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An investigation of influences on strategic decision-making in popular recorded music industry micro-enterprises

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**AN INVESTIGATION OF INFLUENCES ON
STRATEGIC DECISION-MAKING IN POPULAR
RECORDED MUSIC INDUSTRY MICRO-
ENTERPRISES**

DAVID R. SCHREIBER

**A thesis submitted in partial fulfilment of the requirements of the
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Abstract

This thesis investigates the strategic decision-making practices (SDM) in music industry micro-enterprises in the United States. Although a significant body of literature has examined the SDM processes in high-tech firms, manufacturers and other specialty industries, very little has been learned about strategic decision-making within the music industry. Eight cases were used to look at what influences the decision-making practice, and how. Two decisions from each of four firms that are directly involved in the marketing and promotion of recorded music product were chosen. The primary source data came from forty-three interviews by thirty-six respondents from firms that were directly involved in the decision-making practice. Direct observation and note taking on company culture and employee interaction, analysis of artefacts in the form of company emails, websites, social media sites and magazines, and other items referenced in the interviews were also used as data sources.

Bourdieu's theory of practice was used to conceptualise the decision-making as interplay between social, cultural, symbolic and economic capital, habitus, and field. The principle argument developed in this thesis is consistent with Bourdieu's concept of recognition, and explores the desire for actors in this field to make strategic decisions that will position themselves better to either acquire and/or use capital that will lead to further power and positioning within the field. The primary practice was often dictated by the actor's concern for reputation and how other individuals perceived them and their respective firms. Instances of explicit and implicit exploitation of objectified symbolic capital were seen as a necessary practice to achieving firm objectives. This research also incorporates previous research on strategic decision-making in other micro-enterprises, including the use of past experiences, personal biases, heuristics and intuitive behaviours, as they are a product of the relationship between the habitus, capital and field. A Bourdieusian lens allowed for the surfacing of the complex reflexive interplay among Bourdieu's practice theory and the theoretical constructs of strategic decision-making, which led to a deep description of the influences on these practices in music industry micro-enterprises while further developing his ideas about the field of cultural production. By bringing both of these nuances to the forefront, my analysis leads to a contribution to the decision-making literature for micro-enterprises and music industry theorists while arguing for a repositioning of the popular music industry within the large-scale production of culture, as one characterised by high amounts of symbolic capital, not low amounts as Bourdieu (1996) contends. In addition, I will argue that in order to transform one capital to another, for example, social or economic capital into symbolic capital, there is a need for a field-specific capital. In this case, 'music industry capital' is used as a negotiating aid when agents vie for power and positioning within the music industry.

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Declaration of Authorship

I declare that the work in this thesis was carried out in accordance with the regulations of the University of Westminster. The work is original, except where indicated by special reference in the text, and no part of the thesis has been submitted for any other degree. Any views expressed in the thesis are those of the author and in no way represent those of the University of Westminster. The thesis has not been presented to any other University for examination either in the United Kingdom or overseas.

SIGNED:_____

Glossary of Terms and Acronyms

A & R - Artist & Repertoire – The department within a record company responsible for finding new artists to record

Actors - '*Actors*' refer to the individual that '*acts*' or makes their own free choices through '*Agency*'

Agents – '*Agents*' are normally those individuals or '*actors*' that act on behalf of another and manage business, financial or contractual matters for a musician.

Album – A recording containing usually eight or more individual songs totalling 30 or more minutes of playing time.

Billboard Charts – Report the weekly popularity of songs and albums in the United States recorded industry measured by radio airplay, streaming and sales

Booking Agents - '*Booking Agents*' refer to the agent that secures employment or performances for an artist

Bundling – a sales and marketing strategy used in the music industry by combining of songs or other product under one single unit. Multiple songs on a given 'EP' or 'Album' would constitute a bundling of sound recordings.

CHR – (Abbreviation for Christian Hit Radio) is a radio format that focuses on playing the Top 40 Christian songs as ranked by Billboard Charts.

Christian AC - (Abbreviation for Christian Adult Contemporary) is a radio format similar to Adult Contemporary (AC) that targets 30-40 year old women.

Christian INSPO (An Abbreviation for Christian Inspirational Music) – Is a style of music that often blends pop, contemporary and worship music and adult contemporary (AC). Tracked by Billboard as a chart under the moniker of 'Soft AC/Inspirational'

DMA (Abbreviation for 'Designated Marketing Area') – A non-overlapping geographical area that is considered a standard in radio and television advertising

Distribution (Abbreviation for Music Distribution) – the process and structures developed to get recorded music product into retail establishments. This can be done with physical product or digital music product. Distributors act as middle-man between record labels and retail stores.

DVD – Digital Versatile Disc, an optical disc storage format

EP - (Abbreviation for 'Extended Play') – An album containing at least three and typically four to six songs

Hot 100 – The Billboard Chart that tracks the top 100 most popular songs measured by airplay, digital and physical sales

Hot Christian Songs – A Billboard Chart that ranks the most popular Christian songs measured by radio airplay impressions for any given week

Independent Record Label or 'Independents' or 'Indies' – refers to those record labels that are not directly affiliated with the three main recording/entertainment companies

MP3 (Abbreviation for MPEG-1 Audio Layer 3) - A file compression standard developed by the motion picture industry to make audio files smaller and therefore easier to transfer and store in computers and other devices

MPAA – Motion Picture Association of America, a trade organisation that represents the six big Hollywood studios.

'Majors' or Major Record Label – refers to the three main recording/entertainment companies

Promotion – the marketing and exploitation of master recordings by means of radio airplay

Record – a general term used in the recording industry to mean an album, but could be considered an 'album' or 'EP'

RIAA – Recording Industry Association of America, a trade organisation that supports and promotes the creative and financial vitality of the major music companies

SDM – Strategic Decision-Making

SoundScan – The company that collects point-of-sale information from the UPC bar code scanners at a variety of record retail outlets and sells sales pattern information to the labels or other parties; now actually Nielsen SoundScan, a division of Nielsen Retail Information

Top Christian Albums – A Billboard Chart that ranks the top selling Christian albums

1. Introduction

1.1 RESEARCH BACKGROUND AND AIMS

The research presented in this thesis is motivated by the desire to address a gap in our understanding of micro-enterprise decision-making in the popular recorded music industry. Although a significant body of literature has examined strategic decision-making in high-tech firms, manufacturers and other industries, there is a paucity of research from within the recorded music industry that uses a Bourdieusian methodology. The packaging and selling of a creative product, the high risk, low success rate of music, and the rapidly changing nature of the distribution system impacts the way in which decision makers examine the environment, analyse data and allocate resources. These creative and cultural industry characteristics (Hirsch, 1972; Peterson, 1976; Negus, 1997; 1999; Caves, 2000) will help to form the foundation of this thesis.

In an effort to understand this practice better, I sought to answer the following:

1. How do owner managers within recorded music industry microenterprises in the United States of America make strategic decisions?
2. What are the key influences on decision choices using a Bourdieusian conceptualisation of decision-making as interplay among social, cultural, economic and symbolic capital, habitus, and field?

The recorded music industry is a dynamic and interconnected network of businesses that contribute to the overall end-product of music to which we listen. The previously accepted business model within the recorded music industry, before the recent internet-generated shift in its market structure, consisted of a rights-based model of distribution that relied heavily on 'mega' hits to generate revenue and sustain the major record labels' dominance. This model is now moving towards one that focuses more on the ways in which firms need to understand how to best monetise the relationship between content creator, the artist and consumer. As the prominence of MP3 technology took hold in the 1990s and consumers began listening to their recordings through

digital means, the value chain shifted and became a much more 'artist and consumer friendly' model – one which enables easy access to music and satisfies consumer needs and wants. These consumer-centric foci continue to shape the power and market structures in the industry today (Bockstedt, Kauffman & Riggins, 2006).

Even though the means of consumption and distribution have been changing in the recorded music industry, the product has remained relatively constant for decades. This consistency, coupled with the opportunities brought about by changes in technology, has prompted the investigation of the characteristics inherent in the commercialisation of cultural production and creative product like music (Caves, 2000). This has led researchers as early as the 1960s and 1970s to begin investigating the dynamic relationship between the economic interest of the individual or firm and the creation of popular music for the public and private good. As this research thread has grown, from social and cultural implications to the impacts upon the marketing, management and economics of the industry, it has presented researchers with more questions and opportunities for further investigation.

One such area of interest and worthy of further study includes the way in which strategic decisions in this industry are actually made. What motivates people to make decisions the way they do, and why? As I will discuss throughout this thesis, much has been learned about strategic decision-making processes throughout the past half-century, but little has been investigated specifically within the realm of a creative and culture-producing industry like the popular recorded music industry - one that exhibits characteristics such as an uncertainty of demand and unpredictability of success, which I will discuss in further detail in section 2.4.4. I will argue that, although similar influences on the decision-making practice may exist in other environments in which studies have been undertaken, the characteristic qualities of the recorded music industry impact strategic decision-makers in a way that has not yet been articulated empirically.

1.2 CONTEXT TO THE THESIS

Much of my adult life has been involved in music, either as a performer, educator or business associate. What I have learned in practical terms about the popular music industry has come from working and interacting with people while pursuing my career goals and helping others to achieve theirs. Considering the path I have chosen, now as a university instructor and researcher, I have also had the opportunity to learn from and teach others about my experiences.

While pursuing my own goals and assisting others, I have also had the opportunity to begin learning more of the theoretical concepts that have guided the industry, understanding better why things are the way they are. Whilst working in the music industry and expanding my opportunities to learn more about theoretical foundations, I always knew there was something different about how business was done in this industry. I am aware of how it has evolved within the past half-century and the uncertainty and unreliability of what would or could lead to success. This included the way I, and my colleagues, often approached problem solving and made the decisions that could either make or break our own or our artists' careers. This led me to look into how and what *actually* influenced, not only my own, but others' decision-making in this industry.

In the winter of 2009, as I began my search to pursue a PhD I was coming from a career in the music industry. I had begun teaching in higher education only a few years earlier, but was still actively consulting and managing artists in the music industry. My career began as an independent musician and instructor before moving to a position as regional sales manager for a music products' chain in the United States. I later became marketing and business development manager for a music and entertainment firm, and had the opportunity to work with prominent international artists. I also held other positions in administration and licensing, during my twelve-year career in the music industry. In 2006, an opportunity to teach in higher education was presented, with an offer from a small liberal arts college in central Pennsylvania. I pursued this proposal with excitement and was soon enjoying an environment that actively encouraged the dissemination of new knowledge, debate and inquiry. It

was not just about solving problems; it was also about asking questions. Bringing a blend of practical knowledge and my strong desire to learn allowed me to seek insight into some of these problems and questions I often encountered and inquired about while working. I just needed the tools and guidance to do so adequately and professionally. While I began the process of formally pursuing a research degree, I also became active in other academic organisations and pursuits including the Music and Entertainment Industry Educators Association (MEIEA), the Academy of Management (AOM) and the Strategic Management Society (SMS). The culmination of these activities and my acceptance into a research programme enabled me to consider investigating what was really happening in companies as they were making the strategic decisions that impacted the future of their companies. Was it formal planning, as I had learned in graduate school, or was it more akin to how I, in reality, was approaching it? My procedure could have been described as somewhat chaotic, with no logical planning other than doing what I felt was correct at any given time. I wanted to know more, and this was the opportunity for formal inquiry. Not only could I find insight for myself, but this information could also be helpful to those who continue to encounter these challenges in the industry today.

Because of my experience in the industry and recognition of the need for a better understanding of this context, in this thesis I seek to engage not only theorists and academics, but also those who work in the industry. I hope to enlighten my own future practice and understanding, as well as theirs. Thus, I will inform the debate on micro-enterprises and, specifically, those within the music industry field.

As I began my research, I approached it from a positivistic perspective typical of a management researcher from the United States. I quickly realised that in order to understand the subtle nuances of the strategic decision-making practice, I needed to pursue an approach that would provide for a more descriptive, rather than a generalised finding. This led to explorations into those methodologies best suited to answering my questions. Ranging from Giddens' structuration to symbolic interactionism, I found an interest in a growing perspective that has recently gained prominence in strategy research – strategy-as-practice (S-as-P). I chose this approach due to the practical nature of its

philosophy, and the growing interest amongst strategy researchers. S-as-P research takes a different perspective from previous threads of inquiry – one often rooted in practice theories that look at how strategy is actually carried out in firms. Of the multiple practice theories, I chose Bourdieu and his approach to social scientific inquiry for three reasons.

First, his method of interpretation can account for the subtle nuances between structure and agency. This enables an investigation into the influences that are occurring between the firms, the actors and the industry in which they are situated. The researcher is capable of extending beyond the surface, and exploring how the phenomena being studied have evolved. Meaning is determined by the interplay among the field, its actors and structures, the practices and interactions of people and the activities they carry out. Choosing a practice theory as a methodology allows for that understanding. It enables me to look at not just the decisions being made, but also what is motivating those decisions and influencing them.

Second, it is Bourdieu's use of an on-going reflexive approach to analysing empirical data that allows me to be mindful of how my biases may influence the interpretation of data. This will be elaborated on in more detail in Chapter 9. The activities and practices being observed, documented and analysed are coloured by the prejudices, dispositions and biases that are the result of my working in the industry, and of which I have had to be mindful in writing this account. This is an example of a reflexive sociology that Bourdieu called '*participant objectivation*'. A critical look at the analysis that I conduct can also lead to an understanding of how my view and experiences can distort, overemphasise ideals or even impact interpretation of the data. Being mindful of this impact lies at the heart of what Bourdieu often found troubling in a detached world of 'observation' that is at the centre of an objective or positivistic epistemology.

Third, his theory of practice, unlike others, can account for the subtle differences that motivate an actor beyond the superficial. His use of habitus, field, doxa, capital and more specifically symbolic capital can account for behaviour and motivation in ways other theories cannot. The use of symbolic capital allows for the unspoken power relationships between the systems in the

field and the actors within them. I wanted to study why and how strategic decisions were being made and what motivates people to prioritise certain objectives over others and how this leveraging of power can influence that practice. Through my own experience, it was the 'unspoken' leveraging of 'whom you know' or 'what someone can do for you' mentality that permeates the daily decision-making. The need to launch an artist by getting them ranked on industry sales and airplay charts, signed to a 'certain label' or working with a specific producer, and the great lengths people go to make that happen, can impact how decisions are perceived and made.

As I was exploring the different practice theories, frameworks and methodologies available to me as a researcher, I stumbled upon Bourdieu and his praxeology while reading the *Cambridge Handbook on Strategy as Practice*, edited by Golsorkhi, Rouleau, Seidl and Vaara (2010). It quickly became clear to me that a Bourdieusian lens would aid in the explanation of, and accounting for, the subtleties of the practice that I wished to investigate. I took it upon myself to conduct further 'due diligence' on his work and learn more about what Bourdieu and his theory had to offer, not only into *why* it would be an appropriate lens, but also its limitations. After extensive investigation and considering the influences on strategic decision-making in micro-firms, I determined that Bourdieu enabled the answering of my research questions. The last missing piece for me to make this decision was a work by Özbilgin and Tatli (2005) that enabled me to feel comfortable in taking a risk in using his work in an organisational setting. Becoming more fashionable now, it was less so when I decided to use a Bourdieusian praxeology as a lens when looking at practices within a firm. This also led me to doing something different, while simultaneously knowing that it was an appropriate methodology to pursue for this research. However, I was at first cautious of the contribution it could make to understand the phenomena better, mostly because it reinforced my early bias towards a more positivist approach. Nevertheless, as I continued the research and became more comfortable in using a Bourdieusian praxeology and a more interpretivist epistemology, a rich account of the decision-making practice began to surface. A further reflection of how well Bourdieu worked, its limitations, and how the

challenges from an entrenched positivistic disposition affected my research, will be discussed in sections 9.6 and 9.7.

1.3 METHODOLOGY AND DATA COLLECTION

As stated, the research questions have been operationalised using an interpretive epistemology so that the nature of 'how' and 'what' can be explored in-depth. Specifically, my intention is to follow the approach to phenomenological analysis as defined by Denzin and Lincoln (2005), a perspective concerned with "*how social reality, everyday life, is constituted in conversation and interaction*" (p. 3) and how this contributes to the perceptions of decision-making in the popular recorded music industry. Using Bourdieu, and his theory of practice as a methodological lens to accomplish this, allows for the study of strategic decision-making in its '*natural setting...by attempting to make sense of, or interpret, [it] in terms of the meanings people bring*' (Denzin & Lincoln, 2005, p. 3). This perspective is suitable for the personal interviews, direct observation and analysis of key documents and communication that were used for this research.

I decided that the best approach to answering the research question using Bourdieu's theory of practice was to undertake a study of multiple decisions. Fieldwork was carried out in two distinct phases. The first phase consisted of eleven interviews that allowed the fine-tuning of questions and adjustment of procedures when data collection ensued for the second stage. Most interviews were conducted one-on-one, unless requested by the interviewee. Each individual, however, was presented with the same topics for discussion, whether one or two colleagues were present in the room. The semi-structured interview allowed for an extraction of richer data enabling me to probe deeper into subtleties of activity. The interview protocol was based on sixteen, pre-determined topics, some of which were altered slightly in a second phase of the interview to reflect the position and responsibility of the individual that was involved in the decision practice.

1.4 KEY ASSUMPTIONS AND OTHER JUSTIFICATIONS

There are many assumptions that guide inquiry in strategic decision-making. The perspective taken in this research - a sociological practice driven approach - enables an account of the many influences that impact the decision-making process. The practice involved in generating activities, determining implications and the structures in which the decisions are made, is not a purely scientific or economic one. You must also take into consideration their social reality and history when looking upon the intent and motivation behind why certain decisions are made in the manner they are. Secondly, the power and positioning within the field must also be taken into consideration. The capital, in all forms, social, economic, cultural and symbolic, determines the actor's influence upon other actors in the field and the decisions that shape the accumulation of that capital. Thirdly, this interplay among actors and other firms in which they operate is not done in isolation; it is played to the field doxa, the rules of which are often dictated by the dominant actors within the field. However, the actor plays the social reality of that game and must determine how he or she is able to leverage what they have in order to increase his or her positioning. This leveraging of resources is conducted through decision-making, which may have a long-term impact on them or the firm in which they work.

As the researcher, my dispositions will be highlighted, as their impact is meaningful in the interpretation of the data. Having a history of working in the industry for well over a decade and coming from a more positivistic research environment within the United States, I will certainly approach it with bias. Bringing my habitus to the research can lead to misunderstood intentions and nuances that other investigators, outside the field, may not bring to the analysis of the data. Because of my experience, I may see things as insignificant that could negatively affect the subtle gradations and richness of interpretation that could more easily be recognised by someone that sees it with fresh eyes.

1.5 OUTLINE OF THE REPORT

This thesis contains nine chapters. The first following this introduction is the literature review; the next chapter focuses on the chosen methodology, followed by a chapter discussing the methods used. The next four chapters feature the data collected and the analysis of it, with a final discussion chapter that speaks to findings, limitations and future research. Beginning after this chapter, the recent research being undertaken within strategic decision-making will be discussed along with investigations related to the music industry. Understanding the differences in how managers that work in micro-enterprises approach decision-making along with the influences upon the practice is imperative in framing the context of the research questions. This will be reviewed along with what has been learned about the practice from the beginnings of the conceptualisation until now. It will then be followed by a review of the popular music industry that will outline the social and cultural impacts of the field including the implications of bringing music to the market place along with the characteristics that define it as a creative and cultural industry.

Chapter 3 is a discussion on methodology, specifically the use of Bourdieu's concepts within his practice theory – the underlying theoretical assumption that has guided this research. Bourdieu's practice theory is outlined and justified, as a lens most suited for answering the research questions over other known practice theories. Each concept is then defined within his theory of practice including habitus, capital and the field cultural production, including how these concepts are used within the music industry.

Chapter 4 outlines the methods used in data collection. It discusses the rationale for the use of cases in answering the research question. In addition, the use of interviews as a source of data and the use of direct observation and note taking will also be discussed. Furthermore, the chapter will provide the approach used in case reduction, coding and analysis techniques and specific field procedures used when obtaining access, confidentiality and ethical use of data.

In Chapters 5 to 8, the findings and analysis of the data obtained in the field are undertaken. Within this presentation, each chapter purposely contains two strategic decisions undertaken by one firm, which will enable the reader to navigate more clearly the findings of each case. The details of the practice of the decision-making are highlighted and the influences behind those practices are specified. The ramifications and justifications of the decision-making are also emphasised and the chosen cases will underscore the different perspectives and decisions often confronted within the industry by firm owners and managers. The culmination of all the data collected is brought together with a detailed description of how strategic decisions were made within this context. These data are then analysed and interpreted through the methodology outlined in section Chapters 3 and 4. The concepts of habitus, at both an individual and firm level, capital - symbolic, cultural, social and economic, will be brought together to describe the decision-making practice within the field of study.

Following the presentation and analysis of the data will be a discussion about the implications of those findings on the fields of decision-making in micro-enterprises and in a creative and cultural business like the popular recorded music industry, the extraction of, the analysis and the framing of it with the theoretical foundations established in Chapter 2 and 3, while doing so through a Bourdieusian lens will shape the findings and contributions made to the strategic decision-making literature and application of his practice theory in this setting. The practice used in making strategic decisions highlight the importance agency has on the firm and the influences that the field has upon that agency. Highlighting these results in this fashion will demonstrate the new findings and rich description that contribute to the understanding of how decisions are actually being made, not only in micro-enterprises, but micro-enterprises that operate in a cultural and creative industry like the music industry.

2. Review of Relevant Literature and Previous Research

2.1 INTRODUCTION

As was suggested in Chapter 1, this study will examine the strategic decision-making practice in micro-enterprises, from the United States popular recorded music industry. Although a significant body of literature looks at the strategic decision-making processes in high-tech firms, manufacturers and other specialty industries, there is a paucity of research on these practices in the music industry.

In an effort to understand this practice better, the research will look at answering how and what influences owner managers of micro-enterprises in the recorded music industry to make strategic decisions. In this chapter, I will explain the process of strategic decision-making as practice within the recorded music industry. The chapter is organised in four sections. First, an investigation into the theories and concepts implicit in strategic decision-making, especially as it relates to micro-enterprises, will be highlighted. This will be important to help explain and build upon the concepts to be identified in the findings of the research and later the discussion of those findings. It also helps to build a framework that can be integrated into Bourdieu's practice theory, which will later establish a richer description of the practice.

In addition to the current threads of research that exist within strategic decision-making, three additional concepts that are explicit in the framework for this research will be explored. Second, the current, commercial music industry, the characteristics that underpin it and the factors that have influenced its economic performance in recent history will be discussed. Within that, how research within the music industry has developed within five general categories of inquiry, including the impacts on social and cultural influences, artist selection processes, the structure of the music industry, economic and pricing influences and, lastly, the impact of new technologies, will be presented. Current threads of research as well as gaps in knowledge will be explored. I have not investigated

those disciplines engaged most directly in recording, audio production and engineering, since their role, though applicable to the music industry, has little relevance in this current research.

Moreover, an establishment of the important research currently being undertaken in the realm of strategy as practice will be undertaken along with a brief exploration in the differences that exist in strategic decision-making for micro-enterprises and small firms, especially as they relate to the recorded music industry.

2.2 STRATEGIC DECISION-MAKING

2.2.1 Decision-Making

A decision can be defined as ‘making up one’s mind’ or ‘coming to a conclusion’ on a given issue. This definition is one that is inclusive of a ‘cognitive’ or thought process, but is not adequate in including additional attributes that may be involved. Mintzberg, Raisinghani and Théorêt (1976) recognised that a decision is much more than a cognitive process and defined it as ‘a specific commitment to action’. Their definition for decision-making involves the actual doing of something, not just the mere thinking of doing something. Others (Castles, Murray & Potter, 1971; Greenbank, 1999) have gone on to wonder whether this action includes the commitment to do nothing, or not make a decision at all. These definitions extend the concept of decision-making from a simple cognitive approach to one that includes the actual making of the decision by taking into consideration the implementation of the process. It also becomes more indicative of the importance of ‘body wisdom’, the intuitive or innate attributes of the process that an individual must consider when weighing several options (Simon, 1978; Eisenhardt & Zbaracki, 1992). Body wisdom takes into consideration not only the rational thought process, or weighing of alternatives, by which decisions are made, but also leaves the process open to the influence of those attributes less tangible that may influence those decisions.

The ‘less tangible’ attributes have led to a body of research focusing on cognitive psychology in decision-making and the influences they have on the process. This research includes the role of biases, past experiences and

heuristics as well as a thread of discourse pertaining to studies that focus on cognitive neuroscience. Each of which will be elaborated in more detail.

2.2.2 Levels of Decision-Making

Different levels of decision-making have been identified to exist in firms. Ansoff (1971) classified them as operational, administrative and strategic, with each level increasing in complexity and impact. Operational decisions are those that are routine in nature and will remain consistent with the organisation's methods and routines. Administrative decisions are those that tend to occur at a 'middle-management' level and will be more complex as they are dealing with motivation or control issues. At the top of this hierarchy lies those decisions classified as strategic that are typically executed and made by top management of the firm and will be more involved with the long-range planning and/or objective setting of the organisation (Gore & Richardson, 1992). Mintzberg *et al* (1976) has gone on to define strategic decisions more specifically as those that are 'important, in terms of the actions taken, the resources committed, or the precedents set.' These clear lines of a strict hierarchy may become blurred when applied to small businesses and are discussed in further detail in section 2.6 below. Some small businesses may fall short of a strict hierarchy of this kind by the sheer nature of being a sole-proprietor, or micro-enterprise. The strategic level of decision-making is of interest to this study and will continue to be the focus of development.

2.2.3 Strategic Decision Making as Processes and Dimensions

Various strategic decision-making processes and dimensions have been identified throughout the literature. Fredrickson and Mitchell (1984) studied comprehensiveness and stable firm environments to conclude that strategy is itself a decision-making process. From their observations they suggest that researchers should study individual, that is, single, strategic decisions. This way, researchers can attempt to observe whether firms integrate those decisions into an overall strategy. Many rely on some key assumptions when studying the phenomena. In particular, one assumption is that decisions are moments when a course of action is taken (Harrison, 1987). This view has been challenged by

some researchers that consider decision-making a social process that consists of a series of events that begins with recognising that a problem exists, then developing alternatives solutions, and lastly making a choice (Simon, 1978). Others have found that strategic decision-making processes are more complex and begin with not recognising a need for making a decision immediately but rather when objectives are set out through to actual implementation of the decision. Specifically, Mintzberg *et al.* (1976) compiled these steps to create a model of strategic decision-making based on empirical observation made from 25 decision processes. The authors identified seven possible pathways through the model which included different phases and sets of supporting routines. What Mintzberg *et al.* (1976) were able to demonstrate was that the strategic decision-making processes tend to be more structured than amorphous. Even though they were not the first researchers to identify strategic decision-making as a process with multiple dimensions, they were able to demonstrate empirically that it does involve multiple steps of varying complexity.

2.2.4 Influences on Strategic Decision-Making

Although strategic decision-making processes have allowed researchers to understand some of the more objective characteristics, much of the current understanding of strategic decision-making has moved away from conceptualisations of the process (Ansoff, 1965; Porter, 1980; Mintzberg, 1994). Instead of it being a top-down, externally focused, calculable process as indicated by Simon (1978), there is much greater recognition of decision-making as an emotional, competence or heuristic-based process (Mintzberg & Quinn, 1991; Weick, 1995; Stacey, 1996) with multiple influences. These include individual cognitive level influences of sense-making, heuristics, biases, intuitive patterns and even personal characteristics; and group or organisation-level processes, for example planning, data gathering and analysis.

Research into individual decision-making cognition has shown that when decision makers are exposed to similar internal and external stimuli, it often results in differing interpretations of those stimuli (Dutton, 1993). Gioia and Chittipeddi (1991) argue that this 'sense-making' process enables decision makers to collect information and helps them to make more informed decisions.

Although, when left to individual interpretation of events, these decision makers use heuristics, that is 'decision rules, cognitive mechanisms, and subjective opinions' to aid in making decisions (Busenitz & Barney, 1997). Some argue that these decision aids are an inferior and flawed approach compared to a more rational method (Hastie & Dawes, 2009). However, recent studies have shown that using them can be as effective and efficient as complex models in some environments. (Katsikopoulos & Fasolo, 2006; Smith & Gilhooly, 2006). Gigerenzer and Goldstein (1996) have even tried reconciling this difference by identifying a 'third way' through the development of a family of algorithms that bridge the divide between reasoning, as one that is neither rational nor psychological. The authors based these algorithms on Simons' '*satisficing*' concept in which the rational integration of all information is unnecessary and at times can perform better in speed and accuracy for the making of a decision. This model, more of a bounded rational one, stops after the 'first discrimination cue is found,' essentially creating an anchor on which a decision is made based on the knowledge of the individual making the decision. That is, similar to that of certain heuristics, yet formally modelled.

Heuristics

Heuristics have been identified as aids that help simplify the decision-making process in uncertain situations and bring about a suitable outcome. Anecdotally, much of the decision-making that occurs within this industry is done to aid in 'quicker' decision-making due to the inherently turbulent environment and lack of time and knowledge to gather information. Music industry decision-makers often need to take swift action, based upon trends in the market place or decisions based on subjective elements within a cultural or experiential product like music. Simon (1990) defined these heuristics as '*methods for arriving at satisfactory solutions with modest amounts of computation*' (p. 11), which corresponds closely with Kahneman's (2011) 'System 1' idea – '*thinking corresponds to fast, intuitive, emotional and almost automatic decisions*' (p. 20). They enable the decision maker to streamline the process and use less information when making the decision. Although research in the area of heuristics has been vast, leading to numerous heuristic types, and

leaving some to question the term and what it really means (Shah & Oppenheimer, 2008), this research will focus on some of the most understood heuristics that have endured rigorous investigation. Tversky and Kahneman (1974) identified three types; the *representativeness heuristic* – decisions based on the likelihood of something happening; the *availability heuristic* – judgments based on exposure to a cue, or use of our memory and ability, to remember; and *anchoring and adjustment* – basing decisions on previous knowledge that ‘anchors’ an event in which we then make adjustments based on additional information.

The Representativeness heuristic (Bruin, Parker, & Fischhoff, 2007) (Shah & Oppenheimer, 2008) (Goldstein & Gigerenzer, 2002); was first studied by Tversky and Khaneman (1971) when they explained why statisticians calculated the potential outcome of a sample based upon population parameters even if the sample was too small for it to be statistically representative. They argued that this type of decision-making should be regarded as suspect because of its prevalence to lead to personal bias. Since their first look at this heuristic however, Kahneman (2011) has continued his research in the area concluding that the use of a representativeness heuristic is often used a rules of judgement and is even necessary for effective decision-making under certain circumstances. Others (Hilbig & Pohl, 2008) (Pachur & Hertwig, 2006) have also gone on to investigate this ‘probability-based’ heuristic. Hilbig and Pohl (2012) looked at its use under time constraints and effort-related factors and discovered its prominent use within those parameters as well.

In addition to the work done on the representativeness heuristic, some studies also looked at the use of, and reliance upon, the availability heuristic (Tversky & Kahneman, 1973), also known in some circles as the ‘recognition heuristic’. Goldstein & Gigerenzer (2002) looked at how judgments are made based on a cue that triggers our memory. Redelmeier, (2005) looked at how using these types of shortcuts can contribute to misdiagnosis in patients. However, when these life or death scenarios are not relevant, using a shortcut like availability heuristics can aid in quicker and often good decisions in less time, then a more thorough or calculated approach to the decision-making (McKelvie, 2000).

The third heuristic to discuss that has been studied since the recognition of these 'short cut' rules is the anchoring and adjustment, (Simmons, LeBoeuf & Nelson, 2010) (Epley & Gilovich, 2006) where the decision-maker anchors a decision choice from a past event and adjusts his or her choice based on the new information. Simmons, LeBoeuf and Nelson (2010) in their study on the heuristic demonstrated that people are often uncertain about which way to adjust from their anchor and this uncertainty causes them to believe they have adjusted too far from initial assessment, whereby effecting decision outcome. Epley and Gilvovich (2006) also studied this heuristic and found that once a plausible outcome had been reached by the decision-maker, the need to search for other alternatives ceased to exist, thereby proving the efficiency of the judgement rule, but recognising that if a more thorough anchoring search was done, that outcomes could instil better decision-making.

Intuitive Behaviours

In addition to sense-making and heuristics, intuition has also been identified as a cognitive influence. Although intuition has not been widely studied in academia (Agor, 1989), some academics have found ways in which to quantify its qualities so that this phenomenon can be studied more in depth. Those who do write about it (Behling & Eckel, 1991) tend to classify it into six conceptualisations;

1. paranormal power or sixth sense;
2. personality trait;
3. unconscious process;
4. set of actions;
5. distilled experience; and
6. residual category.

Miller and Ireland (2005) attempted to provide clarity to the many definitions and its applications as it is used in management research. They determined that two levels of intuition exist, 'holistic hunch' and 'automated expertise'.

'Holistic hunch intuition is capable of providing benefits but only when firms are emphasizing exploration. Automated expertise intuition left at a subconscious level does not appear to provide unequivocal benefits to firms' (Miller & Ireland, 2005, p. 28).

More recently, Seifert and Hadida (2009) identified intuition and its influence on managerial forecasts in the music industry as having a positive impact and increase in forecasting judgments. This also demonstrates how the unconscious process of intuition lends itself to more improved business actions and talent selection decisions within the music industry. Although academic studies related to intuition have increased in recent years (Dane & Pratt, 2007; Khatri, & Alvin, 2000), it continues to present challenges with regard to empirical measurement.

Trust

Trust has also been shown to play an important role in strategic decision-making for managers. In today's business environment, the reliance upon subordinates or other colleagues to aid in decision-making has become more prominent. Trust, an *'individual's willingness to be vulnerable to another based on the belief that another party is competent, honest, reliable and concerned about the individual's own interest'* (Spreitzer, G. & Mishra, A., 1999, p. 159) is consistent with other conceptualisations of trust within the literature (McAlister, 1995) and enables a manager to rely on another's expertise in areas that may be less familiar to them. Spreitzer and Mishra (1999) found that managers are more likely to include employees in the decision-making process when trust between the two had been established. The relationship that has been recognised between decision-maker and 'consultant' demonstrates that a perception of honest and reliable advice will be given when asked about a given situation. In addition, Dooley and Fryxell (1999) found a strong relationship between trust and dissent within the decision-making process and decision quality. Trusting members of a decision-making team and relying upon them even when disagreements emerge can improve the quality of the decision outcome. Liberman-Yaconi, Hooper, and Hutchings (2010) also found that in micro-firm strategic decision-making, owners often relied upon 'external

advisors' in seeking information before making decisions. Using 'external advisors' enabled managers to seek out perspectives they were less familiar. An outreach in this manner on major decisions is indicative of a trust relationship between decision makers and perceived professionals.

Industry Environment

Other influences on strategic decision-making that have been empirically studied include group or organisational level processes. Eisenhardt (1989; 1999) looked at strategic decision-making processes in high velocity environments. In her observations she determined that firms engage in open discussions, and use more, not less, information when making decisions. Scanning the environment, increasing alternative solutions and modelling different situations occurred more despite the pressures and time constraints inherent in a turbulent environment. These results challenged the traditional views of strategic decision-making in high-velocity situations that indicate less information would be used rather than more (Eisenhardt, 1989). She also concluded that to be more effective, strategic decision-makers in high turbulent environments should encourage conflict amongst its influencers - in this case the top executives - in order to foster better outcomes. Cosier (1982) also advocates ways to foster better outcomes through the use of 'devil's advocate' practices and dialectic approaches amongst decision-making teams. He argues that surrounding yourself with 'yes men' may not be as conducive to effective decision-making in the long run and the use of dissent and critical thought could be more effective. Contrary to this argument, however, Cosier and Schwenk (1990) advocate for consensus in creating more effective decisions in some circumstances. They went as far as stating, '*consensus may be preferred for smaller, non-diversified, privately held firms competing in the same industry*' (p. 70). These conflicting arguments and inconclusive outcomes appear to demonstrate a clear lacuna in the knowledge surrounding these specific phenomena.

Sunk Costs

Strough, Schlosnagle and DiDonato (2011) found a relationship between age and the tendency to move forward with a decision to escalate financial risk through sunk costs. In their study looking at 21 older and 20 younger adults they found that older adults are less likely to commit to the sunk cost fallacy and are more likely to make decisions to correct it, being less likely to focus on the current problem. In addition, Larrick, Nisbett and Morgan (1993) found a connection between demographic characteristics of an individual like education, age and intelligence and the use of sunk costs. In their study looking at faculty and college seniors they found those with a lower income status had poor economic judgement leading to a higher probability of financial escalation. In addition, they also found a positive relationship between 'intelligence' and those individuals who use micro-economic principles like cost-benefit rules that lead to more successful life outcomes.

The sunk-cost fallacy is an '*irrational decision to invest more future resources in a situation after an investment has been made (costs are sunk) compared with the same situation without an investment.*' (Strough *et al.*, 2011 p. 681). Although other studies (Zeelenberg & van Dijk, 1997) have also looked at the connections between how we make decisions that increase financial risk and exposure, Garland (1990), found that there was no indication that incremental costs played any role in decision-making within its study that created a research and development (R & D) and a commitment of funds.

Past Experiences

An individual's past experience can also influence their future decision-making. Juliusson, Karlsson, and Gärling (2005) determined that an individual who had positive prior experiences in a given situation would likely make similar decisions in the future with the expectation of a similar outcome. The authors looked at how participants responded to an escalation of commitment or 'sunk costs' in investment scenarios. In one of two experiments it was shown that prior losses or gains affected the decision makers' choices for future investment. Through this they were also able to observe that a negative past

experience led to a belief that given a similar situation a similar, negative outcome would occur. Another study (Council, 2009) has also suggested that past experience is critical to complex decision-making, especially in confusing situations. The authors found that past experiences actually '*rewires the brain*' to help categorise and improve efficiency of our decision-making processes. Learning from how we perceive and react to things in the past helps the brain to re-shape how we comprehend that experience so that we can change how we respond in future events. The impact that past experience has physically as well as cognitively has been shown to influence how decision-makers perceive future scenarios and impact biases, heuristics and other evaluative practices.

Personal Bias

In addition to past experiences as an influencing factor on decision-making, personal biases have also been shown to impact the effectiveness. Cognitive biases are thinking patterns based on observations and generalisations that may lead to memory errors, inaccurate judgments, and faulty logic (Evans, Barston, and Pollard, 1983; West, Toplak and Stanovich, 2008). Cognitive biases include, but are not limited to (1) belief bias - the over-dependence on prior knowledge in arriving at decisions; (2) hindsight bias - people tend readily to explain an event as inevitable, once it has happened (3) omission bias - generally, people have a propensity to omit information perceived as risky; and (4) confirmation bias - In which people observe what they expect in observations (Marsh and Hanlon, 2007; Nestler and von Collani, 2008; Stanovich and West, 2008; see also West *et al.*, 2008).

In decision-making, cognitive biases influence people by causing them to over-rely on, or lend more credence to, expected observations and previous knowledge, while dismissing information or observations that are perceived as uncertain, without looking at the bigger picture. While this influence may at times lead to poor decisions, the cognitive biases enable individuals to make efficient decisions with assistance of heuristics (Shah & Oppenheimer, 2008). These biases and heuristics can also be triggered by the uncertainty of decision outcomes. When decision-makers are uncertain of the positive or negative results of his or her actions, Naqvi, Shiv and Bechara (2006) found that these

decisions are often influenced by emotion. Driven by the ‘Somatic-marker’ hypothesis, these researchers contend that decisions influenced by emotions driven by the state or condition of the body. Essentially, the use of emotion becomes interplay between a neural state and that emotion driving the decision and potential outcome. Cognitive neuroscience has played a prominent role in recent decision-making studies that have direct or indirect influence on personal biases including the emotions just mentioned, as well as moral judgement (Greene, Sommerville, Nystrom, Darley & Cohen, 2001), and how and where the framing effect of biases impacts the brain (De Martino, Kumaran, Seymour & Dolan, 2006). Although significant research continues within the neuroscience realm in understanding how decisions are being made on a physiological level, especially related to biases and heuristics, the focus of this study will continue to concentrate not on the physiological effects or impacts, but on cognitive influences upon the decision practice.

Age, Education and Socio-Economic Status

Research on individual characteristics, like age, education level, and socio-economic status also influences the decision-making process (Finucane, Mertz, Slovic & Schmidt, 2005; Bruine de Bruin, Parker & Fischhoff, 2007). Bruine de Bruin *et al.* (2007) looked at these characteristics in a study that measured the impact these demographics have on decision-making. They did this by administering an Adult Decision Making Competency (A-DMC) test that measured tasks that include *framing*, how to deal with *sunk costs* and *social norms*, among others. Their results indicated that those individuals that were selected from social service organisations and had less education did more poorly on the (A-DMC) test. However, they do not go as far as saying that there was direct causality between socio-economic status and education, but a correlation between the two when they measured validity. They further conclude that having lower decision-making capability could lead to more difficult life outcomes that are caused by the stress of poor decision-making. Although direct empirical evidence does not support this later conclusion, what

is evidenced is that the amount of education and socio-economic background does influence an individual's cognitive decision-making capabilities.

In addition to socio-economic status and education, Bruine de Bruin *et al.*, (2007) also looked at how age affected the decision-making process. Their results indicated an inconsistent relationship.

Older adults performed significantly worse on 'Resistance to Framing' and 'Applying Decision Rules,' they did significantly better on 'Recognizing Social Norms' and 'Resistance to Sunk Costs (Bruine de Bruin et al., 2007, p. 948)'.

This, they conclude, could be a result of the competing viewpoints. One, that cognitive abilities decline with age (Baltes & Baltes, 1990) and two, that experience and learned life skills increase efficiency and effectiveness in decision-making abilities (Salthouse, 1991).

2.3 SMALL FIRMS AND MICRO-ENTERPRISES

Small and medium-sized enterprises in the United States account for 95% of all businesses, almost half of the nation's private sector work force and provide nearly half of the country's GDP (Executive Office of the President & Small Business Administration, 2009). Comparatively small enterprises in the UK account for 99.2% of all business (Stanworth & Purdy, 2008) and 99% of small and medium-sized enterprises in the EU, of which 90% of those firms are micro-enterprises – those businesses that employ less than 10 people (European Commission, 2009). Although, the definitions regarding what constitutes a 'small,' 'medium,' or 'large' firm vary from country or economic region, for sake of clarity and considering the proximity of where this research was conducted, the general definition offered by the Small Business Administration (SBA) in the United States will be used here. Respectively, the small firm would typically employ up to 500 depending on industry, while the micro-enterprise shares a similar definition as the European Union as one that employs fewer than ten employees. Considering the amount of economic impact these firms have on the world economy and their prevalence in the popular recorded music industry, further enquiry and research on decision-making in micro-enterprises continues to be warranted and is the focus of this research.

The importance of small firms in general, and more specifically in the music industry, is also not widely studied. One study, (Partnership, 2006) found that 90% of music businesses could be classified as SMEs in the UK. Findings in this study indicated two key characteristics among them, one of which will later prove to be a factor in describing the strategic decision-making practice. Those include 'portfolio working,' where firms tend to operate within multiple industry sectors at any given time and the predominance of 'micro-businesses'.

Although directly comparable data are not available for the U.S. market, these statistics can be used to infer the approximate industry make-up and business characteristics that exist there as well. Currently, only anecdotal comment can be applied to similar firms operating in the U.S., some of which include a lack of management training to limited sources of funding available for day-to-day operations or expansion.

Other studies have looked specifically at the differences among small enterprises and larger firms and how decisions are made within them. For example, Wellbourne and Pardo-del-Val (2009) found that smaller firms place more value on relational capital than do larger firms. These contacts and relationships tend to be so pivotal in the success of a small firm that they may often be the cornerstone to their on-going success and can often lead to failure if the relationships no longer exist. These relationships can influence strategic decision-making by creating a sense of 'collaborative entrepreneurship,' when firms work together to achieve a competitive advantage. This collaborative entrepreneurship is a cornerstone to the ways in which many of the micro-enterprises in the music industry conduct business and make strategic decisions - often their very survival is dependent upon them.

Research that has been undertaken within the broader SME category has shown some characteristics distinctive to small firms as well as some contrasting differences from their larger counterparts. Because micro-enterprises are less formal in their planning and analysis, due to the limited resources and time constraints, strategic decision-making tends to be more of an extension of each owner-manager's personal experience, personal limitations and bias (Simon & Houghton, 2002; Bazerman, 2009). Because of the closeness these owner-managers keep to the day-to-day operations and planning of the business and

their personal limitations and bias they carry with them, researchers have also found that personality traits tend to dominate strategic decision-making. McCarthy (2003) looked at these personality traits in entrepreneurs and found that the process of planning in these firms is largely dependent on the owner-managers personality. These entrepreneur types were classified as 'pragmatic' and 'charismatic'. The author also concludes that the charismatic type of entrepreneur was more common and that this personality type was '*forced to prioritize planning and reduce the uncertainty of decision-making in order to satisfy stakeholders and safeguard the future of the company*' (McCarthy, 2003 p. 336). Brouthers *et al.* (1998) also looked at personality influences in small firms, those enterprises with fewer than 100 employees. They investigated a cross-section of firms in the Netherlands and found that procedural rationality in these companies was limited and that many decisions were made based on intuition and the personal characteristics of the managers. Few people were involved in decision-making and the larger of these companies they sampled tended to be more rational in their strategic decision-making process with no significant difference between manufacturing and service firms, suggesting that the larger firms relied more upon these methods.

Jong (2004) and Liberman-Yaconi, *et al.* (2010) have also found that entrepreneurs and those managing micro-enterprises tend to make decisions in different manners. Specifically, Jong (2004) identified five types of entrepreneurs that differ significantly in their strategic decision-making. These classifications identified key areas of difference from decision makers in larger firms. In his findings, he identified found was that differences in the frequency of making decisions, search for information to make those decisions, choice alternatives, level of risk, consideration of other options and 'risk-taking propensity'. Liberman-Yaconi also identified various characteristics to those micro-enterprises they investigated. Within the information technology sector of Australia, they found that many of them participated in bounded rational and intuitive behaviours, along with logical/analytical and systematic behaviours, internal, as well as external search tendencies.

Other areas of research that have marked a difference in small firms and large firms, especially in regard to decision-making, are those studies that look at

the use of bias and heuristics - an experience-based approach to decision-making. Busenitz and Barney (1997) have determined a link between the use of heuristics in decision-making and innovativeness. They went a bit further in their research to ask not whether heuristics exist within strategic decision-making, but rather if individuals vary to the extent they use bias and heuristics in their decision-making. Busenitz and Barney (1997) found that:

'Under conditions of environmental uncertainty and complexity, biases and heuristics can be an effective and efficient guide to decision-making. In such settings, more comprehensive and cautious decision-making is not possible, and biases and heuristics may provide an effective way to approximate the appropriate decisions' (Busenitz & Barney, 1997, p. 9).

The use of heuristics in these circumstances of uncertainty and complexity in small firms demonstrate their importance of these characteristics in owner-mangers in their use in strategic decision-making.

2.4 THE MODERN COMMERCIAL MUSIC INDUSTRY

2.4.1 The Music Industry Today and Factors Influencing Performance

Throughout this review any reference to 'industry' or 'music industry' will encapsulate all business sectors that contribute to the value chain of any commercialised popular recorded music product. When appropriate, a designated business sector within the popular music industry will be made explicit, for example, the recording industry. Today, the popular music industry is vastly complex and comprises an interconnected network of businesses that contribute to the overall end product of music. The earlier recording industry business model before the recent shift in the market structure of the recording industry consisted of a rights-based model of distribution that relied heavily on 'mega' hits to generate its revenue and sustain the major record labels dominance within the market. This model is now moving towards one that focuses more on the ways in which organisations need to understand how best to monetise the relationship between content creator, the artist, and consumer, the fan. As the prominence of MP3 technology, a common audio format for consumer audio storage, took hold in the 1990s and consumers began listening

to their recordings through digital means, the value chain shifted and became a much more 'artist and consumer friendly' model, which continues to shape the power and market structures in the industry as it is today (Bockstedt *et al.*, 2006). However, with this shift in industry structure and dynamics, things appear fundamentally different as the music industry's definitive model of operation is shifting to a more consumer based, market centric one dictated by customer wants and needs and ease of access to the product.

Experts have been analysing and studying the current trends in the recorded music industry since the first indication of new technology disrupted the then 'status quo', or market dynamics. That technology became well established in 1998 with the inception of the file-sharing service Napster. Soon after, the recording industry began registering a decline in recorded music sales that continued beyond the next decade and even today. The length and depth of this current decline is not yet known, but recent IFPI statistics indicate a 48% decline world-wide of recorded music sales from 1997-2010 (IFPI, 2011). The recorded music industry has attributed these declines to the advent of new technology, MP3s and its current method of distribution - file sharing. Although, at first glance this seems consistent, continued research in this area has found other contributing factors.

Sosnick, Schreiber, and Sandoval (2003) investigated a few of these influences including the impacts of 'Minimum Advertised Pricing' (MAP). MAP, as implemented in the music industry in the mid-1990s, was an established retail price from a record company, which may be lower than its recommended retail price, but which retailers were ostensibly not allowed to undercut. Sosnick *et al.* reference the changing shopping habits of consumers in the 1990s while the record business was in the midst of consolidation and experiencing a period of pricing volatility. In 1995, the MAP policy, which was implemented by record labels, was developed to stifle a CD price war that was initiated by discount retailers, such as, Best Buy, Circuit City and Target. The MAP sales policies of the major record labels established a price floor below which retailers could not sell music without losing vendor-supplied cooperative advertising dollars. MAP's control over this important mechanism created a demand for less expensive music than the market could provide. Furthermore, minimum advertised pricing

made competing forms of entertainment, many of them upgraded or new to market, relatively more attractive.

MAP pricing created the demand for low-priced music, just as the improvement in technology, the Internet and CD-burning, provided the means. Price supports, also known as price floors, create 'black markets', especially for products that have low physical production costs as a percentage of total cost. Products with high marketing costs, such as music, are particularly vulnerable. The low cost of distribution over the Internet exacerbated the problem.

As the Internet was in its infancy, some trends regarding pricing and declining sales began prior to any widespread indication of an event. In addition to their findings regarding the influence and impact of MAP pricing on the industry, Sosnick *et al.* (2003) investigated a decline in recorded music beginning in 1997, two years prior to the Internet phenomenon Napster and five years prior to the precipitous decline in sales we see continuing today (RIAA, 2011). The authors looked at sales on a *per capita* basis for one of the industry's most targeted age groups, 15-24 year olds. The analysis indicates that sales were actually declining, but population growth masked this change until 2001. By analysing the authors' chosen age group it can be observed that the *per capita* music spending peaked at \$111.44 in 1996 and had since declined 18% to \$94.28 (7.1 units) by the year 2000. In addition, Alhadeff (2006) noticed that, beginning in 1990, recorded music started a decline in real prices, possibly due in part to decreased demand, and also masked by population growth. Since then, the recording industry has seen a consistent year-on-year contraction and the value of recorded music decline. Certainly, further investigation into this phenomenon is warranted to see whether or not additional influences other than population growth can be identified.

In addition to studies focusing on the effects that triggered the current industry downturn, further research within the industry has looked at conditions of the market and factors that have influenced its expansion and contraction in recent decades. Some industry experts have argued specifically that current performance is also a reflection of industry marketing strategies, specifically as they relate to the consumer purchasing behaviour patterns related to the 'singles' market in the 1990s and 2000's. This bundling and distribution

strategy was in the midst of being phased out during the time MAP was a factor and when sales started declining. With a steady decline since 1997 and a 65% decrease in sales since 1999, the life and promotional value of the single were questioned (RIAA, 2011). The sales decline was not simply a derivative of consumer rejection, but due to a conscious strategic decision by record labels not to promote or manufacture them.

'The main reason that single sales are down is because most major-label executives believe that singles cannibalize album sales. Therefore, they either do not put singles out or they put singles out but delete them when the album containing the song is released—in an attempt to force consumers to purchase entire albums, which are more profitable.' (Christman, 2002, p. 1)

When 'Billboard', a weekly industry trade journal, changed how it compiled the Hot 100 chart, it eliminated any incentive for the 'labels' to release this promotional configuration. In 1999, in order to allow non-commercial singles to chart the Hot 100, 'Billboard' eliminated the commercial-availability requirement. This type of 'sense-making' and 'sense-giving' (Weick, 1995) to the charts - and the then current strategies for positioning were and are industry standard - had an unintended effect on industry practices and/or strategic positioning. Anand and Peterson (2000) studied these 'sense-giving' phenomena in the music industry as they applied to the 'Billboard' charts – the music industry trade used for market and charting information. According to the authors, they felt that 'Billboard' charts were a good choice to study these phenomena for three reasons:

'First, they provide the attention focus for an Organisational field. Second, they essentially serve to help participants make sense of market activity within the field. Finally, market information regimes are socially and politically constructed and are hence fraught with biases and assumptions that are largely taken for granted.' (Anand & Peterson, 2000, p. 271)

This change, allowing independently released music to chart easier, enabled the 'labels' to secure good placement without releasing a 'single' for sale (Christman, 2002). In an industry where activity rises and falls with positioning on the charts; where hiring's, promotions, firings, resource allocation, retention or elimination of 'inter-organisational relationships' may be determined by positions held (Anand & Peterson, 2000) and the idea that 'singles' drastically

reduced album sales helped to contribute to shifting market dynamics while opposing the consumer's preference for purchasing music.

2.4.2 Review of Current Research Threads

In order to continue understanding the challenges currently facing the industry today, and how music industry micro-enterprises make strategic-decisions, it is important to look at how, and to what extent, this industry has been researched and what has been learned. Prior to the 1970s, there was a paucity of research specifically related to the music industry. Even then, it was centred less on the 'management of' and more on the social-cultural impact it was having. Current writings about the recorded music industry are typically 'Do it yourself' or 'How to succeed in...' guides, written by practitioners and individuals with prior music industry experience (Baskerville; Krasilovsky, 2007; Brabec, 2008; Passman, 2009). There are, however, some studies (Seifert & Hadida, 2009) (Gander, Haberberg & Rieple, 2007) that are being completed in the field that are moving it towards a clearer theoretical understanding. Those studies, in addition to the social cultural influences previously mentioned, include research on talent selection strategies, industry structure and value chain studies, enquiries related to economics and the impact on new technologies like peer-to-peer (P2P) file sharing.

Social Cultural Studies

Some of the first writings began with the identification of a 'culture industry' by Theodore Adorno and Max Horkheimer (Adorno & Horkheimer, 1997) where they discussed the mass production of cultural product. Since then other researchers (Hirsch, 1972; Hesmondhalgh, 1996; Power & Scott, 2004; Hesmondhalgh, 2006; Gander, 2011) have taken to reflect upon the strengths and weaknesses of their arguments and have contributed to the understanding of cultural production. One area of research by Peterson and Berger (1975) investigated the concentration of music industry firms and the corresponding diversity of the music that would follow. They began a thread of culture production research in the recorded music industry that has since been

critiqued, built upon, extended and at times refuted. Peterson and Berger (1975) looked specifically at the cycles of industry concentration and the diversity of the products being released. By looking at Billboard's top hits on the Hot 100 chart from 1948-1973 and other secondary sources they found a negative relationship between the concentration and diversity in the recording industry: The more concentrated the record label consolidation, the less diversity in the music that exists.

Rothernbuler and Dimmick (1982) built upon the Peterson and Berger study of concentration and diversity and demonstrated that similar results existed through 1980. Their methodology was similar to Peterson and Berger; they also examined the Billboard Charts, but from 1974-1980. Alexander (1996) also looked at concentration and diversity but studied the phenomena, not only through the charts, but also sheet music. He was able to determine that both low and high levels of market concentration are associated with decreased product diversity, and that maximum diversity results from a moderately concentrated market structure. This put into question some of the previous studies conducted on the topic, but also did not go without criticism. The Alexander methodology was questioned by the sheer nature of the use of sheet music as a form of analysis (Peterson & Berger, 1996). The study of concentration continued throughout the 1990s when Lopes (1992) extended the original Peterson and Berger study on innovation and diversity. He found that major 'labels' would continue the 'open system of production' despite dominance in the industry and that an oligopolistic competition in the music industry, the current market structure at the time of study, can create a significant level of innovation and diversity. This essentially contradicted the Peterson and Berger findings that the concentration of 'labels' would stifle innovation and diversity in the business. As long as the open system of production through independent producers and independent labels existed, so would the diversity in music type. Further studies continued looking at this issue. Christianen (1995) looked at music from the Netherlands to try and create some conclusion to the inconclusive investigations done so far by Peterson and Berger to Lopes and Rothenbuhler. Continued investigation by Burnett (1992) found that concentration and diversity no longer have a negative correlation. This was mostly due to the new

music model of 'open' production, first investigated by Lopes (1992), where independent labels produce the majority now being marketed and distributed by the 'major' record labels, allowing for diversity in music to exist in an oligopolistic environment. A more recent contribution to this thread of inquiry has been done by Dowd (2004) where he attempts to bridge the inconsistencies that have been identified by the previous authors. The author looks not only at the record label creating the product, but the performer and temporal effects. His notable contribution to this literature is that diversity differs depending on the decade being analysed. He found that:

'when decentralized production is low, as in the 1940s, high concentration reduces the number of new performers and new firms. When decentralized production grows more pronounced, as in the 1980s, concentration's negative effect is reduced and eventually eliminated'. (Dowd, 2004, p. 1411)

Although much of what has been learned about the number of recorded music producers in the marketplace and the diversity of music that ensues have determined that it may depend on the era being studied. The Dowd (2004) investigation on the issue brings the most comprehensive look at the phenomena to date and has led to a more detailed and thorough understanding of the connection between the two.

Artist Selection Procedures

One area of the industry that is often regarded as quite dynamic, elusive and hypersensitive to cultural preferences is that of talent acquisition, or 'Artists and Repertoire (A & R)'. Having on average a 15% - 20% success rate (Caves, 2000), this industry practice of signing talent to labels and music publishers, albeit essential, is often regarded as a 'hit and miss' tactic to see what or who 'breaks', and who does not. A few authors have looked at these statistics to determine the chances for breakeven or success in the music industry. Papadopoulos and Rolston (2006) speak of these probability ratios through the use of SoundScan data analysis. They were able to determine that there is a 23% probability that a release will sell between 100-1000 units and a 0.22% probability that they will sell 500,000 units. 500,000 units, as a level of

measurement is of particular importance in the U.S. market because of the 'gold' status, or certification that comes at that sales level. Marcone, in his 2005 paper on success rates of label releases, also looked at SoundScan data and found that only *'0.04% of the 9,406 titles released by the major record companies in 2004 had sales in excess of one million units.'* (Marconi (2005) cited in Papadopoulos & Rolston, 2006, p. 61). The recording industry is a highly, 'hit-driven' business in which successful acts often need to offset the costs of those who fail to break-even. This talent acquisition strategy is often dependent upon exploiting the economies of scale that exist in a few artists, demonstrating the presence of the 'superstar' phenomenon. As the statistics indicate, the economy of scale strategy becomes necessary for the record labels to offset the risk and cost associated with signing, recording and marketing the talent. Because of this risk, finding the right talent for a label becomes a quintessential component to its success in a highly turbulent and unpredictable environment like the music industry.

Record labels that operate in this highly turbulent environment have a vested interest in understanding the talent acquisition process better to create or sustain a competitive advantage through artist selection procedures. Ordanini (2006) in particular looked at how prior independent label experience from an artist played a role in the success of that artist on the charts within the Italian music industry - both local and international artists. He found that the selection process whether it is 'direct' through the major label, or 'indirect' through 'the agency method', determined to some extent the expected success of that artist – specifically with regard to the duration, frequency and speed of that success on the charts. He went on to show that the type of selection process adopted by the label seemed to capture the 'innovation philosophy' of the players more, than does the advertising and promotion associated with achieving that level of success on the charts. It is also worth noting that Ordanini (2006) linked some practical considerations with the importance of the selection process regime chosen. His results demonstrate the importance of a mixed innovation strategy or blend of 'direct' and 'agency' that could lead to better market performance for the label and a more balanced short and long-term financial position. Finally, he concluded the importance of acknowledging the

influence that the independent, smaller, more culturally sensitive 'labels' actually have on the long-term success of artists.

Although the Ordanini findings have contributed to the existing literature within selection procedures within the music industry, the findings do not come without criticism. Smith (2007) expressed some concerns about the Ordanini methodology as well as the analysis of his data. After further investigation, Smith (2007) notes that a certain majority of success is inherent in the 'Italian only' artists and especially those that are solo acts as opposed to bands or groups. He goes on to say that it is '*difficult to establish that it is the signing-mechanism that is driving success rather than the solo status of the artist that is driving success.*' (Smith, 2007, p. 158).

In addition to the impact that prior, independent label experience may have on chart success, Ordanini, Rubera and Sala (2008) looked at the new product development process and how new product development teams used the prior knowledge obtained from previous releases to create a foundation of functional knowledge. Here the authors looked at two in-depth cases from EMI Italy in which they analysed how the creative A & R and marketing teams integrated their functional knowledge in disseminating which artist to sign and consider a priority. This knowledge transfer and coordination amongst different departments in the label led to more standardisation of procedures as well as more creativity for subsequent releases of artists. The practicality and theoretical implications of this are of particular interest to the music industry, as well as other creative and culture-producing industries, because of the inconsistent and often ambiguous nature of the product.

Another contribution to the artist selection literature was undertaken by Seifert and Hadida (2006; 2009) in which they investigated the 'talent selection paradox', a phenomenon where a small number of artists generate the majority of the firm's income. Yet, very little, probably less than 1% of total revenues, is invested in the talent selection process (Seifert & Hadida, 2006). The authors investigated how labels could improve the talent selection in a blockbuster industry. They developed a framework that looked at strategic decision-making and the resource-based view of the firm and then applied this framework to a study looking at intuition. They determined that '*collective intuition based on*

aggregated judgments can improve the quality of managerial forecasts' (Seifert & Hadida, 2009, p. 1). Neither the cognitive processes of strategic decision-making, nor the resource-based view of the firm alone is able to provide any direction, but combining the strengths of both can provide a more comprehensive picture that can then lead to better talent selection processes.

The Music Industry Structure and Value Chain

In addition to studies focusing on product development and artist acquisition, some areas of study have focused on the analysis of industry systems (Graham, Burnes, Lewis & Langer, 2004; Tuomola, 2004; Bockstedt *et al.*, 2006) general business practices (Gander & Rieple, 2002; Gander *et al.*, 2007) and current power shifts in the industry (Huygens, Van Den Bosch, Volberda & Baden-Fuller, 2001). Here, authors have been able to demonstrate the importance of industry structure and current market changes and what they mean for the future models of the industry. Since Michael Porter (1980) introduced the concept of the value chain, it has become a mechanism for managers to assess where value is added to each aspect of a product's manufacturing, marketing or distribution. In the music industry, the value chain begins with the content creator, record label or songwriter, moves on to development, artist or producer, aggregation, then to marketing, distribution and ultimately to the consumer. Bockstedt *et al.* (2006) analysed the changing value chain within the current recorded music industry. The authors noted that the shifting digital distribution channels are contributing to an underlying power shift in the music business from those who traditionally controlled most physical distribution channels, the major record labels, to artists, consumers and digital retailers. The authors believe that these power shifts have the ability for players in the music industry to take advantage of new strategic opportunities in the future.

