



FROM THE AUTHOR OF TOUR:SMART AND  
WELCOME TO THE MUSIC BUSINESS, YOU'RE F★★KED!

# BAND:SMART

SUCCEED IN THE MUSIC BUSINESS ON YOUR OWN TERMS

ARTIST, EDUCATOR, LABEL OWNER AND ENTREPRENEUR

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**MARTIN ATKINS**  
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WITH ADVICE FROM OVER 100 INDUSTRY PROFESSIONALS ON:

WHY YOUR BAND ISN'T PLAYING THAT FESTIVAL  
A BETTER LIVE SHOW ★ FROM SOUND CHECK TO ENCORE  
BOOKING YOURSELF ★ THE GLORIOUS HEADACHE  
MAKE YOUR SHOW AN EVENT ★ METHODS OF DISTRIBUTION  
MARKETING ★ HOW TO MAKE AN ADDITIONAL \$100K NEXT YEAR  
REVENUE STREAMS ★ A HANDS-ON APPROACH TO MERCHANDISING  
GIVING A GOOD INTERVIEW ★ HOW TO GET SIGNED & WHY YOU DON'T NEED TO

NO ONE KNOWS THE MUSIC INDUSTRY  
BETTER THAN MARTIN ATKINS. - DISC MAKERS

# **BAND:SMART**

**SUCCEED IN THE MUSIC BUSINESS ON YOUR OWN TERMS**

**★ ★ ★ MARTIN ATKINS ★ ★ ★**

*First Physical Edition*



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**FOR MY FAMILY:**

Katrina, Ian, Harrison, Sidney & Cole Vincent,  
my Mum, Jan and Porridge, too.



# THANK YOU

When I finished my first book, Tour:Smart, I FedEx-ed it to my dad over in England. He had been ill for many years, and I was frightened at the time that he might not survive long enough to see his son actually write a fucking book. No such worries now. Unfortunately, he passed a few years ago but I hope some of his wisdom is in here. He introduced me to the world of Dale Carnegie and so much more that I slowly keep realizing, so, thanks for that Dad. I miss you every day.

To all of the people who have sat down with me, on the phone or in person, or who have taken the time to enlighten me and welcomed myself and my family into their lives, I thank you so very much. To everyone who contributed, not just to this book, but to my education (and I hope yours), thank you.

Six years is a lot of time to be working on anything, but weirdly it gave me the space to make this more, I hope, than a hilarious “how to MySpace” and come up with a more timeless useful book of ideas that work in any situation.

I've received some terrific help from the staff and students at Madison Media Institute and at SAE Chicago. Campus Director James Thomas and the entire SAE North American team have shown nothing but unhesitating support, which is so very much appreciated.

Chris Ruppenthal has corralled interns, assisted with the Kickstarter and contributed articles himself along the way through really large pieces of this.

Katie Crain was always there as a sounding board for me, as well as with dealing with interns at Invisible and countless "last SXSW before we publish" years, too.

Joanna Quargnali-Linsley waded in fearlessly, too. Thank you.

My manager Susan Ferris will simply not believe that this is done! Thank you all for so much support.

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A lot, lot, lot of people have put sweat and time and care and love into this thing and, if you've seen my crowdfunding lecture, you'll know that not everyone made it to the other side.

It was always my idea that Eric McNary would lay this out. He did such an amazing job on [Welcome To The Music Business... You're Fucked!](#) We got a little bit of the way in before he was diagnosed with bile duct cancer. We had such a great time laying out Wendy Day's piece. Thank you Eric — you enabled me to see how fuelling and powerful this relationship could be. Diana McNary was glorious and graceful as we transitioned slowly and sadly forwards after you left us.

Jen Bachelder picked up the torch after Kelly Paulsen-Robbins ran with it for a while. I change and write as I go, with ideas from words, creating pictures and ideas that clarify or necessitate more writing and constant new ideas and contributions from wherever I am or whoever I am lucky enough to be hanging with. What a fucking nightmare that must be – so thank you Jen for dealing with me in accelerated "this is the last week for sure mode" for over two years and allowing me to keep changing and adding until this very last day. That is priceless for an a.d.d. scattered plate-spinner like myself. Priceless. Thank you, Jen.

A much needed boost towards the end of this as Bob Boilen asked me to participate in a small piece every couple of weeks for the All Songs Considered blog for NPR. Of course, a distraction and change causing creativity, but all good and a much needed push towards this finish line. Thank you.

Lastly, to everyone that does amazing shit when they shouldn't (and others couldn't). To everyone that conjures magic out of a basket of shit — thank you for inspiring me, making me and others realize that anything really is possible, and keeping possibility alive.

Thank you all so very very much.

Martin

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The music business is soup.  
And you're a fork.



# A NOTE FROM MARTIN ATKINS

## TIME MAKES ALL THE DIFFERENCE.

For an artist just starting out, the wall of death you are facing is just time — nothing, **nothing** is very complicated. It's just time. Lack of time leads to lack of attention to detail and stupid career bending mistakes. *Time* and attention make all the difference.

The guy with the book that tells you about success, hit singles, fast cars and swimming pools paid for his a long time ago. He's re-telling how he did it. It's a memoir, not a battle plan. The guy that tells you, "You *must* have an amazing collection of black and white photographs" is related to a photographer or selling photographic paper on the side. Get it, yet?

Listen to yourself in all of this: you'll need to read between the lines of all of the books that are out there about the music business (28,716 at last count). **Be brave.**

Look in the bathroom mirror... get some paper towels and Windex, clean off the toothpaste snowstorm, look at the half-empty bottle of Adderall, wonder where they all went, spray some cologne, close the door, and LOOK, IT'S YOU!

## DON'T WAIT TO BE DISCOVERED. DISCOVER YOURSELF.

Carry your own gear, help other people, and shut the fuck<sup>™</sup> up occasionally. At some point you'll find yourself up shit creek reluctant to use your 1960s humbucker sunburst Gibson Les Paul as a paddle in case the dirty, shit-filled water tarnishes the finish before you are even halfway through the payments. The real ones just do it. They bleed and cry and whatever the insurmountable obstacles, they make it happen on whatever level they can. Looking like you're making it on a higher level than you are isn't making it at all. You've just swapped out your green belt in some sleazy martial arts laundry mistake, and every day you wear it tarnishes the belt that you actually do have.

You just have to work 10 times harder than you thought you ever would to do anything. There are 3 to 5 million bands on Facebook, ReverbNation, and whatever else. In the past, if you wanted to release music, you needed to have \$5,000-\$10,000, be independently wealthy, or injured in a car accident to be able to afford to do that. Now, it's great that everybody can make music and put it up on the internet, but if you want to get some attention and play shows you have to be working harder and smarter than ever.

Before anything else, take responsibility for your music; don't blame anybody for anything. It's just too easy to blame a bad manager, a lame agent, a crappy record label. You can blame all kinds of things; you can blame the weather, "it was snowing in Denver." You played there on December 23rd you idiot, of course it was snowing! Pay attention, stop blaming, take responsibility, and work 9 days a week, 28 hours a day.

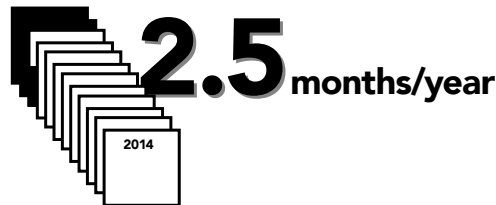
There is no right or wrong:

## THERE ARE NO RULES EXCEPT THE RULES YOU IMPOSE UPON YOURSELF.

<sup>™</sup>*This fuck brought to you by Boon Sheridan.*



Photo: Sudarshan Bhat



Remove the barriers between you, your songs and your recordings. Remove the barriers between you and your fans, and where there is a barrier that you can't remove, put your fingerprints and your DNA all over it.

If you're up at 5am you are 5 hours ahead of your arch rival (ironically, the lead singer of The Arch Rivals), the person that gets up at 10am. It may not seem like much but at the end of the week you're now 35 hours ahead of that rival, and 1,820 hours ahead by the end of the year. So get the fuck out of bed!

Is there a limit to where this can go?

If you choose to record unlistenable horrible songs with controversial or offensive (whatever that is) content then, in terms of the size of your audience — there is a limit. **It is all up to you.** (I believe Henry Ford was correct when he said "whether you believe you can or you can't — both are true.") Now, more than ever, the promise of the punk rock, post punk, industrial, hip hop, black metal, alt country, D.I.Y., EDM, chip tune, whatever, revolution is tangible, — REAL.

## **YOU ARE IN CHARGE OF ALL ASPECTS OF THE EVOLUTION OF YOUR SONGS, YOUR IDEAS AND, ULTIMATELY, YOUR CAREER.**

You are now connected directly to your audience — they just don't know it yet.

As things grow, you will learn not only the things that can be delegated and the way to communicate those tasks, but you will also begin to learn who can be trusted with them.



There's no such thing as traditional efficiencies when dealing with the world of art and music.

As I have said many times, success, or, sorry, **\$UCCESS!** boils down to one simple necessity — the ability to sustain, keep going: left foot, right foot, left foot, right foot, barefoot, nail, blood, emergency room, tetanus shot, wheelchair, recovery, left foot, right foot.

The nature of success is having the drive, stamina, sustained concentration, calloused palms, and psyche to triumph though all of the crap and keep looking into the distance: for another great show, a heart fuelling cheer, another t-shirt sale, or an enthusiastic word from a fan. How many of those people will be the reason your show succeeds three years from now? Maybe one of them will be your manager, merch person, or partner.

How many bands would be grateful for \$800? That's the amount of tour support the label that wouldn't sign you wouldn't give you. You can save that by planning, having a larger range of merch, and a tip jar over a couple of weeks. There are plenty of things you need to waste money on as you develop as an artist: a huge paper mache octopus that seemed like a good idea but never made it back into the van after the first 'beware of the octopus' CD release party, the new audio effect, the ridiculously expensive lighting that made everyone look worse, the badly conceived bagpipe overdub on track three. But none of these are really a waste in the technical sense — each experience is a valuable part of your creative journey. Fail faster!

Everyone is saying you don't need a label anymore. Well, duh! You never have! Build your own Great Wall of China one brick at a time. And, for some, this IS inspiring, this idea that you can "Bob The Builder" the fuck out of your own career. Can we do it? Well, as the post industrial German rock band would say, "Yes, we're Can!"

By all means, read this book. There's some good shit in it! Or just hang around in the store here for a while and write down some good bits. If you can't afford it, just put it in your pocket and steal it. No one will notice. If they do, you can blame it on me and point to this, but let's make that the last of the blaming. Now, get the fuck on with creating your own success, you wonderful motherfucker!

Peace, love, respect.

Martin Atkins

Never mind the other shit.

Father of four!

**I saw U2 in 1980 at a club in London called the Rock Garden. Me, U2 and 16 other people And 20 years later — bang! Overnight sensation!**

What would a transformed, sustainable, just, and profitable music business look like? That's the only question we ask here. It doesn't matter what's broken, what doesn't work, how screwed up it is that everyone's downloading for free or... it's "what will work?" Because, people love music, more than ever. They want to be around music, they love artists, they connect with artists more than ever, music is more a part of people's lives, and we have analytical proof that that's true. How do we monetize that new business in a brand new way? We have to pretty much forget we were ever in the record business.

This is possible. This new business is possible.

- Tom Silverman



# 01 SUCCESS

I thought that success was a house with a pool in LA flanked with palm trees. It really confused me when we had a worldwide hit single and I didn't feel very good. It took a while to realize I just wasn't happy. At that point it's tough to get advice from anyone... you have to trust whatever internal barometer you have.

It's like: a symphony between the music, the marketing, the imagination, the stage show, the ability of the band to promote themselves/make friends/be nice, the popularity of their chosen genre and the availability of transportation. It's teamwork except you, the person reading this, you are all of the team members and there's no high in team.

I'm not saying 'don't have ambition' — you **HAVE** to have it. But if your head is always looking up into the clouds, then you'll miss the **NEXT** step — which is just a little bit higher than the place you are standing right now.

**When it gets good...  
it gets worse.**

*— Jeanette Turner*

**I DON'T KNOW how you can put 20,000 people in a stadium**, but I know that if there were two people sitting on a fictitious couch in the corner of the room right now, that if you were to make friends with them, or at least make contact, have a conversation, exchange your music, a CD, a shirt, a download card whatever for an email address — then all you need to do is **THIS VERY THING** 9,999 more times and you have your 20,000 people!

This would also fall into the motivational poster category of “it's not the destination, it's the free tickets to see Journey.”

Of course, this means that packed in your new shiny diversified skill set, people skills needs to be in there. Don't fool yourself — people aren't always born with these skills. The more you practice, the better you will become at anything. I'm *very* shy and look at me — sitting alone in a basement typing!

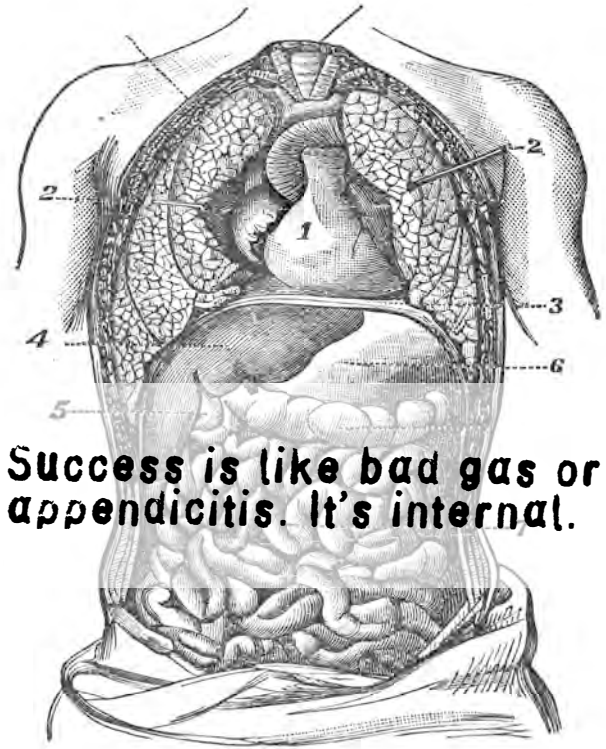
If you've seen my lectures you'll know that this is the point where I play my home movies of the Great Wall of China, a terrific metaphor for success. On the one hand, you can stand off to a distance, hands on hips shaking your head, wondering how on earth they created this amazing 7th wonder of the world, *or* you can realize that it's just a fucking pile of bricks.

#### **Start your own pile of bricks.**

After 6 or 7 months you'll have a bit of a wall going on and people will stop and ask ‘what the FUCK are you doing?’ and you can answer with pride! “I'm building the Great Wall of China #2: The squeekquel!”

They'll say, “This is ridiculous,” “You are an idiot” and “I preferred you when you were drinking” and then they'll ask, “How can I help?”

Because people will help with wild crazy crusades that no sane individual would undertake. When everything makes perfect sense, then all you have is a business plan, and who gives a shit about that!



**Success is like bad gas or appendicitis. It's internal.**

**You have to go 1 by 1 – just like an artist in a gallery.**

– Chuck D

**Don't listen to people who say it is uncool for an artist to understand their business. Allowing yourself to get ripped off because you preferred to wallow in ignorance, is certainly not rock'n'roll.**

– Olaf Furniss

Don't be intimidated by the road ahead. As an independent today it's easy to be overwhelmed with all the tasks ahead. Don't be. How do you eat an elephant? One bite at a time. You build your list one fan at a time. Sell them one CD at a time. There are no magic bullets. Be patient, work hard, and stay passionate.

- Tony van Veen

The ONLY reason to attempt to make a living as a musician is because you can't help yourself. You must be so passionate about your craft that driving 4-10 hours per day every day, eating bad road food, sleeping on cold floors, not getting 1/2 the sleep you need, getting screwed over again and again, etc., doesn't faze you. If you have a decent day job and can't afford to leave for months on end to tour, then admit to yourself now that your music is your hobby, not your profession. Real labels can only afford to work with serious musicians. You will lose money the first few years; if you do everything right and have luck on your side, you could break even the next few years; if you continue to do everything perfectly and get insanely lucky, you may earn a living from your music. It will be 97% grind and 3% glamour. It will never be an easy life.

- Nan Warshaw

## **ONE OF THE LARGEST OBSTACLES TO YOUR SUCCESS MIGHT BE YOU?!?**

How tragic is it, with all of the obstacles to overcome (finances, shyness, geography, technical stuff, workload stuff) that one of the largest obstacles to your success might be YOU?!? I have seen this so many times it's not funny anymore – I have also been this person many times. I could hide behind the fact that I'm shy and sometimes I know that people take the manifestations of shyness as an aloofness – which sucks! BUT, be careful that your insecurities don't manifest themselves as some kind of raucous asshole type behavior because you think that's how rockstars act – the real stars are NICE to people, they connect with their fans – that's all that's left, really, and the essence of all of this – the connection – with you, the music, the lyrics, whatever – you can either help it along – or destroy it.

### **You have to create a FACE TIME CONTINUUM!**

Unfortunately, any opportunities (to fail or shine) will be accompanied and multiplied by the x-factor, karma, and Murphy's Law.

According to Nan Warshaw, "It will be 97% grind and 3% glamour."

Ouch.

I hope this all helps. So far, from a scientific standpoint, it looks like it boils down to this: Don't start a band whatever you do. If you won't listen to me and you do start a band, then do *not* get in a van, a bus, or god forbid a *plane*. Don't do drugs, a sandwich, or anyone else's girlfriend. Make sure you hire a lawyer (or two!) before you begin playing any instrument. Don't leave the country. Don't write any songs and for fuck's sake don't come up with a bandname, an album cover, or t-shirt design.

**It's not enough just to be great.  
Being great is the price of entry.**

- Mike Bailey

Remember, for a long time, it looked like Ginger Spice leaving the Spice Girls was the end. But, now they are reunited and better than ever... just remember that when everything seems hopeless!

Don't be in a hurry. So many people are aiming for something huge like "I want this album to be #1!" People think in very grandiose, massively successful terms, but really, sometimes all you need in any business is just the ability to get through to next week and the week after and to do it again and to do another show and to record another song and if you can keep doing that, you keep getting incrementally better and you'll eventually get to where you can be: learning, growing along the way.

**Train for success.** People train for everything! Marathons, driving tests, hotdog-eating competitions! Why on earth wouldn't you train for something as huge, as dangerous, as awe inspiring, and as potentially rewarding as this? Anything, except perhaps the economy, can be fixed.

Success often has less to do with number of fans and more to do with an artist's ability to engage and interact with their fan base.

– Benji Rogers

Kemmons Wilson, who started Holiday Inn said, "You walk through the doors that are open." Sounds sensible, so check yourself. You might be hammering on the **one** door that you think is right for you — the right door is the one you can get open.

Remember that the definition of a successful musician is one who is making a living playing music. That's a great goal. Like with high school football players trying to become NFL players, one in a hundred thousand makes it. But in music there are minor leagues. If you can make a living playing music you love for a 100 people in a bar, then you're a success. You're just not a star.

– Bruce Iglauer

**Success is an incremental paper trail of ticket stubs and the echo of applause one person at a time, until, magically, you find the tipping point.**





*Hotel Steps, San Diego*

**Do what you love. Do NOT hedge your bets and do NOT doom yourself with a back-up plan — just GO FOR IT! Listen to, have faith in your inner voice: it doesn't lie.**

*– David Rosen*



# Bomb Sniffing Dogs: Trust Yourself!

Ever been to the airport and the ATF (Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms, and Explosives) person comes around with the cute dog and you KNOW you don't have any drugs in your bag but what if someone put them there?

The scenario races ahead in your mind...they have dogs that do everything these days. Guide dogs, Kim Kardashian missing underwear sniffing dogs and more.

Just like the old black and white movies-- they give the dog a quick sniff and off they go!



Well, that's how YOUR instincts will be after paying attention to this stuff- YOUR body will become an instrument that will let you know (if you let it) when a situation is right or wrong - despite what any regular, familiar, rational indicators might tell you.

Sometimes in a band - the problem with a democratic set up is that we are robbed of finely tuned instincts. Right now our old dog Porridge is in the basement - somehow he senses a thunderstorm coming 20 minutes before we see it materialize - same thing happened with animals out in California and earthquakes.

*Let's see the democratic band -not in the studio but mysteriously transplanted to the world of the ATF -on the case of the Library Bomber- let's see how the situation unfolds...*



THE DOG IS BARKING!!

WELL, WAS IT THE BOMB BARK OR WAS HE BARKING JUST BECAUSE HE SAW SOMETHING THAT FREAKED HIM OUT?

WHAT'S GOING ON?

The dog just barked.

Was it the bomb bark?

I'm not sure.

...OK, well, let's send it back a few times and keep a log of what happens each time, then we'll take a vote on the -

When the bomb-sniffing dog barks ONCE, you fucking run. Pay more attention to your internal strawberry alarm clock - it's your most valuable instrument

Yeah, I know, Malcolm Gladwell explains all of this more thoroughly in his book BLINK - well worth the read.

**YARK!  
YARK!  
YARK!**

**BARK!  
BARK!  
BARK!**

# VIKING LAW: ACT LIKE A VIKING

The Vikings roamed the plains from the 700's or so to the 1100's. Let's have a huge laugh and see what crazy ideas they had so we can laugh, re-assure ourselves that moving forward is the way to go. The past is bad and a little bit smelly and that we are modern, evolved, and know an awful lot...

## BE BRAVE AND AGGRESSIVE

- Be Direct
- Grab All Opportunities
- Use Varying Methods of Attack
- Be Versatile and Agile
- Attack One Target at a Time
- Don't Plan Everything in Detail
- Use Top Quality Weapons

## BE PREPARED

- Keep Weapons in Good Shape
- Keep in Shape
- Find Good Battle Comrades
- Agree on Important Points
- Choose ONE Chief

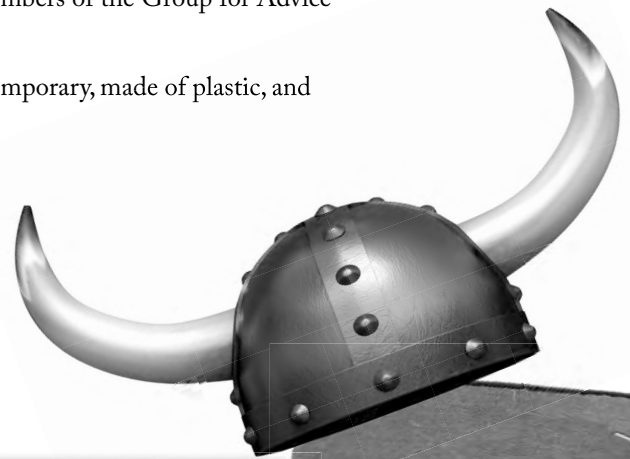
## BE A GOOD MERCHANT

- Find Out What the Market Needs
- Don't Promise What You Can't Keep
- Don't Demand Overpayment
- Arrange Things So That You Can Return

## KEEP THE CAMP IN ORDER

- Keep Things Tidy and Organized
- Arrange Enjoyable Activities Which Strengthen The Group
- Make Sure Everybody Does Useful Work
- Consult All Members of the Group for Advice

Then oh, shit... be like a Viking! I don't mean get the hat. That's external, temporary, made of plastic, and easily removed... I mean inside.



Who gives the best advice? My intuition.

– Gary Vaynerchuk

It's much easier to  
fix the music than  
the attitude.

If you want to be happy in showbiz (or any creative field), listen to that voice inside you. Even if it says “Fuck it” sometimes. Work with your friends. Avoid chasing fame or money. Just do what you want to do, when and how you want to do it. And if it's not making you happy, quit. Quit hard, and quit often. Eventually you'll end up somewhere that you never want to leave.

– Bobcat Goldthwait



# CHECK YOUR HEAD!

## ANTHONY SPINA



### CHECK YOURSELF:

Take a mental inventory of yourself, your band, your surroundings and your life. Right now. If any of it is for even a split second Strugs, cut it or change it. What is Strugs? Excellent question. To find the answer it is easier to define what being Non-Strugs means. A wise gentleman by the name of Corey Smith defined Non-Strugs as “perpetually aspiring to not hurt in all aspects of one’s life.” So before you even begin to read further you must rid yourself, your band, your life or anything that could be negatively affecting your success. Or in Smith’s words, would be considered Strugs. This can be a band member who is a complainer or doesn’t show up to practice, not believing and fully committing to being awesome all the time or a general lack of motivation, commitment and the overall understanding that you are ready to take over the fucking world. Assess your current scene, wherever that may be.

**Don’t look at where you fit into the spectrum, create your own place.** Stand up, stand out. Don’t worry about whatever everyone else is doing. Authenticity always wins. But...

### THE INTER-WEBS:

If you are a band now you are coming of age at one of the most unique times in music history. The classic “play as many shows as you can, build up a local following and wait for a label to pick you up” is dead. The Internet is the best thing to happen to the music industry, ever. Because it puts the power back in your hands. Technology has made it easy and affordable to record your own music. The Internet has made it easy to get your music “out there.” But putting your music on the Internet is just the beginning.

You now have access to so many different forms of media on the Internet it can be overwhelming. Take videos of you playing live. At a show, on the streets, in the back of a car, anywhere! Post that on YouTube, etc. and get people involved. Put a face to your music. Do behind the scenes videos, interviews, “A Day in the Life”, etc. Use your social media to connect it all. If you consistently and uniquely engage your fan base and potential fan base on the Internet, in person and everywhere in-between, they become walking promoters for that band that you gotta check out (yours).



