

# White Paper- Making music for a global audience

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Creating Entertainment Legacies

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## Introduction

This paper will help music professionals, budding songwriters, producers and media employees within recording/publishing companies in order to establish and reaffirm a business check list in order to create a worldwide hit record. I will also examine where audiences are likely to be receptive to music and why this is critical for a music making company to understand.

I will also examine why music can be successful or not commercially and what obstacles or barriers to entry exist in order for the composition or production to be successfully adopted onto a broadcaster playlist (Radio, TV, Online Platforms) in order to secure airplay to achieve sales. I will also demonstrate how to make music accessible and why this can give your product or brand a competitive edge to become a market leader.

## Components to music markets

I have created a model to demonstrate that music audiences can be segmented into four key target markets. It is important to understand that successful penetration in more than two of these four components will likely produce a framework for a global hit however it is not just the penetration that is important, it is also how high this penetration is in this highly competitive market and the ability to increase the frequency of the sales in order for the product to have a high lifecycle (Music that you would want to hear again and again).

Four components to pop music markets to are:

Children 6yrs - 13yrs	Clubbers 13yrs – 18yrs & 18yrs – 35yrs
Contemporary (Parental markets, mums & dads)	Core Audience 18yrs – 25yrs

*Table 1 Four Components to Pop Music Markets; Tewis K, 2011)*

These four groups currently access new and existing music in five ways, online, mobile technology, TV, sharing (Social gatherings) and radio. Regardless of how much technology develops and shapes the purchase behaviour of a buying audience within the next 25 years, it is my belief that this audience will always be 'sharing' music in much the same fashion. Online, social media and mobile devices are now the primary way in which to preview, launch and sell music, acts and brands and it is likely that we are just at the start of the peak into this huge digital world ahead of us that will continue to grow at an exponential rate in order to satisfy customer's hungry demands.

Human beings in every walk of life will always desire music in some form and in today's market and for the first time the global audience are dictating to music/media industry what their needs and wants are more aggressively. What is absolutely vital in order for companies to compete effectively in such a fast moving environment is for musical content and sound design of a production/ composition to be very catchy (Contagious), strong (Clean and punchy musicality) and prolific (Dynamic to more than one music market/customer group).

Today's music buying audiences have less time to adopt a song due to fast technological advances whereas traditional promotional methods would have allowed a song to be strategically promoted over a longer period in order for it to gain its own promotional campaign to achieve 'physical' (CD's/Vinyl) sales. The composition and production therefore has to have the hit musical formula and fit into at least two of the four key audience's right from outset; Contemporary and Core Audience. The single release then needs to be marketed to the relevant distribution channels (Itunes/You tube/Radio/TV) fast to ensure the best chances of high sales (Adoption) which then will hopefully translate into high and consistent single then album sales.



## Story Boarding

A very useful technique I use when designing my productions is to assess at the initial stages of composition which one of the key customer groups could this composition appeal to and how to gain access to more or all of them. How could I encourage an area that would not normally be interested to be interested and persuaded to make a purchase? One of the key ways to help capture the contemporary market is to combine a new production with a classic sample / cover version element that could immediately engage a different audience through familiarity to achieve likability and purchase.

Examples of this in 2011 have been Jennifer Lopez – On the floor which cleverly utilises the iconic anthem 'The Lambada'. This is a clever combination (Ansoff's Expanded Matrix), and helps one customer base adopt another with the use of sampling an iconic theme from Latino music markets for which the 'Lambada' were originally made for. Traditionally the Latino market has been a loyal and very lucrative market due to its music culture and support of its own products. Artists such as Shakira and Gloria Estefan have gained extensive sales over long periods of their careers allowing their own business models to become highly sustainable.

2011 also produced Jason Derulo's – 'Don't wanna go home' an equally effective combination as this sampled the 1993 ultimate dance bass line from Robin S – 'Show me love' and the cover version chorus of the very famous 1956 track entitled Day-O (The banana boat song). Both are examples that diversifying music themes of a highly popular song can help music companies break acts and new music into new markets more effectively. Typically the cynics have complained about this type of 'musical debauchery' and that the use of tired collaborations is displaying that there is now no new creativity in the music industry. Opinion makers who believe this are often short sighted. Themes have been copied for decades and ideas morphed into other music genres to create fun and exciting new music concepts. Even Elvis was a modification based on various artists from the original blues and soul era of the 1950's.

