



KILLING

MG M N T

CREATIVE BUSINESS PROJECT

BUSINESS PLAN: KILLING MANAGEMENT

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Module Code: BMTY7006

Word count: 12405

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Executive Summary

KILLING MGMNT is a music management company based in Tallinn, Estonia. The company represents the most exciting female-identifying artists and producers in Estonia, and plans to expand into the Baltics and Nordics in the upcoming years. The company aims to promote and champion female-led projects and acts, particularly songwriters and producers, and is the only one of its kind in the Baltic/Nordic region.

Historically, women have always been in the minority in the music business. Unfortunately, even in 2021, the issue remains the same - women are underrepresented in every aspect of the industry. In the most recent Annenberg Inclusion Initiative annual report (2021), only 2.6% of the producers in popular music were women, and across 900 popular songs, 12.6% of the songwriters are women. According to Vick Bain's report (2019), there are 68 UK labels which have no solo female artists, compared to 15 which have no male artists (Counting the Music Industry: The Gender Gap, 2019). Although there have been some improvements in the last decade, and the topic is being discussed more than ever, there is still a lot to do to provide equal opportunities to both men and women.

KILLING MGMNT is based in Tallinn, Estonia. With only 1.3 million citizens, it is one of the smallest countries in Europe. Estonia is part of the Baltics, and borders Finland, Sweden, Russia and Latvia. Estonia, specifically Tallinn, is a fertile ground for new businesses and start-ups: companies such as Skype, Bolt and TransferWise were founded there. Estonia is a hub for entrepreneurs: it is the first country in the world to introduce an e-Residency scheme. E-Residency means that anyone in the world can apply for a secure government-backed digital identity and regardless of their location, gain access to Estonia's e-services. Companies established through e-Residency are trusted location-independent EU

companies, which can be managed remotely from anywhere with low costs, minimal hassle and access to all the tools needed to grow globally (Visit Estonia, 2021).

The music market in Estonia is small, but in the last 5 years it has seen a rapid growth in exporting local music to broader audiences. Music businesses, labels and management companies have been founded and bigger international companies have expanded and settled in the Baltics. In 2015, Music Estonia was founded: Music Estonia is a music industry development centre and export office (Music Estonia, 2021) and along with the annual music industry conference Tallinn Music Week, is responsible for inviting new international contacts and industry to the country. Music Estonia also creates opportunities for artists, local companies, emerging talents and underrepresented people through multiple European funded programmes, including AMP - an export development programme for both advanced and new music companies. The 15-month programme aims to take participants in new developments in the field of export capacity by involving foreign mentors with long-term international experience and other specialists in the field during the programme (Music Estonia, 2021). In addition, one of the most recent collaborations has been with *shesaid.so*, who helped to organise the first ever all female songwriters' camp in Estonia in early 2021. Major labels - Warner, Sony Music and Universal Music - have all expanded their presence in Estonia over the last year, and have signed numerous local artists. Universal Music Baltics was established in Estonia in 2008, but only had two employees until early 2021, when they expanded their team to 9 people and expanded across the Baltics. Sony Music announced their new expanded team in August 2021, with 9 employees in Estonia, 3 in Latvia and 3 in Lithuania (Sony Music Baltics, 2021) and Warner Music Baltics now operates with 8 employees, having opened their Baltics office in Tallinn in October 2020 (Music Business Worldwide, 2020).

Within this context, KILLING MGMNT aims to work in collaboration with multiple companies, organisations and educational providers who support and strengthen the position of women

in the industry, run workshops for young musicians, and introduce technology and production in their musical vocabulary from an earlier age. The company will provide industry opportunities to the younger generation, and by working with Music Estonia, could provide paid positions to give real life experience for passionate young professionals. In order to showcase and celebrate women in music, the company will also initiate a podcast and series of events in Estonia and around Europe.

Artist Management

The music business swirls in its own continuous change, and the result has been the shrinking influence of large record labels in the careers of artists. Instead of being an adjunct to the work of the label on behalf of the artist, managers now find themselves at the hub of the artist's career, providing many of the services formerly handled by labels, and they wield considerable control over the success of music careers (Allen, 2011).

There is no clear definition for the role of artist manager, other than that artist managers guide every aspect of their clients' careers, counselling them on professional decisions and opportunities, overseeing their day-to-day schedules and activities, and representing their interests within larger productions and teams (Berklee, 2021). This could mean numerous things: from looking after their artist's mental and physical health to negotiating deals with labels or planning releases and tours. The main areas that a lot of articles and research papers point out are organising, planning, controlling and directing an artist's career.

Paul Allen discusses in his book 'Artist Management for the Music Business' (2011) how an artist manager is a completely different job role to any other managers. It is much more personal: he even compared the trust and the strength of the relationship between an artist and a manager to a successful marriage. The association and level of close personal commitment is rare in any other businesses because there is virtually no aspect of the

professional and personal corners of an artist's life that a manager does not encounter on a regular basis.

An artist manager needs to have excellent communication skills and emotional intelligence. They need to have good people skills, read people well, understand different personalities and be good at networking, including the social and business aspect of the role. Given that artist managers are also often in the coaching or mentoring role, being a good leader and a listener are also essential. They need to be ahead of the curve, think outside the box and be creative. As well as being in charge of an artist's career, managers are in charge of their own career, so making sure that the manager keeps up with current trends, changes in the industry and predictions is vital. The hugely competitive nature of the music business requires that the managers must push their own creative skills to their limits in order to advocate on behalf of their clients (Allen, 2011). It is not enough to follow what every other artist/manager is doing, especially in a country as small as Estonia.

Guy Morrow (2018) states in his book 'Artist Management: Agility in the Creative and Cultural Industries' that artist management can be defined as a form of group creativity that involves the interaction between artistic creativities and managerial creativities. Whilst the creative aspect of managerial work includes more problem-solving, strategising and negotiating solutions, and is completely different to the artistic creativity, together they create a whole. Managers also need to be patient and understand that artists' creative minds often work very differently and tasks that seem to be quick and easy, might take time.

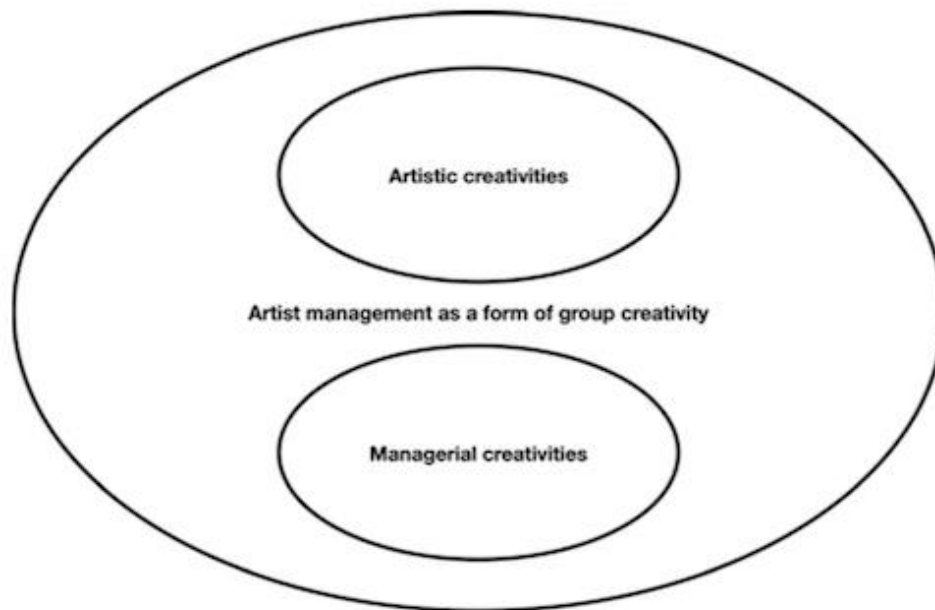


Figure 1. Artist Management (Morrow, 2018).

For my project I chose to conduct qualitative research. To me, given that an artist manager is a very individual and diverse job role and most managers have a very unique story of how they became one, it seemed that the most appropriate research paradigm would be to conduct interviews. I interviewed 3 managers from Estonia and 3 managers from the UK. The information and knowledge I received from the UK managers is going to help me utilise their experience and advice outside their country and apply it in my home territory; talking to the Estonian managers informed me of the current state of the industry in Estonia and helped me get a better understanding of the market.

I interviewed Thea Zaitsev, the founder of Tier Music, Kaarel Sein, the founder of Grind, and Karl Tamm, the founder of wavy ent. In addition, I conducted interviews with James Morgan, the founder of Pieces of 8 Music, Sophie Dorrington, Artist Manager from Tileyard Music, and Cian Davis, A&R Manager at 0207 Def Jam. In this part of my research, my questions (Appendix 1) were solely focussed on finding out about managers' personal stories and their experiences, and how they navigated their start in the industry.

Q1 - Please describe your background (education/previous work prior to management)

Q2 - How did you get into management?

Q3 - Describe your current position (are you part of a management/working individually etc)?

Q4 - How many acts have you currently got in your roster?

Q5 - What was/is the thought process when choosing which artists to manage (i.e personal preference, potential to be commercially successful etc)?

Q6 - What were the biggest challenges when you first started (personal/industry)?

Q7 - What are the biggest challenges right now (personal/industry)?

Q8 - What are the essential skills (interpersonal and professional skills) to be a good manager?

Q9 - What's next for you, future goals?

UK

James Morgan

Sophie Dorrington

Cian Davies

Q1	studied non-music degree, heavily into DJ'ing, worked at EMI, landed a job at Universal as an A&R, stayed for 10years	studied English Language and Linguistics at Edinburgh University, went into PR, first job as a PR at a DJ agency, found out about Sigala, joined the team as he was about to release his 4th single	studied psychology in Manchester, started hosting club nights; worked as an intern every job possible, has been a radio plugger, driver, A&R, admin
Q2	learned a lot from communicating with managers on a daily basis, wanted to be his own boss and work closer on all aspects of artists careers		interned at MMF, met many managers, found a band he started managing, did many jobs until was offered a position at Insanity Group
Q3	director of Pieces of 8 Music	part of an artist management company, primarily doing day to day management for Sigala and Pixie Lott.	A&R at 0207 Def Jam Records; independent manager
Q4	2	2	2
Q5	age, talent, amazing songwriters, you have to completely believe in them 100%, their voice needs to be completely distinctive, need to know who they will appeal to	potential to be commercially successful, right attitude	needs to make you feel something; need to have the right personality but the music needs to touch people
Q6	getting the chance in the first place is tough, need to have luck and persistence	there is a lot to get your head around as you are across all aspects of an artist's career	getting into the industry - it's small but everybody wants to work in it; trying not to be overly ambitious

Q7	staying on top of the industry trends is an ongoing challenge		Covid and being isolated; hard to balance personal life and work life
Q8	patience, persistence, passion and belief	ability to adapt to last minute changes, keep calm under pressure, have solutions to problems	patience, humility, knowing when to shut up; empathetic, able to manage stressful situations calmly; good timekeeping, being kind, helpful, giving, not to be afraid to look stupid, always remain curious, knowing when to step up and stand up for your artist is crucial
Q9	get an artist signed	expand roster, find new talent	do my job really well, no1 single and no1 album, leave a legacy behind

