



ARTIST COACHING



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INTRODUCTION

Let me introduce myself briefly.. My name is Joey (a.k.a. JoeySuki), I have been an international DJ and producer for over ten years. I love working with bullet points so let's get this done quickly:

- I've released music on labels such as Revealed Recordings, Toolroom Records, Spinnin Records, Ultra Music Records and Defected Records
- I've released collaborations with the likes of Hardwell, Firebeatz and Kill The Buzz
- I played at festivals such as Tomorrowland and Creamfields
- I did official remixes for the likes of Jennifer Lopez and Pitbull
- I run my own label Dubbed Records

After touring the world for a few years I ended up in a burn-out. During this process I decided to change the course of my life, I wanted to guide artists during their career.

I became an Artist Coach.

After being active in the music industry for over ten years, I've got a pretty good insight in what people are struggling with during their career. I tried to pin down all the main challenges that most starting and professional artists have during their 'road to success' and wrote down my vision and solution to handling these challenges. I've written all of the tips and tricks from my own experience as an artist and my experience of working in the industry for over ten years.

Have fun!

Joey



FIVE NEED-TO-KNOW TIPS TO GET YOUR CAREER STARTED

We all know the feeling. You have a dream and a goal set for the future but how do you get there? You keep on thinking about a solution or the gateway to success, but in the meantime, your career is not making any progress. How do you get started? What are the most important things you need to do as an artist before you get yourself and your music out there?

Tip 1 Find your unique selling point

What is it that makes you different from all the other artists out there? A simple answer such as: “my music sets your party on fire” just won’t do the job. You need to find your unique selling point. This could be your style of music, your branding, your looks, your life story, etc. As long it’s something that you have to offer to the world, and someone else doesn’t.

Tip 2 Brand yourself

As soon as you found your unique selling point, you know which direction your branding should go to, or you should at least have a particular way of thinking about it. Are you going to be the outgoing cool kid who talks a lot through social media and has a strong opinion on everything? Are you going to be the guy that does it the ‘Deadmau5 way’ by thinking of an act which includes a particular figure or masks? Reflect on if you want to have black and white photos or if you’d prefer colour photos to express your branding. Even your tone of voice on social media is a critical subject in this decision.

Tip 3 Work on your network

The network is vital in this business. If you don’t know anyone, no one will know you. Visit parties, go to seminars, go to conferences such as the Amsterdam Dance Event and meet up with people from the industry. Talk to people and let them know about you as an artist, your music and maybe one day this connection will help you and your career to the next step. All it took was that one conversation you had that one time during ADE. Don’t underestimate the power of human interaction.

Tip 4 Keep evolving

Stay up to date about things that are useful to you and your careers such as the latest plugins, the latest DAW’s, the newest talents, the most recent trending charts or social media platforms. The world keeps on evolving and so should you. Otherwise, you will be one step back every time. By investing time to things that will matter to you in the future you will always be one step ahead of everyone else.

Tip 5 DO

Instead of sitting around and thinking about things that you could do or might happen in the future, I would strongly advise you to just go and DO those things. The only way to get one step further in your career is to put in the work. Make music, find gigs to play at, visit conferences, connect with people from the industry online or offline, etc. Anything is better than sitting back home and thinking about how beautiful everything could’ve been. Create opportunities by putting in the work!

HOW TO KNOW WHEN YOUR TRACK IS FINISHED

I noticed that a lot of artists struggle with the fact that they don't know on which point their track is really finished and ready to be released. I'm gonna give you a few tips and tricks about how you know that your track is ready to be released.

Let's start off with a quote: *One man's crap is another man's treasure*

I'm gonna let this sink in for a while and will get back to you about this at the end of this part.

Tip 1 Don't be a perfectionist

Most artists are better known as perfectionists but this actually doesn't help you with deciding when your track is really finished. Perfectionists tend to keep on changing parts of the track over and over again which leads to not releasing music at all and not releasing your music leads to having no career in the music industry.

We all know that one person who spends more than two hours mixing a hi-hat. I understand that you want your track to sound good and at a high level but nobody is gonna hear the difference between a well EQ-ed, compressed and limited hi-hat in the overall mix. You have to pay attention to the things that matter and spending so much time to hi-hats for instance is not gonna be a game changer for your track.

So... don't be a perfectionist and accept the fact that your track is never going to be perfect. Spent time on the things that matter and don't go too much into the details of your track. You, as a producer, have trained ears so you hear more details in music than the consumer does. Your mother, for example, won't hear the difference between EQ-ed beats but will hear the difference in a melody or rhythm.

