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Authenticity

And its role within the branding of an artist

Bachelor Thesis in Business Administration

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Yours truly.

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Abstract

Problem:

One of the most important parts in making an artist succeed is to brand him/her in the most suitable way possible. There is often a general consensus among people in the music business that it is important for an artist to be authentic. Definitions on the word authenticity are often vague, subjective and differs depending on whom you ask. It is therefore hard for employees in the music business to use authenticity as a tool in their branding strategy, because they cannot measure authenticity in numbers. It also becomes hard to find out how important it is for an artist to be authentic in order to succeed due to the fact that you cannot measure it in numbers. Due to these problems we hope that our study will bring a higher level of clarity on authenticity and its role in the branding of an artist.

Purpose:

The purpose of this thesis will be to investigate what role authenticity has within the branding of an artist. To do this we also need to investigate what authenticity is and what an authentic artist is? Our Research will examine if it is crucial for an artist to be authentic in order to grow. Our focus will be in the actual production of authenticity from the different parts in the music industry.

Method:

Using an inductive approach we will conduct telephone interviews with already established contacts in the music industry. Data will be collected using a qualitative method since our research problem is poorly understood and so an exploratory design will give us in depth information. Interviews will be conducted in an unstructured way with open-ended questions that will allow the respondent to speak as freely as possible.

Conclusion:

The term authenticity is relative in its meaning since what is authentic to one person might not be to another. But when weighing the information we have gathered then something being authentic is when it is original, credible and offer something that is hard for competitors to replicate. Information collected concludes that there are mainly two ways that the industry affects an artist's authenticity, social medias and that the artist surrounds him/her self with the right people. The information from previous research and interviews conducted points towards that an authentic artist knows why they are in the business and can stand by what they do and say. An authentic artist should think long-term before making a decision, reflecting upon how does it affect my image? Will I be comfortable with this? Can I stand for this? This is so that the artists remain true to themselves and their audience.

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1 Introduction

This chapter begins with a background, which describes the subject of the study. The background section is followed by the problem discussion, purpose and research questions where we describe why our study is important and the main questions we need to answer in our research. The chapter ends with the delimitation section where we discuss the different limitations of the thesis.

The music industry is highly volatile and new artists come and go all the time. Why is this? Is it due to the fact that their talent faded on the way or did the audience just get enough? Or could it be that they experienced poor and inefficient marketing that did not make this artist/band attractive in the long run for its target customers. All artists need to be marketed to a certain extent just like products, it is not always the best product that sells the most, the same goes for artists. In the early stages of the life cycle of an artist high focus is put on marketing and branding is needed to separate this artist from the rest and to capture a certain group of customers with its uniqueness. Is there a dilemma between monetary return on an artist and the preservation of this artist's authentic brand? Since it is easy for an artist to become a "sell out" as they advance in the business and realize they can make money on their name and jump on every project possible but side step away from what probably made this artist so great, its uniqueness.

In a time where there has been an increased existence of fakes authenticity is pushed to the front. We hear, read and see fakes all the time and so companies often label the word authenticity on their products. The reason for this must be due to the simple fact that they feel that customers are demanding authenticity. It has become a new consumer sensibility just like quality, cost or availability. As the artist starts to attract a larger crowd, is it possible to maintain this original authenticity that has been built up in the brand? Is it inevitable that this brand authenticity will fade away? Does it even matter to the audience? These are some of the questions that will be looked into and that will then help in the conclusion on the role of authenticity in the branding of an artist. We will also examine how the brand and the authenticity are communicated to its target audience. "The moment one tries to be real, tries to be authentic, and the trying is detected, the bubble bursts and the inauthenticity spills out" (Gilmore & Pine II, 2007, p 85). Record companies that have several artists within various genres and therefore attract different customers, are they marketed differently or in the same manner?

1.1 Problem Discussion

One of the most important parts in making an artist succeed is to brand him/her in the most suitable way possible. There is often a general consensus among people in the music business that it is important for an artist to be authentic. Definitions on the word authenticity are often vague, subjective and differ depending on whom you ask. It is therefore hard for employees in the music business to use authenticity as a tool in their branding strategy, because they cannot measure authenticity in numbers. It also becomes hard to find out how important it is for an artist to be authentic in order to succeed due to the fact that you cannot measure it in numbers. Due to these problems we hope that our study will bring a higher level of clarity on authenticity and its role in the branding of an artist.

1.2 Purpose

The purpose of this thesis will be to investigate what role authenticity has within the branding of an artist. To do this we also need to investigate what authenticity is and what an authentic artist is? Our Research will examine if it is crucial for an artist to be authentic in order to grow. Our focus will be in the actual production of authenticity from the different parts in the music industry.

1.3 Research Questions

In order for us to be able to draw a conclusion on what authenticity is and its role in the branding of an artist within the music industry, we will need to investigate and conduct an in-depth research within these subjects:

- **What is authenticity and how is it produced?**
- **How does each part of the music industry contribute to the production of authenticity in the branding of an artist?**
- **What makes an artist authentic?**

1.4 Delimitations

The major limitation of this study is that authenticity is not measurable in numbers, so it is therefore hard to back up theories and results with graphs and statistics. But on the other hand, this is also the reason why we are doing this study to begin with, in order to better define what authenticity is and its role within the branding of an artist from a production point of view.

It is almost impossible to establish what an authentic artist is because it is a subjective opinion and differs depending on who you ask. This limits us to make an exact definition of what an authentic artist is but we could make a conclusion based on the most common views from prominent people within the music industry combined with previous studies on the subject.

Another limitation is that our research method of doing interviews with prominent people from the Swedish music industry is that it limits the opinions to only Swedish employees. In order to base our study on a more global scale, a major part of our thesis uses previous studies that were conducted on an international level.

2 Frame of Reference

This chapter will discuss previous research made on the subjects related to our research questions. We will use this information in combination with our empirical findings to be able to draw a conclusion of our study.

2.1 Branding

Looking into branding, it will be essential to find out how to measure brand equity. According to Aaker (1991) there are four dimensions of brand equity being loyalty, perceived quality, association and awareness. Bearing these dimensions in mind it will help us understand what affects the brand for an artist.

Aaker (1996) mentions three criteria's that these measures should have. They should measure the asset value of the brand and focus on the sustainable advantage that is not easily copied by competitors. We believe this to be the authenticity part since it is each artist's uniqueness that is hard to copy. The way some artist sings or how he/she came into existence of being an artist. Also a lot of the people we have talked to mentions that authenticity is the "it" thing that an artist has. Secondly measures should reflect constructs that affect the market since they will have an effect on sales and profits. Third, measure should be sensitive so that if brand equity change measures should detect this change. If the brand equity takes a hit because of competitor actions then this should be accounted for in the measure.

"A study done by Young & Rubicam agency showed that in the upcoming brands (the popular ones) were on average high on differentiation and lower on the other dimensions such as knowledge and relevance." (Aaker, 1996, pg 113) This shows once again the importance for an artist/band to have a certain uniqueness in order to get in the spotlight and reach out to a target group of people. Another important part in the growth phase is for the artist to just create brand awareness and according to Aaker (1996) there are different levels of awareness that is created: recognition, recall, and top-of-mind, and brand dominance, brand knowledge, brand opinion. There is a difference in the importance of the different types depending on the created brand, is it a niche or is it a well-known brand already.

2.2 Authenticity

Looking into authenticity and brand/authenticity, the key thing to do first is to get a clear picture of what authenticity is. Being authentic "is to be original and offer a distinctive approach such as Hank Williams did in reshaping country music in the 1950s"

(Jones, Anand & Alvarez, 2005, pg 1). Another definition is that "What do we mean we mean when we call something authentic? A lot of things, as it turn out, but the word seems to be defined primarily in opposition to faking it" (Barker & Taylor, 2007, introduction page).

Jones et al. (2005) identifies three dilemmas of how to create authenticity in cultural industries. First being if authenticity comes from deliberate or emergent strategies. Second, how categories of understandings are managed, meaning if the artist plays within categories like Madonna moving from one category to the other or if the artist plays with categories and redefining them. Third, if authenticity is primarily the outcome of an individual or a social phenomenon. If it is the persons self and purpose that drives its meaning or like the Italian

film industry where the directors experience authenticity through the socially constructed nature of authenticity in this industry.

The demand for authenticity today is higher than it has ever been before. Why is that? There are a number of reasons, Gilmore and Pine II (2007) presents five key drivers for the demand of authenticity.

First the emergence of experienced economies as a backdrop and consider how staged experiences can leave consumers longing for less contrived encounters. Secondly, how the role of technology makes people frustrated in the communication process with businesses. Third, the rise of postmodern thoughts and how such views influence consumer behavior. Fourth, are the aging baby boomers and the impact that this generations consumption decisions have on us all. And finally how the perception that our major social institutions practices run afoul of their purposes leaving room for businesses to offer alternatives that provides real value. As products, services or even artist are branded it is becoming more essential that these brands are associated with authenticity in the eyes of the customers.

In a world that tries to prove that everything is real even though the Asian market is making huge amounts of money providing fake merchandise to the rest of the world. Would this then contradict with the statement that there is a growing concern for authenticity? Actually no, since if so then the manufacturers would not put so much effort into making the fakes look like authentic real ones. Since technology is becoming an efficient and cost cutting solution to many parts of a company's operations it also loses the human touch to it (Gilmore & Pine II, 2007). Operations and services from companies have become more computerized; hence it loses its personal touch and its authenticity towards the customer.

2.2.1 Real and Fakes

Joie de Vivre Hospitality founder Chip Conley said, "rule number one for brands: the words that a loyal customer uses to describe her dream product tend to be the same words she would use to affectionately describe herself" (Gilmore & Pine II, 2007, p 21). In the case of an artist, their brand should be but a mere reflection of their fans to be viewed as authentic in their eyes. Examining artists today, the ones that are more likely to fall in the inauthentic group are pop stars that have a younger target group. This contradicts with what Jane Rinzler Buckingham, president of research firm Youth Intelligence, points out that kids in the age 18-30 have an incredible demand for authenticity due to that they are constantly and daily exposed with artifice and therefore want the real deal (Gilmore & Pine II, 2007). There are constantly categorizing between real and fakes. Fakes try to be as real as possible and real ones are fronting with its authenticity. This must be due to the simple fact that consumers are demanding authenticity.

We are exposed to fakes all the time and therefore have an increased need for realness instead of artifice. Therefore we find labels on almost every product with the word "real" on it so that they try to distinguish themselves from the fakes. *Real* Hormel bacon adds *real* taste, Kellogg's Rice Krispies with *real* strawberries and Prego Hearty Meat Sauce an *authentic* Italian sauce (Hartman 2002). This brings the notion to the consumer that fakes are surrounding us and that these products claiming realness might be fake as well, since there is a scarcity of authenticity when everyone tries to claim it. Claiming authenticity often automatically makes the consumer doubt it, and as mentioned Hartman (2002) authentic is probably the most inauthentic word there is.

An authentic person should not have to pose and say he/she is authentic. (Hartman, 2002) Fakes within the music industry can be tribute bands. There are thousands of them and they sing and act like the originals like U2, Guns n Roses and The Beatles. Though not being real or authentic does not require an artist to be a tribute band, it is simply breaking the rule “to be true to what you say you are.”

Gilmore & Pine II (2007) establishes three axioms of authenticity:

- **Axiom 1.**
If you *are* authentic, then you do not have to *say* you are authentic
- **Axiom 2.**
If you *say* you are authentic, then you better *be* authentic
- **Axiom 3.**
It is easier to *be* authentic if you don not *say* you are authentic

This just once again points out the meaning of businesses today proclaiming authenticity on their products/services but instead the consumer perceives this as disingenuous.

2.2.2 The Different Forms of Authenticity

Authenticity comes in many forms, along with various offerings from companies and Gilmore and Pine II (2007) discovered five genres of perceived authenticity, each related to one of the five economic offerings that exist. Each perceived authentic genre could be applicable to any and all offerings.