Estonia

Thea Zaitsev

Kaarel Sein

Karl Tamm

Q1	has a musical background, played an instrument & sang in choirs, studied in Denmark and worked at a music publishment, moved to the UK to do masters in Music Management, then worked in few music PR companies, then music licensing at Universal Music, then A&R consultant at Virgin/EMI, left after a year to focus on her own business and management	studied in Estonia, USA (high school in Michigan) and Bachelor's degree course in Sound Production at SAE Institute Cape Town; also went to a music school for 5 years playing trumpet as his main instrument; started building stages for his dad's company when he was 14; he's played in a band as a drummer and over 500 shows as a DJ in Estonia, Finland, Latvia and South Africa; started as a promoter in 2010; he was was a radio show host at Radio 2 in Estonia for 3 years, they ran a radio show Grind, which is also their event brand (the radio show is running til this day); before music he had a lot of different jobs: pizza dough maker, waiter, barman, xbox hardware customer support, social media manager, director assistant in the Estonian Puppet Theatre	started management when he was still in high school
Q2	realised there is a lot of talent in Estonia but no managers, inspired her to study management; heard NOEP's first release by accident, liked it and reached out to him - have been working together ever since.	managed his own band's daily tasks, soon musician friends started asking advice and feedback; started working as a bookings manager. The official management started in 2018 with nublu, who was a new talent and they hit it off straight away and made things official.	was part of the so-called 'Soundcloud-wave' of young artists, decided to organise a festival, offered to manage one of the artists who refused at first but changed his mind later
Q3	CEO of Tier Music Management and Publishing	co-founder of Grind, booking agent	CEO of Wavy ent. and working as a project

			manager at Sony Music Baltics.
Q4	3	4	5
Q5	it's about the music; she should instantly know what to do to make them more successful; connecting with the act and the personality	most of the artists were his friends before they started working together; valued their music and the talent; got along well and had the same mindset and willingness to work hard: he shouldn't want it more than they do; potential commercial success	follows his intuition; the potential to produce something that would be different which would have the potential to speak to the masses; presence, honesty, their willingness to work, self-awareness.
Q6	finances - up and coming acts do not really earn money, income was rather small; lived in London which was very expensive but good for connections	Estonia is a really small market, the opportunities to just run a regular management are very limited, need to have 360 deals and put our eggs in different baskets - difficult because it means a lot of work in various fields.	working with the labels, figuring out how to lead artists' career, building a network
Q7	finances, especially during Covid; educating the local market regarding fair fees for artists: for licensing their music, sync; also a lot more competition due to digitalisation	Covid, personal development and not over-working; finding international opportunities for artists	find the right people to work with and invest in them, even though the income has decreased around 70% due to Covid; having to be patient if you need input from an artist but they don't react
Q8	good listener, analytical thinking, great planner, organisational skills, good negotiator and a bit of a fighter to stand up for your acts; patience, being a people's person	know the industry, connections, communication, high stress tolerance, problem-solving mindset, business mindset	patience, empathy, critical thinking, punctuality; need to be a go-getter, knowledge of marketing, music business essentials, knowledge of how to identify the right career path based on your artists' needs;
Q9	find more talent, expand the management team	keep building a great company; to gain international success and to get consistent touring for his artists' home and abroad; more focus the record label side of things and building their own catalogue.	build artist management and try to expand internationally

Unsurprisingly, there were many overlaps in managers' responses (Appendices 3-7 – summary above). Everyone has had a very different journey to becoming one but the challenges and goals are shared by the majority. It has been useful and interesting to learn about people's experiences and that there are so many opportunities within that job role. I would like to highlight my interview with Cian Davies (Appendix 8), which was insightful and

inspiring: he expressed that in order to be successful in the industry, it is important to be a person that people would always like to work with, and never stop learning, being curious, ambitious and improving yourself. The level of detail and self-reflection in his interview was extremely impressive.

Market Research

Artist Management in Estonia

When interviewing Thea Zaitsev (Appendix 4), she said that around 2010, she only knew one manager in Estonia who actively participated in conferences and had a roster of artists to manage. Currently, there are 12 management companies in Estonia - Estonian Funk Embassy, Monday Morning Management, Gateway Management, Full House Agency, Made in Baltics, Moon Management, FAAR Music, Tier Music, Moonwalk, TIKS, wavy ent. and Grind. In addition, there are individual managers who represent an act (or two) but do not have their own management companies. On average, the companies listed above manage between 3-5 acts each, which means there are around 55 artists under management, with 2-4 employees per company working in these companies. This is further proof that the industry has experienced a shift in the last 10 years but still remains relatively small. With the exception of Monday Morning and Gateway Managements, every company is providing at least one additional service, such as publishing, organising events, production, or label services.

Given that the market is so small, companies need multiple sources of income to be able to make profit. Kaarel Sein (Appendix 3) mentioned that running just a management company on its own would be too challenging due to the size of the market, which is why I have decided to take his advice and expand the operations of KILLING MGMNT to multiple different areas. Because label deals, streaming numbers, and other sources of income that are normally associated with label services are extremely low, I have chosen not to pursue another

management company that offers services mentioned above. Having researched the existing companies and talking to the managers, I have concluded that there is no need for another similar company, especially if it could just offer the exact same services as some other more established ones.

Interestingly, with the arrival of major labels and their sub-labels, there has been a rise of management companies that work exclusively under a particular label. For instance, Made in Baltics' as well as wavy ent.' artists both work only in cooperation with Sony Music Baltics. This can be viewed as a safe option to make sure manager's artists can all be signed with a major label, however, in my opinion, it could also set restrictions to the type of artists the manager represents, since majors tend to be only interested in acts that have a mass appeal. When asking managers about the thought process when choosing which artists to work with, only Sophie Dorrington from Tileyard Music (Appendix 6) highlighted the commercial success as the key factor, whereas other managers prioritised the quality of the music, the right attitude, the work ethic, and the relationship/friendship they had with the artist prior to working with them. It could be argued that being tied into a major label's operations restricts some artists' creativity and therefore would not be a suitable way to release music for many acts.

I am currently working in Tier Music Management (2021) as the only artist manager (junior manager and maternity cover for my line manager). My job tasks include day-to-day management, release plans, live/tour coordination, client/producer/artist liaison, meeting with labels, music licensing, creating contracts, invoices, social media and marketing plans, creative planning and strategic planning. I am managing 3 artists - NOËP (2021), Sander Mölder (2021) and Mick Pedaja (2021). All 3 artists are stylistically very different, appeal to different audiences and are in different stages in their careers, which makes this role exceptionally varied, with every day introducing new opportunities and challenges.

Through my research, there is no evidence of management companies in Estonia or anywhere in the region that would be similar to KILLING MGMNT. It is the first company that would primarily represent female acts. It would also be the first company to actively reach out to younger generations and seek opportunities to collaborate with them through education and offering hands-on industry experience.

Music Industry in Estonia

Due to Estonia being under the rule of the Soviet Union until the early 1990s, the music scene was heavily influenced by Russia and what/who was popular there at the time. Many young people had not even heard music in English and in order to hear any foreign acts, Estonians either needed to have special access to find the right frequency on their radios to listen to the Finnish channels or they had to be musicians/music students. Given that the main second language people had to learn in school was Russian and not many people spoke/knew English, in order to make songs more relatable for the whole nation, foreign hits were often introduced to the Estonian audiences by translating lyrics to Estonian. Up to this day, my parents' and grandparents' generations do not listen to much foreign music and artists know that if they want to be attractive to more people, the majority of the songs need to be written in Estonian, which limits the potential for reaching wider audiences internationally. Therefore, artists need to make a choice: whether to become an artist in Estonia and sing in Estonian, or whether to break out of the country and gain attention outside the home territory. Many artists who started writing their music in English, quickly realised that in order to gain any exposure and media interest in their work, they had to start releasing music in Estonian.

Currently, the biggest selling music style is Estonian rap and mumble rap: in addition to some more mature rap groups, such as 5MIINUST (2021), there has been a new wave of young late-teens/early 20s mumble rap artists who many teenagers find they can relate to because of their age and their lyrics. This style has been the most successful in radios/charts/Spotify for the last 2-3 years, starting exclusively on Soundcloud around 4-5 years ago. These 5-6 young men were not known by many at the time but once they started hosting live gigs, they quickly became extremely popular amongst young adults. Now, it is actually considered 'mainstream' and many radio channels mainly prioritise these artists.

In 2021, people have more access to global music via streaming platforms and the internet than any other generation before, therefore I believe that music in Estonian will become less popular in the next 10-15 years. If we look at Spotify's official TOP50 Estonia playlist (October 2021) for this month, we can only find 5 Estonian acts in the TOP50, with the highest local artist (5MIINUST) charting on the 7th place. In addition, major labels do not always prioritise their local artists when creating radio/social media campaigns, meaning more resources are spent to push international releases. When comparing Spotify's TOP 50 to one of the most popular radio stations MyHits Radio's TOP 20, the situation looks very similar.

MyHits TOP 30 (16. oktoober):

- 1 (4) Måneskin "Beggin"
- 2 (1) Shouse "Love Tonight (Robin Schulz Remix)"
- 3 (5) Kungs "Never Going Home"
- 4 (2) Karl-Erik Taukar "Superkangekaelne"**
- 5 (3) Ed Sheeran "Bad Habits"
- 6 (7) Pascal Letoublon feat. Leony "Friendships (Lost My Love)"
- 7 (8) NOËP "Head Out Of The Water"**
- 8 (9) Lil Nas X & Jack Harlow "INDUSTRY BABY"
- 9 (10) Joel Corry x Jax Jones feat. Charli XCX & Saweetie "OUT OUT"
- 10 (11) Tungevaag feat. Kid Ink "Ride With Me"

- 11 (12) Ed Sheeran "Shivers"
- 12 (6) Whitney Houston x Clean Bandit "How Will I Know"
- 13 (13) nublu & whogaux "uputada merre"**
- 14 (21) Shawn Mendes & Tainy "Summer Of Love"
- 15 (20) Elton John & Dua Lipa "Cold Heart (PNAU Remix)"
- 16 (14) The Weeknd "Take My Breath"
- 17 (15) Camila Cabello "Don't Go Yet"
- 18 (16) gameboy tetris "Incognito"**
- 19 (19) Becky Hill & David Guetta "Remember"
- 20 (18) Farruko "Pepas"

Figure 2. MyHits TOP 20 (Muusikaplaneet, 16.10.2021)

There are only 4 Estonian artists on the list, the highest being Karl-Erik Taukar (4th). When discussing this with Mikko Manninen, the General Manager of Warner Music Baltics (Appendix 2), he agreed that local music does not do as well in radio and Spotify charts and his goal is to push local artists more in the future. Interestingly, there is not a single female Estonian artist in TOP 20. In Spotify's TOP 50, there was one female Estonian (TOP19). Only 13 songs of 50, which is equivalent to 26%, featured a female artist. 80% of Warner Music Baltic's artists are male artists, which reflects the current state of the market. Manninen stated that in his opinion, there is a lack of female artists in Estonia: when looking at management rosters, the majority of artists are all male. This is definitely something that needs to be talked about more.

What is also interesting in Estonia is that every artist is accessible and approachable. In the UK, not many people could afford A-list superstars for their wedding or function, whereas in

Estonia, for an extra few thousand euros, even the bigger and more successful acts will be available. An A-list artist could earn between 5000€-10,000€ in a weekend. Although it is a good opportunity for artists to make decent money, it takes away the exclusive aspect of an artist's set because it might be possible to see your favourite artist more than once a month in multiple corporate/private events, which is why there are not many big festivals in Estonia where local artists would get the main slot. This is also why there are not many session or function musicians in Estonia - the demand is not very high, because people would often wait a bit longer to have enough funds to hire their favourite artist than an unknown function band.

Music Industry in the Baltics

As in Estonia, the Baltic music industry as a whole is also developing fast. Manninen (2021) believes that the market has made significant progress in the last few years and that the standard of artists is now higher than ever. He also thinks that in the next 5 years, the region will likely see some international breakthroughs with the help of the digitalisation of the world which helps projects to have wider impact globally, even in our region. However, the three countries are still in different stages of development and the culture, listening habits and traditions affect all countries very differently. Traditional music in the local language will also likely be a huge part of the industry in 5 years' time.

Women in the Music Industry

Although arguably some of the most successful artists in the world are women, it is the lack of women and diversity in the whole industry that is still a big challenge even in 2021.

