset to that of a small business owner. The name of your business is your stage name. The "product" you sell to start out is your music -- this is your core offering, the essence of who you are and what you represent. Eventually as you gain more and more control of your career, the actual products offered by your business will be further developed and expanded and might include: tickets to your shows, merchandise, song features and just about anything you want. Just like a small business you will need customers which you know as fans. As your career continues to develop and your fanbase begins to grow you will begin to see how you as an artist have developed your own formula for creating, packaging and selling music to your very specific type of fan base, your market.

What Makes a Hit?

One of the main reasons that artists in today's generation opt to remain as independent artists is because they don't want to be told to make lesser quality music in an effort to make a song hit the charts. The majority of radio hits tend to sound remarkably similar to each other. What sets songs apart in today's world?, There are various theories on what makes a hit. According to Noah Askin (Pop-culture researcher), it's the subtle differences in a song that sets it apart from other songs being released at the time. Askin encourages artists to lean more toward creativity, rather than attempting to replicate the sounds of what's selling.

Having a creative edge while sounding close enough to what else is out at the moment is what really sets artists and their songs apart from the competition.

An example of a recent hit song is “Old Town Road” by Lil Nas X. This song came out in 2019 and spent 17 weeks at the top of the Billboard charts. “Old Town Road” is written in the key of D-flat major at 136 beats per minute. This in itself is not what sets it apart from its competition nor is it a random fluke. There are many songs written and composed with similar metrics. Among songs with a tempo of 136 are “Back When” by Tim Mcgraw and “Poetic Justice” by Kendrick Lamar. Both of these songs have had tremendous commercial success in their genres. What these songs also can claim is a broad consumer fan base., And that is exactly where “Old Town Road” excels. This song blends two contrasting music styles into one song that sounds close enough to popular mainstream hip-hop while sounding unique through integration of a deep rooted country music sound. Adding a country artist such as Billy Ray Cyrus to sing the chorus strengthens that connection to the country music audience practically doubling the size of the demographic of potential consumers. The song gained further exposure by sparking a social media trend on the platform Tik Tok called the “Yee Hee Haw challenge.” This video challenge involved people posing in regular clothing before cutting to them in a cowboy outfit when the beat drops, this challenge was something fun and easy for both audiences to do and share with their friends strengthening the consumers connection to the song, thus sparking its virality.

Owning Your Rights

As discussed above, we have all heard about how often music artists get screwed over by record labels because the labels have control over the rights to a lot of the artists songs. What I don't hear enough is someone explaining what that actually means or how to avoid this unfortunate circumstance. In the music industry, the knowledge regarding an artists rights is kept largely under wraps. The reasoning behind this because record label executives make the most money on what you don't know. Everytime a song is played it generates royalties from several different types of rights: Copyrights, Distribution rights, Public Performance Rights, Mechanical rights, and Licensing rights.

Musical copyrights are organized in two categories. First is the copyright that is issued for the composition (lyrics and melody) of the song, this includes the words written and the notation of the music these rights are usually owed to the songwriter(s). Secondly is the copyright for the sound recording of the song, this covers the artists interpretation of the lyrics and melody that is written by the songwriter. This copyright is usually owned by either the artist or the record label. The most secure way to copyright one's music is through the United States Government copyright office. This is something that can be done online. "U.S. Copyright Office." Copyright, www.copyright.gov/.

Distribution

With the emergence of the internet, streaming has provided a new means for independent artists to market and promote their music thus cutting out the middleman of

record labels. The challenge now for artists is that of just getting people to listen to your music when they often don't even have to pay for it since they pay for services such as Spotify, Google Play, Tidal, and other streaming service providers.

There are a number of online distributors that enable you to place your music on streaming services so that you may collect streaming revenue from them. Some of the more popular online distributors include Distrokid, CD Baby, and Tunecore. What these services do is track down every time your song is played on any streaming service around the world and collect a determined rate of the service and pay you according to the amount of traffic your music gets.

Every time your song is performed in public, you are owed royalties. Whether it is in a show, or on the radio, or playing in the mall, it is referred to as a public performance. These royalties are tracked down by what's called a Performance Rights Organization (PRO). In the United States the major Performance Rights Organizations are ASCAP, BMI, and SESAC. SESAC is a performing rights organization with a very exclusive clientele, artists' who are signed under SESAC have only done so because they were invited to, not just anyone can sign up for this organization. ASCAP and BMI however are both performing rights organizations that anyone can sign up for. There are options on both sites to sign up as a songwriter as well as a Publishing Company. As an independent artist, it is likely that you will have to sign up as both considering that you are your own Publishing Company.

