

THE ALL-IN-ONE RESOURCE FOR RECORDING ARTISTS

THE

# INDIE BIBLE

16TH EDITION

ARTICLES

**3200 PUBLICATIONS THAT WILL REVIEW YOUR MUSIC!**

**3800 RADIO STATIONS THAT WILL PLAY YOUR SONGS!**



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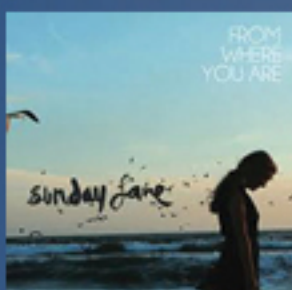
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to submit MP3s





# ARTICLES THAT WILL HELP YOU TO SUCCEED IN THE MUSIC BUSINESS

*"Don't forget to applaud the little steps, as well as the big."* – Janet Fisher, *Goodnight Kiss Music*

*While creating The Indie Bible I have been fortunate enough to have met many of the most knowledgeable people in the independent music industry. Successful authors, publicists, music reviewers, entertainment lawyers etc. I thought it would be a perfect fit if I presented several of their articles to help you gain insight on how to deal with the many twists and turns of this complicated industry. The articles in this section are sure to be helpful to musicians and songwriters, and especially to those that are just starting out. Every author I asked was kind enough to submit an article that will help you to move forward with your music career. Do yourself a favor, and put their experience to work for you!*

## intro

### TO ATTACH OR NOT TO ATTACH: A PRIMER FOR SUBMITTING YOUR MUSIC TO RADIO, MUSIC BLOGS, PRESS AND LABELS

by David Wimble, The Indie Bible  
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#### INTRODUCTION

The most frequent question I get from artists is "how do I contact the music services listed in your directory?" The answer is always the same. Whether you're contacting a magazine, music blog, radio show, record label, music distributor or promotional service - you have to check THEIR SPECIFIC submission guidelines before getting in touch.

This is the most fundamental rule of promotion. It is the rule now, and it will be the rule 2000 years from now when humans have giant heads and tiny bodies.

There's really no excuse not to check. Ninety percent of music services have their submission guidelines clearly posted online.

#### WHY DO ARTISTS IGNORE SUBMISSION GUIDELINES?

My guess is, as is the case with most people, musicians and artists are in a gigantic hurry and are always on the lookout for any available shortcut. It's a habit that lies deep within our psyche and is hard to break.

Shortcuts are great when you end up where you're trying to get to. If you don't end up at your destination, then by definition, it's not really a shortcut.

In the music business, because there are so many thousands of people submitting their music daily, if you don't follow the submission guidelines, you may as well open your window and throw your CD onto the street. That way, it has a miniscule chance of someone listening to it.

#### A BIT OF BACKGROUND ON SUBMISSIONS

It used to be when you were looking for places to review or play your music, the options were very limited. You would make a demo in a studio or create a home recording, and would then mail physical copies to the various record labels.

There were some college stations around that would play your song, and a cluster of homemade zines, but that was it as far as any exposure opportunities went. Remember, there was no internet back then.

However, that was many years ago.

With the explosion of the internet and all of its components, including audio and video websites, streaming, music blogs, review websites, internet radio, podcasts and social networking systems, it is no longer possible to even keep track of all the places that could help you to gain more exposure for your music. It's an impossible number to keep up with.

And they all have their own special way that they like to be reached.

Yet, whether they have been around long enough to witness this change or have grown up with the internet as a fixture, a lot of artists still tend toward a one-size-fits-all mentality when it comes to making initial contact.



They believe that contacting everyone the same way is more practical than taking the time to research each music service individually.

But if it doesn't get you anywhere, how practical is it?

The future will bring us still more ways to contact people. To make any serious inroads, you in turn need to put aside the time required for the "personal" touch.

## HOW TO SUBMIT YOUR MUSIC

The rest of this article lists all the possible ways (that I know of) to submit your music to the various music services (or in some cases, reasons why a music service doesn't want your submission).

I have created this list to show you that there are MANY ways that you may be asked to submit your music. I hope to get the point across that sending your music without checking the submission guidelines is a waste of your time and money. And frankly, it just irritates people.

### A. METHODS THAT GUARANTEE FAILURE

#### 1. The generic e-mail blast

We all know this one. We're all subjected to it daily. It's called SPAM. The logic behind it all comes down to basic math. "If I send out X number of e-mails and only .01% of the people respond ... that's still a lot of responses!"

I can guarantee you that no music submission guidelines in the history of the world have ever stated that their preferred way of being contacted is by an e-mail blast!

#### 2. The generic e-mail blast with fries

To get an e-blast from an artist that has cc'd you and several hundred other people is the lowest possible form of communication in the music business, especially if there are MP3s attached. It frustrates everyone involved. If you're going to send out a blast, at least have the decency to use the blind carbon copy (bcc:) so that no one sees anyone else's e-mail address.

#### 3. No contact name

When sending an initial e-mail to a music service, I highly recommend that you take the time to find out the name of the appropriate

contact. This will show them that you have sacrificed a few seconds of your time to at least find out who to contact.

These are human beings you're contacting, and it frustrates them to continually receive requests from people that call them "Hey" or "Dear Music Reviewer."

There are cases where no contact name is available. A lot of bloggers like to keep things mysterious. In these cases you have no choice but to start your correspondence with a generic salutation.

However, in most cases, the name of the appropriate contact is posted, usually in the "About Us" or "Contact" section.

#### 4. Does NOT accept unsolicited material

One of the most frustrating things for independent artists to deal with is the large number of labels and music services that do not accept unsolicited material.

It creates a kind of an outside-looking-in feeling. How do you become one of the "solicited" and why are these people being so mean?

There are two main reasons for this vigorous screening. The first is for legal protection.

In the past, there have been many artists that have filed suit against labels, claiming that the label ripped off their song. They claim that they sent XYZ Records a demo, and a year later a XYZ Artist released a song that sounded similar to their demo.

It gave record companies no choice but to protect themselves. A lawyer or management firms must ask for permission to send in a demo on behalf of their clients. There is no longer direct communication with the artist.

The second reason is that this screening helps to make sure the music is targeted. It enables labels to avoid the deluge of inappropriate material that they would receive if they welcomed ALL material. At some point a human being has to go through all the submissions. If the label welcomed unsolicited material, they would be fortunate if 10% of the music sent to them actually fit the style that they were looking for.

So, it's not that record companies, management firms, PR agencies don't want to hear your music. In most cases, they're just protecting themselves legally and are also

making sure that the submissions that do come in are compatible to their needs.

This is the first thing to check for. Does this music service even accept submissions?

#### **5. “Submissions are closed”**

Many services, especially small labels, review websites and blogs, reach a point where they're maxed out. They have a small staff and have a backload of submissions and cannot possibly get to any new submissions, at least for the next while. In their submission guidelines there will be a notice that submissions are closed until further notice. Once they get caught up, submissions are opened up again.

#### **6. Not using the correct e-mail address**

Most music services have several contact e-mails, especially the larger ones. The e-mail to use depends on your reason for getting in touch. There may be an e-mail address specifically for submissions, reviews, press releases, demos, general questions and advertising. Make sure that you use the appropriate e-mail address.

If a music reviewer's personal address is listed, and they ask that you send all submissions to the music@ address - do NOT send your music to their personal address, even if that's the person that you would like to send your music to.

It's likely that the music@ / demos@ / reviews@ messages go to a different account that can handle large files and a lot of incoming e-mails.

#### **7. Poor spelling, grammar and text speak**

You have to know your place in the world. If you're a rotten speller, then admit it. Either run your spell checker or get a friend to look over your copy before you send it to anyone. The same thing goes for grammar. The last thing that a blogger or music reviewer wants to do at the end of the day (or in the evening if they have a full time job) is to try and plod through a mess of misspelled words and grammatical oddities.

The same thing goes for text speak. You're not texting someone, you're writing a letter of introduction. That age-old rule about the importance of first impressions still applies.

#### **8. Asking a question that is answered in the FAQ**

Most music services have some sort of FAQ on their website - a page that features answers to the most frequently asked questions. They'll ask in their submission guidelines that you take a moment to read the FAQ before contacting them. The usual policy is, if the FAQ doesn't answer your question, then by all means get in touch. However, if you send them a question that is answered in the FAQ, you're only going to tick them off. It's doubtful that they'll get back to you.

### **B. GENERAL RULES**

What style(s) of music does this music service welcome?

Nothing slow burns a radio host, music editor, label owner or blogger like getting bombarded with music that is totally unrelated to the style that they promote. It displays a total disrespect. It's like sitting down and ordering pizza in a Chinese restaurant. It shows them right away that you haven't taken a moment to even look around to find out about what it is they do. Your songs, of course, are trashed immediately.

#### **9. Contact before sending your music**

Several music services are more than happy to accept your music. All that they ask is that you contact them before sending in your music ... just to make sure your music is a good fit. It's for this reason that many services do not post their physical address online. You must contact them first in order to get the mailing address. It's their way of pre-screening submissions.

#### **10. Do not contact before sending your music**

Some services do not want to be bothered with an initial contact. It's a waste of their time. They insist that you go ahead and send your music in without any preliminary introduction. Contacting them only irritates them.

#### **11. Facebook, Twitter**

An increasing number of music services prefer to be contacted through their Facebook page or Twitter account. Often you will not find any other contact information on their website other than a link to their Facebook and Twitter pages. Sometimes you will find a contact e-mail within the About section of their Facebook account.

## **12. Comments**

Many bloggers don't post any contact information at all. In order to get in touch you have to post a comment on their blog.

## **13. What formats do they accept?**

This is another key element that is often overlooked. Music services usually post their format of preference. Often it's a combination of several formats. For instance they may accept digital and physical submissions. Or, they may accept digital submissions only. They may also welcome videos. Or they may be old school and will ask for physical submissions only.

## **14. Vinyl only**

There is an increase in the number of music services that accept vinyl only. It's making a bit of a comeback. They are usually record labels in the Punk, Electronic and Hip Hop genres.

## **15. EPs and demos**

Many reviewers will accept demos and EPs to review, but MANY DON'T. Again, it's important to check before sending out your EP or demo.

## **16. Time sensitive material**

There are a number of music blogs, radio shows, promoters and review sites that will only deal with music that has been released recently. The cutoff date varies, but the allowable time of release is usually 6 months or less. If your music was released prior to their "cut off" date, it will be ignored.

## **17. Local music only**

There are a lot of local music resources. Local radio shows, publications, blogs, labels and more. What is meant by "local" depends on the specific resource. For some it may be a particular city and its surrounding suburbs. For another it may be an entire state or province. Local could also include several states, or even a specific section of a state (ie: Southern California or Central Ohio). While for others, local can be a whole country.

A common exception is if your band is on tour and is playing in the community. Often, that qualifies you as "local" even though you're not from the area.

## **18. Which reviewer accepts my style of music?**

There are a large number of music blog and review websites that have a stable of reviewers. Each reviewer accepts one or more particular styles of music. So, even though the overall website may welcome many styles, the onus is on you to find out which of the reviews/bloggers deals with your particular style of music. Once you determine which reviewer covers your style of music you can contact them according to their specific submission guidelines.

## **19. Permission forms**

Many music services, usually internet radio shows and video broadcasting websites, will not play your music or video unless you fill out their online permission form. In some cases you are asked to print out the form, fill it in, and mail it to them. If you send them your music without the form, it will not be played.

## **20. Is this a free or a paid service?**

Most bloggers, magazines and radio shows will promote your music as a free service. It's what they love to do. However, more and more services are charging a minimal fee. It's usually between \$10 and \$50 depending on the services they offer and the number of songs involved. There are also music services that offer both a "free" and "paid" option. The main advantage of the "paid option" is that it gets you to the front of the line.

## **21. Third party submission services**

Often a music service will only accept music through a THIRD PARTY Submission Service. MusicSubmit [www.musicsubmit.com](http://www.musicsubmit.com), Sonicbids [www.sonicbids.com](http://www.sonicbids.com), Musicxray [www.musicxray.com](http://www.musicxray.com) and ReviewShine [www.reviewshine.com](http://www.reviewshine.com) are the most popular. These submission services act as a protective buffer. Instead of being bombarded by thousands of submissions, many bloggers, reviewers, radio shows etc. hire a Submission Service to handle ALL of the incoming submissions. The Submission Service makes their money by charging the artist a small fee for the submission. Usually \$5 or \$10.



## 22. Sending a press kit

Another important consideration when sending your music is the accompanying bio information about you or your band. Submission guidelines are usually specific about what sort of information they would like to have included. They could either ask for a full blown press kit, a one-sheet, an electronic press kit (EPK) or just a few lines only. They may also want a photo of you, a scan of the album cover, press clippings and so on. Your best chance to succeed is by sending exactly what it is they want. If they ask for a one-sheet and you send them a novel, you're only going to frustrate them.

## 23. College radio

Some college radio stations allow you to send your music directly to a show's host, but many insist that all music must be sent to the Music Director. The Music Director then passes on the music to the various shows, according to the genre. Make sure you're clear on whom to address your music to.

## 24. No shrink wrap or glitter

When sending a CD make sure to remove the shrink wrap first. It's highly irritating for someone receiving hundreds of CDs a week to continually have to waste valuable time removing annoying shrink wrap. And please don't fill your envelope with glitter to try and be unique and get their attention. It's universally hated by everyone in the music business.

## C. DIGITAL SUBMISSIONS

### 25. Attachments

Nothing fires up the rage-O-meter like receiving an e-mail with a MP3 attached, when your *submission guidelines* clearly state "PLEASE DO NOT ATTACH MP3s!"

These inappropriate submissions tend to clog up their server (and mess with their peace of mind).

### 26. Sending MP3s

If a music service does welcome attachments, make sure that you follow their particular specs (if they have them listed). There are a variety of ways to format/compress a MP3. For starters, you always want to make sure that it's tagged/labeled right. The formatting details vary according to the individual music service.

Here are examples I've taken from different submission guidelines in regard to sending MP3s. If you don't understand the jargon, a quick trip to Google will clarify everything for you - KBPS, KHz etc.:

*Please compress your MP3 file to 320 KBPS.*

*MP3 file encoded at 64-512kbps or VBR with 44.1 kHz sampling rate and less than 30 MB.*

*MP3 format, 256 kbit / s, 44.100 KHz*

*We ask that any single MP3s be 128 kbps or better, properly tagged and preferably FCC friendly.*

*Audio files (128kb minimum quality MP3s).*

*Digital promos (WAV or MP3 192 kbps or better quality)*

### 27. Links to your music

Services that accept digital submissions, but don't want attachments, will often ask that you send a LINK to your music. MySpace is pretty much history so they prefer that you send a link to your main website, Facebook page, Bandcamp page etc.

Having a link allows the end user to take their time because there are no storage issues. They can casually visit your link whenever they have a moment. If they like your music, they may then ask you to mail in your CD or send them a digital file.

### 28. Streaming

For some music services the preferred delivery is via streaming. Streaming is content sent in compressed form over the internet and displayed by the viewer in real time. In other words, they click on a link and the music or video starts to play right away. The end user doesn't have to wait for the entire file to be transmitted. Streams can be from a YouTube page, Bandcamp page etc.

### 29. Online forms

A lot of music services have set up an online submission form. It allows you to fill out some information about yourself and your band, and it also enables you to upload one or more of your songs to their server.

### 30. Soundcloud Dropbox

Soundcloud is a highly popular service that enables businesses (and individuals) to accept large numbers of digital files effortlessly. Soundcloud is essentially a GIGANTIC virtual server where music services can park massive numbers of audio and video files without clogging up their hard drive or personal server.

A Soundcloud Dropbox is the file exchange area (you'll see a Dropbox icon on the web page of many music services). This is where artists can submit their music. It's kind of like a mailbox for digital files. Once submitted, the file is then parked on the music service's cloud server where it can be listened to or viewed at their leisure.

### 31. File Sharing Services

Many music services, especially reviewers and bloggers, ask that you send your digital files to them via a File Sharing Service. A File Sharing Service is a company that transfers huge files on behalf of their clients. This cloud-enabled transfer allows a music service to download submissions without having to worry about their personal server getting clogged by the endless influx of submissions. Yousendit [www.yousendit.com](http://www.yousendit.com) Sendspace [www.sendspace.com](http://www.sendspace.com) Mediafire [www.mediafire.com](http://www.mediafire.com) WeTransfer [www.wetransfer.com](http://www.wetransfer.com) and Rapidshare [www.rapidshare.com](http://www.rapidshare.com) are the most popular File Sharing Services.

### 32. Digital Music Aggregators

In order to get your music posted on many of the larger digital music websites such as iTunes and Spotify, you must have your music submitted through a Digital Music Aggregator. Aggregators are music services that distribute audio files in bulk to these massive digital websites.

Aggregators enable these giant music websites to avoid the technical headaches that would arise from hundreds of thousands of individual artists uploading their music. The Aggregator eliminates the need for the technical support that would be required to assist such a large undertaking.

Popular Aggregators including CD Baby, IODA, The Orchard, IRIS, Redeye USA, ORDIS and INGROOVES.

## D. THE FOLLOW-UP

Submission guidelines not only tell you how to make FIRST CONTACT, but more often than not, they also tell you how to FOLLOW-UP (or not follow-up).

The follow-up can often be as important as the first contact.

The most common RULE is that if they like your music, they will get in touch. In other words, "*Don't Call Us – We'll Call You.*" It's nothing personal, they just don't have the time to respond to all of the submissions they get.

Others may welcome a gentle reminder. Radio show hosts often ask that you follow their playlist to see if your music has been played (instead of contacting them and asking).

A lot of places emphasize NO PHONE CALLS!

A sure-fire way to irritate someone is by following up in a way that they specifically asked you not to in their submission guidelines.

## IN CLOSING

Music people are very busy. They are absolutely bombarded with music on a daily basis. It's a byproduct of doing what they love to do - listening to and discovering new music. They are willing to deal with the deluge because of this incredible passion they have for music. All they ask in return is for you to follow a few simple rules that will make the handling of this incoming flow of music a bit easier.

The best way to have your submission stand out, is by making it personal and by following their submission guidelines *to the letter*. By doing so, you become part of the minority, and are more likely to be remembered.

If you don't follow the specific submission guidelines, your music faces the inevitable fate of being trashed.

*David Wimble is a songwriter, recording artist and is the publisher of the Indie Bible [www.indiebible.com](http://www.indiebible.com) The Indie Venue Bible [www.indievenuebible.com](http://www.indievenuebible.com) and the Indie Bible ONLINE [indiebible.lwcr.com](http://indiebible.lwcr.com)*

*His company has combined all of their directories into a single bundle in order to create an affordable resource for artists that are struggling during the current financial downturn [www.indiebible.com/bundle](http://www.indiebible.com/bundle) He can be reached at [david@indiebible.com](mailto:david@indiebible.com)*

## radio airplay

### GETTING RADIO AIRPLAY

by Lord Litter, host of Lord Litter's Radio Show

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It was the late 80's and I was doing freelance work for a commercial radio station. The first thing I discovered was an enormous heap of releases in the hallway. Here are some hints how to approach DJs. An important aspect of a release surely is that it can be used to promote the band/ musician.

If you don't take care of certain areas, your music *might* be on air, but no one will get to know who you are and where they can buy your music...so the whole promotional effect is lost.

#### **Here are things that give me trouble and that I think may cause other DJs to NOT play the release:**

1. Every item you send should have a clearly marked address. Info material will be separated from the CD, so if there is no address on the cover, then you'll get no play listing, your address will not be spread etc...
2. Since the CD became *the* medium of choice, some bands should send magnifying glasses with their releases. Sometimes covers look great but the writing is either much too small, or the use of colors make it impossible to read. Make sure it as *easy as possible* to identify the name of your band, the song order, and a contact address.
3. The more well known a DJ is, the better the promotional effect. It also means that a known DJ gets piles of releases every day. Therefore, the time to care about the individual release shrinks to almost seconds, leaving no time left to care about questions like: What the name of the band is, and what the title of the release is.
4. Give all of your material a professional approach. It is impossible to read ten pages to get the basic info about a band. Send a reduced informative version of

your material with the offer to send more if interested. A link to your website is what I appreciate.

5. DJs are human beings - yes they are! Treat them like you want to be treated. No need to send endless letters, but a short "Hey, thanks - airplay really appreciated!" proves that you *\*care\** about your music and about the one that *\*cares\** about your music - the DJ.
6. The best way to get in touch is to check in before you send your music and say something like "We heard about your show from ... would you be interested in our music? If the DJ doesn't answer you can forget him/her anyway. You might not even get playlist later. The basic idea here is to keep it somehow personal. You'll discover that it creates a very positive effect - in some cases you might even find a friend!
7. If you send CDRs (I do broadcast these!) make sure they really work! I have one CD player that doesn't take badly burned CDs. So, if your CD (in the running order of the show) must be played on that player and it doesn't work, it will not be played.

The basic idea is: make it as easy as possible to handle your material. Before you finish your material, take it to the printer, if the required aspects are not clear, change it. I know it's a lot of work, but the alternative would be: become rich, hire a professional promoter and watch how your release will be thrown away with the others. The answer is always "somewhere in the middle" as we say in Germany.

*Lord Litter has earned the reputation for producing and delivering what is arguably one of the world's best independent music programs. Since the early 1990s, Lord Litter has known the pulse of independent music, and today, indie musicians from all over the planet know that his program is one of the ultimate destinations for their music. Website: [www.LordLitter.de](http://www.LordLitter.de)*

### COLLEGE RADIO STRATEGIES: AN INSIDE LOOK

by Ted Jamison, KLC Radio Promotion

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Once Upon a Time ...

College radio used to be great. In fact, there was a time when college radio was indispensable. Thirty years ago, it was the primary resource for up-and-coming bands to



gain listenership. Record labels, small to major, would scour the airwaves for potential clientele. Bands like the Smiths, R.E.M., the Replacements all got signed thanks to college radio play. Nirvana's Nevermind couldn't have achieved its historic No. 1 spot on the Billboard 200 if "Smells Like Teen Spirit" hadn't first hit the college airwaves as a single. College Music Journal was an entire magazine devoted to an analysis of college radio music in the '80s and '90s. In a time before Internet, before Pitchfork, before Bandcamp, Facebook, Soundcloud or Piratebay, college radio was the frontline—the primary wave of attack for the cutting-edge music scene. Today things are, well, different. It is safe to say that the role of college radio has changed significantly. But never fear, I am here to help you navigate these changes.

### **My Radio Station**

I am a junior at Lewis & Clark College, a small (we're talking 2,000 undergrads), private, liberal arts college in Portland, OR. I am also a DJ and music library manager at KLC, our school's radio station.

Every radio station at every college is a different sonic snowflake from the next. There are plenty of large, well-funded and thriving college radio stations with full-time DJs and managers on payroll. I am not talking about those stations. I want to give you an inside look into the opposite side of the spectrum: the small, underfunded and completely student-run liberal arts college radio station. Here is a secret: at our station, your best resources may have nothing to do with "radio" at all! Keep reading, I will explain.

### **An Inside Look: The Grim Truth**

Here are a few facts you should know about my college radio station:

- Rules and regulations for DJs exist but are rarely enforced or followed.
- Most shows are not seriously themed...or taken seriously...or listened to at all for that matter.
- We have an incredibly unorganized "library" or room full of CDs and vinyl in utter disarray.
- We receive promotional/demo CDs from musicians almost every day, but have no system or process for listening to them. (They

basically go into a void, an un-listened-to stack of doom.)

And most importantly:

- We are not broadcast over any FM or AM airwaves.
- We stream our shows online and do not save or archive the shows.

That's right, our college radio is not actually on the radio. The fact is, FCC licenses are very expensive and labor-intensive for a small, student-run station to maintain. While I can't speak for all small college stations, I certainly have friends in small schools who describe similar predicaments at their stations. I understand this may seem bleak. I mean...it kind of is.

### **Don't Lose Hope!**

The good news is that there are still resources at my college radio station that you can take advantage of! Like I said before, many of these opportunities have nothing to do with "radio" play at all!

### **1. Play At Our School**

If you want a great chance to expose your music to a college campus, go play there!

Aside from radio itself, our station is in charge of bringing music to our campus for live events. We organize at least three to four live shows per semester featuring all types of music from the surrounding community as well as touring acts. We are always looking for bands and musicians to come play in some form or another. The radio station also has a budget for promoting these shows via posters and flyers; so if you play here, people will know. I guarantee you will get more exposure from actually playing on our campus than from your demo being streamed on our station.

### **2. Use Our Recording Studio**

Our radio station also has a brand new, built-in recording studio. Straight up. We will record you or your band and we will do it for cheaper than any "professional" studio. Our recording studio is one of the most important and shockingly underused resources in our radio program. On top of this, our recording studio has a connected bandcamp page on which we will promote whatever you record for free!

### 3. Ask For a Review

We run a music blog tumblr webpage on which we post album and concert reviews. If you want a source of feedback from one of your most valued demographics, contact us and ask for a review. Local venues love comping tickets for college radio stations, which means we will absolutely attend and review your live show if you reach out and ask for one.

### 4. Beware the CD Abyss of Doom!

Unfortunately that is where your demo or EP will likely end up if you just mail it in to us. We will sooner listen to your CD if we know you or have at least had a conversation with you. Which brings me to my final point.

### 5. Stop By, Say Hi

This may be one of the most important tips I can offer. In fact I really can't stress it enough. The most efficient way to make use of any of the above resources is by personal connection. Come onto campus and stop by the station. Introduce yourself to anyone and everyone. Hang out. Sit in on a show or two. This could really make all the difference

### And Remember...

College student apathy is real, especially at an entirely student-run radio station. If you ask for something and don't get an immediate response or a follow-up, ask again. I promise, it's not that we don't care about you or are not interested.

*TED JAMISON is a DJ and music library manager at KLC in Portland, OR, where he attends Lewis & Clark College. He is an ethnomusicology major, a bass player and an aspiring music writer. Reach him at [tedjamison@lclark.edu](mailto:tedjamison@lclark.edu)*

## RADIO AIRPLAY 101 - COMMERCIAL AIRPLAY MYTHS

by Bryan Farrish, Bryan Farrish Radio Promotion

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When talking to people who are launching their first couple of projects, invariably the same misunderstood points come up concerning commercial regular-rotation airplay. *Here are some common myths:*

### DJ's play the records

This only applies to non-commercial radio, and specialty/mixshow radio. The majority of people in the U.S. listen to commercial regular-rotation radio, and on these stations, the DJs have no say at all in what is going to be played (unless, in the case of a smaller station, the DJ is also the PD). So, the biggest pitfall to avoid is asking a DJ at a commercial station "Can I give you my CD for possible rotation?" The DJ is not allowed to say "No", and he/she is probably not going to explain that only the PD can approve regular rotation. The DJ is just going to say "OK".

### Why do they play it?

Good songs do not mystically spread to other stations. Every single song you hear (or every syndicated program you hear) on commercial regular-rotation radio is on that station because of layers of promotion and marketing.

The song you hear was the one that made it, it beat out the other 300 songs that were going for adds that week. What you don't hear are the endless phone calls, faxes, trade ads, personal meetings, consultant recommendations, call-out research, and other things which went into getting the station to add the record. The station owners make it a requirement that DJs make it sound like they picked the music themselves.

### College or specialty/mix-show will expand to commercial

Just because you do well on non-commercial or specialty/mixshow radio, it does not mean anything will happen on commercial regular-rotation radio. Nothing at all will happen at commercial unless a separate, higher-level campaign is put into place to take the record into regular rotation. The pitfall here is that a listener will hear something on college, and then a month later hear it on commercial, and conclude that the college caused the commercial to happen. The listener did not know that both campaigns were in place simultaneously, and the college simply went for adds a month earlier.

### You have to be signed

Untrue, being signed is only a signal to the stations that the basic marketing practices are going to be done right. If you have the budget, you can duplicate the marketing practices of larger labels, provided you know how. The band *Creed* set a good example, of putting their \$5 million marketing dollars into the right place.

## Request calls will help

They won't hurt but your time is better spent doing other things, like inviting people to your gigs. Stations know which calls are real, and which are bands and their friends. Stations have consultants and seminars which cover this *one* topic.

## I can't get airplay without distribution

It depends on the size of radio that you are going after. Smaller commercial regular-rotation stations in smaller markets won't make this too much of a sticking point, especially if you have a powerful radio campaign going, or if you are doing great gigs in their city, or if you have great college or specialty/mixshow results. But the larger stations... which you can't work anyway until you do the smaller ones... won't touch a project that has no distribution.

## Airplay without gigs

Again, it depends on the size of radio that you are going after. Not being able to gig is a serious handicap at any station, but you can overcome it in smaller markets with intense radio promo, press, sales, and non-comm results.

## Non-monitored stations are of no use

Non-monitored stations are of no use only on the *Billboard*, *R&R*, and the seven *Album Network* mag charts. But *FMQB*, *CMJ* and all specialty/ mixshow charts are compiled manually. Since you need to start off on these smaller charts first, this works out just fine.

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## HOW TO GET YOUR SONG ON COMMERCIAL RADIO

by George Howard, Artist House Music

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Why is it that even with all of the changes that have occurred of late in the music business - changes that have altered the face of nearly everything - commercial radio today is still not that different than it was ten, twenty, or even fifty years ago?

As Jeff Price rightly points out in his article "The Hidden Money In Radio," commercial radio is the last stronghold of the majors. They lost control of perpetual copyrights when artists could fund their own recordings

via the advent of ProTools. They lost control of distribution once Apple and TuneCore got in the game. And, arguably, they lost control of publicity once artists began using social media to connect directly with their constituent group.

So ... why not radio? Why has radio remained in tact when all the other elements in the industry have changed?

To answer that question, it's first important to understand how a song gets played on "Big Time" radio. By "Big Time" radio, I'm referring to formats like Adult Contemporary (AC), Hot Adult Contemporary (Hot AC), Contemporary Hits Radio (CHR), Active Rock, Pop, and Urban. There are other formats - college, Adult Album Alternative (AAA) - but, because their impact is smaller (read: less money can be made from them), they operate more in line with the way one would think radio operates: program directors try to pick music that the listeners of their stations will like, and if the listeners respond (calling in to request the song; calling in to ask what the song was, etc.), the song gets played more and more. If there's little or no response, the song doesn't get played for very long.

"Big Time" radio doesn't typically operate that way. For an artist to even be considered by a Program Director at one of these stations, a tremendous amount of other activity must be going on. For instance, the artist may have had tremendous (and I do mean tremendous) success at one of those lower formats (AAA or College); or the artist might have had their music used in a TV commercial or film; or (and this is rare) the artist could be blowing up (selling out live shows, etc.) in a local market, and one of these Big Time stations "tests" their music during one of their "specialty" shows (i.e. shows that feature local music, which are typically aired on weekends or late at night - when few people are listening), and it goes so well, that other stations pick up on it.

All of the above seems (and is) fair and reasonable. Unfortunately, this type of organic, merit-based radio play usually does not end with an artist's song actually being programmed and played. Instead, there is another, less reasonable way artists find their music being played on Big Time radio.

This other way involves most everything you've ever thought it involves - primarily money (lots of it) and the old boys club of relationships. A major label (and that's an important distinction) signs an artist, spends a



bunch of money to make a record, and then must get that artist's music on the radio in order to have any chance of success.

When you're faced with a "must do" scenario, you do what you must. In this case, the labels first try to find some early supporters: program directors willing to "test" the song - give it limited play, and see if there's a response from the stations' listeners. If there is, great. If there isn't ... well, great. In either case, if the label decides they have to get the song on the radio, whether the "test" went well or not, they're going to do what they have to do. And for what it's worth, getting a "test" spin is no easy task in and of itself. Favors are given to those who have greased palms for years to provide the three and a half minutes of airtime at 2:30AM on a Thursday night to test a song.

Getting a song "added" to a station's playlist to get a certain number of plays per week involves a rather byzantine process that brings in various parties, called independent promoters ("indies"). These "indies" are first paid by the label. It's important to note that the money the indies receive isn't necessarily compensation paid directly to them for getting Program Directors to get a song played. Rather, they work more like an intermediary to pass the label's money to the radio station. These indies, with the money paid to them from the labels, pay the radio station money for various listener give-aways, bumper stickers and so on. To top it off, these very same indies are often also paid a second time by the stations themselves as a consultant to advise the stations on what songs they should play.

Top indie promoters make a lot of money.

Confused?

You're meant to be.

Smell fishy?

That's because it is.

It's all obfuscation. It's all a way for the labels to avoid being seen as engaging in direct payment to a radio station in exchange for the radio station playing the label's song. In other words: Payola.

Payola emerged pretty much alongside radio. However, it wasn't until the 1950s that anybody paid it much mind. At this point, payola was criminalized, and it's been illegal to induce a station to play a song in exchange

for money, without disclosing that money has changed hands, ever since.

The methods change; the labels always trying to stay one-step ahead of the government, and obfuscate just enough to keep the system churning along as it always has.

The reason the majors are willing to take these risks, and bear these costs - and the costs associated with breaking a record on Big Time radio can easily reach the seven figures - is because when a record breaks - even today - the returns are massive. One could argue, in fact, that due to the ineffectiveness of other means of promotion, Payola has become even more frenzied and high-stakes.

You may ask, at this point, "well, fine, I get it ... the majors pay a bunch of money, and they get their records played, but why couldn't some non-major (indie label or investor) do the same - pay a bunch of money and get a hit record?" The answer ties us back to Jeff's article, and explains why Big Time radio is still the purview of the majors. Assuming you had a million bucks or so, you very well could hire yourself some of these indies to "work" your record to Big Time radio, and, believe me, they'd take your money. Your record even might get a few spins (though likely only during times when prisoners, insomniacs, and long-haul truckers are listening), but those spins would peter out pretty fast. The indies would come back and say something along the lines of, "We've got our toe in the door with station KCUF, and if you can just give it a bit more juice, they'll move it from overnights to drive-time." And you may give them that juice, and it may get a few spins during drive-time. And then you'll be told that you need to "juice" some other stations. You can juice until your money runs out, but the chances of the record ever really breaking is almost zero.

Here's why: You've come to these indies, and they've gone to the labels, and they've taken your money, and they know that you're probably not coming back any time soon. On the other hand, the majors are coming every week with money and new artists. Who would you prioritize if you were in the indie/radio station's shoes?

o, the majors have a lock on this. Every once in a blue moon a song will be so powerful that it can't not be played, and it doesn't matter if it's on a major or not. But this is so rare as to be almost non-existent. The reality is the songs you hear on Big Time radio all got their the same way, and if you look at the label

who released these songs, 99% of the time, they'll be on a major.

It's not all doom and gloom however. Any time a system exists that is as corrupt as what I've outlined, it eventually falls under its own weight. Customers who have been fed a steady diet of music that is not being played because it impacts the market, but rather because it was the highest bidder, eventually lose interest and look for alternatives. Up until recently, there weren't alternatives, but now with internet radio, satellite radio, subscription services, and your own playlists on your iPod/iPhone, the alternatives abound.

Our challenge and opportunity is to not allow these alternatives to follow the same path that traditional radio went down.

*George Howard is the former president of Rykodisc. He currently advises numerous entertainment and non-entertainment firms and individuals. Additionally, he is the Executive Editor of Artists House Music [www.artistshousemusic.org](http://www.artistshousemusic.org) and is an Associate Professor of Music Business/Management at Berklee. He is most easily found on Twitter at: [twitter.com/gah650](https://twitter.com/gah650)*

## INDEPENDENT RADIO PROMOTER CHECKLIST

by Bryan Farrish, Bryan Farrish Radio Promotion

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If you are hiring a promoter to push your artist to radio, here are a few things you can consider which will help you have the greatest chance of success (and when I say promoter, I mean an airplay promoter, not a club or booking promoter). The big concern with this process is, if you choose the wrong person(s) to promote your artist and end up with bad results, you can't just go back and do it over again. That's it for that CD (at those stations). That CD is now "an old project" at those stations, and you can't go back to them until you have a new release.

### Part One: Overview

**Using a friend:** Non-experienced friends sometimes offer to promote artists to radio for free, or for "a few dollars". This is fine as long as you use them for the right tasks, like helping with the mailing. If you are working college radio, in the 20-30 station range, then they could make some calls too. If they try to call *commercial* radio, they will probably stumble after just a couple of weeks. And

forget about any capacity of doing reports or trade charts.

**Moonlighter:** Staff promoters at major labels sometimes offer to "help you out on the side" for a fee. On their days off, or on the weekend, they say they will "make some calls for you". What happens is that their company finds out and disallows it, or the person gets tied up on their days off, and can't do it. Either way, it is a conflict of interest for them.

**Publicity:** Public relations people sometimes offer to work an artist to radio for airplay. But don't, however, confuse PR with airplay. A real radio campaign has nothing to do with publicity. They are two separate techniques, with different contacts, lead times, terminology, call frequency, and so on. A person who is good at one is usually terrible at the other. This is why they are always separate departments at labels.

**Station People:** Station employees are sometimes recruited to work an artist, and will tell you that "they know what stations want." This sounds convincing, but in reality, taking the calls (which they do/did at the station), and making the calls, are very different. Until station people are trained (at a label or indie), they make poor promoters.

**Big clients:** The most-often used sales technique of promoters is to tell you they have worked "some big artist", and that this would benefit you. Ask them what they mean by "worked". Were they solely responsible for charting that artist? Probably not, more than likely, the promoter was probably just partnered with a label or another promoter, or worse, was just an assistant or sidekick. Again, they will NOT tell you they were not the only promoter. You will *have* to ask the artist or the artist's management directly.

### art Two: What to look for in a Promoter

**Making contact:** Some Indies are always there when you call, others are never there. The ones who never answer that is usually a *bad sign*. If you thought it was difficult reaching them before you hire them, just wait until *after* they get your money. Also be wary, if they say they give clients (and potential clients) a different phone number to call than the one they give the stations. It is more likely you will never get that person on the phone when you do need them.

**Reports:** Reports are a requirement that well-organized promoters provide to you. Without a report, there is no other way you are going to be able to understand what is going on with

your airplay each week... much less someone else such as stores, papers, clubs etc.

**Office:** If the promoter does not have an office (even a small one), then you will be competing with things like the promoter's sleep, TV, neighbors, dinner, etc.

**Assistants:** If a promoter handles more than one genre of music at the same time, or if the promoter does college radio at all, then assistants are mandatory. The phone calls have to be made, and no one person can call more than 150 stations a week, do reports, faxes, emails *and* talk to you when you call!

**College Radio:** College should be considered for every campaign, even if you are doing high-level commercial radio. College radio is relatively inexpensive, and will allow you to create some good looking charts and reports to show retail, press and clubs.

**Faxes:** Serious promoters use faxes. Faxing is simply the fastest way to get a one-page synopsis of info to the stations... with pictures if needed. They are not cheap, but a good promoter should still include these faxes.

**Emails:** While you may get excited about email, remember that since email is free, stations get them from every artist on the planet. And all the emails look the same. So, in order to build a solid project, you must use faxes and phone calls, because most artists can't afford them (and that is why you will stand out.)

**References:** Any promoter worth consideration will have a list of past clients. What you are looking for, is a promoter with projects that are on your (independent) level. A list of "big" clients, doesn't necessarily better, since a promoter used to having massive help from major label staff promoters, national tours, retail promotions, advertising etc., will not have these with your project. You need a promoter who is set up to work with indie projects like yours.

**Do your Homework:** The "major label" promoter was actually not the promoter that worked the major projects in the first place. They were probably just assistants in the office, or were mail people, or more often than not, they were just outright lying. It happens all the time. Ask the artist directly to find out.

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## HOW TO SELECT A RADIO PROMOTER

by Peter Hay, Twin Vision

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As an independent record promoter, the most frequent question I get from artists or their representatives is: how many projects are usually worked at one time. This question is so intuitively perfect that it may be the most important way of evaluating whether to use one promoter or another. Yet, I rarely ever get a follow-up question. In fact the average response is silence, which leads me to believe that the lay person really does not have a barometer to evaluate the response.

Here are some parameters and perspectives from which to evaluate the information you get from the promoter (assuming they are honest). You would be right to assume that it is hard for the average radio station music director to absorb the stories and pitches on numerous releases, particularly since they are hearing from about thirty other promoters covering more than 100 releases that week. I find that six to eight projects can be served effectively. For projects submitted to me that go over my limit, I usually try to schedule their campaigns for other times (which sometimes causes a loss of business).

Within those numbers there is another dynamic that makes this number manageable: some campaigns are just starting, some are in the middle and some are winding down. These stages create flexible emphasis on different aspects of each project. Ultimately, the effort is to give every project their days in the sun and make sure all their potential is fulfilled. It takes a bit of juggling, but that is what makes for a professional. I must know how much a particular programmer can absorb and what to emphasize with each call.

There are some promotion companies that are working fewer releases; they are usually ones that are still getting established. There is no real advantage to that smaller number. As long as you are conveying all that needs to be conveyed to create a positive impression you are doing the job.

### How am I assured that my project will remain a priority?

Some promoters have so many releases they just naturally start to emphasize the ones that seem to be happening or hot and neglect to give special emphasis to those that need the most help. When that happens, you need a promoter to promote the promoter. There are

ways to make sure you are not in that position.

In order to assure that your project will not slip through the cracks you must stay on top of the promoter, asking every question that occurs to you each week. Check to see what stations are priority targets in a particular period and make sure you get the details of their conversation with those stations. You should get extensive, detailed reports weekly. Do not hire any promoter that does not provide that.

Also, keep them posted on developments like gigs and press; everything related to your career and this release may have some relevance. Do not worry about being a pest, you deserve face time at least once a week, if not with the head of the company, then the rep who is actually handling your project (more on that later).

Here's the question that should be asked right after how many projects are they working: how many major label projects are you regularly working? By "major" I would include all labels associated with the major conglomerates or established independents. Let your common sense tell you what the number should be while keeping in mind that you would be right to suspect that major label clients could get more emphasis. What promoter would not want to make sure to deliver for the regular clients? Securing that Add at a good station may come down to you or the major's project.

### **Should you hire a promoter who has a list of "name" artists on their resume?**

If they delivered for Norah Jones or Death Cab For Cutie, they must be good for you. Well, maybe. Of greater importance is how the promoter expresses him or her self about your music. Listen closely to the tone and enthusiasm they convey about your project, you will get a hint of what they will say to the stations about you. Ask, not only, what the promoter thinks of the music, but what are they going to say about it. What will they highlight as the "story" to introduce the artist? You are listening for details, nuance and maybe even something no one has ever noticed about this music before.

### **Who will do the actual promoting?**

Who exactly are you interviewing when you call a promo company for information? In many cases the head of the company or the person you talk to is not the point person calling the bulk of the stations. When you contact a promoter who personally sells you on the services, you absorb how much of an expert they are, how they sell, and most importantly, if they are showing some passion

for your music. When the promotion is delegated to an underling, you don't get any comparable impressions.

All these intuitive questions that occur to you are right on the money and you probably have a sense of what is right even if you don't have specific references. I hope I gave you something to back up your gut instincts.

*Peter Hay is a 38 year veteran in the music business who is president of Twin Vision, an independent promotion company specializing in Triple-a, Americana and college radio. Contact him at [peterhay@twinvision.net](mailto:peterhay@twinvision.net) or visit his website at [www.twinvision.net](http://www.twinvision.net)*

## **HOW TO USE RADIO PROMOTION TO BOOST AIRPLAY AND BUILD NEW AUDIENCES**

by Jeri Goldstein, PerformingBiz.com

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I often get calls from artists who want to know more about using a radio promotion company to help boost airplay and build new audiences. Most artists believe they ought to launch into a full-blown campaign as soon as they have their hot-off-the-press CD. Some artists should do just that, others should not, depending on your career goals, of course.

Use radio promotions to identify hot markets for touring. Be prepared to tour in the markets where airplay is greatest. The best use of a radio campaign is to track the cities and radio stations that have added the recording. Plan support tour dates in those cities no later than four to six weeks after the campaign has been completed. Once you have the radio stations become familiar with your music, those stations become key points of contact to help promote a tour date. When you notify the station of the upcoming tour, they are likely to extend airplay, promote the date, do phone or live interviews and possibly even work with the promoter or venue as a co-sponsor. The radio station may even be able to recommend specific venues and promoters in the area at the start of your booking process.

Use the radio promotion's campaign to leverage better dates. As you contact the various venues in the markets of greatest airplay, mention the radio campaign, the station playing the recording and what degree of airplay the recording is receiving. Knowing that radio is supporting the act can often be the persuasive factor necessary to land a date.

There are two methods of radio promotions to consider-- hiring a radio promotion company



or doing radio promotion on your own. Here is a set of criteria to help you decide which works best for you.

### **Hiring A Radio Promotions Company**

1. Acts with intentions to expand their touring beyond their own region or to tour nationally would benefit from working with a professional radio promotions company.

2. Costs range from \$400-\$600 per week for an eight to twelve week campaign. Be prepared to spend at least \$2400 for an eight-week campaign and if all is going well, you might want to add an additional two to four-weeks. These costs are just for the company. Some companies charge additionally for expenses like shipping and phone. You need to have enough promo copies of the CD available as well. Each promotions company will tell you how many stations they service.

3. Select a company that is well established in promoting to your genre of music and radio format. Some of the main formats are: A3, Americana, NAC/Smooth Jazz, Rock, Adult Contemporary, Country, Adult Alternative, Gospel, R&B, New Age, World Music, Latin, Rap, Urban, College depending on which radio chart is used.

4. Know which format your recording fits. If you intend to use radio promotions as a tool to push the act to the next level, you should research formats and listen to the stations playing those formats prior to making the recording. When interviewing companies to work with, they will review the recording before taking on the project. They are just as anxious to have a successful campaign as you are. They have a reputation to maintain with the various radio stations. Their credibility is at stake with every project they pitch.

5. Ensure that the recording will be available in the markets where the campaign is concentrating. This can include signing with a distributor who will stock the local stores, or it can mean the recording is available through any of the online retailers. If the recording begins to receive airplay, radio stations want to make purchase information available to callers.

### **Self-Managed Radio Promotion**

1. Consider the range of your touring. If you tour within a specific region or remain close to your home base, it may prove more cost effective for you to manage your own radio promotion. Although some regions of the country do have radio promotions companies that concentrate solely on a single region, most conduct national promotions campaigns.

If you have no intention of touring outside your region, or plan to move more slowly, region by region, the expense for a national campaign may be prohibitive and unnecessary at this time. The money spent on the regions you do not intend to tour will be wasted. When touring is restricted to one area, it is easier to select tour cities and research the appropriate radio stations on your own, city by city, as you need them. Your costs are then spread out over an extended period, as are the necessary promo CDs. You are able to concentrate on each city you intend to tour. The main concern for you is scheduling time to send the promo CDs, make initial calls to the station to check on the CD arrival and then at least once a week, make a follow-up call to check on the airplay the CD is receiving. This is no small task and it is time consuming.

2. Hire a friend or fan part time or assign someone from the band. The solution to the time consuming nature of this project might be to hire someone for a few weeks at an hourly rate, the total being much lower than the professional company. If they are organized and have a pleasant phone manner, they can accomplish much the same result as a professional company. The difference will be that the professional company has an established reputation and music directors at the various stations will take their calls. Your employee will have to spend some time establishing a relationship first. Then again, your campaign doesn't necessarily have to be completed within a specific time frame. You are able to target the cities of greatest importance as you decide to set tour dates in those markets.

3. When making the recording budget, include money for promoting the recording. Set aside dollars for shipping costs, phone calls, promotional CDs and packaging materials. Research the number of stations you are likely to target and make sure you have included that number in your initial count for manufacturing. Most artists' recording budgets omit any additional money for promotion. Make booking gigs and building an audience easier for yourself by designating money to market the new CD. This in turn will help leverage your bookings at targeted venues in desired markets.

The goal of any radio promotion campaign, large or small, is to create audience awareness of your group and the new recording. National promotions companies use charts to mark progress. If you choose to do your own regional campaign, your benchmark will be the number of stations that begin playing the

CD. If those stations report to a specific chart, it is not unheard of for an independently, self-promoted artist's CD to achieve chart notoriety. I've worked with a number of artists who conducted their own campaigns with great success and charted. They spent many hours of each day calling and then recalling. Their efforts were rewarded. Yours can be as well.

Ultimately, your goal is to use the radio airplay to boost bookings and build your fan base. Radio recognition helps both causes. Include some aspects of radio campaigning in your marketing program.

*Jeri Goldstein is the author of, How To Be Your Own Booking Agent The Musician's & Performing Artist's Guide To Successful Touring 2nd Edition UPDATED. She had been an agent and artist's manager for 20 years. Currently she consults with artists, agents and managers through her consultation program Manager-In-A-Box and presents The Performing Biz, seminars and workshops at conferences, universities, for arts councils and to organizations. Her book, CD-ROM and information about her other programs are available at [www.Performingbiz.com](http://www.Performingbiz.com) or phone (434) 591-1335 or e-mail Jeri at [jg@performingbiz.com](mailto:jg@performingbiz.com)*

## **PUBLISHING ROYALTIES FROM RADIO**

by Bryan Farrish, Radio-Media

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We are always asked by people releasing their first record, "Will I get BMI/ASCAP royalties if I get airplay?" This question is similar to asking, "If I open a restaurant, will I make money?" While it is the job of BMI/ASCAP to pay airplay royalties, it's also the job of restaurant customers to pay their check at the end of their meal. But most new restaurants don't make a profit, and most records pushed to radio don't make more than a few dollars from publishing. Our recommendation: Don't do radio for the purpose of publishing. Do it instead for other reasons ... like tour distribution. There are some exceptions (one out of a hundred records do make some money), but you wouldn't open a restaurant if you knew for a fact you only had one chance in a hundred of making it.

The reason that a new indie act will probably not see a check from BMI/ASCAP is that they will not get enough spins on the larger stations. BMI/ASCAP does pay for college spins (just check their websites) but even they state that they pay only about a million dollars

a year for all college records. The problem is that there are about a thousand records mailed to college radio EVERY WEEK in this country (not all stations get all records, of course,) so using the numbers from BMI/ASCAP would show that each record gets \$20. But what you don't see is that most of the money goes to less than one percent of all the records ... the major label and major indie records ... because they get the majority of spins because of the level of marketing that they do. So the majors get a bit more royalties from college radio, and the small indies get nothing.

With commercial radio, there is no comparison... unknown indies make zero publishing in comparison with even midsize indies. If you are a grassroots indie with your first release, don't even waste the energy with BMI/ASCAP... spend your time finding paying gigs to play, and sell your CDs there.

On the other hand, if you are indeed a midsize indie (meaning your average title scan 50,000, and you have been doing this for at least three years,) with at least indie distro, and if you are getting newspaper press in at least 50 of the top 100 markets, and if your videos are also airing in these markets, and if your gigs are pulling 500 to 1000 paid people... and finally, if you have some good low-medium level radio promotion (\$50,000 or more) going into your next release, then you will probably get enough airplay to be getting some good sized publishing checks, although probably not enough to pay for your promotion.

The point here is that small indies have a certain amount of time they can spend on dealing with different areas of marketing, and BMI/ASCAP issues should not be one of the first things dealt with. By all means use radio, but use it for getting more paid gigs (and more people at those gigs) so that you can make some money each night, and sell CDs and merch while you are there. And use radio to get referrals to newspapers/magazines, stores, even labels and managers. Use radio chart results to build your marketing kit. Use non-commercial radio to drive people to you site. Use commercial radio morning shows to showcase crazy tunes and jokes. Just don't try to use radio for publishing.

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## PODCASTS AS A PROMOTIONAL TOOL

by Colin Meeks, IndieLaunchPad.com

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In their simplest form, podcasts are audio files created on a computer or portable media devices that are subscribed to by people interested in the content of the Podcast. These audio files are then transported across the Internet to the user's computer. This can be done automatically using one of a myriad of podcast aggregators like Juice, Doppler or WinPodder. Podcast comes from the amalgamation of two words, iPod and broadcast. This has led to the common misconception that an iPod is required to listen to them, this is not the case. You can listen to a podcast on any computer, MP3 player or CD player if the podcast has been written to an audio CD. The early genesis of podcasting is commonly attributed to Adam Curry and Dave Winer. With Adam's drive to make it happen and Dave's RSS (Really Simple Syndication) to act as the kind transport layer to get the podcast out to all subscribers. Talking of subscribers, another common misconception is that you need to pay for the podcasts you download. After all, you are a subscriber. While there are a few paid for podcasts, the vast majority are totally free. Podcasts have grown at a phenomenal rate and their popularity was launched into the stratosphere, when Apple decided to jump on the podcast wagon and allow people to subscribe to podcasts through iTunes. Like music before it, suddenly podcasts were available to the regular person, without requiring complex knowledge of RSS feeds and aggregator software.

With podcasts coming into their own in the latter half of 2004, suddenly there was a medium that was inexpensive and could reach the world over. Creating a podcast can be relatively cheap, but once the bug catches hold, it's not long before podcasters outgrow their modest hardware and strive for perfection with a new microphone and mixer. Another big issue for podcasters is bandwidth. Having a few dozen people download your podcast is fine, even though the average music podcast is around 20-30 megabytes, but just imagine what happens when you have thousands of people downloading. Many people find themselves with an expensive bill from their Internet provider. There are many services that alleviate this problem for a small fee and it's these hidden costs that most people, especially listeners are not aware of.

Adam Curry had his own podcast called the Daily Source Code. At the beginning of each show and occasionally within, he would play music often referred to as mashups. This was the fusion of two or more different songs into one. This sometimes resulted in some great songs, but it was also in direct violation of copyright. While many didn't think it to be a real problem, it wasn't long before the powers that be came knocking on Mr. Curry's door and he was forced to stop. In the latter half of 2005 however an artist from NY, USA stepped into the breach and gave Adam full permission to play his song Summertime on the Daily Source Code. This artist was Brother Love and it was the beginning of something quite special. It wasn't long after this, that bands began to see the potential of podcasts and either gave permission to podcasts to feature their music or to sometimes create podcasts themselves.

There are now literally thousands of podcasts, featuring a multitude of new bands and artists. Bands are now finding new audiences from around the world. Hollow Horse, a band from Glasgow, Scotland are one of the many bands with positive things to say about podcasts. Kenny Little from the band says "If it wasn't for the medium of podcasting we would probably have split up. As it stands, we are now in the middle of recording our third album and, the strange sideline to all of this is that we now have friends and fans from all over the world." After being first featured in a couple of podcasts, Kenny said "We have sold more copies of the album in America than we have in Scotland. How amazing is that". Many bands now have no intention of seeking a record label, preferring to handle everything themselves. With Podcasts, Facebook and a Myriad of other services available in your arsenal, it's now quite a feasible thing to do.

*Colin Meeks is host and produce of the Indie Launchpad Podcast*

*[www.indielaunchpad.com](http://www.indielaunchpad.com) which showcases some of the best in independent music.*

## WHAT IS PODSAFE MUSIC?

by David Wimble, The Indie Bible

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As you visit the hundreds of music podcast and MP3 blog sites you'll notice that most of them feature something called PODSAFE MUSIC. For this article I have gathered information from various internet sites in order to help clarify what podsafe music is

and how it can become another helpful tool to place into your marketing utility belt.

**Definition of podsafe music** (from Wikipedia en.wikipedia.org)

Podsafe is a term created in the podcasting community to refer to any work which, through its licensing, specifically allows the use of the work in podcasting, regardless of restrictions the same work might have in other realms. For example, a song may be legal to use in podcasts, but may need to be purchased or have royalties paid for over-the-air radio use, television use, and possibly even personal use.

The effective definition of “podsafe” for a given work depends entirely on the contract through which the podcaster licenses the work; there is no single podsafe license. The concept of podsafeness, in its true form, greatly favors the artist and the profitability of the artist’s product, in exchange for only very limited concessions to the podcasting community.

While some works such as public domain works or works under some Creative Commons licenses are inherently podsafe, the only actual requirement for a work to be podsafe is that any licensing requirements it has, if applicable, allow for the work’s free use (typical broadcast use in its original form, if in no other form, depending on the specific license) in a podcast or web broadcast. This gives specific favor to podcasts only, allowing the artist to impose more traditional constraints on everyone else. Podsafe licensing can, for example, continue to require non-podcast consumers to pay for the work, require royalties on derivative works, and profit significantly from the work’s use in traditional radio, television, or film.

