

The Big Picture Business Podcast — Episode 6
Making the Most of What You Have
and Constantly Adapting
Featuring Christopher Bright

Introduction

- In this episode of The Big Picture Business Podcast, hosts Dominica Lumazar and Rory Carruthers bring their first guest on the show—the talented musician, Christopher Bright.
- Christopher is an artist who has performed in over 50 bands, has taught hundreds of students, and has credits in over 500 songs.
- His endeavors musically have amassed him earnings of over half a million dollars. He is also Dominica’s music teacher and Rory’s long-time friend.

Getting to Know Christopher Bright

- Christopher got into music through video games. He loves the background songs of games from the Super Nintendo and the other older games from the 80s and 90s, like Final Fantasy and Super Castlevania 4. To this day, he still collects a lot of game soundtracks. He used to be interested as a child growing up in the 80s in Synthesizers, electronics that you’d see on MTV. He used to take apart boomboxes.
- The first instrument he learned was the guitar. He picked it up because it was easy in the sense that it was portable. He later got into drums and keyboards. His favorite instrument to play live is drums, and his favorite creatively is keyboards.
- Christopher struggles to categorize the music he is making now. A lot of what he is making now is inspired by Brian Eno and Smashing Pumpkins. His work now as ambient

electronic. However, a band that has inspired his work now that he has played in with Rory would be Glider.

- You have to look at music or whatever you're doing as a business. Christopher understands that this can often be hard for creative people, but it is necessary.
- Most of his days consist of working with clients or working on databases and other business-related stuff. He often just wishes he could practice music a bit more. Overall, the business aspect of his career ends up being about half of what he does.

Written Endeavors

- Christopher is now an author too. Rory and Christopher worked on *So You Want To Be A Musician?* together to make Christopher a No.1 International Best-Selling Author. They also have another book they are working on titled *The 5 Minute Musician* that will be out soon.
- The concept for *The 5 Minute Musician* was inspired by one of Christopher's clients. He taught a grandma how to play an instrument within five minutes.
- Christopher teaches lessons for several instruments but acknowledges the stigma that music lessons get about "running into the teacher with the stick" who loses it when you mess up during the lesson.
- Christopher wanted his lessons to be about getting some wins right out of the gate and doing something practical rather than sitting down for an hour and playing scales. He developed an order when teaching drums using two letters and a number in a particular order that can teach someone to begin playing a drum beat within 3-5 minutes.

Making Big Strides With Limited Time

- You can do a lot in a little amount of time if what you're doing in that short space of time is fully focused, as well as when you are stacking consistent little amounts of time on top of each other over and over.

- Christopher does pushups bit by bit. It may not seem like much at the start, but when put across the entire year, it adds up. He has done over 18,000 pushups since the beginning of the year because he does 150 a day.
- Keep notes about what you have done. That way, you can look back and see firsthand the progress you have made.
- The best way to take notes, whether that be digitally or on pen and paper, is to take notes on a medium that you know you will consistently go back and look through rather than abandoning for six months. Physically writing helps engrain information, so that is why Rory writes down his notes physically so that he can remember it better.
- This can also relate to knowing the numbers of your business. If you are tracking all the details about your business, then you'll see what you're comparing against it. Tracking it also allows you to see the gradual progress of the results and to see the value of the incremental steps you have taken over months or years.
- Just because you have to do something doesn't mean it has to suck. You can look at the positives of knowing that doing it will bring a benefit to yourself or your company.

Making the Most of What You Have and Constantly Adapting

- Early on in his career, Christopher was in an interesting situation because he really wanted to get into drumming, but getting a good drum set can be several thousand dollars. He realized that drums are a rhythm-based instrument and are based on coordination. So, he came up with a way with a grid, to write things down. When the time came to get a drum set, he was ready to go. That is an excellent example of making use of what you have at a current moment in time.
- Christopher acknowledges that he is sort of a nobody, despite his successes. When he got into music, it wasn't because he was super great at it, it was because it drew him in, and it was impactful for him. It was less about talent and more about him being stubborn and deciding that music is what he wanted to do.