When you want to succeed as much as you want to breathe, then you will be successful.

– Eric Thomas

# IN CASE OF PANIC ATTACK, BREATHE INTO BAG

## KYLEE SWENSON GORDON

I have a hard time taking my own advice on this, but it's important to remember the high you feel from the wins (e.g. playing a music festival) and do your best to forget the losses (some dis from a blogger). In fact, most people won't even pay attention, but for you — the unfortunate target — it's easy to sulk, let it fester and lose sleep over it. Like a board game that sends you two spaces forward, five spaces back, seven spaces forward and then straight to jail, you will sometimes wonder if you will ever... you know... "make it." But is that the point, or is it that you are creating music that people appreciate?

During a particularly stressful time, a friend gave me a paper bag with these words written on it: "In case of panic attack, breathe into bag until you just don't give a crap." I highly recommend doing something stupidly funny that helps take the edge off of the seriousness of it all. Then the next time something goes wrong — whether it's your van breaking down in Lemmon, South Dakota or just something that pokes at your ego — breathe into the bag. And most importantly, don't quit!



Chaos is a ladder.

– *Game of Thrones*

If you are going to try – go all the way.

– *Charles Bukowski*

**Every scary thing that you have ever heard about the music business is true.** If there is any other work that you would be happy doing, you should strongly consider going that way. The musician's life is filled with pitfalls and sketchy characters, who can at least be entertaining. Worse than that is the mainstream music industry, which is built to a large extent on the near or complete ignorance of one party in the transaction- the artist.

The many difficulties, and the often limited practical and financial realities tend to select for the obsessed, and those who are in it for the music and the experience no matter what. Many of us are in it because we can't not do it. If you're one of these people, then learn as much as you can about everything that you can: the history, the structure, the roles, the etiquette, about every art, technology and science that you run across — and never stop learning.

– *Mark Rubel*

# WHY WOULD ANY SANE PERSON SUBJECT THEMSELVES TO THIS FOOLISHNESS?

## GRETA BRINKMAN

I sincerely hope that you don't think you're going to be making a living selling records, because that's not how things work any more. Even when they DID work that way, only a tiny fraction of a percentage of bands ever broke even, while the rest got anally raped by the record companies and in many cases never recovered. As I'm writing this, the major labels are in their final death throes, and not a minute too soon if you ask me. There ARE some labels who are honest and fair with their bands, but the fact is, nobody makes money selling CDs anymore. Your record, if it's any good and anybody wants to hear it, will be up on the internet within milliseconds of you releasing it. The absolute best you can hope for is to make some money on merch when you play out of town, but you shouldn't even hope for that. See that Rock 'n' Roll Hopes and Dreams™ dial? Adjust that downward. More. More. The reality is, you'll be lucky if you break even and your tour doesn't actually cost you money out of pocket. If that happens, SUCCESS! You just had a paid-for, working vacation!

I know you want to get your music heard, and I'm not here to advise you about that. If you don't suck, and there is a niche for the type of music you're doing, people will find their way to it sooner or later.

### IT'S BOTH TOUGHER AND EASIER NOWADAYS.

Let's say you're a moderately good Black Metal band. Thanks to the internet, there are about 8000 other moderately good BM bands out there from all over the world, all hoping to be heard by the same, say, 10,000 BM fans. How can you stand out? Let's face it: pretty much everything that can be done with bass, guitar, keys and drums has already been done, and you're not likely to set the music world on fire with your BRAND NEW TOTALLY ORIGINAL sound. So how can you get the word out? A: by being good (you're on your own with that, sorry), and B: by playing live. You're going to have to start from the ground up, and no whining. Just because you've been practicing for years and put college on hold doesn't mean anybody owes you jack shit. See Martin's other book for tips on how to tour without bankrupting yourself (hint: routing is important!)

Geez, this sounds discouraging.

Why, then, would anybody be in a band? It's a lot of time, trouble, expense and very little monetary reward. For the chicks/dudes? Well, there still is that. For the adventure? Absolutely. To make new friends and see places you would never normally go? Definitely. And how about, it brings you joy to be making music with your friends, and performing music for your other friends, and it's nice to be part of a scene where you all like the same things, and you can talk to somebody who UNDERSTANDS about Earth guitar heads or diminished 7ths or why John Bonham is still a god.

**GRETA  
BRINKMAN**



**BASSIST AT LARGE**



# INSPIRE AWESOMENESS

## LANCE CURRAN

At Threadless, our mission is to inspire awesomeness. In each other. In our community. In the world.

I think this is a good motto for any band. You need to inspire awesomeness in your band, that will inspire your fans (community), and finally your band and your fans can inspire awesomeness in the world.

Designs on Threadless are voted on by our community with a score from 0 to 5 and "\$" (meaning "I'd buy it"). When I see or hear a band for the first time I'm applying this rating system mentally to them as well. What would motivate an audience to give you a 5 rating or say they would buy your album?

IT'S NOT ALWAYS THE MOST  
TALENTED DESIGNER WHO GETS  
THE HIGHEST RATING.

Sometimes it's just witty, clever, or fun and other times it's just the designer who is able to promote themselves the best. Where is your band? What if you were all of these?

When I used to manage and do production for shows I saw a lot of bands. I watched amazingly talented musicians perform to an empty room and I've seen the most horrible acts play to a packed house of diehard fans. You would learn what bands were the most passionate and the most involved with their fans.

## TALENT WAS MEANINGLESS. PASSION WAS EVERYTHING. YOUR FANS ARE EVERYTHING.

If you just enjoy playing music and don't really care about a career or being successful then why the hell are you reading this book? The fact that you're curious and passionate enough to pick up *Band:Smart* shows you have a spark that with the right fuel could become a raging rockstar.

Being in a band is a lifestyle. It's you. It can be extremely hard and frustrating but if you call it work then do something else that makes you happy because you're not cut out for it. **You do it because it's you and you have no choice.**

The situationist Guy Debord's first book *Mémoires* was bound with sandpaper so it would destroy all other books next to it on the shelf. Inspiring awesomeness. Guy Debord was later quoted as saying, "I have written much less than most people who write; but I have drunk much more than most people who drink." Eventually the drink killed him. Not so awesome but the dude was passionate about drinking.

But what the fuck do I know? Go have fun. That's all that matters anyway.



# DECONSTRUCTION

## CASEY RAIN (S-ENDZ)

I'd be lying to you if I said that I hadn't trashed a hotel room before, or abused the minibar, or ran up enormous phone bills from the hotel room (in that last case, I honestly thought MTV was paying for it.....they weren't). The point is, unless you're Metallica, you'd be an idiot to do any of these things on a regular basis. And I'm guessing you aren't Metallica (If you are, what's up guys?). When I say a regular basis, I mean more than once. And even then you should probably know better, because you've read this.

Somebody will always have to pay for any damage you cause, and it'll probably be you, or your label (who will start to dislike you, which is a path that leads to you getting dropped), or your management (who will start to dislike you, which is a path that leads to you getting dropped). Even if none of those people end up footing the bill, don't count on getting booked by that promoter, asked to appear on that show, etc. ever again.

It's simply a question of being aware how others might see you and the impression you leave with these people.

**FIRST IMPRESSIONS LAST A WHOLE LOT LONGER THAN YOU MIGHT THINK.**



There are going to be times when you will get dangerously close to losing your mind, lighting the rehearsal space on fire, running off screaming and pulling your hair out in chunks.

*- Kylee Swenson Gordon*

**Those who succeed have talent, skills and endurance...**

*- Bob Tulipan*

**There is no deodorant like success.**

*- Rod Steiger*

# 3 SIMPLE RULES TO 'MAKING IT'

## DAVID LEWIS

Too many artists these days are all too eager for the trappings of success with very little understanding of the importance of earning their spot. Many bands will look to the team around someone successful and think I just need their – manager, publicist, booking agent, or girlfriend – not realizing the hard work.

Having Fall Out Boy's manager does not make you Fall Out Boy, or, Coldplay, or even Creed. Right? You might talk a ton of smack about any of those bands, but each of which has likely done more work than you can even imagine. That doesn't make them good, but it does make them deserving.

Here are three simple rules that if you follow – and get lucky – will lead to your best shot at making it.

**1 PAY YOUR DUES.** I have had students, interns, and total strangers tell me they are tired of hearing about “paying their dues.” When I was young and dumb I actually thought it sounded romantic to sleep on floors, eat nothing but ramen noodles and travel the world. Maybe today's young people are brighter than I was, but that doesn't change the fact that you shouldn't get into this business for the quick buck. Many music business professionals make a fraction of what their real world counterparts might and at a much-delayed climb to the top.

If by the time you are 30 you still give a shit about music then by default you will probably make more money than all the 20-year-olds trying to break-in to the business, same goes for 40-year-olds. I know a few 50-year-olds still trying to make sense of the music world. They have families. They make decent money. They looked tired as fuck. They've paid their dues and now they sign your paychecks. Do you think they want to hear about how exhausted you are?

**2 SAY THANK YOU.** This is not even a music business thing. This is just common sense. The biggest stars I have met have been some of the most gracious people. If you got into this business for an excuse to be an asshole then I have some news for you: you can be an asshole now, you don't need a guitar and a record contract.

I will always pay attention when I am out to dinner with a group of people to how my table treats the wait staff. If you are demanding, self-serving and a pain-in-the-ass that typically means you are a demanding self-serving pain-in-the-ass. Be respectful of the people around you. Say thank you. Really it is that simple.

**3 BE AWESOME, BE INTERESTING.** Your talents supercede all this back-and-forth on what makes for success and what doesn't. I can only assume you are amazing, that what you are doing is truly ground breaking and new, that your live set can actually kill people, that you are the best rapping, guitar playing, line dancing, fake-ipod-dj hybrid the world has ever seen. Beyond that, be respectful and studied. Be new and interesting. Work hard and say thank you. **Be obsessive and controlling but also patient and kind.** But above all, be good at what you are doing and follow through. Nobody who has done that has failed and you won't either.



## DAVID LEWIS



CREATIVE DIRECTOR AT  
EFFECT PARTNERS

[davidtlewis.com](http://davidtlewis.com)

GOOD ADVICE

FROM

BAAD PEOPLE!

I have gleaned a few other truths out of the black pit of doom that is a musician's sorry career. Never put the money first and chose your band-mates wisely. Play worthy benefits for unpopular causes close to your heart and make weird guest appearances in unlikely venues from time to time even if you don't get paid. There are karmic rewards.

— Jon Langford

.....

Your drive is the only thing standing between writing songs in your bedroom that no one will ever hear, and headlining Wembley Stadium. **You don't have to be particularly good to be successful.** You can be so driven that your enthusiasm is contagious and you sell lots of tickets and records. And probably most importantly, your reputation is what will continue to open (or slam shut) doors for you throughout your career. You're going to run into the same people again and again. Some will work their way from street teamer to club owner, so it pays to keep a good name for yourself. You catch more flies with honey than with vinegar.

— Casey Orr

.....

You thought you were in the record business, now you realize you're not. You're in the fan-relationship management business. You thought you were an artist and all you had to do was be good. But now being good is not enough because there are 100,000 other artists that are putting out albums every year. So, they're all good. It's not enough. You just learned that 81,000 albums sold under 100 units, so you're realizing "what the fuck?" At this point you have to say, "alright, let's go back to the drawing board." How can I work smarter, how can I work better, how can I take the effort and the focus I want to do in a new way.

— Tom Silverman

You don't get to a million until  
you get past ONE.

— Chuck D

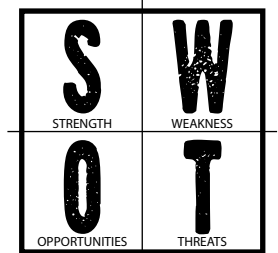




# WHO?

**CHEMISTRY IS UNFATHOMABLE AND IMPOSSIBLE TO STAGE, DIRECT, OR PLAN FOR.**

Think as though you're at the beginning of an episode of Mission Impossible, except this is Mission *Really* Impossible. Think about the skills that might be needed on the road ahead: vehicle mechanic, computer nut, a bit of muscle here and there, technical ability, organizational skills, a bit of sex appeal, and a golden tongue for the interviews. Look at your choices as underlining the good points and balancing out your weak points (you probably do have a few). SWOT (strength, weakness, opportunities, threats) yourself and proceed accordingly. If you are totally shit at writing lyrics, then look for someone who has a rhyming dictionary.



**YOURSELF!**



Get some balance so that you can be totally unbalanced in a deliberate way. Understand that chemistry is unfathomable and impossible to stage, direct, or plan for. There is a tipping point on every single equation we examine. There isn't a recipe for this stuff. Okay, well there kind of is. Sometimes it's some of the same ingredients put together in a different order, half-baked, or sometimes crispy round the edges.



## **FUCKED BY: CHOOSING THE WRONG PEOPLE TO BE IN A BAND WITH.**

It's not all about choosing the safest, most punctual, polite, tidiest band members with the best credit ratings and cleanest driving record. Those qualities don't make up a band that draws fans to the venue, do they? There's no risk, no danger, nor anything to compel fans to watch. I recently bought a shabby louvered door for my boys' room. I stripped it back, got rid of all of the caked-on flakiness from 50 years of built up paint. Hours later, I stood back to admire my work. I was patting myself on the back for a job well done when... the door crumbled and fell apart. It turned out that it was being held together by all of the shitty flaky paint. Moral of the story — sometimes you need a bit of flakiness and not some badass stripper!

**CHOOSE** the drummer that shows up. Then, if you are struggling between two — choose the one with the smallest kit who doesn't want to change drum heads every day (ask them!) or the one that hears you when you ask if they can play a little quieter.

**CHOOSE** the bass player with the van and the rehearsal space she built with the proceeds from the car accident settlement — unless she is totally shit and can't play bass. Then think about going all Human League and having her stand behind a keyboard with dark glasses and a sequencer.

**CHOOSE** the guitarist that has several cup holders already built into his equipment along with ashtrays and several cigarette lighters Velcro-ed to his amp along with a blender. This is the mark of a true professional — you are in the presence of greatness.

**CHOOSE** wisely, surprisingly, and understand the consequences — one of them being that if you follow all of the rules of business and just choose two other people to be in your band based upon their assets instead of choosing the five nut jobs you really want to be in a band with then you might be fucked before you start. But you'll have a hell of a time not getting there.

## **GET SOME BALANCE SO THAT YOU CAN BE TOTALLY UNBALANCED IN A DELIBERATE WAY.**

Don't be in a hurry to put a band together. Explore yourself first.

Think of this as war, because it is! Eventually, when you tour, it's much better to be *one* person going into unknown territory. If a venue or city is wrong, it's just you and the voices in your head you need to explain to, not some drummer on \$100 a day complaining about the lack of beer or a hotel. You can perform on the streets anywhere without a debate. That means more fans, more accidental encounters, a larger network. The third, fourth or fifth time you go back to a city, *then* you can add a couple of additional musicians, and the show will seem like you added fireworks!

**Mick was not the most punctual guy, but looking back, I believe talent is worth waiting for...**

*—Joe Strummer (admitting it was a mistake to fire Mick Jones of the Clash)*

Make the difficult choice. Stretch yourself. The resolution of these difficulties will make you more interesting *and* people like fireworks.

Done the other way around, too ambitious and costly with too many people on the front end when you make the financially dictated change back to a solo performer, it's theatrically a step backwards, sonically undermined and looking like a budgetary cut-back, which is exactly what it'll be.

When it's just you, you can stay with *anyone!*

I spoke to an artist in Ann Arbor. She plays guitar, sings, writes all her own songs, and it seems people really like what she does. Now she is waiting to put a band together to go out and do some shows. All of her questions for me involved how she should go about dealing with a drummer that has a busy schedule and problems involving other musicians. It seemed to me like a bucketful of ice-cold limitations, thrown down the pants of her very nice little manageable situation. I advised her to immediately start *doing it solo*. Incrementally start to build a fan base/a larger audience. This is essential leverage when trying to put a band together to do your songs (not theirs initially):

## YOU ARE NOW THE DEALER OF THE DRUG... GROOVYNESS

...and providing audiences larger than zero. This is more powerful than money in your negotiations with hired musicians. The more you perform solo the more likely candidates for your new band you will meet.

And, as we all know,

## THERE'S NOTHING BETTER THAN PLAYING WITH YOURSELF.

THINK before you start a band with 9 members. It's going to sound amazing and look amazing, until you have to feed everyone! Any club owner is going to run screaming from giving you a shot at a first gig. You can try saying you only want pizza and beer, but how many fucking<sup>»</sup> pizzas is that? More than the DJ gets. Your chances of crashing at someone's apartment are severely limited. Anyone cool enough to let you stay is unlikely to have the room to accommodate 9 of you.

You can put a bunch of great players in a room — that doesn't make a band — it's chemistry.

— Kevin Lyman

<sup>»</sup>This fuck brought to you by Chad Ferguson.

# CONSEQUENCE OF PEOPLE

# people	vehicle	mpg	band meal	pizza 3 slices each	hotel rooms	stay with fans	minutes for a piss stop	dressing rooms	chances of being bought a round of drinks?	what you get if the band grosses \$2,000 per show \$10k/week	cabs needed from the airport	# of cases of beer for everyone to have 6	chances of drama	# of people on the guest list at 4 each	10 hrs per week min wage job	for 3 months
1	car	25	\$10	1	1	yes	3	1	good	10,000	1	0.25	impossible	4	73	870
2	car	25	\$15	1	1	yes	6	1	good	5,000	1	0.5	low	8	145	1740
3	car	25	\$25	2	1	yes	9	1	good	3,333	1	0.75	low/slight	12	218	2610
4	car	20	\$30	2	2	yes	12	1	good	2,500	1	1	medium	16	290	3480
5	van	15	\$35	2	2	yes	15	1	ok	2,000	2	2	medium	20	363	4350
6	van	15	\$40	3	2	no	18	1	ok	1,667	2	2	medium	24	435	5220
7	van	13	\$45	3	3	no	21	1	ok	1,429	2	2	possible	28	508	6090
8	van	12	\$50	3	3	no	24	2	poor	1,250	2	2	high	32	580	6960
9	van	11	\$50	4	4	no	27	2	poor	1,111	3	3	high	36	653	7830
10	van+car	6	\$50	4	4	no	30	2	poor	1,000	3	3	high	40	725	8700
11	van+car	6	\$60	4	5	no	33	2	impossible	909	3	3	imminent	44	798	9570
12	bus	6	\$60	5	6	no	36	2	impossible	833	3	3	definite	48	870	10440
13	bus	5	\$80	6	7	no	39	2	are you fucking	769	4	4	definite	52	943	11310
14	bus	5	\$80	6	7	no	42	3	kidding me?	714	4	4	definite	56	1015	12180

## PERSONALITY CHOICES OF A BAND...

**The first rule** of starting a band should be that you start it to have fun. Having fun usually involves people who get along together and grow together into a band. After a while if someone is not growing with the band musically or does not fit in socially you have to know when to make a change. When you are great and successful it is sadly expected that you will all hate each other's guts (only partly joking there). Bands like the Chili Peppers do it right... they get together for three years and bust ass and then take a break from each other and pursue other interests for a couple years. Then they set up in a garage and see if they can still play together as friends before they do a new album. Sadly, I think many bands don't do that and stay together for the money. I have seen it with many bands and can't figure out why they do it, maybe the managers and agents have big mortgages and convince them to do it for the money.

— Kevin Lyman

# MORE THAN ONE

## LEE JARVIS

Part of working smart is knowing when to delegate: you can spend 50 hours learning Photoshop, it is a great tool, but if you know a fan who is already an expert then get them to do it, send them a t-shirt, and you can spend 50 hours practicing your instrument or writing new material. And how about someone better looking than you collecting emails at gigs, in return for a couple of beers?

The best thing about being in a multi-person band is that you can all assist in this.

**YOU SHOULD NOT HAVE ONE PERSON SLAVING AWAY,  
BUT THE SYNERGY OF SEVERAL PEOPLE WORKING TOGETHER.**

One member may be good at social media promotion — let them do that; one may be really talkative and charming — let them meet the press/venue staff/radio hosts; one may be a raging, drug-fueled, sex-crazed psychopath, but man are they a whiz at making websites — let them do that. The one who is great at managing people — they'll have to manage the web design psychopath.

**EVERY BAND SHOULD HAVE A RAGING, DRUG-FUELED, SEX-CRAZED PSYCHOPATH.**





**IT'S ALL ABOUT THE MULTI-TASK KING!**

You will be more able to barter skills when you actually have some! When the owner of a studio has a fire, loses an aquarium, a website, needs to redo the wallpaper, and restock the fish... you can provide that service in return for recording time.

Perhaps the biggest skill of all is the realizing that we are all just human beings and that rolling up your sleeves and helping, be it changing the oil, helping someone move, or just being there without question is what really matters. Being next to someone that is calming in a crisis can ignite a solution and prevent a compounding the problem. Learn to do that by experience. Take the Valerian route.

## **PRACTICAL**

- Recording
- People Skills/Counseling  
(Waiter, Interpreter, etc.)
- IT/Software/Networking
- Social Media
- Music Technology
- Electronics
- First Aid
- Accounting
- Instrument Repair/Creation
- Basic Vehicle Maintenance
- Language/Sign Language
- Aquarium management
- Basic Construction/Carpentry
- Baby/Animal/House Sitter
- Cleaner/Organizer

## **SPIRITUAL**

- Self Defense
- Mediation
- Yoga
- Meditation

## **ARTISTIC**

- Metalwork/Staging
- Art/Graphics
- Screen Printing
- Tattoo Artist
- Web Design
- Graffiti
- Hairstylist
- Videographer/Drone Operator
- App Development
- Songwriting (now there's one!)
- Interior designer
- Acting – stand up and speak!
- Sewing

## **SPECIAL/COOL PARTY TRICKS**

- Cooking
- Balloon Bender
- Juggler
- X-Box Hacking

Learn another language... additional skills make a difference and create opportunity. Sign language experts get \$30+ an hour!

Learn to sing: 'Guitarist wanted, must have good BV's.' How many times have you see this ad? This can give you the edge over the competition when it comes to audition time.

– Jim Clark

# DAY JOBS

The day gig is essential.

– Wayne Kramer

I kinda feel like having a job is great, and being in a band as a side project is great and not any kind of a compromise at all.

– Steve Albini

It seems that the “day job,” the ditching of, the continuation of, the presence of, is some kind of yardstick that artists use as a gauge to their level of success. It's the universal put down response... "How did we do?!" "Don't give up your day job."

Actually, it's well worth dealing with the problems that day jobs can create. Without any other sources of income you will quickly be in all kinds of shit – losing the path that you decided to set out on and losing your ability to do it your way. You will end up doing too many local shows because you need the money, the free beer and the high! Nowhere ever in the history of the world have I come across a situation with a band with (say) six members that has a strategy to take over the world, but first, they all get two jobs and put \$100 bucks a week each into their “make or break” fund. Wow, that's ANARCHY. How sad is it when strategies like saving and planning feel weird to even type?...Naaaa, only joking! What you need is DRUGS baby, drugs!

Once again, it is time for some heavy application of the D.T.O. (*See Strategy*). Wait as long as possible to give up your day job. I say jokingly when I'm talking about the “flower petal plan” for touring to return home just in time to fall asleep at your desk on Monday morning. That is exactly what you need to do. Pushing everything: yourself, your physical limits, your mental capacity for stress and dealing with people, your bank account, your relationships, and your day job as far as you can. One written warning is serious, but it ain't two.

## BALANCING ACT

### MICAH SOLOMON



If you need to keep your day job for the time being you're in good company; most people in the performing arts seek supplementary employment for at least part of their career. (One of my favorite examples: perhaps the greatest classical composer of the early 20th century, Charles Ives, continued to remain fully employed in the insurance field for most of his career. Dissonances, he reasoned, were not a reliable way to feed a family.)

Working a daytime gig may take some spring out of your step, but it can also provide key benefits like health coverage (don't hit the road without it!) Then again, supplemental employment is no excuse for treating your music like a hobby. To make it big in music you'll need to run your career like a real business – beginning now. Run your part-time business just as professionally as a full-timer would.



Keep your day job while you play and build a fan base. Keep working until your filled up schedule gets you fired.

# BEST DAY JOB WHILST BEING IN A BAND?

I know players who have bailed hay, dug ditches, lots of construction, house painters, set designers, teachers, pizza delivery guys, graphic designers, dog walkers, and many just date strippers that have cash.

.....  
 - *Torch Torcherie*

I work in a vintage shop, 11am-6pm. We also practice in the back of the shop, and the owner is our biggest fan. I can get all the time off I need, and extra hours when the times get tough.

.....  
 - *Jay Godin*

Develop your songwriting skills enough to not only write for your band, but others too. Contributing to a few songs that become even minor hits will pay your rent for a while! Also, web and graphic design is good because it's flexible and can be done anywhere!

.....  
 - *S-Endz*

I work at an auction house. The people are cool and the owner supports what I do. I get the time off I need. That's pretty much the best day job I could possibly ever ask for plus I get to take pictures and see a bunch of crazy shit all day long!

.....  
 - *Jon Allegretto*

To pay the bills, try registering with NARMS (not to be confused with NARM!). NARMS is a nationwide merchandising clearinghouse for manufacturers who need grocery/hardware store/etc merchandising — a middle person so to speak — pick your hours, pick your products, paid mileage, good hourly pay (avg. \$20 per hour). If you've worked in a record store and know how to merchandise and set-up displays this is a perfect gig to be your own contractor and make great \$ on your terms and time. Visit narms.com

.....  
 - *Nora Hayes Eldredge*

Phone sex operator.

