



CARTEL MANAGEMENT AUSTRALIA

The Artist Attitude.

There's a quote floating around that says you have to work hard at work worth doing. For independent and developing artists, that work is seemingly never-ending. You must create music, express your creativity, foster industry relationships and connect with other artists, build your audiences on streaming services, set up release campaigns, make content and assets surrounding releases and for your social media profiles, pitch your music to the media, perform live and on top of all of that, you have to enjoy what you're doing. Now, that seemingly endless to-do list can get frustrating and it can make artists feel as though they are giving the world without seeing grand outcomes, if any outcome at all.

This results in a lot of artists becoming jaded and impatient, and the creativity and drive to grow can sometimes wane. Throw in our current situation, 2+ years of an uncertain and unstable environment in our industry, and some artists have become overwhelmed and downright done with waiting and growing and continually putting their pieces together.

This leads us to the topic of this month's e-book. Artists and their attitude towards the music that they make, the music industry in general, their teams, and their expectation to meet great success - whatever that means to them. Now, as always, this is a general observation of the trends that we have noticed in the day-to-day workings of our industry, and hopefully some helpful advice. It will not apply to everyone.

TRUST IN THE PROCESS AND IN THE PEOPLE AROUND YOU.

We've come across artists who are new to the process, those who have seen success and those who have been burned by the industry. It's difficult to trace when exactly an artist begins to lose faith in their music or in the broader support of the industry but it almost always involves an artist's trust in the process and in their team(s) around them. If you have clear goals and actions to achieve those goals, and you are spending the time you can to build towards those goals and believe wholeheartedly in the process - you might go slow but you will always move forward. Success does not mean world-recognition in the early days of your project. Very few artists achieve this, and if they do, it is likely they have been picked by a global team (usually a major label) very early and multiple people have been involved over multiple years in their 'seemingly overnight' growth. Others (again, very few) build quickly. But if you've got trust in your own process and you're always looking to learn the next best way to grow (implementing those processes into your own to streamline), you will see success and won't ever need to compare yourself. Trust in the process also means trust in your art and in the team around you. This means that you've given yourself the space and the skills to put together the best quality music that you can put out into the world - a piece of music that fits into your release schedule and action plan towards your goals - and one that will help you build your niche audiences and industry support. Trust in the process also means trusting the team that you have around you to be able to build you towards your goals. This team means anyone that has a hand in your project - producers and engineers that you choose to work with, distributors, agents, managers, publishers, vocalists, videographers etc. If you have chosen to work with them, after careful consideration, then your trust in them should not dissipate because of your 'seemingly' slow growth. Now, we're not advising to keep working with people who are not working for you or continuing working with people who do not align with your values or creativity as an artist or those who are not showing you any momentum at all, but if the team around you is working hard for you and you can see that, as well as seeing the incremental growth, do not let them go just because you feel it's 'taking longer

than expected'. Most of the time, you must trust in the process but no-one can put a timeframe on your expected 'success'. Everyone in this industry is just putting together the building blocks one by one, utilising their knowledge that they must consistently develop whilst in complete freefall. There is no one way to see 'success' in this industry. No one can give you that. The only thing you can control is your music and your creativity, your work ethic, your trust in the process and the willingness to continue moulding your artist project to find whatever 'success' means to you. Trust in yourself, your music and the team around you.

Previously, we've written an e-book that outlines the release process. If you haven't already, feel free to check it out here:

WORK HARD - AND WORK HARDER.

As mentioned above, one of the things that you can control is your work ethic. Now, we know that everyone's lives are busy and people can commit different allotments of time towards their project. If you are committing the most time you can to your project, every day - week - month - year - then you have the right attitude about your growth as an artist. We value work-life balance so definitely make time for loved ones, friends and all of the other things that are important to your life but once you've allotted the 'project work time' into your schedule, and it's time to create or do your admin or any other project work - WORK HARD at it. We tell ourselves all the time that no matter how hard we work, there will always be someone working harder than us and willing to go that extra step to connect with more artists and has a bigger passion to create more opportunities, and that is one driving factor during work hours for us - aside from the fact that we absolutely love what we do and feel incredibly fortunate that we actually get to do it full time. Please use your time wisely and actually work when it's your artist project time. That does not mean sitting in the studio and playing games on your phone or messing about with your engineer (though we absolutely believe this work should be fun!), this means getting down to business and creating the demos that you are planning or if you're not in the creative mood / have allotted the time for administrative work - do that work!! It is important and it will help you grow. Work harder than everyone else (as hard as you can) and you'll never feel disappointed. You'll also never feel deflated with the external outcomes of your music in relation to your goals, because you know that you are giving it your all.

DO WHAT YOU SAY YOU'RE GOING TO DO.