- **Commodities – Natural Authenticity**

People tend to perceive as authentic, which exists in its natural state either in or of the earth, remaining untouched by human hands, not artificial or synthetic

- **Goods – Original authenticity**

People tend to perceive as authentic that which possesses originality in design, being first of its kind, never before seen by human eyes; not a copy or imitation

- **Services – Exceptional authenticity**

People tend to perceive as authentic that which is done exceptionally well, executed individually and extraordinarily by someone demonstrating human care, not unfeelingly or disingenuously performed

- **Experiences – Referential authenticity**

People tend to perceive as authentic that which refers to some other context, drawing inspiration from human history, tapping into our shared memories and longings; not derivative or trivial

- **Transformations – Influential authenticity**

People tend to perceive as authentic that which exerts influence on other entities, calling human beings to a higher goal and providing foretaste of a better way; not inconsequential or without meaning

Original authenticity is achieved when taking some bold new direction in product, process or practice. It may involve blending offerings into some original form as a mash up in the music industry. A perfect example of this is *The Grey Album*, which matched the vocals from the famous rapper Jay-Z's *The Black Album* with the melodies of The Beatles' *The White Album*. This album had one million copies downloaded on one single day (Gilmore & Pine II, 2007)

“As new means of delivering music develop - through the Internet, mobile phones and partnerships with third-party brands - the major labels are beginning to act like traditional marketers to take advantage of new opportunities.” (Day, 2007, pg. 16) Due to the heightened interest in net related marketing, music companies are starting to market a lifestyle brand instead of just the artist so that they can lead the consumer from one artist to another in their possession. The web is a community and some of the music labels are starting to see this as an opportunity to market their lifestyle or artist, bringing travel, fashion and music together in one community. This type of marketing tries to deliver more value to the end customer with a lifestyle approach.

2.2.3 Consistency or Change

According to the traditionalist's view on branding, consistency is the key and that one should never change its branding strategy due to the fear of losing equity. On the contrary, marketing scholars from the consumer culture theory claims that brand can and must be change over time to remain relevant and accommodate cultural changes (Holt, 2004).

For an artist to remain in the spotlight and to avoid that the brand gets tired Aaker (2004) says that one way to revitalize is brand extension. This is why many successful artists not only have music in their portfolios, but also clothing, perfumes and acting careers. This will allow the artist to become broader with a more diverse audience. Closer relationship is crafted since the fans can now smell and dress like their favorite artist. By expanding the portfolio and audience it is still important how this is done so that the primary audience do not get hurt. And if there is some damaged done then the artist has to ask him/herself, is it worth it? Or how will this affect my image?

2.3 The music industry

2.3.1 Players

Before looking into the history of the music industry and what factors have been crucial in its development, it is necessary to establish what players that are relevant and essential for an artist.

2.3.1.1 Record Labels

Even though the record sales have declined dramatically during the last decade, the record labels are still the most powerful force in the business. The record label distributes an artist's music and handles a major part of the artist's promotional issues.

2.3.1.2 Management

“The personal manager is the single most important person in your professional life. A good personal manager can expand your career to its maximum potential, and a bad one can rocket you into oblivion” (Passman, 2010, p. 27)

The manager is the artist's right hand and usually the most important player within the artist's staff. The manager handles a lot of the work for the artist so he/she can focus on the music.

2.3.1.3 Live Booking Companies

As the record sales has declined dramatically during the last decade, artists has been forced to focus more on performing live to generate money. This has raised the importance and power of the live booking companies. These companies are now often also a part of an artist's marketing campaign. If an artist's signs with a prominent live booking company, the chances of being booked to, for example, major festivals, increases.

2.3.1.4 PR

The importance of PR is as important to an artist as for any other company. When artists get bigger, they often hire a particular PR person, which handles the entire PR for them instead of the record label.

2.3.2 Major and indie record companies

Passman (2010) concludes that there are several methods of design for how an artist can be in the music industry and how their songs reach its audience. The artist can go with the major record company or with an independent record label and in their way of operation there are some differences.

2.3.2.1 Major Record Companies

In this design the artist signs with one of the major record companies like Warner Music or Columbia Records for example. The company hands the records to a distributor that will sell the hard copy but also, which are more common today, distribute it digitally. Once an artist has signed a deal with a record company, the record company starts to form a marketing plan in order for the artist's career to launch. In fully staffed record companies these divisions are most common:

- **A&R**

The A&R department finds new talent and nurtures them in their creative process.

- **Sales**

The sales department makes sure the artist's records are in stores for their audience to buy.

- **Marketing**

The marketing department handles publicity, promotional videos, in store displays but also work like album-cover artwork.

- **Promotion**

The promotion departments solely purpose is to handle the artist's promotion issues like enquiries from different media outlets.

- **Product Management**

The product management department makes sure that the other divisions involved in getting your product out on the market are working together and in the same direction all the time.

- **New media**

The new media department handles the digital aspect and try to find new ways for music to be delivered.

- **Production**

The production department creates the actual hard copy, assemble it, and transfer it to the distributor.

- **Finance**

The finance department handles expenses and incomes, and they compute and pay royalties.

- **Business Affairs / Legal Department**

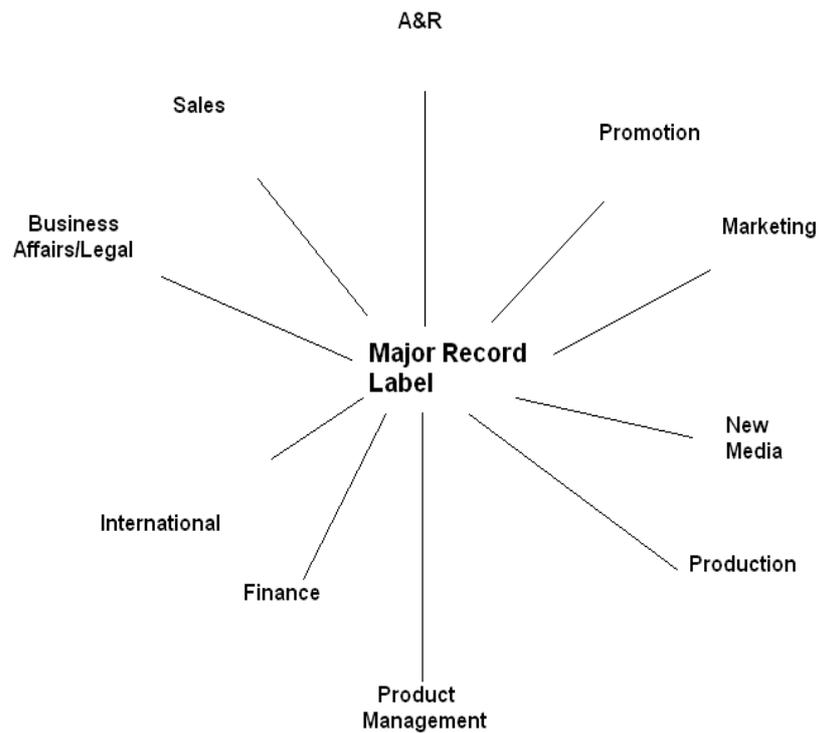
The business affairs / legal department handles the entire companies contracts, negotiate deals and give legal advice.

- **International**

The international department handles and coordinates releases on an international basis.

Figure #1 shows the major record companies structure:

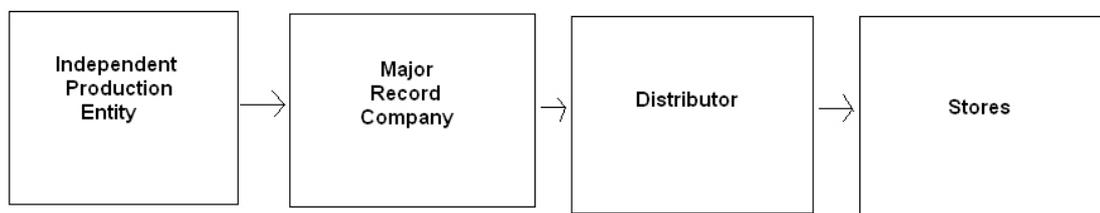
Figure 1 – Broad Strokes Overview of the Record Business, (Passman, 2010, p .63)



2.3.2.2 Independent Record Labels

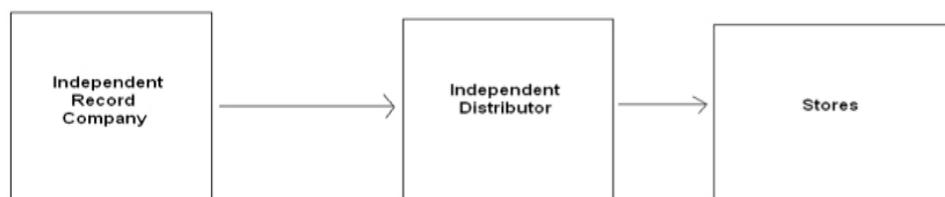
A major record company does not own the independent companies and these can come in two different forms. The *Major-Distributed Independent* record company has a few main characteristics. It is an independent entity with low focus on staff but instead focuses on signing artists and contracts with major record labels. This allows them to perform all the functions but recording the records which the major record company accounts for. Finding talent and making sure that the distributors promote their products are the main objectives. Figure #2 visualize how the Major-Distributed Independent record company is structured:

Figure 2 – Major Distributed Independent Record Company, (Passman, 2010, p .64)



The second form of an independent company is the *True Independent* one. These are small-scale companies that is not owned by a major label but instead financed by its investors. They distribute their records through independent distributors, which in turn are set up to deal with specialized needs from independent companies. The structure is shown in figure #3:

Figure #3 –Independent Record Company Distribution, (Passman, 2010, p .65)



2.3.3 The Career of a Music Artist

Passman (2010) describes how a music artist’s career is limited in a particular way compared to an “ordinary” working career. The time in the spotlight is limited, though the term “limited” can be everything from one to fifty years. In most other “ordinary” careers, one can expect a lifespan of a professional career of about forty plus years. Passman (2010) describes that if an artist were to take his/her concentrated earnings of a few years and spread them over the “ordinary” lifespan career, this artist would realize two things; 1) This amount of money

does not look so attractive 2) This is the money you have to support the remaining of your life. Before one should even think about picking a functional team for ones career, it should be clear that the music is ready to be distributed on a major scale. You would open a store without having anything in to sell? What type of music shall be created then? “It is simple – you make the music that moves your soul. No one has ever had a serious career by imitating others, or trying to guess what the record companies want.” (Passman, 2010, p. 13) How music should be created is of course depending on what goal the artist has. Creating music that you have a passion for and get moved by as Passman mentions is more likely to send an authentic image of your self to the audience.

2.3.4 Looking In the Rear View Mirror at Authenticity In the Music Business

“What separates the artists real self and the self that is presented to the world we can call mediation and the artist who strives to be authentic will try to minimize the level of mediation to the greatest possible degree.” (Barker & Taylor, 2007, p 219)

As Barker and Taylor (2007) points out, it is hard to come across music from songwriters, rappers, rock artists today that does not bring up the role of authenticity, “especially music aimed at white teenagers where authenticity is seen as the sine qua non of an artist success” (Barker & Taylor, 2007, p xi). Almost all rappers want to communicate to their audience that they are still real and in many times the same person they were before their fame and money. Taking Jennifer Lopez’s biggest hit as an example with the lyrics “do not be fooled by the rocks that I got, I am still Jenny from the block” in it. With the combination of almost everything being constructed to a certain extent and the bombardment of fakes in today’s society, it feels like one of the job requirements for an artist is convincing the audience that he/she is not fake. This particular artist is different and not a part of the other commercialized artificial business.

2.3.4.1 The Consistent Kurt Cobain

Kurt Cobain's appearance on the cover of the magazine “Rolling Stone” show how an artist have to appear real even though pleasing the business end as well. Kurt Cobain’s intention with this performance was that he did not want to appear as a phony for his audience. On the cover he had a t-shirt that said; “Corporate magazines still suck” which is a double moral standard itself. Success rarely comes without having to make a few compromises or sacrifices on the way. Kurt Cobain wanted his fans to see the person he was before he made these sacrifices, the real him. Because of this his fans perceived him as the real thing in a fake business. As mentioned in chapter 2.2.1, a person idolizing an artist would most likely describe him/herself in a similar manner as the image they have of their artist and this creates a connection. Kurt Cobain was highly interested in music from an early age and idolized many performers himself. Based on these experiences, he knew what his audience expected from him once he became famous.

