

# THE MANUAL



HOW TO BUILD A SUCCESSFUL  
STRATEGY TO INTEREST BRANDS

(OR HOW TO SELL OUT  
WITHOUT SELLING OUT)

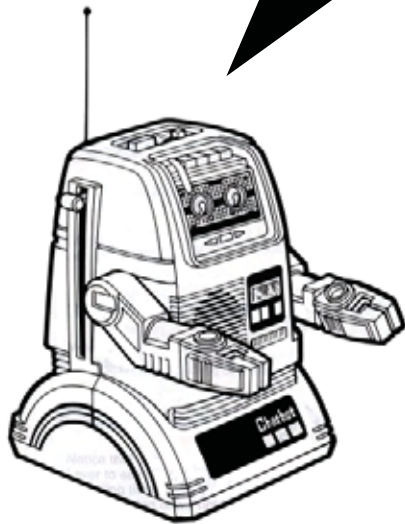
PUBLISHED BY:



HEARTBEATS *international*

"The music business is a cruel and shallow money trench, a long plastic hallway where thieves and pimps run free, and good men die like dogs. There's also a negative side."

Hunter S. Thompson



## FOREWORD

Making good music is not good enough.

With their legendary book 'The Manual – How to Have a Number One the Easy Way' (1988), Bill Drummond and Jimmy Cauty, better known as the KLF, uncovered the shortcuts to mainstream chart success and showed us that music is not only about the music itself.

This still applies, but the formula for success has changed. Today we're surrounded by music everywhere and spend more time listening to it than ever before. However, as digitisation has made music essentially free, a record deal today is not what it used to be. Those making music often have to look for other streams of revenue and outputs for their music.

Today, brands are becoming bands. Music engages people and stirs up conversations, and that is something brands want to tap into. Brands want to associate with authentic music culture and be providers of exclusive content and inspiration in order to create not only loyal customers, but fans. But it also works the other way around. Bands can learn a lot from how commercial businesses think and operate.

In 1984, when Michael Jackson reworked 'Billy Jean' into a 'Pepsi Generation' commercial, it was one of the biggest product endorsement deals ever. It is still a good template for an artist-brand partnership but luckily you don't have to be Michael Jackson to benefit from working with brands. This manual is a guide for bands, musicians, artists, record labels, festival organisers (even app whiz kids) in the basic, but important, steps of music and brand partnerships.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Jakob'.

Jakob Lusensky  
CEO, Heartbeats International

# THE BRAND AND BAND RELATIONSHIP

The music industry and commercial brands come from two completely different cultures that do not share the same values. In order to have a partnership which involves more than just money being transacted, both sides need to learn more about how each other works. Below we take a look at how the two can benefit from working together.

## THE MUSIC INDUSTRY

Apart from economic support, a brand partnership can help you with:

- Reaching new audiences
- Reaching out on new platforms
- Reaching out to new territories
- Building your own brand

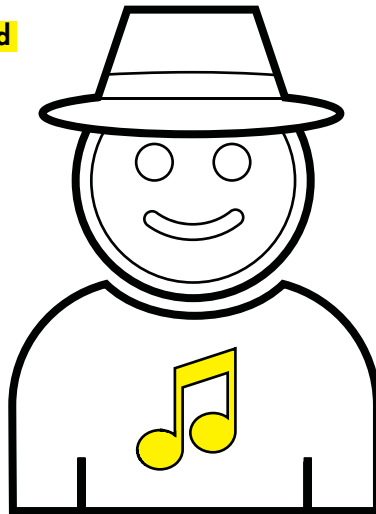


Fig. 1a The music industry

## COMMERICAL BRANDS

For brands, the key objective of association with music is typically a positive realignment of brand values. A music partnership can help brands with:

### Awareness

Partnering with the right music act can help create awareness of a brand and its products or services.

### Authenticity

Music is popular culture and creates a positive and creative context where a brand can be featured and endorsed in an authentic way.

### Association

Music and artists can create the right associations around the brand in the mind of it's target group in a more emotional way and thereby strengthen brand equity.

