

Key Factors Contributing to the International Success of a Rock Band: Managing Artists as Businesses

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<p>The aim of the study is to identify the main factors that can make a rock band successful in the music industry, particularly in Europe. As the study considers bands to be businesses, it takes a managerial point of view. It determines the role and responsibilities of an artist manager, and explores the different management possibilities for artists.</p> <p>The topics the study is discussing include the importance of a clear artistic vision, branding and strategic planning, tools for audience building, the possibility of self-management and the changing business models in the music industry.</p> <p>The commissioner of the research is a Danish group, Cold Black. A newcomer rock band, which has been self-managed and self-financed since the beginning of its career. The band is already successful in its local market and now looking for ways to promote their music on international markets.</p> <p>The chosen research method is qualitative, supported by a set of semi-structured interviews, a focus group discussion and literature review. The interviews are conducted with industry experts and musicians. Based on the data collected, the commissioner receives developmental suggestions to make them more competitive on international markets.</p> <p>As a result, the study prepares the commissioner and their music for being successfully exported internationally. It may also serve as a guideline for young musicians and managers, especially within Europe.</p>	
Keywords music, rock bands, manager, success, artist management, touring, image, marketing, branding, team dynamics, music industry, business models, culture export management	

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1 Introduction

1.1 Project background and motivation

There has been a wide range of research interests invested in the music industry. Generally, most studies focus on the history of the industry (Knopper, 2009), touring (Atkins, 2007), legal issues (Stim, 2012), technical matters (Senior, 2011) and self-management for bands (Chertkow & Feehan, 2008). For this thesis, Allen (2011), Wickström (2009), Kirsner (2009) and King (2009) were the most important sources. While Allen argues what makes a successful artist manager, Wickström evaluates trends of the new music economy with an outlook on the future. Atkins provides an extensive overview on audience building in the digital age and King deals with music marketing and promotional strategies.

My thesis focuses on rock musicians whose careers have just recently started. Since the business models in the industry have changed significantly over the years, it's becoming more difficult for young musicians to get the recognition they deserve. Looking at these changes, it is obvious that careful planning is more important than ever. Most artists manage themselves in the beginning of their careers, but how far can they get without the help of a manager and a professional support team? What role does a manager play in a band's success? What are the best strategies for beginner rock bands to consider? When is a band ready for an international career? This study will attempt to answer these questions and ultimately serve as a guideline for young artists.



Figure 1. Motivators of the study

As shown in Figure 1, my motivation for conducting this research originates from personal interest and experience; during my studies I have worked with several bands which all dreamt of success. I noticed that their expectations were usually unrealistic and they did not make the right kind of efforts to stand out in this very competitive business. Therefore, I became interested in finding out whether there is an actual recipe for success. Besides my personal motivation, the thesis is also relevant to my professional studies, both as an International Business and Culture Export Management student.

The study has been commissioned by a Danish group, Cold Black. The band was founded in 2011 and plays hard rock for young people. They have strong lyrics, catchy tunes and a distinctive image, with which they have already earned a rather small yet well-established fan base in Denmark. The band is quite popular in social media and they have recently released their first EP and music video.

I chose to work with them on this project because they are hard-working, goal-oriented and responsible individuals, who can work efficiently as a team and who have an eye for business. I believe that this study can support them in reaching international success.



Picture 1. Cold Black by Tobias Wiig Jørgensen

Picture 1 is taken from the latest photo shoot of the commissioner band, Cold Black.

1.2 Aims and objectives

The main aim of the thesis is to identify the main factors that can make a newcomer band successful in the music business, particularly in Europe. In order to do so, I will identify the most important elements alongside with the most common mistakes and risks to look out for. The manager's role in the process will also be evaluated. That way the study will not only be able to answer the question about a recipe for success but will also function as a guideline for young musicians. The study will also analyse the activities and strategies of the commissioner band and give them developmental suggestions for the future.

1.3 Research questions

The study has several research questions, which are the following:

1. What are the key elements of a band's success in today's music industry?
2. What are the most common problems bands face and how to overcome them?
3. What is the role of the manager in a band's professional success?

1.4 Structure and methods



Figure 2. Thesis structure

As can be seen from Figure 2, this thesis is essentially a research that contains an empirical study. The theoretical part is the core of the study and it includes three topics. Firstly, I describe the characteristics of the new music economy as it is important for new artists to understand the changes and place themselves in the market. Secondly, the role of the artist manager is discussed with a brief outlook on

self-management. Thirdly, I take a look at the key factors of success and suggest that it is beneficial for artists to look at their act as a business.

I gathered data from written sources on the one hand (books, journals, articles) and qualitative interviews with industry experts and musicians on the other hand. The interview topics are designed to be in harmony with the theoretical framework.

The empirical study is based on the data collected in the first part. A focus group discussion is organized with the commissioner, where the topics are line with the theory and the interview findings. Based on the results, I give them suggestions on how to proceed with their career. These suggestions concentrate on developing a competitive edge for the band and preparing them for an international career.

1.5 Relevance and reliability

A study such as the one proposed here is very much needed, as many young bands are struggling to identify the key factors that would guarantee their international success. Additionally, the study may be relevant for aspiring artist managers, as they would benefit from getting access to the experts' knowledge, both about the current situation of the music industry and band management.

The knowledge of the selected methods (interviews, focus group discussion, literature review) and the reliance on triangulation of these methods will strengthen the study's reliability, enabling me to provide valid answers to the research questions.

2 Literature review

2.1 The new music economy

It is common knowledge that the music industry has changed inevitably in the past 15 years; long gone are the times when record labels dominated the industry. The advent of the internet, the viral use of P2P networks, unauthorized file sharing and cloud based services meant the end of an era for the recording sector. New times created new rules and income streams, requiring a different strategy from the aspiring artist. This chapter explains the key differences between the old and new business model and specify the main characteristics the new music economy.

2.1.1 The changing business models of the music industry

"Analysts and executives have long lamented that the music industry is dying. That is not quite true—it is the record business that is clearly done for."
(Lowrey, 2011)

The four major labels were forced to shed 25 % of their work force since the turn of the century, while indie labels are on the rise. (Wickström, 2009) In year 2000, artists received two-third of their income from recorded music, and the other third from live performances and merchandise. (The Economist, 2007) By today, these proportions are reversed; as Goodman states it, the new music economy is based on live shows and licensing revenues instead of record sales. (Goodman F. , 2008)

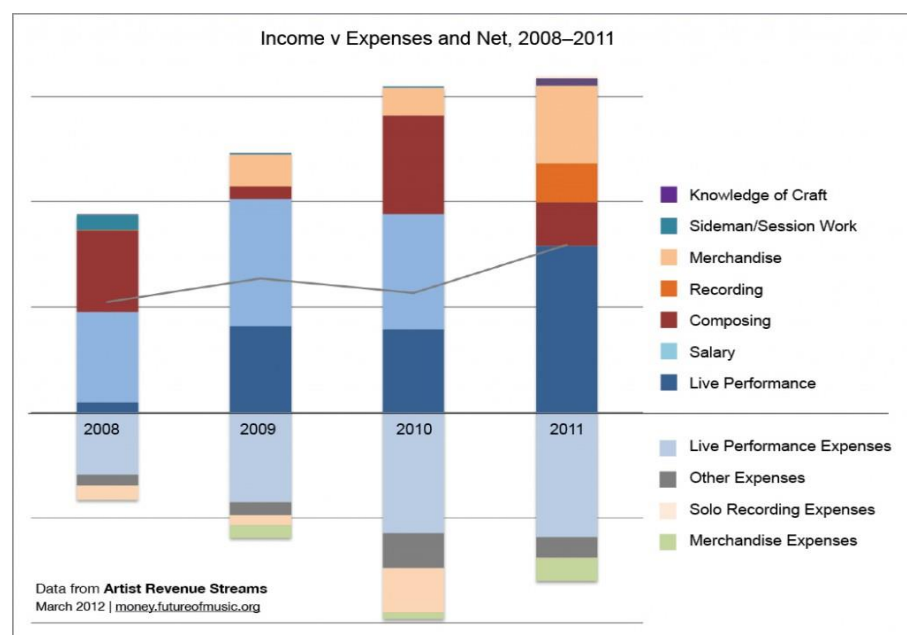


Figure 3. (Thomson & Cook, 2012) Artist revenue streams, 2008-2011

Figure 3 clearly shows that the income from live performances and merchandise has increased significantly since 2008.

The role of the artist as an entrepreneur has been greatly reinforced. (Kirsner, 2009) With major labels refusing to take risks, musicians have become more responsible for their own careers than ever before. In the era of digital creativity, they can produce good quality music inexpensively, even from their own living rooms. As a result, the distance between the amateur and the professional artist has been minimized. Fans take part in the creative process by producing cover songs, remixes and artwork, promoting their favourite musicians on the world wide web. More and more artists establish direct relationships with their audience, realizing their potential not only as inspiration, but also as a promotional tool.

This new cycle presents more opportunities on the one hand, such as easier communication with fans, inexpensive music production, growing demand for entertainment or the possibility of becoming an internet sensation. On the other hand, there are more challenges as well. Firstly, as there is a huge surplus of content, artists must face massive competition. Secondly, record labels are not willing to take risks anymore and invest into developing talent. This implies that artists need to support themselves financially, find a way to stand out and accumulate a fan base on their own before they could advance their careers to a professional level. (Kirsner, 2009) The new era is definitely promising, but it also requires a great deal of commitment from artists.

2.1.2 Characteristics of the new music economy

The new music economy may be characterized by unique features, which are completely different compared to the features of the traditional model. While the traditional business model includes the mass production and distribution of physical goods, the new business model switches towards online music services. (Hughes & Lang, 2003) Furthermore, there is a strong connection between audience members; music is no longer merely a product and fan participation has increased immensely.

Wickström describes the new music economy with the following characteristics:

2.1.2.a High connectivity vs. little control

The old music economy can be portrayed with a low level of connectivity. (Wickström, 2009) The connections between the audience members were relatively weak, as the

technology did not allow them to network with other fans around the world. In our day, fans have plenty of opportunities to connect with each other, such as forums, social media, chat rooms, blogs or e-mail. At the same time, they are able to follow their favourite artists on the internet; they can ask questions on the official forum, comment on social media activities or share their own content on YouTube. It has never been easier for artists to build a community.

Nevertheless, as new technologies lowered the barriers, it became challenging to control the use of information and intellectual property. Physical music distribution has been radically reduced, and even though there are functioning systems to replace the loss (iTunes, Spotify), piracy is still a substantial problem for right holders. For every track legally downloaded, 20 are illegally downloaded. The new music economy is demanding the right holders to re-evaluate their terms of use. (Wickström, 2009)

2.1.2.b Service vs. product

As I have mentioned above, the old music economy was the industry of physical goods, where the main goal was to sell as many records as possible. Tours were merely a tool to promote the artist's most recent release, stimulating the audience to purchase it after the show. In our days, information is accessible to everyone. People are not willing to pay extra for basic access anymore, but they are willing to pay for services and experience. (Wickström, 2009) Hence, artists and music firms started asking themselves: what added value do we deliver to the customer? As a result, they began to provide more than just the music itself; extreme live shows, effects, meet & greet opportunities, special fan club benefits or interactive multimedia content.

A good example may be the project Year Zero by Nine Inch Nails, which is essentially a concept album but it also includes an alternate reality game of the same name. Fans all around the world could play the interactive game, find clues, discover hidden messages, and eventually solve the story. The band's tour was also a part of the game, where the most dedicated players were awarded with a private concert of Nine Inch Nails. Audience participation was so high, that the Rolling Stone magazine described it as "a marketing team's dream". (Goodman, 2007) The case of Nine Inch Nails illustrates perfectly that the album itself may only be one component of the whole experience.

2.1.2.c Amateur vs. professional

The gap between amateur and professional artist has been dramatically reduced. Creating music does not require expensive studio equipment anymore, as there are various music production softwares available. Fans can produce their own remixes, cover songs or music videos and share the content online within a few minutes after it is ready. Jenkins calls the phenomena participatory culture: it means that the audience does not only passively consume culture, but also contributes in the production of it. (Jenkins, 2006)

In the new music economy, fans became an important and inexpensive promotional tool, and McDonald tells why: “Music fans have a credibility with other music fans that no amount of advertising or number of reviews can quite match.” (McDonald, 2013) Firstly, fans advertise the band both online and offline, which is useful word-of-mouth marketing. Secondly, the more dedicated ones create street teams and fan clubs, to support their favourite musicians. The most common activities of these teams are DIY advertising, concert photography and regular online discussions. Thirdly, the most passionate ones will produce their own music videos, fan art or cover songs, which is another excellent way of marketing the artist online. (Wickström, 2009)

There are further benefits from the sales perspective, as the most active fans tend to spend the most money on concerts, merchandise and records. Artists should encourage the fans’ creative desires to publish content, join the street team and take part in the creative process, to ensure their continuous support and interest.

2.1.2.d The artist vs. the label

Record labels have definitely lost from their power compared to 20 years ago, but they are still a major source of financial support for artists when it comes to recording, touring or marketing. However, labels have changed their strategies in order to survive and stay profitable; they are implementing a risk-avoidant approach when it comes to signing new artists. (The Economist, 2011)

With the strategic shift, the ways of discovering talent have changed as well. The major labels are not willing to develop unknown talents into superstars anymore. Instead, they expect artists to have a self-sustaining business before offering them a recording deal. Major labels are trying to reduce risks by outsourcing talent development to independent labels, accepting only established artists and publishing special editions of

old hit records such as Nirvana's Nevermind. (The Economist, 2011) It is clear that artists must also be successful entrepreneurs if they would like to accomplish something in the new music economy.

The music industry is oligopolistic in nature, meaning that a small number of multinational music companies control most of the global music related sales. (Picard, 2002) In the order of market share they are: Universal Music Group, Sony Music Entertainment, Warner Music Group, and EMI group. These companies are referred to as majors, while the others are referred to as independents. An independent label can be defined as "any music recording label that operates without the funding of the organizations of the major music labels." (Ostrow, 2010)

Independents often accept a higher level of risk, than the larger labels. Because of that, they have been able to develop new genres and artists, for example they often develop acts from the rock scene. Nonetheless, independent labels do not own the same amount of resources majors do, therefore they are usually a stepping stone towards a more promising contract in the future. Once the artist has grown professionally, a major may acquire the contract, the artist, and sometimes even the whole label. As I mentioned above, majors are not responsible for new talent anymore; they look for artists with a stable fan base and relevant experience in performance and showmanship. This in turn means that touring enjoys a great priority in today's music business. During live shows, musicians learn their own performance style, master communication with the audience, gain confidence and grow as a team. Touring is important for bands from the financial point of view as well; they receive 85 % of the gross revenue from touring but only about 10 % from the recordings. (Wickström, 2009)

In summary, major labels do not consider start-ups, and indie labels do not have the capacity to work with all the bands looking for a career-boost. Artists are more responsible for their own careers than ever before. They need to adapt their strategies to the changes in the industry; creativity, community building, touring and fan involvement are some of the most essential building blocks of success in the new music economy.

2.2 The manager

In this chapter I am taking a look at what literature sources say about the role, responsibilities and essential skills of a band manager (particularly in the music business) and how managers can facilitate the development of the musicians they manage. As this research is concentrated on bands rather than on solo artists, the literature review will focus on band management as well.

2.2.1 Who is a manager?

“The personal manager is the alter ego of the artist, the part of the artist the audience never sees.” (Frascona & Hetherington, 2004)

One will most likely find a manager behind successful artists nowadays, be they writers, actors, opera singers or musicians. Artists need managers to achieve a healthy balance between art and business, which is a challenging task to accomplish itself. However, connecting art and business is not the only reason why managers exist in the show business. Artist managers also participate in daily aspects of their clients’ life, which distinguishes them from traditional managers who may keep a distance from their clients.

Being a manager in the entertainment industry requires a broad set of skills. Artistic managers are usually coaches, figureheads, liaisons, disturbance handlers and salespeople all at the same time. (Mintzberg, 1973) Good artist managers take on most of Mintzberg’s managerial roles in their day-to-day operations, while demonstrating creativity and a high level of expert knowledge of their field.

The above reflections about the managers’ identity are supported by various literature sources. For example, a manager may be defined as “the person responsible for the work performance of one or more people. His or her basic job is to organize human and material resources in a way to help the organization achieve its goals and objectives.” (Byrnes, 2009)

In the case of this study, the organization is the band itself, as they are “working together to achieve a common purpose, transforming their resources into products and services.” (Byrnes, 2009) A common purpose may be short-term, for instance to reach a 1000 Facebook fans during a given year; or long term, to get a promising record deal and go on a European tour with the album. The resources can be both tangible and

intangible, such as talent, ideas, money, instruments, song lyrics, technical equipment, musical notes or the band members themselves. These resources can be transformed into products and services, such as songs, concerts, albums, merchandise, meet and greets or special fan club benefits.

