

MARKETING YOUR BAND/BRAND

Building a Brand Beyond the Music

MC: Robert Baxter (Artist)

Panellists: Daniel Petchey (Senior Campaign Manager, Mushroom Music), Sarah Guppy (This Much Talent), Vincent Kinna (Teenage Dads)

Overview

The opening panel of Soundcheck tackled one of the most pressing challenges facing emerging artists: how to build a recognisable brand and cut through the noise without a big budget or major label support. The discussion moved fluidly from visual identity and brand development to the realities of content creation on TikTok and short-form platforms, culminating in practical strategies for sustainable self-promotion.

The unanimous message from the panel: be authentic, be prolific, and don't wait for permission.





KEY DISCUSSION TOPICS

1. ESTABLISHING A VISUAL BRAND ON A DIY BUDGET

Daniel Petchey highlighted Glass Beams as a standout example of DIY branding done right. "They recorded, wrote, filmed all their live content - everything in the garage in their backyard," he explained. "They built such a rich world around what they do. The music matches up to the visual world perfectly." Their process was deliberate: "Honestly just sitting down, listening to the music, figuring out exactly where they thought it would sit at a visual standpoint, and then slowly started working their way out backwards."

Sarah Guppy emphasised the importance of self-reflection in the branding process: "Think about colour palettes, think about who you are and the story of who you are and what you want to tell." She noted that when working with new artists, her team conducts a detailed Q&A: "What is meaningful to you? What do you do outside of your band? Who are you as a person?"

Vincent Kinna offered the perspective of a band that found its brand organically: "We never even thought about what we would wear or whatever. It was just like, we're playing music and we were just learning as we were going. I think there's also some beauty in that process."

Key takeaway: There is no one-size-fits-all approach. Whether you arrive fully formed (Glass Beams) or evolve over time (Charli XCX's Brat campaign), the most important thing is to start with your music, understand who you are, and build outward from there.

2. INTEGRATING PERSONAL INTERESTS INTO YOUR BRAND

Vincent provided one of the panel's most practical pieces of advice: "If you guys have your own hobbies or other creative interests outside of music, I think it's really important to pursue those and try and integrate them into your project. That's gonna naturally be reminiscent of you and unique to you."

For Teenage Dads, this meant incorporating photography and graphic design skills from within the band. Sarah reinforced this: "When it comes to talking to labels or PR, they will ask you about your story. What do you do outside of your band? Who are you as a person?"



3. SHORT-FORM CONTENT: THE LOTTERY TICKET STRATEGY

Daniel Petchey introduced what Mushroom Music internally calls "lottery tickets" - the idea that more content gives you more chances to win. "None of us have any idea of what is actually gonna be that moment that connects. The more darts you throw at the board, the better your chances are."

He was emphatic: "Don't paint yourself into a corner by thinking that you need to go and just create this one music video and thinking that's gonna be the thing that puts you out into the world. It might not be that. It might be that you go and film 50 short-form clips on your phone."

Robert Baxter shared his own approach: "I promise myself - I'm gonna post 50 TikToks to this sound. Like, I can't not give my song every opportunity."

Sarah Guppy framed social media as a free testing ground: "We're actually lucky to be in this era of social media because we can try so many different things for free. You don't have to pay to post on social media. That is amazing free marketing."

4. CONTENT PILLARS: MAKING CONTENT SUSTAINABLE

Daniel introduced the concept of content pillars - three or four repeatable framework ideas that make content creation manageable at scale:

"You might come up with three or four sort of easy, repeatable framework ideas. One could be tour stories, two could be studio breakdowns, whatever it might be. You know that the template is the same, but you can change the location or change the song."

He suggested two categories of pillars:

- Music-specific pillars: lyrical breakdowns, studio walkthroughs, song-by-song analysis
- Artist identity pillars: personal stories, behind-the-scenes, personality-driven content

Vincent shared how Teenage Dads discovered their content identity on tour: "We realised that we just have this massive backlog of funny tour stories, and we're like, we love telling stories. Why don't we try and film it?" The approach was extended by leaning into embellishment and humour: "Our band is very humorous. The fact that we are aware of that and we're finding ways to incorporate that is really important."



