THE Musician's Handbook

${\it Music Business Plan for } \\ {\it Music Business and Entrepreneurship (MUCE 4000)}$

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1 Summary Statement

1.1 My Background

In many ways, I am very fortunate to say that my audition to get into the University of North Texas' College of Music was one of the worst experiences of my life. The voice is a very temperamental instrument and every time I neared a recording or audition day, I felt become even more unruly. The day I was set to record my video audition, I was about five days into a fight with the flu and losing terribly. So many takes from that day were interrupted by my coughs and sneezes. If I'm remembering correctly, I had tears in my eyes during a take we submitted because of how hard I was keeping myself from coughing. For obvious reasons, I thought that my dreams of studying music were over as UNT was the only school of music I applied to. Miraculously, though, I made it to the live audition round. I vowed that I'd work even harder to make sure that I felt confident in the performance I gave.

In hindsight, I was definitely overworking my voice by practicing for hours a day in addition to high school choir and voice lessons. It's what I thought I had to do, though. At the time, I practiced as any instrumentalist would, for long, hard hours, constantly. Furthermore, between my virtual audition and in-person one, I developed also anxiety (in general but especially in regards to performance) so bad that I could barely hold down food anymore. Multiple times I would practice so much I would manage to make myself so physically ill that I would have to stop practicing to go vomit.

The day I met my pianist (for the first time and in her apartment) was about a week before my audition. My voice was already exhausted. My voice was so exhausted, in fact, that it gave out on me more than a couple of times. Near the end, I was so fed up with my instrument, in my eyes, not being enough that I burst into tears. Not small tears I could blame on allergies or a strong gust of wind like I had in lessons past. Big tears that leaned closer to sobs. Ones that made both the pianist and my voice teacher stop dead in their tracks to make sure I was okay.

My audition was a culmination of all of these events. To put it briefly, it was, arguably, one of the worst days of my life. I left Voertman Hall, where my audition was held in front of all of the Voice faculty, feeling I'd, at best, embarrassed myself and, at worst, wasted all of the time, energy, effort, money, and pride that was put into me by my family and voice teacher and friends and choir teacher and mentor and other teachers and even the pianist and everyone I'd ever told about my goal. As soon as I got back into the passenger seat of my mom's truck to go back home, I started crying and I didn't stop crying for days after my audition. When I received my acceptance letter, my first thought wasn't, "wow, I'm so proud of myself"; it was "how bad was everyone else that I made it in?" Even months after I received my acceptance letter, even well into the second semester of my freshman year at UNT, I worried they'd realize they made a mistake and rescind my acceptance.

Over my three years here, I've heard countless stories audition days and juries and performances, and there are so many continuing threads in these stories, it weaves a tapestry that does not showcase the joy music typically brings to people in the general public. I am fortunate, though, in that from all of this, came my idea for the *The Musician's Handbook*.

1.2 The Musician's Handbook

My name is Alexis Chaney and I am a third-year Psychology and Voice-Concentrated Music Double Major and German Minor at the University of North Texas. The first written notes I have on *The Musician's Handbook* are from 28. March 2020 in a Google Doc. The first timestamp on it reads 02:01am while the last reads 04:26am. I remember almost nothing from these almost two and a half hours but some of my favorite notes I wrote read:

- "different sections for different instruments and voice types general voice tips and specific branches"
- "potential problems that could arise with what one plays and quick and long term ways to remedy/fix it"
- "make sure this hasn't been done before???"
- "section where people can request specific information or send feedback for what works, what doesn't, etc"
- "if a person puts their location in it can show a list of doctors/physicians/etc in their area and their specialties (will probably have to get connected with most/all of them)"
- "have a place where I found all of the resources I used so others can look at it for themselves (also no plagiarism)"
- "overall goal: one place with trusted, reliable sources that people can go to if they're dealing with something so they don't have to scour the entirety of the internet just to find potentially wrong information. a lot of musicians who play the same or similar instrument(s) deal with very similar problems so it makes sense to have a place with quality information that everyone can go to"

Though it was initially supposed to be a one-woman venture, through drafting this outline over the course of the Spring of 2022 I've realized that doing this alone is nearly impossible. The idea has become significantly more fleshed out over the past two years but the core goal is still true: The Musician's Handbook should be a place where musicians can go to find information on the that is both up-to-date with current research and reliable. We plan on marketing towards musicians applying for and currently in college. This is a key time in a young musician's life when they decide if this is what they actually want to do and when they are also the most susceptible to injury.

