



Student Name: Caitlin Annie Skea

Student Code: 2012157

Module Code: BMTY7006

Module Lecturer: Steve Cole

Assignment Title: Proposal

Word Count: 1097 words

Doyenne Publishing

Introduction:

My business project proposal will be based on the independent publishing company, ***Doyenne Publishing***. The business aims to support the success of female artists of all ages. Doyenne Publishing would exclusively support, sign and represent women of all music genres, sizes, looks, ethnicities, sexualities, and beliefs - making a stand for women in the music industry who, as a gender, continue to experience inequality in opportunity, respect and success.

Why are you starting this business:

Several female-run businesses are emerging in the industry currently, from record labels to non-profit organisations (for example, She Said So, Saffron Records, Women In Music). However, through extensive primary research, there appears to be no *publishing* company that follows a similar pathway to Doyenne, exclusively signing women. The decision for a *publishing* company over other organisations (record label, for example) is due to the lack of female music publishers, which has been detected recently. Successful women in the music industry like Sarah Liversedge (Managing Director of BDi Music and A&R Director at Bucks Music Group) have noted 'the small numbers of female publishers' (Williamson, C., 2021). This is where Doyenne Publishing comes in, providing the industry with another business that raises awareness of gender inequality in the workplace and ensures the industry's publishing is also making a stand.

The rise in female artists in the charts has arguably seen a climb in recent months (Cardi B, Megan Thee Stallion, Ariana Grande, Billie Eilish, and Miley Cyrus, a few currently). However, recent statistics still demonstrate inequality regarding gender success in the music industry. Many upcoming female artists are still struggling to be taken seriously and respected in the industry, at the same level as men currently are.

Many would argue that great strides have been made in the industry regarding this controversial topic. The MeToo movement gained significant momentum and public support in

2017 following the allegations of sexual assault against Harvey Weinstein. It sparked many members of the entertainment industries to challenge sexual assault and abusive actions that were taking place. The #MeToo hashtag began trending globally to raise awareness of the movement and prevent the continuation of others in the industry. However, several years forward, it still appears that not enough has been done to ensure that women in the industry have equal opportunity for success as men.

Stacy L. Smith of the University of Southern California's Annenberg Inclusion Initiative has continued studying whether equality in the music industry has been achieved. As of the 8th March 2021, Smith discovered that 'the numbers for women in music have mostly not improved, and in some ways even gotten worse' (Sisario, B., 2021). Continuing, credit information for songs on the Billboard year-end Hot 100 chart was included in the study, with results below:

- In 2012: research conducted that women represented 20.2% of the artists of the year's top songs on the Billboard year-end Hot 100 chart.
- From 2012 to 2018: results showed an average of 21.6% were female.
- In 2019: results showed 22.5% were female.

The statistics above demonstrate an insignificant 2.3% improvement over seven years, highlighting the issue at hand. Further, 'of the 1,797 artists behind the 900 songs on those charts, there were 3.6 men to every woman' (Sisario, B., 2021). The British copyright society, PRS for Music, has also stated in 2020 that notably, '81.7% of its members were men' (Sisario, B., 2021). The 2020 Grammy nominees set 'a new high for females, with 20.5% of nominations in the top five categories' (Wang, A., 2020) - 79.5% is the lowest percentage male nominees have received in history. These results demonstrate the dire necessity to change the percentage of women in the industry, building a more equal and supportive platform for all genders. Doyenne Publishing aims to play a part in this success.

There is the possibility that some may argue the exclusivity of signing women to Doyenne Publishing is a demonstration of sexism in itself - not allowing men to be a part of the publishing company. However, it is essential to remember that most music publishing companies active in the industry are weighted more on men than women. The results listed

above are a brief demonstration of this; more male artists are working in the industry than women. Doyenne Publishing aims to stand for women in the industry; the exclusivity is not to dismiss men but to empower and escalate women. Launching a publishing organisation exclusive to women will hopefully create a buzz amongst the industry, raising awareness of the industry's apparent (and potentially unknown to some) inequalities. It may be potential for Doyenne Publishing to introduce signing and representing male artists to the company in the later years of business once the message of this controversial issue has been raised. However, currently, the aim is to make noise in the industry and stand for female artists who feel disadvantaged in a male-dominated industry.

