

FROM MIX TO MAINSTAGE

THE BLUEPRINT FOR EMERGING
ELECTRONIC ARTISTS

 AUDIENCE STRATEGIES  ACADEMY

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Summary

I. Introduction

Purpose of the Report

- "From Mix to Mainstage: A Blueprint for Emerging Electronic Artists" is a comprehensive research project aimed at transforming the approach of new and emerging artists in the electronic music industry.
- The report seeks to identify and understand the barriers that emerging artists face and provide actionable strategies for overcoming these challenges, ultimately paving the way for sustainable careers in the industry.
- By offering clarity on the reasons why some artists struggle to make a mark despite producing quality music, the report aims to inform better strategies for career development and success.

Methodology and Data Sources

The report draws insights from two primary sources:

1. In-depth qualitative interviews with established and upcoming artists, as well as individuals from the live and recorded music industry who can provide opportunities to upcoming artists.
2. A detailed survey of 273 electronic music artists, representing a broad and diverse group of individuals at various stages of their careers.

The interviews offer unique perspectives on navigating the electronic music industry, while the survey data provides a comprehensive understanding of the experiences, challenges, and strategies employed by electronic music artists.

The diversity of the survey respondents, both geographically and in terms of career stage, reinforces the report's findings and provides a solid foundation for the recommendations presented.

II. Key Challenges Faced by Emerging Electronic Music Artists

Difficulty in Growing a Dedicated Fan Base and Social Media Following

- Growing an online audience is a struggle for almost all electronic music artists, with two-thirds of them considering it a major challenge.
- Understanding algorithms and developing effective promotional strategies for music releases are also widespread challenges among artists, with 88% of artists facing some degree of difficulty in these areas.
- The survey reveals that 62% of artists consider growing their online audience a major struggle, while 41% find developing promotional strategies for music releases to be a significant challenge.

Financial Constraints and Balancing Music with Other Responsibilities

- Financial sustainability is a major concern for electronic music artists, with 76% of survey respondents indicating that their careers in electronic music are not financially sustainable at present.

- To make ends meet, 82% of artists rely on jobs unrelated to electronic music, with 56% working in a full-time capacity and 26% working part-time.
- Older artists, likely with larger financial commitments, are more likely to need to rely on full-time employment, with 62% of 35-44-year-olds relying on full-time paid employment compared to 26% of artists aged 18-24.
- Balancing time for music with employment responsibilities is a significant challenge for 56% of artists, who rate it as 4 or 5 out of 5 in terms of impact on their careers.

Struggles with Self-Confidence and Dealing with Failure

- Pressure to succeed is commonly felt among electronic music artists, with 55% experiencing it fairly or very often.
- Comparing oneself to others is also prevalent, with 50% of artists doing it fairly or very often.
- Dealing with failure, maintaining self-confidence, and balancing personal and professional life are challenges faced fairly or very often by two-fifths of electronic music artists.
- Artists cope with failure by embracing it as a learning opportunity, leaning on their support networks, and remembering their passion and goals.

Lack of a Strong Professional Network within the Electronic Music Industry

- Most electronic music artists do not feel their professional network within the industry is strong enough, with only 2% rating it as 5/5 (strong) and 22% rating it as 4 or 5 out of 5.
- Geographical barriers, such as being distant from industry hubs or residing in less recognized locations, are significant obstacles for artists.
- Personal challenges, such as balancing a full-time job or managing a professional career outside of music, also contribute to difficulties in networking.

III. Strategies for Success

Developing a Clear Artistic Vision, Brand, and Musical Identity

- Having a clear artistic vision, brand, and musical identity is crucial for distinguishing artists in a crowded market and guiding their career trajectory.
- Developing a unique sound and aesthetic requires patience and dedication, and it may take up to a decade to establish a truly distinctive artistic identity.
- Branding extends beyond visual aesthetics; it encapsulates an artist's values, story, and musical ethos, creating deeper connections with audiences.
- A well-defined artistic vision and identity facilitate more meaningful connections within the industry and help artists navigate the complexities of the music business more effectively.

Leveraging Social Media Platforms Effectively for Career Development

- Social media is a crucial tool for building an audience, but it's essential to focus on genuine engagement and community-building rather than merely chasing followers or likes.
- Effective strategies for social media mastery include developing a clear and consistent brand, engaging genuinely with your audience, creating quality content regularly, leveraging analytics for insightful engagement, utilizing multiple platforms strategically, and investing in continuous learning and improvement.
- While social media can fast-track opportunities, it's vital to maintain a balance between online presence and musical authenticity.

Building Genuine Relationships through Effective Networking

- Effective networking involves building genuine relationships within the industry over time through shared experiences, mutual respect, and common goals.
- Networking is not about the superficial accumulation of contacts but rather the art of identifying and nurturing relationships with those who bring out the best in your creative and professional journey.
- Cultivating a supportive ecosystem that thrives on collaboration, shared success, and the continuous exchange of ideas is essential for navigating the complexities of the industry.
- Emerging artists are encouraged to embrace networking not just as a means to an end but as a vital component of their artistic journey, contributing to a more inclusive, dynamic, and sustainable music industry.

Understanding and Navigating Various Industry Roles

- The electronic music landscape comprises various key players, including record labels, booking agents, promoters, collaborators, and education providers, each playing a critical role in an artist's journey.
- Understanding the roles of these industry stakeholders is paramount for emerging electronic artists to navigate the complexities of the industry more effectively.
- Building strong relationships with labels, leveraging the expertise of booking agents and promoters, assembling a dedicated team, and embracing continuous learning are essential strategies for career success.

Approaching Venues, Promoters, and Labels Strategically

- Before approaching venues and promoters, artists must comprehend the current landscape of the electronic music scene and adapt their approach accordingly.
- Crafting a compelling pitch that showcases an artist's unique identity, music, and understanding of the industry is essential for capturing the attention of venues and promoters.
- Building genuine relationships through effective networking and leveraging digital platforms to enhance visibility are crucial strategies for connecting with industry stakeholders.
- Demonstrating value beyond musical talent, such as the ability to market oneself and engage with audiences, is key to securing gigs and establishing long-term partnerships.

Participating in Competitions to Validate Talent and Open Up Opportunities

- Competitions serve as platforms for validating talent, providing exposure to industry professionals, and opening up new opportunities for emerging artists.
- Winning a competition can provide a significant morale boost, serve as a form of external validation, and lead to opportunities such as record deals and festival performance slots.
- Competitions also contribute to artist development by offering feedback from industry experts and simulating real-world challenges and successes.
- The electronic music industry should continue to support and develop competitions as a key component of the ecosystem that nurtures new talent, ensuring a vibrant future for the genre.

Engaging in Continuous Learning and Skill Development

- Continuous learning and skill development are essential for artists to remain competitive in the rapidly evolving electronic music landscape.
- Acquiring knowledge across various domains, including music production, marketing, brand development, and business management, ensures artists are well-equipped to navigate the industry's complexities.

- Developing soft skills, such as networking and building genuine relationships, is equally important for career advancement.
- Engaging in formal education programs, online courses, workshops, and industry events can help artists stay updated on the latest trends, technologies, and innovations in electronic music.

Building a Team and Delegating Tasks When Necessary

- As an artist's career progresses, building a supportive team and delegating tasks become increasingly important for sustainable growth and success.
- A well-chosen team, consisting of managers, mixing engineers, PR professionals, and other specialists, can provide invaluable support and expertise in navigating the music industry.
- Recognizing when to delegate tasks allows artists to focus on their core passion and creativity while ensuring the business aspects of their careers are managed effectively.
- Cultivating a team that understands and shares an artist's vision and commitment can exponentially increase their chances of long-term success in the electronic music industry.

Prioritising Mental Health and Well-Being

- The fast-paced and demanding nature of the electronic music industry can take a toll on artists' mental health and well-being.
- Prioritizing mental health is essential for maintaining creativity, resilience, and overall career sustainability.
- Incorporating self-care practices, seeking support from loved ones and professionals, setting boundaries, staying connected with a supportive network, and engaging in personal development activities are key strategies for maintaining mental well-being.
- The electronic music community should strive to create a more supportive and inclusive environment that recognizes the importance of mental health and provides resources for artists facing challenges.

IV. The Role of the Electronic Music Industry in Supporting Emerging Talent

Making the Industry More Inclusive and Accessible through Education and Mentorship

- Implementing comprehensive educational programs that cover music law, marketing, and the music business can lay a foundation for artist self-reliance and informed decision-making.
- Mentorship initiatives, especially those targeting underrepresented groups, can significantly enhance inclusivity by providing guidance, support, and a sense of belonging for newcomers.
- Creating platforms that facilitate connections and encourage collaboration and shared learning can help foster a more accessible and supportive community for emerging artists.
- Demystifying industry entry points and pathways to success through open-access resources, case studies, and industry insights can help artists navigate their careers with greater confidence and strategic foresight.

Reevaluating the Emphasis on Digital Metrics as a Measure of Success

- The electronic music industry's overemphasis on digital metrics, such as social media followers and likes, as a measure of success can be misleading and detrimental to artist development.
- Prioritizing online persona over musical skill and authentic engagement can hinder the career growth of talented artists who may not excel in social media promotion.
- The industry should strive to create an environment that values and rewards genuine talent, creativity, and hard work over superficial metrics.

- Adopting a more balanced approach to evaluating artist success, one that considers musical skill, live performance ability, and authentic audience engagement, can foster a healthier and more sustainable industry ecosystem.

Supporting Emerging Talent through Targeted Educational Initiatives

- The electronic music industry can play a vital role in supporting emerging talent by offering targeted educational initiatives that address the specific needs and challenges of aspiring artists.
- Collaborations between music education providers and industry stakeholders can bridge the gap between academic knowledge and real-world experience, providing students with invaluable insights and networking opportunities.
- Initiatives that promote diversity and inclusion within music education, such as scholarships for underrepresented groups, can contribute to building a more equitable and representative industry.
- By investing in the education and development of emerging talent, the electronic music industry can cultivate a pipeline of skilled, innovative, and adaptable professionals who will shape the future of the genre.

Implementing Mentorship Schemes to Foster Artist Growth

- Mentorship schemes play a pivotal role in the development and success of emerging artists by providing guidance, industry insights, networking opportunities, and psychological support.
- Labels, festivals, and clubs can contribute to nurturing talent responsibly by designing inclusive mentorship programs that target underrepresented artists and support participants beyond the initial stages of their careers.
- Mentorship initiatives should focus on comprehensive skill development, industry knowledge, and the cultivation of a supportive community that encourages collaboration and knowledge sharing.
- By investing in mentorship, the electronic music industry can create a more diverse, resilient, and sustainable ecosystem that benefits both individual artists and the genre as a whole.

Leveraging Competitions to Discover and Nurture New Talent

- Competitions serve as valuable platforms for discovering, validating, and supporting emerging talent in the electronic music industry.
- By sponsoring competitions, offering performance opportunities as prizes, and participating in judging panels, industry stakeholders can contribute to a vibrant ecosystem that nurtures new talent and promotes diversity.
- However, it is crucial for the industry to engage with competitions responsibly, ensuring transparency, providing constructive feedback, and avoiding exploitative practices that may take advantage of artists' aspirations.
- Fostering an environment where competitions are seen as genuine efforts to discover and support new talent can help cultivate a more inclusive, dynamic, and sustainable electronic music scene.

V. Shaping Music Education for the Future

Incorporating Practical, Industry-Relevant Content into Music Curricula

- Traditional music education often focuses on developing musical skills and historical knowledge, which, while important, does not fully prepare students for the challenges of the modern music industry.
- Music educators must integrate practical, industry-relevant content into their courses to equip aspiring electronic artists with the tools they need for success.
- Curricula should include modules on effective communication, personal branding, leveraging social media, and developing a strong artistic identity to help artists navigate the complex digital landscape.
- Incorporating lessons on the roles of various industry stakeholders, legal aspects of music production and distribution, and business strategies can empower artists to make informed decisions throughout their careers.

Focusing on Networking, Brand Building, Industry Acumen, and Resilience

- Music education programs should prioritize the development of networking skills, teaching students how to build and maintain professional relationships and foster collaborative opportunities.
- Courses should guide students in crafting a unique artistic brand that resonates with audiences and industry professionals alike, emphasizing the importance of authenticity and consistency.
- Developing industry acumen is crucial for long-term success. Education should provide students with a comprehensive understanding of the electronic music industry's structure, dynamics, and key players.
- Resilience and mental well-being should be addressed through courses that focus on building coping strategies, maintaining motivation, and seeking support when needed.

Providing Hands-On Experiences and Simulated Real-World Scenarios

- Practical, hands-on experience is invaluable for aspiring electronic music artists. Music education programs should incorporate opportunities for live performances, internships, and collaborations with industry partners.
- Project-based learning that simulates real-world scenarios can help students develop problem-solving skills and adapt to the challenges they may face in their professional careers.
- Exposure to industry-standard tools, software, and equipment through educational partnerships can ensure that students are well-prepared for the technical demands of the electronic music scene.
- Facilitating mentorship opportunities and guest lectures from established industry professionals can provide students with valuable insights and inspiration for their own career paths.

Adapting Music Education to Evolve with the Changing Demands of the Industry

- The electronic music industry is constantly evolving, with new technologies, trends, and challenges emerging at a rapid pace.
- Music education must remain agile and responsive to these changes, continuously updating curricula and teaching methods to reflect the current state of the industry.
- Educators should actively seek input from industry stakeholders, alumni, and current students to identify areas for improvement and ensure that their programs remain relevant and effective.
- Embracing a culture of innovation, experimentation, and continuous learning within music education can help foster a new generation of adaptable, forward-thinking electronic music artists.

VI. Conclusion

Recap of Key Findings and Recommendations

- The "From Mix to Mainstage" report identifies the key challenges faced by emerging electronic music artists, including difficulties in growing a dedicated fan base, financial constraints, struggles with self-confidence, and a lack of strong professional networks.
- The report outlines essential strategies for success, such as developing a clear artistic vision, leveraging social media effectively, building genuine relationships through networking, navigating industry roles, and prioritizing mental health and well-being.
- The electronic music industry plays a crucial role in supporting emerging talent by promoting inclusivity, reevaluating success metrics, providing targeted educational initiatives, implementing mentorship schemes, and leveraging competitions to discover and nurture new talent.

- Music education must adapt to the changing demands of the industry by incorporating practical, industry-relevant content, focusing on key skills like networking and resilience, providing hands-on experiences, and continuously evolving to reflect the current state of the electronic music scene.

Call to Action for Emerging Artists, Industry Stakeholders, and Music Educators

- Emerging artists are encouraged to embrace the strategies outlined in this report, focusing on developing their unique artistic identity, building a strong professional network, and prioritizing their mental health and well-being.
- Industry stakeholders are called upon to actively support emerging talent by creating inclusive opportunities, reevaluating success metrics, investing in targeted educational initiatives, and engaging responsibly with competitions and mentorship schemes.
- Music educators are urged to adapt their curricula and teaching methods to better prepare aspiring electronic music artists for the challenges and opportunities of the modern industry, incorporating practical skills, industry insights, and hands-on experiences.

The Potential Impact of Implementing the Report's Insights on the Future of the Electronic Music Industry

- By implementing the recommendations outlined in the "From Mix to Mainstage" report, the electronic music industry can foster a more inclusive, supportive, and sustainable ecosystem for emerging talent.
- Embracing a holistic approach to artist development, one that prioritizes authenticity, creativity, and well-being, can lead to a more vibrant and diverse electronic music scene.
- Investing in the education and mentorship of emerging artists can ensure a continuous influx of innovative, adaptable, and skilled professionals who will shape the future of the genre.
- Ultimately, by working together to address the challenges faced by emerging artists and providing the necessary support and resources, the electronic music community can create a thriving, resilient, and forward-thinking industry that celebrates and nurtures talent at all stages of development.

About this report

Report Overview

"From Mix to Mainstage: The Blueprint for Emerging Electronic Artists" is a comprehensive research project set to transform the approach of new and emerging artists in the electronic music industry. It aims to understand the barriers these artists face and provide actionable strategies for overcoming them, paving the way for sustainable careers.

The report is based on in-depth qualitative and quantitative research, including interviewing established and upcoming artists; individuals from the live and recorded music industry who can provide opportunities to upcoming artists, and critical data analysis.

Need for the Report

Despite talent and music production skills, most artists face challenges in breaking through the electronic music industry. The question of why some artists struggle to make a mark, despite producing quality music, has been a point of debate for many years.

There is a need for a deeper comprehension of the industry dynamics and a more targeted approach to strategy development for emerging artists. This report aims to fill this gap, providing valuable insights and directions for the aspiring artists in the industry.

Impact of the Report

We hope the report will make a significant impact in several ways:

1. **Providing Clarity:** The report will offer clarity on the reasons some artists struggle in the industry even with quality music, helping inform better strategies.
2. **Informing Strategy:** It will guide upcoming artists on networking, getting gigs, approaching labels, and effectively dealing with rejection, thus contributing to the artists' professional growth and success.
3. **Advising the Industry:** It will inform key industry stakeholders on how they can better support emerging talent and make the industry more accessible and inclusive.
4. **Shaping the Future:** By providing a detailed roadmap for success in the electronic music industry, it will shape the future of many potential artists, influencing the industry as a whole.
5. **Educational Resource:** As a comprehensive resource, the report will aid music education programs and courses in developing a relevant and impactful curriculum.