.....  
 - *Alana Waters-Piper*

Being a graphic designer and artist has been the best day or anytime of the day job for me while being in a band. I can choose my own hours and best of all I don't have to hire anyone to do the band's design work.

.....  
 - *Layla Reyna*

Being a Musical Instrument Repair Tech kept me always meeting the new players that came to town. It also made me a hero and a go-to guy for regional and national level players. It kept me surrounded by musicians even when I was not playing.

.....  
 - *Christo Ruppenthal*

Silkscreening.

.....  
 - *El Jeffe Klukowski*

I don't see it as a lack of commitment to not try to make a living off of it. I see it like totally converse to that. I think of music as something that I'm willing to work 40 hours a week or more to support, like a wife and family, right? Music to me is that important. It's so important that I don't expect it to make a living for me. I expect that I will have to work a normal, regular job like a regular person in order to have the luxury of being able to play music.

.....  
 - *Steve Albini*

Think about the new era of pick-up gigs TaskRabbit, Fiverr, Uber, Lyft...





## WHY BANDS BREAK UP

The great thing about buying a car these days is that there is so much (SOOO MUCH!) information about every single version of every single model. NOTHING is left to chance except whether or not you read the right blogs, consumer reports and remember to get your CARFAX history report. A five second Google search tells us the 2001 Honda Civic is by far the model most plagued with problems. How many oil changes occurred during the car's lifetime, how many windshield wiper blades have been replaced (front and rear), and how much sex has been had in the seat (front and rear). There is no website, blog, book, YouTube video, or directory where you can gauge the likelihood of how prone a middle aged bass player is to alcoholic tendencies or a predication for drugs or underage girls? No consumer report that warns us about THE REASONS BANDS BREAK UP.

This might seem like a rant, but it isn't! It's the result of a lot of research and some social media help.

### A NEVER ENDING LIST OF REASONS WHY BANDS BREAK UP:

Growing pains, money, sex, moderate success, too much practice, someone fucked someone's girlfriend, too little practice, someone fucked someone's boyfriend, one show went horribly wrong, egos, sex, creative control, a sandwich, drugs, sex, being beaten in a battle of the bands by a bunch of pretty boys, not enough gigs, sex, drugs, money, the business model sucked, the producer, growing pains, two words: Day Job, contracts, the lead singer found God, our manager ripped us off, the lead singer died, unable to follow up on an amazing album, drugs, the vehicle, drummers, everyone thinks that they are the leader, bitches, the label, unrealistic expectations, stagnation, sex, the guitar player let his girlfriend sing, legal issues, drugs, alcohol, girlfriends, money, money it's always money, the lack of a spoon for a tub of yogurt, creative differences, sex, our agent sucked, sex, sex, drugs.

We didn't break up. We just lost our way.

.....  
- *Mercy Victor*

Some people want to be in bands because they think it will allow them a life of laziness and total unaccountability. Such people are poisonous to bands.

.....  
- *David Israel Dabbs*

My band broke up because the drummer got a job mowing lawns and the bassist wanted to move back home with his parents... so I got drunk and chased him out of the house with a large butchers knife.

.....  
- *Elvis Azard*

You don't have to be a large band to have all of the same problems with addiction, personality differences, family issues or any other reasons for a group of people to become dysfunctional and split up. Choose wisely whom you sign on with.

.....  
- *Chris Pentecost*

The singer went to Iceland. :P

.....  
- *Joel Gausten*

# FORMING YOUR OWN BAND

## ANDERS ODDEN

### THE ART OF WAR.

To make sure you are ready to face the enemy, you have to gather the right members to join your army. A perfect band has to include the following elements:

- A star
- A brain
- A joker

No band out there is even possible without 1 guy to be its face. It has to have the front man that gets the attention for people to even bother. You can shoe gaze as much as you want or make a one-man army playing ambient music, but if you want to have a truly successful band it has to have the something extra to stick in the short term memory of the audience. No one goes to a show only to hear and see a great guitar player with a bad singer or weak front man.

This star will never shine unless someone else in the band is the brain to make the whole operation functional. The guy in the back who always had some money to cover everybody's asses, the rehearsal space, the car, etc. This guy is in fact the band's manager until you get someone else to be your manager, but that happens a long time after you have something somebody ELSE can make money off of. Good managers do not grow on trees, and the ones who come down from a tree and tell you they can make you a star, well...

### KNOW YOUR STRENGTHS AND WEAKNESSES.

The brain must learn fast and network with all the other people you need to do stuff for you. He also needs to set a game plan for the band and make a strategy. Like a general who plans for war you have to know your strengths and weaknesses. No army is going to win a war if they do not have a plan. The most important thing about a plan is to actually follow it. If you learn how to do this and also plan for version A, B, C, D etc of the plan, then you are set to go.

A band also needs a joker. Someone to take the heat down and make the life of the band a much more calm and relaxed place. If you are TOO serious in this game — you lose. Go watch Spinal Tap. It is the truth. Everyone in a band will know that the jokes are real and that it's so accurate and to the point that it's ridiculous.

The joker must not become a REAL scapegoat. If so, you have pushed it too far and that will break your band up at the end of the day. You started playing music because it was fun, right? Keep the fun in there at all times. Especially if you DO get successful.



**ANDERS  
ODDEN**



**OWNER at  
WATCHTOWER AS**

@satanders

**For more on personalities, check out  
Joanna Weber's piece later. It's got great  
illustrations, too!**

# CHOOSING A SINGER

As the singer enters the room, listen for a while to the anecdotes of days gone by or days yet to come. Marvel as he or she weaves a tapestry of brilliant threads, joining words that were never before joined, into songs that were never before sung. Look at the words as they appear to sparkle and dance in front of your eyes. Then, punch the singer in the throat. I don't mean really hard, but hard enough.

## WHY?

I've been looking at simple things you can do to better your chances of gaining popularity without breaking, snapping, and then setting fire to the bank account and your partner's credit score. One of these things is to perform at least 7 days a week instead of 4 or 5. It's the **EASIEST** way to make more of the difficult **REAL** equations work. In fact, if you are a band gigging to 100-150 people on an o.k. night, then allowing for some extra t-shirt sales and a few more CDs, less hotels, more tips, more door money, more food, over the course of 40 weeks of gigging will put an extra 75k in your pocket — \$75k o.k.!?

Because of the harsh reality of budgets, a day off is a luxury for the singer. The budget simply won't support it. In every week on the road there are seven days when people need to eat, sleep, and get paid. You need to offset this with seven days worth of income, pizza, contacts, vibe, t-shirt sales and groovyness.

Allowing for the fact that in any larger city there are hundreds of bands, there are going to be hundreds of singers in any city and, **ASS-uming** that 6 out of the 10 applicants are pretty good and not too insane, then that's my advice: punch each one in the throat. You **HAVE** to make sure that they can deal with the throat stress that touring these days is going to rain down on them.

No sooner had I written this than I started to look at some emails from indie record stores across the country. Many of them have started to advertise early intimate/acoustic performances from bands performing at the larger venues. So, **HELL**, that means another gig for your dulcet-toned singer. See what I mean? This started off to be a fucking<sup>n</sup> fun afternoon assaulting singers and now it's turned into some really good advice. You **NEED** someone fronting your band who can sing 7 full shows a week, hit a few acoustic afternoon shows, early acoustic lounge type radio shows, and do 10 interviews a **DAY**, without losing his or her voice (or mind!).

Check out vocalist tips later in the book.

**A day off is a luxury  
for the singer.**

<sup>n</sup>*This fuck brought to you by Emily Rehm.*

# AUDITIONING

## ALESSANDRO QUARGNALI-LINSLEY

### AUDITION PREP

Your want-ads need to follow the same principles as everything else you do: know your market and tailor your message. You want to get high caliber musicians, and they are as frustrated by the amateurs and wannabes as you are. Be direct, to the point, and don't bother with building yourself up or belittling your competition. If you're gigging, state it. If you're touring, state that. If you're tired of answering ads from idiots, don't say that; just set your tone higher and ask for demos. This isn't a personal ad, it's a business solicitation.

Set up two nights a week for auditions; include that information in your ad. Pick a song or two from your set and get these somewhere you can get copies to the prospects. Online methods should be an obvious choice. The tracks you pick to audition with should be typical of your music and should highlight the needs of the position you're filling. It should be something the rest of the band is extremely tight on. You want everyone to be able to spend 80% of their attention on the new guy, not worrying about remembering their chart.

When someone calls, pre-screen them: what's their experience? What are they looking for? If you're in it for the big return, the guy who just wants to have some fun on the weekends will never work, even if he's fucking perfect in every other regard. It's not worth wasting either of your time even for an audition. As much as their actual answers are important, pay attention to their vibe — if their words are good but they seem like an idiot, **trust your gut**. Similarly, a newbie who seems cool might be worth a shot — we all start someplace. Depending on the current market, response, etc, you might ask for a demo to vet and then get back to them.

### AUDITION TIME

Just as you need to play to the top of your game, place that same expectation on people auditioning for you. This is one of those places where you can set the expectations. If they don't have the ability to easily download a demo track from you then they have a serious gap in their professional skills. If they don't have a car, missing gear, need to borrow gas money... do I need to say it?

Auditions are like interviews. You can be laid back, but don't forget what you're all there for. The audition should give you a sense of what the new person is capable of, how seriously he or she prepped their material before hand, how willing they are to actually rehearse. Assuming that they don't perfectly nail the tunes on the first go-around, go back and work sections like you would at a rehearsal. That'll let you see their learning process, how quickly they pick up something new, or whether you can communicate effectively.

Depending on your band and its genre, other auditioning tools are free jams - which let the auditioner show their own style without comparison to the departed - and playing through covers that you all know. Of course, if your band can hack through the Alice in Chains catalog but the new guy's repertoire is limited to Front 242, there may be a problem... or maybe not.

ALLESANDRO  
QUARGNALI-LINSLEY



MUSICIAN  
PRODUCER  
AND ARTIST



# CHECKLIST FOR ROCK STAR GREATNESS



- GLIB SUPERFICIAL CHARM
- GRANDIOSE (EXAGGERATEDLY HIGH) ESTIMATION OF SELF
- NEED FOR STIMULATION
- PATHOLOGICAL LYING
- CUNNING AND MANIPULATIVENESS
- POOR BEHAVIORAL CONTROLS
- SEXUAL PROMISCUITY
- IRRESPONSIBILITY
- CRIMINAL
- VERSATILITY

**Oh shit! That's not rockstar greatness - it's the Hare checklist for criminal psychopathy!**

Make sure no one in your band has a **CRIMINAL RECORD!**  
It really fucks up your chances at international touring!

—Josh White

Make sure everyone in your band has a criminal record. It makes the stories so much more interesting!

# THERE'S NEVER BEEN A BETTER TIME TO REDEFINE WHAT A BAND IS

## MOLDOVER

If I could tell a band one thing, it would be the thing I proved to myself over the last decade: With technology,

### YOU DON'T NECESSARILY NEED A BAND TO CREATE AN ENGAGING LIVE PERFORMANCE.

Don't get me wrong — I've played in all kinds of bands, and making music with other people is one of the most satisfying experiences life has to offer. I just want to point out that this is a unique and exciting point in music history when for the first time; advanced real-time audio software is finally accessible to all music makers. In other words, you don't need an engineering degree to make live electronic music; you just need a basic computer. Let's consider some possibilities:

- Your alcoholic drummer could be replaced by a **CONTROLLER** that keeps perfect time, does exactly what you tell it, and never whines about not getting enough drink tickets.
- Your virtuoso bassist hates playing the simple bass lines in your songs, so you kick him to the curb, set up an **OCTAVE DIVIDER** and a **LOOPER**, and play the lines yourself.
- Your drama-queen vocalist is annoying as hell to work with, so you make a new front-man out of a good turntablist who can **SCRATCH VIDEO PROJECTIONS OF FRANK SINATRA USING TIME-CODE VINYL**.

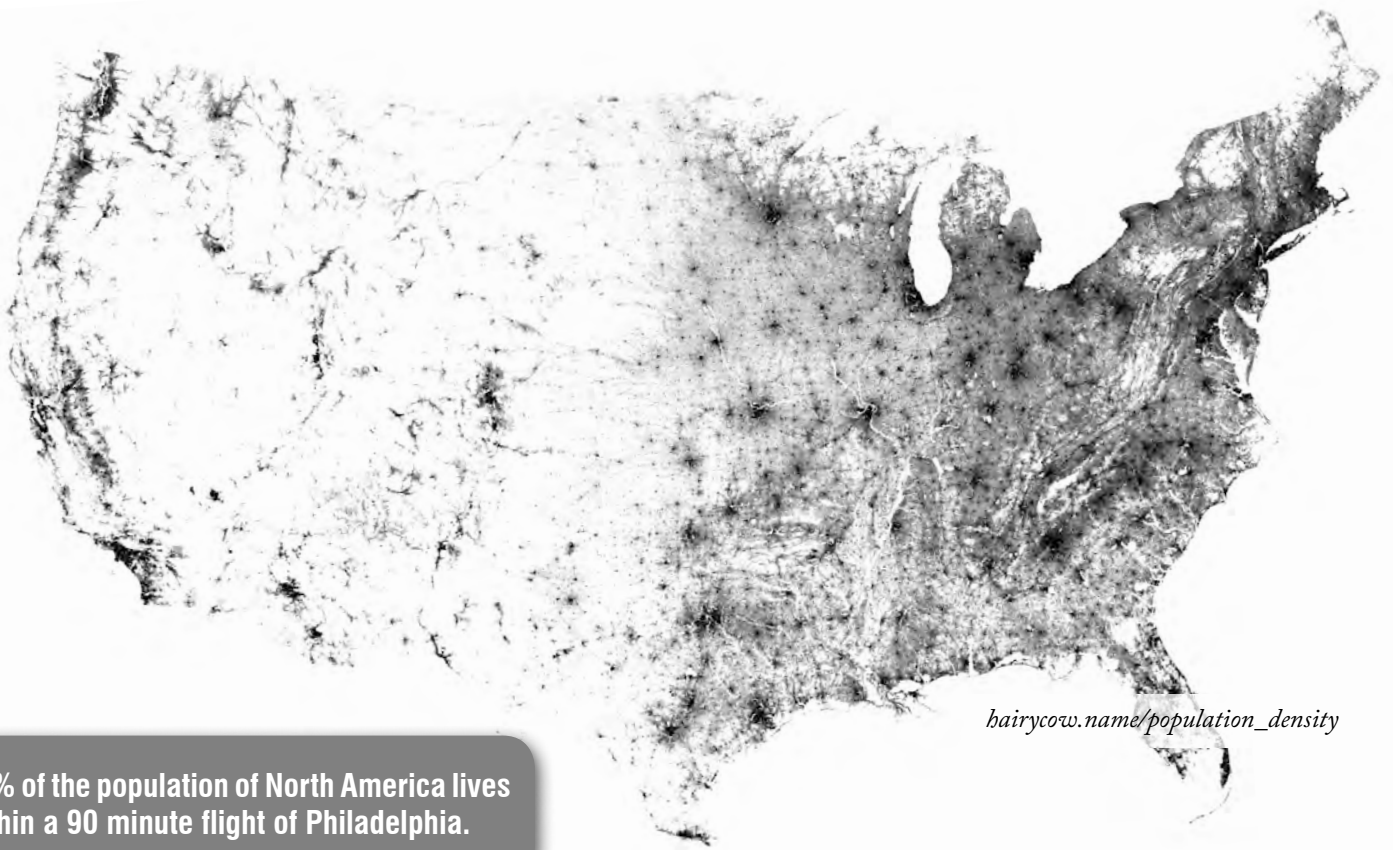
### IN THE NAME OF MUSICAL EVOLUTION PLEASE AT LEAST CHECK OUT SOME NEW POSSIBILITIES.

Ok, maybe you're committed to traditional Irish folk music and this kind of technology isn't going to help you much, but in the name of musical evolution please at least check out some new possibilities. You'll learn something, you'll have a plan-B when band members become major frustrations, and you might discover something incredibly **FUN** that you never knew existed.



No mercy. If there's a weak link in the band then get rid of them ASAP. They may be a friend or relative, but if they're holding you back, they gotta go! It might sound harsh, but bands are only as good as their weakest member.

— Jim Clark



65% of the population of North America lives within a 90 minute flight of Philadelphia.



## WHERE?

There are several factors to consider when examining your location. None of these factors are static in themselves. This is a great big lava lamp of ever-changing possibilities.

What are the geographical benefits of your location? One big one is that you are already there! Don't worry if it's a small shitty city. Become the big fish in the small pond first!

## GET YOUR SHIT TOGETHER IN YOUR OWN SHITTY CITY...\*

### IS YOUR CITY A GOOD BASE?

1. Is it one of the top 100 markets in the US?
2. What about one of the top ten? (This *could* be a negative.)
3. One of the top 2? (This *is* a negative.)
4. You lose points for being west of the Minneapolis/Texas line.
5. You lose more points if you are on the west coast. Gas is a dollar more per gallon and the gigs are further.
6. You lose points for not being a 360 degree hub (i.e. any coastal town only has possibilities in 180 degrees and you need 360 degrees of possibilities).
7. How many Starbucks and Whole Foods are in your area? (As a barometer, your music might need a different one, like #8.)

Sometimes the smaller the city, the easier to facilitate a scene.

- Butch Vig

*\*It doesn't matter where you are. You'll always hate the city you're in.*

8. How many cool stores in town? Tattoo, art, clothes other?
9. How many music stores?
10. Are there colleges offering music internships and opportunities to record for free?
11. Are there toll roads or bridges close by? In any direction? (Philadelphia and NYC are BAD!)
12. What is the cost of living?
13. What's the average cost of rehearsal space? Studio time?
14. How many venues, regional and national, are in the market and within 50 miles? 150 miles?
15. What is the proximity to an airport for when that opportunity knocks?
16. How often do national bands come to town?
17. What is the job market like for you (and your bandmates) skillsets?

### Also worth considering...

- **Do you own a vehicle?**
- **Add points for vehicle mileage better than 15 mpg. Lose points for vehicle mileage less than 15 mpg.**
- **Do you have day jobs?**

## EMERGING MARKETS

Population and geographical changes in many markets are fluid. There are many businesses moving in order to find other, cheaper places to operate. This isn't to make more money, this is to survive! Slowly (but noticeably), secondary markets have started to have a scene and some major markets are declining or the emphasis is moving to the suburbs. Boise has grown 2% in the last year, Atlanta 3.3%, Phoenix 4%, just about every city in Florida is growing... New Orleans, tragically, has shrunk by 22%, Detroit and Buffalo are shrinking too.

As of this writing, Colorado has its highest job growth rate since 2000! (Growth rate! Geddit!) According to the Denver Post, **more than 200 new restaurants debuted around the Denver area in just one year.**

The West Coast is booming too with Riverside CA, Seattle WA, San Francisco, CA Portland OR, Los Angeles CA, San Diego CA, all in the top 10 cities for growth with a million or more workers and of course North Dakota is in the middle of an oil boom where fast food workers are getting \$15 to \$20 an hour at Hardees!

It's not just all of the above that's fluid — your fan base is, too. DON'T keep doing the same thing. If your band survives for a decade — reflect, analyze, LOOK at your fans — if they are all married then think about playing in the suburbs (where they are!) instead of keep playing downtown where you used to play, where everyone hooked up, got pregnant, married and moved to the suburbs...

## PLACES TO AVOID

It seems that most bands want to head to New York City or Los Angeles to prove that if they can make it there, they can make it anywhere. Well, maybe. But the cards are stacked against you in both cities. David Byrne said in the Creative Time Reports about NYC, "The rich are destroying New York culture... there is no room for fresh creative types." People there are less likely to show up to see an unknown band and you might find yourself playing with seven or more other bands. Put these expensive cities on the back burner. You don't want your catchphrase to be, "We can't make it there; we can't make it anywhere."

**New York City:** "Nobody cares, dude!!!" There are at least 1,200 events per week.

**Los Angeles:** "Dude, what was the question?" There are at least 1,700 events per week.

**Austin, TX:** Two weeks before and two weeks after SXSW.

Use good tools and the internet, find out where your fans are and play there. It's easier to deal with problems of equipment, staging, or no dressing room than it is to be well taken care of, but not have anyone buy a ticket. (We like ReverbNation's Fan 360, Google Analytics, The Orchard's Heat Map and YouTube Insight. Check out Bandsintown, too!)



GOOD ADVICE  
FROM  
BAD PEOPLE!

Someone in your band needs to be involved in the left brain stuff.

.....  
- Robert Cronberg

Assemble your band with half an ear on musicianship and two eyes on commitment levels and self sufficiency. A three fingered low maintenance guitarist you can have a drink with is so much more fun that a neurotic, bread-head virtuoso who asks loads of annoying questions and never has a battery for his/her pedals.

.....  
- Jon Langford

Being in a band is just like being in a relationship, except it's with 2+ other people, and allegedly you're not all sleeping together. When it's good, you're all on the same page and supportive of each other, and it's a beautiful thing. When it's bad, it's an endless dysfunctional nightmare.

.....  
- Greta Brinkman

Don't let anyone play for your band that gives you bad vibes. He or she may end up kidnapping your bass player if you're not careful.

.....  
- Joshua Liston

To make that great recording it is important that you're working with the right people. The chemistry has to be there.

.....  
- Reid Hyams

Develop music technology skill sets. This is going to enable you to become an indispensable member of any band. You could become an integral part of the writing team, take a production role and even become the technical director for the stage show.

.....  
- Tristan James

# WHEN?

There has never been a better time to be in, start, join a band or start a business, not only are all the tools and information easily accessible, but a culture of entrepreneurship is everywhere. even Quickbooks uses a band on the road in their ad! The easiest way to give you a flexible guideline as to the right time to jump is when more things would be compromised, fucked,<sup>2</sup> lost, diminished, irretrievably napalmed, by *not* jumping. Push it that far and you stand a better chance than if you jump six months early, 12 bi-weekly paychecks too early, 24 chances to sneak into the stationary cupboard and steal more Sharpies too early, unlimited piles of free Xeroxing too early. Plus, you need your workmates to come to your shows.

The jump is frightening. It is part of the poetry, the myth, of this crusade. The people who can really help you are the people who at some point in their lives have made the jump themselves. I'll try and help people who have made the jump. I don't help people who haven't. It might be the last real barrier to succeeding. If you believe in yourself enough to jump off the tall building of hope and ambition, then there are people who will help you. The help you get, the essential blips of energy come not from people who "really like your music" but from people who genuinely respect your balls, putting everything on the line for this most important, intangible, abstract, human, chemical, thing. Communication, expression, collisions, and a journey that holds our attention. What might seem like an overnight, meteoric rise to someone that isn't paying that much attention, looks very different to the person who's watched that petrified artist ascend to the very top diving board, step by irretrievable step.

In that way the jumper holds so many other people's hopes, fears and dreams within themselves. It seems only fitting, then that they should hold three or four beers and a plate of lasagna when they stay overnight at your house.

There aren't rules for this stuff. I'm just giving you as much information as I can. I can't guarantee that when it looks like the car is going to overturn on top of the baby that you'll magically have the strength to lift it up and smile for the CNN iReporters as they capture it all on their smart phones. You don't know this stuff until you do it. The world is littered with the bitter remains of those that never tried, and those who did and wish they never had. The fleeting, rare moments when you see the very best from people, places and things can more than outweigh the wet-drag weight of ten times more shitty ones.

That is the wildest drug you will ever do.

**"FAITH IS TAKING THE FIRST STEP EVEN WHEN YOU DON'T SEE THE STAIRS"  
- MARTIN LUTHER KING, JR.**

<sup>2</sup>*This fuck brought to you by Scott Cohen: "Complaining is not a strategy. Get the fuck to work."*



**Leap before you look.**

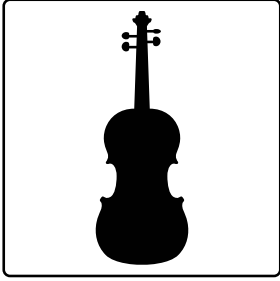
– Richard Branson

**Jump off the high dive board  
before the pool is full of water.**

– Gary Witt

**You jump off a cliff and assemble  
an aeroplane on the way down.**

– Reid Hoffman



## WHAT?

### DEMOCRACY OR BENEVOLENT DICTATORSHIP

You might choose the benevolent dictatorship route, but be careful: if you remove the first four letters you are just one “i” away from being a violent dictator.

The democratic solution might be time consuming, involve other opinions other than your own and nurture everyone to feel more invested in the band, it might be the better way to go, unless you are Prince, the guy from Guns N Roses, anyone from the Eagles, Eddie Van Halen, etc., etc., etc. And, it’s a nice safety net just in case you’re an idiot with crappy songs and horrible ideas for t-shirts.



When you get a group of musicians together. Sometimes it gels perfectly, but when it comes to writing, it falls apart. There has to be a leader and everyone thinks they are it. You have to find out what you’re strongest at and use that potential. Sometimes you strike gold and all 3, 4 or 5 people can collaborate together and contribute to the writing process. But that’s rare; it’s usually a core that does the most writing, but you still have to make sure all the puzzle pieces fit. Just because 1 or 2 people are writing the music doesn’t mean that the others can’t bring their talents to the table either in the studio or on stage.