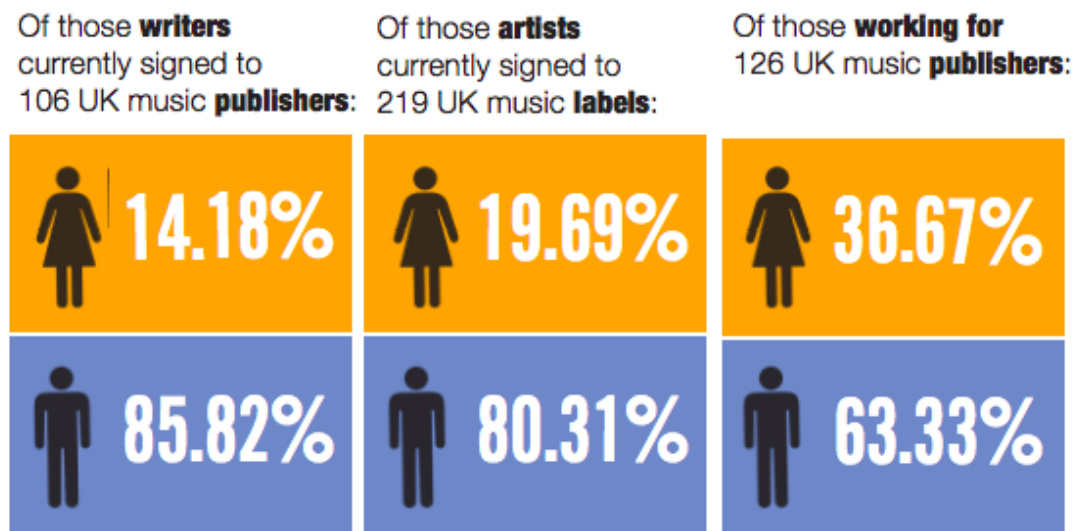


Figure 3. The Gender Gap in the UK Music Industry (Bain, 2019).

Unfortunately, there is no research conducted in Estonia or in the Baltics, but based on the UK's example, in 2019, 14.18% of writers who were signed to 106 music publishers were women. Men represented 80.31% of artists that are signed to 219 labels; 36.67% of people working for music publishers are women. Although year by year, the percentages change between 2-3%, it is still not enough to see a meaningful difference.

In 2019, the BBC published its own research looking at the disparities of women in the charts: "In 2008, 30 female acts were credited on the best-selling 100 songs of the year. In 2018, the figure was still 30. But the number of men has risen by more than 50% as the number of collaborations has grown over that time from 59 men in 2008 to 91 in 2018. Which means the gender gap has grown." The main genres in the radio charts are dance, pop and hip hop and whilst often female vocals are featured in these styles, the main writers/DJs/producers are still

men. "Collaborations are healthy, as long as it's an equal partnership and women aren't always relegated to being the featured artist; if you try and redress the balance as an industry - because women are every bit as creative and brilliant - then it will be redressed, but it has to be a conscious effort by everybody," (Stennett, 2019).

Singer Mabel added that as women in the creative industry, we get moulded into something that we do not necessarily want to be but what would sell, whereas in comparison, boys are encouraged to do whatever they want to do. She thinks it is about encouraging the younger generations not to follow the same patterns.

Contacts and networking are important in the music industry and often, rather than actively seeking for new musicians, people tend to work with the same people they previously have had great experiences with. Because there are fewer women in the industry anyway, the chances of women being in the mix are also limited. Anoushka Shankar, the president of The F-List: Directory of UK Female Musicians (2021) discusses the importance of creating the F-List: "You can go to the website and search by instrument, or search by genre, or by location and you'll get a list of women who are right there doing exactly what it is you need. It's the relationships that people already have in music that will be the easiest path to tread." In my opinion, it would be better to have a website where a mix of men and women would be represented, it is a good starting point to give women the platform to showcase their skills.

WOMEN ARE MISSING IN THE MUSIC INDUSTRY

Percentage of women across three creative roles...

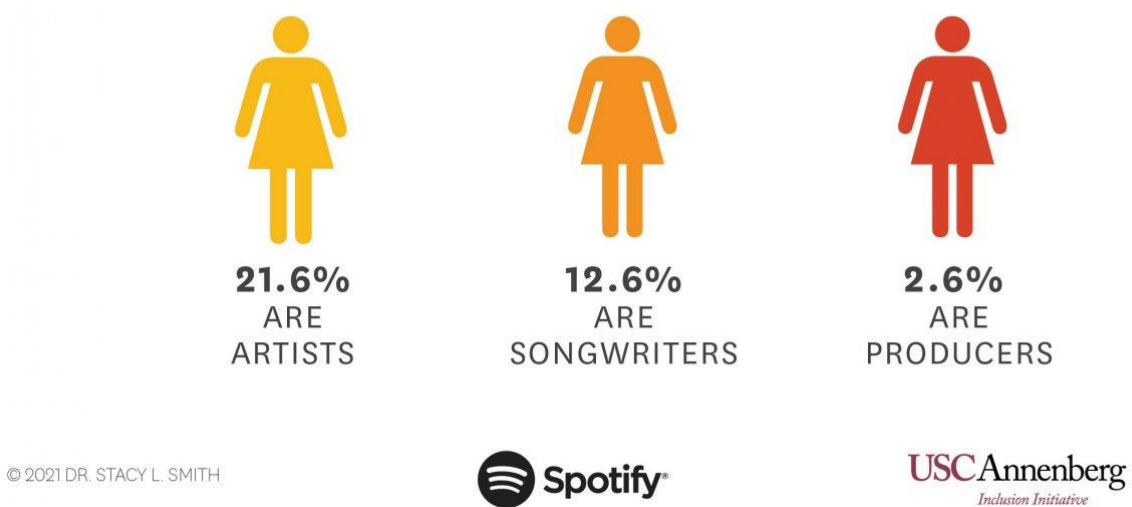


Figure 4. Percentage of women across three creative roles (Smith, 2021).

The USC Annenberg Inclusion Initiative and Stacy L. Smith conducted a report (2021) about women in popular music. They analysed data from 900 popular music songs; the report includes Billboard Hot 100 Year-End Charts as well as statistics from the Grammy awards. According to the paper, only 21.6% artists, 12.6% songwriters and 2.6% producers in popular music are women. To add, only 9% of the songs in the last 9 years have a female producer - no women were nominated for Producer of the Year for the eighth of nine years studied. Although the number of songwriters and artists is slightly higher than it was in 2019, the lack of women on the creative side is still very visible.

Breaking the Barriers

There are numerous factors that act as barriers for women in the industry. Historically, women have been in a weaker position in society - for centuries, women were not allowed to have a career, to vote, to perform; to this day, some countries control what women can and cannot do. Moreover, the pace of the industry, unsociable hours and untraditional working patterns often make women having to choose between having a family or a career in pivotal moments in their lives, which makes a career in music unattractive to many. There is still a substantial pay gap across various positions in the industry - a recent Women in CTRL (2021) research found that women who work as part of major label's operations in the UK earn 25-30% less than men in the same positions.

As in society, women in the creative industries are often objectified due to their looks; the industry is prone to sexism and harassment and often women are threatened to lose their jobs if they dared to speak up. The recent #metoo movement has highlighted how bad the situation really has been for many years and finally, men have had to start taking responsibility for their behaviour. Another challenge is technology. Music production has been considered as a masculine activity and often, girls believe they are not skilled enough to try it. But technology for current popular music is crucial, given that modern music relies increasingly on computers and less on real instruments. Research by Comber, Hargreaves and Colley (1993) has shown that in the classroom, "Boys are more confident in their use of music technology; that they are showing an increasing interest in music as a result of it; and that teachers have a crucial role to play in ensuring that girls are not disadvantaged in the use of music technology." The current lack of diversity in the industry means there is also a lack of role models for young women. If girls cannot visibly see women in these roles, they do not even know it is possible. This applies to our society as a whole - the more we see women in powerful positions, the more role models girls have.

Business Plan

First Year

My aim is to sign 2 acts and a producer in the first year, whilst finding ways to collaborate and work with multiple musicians across the country/region to establish the name and brand within the industry but also to find new talent and potential new signings. During the first year, I aim to receive support from Music Estonia through their various channels, which would help financially but also to grow the company's presence (inter)nationally. The main three areas to establish and expand for the first year would be management, education and events.

	1st year	5 years
Management	• 3 acts: Rahel, Manna, Kerli • collaborate with other artists, find some new talent • find opportunities to get artists more attention (live gigs, media etc)	• expand roster with artists from the Baltics, Scandinavia • artists signed to labels, performing at big festivals, touring internationally • big following on social media, streaming platforms
Education	• visit high schools for workshops/sessions • discussion with music schools • get involved with Georg Ots Music School and their work placement • collaborate with Music Estonia	• creating an impact on schools • starting a new popular music academy to teach popular music singing/instruments/songwriting/ production for teenagers
Events	• Killing MGMNT Showcase in Tallinn Music Week • host/curate panel at TMW discussing women in the industry • networking sessions within the industry • podcast discussing and celebrating women in the industry	• Killing MGMNT Showcases in major European music festivals • International networking events • collaborating with female-led/independent businesses; sponsorships

Figure 5. Killing MGMNT's Business Plan: 1st Year vs 5 Years.

Management

As management is still the key focus of my business, the main emphasis will be on selecting and signing the right acts and providing them with great opportunities. My aim is to find like-minded versatile women who are active in various genres and who would be advocates of the brand.

Rahel



Figure 6. Rahel (2021)

Rahel (2021) is a 26-year old singer/songwriter, based in Tallinn. She has been part of the industry for a few years and is known to some Estonians but mainly as a backing vocalist and a session singer - she has only recently started her own original project. Her sound and style can be described as soul, good-mood gospel pop, which is not very common for Estonian artists. She writes her material by herself. She is also an actress, and is known for her entertaining Instagram stories with one of her best friends, Eleryn, who is also a rising star in Estonia.

Rahel's first two releases have accumulated around 100,000 streams on Spotify (2021), she has 2,500 Instagram followers and 700 Facebook likes. In 2021, she qualified for TOP 20 in Eesti Laul ('Song of the Year', the winner gets to go to Eurovision to represent the country). I attended her first ever showcase in Tallinn Music Week at the beginning of October 2021 with her band, which was impressive - she has got a great personality, her new material is catchy, she looked and sounded great live. Her challenge in Estonia would be getting the country behind her, given her style might remain too 'foreign' for many Estonians. However, I have found that a lot of globally known artists who are writing that style of music are men: for instance, Allen Stone and PJ Morton have a similar style, so even internationally there are not many female artists who would be similar to her.

With Rahel, the emphasis would be first to establish her as an artist and a personality in Estonia and then look further to Scandinavia, UK and the rest of Europe. Because of her bubbly and outgoing personality, as a manager, I would emphasise social media and talk shows/interviews/challenges with radios to make sure people would get to know her better. Her English is excellent, so communicating with international audiences should not be an issue. Another challenge would be finding the perfect audience profile for her: she is currently appreciated by many fellow musicians for the level of her talent and her band, but given that stylistically it is not quite mainstream, finding an angle to encourage radio stations would play her music will be hopefully achievable through other activities around her original music.

Manna



Figure 7. Manna (2021)

Manna (2021) is a 23-year old singer-rapper, who has been known for silky vocals and her collaborations with Estonian rappers and DJs since 2019. Her style is varied but can be described as alternative hip-hop, rnb and psychedelic. She has been featured on many successful songs as a guest vocalist, which means people probably recognise her voice but not her name as a solo artist. Her style and her artistry and presence can also be compared to Billie Eilish - she is not trying to fit in any norms; her 'bedroom production' style music and her raw lyrics make her relatable for many Gen Z'ers. There are no other artists like her in Estonia and given that artists such as Billie Eilish are currently very successful, I can see a huge potential in her for the European/British market. Manna also hosts her radio show where she discusses societal problems, everyday issues, and plays her favourite new releases. She also produces her material by herself. Manna loves collaborating with other musicians, so the first step for me would be to find some international producers/rappers for her to collaborate with on a big feature.

Kerli



Figure 8. Kerli (2021).

