

# Branding Your Band in 3D – Follow the Energy

By Xandre Probyn

Energy – that essential element that binds and drives you and your brand is our focus for this issue. This is the most important step as it will direct all the other areas of brand building so get ready to start questioning your own purpose, ethics, mission and meaning of life. Who knows, there might be song in it at the end of the experience.

Chasing success goes so much deeper than what I like to call sensory branding i.e. you can see it, feel it, hear it, etc. If this is your sole focus, then success will definitely be flitting away from you faster than the guitarist duo from Dragonforce can pluck and strum their guitar strings.

Your energy will influence your thinking and behaviour at the lower levels so, this interconnectedness or *raison d'être*, needs to permeate every aspect of your brand identity. It is therefore vital that this mission cascades and incorporates every level below it, creating a tightly intertwined and synergistic environment. So it is no good just changing your behaviour or improving your capabilities as these will not necessarily have any lasting impact on the other areas of your brand building strategy. In the words of Albert Einstein: "The problems of today can only be solved at a higher level of thinking than that which created them: - i.e. whatever is on top runs everything underneath.

This energy has to do with your sense of self within the context of the world at large.

So, down to the nitty gritty – theory is great but how exactly does one go about doing this? First and foremost ask yourself – Do I/we cooperate and contribute to the musical industry as a whole and what form does this cooperation and contribution take. Secondly, contemplate your greater purpose as a musician or as a band and the impact you want to have? Put differently, why are you out there sharing your musical genius with the world and how do you want to touch or influence other people's lives? Another way to look at it is to think about how you would like to be remembered. Similar to Alice Cooper who set out to be the "rock vil-

villain" rather than the "rock hero" and who lived this persona so truly, that Bob Ezrin described him in the following way: "He is the psycho killer in all of us. He's the axe murderer, he's the spoiled child, he's the abuser, he's the abused; he's the perpetrator, he's the victim, he's the gun slinger and he's the guy lying dead in the middle of the street" or the Jonas Brothers who consistently build their brand as a wholesome family-friendly band with solid foundations in Christian values.

Either is good, as long as it is a true reflection of who you are and what you want to offer and the energy is so deeply imbued in your offering that the greater good believes in you!! Keep in mind that when the levels are not aligned it will interfere with the creative process. Take for example, Justin Bieber or Brittany Spears who both started off with squeaky clean images which are rapidly being tarnished by fame and fortune and alienating their former fans.

Next, pinpoint where the energy comes from that drives you and creates a bond between yourself, your music and your fans. Is it internal or do you need external momentum to get it going. Also, does this energy invigorate or deplete you. If it is depleting you then you need to reassess the package that you are offering the world and re-examine each area to see where the conflict exists that is going against the sense of who you truly are. For if your portrayal of yourself goes against the grain of who you are at the deepest level of being then it will seep through into every facet and create a presentation that is implausible and insincere.

So, experience the energy, examine the energy and live the energy constructively and you will be taking the first vital step in creating a brand that excites people and builds a foundation for success.

Next issue we will take a look at creating an identity that supports your purpose/energy. Till then magic music making.

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