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## The Business Managers for The Weeknd, Skrillex, And More Share Their Money Management Tips

By Steve Baltin, Senior Contributor  
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DWA founding partner David Weise  
Photo courtesy of DWA

Recent FORBES cover star the Weeknd earned that spot based on his \$92 million year and sixth-place finish on the “Celebrity 100.” Skrillex, at \$30 million and Zedd, \$19 million, both made the top 10 of the “Electronic Cash Kings” list.

All three of the cash kings, along with Coldplay and songwriting icon Carole King, share one thing in common. They trust Encino, California-based firm DWA, David Weise And Associates, to manage their lucrative earnings.

Founded January 3, 1999 by David Weise, the company, whose website describes it as, “A full-service business management firm proud to service the best in the industry,” has become one of the leading business management firms in music, covering not just business management, but taxes, royalties, insurance and touring as well.

Weise and senior partner Wayne Kamemoto are very proud of the company’s growth in Kamemoto’s dozen years with DWA.

"I joined the firm 12 years ago, there were 35 people here, grown into 150 in 12 years. And it's not because we acquired another firm or someone passed and we acquired their business or anything like that," Kamemoto says proudly. "We built it organically through hard work. We're not hanging out at the club and smoking cigars with industry big wigs to get clients. It's just basically through sweat."

"We pride ourselves on not poaching off of other firms and stuff like that. If there's an opportunity presented and when you have a pretty good reputation and stuff there are opportunities for us not to have to do that," Weise adds.

To both men, so much of their success with their high-profile clientele comes from personal relationships. "It's one of those things where you really have to develop a rapport. That's one of my key things," Kamemoto says. "You have to be able to pick up the phone, have the conversation and understand what your business manager is telling you. Those are the relationships I strive for."

Weise adds to that with a hilarious story of a former member of the DWA roster. "I had a client a long time ago wanted \$30,000 in cash. I had to jump through hoops to get \$30,000 cash so I asked him why," Weise recalls. "He said, 'You don't need to know about that.' I said, 'I think I do.' 'Well, I'm going to this resort where I've already done 15 minutes, I'm gonna do minutes of walking on hot coals.' And I said, 'For \$30,000? Why don't you come over and I'll charge you a thousand and put hot coals down? I'll save you \$29,000. We had that kind of rapport. I thought that was hysterical."

As you would imagine, both Weise and Kamemoto are loaded with witty stories and a lot of insight, about managing money, that is relevant and helpful even if you never will make \$92 million in a year like the Weeknd.

Laced with their personal anecdotes and business acumen the two, over lunch at their Encino office, shared some of their tips for smart money management.

**Limit spending on items that have no value. It's important to create wealth and not accumulate too many items that have no future value.**

Wayne Kamemoto: It's easy when you have money to start spending arbitrarily on things that you don't need that don't add value. You don't want to be in that mode where you're just spending.

David Weise: Like going to the nightclub and spending five grand. The next day it has no value, it has absolutely no value.

**Understand the difference between spending money on wants and needs.**

Kamemoto: A client was looking into buying a Lamborghini, she didn't have a daily driver car, that was going to be her daily driver. I told her, "That is completely unreasonable. Do you know the maintenance, the insurance?" That was squashed fairly quickly, but there are others that bought the Lamborghini. And of course the person that bought the Lamborghini wanted to get rid of it immediately. I don't like to say I told you so, but I told you so.

**Hire pros, not bros: The most trusted people could be your friend from middle school, but make sure he/she is qualified to be your Tour Manager or fill any important role on your team. Errors made by your team can cost you dearly.**

**Don't spend what you don't have.**

Weise: For guys like us, maybe in our 20s we went to college and our late 20s, early 30s we figure out what career path we're gonna go, maybe find a significant other, start settling down and when we're in our 40s maybe that's when we start making money, we have discretionary money to be able to purchase things. There's a longevity there. But with most of our clients – artists, athletes, actors – they make the substantial part of their money in their early 20s. But it's a lot easier when you're in your 40s. So if I gave you a million dollars when you're 21 versus a million dollars today what you would do with that million dollars could be completely different.

**Stick to a budget. Spending can become a wild horse if not properly corralled at the stable.**

**Don't buy on impulse - comparative shop, look for discounts/sponsorships, consult an adviser for big purchases. Plan your purchases.**

Weise: A lot of the artists want that immediate satisfaction, they walk into a store and they see something and really want to buy it. We want to make the artists understand to at least have the conversation ahead of time. One particular client wanted to buy a watch, so he bought it retail for 80,000 dollars. Sure enough we could've gotten that same watch for 56.

**Hold a tax reserve. When money comes in, set a proper amount aside in a separate account for the taxes associated with that income if the proper amount hasn't already been withheld.**

**Don't be the Friends & Family bank. Giving handouts sets a precedent. You can blame it on your Business Manager when you turn someone down! But there is a greater consideration for loans/gifts that will help the recipient provide for themselves. Don't host every party or automatically pick up the check at restaurants in a group setting.**

Kamemoto: It's basically an education. We try to really put in in layman's terms so they understand it. A microcosm would be if you look at a touring artist, every decision they make impacts the bottom line and you should really be well aware of what you're coming home with. Some artists go out there and they have no idea what the budget is and they have no input on the budget. "Okay, you're staying in these hotels, you're bringing our your buddy who you need with you cause you trust him and he makes you comfortable on the road, but his hotel, his per diem, his flight, all of that, just snowballs into a big expense."

**Invest in your future self via retirement plans, which provide a current tax savings while building a future nest egg.**

**Diversify your investments. Don't be enticed by sexy investments (restaurants, start-up companies), be cautious about making any expenditures you don't understand - do you know enough about a particular industry to be a new business owner?**

Weise: My most successful artists aren't because I told them what industry standard was, it's because they said, "F\*\*k the industry standard, let's create our own path." And those are the guys that are most successful. But the clients that have impressed me the most have been the ones that have done it based on creating a new trend, whether it's someone creating a vodka brand that was dead and dormant and all of a sudden made it cool and fresh. Or whether all of a sudden you see an artist that takes an old brand like Adidas or Puma and makes it the biggest talk of the game, that, to me, is brilliant. That is understanding how you go out and influence people.