LAB University of Applied Sciences
International Business Lappeenranta
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Step-by-step plan to succeed for an artist entering Russian music market by using social media tools

Thesis 2020

Abstract

Yudichev Gennady
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ing social media tools, 39 pages
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The purpose of this research was to develop a step-by-step guide which can
help any individual or group of people in entering Russian music market and to
get to the top of the industry by simply putting in work and taking advantage of
free social media tools. Initially, the phenomenon of music industry was ex-
plained together with phenomenon of YouTube and ways of income for artists.
Afterwards, the switch to reality shifted and real-life problems related to the
topic were explained. The most related example of an artist achieved the suc-
cess using social media tools explained.

The information was gathered from literature, articles, online blogs and videos.
The author's proficiency in the field complemented the findings as well. The em-
pirical research included mentorship with an experienced top video blogger from
Russia. In addition, the practical report was held considering YouTube's strate-
gies to succeed.

The author identified some of the most innovative attention catching techniques
and provided practical advice together with real life examples. This thesis can
be used by any foreign artist as a pattern for formulating an own promotion plan
for approaching Russian audience online and achieving career success in that
country.

Keywords: Success, Brand, SMM, YouTube, Music, Artist, Russia.

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Acknowledgement

The author expresses his gratitude to everybody who have supported him throughout the thesis.

Glossary

IFPI – International Federation of the Phonographic Industry)

RIAA – Recording Industry Association of America.

CMO's – Collective management organization.

Video blogger – A person owning a YouTube channel and uploads self-made content in it. Also referred to as YouTuber, creator, blogger.

CTR (click-through rate) - CTR is a metric which shows one what percentage of his or her impressions on YouTube turned into views.

Thumbnail – The main picture shown next to the YouTube video title. One of the crucial aspect of videos becoming viral.

Metadata – YouTube metrics concluding title, description and tags.

Prank – Type of video shot to catch people's emotions on camera. Basically, a joke on people.

Challenge – Type of videos concluding element of challenge.

YouTube – Social media web site allowing people to share their UGC

UGC – User Generated Content

1 Introduction

1.1 Background

Time always goes, and it never stops, and people always look for better life, for better finances, for better activities, looking for popularity and the best possible experience of this life. By creating a business based on an online presence and entertaining (or educating) the audience, people involved in it may benefit in all the ways. As well as the audience, because audience always benefits from interaction with an artist, by receiving a piece of energy from him with his online content and music as well as a pulsing feeling of connection with the artist.

Thesis topic "Step-by-step plan to succeed for an artist entering Russian music market by using social media tools" had come to the author's mind initially once he started thinking about the thesis topic. As music is something the author has always looked up to as a source of both active and passive incomes which is a true way for financial independency and freewill live which he is a big fan of.

The idea of this thesis is to show step-by-step way to succeed in the Russian music market from creating and controlling the fan base to getting enormous profits from concerts, royalties, branding, advertisement, sponsorships and souvenir sales.

A huge accent will be made on the marketing as the author's main specialization and also as importance of marketing cannot be underestimated at all stages: while starting, running and developing a business. As far as it is not as hard to come up with a business idea than to actually market one's product in order to get sales and profits.

1.2 Purpose of the study

There are several purposes of the study, such as to develop a guide, which can help any individual or a group of people in entering Russian music market and to get to the top of the industry by simply putting in work and taking advantage of

free social media tools. And, even more important, to open the minds of the readers to a significant marketing tool.

1.3 Delimitations of the study

The thesis was created in accordance with some frames which the author has created. The thesis was concentrated on marketing, on social media website of YouTube, to be exact. YouTube was chosen as a most popular video UGC platform in the world to promote goods and services as well as music. Also, the author's personal importance of the platform was decision making aspect. There are different ways to use YouTube to promote music: free and paid. However, the research was only focused on free YouTube promotions by YouTube algorithms themselves.

The study was also limited by Russian music market. However, there are some words about the global digits in the music industry in the background part, which was crucial in order to show the contrast of the American and Russian music markets as well as the fact that the United States of America leads the music streaming market due to amount of people that English is spoken between, and Russia with other countries just follow.

The aim of the thesis was to create a step-by-step plan for artist in order to generate profit. To delimitate the study, it was chosen to concentrate on income from music streaming and strategies to achieve that. However, there will be listed the list of different opportunities for artists and authors to profit from their creation in the chapter "Ways of income". Also, those other ways on income will be mentioned within an example of Morgenshtern, later on in this thesis.

When the discussion about YouTube as a powerful social media tool was started, the author never mentioned any profits coming from somewhere else but music-related sources, so the possible YouTube monetization and other profit incomes are not mentioned in the thesis.

It is also crucial to mention that in the thesis, the music production part will not be disclosed, as the main problem for making profit off music is not to produce music but more of promoting.

To some readers, especially to ones who consider themselves artists, it might be difficult to accept that as a tool, YouTube must be used. It is necessary to use. There is a list of reasons for that. At least it should be used because according to the survey held in the U.S. by Variety, emotional attachment of teenagers toward favorite bloggers is seven times higher than toward traditional stars such as singers or actors. In addition, YouTubers are 17 times more engaging for youths (Variety Media 2015). Whatsoever, there are insecurities in some people which lead them to avoid using YouTube or other super popular social media platform as a tool in achieving their own goals. Such a significant issue will be explained in detail in chapter Doubts and fears, later in this thesis.

As far as the world develops rapidly, there might be a chance of the content of this thesis to become old for the reader, so the author points out that the information from this thesis might become irrelevant within few years.

1.4 Research questions

The most complicated part about doing social media is generating content ideas and being consistent with one's content. That is why the main research question is as follows:

- How to use social media in a way to reach the heights of popularity and success

In addition, there are several sub-questions without those, the whole main question cannot be answered completely:

- How to come up with ideas for content

- How to create such a content that YouTube algorithms promote it for free?

1.5 Research method

To get a better realization of a process, one needs to include some practice in it, as having theory without having practice is an unproven objective which is not the right way for the researcher to do his or her studies. Some practice will be added to the thesis.
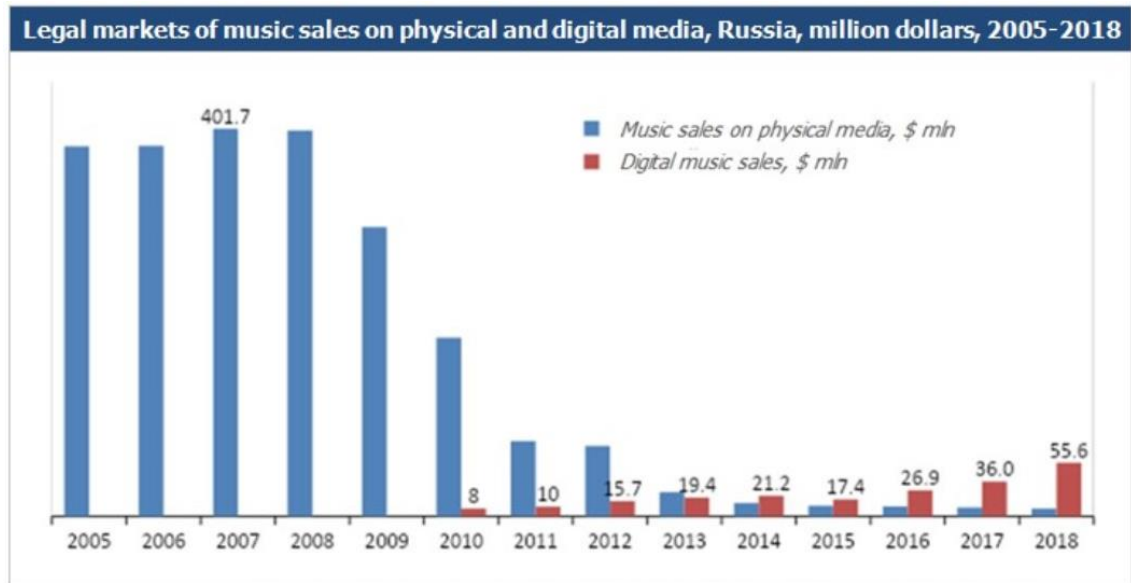
Theoretical research of the study will be based on review of an appropriate business cases and professional literature. The author is going to gather empirical information from a YouTube channel he has created to answer research questions.