– Mike Reidy

# DEMOCRACY? OR NOT.

Every band likes to think of themselves as being a democracy. Unfortunately, this is unrealistic. There is absolutely a pecking order in most cases, but what defines it? It depends on the band. Who works the hardest? Who contributes the most to the most amount of things that you are building your success from? Who is grinding the most, day in and day out?

Just because you might be the lead singer and/or the face of the band, don't think that you are more important than the drummer or guitarist who might be writing more of the songs, networking and building relationships with more key people, doing everything in their power to promote the band behind the scenes, maybe even helping to book the shows, set up the meetings, talk to the video directors, talk to your management every day to form key plans, building your website and communicating with your fans online, etc, etc, etc, etc. Many lead singers fall into that trap: it's called "lead singer syndrome." Don't get egotistical and sulk when something doesn't go your way. Remember - nobody is indispensable, no matter how many girls in the front row are screaming that they love you. Be objective and put in the graft without being asked, and you'll find that your opinions have more worth.

- S-Endz

## PICK A LEADER

### HILLEL FRANKEL

Your band is a business. Equal representation and an equal say for everyone is a wonderful thing when you are discussing options in your band practice space, or casting a ballot in a voting booth, but a 4 member band with 4 voices in business is a 4 headed monster. As your band's potential lawyer, the last thing I want to hear is 4 different opinions from 4 different band members. That is a sure warning that your band is not ready for the next step.

Pick a leader for the business side.

He or she can be different than the leader on the music side. Pick the one who can rationalize with the other band members, the one who can make a decision and then get things done. Pick the one that people like, not the moody, introspective or angry one! Pick a leader who can articulate the bands position to the lawyer, to the potential manager, tour sponsor, investor, or label. What will save your ass from day one is to designate the band member with some business sense as the business leader.



**HILLEL  
FRANKEL**



**ATTORNEY at LEAVENS,  
STRAND & GLOVER, LLC**

[www.ent-law.net](http://www.ent-law.net)

# SEVEN DEADLY SINS: THINGS THAT WILL KILL A BAND DEADDER THAN FUCKING FRIED CHICKEN

## MICHAEL JOLKOVSKI

**1 ENVY.** If you feel threatened that you have a standout frontman, guitarist, songwriter, marketer etc you will hate them for doing good things. Instead of feeling diminished by their accomplishments, you should feel augmented. (A little music theory joke there). You should be working hard to match their contribution rather than hating them for being showoffs.

The opposite of ENVY is GRATITUDE. Be grateful you have people in your band who are more talented, better-looking, or more organized than you. Their gifts help power the band.

If you need to be the best, the smartest, the funniest, the best-looking, the best dancer, you will be a massive pain in the ass to work with.

**2 RESENTMENT.** If you feel taken advantage of, unrewarded, or given the shit end of the stick, this will corrode you and the band. It is on you to have the ovaries to stick up for yourself – and the maturity to accept that maybe this is your fair share – and if you want something different, it is on you to make it happen.

It often happens that everyone feels like they are doing the most work. While you are calling around, hustling up gigs, the web person is spending 20 hours recoding the WordPress theme and the songwriter is pulling his eyeballs out trying to get the chorus right. This is why it's a good idea to have the part of the band meeting where everyone reports in on what they are doing for the band.

The opposite of RESENTMENT is a sense of FAIRNESS.

**3 DISHONESTY.** Naturally you want people who will tell the truth. It's most important to be truthful about areas of disagreement and conflict.

A classic place this causes trouble is in deciding the basic setup of the band. If you SAY you want to be egalitarian and democratic, but you secretly want to have your way, you haven't been honest with yourself or your bandmates. If you think you should be the philosopher-king of the band, that's perfectly fine, but it's on you to say so. Lots of bands have a visionary leader. Go for it. If you can't get people to follow your lead, it's not an injustice.

If you bring in a song you wrote and the others want to make changes, you have to be honest about whether you are open to making changes. It is perfectly fine to insist on being the czar of your own song. If you let others mess with your song and then get all butt-hurt about it, it means you weren't really interested in collaborating.

**MICHAEL  
JOLKOVSKI**



**PSYCHOANALYST &  
ORGANIZATIONAL  
CONSULTANT**

workingthrough.com

If you are only lukewarm in your commitment to the band and you are looking to join another band or go back to college, don't act like it's the only thing in your life.

If you think somebody's new song sucks or you hate the direction the band is going, find a diplomatic way of saying that the atonal polka stuff or the new setup with 9 dulcimers and a keytar is not your cup of tea. Otherwise you will just fume.

**4 SLOTH.** A wise man said "GTFOOB!" Success goes to those who do the work. Whether it is work in the practice room, in the rehearsal space, in marketing or in working the day job to pay for gas,

### **IT'S WORK THAT TRUMPS TALENT, 100 TIMES OUT OF 100.**

Often, people fall into a slothful slump when they are demoralized, discouraged, or indecisive. If that's happening, you have to address this as a problem (See *The Truth About Cats and Dogs* by Joanna Weber later in the book).

Otherwise, you need to decide whether you are willing to do the work involved in making a band succeed. If not, maybe you'd be happier playing for fun, or being a sideman in someone else's project, or doing something easier with your life, like being a surgeon.

**5 CONTEMPT/ARROGANCE.** If you think the others in your band are beneath you, it will show. And what on earth are you doing in a band with people you don't respect? Either admit that this is the best you can do at the moment AND you need the others, OR go off and be a solo genius. The Unabomber's shack is available. If you sneer at other players and other kinds of music, your ears will be closed and you will never learn or grow. OR perhaps you are a once-in-a-century genius. My money's on the former.

### **THE OPPOSITE OF CONTEMPT IS RESPECT.**

Any rock stars here? It takes attitude, but attitude will kill you.

### **ARROGANCE IS THE TOXIC SIDE OF THE ROCKSTAR/DIVA/PRIMA DONNA ATTITUDE.**

If you think the sun shines out of your arse and the world should bow down to you, not only will you make enemies and burn bridges everywhere you go, you won't do what you need to do to succeed.

It's easy to confuse arrogance with confidence, and to think you need to pose like a rockstar to be taken seriously. Most of the time, arrogance is a brittle mask used by people who are generally terrified. You can intimidate people for five minutes by being arrogant, but nobody respects it.

The opposite of arrogance is humility: this is what it takes to admit you need others, that you need to listen to constructive criticism, you need to get a teacher and practice hard, you need to tear up the first five versions of your new song, you need to work on your moves, you need to build an audience and persist when people talk through your set, you need to relentlessly improve, and you need to ask people nicely to listen to your music and thank them when they like it. "I need your help" are magic words. Humility allows you to learn from everybody.

**You will become old and stupid  
and dogs will pee on you.**

*- Michael Jolkowski*

**6 DISCOURAGEMENT.** It is a discouraging business – especially if you are trying to do creative and new music, there will be times when it seems like it’s all derivative tripe. There will be times when it all seems like a pointless waste of time.

This is normal. But if the band overall stays in a discouraged state of mind, people will start missing practice and having time conflicts with gigs, and your band will just poop out. You need to recognize discouragement and attack it. Your morale is job one – if you stay discouraged, you won’t do the things it will take. Since I don’t know you, I don’t know what will help. Maybe playing out more, maybe going for some easy wins like cover gigs. But you have to square up to discouragement and disappointment as an ordinary problem that has to be fixed.

**7 INDECISION & DISORGANIZATION.** Many times, creative people resist too much organization, because they don’t like to be hemmed in. But it’s a career-killer to change your mind too often, especially with respect to the big-picture artistic and business decisions. Ariel Hyatt points out that, while you might be intuitive about your art, you need to be rational and analytic about your approach to building an audience.

What kind of band are you? What style? What kind of audience? How are you going to present yourself to the public? What’s your general strategy? What’s your band name, logo, URL, social networking presence? Where is the community you want to reach? How will people know you exist?

If you change these things too often, you will confuse your audience and waste your energy and thrash around aimlessly.

It is easy to do this, because it is incredibly hard to have confidence that a specific approach is going to work. If you have decided to cold-call all of the Polish Catholic churches in your area to get gigs for your polka band, you can’t just drop it after three weeks and try to get booked into country & western bars. Unless you want to fail.

You can’t go great-guns into a Twitter campaign and then lose interest. You will definitely find your confidence falter, because nothing will create a sudden flood of gigs. But if you are tweeting like crazy and then stop, people will assume the band has gone dormant.



*There will be times when it all seems  
like a pointless waste of time.*



You should know exactly who gets what percentage of royalties from your album and the individual songs. If a band member leaves the band, they will want their fair share for what they've done on the album. If you don't have a contract and clear understanding of how everything is split, you can run into really shitty legal problems. **You'll spend thousands on recording but not a couple hundred dollars on an entertainment lawyer?** It's best to work this stuff out when feelings are all happy between band members.

.....  
- Chris Seth Jackson

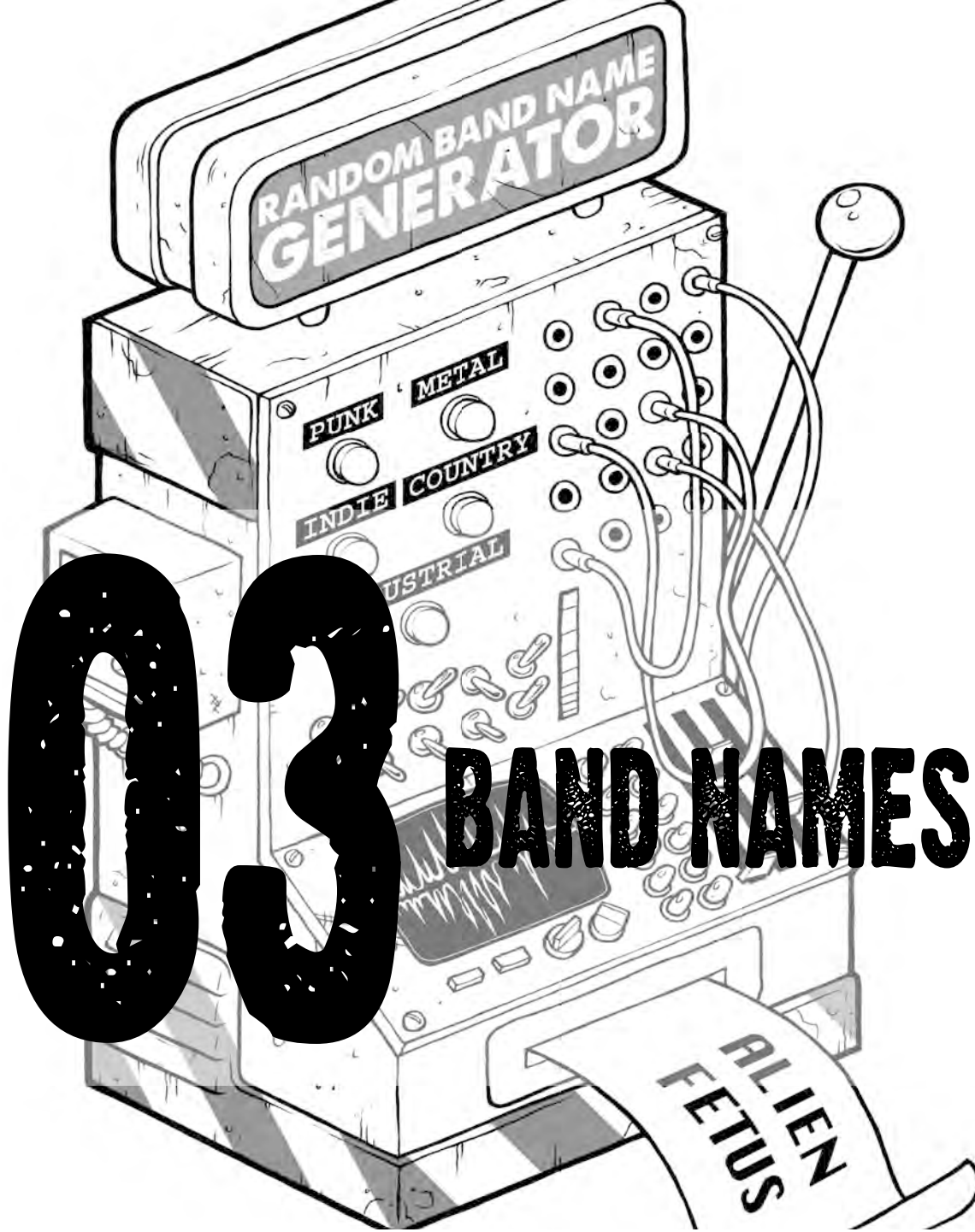
I think one issue that comes up again and again, band-wise, is the partnership thing and throwing-people-out thing. If bands would just think about it before they do things, it would help.

- Evan Cohen Manifesto









Ok, now you have carefully put your band together. What is it called? This is the subject of many hours and six packs of band meetings, political maneuvering, and “I asked everyone at the record store and they all like \_\_\_\_\_” (fill in the blanks), there’s a name Phil N the Blanks (arghhhhh). I think I have that on a flyer somewhere — sounds very punk.

Crazy band names are taken as evidence of the acceptability of *anything* as a band name. Their familiarity (because of success) doesn’t mean it’s a hard and fast rule that the most insane name is going to be a winner.

Englebert Humperdinck... I rest my case. But without the ridiculous name, you might never have heard of him? He changed his name after manager, Gordon Mills, convinced him that it would be a beneficial career move. Tom Woodward changed his name to “Tom Jones.” Ice Cube was originally O’Shea Jackson.

The name of your band should work (along broad lines) within the genre of your music. It is, after all, is a chance to reinforce the image of your brand. “Pastel Lilac and the Sweet Smelling Daisies” is a misleading name for a black metal



band. “The Blowjob” might be inappropriate for a classical ensemble. However, either of these could lead to a great punch up at the heavy metal club or the church. So, actually, scratch that last paragraph — these are great names! Weigh the value of the hilarious ad in the local paper versus a lifetime of being in *Bare Naked Ladies*.

Don’t name a band after an ex girlfriend (Kelly Is A Slut) or you will be forever linked to the skank that ran off with the bass player from your arch rivals, The Arch Rivals. And, when you become really famous, she will write a book or release an album, do loads of interviews, and release *that* photograph.

If all else fails, then sit and reset Rock Band and take a name from their random band name generator. In fact, there’s another band name: “Random Band Name Generator!”



## BE CAREFUL OF A MASSIVE DESIRE TO USE PROFANITY IN THE NAME.

Be careful about aligning your band with a specific country. Although you are catering to a niche market, you might be alienating the other 98% of the world.

Never align your band with an organization or instrument of governmental control or oppression.



Have the band name reflect the genre and the band accurately. If you are a trio, you aren’t (really) a Dixie land jazz band. Take the Scotland Yard Gospel Choir, for example. They are, of course, a five piece indie rock band from Chicago!



Smart creative people can sometimes go one click too far when naming anything. We had fun thinking about names for a new project in the early 90’s, deciding to call ourselves SHIT! — purely so that, if a journalist said “this band is crap” we could say, “NO! — We’re SHIT!” As evidence of Murphy’s Law and a bunch of other stuff — to AVOID any trouble because of the name — we decided to call the band: Murder Inc — then paid *a lot* of money to search the trademark, etc — yes, I’m sure you are thinking, “Hang on! There *is* an artist (and a label) called Murder Inc!?” Yes, there is. Take this as evidence that a legal document isn’t all you need to protect your rights. Sometimes, just like a pickup game of baseball... someone needs a bat.

You need the paper, the means and the intent.

So I guess my point is, other than checking the availability of the name itself, and the domains, do your worst!

Of course sprinkle everything with a fast dissolving packet of Murphy’s Law! You never know how the planets will align to screw up your most careful strategic choice. How did Anthrax feel when everyone was being poisoned? That can really screw with your Twitter feed!



Read more in Working with Brands.

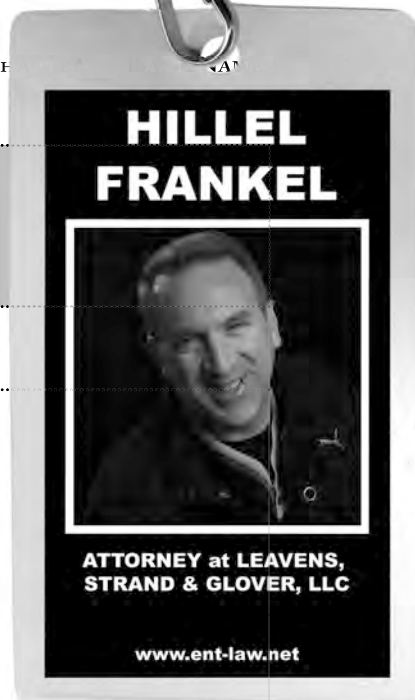
## THINK OF A BAND NAME THAT HASN’T BEEN USED

Yeah, forget it — this is impossible. It’s a pain in the ass and a threat of a lawsuit when you find out that the band members are 10, so you were a little bit nasty and threatening — but their mom is an attorney (of course she fucking is! [true story]) so deal with it — and look forward to getting the final sign offs on the name at great expense two days after the band breaks up (true.).

# TRADEMARK YOUR NAME

## HILLEL FRANKEL

What about the band from LA that signed a big indie deal only to find that a much smaller band in Ohio had already filed for trademark and was using their band name? They had to spend 90% of their first album advance and recording budget to buy the rights to use their own name from that little band in Ohio. What about the Chicago rapper Common Sense who had to change his name to Common because of a California reggae band named Common Sense, even though the rapper had already released a highly acclaimed album. **Own your name from the outset!** Same principal as stated above with regard to copyrights: the first to file and register the trademark with the US Patent and Trademark Office is presumed to be the original owner of the trademark and disproving this ownership can be very expensive. Plus you get to use the little ™ and the little ® when it is registered. Very cool! I would recommend hiring a lawyer for the trademark process. It is not too expensive and if you mess up the actual filing, you will lose your \$325 in USPTO government filing fee (note - \$325 per classification for a performing group, 2 classifications at \$650 if you want to register the mark for merchandise or 3 classifications at \$925 if you want to be a label under the same name as well) and more importantly, you lose your original filing date.



The Manchester Orchestra:  
Not from Manchester.  
Not an orchestra!

## CASE STUDY: LAUREN ALECTRONA OF ALECTRONA

**L.A.:** The problem is our band name "Alectrona." EVERYONE calls us "Alectronica." We go on mini-tours with bands and they say, "Thanks to ALECTRONICA for opening for us!" Venues say it wrong. It's misspelled on flyers, etc... it's soooooo hard to find another name. What should I do?

**M.A.:** I'd do a shirt that says, "THERES NO FUCKING I.C. IN THIS FUCKING BAND ASSHOLE" then have some idiot introduce you and get your name wrong. Run out onto the stage and beat him up with a trash can lid and a hammer... then, exhausted... lean over to the mic, wipe the blood out of your hair and say... "It's alectrona....alectrona..." THEN, print the photos everywhere, then write a song about it... then at the vinyl release party... have someone introduce you as Alex Stronberg and then just shoot him, go to jail, die in the electric chair then sell millions of records... then Jason Pettigrew can write, "the band was shit, but that girl Lauren was a motherfucker." Kerrrchiing!!! That's just what I'd do....

**L.A.:** -Update- It's working! We made a t-shirt and put an echoing voice saying "Alectrona" in some of the backing tracks for our songs. So far no one has said our name wrong in months! \*high five\* Thank you so much!

# SEO: HOW TO CHOOSE A NAME SO YOU WILL BE FOUND ONLINE

## CHRIS BOLTON

Choosing a band or artist name that is search engine optimized can help your career down the road.

Yes, many bands have managed to achieve success in spite of unsearchable band names (the band Girls come to mind), but why not make it easy on your fans and choose a name that is easy to search for and find?

Many musicians have discovered (the hard way) that an unsearchable band name can hurt sales, reduce concert attendance, and frustrate fans.

And it's not just major search engines like Google and Bing that you should be concerned about. A poorly chosen band name can make it hard for fans to find your music on iTunes, your videos on YouTube, and your band profiles on social networks.

### SEO DON'TS

**DON'T USE COMMON NAMES, WORDS OR PHRASES.** Common names and phrases are often searched for. So it's difficult to place at the top of search results for these terms. Avoid band names like Blue, Harmony, Hot and Cold, or El Nino. These sorts of everyday names and phrases present an uphill battle for good search results.

**DON'T GET TOO CREATIVE WITH SPELLING.** Using creative spelling will actually increase your search engine ranking, but only if your fans spell your name correctly. Take the band Gorillaz. Gorillaz fans know how the band name is spelled and therefore don't have a problem finding the band online. But if I heard of Gorillaz from a friend, and didn't know they used an "z" instead of an "s," I might search for "gorillas" with an "s" and find myself knee deep in articles about big hairy monkeys.

**DON'T USE SPECIAL SYMBOLS %@#!** Do you know how to put an umlaut over a ü when you type it into a search engine? Chances are, a good portion of your fans don't. Many special characters will be unrecognized or ignored by search engines. Also some special characters can be misinterpreted by computer programs as code and it can cause errors. Keep this in mind before you name your band: <Bl@st%>

**DON'T PIGGY BACK.** If you name your band The Katy Perry Experience you may get some traffic from Katy Perry fans who stumble upon your site, but that doesn't mean they're going to buy your music. Collateral traffic isn't always the best quality. Also, popular news about Katy Perry may often supplant your good rankings and there's always the possibility you get sued or the world gets tired of Katy Perry.

HATE  
SEX

THE HAUNTED  
BOWELS

MEAT  
FETISH

SCREAMING  
DISCHARGE



## SEO DOS

**USE MORE THAN ONE WORD.** A single word band name will only be easily searchable if your band name is unique such as Jamiroquai or Fugazi. But a unique band name can be hard to spell. Why not use a cool juxtaposition of a few common words such as Arcade Fire, Daft Punk or Kings of Leon. This way you can have a unique name that almost anybody can spell and easily find.

**TEST YOUR BAND NAME IN GOOGLE.** Let's say I'd like to call my band Unicorn Bluff. Let's search for that name in Google. For a more accurate result, I'll put "Unicorn Bluff" in quotes so that Google only searches for those two words strung together. In this case, there are only 307 results for "Unicorn Bluff." The top results are related to a unicorn poster. This looks promising. There are no Facebook, YouTube, MySpace, or music related results on Google's first page of results. My only concern with this band name is that "unicorn" has been a popular word in recent years for band names. So I might also do a search for "unicorn band" to see what my competition looks like.

**RESEARCH YOUR DOMAIN NAME.** A good domain name that is close to your actual band name will make it easier for people to find you online. If my band name is Unicorn Bluff, my ideal website is [www.unicornbluff.com](http://www.unicornbluff.com). [Unicornb-forever.net](http://Unicornb-forever.net) would be less than ideal because it does not contain both keywords of my band name and it may be hard for my fans to remember.

If my first choice wasn't available, I might go with: [www.unicornbluff.net](http://www.unicornbluff.net), [www.unicornbluff.co](http://www.unicornbluff.co) or [www.unicornbluffmusic.com](http://www.unicornbluffmusic.com). Make sure to check on the availability of domain names while you do your research. A good domain name will make it much easier for your fans to find you.

**TRADEMARK YOUR BAND NAME.** Once you've found the perfect SEO friendly band name, you should trademark it so nobody else can lay claim to it.

Use [www.namechk.com](http://www.namechk.com) to check your desired band name on TONS of social networks all from one site!



**Sweden is a band from Norway.**

**The Boards Of Canada – Scottish!**

**The band Saskatchewan is from Orlando.**



DOS

DOMITS

# LOGOS

In the same way that brands pay attention to their market and their goals before creating a logo, you should, too. I don't want to get into the insanely elaborate unreadable metal logos that are out there, but that's obviously a style if you are in that niche. Colours affect your logo and design, but the most important factor here is *you* knowing who you are. You need to do this anyway (especially to find your social media voice later) so think about this stuff now!

Don't think for a second that the amount of money you spend has anything to do with the power or strength of your logo. Twitter spent less than \$20 on theirs! I think the Nike swoosh was \$50 or so. You can get a logo on Fiverr for, er, a fiver! Many owners of businesses design or create their logos themselves. I am *not* saying that I am a designer, but I put together my band's logo slightly by accident on a computer at FedEx Kinkos.



There is no reason that you can't mess around with some different logos. Pay attention to the stickers that people choose or the shirts that people buy — that's the logo that's speaking to them.

**Be careful:** You don't want to get into a fight you can't win, but if your logo can be used without any wording and still communicate your brand to people, you're in awesome territory.

*I love this picture of Hugh Lee (not just because my students made the shirts for him). It doesn't need a caption — any picture taken of him answers the first question that it poses.*

*Photo: Alex Alvarez*



# TOP 10 TIPS FOR A DECENT LOGO

## PATRICE K. COKLEY

- 1 Research similar bands' logos. Not to copycat, but to see how it reflects that band, how it's being used, and how their audience responds to it.
- 2 Know yourself and how you want to be perceived by your audience. Your logo is more than a nice symbol or font. It's a graphic representation of you and/or your band.
- 3 Be mindful of the color(s) you choose. Color evokes emotion, and you want to make sure the color you choose evokes the appropriate emotion you want your audience to have when experiencing it. For example, a company that uses blue is perceived to be trustworthy, dependable, and strong; hence why a lot of financial institutions, automobile companies, and social media platforms use it. Another example is red, which is perceived as exciting, youthful, and bold; think Netflix, Target, Dairy Queen, Virgin, etc. Search "brand colors" in Google for a complete color guide to reference.
- 4 Keep it simple, but unique and recognizable. You don't want anything too complicated that has the potential of being unattractive to your audience.
- 5 Note fonts that you like. Many artists or bands have logos that are text-based with a very distinct font or arrangement. (Example: Mary J. Blige, Nirvana, Maroon 5, and Michael Jackson.)
- 6 To stand out a bit more, consider incorporating an icon or symbol into your logo. (Examples: Prince and Rolling Stones) It can make the perfect profile picture, watermark, or small merch item.
- 7 Make sure it's versatile so that it can fit on a horizontal or vertical layout.
- 8 Sketch ideas to show your graphic designer and get input from your peers and your audience once concepts are developed.
- 9 Test the logo on both a black background and a white background to determine if the inverted logo conveys the same meaning and emotion.
- 10 Make sure you get the logo file from your designer in an .ai or .eps format. Both formats are vector-based and allow you to resize the logo without pixelated distortion.