Through this initiative, we aim to cultivate more effective, informed artists who can navigate the industry landscape successfully and build sustainable careers in electronic music.

Background

The electronic music industry is a powerful force in shaping cultural identity, fostering community connections, and driving economic growth. The importance of education in supporting this dynamic industry cannot be overstated. By investing in the development of emerging talent and recognising the interconnectedness of culture, community, and commerce, the industry can continue to evolve and expand, ensuring its lasting impact on the cultural landscape.

Understanding the barriers facing emerging electronic music artists and implementing strategies to overcome them is crucial for the growth and vitality of the industry. Educational plans and industry engagement are key components of this effort, providing artists with the skills, opportunities, and support they need to navigate the challenges of the industry. By prioritising the development of emerging talent, the electronic music industry can continue to thrive, marked by innovation, diversity, and a strong sense of community.

The Electronic Music Industry

The electronic music industry stands as a monumental pillar within cultural, community, and commercial landscapes in several Western countries. Its influence stretches across the spectrum of societal touchpoints, from nightclubs to the vibrant stages of festivals and into the digital realms where communities thrive and interact. As the industry continues to evolve, the intersection of culture, community, and commerce becomes increasingly significant, underpinning the vital role of education in nurturing and expanding the scene's impact.

Cultural Impact

Electronic music is more than just a genre; it's a cultural movement that has reshaped the contours of the global music landscape. The UK stands as a pioneering force in this movement, birthing new genres and subcultures with an impact reaching far beyond geographical and societal boundaries. The influence of these subcultures extends well beyond their sonic contributions. This fusion of influences highlights electronic music's ability to bridge cultural divides, fostering diversity and inclusivity. From underground raves of the late 20th century to today's colossal festivals drawing millions, electronic music has been pivotal in driving cultural innovation while shaping fashion, visual arts, and social norms. Fashion trends at clubs influencing mainstream styles are a testament to its pervasive presence across various creative domains. Spanning from drum & bass to house and techno scenes, the diverse tapestry within electronic music reflects richly woven influences that contribute to the UK's cultural identity and global cultural trends.

Community Building

At the heart of electronic music lies a sense of unity and togetherness. Clubs, festivals, and events serve as more than just entertainment venues; they are places where individuals unite, share experiences, and form enduring connections. Fostering a sense of belonging that encourages tolerance, acceptance, social intimacy, and grassroots creativity, these spaces have a profound impact on communities, contributing significantly to mental well-being. This communal aspect is even more pronounced in today's digital era, where online platforms and social media enable fans and artists to connect, exchange ideas, and collaborate in unprecedented ways. Furthermore, reaching various micro-communities through electronic music promotes inclusivity within groups such as the queer community. These collectives play an essential role in advocating for

diversity and representation within UK culture by providing platforms for underrepresented groups while challenging mainstream narratives.

Economic Contributions

The economic impact of the electronic music industry in the UK is undeniable. With an annual contribution of £2.5 billion across recorded music, nightclubs, festivals, and concerts, the industry is a significant driver of economic activity. Despite facing challenges such as the decline in nightclub patronage and the rising costs of living, the resilience of recorded music and the growth of festivals showcase the enduring appeal and potential of electronic music to generate substantial revenue. This economic vitality not only supports artists and industry professionals but also contributes to the broader UK economy through tourism, hospitality, and related sectors. In 2022, music tourism generated a staggering £6.6 billion, inclusive of the electronic genre. Electronic music festivals and events play a substantial role in attracting 14.4 million music tourists, including 1.1 million from overseas, and sustain 56,000 full-time jobs.

The Role of Education

The intersection of culture, community, and commerce within the electronic music industry underscores the critical role of education in sustaining and expanding its impact. Education serves as the foundation for nurturing talent, fostering innovation, and ensuring the continued growth of the scene. Initiatives like the Lisa Lashes School of Music, specialised courses offered by institutions like Toolroom Academy and the University of Central Lancashire's Music Industry Management & Promotion Master's degree are pivotal in equipping aspiring artists and professionals with the skills and knowledge needed to navigate the complexities of the industry by providing industry-relevant education. These educational efforts not only support professional development but also contribute to the economic and cultural vitality of the electronic music scene. Music services are also crucial in shaping music education at primary and secondary school level. They help bridge the gap between traditional education frameworks and contemporary music trends and provide access to music technology for both teachers and students.

By embracing education, the electronic music industry can continue to thrive, ensuring that artists are well-prepared to contribute to its cultural, community, and commercial success. Education is not just about technical skills; it's about understanding the industry's dynamics, the importance of networking, and the strategies for building sustainable careers. As the industry moves forward, the integration of education, culture, community, and commerce will be essential in shaping a vibrant, inclusive, and economically robust electronic music scene in the UK and beyond.

The Importance of Understanding Barriers and Strategies for Emerging Artists

Emerging artists in the electronic music industry face a myriad of barriers on their journey to recognition and success. Understanding these obstacles, alongside the strategies to overcome them, is paramount for several reasons. It not only facilitates the growth and development of talent but also ensures the vitality and sustainability of the electronic music scene as a whole. To this end, there is a pressing need to (a) implement educational plans tailored to the unique challenges of the electronic music industry and (b) engage the wider industry in efforts to support artists in navigating these barriers and applying effective strategies.

Unveiling Barriers

The barriers facing emerging electronic music artists are multifaceted, ranging from the high costs of equipment and production, limited access to networks and platforms, to the challenges of standing out in a saturated market. Moreover, the

digital landscape, while offering unprecedented opportunities for exposure, also demands a nuanced understanding of marketing, branding, and the effective use of social media. These challenges are compounded by the need for continual learning and adaptation to rapidly evolving technologies and audience preferences.

The lack of integration of electronic music into the educational system is also a challenge. Primary and secondary schools face obstacles such as insufficient funding and resources, technological reluctance, and a shortage of necessary equipment. These hurdles hinder the effective implementation of music technology and electronic music teaching methods in classrooms, which prevents students from acquiring the skills and knowledge required to pursue careers in the music industry.

Understanding these barriers is crucial for several reasons. It highlights the areas where artists require the most support, identifies gaps in the current ecosystem, and informs the development of targeted educational and support programs essential for nurturing the next generation of electronic music talent. Without this understanding, efforts to support emerging talent may be misdirected, failing to address the most critical challenges they face.

Implementing Educational Plans

Education plays a critical role in equipping emerging artists with the skills, knowledge, and resilience needed to navigate the industry's challenges. The integration of music technology into the curriculum, supported by collaborations between music services and industry players, is crucial for modernizing music education in schools. Additionally, tailored educational plans can provide artists with a comprehensive understanding of the music business, production techniques, marketing strategies, and the legal aspects of the industry. Furthermore, education can foster a sense of community among emerging artists, providing a platform for networking, collaboration, and mutual support.

The implementation of educational initiatives requires a collaborative approach involving music institutions, industry bodies, and established artists. These programs should aim to be accessible and inclusive, ensuring that artists from diverse backgrounds and with varying levels of experience can benefit from them. Education not only empowers artists but also enriches the industry with a diverse and innovative talent pool.

Industry Engagement

The push for the industry to support up-and-coming artists urges record labels, promoters, media platforms, and established artists to take an active role in nurturing new talent. This means offering exposure opportunities like festival slots and mentorship programs as well as providing access to studios, equipment, and funding. Engaging with the industry through mentorship and collaborative projects allows emerging artists to gain valuable insight, experience, and networks essential for their future professional success in electronic music. This direct exposure to the industry not only enriches the educational experience but also prepares emerging talent for the challenges and opportunities they will face as professionals in the electronic music scene.

Industry engagement is essential for several reasons. It bridges the gap between emerging talent and the broader industry, providing artists with the connections and opportunities they need to succeed. It fosters a culture of mentorship and collaboration, enriching the industry with fresh ideas and perspectives. By investing in the development of emerging artists, the industry ensures its own sustainability and relevance in the face of changing musical trends and consumer preferences. For aspiring artists seeking an understanding of the music business complexities or honing their craft; educational programs offer vital pathways facilitated by institutions connecting students directly with professionals during real-world experiences.

Methodology

This report draws on two main sources of insight. First, we conducted 1:1 interviews with a selection of artists and industry people. Then we surveyed a large number of artists.

Who We Interviewed 1:1

This report features a diverse range of insights from established and upcoming artists, industry professionals, and educators, each offering unique perspectives on navigating the electronic music industry. Insights from the interviews are shared in the relevant sections of the report. In the meantime, here's an overview of the contributors and the kinds of valuable insights they each provided.

Artist interviews:

- **Fletcher Kerr:** An artist who talked about his pragmatic approach to balancing passion projects with commercial gigs. Fletcher discussed the crucial importance of a clear artistic vision and the role of hidden teams behind successful solo acts. He highlights the disparity between online popularity and musical talent, advocating for authenticity and strategic career planning.
- **Maxinne:** An artist who transitioned from a passionate music listener to a DJ through elevated club experiences. Maxinne underscored the significance of networking, a well-rounded skill set, and branding authenticity. She advocates for systematic growth and inclusivity within the industry, emphasising commitment and the strategic use of social media.
- **Channe:** An emerging artist who highlighted the importance of industry exposure and continuous learning. Channe spoke to the power of networking and competitions in advancing her career, the importance of focusing on one's craft, and the value of persistence, commitment, and self-belief in overcoming industry challenges.
- **Calumn Lawrence:** An artist navigating geographical constraints and the power of educational platforms. Lawrence discussed the balance between artistry and commercial work, the importance of networking, and strategies for branding and online engagement, highlighting the value of mutual support within the music community.
- **Katsi, aka Juliet Sikora:** An artist who emphasised the importance of networking, self-promotion, and overcoming the administrative burden of a music career. Sikora discusses the challenges of economic constraints on creativity and the negative impact of genre pigeonholing. She offered practical advice for aligning with labels and engaging audiences.
- **Navin Larriba:** Navin explored the journey of aligning his music production skills with his taste and the balance between his music passion and day job. He emphasised the importance of industry relationships, the strategic use of social media, and continuous learning to advance in the electronic music scene. Navin also discussed the challenges of streaming revenue for artists and stressed the need for selectivity in gigs and releases to bolster one's career and brand.

Industry interviews:

- **Gernot Mueller (Voltage Circus):** An educator focused on the importance of social media presence and a proactive career approach. Mueller emphasises the need for legal knowledge, understanding of the industry, and diversification of income sources, advocating for perseverance and the creation of opportunities rather than reliance on luck.
- **Chris Goss (Hospital Records):** The Co-founder of Hospital Records emphasised the role of social media and community in artist development. Chris stressed the importance of authenticity, hard work over quick wins, and the need for a strong support network, advocating for a return to grassroots music scenes and the value of patience in building a career.
- **Mark Knight (Toolroom records):** A veteran artist and label head who advocated for business acumen alongside musical talent. Knight stressed the necessity of developing a unique artist identity, the transparency of passion in music creation, and the importance of teamwork and collaboration in building a sustainable career.
- **Paul Nolan (Make Your Transition):** An artist, industry professional and educator who advised on defining personal success and the value of authenticity over following trends. Nolan discussed the challenges of nurturing new talent, the misalignment of revenue streams, and the importance of community building, highlighting the need for a fairer and more supportive industry structure.
- **Owyn Sidwell (Manager):** A manager and industry strategist who focused on the importance of multiple revenue streams and passion-driven monetisation. Sidwell emphasised the power of understanding one's "why", viewing artists as brands, and the effectiveness of strategic career planning, advocating for empathy and realism within the industry to support emerging artists.

Who We Surveyed

A key part of our research methodology was a detailed survey that garnered responses from a broad and diverse group of 273 electronic music artists, providing invaluable insights into the industry's current landscape. *General results from our survey are shared in the 'What artists told us' chapter of this report. Results relating to specific recommendations are presented in the relevant sections of this report.*

Our survey methodology aimed to capture a comprehensive understanding of the experiences, challenges, and strategies of electronic music artists. The questions covered a wide range of topics, including demographic information, career stage, financial sustainability, educational background, and specific challenges within the industry. This approach allowed us to gather data on the most pressing issues facing emerging artists and identify potential pathways to success.

Who we surveyed

The diversity of the respondents, both geographically and in terms of career stage, reinforces the report's findings, providing a solid foundation for our recommendations. By examining the responses of artists from various backgrounds and at different points in their careers, we have drawn insights into the common barriers to success and the strategies that have proven effective in overcoming these obstacles.

- **Gender Representation:** The majority of respondents identified as male (91%), with a small proportion of female (8%) and non-binary/not listed (1%) participants, reflecting the industry's known gender disparities.

- **Age Distribution:** Participants predominantly fell within the 25-44 age range (70%), capturing insights from those likely in the midst of actively shaping their music careers. This age distribution offers a balanced view of both emerging talents and those with considerable experience in the field.
- **Global Reach:** Respondents hailed from a wide array of countries, with a notable concentration in the United Kingdom (26%) and the United States of America (25%). Germany was the third highest (8%). This global perspective ensures the findings are relevant to artists navigating the industry in various cultural and market contexts.
- **Career Stage:** Our survey attracted artists at different career stages, from those with no original music releases (23%) to those with 20+ releases (16%), illustrating a broad spectrum of experience levels. This diversity enhances the report's relevance across the emerging artist community.
- **Income Sources and Financial Sustainability:** A significant portion of participants (34%) reported negligible income from electronic music, highlighting the financial challenges faced by emerging artists. This aspect underscores the critical need for strategic career planning and diversification of income streams.

The geographic diversity of the artists surveyed showcases a broad international representation, highlighting the global appeal and reach of electronic music. The responses span across continents, including artists based in major music hubs such as London, New York, Berlin, and Tokyo, as well as those from less traditionally highlighted regions like Durban, Velika Plana, and Santiago. This variety not only underscores the universal language of electronic music but also reflects the varied cultural influences that shape the genre. The United States and the United Kingdom emerged as significant centres, with multiple cities listed, indicating a strong presence of electronic music activities. Meanwhile, the inclusion of cities from countries such as Brazil, Japan, Serbia, and South Africa points towards a diverse set of backgrounds and experiences within the industry. This geographic spread is crucial for understanding the different challenges and opportunities that emerging electronic artists face in their respective locales, offering a rich tapestry of insights into the global electronic music scene.

77% of the electronic music artists surveyed had released original music (singles, EP, albums) with 27% having released 10 or more. 51% perform live, or deejay at events on at least a monthly basis. That being said just 13% feel they have an established following, with the majority feeling they are growing (54%). Followings take time to build, so it is not surprising to see older deejays more likely to feel they have established their following with 19% saying they have an established following vs. just 4% of 18 to 24-year-olds.

Producing music and deejaying represent the two main ways in which electronic music artists spend their time with 95% producing and 79% deejaying. This trend exists across different age groups, however, older artists are more likely to be involved in producing and other non-performance-based activities such as producing music for others and sound engineering. Producing music is 97% for 35-44 year olds vs. 88% of 18-24 year olds. Producing for others and sound engineering are principal activities for 8% of 18-24-year-olds vs. 20% and 15% of 35-44-year-olds, respectively. Conversely, Live performances are a main activity for 36% of 18-24 year olds vs. 19% of 35-44 year olds.

Electronic music activities they undertake

The responses to our survey on the main activities that constitute careers in electronic music reveal a vibrant tapestry of roles beyond the conventional pathways. Artists are diversifying their skills and embracing a wide range of activities that underscore the multifaceted nature of the industry. A notable trend is the support for the community, with artists actively engaging in "supporting other artists with social media," and taking on roles as "life coaches for artists," which illustrates a culture of mentorship and mutual growth. The entrepreneurial spirit among emerging artists is palpable, with many taking the helm as "event organisers," "running record labels," and "booking agents," indicating a hands-on approach to carving out their careers.

Q: What are the main activities that constitute your career in electronic music?

- Producing music 95%
- DJing 79%
- Social media / Audience development 23%
- Live performances 20%
- Music production for others 16%
- Sound engineering 13%
- Teaching music production / DJing 8%

Source: From Mix to Mainstage survey of electronic music artists, January '24

The creative integration of music with other mediums and platforms is another highlight, with artists contributing to "YouTube and radio shows," "singing," and "writing vocals," showcasing the blend of talents that artists bring to their music careers. The geographical spread of activities, with artists running events "in Ibiza, the UK, and Amsterdam," speaks to the global nature of the electronic music scene and the importance of live events in artist careers.

Moreover, the business acumen of artists is evident in their involvement in "the business side (distribution/publishing)," "event management and marketing, branding, social media," and "video editing for dance music education brands," revealing a keen understanding of the importance of brand building and digital presence. The role of technology and education is also highlighted, with artists engaging in "learning techniques" and contributing to "Spotify curation," pointing to the evolving landscape of music distribution and consumption.

The variety of roles undertaken by artists, from "venue operation" to "live stream weekly shows," reflects the dynamic and evolving nature of the electronic music industry. These activities not only constitute their careers but also contribute to the broader ecosystem, supporting the growth of the genre and its community. This diversification of roles underscores the resilience and adaptability of artists in navigating the complexities of the music industry, highlighting the need for a holistic understanding of the career pathways in electronic music.

What Artists Told Us

Here, we outline the general findings of our survey. In addition, you'll see more survey results throughout relevant sections of the report.