The main research question will be specified by case country of Russia and will be disclosed throughout the thesis qualitatively, while the sub question will be answered based on YouTube blogger Sam Jones' mentorship.

2 Theoretical framework

2.1 Music industry

Music industry is a huge worldwide market which itself generates enormous amount of money. Figures released one day in IFPI's Global Music Report 2019 show total revenues for 2018 were US$19.1 billion (IFPI, 2019). Meanwhile, in the U.S. recorded music business alone generated US$11.1 billion, the following 2019 year, according to the RIAA's (RIAA, 2019) annual year-end report (Billboard, 2020). According to JSON.TV, in 2007, with a result of US$401.7 million, the Russia's music market took solid 9th place in the world in terms of revenue with all legal sales were made on physical; media (CDS, vinyl records and cassettes) (JSON, 2019).

Legal markets of music sales on physical and digital media, Russia, million dollars, 2005-2018

- Music sales on physical media, $ mln
- Digital music sales, $ mln

401.7 | 8 | 10 | 15.7 | 19.4 | 21.2 | 17.4 | 26.9 | 36.0 | 55.6

2005 2006 2007 2008 2009 2010 2011 2012 2013 2014 2015 2016 2017 2018

Source: J'son and Partners Consulting, InterMedia, IFPI, Russian music yearbook

Figure 1. Legal market of music sales on physical and digital media, Russia, million dollars, 2005-2018.

Being an emerging market, Russia shows the great potential for developing a strong music brand with high return on investments (ROI). Russian music market has been struggling with high level of music piracy, however, with appearance of music streaming platforms, such as Apple Music, VK Boom, Google play and Spotify, the level of piracy has decreased, and the monetization has become easier for musicians and labels to receive.

The hardest part, however, for a foreigner, trying to enter Russian music market is language barrier, as majority of Russians are listeners to music sang in Russian language. Denying the language aspect, the scheme to success is common across the world, the only difference is differentiation of music platforms where the music is streamed and also different collective management organizations (CMO).
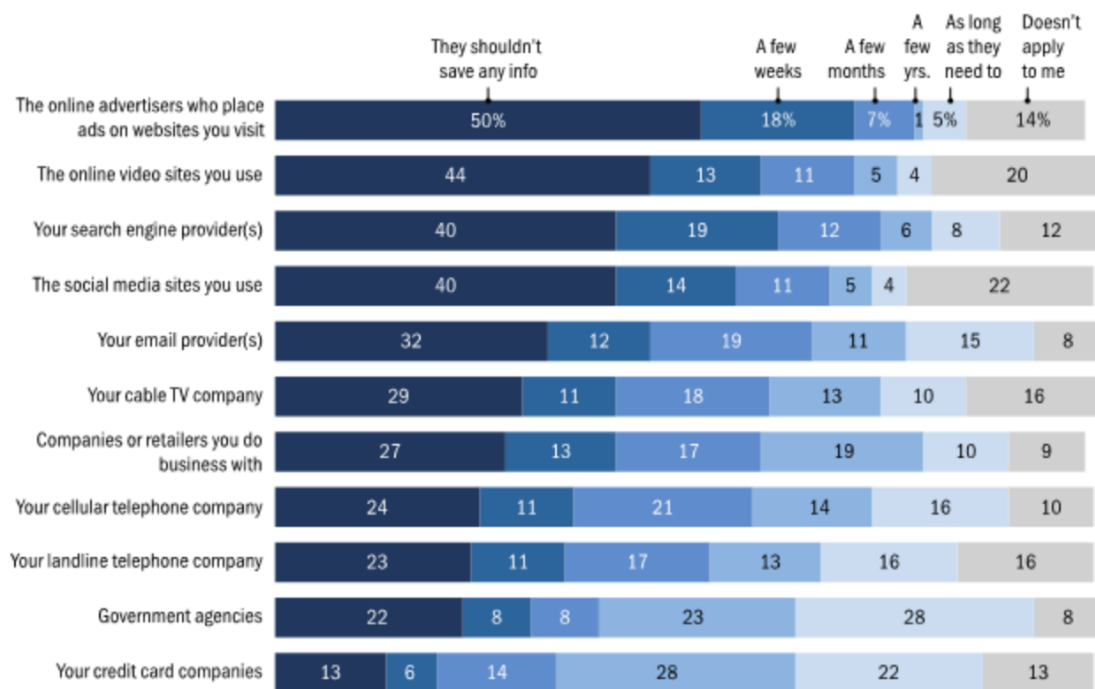
2.2 Doubts and fears

Building a business around one's own persona or building a business around something external (no need to expose one's face on camera) is a philosophical discussion and preference of an individual. Some people are not willing to show

their events, personal lives or even own faces online due to privacy level they want to achieve in their lives, however there are more and more people using those services at their own advantage each year. According to Pewresearch, most people hold strong views about the importance of privacy in their everyday lives (Pewresearch, 2015).

Most Expect Limits on How Long the Records of Their Activity Are Stored

% of adults who think the following length of time is "reasonable" for different companies or organizations to retain records or archives of their activity

	They shouldn't save any info	A few weeks	A few months	A few yrs.	As long as they need to	Doesn't apply to me
The online advertisers who place ads on websites you visit	50%	18%	7%	1	5%	14%
The online video sites you use	44	13	11	5	4	20
Your search engine provider(s)	40	19	12	6	8	12
The social media sites you use	40	14	11	5	4	22
Your email provider(s)	32	12	19	11	15	8
Your cable TV company	29	11	18	13	10	16
Companies or retailers you do business with	27	13	17	19	10	9
Your cellular telephone company	24	11	21	14	16	10
Your landline telephone company	23	11	17	13	16	16
Government agencies	22	8	8	23	28	8
Your credit card companies	13	6	14	28	22	13

Source: Pew Research Center's Privacy Panel Survey #2, Aug. 5, 2014-Sept. 2, 2014 (N=498). Refused responses not shown.
PEW RESEARCH CENTER

Figure 2. Most expected limits on how long the records of their activity are stored.

What is important for marketers and businesses – there are 3.8 billion people using social media in the world and for ones mentioned before it is nothing but the best tool to use at their own advantage (Wearesocial, 2020). It is no secret to people anymore that social media sustain giant traffic which itself generates sales and revenue. In addition to that social media gives one a lot more than just traffic: it brings opportunities in people's lives. Besides popularity, and everything that

comes with it, social media profiles let their owners to use other people and businesses goods and services in return to advertisement on their social media pages which cost its owners nothing. For instance: a travel blogger with over 100.000 followers can easily take free hotels worldwide for advertisement post on his page if he can make such a deal with hotel representatives. Another case is where a young lady talking about fashion with certain fan base of following on her social media page can find a make-up producer company to be an ambassador of.

2.3 Ways of income

In 2020, artists in Russia came to a point where many of them earn enormous profits different ways. By talking enormous profits, author means hundreds of thousands of euros annually, when bigger artists earn up to several millions. Depending on whether an artist is just a performer or author or both, there are different types of incomes for each profession.

For authors:
(a) Different types of income from public performances on radio, television, downloads and streaming online, live performances, bars, concerts, shops, and any location where a work is played or heard in public;
(b) Different types of income from mechanical licenses when recordings are distributed on physical sound carriers such as CDs, cassettes, vinyl and DVDs and are sold to the public;
(c) Different types of income from mechanical licenses when works are the subject of audio or audio-visual downloads, streaming via the Internet or as ring tones;
(d) Different types of income from synchronization licenses when the work is synchronized to visual images, video or film;
(e) Different types of income from the sale of printed sheet music and scores or from online digital sheet music downloads;
(f) Different types of income from home copying levies;
(g) Different types of income from public lending of sound carriers containing the work.

