DIY The Job Description Of An Artist
The action's you need to commit to in order to create sustainability in music.

Lets face it, at one point or another, every single creative who has written, recorded, drafted, produced or created a piece of music has asked the question *what would life be like if I was a full time artist?*

Consistently touring, spending your days (and probably nights) creating music, art, fun things in a lush, decked out studio instead of working a boring, monotonous job that may or may not fulfil you. For the vast majority of individuals, that five second thought is as fleeting as the desire to actually get up and go to that job in the morning. This is when the dream of sustaining a successful music career turns into an escape from reality rather than a goal with set actions and a timeline. For the others though, the ones that make the decision to stand up and say *"I am going to do this"* - that thought is the beginning of a very interesting and exciting journey.

A career as a creative is not a one size fits all method. There are multiple ways to achieve sustainability, depending on a number of things including: your project, the genre and style, where your strengths and weaknesses lie, the time with which you allow yourself to develop and grow, your commitment to all facets (touring, production, constant learning, relationship building, social media etc.). The main factor separating those who are creating a career (and therefore, sustainability as an artist) are the measurable actions for every aspect of the project.

The 'job description' of an artist now vs. that of an artist 15-20 years ago are very different. In the days of physical distribution, the selection pool of artists was a lot smaller and the measurables of success were a lot clearer. You compose a good piece of music, you give it to your label / distributor, your music gets put onto the shelves of JB-HI FI and Sanity, you are played on the radio and boosted up the physical sale charts, and if you are lucky enough, you tour and grow.
In today's market, music has become more accessible, with the rise of digital stores like Youtube, Spotify and Apple Music that make music discovery simple and at the touch of a button. A majority of the time, music discovery of a new artist is reliant on algorithms, determining what a specific listener will like because of the similarity of other artists. Aligning with the rise of the internet and social media, the information to become an artist is more readily available, and to that end, the market is now flooded with artists - all competing for attention.

So not only do you need to create an awesome piece of music but it is also vitally important to have the knowledge and processes to get your music to an audience that is being bombarded by new music daily, and make them CARE.
Identifying that process and putting those actions into place consistently is where the magic happens.

Any job has processes, if you work at a supermarket, there is a stocktake process, if you work at a movie theatre, there is a ticketing process and if you are an artist you need to develop processes to put your music in the best position possible. Unfortunately as previously mentioned creating these processes as an independent artist in 2020/2021 it is not a one size fits all method.

Below we have listed some things to consider when trying to create some sustainability through the artist brand.

Creative Process:
First things first, creating a flow in your creative process that allows you creative freedom but also the ability to create music at a sustainable, consistent pace. After all, your music is your main product and should be the main priortiy. If you have read our previous articles we often write about creating a system where you are always ahead on both music and content. For example, spend 3-4 months creating as many finished singles as possible. After that time is over set out a release plan with all of the singles to be released within x amount of time. During that x amount of time, while you are releasing consistently and putting up content created weeks / months before, you then have the time to start on your next back catalogue. This also accounts for writers block and will not affect consistency of releases from your audience's perspective.

Prioritise networking and learning industry best practice:
The number one issue we see with most new artists is that they do not prioritise learning industry standards & networking and building relationships with actual industry professionals i.e. Label A&R's, booking agents publishers, promoters, venues, etc.

Understanding the processes and best practices is paramount as you are trying to grow through the industry itself. Gaining sustainability in the music industry comes with understanding the knowledge of the royalty process and navigating its governing body [APRA / AMCOS (royalties) & PPCA (performance only)]. By gaining knowledge of this it allows you to build a base around how you can gain financial sustainability to actually achieve what you want.

The industry in the Australian territory is small, everyone knows everyone, and there are thousands of artists on the outside trying to get in. Expectations play a major role in this, don't expect to make one connection and then stop, this is an ever growing part of the game. You may not receive a reply on the first go, but over time and progression through the project, contacts will grow at a steady incline.

Time Management:
In a previous article "[Your Wasting 16 Hours A Day](#)" we spoke a lot about allocating specific time to your artist project and maximising that time while balancing your day job, schooling, social life etc.

This topic generally comes under a lot of fire, thanks largely to the 'hustlers' and the 'motivation gurus' because the messages they discuss / share can come across as condescending and have very little context attached to it. The work until you drop methodology has been adopted by many and can often lead to issues like burn out or people fall out of love with their processes & passions. On the complete other end of the spectrum, in the age of social media and ultimate convenience, the amount of distractions that are available to take up valuable time are everywhere. Establishing a healthy balance between your life and your work to maximise your happiness should be of key importance.

Ultimately, your passion project is as successful as the time that you put into it. If you are putting minimal time in and your expectation is to grow rapidly, then you are creating a situation where only frustration and anxiety can fester. Obviously, not everyone has the same time or routine and it is no one size fits all affair but let's break down a normal 24 hour 'working' day and aim to add context to this discussion.

Learn to prioritise your time to **every part of your project, not just studio time.**

Know what you need to spend:
When releasing music, at some point in time whether it be during the production process or during the rollout, you may need to spend money to ensure your brand and your music will be in the best space possible. Some of the things you may outsource could be: studios, mixing & mastering engineers, publicity consultant, photographers, videographers, designers etc. Knowing what you wish to get out of every release is something you can brainstorm when you are creating release strategies months in advance. By doing this, you can then allocate money where it is needed and be organised for each single.

For most artists, budgeting can be one of the hardest things in a process like this and not having access to loads of capital may seem like an issue for some. It's fair to say that in 2020/2021, anything is possible with the resources offered to you by a nice little thing called the internet. Not a designer - you can download Canva for free. Not a videographer - you probably have a camera on your phone and iMovie set up on your laptop (also free). The DIY approach done correctly has served artists well and will continue to do so in many areas of releasing content. There are also a mountain of free Youtube tutorials and Google searches to help get you started or help you learn the skills necessary to complete each task. Otherwise, just ask a peer, a fellow musician, friends, family or us!

We heavily suggest that you create a team / gain access & knowledge of services that will benefit you and your creation process and remain loyal to the services that work well for you. For example if a mixing / mastering engineer that you have developed a good working relationship with should remain as a part of your ongoing releases as they will benefit you for the better. Secondary for that you can begin to budget according to those needs in advance.

Release Plans:
In our previous article "Release Plans" we highlighted an in-depth 6 week release plan (x4 weeks prior and 2x weeks post release). That breakdown is the actual process we use when working on releases with our artists. Along with that release plan we heavily recommend that you develop and maintain lists of industry practitioners that can eventually benefit your project.

The way you plan your releases allows you to understand your audience, trends in what's working and what's not, and finally a solid indication of growth for the overall project. Being versatile with your release plans and understanding the subtle ways to navigate the platforms your music is being shared on is paramount to how your audience will discover you.

Be flexible with release strategies and be mindful to the flow state of the market as new platforms and algorithms change daily.

Self Evaluation & Expectations:
After every release, be accountable with yourself. What worked? What didn't? What could you have done better? Once you've answered honestly, change what you can control to best align with your goals and continue. Your attitude and your expectations need to be realistic to the position that you, as an artist, are in. If you do not put focus and attention into your release, it will not out-perform other releases. Every time, you have to build your audience and showcase your single / album / EP as much as you can - and as much as it aligns with your goals. Expectation is one of the reasons why so many young and developing artists quit before they've really even begun. Do not let unrealistic expectations be the end of your career.

The main point of this article is that you (the artist) are in control. You have every tool at your disposal to navigate your releases and your music career. There are no excuses why you cannot have successful releases in 2021.