Getting It Out There

You can make the greatest song ever, but if no one knows that it came out or where to even listen to it, very few people will ever know it exists. As an artist you have to make creative reminders that your music is coming out. This is called promotion and it is necessary for every new thing that you want your fans to consume. Fans want to feel as if they are a part of the creative process with you, so while you're in the studio post a short snippet of the song you are working on and planning to release. If you remind your audience about your music using the same type of message or content, people will view you as spamming them. This is why we have to change our approach to the content we make. You can follow up your studio snippet with a picture of the album artwork, which you can follow up an infinite amount of varying content such as artwork pics, freestyle videos, interviews, etc.

The Show

I Need Shows!

Independent artists struggle to find shows. For those new to the scene, it can be as difficult to figure out who can help as it is to help yourself. There are various resources and methods to assist artists in getting exposures through live concerts and shows. Some shows are completely free to perform but often don't pay at all. Some shows will pay you directly to

perform, some shows will pay you based on how many tickets you sell, and some shows want you to pay in order to perform. Some of these methods are more ideal than others, but what they all have in common is that they all are platforms to showcase your music to new audiences.

Depending on where your budget is at, an artist could theoretically perform every single night with a mixture of all of these methods. As an artist you need to be constantly saving money to be investing in your craft if you want your reach to grow. If you don't have much of a budget, you can hop on any social media outlet and within minutes find a local open mic to perform at. Open mics are low-cost, low-risk platforms where you can perform and literally snatch up 10-20 new fans and listeners per night just by being good at what you do. Due to the informal nature around open mics, artists and fans are all together in an intimate audience.

There are three tricks to gaining new lasting fans at your local open mic. The first trick is to change your mental image of what an open mic is. Through the average person's lens it's just that, an open mic, A bar or club where people come and perform their songs and leave. However you are not the average person you are an artist trying to promote your music you are no different from a small business owner trying to promote his product. Your product is your music and your stage name is the name of your small business, you have to look at every open mic as a networking opportunity.

Polish The Product; Connect with Your Audience

Your live show is your chance to shine. In every live performance your primary goal should be collecting new fans and putting on a memorable show for your existing fans. With that being said it is baffling how many artists come in up in this day and age simply neglect the importance of consistent rehearsal.

Rehearsing for your next live show is more than just remembering the words to your song. It's about getting comfortable in a situation that is undoubtedly uncomfortable for most. As an artist you need to learn to adapt to the space of being on stage. For the entirety of your performance you have to keep the audience engaged and wanting to see more of you and you have to be able to provide all of that as the performer.

In any live performance you face as an emerging independent artist, it's safe to assume that people won't necessarily know the words to your song already or even remember the names of the songs when you tell them because of this it is a vital to not only put on a memorable performance but to also have easy access for those new fans who want more of what they just experience through your show. In this segment I will go over some of the different aspects that go into a memorable performance. This section will have nothing to do with the production of your music as I expect it to already be good enough for you to perform it live. This section is purely about being remembered.

The first important thing to think about is the introduction of your performance at a live event. This could be done in various ways and does not have to be reduced to "Hi my name is

, and this is my song " The reason it is wise to avoid this type of opening is because it is stiff and amateur sounding in fact it is very likely that the other performers will open up with the same type of introduction. What you have to understand is when you're on that stage you are your craft. If you are aspiring to be a hip-hop artist, in that moment you have to accept that you are.

Get rid of the notion that open mics and underground concerts are just practice. Every time you have an opportunity to play in front of people, you have an opportunity to grow your fan base and reach those who can help you to grow that base further. Instead look at these types of events as opportunities to snatch up new fans for your music. Try opening with an introduction that immediately engages the audience. For example opening with the phrase as simple as "How are y'all feeling tonight (insert venue name)?" Is enough to get your audience making noise rather than giving you a straight answer. Many performers would agree that the audience members are smart enough to follow basic instructions however they are very limited in their ability to clearly communicate as a group. This is why audience members tend to opt for loud cheering, over complete sentences. It's very possible for you to be on the stage and ask the audience how they are feeling tonight and not get a response whatsoever, do not worry if this happens to you it is completely okay to just repeat yourself. Ask the audience again "how are you feeling tonight?" You can add flair to this tactic by adding phrases such as "no, I need to hear y'all louder..." or "let's try that again...". After you've got the audience engaged and paying attention to you this is where you can tell them who you are.