The band manager's tasks are to supervise the whole process, assist the artist in setting up realistic goals, obtain and allocate the resources most efficiently, ensure quality and finally sell and promote the end product to suitable audiences. Passman goes even further by stating that the manager is simply the most important figure in the artist's professional life. (Passman, 2009) This is probably not far from the truth, as the manager is supervising most aspects of the musician's career, which aspects will be discussed later on in this chapter.

2.2.2 The four functions of an artist manager

In the field of entertainment, the artist-manager relationship is considerably closer than what is typically seen in business life; it is more often described as a partnership rather than a hierarchical relation. Still, the classical management functions apply in the music industry as well. DuBrin describes planning, organising, leading, and controlling as the four functions of a manager. (DuBrin, 2006) These functions must be fulfilled by arts managers in order to operate successfully. These functions also serve as the basis of the above mentioned partnership; therefore it is important to explain them in more detail.

The **planning** function is probably the most difficult one out of the four. It is about setting realistic – long and short term - goals and developing a set of logical steps to meet these goals in the end. In other words, it may also be defined as strategic planning. The first and most important phase in the planning process is to develop a clear artistic vision, to provide the team with definite directions from the beginning. Based on this vision, a well-designed plan may make the difference between the group's success and failure. Allen explains it as creating “a road map that helps define the route to success”. (Allen, 2011)

The function of **organizing** is the process of putting the plans into action. It may include defining the details, allocating resources, budgeting, scheduling, or assigning tasks to the right people. This function is about dividing the work into manageable components. (Byrnes, 2009)

The **leading** function requires taking the role of a leader and creating a shared vision which every team member should believe in. For the artist manager, working with highly self-motivated, independently-minded people offers a unique leadership opportunity. The manager must ensure that the talents and the energy of the team are directed towards the long-term success of the artist. As it is usually a long road towards success, the leader should act as a coach from time to time, keeping the team motivated and productive. (Byrnes, 2009; Allen, 2011)

Controlling means monitoring the progress, comparing the results with the objectives and assuring quality during the whole process. A good arts manager knows how to control the available resources, such as time, people, equipment, and finances. In addition he is able to step in, when a change must be made. Controlling in the music industry means directing the band's developing career by creating strategic plans. These plans must be realistic and flexible enough in order to adapt to the circumstances. (Byrnes, 2009; Allen, 2011)

2.2.3 Responsibilities and skills

It must be noted that the responsibilities may vary for each individual contract, depending on the requirements of the band and the manager's capability. In this section, I describe the most common duties artist managers take on and the necessary skill set required for optimal performance.

Passman describes the manager's responsibilities as follows: firstly and most importantly, the manager is advising the artists in all the major business decisions they need to make; for example which record deal would be the most suitable for the band at the time. The manager is taking part in decisions connected to the creative process, promotion or marketing. They participate in planning tours, budgeting for them and supervising the work of the people involved, for instance the agents, tour managers, promoters, or the crew. (Passman, 2009)

As it shows, the management tasks in the music industry are quite versatile and professionally demanding. For these reasons, a very specific skill set is necessary to become an acknowledged player in the field. According to Allen, a qualified manager should understand human nature and learn how to influence it through listening, persuasion and negotiation. Coaching and leadership abilities are required, as band members will often seek their guidance in professional and personal matters. Social and

communication skills are also extremely important, as the manager must represent the artist in various social settings. Last but not least, financial and technical skills are an asset, as most of the band's activities need to be budgeted for and using technical equipment is a part of their rehearsals, concerts and recordings. (Allen, 2011)

Byrnes presents an interesting point of view about the value of professional education and training. He claims that most top level managers today learned their work by doing and they wish they had more training in marketing and fundraising beforehand. For him, being a successful arts manager means having a strong personal mission, passion, relevant skills and education. (Byrnes, 2009)

2.2.3 Self-management

“Maybe you don’t need a manager – but you sure need management.”
(Frascona & Hetherington, 2004)

It is important to discuss, what other management options bands have, as working with a professional manager is not the only one. The choice may be influenced by many factors, such as the band's goals, preference, monetary issues or the complexity of their career. Regardless of the chosen option, applying management principles is absolutely necessary for a band's success, as these principles may help them realize their goals and take their career to the next level.

The most popular option is self-management. The majority of new bands operate this way, but some of them stay without a manager even as their career proceeds. The usual model is that one member of the band handles the business related activities (booking, promotion, management, networking) in addition to participating in the creative process. In this case, the musician is acting more as an entrepreneur managing their own business. Self-management is attractive for musicians, because they do not need to pay for a manager, give up any of the creative control, and they can manage their activities according to their own schedule.

However, there is more than one downside to this approach. First of all, most artists lack professional education in business and management; at the same time – as a new band - they lack necessary industry experience and contacts. (Frascona & Hetherington, 2004) Often, the trial and error approach is implemented. That is a lengthy process, which may ultimately affect the band's motivation and team dynamics negatively. Secondly, the artists may find it challenging to review their own work

objectively, as they are artistically involved with it. Thirdly, the self-management approach is the most time-consuming option, as it requires artists to engage in all business related activities besides creating and performing music.

It must be noted though, that despite the risky and time consuming nature of it, self-management can be a successful option, if there is a solid strategy, careful planning, analysis and commitment from the band. It may be useful for start-ups, as it requires them to set up their own goals, create their own image and improve their team dynamics. However, after a certain point, it becomes extremely difficult to organize the band's activities efficiently without a professional manager.

That raises the question: at what point does a band actually need a manager? As Lowry explains, in order to have a full-time manager, the artist must be able to give them full-time work (live shows, touring, possible record deals, appearance in media). The band should be playing regular shows nationally, have a solid fan-base and a proper press-kit before seeking a full-time manager. For new artists, it may be more suitable to find a manager offering hourly consultations instead. This way, they can receive valuable advice and get their career set in the right direction in a cost-effective way. If the working relationship proves to be efficient and the artist is ready for the commitment, a full-time management contract may be signed. (Lowry, 2010)

In summary, a manager's support can be useful at any point of a band's career, even if it does not mean full-time employment during the earlier stages. Musicians should be open-minded to seek advice from experienced professionals, as objective feedback, industry insights and career guidance is highly valuable in the music business. Self-management is an alternative, which may be risky but also rewarding in terms of team dynamics and identity development. Either way, the band must adopt an entrepreneurial mind set and understand the necessary business processes so that they can actually control the flow of events instead of simply drifting with them.

2.3 The artist as a business

“If you want to make money with your band, you need to act like a business in many ways.” (Lovett, 2012)

Many musicians assume that their product (the music) itself is going to be enough to get them noticed and take their career to another level. They often make the mistake of thinking that “a good product will sell itself”. Unfortunately, it is not true in the

majority of cases. When it comes to rock musicians - as their music does not fit into the mainstream category - it is even more difficult to appeal to a large audience. For this reason, artists must look at their band as a business in addition to the creative aspects of writing and performing music.

In reality, the music business does not differ greatly from any other business. As McVey explains it, the music is the product, the manager is the CEO, the record label is the manufacturer and the promoters are responsible for marketing and promotion. The business must co-ordinate the available resources and activities in a way, that it can generate profit by the sales of CDs, concert tickets, merchandise and royalties. (McVey, 2009) As any business, bands must face competition as well. Therefore, it is essential to gain a competitive edge, monitor the competitors and develop unique strategies to draw audience attention. The artist must develop both a business and a creative mind set in order to achieve success, as then they understand the processes better and are therefore able to influence them more effectively.

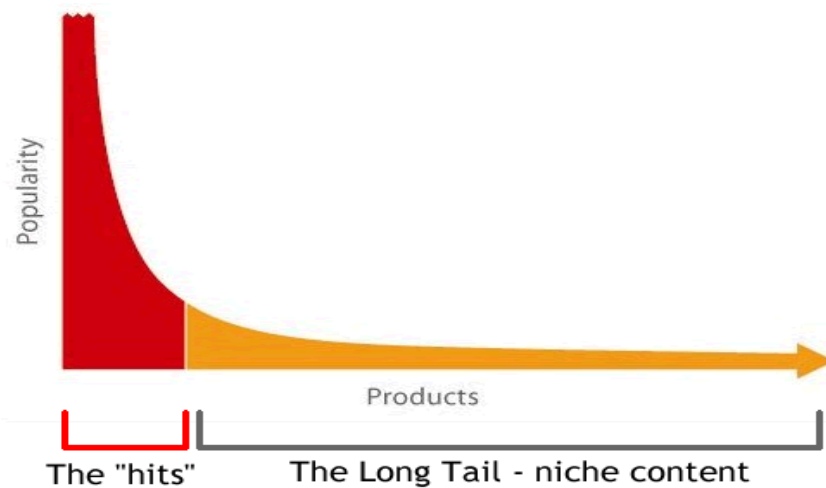


Figure 4. (Anderson, 2006) The Long Tail Model

Before anything else is done, a reality check may be in order. Being familiar with Chris Anderson's Long Tail Model can help start-up artists to understand the nature of the industry and set their goals accordingly. As there is a high surplus of available products, only a few acts could make it to the world famous level – they are “the hits” on the graph or in other words, the mainstream products. The rest is called The Long Tail, which means a high volume of niche products, generating a lower amount of sales and having a steady but low popularity compared to the mainstream. However, thanks to the “infinite shelf-space effect” of the digital era, consumers are offered unlimited

choices and they become less hit-centric. Niches satisfy narrower and more particular interests, thus there will always be a demand for them. (Anderson, 2006)

2.3.1 Vision, Goals, Strategy

“Anyone who doesn't believe in miracles isn't a realist.” (Ben-Gurion, 1956)

All the rock superstars of our time have at least one thing in common: and that is a strong artistic vision and mission. Metallica wanted to impact the music scene of its day by re-introducing heavy metal to the hair metal era. Marilyn Manson wanted to re-establish the shock-value and the show element of rock music during the grunge era. Korn wanted to bridge the gap between hip hop and rock, eventually creating a new genre called nu metal. These bands all had a vision and worked extremely hard to turn it into reality. Every successful band has a clear concept about what they represent, what their message is and what they want to achieve.

Most businesses are launched in order to realize a vision – “a realistic, credible and attainable view of the future that grows out of and improves on the present.” Having a clear vision is the first and most vital part of the strategic planning process, even though a vision alone may not be enough for success. It must be communicated both in and outside the organization, with the objectives planned and executed properly. (Bovee & Thill, 2005)



Figure 5. (Texas A&M University, 2010) The strategic planning cycle

McVey lists the dream, the goal, the plan, and the team as the most important factors of success in any business. (McVey, 2009) When it comes to music, the dream is

usually creating something memorable and becoming famous. The goals must be more specific than that and they can be long or short term. For example setting up a national tour or getting 100 newsletter subscribers. The plan must be a detailed description about how these goals will be reached. For instance, writing a business plan can be useful for any start-up band. Moreover, it is good practice in understanding how all the business activities are related and how they actually exist to help the artist's career. Finally, the team must work together efficiently, meaning that the members of the band must be on the same page about the above elements, communicate openly and work together to reach their goals.

Having a vision and goals is essential for any organization, but it is strategic planning that turns them into reality. Good strategies are always in harmony with the firm's mission, vision and objectives. Strategic planning is important for various reasons: it gives a direction to the company, helps to develop a competitive edge and eliminates risks before they can occur. (Huikko, 2012) It can increase customer satisfaction, financial performance and – if done correctly - make the company more successful in general. (Tappin, 2009)

Artist should work with the STP method, which is fairly simple and also rewarding in the long term. The first step is called Situation, which is evaluating the present state. The second one is Target, which is defining the goals and the third one is Path, planning the actual route towards them. (Rose, 2007) For example a specific Situation may be that a new band is having difficulties booking local shows. First, the problem must be analysed: Are they asking too much money for their level? Are they trying to reach too large venues? How about their online presence? Once the current situation is evaluated, the Target may be set up; the band will book five shows in local venues during the course of two months. The Path is essentially an action plan, which explains how this goal will be achieved. For example, researching local rock venues, creating a contact list, willing to play on weekdays as well or improving the band's online content.

Such action plans may be created for both short and long term goals. Creating and following these plans increases motivation, establishes standards and clarifies expectations within the team.

There are various tools that can assist strategic planning, such as SWOT, PEST, competitor or situational analysis. (Bovee & Thill, 2005) These tools help the artists

place themselves in the market, understand their competitors or learn about their hidden potentials or risks they need to face in the future.

2.3.2 Team Dynamics

“You may have the greatest bunch of individual stars in the world, but if they don't play together, the club won't be worth a dime.” (Ruth, 1939)

Sometimes, the biggest challenge of working in a band may not be writing, recording, or performing music, but the actual people element, meaning what kind of personalities are in the team and how can they work together. Bovee and Thill define a team as “a unit of two or more people who work together to achieve a goal. The members have a shared mission and are collectively responsible for their work.” (Bovee & Thill, 2005) It is easy to see why any band is also a team.

Team dynamics are psychological forces influencing the performance of a group. They are shaped by the attitudes and personalities within the team, the task at hand, the working relationships, and the operating environment. Team dynamics are good, when they enhance the performance of both the team and individual members. They are bad when they cause unnecessary conflict, decrease motivation and hinder the team in reaching its goals. (Myers, 2013)

When assembling a team it is very important to consider the overall dynamics. Therefore, new band members should always be auditioned based on specific criteria. According to LaFasto and Larson, five dynamics are fundamental to team success: team member, team relationships, team problem solving, team leadership and the organizational environment. (LaFasto & Larson, 2001) In more detail, effective teams are made from effective individuals, who are able to resolve both their interpersonal problems and the ones arising during the project. They are competent communicators with a proficient leader ensuring their performance. Finally, they are in a supportive environment, which does not encourage competition between team members.

Bovee and Thill draw attention to the importance of allocating team roles. (Bovee & Thill, 2005) While one member of the band may be most interested in performing, another one may have talent in writing lyrics, while the third one prefers to be involved with business-related activities such as booking shows or planning marketing material. One member of the band should be elected as the leader, who is usually the band's

founder or song writer. Having a leader in the band is important for many reasons: it makes decision making easier, gets the band more organized, helps to reinforce values and keeps the band focused on their goals. (Tracy, 2008) Moreover, the leader acts as a contact person and represents the band in front of managers, venues or the press. When dividing team roles, it is essential to consider what each member is interested in or passionate about; it ensures continuous motivation within the team and enthusiastic people will always produce better results.

Despite thoughtful planning, conflicts in a band are usually unavoidable; individual working morals, attitudes, expectations, but even the power structure can be a source of disagreement. As stated by Koch, the most common causes of conflict within a band are related to: skills, styles, level of effort, goals, control and team relationships. It is crucial that the above issues are discussed early enough in the band's career in order to avoid further misunderstandings. (Koch, 2007) Interpersonal issues must always be addressed directly and band members should be open about giving and receiving feedback. (Bovee & Thill, 2005) Periodical band meetings provide an excellent platform for such discussions.

2.3.3 Branding

“One way of dealing with the rising costs of getting and keeping attention in the new music economy, is to treat artists and bands like brands.” (Kapferer, 2004)

Branding is a key element of success for any business. If done correctly, it communicates the company's values to customers, employees and other stakeholders, building their trust towards the brand and therefore the organization itself. Ultimately, branding can increase sales, improve working efficiency and emphasize competitive advantage.

In the music industry, it is essential to build up an appealing image, as it will determine how the public perceives the artist and what they are remembered for. However, it is not only the artist's image which is included in the brand. Logo, merchandise, shows, lyrics, album artwork and even their fonts or their style of communication is adding to the brand. All the elements must be in line with what the artist represents in order to create an authentic brand. Therefore, it is recommended to word the values early on in the artist's career.



Figure 6. (Ng, 2011) The key elements of branding

According to McQ, a good brand always reflects a band's unique identity, which can separate them from their competitors. He also mentions consistency as the most important characteristic of a successful brand. (McQ, 2011)

Baumgartner takes this further, by stating that a good brand can help artists define their career objectives and make them more aware of their own values. He claims that having a message is the most significant step in branding, as it can establish an emotional connection with the audience, reinforce values inside the band and provide them with a competitive edge. (Baumgartner, 2010)

Chertkow and Feehan define the four ingredients of effective artist branding as follows: accuracy, impact, consistency and repetition. (Chertkow & Feehan, 2008) It means that a good brand should set up accurate expectations in the consumers' mind, transfer its message easily and by all means be consistent. In order to strengthen the image in the customers' mind, the brand must be used repeatedly.

