

SoundsUnite by AudioWorks Inc.: An Entrepreneurship Case in the Music Industry

James Moore
Wilfrid Laurier University

Jackie Dean
Wilfrid Laurier University

ABSTRACT

This case presents a unique opportunity for students to contribute to an established company in the Canadian music industry. The company, well-funded and resourced, is facing technical challenges in completing its product and a competitive market upon its launch. Students are invited to provide recommendations on product development and marketing, with a key focus on managing within budget constraints.

Keywords: entrepreneurship, music, Canada, product, development, marketing



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THE CASE

It was a hot Friday summer afternoon and AudioWorks Inc. CEO Brian Huston was happy to retreat to the cool confines of his office at Metal Works Studios in Mississauga, Ontario, Canada. Brian, Metal Works CEO Gil Moore, and sound engineer Noel Cadastre had formed Audioworks several years earlier for the purposes of developing SoundsUnite, a solution to the rapidly evolving needs of emerging musicians. Profiles of the three founders can be found in Exhibit 1. A profile of the Metal Works group of companies can be found in Exhibit 2.

Over the years, Brian, Gil, and Noel have taken an active interest in the development of the Canadian music industry. They had grown to love their work. They realized that the more musical talent Canada developed, the more prosperous and rewarding their own businesses and careers would be. Motivated by their desire to further develop the Canadian music industry, Brian, Gill, and Noel formed AudioWorks Incorporated to develop an app called SoundsUnite. This unique app, which works on all major platforms (PC, Mac, Android, IOS), provides a platform for musicians to learn, collaborate and protect their work. Through their connections in the industry, the founders were able to attract top level partners. First, the RBC Foundation, through RBCXMusic and RBC Emerging Artists joined as a funding partner. Next, Microsoft joined the SoundsUnite venture through the Microsoft Partners Program and the Microsoft for Start-Ups Founders Hub. Microsoft provides technical assistance in the development of the SoundsUnite application.

The three founders have several objectives related to SoundsUnite. They would like to assist in the development of the Canadian and international music scene. They would like SoundsUnite to be the go-to platform for musicians looking to learn, collaborate and record. From a financial perspective, they would like to turn the application into a profitable venture or at the very least, a self-sustaining venture that can fund its own future development. Future investment is possible, but it needs to be justified. They would also like to partner with other organizations to advance the app and the Canadian music community. Potential partners could be financial and development partners but also not-for-profit organizations that could help to advance Audioworks agenda of growing the Canadian music community.

For videos on the founders' intentions for SoundsUnite please see [How did SoundsUnite come to be? - YouTube](#) and [Noel Cadastre | A Message from SoundsUnite Co-Founder & Chief Music Officer - YouTube](#)

THE GLOBAL AND CANADIAN MUSIC INDUSTRY: FACTS AND TRENDS

The emergence of music streaming has had a dramatic impact on the music industry. Prior to the emergence of streaming services, consumers purchased products like compact disks. The artist received a set amount of revenue at the time of the sale regardless of how many times the consumer subsequently played the music. The emergence of streaming converted artist revenue streams to a pay per listen model resulting in artists making money based on how often their songs are played.

Initially the impact was very negative. Global music revenue declined sharply from 1999 to 2013. Recent trends are much more positive. In 2022 the global music industry had revenue of U.S. \$26.2 billion, up 9.0% from 2021. Table 1 provides further information on the growth and composition of global music revenue from 1999-2022.

Canada's music market grew by 12.6% in 2021, to a total of US\$583.6 Million, making it the eighth largest market in the world. Canada's growth was driven by an 18% increase in streaming, which includes a 15.6% increase in paid subscription streaming, and 29.1% and 28.2% gains in ad-supported audio streaming and ad-supported video streaming, respectively. Physical format revenue increased by 11.4% in 2021, to a total of US\$66.3 Million, the seventh highest ranking in the world¹.

The following significant changes have occurred within the music industry over the past twenty years:

1. **Digital Transformation.** The rise of the internet and digital technologies has significantly impacted the music industry. The shift from physical formats such as CDs to digital formats like MP3s and streaming services has changed the way music is consumed and monetized. Despite initial challenges due to piracy and illegal downloading, the industry has shown remarkable resilience. The emergence of legal digital music platforms, such as iTunes and later streaming services like Spotify, Apple Music, and YouTube Music, has not only helped revive the industry but also provided new revenue streams.
2. **Streaming Services.** Streaming has become the dominant mode of music consumption in recent years. The convenience and affordability of streaming platforms have led to a significant increase in revenue for the music industry. Subscription-based streaming services, combined with advertising revenue from free tier options, have been a major contributor to the industry's growth. Streaming has not only allowed for broader access to music but also facilitated a shift from ownership-based models to access-based models, promising a bright future for the industry.
3. **Changes in Consumer Behavior.** The way consumers engage with music has evolved over time. The advent of digital music and streaming services has provided consumers with greater flexibility and convenience in accessing music. With the proliferation of smartphones and mobile devices, music consumption has become more mobile and personalized. These changes in consumer behavior have influenced revenue streams, with artists and industry stakeholders adapting to new consumption patterns. Consumer habits have also changed with the emergence of streaming. Previously, consumers typically purchased music in their teens and twenties and then stopped. Older consumers are increasingly purchasing music. However, the youth market still dominates.
4. **Live Music and Concerts.** Live music performances and concerts have become an increasingly important revenue source for the music industry. Artists and musicians often rely on live events to generate income, as they offer unique experiences that cannot be replicated digitally. The growth of the live music sector, including music festivals and touring, has contributed to overall industry revenue.
5. **Globalization and Emerging Markets.** The expansion of the music industry into emerging markets, such as China, India, and Latin America, has had a significant impact on revenue growth. Increased access to music and rising disposable incomes in these regions have created new market opportunities. Furthermore, licensing deals with digital platforms and streaming services in various countries have expanded revenue streams for the industry.
6. **Technological change.** The emergence of new technologies, such as artist-accessible Digital Audio Workstations (DAW) has also impacted the music industry. Artists are more able