It could be argued that Kerli is one of the most known Estonians in the world. Signed with Island Records by LA Reid back in 2006 when she was only 18, Kerli (34) is a singer, songwriter and a producer. Kerli has charted in various Billboard charts with her songs 'Walking on Air', 'Love is Dead', and 'Army of Love', has sold hundreds of thousands of records and has co-written one of Demi Lovato's biggest hits 'Skyscraper'. In addition, there were multiple stories and discussions (2011) about how Lady Gaga's team 'stole' Kerli's image and style and made Gaga look like her, copying everything from her hair colour to her outfits. She has had a very versatile and challenging career under various different labels in different countries: her last release was in 2020.

Kerli has around 350,000 active Spotify monthly listeners, but she has now moved back to Estonia to take a break from being an artist and instead, she wants to write and produce for other people. As a producer/songwriter, she is currently not tied into any label/management/publishing contracts and knowing that she is passionate about sharing her experience with the younger generation and collaborating with new artists, she would be the perfect match for my roster.

Some prospective artists/producers to keep an eye on include Kitty Florentine (2021), Pološywa (2021) ELLIP (2021) and Maribella (2021). I would like to collaborate with them during the first year to see if they would be a good match and whether I could help them with their career.

Education

Estonia's education system is very different compared to the UK's. Music and creative arts are at a very important place in education as well as in the Estonian culture but the main emphasis is on choral singing and classical music. Music provision does not happen during school time, however many schools have music specialised classes, which means there are after school choirs and vocal ensembles that students attend within their own school. In addition, separate to schools, there are music schools (students will specialise in one instrument, as well as receive weekly theory, history and ensemble classes; normally students start at the age of 7, graduate by the age of 13 and gain a qualification equivalent to UK's Grade 8 in their instrument, music theory and music history) or music studios (choir and dancing classes, some students start at the age of 3 but can start anytime). Students take exams in their classes every term, get graded weekly for their homework, take part in competitions and perform progress showcases every two months. In recent years, some music schools have tried to modernise the curriculum by adding pop vocal group lessons, pop singing lessons and ensemble classes, but that is the extent of popular music being explored in the school system. Music studios focus on choirs: classical vocal technique, sight reading, harmonic connections and group singing.

My aim would be to start with high schools and run some workshops in popular music, music industry, music production and discuss women in the industry. I have multiple years of experience in teaching, both on high school level as well as in higher education: I have taught

pop singing, choirs, arranging, music theory, directed vocal groups and bands, and have facilitated music industry workshops and sessions.

My workshops would always be open to anyone regardless of their gender because I believe that keeping these discussions exclusively to girls/women would not make any difference and it is important to include everyone to address issues and share the knowledge. I would also like to work with heads of music schools to introduce and work on curriculums for additional classes/pathways for popular music and production. There is currently one music school in Estonia - Gustav Adolfi Muusikakool (2021) - which is offering a DJ/Production pathway: I would start the conversation from there. Currently, no girls are signed up for this course; I would bring in artists/producers and host workshops/songwriting classes to complement the existing programme and discuss how we could make it more appealing and accessible to girls as well.

Beyond the high school level, there are three higher education institutions that offer a music related qualification/degree. Viljandi Culture Academy (2021) focuses on traditional Estonian folk and jazz music and sound engineering. The Estonian Academy of Music and Theatre (2021) specialises in classical music and Georg Ots Tallinn Music School, which is the only school out of three which does not offer a degree, is mainly focussing on popular and jazz music. In 2020, the school also introduced a 1-year course in music industry entrepreneurship. During the programme, students are asked to find a music-related company to work in and get hands-on industry experience. Companies can express their interest and create job roles and the school either approves or disapproves the position; in return the companies agree to offer mentorship and knowledge exchange, as well as to be part of some of the lectures within the school. This would be an excellent opportunity for me to get involved with younger talent, and depending on students' background (artist or producer or industry focused) I could offer multiple different positions within KILLING MGMNT. In addition, by leading lectures and

masterclasses, more industry people will find out about us and we can establish some useful connections.

Through Music Estonia's AMP programme, I could also offer opportunities as part of their INTRO programme. INTRO aims to bring additional managers, assistants and other professionals to the Estonian music industry through an intensive hands-on intern programme. During the 3-month programme, the interns work closely with selected artists, on organising music-related events or other relevant tasks that contribute to their skill-set and also to the field (Music Estonia, 2021). These could be project specific roles, especially useful when organising events.

Manninen (2021) stated in his interview that that the only way to change the culture is by offering people opportunities from an earlier stage: opportunities for the appropriate education, opportunities to network, opportunities for young girls to meet women who are working professionally and who would be great role models, and opportunities to collaborate. It is important that girls could see being an artist, producer or a music industry professional as a serious career and could make their choices accordingly.

To conclude, I believe that in order for us to see a change in the industry, we need to start these conversations as early as possible. To reflect back on my own time at school, in order for me to start my own pop-focussed projects, I had to wait until I finished my music school and music studio to have time to focus and work on things that interested me. I had no support or guidance but I was determined to explore popular music and educate myself enough so I could move to the UK and do my degree here, however, not everyone has the same personality and passion, unless they feel supported and guided.

I value the standard of teaching music in Estonia highly and to this day find myself in many situations where my training in classical music has benefitted me, such as doing gigs where I am the only singer who can also read music or who can arrange and transcribe. In Estonia, the educational side of popular music is still in its infancy, and I believe that it is possible to teach popular music in a similar setting to classical music, with the same intensity and standard. I would very much like to be part of that change.

Events

As events could really help me establish my name and brand to the wider audience as well as potentially being the fastest way to see any income during our first year of operations, I would apply and plan a mixture of festivals and showcases for my artists to get involved with, and host talks and events myself. My first goal would be to host KILLING MGMNT's own showcase at Tallinn Music Week where my acts (as well as acts I have invited to be part of the evening) could perform. I would also like to host and curate a panel talking about women in the industry. During the festival this year (Tallinn Music Week, 2021), there was not a single panel discussing anything gender-related or about the issue of women being so underrepresented in the music business, so I am hoping that having a discussion for the first time will create some interesting opportunities and outcomes.

I would like to stay away from club-series or anything that would unnecessarily associate women and partying with my brand, at least the first year. Not to say that women are not allowed to party, but as a newly established business, I am trying to create a brand of strong, intelligent, smart, kind and uplifting community of (wo)men and from a marketing perspective, it would not necessarily match with my ethos. Instead, I would like to host networking sessions with people in the industry - because the country and the industry is so small, there is a tendency of not collaborating but competing against each other. One recent example of this is when I was organising a single release event for NOEP's last single, which was meant for

press, promo, industry friends and influencers. I put together a guestlist of all the industry contacts, including artists and people who work with different labels than NOEP's label (Warner). However, when I sent my guestlist to confirm with the label representatives, anyone who was not part or associated with Warner was taken off the list. I find it frustrating, because the industry is so small anyways and I believe creating unnecessary competition is not going to help anyone: I would actually like to change that culture. These networking events could also be a platform for my artists and up-and-coming artists to showcase their new material, meet people and socialise.

I would like to start a bi-weekly podcast which would feature multiple hosts from my team, including artists, talking to and celebrating women in the industry. The main topic would stay the same but it would be going into more in-depth with people's personal experiences and stories. Again, even though we are talking about women in the music business, this would not be limited to women only - if the right person has interesting stories and valid points, gender is not an issue. What is important is starting these conversations with people with different age groups and different backgrounds, and hopefully they will be interesting and relevant to anyone listening, not just people in the music business. It is also about celebrating what women are doing and how we can do even better in the future. To add, according to the latest European Commission study into the pay gap situation in the European Union (2019), Estonia has the highest pay gap in Europe (more than 20%), so I feel it is important to discuss these issues outside of our own industry as well.

It is important to highlight that both educational activities and workshops should be inclusive to all genders. If we only talk about these issues amongst women, we are not actually making any difference because it is likely that women are already aware of them anyway.

5 Years

Management

Hopefully, within the next five years, my management company will have expanded to the rest of Baltics and/or to Scandinavia. My main focus will probably still be on the Estonian market but having some international acts to manage is also a goal of mine. Hopefully my artists are playing major festivals, touring internationally, doing well in social media and on streaming platforms. I would also have a bigger team to help me with my workload.

Education

It will take time to establish new educational programmes in schools all over the country but in five years' time, I could potentially open my own after school academy for young musicians aged 14-16 and 16-19 to teach them popular music performance / songwriting / production / industry. This could give them the tools to either further study their passion or find a relevant project / job to work on. I could still collaborate with high schools and music schools to offer help and guidance but it would then run from my academy.

Events

In the next 5 years, I am hoping to have KILLING MGMNT's own showcase in major European music industry events: Reeperbahn Festival, Tallinn Music Week, Sonic City, Liverpool Sound City, Eurosonic Noorderslag, and WOMEX. The networking / performance events will expand to the Baltics and Scandinavia, and hopefully there will be multiple cross-collaborations with female led / independent businesses and sponsors all over Europe.

SMART

I used the SMART objectives to set out my business plan for the first year. The SMART acronym is a tool designed to help organisations and individuals set objectives in an effective and productive manner (Chartered Management Institute, 2014). SMART stands for specific, measurable, achievable, realistic (or relevant) and time-bound. This helped me to solidify my business plan and make sure it is achievable.

Specific	Measurable	Achievable	Relevant	Time-bound
-create a management company - sign 3 acts - conversation with educational institutions; -organise networking events, festivals, panels -start a podcast to create more conversations	- have an active company - 3 acts who have signed contracts - proof of school visits, meetings - successful events, performances at festivals and panels - active listening on the podcast	- industry and territory is small, easy to start new projects and companies - music industry in Estonia is evolving fast, lots more happening right now than 5 years ago - a lot of support from organisations/government for arts	- no female-only management companies in the region - no appropriate popular music education nor opportunities for girls - no industry panels/events that would focus on women in the industry - huge pay gap in the market	- 1 year to get all the projects going - 5 years to develop it to become international girls

Figure 9. SMART objectives for KILLING MGMNT.

Operations Plan

For the first year, I would work as the only employee, with the additional team coming through Music Estonia and G. Ots Music School. Ideally, I would have one person joining me through Music Estonia's AMP Programme for the first 18 months' (salary provided through the programme), one person through the Music School's placement for 12 months and multiple interns for the 3-month INTRO programme for different projects. The aim is to find the right people who fit the team and after they have finished their programme, they would be experienced and equipped for the job: I would offer them paid positions through the company.

In Tier Music, where I'm currently working, I am the only employee: the two ladies who are working on the publishing/sync side are working as part of the AMP programme and G. Ots Music School's placement. They will finish these programmes at the end of the year but will be offered to start officially working with us at the beginning of next year. I have observed that if the managers get the right people on board, it does not matter if they are officially employed by the company or working through other programmes: they want to impress and do well and within that time they get given, it is very obvious who fits in with the team and with the company's ethos and who does not. Often, when young people are offered the opportunity, they are way more proactive and bring many creative ideas and approaches to the team than people who have been in similar positions for a while. It is also a risk free way from an employer's perspective to work with numerous people without having to go through the hiring/firing process. I would like to highlight that it is important to me that people, regardless of their gender and age, get paid fairly for the work they do so their input/stage in their career/skills will always reflect on their pay.

Job Title	Name/add comments
Director, Manager	Grettel Killing
Junior Manager	Through AMP, 18 months, 0.2 position
Events Coordinator	Through G.Ots School, 12 months, 0.2 position
Digital Marketing Assistant	Through G.Ots School, 12 months, 0.2 position
Project Manager 1	x2, INTRO, 3 months
Project Manager 2	x2, INTRO, 3 months
Project Manager 3	x2, INTRO, 3 months

Figure 10. Operations Plans for Killing MGMNT.

Management

The industry norm for commission for managers is 20% of the artist's gross income (Musicians' Union, 2021). This is the norm in Estonia as well and includes income that the artist makes from live performances, royalties, advances from labels, grants, sponsorship deals.

Contracts

Although many artists and managers work without a legal contract, it is important for me to have written agreements with people I work with to protect both parties. Ideally, once an agreement has been negotiated and signed it should be put in a drawer, forgotten about and only referred to when clarification is needed as to the parties' rights and obligations (Musicians Union, 2021). If things go smoothly, the document does need to be discussed but it gives security and clarity should things not go as planned.