Elaborating on the value chain, Graham *et al.* (2004) conducted a study on the changing supply chain of the industry. Here, the authors demonstrate that a more 'dynamic network of suppliers', those with their own objectives, artists, managers and others, are influencing the music product, which is replacing the

traditional music supply chain. The digital age has lowered barriers to entry within the recording industry by virtue of decreasing transaction and production costs. This breakdown or reorganisation within the supply chain has led to a more prolific and dynamic group of suppliers entering the market and creating easier access to consumers. They also state that it is important to note that the music industry is marked by high costs of entry and a tight control of the traditional distribution system and that artists are beginning to bypass record labels and integrate this element of the supply chain into their own operations. Others have agreed and have also gone on to confirm these findings. Lewis, Graham and Hardaker (2005) investigated the music industry supply chain and the barriers of entry associated with it. They concluded that the largest barrier to entry in the industry has been the physical distribution network and high costs associated with marketing and promotion. The Internet has impacted these barriers to entry in the past decade and the old model value chain has been greatly compromised.

The impact the Internet has had on the value chain is undeniable for those who work and study the music industry. Tuomola (2004) identified cases of disintermediation – the shortening of the value chain, in which some actors within the chain become diminished in their role, or are no longer necessary. In the music industry that could be either a record label, wholesaler or a retailer. Here the author was able to identify cases in which established artists have been able to shorten the chain with success. However, this disintermediation and success is dependent upon the digitisation of content, and communication technology like the Internet.

In addition to supply chain and value chain studies, other areas of research have also looked at strategic alliances that exist within the industry and reliance upon competing partners. For example, Gander and Rieple (2002) looked specifically at the management of alliances that exist between major and independent labels and the sharing of resources between the two. They collected data from senior managers who were responsible for the management of relationships between the major record label and their independent partners. The authors determined that a paradox exists between these two alliances for their relationship is dependent upon each other's strengths yet they still

compete within the same market place. The relationship is seen more as a symbolic one rather than a competitive one. Huygens *et al.* (2001) looked at this relationship and found that although major and independent labels rely on internal processes to stay competitive, they also rely on each other and depend on their interaction with one another. The authors determined that this interaction enables the industry to co-evolve over time.

Economic Theory and Pricing Considerations

In addition to artist selection decisions and industry structure, a research thread has developed around economic theory, including demand and pricing considerations, and its application to the music industry. Hendricks and Sorensen (2009) took a close look at 'backward spill-overs,' in which an increase in demand of an artist's first album is stimulated by a successful release of a follow-up, or second album by an artist, especially if the debut album was a hit. This 'spill-over' can have a profound impact on the financial success of both the artist and the label and can help in determining future strategic direction for them as well.

Other researchers have looked at the importance of pricing and the demand for recorded music product. In taking a closer look at these economic principles, it helps to put the inconsistent and dynamic properties of this product into perspective, especially when setting the state for industry dynamics. Papadopoulos and Rolston (2006) looked at product pricing of a recorded product within market conditions of uncertain demand and believed that consistent pricing may be a more viable and practical approach to this pricing structure rather than dynamic pricing. They applied stochastic demand principles to music industry recorded music products and determined that dynamic pricing for the tens of thousands of releases that come out each year is simply unworkable. They maintain that, although consistent pricing strategies may put the label at risk of collusion accusation, it also provides a way for the label to offset the risk potential of this highly unpredictable product and the success ratios associated with it, as was discussed previously.

Whereas Papadopoulos and Rolston (2006) looked at stochastic demand

principles as they relate to price, Bhattacharjee *et al.* (2007a) looked at the same demand principles as they relate to the album lifecycle. They noted that due to the changing supply chain brought about by the Internet, most notably file-sharing, the album lifecycle on the charts has diminished. If albums do maintain their position past the first week of entry, their likelihood of success increases due to the integration of information sources that are readily available to the consumer. Bhattacharjee *et al.* (2007a) claim that understanding this '*helps to create a more dynamic decision process on resource allocation to market music products*' (p. 15).

Other authors have considered the demand for pre-recorded music internationally (Stamm, 2000). In his book, *Music Industry Economics: A global Demand Model for Pre-Recorded Music*, Stamm was able to show that:

- (1) Recorded music is a luxury good that is considered price elastic; and
- (2) Age is a determining factor in demand for recorded music.

Stamm demonstrated empirically that these market assumptions do exist in 67 countries worldwide.

Impact of P2P File Sharing

In recent years, there has been an influx of examination into the effects of the Internet, including copyright implications (Wull, 2011) (Kretschmer, 2005) as well as business and economic impacts of P2P file sharing (Ahn & Yoon, 2009) (Bhattacharjee, Gopal, Lertwachara, Marsden & Telang, 2007b; McKenzie, 2009) (Fox, 2005; Aguiar & Martens, 2013). A cross-section of that body of work includes a study by Fox (2005), where the author examined the impact that the Internet and digital rights management technology have had on record companies and independent musicians. He explores the impacts these drivers have had on both the distribution of music on the Internet as well as possible social networking implications. He proposes that a model for the industry will be based more on creating new revenue sources through social networking means as opposed to a model based on the selling of recorded music. Bhattacharjee *et al.* (2007b) tested the effects of file-sharing to determine the

impact that it may have on the length of time an artist remains on the charts. They determined that after the initial fan-base of an artist purchases the album; sales tend to depend on the 'non-hardcore' customers. It is that factor that interested Bhattacharjee *et al.* (2007b) to determine whether file sharing could lengthen the time a song remained on the charts. They concluded that P2P file sharing negatively impacts chart survival with the exception of superstar acts and female artists. They also concluded that the major labels are increasingly 'widening the gap' and suggest that independent label strategies may prove to be creating a competitive edge that might want to be investigated further.

More recently, the European Commission's Institute for Prospective Technological Studies (Aguiar & Martens, 2013) surveyed 16,000 European consumers and concluded that illegal downloading is not a substitute for legal music purchase activity. Although these results will certainly be examined carefully in the coming months and years by many whom illegal music downloading directly effects, the importance of P2P file sharing and its bearing on business models and chart success are proving impactful, especially as firms move into this new value chain.

As illustrated, there is a wide array of academic research being undertaken within the context of the music industry. Some look at existing theoretical models within respective disciplines, such as the management, marketing and economic fields, while others are looking closely at industry specific phenomena to try and move the understanding of the field forward. Each thread continues to lay a more solid foundation to the understanding of the industry practices in hopes of understanding it better.

2.4.3 Characteristics of the Field

Although some authors have discussed the differing characteristics inherent in entertainment firms and culture-producing entities (Peterson, 1976; Bourdieu, 1984; Negus, 1999; Power & Scott, 2004; Hull, Hutchison & Strasser, 2010), a few are indicative of the characteristics most relevant to this research. Prior to Peterson's (1976) work on the 'production of culture', the industry was often characterised as being similar to manufacturing firms. Peterson's work found that popular music and other cultural forms were often created through

situated activity by groups that contributed to the body of creative work in a society. By studying organisations involved in the production of these products, he enabled a debate that went beyond the creative output of one individual. Bourdieu (1984) also contributed to the discussion with his work on cultural intermediaries, those individuals who act as gatekeepers from creator to consumer, in industry terms this may include but is not limited to A & R representatives, booking agents, managers or record labels. Although a Bourdieusian perspective on the production of culture extends beyond that of the organisation, he believed that multiple societal influences, external to the firm, must also be taken into consideration. Negus also feels that the creation and production of popular music must be '*interpreted and understood in different ways*' (1999, p. 20). In addition, his work on genre cultures highlights the procedures employed by record labels and their *formal ways in which knowledge about consumers is collected, produced and circulated and how this informs strategic decision-making*' (Negus, 1999, p. 20).

In addition to the work done on the production of culture perspective, Caves (2000) identified qualities inherent in the creative industries that exhibit distinctive characteristics that may influence the decision-maker, including:

1. ***Uncertainty of Demand:*** Demand is uncertain and producers of creative products never really know if people will commit to purchase. Uncertainties exist before and after release.
2. ***Connection to the Product:*** The artist's taste and the quality and quantity of creative effort impact the product.
3. ***Diversity of Skills:*** The need for a number of skilled and specialised outputs to create, market and promote the product
4. ***Infinite variety:*** The endless supply of creative and substitute products
5. ***A list/B list:*** The unpredictability and ambiguity of quality and control
6. ***Time flies:*** The timeliness of relevancy and need for temporal coordination of production and marketing activities
7. ***Ars longa:*** The duration of the copyright and length of time available for exploitation.

Considering the work being done on the unique characteristics of the popular recorded music industry, the findings from Caves and others will enable me to create a baseline to the differences and influences that may exist as a deeper examination into the practice is undertaken within this thesis.

2.5 STRATEGY AS PRACTICE

Research into strategy-as-practice (S-as-P), the approach that this study is adopting in its examination into how strategic decision-making is being undertaken, has recently gained prominence in strategy research. This approach has been chosen due to the practical nature of its philosophy, and the growing interest amongst strategy researchers. S-as-P research takes a different perspective from previous threads of inquiry - one that looks at how strategy is actually carried out in firms. The strategy concept is not looked at as something to be 'had,' the resources it possesses or an overarching rational analysis of the internal and external environment, but one that focuses on the act of, or implementation of, strategy. It is looked at as something that people in organisations 'do' (Jarzabkowski, 2004; Whittington, 2006). It also argues for the

'value of explaining (and therefore helping to improve) the performance of people as they interact and enact institutional and Organisational practices' (Johnson, Langley, Melin & Whittington, 2007).

Johnson *et al.* (2007) discusses the different areas of inquiry within the S-as-P research agenda. The authors identified three levels that correspond to the research being done from a more macro-level to one on a more micro-level that includes an organising framework identifying a varying degree of '*institutionalised strategies*' to '*actors' process strategies*.' It is the realm of '*actors' process strategies*' that this research closely relates. This investigation looks specifically at the individual social interactions and practices as they relate to strategic decision-making within the meso-organisational level and macro-industry level influences as opposed to isolated factors of influence or ones not rooted in the practices of individual actors.

In addition, Whittington (2006) has identified a seemingly natural progression of the current research within the practice literature. He has identified a '*bifurcation of inter-Organisational activity and external Organisational impacts*'. Whittington concludes that strategy should be looked at not only as something that is 'done,' but also something that has a broader context, including internal, external and social ramifications. These two branches of internal activity and external effects should not be looked at, or studied, in isolation of one another but together, as they work hand-in-hand. Individual firm activities within the recorded music industry not only impact themselves directly, but these firms' actions also have broader industry-wide and cultural implications as well. It is an iterative practice between industry, societal and cultural influences, similar to Negus' (1999) argument in which he makes the case that culture produces an industry, as industry produces a culture. Knowing that strategising looks closely at what people do in firms, this could ultimately help to improve the actor's process as it takes into account the broader context in which it is being done, and creates a home in which my study fits.

To avoid confusion, it must be noted that the S-as-P enquiries are not linked to any one methodology of studying management, strategy or decision-making. I mention it here as a relevant and quintessential aspect of where some management enquiry is being undertaken, and the influence this approach to studying strategic practices has had on my chosen methodological lens for this research and the questions that guide it. Although this gives perspective to this research, it is not to be considered as a methodology, nor a theoretical framework in which the research questions are answered. The body of literature that is evolving from this viewpoint gives focus and attention on the relevance practice theories have on strategy. Social practice theories have been developed as an alternative to individual social construction and include individual learning as a participatory subject of the world. Practice theories '*exist ... because people are engaged in actions whose meanings they negotiate with each other*' (Wenger, 1998, p. 72). An individual's learning does not exist only in their cognitive actions but as a participant within the social world, where people engage within the fields of participation and play by the doxa dictated by the field and learn and

understand new knowledge.

It should also be noted that the choice to move forward with a practice theory is also personally driven. Although, the reasoning behind why I chose one practice theory over another will be discussed further in Chapter 3, I did feel The importance of, and reliance upon, networking to get business accomplished in this industry is not an isolated endeavour and would be less effective if the social construction of this behavior was not accounted for when looking into strategic decision-making.

2.6 CONCLUSION

This chapter has provided context into what has been learned about strategic decision-making, current market conditions within the popular music industry and characteristics that embody it. By reviewing the literature, I have established the relevant knowledge that can then be integrated into Bourdieu's practice theory, whilst providing context that will later facilitate a richer description of the strategic decision-making practice.

It has been established that SDM in micro-enterprises has been shown to rely on heuristics, bias, trust, past experiences and intuition and can often be affected by age, education and other demographic characteristics of the decision-maker. These established practices differ from those of medium and large firms where resources are often more readily available to decision-makers, thus take on a more logical, analytical or comprehensive approach to the process. We also learned through this literature review, that the popular recorded music industry has gone through drastic changes throughout the past decade, with technology disrupting the value chain to one that is more accessible to the producers and consumers of music product. In addition to having technology acting as a catalyst, it has been shown that key industry characteristics contribute to the construction of the field doxa and play a prominent role in the interpretation and action of individuals within the field.

However, whilst this chapter has established the academic, and theoretical constructions of decision-making as well as characteristics of the popular music industry, it has also shown that we have very little knowledge

about how micro-enterprise owners and managers within the field construct and respond to strategic decision-making. These findings suggest that SDM within this field may have different aspects brought on by industry characteristics and the people who make the decisions, paving the way for further, descriptive research of the practice.

Thus far in this thesis, Chapter 1 has considered the organisational fields within which this research is undertaken, along with the motivations and potential influences behind the collection, analysis and interpretation of the data. Chapter 2 has examined the multiple constructions of SDM in the academic literature. Thus, Chapter 3 will now turn to the methodological framework, which I intend to use to study the SDM practice.

3. Bourdieu's Practice Theory as a Research Methodology

3.1 INTRODUCTION

The objective of this research is to examine, using a Bourdieusian practice theory lens, the decision-making practice that micro-enterprise participants engage in within the United States popular recorded music industry. Of particular interest are the influences upon the decision practice and how habitus, field, capital and doxa are relegated to an actor's desire for dignity and recognition (Wacquant, 1998).

This perspective was chosen as being the best suited to answering the research question. Understanding the everyday world and the paradox of agency and structure is brought together through Bourdieu's theory of practice – which is the interplay between actor and field through habitus and use of capital. Using this methodological paradigm allows the study of strategic decision-making in its natural setting, making sense of the complexity and depth of the information, while simultaneously being brought in to interpret it (Denzin & Lincoln, 2011). In this respect, as other researchers have, I am seeking to produce findings that are compelling by using the work of Bourdieu as an aid to their fuller comprehension. Some of this previous research has linked a firm's competitive advantage to the intellectual capital that is created through its social capital (Nahapiet and Ghoshal, 1998). In addition, Bourdieu's concepts have been used in entrepreneurial research (Steier, 2001), the education field (Gunter, 2002; Nash, 1990) as well as within political sociology, particularly research on the political environment and power (Kauppi, 2003; Schugurensky, 2000). Music scholars have also found his ideas on taste and class applicable to their research in understanding preferences and consumption (Chan & Goldthorpe, 2007; Prior, 2011; Hennion, 1997). Although these studies provide some insight into the applicability of Bourdieu within the business, education, political and music fields, there continues to be limited research using Bourdieu and his theories within the music industry.

Using a Bourdieusian theoretical lens anchors the research within the practice perspective, while using an appropriate sociological theory. This chosen 'home' fits well within the activities and business practices of the music industry, which relies strongly upon social and cultural influences for its success (Caves, 2000; Bourdieu, 1993b). Bourdieu discusses these influences and the importance they play in his concepts of field, habitus and capital (Bourdieu, 1977), which will assist in defining some of the recorded music industry phenomena. Especially relevant are his use of social capital, cultural capital, economic capital and symbolic capital as they can be applied to the activity and the practice of actors and their use of power within the music industry field, which relies heavily on these different types of 'capital' (Bourdieu, 1977).

Although other prominent approaches were considered including structuration theory (Giddens, 1984), critical realism (Bhaskar, 1978; Archer, 1995) and activity theory (Leont'ev, 1981) none seemed to be as good at answering the research question as Bourdieu. Giddens' approach is not as well-suited to consider the influences of the past that have resulted in an individual's habitus. It is those past, personal experiences that have helped develop an actor's current decision-making 'rules' that will affect the accumulation of capital, and help shape the field. Critical realism makes an attempt to overcome the dichotomy of structure and agency, through a strong belief that structures come first, are more durable and go 'farther back'. Although valid, it is the sense of hierarchy (Archer, 1995), or dualism, that is created in critical realism and the rigid structure that does not make 'agency easy' (Whittington, 2010). The position of agency in decision-making and the properties that influence it are critical in answering the research questions. Furthermore, activity theory focuses more on the artefacts or objects of engagement, as opposed to the field or more 'macro' perspectives. What activity theory is not able to address is the prominent use and need for capital or an expanded use of those resources to engage in the power struggles and influence between the social actors. It also does not lend itself to considering the more macro influences on the practice, as does Bourdieu. Although it may be well suited for influences that occur within the more immediate situated activity, it is not as well equipped to consider the broader social spaces or fields that may have influence. The use of Bourdieu in

organisation studies, especially when looking at strategy practices, can elicit new and insightful findings that may not be as easily highlighted by other practice theories.

3.2 BOURDIEU AND THE SCIENCE OF PRACTICE

Bourdieu, through his work as an anthropologist, sociologist and philosopher was able to influence the current sociological discourse by challenging the accepted ways of thinking about how social reality is constructed. His theories have had a profound impact on the world of sociology and his work on practice, specifically, has made a major contribution to the field (Léandre Gomez, 2010). In particular, others have found his work helpful in defining or explaining strategy through a practice perspective in organisation studies (Whittington, 2003; Jarzabkowski, 2005). Bourdieu is able to contribute and transcend the deep-seated traditions and stances that have embattled the social world through the duality of micro and macro analysis of social life, the material and symbolic realities of society and the classic objectivism vs. subjectivism debate. He felt that this dichotomy 'must be overcome'. Objectivism holds that social reality consists of structures of relations that impose themselves upon the actor, whereas subjectivism is rooted in the individual actor's will and ability to interpret and interact meaning with one another (Wacquant, 1998). Bourdieu was able to overcome this dichotomy through his theory of practice - introduction of 'habitus', 'capital' and 'field' where actors interact, not only with each other, but also within the systems in which they exist. It is this interaction that allows for a more descriptive depiction of reality.

In addition to his anti-dualistic approach to social action, his scientific approach is '*genuinely synthetic, in that it simultaneously straddles disciplinary, theoretical and methodological divides*' (Wacquant, 1998 p. 219). He attempts to achieve this dissection through the intimate relationships that he identifies in his theory of practice between habitus, field and capital. Using a deep reflexive process enabled him and future researchers, through this theory, to see these relationships for what they really are. He did this through the use of both objective and subjective elements of the data.

Most importantly, a Bourdieusian philosophical anthropology is rooted in one of the biggest and most misrepresented elements of his work – *recognition*.

'His is not a utilitarian theory of social action in which individual's consciously strategize to accumulate wealth, status, or power....Bourdieu holds that the ultimate spring of conduct is the thirst for dignity, which society alone can quench. For only by being granted a name, a place, a function, within a group or institution can the individual hope to escape the contingency, finitude, and ultimate absurdity of existence...Social existence thus means difference, and difference implies hierarchy, which in turn sets off the endless dialectic of distinction and pretention, recognition and misrecognition, arbitrariness and necessity' (Wacquant, 2006 p. 219).

The general misconception that an actor's motivation is rooted in the accumulation of wealth, status and power and not the need for distinction and recognition in such a manner that only society can satisfy, is at the foundation of this research as are the influences on the decision-making practice. It is imperative that a critical approach is used when looking at this phenomenon and that the objective and subjective elements influencing the strategic decision-making practice be considered. This will enable a more comprehensive empirically-based observation of the influences on the decision-making practice and the role that recognition and distinction play as actors negotiate and accumulate different forms of capital, while relying upon their personal dispositions, firm level habitus, and industry *doxa* to achieve the distinction and recognition they desire.

The following sections will elaborate more on the specific concepts that Bourdieu uses in his practice theory and why they are best suited to answer the research question. All concepts will be used, for Bourdieu believed you couldn't use one without including the others; there is an 'unconscious relationship' (Bourdieu, 1993b) that exists between them. Those to be considered include habitus, economic, social, cultural and symbolic capital, his concept of field, including his ideas regarding the field of cultural production and the *doxa* that dictate the 'rules' of practice.

3.3 HABITUS

The concept of habitus was developed to bridge the 'outside' world with the 'inner' self. However, Bourdieu was not the first to utilise the concept of habitus to describe human disposition or intimate connection to our personal past. The concept was first coined by prominent thinkers like Aristotle and later adapted by Thomas Aquinas in the thirteenth century when describing human habits and the connection with ethical discourse (Nederman, 1989-1990). In Latin it literally '*refers to a habitual or typical condition of the body*' (Jenkins, 1992 p. 74). Bourdieu interpreted the concept and developed the idea beyond simple human habits or body condition, but more specifically as an alternative to the structuralist perspective – one that would look at society as a complex system of parts or social structures that shape society as a whole. This was outlined in his argument for a theory of practice and is critical in transcending the objectivist perspective by introducing the subjective element, habitus, as '*systems of durable, transposable dispositions, structured structures predisposed to function as structuring structures*' (Bourdieu, 1977, p. 72).

Here, the 'structured' pertains to our personal history, the influences that have shaped who we are today that include our past experiences and personal dispositions. The 'structuring' refers to the current, present day influences upon the actor through the interaction of other actors and the structures and the systems that are part of his or her life - these may include, but not be limited to the company they work for, the industry they work in, and the political or economic systems in which they conduct their daily lives. The habitus is considered 'durable' in that it lasts over time; it is inherent and becomes inherent in individual dispositions. The habitus is a product of who we are and have become during our lifetime and the experiences within it. It is also 'transferable' in that it is possible for it to cross boundaries of social fields. Although our behaviours may change depending on the role we are playing, be it father, brother, professional or husband, the core of these personal dispositions – our personality - are concrete. '*These unconscious schemata are acquired through lasting exposure to particular social conditions and conditionings, via the internalization of external constraints and possibilities*' (Wacquant, 1998, p. 220).

Essentially, habitus tells us that we are a product of our past, the culmination of experiences learned and reinforced through our social interactions with other actors and societal institutions. Yet we shape these institutions by our habitus, a cyclical reinforcing of events and practices.

It is best to understand habitus in a more practical sense - one that is easier to understand in operational terms and can be more easily interpreted for this study. Bourdieu refers to the habitus as 'personal dispositions' that designates a 'predisposition', a 'tendency', 'propensity' or 'inclination' (Bourdieu, 1977, p. 214). This predisposition as described by Bourdieu is '*a past which survives in the present and tends to perpetuate itself into the future by making itself present in practices structured according to its principles*' (Bourdieu, 1977, p. 82). These practices and principles manifest themselves in the form of biases and heuristics that people rely upon for reasoning and day-to-day decision-making. It is these practices of decision-making that guide the individual's past experiences and predisposed tendencies that influence the practice along with the principles of the field in which the practice is being done. Furthermore, Bourdieu argues that the actor thus becomes a '*practical operator of the construction of objects*' (Bourdieu, 1990a, p. 13). This perspective enables the actor to affect and control his or her reality by using the experiences of the past to shape his or her future. The habitus is the product of our history that influences an actor's future history.

Even though the actor is seen as an active participant in his construction of reality, this active engagement is often constrained. It is constrained by the past and tends to give '*disproportionate weight to early experiences*' (Bourdieu, 1977, p. 54). People always have the ability to invoke agency in their decision-making, but their perspective that has been engrained in them since birth will limit them. Their age, gender, familial roles assumed and parent relations are rooted in an actor's '*basis of perception and appreciation of all subsequent experiences*' (Bourdieu, 1977, p. 54). Our current and future dispositions start here, influence and constrain our decision-making. These experiences cannot be changed, and form what Bourdieu (1990b) calls:

'...schemes of perception, thought and action tend to guarantee the "correctness" of practices and their constancy over time" ...a present past that tends to perpetuate itself into the future by reactivation in similarly structured practices, an internal law though which the law of external necessities, irreducible to immediate constraints, is constantly exerted.' (p. 54)

In other words, the habitus can be seen like a game of cards. In a card game, we may be dealt a certain hand that will include many different value cards. But it is how we choose to play those cards in a certain fashion, the 'correctness' of practices of what we have been dealt, but we must play *those* (emphasis added) cards that we have been dealt for that game.

3.3.1 Group Habitus

Bourdieu (1990a) also argued that habitus is not limited to the individual actor, but can also manifest itself in the group. Not only do individual actors possess a habitus, a group of individuals can possess a similar habitus. Through common elements or ways of doing things, the group too can take on these qualities. Bourdieu described this as having common '*schemes of perception*' or a similar world-view that has been learned by and through the collective whole – a type of culture that manifests itself on a firm level, a corporate culture. They will take on qualities that are products of their history and become engrained in the workings and dispositions of the group.

The group habitus is also '*socially constituted and constantly reinforced by individual or collective sanctions*' (Bourdieu & Nice, 1980, p. 291). This is most evident in communities where the group influences the individual habitus in its most formative years. When gender roles, certain behaviours within social groups, rules and norms are learned and general ways of behaving are engrained in the individual, which in turn reinforces the group habitus. These behaviour schemata are not mediocre events, but a dynamic process that can often be influenced by new members of the group that bring with them their own personal dispositions and therefore, new perspectives (Strauss & Quinn, 1997).

The group can also assume, in its own manner, a type of '*group think*' that carries with it the histories and traditions of the group and sometimes the inability to think beyond what new members can contribute. Bourdieu (1990a)

believes that the group habitus has the '*infinite capacity to generate products – thoughts, perceptions expressions and actions* (p. 55). This '*infinite capacity*' suggests the power that is available to the group and that that power has the capacity to transcend that of the individual. This could explain the synergistic properties that teams are able to profit from and the innate safety or growth capacity that is felt when an individual is working with or in a group.

In addition, Bourdieu (1990b) also feels that the group habitus can function as the '*collective memory, reproducing the acquisitions of the predecessors in the successors*' (p. 291). This is the 'history' of the group that often depicts itself in stories, past experiences or events that contribute to the underlying dynamics and culture of the group.

3.3.2 Habitus Within the Firm using a Relational Approach

In addition to the group habitus being commonly known in social class, families or communities, these 'groups' can be classified as groups within the firm – as all the employees of the firm or the specific employees of functional departments within the firm. The definition or concept of habitus by no means limits this application to individual agency as was described above, but can also be an approach to looking at the group habitus within an organisational structure and the culture of a firm (Ölzbilgin & Tatli, 2005). The power dynamics and struggles within an organisation between actors can be defined and applied using a group level or 'meso-level' habitus – the 'micro-level' being the individual agency, and 'macro-level' the field in which the firm operates. One of the salient features of applying the habitus to the culture of the firm is its inclusion of history, '*the habitus – embodied history, internalized as a second nature and so forgotten as history*' (Bourdieu, 1990a, p. 56). This enables the study of organisations to include not only the power plays constituted with the existence of the firm and the impacts they have on decision-making but also provides historical context - albeit unconscious structure - to the influence and context. It would also enable the researcher to take into account many of the '*individual mechanisms and structures*' that are inherent in the firm. It allows for an account of power struggles, but also the influences between actors, the firm and the fields in which the firm exists. It is the habitus that enables the tension

and negotiation among its members that ultimately help contribute to and transform its culture or competitive position within the market ((Özbilgin, 2005).

A 'meso' or firm-level of analysis of habitus (Özbilgin, 2005) enables the researcher to investigate the 'relational interplay' that goes on between actors in the context of the Organisation. In addition, Wacquant (1998) along with Özbilgin (2005) make a case for using a relational method when investigating the firm level differences.

'Bourdieu argues that using a relational methodology enables the researcher, and the researched to be more comprehensive in studying the social phenomenon as opposed to a more comparative method which...merely expose (s) the contrastive positions of two individual, cultural or structural phenomena against one another, failing to capture their rich relational interplay' (Özbilgin, 2005, p. 247).

A relational method approach allows for a more comprehensive study of the interplay between the individual level habitus or personal dispositions, the firm level habitus and the field. The active interplay between them will enable the researcher to take an historical account of each while examining the phenomenon in its situational context. It will also enable the researcher to look at the 'inter-dependence' each has upon one another. A comparative approach to this would not be enough to wholly understand the influences of the strategic decision-making practice. As Bourdieu noted:

'It is a reminder that comparison is possible only from system to system, and that the search for direct equivalences between features grasped in isolation, whether, appearing at first sight different, they provide to be 'functionally' or technically equivalent (like Pernod and shochu or sake) or nominally identical (the practice of golf in France and Japan, for instance), risks unduly identifying structurally different properties or wrongly distinguishing structurally identical properties . . . what is commonly called distinction, that is, a certain quality of bearing and manners, often considered innate . . . is nothing other than difference, a gap, a distinctive feature, in short, a relational property existing only in and through its relation with other properties.' (Wacquant, 1998, p. 220)

Using a comparative method would only allow for a contrasting perspective on the practice, and limits a comprehensive investigation into what is really happening at the most intimate level with minute detail.

3.4 FIELD

Bourdieu argued that in order to truly understand a social phenomenon it must be understood within its historical context. This is done by looking deeper than the social practice of actors and their interactions amongst each other by considering the social space or 'field' and the rules that are created by an actor's practice within it: *'A structured space of positions, a force field that imposes its specific determinations upon all those who enter it'* (Wacquant, 1998, p. 221). Thus if a person wants to enter or participate in a specific field they must first enter with the qualities or attributes with which they can play by the explicit and implicit rules of the game. They may need to possess a certain level of credentials or certain level of 'capital' in order to be considered a legitimate player within the field. They must abide by the *'mores and regulations enforced...of that time and place'* (Wacquant, 1998, p. 222). In addition, Bourdieu also argued that a field is an *'arena of struggle though which agents and institutions seek to preserve or overturn the existing distribution of capital.'* Here it is a constant battle over the power, positions and hierarchy that exist within the field. Actors in current power positions will tend to take a more 'conservative' strategy in order to maintain the current level of influence. Those who are struggling to achieve power within the field tend to rely more on 'subversive' strategies. Established actors desire to hold onto power while those new to the field attempt to overthrow those in the dominant position. Those actors in the dominant position will also attempt to accumulate more 'capital' or expertly use accumulated capital in order to preserve existing power and influence within the field. This may be done through the use of social networks, education credentials, and economic capital or other means necessary (Wacquant, 1998).

According to Bourdieu, identifying the field not only meant looking at the historical relational contexts in which social practice occurs, but also its inherent history of what has been learned, who was involved and dispositions developed over time and the practices surrounding it. (Bourdieu, 2005; Grenfell, 2008). Field or 'Le Champ' (Grenfell, 2008) is used to identify any space of intellectual discourse or practice. Based upon the premises of being a *'structured space'* and

'arena of struggle' in which actors vie for position and power, it is essential to define the 'space' that will be under investigation. For this study, the field will clearly be defined as micro-enterprises that are directly involved in the marketing and promotion of recorded music product in the United States which sits within the broader field of cultural production. This may encompass firms including record labels, distribution companies, artist managers, booking agents – those who seek 'employment' for the artist - or firms that may provide the functions associated with the marketing and promotion for this cultural product.

Although this study specifically looks at the marketing and promotion of recorded music in micro-enterprises, Bourdieu also argues that a field is not specifically confined to one specific set of rules or field type, but rather a social world may encapsulate a number of fields. A good example of this exists within broader field of the creative and cultural industries, which Bourdieu would argue is a subfield of the economic field. Within this field lies the music industry, which in turn incorporates the smaller sub-fields of, for example, the recorded music industry, marketing and promotion, and artist management and so on. Even though each sub-field may have its own doxa or rules of the game that dictate actions within it, often each sub-field may relate to its larger field with corresponding power relations and rules (Grenfell, 2008). This innate hierarchy of fields that interrelate often affects each other. Again, in the broader economic or technological field, events that occur here can easily affect the cultural industries and more specifically the music industry. An example of this were the technological events of the late 1990s - the advent of MP3 technology – that have had a profound impact on the marketing and distribution of recorded music product and the corresponding sales of that product since, which has also impacted the broader economic field within. The complex interweaving of events and interrelated actions can also easily be compounded when institutions within sub-fields are classified as fields (Grenfell, 2008).

Understanding and taking into account this complex web of fields and sub-fields will be critical when examining the influences upon the decision-making practice for this research. The power dynamics and struggles that interrelate will need to be taken into account. The economic space, the field of cultural production, recorded music industry and micro-enterprises will all

directly influence the marketing and promotion of recorded music product and the decision-making practice.

In order to operationalise the study of a field or sub-fields that incorporate the specific social phenomena of study effectively, Bourdieu felt that three things were necessary. First, the researcher must '*analyse the position of the field, vis-à-vis, the field of power*' (Bourdieu, 1992, p. 105). In the case of this study and within the context of the strategic decision, the recorded music industry sits within the broader field of cultural production, which itself exists within the field of power. These interrelated sub-fields may also include firms or subsidiaries that distribute recorded music or the stock markets that influence the decision-makers as they evaluate the profitability of their artists, their supply chain and relationships with their consumer. Although many fields are interconnected and some more influential than others, they must still be considered when looking at the influences upon decision-making in the recorded music industry. Second, '*one must map out the objective structure of the relations between the positions occupied by the agents or institutions who compete for the legitimate form of specific authority*' (Bourdieu, 1992, p. 105). This could include the industry structure and dominant institutions within the field, key players and the positional power of those actors. Third,

'one must analyse the habitus of the agents, the different systems of dispositions they have acquired by internalizing a determinate type of social and economic conditions, and which find in a definite trajectory within the field under consideration a more or less favourable opportunity to become actualized.' (Bourdieu, 1992 p. 105)

Each of the key players that are involved in the decision-making practice will be investigated. The personal individual dispositions and the histories they bring to the context along with the firm level habitus or organisational culture will also be taken into consideration.

3.5 THE FIELD OF CULTURAL PRODUCTION

Although I briefly mentioned Bourdieu's concepts regarding the field of cultural production in Section 2.6 and 3.4 above, further description is needed as it relates to his theory of practice. This greater depth of discussion will create a better understanding of its strengths and its limitations as they relate to this study.

Bourdieu's field theory of cultural production has been interpreted broadly to encompass '*the tradition of classical sociology, including science, law and religion*' (Hesmondhalgh, 2006, p. 212). It is his work within the production of the expressive-aesthetic culture that is most relevant here. Although much of his work and subsequent writings address art and literature, the concepts are equally relevant to the production and consumption of popular music. Bourdieu offers a field theory using a vocabulary that invokes his concepts of habitus and capital, which enable a connection to be made between his ideas of practice and the field of cultural production. Even though some of Bourdieu's ideas are helpful in the discussion of the cultural production field, there are limitations that require guiding principles from other frameworks, such as those addressed in Section 2.6 above. These are considered along with other theories that help to explain the characteristics of this space.

Bourdieu's definition of 'field', outlined above in Section 3.4, allows for the interconnections of various fields such as economics and politics, which come together to form the 'field of power' (Bourdieu, 1993a). In addition are his ideas regarding the field of cultural production, which he positions within the field of power and characterised by the dominant fraction of the dominant class (Bourdieu, 1993a). He further divides the field into the sub-field of 'small-scale production' (*art for art's sake*) and the sub-field of 'large-scale production'. The small-scale production is characterised by low levels of economic capital but high amounts of cultural capital, while the large-scale sub-field is characterised by high amounts of economic capital and low amounts of symbolic capital (Bourdieu, 1996). Hesmondhalgh (2006) interprets this distinction between the divisions clearly:

These are primarily distinguished from each other by the degree to which they are autonomous of the field of power. Small-scale or restricted production is described as having a relatively high degree of autonomy, but never full autonomy; mass production is 'heteronomous'; - subject to outside rule - but never fully so (Hesmondhalgh, 2006 p. 214).

Bourdieu often referred to the small-scale production as that of 'high-art', one of more sophistication and 'pure', while the sub-field of 'large-scale production' is one that is more commercial to satisfy the masses (Bourdieu, 1984; 1996). The popular, recorded music industry and its symbolic goods are a product of such a sub-field. It is the 'heteronomous' characteristic of this field that enables an industry to be sustained through the continued production of its product by its creators and enjoyed by its consumers. It is also one that enables those in the higher fractions of the industry to maintain the power that they hold. It is one that Bourdieu defines by higher sales and economic activity, with a lesser degree of symbolic capital (Bourdieu, 1984; 1996). Although Bourdieu does discuss some characteristics of the field structure, it is one that he rarely addresses, which some believe is to the detriment of the theory (Hesmondhalgh, 2006). Bourdieu also speaks to what he calls a 'new *petite bourgeoisie*', or the 'occupations involving presentation and representation (sales, marketing, advertising, public relations, fashion, decoration and so forth) in all the institutions providing symbolic goods and services' (Bourdieu, 1984, p. 359). These 'new cultural intermediaries', or those actors that 'mediate' between the producers and consumers, are the industry personnel responsible for the production and distribution of product, what Featherstone (2007) identified as 'generators' of new consumer culture. Hesmondhalgh (2006) has found this definition problematic and misunderstood. He further argues that Nixon (1997) has misinterpreted Bourdieu's definition, citing that the 'intermediary' function is not one that contributes to the production, but rather Bourdieu's intention was that these individuals are '*critics*' who act as cultural intermediaries in the recording industry. I must argue, however, that intermediaries are not 'generators' (Featherstone, 2007) of the new consumer culture, but rather 'enablers' of the process of creation and agents of production. Recording industry personnel *are* essential '*critics*', but do more than just 'critique' or

provide judgement, they act as gatekeepers who facilitate the production of music and at times may contribute, but not decisively so, to what is to be worthy of public consumption. The consumer's role as 'gatekeeper' of cultural product is underestimated, and their influence upon popular culture is seen regularly. Evidence of this can be found in the consumer's use of social media and viral marketing. The artist Psy and his parody '*Gangnam Style*', or more recently the Norwegian band Ylvis and '*What Does the Fox Say*' have had substantial cultural impact and economic success in the United States, while not being subject to a 'cultural intermediary' or 'gatekeeper' of a record label. The idea of the cultural intermediary being seen as a purveyor of what is to be successful, and what is not, or a 'generator' of new consumer culture, does not account for the role of the consumer in what makes it popular in its own right. They are agents and 'enablers' of the process, but not 'generators'.

Bourdieu is able to provide some context for the power and positioning of actors within his field theory of cultural production, but even more so when his ideas of capital and habitus are applied. Bourdieu has shown the effect of possession and use of capital within the sub-fields of small and large-scale production, but he is also able to account for how individuals within these fields attempt to maintain or acquire further power by the transformation of capital into other types; '*as a rule those richest in economic, cultural and social capital are the first to move into the new positions*' (Bourdieu, 1993a, p. 68). Although he quickly contends that this is true in all fields and the context pertains to small-scale product ideas, the applicability of his practice theory concepts within the field of cultural production become clear. He also states that:

'Because economic capital provides the guarantees [assurances] which can be the basis of self-assurance, audacity and indifference to profit – dispositions which, together with the flair associated with possession of a large social capital and corresponding familiarity of the field...points toward the outposts' (Bourdieu, 1993a, p. 71).

When accounting for practice within the field, Bourdieu poses some explicit questions;

What is the degree of conscious strategy, cynical calculation, in the objective strategies which observation brings to light and which ensure the correspondence between positions and dispositions?
(Bourdieu, 1993a, p. 72)

It is this type of question that enables Bourdieu to utilise his concept of habitus and to strengthen his argument and flexibility when using his practice theory within the field of cultural production. Not only is he accounting for power through capital, but he also sees the '*cynical calculation*' or '*conscious strategy*' of the actor. Bourdieu contends that:

'Lucidity is always partial and is, once again, a matter of position and trajectory within the field, so that it varies from one agent and one moment to another' (Bourdieu, 1993a, p. 72).

He sees these actions as something that will always differ, depending on the situation and circumstances of the agent's habitus and the capital he possesses. One could argue that this is the very nature of what he is attempting to achieve in his sociological perspective. Combining his theory of practice with his theory of cultural production enables the researcher to investigate behaviour within a specific social space more fully.

Although Bourdieu's field theory of cultural production provides for the potential to understand the meanings of everyday structure and agency, Bourdieu has little to say about the large-scale production of cultural goods and the impact it has on an important aspect of current societal trends. He essentially leaves '*no account of how the most widely consumed cultural products – those disseminated by the media – are produced*' (Hesmondhalgh, 2006 p. 218). Hesmondhalgh (2006) further believes that Bourdieu inadequately addresses the '*significance in determining conditions in the sub-field*' unlike his more developed ideas regarding the sub-field of small-scale production. These gaps allow for contributions to his ideas within large-scale production, but also expose the need to capture characteristics of the field developed by other theorists.

3.6 CAPITAL

Bourdieu's theory of practice also includes his concept of capital. Capital, or one's position within a field, and its interplay between the actor's habitus within the field constitute the premise or social context in which practice occurs. Capital, as defined by Bourdieu is:

'Accumulated labour (in its materialized form or its 'incorporated,' embodied form), which, when appropriated on a private, i.e., exclusive, basis by agents or group of agents, enable them to appropriate social energy in the form of reified or living labour' (Bourdieu, 1986 p. 46).

It is important to note that the concept of capital goes beyond that which is commonly understood as economic capital or the financial assets that are so often associated with the use of 'capital' in economic theory. When Bourdieu discusses capital, he intends it to extend beyond the financial assets that an actor possesses but also capital in the form of *social* capital – the professional or personal connections with other actors, *cultural* capital – the skills and education one has acquired, and the corresponding *symbolic* capital – the resources available to an actor through prestige, honour or recognition, that may result. It is these various types of capital and their use or exchange across different fields and negotiation of power across the complex web of fields that is critical to his theory of practice. Capital, in all its forms, takes time to accumulate and can often be exchanged for economic capital or for more capital of its own likeness. The existence of capital and amount hitherto is dependent upon the social world in which it exists. The amount and types are constrained by the field and are *'inscribed in the very reality of that world,'* which help govern and determine the success of the practices within that field (Bourdieu, 1986 p. 46).

3.6.1 Economic Capital

Bourdieu defines economic capital as an actor's command or control over economic resources such as cash or assets, private or real property (Bourdieu, 1986) by which further accumulation of social or cultural capital may be obtained. Assets can be immediately turned into cash or be considered institutionalised through an actor's property or intellectual property rights. In addition to the most heralded understanding of economic capital – cash – within

this field of study, intellectual property in the form of copyrights and trademarks are at the benchmark of economic exchange. This type of 'mercantile exchange' is at the heart of all capitals theorised by Bourdieu, including social and cultural, and acts as one of the primary forms of capital within his theory of practice.

Being the '*root of all other types of capital*', Bourdieu (1986) sees social and cultural capital as '*disguised and transformed variations of economic capital*' (Bourdieu, 1986). The 'transformation' or conversion process, however, is one that takes great effort and is often superseded by the desire for greater accumulation of economic capital in light of recognition. This transformation process of capital types will be discussed further in section 3.6.5 below.

3.6.2 Cultural Capital

Cultural capital is an actor's knowledge, education or skills that enable social mobility and may be exchanged for additional economic capital. It manifests itself in three forms; institutionalised - through educational credentials such diplomas, certificates or licenses (Bourdieu, 1986) an embodied form – '*long-lasting dispositions of the mind and body*' (Bourdieu, 1986) and an objectified state - physical objects or 'cultural goods' like books, music or instruments.

Cultural capital, in its embodied form, is developed over time and is not something that is instantly or easily acquired. The embodiment of cultural capital is often 'incorporated', 'cultivated' or obtained through the self-discipline or personal pursuit. It does not have to be a deliberate acquisition, but may be 'assimilated' through family values and socialisation (Bourdieu, 1986). It is a capital that becomes ingrained in one's habitus and develops as a property, *per se*, of an individual's disposition. Critics will argue that it is not always easily observable, but becomes an integral part of an individual that is not easily transferable (Bourdieu, 1986). Bourdieu (1986) does believe that this capital, much like the other sub-types of capital can be transferred into an economic asset. In this case, an acquired set of skills through education or abilities learned through family or apprenticeship enables the possessor of this capital to exchange their knowledge for an economically accepted salary or 'mercantile exchange' of that knowledge. This, argues Bourdieu (1986), can create a sense of

'scarcity' of the capital when it becomes so intimately aligned with the actor. Power struggles between others with a similar possession of cultural capital within the field create dynamics of distribution assessment among those who create the 'laws and/rules.' However, there are challenges and limitations that exist with the embodiment of cultural capital. This capital is limited by the actor's mental capacity to acquire it and will ultimately elapse with its possessor. It can become diluted or entangled in perception when transferred from generation to generation and can be difficult to measure (Meisel & Sullivan, 2002).

Objectified cultural capital consists of the physical objectification of the cultural capital that is owned or possessed by the actor. This could include any number of representative artefacts that could include a work of art or a musical instrument. These physical assets may be exchanged for economic capital or consumed. Consumption can only occur if there is an appropriate understanding of the object. For example, a violin cannot be played or a piece of art be understood without the proper embodied capital - education or knowledge of that art or instrument from previous acquisition of the knowledge is needed. However, Bourdieu also argues that this capital, and the power that embodies it, may be acquired through 'proxy', which gives evidence to the 'executives' of a field:

"To possess the machines, he only needs economic capital; to appropriate them and use them in accordance with their specific purpose (defined by the cultural capital, of scientific or technical type, incorporated in them), he must have access to embodied cultural capital, either in person or by proxy." (Bourdieu, 1986, p. 50)

Although an actor or executive may not understand how to play an instrument or be an entertainer, they have the ability to acquire the power associated with that knowledge, embodied in cultural capital, through direct association or through economic capital exchange. This becomes apparent within the creative and cultural industries, and specifically the music industry, where booking agents, managers or marketers of music and the artists who record that music are able to acquire this capital through association without actually possessing it. This also holds for individuals that possess a particular machine or device, but may not have the actual cultural capital needed to use it appropriately. The

ownership of these items, or association through proxy, also portrays a level of symbolic capital that then reinforces the actor's social status or position. Yet, this only remains effective if it is used as a tool within the field or social space (Bourdieu, 1986). This is evident when a manager or booking agent who represents a well-known artist wields this power, intentionally, to his or her personal advantage or on behalf of the artist they represent. Being 'associated' with a commercially successful artist and the symbolic capital represented in it, may be used to achieve further symbolic, economic or social capital if so chosen.

Institutionalised cultural capital is a state that '*institutes an essential difference between the officially recognized*' as opposed to the more individualistic development of embodied capital (Bourdieu, 1986 p. 51). Institutionalised capital brings forth the official 'recognition' of the cultural capital acquired that shows belief in the qualifications within the field. This is often done through academic credentials, qualifications or diplomas. It also enables the actors of the field to 'compare' qualifications or to put a monetary amount on the value of the education gained that enables the actor who acquired it to transform cultural capital into economic capital. Institutions are able to recognise this type of capital that allows for easier comparisons and can often be used by them as a tool for easier decision- making (Bourdieu, 1986).

3.6.3 Social Capital

Bourdieu (1986) also discussed the importance of social capital, that is, one's resources based upon networks of influence and support, relationships and group memberships. Not only is having a contact or network of individuals available at his or her disposal to forward their position in the field, but Bourdieu also felt that the actor has the benefit of the 'collectively owned' capital. In other words, they have the access to the social networks of each of those members of the group that 'entitles' them to the 'credential' of the association. The amount of social capital is in direct relation to the level of capital an actor possesses and to what degree he or she can mobilise their networks (Bourdieu, 1986). Here Bourdieu suggests that economic, cultural and symbolic capital are 'never completely independent' of each other and that the larger amount of each is directly related to the volume of social capital any

particular actor possesses. Bourdieu (1986) also indicates that social capital is not given to an actor, but something that must be accumulated or pursued by effort over time and considered as an investment for the short or long term. Being a purposeful endeavour, accumulation of social capital must be deliberate and sought out by the actor. Joining societies, clubs and other organisations that enable the collective whole to benefit from each other's participation is at the heart of this element of his theory of practice. For example, actors within the recorded music industry field understand the benefit of joining the local musicians' unions or industry-recognised societies like the National Academy of Recording Arts and Sciences - N.A.R.A.S. They can associate with these clubs and see the value in the symbolic profits and potential economic capital that can be attained through their association. The question is how and to what extent, does this social capital influence the strategic decision-making practice within this field. Knowing this will also help to contribute to the understanding of the influences on the practice as they relate to the field characteristics established in Chapter 2. The actors understand the value and what they can receive from being a part of them, but there is little research on the influence that these social and professional networks have on strategic decision-making in music industry micro-firms.

3.6.4 Symbolic Capital and Symbolic Power

Symbolic capital represents '*accumulated prestige or honour*' (Bourdieu & Thompson, 1991). This form of capital, similar to others identified by Bourdieu, embodies an objective or subjective form which, taken together, contributes to a shared meaning of value and prestige that can lead to a form of symbolic power. Within the field of the recorded music industry, the actual Billboard charts and/or a Grammy or Dove awards take on the highest level of symbolic capital, either in terms of an objective form as a structured structure of symbolic power, as an '*instrument of knowledge and communication*', or subjectively through what it represents when a Grammy or Dove award is earned or a certain chart level position is achieved (Bourdieu & Thompson, 1991). This symbolic capital and power recognised within the charts and awards help to give meaning to the field, and help to provide '*consensus which contributes fundamentally to the social*

order' (Bourdieu & Thompson, 1991 p. 166). They act as 'structuring structures' that allow the actors of the field to make sense of the *doxa* and to guide their current, accepted practices.

This is also done through the positions occupied by the institutions within the field. The symbolic value of the prominent institutions or 'major record labels' serves to some as the ultimate feat or level of success or attainment. They boast a 'we've made it' ideal when an association with one of these firms occurs. This could be done through an artist being offered a 'record deal' from them or an aspiring college graduate being offered his or her first job by one of these firms. The level of prestige or honour that signing, or that employment offer, brings to the actor positions them in a more competitive or prominent position within the field. Bourdieu also sees symbolic capital as '*credit, but in the broadest sense, a kind of advance, a credence, that only the group's belief can grant.*' Therefore, the symbolic capital and the power that it possesses within the field can only be granted and be given importance by the actors and the social structures within it. It is these very actors that seek and give the power of the capital and its prominence. Symbolic power is an invisible power that only has meaning for those who recognise it and utilise it to their advantage, and often under the 'auspices of ignorance' (Bourdieu & Thompson, 1991). This symbolic power, however, is not just limited to accumulation by individual actors. Similar to the habitus discussed above, symbolic power may also be exercised by interactions between social networks – in this case the firm. Understanding the possession of symbolic capital and the power that this can instil upon a firm can be seen as the framework for the formulation of 'symbolic systems.'

'Symbolic systems' are fundamentally distinguishable according to whether they are produced and thereby appropriated by the group as a whole or, on the contrary, produced by a body of specialists and more precisely, by a relatively autonomous field of production and circulation (Bourdieu & Thompson, 1991, p. 168).

Symbolic systems were first discussed and identified through a neo-Kantian tradition in which 'symbolic universes' such as language or art, which is relevant here in the form of music and the production of the recorded product, was recognised '*as an instrument of knowing and constructing the world of objects, as 'symbolic forms*' (Bourdieu & Thompson, 1991). With music, and the

recordings that embody it, come the institutionalised recognition of 'knowing' through 'symbols' of recognition that are being reinforced through the institutions of legitimacy in that 'knowing'. Institutions such as the Grammy Awards or the Grand Ol' Opry that host the rituals of this recognition award objectified and institutionalised forms of power to firms or individuals that meet the criteria determined by those within the field.

'Symbols are the instruments par excellence of "social integration": as instruments of knowledge and communication...they make it possible for there to be a consensus on the meaning of the social world, a consensus which contributes fundamentally to the reproduction of the social order' (Bourdieu & Thompson, 1991, p. 168).

These symbols contribute to the legitimacy of the established order by reinforcing these distinctions or hierarchies by the dominant culture. The dominant culture in this case are those industry leaders, like the major record companies or 'majors,' or commercially successful firms both in terms of economic, cultural and symbolic capital accumulation that exercise and reinforce their power and dominance in the field.

'In is as structured and structuring instruments of communication and knowledge that 'symbolic systems' fulfil their political function, as instruments which help to ensure that one class dominates another' (Bourdieu & Thompson, 1991, p. 168).

What Bourdieu alludes to here is that class fractions are engaged in a symbolic struggle. If the 'majors' characterise the dominant culture of an industry like the recorded music industry, by its very nature the same culture must include a dominated class. Here, this role is represented by 'independent' record labels or a 'Do-It-Yourself' (DIY) artist within the industry; those with typically fewer economic resources, and less social, cultural and symbolic capital. This hierarchy of a dominating and dominated culture leads to the creation of social classes within the field. It could be stipulated that the 'independents', often known as 'indies' fulfil the role of the middle class whereby the working or lower class segments would be fulfilled by the DIY artist within the industry - having even fewer resources and capital at its disposal when compared to their independent label counterparts.

'Dominant class fractions, whose power rests on economic capital, aim

to impose the legitimacy of their domination either through their own symbolic production, or through the intermediary of conservative ideologues' (Bourdieu & Thompson, 1991, p. 168).

The symbolic production within this industry - the award shows - reinforces the dominant culture's position – the majors - in the field by legitimising their own efforts. By rewarding or recognising those who have achieved what has been determined by the class as 'success,' public recognition of a 'job well done' or a 'you've made it' - 'you're one of us now' reinforces this message and helps to solidify its positioning in the field. Those being dominated or seen as legitimate also recognise this, but a struggle exists between the dominating - who set the rules for these shows - and the dominated that wish to 'join the club.' Bourdieu feels that *'The dominated fraction always tends to set the specific capital, to which it owes its position, at the tip of the hierarch of the principles of hierarchization.'* (Bourdieu & Thompson, 1991, p. 168).

3.6.5 Transformation of Capital

The transformation, allocation and distribution of capital can and often does occur, exchanging one for another is something that can happen explicitly or implicitly depending on intention and agency. It is this intentionality that creates the boundaries between the habitus, field and capital within the world of each actor. Bourdieu does make clear that the sub-forms of capital can be derived from economic capital. Simply, networks and forms of cultural capital can be bought, but may not be as concrete as if invested over time and require great effort for it to provide the power within the field (Bourdieu, 1986). More common, however, is the actor's desire to transform these capitals into economic capital.

'So it has to be posited simultaneously that economic capital is at the root of all the other types of capital and that these transformed, disguised forms of economic capital, never entirely reducible to that definition, produce their most specific effects only to the extent that they conceal the fact that economic capital is at their root' (Bourdieu, 1986, p. 54).

Bourdieu makes explicit that at the heart of all transactions within the social space or field of question; an actor's intention is the accumulation of economic capital. The possession of social, cultural or symbolic capital in

themselves is legitimate and allows for a more accurate depiction of practice, but intentionality lies in the acquisition of further monetary or economic assets. However, this is not at the heart of what lies in his theory of practice. As discussed earlier, an actor's true intention is that of distinction, being socially recognised for who they are and by what they possess or do, with the root of that distinction being disguised by the transformation of capital as the ultimate pursuit of further economic capital.

3.7 CONCLUSION

The rationale for using Bourdieu's theory of practice as a chosen methodology was made explicit. This has been achieved through a detailed look at the main components of his practice theory, the habitus, both at the individual (micro) level and group or firm (meso) level, capital and field. Furthermore, it was also justified, in comparison to other practice theories and the inadequacies of those theories, as a chosen lens for investigating the strategic decision-making practice in recorded music industry micro-firms. Lastly, the importance of using a Bourdieusian lens and conducting the research using a relational method as opposed to a comparative approach was discussed. The next chapter will operationalise this methodology and the methods used for my research.

4. Methods

4.1 INTRODUCTION

In order to proceed with a discussion about the chosen methods for this research, it is worth restating the aims discussed in Chapter 1. My objectives are to explore the influences on strategic decision-making practices in micro-enterprises, from the perspective of individual actors, the objective variables that influence those actors and the fields in which they conduct business. It was also stated that the reason for this research was to gain insight into how strategic decisions are made in the music industry, where unpredictability of success and an infinite variety define the product and the field. As discussed in greater detail in Chapter 1, this research takes an interpretive practice theory approach that will allow for a representation of experience. Bourdieu's theory of practice allows for an account of influences beyond the superficial description of the process.

In this chapter, I will discuss the methods used to answer the research question, along with the epistemological and ontological foundations for the study, and the practical implications for such a research project. Issues of access, the chosen data collection method and ethical considerations of the project will also be outlined. I will conclude with an explanation about the coding process and data reduction methods used.

4.2 JUSTIFICATION FOR DATA COLLECTION METHODS USED

As discussed, a number of methods have been used when investigating decision-making in organisations and each has demonstrated appropriate attributes for the chosen study. When using cases as a way to investigate a research question, Yin (2009) and Denzin and Lincoln (2011), have indicated that some of the most common data collection tools include interviews, direct or participant observation, archival records, documentation and artefacts. The habitus, being a conscious and '*unconscious relationship*' resulting in a personal disposition that is both socially and individually constructed, is best understood by personal interviewing – the semi-structured interview. It is in this approach

that actor intention can be explored and combined with their objective characteristics, the environment within which the practice is constructed and the field(s) in which they interact. I chose this primary source of data-collection over other practices, including direct observation, oral history and critical arts-based inquiry. Each has their areas of strength when trying to extract the representations of experience that is at the heart of interpretive inquiry, but none seemed to be as suited as the interview for answering my research question. Direct observation would allow for the 'actions' in behaviour to come to the forefront, but I am also interested in the 'why' behind those actions. Oral history, could account for some of the 'why' but tends to keep the dialogue more 'open-ended' and may not keep the dialogue focused on the phenomenon of study (Denzin & Lincoln, 2011). Using a more semi-structured approach to the interviewing process, allows me to focus the dialogue on the specific issues related to the decision-making practice. Although a critical-arts based inquiry might be suitable due to the chosen industry of study, it situates its inquiry within the 'artist-as-researcher', and uses the '*aesthetics, methods, and practices of the ...arts*' (Denzin & Lincoln, 2011, p. 415). This thesis looks at but one *business* practice – SDM - and does not intersect at the borders of art performance and research.

In addition to personal interviewing, other methods can be used to capture data within cases; often the use of secondary sources, archival records and direct observation can assist in securing an in-depth understanding of the phenomena beyond what any one data collection method is able to do, enabling the researcher to capture a more 'complete' and comprehensive account of the practice (Bryman & Bell, 2007). By using additional data sources like field notes on direct observation and artefact analysis, it facilitates a more comprehensive investigation of influences beyond the actor's interpretation of the events and takes into consideration objective and demographic influences. These influences at the micro-level include individual dispositions, the type and quantity of capital an actor possesses and their personal biography. When looking at the habitus of the firm or meso-level, using cases enables an investigation of the interactions between individuals and groups, and the power structures, practices and politics between them. A clearly defined macro level or field enables the research to be

situated in a context that shapes and reshapes the understandings and reactions in relation to the perceived environment (Nord, 2005).

To answer my research question and enquire about their habitus while interpreting the practice of decision-making within the firm and the field in which the firm operates, I determined that the most suitable data collection technique would be the semi-structured interview. Using the interview as a primary source for data when using Bourdieu's theory is not unique to this study. Previous research on the habitus and decision-making has also relied on the interview as a source for data collection. Table 1 below outlines the different studies and approaches that have been used by other researchers to look empirically at the subconscious and conscious predispositions of an actor and the influences that surround the decision-making practice in organisations. This would suggest that the interview is a reliable and suitable approach when using Bourdieu as a methodological framework for a study of this kind.

Table 1 – Select Studies of Subconscious and Conscious Decision-Making

Study	Investigation	Method Used
McDonough (2006)	Habitus	Unstructured interviews
Mutch (2003)	Habitus	Interviews, questionnaire, direct observation, documents
Sayce (2006)	Habitus	Semi-structured Interviews
Lieberman-Yaconi, Hooper & Hutchings (2010)	Decision-making	Semi-structured interviews for study of a case (unit of analysis being the decision)
Kauer, Prinzessin zu Waldeck and Schäffer (2007)	Decision-making	Interviews and questionnaire

The interview allows for a targeted approach and a rich description of the personal experiences of the decision-making practice, as the actor perceives it. However, along with this intimate perspective comes personal bias. The respondents may feel the interviewer wants to hear certain things and could

adapt their responses to the interest of the researcher and thus provide information that is less true and accurate than their perception.

Semi-structured interviews encourage flexibility during discussions while providing guidance in data collection. Using this type of method also allows for an active engagement between the parties to explore new areas of enquiry that may not have been discovered. To avoid moving into an irrelevant concept, however, a theory driven schedule of topics that acted as an '*aide-memoire*' for the interview was used for guidance – see *Appendix C*.

Semi-structured interviews also allow for a more robust description of events, interpretations, accounts of experiences and context that more casual, surveys or other data collecting sources may not provide. Bryman and Bell (2007) also indicate that using interviews enable the interviewee to 'answer in their own terms' and can facilitate unusual or unexpected responses that can lead to exploring new areas that may arise. For this research, the semi-structured interview enabled the respondents to reflect upon the influences and process involved in their decision-making practice. For each specific decision that was discussed the respondents could elaborate on the actions taken, or inactions, on their part, and by other participants of the process and why and what factors may have contributed to the specific outcome. Semi-structured interviews also allowed me to mine deeper into the meaning and motivations behind such action. The time for reflexivity and ability to capture further insight made the semi-structured interview a particularly attractive choice for collecting data specific to the influences the personal and firm-level habitus has on the decision-making practice.

4.3 GAINING ACCESS

Gaining access for research can be a challenging process, especially for firms within the music industry. Access was obtained through my own professional network and then through a careful selection of firms. This is discussed in more detail in section 4.4. Once contact was made with the owners or managers of those firms, permission to conduct the interviews and gain access to relevant data was sought by an introductory letter sent through email

correspondence - *Appendix C*. The research agenda was made explicit to the respondents and the potential use of the data and implications of the study were made clear. *Appendix A* lists the participants involved in the study. Pseudonyms were used to protect their identity for confidentiality purposes. In addition, further details of the interview are also listed including dates, times and length of the interviews. Of all the thirty-six individuals and twenty firms contacted, only one declined to participate in the study due to his desire for confidentiality and unfamiliarity with the research process.

4.4 DATA SOURCE AND COLLECTION

4.4.1 Interviewing

The fieldwork was carried out in two distinct phases. The first consisted of eleven interviews that were used as pre-interviews. This stage enabled me to fine-tune questions and adjust the procedures when data collection ensued for the second stage. Grbich (2007) describes this technique as a 'recursive spiral,' in which the research process starts with defining the question, data collection, preliminary analysis, then continually refining the question and/or method and going back out into the field, until no new data emerge. Differing from a 'pilot study' or 'pre-test' in which data are typically not used for a full-scale study, the data within the pre-interview process were used and constituted an actual part of the research. Most interviews were done individually, unless not feasible due to the professional constraints of the interviewee. However, if an interview was conducted simultaneously with another person involved in the decision-making practice being present, each individual was presented with the same questions. Conducting the interview with more than one person present often led to memory recall that may not have occurred if the interview was conducted individually. The dialogue of the semi-structured interview was guided by sixteen topics – *Appendix C*. The approach was altered slightly in the second phase of the interview to reflect the position and responsibility, within or outside of the firm, of the individual that was involved in the decision practice.