The songs you choose to sing are entirely up to you. What I would recommend though is songs in which the chorus has lyrics that are easy to remember and recite so that the audience has something to sing along to. Whenever possible look for opportunities to teach the audience the words to your choruses. The more people know the words to your song the more intriguing you appear to those who don't. Making the audience feel part of the event leaves a memory that will motivate them to come back or look you up online. However no matter how great the song is the second part of putting on a memorable performance is your energy. No one will believe in your music unless you do, so when you are on that stage you have to be your biggest fan in order to expect anyone else to become a fan as well

SMALL TALK

“Whether you realize it or not networking happens all the time... The ability to talk easily with anyone is a learned skill not a personality trait, acquiring it will help you build rapport with these people and leave a positive impression that lasts longer than a simple exchange of business cards...”

Fine, Debra. The Fine Art of Small Talk. Hachette Books, 2005.

Face to Face Promotion (Small Talk)

This is perhaps the most important skill to develop as an independent artist. This is the tool that will get you your most dedicated listeners. Word of mouth is the most effective form of promotion and who better to spread the word of your awesome music than you. However, it goes even deeper than that, that very small interaction with people at the venue whether its fans or

other artists gives them a reason to stay long enough to watch you perform and in this day and age people are very likely to record you for their social media purposes this exposes you to the people who follow them potentially growing your fan base.

This is your secret weapon that allows you to make a fan out of every person you meet. Many look at small talk as the less important version of deep conversation. In reality it is more of the gateway to deep conversation. As an independent artist many of your first shows will be small venues such as open mics and underground music concerts. The downside to this is that the audience members are likely only there to support their friend that is also performing at the show. Being that the other artist is their friend gives them a “reason to care” about them as an artist. In order to make every one pay attention to you and your performance, first you have to give everyone a “reason to care” about you. This is where small talk comes into play. Within the confines of an introductory conversation with an audience member who has probably never heard of you before, you have the opportunity to do the following: Make them aware that you are an artist, Learn (and I do mean learn) their name, Express an interest in what it is they do, and, Let them know that they should stay to see you perform. People tend to enjoy the company of those who make them feel special. People also tend to feel special by talking about themselves. The trick to extending your small talk conversation is to ask open ended questions.

Make them Aware

“What about you?”, is likely the most commonly asked question in any conversation, it’s an easy fallback option for many people who are unsure of what to say next. Understanding this along with being aware that the majority of people who attend open mic’s are usually artists themselves of various backgrounds, It’s very normal to approach anyone at the venue and ask, “What do you do?”. You never know who is at these events, you may be talking with a producer, or a podcast host, or another promoter looking for acts for their next show. Regardless of their answer, they’re very likely to ask you the same question. Be prepared to introduce yourself as the artist that you are, It helps to know all of your social media handle’s of the top of your head as this can also be a prime opportunity to exchange that information with your potential fan.

Ask for their name and offer yours, this subconsciously changes the fans initial impression of you from total stranger to “guy who knows my name but I don’t know his”. By offering your stage name it changes their view of you to now an acquaintance. By starting a conversation you have provided them with a ‘reason to care’ about you, thus leading to a reason to stay and watch you perform. When you finally get on the stage and introduce yourself to the audience, everyone you’ve talked to beforehand would have heard your name 3-4 times, when you add on a well rehearsed set and saying your stage name one more time to close your set, you will be imprinted in your audiences memory of that night. The more they see you moving

forward either online or in person the more that bond between you and your new fan strengthens. In a perfect world you would know each of your fans names and something interesting about them, as an independent artist you should strive for this. The days of the bougie rapper are over, fans want to feel like friends.

MUSICIANS' PROMOTIONAL TOOLKIT

Here you will learn various promotional tools that will allow you to connect with your audience. Each of these tools are extremely important for different reasons. Although you can build these sections up one at time, it is most effective to build them together to maximize your exposure and legitimacy.