Tip 2 Test it!

If you ask your family or friends for feedback they probably don't want to hurt you and your feelings and they won't give you their honest opinion about your new banger. The crowd will always give you an honest opinion. That's why my second tip is test your music in front of a crowd because you can directly see what the effect of the track is.

Do make sure that you play it in the same environment as where it's gonna be played when it's gonna be released. For example: if you produce tech house music, make sure you test your music in a club where this music normally gets played because if you test it at a bar where everybody wants to hear pop music, the reaction of the crowd isn't gonna be reliable.

Tip 3 Compare it!

This is one of the things that I always did to check if my track was sounding right.

I always made my podcast and pre recorded radio shows in Ableton Live which gave me the opportunity to check how my tracks would stand out in a mix. I picked tracks that I knew were sounding phat in a club or festival (because I played them myself before) and I mixed in my own track in between. If I didn't hear anything weird like big dips in the frequency spectrum or a big difference in volume than I knew that my track was ready.

Of course these tips aren't the only things that you could do to know if your track is ready to be released but at least it's something to hold on. It's easy to lose yourself in the process of production and sometimes you forget the important elements of the track because you're too much into the details.

Let's get back to the quote from the beginning of this blog: *One man's crap is another man's treasure*

This is a really important quote because it changes the way you think about releasing your music. Everyone experiences and listens different to music, so that makes it quite difficult to decide what's gonna work and what doesn't. The fact that you aren't the biggest fan of your latest release doesn't necessarily have to mean that it's not gonna be your breakthrough release. The consumer is gonna decide whether he or she likes the track or whether he or she doesn't like it and that's the only opinion that is gonna matter in the end.

Conclusion: Create music YOU like, create it in the best and creative way possible and release it as soon as you feel like it's done (and remember to not be a perfectionist)

HOW TO GET YOUR MUSIC SIGNED

Most artists are struggling to get their music signed these days. Most of the time when you finally found the correct email address for a demo drop, you won't even get a reply. This is really frustrating and could cause you to lose faith or motivation.

The good news is, you don't necessarily need a label anymore to release your music.

Don't get me wrong, labels are still able to add value to a release in some cases but the majority of labels (mainly the smaller ones) aren't interesting to sign with any more.

When I talk about a label 'adding value' to your release, I mean doing proper promotion and marketing for your release. Having a decent network to send your music to and a decent fanbase that is engaged with their releases and featured artists.

The bigger labels out there are still valuable to sign with, as long as you have priority. Make sure you don't just become a number but make sure that they put work into your release. Just releasing your track and not doing any promotion or marketing is useless. Remember that you are paying the label for these kind of things (with your royalties) so they should put in the work.

Most of the labels do this:

1. Sign an artist
2. Schedule the track
3. Create artwork and a minor promotion plan
4. Release your track
5. Hope for playlist placements
6. The end.

Unfortunately, this isn't enough anymore to make it through the cut. Thousands of songs get released each day so how are you going to stand out from the crowd?

Luckily, we live in 2019. We have the luxury to reach out to other opportunities aside from labels. We aren't relying on third parties anymore to bring our music to the audience. Just a couple of years ago, labels were the only ones who could get your music distributed and bring it to the people and that brought a lot of costs with it as well. Nowadays, this is way easier to do and you don't even need a label to do it for you.

Online Distribution

If you are tired of getting rejected by labels every time and you do feel that your music needs to be heard then releasing your music through an online distributor is the best way to go.

An online distributor has one job and one job online: Uploading your music to all the streaming and downloading platforms.

Once you have subscribed, you will be able to upload your own track, cover art and other info that you'd like to add to the release. You will be able to pick a release date that works best for you and your schedule. Once you've approved everything it's go time.

On the date that you've selected, your track will appear online. It's now out in the open and free for the world to check.

The best thing about releasing music yourself through such an online distribution partner is that you will keep 100% of the rights. You will also receive 100% of the revenue. When you sign with a label, this will be way less because you have to split the revenue with the label. In some cases, these splits might be 80% for the label and 20% for you.

Promotion

As I've said before, releasing music and not doing any promotion or marketing is useless. The world isn't going to find out about your music by itself. You need to make make them aware of it.

Here are a couple of ways to make the world aware of your music:

- Get your music into playlists
- Get influencers to use your music in their content
- Get supported by other artists
- Posting content on social media

I'll briefly explain what the effect of all these things could be.