**PATRICE K.  
COKLEY**

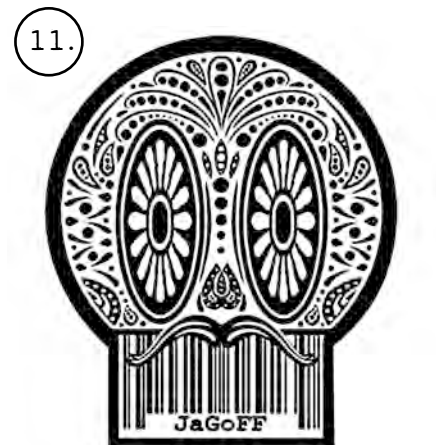
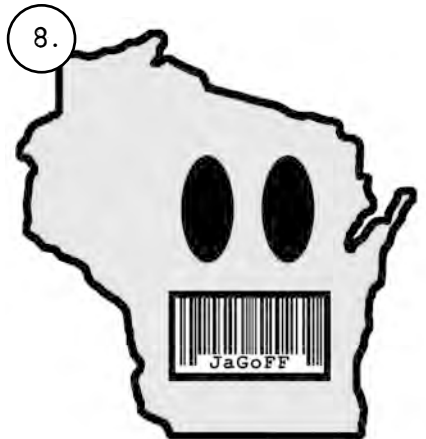
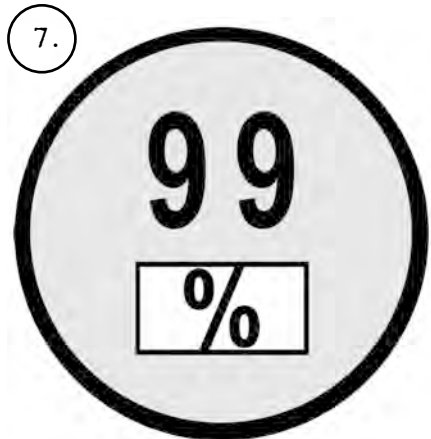
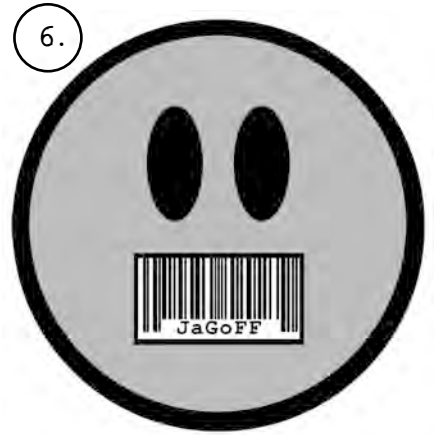
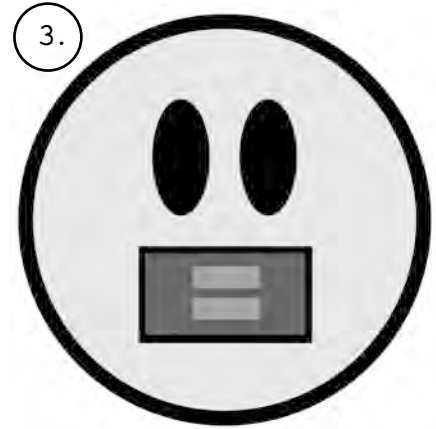
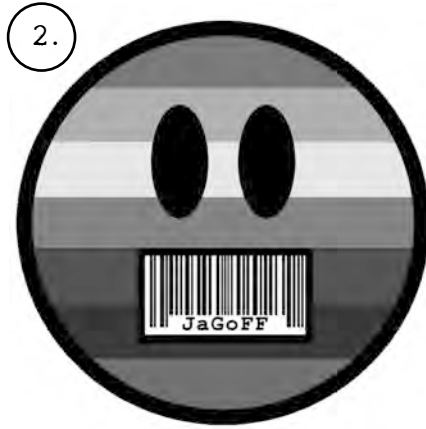


**THE BASSLINE GROUP**

[www.thebasslinegroup.com](http://www.thebasslinegroup.com)

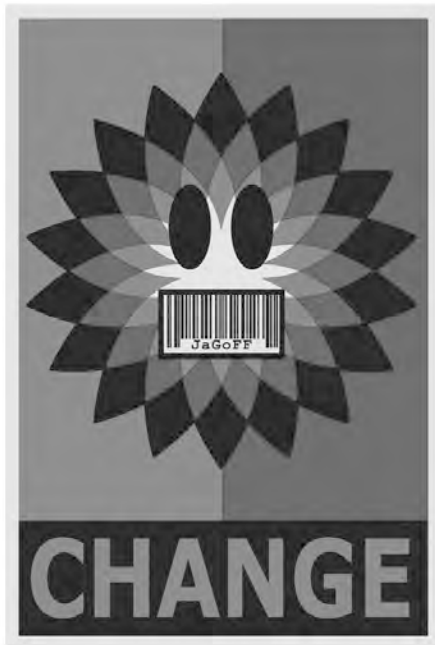






I love the way the JaGoFF logo is instantly recognizable, even at a distance or when it is customized.

12.



13.



It has to have an identity that is yours and yours only. I cannot stress this enough. You have to find your sound, luck, humor and message that make your band stick out of the ten million headed monster of bands in the world.

—Anders Odden

14.



15.



Branding: Making a great logo, using it for the rest of your life, and putting it on EVERYTHING you do (like the ol' NIN — everyone instantly knows what that is).

—John Wheeler

If your band wants me to use the horrible logo your 5th grade cousin drew, then don't have a better one on your facebook profile. I will use the one that does not look like crap.

—Stephen Harm

## JAGOFF PUBLISHING

1. Standard Logo

2. Gay Pride

3. Marriage Equality

4. ACTA

5. Fukushima

6. Breast Cancer Awareness

7. Occupy

8. Walker Recall

9. Halloween

10. Santa

11. Day of the Dead


12. Change / BP Spill

13. Happy Buy Nothing Day

14. Vote

15. SOPA Blackout Day





# 04 SONGS

The romance and the magic of creativity comes down to this for me: it's just like taking a big crap. I'm tied in knots beforehand and relieved and red faced afterwards.

When an idea is inside of me, it affects me physically. On one hand it keeps bouncing around in my head, taking up space until I write it down. On the other hand, until the idea has left my body and I can view it/hear it from a distance that it is literally going to constipate me until I can get it out/down on disc, tape, paper, pissing in the snow, pencil or singing it into my voice mail, WHATEVER. Sometimes it is much more complicated. An idea is prodding me for attention and it might take days before I have cleared away enough of the overlaying of other tracks and ideas to support the voice that has been overlooked or buried.

Songwriting is NOT what Sir Paul McCartney said — falling asleep then waking up with "Eleanor Rigby" magically written on the back of a cigarette pack. It's hard work filled with many versions making incremental progress towards a better and better song.

**A fantastic composition transcends quality.**

— Sep V

If you write 30 songs, 10 will be better than your other 20. The next 10 you write will be better than that, allowing for some fucked-up, experimental stuff that leads nowhere (as opposed to the fucked-up experimental stuff that leads to innovation, hookiness, and worldwide success). You need more songs because you need to give one album away for free and have a second album (the B-sides, the lost tapes, songs from the cutting room floor, the songs your producer didn't like but he's an asshole so now here they are) that you can sell. This is a very important part of being able to sustain and it is completely within your control.



I like when me and music get in a fight, cause the make-up sex is phenomenal.

– Bangalore Chris David

Think of your songwriting ability like a muscle. You can't run a marathon on your first day as a runner. You train. You run a little more each day. When you work out your "songwriting brain" and really get it pumping, it can move mountains, move people, pose a question, change minds, start an uprising, or make someone cry.

Write 50 songs. You'll get better. You'll piss yourself off. You'll do silly things with words about subjects that you never thought you could write about. You can use some of that wordplay technique on another song somewhere in the future. Then you just have to distance yourself from all of it or trust someone (a producer, perhaps, or fans who vote with clicks) to sift out the good from the bad. Ten of those songs will be awesome and ten will be appalling. Your next ten will be staggeringly better than the first 50. You just have to do the work.

Creativity is what you *have* to do. It's not a decision, it is something that itches like a rash, keeps you up and bounces around until you make all of the pieces fit.

The art vs. business struggle continues... except that there is no struggle.

Art always wins! Then, the business of it fails and the art loses. ALWAYS.

Business is not evil. Art is not a badge to wear. It's a fucking<sup>3</sup> affliction that does not need to be compounded by bad business or worse... the denial that business exists.

<sup>3</sup>This fuck brought to you by Teresa Larson.

The best part about dating a musician is all the things they wrote about their exes. Errr...wait...

– Sarah Saturday

YOU are the worst person at choosing a single for a project you are involved in. Enlist your fans' help in deciding this. Apparently, Jason Mraz decided to buck his major label advice for his latest hit "I'm Yours". Since he was getting a better reaction to this song than others, he saw this as the sign that this should be the single. What did he get in return? 71 weeks on the Billboard chart.

— Jesse Cannon

## WORRIED ABOUT HOW HARD IT WILL BE TO WRITE 50 SONGS? GREAT! FUCK OFF AND LEAVE SOME SPACE FOR THE REST OF US YOU LAZY BASTARD.

If you find yourself staring at a blank screen, piece of paper, or your head is empty — try one of these not proven but interesting techniques for songwriters.

### THE CUT-UP TECHNIQUE

Write random words and sentences then cut them up and re-group them like the refrigerator magnet game. Words collide in interesting and different ways than you might imagine. Often, just listening gives you a different perspective. A German friend was talking about drugs one day and referred to "stronger" drugs as BIG drugs. Boom! Out comes the note book — song title!

### RHYMING

Rhyming acts as a memory prompt, and the more your song gets sung in someone's head, the deeper it gets embedded. Although, as of this writing, there are no royalties for songs played in people's heads (that's something else for you 80s old style music business fuck-os<sup>2</sup> to complain about.)

Rhyming plants seeds in the memory. Those seeds can sprout and fill a brain like spiders eggs laid in your ears.

**THE MORE YOUR SONG GETS SUNG,  
THE MORE THE DOLLAR BELL GETS RUNG.**

Rhyming: It's not only important, it can get you off a murder charge! If it does not fit you must acquit!

### CREATE BROAD EXPERIENCES

If you can distill it down, *and* broaden things out — create some experience that makes your song everyone's, you might get some traction. Be clever, but not too clever.

"We sang shang a lang as we ran with the gang do it do wop be do be do way."\* I rest my case. \*The penis mightier than the sword. (Yes, that was deliberate!)

\*I don't have to tell you that's the Bay City Rollers.

<sup>2</sup>This fuck brought to you by Kyle J. Smith.



## SET OBSTACLES

I like the idea of setting obstacles when writing to see what happens. Write an album of songs that feature garden tools. Follow these tips and you'll be raking it in!

- I've got hoes in different area codes
- Got 99 problems but even distribution of my fertilizer ain't one
- Let's get ploughed!
- Marvin Gaye wrote a song about an onion.
- Neil Young wrote a song about HomeGrown and I don't think he was talking about tomatoes.
- "Me, I'm just a lawnmower" – wasn't that Genesis?

Or only use washing machine analogies, metaphors and similes to create an album of love songs:

- The bleach of my love will never remove the stain her lipstick made on my heart.
- Your love sticks to me like the stain on your snow white underpants.
- I miss you, like a reach for the dryer sheet at the bottom of an empty box.
- Our love is stronger than dirt.

Yes, I know, crap, but it's an interesting exercise and a sponsorship deal with Maytag. I already have the album cover designed in my head.

**YOU NEED MORE SONGS YOU CAN SELL, GIVE AWAY, AND TRASH.  
LISTEN TO YOUR FANS ONLINE – OR WATCH THEIR REACTION LIVE.**

# TOP TEN RULES FOR BETTER SONGWRITING

## DARREN MONSON

**1 DON'T BE A PERFECTIONIST.** Write a LOT. Churn songs out, bin them and churn more out. Don't be a perfectionist. The aim is to improve over time, not to sit down and craft the perfect pop song on your first attempt.

**2 GET FEEDBACK AS OFTEN AS POSSIBLE.** Be fearless with your songs. It's OK if you write a crap song. What is not OK is to try and convince everyone that it's a great song! Get feedback and allow people to be honest, that way you will start to learn what really works.

**3 HOT AND COLD.** I am talking about combining opposites such as spiccato and legato (short and long). When you have long held chords, try a shorter or snappier vocal line. If you have a funky bass line you might want to opt for a simpler, more solid guitar part. It's simple stuff, but worth thinking about when writing or producing.



**4 LEARN TO UNLEARN.** Don't be afraid to break the rules. If it sounds good to you then do it!

**5 THE DISADVANTAGE OF TALENT.** Raw talent can take someone 10% of the way to success, but hard work and determination make up the rest. The problem with naturally talented people is that they never learn to accept failure and find it harder to accept defeat. People who are average (but with a burning desire to win) are in many ways better equipped to stay the course and succeed long term.

**6 SEE THE BIGGER PICTURE (ALWAYS).** Develop the part of your brain that can listen to and analyze the whole picture, instead of focusing on tiny details. You should be able to hear instantly what is needed to make your songs work. Avoid analysis paralysis. Michael Jackson's "Thriller" album was recorded in four weeks and producer Quincy Jones says that the limited time actually helped as they were unable to over analyze.

**7 SAY IT DIFFERENTLY.** We all know that there are common lyrical themes in music. I would guess that the topic of 'love' is the most widely used lyrical theme. Using tried and tested themes can be a good thing, but you should always try and say it differently. For example, Dianne Warren said "Un-break my heart" instead of "Mend my heart". She invented a new phrase to say the same thing a million other songs have said before and it worked perfectly.

**8 KEEP IT SIMPLE.** It is a kind of 'musicians curse' to assume that complicated means better. Get used to writing simpler songs that have more hooks and adhere to common (natural) arrangement structures. Remember, you will hear the song over and over but your audience will have to 'get' it on the first listen. Keep it simple people!

**9 WORK WITH OTHERS.** Even if you don't like working with others, please try it. You'll see that in many cases more heads really can be better than one. Working with others forces you to move away from your comfort zone and in my experience produces better songs. The process of getting input from more people during the writing process is healthy and makes it unlikely that you'll write a real stinker!

**10 TAKE REGULAR BREAKS.** Have you ever worked on a song for 15 hours straight and been totally disappointed with the result? It's happened to me many times! Doing anything creative can lead you down a rabbit hole of endless ideas that (if no breaks are taken) can spiral into complex introverted expression. In other words, take a bloody break and come back with fresh ears!



SliceThePie.com is a great way to have a bunch of people review your music, a great way for a new band to get feedback on their songs and adjust before recording/releasing, etc.

Remember, you will hear the song over and over but your audience will have to 'get' it on the first listen. Keep it simple people!

Learn how to write great songs. It starts and ends with the song. After all, you can be the biggest marketing genius, if the songs are no good you're going to fail. Guaranteed. Do your research and become an expert: listen to the radio and analyze the hits, read songwriting books, co-write with more experienced writers, attend songwriters' workshops and seminars. Learn about intros, verses, bridges, choruses, hooks, strong lyrics. Then blow me away.

- Tony van Veen



# 5 THINGS YOU SHOULD KNOW BEFORE WRITING POLITICAL SONGS

## JON OSTROW

### MUSIC HAS THE POWER TO CREATE A MOVEMENT.

Throughout music history, songwriters all over the world have used this power to speak out and raise awareness about political issues. From genocide and racial atrocities, to class warfare and economic unbalance, every (or almost every) major political issue of the last 50 years has been given a soundtrack by a songwriter that felt strongly enough to put their feelings into song.

In fact, some of the best songwriters of all time are considered as such because of their ability to stir the pot and get people in motion to act against political injustice.

A few important examples of famous political songs are:

- Bob Dylan: *The Times They Are A Changin'* // Written in 1964 during the civil rights movement in the US, this song became the soundtrack for the movement.
- Bob Marley: *Redemption Song* // A hopeful protest song written during time of unrest in Jamaica.
- John Lennon: *Imagine* // Easily considered to be the most important anti-war, pro-peace song ever written.
- The Sex Pistols: *God Save The Queen* // Commentary on the economic divide in England during the 1970s, this song took direct aim at UKs elite class, meanwhile giving a voice to the unrepresented, lower class.
- Rage Against The Machine: *Killing In The Name Of* // Written in reaction to the 1992 acquittal of the four police officers accused of assaulting Rodney King (which sparked the infamous LA Race Riots), this song has since become the soundtrack to racial injustice.
- Notorious B.I.G.: *Things Done Changed* // A terrifyingly realistic portrayal of the economic divide and widespread crack cocaine epidemic that plagued many inner city neighborhoods in the early 90's.

### 5 THINGS TO CONSIDER WHEN WRITING YOUR OWN SONGS:

**1 TELL A STORY.** Whether you tell a personal story or just paint a picture of what the victim of the political issues would experience, telling a story is one of the most important and effective ways to connect the significance of the issue with the listener.

**2 BE PERSONAL.** Often times, songwriters will try to simply write a political song for the sake of writing one, but without having a personal connection to the issue, the song will likely fall flat with connecting with others on a widespread



I have never written a song by myself.

– Chuck D

level. An effective political song should show passion about the issue and more importantly, what it takes to right the wrong, so if you attempt to take on a political injustice through song, make sure it is something you personally feel strongly about.

**3 OPINION MATTERS.** Writing an effective political song is more than just laying out the facts, it is about adding in your own commentary and again showing the passion as to why you feel it is so important to address the issues within your song head on.

**4 THE SONG MUST BE THE PRIMARY FOCUS.** While the lyrical content and political message will obviously be in the spotlight, that doesn't mean you can forego quality songwriting! This is a big mistake that so many make and believe it or not, it can lessen the effectiveness of the lyrics and message if the song isn't worth listening to. All of the songs listed above made a difference, and all tell an important political message, but first and most importantly each is a fantastic song worth listening to.

**5 SHOULD BE CURRENT AND RELEVANT.** This would seem obvious enough but it is important to state; if you are going to write a political song, make sure it is current and relevant if you want it to energize people. While WWII and the Vietnam War were important, writing political songs about them now is less social commentary and more a nostalgia piece. The latter is absolutely fine if that's what you are going for, but if not, it is certainly something to be wary of.



If songs 1-7 rule and 8-15 blow... do me a favor and release a 7 song record. I hate getting less interested as a record goes forward.

—Stephen Francis

Everyone is optimistic at the beginning. In the middle, it's, "OH, SHIT!" then it starts to be ominous, but that tension is so important to creativity.

—Jeff Castelaz





# 05 IMAGE

*Photo: MaryTaylorBunny by ChadMichaelWard*

A good image is like the hook of a song. It's repeatable, recognizable from a distance, and sticks with you.

The idea of image feels as though it has gone through the same changes that marketing has gone through. Marketing isn't fake, temporary, celluloid fabricated anymore — it's real. Image is no longer just having a look, it's what you do. Image used to be the look you chose, a carefully orchestrated picture with the hair just right, the makeup freshly applied, the chins not so visible, and the blemishes camouflaged. Now your image is everything you say, do, feel, project, blurt, spew, write, draw, sing, play, beat, smoke, and ingest.

Every time you look at the camera, put on the perfect front, somebody else is taking a photograph from the back. The image, now, is more than two dimensional; it's three dimensional physically and spiritually. The things you think and say can change the way a song is perceived. The way you look and act changes the way people feel about you more than how you look temporarily in a photograph. Staged is false.

**You don't get to hear  
the music unless you  
like the image...**

*— Miles Copeland*

We get back to the value of authenticity and the need to look inwards. Center yourself before you start to project outwards because if it is not real or consistent (and I think the only way for it to be consistent is for it to be real) then it will erode and crumble over time.

Have fun with your image. Think. Work on becoming who you are or discover the person you're comfortable living with before you show people. It's internal and external. Don't choose to be the guy in the rubber underwear if you don't want to live with a rash and put ointment on your rider (and other places). Don't decide to be Robin Hood if you like to ride in limos. Don't pretend to love your fans if you really hate people, love money, and despise everything.

I imagine Liberace always in sequins and feathers immaculately dressed with rings and a chauffeur. That's tough if that's the image you choose for yourself when you need to go down to Target or the grocery store to get some cat food in your sweat pants.

## **IF YOU CAN'T GET ATTENTION OR VISIBILITY — CHANGE THE BACKGROUND OR CONTEXT.**

Stand out from your background or change the background! Your fake Indian Chief Headdress, plastic pants, and sheet-rocking stilts will seem common place and boring at the Village People Reunion bash on Halloween in NYC. BUT, wear that shit to the DMV! Now we have action, memorability, and, yes, possible arrest but it's all a balancing act, especially with the sheet-rocking stilts.

### **IMAGES ARE MARKETING**

Don't get pulled into some rock and roll 1980s "no cameras allowed" bullshit at your shows. Let your fans take pics — and tag them! ENCOURAGE IT! Take photos with fans before and after the show!

Metadata your images! Make sure you read the section on making your website images searchable! (*Read more in SEO.*)

**Pictures of faces are more powerful than pictures of instruments or cool graphics from your album cover.**

**Don't wear ball caps. Photographers hate them.**

*— Jason Pettigrew*

# GOOD IMAGERY STILL MATTERS

Make sure you have great publicity photographs and you know how to use them at the appropriate resolutions, online and offline. Hire a professional photographer who already has a terrific portfolio full of musicians. Why spend real money and time to look good? One reason is that newspapers often choose which photos to run based on the decision of the paper's photo editor, not the review staff.

## **AND IN THIS BUSINESS, A PHOTO WITH A CAPTION IS WORTH FAR MORE THAN 1,000 WORDS.**

The same principle holds true when packaging your CD. Use a professional designer, use professional photos, and make sure you look as good as you sound to your potential customers, fans, and industry contacts.

- Micah Solomon

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There is no single way to produce a great press photo. As long as you've left an impression and piqued the curiosity of a potential fan then you've succeeded. Don't fret. You can keep trying different ideas until you see that one magic photo that just hits you in the right way, the one where you say, "Oh yeah! That is how I want the world to see me!" Just do me a favor and stay away from the railroad tracks. It isn't safe down there anyways.

- Chris Robley

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Present yourself, in a way in which you wish to be perceived. This includes the way you dress, your online presence and branding, the things and the people you associate with. You control what the perception of your band/music is before the general public even hears a note of it. Packaging your products, promoting them and marketing them under one branded image is essential to sticking out in the over saturated areas within independent music communities.

- Shawn Kellner

# GETTING THE BEST OUT OF A PHOTO SHOOT

**PAUL  
NATKIN**



**PHOTOGRAPHER**

[www.natkin.net](http://www.natkin.net)

## PAUL NATKIN

**Step 1:** Be professional! Plan what you want before the shoot. Discuss with the photographer what you are looking for from the shoot. Publicity shot? Website usage? CD packaging? All of the above?

- If the photos are going to be used for CD packaging, make sure you plan the package with your manufacturing company first. Jewel box or DigiPak? Clear or grey tray? Booklet? How many pages? How many photos will you need for the package?
- Find an art director to design the package, based on a template that the manufacturer will provide. This will allow you to know what needs to be shot on the day of the shoot.

**Step 2:** Discuss photographic rights to the final images (and the fee). Every photographer has a different idea of what rights belong to what party. You should always have the rights to use the photos for publicity and web use, but might have to negotiate a higher rate for cover art use. The photographer always owns the copyright to the images, unless you negotiate that transfer in advance (usually at a much greater fee).

**Step 3:** Decide on the concept for the shoot. Photo studio in front of a background? Location shoot? Indoors? Outside? Maybe use your rehearsal space for a location. Somebody's house if it has the right look? Outside if weather permits? The main thing to remember here is that the photos should convey the vibe of the artist.

**Step 4:** Schedule the shoot. Plan a time when you can all easily get to the location **ON TIME**. Have an alternative location set in case of rain or snow. Try not to shoot outside at noon, when the sun is directly overhead. Everyone will look like they have bags under their eyes!

**Step 5:** Practice poses! Just as you practice for a show, practice for a photo shoot. Prepare for the shoot. Lay out whatever you are going to bring the night before. Make sure that all the clothes fit.

**Step 6:** **BE ON TIME!!!!!!!!!!!!!!** Being on time means being 10 minutes early. If one of your band members has trouble being on time, pick him or her up. Or lie to him and tell him that the shoot is a half an hour before it actually is. You should treat a photo shoot the same as you would treat a gig. Prepare and put on a professional show. If you are going to have instruments in the photo, make sure that they are clean and polished- unless your plan is to make them look grubby.

**Step 7:** When you arrive, treat the photographer's space as you would your own. (Or better). Ask where you can hang up clothes and where to put cases. Don't open the refrigerator unless you ask first.