Musicians need branding to strengthen their competitive edge, their values, their team spirit and their public image. A strong brand is necessary to stand out in the industry and to communicate the artist's identity. All three authors agree that authenticity and consistency are essential elements of a successful brand. It means that all the branding activities must reflect the artist's identity, with all the elements being coherent and homogeneous. For example, Finnish hard rock band Lordi works with a memorable concept: full-scale horror costumes, with the lyrics reflecting the same style, combined with an impressive live show supported by pyrotechnics and stage art. Additionally,

their website, their merchandise and even their use of colors communicate consistency and thoughtful planning. Their example clearly shows that there is much more to successful rock bands than simply the quality of music.

2.3.4 Marketing

“The number of already available goods far exceeds the number that can be successfully marketed.” (Hirsch, 1970)

Artists may often be too focused on the creative aspects of their music while ignoring the importance of marketing. While established musicians can be 100 % occupied with the creative process – as the management takes care of all their business activities – new artists must plan their actions carefully if they would like to stand out. Unfortunately, having a great song or album will not be enough to reach the audience without proper marketing to support it. Letang defines marketing in the music industry as “the process of raising awareness of your music or release”. Most start-up bands use Facebook and Twitter to announce news, shows and releases to their audience, but the actual strategy has to be more complex than that, including various outlets on- and offline combined with a creative approach. (Letang, 2012)

A band has to plan their marketing efforts, just as any other business; they need to sell records, concerts, music videos and merchandise, thus developing a marketing strategy is of paramount importance. As stated by Lengyel, a band should at least be able to position itself in the market, define their target audience and set up a communications plan as a part of their marketing strategy. (Lengyel, 2012) To be most efficient, all the marketing activities should be synchronized and coherent.

“Integrated music marketing is a concept, where all aspects of a particular artist’s campaign work together as a unified force to build visibility, rather than working on their own isolation.” (King, 2009)

Producing a well-written and professional press kit is essential for adequate image projection in the music industry. A press kit is a collection of material that summarizes the band’s experience, showcasing its strengths and marketability. (Ostrow, 2010) It is used when artists need to provide background information about themselves for clubs, agents, managers or journalists; it plays an important role in selling the artist’s talent. A press kit includes at least the biography, high quality images, demo, music videos, tour

dates, notable reviews and naturally, contact information. (Hamilton, 2012) Most press kits of our time take an electronic form.

King highlights the importance of targeting, positioning and differentiation. According to him, bands often make the mistake of wanting to be “everything for everybody”, which is not an effective strategy. Artists should find their niche and determine their target audience in order to market their music most efficiently. Who is the audience they want to play for? Who is the actual audience participating at their shows? Additionally, a competitor analysis may help artists in finding their unique selling proposition. What makes the band unique? Why would the audience choose them over other bands? What added value do they deliver? Being aware of what makes the artist unique is the key of differentiating them from their competitors. The power of word-of-mouth marketing should not be underestimated either, as every single person has the ability to create listeners out of their own social circle. (King, 2009)

Once the target audience is determined, artists must draw their attention to the unique generational differences and adjust their marketing strategies accordingly. For instance, older people rather stay faithful to the musical idols they grew up with, such as KISS or The Rolling Stones. These people are more likely to be collectors of music (rare EPs, vinyls, CDs), as they have a large amount of disposable income compared to younger audiences, who rather spend money on live shows and merchandise instead of CDs. (The Economist, 2011) In order to market their music efficiently, artists must be aware of who their actual audience is and what kind of special behavioural features they can be characterized with.

Generation Y (born between 1980 and 2000) can be generally characterized by being tech-savvy people with a relatively short attention span and a high value for individuality. Because of that, the artist must constantly provide something new in order to create a memorable brand in their minds; frequent stimulation is required to keep their interest. They are not just passive consumers anymore; they are eager to participate in all the artist’s activities and enjoy games, stories and surprises when it comes to marketing. They rely heavily on word of mouth when evaluating new products. (Van den Bergh, 2011)

The following generation called Generation Z is so connected to technology, that they have earned the nickname “digital natives”. As they are exposed to a swarm of information on a daily basis, they value speed over accuracy. (Schmidt & Hawkins,

2008) Their attention span is even shorter than Generation Y's and - as they are excellent at multi-tasking - it is challenging to keep their interest focused on a single subject. As a result, they usually cannot be described as brand-loyal people; on the contrary, they are experts in branding themselves, as peer pressure plays an important role in their lives. Their main form of communication is social media platforms and text messaging, but they are receptive to marketing on other internet-based platforms as well. (Renfro, 2012)

Besides unique generational characteristics, artists should pay attention to behavioural shifts as well. Kirsner defines a behavioural shift as "anything that represents a new way how your potential audience members are spending their time". For example the appearance of the internet in the 1990s was a behavioural shift, as people started communicating via e-mail. Or the creation of Youtube in 2005, when people began streaming music and creating video blogs. As these shifts create new ways to communicate with the audience, it is essential to monitor them closely and stay up to date. (Kirsner, 2009)

Marketing is the most efficient way artists can draw attention to their music. The key is that all the efforts are integrated, well-planned and professionally executed. Artists should know their audiences well, be able to position themselves in the audience's mind and differentiate themselves from their competitors, just as any other business.

2.3.5 Audience Building and Communication

"Before, there was this distance between the artist and the fan. With the Internet, they're your best friend." (Kirsner, 2009)

Efficient audience building is a crucial factor of succeeding in the music industry. With the band being the business and the fans being the customers, it is quite self-explanatory why musicians need to put extra effort into reaching out for new supporters and keeping the connection with the existing ones.

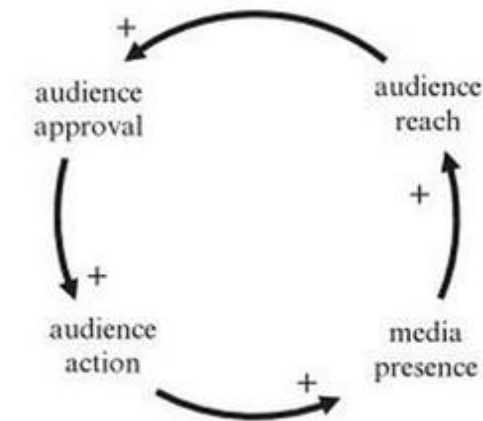


Figure 7. (Wickström, 2009) The audience-media engine

Figure 7 exhibits an interesting model called “the audience-media engine”, which has served as a basis of music business strategies for many decades. It is explained as follows: The foundation of business is audience action, which is stimulated by media exposure. Artists must be displayed in several outlets, in order to keep the audience reach steady. As that means higher marketing costs as well, music firms need to generate further audience action and rely more on the fans as a promotional tool for the artist. Dedicated fans will create and share content on different platforms such as websites, blogs and social media, which means increased media presence again. (Wickström, 2009)

Most of the fans will remain passive consumers, which means that they buy the CD and occasionally purchase concert tickets. Others will want to be more engaged, participating in promotional activities, setting up street teams and following the artist on- and offline. Finally, a much smaller percentage – the “hard-core fans” – will be interested in everything the artist produces from merchandise to limited edition releases. (Kirsner, 2009) These people are the most supportive both financially and creatively as well. They will also be the most likely to contribute in crowd-funding projects or auctions of the artist. It is important to communicate with the fans and understand how they would like to be involved in the process, as they will contribute and commit on different levels. Loyal supporters must be kept satisfied and the more passive ones should be stimulated into taking action.

Even though technology has great advantages when it comes to audience building (viral marketing, social media, direct communication with fans, ease of access) audience fragmentation is unavoidable. With the internet, the number of outlets has increased

even further, and it's not possible anymore to reach the whole audience through a single outlet. Artists should be aware of that and use various outlets for communication instead of a single one. (Anderson, 2006)

In summary, bands need to adapt to the new music economy, where artists are entrepreneurs, music is becoming a service and fans are gaining more power over labels. Working with a competent and professional manager is also crucial for an artist's success, but self-managed bands are on the rise as well. Artists have to evaluate their goals, assess their current situation and choose the best management option accordingly. Finally, it is beneficial to look at the band as a business. Understanding the concepts of vision, team dynamics, branding, marketing and audience building can greatly increase a band's chances to succeed in the music business.

3 Methodology

This chapter introduces the most important theories of qualitative research and the necessary steps to gather and analyze data. At the same time, I explain why I chose qualitative research methods for data collection.

3.1 Research methods

As Kumar defines, qualitative research measures the data's quality rather than its quantity. The questions are adjustable to explore the interviewees' insights, thus provide a wide range of evidences to strengthen the phenomenon or problem in a particular situation. (Kumar, 2005) The method is used, when a deeper understanding is required on a certain topic. (Saint-Germain, 2002)

Qualitative research ultimately aims for understanding people's hidden motivations, thoughts or perceptions concerning a certain issue, event or organization. The process is discovery-oriented, and the collected data is considered subjective - as it is the perceptions of the people observed. (Key, 2002)

Theses of similar music industry related topics use a variety of – mainly qualitative – research methods, such as semi-structured interviews (Marttila, 2012), theme interviews (Tähtinen, 2010) and case studies (Piippa, 2009). Project-based theses are less common, with results such as creating a fan club plan (Ullman, 2013) or arranging a specific event (Hirvelä, 2012). Finally, in some cases mixed methods (Suominen, 2009) are used.

For this research, I adopted the qualitative method, firstly because the research problem is quite complex and the presented issues must be opened up and explained in a great detail. Hence, the quality of the data is a priority. Secondly, respondents need to be hand-picked by pre-defined criteria, as they have to be artists and managers from the rock music field. The subjects must have knowledge and experience in the industry and they should be working in Europe, so probability sampling is absolutely not suitable. Thirdly, the quantitative tools and methods would not support my research, as I am looking for viewpoints, stories and experiences rather than numeric measurements. Thus, surveys would not be the proper tool for data collection. More specifically, the chosen qualitative research tools are semi-structured interviews and a focus group discussion with the commissioner.

Kvale defines qualitative interviews as conversations, that "attempt to understand the world from the subjects' point of view". (Kvale, 1996) In semi-structured interviewing, the researcher sets up an outline of topics and questions beforehand, called the interview guide, which sets a clear direction for the interview. However, not all the questions are set beforehand, further questions may arise during the interview itself, this way allowing more flexibility for the researcher. (Bernard, 1988) Semi-structured interviews resemble more to natural conversations and encourage focused, two-way communication. (FAO, 1990) I chose this method because each case has something new to offer and each interviewee has their unique story and experiences. Therefore, I did not want to limit the conversation merely to the questions I designed beforehand; the participants had the freedom to express themselves in their own way, which I believe produced more reliable data. The three main themes of the interviews were the main factors of success, the main factors of failure and the role of the manager. The basic model for the interview questions can be found in Attachment 1 below.

As Zikmund explains, "Focus groups are being used to help understand how a product will be received and how it might be improved". Focus groups are basically unstructured interviews with a small number of interviewees, where the free flow of the conversation helps the respondents express their true feelings, opinions and concerns. (Zikmund, 2003) In this case, broad topics were presented to the group, in order to stimulate discussion between the band members. As the members had a conversation with each other instead of a traditional question-answer setting, the discussion was more lifelike and relaxed, therefore providing more reliable data. Ultimately, the discussion's purpose was to reveal the band's current situation, opportunities and possible areas of development from their own point of view. The focus group was also aiming to find out about possible disagreements and misconceptions within the team as well as new ideas and perspectives.

3.3 Sampling

According to Mallari, there are no strict rules for sample size in qualitative research, as the goal is to collect knowledge and experiences from specific individuals and therefore the results may not be generalized. (Mallari, 2012)

For this thesis, nine interview subjects were chosen, from which the first three are self-managed artists (group S), the second three are artists with a professional manager (group W) and the last three are managers in the music industry (group M).

I was selecting the participants based on the following criteria:

- Is a rock band, plays in one or has experience with managing such bands
- Is an experienced professional in his or her own field
- Has reached a certain level of success in the music industry
- Represents different countries of Europe

Age or gender was not a criteria when choosing the research participants. The three groups represent different viewpoints in the music industry and the interviews aim to answer the following questions: What are the main success factors according to bands in comparison with managers? Do self-managed bands represent a different viewpoint from the bands with management and if so, in what way? Why do some bands choose to stay self-managed while others don't and which is the better strategy? How does each group evaluate risks and mistakes? How do they see the role of the manager? As I am limiting the research to the European market, it was important to emphasize geographical diversity within the borders of Europe, to see how much location influences the success of a band. The countries represented are: Finland, Sweden, Italy, The United Kingdom, Norway and Hungary.

The individual interviewees were picked with careful consideration regarding their background, experience, occupation and level of success. The goal was to be able to compare different perspectives and opinions in the end. For instance, W1 is a singer and songwriter with two failed projects behind his back, despite working with a manager, a clear concept and a solid strategic plan all along. On the contrary, S1 is the lead guitarist of an internationally recognized hard rock band. This person took on the responsibility to manage his own band and he is doing it very efficiently. It was important for me not to focus only on industry famous and successful people when choosing my subjects. I was also interested in why do certain projects fail while others may not.

3.4 Data collection and analysis

As defined by Key, the primary data collection instrument in qualitative research is humans and the data collection process is conducted under natural conditions. This type of research – if done correctly - produces valid results with providing “rich and deep” data. (Key, 2002)

According to Mahoney, the main methods of data collection are observation, interviews, focus groups, document studies, key informants and case studies. (Mahoney, 1997) As mentioned above, the chosen methods of data collection are one-on-one interviews and a focus group discussion.

The interview questions differed by each person, depending on the flow of the conversation; therefore each interview has a slightly different focus. There were a couple of common questions as well, especially about the topics of music industry, start-up bands and artist management. The length of the interviews ranged from 30 to 70 minutes, resulting in a total length of 312 minutes. All participants have agreed for the interviews to be recorded, transcribed and analyzed for this thesis. The participants were given the option to revise their answers in written form after the interviews. Participating musicians preferred to be mentioned in their artist names during the research process.

When transcribing the interviews I stayed true to the original recording. However, I have removed unnecessary filler words and phrases in order to make the interview easier to read. The interview transcripts are solely used for research purposes and are not shared on other platforms. The interview transcripts are not included in the thesis.

According to Taylor-Powell & Renner, the five steps of the qualitative data analysis process are the following:

1. Familiarizing with the data itself and evaluating the quality of it by reading the notes and listening to the recorded material. The key questions should be stated before the analysis starts.
2. Determining the focus of the analysis (one case, one group, topic or question).
3. Identifying the key patterns and organizing them into categories, eventually creating a meaningful text. This is where the key questions are being answered.
4. Assessing the importance of and the relationship between the categories, to be able to explain the patterns and summarize their meaning.
5. Interpretation of collected data, which explains the key points and the important findings of the research. (Taylor-Powell & Renner, 2003)

I have been adopting the same logic during my data analysis process, following the five-step model above.

3.5 Limitations and delimitations

Limitations may be defined as influences the researcher cannot control. (BCPS, 2010) This study has a set of limitations as well. First of all, the given time frame for completing the project was relatively short (one semester). This way only a limited amount of interviewees could be found and long-term observation could not be conducted. Secondly, as people working in the music industry are generally busy, it was difficult to arrange interviews, especially without any previous connection between me and the interviewee. Furthermore, I could not conduct each interview face to face due to geographical distance and lack of resources to travel. Thirdly, for obvious reasons it was not possible to organize interviews with world famous artists who have experienced the highest levels of success in the industry. Finally, some of the interviews did not match my expectations quality-wise, therefore I could not include them in the analysis. I managed to control the limitations to the extent that they do not influence the quality of the work.

Delimitations are choices made by the researcher which describe the boundaries set for the study. (BCPS, 2010) In this thesis, findings cannot be generalized to all markets, as only European professionals have been interviewed. I am not dealing with finances and legal issues in the literature review. Firstly, these topics are not closely related to my studies or my field of interest. Secondly, as most beginner bands do not have complicated income streams, and each country works with their specific regulations, I did not find it necessary to concentrate on these fields in my research. I am not studying other professionals in the industry such as agents or producers, as I chose to focus on the managerial point of view besides the one represented by the artists. I am not studying new bands, because – from my point of view – to understand success one has to actually achieve it first. Moreover, interviews with experienced musicians and managers are more beneficial for my commissioner's development as well.

4 Results

This chapter presents the findings of the nine interviews conducted and the analysis of the focus group discussion with the commissioner.