The licensor of any podsafe work must be legally capable of making it so. An artist cannot distribute his or her own work through a podsafe license if doing so would break any laws or breach any standing agreements (e.g. with the RIAA). The creator of a derivative work may also not claim this work podsafe without express permission from the original copyright holders. (PMN has more specific and stringent terms to this effect in its agreement.)

Another point of contention is that not all podcasts are non-commercial works; in fact, an increasing number of podcasts are taking on sponsors and looking to make a profit. In general, no significant distinction is yet made between podsafe for non-commercial use and

podsafe for commercial use, but it could easily arise at any moment.

**Motives for the podcaster to use podsafe music** (from Wikipedia en.wikipedia.org)

As podcasting grows more and more popular, illegal use of heavily licensed music (as through the RIAA) becomes increasingly difficult to hide. This is in general of greater concern to podcasters than to the typical sharer of music, because podcasters usually produce their shows for and promote them to the public—a far more overt and traceable action.

Including such licensed music legally has its own set of caveats. Indeed, under many jurisdictions it’s currently impossible, but the message from those in the know is that many licensing agencies, if they do intend to allow the use of their music on podcasts, will require not only the payment of royalties but also the use of DRM on the shows. (DRM, because of its proprietary, system-specific nature, would be destructive to the general openness and system independence of podcasts.)

Use of podsafe music instead of more stringently licensed material allows a podcaster to continue to produce an inexpensive, legal program with little hassle. Not least important for an independent podcaster is the promise of being able to avoid the confusing maze of licensing organizations.

**Motives for the artist to use podsafe music** (from Wikipedia en.wikipedia.org)

Conventional radio (and television) can present a difficult, and not always logical, barrier of entry for a musician or other media artist involving large sums of money and often a great deal of surrender in both ownership and creative freedom.

In contrast, podcasting, an increasingly popular medium for audio programs, is as a whole very receptive, indeed thirsty for artists and input. This is due in part to the creative and economic nature of the largely independent podcasting community and further fueled by its need to avoid repetition. While a conventional radio show may be able to risk replaying a large part of its music selection from day to day, there would be little point in downloading a music podcast whose selection did not vary significantly from a previous show. Podcasting is thus a voracious medium. With a growing and international audience podcasting is now



becoming an effective means for inexpensive artist promotion often aimed squarely at the people most like to be interested in that type of music.

### **What is The Podsafe Music Network?**

The Podsafe Music Network ([music.podshow.com](http://music.podshow.com)) is a comprehensive source for podsafe music. It was founded in 2005 by ex MTV VJ and current podcaster Adam Curry (Daily Source Code [www.dailysourcecode.com](http://www.dailysourcecode.com)). PMN brings a large group of podcasters together with a wide variety of all-podsafe music and the artists who produce it.

#### **According to PMN, podsafe music is music that meets all of the following conditions:**

1. Works submitted to the Podsafe Music Network are the property of the artist, and all rights to these works, including lyrics and music, are the property of the artist.
2. All works contain no recordings, lyrics, copyrights, or other elements that are the copyright of any other artist, except under the limited provisions of the Creative Commons License Agreement [www.creativecommons.org](http://www.creativecommons.org)
3. Despite any recording contracts with RIAA, ASCA, BMI or other recording industry entity, the artist retains ownership of the works and is free to distribute, broadcast, license or sell these works at the artist's discretion.

The licensing agreement between the artist and PMN:  
[music.podshow.com/music/artistTerms.htm](http://music.podshow.com/music/artistTerms.htm)

### **What are Creative Commons Licenses?**

(from [www.creativecommons.org](http://www.creativecommons.org))  
Creative Commons Licenses help you publish your work online while letting others know exactly what they can and can't do with your work. When you choose a licence, we provide you with tools and tutorials that let you add licence information to our own site or to one of several free hosting services that have incorporated Creative Commons.

#### **1. Standard License**

License your song under your terms. Our set of standard licenses will let you share music with fans while protecting your song from limits you put in place.

Or, choose a prepared license for audio works.

#### **2. Sampling License**

People can take and transform pieces of your work for any purpose other than advertising, which is prohibited. Copying and distribution of the entire work is also prohibited.

#### **3. Share Music License**

This license is aimed at the musician that wants to spread their music on web and filesharing networks legally for fans to download and share, while protecting the music from commercial use or remixing of any kind.

### **How does a Creative Commons license operate?**

Creative Commons license are based on copyright. So it applies to all works that are protected by copyright law. The kinds of works that are protected by copyright law are books, websites, blogs, photographs, films, videos, songs and other audio & visual recordings, for example.

Software programs are also protected by copyright but, as explained below, we do not recommend that you apply a Creative Commons license to software code or documentation. Creative Commons licenses give you the ability to dictate how others may exercise your copyright rights—such as the right of others to copy your work, make derivative works or adaptations of your work, to distribute your work and/or make money from your work. They do not give you the ability to restrict anything that is otherwise permitted by exceptions or limitations to copyright—including, importantly, fair use or fair dealing—nor do they give you the ability to control anything that is not protected by copyright law, such as facts and ideas.

Creative Commons licenses attach to the work and authorize everyone who comes in contact with the work to use it consistent with the license. This means that if Bob has a copy of your Creative Commons-licensed work, Bob can give a copy to Carol and Carol will be authorized to use the work consistent with the Creative Commons license. You then have a license agreement separately with both Bob and Carol.

### **Where are the forms that I have to fill out?**

Creative Commons licenses are expressed in three different formats: the Commons Deed (human-readable code), the Legal Code (lawyer-readable code) and the metadata (machine readable code). You don't need to sign anything to get a CCL. Just select your license here:

[www.creativecommons.org/license](http://www.creativecommons.org/license)

# Guaranteed Airplay On Internet Radio

Get played to millions of listeners  
who like your style of music

## How It Works

### 1. Upload music and target the right listeners



Start by uploading your songs and photos. Next, choose the popular artists whose music is most similar to your own.

### 2. Get played on internet radio and collect fans



Your music plays on Jango and other radio sites, in stations featuring the popular artists you chose.

### 3. Get reports and data on your new fanbase



Radio Airplay artists get detailed reports on their new fan base, a great resource for getting to know your audience.

## 100 Free Spins to start and more Free Spins every week

Sign up now at [www.radioairplay.com/music+promotion?source=indiebible&pc=100](http://www.radioairplay.com/music+promotion?source=indiebible&pc=100)



radioairplay

### **Hmmm ...what if I change my mind?**

This is an extremely important point for you to consider. Creative Commons licenses are non-revocable. This means that you cannot stop someone, who has obtained your work under a Creative Commons license, from using the work according to that license. You can stop offering your work under a Creative Commons license at any time you wish; but this will not affect the rights with any copies of your work already in circulation under a Creative Commons license. So you need to think carefully when choosing a Creative Commons license to make sure that you are happy for people to be using your work consistent with the terms of the license, even if you later stop distributing your work.

### **Before you do anything, make sure you have the rights!**

Before applying a Creative Commons license to a work, you need to make sure you have the authority to do so. This means that you need to make sure that the person who owns the copyright in the work is happy to have the work made available under a Creative Commons license.

### **Where do podcasters find podsafe music?** (from Dave's Imaginary Sound Space [soundblog.spaces.live.com](http://soundblog.spaces.live.com))

Discovering new music and the ability to use it fairly without fear of copyright infringement is a key issue for podcasters and listeners alike. Artists, composers, producers and consumers can all benefit from clear, fair and flexible copyright licenses that embrace new technologies. 'Podsafe' means non-RIAA audio and video that can be used legally in podcast productions and freely distributed online for downloading.

Podsafe music can be found in many locations on the web including: artists websites, MP3 blogs, open source music communities, podcast directories, netlabels, P2P networks and BitTorrent hosts. A quick search for "podsafe" in a podcast directory like [PodcastAlley.com](http://PodcastAlley.com) reveals a rich and diverse array of productions featuring podsafe music. Unfortunately it becomes extremely time consuming for podcasters to source available music and listen to it. Recommendations by listeners and fans play an important part in the podcast production process.

The definitive list of podcasting safe music sites can be found here: [www.soundblog.spaces.live.com/Blog/cns!1pXOS7I93k8mqeQ7FIEEmOSQ!907.entry](http://www.soundblog.spaces.live.com/Blog/cns!1pXOS7I93k8mqeQ7FIEEmOSQ!907.entry)

### **It's always about the music**

For an artist just entering into the podcast/MP3 blog universe, the amount of information to take in can be overwhelming. It's not unlike a lifelong typist being plopped in front of a computer and asked to create a spreadsheet with colored charts.

As you watch the internet continue to explode with new technologies, it may feel like life has passed you by and left you lying in the dust. However, the truth is we're all still tightly bundled together. No one is *ever* left behind. The opportunity to move towards the cutting edge is available to anyone (my father-in-law has just learned how to use a computer at the age of 81). Don't let fear (and the excuses it can conjure up) lessen your attempts to succeed.

Remember, it has always been, and always will be about the music - that unique expression that *you* have to offer to the world. Podcasts, podsafe music, MP3 blogs, Creative Commons licenses and all that other bounce-off-the-head stuff is simply a collection of new and useful tools to help you get your music heard by more people.

### **Final thoughts**

For the newbie, my suggestion would be to take it slow. Go to the Creative Commons site [www.creativecommons.org](http://www.creativecommons.org) and poke around. It's a very user-friendly website. They understand that musicians are not lawyers.

Once you're done that, then start checking out the various podcast and blog websites. You'll soon discover that bloggers and podcasters are simply human beings with a passion for music - a collection of music lovers that are ready and willing to help you get your songs heard by a new stream of potential fans.

*David Wimble is a musician and the editor of the Indie Bible*

## **getting your music reviewed**

### **HOW TO SUBMIT MUSIC FOR REVIEW**

by Jodi Krangle, The Muse's Muse

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Getting the attention of music reviewers can be almost as difficult as breaking into a bank - and let's face it - sometimes far less profitable. But a good review is worth its weight in gold. So how does one go about getting reviewers to give your particular

package the time of day? I receive quite a few of these packages myself, so while I'm no expert, I do have a few suggestions:

### **Be polite when making first contact**

1. This may sound like it's too obvious to mention, but trust me - if you contact a potential reviewer by demanding their submissions address because you are simply the best thing that has happened to music since the microphone and the reviewer would be out of their mind to pass you up, you're likely to be disappointed at the response you receive.
2. Your initial contact should be polite and brief. A simple, "Hello, my name is (so and so) and I'm interested in a possible review in your (publication/website). Would you be able to supply me with the proper contact information so that I can send you my CD?" will be kindly received. Even if it takes the reviewer a little while to get back to you - whether it's by regular mail, e-mail or through the feedback form of a web site - their reply will usually be helpful.
3. One last word on the subject of first contact: PLEASE don't send an e-mail with your web site address and only a "Check this out!" line for clarification. You don't want to know how much spam e-mail I receive in a day and messages like that simply make me feel as if I'm being asked to check out the latest in cheesy porn. I delete such messages on sight and I honestly don't know many reviewers who pay them any attention either.

### **Presentation**

1. The presentation of the CD itself is probably the most important element of your package. It's that CD that will give the reviewer their initial impression of your music. That doesn't mean you have to have spent thousands of dollars on your presentation, a huge CD insert, a gorgeous color cover, etc. That just means that your "look" should be consistent.

*Note: if you're not getting a professional printing of anything, a color inkjet printer creating your own letterhead along with a similarly designed CD covering sticker, will work quite nicely.*

2. Simplicity is often the best way to go. Above all, avoid sending in a blank recordable CD with black marker written on it. Your contact information should be on the CD and the insert and/or cover. No

matter what you do, make sure your contact information is easy to find.

3. The insert certainly doesn't need to be in color but there should be one, if at all possible. The insert is the perfect place to put contact information, credits (the reviewer is often fascinated by who did and wrote what), anecdotal information, etc - the things that make you special and different from the other folks the reviewer will be listening to. If there is a chance the CD might become separated from the rest of your work, you want the reviewer to be able to contact you from that CD alone.

### **Things to include in your package**

- A brief cover letter addressing the reviewer by name (a MUST)
- A bio (1 page!)
- A CD, with an insert of some kind.
- Up to 3 reviews if you really feel you need them (try to keep this on one or two pages)
- Make sure your contact information is on everything.

*Note: Keep in mind that if your CD itself is a nice little package all on its own including inserts, you may not need the bio or the reviews and could probably get away with just sending in the CD and a cover letter. If you have a web site and include the URL to that site in your cover letter, the reviewer can find out tons more information on you should they wish to.*

### **Be patient**

Remember to be patient, not that you shouldn't ever re-contact the reviewer. Remind the reviewer you're around! Just don't do it every day. Wait a couple of weeks between contacts. Reviewers have a lot of demands upon their time and are frequently several weeks - or even months behind in their reviews depending on the publication(s) they write for.

### **Be professional**

The way in which you treat people will reflect upon your professionalism even more so than the look of your CD. It takes years to build up a good reputation and only a few minutes to completely destroy it. As with anything in the music business, you never know when someone you were kind to will be in a position to return that kindness. It's all about relationships. Make sure you're the sort of person who fosters good ones and it'll all come back to you.



Be pleasant; don't demand to know why your CD wasn't chosen for a review and/or spotlight if you are told that it wasn't - not unless you actually want to hear what the reviewer has to say. And if that reviewer *does* let you know why, let it be a lesson and move on. Try to keep in contact with the reviewer. It might be that a future release of yours will be better received. I hope these hints have helped. Meanwhile, good luck with your music!

*Jodi Krangle is Proprietress of The Muse's Muse Songwriting Resource  
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about her free monthly e-zine*

## 10 THINGS TO CONSIDER WHEN YOU'RE SUBMITTING AN ALBUM FOR REVIEW

by Thomas Deneuve, I CARE IF YOU LISTEN

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As the editor-in-chief of I CARE IF YOU LISTEN, I have been receiving a growing number of submissions for reviews. As much as this is very exciting both for the magazine and for the new music scene at large—keep creating music!—I often witness the same mistakes that reduce one's chances to be considered for review, and not only in our magazine and blog. So here are 10 things to consider when you're submitting an album for review:

### 1. Do your research

Make sure that the outlet you're pitching your album to is interested in your kind of music in the first place. Spend a few minutes browsing the website and check the content they publish. If it's all world music, they might not be into your latest musique concrète recording.

On a side note, I feel that it is OK to ask around for contact infos, editors' emails, etc. Don't be afraid to briefly introduce yourself, though, and give the connection (My name is Phil. Bob from The Spectralites gave me your contact info and I hope it's OK to contact you directly).

### 2. Don't ask if people would like to listen to it

Are you contacting an outlet that publishes album reviews? Good. Are they reviewing the kind of music you're creating? Excellent.

Now, chances are that they are already interested in your music, or at least a priori curious about it. They probably also don't have time to answer every email. So? Don't ask them if they want to listen to it: introduce it briefly and point to a place where it is available for them to listen to. Bonus points for not making them write an email back.

### 3. Offer a streaming link

Last week, after writing back to a musician saying that I was interested (see #2), I received an answer that went like this:

"I cannot get you a streaming link but I'd be happy to mail you a hard copy."

Why? Why spend the money on a bubble envelope and shipping fees if you can just send a streaming link? At this point, it is a first listen, an assessment. The album might not be picked and you might waste a copy that could be used towards another form of promotion (see #8).

How long would it take to upload the album in a private Soundcloud set and share a secret link? If you don't know how to do this, this article will be helpful.

### 4. If you really have to offer a download link, make it light and convenient

If you can't figure out how Soundcloud works, or if you are some sort of streaming vegan, then offer a public download link—not an invitation to the umpteenth cloud service: No registration should be necessary to access your music.

Make sure to offer a good file format too: no .WAV or .OGG, that are too large, or .WTF that requires three new codecs to listen to. Tracks should be clearly labeled (001.wav, 002.wav, 003.wav? Click; trash) and tagged appropriately (a favorite: <http://www.mp3tag.de/en>).

### 5. Offer a streaming link

No, really. Bandcamp, chartburst.com, mixcloud.com, and many more.

### 6. Build a landing page for your album

Build a page on your website specifically to promote your album (call it an EPK if you'd like). Do not use an entry somewhere on your blog. Do not bury the album at the bottom of your discography. This page should have one single purpose: Listening to your music and learning more about it.

Shorten the URL and give it a catchy name like bit.ly/RadTrioCD, it will be easier to share on Twitter, Facebook, by email, on print media, etc. Pro tip: add a plus sign (bit.ly/RadTrioCD+) after a bit.ly or a goo.gl link and visit the new URL to quickly check the stats...

Your landing page should/could include:

- a short intro paragraph,
- a video about your album,
- a link to the full press release (as a second page or a PDF),
- an audio player (and if it is above the fold it's even better),
- links to your social media accounts (as in "see how many people will read the review when I share it")
- your contact info (or a contact form)
- bonus: hi-res photos + cover art (include the name of the artist and the photo credit in the filename: Super-Duper-Quartet-Credit-John-Doe.jpg). Ideally, offer both orientations (landscape and portrait).

## 7. Trust the soup

Don't ask people to keep this link to themselves: Yes, there are dishonest people everywhere and we all know this. Just don't assume that the person that will put in the hours to help promote your release is one of them. That's not the best vibe to give off.

Besides, depending on the size of the outlet, the link might end up being shared with writers or other editors. This is a risk you must take.

## 8. Offer copies for giveaways, and offer to send them yourself

If you make it easy for the editors, I'm pretty sure they'll be glad to organize a giveaway (Facebook lifted Timeline Promotions restrictions) and to help share your music with their readership. And you know what? If you send the CDs yourself, you are in control of the way you connect with a potential fan and you can enclose:

- a personalized thank you letter. Who doesn't like to get one?
- an invitation to join your newsletter via a shortened URL or a QR code (one of the only good uses of QR codes),
- a coupon for a second copy at a discounted price. Try it: Someone who digs your music will most likely give the coupon to a friend.

## 9. Don't send mass emails

Just don't. It feels more efficient but it is totally counterproductive—especially if you are contacting people for the first time. If you have fifteen hours to devote to connecting with potential reviewers, target well (see #1) and write personalized emails. 10 quality, targeted emails are better than 150 anonymous blasts.

Do you like to receive mass emails? Well, nobody does. Click; trash.

## 10. Following up or not following up?

I'd say yes if you add value to your follow up message. How? First, don't try to make the reader feel guilty about not having answered or posted anything yet (It's been three weeks and I still haven't heard from you guys). Bad idea. Instead, connect using the publication itself. A review they posted a couple of days ago was about a Stockhausen piece? Explain how Stockhausen was an influence for your album because X/Y/Z. Offer something that might help writing the review, whether it's an interesting angle (the only album in recent history featuring a microtonal ukulele and timpani piece) or maybe an insight into your creative process (interview with one of the performers that you posted on your personal blog). Keep it short, keep it friendly! And don't follow up more than twice. Man, that feels like a lot of work!

Yes, because it is a lot of work and you cannot ask people whose job it is to review CDs to do it for you. The less people have to do to access your music, and the more they will be open to listening to it. Reduce the friction to a minimum.

## And in the end ...

If your album gets picked, share the review with your followers on as many networks as possible. Add a quote from the review to your press section on your website—or your email signature—and link back to the original review (sending traffic their way is a thoughtful way to thank a publication; they will know it's coming from you).

If it doesn't get picked, well, there can be a variety of reasons why, and very few are really about your music: you targeted the wrong site, the timing didn't work out, or maybe you made a couple of mistakes that made it too hard to get to your music?

*Founded in December 2010 by Thomas Deneuve, I CARE IF YOU LISTEN was born from the desire to talk about Contemporary Classical Music—or New Music—in lay terms. Other interdisciplinary topics include Art and Technology.*  
[www.icareifyoulisten.com](http://www.icareifyoulisten.com)

## HOW DO I GET MY MUSIC ON BLOGS? A Step-By-Step Guide For Musicians Looking To Get Reviewed On Blogs

by Ariel Hyatt, CyberPR

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A fascinating study from NYU's Stern Business School was just released. This study was based on the correlation of album sales and blog posts, and the researchers discovered the following:

\* If 40 or more blog posts were made before an album's release sales ended up being three to four times the average for both independent and major label releases.

\* If blog posts crossed 250, album sales rose to six times the average regardless of label."

Full report here:

<http://hypebot.typepad.com/hypebot/2008/02/blogs-more-than.html>

Um, Oh My GOD – this is HUGE NEWS. For the past few years everyone in the music business has been scratching their heads and asking: How do we sell more records?

And blogs are the answer! (and academically researched no less)

So, what does this mean for you my dear artist?

It means it's time to get your album blogged about!

But how in the heck are you going to do that?

Bloggers are unapproachable. People that live in ivory towers expunging and eschewing their amazing knowledge and opinions about music. They are snarky and they are untouchable (Is this the conversation going on in your head at this very moment?) Shut that little voice up and read on...

Here is a guide that will help navigate you through how to get your music blogged about:

As a recovering traditional publicist with a background in writing press releases, announcing things, and blatantly pitching my clients, I had to relearn from scratch everything I thought I know about how to promote music when I decided to take my company digital.

## A BIT ABOUT BLOGGERS

Statistics say that there are currently 80 million active bloggers today.

Blogs as you know can be about any topic. A few dozen people read some blogs and some are read by millions. A vast majority of all bloggers create blogs for no financial gain whatsoever, in fact it usually costs a music blogger money to host his files and maintain his blog. A blog is an extremely personal and private endeavor. Most bloggers create their blogs as a personal outlet. It's an outlet where they talk about their lives, their opinions, the things that they like and dislike, it's basically an online diary.

Bloggers are a quirky lot. I know this, because I've spent the last couple of years observing bloggers, interacting with bloggers through my business, and attending some of the most notable blog conferences on earth. To top it off, I live with a blogger. Yes, I sleep next to a real live music blogger every single night and so; I can speak from that experience as well.

So, how on God's green earth are you supposed to interrupt and say: Hey blogger, come write about me in your personal diary!?

There are a few ways to do this. Here are your options ...

## IDENTIFY 50 BLOGS YOU WANT TO BE REVIEWED ON

So, once you have your own blog, up and running. The next step is to identify which blogs you would like to be included on and start reading them and posting comments on them. Remember the NYU study shows that if 40 or more blog posts were made before an album's release sales ended up being three to four times as high.

TIP: Make a list of your 50 targets in your Blogroll – the NYU study showed that some of these blogs should be the bigger and more widely read blogs like Pitchfork and Brooklyn

Vegan. These are great targets but I suggest you target blogs that are more likely to cover you based on what they are already writing about – The most popular music blogs that everyone constantly mentions tend to be indie-rock centric so if you do play indie rock then you may not have a chance of getting included.

And see if anyone has written about you already. With 80 million blogs out there it's possible you have been mentioned somewhere already!

If you find a post PERFECT! Post a comment back thanking them for their post and say something about their blog – the idea here is create a two-way conversation by talking about THEM. Use a sig file identifying yourself so they know where to visit you online.

Here's what mine looks like:

Ariel Hyatt  
CYBER PR  
Digital Music Campaigns  
Ariel[AT]ArielPublicityDOT...  
<http://www.arielpublicity.com/blog>

TIP: Add the blogs that mention you to your blogroll. A blogroll is simply a shout out to other blogs. You see them on every single blog you go to (they are the big lists of other blogs and sites in the margin of the blog).

TIP: Comments should never be self-promotional at first they should be entirely about the blog and the blogger. Add comments, comment on how you like their blog. Add feedback. Disagree, agree; but participate in the blog. When you are a blogger, it's all about how many comments you have and how many people you are engaging on your blog. This part is critical.

Find your community - Artists you know & play with

If you do not find any posts about your music a great way to start is search blogs for other artists you know and play with then you can reach out with a personal reference and say something like:

I just read your post about Elizabeth and The Catapult. I couldn't agree with you more they put on a great live show. In fact we played

with them just a few months ago and I was blown away etc.

TIP: DON'T ask for a review on your first contact with a blogger – just make an observation about THEM and comment on what THEY are writing. There will be plenty of time to make yourself known later – this is a process that takes some time.

REMEMBER bloggers are people too and all PR is about connecting personally with the blogger – They will sense it if you are full of BS and just trying to get something – I've made this mistake and the results are not pretty.

Search by sound alike & comparison

Another way to identify appropriate blogs is find posts about bands that you get compared to and that you sound like.

TIP: Stay away from the huge names like Bob Dylan and search for more niche artists you get compared to

The next thing to do is go visit these blogs and take a peek. Is this the kind of the blog that would write about you? If so, add this blog to your RSS reader and return to and comment on this blog often. Add this blog to your blogroll, so that the blogger can see that you are visiting their blog often, and start posting comments.

TIP: In order to become sticky you will have to post comments on other people's blogs regularly and get to be known by the blogger before you make your first pitch.

After a few weeks of tracking and posting, you could write a simple hello to the blogger, mention that you have a blog, a music that you would like for them to check out, and then subtly see if you can encourage them to check out your music.

After you get your first review remember to link back to your blog and thank the blogger.

Like I said before bloggers read other bloggers' blogs. Soon, you will begin to spread around the 'net!



## BECOME AN AVID BLOG READER & COMMENT BACK

At the very least microblog using Twitter.com a wonderful easy to use site that I am obsessed with.

View my profile here:  
<http://www.twitter.com/cyberpr>

If you are going to go this route, I suggest you build a links page on your website or on your Facebook page to link back and send shout outs to other blogs so that you are still somewhat in the link back game which is critical.

## HIRE A PR FIRM TO HANDLE BLOG PLACEMENTS FOR YOU

I suggest that you do your research thoroughly and make sure you are very clear what it is you want before you go down this path. There is a guide I wrote called “The Musicians Guide To Choosing The Perfect Publicist” and it is available for free on my site.

*Ariel Hyatt founded Ariel Publicity & Cyber PR 12 years ago and her firm has worked with over 1,000 musicians and bands of all genres. The Ariel Publicity mission states that all artists deserve to be heard and there is a place for artists of every level to receive exposure. Ariel Hyatt has managed to place tens of thousands of artists in countless outlets from national magazines and TV to the most grassroots online fanzines. Her company is now 100% digital and helps artists increase their online exposure. She is also the co-founder of Bandletter.com, a company that creates newsletters for musicians.*

## DO'S AND DON'TS TO GETTING YOUR MUSIC POSTED ON BLOGS

by Confusion Pigeon, Pigeons and Planes  
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As a music blogger, I literally get billions of emails every day. Uh, well I get a lot of emails every day from people who want their music to be posted, and I've talked to enough bloggers to know what works and what doesn't. I still believe the most important thing is the music, but even when you've got great music it's hard to get heard in such a crowded blogosphere. I wrote a Part 1 to this

post, but I think it's time to update with some new tips. Do's and Don'ts to getting your music posted on blogs. Ready? Go.

### DO's

1. Promote the link. When you send out an email, include a line that says something like “If you choose to post, send back a link so we can promote it”. This means that you'll share the link on your Facebook, Twitter, Bandcamp, blog, or whatever you're working with. By nature, bloggers are, for the most part, greedy swines just like anyone else. If they think they have something to gain out of it, they'll be much more likely to post.

2. Address the blogger by their name. I mentioned it in the last post, but it makes a huge difference. Mass emails are necessary, but if you've got a few key targets, get their name. I'm Confusion. If you dug a little deeper you'd know my name is Jacob. If I see an email like, “What's up Confusion!” or “Hey Jacob!”, that immediately gets my attention, because most start off “To Whom It May Concern”, and you'd be surprised at how many “Dear Frank Ramz” emails I get. I don't really take offense – I know it can be overwhelming to keep all your contacts straight, but I don't even read those – I just forward them to Ramz. If you can't personalize it, try something a little more friendly, like “Hey, hope you're having a good week!” Trust me, nobody wants to be the person to whom this shitty mass email may concern.

3. Follow up. This one might get me in trouble with other bloggers, but fuck it. If you send someone an email and it gets ignored, what harm can be done by sending another one? They get annoyed? Yes, they will get annoyed, and they might even block you forever, but they were probably gonna ignore you in the first place, so who cares? From the perspective of a blogger, it can be really fucking obnoxious, but it can also be a matter of missing the email. I can't tell you how many times I've ended up posting something that I love after a second email simply because I just missed it the first time around. (Already regret putting this out there. Please limit your follow ups to 2 to 3 spread out over time.)

4. Think Guerrilla. This is the most valuable piece of advice I can possibly give you. Traditional companies are approaching the internet like a troop armed with muskets, lining their soldiers up at a safe distance and anticipating a certain number of misfires. Things have changed. This is like a jungle

war with high powered, automatic weapons and large, indecent blades. Do whatever the fuck you need to do. To us bloggers, the only thing that separates a garage band trying to get heard from a major PR firm supporting a popular rock band is the official looking title at the bottom of the email. See where I'm going with this? Get your sister to send an email as your official manager. If that fails, be yourself and beg for a post. If that fails, get a fan to send an email with no intention other than to spread good music. Right? I'm not trying to encourage lying and misleading, but do what you need to do. Bloggers are just people, and different things work for different bloggers. Be creative, and think outside the box.

5. Support the blogger in weeks leading up to your release. Follow him/her on Twitter and Facebook. Start random conversations, spread their posts, retweet them. This way, when you approach them for the first time for your self-serving purposes it won't be one of those awkward conversations that go:

You: Hey, what's up? I'm D-Bag from the group D-Bags

Blogger: Not much, what's going on?

You: Chilling. You hear that new Kanye?

Blogger: Yeah, good stuff.

You: Yeah.

...5 minute pause...

You: So, you got a minute to listen to my new song?

You wouldn't believe how many of these conversations I've had. It has gotten to the point where I prefer the honest person who gets right into things. Don't get me wrong, I love talking to artists, love talking music, and love supporting good music whenever I can, but nobody appreciates being manipulated into a conversation with one purpose. Just keep in mind that as an artist, there's a lot you can do to support bloggers too. Showing them a little love before you start asking for favors can go a long way. I notice when people are consistently leaving comments, sharing links, talking to me on Twitter and shit. I don't promise posts to anyone, but when that name pops up in my inbox, I'm much more likely to check it out.

6. If all else fails, be real. Like, really real. This is always refreshing.

## **DON'Ts**

1. Unless the blogger is familiar with your work, don't send a .zip file. Nobody wants to download a .zip file of a mixtape, album, or whatever without hearing a couple songs first. If you've got a link to a page where your

music can be streamed first, including a link to an album is fine, but blindly downloading a folder full of mystery music is about as appealing as funneling a liquid without having any idea what is in it. (Maybe a bad example – that prob appeals to you twisted kids).

2. Don't talk about how many downloads or views you got. To any internet savvy user (which includes almost all bloggers), this is an immediate red flag. I've seen YouTube videos with thousands of views. I've watched these videos. I know for a fact that no more than 2 people could have possibly sat through more than 30 seconds of these videos. It is easy to manipulate numbers when it comes to views and downloads, and any credible artist will get views organically. Let the numbers speak for themselves. This may be different when you're dealing with labels, who want to see numbers and quantified success, but to bloggers, buzz and word of mouth is much more powerful.

3. Don't forget to include references. This could have easily been "DO: Include References", but for the sake of my DO to DON'T ratio, it's going here. Like I was saying in number 2, it's easy to fake numbers on the internet. It's not easy to fake sources. If you get posted on a credible blog, mention that in your email. Maybe add a little quote at the bottom of someone notable saying something good about you (Eg: Confusion from Pigeons and Planes says: Best album of the year!) It's reassuring to know that at least one person out there enjoyed your music. If I see that some blog I like said something positive, I'm definitely going to check it out.

4. Don't require a username and password and address and social security number and the fucking name of my first pet (RIP Lucky) in order to access some secret page where bloggers can download your music. Just give us a stream. I recommend Bandcamp and SoundCloud. Both beautiful sites that, to bloggers, make the internet a better place.

5. Don't give too much information. A little background is okay, but really we just want to hear the music. We can always contact you later for more information. Sometimes I'll get emails with 20 different links, three different chunks of never ending text, and links leading me to all corners of the internet. If, after looking at it for 5 minutes, I can't figure out what I'm supposed to be listening to or what is going on, I will move on.

*Confusion Pigeon is a blogger at Pigeons and Planes [www.pigeonsandplanes.com](http://www.pigeonsandplanes.com) - a place where you can keep up with good new music, whether it be mainstream hip-hop, indie rock, or anything in between.*

*The article is an updated version of TJ Chapman's artist about how to send your music to music blogs.*

*[www.tjchapman.com/dos-and-donts-for-getting-your-music-on-music](http://www.tjchapman.com/dos-and-donts-for-getting-your-music-on-music)*

## 5 TIPS FOR APPROACHING MUSIC BLOGS, WRITERS, AND OTHER MUSIC PRESS

by Julia L. Rogers, MusicCoaching.com

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Part of being a DIY artist is marketing yourself like an entrepreneur or small business owner. You're presenting the brand of "You, Inc.," comprised of all the unique things about your music and you as an artist. And while putting some tracks up on social media platforms like Facebook, Bandcamp and your own website is an important part of your marketing plan, you can't just leave it at that and hope someone will simply stumble across your music.

An important part of your PR efforts as a DIY artist is to effectively present yourself to music blogs, podcasts, online music communities, websites, and magazines. It's a given that if you're at the stage where you're ready to approach the music press, you should have at least two things:

- 1) a professional-sounding collection of your songs that represents you at your best
- 2) tangible proof that you are playing regularly and working hard at providing an engaging experience for your fan base.

Assuming you have both those things going for you, what comes next? Unless you have networked at a conference or have had the chance to meet a blogger, podcaster, etc. in person, there's a good chance your first interaction with the music press will be via email. A well-crafted introduction email might land you more free promotion than you could ever afford - a poorly executed email will immediately make its way to the "deleted" folder.

You don't have to be a trained writer or even a great natural marketer to put together an attention-getting email. But if you're serious about making music your career, you do have to approach the media thoughtfully and professionally and think like a business owner whenever you're presenting yourself and your

music. Here are five tips to think about before (long before!) you hit "send" on that next email.

### 1) Have a clear grasp on your story

You love your music and you think people should hear it. But you have to think of yourself like any other company or brand. In order to get people to tune into you, you must have a good handle on your story and mission statement as an artist, and be able to persuade potential fans with short attention spans why they should give your music a listen.

"I've been passionate about music ever since I was five and I like to write songs," or, "I grew up watching MTV and know my music is better than what I've seen on there" isn't going to cut it. Cliches aren't going to set you apart from the other thousands of indies who have the same story.

Instead, think about which unique qualities set the story of how you came into music â€“ something personal and specific. Perhaps you were raised by circus performers who were hip hop fans, which led you to develop an interest in playing the accordion and writing clown-themed raps. (You certainly wouldn't have to try to stand out if that were your story). Even if you are a guitar-driven indie rock band or a traditional singer/songwriter, think about the personal experiences that have led you to pursue music and how that comes through in what you do. Then write that story out, in no more than three sentences.

People with the power to write about and recommend your music to others often get hundreds of emails daily, and they will tune out if you don't get to the point quickly. If they want to know more, they will ask. After you write down your short story - aka, your "elevator pitch" - repeat it over and over to yourself, so you can rattle it off when someone asks you. And relay it in every email you send to someone you think should be listening to your music, along with a direct link to some songs.

### 2) Keep it local

When you're deciding which media outlets to contact about your music, start with those that write about musicians or events that are located near you. If you're at the beginning of your career - and especially if you're at a point where you're regularly starting to see more than just your four closest friends at your shows - you need to focus on getting attention in your home city/local area. In the beginning, reaching people who can actually come out to see you play, understand where you come from, and who can interact with you

personally is an important part of establishing personal relationships with fans. The closer they feel to you, the more likely they will be to recommend you to friends, and the more often all of them will want to download/buy your music, buy your T-shirts, or come to see you perform.

### 3) Do focused research

As a DIY artist, there's nothing that can waste your precious PR time more than blindly sending out "listen to my music" emails to every person on the planet who listens to music. Still, a lot of bands do just that, thinking that indiscriminately casting a wide net will increase the odds that someone will respond.

Think of it this way - if you don't own a house, would you like to get repeated, unsolicited emails about homeowners' insurance? If you front a country band and you randomly email bloggers that write exclusively about heavy metal or someone that runs a steampunk zine begging them to listen to your music, you're committing the same crime of irrelevancy and wasting your own time. You could also be building a bad reputation for yourself in the industry.

Thanks to Google (and the Indie Bible) it's quick and painless to search for the media outlets that regularly talk about the exact type of music you play and to find the people that might be interested in hearing from you, which ups the chance of a positive response to your email significantly. Along those same lines, know which type of outlet you're emailing before you send any emails so you can set realistic expectations about the response you might get. A blog, a newspaper, and a magazine all take very different approaches when it comes to writing about and talking to artists. Also, before you start to send emails, make a list of sources. You can add to and subtract from that list as you go along.

### 4) Send personalized emails

Once you've made a list of media outlets to email - even if that list is long - resist the temptation to send a form letter. Take the time to craft each email separately and include a few personalized details you've learned through your research about the person/publication/source in question. If you are sticking to the "short and sweet" rule of emailing, this level of detail shouldn't take too long to add, and it will show the person on the other end that you've taken a little time to learn about who they are, that you're legitimately interested in their feedback, and are serious about your career.

### 5) Don't send more than two emails

Along the same lines as "keep it short and sweet," when you're reaching out to someone you've never communicated with, limit yourself to two emails: an email with links and a follow-up email, sent at a later date. People writing about music hear from a lot of artists, every day. And the best journalists and bloggers - those that truly care about what they do and have a legitimate love of music - are going to actually take the time to thoughtfully read and listen to almost every email and music link they get.

You can't expect to get a "yes" or "no" right away, so you need to be patient. You might get a quick "Thanks for sending this! I'll listen to it within [a certain time period] and get back to you." If that happens, wait the amount of time the person specified and then send a follow-up message a few days after that. If you get no response to your initial email - which, frankly, quite often happens - wait at least a week before sending your follow up. In either case, if you don't hear back after your second email, end it there and move on.

As you think about the process of sending emails to the press about your unique artist brand, try to remember the last time you heard anyone say, "I love this new band. I had never heard of them before. All they had to do was send me a link to a free download of their album, and I was sold!" Likely, you can't, because that never happens. In order to get the attention of music journalists - or anyone for that matter - you need to provide compelling reasons for them to listen and fall in love with your music. And if you can create that magnetic pull to your "creative products" (your music!) through all your marketing efforts, you will continue to add to your roster of "loyal customers" (your fans!).

*Julia L. Rogers is a classically-trained musician, a published author, and a contributing music writer at Bitch magazine. Julia plays out regularly in New York City in various original projects and writes about business strategy, social media, and emerging technology for corporate clients ranging from AOL Small Business to American Express. Julia is also available to be hired as a music bio writer. This article originally appeared on MusicCoaching.com - a blog for musicians and music industry people. [www.musiciancoaching.com](http://www.musiciancoaching.com)*

## INSIDE THE HEAD OF A MUSIC REVIEWER

by Suzanne Glass, Indie-Music.com

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What to send? When to follow up? What to say? Should you keep bugging a writer to review your material? What makes writers chose one CD over another to review? And most of all can you increase your chances of getting a published review when you submit a CD? Answer: Absolutely! By understanding a writer's mind, and following a few simple guidelines, you will substantially increase the likelihood your music will be chosen for a review or feature.

Indie-Music.com recently asked our writers; Heidi Drokelman, Jennifer Layton, Les Reynolds, and Erik Deckers, a series of questions designed to let musicians see inside writers' heads, and get a unique look at how the behind-the-scenes process works. After the Q&A, we give a quick checklist for getting your music reviewed successfully.

### Q. What impresses you about an artist/musician/band?

**A. Heidi Drokelman:** Number one; the biggest impression is always the music, and the talent (however sometimes hidden it is) of songwriting. The versatility of all the members is important, and having an appreciation for good songwriting, no matter the genre, will always shine through in someone's work. Sure, clean production always sounds nice and makes a big impression when you're only listening to something a few times for review.... but I've been doing this [reviewing] for a long time now, and if the material is there (even in raw form), the first thing I forgive is production quality. When your songs stand out, even if you've recorded on the worst machine you can possibly find, then that's what counts. Even the worst material can't surpass a production snow job.

**A. Jennifer Layton:** There's no one thing. I've been impressed by so many different things. I'm impressed when I hear a musician doing something new that I've never heard before. I'm impressed when I hear a poetic folk song that expresses something so true; I feel it tugging at my heart. No matter what the press kits look like or how fancy the web site is, none of it matters if I'm not touched by the music in some way.

**A. Les Reynolds:** Real talent in at least one area (vocal, instrumental, lyrical) and especially when all those elements come together. Also, if they've got their s\*\*\* together —correspond in timely manner, not pushy about reviews, answer questions coherently and communicate well (even if this is through an agent, having the right agent who can do those things is crucial).

### Q. What impresses you in a promo pack submission?

**A. Erik Deckers:** "Is the press kit complete? Does it have a bio and headshot or group photo? Are there other articles from other reviewers? If the answer is YES to these questions, then I am impressed. If the press kit contains a three-line bio, or vague and airy generalities discussing the metaphysics of the universe in relation to their music, I am decidedly unimpressed."

**A. Heidi Drokelman:** "Oh, this is a completely relative thing. I look at this part of the packaging after I've already listened to the music. If getting signed by a label is your goal, I'd much rather receive bio materials, a dated letter (it's really hard to separate the volume of mail that some of us receive, so including a dated letter from a band representative is a nice touch), a simple photo that expresses the personality of an artist or band, and on occasion, I enjoy a good piece of gag swag. Taking that extra step and coming up with a creative piece of swag can push a pack to the top of the pile. However, please refrain from the offensive, even if it's meant in jest."

**A. Jennifer Layton:** "I take a different route with promo packs. I know those materials are expensive, and I have a small office and can't hang on to all the press materials I get each month. Which means that if I don't absolutely love the artist, the promo pack winds up in the trash after I write the review. I feel really guilty about that. So when an artist contacts me about submitting material, I tell them they don't have to bother with headshots or elaborate press kits — just a simple bio sheet that includes the web site address, telling me whatever they want me to know about them. What I'm really interested in is the music."

**A. Les Reynolds:** "It looks like the artist/band took time and care in preparing it and it "fits" with the image and overall music style. Quality photos, if included, also get my attention. While I won't use the pix (except to decorate my pod at work!), it says something about the artist — I can get a "vibe" or feel off that. I am also just impressed with quality photography since I used to be a photographer."



### **Q. How can bands get your attention?**

**A. Erik Deckers:** “Write a personalized note to me, not a generalized form letter.”

**A. Heidi Drokelman:** “Bands can get my attention fairly easily, but holding it can be another story altogether. I am all about helping out quality bands and artists, and will take extra steps to make sure that I am doing all I can without showing blatant favoritism (although I AM known for that as well), so some of the ways to do this are: Be courteous: I should clarify because I despise kiss asses just as much as the repeat offender rudeness. I’m not asking for special treatment, just a bit of humanity. Don’t be overly pushy. I don’t mind the follow-up to check in on the status of a review, but DO NOT expect to get a review every time you send in material. Some pushiness is good, but use common sense to know where the line has been drawn.”

**A. Les Reynolds:** “Contact me directly. Keep the lines of communication open, and don’t tell me to just go to your MP3 site. I hate that! It’s become the universal cop-out (besides —what if the computer is malfunctioning or the internet is down?) Also: if they can describe their music accurately in a sentence— that shows they know who they are and have read my Indie-Music.com bio blurb.”

### **Q. What do bands do which wastes their money, when they send submissions?**

**A. Erik Deckers:** “Send crappy press kits. If I don’t have much background information on the band, I can’t write a good review. If I can’t write a good review, then it doesn’t help the band much.”

**A. Heidi Drokelman:** “If they’re unsolicited, it’s a huge waste of money in general. Don’t just blindly send your discs out to everyone you think has an inkling of interest in your work. Make sure that you contact someone and at least use the proper procedure. I’m sure this may sound lame to you, but the procedure we use is built to enhance our reviews, not to bring you down. On another note, photos, postcards, stickers, bio write-ups, and discs are not a waste of money. Just plan your priorities and work up to the full packet.”

**A. Jennifer Layton:** “I hate to see bands spend money by sending me glossy headshots and other expensive materials. While I’m impressed by their professionalism, I’m not a label rep or someone who will have a major influence on their career — I’m just an indie writer. Also, I tell artists not to waste money

by sending their submissions by Federal Express. Regular old mail will do fine.

**A. Les Reynolds:** Sending tons of press clippings - one sheet is enough. Sending all sorts of odd-shaped stickers and things that, by themselves — once away from the package — mean nothing. Most Press kits are guilty of overkill.”

### **Q. How can bands improve their submissions?**

**A. Heidi Drokelman:** “Solicit your submissions for review – it will ultimately benefit you more to do some research and look into different publications and specific writers, than it will to blindly send things out. Quality is key - you’re looking for someone to thoughtfully review your material, to respect it, and cultivate new contacts for publicity and marketing purposes. Do what you can presently afford, and the rest will fall into place.”

**A. Jennifer Layton:** “I think they can tone down their bios a little. I’m aware that most artists write their own bio sheets, so I have to laugh when I read stuff like “This is the most amazing rock band on the music scene today. No one has ever come close to matching their talent and energy.” Also, be sure to run your press materials through a spell- checker! One of the funniest bio sheets I ever got was from a folk artist who called himself a great intellectual songwriter, and the word “intellectual” was misspelled.”

**A. Les Reynolds:** “Unwrap those CDs - Pleeze!!! Send quality materials that won’t fall apart immediately. Send good quality CDs (occasionally defective ones or discs produced in an odd format is received, and they won’t play.)”

### **Q. How do you deal with your personal music preferences when reviewing? Do you review styles you would not normally listen to/buy?**

**A. Erik Deckers:** “It’s actually a little harder for an artist to impress me when they’re in a genre I already like, because I have some definite ideas about what I enjoy and what I don’t. But that means that if an artist CAN impress me, then they’ve done an excellent job. I do review styles that I normally don’t listen to, so if an artist can create something that I enjoy (i.e. country music), then they also get a good review.”

**A. Heidi Drokelman:** “Actually, I may be one of the few reviewers that will instantly admit that I use my personal music preference as a barometer for my reviews. I believe that it is

almost impossible to take that out of the mix, especially when considering first impressions and different “trends”. But this can be a very positive tool, especially when considering things like generational preferences (determining who this music will appeal to), and regional trends.”

**A. Jennifer Layton:** “That’s been an interesting issue for me. Over the past three years, I’ve learned not to rule out styles of music I don’t normally listen to. I thought I hated all folk music before I started writing for Indie-Music.com, and now I am completely in love with acoustic folk/rock music. The only thing I can’t review is rap. I’m a middle-class white girl who still listens to Barry Manilow and the Carpenters occasionally – I have ZERO credibility when it comes to rap and hip-hop.”

### **Q. What do you most enjoy about reviewing indie music?**

**A. Erik Deckers:** “It’s not the same old schlock I hear on commercial radio. In most cases, it’s better.

**A. Heidi Drokelman:** I’m still amazed, after all these years, at the quality and talent that’s out there. The best thing about reviewing indie music is the sheer unpredictability of it all.”

**A. Jennifer Layton:** “I know this sounds dramatic, but writing about indie music for the past three years has changed my life. I’m a lot more open-minded about so many things because I’ve learned to be more open-minded about the music I listen to. I’ve met several of the artists I’ve reviewed and am so happy that I’ve been able to encourage them by contributing positive reviews to their press kits. I’ve become such a fan of indie music that I flew up to NYC for my birthday last year to see performances by some of the artists I’d written about.”

**A. Les Reynolds:** “The fact that there’s an unlimited amount of real talent out there and it keeps coming and won’t ever stop. I’ve heard stuff I would have never heard otherwise, met musicians I’d never even dreamed existed. And the cream is when a real connection is made... that’s worth everything.”

### **Q. What most irritates you in writing reviews?**

**A. Erik Deckers:** “Getting unsolicited reviews. I’m pretty busy to begin with, and so I have to be selective about whose reviews I undertake. When I get one that I didn’t ask for, I don’t look favorably upon that artist. If I

do manage to get around to doing their review, they’ve got a bigger hurdle to clear in that I’m already annoyed with them.”

**A. Heidi Drokelman:** “The only thing that ever gets me is the volume of the mailings that I get. Making the commitment to give advice, constructive criticism, and deliver it in a way that isn’t cruel, disconcerting, or rude is never easy. I may have harped a little about bands realizing that the reviewers are human, but remembering how personal the work is to others keeps me in check when delivering my honest opinion about their work.”

**A. Jennifer Layton:** “What drives me NUTS is when artists or labels put me on their mailing lists when I didn’t ask them to. Some artists have even put me on their lists before they’ve even sent me the CD for review. The worst was after I wrote a positive review of one band, and then their label put me on the mailing list of every single artist on their roster. That’s one of the reasons I don’t deal with labels or PR people anymore. If I love an artist’s work, I’ll ask to be put on the mailing list. And I have done that many times.”

**A. Les Reynolds:** “Bad (inaccurate/incomplete) information on liner notes (it happens) or if the info is not legible — that stuff is very helpful and often necessary (in my opinion) in writing reviews. That, and wishing I had nothing to do but write, because most of these artists deserve a timely review.”

### **Review check list**

1. Communicate professionally - Use standard grammar and punctuation, proofread, and use a spell checker. You don’t have to write a business letter like you learned in 8th Grade Grammar class, the letter could be creative, but make sure it is identifiable as a business communication and not junk mail. Make sure to directly state you are looking for a review. Don’t send mass mailings, it’s obvious to the recipient. On the phone, leave useful messages designed to make it easy to call you back (spell your name, and repeat your phone number twice to make copying easy for the listener).
2. Follow submission guidelines - Guidelines exist for a reason, which is to help an organization handle a large flow of music submissions in an efficient manner. Each publication does it differently, but if you choose not to follow the guidelines, expect your submission to be late, lost, or worse.

3. Send a cohesive promo pack - Writers have differing preferences on what they like to receive as part of a promo pack. Most writers, though, like to read a band biography and a few press clips (it helps in writing a review to know more about an artist), and many also like to see a band photo. If you are unsure what a writer requires, err on the side of sending too MUCH rather than not enough. If you choose not to include photos and graphics, make sure they are easily available on your website, in case the reviewer plans to publish your review with pictures.
4. Give contact information - When your review goes up, nothing would be dumber than to make your CD hard to find. Many artists, though, forget to include full contact information including mailing address, phone, email, and website URL.
5. Identify your genre - When people read reviews, they want to know, up front, whether it's their "style" or not. So even if you simply say "a cross of rock, folk, and punk", that is much better than saying "we cannot be categorized". Better to categorize yourself than let a writer do it for you. Many writers are not musicians, and do not know precisely how to describe your genre just by listening. Help them.
6. Write a meaningful bio - Drop the lines that say you are "incredible", "changing the face of music", or "talented beyond belief etc.
7. Make the writer's job easy - Since writers are, at the basic level, just people doing their job, it only makes sense that if you can make their job easier, they will like you and try to return the favor. That's just human nature. Include everything the writer needs, be sensitive to their schedule, and provide graphics or answers to any questions promptly.
8. Follow up courteously - Writers vary greatly in how they respond to follow-ups. Some people will respond promptly, keeping you up to date at each step of the process. Other writers ignore follow-ups completely. Your best bet is learning each writer personally. As a general rule, follow up about 2-4 weeks after your submission should have arrived with a short note. If you hear nothing, try again in another two weeks. If you again hear nothing, try waiting a month. Don't threaten or chastise the writers, just ask if a decision has been made about your review yet.
9. Don't argue with the reviewer - You can't win. If you don't like the review, you can pass on that reviewer with your next CD. Or you can submit again and see if their opinion has changed. Either way picking a fight about something the reviewer wrote is a waste of your time. If there is a factual error, fine, ask the writer to correct it. But don't argue, "Our choruses are NOT boring! They are complex and emotive". Since the characterization of your choruses as "boring" is only the reviewer's opinion, you are not going to change it. You might, however, piss off the writer for life.
10. Keep the connection - You need to cultivate your relationships with writers. Check in with them periodically between CDs, read their other work, let them know if you have news, and send thank-you notes - even if you did not get reviewed. Your goal is to build a relationship. You never know when that relationship may help you out - but you can be sure it will work in your favor if you present yourself as nice, interested, and understanding.

*Suzanne Glass founder Indie-Music.com, All the reviewers featured in this piece write for Indie-music. For more information please contact: [www.indie-music.com](http://www.indie-music.com).*

## SO YOU GOT A BAD REVIEW - WELCOME TO THE CLUB!

by Chris Robley. The D.I.Y. Musician

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### HOW BANDS SHOULD DEAL WITH NEGATIVE PRESS

Without naming names, I'd like to tell you a story about something that unfolded yesterday on Facebook.

A certain band got a somewhat unfavorable review from a local publication. The band members' feelings, understandably, were hurt; they'd worked hard writing, rehearsing, recording, and mixing an album they were proud of - and they expected the whole world to love it too. One music critic, however, didn't love it. And it was his job to say so in print.

While we've argued in the past that posting a link to a negative review on social media can be a good way for bands to blow off steam (and let your FANS do the trash-talking), this band went and did something we would never

recommend; they did the trash-talking themselves, insulting the ears, taste, and discernment of that critic, and concluding with an F-bomb aimed at the publication.

It backfired. People came to the defense of the critic and called the band out for seeming both insecure and insensitive. On top of that, the band pretty much ruined their chances of that publication ever printing a nice word about them in the future.

Thankfully the band deleted the post later in the day (and hopefully apologized to both the writer and the magazine).

Anyway, I'm not writing this to beat up on the anonymous band. They seemed to have already learned from their mistake. And besides, we've all wanted to respond to bad reviews in this way. But there ARE more productive things to do in the face of negative criticism.

## **HERE ARE A FEW THINGS TO REMEMBER ABOUT BAD REVIEWS**

### **1. Bad reviews can be a learning experience**

One of my early bands got a review that really stung. For a couple weeks I put up my proud defenses, saying to myself, "Ah, well they just didn't GET it!" But ya know what? Some of their criticisms were dead-on - and I eventually realized it. The next time around I didn't make the same mistakes. This brings us to ....

### **2. Bad Reviews hurt, so just go ahead and hurt**

I'm not saying you shouldn't feel the sting. Someone just said your precious baby was ugly. Let yourself get angry or sad or whatever. Just don't lash out at the critic. And after the wound has healed a little, you can check out that baby with fresh eyes. Maybe it IS ugly. OR maybe the critic just didn't like you, but thousands of other people will! Which brings us to ...

### **3. Always remember that you're not going to be some folks' cup of tea**

Mathematically speaking, most people that hear your music will probably be indifferent to it, somewhat enjoy it, or somewhat dislike it. Your most loyal fans and your crazy haters are going to be in the extremes on either side of that wide middle-ground. So don't be upset if most music critics don't think you're the reincarnation of Mozart.

### **4. Bad reviews can boost your website's SEO power**

Think about it; if a highly-trafficked online magazine or blog reviews your music, when they link to YOUR site in the review it's going to help your own SEO power. And as your site moves up in the Google results, no one has to know that it was a downer review which boosted your search ranking.

### **5. Remember your manners**

It makes good business sense to stay quiet - or at least polite - when you get a bad review. If you retaliate (like the band mentioned above), you run the risk of being blacklisted by that publication. And that reputation might follow you elsewhere too.

### **6. You'll seem cool and confident by staying calm**

You're the best band in the world, right? Well the best band in the world wouldn't be phased by one bad review from a paper in ... what town was it in anyway? Oh yeah, right. We couldn't care less. Because we're on tour right now and having so much fun. Are you coming to the show tonight?

I've known some artists who've gotten very negative reviews from certain magazines, only to get glowing press from the same publication for their followup release. That probably wouldn't have happened had they sent back a nasty letter or blown up on Facebook about it. They stayed calm (outwardly, at least) and kept on!