The Need: Most Artists Told Us Their Career Isn't Sustainable

A conclusion that stood out consistently across genders and age groups is the difficulty making a living from electronic music - 76% say their career in electronic music is not financially sustainable. Just 9% say it is, with the balance finding it somewhat sustainable.

Q: Do you consider your career in electronic music to be financially sustainable at this time?

- “No” - 76%
- “Somewhat” - 15%
- “Yes” - 9%

Source: From Mix to Mainstage survey of electronic music artists, January '24

Therefore, most artists rely on income outside of electronic music

To make ends meet, 82% of artists rely on a job unrelated to electronic music, 56% in a full-time capacity and 26% in a part-time capacity. Older artists, likely with larger financial commitments, are more likely to need to rely on full-time employment, with 62% of 35-44-year-olds relying on full-time paid employment compared with 26% of artists aged 18-24. The 18-24 year olds are more likely to be working part-time (48%).

Q: What additional sources of income do you rely on?

- “Non-electronic music-related full-time job” - 56%
- “Non-electronic music-related part-time job” - 26%
- “Savings” - 17%
- “Family” - 10%
- “Non-electronic music-related consulting work” - 7%

Source: From Mix to Mainstage survey of electronic music artists, January '24

Detailed responses to the question about current sources of income related to electronic music revealed a diverse range of experiences among emerging artists. Some respondents highlighted the absence of income from their music endeavours, with multiple individuals stating, "Don't make any income," "None 😊" "None," and simply, "0."

However, creativity in income generation is evident. Several artists mentioned roles that support the broader ecosystem of electronic music, such as "Coaching artists," "Producing events," and "Running my own events." These activities not only contribute to their livelihood but also enrich the community by providing platforms for performance and learning.

Another notable aspect is the blending of skills and roles to support their careers. Responses like "Social Media," "Graphic Design for other producers," "Video editing for dance music education," and "Sound tech for nightclubs, equipment rentals" illustrate how artists are leveraging a wide array of talents beyond just their music. This **multifaceted approach to income reflects the necessity of adaptability** in the industry.

Many respondents have found income streams entirely separate from their musical pursuits.

- Artists told of the diverse and sometimes surprising ways in which they sustain their careers beyond their music. These insights offer a rich tapestry of the lived experiences of artists, illustrating not only their creativity in music but also in navigating the financial realities of their chosen path.
- For instance, one artist shared, "I am the owner of a coffee shop in Greece," revealing an entrepreneurial spirit that extends beyond the studio. Another mentioned "Full-time firefighter," showing a stark contrast between their day job and their passion for music. This duality of roles—balancing demanding, unrelated careers with music—was a recurring theme, as seen in responses like "Union Decorator (Convention Shows, Conferences, Meetings, Stage Production, Weddings)."
- Several artists have turned to freelance and creative fields to supplement their income, with responses like "Freelance Content Creator" and "Screenwriting," indicating a synergy between their artistic sensibilities and their means of making a living. Others have embraced the gig economy in a more direct relation to their music careers, with mentions of "DJ gigs," "Events, merch sales, mastering and mix down services," underscoring the importance of diversification within the music industry itself.
- The array of jobs and roles artists undertake—from owning businesses to performing in entirely different professions—paints a picture of a community that is deeply committed to their artistry despite the financial uncertainties inherent in the path of an emerging electronic artist.

A few artists express a more mission-driven approach to their work in music, with one artist stating, "I don't DJ for money or income; it's my passion and mission to inspire people." This sentiment, while not contributing financially, underscores the intrinsic value and personal fulfilment derived from their art.

One particularly striking statement was, "I took a risk and am going all in on music," encapsulating the high-stakes gamble many artists are willing to make for their craft.

The responses paint a picture of **resilience, versatility, and the blending of passion with pragmatism**. Emerging electronic music artists are navigating their financial realities through a combination of music-related activities and external employment, all while some remain committed to their art as a primary source of inspiration rather than income.

What Artists Want

We asked artists, “What are your main goals and aspirations in the electronic music industry?”

Our survey found a wide range of ambitions, hopes, and dreams from individuals at different stages of their careers. Many artists express a desire to not only establish themselves within the industry through DJing and producing high-quality tracks but also to impact their audiences positively, spreading good vibes and happiness through their music. For example, one artist aspires to "simply write tracks and play sets that give people a good feeling," encapsulating the emotional connection and escapism music can provide. Another common theme is the aspiration to achieve recognition and financial stability, with goals like "to earn regularly a stable amount of money that can pay a living for me" and aspirations to "get signed to a major record label and perform as DJ worldwide."

The ambition to contribute to the electronic music community is also evident, with responses highlighting desires to mentor and coach others, thus giving back to the industry that has inspired them. An artist mentions wanting to "empower others to reach their highest potential," showing the nurturing side of the electronic music world. Furthermore, the aspiration to innovate within the genre and maintain authenticity despite the pressures of commercial success is voiced by an artist who wishes to keep a part of electronic music "simple," countering the trend towards overproduction.

Artists also express specific goals, such as releasing tracks on particular labels or achieving a certain level of industry recognition and fanbase growth. The diversity of aspirations—from performing at favourite venues and festivals to making music production and teaching a full-time job—highlights the many forms of success in the electronic music industry. It also tells of the importance of supportive structures and networks to help artists navigate the challenges and realise their diverse ambitions.

Challenges and Obstacles

Audience growth (difficulty in growing a dedicated fan base or social media following) and **social media strategy** (uncertainty or difficulty in effectively using social media for promotion) are the two biggest challenges faced by electronic music artists (rated as 4 or 5 out of 5 for impact on their career by 67% and 64% of artists respectively).

Finances are also a key challenge for artists, whether it be balancing time for music with employment responsibilities (56% of artists rating as 4 or 5 out of 5) or having a limited budget for marketing, production, or other essential activities (56% of artists rating as 4 or 5 out of 5).

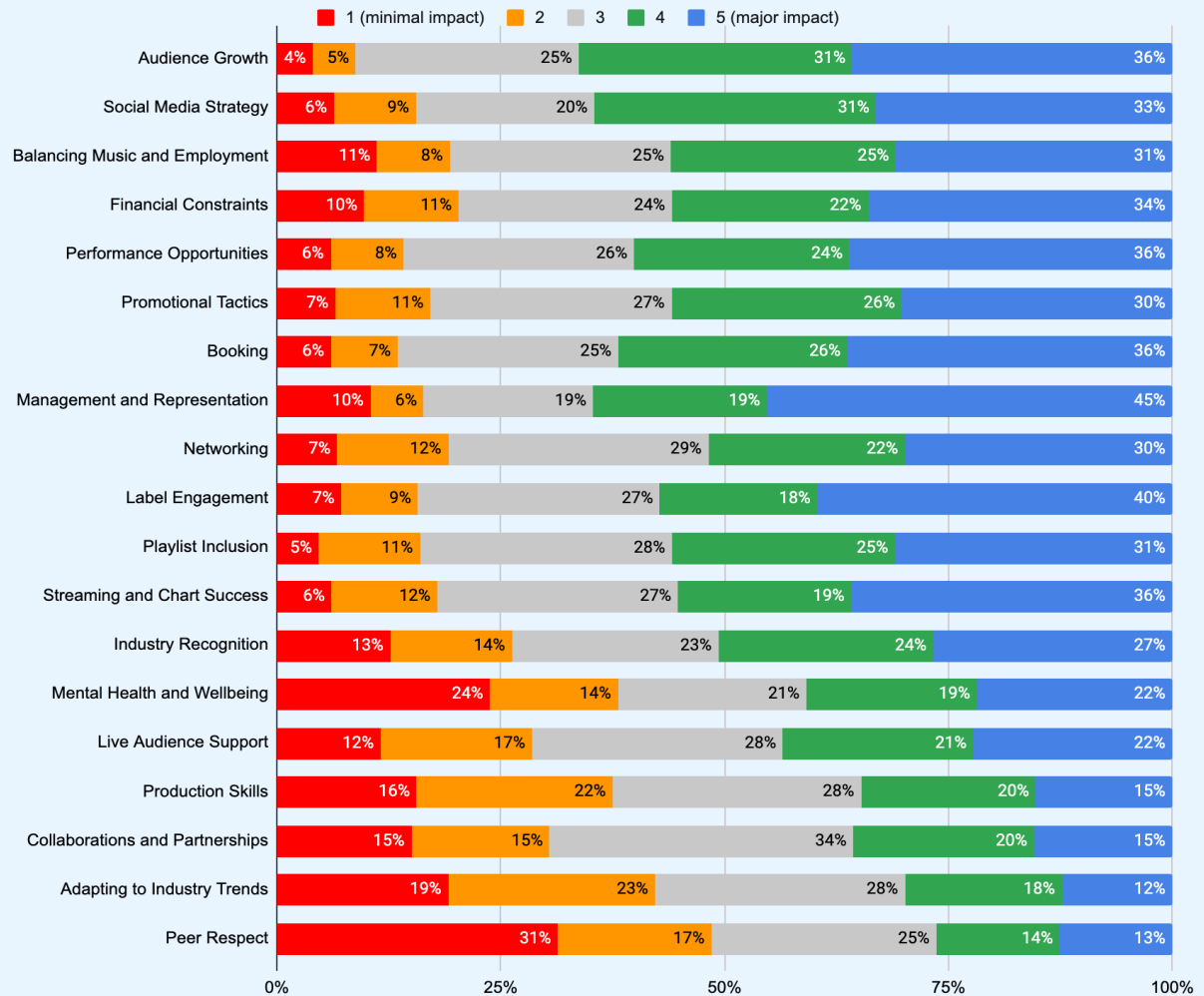
Securing booking for gigs and events is also a common challenge, with 60% rating it as a significant challenge (4 or 5 out of 5)

Here's the question we asked in full:

Q: Below is a list of challenges that emerging electronic music artists often face. Please select all the challenges that apply to you and rate their impact on your career on a scale from 1 (minimal impact) to 5 (major impact).

Options were:

- Adapting to Industry Trends: Keeping up with and adapting to changing trends and technologies in the music industry
- Audience Growth: Difficulty in growing a dedicated fan base or social media following
- Balancing Music and Employment: Managing time between music and other employment responsibilities
- Booking: Difficulties in securing bookings for live performances
- Collaborations and Partnerships: Challenges in forming effective collaborations or partnerships
- Financial Constraints: Limited budget for marketing, production, or other essential activities
- Industry Recognition: Other DJs or producers not playing or acknowledging your music
- Label Engagement: Difficulty in getting labels to listen to or release your music
- Live Audience Support: A limited number of supporters attending your gigs or performances
- Management and Representation: Challenges in finding a manager or agent
- Mental Health and Wellbeing: Managing stress, anxiety, or other mental health challenges related to career pressures
- Networking: Difficulty in making meaningful industry connections
- Peer Respect: Feeling undervalued or disrespected by industry peers
- Performance Opportunities: Challenges in securing bookings for gigs or events
- Playlist Inclusion: Difficulty getting music added to major streaming service playlists
- Production Skills: Challenges in developing or improving music production skills
- Promotional Tactics: Challenges in promoting music releases, gigs, or personal branding
- Social Media Strategy: Uncertainty or difficulty in effectively using social media for promotion
- Streaming and Chart Success: Limited success in terms of streams or chart positions



Source: From Mix to Mainstage survey of electronic music artists, January '24

Building a personal brand and **effective social media marketing** are considered to be very or extremely important by the majority of electronic music artists (92% and 87%, respectively). Beyond this, **financial planning and management** and **understanding copyright law** are also key to career advancement, seen as very/extremely important by 69% of artists.

Q: Reflecting on your career growth, which of these areas do you believe have contributed most to your success? Please select one

- “Investing in music production skills” - 41%
- “Developing a unique musical style” - 19%

- “Networking within the industry” - 17%
- “Effective use of social media” - 11%
- “Collaborating with other artists” - 9%
- “Other (please specify)” - 3%

Source: From Mix to Mainstage survey of electronic music artists, January '24

We asked: Reflect on your journey as an electronic music artist. What have been the most significant challenges or obstacles you have faced? Please describe them and how they've impacted your career. Feel free to include any aspects you believe are relevant, such as financial constraints, industry knowledge, technical skills, networking, mental health, adapting to trends, or any other challenges you've encountered.

Responses provide a vivid snapshot of the diverse challenges faced by emerging electronic music artists. Their journeys are marked by many obstacles, from acquiring the necessary skills and equipment to create their music to navigating the complexities of the industry's social dynamics. One artist highlights the struggle to gain "enough skills to get to a point where I can make a track," underscoring the technical barriers that can stifle creative expression. Others point to the industry's "gatekeepers" and the challenge of being a female in a male-dominated field, alongside financial constraints that limit access to essential resources.

The emotional and psychological aspects of the music career are equally daunting. Several artists mention "imposter syndrome" and the loneliness that can accompany periods of unacknowledged effort despite significant personal investment. The importance of networking is a recurrent theme, with many expressing frustration at the industry's emphasis on who you know over talent and the added pressure of social media as a tool for gaining recognition and bookings.

Personal tragedies and the struggle to balance music with other life responsibilities, such as full-time work and family commitments, also emerge as significant themes. One poignant response describes the heartbreak of selling equipment to save a loved one's life, highlighting the profound personal sacrifices some artists make to pursue their passion. Others discuss the challenge of creating high-quality music with limited resources, navigating mental health issues, and the isolation felt within the industry, significantly when geographical location or financial limitations hinder access to networks and opportunities.

These responses reveal the resilience and dedication of electronic music artists in the face of industry challenges. They show the **need for more supportive structures and resources to help emerging talents** overcome these barriers, emphasising the importance of mental health support, accessible technical training, and more inclusive networking opportunities. The survey results not only shine a light on the struggles of these artists but also highlight their determination to persevere, innovate, and contribute to the electronic music scene despite the odds.

Dealing With Failure Is Part of the Job

Survey responses to how electronic music artists cope with failure reveal a resilient and adaptive mindset across the community. Many artists emphasise the importance of persistence, learning, and personal growth in the face of setbacks. For instance, one artist succinctly says, "I keep going back to the drawing board to learn more," encapsulating a common theme of reflection and improvement. Another highlights the fluidity of audience preferences, stating, "It happens, people's listening experiences change, I don't take it to heart," which underscores an understanding of the subjective nature of music appreciation.

The resilience of these artists is further illustrated by statements like, "I cope very well, and it makes me stronger" and "Just having a constant belief that you can do it and keep going." These responses underscore a steadfast belief in their abilities and the importance of maintaining a positive outlook. The practice of analysing setbacks, as one respondent describes,

"Analysing why it happened, talking to someone, solving the problem for next time, then getting better :)" suggests a strategic approach to overcoming obstacles. Moreover, the sentiment, "Receiving a 'no' is an integral part of the journey. It's an opportunity to listen, learn, and propel oneself forward," highlights the constructive use of rejection as a stepping stone for progress.

The community also values support and self-care, with artists mentioning strategies like, "I meditate and go to therapy" and "Take an evening with loved ones, then have a bit of a sleep-in," indicating the importance of mental well-being and emotional support. Furthermore, the emphasis on perseverance is evident in phrases like, "Keep pushing!" and "Never give up and fight until you achieve your goal," showcasing a determined spirit.

Artists shared many candid insights, ranging from initial doubts to resilience and personal growth. One artist mentioned, "It makes me second guess if I should pursue music," highlighting the profound impact rejection can have on self-confidence. Conversely, another found solace in rejection, stating, "I learned fast it's nothing personal, merely part of the process. You just adapt your approach for the next project." This reflects a common theme of adaptation and learning.

Several artists expressed a positive outlook, viewing rejection as an integral part of their journey. "It hasn't affected me; it is all part of the journey, I am happy with rejection, with labels, it means I'm doing what I want to do," one respondent shared, illustrating an appreciation for artistic integrity over industry approval. Others found humour and resilience in rejection, with one quipping ...

*“... I hate those people for a week ...
... then I send them another demo 🤡...”*

The emotional spectrum of responses varied widely. Some artists reported minimal impact, focusing on the pragmatic aspects of rejection, "Not too much - I'm realistic, pragmatic and I don't really have anything to 'prove'," while others described a more profound emotional toll, with comments like "It affects my mental health" and "It was really hard before because I thought I was good, but I realised I wasn't doing enough."

A recurrent theme was the motivational aspect of rejection. Many artists reported that rejection fuelled their drive to improve, with sentiments like "All the rejections I had only fuelled the fire I have burning inside me." Moreover, the feedback from rejections, when provided, was seen as valuable for growth, "Well, there have been a couple of labels that rejected my demo submission. But I got feedback. Which tends to be more positive than negative. This kept me moving forward."

Rejection also prompted introspection and strategic adjustments. "Handling rejection is an inevitable part of the electronic music industry," one artist reflected, summarising a sentiment echoed across many responses. They viewed each rejection not as a defeat but an opportunity to reassess, refine, and persist.

In summary, these responses paint a picture of an electronic music community that is resilient, reflective, and constantly seeking growth. While undoubtedly challenging, many artists ultimately view rejection as a catalyst for personal and professional development, reinforcing the importance of resilience, adaptability, and continuous improvement in navigating the industry's uncertainties. Artists cope with failure by embracing it as a learning opportunity, leaning on their support networks, and always remembering their passion and goals. This mindset not only helps them navigate the industry's challenges but also contributes to their personal and professional development.