¹ Music Canada, [IFPI releases Global Music Report 2022, capturing the innovation-driven music market trends in Canada and around the globe - Music Canada](#)

to record and edit their own music. Electronic artists can produce music without playing instruments by arranging pre-recorded sounds (virtual instruments, drum machines, etc.) and utilizing DAW features (loops, drum machines, etc.). A description of Digital Audio Workstations, their capabilities, and users are included in Exhibit 3.

THE RECORDED MUSIC INDUSTRY²

Most musicians are not skilled in the business aspects of their profession, so they rely on a team to get their music to market and gain an income. A personal manager is typically employed and receives approximately 15% of the artist's gross revenue. Personal managers are responsible for arranging and maximizing recording deals, assisting in the creative process, arranging tours and shows, and promoting the artist. Business managers are employed to collect revenue, pay bills, and manage investments and taxes. Business managers are either paid flat fees, hourly fees, or a percentage of the artist's revenues (typically 5%).

There are three major record companies: Universal, Sony, and Warner. Record companies function to produce, distribute, and market music. Prior to streaming, record companies were responsible for producing compact discs and vinyl records and distributing them to record shops as well as marketing the artist and their recordings. Prior to streaming, it was difficult for musicians to function without a record company. With the emergence of streaming, record companies have become less significant because it is possible for artists to sign deals with streaming services without the assistance of a record company. Record companies still play a significant role in promoting artists and getting their music played on streaming services and radio. Recording companies make significant investments in artists by paying studio costs, engaging in marketing and advancing funds. In return, record companies take a sizeable cut of artist revenues. Depending on the profile of the artist, the artist will receive 15- 20 percent of the revenue from the sale of the artist's product. The record company keeps the rest.

THE SOUNDSUNITE APP

Three pain points exist for emerging artists:

1. Lack of a music cloud ecosystem. Largely unserved youth are unable to study music, create music or collaborate on mobile devices.
2. Local collaboration is old world and restrictive. Existing platforms don't allow "in sync" recording and production among emerging artists.
3. The free music instruction that is available on the internet is of low quality and does not help learners to succeed.

The SoundsUnite App aims to address these three pain points by creating a high-quality application that works on any device (PC, Apple, Android, IOS). The app is available for desktop computers as a web application at www.soundsunite.com. For Android and IOS users, the app is available on the App Store. There are currently two membership levels: a free Silver level membership and a Gold level membership with advanced content for \$9.99 a month³. A platinum-level membership is also available for \$19.99 a month, which will include Master's Class lessons featuring prominent musicians and sound engineers.

² Passman, Donald S. All you Need to Know About the Music Business. 2019. Simon & Schuster, New York. ISMN 978-I-50111-2218-7.

³ Sign up for Silver level then use the free code RBCXMUSIC for a free upgrade.

Current Functionality

The app has been recently launched but has not yet achieved its intended full functionality as development continues. Currently, the app consists mainly of lessons and shared content.

The app currently contains three content areas that are consistent with SoundsUnite's motto: "Learn, Create and Share, Anytime, Anywhere, Any Device." The current capabilities of each content area and future plans are summarized below:

Content Area and Objectives	Current Capabilities
Learn. The Learn area provides instruction on all aspects of music, including playing, composition, mixing, and the music business. The objective is to improve aspiring artists' knowledge.	The Learn function of the app currently allows users to access lessons provided by Metal Works Institute, MusicCounts Learn, and Music Canada/Connect.
Create. The create area is intended to assist musicians in creating and collaborating on musical projects.	No current functions.
Discover. The discover area allows users to discover music created by emerging and established artists.	Videos of a few artists are currently available.

Planned enhancements are described in Exhibit 4. For a good demonstration of what the app will eventually do, visit https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Cjb3MgZ_JLM. For a conceptual image of how SoundsUnite will allow artists to collaborate, see Exhibit 5.

SoundsUnite Development Process

Audioworks has put together an impressive technical team to develop the SoundsUnite app. Profiles of the SoundsUnite Development team can be found in Exhibit 6.

The Metal Works group of companies have put their full weight behind SoundsUnite. The development team works at the Metal Works facilities in Mississauga or remotely. Metal Works provides its facilities free of charge and does not charge for the use of its equipment. If SoundsUnite uses Metal Works employees, SoundsUnite only reimburses for the cost of the employees' salary for the proportion of time spent on SoundsUnite. There is no service markup.

Audioworks has developed two proprietary technologies that it feels will differentiate its products from its competitors⁴. The first technology is the Audiolog sync technology. Audiolog allows users to save their entire project in the cloud. Audiolog allows for minimal data transfer because it only updates portions of the project that have changed rather than requiring a data-intensive resaving of the entire project. Multiple artists can track changes simultaneously during the development process. The second technology, Media Cluster, is a closed-source digital audio container format intended to act as a big-data package, not intended for streaming but for ease of sharing audio content and securing all files within SoundsUnite only. It will also be able to convert audio files into multiple formats.