Get your music into playlists

Once you've managed to get your music into a playlist, you're reaching a new audience through that playlist. A playlist has followers and they will become aware of your release once you've been added to that particular playlist. The more playlists, the better the awareness.

Get influencers to use your music in their content

Influencers have followers. Those followers are the people that you want to reach so you need to figure out a way to get your music to that audience. A great way could be by offering your music to the influencer and let him use it for free. Letting him using it for free is valuable for him and at the same time, you're reaching a new audience which leads to more awareness.

Get supported by other artists

If an artist, for example a DJ, plays your song in his show, you will reach the audience that is in front of him at that moment. The more he plays your song, the more people you will reach. Most artists also have a playlist so having him featuring it in his playlist is valuable to.

Posting content on social media

Have you ever heard of content going 'viral'? If something goes viral, that means that it spreads itself over the platform. That's how content works. If you post valuable content that either makes people laugh or learn about something, chances are big that your post will get a bigger reach. Every single person that you reach with your content might be a future fan.

So now that you know a bit more about how you can release your song, it's time to do it yourself. Start releasing your music NOW because your music will be the fundament of your whole career.

Without music, you're not an artist.

HOW TO GET YOUR MUSIC IN SPOTIFY PLAYLISTS

The music industry has changed a lot in last few years. We went from buying vinyl and tapes to listening CD's, minidiscs and along came the MP3 player. Nowadays we are at the point of what I was dreaming of as a sixteen year old kid. Unlimited streaming, whenever you want, wherever you want. Can life get better?

These changes bring along problems about how we need to market our music. There are almost no record shops anymore so no need to pay them a visit with your bag full of self burned copies. Nowadays it's all about playlists but it's hard to physically visit a playlist right? Playlists are a great way of reaching a bigger audience with your music so getting featured is one of the best ways to market your music in today's music industry.

So how does this works? How do you get your music in the playlist where you want to be featured in? How does this works?

Let's start off with some basic knowledge. There are three different kinds of playlists on Spotify:

1. **Curated playlists** (*made by people who work for Spotify*)
2. **User curated playlists** (*made by Spotify users*)
3. **Playlists generated by algorithms** (*made by robots*)

Now that you know what kind of playlists there are and what the story behind them is, let's talk about how you can get featured in one.

Hire a PR agent or be your own PR agent

Most of the Spotify playlist curators are following the online blogs that we all follow. Here's a few names to get you started: Proximity, Nik Cooper, Indie Shuffle, Trap City etc. When your track gets featured on one of these big platforms it's more than likely that your track will get higher up in the charts on sites such as Hype Machine, which will lead to your track getting some attention from people like the curators and loads of other people who might be influential.

One of the ways to get yourself featured on one of these blogs is by hiring a PR agent. This will cost you some money but if you get a good one, who has a big network, a big track-record and knows a lot of important people, it will probably pay itself back with a lot of features on blogs. (There's no guarantee though)

A second way of getting your music in playlists is by using SubmitHub. This website is really handy because you can send your music directly to the blogs that you have selected. Most of the big blogs are connected with SubmitHub so this is how you have a better chance to get heard. This will cost you a small amount of money because you pay per blog that you decide to send it to.

The blogs need to give you their feedback in return and if they like it, they will post it (which will lead to a higher ranking on Hype Machine and getting more important people their attention).

Hire a playlist plugger

There are companies out there whose sole job is to pitch your music for inclusion in playlists. Of course this looks a lot like a PR agent but the big difference here is that a playlist plugger is in direct contact with playlist owners (curated or user curated) and not with blogs.

Unfortunately they have the same problem as PR agents have: **you never get any guarantees**. You will never know what happens with your money and if it gets spent right by the agent or plugger. That's why it's so important to do research have a look at their past. Which artists have they worked for? Which tracks did they work on in the past? If they've only worked for artists that you have never heard from, it's up to you to fill in the blanks here...

Contact (user) curated playlists

This one all comes down to putting in the work and is the best option if you have a low budget.