Without examples of creativity or regeneration in current music products there would like be very little repeat lifecycles for records such as 'The Lambada/On the Floor'. Is it fair that the new younger audiences have to spend years learning about music and its history just to satisfy the cynical minority in order for the new customer group to make an objective assessment? Of course not, the few always try and spoil it for the majority. For a music publisher this type of commercial activity is a huge bonus as they would find it very hard in traditional terms to release the Lambada back to the top of the charts in any country without collaborations introducing samples or themes back into music charts.

In some cases the music publisher already owns key back catalogue and should be managing this 'upwards' (Identifying records/samples which should be being used) to the record company suggesting relevant themes and timely modifications in order to producer further sales to market. Looking at the logistics (Porters Value Chain, 1985) of this, this process is highly appealing to a publisher who only has its own paper work to consider and not wait on another companies procedures (Clearing of samples/Use of mastered recordings) which can be timely and costly which can result in missed opportunities.

In the corporate world it does come down to music company's financial bottom line as the cost of breaking acts and running a music business is never cheap. The financial elements alone (Producers, writers, PR, design agencies) are a costly exercise and if you or your organisation want to be the market leader in this field (in line with music customers expectations), you will be faced with some very high paid executives salaries, costly promotional / marketing campaigns and complex operational issues in order produce exceptional market leading products consistently.

## Lullaby

When creating hit melodies and catchy musical hooks for your composition remember to keep 'top lines' (The musical part you often hear people whistle) simple, memorable, easy to learn and stick to the 'lullaby' formula. I refer to this formula as lullaby because it is my belief that musical pieces should be as catchy as 'Three blind mice' a children's nursery rhyme. Keep it simple, less is more.

Producing music to this formula will allow the human brain to recognise and retain instantly memorable and catchy elements easier, which will likely stay in the consumers mind for longer periods. It has been documented that some of the most successful music ever composed is actually popular because of similar chords and progressions that register well with our own brain. The Bee Gees and Abba adhered to this popular method, the results speak for themselves. The ultimate aim in today's market is to repeat long term sales (decades if possible), with a trusted reputable brand that can bring in multiple revenue streams from publishing, tours, merchandise, online, TV and music sales.

All of us have been subjected to this clever hook element at some point or another. Do you remember ever saying to yourself or your friends, 'Oh I can't get that song out of my head now, it will be in my head all day!'. Making music 'additive' to an audience is crucial in the current climate due to its extremely fast pace. Translating this musical message across effectively to market has put the majority of focus on to the composer and producer in its creative infancy. Fully understanding that the 'Time to market' is a huge and complex task in itself should well define to media creative's/employees that strategic planning will likely capitalise on financial sales by building a solid and trusted reputation/brand of an act/company. Examples of this catchy and addictive practice are Taio Cruz's – Dynamite and LMAO's – Party Rockers'. The ingenious part to these musical works is that they appeal in all of the four sectors music (Table 1).

Both compositions started life in a club (DJ Promo) and on dance music shows (club friendly radio playlists), then spread rapidly into the core audience, then children and then the contemporary market followed soon after. I was part of the performing world of DJ's that programmed these records into my DJ set and observed them grow very quickly over a short period of time. Few records nowadays have a shelf life of over half a year however with strong online and radio programming and wide commercial DJ performances it is likely that you are radically able to extend the product lifecycle of a record to achieve long term sales.

Creating lullaby elements within recordings has helped Taio Cruz and LMAO's compositions demonstrate commercial sustainability through strong product lifecycles. Proof then in practice that good planning of a creative strategy (Story Boarding) to capture the four core sectors of music buying consumers, then ensuring the producer and composer add in the vital top line / lullaby elements to create a hit record with a long life-cycle so that it competes effectively against competitors products.

Current examples of sustainable long term commercial growth can be seen through creative planning and product diversification and is demonstrated well within the recent Lady Gaga album 'Born this way'. The writers and producers have used very easy to learn catchy hooks over and over again in order for the content to become memorable faster. Arguably such tactics could be in place to cover the fact that the song is not traditionally a 'strong one'. Whatever the case by adopting slick musical sections that grow to become infectious and likeable is a highly commendable strategy. In my opinion that is nonsense and only identifies that relevant product diversification can drive strong commercial sales globally. Besides, music is subjective and creative managers and artists should be looking at new ways to write and re-produce concepts and ideas to freshen up the music industry and help engage and excite audiences globally.