With his suicide later on, Kurt Cobain became an extreme stature of maintaining an image he had created and that was shown to his fans. In his suicide letter he said, “The fact is I cannot fool you, any one of you. It simply is not fair to you or me. The worst crime I can think of would be to rip people off by faking it and pretending as if I am having a hundred percent fun.” This added to the fact that there were and still is a huge demand of authenticity from the

listeners since Cobain had to compromise his attitude more and more. He was transformed into a Cobain that was not the same person he wanted to be for his audience and therefore decided to take his life. (Barker and Taylor, 2007)

2.3.4.2 Racial Stereotyping

Barker and Yuval (2007) talks about the fact that genres like jazz, blues, country, rock ‘n’ roll and hip hop eventually become the authentic music of one or another of our two major races, no matter of much each of them have contributed to it. We seem to have been born with a desire to categorize all cultural products as either authentic black or authentic white. The products that are in-between, we either call odd or groundbreaking and the ones that are authentically mixed confuse us. Elvis Presley, Jimmy Hendrix and Eminem are masters of racial mixing but instead of seeing them as integrated Americans, Hendrix was accused of “Uncle Tomming” while Elvis and Eminem was accused of “appropriation”. Instead of listening to the music as just music, many have to put it into a category and thereafter judge it.

2.3.4.3 Personal Authenticity

A vital part for an artist is to create something real and unique with him/herself, it can be the way in which the artist sings a songs or how it is performed. Singing them in a manner so that when hearing it, one would almost automatically connect the voice to that artist. Jimmy Rodger sang the blues and he sang it honestly, his fans could feel this. He did not imitate anyone, he made the songs his own and added to what only can be called Jimmy Rogers personal authenticity. Rodgers sang his songs honestly to himself and one could feel that it was his own laughter and tears, feelings and experiences that he conveyed. Ray Charles marked the birth of soul as music that would define authenticity for its later performers. He showed how his natural imperfect voice was compensated by his emotions, which introduced a level of personal authenticity into black music that was foreign to other performers. Jimmy Rogers wanted his audience to understand him even more and decided to sing about his serious disease that was killing him by degrees, tuberculosis.

2.3.4.4 Artists Exposing Themselves

In Jimmy Rodgers song “Jimmie the Kid” he sang about his entire life story, which later on became a trend for performers to do in order to convey their ambition of keeping it real. “Coal Miner’s Daughter” by Loretta Lynn, “Pennyroyal Tea” by Nirvana and “Confessions Part two” by Usher are examples of this. They let the audience see their human side, their failures and setbacks to boost their “real” value. It is also important to point out that Jimmy Rodgers did not start off with autobiographical songs; it was once he had become famous that his audience knew enough about him as a person that they would even care if he opened up. Once they did, Rodgers felt that he could open up about his disease and other parts of his life that had been untouched before. He was the first celebrity singer whose songs were about his life entirely and not something artificially created. This way of songwriting became the mode of operating for several generations of country singers. (Barker & Yuval, 2007)

Barker and Yuval (2007) isolate seven functions of impulses behind autobiographical songs to better understand songs like “Jimmy the Kid” and “Jenny from the Block”.

First is the primal need for confession, which is a private impulse that is basic to all of us. Second is what they call the “blues impulse”. As the blues has mainly been songs sung from a first person view about troubling experiences with which the audience can sympathize with. This was the basis for Jimmy Rodger’s appeal. Third is regarding the business end, since market forces pressure singers to be original, autobiographical songs become a logical outcome. Fourth, is the phenomenon of realness, the desire of an artist to be genuine. The desire to not present something created but the original self to the public. Fifth is what they call the press release function. Taking “T.B Blues” by Jimmy Rodgers as the example telling his fans that he was dying. Sixth, there is the simple boastfulness that a large number of hip-hop songs are about. The last impulse is the social comment. This lets us, as listeners to better understand why some artist creates these songs; it shows that there are several factors underlying its existence.

After the 60s, artists started to become more involved in the whole creation of music and how it was delivered. A big difference in the way musicians acted between prior to the 60s to the late 60s was the aspect of songwriting. Before the artist was merely a pretty face that sold CDs, they turned up at the right day and performed what was asked from them. At the end of the 60s, this way of acting was viewed as being a phony. Bob Dylan and The Beatles became the two main actors in erasing the gap between what had been seen as authentic by performers such as Jimmy Rodgers to the ones displaying an artificial world as Elvis. Dylan made this happen by becoming more mainstream, letting his personal and poetic vision reach a larger audience. The Beatles, who performed and wrote their own songs, actually transformed the music industry, going from where artists and songwriters were independent to where the relation between the two could not be ignored.

This increased the audience expectations of songs in their intensity and significance. It was not enough to interpret songs no more; it had to be a self-expression, their own. This trend of autobiographical songs and artist exposing their lives to the audience, made it increasingly important for other artists to follow the trend. Best of all were if they exposed their tormented souls and problems, this was the ultimate kind of authenticity. Though many artists had lived their whole life in middle class families and did not encounter that many critical problems, they suddenly had almost death experiences, had their heart ripped out and had dealt with drug problems. Many performers lived their life according to the picture they had painted of themselves to the public, particularly to the audience of their genre, where they were expected to behave in a certain way. Sid vicious (Six Pistols) is one extreme example of an artist who lived his life in danger and excess, in order to transform him and his band into the image of rock stars. (Barker & Taylor, 2007)

2.3.4.5 Stretching the Brand

Artists who feel they need to jump on certain things due to external pressure can have problems renewing themselves, since they go away from what was attractive for their core audience. One example is when Mike Nesmith from “The Monkees” later in this solo career tried to mix the authentic feeling from country into rock. By doing this, he achieved some degree of pop success but in the process he alienated the part of the audience that saw this as a betrayal of the authenticity evident in genuine country. Another more successful example within the Swedish industry is Salem Al Fakir. He was seen as an indie artist and highly

genuine in all ways. Then he appeared in something called “Melodifestivalen” which is highly commercialized. But the way he did it in only made him attract a larger audience together with remaining his indie credibility. This was of course a gamble and Salem was nervous about it pre hand as well.

2.3.4.6 Embracing and Escaping Reality

Looking at the 70s, people experienced the birth and rapid rise of heavy metal, punk, hip-hop, electro, disco, funk and many more genres. Since then, there has not really been any new genres brought to life, just sub genres. After the assassination of Martin Luther King Jr and Robert Kennedy, the election of Richard Nixon, the recession and the following of OPEC price rise, this somehow forced some musicians into a darker direction of their music. The music scene, which had been ruled in the 60s by Rolling Stones and the Beatles, had to make room for new ones like Led Zeppelin, Pink Floyd, Creedence Clearwater, Black Sabbath and The Who. Rock was then ultimately broken down into sub-genres as well, hard and soft rock, California rock, New York rock, heavy metal and glam. The good old-fashioned three minutes songs did die out as well as musicians many times were given free hands without restrictions from their music company. The songs were stretched in order to make them more artistic. Though there were more dark genres describing this dark time for its audience, there existed another type of audience who did not want more darkness in their life, they turned to the music of disco instead.

This genre became hugely popular, but definitely not due to the fact of it bringing an authentic touch to the music. Disco had avoided the aesthetics of authenticity. A typical song did not tell us about the performer or even reality. An artificial world was created with glamour, ecstasy and escape. This was not really surprising thinking of which period this was created during. The backdrop of Watergate, Vietnam and the economy was in serious recession. Disco was a way for societies to escape this reality and join the world of disco instead for a brief time. The need for authenticity was not of interest here, which then shows how this factor is affected by certain time periods as well. (Barker & Taylor, 2007)

3 Research Methods

This chapter describes in which way the study was executed. We discuss why we used some particular approaches for our research in the first two sections “Inductive vs. Deductive Approach” and “Quantitative vs. Qualitative Study”. This is followed by the “Interviews” section where we describe why and how we conducted our interview studies.

According to Gummesson (2000) there are three main challenges for a researcher. First is the access to reality, being the researcher’s ability to get close to the object or area that is of interest for the study. Second challenge is pre-understanding and understanding. Pre-understanding refers to a person’s knowledge and insight before starting the research and understanding is referred to the insight gained from the research, the output. Third challenge is quality. Quality refers to the reliability, validity, objectivity and relevance.

We want our empirical studies to give us information that creates a general opinion from each instance in the music industry but also what each instance general opinion is towards the matter.

In order for our research to tackle these challenges as effective as possible we will explain our strategies and techniques chosen and our reasoning for them.

3.1 Inductive vs. Deductive Approach

Ghuri, Grønhaug & Kristianslund (1995) say that the main difference between the two approaches is that induction is based on empirical evidence and deduction is based on logic. There are existing theories on authenticity but when examining the production of authenticity towards a music artist there is very little research that has been done. Our research will then be based on our empirical findings and from these findings relevant theories on branding and authenticity will be used to draw conclusions on the matter.

Jacobsen (2000) state that a deductive approach goes from theories to empirical findings and that an inductive approach goes from empirical findings to theories. Researchers using an inductive approach have almost no expectations of the outcome and therefore use an open approach to the research. The goal is that nothing should limit what type of information that is gathered by the researcher (Jacobsen, 2000). By minimizing our preconceptions our data collected will be relevant, real and give us a correctly reproduction of reality according to Jacobsen (2000). Since we base our research mostly on our empirical findings it is important that this information is not manipulated by us in the collection process, but instead describe the situation in reality as accurately as possible. The deductive approach has at least three stages of interpretation during the process of data collection while the inductive approach uses one interpretation stage less (Jacobsen, 2000). Inductive approach is more suitable then since it minimizes manipulation of data and would provide us with relevant and accurate information. Our approach has been more related to the inductive one were we have gone from specific data to form a generalization. But still we have used general theories as well to explain certain matters. According to Trochim (2001) most research actually involves inductive and deductive reasoning for certain parts during a research study. But considering the purpose of this thesis an inductive approach is more fitted.

3.2 Quantitative vs. Qualitative Study

When the researcher has established how the research shall be constructed then this person need to establish what method shall be used to collect the information. The problem statement should be the guide for chosen method. Is it clear or unclear? (Jacobsen, 2000)

And Ghauri et al. (1995) points out that when the research problem is poorly understood then an exploratory research design is most suitable.

Since our research problem is poorly understood we have chosen an exploratory design that requires that our method chosen focuses on a few units that will give us in depth information. And a method that has these characteristics is fitted for collection of what is called qualitative information (Jacobsen, 2000).

Ghauri et al. (1995) mentions a few key characteristics the quantitative method has:

- Emphasis on testing and verification
- Focus on facts and/or reasons of social events
- Objective 'outsider view' distant from data
- Hypothetical-deductive; focus on hypothesis testing

Ghauri et al also shows the main attributes that a qualitative method has:

- Emphasis on understanding
- Focus on understanding from respondent's/informant's point of view
- Subjective 'insider view' and closeness to data
- Process oriented

When looking at the two methods and their characteristics and considering our problem statement and the purpose of our study a qualitative method is more suited for us when collecting information.

There are three major components of qualitative research (Becker, 1970; Miles and Huberman, 1984; Strauss and Corbin, 1990):

1. Data: often collected through interviews and observations
2. Interpretive or analytical procedure: the techniques to conceptualize and analyze the data to arrive at findings or theories.
3. Report: written or verbal. In the case of students, the report is written in the form of a thesis or project.

(Cited in Ghauri et al. 1995)

Our thesis is using an inductive approach, data is collected through telephone interviews and we have chosen an exploratory design due to our research problem being poorly understood. These are all characteristics of a qualitative research, which will provide our research with, as accurate and relevant information as possible and it is therefore we have chosen it.

3.3 Interviews

In research there are two types of interviews being used. First is the survey research interview where a standard format is used for the interview that has its focus on fixed response categories and systematic sampling, combined with quantitative measures and statistical methods. The second type is the unstructured interview that gives the respondent almost full liberty to discuss opinions and behavior towards a particular issue (Ghauri, 1995). During an unstructured interview the researcher is just there to lead the questions and record to later understand why and how. Questions are unstructured and not systematically coded before the actual interview (Ghauri, 1995). Considering our purpose there has been little research done before and so we want our contact persons to be able to speak as freely as possible to bring us greater insight to the subject from their point of view. A survey or a structured interview would use questions that limit the respondents to a few fixed response categories and since we want to gain an in depth insight this would not be wise.

We conducted telephone interviews in order to gain empirical information from already established contacts within the music industry. Interviews face to face are cost a lot for the researcher both in time and monetary. The researcher has to transport him/herself to the contact person's location (Jacobsen, 2000) and this was inconvenient for us due to our contacts being highly geographically dispersed throughout Sweden. Interviews face to face also gives the researcher a much larger amount of data in forms of notes and recordings which needs to be processed which brings the risk to gather more information than the researcher can handle and will not therefore get a valid overview (Jacobsen, 2000). On the other hand face-to-face interviews allow the researcher to see the person being interviewed and can therefore analyze facial and body expressions.