A total of forty-three interviews with thirty-six respondents were conducted over a one and a half year period. Five were follow-up interviews

where further information or clarification of data was needed after initial data analysis was conducted. In addition, a third follow-up interview was required with two of the interviewees. Each interview lasted between 45 minutes and two hours. Consent was obtained for each by the owner/manager and all firm employees that were involved in the decision-making practice. This process proceeded in two phases. First, I conducted an initial interview with the owner/manager in which self-identification of what he or she believed to be a firm-specific, strategic decision was conducted followed by the schedule of questions designed to facilitate answering the research question. Second, I interviewed the remaining employees and/or stakeholders involved in this practice.

I proceeded to inform the interviewees of the research agenda and asked them to provide permission to record and publish material. In addition, individuals were granted the ability to withdraw from the research at any time if they felt expectations were no longer being met. Assurance of confidentiality through the use of pseudonyms for the individual as well as the firm was also discussed and given. Digital recording devices were used to capture the data. All interviews were conducted in-person and face-to-face, with the exception of four, in which the interviews were done electronically via Skype. The use of on-line interviewing in these cases was due to logistical matters and allowed for similar interaction with rich communication between the interviewer and interviewee with voice and a variety of visuals.

As mentioned, the interview was only one method utilised for these cases, additional data collection occurred through direct observation and note-taking at the firms' headquarters. Specifically, the capture of evidence regarding company culture and employee interaction, the décor and layout of offices were also included in the initial assessment of company culture and values. In order to build upon this analysis, artefacts in the form of company emails, when supplied and were relevant, were coded to the criteria set forth in the research agenda. In addition, company websites and social media sites were analysed to add further context and to determine the values important to the firm, as they wanted to be branded to their stakeholders. Magazines were also used,

specifically trade magazines such as *Billboard* and *MusicRow*, to analyse chart positioning and relevant publicity.

The idea of data saturation is one that is not specified and rather ambiguous and is often left to the discretion of the researcher. Here, the quality and quantity of the data obtained was deemed appropriate when nothing new emerged from the transcripts of the interviews and other data collected. Since the respondents were asked to elaborate on their own personal actions within the decision practice, the interview and subsequent follow-up interviews allowed for reflexivity and a description of the practice.

4.4.2 Reflection and Analysis of the Pre-Study

The pre-study was a useful test for the research design. It allowed for greater clarity in the filtering process used in making choices. It enabled a refining of the topics used during the interview, and aided my decision to collect data from multiple sources, including social media sites, websites and Billboard charts, and clarified coding procedures. Furthermore, after the initial interviews were conducted in the pre-study, I began my data analysis which helped to decide the firm type that would be best suited to answer the research questions.

In one particular company, Water Toss Music, the themes and vignettes from interviewee's responses revealed little information regarding strategic decisions in the music industry, especially when compared to the other firms and decisions that I was studying at the same time. Although evidence of heuristics and planning were emerging, there was little discussed that would add to the thesis. I determined that this was due to the firm's business model. Water Toss Music was not directly involved with the marketing and promotion of recorded music and did not exhibit the economically and culturally driven characteristics of a firm that functions within the music industry. Although they were initially chosen due to their involvement with the hiring of musicians for the production of events, it was not a model suited to the challenges and opportunities that music industry firms confront in their SDM, which this research was seeking to uncover. They more naturally met the criteria of an events management firm that just happened to hire musicians. The company was removed from the list of firms that formed part of this study and the focus remained on those companies

that that were directly involved in the marketing and promotion of recorded music.

In addition to the filtering of the company type, the pre-study also confirmed where the interviews would take place. Conducting the interviews within the workplace helped put the interviewee at ease and enabled me to take notes on certain behaviours and inquire about awards or artefacts displayed. At that time, I decided that I would continue, whenever possible, to conduct the interviews at the respondents' workplaces. Furthermore, the pre-study helped refine the topics to be discussed within the interview. After using my '*aide-mémoire*', I noticed that certain topics produced more detailed and interesting results than others. Therefore, if I noticed that the interviewee was concerned about time, or was fidgeting, I would focus on certain topics that were more relevant to the discussion.

Moreover, after conducting the pre-interviews, it became clear that additional sources of data would help in illuminating the subtleties in some of the decisions. Therefore, I looked at all supporting artefacts that were relevant, including websites, social media sites, Twitter accounts and/or Billboard charts to which I could get access.

Lastly, the pre-study interviews enabled me to begin refining the coding and analysis procedures. Prior to the interviews, broad categories were established that included concepts from Bourdieu's practice theory and the SDM framework established through the literature review. Specifically, the pre-study enabled the creation of sub-categories of these broad classifications. If something of interest was uncovered that did not fit into the established groupings, new categories and codes were generated. For example, the coding of 'aggrandisement' was created along with appropriate sub-categories such as 'name dropping', which included evidence of 'prominent artists worked with'.

After an analysis of the pre-study data, the initial research questions were not changed. Each interview, with the exception of those from Water Toss Music, was providing compelling data that would later be considered for inclusion within a case. The emerging themes and descriptive vignettes heightened my interest in finding answers to my questions. During the pre-study, the research

included an enquiry into the broader SME firm size and it was not until further case selection that it was refined to include only micro-enterprises.

4.4.3 Selection and Dissemination of Firms and Cases

A deciding moment in the research occurred after the results of the pre-study were presented during the transfer interview from MPhil to PhD. I decided that the data being collected would be better reported in the form of cases to allow for the Bourdieusian methodology, thus enabling an account of both the objective and subjective characteristics of the practice. I then decided that each individual strategic decision would be the unit of analysis (case). This allowed me to bring in the actor, the firm and the industry into context more easily. The subtleties of the actor's past experience and age as influential factors would prove difficult to link to the practice if all the evidence was not connected to a specific decision.

After the preliminary findings were showing promise in answering the research questions, adjustments to the choice of firms, collection of data and analysis procedures were undertaken. I decided that additional companies to be considered in the study would be selected through personal contacts and recommendations from previously interviewed owners. With one exception, all initial contacts at these new firms came from the owner or manager. Once interest in participating in the study was acknowledged, I followed-up to confirm the research agenda. This correspondence also followed the protocol I established in the written disclosure in *Appendix C*. After direct communication had been made, the individual owners agreed to meet with me and discuss the SDM practice of their company and, more specifically, talk about themselves, as the primary decision maker.

This led to an additional fourteen companies from which I sought further data. The final firm came from an 'up-and-coming' local band, two of the three members of which came from one of my classes at Belmont University. Through personal conversations with these members, I felt that they could offer insight from recent decisions they had made. These twenty companies that I had now identified fitted the more refined criteria of being 'directly involved in the marketing and promotion of recorded music'. These included record labels,

artist management companies, producers, entertainment attorneys, marketing firms, artists and production companies and consultants. By the time the final company had been selected for inclusion, data analysis had been on going and data saturation was beginning to emerge. The last company ultimately confirmed what I was already seeing through the other decisions and helped to limit the number of companies.

Approximately a year and a half from the beginning of data collection, the analysis of the forty decisions that emerged from the twenty firms began to show patterns in their description of the practice. Since I decided earlier that cases would be used as a way to present the evidence, eight decisions from four firms were selected as an optimal number based on previously accepted criteria established by Eisenhardt (1989) and Yin (2009). For those four firms, two decisions from each were chosen to portray the consistencies and differences among the actors' practices and circumstances. Therefore, the decisions listed in Table 2 below were chosen from the firms identified. Of the forty discussed in the interviews, some exhibited more interesting descriptions. Those with a clearer and more insightful depiction of the practice were selected for consideration. This quickly narrowed the number of cases down to eighteen. The final eight were then selected based upon my experience working in the industry. For one specific decision-type, the 'artist selection', or the choosing of what artist to 'sign' to the label, was mentioned by more than one manager. In this situation, I chose the one that was the most illuminating. I decided the case from Hat Punk, LLC would be included in the final eight cases, even though it was discussed in 'general terms' and not to a specific artist they had 'signed'. Lastly, the final cases for inclusion were those from whom I knew I could get further access and arrange follow-up interviews, if necessary.

Table 2 – Select Decision Cases

Cases	Firm
Case # 1 – Radio Promotion Strategy	Kapooshki Music
Case # 2 - Expansion and Diversification	Kapooshki Music
Case # 3 - Marketing & Promotion	Cisco Newman
Case # 4 – Team Expansion	Cisco Newman
Case # 5 – Client Acquisition	Bench Puppet Entertainment
Case # 6 – Firm Relocation	Bench Puppet Entertainment
Case # 7 – Company Buy-out	Hat Punk, LLC
Case # 8 – Talent Selection	Hat Punk, LLC

During the interviews, I asked questions about specific strategic actions that had been taken by the individuals. Instead of imposing a specific definition upon the interviewees, the strategic decisions were self-identified by the owner-manager. They were then used as the unit of analysis for the case rather than the firm as in previous research. For example Hickson *et al.* (1986) and Dean and Sharfman (1996), show that decision processes can often vary widely in any one organisation. Looking at the decision rather than the firm allows for a more reflexive and pluralistic approach to the investigation within the context of the organisation. After the decisions were identified by the owner/manager, they were then limited by *when* the decision or new direction was taken. Huber and Power (1985) found that moderate amounts of time did not substantially affect the recollection or practice surrounding the decision, but Golden (1992) posits that those accounts greater than two years old tend to be remembered more inaccurately. Therefore, those decisions or new directions taken within the past two years were chosen. As will be shown in Chapters 5 to 8, the decisions chosen for analysis are in various stages of execution with some outcomes already known by the decision-makers. Understanding that these varying degrees of completion and success may result in recall bias, compensation was made whenever possible by interviewing multiple individuals involved in the decision practice. In addition to compensating for recall bias, using multiple

individuals and their perspectives helped to mitigate discrepancies and provided more detail.

As previously discussed, in addition to the semi-structured interviews, I took notes on employee interaction, as well as the use of artefacts in the firm to reinforce status and other observable characteristics that directly impacted, or were a part of, the decision practice. These notes and documents were used along with the interview data and contained information about office locations, team demographics, financial performance and other specific information relevant to the strategic decision that was made.

4.4.4 Managing Ongoing Relationships with Respondents

Often access to proprietary information in music industry firms is difficult to achieve. Industry executives tend to be cautious and sceptical because of the on-going pursuit by 'would-be' artists or unknown professionals that seek their attention. As in other industries, relationships you develop and maintain are critical to getting things done. This was evident in many of the decisions in this study as managers talked about their relationships with others and the mutual trust they had developed when conducting business.

As many of the relationships established in this study were new, approaching the respondents with sensitivity was needed. Although a certain level of 'mistrust' may have existed at the start, any scepticism was quickly replaced by a desire for mutual understanding of what was being investigated or, at the very least, the interviewee took a more positive attitude towards the interview process.

4.5 THE CODING PROCESS AND DATA REDUCTION

All interviews were transcribed and entered into NVivo 9 qualitative data analysis software for easier organisation, manipulation and retrieval of the data. Respondents were asked to verify transcripts and interview notes for accuracy, as suggested by Lincoln and Guba (1985). I used a thematic analysis on the data, which included the capturing of key words and themes with a constant comparative analysis. Here, the most descriptive and illustrative comments

were used as empirical evidence. The data were coded based upon central themes first guided by Bourdieu's practice theory and then by the theoretical concepts established in Chapter 2. To aid in more thorough data analysis, I used conceptually ordered displays (Miles & Huberman, 1994) to assist in interpreting and explaining the theoretical concepts outlined in the methodology. Using the data in this way enabled them to be analysed for similarities, differences and conceptual patterns in a much clearer and efficient way.

Coding began with the identification of the most common and relevant phrases and themes that had bearing on the research question. Several themes either began to confirm some of the theoretical insights already established in the literature or began to show evidence of concepts not yet explored. Once identified, a more thorough review of the interviews and the already coded sections were analysed and interpreted according to the established Bourdieusian framework. I then grouped the codes according to their theoretical concepts and then sub-categorised by the theoretical framework established by previous research. A total of 122 codes (*See Appendix B*) from ten major themes were created within this framework and used as the evidence trail for each of the cases being used.

The coded data consisted of words and themes from the respondents that were used to capture a specific meaning and context. In total, there were over 218,000 words that were transcribed with 1,751 relevant quotes that were derived from the coding process. From those 1,771 quotes, 110 of the most common/relevant themes were used to describe the research findings and used in the corresponding cases. In addition, twenty pages of observation notes were also used to identify further themes and concepts, about twenty websites were explored to confirm people, places, awards and other pertinent data discussed or mentioned throughout the interviews and the notes taken. In addition, two trade journals were also used to confirm chart positioning and multiple email threads were analysed to capture discrepancies or inconsistencies from the transcribed interviews.

4.6 CONCLUSION

In summary, although research has examined the social and cultural influences on the music industry, notably the recent changes in economic worth (Wikström, 2012) and the impact of file sharing on firms' business models, (Michel, 2003) there is a paucity of research in two areas. First, how do owners and managers within American popular recorded music industry micro-enterprises make strategic decisions? Second, using the Bourdieu conceptualisation of decision-making as interplay among social, cultural and economic capital, habitus, and field, what are the key influences on decision choices in this cultural and creative industry? These questions, along with the characteristics of the music industry as established by Caves (2000) and Bourdieu (1996, 1993a) and with the identified gaps within the literature, led to the current research. The research questions are answered by using a multiple case approach using the strategic decision as the unit of analysis. Primary data collection was completed through the use of semi-structured interviews with thematic analysis of the data to generate the most descriptive quotes portraying the decision practice. The following four chapters will present that evidence.

5. Empirical Findings and Analysis I

CASE #1: RADIO PROMOTION STRATEGY

Enterprise: Kapooshki Music

Sector: Christian music

Owner: Joe Jackson

Turnover: \$750,000 annually

This first case is about making a decision to pursue an Adult Contemporary (AC) radio promotion strategy for *The Groove*, a regional Christian recording artist, and their most recent radio single. *The Groove* is a regional band that is contracted to a management deal with Kapooshki Music, which operates within the Christian Music industry – a niche market of the popular recorded music industry. This decision, as with all others in this study, has been self-identified by the owner of the firm, as one that is strategic in nature. Strategic decisions typically, but not always, require a substantial amount of economic capital, relative to the net worth of the firm in order to be effectively executed. Often, if the owner/manager identifies a decision as being strategic, that particular decision has probably had a profound impact on, or utilisation of, the firm's resources. Evidence of the resources used, among other considerations; including influences upon the decision practice will be discussed.

This decision, to pursue a specific radio promotion strategy was intentional, yet had evolved and emerged from previous decisions regarding radio promotions. *The Groove's* previous album release pursued a conservative Contemporary Hit Radio (CHR) campaign that achieved the aims set. This time, however, considering shifting market forces, and the previous success obtained by *The Groove* with this strategy, Joe Jackson felt there might be value in pursuing a more aggressive Adult Contemporary (AC) radio campaign. This decision to be made is which strategy to pursue, with the latter risking more economic capital and greater use of social and symbolic capital to implement. Considering this, Joe felt it was worth the potential outcome. His assumption was that the greater the exposure, the greater the potential sales and return on capital invested. Thus:

'...trying to do the AC charts instead of doing CHR...number thirty on the AC charts has like three million listeners a week or something. And that's equal to like number one on the CHR chart.'

The overall aim of the decision is to increase song popularity among potential consumers while achieving the highest possible chart ranking. 'Charts' in the recorded music industry reflect the relative popularity of songs or albums during any given week and are often used as a sense-making and sense-giving form of objectified cultural capital, as it is a manifested form of social relations that embodies current industry and market knowledge. They may be organised by genre, for example, country, R&B/Hip Hop, Christian, and Latin, and can reflect activity for an individual song or album, depending on the chart type. When factoring in chart statistics, again depending upon chart type, they reflect a numerical hierarchy ranking based upon sales and airplay of the specific song or album. Although there is no direct economic return that correlates with a specific ranking on the Billboard charts, they do represent a sense of symbolism of status and power that has been placed upon it by field actors. They assist in determining the 'inter-organisational' relationships (Anand & Peterson, 2000) among field actors and are used as vehicles of change in the power shifts that occur between them and firm dominance. The symbolic capital they represent, for the participating artist and those associated with their success, be it management, record label or other team inputs (Caves, 2000) can later be turned into other forms of capital, which then aid in actor recognition.

Specifically, the Christian Music industry relies on reporting by various bodies compiled by Billboard. These charts include the 'Top Christian Albums' and 'Hot Christian Songs' charts, the Christian Adult Contemporary (AC), Christian Contemporary Hit Radio (CHR), Christian Rock, and Inspirational (INSPO). The relevant charts under consideration in this decision by Joe and Kapooshki Music include the Christian CHR and Christian AC charts. Each caters to a specific audience of listeners with the most relevant differentiating factors being genre, number of reporting stations and audience reach. As Jackson said:

'Yeah, the deal is that the rock charts are more indie [independent] oriented and easy to get into, but the audience sizes are really small.'

CHR represents a smaller audience size and potentially a smaller consumer base for the firm. Although Kapooshki Music has seen prior success on the CHR charts and their respective audience, here they are considering the option of pursuing the more 'coveted' and 'prestigious' AC audience. This will enable the firm to use the already obtained symbolic capital obtained through the past CHR ranking as a sounding board for this attempt at using the appropriate resources to accumulate potentially further status, while reaching an even larger audience base. In addition to expanding the firm's success, the industry environment has also undergone changes allowing for opportunity that once may not have existed for them. Joe, in discussing these changes, commented:

'So that's why we chose CHR then... fast forward three/four years, well now AC has gotten hotter, so it's moving more in our direction, our bands have gotten better and their ballads now fit AC.'

The changing industry environment and consumer preferences have allowed for this new opportunity, as Joe perceives it. Kapooshki Music needed to consider whether they were in a position to capitalise from past success in order to further their own position within the industry. The internal and external environments had changed and, as will be shown, Joe Jackson carefully negotiated his existing social, economic and cultural capital along with his own personal dispositions, the Kapooshki habitus and symbolic capital as confirmation of his strategic decision-making practice.

5.1 FIRM BACKGROUND AND DECISION CONTEXT

Before further analysis of this decision and the influences upon its practice is undertaken, the context in which it was made must be made explicit. Bourdieu (1990b) argued that in order to understand the social construction of reality, the researcher must take into consideration both the objective and subjective dichotomy, for he believed you cannot have one without the other. For

this case and all subsequent decisions, the objective elements include the firm in which the decision is being made, the industry in which the firm conducts business and the demographic characteristics of the actor who is making the decision. The subjective elements will include the relational practices of the actor and my own interpretation in making sense of, and relating, their stories. This will be done by looking at the individual dispositions, behaviours and practices of the actor in the decision-making practice.

This, and each subsequent case, is laid out in a manner that first establishes the context in which the decision was made, that is, the objective factors that have a bearing or influence on the decision-making practice. The factors will be discussed first and include the industry sector of the broader recorded music industry in which the firm operates, the attributes of the firm and the actors involved in the decision-making practice. Second, a closer look at the decision itself will be undertaken. A dissection of its practice will be carried out by first looking at the influences upon the decision before discussing the role that habitus, capital and doxa have upon it.

5.1.1 Christian Music Industry

For this case, and the one to follow within Chapter 5, the decision under investigation was made within the Christian Music Industry, a sector of the broader recorded music industry that records, produces, markets and promotes the sale of Gospel, Contemporary and/or Alternative Christian music. Often, the gatekeepers, those who control access to the decision-makers, such as the artists and consumers within this field, strike a balance between the economic success of the music being promoted and the spiritual message that may naturally conflict with the commercial success of that music.

One of the difficulties these opposing concepts face is the challenge of garnering widespread acceptance and popularity within the broader popular recorded music industry. Bourdieu's position on the influence of religion in social practice is vague. What he does speak about is more organisational, as in the hierarchy of the church, but little is articulated about the influence of religious beliefs on the social practice of an actor (Verter, 2003). Within this case, it is important to note that the religious beliefs of an actor that works in

this industry will have a bearing upon one's habitus, thus likely to influence the decision practice. The idea of religion and music becomes an economic issue worth studying when one takes the message of the religion, interprets it, produces it in a manner of entertainment and packages it for mass production in the name of enterprise. As stated, these two fractions tend to oppose one another, yet must exist and cohabit as one. Therefore, religious influence must be considered as a relevant factor in the social action of actors that are dedicated and committed to the strategic decision-making practice in this field.

5.1.2 Organisation of the Firm

'Kapooshki Music', owned and operated by Joe Jackson, is the legal name for the group of wholly owned subsidiaries, each a separate legal entity, operating within the Christian recorded music industry. The separate legal entities that encompass this firm include Stealth Artist Agency, LLC, Kapooshki Music, Inc. Sanctity, LLC, Liquid, LLC and Little Avenue, LLC. Descriptions of each of these entities below help to establish the organisational context in which this decision was made.

Stealth Artist Agency (Booking)

'Stealth Artist Agency' is the booking division that primarily serves the developing Christian artist, *The Groove*, in the church, general music or college market. Gross sales for Stealth Artist Agency exceeded \$500,000 in 2009 and \$750,000 in 2010. They recently developed an efficient online booking process that has encouraged continuous growth while providing the opportunity to license the programme to other agencies. This aspect of the business has the most proportional return on investment and is seen as one of the firm's true 'cash cows'.

Kapooshki Music (Record Label)

'Kapooshki Music' is the record label division of the company, serving primarily faith-based artists. Kapooshki noted successes include 2008 recognition as the 8th best label in the world for Christian Pop / CHR radio according to R&R (Radio and Records) industry charts and the holding of

international distribution rights with a major recorded music distributor. This business is noted by Jackson as the most capital 'intense', and will often see broad fluctuations in profit and loss, year on year.

Sanctity (Music Publishing)

'Sanctity' is the music publishing company of the firm. They have had some modest success placing several songs in TV/film including movie trailers, and a major US network promotion. They also have a limited partnership with a major music publisher for the administration of copyrights.

Liquid (Consulting Business)

'Liquid' is the consulting arm of the business serving primarily musicians, through business-to-business consulting. It is also involved with 'Little Avenue', and several universities and churches.

Little Avenue (Live Event)

'Little Avenue' was co-founded by owner Joe Jackson. It is an annual, major, Christian Music festival with about 20,000 attendees. Joe Jackson serves on the board of Little Avenue and still considers it part of the Kapooshki portfolio. Although he does not run it directly, there is still an active relationship between the two.

5.1.3 Firm Habitus and its Competitive Advantage

Bourdieu (1984) argued that large groups of individuals may also share a habitus and that firms could occupy a position where the micro-individual and macro-structural environments converge. The firm's habitus can also reflect the company's strategic intent and culture that give insight into company values and the norms, systems and beliefs of the employees that work within it. This strategic intent can provide context and intentionality for what influences strategic decision-making within the field, and how.

Kapooshki Music identified its key competitive advantage as providing entertainment services, through the live performance of its artists to churches and church affiliated organisations that are looking to spend \$500-\$1,500 in

Christian music entertainment. The owner/manager of Kapooshki music, Joe Jackson, also sees the firm as a *'big fish in a small pond'*. As he commented:

'My theory was like...would you rather be the number forty guy on a major league baseball team roster, or be the number one guy on their farm team?'

Throughout the discussion, Jackson indicates his preference to see his organisation have a larger impact in a smaller market. This was his primary rationale for locating the firm in a 'non-traditional' music epicentre, or what he refers to as an *'up and coming'* music scene. This town, the size of 50,000 people, is in stark contrast to being one of many players in a regional business cluster for music in the United States, like Nashville, New York, Los Angeles, or one of the many other, even less prominent ones from Atlanta to New Orleans. In addition to a desire for a regional dominance of the firm, Jackson also alluded to his propensity and his team's role as more visionary rather than tactical. This visionary strategy, as he sees it, is a way of differentiating himself, his team and his company from those with whom he may conduct business. As he said during his interview:

'we talk about a spectrum between artist management as being hyper admin oriented and then much more visionary strategy. And we put ourselves in the camp of being strategic; more like we're the chess playing camp. The pocket protector kinda guys out there, we're not them. But I do try to surround myself with staff who are more detail oriented and have more time so I can play the chess pieces.'

He is the atypical leader that surrounds himself with people that can take on what he is unable to do, and he allows the team to play to its strengths. He understands his role within the team and is not afraid to seek advice or provide direction when needed, especially with regard to larger decisions that need to be made.

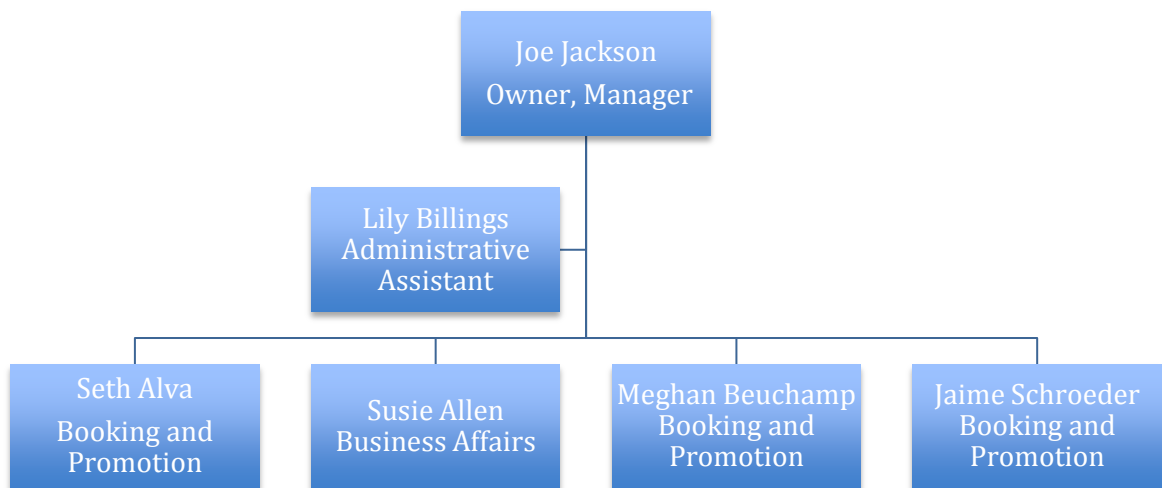
Kapooshki Music and its employees take the industry they work in seriously. All employees are self-described and devoted Christians that can personally relate to the Christian Music industry in which they work. They respect the symbolism instilled in the industry's award shows, sales and airplay charts, and certifications. Even though the basic industry doxa is understood, the owner/manager of Kapooshki Music does not always see himself as playing by

them. This and the idea that Joe is not afraid to do what he feels is more in-line with his own personal philosophy or engrained dispositions on how to play by those 'rules of the game,' is evidenced by his approach to A & R:

'I don't like to see the band perform before I sign them, and National is all built on "oh you have to see the show". No, you got to get to know the character of the band. Who cares if you like it or not? Those people are all high on themselves thinking they can see something that other people can't see. You are an idiot. Go to the table and see who sold the merch, cuz I wanna know which artists the fans are connecting with.'

Joe's statements here exemplify his feelings towards the industry standard or 'typical' rules of operation. Usually, when labels seek new talent, A & R managers insist on seeing the entire 'package' the artist has to offer, including their live show. Joe on the other hand is less concerned about how they perform, claiming that the one making the decision to sign them to the label cannot possibly tell whether they will be a hit. Instead, he is more concerned about who is there seeing them, and who is purchasing their music. This, he claims, will give him better insight into who the band's customers are and whether he can establish a relationship with them. He is more concerned about band 'character,' then he is about the inherent talent that may exist. This he claims is indicative of his perspective and his 'out of the box' thinking and decision-making.

Figure 1 - Kapooshki Organisation Chart



5.1.4 The Actors and Personal-level Habitus

Joe Jackson – Owner, Manger – Kapooshki

Age: 34

Gender: Male

Education: J.D. – Valparaiso School of Law (2007)

B.A. – Biblical Literature, Indiana Wesleyan (2000)

B.S. – Biology, Indiana Wesleyan (2000)

B.S. - Economics, Indiana Wesleyan (1999)

Susie Allen – Administrative Assistant, Sales

Age: 29

Gender: Female

Education: B.S. – Psychology, Indiana Wesleyan University

Additional Coursework: A few Economics Classes

Lily Billings – Booking, Sales

Age: 23

Gender: Female

Joe Jackson

The key decision maker, owner/manager of Kapooshki Music, Joe Jackson, has a strong commitment to personal development. He values the cultural capital that he has acquired through his upbringing, institutionally through his education and generally by the skills he has developed by working in the industry. Priding himself in learning from the *'ground up,'* Joe began his career *'laying out chairs at a show while he was in college.'* He speaks highly of his family and friends *'seeing them as often as he can'* and has a desire to maintain strong commitments and attachments with them. As he said at the interview:

'I had just spent the week with the extended family in North Carolina I moved one cousin [here] who was more like a sister. So she's been here for the past five or six years. So she's my connection to family. If she goes home then I go home. Her mom and dad came to visit us, my aunt and uncle. So and she just had a baby in January and we are always with him.'

As a self-described *'people person,'* Joe states clearly that *'relationships and depth of [them] mean a lot more to [him] than to the average person.'* In addition, he is attracted to the idea of an academic life and desire to increase his understanding of the world by developing his skills in the workplace and the classroom. He holds his earned degrees in the highest regard and contemplates further studies to broaden his perspectives:

'I would like to read more, write, teach...going back to school and retraining for something completely different; A PhD in public policy interests me...something like medical or national security...'

He is a steward of learning, appreciates it and accepts it as part of who he is, whether it is specific to the industry he currently works in, or something entirely unrelated that would ensure continued learning.

Joe began his career in the recorded music industry, like most, in a menial job surrounding himself with the music and artists he grew to love growing up. His first job provided the opportunity to arrange chairs at a concert where he was attending college. He later got involved in student activities, began booking bands and later became student body President. He further explained:

'By the end of the following year I was student body president, and I kept my student activities thing which was unusual. Partly...because of the stipend, party cuz I was doing concerts. Music was always part of my life, so that makes sense'

While still in school, Joe was already exhibiting the drive, leadership motivation, hard work, and independent mind-set of an entrepreneur (Kirkpatrick & Locke, 1991), characteristics that will help contribute to his thinking and reasoning, and might explain why he makes decisions in the manner he does. He does not shy away from hard work as long as he is doing what he is passionate about. This passion comes through in observed behaviours and personal interaction with Joe. He exhibits high energy, is always 'on the go' and takes initiative with natural grace. Having these traits coupled with his work ethic, and having music '*always a part of [his] life,*' drew him to start Kapooshki Music. These personality traits and vocational strengths led to success early on in his career for Joe giving him a '*taste*' for success:

'I think the largest conference we ever had (in college) was when I ran the concert for a youth conference and we had like 5,000 kids come and we packed up the arena and that never happens.'

Such a successful turnout for a budding entrepreneur instilled in him a confidence and desire to continue building a career in this field. It ultimately led to his first job within the music industry as a booking agent for *Zero Sum Christian Times*. There he found further success, which drew him to follow his strength and desire to learn more about the field by pursuing his education in law. While in school Joe sought out other jobs outside the industry; this experience was short-lived and reminded him of his natural attraction towards the music industry:

'But when I came to Law School I volunteered at a used car dealer, selling cars. I worked at a pawn shop for a day, that was cool, the second day they moved to another location and I started handling guns which freaked me out cuz I'm Canadian and I was like I can't do this I'll just keep promoting my concerts.'

Drawing on his past, positive experience with promoting concerts, he felt compelled to start managing his first artist informally, which eventually led to the formation of Kapooshki Music.

Susie Allen

Susie, the firm's administrative assistant and internal sales representative, comes from a typical self-described 'middle class' background where she was born and raised in Colorado Springs, Colorado. There, she attended grade school through eighth grade before moving to the state of Michigan where she completed high school and then began attending Indiana Wesleyan University pursuing a Bachelor of Science degree in Psychology. While attending Indiana Wesleyan she met her future employer Joe Jackson and others within the local recorded music industry field. This established a relationship that would later lay the groundwork for her and Joe's personal development, trust, interactions and future decision-making within the firm. Prior to her employment in the recorded music industry, Susie did case management for a mental health centre and worked in childcare. Later, she was hired by Kapooshki Music to take care of the firm's business and administrative affairs. In addition to these responsibilities, she has also taken on other aspects related to her work in the music industry including booking and sales.

5.1.5 Resources Needed

The Sharing of Costs between the Firm and its Artists

Not all costs associated with this decision to pursue an AC radio strategy for *The Groove's* most recent single were direct economic capital expenditures to the firm. Industry doxa within this field tend to dictate the costs associated with managing an artist - as long as those costs are directly related to the furthering of the artist's career - are to be paid for by the artist. On occasion, a third party, often a record label or owner of the master recording may advance the costs for promoting a recorded song to radio. Since the band owned their own master recordings, much of the costs associated with this decision fell on them to finance, not forcing a direct expenditure on *The Groove*, even though Joe was the one ultimately making the decision. Having Joe make the decision and manage the process not only followed industry standards but also aided in the simplification and professionalism of the transaction.

'...and because we manage the band and they aren't actually on the record label, then they are responsible for those costs, so it would have actually been the band's resources, but we would have been helping them allocate that out.'

However, some costs for this decision are not directly expensed to the artists, but do fall into risks taken on by the firm.

'And then it also costs money to create a radio campaign - but in that case we already have Awesome Promotions and his name is Tio...he's the one that is calling the radio stations, he's then pushing the single, tracking how much it's playing and we have to pay him to do that, so that costs money'

Although Kapooshki does not have this particular band signed to the label division, it is able to use the resources available to it from its other wholly owned subsidiaries. Because the record label division already established a professional network, Joe found that he could benefit from the synergy of the two, ultimately limiting the economic risks. Often, the owner of the master recording, which is typically the record label, does promote, using the medium of radio. Since the band is in essence acting as its own label, the social and cultural capital available to Joe through the Kapooshki label division was better positioned to take on this risk on behalf of the band even though they would traditionally take on that role.

In addition to the up-front costs of radio testing and actual promotion, other economic incidentals were also a concern.

'Then the other big part of [this is] The Groove doing actual physical radio visits so that stations around the country are seeing who they are and are familiar with them, they want to play the song because they come. So that's obviously an expense too when you are having to travel.'

These financial implications are taken seriously by Joe and the band and evidently influence this decision-making practice. The underlying implications for expending this amount of capital lies in the assumption that those who can benefit from this decision could further increase their own possession of economic capital.

The Reliance upon Personal and Professional Networks

In addition to the financial resources needed for this decision, Joe relied upon his accumulated social capital as well. This was evidenced by the use of personal and professional networks including close personal relationships, as well as external advisors and consultants. He also understood the importance of those relationships, especially those he has within the radio promotion community. They would eventually prove relevant and important in this decision. He knew how to use them efficiently by capitalising on them in a manner that would be the most beneficial. In order for him to pursue this new strategy, Joe understood that he did not have the personnel, nor the economic resources, to cover as many individual promoters directly, as may have been needed to launch effectively an AC campaign. Therefore, he carefully selected those with the best connections and with whom he already had relationships.

'And each of those relationships that they build off the first radio single, they get ten more champions on the next radio single plus most of the people that liked you last time like you again.'

Knowing that those promoters had a previous favourable response, he also knew that if he had another quality product he could count on the social capital, his current professional network, of those promoters to aid in his objectives.

'He talks to other promoters and so it's exponential, it's not like one plus one equals two, it's like one plus one equals twenty.'

These networks can either make or break the success of his decision. What Joe is specifically referring to in his comments about the '*exponential*' effects alludes to the importance that social capital and habitus play within this field to build the momentum and excitement needed for songs to reach critical mass and hence commercial success. Even though technology and the advent of the Internet have had profound effects upon the industry, radio airplay is still the number one marketing and promotional strategy for commercially successful songs. If just one radio promoter convinces a programme director to play Joe's song, it will compel other programme directors at other radio stations also to play Joe's song. This can be attributed to the individual habitus of each radio programme

director. If momentum begins to build, they can claim that their judgement prior to critical mass was sounder. This would enable them to be 'recognised' for the ability to do so and that could lead to more power and recognition within their own field. Being recognised for having this level of cultural capital also equates to the potential symbolic capital that comes with hearing and supporting the 'next big thing.' Joe understands the leverage that this momentum can create within the field, therefore committing himself to the importance of focusing on, and establishing, this professional network. His experience to this point in the field has enabled him to see this play out over and over again, thereby reinforcing his own dispositions on the matter and impacting his decision choice of whether, or not, to pursue this more aggressive AC campaign over the more 'safe' CHR one.

Working with What You Know and the Quest for More Industry Knowledge

In addition to the economic and social resources needed, Joe also depends upon his prior learning experiences and on-going desire to further his field knowledge. The accumulated cultural capital prior to this decision enabled him not only to pursue this decision but also how he pursued and perceives it. The accumulation of certain knowledge and desire to continue increasing this capital was evidenced throughout the decision process. These behaviours are rooted in his general knowledge and skills that he has accumulated in part by his institutionalised credentials through his education, his desire to learn through his continuous reading of books and wanting to understand how things work. Joe, with his self-acknowledged '*modicum of intelligence and good intelligence quotient*' (IQ), has experience in practicing law, economics and free market discourse and, thus, is able to apply this to his understanding of the choice he needs to make in this decision.

In addition to his liberal arts education and skills that he has accumulated, cultural capital could be discerned in the understanding of the field. Having worked in the music industry for over fourteen years has led to knowledge in many sub-sectors, including how to negotiate terms on contracts, how to market and promote recordings and how to deal with the politics of

managing and booking artists. This has enabled him to use this information to aid in making his decisions.

'If we are doing Christian music or college music, thematically through all of this, those are the two worlds in which I know what I'm talking about.'

His understanding of both fields, Christian music and what he labelled as 'college music', would not be possible without his prior experience and early success in both, as evidenced in his individual habitus in Section 5.2.4.1 above. Each success encouraged further understanding as well as the confidence to continue pursuing this strategy that,

'...the thing that would be different between us is that I was bolder',

enabled him to take risks in hopes of accumulating more social and cultural capital. Joe's knowledge of marketing and promotion of albums is rooted in his success promoting live events in college. Knowing that with his knowledge and ideas he could succeed, he expanded his capital assets and boosted his confidence to continue:

'I've also done consulting for artists,' we have 'Little Avenue here' and the other legal entities that we are able to feed off of and learn from.'

After finding success by starting Kapooshki, bringing a set of investors on board within that time culminated with the success of a previous CHR radio promotion.

'...by the end of 2008 we were the number 8 CHR Christian radio label in the world. So, basically number 7 was Goatee – Toby Mac...(and I think that they had I think five hit singles. And we did too. But they have like say 6.2%, [of the airplay total] and we only had 4.8% of the airplay total.'

Throughout this industry-specific, cultural capital accumulation, Joe felt that he was equipped to take this potential risk in the manner he did.

'I may as well go, at this point in our career, with our experiences after AC.'

Although being hesitant in pursuing this strategy a few years earlier, his accumulated knowledge and confidence in a potentially positive outcome could be attributed to the success just discussed. Couple those successes with changing industry doxa, and the consumer shifts in preference, allowed for an opportunity to pursue the AC demographic. Understanding the genre and market in which he is targeting and working within similar live entertainment, management, booking, publishing and consulting, through which his business operates, gives him a wide industry spectrum of knowledge on which he may rely when assessing risk and outcomes.

In addition to institutionalised and embodied forms of cultural capital, evidence also shows the use of cultural capital in its objectified form prior to, and throughout, the decision practice.

'Yeah, So I'm watching SoundScan, I'm reading R and R, Christian Radio Weekly, which isn't around anymore, CCM update.'

These reporting services and trades enabled Joe to track current economic and industry trends through Nielson SoundScan reporting, which tracks album sales. Although no direct correlation between chart ranking and economic outcome has been observed, one can assume in most cases that the higher ranking on the chart, the more return on your investment is made and therefore more economic capital is accumulated. Due to its weekly reporting, Joe is able to track any on-going symbolic capital that might change through a weekly rise or fall on the charts of one of their artists they are promoting and then again the potential return on investment.

In addition to the weekly reporting and overall positioning within the marketplace, Joe is able to accumulate and utilise other forms of capital, specifically the on-going accumulation of cultural capital in the form of industry knowledge:

'So how do they make their decisions as to what they wanna play? They look at what's on the chart.'

Again, the charts and sales data from Nielson SoundScan provide the knowledge and information needed to conduct business on a day-to-day basis. If an artist is finding the success that they seek in a specifically designated marketing area (DMA), then Joe and his team can make decisions on how or where to invest further promotional dollars. This information, with which those decisions are made, can extend the life cycle of the artist and their releases, or help to determine when decline is irreversible and the return on investment is no longer at the levels desired. It is a recursive spiral that feeds on itself. Decision makers like Joe understand that what is being played by other actors in the field will likely benefit them and their listening audience as well. Joe understands this and knows that, if he can achieve a chart position on AC over CHR, the payoff can become more exponential, similar to the network that he discussed earlier. Staying apprised of current rankings on Christian Radio Weekly or CCM Update enables Joe to assess industry trends, which will then be used to influence the decision practice.

5.1.6 Influences on Decision

'Time is of the Essence' and the Changing Music Industry

Often *'time is of the essence'* when certain decisions need to be made in the creative industries (Caves, 2000). Timing of the decision and the potential outcome for swift or delayed action can have positive or negative consequences. Joe understood this and realised that external uncontrollable influences impact his decision practice as he contemplates the potential effects the timing would have on the desired outcome. *'So there's another issue, do we just wait?'* If waiting meant increased opportunity for success, it would have delayed his decision. However, just the opposite is also true. If he delayed the exploitation of this song within the AC format, then the opportunity could be lost. Joe expressed his concern about a delay, as it relates not only to the uncertainty of song exploitation and its financial return, but also as it applies to the content creators – the band.

'So that becomes an issue of timing. Well, is the band going to be in business in six months?'

If he waits to exploit the song in a timely manner, Joe may risk the band's desire for longevity. Their livelihood is *'on the line'*, and if progress towards promotion is not done effectively, efficiently and in a timely fashion, opportunity may be lost for maximum return:

'It might be easier for them. But more importantly, it's [the band] new network, its new team and their money, but it's not worth waiting six more months. We are gonna go ahead ourselves, because six more months is a whole semester that the band doesn't have radio airplay, so it doesn't increase those shows like I was talking about, it doesn't get kids singing their lyrics. The band is the primary business that needs to move forward, they need to do radio and they need to do it soon.'

If progress is not being made, often the creative individual is forced to seek other avenues of income generation for survival and the opportunity may be lost. The record label and other 'team input' resources, social, economic and symbolic capital could be put at risk.

Timing becomes quintessential in the industry, not only because of the opportunity to exploit the song, but also because of the intimate relationship between that timing and the changes occurring (Grenfell, 2008) within the field. Considering whether the timing is right to release the single is not only dependent upon market forces and band dynamics, but also changing field doxa. Joe realised how other labels in the industry wanted to promote their songs, contributing to why AC became a viable decision choice.

'And what he is saying [Indie Song Promoter] is that over the past five years it has gotten so bad in his view that it's just as competitive now in CHR, meaning there are just as many bands trying to get their songs on there....so as an independent radio promoter he is probably the best reflection of how the business is shifting.'

Knowing this, and understanding that *'AC is where the money is at'* led Joe to believe that now would be as good a time as any to pursue a more symbolically lucrative strategy, if it were to pay off:

'...well now AC has gotten hotter, so it's moving more in our direction, our bands have gotten better and their ballads now fit AC.'

The changes within the industry that have occurred throughout the past decade, and continue today, have created a more competitive industry environment. Joe is aware that *'there is more music available for fewer slots'* but feels strongly about the potential this new song holds. The strong competition is not only with other record companies, but also with the radio stations seeking the next popular single. Decision-makers in radio seek to ascertain what will be the next 'hit' among its listening public. When people tune-in to listen to the music being played, it can lead to an increase in ratings that ultimately impacts advertising revenue and future earnings. Therefore, a tension is created between the program directors of radio and the music promoters of the record label. This tension is a necessary and sustainable one that exists due to the vested self-interest of both parties. Radio needs the music, and the labels need the listeners.

However, enabling and constraining power struggles also have macro-cultural impacts. Although fewer slots may exist for airplay, if the song is a potential hit, actors within radio may be less concerned about where the music is coming from, as long as the result favours their own interests. When the public believes the song is good, they will listen while satisfying the radio station's agenda. The more people 'tune-in' to hear a song the more they will play it, perpetuating the cultural influence.

This also preserves the symbolic relationship with the record label. The success of the song at radio enables decision makers at the label to anticipate the economic success of the music. Therefore, radio can act as an entity that 'balances' the power among the players in the music industry if the song they are promoting is superior to the symbolic power between them. Joe understands this dynamic, which gives him the motivation to consider this new strategy. He continues his rationale for wanting to pursue an AC format over CHR.

'CHR stations have been flipping to AC format. If he's (radio promoter) a fair anecdotal barometer, a reflection of what the big boys are doing, what my industry is currently doing, it's like people

are putting all their money in AC, why because they are selling more compact discs still. Probably more people are more likely to go buy the cds when they have a smash hit on AC then when they have a smash hit on CHR.'

Because of the industry changes, the majors, and other firms with more resources, have been exerting tighter control on radio promotion channels by flooding the market with product. Having access to more cash and established contacts enables them to wield this power on the decision-makers in radio. This in turn has consequences for less influential entrants like Joe. It makes it more difficult to have his songs played. This aids in reinforcing everyone's position, including his own. The major label's resources are being used as an aid to maintaining control of the limited access to radio airplay. When an actor, or set of actors from a firm, wields their influence on a music promotional tool like radio, it can impact the accumulation of economic, social and symbolic capital.

In addition, using accumulated resources to control the number one promotional mass medium for music also has far-reaching social and cultural impacts. Those who have the power to control what listeners hear also influence consumer preference and taste and ultimately buying behaviour and purchase decisions. Joe's choices in this case impact not only himself and his business, but also the industry in which he works and the broader national social space (Bourdieu, 1996) in which a society's culture exists. Since all formats, including the traditionally less popular CHR, are just as difficult to enter as the more popular AC, then why not pursue the one that will have the greatest reach and greater return, namely, AC.

The Symbolic Power of the Charts

The role of the industry 'charts' as an embodiment of symbolic capital cannot be underestimated. The symbolism of 'charting' is representative of the power it holds as it influences decision-makers and their choice of music to promote, or, for the radio executives, as they decide which songs to add to their playlists. As Joe reflects, he describes the influence and importance the charts play in his decision-making:

'So how do they make their decisions as to what they wanna play? They look at what's on the chart. So you get an exponential increase in

impressions when you are on the chart because you obviously get the people who reported on the chart, but now all the non-reporters are more likely to play you as well. So the chart is exponential nonsense, in that it gets all the stations who report and then it gets the concentric circle of the people who watch the chart, and then it gets the people who are really delayed and just play the local station who just plays whatever he wants, like two years later he might be playing your song because it charted two years ago...or, you might get 30, 29, 28 [position on the chart]...some of the bigger and more powerful stations will say "oh we will consider playing that song now".

The achievement of 'making a position on the chart' symbolises the power that is now available to the actors. If Joe chooses the right song that will be picked-up by radio, he can get the airplay he is seeking and hopefully a higher position. This creates an 'exponential' effect on its success. As long as others perceive this, the more likely they are to also to promote it, which in turn perpetuates the success. Again, this is indicative of the self-interest of those in radio. If they see the song rising on the charts, they also desire to indulge in its success by attracting those listeners that will impact their profitability without having to expose themselves to the risk of an 'unproven' song. They can delay playing it until the response is proven on an established and reputable tool like the charts.

However, it is not only decision-makers in radio that rely on this artefact for its influence, but so do the actors that compile, analyse and report the information. The individuals who control these reporting mechanisms *want* to be relied on for this information. It properly places them in the middle of the power struggle that exists within radio and the music industry by granting them the influence and recognition they seek and desire.

Furthermore, the charts not only represent the symbolic power embodied within them, but they also act as a controlling mechanism. As long as the actors seeking radio airplay understand the important role the charts play in their success, they will continue to go to great lengths to achieve either higher positions on them, or, at least, to maintain their positions. As long as the capital and resources are available to the actors, the chart's role reinforces the inequality in power relations. Joe recognises this as he speaks about the value in them, but is also mindful of the difficulty in being added to the playlists.

Although they go to great lengths to appear unbiased in their reporting, the collection methods used by the people who compile them are only as good as

the data that goes into the analysis. Who will be considered a 'reporting station', and the decision to include streaming and other social media activity determines ultimately who will chart and how. This was most evident in 2013 when Billboard changed their methodology to include streaming. When this decision was implemented, the next week's 'No.1' single was not even a song being played on radio at that time, rather it was based on the 'YouTube sensation' and Korean artist, Psy and his parody *Gangnam Style*. Traditionally, this information was not included in reporting. A sign of changing music consumption patterns, but also data that now includes channels which the industry 'dominated' have easier access. Motivated by self-interest, actors who compile the charts want to continue to be the industry's decision-making resource by staying relevant, but also by balancing the symbolic power relations among the actors who use them.

Firm Level Habitus

In addition to the macro-level field influences upon the decision, meso-level or firm level dispositions also influence the decision-making practice. The firm's decision makers exhibited analytical behaviours when evaluating alternative courses of action within the decision-making practice along with acting on incomplete information. Evidence of power dynamics was also observed through the company's position within the field due to current organisational culture dynamics.

The Use of Song Testing as an Analytical Tool

Some behaviour exhibited as part of the decision-making practice demonstrated a 'logical and analytical' approach to data gathering during the consideration or information gathering stage of the decision practice. The owner manager in this case was attempting to find the optimal level of information needed to feel confident that a positive outcome or effective decision would be made. This was done through the use of song testing. Song testing is done in this field to determine, or attempt to forecast, the popularity of the song with its target audience prior to committing large amounts of economic capital relative to the firm value and potential sales forecast for its promotion. Joe felt strongly

about the positive results received from the song testing that encouraged his choice to promote through AC charts.

‘The science behind it said that this was a song worth betting on’.

Joe is alluding to the target audience response to the song when it was tested. The ‘science’ here is an empirical observation made by a researcher that records the response made by a potential audience listener. This response is measured on a simple Likert-type scale from ‘dislike,’ ‘like,’ to ‘likes a lot,’ and is sampled at a level that is considered statistically significant. Age relevance is also considered in the equation as the results are then ranked compared to other songs that were similarly tested for identical markets, ultimately ranking the preference of the song within a percentile. Although there is no guarantee of success, it does allow the decision-maker to gauge whether they are pursuing the right audience. It also allows them to see if they are pursuing the right chart for ranking potential, and how many promotional dollars they should invest.

Joe felt confident that the song was worth promoting, but only after the initial results tested well, specifically for the AC demographic.

‘The opening reason for the band strongly considering AC was that the song tested better with an AC demographic than with a CHR demographic. So the quantitative analysis by the third party, and we probably used the best one for it, they did auditorium testing with real people.’

As previously discussed, the intention was not necessarily to push the AC demographic. Many factors were influencing the choice between that or CHR, but Joe was open to the idea of either at that time. Past, positive outcomes in the CHR category and the lesser amounts of economic capital needed to promote the CHR demographic indicate a bias towards continuing to pursue this strategy. However, the song testing demonstrated the potential for acquiring more economic, social and symbolic capital that may result by pursuing the AC chart, if the outcome is successful. It must also be noted that Joe’s previous statements about the changes occurring with the field also weigh heavily. He understands

that the AC market is changing and knows that this audience is more apt to connect to this band and so these songs must also be considered.

Acting on Incomplete Information

In addition to the behaviour exhibited by logic and analysis through statistical testing, Joe also demonstrated the need to act on incomplete information.

'I think when it comes to radio it's just so hard to extrapolate out what your income will be...it's like you just sit there dumbfounded.'

Joe is referring to the uncertainty of demand that comes with the selling of a creative product like a recorded song. This uncertainty was found to be a roadblock in determining the potential payoffs associated with this decision. Joe felt that it was nearly impossible to determine the economic impacts or return on investment of a successful radio campaign on AC. This behaviour is rooted in the field characteristics identified by Caves (2000). The 'uncertainty principle' refers to the inconsistency in the purchasing desire of the consumer for a music product. Although Joe attempted to be as careful as he could through the testing, he is also constrained by the uncertainty of the field and the lack of information surrounding it. Having to act on incomplete information is not new in decision-making, but the ability to make effective decisions with this limited knowledge does come down to the habitus of the decision-maker and the traits and skills that have developed within it over time. Many of these influences that are habitus driven will be discussed in 5.3.3.3 below and will explain the reasons behind the choices Joe made when dealing with incomplete information.

A Need to Aggrandise the Firm

In addition to the analytical behaviours, Joe was also influenced by how the company was perceived by other actors and firms within the field. This was evidenced through the use of firm aggrandisement – to appear greater or enhance the power and position of the firm within the field. Aggrandising a firm in the music industry helps to establish a perception of legitimacy by which another person or firm within the industry would want to do business, at least through the eyes of the owner-manager doing the aggrandising. Joe's attempt at

this was done through previous chart positions achieved in prior years. As was just discussed above, the symbolic capital inherent in certain chart level achievement helps to establish a sense of legitimacy to others participating or conducting business in the field. Achieving a top 10 hit or ranking on the Top 200 Billboard chart indicates that either (a) you have accumulated a level of cultural capital others seek from you, (b) you have established your social capital to a level that other actors desire to tap into it, and/or (c) you have generated enough economic capital so that those other actors desire to associate themselves with you in order to generate more themselves. Projecting a certain image to external stakeholders or even the other field players lays the groundwork and sense of self-confidence that Kapooshki and its owner, Joe Jackson are able to hold within the field doxa. Joe's perception is that the other participating players in the field have confidence in him and the business in which he operates. The ramifications of this type of practice or behaviour will be discussed throughout the case studies in this research, but more specific psychological motivation for Joe is discussed in further detail below. The other participating players in the game also benefit from this confidence:

'in the process of getting some of our bands to be on the radio that's what we really wanted, then we ended up placing 8th in the world. So it's something that we just tell people now. Or we will scan it and send people the image just so that they know we've been around and are legitimate. That kind of thing.'

By making explicit that Kapooshki Music is identified as '*8th in the world*' to those with whom they conduct or want to conduct business, enables Joe and Kapooshki music to be perceived by themselves and others that they are a legitimate player in the field. Additionally, this allows Joe, from his perspective, to conduct business in the manner he desires, by increasing his chances of accumulating and furthering his social, cultural and economic capital. In essence, it becomes an establishment of power that the firm is then able to exploit to its benefit.

Individual Level Habitus

Even though the macro environmental influences and firm-level influences have an impact on the decision practice, more directly involved are those micro-level or individual dispositions brought by the key decision-making actor. Certain types of decision-making heuristics were evidenced throughout the practice, as were personal biases, the use of external and internal advisors to the firm and some evidence of intuitive behaviours.

The Use of Heuristics

One of the more prominent behaviours exhibited at the personal level was the use of different heuristics or decision aids to assist in the practice. The most common heuristics in the data include the representativeness heuristic, and the anchoring and adjustment heuristic.

'and if the odds of success...it's so hard to measure, just if I'm gonna be competing with just as many people, I'm gonna have a single that fits the format, I may as well go, at this point in our career, with our experiences after AC.'

The purposeful action in making this decision was assisted by the use of the representativeness heuristic, a decision aid where the judgements about the probability of an outcome under consideration are made. This was done by Joe's deliberate attempt at determining the odds of success based upon his past experience and outcomes in working with CHR radio. However, it was not just the past experience in which this decision was used as a reference; it was also the *outcome* of the past decision that allowed Joe to find value from which he has now based the odds of success for this current decision. His positive, past outcome was used as a projective mechanism onto this new decision choice and provided the confidence needed to entertain the risk of pursuing the AC format. In addition, being a confident individual, his habitus facilitated the means by which the risk of utilising further economic and social resources seemed feasible for this new decision. This rationale was also reinforced by the amount of economic capital that was forfeited with the previous strategy.

'Because if I'm gonna spend \$5,000 on a radio campaign with him, then I can spend the same five going into the bigger league'

If Joe felt the odds of success were similar without sacrificing more economic capital, and with the potential returns of social, economic and symbolic capital greater, it seemed an appropriate risk to take in order to potentially increase his position within the field. However, it must be noted that this also provides evidence of an anchoring and adjustment heuristic, a decision aid where some estimate of value is needed in order to place preference upon, or estimate a similar outcome for, a comparable decision. Here, Joe is anchoring the economic costs in a past decision and adjusting or referencing the value of that cost as it relates to this current decision.

It must also be noted, that this decision and the heuristics involved were not isolated to an actor who was only influenced to trigger the heuristics or Joe's specific and deliberate desire, at this moment, potentially to increase his capital. Circumstances close to Joe, including but not limited to the changing industry environment that is enabling him to pursue this type of radio strategy, include the product that has evolved from the recording of the actual songs.

'...and as their new project was kind of forming it seemed like this song or songs we were thinking about pushing to radio could be viable in AC. So it wasn't like we are going to go out and make an AC song, it was just that's what happened so now it seems like that's the way to go about it.'

It was this circumstance by which Joe saw the opportunity that triggered the heuristics used. The way in which the band and their producer were recording the album influenced this cognitive process to begin calculating the odds of a similar outcome for Joe and then anchoring the economic feasibility with past expenditures. Influenced by this creative output, coupled with his personal predisposition to taking on risk and recognising the potential rewards, along with the evolving industry, trends came together to create this opportunity for Joe and his company.

The Reliance upon the 'Trades' and Networks in Strategic Decision-Making

Each individual involved in this case also relied upon outside individuals within their social network to seek advice or guidance. Also evident was the use of material objects of influence – objectified cultural capital (Bourdieu, 1986), mainly the use of books rooted in marketing and economic theory as well as trade journals and the referencing of the Billboard charts.

As Joe was contemplating the viability of this decision, he often sought outside or external advisors and their opinions.

'[I] talked to the radio promoter a lot...he helped me pick which radio test company to use this time.'

This 'sought-after' advice encourages Joe and reinforces his decision to test the viability of the song within the AC market. This reassurance from a radio promoter held a certain level of respect in the eyes of the owner manager. Because of this level of respect, Joe later followed through on that advice, 'Yep, *'Centennial Promotion' is who we are using on our campaign.'* The recommendation to use Centennial Promotion came from the same radio promoter and was ultimately used in the song testing as well. The trust in this recommendation was legitimised by Joe through his 'title' of 'radio promoter' and the unspoken credentials and embodied cultural capital of 'expert' that this title projects. Although the promoter's job is to do just what he is offering, and what Joe is soliciting, Joe is doing so without any direct experience, positive or negative, of the services that Centennial Promotion is offering him. The value that is perceived through this title is invaluable and essential in seeking the appropriate advice and cultural capital that Joe is lacking.

Another member of Joe's social network was used for advice, namely, an Artist and Repertoire (A & R) director from a respected record label, one which had obtained a high amount of symbolic capital through their past successes on similar charts:

'But here's an interesting one, I put a call into one of the big boys, had him listen to the song, and some really cool insights, he felt like

it was linear. Like it's a good song, but not a great song, and [I] trust his judgement.'

This external advisor's opinion on the song demonstrates a 'devil's advocate' (Amason, 1996) approach to the information giving and seeking. Joe sought his perspective on the song and although his thoughts were not what Joe hoped, he found value in the opinion. He understands first, the credibility associated with a title that comes with a senior A & R representative from a major label, hence why he sought out that individual. Second, despite the opinion that his expertise and level of accumulated cultural capital provided, he understood the value in his opinion. If, after he played the song, he received a favourable reaction, it may have either reinforced Joe's decision to move ahead with the risk involved in pursuing AC radio, or it could have created an atmosphere of wanting to put at risk further capital. The evidence in this case of seeking external expertise is certainly not affirming to Joe in this manner but it did enable him to see a different perspective in which a personal bias could have clouded his own judgement. He sees value in the title of 'A & R' for a major label and believes this person symbolises success and holds the power to influence. Joe is hoping that his opinion and experience in fostering new talent will tell him something about his own abilities. If a favourable judgement is made, it can aid in any insecurities he may be fostering about being a successful judge of new artists and music. However, by respecting and seeking out the A & R director's opinion demonstrates the empowerment that Joe grants him. He is valuing his perspective over his own, unknowingly reinforcing the dominated position he holds in the field. He continues to speak to the value of getting a major label involved for a radio promotion strategy such as this:

'we need them purely for their expertise, or to save time...if we could get a major label on board, it might help a little bit with getting these stations to play it more'.

Associating with a major label adds value through the influence they can provide. Something as simple as 'saving time' demonstrates the capabilities actors possess when working for a major label. In order to do things more efficiently, the A & R managers who occupy these positions use the symbolic power that is associated with the major label brand to 'get things done'. They use this capital

from the label in conjunction with their professional networks and economic recourses to convince others to act. This persuasion can be a powerful motivating tool. The individual being manipulated acts in fear and self-interest, fear of being seen as uncooperative with the one who holds power, the A & R in the label. The response is quick in order to be perceived positively by the A & R manager. They are hoping, or anticipating, an exchange for something of value in the future – a personal investment by performing a favour or request.

By using the label to 'save time' along with the 'trust' and respect Joe speaks of is also associated with prior knowledge and experience that he has, having previously worked with other A & R managers. On a previous project for the label, Joe recalls:

'the stations remembered that they had given them a gift in [Prominent Band], like they had done some visits earlier.'

He knew he could make more progress if he associated this AC promotion with a major label. Granting a favour by bringing prominent artists to the station helps in acquiring 'adds' to playlists and higher 'spins' that contribute to chart positioning. Calling on his A&R contact was not only a ploy to get his opinion of the song, but if he liked it, he could use this company and their expertise to position himself better. In the end, however, and despite this, he took the opinion to heart, and ended up pursuing the AC radio strategy regardless.

In addition to seeking outside counsel, Joe also relied upon forms of objectified cultural capital in weighing decision choices that influenced his pursuit of an AC radio campaign. In this instance, the culmination of macro-industry influences, the resources of the firm and Joe's habitus came together to assist him in making this choice. Joe sought the use of *Christian Radio Weekly* and *CCM Update* when looking at what other artists were charting, how they were charting and how they related to his current artist and the single he was promoting. The changing trends within the industry, as Joe alluded to previously, were reported through the symbolism that is represented in the charts. The trending genre of music that has been successful recently and how this has evolved since his previous CHR strategy was tracked, monitored and verified by Joe through these resources. The credibility of the charts and the ability to track trends is given to it by the industry that reinforces it and the

actors that maintain them. It provides meaning to those seeking power and acts as a catalyst for the day-to-day decision-making within the firms who track them. Joe is no exception here and as trends within the industry evolved, so did his attitude about the feasibility of pursuing the AC radio strategy. He understood what resources the firm could ultimately use to make this strategy a viable pursuit while using his personal risk level as a benchmark to the timing and utilisation of the resources that would be needed. These external influences were continuously at play as Joe assessed his alternatives throughout this decision-making process.