## **Pitching records to market (Broadcast & Nightclub)**

*Definition (For the purpose of this paper); Broadcast relates specifically to Television, YouTube/Napster/Online Playlists, Radio, iTunes)*

If the Lullaby formula is implemented effectively when planning your production you will engage broadcast and nightclub platforms with more success. In the past A&R employees would attend nightclubs to test a product and watch/record its reaction live. Although in 2011 this benchmarking practice is now not normally practiced by A&R employees, the onus is put onto DJ's by record companies to market test the product and report back to a music company. This is however a flawed process as it is not a totally true reflection as the A&R employee cannot effectively gauge the wow or not wow factor and what elements are working/need improving which a DJ never reports effectively as usually they are not a qualified consultant producer for the record company. Some are also biased in order to only provide positive feedback in order to remain on the mailing list and not provide a critical assessment which is actually what is required.

It is also important for music organisations to understand that as long as the DJ is returning a chart regularly and filling in a report (this can actually be just one word) that the benchmarking process is not real reflection/analysis of the composition performance and therefore likely that in a 'mail out' of 700 DJ's the feedback will not help the A&R employee make a credible assessment going forward to benefit the release. The answer then should be to either send in a scout team to gain this information or improve the feedback process from music DJ's/tastemakers globally.

It is crucial to understand at these market testing points how the record is performing and if it is the correct production which may need remixing or improving. It is also important to remember this type of benchmarking should not be done in so called trendy clubs as this is not a real reflection of a 'pop' market therefore mainstream commercial venues should be the focus when reflecting on feedback from market testing. In short, 'Know your audience, very well!'

It is important to also acknowledge that if you are producing music and you or your artist does not have a major label recoding deal, getting your music to mainstream radio playlists will be nigh on damn impossible. This is because radio only has a limited amount of time to play music which they prefer to do on strict rotation to keep audiences engaged by playing the most current and popular music. In the UK commercial radio companies create four slots (as opposed to none with the BBC programming as it is publicly funded) per hour in order to sell radio advertising space which is a vital revenue stream for them to survive. They aren't being mean to your music production, it's just big business.

Don't despair! All is not lost. If the production is unsigned then this can be aimed at specialists pop or dance music shows across radio networks where DJ's have some freedom in order to hand pick material for their playlist/audience. It is again important to remember you will likely need to remix or re-produce a musical product to fit into that DJ's show or music genre and if successful then push the radio edit through to the record company and their commercial team in order to try and build a campaign that leads to a major label deal. Don't be afraid to work on what may seem like a backwards strategy, you will be moving forward, it is just a clever tactic to get you to the big labels.

A good tip to assess if your work has enough scope within radio is to regularly study broadcast playlists that are made available on the website of each particular company. You can use some of the information to gauge the feasibility of the musical production you are involved in and understand what needs or doesn't need to be done in order for your production to be able to fit into a playlist.

Don't expect radio to radically alter their core competences just because your artist (established or not) has a new ground breaking wacky concept. Many high profile artists have lost their direction because they wanted to take charge of their music career and ignore the formal process, channels and music professionals that are employed in order to meet the demands of the record company, publisher, fan base and music consumers.

### **Making Music More Accessible**

A critical consideration when planning the creation of music singles, albums and brands is to make the music within them as accessible as possible. Radio is just one broadcast element that will be bombarded with many requests to join a group playlist/DJ show so using a defined creative strategy will allow you to have greater success and appeal to the wider customer base.

Making products more accessible will equally be of huge interest to a major label/publisher as they will recognise the potential revenue from sales, adoption of record to a broadcast playlist customer groups. I have witnessed firsthand how A&R employees and music producers make and release records just for the existing fans. I have never understood this philosophy, the fans will buy the records anyway, they are FANS! Appeal to the market who are not traditional fans then the likely outcome is that you will benefit from two markets and sell units beyond your expectations. The key is to think laterally.