4.1 Interview findings

As I have mentioned above, the interviewees were divided into three groups: self-managed bands (S1, S2, S3) bands with a manager (W1, W2, W3) and the managers themselves (M1, M2, M3). The results obtained from these groups were analyzed according to three main points: key factors of success, key factors of failure and the role of the manager. This way, the study is able to deliver precise answers to its research questions and provide a comprehensive overview of the results. A summary table of the results may be found as Attachment 2 in the Attachments section.

4.1.1 Key factors of success

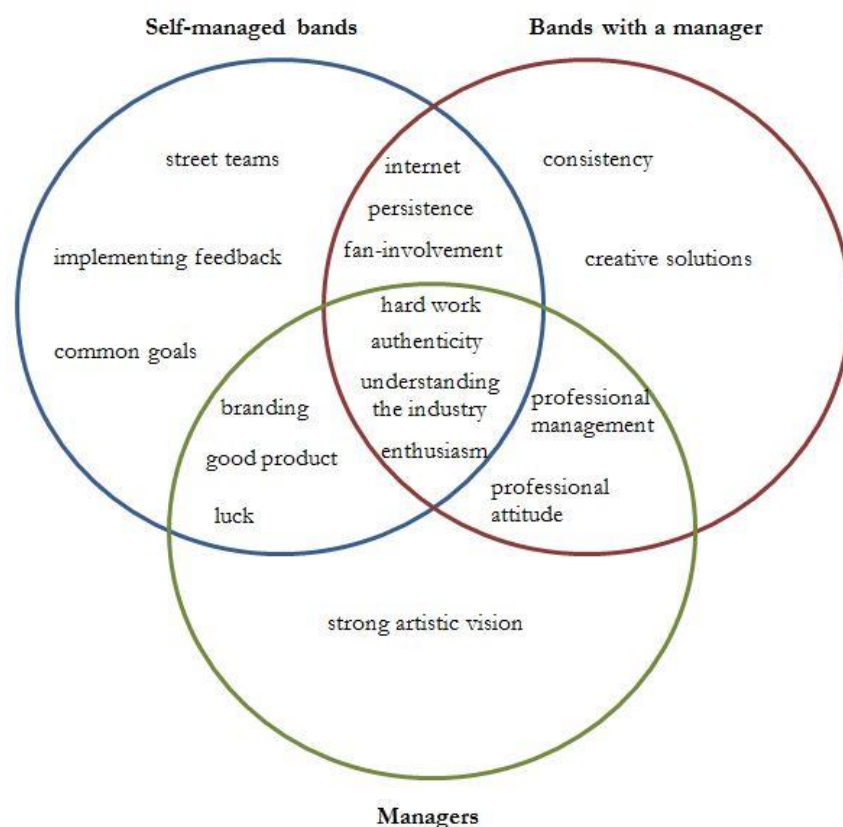


Figure 8. The Key Factors of Success

As shown on Figure 8, all three groups agree that hard work, authenticity, enthusiasm and knowledge of the industry are absolutely necessary, if a band wants to succeed in the music industry. Bands understand that superstars are rarely discovered anymore in

our time, and it takes great efforts from a band to be a recognized player in the field. When it comes to managers, they are obviously looking for hard-working individuals to sign with. Even though most bands did not mention authenticity directly, all of them indicated that *“doing your own thing”* or *“doing what you believe in”* is a crucial part of achieving success. Since they are playing in rock bands, it is exceptionally important for them to stay true to themselves, their beliefs and their message; naturally, they would like their music and image to convey authenticity as well, which is equally important for managers. Fans have the need to identify with the musicians and their message in order to support them. Even though planning must be taken seriously, the band’s image, lyrics and music cannot be too fabricated, they must come from the heart and have an artistic value if the band would like to build an audience. As M1 pointed out, the music business is primarily built on emotions and managers should not lose focus of that fact. Furthermore, all groups value at least a basic level of industry knowledge. It provides bands with more security, confidence and decision making power. According to W1, *“the more you learn about music and the music industry, the more autonomy you’ll be able to maintain in your career.”* This element is highly important for bands, because with the knowledge they possess, they can avoid working with frauds and entering unfavorable deals. Industry knowledge from the artist’s side also makes the manager’s job easier, as then the artist is able to participate in business-related discussions, express his or her opinion in such matters and assist in brainstorming new ideas. Lastly, bands must be enthusiastic about all aspects of being a performing artist. S1 expresses great passion for his band and his music: *“I eat, sh*t and live for this, 24 hours a day. This is my life!”* in addition, W2 supports him by stating *“my band is more than a job or a business.”* Since it is certainly challenging these days to make a career out of being a rock musician, artists have to stay motivated even during the difficult times if they want to accomplish something. Obviously, a manager cannot motivate the band if the band itself is not interested in what they are doing. Enthusiasm is required from both sides to establish a rewarding working relationship.

Naturally – considering their background – each group had their own priorities. An interesting finding is that both managers and bands working with a manager mention professional attitude and professional management as a key factor of success, while self-managed bands do not. According to W3, *“nobody takes you seriously if you are self-managed.”* which suggests that in order to do serious business, it is always favourable to have a manager representing the band. All managers agreed that self-management can

take a band to a certain point, but professional artists must always work with a manager. M2 draws our attention to the significance of good manners by saying that *“the most important aspect of a good band is great manners.”* Moreover, all three managers agreed that an artist manager also needs to be respectful, polite and professional in any situation, clearing a common misconception that a manager needs to be rude and pushy to do business effectively for the artist.

While bands with a manager value professionalism, self-managed bands rather see a good product, branding and luck as key elements of success, and the manager group agrees with them. For instance, M1 thinks that *“having good songs is rather underrated these days.”* The statement is unfortunately true, as many bands have the wrong priorities, such as becoming a rock star or pursuing financial gain, forgetting about being an artist (this will be discussed in more detail in the next section). Surprisingly, it was the self-managed group which recognized branding as an important factor, while bands with a manager rather mention consistency in terms of image alone. It may be because self-managed bands are in charge of all aspects of their career, therefore they have to plan everything themselves; they have no manager making plans for them in terms of image, stage performance and their website’s look. Although not all of them speak of branding as such, they clearly see the different elements of branding and they acknowledge its relevance to a band’s success. According to S3, *“times have changed and it’s not only the music anymore. It’s the looks, the shows, the updates and a lot of things that can make a band fan-friendly. And these must be consistent.”* Each manager emphasized the necessity of branding and stated that a good brand is always connected to the audience. M3 summarizes branding for rock musicians as follows: *“If it’s a rock band, the attitude should be rock. Fire all the PR agents and create your own style and image. Be proud of it and stick to it.”* This means that a rock band should always have a distinctive, unique and rebellious style, with a similar appearance and stage show.

The last success factor both managers and self-managed bands agree on is luck. S3 is confident about luck being the most important element that can make a difference in a musician’s career: *“you have to be on the right time at the right place. It is like 80%”*. As managers are familiar with the unpredictable nature of the industry, they also mention luck, but they still place hard work, talent and efficient branding on the top of the list.

Both group of bands agree on using the full potential of the internet to get closer to fans and also to involve fans with the bands’ activities, such as promotion or even

booking shows. S1 states that *“these days it’s all about the web, like social media.”* It is true as almost every band uses social media as their main platform to communicate with their fans and reach out for new ones. However, it should not be the only platform where fans can access the band. W3 has a straightforward opinion about fan involvement: *“Of course you have to involve the fans. They have to be a part of it.”* The band claimed that their fans have often organized shows for them, even though they are working with a manager. Involving the fans is a good way to keep them motivated to contribute; furthermore, it has proved to be a cost effective promotional method, which ultimately brings the fans and the band closer to each other. However, the band must also evaluate the risks besides the opportunities, as ineffective arrangements may have a negative effect on their brand. Fan involvement must be organized and planned just like any other activity of the band. Self-managed bands seem to rely more on fans when it comes to promotion or feedback. For instance, S2 has an impressive number of street teams in different countries: *“We have many street teams. In Finland, Italy, US, Spain and also in South America.”* As self-managed bands usually work with a limited budget, it is greatly beneficial for them to have their street teams to assist with the promotions and the marketing.

4.1.2 Key factors of failure

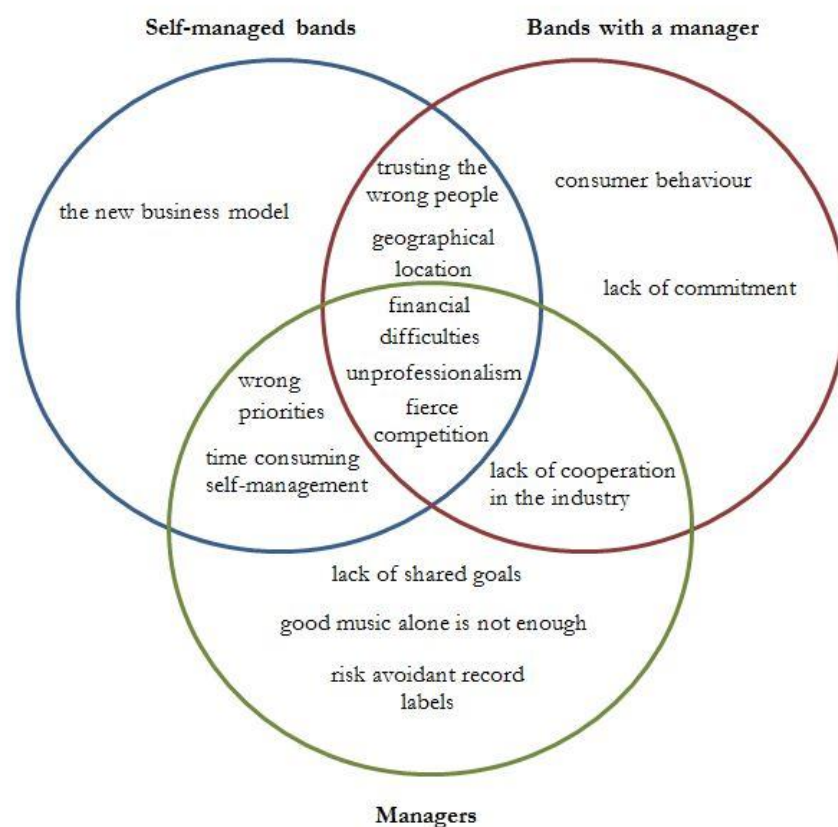


Figure 9. The Key Factors of Failure

All the three groups see financial difficulties, unprofessionalism and fierce competition within the industry as key factors of a band's failure. Being a professional musician requires heavy investments such as equipment, touring or custom made performance outfits. In the beginning, artists must fund these from their own pocket as there is no record label or sponsor to offer them financial support. S2 draws the attention to an even bigger problem which is that *"nobody wants to pay for a new band"*. Agents and promoters are reluctant to take the risk, as these bands do not have an established audience yet, therefore ticket sales become unpredictable. Because of that, many new bands are playing shows for free in hopes of the investment to return itself with time.

This leads to the second problem, which is unprofessionalism within the industry. It has been reported by bands that they are having difficulties with finding competent managers, agents and promoters. Bands feel that plenty of people in the industry are merely after financial gain instead of doing quality work. W1 shares his experiences on the subject as follows: *"I should not have relied on people who tried to pose as hardcore professionals but who weren't in fact worth sh*t"*. When questioned about the obstacles he is facing, W2 names *"the ignorance and unprofessionalism of other people"* as the main problem. To avoid such career traps, bands always need to make an informed decision before signing with a manager or agency and should not solely rely on promises.

The last failure factor each group mentioned is the competitive nature of the industry. M1 opens up the problem more: *"every single day there is more music available, there has to be ways to stand out from the crowd and it is becoming more difficult each day"*. As there is a huge surplus of bands in the market, it is challenging to stand out or create something completely new. Excellence in quality has never been more important; bands need to develop their competitive edge and provide a memorable experience to the audience. No rock band can succeed in the new music economy without a strong concept.

Both groups of bands see insufficient geographical location as a definite failure factor. If the rock scene is not developed in the band's home country or if they are located far from their target markets, it will be more difficult for them to succeed. W2 is clearly not satisfied with the rock scene in his home country. He claims that *"Italy is the worst place for rock"*. If rock music is considered too much of an underground genre, bands can only achieve a limited success as the audience number will be limited as well. It is

important to identify the band's target markets, where their music can sell the best; this will many times not be the artist's home country.

Both managers and bands with a manager agree that the lack of co-operation within the industry is a major obstacle. W2 explains the problem from the artist's perspective: *"bands are envious and they don't want to co-operate with each other"*. According to M1, managers are facing similar problems: *"although the industry is quite small, we got used to working in small groups and not reach out for our peers that much"*. This shows that both bands and managers would need to be more open-minded and find more opportunities for co-operation instead of working in their own isolation.

Another issue originating from the industry is the changing consumer attitudes towards purchasing music. W3 complains that these days *"fans expect to get everything for free"*. Illegal downloads and single song purchase have caused record sales to drop dramatically. To make up for the lost sales, artist put more emphasis on touring and merchandise. However, touring comes with a high cost and it does not always return the investment. M1 has the same opinion: *"often you have to do 2 or 3 tours when entering a new market before you can even be profitable."* Artists must be aware that they need to collect their income from many different sources and they have to set up a strategy for each of these streams. Also, fans should support their favourite artists instead of taking them for granted, as their contribution is vital for the artist's success and – in many cases – their survival in the market. While bands with a manager are worried about the changing consumer attitudes, the self-managed group is having difficulties adapting to the new business model itself. As they have to invest to each element of their brand themselves, it is becoming more and more challenging for them to keep up with their competitors; especially because they are working with a limited budget.

Both managers and self-managed bands agree that having the wrong priorities can be a main failure factor for bands. According to S3, rock musicians can easily forget about what their actual profession is: *"bands can be too focused on being rock stars instead of being musicians."* For some bands, public image and fun becomes more important than developing themselves musically and offering artistic value to the audience. Another example of wrong priorities comes from S1, who says: *"I really don't like when it's obvious that artists doing things just for the money."* When it comes to music, financial gain cannot be the only motivator; otherwise, the artist's authenticity will suffer, which cannot be risked in the rock genre.

Furthermore, both groups see self-management as a difficult and time consuming option. It basically means that one member of the band is doing two people's work at all times; this definitely takes a great amount of time away from the creative process, what the artist really should concentrate on. S3 has the same opinion: *"I want to write music and perform music, it's good to have other people take care of business."* Even though he would prefer working with a professional manager, he will continue managing his own band until they find proper management according to their expectations. All managers agree that no professional artist should be managing themselves; however, they also admit that a start-up band is not likely to get a professional manager. Although this seems to be a paradox, there is a solution. A band is able to reach a certain level of recognition by itself, if it has quality music, a distinctive image and a good concept, combined with a tactful strategy in terms of promotions and marketing. Making conscious business decisions, working hard and offering a quality product will eventually catch a professional manager's attention. Another option to avoid self-management is hiring a friend or acquaintance, which is discussed in more detail in the next section.

Finally, managers named further failure factors, which have not been mentioned by the bands. Firstly, lack of shared goals within a band can be a huge obstacle in achieving success; M2 reveals why: *"If you can't convince people to share the same enthusiasm, vision and direction, then it's really hard to work as a team."* As previously mentioned in the theory chapter, each member of the band has to understand and work towards the same goals with the same dedication in order to succeed; any member doing otherwise is hindering the development of the team. Secondly, playing good music alone is not enough to stand out in the new music economy. Many bands still think that their music will sell itself. Unfortunately, as M1 points out, *"the fact is that nothing ever sells itself."* Musicians need to plan and synchronize their stage show, image, online presence, marketing and many other elements in order to gain recognition in the new era. Lastly, record labels are not willing to take risks anymore by signing non-established bands; they want to make sure that a band is worth investing in, as they operate with a much smaller budgets than before. As M3 says: *"record companies don't want to and can't afford to take the risks."* Nowadays, bands have to be quite established already if they would like to get a record deal from one of the majors. Therefore, working with independent labels may be a good option in the beginning, especially for rock artists.