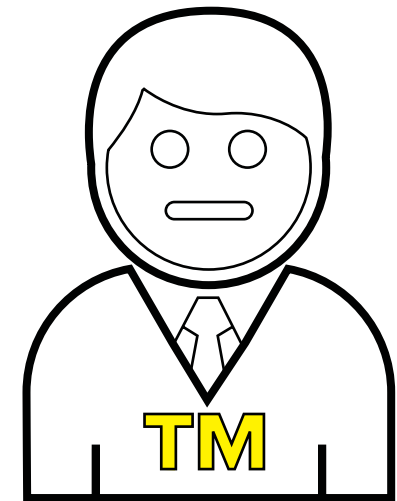
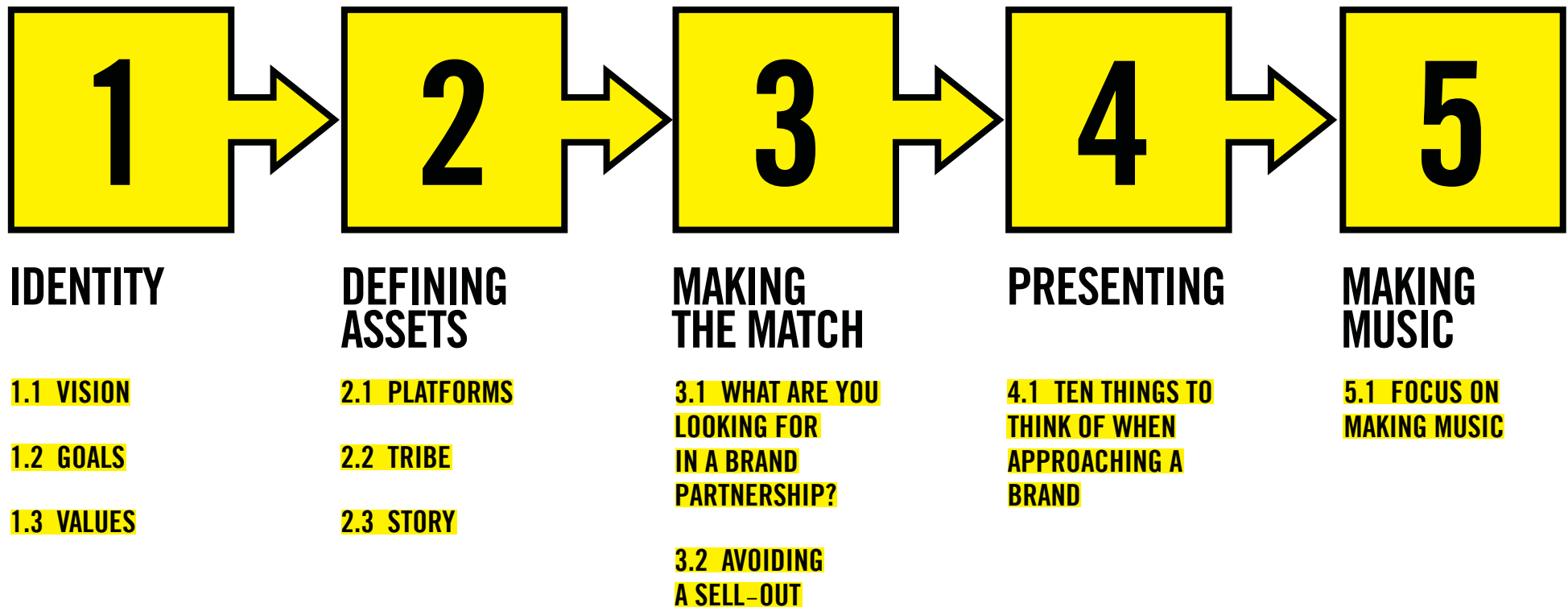


Fig. 1b Commercial brands

"A partnership is where each party understands and recognises the objectives and requirements of the other, and works together to achieve them."

# OUR MODEL OF SUCCESS

There are lots of things to think about when navigating within the landscape between culture and commerce. Based on our experiences from working with some of the world's leading brands, we have pinned down what we consider to be the most important steps for you to think of in order to become more attractive to brands.



