



How PVLACE makes unique sounds that music producers buy like crazy

Denis Berger comes from a small town in Germany and, not so long ago, he was spending his days making beats in his car in a McDonald's parking lot. Fast forward to today, he's signed to 808 Mafia, one of the biggest Hip-Hop production groups in the USA. His credits include Lil' Yachty, Ty Dolla Sign, Young Thug and more.

He has leveraged Instagram Live to build a devoted fanbase and drive sales on his Sellfy store. Read on to find out what strategies he uses to create and sell his unique sounds.

How did you start making music?

When I was 4 or 5 years old, my uncle was a house music DJ in many European cities. At that time, everyone was listening to trance music. One day I was at my uncle's house and he gave me a disc player with 10 house music CDs. It was one of those old made players where you put a CD in. When I first heard this music, it felt so new and amazing to me! I became addicted to trance music. I listened to it every day. So, that's how my love for music started.



When I was around 16, I started listening to dubstep, like Skrillex. That's when I realized I need to start making music. So, I downloaded Ableton Live (now, I use Omnisphere), I went on YouTube and typed 'How to make dubstep/tutorial'. That's how I started making music.

I was creating dubstep and trance music for peers, but when I was 16 or 17, I started going to parties and there was Hip-Hop music playing. Back then I didn't enjoy it, but as I got older and went to more parties, I really started enjoying it. That's how I started making Hip-Hop music, which is what I do now.

When did you start selling your sounds on Sellfy?

I got this idea even before I got signed with 808 Mafia in mid 2018. I first went for Sellfy in 2016. Because one of my favorite artists (Koolha) has a store on Sellfy. In the beginning, I just bought things from my favorite artists, but I also realized I could sell something myself.

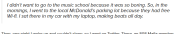
When I got signed to 808 Mafia, I didn't have an income yet and I was trying to figure out how to survive in the first months of making music. When you have some debts, it takes time to get the money.



I had created some quality sounds that nobody had and I decided to sell them as my first pack. Actually, my first product is still my favorites, with over 250 sales.

How did you get signed?

Oh, that story is amazing! It's like a Hollywood story haha! So... we need to go 5 years back. I was in a Catholic private school and I screwed up school completely. Then I went to two other schools and screwed up again. My parents were so pissed off. Then, I got a good job at an insurance company. I was very, very lucky to get that job. But, after half a year, I left. I wasn't interested in it, I just wanted to make music.



And then, I saw advertising for a music school one hour away from me. And I thought that's it, that's the place for me. I went to the music school and, in the first month, I got really bored because I already knew everything. So, I went home with awful grades because I don't like it. And that was my 18th year in a row screwing everything up.

I didn't want to go to the music school because it was so boring. So, in the evenings, I went to the local McDonald's parking lot because they had free Wi-Fi. I sat there in my car with my laptop, making beats all day.

Then, one night I woke up and couldn't sleep, so I went on Twitter. There, an 808 Mafia member called 'Gavin' had tweeted that he has time for collaborations and he sent him some sounds. So I sent him a pack with over 100 sounds. He replied that they're alright, which, in producer language means he doesn't want to use them. I just thought 'I'll leave it'.

A week later, I woke up in the morning to go to 'school' and I looked at my phone. I saw 26 missed calls from an American number. I was thinking 'oh! So, I called the number back, and it was Southside (@Southside), who's my boss now. The call was, like, only 1 minute because he speaks so fast. And then I sat in my room stunned. My life completely changed with one phone call!



See, I'm in Germany and, because of the time difference with the USA, I was asking while Southside was going live on Instagram saying searching for Denis Berger. But, he couldn't find me because I use my artist name PVLACE. It was pretty easy... while I was sleeping, one of the biggest producers in the world was searching for me on Instagram.

To this day I don't believe everything happened like that, it's like a dream!

How has your life changed since you got signed with 808 Mafia?

Umm... I have more money, haha! But, actually, nothing much has changed. I'm in the same room in my parents' house. And when I go outside, for example, to the local Burger King, people stare and want to take pictures with me. My life is great. It's about 30,000 people. I can afford more and people know me, but I'm sitting in the same room as I was 3 years ago.

I listened to and made electronic music my whole life, so I came into this industry with completely fresh and original sounds.

The thing is, I didn't even realize my sounds seemed so unique to others! I mean, I know my sounds are different and I make good melodies, but it's nothing better than the top artists. And when people discovered me, they were saying they had never heard such sounds before. So I think the answer is my background.