4.1.3 The manager

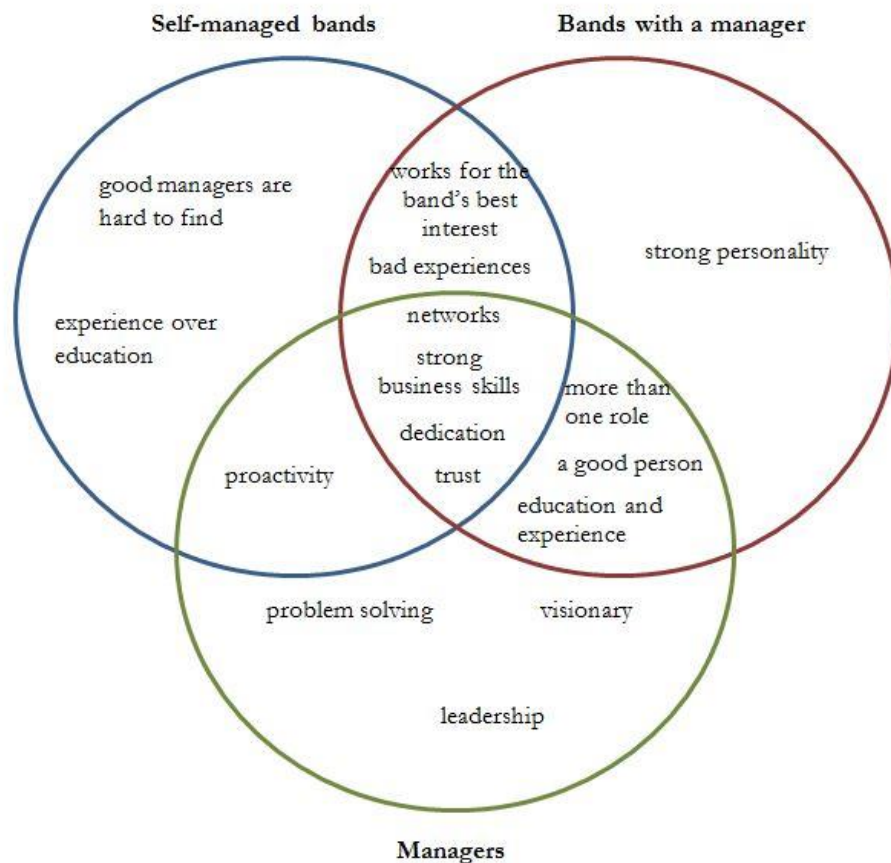


Figure 10. The Manager

All three groups agree that networks, strong business skills, dedication and trustworthiness are essential qualities of a good manager. Every single interviewee said that a manager should have a wide professional network and good connections within the industry. As the music business is a relatively closed world based on reputation and relationships, networks become just as valuable as knowledge of the industry or relevant skills. W3 goes even further by stating that *“it’s not what you know, it’s who you know”*, implying that networks are of utmost importance. Having strong business skills as a manager is a basic requirement from anybody working in such position and it is no surprise that each group agrees with that. Bands expect their manager to be trustworthy and dedicated to the cause. They would like to see that the manager is genuinely interested in the band and also motivated to take them to the next level. According to W1 *“one has to be very dedicated and honestly somewhat insane to be able to enjoy this.”* Trust seems to be crucial in the artist-manager relationship and it needs to be mutually exclusive. As managers in the music industry have a closer relationship with their clients than managers in other industries, trustworthiness is considered to be one

of the most valuable qualities. M1 summarized this perfectly: *"There has to be a mutual trust."*

Unfortunately, most of the interviewed bands had negative experiences with management in the past, which have affected their opinion of managers in general. For instance, W2 is wondering: *"are they really interested in you or only in getting your money?"* This shows that even if his band is working with a manager, he finds it difficult to trust him because of past experiences. S1 represents a more extreme viewpoint, which is: *"if you wanna have anything done, then you'll have to do it by yourself."* He has been working with different kinds of managers before but he has always been disappointed. By now, he has completely lost his trust towards them, so he is managing his own band instead. His example shows that it is possible for a self-managed band to succeed in the music industry. However, S1 is extremely motivated, ambitious and enthusiastic with strong business skills and wide networks. Without these qualities, self-management is probably not a good option on the long run. Even though most bands told about past conflicts with managers, the self-managed group was generally more negative towards the issue, also they claimed that good managers are hard to find.

An interesting finding may be that while managers and bands with a manager think that education is absolutely necessary, self-managed bands value experience over education. This may be because bands with a manager have more experience in working with one and therefore understand the importance of education better. From the managers' side, M2 has a clear opinion: *"I don't know of any good manager who wouldn't have education."* According to the interviewed managers, studies in business, finances and cultural production are the most useful for the job.

Furthermore, both managers and bands with a manager think that being an artist manager means playing many roles at the same time. M3 talks about her job as follows: *"it's more than 360 degrees. I am doing everything and also I don't want to put up any borders for myself."* Being a manager requires versatile skills and a great deal of flexibility. Both groups think that a manager should have good manners and be a good person. M2 summarizes the issue quite bluntly by saying that *"nobody wants to work with *sshholes."* W1 expects a manager also to provide emotional support: *"this is where a manager can help the most; motivating people to get through the rough part and help them focus on the positive things."* While bands with a manager put emphasis on the personality and manners, the self-managed group is looking for proactivity and an action-oriented approach. To quote

S3 *“we have heard so many nice things, a lot of sweet talk but they can’t back it up. That’s why I always prefer action over words. I always go for action.”* This can also be related to their negative experiences, where they have heard many promises which ultimately did not turn to reality. M1 backs him up with a similar opinion: *“bands have been screwed up because of bad managers who told them they know how to make them big and it never happens.”* This shows that there is a high number of incompetent people in the industry with the wrong priorities. Bands need to be careful and always make sure that the manager they are working with is trustworthy, hard-working and has a good reputation.

While bands are usually looking for professional and experienced managers, the manager group presents an alternative for them. They say that a good friend may also manage the band, especially in the early stages of their career. M2 thinks that hiring a friend as a manager can have more than one advantage: *“If it’s a friend who helps out, there is always a value in that, it creates a network and they grow together.”* It is a cost-effective approach, where the artist-manager relationship is based on mutual trust, which is of paramount importance. Moreover, the manager is working with the band from the very beginning, understanding their concerns, wishes, strengths and weaknesses, which enables him or her to truly work for the band’s best interest. Unfortunately, this management approach has its disadvantages as well, considering the lack of professional experience. However, it may be more important to learn, grow and make mistakes as a team, because it ultimately strengthens problem solving, transparency and team dynamics inside the band. Start-up bands should consider hiring a friend or acquaintance as an alternative to other management options.

Besides the ones discussed above, the manager group mentioned problem solving, leadership and being a visionary as essential qualities. As a good manager should solve problems in the present, lead his or her band towards future success and be a visionary, who can make assumptions of and therefore shape the future.

4.2 Analysis of Cold Black

This section gives an overview on the commissioner’s current state as a band in terms of vision, goals, team dynamics, branding, marketing, touring and finances. The analysis is based on the formerly conducted focus group discussion with the band. Following the analysis, developmental suggestions are given in the Conclusions chapter.

4.2.1 General information

Cold Black currently has five members, Martin, Terry, Alex, Jamal and Jeff, all of them are in their early twenties. The band has been through a couple of changes before the final formation has been made. Three members are related with family ties and the other two have been acquired through personal networks.

The band sees itself as an upcoming act and admits that their attitude has changed significantly compared to the beginning. Constant development is especially important for them and they are realistic when assessing themselves. They would like to evolve both musically, image-wise and as showmen. In order to live up to their high expectations, they are rehearsing 2-3 times a week with additional jam and song writing sessions. In addition to the creative aspect, the band is familiar with the most important concepts of business, they know what makes a rock band successful and they choose their strategies consciously.

It has been clear during the whole process that the band is serious about making a career out of music and they are embracing their possibilities efficiently. They are five hard-working and enthusiastic young men, willing to change the world of music.

4.2.2 Vision, goals, strategy

The band is obviously excited when looking into the future, as they have set many goals in front of them. The elements of their vision include “world domination”, playing thousands of shows all over the world and reaching as many people as they possibly can. They picture themselves as professional musicians in the future, who earn their living solely from music. They set high goals for themselves and they are aware that hard work is the only way towards success.

They are planning the majority of their shows for the summer season, and they are looking forward to arrange festival performances. Meanwhile, new videos and an EP is going to be released. The band is hoping that the new EP will draw the record labels’ attention to Cold Black, as they would like to sign with a good-reputation label.

The band admits that they do not have a clear strategy, as “they don’t know enough about business.” They would prefer for a manager and a record label to take care of business matters, so the band can concentrate 100% on the music. However, they put

great efforts into promoting themselves, networking and participating in different projects (such as this thesis).

They summarize the most important success factors as “having the whole package”, meaning unique music, authentic image and a hardworking attitude, which shows that they do understand the most essential elements contributing to success.

4.2.3 Team Dynamics

The members describe the band as a family. They are very pleased with the team dynamics; as there are no “big egos” in the band, the communication in the team is efficient and each member feels like their opinion counts equally. The decisions are made in a democratic manner.

The band enjoys discussing about their image, music and stage performance as a team. These discussions have a great importance as the band considers these brainstorming sessions as a part of their creative process.

Each band member has different competences; for example Alex is talented at promotion and writing guitar riffs, Terry is a good composer and Jamal has creative ideas both about the band’s image and music. Despite of being such a democratic band, it is clear that Martin is the leader of it. He writes the lyrics, he is responsible for arranging shows, contacting venues and keeping in touch with people from the industry. He claims to have more knowledge and interest in business than the rest of the band does.

Since every member is responsible for what they are personally interested in, it has a positive effect on the overall team dynamics, as well as the motivation.

4.2.4 Branding

The band has a clear concept both image-wise and musically. They are aiming to compose catchy metal tunes with a heavy visual side in addition. They use war paint, colourful hair, studded clothing and make-up in order to create a more dramatic visual experience for the audience. In addition, their stage performances are highly synchronized and well-choreographed, intending to make an impact on the viewer already after a short time. It is important for them to convey energy and emotions to the audience with every single performance. They know that the audience is expecting a show each time they visit a concert.

Furthermore, they are working with a professional to create merchandise for the band; the first items sold will be t-shirts, tank tops and rubber armbands. The band thinks that producing t-shirts are a must, as they are the most sold music merchandise in the world. Tank tops are created because they are fashionable items worn by fans of the hardcore/metalcore genre. Lastly, the armbands have a low production cost and they offer a good alternative for people who would like to support the band but their financial situation does not allow them to spend a lot of money.

The band acknowledges the presence of competition in the industry, but they are aware of their competitive advantage in terms of appearance, stage show and the melodic sounds they produce. Because of this combination, Cold Black may appeal to a bigger audience compared to other bands in the same genre.

4.2.5 Audience

The band defines their target audience as follows: “Of course rock fans. The old rock ‘n rollers that used to listen to Kiss and Zeppelin. But also the young kids. The teenage girls, the emos, the outcasts and the depressed. People who find comfort and consolation in our music and lyrics.” – this statement expresses that music is more for them than simply entertainment or work; they deem it as a mission.

They are committed to building a community and take part of the “rock ‘n roll revolution” following the example of world famous artists such as Black Veil Brides and Asking Alexandria. This means that they would like to bring back the original rock star concept of the eighties with adding a modern twist to it.

They consider cooperation with other bands to be an effective way of audience building, and they are constantly looking for new bands to book shows with. The band believes in working together with their competitors instead of working against them. They recognize regular live shows as an essential tool for audience building. Besides, the band has a strong social media presence, with which they earned themselves loyal fans globally.

The band’s audience varies, but it consists of mainly teenagers and young people who are fans of the rock and hardcore genre. Cold Black played shows both for 400 and five people, so the audience numbers vary greatly depending on the date, location and the nature of the event. For instance the band is quite well-known in the Copenhagen scene and enjoys a great amount of support from the fans there. However, when they

are performing at new locations, the attendance may be lower as the fan base is not established yet. The band would like to attract more people to their shows but they do not see the Danish scene optimal for their style of music.

4.2.6 Marketing and Communications

The band considers their music to have a high hit potential compared to other hardcore bands on the market. They describe their music as catchy and melodic with strong riffs and meaningful lyrics. It is clear that they understand their product and their competitive edge quite well.

Their main platform for promotion is social media (Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, YouTube, Kik, etc.), with Facebook being the number one communication channel. They claim that Facebook is their most valuable asset in terms of promotion and connecting with the fans. For example, they use promoted posts on Facebook to reach more people but because of the expensive nature of the service they cannot use that too often. Despite their strong social media presence, Cold Black does not have an official website yet, mainly due to financial reasons.

They put a great emphasis on networking, both on and offline and they also rely on word of mouth. They know that the music industry is based on connections and they claim that knowing the right people is 70% of any band's success. However, they think that the scene in Denmark is not appropriate for finding valuable industry contacts, as all the big players live in the United States or in the United Kingdom.

The band's social media presence has opened doors and offered new opportunities. For example, a producer - who has seen Cold Black's video on Twitter - invited the band to Cleveland to record their new EP.

The band does not have an official street team yet and they do not consider it as a crucial part of marketing and promotions. However, they do admit that if a street team is well organized and the members are hard-working, it can produce excellent results.

4.2.7 Touring

The music scene in Denmark is not ideal for rock bands, as it is very focused on indie rock, pop and electronic music. The country never really had a large rock or metal scene, therefore these genres are considered underground. Only a few Danish rock bands could achieve international success; they are Volbeat, D-A-D and King

Diamond. According to Cold Black, Denmark is one of the worst places to start a rock band and they think geographical location has a high significance in a band's success. They see Sweden and Finland to be better markets for their style of music.

The band is focusing on the local market at the moment, both the Copenhagen scene and other parts of Denmark such as Frederikssund, Rødovre, Vordingborg or Helsingør. The next step in the plan is Sweden, then the band would like to concentrate on the rest of Scandinavia and Germany. Nonetheless, the band would like to travel the whole world and they are interested in gig possibilities in any country.

They are not satisfied with the amount of shows they play, and they wish they could perform more live shows, especially outside their home country. Currently, the band is having about 25 concerts per year, and they have contacted several booking agencies to set up tours for them. At the moment, the arrangements are in progress and the band is waiting for the results.

4.2.8 Management

Cold Black is currently self-managed, with guitarist and lyricist Martin Dupont responsible for management. He books shows, negotiates with agents, contacts record labels and handles most of the promotion and communication on behalf of the band. He is the band's leader and contact person, which is a demanding task considering his other roles in the band and his every day work in addition.

The band is not self-managed by choice; because of their financial situation, they could not pay for full-time management. Also, they are looking for serious representation and would like to choose their manager carefully. The best option – according to them – would be to find a professional manager as soon as possible, but he/she must be “the right person from the right company”.

The band is looking for a manager who is serious, responsible and experienced. A proactive person, who has valuable networks and can help the band eliminate the risks and realize their opportunities. They realize that trust should not be easily given away in the music industry, as certain people tend to take advantage of newcomer artists. Therefore the band would like to make a well-informed decision when it comes to hiring a manager.

4.2.9 Finances

Cold Black names finances as their primary difficulty in achieving success. They have been offered a number of promising opportunities, but most of these require big investments from the band's side, such as plane tickets, equipment or studio time. They have never received any outside funding, they financed all their band-related projects themselves.

As the rock scene is not well-developed in their home market, it is challenging to attract masses of people to live shows. Since the band cannot bring a great number of people to their shows yet, they are usually not offered a high amount of compensation either. Furthermore, teenagers and young people have a limited amount of disposable income, thus they can offer only limited financial support for the band. Some of the members are students and others are living on welfare, which complicates their finances even further. The band is not satisfied with their current position as they would like to earn their actual income from music. They summarize their situation with the following quote: "Starting and developing a band is insanely expensive if you want to do it right, and at the moment we're struggling to make ends meet".

4.2.10 Summary

Generally, the band works with excellent team dynamics; there is open communication between the members, with efficient team work and a fair decision making process. They also work with a strong concept and they are striving to harmonize all the elements of their brand. They understand the key elements of success and the main concepts of business such as branding or competitive advantage. The band has a clear vision and works with specific goals, which is absolutely necessary for any artist's success. They are responsible and they would not like to make hasty business decisions. They are also motivated and talented people who work really hard for their dreams. Still, Cold Black is facing some of the typical problems of newcomer bands. Without a manager, the band lacks proper professional guidance, long-term planning and necessary networks. Geographical location and lack of funding are also major issues, as the rock scene in Denmark is not well-developed and therefore the market is small. Despite their active presence in social media, having no website makes it more complicated for the audience and industry people to reach them and find information about the band. Also, they do not consider street teams as a successful promotional tool and they have a quite one-sided approach when it comes to audience building.

5 Conclusions

This chapter begins with the study's most important findings and the answers for the research questions. Then I move on to my suggestions to the commissioner band and I assess the validity and reliability of my research. Finally, I discuss the relevance of the study and give recommendations for further research.

5.1 Key findings

The research has produced many interesting results, some of which had not been expected beforehand. Interviewing has been proven to be an efficient method in understanding what makes a band successful in today's music industry. Also, underlying issues and additional elements have been uncovered, which the theory itself did not reveal. I have grouped the study's key findings according to the original research questions, as answering them is a crucial part of the process.