Close Personal Advisors and Colleagues

Further evidence of influencing the decision-making practice came from the use of colleagues and/or close personal advisors to the owner-manager. Although the firm structure is not designed to include a top management team, the owner-manager responded to Susie as if she carried those responsibilities. Joe often used her as a 'sounding' board to his thoughts and ideas as he was contemplating the move toward promoting to the AC demographic.

'and then Susie's reinforcement. Like Susie is really good at grounding me in reality.'

This advisory role appears to be established by his historical association with, and trust in, Susie that he has learned and acquired through their relationship. Often, trust is seen as an aid in promoting networks and can encourage cooperative behaviour among colleagues (Rousseau, Sitkin, Burt & Camerer, 1998). The cooperative behaviour evidenced here provides the depth and historical connection of both actors' past as it is currently influencing the present and future behaviour. The trust acquired through past experience and reliance upon this formal social network enables Joe to perceive himself being in a better position to make clearer and more effective decisions. Susie influences his level of confidence and reinforces his current thoughts on the subject. However, she should not be seen as fostering a 'consensus' mentality, for Joe's comments regarding the '*grounding me in reality*' supports the idea that she often is not in consensus with ideas, but quite the contrary. She provides a

sound, grounded perspective that may bring Joe down from an exciting idea is the true value that he is often able to see in hindsight. This positive past experience with her advice-giving and consultation causes Joe to seek it often and for different scenarios.

Joe's perception of the value that he sees in Susie is not a one-sided perspective, as is evidenced. Susie also sees a similar role for herself in his decision-making.

'Well any of the major decisions, including the ones you were referring to earlier, usually him and I will meet about something like that. Kind of at the beginning and then after he has gathered more information and thought about it more, and then kind of more towards the end where we need to be making a decision. So he will ask for my opinion, and where I can be helpful is kind of be a sounding board or like this is what I hear you saying and this is what you said in the past'

It becomes clear that this is a mutually beneficial relationship in understanding Susie's role in the decision practice. This is evidenced by the consensus in the meaning of her role.

'So whatever he is saying I can kind of reflect kind of like a mirror so that he can see the picture in a different way. Because when you work with something so closely you can get bogged down in it and so it is helpful to get someone to kind of bounce it off of. So I think that's my role in helping him.'

This does not mean, however, that Susie will concede to the owner-manager's perspective or opinion on the matter. Evidence of both consensus and 'devil's advocate' behaviour is exhibited here and can have a positive influence on the outcome. These opinions are continually sought out as the decision-making practice continues through to the end. *'He always comes back'* is evidence of the value and trust between the owner-manager and his employee within this dyadic relationship.

Joe also sought opinions from another employee as well. Depending on what information he is seeking, he will reach out to Lilly Billings on matters more specific to consumer perspectives.

'...mostly because she is so fresh. She is just a recent graduate herself, like getting her opinion shows me where the average people are at.'

Joe is able to capture a more 'grounded' perspective on how the chosen demographic may respond to the song or how it may be perceived if promoted to the AC demographic. Lilly is seen by Joe as more *'in-tune'* with growing trends and what the consumer may respond more favourably to when the music is being marketed. The evidence provided here demonstrates that Joe does not make strategic decisions in isolation. Although Kapooshki is a small company, Joe still respects and actively seeks out counsel from select employees on specific matters before making a decision. Whether this is an active pursuit for differing or confirming perspective and opinion, or a confirmation of bias on his part, he still finds value in pursuing this approach.

Personal Opinion, Bias and Preference

Personal biases were also evidenced within the decision practice. The different types of cognitive bias found include the belief bias and confirmation bias. The belief bias, where the logical strength of an argument is biased by one's own opinion or belief, came through when the owner was evaluating the strength of the product for its chosen audience. Here *'my own opinion of the song itself,'* influenced whether Joe could even move forward as to whether or not it was an appropriate strategy to consider. If he could not endorse the viability of the song and believe it was appropriate and have potential for success, it would be difficult for him to commit the capital needed to effectively implement the decision.

The use of a confirmation bias, a cognitive bias that confirms one's own perceptions, was also evident:

'So there was a bias, but even my bias was, I would argue, well founded.'

Here, Joe was acknowledging what he already felt was his preference towards not only Christian music and the band they are promoting, but also the desire to pursue the more coveted AC audience. His perceptions of the symbolic

value inherent in the AC charts and the confidence in his abilities already confirmed from his previous success on the CHR also only helped to reinforce his perceptions of the ability to be potentially successful here.

The Use of Intuition

Some limited evidence of intuitive patterns, or making decisions based on ‘gut feeling’, were discussed and found to influence the decision practice. Although it can be challenging to compare with an occurrence of an intuitive pattern over a perceived heuristic or bias, previous research undertaken on intuition in decision-making has isolated these ‘gut-feeling’ events into observable data (Miller & Ireland, 2005; Seifert & Hadida, 2009; Liberman-Yaconi, Hooper & Hutchings, 2010). As admitted by Joe, he relied upon gut feelings over financial forecasting when determining the profitability of using the potentially, more costly, radio strategy:

‘gut-feelings, on instinct because I can’t remember a time when we sat down and added up the cost and how much we wanted to get out of it.’

Even though the song testing was approached in a more analytical manner, through statistical analysis and consumer response, the financial forecasting of the decision was rooted in intuition. This was done for two reasons. First, the statistical analysis used in the song testing was done by a third party and not by Joe. Even though his educational background, specifically his study of economics, would provide him with the appropriate cultural capital in the form of the skill set needed to do the forecasting, he chose not to do so and relied on his ‘gut-feelings’ as to whether, or not, it was worth the investment. Two, his ‘choice’ to do so was done because of typical industry practice and field habitus. As Caves (2000) has pointed out, the philosophical assumptions among the field’s actors, along with observed practices, indicate that there is an inherent unpredictability of success in creative product like music. Joe makes this clearer with his comment that *‘there isn’t a way to quantify it’*. He either sees it as (a) not worth the investment of hiring a third party to forecast for him, or (b) not worth his time and effort to forecast. Although the more typical of the

two approaches here would be for Joe to do the forecasting, he had decided, through his past experience and 'gut feelings', and now, embodied industry knowledge about the accuracy in which it can be done, that it is not worthy of his time and investment. This preference for a more logical or thorough approach to song testing and not the forecasting of profitability of the decision choice here is indicative of a prioritisation of the symbolic nature of the potential success on the AC charts outlined by the song testing and field doxa dictating the rules of the game. Thus, he justifies financial forecasting over 'educated guessing' based on his 'gut-feelings.' Even though song testing was approached differently from the financial forecasting, it was originally approached in a similar way:

'In fact he didn't even really want to do radio testing, he didn't intuitively want to do it'

Knowing this does offer some evidence of the questionable value that the song testing provides for Kapooshki and the value of the return on investment, regarding the expenditure of the economic capital. Despite past dispositions, there is an inclination not to move ahead with supporting material, or perhaps to take a more analytical approach to the practice. Intuitive behaviour here does not override this, but it does indicate the value placed in going with your 'gut-feelings' over the statistical analysis. The value is there, but it is questioned because of the expenditure of economic capital to get it done. Either way, a value judgement regarding the viability of such an approach, or the benefits outweighing the cost to do it, was included in the process.

It must also be noted that intuition played a role, not just in determining whether or not it was worth forecasting the profitability of radio promotion costs, but also in the choice to use a more analytical approach for song testing. The actual reasoning behind moving forward in the first place to test the song, before committing to an AC radio strategy was rooted in how Joe and his team felt about the song:

'All those indicators make it feel like a good song'

'Feeling like a good song,' was enough for Joe to pursue it further. *'All those indicators'* in this case are not always quantifiable elements of a song. Some qualities of a 'hit' song may be better predictors of success, including being memorable, having a good 'hook' and solid structure. However, whether the song ends up resonating with the consumers is not always easy to forecast. Many songs have the aforementioned qualities, but that does not dictate a 'success' formula. That 'it' factor that is often discussed in industry circles are those qualities that are not easily identifiable and are usually attributed to having a 'gut-feeling' about the song, or having it just *'feel like a good song.'* This *'feeling,'* when analysed, can be attributed to Joe's age, personal preferences in music types, past experience and his embodied industry knowledge, but also that 'hunch', or intuitive feeling, he has about the song that is not as easily attributable to these factors.

5.1.7 Conclusion

This decision was a choice between pursuing an AC radio strategy over a CHR strategy for a new song on an album about to be released by one of the Kapooshki recording artists, *The Groove*. As was demonstrated, multiple factors influenced and were critical to the practice of making this decision. The impact of analytical behaviours, personal biases, heuristics and intuition all played a role in the decision choice. These micro-level influences, however, were not contemplated in isolation. It was the culmination of the macro, field doxa and its current change, along with the culture of the firm that helped Joe to feel he was making the best decision he could with the resources available to him at the time.

Table 3 - Case #1: Summary Evidence: *Kapooshki Music: Radio Promotion*

Impact	Influences	Field (s)	Firm Habitus	Decision Maker Habitus	Economic Capital	Social Capital	Cultural Capital	Symbolic Capital
	Multiple influential factors were observed and impacted decision outcome.	Economic, Recorded Music Industry, small business, creative and cultural production industries	Christian values motivated by fairness and making an honest living	Committed to learning and education, Strong family values Conservative disposition	Financial assets needed to execute were substantial and potentially impactful	Deliberately makes decisions to expand professional network	Industry knowledge is continuous acquired, use of embodied, institutionalised and objectified capital prominent	Uses chart positioning to signify success while equating to further power, positioning and more capital
Evidence	<p>Bounded Rational: 'I think when it comes to radio it's just so hard to extrapolate out what your income will be based on it, that it's like you just sit there dumbfounded.'</p> <p>'The science behind it said that this was a song worth betting on'</p> <p>Aggrandisement: 'we ended up placing 8th in the world. So it's something that we just tell people now. Or we will scan it and send people the image just so that they know we've been around and are legitimate. That kind of thing.'</p> <p>Heuristics: 'and if the odds of success... it's so hard to measure'</p> <p>Intuition: 'All those indicators make it feel like a good song... Like there isn't a way to quantify it.'</p> <p>'Gut feelings...on instinct'</p> <p>External Influences Internal Influences Personal Bias</p>	<p>Business: Recording, Record Label, Music Publishing, Artist Management, Booking, Festivals</p> <p>So that's why we chose CHR then... fast forward 3-4 years, well now AC has gotten hotter, so it's moving more in our direction, our bands have gotten better and their ballads now fit AC.'</p> <p>'Over the past five years it has gotten so bad... as an independent radio promoter he is probably the best reflection of how the business is shifting.'</p>	<p>Christian values motivated by fairness and making an honest living. Willing to take risks</p> <p>Visionary strategy; surround myself with staff who are more detail oriented</p>	<p>Age: 34 Gender: Male Self-identified Social Class: Upper-Middle Ethnicity: Canadian Born - Indian Education: J.D., B.A., B.S.</p> <p>Committed to learning and education, Strong family values</p> <p>I would like to read more, write and teach</p> <p>I wanted to be part of building a band, a team together</p>	<p>'we have to pay him to do that, so that costs money'</p> <p>Motivated by the accumulation of assets.</p> <p>Limited resources available for business activities.</p> <p>Recent layoffs and cutting of hours</p>	<p>'He talks to other promoters and so it's exponential, it's not like one plus one equals two, it's like one plus one equals twenty.'</p> <p>'Christian Music and College Music...those are the two worlds that I know what I'm talking about'</p> <p>Institutionalised knowledge acquired from degree seeking education</p> <p>Objectified forms used in form of texts and trades</p> <p>Embodied through industry and general knowledge</p>	<p>Industry Knowledge</p> <p>'So how do they make their decisions on what to play? They look what's on the chart.'</p> <p>'Christian Music and College Music...those are the two worlds that I know what I'm talking about'</p> <p>Institutionalised knowledge acquired from degree seeking education</p> <p>Objectified forms used in form of texts and trades</p> <p>Embodied through industry and general knowledge</p>	

5. 2 CASE #2: EXPANSION AND DIVERSIFICATION

This decision is about a choice between diversifying Kapooshki Music through the creation of separate legal entities, which would allow for Joe's desire to expand the services being offered by the firm, or to add separate functioning departments under the already established legally entity – Kapooshki Music. This choice was prompted by Joe's past experience in promoting bands and his direct observations of the opportunities he saw for further expansion in sub-sectors of the industry in which he currently worked.

'I started out as a concert promoter and I am taking all the risks to build these bands, but the managers are getting commissions off of the band...I am funding the concert and was building their following, their revenue in my market. But I'm getting no ongoing stream. I sell tickets, they sell t-shirts, they get the money from the t-shirts and the manager gets nothing.'

Joe was seeing the opportunities available to him and felt he had the needed skill set and assets in order to move forward with this possible expansion. It also enabled him to begin satisfying his desire to be a part of a cohesive team.

'I was really a solo practitioner running a show for a different team coming in every week, doing three or four concerts sometimes even in the same day but usually over a weekend in different parts of the state with a different set of faces every time...the team was a different group of people. I wanted to be part of building a band, a team together where we are working every week together instead of once or twice a year.'

Expanding the company would allow Joe something more conventional, more permanent. This desire for more consistency can be traced back to his self-identified traits of being an extrovert and 'a people person' who values family and relationships. Although this was a drive towards something more settled for him, the choice, the decision practice and the influences upon this practice were, on the surface, a viable economic opportunity to pursue. This would enable Joe to not only satisfy his desire to build relationships and increase his economic capital, but also further evidence will suggest that the true rationale behind choosing to form separate legal entities over departments within the already existing business structure, is more rich and multi-faceted. This case, unlike the

one proceeding - and others that follow - will be analysed from a post-choice perspective and not through a real-time standpoint. The rationale behind his choices will be studied and the motivations behind his decision choices will be made explicit. As will be evidenced, the rationale ranges from logical business reasons to Joe's more deliberate attempts at accumulating further social and symbolic capital in order to leverage his positioning in the field.

5.2.1 A Limited Need for Asset Expenditures

The resources needed to execute either choice option in this decision were minimal. However, there was some anecdotal comments that alluded to the necessary expenditure of small amounts of economic, cultural and social capital.

The economic capital needed included the costs directly associated with incorporating separate legal entities. As a minimal expense, Joe, as he weighed his options, did not see the financial implications of legally incorporating each entity as a deterrent. This was to be a legal and a paper transaction and not one that needed further assets, buildings or space to execute. Therefore, Joe did not see this as a high-stake, economic risk on his part, nor that a substantial amount of other capital would need to be used in order to move forward with his idea.

The cultural capital needed came in the form of the knowledge and expertise to execute this decision. However, Joe being an educated man understood that he needed a general level of knowledge in order to have the appropriate conversations with the right individuals to execute the decision. As will later be evidenced, Joe sought several external advisors and consultants to assist him where he lacked the appropriate cultural capital. He relied upon his social network to provide the expertise to navigate through the incorporating process and enable him to move forward with his decision choice.

5.2.2 Influences on Decision

The Use of Scenario Planning and Isolating of Profit Centres: The Role of Information Analysis

Joe demonstrated logical and analytical behaviour, even though he was limited by the information provided to him to aid in this decision choice. He was

first motivated to move in the direction of re-structuring his firm with each of the component parts as separate entities so he could shelter future assets and cash.

'...if we ran a big debt up with Sony, which we have, it only forces us to shut down our label division. It doesn't touch our publishing... unless I did something crazy they have no contractual way to get at our booking revenues. It's conceivable that labels shut down regularly, and their distributors take over the catalog. But they can't touch my booking or my management or my festivals.'

By keeping them separate from his label, Joe would be able to continue conducting business in other field sectors without compromising his cash flow and reputation within the field. He is able to isolate the debt-ridden label from the more lucrative endeavours like management, festivals and booking. He is also able to continue leveraging his position while knowing that if he had decided to keep them under the Kapooshki imprint, he would be continuing to struggle to keep the business profitable. After a certain period of time, not only would his entire accumulated economic capital be utilised, but his social and symbolic capital could also be at risk. This is seen as a survivalist tactic, one in which he minimises or mitigates the risk by 'taking out the rotten apple from basket so as not to contaminate the entire bushel'.

Joe's behaviour here is not an isolated event. Having the institutionalised educational credentials and being one that appreciates a world-view he has little difficulty seeing *'all sides of the story'*. His desire to collect all data available to him in order to make better decisions is based upon the premise and assumptions at hand. On multiple occasions, Joe exhibited analytical decision-making behaviour when deciding and justifying his choice to create separate legal entities. When Joe was asked whether he and his team felt it important to model or forecast the profitability of opening up these new businesses he stated:

'...we did, but it was kind of... [for] a couple of them [we] actually had done a little bit of modeling.'

By approaching the information gathering stage of the decision process in this manner, Joe was allowed to make a more educated and thorough

decision. It also enabled him to identify where his true profit centres could come from if he decided to focus more of his resources there.

'So at that point we did figure out that managing the band earned more maybe in the shorter run and booking more.'

More clearly understanding the profit centres and where much of the money was to go, would not have been possible without doing some scenario planning to help give him perspective. It also allowed him to avoid risking his reputation in the field by finding ways to stay in business and keeping the more debt-ridden label at arm's length. However, it is important to keep in mind that these influences, regarding the modelling are purely economic and transactional ones. Joe is reluctant to jeopardise his standing and reputation in the industry, which was earned through past successes on the Christian music charts through his label and the distribution it offers, and sacrifice the symbolic capital he has earned. Joe must carefully navigate the close interaction between the two if the association of one (the economic) pollutes the other (symbolic), he risks losing much of what he has achieved within the field.

In addition to the cross-contamination of his economic and symbolic capital with his label, Joe exhibited other behaviours with regard to the logical accumulation of other capital through the association of the brands that come from setting-up separate legal entities:

'if you associate one brand with one sub industry and you want to hire or put the artists on somebody else's roster for a different sub industry - so booking as opposed to a label. And you have to have your entities separate otherwise they'll say "why are you giving them to me.'

Here, Joe is attempting to ward off future confrontation with actors from other firms within the field in which he desires to do business. This confrontation is seen as threatening to Joe – not personally, but through his reputation as a viable firm with which to do business. He fears that by having someone within the field in a more prominent position of power questioning his business tactics, he will be perceived as an inferior partner – putting at risk his current field positioning. The amount of capital one is perceived to possess can influence the way in which other players in the field react. This may lead to

further opportunities for business, or diminish them. This positioning, being a sought after social status within the field, is an aspiration for Joe. He is influenced by the strong desire of other actors to be associated with that capital, success and strong position within the field. By not setting up separate brands – separate legal entities for the firm, he has logically and systematically thought through the ramifications this may have on his perceived positioning and how it could potentially be compromised.

Leveraging the Network for Understanding and Capital Acquisition

Thinking through this decision, as Joe did, was but one reason he felt it in his best interest to move forward with incorporating the different business units. He also saw benefits in the potential increase in his social capital.

'...if we signed a band to manage them, but they were labeled by somebody else or they were booked by us and managed by somebody else...let's just say you are managing an act but they are booked by somebody else's agency. When that agency gets a show, our management has to approve it. So let's say they get ten shows in a month and eight of those shows are with promoters that we have never known before, we just picked up eight new contacts that we can use to benefit our agency's artists.'

Joe is pretty clear in his strategic approach to expanding his professional network. He understands that by creating the different entities and the brands that correspond with them, it will enable him to have access to people that otherwise he would not have. He understands and sees the value in the strong social and professional network needed to do business in the industry and be perceived as a viable player in the game. He discusses further how making this decision can expand his reach in the industry:

'...its' sneaky right...because this booking agency is booking your band so that they can make commissions off of that, they are not booking the other band that you book. I used to put it up on the grid so you take artist one for us and we do management for them. And they were with some other agency - agency one. Artist two is with our agency but somebody else's management company, but the promoters as agent or manager when the show is booked it doesn't matter whether you are the agent or manager, you got to know who that promoter was...'

In the first example, Joe was capitalising on the new network he was able to accumulate within the live entertainment field – specifically those who secure employment for artists – the booking agents and promoters. He understands the value in connecting with the promoters with whom he will now do business; he would not be doing this if he had not separated his management and booking businesses. By not having everyone with whom he signs on every sub sector business, he is by virtue of extrapolation able to increase his social capital. This again, will elevate his perception status in the industry. Further evidence reinforces this idea:

'...there definitely is building up network when it's their agency booking 100 shows for us and we go down the list and we say we have only known 20 of these promoters. Let's take the other 80 and send our other band their way.'

Closely related to the expansion of his professional network, which in turn will enable him to accumulate further economic capital, Joe sees the close relationship and value in expanding his industry knowledge that will add to his level of cultural capital.

'...okay let's have each of our artists have at least one area that we don't do. So we can learn from the other side and we can gain their network.'

Understanding who Joe is, his habitus, and what motivates him personally is really at the heart of his desire to expand his network. Yes, one of the motivations for him is the potential to increase his business opportunities, which could translate into further economic capital. However, why Joe has done this is likely deeply seeded in who he is as a person. Joe loves to accumulate further knowledge, not only for the sake of knowledge, but in order to help him in achieving his goals. One of his mantras, *'knowledge is power,'* coupled with his desire to expand his network will not only provide the sought after economic activity, it will also provide an opportunity for learning that he so covets. *'So we can learn from the other side'* is a motivating factor for him. If he can understand better how *'the other side'* does business, he can learn what to do and what not to do. He knows that having this embodied cultural capital will further elevate his positioning personally and professionally. He has accumulated his

institutionalised capital through his law degree and multiple first degrees, but he also knows that he must embody the knowledge of the field and its corresponding fields in order to position himself better. This, through personal observation and documentation, is not a superficial attempt at wanting to be perceived as knowledgeable; it is a genuine attempt at having him widen his world-view so he can understand better how things function. Thus, if needed in the future he may be better equipped to handle a situation brought to him that could potentially shorten the path to more capital accumulation.

The Desire to Learn

While understanding the rationale behind Joe's desire to increase his professional network, the data suggest he also covets the accumulation of cultural capital. It is then important to ask how this passion has influenced his decision-making. He has already been explicit about his desire to learn '*how the other side does business.*' He further states what he *could* learn from making the decision choice of expanding the company to include the separate businesses:

'So by us tapping into somebody else's management company and maybe the label or the booking agent...we are booking [our] band but we are also learning how THEY manage bands. We are managing [our] band but they are on your label. Tell us about YOUR radio promotion strategy. Well you know what; I can't unlearn that when I go back to my label. I learn from other label's mistakes because I see them from the inside.'

By setting up a separate brand that book his acts, he is able to learn how other companies manage their business. This is an attempt by Joe to further his understanding of how the management field, a sub-sector of the recording industry field, works. This desire for understanding focuses on not only how the field is structured, that is, the role his firm plays within the field, but also his personal habitus. He had clearly stated earlier that he perceives his strategy as a '*visionary*' one and is willing to '*take risks*' in order to succeed. This approach is Joe's way of navigating through the industry doxa in order to achieve his desired position. However, his idea of '*risk*' is relative and may not be perceived as risky by someone who may come from a more liberal background, or from someone that is

personally and professionally motivated by his Christian values. He sees it as an intelligent and creative way of doing business. Others may agree but come from a 'do what you need to do' approach to get the business perspective and may not approach it from a morally grounded one. Either way, Joe sees the benefit of creating these separate legal entities for the company well beyond just the economic point of view. He goes on to reiterate his beliefs about how the industry and the actors within do this regularly to further their own knowledge:

'Every manager that manages a band I'm sure uses the lessons he learns from that label to apply to future management deals. The difference here is we were going to apply it to future label deals too.'

Again, focusing on the rationale for his choice here, it is almost as if he feels guilty for trying to learn about the industry in this way. By stating that other managers *'use the lessons he learns,'* Joe hints at an element of uncertainty, he is not really sure that is what people do and he does not really have a way to find out. What he knows certainly is that it is how *he* has decided to learn how the industry works for this situation. A touch of guilt can be extracted from those words. Joe is a man of strong faith who believes deeply in his religious affiliations that influence this sense of guilt. He knows that in order to be better positioned within the field and be more influential, he will be more successful knowing how the business operates from many perspectives. But he wants to get there genuinely and honestly. Although, nothing of what he does is illegal, he walks a fine line ethically and morally. He values and knows the value in understanding how the industry works, having the right skills to do the job and the general knowledge that comes with working with people. He also understands that the more he knows, the more he will be able to leverage for future transactions. It becomes a delicate balance for Joe and he covets the understanding. He has the desire to accumulate the capital that will provide the leverage for success, but because of whom he is the dichotomy of faith and profiting from the selling of music, he struggles with his actions. Although, he ultimately overcomes this, by moving forward by

branding the business functions separately, he does so with some hesitation as to whether it is the right thing to do.

Aggrandisement and the Perception of Credibility

In addition to the attempt at expanding his social and cultural capital behind making this decision, Joe was also very explicit in his attempt and desire to aggrandise the firm through the eyes of other actors in the field.

Aggrandisement – to make greater in power, influence, stature, or reputation or to appear greater or to exaggerate appeared to influence every executive's decision-making process – was found to be at the core of Joe's rationale during this decision practice:

'Why turn them all into separate entities? One, because credibility with those labels in Nashville and other companies, like it was all just one - my Mickey Mouse music company they wouldn't take it very seriously.'

In order to appear legitimate within the industry - the appearance of being 'legit' or credible - seemed to be a priority and unspoken 'doxa' for Joe. In the music industry, reputation and status can be fleeting which can lead to 'misrecognition in which power relations are not seen for what they are but are interpreted in a way that is seen as legitimate' (Gunter, 2002). In Joe's attempt to be seen as a bigger firm by setting up these legal entities was his way of trying to shift the perceived power relations in and amongst other players in the field – in a sense - level the playing field. He wanted the same opportunities to conduct business in the field as someone with greater amounts of symbolic capital than he possessed:

'...it looks small if you are this music company who says we do all these different things. And who do you represent, nobody famous. So by having Liquid, Kapooshki Music - which is our record company - Stealth Artist Agency, they looked [bigger] - individual logos, individual phone numbers and email addresses - it looked more legitimate.'

His rationale could not be more deliberate and his strategic choice to set-up these separate entities instead of having one company would enable him to be seen by others as a viable person with whom to do business – one with accumulated social, economic and symbolic capital.

Much of this need for recognition is also magnified by his choice to locate the firm in a non-music epicenter, far from where much of the business in the U.S. is done. Although Joe felt he had some flexibility to do this, it was also out of necessity for the people with which he needed to do business. This was to ensure that those other firms and the managers running them did not feel as if it was wasting their time.

In addition, as Joe decided to expand into adding a recording studio to the Kapooshki brand, he was also deliberate in his attempt at inflating the reputation of the new studio. He and his associates struggled with how it would be perceived to the field and whether they should brand the studio under the name Kapooshki Music, or something separate. It must be noted however that some of this debate was also rooted in a rationale and a logical attempt at not exposing the new entity - the studio - to the debt burden of the label. However, he again was very explicit as to why he wanted to brand it under a similar name as the label and eventually found a legal way around this without exposing the new entity to the debt. This would now allow Joe to use the names and bands associated with the label through the act of 'name-dropping':

'Right now I think it's going to be Liquid, LLC and "Doing Business As" Kapooshki Studios...to everyone else - the public - it looks like it is connected to Kapooshki and has the prestige, which in Christian music for an indie band is a big deal...home of [artist name purposely withheld], home of [artist name purposely withheld] current artists that's on radio, home of Dove award winning [artist name purposely withheld], they won rock album of the year in Canada.'

Joe went on to clarify why this type of approach would benefit him and his firm:

'For this kind of thing yeah. This is the first time that we are trying to milk something. I have never... I've been about real value over height value all the time and I'm finally going to the dark side and saying well if that's what people want we will give it to them...They are going to buy into us because of perceived value.'

This need to aggrandise through the public appearance of being seen as a greater size or by name dropping is really an attempt at making up for the lack of social, economic and symbolic capital needed in order to maintain

relevance, to conduct business and garner respect. Joe often references the appearance of his firm if he did not set up separate legal entities:

You'd look small...so you are a management company but you also do booking and you also do label, you must not be very good.

The need and desire to accumulate the resources and capital to conduct business in the recorded music industry is, as Bourdieu would say, '*the ultimate spring of conduct is the thirst for dignity, which society alone can quench*' (Wacquant, 1998, p. 219). However, when those resources or capital are not yet present at the level at which the actor who seeks it, desires, an attempt at misrecognition occurs and is done through aggrandising. It becomes an attempt at recognition in the music industry that can only be satisfied by their peers within the field who are respected or who hold prominent positions of power.

The Pursuit of Personal Accomplishment and Economic Capital

Much of the personal level motivation behind this decision-practice is evidenced by a desire for personal satisfaction and the pursuit of economic capital. Being a self-identified '*extrovert*', Joe's decision to expand the company in the manner he did is also a direct result of who he is, and how he wanted to pursue his business life.

I wanted to be part of a team rather than having a different team every weekend...so my personality [influenced the decision].

Much of this rationale for diversifying the business was to satisfy the need to be around people he knows, to '*build long term relationships*' and to '*have fun at work*.' This satisfied Joe's personal desire '*to have close deep relationships*', which he felt '*meant a lot more to [him] than the average person*' and that it '*wasn't possible when you are a concert promoter...but it's built in when you are a manager*'. The very business model of being a promoter lends itself to working with different people and seeing different faces regularly. This did not match Joe's personality and led to his personal desire to expand the firm, along with the economic and symbolic reasons as well. For Joe '*getting into management...financially it made sense*,' and when asked about getting into booking as well, he simply said '*booking and managers get paid commission*.' This

was his chance at making more money as well as expanding the wide reaching perception of the firm. If the money is in management, it is in booking as well and the return on investment is often directly correlated with the amount of work and effort that is made available.

The Use of Attorneys and Other Professionals

Joe did seek help outside the company to assist him and his company in analysing potential profitability of these firms. This analytical approach to determining the economic viability of these decisions was done through the use of forecasting and modelling tools. However, Joe did not want to do this alone and sought outside help from his barrister to assist him:

Phillip the attorney where we analyzed it because we came to a point where we created a graph that said if you sold this many records you would make most of your money, would you make more managing or being label?

He understood that this was a gap in his knowledge and which only specialised individuals, with the skill set he needed, could provide. He also looked to trusted advisors for opinions, not for the specialty embodiment of a specific knowledge, but the role they play in operating and overseeing one of his future businesses:

'I've talked to the people involved with the studio itself like Jeremy from [artist name purposely withheld] because he's one of the key guys with overseeing the studio. I asked them a little bit of their input.'

He trusts Jeremy's professional opinion and knows that he is best suited to answer specific questions because of his positional influence and knowledge of the job.

Internal Colleague Influences

Other members of the team – employees of the firm, also influenced this decision. As was the case in the first, Kapooshki Music decision that was analysed, Joe consulted a few of his trusted employees when seeking out how to approach the decision of setting up a separate legal entity. Specifically in this case, it was relevant to his choice to separate the recording studio from the label:

This one I talked actually a fair bit with Susie.'

Joe felt that he could trust Susie's opinion here and trusted what she had to say about doing so. This trust goes back to knowing and interacting with her since their time in college together. Over the years, after she was hired by Joe to work in sales and administration, she has played an important role in the decision-making of Kapooshki. Her counsel was continually valued by Joe - helping him to see things from a different perspective and often enabling him to see a more logical side of issues where he may have been emotionally involved, thus leading to, or including, strong personal bias. Knowing this, Joe felt he could go to her often seeking input on bigger decisions and this was no exception. She offered sound advice that allowed him to reinforce his bias in the decision. He trusted her understanding of the business in the field in which they conducted the business and in which she could be depended on to provide advice.

5.2.3 Conclusion

As was seen in this second decision by Kapooshki Music – whether to expand and diversify the firm through setting up of separate legal entities – the overall rationale was to be seen as a viable business within the Christian recorded music industry. Although the use of economic capital here was minimal, as Joe decided between whether to separate out the companies or keep them within one larger firm, the important factor was how others would perceive him and his company. Joe determined that the perception and potential success are related and being seen as a larger, more experienced, better connected and knowledgeable business could enable him easier access to social, cultural and symbolic capital that could later be transformed into economic capital or further symbolic capital. The influences upon this decision practice included internal business colleagues and their perspectives, external resources in the form of industry skills needed to execute, logical and analytical behaviours when approaching the information gathering stage of the decision practice, as well as those of the owner-manager, Joe Jackson.

6. Empirical Findings and Analysis II

CASE #3: ALBUM RELEASE

Enterprise: Ronald 'Cisco' Newman, Sole Proprietor

Sector: Americana music

Owner: Cisco Newman

Turnover: \$35,000 Annually

6.1 FIRM BACKGROUND AND DECISION CONTEXT

This decision is about choosing an alternative between two album format options for the Ronald 'Cisco' Newman upcoming album release. The details about this release and the struggles that he faced as he was deliberating which direction to take will be outlined, as will the resources he used to make the decisions and the influences upon the decision practice. Evidenced in this decision is the use of company and personal aggrandisement, a concern for reputation, past experiences, personal belief biases and anchoring and adjustment heuristics. Specifically, there are two overarching observations that influenced the decision practice over those discussed in Chapter 5. Here, due to the Cisco business structure, and his current possession of symbolic and economic capital, he is limited by the lack of these resources. In addition, the effects of this decision upon his reputation and symbolic positioning in the field are deemed to be the most prominent influential factors.

Ronald Cisco Newman is a singer-songwriter based in Richmond, VA. Legally recognised as the sole proprietor of 'Doing Business As' (DBA) Cisco Newman, he is a one-person micro-enterprise that is typical of the 'Do-it-yourself' (DIY) artist that has become prominent in the music industry since technology brought about changes in the distribution system beginning in the late 1990s and continuing today. During his tenure as an independent musician, Cisco, on occasion, has surrounded himself with a team of agents – managers, consultants and barristers - that have assisted him with his operations. These agents have enabled him to conduct business within multiple sub-sectors of the recorded music industry as his business has grown through the years.

6.1.1 Organisation of the Firm – *Cisco Newman*

Being a sole proprietor, Cisco Newman is, at the moment, his own manager, his own agent and his own record label. He does have a third party working on his behalf as a publisher, securing a deal to represent his song writing interests. And even though he does control and own all of his Intellectual Property – including the rights to his songs and recordings, he has chosen not to recognise each of these operations as separate legal entities – each operate under ‘Cisco Newman’. Cisco, his brand and the legal entity that is recognised as a trinity, seen as one, but where all three are virtually inseparable as perceived by fans, agents and business partners. This is typical of the DIY artist that is pursuing a career in the music industry since the advent of digital technology in the form of MP3’s and the changing distribution channels. A DIY artist can be described as a musician who performs, seeks employment (live performance), records, promotes, or any activity associated with the marketing and promotion of recorded music product, without the aid of ‘professionals’. Within this context, the ‘professional’ would be considered any third party who may conduct specialised business operations within the field of the aforementioned sectors, these could include record labels, booking agents, and artist managers.

The breakdown of distribution channels within the recording industry throughout the past decade, and the advent of new technologies that prompted and perpetuated these changes, have allowed for easier accessibility to the consumer that has enabled many musicians to produce, distribute, market and promote their own product. This virtual inseparability and accessibility to the market has brought with it new opportunities and challenges that have been represented in the decision-making practices that are evidenced in Cisco’s pursuit of his new release of an extended play album (EP: 4-6 songs) over a traditional full-length album (10-12 songs). This decision represents the opportunities that have resulted from the changing industry landscape for independent artists like Cisco. It characterises the choices available to these artists as they confront major decisions that will affect them and their business.

Operations

Cisco Newman writes, produces, records, finances, and promotes his own recorded music product. He does not partake in the signing of, recording or promoting of other artists or products as would be representative of a traditional label and their day-to-day operations. He does not have a formal organisational structure that relies upon skill sets of employees through a division of labour, nor does he hire consultative services for operating his business. He is a micro-enterprise that is legally recognised as a sole-proprietor that makes a modest living as a singer-songwriter. Cisco grosses about \$35,000 a year and like many DIY artists trying to make a living struggle often with cash flow and profitability. He conducts his daily business and administrative operations out of his home office, books his own shows, concerts and has no agents working on his behalf other than the occasional legal counsel or casual consultation.

6.1.2 The Actor and Personal-level Habitus

Cisco Newman – Singer - Songwriter

Age: 33

Gender: Male

Ethnicity: Caucasian

Education: B.A. Musical Composition

Cisco Newman – Individual Habitus

Cisco Newman is a thirty-three year old male singer-songwriter that has been honing his craft for the past ten years. He identifies himself as a brother, husband, son, teacher and performer. Cisco is a modest individual grounded in strong family values and a strong sense of right and wrong.

'I don't do anything really swarmy [unethical] at all. People should base their decisions on what they value, not what they put in front of you'.

This was instilled in him through his upbringing and may indicate limited risk taking in decision-making. He comes from a strong nuclear family in which he is emotionally involved and is closely connected.

'I had good parents, who were really involved in everything I did. After I moved out...I just practiced that. Then, I was surrounded by coaches'.

This left Cisco feeling grounded personally and professionally and ultimately confident in himself when beginning his DIY endeavours. Understanding that, despite unforeseen or unintended outcomes, he could always rely on a strong family unit. He feels that it has impacted him positively, by keeping *'me more in-line knowing that my mom would check my business and hold me accountable.'*

Cisco has describes himself as an *'outgoing, but calculated' individual...you have to be in this business to want to get on stage.'* He makes conversation easily with people he does not know. And although this can often give the impression that he *'fly's by the seat of his pants,'* but he is not, he is more *'calculated.'* He admittedly second-guesses himself often because *'I don't know what I'm doing...in a business that doesn't know what it's doing either.'* This leads him to feeling as if he is making decisions on a lot of uncertainty and uncontrollable factors. These uncontrollable factors lead Cisco to believe that he has little influence in his own decision-making. This limited influence, from his perspective, is rooted in a lack of confidence. Confidence that has been eroded through ten years on the road touring and attempting to make in-roads as a musician and seeing others less talented – as he perceives it - see greater success and longevity. This perception of unwarranted success lies at the heart of the uncertainty principle (Caves, 2000) that is present within this industry. Never knowing where or how success, or even what the odds of success can be, leads to a feeling of uncontrollability and erosion of confidence upon an actor who is attempting to make a career creating, marketing and selling recorded music product.

Cisco considers himself fiscally conservative, yet socially liberal. He has an appreciation for art, and creativity and will respond favourably to new ideas and thinking beyond the *'status quo'*. He is not a big consumer of music even though he makes a living creating, producing, marketing and distributing it.

Through observation and direct interaction, Cisco appears conscientious – efficient and organised, unlike what some may consider being the stereotypical ‘eccentric’ artist – unorganised and aloof to the business dealings of his craft. He has a good business mind and understands the difference between commerce and art and knows how to successfully merge the two to create a viable business. *‘I know what I’m doing. I know the people I am reaching’* indicates he is knowledgeable, but also has limited power to influence. Having the knowledge of how the industry works is obviously important. However, knowledge is one thing, but being able to use it to garner influence for personal or professional ambition is another. This creates a disconnect between the ‘knowing’ and the ‘influence’, for which further resources are needed in order to ‘bridge this divide’. Skill and experience in a given field can help close this gap, but those resources must first be acquired. This can be achieved through time and success, which can then lead to acquiring more authority, creating an iterative cycle of success and influence. This generates a delicate balance and an ongoing struggle for those in Cisco’s position.

Cisco also admits to a sense of insecurity. At times he is unsure of his abilities or whether *‘he has what it takes’* to succeed, he is often *‘scared of regret...and having screwed up a lot of stuff’*. Anecdotal comments have also shown this level of insecurity or lack of confidence in many musicians and artists that pursue this type of career and lifestyle. These feelings of uncertainty and insecurity are not uncommon and should be considered when researching how personal dispositions may influence the decision practice for Cisco. The rationale behind this insecurity can be partially attributed to the previous discussion regarding the influences the changing industry has had on DIY artists like Cisco, but he also states clearly:

‘I don’t know they’re the right decisions. I don’t necessarily know how to do this...there are so many ways of doing things now, it’s hard to know what is the right way’.

This uncertainty he reflects upon in his decision-making abilities, along with his other personal dispositions will be analysed in the decisions that follow. The descriptions will take into consideration Cisco’s personality and objective characteristics as just discussed, as will his habitus, the business he runs and the

industry he works in. It will then be shown how each of these factors influences his decision-making.

6.1.3 Resources Needed

The Constraints of Time and Money

Economic capital and the influence it has on this decision is evident as Cisco goes through the decision process. The need for economic capital for implementation was at the forefront of influence for this decision. Cisco made this clear on multiple occasions:

'Yeah that was the biggest factor, that I didn't have enough money to make a full-length record. I wanted to, and it would have required a lot of borrowing that I just didn't feel like doing ... there just wasn't enough money for a full-length record'.

Even after taking into consideration other factors like reputation, and the field doxa, each of which will be touched upon in subsequent sections, it still 'came down to money' for Cisco and he really felt that 'the money just wasn't there,' to make it happen any other way. He felt limited and constrained by his lack of financial resources to do what he felt he needed to do, or for what he wanted to achieve. Not having enough money was evident, but it was not the only factor. If it were about the lack of economic capital, this decision would have been easier to make and would not have been self-identified as a strategic, or major, decision. There was more at stake for Cisco here as he considered the alternative options available to him. One of those options, albeit a more superficial one, included the potential return on investment. He did not have the financial resources to do the full-length album, but he did consider the increase in time it would take to record and thereby release it. This would have affected the time in which he could see profits from his endeavour:

'If I went with the EP, I would spend half as much time recording, get out the EP quicker and spend half as much money'.

He also considered whether he could increase his cash flow post-release over the EP:

'Make more by selling the album, spent more making it...all in all yeah, I think it would be a wash'.

Both examples of Cisco's thought process are evidence of a logical and analytical approach that he used when contemplating the economic aspects of the decision. The details of this practice will be discussed in more detail below, however, it is important to note that taking this approach was justified when looking at the economic implications of the decision. Some of which, are inherent in Cisco's personal disposition discussed in section 6.1.2. Being fiscally conservative, Cisco's personality favours looking at the options available to him and the consequences or implications of each of the decision choices. Limited by his knowledge of how to do intricate financial modelling and the lack of time to execute a thorough vetting of all options he relies upon the broad-based estimates and the implications that may result:

'I think for me, now looking back I want to say that I made a decision that I wanted to put out more music more often as opposed to putting out one album every three years. So I knew...'

He knew that he could have more capital coming in, and '*more often*', which enabled him to '*enjoy a spike in sales when the record came out*', and although the upfront economic incentive was appealing, there was more motivating him in this decision. As the evidence demonstrates, the money was an important influence in his thinking, but it was more about his symbolic standing via his reputation in the industry, that is, how he is perceived by other industry professionals and by his fans.

The Value of a 'Name' and the Symbolic Power it Represents

As discussed, economic resources influenced the decision, but so did his symbolic positioning within the industry. His lack of options with regard to transforming economic capital into symbolic capital became evident here, for being a DIY artist possessing limited amounts of each, cornered Cisco into having to consider, not only the economic impact, but the symbolic one as well. This symbolic influence first came out in his desire to work with a 'big name' producer, but in order to do so would entail either an amount of economic capital that he did not have, or a certain amount of symbolic capital, which he does not yet possess. Because he did not have enough economic capital at his

disposal he was limited in the type of album he could logically release without losing further assets. If further economic capital was available, Cisco made it explicit that he would have made a different decision:

'One, because you have someone who has that much pull you would want it to be a full-length to get the most of that experience. To make ten songs with that person as opposed to just five. And the excitement level is higher - you know what I mean? I don't know, I mean yeah of course, to me that's like just using the opportunity'.

Not only would he have gone on to make a full-length album, but he would explicitly transform his economic capital to symbolic capital in the form of an established, industry recognised producer. This is evident in his comment about working with someone with *'that much pull'*.

Being limited by his economic capital, Cisco was unable to move forward with this potential transformation into symbolic capital, but it is important to understand the important role symbolic capital in this form plays as DIY artists make decisions about their career every day:

'Those kind of things are like pipe dreams where everyone wants to work with a big producer, and I've thought about it as recently as the last couple of weeks. The resources just aren't there at the moment'.

Cisco stresses the importance of working with producers with a list of *'credits'* and who possess a large amount of symbolic capital, obtained through award accumulation, producing albums with prominent artists, or working with other artists who have obtained a large amount of symbolic capital. He acknowledges that the social and symbolic capital that an established producer brings with them could positively impact his own career, if he can associate himself with their success:

'Because it's validating, you think that because the people who are having success in this industry, you like to think that by being associated with them that success is attainable as well....That's either because they'll mention you, which is as absurd as it sounds, they'll mention you in some interview that they are working with you, or that you can just literally use their name on anything you are doing to promote their record. "So and so worked on my record" ...that could be just enough, that could be enough that by mentioning their name people will actually listen to your record when they wouldn't

have before. Oh T Bone did this record, I'll totally check that out. And never mind that he has made bad records. But because he is involved in your album then it's something that people will actually listen to'.

Success seems more achievable if even the slightest of association between him and a prominent producer occurs – by the very nature of working together. Although a producer of this calibre may or may not outright announce to the industry that I've worked with Cisco or 'so and so', if in passing or through an interview a question arises about current, future or past projects, it may intrigue others to investigate further. The very notion that a prominent producer or artist would work with Cisco is in itself validating enough. The symbolic capital that is possessed by these individuals will transcend prior beliefs. If *they* see the potential or talent in this individual or band, then there must be something to hear or see. The embodiment of that association could and has often been the trigger that has started the momentum for some artist's career, like pop star Justin Bieber's association with R&B artist Usher. Whether it is warranted or not, the association and involvement of big names can cause others to see things that may, or may not, be present. This is what Cisco is alluding to in his comments and why the association with someone with large amounts of symbolic capital can pay off for a DIY artist like himself.

The Role of Management and Friends

This decision also relied upon a strong social network. Here, the social network came in the form of a type of consultancy from his previous manager, the studio owner where he was to record the album and musicians from his band. Cisco often went back to his previous manager to consult on whether he should pursue the EP over the full-length album. This was done more as a '*confirming*' action to what he was already thinking or leaning towards and can be attributed to Cisco's insecurities and uncertainty in making decisions. Questioning his abilities and decisions at times, Cisco used his social capital as an affirmation tool for what he was already thinking. Trusting in the advice he would receive from his manager:

'I just wanted to make sure that I was thinking through all the possibilities, that I wasn't missing something and was considering the costs involved and the potential sales. At this point I already knew what I wanted to do, but it was good to hear it from someone else I trusted too'.

In addition to speaking often with his old manager on these issues, he sought out advice and direction from those closer to his day-to-day operations. This led him to consult with the studio owner where he was recording the album. The studio owner was directly impacted by this decision because, one, he was going to be affected financially by this decision and, two, he was also the guitarist in Cisco's band - when a full-band was used. If Cisco decided to go with the EP, which consisted of fewer tracks, he would not spend as much time recording, editing, mixing or mastering in the studio. This would impact the studio owner's bottom line, potentially leaving a bias in his own favour, which would also influence the advice being received by Cisco on this decision. This could be interpreted as a 'devil's advocate' (Amason, 1996) approach being sought by Cisco through his social network. However, considering the studio owner was also the guitar player, knowing Cisco personally for many years enabled him to secure the best rate possible, thus, already impacting the studio owner's bottom line:

'...because the guitar player in the band owns the studio, there wasn't a whole lot of shopping around for a good deal. I had a pretty good rate with him and he was already invested in it because he plays in the band'.

Having this connection may have had a 'devils' advocate' influence, but Cisco found that it made the decision easier for him to make in favour of the EP because of the cost savings the other actor was able to extend and the flexibility with time being in the band. In addition, Cisco wanted to speak with others close to him, the ones that would actually be a part of the recording, knowing they would be directly impacted by the choice he made. *'I needed to talk that over with the guys'.* Again, this is indicative of an affirmation to what was already decided by Joe and reinforces the influence his habitus has on his decision-making practice. It could be argued that this affirmation from his previous manager and the band was more of a consensus (Amason, 1996) action. He

already had a good idea of what he wanted to do, but used a strong social network as a consensus-building tool, not for a team, but for himself.

Knowing What You Know: The Reliance upon Experience

Much of the skills and knowledge that Cisco brings to his decision-making comes from what he has learned as he built his business. He certainly has a solid foundation rooted in institutionally recognised cultural capital such as his undergraduate degree, but also his graduate studies that helped start his thinking as an entrepreneur. Although Cisco does not directly call upon the skills and knowledge he acquired when he was studying the business side of the music industry, Bourdieu would argue that this history has influenced Cisco's habitus and personal dispositions, which would lead to perspectives that influence decision-making. Whereas his understanding of the industry may have been grounded there, Cisco feels that much of what he learned was from how he has conducted his business since 2002:

'Yeah I mean what I feel I bring to the table is what I know about what I do, and that's it'.

His reliance upon his embodied cultural capital in the form of industry knowledge was learned and ingrained through practice and hard work. Cisco relies as much as he can on what he knows, his skills and education, but still reaches out to his network and advisors to reassure his thinking and actions – a direct result of his sense of insecurity.

6.1.4 Influences on the Decision

The Flexibility of a 'DIY' Artist in a Changing Industry Field

The 'rules of the game' for the DIY musician tend to differ from those firms that have a more centralised structure, a set hierarchy, and utilise a specialised division of labour. Although centrally structured companies like record labels - that have multiple employees - and DIY artists both find themselves in a power struggle battling over consumer sales and field position, DIY artists must make decisions with less economic, symbolic, social and cultural capital. They must do so while seeking the recognition of a position in the field

that is either already filled, or at least become better positioned to be more competitive with the more established players like those record labels just mentioned. What may be accepted practice for the small to medium size enterprise such as a publishing company or record label may be very different for a touring musician with limited resources. These can influence the decision-making practice for the DIY artist. They may be concerned about expectations, influences or potential outcomes in a different manner compared with their hierarchal, specialised competitors. For example, in Cisco's situation, it became apparent that being an independent musician was often at the forefront of his thinking. He acknowledges the benefits that come from the 'freedom' of being your own boss, but also the perceptions that it brings:

'There is this coolness to being an independent artist, it's really cool. It's really cool to do your own thing and people are more accepting of that now in general, it's more accepted to not be a slave to some of these bigger companies; that you're doing your own thing because the tools are there for you. It's awesome'.

This is evidence of what he considers positive attributes or 'freedoms' that come with the position he occupies in the field. He perceives himself as having flexibility with his decision-making without the need to consult or 'ask permission' for what he feels is an important direction to take, or major decision to make. He describes this freedom even further as a self-described benefit:

'I didn't have to really have a conversation with anyone about what I needed to do, if I didn't want to...I didn't have to consult with anyone in order to move forward. And that's a nice luxury, that's awesome, a really nice thing'.

This could be seen as a way for the decision maker to seek permission or consult other firm employees on actions to be taken, ultimately influencing the decision maker in a particular fashion. Although, in a previous case, the influence was deemed to be a positive one, at times this could lead to influence that may be politically motivated or undesired – depending upon the positional power that may be exerted upon the practice. In this case, however, Cisco felt it a benefit to him and his firm that he did not have to move in a direction, or take a certain position, he did not want, or felt was appropriate for his pre-determined aims. He is able to take ownership of the decision and reap the added value from

it, or suffer the consequences that may result, without being accountable to others. Regardless of the outcome, value was sought in the freedom not to engage in or, at the very least, not to act.

This feeling of *'freedom'* and *'flexibility'* and not needing to seek *'permission'* from others to proceed is also at the forefront of his decision practice, as Cisco sees the 'rules of the game' shifting due to the changes within the distribution system. He recognises that the rules are in a state of flux that is providing opportunity never before seen in this industry for a DIY artist. These changing rules have provided opportunity to distribute, market, promote and generally engage with your fans more than ever before. However, this freedom also leads to uncertainty and the feeling of disorientation at times. As Cisco previously mentioned *'he didn't know what he was doing, in an industry that didn't know what they were doing either'*. This *'freedom'* and opportunity, breeds uncertainty and with uncertainty comes doubt, doubt that can evolve into an erosion of confidence that then impacts how, or in what direction, Cisco will move for any given decision needing to be made. This doubt can often lead to overcompensation, which will be discussed in further detail below. However, it must also be noted that Cisco feels positive about this freedom and feels that it brings with it an opportunity that his competitors are not always able to enjoy. He strongly feels that:

'You pretty much choose your own adventure. There are tons of different avenues you can take. You could if you wanted make music and never tour. There's people that do that and do a great job of it. It's a specific type of music or a fan base that doesn't go to live shows anyway. I mean you can literally do this ten different ways; and then you can do those ten different ways ten different ways as well, as far as how you approach it. So since there isn't a way to do things anymore you don't just make a record, book a tour, and go out and push, push, push, push, push. You don't have to do that anymore. One, because it doesn't really work, or the machines behind that aren't really available anymore, no one has \$250,000 from a record label to push like that anymore. But the cool thing is, that you have ways to reach people digitally. You have lots of different social networks to get your music out there. The difference is though that there are tons of different ways to do it'.

Cisco's statements are in reference to answering or seeking permission from a record label or other entity that would exert undo power or influence upon his decision-making. The changing distribution system within the field enables him to pursue his own marketing and promotion strategies that a decade ago would have been nearly impossible to do without the assistance of an established distribution network controlled by the major recording companies, or select independent record companies. The changes that have taken over the field have provided opportunities for him and other DIY artists that enable them to seek power and position within the field with lesser amounts of social, economic, symbolic or cultural capital.

Firm Level Habitus

As was discussed in Chapter 2, the evolving distribution system within the music industry has brought about changes in marketing and promotion of recorded music that has led to opportunities for artists and the music they promote that were not present ten years ago. This has also led to an influx of product into the distribution system because of the easy access to market that was once limited. With the prominence of DIY artists within the field, it has become increasingly more difficult for these musicians to differentiate themselves from others trying to grow their business organically. Album releases have seen a steady increase year over year up until 2008 where they peaked at 106,000 releases. Since then, there has been a steady decline with the most recent statistics showing only 75,000 new releases in 2010 (Peoples, 2011). Although statistics show a recent decline, it has not made it any less difficult for developing musicians to differentiate themselves and the music they create from their closest competitors. Part of this differentiation process lies in having the firm or artist being seen as viable, not only among his or her customers or fans, but with those with whom the firm wishes to do business, leading to the concept of aggrandisement established in Kapooshki's decisions. As will be shown, aggrandising behaviour also influenced Cisco's decision-making along with the symbolism it represents. It was at the heart of why Cisco struggled with choosing to release an EP over a full-length record.

Aggrandising and the Concern for Fan Perception

Aggrandisement, although difficult to differentiate in this case between individual and company (they are one in the same for Cisco within this field), was evidenced as influential within the decision practice. Aggrandising serves two purposes here; one, to be seen as credible by his fans and colleagues and two, to aid in differentiating himself among other actors vying for power, further symbolic and economic capital. In Cisco's decision-making practice, there was concern for how he, his brand and the firm in which he does business would be perceived. It enables him to conduct business as well as be taken seriously by his fans that want to invest their time and money in the viability of the craft and the likeability of the artist. Fan engagement has the potential to increase loyalty, which can turn into support both emotionally and financially for the artist. Therefore, making decisions that will position him, and how he is seen in the field, better are in his best long-term interests.

In the first instance, Cisco felt that releasing an EP may jeopardise his 'standing' with his fans and being seen as a 'smaller' release may be something that would not be 'on par' with his current field position or standing. It is important for the reputation of the artist to uphold a perception of 'being relevant' and 'on the cutting edge' of the music. The newest and long standing fans desire longevity – the need or desire to feel involved with the next 'great' thing or success before it reaches the masses. This makes *them* feel important, relevant and to speak to recognising cultural product before their peers. This too is at the heart of recognition, but beyond the scope of this research. The artist, by portraying him and his business in a fashion that reinforces that image helps to create a social network of people that want to be involved with them before success is achieved. This is evidenced in Cisco's concern for how is seen by his consumer:

'Yeah, it's a weird double-edged sword [being a DIY artist]...at the same time you still want to appear like you've got enough going on that it's a viable business, that it's not that you are a lazy person who doesn't want to get a job'.

It is important for Cisco to be seen as 'viable' and not just an everyday musician that has starry-eyed dreams for success. His decision-making is influenced by this and will often try to avoid this perception, as he goes on to state:

'we are playing at xyz venue and opening for this ABC artist. It shows that we are building something we have something going on'.

Here, aggrandisement substantiates itself in the specific name and artist in which Cisco chooses to play. The specific venue may have a reputation for only allowing artists with a strong fan base or who can draw a certain crowd when performing, while a specific artist may be associated with a certain stature. If you are able to play with ABC artist, '*you must (emphasis added) have a lot going on*' and therefore worth going to see. Although deciding to play specific venues or deciding to play with certain artists helps to reinforce this 'image,' this phenomenon was also present as an influential factor in Cisco's decision to release the EP. In order to maintain his level of 'relevance' and perception that he sees as building and or maintaining in his career, his decision as to whether he should release an EP over a full-length album could jeopardise this perceived 'success'. Cisco was concerned about how releasing an EP may be perceived by his fans or colleagues. He wants to maintain the perception of '*building his career,*' not one that has seen its prime:

'Like they are part of something great that's moving forward, not a career that's slowly dying because the \$10,000 you borrowed from your dad ten years ago is gone now, you know what I mean'?

Cisco's concern in this case, was that by choosing to release an EP, he would potentially leave the perception of a 'has been', or that he could no longer afford to release a full-length album. His relevance would be greatly diminished.

Leaving a perception of relevance is seen as just part of what he needs to do and the decision he needs to make to reinforce this image of legitimacy. It also plays a role in differentiating oneself from others in the field in which the individual or firm is competing. The field characteristics and changing environment have provided opportunities for firms like Cisco's, but with these prospects come changes in how micro-enterprises conduct business and make decisions. Cisco realises that opportunities now exist that did not before, while

at the same time providing challenges that he feels are leaving him in a position of being compelled to make decisions that reinforce this perception:

'Whether you want to or not you are actually or I am actually competing with other people who are doing the same thing that I am at different levels. So you have to when it comes down to it... not too often I think now people have a choice to buy between this song or this song or this album or this album. I really feel like there's not a whole lot of that out there anymore. When you go to a music store or a record store, the record store was literally albums right next to each other that you had to choose whether to buy one or the other. I feel like now when you are presented with music you have the choice whether to buy that song or not and move on'.

Although strong competition exists in many industries, the difference that exists here is the strong substitution effect that can occur along with the social phenomenon that occurs with viral marketing - an advertising strategy that relies on individuals to spread or promote a message. The more people see others enjoying or seeing value in something, the more likely others will want to 'get on the bandwagon'. That seems to be evidenced here as well, and by Cisco's concern for portraying himself as not as 'big' or relevant or fading away into the next 'has been'. He strongly feels that consumers make purchase decisions based, not only on song or album appeal, but also on how 'big' you are, or how big you are perceived to be, in the industry. It enables the consumer to choose between many options:

'Any fool can get Photoshop, Garage Band, MySpace, and a website, and look like they have enough going on. Anyone can do that. So you might as well take it a step further and go beyond what the bare minimum is'.

Taking it a step further or going beyond '*the bare minimum*' is a way for an independent artist like Cisco to differentiate himself from others doing something similar.

When Cisco finally decided that an EP was the most economical way to release his new songs, maintaining his 'relevance' to his fan base, and to continue differentiating himself in the industry, he went to great lengths to maintain this perception that he was not choosing the 'cheap' independent artist perception:

'I can tell you I didn't mention the word, it was called an album. My new album was coming out, that's how I described it. It was not an EP until the day it came out'.

By using the word 'album' in his marketing materials and communication to the public enabled him to continue the perception of being a musician that is not financially impoverished or concerned about expenditures. Cisco felt it essential that his fan base and professional network continue to see him as 'a certain level artist, with a certain stature', and that releasing an EP over a full-length album could compromise this position. He is concerned about how he is perceived within the field and that it may affect his current positioning or future potential at accumulating the capital he desires.

Even though evidence showed that he could only go in one direction because it was '*all about the money*,' the economic influence, albeit strong, was just one influential aspect. One of the underlying influences in this decision was really about how his fans and professional network would perceive him and the impact that perception would have on his reputation as an artist.

Individual Level Habitus (Micro Level Influences)

Individual Aggrandisement and Concern for Reputation

Going a step beyond the company perception of Cisco Newman as a performer and professional, Cisco also felt concerned about how this release would be perceived on a more personal level. Here, aggrandisement was apparent through a concern for reputation. How Cisco's brand was perceived was one thing, but Cisco also contemplated the impact it had on him personally:

'Yeah, it was ego. It was totally an ego thing. I didn't want to put out half a record. It seemed like I was showing my cards a little bit. Showing that I didn't have the money to make a full-length record. I didn't want to look like I didn't have the money to make a full-length record'.

Again, concerned with how he would be perceived by not having the money to release a full-length album. He felt that if he decided to go this route, he might jeopardise the symbolic capital that he has obtained throughout his career. Artists that have had success at the level in which

he was attempting to operate are not concerned with the financial implications, or at least do not leave that perception if they do. This concerned him and he felt that if he decided to go with the EP, that he would have to expend a certain amount of symbolic capital that he had gained, which he was concerned about losing, and indicating that it might be too much to sacrifice.

In addition to the financial and perceptive concerns, Cisco was also worried about how his reputation as a viable music-producing artist would be affected. In the music industry, if too much time has passed since a release of new music, a fan's engagement with the artist may diminish along with their 'relevancy' in the marketplace. This is especially a concern in an evolving field like the music industry where monetising fan engagement has become a priority. This relevance and potential dwindling of fans impact an artist like Cisco emotionally, for it is his personal reputation that is at risk, not just the brand. Knowing the timing issues that producing a full-length album would bring, coupled with the limited tracks an EP would provide, Cisco also contemplated what either of these factors could do to his reputation:

'But at the same time I didn't want my fan base to feel like they had waited two years for a record and they were only going to get a few songs'.

Contemplating the two issues, left Cisco making a decision not only about what album type to release, but how this decision would impact his reputation as a musician, and how that reputation would jeopardise the symbolic capital he already possessed. Using a sense of individual aggrandisement to preserve his reputation and thereby keeping a secure hold on his symbolic capital moves to the spirit of why artists like Cisco choose to aggrandise or use it to impact decision practice. When discussing his opportunities that come with his sense of freedom, it was explained that with that freedom of opportunity comes uncertainty and with that uncertainty comes doubt, doubt that can evolve into an erosion of confidence that impacts how or what direction Cisco will take for any given decision needing to be made. This doubt can also be overcompensated for, and turn into a sense of insecurity that instigates aggrandising behaviour. If he is

perceived by any of his stakeholders as disingenuous, he could quickly erode any of the symbolic capital that he feels he has earned along with his accumulated social and economic capital.

