

How to Grow and Nurture Young People's Music Fandom

With increased fragmentation of the music content ecosystem and the corresponding decline of 'traditional' revenue streams, creating and nurturing highly engaged fanbases is more important than ever. Engaged fanbases deliver -

More sustainable and long-term revenue

Increased algorithmic visibility due to higher content interaction

Broader reach as fans organically promote and share

At We Are Family, we understand how fandoms are formed and the journey kids and teens go on from never having heard of an artist to being a superfan.

01



Constant and Curated Exposure

Young people's music fandom begins with ubiquitous and relevant exposure across all their favourite digital platforms and social spaces. Rather than actively searching for new artists, fans are swept up in an ongoing flow of content, influencing their tastes without them even realising it. In order to be considered, you need to be active and relevant across as many relevant online and offline touchpoint as possible.



Recommendation and Action

You need to consider the concentric circles that kids and teens surround themselves with. Including close friends and family, play-ground friendship circles, social media and their wider community. Look at reaching them through gaming, sports and school, as well as how they might traditionally consume music.

Understand where they are beyond music channels and engage them there



02



The Emotional Hook

The second stage of fandom is all about emotion. You have seconds to pique a teens interest before they are onto the next thing, those seconds need to be brimming with emotional response cues. Young audiences don't just listen to music, they feel it. On platforms like TikTok and Instagram, a song's success hinges on its ability to spark instant emotional reactions. Whether it's nostalgia, joy, empowerment...connection moments happen when a track triggers an emotional response from the consumer. When music resonates emotionally, engagement follows.



Recommendation and Action

To deepen this emotional connection, partner with influencers who can bring the music to life through storytelling and authentic reactions. Ensure the opening hook can be instinctively used as a short hand for an emotion, this will encourage content creators to use your music in their own content, leveraging the emotion you have created for their own means. Use data insights to ensuring the right hooks reach the right audiences.

Emotion Fuels Engagement



03



Authenticity as Social Currency

As fandom deepens, music alone isn't enough. Young people crave connection with the artist behind the sound - real stories, vulnerable moments, and personal motivations. Authenticity fuels resonance. Supporting emerging artists isn't just about music; it's social currency. Discovering an artist early, championing their rise, and witnessing them stay true to their vision becomes a badge of identity. It's how young audiences express taste, build status among peers, and feel part of something bigger.



Recommendation and Action

Promoting behind-the-scenes content and personal stories will help fans connect with artists on a deeper level. Embracing an artist's realness creates more meaningful relationships with fans and strengthens loyalty. The fans journey becomes intermingled with the artists.

Fans want to engage beyond the music, it makes them feel more connected and gives them social currency by enabling them to be a "real fan"



04



From listener to Creator

Fandom isn't just about consuming music, it's about participating in it. Digital platforms like YouTube, Fender Play, MusicGurus and other DAWs (Digital Audio Workstations) have made learning music more accessible than ever, removing traditional barriers to music production. Kids love to see themselves progress and get better at things, and by enabling them to learn music, it empowers them to go beyond just listening and start creating, strengthening their emotional connection to the artist and their work.



Recommendation and Action

Sharing exclusive content such as tutorials and behind-the-scenes footage on the production process gives them the tools to create their own versions of a track, whilst creating competitions or community spaces where fan-made music is showcased, strengthens fandom through creative expression.

Empower kids to learn new skills through your music

05



Creating a sense of belonging and identity

This step is about creating an authentic, meaningful connection where fans don't just enjoy an artist's music, but deeply identify with it. Fans find a sense of belonging within a community built around shared values, interests, and emotional connections to the artist. At this level, fandom becomes a core part of their personal identity.



Recommendation and Action

The music industry should actively build inclusive fan communities where listeners can interact meaningfully with each other and the artist, aligning closely around shared values and experiences. Artists should regularly acknowledge and celebrate fan creativity, engage authentically through informal digital interactions, and offer thoughtfully designed merchandise that reflects and reinforces fans' identities and sense of belonging.

Create shared spaces for fans to connect and belong



Early adopters become tastemakers

For music aimed at children under 8, engaging parents is just as crucial as engaging the child. Parents act as gatekeepers, controlling what music their children consume. Gaining their approval is key to transforming passive exposure into a lasting musical connection, laying the foundation for a child's journey into fandom.



If you would like to know more about how to nurture and grow your fanbase, please get in contact at hellouk@we-are-family.com