What are the key factors that can make a band successful in today's music industry?

Firstly, and most importantly, it is beneficial to look at the band as if running a business. Successful businesses of our time have a strong vision, a consistent branding strategy, creative marketing solutions and excellent team dynamics. They understand their own product, their customers and competitors. They set up specific goals and plan in advance how to achieve them. When it comes to bands, they are selling a cultural product and therefore it must have an artistic value. Still, the members must share the same goals and work towards the same artistic vision, just like they would need to at any company.

Nothing can replace hard work in such a competitive industry. Anybody aiming to become a professional musician has to know their craft extremely well and should always keep practicing. As it is difficult to stay objective about their own art, bands should always be open to feedback, discuss it as a team and implement it when they find it necessary. Understanding the current music economy is a definite asset as well, because it gives more autonomy to artists and also more confidence in business decisions.

Besides excellence in music, a professional attitude is required if a band would like to be successful in the music industry. This means good manners, sportsmanship and a generally positive impression.

The band should also find themselves a manager with similar qualities, who can provide them with proper guidance and take care of business matters. Success of self-managed bands is more of an exception than the rule in the industry; it is simply because a musician managing his or her own band is doing two people's job, which usually cannot be a working concept on the long term (even though it is usually beneficial in the early stages).

In the new era, bands can exploit the possibilities of the internet and build a community through it. They should involve their fans in the creative process by videos, interviews, pictures and frequent updates. The more dedicated fans may take part in the street team, create remixes or even arrange shows for the band. To whichever level fans get involved, their contribution is invaluable.

Finally, luck is an important element of success. Being in the right place at the right time might make or break a band's career. Also, as I have discussed above, the music industry is built on emotions, which are highly unpredictable in nature. There is no definite formula for success, but a band can greatly improve its chances by following the suggestions above.

What are the most common problems bands face and how to overcome them?

Most bands struggle with financial difficulties in the beginning of their career, as they have to finance their equipment, touring, outfits and recording out of their own pockets. It is easier if every member earns a stable income alongside playing music; however, newcomer bands usually consist of young people without an established career to fund their expenses. Even if this is a major obstacle, bands these days can find alternative ways of funding such as Kickstarter or Pledgemusic. These sites exist to support creative projects and they became quite popular during the past few years. Other options are finding product sponsors, receiving start-up money for a good business plan or signing with a smaller indie label.

Another major issue is insufficient geographical location. It is difficult to build an audience, if rock music is too much of an underground genre in the band's home country. It is important to identify the markets where the band's music can sell the best

and target these countries from the beginning; unfortunately, this will many times not be the artist's home country. Bands need to consider that while their music may work well in one market, it might not do so well in another. A good example could be a Swedish rock band The Hives, which became a major hit in the United States but they aren't nearly as famous in their own country.

The new music economy itself poses many obstacles for bands. The most prominent ones are: risk avoidant record labels, fierce competition and changing consumer attitudes towards purchasing music. Artists can overcome these problems by following the steps suggested above, with special attention to branding and audience building. A more complicated issue is unprofessionalism and lack of cooperation within the industry. Bands need to use their judgement and always make a well-informed decision when choosing a manager to avoid unfavourable situations. At the same time, managers and other industry professionals should learn to be more open-minded and find more opportunities for co-operation.

Certain issues may arise from inside the band as well, such as the difficulties of self-management, lack of shared goals within the team, or having the wrong priorities. Firstly, self-management is always taking time away from the creative process, which should always be the primary focus for any artist. Furthermore, doing business efficiently requires education and experience from the field, which bands usually lack. Finding a manager is the best solution for this problem; this person may even be a friend in the beginning who has a good sense of business. Secondly, without shared goals, there is no definite direction the band is going; they cannot accomplish much if only one of their members is working hard and the rest considers music merely as a hobby. Thirdly, money and fame should not be the main motivators for any band, as their authenticity and quality of music will eventually pay the price.

Finally, as many of the interviewees pointed out, nothing ever sells itself. Artists these days have to synchronize their marketing, promotional and audience building activities in such a way, that it not only generates attention, but also harmonizes with the brand and creates a lasting impression in the consumers' mind. It is challenging to build a distinctive, one-of-a-kind brand in such a competitive and overpopulated industry, but bands should always strive for excellence both in art and business. One of my interviewees called the music industry a jungle, where only the strong ones survive; looking at my results, I would say he probably was not far from the truth.

What is the role of the manager in a band's professional success?

One of a band's most important tasks is to find the right manager, who has the required attitude and skills to advance their career. Some of these are: strong business and social skills, leadership, problem-solving, proactivity, education and industry experience. Being a manager is not limited to a single role. Most managers describe their role as 360 degrees, where they have to be prepared for virtually any situation.

A manager can take the artist to a professional level by providing them guidance, consultation and taking care of all business activities so the artist can focus on the creative process. Tasks of a manager include arranging tours, improving the band's brand and public image, promotion, cooperation and sponsorships, strategic planning, managing all the income streams and generally being the contact person of the band for any business-related matter.

Most of all, networks are a manager's most valuable asset. A good manager knows the key players in the industry and also how to establish new contacts with agents, promoters or other professionals. He or she is responsible for finding and employing a competent support team for the band including roadies, technicians, an attorney or an accountant. The manager ensures that all the people in the team do quality work; this way, the band is protected from frauds and can fully concentrate on writing, recording and performing music.

The manager also plays a great role in the band's team dynamics by helping the band to set realistic goals and stay focused on them. He or she sees the hidden potential of the members and motivates them to bring it out of themselves. Managers are more than simply leaders, contact persons or CEOs; they provide emotional support at difficult times, advise the band members in all aspects of their life, they are trustworthy, dedicated and – in many cases – good friends of the band.

Nevertheless, a band cannot expect everything from the manager only, as the music industry have changed and talent is not discovered the same way it used to. Start-up artists are more like entrepreneurs in the beginning of their careers; they need to develop their own concept, sound, image and brand before they could become professional musicians and therefore need a manager. In other words, a band should definitely recruit a manager, once they are ready to step up to the professional level.

Unfortunately, because of their negative experiences, bands seem to be losing their trust towards managers these days; this is a real problem, as trust is the base of the artist-manager relationship. The industry needs to find a way to reduce the amount of frauds and re-establish bands' faith in managers, otherwise the working relationship will suffer long-term damage.

5.2 Suggestions for the commissioner

Firstly and most importantly, a **website** must be set up for the band. Facebook is a good platform for communicating with the fans but there has to be an official website as well; branding, increased online presence, professionalism and more credibility are only some of the reasons why. Since the band is producing merchandise and soon the new EP is out, a web shop integrated to the website may also be a good idea. Even if the band cannot afford a professional web-designer yet, it could be a good idea to develop a site from **templates** available online, such as <http://www.wix.com/>. It is a good start and it can always be improved later as Cold Black grows.

Every band needs a well-designed **press kit** and Cold Black is no exception. An electronic one may be the most convenient option. As I have discussed earlier, the press kit plays an important role in selling the artist's talent. It should include at least the biography, high quality images, demo, music videos, tour dates, notable reviews and naturally, the band's contact information. Even though the content is the most important part, the band could still find a creative way to design the press kit, which immediately gets the viewer's attention. The design should be consistent with the band's image and main color themes, which – according to my observations – are purple, black and white.

As the band does not have an actual **logo** yet, it would be necessary to design one. The font is already made but the band should also consider including an image which they can be immediately recognized from (such as the dragon of Fatal Smile or the angel of Negative). The image can then be printed on roll-ups, banners, merchandise and any kind of promotional material. The logo is also an element of branding, which can help to create a strong image about Cold Black in the audience's mind. If the band cannot afford working with a professional designer, they could use their popularity in social media for their advantage by setting up a **design competition**. They could announce what kind of image they are looking for and the fans could submit their own designs for the logo. This method would not only be beneficial and cost-efficient for the band,

but it would also increase fan involvement, which is a key factor of success in the industry.

Cold Black has been releasing a set of **video blogs** during their recording sessions in the US, which I found to be an excellent idea to connect with the fans, take them behind the scenes and show them how the recordings are proceeding. These types of videos can bring the fans closer to the band, because they are involved in the process. Perhaps the band could make regular video blogs and release them by a predictable schedule (such as new videos every Thursday or on the first day of each month) as this way fans will have something to look forward to and they will regularly visit the band's site for new releases.

Although the band does not see it as paramount importance, an **official street team** should definitely be set up, with a responsible and goal oriented person as its leader. A street team is a good way to involve the most dedicated fans and motivate the more passive ones. Even if the band might not see the point yet, the fans may come up with great ideas for promotion, create artwork, assist the band in its projects and most importantly, build a **community**. I have been working with street teams and fan communities for many years, and I can say from my experience that setting up such team always comes with an added value. While a single person might be too shy alone to contribute, he or she has a great platform to share his or her ideas while discussing with fellow fans. It also works the other way around: if there is even one truly dedicated and proactive person in the team, the others will follow. A street team – if done well – creates a sense of belonging and loyalty in the fans, which is one of the most valuable assets a band can possess.

Just like Cold Black, many bands use **war paint** these days to make their appearance more dramatic on stage (Lord of the Lost, Turisas, Motionless in White, etc.). The band needs to make sure that their way of painting stands out compared to the others and therefore eventually become their signature. When watching the music videos and stage shows, Alex is the one who stands out the most; I would suggest to create a more distinctive look for Terry. Being the singer and therefore the lead figure of the band, he has to stand out and have an iconic look.

The band should design their own **guitar picks** with their logo and name on them; they are good for branding, marketing, they do not have high production costs and they are nice memories to take home from a concert.

As Cold Black is already quite established in Copenhagen, a **tour map** could be created for other cities (where is the band mostly invited to, in which cities they would like to tour, which dates would be most beneficial, what would be the advantages/risks, what about the local audience). The band does not need to follow the map 100 %, but it is a good way of finding out more about the band's goals, their main markets and their audience. Also, it helps the band to plan and budget their upcoming tours better. The same mapping can be done for **booking agencies** in different countries such as Sweden, Finland or Germany, which Cold Black sees as their primary markets.

Even though the band does not have a full-time manager yet, they have other options to consider. Many managers offer **consultations** on an hourly basis. A situational analysis may be useful for the band and the manager can also help with tour planning, setting up goals, marketing or branding. Another, even more cost-effective idea may be to contact schools and universities teaching music or cultural management and become a **project commissioner**. The students can arrange shows, create marketing, communications and strategic plans or assist in the band's promotion.

The band is looking for a respected label, but this does not need to be one of the majors in the beginning. As I have previously mentioned, **indie labels** may operate with a smaller budget, but they could offer great benefits to motivated newcomers such as touring support, talent development and a support team. Cold Black should absolutely consider this option when looking for a label; the band should map out the indies and set up a plan for contacting them. A list of the Danish independent labels can be found at: <http://www.dup.nu/labels>

As a band, Cold Black should establish a **company**, if they have not done that yet. This would provide them with tax advantages, make business easier, lead to more organized finances and add to the band's professional image.

As the band is admittedly having financial difficulties, they need to consider alternative sources of funding. For instance, launching a project on **Kickstarter** may prove to be beneficial, as the band has many followers and supporters online. Besides financial support, they should consider **product sponsors** as well; these companies can represent anything from rock clothing to beer brands, the most important is to be creative, pitch the band well and offer added value to the prospects.

Even though Cold Black thinks that **networking** is less of value for them within the borders of Denmark, they should have a change of perspective. Music exhibitions, fairs and **industry events** are highly international, therefore the band can gain valuable contacts at such events. Although Denmark is not their target market, it would still be beneficial to network with **Danish professionals**; there are various organizations in the country that support the promotion and international export of Danish music in particular (Music Export Denmark, ROSA, KODA).

The band has already appeared in a couple of reviews and interviews, but their **press coverage** should still be increased. They could create press releases for local magazines and get their story told (about new releases, recent shows, etc.). Besides printed press, the band should also appear in different **webzines**, which are online magazines many times managed by fans. Fans are always looking for new music to listen to and they would also like to get to know the people behind it. Cold Black should put their story together in a way, that it raises interest and draws more attention to the band. Naturally, the story has to be consistent with the brand; it is not only about the content, the presentation is just as important.

For social media, short **video Q&As** may be created in addition or integrated to the video blogs. Fans may send their questions to the band and they can pick the best ones, answering a few of them every four weeks.

5.3 Validity and reliability

Validity and reliability of the results had a key importance during the whole research process; the chosen research methods, the sampling and the data analysis each contributed in producing valid and reliable results.

The number of interviewees was maximized in consideration of the time available. Furthermore, three different sample groups were set up, in order to produce more accurate results. The responses within the groups did not typically represent extremes, therefore reliable conclusions could be made. I am certain that my research can be duplicated with the same results, as theory is given and the interviewees' answers weren't manipulated in any way. Furthermore, the answers have been analyzed with the highest possible level of objectivity, following my notes, the interview transcripts and the original sound recordings.

It has to be noted though, that music is a fast changing industry and I am not able to predict what the future holds. This research has been made according to the present state of the music business and its results can only be interpreted to that extent. Therefore, when studying the same subject in the future, researchers should always take a good look on the current situation of the industry first.

In order to produce valid results, I chose a variety of research tools to work with (literature review, semi-structured interviews and focus group discussion). The triangulation of methods enabled me to provide valid answers to the research questions. The results are valid, as they answer all the original research questions related to key factors of success, key factors of failure and the role of the manager. As I have mentioned above, the industry is changing rapidly, and the research results may not be valid in the future. However, they definitely are at the time of my graduation, and even after they may provide a base for further research.

5.4 Discussion

This study is important not only because it gives an overview of the current state of the ever-changing music industry, but it also provides a guideline for young musicians or managers to follow. Similar studies mostly focus on how things should be done, but for me it was also important to take a closer look at the underlying problems from different points of view. The interview results and the focus group discussion both highlighted some critical issues, which theory alone could not reveal.

As this research had its limitations in terms of time, extent, methods and number of respondents, future studies could focus on opening up the findings and analysing them in more detail with special attention to the key factors of failure and the artist-manager relationship. Quantitative studies may be conducted to identify more issues bands are facing and the same could be done for managers. Once all the problems are clear, they can be opened up by qualitative methods. For example the researcher could observe bands and their managers for a longer period of time; it would be an excellent way to shed light on the most common problems and the main sources of conflict.

Another method could be interviewing more respondents, asking them questions on a specific topic; each element covered in this study may easily be a research topic on its own, such as the influence of geographical location, the importance of branding in the

music industry or the artist-manager conflict. Furthermore, the scope of the study may be extended to different markets such as Japan, China or the United States.

It is clear that further research is needed on the subject and I hope that there will be; in a world where bands need to work for free and artists have lost their trust in managers, there is much work to be done. The voice of the artist needs to be heard and managers have to be ready for the discussion. Researchers should listen to, observe and analyse both groups thoroughly in order to get a better understanding of the phenomenon and eventually provide a solution. There is much yet to be understood about this industry built on the fascinating mixture of art, business and emotions.

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Attachments

Attachment 1 – Interview structure

1. Background information
2. The effects of the new music economy
3. Obstacles and opportunities
4. Artist manager traits, tasks and responsibilities
5. Self-management
6. The artist as a business
7. Goals and concept
8. Branding
9. Promotion
10. Community building and audience participation
11. Common mistakes and lessons learned

Attachment 2 – Summary of the results

	Success factors	Failure factors	The manager
Self-managed bands	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - practice - persistence - enthusiasm - common goals - good product - the possibilities of the internet - understanding the industry - authenticity - fan involvement - street teams - implementing feedback - branding - luck 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - trusting the wrong people - geographical location - fierce competition - wrong priorities - the new business model - time consuming self-management - unprofessional people in the industry - financial difficulties 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - networks - good business skills - proactivity - works for the bands' best interest - makes the band progress - experience over education - lack of good managers - trust (lost) - giving up control
Bands with management	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - authenticity - fan involvement - understanding the industry - the internet - professional attitude - consistency - hard work 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - trusting the wrong people - geographical location - consumer behaviour - lack of commitment - lack of cooperation 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - networks - dedication - strong personality - social skills - handles all business activities - understands the bands'

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - persistence - effective management - inner drive and motivation - creative solutions 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - unprofessional people in the industry - financial difficulties - fierce competition 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - needs - plays more than one role - education and experience - trustworthy
Managers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - good product - hard work - authenticity - understanding the industry - manners - branding - strong artistic vision - professional team - enthusiasm - luck 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - fierce competition - lack of shared goals and consistency - wrong priorities - good music is not enough - self- or unprofessional management - lack of cooperation in the industry - risk avoidant record labels - financial difficulties 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - many roles - networks - problem-solving - strong education - experience - believes in the band - passion and dedication - trustworthy - leadership - may be a friend in the beginning - a good person - visionary

Attachment 3 – Interview quotes

Attachment 2 includes the most important findings of the interviews in more detail, supported by quotes from the interviewees.