Social Media

Social Media is the perfect tool for businesses of all types to connect with their consumers. These connections are what increases people's interest in a product, ultimately leading to them buying the product. In the case of the Independent Artist it helps to get people to buy into your brand by listening to your music. All Social Media platforms exist for the sole purpose of making the world a more social place. People socialize about any topic that you can search on the internet, you want people socializing about you.

The way to get people socializing about you is through what's called content. Content is a term that is meant to be extremely general, I view it best as moments in your journey. It could be

anything from pictures to artwork, videos, music etc. However the content you create generally follows an expected amount of audience engagement. Pictures tend to be more engaging for your audience than simple worded posts, video's tend to be more engaging than both of those.

So why not drop a bunch of music videos to maximize my engagement? The short answer, because no one would care. You have to strategize your content in order to not exhaust it for no reason. If you've ever seen boxing you know that a boxer doesn't knock out an opponent without first setting him up with jabs. You should approach content creation with the same mindset.

The jabs we'll refer to as "70% content". This is the content that is just of you doing cool things that support your brand. These are the photo shoot pics, you in the studio, out performing live, etc. This is the content that says "Hey world, look at me", you post this just to grab your audience's attention while letting them know that you're working on something cool. You can also build anticipation in your audience by hinting to them what that "something cool" is (album, tour, music video, new music etc...)

The knockout punch we'll refer to as "30% content". This is the cool thing you've been working on. The product of your brand that your audience consumes. This is the content that says "Hey world, check this out". This type of content is what most represents your brand because it is the product itself so as an Independent artist it is your responsibility to not only make it as good as possible but make sure it is available to as much of your fanbase as possible.

For an example: See Evan LeSoule's [Social Media Release Strategy](#)

Press Releases

This is how you promote your music to different radio stations, and hip hop blogs.

Understand that you have to view the people in charge of these outlets as a different type of consumer. Although like the average music consumer, a radio personality or blogger may come across music through outlets such as social media and live shows, However part of their job is checking their emails and reviewing artists press releases to determine whether or not they will play that artists on their show. This is important because their show has an audience of people who tune into them in order to receive new content. Blogs and radio can serve as a very valuable outlet to present new content to their fan bases. It is vital that you submit your music to platforms that promote music that is similar to your genre of music. There are tons of outlets that are even dedicated to promoting emerging artists and you need a way to reach them.

When submitting a press release it is important that it looks professional. This means having a heading along with an engaging title Something other than “New song by {Insert Name}”. You are basically delivering your song as a short article so it is important to tell the

audience a bit of what the song is about and who you are as an artist in order to get them interested in listening. This also gives the host things that they can share about you and your music to their audience. The details that you may consider to be not important or wierd about your music making process are most often the details that get people most interested in you. In addition to getting them engaged you have to make it as easy as possible for them to listen to the song. A very effective way of expediting the process between reading about the song to listening to it is by adding a hyperlink to the song. It is best to have a hyperlink that can lead people to a variety of playing options, the reasoning behind this is again to make the listening process as easy as possible. If you are contacting a radio host about your music and they happen to be a person who uses youtube frequently to find new music, sending him a link to your soundcloud page may just be enough to turn that person off completely. You are not the only artist sending them music so by minimizing the time spent reviewing your music and fast tracking them directly to your music. You maximize the likelihood of retaining their attention thus increasing the likelihood of them featuring your music on their platform.

For an example: See Evan LeSoule's [Press Release](#)

Websites

When was the last time you bought a product or service from a company that did not have a website? The answer is most likely never. The reasoning behind why you don't is because without a website consumer's are quick to become skeptical thus creating another barrier between them and your music. By investing in a website for your music you remove that barrier

of skepticism by countering it with legitimacy. Websites consist of two basic functioning parts, First is the domain name, This is what your audience types into the search bar when they want to go to your site, this is also some of the information that search engines use in order to connect your content to all of the other content you release online. The second part of your website is the hosting site. This is what your audience actually sees when your page loads in their browser. This is where you post all things related to you in a neat and engaging visual experience. Your website serves as the central hub for your artistry. With your site you also have the ability to track the visitors of your site and retarget them with advertisements for more of your products/music.

For an example: See Evan LeSoule's [Website](#)

EPK

An Electronic Press Kit (EPK) is basically your website in the form of a short downloadable magazine. This once again is all about you and your artistry. Artist's, Bands and managers will send these to booking agents, tour managers, record labels and even radio stations with the intent of getting more opportunities whether it's in the form of shows, interviews deals, etc.