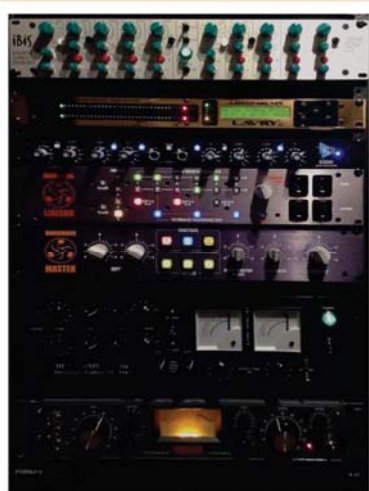
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## A MUSICIAN'S GUIDE TO STREAMING: THE PROS & CONS OF SPOTIFY, BANDCAMP, SOUNDCLOUD & MORE

by Joe Youorski, Paste Magazine

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Where to put your music as a beginning artist can be a daunting question. Every online service has pros and cons, and different programs work better for different genres, artists and scenes. Finding the right distribution method can be tough, and the industry is still going through growing pains when it comes to royalty payments.

Knowing the ins and outs of each distribution service is vital as an artist, so here's a look at six prominent mediums and what they have to offer.

### **Bandcamp**

Bandcamp is frequently used by smaller bands and labels to distribute music cheaply and efficiently. The structure of the site allows for easy downloads as well as streaming, and Bandcamp allows bands to name any price for a download. Customers are also able to buy physical releases and merch from a band, listed underneath the digital option.

Bandcamp's payment program is simple: the company takes 10 percent of merch sales and 15 percent of downloads. After a seller reaches a \$5,000 profit, then the Bandcamp cut drops to 10 percent of digital profit. Revenue is linked to a seller's PayPal account, so that \$5,000 can come from any number of releases and artists directed to the same PayPal account.

For \$10 a month, an artist can upgrade to a Bandcamp Pro account, allowing the seller to send out discount codes, use private streaming options and access in depth analytics.

Bandcamp has been lauded for its artist-friendly business and design, making it a good choice for indie musicians. The only downside is that no revenue is generated from album streams, so if you like an artist and want them to make some money from Bandcamp, make sure to buy an album once in a while.

### **Soundcloud**

Whereas Bandcamp allows artists to put music up for free and then takes a revenue cut, Soundcloud goes the opposite direction. Free accounts are allowed only two hours of upload time, so to really get the most out of Soundcloud, you're going to have shell out some money up front.

A Pro account costs \$6 a month or \$55 a year and allows for four hours worth of uploads. An Unlimited account costs \$15 a month or \$135 a year, and you'd expect, allows for unlimited uploads, though users are only allowed to add 30 hours of music each week.

The extended accounts allow for more downloads, analytics and let a user spotlight five songs at the top of his or her profile. Pro and Unlimited users can also turn on Quiet Mode, making comments and statistics private.

However, Soundcloud does not directly pay royalties for streams. If you're looking to get paid for streams, you'll have to partner up with non-profit SoundExchange and license your music, making Soundcloud more of a tool for sharing rather than selling. Links to iTunes can be included as a Buy button, however.

### **YouTube**

How much YouTube pays songwriters for featuring songs on its service is hard to find out, as Google has artists sign a non-disclosure agreement. It doesn't appear to be much, however.

According to a piece by The Guardian, an anonymous songwriter reported a profit of \$80 for nine million plays. YouTube also does not have performance rights agreements in every country with the service, so some views do not actually count toward royalties at all, but still bring in advertising money for YouTube.

Even in the U.K., where YouTube does have a deal with the Performance Rights Society, the video streaming company pays a lump sum for licensing, which is then distributed among songwriters. This model means that the popularity of a song makes little difference for royalties.

The best bet for generating a profit at YouTube is by generating enough views to become a premium partner and earning money through advertising. While YouTube is very useful for sharing music and especially

live performances, don't go into it expecting to generate a significant profit.

## Spotify

Spotify often catches a lot of flack for its royalty payments which range between \$.006 and \$.0084 per stream. The company claims that a small indie band makes about \$3,300 a month off an album, while a highly successful indie band makes \$76,000, but several artists like Zoë Keating have claimed to have received only \$808 from more than 200,000 streams on the service.

While it does not directly cost to put music on Spotify, the service only uploads music from labels and distributors. If you don't have a label, then you'll have to go through an artist aggregator. Some services like Tunecore charge a yearly fee for distribution, while others such as CDBaby take a small cut of net earnings.

Spotify does allow artists to put merchandise up for free on their profiles, and no cut is taken for merch sales. However, only three items can be listed at a time.

## Pandora

According to Pandora, one million plays results in about \$1,370. That money is then divided among the label, songwriters and performers, which makes for a very small sum of money awarded to each musician.

However, it is worth noting that while it's hard to make money on Internet radio like Pandora, it's even harder to make money off terrestrial radio. AM/FM stations only have to pay a songwriter's royalties, not performers.

So while Internet radio services such as Pandora may not pay much, having your music on there is still a bit more lucrative than traditional radio. Getting your music on Pandora requires that your music already be on a service such as iTunes or Bandcamp, and similar to Spotify, royalties can be collected through a label or SoundExchange.

## iTunes

iTunes has long been a dominant distribution medium for music—relying on downloads more than streaming—and getting music on the program is fairly streamlined. However, for smaller artists, the costs can sometimes trump the benefits.

Most artists have to use an aggregator to get music posted, meaning that a payment plan

with the aggregator will have to be used. iTunes then takes around 30 percent of sales from music. While this is a bit more costly than other services, the popularity of iTunes does make it an appealing service. Downloads from iTunes also easily go onto an iPod or other device, which makes music more readily accessible for fans.

## Other Options

Rdio, Beats Music, Rhapsody, Napster and Google Play Music, work on a similar model to Spotify, but the latter four don't have a freemium model, meaning royalty payments are typically higher (an accounting from an anonymous indie label shows Google Play paying nine times what Spotify pays—even Rdio shows a significant per-stream increase from Spotify). Deezer also works similarly to Spotify and is available in nearly 200 countries—just not the U.S. Slacker Rdio and Samsung's new Milk Music operate more like Pandora. Using a service like SoundExchange can earn royalties from the likes of iHeartRadio and SiriusXM, as well as Pandora. Xbox Music, while relatively small compared to the other services on this list, has become known for paying much higher royalties than its peers.

Some musicians like Camper Van Beethoven/Cracker frontman David Lowery, have argued that no streaming service pays enough to sustain musicians, and it may not even be enough to sustain companies like Spotify that rely on the freemium model. There's still a lot of shaking out to happen in the music-streaming industry.

*Joe Youorski is a freelance writer whose articles have appeared in Pop Matters and Paste Magazine. You can follow Joe @jyouorski*

## HOW TO LEAD PEOPLE TO YOUR MUSIC IN A DIGITAL AGE

by Bill Pere, President of the Connecticut Songwriters Association

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With the maturity of digital delivery and a proliferation of websites that allow easy uploading and legal downloading of music, the old models of making and marketing CDs are gone. The shift from an album-based economy to a track-based economy spawns many new considerations for the indie artist when the time comes to go into the studio and record.

In the old days, the typical strategy was to record an album, release a featured “single” and people would then purchase the whole album, never having heard the other songs. Albums often contained several ‘filler’ tracks of songs which never would have stood alone.

Today, anyone can easily hear up to 2-minute samples of tracks before purchasing, so the notion of using filler tracks is essentially useless – ALL the tracks have to be good or the consumer will just bypass them and download the ones they want. More than ever before, the quality of the songs is important helping your music rise above the baseline of filler tracks that are out there on CD Baby, iTunes, and other internet music stores. If you spend the time and money to record a filler track, it’s not going to give you the return on your investment in a track-based music economy as it might have in the old album-based economy.

This leads to the obvious question, is the concept of an “Album” even valid anymore? Should an artist spend time and money making a physical CD, when CD sales are rapidly declining and digital sales are increasing? If you are a touring artist, you’ll still (for now) want physical CDs to sell at gigs, but remember that the ultimate goal is always to be able to generate income without having to be physically present.

### **Content is king**

Consider how a typical listener comes to find new music. As an Indie artist, it’s fair to assume that most people have never heard of you. How will they find your songs? The most likely path to your music will come from consumers doing Internet searches on topics which have nothing to do with you. However, if your website contains content that might be of interest to particular groups of people, they will find you and then discover your music. For example, I have lots of website content about hunger and homelessness, and also about songwriting techniques. I’ve had lots of folks around the world find me and my music because they were searching on those topics, and now they’ve become fans. Think of the content on your website as a net to catch Internet searchers.

Another way to increase the effectiveness of your net is to put the lyrics to all your songs online as a separate page for each song. If you write songs about various topics, people searching those topics will be more likely to find your content. Again, the importance of the songwriting comes to the fore. If you just write generally about love and how you broke

up or got together, you’re going to be lost in an ocean of similar content. If however, you want to write about those things and use some interesting metaphors, like “your love is kryptonite” (a Superman reference) or “My heart is as parched as the desert of Tatooine” (a Star Wars reference), you’re now providing potential hooks for people with specific interests. In this age of niche marketing, specificity is always going to be a big plus. Over the years, I’ve been commissioned to write songs about a submarine, a river, a statue, horseback riding, Special Olympics, and various other unusual but specific things. These songs get found by people searching for related content. As an example, my submarine song about the USS Connecticut is often mentioned on websites of Navy personnel.

In a track-based digital music world, there are some things we’ve lost from the album-based model. Concept albums like the “Days of Future Past” (Moody Blues), or “The Who Sell Out” (The Who) don’t translate well to a track-based model. The order of tracks and the transitional content between them were essential to making concept albums work as a whole. With individual digital tracks available in any order, the artist can no longer control how the listener will hear the content. Each song will have to be able to stand alone, and transitional material between songs is meaningless, and complicates where to place the track markers. If you want to do a concept album with transitional material, it is a good idea to submit a different version for digital download, where any inter-song transitional material is omitted. With most sites giving a 30-second clip to preview the song, it’s important to limit the length of musical introductions and get right into the song, unless you can specify the section to use for the preview clip.

### **Critical mass**

Similar to a concept album, but more in tune with today’s market is the themed-album. This is a collection of individual songs, each of which could stand alone, but all of which relate to some common and specific theme e.g., high school life, baseball, rural life, spirituality, boats, etc. This serves two purposes. It makes it much easier to identify a target audience, enabling you to focus your promo efforts. It also provides a critical mass of content on the Internet, making a much bigger net for catching Internet searches about that topic. The more specific the theme, the better.

## What's in a name?

One of the most important things to think about in a digital world is the song title. Typically the title of a song going to be a phrase in the first or last line of the chorus, as that is the most easily remembered part of the song. But it might not be the most unique phrase as far as search keywords go. So you can use the technique of double-titling, where the song has one primary title, followed by a second in parentheses. An example would be Rupert Holmes' song "Escape (The Pina Colada Song)". In the aftermath of hurricane Katrina, I produced a song by a fellow writer called "Daydream" about memories of growing up in New Orleans. I suggested that it would be advisable to double-title the song calling it "Daydream (The Levees of New Orleans)". You can see the difference that would make in number of search hits the song receives.

If you can come up with a title which is similar to some word or phrase which is commonly searched, it will be a big help to you. Before there was the "High School Musical" phenomenon, I released my CD and song "High School My School". This gets many hundreds of hits each day from people searching "High School Musical". If you can generate high web traffic, you only need to convert a small portion of that into sales to start seeing meaningful royalties.

## To summarize

In today's world of individual tracks and search engines, make it a part of your overall planning to think about how you can maximize the web traffic that each of your songs can generate. Think of lyrics, titles, and subject matter as web content. Make sure each song is truly strong enough to stand on its own as if it were a featured single. Learn how search engines like Google work and optimize your website content to draw people to you. Cast a well-thought-out net, and you'll be well-rewarded.

*Bill Pere is President of the Connecticut Songwriters Association and author of "Songcrafters' Coloring Book: The Essential Guide to Effective and Successful Songwriting."*

## THE DIGITAL TOOLBOX: TOOLS AND STRATEGIES FOR CONNECTING WITH FANS ONLINE

by Scott Kirsner, author of "Fans, Friends & Followers: Building an Audience and a Creative Career in the Digital Age"

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The way the music industry worked for most of the 20th century involved artists striving and gigging and hoping to get discovered, and then letting someone else worry about everything else. Today, most of the responsibility for marketing, promotion, and building an engaged fan base falls upon you – even if you are lucky enough to get signed to a label. Take a band like OK Go, signed to Capitol Records. The band members say that the way they've achieved a global reach is by coming up with their own clever tactics to connect with fans, like making cheap, homemade music videos and posting them on YouTube. (OK Go's video for "Here It Goes Again" has been seen more than 45 million times on YouTube.)

"Much more of this promotional stuff used to be handled by an industrial media machine of some kind," says lead singer Damian Kulash in the book Fans, Friends & Followers. "And little of it is now." Now, musicians like Kulash are realizing that a strong connection with fans is their most valuable asset.

Here are three strategies that the musicians featured in Fans, Friends & Followers say are essential:

- 1) Collect emails religiously
- 2) Let fans tell you where to play
- 3) Create opportunities for participation

## Collect e-mails religiously

Facebook and Twitter are great ways to communicate with your fans, but most musicians still say that old-fashioned email can be the most reliable way to ensure that your message is read and to have fans take a certain action, like buying a ticket to a show or a new CD. Services like Host Baby, Constant Contact, or Vertical Response can help you collect emails on your website and manage your out-going messages. But it's important to take advantage of every opportunity to grow your list of email addresses.

Here's what Richard Cheese, a Los Angeles based singer who fronts the band Lounge Against the Machine, says about gathering fan email addresses:

1. I retain the email address of every customer who buys something, whether it be CDs, tickets to our shows, or membership in our fan club.
2. Whenever we do a concert at a venue that sells tickets online, we ask the venue to send the ticket buyers' email addresses to us, and we send them a "thank you" email and invite them to join our list.
3. We have email sign-up sheets at our shows.
3. We have a sign-up link at our website, where visitors can add their names to our email list in a form.
5. Of course, anytime someone emails me, we invite them to join our email list, too.

### **Let fans tell you where to play**

The old approach to touring involved renting a van, and heading down the west coast from Seattle to San Diego, booking gigs in every venue possible. But new tools allow your fans to help guide where you go. The result is that they feel they've helped "bring" you to their town, and you get a more reliable turn out. Brooklyn-based singer-songwriter Jonathan Coulton explains how he uses Eventful Demand, a free service, to let fans request that he come to their town – in conjunction with his blog.

"You can put something on your site that says, 'Sign up here and tell me where you live if you want me to perform in your city.' I can log in and see all of the cities where people are demanding me.

"I was on tour with author and "Daily Show" performer John Hodgman in Seattle. We had an event on Friday. I sent a message out to all the people in Seattle who'd demanded me, and posted on my blog saying, 'I'm going to be in Seattle, and I'd be happy to do a show on Saturday night if I can find a venue.' This was maybe a week-and-a-half before the date. Within 24 hours, I got five or six responses from people, some who'd actually called up venues to find out who the booker was. One guy owned a coffee shop, and he offered that as a venue. The one that looked like the best option was the Jewelbox Theater at the Rendezvous. It held about 75 people, and there were 75 people there. That's when it all clicked for me.

"We'd had 45 demands in Seattle, and that turned in to a 75-person audience. Then, we tried San Francisco. For me, it holds true that the audience size will be larger than the number of people who've made demands. Eventful Demand has helped my agent sell me to venues who've never heard of me. He can say, 'Look, we just did a show in San Francisco, and the demands were at this level, and this many people showed up.'

We've tried doing cities where the demand numbers just weren't there, because they were between two other cities where I was playing, and it hasn't worked."

### **Create opportunities for participation**

Fans no longer just want to buy your album or a ticket to see you perform – they want a window into your creative process, and a chance to get involved. For some musicians, that may entail letting fans choose the photo that goes on an album cover – and for others, it can involve letting fans sing on their album or contribute a solo. (On his song "Shop Vac," Coulton let his fans submit solos and then invited them to select the contribution they liked best to be included in the final version.)

When the band OK Go noticed that fans were making their own versions of some of its more popular YouTube videos, mimicking the band members' dance moves, they created a contest to choose the best one. The winners got an all-expenses-paid trip to a concert, and the opportunity to dance onstage with the band. The result? "Today, there are many more OK Go videos out there than we could've ever produced," Kulash says.

The ultimate form of participation may be getting fans to help fund the production of a new album. Singer-songwriter Jill Sobule explains how that worked for her 2009 release *California Years*.

"I picked \$75,000 as a fundraising goal. It was kind of off-the-cuff. Making a record can cost anywhere from \$1,000 to \$1,000,000. I figured I'd use the money for recording, distribution, publicity – everything.

"The contribution levels went from \$10, which got you a digital download of the record, to \$10,000, which gave you the chance to sing on the record. A woman named Jo Pottinger from the UK donated at that level. I bought her a plane ticket, put her up at a fancy hotel for a couple nights, and I gave her a vocal lesson. She sang on the record, and a friend of mine videotaped it. She was fantastic.



"I've also done a couple house concerts for people who donated \$5,000. If you donated \$1,000, I said I'd write you a theme song for your answering machine, and I still have to record a few more of those.

"It took me about two months to get to my \$75,000 goal. [The final amount raised was close to \$90,000.] Hopefully, California Years will be successful enough that I can fund the next one myself. Yet, I'd still want to keep the participation from the fan base in there."

There are no set rules yet about the ideal ways to collect email addresses, let fans shape your tour, or give them opportunities to play a part in your music. You may discover a strategy that works better for you – and if you do, hopefully you'll share it with other musicians. "Everybody's in the same Wild West environment," says Kulash. "There are no rules. Anything could work."

*Scott Kirsner is a journalist whose writing has appeared in Variety, The New York Times, The Los Angeles Times, Newsweek, and Wired. He edits the blog CinemaTech, and his latest book is Fans, Friends & Followers: Building an Audience and a Creative Career in the Digital Age. More info at [www.scottkirsner.com/fff](http://www.scottkirsner.com/fff) This article originally appeared Discmaker's FastForward newsletter.*

## HOW TO SELL YOUR MUSIC ON ITUNES - THE IMPORTANT FACTS SOME LEAVE OUT

by Shaun Letang, Music Industry How To  
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While getting your songs and albums on to these big online stores is a good feeling in itself, if you want to actually make sales of your music, getting your music on iTunes is only a small part of what you need to do. Let me explain.

### What iTunes And Other Online Music Stores Don't Do

While getting your music on one of the world's biggest online music stores is definitely something you will want to do, there is something many musicians fail to realize: iTunes is a platform to sell your music, NOT a marketing tool.

What I mean by this, is it will serve one purpose: Provide a way for people to buy your music. What it does not generally do

however, is help expose your music so more people will buy it.

While they do have their own charts and the odd promotion that can help give artists exposure, they don't do anything for the average person who sells their music on this platform. Unfortunately, if you're just starting out and aren't selling a bucket load of songs already, you will fall into this category.

As with selling on any other platform, if you really want to make sales, you first need to get people aware and interested in your music. If you don't do this, it won't matter where you're selling your digital downloads. It could be on iTunes, your own website, or some other corner of the internet; YOU WON'T MAKE SALES!

Unless you're willing to promote your music and sales page to people, there's no point putting your music up to sell in the first place. With that in mind, let's look at how to get more exposure on iTunes.

### How To Get More Exposure On iTunes

One of the best ways to get more targeted people visiting and interested in your iTunes sales page, is to link to it from your own website. This can either be within your shop page, or a link in your sidebar. If you haven't already got a website, you can check out our step by step guide to building a website here.

You should make it clear that it's a link to your iTunes or shop page, so people that go on to click through know exactly what to expect. While you could trick people and just say 'click here', a lot of people that do click won't be interested in buying from you. They may even get frustrated with your unclear navigation and leave your site.

Once your link is on your website, the next step is to promote your music and yourself as a brand. This will be in the form of gigs, Youtube videos, and any other methods you can think of or that are already working for you.

Any time you can, direct these people that hear about you to your website. You can do this at gigs by mentioning a free gift people can get by visiting your site (Mention this a couple of times during the gig and also at the end so all the details stay in their heads). You can also do this via your Youtube videos by adding a clickable link within the video, and also within the video's description.

You will get people coming back to your site, and learning about you as an artist. Some

people will go on to click on your iTunes and shop page, others won't. Those that do though, will often be more likely to buy than if you were to send them directly to iTunes at the beginning. This is because they haven't been sent cold to your sales page, and all this time they've been learning more about you.

They may have heard about you at a gig, went on your website and liked what they've seen, then intentionally went on your iTunes page knowing there will be something there to buy. By this point, you know they are interested in what you offer, and will likely buy a song if what they see on your iTunes page is of interest to them.

Those that don't click over to your iTunes page however, may still do something else that will benefit you. They may sign up to your mailing list which will allow you to keep in contact and continue to 'sell' the idea of yourself to them, or they may look at enough of your pages to gain some interest in you. This could lead to repeat visits to your website, and the opportunity to sell them songs or merchandise in the future.

If however they went straight to your iTunes page and they didn't want to buy, you wouldn't have the opportunity to get them on your list or to get them more knowledgeable about you as an artist. This will mean you retain less of your potential fans in the long run.

While you may get fewer people landing on your iTunes page in the first place, those that do will be of a much higher quality and much closer to the buying stage. Because of this, you will most likely make more sales instead of people landing on it and bouncing straight off again. This is ideally what you want.

## Conclusion

Getting your music on iTunes isn't a magic formula that will allow you to sell more songs. It's a platform to sell your music on like any other, although admittedly one that people trust and often use with their 'i' related devices.

It's important to get your music on iTunes, but if you want to sell those songs, you need to promote that page yourself.

*Shaun Letang is a music consultant based out of London England. He advises musicians on how to better run their music career to increase both their fan base and income from their talent. He does this in terms of free content on his websites [www.sh ShaunLetang.com](http://www.sh ShaunLetang.com) [www.musicindustryhowto.com](http://www.musicindustryhowto.com) and [www.independentmusicadvice.com](http://www.independentmusicadvice.com) but can also be hired to give personal advice.*

## HOW TO PROMOTE YOUR MUSIC ON YOUTUBE AND VEVO

by PRS for Music Magazine

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Music videos are an increasingly important promotional tool for artists and labels. They allow musicians to build their image, get their music heard, woo new fans and earn money. And, while some music videos can cost thousands of pounds to produce, there are some simple steps you can take that won't cost you a penny but will ensure you are represented on YouTube, VEVO and other visual and social media channels.

Caroline Bottomley is founder and manager of Radar, an award-winning global network connecting record labels, artist and professional music video directors. She regularly speaks at events about music video promotion and judges the UK Music Video Awards.

She recently chaired a panel at industry conference Midem, with guest speakers Eric McKay (business development, VEVO), Connie Meade (label manager, Infectious Music), Stephen O'Regan (founder, Balcony TV) and Patrick Ross (label services, Kobalt). Here are some of the top tips they shared...

### The importance of YouTube

Having a YouTube presence is essential for the following reasons:

**Availability:** YouTube is the primary search tool for music on the internet

**Shareability:** it's easy to share and embed from YouTube so your videos can provide content and conversation points on your other social media platforms like Twitter and Facebook.

**Monetisable streams:** YouTube loves music videos and encourages partnerships with labels and artists, which could bring you financial benefits. YouTube is also licensed

by PRS for Music, so you could earn royalties when your videos are played.

Statistics: radio decisions regarding playlisting are commonly based on YouTube stats, while record labels, managers and publishers use stats as an important popularity indicator when signing new acts.

### **How to become a YouTube partner**

YouTube is making it increasingly easy to become a partner, which means you can earn money from your video views. Partnership also improves search rankings for videos in your channel. Visit <http://www.youtube.com/yt/partners/> to find out more.

There's a myth you need to have over 100,000 views to become eligible, but this isn't true. YouTube wants more quality music content in the partnership scheme, so get registered.

### **A YouTube don't**

If there are several YouTube accounts that could host your video, pick one and go with that. Don't split views between accounts because it will make your stats look worse. Always upload the video to your Artist channel and 'favourite' it in the Record Label channel. Favouriting means the video will show up on the label channel, but the views all aggregate on the artist video.

### **Pros and cons of monetised ads**

There are two kinds of advert: the 30 seconds pre-roll which is very intrusive but high earning, and the five second skippable banner advert.

You earn money from allowing pre-video adverts in YouTube. But videos with adverts are statistically less likely to 'go viral'. Artists and fans hate adverts and, as sharing is often the most important metric for a video, think carefully before agreeing to adverts.

You don't need to be 'on' or 'off' with adverts – Infectious Music doesn't run ads for the first two weeks of a new artist's campaign – it considers adverts to be off-putting to fans of new acts.

Monetised videos become unavailable to German and Chinese fans, due to lack of licensing agreements in those territories.

### **Pros of VEVO**

VEVO is the biggest global network dedicated to music visuals

It offers a dynamic recommendation service viewers – who stay longer and watch more.

There are higher earnings for partners and VEVO will even do special promotion projects with the right partners

The platform likes independent artists; there are many ways for independent artists to get onto VEVO, for example via The Orchard.

### **Cons of VEVO**

You have to upload a new master file for the platform to be able to host your video so you're splitting views across YouTube and VEVO

The adverts are more intrusive

You can't opt out of adverts by type for example, you can't opt out of receiving alcohol adverts

VEVO works better for some kinds of artists than others

### **Packshot and lyric videos**

It's useful to have all your tracks on YouTube – if you don't then someone else will.

Packshot videos are quickest and cheapest way to do this. If quality content is important, lyric videos are a good solution. Always service a video when you're going to radio.

### **Video for promotion and discovery**

Channels such as Balcony TV can deliver an audience, but don't yet deliver monetisation. They can be very useful for new artists, where growing a fan base is more relevant than monetising views.

*PRS for Music is home to the world's best music writers, composers and publishers. PRS for Music brings together two royalty collection societies; MCPS and PRS. We exist to collect and pay royalties to our members when their music is exploited in one of a number of ways – when it is recorded onto any format and distributed to the public, performed or played in public, broadcast or made publicly available online. [www.m-magazine.co.uk](http://www.m-magazine.co.uk)*

## WHY ARTISTS SHOULD STOP CHASING SPOTIFY'S PENNIES AND FOCUS ON TOP FANS

by George Howard, Berklee College of Music  
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Nary a day goes by when we don't hear from an artist with a variant on the following: "My song was streamed on Spotify/Pandora [insert "large" number here], and I was only paid [insert "small" number here]."

These stories make for good fodder in that they highlight a perceived inequity with respect to an artist's work being devalued. They have all the right elements: there's the David and Goliath trope; the not-so-subtle dystopian inference that our society is going to hell because it's over-valuing corporate greed to the detriment of artistry; and the fact that, because it's music – something that plays some sort of role (however large or small) in most peoples' lives, we're all vaguely complicit in these inequities.

As is so often the case with stories that seem to suck just about everyone into their vortex, they often are full of sound and fury, but signify nothing. Such is the case with the hubbub around payments (or lack thereof) from Spotify, et al. to artists.

This is not to say that what Spotify and other music services is or isn't paying artist is right or just. Rather, it's irrelevant. In fact, not only does this debate have zero bearing on artists (not to mention consumers), but by its very nature it serves as a distraction with respect to what artists should really be focusing on.

Certainly, the payments to artists from streaming services are immaterial to the artists. This does not mean that these services aren't paying out some, prima facie, big numbers to certain artists. It's just that even if, for instance, Pandora pays out a million dollars to Jay Z, this amount, when compared to the money Jay Z earns from other ventures, is immaterial. It works the same way for a new artist who gets a payment of \$0.25 from Spotify; it's immaterial when compared to what they got paid for playing a club gig or selling a t-shirt. Same deal for mid-level and heritage artists.

Is this "right?" Hard to say. Right now customers are the prime beneficiaries of this windfall of historically deeply discounted music. Any song ever recorded for – at most – around \$10/month is hard to argue with, and even harder to change; customers have now been conditioned that this is what music costs, and, the vast majority of customers are not

going to ever pay more for it. The services who are now forced to price their subscriptions at this price point argue that if they raise their payments to artists they will go out of business; Pandora actually intimates that if they don't pay less to artists they will go out of business, because 50% of their revenue is going to artists royalties. Of course, rather than reducing artist payments to lower this percentage, the other way to reduce this percentage is to increase revenue! But, again, Pandora doesn't want to do this because they fear customer revolt if, for example, they run more ads per hour to increase revenue.

All of this is of course outside the artists' hands. No matter how many Facebook FB +1.49%posts artists make discussing the real or perceived inequities regarding payments the chances of the rates going up are slim, and, again, even if they do the payments will still be immaterial.

Artists must therefore recalibrate not only their expectations with respect to payments (they should expect nothing), but also their approach generally. Here's how.

We can loosely lump music consumers into three basic clumps: Casual Fans, Active Fans, and Passionate Fans. This grouping nicely corresponds with the Customer Journey as created by the auto industry (but applicable to pretty much everything) that states that customers follow the same path: Awareness, Consideration, Trial, Purchase, and Re-Purchase.

Overlapping these two we see that the streaming services fall neatly into this trajectory. For instance, The first stages of the Customer Journey, Awareness and Consideration, line up well with the Casual music listener. That is, someone who doesn't know what they want, but has a felt need for music might turn to a non-interactive streaming service such as Pandora, Songza, or a web-radio station. These non-interactive streaming services allow for Casual Fans to hear an array of music.

Given that the core competency of Pandora is to customize a listening experience to your likes, it stands to reason that the Casual Fan could discover something they like that moves them to the Active Fan level. This stage aligns with the Consideration/Trial stage of the customer journey. Here the customer might turn to Spotify or one of the other interactive streaming services (the difference between non-interactive and interactive services is that interactive services allow you

to select specific tracks, and listen to them repeatedly; non-interactive services do not allow this). The customer has discovered something in the casual stage and is now considering it/trying it by actively selecting it on Spotify to listen to it a number of times to see if there is resonance.

While the payout to artists increases exponentially when a customer goes from causally discovering their music on a non-interactive source to actively selecting and playing it on interactive service, the payout remains immaterial.

It's only when the customer, after truly resonating with an artist, moves from an Active Fan to a Passionate Fan that the artist stands a chance of making money. This is because this Passionate Fan aligns with the Purchase and (more importantly) RePurchase stage of the customer journey. Here the artist can finally unshackle from the contingency of payments from the streaming services, and instead make material money via things like sale of tickets, vinyl, merchandise, membership/subscription modes to their own Site for exclusive content, direct sales from their website of downloads of non-album tracks (live performances, demos), etc.

These items (recordings of live shows, tickets, etc.) are only of interest to Passionate Fans, of course, and thus the importance of using these services like Spotify and Pandora for all their worth to drive more potential Passionate Fans into the funnel in order for the percentage of Passionate Fans to grow.

As seen as a potential catalyst to herd more casual and active fans — fans who may become Passionate Fans — into this funnel, these services take on a real value. This value far exceeds any direct financial payment (whether that number goes up or down 10%). To this end, the artists must learn to use these services and benefit them in the same way the artists are being used by and benefiting these services.

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## SOUNDCLOUD: SHARE AUDIO RECORDINGS

by AppAppeal.com Editor

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You may have noticed that many of the hundreds of music blogs that accept material for review from independent artists have something called a **Dropbox** on their website. The **Dropbox** is part of an audio file delivery system called "SoundCloud."

SoundCloud is a really useful way of sharing music files without having to worry about doing anything complicated. SoundCloud simplifies the process involved in sharing music files. Rather than having to upload your files to an FTP and then send everyone complicated instructions you can now use this site. Thanks to SoundCloud you don't have to worry about filling everyone's mailboxes up with your MP3's. To send a music file requires a considerable amount of bandwidth and also takes some time, which is why SoundCloud is becoming so popular. Music sharing has received a lot of attention lately, mostly because it's illegal. However not all forms of music sharing are illegal, there are plenty of legitimate reasons why businesses may want to share music files with other people.

### What is the history and popularity of the app?

SoundCloud is based in Berlin, Germany, and was founded in August 2007. It was created specifically to help people that work in the music industry and want to share music files quickly and easily with one another. It has been reported that SoundCloud will be one of the launch partners for Facebook Music. In October 2011, SoundCloud launched its first iPad app.

### What are the differences to other apps?

Unlike the majority of other music sharing applications this one is perfectly legal to use. It is probably the only music sharing application that's actually designed to help the music industry rather than damage it. SoundCloud is designed to make the way the music industry shares files quicker and more efficient. Rather than having to send numerous emails to different people, a single file can be uploaded and shared by many people.

### How does the web app look and feel to use?

The site is very easy to use, and it's very easy to upload and send files to anyone that you



want to see them. You can either keep your files private or share them with other people; it's completely up to you. You are walked through every step of the process which should make it very easy, you are guided through which will make it easy to understand what you need to do. The whole process is very straightforward and you shouldn't have any problems.

### **How does the registration process work?**

Registering for an account with SoundCloud is very easy. Spend time carefully choosing your username as this will become your domain name which people use to access your files, try to keep it as short and easy to remember as possible. Avoid usernames that sound too similar to others, and long names. You will then be given the option to enter lots of optional information; you can either fill it out or click the "Skip this step" link at the bottom of the page. Once you have done that you will see how your profile looks to other people, spend some time customizing your profile if you want. You will have to confirm your email address by clicking a link in the email that is sent to you.

### **What does it cost to use the application?**

The application is free to use for most people, although there are also professional accounts that cost money. The professional accounts have higher limits, and more features. The top of the range account is an unlimited account which allows you to upload as many files as you want and also the ability to brand your drop box.

### **Who would you recommend the application to?**

SoundCloud is a great tool for anyone that needs to be able to share sound files with people over the internet. Music files can be fairly big which can make sharing them a real pain. This site simplifies the process because it's dedicated to doing just that.

### **SoundCloud Features**

1. Share your Music files with other people
2. No need to learn anything complicated like FTP
3. Faster and less annoying than emailing the files to everyone
4. Cheaper than burning the files onto a CD and posting them

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## **HOW TO USE THE SOUNDCLOUD DROPBOX FOR DEMO SUBMISSIONS**

by David Adams, The SoundCloud Blog

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When any band starts one of the first stepping stones is recording that first demo and sending this to their favourite labels. This system classically has taken place with artists submitting demos through the post, sending over MP3 files or bands sending across links to their social media pages. And sometimes all three. From a label's perspective it's becoming more and more essential to simplify this whole process.

What if this system was streamlined and centralized? Well it can be. SoundCloud has a really useful free tool called DropBox, that enables you to streamline your demo submission process. It's being used by labels ranging from Fat Cat Recordings to EMI and we think that more people could be making the most out of their DropBoxes.

So here's a quick post covering everything you'll need to know to create a quick, simple and cost effective demo submission policy for your label. Hopefully it will make checking demos feel like an interesting discovery process again, not just a chore.

### **Why use a DropBox?**

Your DropBox page is where people can go to send you tracks directly via SoundCloud. By using the SoundCloud DropBox feature it allows you to:

- Centralize and organize all demo submissions
- Stream submissions without taking up space on your desktop
- Enables everybody, even people who are not on SoundCloud, to share their tracks with you
- Embed a DropBox on to any site where you want to receive submissions (including Facebook)
- Receive submissions that can feature links to videos and further information on an act

## **How do I setup and let people know about the DropBox?**

If you have a SoundCloud account then you automatically have a DropBox. So you can get started straight away with receiving demos. There are two ways you can direct attention to your DropBox page. Firstly you can use the direct link to the DropBox and include this link wherever necessary eg. in your email signature. Alternatively you can grab a rather nice looking DropBox widget to embed on your own site eg. on your 'Contact' page. The widgets work as a great visual presence on your site as an easy click through for people to follow to go to your DropBox. You can grab the embed widget codes from the right hand side of the DropBox page on your public profile.

## **How can I customize my DropBox?**

With our premium accounts you can customize the look and feel of your DropBox page as well as leaving information on your demo policy, what you're looking for etc. To customize your DropBox click on the 'Edit your branded DropBox' option. From here there is a number of options you can edit on your branded DropBox page:

- Add header and body background images
- Customize the text and logo
- Edit the color scheme

## **What happens when I receive music from my DropBox?**

All your submissions through your DropBox can be viewed from the 'Tracks' section on your SoundCloud account. If you go to 'Tracks' from there you can choose to view tracks sent to you 'from people you follow' and 'from others'. By making the most of the follower aspect of this separation it is a helpful filter to separate submissions to other incoming audio. Tick the box saying "Only show tracks shared to my DropBox"

The tracks on this page will play one after another so from a label perspective you can leave the page open while you get on with other asks and listen through all the submissions. If one track hits you with a moment of inspiration then click through on the player for further info on the artist and to contact the individual via SoundCloud. Once you have finished with a track in your DropBox just press the delete icon on the top right of each player, as simple as you would with an email client. If you don't want to hear any more tracks from a certain user then simply click the 'mute' option!

## **DAVID ADAM'S INTERVIEW WITH FATCAT RECORDS**

We caught up with Tom Lavis from FatCat and asked him about how he has been using SoundCloud and the DropBox feature in their working life.

### *1) How long have you been using SoundCloud?*

Not long - only about four months. But it's already made a difference to how we work with demo submissions. We're really excited about it, I don't think it will be long until we release our first album sourced through SoundCloud.

### *2) You have been keenly using the DropBox feature. What was your process before using the SoundCloud demo DropBox?*

Before SoundCloud we were receiving demos through the post, on CD, vinyl and tape. We still do - it just means we get twice as many submissions, which is great. We did used to get emailed links to social media pages but we found that they sometimes got lost in our inboxes. The DropBox is much better... all the tracks are in the same place, we just have to press play and carry on working whilst the tracks play through.

### *3) How has SoundCloud eased the process of receiving demos than in the past?*

It has eased the process of receiving demos, but we still very much enjoy receiving CDs through the post and wouldn't want that to stop. It's added a refreshing and exciting new element to the type of demo we get. The tracks we get in the dropbox are from a wider range of influences.

Like I mentioned above - listening to the tracks we receive through our Dropbox couldn't be more simple. It's certainly easier than opening packages and logging in CD's.

### *4) Are there any creative ways you are looking to use this influx of music received through your SoundCloud DropBox?*

Well, of course we would love to release some - which will certainly happen. The standard so far has been way higher than the average standard of our physical submissions.

For the moment we're just adding our favourite tracks to our demo player on the FatCat site and our Facebook page. We want these talented artists to get some recognition -

so it's important to us to get them some exposure.

We're also thinking of releasing some SoundCloud curated compilation of the best demos we've received through SoundCloud. We released a CD called 'No Watches. No Maps' a long time ago which was a compilation of the best demos we got through the post, we'd like to do a part two which would be made up of entirely SoundCloud submitted demos.

At the moment we're running a remix competition - we have put the stems of a David Karsten Daniels & Fight The Big Bull track on SoundCloud, anyone can go in and download them and then have a go at remixing the song by submitting through the group dropbox - there's still 2 weeks left and 15 remixes in. We're hoping to do remix comps for a lot of our forthcoming releases.

*5) What tips can you give for artists sending you tracks through to your DropBox?*

Don't drop in more than 2 tracks, make sure they're the ones you're most happy with. If we don't get back to you or put your music up, it doesn't mean you shouldn't submit some more stuff in the future.

We like all kinds of music, so don't think that what you do might not be for us. Also - don't worry about your track sounding under-produced or too rough, some of the bands we've signed in the past started out by sending us very lo-fi demos recorded with 1 mic in a cupboard... sometimes these ones are the best.

*David Adams is a writer for SoundCloud's official blog. [blog.SoundCloud.com](http://blog.SoundCloud.com)*

## tools

### WHAT ARE PERFORMANCE RIGHTS ORGANIZATIONS?

by Jer Olsen, CEO MusicBootCamp.com  
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Performance rights organizations like BMI, ASCAP and SESAC all perform a similar task but in slightly different ways. Essentially, they all perform the duty of collecting royalties for non-dramatic performances of intellectual property. In simpler terms, they collect the income from radio stations, TV stations, programming companies, Internet marketers and any other entity where music and related intellectual property is used. These royalties are then, in turn, paid to the

various publishers and authors associated with a particular recording or performance.

### Why do we need them?

The fundamental reason behind the birth of these organizations is the simple fact that individual artists and song writers can't possibly devote the time, attention and research required to collect royalties from the plethora of companies that use their music, even though by law they are entitled to those royalties. Artists depend on these performance rights organizations to do the hunting and collecting for them—a small price to pay for a piece of a much, much bigger pie! There's a saying, “50% of everything is a whole lot better than 100% of nothing!” Well, we don't know exactly how much money these organizations charge for their services, but we can be certain it covers their time and energy (similar to how music publishers earn money for getting music played in movies, TV shows, or recorded by other artists, etc.) The truth is, performance rights organizations are a necessary and helpful tool for musicians and publishers. The toughest decision is choosing which one to align with.

### Which one to choose?

Please visit the page of each organization to find on-line information about joining as well as a ton of other terrific resources. Compare and make a decision on which one best suits you. If you don't, you can practically assure yourself of never being paid for airplay.

#### United States

BMI—Broadcast Music, Inc ([www.bmi.com](http://www.bmi.com))  
ASCAP—The American Society of Composers Authors and Publishers ([www.ascap.com](http://www.ascap.com)),  
SESAC ([www.sesac.com](http://www.sesac.com))

#### Canada

SOCAN—The Society of Composers Authors and Music Publishers of Canada ([www.socan.ca](http://www.socan.ca))

#### The UK

PAMRA—Performing Arts Media Rights Association ([www.pamra.org.uk](http://www.pamra.org.uk))  
PRS—The Performing Right Society ([www.prs.co.uk](http://www.prs.co.uk))  
MCPS—The British Mechanical Copyright Protection Society Limited ([www.mcps.co.uk](http://www.mcps.co.uk))

#### France

SACEM—Societe Des Auteurs Compositeurs Et Editeurs De Musique ([www.sacem.fr](http://www.sacem.fr))  
CISAC—Confédération Internationale des Sociétés d'Auteurs et Compositeurs ([www.cisac.org](http://www.cisac.org))

## **Germany**

GEMA—The German Society For Musical Performing Rights And Mechanical Reproduction Rights ([www.gema.de](http://www.gema.de))

## **Italy**

SIAE—Societa Italiana Degli Autori ed Editori ([www.siae.it](http://www.siae.it))

## **Spain**

SGAE—Sociedad General de Autores y Editores ([www.sgae.es](http://www.sgae.es))

## **Sweden**

STIM—Svenska Tonsattaress Internationella Musikbyrå ([www.stim.se](http://www.stim.se))

## **Australia**

APRA—The Australasian Performing Right Association Limited ([www.apra.com.au](http://www.apra.com.au))

Note: If you are looking for information on how to start your own publishing company, inquire on each site or call each company on how to obtain membership as a publisher. Becoming a publisher is not as nearly as difficult as performing the duties of a publishing company since a publisher's main task is exposing compositions and recordings to as many profitable opportunities as possible. Many of the duties of publishing companies can be effectively performed through a membership with the *Harry Fox Agency* ([www.harryfox.com](http://www.harryfox.com)).

*Jer Olsen is the founder and CEO of MusicBootCamp.com, home of "Dirt-Cheap CD Replication and FREE Music Business Training!" This article is a sample of the many free resources available on the Web site. Jer is also an accomplished musician and producer with several top 20 Billboard hit remixes to his credit.*  
[www.MusicBootCamp.com](http://www.MusicBootCamp.com)

## **UPC & BARCODES FOR PENNIES AND SENSE**

by Lygia Ferra, [LAMusicGuide.com](http://LAMusicGuide.com)

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With all the details that go into making a CD it is easy to put off making certain decisions, especially if there is cost involved or contradictory information.

### **So what exactly is a barcode?**

Bar codes are also called UPC Symbols (generated by the Uniform Code Council ([www.uc-council.org](http://www.uc-council.org).) They are the small black and white lines that correspond to a unique 12 digit number used to track sales of

CD's, while Sound scan correlates the information with your barcode in their database. Unless you are planning on starting a record label and putting out a number of releases with several artists, the \$750 expense isn't really necessary.

## **Soundscan**

Since Soundscan ([www.soundscan.com](http://www.soundscan.com)) has a direct influence on placement in Billboard and CMJ music charts and other forms of recognition, payola has all been obliterated. It is a tracking system that did away with the potentially subjective reports of radio programmers and store managers prior to 1991. Sound Scan's records are not public, so the only way to access their data is open an account at a minimum price of several thousand dollars per year. The only ones checking are the larger labels and bigger companies. If you want to impress, you would need to sell more than 1,000 units to catch their eye.

### **Why do you need one?**

One reason why you may need a barcode at all is that most stores and online retailers require an UPC code on every product they sell. So sparing the \$750 expense, you can acquire one through Oasis or Discmakers for "free" when you replicate your discs, or through *CD Baby* for a modest \$20 fee.

In the case of CD Baby the agreement does not bind you to the company in any way, other than having them listed as your "Parent Label" in Sound Scan's database. They provide you with the code as an electronic image, and you can include it in any cover art as appropriate.

### **How do you get credit for sales?**

To ensure you are properly credited for all record sales as in the case of Discmakers you fax the necessary forms to Soundscan (914-328-0234), you will need a separate form for each release. Any independent artist or band can have their retail sales tracked through Sound scan, though only a label with two or more acts can take part in their Venue Sales Reporting Procedure. You must also have been in business two years or more, with a \$500 fee.

### **It's never too late**

You can always purchase one afterwards and have them printed on stickers. If you do it yourself make sure your printer is at least 720 dpi so they will read correctly. You can easily download a shareware barcode. A simple search for "UPC Barcode" @ <http://shareware.cnet.com>, or [www.download.com](http://www.download.com) will yield many results.

## Alternatives

You can also go through a company (usually with a minimum order of 1,000 stickers) they will print them out for you, saving you the hassle of doing it yourself. If you are only going to sell your product at gigs or through alternative means, you really do not need a barcode at all. But for a mere \$20, CD baby will save you all the worry and give you many more possibilities to sell your product.

## Sources:

**The Uniform Code Council:** 1-800-543-8137 [www.uc-council.org](http://www.uc-council.org)

**Soundscan:** (914) 684-5525  
[www.soundscan.com](http://www.soundscan.com),  
[clientservices@soundscan.com](mailto:clientservices@soundscan.com)

*Note: If you do decide to bite the bullet and purchase a barcode through the Uniform Code Council the process can take a number of weeks so allow for that extra time.*

**Independent Records:** 1000 stickers Single Format Registration, Price: \$55.00 - [www.indierec.com/s-barcodes-register.html](http://www.indierec.com/s-barcodes-register.html)

**Bar Codes Talk, Inc:** 888-728-4009 Florida \$30.00 shipping included.

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## BAND AND PRESS KIT ESSENTIALS

by Richard V. Tuttell, Daily News  
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Destiny's Mother-in-Law may not be the best local band in town — or even the loudest, but they know how to attract attention. The heavy metal group's marketing plan included an obvious first contact for any promotion — their hometown newspaper. Many bands overlook this option when promoting their CDs and gigs. What may seem stuffy and low-tech, however, is a golden opportunity for getting publicity and building a local following.

In the case of Destiny, a power trio based in eastern North Carolina, the first step was a phone call to the editor to introduce the band, gauge interest and find out the preferred method of submitting information. A press kit containing, a press release, photo and CD followed this.

## Press release

This is the most important piece of the promotion program. It should answer six questions: who (the name of the band and its members), what (the style of music, gigs, or recording being promoted), where (the location of the performance or where the recordings are available, when (the time and date of the show), why and how (is the show a benefit, then for whom, why should people want to hear the band and how can people get advance tickets or find the club or other venue?) Leave the detailed back-story, how the lead singer while working at the Citgo station met the guitarist when he drove in with a flat, for a later full-blown feature.

Format is just as important as content. A sloppy presentation reflects a lack of professionalism and reduces the chances the release will run as written, or at all. Type the release on standard letter-size sheets or submit it as a digital text file on diskette or by email. Use plain text, which is compatible with most computer programs and operating systems used by newspapers. Not everybody has a copy of Microsoft Word around. If you email your release, paste the text of the release into the body of the message because editors are wary of opening attachments from strangers. Write in narrative form with complete sentences (use both lowercase and uppercase letters) rather than sending a flyer, (because it gives the band a better shot at controlling how the information will be printed.) Be sure to include contact information (names, phone numbers and email addresses), just in case.

## Photos

Destiny's Mother-In-Law sent a standard 8x10 black and white print, which was fine for our paper, but I would suggest sending color prints. It leaves open the opportunity of it being used on a feature front. If the image is to go on an inside page a color photo can still be scanned as grayscale. Many papers are using digital cameras and will accept digital images with a resolution of at least 2 MPs. Submit a jpeg or tiff file on a diskette or by email. It's helpful to provide a paper printout to show what the digital image looks like. You can also refer to a Web site from which the photo can be downloaded.

Don't print a digital image on your inkjet, submit it on a sheet of copy paper and expect it to be published. The quality just won't be acceptable. Also avoid Polaroids that usually have poor production quality. Spend a few bucks for a professional portrait or get a friend with a decent camera and an eye for composition to help you out. Keep the shot tight with members grouped closely together to avoid dead space. Filling the viewfinder to



the max allows you to decide how the photo should be cropped rather than a photo editor.

Always attach caption information to the photo on a piece of paper taped the back or bottom of the print. Name everyone in the photo, identifying each person. Even if that information is already on the accompanying press release put in the caption. Photos and releases are often separated.

## Recordings

Including a CD showcasing your talent is a nice touch with a press release, but is more important when requesting a music review or feature story. Some newspapers prefer to experience the band live and others may accept MP3 files. Do not send your only master copy of your sure-fire hit, because there's often no guarantee that it will be returned.

Don't be discouraged if the big metro paper rejects your submission. For every daily paper there are about nine weeklies or other non-daily publications, and they depend on local content

*Daily newspaper editor Richard Tuttell is the author of Good Press: An Insider's Guide to Publicizing Business and Community News, available from Barnesandnoble.com, Amazon.com and other on-line booksellers. This article originally appeared in Disc Makers Fast Forward newsletter. For a free one-year subscription, call 1-800-468-9353, or visit [www.discmakers.com](http://www.discmakers.com).*

## SO, WHAT'S THE SCOOP WITH ELECTRONIC PRESS KITS?

by Panos Panay, CEO Sonic Bids

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It seems that the big buzz out there in the music word today is all about Electronic Press Kits (EPK™). Should independent musicians use an EPK™ or a traditional press kit when approaching club promoters, festival organizers, radio programmers or record label A&R representatives? Do they work as well as regular press kits or should one stick with the tried and true method of snail mail kits? Are industry insiders even using them?

### Electronic press kit, why is it important?

The answer is simple: like every other major innovation over the years ranging from the Compact Disc to the MP3, the industry was slow to initially accept it but it's fast becoming the ubiquitous standard that everyone from up-and-coming independent artists to word-renown festival directors is

using to send and receive information about bands and artists from around the globe.

An EPK™ is like a virtual passport that you can use again and again to gain entry into hundreds of conferences, festivals, clubs, music competitions, colleges, or to even get your songs played on radio or reviewed by record companies or music producers. It contains everything your regular press kit contains and more: music samples, high-resolution photos, bio, press reviews, and even an up-to-date gig calendar (try that with a regular press kit). What's great about an EPK™ is that it takes literally 20 minutes to create one online and you can put it to use and start saving money almost immediately. For the cost of little more than sending out two regular press kits, you can sign up for an account, create an electronic press kit, and email it out to anyone, anywhere, at anytime. It not only communicates all the information that is found in your average press kit or web site, but it does so more quickly, more efficiently and far more effectively. Think how mind-blowing it is to be able to email someone everything they need to know about you or your band as soon as you get off the phone with them (or better yet, while you are even still talking with them).

### Cost effective solution

Think of the implications of this innovation for the average up-and-coming artist. For the first time in history, there is no direct link between how many people you can reach and the cost of reaching them. For example, with a traditional press kit there is a vast cost difference between sending out 10, 100, or 1,000 of them. This means that even though today an independent artist has access to an unprecedented amount of information, the ability to take full advantage of this has, until now, been limited (consider the cost involved in sending a regular press kit to every single possible contact in this guide.)

The Electronic Press Kit has changed all this. Every day there are artists that are sending out their EPK™ to say, 100, or 200 college promoters at practically zero cost. These artists are receiving offers from people that normally they would have had to spend way too much money to reach (and often paying way more in reaching them than the actual fee they receive). The cost and effort of emailing an EPK™ to all these promoters is a small fraction of the corresponding investment in regular press kits – not to mention the benefits of the fact that communication is practically immediate (versus waiting for a week or so to get a press kit in the mail).

## Conclusion

Does all this mean that you can go ahead and recycle all your physical kits right after you finish reading this article? Well, my prediction is that “hard” copy press kits are going the way of the vinyl and the cassette tape but like any other new technology, adoption takes a while — and there are still the technology laggards. Traditional press kits and CDs still have their place (for now) but my advice is to save your money and send them to the increasingly fewer people that specifically ask for them after they review your electronic press kit. Then you at least know that these are high prospects that are worth spending an extra \$20 in trying to communicate with them.

*Panos Panay is the founder and CEO of Sonicbids, the online pioneer of the Electronic Press Kit (EPK™) platform. The service currently has over 70,000 registered artist members and 6,000 active promoter members who actively use EPK's to connect and communicate with each other on a daily basis.*

## WRITING A BAND BIO

by Suzanne Glass, Indie-Music.com

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Having a little trouble coming up with a decent band bio? Check out these suggestions:

1. Don't worry about writing a book. One page or even a few paragraphs is fine. In fact, most people don't want to read any more than that.
2. Do emphasize your strong points while minimizing areas where you lack. If you have played gigs with well known bands, be sure to list it. If you haven't played many gigs, don't bother mentioning the fact. Go on to your recording, or your other musical experience. Also, while it's OK to “hype” a little bit, never tell any out-and-out lies or make a boast you might not be able to come through on. It will come back to haunt you, and then you will lose all credibility in the reader's eyes. Not to mention these music people talk to each other...and HOW!
3. Do use your band's letterhead to write it on. (You DO have a logo and letterhead, right?) Be consistent in your entire promo package with the image, logo, etc.
4. Don't say your band's music is “not able to be classified”. Aside from the fact that a million other bands say the same thing, the music industry contact reading your bio wants and NEEDS to know who you

are comparable to. For instance, if someone recommends a movie to you, you probably need to know if it's a horror flick, a romance or whatever before you decide if you want to see it.

5. Do use humor or slight sarcasm if it fits your band's image. But avoid the temptation to go overboard. A bit of humor can make a low budget press kit seem better. Too much is a loser. Also, some types of bands fit into a niche that is more open to humor. Just make sure what you say will not offend anyone.
6. Don't, repeat, DO NOT say you are the coolest, best, or greatest band around, or anything even remotely close to it. Music Industry people want to decide for themselves if you are good or not. Avoid the flowery adjectives.
7. Do list the band's major musical influences. This goes along with trying to give the person an idea of what you sound like. It can work great to come up with a unique description of your music. For instance, Indiana guitarist Michael Kelsey describes his music as “Progressive, aggressive acoustic music”.
8. Unless your band has former members of Aerosmith and Van Halen in it, it's probably not a good idea to do one of those story bios. “John was playing in Joe's band until the singer quit. Then John met Steve, who was playing with the Nobodys. They formed a band called The Losers. When the drummer quit, they changed their name to The New Losers”, etc. This is irrelevant and, well, boring. Not to mention it shows your lack of ability to keep a band together. It is OK to use an interesting line or two about how the band got started, or how songs are written. It's also OK to add any interesting facts, like maybe your band donates all proceeds from their cassette sales to charity.
9. Of course you want to list all your major accomplishments. Any recordings, awards, education etc.
10. A quick concise listing of each member is good. Sometimes you can do fun things with this like a listing of each members' favorite drink, or other non-relevant stuff. But make sure it works. Nobody really cares what your favorite anything is, so it has to be part of a humorous image. If any members have played in well known bands, it's good to mention it here, but don't make a big deal out of it.

11. You may use a different version of your bio depending on who will be receiving it. For instance, a record label and a club booking agent might need different info to decide if you interest them. A record label wants to know you have it all together: music, business, a fan base, songwriting, etc. A club agent is mostly concerned with whether you have a following that will bring paying business to his club.
12. Do make absolutely sure you have your address and phone number (and your e-mail and website URL, if applicable) listed prominently. This goes for all items in your press kit. Name, address, and number on EVERYTHING. (Demo tape included!)
13. Read other bands' bios. Compare and rewrite. Have other people read and comment on what you write. Make sure it is grammatically correct, with no typos. If you really feel yourself lacking in this area, consider hiring someone to write your bio for you. A good bio is part of the press kit that forms the first impression of your band. Don't mess it up.