It is key to engage the audience that perhaps isn't a fan of the current artist or genre. The positive impact of this will be the chance to potentially change the success rate of your musical project/campaign exponentially by deciding to use catchy records with a potential long lifecycle.

Michael Jackson fans bought Michael Jackson records even when he had times of poor PR activity and a negative somewhat consumer perception. Fans see through most faults/negative PR and they will support an act because they utterly adore them, it is as simple as that. If in the later part of Michael's career he had released that top quality market leading pop records were all he needed then it is likely that all broadcast and media channels would be climbing over themselves to support his comeback. A good example of this is Madonna's who still produces/embraces complete market trends and changes and excels in this area.

Reflecting on the most successful acts to date, it is clear why some records and artists were supremely popular. Whether the act wrote the record or just performed it, the content of the music was the part that had made it memorable and accessible to the target market. Appeal and likeability will forever be essential!

Current examples of musical likeability are Lady Gaga and Rhianna who have incredible music formulas mainly due to their musical content and its high quality market-wide appeal that constantly satisfies and re-engages new audiences to grow their fan bases and market share. Relating to my earlier concept of four key pop markets I will demonstrate (Diagrams 1 and 3 from my own opinion) the commercial success rates pictorially and provide a rating to each pop market and then discuss the findings.

This type of assessment is what could be considered from senior music employees and all creative people associated with an artist, brand or product before the release to help truly assess the music environment.

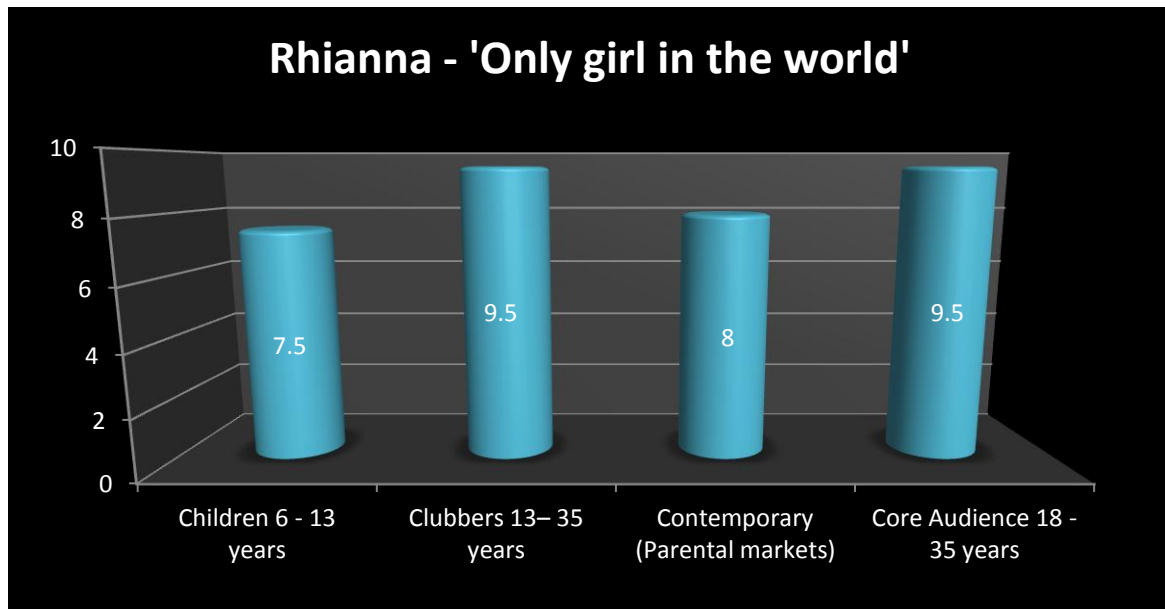


Diagram 1 Four components to pop music markets; Tewis K, 2011 – Production; Rhianna, only girl in the world