The Impact of Past Bad Decisions

Past experience often plays an important role in decision-making. Positive past outcomes can lead to similar decision-making given similar circumstances. On the contrary, negative, past outcomes can influence future decisions by the actor's desire to avoid similar results (Sagi & Friedland, 2007). Cisco's past negative experience to a decision led to a similar avoidance behaviour, but also a prudent one:

'There was a series of really bad decisions made over a couple of years, and the money wasn't there. I was having to pull myself out of a hole for a couple years. I was finally ahead for once, and I didn't want to use more money than I had'.

The lack of economic capital and assets is common among DIY artists and can often influence decisions being made. In Cisco's case, and relevant to his decision to release a full-length album or EP, his financial position has direct impact, but this effect is also grounded in past decisions that now have bearing and influence on this particular decision. He is exhibiting avoidance behaviour in that he does not want to endanger his current economic position as he did in the past. This influence also causes him to proceed with caution and will lead to seeking further advice from external consultants and advisors. These advisors will also help to reinforce his own dispositions that he has acquired from his previous experience. In his decision to release an EP, Cisco's use of past experience as a benchmark is explicit and impactful. Often, past experience, as argued by Bourdieu (1990b) can impact an actor's personal dispositions but often becomes part of the individual habitus, which makes it more difficult to isolate.

In addition to a past, negative experience, Cisco also relied upon a past, positive experience as he contemplated this decision:

'My most successful record was an acoustic record I made in a day and a half for \$200...keeping that in mind I wanted this next to have

whatever charm that record had, but I was going to make a record using everything I had as well'.

He knew from past experience that he could create a great record with limited funds. This would help to alleviate his concerns that the more money he spent on a recording the better the album would, or could, be. He learned that he could do with less and still produce an excellent record. This is what helped to reinforce his economic concerns that he equated with quality, and assist in neutralising that influential factor.

The Need to Consult

Cisco's desire to seek outside counsel served two purposes when making this decision. First, he used personal advisors to aid in reinforcing his choice once it was made and, two, he used external advisors to consult and talk through concerns of past experiences that are now influencing his decision practice:

'There were certain people that I went to for advice like [my previous manager] and my wife'.

Seeking advice in these matters was not done to influence his decision-making but was used to affirm what was already decided. Cisco finds it helpful to speak with those closest to him as a way to 'talk through things', which allows him to feel more confident in the decision he has already made:

'...It's nice to talk it over with [my old manager] because he has an interest in it because he understands the music business side of things and I can talk to him...My wife has a vested interest in it because she's looking at it like what's going to make money and what's going to keep our family happy. Trey is looking at it completely on the creative side. So I feel like I have a nice combination of people that I can bounce things off of. So that the decision that I need to make is going to validate my gut reaction or it's gonna make me talk it over to the point where I can say that my gut reaction is wrong. I can be informed enough to say that it's wrong'.

The roles he plays as a decision-maker are evident here, artist, husband and band-mate, all helping to define the 'rules' Cisco feels he needs to follow, to approach the decision appropriately. He is influenced by these rules, but as he explicitly states, it is used as a validation to a self-described 'gut feeling'. He is

able to reassure himself and the decision he already made. This was due to his personal disposition of insecurity and the past experience discussed above that he went through with other releases. He also sought emotional support from those who are closest to him professionally when he plays:

'I talked it over with the guys in the band. We talked over what songs they were most excited about'.

Although external influences did not play a direct role in influencing which record Cisco would make, it did serve as a '*post consensus*', or as a reaffirming mechanism. '*Post consensus*' in the sense that it enabled Cisco to affirm why he decided what he did. On the one hand, it is similar to forming consensus, common in decision making in educational circles and top management teams (Amason, 1996) but without the process and debate that would come with the decision.

Personal Bias and Heuristics

This decision also provides evidence of heuristics and personal bias. However, not used independently, one was used to instigate the other and was essentially a culmination of his uncertainties and personal dispositions. Cisco uses a personal belief bias as something he already felt, a reaction to an aforementioned 'gut feeling', essentially treating it as a validation tool. He exhibited preference, while reinforcing his concern for reputation:

'I feel like what I really did was I knew it needed to be an EP and I needed to validate it to myself by making this decision'

This belief bias was rooted in his past experiences, anchoring that experience within his mind as a reference point, which then enabled him to adjust according to the circumstances of this decision. He originally believed the EP was the right way to go because he anchored a past experience and learned from it.

'...just basically the amount of money I spent on making records in the past, the amount of money I had.'

This set him up in determining how exactly he should proceed. Considering his current economic capital and what he knew it would cost, he felt that he needed to learn from his past mistakes in when budgeting costs for album production.

6.1.5 Conclusion

'So keeping that in mind I wanted this next to have whatever charm that record had, but I was going to make a record using everything I had as well.'

Cisco is referencing one of his prior releases where much success was gleaned with minimal use of capital. He saw that release as successful because of his return on investment – not only on his economic expenditures, but also his transformation of social and cultural capital used in seeking further economic capital. Cisco, like many DIY artists in the industry today, take chances and make decisions that use most, if not all, capital available to them in order to sustain his or her career. To them, a major decision like releasing an EP over a full-length album means the difference between having a sustained career, or one that will end within months of release. Much of the success is determined, like many small businesses, by cash flow, but even more importantly, as evidenced here, is the symbolic capital at stake. Lack of economic capital can sustain a career for many years as anecdotal comment shows in much of the commentary from this industry. However, if an artist's symbolic capital is used or becomes non-existent within the field of actors and/or consumers, their career is no longer viable.

Table 5 - Case #3: Selected Evidence: <i>Cisco Newman</i> - Marketing and Promotion								
	Influences	Field (s)	Firm Habitus	Decision Maker Habitus	Economic Capital	Social Capital	Cultural Capital	Symbolic Capital
Impact	Multiple influential factors were observed and impacted decision outcome.	Economic, Recorded Music Industry, small business, creative and cultural production industries	Sole Proprietor	-Personally and professional grounded -Sense of humour -Calculated -Lacks confidence in making decisions	Limited Financial resources and assets drive business decisions	Relies upon technology to assist in social connections	Learned by doing and makes choices based upon this knowledge	Influenced and motivated by acquisition of and association with 'symbolic capital'
Evidence	Company Aggrandisement: <i>'Yeah, it's a weird double edged sword [being a DIY artist]... you still want to appear like you've got enough going on that it's a viable business, that it's not that you are a lazy person who doesn't want to get a job.'</i> <i>'I can tell you I didn't mention the word-it was called an album. My new album was coming out, that's how I described it. It was not an EP until the day it came out.'</i> Individual Aggrandisement and Concern for Reputation: <i>'It was totally an ego thing. I didn't want to put out half a record. It seemed like I was showing my cards a little bit. Showing that I didn't have the money to make a full-length record. I didn't want to look like I didn't have the money to make a full-length record.'</i> -Past Experience -External Advisors -Personal Belief Bias -Anchoring and Adjustment Heuristics	Business: DIY recording artist and songwriter, Live performance, Record Label, Music Publishing <i>I don't know what I'm doing...in a business that doesn't know what it's doing either.'</i> <i>It's really cool to do your own thing and people are more accepting of that now in general because the tools are there for you</i> <i>'I mean you can literally do this ten different ways; and then you can do those ten different ways ten different ways as well, as far as how you approach it</i>	Reference Decision Maker Habitus Age: 33 Gender: Male Self-Identified Social Class: Working Ethnicity: Caucasian Education: B.A. <i>'I don't necessarily know how to do this...there are so many ways of doing things now, it's hard to know what is the right way.'</i> <i>'Outgoing, but calculated'</i> <i>'Scared of regret'</i>	<i>'Yeah that was the biggest factor, that I didn't have enough money to make a full-length record'</i> <i>'It came down to money'</i>	<i>'You have lots of different social networks to get your music out there.'</i>	Embodied Cultural Capital <i>'I bring to the table what I know about what I do, and that's it'</i>	<i>'big name producer...with that much pull'</i> <i>'One because you have someone who has that much pull you would want it to be a full-length to get the most of that experience.'</i> <i>'Because it's validating'</i> <i>'you can just literally use their name on anything you are doing to promote their record. So and so worked on my record. That could be just enough'</i> <i>'Mentioning their name people will actually listen to your record when they wouldn't have before'</i>	

6.2 CASE #4: SECURING A PUBLISHING DEAL

Cisco's second major strategic decision was regarding an opportunity to sign a new publishing deal with Henson Music Publishing, an international music publisher with a new affiliate office in the United States. He was approached and offered a deal unexpectedly and felt that *'he really needed to weigh it out.'* Often, strategic decisions in small micro-enterprises like Cisco's are unsought and can often be considered an 'action', or more 'interpretive' perspective (Hendry, 2000) on the situation. Firm owners do not often realise at the time that the decisions they are making could be considered strategic; they evolve, are more organic and only after looking back on the circumstances are they able to identify them as such. Though similar here, Cisco knew as he was being confronted with this option that it could have significant impact on him and his business. That was certainly evident here as well and is affirmation of previous research done on SME decision-making (Hendry, 2000; Jong, 2004).

'Whether it was the right one for me, that's what I needed to figure out, but it was clearly an opportunity. The potential was there...and I didn't seek it out, not in the slightest bit.'

Being an unexpected choice for Cisco to make, he felt that this was something that needed careful consideration. He was cautious in his approach because of previous experiences working with individuals that wanted to assist in his career and the implications that adjusting his business model could have on him and his livelihood. Through his understanding of the field doxa and his industry knowledge, Cisco understood the potential ramifications this decision could have, both negatively and positively. What he needed to decide was whether now was the right time and whether this was the right company with which to make this move:

'I needed to decide if I wanted to have a publishing company and I looked at all the different companies and thought this is what I want. It was them coming to me and me figuring out if this worked with what I was doing.'

At this point in Cisco's career, he had been focusing his day-to-day business operations on the marketing and promotion of recorded product and performing live. His business model was dependent upon 'experiencing' the

Cisco brand, whether it be through recordings, merchandise or the live performance. He understood however, that this is a difficult model to sustain for him and other *'life concerns'* were beginning to affect him. Being recently married, envisioning a family and his general concern about life, Cisco began contemplating his vulnerability regarding his future longevity of his current business model. His objective characteristics, his demographic profile, being married, thirty-three years old and living in Richmond, VA, are evidenced as influencing why this was such an important decision for Cisco:

'You know, I'm not getting any younger. I married now and I feel like I need to think about securing some steady income, some security and a publishing deal could help in that.'

He recognises the potential in deciding to sign a deal with Henson, if song placements could be secured, and licensing deals in T.V. and Film could be in the future for him, it could create a more steady and lucrative income. An appealing concept for a man in his early thirties starting to think about starting a family, frustrated at a ten year career with little capital, both economic and symbolic, to show for it. These motivations along with past experiences and heuristics helped Cisco make the decision to sign the deal.

Further detail on Cisco's company and his personal objective characteristics will not be reiterated here. However, where necessary the introduction of new protagonists in the decision practice will be introduced, as will the relevant context for the decision. This decision was important for Cisco, because it was a pivotal one that later proved to contribute to a new strategy for him as a DIY artist, one that can be likened to a booking agency deciding no longer to secure employment for artists, but rather managing them.

6.2.1 The Actors and Personal-level Habitus

Cisco's demographic characteristics along with a description of his individual habitus traits were described. For the sake of redundancy, it will not be necessary to repeat those characteristics here. However, within this decision, a new protagonist is introduced as an active participant in the decision practice. Although her active engagement is limited, her involvement was critical to the

decision choice and therefore is relevant to the practice surrounding the decision and the intricacies of what Cisco contemplated as he chose whether to pursue this decision.

Janet Housley – Creative Director

Age: 25

Gender: Female

Ethnicity: Caucasian

Education: B.A.

Janet Housley – Individual Habitus

Janet Housley is the publishing manager for the recently established affiliate office of Henson Music Publishing. A UK based, internationally recognised music company that has chosen to expand its offices into the United States. This allowed the company to establish a presence in the local market while capitalising on the opportunities that exist within the largest music market in the world. Janet is a twenty-five year old recent graduate of a local music industry program. Henson recruited Janet locally because she was young and willing to represent the firm's interests in the United States enthusiastically and with dedication. The company charged her with the responsibilities of overseeing the acquisition of talented songwriters as they executed their international expansion. Janet is a motivated individual willing to do what is necessary to get the job done, in the best way she knows how:

'I would describe myself as driven and willing to go to great lengths to make the contacts needed'.

Being a recent graduate, she has her hand on the 'pulse' of what is happening in the local songwriter's scene. She understands and recognises good talent when she sees it and is willing to establish relationships with those songwriters if she and Henson see it to be a good fit:

'We're looking to establish relationships with songwriters who have a certain style of writing that will serve our interests. We have very little to offer them with regard to advances, so we are not asking for ownership of their songs either. We want to establish a relationship and see what we can do for them and vice versa''

Not originally from the New York area, positions Janet with limited social capital in the form of professional networks in which to exploit. Her comments about *'going to great lengths'* reinforces this premise, which could pose limitations on the types of promotion needed for a successful firm such as Henson. She has the institutionalised cultural capital in the form of Bachelor of Arts in Music Business, but no evidence exists that the industry knowledge that may be needed has been embodied in her habitus, or learned through experience working in the industry. This is due to her having less than one year's experience working in the industry. Janet's involvement in the decision practice for Cisco, albeit limited, is important to how and what decision he makes on whether to sign a deal.

6.2.2 Resources Needed

Limited Expenditures and the Retention of Copyrights

The financial resources needed to execute this decision had minimal impact on the decision practice. The limited expenditure needed to eventually execute the decision, if Cisco felt it was in his best interest at the time, would be limited to hiring a third party, a team input that would offer legal assistance to aid in execution – a barrister and the expenses associated with travel. *'I had to spend money to draft a contract.'* This is a minimal expense, but is indicative of the lack of cultural capital needed in order to protect him throughout this process and beyond. Cisco has insufficient cultural capital in the form of contract expertise and institutional knowledge in legal credentials needed for optimum protection. He sought a barrister to represent him, negotiate for him and draft a contract that would protect him. This transformation of economic capital for the proxy form of cultural capital was necessary if Cisco wanted this deal to happen. He recognised this and was willing to spend what was needed, within reason, to make it happen.

In addition, Cisco knew that while he was contemplating whether to sign the deal, or not, he was being influenced by geography. Being a resident of Richmond, VA, he was 500 miles from the home office of the firm with which he

would need regular and direct contact. Knowing this, he needed to consider the costs of travel to and from their location to conduct business when needed.

'I had to get to know them, spending money going back and forth to [location purposely excluded] I wouldn't have spent it, if I wasn't seriously considering it'.

The company would not pay these expenses for Cisco, nor would they offer any advance – often typical of this type of deal. In exchange for no advance, he would be able to retain all ownership of his copyrights. In essence, the use of contracts here is a standard; risk adverse tactic (Caves, 2000) that field doxa would consider a typical 'Administration' deal. In exchange for the company's services and active exploitation of his catalogue, they would retain 20% of all income earned. This was appealing to Cisco, mostly because he wanted to retain ownership. From his perspective, he has worked very hard in his career and wanted to do anything he could to maintain as much control over his Intellectual Property as he could. The risk was low for him in this deal and it made it all that more appealing. The offering of this kind of agreement was certainly an influential factor, coupled with the limited resources needed to acquire a significant amount of symbolic capital associated with 'having a publishing deal,' would change how he did business and how he perceived his performing and song-writing career.

Cisco also felt confident in what the firm could offer in the short-term. After discussing the details of the contract with Janet, her supervisor overheard a conversation regarding Cisco's desire to connect with a prominent producer. Cisco was impressed when:

'...he offered to make the connection, which he did. He had no reason to do that, it was his idea, he made it happen'.

Providing a favour before any vested interest in Cisco demonstrates the influence the actors within the company possess in order to 'make things happen'. Although Cisco is adamant that he had 'no reason' to make that connection, it is more likely that he did. Janet's supervisor was purposeful in reaching out in this way. By doing so, he is establishing his authority over Cisco by demonstrating the power and influence he can wield by connecting him with the producer. By establishing his position early on, he is making it clear to Cisco

that he wields influence when needed and is in control of the relationship being established between the two of them. Although Cisco was not aware of the subtle power play, non-the-less, the favour appealed to him and reinforced the positive perception he had of the company.

The Need for Industry Knowledge and the Role of Institutionalised Cultural Capital

The role of cultural capital, and the lack thereof, also played a role in this decision and how certain choices for other influential factors were made. Through Cisco's habitus, he understood that limitations in certain areas existed; therefore he sought external advisors to aid him. Those advisors are discussed in more detail below, but it is worth mentioning the causes behind why they were sought and those are rooted in the lack of a certain embodied and institutionalised capital in the form of legal qualifications and expertise and other industry specific knowledge that Cisco felt would aid him in making a better decision. However, he did possess a certain amount of that capital that enabled him to make a better-informed decision through a language in which he could understand. This type of cultural capital was what he had gained through his graduate school education in music business.

'I wouldn't have had intelligent conversations with Chris, if I didn't tap into that knowledge I learned in school'.

The education taught him to be resourceful and creative in his endeavours and throughout his industry experience that he has acquired in the past ten years and has now embodied itself within him. He consciously realises however that much of that embodied knowledge was rooted in his education:

'I used some resources and skills acquired in school'.

The institutionalised and now embodied capital enabled him to discuss intelligently the details and options available to him as he was making his decision regarding possibly signing with Henson:

'It enabled me to speak intelligently'.

Having the appropriate amount of cultural capital in this decision enabled him to discuss with what would be considered a different class fraction

(Bourdieu, 1984) to which he did not belong, at that time. Indeed, he relied upon the barrister's expertise in the matter. The appropriately accumulated cultural capital enabled him to shift the power balance between Henson Music Publishing and himself, on behalf of a team input, momentarily so that he could make a more appropriately informed decision.

Symbolic Capital and the Power of Association

Cisco's desire to accumulate symbolic capital and/or associate with the prestige that was already accumulated and '*in the name*' of the publishing firm, thereby enabling himself to associate with that capital was an influential component to Cisco's decision-making about whether, or not, to sign this publishing deal:

'I felt that the sort of success that they have seen, I could see that success as well'.

The success that Cisco's speaks of is the desire to associate himself with the prestige that has been accumulated by the firm within the field. He also alludes to an added benefit or mystique that is associated with a firm from Europe:

'Associating with a name like "Henson" from Europe of all places, it had mystique that could lead to my success'.

Evidence suggests that he clearly felt that this association could attribute to his success within this field. They were not 'committed' to doing anything on his behalf '*they don't have to do anything actually...[the] deal wasn't all that attractive once you started to consider it.*' But it is what it represents that makes it appealing. As he saw it, signing with Henson 'could' lead to successful exploitation of his catalogue. The very essence was in the name and what they had been able to achieve in the UK. They are a prominent name *because* they have a record of success – they have accumulated the symbolic capital it needed for Cisco to feel that something good could come from the association of the name. However, this symbolic capital did not easily transcend geographic boundaries:

'In the U.S. no one knew [who] they were, but because I knew who they were and the artists they attracted it made me want to sign with them more'.

As Cisco is weighing his option and contemplating the pros and cons of

making this decision, his desire to associate himself with the Henson name also extended to a desire to associate himself with the artists that already have publishing deals with that company. This speaks to the ‘type of firm’ or brand that Henson has developed for itself, the values they represent through the artists on their roster and how they desire to represent themselves in the field. Cisco understands this association and iterative benefit between artists, the firm and the field. In addition, the added symbolic positioning could also provide further economic capital:

‘I was left with the impression that they had serious money behind them and they couldn’t fail because of it’.

An assumption was made, one that came with the symbolism of the name, along with Cisco’s trusting disposition, that this could be a positive decision and one where he *‘had nothing to lose in signing this deal, but the upside could have been enormous’*. The potential rewards outweighed the perceived risk. He felt the company had the financial resources to back what they were saying and the disposition to trust someone that had achieved a reputable name and stature in the industry. In his mind, they would *have* to support him, their new acquisition. It is what the deal had the potential to represent if he chose to move forward with signing a contract. Although, it was made clear that *‘the company was not committed to do anything’* with his intellectual property, nor was he able to see an advance for future submissions of his work, the trade-off was that, in turn he also did not have to make any significant exchange of economic capital to associate himself with the symbolic capital that was already accumulated by the firm. By mere association, and the ‘aggrandising’ opportunities that would exist, he could raise his perceived symbolic positioning in the field.

6.2.3 Influences on the Decision Practice

The Role of the Contract in the Decision Outcome

Two industry characteristics (Caves, 2000) include the use of ‘team inputs’, that is, key advisors that have accumulated a desired cultural capital that will aid the decision makers to achieve further position and power and the ‘use of contracts’ in order to protect and mitigate the intellectual property being

exploited. The use of team inputs will be discussed in further detail below under external advisors. However, the use of contracts was evidenced as key to influencing the decision practice for Cisco as he was determining how to proceed.

The contract terms and the rules that determine the relationship between parties often lay the foundation for success of either or both parties. They are taken quite seriously in this field and can often determine the amount and types of capital that may be accumulated between the parties. Specifics of these contracts and the rules that generate them are beyond the scope of this research, but its relevance is important enough to be a key influence with this decision and the ownership of the property rights that were presented to Cisco within that contract:

‘One of the biggest things to me was the idea of them owning any of my copyright, that was out the door. They never asked for that. Once this was on the table it was like okay, there are other publishing deals out there, so it was kind of apples and oranges because there are publishing companies that will give you an advance’.

Often, as industry *doxa* dictate, ‘an advance’ is in exchange for future earnings on the copyright that exists in a song. Power and capital accumulation exists with ownership and commercial exploitation of those copyrights. Contracts determine the details of the ownership of those socially constructed rights and legally protect those actors involved. They are at the heart of why this field exists and the players take the legal exchange of them and the details that dictate the exploitation with the utmost seriousness. There is no exception here, as when Cisco considers the fact that Henson was not interested in ownership of those rights, but only to act on behalf of a third party collection of assets that may be earned on them. In the industry this is typically called and ‘administration’ deal. However, as Cisco alludes to in his comments below, this deal was not strictly an administration deal either, but a hybrid of a typically publishing deal, where rights of ownership are handed over to the publisher in exchange for the previously discussed advance and opportunity to market and promote on behalf of the writer. This deal was a mix of both. Ownership stays

with the author, but Henson will market, promote and collect assets on behalf of the writer:

'What happened was he tried to draft the contract, where instead of it being the contract he gave to me which was some wacko crazy contract from the UK, he drafted something more like what Bug Music does, more of an admin deal that they do'.

Despite the cross-cultural differences that were made explicit in the terms of the contract that were originally presented, the heart of this contractual agreement is the same. The industry *doxa* dictated by the rules of how relationships with actors and the maneuvering of the 'rights' by which are being negotiated, are the same. They influence the decision practice in how Cisco evaluates the viability of his choice. He is being asked to give up minimal economic capital in exchange for this agreement. As indicated in the first decision, economic capital is critical in Cisco's evaluations of his decisions, even when symbolic capital and power is at stake. The terms of this agreement and the industry rules that govern them, made his decision choice easier, but nonetheless influential. It is also worth noting that from Henson's perspective, Janet made clear why they presented the agreement they did:

'To us, Cisco is considered an investment; we were willing to take a chance on his talent. We had little to offer him with regard to an advance, so we could not justify asking for the rights to his songs'.

The evidence presented here indicates minimal risk with optimal return for Cisco, making his evaluation of moving ahead with signing a deal seem simple. However, Cisco's past experience and habitus instill doubt, which makes this decision more difficult in evaluating and ultimately whether, or not, signing with them is an appropriate decision to make.

Decision-Making on Limited Information

Many small firms have been confirmed as using bounded rational behaviours in their decision processes (Lieberman-Yaconi et al., 2010). This behaviour is often bounded by limited information available when decision choices are being made. As Cisco indicates below, he too had limited information about the company and what exactly it may entail. Being one of the first deals

being signed by Henson in the United States left little precedence for Cisco to make his decision:

'I had a conversation with someone recently who was going to sign with Henson who they solicited and they wanted to know what I thought about it and I thought "wow that would have been a nice conversation to have when I was being [courted by them]. But there wasn't anyone, this was a new thing for them, you know? All I had was this enormously successful British company, successful worldwide and then was going to start this little publishing company in the [United States]. So I had to promise only that there was a lot of money behind this theoretically and that they had success far away. But that the namesake at least was going to be enough to get something started. You know what I mean"?'

This limited information caused Cisco to rely upon the symbolic capital and reputation that had been accumulated by the company - the capital that is now represented in the name 'Henson' and the artists being represented by them that Cisco previously discussed. That symbolism, and the 'international' perception, creates an assumption by Cisco that economic resources exist with the firm. Those resources along with the precedence of success make his ultimate decision to sign with Henson less risky. Taking on less risk and associating himself with the name, Henson, was enough for Cisco to feel more comfortable signing a deal with them so he could feel more relevant in the industry.

Firm Aggrandisement and the Perception of Credibility

Although Cisco was not originally anticipating this opportunity to sign a publishing deal, after weighing several options and contemplating the resources needed to execute it, he felt it would be worth the risk to get involved. He did have deliberate intentions for this type of association with yet another third party. He was hoping to have the opportunity, but did so with caution and scepticism. Much of this is rooted in his personal habitus and his past experience working with third parties, but much of this caution is overcome by the anticipation of the association he would have with a 'Henson' deal:

'I think I was hoping that it would at that time it gave me a feather in my cap and that's it. That's the very least of what I hoped it would get

me. It would give me the opportunity to say that I had a publishing deal and it would open up doors for me that I didn't have'.

Having a 'publishing deal' in Cisco's eyes would give him the credibility, or at least be perceived as a credible business. Yet again the need to associate with this success is at the root of influence in his decision choice. He understands that without this association his ability to conduct business is hampered by the industry *doxa*, or at least the interpretation of that *doxa* by some players:

'Because I run into closed doors all the time.'

Knowing that things are difficult when success is not 'perceived' by others also indicates an element of past experience influencing this decision. Not only by the limitation brought on by a non-association, but one brought on by association. Associating himself with the 'Henson' name and the success that comes with it would give him the perception of legitimacy through firm aggrandisement by association of a publishing company:

'I would like to get a decent publishing deal in Nashville...because the perception there is I have value because someone else saw value in me already.'

It is worth noting that in Cisco's comments here, he is foreseeing, yet again, the potential value by association with, and value of, what comes from saying he has a publishing deal. Although he expects little financial return with this deal, he understands yet again the value that it will bring for further publishing deals. The specific mentioning of the business cluster - Nashville holds value to songwriters. Knowing that the city is an epicentre of music, specifically to song writing holds value to Cisco both specific to social capital via professional networks and economic capital due to the sheer amount of business being done in the city (Raines & Brown, 2006). He also understands that by using a name like Henson, and being associated with the publisher as a songwriter, he hopes that it will present opportunities for him with Nashville companies where his chances of capital acquisition are increased.

Individual Level Habitus (Micro Level Influences)

The Lasting Impact of Bad Decisions

Cisco makes very clear that *'there was a series of really bad decisions made over a couple of years.'* This was first evidenced in his first decision and referenced as an experience related to financial matters. However, Cisco was also referring to bad experiences that he had with 'team inputs' that had represented his interests. This was brought out more clearly in his comments before, especially regarding the distractions that come with agents that are not as committed to your career and success as a DIY artist, as you might be:

'the guy also called me Donald or something. No he called me Dan. I had to make a decision. I had to say you know what this guy is an idiot and he's not part of the acquisition. He's not part of running the business, he is doing something completely different. He just didn't care enough to know my name yes, but he also didn't have to know it either because [Janet] was the person I was dealing with, someone completely different and I thought well whatever, I've made mistakes too before. This guy was just involved in other things'.

This episode that Cisco is referring to is indicative of the past negative experience that he had dealing and working with third party inputs. Those 'agents' that worked on his behalf and represented his interests in the field include his first management company, not the one he now refers to for external affirmation – but one prior - and booking agents. Much of his 'caution' and reluctance in wanting to secure a deal with Henson is rooted in those prior experiences – most of which were negative. The 'mistakes' he references above, and this association can draw the feeling of not being a priority to his previous managers. Although not getting his name right in the preliminary stages of the negotiation was not drawn as too significant to Cisco, it is evident by his comments that offence was taken and reference to his prior experience reminded him of the potential hazards that allowing a third party to represent his interests can bring. Although the justification for not knowing his name was an attempt to make him feel better about this deal that he so desired to have and have work for him, it did make him hesitant in signing the deal.

In addition, as his interactions with the *'the guy running the business,'* Cisco's regular interaction with Janet began to concern him as well, also

reinforcing scepticism of getting involved with third parties in his career. Although she was eager and willing to make the connections needed, she was also inexperienced. According to Cisco, her age and lack of cultural capital began to place doubts in his mind about the credibility and ability for Henson to do the job that they were saying they could do. There wasn't any one event in which his scepticism could be attributed, but Cisco felt that she was very 'green' in her dealings and communications. This feeling of being unknowledgeable is attributed to perspective. Cisco has accumulated a substantial amount more of cultural and social capital within the field, which enables him to see things differently and speak in ways that are more conducive to conducting business with the field. He is also older and the impact of age, life and business perspective can, and often does, influence decision-making (Bruine de Bruin *et al.*, 2007) – with no exception here.

This negative past experience with third party agents can also be argued as evidence of an anchoring and adjustment heuristic. Cisco's decision to move ahead with the deal was anchored by his negative past experience which he referenced when making the decision.

He ultimately adjusted, not by avoiding the deal, but justifying in his mind that it was acceptable because of the limited amount of risk that he was taking. He proceeded with caution but did so knowing that the potential positive outcomes with this deal outweighed the risk.

The Reliance upon Networks for Affirmation

Individuals, firms and other artefacts were used to gather information to assist in making the decision to sign the publishing deal. Cisco's disposition and past experiences had led him to feel a certain way about third party agents who want to do business with him or indicate that they want to 'help' him and his business. These feelings include scepticism, which have led to mistrust, and insecurity. This sense of insecurity has led to a slower more uncertain decision-practice that is evidenced here as he was contemplating whether it was a choice worth making, one that could and should have been an easy choice to make:

'No, I'm not a very quick decision-maker; I tend to turn to people around me to help me, validate what I am thinking. I don't usually

change my mind, but I usually come to a conclusion and then talk to others about the conclusion that I made'.

Cisco seeks out external opinions prior to making this decision, from a point of validation, not for information gathering. Information seeking has been shown as the reason why actors tend to look outside the firm to aid in decision-making processes (Liberman-Yaconi *et al.*, 2010). Although he is likely to query if there is something he has yet not anticipated, he comes from a post decision perspective, not a pre-decision one. Similar to his decision-practice for his choice to release an EP over a full-length album, Cisco uses external advisors more as a validation tool – post decision choice - rather than to seek their advice on which direction to choose. This is rooted in his habitus and general lack of confidence in making a concrete decision. Feeling that he will make a bad choice comes from many past years of inadequate levels of cultural capital in the form of industry knowledge and the constant reminders of what he perceives as potentially bad choices due to negative past experiences. The field doxa also plays a role in this sense of insecurity. By the very nature of the 'infinite variety' principle (Caves, 2000), agents tend to place little value in any one artist unless they possess a significant amount of symbolic capital. The association or behaviour that one exhibits when they perceive the talent as indispensable tends to create a difficult environment for the performer, leading to feelings of inadequacy in their skills, which can lead to a negative self-perception. This negative self-perception affects confidence, which in Cisco's case affects his decision-making practice. He seeks external advice in some circumstance to make up for this loss of confidence.

Those individuals from whom he sought advice aided him not in the efforts of making the decision – and reassurance, as just discussed, but also in navigating through the legal aspects of securing the deal through contract negotiation. In order to do so, Cisco sought the expertise of a barrister:

I had plenty of conversations with my attorney, Lilo Hollysworth'.

These conversations enabled him to work through the legal ramifications and protection he needed. As was discussed earlier, he lacked the embodied and institutionalised capital necessary here for adequate protection. The attorney he hired embodied this capital, in the form of needed legal knowledge and

credentials to practice law in the United States. This aided him in effectively executing this decision. Again, as evidenced this was done post-decision, but did aid in the effective iterative nature of decision-making inherent in small firms. This lack of appropriate cultural capital allowed him to use the social capital he had accumulated through his past successes in the field.

In addition, even though Cisco indicated that this industry knowledge was adequate, based on prior institutionalised capital accumulation from his education, he also sought out post-choice advice and affirmation from his previous manager – also similar to the behaviour exhibited in his album format decision:

'I talked it through with my old manager...I consider him knowledgeable'.

Speaking with his old manager enabled him to seek out validation and advice from a trusted advisor and to reassure him of his decision choice along with informal career advice. This behaviour is similar to the one observed in his choice to release an EP over an album and will be refrained from further analysis, due to the similar premises. It is however, worth noting that similar behaviour did exist over these two major decisions.

6.2.4 Conclusion

Cisco's decision to sign a publishing deal that would significantly change the strategic direction of his career should have been an easy choice. However, a complex iteration of the habitus between actors, field doxa and desire for capital culminated in being a difficult decision choice for Cisco. This decision would have enabled him to increase his symbolic positioning by associating his brand with that of a more established and reputable one within the field. However, as doubt about the attentiveness of the actors and the cultural capital they possessed set in, a few negative past experiences and decision-making heuristics forced him to seek outside advice to reinforce his decision. In the end, the limited risk involved outweighed the potential increase in symbolic capital by name association and the potential economic returns outweighed the ones in which he used, ultimately guiding his hand in making the choice to sign the deal.

Table 6 - Case #4: Selected Evidence: Cisco Newman - Team Expansion								
	Influences	Field (s)	Firm Habitus	Decision Maker Habitus	Economic Capital	Social Capital	Cultural Capital	Symbolic Capital
Impact	Multiple influential factors were observed and impacted decision outcome.	Economic, Recorded Music Industry, small business, creative and cultural production industries	Sole Proprietor	-Personally and professional grounded -Sense of humour -Calculated -Lacks confidence in making decisions	Limited economic assets needed for decision	Enabled Cisco to use a resource that compensated for a lack of institutionalized cultural capital needed to practice law and draft contracts	Allowed Cisco to speak intelligently and assist in negotiations of contract	Value and prestige is associated through branding weighed in favour of decision choice
Evidence	<p>Aggrandisement: <i>It would give me the opportunity to say that I had a publishing deal and it would open up doors for me that I didn't have.'</i></p> <p><i>'I would like to get a decent publishing deal in Nashville... the perception there is I have value because someone else saw value in me already.'</i></p> <p>Negative Past Experience: <i>'There was a series of really bad decisions made over a couple of years...'</i></p> <p>External Influences: <i>I'm not a very quick decision maker, like I tend to turn to people around me, validate what I am thinking. I don't usually change my mind, but I come to a conclusion and then talk to others about it</i></p> <p>Anchoring and Adjustment Heuristic</p>	<p>Business: DIY recording artist and songwriter</p> <p>Live performance, Record Label, Music Publishing</p> <p><i>"They never asked for my copyrights"</i></p> <p>Not typical of industry doxa and risk mitigation due to no advance</p> <p><i>'wacko crazy contract'</i></p>	<p>Reference Decision Maker Habitus</p>	<p>Age: 33 Gender: Male Self-identified Social Class: Working Ethnicity: Caucasian Education: B.A.</p> <p><i>'I'm not a very quick decision maker, like I do tend to turn to people around me to help me, validate what I am thinking. I don't usually change my mind, but I usually come to a conclusion and then talk to others about the conclusion that I made.'</i></p> <p>Janet Housley: Creative Director Age: 25 Gender: Female SISC: Working Ethnicity: Caucasian Education: B.A.</p>	<p><i>'I had to spend money to draft the contract'</i></p>	<p>Use of barrister to negotiate contract</p>	<p>Institutionalized capital</p> <p><i>'I used some resources and skills acquired in school'</i></p>	<p><i>'Associating with a name like "Henson" from Europe of all places, it had mystique that could lead to my success'</i></p>

7. Empirical Findings and Analysis III

CASE #5: CLIENT ACQUISITION

Enterprise: Bench Puppet Entertainment, LLC

Sector: Social Media Marketing

Owner: David Sax

Turnover: \$80,000 annually

7.1 DECISION CONTEXT AND FIRM BACKGROUND

This decision involves the choice to take on a specific client that is requesting the development of a digital music application. Intentions were good at the outset and contracting the client was not difficult, especially since it fell within the skill set and services offered by the firm at the time. However, the characteristics of this case that warrant closer investigation involve the on-going tactical decisions involved with a project that is escalating in cost and the '*uncertainty of demand*' principle that underpins the music industry (Caves, 2000). The idea of 'sunk costs' was first recognised by Barry Staw (1976) and is a term used when people justify the investment of increased risk in a decision based upon previous investment and not the current cost. The influential factors that impact this decision were recognised as strategic only after the fact. That is, a post-decision analysis made well into the implementation phase of the decision-making process. Recognising it as such, provides further evidence of the Hendry (2000) concept of an 'interpretive' decision – 'a retrospective rationalisation of a prior action', that is common to small and medium sized enterprises, like Bench Puppet Entertainment.

The evidence of how this decision was made and the factors that influenced it will show that the initial intention was to increase the firm's economic capital, and using large amounts of social capital for its execution. After deeper analysis, however, and similar to the previous cases discussed, the underlying aim in this decision was to increase the firm's perceived position within the field by attempting to acquire further social and symbolic capital. Considerations in this decision practice were also deliberated upon because of

the wish, to increase the actors 'reputation' within the industry that, thereby, affects the social and symbolic capital he could gain or possess.

Bench Puppet Entertainment is a social media and marketing firm based in Nashville, TN. The company began operations in 2007 and has since been run by owner-manager David Sax. The company operates under the auspices of the music and entertainment industry and specialises in marketing and promotion of recorded music, specifically social media entertainment branding and web development.

This decision to agree to take a client for the company that was requesting the development of a new digital music application had an upside that was apparent to David from the beginning of decision recognition:

Why would I not do this?" So my assessment wasn't very large...will this trip my business or will this increase my business? It was just a can I do this? Can I not? I don't have any clients right now, why not make this happen?

The choice seemed simple at the time. However, it must be noted that David did not recognise this decision as 'strategic' until post decision analysis, simply tactical. Although intentions were good at the outset, the project quickly spiralled out of control, occupying time and economic resources of the firm. It ultimately became a key influence in the suspension of the firm in 2011 – changing the strategic direction. The details about this decision and the struggles that David and his employees faced throughout execution and continued escalation of the risk will be outlined, as will the resources he used to make the decision and the influences upon the decision practice throughout the implementation and resolution.

7.1.1 Firm Structure and Employees

Bench Puppet Entertainment is a legally recognised Limited Liability Corporation (LLC) that employs two individuals and houses one intern. The company office is located on 16th Avenue of Nashville's coveted music row and is described as '*Nashville's Leading Entertainment Branding Firm*'. Clients of the firm include artists Keith Urban, Fall Out Boy, and major record labels such as, Epic and RCA. Currently, Bench Puppet Entertainment is an entrepreneurial

endeavour owned and operated by David Sax that employs one Director of New Media, Sarah Stonewall. The company started operations by capturing the growing New, Social Media market that many up and coming artists and established labels looked to for expertise and professionalism.

Being young, recent graduates of higher education, setting up operations in a highly competitive music industry epicentre is representative of the motivation, drive and commitment to the business that David and Sarah try to portray. Many opportunities abound in the 'music city' for recording artists, songwriters and live entertainment. It is home to the Christian and gospel music industry as well as the epicentre for country music. With these breaks for musicians come opportunities for entrepreneurs in the music industry as well. The competition can be fierce in a crowded field where actors vie for power and is dominated by a class fraction of major record labels and publishers, yet leaves room for mobility if the product or service is right. The high risk and high reward business like the recorded music industry gets challenged daily by new, up and coming companies like Bench Puppet Entertainment. The dynamism and enthusiasm for this new entrant in the field is evident in their vibrant, yet personal office. They are intentionally small, yet nimble, and are able to respond to all clients' needs quickly and efficiently. Limited in industry experience, yet driven to succeed, their reputation was quickly established. Sarah shares why she felt they are different:

'We took ownership of everything. If we didn't have content from our clients we came up with it to the best of our ability and they got well above and beyond what they paid for - every time'.

She went on to further state why their clients kept coming back and the referrals from previous work continued to come in:

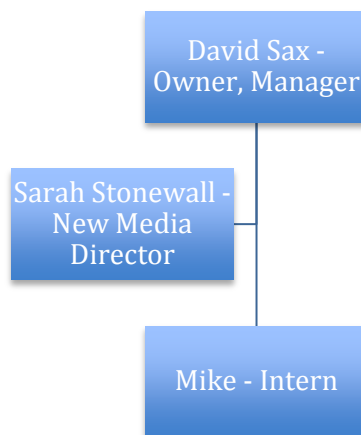
'I think that the edge was definitely the personal touch, you always got an answer'.

David takes the level of customer service within Bench Puppet seriously. He understands the importance that your reputation holds in a regional music epicenter like Nashville, so much so that it becomes critical in influencing his approach to making this decision. David leads this commitment to customer service and personal attention and actively fosters this culture within Mad Man:

'it's the small home town family vibe. We have a great product every time. We always show results, we are small and you get 'me' every time you call.'

This attitude resonates throughout the firm. David and Sarah feel the key to the competitive advantage in this growing segment of the industry is keeping it small, approachable and personal. However, this sentiment is also what contributes to the suspension of the firm activities when a critical line is not drawn between sustainable business practices and customer service.

Figure 2 - Bench Puppet Entertainment Organisation Chart



7.1.2 The Actors and Personal-Level Habitus

David Sax – Owner, Manager – Bench Puppet Entertainment

Age: 25

Gender: Male

Ethnicity: European Caucasian – Sicilian Descent

Education: B.M. – Music Education

Sarah Stonewall – New Media Director

Age: 25

Gender: Female

Ethnicity: Caucasian – American Indian

Education: B.M. – Music Business and Entertainment Industries
Minor – Marketing

David Sax

David Sax, is a self-described ‘*driven*’, Florida-born Sicilian with a passion for making a lasting difference in the music industry. His entrepreneurial attitude was evident as he shared his rationale for taking on new clients and starting this new business:

‘there’s no reason that you should not try something. You should never not set out to try something’.

Although his original intent on venturing to Nashville was to become a professional saxophonist, his career path has taken quite a different turn. While still a student at University, David created his own brand, marketing, design and fan-artist relations company, Bench Puppet Entertainment, where he currently serves as President. The company is five years old, and is building significant momentum and maintains an impressive client list. Additionally, David has worked in conjunction with Orbison Records/Orbison Estate, Still Working Music, and Lytle Management Group, playing an integral role in the online and digital presences of recording artists Roy Orbison, Universal Music’s Gary Allan and RCA’s Chris Young, to name a few. Highly active in Nashville’s professional community, David is also a member of Piecemeal, a music business-networking group committed to improving the future success of the industry via university outreach, workshops, community service events and leadership summits.

In addition to the driven and confident disposition that underlies David’s personality he also shared his idea of being a man of pride, *‘I take so much pride in my work’*. He understands the importance of working hard and the payoff that can ensue from being dedicated. He is witnessing, first hand, through his own upbringing and interaction with his family great success in his entrepreneurial endeavours:

‘My mother owned a business for 20, 30 odd years. My sister is a very powerful woman now, I say powerful like monetary...My sister has done well for herself’.

Much of David’s personality, in addition to his personal characteristics like age, industry experience, and recent graduation from higher education, play a role in how he sees his decision choices that ultimately play into his decision

practice. This dynamic interplay between his habitus, his company and the industry in which he works come together to highlight how and why he made the decisions he did for this case.

Sarah Stonewall

Sarah Stonewall currently works for Bench Puppet Entertainment. She is an avid student of all things new in the media, marketing and search engine optimisation (SEO) and search engine marketing (SEM). In addition to working at Point 3 Media, she shares a joint venture with Janet Hagan as the Social Deviants. Social Deviants is an avenue for Sarah and Janet to blog, engage in conferences and speak at local and national events. Sarah was also recently awarded a research grant from the University of Miami for social media.

Sarah has also worked for a prominent classical music label, a major record label, CC Productions, eHeart Records, Opening Bell, the Radio Spot, and Sands Entertainment. While she was at the classical label, she achieved growth in all social media avenues, and also managed the label's brand online. She has a passion for wine, food, sports and travel. She graduated from University with a Bachelor of Music in Music and Entertainment Industries in 2007 and she is involved with Peace Meal, the Tri-Delta Alumni Association as well as her University Alumni Association.

Sarah is a driven individual, yet calm and reserved. She is committed to her employer and a hard-working and passionate music industry enthusiast. Although she works for a start-up, she does not have the typical entrepreneurial spirit and drive like her boss David. She is a loyal employee and works well when given direction and asked for input. She is young and well versed in the lifestyles and interests of the target consumer of the companies to whom they provide service. She is limited in her social capital, mainly due to her recent graduation from college and limited professional experience. However, she holds this asset in high regard and actively works at increasing it. Her cultural capital is also limited by her industry experience, but she has obtained a four-year undergraduate degree. Association of those who have achieved status in the industry and carry with them the symbolic capital representative of their

hard work and success motivates her to learn the industry and expand her network.

7.1.3 Resources Needed

Cash Expenditures to Execute

The financial resources needed to execute this decision had minimal impact on the decision practice. The limited expenditure needed to execute the decision included the hiring of third party developers, a crowd-sourcing strategy that outsources tasks instead of having an employee perform them. David uses to minimise his internal expenses while maximising the expertise of the specific skill set of an individual that he needs for any given project that may go beyond his personal skill set. His business is structured in such a way that the customer, through their initial hiring fee, would front these expenses. For the development of this application, that is exactly what David needed to do and would not start his work until the fee was received:

'I brought in a third party to come and probe this entire app'.

The hiring of this third party enables him to act as project manager, or a middleman in the development of the application, while limiting the risk and exposure to his economic capital. Keeping services like this at arm's length enables David to take on and manage projects with greater ease, but it does not come without risk. In exchange for the limits on economic capital expenditure comes the exposure of his reputation and accumulated symbolic capital. Although a common industry practice that he has also committed to, if a third party developer acquired through crowd-sourcing, fails to meet expectations, it is his personal and firm's reputation on the line, not the third parties. Being a cash deficient micro-enterprise positions David in this vulnerable position.

The Lack of Skills and Need for Contracting

The role of cultural capital and the lack of specific skills needed by his team to execute this decision triggered reliance upon the implementation of David's social capital. This again is evidenced in the use of his professional network that he called upon in order to compensate for the lack of appropriate skill. He quickly accessed his '*network outside of Nashville*' and approached his

'network and the people that he knew, his community' to fill this role for the initial development and then later when the project was in need of rescue, after the terms of the initial developer failed:

'So I was looking for contractors. I am pretty well connected in the technology community of Nashville...it's a very small community, about 8 people, 6 people. Better freelancers, so I emailed all of them...I let them know what happened and I gave them the project, and asked them to finish this project. In the end, no one would take it'.

David understands the limitations in certain areas of his skills. Therefore, he sought his external network to aid him in the execution from the onset through to multiple episodes of escalation. This network, discussed in more detail below in 'External Resources', and like Cisco's situation discussed earlier, is rooted in the lack of a certain embodied and institutionalised capital in the form of technical qualifications and expertise that he needed to make this happen on his own. However, he did possess just enough to enable him to make better-informed decisions by communicating his needs and expectations. This type of cultural capital was obtained through industry knowledge that he has acquired since college and his four years working in the industry.

7.1.4 Influences on Decision

Sunk Costs and the Decision

Unlike the previous cases outlined, it is important to understand how and why David escalated his risks at various stages of the implementation of the decision. This decision was about the choice to develop a music player application for one of David's clients. The economic incentive was an easy choice for David as was evidenced above, but not before further contemplation of the resources it would use and the benefits it could bring:

'Originally I didn't want to do this, I tried to push him in a lot of directions and I said here's Fanbox, here's Reverbnation, MySpace, here's this, here's that. Why are we recreating the wheel? There's no reason to recreate the wheel'.

After his original reservation and the client coming forward with the money to develop it, he clearly felt it was the right choice at that time, *'he finally had money and I said we could go forward with this.'* Not having the entire skill set needed to

execute this project entirely, David sought to expend a portion of his own social capital and the economic capital received as front money to make it happen:

'So I brought on the third company, he had application experience, so brought him in and I was going to be a source for him. I was going to do all the design and he was going to do all the programming and backend stuff. So we set it up and met with the client, right from the beginning the client knows exactly what's going to happen, exactly how it's going to happen. He understood that this was a new development'.

Everything was off to a good start and going according to plan, David felt he has made an effective decision that would help him build his business economically and symbolically. Nothing seemed out of the ordinary other than his original *'holistic hunch'* (Miller & Ireland, 2005) that caused a sense of doubt. After some time had passed, however, the project was clearly not on the proposed time schedule:

'The project was only supposed to take two months, fast forward six months and the project is still not done'.

Starting to feel distraught and frustrated over the unfinished project, David is concerned, yet cautious, that it can be completed shortly to all parties' liking. Despite feeling that the client may have taken advantage of him:

'We are getting jerked around by the third party guy. I'm having to pay him for every single time we have one on there'.

At this point, David understands that having to continue with this project is costing him money and time that is beginning to take away from other projects to which he should be devoting his efforts:

'Well, at this point I was committed to finishing the project, I felt like it could still get done if we were able to stay on him more'.

Although there is no empirical evidence to confirm it in this case, previous studies on decision-making and experience have shown a tendency towards less effective decisions (Juliussen *et al.*, 2005) when the decision-maker has less experience within the industry in which he works. At this point it could be speculated that David, if he had acquired further cultural capital related to industry or general knowledge, may have discontinued the project at this time.

Being overrun on costs, time and his original skepticism to take it on, may have led him to be more decisive. However, David felt committed and wanted to resolve it to a positive outcome. He was still working with a client that wanted the application developed and they were on good working terms:

'Jump forward now a year down the road. We are now all the way back around and the project still is not completed. We were about three months out of a year actually and Jackson was just going crazy...'

His client is frustrated, he is frustrated and he still does not have the project completed. That is in the hands of the third party developer:

'[Jackson] and I were talking and we finally decide we are going to pull this from [Molly], bite the bullet, and find another programmer. Suddenly I call [Molly] and say, "hey you are done". [Molly] is utterly pissed of course, bottom line is I paid [her] out. Exactly where we are is now \$8000 that I have not received anything for. I literally fed all that money straight through to [Molly], no money in my pocket. So [Molly] got paid for a product that [she] said was our fault that it was not done, and it was her fault. We are now at a year'.

Bitter contempt and all economic capital expended, the project that should have been completed in two months is now one year old and not complete. David attempts to appeal to his senses by stopping the project and moving on. However, he still does not have a product that the client is expecting. It has also gotten messy and become problematic legally with contractors wanting to put what has been completed up on open access websites for anyone to use. At this point, David decides again to escalate the investment and sink more capital into the completion of the project but not without expending more social capital as well. Much of this choice to continue escalating the commitment is rooted in David's habitus, concern for reputation and the impact it might have within the field. David is a proud and stubborn individual, but committed. He stands by his word and feels that if he made a commitment to complete a project he would. At this point, there is no financial incentive or ability to accumulate further wealth, he has used up much of his social resources and is willing to 'save face' for the sake of his reputation within the field and not to do further damage to potential future business:

'I am pretty well connected in the technology community of Nashville...In the end, no one would take it'.

David will be unable to offset the costs already incurred on the project and yet he is still compelled to escalate the costs of the project one step further. He is compelled to complete it for his client:

'So I had to get this done, this is where we say we go above and beyond. I was willing to eat the money to get this for the guy, he had been with me for a year. We had gotten drinks, had a good relationship.' ...at this point the application was about 75% completed. And I paid them around \$2,500. So at this point they are saying they need stuff, Randy is saying they don't need stuff. And I just lost another \$2,500, and it's still not done'.

This compelling notion and 'irrational' (Strough *et al.*, 2011) decision-making behavior of escalating the costs when an outsider with less at stake would cut it, goes deeper than the economic incentives of making a profit or, in this case, even coming close to a break-even point. The project is a loss, he knew it was a loss and still invested 25% more finance to make a further attempt at completing it. As some experts have found (Bruine de Bruin *et al.*, 2007; Strough *et al.*, 2011), this behaviour might be expected considering his age and time proximity since college graduation. When asked, post-decision, what happened and why he continued to escalate the risks he replied frankly:

'I did not expect to get screwed over by my contractors. And that's what happened. I kept getting pushed by contractors and got stuck in the middle. I take so much pride in my work that I felt I needed to fix what happened'.

But yet, even '*feeling stuck in the middle*,' he decided to escalate the financial costs. His sentiments here allude to a struggle he felt between the contractors he hired to complete the project and the consumer seeking his firm's services. The rationale for this decision-making practice is rooted in two concepts. First, David's concern for his personal and business reputation within the field as he struggles to preserve the symbolic capital he has acquired through his reputation. Second, qualities of his habitus rooted in his personality, age and experience have also influenced his decision choices. These, along with other identified influences will be discussed further.

Individual Level Habitus (Micro Level Influences)

Concern for Reputation and Symbolic Capital

The execution of the decision was not going according to David's original expectation, putting at risk his positioning with the field through his social and symbolic capital. Specifically his concern for his *reputation* as an actor – perceived as one who keeps his word and will get things done quickly and efficiently, a minimum expectation needed to stay competitive in a tight field like the Nashville Music Industry. His concern over this and decisions to continue to inject money in the project, despite the time commitments that have now been taking him away from other projects, ultimately cost him further resources.

As briefly mentioned earlier, this could be attributed to his lack of industry or professional experience – which could also lead to less effective decision making, and his drive to take on new projects to 'prove' himself – being a recent graduate - as a viable reputable company to do business. Although David never explicitly discusses his concern for 'reputation,' this could be inferred in his comments, such as:

'I take so much pride in my work that I felt I needed to fix what happened'.

It appears that much is at stake professionally and personally for David, indicating his motivation to reject a normative approach to problem resolution and decision choice.

It is also worth mentioning that being a younger entrepreneur, still in the midst of establishing his reputation within the field, he lacked a certain amount of capital that played a role in the attitudes of the other actors involved in the process:

'Sometimes I felt it was impossible getting a response from him or that days and sometimes weeks would go by without a word on how the project was going'.

This kind of behaviour would be indicative of a lack of respect for David and his company. Knowing that little was at risk at their end, other than the fall-out from this specific project, they did not feel that similar capital was at stake. Being from outside the field, a similar concern did not appear to transcend

industry boundaries. Their commitments and priorities were elsewhere, or at least that is the perception they leave with those on the receiving end of such a lack of response. It can be inferred that the importance of symbolic capital in this field, may have played a role. If David and his company had possessed more of it, this lack of response may have been avoided. A higher level of respect and concern by the third party would have likely motivated them to be more responsive, for their reputation would also be more at stake.

Personal Characteristics and the Role of Pride

It must also be noted, however, that David's concern for recognition in the field and desire to preserve his reputation is not simply a professional motivation. Evidence suggests that it is intimately connected to a personal one as well, rooted deep in his personal habitus and individually objective characteristics. Being a young, 25-year old male and recent graduate of University, coupled with the drive to prove he can succeed along with a prideful demeanour, David's personality characteristics undoubtedly influenced his desire to escalate the commitment. Again using the evidence from above - *'I take so much pride in my work that I felt I needed to fix what happened'* – demonstrates that he is a man that chooses to live his life and conduct his business by his word. He cares deeply about how he and his business is perceived and is willing to put his company and his reputation on the line to ensure that it ends correctly, with all parties satisfied. Being a younger entrepreneur willing to take greater risks and armed with a limited set of cultural capital that may have been necessary to heed the warning signs of commitment, contributed to the decision outcome.

Past Experience

Past experience also played an influential role in David's initial decision to take on this project, as well as his subsequent choices to escalate the risk of his choice, even though negative experiences continued to plague his original choice. Initially, David was confronted, from his perspective, with an easy choice:

'[I've been in business for] four months and I was definitely going through hills and valleys. I just got off the road, because I was going

on the road to do a side job on the weekends. I was a weekend warrior trying to make extra cash, and this came in and I needed money, so I was like "Shit \$8000, why would I say no to \$8000".

David understands from his past endeavours on the road as a touring musician that income was low and inconsistent, so the appeal of a large amount of cash at the onset of the execution of this decision could satisfy this sense of financial insecurity to which, while touring, he had been accustomed. This negative past experience of unpredictable income in combination with his limited cultural capital in the form of industry experience at the time of choosing whether to move forward with the project, influenced his decision choice to say 'yes' to taking it on.

The Need for Cash Flow and Desire for Recognition

In addition to David's concern for reputation, his personal dispositions and past experiences, the then current lack of economic capital influenced his initial decision to take on this project:

'When it came to me, my assessment really was why do you want to do this? What's the bottom line?'

For David, at the beginning, the superficial objective was an economic one. There is clear evidence through this case that he was concerned not only about his current financial position as a company, but what could be gained if he decided to say 'yes' to this project. Through the Bourdieusian concepts of recognition and theories of capital, it could be argued that David's true intention, at least the longer term objective, was one in which he could ultimately transform this economic capital into further social capital – through the use of newly formulated professional networks – and symbolic capital through the acquisition of another satisfied client. This concern for symbolism becomes more explicit as David later attempts to rectify the decision when the evidence that was presented above indicated his concern for his reputation. There should be no doubt however, that David's concern at the beginning was to increase his economic capital.

Consulting Trusted Colleagues

As David's decision to continue investing funds into this project, he was also influenced by his colleagues. David felt he could trust his fellow employees and respected their opinions enough to seek counsel from them. Although an informal process, he confided not only in his Director of Social Media, Sarah Stonewall, but also his intern, whom had a more technological, digital design background:

'I talked to her [Sarah] about it, and I talked to Mike about it. I talked to Mike about it more to tell Mike my intern exactly how to make it work, what was going on, what not to do when you do it one day'.

Mike, in this case, played an important role in helping to resolve the situation. David sought from Mike the software development skills he did not possess. He was hoping that turning internally, he might be able to resolve the escalating commitment and prevent further loss in reputation and or social or symbolic capital.

In addition, he sought further strategic advice from Sarah:

'Should we go forward, should we not?'

What he sought was not grounded in a level of knowledge needed to get him out of the situation. Sarah did not possess the needed cultural capital to do that, but what she was able to offer was another perspective. A perspective from someone not as intimately involved, but understands the field doxa and the habitus of her boss. As long as she could be frank, and she was, the advice sought by David could assist him in judgments on how to move forward. Turning internally was important for David as he weighed his options and the evidence suggests the role and influence it had on the outcome.

The Role of Close Family

External influences, those outside the firm, also played an important role for David as he was implementing this decision and manoeuvring through its escalation of commitment. Although the influences here were not professional colleagues or advisors, nor were they in the form of objectified cultural capital such as charts, texts or other artefacts, but rather they came in the form of close

personal relationships. David felt, in this case that he needed to confide in people he knew well, and that had experience in these matters. Being a family man, David felt compelled to reach out to his mother and sister:

'when things go South I call my mother and my sister'

He clearly sees value in what either has to offer. It is a safe way to seek professional counsel without showing vulnerability to a professional colleague who may perceive this as a weakness, a detriment in a field of competitiveness such as the one under investigation. This vulnerability, or perceived vulnerability, could lead to a risk in social and symbolic capital possession of Bench Puppet Entertainment:

'My mother owned a business for 20, 30 odd years. My sister is a very powerful woman now, I say powerful like monetary. Not a drug lord. My sister has done well for herself. So I usually call them and tell them what's going on.'

With counsel from his sister, he was able to seek professional business advice without sacrificing this potentially perceived weakness, a weakness that could jeopardise his reputation from an employee perspective. If he is seen as a weak, uninformed leader, their confidence in his abilities could erode quickly causing further loss of social capital and, in addition, lead to other internal problems.

7.1.5 Conclusion

Unfortunately, this decision did not end with an outcome related to what was expected at the outset – rendering it as an ineffective decision. David's choice to continue to escalate the commitment and to continue taking further risks with this project ultimately led to a suspension of operations for the company:

'I know many times that I said "I can't do this right now, I have to deal with this." That's the problem. I don't feel like it was a bad decision because I learned more than I could ever imagine from this project, but it's definitely a factor of why we aren't around today'.

What, at first seemed like an easy choice, yet a big project to take on, led to a series of tactical decisions that paved the way to a dissolution of a great client relationship and a project that has yet to be completed. As in all events that one is able to look back upon, hindsight is 20-20. It is easy to analyse this

case to indicate what and where things went wrong and where a different approach to the decision-making could have avoided such an outcome. The motivating factors behind his decision to continue to escalate are entrenched in David's fear of losing his most precious, negotiating commodities, his social and symbolic capital - the capital needed to continue growing his business and reputation in the Nashville music industry.

Table 7 - Case #5: Selected Evidence: Bench Puppet Entertainment Client Acquisition

	Influences	Field (s)	Firm Habitus	Decision Maker Habitus	Economic Capital	Social Capital	Cultural Capital	Symbolic Capital
Impact	Multiple influential factors were observed and impacted decision outcome.	Economic, Recorded Music Industry, small business, creative and cultural production industries	-Accessible -Personal -Vibrant	Proud Driven Willing to take risks Confidant	Minimal impact on this decision practice	Enables decision maker to secure business and call upon skills needed to complete projects	Enabled him to take on new business and execute	Strongly influenced commitment to escalate sunk costs
Evidence	<p>Sunk Costs: <i>We are getting jerked around by the third party app. I'm having to pay him for every single time we have on there.</i></p> <p><i>Well, at this point I was committed to finishing the project, I felt like it could still get done if we were able to stay on him more.</i></p> <p><i>We are now \$8000 that I have not received anything for.'</i></p> <p>Concern for Reputation: <i>'I take so much pride in my work that I felt I needed to fix what happened.'</i></p> <p>Past Experience: <i>I was definitely going through hills and valleys. I just got off the road.... I was a weekend warrior trying to make extra cash, and this came in and I needed money, so I was like "Shit \$8000, why would I say no to \$8000."</i></p>	<p>Business: Branding and Marketing Firm</p> <p>Age: 25</p> <p>Gender: Male</p> <p>Ethnicity: European – Caucasian – Sicilian Descent</p> <p>Education: B.M.</p> <p><i>'You should never not set out to try something'</i></p> <p><i>I take so much pride in my work'</i></p>	<p>It's a small home town family vibe'</p>		<p><i>I brought in a third party to develop this entire app' [adding minimal costs]</i></p> <p><i>T am pretty well connected in the technology community of Nashville'</i></p>	<p>Embodied Cultural Capital</p>	<p>Concern for reputation and the already accumulated symbolic capital by the firm</p>	

7.2 CASE #6: FIRM RELOCATION

This second decision made by David within Bench Puppet Entertainment is about the choice to relocate company headquarters due to overcrowding of its current location. The decision is a choice between locations that would ultimately enable the firm to, not only be in more suitable space to conduct business but also, be seen as a genuine player in the industry, as viewed by its competitors and other actors through the association within a geographical business cluster. Specifically, there are two overarching observations that influenced the decision practice that affirm previous decisions discussed in Chapters five and six. Here, due to the limited amount of symbolic and economic capital currently possessed, coupled with a chance opportunity, enabled David to aggrandise the firm through a business cluster association on 'music row'. In addition, evidence also affirmed the use of bounded rational behaviours, a price heuristic, and internal company pressures.