W1, Hungary

Main factors contributing to success	
Clear vision and goals	<i>"First of all, vision. Know what you want to accomplish."</i>
Establishing a good relationship with fans	<i>"Appreciate your audience and give back as much as you receive from them."</i>
Authenticity	<i>"Practice what you preach."</i>
Using every possibility for networking	<i>"I left Emergenza with a nice list of contacts to these venues, where we would play amazing shows, often supporting foreign bands."</i>
Understanding that marketing doesn't mean selling out	<i>"Music is the product of an artist's activity. And advertising it does not take away from its value."</i>
Knowledge of the industry and the business side of music	<i>"The more you learn about music and the music industry, the more autonomy you'll be able to maintain in your career."</i>
Image, concept, branding	<i>"The point is, give some consideration of what you would like to project of yourself, how you would like the public to perceive you."</i>

Hard work	<i>"You have to be very hard working if you want to achieve anything in this genre."</i>
Finding creative ways to reduce costs	<i>"Knowing a bit of music production can significantly reduce your costs."</i>
Strong artistic vision and planning	<i>"As long as you have a clear vision of what you want to represent and where you'd like to get, you're all good."</i>
The ability to work and stick together as a team	<i>"Shove up your ego and learn to exist as a part of a team, a brotherhood, if you will."</i>
Taking advantage of each networking and performance opportunity	<i>"Always make the most out of the situation you're in."</i>
Setting high goals and always acting in a professional way	<i>"I have regarded music as a business from day one. Because my goal has been set so high, I was determined to try to achieve it in the most professional way possible."</i>
Authenticity	<i>"The bottom line is, be as honest as you can be, because if you're not, people will find out sooner than you think."</i>
Looking at the band as a business and not being afraid of marketing	<i>"People will buy well-marketed products even when they are of considerably lower quality than some other great, yet poorly marketed product."</i>
Main factors contributing to failure	
Bad team dynamics	<i>"You cannot accomplish great things if, out of 5 or 6 people, you're the only one working hard."</i>
Choosing band members based on the wrong criteria, or no criteria at all	<i>"I should've never let people join my bands simply on the basis of them being my friends."</i>
Different expectations inside the band	<i>"I wasn't able to motivate members as most of them regarded the band as a hobby."</i>
Inability to separate personal life from business	<i>"I should've kept things a lot more professional and not be so inconsistent on separating my personal life from my bands."</i>
Lack of consistent marketing strategy	<i>"Here's how you can't and shouldn't market yourselves: by spamming random people's profiles with your music."</i>
Trusting the wrong people	<i>"I should not have relied on people who tried to pose as hardcore professionals but who weren't, in fact, worth shit."</i>
Unstable, immature personalities in the band, resulting in bad team dynamics	<i>"Other band members were so unstable and insecure, I constantly had to allocate an unproportionally large amount of energy to nursing their fragile little souls."</i>
Getting too close to the fans on a personal level	<i>"They (the fans) do not see you for who you are (...) you should be aware of that at all times and NOT take advantage of this asymmetric relationship."</i>
Lack of resources and financial difficulties	<i>"One has to pump insane sums of money into a band for years until the first returns start coming."</i>
Wrong priorities, lack of serious commitment	<i>"Fucking every groupie and drinking up the world's alcohol supply is not an accomplishment."</i>
People rather download music for free than spend money on live shows	<i>"People no longer go to live shows."</i>

Having no clear concept or direction	<i>"The band lacked a clear artistic vision, therefore internal cohesion, and I had no concept of our supposed target audience."</i>
Insufficient geographical location	<i>"Hungary lacks a proper infrastructure that is supposed to provide young talents means to promote themselves."</i>
Not putting enough effort into building a community	<i>"Bands just might find it much more comfortable to post bullshit on their Facebook page than to put effort into maintaining a street team."</i>
Good music alone is usually not enough	<i>"There's this very common attitude that 'we'll just play awesome music and someone will discover us with time'. That's complete bullshit."</i>
The manager	
Strong and tactful personality, being a good leader	<i>"You must be able to discipline the beast and make it work towards the set goals."</i>
Be the engine of the band's business activities	<i>"You will have to deal with the fact that almost no-one in the band is interested in these (business) activities."</i>
A beginner band can benefit from a manager too if they are serious enough	<i>"Should a starting band hire a manager? Sure, if they want to do serious business, they definitely should."</i>
Educate the young artists about the business and make them work towards a common goal.	<i>"Educate young musicians about what they should expect and how they can cope with all that is to come."</i>
A good manager should patient	<i>"Patience helps when you're working with young beginners."</i>
Dedication and a little bit of craziness	<i>"One has to be very dedicated and, honestly, somewhat insane to be able to enjoy it."</i>
Offer a more objective perspective	<i>"A manager can help a band set realistic goals and outline a path to reach them."</i>
Reliability	<i>"Reliability is the foremost quality a manager must possess."</i>
Warn for mistakes and help the artist keep both feet on the ground	<i>"He/she can also help avoid career traps."</i>
It has to be clear who is in charge of what to avoid battling over control	<i>"The manager and I were in a constant battle for control, and band members didn't really know who they should listen to."</i>
Motivate the band, act as a coach Emotional support, handling conflict	<i>"This is where a manager can help the most: motivating people to get through the rough part and help them focus on the positive things."</i>

W2, Italy

Main factors contributing to success	
Creativity, financial resources and authenticity	<i>"Always try something new, get ready to spend lot of money and be yourselves."</i>
Listening to feedback but also filtering it	<i>"Always listen to criticism but don't take all the advice you get!"</i>
A professional musician is not a hobby musician – a different mind-set is required	<i>"If you want to create something serious you have to think in a different way."</i>

Having a higher purpose with the band	<i>"My band is more than a job or a business."</i>
Fans as a cost-effective promotional tool	<i>"Fans are the best way for promotion and they are cheaper than an agency."</i>
Using the possibilities offered by the internet and social media	<i>"It's very important to use the new media to keep in contact with fans, and inform them of all the news."</i>
Effective management	<i>"They should help and find the best solution for the band about tour, gigs, promotions."</i>
Main factors contributing to failure	
Trusting the wrong people	<i>"Don't trust people who promise you many things."</i>
The way people purchase music has changed and it's not beneficial for artists	<i>"I wish people would continue to visit live shows and try to buy the whole album of bands and not only one song on iTunes."</i>
Rivalry and lack of co-operation between artists	<i>"Bands here are envious and they don't want to cooperate with each other."</i>
Insufficient geographical location	<i>"Unfortunately Italy is the worst place for rock."</i>
Lack of brand-loyalty in the audience	<i>"People these days can switch from band to band very easily."</i>
Shortened attention spans – difficult to keep the audience's attention	<i>"Social networks changed many things in band promotions. Now people want to see everything about a band in one second."</i>
Lack of knowledge and professional behavior from others outside the band	<i>"The ignorance and the unprofessionalism of other people."</i>
The manager	
Knowledge of the industry	<i>"You have to know the music business very well."</i>
The importance of networking	<i>"Have lot of good connections with other promoters and musicians."</i>
Should understand the bands he works with a build a good relationship with them	<i>"Know well the bands which you are working with."</i>
Should be well-educated	<i>"Education is important."</i>
Should be tough when it's required	<i>"Sometimes you have to be a bit strict and rude."</i>
Taking the artist to the next level	<i>"We noticed that we could not reach the next level (work with bigger promoters, bands etc.) without a management."</i>
Lack of professional managers with a good sense of conflict management	<i>"We had both positive and negative experiences...well to be honest mostly negative."</i>
Handling all business activities around the artist	<i>"First of all we are all musicians so we should only play and put a management in charge of business."</i>
A good manager is not only interested in his personal financial gain	<i>"Are they really interested in you or only in getting money?"</i>

W3, United Kingdom

Main factors contributing to success	
Fan involvement	<i>"You have to involve the fans. They have to be a part of it."</i>
Good manners	<i>"Be nice to everybody, be polite and never step on people."</i>
Professional attitude	<i>"There will always be conflicts and you can't take them too personally."</i>

Effective and smart self-promotion	<i>"You have to learn to pitch your band. You have to be careful not to overdo it."</i>
Being a role model	<i>"You should be the person people look at and say – I wanna be that person."</i>
Inner drive and motivation	<i>"Do it because you love it!"</i>
Having a consistent image	<i>"You need a unified look."</i>
Respect towards the audience	<i>"Respect your audience. Nothing happens without them."</i>
Authenticity	<i>"You don't have to be different, you don't have to wear make-up or anything. Just be passionate and sincere."</i>
Persistence	<i>"We've been around for 12 years. You just have to keep going."</i>
The band must have a leader	<i>"You need one driven person in the band."</i>
A positive attitude	<i>"See the glass as half full instead of half empty."</i>
Practice makes perfect	<i>"Practice, practice, practice."</i>
Tolerance and cooperation	<i>"We don't like false people but we would still work with anybody who wants to work with us."</i>
Understanding your audience and keeping them interested	<i>"You must be in tune with your audience and keep them interested in what you're doing."</i>
Making your own solutions for problems	<i>"We own our record label."</i>
Main factors contributing to failure	
Too many bands on the market	<i>"The scene is so overpopulated."</i>
Inefficient booking agents, promoters, etc.	<i>"Agents can be difficult to deal with."</i>
Self-management taking time away from the creative process	<i>"Who is writing the music then?" (referring to self-management)</i>
Other genres are far more popular than rock these days	<i>"I don't think anywhere is a good place to start a rock band today."</i>
Setting unrealistic goals	<i>"If you set your goal to be the biggest band in the world you only gonna get upset. "</i>
People don't want to pay for music	<i>"Fans expect to get everything for free."</i>
The complexity of income streams	<i>"You have to diversify, you cannot just do an album anymore. There are a lot of different income streams."</i>
Only going with the flow, not contributing in decision making	<i>"You can't afford other people make decisions for you."</i>
No business makes up for real talent	<i>"Without real art there is no business."</i>
Not taking care of the bands' looks	<i>"Nobody wants to listen to your music if you look like garbage."</i>
Having a message is not enough anymore	<i>"It's not only about what you are saying."</i>
Audience making fast assumptions	<i>"People categorize bands."</i>
Bad team dynamics, lack of team effort	<i>"If you are not a team just five individuals, it won't work."</i>
The manager	
A band has to have a manager if they want to be taken seriously	<i>"Nobody takes you seriously if you are self-managed."</i>
Having networks is very important	<i>"It's not what you know, it's who you know."</i>
Has a strong inner drive for what he's doing	<i>"A good manager is driven."</i>
Has an appealing personality and good people skills	<i>"Very personable, talks to people all the time everywhere."</i>

Open, friendly and easy to talk to	<i>"Approachable. A manager cannot be hard to talk to."</i>
Has to consider the bands' opinion	<i>"We can't always do as she says and she has to understand that."</i>
Specific personal traits are necessary	<i>"It takes a certain personality."</i>
Is a friend also	<i>"Should be a friend as well."</i>

S1, Sweden

Main factors contributing to success	
A strong sense of inner motivation	<i>"I've always been the driving force in every band I've been in since I eat, shit and live for this...24-hours a day...this IS my life!"</i>
Nothing can replace hard work	<i>"Work hard, play hard and great things will happen."</i>
Using the possibilities offered by the internet and social media	<i>"These days, it's pretty much all about the web, like social media."</i>
Keeping contact with the fans as they are the band's main income source	<i>"Artists should take their time to keep in touch with their fans...since it's the fans that make bands what they are...no fans - no fun!"</i>
Music as a service	<i>"Bands are touring more than ever with package tours."</i>
Branding is more important than ever	<i>"Bands are trying to make money by selling their own brands with beer, wine, headphones etc."</i>
All members should be competent and work towards the same goals	<i>"Make sure you got your shit together and that you have the same goals in the band."</i>
Good quality music and authenticity	<i>"Have great songs and do what you believe in."</i>
Listening to feedback, analyzing it and daring to take risks	<i>"We changed our image since we always did hear that we we're so good looking and that we were styled "over the top" and we felt that our music wasn't in the focus....So we decided to go all in to try to look as ugly and "bad looking" as we could."</i>
The importance of ambition and high goals	<i>"You'll have to have big dreams and goals to make it big."</i>
Main factors contributing to failure	
Being too naïve and doing business without a written contract	<i>"If it sounds too good it's sure not true...make sure have every deal or business in a signed paper before you do anything."</i>
Doing business with the wrong people	<i>"The music business is really a crazy jungle, full of snakes that only wanna rip you off."</i>
Pursuing merely financial success	<i>"I really don't like when it's obvious that artists doing things just for the money."</i>
Expecting fast and easy success	<i>"They quit too easy and don't really know what hard work means."</i>
Not being able to deal with difficulties	<i>"Only the strong survive."</i>
Large surplus of bands in the market	<i>"These days, it's even harder to stick out just with your music."</i>

Incompetency of the management	<i>"I used to work with a manager but I still had to check things twice just to make sure they did what I told them...so it was just a total waste of money and time."</i>
Time consuming audience building	<i>"It takes a long time building an audience."</i>
Letting others take advantage of you	<i>"I used to be too kind to people...thankfully I'm not like that anymore."</i>
The manager	
The band knows best what they want to achieve so they should manage themselves	<i>"If you wanna have anything done, then you'll have to do it by yourself."</i>
The importance of networking	<i>"Have some good connections in the music business."</i>
Hiring a manager costs a lot of money	<i>"If you have a shit load of money to spend, please go ahead and get your band a manager."</i>
Without a manager, the control stays in the hands of the band	<i>"By doing everything on your own you'll have total control and know what's going on."</i>
It's difficult to find a manager who is a perfect fit for the band	<i>"Some managers do awesome work but it's all about who's your manager, what he can do for you and what you're aiming for."</i>
There are certain aspects of being a manager which cannot be learned at school	<i>"I think you simply have it or not."</i>
A good understanding of business, combined with a professional and proactive attitude can make up for lack of education	<i>"It doesn't really matter if you're educated or not as long as you have a good sense for good business and know how to do to make things happen."</i>

S2, Finland

Main factors contributing to success	
Constant practice	<i>"You just have to keep rehearsing."</i>
Inner drive and motivation	<i>"If you believe in something you should never give up."</i>
Using different tools for promotion	<i>"Street teams, Facebook, music videos, merchandise..."</i>
Authenticity	<i>"Do your own thing, that is everything."</i>
Planning is important but avoid planning every single detail	<i>"You have to think about your concept but not too much. - Be yourself but dress in black."</i>
Finding people with common goals	<i>"The team dynamics are improved since we changed some of our members."</i>
Fan involvement and regular contact with the audience	<i>"Fans should be involved with what the band is doing. And it's very important to be in contact with them."</i>
Co-operation with booking agents	<i>"We are working with a couple of agents here."</i>
The Internet offers great possibilities for bands	<i>"It doesn't matter where you start your band, it's the age of the internet."</i>
Keeping up street teams	<i>"We have many street teams. In Finland, Italy, US, Spain and also in South America."</i>
Main factors contributing to failure	
Managing individual timetables between band members	<i>"We have now seven players in our band. It is kind of difficult to arrange."</i>
Combining fun with work	<i>"Drinking can be a problem. Especially before the shows."</i>

Different genres taking over the music scene	<i>"New metal is coming quite strongly. Pop and rap are also big competitors in Finland."</i>
Inconsistency	<i>"Don't change your concept too much or too often."</i>
Good music is not enough alone	<i>"It's not only the band's music..."</i>
Promoters and agents do not want to take the risk with new bands	<i>"Nobody wants to pay for new bands."</i>
Lack of financial support	<i>"Money is a problem. Everything is difficult when you don't have it."</i>
Self-management is taking away from the creative process	<i>"It is too hard to do everything yourself. It takes so much time."</i>
Fierce competition	<i>"There are so many new bands."</i>
The gap between amateurs and professionals has been radically reduced	<i>"These days anybody can make their own records which are good quality."</i>
The manager	
A manager can always be useful for an artist's career	<i>"A manager is always good to have, even in the beginning."</i>
Good managers are not easy to find	<i>"It's hard to find the right person."</i>
The manager's personality needs to work well together with the band members'	<i>"Need to have the chemistry together."</i>
Experience is more important than education	<i>"Education is not so important if he can do his job well."</i>
A nice person true to him or herself	<i>"Has to be a genuine and nice person."</i>
The importance of networks	<i>"Must have a big network."</i>
A good business person	<i>"Makes favourable deals for the band."</i>
Helps the band expanding to the US market	<i>"Someone from America would be nice."</i>
Has the band's best interest in mind and represents that at all times	<i>"A good manager would stand up for the band."</i>