Strategies Artists Have Adopted

We asked: How have these challenges impacted your career progression, and what strategies have you employed to overcome them?

Responses to the question of how challenges have impacted career progression and strategies for overcoming them revealed a tapestry of individual experiences, innovative approaches, and persistent struggles among emerging electronic music artists. One artist mentioned, "I've taken a long time to finish things as a result. So just trying to become quicker at getting it done and reference tracks better," highlighting the common issue of speed in production. Another shared the unique challenge of being neurodiverse, explaining how it "is challenging where the learning style is different, so it takes time to process," leading to financial barriers and a pivot to writing with artists/producers.

Financial constraints were a recurring theme, with one respondent stating they had to "find a stable job to be able to have an income to produce music." This speaks to the broader issue of balancing financial stability with creative pursuits. Despite these hurdles, resilience shines through in responses like, "Don't give up," and "Create a plan to reach goals and hold yourself accountable for each goal."

Networking emerged as a crucial strategy, with artists finding value in "being as authentic as possible with people in the industry" and leveraging social media, even when it falls outside their comfort zones. The importance of adapting to the digital landscape was evident, as one artist noted, "The internet is a wonderful thing. I work hard to earn my money, playing a minimum of 3 gigs a week + teaching & the occasional bit of other work."

The responses also highlighted the power of **collaboration and community**. One artist found success by "starting to work together with my Nobody Knows partner," leading to the launch of their own festival and collaborations with local artists. This approach not only addresses financial and networking challenges but also fosters a sense of belonging and support within the industry.

Pursuing **education and skill enhancement** was a common thread, with many artists investing in production courses, embracing mentorship, and dedicating time to practice. This commitment to growth and learning underscores the resilience and adaptability required to navigate the complex landscape of the electronic music industry. Many artists sought to enhance their technical skills and industry knowledge through online courses, mentorship, and practising production and DJ skills. This commitment to growth is seen as essential for staying relevant and advancing in a highly competitive field.

Several artists emphasised the value of making time for **productivity and learning crucial business skills** such as drafting agreements and applying copyright to their music. This foundation has enabled them to negotiate deals effectively and expand their collaborations, showcasing the critical role of business acumen in the music industry.

Community building emerged as a key theme, with artists finding success through creating short-form content and actively engaging with similar artists and fans on social media. The strategic use of social media platforms, including maintaining an Excel spreadsheet of industry contacts for daily interaction, was highlighted as a vital tool for expanding reach and fostering a supportive fan base.

Direct **engagement with the industry** through sending music to labels, self-releasing music, and participating in events and festivals has also been fruitful. These approaches underline the importance of proactive outreach and the benefits of leveraging digital distribution services.

Authenticity and originality are valued, with artists emphasising the importance of being true to their sound and consistently striving to comprehend upcoming sounds while avoiding repetition. The power of storytelling to build trust with audiences and the strategic use of online advertising to maximise the value of each dollar spent was also noted.

The collective wisdom of these responses highlights a holistic approach to career advancement, combining technical proficiency, strategic networking, authentic engagement, and business acumen. These insights not only enrich our understanding of the electronic music landscape but also offer actionable guidance for emerging artists navigating their path to success. Their responses paint a picture of an artist community that is both challenged and energised by the hurdles they face. Through creativity, collaboration, and continuous learning, they strive to overcome obstacles and carve out sustainable careers in the ever-evolving world of electronic music.

Support Artists Want

Responses to our survey question about the types of support or resources that would help emerging electronic artists overcome challenges revealed a strong demand for mentorship, financial support, and educational opportunities tailored to the unique needs of artists with disabilities or those on very low incomes. Many respondents emphasised the importance of **mentorship**, with suggestions ranging from funded courses with disability-experienced tutors to grants supporting artists with limited financial resources. The desire for **financial aid** to expedite the development and release process was another recurring theme, alongside requests for more interactive courses, better networking opportunities, and strategic guidance from mentors.

Artists expressed a need for practical support in various forms, such as access to tools from record labels, guidance on **navigating the music industry's business side**, and **direct feedback** from professionals. The responses also highlighted a desire for more testimonials from industry insiders, indicating a hunger for **real-world success stories** and practical advice. Some artists pointed out the need for mentorship in managing financial pressures, especially in regions where government support for the arts is lacking.

There was a call for more accessible and **supportive networks**, especially local ones, and educational resources that demystify music production's technical and business aspects. Suggestions included online group therapy aimed at electronic music professionals, mentorship or management assistance, and resources for improving time management skills. The responses underscored a broad consensus on the value of human relationships, knowledge exchange, and creating a supportive community as crucial elements for success.

Interestingly, some artists proposed innovative ideas like a **structured career progression** system, akin to military ranks or a professional league for DJs, to add objectivity to the industry's often subjective nature. Others sought more basic but essential support, such as equipment funding, advanced production training, and clearer communication from labels.

The survey responses paint a picture of a community eager for more structured support systems that offer both practical resources and emotional encouragement. The emphasis on mentorship, alongside the need for financial support and educational opportunities, suggests a pathway for stakeholders to make a significant impact on the careers of emerging electronic artists.

The Business Side of the Industry

Artists' responses show varied comfort levels and familiarity with marketing, financial management, and contract negotiations. For instance, some artists express modest assurance in their grasp of industry dynamics, with one noting they are "OK, although not sure about contract negotiations" and another stating they feel "Confident enough in my understanding of these subjects." These comments hint at a foundational understanding yet highlight areas of uncertainty, particularly around contract negotiations.

However, a notable number of artists articulate significant gaps in their knowledge, particularly around marketing and the complexities of contract negotiations. One artist candidly admits to being "Very unconfident in that aspect," while another explains their expertise is limited to "some general business aspects for sure, but things like contract negotiations usually feel one-sided." These responses indicate a common concern among artists about navigating the more intricate and potentially exploitative aspects of industry dealings.

Interestingly, several responses highlight a self-taught approach to understanding the business side of music, with artists acknowledging the importance of being proactive in their education. Phrases like "I'm pretty much self-taught, but I'm aware of how important this is" and "Still a little lacking, but much better than it was a year ago" reflect a journey of ongoing learning and improvement. This self-directed learning path is often coupled with an awareness of the need for more structured knowledge, as suggested by comments wishing for more information or formal education on these topics.

The diversity in confidence levels and perceived knowledge gaps underscore the need for more accessible, comprehensive education and support structures within the electronic music industry. These responses serve as a call to action for industry stakeholders to facilitate opportunities for emerging artists to develop the business acumen necessary for sustainable career growth.

Crucial business-related skills and knowledge

There is a diverse range of business-related skills and knowledge that emerging electronic music artists find crucial for their career development, underscoring the multifaceted nature of success in this industry. Many artists emphasised the importance of effective promotion and networking, noting these as key to gaining recognition. One respondent candidly shared, "Getting your name out there, whether that be online or through shows," highlighting the critical role of visibility. Another pointed out the steep learning curve involved in understanding "Types of song contracts, sync deals, label management, copyright, licensing," often acquired through trial and error. The sentiment that "It takes a team to get anything of significance done" was echoed, underscoring the collaborative nature of the industry.

Marketing acumen was frequently mentioned, with artists acknowledging the necessity of online marketing skills to navigate the digital landscape successfully. For instance, one artist detailed their journey, "Online marketing. I've paid for classes. I've watched videos on social media & YouTube," illustrating the proactive steps taken to master this domain. Another artist reflected on the power of networking, "The power of networking and always showing up as your authentic self," suggesting personal authenticity as a catalyst for professional growth.

The responses also revealed a common theme of resilience and adaptability, with artists recognising the need to continuously evolve their skills to meet the demands of the industry. For example, one respondent advised, "Go out of your comfort zone," highlighting the importance of seeking new audiences to expand one's reach. Moreover, the responses

underscored the value of formal and informal education in acquiring these skills, whether through mentorships, online courses, or real-world experiences in other business sectors.

In summary, these insights paint a vivid picture of the dynamic skill set required to navigate the electronic music industry successfully. From mastering promotion and marketing to fostering meaningful connections and understanding the legal landscape, emerging artists must wear many hats to carve out sustainable careers. These firsthand accounts not only enrich our understanding of the industry's challenges but also offer valuable lessons for aspiring artists on their paths to success.

Why Some Great Artists Don't Break Through

In electronic music, as in many creative industries, a significant gap often exists between talent and recognition. This disconnect can be perplexing, especially when we observe artists with profound musical skills who remain on the peripheries of success. The journey from the studio to the stage, and further to widespread acclaim, is fraught with hurdles that talent alone cannot surmount. Understanding why some great artists don't break through requires a deep dive into the multifaceted nature of success in the electronic music industry.

Talent: Undoubtedly, talent is the cornerstone of any artist's career. It is the raw material from which unique and compelling music is crafted. However, talent in isolation is like a falling tree in an empty forest. Without an audience, its impact remains unheard. The music industry is packed with stories of now-legendary artists who, despite their profound skills and innovative sound, struggled for years to gain the recognition they deserved.

Recognition: On the flip side, recognition in the music industry is often a product of visibility and presence within the right networks. It hinges on an artist's ability to market themselves effectively, to find and connect with their audience, and to navigate the complex ecosystem of labels, promoters, and platforms that dictate the music's accessibility to a wider audience. Recognition is not merely a merit badge awarded for musical talent; it is the culmination of strategic positioning, branding, and the artist's ability to resonate with a community.

Case Study: How great artists have always struggled to break through

The journey to success in the music industry is often marked by setbacks, rejections, and failures that many artists face before achieving fame and recognition. This narrative is not uncommon, as numerous well-known musicians have encountered significant obstacles on their path to stardom. These stories serve as powerful reminders of resilience, perseverance, and the importance of pursuing one's passion despite the odds.

Lady Gaga, born Stefani Germanotta, faced early rejection in her career, including being dropped by Def Jam Recordings just three months after being signed. Despite these setbacks, she persevered, eventually signing with Akon's Konvict Music and achieving massive success with her debut album, "The Fame," which won two Grammy awards and was number one in nine countries.

Madonna, synonymous with pop music's evolution, struggled initially after moving to New York City. She faced job dismissals, financial hardships, and even violence. However, her determination led her to secure a record deal, paving the way for her to become the biggest pop star of the 1980s.

Jimi Hendrix, now celebrated as one of the most influential guitarists in the history of rock music, had a discouraging experience opening for The Monkees. He was booed off stage, but this did not deter him from pursuing his passion, ultimately revolutionising music with his innovative guitar playing.

Jay-Z faced rejection from record labels early in his career, leading him to co-found Roc-A-Fella Records. This decision was instrumental in launching not only his career but also the careers of other artists. He has since become one of the most successful musicians and entrepreneurs.

Elvis Presley, the King of Rock and Roll, was initially rejected by labels and told he couldn't sing. His perseverance led to a breakthrough when a DJ played his song "That's All Right," marking the beginning of his legendary career.

The Beatles: Rejected by Decca Records in 1961 for being "out of fashion," they went on to become one of the most successful musical acts in history.

Electronic Artists:

Eats Everything: Despite his early passion for DJing, which began at the tender age of 12, success was a long time coming for this Bristol-native. Born Daniel Pearce, he spent the majority of his 20s navigating through various dead-end jobs, all the while trying to make a mark as a DJ. It wasn't until his 30s, after years of dedication and perseverance, that he released "Entrance Song" in 2011. This track marked a turning point, catapulting him from local gigs to international acclaim. Pearce's story is a testament to the power of persistence, demonstrating that success can come at any stage in life, provided one is willing to persist in their passion.

Calvin Harris: Before becoming the world's highest-paid DJ, Harris endured a humble beginning in Dumfries, Scotland. His early career was marked by a chronic fatigue illness that sidelined him for over a year during his teens. After a failed attempt to jumpstart his music career in London, which led him to work at M&S, Harris moved back to Dumfries. However, he didn't give up on his dream. Utilising Myspace to promote his music, Harris caught the attention of EMI, leading to his breakthrough album "I Created Disco" in 2007. Harris's journey from an M&S shelf-stacker to a global DJ phenomenon highlights the power of unwavering dedication and the transformative potential of social media in the music industry.

Duke Dumont: Initially, Dumont took a job creating ringtones for a phone company, a far cry from the glamorous life of an international DJ. His commitment to his music career was so intense that he was eventually fired for spending too much time on Myspace, promoting his music. This dismissal, however, turned out to be a blessing in disguise. It allowed him to focus fully on his music, leading to his eventual breakthrough. Dumont's journey underscores the importance of resilience and the willingness to take risks for one's artistic vision.

Skrillex: Raised in a Scientologist household, Skrillex faced intense personal challenges, including bullying and the revelation of his adoption, which led him to run away from home at 16. His early musical endeavours were in various rock bands, where he found moderate success but was ultimately limited by vocal chord issues. Transitioning to electronic music marked a new beginning for him, and he eventually went on to release the groundbreaking EP "Scary Monsters and Nice Sprites." Skrillex's story is a compelling example of how personal struggles and a willingness to explore new musical territories can lead to unprecedented success in the industry.

These artists' stories highlight the unpredictable nature of the music industry and the importance of resilience. Their experiences underscore that initial failures and rejections can eventually lead to monumental success, serving as inspiration for aspiring musicians everywhere.

At the heart of the talent vs. recognition disconnect lies the crucial role of marketing. In a saturated market, where thousands of tracks are released daily, great music risks obscurity without strategic marketing efforts.

The gap between talent and recognition in the electronic music industry underscores the complex interplay between art and commerce. While talent is the foundation, strategic marketing and industry savvy are equally crucial in navigating the path to success. For emerging artists, understanding this dynamic and actively engaging in the business aspects of their careers is key to not just making great music but also ensuring it reaches and resonates with audiences worldwide. In essence, breaking through is not just about being heard; it's about being seen, understood, and remembered.

Ten Lessons for Artists

Here, we pull together everything we've heard from industry interviews and from our survey of artists, to define what we feel are the ten most important lessons for artists looking to build sustainable careers.

We've grouped the ten lessons into three categories:

- Identity Issues: The Struggle for Recognition
- Networking Properly
- Other Strategies for Success

Identity Issues: The Struggle for Recognition

Growing an online audience is a struggle, to some degree, for almost all electronic music artists - and a major one for two-thirds of them. *Understanding algorithms and promotional strategies* for music releases are also widespread challenges among artists, with 88% of artists facing some struggle.

Q: What specific marketing skills are you struggling with?

[Scale: Not a struggle, a slight struggle, a major struggle] - Percent saying 'a major struggle':

- "Graphic Design" - 28%
- "Growing my online audience" - 62%
- "Making short-form content (e.g. reels, shorts etc)" - 42%
- "Promotional strategies for music releases" - 41%
- "Thinking of content ideas" - 38%
- "Understanding algorithms" - 46%

Source: From Mix to Mainstage survey of electronic music artists, January '24

1. The Importance of Having a Clear Artistic Vision, Brand and Musical Identity

The significance of having a **clear artistic vision, brand, and musical identity** emerges as a foundational principle across the spectrum of interviews conducted for this report. This section synthesises insights from a variety of voices within the electronic music industry, illuminating how a well-defined artistic identity not only distinguishes artists in a crowded market but also guides their career trajectory, influences their audience engagement and networking strategies, and affects their relationships with labels and audiences.

Artistic Vision and Identity

The journey to establishing a unique artistic vision and identity involves introspection, creativity, and strategic planning. Fletcher Kerr underscores the importance of refining one's "sonic image" to achieve consistency in sound, which is crucial for emerging artists striving for recognition. This sentiment is echoed by Maxinne, who highlights the transformative power of immersive music experiences in shaping her artistic identity, signifying the potential of high-quality music to inspire passionate listeners to become future artists. At the same time, the process of discovering and honing one's unique sound and aesthetic requires patience and dedication, as noted by Gernot Mueller, who advises that it may take up to a decade to develop a sound that truly stands out. Chris Goss emphasises that marketing can't fix mediocre music. Artists must focus first on their core product - their musicality, personality and having something meaningful to say.

One insight from Navin Larriba's experience is the moment when an artist's skill level aligns with their taste level. This milestone is crucial for artists, marking a transition to producing music that resonates with their personal vision and standards. It signifies a significant step in an artist's development, where they start creating work that truly represents them, embodying their unique style and preferences.

Branding as a Strategic Tool

Branding extends beyond visual aesthetics; it encapsulates an artist's values, story, and musical ethos. As Paul Nolan suggests, defining what success means on a personal level and aligning one's brand with these values can create deeper connections with audiences. This approach is supported by Katsi aka Juliet Sikora, who emphasises the power of presenting oneself bravely in the digital world, leveraging social media as a platform for storytelling and audience engagement.

Networking and Industry Relationships

A clear artistic vision and brand not only attract a loyal fanbase but also facilitate more meaningful connections within the industry. Effective networking, as demonstrated through the experiences shared by Chris Goss and Mark Knight, is predicated on the authenticity and distinctiveness of an artist's identity. Building genuine relationships with industry professionals, labels, and fellow artists becomes more feasible when one's artistic vision is clear and communicated consistently.

Impact on Career Strategies

The strategic importance of a well-defined artistic vision and identity is further highlighted in the context of dealing with labels and navigating the complexities of the music industry. Owyn Sidwell's insights into strategic career planning resonate here, suggesting that artists with a strong sense of identity are better positioned to plot their career trajectories, align with labels that share their vision, and, ultimately, achieve sustainable success.