# 1 → IDENTITY

A common problem among many artists, as well as brands, is that they are not clear on what they are or who they want to be. A band that is unclear about this will have a hard time being successful. Defining your identity is not about becoming a product or creating something that isn't. Rather, it is about becoming clear on who you are and what you want to achieve. Here are a few things to learn from the world of branding and marketing:

## 1.1 VISION

- Spend the necessary time to think about your vision. What is the 'higher purpose' of you making music?
- Visualise your own situation in five years time. What will you have achieved?
- Write it down. Your vision should form the basis of all your future actions.



Fig. 2 Questions to answer about your identity

"Just because people can sing or play an instrument, form a band, record some music and put it on MySpace, why do they think they can make a living touring the country playing music? When you shoot a photo, do you think about becoming a professional photographer? When you learn a sport, do you assume the next step is a career in professional sports?"

Suzanne Lainson  
Branding Consultant

## 1.2 GOALS

Monitor your success by setting measurable and realistic goals connected to a timeline. In this way you will become more attractive to brands that you later approach. Write down your goals and evaluate them as time goes by.

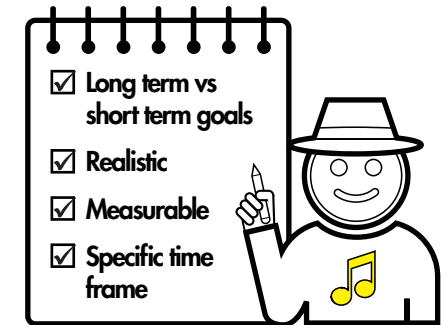


Fig. 3 Checklist for how to set your goals

## 1.3 VALUES

You are the one who decides who you are. It is important to define what values you represent because this will be used when you approach brands later on. Spend the necessary time to define who you are, or at least whom you want to be or be considered as. Define the core values that you and your music stand for.

- What values are important to you?
- Define the core values that you want people to associate you with.
- Are you authentic, independent, rebellious, contemporary, trendy?

# 2 → DEFINING ASSETS

Now you know who you are and what you want to be. But what do you have that may be of interest to a brand? It is time to define your assets. Defining assets is about defining your platforms and touchpoints with fans, nourishing them and telling your story in a unique and memorable way.

## 2.1 YOUR PLATFORMS

First define which platforms and touch-points you already have with your fans. Brands will most likely be looking for three things in a partnership; *awareness, authenticity* and *associations*. Questions to consider:

- How can your platforms be of help to a company in generating brand awareness?
- What are your 'touchpoints' with your audience?
- How many people are exposed to your music?
- How do your fans interact with you on these platforms and how much time do they spend?

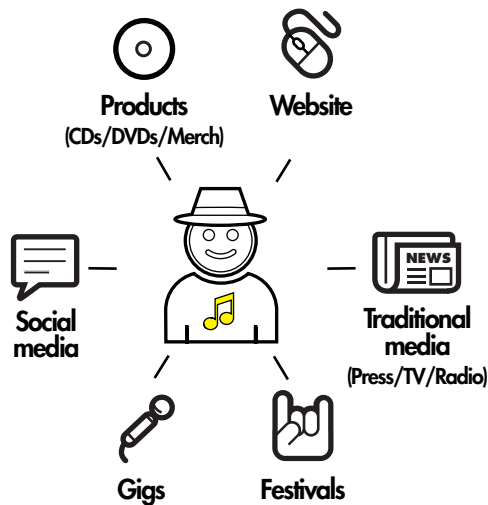


Fig. 4 Assets and platforms

## 2.2 YOUR TRIBE

Marketers are just as interested in the people that listen to and access your music as the music itself. Set clear goals on what to achieve and how to grow your fan base on various platforms. In this way you can turn a tribe into a movement. A good example of this is Imogen Heap, who has grown her fanbase to over 1.4 million followers on Twitter.

Five questions that are important for brands to know, and for you to answer:

1. Who are your fans?
2. How many are they?
3. Where are they?
4. How do you keep in contact with them?
5. How do you help them connect with one another?