5. AUTHENTICITY OVER POLISH

The entire panel repeatedly returned to the theme of authenticity. Daniel told the story of Bliss n Esso's MC Esso getting into Twitch streaming despite being notoriously bad with technology. The technical failures became the content: "We've kind of embraced those moments, and funnily enough, those have then become the short-form clips that we push out."

Robert shared how a vulnerable, unpolished video about feeling overwhelmed performed better than his usual flashy content: "I was like, hey, this is how I'm really feeling. This isn't a flashy video. I'm just going to talk to you for three minutes without any cuts. And then people were like, oh, thank you for sharing that with us."

Sarah reinforced: "You'll probably hear us say that a million times today - being authentic, be authentic to yourself. You all know, you're on social media - you see through all of the ads and all the BS."

6. THE DIY MINDSET

Vincent closed with a powerful statement about agency: "You should just try and remove any idea that you need certain people - like a team or a manager or a booking agent - to do anything. None of us had played in bands before. I had never played an instrument before joining the band. But here we are."

He quoted his guitar tech: "You do it yourself, or be prepared to pay other people to do it. And if you don't have money, then you've gotta obviously do it yourself."

AUDIENCE Q&A HIGHLIGHTS

Q: How do you post 50 pieces of content for one song without it feeling stale?

Robert: Use completely different formats - fit checks, family reactions, street performances, stream-of-consciousness text overlays. "There's people around that think like you, and when you post stuff that's just a stream of thought from your brain, you can reach people like that."

Q: Any advice for people struggling to start or join a band?

Vincent: "Go to gigs, network. If you've got four friends who think it would be fun, go for it and learn on the spot." Sarah: "Go and be part of the community. Support other artists." Robert: "Be confident - if you've just started playing drums, don't say 'I play drums a little bit.' Say 'I'm a drummer.'"





ACTIONS YOU CAN TAKE IMMEDIATELY

1. Sit down with your music and define your visual world. Build mood boards. Look at artists in a similar space. Work backwards from the sound to the look.
2. Identify your content pillars. Choose 3-4 repeatable content formats (tour stories, lyrical breakdowns, studio BTS, personality-driven clips).
3. Post on every platform. Put content on TikTok, Instagram Reels, YouTube Shorts. You may discover your audience is on a platform you haven't tried.
4. Batch your content. On shoot days, capture as much as possible in one sitting while you're in the right outfit, mindset, and location.
5. Integrate your personal interests into your brand - photography, design, humour, sport, whatever makes you 'you'.
6. Set achievable goals. Start small: 10 new followers, one piece of content a week. Build from there with short-term and long-term targets.
7. Don't wait for a team. Learn to book shows, design artwork, and pitch to media yourself. These skills become assets and potential income streams.
8. Film everything. Rehearsals, studio sessions, green rooms. Set up your phone and forget about it - you'll have content later.
9. Embrace imperfection. Embarrassing moments and technical failures can be your best content. Post and ghost - don't obsess over performance.
10. Make friends. Network at gigs, events like Soundcheck, and online. Talk about more than just music. Genuine relationships open doors.



PANELLIST'S CORE MESSAGE

Daniel Petchey

Create content at volume - think "lottery tickets." Build content pillars for sustainability. Create a rich, deep world that superfans can explore.

Sarah Guppy

Know your story. Set clear short-term and long-term goals. Social media is free marketing - use it. Trial and error is the only way.

Vincent Kinna

Integrate your personal interests. Be proactive. Split the workload in a band. Don't wait for anyone's permission - DIY teaches the hustle.

Robert Baxter

Own your identity loudly. Batch content on shoot days. Be willing to embarrass yourself. Let people in - vulnerability connects. |



STAY IN TOUCH

Website

<https://soundcheck.melbourne>

Instagram

<https://www.instagram.com/soundcheckmelbourne/>

Facebook

<https://bit.ly/soundcheckmelb>

Email

soundcheck@rawkuslive.com.au

Get Involved:

Contact Alan at soundcheck@rawkuslive.com.au