For performers:

(a) Different types of income from fees for live performances in front of audiences at festivals, clubs, concert venues, public places and private events;

(b) Different types of income from royalties when a phonogram producer (record company or label) sells a fixed performance (recording) to the public on a physical sound carrier;

(c) Different types of income from royalties when a phonogram producer sells a digital recording via the Internet as a download, by streaming or as a mobile phone ring tone;

(d) Different types of income from public performances when a recording is played on the radio, on television, or in public (such as in an arena, club, etc.);

(e) Different types of income from 'master re-use' when a recording is synchronized to visual images, video or film;

(f) Different types of income from home copying levies;

(g) Different types of income from sponsorship and branding;

(h) Different types of income from public lending of sound carriers. (David Stopps, 2014).

There was a list of possible incomes for music creators and performers (both authors and artists), according to WIPO 2014, by David Stopps.

2.4 YouTube

YouTube is the major social media platform that allows its users to upload and share self-produced content with each other. YouTube was launched in May 2005 and in one year it was bought by Google Inc. Nowadays, YouTube user count went for over one third of Internet population, generating billions of views daily.

According to AvertMedia, in Russia, YouTube is watched by a significant number of 44 million people in a month, which is around 64% of a whole Russian internet users amount. Percentage of age performance on YouTube in Russia is as follows: 12-17 years – 10%, 18-24 years – 18%, 25-34 years – 28%, 35-44 years –

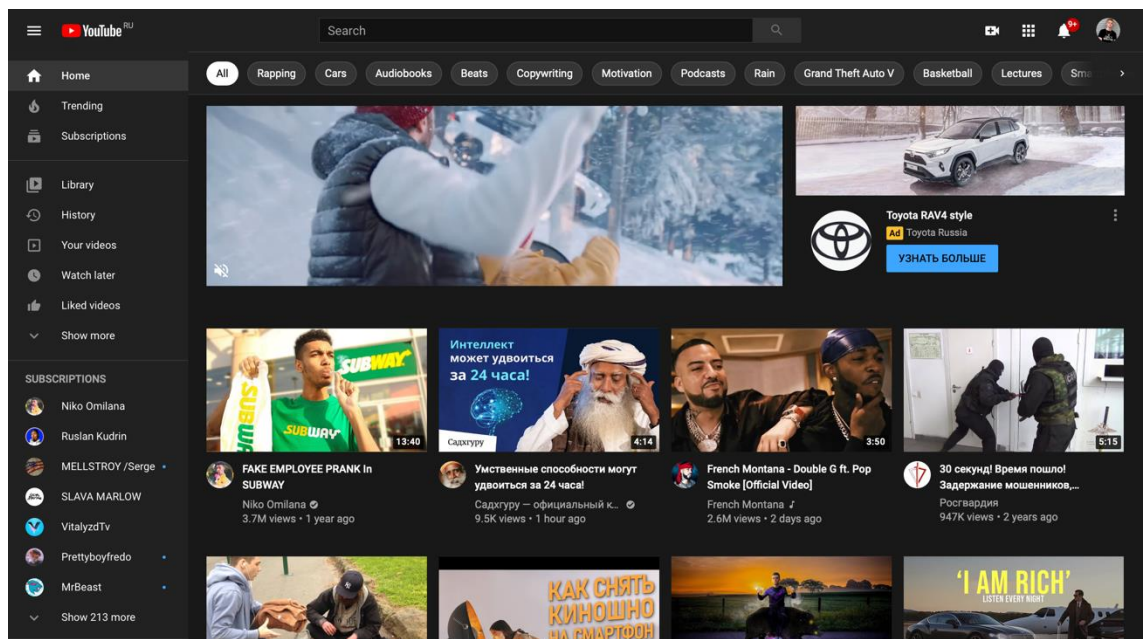20%, 44-54 years – 15% and 55-56 years – 9%. (Avertmedia, 2020).

Figure 3. Home page on Russian YouTube.

The greatest tools of YouTube for the purposes of marketing a brand or an artist, in case of this thesis, are YouTube algorithms. YouTube algorithms are tools which support online content creators by showing their content to more viewers compared to the content of ones who is not supported by YouTube algorithms. The exact components of a video that is a subject to be potentially supported by YouTube algorithms are described in the chapter "How to create such content that YouTube algorithms promote it for free" of this thesis.

2.5. YouTube algorithms

According to YouTube, the algorithm is basically a real-time feedback loop that tailors video to each viewer's different interests. It decides which videos will get suggested to individual users. There are two algorithm's main goals: to find the right video for each viewer and to get viewers to get watching. (Hootsuite, 2020).

The two most important places the algorithm impacts are search results and rec-ommendations. When operating within YouTube platform, one should consider that those two most important places the algorithm impacts are where one should consider aiming. Talking about recommended videos, the algorithm ranks them

by adding a score base to them on performance analytics data. Then it matches videos to people based on their watch history, and what similar people have watched. Whenever the algorithm ranks a video, it looks at the performance.

It is crucial to be mentioned here that there are several metrics how the algorithm determine whether a video is to be pushed or not. These metrics are as described right below:

- Whether people click on a video (impressions & views)

- How much time spent watching a video (watch time or retention)

- How many likes/dislikes/comments/shares video gets (engagement)

- How quickly a video's popularity snowballs (rate of growth)

- How new is a video

- How often a channel uploads new videos

- How much time spent on the platform after watching a video (session time)

However, it is somehow important too, that algorithm works for all the viewers personally, rather than as a whole. Basically speaking, the algorithm looks at personalization:

- Which channels and topics have a viewer watched in the past

- What has he engaged with in the past

- How much time spent watching

- How many times a video has been already shown to the viewer

- What a viewer does not watch

(Hootsuite, 2020).

2.6 The reality

The reality is rather brutal for musicians when they put effort, time, energy, creativity, hard work, talent and other resources in music production. Most of them naively expect that once they like the single, the market is going to love it itself. Unfortunately, this is not how it goes. Every self-respected musician in 2020 must admit that creating a song for the purpose of making money off streams is only a half of issue. The biggest issue here is to properly deliver the main message of the song (this might be a hook or a chorus or even some lines from the verse) to every potential listener of such genre.

However, when talking about the reality, it is sad but true that the market is over-weighted by all different types of music and even in Russia, (not as hard as the United States market, but still) there are hundreds of songs that are created and uploaded to streaming services every day. With such a competition, there are a lot of real creative and professional artists who are productive enough to create a hit by hit, still cannot make it to the top of recognition and acceptance. The main reason for that is their lack of understanding the significant power of social media tools, such as YouTube (as the main platform for this thesis) or the brand-new social media – Tik Tok, which literally supports musician's recognition by users who self-generate content.

Researching the music market of United States proves that there are all different tactics to achieve huge success in the music industry. To realize the difference between different approaches, one can take a look at two artists using different strategies. Remaining them nameless, even though they are not nameless at all – one artist's way of creating wealth is to produce as much content as possible, making sure that the music is up to competitive level and lyrics include trending topics. On the other hand there is an artist who admits to create one hit single and work on marketing and pushing that song through social media both as hard and as long as needed or possible until he and his crew get to a point where they get over a million streams on that song on whatever streaming platform they are marketing it from (SoundCloud as most often used) and when that happens, they are most likely to get an offer from a major label with an upfront advance for

purchasing the percentage of publishing or other royalties of that song which is buzzing.

However, it is not necessary to get signed with a major label, but only if an artist tends to get featured on some other, bigger artist's songs or get them to feature on his own projects.

What is the most interesting is that nowadays the music industry is worldwide with all its features, and even though the case country of this thesis is Russia and yes, most Russian people have a certain preferences in music which might be a little bit different from the whole world trends, still, there are lots of people who pursuit the tendencies of worldwide music community.