The Musician's Handbook will be a for-profit corporation headed by a Chief Operating Officer and Chief Technology Officer acting as co-Chief Executive Officers. The business and technological sides of the company will act separately but be a part of the same entity. On the business side, there will be Business Managers and a Research Team. The technology side will be composed of Technology Managers, a Tech Team, and an IT Department. The company will make money through donations, partnerships, masterclasses, ad revenue, a premium version of the app, and memberships.

2 Market Analysis

2.1 Customer Profile

Our target audience are younger and less experienced musicians between the ages of 16 and 25. This stage is key and crucial in determining whether people want to become professional musicians, make music a hobby, or quit music altogether. We do not have a gender preference but suspect girls and women to use the app most as they are most likely to seek out and ask for help.

Though *The Musician's Handbook* will be user-friendly to everyone, we will cater most to people with experience in or consistently learning music, no matter how great or small. This, essentially, means that the site will most benefit people who are doing continuous work learning or playing an instrument, rather than people who are learning or playing it on-and-off. We especially want to target those who are serious and are planning to have a career. We believe that if *The Musician's Handbook* helped them when they were younger, they will be more inclined to mention it to their future colleagues and/or students.

2.2 Competitor Analysis

Our biggest competitors are WebMD as well as basic Googling. These services are free and very popular and more or less trusted. As they do have a large amount of backing and funding, they have the ability to produce a lot of information in a short amount of time. However, anyone can put anything on any search engine and finding information that is accurate and scientifically-backed can require a lot of time and patience. Furthermore, these sites have information that isn't specific to musicians, whose elevated use of various parts of their body lead to special circumstances.

The Musician's Handbook differentiates itself in that all information posted on the app will be current, accurate, and reliable. All of our information will be dated so users now how recent these results are. The dates that they were edited after being published will also be listed. Unlike other sites, we will also include a "Previous Research" section of every topic. This will include all past edited versions of the topic, so users can see how information has changed and evolved over time. We will also have a brief summary of what various ailments are for those wanting quicker results as well as longer sections for more depth searching.

2.3 Marketing

Two taglines we will use are "a way to continue doing what you love" and "love yourself, love your music/instrument." As we are targeting a younger demographic, we want to use strong and impactful words, such as "love." We will include mostly college-aged students in advertisement and marketing, so our audience can more easily place themselves in the actor's shoes.

We plan on using various social media platforms to host information about *The Musician's Handbook*. These platforms include: TikTok, Instagram, and Facebook with the former two focusing primarily younger generations and the latter being for parents and the older generation in general. We will have to see what content does the best, but we plan to

post TikToks pertaining to musicians and a bit of music psychology. "Voice [insert other instrument] Teacher" react videos are popular on the app, so we may recreate that with various musical and health professionals. Essentially, we want to ride trends as we begin to find our place and audience on the app and slowly grow to being able to create trends. Facebook will be primarily host information the various events we do across the country as well as recordings of said events where we are allowed to record. Instagram will act as a bridge between the two sites. We will post our most popular TikToks under the reels section of our Instagram profile while also highlighting the various events we do.

We will also market towards schools, universities, and private lessons teachers as a means of getting the adults accustomed to the app. The hope is that if we market to them directly via talks at their schools, masterclasses, and personalized handwritten letters, they will be more willing to discuss *The Musician's Handbook* with colleagues and peers. Word-of-mouth will always be a strong way to market and its power cannot be understated, especially as we are trying to grow the brand and get our name out there.

Our marketing plan will go as follows: One year from our launch, we will begin networking with potential investors and shareholders, and start taking notes of various trends throughout the various seasons. Six months from launch, we will start networking with schools and private lessons teachers and create our social media accounts. Three months from launch, we will send out handwritten letters to private lessons teachers and school teachers/professors who seemed particularly excited about *The Musician's Handbook*. The night before the launch, we hope to have an in-person and virtual launch party, so people can tune in and have a specific day to be excited for. The day of the launch, we will have scheduled talks in the city where we held the launch party.

3 Management

There will be a Chief Operating Officer and a Chief Technology Officer acting as co-Chief Executive Officers (CEO).

3.1 Business

The <u>Chief Operating Officer</u> (COO) will be in charge of the business side of *The Musician's Handbook*. These tasks will include overseeing the Business Managers as well as (such as marketing the app, being the "face" of the app, giving talks about the app, etc.). They are able to lead the business aspect of the app while being understanding and compassionate to those below them. They need to know what their weaknesses are and how to work through them while accentuating their strengths. They should be able to rally confidence and community both in the workers and within the targeted population. They should also be active members in local, national, and international music communities. The Chief Operating Officer will be a salaried employee. I, Alexis Chaney, will act as COO.