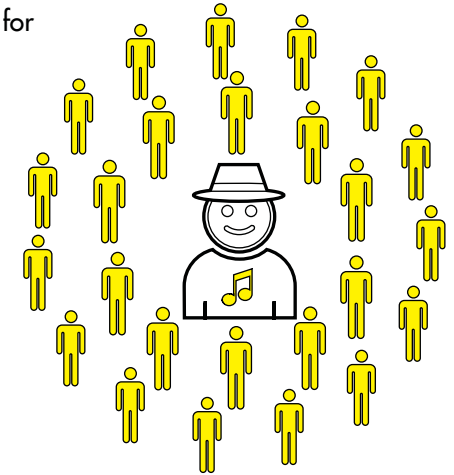


Fig. 5 The relationship between yourself and your fans

## 2.3 WHAT'S YOUR STORY?

Marketing is about creating conversations between people. Word-of mouth is seven times more effective than traditional marketing. Today when people are connected to each other through social media it is more important than ever to tell a story that 'sticks' and that people share with one another. We are not talking about writing a biography, but a story that follows the classic drama and narrative which is easy for media and fans to follow and remember.

- Write your story, not your biography.
- What makes your story memorable?
- What makes your story shareable?



# 3 MAKING THE MATCH

## 3.1 WHAT ARE YOU LOOKING FOR IN A BRAND PARTNERSHIP?

Ok, you now know what you have and what you can offer; but what are you looking for in a brand partnership? Money will always be an important factor, but the best partnerships are those that are mutually beneficial and involve more than just money. Here are five things that teaming up with a brand can help you with:



Fig. 6 Support that brands can offer

1. Wrigley's	2. Blackberry	3. Walmart	4. Swarovski
5. Bacardi	6. Apple	7. HP	8. Polaroid

## CAN YOU MATCH THE BRAND WITH THE ARTIST/BAND



A. Groove Armada	B. Bruce Springsteen	C. Lady Gaga	D. Gwen Stefani
E. Rihanna	F. Band of Horses	G. U2	H. Chris Brown

"Selling out refers to the compromising of one's integrity, morality and principles in exchange for money, success or other personal gain. It especially refers to the attempt to increase social appeal or acceptability through this compromising. The person who acts in this way is referred to as a sell out."

Wikipedia

## 3.2 AVOIDING A SELL-OUT

Based on analysis of existing initiatives when brands and artists connect, we identified a few success factors to consider to avoid selling out.

- Agree on objectives (and understand each other's)
- Ensure that the values are aligned between you and the brand
- Ask your closest fans about their opinion before the partnership
- Follow this basic rule: Could you and the brand be friends in real life?

The importance of linking your values with a brand is becoming significant and is obvious when looking at a few recent examples as shown in the quiz below:

# 4 → PRESENTING



You have now learnt the ways in which to benefit from teaming up with a brand and the necessity to identify what you need help with. Now is the time to approach the brands you want to work with and often this is where problems start. You have a great band with great music and think you have something to offer a brand, but you don't know what to do or who to contact. We have pinpointed a list of ten things to think of before contacting a brand:



## TEN THINGS TO THINK OF WHEN APPROACHING A BRAND

- 1 Identify brands with similar values/target group**  
This will make your task easier and the match more natural. No time wasted.
- 2 Be clear on how your offering helps the brand achieve its goals**  
Show them the figures (and they show you the money!).
- 3 Know what you would like to get out of a partnership**  
Brands have limited time so you need to be clear, relevant and get to the point.
- 4 Music is not a priority, you have to make it one**  
Make them understand how your offering helps them reach their communication objectives.
- 5 Remember that there are minimal budgets for music, but more for communication**  
Again, brands are foremost interested in communicating, not in the music itself.
- 6 Do your research**  
Do your homework before approaching a brand. What are their goals and focus points; and how does your initiative fit into their overall communication strategy?
- 7 Present not only your music, but also who listens to it**  
Your music is the connection to a fan base, a tribe, and might be associated with a certain lifestyle.
- 8 Meet the agency**  
Presenting to agencies first can be one way to go. Many brands have great trust in their advertising, PR and media agencies and their advice.
- 9 Marketing isn't really much fun, music is!**  
Let's be honest, music is much more fun than marketing, so mix the hard talk with making them experience you and your music in an emotional way.
- 10 Make them experience your offering**  
Don't bring demos! Show the effect your music has on people and tell them your story.