What specific service or product does it provide:

The publishing company will operate as other traditional independent publishing companies - they 'handle their own administration in-house without the aid of one of the majors. They also are self-funded' (Mcdonald, H., 2019). Doyenne Publishing has a unique selling point by exclusively signing and representing women, which I believe will give it a unique selling point. DP will be more 'hands-on' regarding the creative process and heavy promotion - for example, 'a person or department will be devoted to providing feedback to songwriters on their work, making suggestions for new directions'. Whilst the company will begin an Independent, Doyenne Publishing will aim to become Major Affiliated in the future- 'Independent publishing companies that have deals with the majors to handle their licensing administration' (Mcdonald, H., 2019)

Who is your target audience:

Doyenne Publishing's first target audience is the female songwriters, producers and artists it will sign. Secondly, the individuals in charge of distributing the music - to be sent to labels, film, radio, TV, advertising, commercial breaks etc. These distributors must support Doyenne's ethics and message, ensuring the music is heard in the appropriate setting (not to be used for a misogynistic commercial, for example). The company will operate similarly to indie and independent. However, A&R scouts and representatives will be sourcing female artists only.

With the label's aim and concept to support all women, it will be searching to sign female artists of various genres, looks, characteristics and beliefs.

What do you hope to achieve in this project:

As a woman in the industry myself, I would like to be part of the movement, raising awareness of this controversial subject, creating an environment where female workers feel equally welcomed and respected as male workers. I hope to start this business with the intention that it will be part of this vital movement.

SWOT Analysis:

<u>STRENGTHS</u>	<u>WEAKNESSES</u>
- I am a woman working in the industry myself. Therefore I have first-hand experiences concerning this issue. - I am a female artist too. Therefore I am my target audience. I can put myself in their shoes as it were, creating an organisation that would appeal to artist such as myself. - There appears to be no competing publishing company exclusively signing women. Therefore there is more of a chance that Doyenne Publishing could break through and create buzz. - Other women-run organisations (She Said So etc.) are pushing the topic of gender inequality in the industry. Therefore, Doyenne Publishing will be taken more seriously, as the discussion has already begun.	- I currently have acquired no solid contacts from other women-run companies in the music industry. Information, support and guidance from them (I believe) is an essential part of this success. - I have no previous experience regarding the publishing side of the industry.
<u>OPPORTUNITIES</u>	<u>THREATS</u>
- Whilst the #MeToo 'buzz' has arguably died away recently, it is still relevant. It is a	- The exclusivity of women may receive backlash and criticism of sexist behaviour.

movement that has the potential to get stronger and will no doubt encourage and push Doyenne Publishing further. - Many companies and organisations have had to shut down due to the ramifications of COVID-19. Doyenne Publishing may be emerging in a time where there are fewer publishing businesses than before.	- Other publishing companies may emerge over the next couple of years that could become Doyenne's significant competitors. - The pandemic has put many songwriters, artists, producers out of work, so there may be a smaller selection to sign and represent.
--	---

Bibliography:

Mcdonald, H., 2019. *What a Music Publishing Company Does*. [online] The Balance Careers. Available at: <<https://www.thebalancecareers.com/what-does-a-music-publishing-company-do-2460915>> [Accessed 27 April 2021].

Sisario, B., 2021. *For Women in Music, Equality Remains Out of Reach*. [online] Nytimes.com. Available at: <<https://www.nytimes.com/2021/03/08/arts/music/music-industry-gender-study.html>> [Accessed 19 April 2021].

Wang, A., 2020. *Here's How Overwhelmingly Male the Music Industry (Still) Is*. [online] Rolling Stone. Available at: <<https://www.rollingstone.com/pro/news/heres-how-overwhelmingly-male-the-music-industry-still-is-940255/>> [Accessed 7 May 2021].

Williamson, C., 2021. *Independent women in music publishing*. [online] Prsformusic.com. Available at: <<https://www.prsformusic.com/m-magazine/features/independent-women-in-music-publishing/>> [Accessed 7 May 2021].