

Required Reading

APRIL 15 2023

EDITION 007

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Saaya Temori

Artist manager at Emagen
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In this edition of *Required Reading* - an online zine designed for you to download and apply to your career - **Saaya Temori** proves that she was just like everyone else who had the dream of working in the music industry. From a hungry college student balancing three internships during one semester to carving out a role as a full-time manager, Saaya exposes some of her most vulnerable moments, thoughts, and experiences.

“You just have to reach out to people.”

I went to a lot of shows in Dallas when I was in high school. I went to a festival called Identity Festival. I remember being there, looking around, and knowing I wanted to be a part of that somehow.

One of my older cousins who lived in LA was working at MTV, so I reached out to him and asked, "How did you get this job?" He told me, "You just have to reach out to people," and left it at that. I went on Google and searched every single music company that existed in Dallas. I was, like, 16 years old and I emailed all these people and said, "Hey, I'm in high school, but I'm really interested in learning about the music industry and working for you."

Obviously, the Dallas music scene doesn't have that much going on as far as the business side of music goes that a high schooler could do, but a few people got back to me. I started interning at an indie rock label called Hand Drawn Records. When I graduated from high school, I moved to Austin to go to the University of Texas because there was no better place to be. I became friends with a lot of different local artists and I started managing them. Eventually, I started throwing shows, and the local bands that I was managing started kind of taking off.

[Austin-based concert promoter and festival producer] C3 Presents came to me and asked me if I wanted to intern for them. That's when I finally got my foot in the door. I was there for two to three years. Simultaneously, I worked for the Warner Music Group's college marketing program. I even spent a few months in New York working at a few different companies while I was in college. I was trying to do everything I could and tried out different jobs, from festival production to talent buying management.

Eventually, I resonated with artist management the most because I really enjoyed taking care of people and developing people and working hand in hand on a regular basis.

The truth about artist management

Management came naturally to me because I got the privilege of experiencing all the different sides of the industry. I naturally have a family-like approach with everyone that I work with and with my artists - they've become some of my best friends. I'm also not above or below any job, and that's the reality of artist management. A lot of people don't realize that it's not as glamorous and exciting as it looks.

Sure, we get to go to shows, travel, and represent artists, but there's so much behind the scenes that occurs that's not so simple. Every single day, I don't know what my day is going to look like. I wake up to chaos sometimes, and then the next day, everything is good. You never know what is going to happen.

Meeting Anthony Saleh

At one point, Anthony's company, Emagen (Future, Nas, Alina Baraz), was a co-management partnership with C3 so I connected with him through the company, through a former colleague, Bo Triplett.

During my junior and senior years of college, I started flying back and forth between LA and Austin to work with them. I put myself in so much debt and skipped so many classes. But I wanted to show them that I was serious about this. Eventually, Bo told me, "You should come to LA and work with me and Anthony."

I'm on year six now, still going strong with Anthony and the team. Then, whenever Bo transitioned out of managing Alina Braz, I was the next person up. He kind of just threw me into the fire. I remember I would send Anthony weekly updates, basically novels, of what was going on. At one point he said, "I trust you. You don't have to do all this, just do your thing." He really empowered me.

What it takes to break an artist

I had the privilege of signing Col3trane in 2019 to Emagen. This was when a lot of his songs like “Penelope,” and “Malibu Sleep,” were popping off. Shortly after that, went to Australia and did a tour. He was buzzing, and then COVID hit. That destroyed a lot of our momentum. Once the world started opening back up, we were almost having to start from scratch.

He dropped an album called Lush Life, and from our perspective, we thought it was going to hit super hard, and it would be so impactful. It was impactful for the listeners, but it didn't do what we thought it was going to do. That translates directly to just the state of the music industry and how oversaturated it is. But I think it's a good thing because now we're coming back to music needing to be good, and the music is going to speak for itself, hopefully soon again. I think the best thing that you can do is be consistent, and, eventually, when you least expect it, something will go.

Additionally, I've been managing Alina Baraz since 2018. By that point, she had already broken career-wise. She already had a cult fan base that would show up, buy tickets, and stream her music religiously. She can go silent for a few years. We dropped music last year, and she hadn't released anything or posted on social media in two years before that. We still did five shows in California that all sold out, which is crazy to think about. But artists like her have that fan base and that platform because they were able to develop it before the world turned around.

The struggle stories

There were so many times while I was in school and reached out to so many people with no response. I sent maybe 1,000 cold emails out. Eventually, all that energy that I poured out came back to me. But I put myself in a lot of debt to do these internships because that's unfortunately a norm in the music industry that I hope to change one day. It was totally worth it, but it was not easy.

I moved to LA with \$100 in my pocket, and my job with Anthony wasn't fully solidified yet. I had no idea how I was going to survive or do anything. After a few months, it worked out. But it's not all pretty and simple. I remember at one point at the end of my college career, I didn't have a job offer yet. I thought to myself, "Wow. I thought all these different things that I've done would set me up nicely to have all these offers." But, something I recognized through that experience is that the universe does not ignore all the energy that you pour out whenever you're trying to achieve something.

It didn't come together in the way that I thought it would, but eventually, it did. It ended up being better than I could have expected. Even now, I just turned 27 years old. I've been out of school for almost six years, and I'm thinking, "Cool. What's next?"

Defining success

I tend to fail to pay attention to progress, which I think is something that we all do. It's like, you finally achieve these things that you were striving for, and then once you have it, you don't even recognize that you've achieved it.

19 or 20-year-old me would be so stoked about my career right now. But now, I'm thinking, "What's next? How can I continue to grow?" I don't feel super accomplished, but the younger me would so proud.

After the last six years, success is measured to me by happiness and being able to work with people that I love. It's also about continuing to collaborate, grow, and expand what I'm doing, and using music as the platform to do other things that can be super impactful, whether it's through technology or philanthropy.

I don't think my success can be measured by certain milestones anymore.