The point is that Russia is a quite unique country in terms of worldwide views and there are specific tactics and schemes need to be used in order to create wealth and success on the federal level. An artist trying to develop and monetize a sustainable fan base needs to be aware of that, however this thesis is aimed to both foreigners and locals trying to achieve success in Russia. Overall the way to success is pretty much common that is why the thesis has started with examples of artists who has done came up to the very high level (talking billboard positions and of course financially sustainability) operating within United States of America and globally.

2.7 How to create such content that YouTube algorithms promote it for free? Components of viral videos.

Sam Jones (2020) has provided the information regarding this question.

"How to create such a content that YouTube algorithms promote it" is a complex question with understandable answers. While trying to figure out what are the steps that successful YouTubers have been taking in order to get where they are today, the author took a tutorship from a Russian YouTuber - Sam Jones with the YouTube following base of over 500 thousand subscribers. After completing the study course of YouTube, there were seven necessary steps pointed out as follows:

- Attaching to trends

Attaching to trends brings 50% of success of the video compared to 50% divided between other steps. In order to get attached to trends, one should look out for the videos on YouTube which have lots of views compared to relatively small number of subscribers, in the last month. Then one should figure out what make those videos gaining views, most often it is a topic which is included in the title of the video.

- Overacting

Due to high competition level on YouTube, it is recommended to overact in the video fundamentally. To overact in the video fundamentally means out compete one's competitors by doing simple actions and overact so much that it becomes interesting to watch. For instance, Sam Jones had mentioned that he decided to make reaction videos for 10 hours instead of ordinary 5-10-minute videos that majority of YouTube reaction channels do. That lead to his very first videos blowing up, despite they were made in a high competed field, as Sam found out his way to overact.

- Causing emotions

For the video, in order to get better involvement with viewers, as well as to get people to click on one's video in the first place, it is recommended to cause emotions from the audience by at very least putting people's faces with vivid emotions on so called thumbnail of the video. Putting people's faces with vivid emotions on the thumbnail cause high CTR level. Later in this thesis, the definition of CTR will be explained.

- Pranks

Pranks mean that the video itself should include the element of prank or joke on people. It has not even necessary to be a prank video itself. However, it is always entertaining to watch natural people's reaction on unexpected prank towards them. As it was discussed in chapter "In general" of practical report of the

thesis, entertainment is the main fuel of YouTube audience in their motivation to watch the video, which is the purpose of a marketer.

- Challenges

Naming video titles challenging leads the viewer to get interested in it by human nature. Calling video titles challenging may be simply framed as "I do something for certain amount of time/money/tries". For example: "I earn enough cash to buy a car in 90 days". In that example, one can see the "I do something" and "For certain amount of time" as was explained before. It was not mentioned, however, that the word "Challenge" should ever be included in the video title.

- Drama

Dramatizing video in any way (and on the title or thumbnail especially) leads to viewer's emotions which is the aim of someone trying to catch viewer's attention and get him to click the video.

- Money related

Money related videos are always interesting to a significant majority of viewers. For instance, one of the largest YouTubers Mr. Beast's videos are very persistently titled or thumbnailed money related. Especially in Russia, with its low minimal wages and level of income people live in, it becomes a social problem and money related videos always gain good attention and views. Another great example of money related content is Russian YouTube blogger and artist in particular, Morgenshtern, when he became viral after posting a video of him putting a hundred thousand rubles (1000 euros) on fire. Later, in one of his interviews he explained that it was a very cheap price for the level of virality he received. As he was shown on several federal TV news and was mentioned by lots of YouTube bloggers in their videos, it becomes objectively that the move of burning average citizen's 2-3 months' salary brought much controversy and, at the same time, brought a very good return on investment. (Sam Jones, 2020).

2.8 VidIQ

To measure the possible success of the future videos, to one, it is recommended to use the web service plugin called VidIQ. VidIQ was created to help YouTube creators to monitor their videos' success and to predict the success of the upcoming videos by re-checking their optimization and comparing the request with the search value. It is a necessary tool to use when trying to generate big views on one's YouTube videos. (VidIQ, 2020).

2.9 How to generate ideas

Also, it was mentioned by Sam Jones (2020) that in order to generate ideas, there are the following steps:

Step 1

To do a research on YouTube about what videos have blown up. To pay a close attention to their titles and thumbnails, descriptions and metadata. To choose videos that include components of a viral video mentioned above in this thesis.

Step 2

Using popular titles, create own video necessary including three to four key components for making a viral video. In the example below there are several key viral video components included: video is made around trending or popular word – Uber (author argues that once a word Uber was changed by Taxi, the video would have not got as many views as it has); overact (Lamborghinis in Uber is not ordinary); causing emotions (people do not expect to see a Lamborghini as their Uber ride and tend to emotionally react); prank (both in the video on Uber clients and in the video title). Figure 4 shows a great example of following key viral components of the video in the title and idea bringing its creators millions of views (HoomanTV, 2018). (Sam Jones, 2020)
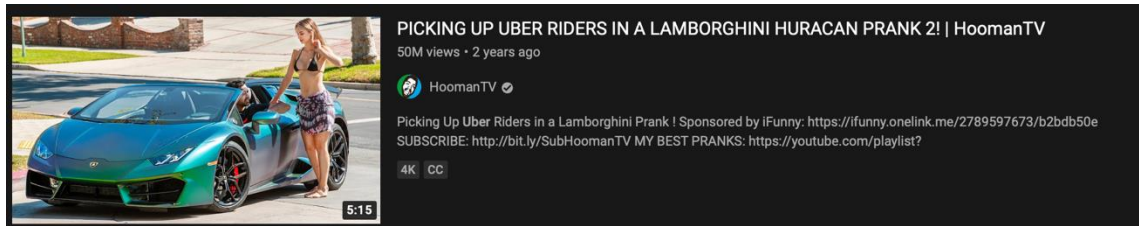
Figure 4. Picking up uber rides in a Lamborghini Huracan prank 2.

Another great example is Mr. Beast, again, as shown in Figure 5, with his video perfectly following all the key components of viral video: trend (uber); overact (2256 miles in one ride); emotions (both in the video itself and in the video thumbnail). (Mr. Beast, 2017).
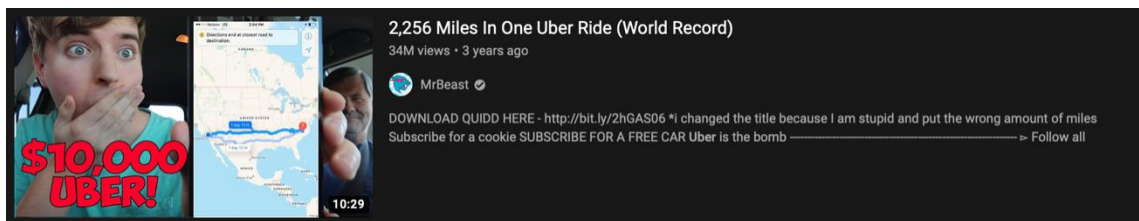

Figure 5. 2,256 miles in one Uber ride (World Record)

2.10 Case - Morgenshtern

The greatest example of an artist using social media website of YouTube to promote his music and generates unbelievable revenue is Russian artist/YouTube blogger, and recently a businessman and co-founder of a fancy restaurant in the city of Moscow - Morgenshtern. According to the Forbes, in 2020 he generated over 1.5 million dollars just in profit (Forbes, 2020). Such an example was chosen as the most relevant example to the thesis topic, which is again: "How to succeed as an artist entering Russian music market using social media tools". In his early interviews, Morgenshtern claimed that he initially started off making music but faced the issue of lack of sustainable traffic for his music streams to support his lifestyle. Then, he decided to create a YouTube channel to promote his music, in a way this thesis is done as well. He started his channel in June 2013 and to this day, he has attracted and involved almost 8.3 million subscribers to just single YouTube channel (over 5 million on Instagram).

