

DESTROY

DIGITAL MEDIA PLATFORM

HOW **COMPETITIVE STREAMING™**

LEVELS THE PLAYING FIELD FOR CREATIVES

by

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competitive **streaming™**





CHAPTER 1

LEVELING THE PLAYING FIELD

The landscape of digital media entertainment is evolving at a breakneck pace. Music in particular, a top-heavy industry defined by its A-list artists is now experiencing a semi-leveling of the playing field. A 2019 Rolling Stone article reports that “Over the past three years, the world’s biggest artists have seen their market share of total streams — and therefore total money distributed by the likes of Spotify — decline significantly,” and that “new artists, rather than older recordings, are gaining market share on audio streaming services; suggests something very important is going on in the global music business: A “middle tier” of new artists, operating away from

the million-dollar advances of streaming's biggest acts, are increasing their share of the format's economics.”

These findings signal positive change and bode well for that middle tier of new artists, but there is still more leveling to be done to positively impact the lower tier, or undiscovered artists. These acts struggle to get any leverage or exposure. Perhaps these undiscovered artists lack the talent necessary to warrant success, but I'd argue that there is always a diamond in the rough. Everything is liked by somebody.

In the not too distant past, it was next to impossible for an artist to record music at home without deep pockets. Now, with a little technical skill any artist can turn out a high quality recording. These recordings, even from undiscovered artists, deserve to be discovered. Of course, equal access and exposure doesn't equate to equal success, but the

goal should be equal opportunity. That's what all creatives deserve — an opportunity to be discovered, regardless of finances, relationships, or even talent. Yes, talent.

Talent is defined as a special, natural ability or aptitude, the keyword being “special.” And the perception of special ability or aptitude is highly subjective. Something considered special to one person might not be to others. Creatives are artistic; they demonstrate imaginative skill in some area or activity. We often perceive talent based on how it compares to something or someone already deemed talented. We say things like, so and so sounds like another artist who we already perceive as talented, but comparable perception isn't the sole determining factor of talent. Sometimes talent is expressed in stuff we've never seen before.

The music industry has been referred to as a copycat industry. Executives often seek artists whose skill sets have proven appeal, and they are hesitant

to invest millions of dollars in artists they feel are too peculiar. They refer to those artists as unmarketable and risky. But, when we consider the artists that defined genres of music, their uniqueness and ability to break from the norm was key to making them household names. The white glove on Michael Jackson's hand was just one glimpse into his unique character as an artist. In a 2012 article for *The Atlantic*, Joseph Vogel, author of *Man in the Music: The Creative Life and Work of Michael Jackson* opined, "The hallmark of his art is fusion, the ability to stitch together disparate styles, genres and mediums to create something entirely new." From 1960 to 1970 the Beatles were like no other group. Each member brought his own character to the band as they evolved from 1950s rock & roll and Skiffle to pop ballads and psychedelic rock mixed with classical influences. These pioneers dared to buck the trends and launch into new territories, refusing to be chained by industry norms.

Many of the big names we love also had the fortune of being discovered and backed by major labels that promoted their artistry to the masses. This luxury is not afforded to most artists, and not always because they lack talent, but because the opportunity doesn't exist. What if the next Michael Jackson, Prince, Taylor Swift, Drake, or Beatles is out there, but they never get noticed because they cannot get a high-profile manager, make the connections, or find folk who believe in them? Maybe they're introverts who require the gift of gab. Creatives who maintain confidence in their creative skills but need marketing know-how and can only upload their art to a digital platform. Should these creatives be forgotten, destined to be buried in a digital haystack of data, forever? I say no. Everyone has some sort of talent. The key to success is finding and connecting with the people who value yours.

Digital media platforms allow creatives to connect with the people closest to them. They are great for sharing content through direct upload to social

platforms like Twitter, Instagram, and Facebook, or subscription-based platforms like Netflix, Apple, and Spotify. The problem is that without paid advertising or celebrity status, these platforms do nothing to share content beyond your friends and family.

The playing field must be level for all creatives to share their content beyond their inner-circle. Changes in the entertainment industry resulted from advances in technology, such as going from CD/DVD to download and from downloading to streaming, but none of these advances has helped level the playing field for all creatives — until now.

Moving from traditional streaming to what I call Competitive Streaming™ will provide unprecedented opportunities for artists to gain exposure and grow their audiences. This is especially true for artists who are considered low-tier by current music industry standards. As technology continues its rapid advance, it's unclear

what the digital world will look like in the near future. What is clear is the inequality among the classes of creatives occupying today's most prominent digital platforms and the challenges those platforms present for growing undiscovered artists' brands. The stage is set for Competitive Streaming™ technology to level the playing field for even low-tier artists or URCs to reach the world.