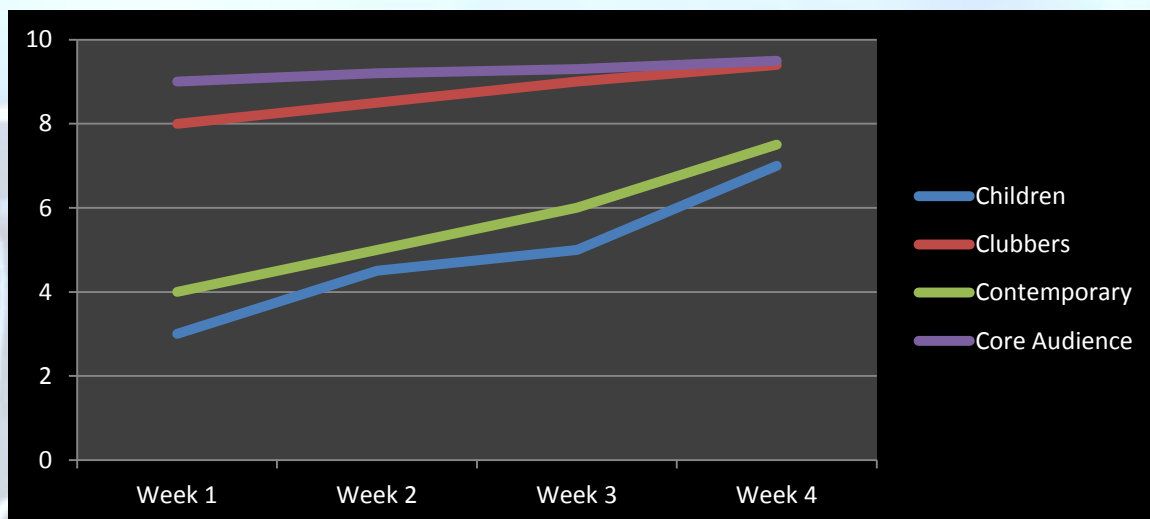


Diagram 2 Timeline of Adoption of music to four component pop markets; Tewis K, 2011 – Production; Rhianna, only girl in the world

Diagram 2 demonstrates the purchase/influence behaviour (timeline format) over the period of the first four weeks of single release. Highlighted with an effective rating (1-10) what each of the four music components market reaction would have been and shows justification as to why 'Core' and 'Contemporary' markets are crucial to music sales and the timeline they take to adopt the product.



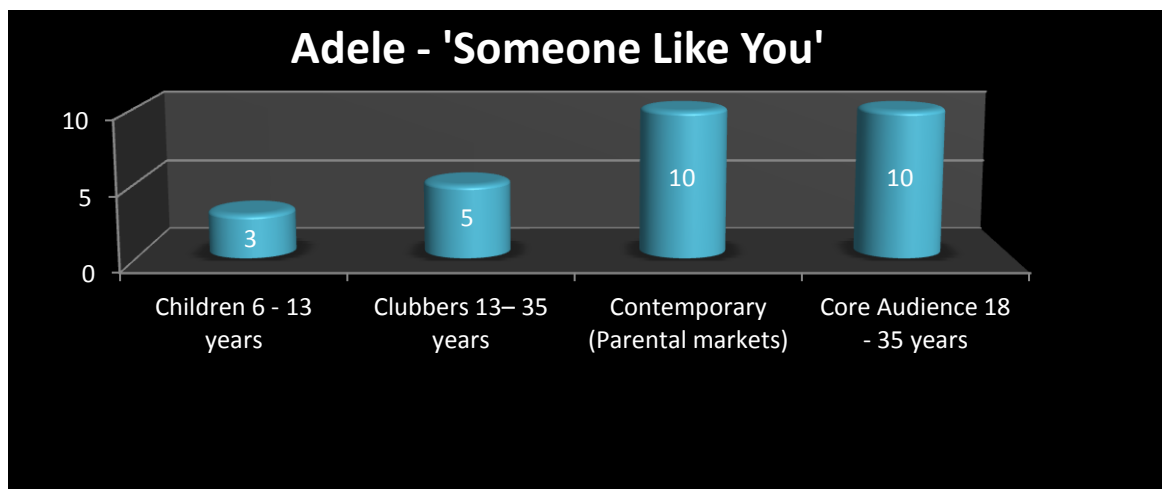


Diagram 3 Four Components to Pop Music Markets; Tewis K, 2011 – Production; Adele – Someone like you