Becoming a multimillionaire in just few years, being only 22 years old is an enviable result which cannot be underestimated by people of all ages and mentality. Figure 6 shows the home page of Morgenshtern's YouTube channel.
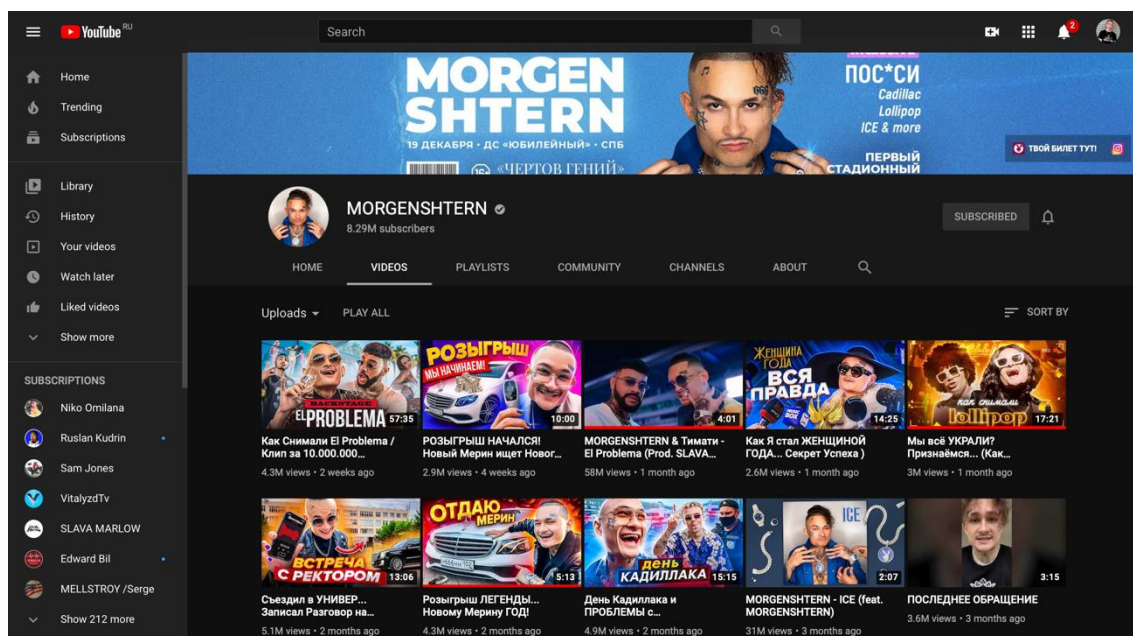

Figure 6. Morgenshtern's main YouTube channel page.

Besides music streams, that are defined as a main source of income in this thesis, Morgenshtern has created his wealth by, of course, diversified sources of income:

- Streams

The significant part of his income is coming from music streams, as prices that are paid to artists for their music streamed is rapidly growing in Russia. In 2019, Morgenshtern used his YouTube channel to stream himself in a studio working on an album for a week. The income from album streams brought its creator somewhere around 125000 euros in just first 3 months since it has been dropped and what is interesting too, every single track from an album has become a platinum (Sobaka, 2020) (Muz-tv, 2020).

As it is clear now for the reader, the success of the album was generated because of artist using his social media tool in the most right way for that period of time (author argues that the album would not have such a success in terms of

figures if the process was not streamed). Another important aspect of an album success is challenge aspect. As was discussed above, in the chapter "How to create such a content that YouTube algorithms promote it for free? Components of viral videos". It is clear that in order to get views, one or several components should be included. As the example of Morgenshtern's music album one can see that it was a strong challenge titled videos: "making an album live in just one week", which is both challenging (1 week) and overacting (make a whole music album in one week is not what usually people do). (Figure 7).
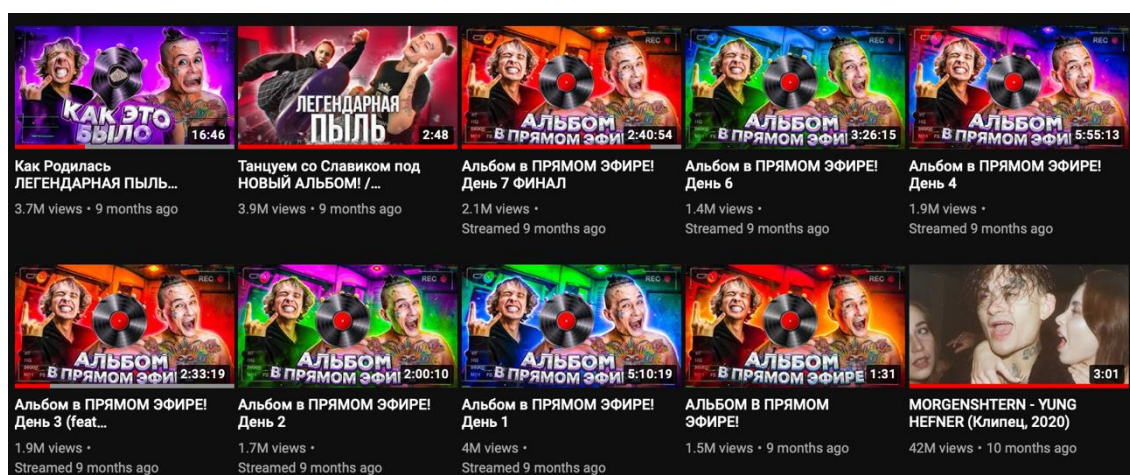
Figure 7. Album "Legendary Dust" streamed and has millions of views.

- Live and online concerts

Before the pandemic has appeared, Morgenshtern was regularly touring within the country. The concert honorarium depends on how big or small a city is, it might be somewhere around 300.000 – 2.000.000 rubles or 3000 – 20000 euros per concert. The more interesting fact is that once pandemic locked down all the entertaining events in Russia, Morgenshtern with his crew decided to do perform online, and at some point they have over 5 million people watching the live concert at the same time which has never been possible in offline concerts.

- Merchandise sale

Morgenshtern and his crew always create a new line of merchandise, once the previous one is sold out. He uses his social media to promote and generate

sales of his merch by simply advertising it inside his videos. That source of income cannot compare to two previous ones, still it brings the artist somewhere around 3000 euros monthly.

- Sponsorships with brands

Advertising big brand and being an ambassador of such is a great fortune and result of hard work. Depending on an artist influence and his social media subscriber base count, brands can pull out different offers for them. For Morgenshtern being a very huge artist of these days, having a sponsorship deal with brand "Sprite", it is acceptable that he has received at the very least 100.000 euros for just showing him sipping that Sprite online on his social media accounts.

To sum up, a usual guy from Russia has become a multimillionaire in just few years by initially understanding the importance of social media tools, then applying the knowledge to take advantage of those tools.