We live in a world where everything we need and everyone we need to know is at our fingertips. Wanna know why? We have the internet and a smartphone. There's a special website where you can find almost everything you want to know and i'm gonna give it to you, ready? Here it is:

<http://www.google.com>

This is how it works:

- Search for potential playlists on Spotify that are specialized in your music genre. Don't only look for the biggest ones out there but also search for the medium sized playlists that have 1000 - 10.000 followers
- Click on the profiles that are connected to the playlist and see if you can find a name. If you find a name, google it and find his or hers Facebook, Instagram or Twitter page so you can send him a direct message. If you don't find a name, check out on google if you can find out more about the company or account that is connected to the playlist. **Wake up your inner Inspector Gadget!**
- If you found the person who owns the playlist: send a direct message without trying to sell your music to him. Just show him your respect by telling him that you admire his playlist and how much followers he have gained in the last few months. After having a small talk it's time to let him know you're a producer yourself and send him some music. *"would be great if you could feature this in your playlist and let me know if there's something I can do for you!"*.
- And now it all comes down to what we dutchies like to call: "Now we wait". Hopefully he will think you're a nice guy and he feels like you deserve to be in his playlist. There always is a possibility that this doesn't happen, in that case: on to the next one! Never forget that this is a people business.

The Algorithm

Now this is all being said, it's really easy to think that it's not that hard to get your music in Spotify playlists. Never forget that it all starts with good music! If your music sucks the chances of being in a Spotify playlist will be way lower than if you have an awesome track. This is where the statistics kick in. Spotify has designed an algorithm that detects how often and long songs are being listened to, get saved and get shared by people. With this statistics they've created playlists such as Discover Weekly and Release Radar.

If your track is being featured in some people's Discover Weekly playlist and the algorithm notices that a lot of people are saving it into their private playlist or that a lot of people are replaying it that day/week, it will mean that you've created a good song. The algorithm will decide to share your track to more people because it tested well in the previous round. So that's another way of getting heard on Spotify. Make good music!

The market will decide if your track is worth being shared or listened to and that's the most honest feedback you can get in my opinion.

HOW TO MARKET YOUR MUSIC

Let's start off with the basics. The word "marketing" actually exists from two words:

Market: as in the marketplace

Getting: how can you get the people to your shop?

So what is marketing exactly?

Marketing is all the things a company does to promote their product.

If we rephrase this to the music industry, the so called 'product' is your music and all the 'things' are video's, photo's, written content and livestreams.

Back in the days, people had to print posters, visit record shops or make appointments with every possible man or woman who could buy their music. That's a lot of work and takes up a lot of time doesn't it?

We live in a beautiful time people. We have the internet! We can speak to a person on the other side of the earth just by clicking our mouse. We can reach out to our fanbase by targeting them on Facebook. We can promote our music to people that are actually interested in our music. The ROI (Return Of Investment) is bigger than ever! It's amazing what you can do by spending small amounts of money nowadays. It's just all about using it in the right way.

So how do you market your music in 2019? By using the following platforms in the right way.

Facebook - Instagram - Snapchat - YouTube - TikTok - Twitter

I'm not gonna talk about all of them but I'm gonna take a deep dive into a few of the most important platforms.

How to market your music on Facebook

Instagram is the biggest social media platform out there on this moment. All your friends are there, your family and guess what... So are your future fans! The biggest plus side of Instagram is that they own a LOT of data from every user. They know exactly what you eat, drink, laugh about, cry about and what you like to do in your spare time. They know all of this because they know what you click on. They know which movies you watch and how long you watch them, they know which pictures you like, share or reply on and they know who you are connected with (and much more).

All this data gives you a lot of power when it comes down to selling stuff. The only thing you should know before you start using this data is:

- 1) **WHAT** am I gonna sell?
- 2) **HOW** am I gonna sell it?
- 3) **WHERE** am I gonna sell it?

I'll give you the answer to that:

- 1) Your music
- 2) By creating likeable, shareable and loveable content that represents your brand
- 3) Social Media (Facebook, Instagram, Snapchat, Twitter, TikTok, Youtube etc.)

So now you have the answer, you can start filling in the blanks for your own brand.

You can post videos, photos, written word, animated GIF's.. It's up to you to decide which one you are gonna use for your marketing strategy.

Not everyone feels comfortable doing video and not everyone looks good on a photo.. So try to think of content that works best for you. Are you a great photographer? Great, post photos. Are you a great video editor? Awesome, use videos! Do you prefer to speak without visuals? Do podcasts. The most important thing here is that you pick a way of communicating that feels natural to you. If it doesn't feel natural doing it, you're not able to maintain it and so, you're quality and quantity will go downhill after a few weeks/months.