*Suzanne Glass founded Indie-Music.com, an online magazine that reviews dozens of independent artists each month, includes music charts, audio & internet radio, and how-to-succeed articles for musicians, all at no cost. A paid members option gets your music in rotation with streaming audio, radio, multimedia advertising AND full access to our DIY music industry database with over 7000 venues. [www.indie-music.com](http://www.indie-music.com)*

## THE "T" IN TOUR MERCHANDISE STANDS FOR T-SHIRT

by Gigi Swanson, M.G. Incentives Inc.

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When you think of tour merchandise you might envision major label artists playing large arenas and selling everything from tie-dye t-shirts, bumper stickers, embroidered baseball caps and in the case of the Rolling Stone's famed Voodoo Lounge tour—a custom motorcycle.

But even if you are an independent artist you can run your business like the big acts by utilizing an added revenue stream source—custom merchandise. As an artist/performer you are selling an experience and fans will buy a souvenir of that experience in the form of a CD, clothing, buttons, posters, etc. As

music fans we have all come home with something more tangible than a ticket stub and it's usually something we can wear.

The custom wearables market has plenty to choose from, but let's focus on the long held wardrobe staple—the t-shirt. What better promotion is there than a walking billboard to advertise who you are and what you do. It's generally inexpensive to produce and if made with good-quality materials it can last a very long time. But better than that, there is a healthy margin of profit in the sales of wearables, which can at least offset or even cover your travel expenses.

You can package CDs with a T-shirt for an "added value" sales incentive such as offering them "half off" with a CD purchase. You can use them as door prizes or as a thank you for the sound guy or the waitress at the clubs you play. The same applies for coffeehouse, church and house concert gigs. Even when you play for free you can earn money and build goodwill and name recognition.

Don't think selling T-shirts is for more visible and established acts. If you are playing out and selling CDs you can sell shirts. But before you jump in, here are a few pointers to make your promotional dollars work for you.

The most popular T-shirt is the basic crew neck. Not only is it low in cost, it's a style people are familiar with. As far as color options are concerned, the sky is the limit with the least expensive being the standard white, then the heathers/naturals, and then the darker colors. Besides the basic tee, you can branch out with different styles such as '70s retro ringer tees, baseball raglan tees and new styles made for women such as scoop necks, baby-doll tees, and the new layered looks.

I prefer 100% cotton heavyweight Tees in the 6.0 oz range for long term durability. Brands such as Gildan, Hanes, and Jerzees have been common favorites for years. Heavier fabric is knitted tighter which enables a better screen print, especially when using detail and four color process. Plus they are typically cut larger and hold up better with multiple washings. But you must think of the tastes of the end user and the image you are trying to promote. That's where fashion often comes in. Knowing your audience is key.

For example, one of my Rap group clients goes for the extra large size heavier weight tees, whereas a rock group client sells mostly light weight, smaller tight fitting "alternative" tees. They cost more but the look they achieve supports their brand image. Check out the on-line stores of different recording artists to get a sense of what fans are buying and to see what might work with your audience.

What makes your t-shirt sell isn't the style, its size or color but its logo design. Logo art needs to be readable and convey the image you want to promote, but keep in mind it should be something a person will want to wear.

When it comes to printing logos, you can opt for gel, sugar-glitter, suede, reflective, metallic, glow in the dark, and ink in one color and up to 12 colors.

Screen printing using one color ink in one position on the shirt is the most economical. You have to pay for an art screen with each color you use as well as for any extra handling of the shirt. That includes flipping it over to print on a different side. Some artwork may require added film screens to replicate more complicated designs. So keep it simple if you can. If you have to go with a certain "look" make sure you get a thorough quote before you proceed.

Your logo art needs to be in a graphic format generally saved as an eps file. Many printers charge an hourly rate to prepare art that isn't standard or isn't vector art for more complicated designs. Most printers carry standard Pantone Colors but also offer color-matching inks for an added charge.

How many T shirts should you buy? The real price breakpoints in the industry start at 144 units, but that amount isn't practical for everyone. You can find reasonable shirts at the 72-unit range or even less if you plan it right. Funds still short? I know of some bands that purchased co-op shirts with another band or with a sponsor such as a local nightclub. They basically sold space on the shirt to share or subsidize the cost and helped promote their partners at the same time.

If you can get your shirts for under \$5 and sell them in the \$10-15 range you will see a quick return on your investment. When I taught music business classes, I used to illustrate the power of selling tour merchandise to my students this way: A typical major label recording artist might make a little over \$1 off the sale of a CD. He would have to sell five CDs or more to make the same margin off the sale of one basic T-shirt. That's why some of the major labels have affiliated merchandise companies as an added revenue stream for themselves.

Tour or gig merchandise can be incorporated in your overall marketing plan. It fits right in with preparing press kits, driving traffic to your website, getting people in the door and selling CDs. The right product will promote you long after the gig.

Keep an eye out for future articles on more promotional products. Trucker hats anyone?

*Gigi Swanson started an entertainment division three years ago when she left her teaching and administrative duties as director of the music business program at McNally Smith College of Music located in the Twin Cities. She commutes between the company's Minneapolis and St. Petersburg offices and recently opened a satellite office in Nashville. M.G. Incentives, Inc., a company that specializes in promotional products. The company has worked with advertising firms and corporations for over 15 years.*

## 5 TIPS FOR SELLING MORE AT THE MERCH TABLE

by The DIY Musician

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We've all experienced it: You just played a killer show. The venue was packed. The crowd loved you. And yet . . . you only sold 2 CDs (and one of them was to your little sister, Sammy).

Getting your fans to the merch table can be tricky and also one of the last things you want to think about when you're dealing with sound checks, set lists and late bass players.

But putting some time and thought into how you sell can pay off . . . literally.

### 1. Step up Your Presentation

How many times have you seen a band drag out a cardboard box at the end of their show and place it at the foot of the stage?

Then somebody mumbles something into the mic about CDs and walks away. If you want to sell merch, you need to SELL it. Present it in an attractive way and put your best salesman (or woman) at the helm.

Bring a tablecloth and maybe a suitcase you can display your albums in.

Decorate with items of interest. What will make people stop by and ask "what's that?" or say "that's cool!"?

Instead of writing your prices on a dirty cocktail napkin, get one of your artistic friends or bandmates to create a sign with style. What about calligraphy, a woodcut or a painting?

Bring tape, tacks, hangers and whatever else you need to display your T-shirts, posters, and other merch in a semi-orderly fashion, so fans can easily see what's available.



Set up the merch before you play, and make sure it's attended to during your performance.

Bring a light. Clubs are dark. Make sure your merch is visible.

## **2. Give Them Payment Options**

Make sure to bring some one-dollar bills for change, and don't charge 9.99 for anything unless you have a big bag of change. Not everybody has cash on hand. Sign up for CD Baby's Swiper program so you can take credit cards at your shows, or use one of those nifty iPhone apps that take credit cards.

Get one of those "Accepts Visa/Mastercard" table tents so people know they can pay how they like.

## **3. Sell More than Just CDs**

Not everybody still listens to CDs. Sell download cards for the digitally inclined. Sell vinyl for the music collectors.

Sell T-shirts, mugs, stickers, DVDs.

Try to think of items that your audience will connect with.

## **4. Sell From the Stage**

You've got the ears of your audience. Take advantage.

Describe what you're selling on the mic.

Introduce the person who is selling your stuff. Tell the audience how nice and approachable they are.

Don't wait until the end of the set to sell your wares; plant the seed after your first few songs. Remind them again at the end of your set.

## **5. Special Offers**

Special offers are a great way to encourage sales and make your fans feel appreciated.

Offer your fans a discount for buying more than one CD.

Offer a special limited-edition T-Shirt or single.

Tell your audience that everyone who stops by the merch table gets something free like a sticker or . . . I don't know, a pocket protector?

Try a raffle or a contest.

*The article was originally published in CD Baby's DIY Musician blog.  
<http://diymusician.cdbaby.com>*

## **UNTANGLING THE MAZE OF MUSIC CONFERENCES**

by Bill Pere, Connecticut Songwriter's Association

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I've had the privilege of presenting and mentoring at many conferences across the U.S. over the years -- not just music events, but business, technology and educator events as well. I often find first-time attendees asking some common questions: "Do I belong here? Is this the right place for me? How do I get the most from this?"

To help you decide what events to attend, it is important to understand what the name of the event tells you. Any event where a bunch of people get together or "convene" for a purpose is called a "Convention" There are three main types of conventions, and it is important to know the distinctions.

When people come together with the primary purpose of learning and sharing knowledge, it is a "Conference" in the true sense of the word. Folks are there to confer. Workshops, panels, mentoring, and critiquing are front and center. Education is the event driver. This would be the case at events like the Singer-Songwriter Cape May Conference ([www.sscapemay.com](http://www.sscapemay.com)) or the Independent Music Conference ([www.indiemusicon.com](http://www.indiemusicon.com)) which are geared mostly toward education, with performance as a secondary activity. The music professionals who come are there not to 'discover' artists, but to share their knowledge and to mentor attendees who seek to develop their skills and careers.

When people are gathering with the primary purpose of performing, you have a "Festival". Think of the Newport Jazz Festival, the Kerrville Folk Festival, The Monterey Pop Festival, Falcon Ridge Folk Festival, or the Podunk Bluegrass Festival. These are clearly labeled as to what they are, and attendees know what to expect. Performance rules, and any workshops or panels are ancillary activities. The industry professionals there are frequently venue operators, booking agents or artist development folks, and even the educational workshops are slanted toward aspects of performance.



When people congregate around a theme of business, products, and commerce, it is an "Exposition", or "Expo". Vendors and their goods and services are the main attraction. Think of the Eastern States Expo (The Big "E"), the New England Music Exposition (NEME), or the NAMM Expo (National Association of Music Merchants). What we often call the World's Fair is actually called the Universal Expo, or the Great Exhibition. Industry folks there are usually people with products and services to sell to the attendees.

This is not to say that any event of one type won't have parts of the other two as well. Most of them do. It's a matter of which of the three elements -- education, performance, or commerce -- is most prevalent and prominent.

If you attend an event expecting a healthy dose of education and instead see everybody hawking goods or promoting performances and guerilla showcases, you'll be disappointed. Similarly, if you are expecting a weekend of performances and find mostly panels or vendors, you'll feel you're in the wrong place.

So you need to do two things -

First, make sure you know what YOUR primary purpose is in attending a convention. Do you want PRIMARILY to learn, to perform, or to find products/services? No single one precludes the others, but there is usually going to be a primary motivation.

If you list networking as one of your key purposes, that's going to occur at any type of convention. The question is whether you want to network primarily with industry pros who are willing to help and mentor you, or with other performers and venue coordinators, or with providers of goods/services.

Second, you need to make sure that the event you are thinking of attending is accurately named, so that you get what you sign up for. Do your internet research to find out. Contact others who have attended. Don't assume the name is correct.

Of the three types of conventions, the ones that create the most confusion are the conferences. Many conferences start out as truly educational endeavors, and then evolve over the years to become more performance oriented, with the educational components taking a lesser role. Always check out a conference agenda to make sure there is a full schedule of panels and workshops, and that the focus is still on education.

Size matters - but not necessarily in the way you think. Some of the best quality time with industry pros and the most valuable networking can be found at the smaller scale events. When you look at massive events like SXSW with 20,000+ people there, you're just a drop of water in an endless sea. If you're at an event of 200 people, you're much more likely to get individual attention from whichever mentors and professionals you want to meet. Don't hesitate to ask event organizers what the typical size is of the event, if you can't find out from the website.

Finally, check out an event's longevity. If it's been around for many years, it must be doing something right. For a long-running event, you can easily find others who have attended who will give you some feedback. However, just because an event is new doesn't mean it won't be valuable. Check the track record of the event organizer, and the backgrounds of the presenters.

When you decide on the right event for you, make the most of it. If you ask anyone there to listen to your songs, do so with the expectation of constructive feedback, not just a pat on the back, and always have lyric sheets with you. Lyric sheets make you look professional and show that you respect the other person's time. Make your package look professional with all your contact info on each piece. It's a shame to see so many expensively produced CDs thrust into my hands that have unreadable fonts, no track times listed, no contact info, no titles on the disc, shrink wrap not removed, misspelled words, and sadly, artists who do not want to have those things constructively pointed out to them.

The biggest successes I've seen at conferences come not to those who attend primarily to perform, but to those whose primary purpose is to learn and to network. Specifically, many of the bands and individuals who are at conferences just for the performance aspect are absent during the day at all the workshops, panels, and mentoring stations. Attendees who do frequent the learning and networking programs establish relationships with people who can offer them career-advancing opportunities later on. I know this to be true, as I have been involved first-hand with many mutually beneficial business opportunities with folks whom I have met through my conference workshops and mentoring. And I've had little useful follow-up interactions from those who were there only to perform or to be "discovered". The real benefits from a conference come from the follow-up interactions after the event is over.

Think of it this way: At a conference, where the focus is on learning, the performance-only crowd sends a signal that they are there because they are the ones with something to offer and they don't need any professional or peer advice. The learners/networkers send a signal that the music pros and fellow-artists there have something of value to offer them. Which do you think will lead to more fruitful long-term relationships down the road in a relationship-driven business like music?

For more:  
[www.songcrafterscoloringbook.com](http://www.songcrafterscoloringbook.com)

*Bill Pere was named one of the "Top 50 Innovators, Groundbreakers and Guiding Lights of the Music Industry" by Music Connection Magazine for Outstanding contribution to Music Education. For workshops, consultation, critiques, or other songwriter services, contact Bill via his web sites, at [www.billpere.com](http://www.billpere.com), [www.ctsongwriting.com](http://www.ctsongwriting.com), and [www.lunchensemble.com](http://www.lunchensemble.com)*

## **BUILDING A MUSIC SITE THAT SELLS: PROMOTE YOUR CD, NOT YOURSELF**

by Mihkel Raud, author of "How to Build a Music Website that Sells"

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Marketing your CD on the Internet isn't really that different from marketing any other product on the Net – be it some fancy million dollar mansion in the Hollywood Hills, a how-to-get-divorced-in-less-than-ten-days consulting service, a super-cheap DVD player, or a subscription to some kind of porno website...whatever...it's the same game. To play any game, you have to know the rules.

### **Break all the rules**

When it comes to music, I encourage people to get as crazy as they can. Break all the rules you've ever heard of. Try new! Don't think just of radio! Forget about what anyone else may or may not think of your music! Be yourself! Do what you want to do! And do it now! You have to dare to do!

Still, marketing your music – be it on the Internet or offline – is a totally different ballgame. You need to use some rational sense if you want to see results.

I know that it's pretty uncomfortable to think of your CD as a piece of merchandise. After all, music is supposed to be art, right? It is. Tell the opposite and I'd be the first to

protest. Your CD is just as much of a product as a bottle of beer. Your CD is a product that everybody should "need."

This concept of "need" is exactly what soooooo many musicians fail to understand. Almost every band or singer/songwriter website that I have seen concentrates on the artist.

### **Basic elements to a site**

- Biography
- Photo gallery
- News
- Gigs
- Sound samples

### **Think outside the box**

There are many possibilities of what to include on your site. Some bands post lyrics, or have discussion boards and chat rooms. The most commonly used concept in the music business is still to build the website around the artist.

So what's wrong with that approach? Nothing really, except that it's so common. And the artist approach will not sell your CDs. You ask... how is that true? Let's look at an example. Let's say you're planning to buy a Mesa Boogie amp. You want to get yourself the best full stack in the world. Visit Mesa ([www.mesaboogie.com](http://www.mesaboogie.com)) and take a close look at what's on that site. Are you being bombarded by raves about just how great a guy Randall Smith is? He's the mastermind behind Mesa amplifiers. Do you see any Smith family snapshots on the front page? Or "better" yet, is there a guest book form asking you to leave Randall an "I love you" message? Nope. None of that "person" stuff is on the Mesa Boogie amp website. Why? Because it's the product you're after, not touchy feely with its inventor. Why on earth should your website be any different?

If you really want to succeed, you need to stand out. In order to beat that competition, you will have to use The Billion Dollar Baby Website Concept, as I have ironically titled the concept (if you know the Alice Cooper song, you know what I mean!) In other words, create a website that is solely focused on your product – the CD.

### **Your CD as the spotlight**

That's right. The only hero of your movie should be your cool-sounding-Grammy-winning-absolutely-fabulous CD. Every other detail of your website has to serve the same master - your CD. Nothing is more important than that music that you want to sell. If you use The Billion Dollar Baby Website

Concept, you can turn the whole internet music game upside down. And you will win. It's as simple as that! OK, this may hurt your ego a little bit. I understand perfectly. After all, you wrote the songs. You spent hours singing them in perfect tune. Heck, you may even have produced the CD all by yourself and that's no easy task. But now I'm asking you to spotlight the CD instead of yourself?

Remember this important point. I'm NOT telling you to shut down your existing artist website. On the contrary, it's smart to have one. In fact, you can have a bunch of them.... the more, the merrier. You can have your loyal fans create them for you. However, on your Billion Dollar Baby Concept Website you are going to play a supporting role. Your CD will be the main player.

### **A separate website?**

It is absolutely essential to have a separate website for your CD only. And when the time comes, for your next CD.... plan a separate website for it too. Every time you put out a new CD, you will build a new website designed just for it. My concept demands a lot of time and dedication, and is directly from my own experience. It's loads of work, and is expensive, but is another way to be a success.

I found a medieval music band from Estonia and produced a record of Black Sabbath songs in the 14th Century style of music. "War Pigs" sung in Latin. "The Wizard" played on Gothic harp and a fiddle (www.sabbatum.com.) I sold well over 1000 copies in the first few months. I sold 1000 copies entirely on the Internet with no marketing funds whatsoever. I did it all from my small apartment in Tallinn, Estonia. Now, if I could do it, so will you.

*Mihkel Raud is the author of "How To Build A Music Website That Sells." To order your copy, please go to:  
www.musicpromotiontips.com*

## **musiclicensing**

### **DIY MUSIC LICENSING SONGS IN FILM, TELEVISION, ADVERTISING, GAMES AND NEW MEDIA**

by Gilli Moon, SongsAlive!

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One of the most significant playing grounds for independent artists and songwriters to create revenue from their music has become the Film and Television Music Licensing

world. Formerly a closed and secular business, delegated to only music publishers "in the know", this arena has now become not only accessible by independent artists and songwriters, but has become the largest marketing avenue for artists (Indie AND Major). I believe there are two major reasons for this.

1. The demise of the music retail business (CD Stores) and increase in internet marketing has caused Artists and Labels alike to look further afield to market music and build revenue streams. Landing a song in a TV show, or video game, can give you 500 times more profit in one go than 99 cent downloads or online CDs sales that net you \$8 per sale. You're looking at \$500-\$50,000 for an average upfront license fee and royalties for a song in Media. Which area are you going to spend more time on?

2. Music supervisors for Films and TV Shows have become excited about using indie songs in their projects, versus spending the big bucks on going through a Major Label or Publisher. Not only is the cost cheaper (\$5,000 to sometimes \$50,000 for a major label artist's song, versus \$1000 going down to \$0 for an indie artist's song), but it's easier to clear the song from an indie artist. Major Label artist's songs are usually tied up in red tape: Clearing a song through a Major Publisher (or several) can take months, let alone trying to clear the use of the Master. Whereas clearing an indie artist's song (which they probably own, publish, and released themselves) could take 24 hours or less.

A music budget is sometimes the last to be allocated in Films and TV shows. Even though the film producer or director may want a famous artist's song, they may not be able to afford it by the time the music is considered. They may look for similar songs, and that's where the indie artist can profit greatly.

### **Don't be intimidated**

Who is in charge of placing music in films or TV shows?

Usually the person that will ultimately communicate and negotiate with you is the "music supervisor", music publisher or library.

These people love music. That's why they chose this business. They love to hear great songs, and are "going to work hard" just like you are. Find out what their needs are before reaching out. And remember - they are just people.

### **Get your ducks in a row**

The 5 Ps - Proper Preparation Prevents Poor Performance

Before you start knocking on doors, you need to know about the licensing business. You need to get yourself organized. My father used to say to me as a kid, "Gilli, P P P P P. Proper preparation prevents poor performance."

The first thing I recommend is to ask yourself is WHY am I doing this? What will I get by pursuing this field? Is it for money? For glory? For exposure?

Asking these questions will help you refine your focus. WHAT do I need to do in order start licensing? What do I need to know? WHO do I need to contact? Who is my target? Who will want to hear my songs? People I know? People I don't know? WHERE do I need to go to do this? Research? Networking? HOW do I go about this? Online promotion? E-mails? Industry networking events?

### **Organize Your Song Catalog**

Get your songs in an organized format, whether it be in an Excel Spreadsheet or even a Google Doc. An electronic file is handy with rows and columns for each piece of information about a song.

It's also useful to have a manila folder for hard copy information about your songs. Each song should have its own manila folder. Inside you can put lyrics, chord charts, co-writer agreements, licensing contracts and any other pertinent information.

### **Meta-Tag Your Songs**

The worst thing you can do is send a digital file that doesn't show who wrote it, who owns it or what it is. It's the same as giving a blank CD to someone.

You need to title the MP3 with the name of the song AND your name (whether you are the artist or songwriter). THEN, you want to meta-tag the song.

What does that mean? It means that all the information and details, as well as search tags are already instilled into your MP3 so that the end-user can receive all the data they require. This helps you, because it makes it easier for them to find your song if they save it in a database. And it also gives them information about the style/ genre/ songwriters/ publishers/ pictures and even lyrics. Most music supervisors require it.

Become a Member of a Performing Rights Organization (ASCAP, BMI, SESAC etc.) A PRO effectively represents you and your song

for all performance rights usages of your songs in the world. Without being a member of a PRO (and you can only choose one), you will not get paid for your songs on radio, on television, over the Internet or anywhere there is performance rights usage of compositions.

Every country in the world, except the USA has only one PRO. In the States, there are three to choose from: ASCAP, BMI and SESAC. They are free to join.

Let's say that your song gets licensed to a CBS Movie of the Week. The ONLY way you can receive royalties is through a PRO. Only the PRO pays the songwriter monies from the TV network. The producer of the TV show must submit a CUE SHEET to the TV Network. The Network then submits that CUE SHEET to the PRO, who in turn pays the songwriter.

Consider Starting Your Own Publishing Company or Find an Administrative Publisher It can get a little crazy trying to keep your songs organized. Gone are the days where you have to find a publisher to do all your work. You can do it yourself (DIY), but you may want to consider setting up your own publishing company, or using an administrative publisher, to ensure your publishing share gets taken care of. You can contact your PRO directly to set up a publishing company. In using an admin publisher you still receive a high percentage of payments. In an ordinary publishing agreement situation, you may be giving away 50% or more of your publishing share. Admin publishers only take 5% to 30%. The difference is admin publishers will generally just collect royalties on your behalf and organize your songs. They can also organize your licensing and contractual agreements.

Ultimately you want to consult your PRO, a lawyer and other songwriters to determine your best course of action.

### **Use specific self-marketing practices**

Create a Website Dedicated to Songwriting Why should only performing artists have a website? I think it's extremely important for songwriters and composers to have their own website to promote who they are and their music. If you are a singer/songwriter, I encourage you to have a section dedicated to your songs and songwriting, a discography, and a specially tailored biography that focuses on you as a songwriter. I also believe that social networks can play an important role in your internet promotion (Facebook, LinkedIn etc.). Make sure that your social pages always LINK back to your main website.

If you are pitching your songs to music supervisors, they will want to see your credits, your discography, and perhaps a little about you. Remember, this is about developing relationships, and the more human you become (accessible to others), the more opportunities you create.

### **What to Send to Music Supervisors**

What do they need from you? Songs for what? Music for what? Get specific. Know what they want first, if you can. Sometimes supervisors are clear in their pitch as to what they are looking for. Sometimes they are vague, "e.g., songs about love and loss". If you get a generic pitch, don't be afraid to contact them and ask them what STYLE, GENRE and TEMPO they are looking for. Finding out more about the story can be helpful. Is this a love song, i.e. romance? Or about a family member passing away? This calls for two different types of songs.

Usually, if you are e-mailing someone unsolicited (not requested/out of the blue), you DON'T want to send any MP3 files or propaganda. Just send a short and sweet e-mail note asking permission to send more. ASK THEM what they want. Ask them if they prefer MP3s or a CD in the mail. ASK THEM if they want a biography/press kit or just the URL of your website.

Once you are given permission to send, songwriter packages should be uniquely simpler than artist packages. Don't over "flower" the package. The focus should be the music you are sending.

- the CD must be labeled clearly (make you know if they want it in a sleeve or jewel case with spine clearly marking your song so they can store it on their shelf).
- include a typed sheet describing the songs on the CD and any directions on how to listen to it, and what pitch you're pitching to. - send 1 one-sheet or 1 postcard.

They may not want your big biography. but sometimes they want to read your discography (recording/placement credits). And as mentioned, you must meta-tag your digital files.

### **Do your research**

What are the Markets?

Get to know the markets that you can pitch to, including major film, indie film, trailers, TV shows, video games, corporate video, ads (TV and internet).

### **Get Connected with Who is Looking**

Your targets are music supervisors, publishers, music libraries, producers, editors, directors and some labels/artists.

### **Music Supervisors**

A music supervisor's role is to place music in films, TV shows, ads, video games and projects needing music. They are usually well versed in styles of music, and know where to find them, whether through major label/publisher routes, or indie networks.

A music supervisor may work directly or indirectly with the film/TV show director, producer, music editor, or another go-between, such as a publisher. Their job is to deliver music within the budget allocated for music in the project.

A music supervisor is like you and me. They are people, who like music. You like music. They like music. This is our common denominator, and a great way to start a conversation.

Music Supervisors will often take 25-50% of your publishing share of your songs, and sometimes the complete 100%. Music Libraries - represent songwriters and pitch for you. They tend to sell packages to their clients so your songs might be lumped into a package resulting in smaller percentages, but still ... you get paid. They usually take ALL upfront licensing fees leaving you only the songwriting royalties you receive through your PRO. They often take all the publishing as well. While Libraries may not be as lucrative, you may get more songs licensed. They love instrumentals, so be sure to mix instrumentals of all your songs, before you leave the studio.

Music Libraries will occasionally take 50% of the publishing share of your songs but most often they take the full 100%. Music Publishers - technically represent songwriters and were the only representation songwriters had in what I call the "Dark Ages" of the music business. They also print sheet music and draw up contracts for all types of placement scenarios for songs. As I mentioned before, you can sign with a publisher, or an admin publisher, or become your own publisher (a relatively new phenomenon for songwriters to take charge of their own business affairs). Publishers will often take 25-50% of your publishing share of your songs, and sometimes the complete 100%.





*"Big Meteor's **Wild River** CD is as close to perfect as a recording can be. Absolutely **BRILLIANT!**"*

- Raging Smolder Magazine

MUSIC FROM  
THIS CD HAS  
BEEN PLAYED ON  
**HUNDREDS** OF  
SHOWS INCLUDING  
THE FOLLOWING  
NETWORKS



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# BRYAN FARRISH

## P R O M O T I O N

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Airplay Promotion

Booking Promotion

TV/Film Promotion

It is important to see a Publisher as being different than a Music Supervisor or Library. A Publisher takes care of the "whole you" as a songwriter. They not only represent your song catalog but are invested in your future as a writer (career growth). You would want them to help further your career by introducing you to people in the business, other writers, artists and placement opportunities throughout the year. Also, you are fixed into an exclusive contract with Publishers, unlike Supervisors or Libraries, who take you on a per-song basis.

Get to know film makers, producers, directors, editors, and even actors. I've placed songs of mine in films, especially independent films, because I networked with script writers, budding directors and even music editors working on films.

Easy clearing gets the job  
It has become lucrative and accessible for independent songwriters to find success in the Licensing world because, chances are, you own your master and your song, and you can clear it quickly. This is heaven to any music supervisor.

#### **Some tips**

Own the Masters / Songwriting Agreements / Own the Publishing. Clear it in 24 hours  
Keep track of your ownerships in your Song File so you can contact your co-writers or master owners quickly and get clearance ASAP. Preferably, you become the administrator of that song from the moment it's written and recorded (through signed co-writing agreements and master usage agreements). Also, make sure you get all your musicians to sign off on a Musician's Clearance (stating that they got paid and won't seek royalties).

It's Okay to Represent Yourself, but be Professional  
Remember, your market is made up of people just like you. There is no reason why you can't represent yourself.

If You Have a Publisher, Work with them to Clear Easily and Quickly.  
Develop a strong relationship with someone at your publishing company that you can call upon at a moment's notice to help you clear your songs. Harry Fox (USA) and Amcos (Australia) are useful for COVER song clearances. There's a new one called Limelight. Be Open to Different Ways to Earn Your Revenue Ever consider creating music content for webisodes, webcasts, online games or college films?

#### **Know the money language**

Upfront Fee for Sync and Master  
In any composition, there are two rights, the publishing and the performance rights.

The sync license covers the SONG, which is the songwriter and publisher of that song. This license allows the use of the underlying lyrics and music of that song in the project. The master use license covers the performance side of the music, i.e. the recording - the "master". Often, the person who owns the sync/publishing side (song/composition) is different than the person who owns the master/recording side (the recording). You may be the songwriter, but perhaps the artist or the record label owns the recording of the song.

If a TV company wanted to use a cover version of "Yellow Submarine" by the Beatles, they would need a SYNC license. If they wanted to use the original song by the Beatles, they'd need a SYNC and MASTER usage license.

Let me point out that  
publishers/supervisors/third parties are NOT ALLOWED to take any percentage of the SONGWRITER royalty of the Sync/songwriter share. That MUST be paid BY the PRO (ASCAP/ BMI/ SOCAN/ APRA) DIRECTLY to the songwriter.

#### **Back End Royalties**

You will get a certain royalty rate depending on the TV Station and its license policies with the producers of the show, as well as the actual standard rates they pay out. Getting a song on the Disney Channel might not bring in as much as CBS or Fox. Networks pay more. And as the show gets syndicated (repeats and licensed to other nations), your royalties become less and less.

Networks pay the PROs, period. But they CANNOT pay unless they receive a CUE SHEET from the TV Show itself. Therefore it is ALWAYS a good idea that you get a copy of the cue sheet when placing your song, so that you can follow up with the PRO at your end. (Don't wait for the TV show to submit their Cue Sheet. If they don't know what a cue sheet is, especially with indie productions. Train them!)

The PROs pay the SONGWRITER and the PUBLISHER. You as the songwriter get the songwriter share directly, while your publisher pays you your percentage after they receive the publishing share.

### What is a Cue Sheet?

The creation of cue sheets often stems from the composer or music editor's spotting notes or edit decision list (EDL). If a Music Supervisor is on the project, they can sometimes be responsible for collecting information on the music used as well. They MUST be submitted to the PRO so the songwriter gets paid.

### To Re-title or Not?

There is a lot of controversy about whether one should re-title their songs for specific placements or not. The positive side of it is that if you do re-title, you can use the same song in many situations, through different publishers who may want 100% of their publishing share. So, if I place a song in a TV show through XYZ Publishers, and they want 100% of the publishing, even though it's a non-exclusive placement, if I don't re-title the song it's hard for LMN publishers to place the same song in a different show and also get the same publishing share. If each publishing company collects on different TITLES of the song, then everyone gets their piece of the pie, and I can keep the original title, as my own, collecting 100% of the publishing to my own publishing company.

The downside is that it can be confusing branding-wise if the TV show ONLY wants your song on their show and nowhere else. That means giving them an exclusive right, and you would want to be getting a lot of money for this. It also can be demeaning to the original work you created, or demeaning to the original publisher's efforts (what if the second publisher only heard the song after hearing the first publisher's placement?) Several top Hollywood music supervisors are now refusing to accept re-titled material after being pitched the same song from different sources under different titles (and at different rates!). The potential for confusion has led at least one major studio to issue an edict stating that they will only work with writers / publishes that represent their content exclusively. (Source: Production Music Association)

Do the follow up and keep records  
Go back to your Song file Excel or use a management system to keep records of who you have pitched to and where you have placed. Continue to stay organized with your song title registrations, pitches and placements.

Polite follow-ups are essential. Once you've pitched, follow-up after a certain amount of time. Don't bombard people with e-mails, and

don't add them to your fan mailing list. Be professional, courteous, but assertive.

Good luck in creating financial and artistic abundance in your world!

*Gilli Moon is a force to be reckoned with in the music industry. She has become a beacon for artists around the world, inspired and motivated by Gilli's story, and her creativity. She performs and tours around the world and is constantly creating projects for her own music and arts passions, as well as for others. Discover this dynamic and organic artist at [www.gillimoon.com](http://www.gillimoon.com) Click on Bio for her full story. Her music plays from every page. Check out her label, Warrior Girl Music, which also offers private artist coaching at [www.warriorgirlmusic.com](http://www.warriorgirlmusic.com). And the nonprofit organization Songsalive! at [www.songsalive.org](http://www.songsalive.org)*

## INTERVIEW: 7 QUESTIONS FOR A REAL LIVE MUSIC SUPERVISOR SARAH GAVIGAN OF GET YOUR MUSIC LICENSED

by Ariel Hyatt, Ariel Publicity

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I'm kind of obsessed with how artists make money mostly because artists constantly ask me how they can make more of it.

Several weeks ago, we proudly blogged in support of The Future of Music's incredible undertaking Artist Revenue Streams, which is a must read for any artist looking to monetize their music.

The FMC has begun to release the results of their in depth study and they have identified 42 ways artists can earn money.

Numbers 5 & 6 on the list are:

5. Composing Original Works for Broadcast (an original jingle, soundtrack, score, or other musical work for a film, TV or cable show, or an ad agencyâ€¦)

6. Synch Licenses (Typically involves licensing an existing work for use in a movie, documentary, TV, video game, internet, or a commercial).

Which leads me to start focusing in on: How I can helpâ€¦ which led me to Sarah Gavigan, founder of Get Your Music Licensed.

Sarah is an award-winning music supervisor/producer for advertising agencies, brand consultant on music licensing, and a writer. Like me, She has presented at conferences around the globe, including CMJ, SXSW, and Belfast Music Week.

I asked her 7 of the most important questions I could come up with about music licensing and placement and she graciously answered.

*1. Ariel Hyatt: What makes music licensing so important for musicians today?*

Sarah Gavigan: The first reason is distribution. In a sea of music it's hard to make a lot of noise. Radio is still seen as the most powerful way to get your music heard by the masses, and the only way to major rotation is to be signed with a major label who is willing to throw a lot of money into your record. Radio literally has the ability to broadcast your song to millions of people every time it's played. So does synchronization music licensing! If your music is in a television commercial, during primetime hours your song is being heard by millions of people every time that television show is broadcast. The second reason is that it is a fastest way to make real money.

*2. AH: Is it possible for an independent artist or band to get their music placed in a film, on a TV show or ad on their own?*

SG: Absolutely, but you need to have a 2 things in place: 1st In order to appeal to music supervisors you have to know what they're looking for, and you need to have your rights in order. 2nd you need to understand that presentation is everything. That's not to say that you need a fancy website, you just need to understand what information a music supervisor is looking for.

The 2nd most important thing to know about music licensing is that it's a numbers game. The more music you have in your catalog, the more diverse that catalog is, and the more chances you have for getting your music licensed.

*3. AH: How do you know if your music is right for licensing?*

SG: The best way to know if your music suits a certain type of placement is to watch TV. Watch TV shows, movie trailers, TV commercials and webisodes on YouTube, and you will get a feeling for where your music will work best (i.e. an action series, a drama etc.)

*4. AH: Who should an artist contact to get his music placed?*

SG: It's important to know who you're talking to, I never open e-mails if I can see that it is a mass newsletter or e-mail blast from someone I don't know. You need to do some well thought out research. Find a show or brand that you like and work backwards. Look up the Music Supervisor online, and learn a little bit about them before reaching out. Are you thinking a certain brand you think your music might be good for? With good research you can find the name of the ad agency, and then the name of the music producer or creative director at that agency that works on that brand. For many people this can be daunting and time-consuming way to spend your time, which is why I recommend forming mastermind groups with other musicians to help divide and conquer, or to join music libraries that can help distribute your music to buyers in the licensing market.

*5. AH: How will being on Facebook & Twitter help get music licensed?*

SG: You need to create an audience and create buzz if you want major music supervisors to notice your music. You want to use Facebook and Twitter to help you to establish your brand.

*6. AH: What are music supervisors looking for when they search for artists on social media?*

SG: We usually head to social media channels once we know about an artist to see what the buzz factor is. If I have heard a song of an artist and I want to know more I will Google their name and visit their Facebook & Twitter profiles to see how large their audience is. Many times as music supervisors, this helps us gauge where the music might fit best. It seems strange but many times are creative direction is to find a "buzz band" (meaning one with an already established and growing audience).

*7. AH: If you want to get your music placed, do you need to be signed to a label or a publishing deal first?*

SG: You don't need to be signed to get a music placement. I use unsigned artists all the time, which I find through reps, managers and other types of music companies that handle musicians. But, having a prominent music placement can help your chances of getting signed to a label or publisher because you have acquired a larger audience by having your music heard by millions.

*Sarah has created an online educational resource called **Get Your Music Licensed**. Which is an online community and platform where she shares her insight and expertise on the notoriously hard to access music licensing industry. [www.getyourmusiclicensed.com](http://www.getyourmusiclicensed.com)*

**WANT A GUIDE TO HELP YOU?** I wrote one :-) My completely new **THIRD** edition of **Music Success in Nine Weeks** is available for presale now! (and it's \$5 less than last year!) This edition is completely revamped and now includes a full chapter on YouTube as well as new sections on Fan funding, and new blogging techniques. Each book comes with My Cyber PR Mastermind Forum - Get goal support for \$27.99 (ebook) \$29.99 (physical book) Many fabulous musicians and I will be there help you along with your goals. 1 Membership comes with each purchase. Order now:  
[www.musicsuccessinnineweeks.com](http://www.musicsuccessinnineweeks.com)

## **FIVE WAYS TO MAKE MORE SYNC MONEY FROM YOUR MUSIC**

by Chris Robley, CD Baby DIY Blog  
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CD Baby has paid \$1.2 million in sync licensing revenue to independent artists. Are you earning as much as you can?

As this story from Digital Music News reveals, artists are earning more money these days from user-generated YouTube videos than from the official music videos themselves.

So perhaps not surprisingly, much of the \$1.2 million we've paid out in sync revenue has come from monetizing music on YouTube — but we're also seeing a steady rise in payments from other areas: Apps like Jumpcam and Animoto which allow users to add audio to their videos; audio networks that play music in stores and malls; indie films; and many other platforms where people want to add music to enhance the experience for their users.

It's no secret that big money can be made from high-profile sync placements where your music is used in a TV show, film, video game, or commercial. But the world of sync licensing has grown to include online "micro-sync" usages — in videos, apps, and more — and it's no longer a side-business for musicians.

The modern music industry is built on a social economy. What your fans do (and want to do) with your music has real value. Sure, you

won't earn as much from a single micro-sync placement as you would if your song got used in a Coke commercial, but micro-sync is all about VOLUME — and as our \$1.2 million payout shows, when your fan community is empowered to take social action with your music, you make money.

Here are 5 ways to encourage your fans to use your music

1. Let people know they can license your music at [FriendlyMusic.com](http://FriendlyMusic.com), a service that enables video creators to affordably license great indie music for their videos. Be sure to mention this option on your website, via social media, and in your email newsletter.

2. Make sure your fans know they can use your songs for their wedding videos, family reunion videos, company or school projects, vacation slideshows, etc. Your songs are already in heavy rotation in these peoples' households; might as well be in their videos, too!

3. Host a video contest and ask your fans to create music videos for their favorite songs. Whether its footage of a dance party, a stop-motion animation, or a bunch of kids lip syncing, these kinds of videos can add up to serious ad revenue from YouTube (and that ad revenue gets paid to YOU).

4. Create and upload videos for ALL your songs (even if they're just simple album art videos). YouTube has become the #1 preferred listening platform for younger music fans. Make it easy for them to hear your music. the more songs you make available, the more opportunities you have to earn sync revenue.

5. Sign up your entire back catalog for CD Baby's Sync Licensing Program, because you never know which of your songs might be perfect for some content producer's needs. Even your oldest songs can keep working for you long-term.

*The CD Baby DIY Musician Blog and Podcast give independent artists direct access to the advice of industry experts and top sellers. Updated weekly, and covering topics as diverse as marketing, songwriting, social networking, recording, copyright, viral videos, and booking, you'll want to check back often for another dose of do-it-yourself inspiration. <http://diymusician.cdbaby.com>*



## HOW TO COPYRIGHT YOUR MUSIC

by Nancy Falkow, Said So Public Relations  
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Sometimes musicians think every song written needs to be immediately copywritten, but this isn't always true! Copyrighting, registers your music so that if a situation arises that someone is stealing your music, your registration of copyright is on file, which protects you. So, if you're singing these songs in your living room for your family, you don't need to run to Washington, DC!

### What can be copy written?

Literary works; musical works, including any accompanying words, dramatic works, including any accompanying music, pantomimes and choreographic works, pictorial, graphic, and sculptural works, motion pictures and other audiovisual works, sound recordings and architectural works.

### Library of Congress

If you plan on distributing your music through the web you should copyright your songs. Go to the *US Copyright Registration site* and download the forms you need. Each situation is different, read all of the information, and figure out which best applies to you. Put your music and lyrics on tape or CD, fill out the appropriate forms and write the check. It takes up to 6 weeks to receive all the paperwork and registrations.

**Internet:** [www.loc.gov/copyright](http://www.loc.gov/copyright)

**Phone:** 202/707-3000 (this is NOT a toll-free number)

**Write:** U.S. Copyright Office, Library of Congress, 101 Independence Avenue, S.E., Washington DC 20559-6000

### The forms

What you need is a properly completed application form, a nonrefundable filing fee (\$30) for each application and a non returnable deposit of the work being registered (A tape, CD, and/or lyric). You can copyright more than one song on one tape or CD by sending it in as an anthology. In short, you put your songs on one format, give it a name like "Greatest Hits" and send it in.

This is the best way to save money. Instead of copyrighting each song for \$30, you're copyrighting an entire batch for \$30.

Remember it's always important to protect yourself and your songs. Good luck!

*Nancy Falkow is the former President of Said So Public Relations [www.nancyfalkow.com](http://www.nancyfalkow.com) - an independent grassroots publicity firm.*

## HOW TO TRADEMARK YOUR BAND NAME

by Derek Sivers, CEO CD Baby

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Anytime you are promoting, you are also promoting your name - so make sure it's yours!

I'm giving you some unofficial advice here from my own experience. There are attorneys and specialists that can help you much more. I recommend a book called "*Trademark Legal Care for Your Business & Product Name*" by Stephen Elias (Nolo Press). It covers everything, and even includes the forms you'll need to register. For basic trademark advice, go to my web page of reprints from Nolo Press: ([www.hitme.net/useful/c.html](http://www.hitme.net/useful/c.html))

### Research to make sure no one else has your name

Check the PhonoLog at your nearest record store. If you can, check *Billboard's Talent Directory*. (It IS expensive to buy however). If you've got \$\$, hire a search firm (attorneys) - this is the most reliable, but it will set you back \$300-\$500. I also heard CompuServe has a trademark research center.

### The library is free

Call the nearest largest Public Library and ask if they have a "*Federal Trademark Register CD-ROM*". (Each state has between 1-3 libraries that will have one). You can go in, and they'll even show you how to do a search. Search for your full band name, then each word individually. *Example:* my band "Hit Me": search "Hit Me" then search "HIT" then search "ME". The reason is there may be a band called "Kick Me" or "Hit Us" that could be a conflict. If you can think of other similar words to search, try those, too. You can also get a printout of all this. If there's nothing even remotely similar, you're doing OK. If someone, even a clothing company, is using your name, then you should consult an attorney.

### Trademark & Servicemark

1. Make sure you search the Federal Register, then the Pending Register. These are for the names that have been applied for, but not completed yet. Call

Washington, DC: (703)308-HELP and ask for the book “Basic Facts about Registering a Trademark”.

2. Trademark covers a product, while a Servicemark covers a service. As a musical act, we are a service. If ALL you do is make CDs and tapes, but never play live, maybe your name only applies to a product. For most of us, it's a service first, then a product second. It's all the same form, just a technicality. Note: You can still use the ® [little (R) in a circle] when you are registered.
3. You can start using “TM” or “SM” after your name now. It means you have *intent* to register, or are claiming legal ownership of that name. You can use the ® \*after\* and only after the whole registration is complete.

### How much does it cost?

Each registration class costs \$245. When I called the office help line, they said if you register your Servicemark, that's plenty of protection for now. That is until you start selling loads of t-shirts, hats, action figures! Make sure you get the new forms, since the older forms have \$200. A Servicemark for a musical act, you will want to file a “CLASS 41”. The description of product/services is: “Entertainment Services in the nature of Musical Performance.” Don't forget to do this NOW, or all the work you're doing to promote your act will be wasted.

*Derek Sivers is the founder of the extremely popular online music store, CD Baby. Derek has sold CD Baby and is now developing new projects to help independent artists to succeed. For his free e-book on how to be more successful promoting your music, visit [www.sivers.org](http://www.sivers.org)*

## TRADEMARKING YOUR LOGO

by Vivek J. Tiwary and Gary L. Kaplan,  
StarPolish.com

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**A good logo** is an invaluable tool in the imaging and marketing of a developing artist. That is why it's important to design a logo immediately after you have settled on your name. But unlike your name, it's more acceptable to change your logo over the years without losing or confusing fans. *311* and *The Rolling Stones* are great examples of bands that have either changed or modified their logos to adapt with changing times or the themes of certain albums or tours.

Not every artist has a logo, but a logo can only help. Remember that your name simply and consistently printed in a certain standard font can be a fine logo (e.g. Cheap Trick). I personally like logos that are minimal, easy to remember, tied into the artist's name, and easily reproduced. Like your name, your logo should somehow also be in line with the vibe of your act.

### How do you get one?

A band member or friend designing your logo may assure a genuine and intimate connection between the logo and the band. If no one you know is talented in the visual arts, you can seek help from local design companies. Be careful though, as some of these companies can be expensive. Alternately, you can solicit help from local design schools, whose students may be willing to design a logo for free in order to gain working experience and build up their own design portfolios. Try putting flyers/posters up in the schools or posts on school bulletin boards announcing that you are a local band/songwriter looking for a logo designer.

### Be seen

Once you have a logo that you are satisfied with, put it on everything— all over your website, your merchandise, your CD, your letterhead, etc. Make stickers and always keep a small stack of your logo stickers on hand. Stick them on everything and everywhere. Consistency and repetition are critical marketing keys. The more times people see the same logo, the more they will remember it and your act.

### Register your logo

Register with the *U.S. Patent and Trademark Office* (or comparable body if you are based in another country). Much like with your name, you acquire rights to your logo when it is publicly used in commerce. This means that when you sell your merchandise, or play a show where your logo is displayed, you automatically obtain some common law rights in that logo. Registering your logo as a trademark, however, will provide you with important additional rights:

### Do a search

Assuming that you are the first to use this logo, registering your logo will help secure your right to use it, and prevent others from using the same or a similar logo. Because of the extremely subjective nature of the trademark analysis for logos, it might not be worthwhile to perform a search. It is not with certainty you will discover the same or similar logo being used by another band. If you choose to perform a search, you can try

*Thomson & Thomson*, or the folks at ([www.tradename.com](http://www.tradename.com)) A lawyer can take care of the whole thing, since the analysis is so touchy, that only an experienced trademark attorney will be able to offer sound advice.

The good news is it's not quite as disastrous, if you are forced to change your logo. It might not be what you'd ideally like to do, but it pales comparison to having to change your name. If you can afford to hire an attorney to assist you, go ahead and trademark your logo. If your problem is that you're strapped for cash, try to register your trademark yourself by using the website of the U.S. Patent and Trademark Office ([www.uspto.gov](http://www.uspto.gov).)

*Vivek J. Tiwary founded both StarPolish and The Tiwary Entertainment Group, a multi-faceted entertainment venture focusing on artist management, marketing consultation, and project production. Vivek has 10 years experience in the arts and entertainment industries. Prior to joining StarPolish.com, Gary L. Kaplan spent three years at Skadden, Arps, Slate, Meagher & Flom, one of the world's preeminent law firms. Gary was a member of Skadden's Intellectual Property Department, focusing on patent litigation.*

## ENTERTAINMENT INDUSTRY LAWYERS: WHO, WHERE AND HOW MUCH?!

by Wallace Collins, Entertainment Lawyer  
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As a creative artist in the entertainment industry you do not need to know everything about the business in order to succeed, but you should hire people who do. When I was a teenage recording artist back in the late 70's, I can remember being intimidated by the "suits". Now that I am on the other side of the desk, I have a broader perspective. I am here to tell you that those "suits" can help you; provided, however, that like any other aspect of your life, you use your instincts in making your selection.

### The team

The best place for you to start building your "team" of representatives is with a competent lawyer who specializes in entertainment law, which is a combination of contract, intellectual property (copyright, trademark and patent) and licensing law. Eventually, your team could possibly include a personal manager, a booking agent and a business manager/accountant. Your lawyer can assist you in assembling your team. He may then function as the linchpin in coordinating the

activities of your team and insuring that these people are acting in your best interests.

### The lawyer

A good lawyer will navigate you safely through the minefield that is the entertainment industry. Record contracts, publishing agreements and licensing arrangements can be extremely complicated. Proper negotiating and drafting requires superior legal skills as well as knowledge of entertainment business and intellectual property practice. Your lawyer can explain the concepts of copyrights, trademark and patents to you and assist you in securing proper protection for your work. In addition to structuring and documenting a deal to maximize the benefits to you, some lawyers also actively solicit deals for their clients.

### What to look for

When looking for a lawyer take the time to interview a few before retaining one. Some lawyers are with large firms, but many are solo practitioners. Lawyers have various personalities and legal skills and you should seek out a situation where the "vibe" is right. It is not necessary that your lawyer like or even understand your creation. It is more important that you feel he or she is a trustworthy and competent advisor.

### When do I pay?

Keep in mind that a lawyer with other big name clients is not necessarily the best lawyer for you; if it comes down to taking your calls or those of a superstar, which do you think will get preference? A lawyer, much like a doctor, is selling services, so if you go to him for advice you should expect to pay. With the odds of success in this business being what they are, very few lawyers will agree to work for you and wait for payment until you are successful and can pay your bills. You may also find someone who will work on a contingency basis.

### The cost

1. A lawyer specializing in the entertainment field usually charges an hourly fee or a percentage of the money value of your deal. Hourly rates generally run from \$200 and up. Percentages are based on the "reasonable value of services rendered" and generally run around 5% of the deal. A few lawyers may charge a set fee, such as \$1,000 or \$1,500, to review and negotiate certain documents. Check around to see if the fee arrangement proposed is competitive.

2. Most lawyers will require a payment of money in advance or “retainer”, which can range anywhere from \$1,000 to \$10,000. Even those who take a percentage of the deal as a fee may require that you pay a retainer. In addition to the hourly fee or percentage, you are usually required to reimburse your lawyer for his out-of-pocket costs, including long distance telephone calls, photocopies, postage, fax, etc.
3. You should realize that in retaining a lawyer you are making a contract even if your agreement is not written. In return for a fee, the lawyer promises to render legal services on your behalf. However, some lawyers may want a fee arrangement in writing (specifically in connection with a percentage deal) and/or a payment direction letter. A cautious lawyer will advise you that you have the right to seek the advice of another lawyer as to the propriety of a percentage fee arrangement.

### As a general rule

You need a lawyer if you are asked to sign anything other than an autograph. Too many aspiring creative artists want to get a deal so badly they will sign almost anything that promises them a chance to do it. Even successful careers have a relatively short life span, especially in the music, movie and television business. Therefore, it is important for you to get maximum returns in the good years and not sign away rights to valuable income.

*Never* sign anything without having your own lawyer review it first! Do not rely on anyone else (or even their lawyer) to tell you what your contract says. Do not let anyone rush you or pressure you into signing any agreement.

There is really no such thing as a standard “form” contract. Any such contract was drafted by that party’s attorney to protect that party’s interests; your lawyer can help negotiate more favorable terms for you.

*Wallace Collins is an entertainment lawyer with the New York law firm of Serling Rooks & Ferrara, LLP. He was a recording artist for Epic Records before attending Fordham Law School. Contact: (212) 245-7300, [www.wallacecollins.com](http://www.wallacecollins.com)*

## ROYALTIES IN THE MUSIC BUSINESS

by Joyce Sydnee Dollinger, Entertainment Lawyer

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What is a royalty? In the real world, the word royalty is synonymous with the power or rank of a king and queen. In the music world, the word royalty is synonymous with *money*.

Royalties are the most important entitlements of the musician. These entitlements warrant them to receive money from their craft - the craft of MAKING MUSIC.

### Royalties

There are many types of royalties. The list is constantly growing because of the new technology, but here are some to name a few: Artist Royalties, Mechanical (Publishing) Royalties, US Performance Royalties Synchronization Royalties, Grand Rights Royalties, Foreign Royalties for record sells and performances, Lyric Reprint Royalties.

### General definition

Artist Royalties, in a nutshell, are monies paid to the recording artist from the record company. They are the share of the proceeds from the sale of the artist’s records paid directly to the artist after the artist records material for the record company. This, in turn, gives the record company permission to exploit the musical work in the marketplace.

### Recording contracts

In artist recording contracts, artist royalties are usually negotiated in points. When record label business affairs attorneys use that terminology, they are referring to the percentage points the record company will pay an artist on each album sold. For example, if an artist gets 10 points, it usually means that the artist receives 10% of the retail cost of each record sold.

#### 1. Superstar Deals

Royalties usually are:

- 16%-20% of retail of top-line records plus escalations
- 18-20% is quite high and the artist must sell a lot of records - usually more than 5 million
- 100% CD rate and can receive new configuration royalties
- 12-14% of singles + escalations receive increased royalties when contract options are exercised



## 2. Mid-Level Deals

Royalties usually are:

- 14%-16% of retail top-line records plus escalations (escalations usually based on genre)
- 16% is high and the artist must sell a lot of records
- 85-90% CD rate and new configurations
- 12-13% of singles or 3/4 of LP rate receives increased royalties when contract options are exercised

## 3. New Artist Deals

Royalties usually are:

- 11%-13% of retail top-line records
- 75-85% CD rate and new configurations
- 10-11% of singles

## When to renegotiate

If the artist sells a ton of records, the artist can usually re-negotiate with the record label and try to receive increased royalty rates.

- Increase net royalty rates on remaining LPs in the contract increase rate for each successive LP include escalations for attaining sales plateaus
- Receive the increase royalty rate on future sales of past LPs improve the royalty computations increase foreign rates, the CD rate, the new technology rate, licensing fees and free goods
- Reduce the recoupment percentages

## Record royalty formula

The record royalty formula is usually based upon a percentage of records that are sold. In using the formula, the record company looks to the retail price of the commercial top-line records and standard deductions that every record company takes from the gross income from the sales of those records. Some of the deductions are: recording costs of the records, packaging, returns and reserves, discounted military sales, video costs, tour support, promotional records and free goods. Please note: records on which royalties are paid are quite different from deductions from gross royalties.

*Joyce Sydnee Dollinger is an attorney admitted in New York and Florida. She is also the Vice President of 2 Generations SPA Music Management, Inc., and involved with 2generations.com and SPA Records, Inc. Contact: [www.sparerecords.com](http://www.sparerecords.com).*

## ARTIST-MANAGEMENT CONTRACTS

by Richard P. Dieguez, Entertainment Lawyer

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Next to a record label deal, the artist management contract is the most exciting agreement an artist will sign. As with any legal document, a contract shouldn't be signed without the advice of a music attorney. Let your lawyer take the blame for "asking too much" or for being such a "tough negotiator" that is what they are being paid to do. Here are the fine points to negotiate:

- How long will the agreement be in effect?
- How much will the manager get paid during the agreement?
- How much will the manager get paid after the agreement has ended?