3. Practical report (empirical)

3.1 Doing YouTube

Since June 2019, the author has started a YouTube channel to promote his music by creating YouTube videos and the channel has not blown up until he started using several features of catching people's attention as part of the thesis work. (Big Drip Boi, 2020)

The fact must be mentioned that the author had already been doing YouTube in a way he was trying to catch people's attention by creating videos titled popular google requests. For instance, he had created videos titled: "how to promote music", "best digital audio workstation to make music", "how to advertise a YouTube channel", "how to come up with ideas for videos" and more. In other words, those were some specific titles which are googled the most out of all. To find those exact titles, programs such as "trends google" or "wordstat yandex" (for Russian language speaking countries in particular) can be used. (Trends Google, 2020), (Wordstat, 2020).
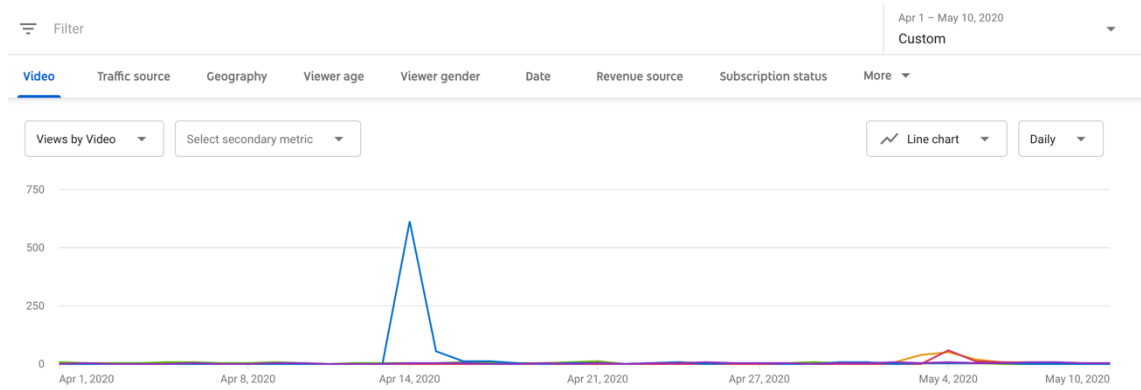
Figure 8. Amount of views of Big Drip Boi's videos before using catching people's attention techniques.
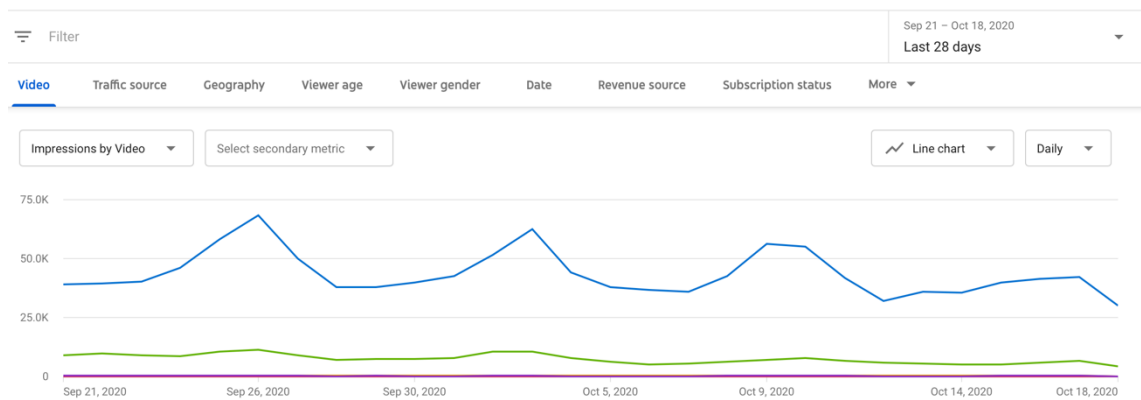

Figure 9. Amount of views of Big Drip Boi's videos after using catching people's attention techniques.

After 2 months those videos gained approximately 250 – 400 views average. Which is not a good result. Then have come the idea about another strategy to catch people's attention (Figures 8-9). It is clear from those figures that the daily views amount had grown approximately 140 times, from peaking at 500 daily views to peaking at about 75.000 views a day.

The realization has come that in order to get popular, the content needs to be made popular. Basically speaking, after searching more information about the platform called YouTube, it was found out that over 70% of attention on YouTube is concentrated on entertaining videos, despite educational ones, which was the greatest realization of this whole process (Sam Jones, 2020). In addition, here needs to be mentioned that 3 main features were discovered which lead YouTube algorithm to push it and help gaining views:

- **CTR or click-through rate**

CTR is a metric which shows one what percentage of his or her impressions on YouTube turned into views. This measures how often viewers watched a video after seeing an impression. (Creator Academy, 2020). In practice, good CTR comes after good thumbnail (cover art of the video which goes together with the title. In order to get the best CTR it is needed to include a few (1-3) massive objectives in the thumbnail which catch attention the most and includes emotions or money related aspects.

Figure 10. Example of a great thumbnail and title for the YouTube video by the one of the greatest YouTubers of our time MrBeast.

As one can see from this picture, the thumbnail includes all the major requirements for a good CTR rate achievement.

$$CTR = \frac{Clicks}{Views} \times 100$$

On Russian YouTube CTR can range from 0.4 to 4.0 percent.

- **Watch time or audience retention**

Watch time (or audience retention, as it's popularly called in YouTube analytics) is the total amount of time in aggregate that viewers spend watching one's videos. Ideally, videos topping in this metric result in higher overall viewing sessions. (YouTube Academy, 2020). Watch time has become the key component

after CTR. As good CTR lets audience to at least click on the video, good watch time is a metric identifying that the video is actually interesting and not just a clickbait which is often used for gaining more views. (Socialmediaexaminer, 2017).
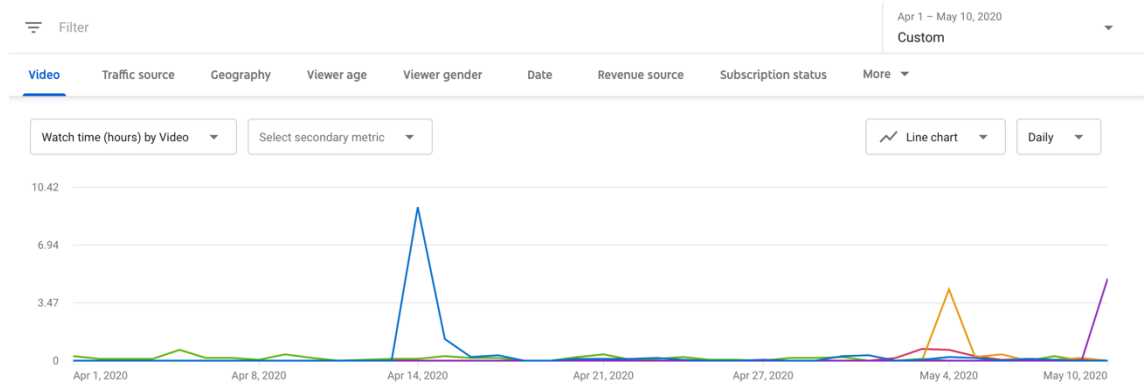

Figure 11. Amount of watch time of Big Drip Boi's videos before using catching people's attention techniques.

- **Binge watching**

Binge-watching is a practice of watching one's content for a long period of time. In terms of YouTube, binge-watching of a certain YouTube channel shows YouTube itself that the content is worth promoting by YouTube algorithms.

Besides technical part, after studying super successful YouTube channels with significant following base of millions and millions of people, the author has found out that there are several key components of YouTube videos which must be included in the footage of the video itself.

To start with, the decision about the content changing was made, aimed at catching people's attention the most. But the question still was where to get the traffic for videos? The shady strategy then was used just to try it out: there were created several "official music videos" of a certain popular artist – Morgenshtern, who holds the most attention of the internet at the time. Those "official music videos" were made by cutting artist's other videos and combining those pieces to his song dynamically using video editing program called Final Cut Pro X. Then, uploading those videos, it was decided to name it an official video, and even though it does

not meet the YouTube policy, there were no YouTube strikes gotten to those videos and the platform let them be used, however, did not let to monetize them. To make long story short those videos has taken off.
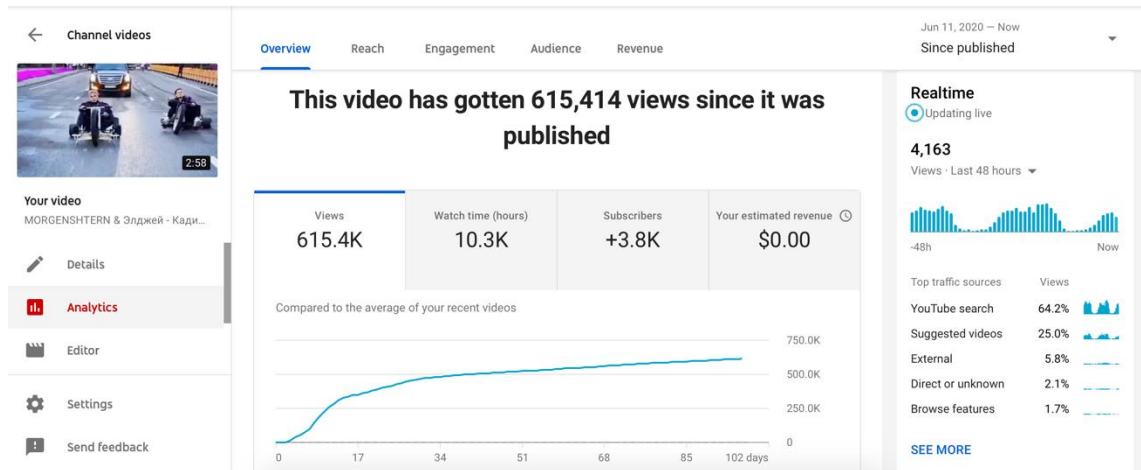