Here's a few ways to market your music on Facebook

- **Customize your content** so people will instantly recognize it (*see picture 1*)
- **Be creative** Try to make creative content that is easy to engage with (*see picture 1*)
- **Promote your post** invest a small amount of money and create your custom audience to have the best ROI

- **Get involved** respond to your audience when they leave you a message, I know you're behind a computer but it's still people who are typing those replies. People have feelings so be kind and show them your appreciation
- **Live videos** are a great opportunity to engage with your fans and give value to them

Picture 1

In this picture you can see an example of custom created and engaging content.



Quantity over Quality

We live in a world where thousands and thousands pieces of content get posted each minute. There is an overkill. The social platforms developed something to prevent your from getting an overkill and to only see content that is interesting to you, it's called an algorithm. Algorithms look at your behaviour on the platform and show you content that connects to that behaviour. For example, if you love looking at funny videos, chances are big that you will see a lot of those and you won't be disturbed with a blog about food.

Because of the algorithms, it became impossible to over kill your audience. That's why I preach for creating and posting as much content as you can. Every single piece of content could end up with a future fan, a manager, a booker or a label owner. You never know where those things end up so posting more content means more opportunities for your career.

How to market your music on Snapchat and Instagram Stories?

A new way of communicating is the way people like to call creating stories. Snapchat was the first who started this (the first big and famous one actually) and it just was a matter of time before other platforms started adopting this feature. Nowadays we can't think of Instagram without the stories functionality but only a few years ago Instagram was only about posting normal content. This is one of those examples when I talk about shifting platforms. Snapchat started something that worked really well and other big platforms start copying it to keep their audience on their platform. When platforms start doing this you can see a shift from audience from platform to platform. That's also why I should never go all in on one platform but always spread your chances and be active on multiple platforms.

Let's say you've build yourself an audience of 100.000 people on Twitter and all of a sudden Twitter isn't hot anymore because everyone is using Snapchat. That means you're in deep shit! So try to cross-communicate online. Get your fans from Snapchat to go to your Facebook page as well and vise versa. Never rely on just one platform.

So why is marketing my music on Snapchat and Instagram Stories so different from using Facebook?

Well for starters.. Your content will disappear in 24 hours (or even quicker) so it's not that important that all of your content should be picture perfect. It's OK to post a crappy low quality photo of your coffee with a timestamp on it because it disappears in a few hours.

The reason why they call it "stories" is because it's perfect to tell people your story of the day. Show them what you did today, what did you drink? What did you eat? Who did you meet up with? Where did you go?

Instagram Stories and Snapchat are all about the NOW. Not about what you did yesterday, not about what you are gonna do tomorrow. Nope, what are you doing RIGHT NOW. That's what matters on these platforms.

So when you want to market your music through those channels. Don't create perfect content, just show people who you are and what you do in a normal day! How much time do you spent in the studio? How much do you travel? What's your favorite drink? What's the name of your dog? That's content that should be posted here.

If you really want to take things to the next level on these platforms, you can start to think about a strategy that gives people a real story. Think about the things that you are gonna show people before you go on your next tour. Take them on a trip and create a small movie that consists out of short 10 second video clips or show them backstage footage of your videoclip recording day, show them the crew and bloopers before you show them the final video. It makes them feel like they were there! It makes them feel special.

Like I said at the beginning, i'm not gonna talk about all the platforms.. I think that Instagram, Instagram Stories and TikTok are the most important platforms as we speak to market your music and all the things I told you today are also applicable on the other unmentioned platforms. Be creative with your content, be consistent and get involved with your fanbase.

And remember: 'only ten views' today, is already ten views more than you had yesterday!

CONCLUSION

Congratulations, you've made it to the 17th and last page of this guide! Now that you've completed this guide, you now should know more about how you can finish your tracks, get them signed and what you have to do after they've been released.

All of these tips and tricks will help you in your career but there's one thing that I highly suggest you to start off with right now...

WORK

The only way to make a difference in this industry is to WORK REALLY HARD!

You may know all things you need to know, read all the books that are out there or follow every 'music industry guide' on the internet but as long as you aren't gonna put in the work, I can guarantee that NOTHING is gonna happen.

- Release as many tracks as possible
- Play as many shows as possible
- Connect with as many people as possible
- Create as many quality content as possible

And don't forget to enjoy the ride because it's gonna be a memory for life.

Here's a quote that may help you at times when things aren't going as fast as you'd hope for.

Be patient and keep on building towards your dream, step by step, brick by brick.

Good luck!

Joey | Artist Coach