## The art of negotiation

1. It is likely you and your manager are each likely to have a legitimate difference of opinion as to the amount of time for which the contract will be binding. Whatever the reason, you don't want to get locked in with a loser for the next seven years. On the flipside nothing can be more frustrating for a manager than to have her budding artists go to another manager, where they then make it to the big time.
2. Depending on the particular circumstances of the parties, the negotiation will center on a contract term ranging from as short as six months to as long as several years. What length of time is fair really depends on what you and your manager are each bringing to the relationship you wish to form. For example, let's say that neither of you has too much experience in the music business. In this situation, you're both probably better off with a short-term contract, (6- 12months) so that you can check each other out without getting locked in. You can always enter into another agreement if it turns out, at the end of the contract, that you have a future together.

## The time and money equation

What happens if you can't agree to a fixed amount of time? Well, to satisfy both parties, the attorneys can always try to hammer out a compromise: a short-term contract with the potential of being converted into a long-term contract. For example, the parties could agree to a one-year contract. Part of the agreement, however, would be that the manager must meet certain conditions during this one-year period — such as getting you a record deal, a publishing deal or even guaranteeing that you earn a minimum amount of income. If the



manager fails to meet the conditions, then the contract ends when the year is up. If, however, the manager is successful in meeting the conditions, then he has the right to automatically extend the contract for an additional period of time, say for another year.

### **Commission**

The custom is for the manager to work on a commission. In other words, the manager gets compensated for his efforts by taking a percentage of whatever income you earn as an artist. Obviously, your attorney is going to try to negotiate for as small a percentage as possible. You'll argue that the manager simply manages, and without your talent, there is nothing to sell to the labels or to the publishers. The manager's attorney is going to negotiate for as high a commission as possible. Their position will be that there is a lot of talent out there — especially in the major music centers like California and New York.

### **Money talks**

So what's the range of the amount of the commission? It can generally be anywhere from 10% to 25% of your gross income. The amount that is settled on may very well depend on the circumstances. Again, the art of compromise may bring new life to a negotiation that is at a deadlock on the issue of the commission amount. Regardless of the particulars, the concept here is that the lower percentage rate should be satisfactory to you, while the manager is also given an incentive to make a bigger percentage if he can get you to earn in excess of a certain amount of gross income. And, of course, getting you over that amount, whether it's \$25,000.00 or whatever, will be to your benefit as well.

### **The manager**

Your manager will likely try to apply their commission to every conceivable entertainment-related activity from which you could possibly earn an income. Examples of such money-making activities would be live performances, record sales and the sale of promotional merchandise such as t-shirts, posters, buttons, programs and pictures. If you feel that the commission rate the manager is asking for is too high, you can try to compromise by proposing that you'll accept the commission rate, but only if certain activities are excluded from the commission.

### **After the contract ends**

Another touchy subject is whether the commission on gross income earned by the artist continues after the contract has ended. Your response will probably be "of course

not!" After all, once the contract is over, neither party has any further obligation to the other. Once the contract is over, there should be a clean break, but it is not always so clear-cut

You may be fortunate enough to have signed some money-making deals. As agreed, the manager gets his percentage and you keep the rest. But it may be that your money-making contracts will still be in effect for quite some time after your management contract has ended. Since you will continue to profit from a deal he helped you obtain, the manager may feel that he should also continue to profit even after the artist-manager relationship legally ends.

### **When you get a new manager**

If you enter into a contract with a new manager, that new manager will probably be no different from your former manager on the question of compensation. The new manager's attorney will probably demand that the commission apply to every conceivable entertainment-related activity from which you could possibly earn an income. And this would include the money pouring in from deals your former manager obtained! You wouldn't want to be stuck paying two commissions on the same money.

### **Conclusion**

There are many aspects of the artist management contract that will be subject to negotiation. An issue may be made of as to who collects the income: the manager, you or maybe a third party like a business manager or accountant. Another traditional sticky point is the extent of the manager's authority to sign contracts on your behalf. There may even be some negotiating points that to you and the manager don't seem crucial, but to the attorneys seem to mean everything. The personal circumstances surrounding any given artist management contract can be so unique, that the art of compromise expands the parameters of the so-called "standard" contract.

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## THE WRITTEN AGREEMENT AMONGST BAND MEMBERS

by John Tormey III, Entertainment Lawyer  
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### AABM

I have seen references to the above-mentioned document as both “Inter-Band Agreement”, and “Intra-Band Agreement”. Rather than initiate any argument with grammarians as to which term is correct -let’s simply call this all-important document the “Agreement Amongst Band Members”; or, “AABM”, for short. If one is a musician playing in a multi-member band, is an AABM needed? *Absolutely, yes!*

### The agreement

There are some parallels to an agreement amongst band members, and a pre-nuptial agreement between prospective spouses. But I actually find the case for having an *AABM* more compelling than a pre-nup. A marriage should be a function of love. A band formation, on the other hand, is often a commercial exercise.

Written agreements should be required for any collaborative commercial endeavor between 2 or more people. Maybe it seems easier NOT to make it official, but no band member should skip the *AABM*, if the band member takes his or her band or career seriously. It may not be realistic to operate on blind trust, in place of a good written agreement.

If the band formation is not viewed as a commercial exercise, then I suppose the band members can simply agree on a handshake, and then gig for free in the subways. However, the majority of bands that I hear from are concerned about their financial, as well as their artistic, futures. Many are trying to find a way to become economically self-sufficient on music alone, while preparing to quit their “day jobs”. It is best to have an agreement in hand, rather than, to put it off.

### When to begin?

No one wants to be required to negotiate and close the *AABM* once the band is already successful, or once the band has already been furnished with a proposed recording agreement. The optimal time to close the *AABM* is while the band is just being formed or while it is still struggling. A good *AABM* should also be flexible enough to contemplate future changes, such as changes in personnel and, Artistic direction. It is also likely one of the members may have more of a hand in the writing of the words or the music of the

band’s original songs, all the more reason for creating the *AABM* as early as possible.

### Band members

In the average 4-person band, each member may play a different instrument. Some may have been in the band longer than others, or more experienced in the business of music. Maybe one of you has “connections” to clubs and labels, or more free time to invest in the running of the band’s business. Each member can perform a different function in business.

### Why a contract?

The real value of a contract - any contract, including the *AABM* - is as a dispute-resolution and dispute-avoidance tool. By dealing with things ahead of time, it may be best to discuss things now; and put the results on paper. Resolve things before having to pay litigators thousands upon thousands of dollars to do it in the courts later.

### What happens if...

All of those “what if” questions, may not be the focus at the beginning. Band members may not want to think about, what *may* happen if the bass player departs to raise kids in Maui, or the singer-songwriter front man decides to join the Air Force. If all the other band members all value their investment of time, sweat and money in the band, then they should know and have fully thought through - in advance - the answers to these types of questions. Who owns and administrates the copyrights in the songs? Who is responsible for storing the masters? Who has final say in the hiring and firing of a manager? If the band breaks up, which member or members, if any, may keep using the band’s name? And these are just *some* of the questions that should come up.

### When to get a lawyer

Every band’s situation is different, and the lists of questions to consider will be as different as there are different band personalities and different band members. The band may be better off, if a lawyer prepares the *AABM*. In a perfect world, all band members would be separately represented by a different attorney, but that is not realistic.

Should all these considerations prevent a band from creating a good *AABM*? Absolutely not, the band should at least try to resolve amongst its own members, the answers to all of the “what if” questions that will likely come up in the life cycle of any band. The band can try to resolve these questions on paper. Thereafter when affordable, one of the band members may decide to consult with an attorney to

review and revise the band's starting-point document - (typically, this turns out in practice to be the band member with the most at stake in the outcome).

Be aware that one attorney may well not be able, or be allowed to represent all band members simultaneously. This is due to concerns about possible conflicts of interest, (especially if different band members have different percentage investments at stake in the band's commercial endeavors.)

It is best to draft some kind of written agreement between band members, since doing so now can save a lot of heartache and expense down the road in the future.

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## HOW TO LEGALLY SELL DOWNLOADS OF COVER SONGS

by Derek Sivers, CD Baby

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Please note that the below is not official legal advice. It is ONLY for the U.S.A. We are not your lawyers, and you should always contact your attorney before entering into any contract such as a license.

If you have recorded a cover version of someone else's song, and you plan to make that recording available over the Internet, the following information applies to you. You must follow these steps BEFORE you make your recording available for distribution to the public!

If you record a cover version of a song, (meaning your performance of a song that has been released in the U.S. with consent of the copyright owner), you are entitled by law to release your recording commercially, and the owner of the copyright to the song cannot prevent you from doing so.

The Copyright Act provides for what is called a "Compulsory License" for downloads and CD sales, which means that if you follow the steps set forth by statute, you can distribute your recording of that song on a CD or over

the internet. This Compulsory License is only available for sales in the United States. Other uses of masters, such as streaming, conditional downloads, and the like, are not subject to a Compulsory License. A separate license from the publisher is needed in those cases.

The following details the procedure for individuals to obtain a compulsory license to digitally distribute cover songs over the Internet to end users in the United States.

### Identify the Copyright Owner - the publisher

The first step is to identify the owner(s) of the copyright to the song - the publisher. The easiest way to do this is to search the songwriter/publisher databases, here:

BMI ([bmi.com](http://bmi.com))

ASCAP ([ascap.com](http://ascap.com))

SESAC ([sesac.com](http://sesac.com))

Harry Fox ([songfile.com](http://songfile.com))

U.S. Copyright Office ([copyright.gov](http://copyright.gov))

Keep in mind that the owner of these rights is typically a publisher, and that the owner of the rights in the song is not the same as the owner of the rights to any particular recording of the song. In other words, Record Labels are almost never the owners of the copyright to the musical composition - they typically own only sound recordings. You should be looking for the name of a publisher (or in some cases an individual).

Be careful to identify the exact song you want, as there are many songs with the same names. If you cannot find the owner through these websites, search the records of the Copyright Office online.

If you cannot find the copyright holder(s) after a thorough search, you can send the letter to the Copyright Office, along with a small filing fee, currently \$12.00. See the Copyright Office website for the proper address and current filing fees if you are going to be sending the letter of intent to them.

Instructions on how to do that are on "Circular 73" from the U.S. Copyright Office, on a PDF file, here:  
[copyright.gov/circs/circ73.pdf](http://copyright.gov/circs/circ73.pdf)

**WE STRONGLY RECOMMEND  
DOWNLOADING AND READING THIS  
FILE, because it carries the essence of this  
entire article.**

## Send a Letter of Intent - EXACTLY like this

You must send one letter for each song for which you seek a compulsory license 30 days before you begin distribution of your downloads. The letter must be sent by registered or certified mail and contain the following:

1. A clear subject line/title that says "Notice of Intention to Obtain a Compulsory License for Making and Distributing Phonorecords"
2. Your full legal name
3. All fictitious/assumed names (stage name, band name) used
4. The names of each individual owning a 25% interest or more in the distribution of the song (band members, if you split your sales income)
5. Your fiscal year (usually January 1st - December 31st)
6. Your full physical address - P.O. boxes are unacceptable, unless that is the only option for addresses in your geographic region
7. The title of the song
8. Name(s) of the author(s) of that song
9. The type of configuration expecting to be made (a music file distributed over the Internet is called a "Digital Phonorecord Delivery" (DPD))
10. The expected first date of distribution
11. The name of the performer/band doing the cover
12. Your signature.

If there is more than one publisher listed, sending a letter to one of them is sufficient for the compulsory mechanical license; however, if one or more of the copyright holders is not from the United States, it is best to send the notice to all copyright holders.

## Send royalty statements and pay royalties

Once you begin distributing the song over the Internet, you must send monthly statements of royalties on or before the 20th of each month, and pay the royalties.

The monthly statement must be sent by registered or certified mail and include:

1. A clear title that says "Monthly Statement of Account Under Compulsory License for Making and Distributing Phonorecords"
2. The period (month and year) covered by the statement
3. Your full legal name

4. All fictitious/assumed names (stage name, band name) used
5. The names of each individual owning a 25% interest or more in the distribution of the song (band members, if you split your sales income)
6. Your full physical address - P.O. boxes are unacceptable, unless that is the only option for addresses in your geographic region
7. The title of the song
8. Name(s) of the author(s) of that song
9. the name of the performer/band doing the cover
10. The playing time (length) of your recording of the song (minutes:seconds)
11. The number of DPDs made, i.e. how many times your recording was downloaded
12. The number of DPDs that were never delivered due to a failed transmission
13. The number of DPDs that were retransmitted in order to complete/replace an incomplete/failed delivery
14. The total royalty payable (number of total DPDs, not counting ones never delivered multiplied by the statutory royalty rate (see below))
15. The following statement: "I certify that I have examined this Monthly Statement of Account and that all statements of fact contained herein are true, complete, and correct to the best of my knowledge, information, and belief, and are made in good faith"
16. Your signature

You must also send an Annual Statement of Account at the end of each calendar year, which is virtually identical in content to the Monthly Statements, but must be certified by a licensed Certified Public Accountant (CPA).

## Statutory royalty rates

The current (2006) statutory rate for royalties is 9.1¢ for every copy sold if the playing time for the song is under five minutes. If the playing time for the song is longer than five minutes, the rate is 1.75¢ per minute, rounding up to the next minute.

under 5 minutes = 9.1¢ per copy  
5 to 5:59 minutes = 10.5¢ per copy (6 minutes x 1.75¢)  
6 to 6:59 minutes = 12.25¢ per copy (7 minutes x 1.75¢)  
7 to 7:59 minutes = 14¢ per copy (8 minutes x 1.75¢) etc.

The Copyright Office can always keep the most up to date information concerning statutory royalty rates at this link:  
[www.copyright.gov/carp/m200a.html](http://www.copyright.gov/carp/m200a.html)

### IMPORTANT notes

The publisher may tell you that they don't deal with compulsories, and that you should contact the Harry Fox Agency. Though the Harry Fox Agency can handle mechanical licenses for DPDs for most publishers, you still have right to obtain a compulsory license by following the directions, above.

Remember the law is on your side. You are entitled to a compulsory license by law. You have permission - (a compulsory license) - as soon as you send the notice, described above, to the proper publisher. As long as your notice complies with Copyright Section 115, (described above), the publisher need do nothing other than receive the royalty payments. You don't even need to wait for their reply.

### Other notes

You may be able to negotiate a better deal for yourself, either with lower royalty rates or less frequent statements of account. If terms are negotiated which deviate from the standard Section 115 then a mechanical license will be issued by the publisher or HFA.

If you wish to distribute physical copies (e.g., CDs) of a cover song, you must obtain a similar compulsory license, available for most popular songs through the Harry Fox Agency at [harryfox.com](http://harryfox.com). If you plan on distributing between 500 and 2500 physical copies, you can obtain a compulsory license through the Harry Fox Agency online at [songfile.com](http://songfile.com).

For more information on compulsory licenses for all forms of distribution, please refer to the Copyright Office's web site, at [copyright.gov](http://copyright.gov), and contact your attorney.

Helpful publications available through the Copyright Office include Circular 73 (Compulsory License for Making and Distributing Phonographs), Circular 75 (The Licensing Division of the Copyright Office), and M-200 (Checklists under Section 115 of Title 17).

If you have been distributing a cover song without a compulsory license or an agreement with the copyright owner, you are ineligible to obtain a compulsory license for that recording (!), and you may be subject to civil and/or criminal penalties for copyright infringement.

Be careful to follow the steps exactly as described above, in order to be legal.

### Download and print/save these files

How to Investigate the Copyright Status of a Work

[www.copyright.gov/circs/circ22.pdf](http://www.copyright.gov/circs/circ22.pdf)

Compulsory License For Making and Distributing Phonorecords

[www.copyright.gov/circs/circ73.pdf](http://www.copyright.gov/circs/circ73.pdf)

Notice of intention to obtain a compulsory license

[www.loc.gov/cgi-bin/formprocessor/copyright/cfr.pl?&urlmiddle=1.0.2.6.1.0.175.17&part=201&section=18&prev=17&next=19](http://www.loc.gov/cgi-bin/formprocessor/copyright/cfr.pl?&urlmiddle=1.0.2.6.1.0.175.17&part=201&section=18&prev=17&next=19)

Royalties and statements of account under compulsory license

[www.loc.gov/cgi-bin/formprocessor/copyright/cfr.pl?&urlmiddle=1.0.2.6.1.0.175.18&part=201&section=19&prev=18&next=20](http://www.loc.gov/cgi-bin/formprocessor/copyright/cfr.pl?&urlmiddle=1.0.2.6.1.0.175.18&part=201&section=19&prev=18&next=20)

Checklists of Required Information

[www.copyright.gov/carp/m-200.pdf](http://www.copyright.gov/carp/m-200.pdf)

These and more available at the U.S.

Copyright Office website:

[www.copyright.gov](http://www.copyright.gov)

*Derek Sivers is the founder of the extremely popular online music store, CD Baby. Derek has sold CD Baby and is now developing new projects to help independent artists to succeed. For his free e-book on how to be more successful promoting your music, visit [www.sivers.org](http://www.sivers.org)*

## marketing and promotion

### CREATING AN INDIE BUZZ

by Daylle Deanna Schwartz, author of "I Don't Need a Record Deal! Your Survival Guide for the Indie Music Revolution"

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People won't buy your music or come to shows if they don't know about it. By working the media, you can create a foundation for your career. Artists ask, "Why would someone write about an unknown artist or play their music?" Lose that mentality if you want to create a buzz around you and your music! If you've got THE GOODS, the potential is there. Once you believe your music is worthy of media exposure, you can work to inform others.



Build your story one press clip and one radio show at a time. Take baby steps up the ladder from teeny publications and local radio stations to larger ones. As your story builds, so will opportunities to increase it even more! According to Dalis Allen, producer of the Kerrville Folk Festival, "Having your record reviewed in [local magazines] may not propel your career to the degree that you want it to end up. But every one of those things adds up. If I see a review of someone's record in Performing Songwriter and then hear their name somewhere else and then see their package, I've seen their name over and over again. It doesn't matter if it's not the most important thing that you're going to do. It's one more step in what you're going to do."

Let people know about you and your music through the media. It may feel useless if your hard work doesn't pay off immediately. Don't lose hope! Every CD that goes out is another chance for progress. Indie artist Jennie DeVoe says, "I give CDs to radio and anyone else who should have it. It's like planting seeds." Plant your own seeds once you have something to pass out. It takes time, but if your music moves people, your career can sprout by means of reviews, radio play and other exposure that builds your foundation.

If you plant enough, you have a better chance for a lovely blooming garden. Indie artist Canjoe John says, "The business of music requires public awareness and major marketing in order to sell. Major labels have major money to market with. Independents must get publicity in order to survive. I send well-written press releases out on a regular basis. I look for every opportunity to get in the news, TV, radio, newspapers and magazines. If I'm in a new town, I call newsrooms to try and get a story. I've been very successful at this and consider getting major free press as much an art as performing major stages." Exposure builds your story!

Start by creating what's known as a one-sheet. It should be a summary of your story on one sheet of paper. Include whatever ammo you have – a short bio, a track listing, tour dates and past venues, radio play, short press quotes and any other notable info. Design the info on your one-sheet in an organized way. Send your one-sheet with a CD to publications for reviews, radio for airplay, venues, potential agents, managers, distributors and almost anyone else you want to get interested in you and your music. Call first to see if they want a full press kit or just a one-sheet with a link to your website.

Check out daily and weekly papers, alternative publications, trade magazines and even papers from schools. Be creative about where you can fit it into publications. If you have a good story or technique relating to your guitar playing, pitch a guitar magazine. If you've made savvy business moves, pitch a business magazine or the biz section of a local paper. Do research at stores with big magazine sections. Find an angle about you or your music and look for music and general publications that might write about it.

Create a good electronic press kit on your website that people can go to for more info and a selection of photos (least 300dpi in quality) that they can download without having to deal with you. Include a private page with full songs and send media people the URL so they can hear your music. Organize a street team of fans who can help you create your buzz. They can make follow-up calls to press and radio stations in their regions. Fanpower combined with your own hard work can create a buzz that will get you to bigger publications and radio stations, which leads to better venues. This can lead to the day you quit your day job because you've created a full time income from your music!

*Daylle is the best-selling author of Start & Run Your Own Record Label and The Real Deal: How to Get Signed to a Record Label. She also presents music industry seminars, does phone consulting for musicians and record labels and publishes Daylle's News & Resources, a free industry newsletter. daylle@daylle.com www.daylle.com*

## HOW TO BE YOUR OWN PUBLICIST

by Ariel Hyatt, Ariel Publicity

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For this article, I interviewed several entertainment writers from across the country. Their comments and advice are included throughout. Writers who will come up throughout are: Mike Roberts (*The Denver Westword*), Jae Kim (*The Chicago Sun Times*), Silke Tudor (*The SF Weekly*).

**MYTH:** A Big Fat Press Kit Will Impress a Writer.

**TRUTH:** Writers will only become exasperated by a press kit that is not succinct and to the point. A bio, a photo and 6-8 articles double-sided on white paper is a good sized kit. If a writer wants to read more than that he will contact you for further

information. If you don't have any articles, don't worry, this will soon change.

The first step in your journey is to create a press kit, which consists of four parts — the Bio, the Photo, the Articles and the CD.

*Jae Kim:* “The ultimate press kit is a very basic press kit which includes: a CD, a photo with band members’ names labeled on it — not a fuzzy, arty photo — a clear black and white, a bio, and press clips — 10 at most, one or two at least. 40 are way too much.”

## **PART 1: The bio**

Write a one-page band bio that is succinct and interesting to read. I strongly advise avoiding vague clichés such as: melodic, brilliant harmonies, masterful guitar playing, tight rhythm section, etc. These are terms that can be used to describe any type of music. Try to make your description stand out. Create an introduction that sums up your sound, style and attitude in a few brief sentences. This way if a writer is pressed for time, she can simply take a sentence or two from your bio and place it directly in the newspaper. If you try to make a writer dig deeply for the gist, that writer will most likely put your press kit aside and look to one of the other 30 press kits that arrived that week.

**TIP:** Try to create a bio with the assumption that a vast majority of music writers may never get around to listening to your CD (500 new releases come out in the United States each week). Also, writers are usually under tight deadlines to produce copy — so many CD's fall by the wayside.

### **Q. Whose press materials stand out in your memory?**

- A. *Jae Kim:* “Action shots of bands. Blur has had a few great photos, and Mariah's are always very pretty. Also, Mary Cutrufello on Mercury has a great photo — enigmatic with a mysterious quality. Her picture was honest and intelligent, just like her music.”
- A. *Silke Tudor:* “The Slow Poisoners — a local SF band who are very devoted to their presentation. They have a distinct style and everything leads in to something else. Photos are dangerous. If the band looks young and they're mugging you have a pretty safe idea of what they're going to sound like.”

## **PART 2: The photo**

It is very tough to create a great band photo. In the thousands that I have encountered only a few have had creativity and depth. I know it can seem cheesy to arrange a photo shoot but

if you take this part seriously you will deeply benefit from it in the long run.

Create a photo that is clear, light, and attention grabbing. Five musicians sitting on a couch is not interesting. If you have a friend who knows how to use PhotoShop, I highly recommend you enroll him or her to help you do some funky editing. Mike Roberts tends to gravitate towards: “Any photos that are not four guys standing against a wall. Also, a jazz musician doesn't always have to be holding a horn.”

**MYTH:** Photos Cost a Fortune to Process in 8 x10 Format.

**TRUTH:** Photos do not have to be expensive. There are a few places to have photos printed for a great price. My personal favorite is ABC Pictures in Springfield, MO. They will print 500 photos (with layout and all shipping) for \$80. Click the link to check out their web site or telephone 888.526.5336. Another great resource is a company called 1-800-POSTCARD, ([www.1800postcards.com](http://www.1800postcards.com)) which will print 5000 full-color, double-sided postcards for \$250.

Extra postcards not used in press kits can be sent to people on your mailing list, or you can sell them or give them away at gigs

## **PART 3: The articles**

Getting that first article written about you can be quite a challenge. Two great places to start are your local town papers (barring you don't live in Manhattan or Los Angeles), and any local fanzine, available at your favorite indie record store. Use this book as a resource for CD reviews. Find music that is similar to your band's type of music and then send your CD's to those reviewers. As your touring and efforts increase, so will the amount of articles written about your band.

## **PART 4: The CD**

The CD artwork, like the press kit, must be well thought out. You should customize your press kits so that they look in sync with your CD. This way when a writer opens up a package the press kit and the CD look like they go together. Put your phone number and contact info in the CD so if it gets separated from the press kit, the writer knows how to contact you. I asked Eric Rosen, the VP of Radical Records, how he oversees the development of product. He had a few things to say about stickering CD's (placing an extra sticker on the cover to spark the interest of a writer).

“If you are going to sticker your product, be unique in the way you present it — try to be clever about it — plain white stickers are boring.” He went on to say that “Recommended Tracks” stickers are great for the press (suggesting no more than two or three selections). Eric does not think that stickers are too advantageous in CD stores, because then “You are just covering up your artwork.”

**TIP:** Don’t waste precious CD’s! Keep in mind that 500 new CD’s come out every week in the United States. Unless you are sure a writer actually writes CD reviews (many are not given the space to run them) don’t waste your hard-earned dollars sending that writer a CD. Again, ask the promoter which writers like to receive CD’s for review and which ones don’t need them.

#### **Q. What do writers like?**

- A. *Silke Tudor*: “When people personalize things and use casual words. If an envelope is hand-addressed, I will notice it right away and I always open things that people put together themselves. Hand-written stuff gets read first. The bands that do PR for themselves are the ones that stand out for me”
- A. *Mike Roberts*: “Include the name, show date, time, ticket price, place, and who you are playing with. If I don’t see the contact number I have 69 other kits to get to.”

#### **Q. What do writers hate?**

- A. *Jae Kim*: “I hate those padded envelopes that get gray flaky stuff all over you — I feel like its asbestos.” She also dislikes “When I get a package with glitter or confetti in it — it gets all over my desk.” “I [also] don’t like Q & A sheets” — She prefers to come up with questions herself rather than receive answers pre-fabricated for her and spoon-fed.
- A. *Silke Tudor* similarly reports: “I never open anything over my computer.”
- A. *Mike Roberts*: “I don’t have much interest in gimmicks like hard candy. If I tried to eat it, it might kill me. Also you can’t expect a writer to shove something in the paper at the last minute. Please give as much lead time as possible.”

#### **Q. What do writers throw in the garbage immediately?**

- A. *Mike Roberts*: “Anything past deadline.”
- A. *Jae Kim*: “Pictures of women’s butts or profanity that is degrading to women.”

- A. *Silke Tudor*: “If I already know the band and I know that I don’t like it.”

#### **Getting your press materials out there**

Once you have a press kit together try to start planning PR for any tour 6-8 weeks before you hit the road. As soon as a gig is booked, ask the promoter for the club’s press list (most clubs have one.) Promoters are dependent on this local press to help sell tickets. Have the list faxed or e-mailed to you. Don’t be shy — you are working with the promoter to make the show happen and promoters love it when the show is well publicized. Also be sure to ask the promoter who his or her favorite writers are and which ones will like your style of music. When you do call those writers, don’t be afraid to say which promoter recommended them and invite them to the show.

If the local promoter has a publicist, let that publicist do his or her job. Pack everything up and mail it to the promoters. Make sure you ask the promoters how many posters they would like and send them along with the press kits. After a few days it’s best to call and verify that the material was received. If you can’t afford to send kits to everyone, ask the promoters in each area which three or four writers would most likely cover a band that plays your style of music. Also, ask the promoters where the clubs run strip ads (these ads will be in the papers that cover music and inform people in the area about club happenings.)

#### **Publications**

If you are servicing press yourself, and the club does not have a press list, pick up *The Musician’s Atlas*, or *The Musician’s Guide To Touring*. Both of these guides are packed with a wealth of information on publicity outlets across the country, as well as venues, record stores, labels, etc. I recommend sending materials 4-6 weeks prior to the gig. Beware of monthly publications — if you are not at least six weeks out, don’t bother sending to them.

#### **Call the writers**

Most of the time you will be leaving messages on voice mail. Be polite, get right to the point, and be brief!! 9 times out of 10 writers will not call you back.

#### **Persevere**

If you are a totally new band and you are worried because a paper did not cover you the first time around, keep sending that paper information every time you play in the area. I have never met a writer that ignores several

press kits from the same band sent over and over again. It may take a few passes through in each market, but the more a writer sees over time, the more likely he will be to write about you.

### **Don't let all that all that voice-mail discourage you**

I have placed hundreds of articles, mentions, and photos without ever speaking to the writer.

### **Writers are more responsive to e-mail**

It's free for them and does not take too long to respond to. If you are sending e-mail follow-ups, put a link to your site, or the club's site if you don't have one. You can also send a sound clip if you have the capability. IMPORTANT NOTE: Don't bother sending out materials a few days before the gig. Writers are usually way past their deadlines by then and they won't be able to place your band.

### **Posters**

Posters are a great form of PR and they don't have to cost you a fortune. The most cost-effective way to make posters is to buy 11x17 colored paper from your local paper store (approx. \$7 per ream of 500) and run off copies at the copy shop (approx. 7 cents each). Make several white copies and include these with your colored posters — this way the promoter can make extras, if needed. For higher quality posters, I recommend a copy process called docutech. These cost a penny or so more apiece, but they are computer-generated and look better than regular copies. Have whoever designed your poster also design small lay-ups to send out as fliers and ad-mats. Make sure your logo is included on them so the promoter can use them for strip or display advertising.

### **Have patience**

The first few times you play a market, you may not get any press. PR is a slow moving vehicle that can take time to get results. I have worked with some bands that have needed to go through a market 3-4 times before any results started showing up in the press. When sending materials on repeated occasions, include a refresher blurb to remind the writer of your style. Always include the following information: date, show time, ages, ticket price, club name and address, time, and who is on the bill. Don't make writers hunt around for the event info. Make their job as easy as possible by providing as much information. Also keep in mind that some writers will probably not write about you over and over again. If you hit the same markets continually,

a great tactic is to change your photo every few months and write "New Band Photo" on the outside of the envelope.

### **Field staff**

Try to enroll a fan to be on your field staff in each market you visit. In exchange for a few tickets to your show, have this person put up posters, hand out fliers, and talk to the college newspaper about writing a feature or the local radio station about spinning your CD. To get a field staff started, include a sign up column on your mailing list and on your web site. If they sign up, they are the people for you! With a bit of planning and focus, you can spin your own publicity wheel. All it takes is foresight and organization. A band that plans well is a band that receives the most PR.

### **Your website**

If you don't already have one — get on it!! Websites can be easy and inexpensive to design — you can buy software that can take you through it step by step. Better yet, have a friend or a fan help you design a site. Your site should include your upcoming tour dates, as most people will visit it to find out when you are coming through town. Another great place to post all of your dates is [tourdates.com](http://tourdates.com) it's free, and you can also put your bio and photo up as well. More advanced sites include merch as well as CD sales. This is a great idea if you are at the point where you're selling a lot of merchandise. If you're for your own site, at least be sure to link your site to a place where fans can order your CD.

*Ariel Hyatt is the President of Ariel Publicity, Artist Relations, and Cyber Promotions, in NYC. For the past five years she has worked closely publicizing a diverse family of touring and developing indie bands including Sally Taylor, Leftover Salmon, K-Floor, and The Stone Coyotes. Contact: [www.arielpublicity.com](http://www.arielpublicity.com)*

## **IS YOUR BAND READY TO HIRE A PUBLICIST?**

by Diane Foy, Skylar Entertainment

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There are many questions to ask before contacting a publicist or PR firm to determine the answer to that question. A publicist needs to be able to present an interesting story in addition to great music. What is special about you or your band that sets you apart from the many other artists in the same market and genre?

Are you playing live shows often, drawing crowds and building a fan base?

Have you recorded a CD or EP that will be released to retail and/or online outlets?

Does your band have a professional website?

Are you active on social media â€œ Facebook page, twitter, YouTube etc.?

Is there a regional or national tour in the works?

Have you done some publicity yourself in your local area?

Do you have a professional biography?

Do you have professionally shot photographs?

Have you had your music licensed to TV or film?

Is there another aspect of your life or career that is unique?

One benefit of hiring a professional publicist is that they can get your music into the right hands and open doors that may have been previously closed. Publicists spend years building and maintaining their media and industry contact list and most importantly their relationships and reputation with those contacts.

### **YOU ARE READY, NOW WHAT?**

Now that you have decided you are ready to hire a publicist to help you get to the next level, can you afford to pay one? Professional publicists can charge \$1,000 to \$1,500 or more per month and often require a 3-6 month minimum. Are you rethinking that are you ready question? You have probably already spent more than this amount on instruments, gear, recording, touring and other necessities of being a musician, however, if you are serious about a career in music, you must think of marketing and promotion as necessities.

The good news is music publicists are music fans and if you truly are ready and they love the music often they will tailor smaller campaigns for you to get started. If national touring is not a possibility at this time, the publicist may concentrate on regional media and a shorter time frame. Think about your budget before contacting a publicist to at least have a range in mind of what is possible. Be honest about your budget, if you know you can only manage \$2,000 or other amount, tell them. Some publicists are flexible and will work with you in the beginning stages.

### **FINDING & CHOOSING A PUBLICIST**

The best way of finding a publicist is to ask other performers and industry in your circle for a referral. If there is a band or artist similar to your genre of music that has a good

buzz going on, visit their website and see who is listed as their publicist. Next step would be Google terms like "music publicist" "music publicist city or country)" or if your genre of music is specific "jazz publicist" or "metal publicist".

Check out websites, if the website is not professional it may tell you that the publicist doesn't value presentation and image. Read the company profile and publicist bio, check out their past and present clients, read press releases they have written and see if they are active on social media. Social media is a huge aspect of promotion therefore; everyone involved with the band should be active on social media.

After your research you should have a few options to consider and initiate contact with. For a first contact an email outlining who you are and what you are looking for is best. Give a little info on your band or you as a solo artist, your history, what you have achieved so far, upcoming plans and most importantly links to websites where they can get more info and listen to your music.

From there you will see what the response is, if you don't receive a response after a week or so contact again and remind them who you are (best to include original email in body of follow up email). Often the publicist has just been busy and a gentle reminder shows you are serious and reminds them to get back to checking out the info you sent. Or very likely your email went to spam, junk or was accidentally missed. If they are interested they may put a rough publicity plan together for you to give you an idea of their approach and rates. They may also tell you any number of reasons why they can not take on the project and/or refer you to another publicist more suited or more available.

### **WHAT TO EXPECT WHEN YOU HIRE A PUBLICIST**

Hiring a publicist does not guarantee media coverage, no matter how good the music is or how much you have going on; there are many factors beyond anyone's control that determines what media will cover. Like with all aspects of your career, think of publicity as a building process. You may not receive a lot of coverage on your first tour, however, the more often you play a city the more people will come out and the better chance of receiving press.

An ideal plan would start a minimum of 6-8 weeks in advance of CD release or first tour date. CDs need to be mailed out, bio written



or updated, press release written and distributed and time for contacts to receive these before follow up pitches for coverage starts. Media outlets have lead times to consider: daily papers 3-4 weeks, weeklies 3-6 weeks and monthly magazines can be 2-6 months.

Your publicist should keep you updated on the process and results as they happen and provide a report on media received and solicited. If you don't hear from them it may mean there is nothing new to report, however, the more in contact you are with your team the better so ask how things are going and if they need anything more from you. Keep the publicist updated on all your efforts and results too as it helps the publicist if they have something new to pass on when pitching or following up with media. Think of all aspects of your career as a long term building process. Learn everything you can about the business, work on your craft and network, network, network.

*Diane Foy is the Director of Public Relations & Social Media for Skylar Entertainment, a boutique PR firm for the Arts & Entertainment industry formed in 2004.*  
[www.skylarentertainment.com](http://www.skylarentertainment.com)

## TOP 10 MUSIC PR TIPS

by Mona Loring, MLC PR

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Publicity is a huge driving force when you're looking at success in the music industry. Although it's definitely beneficial to retain a publicist once you have your music career in gear, you can still manage to create a little buzz on your own in the meantime. Below are the top ten tips for generating your own publicity as a music artist.

1. Make sure you have a press kit that includes a well-written bio, an 8X10 photo, CD and contact info.
2. Go local. Local press is by far the easiest press to get. Let them know your story and send in a CD. Shoot for the music editor or columnist and if they don't have one assigned specifically, contact the entertainment editor.
4. Social networking sites are all about music these days. Where else can you find people to listen to your music in the convenience of their own home? Make sure you are updating your music, adding friends, keeping them all posted, and updating the tour dates.
4. Radio is a great way to share your music with the masses. You don't have to approach the big ones-you can see

success with air play on smaller stations as well. Send in your CD to local DJs and look up college radio shows nationally and see if they'll spin your music. Online radio is picking up these days too... USA4Real.com is a great option... it doesn't cost much and it gets your music heard.

5. Music licensing is a great way to make money and get publicity. Try contacting some music supervisors on TV shows for a start. Send them an inquiry with your information and a link to your music. If you get placed, you can use it for press-and it becomes a story!
6. Music websites and e-zines are always looking for music to review. Look up their websites and send emails to their editors. Tell them why you're a fit for their magazine and ask if you can send in a CD. Again, try to make contact first... sending in a random package may be useless.
7. Youtube.com and Stickam.com are wonderful outlets to share your music. When done right, you can really start gaining a fan base. Try to do something charismatic and original. Reaching out to people online can do wonders. Create a music video, a video blog, sing an acoustic set, take a stab at some comedy - anything ... Just remember, first impressions are everything.
8. Be philanthropic. Charity does wonders for publicity outreach. Find something you believe in and offer to play at their event or donate proceeds to their cause. Not only does it get you out there and give you a story angle... but it feels good to help out.
9. Send your CDs to appropriate magazines for your music's genre. Make sure you call ahead and find out the right contact, unsolicited packages get lost in the shuffle. A good rule of thumb is to look up specific writers you feel would enjoy your music and find out how to reach them.
10. Try to book shows in different towns, that way you can easily label the cluster of shows as a tour and contact local newspapers and radio stations and offer them merch in exchange for promotions/articles.

Note that PR is about being smart and creative. It's about finding a reason for people to care about you and your music. Sure, great music and a good look are helpful, but you also need to reach out to the public and come up with stories. Think outside of the box and

you'll really benefit from the results in no time. Good luck!

*Mona Loring, president of MLC PR, brings forth solid experience in public relations, freelance writing, copywriting, marketing, and business development. Specializing in creative thinking and promotional development, Loring has successfully combined her passion for communications and creativity to establish a PR career that is both mentally stimulating and captivatingly diverse. For more information visit [www.monaloring.com](http://www.monaloring.com)*

## MUSIC MARKETING STRATEGIES

by Derek Sivers, CEO CD Baby

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### Call the destination, and ask for directions

Work backwards. Define your goal (your final destination) - then contact someone who's there, and ask how to get there. If you want to be in Rolling Stone magazine, pick up the phone, call their main office in New York City, and when the receptionist answers, say "Editorial, please." Ask someone in the editorial department which publicists they recommend. Then call each publicist, and try to get their attention. (Hint: Don't waste Rolling Stone's time asking for the publicist's phone number. You can find it elsewhere; get off the phone as soon as possible.)

If you want to play at the biggest club in town, bring a nice box of fancy German cookies to the club booker, and ask for just 5 minutes of their advice. Ask them what criteria must be met in order for them to take a chance on an act. Ask what booking agents they recommend, or if they recommend using one at all. Again, keep your meeting as short as possible. Get the crucial info, and then leave them alone. (Until you're back, headlining their club one day!)

I know an artist manager of a small-unsigned act, who over the course of a year, met with the managers of U2, REM, and other top acts. She asked them for their advice, coming from the top, and got great suggestions that she's used with big results.

### Put your fans to work

You know those loyal few people who are in the front row every time you perform? You know those people that sat down to write you an Email to say how much they love your music? The guy that said, "Hey if you ever

need anything - just ask!" Put them all to work!

Often, people who reach out like that are looking for a connection in this world. Looking for a higher cause. They want to feel they have some other purpose than their stupid accounting job. You may be the best thing in their life. You can break someone out of their drab life as an assistant sales rep for a manufacturing company. You might be the coolest thing that ever happened to a teenager going through an unpopular phase. You can give them a mission!

Gather a few interested fans for pizza, and spend a night doing a mailing to colleges. Anyone wanting to help have them post flyers, or drive a van full of friends to your gig an hour away. Have the guts to ask that "email fan" if she'd be into going through the *Indie Contact Bible* and sending your press kit to 20 magazines a week. Eventually, as you grow, these people can be the head of "street teams" of 20 people in a city that go promote you like mad each time you have a concert or a new CD.

### Go where the filters are

Have you been filtered? If not, you should start now. People in the music biz get piles of CDs in the mail everyday from amateurs. Many of them aren't very good. How do you stand out? Filters allow the best of the best pass through. It will also weed out the "bad music", or the music that isn't ready. I worked at Warner Brothers for 3 years. I learned why they never accept unsolicited demos: It helps weed out the people that didn't do enough research to know they have to go meet managers or lawyers or David Geffen's chauffeur *first* in order to get to the "big boys. If you *really* believe in your music, than have the confidence to put yourself into those places where most people get rejected. (Radio, magazines, big venues, agents, managers, record labels, promoters...)

### Have someone work on the inside

I prefer to ignore the music industry. Maybe that's why you don't see me on the cover of Rolling Stone. One of my only regrets about my own band was that we toured and got great reviews, toured and got lots of air play, toured and booked some great-paying gigs. BUT... nobody was working the inside of the music business. Nobody was connecting with the "gatekeepers" to bring us to the next level. We just kept doing the same gigs. Maybe you're happy on the outside of the biz. (I know I am.) But if what you want is to tour with major-label artists, be on the cover of *Spin*, heard on the airwaves, or get onto MTV,

You're going to have to have someone working the inside of the biz, Someone who loves it. Someone persuasive who gets things done 10 times faster than you ever could, and who's excited enough about it, that they would never be discouraged. Find someone who's passionate about the business side of music, and particularly the business side of YOUR music.

### **Be a novice marketer not an expert**

Get to the point of being a novice marketer/promoter/agent. Then hand it to an expert. Moby, the famous techno artist, says the main reason for his success was that he found experts to do what they're best at, instead of trying to do it himself. (Paraphrased:) "Instead of trying to be a booking agent, publicist, label, and manager, I put my initial energy into finding and impressing the best agent.... I just kept making lots of the best music I could."

If you sense you are becoming an expert, figure out what your real passions in life are and act accordingly. Maybe you're a better publicist than bassist. Maybe you're a better bassist than publicist. Maybe it's time to admit your weakness as a booking agent, and hand it off to someone else. Maybe it's time to admit your genius as a booking agent, and commit to it full-time.

### **Reach them like you would want to be reached**

Reach people like *you* would want to be reached. Would you rather have someone call you up in a dry business monotone, and start speaking a script like a telemarketer? Or would you rather have someone be a cool person, a real person?

When you contact people, no matter how it's done (phone, email, mail, face-to-face) - show a little spunk. If it sounds like they have a moment and aren't in a major rush, entertain them a bit. Ask about their day and expect a real answer. Talk about something non-business for a minute or two. If they sound hectic, skip the long introduction. Know what you want to say ahead of time, just in case.

Every contact with the people around your music (fans and industry) is an extension of your art. If you make depressing, morose, acoustic music, maybe you should send your fans a dark brown-and-black little understated flyer that's depressing just to look at. Set the tone. Pull in those people who love that kind of thing. Proudly alienate those that don't. If you're an in your face, tattooed, country-metal-speedpunk band, have the guts to call a potential booking agent and scream, "Listen

you fucking motherfucker. If they like that introduction, you've found a good match. Don't be afraid to be different.

### **What has worked on you?**

Any time you're trying to influence people to do something, think what has worked on YOU in the past. Are you trying to get people to buy your CD? Write down the last 20 CDs you bought, then for each one, write down what made you buy it. Did you ever buy a CD because of a matchbook, postcard, or 30-second web sound clip? What DID work? (Reviews, word-of-mouth, live show?) Write down your top 10 favorite artists of all time, and a list of what made you discover each one and become a fan.

This goes beyond music. Which TV ads made you buy something? What anonymous Emails made you click a link and check out a website? Which flyers or radio ads made you go see a live show by someone you had never heard?

### **Have the confidence to target**

*Bad Target Example: Progressive Rocker Targeting Teeny Bopper.* On CD Baby, there is a great musician who made an amazing heavy-progressive-metal record. When we had a "search keywords" section, asking for three artists he sounds like, he wrote, "britney spears, ricky martin, jennifer lopez, backstreet boys, MP3, sex, free" What the hell was he thinking? He just wanted to turn up in people's search engines, at any cost. For what, and who? Did he really want a Britney Spears fan to get "tricked" into finding his dark-progressive-metal record? Would that 13-year-old girl actually spend the 25 minutes to download his 10 minute epic, "Confusing Mysteries of Hell"? If she did, would she buy his CD? I suggested he instead have the confidence to target the REAL fans of his music. He put three semi-obscure progressive artists into the search engine, and guess what? He's selling more CDs than ever! He found his true fans.

### **If you don't say whom you sound like, you won't make any fans**

A person asks you, "What kind of music do you do?" Musicians say, "All styles. Everything." That person then asks, "So who do you sound like?" Musicians say, "Nobody. We're totally unique. Like nothing you've ever heard before." What does that person do? Nothing. They might make a vague promise to check you out sometime. Then they walk on, and forget about you! Why??? You didn't arouse their curiosity! You violated a HUGE rule of self-promotion! Bad bad bad!

What if you had said, “It’s 70’s porno-funk music being played by men from Mars.” Or... “This CD is a delicate little kiss on your earlobe from a pink-winged pixie. Or... “We sound like a cross between *AC/DC* and *Tom Jones*.” Any one of these, and you’ve got their interest.

Get yourself a magic key phrase that describes what you sound like. Try out a few different ones, until you see which one always gets the best reaction from strangers. Have it ready at a moment’s notice. It doesn’t have to narrow what you do at all. Any of those three examples I use above could sound like anything. And that’s just the point - if you have a magic phrase that describes your music in curious but vague terms, you can make total strangers start wondering about you.

### **Touch as many senses of theirs as you can**

The more senses you touch in someone, the more they’ll remember you. BEST: a live show, with you sweating right on top of someone, the PA system pounding their chest, the smell of the smoky club, the flashing lights and live-in-person performance. WORST: an email, a single web page, or a review in a magazine with no photo.

Whenever it is possible, try to reach as many senses as possible. Have an amazing photo of yourself or your band, and convince every reviewer to put that photo next to the review of your album. Send videos with your press kit. Play live shows often. Understand the power of radio to make people hear your music instead of just hearing about it. Get onto any TV shows you can. Scent your album with patchouli oil. Make your songs and productions truly emotional instead of merely catchy.

### **Be an extreme version of yourself**

Define yourself. Show your weirdness. Bring out all your quirks. Your public persona, the image you show to the world, should be an extreme version of yourself.

### **A good biz plan wins no matter what happens**

In doing this test marketing you should make a plan that will make you a success even if nobody comes along with his or her magic wand. Start now. Don’t wait for a “deal”. Don’t just record a “demo” that is meant only for record companies.

You have all the resources you need to make a finished CD that thousands of people would want to buy. If you need more money, get it from anyone except a record company. And

if, as you’re following your great business plan, selling hundreds, then thousands of CDs, selling out small, then larger venues, getting on the cover of magazines... you’ll be doing so well that you won’t need a record deal. If you get an offer you’ll be in the position of taking it or leaving it. There’s nothing more attractive to an investor than someone who doesn’t need his or her money. Make the kind of business plan that will get you to a good sustainable level of success, even without a big record deal.

### **Don’t be afraid to ask for favors**

Some people *like* doing favors. It’s like asking for directions in New York City. People’s egos get stroked when they know the answer to something you’re asking. They’ll gladly answer to show off their knowledge.

One bold musician I know called me up one day and said, “I’m coming to New York in 2 months. Can you give me a list of all the important contacts you think I should meet?” I ended doing a search in my database, E-mailing him a list of 40 people he should call, and mention my name.

Maybe you need to find something specific: a video director for cheap, a PA system you can borrow for a month, a free rehearsal studio. Call up everyone you know and ask! This network of friends you are creating will have everything you want in life. Some rare and lucky folks (perhaps on your “band mailing list”) have time on their hands and would rather help you do something, than sit at home in front of the TV another night. Need help doing flyers, or help getting equipment to a show? Go ahead and ask!

### **Keep in touch!**

Sometimes the difference between success and failure is just a matter of keeping in touch! There are some AMAZING musicians who have sent a CD to CD Baby, and when I heard it, I flipped. In a few cases, I’ve stopped what I was doing at that moment, picked up the phone and called them wherever they were to tell them I thought they were a total genius. (Believe me - this is rare. Maybe 1 in 500.) Often I get an answering machine, and guess what... they don’t call back!! What success-sabotaging kind of thing is that to do? 2 weeks later I’ve forgotten about their CD as new ones came in.

The lesson: If they would have just called back, and kept in touch, they may have a fan like no other at the head of one of the largest distributors of independent music on the web. A fan that would go out on a limb to help their career in ways others just dream of. But

they never kept in touch and now I can't remember their names. Some others whose CDs didn't really catch my attention the first time around, just keep in touch so well that I often find myself helping them more as a friend than a fan.

### **A short description - 10 Seconds or less**

Most of the world has never heard your music. Most of the world WON'T hear your music, unless you do a good job describing it. It's like a Hollywood screenplay. You not only have to write a great screenplay, but you have to have a great description of it that you can say in 10 seconds or less, in order to catch people's attention. Find a way to describe your music that would catch anyone's attention, and describe it accurately.

### **Read about new music**

Go get a magazine like CMJ, Magnet, or Alternative Press. You'll read about (and see pictures of) dozens of artists who you've never heard of before. Out of that whole magazine, only one or two will really catch your attention. WHY? I don't have the answer. Only you do. Ask yourself why a certain headline or photo or article caught your attention. What was it exactly that intrigued you? Adapt those techniques to try writing a headline or article about your music.

*Derek Sivers is the founder of the extremely popular online music store, CD Baby. Derek has sold CD Baby and is now developing new projects to help independent artists to succeed. For his free e-book on how to be more successful promoting your music, visit [www.sivers.org](http://www.sivers.org)*

## **7 EFFECTIVE STRATEGIES TO GET YOUR MUSIC NOTICED**

by Randy Chertkow and Jason Feehan authors of "The Indie Band Survival Guide: The Complete Manual For The Do-It-Yourself Musician"

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In some music business schools, they still give students assignments that go like this: "Assume that you have one million dollars. Make up a marketing plan on how to promote a band."

Here's a realistic assignment: "Go to Facebook. Pick a band. You have zero dollars. Now go promote them."

Although most bands would like to have the kind of budget to promote their latest album on TV, radio, and billboards, they are more

likely to have just enough to print up posters for the next gig. And yet indies can get the kind of attention that major label acts get. You just need to plan appropriately and implement a few tried-and-true strategies.

Here are seven effective strategies to get you and your music noticed. The good news is they're easy on the pocketbook and can be acted on today. All they take is a bit of time and some thought about how to get your music directly in front of the people that are likely to be your new fans. While they may not have heard of you yet, if you follow these strategies, they will.

You have one thing to do before you get started, though. It's the one thing that every band must know: who's the audience for your music. What are their ages? Where do they hang out? What do they do? What are their interests? Who are they? The better you know your target audience, the easier you'll find the strategies are to implement and the greater the return on your planning.

Once you know your audience, dig in.

### **SEVEN EFFECTIVE STRATEGIES**

1. The Standing-Out Strategy
2. The Piggybacking Strategy
3. The Agent Strategy
4. The Multi-Tasking Strategy
5. The Long Haul Strategy
6. The Street Team strategy
7. The Stay-Tuned Strategy

#### **1. The Standing-Out Strategy**

The first thing most musicians think of when they want to promote their music is to get it reviewed by a music publication or played on the radio.

Don't start there. Publications and media that cater solely to music are probably the hardest place to get your music noticed.

The competition for attention in music publications and sites is overwhelming. For instance, National Public Radio's "All Songs Considered" receives 200 to 300 CDs submitted a week. Out of that, there are only eight that get featured. And those are sandwiched in between other songs, and played just once. The same is true with music reviews. Although they are good for getting quotes for your press kit, it probably won't get you many new fans, since it's a music review in a pile of music reviews.

Instead of focusing on music publications and media, think in terms of audiences. Put your



music where it will stand out from the crowd. As an example, consider one of the biggest sellers in the early days of CDBaby.com: an album about sailing. Instead of following the crowd and sending the album to a music magazine, the band instead cleverly sent their album to a sailing magazine.

The sailing magazine, which wasn't used to receiving music, much less an entire album dedicated to exactly what the magazine was about, ended up getting reviewed in the magazine. The band's CD stood out. It didn't have to compete against stacks and stacks of other CDs to get noticed. And because the magazine had a large audience and the CD got a great review, sales shot through the roof.

This is what we call the standing-out strategy, and the great thing about it is, there is room for everyone. While your music is in a musical niche, targeting the people that like that kind of music directly, represents only one, highly competitive channel for your music. By putting your music where there usually isn't any, your music can get noticed.

## **2. The Piggybacking Strategy**

When you're not well known, the quickest way to get the word out there is to piggyback on something that people already know about. One of the best known forms of piggybacking is listing out the bands you "sound like" on your web site. This gives new listeners a clue as to what to expect by drawing on what they already know. Of course, another popular piggybacking tactic is to cover a well-known song. Often, these covers become your initial best-sellers. But they also act as a gateway. If listeners like your version, they'll likely check out your original material.

But piggybacking on other bands or cover songs isn't the only thing that you can piggyback on. You can piggyback on anything that already has an audience.

For example, our own band, Beatnik Turtle, wrote a song called "Star Wars (A Movie Like No Other)". It summarized the entire original Star Wars trilogy in a single song. Around the same time, StarWars.com released a video mashup tool and so we decided to make a video for the song. The video ended up getting played over fifteen thousand times thanks to the active community at that site. That popularity led to it getting picked up by Atom.com which in turn led to it being aired on SpikeTV to celebrate the Star Wars 32nd anniversary.

Current events and popular culture provide opportunities for piggybacking as well. When

a topic is hot, a large number of people will be searching for information about it. For instance, The Brobdingnagian Bards, a Celtic Renaissance musical duo, are always looking for trends to ride, so when the Monty Python musical Spamalot got popular, they posted a blog entry about Spamalot and also mentioned that they covered a Monty Python song previously. The post got a ton of hits, got them noticed by new fans, and resulted in sales.

But piggybacking isn't always about how to get publicity. It can be for a good cause as well. Grant Baciocco of Throwing Toasters put together two compilation charity albums called *Laughter Is a Powerful Weapon*, with music donated by himself and many other well-known comedy artists. The money from one went to the Twin Towers orphans fund and the other went to the Red Cross for Katrina victims.

## **3. The Agent Strategy**

Most bands start out promoting and representing themselves because they start out small. But it's human nature to think more of someone when they have someone acting on their behalf. In fact, it's been shown to be true in various psychological and sociological studies. Even if you're just starting out, find someone to represent you and you'll have more successes.

Having an agent is even more useful during negotiations, because they can be as tough as they want to. If you negotiate for yourself and you give the other side a particularly hard time, they might start to dislike you, rather than your agent.

## **4. The Multi-Tasking Strategy**

The musicians that have the most success don't just rely on one project for their income. Most of them work on many things beyond playing live, selling albums, and selling merchandise.

For instance:

- Jonathan Coulton participates in the Popular Science magazine podcast at popsci.com and licenses his music.

- Brad Turcotte of Brad Sucks maintains multiple Web sites including stripcreator.com and also licenses his music.

- Grant Baciocco of Throwing Toasters writes and produces the multiple-award-winning podcast "The Radio Adventures of Dr. Floyd," does voice-over and acting work, and

produces a podcast for the Jim Henson Company, among other projects.

- George Hrab is a drummer in a popular cover band that plays at weddings and corporate events, writes and produces his Geologic Podcast, and has written a book.

- The members of Beatnik Turtle have day jobs, run IndieGuide.com, and write books like *The Indie Band Survival Guide* and articles like this one.

Not only do musicians like these have a lot of projects going on, they use the projects to promote the others.

### **5. The Long-Haul Strategy**

While major labels had to focus on making one-hit-wonders because of their business model, that was never the best situation for the musician. Furthermore, it's not even similar to the way that most businesses work: build their name over the long term, and eventually get consistent income over time. A band or artist can be just like any other business that starts out small, and eventually becomes solidly established.