Figure 12. Big Drip Boi's very first video to take off.
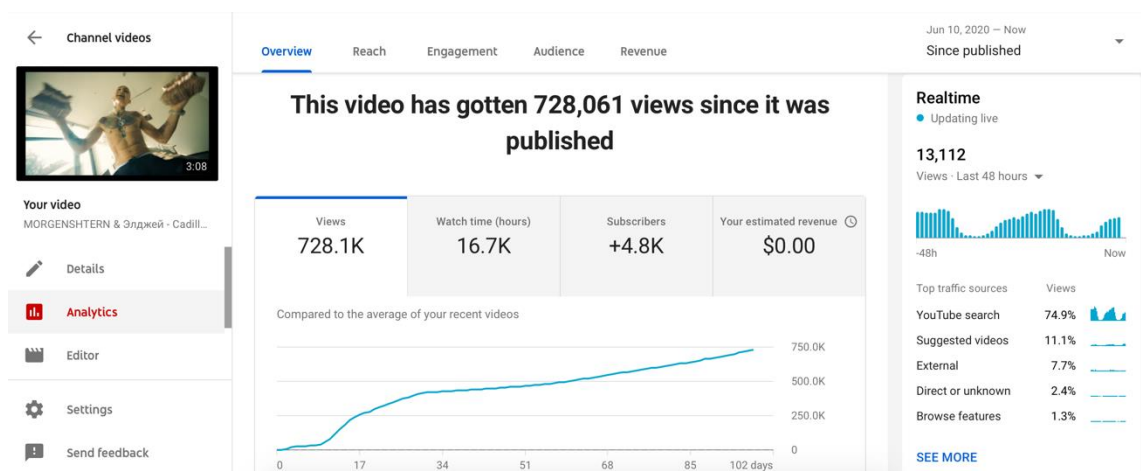

Figure 13. Big Drip Boi's second video that took off.

Within 3 months, since the videos have been posted, 2 of the videos has generated over a million views and brought me to a point of having somewhere around 10 thousand YouTube subscribers (Figures 12-13). Also, as one can see from the pictures, about 70% of the traffic was generated just by YouTube search, meaning people were using the same title these videos were called which is about the same strategy was used with channel's previous videos, the difference is that, the traffic was generated around more relevant high-frequency requests and the

CTR rate was good due to good thumbnails were made which led to those enormous views gotten. So, these are the great examples of using free YouTube promotion by YouTube algorithm to accumulate huge traffic without investments.

Whatsoever this tactic brought the channel to a new level and the happiness was unmeasurable, it still did not meet the goal as the goal was personal recognition, while videos that generated all the following base were having different, somehow irrelevant people's faces. Here is also needed to be mentioned that a few videos having author in them were dropped in-between also in order to get the face seen and known; those videos have gotten around a little 2-6 thousand views which is ridiculous compared with 700 thousand mentioned above, however, is way more than the average channel video used to get.

From there, the motivation has become really high to produce videos more often as the following base started having shape and it is way easier to put effort, time and creativity into something that gets viewed by people, compared to something that is not.

The realization then has come that it was a great time to start taking advantage of the platform and several decisions were made in terms of mixing aims of the current thesis and music promotion. Decision about creating own content has become together with branding, equipment development and content development itself.

3.2 Branding

To start this chapter, the author quotes Thomas Smale, who back in 2015 argued that one's personal brand is how one appears to the world (Entrepreneur, 2015). Therefore, it serves to a reason that a strong brand is preferable to one that is unpolished and uninteresting. Once people know who one is and begin to identify one with a specific area of understanding or expertise, one will be well on his way to becoming the go-to person in his niche or industry. Consistency is the key. Also, as Daniel Rowles argues, if one keeps on publishing useful and engaging content, regularly updates his social channels and positively engages

with anyone who leaves comments or feedback, he will gradually grow his social media audience. If, however, he wants to speed up this process and create the maximum development for his efforts then he is going to need to focus on social media outreach. (Daniel Rowles, 2014).

In his book "Digital Branding, 2014" Daniel Rowels also argues that one also needs to do the so-called "social media listening", which consists of observing their audience and recognizing what they want to see, talk about and engage with.

Branding is a very important component of becoming successful in the social media sphere as branding achieves the following goals:

- Fosters user loyalty

- Motivates the viewer to purchase

- Emotionally connects with a target prospect

- Builds credibility The

- Delivers a clear message (Hypewired, 2028).

Steps were taken for branding are as follows:

- Was created a brand, a unique name for own page followers: "a hitter" or "хитер" which is a close family or gang member (Urbandictionary, 2020).

- The hairstyle was changed to dreadlocks to look more unique and memorable and to attract the attention of younger audience

- Was created a color set of purple and gold to determine the main brand colors.
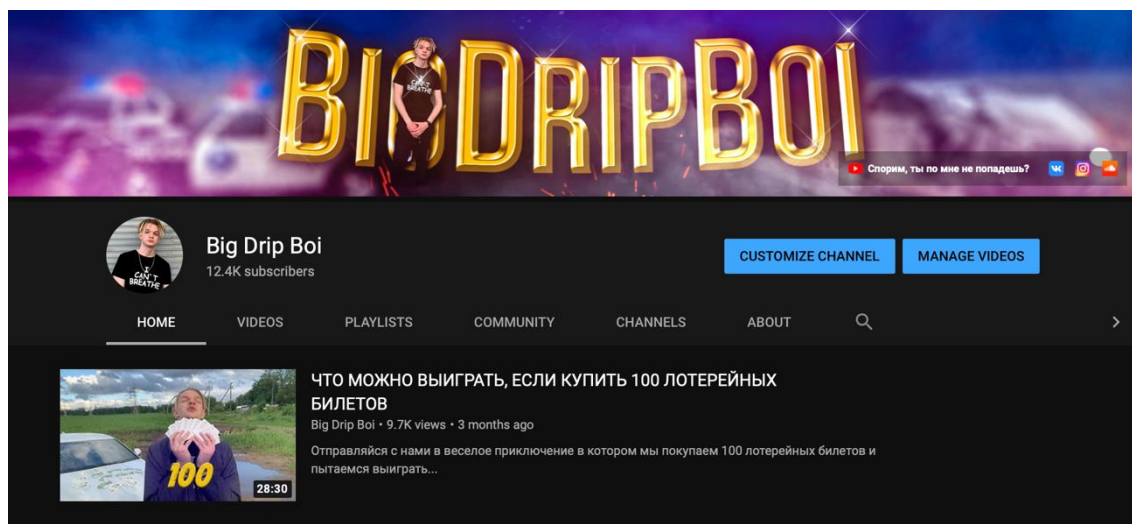
Figure 14. Branding of the main page of Big Drip Boi's YouTube channel.