Conclusion

In conclusion, the amalgamation of insights from various industry professionals underscores the indispensable role of a clear artistic vision, brand, and musical identity in the electronic music landscape. This foundational element not only distinguishes artists in a saturated market but also serves as a guiding beacon for career development, networking, and strategic decision-making. Emerging artists are encouraged to invest time and effort into developing their unique artistic identity, as this will significantly influence their career trajectory and potential for long-term success in the industry.

2. Leveraging Social Media Platforms for Career Development

The digital age has fundamentally transformed how emerging electronic artists approach career development. One of the most powerful tools at their disposal is social media, which, when used effectively, can significantly amplify their visibility, engagement, and, ultimately, career opportunities. Drawing on insights from interviews conducted for this report, it's clear that **social media is not just an optional marketing channel but a crucial platform** for building a sustainable career in the electronic music industry.

Harnessing the Digital Stage

Fletcher Kerr highlights the indispensable role of social media in building an audience, noting its potential to mislead with vanity metrics that might not reflect an artist's actual musical skill. It raises a meaningful conversation about the overemphasis on digital metrics in artist success and the potential disconnect between online popularity and real-world talent.

This underscores the importance of focusing on genuine engagement and community-building rather than merely chasing followers or likes. Fletcher's experience serves as a cautionary tale, reminding artists that while social media can fast-track opportunities, it's vital to maintain a balance between online presence and musical authenticity.

Chris Goss from Hospital Records echoes this sentiment, pointing out the overemphasis on digital metrics as a measure of success. His advice stresses the importance of creating standout content in a saturated market, encouraging artists to use social media to differentiate themselves through unique and authentic expressions of their music and personality.

Maxinne's narrative adds an interesting dimension to the discussion, illustrating how social media can serve not only as a tool for audience building (B2C) but also as a platform for B2B engagement. She highlights the overlooked advantage of leveraging social media for networking with promoters, labels, and other industry stakeholders, suggesting that a strategic approach to social media can unlock doors to collaborations and opportunities that go beyond the traditional artist-fan interaction.

Practical Strategies for Social Media Mastery

1. **Develop a Clear and Consistent Brand:** Your social media presence should be an extension of your artistic identity. As Fletcher Kerr's journey illustrates, having a clear vision for your brand and consistently presenting it across platforms can help carve out a unique space in the digital world.
2. **Engage Genuinely with Your Audience:** Engagement is more than just numbers. As Maxinne's approach shows, using social media to build relationships with your audience and industry peers can create a supportive network that's invaluable for career development.
3. **Create Quality Content Regularly:** The challenge of standing out in a crowded space, as mentioned by Chris Goss, can be mitigated by consistently delivering high-quality content that resonates with your target audience. This can range from music releases and behind-the-scenes content to interactive live sessions.
4. **Leverage Analytics for Insightful Engagement:** Understanding the data behind your social media performance can provide valuable insights into your audience's preferences, helping tailor your content and engagement strategies more effectively.

5. **Utilise Multiple Platforms Strategically:** Different social media platforms cater to different audiences and content types. Using each platform's strengths, an integrated approach can help reach a wider audience and deepen engagement.
6. **Invest in Learning and Improvement:** The digital landscape is continually evolving. Keeping abreast of the latest trends and tools in social media marketing can help artists adapt their strategies for maximum impact.

Conclusion

The interviews conducted underline a unanimous agreement on the significance of social media in the electronic music landscape. While the platforms offer immense opportunities for visibility and career advancement, the key to leveraging social media effectively lies in authenticity, strategic engagement, and a consistent focus on building genuine connections. As the industry continues to evolve, social media remains an essential tool in the artist's arsenal, not just for promotion but as a vital component of their overall career development strategy.

Networking Properly

Most artists feel they don't have a strong enough network.

In our survey, most electronic music artists do not feel their professional network within the electronic music industry is strong enough; just 2% rate it as 5/5 (strong) and only 22% rate it as 4 or 5 out of 5.

Q: How would you rate the strength and effectiveness of your professional network within the electronic music industry? Please consider factors such as the diversity and influence of your contacts, frequency of meaningful interactions, and the tangible benefits (e.g., gigs, collaborations, learning opportunities) you've gained from your network

- "1" - 13%
- "2" - 31%
- "3" - 34%
- "4" - 21%
- "5" - 2%

Source: From Mix to Mainstage survey of electronic music artists, January '24

Responses reveal a multifaceted landscape, marked by both obstacles and avenues of opportunity. Artists candidly shared their experiences, highlighting the impact of external factors and personal hurdles. The closure of clubs, a pervasive popularity contest, and the difficulty of being taken seriously without a following are recurrent themes. One respondent noted, "People only want to know of you when someone else does first," underscoring the industry's emphasis on social proof and recognition.

Positive experiences were also shared, with one artist feeling encouraged by the kindness and support within the community, crediting institutions such as Toolroom Academy for facilitating connections. However, challenges such as the logistical difficulties of attending crucial networking events due to financial constraints were mentioned.

Geographical barriers, such as being distant from industry hubs or residing in less recognised locations like Tasmania, were highlighted as significant obstacles. This issue was exacerbated for artists living in countries with limited electronic music opportunities and cultural and linguistic barriers that add another layer of complexity in countries like Japan.

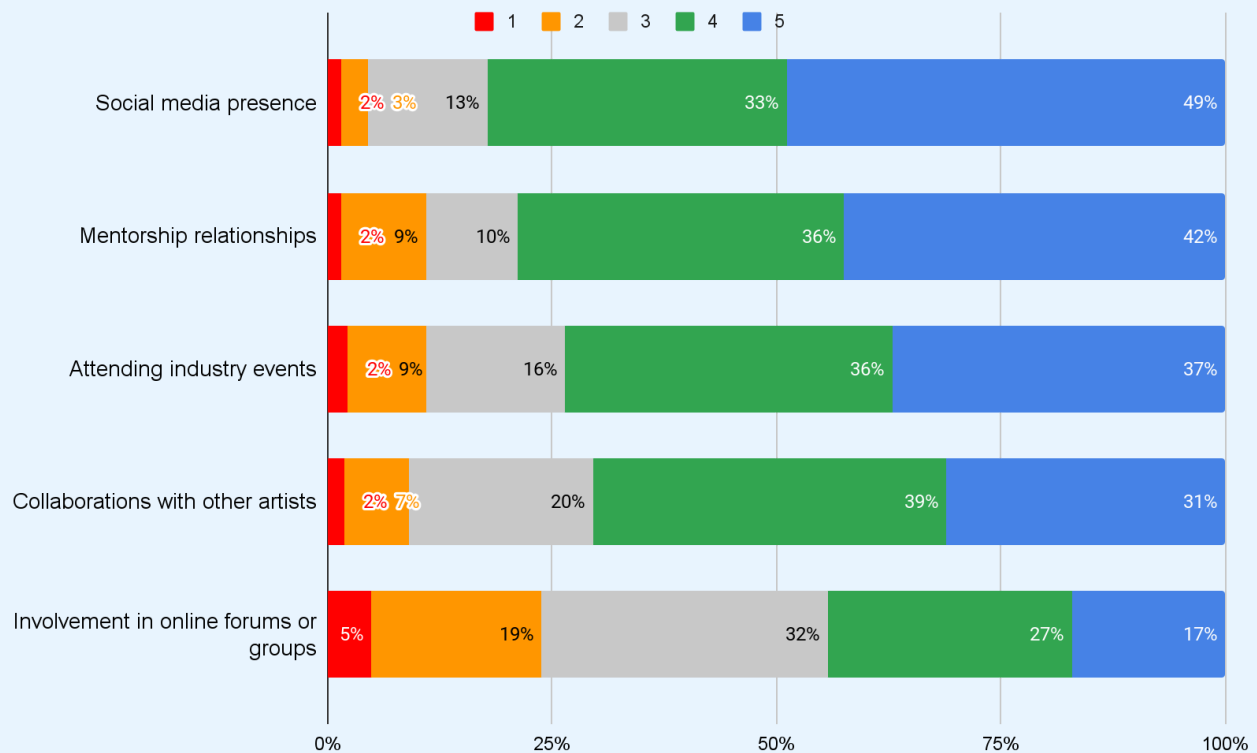
Personal challenges also play a considerable role, with artists mentioning the struggle of balancing a full-time job, managing a professional career outside of music, and dealing with introverted tendencies that make networking daunting. The digital landscape, while providing new opportunities for connection, often feels insufficient compared to the value of face-to-face interactions, as one artist lamented the shift towards online networking.

The responses collectively paint a picture of an industry where networking is both vital and challenging, influenced by a complex interplay of personal, geographical, and social factors. Despite these challenges, the resilience and adaptability of artists shine through as they navigate these obstacles in pursuit of their passion for electronic music.

Social media presence and mentoring relationships were seen as most valuable.

When it comes to networking and community engagement efforts, **social media presence and mentoring relationships** are felt to be the most significant, with 49% and 42% rating them as extremely important (5/5), respectively.

Q: On a scale from 1 (not important) to 5 (extremely important), how would you rate the significance of the following in your networking and community engagement efforts:



Source: From Mix to Mainstage survey of electronic music artists, January '24

Responses to the survey question about the significance of various factors in networking and community engagement efforts reveal a diverse range of perspectives and experiences among emerging electronic artists. The variety in responses underscores the complexity of navigating the music industry's social and professional landscapes.

Some artists highlighted the importance of "Skills sharing" and "Regional events within my (limited) reach," suggesting a focus on community-building and local engagement as crucial elements for growth. The emphasis on sharing knowledge and experiences resonates with the sentiment that building a "genuine fan base through meaningful connections" is more valuable than superficial metrics, such as follower counts on social media platforms. This approach to authenticity and engagement was echoed by an artist who stated, "I've always made it a point to assist emerging producers and DJs by sharing tips and tricks about my music."

The need for guidance and support from the industry was a recurring theme, with one respondent expressing a desire for "a proper company that can help out with questions like where am I in the industry, what label should be right for me, is my production level lagging? Or do they just not listen?" This sentiment underscores the challenges artists face in finding their place within the music ecosystem and the perceived gap in accessible, tailored advice.

Mentorship emerged as a highly valued but often inaccessible resource. Several respondents expressed a wish for mentorship opportunities to help them "develop my skills" and "learn how to have more gigs," pointing to a gap in support structures for skill development and career advancement. The struggle to connect with mentors and the industry at large was summarised by one artist who appreciated the survey for providing "a way for me to communicate some of the struggles."

Concerns about industry dynamics and the difficulty of breaking through were evident, with criticisms about the "dance remix" of the pop music bootleg genre "stealing the space that should be open for artists who create original work." This critique highlights broader concerns about the sustainability of the industry for new artists, emphasising the need for "a major transformation in the way artists are paid for their production" and how projects are promoted.

Networking was repeatedly mentioned as crucial, with a strong emphasis on the value of "Connecting to local promoters/club owners/resident DJs" and "Having support from bigger artists or even same-sized connections." These responses underline the importance of strategic relationships and the critical role they play in an artist's ability to gain exposure and build a career.

Overall, these open-ended responses paint a picture of an industry at a crossroads, with emerging artists seeking more support, clearer paths to visibility and success, and a community that values authenticity and collaboration over competition. The feedback calls for a more supportive ecosystem that addresses the unique challenges faced by new talents in the electronic music scene.

3. Effective Networking: Building genuine relationships

One element consistently highlighted by industry veterans and successful artists alike is the role of effective networking and the cultivation of genuine relationships. Drawing insights from comprehensive interviews conducted for this report, this section explores the nuanced dynamics of building a robust professional network that extends beyond mere transactional interactions.

Fletcher Kerr: Fletcher underscores the misconception of the solitary artist triumphing against all odds. His narrative sheds light on the 'invisible team' behind successful individuals, emphasising the importance of recognising and valuing the collaborative efforts that propel an artist's career. Networking, as Fletcher reveals, is **not about the superficial accumulation of contacts but the art of identifying and nurturing relationships** with those who bring out the best in your creative and professional journey.

Chris Goss: Hospital Records' Chris Goss spoke to the transformative power of community and collaborative ethos within the music industry. He identifies networking as a vital skill that transcends the basic need for visibility, highlighting the significance of mutual support systems, mentorship, and shared knowledge. Chris's insights advocate for a networking approach that is generous in spirit, suggesting that the success of one can catalyse opportunities for many.

Maxinne: Maxinne's ascent in the electronic music scene is a testament to the power of networking. Her journey from house parties to reputable DJ sets illustrates the practical benefits of establishing a strong network. Maxinne's experiences underscore the importance of platforms and initiatives that facilitate interactions between emerging artists and industry stakeholders, suggesting that effective **networking is as much about listening and learning as it is about speaking and promoting**.

Channe: Chantelle Drewery, known professionally as Channe, highlights the role of digital platforms in fostering networking opportunities. Her emphasis on engaging with communities online through Instagram and Discord points to the evolving nature of networking in the digital age. Channe's success story is a reminder that while face-to-face interactions remain invaluable, virtual communities offer a complementary avenue for building relationships and seeking support.

Gernot Mueller: Gernot Mueller, from the education sector, ties the concept of networking to the educational journey of an artist. He posits that educational platforms serve as a unique networking opportunity, connecting students with industry professionals, peers, and potential mentors. Mueller's perspective broadens the definition of networking, integrating it into the continuous learning process essential for any artist's growth.

Navin Larriba: A significant key to progression in the music industry, as identified by Navin, is establishing the right connections. Developing relationships with promoters and industry professionals is paramount. The advice to "get involved" by attending relevant parties and networking events underscores the importance of being present and proactive in the industry circles you aim to be part of.

Effective networking is depicted not just as a strategy for career advancement, but as a **foundational element for building a sustainable career in music**. It is clear from the interviews that genuine relationships, nurtured over time through shared experiences, mutual respect, and common goals, form the bedrock of a thriving career.

The narratives from Fletcher Kerr, Chris Goss, Maxinne, Channe, and Gernot Mueller collectively advocate for a networking approach that prioritises authenticity, reciprocity, and a community-oriented mindset. The emphasis on building genuine relationships resonates across their stories, highlighting the importance of seeing beyond immediate gains to foster connections that are enriching both professionally and personally.

Conclusion

In conclusion, effective networking in the electronic music industry transcends the conventional wisdom of making acquaintances. It is about cultivating a supportive ecosystem that thrives on collaboration, shared success, and the continuous exchange of ideas. Emerging artists are encouraged to embrace networking not just as a means to an end but as a vital component of their artistic journey, contributing to a more inclusive, dynamic, and sustainable music industry.

4. Understanding Industry Roles

This section aims to demystify the roles within the industry, offering emerging artists a clearer path to navigating their careers successfully. By referencing key insights from the interviews, we can provide a comprehensive overview of how understanding these roles is fundamental to building sustainable careers in electronic music.

Understanding Industry Roles

The electronic music landscape is vast and complex, comprising various key players whose roles often intersect and complement each other. From record labels to booking agents, promoters, and beyond, each stakeholder plays a critical role in an artist's journey from the studio to the mainstage. Insights from industry professionals and artists themselves shed light on these roles and underscore the importance of leveraging these relationships for career advancement.

Booking Agents and Promoters

The significance of booking agents and promoters is well-articulated by Maxinne. Booking agents are instrumental in securing gigs, negotiating contracts, and managing schedules, while promoters play a key role in event organisation and artist exposure. Establishing a positive rapport with promoters and venue owners can open doors to more opportunities for artists to perform. Calum Lawrence's journey serves as an example of the obstacles faced by artists in areas with less thriving electronic music scenes, emphasising the crucial roles played by these individuals in generating performance opportunities.

Record Labels and Distributors

Interviews with artists like Fletcher Kerr and Chris Goss from Hospital Records highlight the pivotal role of record labels in providing artists with a platform to release their music alongside financial support and marketing muscle. Fletcher Kerr's perspective underscores the value of labels not just for financial support and promotions but also as partners in an artist's development. Meanwhile, Chris highlights the importance of record labels in providing a platform for emerging artists to gain visibility and recognition for their talent, a sentiment also echoed by Juliet Sikora.

Role of digital distributors is also more than just getting music onto digital platforms. Some digital distributors cater specifically to the electronic genre, understanding its unique market dynamics. They ensure that music reaches a global audience and manage the logistics behind tracking streams and sales.

However, the rise of independent releasing in the digital age has offered an alternative to the record label model, particularly within the electronic music industry. This is due to factors such as digital distribution platforms, social media and digital marketing tools, affordable production software and equipment, and artist collectives. These factors empower artists to create professional-grade music, build direct-to-fan relationships, and gain visibility without any barriers. The success stories of independent artists like Flume, Kygo, and Amelie Lens show the potential for success outside the label system. In fact Gernot Mueller says self-released tracks can gain high traction and attract the attention of labels, leading to bigger opportunities in the future.

Collaborators and Teams

The myth of the solo artist is debunked through insights from Fletcher Kerr and Mark Knight, who stress the importance of collaboration and teamwork. Behind most successful artists is a team comprising managers, mix engineers, PR professionals, publishers and more. They all play a vital role in helping artists create and promote their music, whether it's shaping the

sound of a recording, guiding an artist's career, or managing the rights to their music. This ecosystem supports the artist's creative and commercial endeavours, emphasising the need for emerging artists to cultivate a supportive network.

