

Berklee College of Music

**FIRST ARTIST AID**

REFLECTIVE PAPER

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Master of Arts in Global Entertainment and Music Business

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## Summary

The idea of doing a business plan for a music consultancy agency “First Artist Aid” as a final project came to me after some time. At first, I wanted to be a part of CE projects, such as Disrupcion Records or Women in Music, but when I was not selected for these positions I started to think about other options. To be honest, I did not have many ideas for a final paper, but luckily my advisor had some knowledge about Russian music market and suggested me an idea for my business plan. After looking back to the time when I wanted to establish career of a performer, I realized how many things I did not know or simply did not think of, even though I has always been interested in music, so the idea of providing consulting support to Russian artists seemed very appealing to me.

Thus, my culminating experience is the business plan for my future company “First Artist Aid”, a sole proprietorship company based in Moscow that facilitates the needs of artists, who want to be in the music industry, but due to the lack of knowledge of how music industry works, are stuck and do not know how to move forward. My business plan begins with the Company Overview, where I described the core activities of a company, explained a meaning of a firm’s name and logo, and specified why exactly I decided to establish my company as a sole proprietor.

In the next section I mostly focused on the Client base and Business Environment. Services offered and price breakdown were shown. I examined demographics of our future clients, age and location wise, as well as described our ideal client.

Following chapter was dedicated to the Marketing. The biggest focus was on digital marketing section, where I explained in detail what social media platforms should be targeted the most, because of Russian market’s specifics.

One of the most important tasks of my paper was to explain financials. So, in

the Financial Projections section I reflected all the expenses that we should anticipate as well as an approximate profit for the first 3 years.

## The process

The reason why I am so passionate about the idea of doing a consulting agency is because, as I mentioned earlier, there was a period of time in my life when I wanted to be a performer myself. I have always been creative, when I was a teenager I went to music school, studied piano and vocal, music literature and music theory, so I was a very well-trained musician. But as I got older I wanted to perform more than just at school, I wanted to be a singer, performer, and not just a music student. What happened next is that I started to go to the auditions for music shows, and actually I was quite successful at one of them, but because neither I nor my parents knew how this industry works, my post-show life came back to normal very quickly, because I did not have a lot of material to show at that time, and I did not engage the audience as I should have. There were so many mistakes on my way of trying to be a performer and I am sure that I am not the only one.

Unfortunately, there is almost no one who could help musicians in Russia, the only way to get a worthy advice is either from someone successful from the business or from the manager. But what usually happens is that established in the industry people are 'untouchable' and do not really care about starting artists and if you want to be managed by experienced artist-manager, you should have a certain level of success already in order to be noticed. So, what can be seen is that in the majority of cases, musicians get stuck and do not know what their next steps should be. And I believe that accessible to everyone music consultancy agency is the best option to go.

Enrolling to Berklee was one of the best decisions I could make, and, in some sense, it changed my life. During this year I gained so much knowledge about music industry and its components. At the Live practicum, for example, I learned how live

industry works, how live production and festivals are functioning, what details you should think through so that live show does not become a disaster; and even had a privilege to be involved in building a Musaico festival and being a part of Production team there.

Copyright and Contract Management course thought me to be attentive to every word at the contracts; obviously I am not competent enough to consult serious cases without a lawyer, but I definitely have a general idea. Finance in the music business developed my financial projections skills, that was extremely useful when working on my business plan. Data class introduced me to the most important data analytics tools without which it is very hard to follow and develop any artist's career. Digital marketing class showed how to make a digital campaign and represent an artist at the different social media platforms. Musicians simply do not know about all those things that I have learned and do not have enough hours in their day (and willing as well) to think through so many aspects of their development. All this knowledge that I gained during masters program makes me competent enough to start a consultancy agency, when I am back to Russia.

## Results

My culminating experience was a big work, and I am extremely happy with its results. With the help of my advisors Alf Olofsson and Alex Perrin I developed a well-thought plan for my future company, and I am thankful for their support.

With my final paper, I was able to think through all the smallest details that I should take into account once establishing a company. My future company is a business that depends on me, so it was very important not to miss anything, because it is quite hard enough to work independently. At the very beginning it was very hard to start, because I did not know a lot of legal information on how to establish your own company in Russia, I did not know financial specifics, for example, how big is a tax on your profit. But after

doing a research and consulting with an accountant I found answers on all my questions and the process became easier, because I knew creative side of my future company.

The business plan I created during my Culminating Experience is the foundation from which I will start building my company and its reputation. “First Artist Aid” represents my willingness to share the knowledge that I have with musicians who are in need of guidance and support.

## Next Steps

My future actions would be converting my work into the real business. It is not easy to develop new concept, but I believe that once I prove how useful my services are, artists would spread the word and in a short time our client base will grow. Hypothetic timeline for the first 3 years of operation of my business consists of 4 parts: pre-launch step (when we develop all the templates, like EPK and Onepager, start giving trial free sessions to attract customers, start contacting people who left their emails at our survey and prepare Marketing materials, such as flyers and business cards); Year 1 step (when we legally launch the company, get new customers through people who came to us already, and start digital promotions, such as doing “bring your friend and get discount” and “share this post at your page and get discount” campaigns; Year 2 step (when we travel to other cities to attract clients and keep on growing our client base); and Year 3 (when we represent First Artist Aid at the panels at the conferences and continue on building our reputation).

To sum up, if Russian market accepts this new to the local music industry concept and we will manage to constantly increase a number of our clients, we will increase fees and range of services. Also, it would be great to position our company as an expert in

Russian music business for foreign artists, so we could be a “bridge” to Russia, when it comes to doing business there and could consult them as well.

## Contribution to the Profession

This final project gave me an opportunity to build my own company. My future business is something that is very needed at current Russian music business scene. Who knows how many great artists I can help and how their music can change other people's life? My perfect plan is to have a job at the music company and keep on developing my own at the same time. I never thought that I would want to establish my own company, but after working on my thesis I realized, that it is not that hard to start your own business and what is most important is that there is a need in this type of company. People at other sectors have access to consulting services, so why not include artists?

## Personal Impact

I remember the day when I discovered GEMB program. I remember how I looked through all the beautiful pictures on the website and imagined myself studying there. I remember how scary I was to tell my parents about it, because studying music was never ‘something serious’. I remember how anxious I was the whole day of 15 December 2017, when I was waiting for the answer from Berklee. And I remember my happy tears, when I realized that I will spend the next year in Valencia.

This year at Berklee was truly magnificent for me. For the first time in my life I was studying something that I like and what I am passionate about. Having a background in economics definitely helps with understanding a business side, but I would never be able to know all aspects of music industry if not for this program. In Russia this types of program

that opens in front of you almost ever door in the music industry does not exist, that is why I had to study something else as an undergraduate student, something that clearly was not my passion and calling in life. It was a long and not always easy journey that brought me to Berklee College of Music and introduced me to so many great and knowledgeable professors, classmates, that I am lucky to call my friends now, and people from the industry. During this year I met people who inspired me for a long time and who I thought I would never meet in my entire life; I grew as a person and proved to myself that all dreams can come true if you put a lot of work in them. I enjoyed every second of studying at Berklee and I am extremely sad to leave this place, but I hope that this is just a beginning of something great, that new chapter of my life will bring. I am very thankful for Berklee and for this opportunity and everyone who was a part of this year will always have a special place in my heart.