



**AD Chat with DASH TWO Ep 4:
Fabrice Sergent of Bandsintown**

<https://dashtwo.com/ad-chat/>

Speaker: Welcome to Ad Chat with Dash Two, hosted by Kim Pham.

Kim Pham: I really appreciate you taking the time. I know you've been so busy and you were traveling and all that. I would love it if you could start with just an intro on yourself and how you fit into Bandsintown and if you want to go into explaining what Bandsintown is, that would be awesome.

Fabrice: Well, I'm Fabrice and I'm managing partner of Bandsintown and we are the largest concept discovery app in the world now with 77,000,000 registered users, but it's also the place where artists and fans connect and so we also offer to the artists for free to publish their torrents and in doing we have 430,000 artists registered to the platform today, which is about two-thirds of all artists on tour in the US, in the moment of time.

Kim: That is incredible. It's just an industry standard for all touring and promotion.

Fabrice: Thank you.

Kim: What made you choose this industry?

Fabrice: On the personal side, I've been growing companies in partnership with Julian, who's the other managing partner of Bandsintown and we connected and met, first and foremost around live music originally in France. Since then created three significant companies in tech, in Bandsintown, out of which two were actually related to music but our real passion is live music. So, from a personal standpoint we kind of realize that there is certainly a need in the US for an app that would help find and make discover concerts, as Fandango used to do, always existed to help discover newbies.
From a business standpoint, we kind of feel like live music was a very strong growing segment of the music industry; the recorded music was declining, especially five years ago when we launched the app, so we felt that it would be interesting to support that growth. Also, to bring more popularity to the artist and so we decided to try and research and that's how we found this Facebook app, which was called Bandsintown, actually. Artists, to post there, they had to be on Facebook. We acquired that app and liked the name and we launched the mobile apps.

Kim: That's awesome. Are you able to talk about the business model and how it differs from other concert discovery apps?

Fabrice: The business model is really driven by asking the industry to contribute. We are contributing value to the artist so everything is free for the artist. Everything is free for the fans so the business model is being supported by the industry so Bandsintown is currently filling at least 2 million people to concerts each month, in the US. So, we get some compensation when we help sell the tickets. We don't sell tickets to our friends, we're not a commerce company, we are not merchants but we drive traffic to these fleeting companies. We also enable promoters to promote their shows by offering them sets of platforms, a tool that enable them to target fans on a very local basis and based on their music preference. So that's the second level of the business model, which means that thousands of promoters each month back to pennies from Bandsintown, to better promote their needs and their artists.
The last part is that we also offer brands a very bold solution to connect with fans using music

as a passion point. Brands the music streaming company as is correlated to companies with us like American Express, Citi, people who have already, some who are limited to the States but it also can be brands that are trying to reach and connect with millennials because the strength of Bandsintown is that 60% of our population are millennials. So, we help them connect with a very targetable group.

Kim: Yeah and going back to the tracking, what sites are used to push back fan data? I see Bandsintown is kind of like a social listening tool, and you know what bands people like and are following. So, I would love to learn about the different sites that you can track this data on.

Fabrice: When fans install Bandsintown we offer them to share with us and give us permission to essentially look into their iTunes accounts, Facebook accounts, Spotify, Apple Music, many different types of listening/streaming... YouTube for example, so that we can understand who they are. But clearly you can also track manually themselves on Bandsintown, track that manually. Then we use a very complex algorithm, which managed by our data team in Montreal and that algorithm really creates what we call the fan's music DNA; which is a way to analyze all these better points and draw a conclusion out of that. It's not only how you're using these other services that drives what we recommend to you on Bandsintown, it's also what we learn collectively from the service of being a music profile that we aggregate to better recommend shows. So, to say that not only do we help to better sell tickets in that manner, we help sell 40% out of the tickets that are going unsold on average. But also, we are expanding the market by enabling fans to discover artists they would have never have heard about before. So, 50% of our fans actually go to concerts of artists they have never heard before. We expand by using discovery and not only pushing recommendations but shows of artists you already know or you may be tracking as well.

Kim: Absolutely. I also feel sometimes people get into ruts, where they feel like they're listening to the same music and it's just so great to see suggested artists and then checking them out. Sometimes you just find that you love them and discover them that way. I think that's great.

Fabrice: I love to hear that! What kind of music are you into if I may ask that question?

Kim: I don't even know what this genre is called, I guess it's house/dance music. Where it's DJs but there's also female vocals?

Fabrice: Yeah.

Kim: My favorite is Flight Facilities, Classics, that kind of music.

