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## Extreme Marketing

Has anybody heard the Josh Freese album?

The Internet not only allowed anybody to make and distribute music, it allowed them an opportunity to try and sell it.

Suddenly, we've got millions of mini-Madonnas, familiar with her biography from music television, they figure if they just get in enough people's faces, evidence their raw desire, they will be successful.

But that was a different era. One of gatekeepers, wherein it was incredibly difficult to pass through the filter. Furthermore, Madonna knew her audience, she started off in clubs. Today's "artists" have got no understanding of the marketplace, they just know they can send their message to zillions of people instantly, and doggone it, statistics tell us if just a tiny percentage of people bite, they'll be a success.

But that's spam, not music. Spammers don't sell unproven items, they're moving Viagra, other discounted/grey market/fraudulent iterations of what many people already desire. It's kind of like knock-offs. You want that twenty five dollar Rolex. But you don't want a twenty five dollar watch with a no-name brand and a bland look that will deliver no recognition from acquaintances, no bang for the buck. Unless, of course, that watch is truly unique. In which case, you've got the new Franck Muller. Then again, how many new Franck Mullers are there?

In other words, it's the music, stupid.

In the old days, the days of the gatekeeper, the filter, we had what were called "turntable hits". Labels paid radio to play 'em, but no one bought 'em. And, in case you missed a memo, record companies have historically been in the business of selling records, radio airplay doesn't pay. So what you end up with in this case is a sea of red ink.

Still, one thing the old system did was to squeeze out the riff-raff. Sour grapes was only heard by friends and family. Now, people go online and tell you how the big boys just won't pay attention. Ever think you're not good enough?

Never. These people are delusional.

The quality level required to interest those not related, those not sleeping with you, is unbelievably

high. How many people get to be quarterback of an NFL team? Fewer than fifty start. And so many fans bitch, teams complain that their starting quarterback just isn't good enough, that they can't compete with Tom Brady and the New England Patriots. Is there a shortage of people desirous of the job? Hell, there are fartsos sitting on the couch watching the big screen right now who would quit their gig and run to the stadium, if capable, to be the quarterback of their favorite team, ANY team. But they know they're just not good enough. They'd be laughed off the field. Done after one hit. But somehow, people who create music believe they're entitled to an audience, that the public must pay attention, that they must be heard.

But they're not.

So they resort to extreme marketing.

Mr. Freese has never done anything solo musically that's garnered any attention. Furthermore, he's a drummer, a player in a band who's not known for his sense of melody. But, now he can draw attention to his solo efforts via innovative marketing. But can he get anybody to listen to his music?

How about that guy Moldover, with the theremin built into his CD case. Hell, most people his age don't even want the CD, unless it's as a souvenir of the live gig. I watched his YouTube video

[Moldover's Album - Circuit Board Instrument](#)

but I didn't listen to his music.

There's an interesting story in today's "Wall Street Journal" entitled "Extreme Job-Hunting". One guy wore a sandwich board, another taped his resume inside the cab he was driving, another wore a t-shirt advertising her availability on bike rides. Did any of them get jobs? No! One had even graduated from MIT! They learned some lessons, just like by wading into the Internet pool with your music you can garner information, hone skills, but that doesn't mean you're going to be successful!

Even better, there's an ancillary article, entitled "Brave or Brazen? Bold Tactics Don't Always Get The Job". In this case, NEVER! Job-seekers who show up at offices unannounced not only get bounced, they get blackballed, the recruiter will have nothing to do with that person going forward. As one recruiter said regarding a job-seeker who sent out a meeting-request invite via Microsoft Outlook: "I just thought it was inappropriate and too aggressive. It would be like walking into someone's office without an invite."

Like e-mailing someone who doesn't want to hear from you, who hasn't given permission. Just because you have Jimmy Iovine or Irving Azoff's e-mail address, that doesn't mean they're going to pay attention to you. You're just a nuisance. If anything, the Internet has made those with power even more reluctant to interact with the unknown. You never know who's a crank, who will end up knocking on your front door and barging into your house when you're in your PJs, demanding you listen to his substandard material while he hangs out in your living room.

The only thing that works is music. The music must sell itself. The marketing must be SUBSIDIARY to the music. Just because you can advertise yourself on Twitter doesn't mean ANYBODY cares!

Going one step deeper, let's investigate the Jill Sobule model. Wherein you scoop up a bunch of revenue from your hard core fans in order to make an expensive record so you can finally break through. I love Jill, her music is great. But did she ever stop and rethink her paradigm, her career path? That maybe the fault wasn't the label, but that she doesn't fit into the system? It's one thing if you roll up revenue to record and reach your hard core base, as Marillion has done for years, but if you think that just because you're now armed with money you're going to break through to the masses, you're delusional.

Dan Zanes couldn't break through as a rocker, but he's a king in the world of children's music. Maybe you've got to change your direction, your niche, as opposed to just banging your head up against the same damn wall.

As for Radiohead and its innovative "In Rainbows" name your own price giveaway... It only worked because it was RADIOHEAD! People were already willing to PAY for their music.

So, you route yourself into forty cities in forty days and send out a press release. Who gives a shit? What's that got to do with your music? You're better off staying at home, writing better material, than trying to flog crap to those who just don't care.

And the media ain't what it used to be. So, you get a newspaper to do a story. Does anybody read the newspaper anymore? The "New York Times" reviews records...who you gonna trust, them or Pitchfork?

Everybody selling feels entitled.

And potential consumers just don't give a shit, they've turned off marketing messages. Not only by wannabe rock stars, but major corporations, fielding teams of seasoned marketers. Maybe you know something these marketers do not, if so, go to work for Wieden+Kennedy or TBWA, don't think just because you're an innovative seller/marketer that anybody wants to hear your music.

Look at it this way... Do you think you get to play for the Yankees via sheer desire? That if you could just get in front of a Steinbrenner they'd let you pitch? Tell that story to a friend, he'll think you're crazy. Not only do you need talent, and decades of practice, you must not only be good, but EXCEPTIONAL! If you think it's any different in music, you're dreaming. And I'm here to pop your bubble. If you want to make it in today's no radio world, first and foremost, you must have the chops. And almost NOBODY plays at this level. It's not only cutthroat in terms of getting people's attention, it's cutthroat in terms of talent, and skill! There are a zillion YouTube clips telling you how to play classic tunes on guitar, the wizardry revealed can be impressive, but none of these people WROTE THE SONGS! Anybody can drip paint on a canvas, but Jackson Pollock came up with the idea! It's not so hard to play "Stairway To Heaven", but to write it is almost IMPOSSIBLE!

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