How did you get followers?

At first, I had around 500 followers on my Instagram who were just friends from my hometown and others.

The biggest push was after I got signed (thanks to the channel [RealGist](#)) that uploads producer videos. He discovered me because Southside made that video looking for me. I went to Southside and said 'Hi Denis Berger and asked if he could post a live video of me from my Instagram. And he agreed to post me. So, I went live on Instagram and it got posted on YouTube.

Also, people were looking for my name because the packs had good sounds in it. I did a lot of Live streaming on Instagram and people noticed that I have a lot of potential.

If your products are great and unique, it's pretty easy to get a following, to get recognized.

After getting signed, I got followers pretty fast, about 100 in 6 months, which is a lot for a music producer. For example, Grammy-nominated producers have 25K followers on Instagram. Also, the Digger album placement helped a lot, for example, I was on the new YG Khaled album.



Another thing I do is I say if you can't afford my packs, go on the internet and crack them, download them for free. I know it's going to be posted somewhere anyway, and there's a lot of cheating going on in the producer community. So, if I put out a pack and it sells 250 times, I know 2000-3000 people have it. It's the internet to be honest, I did the same thing when I was starting.

And the interesting thing is, when I started to have this mentality, I got so many more sales than before because they can crack my packs and they bought them anyway.

What are the best ways for new music producers to promote their work?

For me, number one is always Instagram Live. There, you're talking with your fans, and they talk about you. When you go live and show your work, and it's very unique, people are going to talk about you.

Also, always be generous to your fans. I talk to my followers a lot and play my sounds to them. In the beginning, I also made giveaways and free sounds.



Another thing is to have some luck and know people like RealGist or PRG on YouTube. There are the two biggest YouTube channels for producers, and they've supported me a lot. I know the guy behind PRG personally and I work with him right now.

You need to have good relationships with people. You can't do it alone, it doesn't work like that. You always need help. So, always be yourself, be friendly and you'll get contacts and new opportunities.

How do you market your products?

I don't have the time for complicated strategies because I work a lot with 808 Mafia. So, I use two simple marketing strategies when I launch a new product: pre-ordering and email marketing.

Pre-ordering helps prevent piracy because no one has the product before it's released.

In the first week, I get around 100 pre-orders. Plus, I give bonuses with pre-orders, and that motivates people to buy.

The other is email marketing which I do from my Sellfy shop. The email marketing is amazing, everything is automated. I use it to promote every new product.



And, I always drop a product on a Friday or Saturday because I see in my Instagram analytics that most of my followers are active then. I also offer a bonus to those who buy within 24 hours. For example, the last kit got 125 orders in 3 hours or something like that.

What tips would you give to other producers? How can they make their sounds unique?

A lot of people tell me I'm crazy when I say this, but, the first thing you need to make better creative work, is to get your body and mind right before you even start creating something. And this applies not only for music, but for other creative work, too.

When you're eating bad food every day, only drinking soda, never going out, never seeing the sun, drinking every weekend, taking drugs, you can't expect to be the best. That's the first thing because how the body feels is how creative you're going to be. You need to be yourself before you start work in the creative field. To me, that's the key. I try to stay completely clean and I meditate every day.

Number two...

...don't listen to Hip-Hop when you make Hip-Hop, don't listen to electronic when you make electronic, don't listen to jazz when you're making jazz. You need to listen to other stuff.

Even right now, when I'm making Hip-Hop music, I sit in the car and listen to electronic music. And people wonder why I sound so different. It's because it's hearing other kinds of music.

Who is your dream collaboration?



My dream is to collaborate with Tippiie Rydel because he uses his voice to make so many different sounds, so many different styles. He utilizes his voice to make it sound like one song, and I think it's pure talent. People don't recognize him that much, but I think he's the best talent in Hip-Hop music right now.

What are your plans for the future?

Half a year ago, I needed money to the bank and I didn't have any cash to go out for a drink or anything. Now, it has changed completely and it's getting better every month. It's been a blessing.

In the next couple of years, I see myself living in a house outside of a town, with two dogs and a girlfriend, sitting in my house and making music on my laptop. I just want to be completely free. I don't like the fast lifestyle with a lot of people, with drugs and stuff. I'm completely the opposite of it.

I don't know for sure what's going to happen, but I think it's going to get better and better.