This one is a no-brainer but a lot of artists that we speak with have grand plans for how much they're going to get done in their day, trying to fit everything into their 'project work time' that day. When it actually comes down to it, they can't complete everything they say they're going to. This comes down to good planning and clear, comprehensive actions that will align with short-term and long-term goals. We would suggest breaking your 'project work time' into sections - creation (music making, finding references, chatting with vocalists and producers to work with, learning new technical skills etc.), administrative (release campaign set up, emails to industry and media, connecting with other artists, any APRA AMCOS or royalty work, financial work, goal setting and planning), and social + content creation (targeting audiences, creating music videos and visuals, social content and audience engagement, Spotify artist playlists etc.) Your attitude towards each of these 'project work time' sections will be a huge factor in your willingness to get the work done, and towards your project overall. It is not an easy task and music making and releasing (particularly for artists who want to establish a career and/or reputation for being a nationally / globally recognised artist) will not see immediate results. Putting in effort time and time again without guarantee of success is a risk and it's so courageous - and when you reach whatever 'success' means to you, it will be worth it.

YOU'RE NOT GOING TO SEE IMMEDIATE RETURN AND THAT'S OKAY.

We speak to SO MANY artists whose attitude towards results needs to change ASAP. Artists need to switch to a mindset of incremental growth and the value of your hard work receiving feedback. For the vast majority of artists, you're not going to see immediate results and being okay with that and continuing to push forward without having an ego-driven hissy fit, is the attitude that is going to bear fruit in the long run. This mindset switch will allow artists to embrace the industry as a whole and will minimise the feelings of impatience - because every new day is an opportunity to grow your artist project, not a ticking time bomb to success.

YEAH, YOUR MUSIC IS GOOD. SO WHAT?

WE HEAR THIS ALWAYS! Yes, every artist has to achieve a certain quality for their music to further their development. Yes, you have to strive for world-class production and carve out a sound that is unique to you. Yes, you spend a lot of time and energy and commitment to making music. That is all so great, and it takes a lot - we are with you. But, so what? Your hard work and quality sound does not guarantee success. Your career aspirations are not solely determined by your sound. Particularly these days, post COVID and in an era of social media where everyone is glued to their phone, the actual music is a small part of a larger brand picture. Again, this is for those who want to create financial sustainability solely through your artist project and not those who just want to release music solely to express themselves. Your attitude towards your project should encompass the willingness to take on the challenges and thrive outside of just the creative process. The harsh truth is - your project growth (in this climate) does not depend on the music alone.

YOU DO NOT 'DESERVE' IT / CHECK YOUR ENTITLEMENT AT THE DOOR.

Please stop thinking the follow:

- that "the next release is 'the one'"
- that you've "put so much time and effort into your project, how could you not succeed?"
- you "have incredible, rare, special talent" and that alone should be the reason why you succeed.

We have heard all of the above statements and none of them is going to help your mindset in this industry. They will leave you feeling jaded and impatient and will not allow you to dig deep and push further. Unfortunately, no one deserves anything. Please do not fall trap to an attitude of entitlement because of how hard you're working, how good your release is and how talented you are. At the end of the day, the journey to full-time artistry, career projects, financial stability and long-term growth in this industry is about the small efforts you make every single day that you can.

CONFIDENCE, NOT ARROGANCE.

There is a difference! Confidence in your processes and in your artform is necessary. Having the confidence to express yourself via music, share yourself with audiences, consistently be in communication via social media, pitching to industry and media, pushing yourself through hard times and bad days to work towards your goals - that confidence is so important and so vital to thrive in this industry (and in life!). What is not vital is being so over-confident that it manifests into the attitude that everyone in this industry is here to serve you and you alone. That you are so unbelievably talented that doors will open for you with bare minimum work - or no hard work at all. That other artists, industry and media are so lucky to have your music or your presence in their midst that you are entitled to communicate negatively, aggressively (in the name of being single-minded and focussed) and be a general dick. This arrogance (read: very dangerous attitude to have) will never get you far when you are a developing artist. Please do not mistake arrogance for confidence and re-adjust your mindset - seeking opportunity, rather than 'success'.

REMEMBER YOUR INDUSTRY.

My first employer in this industry (who had been around for AGES and had a lot of success within the event and record space) always used to say - "this is the music industry, nothing matters!" Granted, a lot of the time it was definitely said to try and settle everyone's stress but at its essence, he was absolutely correct. We are not solving world hunger, we are not putting people on the moon - that doesn't mean that what we do isn't important - but we need to remember to have fun in an industry that creates so many good times and facilitates good vibes with its products. A lot of artists (and industry and media) get so caught up in the day to day roles and all of the tasks that they need to do and all of the 'success' they need to achieve - that they forget that it is a fun industry filled with interesting people and amazing opportunities.