- **Equipment development**

Together with the branding, the shooting equipment needed to be upgraded. All of the previous videos on the channel were shot on an iPhone 6. However, after doing the project for over a year, it has become clear that the equipment needs to be upgraded to a video camera with the stabilization, a special vlogging lights (a circle light or a soft box), and a good sound recording equipment (microphone). So, there were bought lights, high quality web camera Logitech C922 and micro-phone Samson C01 was already in use so that one was not needed.

- **Content development**

In order to attract attention, the content needs to be made within certain local trending topics in the first place, meaning that decisions about certain piece of content should be made after considering what topics are trending at the moment. At the time of writing this part of thesis the popular topic which the attention was generated around a lot was "притворяюсь новичком" or "pretending a beginner", where creators were uploading videos of them setting up an online class with some random tutors from the web-sites offering different job shifts, such as profi.ru or youdo.ru, and acting like they are the beginners in the field, when they are actually professionals. Then, after some time spent on the call with those tutors, they all of a sudden started showing their skills in the field which usually

caused great emotion from those tutors (shock, laugh, anger, confuse.). Videos gained hundreds of thousands and millions of views, generated revenue for its creators and giving them the creditability within the YouTube community. After all, it was decided to hop on that trend train and go along with it, so the video called "притворяюсь новичком на уроке английского" or "pretending a beginner on an English class" were made.
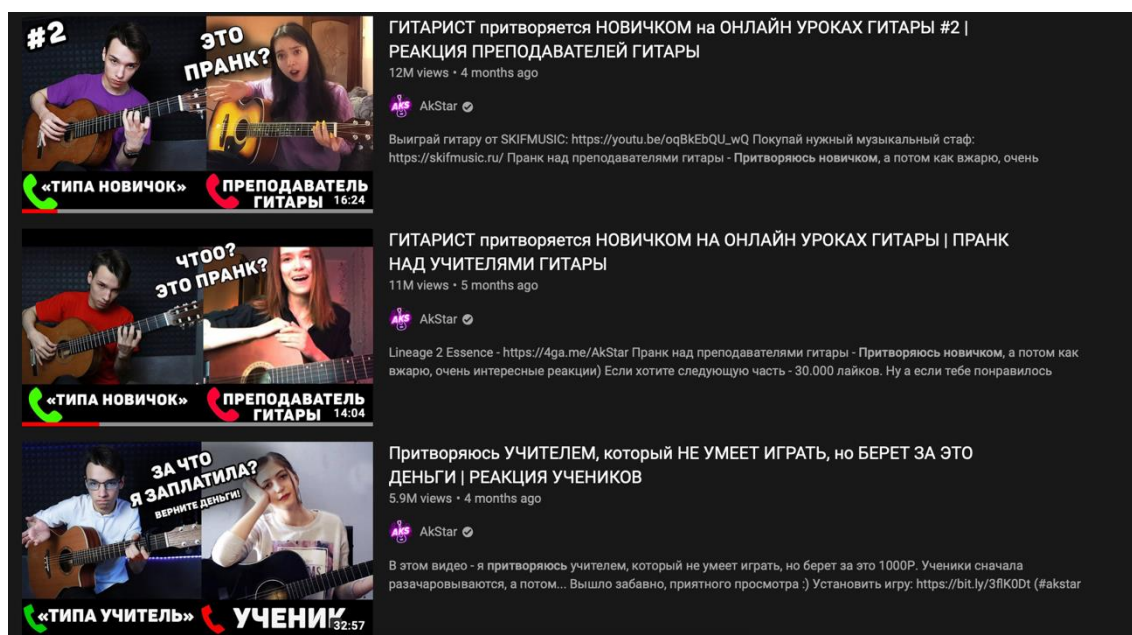

Figure 15. Top viewed videos titles pretending a beginner.

Except those series of videos, it also was decided to promote Big Drip Boi's music in a following way: to create a series of videos called "притворяюсь иностранцем в чартрулетке" or "pretending as a foreigner in a chartroulette". The idea was to do online calls to random people via ChartRoulette where the actor was pretending to be a foreigner by speaking English language and once it became discovered that the person's reaction on the other side of the call is going to be entertaining enough for the purpose of the video, actor went further and offered him or her to listen to his new song as a part of promotion company. Then the music started blasting but in Russian language which of course caused emotion of laugh, shock, confuse and fun. The reaction always was like: "You are Russian!" and emotions caused were great too. Besides that online part, the set was also recorded, and later on, uploaded to Big Drip Boi's YouTube channel,

with links to the song itself to push traffic to a song through this channel, and generate revenue off streams.

4. Music Streaming

In accordance with Soundcharts, music streaming works in a very simple way: a service delivers data to a streamer in small amounts so the user can get pre-buffered music that has been pre-buffered a few minutes or seconds before playing a song. (Soundcharts, 2020).

4.1 ONErpm music streaming platform

Sales - USD

Reference	Store	Total
2020-07	yandex	0.00
2020-06	yandex	0.04
2020-07	vk	0.02
2020-06	vk	0.67
2020-07	odnoklassniki	0.00
2020-06	odnoklassniki	0.00
2020-07	boom	0.61
2020-06	boom	1.40
2020-07	youtube_red	0.00
2020-07	applemusic	0.06
2020-07	youtube	0.01

Total: 2.81

Figure 16. Some artist's stats about how much he received off his music was streamed.

To the author, there was provided the following screenshot of some artist who has uploaded his music to streaming services and got a small number of streams converted into money. Author stopped at this point with his practical report in order to complete the thesis writing part, and considering author's answering all research questions in this thesis completely, he made a decision to not keep exposing his own steps in succeed.

5. Conclusion

Creating step-by-step plan, author attempts to summarize all of written above into one guide which is:

Step 1 – To get rid of uncertainties and insecurities

Step 2 – To create a YouTube channel

Step 3 – To generate video ideas using techniques described in chapter 2.9

Step 4 – To upload at least 1 or 2 videos a week consisting of key YouTube viral video components described in chapter 2.7

Step 5 – Promote music by advertising it inside the videos and adding links to streaming services where songs are posted into the description box under the video

Step 6 – Keep repeating the process

It has never been as easy as it is today to become a very well paid, very influential and known artist by simply accepting the endless power of social media tools and applying the knowledge from this thesis for one's own advantage.

Fortunately for competitors and unfortunately for themselves, most artists do not use YouTube to promote themselves due to their pride or insecurities, explaining it as not a part of their image. Such a deny from using such a great tool to achieve their goals plays significant role in artist's opportunities, narrowing them down.

Content can be made out of anything. There is no such thing as lack of ideas. Ideas always can be created by sourcing what has been done before and went popular or viral.

Trends are repetitive, just like fashion is. A five-year-old trends still can be used attempting to make a viral video and have a nice chance to blow up and gain views.

The most complicated part about doing social media is generating content ideas and being consistent with one's content. That is why the principal research question guiding the whole study was the following:

- How to use social media in a way to reach the heights of popularity and success

The main question was answered clear throughout the thesis. Techniques to music promotion was disclosed. Throughout the thesis it was disclosed that in order to achieve popularity and success, it is needed to use YouTube free promotion power – YouTube algorithms, by implementing steps described in chapter 2.7. An example of artist who had reached the heights of recognition was shown and explained in detail.

However, the main research question could not be answered completely without considering the following sub-questions:

- How to come up with ideas for content

Ways to avoid lack of ideas were explained clearly in chapter 2.9 of this thesis. Speaking simply, there are 2 steps which are to find popular videos which gained many views and using the same video title, create own one and optimize it with right metadata.

- How to create such a content that YouTube algorithms promote it for free?

Adapting to YouTube algorithms is easy once it is discovered. Due to YouTube's opacity, its algorithms shifts might not be predicted. By 2020, the most relevant algorithms were explained in chapter 2.5 of this thesis.

The project is to be kept developing. As far as in real life such a project possibly takes up two to three years, which the thesis timeframes and author's graduation deadline was not matching, the thesis might appear with a little sense of incompleteness. Still, it is fair to say that putting in hard work and adapting to

YouTube algorithms, anybody can easily achieve their goals in the media sphere.

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