The <u>Business Managers</u> (BM) are the link between the COO and the Research Team and oversee all information posted on the website. BMs need to have strong communication skills. They advocate for the needs of the Research Team and need to be good listeners as well as empathetic. They need to be able to make sound decisions efficiently. They will also

be in charge of editing and fact-checking all information. They will be in contact with the IT Department about customer questions. They will also be in charge of compiling notes from customers about research topics as well as finding and applying for grants. They should have experience in writing in general and research papers, specifically. They will preferably be well-versed in music literature. Having experience in and with music is definitely not required but would be helpful. The Business Managers will be salaried employees.

The Research Team (RT) will be in charge of finding and researching information to put on the app as well as writing the reports on it. They will research various physicians and health professionals who specialize in helping musicians. In the beginning stages of the app, the RT will be able to focus on their specific interest in regards to musicians' physical or mental health. As the app grows, the RT will branch out and uncover new interests. They should be passionate about research and inquisitive. They need to have experience writing in general and research papers, specifically. Having experience in and with music is definitely not required but is strongly encouraged. Employees on the Research Team will be hourly employees.

3.2 Technology

The <u>Chief Technology Officer</u> (CTO) will be in charge of the technology side of *The Musician's Handbook*. These tasks will include but are not limited to overseeing the Technology Managers as well as the general operations of running the app. They need to be able to lead the technological operations effectively while also being compassionate to those working for them. They must have expert experience in app development and coding. They should be active members of their community (preferably a music community) to best understand the general and musical populations *The Musician's Handbook* will be serving. Cultivating a community of openness starts at the top, so the CTO needs to be willing to ask for help, accept feedback, and make changes where they are needed. The Chief Technology Officer will be a salaried employee.

The <u>Technology Managers</u> (TM) are the link between the CTO and the hourly employees and will oversee the development and updating of the app. Because of this, TMs will need to have a strong sense of diplomacy and very strong communication skills. They advocate for the needs of the hourly employees so, above all else, they need to be good listeners. They need to be empathetic while also being able to make decisions in an adequate amount of time. They will also be in charge of training new Tech Team and IT Department members and thus need to have experience with the coding software of the app as well as expert knowledge of the app itself. Though TMs do not need to have any experience in education, it would be useful. The Technology Managers will be salaried employees.

The <u>Tech Team</u> (TT) will be in charge of developing *The Musician's Handbook*. TT members need to be independent workers, who can also work well in a team setting. Entry-level experience (at least) is required. However, the environment created in the workplace is going to champion curiosity and innovation, so employees can grow and sharpen their skills. Detail-oriented and ambitious workers will be rewarded. As app updates will take place every other month, work will be spaced out evenly with a slight increase closer to the update and a decrease after the update.

The IT Department (ITD) will be in charge of troubleshooting potential issues for cus-

tomers via phone, email, and an in-app chat option. Patience and understanding will definitely be necessary, but there will also be systems in place against customers who are particularly unruly or rude. The ITD will also be in contact with the Business Managers as customers come to them about information not found on the app. They will need to be extremely up-to-date with the app and all of the app updates and should receive a summary of all new information every day. The ITD also need to be proactive in understanding and answering customers' questions and concerns, while also being proactive in furthering and deepening their own knowledge.

Employees in both the Tech Team and IT Department will be hourly employees.

4 Business Structure

4.1 The Business

The Musician's Handbook will be a for-profit corporation. As The Musician's Handbook may be used for health purposes, steps do need to be taken to make sure the business and shareholders are protected. The Board of Directors will be made of professionals in the following categories: Finances, Marketing, Legal, and Medical. Professionals in these fields will be the most beneficial in making sure the business runs the most smoothly. Board Members should be active in both the general and music communities. They should be passionate about musicians, not just music as a whole. They should be active leaders and extremely knowledgeable in their chosen fields. They need to be supportive but also willing to speak their mind if need be. They also need to be diligent in fulfilling their duties and excited about making a positive change in musicians' lives.

4.2 Sources of Revenue

The Musician's Handbook will make money via the following ways: donations, partnerships, masterclasses, ad revenue, a premium version of the app, and memberships. These will be further outlined next.