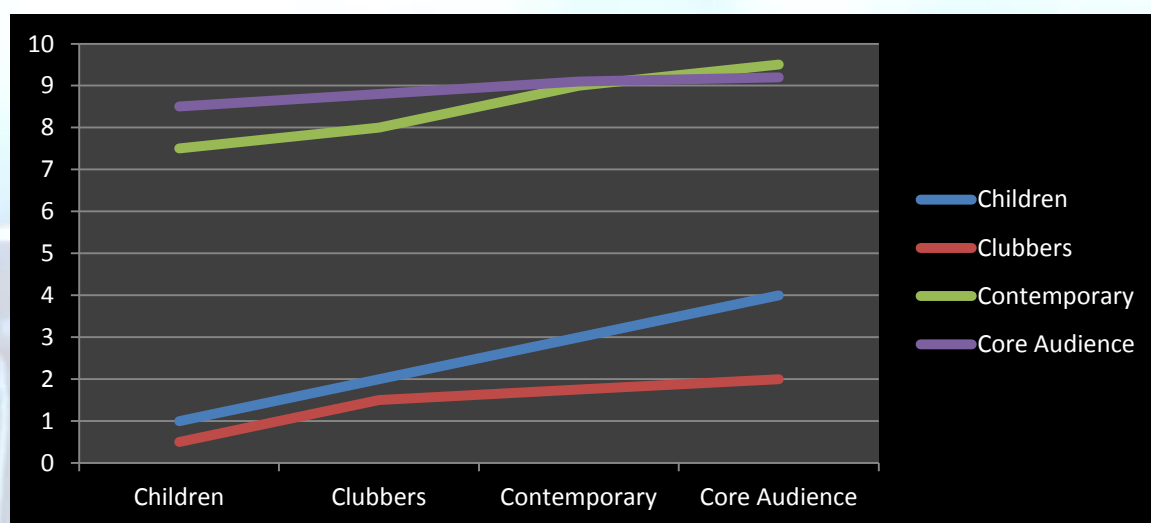


Diagram 4 Timeline of Adoption of music to four component pop markets; Tewis K, 2011 – Production; Adele – Someone like you

Diagrams 1 and 3 demonstrate a very high rating in the 'core audience' and 'contemporary markets'. These are in my opinion are where the key financial gains play a sustainable role as a business model. Recordings that sell well in these identified areas have a higher chance of developing album sales if the single sells well. This is because these customer bases have money to spend and are persuaded at an early stage through music platforms such as iTunes to preview similar for sale products. Making a customer aware of 'similar products that they may like' online has proven to be an effective marketing practice by gaining further sales transactions and improving music market share through by offering consumers similar music products that they may be persuaded to purchase.

The two examples (diagram 1 and 2) also demonstrate that a successful 'fit' into multiple broadcast playlists allow for a longer product lifecycle and deeper market penetration by being promoted. The music company in charge of these products will then benefit on a longer term from two sets of income, physical/digital sales and long term air play royalties from global broadcasting channels.

Although the other two identified markets; 'Children' and 'Clubbers' are not as prevalent from Adele's and Rhianna's singles in comparison to the leading components these supporting markets should not be ignored as they can play a significant part in providing late majority/laggard sales. In the case of clubbers, good quality remix productions made for a clubbing audience can provide

excellent opportunities for sales and market growth. These remix productions feature in the dance music shows on broadcast playlists and can be introduced from the outset or programmed in at a later stage to provide music singles with further market penetration.

The commercial club market did not adopt 'Someone like you' remixes as they were late in being mailed out to DJ's or not mailed at all. Also the ones produced were not of a good enough standard to feature into a DJ's set (club or broadcast) whilst 'Only girl in the world' an instant playlist addition with many suitable remixes. It is prevalent to indicate that Adele did sell more copies even without a strong club and children market purchasing as her song (emotional live performance/choice) instantly engaged the contemporary markets which in my view is the most vital to consider. The content of 'Someone like you' was of such a high quality that it superseded the need for all four markets and chose the two key ones which I have identified as 'Core' and 'Contemporary'.

Different tactics and strategies should be demonstrated in practice by music professionals and it is extremely important to remember that an integrated approach is an ultimate and excellent recommendation in order to achieve the best commercial success possible.