**Step 8:** Listen to the photographer during the shoot. If he tells someone to move back a half a step, it is probably because that person is blocking the light hitting the person next to him. Treat the shoot in a professional manner.

**Step 9:** Pack well and double check that everything you came with goes with you. Try not to leave anything behind. Remember, this is just like a gig. Check the dressing room before you leave, also, make arrangements to pick up the photos (when and where).



**Dress sharp, and dress the same as you do in videos, in pictures, on the album and live. The more your peers think your image is over the top, the better it probably is. Everyone must remember you and recognize you in an instant.**

*—John Wheeler*



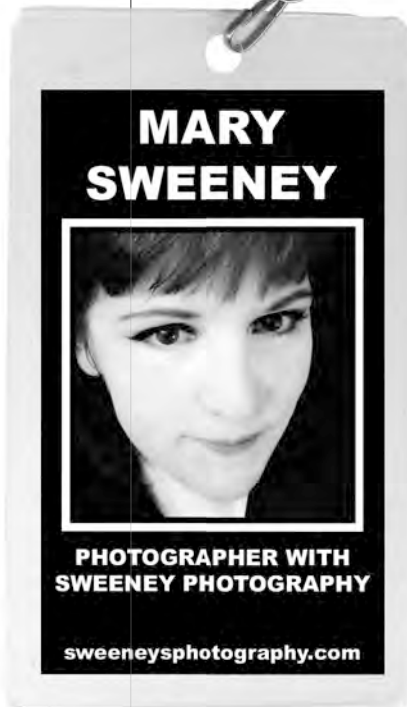
**For God's sakes, hire a real photographer, not your bass player's lady friend who's going to take photos of you in front of a brick wall while standing on a ladder. Those shots will be super edgy and stand out... said no one ever. A lot of times, a pro photographer with real creds that you hire can introduce you to other pro people if you're not a complete pain to work with. Guess what: the connections they likely have (if they're for real) can easily be worth more than the photos they take.**

*—Kent Nielsen*



# DO SOMETHING!

## MARY SWEENEY



By day I am a portrait photographer. I am hired to photograph people in the most flattering way. If a portrait photographer agrees to shoot your show, you should be extremely grateful. I know that makes me sound a bit full of myself but it has absolutely nothing to do with my ego. When a portrait photographer approaches their subject they have one objective — make this person look their best. A portrait photographer knows how to edit and what to edit. While I don't want to change what happened on stage I will make minor changes to the finished “view” of it. Picture this: major label band — lead singer did the entire show with his fly open. When I posted the photos I made sure to zip him up first. Another singer during an outdoor festival gave me the jump shot to end all jump shots. His entire crotch was soaked from sweat but it could have easily been captioned “wasted singer in a fit of rage wets his pants on stage”. I posted and printed the final photo sweat free. I get that people sweat but if it can potentially put that person in jeopardy of bad press — I will fix it. I don't want to see photos of me looking bad so I don't take photos of others in compromising ways — I'll leave that to the paparazzi.

The last bit of advice regarding the photo pit is this: there are good photographers and bad photographers. Some are there to do a job and some are there to do a job AND genuinely want to help you and your band. I will give you a fool-proof way to tell the difference between them so you get the best photos. Look down into the pit and find the one that's dancing — she's the one you let shoot for the entire show and use some flash. ;)

### THE GREATEST LIVE CONCERT PHOTO EVER!

... will not be of you if you don't interact with your band mates or the audience or if you seem to be totally disinterested in your own music. Why would anyone pay to go to a concert to see a band perform if the band isn't going to perform? Take a quick look out at your audience — if no one is taking snap shots you've got yourself a problem.

Getting a great performance photo is no different than getting an audience in front of your band and keeping them there.

### DO SOMETHING ON THE STAGE!

Don't say you're the most amazing guitarist that ever lived and then hide behind the drummer. When I go to see your show, I should NEED to photograph you to let the rest of the world know that they are missing out on the most amazing guitarist that ever lived. If I am inspired to exert the energy it takes to lift my camera to my eye then you are doing something right. Keep doing it and I will climb over equipment or hang from a girder to capture that magical moment when you do something.

Let's discuss what you are trying to accomplish when you perform. You are plain and simply — trying to sell your music. If you start posting photos from your performances that show you doing something then all the friends you have been and will be collecting on all your social media sites will collectively say, “I NEED to be

there the next time they do something!” We have all had a job at one point or another that was customer service based in some way. When you are on stage there is a whole group of people standing in front of you that want to buy something from you. They have an interest. They want to buy. All you need to do is something. **Do something = sell your music. Do something = Greatest Live Concert Photo Ever!**

So what do I mean when I say do something? This is an example of the difference between doing something and doing nothing from Madison based band Sexy Ester. The first time I shot the band, there was almost no movement from any of the guys in the band. Lyndsay would step out occasionally but the performance felt uncomfortably restrained. We had a few discussions after about what they really wanted the look and feel of their band to be. These images are from the show following these chats — when they decided to do something to connect with their audience.

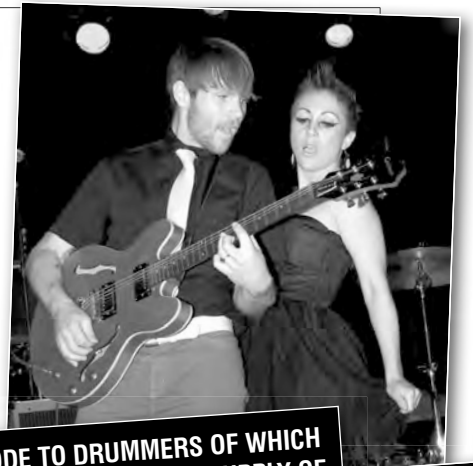
Great live performance photos come from many different places. Yeah, the jumpers are my favorites.

## THERE'S NOTHING LIKE FREEZING AN EXPLOSION OF ENERGY SO THAT IT LINGERS IN MID AIR FOREVER.

Without hearing the music you just know — something happened that was worth seeing. There are also those moments of raw emotion that are expressed on a guitarist's face when launching into a solo or the strain of a full scream exiting a singer's mouth. A performer's connection and involvement with his/her music is what makes a great photo.

It also takes great timing. I listen to the music so I know exactly when that change-up is going to happen or when that stick is going to wreck havoc with a cymbal. I will look through the view finder with one eye while the other scans the stage. I will notice the look the bass player gives the singer and know that something is going to happen and I'll be ready for it. This shot of Mikey Martin of the Shiny Toy Guns was a once in a lifetime photo. I had never met him before this show but he was watching me move around the stage taking photos. When I returned to his end of the stage, he looked at me and nodded ever so slightly and I raised the camera. It was then that he bit down on the cymbal. A couple of years later he told me this was the one and only time he has done this. You see, right after I took the picture the singer/guitarist Chad Petree hit the cymbal with his guitar. Mikey said the pain was excruciating and he was sure he was going to lose every tooth in his mouth.

**The “Greatest Live Concert Photo Ever” will be of you if you DO SOMETHING!**



**ODE TO DRUMMERS OF WHICH I HAVE AN ENDLESS SUPPLY OF DOING SOMETHING PHOTOS**



**VOCALISTS THAT CAN F\*#K THE WORLD BECAUSE THEY DO SOMETHING.**



**THE MOST AMAZING GUITARISTS THAT EVER LIVED BECAUSE THEY DO SOMETHING.**



**MIKEY MARTIN OF SHINY TOY GUNS**





## **PRACTICE FOR CATASTROPHE**

It's not about being able to be put on a great performance when everything is perfect (monitors, underwear, stage height, lights, PA system, dressing room, availability of toilets, crowd response etc.).

It's about being amazing when you absolutely shouldn't and any self respecting artist would have thrown down their instruments and stormed off stage in a huff.

Practice being great in impossible situations. Practice in three inches of water with only four strings on your guitar with the ceiling falling on your head and the microphone cutting in and out while the drummer is so angry he is throwing lit cigarettes at you.

Smile, smile, smile! Give yourself electric cattle prod shocks every time you gaze at your shoes... and, when all of this happens at your opening slot on Lollapalooza... Be amazing! You can laugh in the face of adversity and you'll be triumphant!

Professionals, critics, people who can make a difference to all of your next steps, will notice how amazing you are (not at playing your instrument because that's boring these days — but at overcoming adversity!) YES!

THINK about the other things to practice for too — your band might be some unstoppable formula: a racecar speeding down the fast lane of blah blah blah — but you also need a pit crew that's slick and superfast at repairing damaged equipment guitars, hair, pants, egos disguising pools of vomit or worse — someone needs to practice for that — and, in the beginning stages (and for much longer than that) — it'll be YOU!

## KEEP IT SIMPLE. BECAUSE THE PEOPLE YOU ARE WORKING WITH WILL BE.

Look at issues that might come up during an opening slot — look at your cabling and labeling, make sure you are on a mission to end confusion — you want to be able to hand a sound man two cables (left and right) and say 'here you go!' keep it simple. Because the people you are working with will be.

---

# BUILD YOUR OWN REHEARSAL ROOM

I built a floating rehearsal room for Killing Joke. We were rehearsing in central London and I was tired of sweating behind the drums all day and sweating as I rode two trains and a bus back to the flat I was staying in... so I built my own rehearsal space in Chicago, just a few feet from my apartment!

Where plans had called for the floating room to be floated on neoprene hockey pucks, I pulled rubber brake hoses (with the brass nozzles still attached) from a dumpster of an auto parts supply house. I sealed one end with tape and carefully filled the tube with sand so that the rubber hose wouldn't collapse. Then, I sealed the end of the tube with gasket sealer and more tape. This saved a couple of thousand dollars. It was a good thing I did this because the club space downstairs was rented out to an older woman, who put her bedroom directly underneath the rehearsal room.

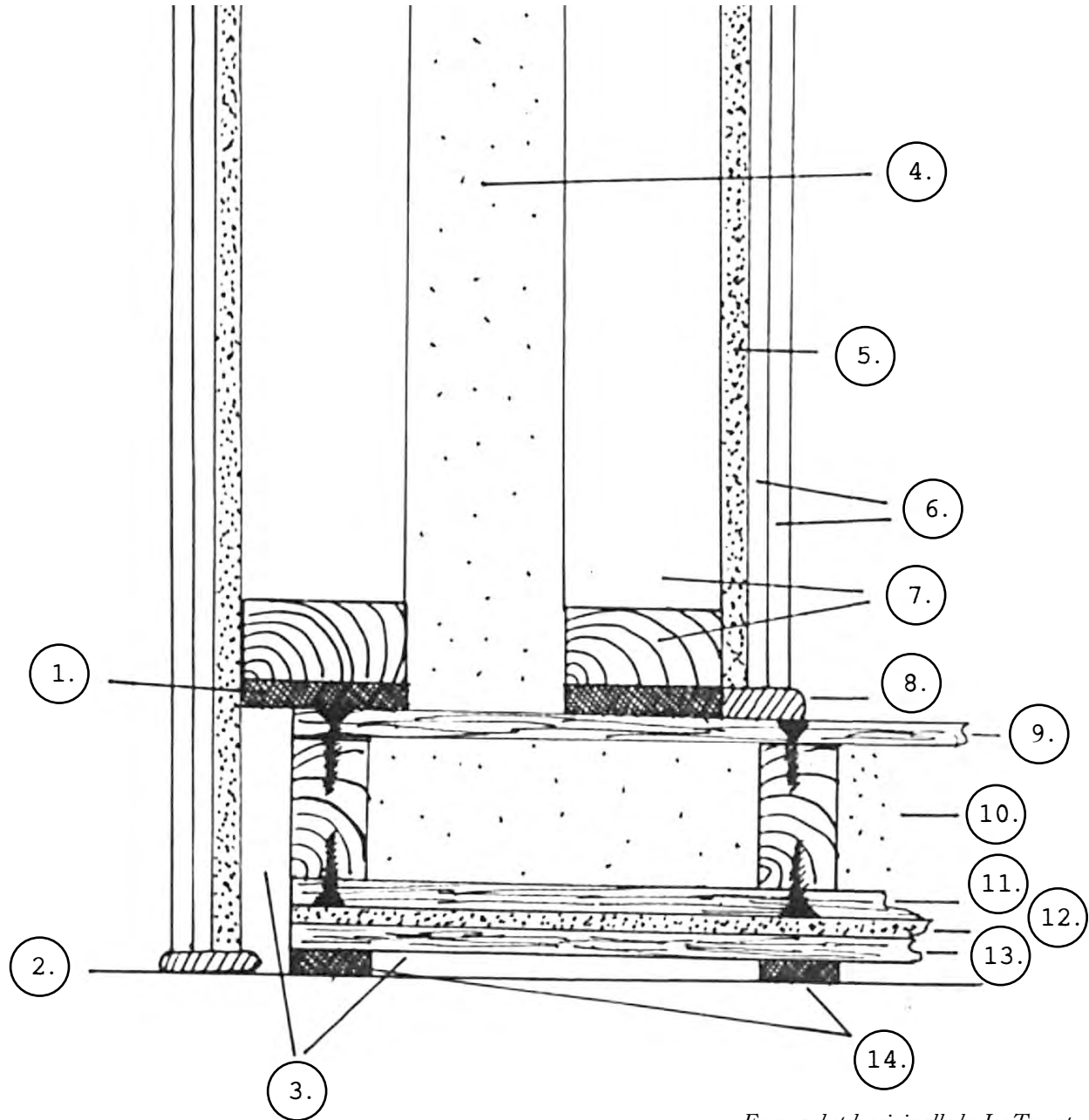
It's not just about saving money on rehearsals, having the room enabled me to add a small control room and start Mattress Factory Studios. This began the studio part of my life, allowed my production skills to flourish, and encouraged countless projects to happen that might not have otherwise (Pigface, ohGr, Spasm).

Of course, if you can't build your own, find a place as close as you can for everyone. Try and be fair! Think about access times (when *you* want), security, and isolation (not in the Russian novel sense, but in the sense that you don't want to hear the bands next door and above all the time). Stairs, light, elevators, garbage, bathrooms — you are going to be there for long periods of time, so pay attention. More spaces these days are adding networking and community benefitting events to their list of services. Look for that too!

Every new band should have to rehearse in freezing old factories with crap gear and no bloody career agenda other than to escape boredom. That's what went wrong in the 2000's...

— Andy Booth

# FLOATING FLOOR AND WALL



*From a sketch originally by Joe Trump*

- |                             |                                |  |
|-----------------------------|--------------------------------|--|
| ①. 1/2" x 3 1/2" Neoprene   | ⑥. 5/8" Sheetrock              | ⑪. 3/4" Plywood/Particle Board                   |
| ②. Existing Floor           | ⑦. 2" x 4" Stud                | ⑫. 1/2" Sound Deadening Board                    |
| ③. Air Gap                  | ⑧. Silicone Caulk              | ⑬. 3/4" Plywood/Particle Board                   |
| ④. 3 Layers R-19 Fiberglass | ⑨. 3/4" Plywood/Particle Board | ⑭. 1/2" x 2" Heavy Duty Neoprene Shock Absorbers |
| ⑤. Sound Deadening Board    | ⑩. Sand or Fiberglass R-19     |  |

# YOUR BAND'S REHEARSAL SPOT

## KENT NIELSEN

### ARE YOU LOOKING TO MAKE A RACKET OR ARE YOU LOOKING TO MAKE IT?

Time for a quick whack on the head. Too often I see young bands come into Fort Knox and they are focused on the wrong things.

One of the first things everyone at the studio notices is volume level. Yes, if you play ridiculously loud while rehearsing we'll certainly notice... and shake our heads. Look at how pros rehearse: lower volume levels mean less ear fatigue (and no headaches),

which means you can actually be productive for a far longer time period. Don't take my word for it: ask just about any pro musician if they have IEMs and they know how to use them. Sonic clarity, 100% controllable volume level in the ear, your own mix and hearing health are the hallmarks. If you haven't tried them, they're awesome and when I see a band 'on ears' with lower FOH volume it automatically ratchets up my impression of them on the pro scale.

A band's philosophy of playing too loud in rehearsal often translates to the shows. The venue owner is hiring you to bring people in and the audience in turn buys F&B from the venue, whether it's a coffee shop or Coachella. If you're so stinking loud that the audience can't stand it and leaves the show, they aren't buying stuff and you're not coming back to play. There is a maxim in the military: train like you fight. If you play too loud in practice, you're going to probably be too loud at the show.

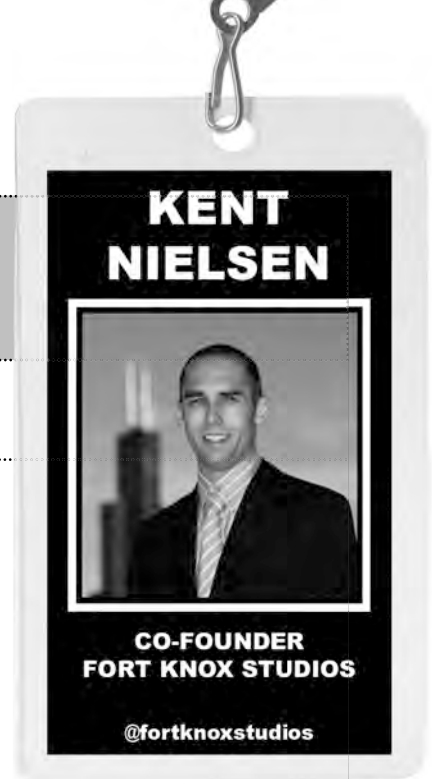
If you read this and think "yeah but being loud is what we do live", unless you're in AC/DC or Metallica, you're probably an idiot or your material is terrible and you figure sheer volume will cover up your faults. Wrong. I've made my point. Onward.

Time for another old school but annoyingly correct maxim, this time Sun Tzu: **"Every battle is won before it's ever fought."** Okay, so how does a military philosopher from 2,500 years ago have any relevance to being in a band? Bear with me.

What Sun Tzu is postulating here is that the one who is better prepared (in all aspects) for the battle wins the battle. Bands don't battle (8 Mile flow about Mom's spaghetti excepted), but they do compete for audience.

Elsewhere in both this book and Martin's excellent previous book, topics such as advancing the gig, merch, booking, routing, et cetera are covered. I'm (hopefully) not going to rehash what someone smarter has already more eloquently written on those topics than I can/will. So I won't.

Here's a question to ask yourself that you may not have considered: Besides providing a place to get loud, what is our rehearsal space doing for the band? If you practice in your basement, garage or the back room in your Uncle Goober's creepo warehouse, the answer is **absolutely nothing**. Like all things in life, you get what you pay for.



Donning my *Entrepreneur*<sup>TM</sup> embroidered polo shirt for a second: your band is a business, your music is your product and your rehearsal space is the office. Looking at all the bands that rehearse in a commercial rehearsal space, what they are creating by default is **sector density**. Lots of guitar players, singers, MC's, bass players, drummers, keys players and all the various other breeds. If you go to a major city and you visit a dentist, a lot of times they're in a building full of dentists. Why? Because dentists often specialize in different things and they can refer business to each other inside the building.

Music industry folks often give the advice that a young band should link up with other bands in the same genre and do shows together. Great 30,000 foot idea. But how to do it? Huge Idea Number One:

## **WALK AROUND A REHEARSAL SPOT AND JUST LISTEN TO THE OTHER BANDS PLAY.**

Ideally you do this more than once on different days as most bands don't rehearse seven days a week. Then, when you hear something good, wait for them to finish a song and knock on the door. If you happen to have beers in your hands when you do so, since the only thing us musicians like more than licking windows is drinking beer, guess what, instant friends.

Band businesses interact with other various types of businesses, such as photographers, managers, booking agents, promoters, producers, engineers and fans. What exists thusly in a larger rehearsal facility is a network that you can easily work yourself into that will provide you with all of the opportunities and resources to get your band to the next level. Do you need some better publicity photos? Guess what, add up all the other bands and they have collectively worked with a ton of photographers, some good, some great, some terrible. Why on earth would you not find the right photog to shoot your band when it's as easy as asking your neighbors? Same for engineers, producers, studios, promoters, managers and booking agents. Huge Idea Number Two:

## **TALK TO YOUR NEIGHBORS ABOUT THE FOLKS THEY'VE WORKED WITH, WHO'S GREAT AND WHO'S NOT.**

Even if your band is a week old, start learning about who some of these other professionals are, and more importantly, their reputations (get more than one opinion!). Even if you're too early to need a booking agent, you want to know who that person should be as early as possible. Then you can get to know that person over a few months before trying to work with them.

There is another group of people who likely love music and know a thing or two about what's going on in a rehearsal/production facility. These people are called staff. Huge Idea Number Three:

## **MAKE FRIENDS WITH THE STAFF.**

They often have the unique perspective of seeing everyone coming through and can steer you towards people, groups and other opportunities. They also can sometimes help you directly get shows or promo.





**GEORGE  
MASSENBURG**



**TECHNICAL EXPERT  
GEORGE MASSENBURG  
LABS**

@gmlllc

# BE MORE EFFECTIVE IN REHEARSALS

## GEORGE MASSENBURG

At rehearsals, everyone who's relevant to a particular tune should be in attendance. Start fresh; be prepared to work together until the scheduled end. One shouldn't necessarily stop rehearsing because one is tired of a particular song. If necessary, mix it up; change tunes.

Cats should be patient if one of one's parts or instruments is dropped or changed by common agreement. Always stick around to listen to ideas, and to help make decisions as a band. Try to give new ideas "5 minutes of life"; first, try to consider the positives of each new idea.

Record rehearsals and, in fact, keep a reference recorder running. Record as much music as possible (very handy when you stumble across one of those magic moments). Record, by any means at hand, to evaluate the songs, music and arrangements – EVERYTHING (except the recording technology or quality). Don't depend on a modest musical idea being saved by "that warm Behringer tube sound" or 16 track analog. In fact, don't use Behringer at all.



Make a recording of the rehearsal, experiment with the microphone positioning, and listen to the recording. Be as unbiased as possible — listen as if you were listening to someone else's demo.

Audition a rehearsal space the way you would a new member of the band.

*- Zini Lardieri*



# 07 PRESS KITS & PR

There is some great advice in this chapter about how to create a press kit, focus, brevity, knowing your audience (in this case a journalist/blogger) but I want to talk just a little bit about the delivery method. SURE, get your information together, organize it. Resist the temptation to waffle on and fill space. If there is lots of space in your one page press kit, the solution is to DO STUFF — Do do stuff to fill it. Don't fill it with doo doo.

Resist the urge to crowdsource the best, most best, grooviest font — that doesn't matter — the facts do.

Don't say you are a hard working band — show it.

Don't say that your audience is growing — show it.

Don't say you are original — in the middle of some bullshit press kit template — show it.

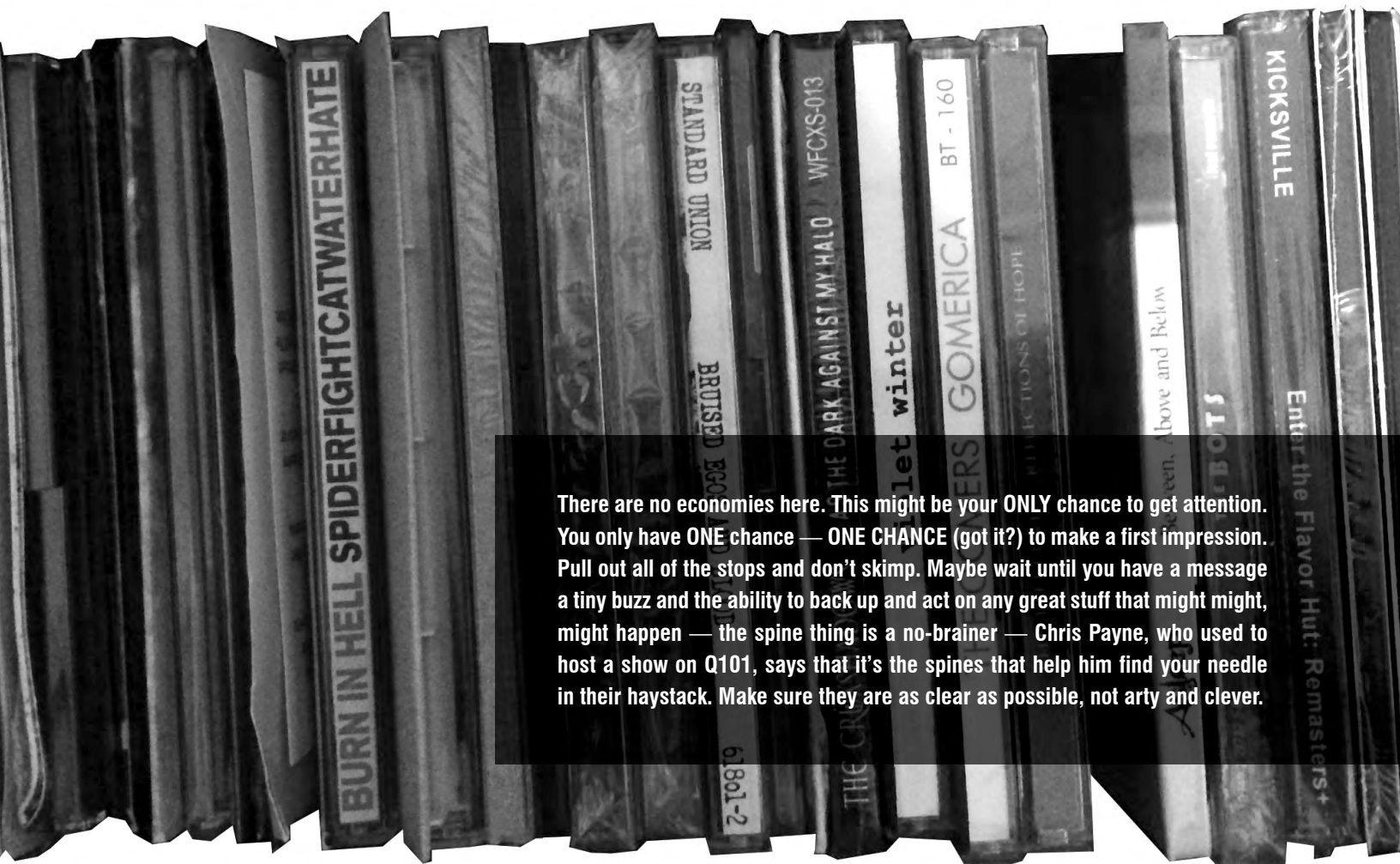
Easy has nothing to do with it (as in most things in this business). You can put up EPK's all over the place, and you should. ReverbNation lets that happen easily, and Sonic Bids make it easy to share and access opportunities — but these are also uniformly easy to delete and ignore.