Through our intense marketing and outreach about *The Musician's Handbook*, we hope to receive many **donations**. On the anniversary of our first year as a business, we will hold a gala that includes paid admission and a raffle, among other things, as a way to gain money and celebrate our accomplishments as a business. We plan on making this an annual event.

We will introduce **partnerships** with various hospitals, family doctors, research labs, etc. This is a more roundabout way to earn money, but by building these connections, we hope to build rapport and our reputation as well as make us a more credible source of information

In a similar vein, we plan on networking with health professionals who specialize in helping musicians and having **masterclasses** where they discuss issues relating to musicians. We will charge admission, so both *The Musician's Handbook* and the health professionals can make money. Further in the future, we plan on furthering this reach by including masterclasses with professional musicians on health-related topics related to musicians.

We plan on utilizing **ad revenue** as a strong source of income, especially during our first few months. We will always make sure the brands we work with align with our vision.

However, as *The Musician's Handbook* continues to grow, we hope to narrow the brands we work with to ones that have very close missions and visions to ours.

The **premium version** of *The Musician's Handbook* will include an ad-free version of the website. Users will be able to put in an email address and password to save their information but on only one device. With the premium version, however, users will be able to login to up to three devices. We will make sure that we are not punishing users for not paying for the premium version by making the free version worse or incomparable. The premium version will be considered an added bonus, rather than necessary for the app to function.

Memberships will come at a later stage after we have solidified our place in the music community. Memberships will include a premium version of *The Musician's Handbook*, lowered admission to masterclasses, and will have their ideas, in regards to potential research topics, considered higher by the Business Managers. It will come with access to a newsletter that has information about a user's specific, chosen instrument.

5 Operations

5.1 Snapshot

5.1.1 Daily

The Research Team will engage with and research information relating to various physical and mental ailments musicians may face. Business Managers will fact-check and edit every member of the RT's work and if there are new employees, training them. The Chief Operating Officer will find events to speak at, write speeches for these events, engage with potential partners, and promote the app.

The Tech Team will be in charge of continuously scanning the app for bugs as well as preparing for future updates. The IT Department will answer customer questions and complaints. Technology Mangers will oversee all app updates and if there are new employees, train them. The Chief Technology Officer will be available to assist all employees with any technological needs as well as speak with shareholders and potential investors about the app.

5.1.2 Weekly

Business and Technology Managers will be in charge of compiling all customer input and distributing it during their respective Department Meetings. Department Meetings will be held every other Friday. Technology Meetings and Business Meetings will be held on different Fridays. Information will still be spread on "off" Fridays; it will just be sent via email. Items that require more conversation or input will be dispersed during Department Meetings while items that require less communication will be sent in the emails. Department Meetings will also consist of going over old and setting new goals to be achieved. All members from the separate divisions will be required to attend. Business Meetings will consist of the Chief Operating Officer, Business Managers, and Research Team. Technology Meetings will consist of the Chief Technology Officer, the Technology Managers, Tech Team, and IT Department.

5.1.3 Monthly

Both the Business and Technology Divisions will meet together for monthly all-staff meetings. These meetings will serve to make sure both divisions are a united front, to update either side on any news that may have fallen through the cracks, to check the progress of the company's goals, and to create new goals if the previous have been met.

The Chief Operating Officer will give and organize talks across the country. These talks will be on a variety of topics relating to the app and musicians' health and well-being. This is both to spread *The Musician's Handbook*'s name as well as be an active member of the community while furthering knowledge on the topic. As our primary target audience is college-aged musicians, most of the talks will take place on college campuses.

App updates will be scheduled on a bi-monthly basis, preferably on the 15th of every month. App updates during odd-numbered months (i.e. January and March) will be centered around the technological side of the app, including but not limited to: user interface, design, and functionality of the app. App updates during even-numbered months (i.e. February and April) will be centered around the informational side of the app, including but limited to: updating the number of instruments we have information on, improving information on the website, and adding information to already added instruments.

5.2 Risks

Because *The Musician's Handbook* has the potential to interact greatly with musicians' health, the greatest risk is that there could be a potential misuse or overuse of helpful information. As will be mentioned later, there will be a very long vetting process before any information is released on the site. However, we will stress that no information, both on our site and in general, is "a one size fits all" solution. We will encourage them to find what works best for them via trial and error and, even better, consulting a local physician or health professional.