The opportunity to make a decision on relocating company headquarters arose out of necessity and chance:

'we were just getting there. Sarah was coming on, I needed a new intern. We couldn't be in a single fold-out table anymore. We needed more space...I live very much on the whim of things, that it will happen, I have a back-up plan always'.

The necessary space and the need to be perceived as 'professional' in order to conduct the day-to-day operations of the business was acknowledged by David. His business was expanding and the need to hire Sarah became a reality. Now that another employee was brought on, along with a new intern, David felt that he needed to have suitable working space for the team. This prompted the decision process and recognition for David to begin evaluation suitable options for relocation.

7.2.1 Resources Needed

Rent and the Need to Relocate

Economic capital and the need for assets to make this purchase were again considered minimal. David needed to evaluate carefully the cost-benefit of the purchase and whether it would be a viable investment opportunity financially. He considered a few viable areas cognitively in which to relocate the company on 'music row' – a geographic area in Nashville, TN that is home to hundreds of businesses related to country, gospel and the contemporary Christian music industries:

'It had to be 'music row', it had to be Brentwood, it had to be Bradley parkway. There were certain areas I had to be in because then it was no use. Why wouldn't I just go back to my house and build an office in the back of my house?'

His particular interests portrayed in this statement have more to do with the symbolism, convenience and business opportunities that exist within these areas, than the actual cost of relocating the firm there. With his budgetary limits at \$800 a month, David needed to be careful where he would relocate his business. He needed the association of being a music industry firm conducting business in an area where others conduct business, but he had to do it within a strict budget. Essentially this decision was a choice between the transformations of economic capital into symbolic capital represented in the association of a music business geographic cluster. This association would enable his business to be seen as a professionally worthwhile firm in which to be taken seriously.

As David's search for the optimum economic and symbolic transformation ensued, he was confronted with an ideal opportunity:

'...about two days before we had to move in, I saw this one [office space] and called right away...I was like holy shit \$500? She said, well I made a mistake, it was supposed to be for \$800, but since we told you \$500 we will do that if you want it, but if you don't this other guy is coming here in an hour and will take it for \$800.' And I was like I will write you a check right now...The location is convenient. I am on 12th Ave 16 south. I am on 'music row'.

Chance opportunity made this choice for David much easier, it enabled him to work within his economic parameters while leveraging his symbolic capital represented by a highly coveted position on 'music row'.

Understanding the Real Estate Market

David knew what the costs were to locate on 'music row'; he also knew a good deal when he saw it. No use of objectified capital or institutionalised cultural capital was evidenced in making this decision. However, embodied capital in the form of real estate and pricing knowledge, the convenience of this location and professional ramifications were culminated in the general knowledge David has acquired in that area. He saw an opportunity and needed to assess his options. David knew what the symbolic ramifications of moving to 'music row' could be, but no evidence of embodied industry knowledge was needed to execute or make choices. Familiarity of the area and the potential outcome was all that was needed to influence this choice.

7.2.2 Influences on the Decision

Firm Level Habitus

Firm Aggrandisement through Business Cluster Association

Within this decision, a new type of aggrandisement of the firm became evident as a form of business cluster association. A business cluster - or industry cluster – is a geographic location that consists of interconnected businesses within a connected field. Porter (1990) discussed the importance of similar businesses strategically locating themselves within a geographic region in order to foster a competitive advantage through the benefits of the cluster, including the close proximity of suppliers and the wealth of knowledge. The business cluster of relevance in this case, which provides the context for this decision, is that of Nashville for the music industry, even more specifically 'music row':

'What comes with 'music row' is 1209 16th avenue south, 17th avenue, east square east, east square west, now 18th avenue - those five streets mean so much'.

David recognises this and understands the importance of associating his business within this cluster. This also explains his reactions when confronted with the opportunity to relocate his business here and

doing so at minimal economic risk. In addition, not only does he understand the importance of this association, but so do others that know him and work in the industry:

'Everyone thinks 'music row'. My old boss came to me on 'music row' offices and said "congratulations you are on 'music row'. I am like, thanks, I don't think it's that big of a deal. He said, "I understand that, but everybody else does. When you finally get to 'music row' they think holy shit you made it'.

Much of the 'not a big deal,' or 'that wasn't the real reason,' attitude that is being exhibited by David is due to his personal disposition in stubbornness, then an accurate reflection about how he feels. Although discourse or psychoanalysis has not been identified as a key data reduction tool for this study, the inflection and general disposition about the topic when brought up through the course of the interview reflects otherwise. The response was indicative of a 'quick reply', or a 'defensive' act - a 'prideful' one - indicating that he did not want to be seen or portrayed as 'falling victim to the game', that is played. He wants to be seen as more level-headed, than moving to 'music row' just because everyone else does and that it would really be in his and Bench Puppet's best interest. He understands that it is, but due to his prideful disposition would like to be perceived as being above the fray and not that he went out of his way to move to 'music row', just to be cool – *'because that's what everyone does.'*

Not only was the importance of this business cluster association recognised by his former boss, but also his more recent addition to the firm and current employee, Sarah:

'I think when it came to my perception about where David was at with his business I perceived that he was doing well moving to 'music row', and that it was a big deal. It was a big deal to go from a wig in a purse to an office with desks and chairs and in a building with other music industry people on 'music row' where we can just walk down to any of the street events that were going on and just sit there mingle, shake everyone's hand I thought was very important. On top of that all the people in this building just getting to make the connections that we made here were unbelievable'.

The importance of the 'internal' (to the firm) perception portrayed by this association appears to share in the importance, as did the 'external' perception. Making decisions that position the firm more competitively, not only increase

business potential through this association, but also attracts more and better talent to work at the firm along with motivating factors for those employed by the firm – which could lead to greater productivity. In addition, the exposure that the firm has now obtained through this business cluster association has positioned it better to obtain highly coveted social capital – *‘to make the connections that we made here were unbelievable... and we definitely wouldn’t have made those connections unless we were in this building’*. Those ‘connections’ as Sarah clearly articulated are a direct result of this move to ‘music row’. Being a recent graduate, a recent move from another music company from Nashville and her age all come together in her desire and passion for easier access to contacts that can better her social capital position. She understands, through her limited experience what access to other actors in the field can do for her and the company. It is not only personally exciting for her, but also professionally. Having not had previous access to these resources will enable her and the company to position themselves better as players in the field.

It is also worth noting that when I asked both David and Sarah about the legitimacy that this relocation gave them, they further likened it to *‘name-dropping...records on the wall...clientele...who your dad is...what kind of clothes you wear...titles’*, in fact, many of the aggrandising behaviours being discussed in this thesis. I asked them to elaborate on this comment and they were quick to say that perception goes a long way in this industry and that it is often experiential more than anything. People are looking at that and saying *‘I want the experience of being able to tell somebody that I got to do this thing with this person’*. David was quick to disagree with Sarah and felt it was more about:

‘Power, like I look at my watch and go, ‘man she is going to Seattle on Monday and I think man that is awesome. All I want to do is go to Digi Music East, the conference, and if I got there I would feel like I made it somewhere’.

Both perspectives come from someone who does not hold the influence or capital at levels that they desire. It is these experiences that they hold in high regard and seek to pursue. It is the power that those experiences ultimately hold as they learn more about what can or cannot be achieved with it. This leads to a strong motivation to achieve it. Additionally, if they can employ such

impressions on others in the field, this may lead to further recognition and 'respect' by their colleagues. This recognition and 'respect' grants them the ability to influence others and use this power to improve their own position and accumulation of capital. From their perspective, the move to 'music row' is one of the first steps to legitimising their experiences and rise to recognition in the industry.

Analysis and Logic in Firm Relocation

Logical and analytical behaviours were also evidenced in David's decision to re-locate company headquarters to 'music row'. Similar to Cisco's situation above, David was left to making this one on his own. He believed that it was time to relocate the business, but not just anywhere.

'So I was looking at I couldn't go out by Hendersonville and Gallatin, it had to be 'music row', it had to be Brentwood, it had to be Bradley parkway'.

David felt that it would be the most beneficial to the future of the business if he moved into one of these key epicentres where different segments of the industry operate. Being a younger, driven entrepreneur and understanding the need be seen and active in the field, David wanted to make the move in a way that would enable him and his employees to take advantage of the professional networks and business opportunities that exist within these areas.

However, he also needed to balance the opportunities that would exist in these locations with what he could economically afford. David's level-headed disposition, yet cautiously audacious, led him to weigh the pros and cons of these options. Choosing among these alternatives was done in a more informal fashion typical of smaller firms like Bench Puppet Entertainment. This informal assessment process was cognitive and internal, with little external influence. David contemplated his options by comparing the economic, symbolic and social advantages of the location choice. David mentally calculated the pros and cons through the limited amounts of information available to him:

"There were certain areas I had to be in because then it was no use. Why wouldn't I just go back to my house and build an office in the back of my house? So I had a place on 18th that I was looking at actually. It was a long office that I was going to separate. That one

was for \$800 a month nothing included whatsoever, so I had to pay for Internet, cable TV, all that... 'and of course I looked in 'music row' area...because it was closer to everything; closer to my clients, closer to here'.

Although David's behaviour did not exhibit a calculated approach to costing out the risk, he did informally weigh the most obvious costs to going with a place on 18th before settling on the location closer to 'music row' at \$300 less with all utilities included. Albeit a small amount of capital to be considered, for a small firm like Bench Puppet any amount of added costs can highly impact the cash flow and profitability of the company.

Individual Habitus

The Price-Quality Heuristic

David acts counter-intuitively to the price-quality heuristic that dictates that the higher the price for a product, the higher the quality of that product. This is not a definitive rule but rather a general association that consumers use when not having enough information about the product and the features and benefits it may offer:

I was looking at days and was like holy shit \$500 and I looked at her while we are in this room and said \$50'?

David, on the other hand, through his cultural capital accumulation and understanding of the product, location, pricing and opportunity understands the quality that he sees associated with the cost of this transaction and the benefits that Bench Puppet can gain from the capital transformation – economic to symbolic. The use of a pricing-heuristic enabled David to reference the quality of the transaction while simultaneously understanding the value in the symbolism of associating his company on 'music row'. Shortly after the decision was executed, Sarah noted the difference:

'Yeah, it increased productivity, and having a different aura around us. We are much more legit in their eyes now'.

What Sarah is referring to is how other actors in the field see her, David and the company now that they have moved. They are seen as a reputable business with which they would also like to associate themselves. The unintended result of internal morale was also a positive outcome. The

atmosphere in the office had changed and a recognisable difference in productivity was noticed. Sarah and Mike were beginning to work longer hours and were beginning to take on more projects with less direction. Generally, there was a more positive outlook on the future of the company and willingness to network on its behalf. The transformation of capital here, by a location change is significant as the interplay between capitals, habitus and field and the decision-making practice come together to position the company and its actors better for further accumulation of assets and recognition.

The Use of Technology in Location Services

The external influences exhibited in this decision practice were not one of advice seeking from personal or professional advisors often seen in the previous cases analysed. Here the external influences upon the decision-making was the use of technology and a third party owner of the office rental space, both of which were needed in order for this practice to exhibit the behaviours evidenced:

'On Craigslist, about 2 days before we had to move in, I saw this one'.

David made the initial contact through the use of technology – an online marketplace called Craigslist where buyers and sellers can converge to make local transactions of rentals, sales or services. It was this relational interaction between actor and artefact that enabled the contact with the agent representing the office space. When the appointment was set and the tour of the space was being undertaken the opportunity presented itself, David's use of the price-quality heuristic along with his experience in the industry and general knowledge of the area was referenced to determine the value:

'...well I made a mistake, it was supposed to be for \$800, but since we told you \$500 we will do that if you want it, but if you don't this other guy is coming here in an hour and will take it for \$800'.

It was this new knowledge, the value of the opportunity in exchange for the economic capital for the potential increase in symbolic capital that prompted his initial response *'holy shit...I looked at her while we are in this room and said \$500'*. This response and recognition of value would not be possible without David

referencing the price-heuristic discussed above and tapping into his internal understanding of the area and the retail space market.

The Impact of New Hires

In addition to external influences on the decision-practice, the use of heuristics and a bounded rational practice to assess the costs to benefits of the transaction, internal influences also prompted the decision to be made. These influences, internal to the firm, came as David hired a new employee and, through their day-to-day interactions, it became apparent that a change was needed:

'Sarah and I were literally sitting by two horses with a wood table, which was awful'.

The space was needed and only compounded when a third party was brought on board to help out – an intern:

'And then when Mike came I was like this isn't going to work. I tried looking everywhere.'

These employee additions and firm expansion were a direct result of a successful year for Bench Puppet Entertainment:

'Now luckily we had money. Here's a preface to all of this, I did great this year, but this past year we tripled our gross, so we had money'.

This lack of space and less than ideal working conditions at the firm, coupled with the growing business, prompted the need to make the decision. The time was appropriate and the productivity was being affected. Both Sarah and David felt they were in a position to make a move and the expansion of the firm is what triggered David's desire to start looking.

7.2.3 Conclusion

This decision was a choice between relocating an up and coming social media marketing and branding firm from a home office to an external office located in one of three geo-locations around Nashville. As external circumstances provided the opportunity, the company owner, David Sax decided to relocate the firm to Nashville's prominent 'music row'. This move, motivated

by the practical implications as well as the symbolic ones allowed David and Sarah the opportunity to be better positioned as available players in the field as they negotiate for social recognition and prominence. The association by location on Music Row also enables the firm to be perceived as a viable player and a company that is worthy of doing business. This legitimisation was accomplished by aggrandising its position, not actively but passively by the very nature of where it is located. In order for this decision to be executed, David relied upon his colleagues for the cognitive-based heuristics and the internal habitus drive to be prominent and successful in the field.

	Influences	Field (s)	Firm Habitus	Decision Maker Habitus	Economic Capital	Social Capital	Cultural Capital	Symbolic Capital
Impact	Multiple influential factors were observed and impacted decision outcome.	Economic, Recorded Music Industry, small business, creative and cultural production industries	Approachable culture -Personal -Vibrant	Proud Driven Willing to take risks Confidant	Limited cash needed. Opportunity enabled for transformation to symbolic capital.	Limited Social network needed. Used as motivator to make decision for relocation	Enabled a calculated decision and recognition of opportunity	The symbolism associated with offices on music row was the determining factor in location choice
Evidence	<p>Company Aggrandisement: 'I perceived that he was doing well moving to music row, and then it was a big deal'</p> <p>'Congratulations you are on music row.' I am like, thanks, I don't think it's that big of a deal. He said, 'I understand that, but everybody else does. When you finally get to music row they think holy shit you made it.'</p> <p>'What comes with music row is 1209 16th avenue south, 17th avenue, east square east, east square west, now 18th avenue - those five streets mean so much'</p> <p>'Power...and if I got there, I would feel like I've made it somewhere'</p> <p>Price Quality Heuristic: 'I was looking at days and was like holy shit \$500 and I looked at her while we are in this room and said \$500?'</p>	<p>Business: Branding and Marketing Firm</p>	<p>Age: 25 Gender: Male Ethnicity: European Caucasian - Sicilian Descent Education: B.M.</p> <p>I take so much pride in my work that I felt I needed to fix what happened.'</p>	<p>I was like holy shit \$500? She said, well I made a mistake, it was supposed to be for \$800, but since we told you \$500 we will do that if you want it'</p>			Embodied capital in the form of real estate and pricing knowledge	<p>Those five streets mean so much"</p> <p>I don't think it's that big of a deal. He said, "I understand that, but everybody else does"</p>

8. Empirical Findings and Analysis IV

CASE #7: ASSET BUYOUT

Enterprise: Hat Punk, LLC

Sector: Record Label and Publishing Company

Owner: Sam Caldwell

Turnover: \$1,000,000 + annually

8.1 FIRM BACKGROUND AND DECISION CONTEXT

This case is about a choice that Sam Caldwell had regarding whether, or not, to buy back the assets of Green Tree Records – the label Sam started in 1999 and has since been President - from Axis Media. The challenge facing Sam in making this decision was dictated by what the terms of purchase would be and whether it would be viable and feasible. What prompted Sam to make this decision was grounded in how decisions were being made under the parent company, along with industry conditions and personal bias. Sam felt this might be an opportunity to own the company, or at least the assets with many of the artists and staff remaining as part of the new label. It must also be noted that the purchasing of these ‘assets’ did not include the purchasing of the brand or imprint of ‘Green Tree Records’. The purchase decision would include the artists, who are signed to the label, their catalogue of recordings, and the publishing company that holds the rights to the songs. Contract conditions for this decision would force Sam into renaming the original label and calling it Hat Punk, LLC. It would once again be under his vision and style of management, without the necessity of answering to a parent company. As the evidence will show, this decision would be his and his alone:

‘When it comes to the strategy of making the decision it was me’.

But he would come to rely upon his staff, past experience, the need for large amounts of economic capital, external advisors and personal biases to influence his decision practice. Sam Caldwell started Hat Punk, LLC, formally known as Green Tree records in the late 1990s. Shortly after the start of operations, the company signed its first artist – releasing their album in March 2000:

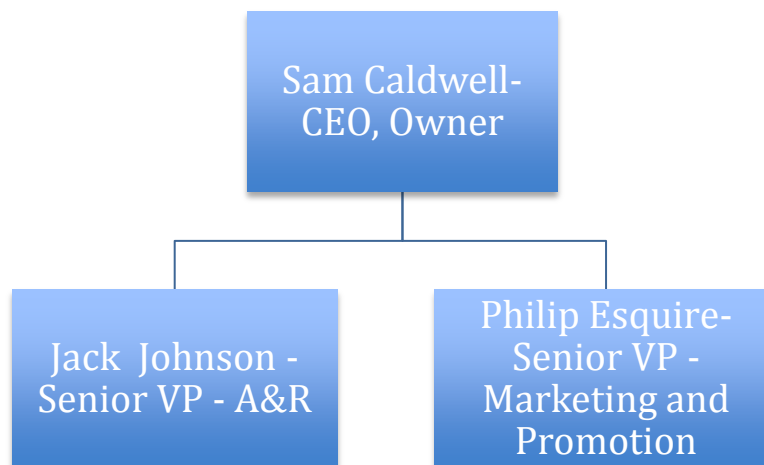
'When I first started [the label] it was me and I was in a house, sharing an office with somebody else - I had a little cubicle. I went from an office bigger than this to a little cubicle. Very shortly I started with one other guy and built from there'.

After a successful three years, in mid-June of 2002, a larger media company, Axis Media – a privately held firm that publishes Christian music, film and other related cultural products - purchased the company. During the ownership of Green Tree Records by Axis Media up to this recent decision, Sam Caldwell continued to be President and CEO of the company. Sam eventually decided that he would buy back the assets back from Axis Media, therefore this decision is being analysed from a post-decision perspective. Much of the evidence provided herein will allude to this, since the conclusion of this sale occurred one-week prior to the collection of data. This case will be studied from when the opportunity was presented through to the post-analysis conclusion.

8.1.1 Organisation of the Firm

Hat Punk, LLC employs ten full-time employee equivalent positions that encompass two separate legal entities, Hat Punk, LLC and Hat Punk Music Publishing, LLC. Hat Punk specialises in contemporary Christian music – CCM - with distribution through a major distributor in the United States. The company conducts business in multiple industry sectors including the producing and recording of popular Christian music, marketing, distribution, merchandising and music publishing. It maintains a roster of between twenty and twenty-five artists and has been credited with developing multiple Grammy award and Dove award winning acts since its inception. In addition, many of those acts have gone on to be RIAA certified gold, platinum and multi-platinum selling artists that have become household names within the CCM music market. Much of their success is due to the culture and expertise of the staff at Hat Punk. Of the ten, full-time equivalent employees at the company, three would be considered members of the top management team and more actively involved in the decision-making within the firm.

Figure 3 - Hat Punk, LLC Organisation Chart



8.1.2 Firm-Level Habitus

Competitive Strategy and Firm Culture

Hat Punk, LLC has a self-labelled '*third way*' of conducting business – described in more detail below. It creates an atmosphere in the office that is in some ways is not unlike other record labels, yet it does set itself apart in many respects. Through direct observation, the 'look' and 'feel' of the office leaves a distinct impression that you have entered a 'record label.' Modern furniture, gold and platinum records on the wall, certifications for multi-platinum records and countless recognition of past success of artists signed and/or affiliated with the label. However, unlike the 'hustle and bustle' that you typically find in businesses such as this, it has a more reserved, calm and collected feeling – Sam describes it as follows:

'When you walk in here we don't have music blaring or anything because we have a lot of seasoned pros.'

Some of this feeling may be due to Sam and his team describing their approach to doing business, their competitive strategy as one based on a '*philosophy of relationships*'. Through his life, spiritual and professional experience, Sam has grown confident of what he likes and does not like, quickly realising that he and the firm would only work with '*mature artists, not by age,*

but by life perspective – [and] strong spiritually’. Sam makes this clear that even now, post-sale of the assets, the company philosophy will remain intact:

‘Because philosophically it’s at the very same place. I had done [it] for 20 years, I had made many sales and did things right. One of the things I [also] figured out was what I didn’t like’.

This ‘understanding’ of what Sam likes and does not like is also observable in how he interacts with his top management team and employees. It is not a disrespectful or condescending communication style, but one of mutual respect and confidence. This leadership style is modelled throughout and is also seen in the communications of its staff. In addition, it transcends the boundaries of the firm and throughout the entire culture and habitus, how he and his team continue to foster and maintain their professional relationships with their artists, their professional networks and the industry in which they operate. Jack, the VP of A & R agrees:

‘I think where we’re really competitive is “authenticity.” I think we are very comfortable being who we are and not trying to impress or bend for artists to fit us, but being who we are and knowing what we are good at’.

Sam and Jack understand the ‘we’ mentality they are fostering when dealing with artists and the staff. Sam describes the company as ‘*An independently minded company that would compete toe-to-toe with all the majors...and win’*. It has become known in the CCM culture as the non-traditional ‘Caldwell deal’ or a ‘third way’ of doing business. Sam describes where this has come from and the philosophy behind it:

‘Before, in traditional artist label relationships...it goes into an “us against them” mentality. So the best relationships I had was when it was a “we” mentality and so when we would say “this is all we have, you may like it, you may not like it, but this is what we’ve got, lets figure out how to spend it wisely”.

This description is indicative of how they conduct business in the industry and within themselves at Hat Punk, LLC. The attitudes of the team extend into the culture of the firm with the stories, artefacts and general mentality towards each other and the people they conduct business. The staff is also proud of this reputation the firm has earned. Jack’s interpretation of the

'third way' is due to the company being *'nimble like an indie, but yet you have the financial resources like the major'*. Sam describes it as the *'independent way which has a lot more freedom and a lot more creativity but [NOT] understaffed, underfinanced, under resourced, [or] have a hard time delivering the results'*. It is the best of each, that is, the resources typically available to the 'majors' with the creativity and flexibility of an 'independent' label that the capital can provide. Here, symbolic capital and its power does not equate to size. Specifically, 'bigger is not better'. He speaks to the control he is able to maintain by not being constrained by corporate interests. He has the flexibility to develop new talent and take creative risks while having control over the social and economic resources needed to bring these talents to the market place. Sam also feels that the artist and label should work together, share the risk and share the resources at the same time:

'You know traditional deal - I fund the record, I fund the marketing, I give it all to you right after you recoup...I came up with a way to do deals where you risk, I risk. We shared rewards, and sow equitable distribution of the resource'.

They saw a niche in the market in which, by the very nature of their size, the major record labels could not fill while at the same time was able to offer a service and flexibility of a smaller label. This approach:

'allows us to put all the truth on the table, figuring out how to do things wisely as opposed to how best to get things for ourselves to protect our interests. Because our interests are aligned, so if you don't win, I don't win. If I win, you win'.

It not only provides artists with the access to a network and assets that most independent labels cannot provide, but it also allows Hat Punk, LLC to maintain and reproduce the inequality in the power relations between them. Although the sharing of risk indicates an attempt at *'levelling the playing field'*, Sam and his team are responding to a fear of losing power in light of a rapidly changing industry. The more they risk, the less likely they will continue to be in business. It is the expertise and the power to dictate the terms of the contracts that allow for Hat Punk, LLC and its artists to be successful.

Since the recent decision was made to purchase back the assets of the label and publishing company from a larger entertainment firm, Sam and the rest of the staff have already noticed positive changes in the culture that was recently weighed down by decisions and the financial position of the parent company. These ‘*positive*’ changes are bringing the company back to how Sam had described it as being in the past, but was now starting to fade – one of many determining factors that instigated the decision:

‘The parent company got themselves into some trouble so it made the environment here tough. So we are coming off of a tough situation and so we thought, we got daylight ahead so we are all excited. We’re pumped’.

The tough environment that Sam discusses here is a direct result of the downsizing and poor decision-making that the parent company has been making lately – at least poor decisions from Sam and his team’s perspective. This downsizing and controversial decisions were a result of the changing industry. The downturn that the recording industry has been experiencing since 2001 did not render the parent company immune, forcing them to make tough decisions – decisions that has now paved the way for opportunity for Sam. The positive perspective from Sam for the future has brought about a sense of authenticity that Jack earlier described and has now began effecting the staff’s attitude within the environment ‘*but what I think has happened is it’s a lot more real, and a lot more energised’.*

8.1.3 The Actors and Personal-Level Habitus

Sam Caldwell– Owner, CEO

Age: 51
Gender: Male
Ethnicity: European Caucasian
Education: B.A. – Radio, TV and Film
Time in Industry: 31 years

Philip Esquire

Age: 47
Gender: Male
Ethnicity: Caucasian – American Indian
Education: B.M. – Music Business and Entertainment Industries
Minor – Marketing

Jack Johnson

Age: 34

Gender: Male

Ethnicity: Caucasian

Education: B.A. – Music Business

Sam Caldwell

Sam began his career in the music industry as an intern at Sound Records, a prominent Christian label based in Nashville, Tennessee. After turning down a job offer from the company, Sam went on to work in an entirely different industry. Some time had passed, and he was again approached to work for the firm he interned with, when he accepted a position working in radio promotion, before moving onto a career in marketing and then being promoted to general manager. His career has been a successful one by any measure, holding presidential positions at various independent and major labels in the Christian music industry. This time was not always positive; however, he had his ups and downs during those days, as he made clear *‘there were some dark days at that label’*. Those dark days were preceded by his personal drive and ambition to start and run Green Tree records. He has a confident, yet humble disposition and he will be the first to say *‘It’s doesn’t mean I have it right all the time’*. He admits to making poor decisions and understands that where there are successes, there are also failures. Having a positive disposition and understanding how things work could be attributed to his embodied cultural capital that he has acquired throughout his life and career:

‘I think I’m just a lot more confident about what I know. I think I am less scared of what I don’t know. So when I don’t know things I don’t try to act like I do. I go get help, and I know where to go get help’.

He is also not afraid to seek help or assistance when he does not know something – nor does a lack of knowledge affect his confidence. He surrounds himself with a team of experts that is able to balance these deficiencies:

‘The things that I know that I know...you, know it doesn’t really shake me if someone thinks differently. I’ll listen to it and I’ll weigh it and measure it’.

Much of this confidence, according to Sam is due to his age, experience and success from working in the industry. Research on cognitive decision-making, and the correlation between effective decision-making and age would affirm (Bruine de Bruin *et al.*, 2007) this. This confidence has also led to a sense of resolution, unafraid to try new things and, if he fails, he can learn from the experience:

'...the courage part was living by my own set of rules and not the set of rules dictated to me by others. I don't let someone else define what success is for me. I've had the opportunities, the biggest company I ran was 105, 110 people, and so I've done that...that's not what I define as success. And so I just had to be courageous and say here's what success looks like to me. And here's what happiness is and I need to just be real about that.'

Sam's habitus, mainly the product of his past, his age, and socio-economic status, is shaped by his experiences and interaction with the structures around him, just as those structures are shaped by the actors that interact with them. Sam and his current perspective on where he is and why he is pursuing this choice is no different. His attitudes have been shaped by the companies for whom he has worked and the people with whom he has worked, leaving him with the personality we see today – the courage, the humbleness, the strength and commitment to his religion have all influenced him in such a way that he knows what he wants and the ways in which this may be achieved. As he just described, he knows himself well and is comfortable with that.

In addition to being a humble, confident and courageous individual he is also a man of strong faith and family values. He often puts his family first and understands the appropriate work-family balance for him:

'And now certainly for me I want to make a living and I don't want to put my family in danger economically'

With these personality characteristics, he is also a man of vision and understands the importance of having a strategic foresight if you want to run a company like Hat Punk, LLC. Using that vision he understands the substantial amount of social capital in the form of professional networks and relationships that are needed to execute that vision:

'You have to have relationships, then strategy; you have to know where you are going. Too many people are informed on what they

are running away from not what they are running toward. I'd say you have to have a clear strategy about what you are running toward'.

With the vision comes risk according to Sam. You must be willing to do, 'within your principle', what is needed in order to execute that vision:

'you have to have the stomach for that...some people do, some people don't.'

Sam is referencing the ups and downs of money making and loss within the music industry. Being an entrepreneur of cultural product, it is often difficult to forecast what song, what album or what artist will be profitable or find the commercial success needed to sustain a business like Hat Punk, LLC. Sam is also an individual who can, financially, and is willing to take on the financial risk involved in working in this industry. He feels he can because of his past success, his age, experience and personality characteristics that make him who he is.

Philip Esquire

Philip Esquire has worked for Green Tree for eleven years. He is a modest man, reserved, with a wealth of industry knowledge and experience that he relies on daily. He does not hold a higher degree, but relies heavily on his experience while he was a touring musician:

'As far as training, it was on the road...I was a performer so I started performing with different bands in the southern California area and from there I started absorbing information about how a booking agent worked. How merchandising worked...sales...live touring'.

Musician by trade, Philip began his involvement in the business side of the industry when he was touring with his band. While supporting releases by A & M and Epic Records, he began interacting with promoters, the group's manager, booking agent, and was active with tour management. He took on that role and started taking care of more business, marketing, and transactional items separate from performing. Later his band was offered their own production company where he would take on a marketing and promotion role. This experience later led to his career in marketing and promotion with Green Tree,

LLC. He oversees a staff of five at the company, which indicates a strong skill set in managerial capabilities and leadership.

Jack Johnson

Jack Johnson has worked for Green Tree, LLC for seven years. Prior to his tenure at the company, he worked for Sam Hood Publishing as an art coordinator before moving up to the creative department. This was Jack's first experience bringing in new talent to the company, albeit songwriters, before coming to Green Tree, LLC as an Artist & Repertoire - A&R, manager. Sam recognised his talents through his '*good ears*', and his ability to bring on successful new talent to the label, which ultimately gave him his current position as Senior Vice President of A & R. Jack is a younger gentleman relative to his colleagues Sam and Philip. This enables him to provide a perspective to the team that they may not be able to have, due to age and life perspective. He self-identifies as being '*in touch with trends in the industry*' while keeping apprised of new and upcoming artists. Jack is also a confident man that strongly believes in what he feels '*he is called to do*'. He has a strong passion for his work and is not afraid to share his opinion when asked, especially when discussing new artists with his team, Sam and Jack. He can relate well to artists, their managers and represents Green Tree, LLC in the industry well through his overwhelming amount of cultural capital in music and trends and well established professional network. This professional network respects Jack because of the symbolic capital he possesses through the artists he has signed and the talent he can recognise.

8.1.4 Resources Needed

The Need for Financial Capital

Economic capital and the need for assets to make this purchase were considered substantial. In order to make this decision, Sam needed to evaluate carefully the cost-benefit of the purchase and whether it would be a viable investment opportunity financially. Sam relied upon a strong professional network and team of advisors outside the firm to assist him in this evaluation. As part of his habitus would influence him, '*he knows what he knows*' and he is not afraid to seek counsel in areas in which he may be deficient. When asked

what resources he would need to execute this decision and were part of his evaluation, Sam made clear:

*'I would say industry knowledge, relationships, and **capital**...then strategy'.*

He went on to clarify that financial capital, the money and assets required to purchase the firm, was needed:

'...financial capital, you got to be able to buy it, start it, sustain loses. You have to have the stomach for the way our sales record is these last few months, I lost money in these two months and think I'm going to make money in month five'.

Although any specific amount was never disclosed, it could be inferred that in order to purchase the assets of a company that owns a catalogue containing a number of multiple platinum and award-winning artists, the amount would not be minimal. In addition, as Sam alludes to in his comments, it is not only the assets he is purchasing, but he also needs enough cash to sustain months of loss as is often the case for recorded music product and this industry. This is especially the case in this environment, where the unpredictability of success is compounded by the illegal downloading of music. The impact that the losses may have on the company can be critical to its success, especially given the track record of losses the company has sustained recently in an industry that often mirrors similar results. Therefore, although the economic capital needed to make this decision was high, and the risks involved have been compounded, Sam still felt he had what it took to bring the company that he started over ten years ago back from its problematic state. This kind of mentality is only possible through the confidence and sense of commitment that Sam brings with him along with the desire to be seen as the 'saviour' of the company. The symbolism involved with being the one who started it and the one who brought it back from the brink of extinction would allow Sam the continued recognition and positioning within the field that he desires.

Personal Relationships and the Need for Knowledge and Experience

In addition to the substantial amount of economic resources needed to execute this decision, Sam indicated the importance that 'relationships' would have on effectively executing and evaluating whether, or not, to purchase the

assets. Not all relationships established in the industry are considered equal and some may have a direct impact while others have a more indirect or no impact whatsoever. Indirectly, Sam did indicate the importance of belonging to associations and clubs when fostering those relationships:

'...the gospel music association, Christian Music Trade Association...I help raise a lot of money for 'International Justice Mission, which is involved in freeing primarily slaves, sex slave across the world' 'Borders Call, which is a nonprofit ministry that those in the music industry support so that families can go to counseling for free'.

But when asked whether these relationships or belonging to these organisations had a direct impact on the decision practice, he clearly stated:

'Not really, no' – [they didn't really have any impact on the decision]

Not having any influence on whether to move forward with the purchase does not mean there is value in belonging to, or being actively involved in, these social networks. What they can and do provide is an indirect influence, meaning that the status and power membership of these networks imposes on decision makers may provide a sense of confidence, or alter the personal disposition, in a way that influences them to take action in a specific manner, and to take on more risk:

'So it's having that knowledge, having knowledgeable people, so I'm kind of putting people in with knowledge. The knowledge of the industry, and the knowledge of the market. Relationships about manufacturing costs, shipping costs, you know - how to make records...You have to be seriously invested in relationships, so when you start a new company, people look at you sideways. So you have to have long-term relationships that you've invested in and have invested in you. So you have to have those and that's artists, managers everybody in the industry and frankly...staff'.

You cannot have the people without the knowledge - Sam sees them as intimately connected and a necessary resource if he wants to purchase the assets back from Axis Media. He understands this and the abundance of social capital he has accumulated throughout his 30-year history working in the industry has enabled him to make this decision indirectly with the odds of success being as much in his favor as they could be. His strong position on the need to have knowledgeable people...who *have done it, not think they know it, but know it*', working with him can be attributed to his own success. He understands the

importance that experience and the capital people possess are necessary to reach his personal and company goals. They are more likely to use their own network and resources to help achieve his. Their knowledge and experience provide comfort for Sam in that they will know how to leverage their resources efficiently and professionally when needed.

Through his 30 years in the business and 51 years of life Sam has come to understand that the right people, the right professionals with the appropriate understanding of how the world and the industry works will be the ones that he will need to implement this decision:

'...you have to really know the business, you cannot start a company in today's environment and hire enough people to do the job. You will go broke. So you have to, you personally, have to know how to do everything. And then you have to have people who know how to do three or four different things....and that have done it, not think they know it, but know it. So it's very fortunate that in 30 years I've done everything possible'.

When Sam is discussing *'today's environment'* and *'hire enough people to do the job'*, he is referencing the challenging and changing field that has brought with it the economic challenges and constraints. This lack of economic capital is, therefore, being compensated for through an overabundance of cultural capital needed to maintain the *status quo*. This added asset cannot come in the form of more actors. The economic resources are not available so he must be comfortable with the team and their accumulated cultural capital to do the job. They must all be knowledgeable, to a certain extent in all aspects, in order to do the job. If this accumulation did not exist, Sam would likely have not gone through with this transaction. Although he mentioned that he needed enough economic capital to sustain a few months of losses, he cannot afford losses of cultural or social capital, as this would jeopardise the symbolic capital achieved to a level that would not be worth the risk for the investment.

8.1.5 Influences on Decision

A Shrinking Industry and the Reliance upon Positional Expertise

The industry rules that guide practice within this decision were evidenced in the importance of team inputs (Caves, 2000). The expertise that

comes with advisors and managers, in order to assist in the commercialisation of a creative product, like music, helps to bridge the gap between individual economic gain and the public good, or for those who wish to enjoy the craft. Those who make decisions in this field rely upon these agents, and their personal and professional networks, to get the job done. Sam knows that in order for him to continue to be successful he understands that it is not only his networks, but it is everyone that is involved in the business of commercially exploiting recorded music products within this field playing a role:

'So you have to have those and that's artists, managers everybody in the industry'

According to Sam, in this field, the rules and power structures that dictate its functioning are rooted in the social and professional networks that contain them. The cultural capital in the form of industry knowledge and the symbolic titles that come with it, like '*manager*' embody this knowledge and the social capital that those who carry this title, have acquired. It is this well-connected network and cumulative knowledge, which the 'team' utilises to create further leverage of the success and power within the field. Sam's understanding of this is important, as will be discussed below. He relies on this network not only to aid him in this decision, but feels it must be in place in order for him to move forward with the execution of the buy-out.

The Need for Budgeting and Planning

In addition to the 'team inputs' (Caves, 2000) that have helped shape the field doxa generally and Sam's decision practice specifically, there was also evidence of behaviours that aided in assessing the viability of decision options. This behaviour was 'systematic' and a 'logical and analytical' approach to data collection during the consideration and information gathering stage of the decision practice. Sam was attempting to find the optimal level of information needed to feel confident that a positive outcome or effective decision would be made. Using this approach to assist him in gathering information for a more comprehensive decision practice is based upon the Kahneman (2011) idea of the second system in decision-making. The first being more intuitive and heuristic based with the second being based upon complex computation, agency and

choice. These choices were situational options generated through sales forecasting and quantitative modelling:

'Certainly I ran my own budgets for the next 3 years. I did cash flows for the next 3 years. So yeah I did model it out.'

Doing this allowed Sam to see whether purchasing the assets of the company would be a wise economic investment for himself. It was calculated through forecasting, not only the short-term but the medium term profitability as well. Being a 'humble yet confident' man, and being first to say '*he knows what he knows*', this modeling out the profitability is serving him in understanding whether this is a 'good' or 'right' decision for him to make now. He understands that modeling out the financial implications would aid in offsetting the personal bias inherent in wanting to purchase back the assets of the company he started many years ago. Although no evidence suggests that he would have still bought the assets if it were forecasted as unprofitable, prior successful decision-making through his position as President would indicate that he would not move forward with an unprofitable endeavour – unless there was a strategic purpose for it. However, this calculation was not simply an economic forecast based on whether or not, it was a sound business choice or one to aid in bias reduction, it was also one that relied on the use of cultural and social capital:

'I have a lot of history, 11 years of history; I knew what we had in the contract and what we didn't. I had some suppositions based on I need a couple things to go right. Here and here. I had checkpoints along the way. I had a budget in mind, what I felt like based on the modeling and everything else, what I can afford, and what my wife was comfortable risking. So yeah we did do quantitative modeling'.

Starting the company and being a part of its operations for the past eleven years leaves Sam privy to the ins and outs of the business – its success, failures and ongoing challenges. He has led and understands the company habitus and is relying upon his accumulated cultural capital and past experience in the firm to aid in his modeling and forecasting of the potential value of the firm, through how he sees it and has experienced it. This alone makes it more than just an economic transaction for him. He is connected emotionally, growing and being a

part of the firm for so many years. In addition to his personal connection to the firm, Sam also consulted his wife when modeling the value of the transaction. The family unit was important here and is indicative of his strong commitment to them. Being a faithful man and one in his early fifties, retirement not far off in the distant future, Sam also had to consider the personal and family ramifications of investing large amounts of economic capital into this decision.

Much of this behaviour indicates a propensity to model the future profitability of the firm to aid him in deciding whether, or not, this would be a sound business decision for him – at least at the surface. As a reflexive researcher using Bourdieu as a lens, specifically his practice theory, I want to understand the motivation and behaviour behind his actions. Sam, the one making the decision – albeit through decision aids like modeling – brings with him his dispositions rooted in bias and personal perspective, the cultural capital accumulated through industry experience, general skills and knowledge and the personal and professional networks that not only influence but may be directly impacted by this decision. The importance that the personal motivations behind this decision have, even on the most modeled and analytical of influences, must not be under-valued.

Individual Habitus

The Role of Professional Personal Contacts

External influences on this decision practice came in the form of professional and personal contacts, which enabled Sam further perspective and clarity. In order for him to feel confident in making this decision while he was weighing his alternatives, he sought out expert legal advice from his professional network:

'I had three different companies and lawyers helping me do this acquisition, I certainly asked their advice on things like possible bankruptcy strategies, technical stuff'.

The assumption here is of Sam's awareness of 'what he doesn't know' and therefore he seeks out legal and bankruptcy advice through his network – his social capital. Confident in his decision-making skills, he seeks expertise in areas he does not understand from people that he trusts.

He knows that they will aid him in providing him knowledge nor with information to make the best possible decision. By trusting others in these areas he demonstrates his confidence in them and in himself. According to the evidence provided in the discussion about his habitus, this trust can be linked back to the prior success he has had in the industry and his ability to enhance his decision-making skills through time and experience. He has relied upon his social capital to aid him countless times before and has had positive experiences from them. Because of this, he continues to rely on them to offer the advice he seeks in order to make this decision as well. In addition to legal and bankruptcy advice, Sam also relied upon accountants to aid him in the potential tax issues that could arise from this decision. *'I had to count obviously tax advice and structure advice'*. Coming from a self-identified, upper-middle social class and holding positions of power throughout much of his career, Sam understands the importance of money and the tax implications behind it. It cannot only affect profitability, but external stakeholder perspective as well. If the firm does not follow good tax advice and account for its income and expenses properly, it may impact the perception that shareholders or investors have on how effectively and efficiently the company is operating. However, since this is a personal buy-out, the stakeholders and the perception they hold are not as a shareholder, but as artists, potential signings and those currently on the roster. It also impacts the perception of his entire social network, professional and personal, as well as other firms within the field that see and begin to perceive the reputation of Hat Punk as one that is being run properly or one that is not, which could end up with the decision of whether these stakeholders choose to do business with them, or not. Although this may not be an immediate response by its stakeholders, Sam's behavior here does demonstrate his understanding of the importance of seeking external professional advice in making a major decision such as this. Through his experience, he understands not only the economic capital at stake here, but also the social and symbolic one as well. Although he may be willing to sacrifice one at the moment, he can only make what he feels is a good and comprehensive decision if he is considering all the implications of it.

In addition to Sam's professional advisors and the implications upon the economic and symbolic capital he holds through the auspices of the firm, he also sought advice outside the company from people close to him while considering the impact his actions it will have on the firm, in addition to his personal and spiritual life. First, he sought advice from a close personal friend, one he has known for decades and trusts in matters such as these:

'Then really there's only one guy I went to, this guy I used to work with. I know him very well; he knows me and is one of the smartest business guys I know. I use him as a sounding board, I use him, as a guy to say here's what I am thinking, and your job is to shoot holes in everything that I say. And we have always worked that way together'.

Sam sought counsel from this gentleman because of the trust that has been established between them. Sam respects his friend's opinion, and knows that he can relate to the decision that Sam is about to make. He understands it because of past similar experience and previous success working in the industry. He also approached his friend because of his candor. Yes, Sam trusts that what he has to offer will be valuable– his past experience in the industry, but he also understands that he is currently outside the field doxa and decision-making practice - he is no longer directly involved in the power struggle to improve his positioning. The accumulation of capital within this context is no longer a motivating factor for his friend. Yet, he understands the field doxa well and the power struggles within. This alone is invaluable to Sam. His friend's advice comes with little or no underlying motives, and it is this candor is needed and appreciated. Sam hopes that his perspective will help him in making a more thorough and well-thought through decision.

Such a major decision as perceived by Sam could also not be discussed by his wife:

'and certainly my wife. She is very involved in that. Again not that she knows how to make it happen, but in terms of whether it would be a good thing for our family, or for me, you know, things like that.'

Although she is one outside the field practice here, her input is invaluable to Sam and weighs heavily on his decision practice. Being a close personal confidant and one that knows him in ways that no-one else does, both professional and personally, Sam knows that she is a good gauge on how this decision would impact their lifestyle and the effects it will have on family life. Sam is a 'big picture guy', strategic and when he makes decisions he wants to know how these decisions will affect him and his business financially, and also personally. The ramifications of these choices go beyond just the commercial success of the label, they also affect his personal life – being a strong man of faith, a spiritual man committed to his life beyond the business, valuing the love he has for his family and how that would impact his spiritual relationship as well. He speaks of balance in his artists, he sees them as an extension of how he tries to live his life – this is evidenced in his discussion about how he runs his company and how others perceive it. Here, he is also seeking balance – balance that Sam equates to success, which equates to equilibrium and to him - power.

The Seeking of Advice and Counsel from Trusted Employees

As Sam continued his information-seeking in order to make his decision, he also sought advice and consultation from his trusted colleagues: *'Well I certainly had talked to..., Philip and Jack...even Dana who has been here for 12 years'*. Having worked with them for so long, he trusted them for the insight they could offer as he mulled over his options:

"They were like "I think that would be great, I don't understand the financial ramifications or how to do that. I know how to do marketing and promotions." They didn't have the life experience, and so they could only respond to the idea'.

This would be in reference to his personal past experience in starting Green Tree (Hat Punk). It is not meant to be a condescending perspective but they simply did not have sufficient cultural capital specific to the decision. However, it is apparent that their opinion mattered - influencing, or at least reinforcing his decision practice. He used them as a sounding board, trusting their advice and counsel in specific matters that would affect them. Jack confirmed this as he shared his perspective on how he and Philip were approached by Sam:

'He walked us through the process, he made us a part of the process, but ultimately it was his decision'.

Jack understood that it was not a joint or group decision to be made by consensus or forum, but one shared with them that enabled an intimate conversation to be held over matters that would affect or concern them personally and professionally if he were to move forward with the buyout of the assets. Even after initial counsel was sought, Sam often went back to Jack and Philip to keep them informed of the progress he had been making as he was going through the decision-making practice. *'He kept us informed...we talked, we asked questions, those kinds of things. But ultimately it was his'.*

Understanding the Past and Recognizing the Opportunity

Sam also responded quite adamantly with a *'yeah, oh yeah,'* to whether past experiences played an influential role in his decision-making for this buyout. Both positive and negative past experiences were factors as he thought through his options:

'You know having done all this before, I had an idea. Being intimately involved with the company, I knew kind of where the bodies were buried'.

His connection and past history with the firm no doubt caused Sam to think about the things that he, and only he, knew – both positive and negative. His mentioning of the 'where the bodies are buried' is an allusion to the inner workings of the firm. Although no further evidence was provided as to exactly what those 'bodies' would be, they certainly provide insight into the institutional history, the spoken and unspoken lessons learned about how to conduct business, or how to cheat or honestly play the field doxa. These are invaluable to him and even though they cannot always easily be traced back to their origin, these lessons impact how they do business today as well as whether Sam would decide ultimately to buy back the assets of the firm. He goes on to recap his history with the company and affirms his detailed understanding of how it functions:

'I have a lot of history, 11 years of history, I knew what we had in the contract and what we didn't I had some suppositions based on I need a couple things to go right. Here and here'.

His experience and understanding of the artists on his roster, what their contracts entail and his understanding of the industry all come into play here. He understands what his employees are capable of doing and how well he can expect his artists to perform. Understanding the history of how all of them interact is an indication of how things may function in the future. He would not be purchasing these assets blindly; he would understand the value his team can bring to the business, the details of the contracts and well as the personal dispositions of the artists on the roster. He knows what is important to them and how dependable they are and the potential they have for future success and profitability of the firm. He knows them personally, professionally and, for him and this business, spiritually, all of which help to indicated future success.

8.1.6 Conclusion

Of all the decisions analysed thus far in this thesis, Sam's decision to buy back the assets of a company that he started 12 years prior was one that utilised a more analytical approach to aid in the decision-making, while being influenced the least by the field doxa. The reason this decision was chosen was to show the relationship between the level of accumulated social, economic and most importantly symbolic capital a firm has achieved in the recorded music industry, and the more analytical its approach to the decision-making practice. This more logical, analytical and systematic approach is due to an actor's perceived level of risk. Sam, in his choice to buy back the assets, felt he needed to be more thorough in his analysis of the situation, although he '*knew*' that he wanted to buy back the company from Axis, he also felt compelled to make sure that his due diligence was done correctly and thoroughly. The desire for this approach allowed him to give a perception of competency to his stakeholders, while not irresponsibly putting at risk the accumulated economic, social and symbolic capital the firm had accumulated since its inception. Although decision-making of this type often does occur within the recorded music industry, the field appears to have minimal influence on the decision outcome. Much of this

decision, although not in isolation as just discussed, did focus on the perspective, motivations and individual habitus of Sam, the decision maker and was not rooted in the direct marketing and promotion of recorded music product. The characteristics of the field impacted the actor's choice and the concern for capital, and the position held within the field were the prime motivators for decision choice and how it was made.

Table 9 - Case# 7: Selected Evidence: Hat Punk, LLC - Brand and Company Buyout

	Influences	Field (s)	Firm Habitus	Decision Maker Habitus	Economic Capital	Social Capital	Cultural Capital	Symbolic Capital
Impact	Multiple influential factors were observed and impacted decision outcome.	Macro: Economic, Recorded Music Industry, small business, creative and cultural production industries	-Professional -Reserved and Respectful Culture -Trusting, yet challenging when needed	-Confidant Disposition -Educated and Knowledgeable of Industry Practices -Subtle yet strong spiritual commitment	Substantial assets were needed to execute this decision	Needed in executing and implementing decision - weighed heavily in decision choice	Also weighed heavily, mostly in embodied industry knowledge	Wanted to be seen as having the company come full circle - saves reputation amongst network
Evidence	Past Experience: 'You know having done all this before, I had an idea. Being intimately involved with the company, I knew kind of where the bodies were buried.' Systematic Behaviour 'Certainly I ran my own budgets for the next 3 years. I did cash flows for the next 3 years.'	Business Sub-Fields: Record Label, Music Publishing, Marketing and Promotion 'Have the stomach for the way our sales record is these last few months' 'I lot of people are scared by this business right now' 'Certainly I ran my own budgets for the next 3 years. I did cash flows for the next 3 years.'	'I came up with a way to do deals where you risk, I risk.' 'I think where we're really competitive is authenticity.' 'When you walk in here we don't have music blaring or anything because we have a lot of seasoned pros.' 'I [the company, through his leadership] tend to zig and zag'	Age: 51 Gender: Male Ethnicity: European Caucasian Education: B.A. - Time in Industry: 31 years 'I'm just a lot more confident about what I know.' 'Just had to be courageous.' 'One of the things I figured out was what I didn't like.' Senior VP A&R Age: 34 Gender: Male Ethnicity: Caucasian Education: B.A. Senior VP Marketing Age: 47 Gender: Male Ethnicity: Caucasian - American Indian Education: B.M	'...financial capital, you got to be able to buy it, start it, sustain it, sustain losses.'	'Have long-term relationships that you've invested in and have invested in you' 'Artists, managers...everybody in the industry and frankly...staff.' 'I would say relationships'	Strategy...these are the things. 'Knowledge, that's the number one thing' 'You have to really know the business' 'The knowledge of the industry, and the knowledge of the market'	Buying the assets back from the parent company allows "his" name to be affixed with the "third way" and its success story once again.

8.2 CASE #8: ARTIST ACQUISITION

Discussion of the final case relates to the signing of recording artists to a record label for the purposes of marketing and exploitation of sound-recording copyrights. This decision, unlike the others that have preceded it, will follow a more generalised discussion, as a 'decision-type' rather than a specific acquisition of a particular artist. This is due to the more general nature in which Sam, Jack and Philip chose to speak about this important practice. Through the collection of data, many firms that I spoke with found this 'decision-type' to be one of strategic importance and, therefore, I deemed it important to be represented as a case. In addition, I discovered that the details of the decision-making for artist acquisitions from Hat Punk to be most illuminating. Thus, it is within this context, and with reference to this firm, that I present the details of this SDM practice.

As in nearly all record labels, artist acquisition, or the signing of new talent to the roster is often seen as a major strategic decision. The amount of economic, cultural and sometimes social and symbolic capital needed to develop, record, market and support an act often does not produce a profit, but when it does it can be the 'cash cow' or 'blood-line; for the firm (Frith, 2001) A & R staff within the label, and those left with the primary responsibility in making talent selection decisions, are often the first in proposing which artists should be considered (Negus, 1992). Stratton (1982) describes the A & R position in a record label, like other similar positions within the cultural industries, as one that extends beyond that of a mere 'gatekeeper' and suggests that the *'aesthetic/commercial dichotomy as articulated in the discourse of popular music serves as a metaphor for the articulation of the A & R person's position'* (p. 90). The person who holds this position wields much of the continuing economic vitality of the organisation within their decision-making power. He further contends that the A & R function is seen as fundamental, with the need for new product to flow into the label system to *'preserve its existence'* (p 91). It is seen as a role that connects artists and consumers together.

The Hat Punk top management team, understanding the importance that this function serves, self-identified the signing of an artist as an act that is strategic in nature and fundamental to the existence of the firm and worth exploring:

'let's pick apart an artist signing...and this can go for anybody... they all kind of fall in the same category [of decision]'.

The artist acquisition process at Hat Punk, LLC is not taken lightly and is one that encompasses a team effort, one described by Negus (1992) that contributes to the firm's power position that *'arises out of, and is exercised through the internal and external relationships which are stretched throughout the production, mediation and consumption of popular music'* (Negus, 1992, p. 39). Sam describes these relationships and the process of 'courting' and acquisition as more of a *'marriage'* than a business transaction:

'I think what I am looking for is someone who will fit here. I don't view the artists signing process as a pursuit, although there are times you do pursue. I don't view it as a competition, but as a time to figure out if you are supposed to be together. Not unlike, I don't want to use the word marriage lightly, but it's about finding the right partner. And when you have those right partnerships things are great. One of the things we always say is we are working on our exit even more than saying hi to each other. Because after our time together we either want to iron it out and say we did it, or shake hands and say we did the best we could'.

By using the word *'partner'* and *'marriage'* in this description indicates a 'life-long' commitment to each other and the seriousness in which he views the coming together of the people he works with. This again can be attributed to his self-proclaimed 'third-way' of doing business. The coming together of the artist on the label is *not* just a business transaction or a way to make quarterly numbers for the company's shareholders, but a partnership in which the profits and the risks are equally shared and, as Negus (1992) posits, a display of power in the courtship ensues. The artists are just as much a part of the company as the network of employees that help to market and promote them. They must not only show commercial potential, but must be a natural fit to the firm's habitus and also the habitus of those who work there.

The influences that go into bringing new talent to the label, much of which is rooted in a labelled 'intuitive approach' (Stratton, 1982), encompasses effortless thinking based on impressions and feelings (Kahneman, 2011). Because of this behaviour for this type of decision – opposite the more logical and analytical practice undertaken by Sam in the decision discussed above – the evidence that surfaced was heuristic-based, entrenched with bias and other influential behaviour. Although some planning behaviour was observed, much of it was done to confirm the decision that was already made through less comprehensive terms.

8.2.1 Resources Needed

Variability and Substantiality of Financial Investment

No specific disclosure was made regarding the amount of economic capital needed for any one artist acquisition at Hat Punk. However, every firm determines the value of the artist through multiple variables including, but not limited to, the potential return on investment, current success already enjoyed in the market place, the amount of front-end investment in the form of an advance and ownership rights. Then, in return for this value estimate, an investment determination will be made. This can be done through a more objective-orientated approach; one based on competitive behaviour or, more likely, what the firm can afford. Either way, much of the economic capital needed in any one acquisition is typically substantial for any label and can be a sign of the commitment level and perceived risk by the record label.

The Reliability upon Networks

In addition to the financial resources, A & R staff need to rely on their professional contacts to execute the decision effectively. Negus (1992) writes about this in his own research on the production of pop music in which he speaks to their reliance upon a network of contacts at other production companies, managers, publishers and lawyers. The dependence upon the decision-maker's networks was no exception here, as Philip Esquire, V.P. of marketing and promotion reflects, based on his personal experience. He too depends upon the use and acquisition of his professional and social network, but

considering his limited role in the artist acquisition process, he typically does not need to reach out. He sums it up clearly by stating '*I think networking is very important*'. More specifically Jack Johnson, V.P. of A & R discusses the importance and the reliance upon these relationships to make things like signing of an artist happen:

'...it's business to business. It's managers talking to labels; it's producers talking to managers talking to labels. Its attorneys talking to you know. Most of the things we have worked with have come from some kind of referral. Even if it's an artist saying you should check out this other artist. Generally that's where it comes from.'

These comments indicate the importance that social capital plays in this decision practice. If, as an actor, your network is limited, you will have a more difficult time leveraging yourself to a more powerful position in the field, which would also limit your access to the artists who are perceived to have more commercial potential. This indicates a cycle that tends to perpetuate itself and is reinforced by the industry doxa and those who possess more of the capital. When agents are talking to managers and managers are talking to labels, this creates an assumed and unspoken barrier to entry. It is the industry's way of filtering out the 'unlimited variety' of talent and artists that may want to pursue the prestige associated with working in the industry or being signed to a label. The tight knit, intricate network that *is* the social capital an actor possesses in this field can be, and often is, a determining factor in an artist's signing of a record deal.

Embodied Industry Knowledge

The capital needed in this decision practice emerges as a form of embodied industry knowledge – obtained through experience and understanding of the field and not one of the institutionalised credentials like degrees or certificates:

'I would say there's no substitute for experience when it comes to that. Jack has been here eight years and has gotten really good at it the past couple years.'

If you do not understand the trends and learn what music is being successful, you will struggle to be successful at making these decisions.

This role is one often seen as connecting two groups together, namely, the artists and the audience, in pursuit of commercial viability for the label (Stratton, 1982). Consumer sentiment and the ‘uncertainty of demand’ can attempt to be mitigated by continuing to understand market trends, breaking artists and consumer tastes. This kind of capital, in the form of industry knowledge can really only be accumulated through experience working directly with those artists and the fans that follow them. Even then, when a substantial amount of understanding has occurred, field doxa can still limit this certainty before and after release. The more general knowledge of trends and bands is certainly important, but so is the specific knowledge and understanding that each genre brings. Sam states clearly his lack of understanding and his bias when it comes to hip hop music:

‘I’m not a hip hop guy...when it comes to music, it just sounds like noise to me’.

Sam will be the first to tell you that if he does not have a member of his team that has the appropriate knowledge needed for a specific signing or if he does not have the certain type of ‘*muscle*’ needed for this type of signing, he will simply ignore the opportunity. This again goes back to the ‘uncertainty principle’ (Caves, 2000) and the mitigation of risk. If a complete and thorough understanding of a market niche, via a genre of music, is not understood, Sam and his team are putting at risk the very field position they have worked so hard to achieve. This would be above and beyond the usual risk associated with signing any artist and the uncertainty of demand that is associated with music products, even those within a familiar genre. It only takes a few bad signings for a company, and a lack of understanding of a market, for them to jeopardise a substantial portion of the symbolic and economic capital earned.

8.2.2 Influences on Decision

The ‘Uncertainty of Demand Principle’ and Its Influence Upon the Acquisition of Artists

Signing an artist and the potential commercial product that is then released by the label for sale to the public is at the heart of this field’s doxa and

incorporates many of the attributes described by Caves (2000). Here, the level of 'demand is unknown' to Sam, Jack and Philip. They have very little understanding or knowledge of whether an artist will see the commercial success they need as they bring them into the 'economic structure' of the business (Stratton, 1982), yet at some point will decide if the level of risk is sufficient to move forward with the decision to sign, or not. Those who have studied the artist acquisition and development processes in the industry (Negus, 1992; Stratton, 1982) have discussed the challenges present in this aesthetic/commercial dichotomy and that the 'gatekeeping' characteristics of artist acquisitions as they distinguish between '*music as cultural artifact* [and] *music as product*' (Stratton, 1982, p. 90).

The 'quality of the creative effort' by the artist will not be determined until after the decision is made, at which stage the level of risk taken on by the firm must also be considered. This 'quality of creative effort' may already be known by Jack and his team prior to the signing, but there is little that can be done if the artists feel this relationship is not living up to expectations and, therefore, lower their creative input. The label can mitigate this uncertainty through the use of contracts, but yet the level of risk is still present. Sam, Philip and Jack also understand the importance that the skills of their team are crucial in order to mitigate their risk. As Sam described in his previous decision, he knows his team, their skills and what they are capable of doing. This diversity and understanding is also important as they take on these new partnerships with artists. They need to feel that they can help them be successful, as much as the artists want and need their expertise.

Personal Level Influence

Past Experiences and the Use of Heuristics as a Value Judgement

Evidenced in this decision practice by both Jack and Sam were the use of availability, representativeness and the anchoring and adjustment heuristics. The reliance upon the heuristic to aid in the decision-making practice is in effect relying upon a quicker cognitive process in making a choice. This becomes evident as Jack describes his approach to the initial meeting of an artist he is considering to sign to the label:

'At some point in time you learn to assess the heart of the meeting, you know if they are our kind of person or not'.

He is relying upon his feeling as to whether they are a good fit for the 'third way' of the company. Jack is essentially anchoring his choice based upon previous experience in these meetings and his understanding of the habitus of the firm and the consumer preference within the field. He must marry all of these quickly to determine whether the risk is at a level worth taking. He then adjusts his opinion based upon these many factors. Sam reinforces this behaviour as well with a similar cognitive process when he meets with the artists using an anchoring and adjustment heuristic:

'95% of the time, there are certain things that I look for, and certain responses. So I guess there are some right answers as it relates to working here, you know not as a person. But you know if they are like, - "my target audience is everybody man and it's all about bringing them to the kingdom." Really, what I hear when they say that is we want to be a rock band but we can't get a deal. So you hear those things and kind of learn what some of that stuff is. There are exceptions to the rule, but you just try to listen really hard'.

It is a form of interview or test. Sam is making an initial judgement, the anchoring is based upon what he expects or hopes to hear from the potential artist. He proceeds to adjust his opinion based upon what they say. While using this decision aid to place judgement, he is also relying upon his past experience working with artists, along with his cultural capital in the form of industry knowledge and skills. His opinion and perspective within this statement can also trace back to his socio-economic status and age. He is no doubt influenced by the attitude that comes with a younger generation that quotes a '*my target audience is everybody*' mentality. He positions himself with a more status-orientated perspective when those comments indicate what he describes as the type of artist or behaviour he would not like to see. The gap in knowledge of that market permeates attitudes and perspectives that aid in his idea of what should, or should not, be said by the artist, on whom he then places value and judgement regarding his decision on a possible signing.