⁴ [Audioworks Inc. | Revolutionizing Music Technology](#)

COMPETITION

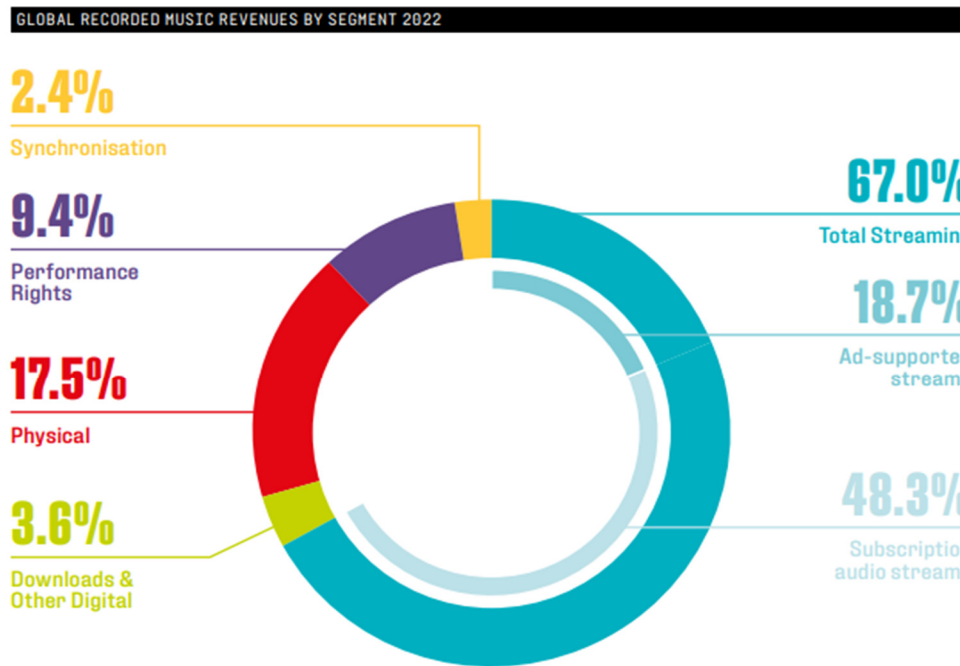
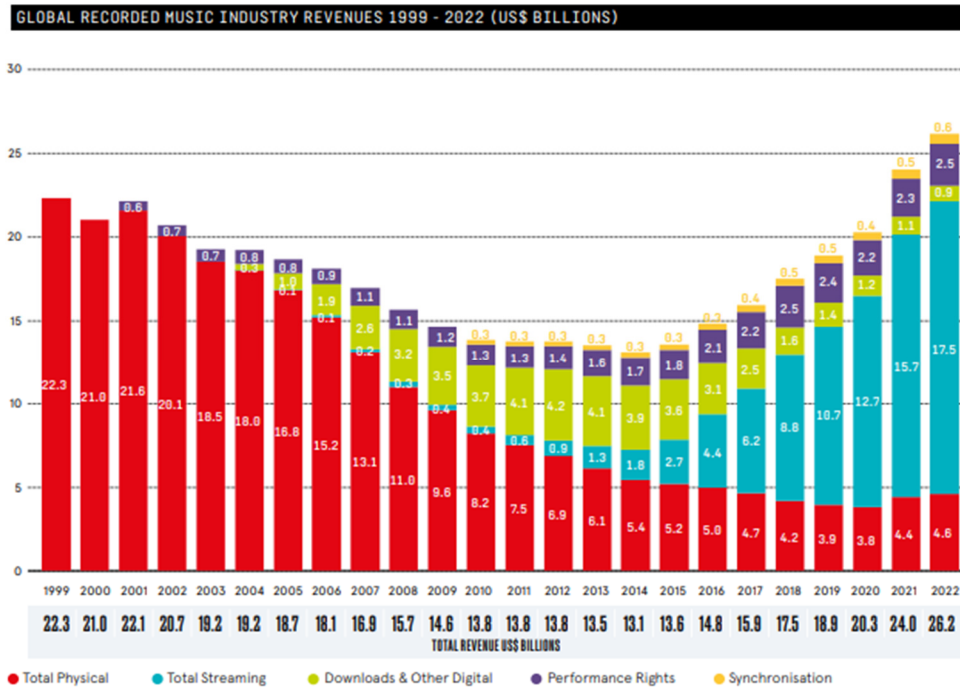
SoundsUnite faces considerable competition from established industry players that exist in the learn, create, collaboration and artist services space. Major competitors in these four areas are described in Exhibit 7. These competitors have strong market positions and many loyal users, but they tend to exist in silos such as learning, digital audio workspace, collaboration, or artist services without addressing the other needs of artists. A big problem with online music learning is that many online learning sources are of low quality because users post their own content, and there are no quality controls. SoundsUnite intends to review all lessons for quality and to only post higher quality offerings. Further, competitor creative platforms are often incompatible, so a musician producing music on one platform is unable to easily upload it onto another platform. Some of the platforms only work on Apple products. Many do not have a mobile option and only work on desktop computers. SoundUnite will work on all devices. File format and transfers can be a big issue for users of these platforms. SoundsUnites use of the Audiolog technology is expected to be a competitive advantage in the file formatting area. Despite the existence of strong competitors, SoundsUnite feels it is in a very good competitive position since its product will more comprehensively serve the needs of artists.