For example, in 2001, Brad Turcotte released his first album online as a downloadable set of MP3s. The money he made from this allowed him to do a run of CDs, which got him another surge of new fans. Later, he released the source tracks to his music, this time making new fans among people who enjoy remixing songs. After he packaged the best remixes into another CD, he got a new surge of fans who loved both the remixes and the original material. By the time he released his second album, it not only did well in its own right, it generated interest in his previous albums.

### **6. The Street Team Strategy**

Today's artists are more connected with their fans than ever. And in these days of social networks, word of mouth is many times more powerful than it's ever been. Every fan you have is connected to many more people, and sometimes, all you have to do is ask in order to get their help in spreading the word. A street team in the past was all about putting fliers in coffee shops. Today, with the Web, they can distribute your music to new fans, get the word out about your shows through their social networks, or even get people to sign up to your mailing lists.

The key to a successful street team, is to be explicit in asking what it is you want them to do. Then, be sure to give them the tools that they need to be successful. And of course,

reward them for their help. If you need some practical advice on how to create and manage a street team, there's step-by-step instructions here.

### **7. The Stay-Tuned Strategy**

Before radio DJs head into the commercials, they announce what they're going to play after the break. This keeps people tuned in during the break. You can adopt the same technique. Always talk about your next project when you talk about your band, whether you're talking to the press, your fans (your blog, Twitter, Facebook), or other musicians.

Here's why:

- Your fans will keep tabs on you until that next project is released.

- The press might ask questions about your upcoming projects and write future stories.

- It gets people involved: If you don't announce what you have planned, you might miss out on a fan that can help.

- It keeps your own band members motivated and working toward the same goals.

So it helps to have a sound bite on the tip of your tongue about what you're doing next. Movies have trailers, and a band should have announcements of what's to come.

As you can see, many different strategies are available to help you get noticed. There are no rules to this new music business, so we suggest experimenting with as many strategies, projects, and ideas to see what works best for you and your music. When you find something that works, keep it up; and when you find something that doesn't, just move on.

*Randy Chertkow and Jason Feehan are authors of *The Indie Band Survival Guide: The Complete Manual For The Do-It-Yourself Musician, The DIY Music Manual, and founders of the free and open musician resource, [www.IndieGuide.com](http://www.IndieGuide.com)**



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## MAY I HAVE YOUR ATTENTION PLEASE: BRANDING YOUR SONGS

by Bill Pere, CT Songwriters Association  
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In today's very crowded music marketplace, you are competing at any given time with thousands of artists and tens of thousands of songs – and you're competing for two specific things: Awareness, and Attention. Awareness is getting a listener to notice that you (or your song) exist, and Attention is sparking enough interest in that listener so that they willingly hold you in their awareness (and ideally, make others aware of you as well).

You cannot achieve Attention without first achieving Awareness. Thus, many artists spend considerable time and resource in "marketing and promotion", learning what they can and applying a variety of approaches to capture listener Awareness. However, they often overlook one fundamental piece of the whole picture – once you've achieved Awareness, what does it take to turn it into Attention?

The answer is simple and basic – quality. Great songs. The songs are like cars to GM, computers to Apple, food to McDonald's, or flavor to Coke. These companies have great brand awareness, but have faltered when there was a perception that their quality was compromised or did not measure up to competitors. The ultimate success of a company (i.e. you), is bring a quality product into a wide awareness.

I meet many young artists who want me to tell them all I know about marketing, but who never ask for analysis or critique of their songs. They've spend large amounts of time and money recording songs that have never been critiqued by objective professionals, or developing graphics that have never gone before a test audience, and then they wonder why all their best efforts at marketing and promoting yield little results – OR – they get some degree of results from their marketing efforts and never think to ask how much MORE they would have gotten if they had a better product.

There was an amazing online poll conducted by Derek Sivers in early 2010. He asked how folks get input on their songs during the development stage. A huge number of

aspiring Independent Artists wrote (sometimes emphatically!) that they never seek out nor ever need critique. Could you imagine any company today investing all the time and money it takes to launch a new product or service without including focus groups and market testing as part of the product development? We all remember - or not - the Ford Edsel...

If much of your competition is not spending time and effort in maximizing the quality of their songs, it is good news for you – it means that if you take the time to work on the crafting of your songs, then your subsequent efforts at promotion and marketing will be that much more effective.

A typical response to avoiding critique is that "I want to be different! My music doesn't fit any type of category" Let's take a moment to look at when 'different' works for or against you. At my workshops, I usually ask 100 people in a room what song they think about when I say the word "love", and I usually get 100 different answers. Then I ask what song they think of when I say "centrifugal" – and there are only two kinds of responses – either nothing, or "This Kiss", as recorded by Faith Hill, written by Beth Nielsen Chapman, Robin Lerner and Annie Roboff (yes, it sometimes takes a village to raise a great song).

There is no question that this song "works", across different styles, tastes, demographics, and cultures. Besides being a #1 international Country hit and a Top-10 crossover hit on multiple-genre charts on three continents, "This Kiss" became the signature song for the 1998 movie Practical Magic. It won the Video Of The Year awards at the 1998 Country Music Association awards. This was the first time in her career that Faith Hill had international success with a hit – success due to the song, not the artist. (She had had four previous #1 hits, but nothing of this magnitude).

Why does this song "work" so well, as opposed to the vast number of other songs that are also about love and kisses? Clearly it's not just what the song is "about". There is more at work.

Song lyrics have three main sets of components: Semantic (having to do with meaning), Phonetic (having to do with the sound of the words), and Prosodic (having to

do with the rhythm of the words). (These are all discussed at great length in "Songcrafters' Coloring Book")

When you look at the chorus of "This Kiss":  
(Chapman, Lerner, Roboff © Almo Music,  
HFA T14952)

It's the way you love me  
It's a feeling like this  
It's centrifugal motion  
It's perpetual bliss  
It's that pivotal moment  
It's, ah, impossible  
This kiss, this kiss, unstoppable  
This kiss, this kiss

You see that it's not what is being said that is so memorable -- a million songs say the same thing. It's not any unique use of metaphor or any memorable story. It is the sound of the words, their cadence, and the unusual choice of words. The incredible international success of this song is shaped primarily by five words: centrifugal, perpetual, (that) pivotal, impossible, unstoppable". These five words show tremendous interaction between semantic, phonetic, and prosodic elements. The sonic activity (use of phonetics) here is extremely high: a five-fold alliteration on "p"; all the words end in the "ul" sound; assonant syllables in "cen" "per" and "pet"; a sonic reversal in "pos/"stop"; and a rhyme in "tual"/"fugal".

Prosodically, all the words have the exact same cadence (accent pattern) of 4 syllables with the accent on the second: soft-LOUD-soft-soft, and the same rhythmic timing. The five lines of this rhythmic pattern set up a real perception of motion -- and then -- the spondee pattern of the words "this kiss" (LOUD LOUD) moved to musical off-beats totally changes the sense of motion and makes the title really stand out, far more so than if the words just continued the fast-moving pace of the previous lines. It is quality craftsmanship on all levels.

Finally, the semantic choice of the particularly unusual word (for a song) "centrifugal" put the icing on this lyric, using the Von Restorff Effect to uniquely brand the song. The Von Restorff Effect is the cognitive principle that makes things stand out and be more easily remembered by being different. This same principle is at work with the music in songs as well. Ask 100 people what well known band they think of when you say "guitar", and you'll get 100 answers. Same for

"keyboard". But ask what band they think of when you say "French Horn" and you'll get one -- The Who. Ask about "flute" and you'll get Jethro Tull, and perhaps some Moody Blues. Ask about "cello" and it's the Harry Chapin Band. The Von Restorff Effect is clearly at work musically as well as lyrically.

The bottom line of all of this is simple: it's not enough to just be different or technically proficient. You have to have an above-average song in order for uniqueness and technical artistry to have optimum effect. And if you're going to be "different" it has to be in a way that is in a space of its own, without other competing songs or artists or styles. You can only determine this with some market testing. Don't just assume. Always strive for maximum Awareness, but be sure you have a well crafted, quality song to hold Attention.

*Bill Pere was named one of the "Top 50 Innovators, Groundbreakers and Guiding Lights of the Music Industry" by Music Connection Magazine. For workshops, consultation, performances, or other songwriter services, contact Bill via his web sites, at [www.billpere.com](http://www.billpere.com) [www.ctsongwriting.com](http://www.ctsongwriting.com) [www.lunchensemble.com](http://www.lunchensemble.com)*

## social networking

### THE ART OF NETWORKING: 5 STEPS TO MAKING BETTER MUSIC INDUSTRY CONNECTIONS

by Dave Kusek, New Artist Model  
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We've all heard this piece of advice time and time again -- in the music industry, it's all about who you know. However, meeting influential connections can seem a rather daunting task. Connections with major record labels or publishing companies can seem completely unreachable and it can be difficult to identify the independent players in the industry. We're here to tell you that any connection is completely within your reach as an indie artist, and with those connections come opportunities. Here are five tips for networking in the music industry.



## **1. Networking on Social Media**

The most accessible way to network in the music industry is with social media. Sometimes it can be much easier to reach out to people online. The first step is identifying some industry people you'd like to connect with. Don't just pick names out of a hat – choose people who work in a field you're interested in. As an example, if you were a jazz songwriter you'd want to connect with publishers, music supervisors, and jazz bloggers. Also, try to stick with people who work with artists at a similar career level to you or just above.

Next, you'll want to start engaging with them on Twitter, Facebook, YouTube, or their blog. The key is to avoid pushing your music in their face right off the bat. Contribute to their conversations in a valuable and interactive way, give them your opinion if they ask a question, and consistently engage so your name becomes something they recognize.

It's about building a relationship. Once you have that foundation you can start tying your music into the conversation.

## **2. Get Out There**

Networking and connecting on social media is something you should be constantly doing, but if you want to take the relationships you create to the next level you need to meet people in person. In fact, talking face-to-face is probably the best way to connect with people.

With that in mind, you need to be actively going out and being a part your local music community. Go to conferences, workshops, festivals, and concerts. Play as many shows as possible, especially open mic nights and events that book multiple bands. Other musicians are often the best connections you will make as they most likely know or have worked with other people in the industry like publishing companies, music lawyers, and booking agents.

You should also try to play at venues and events that may not even be music related. Charities, local fairs and festivals, and hotel performances are great ways to get your music in front of a new audience and give you the opportunity to stand out in a less crowded market.

Of course, if you want these events to be truly beneficial to your career, you need to be talking to people and networking. Just like social media, you want to engage in conversation before pushing your music at them. Talk to them about the show or event, ask them what they do, and then bring up your music. Before you go to these events, make sure your web presence is in order. If they go check out your website and it looks sloppy or out of date they probably won't follow through.

## **3. Every Conversation is a Networking Opportunity**

Not all music connections come with a fancy business card and title. Your biggest opportunity yet could come in the form of a manager at a charity you support, or another local band that wants to team up for a few gigs. With that in mind, don't dismiss any conversation and always be prepared with a business card with contact information and your website, and maybe even a demo CD or download card. Not every connection will lead to opportunities, and many of the opportunities may fall through, but if you don't make the initial connection you won't get any opportunities.

## **4. Follow up!**

When you connect with someone, try to get some form of contact information and take the initiative to follow up. No matter how good people's intentions may be, sometimes they just forget to follow through. It's up to you to rekindle the conversation! If it helps you, jot down or make a note in your phone the date and location you met the person and what you discussed. Including little details like this in your follow up will show them that you really care about what they had to say. Remember, the squeaky wheel gets the grease.

## **5. Give and Receive**

Especially today, the music industry is about forming mutually beneficial long-term relationships, and relationships are as much about giving as they are receiving. Every time you meet someone, think about what you can do to help them before jumping in and asking favors. After all, you can't just expect people to help you out for nothing.

If you're talking to a blogger you could give them an exclusive preview of your next

album. You could offer to record a backing vocal track for a local band. When you go in for a radio interview give them some free tickets or albums to give out to their viewers. Give and you shall receive.

Opportunities and relationships that are built on a mutual benefit also tend to last longer. One performance at an event for a charity you support could lead to your music being featured in the charity's commercials down the line. One show with a band you like in New York could lead to a spot as headliner on their national tour.

Of course, in addition to networking, there are many more strategies to get your music in front of a bigger audience. In the New Artist Model online music business courses you'll learn how to turn your music into a successful business – a business where you're the CEO! You'll create an actionable and personalized plan that will help you achieve a career in music, and you'll be able to do it all with the resources you have available right now.

*As the founder and former CEO of Berkleemusic, the world's largest music school, Dave Kusek has helped teach tens of thousands of students around the world and created hundreds of online music courses. If you'd like to learn even more great strategies from the New Artist Model online music business courses, download these two free ebooks. You'll learn how to think of your music career like a business and get some great marketing, publishing, and recording strategies!*  
<http://get.newartistmodel.com/sq/40358-music-business-strategies>

## EFFECTIVE USE OF SOCIAL MEDIA AND ONLINE MARKETING

by Ariel Hyatt, Ariel Publicity and Corey Denis, Not Shocking, LLC

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Corey Denis is a woman I admire deeply. She and I have an interesting history. She worked at What Are Records? the label I started out at. But she arrived after I had already left, so we never actually had the pleasure of working together during the time. Corey is nothing short of a genius at marketing bands and artists.

She is brilliant because she thinks about both sides of the fence from the both the artists and the fans perspective.

I'm thrilled that she was willing to be interviewed for this piece. Enjoy her responses.

### 1. Why is it important that artists participate in social media?

At the very least, learning how to participate in social media will give artists a chance to take advantage of new online tools, which may actually enhance their current projects. Singles, videos and tour dates can be released via new outlets, fans (new and old) will have a new method of communication with artists, and artists will have a new set of tools by which to market their craft. In the face of both an unstable music economy and the evolution of the new music economy

### 2. Name 10 sites you think all artists should have a presence on?

- Twitter
- Facebook
- YouTube
- Instagram
- Flickr
- Pinterest
- imeem
- Blogger (so you can comment on other blogs)
- Vimeo
- Qik

### 3. Do you think it's important for artists to be on as many sites as possible all over the Internet, or should they be selective and only sign up to the ones that they are actively using?

It can't hurt to have a profile on as many sites as possible, but if you don't sign in or know how to use the networks, or understand how to integrate all the sites together, then the profile will not automatically generate any exposure for you other than the top tier of popular artists who sell millions of records per month. An artist could viably create 50 profiles and optimize search-ability online, but it's crucial to consider what a person will find once they get to the profile. I advise artists to start with 3 networks and to use & manage them correctly and actively, or hire someone who can do it – then increase to 5, 10 and so on.

### 4. What would your recommendations be for the busy artist that only has 30 minutes a week to dedicate to social media?

Set aside a small budget to hire someone to help, and treat them like an additional band member. If you only have 30 minutes to spare then the concept of “your time is money” should make sense to you – and if you want to sell music online and are not Britney Spears, it’s worth your time & money to bring on this additional band member to increase your visibility, discoverability and sales online.

#### **5. How can an artist save time by using widgets, and which ones would you recommend?**

Widgets are time savers if you know how to create and use them. They enable fans to spread information more easily. The only task at hand is to copy-paste-embed on a website or as a blog post. Think of a widget as a mini web page that can be embedded on a larger web page, or somewhere in a social network. I am a fan of the Sprout widget but since most social networks and services offer widgets I recommend simply finding one that you like best and then putting it up on your website and Facebook page. Then email your fans with the embed code and invite them to spread the word.

#### **6. What’s the best way for an artist to get blogged about?**

There are no guarantees. However, I advise indie publicists and artists who are brave enough to do their own publicity to develop a relationship with bloggers by reading their blogs, learning more about their taste and then you can write to them individually to let them know why you think they might be interested in your music. In addition, start your own blog, build a blogroll and link to your favorite blogs.

#### **7. Do you think artists should focus on getting played on Internet radio? Or has the scare with the RIAA stopped most Internet radio programmers in their tracks?**

Internet radio is very important if you want to be heard online. Terrestrial and online radio stations have to pay for the right to use your copyrighted art on their stations. The focus of the RIAA is not to stop the existence of Internet radio, but to hold “interactive” internet radio as well as large venture funded internet radio stations accountable for higher rates. In other words, the RIAA and Sound Exchange are claiming to fight for the rights of artists and get artists paid for large amounts of airplay.

Unfortunately there are larger internet radio channels with over 20 million listeners who are actually squeezing out the smaller webcasters by claiming that they (the large stations) are also small. There are two (or more) sides to this now-famous issue and their arguments (and lawsuits) are not ending anytime soon. I highly recommend to all artists that they push for airplay online the same way you might have pushed for airplay on terrestrial radio 10 years ago. I support webcasters and strongly advise all artists to treat webcasters like they are KROQ. Know which stations are playing what genres, know the DJs, and send them music appropriately. get airplay! Then promote those stations on your website and fan lists/ emails. Support their cause to stay alive and share the love. (note: in the music industry radio play and promotion is commonly referred to as “love”) :-)

#### **8. When consulting with a band or an artist, what do you do for them that helps them sell more music online? How do you quantify your results? How can they?**

When I consult with bands, labels and artists, I strategize digital presence. Simply creating a Facebook page or a Twitter account does not sell music. But learning to use these tools can greatly increase exposure and eventually sell music. In addition there are creative ways to utilize each network to target fans and potential fans. Usually none of this can be quantified financially until at least 3 months after the onset of a campaign. However, there are many numbers revealing exposure such as how many followers, fans or streams an artist accrues over a three-month period. With full engagement, I have yet to see an artist flounder when they know how to utilize the tools.

I teach artists and labels how to use these tools and help them devise creative ways to increase exposure with various tricks inside the tools. Whether it’s using a hash tag or starting a funny group on Facebook, these strategies increase visibility and therefore the discoverability of your music online increases. There are ways to flood Google so that you are always at the top of your own search results without ever buying an adword. I call this Music Discovery Optimization. Increasing visibility and discoverability of quality music will only increase an artist’s chance at selling music new and old.

## 9. Can you name five bands who are doing it right online?

Lil' Wayne, Dr. Steel, Ben Kweller, Birdmonster,

## 10. Finally, if I was an artist and I had \$500 of promotional money to spend, what would you advise me to do?

See #4 – if you have \$500 and don't know what to do with it, hire someone who has command of the new music climate online and can execute quickly to increase your visibility online and teach you how to Twitter. If that's not an option or you just don't want to bring anyone into the fold, spend it on an email newsletter service if you are not already emailing your fans with news.

*Ariel Hyatt is the founder of Ariel Publicity & Cyber PR a New York based digital firm that connects artists to blogs, podcasts, Internet radio stations and social media sites. Over the past 14 years her firm has represented over 1,500 musicians of all genres. [www.arielpublicity.com](http://www.arielpublicity.com)*

*Corey Denis is the founder of "Not Shocking Digital Marketing Strategies." Not Shocking provides digital strategy, execution & consultations to labels, distributors, bands, musicians, managers, literary projects, comedians, venues & music software companies. Capitalizing on 12 years of experience in the digital music industry, Corey created a new music marketing company which combines an array of label experience, digital marketing, digital distribution, technical knowledge & passion to create strategies which help clients with exposure & integration while maximizing time spent online. [www.notshocking.com](http://www.notshocking.com)*

## SOCIALIZE YOUR WEBSITE: ESSENTIAL TIPS FOR USING SOCIAL MEDIA ON YOUR WEBSITE

by Chris Bolton, The Hostbaby Blog

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Social media and website promotion are like two peas in a pod. You need both in order to create a successful online presence. You need to send social traffic to your website, and you need to send website traffic to your social media sites. In order to get this motor running, you need to make sure that your website is well equipped with the buttons, widgets, and calls-to-action that will encourage your website visitors to cross into your social sphere. There are 3 main ways to

do this: Follow buttons, share buttons, and social widgets. Let's take a look at each!

## Using Social Follow Buttons on Your Site

You've seen them: beautiful, colorful, Facebook, Twitter, YouTube, and Pinterest Icons of all sizes and colors. People love to paste them all over their websites-and you should too.

### 1. Don't link to Social Networks You're Not Active On

Just because you have an account doesn't mean you should link to it. When a visitor lands on your page, you've probably only got their attention for a few moments before they click away. If all they do is subscribe to a YouTube channel with no videos on it-you may have lost a potential fan.

### 2. Include a Call to Action

Bright shiny buttons are great, but people have become accustomed to them. They've also become accustomed to generic "calls to action" like:

"follow me on Twitter"

"follow me on Facebook"

Why not get more specific?

"Follow me on Twitter and get event updates and music recommendations"

"Follow me on Facebook to get all the tantalizing details about my life on the road"

Give your fans an idea of what the benefits of following you are, and they will be more likely to click.

Using Social "Like" or "Share" Buttons on Your Website social network chart

Following and sharing are distinct activities and they require different buttons and a different perspective. People share content they find interesting. People follow people they find interesting.

So, to inspire content sharing you need awesome blog posts, photos, mp3s, and videos. Make sure that the interesting content on your site is sharable. Many website builders (such as HostBaby's site builder) have share buttons built in. So you may already have them at your disposal, but there are also companies like ShareThis and AddThis that make adding share buttons easy. Just remember: the trick with share buttons is creating content that people want to share and then telling them to share it.

For instance, if you like the article your reading, you might be inclined to share it. But I'm going to go a little farther than just drawing your eyeballs to the like/share buttons at the bottom of this page, I'm going to add some urgency by asking YOU, (my personal friend and devoted reader), to share this article on Facebook and Twitter. Do it right now, before you even finish reading. Let's see how many likes and shares we can get! (Your Facebook friends will undoubtedly be impressed with your good taste as well as the useful information you provided them with).

Yes, I'm going a little overboard, but studies have shown that simply asking people to re-tweet, post, and share is one of the most effective means of getting content passed around. I guess that seems obvious, but it's easy to forget. Re-Tweet!

For further reading on the importance of using like buttons to enhance your search ranking, [click here](#)

### **Using Social Media Widgets and Feeds**

Installing an activity feed on your website such as Twitter's feed widget is basically a way of showcasing how wonderful you are on your favorite social network. This can be a double-edged sword, though. If it looks like you haven't shared anything in months or all your posts are about what you ate for breakfast-it can deter people from following you. I wouldn't recommend installing an activity feed, unless you post at least a few times a week.

There are thousands of website-ready social widgets out there. Try searching for "social media widgets" in Google. You'll find tons.

Both Facebook and Twitter offer a handful their own widgets that can be added to your site with just a little cutting and pasting.

Here are two of my favorites:

#### **Facebook's Commenting Plugin**

Facebook's commenting plugin allows users to add comments directly to your website. This is a great tool to encourage engagement on your site. Just be sure to respond to the comments!

#### **Twitter's Favs Plugin**

The Twitter Favs plugin is a cool alternative to the feed widget. If you're not a big tweeter this is a great way to share interesting content

with your website visitors. This widget will display anything you "favorite" on Twitter. Don't forget to favorite tweets that contain glowing reviews about you!

*Chris Bolton is a writer for The HostBaby Blog - Website Promotion for Independent Artists. Please visit [www.hostbaby.com](http://www.hostbaby.com) for more information on how Hostbaby can help you. This article first appeared in the June 25th, 2012 edition.*

## **THE 3 MISTAKES EVERY MUSICIAN MAKES WHILE USING SOCIAL MEDIA**

by Ariel Hyatt, Ariel Publicity

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While social media is a critical component to any musician's overall marketing strategy, it needs to be done so effectively, or it is likely to become another source of time and frustration, rather than THE source responsible for moving you closer to achieving your goals.

There are quite a few simple pitfalls that musicians often make while using social media that need to be avoided.

By doing so, you will set yourself on a path towards an effective social media presence and a more loyal fan base.

### **Mistake Number 1: Self-Promotion is the Only Form of Communication (Or, Content is NOT Varied!)**

Research and studies say that mixing up the content is KEY! But sadly most artists are too busy SELF PROMOTING and they totally forget this.

Most artists use text but forget the whole wide world of photos, videos and other sites to integrate into their strategy!

A good general rule to use is that only 1 in every 10 posts should be self-promotional, with the rest focusing on mixed media content focused on sharing your interests and passions with your fans and followers.

My social media pyramid will help you stay the course and you will never push out boring content ever again!



## **Mistake Number 2: Lack of Branding**

I see this all of the time, artists do not think about how they look across their most important social channels – your Twitter is red, your website is blue and your Facebook has no elements that tie into your brand.

Matching your branding across platforms is KEY!

Using your logo is a great anchor to set a specific look, feel and color scheme in place.

## **Mistake Number 3: No Newsletter!**

Every single study you will read still points out one fact.

Your newsletter is where you will make most of your money

I know you either don't have a newsletter or you have a newsletter which kind of sort of sometimes goes out once in a while because you are:

1. Too scared to over communicate with your fans and you don't want to overwhelm them, making them want to unsubscribe.
2. You don't feel you have anything interesting to say, for example you have no shows, no studio time booked and absolutely no "music news".
3. You feel you have enough to do with Facebook, Twitter, YouTube, etc. etc. etc. and so you don't even bother with the newsletter.

The only thing you are affecting with this attitude is your bottom line.

What in the heck does the newsletter have to do with social media?

Your social media should feed your newsletter in every way possible. You should never give away music without getting an e-mail address in exchange, you should always have a widget for people to sign up to your newsletter across all your platforms (i.e. your website, your blog, your Facebook fan page, etc.).

*Ariel Hyatt founded Ariel Publicity & Cyber PR 12 years ago and her firm has worked with over 1,000 musicians and bands of all genres. The Ariel Publicity mission states that all artists deserve to be heard and there is a place for artists of every level to receive exposure. Ariel Hyatt has managed to place tens of thousands of artists in countless outlets from national magazines and TV to the most grassroots online fanzines. Her company is now 100% digital and helps artists increase their online exposure. She is also the co-founder of Bandlerletter.com, a company that creates newsletters for musicians. [www.arielpublicity.com](http://www.arielpublicity.com)*

## **HOW FACEBOOK CAN HELP YOU TO MARKET YOUR MUSIC**

by Ariel Hyatt, Ariel Publicity + Wikipedia  
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*Part A of this article is an overview of Facebook edited from Wikipedia. Part B is an article by Ariel Hyatt on how Facebook has become musician-friendly, and how you can use its tools to gain more exposure for your music.*

### **PART A: FACEBOOK (an overview)** (From Wikipedia [en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Facebook](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Facebook))

#### **What is Facebook?**

Facebook is a social networking website launched on February 4, 2004. Users can join networks organized by city, workplace, school and region to connect and interact with other people. People can also add friends and send them messages, and update their personal profile to notify friends about themselves. The website's name refers to the paper facebooks depicting members of a campus community that some US colleges and preparatory schools give to incoming students, faculty, and staff as a way to get to know other people on campus.

#### **Who founded Facebook?**

Mark Zuckerberg founded Facebook while he was a student at Harvard University. Website membership was initially limited to Harvard students, but was expanded to other colleges in the Ivy League. It later expanded further to include any university student, then high school students, and, finally, to anyone aged

13 and over. The website currently has more than 110 million active users worldwide.

### **How does it work?**

Facebook users can choose to join one or more networks, organized by city, workplace, school and region. These networks help users connect with members of the same network. Users can also connect with friends, giving them access to their friends' profiles.

Users can create profiles including photos and lists of personal interests, exchange private or public messages and join groups of friends. The viewing of detailed profile data is restricted to users from the same network or confirmed friends only when the appropriate Privacy settings have been altered. Without altering the Privacy settings a Facebook profile is viewable by anybody on Facebook.

### **Features**

Facebook has a number of features for users to interact with. They include the Wall, a space on every user's profile page that allows friends to post messages for the user to see, Pokes, which allows users to send a virtual "poke" to each other (a notification that tells a user that they have been poked), Photos, where users can upload albums and photos, and Status, which allows users to inform their friends of their whereabouts and actions. A user's Wall is visible to anyone who is able to see that user's profile, which depends on their privacy settings. In July 2007, Facebook began allowing users to post attachments to the Wall, whereas the Wall was previously limited to textual content only.

Over time, Facebook has added several new features to its website. September, 2006, a News Feed was announced, which appears on every user's homepage and highlights information including profile changes, upcoming events, and birthdays related to the user's friends. Users are able to prevent friends from seeing updates about different types of activities, including profile changes, Wall posts, and newly added friends.

### **The Photos feature**

One of the most popular applications on Facebook is the Photos application, where users can upload albums and photos. Facebook allows users to upload an unlimited number of photos, compared with other image hosting services such as Photobucket and Flickr, which apply limits to the number of photos that a user is allowed to upload.

However, users are limited to 60 photos per album. Privacy settings can be set for individual albums, limiting the groups of users that can see an album. For example, the privacy of an album can be set so that only the user's friends can see the album, while the privacy of another album can be set so that all Facebook users can see it. Another feature of the Photos applications is the ability to "tag", or label users in a photo. For instance, if a photo contains a user's friend, then the user can tag the friend in the photo. This sends a notification to the friend that they have been tagged, and provides them a link to see the photo.

## **PART B: FACEBOOK (A MUSICIAN'S GUIDE)** by Ariel Hyatt, Ariel Publicity

### **Who uses Facebook?**

You won't believe how many people who you never saw around MySpace are on Facebook. All of a sudden you will be back in touch with your babysitter from grade school, a ton of old friends, and even the drummer from your first band. And, if you have been resisting because you think Facebook is just for kids in college, you are mistaken. The largest demographic on Facebook is over 25. It's the 4th most-trafficked website in the world and it's the number one photo sharing application. With over 110 million active users it's here to stay so my advice is DIVE in (if you haven't already).

### **How to set up your Facebook page**

Here is a quick rundown for newbies on how to create a page as a band / musician. It also includes my favorite apps for musicians when pimping out your Facebook profile!

1. Create a Band/Artist Profile by going here: [www.new.facebook.com/pages/create.php](http://www.new.facebook.com/pages/create.php)
2. Click on the third button down. It will say Artist, Band or Public Figure.
3. After you make your selection, a pull-down menu will appear. Select Band if you are in a band, or Musician if you play solo or want to create a solo-page (you can create as many as you want so you can create one for you and one for your band).
4. Enter your name and create a name for your page. Then select Create Page. You are now off to the races!

The rest is pretty self-explanatory. It is now time to upload your photo for your main user icon, your bio, band members, photos and details.

5. Click Create Page. Now you are live and ready to add Apps!

What is an App? It's short for application and it is simply a cool additional tool that you can add to your page so that you can display features such as music, photos and videos.

## **ADDING APPS TO YOUR FACEBOOK PAGE**

Facebook has a great page that explains how to help you with Apps.  
[www.new.facebook.com/help.php?page=25](http://www.new.facebook.com/help.php?page=25)

And the whole list of available Apps is here:  
[www.facebook.com/apps](http://www.facebook.com/apps)

Here are my TOP APPS for musicians. Each one links to a web page where you can download the App for your own profile.

### **1. Music by ReverbNation (play your tunes)**

Musicians and bands can post unlimited songs for streaming or download, add bios and band photos, sell your music and have your friends add your music and share with their friends (viral marketing for you!). This App also includes links to your homepage and you can add up to 30 of your songs (full-length) to your Facebook Musician Page. And the best part: great stats track song-play activity. [CLICK HERE](#) to view a sample page

### **2. Vod:Pod (display your videos)**

I am a big advocate in creating small casual videos to share with your fans. Videos are an excellent viral marketing tool. This App is the easiest way to show your videos. This is a good place to display backstage moments, live shows and of course your music videos. [CLICK HERE](#) to view a sample page

### **3. zuPort (show your Flickr photos)**

If you are a Flickr user zuPort automatically imports your public Flickr photostream so you can show off even more photos to your friends. zuPort: Flickr keeps your sets, collections, tags, comments and everything else linked so you only have to update only once. [CLICK HERE](#) to view a sample page

### **4. Twitter (tweet away and have it synched!)**

This app allows you to update your status on Facebook straight from your mobile phone. So you can be on the road but your Facebook page can be updated from your van! Pretty cool eh?

### **5. Facebook mobile (bring Facebook on the go)**

This app allows you to use Facebook on the go. With it, you can quickly to upload photos and notes from your camera phone straight to Facebook. You can also receive and reply to Facebook messages, pokes and Wall posts using text messages, or use your phone's mobile browser.

### **6. iCast by iLike (tell your fans your news)**

Send bulletins to fans with iCast, the best bulletins system on Facebook. You can send multimedia or mobile bulletins, or just plain blogs. Your bulletins will show not only to Facebook fans, but also via iLike across 10 different networks. They are the go to app for communicating your music to your fans.

### **7. iLike this artist (show off to your fans)**

Musicians, you can show off your fans on iLike on your artist page. This will add an "iLike this artist" button on your page, and will show your (larger) fan count across the entire iLike network.

Happy Facebooking and please find me and join our group which features loads of free tips for musicians:

[www.facebook.com/people/Ariel\\_Hyatt/571390595](http://www.facebook.com/people/Ariel_Hyatt/571390595)

*Ariel Hyatt founded Ariel Publicity & Cyber PR 12 years ago and her firm has worked with over 1,000 musicians and bands of all genres. The Ariel Publicity mission states that all artists deserve to be heard and there is a place for artists of every level to receive exposure. Ariel Hyatt has managed to place tens of thousands of artists in countless outlets from national magazines and TV to the most grassroots online fanzines. Her company is now 100% digital and helps artists increase their online exposure. She is also the co-founder of Bandler.com, a company that creates newsletters for musicians.*

# THE DEFINITIVE GUIDE TO FACEBOOK FOR MUSICIANS

by Bryan Kim, Tracksby

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Facebook is the largest marketing channel for most musicians and bands. Surprisingly, it's also the one they know the least about. So in this guide, we're going to breakdown why Facebook is important, how it works, and most importantly, the specific steps you can take to make Facebook work for you and your fans.

Artists, you can't be blamed. Many of you developed your social networking habits on Twitter or YouTube. These platforms are (or were) a lot more straightforward than Facebook. In most cases you post it, forget it, then maybe check the #s later. Not only do these inattentive social media habits fail on Facebook, they can actually hurt you in a very quantitative way

Furthermore, Facebook largely ignored music for most of its existence. By the time Facebook introduced musician/band pages and artists started amassing an audience there, musicians got dropped into an unfamiliar, fully-formed social networking culture - without any sort of learning curve, burdened with the behavioral baggage of outdated social networks.

But Facebook is really not that hard. And if done right, you have a lot to gain. By numbers alone, there are more people that regularly sign into Facebook than Twitter + YouTube combined. So it's really important now more than ever to optimize your Facebook presence.

## EdgeRank: What It Is, Why It Matters

Before we get into actionable tips, we need to familiarize ourselves with the concept of EdgeRank.

EdgeRank is the name of the algorithm that Facebook uses to determine how often your content appears on a user's news feed. This is key. Most of your fans don't explicitly visit your artist page, so the only realistic chance of reaching them on Facebook is to appear on their respective news feeds. This is essentially what counts for "distribution" on Facebook.

EdgeRank' algorithm determines what a user will see on their news feed. It attempts to filter out all the crap that gets shared on Facebook, and tries to predict what any given user will actually want to see. To any given fan, your musician/band page is competing

with thousands of other friends, pages and other objects to grab their news feed real estate.

So how does EdgeRank determine if your Facebook post is news feed worthy? One word: ENGAGEMENT. You need your fans to like, comment and share your Facebook posts. Anytime one of your fans engages with one of your posts, they're more likely to see your following posts. Conversely, if a lot of your fans engage with your status update in the first few moments it's posted, fans who sign into Facebook later are more likely to see it on their news feed. So early engagement on a post can be proportionately more important.

Have you noticed how your most liked posts end up getting the most impressions? Exactly.

There's a lot of ways EdgeRank slices many factors that affect your news feed distribution. If you'd like to dive into the specifics of EdgeRank, google it and you'll get a wealth of detailed articles, like this, this, and this.

No matter how facebook slices it, your actionable instruction remains the same: GET MORE ENGAGEMENT! Get those likes, those comments, those shares. Make it your main goal with Facebook. These engagement points build on top of itself, ensuring better and better distribution on news feeds over time as your engagement improves. It's something like a credit score for your Facebook page, and the algorithm lends you more impressions the better you perform.

Now that we've established the importance of getting good engagement on Facebook, let's dive into art of actually doing it. Here's how o get Facebook's EdgeRank algorithm to work for you.

## Posting to Maximize Engagement: A Checklist

Photos, Photos, Photos: Photos do well on facebook. Always consider a good and relevant image upload to accompany a status update. This one tactic alone can multiply your distribution, so be generous with the photo uploads.

If possible, orientate a photo in square or portrait alignment (more engagement since it doesn't get cropped in people's news feeds). But don't worry too much about it, a good landscape orientated photo is better than no photo at all.

Geo-targeting: Does it make sense to geo target? You can geo-target posts by city, state, provinces or country. Geo-targeted posts usually reach a higher percentage of fans in the targeted location.

Consider geo-targeting for tour dates, radio support, local appearances, etc.

### **Geotargeting**

When In Rome: Are you geo-targeting a post to an international country? Post in their language. Seriously, you will get a ridiculously good engagement % from this. Do it on your very next international tour stop.

Say More With Less: Shorter posts generally do well, so keep it snappy. Exceptions: heartfelt, substantial, personal, emotional, soul-baring or narrative (story-telling) posts.

Avoid being too self-promotional. Promote it gently.

Be funny! Be surprising! Be authentic! Show personality! Dance on the line of what's acceptable or not. If you can elicit a guttural response, you're more like to get engagement. (good example, George Takei: <https://www.facebook.com/georgehtakei>)

Mind the Time: If possible, spread out updates over time. Avoid overlapping peaks between 2 posts. I would wait at least 2 hours between posts, preferably longer. The lifespan of any given status update is a lot longer than a typical tweet, since EdgeRank can surface a post several hours and days after its publish time. By giving any given status update enough time to engage, you avoid cannibalizing your own engagement per successive post.

Use the scheduler to queue up posts if necessary.

### **Queue**

Interact With Fans: Spend a few moments after posting interacting with fans who leave comments on your status update. Like their comments, and respond to them in your own comment box. As your fans see likes and comments coming from your page, they're a lot more likely to leave a comment themselves, hoping that you might see their comment. And comments especially are EdgeRank gold! Plus, it's an easy and quick way to make your fans' day.

Questions can work well. Try ending any given status update with a Q that directly relates to your post. It can help jump start the commenting.

Celebrate: Holidays are the ultimate zeitgeist moments; they are a great opportunity to engage with your fans. Put up holiday-themed posts on the day of, including unofficial ones like Valentine's day, Mother's/Father's day, Halloween, etc.

Say It With a Lyric: Are you a lyrical musician? Spell out your own lyrics in a status update, especially if it's relevant to whatever else you're pushing in the status update (links, videos, pics, etc.). Your lyrics are akin to a secret code language with your fans, especially if they've already emotionally connected with your words in song. Fans like that.

Format lyrics to imply that they are indeed lyrics. And make it easy on the eyes, make it flow like the cadence of the song. The quicker the fan can recognize the lyrics, the quicker they will "like" the post.

In-Line Previews: Are links properly displaying in-line preview? You can adjust the image and description in the in-line preview before you post. Make edits as necessary.

### **Inline-previews**

Pins + Highlights: Pin or Highlight important posts

Pinning moves a post to the top wall. To pin a post, click the pencil icon that shows up when you mouse to the upper right-hand corner. Highlighting expands a post across the full width of the wall. To highlight a post, click the star icon that appears when you move your mouse to the upper right-hand corner of any post.

### **Pins-highlights**

Milestones: Don't forget to use Milestone posts for key moments from your life. Milestones are distributed wider, get more engagement, and are automatically expanded.

Post milestones by clicking into that middle thread on the wall. You can create milestones in your timeline after-the-fact. Tell a story of your career on Facebook: Create milestones for album releases, chart accomplishments, signing to mgmt or labels, first sell-out crowds, etc.



Avoid Sloppy Auto-Posting Apps: Avoid auto-posting features, plug-ins and apps that don't properly inline preview content to links. E.G.: Tumblr, Twitter, etc.

Exception: Instagram. One of the few auto-posting apps that properly auto-posts to FB, and gets good engagement. If you're a frequent Twitterer, do NOT have Facebook auto-post your tweets. The Facebook audience and algorithm have less patience for frequent updates. And if fans start choosing to receive less updates from you (which they can do with one click), your EdgeRank will suffer.

The Psychology of Click-throughs: Oftentimes your main objective in posting a given status update is to get click-throughs on a link. In this situation, you still want to write to maximize engagement because that gets you distribution. But you need to mind the goal of getting click-throughs as well. To that end, write a message that gives your fans a really good, direct reason to click through. Think like a fan, make them want it. Think of how the most trafficked bloggers use headlines to lure their audience to click through: oftentimes they'll tease you into clicking through to the full article. They'll appeal to your sense of surprise, novelty or exclusivity. For example, a lot of them use the tactic of priming your curiosity, holding back key info to compel you to click-through to satisfy your itch (E.G. "Watch the surprising technique this ninja cat uses to survive a 100 story fall").

Check out Yahoo's featured homepage stories. They use the teasing curiosity tactic on almost every story they feature. When sharing interviews with media, pull a context-less quote. One that your fans would want to read through to figure out the context.

#### **Good Musician/Band Facebook Pages:**

Lady Gaga: <https://www.facebook.com/ladygaga>  
Lil Wayne: <https://www.facebook.com/LilWayne>  
Bassnectar: <https://www.facebook.com/Bassnectar>  
Lykke Li: <https://www.facebook.com/lykkeli>  
Portugal. The Man: <https://www.facebook.com/portugalthemau5>  
Deadmau5: <https://www.facebook.com/deadmau5>  
Pitbull: <https://www.facebook.com/pitbull>  
Diplo: <https://www.facebook.com/diplo>  
Atmosphere: <https://www.facebook.com/Atmosphere>  
Jhameel: <https://www.facebook.com/Jhameel>

Radical Something: <https://www.facebook.com/RadicalSomething>

These are but a few random examples. Would love to hear your suggestions in the comments.

#### **Facebook Feedback Fun:**

I've re-hashed the above advice to countless artists and managers over the years, and oftentimes the last question they'll ask me is what sort of engagement #'s they should be aiming for. That's easy: better than what you were doing before!

On a per status update basis, you should pay attention to all the obvious stats: likes, comments, shares and impressions. You want to aim for better stats than what you're used to seeing. Over longer periods of time, check your Insights and pay attention to the "Talking About This" graph. The "Talking About This" stat measures how many of your fans liked, commented or shared your posts - the exact raw materials needed to produce higher EdgeRank and distribution.

Engagement can be unpredictable, so embrace that failure will happen. You might create the perfect post and still bomb. That's okay, it's a great opportunity to think through why it failed, and cognitively earn your way to your own conclusions.

And last but not least, have fun with it! Strategic Facebooking doesn't need to be a sinister machiavellian, manipulative, marketing scheme. Most of your fans actually want to hear from you and interact with you, and by employing the above tips, you are doing your part to reach them halfway. As an added bonus, Facebook gives you real-time feedback on how well your posts are performing. You'll be surprised by the wisdom you gain into human psychology from observing your own FB engagement over time. Personally, I find it intellectually stimulating. Every status update is a creative, collaborative endeavor: put a little bit of yourself out there, and see how your fans respond.

Almost like dropping a new song.

*Bryan Kim (@freshbreakfast) is Dr. of Biz Dev at Tracksby [www.tracksby.com](http://www.tracksby.com) He personally admins 100+ musician Facebook Pages with a combined following of 35M fans and blogs at Trackswell [www.trackswell.com](http://www.trackswell.com)*

## 8 WAYS TO IMPROVE YOUR BAND'S PRESENCE ON FACEBOOK

by Brian Ward, [www.allfacebook.com](http://www.allfacebook.com)

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Here's how to strengthen your band's presence on the leading social network.

### Pages Are Better Than Groups

If you haven't read it already, please check out my slideshow from October called 7 Facebook Applications Every Musician Needs . I recommend you use any of the tools mentioned, especially MyBand or BandPage. Simply using a group or personal profile won't give you a professional look like you can get with a page and one of the aforementioned applications.

### Building Your Fan Base

You'll attract more fans, and keep them coming back, with simple contests and promotions. I suggest offering a new song to people who click your like button. Give free tickets to the fans who respond first to a promotion, which actually fosters repeat, return visits. Collect email addresses from those who like your page and offer to notify fans of tour dates and other events.

### Use Cool Images

Having a face to match the songs on the stereo is the way to go. Make sure the main photo on your page is the most current available, and strive for an image that's original and entertaining. Put things like tour posters and album art on your wall, along with pictures of concerts that you upload from mobile devices.

### Get Outside Help

Consider layering on additional applications or services provided by third-party developers. Damntherradio offers a free plan for bands just starting out, and options that scale up in price and scope of services for bigger-name artists. Use the tools offered by the product allows you collect e-mail address for upcoming newsletters, post updated content in a time efficient matter, and they boast the ability to double your fan base for free.

### Update The Fans

Try to put original updates on your Facebook page rather than just duplicating what you post via Twitter. People will quickly stop paying attention if there is a lack of relevant news about your music. Leave the more regular updates about your meals and life for Tweets. The quality over quantity rule

definitely applies when sharing information with your Facebook fans.

### Create Conversations

Engage your fans by starting a conversation surrounding any upcoming projects and happenings with your band. If you are on tour try alternative approaches to announce your arrival into a particular town; asking for their local favorite spots is just one example. While announcing tour dates is useful, incorporating locality serves an example of a more interactive approach.

Similarly, present interesting insights about upcoming projects. Post exclusive updates only found on your page; personal touches such as this helps improve your social relationships. Upload exclusive videos and photos as well. It is this mixture that brings fans in, and makes them want to return.

It's essential that you add onto the ongoing conversation on your page. Facebook makes the process of responding to questions and comments incredibly easy. Your fans feel connected to you on these social networks; one of the main reasons they post on your pages is because they are hoping for any sort of response.

### Post New Tracks

In a digital age there is an almost overwhelming expectation for new music to be released at a rapid rate. While BandPage already incorporates this feature, check into SoundCloud when looking to quickly release a demo track exclusively to your fans. Upload, share, and offer a new release occasionally. This can be especially helpful for relatively new bands that are still developing their sound. The music should always be the central point of what you are presenting on your Facebook page.

If you want to sell tracks on Facebook, consider Nimbit, which sets up a digital music shop on Facebook. The company offers a free option for the band that is just beginning, and two different sets of additional features are available for a fee; right now the most you'll pay is \$129 per year. All three plans - including the free option - include an analytics tool to help artists track successful records and songs. Fans can make purchases using a credit card or PayPal, without having to set up a special account.

Moontoast Impulse is alternative to Nimbit. (Moontoast does offer a few different options, but we recommend Impulse because it's the quickest.) It allows for listeners to hear, purchase, and share your music with just a

few clicks - and users never have to leave Facebook. The price is based on the amount of music you sell, with Moontoast Impulse getting 15 percent of the revenues on your sales.

### **Spread The Word**

Posting tour dates on Facebook is a must, and if you can add other events, like album signings, that's even better. Use the events feature on Facebook to invite your fans to click "attend" on dates when you're passing through their town, and give them the opportunity to forward invites to friends. These invitations show up as reminders on your fans' home pages.

*AllFacebook.com is a blog that was started by Nick O'Neill. The purpose of the blog is to cover all issues pertaining to Facebook including new applications, general news, and analysis about the future of Facebook. It is an exciting time in the world of social media and social networking and it is our job to cover all of it in relation to Facebook. If there is anything that you think we should feature or that we should change please do not hesitate to get in contact with us.*  
[www.AllFacebook.com](http://www.AllFacebook.com)

## **20 TIPS FOR IMPROVING YOUR FACEBOOK ARTIST PAGE**

by Nic Robertson, Jaden Social Digital Marketing Agency

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Good old Facebook. It seems like everyone knows how to use it these days; from those mischievous 10 year olds brazenly lying about their age in order to sign up, to the new breed of highly intelligent super-pets who've managed to set up their very own profiles, complete with a neatly cropped selfie, and then ever-so-casually added all of their owners' friends.

What a truly incredible age to be living in!

But in all seriousness, there are literally bus-loads of musicians all over the world that just aren't making the most of the supremely powerful marketing tool that is Facebook. Unlike the golden days of yesteryear, simply being on a Social platform is no longer enough. Nowadays you need a clear understanding of WHO your audience is, WHAT your objectives are, and HOW you will achieve them before you start getting trigger happy and slapping down figurative 10-dollar bills on the spontaneous promoting of posts.

What will now follow this little rant is a collection of 20 great tips (in no particular order) to help you slide over into the fast lane and start kicking Facebook's ass with your online promotion strategy.

All set? Then here we go ...

1. Customise your page's URL - Having a customised Facebook page URL will not only give you a more professional and credible image, but also make it easier for fans to find you.

2. Create a strong visual brand using your header and avatar images - Your header and avatar images are probably the most effective attention grabbers you have. Be sure to use only top quality pictures that accurately and consistently represent your band/music.

3. Fill out your bio and set up all your links - Don't assume everyone knows who you are. Be prepared for the constant exposure to new potential fans, and make it easy for them to discover more about you and your music.

4. Post regularly (at least once per day) - Consistently update your page with new & unique content to keep your fans well fed and happily engaged.

5. Use your timeline to tell a story - Maximise the unique power of the Facebook timeline by adding milestones and taking your fans on a memorable musical journey.

6. Set up a fan gate to capture email addresses - Give away a free exclusive track to anyone who Likes your page and signs up. This way, no matter what changes Facebook may implement on its platform in the future, you will always have the ability to knock directly on your fans' electronic doors.

7. Get friends and family to Like and share your posts - Never underestimate the Social Media reach of your own friends and family. Every. Interaction. Counts.

8. Look at your Facebook insights and get to know your audience - You'll be surprised at how much you can learn! The better you understand your audience, the easier it will be for you to tailor your approach and strategy.

9. Facebook is visual, so include plenty of pictures - Picture content attracts far higher levels of engagement than posts with just text, so be sure to keep those live shots, album artwork and tour posters coming!

10. Quotes + pictures make a great team - Post up your favourite lyrics along with relevant pictures to tell your fans a powerful story and bring them deeper into your world.

11. Share posts from other people and pages - This is a great way to fill in the gaps when you're running low on content ideas. It can also help you to get onto the radars of influencers and their audiences.

12. Start using the Promoted Post feature - But use it tastefully of course. Only 5-10% of your fans will see your posts on average. Promoting some of your posts will help to highlight key content and broaden your reach.

13. Make the first paragraph of your bio short and punchy - This will do the best possible job of selling you to your audience, while also fitting neatly inside the preview box on your main page.

14. Install a good music player app - Make it super easy for new visitors to hear your music and you will maximise your chance of converting them into fans (be sure to place it in your top 4 apps too). ReverbNation has a fantastic Facebook player that's definitely worth a squiz!

15. Take the time to Like and reply to comments on your posts - Make your fans feel loved & validated and they'll become loyal ambassadors for you and your music.

16. Highlight and pin important posts on your page - Strap up your most important updates with a lifejacket to stop them from drowning in a sea of other content.

17. Post trackable links using a service such as Bitly - This will allow you to make cool custom URLs while also measuring your results and evaluating your Social strategy.

18. Build a simple content calendar - Include at least 5 different types of content, for example 'happening-right-now' updates, music, videos, pictures, promo for your other channels, quotes, and links to other great content you find online.

19. Learn (and steal) from other successful pages - Always be on the lookout for ways to freshen up your page by taking inspiration from those who do it best!

20. Set up great apps on your page - There are many music-oriented apps available for your Facebook page. Examples include BandsinTown, Big Woolly, Soundcloud, Spotify, and many more.

*Nic Robertson is the Managing Director of the Sydney, Australia based company Jaden Social - a Digital Marketing Agency. Corporate management type by day, music producer by night, Nic is most well known for perpetually refusing to shave, and for entertaining dangerous amounts of creativity. Working closely with our clients Nic and his team develop a "cut-through" digital strategy to discover and engage fans, build the fanbase and make sure that your online presence fits your brand. Put simply, Jaden Social maximizes the artist's online visibility, ensuring that their product makes it in front of the people who matter.*  
[www.jadensocial.com](http://www.jadensocial.com)

## MUSICIANS TWITTER ROADMAP

by Ariel Hyatt, CyberPR & Laura Fitton, Pistachio Consulting

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I recently interviewed my friend Laura Fitton AKA Pistachio (that's her twitter handle) and I asked her to walk with me through creating a musicians roadmap for Twitter. It answers the question: If you wanted to create a community to promote yourself as a musician on Twitter and you didn't really have a lot of technological "social networking know how" How do you do it?

The full interview can be found on my blog here:  
<http://www.arielpublicity.com/blog> and I encourage all of you to please go to my blog and leave your feedback.

### Step One - Think about your brand first

Set up an account and use your brand name, your band, whatever name it is that you want people to be able to find using Google. That's very important. Don't just pick a name you like. Whatever name you choose on Twitter it becomes very Googleable.

So the thing you want fans and prospective fans to find you as. If you're just starting out, you might use a generic like singer/songwriter or something. But choose something you're comfortable with, that you want to do well in search results and that's the name you want to get out there.

### Step Two - Sign up

Go to: <http://twitter.com> to sign up.

**First:** You may want to watch the video that gives an easy-to understand overview of Twitter - It's right on the homepage - just click the button that says Watch a video!

**Second:** Twitter will take you through a few sign up steps and you will enter your username and your password and your email

**Third:** Twitter will help you search your email address book to see if anyone you know is already on it. You may be surprised at just how many people you know are already using it. You will also have the option of sending email invites to your friends.

**TIP:** Take some time and set up your profile properly. Think about it this way: You probably had a website made for your music and that either involved spending a bunch of money or hitting up a friend for a favor. You put a lot of thought into it and you really worked it out. Well, here's a chance to have a free website. It's not going to be as souped up as your own website, but put a little bit of time. You can set up a static electronic image as your background, just single image, maybe an album cover, maybe a candid of you on the road. Put up a good profile picture. That's the little, tiny square picture that goes next to all your messages. If you're in Twitter, you'll see what I mean. Write a couple things about yourself. Make sure there's a link to your web page. Just get it all nicely set up so it looks cool when you get there.

### **Step Three - Link your mobile phone**

You should enter your cell phone number (it is up to you if you want to accept tweets via texts) this depends on your text messaging plan and your tolerance to loads of texts hitting your mobile constantly. You will have the option of receiving tweets to your phone from individuals so you can have only a few select people tweet straight to your phone.

**TIP:** To text from your phone send messages to: 40404 and they will immediately go to your Twitter feed

**TIP:** To message friends that follow you from your cell phone you can type d (for direct) then their username.

### **Step Four- Search keywords**

Next go to the search page:  
<http://search.twitter.com>

On this page, start searching key words, words that are important to you, topics that you like to write about, words about the music you play, whether it be the genre or the instrument. And if you want to really bond with other musicians just to start, you can even search the brand names of your band equipment. Like your amplifiers are from so-and-so, you search that key word, you're going to find a bunch of other people who've made remarks about that word. That gives you a jumping off point.

You can click in each of their profiles. Remember how I said reading one to four pages of someone's Tweets gives you a surprising accurate sense of their personality? Just find random strangers that way and start following them and see if you have anything in common. If you don't, you just stop following. That's the way to find people with common interests.

### **Step Five - Link Twitter to update status at Facebook**

Next go here:

<http://www.facebook.com/apps/application.php?id=2231777543&b&ref=pd>

and you can link your Twitter page directly to your Facebook and you will be able to update your status on Facebook by using twitter from your phone

### **Step Six - Follow at least 100 people**

Twitter does not work in a vacuum (OK - unless you are Dave Matthews!) But even Dave is directly responding to people and really connecting with his fans - It's amazing to see.

### **Step Seven - Tweet 3x a day**

At first it seems really weird - just keep answering the question "What are you doing?" It will feel strange to just broadcast what you are doing at first but soon it will all make sense!

**TIP:** Don't Over Hype Yourself If you set up a Twitter account and every day, every Tweet just says, buy my album, buy my album, you're not going to get any audience there.

### **Step Eight - @ People you like!**

To comment back at things you would like to react to or to connect directly with someone just tweet: @ and then their username. So if you want to say something directly to Derek Sivers type @Sivers - this will turn up in the



@ Replies in Derek's Twitter dashboard and he will see your comment.

