

Everywhere I go there seems to be some sophisticated discussion or debate about what's wrong with the music industry and what needs to be done to fix it. The conversation takes place in offices among professionals who have been around long enough to know that things are indeed different, and at industry conferences among music artists who revel in new found optimism that the changes will "level" the playing field and make economic opportunities more accessible to them.

As tempting as it may be, I am not enamored with or preoccupied by the current problems that face the music industry. Issues such as declining record sales; the consolidation of radio stations; the constant merging of record labels; the lack of longevity in the "careers" of music artists; the boom in retail sales of used CDs; or any myriad of issues regarding the illegal downloading of music on the Internet.

Why? Because while so many in the music industry (professionals and artists alike) spend countless hours lamenting over things that they can't control, I only focus on the things that are within my control; like my professional choices, income generating activities, and building valued relationships. Most importantly, my business model is based on my passions because while I know that the economy will always fluctuate up or down, and industry trends will turn hot and cold in the blink of an eye, my love for what I do is a constant and remains unaffected.

In 1999 I had the pleasure of meeting and briefly talking to Barry White at a party for the release of "Love Unlimited," his semi-autobiographical book on his adventures in life, love and the music industry. When he asked me what I did for a living, I told

him I was a music business consultant. Barry, who was much darker in person than he is on television and in his videos, flashed some of the whitest teeth you could ever imagine and said, "I don't know what that is, but as long as you believe in what you do, that's all that counts."

I went on to enthusiastically explain to him what I did as a music business consultant, asking him for advice and hogging up his limited time in the process. He stopped me before I could really dive



deep into it and interjected in his sincere, rich baritone voice, the advice that I still follow to this very day, "Constantly re-commit yourself to what you do and the money will follow..."

We all need to re-commit from time to time. We all lose sight of what we actually do for a living and the reasons why we do it, but the long roots of true passion run deep...and even when the tree is cut down by unfair business practices, a glutony of superficial encounters, busted deals, a never ending parade of fakes and flakes, and rampant un-professionalism that plagues the industry, you endure because you know that at the end of the day you are truly passionate about what you do and it all becomes a mere occupational hazard that you learn how to deal with.

While many aspiring industry professionals have fashionably set their sights on the greener pastures of the music business, prostituting their values for the sake and pursuit of money, the vast majority will not obtain the riches they so desperately seek, nor will they be in it for the long haul. Why? Because they lack vision, focus, commitment, and above all else, passion for what they do – which

brings us to the question: what's love got to do with it?

When it comes to art, you would think everything, but the sad truth is that there are many in the music industry that are more passionate about self-expression and self-serving interests, than they are about music as an art form (unless, of course, the music we are speaking of is their own). But you don't have to be passionate about music to be in the music industry, you just need to be passionate about your *motivations* and respect the *process* that allows you to make your money. Show me an act or professional who has failed, and I will show you how that statement applies.

And what about all the "changes" that people are talking about so adamantly? History shows that this industry is *always* changing. The industry never stops changing; technologically; structurally; logistically; and creatively. Adaptability is a requirement of success in every industry because change, to an entrepreneur, is readily accepted, embraced and capitalized upon.

So for those who are distracted by the changes that are taking place in the industry, my free, but valuable advice to all of you is to focus on what you love to do. Your passion is the intangible that will increase the value of your product or service. Your business needs and opportunities will announce themselves at the appropriate time. Until then, rekindle your love affair with your business or art, because in the end, love has everything to do with the reason you do it in the first place.