MOVING FORWARD

Audioworks would like to move towards a comprehensive “launch” of the app. Audioworks is targeting the youth market for SoundsUnite. Audioworks is looking for your team’s assistance in mapping out a plan for SoundsUnite’s future. They would like your team’s analysis and recommendations on the following:

1. How should the app be modified from its existing state? Which of the planned features in Exhibit 4 are most important? Are there any additional features that should be added?
2. What should the final app interface look like? How should the many lessons be categorized and structured?
3. How should the app be marketed to SoundUnites youth-oriented target market? How much would the marketing program cost? Your proposals should total no more than \$2 million Cdn.
4. How is SoundsUnite positioned versus rival applications and how can SoundsUnite come out on top?
5. How can SoundsUnite be monetized?
6. Who could Audioworks partner with to advance SoundsUnite?

Table 1 Global Industry Size and Segmentation⁵



⁵ International Federation of the Phonographic Industry, Global Music Report 2023, available at [Resources - IFPI](#)

Exhibit 1
AudioWorks Inc. Founder Profiles

Brian Huston

A Global Entertainment Brand Management Entrepreneur and Creative Strategic Marketing Professional with 25+ years of experience. He has worked with artists like The Rolling Stones, Bon Jovi, INXS, Def Leppard, Hank Williams Jr., The Tragically Hip & Tom Cochrane

Gil Moore

Gil began his music career in his twenties as the drummer of the iconic Canadian hard rock band Triumph. Triumph burst onto the Canadian and international music scene in 1976 with their first album, "Triumph." The band went on to record numerous hit songs, including "Lay it on the Line", "Magic Power," and "Somebody's Out There". Eventually, Triumph ran its course, and the band went into hiatus in 1993. During the band's rise to fame, Gil wisely invested a portion of his earnings in a recording studio in a humble Mississauga commercial strip mall. Gil's initial investment in 1977 grew into Metal Works Studios, Canada's premier recording studio.

Noel Cadastre

Professional audio engineer, exclusively for all OVO artists, including Drake. Noel has won multiple Grammy Awards with Drake. Noel has also worked with Rihanna, Beyonce, Kanye West, Jay Z, Nicki Minaj and Sade. For a profile of Noel, visit [Meet Drake's Engineer & Metalworks Grad Noel Cadastre \(metalworksinstitute.com\)](http://www.meetdrake.com).



Exhibit 2 Metal Works History

Metal Works Studios and Metal Works Institute of Sound and Music Production are two interconnected entities that have played a significant role in the Canadian music industry. Here's an overview of their history and success:

Metal Works Studios was founded in 1978 and is located in Mississauga, Ontario, Canada. It was established by Gil Moore, a renowned Canadian musician and member of the band Triumph. Initially, Metal Works Studios started as a recording studio primarily catering to the rock and metal genres. However, it quickly gained recognition for its state-of-the-art facilities, experienced staff, and exceptional sound quality, attracting a diverse range of artists from various genres. Metal Works Studios had expanded from one recording studio to now occupying almost the entire property it had started on. Metal Works now has multiple studios. The business has been successful due to the quality of Metal Work's studios and the significant energy that Gil has put into attracting and recording Canada's top talent.

Over the years, Metal Works Studios expanded its facilities, becoming one of the largest recording complexes in North America. It boasts multiple studios equipped with advanced recording, mixing, and mastering equipment. The studios have hosted many renowned artists, including Drake, Justin Bieber, Rush, David Bowie, and many more. Metal Works Studios has garnered numerous awards for its technical excellence and has been a preferred choice for recording projects by both local and international artists.

Metal Works Institute of Sound and Music Production was established in 2005 as an educational institution adjacent to Metal Works Studios. It offers comprehensive programs and courses in sound engineering, music production, live sound, and entertainment business. The institute provides students with hands-on training and practical knowledge, preparing them for careers in the music and entertainment industry. Metal Works Institute has a partnership with Wilfrid Laurier University that allows Laurier music students to take sound recording courses at Metal Works Institute. Metal Works Institute is also the leading provider of music lessons in Canada.

The programs at Metal Works Institute are designed to offer a blend of technical expertise, industry knowledge, and artistic creativity. Students have access to the state-of-the-art facilities of Metal Works Studios, allowing them to gain practical experience in a professional environment. The institute also brings in industry professionals as instructors and guest speakers, further enhancing the learning experience.

Both Metal Works Studios and Metal Works Institute have had a significant impact on the music industry and aspiring professionals. Metal Works Studios' reputation for excellent sound quality and top-notch facilities has attracted a wide range of artists, contributing to the success of numerous hit records. Its role as a recording destination for both local and international artists has put it on the map as a world-class recording facility.

Metal Works Institute has successfully trained and educated a new generation of sound engineers, music producers, and industry professionals. The hands-on training and industry connections provided by the institute have helped graduates launch successful careers in the music and entertainment industry. Many alumni have gone on to work with renowned artists, studios, and production companies, making a significant impact on the global music landscape.

Exhibit 3 Digital Audio Workstations

A digital audio workstation (DAW) is a software application used for recording, editing, arranging, and producing digital audio. It serves as a comprehensive toolset for music production and audio post-production. With a DAW, musicians, producers, and audio engineers can create, edit, and manipulate audio tracks in a digital environment, replacing the traditional analog recording studios with digital counterparts.