Education Providers and Mentors

The role of education providers and mentors in artist development cannot be overstated. Gernot Mueller and Paul Nolan discuss the importance of continuous learning and self-improvement, whether through formal education platforms like Toolroom Academy or mentorship schemes. These avenues not only impart essential skills but also provide networking opportunities and a deeper understanding of the industry landscape.

Conclusion

Understanding the roles of various industry stakeholders is paramount for emerging electronic artists. These insights, drawn from the experiences of individuals across the spectrum of electronic music, underscore the collaborative and interconnected nature of the industry. By forging strong relationships with labels, leveraging the expertise of booking agents and promoters, building a dedicated team, and embracing continuous learning, artists can navigate the complexities of the industry more effectively. This section of the report aims to equip artists with the knowledge to strategically engage with these roles, paving the way for sustainable and successful careers in electronic music.

5. Getting Gigs: Approaching Venues and Promoters

Interviews with artists and industry professionals highlight essential tactics for emerging artists seeking to secure gigs, a vital step in building a successful career in the electronic music industry.

Understanding the Landscape

Before approaching venues and promoters, artists must comprehend the current landscape of the electronic music scene. Insights from Fletcher Kerr and Chris Goss underscore the importance of recognising the shift in audience preferences and the impact of digital platforms. Fletcher Kerr's pragmatic approach to balancing personal passion with profitable opportunities in the industry, and Chris Goss's emphasis on the necessity of standout content in a saturated market, suggest that artists need to be adaptable and strategic in their approach.

Crafting a Compelling Pitch

The interviews highlighted the importance of crafting a compelling pitch when approaching venues and promoters. Maxinne's success story illustrates the value of leveraging her network and showcasing her unique brand and sound. She emphasised the need for a well-rounded skill set, suggesting that **artists should not only focus on their music but also on how they present themselves** and their understanding of the industry.

Building Relationships

Effective networking and building genuine relationships were themes that resonated across several interviews. Fletcher Kerr pointed out the significance of uncovering hidden collaborators, indicating that understanding the broader ecosystem of support behind successful acts can inform how emerging artists approach venues and promoters. Meanwhile, Channe's journey highlighted how community and connections can open doors, stressing the importance of being part of industry networks, both online and offline. Networking and building relationships with established artists in electronic music can lead to opportunities such as opening for them at their gigs.

Leveraging Digital Platforms

The digital era has transformed how artists connect with venues and promoters. Emerging artists should ensure their music is accessible on platforms like Spotify, Apple Music, Bandcamp, and SoundCloud and actively engage with these communities. Creating and sharing high-quality recordings or live sets can attract the attention of venue promoters and event organisers browsing these platforms for new talent. Additionally, **leveraging the analytics from these platforms can help artists understand their audience demographics** and target their pitch to venues where their fanbase is located.

Fletcher Kerr's insights into the "Social Media Mirage" and the advice from Gernot Mueller about the critical role of social media for branding and visibility suggest that artists must effectively utilise digital platforms. This involves not just showcasing their music but also building a narrative that captures their identity and resonates with both venues/promoters and audiences.

Demonstrating Value

Venues and promoters are looking for artists who can draw crowds and create memorable events. Insights from Maxinne on "B2B Social Media" and Channe's emphasis on the importance of defining one's craft highlight the necessity for artists to demonstrate their value beyond their music. This includes their ability to market themselves, engage with their audience, and contribute to the success of the events they are part of.

Key Takeaways

1. **Adaptability:** Be prepared to adapt your approach based on the evolving landscape of the electronic music industry and audience preferences.
2. **Compelling Presentation:** Craft pitches that showcase your unique identity, music, and understanding of the industry.
3. **Relationship Building:** Foster genuine connections with industry stakeholders through effective networking.
4. **Digital Savvy:** Utilise digital platforms to enhance your visibility and connect with venues and promoters.
5. **Value Proposition:** Demonstrate your ability to contribute to the success of events, not just through your music but also through your marketing and audience engagement skills.

Emerging artists must navigate the challenging terrain of securing gigs with strategic insight, adaptability, and a comprehensive understanding of the industry's dynamics. By drawing on the lessons from seasoned artists and industry professionals, they can position themselves effectively when approaching venues and promoters, paving the way for a successful career in electronic music.

6. Approaching Labels: Do's and Don'ts

In the journey of an emerging electronic artist, navigating the relationship with labels is both a critical and daunting task. This section distils insights from interviews conducted with a diverse array of industry participants, from seasoned artists to label executives, providing a pragmatic guide to engaging with labels.

Do's:

1. **Build a Distinct Musical Identity:** Before approaching labels, artists must cultivate a unique sound and identity. Fletcher Kerr's emphasis on having a clear artistic brand underscores this need. Your musical identity not only helps in standing out but also in aligning with labels that share your artistic vision.
2. **Understand the Label's Catalogue and Ethos:** Katsi, aka Juliet Sikora, advises artists to research and understand a label's musical direction and ethos before making contact. This ensures your music aligns with their catalogue, increasing the chances of your work being received positively.
3. **Selectivity for Growth:** Navin's strategy to become more selective with gigs and label releases as he aims for higher profile opportunities provides a blueprint for emerging artists. This approach emphasises quality over quantity, suggesting that being discerning with opportunities can enhance an artist's brand and propel their career forward. It also touches on the importance of aligning with labels and events that match an artist's vision and goals.
4. **Create a Professional Press Kit:** A well-organised press kit, including a short bio, discography, notable achievements, and links to your best tracks, is crucial. Mark Knight's discussion on the importance of presenting yourself professionally highlights the need for a cohesive package that represents your brand and music effectively.
5. **Network Authentically:** Networking isn't merely about exchanging contacts; it's about building genuine relationships. Paul Nolan's insights stress the value of engaging with the community and establishing connections that can naturally lead to label introductions.
6. **Demonstrate Your Commitment:** Labels are looking for artists with a long-term vision for their career. Mueller explains that labels view signing new artists as an investment and therefore, they prefer artists who demonstrate long-term commitment to their career. Thus, it's crucial for artists to show their dedication and willingness to work hard for many years to convince labels of their potential return on investment. Owyn Sidwell's suggestion to show your dedication and professionalism can make you a more attractive proposition to labels seeking to invest in artists who view their craft not just as a passion but as a career.

Don'ts:

1. **Avoid Bulk Email Blasts:** Generic emails sent to multiple labels at once are often counterproductive. Fletcher Kerr's experiences remind us that personalised communications tailored to each label's focus and previous releases are far more effective.
2. **Don't Overlook the Importance of Social Media:** Despite Fletcher Kerr's critique of social media metrics, having an engaged following can demonstrate your ability to build and maintain a fanbase. However, artists should balance their online presence with genuine musical talent and not let social metrics define their worth.
3. **Resist the Urge to Follow Trends Blindly:** Authenticity in your music and brand is key. Katsi's advice against crafting music solely based on current trends aligns with the need for artists to remain true to their sound and vision, even when seeking label support.
4. **Don't Expect Immediate Success:** The path to recognition by labels is often long and requires patience. Mark Knight's career advice, emphasising persistence and the development of a unique sound, highlights the importance of resilience in the face of rejection or silence from labels. It takes considerable time and patience to build a sustainable career in the electronic music industry. Chris Goss pointed out that artists shouldn't expect overnight success and should be prepared to put in the hard work to gradually build up their careers.

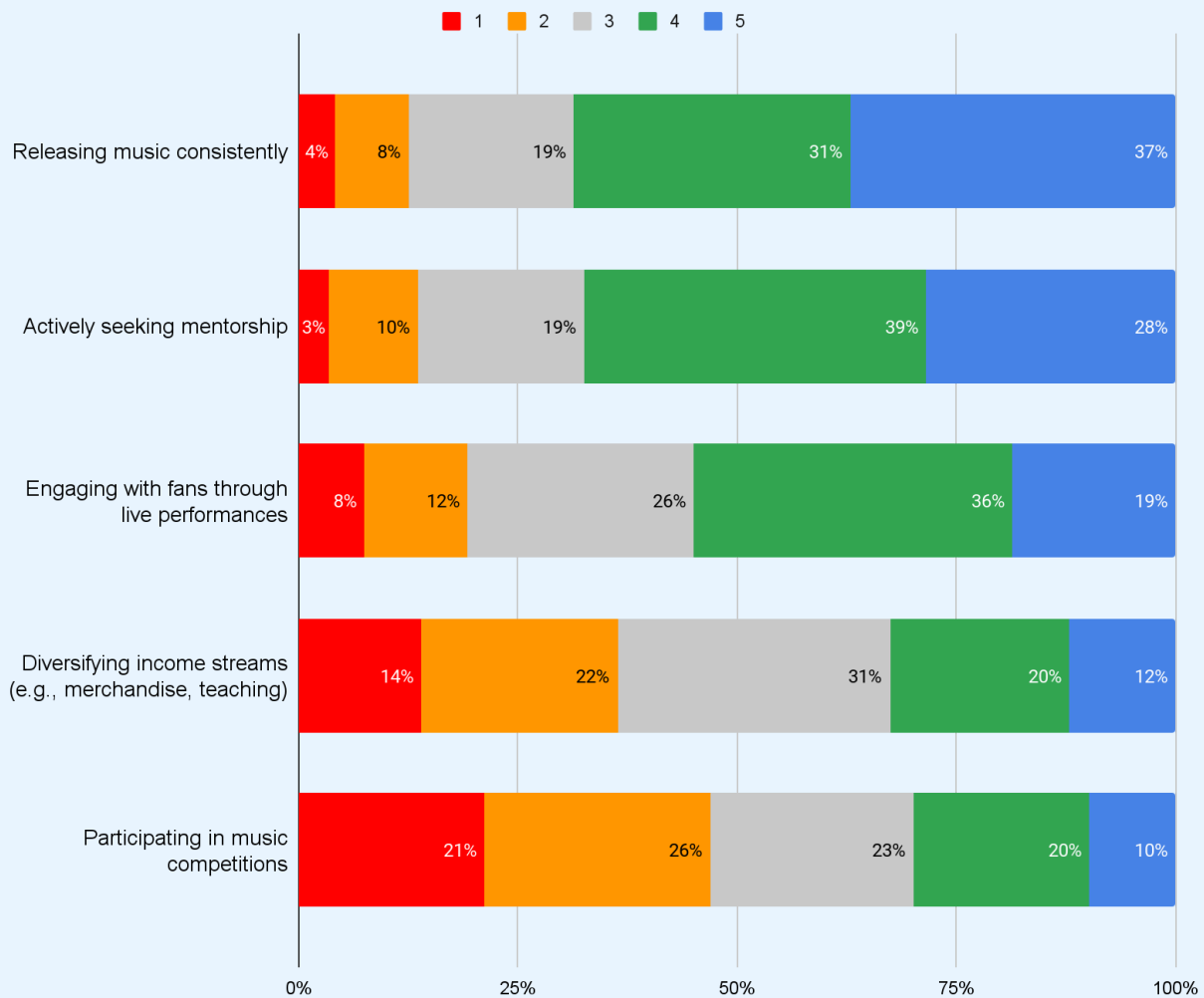
5. **Avoid Underestimating the Business Aspect:** Understanding the business side, including contracts, rights, revenue streams, and analytics is crucial. Gernot Mueller's emphasis on the importance of legal knowledge ensures artists are not only creative but also savvy in their label negotiations.

Incorporating these do's and don'ts into your strategy for approaching labels can significantly enhance your prospects. By fostering a distinct musical identity, understanding and aligning with a label's ethos, engaging in authentic networking, and maintaining patience and professionalism, emerging artists can navigate the complex terrain of label relations more effectively.

Other Strategies for Success

When asked what they thought about a selection of strategies to improve their career growth, the two strategies most commonly rated highly (4 or 5/5) were *releasing music consistently* (69%) and *actively seeking mentorship* (67%). Engaging with fans through live performances was rated highly by 55% of artists, whilst *diversifying income streams* and *participating in music competitions* were rated highly by just under a third of artists.

Q: On a scale of 1 (not effective) to 5 (highly effective), how would you rate the following strategies in terms of their impact on your career growth



Source: From Mix to Mainstage survey of electronic music artists, January '24

7. The Role of Competitions in Validating Talent and Opening Opportunities

The role of competitions such as DJ contests and music production in the electronic music industry, as highlighted by the insights from our interviews, plays a significant part in validating talent and opening up new opportunities for emerging artists. Through conversations with a diverse range of artists and industry professionals, we've unearthed how these competitions not only serve as a platform for recognition but also act as a critical stepping stone in an artist's development and career progression.

Competitions as a Validation Mechanism

Competitions within the electronic music sphere offer a **unique avenue for artists to showcase their talent to a wider audience**, including key industry stakeholders such as record labels, promoters, and established artists. As noted by Channe, winning a competition provided a significant morale boost and served as a form of validation for her work. It underscored the importance of external recognition in bolstering an artist's confidence and reinforcing their belief in their musical direction. This external validation can be useful for emerging artists, offering a tangible sign of their potential and readiness to engage with a broader industry audience.

Opening Doors to New Opportunities

The impact of competitions extends beyond mere recognition; they open doors to new opportunities that might otherwise be inaccessible to emerging artists. For instance, Channe's victory led to opportunities with a record label, illustrating how competitions can directly connect artists with pivotal career advancement platforms. Competitions amplify an artist's visibility, demonstrate their commitment and talent, making them more attractive to labels and promoters looking to invest in new talent.

The Role of Competitions in Artist Development

Competitions also play a substantial role in artist development, providing participants with feedback from industry professionals and peers. This feedback is invaluable for refining an artist's sound, performance, and overall approach to their craft. As highlighted by Maxinne, the transition from a passionate listener to a professional DJ was significantly influenced by her elevated experiences at quality clubs and festivals, a journey that competitions can emulate on a smaller scale. **Competitions simulate real-world challenges and successes**, offering a safe space for artists to experiment, learn, and grow.

Industry Support for Emerging Talent

Our interviews also shed light on the broader industry's role in supporting emerging talent through competitions. For example, Chris Goss of Hospital Records pointed out the importance of mentorship and support from large music companies. Competitions, especially those sponsored or endorsed by respected industry players, can serve as a crucial part of this support ecosystem, providing not just exposure but also educational and developmental resources.

Conclusion

In conclusion, competitions serve as a platform for validation, a doorway to new opportunities, and a crucible for artist development. The insights from artists like Channe and industry professionals underscore the importance of competitions in shaping the careers of emerging artists. As such, stakeholders across the electronic music industry are encouraged to continue supporting and developing competitions as a key component of the ecosystem that nurtures new talent. This

approach will ensure the vibrant future of the electronic music scene, fostering a continuous influx of fresh, innovative talent ready to take the global stage.

8. Continuous Learning and Skill Development

In a landscape that is as dynamic as the sounds that define it, continuous learning and skill development emerge as non-negotiables for artists aspiring towards a sustainable career. The insights derived from interviews with a diverse array of artists and industry professionals underscore the multifaceted nature of growth in this sector. This section delves into why **relentless improvement and adaptability are not just beneficial but essential**, drawing upon the experiences and advice shared by those at the forefront of the industry.

Continuous Learning: A Core Pillar for Artists

With its rapid technological advancements and evolving consumer preferences, the electronic music industry demands that artists not only keep up but stay ahead. Fletcher Kerr, an artist known for his commitment to refining his "sonic image," exemplifies the importance of having a clear artistic vision and continually honing one's musical identity. Kerr's journey underlines that defining and redefining one's sound is a continuous process, shaped by both introspection and external influences. Maxinne's approach involved continuously learning new skills, whether it be related to music production, networking, or operating within the industry. While, Navin's realisation that what brought him success at one level won't necessarily work at the next underscores the dynamic nature of the music industry. These insights and experiences suggest artists must continuously learn, adapt, and refine their approach to remain relevant and sustain their careers.

Skill Development: Beyond the Studio

The transformation from emerging to established artist involves mastering several skills, both within and outside the music studio. Paul Nolan's advice and Owyn Sidwell's emphasis on "educational empowerment" highlight the value of acquiring knowledge across various domains. It highlights the necessity of understanding the business side of music, advocating for a comprehensive grasp of marketing, brand development, business management, and the intricacies of the industry's economic models. With an abundance of resources available, from books to online tutorials, artists can empower themselves with knowledge and skills. This holistic approach to learning ensures artists are well-equipped to navigate the industry's complexities, from promoting their music to managing their careers as brands.

Mark Knight who stresses the importance of treating one's music career with the same strategic planning and investment as a startup business, as well as Navin's journey from pursuing music as a passion to treating it as a business highlights a common trajectory for artists. The transition is delicate; while recognising the importance of professionalisation, artists must balance business decisions without compromising the passion that drove them to create in the first place. This insight suggests the necessity for emerging artists to find a balance between their artistic integrity and the pragmatics of the industry.

The interviews also reveal a consensus on the significance of soft skills. Networking, a key theme across discussions, is noted by artists like Maxinne for its pivotal role in career advancement. The ability to build genuine relationships within the industry can unlock opportunities that are otherwise inaccessible. Such skills are not innate but cultivated through practice and engagement with the community.