Jabobsen (2000) also mentions that a face to face interview will establish a higher level of trust between the parties and that the person being interviewed is less likely to lie to the researcher as he/she might have done over the phone. This is one part that we will have to take into account when gathering information from our contact persons. But Jacobsen (2000) also brings up what is called interviewer effect, saying that a physical presence during the interview can lead to the person being interviewed to act less normal. Since the person being interviewed can also see the researchers' face, and if for example the interviewer looks bored then the person being interviewed might say something to please the interviewer. When weighing the two options and considering our time limit telephone interviews is the most effective choice for our study.

The interviews questions for our research should be open ended and let the respondent express his/her opinion attitude towards a topic freely. The same questions were used for all interviews since the goal was to understand each instance opinion on the subject researched. If we had changed the questions for each instance it would have been more difficult to compare the results against each other. The focus lies in questions that will tell us how and why so that we gain a deep understanding of the process.

Our questions were created so that we would get an idea of how each instance viewed the matter but also when combined create a general opinion. We wanted our questions to give us information concerning authenticity and how does each part in the music industry contribute to the production of authenticity? What makes an artist authentic? After having created our questions we had to ask ourselves if these questions will capture what we are trying to measure and to what degree. This had to be repeated during the process as well to make sure our information collected was as valid as possible. After the first interview that was almost as a test interview we analyzed if our questions gave us information that captured what

we were measuring. And we believed the information to be highly relevant and that our questions made the respondents answer freely and that it gave us an insight into their part of the music industry.

3.3.1 Why did we interview these particular people?

3.3.1.1 PR:

Ozkar Hamberg, PR Manager – Ibeyostudio

We chose to interview Ozkar because he handles prominent Swedish artists like Daniel Adams-Ray for example. He also works at Ibeyostudio, which is a well-respected PR agency that handles all type of artists.

Magnus Högmyr, PR Manager - Playground Music

We chose to interview Magnus because he has been handling prominent artists in the music business for over 20 years. His experience gives us great information on how the music business has changed over the years. He works at Playground Music who handles PR for a lot of prominent both Swedish and international artists.

3.3.1.2 Management:

Anna Arvidsson, Manager for the band “Hoffmaestro”

We chose to interview Anna because she is the manager of one of Sweden’s hottest bands “Hoffmaestro”. Her disadvantage is that she only handles this band.

Henrik Augustin, Manager - Mr Radar Music

We chose to interview Henrik because he is the manager of for example “Rebecca & Fiona”, which is one of Sweden’s new hottest acts. He is fairly young and works at Mr Radar Music who is a young and entrepreneurial up and coming company. We believe he is an expert on the modern music industry and how it works today including factors like the digital media revolution for instance.

3.3.1.3 Live Booking Companies:

Robin Sumpton, Live Booking Agent – Luger

We chose to interview Robin because he handles a lot of prominent Swedish and international artists through his role as a live booking agent at Luger. Luger is one of Sweden's largest live booking companies. They arrange for instance one of Sweden's biggest festivals "Way Out West" in Gothenburg.

Johan Lindqvist, Live Booking Agent - Blixten & Co

We chose to interview Johan because he handles a lot of prominent Swedish and international artists through his role as a live booking agent at Blixten & Co. Blixten & Co is one of Sweden's biggest live booking companies. They handle some of Sweden's biggest artists including Oskar Linnros and Veronica Maggio.

Lars Rixon, Live Booking Agent - United Stage

We chose to interview Lars because he handles a lot of prominent Swedish and international artists through his role as a live booking agent at United Stage. United Stage is one of Sweden's biggest live booking companies. They handle some of Sweden's biggest artists including Lars Winnerbäck and Melissa Horn.

3.3.1.4 Record Labels:

Fredrik Ekander, CEO - Razzia Records

We chose to interview Fredrik because he is the CEO of Razzia Records. Razzia Records is a more indie based record label that has some of Sweden's most prominent artists in their roster such as Säkert! and Timo Räisänen.

Hedda Båverud Olsson, Promotion Manager – EMI Music Sweden

We chose to interview Hedda because she works at the Swedish office of one of the worlds largest record companies, EMI Music. This gives her the insight to see the difference between how the music industry works in Sweden compared to internationally.

John Gardnert, Co-leader – Hybrism Records

We chose to interview John because he is one of the leaders of Hybrism Records. Hybrism Records is a more indie based record label that handles major Swedish indie acts like "Familjen" and Jonathan Johansson.

3.3.1.5 Artists:

Peder Stenberg, Singer in the band “Deportees”

We chose to interview Peder because he is the singer of one of Sweden’s most respected bands, Deportees. Deportees have played for over ten years and the press has consistently praised them. We hope that he will give us a constructive insight of the artist’s view on our questions.

Emanuel Lundgren, Singer in the band “I’m from Barcelona”

We chose to interview Emanuel because he is the singer in I’m from Barcelona. I’m from Barcelona is well-respected Swedish band that is also well known abroad. We hope his experience from both the Swedish and international music scene can give us valuable information on the matter.

Tobias Olofsson, Bass Player in the band “Casual Friday”

We chose to interview Tobias because he is a member of the Swedish pop band Casual Friday. Casual Friday is more of an up and coming band and we believe it will be interesting to also interview people from bands that are not too established. He will hopefully give us valuable information from this perspective.

4 Empirical Findings

In this chapter, we present our empirical findings. Our empirical findings consist of the results from our interviews with different prominent people in the Swedish music industry. On each question, we have taken quotes from people interviewed from all the five different parts of the industry (PR, Record Label, Manager, Live Booking Companies, Artists). The quotes are followed by a combined summary of all the interviews made on the particular question.

Our interviews was conducted with the following people:

(All the gathered Interview questions is found in appendix 1&2)

PR:

Ozkar Hamberg, PR Manager - Ibeyostudio

Magnus Högmyr, PR Manager - Playground Music

Management:

Anna Arvidsson, Manager for the band “Hoffmaestro”

Henrik Augustin, Manager - Mr Radar Music

Live Booking Companies:

Robin Sumpton, Live Booking Agent - Luger

Johan Lindqvist, Live Booking Agent - Blixten & Co

Lars Rixon, Live Booking Agent - United Stage

Record Labels:

Fredrik Ekander, CEO - Razzia Records

Hedda Båverud Olsson, Promotion Manager – EMI Music Sweden

John Gardnert, Co-leader – Hybrism Records

Artists:

Peder Stenberg, Singer in the band “Deportees”

Emanuel Lundgren, Singer in the band “I’m from Barcelona”

Tobias Olofsson, Bass Player in the band “Casual Friday”

4.1 Question 1:

Describe your role towards the artist within the music industry?

PR –

- *“We handle all connection between the press and media for our artists such as TV and interview enquires.”*

Ozkar Hamberg, PR Manager – Ibeyostudio
(O. Hamberg, personal communication, 2010-04-14)

- *“I simply help the artists to reach out”*

Magnus Högmyr, PR Manager – Playground Music
(M. Högmyr, personal communication, 2010-04-20)

Management –

- *“I am like a consultant to the band. Me and the band are like a company, we have a board meeting every month were we decide and make plans for the future.”*

Anna Arvidsson, Manager for the band “Hoffmaestro”
(A. Arvidsson, personal communication, 2010-04-11)

- *“I am a business consultant and helps the artists to make business decisions. I also help the artists careers creatively.”*

Henrik Augustin, Manager – Mr Radar Music
(H. Augustin, personal communication, 2010-04-13)

Live Booking Company –

- *“Our role varies from between different artists. There is a grey area between the responsibilities between live booking agents and managers. Our role is much more influential for artists who does not have a management.”*

Robin Sumpton, Live Booking Agent – Luger
(R. Sumpton, personal communication, 2010-04-12)

- *“I am an live music agent for a couple of Swedish artists. It means that I handle the artist’s live performances and similar matters.”*

Johan Lindqvist, Live Booking Agent – Blixten & Co
(J. Lindqvist, personal communication, 2010-04-14)

Record Label –

- *“We are an indie-label with a lot of different sectors. We are a classic record label to some extent, but we also handle live booking and management enquiries for some artists.”*

John Gardnert, Co-leader of Hybrism Records
(J. Gardnert, personal communication, 2010-05-14)

- *“We mediate between the media and the artists so that the artists reaches out to the right platforms.”*

Hedda Båverud Olsson, Promotion Manager – EMI Music Sweden
(H. Båverud Olsson, personal communication, 2010-04-14)

Artist – This question was not asked to the artists because it was not relevant for them because they are the artists.

Summary of results from the interviews:

The Record Label people all told us that they are a mediator between the media and the artists, but they sometimes also works as managers for the artists that do not have a management (J. Gardnert, personal communication, 2010-05-14). Both the managers we interviewed compared their role towards the artist as a business consultant but those they also tries to help the artist creatively.

The Live Booking Agents we interviewed all told us that they are in charge of the artists live bookings and performances. The live booking agents agreed upon that there is a fuzzy line between the responsibilities between the live booking agents and the managers. Sometimes the live booking agents work more as a manager for artists that does not have a management, similar to what the record labels pointed out. They also stressed that the live booking companies they work for also arranges own concerts and festivals with both their own artists and others. PR handled all press and media enquiries for the artists, helping the artist to reach out in the right manner.

4.2 Question 2:

What do you think is the most important factor in the process of branding an artist?

PR –

- *“It is important that the artist has something that affects me either in his/her music or personality and vision that communicates with the audience.”*

Magnus Högmyr, PR Manager – Playground Music
(M. Högmyr, personal communication, 2010-04-20)

- *“The artist’s credibility no matter which genre the artist is in.”*

Ozkar Hamberg, PR Manager – Ibeyostudio
(O. Hamberg, personal communication, 2010-04-14)

Management –

- *“The combination of creating great music together with a natural charisma that stands out. The music is still the foundation of an artist, if the music is not good then it will never work in the long run. I personally believe that it is important that an artist is credible. I do not work with fabricated artists.”*

Henrik Augustin, Manager – Mr Radar Music
(H. Augustin, personal communication, 2010-04-13)

- *“The most important factor is for all parts of the artist’s team to work towards a common long term goal.”*

Anna Arvidsson, Manager for the band “Hoffmaestro”
(A. Arvidsson, personal communication, 2010-04-11)

Live Booking Company –

- *“You cannot fool the audience and create an artist that is not for real and does not stand for what he/she represents. The audience notices this pretty fast.”*

Johan Lindqvist, Live Booking Agent – Blixten & Co
(J. Lindqvist, personal communication, 2010-04-14)

- *“Talent is of course important but credibility toward the audience is the most important factor no matter if the artist is “Kent” or “Markoolio”.*

Lars Rixon, Live Booking Agent – United Stage
(L. Rixon, personal communication, 2010-04-13)

Record Label –

- *“I believe it is important for an artist to have some kind of special “it” factor about them. It could have something to do with the artist’s music or expression that get people interested. Some artist’s could look good and sound good but lack the “it” factor which makes me not wanting to read more about them.”*

Hedda Båverud Olsson, Promotion Manager – EMI Music Sweden
(H. Båverud Olsson, personal communication, 2010-04-14)

- *“The most important factor is always to make good music. You could figure out clever marketing strategies but in the end, the artist has to deliver something that the audience wants to listen to.”*

Fredrik Ekander, CEO – Razzia Records
(F. Ekander, personal communication, 2010-05-06)

Artist –

- *“The band “Glasvegas” is a good example of what I believe is important. There is a connection with substance between the bands music and their image.”*

Peder Stenberg, Singer in the band “Deportees”
(P. Stenberg, personal communication, 2010-04-12)

- *“You often feel if the artist is authentic. Their aim is not to make money. What a genuine artist is depends on taste, an authentic artist to me might not be authentic to you.”*

Emanuel Lundgren, Singer in the band “I’m from Barcelona”
(E. Lundgren, personal communication, 2010-04-13)

Summary of results from the interviews:

All the interviews conducted in this question started off with the same answer, namely that the most important factor in branding an artist is the music. You can market an artist in an innovative and great fashion but in the end, it is the music people want to listen to (F. Ekander, personal communication, 2010-05-06). The other two people from the record labels that were interviewed also told us about the importance for an artist to have the “it” factor about them and the importance of finding the right record label “family” to handle their career. Management pointed out the importance for the people around the artist to work together to a long-term goal and stressed the significance for an artist to be authentic and credible together with making great music as the most important factor (H. Augustin, personal communication, 2010-04-13).