For the first year, I would offer to sign a short letter of engagement (Appendix 10). As this is the norm in the industry to give each other a year to work on a plan, get to know each other and find opportunities, a year seems to be enough time to see if it is working out for both sides. If it does, I would sign a long-term contract for a period of 3 years with an option to extend it for an extra year every year. I would use the example of Musicians Union's Music Management Agreement (2021) and adjust it to make it relevant for my artists, producers and myself.

During the first year, I would use Music Estonia's rooms that they let out at an hourly rate (10€/h), to keep the costs down. They are located in a great location right in the middle of Telliskivi - a hub for creatives. Many labels' offices are situated there as well as multiple trendy venues. After the first year I would like to create a social hub, where we can have our offices, space for artists, host our podcast and potentially some of our meetings/networking events. The rental cost for office spaces that I think would suit us in Tallinn can be between 600 euros and 800 euros per month.

Education

To get the project started, I would start with school visits to various high schools across Estonia. As I am trying to get as many people involved and interested as possible, my initial outreach visits would be free of charge. Based on Tallinn School no 21's ongoing rates for masterclasses/workshops, a 2-hour session would pay around 500 euros, which would come from a dedicated budget allocated for extracurricular activities by the local authorities. In addition, Music Estonia and the Cultural Endowment of Estonia (2021) take quarterly applications from schools, businesses, institutions and individuals to support projects that help improve the students' experience. Given that nothing similar to my project has ever been done in Estonia yet, I am confident I would get the support from various sources.

Events

To get started with our networking events, I would work in cooperation with Music Estonia as well as Tallinn Music Week, which often supports events outside the festival week as well. These would be ticketed events with discounts for members of Music Estonia. I would also find sponsorship deals through my various contacts (Appendix 11) who could support our event. The events side will be assisted by my Events Coordinator, who will also look after Projects Managers through the internship programme.

In addition to quarterly Cultural Endowment of Estonia's grants, support is also available through Baltic Culture Fund, which was founded in 2018 with the goal to promote cultural cooperation between the Baltic countries and strengthen the internationalization of Estonian, Latvian and Lithuanian culture through joint cultural projects and events (Baltic Culture Fund, 2021). Because BCF especially supports new and one-off cultural events outside the Baltic countries, such as concerts, exhibitions, festivals, performances, international events with a Baltic focus, and showcases and forums promoting the internationalization of culture and offers grants from 25,000 up to 100,000 euros, this fund could become very important when expanding my operations across the Baltics.

Results Forecast

Yr 1	Management cut: live gigs + other income from sponsorships, projects X/20%)	Education	Events	Income (quarterly)	Income (monthly)
Q1	Rahel: 6000€/1200€ Manna: 2500€/500€ Kerli: 4000€/800€	N/A	N/A	2500€	830€
Q2	Rahel: 10,000€/2000€ Manna: 2500€/500€ Kerli: 5000€/1000€	2500€	3000€	9000€	3000€
Q3	Rahel: 16 000€/3200€ Manna: 7000€/1400€ Kerli: 10,000€/2000€	2500€	4500€	13600€	4500€
Q4	Rahel: 18 000€ /3600€ Manna: 11 200€/ 2240€ (additional guest feature - 5000€/1000€) Kerli: 10,000€/2000€	4000€	6000€	18800€	6200€

Annual Costings:	4000€
Annual Income (after costings):	10530€

Figure 11. Results Forecast for Killing MGMNT.

Management

Based on the current rates for up-and-coming artists, I would charge 2500-3000€ for Rahel's band's live performance or 2000€ for an acoustic performance. Her band and team's cost would come to around 1000€ for the band and 500€ for the acoustic lineup. If Rahel was to do 3 gigs during Q1, 5 gigs during Q2, 10 gigs during Q3 (festivals, showcases, weddings) and 10-15 during Q4, her annual income from live performances could be around 50,000€.

Manna is still in the development phase of her live set so she would be gigging less than Rahel during her first year. She would be performing on her own and for her set we could charge 1250-1500€ but there would be no other costs added to the outgoings. Given that she is also a guest vocalist on many people's music, she can also charge 500€ for a featured vocalist gig. Based on 2 gigs in Q1, 2 in Q2, 5 in Q3, 8 in Q4 and around 10 featured vocalist performances across the year, Manna's annual income from live performances could be around 28,000€.

Kerli's income would come from placements and 20% royalties from artists' she is producing for. The standard fee for a placement in Estonia ranges between 2000€-8000€ for artists who are under major labels. For 3-5 placements every quarter, her annual income could be around 29,000€

Education

During Q1, I would try to establish connections and make initial visits to meet the people and familiarise myself with schools' curriculum, programme and the leaders. I would apply for a Music Estonia grant to run workshops for teenagers and also run sessions and masterclasses in high schools. Based on 5 monthly engagements I would expect the yearly income to be around 9000€.

Events

Events will be the most difficult sector to predict the results, mostly, given that during the pandemic it is impossible to plan anything, but also because it is hard to predict the amount of sponsors and support we would be getting from other companies. I would be happy if during Q1, we could host a launch event that we could cover all the costs. During Q2, I would create the first networking session. If I aim the ticket price for these events to be around 15€ and around 80-100 people attend, we could earn 1000€ from ticket sales. Hopefully I will sign

some sponsorship deals with partners for the series of events as well as the podcast. During Q3, Tallinn Music Week's conference and showcases will provide us a higher income as well as Music Estonia's grant and by Q4, I am aiming the networking sessions to be around the country with great sponsorship deals. I predict the annual income to be approximately 13500€.

Costings

Given that my staff would all come through various programmes, I would not have to pay salaries for the first year. The majority of the events and educational activities would be funded and supported by the institutions or companies so I would predict around 3000€ self-funding for the first year to cover running, travel, operational costs. In addition, rental costs would be around 1000€ for the year.

SWOT Analysis

In addition to SMART objectives, it is important to acknowledge the challenges and weaknesses the business might face, which is why I have conducted a SWOT analysis of KILLING MGMNT.

A SWOT analysis is designed to facilitate a realistic, fact-based, data-driven look at the strengths and weaknesses of an organisation, initiatives, or within its industry (Kenton, 2021).

Strengths - only female-focussed management in its region - strong ethos - diverse - well placed in the market - experienced but young staff - expertise to enhance music education	Weaknesses - funding dependant on grants, sponsorships - income based on live gigs, given the current state of the world none of it could happen - young staff, might not find the right people
Opportunities - women in the industry/society is getting more coverage and attention globally - no direct competitors - more young people are interested in pop music - lots of potential work opportunities to young professionals - many potential supporters through grants, sponsorships	Threats - competitors could have same ideas - employees through various programmes, many people coming/going - other managements signing artists I want to sign - schools not being interested in making a change/renewing their curriculum - Covid-19 - there will always be people who believe women are not equally as important as men

Figure 12. SWOT Analysis for Killing MGMNT.

Branding

Having researched the branding of management companies in Estonia, including FAAR Music (2021), Grind (2021), wavy ent. (2021), Full House Agency (2021), and Estonian Funk Embassy (2021), to me, FAAR Music, Grind and Estonian Funk Embassy have got the strongest branding.

From my previous experience with FAAR Music, I am aware that they went through a rebrand this year and it took them 9 months to develop their image. However, I believe that having a strong sense of brand across platforms (website, social media, business cards, email signatures etc) has made the company's online presence slick and professional. I am not confident that producers and artists individually would find the branding relevant enough to associate themselves with it on a daily basis, but from an industry's perspective, it looks professional.



Figure 13. FAAR Music, logo (2021).

Grind has established itself for years with their unique colourful party-theme branding, which is known and familiar for every party lover in Estonia through various forms - concerts, festivals, club nights.



Figure 14. GRIND, logo (2021).

My personal favourite is Estonian Funk Embassy's branding. 1-stop-spot for all things funk-soul-disco related in Estonia and founded in 2016, Estonian Funk Embassy has been active as a radio show, concert promoter, DJ-party, booking and management agency and now as a record label (Estonian Funky Embassy, 2021). Their brand is bold and colourful, their website is slick, there are a lot of ways for fans to get involved with their artist's work, such as merch, Spotify playlists, newsletters, mixtapes. Their artists are the ambassadors of the brand, often modelling or even performing in their merch; they have created a sense of family among their artists, at least from an outsider's perspective.



Figure 15. Estonian Funk Embassy, logo (2021)

In addition, I find wavy ent.'s (2021) branding strongly appealing to the younger generation - all of their artists are Gen Z'ers, and subsequently the whole brand has got a DIY-feeling to it: it is not polished but is relevant to what this generation is into.



Figure 16. wavy ent., logo (2021).

I find Full House Agency's branding very outdated. It is not memorable, their website and socials are not current, showcase old information and there is not anything exciting about the brand. Some of the artists they have on their website do not even work with them anymore, and the company is not actively engaging in the industry. Even without knowing the people behind the company, I think their socials look more like a placeholder where people could enquire about the artists, but nothing more.



Figure 17. Full House Agency, logo (2021).



Figure 18. KILLING MGMNT, branding (2021).

My aim was to create an elegant, smart and classy branding for the company (Appendix 12). It is important to me that the brand would represent the values of the project - representing talented musicians, without calling them 'female producers' or 'female musicians' and without having to remind everyone that we are working with women: this is why I chose not to name the company anything that would only focus on the gender of acts nor highlight it when it comes to visuals. After analysing the branding of some female-led companies/platforms (Appendix 9), I found a lot of them focusing mainly on gender which immediately puts some people off: I am a firm believer that talent should speak for itself. Brand names such as 'Female Bossy Classy', 'Girlboss' or 'Girlgrind UK' could potentially isolate women which is the exact opposite of the end goal.

I started working at Tier Music Management (2021) in March, and even though it was founded years ago, I soon found out that it had no social media and the founder was only in the process of developing a website.



Figure 19. Tier Music, logo (2021).

After I created the company's Instagram account, artists immediately started tagging and posting about the company, which instantly led to more interest in Tier Music from musicians' side as well as fans' and media's. Now, with every new release, radios, media and other artists always share/tag us which has expanded our reach and strengthened our position. I still believe that our branding could be stronger, but since it was created right after I joined, I did not feel I was in the position to suggest changes.

Marketing & Promotion

Social media is more important for a business than it has ever been - building a social presence can make or break the brand. Having been given the task at Tier Music to post our artists' releases on our social media accounts, it instantly became obvious that my allocated working hours could not accommodate the amount of time and attention needed to build an active, slick social media for the company. I did try hard at first but soon realised it would have affected my other tasks and especially now that I am working by myself, I have no capacity to spend hours every day on social media.

However, in my own company, I have allocated a separate position for a digital marketing assistant because even though I do know that social media does not always have the best impact on some people, I also know how important, great and powerful it can be. Not many people might know about Estonia but in social media, it does not matter where you are in the world, as long as people engage with your content; as a country, we have never had a better opportunity to reach people that live across the world.

Given the nature of my company, KILLING MGNMNT's social media accounts would be a combination of my artists' releases, playlists of women in music, adverts for our events and educational workshops, as well as research and statistics about the music industry, and supporting women. Even though I want to educate everyone with literature and polls that have been published about our industry, it is much more important for me to, collectively as a society, look into the present and the future - acknowledge, appreciate and celebrate all the work that women are doing right now and to discuss how we can all have our input to make the current situation better. Given that it is a very relevant topic, hopefully we would gain attention from many bigger organisations who have similar interests.

Future Plans

Although it might seem like there are a lot of very different areas to cover, it is also worth remembering that Estonia is very small. As managers all stated in their interviews, it is not possible to function as a viable business only as a management company, and rather than choosing to create another event, promotion company or label services, I want my impact in the industry to be bigger and more meaningful. I have always loved teaching and mentoring and have really grown into the manager role in the last year. There are clear synergies between the skill set of a tutor/mentor and those of a manager and it is my aim to utilise the skills I have in these areas to enable students, employees and artists to realise their full potential and have successful, sustainable and meaningful careers that will make the Estonian music industry a more diverse and dynamic environment.