Leveraging Music Education

Emerging electronic music artists can maximise their potential by engaging in formal education programs, specialised courses, industry partnerships to continuously learn and grow. These strategies will not only enhance their skills and knowledge but also provide valuable opportunities for career advancement and success within the electronic music industry.

Adapting to Change: The Industry's Constant

Gernot Mueller's perspective on the "social media game" and "mindset matters" highlights the importance of artists adapting to the changing music industry. Artists must maintain their authenticity while embracing new marketing techniques and platforms. This balance between innovation and authenticity can be achieved by staying updated on the latest trends, technologies, and innovations in electronic music. To do so, artists can continuously learn and self-improvement by attending workshops, online courses, conferences, and industry events. This will help them remain adaptable to the evolving music landscape.

Juliet Sikora (Katsi), through her initiatives like "Support Your Locals," demonstrates how established artists can play a crucial role in nurturing talent by sharing knowledge and opportunities. This culture of mentorship is an integral part of the ecosystem, facilitating the transfer of insights and experiences that empower emerging artists to navigate their paths more effectively.

Conclusion

The path to success in the electronic music industry is non-linear, and filled with challenges requiring technical and interpersonal skills. Continuous learning and skill development, as evidenced by the experiences of Fletcher Kerr, Owyn Sidwell, Paul Nolan, Mark Knight, and Juliet Sikora, are fundamental to navigating this journey. Artists must remain students of their craft and the industry, embracing the ethos of perpetual growth to adapt, thrive, and, ultimately, resonate with audiences in a deeply competitive field.

9. Building a Team and Knowing When to Delegate

In the journey of an emerging electronic artist, one of the pivotal steps towards sustainability and growth is the understanding of when and how to build a supportive team, as well as recognising the crucial moments when delegation becomes necessary for further development. Friends, family members, and other supporters can serve as a team in the early stages of one's career. ChatGPT can be your reliable and knowledgeable companion in the initial phases, too. Whether you need help with developing marketing plans, legal contracts, pitching ideas, or generating concepts, this AI-powered assistant can lend you a hand. Below is a useful resource, a practical guide to growth for artists using ChatGPT. .

[PROMPT for Musicians By Richard Bowman and David Boyle](#)

(To get it for free, click this link. Note that the discount will be applied at checkout)

Eventually, an artist is encouraged to assemble a strategic team to assist in their career development. Insights from our interviews illuminate this path, highlighting the importance of collaboration, delegation, and building a team that complements an artist's vision and skill set.

The Invisible Team Behind Success

Fletcher Kerr's narrative reveals the often-understated truth of the electronic music scene: successful artists are seldom solo acts. Instead, they are the tip of an iceberg, supported beneath the surface by a crew of skilled professionals, ranging from mixing engineers to PR experts. This hidden network is instrumental in crafting the artist's public persona and ensuring their music reaches the intended audiences effectively. Fletcher's advice underscores the necessity of acknowledging these roles early in one's career and striving to build a similar support system tailored to their unique needs and goals.

Maxinne emphasises having a good team that understands and shares an artist's goals can significantly impact their career trajectory and find team members who communicate well and contribute to constant progress. This insight suggests the necessity of guidance and resources to help new artists identify and build an effective team.

The Power of Collaboration and Delegation

The importance of team collaboration and the strategic delegation of tasks is further emphasised by Maxinne, who discusses the balancing act between branding and authenticity. She notes that while it's crucial for artists to maintain a genuine connection with their music and audience, there is equal importance in entrusting certain aspects of the career to specialists. This might include social media management, booking gigs, or even aspects of music production that do not align with the artist's core strengths. Channe also emphasises the importance of focusing on one's strengths and recognising when to delegate tasks in order to succeed.

Nurturing Emerging Talent

Gernot Mueller from the education sector stresses the significance of self-reliance but also acknowledges the invaluable support a well-chosen team can provide. According to Mueller, the journey towards establishing a unique sound and brand in the electronic music industry can span a decade or more. During this time, having a dedicated team that not only understands but also shares the artist's vision and commitment can exponentially increase their chances of success. He advocates for artists to be proactive in creating their opportunities by engaging with mentors, joining educational platforms, and networking within the industry to build relationships that could lead to assembling a team organically.

Financial Sustainability and Strategic Planning

Owyn Sidwell's perspective brings a broader strategic dimension to the discussion. He emphasises the necessity of diversifying income streams and leveraging one's network for growth and not solely relying on touring and recorded music for income, especially in the early stages of an artist's career. Sidwell's advice is to consider the team not just as a support mechanism for current artistic endeavours but as a strategic asset in planning for future ventures, whether they be tours, collaborations, or brand partnerships. Understanding when to delegate tasks to this team allows the artist to focus on their passion and creativity, ensuring that the business side of their career is managed effectively and sustainably.

Conclusion

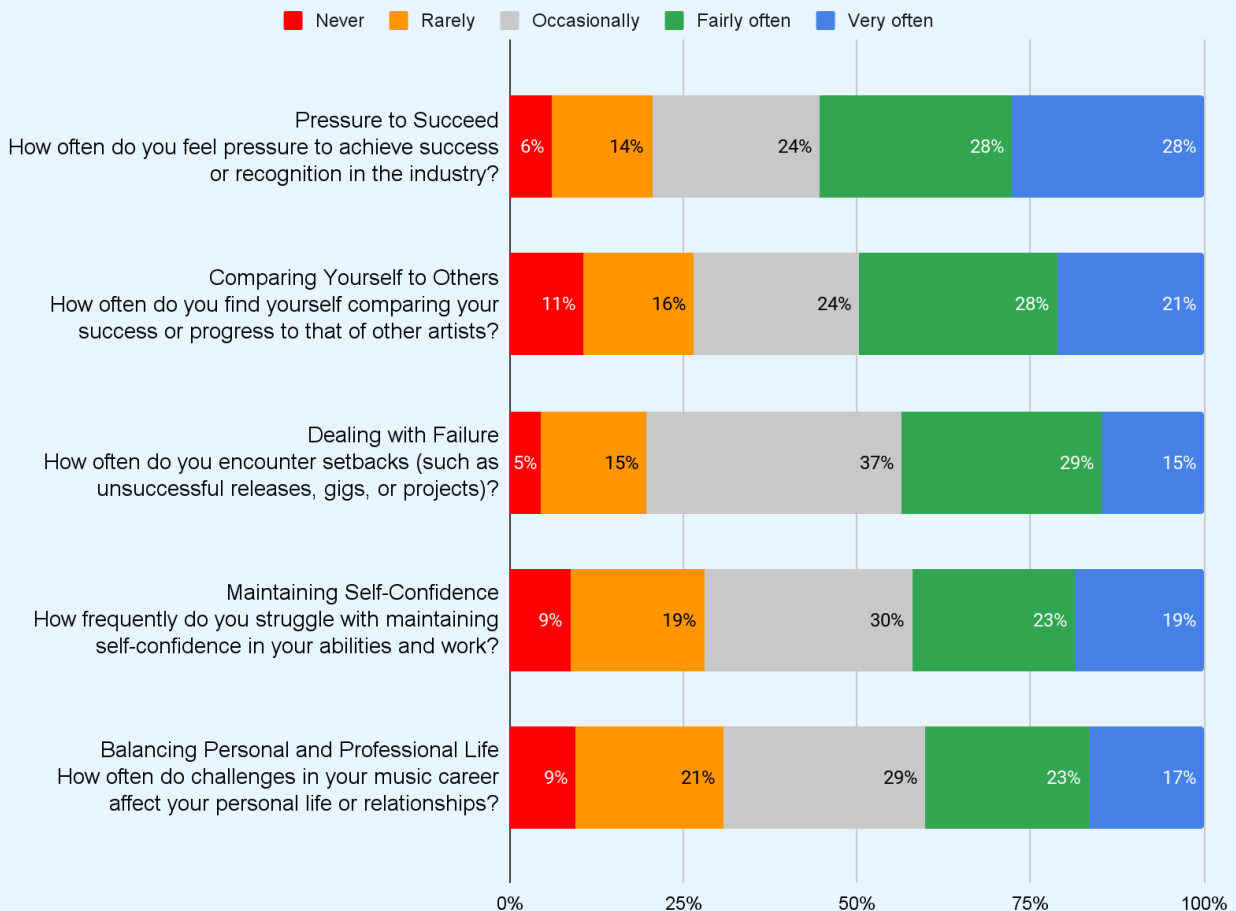
The collective wisdom from our interviews paints a clear picture: building a team and knowing when to delegate are not just steps towards professional growth but essential strategies for survival in the competitive landscape of electronic music. Artists are encouraged to view their career as a collective effort involving not just their creative output but also the support of a dedicated team that can help navigate the complexities of the industry. By embracing delegation, artists free themselves to focus on their core passion, laying a foundation for a sustainable and fulfilling career in electronic music.

10. Prioritising Mental Health for Emerging Electronic Music Artists

The fast-paced and demanding nature of the music industry, including the electronic music sector, can take a toll on the mental health of artists, producers, and professionals.

The survey revealed that *pressure to succeed* is commonly felt among electronic music artists, with 55% feeling it fairly/very often. *Comparing themselves to others* is also common (50% doing it fairly/very often). *Dealing with failure*, *maintaining self-confidence* and *balancing personal and professional life* are also challenges faced fairly/very often by two-fifths of electronic music artists.

Q: In your journey as an electronic music artist, mental health and well-being are often as important as professional development. With this in mind, we're interested in understanding how certain mental and emotional challenges may have impacted your career and personal well-being. Please consider the following aspects and rate how frequently you have experienced them, using a scale from 1 (Never) to 5 (Very Often)



Source: From Mix to Mainstage survey of electronic music artists, January '24

For emerging electronic music artists, prioritising mental health is essential to sustain a successful and fulfilling career in the industry. Here's why mental health should be a top priority:

Creative Well-being:

Mental well-being is closely linked to creativity and artistic expression. By prioritising mental health, emerging artists can maintain their creative spark, overcome creative blocks, and produce music that resonates authentically with their audience.

Resilience and Coping Strategies:

The music industry can be highly competitive and emotionally taxing, with pressures to succeed, perform, and meet expectations. Prioritising mental health equips emerging artists with resilience and healthy coping strategies to navigate challenges, setbacks, and the ups and downs of the industry.

Physical and Mental Balance:

The demanding schedules, late-night performances, and lifestyle associated with the music industry can impact physical health and exacerbate mental health issues. Prioritising mental health encourages artists to maintain a healthy work-life balance, prioritise self-care, and address any mental health concerns proactively.

Sustainable Career Development:

A strong foundation of mental well-being is crucial for sustainable career development in the music industry. By taking care of their mental health, emerging artists are better equipped to handle the pressures of the industry, build long-lasting relationships, and make informed decisions that support their artistic growth and professional success.

Ways to Prioritise Mental Health as an Emerging Electronic Music Artist

- **Self-Care Practices:** Incorporate self-care activities into your routine, such as meditation, exercise, adequate sleep, healthy eating, and relaxation techniques, to promote overall well-being and mental resilience.
- **Seek Support:** Reach out to friends, family, mentors, or mental health professionals for support and guidance when facing challenges or feeling overwhelmed. Don't hesitate to ask for help and prioritise your mental health needs.
- **Set Boundaries:** Establish boundaries around work hours, performance schedules, and personal time to avoid burnout and maintain a healthy work-life balance. Remember that it's okay to say no and prioritise your well-being.
- **Stay Connected:** Build a supportive network of fellow artists, industry professionals, and mentors who understand the unique challenges of the music industry. Stay connected with like-minded individuals for emotional support and collaboration opportunities.
- **Continuous Learning and Growth:** Engage in personal development activities, such as therapy, mindfulness practices, workshops, and educational programs, to enhance your self-awareness, emotional intelligence, and coping skills.

Conclusion:

Prioritising mental health is paramount for emerging electronic music artists to sustain their creativity, resilience, and well-being in a competitive and demanding industry. By implementing self-care practices, seeking support, setting boundaries, staying connected, and embracing continuous learning, artists can cultivate a healthy mindset that supports their artistic growth, professional success, and overall fulfilment in the electronic music scene. Remember, your mental health is your greatest asset – nurture it with care and attention.

Five Ways the Industry Can Support Emerging Talent

1. Making the Industry More Inclusive and Accessible

In addressing the challenge of making the electronic music industry more inclusive and accessible, insights from the interviews conducted with a diverse group of stakeholders reveal several key strategies. These strategies not only aim to dismantle barriers for emerging electronic artists but also offer actionable steps for industry players to cultivate a more supportive ecosystem.

Broadening Access through Education and Mentorship

Educational empowerment and mentorship as a catalyst for success emerge as fundamental themes from the interviews with Gernot Mueller and Chris Goss. Mueller's emphasis on the importance of legal knowledge and industry understanding highlights a gap in the current support structure for emerging artists. By implementing comprehensive educational programs that include music law, marketing, and the intricacies of the music business, the industry can lay a foundation for artist self-reliance and informed decision-making.

Similarly, Chris's account of mentorship schemes run by Hospital Records for female producers showcases the tangible impact of direct support and guidance from established industry figures. Such initiatives not only bridge the knowledge gap but also provide a sense of belonging and confidence for newcomers. Creating more such mentorship opportunities, especially targeting underrepresented groups, can significantly enhance inclusivity.

Cultivating Community and Networks

The insights from Maxinne and Channe underline the power of networking and community in navigating the industry's complexities. Maxinne's success story, facilitated by connections made through Toolroom Academy and her network in Ibiza, exemplifies the transformative power of a supportive community. Similarly, Channe's narrative reinforces the value of engaging with online and offline communities for emotional support and opportunity discovery.

To make the industry more accessible, fostering platforms that facilitate these connections is essential. This could be through online forums, industry networking events, or community-led initiatives that encourage collaboration and shared learning. Engaging more with grassroots artists and fostering a sense of community in the music industry could also lead to a more inclusive and sustainable industry.

Demystifying Industry Entry Points

Owyn Sidwell's strategic approach to career planning, emphasising the importance of diversifying revenue streams and developing a clear narrative, points to a broader industry challenge: the opacity of entry points and pathways to success. By

demystifying these aspects—possibly through open-access resources, case studies, and industry insights—emerging artists can navigate their careers with greater confidence and strategic foresight.

Addressing Systemic Barriers

Interviews with Fletcher Kerr and Katsi aka Juliet Sikora shed light on systemic barriers such as the social media mirage and the economic constraints that disproportionately affect emerging artists. Fletcher's critique of the emphasis on digital metrics over musical skill and Katsi's commentary on the economic advantages in gaining exposure underscore the need for a recalibration of success metrics within the industry. Initiatives aimed at recognising and rewarding genuine talent and creativity, beyond just social media prowess or financial backing, could pave the way for a more inclusive industry landscape.

Implementing Policy and Cultural Shifts

Paul Nolan's critique of the UK's cultural policies and the lack of support for electronic music industry highlights a broader need for policy and cultural shifts that recognise and support electronic music as a legitimate and valuable art form. His Advocating for changes that support grassroots venues, ensure fair compensation for artists, and promote music education can create a more nurturing environment for emerging talent.

In Summary

Making the electronic music industry more inclusive and accessible requires a multi-faceted approach that addresses educational, networking, systemic, and policy-related barriers. By drawing on the insights from the interviews conducted, this report aims to not only highlight these challenges but also to propose actionable strategies for stakeholders at all levels to implement. Through collective efforts, the industry can move towards a future where talent, creativity, and passion are the primary drivers of success, irrespective of an artist's background or resources.

2. Social Media Mirage: The Over-emphasis on Digital Metrics in Artist Success

In the digital age, social media has become an indispensable tool for artists seeking to build their careers. Platforms like Instagram, TikTok, Spotify, and SoundCloud offer unprecedented opportunities for exposure and audience building. However, our research, supported by insights from industry professionals and artists, indicates a growing concern over the disproportionate emphasis on digital metrics (followers, streams, likes) as indicators of an artist's success and talent. This section explores the nuances of this "Social Media Mirage," drawing on insights from Fletcher Kerr, Chris Goss of Hospital Records, and Maxinne, among others.

Fletcher Kerr's Perspective on Digital Distraction

Fletcher Kerr articulates a critical view of social media's role in the electronic music industry. He observes that while social media is undeniably crucial for audience building, the metrics it produces can be misleading. Kerr's insights underscore a pervasive issue: the prioritisation of online persona over musical skill. He notes, "Social media prowess can fast-track opportunities for artists over musical skill," highlighting a misalignment between perceived online success and genuine artistic talent. This suggests an industry trend that rewards those who are "good at social media" rather than those who excel musically.

Hospital Records' Take on Vanity Metrics

Chris Goss, representing Hospital Records, echoes Kerr's sentiments, pointing out the overemphasis on social media metrics. Chris criticised the industry's fixation on vanity metrics, which detract from the essence of music-making and the

organic development of an artist's career. He mentions, "Quick wins on social media distort artists' view of what success requires - hard work and authenticity." This insight reveals a broader industry challenge: navigating the balance between leveraging social media for visibility and maintaining a focus on the core elements of music production and live performance.

Maxinne on B2B Social Media Use

Maxinne provides a nuanced perspective on social media, highlighting its value not just in building B2C (Business-to-Consumer) relationships but also in fostering B2B (Business-to-Business) connections. She underscores the importance of social media for networking with promoters and labels, suggesting that strategic use of these platforms can open up professional opportunities beyond mere audience engagement. This approach suggests a more balanced view of social media, recognising its potential as a tool for comprehensive career development when used judiciously.