Major features of a digital audio workstation include:

1. **Multitrack recording.** DAWs allow users to record multiple audio sources simultaneously on separate tracks, enabling the creation of complex arrangements and layering of different instruments or vocals.
2. **Audio editing.** Users can precisely edit audio files by cutting, copying, pasting, trimming, time-stretching, and pitch-shifting. DAWs often include various editing tools to enhance audio quality and fix imperfections.
3. **MIDI sequencing:** Digital audio workstations support MIDI (Musical Instrument Digital Interface) data, enabling users to create and edit MIDI tracks, control virtual instruments, and trigger synthesizers and samplers.
4. **Virtual instruments and effects.** DAWs come with a wide range of built-in virtual instruments (synthesizers, drum machines, etc.) and audio effects (reverb, EQ, compression, etc.), allowing users to manipulate and enhance their audio creatively.
5. **Mixing and automation.** DAWs provide a mixing environment where users can adjust the volume, panning, and other parameters of individual tracks. Automation features enable users to program changes over time, automating volume, effects, and other settings for dynamic and precise control.
6. **Plugins support.** DAWs can integrate third-party plugins, expanding their functionality with specialized audio effects, instruments, and tools developed by external companies.
7. **Audio file export.** Finished projects can be exported in various formats, such as WAV, MP3, or others, suitable for distribution, playback, or further processing.
8. **Collaborative features.** Some DAWs offer collaboration features that allow multiple users to work on the same project simultaneously or share projects easily.

Digital audio workstations are used by a wide range of professionals and enthusiasts, including:

1. **Music producers.** They use DAWs to compose, record, and arrange music, as well as mix and master tracks to achieve a polished final product.
2. **Musicians and composers.** DAWs enable them to create and edit their music, experiment with different sounds and arrangements, and produce professional-quality recordings.
3. **Audio engineers.** They use DAWs for audio post-production tasks, including editing and mixing sound for film, TV shows, video games, and other multimedia projects.
4. **Podcasters.** DAWs are commonly used for recording, editing, and producing podcasts, adding music and effects, and creating a cohesive final product.
5. **Sound designers.** DAWs are essential for creating and manipulating sound effects and designing audio elements for various media projects.
6. **DJs and electronic music producers.** DAWs play a crucial role in their creative process, allowing them to craft original tracks and mix music for performances.

Exhibit 4
Planned Future Enhancements

Planned enhancements in the learn area include the following

1. Premium online education content with over 1,000 lessons.
2. One on one teaching. 2024
3. Group lessons. 2024
4. Virtual classrooms. 2024
5. Edutainment. Games, get into hospitals, mental health helps, create a game based learning tool

Planned enhancements in the Create area include the following

1. Beatmaker.
2. Virtual instruments.
3. Loops/samples.
4. Import/export tracks.
5. Video chat.
6. Audio/MIDI recorder.
7. Stem mixer.
8. Time stretcher.
9. Clip/track automation.
10. Media Cluster Proprietary File Format and Storage.
11. Audiolog Proprietary Project Sync Technology.

Tools for artists to collaborate and publish their work will include the following

1. E-Commerce store to buy and sell loops and samples.
2. Works registration (copyright, royalty).
3. Digital distribution.
4. Music publishing and licensing.
5. Live show bookings.
6. Community rooms, both public and private.
7. Professional Services that allow users to connect and collaborate with vetted talent for their project, including mixing and mastering engineers and session musicians.
8. Radio / Video Placement Submissions.

Exhibit 5
SoundsUnite Collaboration Diagram



GlobalCollaborationwithSoundsUnite

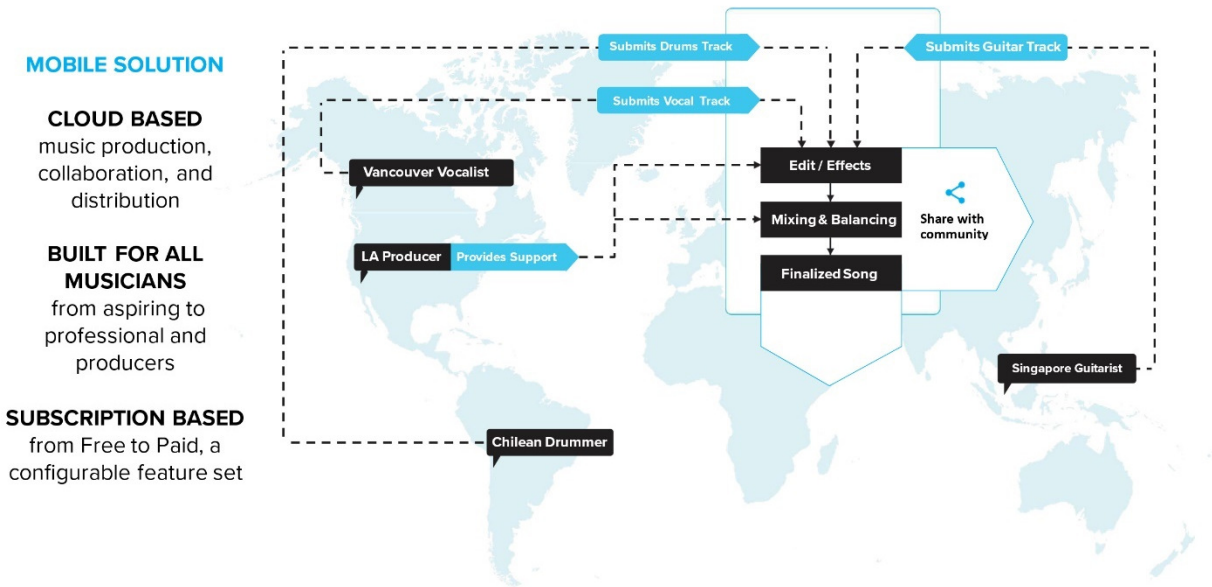


Exhibit 6 SoundsUnite Development Team Profiles

The SoundsUnite Development Team consists of the following individuals

HAIG BEYLERIAN – PRODUCT MANAGER⁶

Haig Beylerian is a Canadian-Armenian guitarist, multi-instrumentalist and composer from Toronto, Canada. Haig has a Bachelor of Music in Classical Guitar Performance from Dalhousie University. Haig has toured across North America as a guitarist, composed and played music for film and theatre, and has appeared on several records as a composer and session guitarist. His records Solo Guitar, Armenian Folk Music for Guitar and Armenian Folk Music for Guitar Vol. 2 are available on all major streaming platforms.