Given that there has been no research into the gender balance of Estonia's music industry, not to mention girls in the education system, I believe there is also a lot of potential for a further research project at PhD level.

In the longer term, it is my intention to share my experience and expertise through collaborations with other music management companies, industry bodies and educational institutions at a strategic level to continue to advance the agenda for women in music. I am currently working on an advisory level with a range of industry professionals and hope in the future to formalise this by working as a paid consultant.

Conclusion

I started my final project with a different idea - I wanted to create an international management company offering all the services - booking agent, social media marketing, release plans, rights, asset creation, press, manager - in-house. After conducting my research and talking to people in the industry, it did not feel like another one of these companies is really needed or missing from the current market. I did realise that although no one verbally mentioned it, there are so many women missing in the music industry. Moreover, due to my change of circumstances, I moved back to Estonia during the pandemic, got my first job in management and learned so many things about the current state of the market in such a short time that I felt the need to contribute to my home country and its artists. I changed the direction of my project because I believe that we do not need another company that does the exact same things that other companies are already doing - I want to affect change in the industry on a different level.

Having always been a strong advocate for women in music and leading and directing musical projects since high school all the way through college, I have had to deal with many assumptions because of my gender: I have often felt that I have had to work twice as hard to prove that I am clever enough or that I do deserve to be in my position. Being the only girl in high school to know how to use a DAW or to attend musical direction or live sound engineering classes in university are just minor examples of how from an early stage of our education and career we do actually have a choice to try something that is normally considered as a 'guy's subject' and we choose not to choose it. As a musician, I have experienced sexism, and even harassment in my workplace and that is something that is common even today. It is time to break some boundaries, stand up for ourselves and teach girls from a young age that we are capable of everything that we work hard for and that gender is not something that is limiting us. The goal is to create opportunities that do not isolate women: we want women to be added into the mix, not exist alongside it. Through this project I have understood how passionate I

really am about making a difference: I have learned how much there is to do but also how much there is that I could personally contribute to start having important conversations.

One of the big advantages of a young small country that is constantly improving and developing itself is that it is possible to make a meaningful difference faster than in a country where there have been rules, laws, legislations, traditions and norms in place for hundreds of years. Although the society we are living in dictates many global standards that we all have to deal with, and our options and opportunities in a small country might be limited, it is always possible to create new ones yourself and the changes implemented will hopefully take less time to make a positive impact. With the combination of artist management, education and events, I am hoping to access many aspects of music and the industry and reach as many people as possible. Moreover, hopefully I can make it a viable business where it would be possible for me to spot the talent early on and work with them throughout their career.

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Appendices

APPENDIX 1

Questions for managers

Please describe your background (education/previous work prior to management)

How did you get into management?

Describe your current position (are you part of a management/working individually etc)?

How many acts have you currently got in your roster?

What was/is the thought process when choosing which artists to manage (i.e personal preference, potential to be commercially successful etc)?

What were the biggest challenges when you first started (personal/industry)?

What are the biggest challenges right now (personal/industry)?

What are the essential skills (interpersonal and professional skills) to be a good manager?

What's next for you, future goals?

APPENDIX 2

Interview with Mikko Manninen

Warner Music Baltics - General Manager

How would you describe the current state of the music industry in the Baltics?

It's in a very interesting stage at the moment. We have all seen that the Baltic music market is starting to reach a level where there are many great opportunities ahead. The development of the market has been extremely promising during the last few years and as we have seen in the other markets in the region, we are expecting that market growth would follow a similar development that we have seen in Finland for example. When it comes to the digital side, music nowadays travels much more and more easily, and barriers between countries are much lower. There are also many opportunities from the songwriting side, brand partnership or live operations side. I think the whole market has come much closer to us than it has ever before.

How about all the Baltic countries separately?

That is a really relevant question because all in all, even though we are talking a lot about the Baltics as a whole in real life it means 3 very different types of countries, where the music industry and development are in very different stages. Also, the taste of music and cultural differences affect the market so there is no singular approach that applies for all 3 countries, for example, Latvian music market differs a lot from Estonian or Lithuanian markets, which means it needs its own approach, but what is common is that the whole Baltic area is a developing market, especially the audience for digital market. But when it comes to the level on the international side of things and influences from other countries, every market is very different.

What do you think will be different in 5 years' time in the Baltics music market?

I think the industry will become even more professional and I think major companies will be even more involved. Of course, based on the previous experience and history, there are already very skillful managements in place, but I think that the international side of things will go even more steps further and that there will be international breakthrough acts from these markets as well as songwriters and producers. I think all in all, the more the market develops and the bigger it gets, the more revenues it will generate, which will make things even more professionally and internationally connected and more cross-border cooperation can happen throughout the Nordics and towards central Europe.

What do you think will remain the same?

I think the one thing that will be the same is definitely music in the local language. The local culture, taste will still have an impact on the music so that probably won't change. Also, for example traditional Estonian bands who sing in Estonian will keep doing well and people are very much still willing to hear music in the local language. Of course, there is a lot of influence from around the world and when you look at styles like hip hop, dance and progressive music, it's much more influenced by other countries, but if you look at the traditional music, it has

really been very much the same for a long time and I think there's always a demand for that kind of music, even if the music industry is changing.

In last week's Spotify TOP50 in Estonia there was one Estonian female artist, ranked in 19th place. What are your thoughts on this?

And that was actually our artist! If we are looking at the TOP50 chart, there's not that many local artists there all in all, because international acts are still dominant at local charts. If we only look at the local artists, our female artist was actually on the second place, which is our highest local chart entry at the moment, so we need to remember that as well when looking at these charts. And that to me is even more something that should be talked about - how we could push more local songs and local artists on the charts.

We never make any kind of judgment based on gender, but if we are looking at the managements for example in the region and what the presence of female artists is like, unfortunately, the amount of female artists we see is much less than male artists.

How do you think we, as people who are working in the industry, can change this situation?

As one example, In Finland we have created an initiative to arrange song camps and producer camps only for young and up-and-coming female producers and songwriters, because in a way it is also about opportunities and examples we are giving for young persons who are starting out and thinking about whether to start looking into production, and how to connect them with the rest of the industry and established producers. I think that is something we can improve even more and hopefully that's something that music associations and organisations in the Baltics are also considering because that at least connects people with each other and makes it easier to collaborate and communicate with the industry. I think we should do it even more in the future to improve the situation. It should be about making the education and training attractive to them so music could be a viable career option: when they are thinking about what to do professionally or what school/degree they should choose - that music industry would be a serious option to consider. The more we have women in the industry, the more we will see them, as artists, producers and writers, because it really is something that doesn't happen just by deciding that now we are only working with female artists.

So all in all, it's about the opportunities: opportunities to have the appropriate education, opportunities to connect with the industry and the industry people, opportunities to meet other women who are established in the business, and to lower the barriers.

What I see is that when it comes to the decisions to choose a producer or an artist or so on, I think in the industry - or at least how I have seen it - gender is never a factor we are looking at. It's always about the person. The main question is how can we get more females involved in the mix.

APPENDIX 3

Interview with Kaarel Sein

GRIND

Please describe your background (education/previous work prior to management).

I've studied in Estonia, USA (high school in Michigan) and South Africa. The latter was a Bachelor's degree course in Sound Production at SAE Institute Cape Town. This course also included a lot of music business aspects. I also went to a music school for 5 years playing trumpet as my main instrument.

My experience in the industry has been really diverse and mostly on the practical stuff. I started building stages for my dad's company already when I was around 14 years of age. This really was a big impulse for my future endeavours. Since then I've played in a band as a drummer and over 500 shows as a DJ in Estonia, Finland, Latvia and South Africa. My promoter career took off in 2010 and I've been a partner in the same event production company ever since. My main tasks have been artist bookings (local and international), marketing, concept creation. We do festivals, club events and concerts of all kinds. I was a radio show host at Radio 2 in Estonia for 3 years. We ran our own radio show Grind, which is also one of our event brands. The radio show is running til this day.

I've also co-founded an international coworking retreat startup, which offered themed educational working holidays for location independent entrepreneurs and digital nomads.

I'm currently a management board member of a crypto currency exchange company from China.

Before getting more serious in the music business in 2010 I had a lot of different jobs: pizza dough maker, waiter, barman, xbox hardware customer support, social media manager, director assistant in the Estonian Puppet Theatre.

How did you get into management?

Initially, I was kind of managing the everyday stuff for my band. I didn't stick any labels on myself at the time, but I guess this was the first taste of that world. Later, during the numerous shows we produced I had the opportunity to peak into the world of artists. At one point some of my friends and resident DJ's started making their own music and I started giving feedback on their music and career decisions. That's when I realised that people trust my opinion and I also started getting more confident. Then came artist bookings, which took me even closer to some of the local talent such as Cartoon and Wateva. The official management started in 2018 with nublu, who was a fresh super talent and we hit it off straight from the get go. In the beginning we were just giving him career advice, but not too long after we decided to make things official.

How many acts have you currently got in your roster?

Today I'm working with four artists - nublu, Cartoon, Wateva and Siimi.

What was/is the thought process when choosing which acts to manage (i.e personal preference, potential to be commercially successful etc)

Most of the artists were my friends before we started working together. To me music is definitely one of the most important aspects. I just really love all of their music and they all are either really great song writers, producers, or both. Another important aspect is how we get along. Also we both need to have the right mindset. We need to believe in the project and have the willingness to put in the work and make the sacrifices needed. I shouldn't want it more than they do :) I think we have managed to develop really close deep relationships and trust, yet also keep our eyes and brains on the business side of things.

PS! Potential commercial success is important for me, as this opens up many doors. I also don't mind working in the underground realm.

What were the biggest challenges when you first started (personal/industry)?

Estonia is a really small market and the opportunities to just run a regular management are very limited, therefore we need to have 360 deals and put our eggs in different baskets. It's difficult because a 360 management means a lot of work in various fields. Initially it was just me alone and it got really wild. I wasn't really good in business or finance and this really put a lot of pressure on me at times. Happy that I pushed through.

What are the biggest challenges right now (personal/industry)?

Most of the artists have international reach and to really make waves means a constant challenge and hustle to get the word out.

Professionally, I take my personal development very seriously and make sure I don't burn out by over working, which means living a healthy lifestyle, having a reasonable schedule and to constantly learning new things in this rapidly changing industry, as well outside of the industry. I'm trying to find a great balance between work and personal life. Right now things are moving in a pleasant direction.

Corona really challenged our whole team in all sorts of ways possible - tons of hours spent rescheduling stuff, working on a super saving mode to survive the low period, keeping our eyes on the prize (not quitting and picking another industry that would be more lucrative for the time being).

Currently personally I'm starting to build my first home which needs loads of planning and also finances. It's a big challenge, but this is something me and my wife have been dreaming about for a long time and we are super excited about getting closer to our goal.

What are the essential skills (interpersonal and professional skills) to be a good manager?

(in no specific order)

Know the industry - I think it is essential to know the industry really well in order to understand what is good for your artist. Every artist is different and needs their own custom tailored approach. Understanding music production can help you give better musical advice, by knowing event production can help you put on your own shows and gather the best team around you, by understanding all the potential revenue streams - well, you will have more revenue streams.

Connections - this comes handy in every industry. Good connections can have so many benefits that can literally change every part of the journey. By knowing promoters you can have shows (easier), by knowing people from the media can help you spread the word wider and faster, by knowing brand representatives can help you get more money for music videos and just more revenue in general, etc.

Communication - to me one of the most difficult aspects due to often crazy daily schedules of the artists. Clear and concise communication will create better working relationships and trust. This is also very personal, as we all have different ways of communication.

High stress tolerance - when there's loads of things happening, there are definitely things that will not go as desired, therefore you need to be calm in the worst of situations, which brings me to the next point.

Problem solving mindset - music is a very personal and emotional thing, and often emotions can get in the way. It's up to me to react to something emotionally, or not. The most efficient and productive way is to put emotions aside and find a solution as quick as possible and to not linger on what went wrong.