When I say delivery method I mean — inside a box of donuts.

Does anyone care — NO. Will they care about you when you present your release on top of a box of donuts? NO, BUT — halfway through eating them, they'll be overcome by a sugar spike and a white powdered sugar moustache of empathy will spread over them like Nutella on your girlfriend's boobs. "So, what's this all about?" they'll ask. And then you can tell them. That's how this works. Not, "Listen to me, we're a great band!" FUCK OFF. There are thousands. But by understanding who you are dealing with: people, people who like donuts or (insert something vegan here, insert something black metal here, insert something appropriately inappropriate here) you can rely on the one thing — people might not like you very much or know that you exist — but there are things that they do like. Give them that then let guilt do the rest.

There are NO economies of scale here — as soon as you print up 100 or more physical 'kits' something will happen that will be so huge that you HAVE to put it in there — print as needed in small quantities, update constantly and make sure you are doing something else to get attention

Read the Blackberry Jam Scam (*See Demos*), shake your head, read it again. Shut up. Deal with it.



There are no economies here. This might be your ONLY chance to get attention. You only have ONE chance — ONE CHANCE (got it?) to make a first impression. Pull out all of the stops and don't skimp. Maybe wait until you have a message a tiny buzz and the ability to back up and act on any great stuff that might, might happen — the spine thing is a no-brainer — Chris Payne, who used to host a show on Q101, says that it's the spines that help him find your needle in their haystack. Make sure they are as clear as possible, not arty and clever.

# DANGER! DO NOT USE! WORDS TO AVOID IN YOUR BAND BIO

## BRIAN THOMPSON

Words and phrases I never want to read in an artist's bio, ever, ever again:

- molten
- unique
- brilliant
- must-hear
- hailing from
- buzz worthy
- one of a kind
- forged in the...
- fusing together
- up and coming
- critically acclaimed
- eagerly anticipated
- destined for success
- fuses blank with blank

I think you get the idea, right? Please tell me you do.

Please?

### THE BEST BIOS ARE ONES THAT CONTAIN NOTHING BUT FACTS.

If you use too many adjectives to puff yourself up and tell me how great you are, I won't buy it and I'm going to call bullshit on you.

Facts however, can't be argued.

If you don't have many facts around your band yet (because you're new and just starting out), then just keep your bio short. There's nothing wrong with brevity. Trust me, people appreciate those who can be concise with their words.

Be creative with your bio. Have some fun with it. But don't be a braggart. If anything, sell yourself short so that I can walk away impressed rather than underwhelmed.

And most important of all, intrigue me. The goal of your bio is for me to go to your website and click "Play" on your music. Does your bio compel me to do that?

Oh yeah, and no matter how much this may hurt to hear... No one cares that you started playing piano at the age of ten in your grandma's basement.



# THE PERFECT PRESS KIT

## ARIEL HYATT

I'm often amazed when I go to an artist's website, and I look around, and I'm trying to find basic press information and I can't.

It seems that in the age of Twitter, Facebook, and Facebook Fan pages, and constantly focusing on your two-way conversations, we've forgotten the important basics.

This is a revised excerpt from my book, *Music Success in Nine Weeks* and it talks about an asset that no matter what we all face with new digital solutions, new platforms and apps that we're going to be forced to learn, we should always remember — your press kit.

It's up to you to post your press information clearly and succinctly, so that you're easy to find and write about. Posting an accessible press kit to share with journalists and new media makers (bloggers, podcasters, etc.) is good common sense.

Editors need access to your information quickly, because they are constantly under deadline.

IF YOU DO NOT MAKE IT EASY FOR THEM TO GET YOUR INFORMATION FROM YOUR SITE, THEY MAY MOVE ON TO ANOTHER ONE OF THE 50 ARTISTS THAT ARE PLAYING IN THEIR TOWN THAT SAME WEEK.

**1 YOUR MUSIC — ALBUM OR LIVE TRACKS.** Make sure you have some music available at your website or a very obvious link to a page where people can hear the music instantly. Many newspapers are now including online listings where they include MP3s of artists coming to town, so make it easy for them to grab the tracks to add to their own sites — this is additional excellent exposure for you.

**2 YOUR BIOGRAPHY — MUST INCLUDE YOUR PITCH.** Make sure you have a short, succinct bio that can be easily located on your site, in addition to the long form one from the blogs and all of the opinions from each band member — which are fun for your fans but not for music writers who will be looking to get quick information. Make sure this bio can be easily cut-and-pasted so writers can drop it into a preview or a column.

- **CREATE A SHORT VERSION FOR THE CALENDAR EDITOR.** Make sure you add your PITCH /USP (Unique Selling Point) as a stand-alone portion to your bio that sums up your sound for calendar editors. It should be no more than 10 words.

- **POST 3 VERSIONS OF YOUR BIOS**

1. Long Form
2. In 50 Words
3. In 1 Sentence (10 words or less)



- **MAKE SURE THE BIO CAN BE EASILY CUT-AND-PASTED!** Do NOT have your bio in Flash format; make sure that editors can easily cut and paste it right off of your site.

**3 YOUR PHOTOS — MAKE THEM EASY TO FIND AND DOWNLOAD.** Thumbnails are great for quick and easy loading but are detrimental for use in newspapers. You should always have a few downloadable photos on your site in at least 300 dpi / jpg format.

- **CREATE AN EASY-TO-SEE LINK THAT SAYS “CLICK HERE FOR A HI RES / LOW RES JPG.”** That way photo editors can get to them easily. When the photos are downloaded; make sure they are properly named with your name or your band’s name, so that photo editors can find them in folders and on messy desktops!
- **REMEMBER TO CHANGE YOUR PHOTOS A FEW TIMES A YEAR** – So if you play the same markets over and over, you can give the media multiple options for covering you.
- **PUT THE BAND MEMBERS’ NAMES FROM LEFT TO RIGHT (L-R) UNDER THE BAND PHOTO TO GIVE JOURNALISTS A POINT OF REFERENCE.** Many publications publish photos with all band members’ names from left to right to save the writers the trouble of having to ask for the names.

**4 INCLUDE YOUR ALBUM COVER & ADDITIONAL ARTWORK.** You also want to make sure you include your cover art in both hi res and lo res (jpg format). This way if your CD is being reviewed, the reviewer can download the artwork to add to the review. If you have additional assets like band logos or graphics add them here as well.

**5 INCLUDE PRESS CLIPS OR FAN TESTIMONIALS IF YOU HAVE THEM.** What you say about you is one thing... However, what others say about you is trusted in a different way. So, if you have articles that were written about you or great quotes to add from fans – do it! (If you don’t, just ask your fans to contribute to your site — they will be happy to do so.)

**FINAL TIP: Sonicbids** is a fabulous place to build and maintain a perfect press kit and you won’t need a web designer to help you — so build your perfect press kit there, link to it and VOILA!



**What’s the best advice I can give a band or artist? Be professional. Have a good looking, simple press kit, a good (short) demo that truly reflects what you’re about musically, present yourself in a courteous way that indicates that you realize that there are thousands of other artists in line behind you, waiting for a shot.**

– Bruce Iglauer

# WRITING A GREAT PRESS RELEASE

## CHRISTO RUPPENTHAL

High quality, compelling content is an important part of writing for promotional purposes. When it comes to press releases, using the appropriate layout and style is just as important! For your press releases to be viewed as credible sources of information it is essential to create them using the correct format.

While some publications re-write their news, many local papers and websites will simply cut and paste your writing into their publication (sometimes with added intros) or read directly from the press release to announce your news. Be sure to keep that in mind when writing your release.

The standard format for writing press releases is not difficult or complicated. Simply include the necessary information below in order, as follows:

Start your release with “For Immediate Release”

**Headline:** Write a headline that is short, simple, and to the point. No longer than 175 characters. The primary points for the release should be included. You might try to include a creative hook to inspire your reader to look further.

**Summary:** The first paragraph should briefly explain the main point of the release. include why the information provided is relevant and newsworthy. Be short and to the point. You will have more room to explain the details later in the body section. The summary should be italicized.

**Date & Location:** The opening paragraph of the release should begin with the City and State where the business (band, artist, etc...) is located, and the date the news release is being made public using the month, day, and year format. Add in the day of the week.

**Body:** The body of a press release consists of two or three paragraphs maximum. Single-spaced and separated with one blank line between. Each paragraph should be focused on one idea and have only a few sentences.

**Band Bio/Artist Information:** A standard paragraph that contains a short, factual overview of the band, artist, etc. Use your band’s “elevator pitch” or a very brief bio here if you have one or two spectacular press quotes or endorsements put them at the end of the body on their own line and cite their source.

**Contact Info:** Here is where you provide information about how readers can contact you or your representative for further information. Include the name(s) of the appropriate contacts along with telephone number; email address; Facebook and Twitter handles. Also be sure the URL for the band or artist’s website is included.



**CHRISTO  
RUPPENTHAL**



**Caravan Gypsy  
Swing Ensemble**

**@ChrisRuppenthal**



# THE PRINCIPLES OF GOOD PR

## WENDY BRYNFORD-JONES

As of this writing, I have worked in the music business for over 20 years, primarily in public relations. When I started in the business, we didn't have websites. America Online was still in its infancy during my second job at Alias Records and I worked on a very oddly shaped and slow computer known as a Mac. IRC stood for internet relay chat and it preceded the instant messengers we know and love today. You had to dial in from a home computer to a University to chat in real time with friends. It was the Wild West, people. When bands toured, we faxed press releases. Our writer and editor databases were written or typed on Rolodex cards. We called people and developed relationships with media over the phone. Once upon a time, dear reader, we had large chain record stores around the country called Tower Records and Sam Goody. Those retailers published beautiful and free four color monthly magazines called Pulse and Request, respectively. Then the Internet took over and the kindergarten days of yore were smashed. Well, not really or at least not immediately. I am not here to wax nostalgic about the good old days. If I were here to do that, I'd be getting into discussions of payola, coke and hookers – the real good old days of major record label promotion. So let's leave this brief digression and get into the now and pay attention — **the players change, the principles do not**. It is my intention to explain the principles of good PR which I don't think have changed since the 70s or 80s. I have seen dozens of wonderful magazines, fanzines, daily newspapers and websites fold. It is not so important to focus on the current major players of the media world because those are always subject to change. Although Rolling Stone has been around for years, I cannot guarantee you that it will be your top target in the print world in five or ten years' time.

Without further ado, let's get to those nine important principles.

**1 WHO IS YOUR AUDIENCE? KNOW YOUR MEDIA TARGETS.** I know you are brilliant, sound unique and are absolutely fantastic. Your sound has massive appeal to everyone so why not target them all? Reality check.

### YOU AREN'T THE BEATLES.

At least not yet. So I recommend you take a poll outside of the band or yourself, including your nearest and dearest and get a sense of who your audience is. Is it college kids or hard rock fans? Soccer moms or hipster National Public Radio listeners? If your music falls under the category of very esoteric minimalist electronic instrumental rock, you may not want to target print or web outlets that cater to avid concert going college kids if you are not planning on touring. I am not suggesting that you not aim high with your media targets, just know what sort of music they are apt to cover and if you might be a potential fit. This leads us to our next principle, which is...

**2 PROPER RESEARCH.** Researching is critical and will become your best friend as you embark on this PR journey. The good news and the bad news is that it never ends. Just as there are wonderfully creative people like you making music every day and wanting to share it, likewise there are new publications popping

WENDY  
BRYNFORD-JONES



PUBLIC RELATIONS &  
COMMUNICATIONS  
CONSULTANT

hellowendy.com



up constantly. Those media entrepreneurs, large and small, want to expose others to upcoming and well-known musical artists. As times have changed most of these outlets tend to fall on the digital side in the form of websites and blogs but you will periodically see back to the future type visionaries who actually start print magazines. God bless those who want to keep print alive! Nothing smells quite like a magazine or newspaper. Trust me, go to the newstand and take a whiff.

## THERE ARE NEW PUBLICATIONS POPPING UP CONSTANTLY

For those of you who are performing locally and regionally, it's a very good idea to familiarize yourself with the alternative weeklies, websites, and daily writers in the cities and towns in which you are based and tour. Also note which writers are writing about whom. Don't send your power pop band's music to the writer who focuses on hip hop. If you fancy yourself in the vein of Bruce Springsteen, note who reviewed his latest album or a similar male artist. Oftentimes people who write music reviews or features are not on the staff of the publication. They are called freelancer writers, freelancers, contributors or stringers. Thanks to the web, you now have many ways of attempting to contact them at your disposal. You might simply do a web search for their name or search for them on social media sites and send a polite note. Of course you will always want to check the front of book or masthead of print publications to find out who the music or arts and entertainment editor is. Editors generally assign pieces to writers but they also rely upon these freelance writers to tell them what is cool and should be getting ink.

A simple way for you to research regional publications if you are planning a tour is to enter a phrase such as "list of San Francisco media outlets" into your favorite search engine such as Google or Yahoo. Many music focused websites and blogs provide links to other websites, which can be tremendously useful for your researching.

**3 KNOW WHAT IS NEWS-WORTHY.** I may differ from some of my peers in the sense that I do not like to bombard media people with press releases for every possible thing. New albums, videos and tours are what I deem newsworthy. If you are not yet an established band in the media, a personnel line-up change is not newsworthy in my opinion unless it is piggy backed onto one of the previously mentioned items such as new music or tour dates. If you are constantly sending out press releases, it seems like spam and when you do have something useful to share, it runs the risk of getting overlooked or ignored.

**4 BREVITY AND ACCURACY.** Admittedly I have been guilty of run on sentences and other crimes, and because of this I want to stress the importance of imparting what you need to say in a well written, brief and accurate fashion. When I worked in promotions and marketing for Launch/Yahoo I had two piles

on my desk. One was for CDs; the other was for the accompanying press materials – bio, clips, photos, etc. I did not want to take the time to read through a several page bio. If I needed to look at it after I heard the music, I would dig for it in the pile. Great filing system, eh? But seriously, I was far more likely to view a simple double sided one page bio before dumping it into the pile than a bunch of papers.

**IF A SENTENCE LOOKS TOO WORDY TO YOU,  
MOST LIKELY IT IS.**

If you are constantly sending out press releases, it seems like spam. When you do have something useful to share, it runs the risk of getting overlooked or ignored.

Be an editor — **go in, think about the key points you need to address, and chop away the fat.** Think about your songwriting and recording process in which you need to trim things down to get to the core.

Be accurate — always spell check things but also read them first. I have a tendency to read too quickly and miss things, so I read, spell check and then read again. Nothing says amateur more quickly than misspelled editor and writer names on addressed packages or grammatical or spelling errors in your press materials. As the adage goes, you only get one chance to make a first impression. Remember you are dealing with media people, who likely don't have much patience for written errors as they are always editing and correcting. Even if you are dealing with Joe Blow blog, who may have typos on his website, put your best foot forward with your approach and be professional. Let the blogger make the errors, not you. This isn't just your hobby; this is your expression of self and your career.

## **NOTHING SAYS AMATEUR MORE QUICKLY THAN MISPELLED EDITOR AND WRITER NAMES ON ADDRESSED PACKAGES OR GRAMMATICAL OR SPELLING ERRORS IN YOUR PRESS MATERIALS.**

Your goal should be quality, not quantity.

**5 ETIQUETTE AND THE PROFESSIONAL APPROACH.** Be professional yet not overly stuffy or awkward. For those of you who have worked in corporate offices who observed casual Fridays, you would not show up to work with your stained or torn jeans. Nor would they be ironed with creases in them, right? Let's say you are making a first attempt at contact with Steven Goldman, music editor at X publication or website. Calling him Mr. Goldman sounds too formal but writing Dear Steve would be too casual. Use the name Steven and briefly explain in your email or phone message why you are contacting him. I only joke around with writers or editors whom I have known for a long time. Email can often be misconstrued and again, you are trying to make a good first impression. Always thank people for their time and consideration and if you do receive coverage or even brief responses to your calls or emails, let them know you appreciate it.

**6 RELATIONSHIP BUILDING — THE FINE LINE BETWEEN PERSISTENCE AND ANNOYANCE.** Editors and writers are busier today than they ever have been. It is not unusual to get someone's voicemail and for him or her to say "the easiest way to reach me is via email," that they don't check their voicemail box frequently or even "don't leave messages here." Obviously we want to respect people's wishes as to how we contact them. I recommend your first attempt at reaching media people to be via email. A typical method I use when working on behalf of my clients might be to email twice, and to call the third time. If the voicemail says email preferred I leave a message saying that I am following up on the email I have sent regarding X. If someone answers the phone and sounds cranky, silently take a breath, smile, and quickly state your name and ask if he or she has just a minute. Then offer to send the information via email and thank them for their time. It has always baffled me why people who don't want to answer their phones do and sound like they want to murder the caller but I try not to take it personally. I am doing my job, they are doing theirs and it's unfortunate we don't always encounter mutual politeness on our paths but that's showbiz.

You do need to realize that at some point when you get no response whatsoever, generally after the fourth or fifth attempt at contact that it's time to quit. This is the line between persistence and annoyance. I rarely leave more than one or two phone messages for a media person because when I am at that stage, emails have already been sent and not responded to.

When you do get an interested party which would be an email back or a promise to listen to your music, show your appreciation and give them a week and then get back to them. If you are calling a writer in Philadelphia and the Phillies are having a good season, by all means, bring it up. If someone answers and sounds friendly and they have a nice voice, feel free to say something like “hey, you have such a good voice. Have you ever done radio?” Try to make conversation. If the correspondence is via email and you’ve never played the venue in their town, ask the writer if they like the place or what the house drink special is. Ask about local attractions or good restaurants in the area. Use your best judgment and go with the flow. If you can, make things personal, light and fun. Show them who you are and have a good time. Yes, PR is serious business but this is the music business, not corporate finance. People in music do have interests and hobbies outside of music.

**7 ETHICS, HONESTY.** Be yourself. Don’t try to be someone you are not. If your cousin thinks that your band sounds like Maroon 5 but she’s actually a bit tone deaf and no one else has ever heard or seen that, it’s probably best to leave comparisons of your band to them out.

## BE YOURSELF. DON’T TRY TO BE SOMEONE YOU ARE NOT.

If your lead time to solicit coverage in local media is less than optimal (this would be less than four to five weeks for a weekly publication, for example), be upfront about it. It doesn’t matter if the date was confirmed late with the venue or you screwed up and didn’t send out information in time, be honest. Tell the media outlets you are aware that this is less than ideal notification but you are hoping they might consider a plug (mention) for your show. Make it easy for them and provide links for artwork, music streaming and other information.

If you know the musicians performing on your bill sound like wailing cats, keep it to yourself.

**8 FOLLOW UP! FOLLOW UP! FOLLOW UP!** Next to research, this is the principle which must be burned onto your brain and inside your eyelids. You can lose many opportunities by not maintaining great organizational skills and following up with media, particularly those who have even remotely expressed interest.

When I worked at Virgin Records, my boss got us into the excellent habit of furnishing weekly reports which were status updates on projects. It is a practice I have maintained to this day and I know my clients appreciate it. They can see the good, the bad and the ugly. People need to know what is confirmed, what is pending (meaning what stands a shot of coming to fruition for coverage), who is being pitched and who has passed. It is concrete evidence of PR efforts.

**PR is a gamble, it’s a crapshoot.** It is about effort, not results. As with most things in life, you cannot control outcomes or results but you can control your actions and your approach. You can be organized and disciplined. I suggest you keep a document of your publicity efforts and update it daily.

**9 POSITIVE MENTAL ATTITUDE / LEGGO THAT EGO.** Competition is at an all-time high. Media outlets, depending upon their size and reach, are receiving dozens to hundreds of packages per week related to music. I have experienced the disappointments and hurts of working with very talented people and not always getting the results they or I hoped for. I have worked with neurotic artists who focused on the negative review when they had several positive ones to balance it. I had a manager scream at me that my relationships were useless and that I was ineffective because he didn’t feel I acquired enough coverage for his client. When

Don't badmouth others  
to build yourself up.

I tried to explain that not everyone will choose to cover an act he yelled louder. I nearly let this jerk's rant deprive me of my years of hard work, effort and a pure heart. A wise woman once told me that just because someone calls you a chair, it doesn't mean you are a chair.

Please do not give up. Maintain your positive mental attitude and believe in yourself. Don't take things personally. On a lighter note, don't forget that opinions are like butts – everyone's got one and they all stink. Your ego will shout, how dare they ignore me? How dare they not cover me? Don't give up. You haven't found your media kindred spirits yet. They are out there. If you have the talent and the persistence you will find them. Stay focused and keep working.

Not everyone will get reviewed in the glossy national publications or most trafficked websites but you can still acquire fans and share your music with people who will appreciate it. Sure it's a great buzz when you get that mention or plug in that big name site or print outlet but remember it's temporary. It is all part of the ongoing, ever changing stream: your life, your art and your passion.

Think about why you got into music — was it to become rich and famous or to find your life partner? Was it because you wanted to carry your message to others or to not be a doctor like the rest of your family? What it all comes down to is you got into this art form for yourself. It's icing on the cake if others appreciate your work. At the end of the day, what's in your soul is what counts. Review or no review, feature or no feature, tell the ego to shut up and keep following your muse.



# FOR BANDS THAT ARE PUTTING TOGETHER A PRESS KIT TO SUBMIT FOR A FESTIVAL

## JERRY FINK

### Do...

- Understand that anyone you send this too is going to be busy
- Read submission rules BEFORE submitting
- Include samples of your music
- Put your best song first
- Include any press you've received
- Use proper grammar
- Keep your calendar updated
- Keep your bio short and to the point
- Include pictures that show your face
- Stand out... in a good way
- BE PATIENT

### Don't...

- Include songs with long intro's before lyrics
- Include your entire album
- Include broken links in an EPK
- Give your life history in the bio
- Include video with poor audio/visual quality (great for YouTube, not your press kit)
- Leave out any special requirements you have
- Embellish or lie (It's easy to figure out)
- Compare yourself to other artists (Influences are ok, but I highly doubt you sound like U2 or Alice in Chains)



GOOD ADVICE

FROM

BAAD PEOPLE!

If your music sucks, go ahead and give me a demo on a dirty, burned CD with your name misspelled in Sharpie. If your music is better than that, your presentation should be too.

You can, and should, challenge the expected. But, much like with your music, if you push too far from what is currently done, in a way that is too different than what is currently done, you will alienate any potential buyers. You should not be like everyone else, but you cannot be so foreign that you no longer fit. Give them what they expect, in a way they don't expect it.

Remember that you are one of millions of bands trying to make it. Most industry people are tired of hearing the sob story, the I REALLY WANT IT story, the "lost my gear in a storm" story, and just about any other story you can come up with. Tell me a real story. And do it over coffee (that you pay for), or in a note that you paint on the side of your garage and take a video of, or some other bizarre way.

*- Joanna Quargnali-Linsley*

.....

If there is one thing which unites journalists, promoters, labels or anyone else working in the business, it is a hatred for impersonal generic messages. Why expect someone to check out your band if you can't be bothered to take 30 seconds to type in their name? I guarantee you will have a better response if you send out 20 personal emails than 100 mass messages. If in doubt, just consider when you last responded to an email inviting you to have your penis extended or your breasts augmented.

*- Olaf Furniss*

.....

When your message starts, "To Whom It May Concern," it doesn't.

*- Martin Atkins*





# 08 GETTING A GIG

*Photo: Daniel Robert*

The advice I have for this section pisses me off a bit just to type the words and I hope it doesn't confuse you — it's this, **be cautious**. This goes against most everything you'll see throughout here and the very idea of being in a band BUT — if you think you can get 100 people to your show — find a venue that holds 50.

If you think you can fill a club on your own, find two other artists that can, too.

If you think you can sell out at a \$10 ticket, then half that.

If you think you have this down and you only need three weeks to promote the hell out of your show, allow six.

This kind of caution leads to sold out shows, full venues, happy, smiling, sweaty faces — and possibilities.

Making your show an event is another flexible equation. The things you have done that have worked will only work next time with different substance. Timetables and templates will work but you need to be aware of constantly surprising and amazing your fans. Change it up, take some careful risks. After all the only risk is not taking one!



We can talk about touring — but really, if you are thinking about this seriously you should drop \$19.99 on Tour:Smart. There are less fucks and some pretty good advice in there.

## WHY ARE SHOWS IMPORTANT ANYWAY?

Oh, so many reasons. You get better, you get instant unquestionable feedback from the audience — ie: they leave if you are shit.