TIP: This is a public message that everyone on Twitter will see.

### **Step Nine - Connect directly**

To send someone a direct and private message - go to your dashboard homepage at Twitter and click on the right where it says "Direct Messages" and then choose the person you want to send a message to from the pull-down menu at the top of the page

TIP: This is a private message that only that user will see.

*Ariel Hyatt founded Ariel Publicity & Cyber PR 12 years ago and her firm has worked with over 1,000 musicians and bands of all genres. The Ariel Publicity mission states that all artists deserve to be heard and there is a place for artists of every level to receive exposure. Ariel Hyatt has managed to place tens of thousands of artists in countless outlets from national magazines and TV to the most grassroots online fanzines. Her company is now 100% digital and helps artists increase their online exposure. She is also the co-founder of Bandletter.com, a company that creates newsletters for musicians.*

*Laura Fitton works for Pistachio Consulting, a company that provides a full range of professional services: briefings, speaking, seminars, research, analysis, strategy, program development, implementation, training, coaching, advising, assessments, enhancement of existing efforts, implementation, innovation and promotion. Visit [www.pistachioconsulting.com](http://www.pistachioconsulting.com) for details on how they can help you.*

## **REVERBNATION PROFILE**

by Heather McDonald, About.com Guide

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### **What is ReverbNation?**

For musicians, the new promotion opportunities created by the internet soon created a new set of problems - how to manage all of those online profiles. ReverbNation was designed to solve that problem. With a ReverbNation page, you can update all of your profiles with new information from one central location and track stats from all of your sites.

Reverb Nation also gives you multiple ways to sell your music, from linking to your offsite shop on your Reverb Nation profile with a free membership to having your music on iTunes and Amazon in exchange for a nominal membership fee.

### **What Can I Do On ReverbNation?**

The promotional tools on ReverbNation are extensive, and you can pick and choose the features that work best for you. Once you set up your ReverbNation page, on which you can include unlimited music, video and photos, some of the most popular tools to use include:

- \* Exclusive content creation - get fans to sign up for exclusive songs, etc, so you get to collect email addresses for promotion.

- \* Viral marketing applications - including Facebook and Bebo

- \* Street teams - get fans to promote for you. You can set up your own street team or Reverb Nation can do it for you.

- \* Web buzz - track mentions of your music online.

### **Stats Tracking**

One of the handiest features on Reverb Nation is stats tracking. You can find out how traffic to your profile compares to other ReverbNation artists, get details about what fans are doing when they visit your profile, find out where your traffic is coming from and find out how widgets and banners you put on your non-ReverbNation profiles are doing. This kind of information can be invaluable when it comes to perfecting your online promotion plans.

### **Reverb Nation Fair Share**

The Fair Share program on ReverbNation lets you get a piece of their advertising revenue. Monthly, 50% of their ad generated earnings goes into a pot and is split among the people who have profiles on their site. Your share is determined by how much traffic your profile is bringing to the site compared to the other sites on the network. Payment is made via PayPal, though you must have at least \$20 in your account before payment is sent.

### **Premium Features**

If you want to get even more out of your ReverbNation profile, sign up for some of their premium features. Premium features include digital distribution on iTunes, Amazon, eMusic and Napster, press kits and extra storage. Prices vary, you can find out more here.

## Who Uses ReverbNation?

Labels, musicians, managers and venues use ReverbNation professionally. Fans also create ReverbNation profiles - they can then interact with each other and their favorite musicians as well as help to spread the word about their new music discoveries.

*Heather McDonald has worked in nearly all aspects of the music industry, from independent record labels to acting as manager and buyer of a record store to tour booking and show promotion.*  
<http://musicians.about.com/bio/Heather-McDonald-24203.htm>

## INSTAGRAM FOR BANDS: 10 QUICK TIPS TO PROMOTING YOUR MUSIC WITH HIP IMAGES

by Chris Robley, CD BABY DIY Blog  
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Instagram is one of the best social tools for bands looking to promote their music. Plus, it's free and easy to use! If you're not already using Instagram on your iPhone or Droid, you can download it for free from the Apple or GooglePlay app stores.

(And hopefully they'll amend their terms of service after this week's uproar over who can exploit the digital rights to the photos you take using Instagram!)

Got Instagram on your smartphone yet? OK. Now that we're all the same page ...

Instagram for bands ain't rocket science; simply take a picture on your phone, apply one of those hip filters so the photo will look like it's straight outta the 70's, add a caption, and post it to all your social media profiles with a single click.

But there are a few things to keep in mind if you want to get maximum results from your band's activity on Instagram.

10 ways to make the most of your band presence on Instagram

### 1. Sync Instagram to ALL your social profiles

This includes your band's Facebook Page, not just your personal Facebook profile! For more info, check out Instagram's instructions <https://help.instagram.com/169948159813228>

Before posting a picture, make sure you've selected the appropriate default Facebook page/profile for that particular image.

Otherwise, you might find you've accidentally shared a snapshot of your family reunion with your music fans.

### 2. Share images across all your social networks

Every fan will have their own preferences for engaging with your content. Some like Twitter. Some like Facebook. Some check your blog. Others wait for your weekly email newsletter. So unless you're running some specific kind of campaign on one particular social platform (for instance, "Come into the recording studio with us on Twitter!" or something like that), then it's wise to share your Instagram images everywhere - your Facebook page, your Twitter feed, Tumblr, etc.

Note: Facebook now owns Instagram, so to kill some of the fun, they've decided to disable Instagram images from populating that nice little photo display on your Twitter profile. However, you can still share links and captions to Instagram images in your Twitter feed.

### 3. Diversify your portfolio

Your photo portfolio, that is. Fans want to see it all: live shots, soundchecks, broken guitars, in the van, late-night writing sessions, recording, putting up posters, pictures of new merch, shooting a video, eating lobster at a band meeting, the Santa Monica sunset, etc.

### 4. Post a photo series

It's fun to post a whole series of related photos over the course of a month or two, and it'll keep your fans coming back for more. Maybe your drummer writes a different message on his drum sticks each night and snaps a quick shot. Maybe you're on the hunt for the perfect burrito, and you take a shot of a plate of Mexican food in each new city. Whatever sounds fun.

### 5. Use hashtags

Tag lots of your images with hashtags. This groups your photo together with related photos by other Instagram users (or with other photos you've taken with the same hashtag) under a single category. Instagram users can then find your photos based on their own interests. For instance, I was in a bar a few weeks ago and snapped this shot of the bar's wall - painted like Eddie Van Halen's guitar. So I tagged the image with #VanHalen.

## 6. Elevate the everyday

Not every moment of your musical life is going to be filled with high drama. There are plenty of little magical moments too. The mundane can be interesting if you frame it right. So share the minutia, the ennui, the drudgery. I guarantee it'll seem exciting to your fans who are sitting all day in a cubicle.

## 7. Put your Instagram photos on your blog or website

You can use Instagram's API or a third-party service to put your Instagram photo gallery on your own site. Check out these sites for further details:

\* View your photos on the web  
<https://help.instagram.com/427910070604293>

\* Adding an Instagram feed to a website  
<http://notes.madebyfinn.com/post/21266413592/adding-an-instagram-feed-to-a-website>

\* Getting started with the Instagram API  
<https://help.instagram.com/454502981253053>

## 8. Captions can make or break the image

A little context can go a long way - and can turn a bad picture into something hilarious, moving, or otherwise share-worthy. Try to be clear and brief. For example, "Getting ready for our show in Toronto" or "Steve just got the call; his girlfriend is pregnant!" (On second thought, you might not want to put that one on Instagram right away).

## 9. Don't overthink it

Instagram is supposed to be fun. Snap a picture, add a filter, and post it! Don't spend 20 minutes setting up the perfect shot or fretting over the filter options. The more fun you have, the more it'll show in your images.

## 10. Ask your fans to help

Get your fans to take Instagram pictures too. But don't just ask them to take pictures of YOU. Make sure you're including them. Have them take pictures of themselves at your concerts, holding your CD, or getting a drink with you after the show. Oh, and make sure to ask them to tag your band!

*The CD Baby DIY Musician Blog and Podcast give independent artists direct access to the advice of industry experts and top sellers. Updated weekly, and covering topics as diverse as marketing, songwriting, social networking, recording, copyright, viral*

*videos, and booking, you'll want to check back often for another dose of do-it-yourself inspiration. <http://diymusician.cdbaby.com>*

## WHAT PINTEREST'S SKYROCKETING SOCIAL NETWORK MEANS FOR ARTIST MARKETING

by Glenn Peoples, [billboard.biz](http://billboard.biz)

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Pinterest could be the next big social media tool for artists, labels and music brands-especially if they're into wedding dresses.

The concept is simple: Pinterest is a virtual pinboard where people share items and images. People frequently post pictures of places they would like to visit-beach scenes and exotic locales are common-and new products they would like to buy. It is used in practical ways when people make note of books they want to read or interior designs they want to consider for their next home makeover.

Followers can comment below each pinned item and re-pin an item onto their page.

Pinterest was conceived in late 2009 by Cold Brew Labs. A working site was running by March 2010, and the official launch came last May. According to comScore, the site rocketed from 1 million unique U.S. visitors in July 2011 to 4.8 million in November 2011 and 11.7 million in January-the fastest independent site to reach 10 million unique visitors in the United States.

Based in Palo Alto, Calif., Pinterest has received funding from a host of investors including noted angel investor Ron Conway, Eventbrite co-founder/CEO Kevin Hartz and Bebo co-founder Michael Burch. A round of \$27 million led by Andreessen Horowitz was raised in October, according to media reports.

Unlike many new Internet services, Pinterest's early adopters tend to represent Middle America. More than half of all users are between the ages of 25 and 44, and 68% earn between \$25,000 and \$74,999, according to Google's Doubleclick Ad Planner. Three in five possess some degree of college education, while 25% have a bachelor's degree or higher. The site over-indexes in places like Arkansas, Alabama, Iowa and Utah rather than the technology hotspots of San Francisco, New York and Boston.

Also, females make up 80% of Pinterest's users, perhaps unsurprising for a site that suggests a digital form of scrapbooking. Each user profile has "boards" where specific items

are pinned. Popular pictures, on boards with names like "Things I Love" or "Wedding Stuff," include desserts, clothes and accessories, home décor and pink items in general. For an early-stage social media site, Pinterest has amazingly little technology and gadgets.

Lady Antebellum and Keith Urban, both managed by Borman Entertainment, are two of the earliest acts to use Pinterest. Borman head of digital business development Cameo Carlson likes Pinterest because it lets an artist show affinity in ways such communication tools as Twitter cannot: "It's a way to take a more intimate look at the bands without being invasive."

Pinterest is indeed soft marketing. Lady Antebellum's page includes a board called "Lyrical Pins" with pictures of the group's lyrics. Each of the three band members also has a board for pinning favorite items. That has allowed Dave Haywood to share his affection for Cinnamon Toast Crunch, Almond Breeze Milk and Gibson Guitars simply by posting images of the products.

Other artists are hard to find. Girlilla Marketing senior account director Ashley Mixson started using Pinterest six months ago after learning about it from a friend. It's a fashion-centric network, she says, where food and events are common topics. "I see a lot of women planning out their weddings on there, whether they're engaged or not."

Girlilla clients aren't yet on Pinterest, although Mixson says she sees potential for artists to share creative ideas and specific interests with their fans. "If a client was really into vinyl," she says, "I could see them posting their favorite vinyl like they would share music on Spotify."

Artists may soon have reason to flock to the site. Just as Tumblr turned blogging into a more visual expression, Pinterest allows self-expression through images-sort of like Twitter with pictures. And with more than 10 million U.S. users and growing, many artists' fans are already there. Carlson says she has recently seen fan activity growing tenfold per month.

As with any new service, artists and managers should think about the return they will get for the time spent learning a new social media site and maintaining a presence, warns Gray Blue, director of music industry relations at fan management and marketing platform FanBridge. He notes that Facebook still dominates social media-163.5 million users in the United States in January, according to

comScore-but some artists should be able to use Pinterest to their advantage. "Every fan base is different," he says. "Every artist is different."

Carlson admits Pinterest won't be a good fit for everyone. "The front page is completely full of wedding dresses and probably always will be," he says. "But at least for us, Lady A and Keith fit nicely in that wedding dress demo."

*Glenn Peoples is a writer for Billboard Magazine Online [www.billboard.biz](http://www.billboard.biz)*

## TOP PINTEREST TOOLS & TIPS FOR MUSIC MARKETING

by Clyde Smith, Hypebot

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Since my early call that music marketers should be paying attention to Pinterest, it's become an increasing focus for a variety of folks in the music industry. Now one of the most popular social networks after only Twitter and Facebook, Pinterest seems likely to establish itself as a must-have for music marketers far beyond my expectations for Google+.

Pinterest is still in invite mode but that hasn't stopped it from becoming the third most popular social network in the United States according to Experian's 2012 Digital Marketer report.

Pinterest provides some basic tips in their Getting Started section including how to add Pinterest to your Facebook Timeline. They also offer a small selection of Goodies including a free iOS app and both a Follow and a Pin It button for your blog or website. Now third parties are emerging to fill in some of the gaps.

## TOP PINTEREST TOOLS FROM THIRD PARTIES

### Pinning & Curation

**Pin A Quote** is getting a lot of attention as a handy way to highlight text and pin it to your Pinterest board. There's also an inexpensive Pro version with customization options.

**Url2pin.it** offers you the ability to take a screenshot of your site and pin it.

**Snapito!** also offers the ability to create and pin a screenshot and recently introduced the multipurpose Pinstamatic. This new Pinterest tool allows you to create a variety of pinnable

pieces of content including sticky notes, quotes, Twitter profile links, calendar items and Google Map locations.

**SpinPicks** is a combination curation and pinning tool. You may have noticed a growing number of tools for helping folks find stuff to post on social media. They're called curation tools and SpinPicks seems to be the first one to feature pinning.

### **Analytics and Influence**

**PinReach** provides analytics and trending data for Pinterest. It also provides a Reach score for those who want a simple way to measure their influence. You can find out more on the PinReach blog.

**Pinpuff** is another tool for measuring your "Pinfluence" with the added bonus of PinPerks.

**Pinerly** is a Pinterest dashboard one uses for posting to Pinterest in order to track clicks, likes and repins. It's currently in invite-only mode but you can sign up on the homepage and get an introduction to the service via The Next Web or Mashable.

You can track traffic to your site from Pinterest in Google Analytics. You can also find out what people have pinned on their boards from your blog or website using this simple trick.

### **Taking Pins Offsite**

**Mapinterest** is a new site designed to allow you to pin bits of web media from Pinterest, YouTube and Instagram onto a map at particular locations. Document your next tour!

### **Extensions & Plugins**

For some additional Pinterest tools including various extensions and plugins for browsers and Wordpress see 19 Tools for Pinterest Pros.

### **Future Tools**

You can follow the Pinterest Tools board from Pinterest for Business to find more tools in the future.  
[pinterest.com/pinterestbiz/pinterest-tools](http://pinterest.com/pinterestbiz/pinterest-tools)

*Hypebot features writer Clyde Smith maintains his business writing hub at Flux Research and blogs about dance at All World Dance. [www.hypebot.com](http://www.hypebot.com)*

## **ONE MAN'S ODE TO THE BEAUTY OF BANDCAMP**

by Mark Dowdell, Bandcamp's Best

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The album format has it tough these days. With all the FB posting, tweeting, and social networking going on, how can any musician hope to grab attention with a product that takes longer than three minutes to experience?

Many have been quick to declare the "inevitable" demise of the format, along with the return of the single. But what about those of us who are still willing to invest a bit more of our time in listening to music? Are we to be left in the cold, dank recesses of history as a mere footnote?

### **Freedom**

Perhaps I'm old fashioned. I'm one of those music nerds who'd walk through the aisles of the record store, looking for nothing in particular. Picking out a diamond in the rough was my specialty... though looking back, I wasn't very efficient at it. I bought hundreds of crappy CDs with the little disposable income I had... But I figured, how could I discover anything I loved without finding out what I hated?

All of a sudden, digital music was here. It was going to save everyone and their mother. No more middlemen. No more Top 40 garbage. We could finally listen to whatever we wanted at any moment!

What we got was DRM, 30-second snippets, 128 kbps standard (!!!) MP3s, and everyone (experts and non-experts) yelling at each other about what direction to take the "industry". So much for the digital utopia.

Luckily, there are some people who know what's up. The folks over at Bandcamp.com have been in business for a few years providing exactly what most of us want (listeners and independent musicians alike) — freedom. Not freedom in the crazy-hippie, "all-music-should-be-free" sense. Freedom as in FREEDOM.

I'm sure you've heard of the site by now, but after using a few of the more popular methods of Internet music consumption, I'm convinced that it's one of the most useful independent music services ever created.

### **Listener's Side**

On one end, there's the musician looking to get his new album into your ears — they can



offer it free to stream, with paid downloads. On the other end, you're craving some great new tunes by some fresh new band, but apprehensive about putting down the money, then finding out that the every song outside of that catchy single is crap. You find out that you can test out the album as much as you want before making a purchase. I see it as just like going to the record store, but you don't have to spend hundreds of dollars trying to find that rare beauty.

Bandcamp provides the connection both parties are looking for with the least amount of hoop jumping of any service I've experienced. Without all of the frills attached to so many other sites (listener accounts, incessant social network integration, tweeting for a track, etc.), there is absolutely nothing in the way of you and the music. From personal experience, I've found that above all else, a music fan should be able to listen (in full) to music before making a purchase, or even providing an email address.

The Bandcamp masterminds recognize this and continue to provide a no-nonsense approach to listening, while simultaneously giving an unheard of amount of power to the musicians trying to make money off of their passion.

### **Musician's Side**

On the independent musician's end of things, the site can be fully integrated with an existing website. The site provides a completely dependable store complete with some basic stats for selling albums, digital or physical. No bloated applications, no annoying up-sells. They take a 15% cut of sales (as of this writing), which is more than worth the unbelievable service that they provide.

Of course, without dedicated social networking features, marketing your music is completely up to you. Beyond genres and tags, there's not much to differentiate your music from the others. But that, I've found, is one of the benefits of the service that Bandcamp provides. With so much clutter everywhere else on the net, with so many social networks vying for your info; Bandcamp stands above them all with a simple, no-nonsense, high quality interface for enjoying and selling music.

Side Note: For all those super nerds out there (and those of us who still purchase music), they've just implemented a feature to download albums in multiple formats. So, for example, you'd like to get a set of lossless

FLACs, but also the 320-kbps MP3s for compatibility's sake. You can now rest easy knowing that both are available to download when you purchase an album. No more conversions, and no more getting annoyed by having to tag all the tracks.

### **The Beauty of Bandcamp**

Like I was hinting at above, the beauty of the site is in its reluctance to add bloat. The less hoops to jump through, the less links to click on, and the less passwords to remember, all makes it immeasurably easier to get you to the music. It also provides for one of the most customizable ways to offer independent music for sale. Its denial of the death of the album format makes it a premiere destination for anyone with more than an ounce of attention for music.

*Mark Dowdell runs the music filtration site Bandcamp's Best, which provides concise reviews of the best albums hosted on Bandcamp, and other music recommendations from SoundCloud. Mark is also an independent electronic musician. You can find him on Facebook & Twitter. This post was originally posted at TightMixBlog on May 11, 2011. [www.bandcampsbest.com](http://www.bandcampsbest.com)*

## **20 STEPS TO CREATING A SUCCESSFUL BLOG FOR YOUR BAND**

by Lance Trebesch, [TicketPrinting.com](http://TicketPrinting.com)

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Blogs prove to be a tricky field to conquer, especially when it comes to gaining an initial reader-base. However, once you get that reader base, great potential for increasing your online reputation is created. Successful blogs keep their status by following these 20 rules from the start and throughout their blog's lifetime.

### **1. Focus the topic**

Thousands of different blogs exist on the web. Only the well-established ones can post general news and see success. Instead, focus your blog around a niche. The more narrow the subject, the more likely you will get a steady reader base.

### **2. Search similar blogs and subscribe**

Because there are so many blogs on the internet, chances are somebody somewhere will also be talking about your subject. Find these sites and subscribe to them so you get instant updates. The best action to take is to

read up on these blogs and know what they talk about regularly.

### **3. Create business relationships**

By helping out someone else and their blog in some way, they will in return help you and your blog out. One good example is devising a list of online radio stations you can submit your music to and give them the list so they can use it for their benefit as well. By becoming business friends, you can promote each other by talking about one another's web page, music, blog etc.

### **4. Make quality content**

Just writing a blog is not enough. You have to make sure what you are writing is good content. No one will comment or read your blog if the content seems worthless and poorly written. Also, write grammatically. Misspellings are one of the most painful things to witness in blogs.

### **5. Work on the title**

The title is a necessity. The first thing people look at and what makes them read your blog is the title. Titles that hint of content with lists and bullets also draw people in due to the pleasing layout and more white space of lists. If the title perks their interest, they will click on your blog to continue reading. Take the time to think about an interesting title and log which titles draw more readers.

### **6. Submit to directories**

After creating a good content-and-keyword-rich blog, submit it to different directories. Top Blog Area and BlogFlux are two good sites to submit blogs to according to category of blog. Another option is to write just one blog for an established blogging site in the rock music industry and tell them why they should feature your blog on their site.

If they choose to put the blog on their site, you will see greatly increased traffic.

### **7. Get a friend to submit your blog to Digg, StumbleUpon, Technorati, Netscape, and Reddit**

These search sites generate a ton of traffic to your site if viewed frequently (or "digged," "thumbs up" "favored," etc). However, people view down on you if you constantly submit your own content to these sites, so instead, make a buddy submit your blogs, videos, or podcasts to these sites one or two times a week. Eventually, your good content will make it to the homepage of these content-search sites, generating an unimaginable amount of traffic to your blog.

### **8. Ping every site**

Some submission sites allow you to 'ping' them, which means they get an automatic update when you post a new blog. This is good so they always have your latest posts in their records. These sites also allow you to put in key tag terms. By inputting a tag term, your blog will pop up if someone searches for the term you used. For instance, if you are writing about electric guitar comparisons (tag terms) and the searcher inserts "compare guitars," your blog will show as a result. You must utilize pings and tags to increase your blog popularity.

### **9. Write regularly and stand out**

The only way to gain a steady reader base is if you write a blog regularly. The best blogs update their content daily or sometimes several times a day. As an upcoming artist, though, weekly will suffice if you write on a consistent day around the same time every week. In addition, you need to stand out from other bloggers. Write properly, but use your personality. Personality keeps the blog interesting and keeps readers coming back. In addition, the readers like to be treated as humans, so drop the business lingo. Blogs are for entertainment, so engage your audience. Write for them.

### **10. Host your blog on your website domain**

Using a different host for your blog not only confuses your readers, but also reduces the amount of quality traffic to your site. The only smart way to host a blog is through your own website. If readers like what they read, or you mention something about your music in the blog, they can easily navigate to your website to find out more information. Creating a blog serves the purpose of promoting your music online, which you can only do if you reader can easily access your website from your blog.

### **11. Ask people to subscribe**

RSS feeds allow users to subscribe to your blog and receive an update when you add new blogs. This makes it convenient for readers so they do not need to check for blog updates. An alternative is to send the updated blog through email, so having both an email subscription and a RSS feed is necessary. Also, make the sign-up process simple and prominent. Display the RSS button everywhere and occasionally mention it in your posts to sign-up. The simpler the process to sign-up, the more chance the reader will go through with the process.

### **12. Offer a bribe to sign-up**

Take an example for Marketing Pilgrim, by offering a \$600 cash giveaway by signing-up

for a RSS feed. The code to register for the money is in an RSS-only message. Receiving \$600 free is pretty convincing to sign-up. Other options to get people to sign up are free e-books related to your topic ("How to Get a Record Deal"), or send a personalized autographed picture of you or the band to those who sign-up.

### **13. Comment on forums. Comment on blogs. Comment on chats. And comment by providing a link back your blog**

By injecting your opinion and showing your personality through these comments, people will notice you and want to find out more. Make sure the comments are meaningful and not just some form of spam to create a link back to you. People appreciate when an expert adds their knowledge, so write truthful comments that will help the audience. Comments are the biggest promotion of your blog in the beginning months of the blog.

### **14. Leave blogs open for discussion**

If compiling a list, ask for comments to add their suggestions for the list. The 5 Rules of Social Media Optimization (SMO) blog by Influential Marketing Blog became instantly popular by people linking to it, posting comments and recommending the blog. After writing a general blog that does not include a list, ask a question at the end to encourage comments and blog discussion. The more, interesting discussion, the more people will link to your blog, promoting it.

### **15. Respond to comments**

Read your comments daily and respond when someone asks a question to you through the comments.

Once you start getting a steady reader base that begins posting comments, do not discourage them by never responding back. Respond rapidly to make your reader happy.

### **16. Start a podcast**

A podcast is a great way to promote both your blog and your music. Podcasts are an audio blog, but you should not update it as often as your blogs (unless you just want to run an audio blog exclusively). On the podcast, talk about interesting subjects related to your blog and mention your music often. Play a fraction of your music just prior to and just after your podcast, promoting both your music and your blog.

### **17. Invite guest bloggers. Be a guest blogger**

Your blog gains interest if you occasionally - monthly, quarterly - invite guest bloggers to

write. Your business pals become a good place to start when thinking about guest bloggers. The guests then feel flattered by your interest in them and in return promote your blog or music. On the other hand, ask your business friends to guest blog for them, which immensely promotes your music or blog through their site. Whenever you get an opportunity to guest blog, take it.

### **18. Add videos, pictures, MP3s etc.**

Just having words on every blog gets boring. Perk reader's interest by putting a funny YouTube video in your blog, adding a unique MP3 or taking a snapshot of the website you mention in the blog. Any item out of the norm to create a change will boost your blog's appeal. Every once in awhile, make your blog a video-blog through YouTube where you narrate the blog (and act as well). You can also create a music video for you or the band and advertise it through your blog.

### **19. Use tracking software and analyze**

Find out how many people are visiting your blogs and which ones generate the most traffic. You should re-create titles and content that receives many views. The tracking software can also tell you how people are hearing about your blog, through Digg, Google, etc.

It can give you a great insight on your viewers and many other marketing hints if you are creative.

### **20. Build a brand**

You want people to recognize your blog as an object, not just another blog. Make your blog worthwhile to the reader. Promote the blog with any sources you have. Tell your friends, family and strangers about it. On your website, promote your blog and on your blog promote your website. Do the same with social networking sites, YouTube videos, podcasts, live performances, etc. By marketing in a bunch of different places, you spread your name and have more sources to promote your blog and music.

Your blog will only see success if you follow all these steps and promote it as often as possible. Blogging takes a lot of dedication but pays off in the end with increased music sales. Never stop blogging and remember, you are writing for your audience.

*Lance Trebesch, CEO of TicketPrinting.com, has a successful 18 year track record of technology and early-stage experience. TicketPrinting.com is the leader in affordable online ticket printing for small-to-medium size organizations, companies, venues, non-profits, schools, associations, and clubs. Over*

*the past 10 years, TicketPrinting.com has designed and printed millions of tickets for thousands of events, fundraisers, performances, concerts, plays, sporting events, raffles, parties and more. TicketPrinting.com has hundreds of ticket templates - just put in your event or raffle information and we print and ship in 24 hour. Or, our Design-Your-Own ticket online tool enables you to customize your ticket.*

## crowdfunding

### THE SECRET TO SUCCESSFUL CROWDFUNDING

by Carlos Castillo, Schwilly Family Musicians

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I know how exciting it is to hear a secret, so I'll get right to the point and then offer some additional insight.

The secret to successful crowdfunding is perspective. "What perspective?" you may ask. Well, here's the key: Crowdfunding is not charity. Crowdfunding is presale.

Pretty simple, right?

When the concept of crowdfunding first circulated it was presented as a way for people who didn't have any money to raise funds to complete their projects. Now don't get me wrong; it still serves that purpose. But you don't have to be broke to take advantage of crowdfunding. Therefore, you shouldn't approach it from the perspective of being a charity.

Don't make these crowdfunding mistakes

Here are some common crowdfunding pitfalls that I'd like to point out in order to help you avoid them.

1. Putting crowdfunding before fan building: Although there is a discovery element to most crowdfunding platforms, you're gonna end up very disappointed if you launch a campaign without an existing fanbase.

2. Buying followers: Just because you bought them doesn't mean they're gonna buy your crap. You don't need a huge fanbase to run a successful campaign; you just need an active group of loyal fans, the kind you earn one at a time and interact with regularly.

3. Failing to give your fans an experience: You're not just selling downloads and t-shirts. You are including your fans in the creative journey. More on this in the next section...

4. Troubles with fulfillment: Make sure to get all the pertinent information you'll need when fulfilling all the orders, rewards, perks and exclusives you're offering. One of the most commonly overlooked pieces of information is the size preference for t-shirts. But also, make sure not to offer the house concert option to people in Thailand if you're not going to be able to follow through.

5. Disappearing after the campaign is over: There is often a gap between when all the money is collected and when the final product is released. Don't leave your fans hanging like a prom date that might not show up. They spent a lot of money on that dress. Make sure they know you're still taking them to the dance. Keep them updated as to your progress.

### Give your fans what they want

If you really do want to get the most out of your music career and have a genuine connection and reciprocal relationship with your audience, you've got to give them what they want. Well what do they want? Here's an easy way to figure that out. Think of someone you admire. What would you want from them? Here are some examples:

Fans want to participate in the creative process. They want pics and stories from the studio. They want to vote on the album cover. They want to see their name in the credits.

Fans want to share the exclusive updates. And when they do so on social media it will generate more traffic back to your campaign.

Fans want acoustic versions of their favorite songs. And when you play them live it's a great opportunity to pitch your campaign and let them know that acoustic downloads are available for contributors.

Fans want options other than just the album. They want test presses, signed CDs, vinyl, handwritten lyric sheets, house concerts, and all the intangible stuff that the traditional consumer experience leaves out. You are a creative person. Here's an opportunity to mix your artistic side with your business acumen.

### How this all benefits you

You're making an album for people who have already bought it. This way you don't have to

feel pressured to be a salesman. And we all know that an artist is more interesting when he is an artist than when he is a salesman.

You have so much more to offer than a \$12 album download. This gives you all that much more opportunity to generate income.

Even after the campaign is long over, every time a fan listens to your music they will reminisce about the experience they shared with you. That's how you turn fans into superfans.

And finally, isn't it so very liberating to be able to walk into the studio with everything already paid for so that all you have to think about is making music? And this goes for musicians at absolutely any level of success at any point in their career!

Well, anytime I write an article like this, people ask me which service I would most recommend. So as the above title indicates, I'm going to take this opportunity to give the Schwilly Family Stamp of Crowdfunding Excellence for Musicians to PledgeMusic.

Not only is this platform built for musicians by musicians, but also Benji and his excellent staff are there to guide you through the process every step of the way. I've never waited more than a few hours for a response to an email. And I've never seen higher success rates for musical crowdfunding campaigns. So I'd like to share with you a few interesting statistics I got from the founder himself:

- \* 22% of PledgeMusic site traffic comes from fans sharing pledges-only updates.

- \* 75% of pledgers contribute to a campaign without knowing the band personally. Ergo, they are the email subscribers, Facebook fans, Twitter followers, etc.

- \* The average pledge is \$55-\$70.

- \* 37% of pledges are over \$250.

- \* 37% of the income comes after the 30-60 day campaign on other platforms would have ended.

- \* PledgeMusic boasts an 86% success rate of reaching funding targets.

- \* On average it takes 17 pledges-only updates to hit your financial goal.

I am in no way compensated for endorsing PledgeMusic, so let me just finish by saying

that whatever platform you choose, crowdfunding truly is a great new way for musicians to get the most out of their careers as quickly as possible. So GO GET YOURS! My special gift to you DIY Musician readers

I help musicians identify key niches, connect authentically to passionate fans, and turn them into paying customers. So I put together a Music Marketing Strategy Guide that I would like to share with The DIY Musician readers, just because I love The DIY Musician (and you!) so much. Check out this Schwilly Family Musicians page, drop your email and I'll send you over some awesome stuff I'm preparing especially for musicians like you.

Here's what you'll get:

1. An 11-page Strategy Guide for Marketing your Music online.
2. Regular updates and tips on how to make the most of your music career.
3. The opportunity to open a one-on-one dialogue with me about your musical journey, goals, and strategies about how to accomplish them.

*Carlos Castillo is a music marketing strategist, live performance recordist, international road-tripper, lap steel player, and Captain of the Schwilly Family. Find him at [SchwillyFamilyMusicians.Com](http://SchwillyFamilyMusicians.Com), tweet him at @CaptainSchwilly, or email him at [Carlos@SchwillyFamilyMusicians.Com](mailto:Carlos@SchwillyFamilyMusicians.Com).*

## 5 SITES TO CROWDFUND YOUR NEXT TOUR

by Robert Nicholson, Sonicbids

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You just finished your album, and now it's time to head out onto the road – but you're broke! All of your cash was sunk into mastering your tracks, and you've got nothing left. Instead of heading back to the 9-5 to waste your time saving up for the road, try something different: crowdfund your tour. An old practice reimagined for the new world, crowdfunding is the newest way to fund your project via the internet. There are plenty of options out there, so to help you narrow down which platform is right for you, here are the five best sites to crowdfund your next tour.

### Kickstarter

Overview: Kickstarter is crowdfunding's paramount site. It has become synonymous with the crowdfunding culture, and is by far



the most popular and viewed crowdfunding platform.

Cost: 5% of funds raised, with an all-or-nothing model, plus 3-5% transaction fees.

Pros: Kickstarter is the most popular and viewed crowdfunding platform.

Cons: There is an approval process, and only US and UK projects are allowed.

### **Indiegogo**

Overview: Unlike Kickstarter, Indiegogo allows you to crowdfund any project, and is available worldwide. It shares a very similar interface to Kickstarter, and allows "flexible funding," an option that lets you receive funding for a project even if has failed to reach its goal.

Cost: On the all-or-nothing plan: 4% of funds raised. On the flexible funding plan: 4% if you reach your goal, 9% if you do not reach your goal. Transaction fees are an additional 3%.

Pros: No application process, allows "flexible funding," and is available in all countries.

Cons: It's more expensive if you don't reach your goal.

### **RocketHub**

Overview: RocketHub is easy to join, your project can be up and running in three simple steps, and has some cool features that Kickstarter and Indiegogo do not. Its "LaunchPad" feature offers members the opportunity to work with top-notch brands, companies, and marketers to promote their projects. It also has a "Success School" feature that provides tools to help you build a better project and get noticed.

Cost: 4% for completed campaign or 8% for partial campaign, with 4% transaction fees.

Pros: Easy to navigate interface, and provides a lot of helpful features.

Cons: Not as much traffic as Indiegogo and Kickstarter.

### **PledgeMusic**

Overview: Unlike the previously mentioned sites, PledgeMusic is a crowdfunding platform that is completely devoted to music. With a slick interface, similar to that of

Kickstarter, it is the leading music-based crowdfunding site.

Cost: 15% commission on all money raised.

Pros: It's popular among musicians, and has the same intuitive and persuasive interface as Kickstarter and Indiegogo.

Cons: It's expensive.

### **Sellaband**

Overview: If PledgeMusic is the Kickstarter of musical crowdfunding sites, Sellaband is the MySpace. Instead of being based on a project, it's based on a profile. You start by creating your profile where you can upload songs, videos, followers, gigs, and a bio. Then you can create the project you want to fund.

Cost: 15% commission on all money raised.

Pros: It's easy to design your page and upload your band's content.

Cons: It's expensive, and not as sleek as PledgeMusic. It can also be hard to get your message across.

*The Sonicbids Blog offers expert career advice for DIY musicians [blog.sonicbids.com](http://blog.sonicbids.com)*

## **d i s t r i b u t i o n**

### **PREPARING FOR DISTRIBUTION**

by Daylle Deanna Schwartz, author of "The Real Deal"

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People who want to press up their music in order to sell it are most concerned about getting distribution. Your focus if you want to make money from your music, is to first take yourself seriously as a business. Whether you like it or not, outside of your circle of fans, you and your music are looked upon as products. If you prefer being idealistic, create and perform music for fun. But, if earning a living from your music is an eventual goal, developing a *business attitude* is critical.

### **What's necessary?**

Read books on the biz and attend seminars if you can. Get a good picture of how the music industry operates. Network as much as possible to create a support system of folks you can call on for resources, advice and encouragement. While you shouldn't negotiate your own contracts, you should

know enough to discuss the terms of one with your lawyer. Don't be one of those musicians who tell their lawyer, publisher, manager, etc., "Whatever you say." Gather enough knowledge so you can make informed decisions based on input from your representatives. Think of yourself as a professional. Even if you're only pressing up your own music, you're a record label. Act like one! Being responsible will max your chances of others wanting to work with you.

### **Getting distribution**

Getting distribution isn't always a guarantee. You can ship 500 pieces and get them all back if you haven't been able to promote your product to a target audience. Distributors get records into stores. Most don't promote them. Stores tell me that records sell because people know the artist. Before taking in your product, distributors need to see that you have a market already interested in buying it. Creating a demand is what sells records. Distributors want you to have a handle on promotion before they work with your label. Once you have that, they'll want your product.

### **Do the groundwork**

Until you identify your potential market and develop strategies for letting them know about your music, having distribution won't sell CDs. The most important thing you can do first is to target the group who might buy your product and figure out how to reach them. Distributors want product that will sell, and will *want* to work with labels that have artists with a buzz going. They don't care how good the music is if nobody knows about it.

It still amazes me how many folks come to me for consultations and aren't sure who is most likely to buy their music. They tell me since it's good music, everyone will buy. That usually means they have no clue and don't want to bother to figure it out. If you can't target your audience, play your music for people who work in record stores or other music related folks and ask for their honest feedback.

### **Your audience**

Anyone may buy your CD, but promote it to the group more likely to appreciate it. Is it college students? Young adults? Teens? Baby boomers? Once you know that, what kinds of promotion will you do to make them want to buy your record? Figuring this out sounds simple at first but if it was, there would be a lot more records making big money independently. It is more than the music being great, for people to buy your CD. They need to hear your music to be enticed to buy it. How will you reach their ears? What will

make them buy it? Figuring out a marketing plan can be the hardest part of putting out your music. Distribution is easy once you get this in place.

### **Create a demand**

The best way to get your product into stores is to develop a story around your act first. Focus your energy on getting reviews, getting radio play (college and public radio are best to start with), selling product on your own, and increasing your fan base by touring. Create a demand, and then put together a one-page synopsis of the artist's story, known as a one-sheet. This has the artist's story - reviews and stories in the media (include quotes), radio play, gigs, direct sales, internet presence, etc, as well as details about the record itself. Include anything that shows the act is marketable, concisely on one sheet of paper. A small photo of the act and/or the album cover should be on the sheet too.

### **How to get in stores**

Send you're one-sheet to potential distributors. Don't send a sample of the music until they request it. The story is more important than the music. Some distributors take calls if you want to try that first. But if their interest is piqued, they'll ask you to fax them a one-sheet. Be prepared. Don't approach distributors until you have a good foundation. Make them take you seriously the first time! Distributors are in the business of selling records. If they think yours will sell, they'll carry it. It's that simple. Start with a local distributor until your buzz gets stronger and you prove you can sell product on a wider scale. Then work your way up to larger ones.

*Daylle is the best-selling author of Start & Run Your Own Record Label and The Real Deal: How to Get Signed to a Record Label. She also presents music industry seminars, does phone consulting for musicians and record labels and publishes Daylle's News & Resources, a free industry newsletter. daylle@daylle.com www.daylle.com*

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### 1. Upload music and target the right listeners



Start by uploading your songs and photos. Next, choose the popular artists whose music is most similar to your own.

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## 25 THINGS TO REMEMBER ABOUT RECORD DISTRIBUTION

by Christopher Knab, author of "Music Is Your Business".

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1. Distributors will usually only work with labels that have been in business for at least 3 years, or have at least 3 previous releases that have sold several thousand copies each.
2. Distributors get records into retail stores, and record labels get customers into retail stores through promotion and marketing tactics.
3. Make sure there is a market for your style of music. Prove it to distributors by showing them how many records you have sold through live sales, internet sales, and any other alternative methods.
4. Be prepared to sign a written contract with your distributor because there are no 'handshake deals' anymore.
5. Distributors want 'exclusive' agreements with the labels they choose to work with. They usually want to represent you exclusively.
6. You will sell your product to a label for close to 50% of the retail list price.
7. When searching for a distributor find out what labels they represent, and talk to some of those labels to find out how well the distributor did getting records into retailers.
8. Investigate the distributor's financial status. Many labels have closed down in recent years, and you cannot afford to get attached to a distributor that may not be able to pay its invoices.
9. Find out if the distributor has a sales staff, and how large it is. Then get to know the sales reps.
10. What commitment will the distributor make to help get your records into stores?
11. Is the distributor truly a national distributor, or only a regional distributor with ambitions to be a national distributor? Many large chain stores will only work with national distributors.
12. Expect the distributor to request that you remove any product you have on consignment in stores so that they can be the one to service retailers.
13. Make sure that your distributor has the ability to help you setup various retail promotions such as: coop advertising (where you must be prepared to pay the costs of media ads for select retailers), in-store artist appearances, in-store listening station programs, and furnishing POP's (point of purchase posters and other graphics).
14. Be aware that as a new label you will have to offer a distributor 100% on returns of your product.
15. You must bear all the costs of any distribution and retail promotions.
16. Furnish the distributor with hundreds of 'Distributor One Sheets' (Attractively designed summary sheets describing your promotion and marketing commitments. Include barcodes, list price, picture of the album cover, and catalog numbers of your product too.
17. Distributors may ask for hundreds of free promotional copies of your release to give to the buyers at the retail stores.
18. Make sure all promotional copies have a hole punched in the barcode, and that they are not shrink-wrapped. This will prevent any unnecessary returns of your product.
19. Don't expect a distributor to pay your invoices in full or on time. You will always be owed something by the distributor because of the delay between orders sent, invoices received, time payment schedules (50-120 days per invoice) and whether or not your product has sold through, or returns are pending.
20. Create a relationship that is a true partnership between your label and the distributor.
21. Keep the distributor updated on any and all promotion and marketing plans and results, as they develop.
22. Be well financed. Trying to work with distributors without a realistic budget to participate in promotional opportunities would be a big mistake.
23. Your distributor will only be as good as your marketing plans to sell the record. Don't expect them to do your work for you, remember all they do is get records into the stores.
24. Read the trades, especially Billboard for weekly news on the health of the industry, and/or the status of your distributor.
25. Work your product relentlessly on as many fronts as possible... commercial and non commercial airplay, internet airplay and sales campaigns, on and offline publicity ideas, and touring...eternally touring!

*Christopher Knab is a music business Consultant, Author and Lecturer. He was recently honored by Seattle's Rocket magazine as "One of the Most Influential People in the Northwest Music Industry." Contact: [www.4frontmusic.com](http://www.4frontmusic.com), [Chris@Knab.com](mailto:Chris@Knab.com)*

## WHY MOST DEMO RECORDINGS ARE REJECTED

by Christopher Knab author of "Music Is Your Business"

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"Getting a deal" has long been the goal of many would-be artists and bands. For mostly naive reasons, most new talent feel that by securing a recording contract with a significant major or independent label, success will be guaranteed. (Talk about naiveté.) To get this 'belief system' up and running, many musicians figure all they have to do is send off their music to a label, and a recording contract will come their way shortly.

### How to improve your odds

The following list of 10 Reasons Why Demo Are Rejected was gathered together after years of listening to comments made by Record Label A&R reps at music industry conferences and workshops, as well as from personal interviews with reps, and from many interviews A&R reps have given to the press. The purpose of providing you with this information is to at least improve the odds that your music will get listened to when you submit your demos. This list will look at the most common mistakes musicians make when either shopping for a record deal, or trying to get the attention of A&R Reps with their demo recordings.

### 10 reasons why demos are rejected

1. No Contact Information on CDR and/or CDR container: Put your name, address, email, and phone number on both.
2. Lack of Originality: Just because you can record, doesn't mean your music is worth recording.
3. The Music Is Good, But The Artist Doesn't Play Live: This applies to all genres of music except electronica and experimental music.
4. Poorly Recorded Material: So you bought Pro-Tools ... so what!
5. Best songs are not identified or highlighted on the CDR: Give the folks a break. For demos-send only 3 or 4 songs and highlight the best ones.

6. Sending Videos In Place Of CDRs: Keep it simple, in the demo mode. All anyone wants is to check out your songwriting and musicianship.
7. Sending Unsolicited Recordings: You sent them, but they never asked for them.
8. Sending The Wrong Music To The Wrong Label: You didn't do your research to find out what labels put out what kind of music.
9. Musicians Can't Play Their Instruments Competently: This is so basic, but you would be astounded at how incompetent most start-up musicians are.
10. The Music Sucks: This criticism is as old as music itself. You may think your music is the greatest thing since frappachinos, but most demo recordings the industry receives are as bad as the first round contestants on American Idol.

*Christopher Knab is a music business Consultant, Author and Lecturer. He was recently honored by Seattle's Rocket magazine as "One of the Most Influential People in the Northwest Music Industry." Visit his website at: [www.4frontmusic.com](http://www.4frontmusic.com) or contact him personally at: [Chris@Knab.com](mailto:Chris@Knab.com)*

## the music business

### 10 KEY BUSINESS PRINCIPLES

by Diane Rapaport, author of "A Music Business Primer"

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*Given two bands (or two businesses) that have equal talent, the one that incorporates the business principles below will often have a competitive edge.*

### Business principles to follow

1. Get to know the people you work with personally. Go out of your way to meet them.
2. Make it easy to for people to associate with your business.
  - Show up for gigs and appointments on time
  - Keep promises you make
  - Phone people back in a timely manner
  - Have a positive attitude
  - Pay your bills on time. If you cannot, call people up and explain your situation.
  - Be nice to secretaries and receptionists. Often the



- “gatekeepers” for access to their bosses.
  - Develop long-term relationships with service vendors.
  - Key business people have few minutes to listen. State what you want succinctly and politely.
  - Say thank you. Forgive easily. Anyone can make a mistake.
3. Treat your employees courteously, pay them a fair wage, be appreciative of their good work, and when you can afford it, reward them with bonuses and other benefits. They’ll repay you with loyalty and good work. Retraining a new employee costs time and money.
  4. Listen to the needs of the people and businesses you work with. Find out what is important to them.
  5. Do every job and every gig as though it mattered.
  6. Provide value added to people you do business with. This can mean everything from playing an extra encore, having special prices for CDs for fans who buy them at gigs; sending out a free newsletter once a month; providing one free CD for every ten a customer buys; and sending favored vendors free goods.
  7. Keep track of your money. Negotiate for better rates. Keep business debt to a minimum. Pay your loans on time.
  8. Cultivate a good reputation. Be principled in your dealings. Leadership in ethics and good conduct will be rewarded many times over in loyalty, in people speaking well of your business, and, perhaps most importantly, of people you do business with dealing fairly and ethically with you. If you examine the histories of people who are constantly being taken advantage of or stolen from, you will almost invariably find that their business conduct invited it.
  9. Good advice is invaluable, and, often freely given. Learn to invite advice. Feedback is important, even when it is negative. Receive criticism with neutrality and graciousness.
  10. When you are successful, give something back to the industry that has served you. Share information with other bands. Donate time or profits to a nonprofit organization.

*This article is from Diane Rapaport’s book, “A Music Business Primer”, published by Prentice Hall (Pearson Education). Diane Rapaport is also the author of How to Make and Sell Your Own Recording.*

*Her company, Jerome Headlands Press, designs and produces The Musician’s Business and Legal Guide; and The Acoustic Musician’s Guide to Sound Reinforcement and Live Recording by Mike Sokol. Contact: jhpress@sedona.net*

## WHAT MAKES A WINNING MUSIC BUSINESS STRATEGY?

by Kavita Haria, Music Business Consultant  
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I asked myself this crucial question when writing my latest e-book, “What are the important skills and practices required to create a winning and profitable music business apart from good music?”

The answer rests in being a good leader of your ship, having a well-designed and communicated strategy and a good marketing plan that can be executed to promote your music in a structured way.

If you re-read that last paragraph, you’ll see how much I emphasize the idea of strategy and structure. It is with this careful planning and well-understood principles that your music business will become profitable.

### Strategy

A strategy comes to life through its ability to influence hundreds and thousands of decisions, both big and small, made by anyone from the director level to the street team level. It is, at its core, a guide to how you behave and provides an external reflection of your music business.

A good strategy fuels and ignites your fire to more compelling actions and results. It leads you to a destination that is clear in your mind. A bad strategy on the other hand leads you to a less competitive, less differentiated position. It is simply a waste of time and energy as it does not move you forward; instead, it keeps you where you’re already at.

The word “winning” is important in this context. An average strategy plan, when executed, gets you mediocre results and may not be a fair reflection of your true talent. A winning strategy plan on the other hand transforms your current situation into monster success through developing the right tools, people, techniques and street teams to share your art with the wider world.

As musicians, we are explorers. As explorers, our job is to explore the depths of our hearts and souls to share the music that feels most at

home to us. Our job is to experiment, and experimentation takes time before it is successful.

Your music business needs a framework for achieving results that can be built upon to achieve your specific goals in your specific music genre. When you start to put together a puzzle, you would start by finding the corners and the edge pieces before building and assembling the inner pieces. It is the same with putting together the framework for your music business.

Constructing a music business plan is the first step in gaining clarity and direction in what you'll do, how often you'll release an album, how you'll market your music and how you'll make money. The framework of your music business is what holds it all together - the operations, the marketing, the management and the finances. Let's look at each one separately.

### **Operations plan**

Your business operations are the activities your music business does in order to share your music. These are usually gigs (what type of gigs?), recording (how often? when?), distribution (whom? how?), sponsorship, and other avenues of generating revenue.

### **Marketing plan**

The activities and tactics you will undertake to promote your music through your music business. These may include PR, social networking on Facebook, Twitter etc, blogging, podcasting, video blogging, flyer and poster marketing, etc.

### **Management plan**

Who will form your core team for your music business and what will they do? Regardless of whether you have the capacity to get these people involved, knowing what you want is core to getting a framework to build your music business.

### **Finance plan**

Knowing what money goes out and what comes in is crucial to understanding how your music business can be successful. My accountant often tells me that the success of my business is equal to how well I can understand the numbers on my cash flow sheet. He is right and I pass this advice on to you.

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*music business success. He writes a free weekly Musicians Development Newsletter to over 10,000 musicians worldwide. For more information visit: [www.innerrhythm.org](http://www.innerrhythm.org)*

## **STOP BURNING BRIDGES...OR YOUR CAREER MIGHT GO UP IN FLAMES!**

by Sheena Metal, Music Highway

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Hey, nobody said the music business was going to be easy. It truly is a jungle out there filled with: snakes, rats, rabid carnivores, sharks...well, you get the picture. In the course of your musical journey, there will be confrontations, arguments, misunderstandings, and miscommunications. You'll get jerked around, screwed over, ripped off and disrespected. So, you want to be a rockstar? Welcome to your nightmare. But this is also a business of good people, who'll give you opportunities and chances and help you out when you least expect it. That's why it's so important that you, as musicians and as a band, act professionally and respectfully regardless of the behavior of those you encounter. You don't have to be a pushover and of course, you have a right to defend yourself against the questionable actions of others, but the music community can be a very small town and the behavior you exhibit will follow you throughout your musical career.

On the flipside of that, there are musicians out there who, either knowingly or unknowingly bring negativity on themselves through their own actions. Short temperedness, egocentricism, brazen entitlement, compulsive lying and just plain old psychotic behavior can brand your band as troublemakers and deprive you of important opportunities that you need to move forward in this business.

So, how can you make sure that you're doing onto others as you wish they would do onto you? What can you, as musicians do, to eliminate aspects of your personality that may be causing bad blood between you and the people you run across on your way to superstardom?

The following are a few tips that may help you to make sure you're exhibiting professional behavior at all times.

### **Be timely and courteous**

Whether you're playing out live or emailing booking inquiries from home, there is never a substitute for courteously or timeliness. At

gigs, show up when you're supposed to, be friendly, treat others with respect, set up quickly, end your set on time, break down quickly, be mindful of other bands on stage, compliment those around you and don't forget simple things like, "please" and "thank you." When you leave a positive impression in people's minds, you'll be high on their list when it comes time to fill an open booking slot, recommend a band for a review, etc.

### **Make sure your actions match your words**

It's such a simple thing but you'd be surprised how many musicians seem incapable of doing what they say they're going to. If you book a gig, show up and play. If you say you're going to bring twenty friends and fans to your gig, do it. If you reserve an ad in a local music magazine, pay for it. If you write a check, make sure that it doesn't bounce. If you say you're going to send out a press package or a CD, mail it. It is true that many people in the music business are distrustful of bands that they don't know, and with good reason in many instances. Build your good reputation in the industry by proving that you will do what you've promised. Start small. Once you've gained people's trust, you'll see more and more doors opening up for your band.

### **Take the high road**

It may be tough but there's nothing to be gained from returning someone's improper behavior with a heap-load of your own. That doesn't mean that you need to let every industry slime-bag from New York to LA ride roughshod all over your music project but there are ways to deal with the negative behavior in this business without branding yourself with a label equally as negative. Sending firm yet professional letters, making intelligent and informed phone inquiries and, if need be, taking legal action against those who have acted inappropriately are ways to handle unpleasant situations without drawing negative attention to yourself. Public scenes, yelling and screaming, long-winded and ranting emails, threats and accusations and spiteful actions may make you feel vindicated but it may chase away the good people as well as the bad and that just sets your band back.

### **You can't undo what you've already done**

It's much harder to undo past bad behaviors, or reverse negative reputations than it is to foster positive ones. It's best when starting out to avoid acting rash as a rule. If you have a band member that is incapable of keeping his or her cool, perhaps it's time to rethink his or her place in your group. The entertainment industry has a long memory and a spiteful

tongue. Make sure when people speak of you, they're speaking well.

This may all seem like such common sense that it isn't even worth mentioning but you'd be surprised how many shows, interviews, tours, and record deals have never materialized because of burned bridges. You may have talent and great tunes, but if your attitude sucks you'll get passed over time and again. No one wants to work with rage-aholics, egomaniacs or crazies. Don't let anyone think that's what your band is about. Sure it's important to be creative geniuses but if no one likes you, you'll be performing your masterpieces in the garage for grandma and her Pomeranian. Get smart and treat people right and you may find yourself rockin' all the way to the bank.

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## **THE 20 WORST INDIE ARTIST MISTAKES**

by Johnny Dwinell, Daredevil Production  
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### **1. Your Songs Suck**

Consumers will instantly click past a crappy song on thousands of online radio stations until they find a good song that really moves them in the first 10-20 seconds. You better have GREAT songs. It's a CRAFT; it always has been. Treat it as such. You need to seek out a few mentors to teach you what they know about their CRAFT and apply your unique vision and perspective to that knowledge. Easy to do with all the online writing societies.

### **2. You're Producing Yourself**

Have you ever wondered why a record label would NEVER let you or your Indie Artist Mistakesfriends produce your own record? Have you ever wondered why most of the iconic superstars STILL use producers? Why aren't they saving money by producing themselves? Surely a producer at that level is pretty damn expensive! Get it? Just because you can work Pro-Tools or Logic doesn't

mean you can or should make a record. The label would put you with someone who is not only experienced at the entire process of making records, but a way better musician than you. The smart artist always thrives being around true pros who are better than them to soak in the education and grow to a new artistic level and be fearless of the journey. Most artists will tell people why they can't or won't afford a producer and then turn around and spend their money on their 25th guitar and new plug-ins for the home studio thereby avoiding the journey. Do you want to make great records or collect gear?

### **3. You're Not Marketing...At ALL**

Putting your music on iTunes, Spotify, CD Baby, ReverbNation, etc. Indie Artist Mistakes is digital distribution NOT marketing. Marketing is the art of influencing buying decisions. Having your CD available for purchase "wherever it's sold" isn't influencing buying decisions. Twitter, Vine, Instagram, Facebook, YouTube, Live Shows, Music Blogs, Indie Radio, Internet Radio, and PR are the marketing tools you need to master. These tools create awareness and drive traffic to your squeeze page where you get the consumer's email address. It's through their email address (and the communication that you send there) that you will influence their buying decisions.