Business mindset - this is the music industry and a clear understanding of business is essential. There's loads of fun aspects, but we all gotta eat you know!

What's next for you, future goals?

To keep on building a great company that I enjoy working at every day. My biggest goal is to gain international success and to get consistent touring for my artists home and abroad. There will be more focus on the record label side of things and to build our own catalogue.

APPENDIX 4

Interview with Thea Zaitsev

Tier Music

Please describe your background (education/previous work prior to management).

I have a bit of musical background as an “artist myself as such” by attending piano lessons at Nõmme Muusikakool for about 8 years as well as singing in various music groups since I was 3 or 4 years old. I was also part of Nõmme Muusikakooli Kammerkoor until the end of my high-school year before moving out of Estonia. My first work experience was at a Danish music publishing / library Apollo Music where I worked as a country manager and music supervisor for the Estonian market. After 3-4 years, I wanted to move to England so I started a masters degree at University of Westminster and sort of quit my job at Apollo. During my school years, I worked in a few music PR companies like Name PR and Bang On PR before getting a job at Universal Music in the music licensing department. That led me to another position at Virgin/EMI as an A&R consultant, which I left after a year or so to focus on my own business and management (with my business partner from Pieces of 8 Music).

How did you get into management?

While attending Tallinn Music Week festival over a few years, I constantly thought there was so much talent out here in Estonia but sadly no managers other than Toomas Olljum. That encouraged me to start my masters degree in management while looking for an artist to manage myself. When I met my current business partner at Virgin/EMI, he was already managing some producers and mixers and it was kind of natural flow for us to start working on acts together. After leaving Universal, it took me a few months before I kind of by accident heard NOEP's first release, which felt like something I would very much like to work on. I got in touch with him and we met up after a month or so and we've been working together since.

How many acts have you currently got in your roster?

I've got three acts under my own management (Tier Music) plus an additional group, which is a duo by one of my acts and his wife. We've also got five producer-mixers I work on together with my business partner under his company Pieces of 8 Music. I also have two more acts under my publishing arm I kind of consult a bit as a manager as well.

What was/is the thought process when choosing which acts to manage (i.e personal preference, potential to be commercially successful etc)

Basically just the music they produce and make as it has to speak to me and I should automatically know what to do with it in terms of making it more successful. On the other hand I should also connect with the act or their personality as it would be hard in my mind to work with someone you do not share much in common or link really.

What were the biggest challenges when you first started (personal/industry)?

Finances I suppose as in most cases up and coming acts do not really earn money and even though we had some acts who were earning from the beginning, their income was rather small. From my personal perspective, I lived in London, which is one of the most expensive cities to live in but on the other hand offers loads of great industry contacts and companies out there. That also creates a lot of competition but all in all I would say it was in some ways hugely challenging but great to start my business there.

What are the biggest challenges right now (personal/industry)?

I would say the same things. I do live in Estonia now but can't say that the income is very stable in our industry especially during the corona pandemic, when we had to live without any income for over a year or longer (when the live industry was rather closed). I guess our challenge here is to also educate the local market in terms of fair fees for artists for their live sessions as well as for licensing their music for sync. Looking outside of the borders, there seems to be even more artists and more competition out there than some years back, which is a lot to do with the fact that we mainly find and listen to new and our favourite artists digitally through various streaming platforms these days and an artist could be from anywhere from the world.

What are the essential skills (interpersonal and professional skills) to be a good manager?

Good listener, analytical thinking, great planner and organisational skills. Good negotiator and a bit of a fighter to stand up for your acts. You should also have a lot of patience and being a people's person is definitely handy.

What's next for you, future goals?

Find some more talent and expand my team - being home with two babies now has made me realise I can't do it all by myself!

APPENDIX 5

Interview with Karl Tamm

Wavy ent.

Please describe your background (education/previous work prior to management)

N/A, I started managing acts when I was still in high school

How did you get into management?

I was part of the so-called 'Soundcloud-wave' of young artists, and I got involved way before it became popular in Estonia. I decided to organise a festival with my mate and booked some other acts to perform too. One of the acts I booked was doing quite well already but he was only 15 at the time. Having already had some more experience in the industry/dealing with the label services etc, I reached out to him and told him that he's likely to start receiving many offers for gigs and work and I'd be willing to help him with these. At first, he politely refused but after a while, he reached out to me and said he'd like to take up my offer.

Describe your current position (are you part of a management/working individually etc)?

CEO of Wavy ent. and working as a project manager at Sony Music Baltics.

How many acts have you currently got in your roster?

5

What was/is the thought process when choosing which artists to manage (i.e personal preference, potential to be commercially successful etc)?

First and foremost, I'm following my intuition. If I find an artist that interests me, then the things that interest me at first are the potential to produce something that would be different but at the same time would have the potential to speak to the masses, their presence, honesty, their willingness to work, and their self awareness.

What were the biggest challenges when you first started (personal/industry)?

Working with the labels, figuring out how to lead artists' career, and building a network.

What are the biggest challenges right now (personal/industry)?

Find the right people to work with and invest in them, even though our income has decreased around 70% due to Covid. Also, having to be patient if you need input from an artist but you are the one having to tell them to do that at least 100 times.

What are the essential skills (interpersonal and professional skills) to be a good manager?

Patience, empathy, critical thinking, punctuality; they need to be a go-getter. Knowledge of marketing and music business essentials, knowledge of how to identify the right career path based on your artists' needs.

What's next for you, future goals?

Build my artist management side, find more people to work in it so I could have more time to think bigger picture plans. I'd also like to expand and try out something on the international market but I'm not setting too many long term goals, because as it is very obvious from the last few years, being in the music industry means adapting to new circumstances on a daily basis.

APPENDIX 6

Interview with Sophie Dorrington **Tileyard Music**

Please describe your background (education/previous work prior to management)

I studied English Language and Linguistics at Edinburgh University, and from there I went into PR. I always wanted to work within a creative field, and my first job was doing PR and Marketing in-house for a DJ Agency. Through contacts I made there, I found out about Sigala, and was able to join the team just as he was releasing his 4th single, and growing rapidly as an artist.

Describe your current position (are you part of a management company/working individually etc)? If you are working as part of a team, how many members are there?

I am part of a management company, primarily doing day to day management for Sigala and Pixie Lott.

What was/is the thought process when choosing which artists to manage (i.e personal preference, potential to be commercially successful etc)?

Potential to be commercially successful, as well as the right attitude!

What were the biggest challenges when you first started (personal/industry)?

In management there is a lot to get your head around as you are across all aspects of an artist's career.

What are the essential skills (interpersonal and professional skills) to be a good manager?

Ability to adapt to lots of last minute changes. Keep calm under pressure. Have solutions to problems!

What's next for you, future goals?

Expand my roster - find some new talent!

APPENDIX 7

Interview with James Morgan **Pieces of 8 Music**

Please describe your background (education/previous work prior to management).

I went to uni in Liverpool studying something quite unrelated but it had music business elements that I could choose from the course. I was also heavily into DJ'ing all over the city at various clubs and events. When I left Uni I was lucky enough to get some work experience at Virgin Records (EMI) in London and then landed a full-time job at Universal Music in A&R. I worked there for over 10 years.

How did you get into management?

I guess after working at a major record label for so long but dealing with managers on a day-to-day basis, I learnt a lot from them and decided that I wanted to be my own boss and work closer on all aspects of artists careers.

How many people have you currently got in your roster?

I've currently got two artists, NOEP and Erica Manzoli, who I co-manage with two different business partners. I also manage a roster of producers, mixers and writers.

What was/is the thought process when choosing which acts to manage (i.e personal preference, potential to be commercially successful etc)

Aside from the obvious things like what age they are, their talent, amazing songwriters etc.. you have to completely believe in them 100%. If you have any doubts then it's probably not going to work out in the longer-term. Also their voice needs to be completely distinctive. You need to be able to tell who it is after a few seconds. Finally you need to know who they will appeal to. Sometimes you get very talented artists but no-one really cares what they are doing, or what music they are making and they don't ever connect with a big enough audience.

What were the biggest challenges when you first started (personal/industry)?

I think just getting the chance in the first place is really tough. You have to be very persistent and also have an element of luck.

What are the biggest challenges right now (personal/industry)?

You never stop learning as the industry changes all the time. To stay on top of everything is an on-going challenge!

What are the essential skills (interpersonal and professional skills) to be a good manager?

Patience, persistence, passion and belief.

What's next for you, future goals?

Right now we're hoping to get Erica signed and then will start releasing her project next year.

APPENDIX 8

Interview with Cian Davies 0207 DefJam Recordings

Please describe your background (education/previous work prior to management)

I went to university in Manchester, where I studied psychology. I grew up being surrounded by music and the music industry - both of my parents worked in music, and it was only when I turned 16 or 17 that I realised that you know... I'd been going to all these big festivals and meeting all these people who were a lot older and really good at what they were doing: people in music and TV and studios etc. When I went to uni, I instantly tried to figure out how to get into the music business as well, so my friend and I started a club night called BPM. We booked some great acts and that was really like a first taster for me to get involved with music, and I realised very quickly that I want work in the creative arts and in events. After getting my degree, I came back to London and tried to figure out how to get involved with the industry here. I got introduced to a guy called John Webster who ran this trade body called MMF - the Music Managers Forum, and I was an intern there. I made tea and I took minutes, and I just did everything there to help him, but also actually, that was probably the moment I also realised that I wanted to be a manager. There's a guy called Brian Message, who managed Radiohead at the time and who is still my close friend, he was very involved with the company at the time, as well as so many other really top class managers, who I was constantly surrounded by at the age of 21, and I sort of realised that I can talk to all these people and I can ask them questions and vice versa, and that I actually know what I'm talking about.

How did you get into management?

I started managing Star.One, who I started the club night with in Manchester. That's I guess when I officially started being a proper manager. And then after that, my journey in music began. I was an intern in Universal Music, I was in the International Promotions team. Did some crazy stuff when I was there - I was James Blake's International Product Manager, I was in charge of sorting an interview on Polish TV with Madonna, I worked with Metallica. Of course, I was still an intern, so I did anything and everything I was asked to do. But I didn't land on my job that I was hoping to get, so I did probably about 10 different jobs in Universal alone after that. From working at merch and Universal's clothing lines to just filling out Excel spreadsheets every day - just anything really! And the mad thing now, when I sit here at 0207 and think about it, is that when I was there as an intern, I used to go and knock on people's doors, and just be like: 'Hello!' and introduce myself. One of those guys I met like that was a guy called Alex Boateng, who was the Marketing Manager at Island Records. Within 5 minutes he said: "Oh I need to introduce you to my twin brother, Alec," who is now Stormzy's A&R and is one of my best friends. It is insane because I met them when I was 22, and now I'm sitting right next to his office because I'm working at their company. So the relationship that we built then - it's a 10 year relationship, which is crazy - is still ongoing, but in a completely different context. I think it's important in our industry to remember that it is so relationship-driven. I

always try to stay the same: always try not to bullshit too much, try to be honest, and be polite and nice. I try to have a nice energy to be around. I think I learned that quite early on, and I think it meant that people liked me, even if I wasn't still quite sure about what it was that I was really good at. But I thought at least being nice would help in the end, and people would want me to be around.

So after I didn't get any jobs in Universal, I went to work in this company called Finger Lickin' Management. I would look after some interesting artists, DJs and swing bands like The Correspondents, but I was dropping down levels: I wasn't part of a major label anymore, I was at grassroots level. I remember the Correspondents did a tour around Germany and I drove the band, at 24. I was still managing Star.One and we put together this mixtape with many rappers and singers for them, and I needed a radio plugger, so I met a guy who was one of the best in the business at the time, who then asked me to go and work for him. So then I was a radio plugger for 18 months, and had an amazing relationship with him. Plugged some really important artists and really liked it, whilst still having loads of other things going on as well; I just tried to make as many things happen as possible, I must've been 25-26 at the time, I was very hungry but I was still probably trying to work it out. Then we had a song with Star.One that both Black Butter Records and RCA were interested in. I went with RCA's offer but a couple weeks later I got a call from the guy who ran Black Butter who asked me whether I wanted to be an A&R there. Of course I said yes. And that I think shows that even though I wasn't officially part of any labels' team, people saw me doing things and they became interested in me. So that's where I officially started my A&R career. I actually had quite a difficult time there - I didn't really get along with the guy who ran it. So then I met Andy Varley, the guy who runs Insanity Group and I went over to his company with Star.One to do full time management. I also met DJ Spooky there who I started managing. My main project with him was Garage Classical, which sold out The Barbican, Hammersmith, Royal Albert Hall. It had always been a huge childhood dream of mine to do shows in these venues. In February 2020 I got a call from Alec, and he said he wanted me to come and work for his brand new company 0207 Def Jam and help him work on Stormzy's album, and I said: 'Where do I sign?', but then of course Covid happened, and now we're here.