The live booking agents had the same view on the matter and thought authenticity and credibility to be the most important factors. They pointed out that the genre does not matter, a goofy clown artist like “Markoolio” could be as authentic as the more seriously acclaimed band “Kent”, the artist just have to be credible to their audience. The PR people, like the live booking agents, told us the most important factor is the authenticity and credibility regardless of the artist’s genre. They also stressed the importance for an artist to have something that moves you, either in their music or personality. The artists themselves believe that the most important factor is to have a strong artist in the beginning and then build from there; they mention “Madonna” as an example. The band “Glasvegas” was mentioned as a great example, where you can feel that there is a substance and connection between the artist’s expression and image (P. Stenberg, personal communication, 2010-04-12).

4.3 Question 3:

What is an authentic artist in your opinion?

PR –

- *“An authentic artist is credible towards both themselves and their audience. It also depends on what you are trying to achieve. To, for example, appear on the television series “Big Brother” could be great for a certain type of artist but devastating for another kind.”*

Ozkar Hamberg, PR Manager – Ibeyostudio
(O. Hamberg, personal communication, 2010-04-14)

- *“I do not really believe there are an authentic artist. All artists want to convey something and be appreciated for what they do. An authentic artist to me is an artist that stand in front of an audience and sings:”*

Magnus Högmyr, PR Manager – Playground Music
(M. Högmyr, personal communication, 2010-04-20)

Management –

- *“An authentic artist is someone who can stand by what they are doing and saying. You do not have to make your own music to be authentic in my opinion. Lady Gaga and Madonna, for example, do not write their own music, but they are still considered authentic.”*

Henrik Augustin, Manager – Mr Radar Music
(H. Augustin, personal communication, 2010-04-13)

- *“The live performance is the most important factor. Every artist should deliver a live performance with passion.”*

Anna Arvidsson, Manager for the band “Hoffmaestro”
(A. Arvidsson, personal communication, 2010-04-11)

Live Booking Company –

- *“An authentic artist makes good music and has a clear vision of what he/she wants to achieve.”*

Robin Sumpton, Live Booking Agent – Luger

(R. Sumpton, personal communication, 2010-04-12)

- *“It is important for many artists to have something to tell, it is important for an artist to identify themselves.”*

Lars Rixon, Live Booking Agent – United Stage
(L. Rixon, personal communication, 2010-04-13)

Record Label –

- *“An authentic artist knows what he/she wants and what is important. It is crucial for an artist to keep his/her integrity intact in order to be considered authentic.”*

Fredrik Ekander, CEO – Razzia Records
(F. Ekander, personal communication, 2010-05-06)

- *“Authenticity means that it should be genuine and honest. Every artist has an artist and personal persona. It is important that the artist stands for his/her artist persona.”*

John Gardnert, Co-leader of Hybrism Records
(J. Gardnert, personal communication, 2010-05-14)

Artist –

- *“You often feel if an artist is authentic. The propulsion is not to make money. What a genuine artist is depends on taste, what is authentic to me maybe is not to you.”*

Emanuel Lundgren, Singer in the band “I’m from Barcelona”
(E. Lundgren, personal communication, 2010-04-13)

- *“An authentic artist is uncompromising, do what he/she wants and does not follow a pre-calculated plan”*

Peder Stenberg, Singer in the band “Deportees”
(P. Stenberg, personal communication, 2010-04-12)

Summary of results from the interviews:

People interviewed from the record labels believed an authentic artist is an artist that stands for what he/she believes and know what he/she wants. An authentic artist should be genuine and honest (J. Gardnert, personal communication, 2010-05-14). An authentic artist has to keep his/her integrity intact (F. Ekander, personal communication, 2010-05-06). While (H. Augustin, personal communication, 2010-04-13) believes that an authentic artist should stand for what they are doing and saying, but he does not believe artists has to write their own songs to be considered authentic. He brings up world famous artists “Lady Gaga” and “Madonna” as two examples of artists that does not write their own music but still is considered authentic. He believes this is because Madonna has renewed her image and music over her whole career in a great way, and in Lady Gaga’s case, he believes it is her background as a competent song writer which is the reason why she is being considered authentic today.

The consensus from the live booking agents was that an authentic artist is an artist that has something to convey to the audience. It does not matter in which genre or if its mainstream or indie, the importance lies in that the artist has to have something to convey. PR also told us about the importance for an authentic artist to be credible and honest both towards themselves and the audience. Authenticity differs between which type of artist it is and what the artist wants to achieve (O. Hamberg, personal communication, 2010-04-14). He continues by mentioning one example of this where one type of artist could keep their authenticity by making an appearance in, for example, the TV-show “Big Brother” and another artist could loose its authenticity by making an appearance there, it depends on what type of artist it is. The artists also agrees with this by saying that the definition of what an authentic artist is depends on personal taste, what is authentic to me may not be authentic to you. An authentic artist is an artist that is uncompromising and does what he/she wants without following a pre-calculated plan (P. Stenberg, personal communication, 2010-04-12).

4.4 Question 4:

Does the importance of authenticity change between the stages in the career of an artist?

PR –

- “I do not believe there is a major difference. A lot of artists start off by sounding horrible but then accommodates in making music for a broader audience.”

Magnus Högmyr, PR Manager – Playground Music
(M. Högmyr, personal communication, 2010-04-20)

- “It depends on the how the development of the artist’s career. In the beginning of an artist’s career, he/she usually participates in a lot of media outlets. When an artist is established, the media should be chasing him/her instead.

Ozkar Hamberg, PR Manager – Ibeyostudio
(O. Hamberg, personal communication, 2010-04-14)

Management –

- “I believe it is most important for an artist to be authentic in the beginning of the career to show the audience that you are for real.”

Henrik Augustin, Manager – Mr Radar Music
(H. Augustin, personal communication, 2010-04-13)

Live Booking Company –

- “An artist that builds his/her career on being authentic have to be authentic during whole career in order to not disappoint its audience with not staying true to the artists ideal.”

Lars Rixon, Live Booking Agent – United Stage
(L. Rixon, personal communication, 2010-04-13)

- “I believe it is important to be authentic all through the career. The career could take different turns along the way but it is important to have a authentic foundation.”

Johan Lindqvist, Live Booking Agent – Blixten & Co
(J. Lindqvist, personal communication, 2010-04-14)

Record Label –

- *“I believe the importance changes due to the shifting perception from the audience of a particular artist depending on the different music trends and tendencies.”*

Fredrik Ekander, CEO – Razzia Records
(F. Ekander, personal communication, 2010-05-06)

- *“I defiantly believe it does. It is natural that the perception of an artist changes over time.”*

John Gardnert, Co-leader of Hybrism Records
(J. Gardnert, personal communication, 2010-05-14)

Artist –

- *“It is easier to be an authentic artist if you have your artistry as a hobby and a spare-time job, there are more demands and requirements if you are professional artist.”*

Emanuel Lundgren, Singer in the band “I’m from Barcelona”
(E. Lundgren, personal communication, 2010-04-13)

- *“The importance does not change. “The Rolling Stones” has been playing since the 60s and they still talk about important blues icons in order to keep their authenticity.”*

Peder Stenberg, Singer in the band “Deportees”
(P. Stenberg, personal communication, 2010-04-12)

Summary of results from the interviews:

Two of our contact persons at the Record Labels believed that the importance of being authentic changes over time because of two different reasons. It is partly because the music trends and tendencies changes and thereby also the importance of being authentic. The other reason is that people as well as artists changes and develops over time and it is important to stay credible to you no matter how you change. The managers believes it is the beginning of an artist's career that is the most crucial part of its career because you have to show already from the beginning that you are for real. The live booking agents reasoned similar to the people from the record labels, saying that an artist's career often has a lot of turns, styles and surprises but it is crucial for the artist to keep its authenticity all though the career will take different turns.

PR, on the other hand, means that the importance of authenticity through the career is dependent on how well their career is doing. An artist's wish is to do as well that you are being chased from media and fans instead of chasing them for publicity and similar. If an artist succeeds with this, it will be easier to stay authentic and not having to be participating in a lot of medias to get publicity. The artists are reasoning the same way, saying that it is easier to be authentic if you have your artistry as a hobby. It is much harder to stay authentic if you have your artistry as a profession because there are a lot of more demands in participating in activities that could hurt your authenticity (E. Lundgren, personal communication, 2010-04-13).

4.5 Question 5:

Is there any difference of how the artist marketing process works today compared to how it worked ten years ago?

PR –

- *“There are two major differences. 1. The Internet of course. 2. There are no real music-video TV channels left anymore so the music video as a concept has lost its significance.”*

Ozkar Hamberg, PR Manager – Ibeyostudio
(O. Hamberg, personal communication, 2010-04-14)

- *“It is the same mechanisms that markets the artists, it is just the technologies that has changed.”*

Magnus Högmyr, PR Manager – Playground Music
(M. Högmyr, personal communication, 2010-04-20)

Management –

- *“The internet has made it possible for many bands to break through from a digital platform like Myspace and Facebook for example. We had over 50000 fans on Facebook before we even were signed on a major label.”*

Anna Arvidsson, Manager for the band “Hoffmaestro”
(A. Arvidsson, personal communication, 2010-04-11)

- *“The music is not distributed in the same way. Artists start their own labels to distribute their own music and handle their own marketing.”*

Henrik Augustin, Manager – Mr Radar Music
(H. Augustin, personal communication, 2010-04-13)

Live Booking Company –

- *“The amount of concerts and festivals are a lot higher today and people appreciate these events a lot more today because the different digital channels has made it easier for people to discover different artists.”*

Johan Lindqvist, Live Booking Agent – Blixten & Co
(J. Lindqvist, personal communication, 2010-04-14)

- *“The product has changed. You do not just sell the CD anymore, you sell a whole general impression of the artist.”*

Lars Rixon, Live Booking Agent – United Stage
(L. Rixon, personal communication, 2010-04-13)

Record Label –

- *“Ten years ago, a band could break through by only penetrating one media like a particular TV-show. Now there are hundreds of media channels that have to be penetrated in order for an artist to make an impact so everyone in the music business have to work a lot harder these days.”*

Fredrik Ekander, CEO – Razzia Records
(F. Ekander, personal communication, 2010-05-06)

- *“The artists are not as dependent on TV-commercials as they were before. Before, you marketed an artist based on how many CD’s they had sold. Nowadays, you market the artist through social medias and blogs for example.”*

John Gardnert, Co-leader of Hybrism Records
(J. Gardnert, personal communication, 2010-05-14)

Artist –

- *“The social medias has turned the power to the artists. You do not have to send a demo to a record label and wait for the answer anymore. You could start your own label and market your own music.”*

Peder Stenberg, Singer in the band “Deportees”
(P. Stenberg, personal communication, 2010-04-12)

- *“Artists market themselves more nowadays through their live performances.”*

Emanuel Lundgren, Singer in the band “I’m from Barcelona”
(E. Lundgren, personal communication, 2010-04-13)

Summary of results from the interviews:

The opinion from the record labels steered at the same way, bringing up the same example of a major difference nowadays compared to ten years ago. Ten years ago, it was enough for an artist to penetrate one particular media, like a TV or radio show, in order to break through and sell a lot of records. The digital revolution has expanded the amount of different media outlets dramatically including web sites, blogs and Facebook. All these media outlets must be covered nowadays in order to get your records to penetrate the market. The managers also talked about the digital revolution and how it taken the artists closer to the audience because the artists can communicate to its fans a lot easier and faster. The power has shifted from the record labels to the artists who can distribute their own music on their own labels and conduct their own marketing campaign on their different media outlets on the Internet (H. Augustin, personal communication, 2010-04-13).

The live booking agents talked about how the internet and the social medias has effected their part of the industry on a positive level because the information about different concerts and festivals spreads fast and easy online. All though the internet revolution has helped their industry, all of the live booking agents points out that the increased amount of media outlets also has forced them to work harder because the live booking companies, as well as the record labels, has to promote their concerts and festivals on a lot of more media outlets nowadays. If we look at the PR people, it is mentioned that the marketing process works in the same way today as for ten years ago, it is just the technology that has changed (M. Högmyr, personal communication, 2010-04-20). The artists also talks about the similar changes that the managers pointed out, namely that the social medias has changed the power from the record labels to the artists. The importance of live gigs has increased and artists are market themselves from their live gigs more nowadays (E. Lundgren, personal communication, 2010-04-13).

4.6 Question 6:

How is the branding strategy chosen for an artist?