4. You're Operating With An Out-Of-Date Business Model – You are still trying to cut cheap demos to shop to a record label to try to get a deal. You still think radio is the key to marketing your music. You still think that radio will be a powerful marketing tool when you do get your deal. You still think the labels make money selling records. You still think that if you get a deal that's when you've made it. Wake up. That ship sailed a decade ago; you have to develop yourself, today.

### **5. You're Not Thinking Like A Record Label**

If you got signed today, the label would surround you with people who make a living writing songs, engineering, producing, doing public relations, marketing, promotion, booking bands, image consulting, photographing, etc. All these people would be highly professional and much more dialed in to the market and process than you and your friends. If you're thinking like a label, you are looking for a team of people to help you with at least some of these important items.

### **6. You're Not Selling Your Music On Your Website**

If you were truly DRIVING traffic anywhere to purchase your music, you would drive them to YOUR site and take all the money. Everyone needs a presence on iTunes, CD Baby, ReverbNation, etc., but why on earth would you pay someone 30% of your record sales to do what you can do with a free plug-in on your WordPress site? If it don't make dollars, it don't make sense.

### **7. You're Not Posting Regular Videos To YouTube**

YouTube is your new radio with an amazing potential for reaching millions, no wait...now BILLIONS, of people and you don't need to spend one million dollars to bribe a freaking Program Director for a CHANCE at getting a few spins. The "shelf space" is unlimited (unlike radio) and they pay royalties and advertising revenue. "I don't get it because I just want to make music" is a cop-out. Why aren't you learning everything you need to learn about this amazing opportunity?

### **8. You Suck At Project Management**

If Steve Jobs had approached the first products from Apple the Indie Artist Mistakes way most of you approach managing your musical projects, he would have died homeless. Jobs was a true artist. The first computers he and Wozniak made looked good, worked well, were packaged well, and were made in his garage. Instead of making 500 crappy computers with the limited budget they had, he made 50 AWESOME computers and the market place responded. The opportunities that came from the first run of AWESOME computers provided the momentum they needed to reach the next level. If you want to find someone to cut your songs for \$300/song, I PROMISE you will find them. Record your 3 BEST songs for the same price as what you would have to spend on 12 and do it RIGHT with a TALENTED TEAM. It's gonna cost money, so think of it as an education. Then watch the market respond!

### **9. You're Waiting For Your "Big Break"**

Deep down you wish it was the old music business because, on Indie Artist Mistakes the outside (from the cheap seats), it seemed easier when the labels took care of everything. Well, they did and you would have paid dearly for that "EZ Button." I got news for you, the superstar artists who are still around today never let the labels take

care of everything. They worked smarter and harder than that in a sea of sharks. You have to create your own opportunities, your own momentum. There's no way around it. Nobody gets "discovered" anymore; so get off the couch, put the bong down next to your baggage and get to work!

#### **10. You Still Think Record Labels Develop Talent**

Record labels don't develop talent like Coca-Cola doesn't repair cars. They don't care about your music, they care about your current cash flow, and how many fans with whom you have a measurable connection. They care about what kind of market you created for yourself and if they can make money by adding fuel to the fire you already started. Think YouTube and Google. Google didn't develop YouTube, they purchased them. Those smart guys at YouTube had to PROVE that their idea had value in the market place. So do you.

#### **11. You Don't Think Of Your Music As Product**

Until you do, nobody is going to hear your art.

#### **12. You're Self-Sabotaging**

This is the most common and most destructive mistake of them all. Let me save Indie Artist Mistakes you the suspense: you're gonna make mistakes. You're gonna hit speed bumps. You're gonna be rejected. You're gonna have to get over it! You have to get out of your own way and just move forward. Stop making excuses. If you keep doing what you've always done, you'll keep getting what you always got. PERIOD. Make a change and watch massive amounts of energy quickly flow your way.

#### **13. You Are Too Sensitive To Take Constructive Criticism**

You would be amazed how many of your favorite superstars were brutally schooled by the label on their first record. They were green just like you! "Go back and write us a single we can promote on the radio or we're gonna drop you." If you're too dumb to know that you don't know a whole lotta stuff, you'll never make it. Be professional and LEARN. It's always better to stay quiet in a room and appear stupid than to open your mouth and remove all doubt.

#### **14. You're Listening To Haters**

When you do start to get momentum, people you don't know and, sadly, many that you do will spit poison into every part of your life. Get used to it. You are doing what they can't.

#### **15. You Haven't Defined Your Lane**

You are afraid to pick a genre because you write in many. Consumers need ONE lane to connect with you in. Just because you pick one doesn't mean you are ignoring the others. Get some traction in one lane first. That traction will help expose a project in a different lane to more people. Think John Mayer with his first few pop records and then he did a blues project. That blues project got a TON of exposure because he was now John Mayer, the pop star.

#### **16. Your Live Performance Sucks**

Nothing is more disappointing than seeing a decent band with great songs and listening for harmonies but nobody sings background vocals. Okay, maybe worse would be a crappy band with crappy songs and everyone is singing crappier background vocals.

#### **17. You're Not Capitalizing On Your Live Performances**

– Today's music market is about endless Indie Artist Mistakes content and email addresses. You should have constant video footage to market on social media. You should have boatloads of email addresses after every show. You should be moving product from the stage at every show. You should be gaining Twitter followers at every show... THEN you can get laid.

#### **18. You're Putting Too Much Stock Into Your ReverbNation Ranking**

A #1 ranking for your small town or big city on ReverbNation + \$2.54 will get you a cup of coffee at Starbucks. How are you getting paid for your songs?

#### **19. You Don't Know What You're Doing On Twitter**

Twitter is a simply amazing surgical marketing tool that allows you to SERIOUSLY target your specific market. When done correctly, your following will constantly grow. One year from now you could have well over 10k followers. Then you would have the means to drive tons of traffic to a squeeze page, or to a YouTube video, or to... Get my point? Your fans are out there, go find them.



## 20. You Think It's All About Music, Not Marketing

The truth is that it sure is nice when they expertly market a killer record, but if it was only about the music, there wouldn't be any crappy songs on the radio. Think about that for a second. Without marketing, nobody cares about your music because they haven't heard it.

*Daredevil Production is the joint vision of veteran Nashville Engineer/Producer/Performer Kelly Schoenfeld and veteran Los Angeles Artist/Producer/Businessman Johnny Dwinell. DDP is a full service music production team housed in Ragtop Recording studios on Nashville's world famous Music Row. [www.daredevilmusicproduction.com](http://www.daredevilmusicproduction.com)*

## TOP 5 MUSIC BUSINESS MISTAKES

by Rick Goetz, [MusicianCoaching.com](http://MusicianCoaching.com)

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### 1. Waiting

Sounds innocuous enough, right? We should be good at waiting given all of the waiting that goes on with the craft of music.

Waiting on our fellow notoriously late collaborators, waiting on getting things tracked right in the studio, waiting to load in, waiting on sound check. There are a million things that we have to hurry up and wait for before we even get to the business side of things. This, of course, is not the waiting I am talking about.

The biggest mistake I have seen is that people wait on outside help to starting their businesses. Anyone who has tried to raise money can tell you that it is much easier to raise when you have momentum with a project than when you only have a blueprint and some high hopes. This is in no way saying I think people should do everything themselves. DIY, in my opinion, is a condition of last resort - but a condition that almost all of us are stuck with at some point or another.

Keep this in mind - when you are someone looking for outside help from someone like a potential manager or an agent, you are asking someone for their time. Given that time equals money, you are, in fact, asking someone to invest in you and your company. When you are preparing to approach someone

for help of this kind, ask yourself "What would make me invest in an artist's career?"

When I ask myself this question, I almost always come up with "wanting to see that my time and money would be going into a business is already showing signs of life." I would want to see that, in spite of or in addition to what my eyes and ears tell me, that real consumers are responding to this musician's material. Generally speaking, those artists who have a spark and have a fledgling business are people who didn't wait on outside help to get those businesses going.

I'll let you in on a little insider secret - since the un-bundling of the album, EVERYONE is making things up as they go along. There is no hard science to the initial stages of breaking new artists - it is a series of best guesses. Since no one is ever going to care about your career more than you do (at least I hope not), you may as well give it a try for yourself. Even if you fail you will no more about the job and be better qualified to find the right person who complements your strengths and weaknesses.

There will be times when you are forced to wait for circumstances to change. It happens to all of us no matter what business we are in, but I urge you to find ways of making these periods productive. No matter what major event in your career is looming large - get out and play, meet people, and record as much as possible, and remember: there is never going to be a perfect time to start that next phase of your career. Something will always be in your way if you let it.

### 2. Unreasonable Expectations

Before I start on another rant about the top mistakes let me point out that I find these mistakes frustrating because I am often guilty of them myself from time to time. I am especially guilty of #2 - unreasonable expectations.

Roughly twice per day I get an email from a musician who tells me that he or she "just wants to get to the next level."

In my head my first response is usually "Oh that's easy just press Up Up Down Down Left Right Left Right A B Select Start." (This got you many extra lives on the game Contra for Nintendo) For better or for worse - there is no special code for the elusive "next level" in the music business.

This kind of message is always a bit disheartening as I am pretty sure that when I ask people who send me these messages to clarify their needs they either will not have defined it for themselves or they have just started out promoting their businesses in the last 2-3 months and they want Jay-Z's phone number (Which I don't have by the way).

Yes, that is absolutely an extreme example and no- I'm not suggesting that everyone out there has such a warped perspective but I do find that people unfairly compare themselves to people who have become icons. If you look around long enough you will find that most overnight successes were not so overnight.

I was fortunate enough to work with Kid Rock in the 90s and most people remember when he arrived with his first big single "Bawitdaba". What most people forget (or never knew) is that ten years earlier he was signed and subsequently dropped from Jive Records, signed an indie label deal (with a label that went out of business), put out two records on his own (before such things were as turn-key as they are now) and built up a network of over 50 very active street team members all over the U.S.. Prior to "Bawitdaba" was also a single called "I am the Bull God" that only mid charted at radio and there were moments where one could feel that the culture of Atlantic Records could have gone either way in supporting (or not supporting) his career. There is an obvious lesson in such perseverance and I know many people who would have given up over any one of those setbacks let alone the whole string of them.

Perhaps Kid Rock is another example that is too large or too exceptional.

### **How about this?**

The majority of people I encounter don't appreciate that it takes a long time (often many years) to get anyone to care about you or your music. Most people need the time to get better at what they do. It takes a ton of mistakes and gigs where you say to the crowd "Be sure and tip your bartender! Oh! You are the Bartenders and waitresses!" I don't think people appreciate that those kind of gigs are the formative gigs where musicians get better at what they do.

I keep hearing the implication that the Internet was supposed to usher in this era where anyone and everyone could make a living at music. Really? So everyone is a rock star? That means there is no one in the audience because everyone is on the stage. That would

all of a sudden makes my accountant a rock star! God forbid!

This is what I've learned about expectations being around the business of music for the last eighteen years - I hope it takes you less time to learn these things than it took me:

- 1) The artists who seemed to make a living / become well known were simply the artists who were still artists ten years later
- 2) You can look around and compare and despair almost no matter who you are. I wonder if Chris Martin from Coldplay laments that he isn't Bono or if Bono laments that he isn't Elvis!
- 3) The awful saying "It's a marathon - not a sprint" really does apply. Far too often I see people blowing their budgets and wrecking their credit on high cost / short term promotional strategies over the course of weeks when better investments would be strategies that endure.
- 4) People who don't invest in their careers (with both their money and time) don't grow their careers.
- 5) Those who were consistent in their efforts tended to fare better than those who were sporadic.

### **3. Poor Planning**

Once again, I don't mean to appear unsympathetic. I know first hand how difficult it is to remain objective once you have put your heart and soul into a project but I have to point out that I have seen far too many careers that have suffered greatly due to poor planning or even worse - no planning.

It sounds ridiculous but something as simple as writing out a list of goals for your business can force you to clarify that vague plan you have in your head - I highly recommend it as I have made the mistake of winging it one too many times when an organized written document would have saved me time, effort and expense. When I am at my best I find that I am often re-visiting revising such documents for my business because I am continually moving closer to my goals. When I am at my worst I am unable to carve out the time to extract myself from daily distractions to reflect on the big picture. I am certainly not saying it is easy but it can be done.

There are two main areas in which musicians seem to flounder the most. Probably not coincidentally they are two of the most

important events in a musician's life - Music releases and Touring.

## Music Releases

With regard to music releases I am always surprised to hear how many people will start looking for a promotion and marketing strategy after their album, single or E.P. has been released. While it is never too late for someone to start such efforts it is probably a good idea to start thinking of such things the minute you enter the studio or even the minute you start writing the next release if possible. I have said it before and I will say it again that websites have ceased being billboards and have become like 24 hour news channels. With this in mind it is important to collect as much content (Journaling, photos, videos, rough mixes, live takes etc) from the writing and recording process as possible. "Why?" You might ask. Simply because there are only so many ways you can say to the people who you hope will care about your music that you have a new record coming out. If you've collected no material about the making of your latest product you will not have nearly as many interesting ways to hype your release. Saying "New record coming next week" is not nearly as interesting as even a goofy video of you spilling Bong water on the console (not that I recommend it).

Another rookie mistake (and again - I empathize - I really do) is rushing a product to market. I watch artists record an album, master it, order a few hundred CDs and schedule a release so they can get it out to market as fast as humanly possible. Oh, I get it, you are excited and you have made sacrifices to create your latest work and you are anxious for the world to hear it. Resist this at all costs. If possible have advance copies of your CD or digital album in the hands of those who can expose it to more people than you can (Journalists, music supervisors, bloggers, morning TV shows, local radio, podcasters, promoters, club owners or even your most successful friends in music for a testimonial about your work). Make sure that you have all of your marketing and promotional materials in hand to the best of your ability - a bio, an EPK, compelling live footage, press clips, artwork, a video (even if it is just the album artwork synced up with your single). Make sure you have events lined up - a record release party, a listening party, a Ustream concert, a house party, some kind of album giveaway, a tie in with a local retail store - anything that gets people talking and anything that exposes your music to new people.

The longer you promote a record the better chances it has of doing something - try your best to line up several months worth of marketing and promotional ideas if possible. The most obvious of these of course isâ€¦

## Touring

Think about touring for a second. You have a new release or you finally got transportation to take your act on the road - what is your plan? I've watched countless acts bleed money on cross country tours before they have even built up their own home market, let alone several regional markets. I suppose that's okay if you're in your early 20s and just want to compare the taste of beer in New York to the beer in Los Angeles (it's the same as near as I can tell by the way. Pizza though? A different story - don't leave New York). Most of the good agents I know tell me that barring very exceptional gigs it is generally not worth touring in any market unless you can revisit that market every 3-4 months to maintain and build a following. What this means for most on a budget is concentric circles around your hometown. It is much easier to do several three day weekends or pull the occasional sick day on a regional build than it is to take two weeks off of work to visit a dozen markets that you won't revisit more than once per year.

It is generally not worth touring any given market unless you can find some kind of support in said market. This can be as simple as family and friends with a place to crash or a good opportunity like finding a local act that does well to trade gigs with. If you pick five markets to target there are only so many college radio stations, indie record stores and local readers you have to service and create relationships with. Yes- easier said than done but it is do-able. Prior to this step is of course making sure you mean something in your home town so you will have a crowd to trade on with other out of town acts.

This post turned into rather random musings about releases and touring but I urge you to write out a plan and think about having a long term strategy for record releases, tours and your career in general.

## 4. Comparing Apples To Oranges

On the off chance that the title of this article is a piece of slang that was unique to my parents (I ran the title by someone who was baffled by the fact that a music blog would be discussing fruit) I am speaking about comparing two things that can't be accurately compared. I have found that is very common

for artists to have the belief that exposure = sales and that all songs and all artists if given the same exposure would get the same response from the public. This issue gets especially cloudy when an artist is comparing his or her own career to the career of someone in the public eye.

The most hate mail I ever got was from an article I wrote that contained the words "Great bands make great managers". Musicians and managers alike hated this statement but it is one that I still stand by. What did I mean when I said it? Well, there is an old (and awful) saying I heard in my record company days - "You can't polish a turd." There were simply some acts back then that no matter how much a label spent on getting them on Radio, MTV and on great tours they just never connected with people.

Many things have changed in the music business but I don't think this has changed at all - sometimes all of the exposure in the world just doesn't matter. I get into a ton of trouble using the word "great" so let me clear that up for the comments you are writing in your head about how much Nickelback sucks and how could Lady Gaga and Kesha possibly be considered great and how I don't know what I'm talking about. First off you should know that on any given week I actively dislike about 90% of the top 200 albums on the Billboard charts. Secondly I neither know nor do I think it is entirely knowable why something connects with a mass audience and some things don't. I do know that some artists seem to be opportunity magnets and many more are not.

Back to the statement about managers - very few people refer to managers without successful clients as "great." Even if a manager does everything right and gets his or her clients exposure, if they don't yield results very few people take notice of that manager's ability. There are other times when you can't seem to stop opportunities from arising for a song or for an artist and contrary to popular belief this really isn't always related to an artist's team. Yes- a good team can bring in great opportunities and tip the balance in an artist's favor but generally speaking it is as much the music as the artist's handlers that makes things happen for an artist.

We see this phenomenon in a much more overt way with viral video in the digital age. People either see something and pass it on to their friends or they don't. I always find it interesting when someone sets out to "Make a viral video". Barring a Trojan type virus that would automatically make a video play every

time someone turned on their machine (please don't do this) there is no way of predicting what will be viral and what won't be. You can market and spend all you want but some things catch fire and other things just don't.

Okay, I have probably beaten this point to death and depressed a bunch of you. Not at all my intent and not at all the focus of this article. If such things are believed to be truly out of your hands then what is an artist to do? My suggestions are two-fold:

### **One: Acceptance**

Acceptance is not the Acceptance of failure. It is the acceptance that if you are doing everything you can to promote yourself- at this moment in time it may not be your turn to be widely embraced by mass media. Enduring and building the best you can is sometimes all you can do until the stars align for you.

### **Two: Growth**

It could be the passage of time alone might make the world ready for your music, stranger things have happened. If it were my music career though I would err on the side of caution and make sure that I put the time in to get better at my craft just a little bit every day. Perhaps your abilities are just a tweak away from being ready to react with people in a different way. The Plain White Tees released "Hey There Delilah" a few different times before a version of the song finally caught fire.

While I never heard the words come directly out of his mouth Ahmet Ertegun was often quoted as saying "A hit will find a way". I think there is a very real feeling that is not at all subtle when you have hit upon a formula with a song or with a group that is really connecting. I also think that there is no telling when (or if) that moment will ever grow in to being. Until such time keep improving your craft and stop comparing yourself to others - it tends not to do any good. If all the exposure in the world was suddenly heaped on you- you might not be ready for it yet.

### **5a. Black and White Thinking (Day Job)**

For me personally, this is the bitch of the bunch. When I hit a speed bump along the road of life like not getting one of my client's a much needed tour or losing out on a new client to a larger company it is often the case that my thought process and solutions to these problems are far worse than the problems themselves. When I don't close a new client I really wanted my mind doesn't automatically

jump to "Well, I'd better find some more potential clients to pitch" it jumps to "I'm going to wind up dying homeless on the street in a cardboard box and I won't even have any pets to love me". The upside to my having this warped way of thinking is that it is VERY common among musicians and creative folks. Doing what I do it's important that I relate to this issue and believe you me- I understand.

So what does this look like? Well, in my experience there are three very common topics in a musician's existence where this thinking really shines through namely in their relationship to their day job, their relationship to their career trajectory and their relationship to the industry.

### **Your Day Job**

So this is usually among the younger set of musicians but have you ever heard a statement like this? "I just quit my job so I can focus on music full time". Now before you rip my head off- yes, in general this is the plan and we all want to be in a place to do this BUT there is a small matter of timing here that is crucial. This transition needs to be well thought out and handled very delicately and with the understanding that you are going to need some source of funding for your life for at least a few years. This is very much an A to Z move so if you just got your Daisy Rock Acoustic Guitar Starter pack in the mail and wrote your first song about your pet ferret George - welcome to letter A - and don't quit that job yet.

### **Daisy Rock Acoustic Starter Pack - A Reason to Have Kids**

This step is really difficult for many a musician especially if there isn't some kind of structure in place. Few people take in to account the paralyzing effect of being granted nearly limitless options with your day after having been part of a routine (no matter how unpleasant that routine may have been for you). Back to the black and white part- the point is it is very difficult to jump into full time music without having built something. If you work a job and have a music business on the side that is beginning to make less money because you can't break away from the day job it may be time to transition from full time to part time at your main gig or to lobby your boss to let you work from home or to find a job with more flexibility (even if it means less pay). None of this is easy but it is possible.

A steady gig has the obvious benefits of stability and insurance but it also provides a regular source of human contact. People often

forget how isolating self-employment can be and let's not forget- you have to invite someone to your shows, right? I'm all in favor of going to music full time but I am also of the belief when you are shifting a car from first gear to overdrive that you will have a much easier transition by shifting through the intermediate gears.

### **5b. Black and White Thinking (Career Trajectory)**

It's a very odd thing to talk to your average musician about their career goals. As I have mentioned before I often hear things like "getting to the next level" or wanting to "make it". Part of the problem is that statements like these aren't specific enough to be of much use to those who utter them. I'm not here to tell anyone that the music business isn't difficult or isn't filled with frustration - it is absolutely frustrating and the pace at which it moves (especially when you are starting out) makes glaciers look like Ferraris. Many musicians need to get a grip on what the majority of career trajectories look like and stop comparing themselves to so-called overnight successes. The harsh reality is that yes- some seemingly talented people get rich and famous doing music and as much as that can mess with your sense of justice - there is absolutely nothing you can do about it.

I should mention that I don't blame anyone for their perception of what the music business really is and what making a living making music looks like. Pop Culture and Hollywood have done a number on us all by presenting us a constantly whispered message that anyone can be a celebrity for seemingly no reason at all. The VH1 behind the music series (which I loved and still do love) was a classic representation of what is broadcast about a musician's career. It had an hour slot and usually was about 43 minutes long. It usually looked like this:

Minutes 1-4 - Where the musician grew up, who their parents were and how they always wanted to be a singer / guitarist / rockstar / rapper

Minute 5-7: - Quotes from Mom, family and friends about how this person was very driven

Minutes 7-10: some footage from a talent show, the chance meeting of a collaborator or label executive - perhaps some brief mention of the artist gigging in obscurity for an unmentioned period of time and at least once getting close to calling it quits.



Minutes 10 onwards - Minor problems in the studio and then rocket ship ride to superstardom including the obligatory dark period (usually someone close to the subject dying or a drug habit) followed by the redemption of them still being on top - and everything being okay.

The point is it is not an interesting Hollywood story that it took a ton of hard work and someone built their fan base one fan at a time over years and years. It is not an interesting Hollywood story that people slowly but surely got better at the craft and kept moving forward. The hard work, the struggle, the doubt, the waiting for better - this is a great deal of the process but it is presented as little more than a footnote in the folklore of being a successful musician.

What I mean to say is that it is easy to think in absolutes when this is the cultural message we receive every day. Try to avoid this. If you don't avoid this it becomes far too easy to be that older crabby musician or ex musician who has a chip on his or her shoulder about how the business (and everything else) sucks.

Try to remember you are slowly building a business and that as long as you are slowly aligning your work life with your passion for music you are on the right track. Your career isn't nowhere if you aren't drawing 500 people a night nor is it nowhere if you aren't 100% self-sustainable yet. Startup businesses take time and very often the ones that survive are the ones that are flexible enough to adapt to whatever is put into their path. Your career in music might not look like the one you envision. God knows when I was a nineteen and getting my first tattoo I thought I was going to be in a touring band for the rest of my life.

The biggest lesson I think I ever learned about the business or probably even life in general (and it hit me like a ton of bricks) was when I interviewed an old band mate of mine who had gone on to be very successful. He said quite simply "I haven't done anything different in 15 years". It was when I realized that I had never worked towards anything with consistent daily effort for more than 2-3 years without losing my focus that I lost my right to bitch.

### **5c. Black and White Thinking (The Industry)**

Perhaps the most stunning example of black and white thinking for musicians is the way they interact with or react to the industry. A large percentage of the musicians I encounter

either despise the industry for reasons that don't seem to be well articulated or are enamored with the industry and desperate for the attention, validation and information that these executives may or may not really have.

I know I am not stating anything that isn't obvious but sometimes stating the obvious is helpful. Simply put- record label executives, music managers, music supervisors, booking agents and music publishers are really just people like any other group of people. There are those who are brilliant and others who are dim, those who are really good and caring and others who seem to be fashioned out of pure evil. Why mention this? I guess because it's important to have some perspective on what elicits such strong feelings from the musician community. Mind you, I'm not saying anyone's feelings are unjustified but I do believe they could often be tempered with a bit of perspective that might make things feel a bit less personal and unpleasant.

So why demonize the music industry? Yes- there are many people out there who prey on the entrepreneurial hope of musicians- so please be careful. The monetary losses aside it would just take one of these awful experiences to sour anyone on the music business and / or humankind in general. It's a bit more subtle than that though. Everyone knows going in that there are long odds in "making it" in the classic sense of the term otherwise everyone would be a famous musician. That said when artist and executive partnerships don't work out both sides like to play the blame game. Can executives poorly handle and in fact harm an artist's career? Sure. Can music executives do everything right and still have an artist not connect to an audience in a meaningful way? Yes- Absolutely. So is it the fault of the industry if things don't work out?

Even if there were no industry this is a game of long odds so what good would finding someone or something to blame really do for you? One thing is for sure if a partnership doesn't work out and the artist gives up on music as a result (this is far more common than you would think) - that is not the industry's fault.

As for executives who have gatekeeper jobs like music supervisors and A&R executives - well - these people are easy to resent. I know first hand- I've been both. These are weird jobs and it is a difficult balance to even inquire about someone's music without feeling like you are leading them on. People who hold these roles often feel like being too personable isn't in their best interest. It is

overwhelming and uncomfortable to always question what people's motives are when they are being friendly. Yes- these types of people can do significant things for your career and are worth pursuing relationships with provided you are spending much more time connecting with people who buy music and tickets. Keep in mind with gatekeepers that their decision isn't personal. They select artists not always based on talent but on what would fit their needs at that moment in time. Also keep in mind that these people have to spend a huge amount of their time making sure they play politics with clients or senior executives to ensure that they keep their gigs so it's not as comfortable as it may appear from the outside.

Why Be Enamored with the Music Industry? Well, in truth, I don't think you should be enamored with the industry nor do I think that you should believe they have the holy grail of music and marketing promotional ideas for developing artists. I think many of the strengths in the industry are centered around maintaining or growing existing brands rather than developing new ones. This is no one's fault really- one never knows if a new artist will convert fans when exposed to new audiences. This being the case I think many musicians put too much time and effort into looking for partners and industry help rather than in figuring out much of their development on their own.

I remember signing my first band at Lava / Atlantic when I was about twenty-four. I was thrilled because not only did I really believe in the group but I was beyond excited to have a first hand look at what really went in to marketing and promoting a band. I had all the knowledge that a total of two years being an A&R assistant and whatever I learned from self-managing a band I was in at college at my disposal. Through the process I learned the following (and not much else):

1) People and opportunities will flock to an artist that is perceived to be on the cusp of success and the same people and opportunities will vanish when people think a project isn't going anywhere. (The phrase "Success has a thousand fathers" comes to mind)

2) An interesting press story (even ten years ago) is not "Artist releases Record" the best publicists will help pull a story out of the soul of an artist and make it interesting before even making a call to the press.

3) Marketing plans seem to compile existing information, cover very general objectives

and often present more questions than answers.

4) Publishing splits between band members should be made while the money is theoretical. Real money on the table can make things very ugly.

5) The more I learned about radio promotion - the less I understood it and the more I resented it.

6) The vast majority of industry people I encountered at the time had never played a live show after high school let alone gigged regularly. As such, they weren't much help with grass roots and developing artists.

When I say that was all I learned - I'm not exaggerating much. I met some interesting people along the way but as far as the information I found it was a major disappointment. I kept on thinking there was going to be some great reveal. There never was and I have yet to find one even twelve years later. It has been a series of little pieces of information that have been the most helpful to me over the years.

Many people in the industry are capable of guiding an established business. Very few are willing or able to build one from scratch. Long story short (Too Late?) The Industry like most things is never as good as it seems and never as bad as it seems. Industry relationships are worth pursuing but I'm of the opinion that such relationships are of much more value to the artist who has developed even a small following than those who have yet to build one.

*Rick Goetz is a music consultant and musician coach by way of a fifteen year career at major record labels and various online and television projects. For more articles like this you can visit his website [musiciancoaching.com](http://musiciancoaching.com).*

## FINDING A SPONSOR

by Bronson Herrmuth, author of "100 Miles To A Record Deal"

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Success in the music business is about separating yourself from the pack. One of the quickest and most effective ways to do this as an artist is to find sponsors. Unless you live in some unpopulated remote region of the world, then you are probably surrounded by plenty of potential sponsors for your music. Basically any individual, company or corporation doing business in your area is a possible sponsor.

All it really takes is them wanting to sponsor you, and then you feeling good about promoting whatever the product is that they make, sell, or distribute. In a nutshell that is how a sponsorship works. Your sponsor “supports” you and in return you promote their product.

### How does a sponsor support?

A sponsor can support you in many different ways, depending on their product and how active they are in promoting it. To give you a real-life example, my band once had a sponsorship with Budweiser through a regional distributor who we met through a club owner friend after we played his club. We were invited to this distributor's warehouse where we were given t-shirts, ball caps, fancy mugs, stickers, etc., all kinds of Budweiser merchandise including several cases of their beer. They paid to have a big banner made with our logo on it, done very professionally and to our satisfaction. We would hang it up behind us whenever we performed. In one corner of the banner it said “Budweiser presents” with their logo and then our logo, much bigger and more prominent. None of this cost us a dime and being sponsored by Budweiser definitely gave us an edge up on our competition when it came time to get gigs in the clubs.

### How do you find a sponsor for your music?

1. Target the businesses that actively promote their product on your local radio stations or TV, the ones that are already showing their desire and ability to promote their product effectively in your area, city or town.
2. Call or just stop by their location and meet them. Do your homework first to find out who are in charge, then make an appointment and go meet them. Chances are you may already know them if you live in a small town or city. Maybe someone you know, like a friend or a family member, already has a relationship with him or her. Use any and all connections you have to get started.
3. If they run radio spots and you have original music already professionally recorded, see if they are open to using your music for the background music “bed” in their radio promotions.
4. If you are a songwriter, write them a song. This can be tremendously effective as a starting point to approaching a potential sponsor. Walk in and play them a song you wrote about them and their product.

5. Car dealerships are great places to start looking. Many bands are riding down the road right now in a vehicle that was provided by their sponsor. Good chance that their name or logo is professionally painted on that vehicle too, along with their sponsor's. Car dealerships also do lots of promotions and events where they have live music for their customers. Even if you approach them for a sponsorship and they decline, making them aware of you and your music can turn into some great paying gigs on a consistent, long-term basis.
6. Radio stations can be awesome sponsors. Many radio stations produce and promote concerts and in most cases use local or area talent to open these concerts, not to mention all the free radio exposure you can get if they sponsor you, or even if they just like you. If you have a record out, having a radio station for a sponsor can really help you get exposed in your immediate area quickly. Approach the ones that play your style of music.

*Bronson Herrmuth is author of “100 Miles To A Record Deal”. For more details please visit him @ [www.iowahomegrown.com](http://www.iowahomegrown.com), or [www.songrepair.com](http://www.songrepair.com)*

## motivational articles

### BE COMMITTED! YOU'LL NEVER BE FAMOUS IF YOU DON'T SHOW UP!

by Sheena Metal, Music Highway Radio

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Everyone wants to be famous: live in a mansion, drive a sports car, tour the world in your private plane, date a model, float around in the pool while collecting royalties for CD sales, and drink beer right out of your private tap. But not everyone is aware that, with any career that has the potential to end in a bounty of riches and beautiful babes, climbing your way to rock stardom is very hard work.

So, how does your average musical genius go from penniless Pop Tart-eater to Lifestyles of the Rich and Famous? How do you move on up from mom's garage to a deluxe apartment in the sky? What's your first baby step on the Yellow Brick Road to fame and fortune? That's simple...be committed!

It sounds silly, but many a musical boat has sailed with a crestfallen unsigned artist standing confused on the dock, for lack of nothing else but follow-through. Commitment to your deeds and plans is the single most essential skill towards achieving your goal of Ultimate Superstardom. Entertainment is a fickle business and chances don't come along every day. One missed opportunity now could have spiraled into dozens even hundreds of opportunities down the line.

It may be true that talent is a gift you carry with you from birth, but commitment is a learned skill that you need to hone every day. So, how can you make sure that you've got what it takes to gather up your supreme musicality and conquer the universe with it continuously?

The following are a few tips that may help you to make sure that you're truly committing yourself to your musical career on a daily basis:

### **Follow up on all leads**

No matter how insignificant they may seem at the time, it's important to follow up on every musical lead that's thrown your way. Letters, calls and emails should be answered politely and in a timely fashion. New contacts should be logged in your address book for future correspondence. Opportunities should be taken, invites accepted, and chances to network relished. By starting out with just these simple rules you'll watch your resources and mailing list grow. Suddenly you'll have music community friends with which to share your leads and ideas, ask advice, trade experiences, and combine talent and energies. Through these friends, you'll meet new friends and fans and from them even more new connections. Soon, you'll have so many opportunities that your concern will change from lack of opportunity to lack of time in the day to pursue each new chance.

### **Just show up**

Sounds so simple it's stupid, but you'd be surprised how many talented people have fallen by the wayside because they were unable to simply show up. Cancelled gigs, forgotten meetings, and missed auditions say to the Musical Powers That Be, "I'm a huge flake who doesn't think your opportunity is worth a half-hour of my precious time." This is a really bad thing. Entertainment is a small town with a huge memory. Don't give people any reason to think that you're not the person they want to work with, give the job to, book for the gig, sign to their label, write about, talk about, and help any way they can. Remember there are tens of thousands of

musicians waiting to take your place, so step up to the plate and seize each chance with optimism and enthusiasm.

### **Take initiative**

Don't wait for opportunities to come to you. The world is a virtual cornucopia of information, so reach out and nab yourself some chances at stardom. Comb the internet, join music communities, visit open mic nights, take classes and workshops...put yourself out there where there are cool musical happenings and let others know that you can be relied upon and want to be involved. By going out and seizing your own opportunities, you may double, triple, etc. your resources and chances, and expedite your journey to success.

### **Do the best job you can**

As important as it is to show up, it is also essential that you come off efficient, talented, and professional when faced with a new opportunity. Being there is half the battle but the other half is being the best that you can be and impressing industry, press, clubs and your fellow musicians enough to make them want you to be involved in anything and everything they do. Make a commitment to put on the best live show possible, to have a terrific CD, to make a professional presskit, and to spread the word about your music. Be punctual, be courteous, be positive and be fun. Don't give anyone any reason not to work with you again and you'll see that it becomes easier and easier to get what you want for your artistic career.

It really is as easy as simply showing up, following up and giving it your all. Making it in music is not impossible; it's just a lot of elbow grease, a little organization, a bit of strategy, and the simple sculpting of your talent into a marketable commodity. There are thousands of chances offered every day to musicians...reach out and grab them by the handful, make every opportunity your own, get everything you want from this business and when you're richer than Oprah and more famous than Madonna, remember that it was you who made it happen. You were a pro. You showed up. You committed.

*Sheena Metal is a radio host, producer, promoter, music supervisor, consultant, columnist, journalist and musician. Her syndicated radio program, Music Highway Radio, airs on over 700 affiliates to more than 126 million listeners. Her musicians' assistance program, Music Highway, boasts over 10,000 members.*

*She currently promotes numerous live shows weekly in the Los Angeles area, where she resides. For more info:  
[www.sheena-metal.com](http://www.sheena-metal.com)*

## **LEAVE YOUR DRAMA AT HOME: MORE ROCKIN' AND LESS SQUAWKIN'!**

by Sheena Metal, Music Highway Radio

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No matter how we, as human beings, live our lives ... drama happens. And the average musician has more drama than the crazy cat lady down the block has bags of used litter on her porch. At every turn, your average wannabe rockstar has a crazy squeeze, a crazier ex, a harem of would-be lovers, and a gaggle of insane stalkers. Then there's the band drama, manager drama, club drama, fan drama, gear drama, and let's not even get started on the online drama potential. Before you know it, your band makes "Desperate Housewives" look like 60 Minutes.

Certainly, no one ever said that music was going to be a safe, secure and solid profession to get into. Any industry that pays buckets of money to young, pretty people for jumping around and showing off is bound to inspire zaniness to some degree or another. And the creative process often brings with it a certain amount of tortured genius that fuels the seeds of drama like miracle grow on weeds. Plus, there are more than twenty million musicians around the world that are clamoring for maybe a thousand record deals like contestants on "Survivor" running obstacles courses for a single meager chicken wing. If there was a country built on drama, a musician would be its queen.

However, as much as the music biz is filled with glitz and glamour and the stuff that tabloid headlines are made of, it is also a business. And if there's one thing you don't want in the middle of your business, it's drama. There's a reason why doctors don't fight over dying patients about their golf scores, pilots don't announce to a plane full of passengers that they've been dating the stewardess, and the chef doesn't come to tell you he forgot to wash his hands before he cooked your four-star meal...drama does not belong in business. Whether you're aspiring to get a record deal or searching for a cure for cancer, leave your drama at home!

The following are a few tips that will help you to navigate the gossip and erratic turbulence

of life in the music industry without becoming a slave to your own drama:

### **Don't let the internet suck you in**

Every since the invention of the internet, there's been more drama in cyberspace than at a convention for bipolar drag queens. It's easy to gossip and backbite while you can stay anonymous, so the internet has becoming a breeding ground for anyone and everyone with an agenda, an out-of-control jealousy problem, an axe to grind, or an unbelievable ego. Angry, upset, small-minded people with inferiority complexes like size of Shamu will use the internet to poke at your band with a cyber stick. As hard as it may be, you need to learn to let it all roll off your back. As long as they're posting about you, it means they're listening. Removing their inflammatory posts, or replying with similar negativity, feeds the drama until your entire message board is about the trouble-maker on your web site and not your music. What if a potential magazine reviewer or an interested label rep is perusing your page with interest only to find more info about your fight with some internet psycho than about your band? It's not worth risking a loss of opportunity to engage in drama.

### **Drama doesn't belong at your gigs**

When you're at a show, your goal is to make music, engage the audience, sell CDs, and win the club over so that you can play there again and again. People make room in their schedules, pay for gas, and fork out cash for a cover charge and bar priced drinks, just to hear you play your songs for them. They want to be entertained; to get away from the pressures of their real lives and escape into the safety and excitement of your music and lyrics. What they don't need is more drama at your gigs then they get from their office co-workers, their wacky neighbors, and bully at their kids' school combined. Whatever problems you're having in your personal and professional life, keep it away from your fans and your industry contacts or they'll start to remember your shows more for the drama than for the music.

### **Your manager is not your therapist**

Although a manager's professional duties make them almost like the band's parent, don't cry to mommy every time the drummer calls you a name or your girlfriend decides she wants to play the field. There is too much music industry drama that your manager has to deal with every day, to add to his/her troubles by piling a heap of your personal woes on top of his/her already overburdened shoulders. If a club owner stiff's you at the door, tell your manager. If another band records one of your songs without permission,



tell your manager. If your wife compulsively flashes her breasts at your shows, send her to a therapist, but leave your manager out of it.

### **Take the crazymakers off your mailing list**

A lot of damage control can be done simply by eliminating from your mailings the nuts that show up and bring their own boatload of drama. If you know that your ex has never gotten over you, that she's off her meds and that she likes to show up and start swinging at every girl she thinks is catching your eye...why would you invite her to your shows? Comb your address book with a big, black sharpie pen and ink out the stalkers, crazies, attention-getters, and overblown drunkards that will turn each and every one of your gigs into a three-ring circus of drama that you're forced to ringmaster from the stage during your set.

Once you remove the drama from your musical career, you'll find that your gigs go smoother, your website is a more positive place for fans to hang in cyber space, and the industry is less wary about getting behind what you're doing. It may seem silly, but too much drama can often be a warning sign that something is really wrong with a band and you may find that industry types will become gun shy around your band if they're worried that your reputation as drama queen will be more trouble than it's worth. Working in the music business is hard enough. Don't give anybody any reason not to work with you. Be smart. Leave your drama at home and show the industry that your music is what's most important to you and your band.

*Sheena Metal is a radio host, producer, promoter, music supervisor, consultant, columnist, journalist and musician. Her syndicated radio program, Music Highway Radio, airs on over 700 affiliates to more than 126 million listeners. Her musicians' assistance program, Music Highway, boasts over 10,000 members. She currently promotes numerous live shows weekly in the Los Angeles area, where she resides. For more info: [www.sheena-metal.com](http://www.sheena-metal.com)*

## **MUSIC CAREER KILLERS: SURE WAYS TO RUIN YOUR CHANCES OF SUCCESS!**

by Chris Rockett, Music Marketing Classroom

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Every hour of every day, there's a talented musician somewhere on the planet who makes the decision to put their artistic side on the back burner in favor of a more stable career. Although they vow they will pursue music in their spare time, just this simple mindset shift could mean that writing songs and playing gigs will always take a back seat to almost everything else in life.

In a way, it hurts too much to do music when you make this decision because it reminds you of all the dreams you had and gives you the feeling of being a failure. Even the most committed musicians can be ground down to nothing after years of playing empty shows and sending out hundreds of demos with no reply. But once you start to recognize the common mistakes you're making, you will be able to avoid them and get on with the real work of consistently creating music that your fans will appreciate.

**Music Career Killer #1: Not working on your music every day**

You can spend your whole life learning music marketing and still fail if you don't have great music to promote, but you can suck at marketing and still do well if your music is on point. The ideal, though, is to find that perfect balance between marketing and music creation.

Commit to working on your music skills for an hour a day, and do your marketing in any additional time that you can spare. It can help to make this into a little game, so every once in a while go back three months in time on your YouTube channel and see the kinds of songs you were writing then. Over that time period, you can really start to notice an improvement if you work on your music and songwriting daily.

**Music Career Killer #2: Not selling anything**

So many musicians drop the ball at this stage: they produce great music, but then feel bad and don't ask people to take the next step to buy something. Or they do try and sell, but because they don't feel comfortable, they get nervous and do a poor job of it.

So if you don't currently have anything for sale on your website, then don't do anything else until you do. It can be as simple as a \$5 per month subscription to get a song of the week delivered to their inbox.

Music Career Killer #3: Not taking at least one marketing action everyday

I've mentioned the importance of daily progress with your music, but just as important is the power of doing one thing per day that will get your music out into the world and in front of a targeted, interested fan. See, music marketing is like trying to push a car with your bare hands. At first it seems like it won't budge, but then you start to get a little movement and before you know it, you're going at a steady and predictable pace. Once in a while, you'll come across a hill where you can sit back and let things roll, all you have to do is steer. But if you just start to push for five seconds then stop for a few days, then come back and try again for five minutes, you will never build up enough momentum and it will never get easy.

One of the biggest challenges that faces the modern DIY musician is consistency, because things will come up in your life that seem more fun or more important than working on your marketing.

But a little bit of focus on one really cool project can work like magic – all you need to do is remember why it's important and why you decided to start learning music marketing in the first place. For me, it's being able to work for myself and staying out of the rat race. I find that idea always allows me to refocus on what's important.

Music Career Killer #4: Boring your fans and playing it safe

I can't tell you how many times I have seen this happen. You go to a show and see a band rocking out some amazing tunes, but each time you see them, they just continue to play the same old set over and over again. The bottom line is that one set of good songs does not make a career.

Make sure you write something new everyday, and the gems will come by default. You'll be showing people considering an investment into your music (a fan, a record company) that you are making a commitment to being consistently productive now and in the future.

Music Career Killer #5: Playing every crap gig you get offered

When you first start out you might as well play every show that comes along because this is valuable experience, and can even save you some money on the practice room. This becomes a career killer, though, when you continue to play every bad show that comes along in the hopes that it might just convert one new fan.

Playing to empty rooms with no pay not only sucks, but it's also like a cancer to your career because it will destroy your enthusiasm. Next time you get offered a bad show, turn it down and spend the evening connecting working toward getting a killer show. One really good gig is worth a hundred empty venues.

Music Career Killer #6: Getting jealous of other musicians

Nobody feels great about getting jealous, but it's natural right? You work your tail off for months to try and get hits to your site, and then you see another musician getting featured in the press and you know that in one day they are going to get more hits than you got in the last three months. I'm sure you may have felt something like this at some point.

But if you just make a little mindset shift, you can get a new perspective on the success of others. When you see another musician doing something cool like getting played on the radio, getting signed, or getting press, think to yourself, "Cool, that means I have the opportunity to do the same thing, because this guy has just uncovered another opportunity for me to market my own music."

If you go as far as to track other musicians who have a similar fan base to your own using Google Alerts, you can get daily updates offering new opportunities for you to connect with people who will be open to what you do because they just featured something similar. This follow up approach is something I call the "slip stream," because you get to ride on the wave of the work done by other musicians and PR companies and it can take a lot of the guess work out of your marketing.

Shoot For The Tipping Point

There comes a time in the life of every successful musician, when you have added so much value to the world that suddenly your Twitter and Facebook numbers are going up every day, and your website traffic is increasing by itself.

This is the point at which enthusiastic fans start to become like your automatic promotion machine, and if you give up before this ever happens you will never know what it feels like.

Having reached "The Tipping Point" you can scale back your music promotion a little bit, and focus much more on the creative process.

Diligently promoting your music on a regular basis for an extended period of time will bring you great rewards, especially if you keep these killers in mind and stay on your toes.

As Bon Jovi once said ...

"Oh you got to KEEP THE FAITH!!!"

*This article is excerpted from "Music Career Killers! 20 Things That May Be Holding You Back In Your Music Career and How To Fight Back!" a white paper released by Music Marketing Classroom.com. The mission of the Music Marketing Classroom is to empower musicians to create a sustainable income, even with a modest music career, and teaches a simple four-step marketing philosophy to achieve that goal. Learn more at MusicMarketingClassroom.com*

## DEALING WITH REJECTION IN THE MUSIC BUSINESS

by Suzanne Glass, Indie-Music.com

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Being a musician, by and large, is a rewarding thing. We get to indulge our muse, spend time with other artistic types, and hear a lot of great sounds. When it comes to jobs, being a musician is great work if you can get it. Unfortunately, it's not all roses. The tremendous amount of competition makes it likely that we will sometimes lose a gig, get fired from a band, or be turned down for a songwriting award. Most of us handle the rejections pretty well most of the time.

However, problems can start to occur if you have a run of too many rejections in too short a time. Musicians may begin to doubt their talent, commitment, and even sanity when repeatedly slapped with "no's".

## Tips to help you through the hard times:

1. Believe in your music and yourself. People tell you this all the time, and you need to take it seriously. Many mega-hit songs were repeatedly rejected before someone decided to release them to become #1 hits. Believe that your talent is unique, and continue to pursue your own musical path.
2. If you hear the same type of rejection often, ("You need to pick up your choruses" or "Work on your pitch"), you may want to look into the criticism. Having an open mind may help you improve your craft.
3. If you get down on music, take some time out. Go to the beach, the mountains, or your backyard, and do something enjoyable that has nothing to do with music.
4. Give yourself the freedom to quit. This may sound contradictory, though by giving you a mental "out", it can help diffuse the pressure when nothing is going right. Chances are you won't quit, but you will know you have a choice.
5. Go jam with some musician friends who do it just for fun, and forget the business. People who strictly do music as a hobby sometimes have a positive energy that will help your jaded, negative energy slip away, and bring you back to the joy of playing music.
6. If you are in a situation where you can't find a band to jam with, and have excess creative energy, consider another type of art or craft. Doing something creative, even though it's not music, will keep your creative juices flowing. Painting, carving, candle making - activities like these may also open your creative flow and inspire you musically.
7. If the problem is due to a conflict in your band, talk it out honestly with the people involved instead of keeping it to yourself and becoming cynical. Conflicts are common in bands (and every other kind of group), and surviving them means the difference between success and failure, since most bands will break up if the unresolved conflicts are not addressed. It will NOT be a pleasant experience.
8. Write a song about it. Who knows, it might be a masterpiece.
9. Think back on all your successes and good times in music, and focus on that energy. Try to balance the current bad times by realizing it's all part of the flow.

10. If you can't kick the down feelings in a few weeks, don't hesitate to talk to your doctor. Artists are known to have high rates of depression and stress-related illnesses, and today there are many new treatments. Make sure you follow a healthy diet and get some exercise.

Getting through those periods when "music sucks" is an experience all musicians have been through at one time or another. Those that master the down times go on to have productive musical careers. Those that get bogged down in the problems and become bitter are doomed to less happy - and maybe less musical - futures.

*Suzanne Glass was the founder of Indie-Music.com, one of the Internet's premier musician websites. The company offers thousands of resources and contacts to achieve success in the music industry, including venues, labels, radio, media, studios, and band listings, plus articles, interviews, and reviews of indie music. Contact: [www.indie-music.com](http://www.indie-music.com)*

## BABY STEPS AND THE ROAD TO SUCCESS

By Chris Standring, A&R Online

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*"If you can achieve one successful thing a day to help your music career on the right path then you are on the right track".*

It's very easy to sit at home and get frustrated with the apparent lack of forward movement in your music career. Especially when you know in your heart that you have what it takes to succeed. It's very easy to get discouraged, for the simple reason that it seems "you are only as good as your last event". Musicians and actors are similar in that we like the highs that our performances give us. We thrive on the exhilaration. It's like a drug. When it goes away we want it again.

### All about perception

Gearing up to a live event is exciting. We can talk it up to friends and fans, promote it the best way we know how and enjoy the thrill of the performance itself. Then it is over and there may be a lull between events. It can seem like your career is going nowhere. It's very easy to feel that. However, other people's perception may be entirely different and probably is.

The music business is all about perception. It is based on hype and salesmanship ability. I wish it was different but it is not and will never ever be. If your band is perceived to be doing well then people will talk. If your band is perceived to be on the way out then people will also talk. If your band is doing nothing, nobody will talk! It is therefore extremely important that you keep the hype factor up. This is one of the things you need to be focusing on between events. Sit back and think about what you clearly have achieved so far in your career. Think about the things that were absolutely in your control.

### Take baby steps

We are constantly bombarded with new creative marketing ideas, most of them excellent, inventive and effective. However, the ideas that you personally will primarily adopt are those ideas that you are totally comfortable with. These are the things that you will make a priority. It's too easy to get overwhelmed with new promotional ideas so we put them off and resort to the things we know we can do. I have two words to give you. BABY STEPS.

### How not to get overwhelmed

It's just too damn hard to do every new promotional idea to get your band to the next level at the same time. This is especially true, if you don't have a team of people working with you. Start by doing just one thing today. If you can achieve one successful thing a day to help your music career on the right path then you are on the right track. So the key is to pick one thing, and do it today!

### Increase your fan-base

The only way you can get successful as an independent artist is by letting people know you exist. So ask yourself for example, "What can I do today to expand my fan-base?" Well, there are infinite possibilities. Let's say you want to increase your e-mail database. Think about the most effective ways you can do that. The most effective ways to build a database, (but more importantly get those people to be fans and come to shows), is to personally get to know them. So start with friends, have them refer their friends, and so on. Hand out flyers and sample CD's or tapes to everyone you know. (Make sure you have a good stack in your car.) Grab business cards of all the people you meet and get their e-mail addresses. Send them a very personal e-mail asking them if they would be interested to know about your band.

## **An overview**

Be creative, DO something that you know you can personally do, to expand other people's awareness of you. It takes a good amount of time but you can help yourself by really being active and productive.

Read everything you can about promoting your own shows and do the things that you are most comfortable doing, the things that you know you can be effective at. Then, step out and try something new.

Do one thing a day to help get to where you want to be, and at the end of each week think about what you have achieved. There is nothing that fuels drive, more than drive itself. There's nothing that fuels lethargy more than sitting at home wishing you were successful and doing little about it!

It can be extremely overwhelming when there seems such a long way to go. So take it one step at a time. That's all truly successful people ever did.

*Chris Standring is the CEO and founder of A&R Online [www.aandronline.com](http://www.aandronline.com)). He is also a contemporary jazz guitarist presently signed to Mesa/Bluemoon Records. The music is marketed at NAC and Urban AC radio. For more info visit Chris @ [www.chrisstandring.com](http://www.chrisstandring.com)*

## **SO HOW DO WE MAKE OUR DREAM BECOME REALITY?**

by Janet Fisher, Director of Goodnight Kiss Music

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### **Define the dream**

What is it you are actually trying to do? Be the world's best writer? Become a megastar performer? Lead the church choir? Own a record label that records other acts? You would not believe how many writer/artists come to me, saying they just want to do "something" in the Music Industry. Sorry, you have to specialize a bit more than that!

Sit down with paper and pen. Define EXACTLY what it is in your heart that you dream of. (Hint, the bigger the dream, the harder to achieve... but as long as you are prepared to give what it takes, you'll find a place in the scheme of things.

### **Research the dream**

Let's say you decided that you want to be a great writer, who is successfully cut on the charts, and makes a lot of money. Do you know what the real charts are? Who's on them currently? What labels are consistently

charted? What are the styles of the top ten successes been in the last two years?

Do you know what the actual elements of a great standard song are? Can you name the top sellers of all time in your genre, or the top sellers of the current year? How did they attain success? Do you hone your skills and knowledge whenever you have a chance? Can you make the presentation of your art a commercial reality? Not just WILL you, CAN you?

### **Practice the dream**

Go do 150 sit ups without practice. Go write a great song without practice. You have to practice (i.e., actually write) everyday, just like you would with any improvement program. If the newest song you are showing is old, you are not competing as a writer.

### **Rewrite the dream**

If something doesn't go the exact direction you thought it should have, rewrite the situation. If it's the song that has flaws, rewrite it until they are gone. If it's the voice, get some training.

If it's the gig, create one that works for you (when I was playing gigs in KCMO, I went to the Plaza, to nice places that DIDN'T have entertainment. I'd offer the owner a free evening of music, if he liked it, I'd work X amount of weekends for X amount per night. I almost always got the gig, partly because I was prepared, partly because few can resist something for nothing and not sense some obligatory return. (Most wanted entertainment, but had no idea they could afford it. For me, it was a way to go).

If you find that you thought you wanted the big dream, but then you realize that your dream didn't include all the nonsense that goes along with one of those in exchange for your "other dream(s)", (perhaps your family or job?), it is TOTALLY alright to adapt your dreams to accommodate each other. Unfortunately, some dreams require 24 hour dedication to maintain (ask any professional who is a megastar in their field.)

### **Pursue the dream**

Don't give up. That's the first thing anyone successful who is giving advice says, so it MUST be true. Take advantage of all opportunities, work, work, and work at it!

### **Live the dream**

Remember that each time you sing, play, write, perform, discuss, pitch, etc., you are creating a reality that supports your dream. Don't forget to applaud the little steps, as well



as the big. You write a birthday song for your sister-in-law, and it makes her cry with your kindness. Your song is used in a campaign for adoption, and though it didn't earn a dime, it was perfect, and said so much to so many. A peer complimented your writing at a recent song pitch. You were the hit of the community musical. It all matters. All these things make us more professional, and give us the reasons for doing the work. They are as important as the royalties, and enrich our life of music. Don't overlook them.

### **Appreciate your dream**

Did you know that most of your little steps are someone else's big dream? Some people would give a great deal to have the opportunity to perform ONE karaoke song in front of an audience, or have anyone use a song for any reason. Appreciate the skills and opportunities you have been blessed with, and that you might even have a dream.

*Janet Fisher is Managing Director of Goodnight Kiss Music (BMI) [www.goodnightkiss.com](http://www.goodnightkiss.com), along with its sister company, Scene Stealer Music (ASCAP). Both are Music Publishers dedicated to supplying the Entertainment Industries with perfect material for any musical need. Janet is also an author in, and the editor of "Music horror Stories", a collection of gruesome, true tales as told by innocent victims seeking a career in the music business". Contact: [janet@goodnightkiss.com](mailto:janet@goodnightkiss.com)*

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