TYRONE MELKIOTY – TECHNICAL LEAD⁷

Tyrone Melikioty has over 10 years experience working in software development. Since joining AudioWorks, Tyrone has developed the system know as Audiolog; a version control system for DAWs (digital audio workstation).

SANTIAGO DE LEON – SENIOR SOFTWARE DEVELOPER⁸

Santiago de Leon is a software developer based in Montevideo, Uruguay. Santiago studied computer science at the Unvirsidad Catolica del Uruguay.

AARON DEROCHE – UX/UI MANAGER

Aaron has worked at AudioWorks since 2021. He is an experienced designer and JS/React interface developer. Aaron attended George Brown College.

NOLAN VERNON – SOFTWARE DEVELOPER

Nolan Vernon is an audio software designer based out of New York. Nolan studied audio technology at the Stevens Institute of Technology in New Jersey.

MAHSHID AGHANIA – SOFTWARE DEVELOPER⁹

Mashid Aghania is a software developer with experience in programming languages including JavaScript, Node JS, C++, and Python. Mashid attended the University of Lethbridge. Mashid has a strong understanding of architecture, including OOP and full-stack development and experience in blockchain technologies such as Ethereum, XYO, and Solana. Mashid has a deep understanding of web development, particularly using JavaScript and experience working with SQL and Mango DB, which enables her to create seamless user experiences that not only look great but also function flawlessly.

JACOB SCHUMANN – DIGITAL MARKETING MANAGER

Jacob Schumann recently joined AudioWorks having previously worked at Cboe Canada. Jacob attended the University of Waterloo where he studied Global Business and Digital Arts. Jacob has experience in digital marketing, product development and UX/UI design.

RODOLFO ORTIZ – SOFTWARE DEVELOPER¹⁰

Rodolfo Ortiz Torres is an audio software developer. Rodolfo attended the Universidad Nacional Autonoma de Mexico.

⁶ [Bio — Haig Beylerian](#)

⁷ [Tyrone Melkioty - Web Developer - Audioworks Technologies | LinkedIn](#)

⁸ [Santiago de León - Software Developer \(doyoubuzz.com\)](#)

⁹ [Mahshid Aghania - University of Lethbridge School of Graduate Studies - Canada | LinkedIn](#)

¹⁰ [Rodolfo Ortiz Torres - Audio software developer - Audioworks Technologies | LinkedIn](#)

BINDU SAI MEKA – DEVOPS MANAGER

Bindu Sai Meka attended the New York Institute of Technology and obtained a Masters of Science in Cybersecurity.



Exhibit 7 Competitors

Online Music Learning Competitors

1. Youtube. Youtube provides thousands of free music lessons. The quality and depth of the lessons vary as they are provided by teachers of varying skill levels. Anyone can create and publish content on Youtube. Youtube has millions of users and is easily accessible.
2. Udemy. Udemy is an online learning platform that offers a wide range of courses, including music-related courses. Users appreciate the vast selection of courses available on Udemy, covering various instruments, genres, and skill levels. However, the quality of courses can vary since anyone can create and publish courses on the platform.
3. Coursera. Coursera partners with top universities and institutions to provide online courses, including music-related topics. Users often appreciate the credibility and quality of the courses offered through Coursera. However, some users find the courses to be more academically oriented, which may not suit everyone's learning preferences.
4. Berklee Online. Berklee Online is the online extension school of Berklee College of Music, focusing on music education. It offers courses, certificate programs, and online degrees. Users often value the reputation and expertise of Berklee College of Music, as well as the interactive nature of their courses. However, the tuition for longer programs can be relatively expensive compared to other platforms.
5. TakeLessons. TakeLessons is an online platform that connects students with music teachers for private lessons. Users appreciate the convenience and flexibility of scheduling lessons with qualified instructors. However, the quality of teachers can vary, and some users may find the pricing to be higher compared to traditional in-person lessons.
6. Skillshare. Skillshare is an online learning community that offers a variety of creative courses, including music-related topics. Users appreciate the affordability and accessibility of Skillshare's subscription-based model, which provides access to a wide range of courses. However, the quality and depth of music courses can vary, as the platform relies on user-generated content.
7. Yousician. Yousician is an online learning platform that works on mobile devices and PCs. Yousician allows users to learn the piano, guitar, ukulele or vocals. A key feature is that Yousician presents the notes or chords to be played on screen. The user plays these notes or chords on their instrument and the program provides feedback (red for incorrect, green for correct) on whether the notes or chords were played properly and on time.