Your EPK has to be visually pleasing and must include Hi-resolution photographs, I would argue however that the composition of the photo is more important than the actual resolution. With the frequent advances in technology it is relatively easy to take pictures

with your phone that will still make your EPK look stunning. Next would be your biography, here is where you tell your story, this section doesn't have to be that long but should be enough so that your audience can get a glimpse into who you are as a person and as an artist.

Social Media Links is also hugely important for your EPK. Your music can be the best music ever but if no one can find it you might as well never put it out. Some other things to keep in mind when building your EPK are direct links to your music as well as images and links to what you believe is your best music video. You should also add any recent or upcoming performance you have and any other blogs you may have been featured on in the past.

For an example: See Evan LeSoule's [EPK](#)

Conclusion: Building Your System

One thing all musicians have in common is that we are all just looking for our next gig. This driving goal (why we are in business) is something that should be kept on the horizon in our long term planning strategy while constantly monitoring available assets, barriers to success and the context around us. When you are aware of your own weaknesses as an artist you will be able to see clearer the type of people who you should have on your team. I use the word team loosely as there is a difference between the team that surrounds a mainstream artist versus an independent one. When I say “Team” I am referring to your network of other artists, creators and musicians that you have formed a relationship with by use of the small talking tactics mentioned earlier in this paper.

Live renditions of your song may sound better than the recorded version, especially when you are on your own, without access to state of the art equipment and a team of producers.. Say you're at an open mic and you meet another rapper, a DJ, a drummer, and guitar player. Separately, you are no more than five amateur music people but together you become an experience. There is an opportunity to leverage mutual gains between allop you. The other rapper's set would look more professional with a live band as would your set, the drummer and guitar player both need artists to play for, and the DJ needs an opportunity to spin someones tracks. By discussing rates with each of the musicians and splitting that total cost between you and the other rapper you both will put on shows that will set you apart from your competition for

relatively cheap. It is highly recommended that you rehearse with them and find ways to make your transition between songs as engaging as possible.

How does this all get paid for? Even when you are signed to a major label, you (the artist) are generally responsible to pay expenses associated with creating and producing your product, especially if you want to retain majority control of the rights. This is you investing in you, booking sites such as Myafton, Majorstage, etc pay artists based on the amount of tickets they sell. This is where your promotion and marketing skills have to shine. If you put a lot of effort into selling the show out via social media, word of mouth marketing, networking, etc. You would be able to make that initial investment plus some. The key more than anything is that you have to be able to sell tickets.

As you learn more about the direction you want to take your career in. You will become more aware of what you need to set as financial priorities. The clearer you are on what you feel your most effective expenses are, the more feasible it is to look into larger options for funding your career such as crowdfunding, business loans, credit cards, etc. You are to treat your funding the same as you would a record label advance.

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Passman, Donald S. *"All You Need to Know about the Music Business."* Simon & Schuster, 2019.

Berger, Jonah. *Contagious: Why Things Catch On.* Simon and Schuster Paperbacks, 2016.

"Copyright Basics." Artists Rights Society, 2018, www.arsny.com/copyright-basics/.

Jones, Phil. *"EXACTLY WHAT TO SAY: More Magic Words for Influence and Impact."* PAGE TWO STRATEGIES INC, 2020.

Keyes, Damian. *"How to Conquer Your City."* YouTube, YouTube, 2019,

Ivy, Adam. *"How To Release A Single In 2020."*

"NYC Concerts, Music & Media." MajorStage, www.majorstage.com/.

“Booking Agent for Rappers & Bands.” *Afton*, myafton.com/.

Cabane, Olivia Fox. *The Charisma Myth: How Anyone Can Master the Art and Science of Personal Magnetism*. Portfolio/Penguin, 2013.

Fine, Debra. *The Fine Art of Small Talk*. Hachette Books, 2005.

King, Curtiss. *The Prosperous Hip Hop Producer: My Beat-Making Journey from My Grandma's Patio to a Six-Figure Business*. Maurice Bassett, 2018.