PR –

- *“It depends on how the music sounds and what type of artist it is. An interesting example of an artist that has been branded differently in different countries is “Adele” who is seen as an indie star in Sweden but in the rest of Europe, she is perceived as a really commercial artist. This shows that you could market an artist differently in different countries in order to find your audience.”*

Magnus Högmyr, PR Manager – Playground Music
(M. Högmyr, personal communication, 2010-04-20)

Management –

- *“Marketing costs a lot of money so minor artists uses free marketing tools such as social medias from the beginning of their career.”*

Henrik Augustin, Manager – Mr Radar Music
(H. Augustin, personal communication, 2010-04-13)

- *“Before you choose a direction, you must think of what impact these decisions has on your existing fans.”*

Anna Arvidsson, Manager for the band “Hoffmaestro”
(A. Arvidsson, personal communication, 2010-04-11)

Live Booking Company –

- *“It depends on which type of artist it is. How does the artist want it to be? If the artist wants a long career, they should think long-term and not too commercialized. An artist could also think short-term and make money fast.”*

Robin Sumpton, Live Booking Agent – Luger
(R. Sumpton, personal communication, 2010-04-12)

- *“We have different strategies depending on which type of artist it is. You could also think about what is indie and what is mainstream nowadays compared to ten years ago. Nowadays, people have a broader taste in music.”*

Johan Lindqvist, Live Booking Agent – Blixten & Co
(J. Lindqvist, personal communication, 2010-04-14)

Record Label –

- *“We choose the direction for our different artists depending what we and the artist want to achieve. We have some dance-oriented artists who just want to release a summer-hit single, and we have some artists that we work more with towards a long-term goal. In these cases, we take small steps forward in order for the artist to have a long lived career.”*

Fredrik Ekander, CEO – Razzia Records
(F. Ekander, personal communication, 2010-05-06)

Artist –

- *“During the record labels days of glory, a lot of the major record labels bought the minor indie-labels. This has resulted in that a lot competent indie-people works at the major record labels. This has risen the major record labels abilities and understanding to market indie-artists in the right manner. “*

Peder Stenberg, Singer in the band “Deportees”
(P. Stenberg, personal communication, 2010-04-12)

Summary of results from the interviews:

Two of our contacts from the record labels say that it is depending on what the artist is trying to achieve. Some genres are more single oriented and some genres are more album-oriented and we then choose our strategy after that. It depends on what kind of a budget an artist has (H. Augustin, personal communication, 2010-04-13). A major record label has a bigger power to make an artist break through because they have more money to market the artist. Smaller artists have to use other media outlets like the Internet, which is free. Two of the interviewed live booking agents says that it depends if the artist has a short or long run career goal, we then have different strategies depending on which type of artist it is. (J. Lindqvist, personal communication, 2010-04-14) reflects on how to choose a more mainstream or indie based strategy for an artist, by saying that the lines of what a mainstream and an indie artist are is very blurry today compared to ten years ago.

The PR people also means that it mostly depends on which type of artist it is and they also reflected on the same issue as the live booking agent, namely that the line of what is mainstream and indie is very blurry today and thereby making hard to conduct a particular strategy based on it. The record labels today knows how to market an indie artist with great competence, because there are a lot of employees at the major labels today that have worked with smaller indie labels in the 90s and thereby has the important competence (P. Stenberg, personal communication, 2010-04-12).

4.7 Question 7:

Who has the ultimately decision of what type of brand an artist should have?

PR –

- “It is the artist together with the record label that decides. The record label often gives the artist, for example, TV commercial appearances in exchange for a part of the artist’s income from concerts.”

Ozkar Hamberg, PR Manager – Ibeyostudio
(O. Hamberg, personal communication, 2010-04-14)

- “It is different depending on which record label it is. I believe it is the artist that decides in the end.”

Magnus Högmyr, PR Manager – Playground Music
(M. Högmyr, personal communication, 2010-04-20)

Management –

- “It is very different from artist to artist. The artist “Rebecca & Fiona”, who I work with are very involved in the branding process but some artist who has no marketing knowledge lets the record label take care of the marketing part of their career.”

Henrik Augustin, Manager – Mr Radar Music
(H. Augustin, personal communication, 2010-04-13)

- “I speak on the behalf of the band but me and the band together crafts the plan of where we want to go.”

Anna Arvidsson, Manager for the band “Hoffmaestro”
(A. Arvidsson, personal communication, 2010-04-11)

Live Booking Company –

- “If you look at the what direction an artist should go, it is still the record label that handles it financially. There is though an artist’s management that handles the its long run direction.”

Lars Rixon, Live Booking Agent – United Stage
(L. Rixon, personal communication, 2010-04-13)

- *“We decide it together with the artist. Sometimes we come with ideas and sometimes the artist does. It is a creative process between us.”*

Johan Lindqvist, Live Booking Agent – Blixten & Co
(J. Lindqvist, personal communication, 2010-04-14)

Record Label –

- *“We create a communication strategy together with the artist where we decide of how, for example, the homepage should look like.”*

John Gardnert, Co-leader – Hybrism Records
(J. Gardnert, personal communication, 2010-05-14)

- *“It depends on the artist. Some artists just want to release a summer hit single and some artists want to have a long career, here we take small steps.”*

Fredrik Ekander, CEO – Razzia Records
(F. Ekander, personal communication, 2010-05-06)

Artist –

- *“We have always done decisions that we have felt comfortable with. You have to ask yourself if you want to maximize your career or to keep it at a level which you feel comfortable with.”*

Emanuel Lundgren, Singer in the band “I’m from Barcelona”
(E. Lundgren, personal communication, 2010-04-13)

- *“It depends on which record label the artist are on. We are on a big record label and their marketing department handles our marketing. But we have a veto on what are going to do in the end.”*

Peder Stenberg, Singer in the band “Deportees”
(P. Stenberg, personal communication, 2010-04-12)

Summary of results from the interviews:

Most of the record labels we interviewed works in the same way. They decide the strategy together with the artist, giving a lot of tips and directions to the artist. (J. Gardnert, personal communication, 2010-05-14) points out that it is important for an artist to sign with the right kind of record label that shares the artist believes of how to work and move forward. Managers said that it is different depending on the artist, some artists are very involved in the branding process but some artists leave that to the people with the right competences so they can focus on the music. One manager believes that the artist's authenticity is depending on that it have to feel like it is the artist's voice that conveys through the branding and not some marketing director at a record label.

The live booking agents also works in the same way as the record labels, meaning that they together with the artist decides on how the artist should be branded from its live performances. The PR people means that it depends on which type of record label the artist is on. They mean though that in the end, it is the artist that decides. (M. Högmyr, personal communication, 2010-04-20) say that a great artist knows better than the record labels on how to market him/herself. The artists confirms this by saying that they have a veto in their branding all though they listen to suggestions and tips from their record label. All the artists said that they are signed to a label that they are comfortable with and who pretty much knows what they want. This makes it easier to make decisions together because they have an agreement most of the time.

4.8 Question 8:

How do you look at the relationship between an artist being authentic and making money?

PR –

- “It depends on which type of artist it is. I do not have a problem for an artist to be commercialized and make money if it is a special type of artist that belongs in a commercialized context.”

Ozkar Hamberg, PR Manager – Ibeyostudio
(O. Hamberg, personal communication, 2010-04-14)

- “There is no contradictory between the two. Artists today cannot afford to be too narrow and picky.”

Magnus Högmyr, PR Manager – Playground Music
(M. Högmyr, personal communication, 2010-04-20)

Management –

- “Nowadays, artists make most of their money on doing live gigs. There is nothing wrong with making money on live gigs as long as the artist is dedicated and gives the fans what they want and not having too expensive tickets to their concerts. Some live booking companies wants us to have higher ticket prices on our concerts but we do not want to influence our fans in a negative way so we decline these suggestions.”

Anna Arvidsson, Manager for the band “Hoffmaestro”
(A. Arvidsson, personal communication, 2010-04-11)

- “Before, less authentic artists made more money. Nowadays it has become more equal, artists can make a lot of money by being authentic.”

Henrik Augustin, Manager – Mr Radar Music
(H. Augustin, personal communication, 2010-04-13)

Live Booking Company –

- *“It is a really hard to balance on the right side of the line for an artist. I believe that it is better with quality than quantity when it comes to live appearances. It is better to do one concert at the right time, at the right venue for the right money than to do ten decent ones.”*

Robin Sumpton, Live Booking Agent – Luger
(R. Sumpton, personal communication, 2010-04-12)

- *“Many artists has a dream of living on being just artists. It becomes dangerous when an artist compromises in the wrong way in order to make money.”*

Johan Lindqvist, Live Booking Agent – Blixten & Co
(J. Lindqvist, personal communication, 2010-04-14)

Record Label –

- *“I believe it depends more on the record label than the artist. Does the record label afford to work with an artist in the long run and wait, for example, ten years and four albums in order for an artist to sell a lot of records?”*

Fredrik Ekander, CEO – Razzia Records
(F. Ekander, personal communication, 2010-05-06)

- *“If the artist does her/his own thing and the audience likes it, then it automatically generates money through royalties and live performances.”*

Hedda Båverud Olsson, Promotion Manager – EMI Music Sweden
(H. Båverud Olsson, personal communication, 2010-04-14)

Artist –

- *“As long as the artist makes money in a way he/she feels comfortable with and has agreed upon, then I do not see a problem with it. It becomes unauthentic when an artist does something against his/her will“*

Emanuel Lundgren, Singer in the band “I’m from Barcelona”
(E. Lundgren, personal communication, 2010-04-13)

- *“If you had asked me ten years ago, then I would have been more rebellious. Today, I feel that it is ok for an artist to make money if the artist has a creative freedom and a veto of how they market themselves.”*

Peder Stenberg, Singer in the band “Deportees”
(P. Stenberg, personal communication, 2010-04-12)

Summary of results from the interviews:

The record labels all believed that this relationship has shifted over the years and that they do not have to stand against each other anymore nowadays. If an artist is considered authentic, then probably more people will see the artist’s concert. (J. Gardnert, personal communication, 2010-05-14) told us about that the risk of being a “sell out”. He gave an example of when a band, who is considered authentic, for example, participates in the Swedish broad mainstream TV-show “Melodifestivalen” in order to attract more fans. The bands original fans can thereby feel that the band does not stand by its ideals and leave them. The managers also agree that the line between making money vs. authenticity has been blurrier during the years. They also do not see a problem with making money as long as the artist gives his all and stays credible towards his/her audience.

The live booking agents on the other hand feel that it is really tricky to balance on the right side of the line. Sometimes it is better to do fewer concerts at the right location at the right time and sometimes it is better to pump out as many concerts as you can from an artist to generate a lot of money. It also depends on which type of artist it is. (J. Lindqvist, personal communication, 2010-04-14) mean that the danger is when an artist compromises and does something he/she does not want in order to generate money, which could hurt the artist’s authenticity. The PR people though had another point of view. They mean that artists’ today do not afford to be too narrow and picky and not participate in certain particular contexts because there are not selling any records to generate money. The artists themselves that we interviewed did not have a problem with generating money as long as the artist makes money in a way that he/she has agreed upon. (P. Stenberg, personal communication, 2010-04-12) say that this is the world we live in today and we have to pay our rent. If we do something that people think it is great, then I do not have any problem making money on it.

4.9 Question 9:

Can you name an example of an artist that, in your opinion, has used the right kind of branding strategy?