Digital Audio Works (DAW) Competitors

1. Ableton Live. Ableton Live was first released in 2001 and is widely popular among electronic music producers and live performers. It offers a versatile workflow, intuitive interface, and a range of features for composition, recording, arranging, and live performance. Users appreciate its session view for improvisation, extensive library of instruments and effects, and its integration with hardware controllers. Ableton Live has a significant user base. Ableton Live Web: Ableton Live is a renowned DAW, and the web version allows users to create music directly in their web browsers. It offers a streamlined interface and a range of powerful features such as MIDI sequencing, virtual instruments, audio effects, and extensive automation capabilities. Users like its versatility, professional-grade features, and the ability to seamlessly integrate with the desktop version of Ableton Live.

2. **Logic Pro.** Logic Pro is a digital audio workstation (DAW) developed by Apple, primarily used by Mac users. It offers a comprehensive set of tools for recording, editing, and mixing music. Logic Pro is known for its user-friendly interface, powerful MIDI capabilities, virtual instruments, and a vast library of loops and samples.
3. **Pro Tools.** Pro Tools is a widely used industry-standard DAW that is popular among recording studios, professionals, and audio engineers. It offers a robust set of features for recording, editing, mixing, and mastering audio. Pro Tools is favored for its advanced editing capabilities, efficient workflow, and compatibility with a wide range of hardware and plugins.
4. **FL Studio.** FL Studio (Fruity Loops) is a popular DAW among electronic music producers and beatmakers. It features a pattern-based sequencer, a wide variety of virtual instruments, and a vast collection of plugins and effects. FL Studio is known for its user-friendly interface, powerful step sequencer, and strong MIDI capabilities. It has a large user base, especially among electronic music enthusiasts and beginner producers.
5. **GarageBand.** GarageBand is a free music production software developed by Apple, available for macOS and iOS devices. It offers a simplified interface, making it accessible to beginners and casual users. GarageBand includes virtual instruments, loops, and basic recording and editing features. GarageBand users appreciate its ease of use, affordability (since it's included with Apple devices), and its integration with other Apple products and services.
6. **Soundtrap.** Soundtrap is an online music studio that provides a collaborative environment for creating and editing music. Users appreciate its ease of use, as it doesn't require any software installation and allows real-time collaboration with other musicians. It offers a wide range of virtual instruments, loops, and effects, making it suitable for both beginners and experienced musicians.
7. **BandLab.** BandLab is a cloud-based music creation platform that offers a comprehensive set of features for music production. It provides a digital audio workstation (DAW) interface, virtual instruments, a built-in library of samples and loops, and advanced mixing and mastering tools. Artists like its user-friendly interface, collaboration capabilities, and the ability to access projects across different devices.
8. **Splice.** Splice is primarily known for its extensive sample library and collaboration features. It offers a vast collection of high-quality samples, loops, and presets that users can access and integrate into their music projects. Users like the ability to browse and download individual samples and the platform's focus on fostering collaboration among musicians.
9. **Soundation.** Soundation is an online music production platform that offers a range of features for creating, mixing, and sharing music. It provides a user-friendly interface, a wide variety of virtual instruments, loops, and effects, as well as a collaborative environment. Users appreciate its simplicity, accessibility, and the option to upgrade to a premium version for additional features.

Collaboration Competitors

1. **Splice.** Splice is a collaborative platform that allows musicians to work on projects together. It offers features such as cloud-based storage, version control, and the ability to upload and share project files. Splice also provides a timeline feature that shows project progress and allows musicians to leave comments on specific parts of a composition.
2. **Soundtrap.** Soundtrap is an online music studio that enables musicians to collaborate in real-time. It provides a multi-track recording interface, virtual instruments, and audio effects. Musicians can invite others to join their projects, edit tracks simultaneously, and communicate through built-in chat and video call features.

3. Ohm Studio. Ohm Studio is a collaborative digital audio workstation (DAW) that allows musicians to work together on music production projects. It supports real-time collaboration, MIDI editing, audio recording, and virtual instrument integration. Ohm Studio offers a chat system, version history, and project management features.
4. Spire Studio. Spire Studio is a portable recording device that allows musicians to record and collaborate on music projects. It offers high-quality built-in microphones, multi-track recording, and mixing capabilities. Musicians can easily share their project files with others for collaboration and feedback.
5. Blend. Blend is a collaborative music production platform that enables musicians to share their projects and work on them together. It integrates with popular DAWs like Ableton Live, FL Studio, and Logic Pro. Musicians can upload their project files, invite collaborators, and exchange ideas and feedback within the platform.

Distribution Competitors

1. SoundCloud. SoundCloud is a well-known platform that enables musicians to upload, share, and promote their music. It allows artists to create their own profiles, build a following, and interact with fans. SoundCloud also offers features such as private sharing, embeddable players, and statistics tracking.
2. Bandcamp. Bandcamp is a platform that empowers musicians to sell and distribute their music directly to fans. It provides a customizable artist page, digital music sales, physical merchandising options, and the ability to offer free downloads or set your own pricing. Bandcamp also has a strong community aspect, with fans being able to follow and support their favorite artists.
3. Spotify for Artists. Spotify offers a dedicated platform called Spotify for Artists, which allows musicians to manage their presence on the streaming service. Artists can claim their profile, access data and analytics, customize their artist page, and even submit their music for playlist consideration. It provides valuable insights and tools to understand and engage with their audience.
4. YouTube Music. YouTube Music allows musicians to share their music through audio and music videos. Artists can create their own channels, upload original tracks, and engage with fans through comments and community posts. YouTube Music also provides monetization options through ads and subscriptions.
5. Apple Music for Artists. Apple Music for Artists is a platform designed for musicians to manage their presence on the Apple Music streaming service. It offers artist profiles, detailed streaming data, playlist placement insights, and resources to promote releases. Artists can also connect with fans through Apple Music's social features, such as sharing playlists and updates.
6. DistroKid. DistroKid is a digital music distribution service that helps musicians get their music on various streaming platforms like Spotify, Apple Music, and more. It simplifies the process of releasing music by handling distribution, licensing, and royalties. DistroKid also offers additional features such as personalized hyperfollow pages and music monetization on social media platforms.
7. Bandzoogle. Bandzoogle is a website-building platform designed specifically for musicians. It allows artists to create professional websites to showcase their music, sell merchandise, and engage with fans. Bandzoogle provides templates tailored for musicians, built-in music players, and integration with other platforms like SoundCloud and Bandcamp.