Music programming for broadcast requires diversity as the listening audience changes throughout the daytime and evening. For instance, people who want to go out clubbing for a night out sometimes turn to broadcasting programmes for simplicity, knowing that they can hear for free the latest new music in order to excite them before going out. Remix productions score well here as some radio edits are not suitable for evening programming and require more energetic elements to feature in a more vibrant and energetic market. Examples of this are 'Alexis Jordan's – Happiness (Michael Woods Mix) and the clever amalgamation of 'Rihanna's - Only girl in the world' and the classic dance anthem Insomnia by Faithless.

Children have an important role to play with the transactional strategy as they do positively influence peers when a 'need' has been identified. Although this group do not normally have purse strings to regularly purchase music I had recently witnessed an associate of mine's young son become obsessed with the catchy production 'Do it like a dude' by Jessie J. The obsession was so intense that not only was the single purchased after a very set of insistent discussions but the whole album became a 'requirement' as the need for Jessie J grew. Music is an intensively passionate subject no matter what age you are. Understanding the role of children within your creative business model should not be overlooked as they are a force to be reckoned with and do provide music sales. Get your brand in to market early!

Ethical practices by music companies should be highly recognised and regulated when children's components are being assessed so that the design does not purposely alienate an audience. In today's market a high focus has to be considered where political regulations from a broadcast aspect (Offensive lyrics, explicit sexual content from video) as this can affect sales and even worse brand credibility which is very hard to manage and repair once damaged.

These potential barriers need to be managed effectively at all times to ensure credibility and that measures such as a risk assessment and radar sensing should be made, prevention is always better than cure. These assessments and sensing can be made by music professionals constantly monitoring the social media environment to fully understand the current positioning of their product/brand and if it is being well received. Most parents within pop markets do have a good understanding of songs and artists that their siblings like and why and how this can affect how a music company can be commercially successful or not.

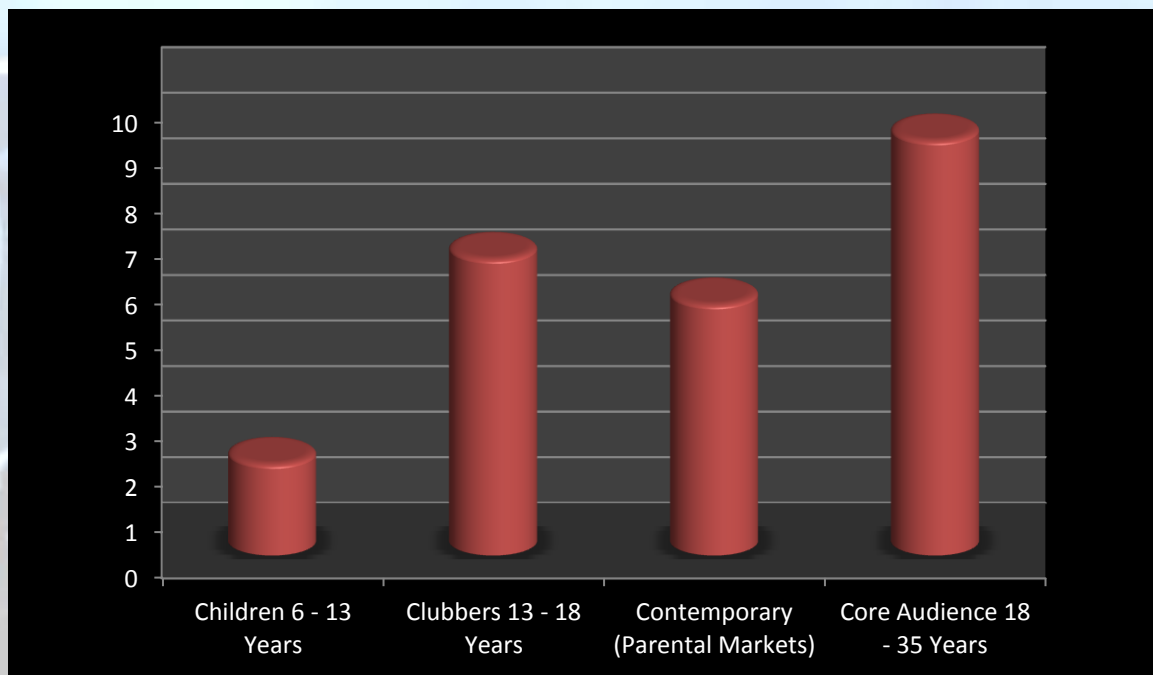
Simon Cowell is one executive who does understand that sexualising acts can cheapen a brand and damage a music brand and shorten the lifecycle through a negative reputation. Retaining confidence and positivity towards acts and music in the contemporary markets can influence parental

preference to music acts that are deemed suitable as an early role model for their siblings. These types of acceptable acts are ones that normally reflects correct and decent practices that align to parent's ideals and who they would like their child to be influenced by.