- One of the things he did was take a step back and look at what music was as an industry. There are several essential roles in the music industry, such as people who teach music, people who teach dancing, people who set up studios to record, etc. Throughout his career, he has managed to transition through different aspects of these roles.
- When he was younger, he was mostly single and had lots of spare time to devote to his music career and improving himself. However, once he got married and had kids, he couldn't allow himself to abandon his family to go on a tour for several months. So, he still had to adapt to find a way to make a career out of music without having to abandon his family. That is when the idea of teaching came up. Christopher transitioned from being in front of the scenes to behind the scenes.
- The challenge of COVID-19 and the threat it posed to his teaching was huge. Typically, he would go to people's houses for their lessons, but COVID made this impossible. However, he once again was able to adapt and take things online using Zoom and Facetime. However, he does acknowledge that the transition did have its challenges. Over time he has gotten used to it and gotten the hang of it.
- He is thankful and hopeful that the music industry is diverse. There are a lot of different ways to conduct things and move around with.
- He has made a lot of money, but when he first started, he was making next to nothing. Over time, he saw steady increases and progression, and that he has calculated that he will pass a million way faster than it took him to pass \$500k, mainly due to his attitude of constantly finding ways to adapt and grow.
- Dominica labels Christopher as "the master of being able to pivot in your business and not give up on your dream."
- If you truly love what you're doing, then you'll find a way to make it happen. Even if you have a family and want to be there for them, then you need to pivot within your business and accept that sacrifices will have to be made.

Being a Responsible Business Owner and Being Organized

- Rory often works with clients who initially have the mindset of: “I’m just going to quit my job and start my own business.” He has had to discourage some clients from doing just that.
- Promote your business before leaving your job.
- Twenty years ago, you could pop online and make some quick money, but that no longer works. You must build your brand and build some funding before you begin making the transition. You have to be a responsible business owner and make sure that you’re not putting the cart before the horse.
- Another key aspect of being a responsible business owner is staying organized. This is not just about keeping track of numbers. Track all your progress and have a database to keep track of all the projects or ideas you are working on.
- Christopher is still learning and will often set aside time for examining his databases just to analyze and try to find ways to improve, progress, or make things more efficient.
- You have to see your databases as something fluid and ever-changing.
- Right now, Christopher is using a combination of Google Sheets, Google Docs, Google Keep, and then he uses a notebook as a planner/calendar. Every day, he gives himself one index card and puts his daily goals on it, and as he completes his goals, he crosses them off.
- You have to find a system that works for you. The goal is to get your systems to the point where they are instinctual. If you can manage to do that, then you’ll get a lot done.

Keeping Data While Maintaining a Personal Connection

- Christopher keeps track of his Rolodex management, which is what he uses to keep track of all the people he meets and is planning on meeting. This is very important because if he didn’t keep track of all the details of the people he’s speaking to, then suddenly, he’ll know too many people and lose track. He uses numbers to keep track of all the details about the people he speaks to so that he can continue from where he ended with them the next time he meets or talks with them.

- Try to keep your notes as minimal and simple as possible.
- It can be easy when scrolling through data and numbers to forget that there are actual people behind those numbers, so he emphasizes the importance of remembering that keeping a personal relationship should be of the highest priority.
- Christopher has gone to the Music Industry Trade Show that happens annually in Anaheim several times and has collected hundreds of business cards from people in different industries. He has established personal relationships that have allowed them to be a benefit to him and him to be a benefit to them.
- Dominica has started using color-coding recently with her contact lists, which has been working well. She points out how she color-codes the cold, warm, and hot leads from her contact list. She believes there is plenty of money out there that businesses and people can join forces to help each other rather than seeing each other as competition. Rory has found that tying follow-ups to an event on his calendar is something that really helps.

Resources and Links Mentioned in Episode:

- [Christopher's Main site](#)
- [Christopher's Music Site](#)
- [Empowered: The Business Owner's Guide to Leadership & Success by Dominica Lumazar](#)
- [Rory's Website and Books](#)
- [Big Picture Business VIP](#)