Conclusion

The insights from Fletcher Kerr, Chris Goss, and Maxinne, among others, converge on a critical view of the current state of social media within the electronic music industry. While acknowledging the undeniable importance of these platforms in modern artist promotion, there is a clear call for a re-evaluation of how success is measured. The overemphasis on digital metrics risks overshadowing the fundamental aspects of music-making and talent. This "Social Media Mirage" not only distorts perceptions of success but also potentially hinders the career development of artists who may excel musically but not in social media engagement.

Our findings suggest the need for a more nuanced approach to evaluating artist success, one that balances the undeniable benefits of social media exposure with a deeper appreciation for musical talent and the hard work behind it. Stakeholders across the industry, from labels to fans, play a role in addressing this imbalance. By fostering an environment that values and rewards genuine talent and creativity, the electronic music industry can ensure that the digital age serves as a platform for true artistry, rather than a barrier to it.

3. Supporting Emerging Talent Through Electronic Music Education

The electronic music industry plays a vital role in supporting emerging talent through music education for several compelling reasons. Firstly, continuous learning and skill development are fundamental for aspiring musicians and producers to remain competitive in the rapidly evolving music landscape. By offering educational opportunities, the industry ensures that individuals can access the latest trends, techniques, and technologies, empowering them to enhance their skills and pursue successful careers in electronic music.

Our survey findings revealed that 63% of participants have received formal education or training in music or music production. Younger artists are less likely to have received formal education or training in music or music production: 44% of 18-24 year olds compared with 70% of 35-44 year olds.

Fostering Creativity and Skill Development

Music education not only imparts technical knowledge but also nurtures creativity, critical thinking, and collaboration – essential attributes for thriving in the music industry. Programs like the Toolroom Academy and university courses provide structured learning environments where students can acquire industry-relevant expertise and prepare for various roles within the electronic music sector.

Responses to the survey question regarding formal education in the music business or training in music or music production reveal a fascinating tapestry of pathways that emerging electronic artists have taken to hone their craft. The diversity of

backgrounds is striking, from those who pursued university degrees in music-related fields, such as "Double Honors Music & Acoustical Engineering" and "Bachelor of Commerce Honours in Marketing Management," to others who embraced a more hands-on approach through "short courses in beginner music production", "YouTube" and "collaboration with like-minded individuals and "self-taught" methods complemented by online courses. The blend of formal education and self-directed learning underscores a dynamic landscape where theoretical knowledge meets practical application.

The diversity in learning preferences underscores the eclectic nature of the electronic music industry, where formal education coexists with self-taught routes via " The significance of direct engagement with the industry was further highlighted by those who valued "Business Development in specific areas like Marketing, Branding, Strategy" and sought a "more structural and effective approach" to music production.

The international dimension of education is also notable, with mentions of institutions like "Pyramid San Francisco," "Icon Collective," "Bachelor of Music (Music Technology) - University of Tasmania," and "Columbia College Bachelor in Sound Engineering," indicating a global pursuit of expertise. This global network of learning, from "Digital Music Production at DJ School Chile" to "NYU x Billboard - Music Industry Essentials", an online class, not only broadens the skill set of these artists but also enriches the electronic music industry with diverse influences and perspectives.

Promoting Diversity and Inclusivity

Initiatives that promote inclusivity and diversity within music education, such as scholarships for underrepresented groups, contribute to building a more equitable and representative industry. By supporting a diverse range of talent, the electronic music industry can harness a broader spectrum of creativity and perspectives, enriching the music landscape and ensuring its sustainability and growth.

Bridging Academic Learning with Practical Experience

Partnerships between music education providers and industry stakeholders are paramount in bridging the gap between academic knowledge and real-world experience. Collaborations with technology companies like Ableton and integration of industry expertise into educational programs provide students with invaluable insights and networking opportunities that can propel their professional development within the electronic music industry.

The survey also illustrates the value of direct transmission of knowledge within the community through mentorships or specific courses by established artists, such as the mentorship by "Steff da Campo" and masterclasses at "Dancefair." This is further enriched by those who have explored music through various angles, from "guitar lessons as a teenager" to engaging in "music electives during my University degree," showcasing the blend of traditional instrument mastery with modern production techniques.

Nurturing Future Industry Leaders

Investing in the education and development of emerging talent is instrumental in nurturing the next generation of DJs, producers, and industry professionals. By fostering a supportive educational ecosystem, the electronic music industry can cultivate a pipeline of innovative and skilled individuals who are poised to shape the future of electronic music and contribute to its continued evolution and success.

In conclusion, the electronic music industry's commitment to supporting emerging talent through music education not only benefits individual artists and producers but also strengthens the industry as a whole. By prioritising education, continuous learning, inclusivity, and practical experience, the industry can ensure a vibrant and sustainable future characterised by diversity, creativity, and innovation.

Survey Findings - *“What types of educational resources or training have you found most beneficial for your career development?”*

- Responses to our survey highlighted many educational paths taken by emerging electronic artists, illustrating that **there's no one-size-fits-all approach** to learning in the music industry. The most mentioned resource was YouTube, a testament to its accessibility and the vast array of content available. Artists cited online platforms like the Toolroom Academy for their structured, interactive courses, which not only teach production skills but also facilitate networking. Personalised learning experiences such as one-on-one training and hands-on learning through starting their own studio companies were also noted for their significant impact on career development. Additionally, formal education in music or related fields like marketing management provided a foundational understanding for some, underlining the importance of both technical skills and business acumen in the industry.
- The variety of responses underscores the eclectic nature of learning in the music production sphere. From "hands-on experience by starting my own studio company" to "Toolroom Academy's interactive courses," it's clear that practical, applied learning resonates strongly with artists. The **emphasis on real-world experiences**, such as "working with artist, gaining a publishing deal," alongside digital platforms, demonstrates the blend of traditional and modern approaches to music education. Interestingly, non-traditional resources like "YouTube and talking to other producers in person" highlight the community aspect of learning, where peer feedback and collaboration play a crucial role in development.
- Moreover, the specific mention of resources like "FaderPro Videos," 'Finish More Music' forum" and "online courses, YouTube" points to the value of both formalised courses and the informal sharing of knowledge within the community. The breadth of responses, from "piano lessons, self-taught" to "Music production course," showcases the varied journey artists undertake, driven by a mix of self-directed learning and structured education. This **diversity reflects the individuality of each artist's journey** and the dynamic and evolving landscape of music production education.

Survey Findings - *“Are there areas in which you feel there is a lack of adequate educational resources or training for electronic music artists?”*

- Responses to the survey question regarding areas where electronic music artists feel there is a lack of adequate educational resources or training revealed a diverse range of opinions and needs. A common theme among respondents was the desire for more in-depth, practical guidance on various aspects of music production and the industry. For instance, one artist expressed a need for "more breakdowns of professional tracks. The whole process, from start to finish, to releasing, etc.," highlighting a gap in comprehensive, start-to-finish production education.
- Financial accessibility to resources was another significant concern, with calls for "funded courses with disability-experienced tutors" and "grants to support those on very low incomes to purchase starter gear." This underscores the financial barriers that can inhibit aspiring artists from accessing necessary tools and training.
- The importance of networking and mentorship was also emphasised, with one respondent noting the challenge of "finding mentors that are affordable and not feeling it is just people taking your money because they understand you have a passion for something." This sentiment reflects the difficulty in navigating the mentorship landscape without being exploited financially.
- Several artists pointed out gaps in business and legal education within the industry, such as understanding "the commercial side of signing a contract" and effective "marketing strategies." This suggests a need for resources

that not only cover the creative aspects of music production but also equip artists with skills to navigate the business side of their careers successfully.

- Interestingly, while many respondents identified specific areas lacking in resources, a few noted the abundance of information available online, with one artist stating, "Right now we can find everything online, so I don't think there's nothing lacking..." This highlights a dichotomy within the community, where some artists feel overwhelmed by the available resources, yet others see gaps in specific, targeted training areas.
- The responses also touched on the need for more specialised training, such as "Training for those with Dyslexia" and resources aimed at promoting diversity and inclusivity within the industry. Additionally, the psychological and social aspects of being an artist, such as dealing with rejection, time management, and maintaining mental health, were areas where respondents saw room for improvement in available educational resources.

Overall, these insights from the survey responses paint a picture of an electronic music community eager for more targeted, accessible, and comprehensive educational resources. There's a clear call for training that not only covers the technicalities of music production but also addresses the broader challenges of building a sustainable career in the industry.

4. The Role of Mentorship Schemes in Artist Growth

Mentorship play a pivotal role in the development and success of emerging artists in the electronic music industry. This section outlines the importance of mentorship, showcasing how labels, festivals, and clubs can contribute to nurturing talent responsibly.

Insights from Industry Professionals

- **Paul Nolan** highlighted the discrepancy between the industry's focus on established names and the lack of support for newcomers. Nolan suggests a more inclusive approach, advocating for established entities to open their platforms to emerging talent. Mentorship, he argues, can bridge this gap by offering newcomers valuable insights, exposure, and opportunities they otherwise might not access.
- **Gernot Mueller** emphasised the importance of understanding the business side of the music industry, which is often overlooked by emerging artists. Mentorship schemes that include education on music law, contracts, and marketing can equip artists with the necessary tools to navigate the industry, making these programs indispensable.
- **Mark Knight** pointed out the necessity of viewing a music career as a business, urging artists to invest in their craft like entrepreneurs. This business-minded approach is something mentorship programs can foster, providing artists with the acumen to succeed not just artistically but also commercially.
- **Katsi, aka Juliet Sikora** stressed the power of networking and the role of mentorship in expanding an artist's network. Sikora's initiatives, like "Support Your Locals," demonstrate how mentorship can be a platform for visibility, allowing new artists to showcase their work alongside established names.
- **Chris Goss** says that large music companies should step up mentoring programs to share expertise with diverse, emerging talent. It's an investment in the industry's future.

Building Sustainable Careers

Mentorship schemes contribute to building sustainable careers by addressing several key areas:

- **Skill Development:** By pairing emerging artists with seasoned professionals, mentorship programs facilitate a direct transfer of knowledge and skills, crucial for the artistic and technical development of new talent.
- **Industry Insights:** Understanding the intricacies of the music industry can be daunting. Mentorship provides a guided pathway, offering insights into navigating challenges, from contract negotiations to effective marketing strategies.
- **Networking Opportunities:** The significance of networking cannot be overstated in the music industry. Mentorship opens doors to new connections, from fellow artists to industry executives, broadening the horizon for emerging talent.
- **Psychological Support:** The journey of an artist is fraught with rejection and uncertainty. Mentorship offers psychological support, providing a sense of belonging and encouragement essential for maintaining motivation and resilience.

Recommendations for Industry Stakeholders

- **Inclusive Programming:** Labels, festivals, and clubs should design mentorship schemes that are inclusive, targeting underrepresented and marginalised artists to ensure diversity and innovation within the industry.
- **Long-Term Commitment:** Effective mentorship requires a long-term commitment from both mentors and industry stakeholders. Programs should be structured to support artists beyond initial stages, aiding in their continued growth and adaptation to industry changes.
- **Focus on Business Education:** Given the emphasis on the importance of business acumen, mentorship programs should include comprehensive education on the business aspects of being an artist, preparing them for the multifaceted challenges of the industry.
- **Regular Evaluation and Adaptation:** Mentorship schemes should be regularly evaluated and adapted based on feedback from participants and changes within the industry, ensuring they remain relevant and effective in supporting artist growth.

Conclusion

The transformative potential of mentorship schemes in artist growth cannot be overstated. By fostering talent through guidance, education, and support, the industry can cultivate a more diverse, skilled, and resilient generation of artists. Industry stakeholders are encouraged to view mentorship not just as a contribution to individual careers but as a vital investment in the future vibrancy and sustainability of the electronic music industry.

5. The Role of Competitions in Validating Talent and Opening Up Opportunities

In the evolving landscape of the electronic music industry, competitions have emerged as a pivotal platform for validating talent and unlocking new opportunities for emerging artists. This section draws upon insights from interviews with established and emerging artists, as well as industry professionals, to underscore the importance of competitions and to encourage industry stakeholders, including labels, festivals, and clubs, to foster and responsibly engage with these platforms.

Validation of Talent

Competitions offer a unique avenue for emerging artists to showcase their skills and creativity in a structured environment. According to Maxinne, an emerging artist who has benefited significantly from participation in competitions, these platforms serve as a crucial validation mechanism. They not only provide recognition from peers and industry professionals but also offer a form of external validation that can be essential for building an artist's confidence and credibility. This external acknowledgement is particularly important in an industry as subjective and varied as electronic music, where traditional metrics of success can be elusive.

Opening Up Opportunities

Beyond validation, competitions can open up a myriad of opportunities that might otherwise be inaccessible to emerging artists. For instance, Channe's experience with winning a competition led to a morale boost, label interest, and subsequent opportunities that propelled her career forward. Competitions often offer prizes that include record deals, performance slots at major festivals, and mentorship programs, providing a tangible pathway to career advancement. They act as a bridge between new talent and industry gatekeepers, offering a platform for discovery that benefits both artists and stakeholders looking for fresh sounds and personalities.

Industry Engagement

The responsibility of the industry in supporting and engaging with competitions cannot be overstated. Labels, festivals, and clubs are in a unique position to offer meaningful support to emerging talent through these platforms. By sponsoring competitions, offering performance opportunities as prizes, or participating in judging panels, industry stakeholders can contribute to a vibrant, dynamic ecosystem that nurtures new talent and injects diversity into the music scene. Gernot Mueller's educational perspective highlights the importance of providing artists with practical opportunities to apply their skills and gain exposure, emphasising competitions as a key element in this process.

Ethical Considerations

However, it's crucial for the industry to engage with competitions in a responsible manner. This includes ensuring transparency in judging criteria, providing constructive feedback to participants, and avoiding exploitative practices that may take advantage of artists' aspirations. The industry must strive to create an environment where competitions are seen as a genuine effort to discover and support new talent, rather than as a marketing tool for brands.

Conclusion

In conclusion, competitions play a vital role in the electronic music industry by validating talent and opening up opportunities for emerging artists. The insights from interviews with artists like Maxinne and Channe, alongside educational perspectives from professionals like Gernot Mueller, underscore the transformative potential of these platforms. It's incumbent upon industry stakeholders to recognise this potential and engage with competitions in a manner that supports the growth and diversity of the music scene. By doing so, labels, festivals, and clubs can contribute to a more inclusive, dynamic, and sustainable future for electronic music.

How This Report Should Shape Music Education

In the dynamic landscape of the electronic music industry, the journey from emerging talent to established artist is fraught with challenges that extend beyond mere musical talent. This report, "From Mix to Mainstage: A Blueprint for Emerging Electronic Artists," has meticulously outlined the barriers that upcoming artists face and has provided strategic advice to navigate these hurdles. The purpose of this section is to discuss the critical role of music education in preparing these artists for the realities of the industry and to advocate for a curriculum that is both relevant and responsive to the evolving demands of the music world.

Music education institutions are pivotal in equipping aspiring electronic artists with the tools they need for success. Traditional music curricula often focus on developing musical skills and historical knowledge, which, while fundamental, do not fully prepare students for the challenges of the modern music industry. Therefore, music educators must take the insights from this report seriously and work towards integrating practical, industry-relevant content into their courses.

Toolroom Academy, the sponsor of this report, is a prime example of how education can be aligned with industry needs. Toolroom Academy stands at the forefront of innovative music education by offering courses that address the specific challenges highlighted in this report. We hope that other institutions will be inspired to follow suit, adapting their curricula to include the following key areas:

Networking and Brand Building

Understanding the importance of networking and personal branding is crucial for any artist's success. Music education programs should include modules on effective communication, building and maintaining professional relationships, and developing a strong artistic identity. This includes leveraging social media platforms, understanding the digital landscape, and crafting a personal brand that resonates with audiences and industry professionals alike.

Industry Acumen

A comprehensive understanding of the electronic music industry's structure and dynamics is essential. Educators should incorporate lessons on the roles of various industry stakeholders, including labels, promoters, and agents, and provide guidance on how to approach and work with these entities. Additionally, insights into the legal and business aspects of music production and distribution can empower artists to navigate their careers with confidence.

Resilience and Mental Well-being

The emotional and psychological challenges that come with a career in music—such as dealing with rejection and managing performance pressures—cannot be overlooked. Courses should, therefore, include components that focus on building resilience, fostering a positive mental attitude, and strategies for maintaining well-being amidst the highs and lows of an artist's career.

Practical Experience

Finally, providing students with practical, hands-on experience is invaluable. This can be achieved through live performance opportunities, internships with industry partners, and project-based learning that simulates real-world scenarios. Such experiences not only enhance students' skills but also provide a taste of the industry's realities, preparing them for the challenges ahead.

In conclusion, this report aims not only to guide emerging artists through the complexities of the electronic music industry but also to serve as a call to action for music educators. Educational institutions can play a crucial role in shaping the next generation of successful electronic music artists by designing curricula that address the specific challenges and strategies. The future of music education lies in its ability to evolve and respond to the industry's demands, thereby ensuring that aspiring artists are not only talented musicians but also savvy, resilient, and well-prepared professionals.