

Define Your Goals - Create A Vision and then Make It Happen

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Business VS Hobby

- Decide this now. Do you want to make money and have this be your job or are you looking to just do it for fun? Maybe you want to make money and treat this as a part time job, if so then you need to think of it as a business still.

- What do you want to make per gig? What will you settle for? Keep that in mind and don't sell yourself short. No one decides your pay but you, ask other pros what they charge (a good way to find this out is to ask them to play a gig with you and see what they charge).

Democracy VS Dictatorship

- Is this a solo project where you make all the decisions or is it a band? If it is a band who is making all the decisions, define the roles of each member and be open and honest with everyone. Maybe one guy is good at money and he does all that, another is good at booking, maybe you have 1 or 2 guys in control of everything and the others are just responsible for showing up and playing the gig (structure pay to go with this idea, don't pay everyone the same amount if everyone's not doing the same amount of work).

- If it is a dictatorship know what responsibility comes with this. You may have to hire musicians (with real money!). If you want ALL the creative control than you will have to bare most (if not 99%) of the weight. Finding number ones and twos are helpful, people you can really rely on to help even if it's just moral support. Be open, honest, and direct with people they will respect you more for it in the end. If it is a democracy know what comes with that. Things will move slower typically, lots of heads in the room mean more variables and less control on your part. Creative people are often disorganized and can

be emotional. Weigh the goods and the bads of either situation because there are many on both sides and there is no right way to do it.

Travel VS Local/Regional

- Are you looking to be on the road in ten years? No? Then you probably should look to other people that are doing the same thing locally and not aspire to be Justin Timberlake (or Sprinsteen, or Dylan, or Stevie Wonder) because if you look at these musicians careers they are on the road for years at a time. That does not mean your art should suffer or you can't travel some times but it's a good thing to think about.

- If you are looking to travel then start doing it early and building markets at the same time you are building your fan base in your home town. In 5 years you will have built relationships and markets all over instead of just focusing on local and then when you go out of town no one knows you and you're starting at zero.

Entertainer VS Artist

- A constant struggle we all face. I think it is important to look at this and know yourself. Are you looking to entertain a crowd? Are you looking to just write songs that are great? There is a balance between these two that we all have to strike. Maybe you want to just write songs and have other people play them, or sell them for commercials and just record, than define that as your goal. Maybe you want to create the biggest party in town, what kind of music makes that happen?

Who's Your Audience? What's Your Venue?

- Are you looking to play house concerts where you can hear a pin drop? You can do that. What is the path that takes you to that ideal environment in ten years?

- Who do you *want* to play for? Who will like what you do? Not everyone, I can tell you that. Where do people like you or who like the

type of music you like go? Find that room and then play it. Look at bands/musicians like you or that you aspire to be like and look at their schedules online. Where do they play? Do they need an opening spot? Contact their management, the worst they could say is no. Ask questions, be vulnerable, allow yourself to get help we are all learning.

Know Yourself, Know Your Worth

- Who are you, what do you want, where do you want to be in ten years?
- Someone out there likes what you do, you are unique...but not THAT unique, there are people like you and that's a good thing!
- Shows and competitions like American Idol are designed for a certain thing. If you don't know what that purpose is than do your research. You will probably find that the design of the show is entertainment and has very little to do with music. But again, do your research. Whatever decision you make in any of this, do your research and understand what the outcome is when you do these sorts of things.
- If it sounds too good to be true, it probably is. That doesn't mean say "no" to every offer that comes at you it just means explore the options, don't sign anything without reading it thoroughly or giving it to a lawyer to look over.

Build Relationships Be Nice

- One of the most important things I've learned. Business and especially in music is all relationships. Meet lots of people all the time and be genuinely nice. If you put positive energy out there it will come back. Support other musicians - go to their gigs, listen..like really listen and offer them feedback. Wouldn't you want the same thing? Invite people over for drinks/food and song sharing or just do one on one sessions with writers you admire in town.
- Don't be fake and don't burn bridges, word gets around. If someone screws you over just don't associate with them for the time being, maybe they'll learn their lesson maybe not. Positive energy will come back positive and maybe you'll need something from that person in the future.

- Who's your idol? Ask them for advice..seriously hit them up the worst they could do is say no or not get back, move on to the next.

Some things to ponder, write the answers down. Sometimes it helps to just see this kind of thing on the page. You can change your answers but this can be a good base for you.

Do you want to make a living or just do this as a hobby?

How would you describe your sound?

If (insert your favorite artist here) was here right in front of you, what song would you play for them? If you haven't written that song, that what would it sound like?

What is your dream venue? This can be a real place or just a detailed description on what it would look/feel/sound like.

What band/artist/genre/movement do you align yourself with?

Who makes the decisions in your project?

What is your end goal for music? Define your vision, be specific, be direct. Nothing is out of bounds.