It's so funny I'm just realising that when you talk about it, it all sounds so planned but really, my whole thing is that I love music, that's the main thing, and I've always been so interested about how it all happens. So I'm always reading and trying to improve. Even yesterday, I went and had lunch with this woman called Eve, who is an A&R in a different record company but she's worked with so many incredible companies and people. I'm just so interested in all of this so I met her and had lunch with her for 2 hours and just asked loads of questions about what she did. And I still have that: I just want to know as much as possible. I'm so interested in people's journeys so I'll try to listen, take it all on board and then take action.

Describe your current position (are you part of a management/working individually etc)?

My full time is at 0207 Def Jam which is a record label. When I left Insanity I gave up being a full time manager and I work here as an A&R. My job is to find artists to work with, and sign them to help them develop. My job now is really music focused, but on my management side I still manage 2 people - one of which not many people know about yet but I'm really excited

about. I got introduced to this 18-year-old Scottish boy who's got half a million followers on TikTok and Grade 8 on any instrument you can imagine, he's got a ridiculous voice as well so I thought I'd try to do something on the pop scene to challenge myself and learn something new.

How many acts have you currently got in your roster?

I work with 4 people at the record label and 2 people as my own management.

What was/is the thought process when choosing which artists to manage (i.e personal preference, potential to be commercially successful etc)?

I think it's quite a difficult question to answer. I'm 32 now and I would've given a very different answer 5 years ago. And I say that because I've always done things off feel: if I feel something, I'll do it. And I have to stop myself from doing that now because it gets you in trouble. You need to do a lot more due diligence. I actually do really believe that with music, it is about the way it makes me feel, so if I feel something, it makes me want to work with someone, and that's kind of what I go off. Obviously, even if I think someone's amazing but I don't like them as a person, then..life's too short to work with people I don't like. I guess that's the part that has changed within the last 5 years - I probably would've pushed through, even if I personally didn't get along with someone, whereas now...no, thank you.

What were the biggest challenges when you first started (personal/industry)?

I think it's really hard to get in. For anyone young trying to get into any industry, but especially the music industry, it is actually so small! And everyone wants to work in it, and I found that quite challenging at first because I thought I knew loads so surely people would want to work with me, or that people would want me to be involved because of my attitude. But then you realise actually the biggest thing that I could do was gain knowledge and experience. I realised that quite early on. Moving around all those jobs in Universal, I didn't see it as negative. I've done every single job in music, other than being a lawyer or a publisher - other than that, I've done everything. And it made me realise that unless you're a doctor or a lawyer or something very specific, you often don't quite know what you're doing, so you need to work it out! Give yourself time. And sometimes, that time isn't afforded in music, because there's always going to be someone else who might have the skillset that they want, so I think that was something that felt like a really big challenge. And then I suppose the other big challenge is... I'm really ambitious, I want to be the best, I really want to be the best manager, and now I want to be the best A&R in the country: and that ambition can be quite crippling mentally. Of course, your drive and your ambition is what people want, but that can also be really harmful for your mental stability. I've had to stop working with some people because they're not as ambitious as me, but at the same I understand that it can be a bit unfair, because my level of ambition is almost too much for myself sometimes.

What are the biggest challenges right now (personal/industry)?

I found the last 18 months really hard. I drive off people, I need to be around other people's energy, so that part for me was really hard.

What I find hard about management in general is that you're someone's friend, you're someone's boss, you are someone's creative control, you are just everything for that person, and that's a really intense position to be in. You know, your personal relationships - girlfriends, boyfriends, friends - are hard enough to maintain because you need to invest energy and time in them, but then on top of that, your relationship with your artists and your clients that you work with need so much attention all the time, because it's merged into this one big responsibility of so many different roles. I think the best way of saying it is that it's just very personal, that's the challenge.

Right now, I also find it interesting that it's been 10 years since I worked at Universal, and there's still loads of people who still work there who I worked with back then. And of course, they've all moved up, but I feel like I'm in such a better position, because I've got so much more experience being around different things and doing different jobs.

What are the essential skills (interpersonal and professional skills) to be a good manager?

You've got to be patient, and for ambitious people it's so tough, like I don't have any of it. In my own life I don't have any patience. For example, I worked on a record with Star. One last year and it took us 7 months to put together the publishing, whilst trying to make sure that the boys carried on being present on their socials and engaging with the fans and then when the record comes and it still doesn't connect, it's like...it's really disheartening. So being able to have patience, being able to have humility, you need to know when to shut up. Honestly, I think it's one of the biggest things in management. Find out what your artist is thinking instead. Because you can get so wrapped up in your 12 month plan and then you've completed your year and ticked the boxes but then, what's next? Is your artist happy? You always need to be listening to the artist as well. Also, just being really empathetic with people and being able to manage stressful situations calmly.

Timekeeping is important - that's hard! I'm not good at it anyway in my personal life, so doing that professionally is challenging for sure. Being kind, helpful, giving, knowing when to step up and stand up for your artist is crucial. You've got all these people who want a piece of your artist from their own angle and sometimes you need to be the one telling people to stop or take some time out. And patience in your own professional career. I feel for the first time that my phone book is enough, where if I need to get to someone, need to be somewhere, or need to find a mixing engineer, artist, producer, label contact, I will always be able to get an answer from someone, and that's just time. That's just the time being involved in the business that you can't fast track. It's stuff that you're doing right now: the fact that we're having this conversation, you know now that whenever you need a contact that you think I could be helpful with, you've got my number. I say that to everyone: if you get on with someone, never be afraid to ask any questions. I literally still ask questions all the time. Sometimes they're probably very stupid questions, might even be idiotic questions that I probably should know, but I'm not scared to look stupid. Music can look cool, sexy and 'I-know-what-I'm-doing' kind of way but honestly, I literally don't a lot of the time. But I know I will find out! And I know enough people that do so I'll ask them.

What's next for you, future goals?

I think I have the best job in the world and I'm really proud of it, and I know that in order for me to keep this job, I need to work really hard: use all the things that I've talked about as a manager and apply that as an A&R, and I need to have success. You know.. what's going to be my Garage Classical moment here? My biggest ambition is to have a number one single and a number one album. And after that, I want to stay here, I want to help the twins make this company the best company ever, and then in the end, maybe I could run one of these companies at some point in my life, that would be amazing. I really want to have the drive to leave a legacy, that's really important to me. I think what we've done with Garage Classical as a collective - we've left a legacy, and that's a big thing, but being here: you've got Stormzy's face on the wall, what he did at Glastonbury, what he's accomplished as a black young man in Britain - it's just incredible. Also, something that I'm really proud of is that as a black owned business, there are 9 A&R people in the team and I'm the only white guy. And I think, to me, it's like validation from them that they think I'm good enough - I really love black music, obviously I love all music, but I love black music, and being here is like acceptance in a way, and I really need to make sure that I take care of that, because I do feel honored to be in this position.

APPENDIX 9

Examples of Branding



WomanKind North



WomenWorking



The Female Lead



Women of Impact



Women in the Music Industry



WomenAfterGreatness (WAG)



Girlboss®



She Is The Music



Chicks For Climate



shesaid.so



She Is The Music



NomeninCTRL



Female Bossy Classy



girlgrinduk

APPENDIX 10

Example of a short form of engagement contract, based on Music Manager's Forums example, for Rahel.

To: Rahel

Date... 1.10.2021

Dear Artist,

Further to our meetings and discussions to date please take this letter as confirmation that I/we will act as your exclusive manager(s) throughout the world for a trial period of (.12.) months from the above date.

During this trial period you agree to pay us commission of (.20..) % on any income received by you in the entertainment industry, except for any income specifically intended as recording costs, video production costs or as tour support. You further agree to re-imburse reasonable expenses incurred by us on your behalf as per the attached expenses schedule.

At the end of the trial period either you or us may elect to terminate the management relationship or move forward with negotiations for a long form Artist Management agreement. In either case payment to me/us of commission and expenses must be paid to me/us within 60 days of receipt of the invoice, which we will submit.

If you sign this letter you are entering into a legally binding agreement.

If the above is a correct reflection of the agreement we have reached please confirm this by your signature(s) below.

Yours sincerely,

GRETTEL KILLING



The Manager

Confirmation of agreement by Artist

Name
Address

Signature.....

Example of an expenses schedule

MANAGER'S EXPENSES (Not chargeable to artist)

Managers general office and business costs including:

Office rents

Management staff salaries and wages

Management staff social security payments

Local property taxes on offices

Manager's office equipment including

Computers

Fax Machines

Photocopiers

Pagers

Mobile Phones

Office telephone systems etc.

Management cars and associated costs

Manager's legal fees

Local telephone, fax and e-mail costs

Miscellaneous office expenses

ARTIST'S EXPENSES (Rechargeable to artist)

Any expenses reasonably incurred in connection with the Artist's Career whether incurred by the Management or the Artist other than the Manager's Expenses above, including but not limited to:

Commission payable to a booking agent or other agents

Costs/wages payable to a Tour Manager

Mail-shots on behalf of Artist

Advertising on behalf of Artist

Artwork on behalf of Artist

Management long distance – phone and fax charges if specifically on behalf of Artist

Hotel room charges

Airfares, rail fares and sea fares

Courier charges on behalf of Artist

Managers reasonable subsistence (food etc.) when on tour or away from office on business on Artist's behalf

Reasonable per mile charge for journeys undertaken on Artist's behalf if in Management vehicle

Car hire, taxis and other travel costs when business is being carried out by Management on behalf of Artist.

NB: The above to be prorated if other Artist's work being done. © MMF 1997

APPENDIX 11

Contact Sheet

NAME	COMPANY	POSITION	CONTACT	CONTACT	COUNTRY OF RESIDENCE
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Kristjan Hirmo	Sky Plus	Radio		hirmo@skyplus.fm	Estonia
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Ahto Kruusmann	MyHits	Radio		ahto.kruusmann@myhits.ee	Estonia
Laura-Liisa Leosk	MyHits	Social Media Manager		lauraliisa.leosk@postimeesgrupp.ee	Estonia
Allan Vinogradov	Power Hit Radio	Radio		allan@power.ee	Estonia
Erik Morna	R2	Head of Programmes		Erik.morna@err.ee	Estonia
Carola Madis	R2	Radio		carola.madis@err.ee	Estonia
Märt Truman	Elu24 Music Portal	Creative Writer		truman.mart@gmail.com	Estonia
Marli Kobin	Kanal 2 (TV)	Media		marli.kobin@duomedia.tv	Estonia
Marleen Kubits	Bolt/Freelance	Global Facebook Advertising Manager		marleenkubits@gmail.com	Estonia
Reelika Valksaar	Defti TV	Reporter		reelika.valksaar@ekspressmeedia.ee	Estonia
Tuuli Rand	TV3 Play	Head of Content		randtuuli@gmail.com	Estonia
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Ago Teppand	Grind	A&R		ago@grind.ee	Estonia
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Roman Demtšenko	Tallinn Music Week	Head of Music Programme		roman@tallinnmusicweek.ee	Estonia

APPENDIX 12

KILLING MGMNT - Branding



Grettel Killing
Director

grettel@killingmgmnt.com

www.killingmgmnt.com

[@killingmgmnt](https://www.instagram.com/killingmgmnt)