Fabrice: Great, that is good to know. I think it is the more relevant we are because what drives Bandsintown, and also a fan of jazz and underground electronic music, so it would probably be close to what you described.

Kim: Yeah, yeah.

Fabrice: When you are into this kind of very specific music, the algorithm is very useful to discover new bands, young artists that have a lot of talent but are very hard to -

- Kim: Hard to find. In your time at Bandsintown, what are some of the biggest changes you've seen in the digital landscape?
- Fabrice: Live music has expanded over five years, with amazing growth. I think for the whole industry it obviously upsets a lot of the decline that we saw in retro music. So, it did compensate in terms of that decline that was important for the artist, otherwise they wouldn't have found a way to survive or to make anything. It's also combined with the expansion of social networks and tools and platforms like Bandsintown, it's also given opportunity to new artists or mid-sized artists to be better discovered and to expand the fan base, even without being signed on a record label. That's also what we need to manage the change over the last 10 years, toying used to be considered as a way to promote a new album, while now it's definitely the opposite, which is that to go out to expand the fan base out touring and on that they may release an album, the cycle is completely different.
- Kim: I suppose having a social presence is just everything these days, right? Just building your fan base. You can be an influencer and have millions of followers.
- Fabrice: The first actually is to build a fan base. I don't think you can even be signed to a record label without showing an existing fan base. So, the other thing is that's recommended to be a great performer these days. In the past, you could be a good artist and a great artist, an amazing artist actually and be a terrible performer but especially when you're an artist starting on the stage of life, it's an imperative tool. The good thing about that is that it therefore creates an ecosystem that is very community driven. The relationship between artists and fans became much more intimate in a way and using also social tools, like Facebook or Bandsintown, now artists can message directly their fans and that's a big change. The media landscape changed for the better, giving artists more tools than ever to be in control of their own destiny.
- Kim: Right. With all the fan metrics that you guys have, how is that leveraged for advertising?
- Fabrice: We offer at least two forms of targeting, which are pretty unique. One is definitely offering brands and our promoters that using central targeting to target fans of particular artists or fans of similar artists, that's one way to leverage. We offer that on Bandsintown but also through Bandsintown Amplified, because we also monetize sales off the website, which we don't own but, which we can offer inventory. That's altogether is definitely artist-centric. To which we have through Bandsintown promoting and through Bandsintown Amplified network, we are in the top five music property in the U.S. So that's a big terrible reach if you want to find the fans of a particular artist or fans of similar artists. Then we offer also another array of targets, which is geography. Most of the bands are mostly local, that's it. Tours and multi-local. So, we also offer great potential to target geographically, which makes Bandsintown an amazing tool for anybody who wants to activate fans. That's all about trends, we can really activate fans. The brands who are organic and all those goals that we described, forgot to mention that but we measure advertisements at Bandsintown, we never pay for download, marketed Bandsintown. Because of that organic aspect of Bandsintown, our voice to our fans matter. They really trust our recommendation, so even if we leverage our data to help bands connect and promote their music, we are always very respectful of the music preferences of our fans.
- Kim: I'm not even kidding, it's one of the emails that I love getting. I get majorly spammed but I just love-
- Fabrice: I'm going to do an interview of you actually! (laughter)

Kim: No, I love knowing-

Fabrice: Since you are a fan, I know I'm gonna be able to- (laughter)

Kim: Just to kind of wrap this up, would love to know what's on the horizon for Bandsintown?

Fabrice: We have interesting and exciting project towards the end of the year. We released a major update of the app in July, which was our sixth major update and that's including this update. Part of the update was to enable artists to post messaging directly to fans and so now you have full-fledged artists' page on Bandsintown, which not only enabled fans to discover, to relate, but also read the posts of the artists, and also discover the artist better because we created special sections for the artist titles, videos, artist SoundCloud, etc. That was the last major update and we are continuously improving this update. Coming next will be a lot of focus on venues and festivals, so we want to significantly upgrade the presence of the venues and festivals on Bandsintown, so you will see that towards the end of the year.

Kim: Awesome, can't wait! We always end our podcast on this one question. Of all advertising that you've seen, what has been the most memorable in your mind? Mine is the Old Spice guy on the horse.

Fabrice: The most iconic ad for me will still remain the one that Apple did a long time ago. It was very iconic of the disruption that they were bringing to the market. Computers but also control when they invested in music, so for me if anything it's just the ability to illustrate how people were using their equipment for present and the advertising for the equipment itself. It was pure genius.

Kim: That's awesome. For our listeners who want to get in touch with you, what would be the best way for them to reach you?

Fabrice: If the listeners want to get in touch, just Fabrice@bandsintown.com