

ADVERTISING & MARKETING

Be My Guest: Turning the Tables on Music Marketing

Once, the music industry looked in danger of being decimated by the internet. But now musicians are deploying their brand power. Stylus interviews Raphael Aflalo of Paris-based Be My Guest - a new music marketing agency that builds links between stars and advertisers.



Raphael Aflalo of Be My Guest and Cathy Guetta

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“I realised that musicians are a combination of brand and medium. They have a strong identity and values, like all the best brands, but they also create and broadcast content across a wide range of media platforms to extremely loyal audiences” says Be My Guest’s Raphael Aflalo

When French digital marketing expert Raphael Aflalo went to a soirée at a Corsican nightspot hosted by the DJ David Guetta, he noticed something special. “People weren’t dancing in the usual haphazard way,” he says. “They were all facing the stage, where David was behind the turntables. It was more like a rock concert than a nightclub. I realised that David was not just a DJ – he was an icon.”

Intrigued, Aflalo crunched the numbers on Guetta, who is also a prolific producer of house music tracks. What he discovered did not entirely surprise him: Guetta had 12 million fans on Facebook and one million Twitter followers. His videos were among the most watched on YouTube. And Aflalo was already aware of the massively popular club dates organised by Guetta’s wife Cathy (“Queen of the Parisian night”) under the brand name ‘F*** me, I’m Famous’.

Aflalo left a message at the Guettas’ hotel. Soon, they were talking about going into business together.

The result is **Be My Guest** – a new music marketing agency that builds links between stars and advertisers. Aflalo heads the outfit along with Cathy Guetta, who brings her considerable networking and event organising skills to bear.

Musicians as Brands - More Powerful Than Athletes or Actors

"I realised that musicians are a combination of brand and medium," says Aflalo. "They have a strong identity and values, like all the best brands, but they also create and broadcast content across a wide range of media platforms to extremely loyal audiences."

He observes that, as brands, musicians are even more powerful than athletes or actors. "The appeal of a footballer or an actor is very broad, demographically speaking. But musicians have easily identifiable, perfectly segmented audiences. Their following is tribal. That makes them easier to sell to clients, who always want to know exactly who their message will reach."



Be My Guest Logo

"Fly Me - I'm Famous"

One of the first deals sealed by the agency is between the Guettas and the Spanish budget airline Vueling. Throughout the vacation season, starting on May 26, flights to Ibiza from major European capitals will feature music created by Guetta – he'll personally DJ on some flights – while aircraft will be branded with the slogan: 'Fly me, I'm famous'. In a side deal, fashion house and cosmetics brand Givenchy will hand out samples of its youth-oriented Play fragrance during the flights.



Be My Guest's first deal is with David and Cathy Guetta and Spanish budget airline Vueling

Later this summer, IT company Hewlett Packard will team up with the DJ to promote its new tablet computer, placing the product in a series of web videos featuring the Guettas touring the nightspots of the world.

Aflalo expects other stars to join his roster shortly. "It's a sort of revenge for musicians whose income vanished when consumers began downloading music illegally. Even now, a gold disc will only earn you about €30,000, so you have to find alternative revenue streams. But the web – particularly social media – has helped musicians become brands in their own right, as well as bringing them closer to fans."

Cost Per Recommendation - Monetising a Star's Brand Power

Be My Guest will also counsel musicians (and eventually artists, chefs, and, yes, sports stars and actors) on how to build their brands online. Aflalo stresses: "We're not trying to compete with the music labels – in fact we're here to advise them. They aren't digital marketing specialists, so we can complement their skills."

Aflalo has been involved in digital marketing since the early days of the internet. He set up his own agency in 1999, selling it to the French advertising mastodon Publicis in 2007. Officially, he's still director general of agency OMG Digital. "Be My Guest is an entirely separate entity, but for the time being I'm keeping my day job," he says. "And of course, we may use some of OMG's audience measurement tools to determine the impact of product placements in David's videos."



David Guetta - One Love Album Cover

Aflalo has come up with a way of monetising a star's brand power. "In the old days we used to talk about 'cost per thousand' TV viewers, or 'cost per impression' on websites. But now I think it's all about CPR – cost per recommendation. When stars recommend products directly to their fans, that's worth something."

ARTICLE REFERENCES

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