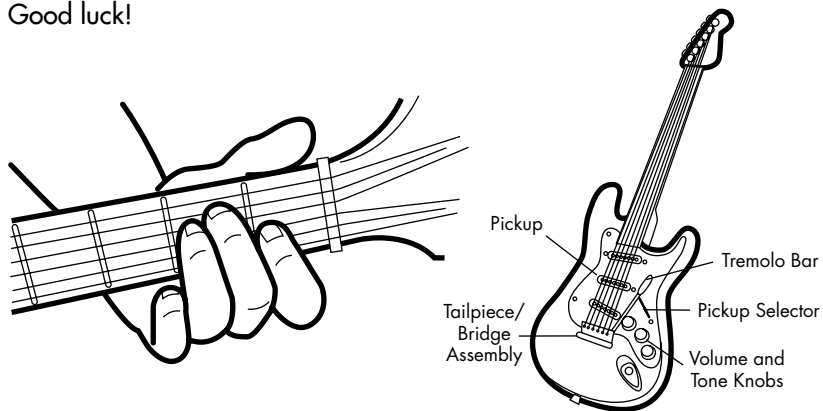
# 5 → MAKING MUSIC

You have defined who you are as an artist, a composer, a band or a label. You have defined your ambitions with making music, your assets, and have even contacted and secured a brand partnership. Everything is all good, or is it? Well, you've forgot the most important thing – making music.

Focus on what you do best and secure a network of people that can help you with the rest. Decide what parts you can do yourself and what parts to outsource or get others, such as a manager or an agency, to do or help you with.

Hopefully what has been presented in this manual can be helpful in setting and keeping clear goals and defining your role as a musician, artist or band. Essentially this means learning how to think about *yourself* as a brand, and that does not necessarily mean that your music has to become or sound more commercial. Remember, good music sells itself. Thinking more as a brand can help you strive for your vision and achieve your goals, whether you decide to team up with a brand or not.

Good luck!



# CASE STUDIES

## TAG RECORDS



Procter & Gamble's body spray, *Tag* partnered with record label Def Jam to form Tag Records and release exclusive music, helping to elevate hip-hop artists to a new level. The artists are also depicted on the different Tag body sprays. What brand could your record label partner with?

## MONSTER



Energy drink brand Monster supports over thirty bands in Europe. For each market, Monster signs upcoming local bands and artists with the right associations and supports them individually with what they need; from fan cards and backdrops to production support.

## HONDA



Since 2001, car manufacturer Honda has teamed up with bands like Blink 182, Incubus, Black Eyed Peas and Panic! At The Disco. Each band styles a car and goes out on tour with Honda. This is a trustworthy initiative - through Honda, the bands can reach a new and wider audience as well as get economic support.

# HEARTBEATS INTERNATIONAL

The material in this manual is based on the book 'Sounds like Branding' that is to be released in 2010 by Heartbeats International founder, Jakob Lusensky. Pre-order your copy of the book here: [www.soundlikebranding.com/book](http://www.soundlikebranding.com/book).

Heartbeats International specialises in helping brands connect with audiences through music. From our offices in Stockholm, Tokyo and New York, we are on a mission to make hearts beat everywhere.

## OUR SERVICES:

### Music branding

- Music identities
- Sonic identities
- Strategic tools (sound logos, theme songs, branded radio, etc.)
- Legal rights consulting

### Music strategies & communication

- Music strategies
- Concept and campaign development
- Creative activation (events, digital, products, etc.)
- Artist and brand alliances
- Social media campaigns
- Legal rights consulting

### Music intelligence

- Workshops and seminars
- Consumer and market research
- Trend reports and trend analysis
- Studies, white papers and reports
- Legal rights consulting



## CONTACT

For more cases and work from Heartbeats, visit: [www.heartbeats.fm](http://www.heartbeats.fm)

To learn more about music's role in branding, visit:  
[www.soundlikebranding.com](http://www.soundlikebranding.com)

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