Leona Lewis is a prime example of how a young very attractive artist can be portrayed as a lady from the start of her career and can remain a high selling contemporary act for a sustainable period. An artist's career should be well managed so that it is very unlikely that an artist with such a squeaky clean image should be seen to be caught falling drunk out of a nightclub every night and in compromising positions that lead to a myriad of negative tabloid publicity. This is a major accomplishment in today's market place and an example of the forward thinking by senior executives. Artists that identify the important of keeping a prestige brand, simple, clean and ultimately straight forward with no gimmicks will likely have a high quality perception to music audiences and then likely to be well received in global markets. It is also critical to note that this is normally a highly respected criteria by core and contemporary markets.

### Future Market Prediction

Using my marketing concept of 'Four components to pop markets', I will attempt to predict the outcome of Leona Lewis' comeback record 'Collide' which is due for release in September 2011. I will demonstrate how this can be used as an analytical tool at corporate media company level and also the artists' management prior to release.



I was emailed 'Collide' on Friday 15<sup>th</sup> July, 2011 in order for me to provide a DJ reaction from Sony Music. My response was that it should do well but was surprised at the lack of wow factor from an artist of such calibre who had not been releasing new music within the last 18 months or so.

Considering the historic pedigree of Leona's, her sales and the sheer size of her fan base including her appearance already programmed into X factor 2011 live shows for this record, that this will sell well. The real performance measure will come if the track does not engage the contemporary audience and gain vital radio and market share play across these high impact broadcasters.



I can see the 'Collide' production being received as weak for club DJ's and I am not hugely confident that this would be programmed into global DJ sets when competition in this genre is at its highest ever. The remix that I have also been mailed (16<sup>th</sup> July, 2011) from Afrojack (a very credible producer) also fails to hit the wow factor mark and I fear this track will fall wide of the core audiences that the production was designed for. Let's hope there is attention paid to DJ reactions in order for a response to be made and a stronger club mix commissioned. My recommendation would be a Laidback Luke remix if the budget is low (and I'm sure with Leona, this is not the case) or then go to the top end and commission a Swedish House Mafia remix.

Broadcasting services will play this record to a large extent but it will not a hard hitting 'A list' defining track for the summer that can drive album sales like Rhianna or Adele's benchmark business model. I do not think the contemporary audience will fall in love with track this either as I feel the song is not a highly memorable one and in parts it a bit 'ploddy' and not catchy enough for such a key UK artist.

This type of piano based house record is made very well by acts such as Kelly Rowland and Kelly does repeatedly find hypnotic and catchy melodies that are effective market wide in comparison. My worry is that Leona will never be Kelly and vice versa and sometimes market modification can confuse the artist's brand message and not deliver on core competences. Change and growth are excellent ideals in business but if the content is lacking and in this case the perception from music audiences is extremely high from forthcoming material then the wow factor can be lost quickly.

This is Leona's experimental album for 2011 and I fear we will never see a repeat of the first album and its success, let's just hope the second single from the new album is the 'REAL' release as opposed to the soft starter which fans will purchase anyway. Let's hope for lots of romantic dreamy catchy ballads/pop songs that Leona' is famous for and that her impeccable vocal delivery, stunning appearance is allowed the chance to explode into the world again with seamless perfection.

## **Conclusion**

Considering multiple component markets at the conceptual stage whether the aim of the strategy is aimed at board/commercial/marketing/production level is essential when designing creative business strategies that can provide music organisations, brands and acts with sustainable advantages that they are viable, relevant to the market place and that generate actual long term sales. It is critical for all music professionals to fully understand the impacts of these market components, the use of Lullaby elements and what modifications should be designed (or not) in order for these creative strategies to become globally successful. If these processes are adhered to well then the positive impacts to the organisation will be market leading results.

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