S3, Norway

Main factors contributing to success	
Understanding the business side of music	<i>"Even if it's an artistic product, you cannot forget the business side."</i>
Having an efficient support team	<i>"To be really successful, you need to have other people around you doing business for you."</i>
Must always write contracts	<i>"Always write contracts."</i>
Mastering music before doing anything else	<i>"You have to learn your craft."</i>
Listening to and applying feedback	<i>"Talk to people you trust and ask for their opinion."</i>
Maintaining street teams	<i>"Bands need street teams."</i>
Being active both on and offline	<i>"Being active in social media and being out playing is the best way of building an audience."</i>
Luck is an important factor	<i>"You have to be on the right time at the right place. It is like 80%."</i>
Knowing your audience and reaching out for them	<i>"It's important to know who your audience are because those are the people you have to reach out for."</i>
Frequent updates online	<i>"Fans expect updates frequently and in real time."</i>
Word of mouth marketing	<i>"If I say that I am playing in a great band it's not the same if you would say the same about me to your friends."</i>

The power of social media	<i>"Nowadays, with social media, you can reach out for your fans differently than before."</i>
Branding	<i>"Things have changed and it's not only the music anymore. It's the looks, the shows, the updates, and a lot of things can make a band fan-friendly."</i>
The rock genre is not just a fad	<i>"There will always be a scene for rock n roll."</i>
Main factors contributing to failure	
Fierce competition in the industry	<i>"It's a tough competition now."</i>
Low record sales meaning lower income for artists	<i>"It is getting harder for bands because there ain't that much record sales at the moment."</i>
The expensive nature of touring	<i>"It's easy to say that today bands can make their income from touring but touring also costs a lot of money."</i>
Difficulties of self-management	<i>"It's hard to do everything by yourself."</i>
Focusing too much on the wrong priorities	<i>"Bands can be too focused on being rock stars instead of being musicians."</i>
Insufficient geographical location	<i>"We have to travel long distances to get to our main markets."</i>
If overdone, business may damage the artistic value of the product	<i>"There is a line between art and business that can be hard to see. The art can suffer because of the business."</i>
Lack of experience and networks	<i>"It can be hard if you don't have the experience and the right connections."</i>
Doing business in the music industry is tough and it's not for everybody	<i>"The business side of music is a struggle."</i>
High expectations from the audience	<i>"The audience is expecting more from bands now than before."</i>
Good music is not enough alone	<i>"Good music seldom is enough to be heard, there are so many other factors."</i>
There is no recipe for success	<i>"I don't have a formula I'm afraid, if I had we would probably be much bigger."</i>
The manager	
Must consider the artist's opinion and ideas and try to implement them	<i>"We used to have a manager but things didn't work out the way we wanted to so we ended the contract."</i>
Preferably from the artist's home country	<i>"We probably will sign with a management, I would like to have Norwegian management."</i>
Understands the bands' needs and works towards fulfilling them	<i>"They have to understand your needs."</i>
Shares the same goals with the band	<i>"You must have the same goals."</i>
Right skills and networks	<i>"A manager must have the connections and skills to make you progress."</i>
Artists should deal with art and the managers with the business	<i>"I want to write music and perform music, it's good to have other people take care of business."</i>
Don't promise if you cannot deliver	<i>"We have heard so many nice things, a lot of sweet talking but they can't back it up."</i>
Good social and communication skills	<i>"As a manager, you have to deal with so many people, with the venues, producers, with everybody."</i>
Actions speak louder than words	<i>"I always go for action."</i>

Main factors contributing to success	
Finding a professional support team	<i>"If the artist is not willing to do the dirty work himself or does not have the capability, there has to be a team that does that."</i>
Artists should also study how the business works around them	<i>"It never really hurt anyone to understand how the business works."</i>
Having good manners	<i>"Respect the people you meet."</i>
Understanding the new music economy and the power of the audience	<i>"The new owners of the music are the audience."</i>
The artist must invest money before he can earn money	<i>"You have to invest in building that career."</i>
All the business activities are important but nothing replaces hard-work from the artist's side	<i>"Everything else has to support the music, but hard-work is the most important."</i>
The importance of branding	<i>"Build the brand and connect that brand with your fans."</i>
Being a talented musician who plays quality music	<i>"Have good songs."</i>
Taking the job seriously and acting as a professional	<i>"You have to think of it in a professional manner."</i>
Using opportunities, not being overconfident, learning and networking	<i>"Be brave, be humble, suck all the information you can and build networks."</i>
Main factors contributing to failure	
Lack of contribution within the industry	<i>"Although the industry is quite small, we got used to work in small groups and not reach out for our peers that much."</i>
Having good music alone is not enough	<i>"The fact is that nothing ever sells itself."</i>
High surplus of content, it's difficult to stand out as a musician	<i>"Every single day, there is more music available, there has to be ways to stand out from the crowd. And it's becoming more and more difficult each day."</i>
Incompetent, unprofessional management	<i>"Bands have been screwed up because of bad managers and people who told them they know how to make them big and it never happens."</i>
There is no recipe for success, what works for one artist may not work for another	<i>"There isn't a definite model that works for everyone."</i>
Picky and risk-avoidant record labels	<i>"Nowadays if you want to get signed in a label or find a good manager, you have to be quite established already."</i>
Touring is expensive	<i>"Touring has become more challenging these days."</i>
The unpredictability of the industry	<i>"It's a business that is built on emotion and it's very hard to predict emotions."</i>
The difficulty of entering new markets	<i>"Often you have to do 2 or 3 tours when entering a new market before you can even be profitable."</i>
Artists focusing too much on success and fame that they lose sight of the creative aspects of music	<i>"People are obviously so enthusiastic in making a career and being successful and they forget the most important thing which is music itself."</i>
Financial gain is a wrong motivator	<i>"If you want to make a lot of money, if that's your primary goal, choose another business."</i>

Lack of objectivity and self-criticism towards own band	<i>"Lack of self-criticism in many ways is often something that prevents bands from development."</i>
Labels invest more time into bigger artists, smaller ones may stay in the background	<i>"There is bigger chance of losing touch especially if you are a small artist."</i>
The manager	
Versatile background and experience	<i>"I was pretty much working through the whole range of operations at that time. It was very teaching."</i>
Makes operations easier and always looking for developmental opportunities	<i>"My role is to make sure that everything runs smoothly and develops."</i>
Has a passion for what he does, believes in himself and in the band	<i>"Truly believes in what he does, believes in the band."</i>
Has sufficient skills and networks that can help the band	<i>"Has the required skills and networks to work for the band."</i>
A manager usually works internationally	<i>"A band that only focuses on the domestic market probably has less need for a manager."</i>
A friend may be the manager during the early stages, but he must be really competent and a fast-learner	<i>"It may be beneficial to recruit a friend as a manager but the friend should be really quick at learning."</i>
The importance of education	<i>"You need education to some extent."</i>
Experience and understanding of business, numbers, finances and leadership	<i>"You have to understand how the business works, how the figures work, you have to do bookkeeping and you have to be able to run the business."</i>
There must be a mutual trust between the manager and the band	<i>"There has to be a mutual trust."</i>

M2

Main factors contributing to success	
All the elements need to work together	<i>"You need to have the whole package together."</i>
The importance of branding	<i>"Must have an articulated sense of the brand."</i>
Finding a professional support team	<i>"One of the artist's most important task is to find a team around him or her."</i>
Setting specific goals	<i>"Set concrete goals."</i>
When it comes to art, business cannot be the only driver	<i>"Business can't always be the driver."</i>
Planning the activities beforehand from image to performance	<i>"You need to plan the whole entity: how do you come on stage, what do you do first, what do you look like..."</i>
Recognizing the main income streams and strategically plan how to collect money from them	<i>"You have to be really aware that you have to collect the stream of money from many sources, and you have to make sure that you have the strategy for each of them."</i>
Good showmanship, performance and enthusiasm at all times – you never know who is in the audience	<i>"Even if you only have 4 people in the audience, you have to play that gig 100%. You might have had A&R from the record label on that very particular gig."</i>
Having good manners	<i>"The most important aspect of a good band is great manners."</i>

Knowing what you really want and practicing it until the point of excellence	<i>"Thinking of what you want to really want to do, sticking to that and doing it far better than others...rehearsing it so much, doing it so much that you become far better than anybody else."</i>
Having a strong and genuine drive and calling to be a musician	<i>"You can only do this profession if you really can't imagine in no circumstance to do anything else."</i>
Main factors contributing to failure	
Nothing can make up for the lack of real talent	<i>"If you don't have the exquisite talent, you can always sell it as much as you like and it won't be sold."</i>
Not asking questions	<i>"People very often don't use the opportunity to ask a lot of questions while that's the only way to learn."</i>
No shared goals and direction within a team, damaging team dynamics	<i>"If you can't convince people to share the same enthusiasm and vision and direction, then it's really hard to work as a team."</i>
Lack of consistency from the artist leading to lack of interest from the audience	<i>"Sometimes you hear the narrative of the artist and you see the photos, the bio and they don't have a linkage. And that's very often the reason that nobody gets interested. They are not coherent."</i>
Professional bands should not be self-managed	<i>"Who really takes care of this thing? Is it the artist him or herself? Well, it shouldn't be. If it's professional, it shouldn't be."</i>
The artist's resistance to engage in business activities	<i>"There can be art without business for sure, but very rarely there can be audiences without it."</i>
Lack of manners and respect	<i>"Nobody wants to work with assholes."</i>
Thinking too much instead of actually doing, not realizing when the time is right	<i>"It doesn't really help thinking too much of who you are and where you're going when you rehearsed for 2 years."</i>
Trying to avoid hard-work	<i>"There are so many artists that think there is a way skipping hard-work. There isn't."</i>
Huge surplus of content resulting in fierce competition between artists all around the world – artists may fail to see the big picture	<i>"You always have to be the best in the world in what you're doing. There is always an option to buy an American singer, a Polish violinist, or a South-African opera singer."</i>
The manager	
Problem solving mind set	<i>"I don't see obstacles..."</i>
Knows very much about his own field and also has a wide general knowledge	<i>"...has to be a T-type of person."</i>
Education is absolutely necessary	<i>"I don't know of any good manager who wouldn't have education."</i>
Can understand and adapt to the fast-changing industry	<i>"It's a business that changes so quickly, and the manager is the one that has to understand all aspects of it."</i>
Sees the big picture and helps the artist in creating a vision	<i>"A manager needs to be somebody who is capable of creating an overall vision."</i>
Is always one step ahead	<i>"Managers need to take the business to the future."</i>
Soft and hard skill set is both needed	<i>"Knowledge of the field is important, but also emotional strength."</i>
Be logical and understand numbers	<i>"Must be good with numbers."</i>

Has to be able to organize the work at hand, which is usually a lot	<i>"Needs to be very good at organizing work, because there is an endless amount of work."</i>
Focus, endurance and resilience is necessary	<i>"Focus, endurance and resilience."</i>
Leadership	<i>"Any qualifications of a good leader really, a good director."</i>
A friend may act as a manager for start-up bands, and they can grow and learn together	<i>"If it's a friend who helps out, there is always a value in that, it creates a network and they grow together."</i>
Having a strong inner motivation	<i>"I've always had a very strong inner motivation for what I do. And that's a true strength that I have."</i>
Self-teaching can be very useful	<i>"I would have probably needed to read All You Need To Know About The Music Industry, I would have benefitted from it earlier."</i>
Must be there for the right reason and must have manager potential	<i>"Somebody not interested in management or not capable of doing it shouldn't do management."</i>

M3

Main factors contributing to success	
Having big goals to start with	<i>"Think big. Even though you are small."</i>
Thinking forward, thinking internationally	<i>"When you start, you should immediately make the website also in English. Why should you prevent millions of people on the internet from understanding what you are saying?"</i>
Image, concept, branding	<i>"If it's a rock band, the attitude should be rock. (...) Fire all the PR agents and create your own style and image. Be proud of it and stick to it."</i>
Energetic, proactive attitude	<i>"I need to cooperate with the artist, I want them to be energetic, active and have a good attitude. Be ready and willing and able."</i>
Meaning behind the music	<i>"Substance."</i>
Giving the audience an experience	<i>"Experience and a strong feeling."</i>
Establishing networks within the industry	<i>"Every business is built on networks. You have to be connected."</i>
Basic understanding of business processes	<i>"The artist should understand some principles of business."</i>
Good manners, modest, nice attitude	<i>"When I look at people who are very successful, they are not arrogant. They are quite modest and nice people. You need to be nice."</i>
Finding alternative ways of funding	<i>"I would release my project in Kickstarter and apply for a rational amount of money."</i>
Understanding that even the most famous artists started once from zero and working accordingly	<i>"Everybody starts from zero."</i>
Proper website and Facebook site	<i>"Take care that your website and Facebook is done properly. "</i>
Understanding the change happening in the industry and acting upon it	<i>"We are in the middle of a change and we are the ones who should make this change."</i>
Luck	<i>"If you want to be famous, you need luck."</i>

Knowing your target audience	<i>"Have a target, a small group of people that want to listen particularly this music."</i>
Establishing a regular connection with the fans, encouraging them to participate	<i>"Interact in real time with your fan base. They know about you, your story and your values and they are a part of your group."</i>
The internet offers new possibilities	<i>"There are no borders because of the internet."</i>
Main factors contributing to failure	
Financial issues	<i>"Money is a number one obstacle."</i>
Lack of flexibility and risk taking of people in the industry	<i>"People can be very rigid and old-fashioned, they stick to rules which are not even written and they don't dare to do anything in a different way."</i>
Having a hard time adapting to the change, clinging to the old ways	<i>"Somehow we haven't yet understood how things changed because of the net. We are still trying to cling to the old type of distribution and manufacturing."</i>
Difficult to access professional managers, producers, etc.	<i>"It is not easy to reach them (the decision makers)."</i>
Not thinking internationally, limiting oneself to a specific market	<i>"Finnish entrepreneurs are shy, they stick to Finland and they don't dare to think internationally."</i>
Success can be damaging for the personality	<i>"It's not healthy to be very successful. It's damaging and it's not good for a person's mind."</i>
Record companies do not want to take risks any more	<i>"Record companies don't want to and can't afford to take the risks."</i>
Self-management taking too much time out of the creative process	<i>"If the artist starts managing him or herself, it's taking time out of the artistic process."</i>
It's difficult to come up with something new	<i>"Nowadays, you have heard all the music already."</i>
Not using all the possible resources and capacity	<i>"If you don't use all your resources and capacity and do it as well as you can, that's just a waste of time."</i>
If the first impression is not good, it is not easy to change it in people's minds	<i>"You are able to create the first impression only once."</i>
Being too hasty to get things done, getting too enthusiastic	<i>"Every artist that I know hurry too much. They get too excited and they can get carried away."</i>
The manager	
A manager should have a decent amount of work to manage	<i>"In the very early stages you cannot benefit from management."</i>
The importance of education: marketing, economics, projects, finance, leadership	<i>"Education is important, because then you know more: marketing, economics, projects, leadership, all of this is good."</i>
Some things cannot be learned at school	<i>"You have to be brave and a little crazy. If you study too much, you may lose this."</i>
Patience, social skills, communication skills	<i>"Patience and also good social and communication skills."</i>
Explaining the current situation to artists so they can always follow the process	<i>"You have to be able to tell the artist about the sales figures and what's happening in the company so that they understand."</i>

Being close to the artist, taking care of them also in difficult situations (not traditional manager-employee relationship)	<i>"You should be able to be friends with the artist. And you should take care of them. If you are on tour and they get very drunk, you drive and get them."</i>
Discovering the true potential of artists	<i>"I cooperate with the band because some artists might be shy and they might not notice themselves interesting things about themselves."</i>
Motivating the artists	<i>"It's my job to kick them in the ass and say: 'Do it better, I know you can!'"</i>
Performing a variety of tasks instead of limiting herself to a certain role	<i>"It's more than 360 degrees. I am doing everything and also I don't want to put up any borders for myself. When something interesting pops up, I will start doing it."</i>
Trust, transparency, openness	<i>"Should be trustful, transparent and open."</i>
Being experimental and innovative	<i>"I want to find new ways to work, new artists, new music."</i>
Strong inner motivation and belief in the cause	<i>"I enjoy what I'm doing and I find it important. We are building the future this way."</i>