Jack also exhibits this type of behaviour in his use of an anchoring and adjustment heuristic in his assessment of potential artists:

'Generally they aren't all the way there, the music is not all the way there, but hopefully it's a place where you can see the sparks, you see the potential and if we are like-minded people where we are going in the same direction'.

Again, a value judgement is used in the anchoring of the decision aid. He is comparing the current level of artistry and commercial potential from his personal perspective and how he perceives the market's tendency when it comes to quality judgement. If there is a dissonance in this comparison, based upon his understanding of the industry and personal habitus, he judges the act or 'adjusts' his decision in order to sign or not sign the artist. However, within his comments it is apparent that this dissonance gap can also be bridged and is indicated by his use of *'potential'* and *'sparks'*, further influencing his decision to sign.

In addition to the use of an anchoring and adjustment heuristic the use of the availability heuristic was evidenced through data collection. Jack in certain instances will judge the decision based upon the probability of the outcome, especially if there is disagreement in certain circumstances:

'Things we are kind of waffling on are probably things we don't need to say yes to'.

This indicates a form of uncertainty or level of probability in risk he is willing to take. If there is not a solid positive feeling about all aspects of the artist signing, including, but not limited to the fit with the label, the quality of their music, and potential commercial success, among others, then he uses a availability heuristic to aid in his judgment. Jack feels that if there is any sense of doubt, his memory will be stimulated to formulate past examples of similar doubt and calculate the probability of a similar outcome. He uses what is available in his memory to influence his current decision choice. Sam also recognises this in Jack and actually relies upon this kind of decision-making from him:

'Jack has been here eight years and has gotten really good at it the past couple years. The first few years he would be like "dude they are right up our alley" and I would be like, "nope, they are not for us".

Even though Sam indicates that Jack's use of this decision making aid has improved, he too used a similar type of heuristic when making judgements on the artist. By claiming '*they are not for us*,' Sam is relying upon his memory and the probability of a similar outcome in a similar situation. This probability, like Jack, is based upon past experiences and knowing that the odds of success for this kind of artist is limited considering his and the companies resources and expertise.

Personal Taste and Bias

The use of heuristics in deciding to sign an artist to Hat Punk plays a pivotal role in judgement and value. However, with personal judgement and value attached to a decision comes bias, which too was evidenced as influential in this decision practice in the forms of belief, hindsight and confirmation biases. Jack is very clear about how he goes about signing an artist to Hat Punk:

'It's really easy, we only sign things that we both can't live without'.

From Jack's perspective, this decision sounds like it is based more in personal belief bias than the more logical and analytical approach taken by Sam in the previous decision. However it could also be considered a type of confirming bias, in which each actor is affirming his or her own personal preference. This bias is centered on the personal belief of each individual and how they feel about the potential commercial success of the music and their confidence in gauging what will, or will not, be successful in the market place. This idea of knowing and understanding comes with a certain level of accumulated cultural capital. Never the less, some assumptions are made, based upon prior success and failures of previous artists, and how the field is currently responding to certain creative outputs. The habitus plays a crucial role here in forming the opinions of Sam and Jack and how they relate to the artists they are signing. The interplay between the habitus, the bias that is rooted within, coupled with the industry doxa and field dynamics all seem subconsciously to influence perspective, decision choice and practice. This appears to happen again and again as judgment and taste (Bourdieu, 1984) of each actor influences the opinion upon the commercial viability of the artist – hence playing a pivotal role in the decision practice of signing an artist. Bourdieu (1984) and Trondman

(2004) would also argue that these perspectives are influenced by the actor's social economic status. Distinctive to this decision practice however, is the necessity to act as an agent or proxy for the consumer. Jack and Sam need to determine the viability of the artist, their potential commercial success, and the inherent level of risk as they decide to sign them. However, they must substitute, or at least be mindful of, their taste in music when making these decisions for their success does not depend upon their personal preference but that of the market for which they are the gatekeeper. This awareness of taste and preference was evidence here by Sam.

'Well Jack could tell you there are certain types of music. I'm not a hip hop guy, if a hip hop guy walks in the room it's no big deal, I can have a great conversation with him. But when it comes to music, it just sounds like noise to me'.

Therefore, when accounting for this personal belief bias, Sam defers to Jack to act as the proxy agent for the market place. He acknowledges the bias associate with certain music genre types that he has, and then empowers those with the appropriate amount of cultural capital and less bias to make the judgement, in this case, Jack. However, Jack is also not free of a certain level of belief bias for which Sam then needs to compensate:

'He is a sucker for a pretty singer songwriter girl. And I have to really filter what he says about it'.

It is as if Sam and Jack compensate for the amount of bias that can occur in a decision practice such as signing an artist and have developed a system of informal processes:

'He can bring me a song and I look at it and say I knew you would bring this. We had this conversation a couple days ago, and "I'm like why" and he says, "because that's just not the kind of song that you like". "No it's not", so we have to talk about that. We defer to each other all the time.'

This deferment to each other, a check and balance, is a strategy for them to mitigate risk in a decision practice rooted in personal belief biases. These biases can and often impact decisions both positively and negatively. However, as some would argue (Hull *et al.*, 2010) the entire A

& R process of signing and finding acts to record for a label is a continuous process in risk management, where this behaviour is no exception.

Intuition, Heuristics or Bias?

Very closely related to the heuristics and bias associated with this decision-making practice was the use of what others have labelled 'intuitive' patterns (Negus, 1992; Stratton, 1982). Intuition is traced through the *habitus* and is often found in the form of 'gut feelings', 'hunches' or 'instinct' (Negus, 1992; Stratton, 1982). In prior research, Stratton (1982) found that the role of the A & R staff is one that continually requires the actor to make decisions about '*which artists to bring into the economic order of the record company*' (p. 90). This is an attempt by the actor to 'reconcile the contradictions' that exist through music and the product it has become, which is often accomplished through a 'subjectivist intuition'. In addition, Seifert and Hadida (2009) (2006), in their work on talent selection decisions, were able to demonstrate that expert 'intuitive' decision-making has a positive outcome when facilitating talent selection decisions. The use of this 'intuitive' language could also be supported by this research as Jack describes his approach to the practice:

'Yeah, there is a gut feeling because there have been songs that I thought would be absolutely huge and the radio said absolutely no way, and so I was wrong, we were wrong'.

The reliance on a 'gut feeling' speaks to the subjective and unpredictable nature of the product, but also the level of confidence that the A & R person has acquired. Jack is '*trusting that [he] know[s] what is good and what is bad by instinct*', and relies on his 'gut feeling':

'when I hear the right thing, I will know it, rather than this fearful process of; I don't know and I have to listen to it some more and I have to play it for other people, and ask, 'what do you think about this'?'.

His disposition indicates that he is a self-assured individual and confident in his abilities as an A & R person. He does not conceal this, rather expressing it with pride:

I have a big enough ego that I think what I like, I think everyone else is going to like too'.

Being confident can impact the amount of risk Jack is willing to take on behalf of Hat Punk, LLC. Taking this risk and leveraging capital to transform it into another can be determined by his experience. Jack attributes much of this to his past success and ability to find artists that will be a good fit for the firm, economically and spiritually.

'Well the past experience doesn't hurt confidence for sure. It doesn't hurt to go I've done this before, I don't suck at it'.

Although Jack clearly is sure of his abilities, there is some indication of overconfidence masking a fear and insecurity of his ability to pick the 'next big act'.

'Hopefully, me and Sam have the foresight to see things not necessarily in the commercialised format'.

Jack's use of 'hopefully' or 'trusting', as used above, indicates a level of uncertainty. Much of the 'prognosticating' of the future success is done by what they feel can only be attributed to something they cannot isolate either, intuition and their 'gut feeling'.

'There are some things that you miss, but overall if you are geared for it, if you've got the practice, if you've got the experience, if you've got the ability and vision to hear some things, then that gut won't let you down'.

By highlighting the role of experience and confidence in making talent selection decisions, they indicate that something other than intuition may be at play. When Jack describes his decision-practice as being based upon 'gut feeling', he is using a heuristic that is influenced by bias. Negus (1992) hints at some of the limitations of the use of 'intuitive' behaviour as a descriptor, although he does not dismiss it outright: *'A subject and intuitive response, in any context, is often obtained when people who are immersed in a particular environment are asked to explain activities that they take for granted and engage in habitually'* (Negus, 1992 p. 51). By definition, intuitive descriptors are those referring to behaviour or actions based upon 'sub-conscious' reasoning. A *habit*, by definition, is a behaviour learned through regular tendency or practice, and is often a result of a conscious, or deliberate, intention. Although I am not arguing that the talent

selection decisions and the music the artists produce, and are subsequently brought within the economic framework of the label, are linked to a conscious 'practice' to form a 'habit', I do contend that it may not be accurate to label this decision-making practice as 'instinctive'. My contention is that one's preference for a song or artist is more closely linked to a learned behaviour rather than an innate perception.

This 'gut feeling' that Jack referred to above, is based upon the personal preference or bias that Jack and Sam try to mitigate when determining song preference for the market. This bias is rooted in a heuristic, which then reinforces the self-identified 'gut feeling'. If Jack senses the song would be successful based upon this, then that feeling must be influenced by what he has seen, heard and experienced prior to this decision. This experience is a culmination of his habitus and the past success and failures of music with which he has been engaged. This creates an atmosphere of information in which short-cut cognitive decision practices, like heuristics, are used to help him with these decisions that then become self-reinforcing. If positive outcomes abound, as he suggests below:

'But I think that we had a feeling that she could do something and she did, she created this record',

then the likelihood of success increases, as Sam alluded to when referencing how Jack has become better at his decision-making for artist acquisition in the past eight years.

The Importance of Experience in Making A & R Decisions

Also closely related to the use of heuristics, bias is the impact that past experiences have on signing an artist to the firm. Again, the positive and/or negative past experience helps to influence whether an actor expects a similar outcome in the future (Juliussen *et al.*, 2005). It can be a self-influencing cycle and one that is held in high regard by Sam:

'I would say there's no substitute for experience.'

His reference to no substitute for experience does not indicate value of positive or negative as being good or bad, but does indicate that the greater level

of industry knowledge and experience, the better off he or members of his team will be in making these decisions. Past experience plays an important role in assessing whether a band has the potential to be a good investment by the label, or a commercial success to the extent they are needed to be. Seeing and hearing successful and unsuccessful acts and how they impacted their audience is important to Sam. He sees value in learning from those experiences that can then be used to make better decisions, similar to the evidence provided with regard to heuristic behaviors. Jack sees it in a similar manner and references the improved confidence that can result from past, positive experiences. *'Well the past experience doesn't hurt confidence for sure. It doesn't hurt to go I've done this before, I don't suck at it'.*

The Need to Consider Marketing Potential and Reliance Upon Networks

Much of the evidence provided so far has been angled towards the personal level influences extending from the habitus. In addition to those macro level influences, those coming externally from the field, also play an important role in the practice of signing an artist to the label for Hat Punk. Negus (1992) found that the role of influences upon talent selection decisions went well beyond the individual's past experiences or personal preferences as shown so far. In his work studying British and American record labels he revealed a much more complex array of influences that extend beyond personal preference, including the impact the artist may have upon marketing and promotion efforts, such as, their live show, press potential and song-writing abilities. That was no exception here as the importance of the relationship between A & R decisions and the marketing and promotions department were closely connected. Philip Esquire, Senior V.P. of Marketing and Promotion has had little influence on the practice, however his understanding of the market place is crucial to determining whether the artist under consideration even has a chance at commercial success. He needs to be involved with the decision practice because of the impact this signing will have on the perceived symbolic capital of the firm from outside stakeholders as well as the utilisation of social, cultural and economic capital. His concern is with the media and retail partners, and he

proceeds to discuss the importance those external stakeholders have on the decision practice.

'Sure it's very significant...it's important to us to have a relationship with them [their largest retailer] because while our distributor does a fantastic job doing it, there is that level of we have all the real intimate detail knowledge...it's been really key for me to go up and meet with the retailer'.

The importance of this relationship and the communication between them cannot be underestimated, for it is the retailer that is able to give Hat Punk the feedback from the consumer and the trends in the market that they are unable to acquire. They hold the direct line to the buyer and if they feel that they cannot sell or carry the product of an artist they are signing, it will impact the decision of whether, or not, they end up signing an artist, or how much they may be willing to invest in them and their career. Philip also feels similarly about the relationships they have with radio, recorded music's number one promotional mechanism:

'...yeah it's very key. I will slide up to Sacramento where one of the larger radio networks is located, KLove. It's very important ...we have a strong relationship with them too so that they are well represented'.

The amount of social capital needed and used in order to acquire and maintain relationships with radio is tantamount to whether an artist will see commercial success at the level needed for Hat Punk to be profitable in many of their signings. The use of social capital in this instance can be directly related to the accumulation of economic and symbolic capital as well. If the relationships are maintained and professional networks used, then the radio promotion can turn into record sales and chart placement for the artist and the firm, whereby the transformation from social, cultural and economic capital into symbolic capital becomes a positive tradeoff and necessary for doing business.

Philip also repeats the importance that media plays in this decision and getting the message out to the consumers:

'People in media need to know the heart of the artist, they need to know the music. They need to know why they need to buy in to this

artist, whether it's the listeners or the store managers, or online viewers, they can do a better job communicating if we communicate that to them directly'.

In addition to retail, radio and the media as influencing factors, Jack also relies upon his producers to make acquisition decisions:

'Producers are generally important because we speak the same language, you know like if it sounds like this or if we do this.'

They bring with them the industry knowledge that will assist the company in determining whether, or not, they can create a recorded product in which it is worth investing. Much of the creativity that happens with recorded music happens in the studio, once the song being recorded is written. These song producers are a good gauge of the artist and their songs and can be an influencing factor to the commercial viability of the product coming out of the recording studio.

Sam also relies often on friends and business partners in the industry to assist him in making artist acquisition decisions:

'Yeah there's been a couple we see without seeing them live (Artists). We know it by reputation; you know our friends and what not. But yeah we do'.

The important contacts through friends, attorneys, managers and sheer reputation can influence how Hat Punk approaches the signing of the artist. The value and symbolic power that is at stake must be filtered through many opinions before a deal is signed. This again is evidence of a risk mitigation tactic involved in the signing of an artist to a record label and an attempt at maintaining field status and power. The risks are high, yet so too are the rewards if a record label is able to find the next hit artist and be able to claim their involvement in the artist success.

The Reliance and Trust amongst Colleagues

In addition to the external macro-level field influences, meso-firm level influences also have an impact on artist acquisition with Hat Punk. These influences are employee specific and are a result of an assessment of the firm's skill set, advice seeking and consultation amongst colleagues. Sam, as has been well established, knows how Hat Punk operates, how it is perceived and the

strengths and weaknesses of his staff. He is very explicit in his rationale for limiting his signings to certain genres but only after he assesses the capabilities of the team:

'Well I think that I try to be very nondiscriminatory in my signings. When it comes to hip-hop or gospel, I don't because that requires a different set of muscles, and nobody on staff has those muscles'.

Yet again, he exhibits behaviour of what he knows and what he does not. He assesses the strengths of his team to determine who can, or cannot, be signed to the label, whether, or not, the artist could be an economic success for them. Knowing the company's limitations enables Sam to limit his risk and exposure of his symbolic capital to the field. If Hat Punk were to take on an artist for whom it does not have the proper cultural or social capital to exploit, Sam then puts at risk the symbolic capital of the firm as competitors and other artists perceive it. One failure in this area influences the reputation of the firm and risks its current positioning. By limiting this type of risk he minimises the unnecessary use of capital and can focus the capital of the firm on resources that will enhance its field position, not put it at undue risk.

In addition to the internal assessment of the team, Sam seeks advice on specific artist signings from those within the firm that he feels have the appropriate embodied industry knowledge and experience and which he can trust. He may at times solicit opinions from the general staff, but he makes it clear that this not always the case:

'If it's a new artist for example and they have really good sounding demos, yes we would. If it's a new artist and their demos are really rough, then no, because those guys aren't trained to hear really rough demos. That's not their job, that's not their skill set'.

He trusts those that have the skills needed to make these decisions and in this case it would be Jack and Philip. He uses them as a sounding board either to reinforce the decision he has already made, or to 'poke holes' in his thinking and rationale for signing. This is also true for Jack, he holds Sam to a similar standard, as they use each other to determine the appropriate 'fit' for the firm:

'Yeah, what's great about me and Sam is we default to each other's strengths and weaknesses respectively. We make decisions together and generally it is us as opposed to a staff making the decision. Hopefully me and Sam have the foresight to see things not necessarily in the commercialised format...I bring things to Sam and Sam brings things to me, and there are a lot of both'.

This level of trust can only grow through time and positive experiences. In a sense, 'it is earned' and as both individuals perform to the expectations of the other, it develops into a mutual respect between the two. This has allowed them to feel safe, to offer opinions and perspectives, and to put at risk each other's capital. Seeing it more as an investment in who they are and what they can achieve with the resources they both possess. It is a form of empowerment each grants to the other through the trust they have earned. When putting their own capital at risk, it demonstrates vulnerability, but also constrains them to not act in haste while having the freedom to act as they see fit to obtain the mutual objectives they share. Jack is very explicit in his feelings about how far the trust has developed between them:

'After eight years...I think I trust Jeff, I trust his vision. I trust the leadership. I trust his financial resources that we are moving forward with this company'

They have relied upon, and have developed, a sense of commitment to each other as they have worked on other projects and signed artists to the label together. They depend on each other, their accumulated cultural and social capital and shared value system that allows them to take control over situations when needed for the betterment of the firm.

8.2.3 Conclusion

This decision, albeit a generalised decision practice that is often gone through when Hat Punk is signing a new artist to their label, is one of the more heuristic based decisions influenced by past experience and rooted in personal bias. The very field in which these decisions need to be made influences the reliance upon these cognitive-based decision patterns. The field doxa of uncertainty, risk mitigation, unlimited supply and an artist's close affiliation to their creative outputs encourages the decision makers reliance upon quick

decision making rooted in past experience. The uncertainty in these decision choices is often met with wide input from close internal colleagues and those outside the firm, all in the name of risk mitigation. It is the selection of talent for a record label that puts at stake the very motivation behind those making the decisions. No other decision creates such high stakes positively or negatively to accumulate the desired capital and positively to position the firm and its decision-makers in the field for further power and recognition.

Table 10 - Case #8: Selected Evidence: Hat Punk, LLC – Talent Selection Decision

	Influences	Field (s)	Firm Habitus	Decision Maker Habitus	Economic Capital	Social Capital	Cultural Capital	Symbolic Capital
Impact	Multiple influential factors were observed and impacted decision outcome.	Macro: Economic, Recorded Music Industry, small business, creative and cultural production industries	-Professional -Reserved and Respectful Culture -Trusting, yet challenging when needed	-Confident Disposition -Educated and Knowledgeable of Industry Practices -Subtle yet strong spiritual commitment	Moderate Investment in cash assets needed	Used and needed for decision-making Aids in alleviating uncertainty and minimizes insecurity	Specific embodied knowledge needed internally for effective marketing and promoting.	Used to reinforce power and position within the field. Also used to aid in decision practice
Evidence	<p>Past Experience: <i>‘Well the past experience doesn’t hurt confidence for sure’.</i></p> <p><i>‘I would say there’s no substitute for experience’.</i></p> <p>Intuition: <i>‘Yeah there is a gut feeling because there have been songs that I thought would be absolutely huge and the radio said absolutely no way, and so I was wrong, we were wrong’.</i></p> <p>Personal Bias: <i>‘It’s really easy, we only sign things that we both can’t live without’.</i></p> <p>Heuristics: <i>‘Things we are kind of waffling on are probably things we don’t need to say yes to’.</i></p> <p>Company Aggrandisement: Implicit in use – platinum and gold records on wall to signify to artists success and a firm in which the artists would like to sign</p> <p>External Company Influences Internal Company Influences</p>	<p>Business Sub-Fields: Record Label, Music Publishing, Marketing and Promotion</p> <p><i>‘I came up with a way to do deals where you risk, I risk.’</i></p> <p><i>‘I think where we’re really competitive is authenticity.’</i></p> <p><i>‘When you walk in here we don’t have music blaring or anything because we have a lot of seasoned pros’.</i></p>	<p>CEO-Owner Age: 51 Gender: Male Ethnicity: European Caucasian Education: B.A. – Time in Industry: 31 years</p> <p><i>I’m just more confident about what I know.</i></p> <p><i>Just had to be courageous.’</i></p> <p>Senior VP A&R Age: 34 Gender: Male Ethnicity: Caucasian Education: B.A.</p> <p>Senior VP Marketing Age: 47 Gender: Male Ethnicity: Caucasian – American Indian Education: B.M</p>	<p>Money needed to sign (advances), market, promote and distribute albums</p> <p><i>‘But generally I think the magic quotient of what we do is people first and music second.’</i></p> <p><i>‘Manager’s talking to labels; it’s producers talking to managers talking to labels’</i></p>	<p><i>‘I don’t because that requires a different set of muscles, and nobody on staff has those muscles’</i></p> <p><i>‘Yeah there’s been a couple we see without seeing them live (Artists). We know it by reputation; you know our friends and what not. But yeah we do.’</i></p> <p>Displaying of prominent awards on walls, pictures of successful artists that the label has worked with.</p>			

9. Discussion

9.1 Introduction

In the previous four chapters, I have outlined the empirical findings and thematic analysis derived from the application of the Bourdieu's practice theory to the decision-making practices in popular recorded music industry micro-enterprises in the United States. The findings in this thesis provide a rich description of the decision practice represented by the eight cases presented in Chapters 5 to 8. Before further discussion, it is worth restating the aims of this research: first, how do owner managers within recorded music industry microenterprises, in the United States of America make strategic decisions? Second, what are the key influences on decision choices using a Bourdieusian conceptualisation of decision-making as interplay among social, cultural, economic and symbolic capital, habitus, and field? The principle argument I develop here is consistent with Bourdieu's concept of recognition, and explores the desire for individuals in this field to make strategic decisions that will position themselves better to acquire and/or use symbolic capital that will lead to further power and positioning. My chosen methodological lens allowed me to surface the complex reflexive interplay among Bourdieu's practice theory and the theoretical constructs of strategic decision-making, which led to a deep description of the influences on strategic decision-making practices in music industry micro-enterprises. By bringing these nuances to the forefront, my analysis leads to a contribution to the decision-making literature for micro-enterprises as well as music industry theorists and practitioners.

The interplay between habitus and field, and the leveraging of positioning within the field allows for an account that the Bourdieu's concepts of capital are able to provide. The differences between, and reliance upon, each to describe the details of the practice is readily suited for an analysis of a creative and culture-producing field such as the music industry. However, there are some limitations to Bourdieu's ideas on capital as well as his theories on cultural production when applied to the large-scale production of popular recorded music. Bourdieu (1986) and his work on capital and cultural field theory (1984, 1993a, 1996) allow for a critical approach to the decision-making practices here, even though

his work within his classification of 'low art' or 'popular culture' (Bourdieu, 1984), in which much of this industry thrives, is limited. Therefore, in addition to providing a rich description of the strategic decision-making practice, I will also position the music industry sub-field within the social space of large-scale cultural production. I contend that Bourdieu has mischaracterised the possession of symbolic capital among actors within the field. In addition, I will argue that in order to transform capital from one form to another, for example, social or economic capital into symbolic capital, there is a need for a field specific capital, in this case *music industry capital* that is used as a negotiating aid when agents vie for power and positioning within the music industry.

9.2 Key Findings

9.2.1 The Link Between Social Capital, Habitus and Field

In an actor's quest for recognition, a path towards leveraging social capital was seen as a prominent influencer among the decisions studied and the actors who were involved in making them. In a field that relies heavily on the use of 'team inputs' or key advisors, be it managers, booking agents, barristers or other colleagues that have accumulated a desired level of cultural capital, the reliance upon them was evident. Whether it was to maintain a current position and to see continued success, or an overt attempt at accumulating more social capital, each actor's desire for this asset impacted the decision-practice in helping to decide how a decision choice would be made. This was apparent as Jack relied upon his network to make talent selection decisions. *'Most of the things we have worked with have come from some kind of referral'*. Although the details of these comments were discussed in Chapter 8, it summarises the dependence upon those networks. Sam and Jack trust and empower others that refer the artists with whom they eventually sign deals. This is also true for those seeking professional referrals *'Who you hang out with, says a lot about who you are'*. Actors rely on one another when a certain level of trust is obtained. Bstieler (2006) found that trust is established when communication and fairness in interaction between actors have occurred over time and where high levels of trust have contributed to successful outcomes. His research also determined

that higher levels of trust differentiate between better and less effective outcomes in new product development decisions. Signing new artists and releasing new albums would be considered new product development, and the behaviours within these cases demonstrate this.

Each of the decisions in this research provides evidence of the need for the decision-maker to seek out people they trust within their social network to aid them in making strategic decisions. Joe sought advice internally from Lilly, helping him see things from a different perspective and often enabling him to move beyond his bias, in which he may have been emotionally involved. Knowing this, Joe felt he could go to her often and seek input on bigger decisions. She offered up sound advice in an unpredictable field. She provided an outlet for him in which an understanding of the contracts that are needed to mitigate risk could be weighed, negotiating an environment that is overloaded with potential products and an active and potentially powerful audience (Negus, 1997). This doubt that can accompany new things (Bstieler, 2006) can be offset, at least temporarily, in order for the decision-maker to feel better informed about the choice as they balance the return on investment when advice is sought.

Jack and the team at Hat Punk, LLC are also able to shed light on this relationship in the role the field plays. Their artist selection decisions are made with the explicit referral of those other actors in the field with whom they have established trust. Although some of the decisions analysed demonstrated the need for the decision-maker to seek internal or external counsel in making decisions, a major decision such as the signing of an artist to the label will not be considered unless they are filtered through their network. At times, as long as trust has been established between the two actors, social capital is seen as a necessary gatekeeper to those artists or 'professionals' that are seeking the power held by the firm that has acquired it. It becomes a trusted network, that is, a perpetual screening device, as long as the capital is maintained. When an agent deliberately seeks to expand his social capital in an effort to better their positioning within the field, the agent's SDM is influenced by how much the network can be expanded.

This was true for Joe at Kapooshki with both of his decisions that were studied. His purposeful choice to expand his network enabled him to achieve

better radio promotion opportunities as well as his intentional expansion of his company. Here, among other things, was an attempt at expanding his political reach by acquiring contacts at other management companies, labels and agencies. This was also true for David at Bench Puppet and his office relocation; he was attempting to better his chances at expanding his social network. The connection between position in the field and deliberate attempts at social capital acquisition are apparent. The less prominent position held, as perceived by the decision-maker, the more deliberate the attempts were to analyse decision choices through the lens of a potential expansion of the network.

Using your network as a 'gatekeeper', or relying upon it to either maintain or accumulate more social capital, are two motivating factors. Trust within an actor's social capital aids in alleviating uncertainty, abating risk and minimising an insecure disposition. Often decision-makers sought out other managers, booking agents, barristers or fans when seeking advice. Mitigating risk or uncertainty, as much as can be done in this industry, has been found to be quite prominent by the use of contracts or 'A-listers' (Caves, 2000). What Caves did not identify, however, was that an agent's network or social capital also aids in trying to offset risk and the wasteful use of economic, social or symbolic capital when leveraging position or seeking success. The agent's social capital helps decision-makers by seeking advice or using their network to '*see things they may not*', an example of which was just discussed above when the individuals at Hat Punk, LLC used their professional connections as a gatekeeper to artist acquisitions. In addition, seeking out personal friends and old colleagues on how to proceed on a choice was also evident. This was the case for Sam at Hat Punk, LLC and Cisco Newman when he sought advice from an old friend and manager. It also transpired when Joe was soliciting input from Lilly at Kapooshki. This type of advice-seeking is certainly not uncommon in strategic decision-making processes across firms outside this field, but the role it plays in reinforcing the attempt at mitigating risk in this culture producing and creative field is an important one. Coupling the uncertainty with the infinite variety of the product available to the consumer and the limited time to exploit it (Caves, 2000) creates a cauldron of field-driven factors that must be considered by actors when deciding on these strategic decisions. The habitus driven reaction is to seek out

those you trust the most, either to confirm your bias toward the decision in order to give the actor the courage to proceed, or to act as a type of ‘devil’s advocate’ to aid in seeing things that the actor alone is incapable of seeing. There is no doubt that in today’s broader economic field the role of risk mitigation is common, especially as the business environment has become more global and turbulent. However, when you factor in the scrupulous consumer of music, where trends can be fleeting and time-sensitive, it creates an even more challenging environment to manage since broader societal forces influence most of those trends. Having an adequate amount of knowledge of these trends aids in trying to combat this uncertainty, but the decision-maker sees their social capital, and the earned trust between them, as a way to assist in that process as well.

Since uncertainty and infinite variety abound in the field, there is doubt in the mind of the decision-maker. This doubt can at times lead to a sense of insecurity on how to proceed with a decision. This doubt can be triggered through a negative past experience that then triggers a decision-making heuristic, or even simply a negative reaction from someone in your network. It is then, that the decision-makers were found to rely on their social capital to mitigate this sense of ‘insecurity’ and rely on the trust that has been earned. The field tends to reinforce this insecure disposition and is why an actor will consult with friends and/or colleagues to offset it, at least temporarily until the decision has been made. Cisco Newman admitted that he sought his old manager’s advice to make him feel better about what he was deciding. David at Bench Puppet looked to family, purposely going outside the field for perspective and even when Joe was uncertain about how to move forward with a major decision, he would seek out Lily’s perspective.

9.2.2 The Link Between Cultural Capital, Habitus and Field

How the actor interprets the industry doxa and sees their role within the field impacts the decision-making practice. Industry knowledge, doxa and habitus driven risk aversion affects potential deliberate and interpretive decision choices. If industry trends are not well understood, especially those related to the production of culture, actors would struggle to be successful at

making decisions with a favourable outcome. Consumer sentiment and the 'uncertainty of demand' can be minimised by the actor by continuing to understand market trends, new artists and consumer tastes. In order to do so they must embody this industry knowledge through experience, or be aided institutionally through academia.

If a recognised lack of knowledge in a specific genre culture (Negus, 1999) of the industry is present, avoidance toward a specific decision can occur, as was the case for Sam at Hat Punk, LLC. Sam acknowledges that a lack of understanding exists with him and his staff about a specific genre culture, which influences his artist selection choices, thereby affecting the decision outcomes. Sam's lack of experience, interest and exposure to a specific style of music has influenced his perception of it, thereby avoiding any major decisions that would bring an artist of that genre to the label.

For David at Bench Puppet, his lack of understanding of how a project can escalate out of control negatively influenced his decision choice. His lack of embodied knowledge of the potential pitfalls caught him off guard – indicating a lack of experience and understanding. In addition, the lack of embodied knowledge on industry doxa influenced Joe at Kapooshki in his desire to expand his company. Joe's desire to learn fostered a disposition that drove him to believe that he could benefit from acquiring knowledge about different industry subsectors. His desire to further his understanding of the industry was not only driven by his habitus, but also reinforced by the field. He was already in the business as a promoter and agent. And, thus, able to understand how management, publishing and other aspects of the industry would assist him to accumulate further capital, in all forms.

Institutionalised cultural capital appeared to have little impact on the decision-making in these cases. One exception was that Joe at Kapooshki proudly proclaimed his education both of the field, through his economics and legal education, which then permeated through his understanding of the industry. All other actors studied made no reference to the credentials of higher education as playing an important role in the decision practice. It was characterised as either '*gut feeling*' or an intuitive reaction that they relied on for direction when making certain decisions. This was particularly relevant when artist selection decisions

were being made at Hat Punk, LLC, as well as larger marketing decisions made by Cisco when releasing his album. The role of intuition, or following ones '*gut*', as a mode of embodied capital appeared to sit in high regard, as though it was the only way to make the decision since the actor's relied on this method so often. It is an answer to an unknown, something that the decision-makers '*can't put a finger on*' when it comes to what their, or the consumer's, reaction may be to a song or decision related to that song or the artist who performs it.

The embodiment of industry knowledge coupled with intuitive behaviours in the decision practice becomes an iterative process rooted in the use of anchoring and adjustment heuristics and personal bias. Preferring one song, or artist, to another for promotion or acquisition, and interpreting the success of them was done through the decision-makers own lens and bias. This perspective is then coupled with the trends of the market, which creates a level of uncertainty that makes logical and analytical practices nearly ineffective, due to the uncertainty of success with music products, even though attempts were revealed of their use with Joe at Kapooshki. The personal bias that accompany the decision-makers preference for one artist to sign are rooted in a heuristic, which then reinforces the self-identified '*gut feeling*', or intuitive behavior. Jack felt as if a song or artist would be successful based upon his '*gut feeling*', then that feeling must be influenced by what he has seen, heard and experienced prior to the decision at hand – but done so subconsciously. This experience is a culmination of his habitus and the past success and failures of music in which he has been engaged. It creates an atmosphere of information where short cut cognitive decision practices, like anchoring and adjustment heuristics are used to help him with these decisions that then become self-reinforcing. This embodiment of knowing, when it is felt, is not something that can be taught through a formal education or institution.

Although Bourdieu (1986) also discussed the objectified form of cultural capital in his work, it did not play a direct role in the marketing and promotion of popular music in the cases analysed here. Objectified cultural capital certainly does play a role in the actual recording of the music to be packaged and sold,

with the knowledge needed to run the recording equipment that facilitates the creation of this cultural product, but little evidence of its involvement is shown here due to the nature of the decisions.

The presence of embodied cultural capital over institutionalised and objectified has shown to be a dominant form used in these decisions. Along with the impacts of understanding industry rules, the use of cultural capital as a leveraging tool, whether explicitly or implicitly through a more intuitive approach, to increase stature in the industry is widely used, albeit less so than other forms of capital yet to be discussed. The understanding of the field and what is needed to market and promote popular music with success is not something that is well understood, even to some that consider this to be their career. It is yet again the very nature of the industry characteristics that are elusive, such as, the uncertainty of demand, the closeness of the creation to the creator and the endless supply of product (Caves, 2000) that impact how decisions are to be perceived and made.

9.2.3 The Influence of Emotion – The Link between Field and Habitus

When examining how decisions were made and the influential factors that contributed to them, the emotional state of an actor was found to impact the practice. An 'emotion' is a state of mind that is derived from one's circumstances, mood or relationships with others, or any of the particular feelings that characterise such a state of mind, which scholars (Ekman, 1992) (Velasquez, 1998) have come to classify as emotional systems. These systems include, but are not limited to, joy/happiness, anger, distress/sadness, fear, disgust or surprise along with secondary systems that may divide each system further. Mood is often associated with emotion and tends to be influenced by character, disposition and personality, which are also manifestations of the habitus. It is an outward expression by the actor influenced by the field, subfields and negotiated through the transformation of the capital they possess. An emotional state can be triggered by cognitive or non-cognitive reactions, the latter of which are generated by physical objects and when applied to this industry can manifest themselves from objectified forms of cultural or symbolic capital like the Billboard charts, or industry created and recognised awards like

the Grammy, Dove or American Music. In addition, emotions are also driven by memories or past experiences (Valasquez, 1998), and are indicative of influential characteristics that have been shown to influence strategic decision-making.

In addition to his discussion about emotional states, Velasquez (1998) proposes a model based upon decision-making by emotion. Within this model, the role of perception, drive, behaviour and motor systems create a non-linear process. How we perceive a situation initiates our inner drives or 'motivational systems' that trigger an actor into action. Emotional states are generated by those drives, which result in the behaviours taken. Although this is not a critique of the model, or an extended review of the literature that has contributed to the role that emotion has played in decision-making, it is worth noting the influential systems that can affect an actor's behaviour. In light of these explanations, Bourdieu enables us to connect these systems through the habitus and an actor's capital when making strategic decisions within this industry.

Evidence of the emotional state of the actors studied in these cases were limited but did show its influential aspects, specifically that of fear, happiness and excitement. When discussing the downside to many of these decisions, or what could go wrong if they did not manifest themselves in the way the decision-maker had hoped or anticipated, it was made clear that '*fear of failure*' was often '*assumed*'. Fear can '*detect a dangerous situation and generate defensive responses that maximize the probability of surviving it*' (Valasquez, 1998, p. 3). It was evident that fear can manifest itself in many shapes and forms, as it were here. The actor would be driven by the perception of, or their underlying emotional fear that would influence their behaviour in, how they saw or chose to proceed with the decision. As was shown, because of the business structure of micro-enterprises, it is more difficult for the owner/managers to separate themselves from the identity of the business; therefore personal character, reputation and livelihoods are at stake. If a criticism of the firm is made, it carries through more easily to the owner/manager personally. It becomes more difficult to remain objective and keep the business and its reputation at a distance, personally and emotionally. This inability to separate emotionally from a business that operates in a field driven by perception, uncertainty and a '*who has worked for whom*' mentality to leverage positioning drives this fear.

Unpredictability breeds uncertainty that drives the fear. Fear that you will lose your social or professional connections, fear of losing your economic resources that feed your livelihood or, as Joe, from Kapooshki, clearly put it *'fear of being perceived 'as nothing special'*; the antithesis of 'recognition'.

In addition to this fear of being perceived as *'nothing special'* in an industry that recognises, rewards and elevates those that are 'special' is the influence that past experience has on driving fear. In a specific instance, Cisco's past experience told him that he could easily lose much of his social capital if a major decision was not carefully thought through. Driven by a fear of losing his fans if they felt that he was a *'has been'*, or no longer *'anything special'*, was influenced by his past experience when fluctuations in his fan base had resulted in loss of income and inability to continue his business as usual. The need to stand out or be at the forefront of the 'up and coming' or 'the next biggest thing' drives the popularity and economic bloodline of an industry that relies on profiting from new cultural trends.

As fear plays a role in the struggle for capital acquisition in this field within the decision-practice, so does happiness and excitement. Many of the actors and the decisions analysed were often driven by the *'exciting prospects'* and the potential rewards of what their decision might bring. This 'excitement' was often grounded in hoping to meet influential people, to learn more about the industry, the anticipation of economic rewards, or simply to be *seen* as influential to other professionals or fans. Each of these prospects, the accumulation of capital in varying types and degrees, was seen as a way for the actor to make a decision in a specific way, one that would lead to its accumulation for further leverage at a future time. If a decision-maker sees the potential of networking or connecting with an 'A-list' (Caves, 2000) producer or label president, they can then see that social capital could lead to the transformation into economic capital or marketing support to acquire a hit record. It is also worth noting that the person's time 'playing the game' within the field, that is, the longer they have been in business and the greater their leverage of their position with the capital they have acquired, the more inclined they were to pursue their idea of happiness. This pursuit was rooted in their decision-making. As Cisco clearly stated:

'At this point I need to channel my energy to things that will make me feel happy',

Or, in some cases, concern about their age and the length of time in the industry affected the decision-practice:

'...we ask ourselves what do we want to be doing, at this point, what makes us happy, even though you're making bread, you're dealing with people that you don't want to be dealing with or doing stuff you don't want to do, that don't make you happy.' I'm 40, he's 46, we don't want to be doing a bunch of shit we don't want to be doing'.

In both cases, whether in reference to projects or making smaller, tactical decisions to *'keep the lights on'* and *'pay the bills,'* the pursuit of happiness and present emotional state of their mind impacted how they saw the potential outcome of their decision. Each decision for them is seen through this lens throughout the decision practice and, in the end, each is asking themselves whether the return on investment, or capital accumulation would be worth the price to be paid in *'happiness'*.

The economic field and the recorded music industry subfield influence this strong desire of *'doing things that will make them happy'*. The pursuit of recognition and the capital needed to leverage their position to get them ultimately to that *'happiness'* have influenced the actor's perception of the industry doxa as do others pursuing the same thing. Being influenced by past experience and having *'been burned'* by others, or pursuing projects that have cost them capital that had amounted to little, have left a habitus tainted with doubt, leaving the pursuit of projects that will satisfy their disposition positively at the forefront of why a strategic decision will be made a certain way. Age also appears to factor in as well, as it relates to body wisdom. As Sam put it in his desire to avoid a *'bunch of shit'*, that leaves little tolerance for taking on projects that are not going to achieve his intended aim. They are less likely to respect certain industry rules if they know they are going to have to deal with things that will cause unhappiness and anxiety. The actors understand that this must be dealt with to a certain degree, but by weighing the alternatives demonstrates that an emotional state influences the strategic decision-making practice. It could be concluded that this is likely to be no different from any other decision-maker needing to make strategic decisions in other fields, but what

makes this field function the way it does lies in the actor's overwhelming desire for prestige – rooted in the popularity and fame that come with success on a regional, national or international level. This 'prestige' is discussed in more detail in 9.2.5 below and explains the industry-specific rationale.

9.2.4 The changing Industry: Impacting the Transformation of Capital

The recorded music industry and the changes within the past decade have brought opportunity for some and challenges for others. With the shifting industry supply chain, has come a modification of industry doxa, especially with regard to the power available to those transforming capital in attempts at maintaining, or escalating, their industry 'class' positioning. This is not a timeline comparison of a 'pre- and post-introduction of MP3 technology' and the precise changes that have occurred, but rather an examination of how the decision practice has been impacted. Actor attitudes related to perceived risk, the disintermediation of the supply chain (Tuomola, 2004) and how decision-makers leverage the capital they possess, will be discussed.

The attempts of risk mitigation have been a part of the industry since its inception through the use of contracts, but knowing that risk can be minimised by the symbolic capital of others has also proven to be useful. The evidence of this came from Cisco when he sought a publishing deal from a prominent international publisher. By associating himself and his company with this firm enabled him to mitigate his risk, not only through contracting with them on favourable terms, but by associating his name with their symbolic capital. That capital, along with the precedence of success made his decision ultimately to sign with Henson less risky. By associating himself with the firm's 'symbolic capital' gave the perception of relevance and legitimacy to others in the industry. This was also the case for David and Bench Puppet Entertainment in his desire to relocate his company to Music Row. He too, was mitigating his risk by geographic location in the hope of associating himself with the perception that came with doing business '*on the row*.' By associating oneself or one's business with another's more prominent reputation, or possession of capital, has been shown to impact the decision-practice.

In addition, the disintermediation of the supply change (Tuomola, 2004) has allowed artists and decision-makers that possess less social, economic and symbolic capital access to social networks, audiences, fans and markets that they did not have before. These changes enabled those who occupy the lower echelons of power in the industry more opportunities to leverage their capital for better positioning.

Distributing one's own album, as was the case for Cisco, would have been a moot point ten years ago, for he would have had limited access to formal distribution beyond that of a live event. Changing technology has enabled Cisco to consider this kind of decision, let alone how to leverage what he has, to strive for a favourable outcome. This was also true for David at Bench Puppet, for his business was built and sustained on this easier access to the consumer. The changing industry doxa have allowed more people to see others enjoying or seeing value in something that they would not have been able to in the past. Even though others will want to '*get on the bandwagon*' of a hot new artist, which is nothing new for popular music, the easier accessibility and ability for fans to share mp3s of their favourite music has allowed a level of fan engagement never before seen. This has enabled artists who possess less social and economic capital opportunity to influence what they *do* possess. Similarities can also be found in access and leveraging of economic capital. Access to consumers takes less economic resources for some than prior to disintermediation. Choosing to produce and market his own album and being able to reach his audience beyond his immediate geographical area is a reality for Cisco only because of these changes. Being able to record an album or EP at a fraction of the cost and having access to distribute that album and promote it have enabled him to transform less economic capital for more social and potentially symbolic capital.

On the other hand, those companies who have seen this disintermediation in the supply chain, the major record companies, have struggled to maintain their positioning by finding access to economic capital dwindling (RIAA, 2011) and the consequences of capital transformation more complex, as the social and cultural capital once needed for distribution of records have broken down leaving it accessible to many more artists and businesses. The changing distribution system and expansion of social media, and the access both provide

have made it more difficult for those who possess more symbolic capital. The increase in competition by these new firms have easier access to the distribution system and tools to promote their product. Because competition and 'unlimited access' to product perpetuates the field, fewer economic resources are being funnelled to those who traditionally controlled all access to the supply chain. This has made transformation of economic capital into symbolic capital a challenge, posing greater risk of maintaining the power and position they hold. This was true for Sam's buyout of the assets, whereby the very reason this decision was an option, was because the company that sold the brand to him no longer possessed the economic capital needed to sustain the position in the field. This is also evident in the contracts that artists are being offered by firms such as Hat Punk, LLC. The '*sharing of risk*' speaks to the dwindling economic capital available to these firms, whereby they push some of that risk, which traditionally would be taken on by the label in full, onto the artist. This is also seen in the kinds of contracts being offered. When a firm like Hat Punk, LLC '*shares in the risk*' they are offering what the industry calls 360° deals when the sharing of revenue from all sources is undertaken, not just the resources that come from the direct sale of the recording.

The changing rules that dictate the industry and how actors choose to leverage their capital has impacted the types of decisions being seen and how they are seen. This has provided opportunities for some and difficulties for others, but the dynamism within these changes has shown that the motivation is still the same. Each actor and their company continue to vie for power and recognition despite the changes and access to those resources and to what degree one may be needed to transform the other.

9.2.5 The Influence of Symbolic Capital on Habitus and Field

The practice of strategic decision-making was often dictated by the individual's concern for reputation and how others perceived their respective firms. 'Aggrandising' provided a perception of legitimacy through an illusion of having greater social and symbolic capital. This idea of an inflated self, has an intimate connection between the habitus, field and capital one possesses.

Aggrandisement will be used when a lack of cultural, social and economic capital is unable to be transformed by the actor into symbolic capital.

It is a phenomenon that is implemented when an imbalance between a lack of cultural, social and economic capital is unable to be transformed by the actor into symbolic capital. It is a conscious transformation of capital that occurs when an actor understands the importance that symbolic capital plays in field positioning. It becomes a habitus-driven choice to use it in order to offset the imbalance that exists, details of which will follow later in this section. Those firms that have yet to achieve prominent levels of cultural and social capital, like the decisions made by Cisco, Kapooshki Music and Bench Puppet entertainment, all felt compelled to use this in order to be seen as a legitimate actor and/or company with which to do business.

Because symbolic capital is *'accumulated prestige and power'* that *'contributes fundamentally to the social order'* (Bourdieu & Thompson, 1991), the decision-maker's motivation to inflate his position, or the micro-enterprise that they own or manage, is seen as a way, by them, to be an active player in pursuit of the higher social order, without actually possessing large amounts of symbolic capital. This imbalance in capital was seen by Kapooshki as an opportunity to network by creating separate legal entities: a booking agency, a management and consulting firm, a music publishing company and a live events division. This was a tactical way to create a horizontally integrated synergy to help establish contacts within these other business sectors while establishing the perceived credibility with the other people and businesses in which they were involved. It was also needed to offset the lack of knowledge within these business sectors that Joe recognised as a deficiency. He could learn from the other businesses, establishing contacts to assist in this education, but could not do so without being taken seriously by those who had accumulated more symbolic capital with which he desired to be associated. The decisions to set-up the separate legal entities and to be seen as a strong business by exploited past chart achievements was triggered by his previous attempts at conducting business within a field without the required capital.

This attempt to off-set the lack of transformable capital and be seen as a company with which others want to do business manifested itself not only in a

superficial attempt at an expansion of the company, but also through association of where company headquarters would be located. This was evident in David's choice to move to the highly symbolic 'music row', but was also the case for Kapooshki in Joe's decision to locate his company in a business sector that was not typically associated with an established music epicenter. However, the motivation behind each of these geographic associations was the same, that is, to have an elevated perception of the business by the macro-environment. In Joe's case, it was more regional, to be seen as a '*big fish in a small pond*'. He felt he had the confidence and the drive to overcome the hurdles of having his business located in a non-music epicenter and chose to focus on the potential benefits - to be perceived as a substantial contributor to the local economic, political and music scene. This enabled him to satisfy his imbalance in symbolic capital by leaving a '*larger than life*' impact at a local level. He planned to establish further social and cultural capital by having a closer, yet larger network within the area while being perceived as knowledgeable about an industry that was geographically separated, like Nashville, thus raising his locally perceived symbolic capital. Although David's desire to move his company was also motivated by his lack of other types of capital to transform into symbolic, his motivations drove him to be a *small fish in a large pond* on 'music row'. This can be accounted for by his own perceived value in that association and what he felt it could bring him and his company and his innate sense of 'pride' disguised as insecurity and a sense of uncertainty.

It would be a mistake suddenly to organise the use of aggrandisement only by the firm. It must be understood that the evidence in each of these decisions provides a varying degree of its use for personal inflation as well. In the case of the sole-proprietors and the DIY artists that are so prominent in the music industry, the line of business and the person are often blurred and difficult to separate – so then is the use of aggrandisement. Cisco demonstrated this clearly with the concern for his reputation when releasing his album. Cisco's decision to release the EP became a semiotic debate that was rooted in how he would be perceived by his fans. Other actors were concerned for their reputations, but approached its use in a different manner by dropping big name artists or producers they had worked with, or by associating themselves with

other more successful acts. *'Giving off a cool vibe or certain level of success or...having the posh office space'* lends itself to certain credibility for other actors, that they might not otherwise have. Not to mention the self-assurance that comes with its use. The choice to aggrandise becomes a value judgement in which the personal dispositions of the habitus may vary, depending upon age, social status or past experiences, but nevertheless is seen as an important attribute to project. It enables the actor to satisfy this value-laden perception and give off a *'cool factor'* or an *'it factor'* that much of this industry is centred on for economic success. It is a trend setting culture producing industry, that each of these actors, their firms and decisions come from and much of the finding and breaking of new talent is dependent upon being the company or person that can make that happen. The macro-environment and industry characteristics have a strong influence here and the decision-maker understands that the odds of working with the next successful act could bring them the economic and symbolic success they desire. Putting forth an inflated sense of oneself in order to increase the odds of working with the next 'breakout' artist or company becomes a strategic decision-making choice, and a strategic one that is then decided in favour of, or against, depending upon the habitus.

The prominent use of aggrandisement is also directly related to an agent's confidence and their perceived ability to 'play the game.' With the field doxa, and the lack of certain types of capital already established as a way to justify its use, the decision-maker chooses to exercise their agency, which can be attributed to an insecure disposition, but its actual application is also determined by the actor's desire for and contentment with self-promotion. Self-promotion, whether it is on behalf of the company they own or operate, or for personal advancement, takes a certain degree of confidence to execute. If this confidence does not exist, an inferiority complex may abound, especially as an actor in this field sees what their competitors have been able to obtain regarding artist associations, chart success, earned awards or field status. An inferiority complex – *'a feeling of intense insecurity, inferiority or of not measuring up'* helps to guard against one's self esteem, or lack of prominent positioning, in the field. One such attempt was through a concern for reputation, as was the case for David's motivation behind his desire to escalate risk, as well as Cisco's choice to release an EP over an

album – each of them providing evidence of a lack of confidence in abilities or current status in the industry.

In the case of a confidant decision-maker, the need to artificially inflate one's position was not used. When Sam, the key decision-maker for Hat Punk, LLC, was contemplating the buyout of assets from Axis media, there was no evidence that personal or business level aggrandisement occurred. This was more of an 'individual' choice, an internal one being contemplated by Sam. Although factors such as the current financial state of the company and its parent company's decision to divest the assets of the label, coupled with the recording industries uncertain environment, there was no evident need to offset a lack of social capital, financial resources, or knowledge of the company and/or industry. He was driven more by his personal commitment to the company derived from his past experience and his ability to recognise an opportunity through his use of a representativeness heuristic and 'gut feelings'. He then used more logical and analytical tactics to confirm these decision choices by bringing in accountants and lawyers, and budgeting the feasibility of his options.

Because of the imbalance between symbolic capital and other types of capital, the decision-maker felt it necessary to inflate his or accomplishments to artificially elevate their position. This is supported by Bourdieu's idea of transformation, where symbolic capital must and can only be accumulated through its transformation of other capital types. The prominence that this capital has been given can be and is only given by the actors within the field who have chosen to play by its doxa– similar to that of recognition – in which Bourdieu has made clear that society alone can satisfy. Therefore, the motivation to accumulate and transform the capital originates in the habitus, similar to the desire to aggrandise, even though each decision-maker viewed the symbolic capital and their own motivation for it through a personal lens.

Joe, possessing small amounts of symbolic capital, sees himself as a '*big fish in a small pond*,' which leads to a negative perception of how he feels he is perceived in large music epicenters. This drives his need to associate with key decision-makers to help him pursue the social capital needed in order to transform it into symbolic capital, thereby increasing the opportunities for its use so that he can conduct business. However, inflating one's accomplishments

would vary depending upon how the actor perceived the potential outcomes and rewards. An objectified form of symbolic capital, the industry charts, motivated Joe from Kapooshki, as they did for Jack, Sam and Philip from Hat Punk, LLC. The differences between them, however, lie in the amount of social, economic, cultural and symbolic capital each already hold. Joe, motivated by the accumulation of capital - so that an upward mobility in the field could occur - and Sam, Jack and Philip, motivated by maintaining the class position currently occupied.

The impetus to accumulate the necessary capital in order to achieve the desired level of symbolic capital is a strong and powerful motivator. Not only does an actor's drive for capital accumulation play a prominent role in the decision-practice as the habitus is influenced by the positions within the field, the mere notion of 'association' is believed to foster a 'quicker' path to legitimate acquisition. Cisco Newman and his decisions were rooted in this association, as was David's use of prominent artists and names on his website promoting his services. David felt that if he could show potential clients, and others with higher amounts of symbolic capital, that he has worked with or has been associated with these more 'prominent' clients, it could lead to the acquisition of more business for him from well established artists and other companies. In some cases it *had* enabled him to accumulate further social and economic capital, which he was then able to transform into the symbolic capital he desires. Association with other more prominent artists tells others that you 'have what it takes to get things done' and achieve what others are after – this is cyclical for Hat Punk, LLC. They are the more established firm possessing the higher amounts of symbolic capital and associating themselves with prominent artists reinforces their positioning. It shows they have the social and cultural capital needed. Associations with more prominently positioned people or firms in the field also indicates to others that you do have the knowledge and network needed to '*sit at that table*' as does the association with a prominent business cluster like 'music row'. The 'awarding' of gold and platinum record certifications, Grammy and Dove awards or ceremonies to recognition like American Music Awards and the Grammys, are industry-constructed vehicles to that 'recognition'. By associating oneself with those individuals or firms that

have been 'recognised' also demonstrates that you have the knowledge and network to make it happen as well.

In addition to the decision-maker's concern for reputation and perception were the explicit and implicit exploitation of objectified cultural capital and symbolic capital. This was often seen as a necessary practice to achieving the firm's objectives while maintaining or achieving a higher-class position within the field. This was often related to the level of 'success' in the field. When adequate levels of cultural, social and symbolic capital are achieved, as perceived by the actor within the field, the rapid demise of the explicit use of aggrandisement occurs. This was most evident by the one firm who has achieved those levels – Hat Punk, LLC. In Hat Punk's second decision – the signing of an artist to the label – the actors of the firm were much less outspoken about who they work with, what had been accomplished, their current reputation, or where their office is located when making artist acquisition decisions. Not explicitly, anyway, but implicitly through the use of objectified forms of symbolic capital in the prominent display of awards, gold and platinum records and other forms of field generated and reinforced recognition. This provided a sense of legitimacy to those artists they were courting. Being less explicit about inflating the company's accomplishments was only evidenced within Hat Punk, LLC, the one firm of the four discussed here, that had accumulated a certain level of cultural, social and economic capital that was transformed into the objectified symbolic capital.

Although no specific measurement was made in this study on 'capital levels' acquired by each, I can conclude that the more symbolic capital a firm possesses, the less degree of aggrandisement that occurs. There is no need for the actors to compensate for something that may be missing, like the recognition and symbolism of success in the field. The decision-makers in these situations were much less willing to '*drop names*' of artists, producers or other firms of which they have associated with. This was seen more as a way to prove something by an individual or firm and was approached with caution when done. They felt, that their record often spoke for itself and an aggrandisement behaviour seen as a way to '*hide something*' that wasn't there. They felt that their success had been earned and their position solidified and the need to '*talk*

themselves up', unproductive. The other decisions from the other less prominent firms had acquired less capital of all types, power and status in the field. If the objectified forms of symbolic capital had been obtained, the explicit use in those decisions would diminish as the confidence in the actor increased and the implicit use of aggrandisement would occur to maintain power and status.

If the actors possess a certain amount of confidence and symbolic capital already, whether it be through past or current dispositions or the attainment of a higher class fraction within the field, the exaggerated use of accomplishments or status can be seen by those actors as a way to 'side step' the natural process of symbolic power accumulation. They are able, at times, to 'recognise' the use of this false perception being projected and see it for its deceptiveness, or attempt at '*making up for something*' that might not be there. It is a way of 'seeing through' the attempts of self-inflation that can often only come through past experience. Clearly, this can have the opposite effect for those who do inflate their accomplishments, their network or their knowledge.

The desired accumulation of, or maintenance of, this power through the implicit or explicit use of exerting one's status also serves as a strategy to force a perceived or actual upward mobility within the industry class-fraction. '*The symbols are the symbols of par excellence of 'social integration,' which contributes fundamentally to the reproduction of the social order.*' (Bourdieu, 1991, p. 166). These recognition symbols, have transformed themselves from objectified forms of cultural capital to that of symbolic capital. *They are structured and structuring forms of knowledge that help to ensure that one class dominates another*' (Bourdieu, 1991 p. 167). When one actor and their corresponding firm lacks the desired capital needed or desired, they will then make an explicit decision to be seen by the dominated class within the field as 'one of them.' This was evidenced through Joe's decision to set-up separate legal entities for his firm, the deliberate choice to be seen as occupying a more dominant class segment so that he could compete or share in the benefits of such a position. This was also true for David and his choice to relocate his firm to 'music row'. This was again, an explicit attempt to position himself and the company within the perceived domain of the dominant class.

However, when an actor is less explicit in its use, the day-to-day decision

practice becomes a way of maintaining the dominating class position within the field. The dominant group has created and reinforced these symbolic systems and now uses them to hold onto its power and positioning within the field. Hat Punk, LLC may not find it necessary to be so explicit when making artist selection decisions due to its position, and may even recognise a dominated firm, but it quietly reinforces its place by prominently displaying its accomplishments. Those being dominated, or seen as legitimate, also recognise this, but a struggle exists between the dominating - who set the rules for what symbolic capital owes its value - and the dominated that wish to 'join the club.' Bourdieu feels that *'The dominated fraction always tends to set the specific capital, to which it owes its position, at the tip of the hierarch of the principles of hierarchisation.'* (Bourdieu, 1991 p. 168). It is also the dominated that feel the need then to invoke explicitly an aggrandisement strategy within their decision-practice in order to compete, or be perceived, as a dominating class, not the dominated.

In the music industry, reputation and status can be fleeting and can lead to *'misrecognition in which power relations are not seen for what they are but are interpreted in a way that is seen as legitimate'* (Gunter, 2002). The attempt to aggrandise the firm or oneself is an attempt to shift the perceived power relations in and amongst other players in the field, in a sense to level the playing field. Actors desire the same opportunities to conduct business in the field as someone who has accumulated greater amounts of symbolic capital. If certain levels of capital have been achieved then maintaining that level is in order for that firm or person. Upholding this position and recognition within the field is done through a past perspective lens – one that uses the coveted symbolic artefacts given to those who have achieved the agreed upon levels of capital deemed to have reached 'success.' It is no longer explicit, it becomes implicit yet is still needed to hold onto the power that has been achieved. Ultimately, the amount of capital one is perceived to possess within this field influences the way in which another perceives.

9.2.6 Influences on the Habitus

In addition to the deeper understanding of the decision practice just described, many of the influences that also affect strategic decision-making in

micro-enterprises within other industries including past experiences (Juliussen, Karlsson & Gärling, 2005), heuristics, bias, and intuitive behaviour (Lieberman-Yaconi, Hooper & Hutchings, 2010) were also evident here and found to be a product of the relationship between the habitus, capital and field. The use of these cognitive ‘short cuts’ was prominent when making artist selection decisions and assessments relevant to the value judgment of a creative product including song selection and marketing. In Cisco’s decision about his new release, Kapooshki’s song selection for radio promotion and Hat Punk’s talent selection decision relied heavily on the use of personal bias related to preference, *‘gut feelings’* and short cuts. Each of these is a direct reflection upon the habitus of the decision makers. For these decisions, the habitus is at the center of the decision-making. It is actor centered – interpreted and evaluated while taking into account the meso-level needs of the firm and the macro-level characteristics of the recording industry field and sub-fields that they impact. Little need for social or economic capital is evidenced with some degree of cultural capital needed to educate the habitus of the tastes and preferences of the market. These influences were not as prominent in decisions that didn’t rely on the value judgment of music. In more objective decision types like Bench Puppet’s firm relocation, client acquisition and Kapooshki’s diversification strategy, the actor’s reliance upon cognitively centered influences shifted outwardly to the use of advisors, both internal and external and with some varying degree, rational behaviour – although not a significant factor. Looking outwardly in these circumstances indicates a need to rely on the actor’s social capital to assist. The consultation should not be seen as a lack of cultural capital, however, since in almost every decision made, whether significant amounts of industry knowledge were had or not, the concept of looking to someone other than oneself for guidance was used.

Also evidenced in the decision-making practice of micro-enterprises in the recorded music industry was the use of analytical and logical behaviour when the actor perceived their accumulated capital was at greater risk. In Hat Punk’s decision to buy back the assets of the firm and Kapooshki’s song evaluation decision, each identified high amounts of capital at risk. The risk factors in each of these cases were the accumulated economic and symbolic

capital. The more logical and analytical or systematic approach to the decision-making in each of those cases was indicative of a habitus rooted in caution. Outcome predictors in the form of budgeting, song testing and forecasting, and modeling were techniques used to forecast anticipated outcomes. The actor's habitus felt better informed and reassured itself that the decision being made is the best one possible. This is inherently a challenge for marketing of recorded music product, a product that tends to be individualistic in its taste in a field where uncertainty in demand exists. This would explain why these approaches are limited in use within this field. However, they are used when the habitus of the decision maker perceives that they and the firm they operate have much to lose.

9.2.7 Characterising the Large-Scale Cultural Production Field and the Music Industry Social Space Within It

Although Bourdieu's theory of practice served the research well, as did limited aspects of his theory of cultural production, both of which are discussed in greater detail below in Section 9.3, there are some limitations. These include further refinement of both his theory of large-scale cultural production as it is applied to the popular music industry and his concepts of capital as it relates to his practice theory. I will address both of these issues by providing context and support for the need to rethink these theories as they are applied to the music industry field.

Due to Bourdieu's limited discussion of the mass production sub-field, I am in agreement with Hesmondhalgh (2006) that this lack of dialogue is to its detriment. Although Bourdieu's field theory has the potential to help us understand the meanings of everyday structure and agent intention, he has little to say about the large-scale creation of cultural goods and the impact they have on production and consumption behaviours within society, especially within the music and entertainment fields. My first aim here is to position the music industry sub-field within the larger social space of large-scale cultural production. I will then argue that Bourdieu has misinterpreted the symbolic capital characteristic within it.