PR –

- *“Both Oskar Linnros and Daniel Adams-Ray has come from nothing, done their thing without compromising. They wrote their music in their basement and has taken good strategic decisions on the way.”*

Ozkar Hamberg, PR Manager – Ibeyostudio
(O. Hamberg, personal communication, 2010-04-14)

- *“The artist Olle Ljungström was funny to put in an interview because he was always very funny and entertaining. He knew how to market himself and he gave the reporter great headlines to work with.”*

Magnus Högmyr, PR Manager – Playground Music
(M. Högmyr, personal communication, 2010-04-20)

Management –

- *“”Rebecca & Fiona” has built their own careers from the ground. They have successfully kept their authenticity intact by being great artists and making great music and standing by for what they stand for.”*

Henrik Augustin, Manager – Mr Radar Music
(H. Augustin, personal communication, 2010-04-13)

- *“Lars Winnerbäck has market himself great.”*

Anna Arvidsson, Manager for the band “Hoffmaestro”
(A. Arvidsson, personal communication, 2010-04-11)

Live Booking Company –

- *“Lars Winnerbäck is a great example of someone who has succeeded, he is both forthcoming and inaccessible. Forthcoming in his music with easy texts and music and inaccessible towards media in order to keep a mystery around him.”*

Johan Lindqvist, Live Booking Agent – Blixten & Co
(J. Lindqvist, personal communication, 2010-04-14)

- *“The artists that has succeeded in their marketing strategies do not like when you call it a marketing strategy.”*

Lars Rixon, Live Booking Agent – United Stage
(L. Rixon, personal communication, 2010-04-13)

Record Label –

- *“There are two ways to go within the branding of an artist. You could go the broad way and market the artist in a lot of marketing channels to get the music out. You could also go the more secret way and not appear in any marketing channels and keep a mystery about the artist. We believe the secret way is a more effectual and efficient way.”*

John Gardnert, Co-leader – Hybrism Records
(J. Gardnert, personal communication, 2010-05-14)

- *“Lykke Li has succeeded with her niche. Even though she now is known worldwide, she till keeps her authenticity intact. She has a very clear niche of everything she does.”*

Hedda Båverud Olsson, Promotion Manager – EMI Music Sweden
(H. Båverud Olsson, personal communication, 2010-04-14)

Artist –

- *“Arcade Fire is a great example of how to brand an artist in a authentic manner. They have found a lot of innovative ways to market themselves in order to keep the mystique of the band. When they released their latest album “Neon Bible”, they gave out mysterious bibles as promotion for the album. They conduct a marketing which feels authentic and not calculated and fabricated, it feels cool and real.”*

Peder Stenberg, Singer in the band “Deportees”
(P. Stenberg, personal communication, 2010-04-12)

- *“The film director David Lynch market himself in great way through spreading the myth around him with different innovative marketing methods.”*

Emanuel Lundgren, Singer in the band “I’m from Barcelona”
(E. Lundgren, personal communication, 2010-04-13)

Summary of results from the interviews:

The record labels mentioned the Swedish artists Lykke Li, "Kent", "Thåström" and "Säkert!" as great examples. (H. Båverud Olsson, personal communication, 2010-04-14) felt that Lykke Li has succeeded in keeping her authenticity intact and a mystery around her even though she is well known worldwide. Everything she does, from music to her marketing follows a red thread all over. "Kent", "Thåström" and "Säkert!" has succeeded by being more careful with their media appearances together with making great music. The managers mentioned the Swedish artists Lars Winnerbäck, "Rebecca & Fiona" and "Petter" as great examples. (H. Augustin, personal communication, 2010-04-13) talked about how "Rebecca & Fiona" started their career on their own from nothing and they have become bigger and bigger without loosing their authenticity.

The live booking agents also mentioned the examples Lykke Li and Lars Winnerbäck. (R. Sumpton, personal communication, 2010-04-12) hails Lykke Li's live performance strategy with her doing few exclusive gigs in order to keep the audience longing for her and to keep her authenticity intact. The PR people mention the Swedish artists Olle Ljungström, "Robyn" and Lykke Li as great examples. (M. Högmyr, personal communication, 2010-04-20) who has worked with Olle Ljungström in the past hailed his ability to sell himself in interviews. There are a lot of artists that do not know how to sell themselves in the media in the right way. The artists mention the Canadian indie band "Arcade Fire" and the movie director David Lynch as their favorites. They feel that both these artists has found new innovative ways to market themselves, which feel, honest and authentic even though they are big world known artists.

4.10 Question 10:

Can you name an example of an artist that, in your opinion, has used the wrong kind of branding strategy?

PR –

- “Most of the winners from the Swedish TV-series “Idol” have failed in their attempt to have a long lived career. They became too eager to gain their careers with doing too many appearances to fast. Most of them are now musical artists.”

Ozkar Hamberg, PR Manager – Ibeyostudio
(O. Hamberg, personal communication, 2010-04-14)

- “It is the artist we do not know about that have failed. There are a lot of artists that simply is not interesting enough.”

Magnus Högmyr, PR Manager – Playground Music
(M. Högmyr, personal communication, 2010-04-20)

Management –

- “”Dogge Doggelito was authentic in the beginning of his career and did music that was considered to be one of the most authentic in Swedish music history. Nowadays, it feels like he has lost his inspiration in making music and this has led to him doing anything he is offered. He is now just perceived as a kind of a hip hop clown.”

Henrik Augustin, Manager – Mr Radar Music
(H. Augustin, personal communication, 2010-04-13)

- “There are a lot of artist which has emerged from” Idol” that have failed. They often want to satisfy their record label in the short run instead of thinking long term.”

Anna Arvidsson, Manager for the band “Hoffmaestro”
(A. Arvidsson, personal communication, 2010-04-11)

Live Booking Company –

- “Artists that have merged from music TV shows like “Idol” has sold a lot of albums but found it difficult to sell tickets to their concerts. This is because they have lost their authenticity along with their desire to sell a lot of albums as fast as possible.”

Johan Lindqvist, Live Booking Agent – Blixten & Co

(J. Lindqvist, personal communication, 2010-04-14)

- *“Daniel Adams-Ray has failed in his strategy. He does too many concerts all over Sweden. There is no exclusive feeling about him anymore.”*

Robin Sumpton, Live Booking Agent – Luger
(R. Sumpton, personal communication, 2010-04-12)

Record Label –

- *“The classic album release up until the beginning of the 21st century was to do a TV-commercial for the album and hope for good reviews. That is a bad release in my opinion, you have to build up a hype, long before the album release so that the actual release is the final part of the marketing plan“*

John Gardnert, Co-leader – Hybrism Records
(J. Gardnert, personal communication, 2010-05-14)

- *“Most of the artists that figure in the tabloids more when they have a cold than when they have released an album.”*

Robin Sumpton, Live Booking Agent – Luger
(R. Sumpton, personal communication, 2010-04-12)

Artist –

- *“A lot of pop bands appears on the Swedish TV-show “Melodifestivalen” without making an impact. They think it will help their career but it often ends up with setting their career back.”*

Emanuel Lundgren, Singer in the band “I’m from Barcelona”
(E. Lundgren, personal communication, 2010-04-13)

- *“I believe there are a lot of artists who do not convey why they are relevant.”*

Peder Stenberg, Singer in the band “Deportees”
(P. Stenberg, personal communication, 2010-04-12)

Summary of results from the interviews:

(F. Ekander, personal communication, 2010-05-06) talked about that it is wrong that some artists figures more in the press and tabloids when they have a minor cold than when they release an album. The branding of an artist should always be based from the music. Another record label employee believed that the failed branding strategy is the artists we have never heard of. They are the ones that did not succeed with reaching out. The managers mentioned the former participants from the Swedish hit TV-show "Idol" and accused them of thinking to short ahead. If they had not rushed out with their albums without thinking of the quality, people may consider them authentic today.

All the live booking agents also mentions the former "Idol" participants and accuses them on the same basis as the managers, of being too fixated of making fast money and not building for the long run. One live booking agent also mentions the Swedish artist Daniel Adams-Ray, which he felt has done too many gigs in too little time. It should have been better to do fewer more exclusive gigs in his opinion. The PR people believe most of the artists out there today are where they deserve; some artists are just not interesting enough. The artists also agree with the PR people and saying that a lot of artists do not have any ideas of what they want to convey. They do not convey that they are relevant.

5 Analysis

In this chapter, we analyze the information gathered from the empirical findings together with material from previous studies in chapter 2. The analysis is divided in three sections based on our three research questions in chapter 1.

5.1 What is authenticity and how is it produced?

Throughout this report we have been trying to find out what the term authenticity means and what is associated with it. What we have seen is that there are many definitions but most of them have the same underlying fundament. Barker and Taylor (2007) said that the difference between an artist's real self and the one that is presented to others is called mediation, and an artist that strives to be authentic is going to minimize this level of mediation. This level of mediation is also touched upon in the interviews many times but (J. Lindqvist, personal communication, 2010-04-14) puts it best by saying that you can't create an artist that is not real and doesn't stand for what he/she represent. You cannot artificially create authenticity within an artist; meaning if one tried then the audience would notice it pretty fast.

What also was coming back when discussing this topic was how people try to explain authenticity they often turn to the opposition of fake or inauthenticity. It seemed that it was easier for people to point down what is fake and thereafter automatically understand that this is not authentic. As Barker and Taylor (2007) mentioned, what do we mean when we call something authentic, many things but primarily it seem to be defined in opposition to faking it.

Chapter 2 also mentions that when something is authentic, it is original and offers a distinctive approach. Talking about persons being authentic or not there was a consensus between the people we interviewed that said that someone authentic knows why they are in the business and where they want to go. So what does it mean to be authentic? What is authentic to me might not be authentic to you but if someone finds something authentic it is most likely due to they can see him or herself in this person or can relate to this item. So the brand should be a reflection of the customer since then there is a connection that is created from brand to the person. Being authentic is being original, credible and to offer something that is unique and hard for competitors to replicate.

The dilemma is that something/someone authentic should not front with being authentic. This destroys the whole picture according to the three axioms of authenticity as Gilmore and Pine (2007) discussed. If one tries to be authentic, the bubble bursts and inauthenticity is spilled out. It is more likely that this is true for persons than products due to the huge overload of fake products everywhere and so companies put the word "authentic" or "real" on almost all their products just because they do not want to be associated with the fakes. They also know that there is a huge demand from the public of just authentic products. The axioms are probably more limited within products since consumers seem to want products that claim authenticity and that appear authentic due to the fact that almost all products do it. The difference with artists the consumer will be more likely to view a person as a fake if this person would try to say "I am authentic". So Gilmore & Pine II (2007) axioms perhaps need to be limited to products and not applied for music artist.

5.2 How does each part of the music industry contribute to the production of authenticity in the branding of an artist?

Analyze the changes that has occurred in the music industry is vital to be able to explain its impact on artists and their careers. Ten years ago, an artist within the music industry could become a huge star by just penetrating one media, since the lack of supply of social medias (F. Ekander, personal communication, 2010-05-06). Today there is a waste amount of medias that an artist could market him/herself in. This gives the artist greater power of their own career since they can via for example Myspace, Facebook or Twitter reach a large audience on their own. This lets their fans come closer to them so this creates a closer bond between the two. This closeness to the artist makes them more attractive and the fans can then understand and relate to relate to them to a higher degree. But on the other hand there is more pressure on each artist to penetrate a larger amount of channels to make an impact.

The social medias has enabled people to reach and find a larger amount of new artist as well and heightens the awareness of the music scene overall. As the live booking companies pointed out during the interviews, the live scene for artist today is vital and more people can now locate these events due to the boost of social medias. Performing live today is crucial for an artist due to the decline in sales of CD's and therefore becomes an important income generator for them but also an important way of reaching its audience. So the artist has more power of their career through social medias today and it enables new possible fans so reach them and to see them play live.

But going back to earlier in the analysis, having a larger supply of channels being located in does not necessarily mean that every artist should be in all of them. The artist together with its staff has to analyze where it is appropriate for the artist to be seen and how? Some artist might just need to penetrate a few channels and maximize them, while it might be healthy for another artist to penetrate a larger amount of channels. It comes down to what message do we send out by being in these channels to our fans and who are our fans? And also, what is the long-term goal of this artist career?

When trying to answer these questions, it is highly important for the artist to surround him/herself with the right people within the music industry. The “right people” means the people that understand the artist, what he/she is doing and why they are doing it. When being on the same wavelength with the whole staff it becomes easier in the communication process when trying to establish future plans. Some artists might need more help than others but still, the choices that are made; the artist should be comfortable with. If the record companies have its entire focus on maximizing this artist in terms of monetary return then the collaboration between the two will probably fail and a whole new message will be sent to the public.

When asking who has the final say, the overall picture was that is was mutual between the artist and the record label, while also the artist and his/her management establishing long-term goals together. Some companies even had monthly board meeting with the artist the perform check ups and see if there are any new ideas on the table. This way of working will also let the artist be an artist, to focus in the music, which in the end is the keystone. The booking companies found it hard for an artist to balance between being authentic and generating money. Management said that there were no dilemma and the record labels opinion was if the record labels can afford to work with an artist that waits ten years to release an album just to not be seen as a sell out.

By looking at the overall view on the matter combined with the previous research there should not be any dilemma between the two. That is if the money generated is in line with what the artist stands for, if the artist still can keep his/her integrity and feel comfortable with the choices that were made in order to generate it. Merchandise for example is a huge income generator today for an artist due to that they barely make any money on selling CD's. You do not become a sell out by just offering merchandise to your fans, but its important to make sure the fans will feel that the artist is behind this which will in turn make the merchandise also authentic in its way. There is nothing wrong with an artist making money, but the way it is done is more important.