There is a potential spread of misinformation due to the fact that research is always evolving. As alluded to previously, there will be multiple stages of checking and vetting information. After topics have been found and written on by the Research Team, there will go through a minimum of five stages of being fact-checked and edited before being published. The topic will go through all of the Business Managers at least once and be checked over the course of a few weeks. Depending on what is being researched and talked about, the process can take as little as four weeks and can last as long as it needs to to make sure the information is correct and conveyed appropriately. We will also update the site as new research becomes available by editing the site and deleting things as necessary.

Lastly, as a (Co-)Chief Executive Officer, a large concern can be that there is a sense of division amongst the Business and Technology Departments as well as a false sense of superiority amongst employees. The best way to avoid this is to cultivate community, openness, and respect throughout the company. As mentioned in the Management section, this starts at the top. The Chief Operations Officer and Chief Technology Officer will be at the Business and Technology Meetings, respectively, for this exact reason.

5.3 Facilities and Equipment

Coding software is definitely required for this job, particularly for the Technology Division. We will either use BlueJ or Python. I, Alexis, have worked with BlueJ the most and have the most knowledge, but Python is typically considered a more standard programming language to use. I will confer with the Chief Technology Officer which would the best to use for *The Musician's Handbook*. We will also require the Microsoft Suite of all employees and that will be standard way to communicate and share information. All employees will also have an employee email.

In terms of technology, we will buy extremely high-tech computers for each member of the Technology Division and require members of the Business Division to have a computer they can use. If members of the Business Division are financially unable to buy a computer, the company will buy one for them of lesser value. We will also need **company iPhones** and **Androids** for every three members of Tech Team so they can test the app on their intended device in real-time.

A **building** is definitely not required but it will be a goal to work towards in our first few years. Until we have a building, all positions will be considered work-from-home. As aforementioned, though a building is not needed, we hope to have one as a means of encouraging and facilitating communication, having a set place for in-person meetings, and building camaraderie between the staff. Though we do not believe all employees will be best friends (or friends in general) nor will we push them to, we do hope having this building will be beneficial in encouraging respect of all staff and their contribution to making *The Musician's Handbook* what is and could become.

6 Financial Structure

As will be outlined, *The Musician's Handbook*, unfortunately, is not a business that could realistically survive, at this time.

6.1 Financial Requirements

The financial needs will be greatest while starting *The Musician's Handbook* and will lessen as the business continues. The main expense upfront will be getting computers. While we could start with cheaper and lower quality computers and work our way up to higher quality ones, we believe that, in the long run, this will only come as a detriment to us. This is especially true when taking into consideration that if we do change computers only a few years into starting the business, we will have to spend extra time and energy on transferring all of the data over. Because we will not initially have a building, this will reduce costs greatly.

The highest cost will come from paying the employees. As there are many facets to the business and many employees needed, this number is going to be much higher than the rest. Paying people an amount equivalent to their work and also a livable wage is extremely important and thinking people will want to continue working when their financial needs are not being met.

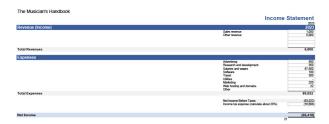


Figure 1: The above shows the income statement sheet for *The Musician's Handbook*.



Figure 2: The above shows the balance sheet for *The Musician's Handbook*.

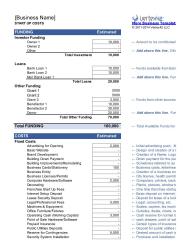


Figure 3: The above shows page two of the start up costs sheet for *The Musician's Handbook*.



Figure 4: The above shows page two of the start up costs sheet for *The Musician's Handbook*.

6.2 Sources of Funding

The Musician's Handbook will need to get at least 70,000 USD in grants and donations, 20,000 USD in bank loans, and 10,000 USD in investor funding. In terms of grants and donations, we will look to various music and psychology societies, hospitals, and large groups, such as chamber orchestras. We do also hope to find at least one benefactor through our networking efforts, whether it be a legacy donor, endowment donor, etc.. We intend to increase our funding efforts every five years to make sure we are bringing in a sufficient amount of money to run the business.

6.3 Breakeven Analysis

Our breakeven is three years. We will have set financial goals to be completed at the end of each fiscal year. If we are falling short, we will begin increase marketing efforts. If we believe that we have marketed as much as we can, we will lean more heavily on finding donors and benefactors. If we begin using our contingency reserve, then we will need to make sure we will, essentially, go into overdrive. This will include increasing staffing and marketing efforts, networking more in other schools, and broadening our social media and local presence. At the end of the three years, if we have not started making money, *The Musician's Handbook* will have to close its doors.