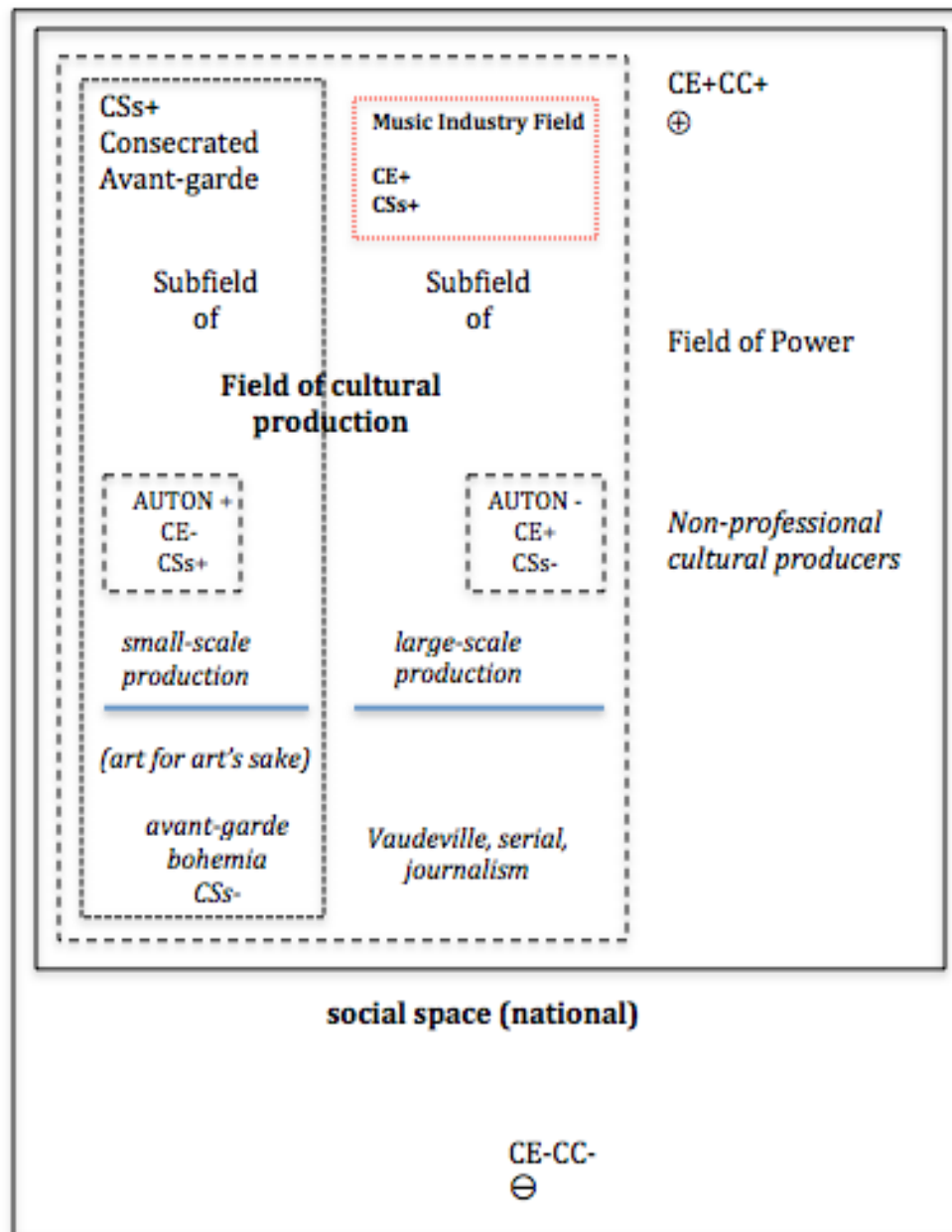
First, it is worth briefly re-stating Bourdieu's (1984, 1993a, 1996) ideas with regard to the field of cultural production. Figure 4 below is a representation of how Bourdieu portrays it within the broader field of power. As illustrated, the field of cultural production sits at the top of the field of power, while simultaneously being within it. The field of power is characterised by higher amounts of economic capital and lower amounts of cultural capital. Meanwhile, the field of cultural production is characterised by large amounts of cultural capital and lower amounts of economic capital. Within the field of cultural production, Bourdieu positions two sub-field types, the small-scale production, 'art for art's sake', characterised by low amounts of economic capital and high amounts of symbolic capital and the large-scale production, 'culture for the masses', that he claims is depicted by high amounts of economic capital and low amounts of symbolic capital.

The popular recorded music industry sits within the sub-field of large-scale production, but is not characterised by low amounts of symbolic capital, as Bourdieu indicates, but by large amounts of symbolic capital as measured by the evidence presented in Chapters 5-8 and the previous discussion in Section 9.2.5. It was shown through this discussion that actors, who have achieved success, possess it; and those who do not, endlessly pursue it or misrepresent themselves in lieu of it. This re-characterisation positions the field at the top of large-scale cultural production, as well as the broader social space of cultural production and field of power (*See Figure 5 below*). In addition, the creation of commercial music product, like that of the broader sub-field of large-scale production is largely 'heteronomous' – subject to outside forces – and thereby influenced by not only the audiences that consume it, but also broader societal and cultural forces that simultaneously shape it, while itself being shaped. Although much of the case for the actor's desire for symbolic capital and the power it represents was made in Section 9.2.5 above, it is worthy of a more explicit discussion. Essentially, two divisions exist within this subfield, those at the top who have accumulated it and those at the lower end of the industry class who *wish* to possess the symbolic capital.

Bourdieu discussed the struggles over the positions within the field (Bourdieu, 1996), which *'often take the form of a battle between established producers, institutions and styles, and heretical newcomers'* (Hesmondhalgh, 2006). This battle was highlighted extensively in the discussion above as actors make decisions while they *'battle'* for position and use the resources available to them. The industry 'bourgeoisie', who exert their positioning through symbolic power by possession of its capital, have been documented formally here and informally through industry observation.

Figure 5

The music industry field in the field of cultural production, field of power and in social space



Key:

—	Social space	CE Capital - economic
- - -	Field of power	CC Capital - cultural
- - - -	Field of cultural production	CSs Capital - symbolic, specific
- - - - -	Subfield of small-scale production	AUTON + High degree of autonomy
- - - - -	Music industry field	AUTON - Low degree of autonomy

Source: Adapted from Bourdieu (1996, p. 124), Polity Press, Stanford University Press

Examples of individuals who are representative of occupying the higher positions and have achieved the honour and prestige recognised by the industry include Clive Davis and Katie Perry. Clive Davis, a well-known 'record man', major label executive and producer who has won multiple Grammy awards and has worked with artists, such as Aretha Franklin, Alicia Keys, Rod Stewart, and Whitney Houston, exemplifies the cultural intermediary of a field that is characterised by higher amounts of symbolic capital. Katie Perry, a well-known artist, who has sold over 11 million albums and 80 million singles world-wide (FM, 2013) typifies the musician that also occupies a field high in symbolic capital. The power they hold through their accomplishments and positions within the field influence actors across the industry spectrum. The discussion on the importance of symbolic capital in this thesis – the attainment of chart positioning by Kapooshki Music, or the acquisition of gold and platinum selling artists - give the individuals affiliated with those artists the symbolic capital to maintain their prestige.

At the opposite end of the spectrum are the industry proletariat. These include the actors dominated not only by economic means, due to the costs associated with reaching commercial success, but also by the influence of the Bourgeois success. The great lengths to which decision makers will go to leave a perception of having acquired large amounts of symbolic capital exhibit the desire to possess it. Without the large-scale production sub-field being characterised by symbolic capital, aggrandising behaviour and prominent displays of public recognition would not be the ultimate motivators for those in the field.

This 'struggle' between the industry bourgeois and proletariat also exists within the two principles of 'hierarchisation'. The '*heteronomous*' principle, favours those who dominate the field economically and politically and the '*autonomous*' principle, whose advocates attempt to identify independently from the influences of the economy (Bourdieu, 1996). When Bourdieu describes these two principles, he speaks to the field of cultural production broadly but attributes the '*autonomous*' principle to small-scale production and the '*heteronomous*' principle to large-scale production. Hesmondhalgh's (2006,

1996, 1999) research on 'alternative' music found striking similarities with the world of art and literature that Bourdieu so often describes. He further explained:

'Indeed, the very word 'alternative' seemed...a vernacular term, within the field of popular musical production and consumption, for what Bourdieu calls small-scale production...constantly defined itself against a pop 'mainstream', a vernacular term for mass or large-scale production. (Hesmondhalgh, 2006, p. 217)

Hesmondhalgh likens the vernacular term 'alternative' to that of Bourdieu's sub-field of small-scale production. Similarly, the vernacular 'alternative' can be likened to 'independent' music. In this comparison even the individuals that market and promote, 'alternative' or 'independent popular music' – music produced 'independently' of major labels or their subsidiaries - have the same desired outcomes as that of more 'mainstream' consumer music, namely, economic success and the acquisition of symbolic power and recognition. 'Independent' firms that produce this music may be in the early stage of mainstream success, or may *claim* to have little interest in it. Although they may exhibit characteristics of small-scale production as Hesmondhalgh (2006) described, the actor's motivations and intentions are more aligned with large-scale production and the outside economic forces that influence it. They have just not yet achieved widespread distribution and 'success'. Even Bourdieu acknowledged that *'those of its [small-scale production] advocates who are least endowed with specific capital tend to identify with a degree of independence from the economy, seeing temporal failure as a sign of election and success as a sign of compromise'* (Bourdieu, 1993a, p. 40). Unlike some small-scale producers that see commercial success as a sign of failure, the producers of 'independent' music, the small-scale equivalent in this field, work *towards* success and recognition. If circumstances change for the independent and 'success' (sales and performances) is achieved, they will have acquired large amounts of symbolic capital and can be associated with – *'the pop mainstream'*. They

can then expect to succumb to the demands of promoters, managers and consumers, which are indicative of heteronomy.

In addition, award shows that are publicly broadcast, such as people's choice awards, transcend the internal influences of the field of mass production. They validate consumers' perceived preferences and taste for pop music culture that aid in re-enforcing these heteronomous characteristics. The companies that try to satisfy consumer's preferences and demand for music replicate this. Cultural and symbolic forces shape what is to be popular, creating a cycle of influence between the firms and the consumers. The intermediaries enable the creation of a product that will sell or satisfy the public, while the public influences what is to be released and its success through preference and taste. These combined forces are not just economic, thus characterising the field as one with high amounts of economic capital, but the symbolism and the power associated with those influential 'unseen' forces are just as influential and characteristic of the popular recorded music industry.

Bourdieu positions the field of cultural production high within the broader social space, yet simultaneously within the field of power. In order for the music industry field to be properly positioned within this space and characteristic of high amounts of symbolic capital, it too must sit high in the field of power. Symbolic power is *'invisible power which can be exercised only with the complicity of those who do not want to know that they are subject to it or even that they themselves exercise it'* (Bourdieu, 1994, p. 164). My discussion of symbolic capital outlines some of these power struggles, as will my further contributions on music industry capital in section 9.2.8 below, indicating its pervasiveness at the micro-level. Although it could be argued that any social space consists of power struggles among actors, it is the broader social space in which the music industry sits that constitutes the influence it wields. This begins with Bourdieu's position on the intra-field struggles that *'the different classes and class fractions are engaged in a symbolic struggle...one aimed at imposing the definition of the social world that is best suited to their interests'* (Bourdieu, 1994, p. 167) and permeates through to the broader 'national' or social space. The actors within the music industry understand that if symbolic capital is possessed, its influences extend beyond that of the music industry field itself.

Actors who sit atop the hierarchy of the industry have the opportunity to influence society's culture. They are able to benefit from this position through the dominance that is associated with it. They have the power to constrain and exploit from a micro-personal to a macro-industry and societal level. The mass consumed cultural goods and services the industry produces and controls is influenced by the culture within the national social space in which it sits. This is best evidenced in Hat Punk, LLC, where the primary actors involved in the decisions introduce new artists to the public that have mass appeal and success. They have the capability and the power, through its capital, to act on what they feel can principally impact their consumer's tastes and preferences. They are then able to directly benefit from those preferences when consumers choose to purchase the music those artists produce. The opposite is also true, in that they are constrained by the symbolic power and resources accumulated by others similar to themselves in the field. If other labels with comparable capital choose to introduce one of their artists, it creates a constraint on how Hat Punk, LLC may proceed. It becomes a cycle of decisions and interconnected dynamisms that actors continuously shape and are being shaped by. The struggles in this dichotomy to maintain or acquire this legitimacy and the power to influence the masses are characteristics of an industry more properly positioned 'atop' the field of large-scale cultural production, and an industry with high amounts of symbolic capital, not low, as Bourdieu contends.

9.2.8 Bourdieu, the Field of Cultural Production and the Need for a Music Industry Capital in a Model of the Cultural Industries

The music industry sits within the large-scale production sub-field of the broader cultural production social space. My argument for this position overlaps with the need for re-characterising this space as one that sits at the top of the broader field of cultural production. Based on this, I further argue that in order to substantiate the transformation of other capital from one form to another, that is, social or economic capital into symbolic capital, there is a need for a field specific capital, in this case, *music industry capital* that is used as a negotiating aid when agents vie for power and positioning within the music industry. Furthermore, those actors who occupy the '*dominant class fractions*' (Bourdieu & Thompson, 1991) of the industry possess higher levels of field-specific or '*music industry capital*' than those within the lower fractions. Individuals who have acquired this capital possess the skills, knowledge and experience to navigate successfully through the industry doxa. They do so through the influence that music industry capital provides them, to maintain, produce, or reproduce, inequality in power relations. It also encourages and discourages risk-taking and enables them to leverage their knowledge and experience to perform favours.

The idea of a music industry capital is in direct response to an assessment of the value and applicability of 'cultural capital' as it was used within this thesis. Through the development of the framework and subsequent coding process, it became increasingly clear that the labelling of 'cultural capital' was an inadequate descriptor of the types of resource being used in some instances by the actors within the field.

In general terms, Bourdieu defines capital as:

'...accumulated labor (in its materialized form or its 'incorporated,' embodied form) which, when appropriated on a private, that is, exclusive, basis by agents or groups of agents, enables them to appropriate social energy in the form of reified or living labor' (Bourdieu, 1986, p. 1).

Although he proceeds to define different types of capital to account for how actors leverage it within the social space, his definition lacks the specific and necessary knowledge of a given field or industry in which firms, and those who work within them, find themselves. Although individuals who fill these 'social

spaces' do negotiate with each other through their accumulated social, economic, cultural and symbolic capital, a void is created for the specific knowledge needed to manipulate and navigate through the field. *Music industry capital* helps to account for this void with the experience, understanding and skills that an individual acquires while working. Music industry capital takes time to accumulate and can manifest itself within the actor. This includes the knowledge of how the rules of the music industry are structured and how to play the game politically with other actors as they attempt to negotiate or maintain their positioning in the field. It is a capital that goes deeper than the credentials that are associated with an institutionalised form of cultural capital, that is, a college education focusing on the industry, and can only be acquired through the experience and success of playing the established rules. Furthermore, music industry capital has the potential to produce profits for the individual, and like all types of capital that Bourdieu prescribes; it too has the tendency to persist (Bourdieu, 1986).

Furthermore, the knowledge and experience one has acquired creates a dynamism among actors that allows them to influence one another. It brings an 'empowerment' to those who wish to wield it. This dynamism is a type of 'expert' power – when individuals assume or perceive that a person has a set of superior skills and reward them for it (French & Raven, 1959). However, unlike expert power, which can exert influence through the *perception* of expertise, this know-how must be seen as genuine. In the music industry, aggrandisement is used to project a perception of legitimacy and can be seen as disingenuous if inflated credentials or an exaggeration of experience are used. The consequences of this 'misperception' can have the opposite effect to that which the aggrandiser is seeking. Instead of wielding the power and influence they hope to achieve through this behaviour, it is never granted by the actor who has attained music industry capital. This illusion of legitimacy may impact an individual who has not accumulated music industry capital, but not those that have. This is often why those who name-drop struggle to get the opportunities they seek. This was demonstrated in Joe's attempt at legitimising himself and his business to those who work in Nashville, with limited results. Music industry capital is attained through the experience and knowledge that a person has acquired and those

skills and abilities must be recognised as genuine in order for power to be granted. When it is legitimate, it can have an 'exponential' effect on those being influenced. It need not be a direct one-on-one; it can also create a '*one plus one equals twenty*' effect. The influence can transcend the individual's direct authority and impact the time it takes to get things done. If an actor can call upon individuals who have accumulated large amounts of music industry capital, they can also expect to accomplish tasks more quickly and efficiently. This was demonstrated when Joe spoke about using influential promoters for a radio campaign, or when he felt he could call on the expertise of a major record company to save time.

In addition, this empowerment may be more passive. Being able to 'experience' something with the individual who has accumulated the music industry capital demonstrates their ability to influence relationships with others who are seeking an association with them. Those who possess the capital may not need to use it to influence others. The individual who desires the connection or wants to fall in good favour with the actor, who possesses it, sanctions this dynamic. If they are seen as being connected with this individual, they too will benefit from that association. David from Bench Puppet Entertainment discussed this when he shared his admiration for someone with whom he wanted to be associated. The impact this kind of passive power has on people places the individual who holds it in an authoritative position, albeit symbolically. They wield an influence that at times may be unknown to them. This influence can be subtle and will manifest itself in the enthusiasm and drive of the individual seeking the association. They hope to leave a favourable impression so they can be seen as someone knowledgeable and competent in what they do.

The possession of music industry capital can also encourage or discourage risk-taking, depending on the habitus of the actor or firm in which risks are being undertaken. Having accumulated a set of skills and industry knowledge can lead to a sense of self-confidence. This confidence can lead to assessments of decisions that may encourage a higher level of risk-taking, especially if the past outcomes were positive. As in the case with Jack being instrumental in finding commercially successful talent, '*it doesn't hurt the ego*',

reinforces his perceived ability to gauge what the public may want to hear. Therefore, he is willing to take risks in signing artists that he may not otherwise have, because of this confidence in his own abilities.

However, understanding the unpredictability of any given project and the potential outcomes, especially the unfavourable ones, can lead an actor to minimise or share in the risk-taking of a project. In this case, it is not merely a confidence issue, as much as it is driven by past experience and the habitus of the individual. It is a form of understanding that has been attained through experience in the industry. Knowing that much uncertainty exists, and having experience investing large amounts of capital in a project with little return, can impact how an actor will make decisions. Sam at Hat Punk, LLC has responded to this by the types of contractual relationships he offers artists. By possessing this capital, he not only understands the risks involved in 'signing' new talent, but he has also changed the way he structures those 'deals' so that his exposure to the risk inherent in the uncertainty, is mitigated. He doesn't follow the 'typical industry model' where the label takes all the financial risk, he shares it, so not only is *his* company vested in the outcome, but so is the artist. This type of behaviour and the dynamics associated with the decision-making can be accounted for through this capital one possesses.

Furthermore, music industry capital can be used to maintain, produce or reproduce inequality in power relations. Those who possess it, reinforce their positions by '*doing it just this way*', or in a similar manner that enabled them initially to accumulate it. They use this capital to '*protect interests*' so that they can reinforce the place occupied in the field. Those who have achieved a level of success deemed adequate, and recognised by those who have attained it, see this. They fear losing this influence and use it to reinforce the inequality in the divisions that exist. By knowing 'who' to talk to, when or how often, or what strategies to pursue allow for a leveraging of other forms of capital in an attempt to maintain the power relations. The skills and knowledge of the industry manifest themselves in such a way that the actor can use this to leverage his or her social, economic or cultural capital.

Sam was able to utilise his accumulated music industry capital by fostering a business model that challenged the standard industry doxa. '*Making*

things happen' through his resources is only possible because he has acquired large amounts of music industry capital that enables him to understand the industry doxa and then work '*against*' them, to his benefit. Joe at Kapooshki also discussed the major labels use of this power in an attempt to continue dominating radio promotion. By having more resources, the knowledge and the power that music industry capital provides, maintains actors like Joe subjugated. They do so by limiting the possibilities available to them, either by flooding the market with product or by 'driving-up' the costs associated with access. Although major labels cannot directly control the price of radio promotion, by flooding the market and reducing opportunities to a limited number of available 'adds' per week, they are inadvertently increasing the demand and those costs.

Music industry capital is acquired by achieving success with songwriters, artists and other actors within the field and by leveraging that knowledge and capital to perform favours. 'Gift giving' can be exercised through the granting of complimentary tickets, back-stage passes or invites to red-carpet events. It can also manifest itself in the form of making 'connections' for others by introducing one person to another. This action reinforces the power position an individual holds while strengthening the legitimacy perceived by the person benefiting from the favour. Joe mentioned how record labels had influenced radio stations and promoters to gain airplay time. Those who hold the power that comes from music industry capital can use it to persuade prominent musicians to visit radio stations in exchange for airplay consideration. Associating with 'big-name' artists motivates the decision-makers within the radio stations. The exchange of favours not only benefits the receiving party, but also the granting party. This action enables the one in power to reinforce the influential relationship between them.

When favours are performed, the perceived power of the actor who is using his music industry capital also increases. If this individual is 'doing a favour' for you, your perception of that individual becomes even more auspicious, leaving a debt of gratitude or appreciation for their act. Similar to that of 'gift exchange' (Bourdieu & Wacquant, 1992), it enables the actors to build a stable and longer-term relationship with each other. It can also keep the receiver of that favour indebted to them, creating a sense of 'authority' over the

individual for the favour being performed while reinforcing the dominating power relations between them.

Music industry capital can also perpetuate itself through objectified forms of symbolic capital. Not only does it demonstrate the prestige and honour earned and accumulated, but it also indicates to others that they possess something of value, namely, knowledge of the practice that those who have not yet accumulated enough, have yet to achieve. Although the displaying of industry awards acts as an objectified form of symbolic capital, actors in the field also understand that those who possess such prestige also acknowledge that a level of understanding of the music industry doxa has been achieved. It points to an experience to which only those who legitimately possess it can attest. Sam was clear when speaking of those colleagues from whom he often sought advice, that is, those who have achieved similar success to him in the industry. However, for those who do not possess similar success, they look on these artefacts and the understanding embodied in them as a mystery. They idolise those who *are* successful, as if its acquisition is only for those who are privileged enough to achieve it.

Earlier in Section 9.2.1, the link between social capital and trust were touched upon briefly. However, the establishment of trust warrants further discussion as it creates tension between aggrandisement and music industry capital. This capital being defined as the skills, knowledge, experience and the power attributed to actors in the music industry. Aggrandisement will not lead to a trustworthy relationship between actors unless the one doing the aggrandising possesses high amounts of music industry capital. Awards such as gold and platinum records embody music industry capital, but can also be separated from aggrandising, even though they may be used as *part* of that behaviour. When an individual aggrandises, it indicates to others the possibility that success has been attained. However, awards are a genuine embodiment of music industry capital. Trust is something that is established over time and typically 'earned' through the reinforcement of expected behaviour. Jack was very clear in the level of trust that had developed between him and Sam over eight years, which led to reliance upon each other and their expertise. The only reason trust – a non-contract based commitment of resources - was established

among the social network at Hat Punk, LLC was because Sam and Jack felt that the managers, lawyers and producers, from whom they sought input, *knew* what they were talking about and had established relationships with them over the years. All of them had acquired music industry capital and did not aggrandise, which led to the trust between Jack, Sam and the producers, managers and lawyers from whom they sought advice.

Trust is more difficult to establish between two people if someone that possesses large amounts of music industry capital is the recipient of aggrandising behaviour. Bstieler (2006) found that communication can be a positive contributor to establishing trust, while perceived egoism appears to have a detrimental effect. Perception of egoism can be an unintended consequence of the aggrandiser. While his or her intention is to be perceived as someone who has attained success and is worthy of a professional relationship, often the receiver, who has accumulated high amounts of music industry capital, can differentiate that behaviour as an artificial, or an inflated ego. They approach this interaction with scepticism as if the aggrandiser is hiding something, or not divulging the 'whole story'. If, having had the experience of being in a similar situation, or having been previously subjected to such boasting, they know, or understand, there is likely to be a 'holding back', or limited disclosure. This creates a tension between the two, which adversely affects the relationship and can delay, or even extinguish the trust needed in order for a professional relationship to be established. An actor that does not possess high amounts of music industry capital will be less inclined to make this connection. They see the behaviour as genuine, or less threatening.

Moreover, this tension can escalate beyond the development of a trustworthy relationship and escalate to an outright feeling of 'mistrust' between the actors resulting in lost opportunities. Portraying a false sense of who you are, or what you have achieved, signifies that you have something to hide. This can create a feeling of doubt among the individuals who are being targeted by the aggrandising. Sam questions those artists who approach him with '*visions of grandeur*', or inflate the credentials of what they have done. His business model is built on the maturity and strong sense of spirituality that he receives from the artists

he wishes to sign. When they aggrandise their achievements, or whom they have worked with, it creates a tension between what Sam hopes to achieve and the trust he feels is needed to share in the success and risk of their career. Although some of these artists have yet to achieve substantial amounts of music industry capital, Sam does possess large amounts of it and is sensitive to aggrandising behaviour and what it can signify, creating a sense of mistrust. Because of this, he will not 'sign' those artists to his record label.

Not being able to establish a sense of trust, or even mistrusting an actor, can impact the amount of risk the possessor of MI capital is willing to take. Being a key characteristic of music industry capital that was discussed, the willingness to take risks can have a direct impact on a potential artist signing to a label, or to someone's career. If Sam does not feel that he can trust his artists, he will not be willing to risk his economic and symbolic capital to sign them to a recording deal. Similar comparisons among other professionals can also be drawn. If a trustworthy relationship has not been established, the possessors of music industry capital will not be willing to risk their own social or economic capital for the sake of the relationship. When Jack or Sam reach out to other managers or attorneys for advice on artists, they are also putting their own reputations at risk. These risks will not be taken if either party that possesses the music industry capital perceives aggrandisement behaviour.

Whereas I posit that a connection between trust, aggrandising behaviour and music industry capital exists, I would also like to consider the use of symbolic power and the connections among domination, trust, fear and music industry capital. Bourdieu (1984) suggests that situated cultural functions in society are more dominant than economic ones, but that status and economic resources *are* necessary. His ideas on symbolic capital, discussed fully in Section 3.6.4, help to set apart the hierarchies of power. Often, the distinctions between those classes are determined by the acquisition of capital. As I established in Section 9.2.3, unpredictability in the field breeds uncertainty within the habitus that

drives fear. The potential loss of financial resources, social capital, or being seen '*as nothing special*', impacts how actors perceive their environment and make decisions.

Music industry capital reinforces Bourdieu's ideas on symbolic power as a way to set apart the classes within the field, and supports his ideas that these situated cultural forces are stronger than economic ones. It is not an oppressive force directed toward the lower fractions to instil fear, but one they create themselves. These inhibitions are created by the prospect of not attaining their own upward mobility and can trigger an aggrandising behaviour. However, fear is also a concern for those at the top, a fear of losing their current standing within the industry class. It is, in many cases, a fear of failure, or fear of losing their reputation or other capital, that motivates the individual. Reflecting back on Joe's situation, he was motivated by fear of losing what he had attained; fear that pursuing the wrong radio strategy could cost him his '*8th in the world*' reputation and that he would have to use increasing amounts of other capital to maintain it. This fear triggered an aggrandising behaviour, while simultaneously understanding that he needed to build trust with others if he wanted to pursue this new radio strategy. Maintaining his reputation without some music industry capital would have been much more difficult.

An actor also relies on trust as a way to alleviate the fear of capital depletion. Even though music industry capital is a 'sub-type' of capital, it is not easily 'used-up' and aids in the transformation of one capital type to another. The fear of losing any resource impacts the emotions and actions of the individual, much like Cisco's fear of losing social capital. In this sense music industry capital acts similarly to that of cultural capital – it has a tendency to persist and, as Sam stated, '*you know what you know*'. Trust between actors thus provides for a way to mitigate that fear. Jack relies on this trust in the hopes of making sound choices by consulting with his manager, producer and attorney contacts when making talent selection decisions. However, this trust cannot be established without the needed music industry capital.

In summary, music industry capital can account for the skills, knowledge, experience and power that enable individuals to transform their social, economic, or cultural capital into symbolic capital. It is an asset, a fundamental capital that needs to be accounted for within the music industry field and for which Bourdieu and his theory of cultural production and theory of practice do not clearly or adequately postulate. The evidence from this research demonstrates the need for this type of capital to provide meaning and understanding about how decision-makers in this field navigate for power.

The Applicability of Findings to Similar Fields

I was at first cautious of extrapolating claims from my findings to other industries, nevertheless, I do believe that similar principles could be drawn if comparable conditions exist. The unpredictability of success, the high risk, low success rate and the infinite variety of product available are characteristics of the music industry that are shared with other entertainment products like video games, television or film. They also share the social space of large-scale cultural production as creators of '*the pop mainstream*'. The shared characteristics of these industries lead me to propose that these fields are characterised by high amounts of symbolic capital and, thus, could also be placed at the top of the field of cultural production.

The discussion of a music industry capital pertains to the field of study in this thesis, but could also be useful as a 'field' capital within other industries. As previously indicated, this study's intention was to provide insight into the practices of music industry strategic decision-making. However, as an analysis of the field of cultural production it is able to provide greater insight into any field where actors find themselves participating where knowledge and skills specific to that field provide further negotiating value for which Bourdieu's capitals are unable to account. Bourdieu himself, for example, in his limited analysis of the journalism and large-scale production field, could have provided us with further insight if he had accounted for this gap in capital. It would have

enabled him to speak to the subtleties among individuals as they negotiate for power within a specific industry. The '*rules of the game*' or 'doxa' speak to the 'taken-for-granted' ways of doing things, but the field-specific capital can account for the dynamic power relations that are grounded in the skills, experience and knowledge of a specific industry.

9.3 Reflection on My Chosen Methodology

Using Bourdieu to examine the influences on strategic decision-making in music industry micro-enterprises allowed me to demonstrate how actors construct the subtle realities of the practice while simultaneously providing insight into the limitations of his theories. However, it would be a mistake not to use Bourdieu's theory in its entirety here as we look at the practice of decision-making. It is often thought that Bourdieu can be difficult to apply (Ölzbilgin & Tatli, 2005) in organisation studies and is often segmented in ways inappropriate for its application to the practice theory. Isolating the habitus, or selectively choosing the influences a particular capital may have upon agency disregards the intention and may misrepresent the influential and reinforcing nature each concept has upon one another. Researchers often isolate one or another in order to demonstrate the impacts the concept may have on the phenomena of study. However, by not taking into account how each aspect of the practice theory influences the chosen concept disregards the iterative and comprehensiveness of the theory itself. If the researcher is to study the practice, it must encompass the habitus, capital and field simultaneously while accounting for the interplay between structure and agency. The habitus is key to actually making the decision choice, but it is the firm in which they work, the fields they exist within and the desire for capital that allows the actor's habitus ultimately to decide how to approach strategic decision-making. In contrasting examples, David, from Hat Punk, LLC, is identified as a confidant, well-educated, 52-year old Caucasian male, while Joe from Kapooshki Music identifies himself as a Canadian Born, 33-year old Indian American. Who they are and what they have become has been influenced by the field, leading to how each decide to leverage their capital. My contributions from this thesis help to explain a few of these

behaviours and should help to alleviate some of the difficulties in researching a field like the popular recorded music industry.

Understanding this approach to how decisions are made provides evidence that indicates the importance that social capital, the emotional state of the actor, the knowledge they have acquired about how the industry works and the role symbolic capital plays in the decision-making practice within this field. The 'black box' of the habitus, the mechanism for interpretation and evaluation of the meso-firm level and macro-industry environment determines the reactions and practice that encompass the decision-making. Although there are many similarities in the influences and approach to making a decision in each firm, the choice of sample, analysis of the data and the chosen methodology enabled an exploration of those similarities and differences that would have not been possible without looking at the decision practice more than once in the same firm.

From the findings in Chapters 5-9, I feel that Bourdieu's practice theory served the research well, while simultaneously highlighting a few limitations to both that and his field of cultural production. The use of habitus, capital and field as a lens into interpreting decision-making practice allowed for the account of past personal dispositions. It also enabled an explanation of the influences upon the practice as well as the interplay between the field of cultural production and actor, as power and positioning within it are negotiated through the use of capital. What the practice theory is not as well equipped to account for, however, is the radical change that has been occurring in the field caused by the implementation of new technologies. Bourdieu does attempt to account for some change through the use of hysteresis, but is not as well equipped to account for the non-human interactions that have been occurring, especially as they relate to the technology and the influences they have had. It is in this regard that Activity theory or Actor-network theory could have assisted in explaining better the role non-actors or artefacts have in the constitution of practice, especially as it relates to strategic decision-making in firms (Nicolini, 2013). For example, the use of computers as they aid in marketing and promotion of music, provide access to artists as potential 'signings' and the facilitation of distributing that music, can and do influence in ways that Bourdieu

is less equipped. However, the use of Bourdieu was sufficient in answering the research question, for at the core of its understanding is the interplay among actor, field and capital as they contribute to an actor's desire for recognition.

9.4 Research Contributions

As stated earlier, my chosen methodological lens allowed me to surface the complex reflexive interplay among the concepts of Bourdieu's practice theory, which led to a deep description of the influences through thick textual renditions on strategic decision-making practices in music industry micro-enterprises. My research also allowed me to demonstrate a few limitations in Bourdieu's field theory on cultural production, as well as his theories on capital. In addition to understanding this practice better, my study contributes to the research on strategic decision-making for micro-enterprises as well as the growing body of literature being conducted within the music industry. No study has investigated strategic decision-making practices within micro-enterprises that market and promote recorded music product. This study lays the foundation for further study into these practices and can be aligned with similar research into marketing, talent selection and other management practices. The literature that populates the current research on the music industry is fragmented, and although this contributes to that fragmentation by adding to it a line of inquiry, it can also be used to help bridge the gaps between the multiple disciplines that have been investigated.

Furthermore, this research is also able to contribute to the growing body of organisational studies that are finding Bourdieu as a relevant and often well-suited methodology for understanding practice. By applying his praxeology, it has been possible to use his concepts of habitus, capital – in all its forms – and field in a research context that takes into account the individual, the firm and the influencing forces of the field. By peeling back these elements, the research was able to demonstrate how decision-making within the music industry is socially-constructed and influenced by the actor's predispositions, interactions in and amongst the firm and how these are predicated upon by the field doxa.

9.5 Implications for Future Research

Using Bourdieu' theory of practice as a lens has provided much insight into how decisions are made and what influences them in music industry micro-enterprises in the United States. First, the sample of this study focused on micro-enterprises within the popular recorded music industry – but one segment of the broader SME category of firm size - provides opportunity for inquiry into larger music industry firms in the recorded music industry. This could shed light onto similar or dissimilar practices when the size of the firm is taken into consideration. The amount of economic, social, cultural and symbolic capital achieved resulting in greater human resources and cash flow may impact the aggrandisement behaviour and/or strategic decision-making behaviour in a larger music industry firm. Differences in strategic decision-making within large firms have already been uncovered (Busenitz & Barney, 1997) in some studies, but taking into account the culture producing and creative field and its doxa may also uncover different findings such as a lesser use of intuitive behaviours or purposeful suppression of them. It may also provide further nuances on the accumulation of larger amounts of capital or the role of hubris or confidence by its leaders on the practice.

Second, further exploration into other entertainment fields may also exhibit characteristics and/or influences that may not have been observed in this study. The classification of 'entertainment' can be wide and often incorporates the fields of sport, gambling and movies (Vogel, 2007) and should be limited to those that would be cross-referenced into entertainment fields within the culture producing or creative industries. The key determinant in these further explorations would and should be the characteristics of the culture producing or creative industries (Caves, 2000) when marketing and promotion of product is at the core of the business activities.

Third, taking into account the geographic limitations of this study could also prove to be another opportunity. A cross-cultural analysis of the same field, with the same segment and firm size could demonstrate to what extent cultural influences impact the decision-making practice. If one is to use Bourdieu and his practice theory as a lens, you must take into consideration the habitus, these past dispositions and the interplay of the structures from which the actor has

partaken, for they could influence the decision-making practice in a different way.

9.6 Limitations of the Research

In addition to the key contributions, some limitations within the study are also recognised including the personal bias that I, the researcher bring to the sampling, chosen method of analysis and interpretation of the results. As was made clear within the introduction chapter, my personal experience working in the industry for well over a decade, enables me to see phenomena in a manner that others may be unable to see, but may also lead me to interpret things with bias. Giving preference to coding specific dialogue or not noticing subtle behaviour during observations may cause me to overlook valuable data that can add to the depth of the research. However, it could also enable me to dig deeper into aspects that may otherwise be overlooked. By understanding the industry jargon, or probing deeper into what may be an ‘off the wall’ comment by an interviewee can lead to the subtleties I am after. Furthermore, I can easily misinterpret intentions and distinctions that other researchers, outside the field, would not. Seeing things from this perspective, could lead to a different understanding and interpretation of the results.

This interpretation was also influenced by my own habitus and the disposition that I bring from the culture in which I have been raised. Being a researcher from the United States, conducting my research in the United States, has certainly impacted how I have perceived, analysed and have written-up the results of the data collected. Coming from a culture rooted in a more positivistic epistemology, I often found myself falling victim to the belief that what has been learned can only be obtained by collecting the data in a systematic and objective manner so that a universal applicability can be applied. Staying true to a more interpretive methodology and using a Bourdieusian lens was challenging. This became most evident during my discussion of the data when I was often drawn to a need to find one or two generalisable findings. The data were often disguised by an incessant need to satisfy this more positivistic perspective when looking and interpreting the data. Also being brought up in this type of environment has acquainted me with the terminology often more suited to that

type of research. Its use would find its way throughout my analysis and writing up of the results. Knowing and understanding this is the first step to its limitations when appreciating and applying the richness of research that can come from a more interpretive approach.

Furthermore, the selective dissemination of knowledge by the respondents has also influenced the results. Through personal experience and direct observation, the offering-up of information, especially information that is at the strategic core of the firms being investigated, could be seen as threatening to the interviewee or an opportunity to exhibit a power influence over the dialogue. If trust, as perceived by the interviewee was not established to a level where highly sensitive information could be freely discussed, this could have brought upon reservations by the respondents, which could have limited the discourse of the information or conscious filtering of it when we were in discussion. If power was at play amongst the interviewer/interviewee relationship, the interviewee could have seen that his knowledge, being what I, as the interviewer, sought to obtain could be controlled by him or her – thereby influenced what he or she would be willing to divulge. Although I felt this was not the case within many of the interviews conducted, often where there was a feeling of excitement and enthusiasm to discuss what the managers were doing, there was certainly a different dynamic at play when interviews were being conducted at those firms that were perceived by the field as having achieved more success. I do believe trust was established, but I perceived a limiting of information in some of those interviews where a stance of ‘on a need to know basis’ was taken because the interviewees may have felt that statements could be used against them. I did my best to overcome these limitations by reiterating the use of pseudonyms in the research and emphasising my understanding of their concerns.

Moreover, although a brief discussion about why one decision was chosen over another was carried out in section 4.4, I believe that the choices I made and the rationale behind their selection for inclusion should be highlighted further, because their purposeful selection could also have limited the understanding of the phenomena. I chose decisions based upon my own experiences in the industry along with witnessing some of the more critical choices needing to be

made by these firms. Although I chose not to include thirty-two other decisions that were discussed, the dissemination of them down to eight provided the rigour, breadth and complexity that I was seeking in understanding the SDM practice. Many decisions that were discussed were identical in nature, for example, those associated with artist selection for the company. Many owners found this to be critically important for their business and considered it to be strategic. While including four or even six decisions of this type would have been possible, I chose the one that demonstrated the complexity and richness of detail for this inquiry. In addition, choosing the other seven cases for this thesis provided a sample that would best highlight the themes that were emerging across the different decisions while providing the most insightful data. Furthermore, the firms were also considered when deducing the cases involved. Although each firm was a micro-enterprise, the differences in the type of business they conducted were diverse. For example, during my pre-study, I had interviewed individuals from a company that could be considered a 'border-line' company within the industry. Although, they conduct business for clients in the music industry, they did not exhibit the same challenges and characteristics that a firm that is directly involved in the marketing and promotion of recorded music product would entail. Therefore, I purposely chose not to select that firm and the decisions it made for inclusion here. I took into consideration the number of employees as well as the business and tried to provide a cross-section of the firms operating in the industry on a daily basis. This included DIY, one-man operations to start-up marketing firms through to a multi-million dollar business with a proven track record in the industry. Therefore, these choices of what decisions, and what firms to include in this thesis, have impacted how this studied is now viewed. Although the contribution is strong and the data is rich in detail and complexity, it is necessary to be mindful of the how the decisions and firms were chosen and how they can limit the interpretation and presentation of the study.

9.7 Reflexivity and Conclusions

This final section aims to provide the position, context and reflections of the author. I am a thirty-seven year old male that currently works at a university

in the United States, lecturing on marketing and management in the music business. I have worked in the music industry for more than sixteen years, beginning my career as a percussion instructor, musician and later a career in marketing and business development. As I briefly mentioned in my introduction, it is the transition from working in the industry to teaching that prompted my desire to learn more about the theoretical constructs of this industry and, in turn, this thesis.

However, there were a number of challenges during the process described throughout this thesis and specifically Chapter 4 that I would like to reflect on, especially in regards to the data collection and analysis. Although my academic background includes a graduate degree, prior to my research training for the pursuance of my PhD, I had little understanding of the process and the rigour that it would entail. My career was in an industry that not only shows little interest in theoretical concepts but also shows little respect for an academic background. Because of this limited research background and eagerness to ‘contribute substantially to new knowledge’, I fell victim to early confirmation bias during my pre-interviews from some of my initial findings. Once I uncovered what I felt was a very interesting phenomenon that would drive the research and one that I experienced regularly working in the industry, I became closed-minded about other aspects that might be influencing the practice. This became a ‘leading’ factor in further analysis that limited the richness of many of the themes and vignettes I was extracting from the data. Disappointing and confidence knocking, it made it difficult to extract the subtle nuances that I sought in this interpretive study. I started to question my analysis of the interviews and my ability to look beyond this concept. After further discussions with my supervisors, going back to the data and re-interviewing a few of the individuals, I was able to extract and interpret the themes and vignettes in a deeper manner. It was also a real learning point on the process of qualitative analysis, that the lens in which you approach your data can impact what and how you see them.

There was another issue related to ontology and epistemology that I had also alluded to in Chapter 1, as well as Section 9.6 above, and found challenging when writing-up the results of this thesis. Because of my limited knowledge of

research practices prior to this process and coming from the United States, I bring deep-rooted assumptions about what research should be. Clearly I have found a home, personally, and for this research, that serves the answering of the questions I have proposed. However, the path to this result was challenging and defeating on multiple occasions. A positivistic ontology is assumed in almost all business research in the U.S. and therefore that assumption had also permeated through how I saw the data and wrote up the results. This perspective was so engrained that, from my perspective, it prolonged this phase of my thesis with multiple rewrites so that cohesiveness throughout the narrative would come through. The past year was also a real learning process, not just in how to write-up results of your research, but also how important your ontological and epistemological assumptions influences the analysis and presentation of your data.

In summary, through this process of critical self-reflection, and being cognisant of these issues contributes to the richness and complexity that I am seeking in this research. I have many words that describe my reflections of collecting and analysing these data: exciting, fascinating, shocking, illuminating, humbling, addictive and never-ending. I acknowledge that the analyses and writing-up can never be complete, and that yet another researcher may find other meanings and interpretations in the same data. However, through the iterative process described in this chapter and the findings presented in Chapters 5-8, my intention is to provide a rigorous, consistent and convincing narrative that is grounded in the data.

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Appendices

Appendix A - List of Interviews

Name (Last, First)	Title	Firm Name	Date & Location of Interview	Interview Time	Interview Length
1. Sutherby, Janet	Entrepreneur, Writer and Music Consultant	Sutherby, LLC	9.6.10 Skype	6:09 pm	1:07:02
2. Wallace, Jason	Producer, Director of Operations	Water Toss Music	7.7.10 Office	3:21 pm	41:40
3. Jones, Kyle	Chief Financial Officer	Water Toss Music	7.7.10 Office	2:16 pm	51:47
4a. Massey, Jack	CEO, Owner	Water Toss Music	7.7.10 Office	9:22 am	1:37:45
4b. Massey, Jack (Follow-up 1)	CEO, Owner	Water Toss Music	1.8.10 Office	9:04 am	20:15
5. Britain, Brian	Business Development Manager	Water Toss Music	11.6.10 Office	10:35 am	1:01:40
6a. Jackson, Joe	Owner, Manager	Kapooshki Music	5.7.10 Office	10:12 am	1:00:58
6b. Jackson, Joe (Follow-up 1)	Owner, Manager	Kapooshki Music	5.7.10 Office	5:33 pm	1:04:02
6c. Jackson, Joe (Follow-up 2)	Owner, Manager	Kapooshki Music	13.6.11 Office	1:30 pm	28:43
7. Billings, Lilly	Administrative Ass.	Kapooshki Music	13.6.11 Office	5:39 pm	27:51
8. Alva, Seth	Administrative Ass.	Kapooshki Music	13.6.11 Office	2:34 pm	33:37
9. Allan, Susie	Business Affairs Manager	Kapooshki Music	13.6.11 Office	3:29 pm	32:28
10. Beauchamp, Megan	Booking & Promotion	Kapooshki Music	5.7.10 Office	12:46 pm	43:35
11. Schroeder, Jamie	Booking & Promotion	Kapooshki Music	5.7.10 Office	2:03 pm	25:56
12a. Newman, Cisco	Singer Songwriter/Owner Manager	Cisco Newman	11.4.11 Skype	9:48 am	47:03
12b. Newman, Cisco (Follow-up 1)	Singer Songwriter/Owner Manager	Cisco Newman	24.8.11 Office	7:57 pm	31:39

Name (Last, First)	Title	Firm Name	Date & Location of Interview	Interview Length	Interview Time
12c. Newman, Cisco (Follow-up 2)	Songwriter-Owner Manager	Cisco Newman	4.2.12 Office	30:28	1:26 pm
13. Housley, Janet	Creative Director	Henson Music Publishing	15.6.11 Skype	46:52	9:04 am
14a. Sax, David	Owner, Manager	Bench Puppet Entertainment	8.7.10 Office	1:15:07	10:28 am
14b. Sax, David (Follow-up 1)	Owner, Manager	Bench Puppet Entertainment	16.6.11 Office	58:31	7:16 pm
15a. Stonewall, Sarah <i>Simultaneous Int.</i>	New Media Director	Bench Puppet Entertainment	8.7.10 Office	1:15:07	10:28 am
15b. Stonewall, Sarah (Follow-up 1) <i>Simultaneous Int.</i>	New Media Director	Bench Puppet Entertainment	16.6.11 Office	58:31	7:16 pm
16. Caldwell, Sam	CEO, Owner	Hat Punk, LLC	14.6.11 Office	52:51	2:01 pm
17. Johnson, Jack	Senior Vice President, A & R	Hat Punk, LLC	14.6.11 Office	24:31	4:04 pm
18. Esquire, Philip	Senior Vice President, Marketing & Promotion	Hat Punk, LLC	14.6.11 Office	48:37	3:13 pm
19. Scott, Michael	Owner, Manager	Scott5 Music	8.12.10 Office	1:19:31	11:20 am
20. Smith, Connolly	CEO	Loom Ball Entertainment	16.6.10 Office	1:10:24	4:35 pm
21. Sandoval, Jose	Recording Artist	Loom Ball Entertainment	16.6.10 Office	15:14	5:50 pm
22. Jones, Anita	Entertainment Attorney	Anita Jones	4.22.11 Office	48:32	10:02 am
23. Lester, Daniel	Entertainment Attorney	Lester, LLC	15.4.11 Skype	1:05:59	6:30 pm
24. Jester, Chris <i>Simultaneous Int.</i>	Owner, Producer	Red Hot	15.6.11 Office	1:12:49	11:06 am
25. Sanders, Brian <i>Simultaneous Int.</i>	Owner, Producer	Red Hot	15.6.11 Office	1:12:49	11:06 am

Name (Last, First)	Title	Firm Name	Date & Location of Interview	Interview Time	Interview Length
26. Sturm, Jessica	Engineer	Solstice Music	3.2.12 Coffee Shop	1:22 pm	50:51
27. Geonivich, Lisa	Partner, Manager, Artist	Black Line	20.3.12 University Office	9:15 pm	28:08
28. Leland, Jessie	Partner, Manager, Artist	Black Line	20.3.12 University Office	10:02 pm	40:35
29. Birch, Ben	Owner, Songwriter	Birch Music Publishing	15.4.11 Skype	10:06 am	46:09
30. Kingsbury, Steve	Owner, Manager	Kingsbury Music	6.5.11 Skype	7:43 pm	59:05
31. Iglar, Brian	Entertainment Attorney	Lester, LLC	20.10.10 Office	3:36 pm	42:31
32. Kostic, Andy	Owner, Manager	Moppy Plate Studios	4.5.11 Office	7:25 pm	16:25
33. Hoyer, Stenny	Owner Manager	Hoyer Music	15.6.11 Office	12:15 pm	1:02:39
34. Willshot, Steven	Personal Manager	Steven Willshot	7.7.11 Office	2:33 pm	56:34
35. Axiom, Sandy	Owner, Manager	Shiny Penny Productions	7.8.11 Office	9:03 am	45:34
36. Williams, Xander	Assistant	Shiny Penny Productions	7.8.11 Office	10:01 am	30:56

Appendix B – List of Codes

<i>Descriptive Label</i>	<i>Code</i>
<u>A BOURDIEU THEORY OF PRACTICE - THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK</u>	
BC: Field	FD
<u>Demand Uncertainty</u>	FD: DH
DU: Influence of fixed and sunk costs	FD: DU-SUNK
DU: Risk assessment (use of options in contracts)	FD: DU-RISK
<u>Connection to Creator</u>	
CC: 'Art of art's sake' influence	FD: CC-ART
CC: Avoidance of 'humdrum' commerce	FD: CC-HUM
<u>Diversity of skills to create, market and promote product</u>	
SD: Choosing of 'team inputs' influence	FD: SD-CHO
SD: Sustaining 'team inputs'	FD: SD-SUS
<u>Infinite Variety (endless supply of product)</u>	
IV: Uniqueness quality	FD: IV-UNIQ
<u>Unpredictability of quality and control</u>	
QC: Decisions to use 'A' list inputs	FD: QC-AIN
QC: Decisions to use 'B' list inputs	FD: QC-BIN
<u>Temporal Coordination</u>	
TC: Timing decisions and coordination	FD: TC-DEC
TC: Economic impacts	FD: TC-ECON

<u>Ars Longa (Limited time to exploit)</u>	
AL: Time considerations to exploit	FD: AL-TIME
AL: Capacity to exploit copyrights	FD: AL-CAPA
BC: Habitus – Individual Dispositions	BC-HI
<u>Bias</u>	
BI: Belief Bias (Based on personal beliefs)	HI: BI-BELI
BI: Hindsight Bias	HI: BI-HIND
BI: Omission Bias	HI: BI-OMM
BI: Confirmation Bias	HI: BI-CONF
<u>Aggrandisement</u>	
AG: Personal	HI: AG-PERS
Name Dropping	
Prominent artists that have been worked with	HI: AG-PERSNDA
Prominent Producers that have been worked with	HI: AG-PERSNDP
Prominent companies worked for or with	HI: AG-PERSNDC
Prominent Positions Held	HI: AG-PERSPH
Exaggeration of Truth	HI: AG-PERSEX
<u>Past Experience</u>	
Negative Past experience	HI: EXPN
Positive past experience	HI: EXPP
<u>Heuristics</u>	
HE: Representativeness	HI: HE-REPR
HE: Availability	HI: HE-AVAIL
HE: Anchoring and Adjustment	HI: HE-ANAD
<u>Personal Characteristics</u>	

PC: Age	HI: PC-AGE
PC: Cognitive Abilities	HI: PC-COG
PC: Socio Economic status	HI: PC-SES
PC: Hubris	HI: PC-HUB
PC: Ability to Take on Risk and Uncertainty	HI: PC-RISK
<u>Intuitive</u>	
IN: Gut Feelings	HI: IN-GUT
<u>External Influence</u>	
Books, Trades	HI: EIBOOKS
Conferences	HI: EICONF
Artists	HI: EIART
<u>Reputation</u>	HI: REPUHIHF
<u>Vision (For the Future)</u>	HI: VISION
<u>Actor Personal History</u>	HI: PH
Propensity Towards Career	HI: PH-PTC
Early Success	HI: PH-ES
BC: Habitus – Company Specific	BC-HF
<u>Aggrandisement</u>	
AG: Business	HF: AG-BUS
AG: Chart Rankings	HF: AG-CR
AG: Firm Ranking	HF: AG-FR
AG: Firm Ranking - Objectified	HF: AG-FROB
AG: Firm Size	HF: AG-FS
AG: Firm Associations/Business Dealings/Networks	HF: AG-FAN

AG: Firm association within business cluster	HF: AG-FIRMA
AG: Clientele	HF: AG-CLIENT
<u>Bounded Rational Behaviour</u>	
BR: Bounded by time and resources	HF: BR-TIME
BR: Limited ability to be comprehensive	HF: BR-ABIL
BR: Incomplete Information	HF: BR-INCO
BR: Incremental	HF: BR-INCR
BR: Non-linear and iterative	HF: BR-ITER
BR: Accepting of alternative as “good enough”	HF: BR-GOOD
<u>Rational</u>	
RA: Comprehensive	HF: RA-COMP
RA: Linear	HF: RA-LINE
RA: Logical and analytical	HF: RA-LOG
RA: Systematic	HF: RA-SYS
<u>Internal Influence</u>	
II: Positional Influence	HF: II-POSI
II: Colleague Influence	HF: II-COL
II: Emergent Behaviour	HF: II-EMER
Encouraged Disagreement	HF: DISAG
Encouraged Consensus	HF: CONCEN
Competition	HF: EICOMP
BC: Social Capital	BC-SC
External Advisors or Consultants	SC: EADV
External Stakeholders	SC: ESTAK

Internal Stakeholders (Staff)	SC: ISTAK
Networks	SC: NET
References	SC: REF
Social Media Membership	SC: SM
LinkedIn	SC: SMLI
Facebook	SC: SMFB
Professional Organisation Membership	SC: MEMB
N.A.R.A.S.	SC: NARAS
Close Personal Relationships	SC: PERS
Spiritual Relationships	SC: SPIR
Casual Conversations	SC: CONV
BC: Symbolic Capital	BC-SYMC
Branding	SYMC: BRAND
Reputation	SYMC: REPU
Objectified:	SYMC: OB
Artefacts – Trades	SYMC: OBTRAD
Artefacts - Charts	SYMC: OBCHRT
Artefacts – Grammy Award	SYMC: OBGRMY
Artefacts – Certification Records (Gold, Platinum)	SYMC: OBCERT
Artefacts – SoundScan Rankings	SYMC: OBSNDS
Embodied	SYMC: EMB
Institutionalised	SYMC: INST
Award Shows	SYMC: INSTAS
‘Breaking an Artist’	SYMC: BREAK
BC: Economic Capital	BC-ECONC
Low Economic Capital	ECONC: LOW
Modest Economic Capital	ECONC: MOD
High Economic Capital	ECONC: HIGH

Cash	ECONC: CASH
Stocks/Securities	ECONC: SEC
Bonds	ECONC: BOND
BC: Cultural Capital	BC-CULTC
Objectified	CULTC: OB
Studio Equipment	CULTC: OBST
Other	CULTC: OBOT
Embodied	CULTC: EMB
Knowledge	CULTC: EMBK
General	CULTC: EMBK-G
Field (Industry)	CULTC: EMBK-I
Skills	CULTC: EMBK-S
Advantages	CULTC: EMBK-A
Institutionalised	CULTC: INSTIT
BC: Doxa	BC-DOXA
Percentage for management	BC-DOXAM
Shifting Promotion Landscape	BC-DOXAPR
Radio Promotion	BC-DOXRAD
BC: Interest	BC-INT
BC: Hysteresis	BC-HYS

Appendix C – List of Interview Questions and Disclosures

Disclosure

The purpose of this interview is to take a closer look at how you and your employees make (big) strategic decisions your firm. In addition to two key (big) strategic decisions that have been made, I will be investigating six other decisions from three other firms. A total of eight decisions and the businesses in which they were made will be investigated using interviews (all members of the firm that are involved actively or passively in making (big) strategic decisions for the company), direct observation, and document data sources. Your expertise and experience in the field will be beneficial to better understand how to improve the decision-making process as it relates to the recorded music industry, especially in this turbulent and dynamic market. In order to do my study effectively, I would ask of no more than an hour of your time for an in-depth semi-structured interview. In addition, I would like to examine any secondary sources that may have contributed or were involved in making this big decision. This is for pursuance of a degree from the University of Westminster and I understand that all conversations will be confidential and the use of pseudonyms will be used in the reporting of the results.

Statement of Research Objectives

The objectives listed below will assist in an effort to better understand how recorded music industry micro-enterprises make decisions.

Objective 1: How are (big) strategic decisions made in recorded music industry micro-enterprises and small enterprises in the U.S.?

Objective 2: Does the strategic decision-making practice within this field differ in relation to actors and firms in other fields?

Objective 3: Using Bourdieu's conceptualisation of decision-making as interplay between social, cultural and economic capital, habitus, and field, and what are the key influences on decision choices in a cultural and creative industry?

Example: Case Study 1 – Strategic Decision Practice (Process)#1

Micro (Agency, dispositions, capital): Actor

Meso (Habitus): Firm

Macro (Structure, Objective, Field): Industry

Proposed Data Sources:

1. Phase1 - Initial CEO Interview
2. Phase 2 - Interviews from other members of the firm or stakeholders involved in the decision
3. Other Sources (Including the use of artefacts, information about external stakeholders or objectified capital surrounding the decision, i.e. charts, internal documents (when available) industry documents, etc...)

Demographic Characteristics

1. What is your gender?
 - A. Male
 - B. Female
2. What is your age?
 - A. 18-24
 - B. 25-34
 - C. 35-44
 - D. 45-54
 - E. 55+
3. How would you best describe your social class?
 - A. Lower
 - B. Working
 - C. Middle
 - D. Upper Middle
 - E. Upper
1. What would best describe your ethnic background?
2. How many other individuals are currently employed in your business?

3. What year was your business established?
4. What industry sectors do you operate within? (Mark all that apply)
 - ____Recording
 - ____Production
 - ____Marketing and Distribution
 - ____Publishing
 - ____Management
 - ____Booking
 - ____Merchandising
 - ____Other (Please describe below)
5. Highest degree obtained?
 - High School Diploma or Equivalent
 - 2-year associates degree
 - 4-year bachelor's degree
 - Master's degree
 - J.D.
 - PhD or equivalent
6. What was your degree(s) emphasis?
7. How long have you worked in this industry? What other experience do you have in this industry?

Interview Questions – Owner/Manager/CEO

I want you to think about two big decisions that you had to make in the past two years that have had or you anticipate having a big impact on your business.

1. Can you describe to me a bit about your company, where you've come from, key accomplishments, how you've changed since you've started, etc...?
2. What is the legal name of your business?
3. Are there other businesses that exist under this umbrella? If so, what are the names, how would you 'classify' them and what is the legal entity associated with it?
4. What would you consider to be your firm's competitive strategy, distinctive competencies, competitors and overall performance?
5. Can you describe to me a big decision that you had to make in the past two years that had an impact on your business? What kind of resources were needed or allocated to make this happen? Why? Social, Economic, Network, Technological?
6. What was the outcome of this decision? Was the outcome better than, worse or what you expected? Are you still anticipating a specific outcome? Why?
7. How has this decision impacted the workplace environment?
8. How much of your success in the industry is based upon that decision?
9. Do you feel there is an inherent 'structure' or 'way of doing things' in this business that influences how or what decisions you take? Past experiences, certain expectations? What do you feel you can control vs. what you can't?
10. Do you feel there are restrictions or limits in the way in which you make decisions? Do you wish you could do more? Why? How could or would you do that?
11. What role does your current financial position or potential financial position play in how you make important decisions? How about your 'level of success' or position in the industry? How important is the influence upon your social network?

12. Does your competition influence how or what decision you make? How? Why?
13. When a big decision needs to be made that may have a substantial impact on your business, do you evaluate different options or potential outcomes? Do you use financial or quantitative analysis tools to help you determine the monetary implications? How long did it take you to decide on a particular option? Has this amount of time changed in the past 10 years? How do you feel you ultimately came to a final decision? Was there a particular 'a-ha' moment?
14. Whom do you consult with, if anyone, before you make a big decision? Why?
15. Why do you think is important to keep in mind when considering a new strategic direction or making a big direction? Why is this important?
16. Are there any external sources that you consult with or use for analysis before you make a decision? Why?
17. Do you belong to any professional organisations or clubs? If so which ones? Why? Has belonging to one of these organisations influenced your decision making process in any way – directly or indirectly? Why?
18. How do you deal with the 'demand' uncertainty and rapidly changing conditions inherent in this business? How do you manage the uncertainties that come with the temperament of the creative individual like an artist? Do you plan for these uncertainties and do they influence which direction you decide to go?
19. What do you think would help you in making better decisions?

Interview Questions – Employee

1. Can you describe to me a bit about yourself, where you've come from, key accomplishments, how you have changed since you have started, education, etc...?
2. What would you consider to be your firm's competitive strategy, distinctive competencies, competitors and overall performance?
3. What is the functional strategy of his or her area? What do you do?
4. What is the frequency and nature of interaction with each other member of the team?
5. *Discuss specific strategic decision discussed by firm owner/ceo.*
6. How do you feel this decision was made? Who or what was involved in this decision? Do you think it was a good/right decision/direction taken considering your understanding of the organisations goals? What kind of resources were needed or allocated to make this happen? Why? Social, Economic, Network, Technological?
7. What was the outcome of this decision/direction? Was the outcome better than, worse or what you expected? Are you still anticipating a specific outcome? Why?
8. How has this decision impacted the workplace environment?
9. How much of your success in the industry is based upon that decision?
10. Do you feel there is an inherent 'structure' or 'way of doing things' in this business that influences how or what decisions you take? Past experiences, certain expectations? What do you feel you can control vs. what you can't?
11. Do you feel there are restrictions or limits in the way in which decisions are made? Do you wish you could do more? Why? How could or would you do that?
12. What role does the company's financial position or potential financial position play in how you make important decisions? How about the company's 'level of success' or position in the industry? How important is the influence upon your social network?
13. Does your competition influence how or what decision you make? How? Why?
14. When a big decision needs to be made that may have a substantial impact on your business, are different options or potential outcomes discussed

with you or anyone else that works here? Do you know if any uses financial or quantitative analysis tools to help you determine the monetary implications? If they do, do you think that is effective? Whom do you consult with, if anyone, before you make a big decision? Why?

15. What do you think is important to keep in mind when considering a new strategic direction or making a big direction? Why is this important?
16. Are there any external sources that you consult with or use for analysis before you make a decision? Why?
17. Do you belong to any professional organisations or clubs? If so which ones? Why? Has belonging to one of these organisations influenced your decision making process in any way – directly or indirectly? Why?
18. How do you deal with the 'demand' uncertainty and rapidly changing conditions inherent in this business? How do you manage the uncertainties that come with the temperament of the creative individual like an artist? Do you plan for these uncertainties and do they influence which direction you decide to go?
19. What do you think would help you in making better decisions?