8. CD Baby. CD Baby allows musicians to make their music available on over 150 streaming platforms including Apple music, Spotify, Amazon and Youtube and to get paid based on the number of plays.
9. TuneCore. Similar to CD Baby, TuneCore allows musicians to make their music available on streaming platforms and to be paid based on the number of hits.



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[Tyrone Melkioty - Web Developer - Audioworks Technologies | LinkedIn](#)

[Mahshid Aghania - University of Lethbridge School of Graduate Studies - Canada | LinkedIn](#)

[Rodolfo Ortiz Torres - Audio software developer - Audioworks Technologies | LinkedIn](#)

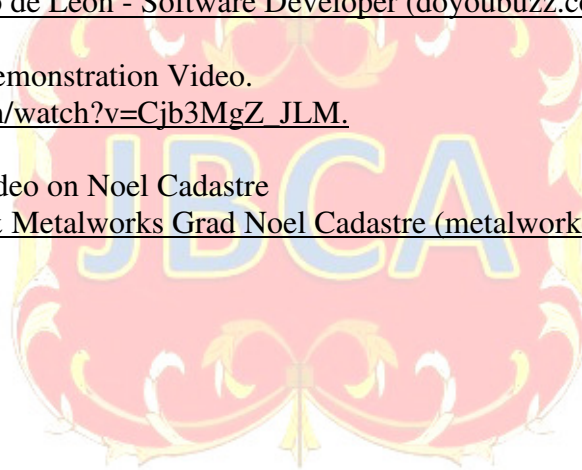
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TEACHING NOTES

Case Background

This case was written to provide study material for third year undergraduate business students in the Spring 2023 Integrated Case Exercise (ICE) at the Lazaridis School of Business and Economics (Lazaridis School) at Wilfrid Laurier University. The case authors are very grateful for the cooperation and wonderful support of Audioworks Inc. – Brian Huston, Haig Beylerian and Gill Moore in particular - who provided the information contained in the attached case study to create an interesting and challenging assignment for business students at Wilfrid Laurier University. Some information may have been disguised or adjusted for confidentiality or learning purposes.

The case was used in the Spring 2023 Integrated Case Exercise (ICE) at the Lazaridis School of Business and Economics (Lazaridis School) at Wilfrid Laurier University. Approximately 400 undergraduate business students participated in the competition. Finalists presented to company management.

Case Research Methods

This case is based on extensive interviews with the management of MetalWorks (Gill Moore) and AudioWorks (Brian Huston, Haig Beylerian) conducted by one of the case co-authors during the months May-July 2023. The interviews were conducted at MetalWorks' premises in Mississauga, Ontario and on zoom calls. Information on the music industry was provided by a co-author who is the former Chief Operating Officer of Music Canada and through research conducted by the case authors.

Intended Audience

This case is appropriate for undergraduate and graduate courses focused on entrepreneurship, marketing, business strategy and the music industry.

Learning Objectives

The objectives of this case are:

1. To expose students to the entrepreneurial development process. SoundsUnite is developing a new product and is facing development, product fit and resource availability challenges. Students are asked to provide suggestions to help the company address these challenges.
2. To challenge students to develop creative marketing strategies in a competitive market.
3. To increase students knowledge of the music industry through an entertaining entrepreneurial case.

Suggestions for Use

Two suggested uses are provided for this case:

1. **In-Class.** Students should be assigned to read the case in advance. Normally, it is good practice to make some of the student's grades dependent on providing a brief submission prior to class to ensure they are properly prepared.
2. **Hand-In Case.** Students could be asked to hand in the case either as an assigned item or as a take-home exam.

Suggested Questions for Class

The following questions were provided to students in the case:

1. How should the app be modified from its existing state? Which of the planned features in Exhibit 4 are most important? Are there any additional features that should be added?
2. What should the final app interface look like? How should the many lessons be categorized and structured?
3. How should the app be marketed to SoundUnites youth-oriented target market? How much would the marketing program cost? Your proposals should total no more than \$2 million.
4. How is SoundsUnite positioned versus rival applications, and how can SoundsUnite come out on top?
5. How can SoundsUnite be monetized?
6. Who could Audioworks partner with to advance SoundsUnite?

Some additional suggested questions for class discussion are as follows:

1. How would you assess Sounds Unite's current business plans and development? How do you assess its management team?
2. Is there a market for SoundsUnite? How would you suggest proving that the market exists? What market research would you recommend?
3. What is a minimum viable product for SoundsUnite i.e. what features, functionality, etc. do you feel are necessary to make the product a success? How would you verify the product?

Epilogue

As of June 2024, the SoundsUnite app continues to be under development. The learn function continues to add more lessons and has been better organized. The share function has seen additional content added by users. The create function has added a sound studio for IOS and Android users. However, company management had expected to be much further along. This continues a pattern of being well behind the expected development schedule.