5.3 What makes an artist authentic?

When moving from the word authentic in general and instead relating it to an artist it becomes easier to pin down. Since authenticity is still a broad term but relating it to an artist narrows down the topic. On the matter of an artist and authenticity, the different interviews gave us the conclusion that it is an artist that knows what he/she is doing and what is important for this artist. This artist will keep his/her integrity throughout the career and focus on long-term goals, not just throwing out a single during the summer period and then that is it. They know why they are in the business and they can stand by what they are doing and saying. We believe these to be key parts in becoming an authentic artist and previous research on the matter complement the last part to it. The information from the interviews are more career related while the previous studies focuses more on the fact that the artist has to make something real and be unique in the way this person is an artist.

How Jimmy Rodgers sang, and everyone that listened to it felt that this was real and these stories was unique to him. Another example is Ray Charles who compensated his unique imperfect voice with the particular way he sang and used his emotions, how he let the audience into his life in his songs. The actual song and the artist have to be unique as well, stand out from the others. Combining this with the information from the interviews we have an artist that is unique in the way of performing his/her songs and stand out from the crowd. This type of artist knows why he/she is in the business and makes choices based on long-term goals. They can also stand by their actions and are comfortable with the decision they make.

Once an artist has established an image, there are two paths to choose between, is this person supposed to be consistent in its image over time or should it be changed due to social and cultural changes? The traditionalist view is that the image should be consistent but marketing scholars from the consumer culture theory claims that it must change over time to remain relevant. Concluding the interviews on the matter they gave us different views. Some people like (F. Ekander, personal communication, 2010-05-06) agree with the consumer theory that it should change due to the shifting perception from the audience depending on the different music trends and tendencies. While (L. Rixon, personal communication, 2010-04-13) said that an artist that builds its career on being authentic have to do it all the way to not disappoint the audience and so the artist stays true to his/her ideal.

Kurt Cobain who is one of the most famous artists in the business definitely agrees with the view on consistency. His whole career the attraction was that of course that he was a great singer but also the fact that he remained the same real person with an extremely high integrity. His fans loved him because he did not make sacrifices for the business end and that he knew who he was and where he came from. On the other hand Aaker (2004) say that in order for the brand not to get tired one way to revitalize is brand extension.

When asking people during the interviews on portfolio extension they said it would not hurt the brand and its realness as long it is an extension that the artist still feel comfortable with and can stand by. It should be related to the already created image and merely be an extension of it. Kurt Cobain might not have kept his integrity if he started putting his name and face on health products for example. Or if he were to appear on a lot of commercials for various products, his fans would see him as a sell out to the commercial side of the business instead.

By summarizing this based on the information we have gathered, the best way would be to stay consistent to the artist's original career and image while refreshing when needed it with an extension it his/her portfolio, if it is still related to the primarily image. Some artist does not necessarily relate the genre they are in with their image, their image just represents who they are and what they stand for perhaps. Taking Madonna as an example as she was mentioned both in the literature and in the interviews as an authentic person. She has moved between genres throughout her career and has renewed her self in that way many times. Even though she has remained attractive to her audience and she has not lost her integrity. This due to the fact once again that she has renewed herself and moved between genres but still she has felt comfortable with it, it has been choices that she can stand for and this does not change her, she is still Madonna in the eyes of the audience.

Many artists find it hard to refresh or renew their brand and are scared of loosing their current value in the eyes of the fans. When asking the different persons during the interviews on what they felt was the wrong kind of strategy then the artist from the TV show "idol" was mentioned several times. As mentioned earlier, an artist that wants a careers need to think long term in terms of the choices they make. The "Idol" winners gets to eager and do as much appearances as possible during a short period of time (O. Hamberg, personal communication, 2010-04-14). (J. Lindqvist, personal communication, 2010-04-14) also points out that they sell a lot of albums quite fast but find it difficult to sell tickets to their concerts because they have lost their authenticity along the way when trying to do as much as possible during a short period of time.

Comparing this to the successful Swedish artist Lars Winnerbäck, who is both forthcoming and inaccessible. He is forthcoming in his music with easy texts and music but inaccessible towards media and this keeps a mystery around him. He has not been commercialized and he has kept his integrity while still selling a lot on each album he releases. The brand of an artist will get tired if it is seen everywhere all the time, and this is the case for many artist that tries to reach a bigger audience without thinking of the long term goals of this persons career.

As Jones et al. (2005) mentions that authenticity can also be the outcome of a social phenomenon like with the Italian film industry where directors experience authenticity through the socially constructed nature of authenticity in the industry. Turning it around, inauthenticity can also be constructed in the same manner. As mentioned by (E. Lundgren, personal communication, 2010-04-13) many pop bands appear on the Swedish TV-show "Melodifestivalen" without making an impact. They think it will help their career but often ends up setting it back. This is a clear example we have seen for many when pop bands try to reach a larger audience by appearing on this TV-show. Instead the image they have created before crashes as they fail to make an impression and therefore looses their integrity and authenticity in the eyes of the previous fans.

It is hard to know before if it is going to be devastating to one's career but many artists have to really analyze how they think the impact will be. Who are our fans today and what fans are we trying to reach with this appearance? Will this then affect our previous fans if we succeed and if so is it worth it? Because not all fail, Salem Al Fakir, a famous Swedish pop artist that had created a certain indie image before he appeared on the TV-show walked out with the same credibility but with a larger audience as well. His image among his core fans was not affected since he appeared on show while still being Salem Al Fakir, he did not change anything to make him more appealing to a larger audience, they were just attracted as well by him as an artist.

We have now analyzed what an authentic artist is and what authenticity is. It is still important to understand, is authenticity important for an artist? Of course it depends on what kind of career you want. If the goal is to release a couple of summer songs and then to make money from commercials in the heat of the fame that is created from this then authenticity is not important. But from what we have gathered from previous research and what we have heard from the people we interviewed, there is a huge demand for authenticity. So then the automatic response would be that there is of course pressure on artists today to be authentic. We want to listen to someone that affects us that has a certain charisma, that is credible and whom we feel is in the business because he/she loves doing what he/she does. This is reflected in their music and so to us as well.

But an inauthentic artist can still have a short-term career and make money during a short span of time since many of us will listen to that single once or twice. The difference is the long-lasting careers, the ones who can live off their music for most of their lives, an artist that has remained true to themselves and to their fans. There is a certain mystery to most of them as well, this combination will make the fans buy their albums and also go see them at their concerts. And it is often when looking back at the authentic artists; they have changed the music scene for followers, due to others wanting to be like them and therefore create music that is still their own but with the touch of their artist of inspiration.

6 Conclusion

In this chapter we present the conclusion of our thesis. We answer the purpose and research questions of the thesis based on the analysis made in chapter 5.

What is authenticity and how is it produced?

Having conducted heavy research, it is still hard to point down what authenticity exactly is. Since it is relative in its meaning due to the fact that what is authentic to one person does not have to be authentic to another. But when weighing the information we have gathered then something being authentic is when it is original, credible and offer something that is hard for competitors to replicate. Persons mostly define authenticity to its opposition being fakes, because societies are overloaded with fakes so it becomes easier to relate to it. It also appears that the most inauthentic word is the word authentic since once fronting with being it, you become inauthentic in the eyes of the consumer.

How does each part of the music industry contribute to the production of authenticity in the branding of an artist?

Looking at previous research and our research conducted made the information points out that there are two major part affecting what impact the music industry have on an artist's authenticity, social medias and the players in the industry. Social medias gives more power to the artist and connects them with their fans in a broader sense then before. The importance lays in deciding which channels to be seen in, what image do we want to send out to them? Being everywhere might affect some artist credibility while boost others. The artist will more easily craft this if he/she surrounds themselves with the correct people, people that understand the purpose of the artist and their long-term goals in the business.

What makes an artist authentic?

Again, an authentic artist might be inauthentic to another, but if concluding the information we have been able to gather on the matter then there are some key aspects to what makes an artist authentic. An authentic artist knows why they are in the business and they can stand by what they are doing and saying. They often think long term in their decisions, asking themselves; why do our fans like us today and where do we want to go with our career? By doing this, they make decision on the basis of not loosing their credibility among their current fans. The careers like the "Idol" artists, they expose themselves everywhere and in the end people get tired and the light stops to shine on them. To become and remain an authentic artist it is vital to know were the career is going and when choices are going to be made and reflect upon, how will this affect my current image/situation? Will I feel comfortable with this decision? Can I stand by this and will it be worth it?

7 Discussion

In this chapter, we discuss, evaluate and criticize our study. We also reflect as researchers on what type of further research, which could be interesting to conduct within this field.

After having looked at the previous research and also our information from the interviews, defining the word authenticity is complicated. Since as many persons mentioned authenticity is a relative term based on a particular persons taste. We build our thesis on the information that we have gathered and draw a conclusion on the subject. More research on authenticity as well as branding would give a heightened level of understanding as well as a deeper knowledge on what it is. Due to the time that was at our disposal, these were the findings we believe was most relevant.

The interviews gave us an understanding of the subject from people working in the Swedish music industry while our previous research is based in an international context. To be able to pinpoint the role of authenticity in the branding of an artist at an international level even more narrowly, it would have been interesting to get the views from people working in the music industry outside of Sweden as well. Their understanding might have been quite different on what is authentic and what role it has for an artist. Though the previous research gathered was similar to the information from the interviews it could have strengthened our conclusion. So for further researches to be done in this area these are important points to bear in mind.

7.1 Recommendations

After having conducted our research there is certain points that we believe to be useful for a person involved in the process of an artist career. Since this thesis is created for the different parts in the industry so that they can through our research get an overall picture of how authenticity is produced for a music artist.

It is important that the person that gets involved with an artist has the same vision as the artist and there is a mutual agreement on what the goal of the career is. Both parties are involved in the strategic decisions that are to be made and both feel comfortable with them. Having a consensus between the people involved will result in that the artist will mirror an image of confident and realness towards the audience. If it is important for the artist to be authentic then thinking long term should make decisions that are made. Decisions made will vary in their impact on an artist's but short term decisions often are greedy and the persons involved will try to maximize return during a short period of time which will most likely make the audience tired of brand. Long-term thinking is more likely to bring consistency and an image that says that this artist is doing what he/she is doing because this person enjoys it.

When trying to refresh an artist image through for example brand extensions it is important that the extension is in line with the already existing image. The extension should make the consumers want this because it reflects the personality of the artist and not something he/she has done in order to become more commercialized and receive a large pay check. The artist should feel comfortable with the extension and feel that he/she can stand for what it represents.

For future researcher it would be very interesting and relevant to perform this research from a consumer point of view. This research has had its focus on the production side of authenticity

so this leaves the gap for future researcher to investigate the role of authenticity from a consumer side. By combining the two we one would be able to see what affects an artist authenticity and how is it produced, but also then how is it perceived and how do the consumer affect it.

It would also be interesting for further research to explore if these conditions hold true on an international level, get the perspective outside of Sweden as well.

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9 Appendix

9.1 Appendix 1

The interview question (in Swedish)

Intervjufrågor för kandidatuppsatsen:

“Authenticity and its role within the branding of an artist”

1. Beskriv er roll gent emot artisten I musikindustrin?
2. Vad anser du är den viktigaste komponenten I att bygga en artist's varumärke?
3. Enligt dig, vad är en autentisk artist?
4. Ändras vikten av att vara autentisk för en artist i de olika faserna av dennes karriär?
5. Skiljer det sig något I hur en artist marknadsförs idag jämfört med för tio år sedan?
6. Hur väljer ni inriktning för marknadsföringsstrategin för olika artister?
7. Vem bestämmer om vilken marknadsföringsstrategi en artist ska ha?
8. Hur ser du på förhållandet för en artist med att vara autentisk och generera pengar?
9. Kan du berätta ett exempel på en artist som du känner har hittat rätt marknadsföringsstrategi?
10. Kan du berätta ett exempel på en artist som du känner har hittat fel marknadsföringsstrategi?

9.2 Appendix 2

The interview questions (in English)

Interview questions for the thesis:

“Authenticity and its role within the branding of an artist”

1. Describe your role towards the artist within the music industry?
2. What do you think is the most important factor in the process of branding an artist?
3. What is an authentic artist in your opinion?
4. Does the importance of authenticity change between the stages in the career of an artist?
5. Is there any difference of how the artist marketing process works today compared to how it worked ten years ago?
6. How is the branding strategy chosen for an artist?
7. Who has the ultimately decision of what type of brand an artist should have?
8. How do you look at the relationship between an artist being authentic and making money?
9. Can you name an example of an artist that, in your opinion, has used the right kind of branding strategy?
10. Can you name an example of an artist that, in your opinion, has used the wrong kind of branding strategy?