Askin, Noah. *The Recipe of a Hit Song | Ted Talk*. YouTube, Ted Talks, 20 Dec. 2015,

ADDENDUM A: SOURCES FOR CAREER BUILDING

Fine, Debra. *The Fine Art of Small Talk*. Hachette Books, 2005. How does one develop and use small talking skills in order to make the most out of networking opportunities and foster relationships with potential clients and business partners. Debra Fine uses real-life examples as well as analytical methods to illustrate how to start a conversation and keep it going by asking open-ended questions to your conversation partner. This book is extremely useful for people looking to improve their social skills.

Cabane, Olivia Fox. *The Charisma Myth: How Anyone Can Master the Art and Science of Personal Magnetism*. Portfolio/Penguin, 2013. The Charisma Myth researches the science behind personal magnetism, it studies how regular people can shape their minds into such a state of positivity that enhances one's charisma. The methods used in this book are the same methods used to help celebrities give off that larger than life auras. Through methods such as visualization, developing mantras and the law of attraction. This book is useful for those looking to increase their stage presence or presentation skills or just want to appear more confident overall. This book can also get a bit confusing as there are a lot of moments where the author will want you to stop reading in order to write something down, this has often caused me to go back to reading what I just read.

Berger, Jonah. *Contagious: Why Things Catch On*. Simon and Schuster Paperbacks, 2016. Contagious looks at viral marketing from an observational point of view. Berger points

out how it's not about how much better a product may be than its competition, rather how unique the plan is to bring it to the masses. Some of the examples discussed in the book include "Barclay Prime's" \$100 cheesesteak campaign and the secretive bar "Please Don't Tell". The book provides insight into the inner workings of a unique marketing plan.

King, Curtiss. *The Prosperous Hip Hop Producer: My Beat-Making Journey from My Grandma's Patio to a Six-Figure Business*. Maurice Bassett, 2018. Curtis King speaks on his journey of becoming a hip hop producer. Although he doesn't consider himself a mainstream producer he has been able to make sufficient living through his passion for hip hop music. King details his struggles and successes that have helped him shape his love for music into a 6 figure business. This is a book for aspiring music producers and artists who are looking for inspiration and tips on viewing their art from a business perspective and making the necessary moves to turn it into a business.

"Copyright Basics." Artists Rights Society, 2018, www.arsny.com/copyright-basics/.

The Artists Rights Society explains the very basics of copyright law. It does so by dictating facts about the process and level of protection offered by copyright law. This article is useful for those looking to protect their work with legal government copyright.

Askin, Noah. *The Recipe of a Hit Song* | *Ted Talk*. YouTube, Ted Talks, 20 Dec. 2015, www.youtube.com/watch?v=R3UnZBpcF1o. Noah Askin goes over what makes the most successful songs in pop culture so successful. While recognizing that the majority of the top billboard songs do sound similar in nature the most successful ones manage to sound slightly different. It's these subtle differences that give fans something new to grasp on to.

Keyes, Damian. "How to Conquer Your City." YouTube, YouTube, 2019, www.youtube.com/watch?v=rHJwNHWbs0k&t=319s. Youtube vlogger Damian Keyes details tactics and strategies on how local bands and music artists can start building their fan base by starting with their local communities. This would be a good source for independent artists many of whom are in a position where they have to build their fan bases from the ground up.

Ivy, Adam. "How To Release A Single In 2020." www.adamivy.com, www.youtube.com/watch?v=ECsniefNLpE. Marketing specialist Adam Ivy breaks down cheap but effective marketing strategies that help drive audience awareness toward your music. The tactics explained are geared for artists in the process of releasing a single but can be modified and used for the release of larger projects as well.

Jones, Phil. *“EXACTLY WHAT TO SAY: More Magic Words for Influence and Impact.”* PAGE TWO STRATEGIES INC, 2020. This book discusses how to tailor your casual conversations to topics where you have the opportunity to influence your conversation partner and engage them with your product and business. By making subtle changes in your everyday conversation skills you can sway individuals toward having an eagerness and excitement not only to your business but to you as a person. This book is useful for entrepreneurs and those looking to improve their social skills.

Passman, Donald S. *“All You Need to Know about the Music Business.”* Simon & Schuster, 2019. An essential overview of all topics related to the music business. This book is written in a way that allows readers to skip across various sections of the book in order to either gain or pass the finer details of each topic covered which allows for a customized learning experience for the readers. This book is for people looking to further their music careers either as an independent or major label artist.