On-stage time is worth at least 5x rehearsal time. Any lessons learnt are burned deeper into the adrenalized cortex.

It is the place you distribute your vibe and your music and your merch. **You** get to look into the faces of your fans. You will feel a confused eyebrow — your inner bomb sniffing dog will just *know* when the energy leaves the room. In the uphill climb of all of the details that go into making this happen — the show is the highest.

It is when you stop talking and start doing — the poetry takes over or it doesn't.

Things become obvious if you are looking.

## FIRST IMPRESSIONS

### CATHY DETHMERS

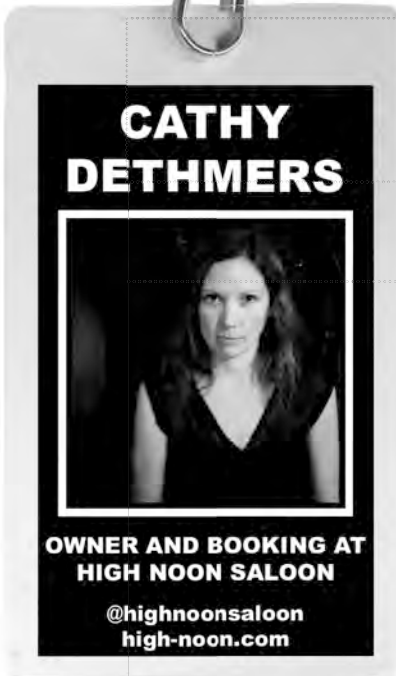
First, present your band as professionally as you can — meaning you should have a web presence, have at least two songs that are decently recorded, and have a concise band bio that quickly conveys to the promoter what your band is all about. Think of trying to get a show like trying to get a job — first impressions are very important. You need to get a promoter to take the time to listen to your music and honestly consider you for a show, and that's not likely to happen if the promoter has to try too hard to figure out who you are.

### FIRST IMPRESSIONS ARE VERY IMPORTANT.

Second, make connections with other local bands right out of the gate — you are more likely to get a first-time show if you can package your band with another band that is already familiar to the promoter. This is also a good way to get your band in front of some music fans that might be predisposed to like your music. Going out and regularly supporting local music is a great way to make these kinds of connections with other musicians, and may ultimately result in some good-will word of mouth marketing for your band by those you've befriended



You only get one chance to make a first impression.



# BOOKING STRATEGY

## KEVIN BREUNER

Getting your band booked in the local club scene can be a challenging task to say the least. It's hard enough to get your email or press pack noticed by the club booker, but once you get your foot in the door, there are still numerous factors that can dictate whether or not you actually get a gig. It's time to get strategic!

- 1 **GET FAMILIAR WITH THE VENUE'S CALENDAR.** Most clubs are meticulous with their calendar (which are usually posted online). Start looking for specific clues. Do they have a standard number of bands on the bill every night? Is there a night where they tend to give new bands a shot?
- 2 **LOOK FOR HOLES IN THE SCHEDULE.** Once you pick up on a club's booking patterns, you can start finding holes in their schedule where *they* are in need of a band.
- 3 **MAKE SURE YOUR MUSIC IS A MATCH.** Narrow it down to the shows where your music is a true fit (time to be honest folks!).
- 4 **TARGET THAT SPECIFIC SHOW IN YOUR EMAIL PITCH.** Now you are prepared to approach the club booker in a way that *helps them* out! Just put the show name and date in the subject line of your email and politely let them know that you would be a good fit to round out that bill (Keep the email brief!). The chances of getting a response to your email, and better yet a gig, just went way up!

**REMEMBER:** Booking a club is a tough job, and the club booker is always happy to solidify a show and get it off their plate. When you approach them in a way that helps them out, you'll see results. If you constantly spam them wanting to play dates that are already filled on their calendar, then you will never be taken seriously. It can take a long time for a new band to get a crack at a highly regarded venue/club. That is, if you do what every other band does and expect the club booker to do all the work for you.

### INSTEAD, STOP LOOKING TO THEM TO SOLVE YOUR BOOKING PROBLEMS AND START THINKING ABOUT HOW YOUR BAND CAN HELP THEM OUT.

That's what my band (Hello Morning) did, and we consistently get asked, "How do you keep getting those gigs?" Now you know the secret!



**KEVIN  
BREUNER**



**DIRECTOR OF MARKETING  
& PODCASTER  
FOR CD BABY**  
@kbreuner

Grave Icon: Myly



**DoubleDoor:** Local bands: We love you, but you can't all play third.

# WHAT A PROMOTER WANTS TO HEAR TO BOOK YOU

**DAN  
STEINBERG**



**FOUNDER OF SQUARE  
PEG CONCERTS**

@TheJew

**DAN STEINBERG**

- Our label will do a ticket buy
- We are worth 150+ tickets in your town (and really mean it).
- We will play for free.
- We have the guy from “The OC” in our band.
- We are getting air play in your town.
- We will buy our own pizza.
- We will be buying ads to support the date.
- We will hand out flyers everywhere in town.
- We want to show you we can draw a crowd, give us a shot on an off night.
- Our music is selling in your city.



**Retain the audience – It’s not just how many visitors that turn up at 8pm that matters, it’s how many that turn up at 8pm, and stay until 4am.**

– *Marcus Taylor*

## **ANNOYING THINGS THAT BANDS DO**

Bands that leave gear behind. This happens at least several times each week and then we get the deluge of frantic phone calls in the following days about have you seen this or that piece of equipment and on the phone act like we should know where their stuff is. It’s amazing how something that is so important to them the next day gets so carelessly left behind the night before. Keep track of your shit and take it with you when you leave!

– *Creepy Crawl*

Tony Maimone of the legendary Cleveland dada-rockers Pere Ubu gave the Mekons a hugely valuable piece of advice back in 1991. “Guys, there’s only two things you have to remember. **Get the money and don’t leave anything behind.**” Truer words were never spoken. I even turned it into the chorus of a song I recorded with the hardest working touring band in modern rock The Sadies. I have lived by these words for the last 20 or so years.

– *Jon Langford*

# 3 THINGS EVERY BAND SHOULD KNOW

## JOSHUA LISTON

**1. SELL THE BENEFIT TO THE VENUE, NOT YOUR OWN MUSICAL BRILLIANCE!** Nearly all venues will take a half decent down-to-earth band that's got a great promotional ethos over a greater band, that either can't pull a crowd or doesn't bother trying!

**2. DON'T BOTHER CALLING AND CALLING UNTIL YOU HAVE RECEIVED THAT POSITIVE FIRST RETURN EMAIL.** Give a venue booker time to develop an understanding of your act before you call. Don't forget to call as soon as you get that reply email, that's the time when the booker will be most receptive to your gig proposal and most likely to remember your sound/bio and vibe. Oh yeah, and don't forget to add the venue on Facebook and or Twitter well before you email to gain an understanding of the venues own web presence and activity.

**3. NEVER OVERSTATE YOUR PULLING POWER!** This is a MASSIVE mistake! Ask every venue booker "what's the minimum number of people we need to get in to secure our spot on a particular nights bill" and assure him or her you can get those numbers. Then work extra/extra hard to exceed that minimum requirement. **If you overstate your pulling power you most likely not be re-booked.**



**JOSHUA  
LISTON**



**BLOGGER  
DIY MUSIC MOVEMENT**

@joshdiymusic

I am an extraordinarily nice person when it comes to bands. I think most bands realize that with me getting 1000+ emails a week and having to listen to all those bands and reply, things can be slow when it comes to getting back to people. This one band though, ugh. I've booked them twice since December and both times they have sent me rude, snarky emails about how it takes a couple days to get back to them. Today they asked if they could talk to my manager because I told them I had no dates to offer them right now. Not only that but last time they played, they started a bunch of shit with the other bands so I'm in no hurry to bring them back. I finally told them I was cutting them off and not booking them anymore and I cc'd the owner and my partner. Man, they know that if a band antagonizes ME into blacklisting them, they gotta be trouble!

- Elle Quintana

### **3 SIGNS THAT THE BAND WILL BRING NO ONE TO THE SHOW**

1. Two weeks before the show they say, "We're gonna pack your place!"
2. One week before the show they ask, "What's your capacity?"
3. Upon arriving at the gig they ask, "So how many people do YOU usually get on a Wednesday night?"

### **3 THINGS ALL VENUE BOOKERS LOVE TO HEAR**

1. We've spoken to heaps of local bands and music fans in your area and they're telling us that our style of music would suit your venue; and also the way we like to promote our shows would compliment the way you promote your venue.
2. We have already checked out and spoken to several quality local bands in your area that are very keen to play the show if it goes ahead.
3. What can we do to make the show the best it can be if it goes ahead and what actions can we take closer to show-day to really ramp things up for a Big Night?

### **3 THINGS ALL VENUE BOOKERS HATE HEARING FROM BANDS**

1. We're massively huge in this town/city/somewhere else completely; or We're GIGANTIC on Facebook.
2. Do you know any good local bands that might want to open for us?
3. Ok so you're booked out that night, well which other venues have live bands in your town on those nights? And do you have their contact information?

### **Q: How often should you contact a venue to get a touring gig?**

A: It's a fine line between contacting, following up and stalking. Make sure that you have good relevant information to your promoter – like, we play to 85 people a night usually, and although we have never been to Chattanooga, after this first slot opening up for \_\_\_\_\_, we will be a great resource for you promoting other national shows...

Also, make sure you say "We don't need anything from you except the opportunity to perform, win over more fans and prove to you we are worthy of this opportunity." You don't need to pester anyone about "how many cases of beer do we get?" NONE!

- *Martin Atkins*



# HOW TO GET A SHOW FOR THE FIRST TIME<sup>T:S</sup>

## RAMONA DOWNEY AND URSULA RODRIGUEZ

### THE GROUND RULES:

Do not send a demo unless it has been requested. The Bottom of the Hill has no “foot traffic.” No one comes to the club except to see the bands. You should feel very confident that 40 to 50 people would come to see your band on a Monday night. If you don’t feel that’s the case, you should wait a bit before playing this particular club. You shouldn’t be in a big hurry to play to nobody, and that’s what happens if you play before you’re ready. Until then, be patient. When you play B.O.T.H. for the first time, you are making a statement about your band.

**YOU SHOULDN'T BE IN A BIG HURRY TO PLAY TO NOBODY, AND THAT'S WHAT HAPPENS IF YOU PLAY BEFORE YOU'RE READY.**

These are some things we would be looking at:

1. What does your music sound like live?
2. What size crowd do you draw?
3. What kinds of people come to your shows?
4. What other bands are you friends with or do you go well with?
5. How easy are you to work with?
6. How loud do you play?

When we put together a show for your first time, we’re trying to get a good vibe going. You should establish a rapport with other bands and musicians.

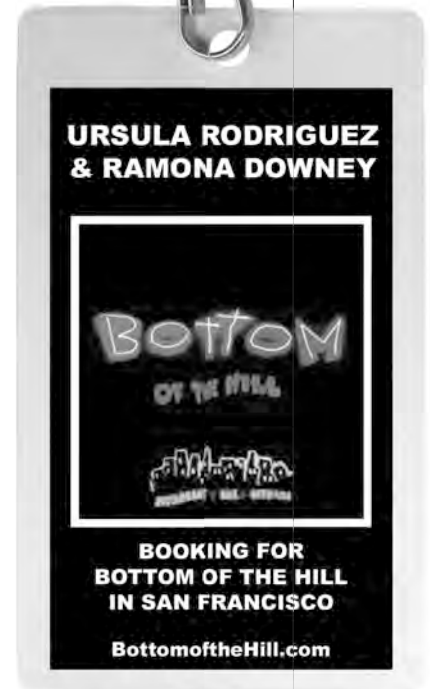
### BUILD YOURSELF A NAME FIRST

How do you do that? Start small. Play the smaller clubs and start a mailing list. Target your audience. Figure out who is likely to like your stuff and concentrate on those types of events. When you start getting shows, play the room. You won’t do anyone any favors by blowing their eardrums while keeping your integrity intact. **Start small. Play the smaller clubs and start a mailing list.**

### SHOULD I TAKE ANY SHOW THAT’S OFFERED TO ME?

No. Be smart about the shows you take. Realize that more is going on than just a show being played. You are being associated in the minds of the audience with the other bands on the bill and with the venue.

Encourage your crowd to come early to see the opener or stay after your set to watch the next band.



## ONCE WE'VE PLAYED THERE AND DONE WELL, WHAT'S THE NEXT STEP?

The next step is to do it again under slightly different circumstances, a bit later in the week, with a different band or two perhaps. Keep in mind that no one plays the Bottom of the Hill every month, so it's important to use some strategy when you plan a show.

### IF YOU AGREE TO PLAY A SHOW AT THE BOTTOM OF THE HILL, YOU SHOULD NOT HAVE ANY OTHER LOCAL SHOWS AT LEAST TWO WEEKS PRIOR TO THE SHOW AND ONE WEEK AFTER.

Specifically, this means two weekends before and one weekend after. Many times, we have seen bands announce to an empty room: "Um... this is our last song... come see us at the Boomerang this Friday." Could the fact of having another gig in just a few days have something to do with the fact that no one came to your show?

## WHEN CAN I CONSIDER A SHOW CONFIRMED?

Many times when you call for a show, the bookers will give you a tentative date saying something like: "why don't we shoot for the third? You ask the other people involved and I'll make sure the date is clear and we'll talk again to confirm it." That is not a confirmed show. We don't consider a show confirmed until we have discussed the full bill (opener, support, and headliner), load in/sound-check/set times, what each band can expect to be paid, and what the ticket price will be. Please make sure you have talked in person with one of our bookers to confirm your show. Phone messages aren't reliable.

When you confirm a show with us make sure you know the following things:

- Date of your show
- Ticket price
- Load-in time
- Sound check time
- What your payment is
- What the bar telephone number is in case of emergency
- How to get to the Bottom of the Hill

When we confirm a show with you, you also need to tell us how many people are in your band, roughly what the stage plot is (typically "guitar, bass, drums with two vocal mikes up front"), and any special arrangements you will need for your set (i.e. "we're sharing a drum kit with the opening band" or "we need a direct box for our Electric Latrinophone").



**Under promise. Over deliver.**

**Follow up and keep your word.** If you haven't already discovered, most musicians are flakes (not the snowflake avalanche-y kind). They're late. They say they're going to do something, and that something is out of a musician's mind right after saying it. They tell a club they can bring 100 people and only 10 show up.

— Chris Seth Jackson

# THINGS BANDS CAN DO TO BOOK MORE SHOWS

## CHRIS BRACCO

### GO WATCH OTHER BANDS THAT SOUND LIKE YOU.

If there are any bands in your area with large followings, get out to a couple shows and become friends. Do them a favor, like designing a website, flyer, banner, etc. The harder you work for a band bigger than your band, and the more respectful you are to them and their efforts, the more likely they will consider you for an opening slot.

### WHERE TO FIND A GIG

#### FIND PLACES WHERE BANDS SIMILAR TO YOU PLAY

Use ReverbNation's "Gig Finder" to figure out where bands are getting booked in your area. However, emailing clubs with your RPK or EPK usually won't get any results, because many of these venues have yet to claim their venue pages on ReverbNation. Instead, after finding some good places, print out your press kit and mail it to them, or better yet, personally drop it off in a nice professional package along with a CD to any decision maker at the club. Follow up with a call within a couple of days so you stay fresh in their minds. If the decision maker has an assistant, get to know that person and you will find that it will be much easier to get in the door.

### PLAY BY THEIR RULES

**Do a gig swap!** If you have a respectable following or are an up and coming band, use sites like [indieonthemove.com](http://indieonthemove.com) and [splitgigs.com](http://splitgigs.com) to trade and share gigs with other bands who might want to break into your market.

### COLLABORATION IS KEY TO SUCCESS IN TODAY'S FRAGMENTED MUSIC INDUSTRY.

**Get creative.** Write up a proposal and present it to the appropriate person at your local school board, offering to do a series of free shows to raise money for the school athletic or band program.





# "WILL PLAY FOR GAS MONEY"

## STEVE HARM

A virtually unknown band from Milwaukee sent a message asking to get on two shows with national headliners. They were "...willing to play for just gas money..."

I don't have time for this, but because no one on that end is thinking this through, I will do it for you.

- MILWAUKEE TO LA CROSSE 210.6 MILES. 421.2 MILES ROUND TRIP.
- MILEAGE TYPICAL VAN/TRAILER COMBO: 10 MPG
- $421.2 / 10\text{MPG} = 42.12$  GALLONS
- $42.12$  GALLONS X \$3.90/GALLON = 164.27

"...WILLING TO PLAY JUST FOR GAS MONEY..."

JUST \$164.27? For an opener? What a bargain for a band that will draw zero people.

Is anyone in the band going to school for business or accounting?

It's tough love, people. And I'm always the a-hole for telling it like it is.



### PREPARE FOR THE CALL

Read the "Promoters and Venues" chapter in *Tour:Smart*. Those guys are telling you what they want! Always remember that what you're asking for is a favor. Know your information—concentrate on the hard facts—not the opinions. Opinions are like DJ's—everybody is one.

## **LOAD-IN TIME**

**CORRECT UNDERSTANDING:** If a band has a load-in time of say 6:30 from that time they may attempt to enter the premises and inquire about loading in of their gear.

**INCORRECT UNDERSTANDING:** If a band has a load-in time of say 6:30 they arrive at 1:45 in the afternoon and knock incessantly on the back door. Usually they knock while the owner is in the basement knee-deep in standing shit working with a plumber to fix a leaking drain pipe. After trudging all the way upstairs to find five snot-nosed kids asking if they can load-in now (and hang out all day!), they are politely told to fuck off and come back at 6:30.

## **PROMOTER**

**CORRECT UNDERSTANDING:** This is a person who actively works to promote a show. They promote by distributing flyers, plugging the show wherever they can and try to get as many people as possible to come to the show. If they have an out-of-town band booked on the show they take financial responsibility to ensure they get paid and are taken care of in whatever way they need. They also take charge in organizing the show and making sure all the bands know when they are scheduled to play and how the money works for getting paid.

## **A “FOLLOWING”**

**CORRECT UNDERSTANDING:** A “following” is a collection of fans that attend the performances of a particular band. This is what bands try to develop to get ahead in the business and grow over time and is a measure of their general popularity. The larger a band’s following generally means they will be booked more often and on better nights at the Creepy Crawl.

– *Creepy Crawl*

Be honest. If you blag it and con a venue into giving you a Thursday night slot because you are HUUUUUUUGE — then that’s terrific, until you are standing on stage in an empty club. It is the phallic equivalent of a jump into a freezing cold pool. Congratulations, at last, your career is now the size of your shrunken dick — but hey, look at my nipples!

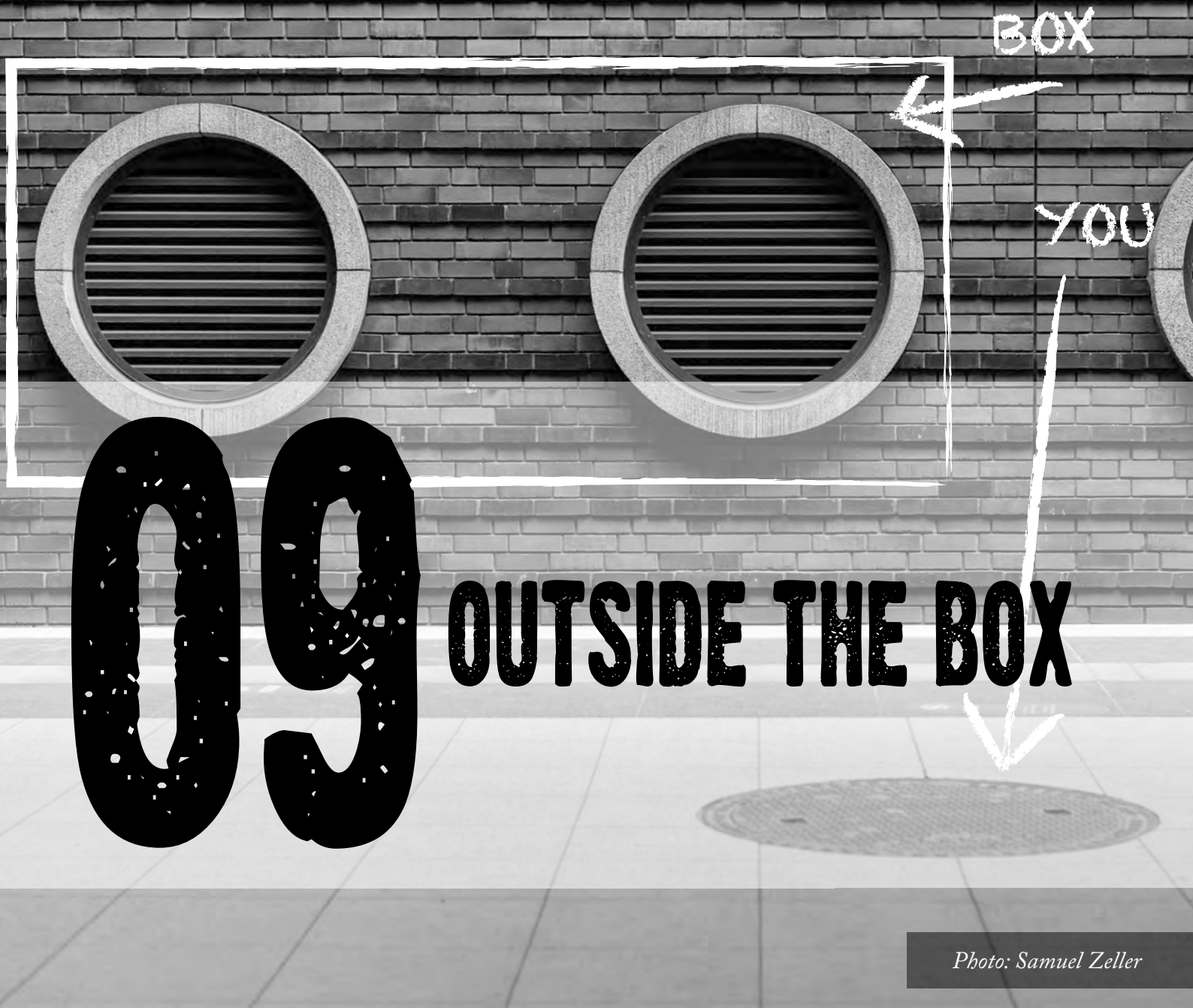
– *Martin Atkins*

.....

Musicians are also in the business of providing experiences: cathartic, pleasurable, intense, escapist, political, any type or combination. Think: what is the experience that your listeners carry away with them? Is it about them, or you? Is it simply too loud? What about you will lead them to return and bring others, given all that they could do with their time?

– *Mark Rubel*





*Photo: Samuel Zeller*

## **NEVERMIND THINKING OUTSIDE THE BOX... THINK OUTSIDE THE VENUE!**

Maybe the real opportunity is outside the venue at a sold out show where everyone is still standing in line. What would happen if you offered a cup of hot chocolate in return for an email address and a quick listen to your music? Sure, you get a few fuckyou@yahoo.coms™ in there. But, you'd also get some very positive results. Switch this around to suit the local climate — weather wise, economy wise, vibe wise. In Arizona in the middle of summer, substitute cold water and a spray bottle for hot chocolate. People will cheer! People will wave to get your attention rather than hiding their faces and running away.

The idea of house concerts seems particularly huge for certain genres and adaptable for others. There are great pieces in here from Fran Snyder and Shannon Curtis about this valuable new alternative. Rock it!



*House Concerts with Mike Doughty*

# HOUSE CONCERTS

## FRAN SNYDER

Mozart was onto something.

Mozart was well known for performing “parlor concerts” in the homes of rich patrons who would delight in the opportunity to show off their acquaintance with him. Things have changed, however, and you no longer need to be rich to have access to some of the finest talent available. Furthermore, many of these artists are genuinely interested in their fans, and enjoy an opportunity to connect in a way that rarely happens in traditional venues.

### BREAKING NEW MARKETS = BREAKING THE BANK

**Most acts, regardless of talent, are lucky to draw 30-40 people when they play in a new area.** The resources needed to get beyond those numbers are getting more expensive and less effective all the time. Publicity and radio promotion can cost many hundreds if not thousands of dollars per week, and these methods employ people to beg, bribe, or cajole overwhelmed media personnel (writers, DJs, music programmers) who can rarely make the returns worthwhile. Ask any act how many “butts in seats” result from a nice article in the paper: few, if any. Likewise, airplay doesn’t yield much unless it is sustained. Posters and flyers? Don’t get me started.

### PLAY ROOMS YOU CAN FILL. PLAY ROOMS WHERE YOU CAN CONNECT.

The best way to build an audience is to play rooms: 1) You can fill, and 2) That allow you to really connect in a personal or powerful way with the audience.

But where are the rooms you can sell out with 40 seats? Specifically, where are the ones that don’t have an espresso machine screaming during your ballads?

Shrinkage!

The potential audience for live music in traditional venues continues to shrink and fragment. People have more choices than ever for entertainment, at home. on-demand movies, Xbox, and the increasing variety of sports events and programming provide serious competition to the concert business.

In addition, despite the good they’ve done for society, stricter DUI laws have reduced the number of people who go out to listen to music, and smoking bans force “would-be listeners” out of the room during the show. We now have 200 capacity clubs who routinely have 50 people show up, and a majority of the audience spends half the night outside.

So venues have to diversify to stay in business.

Pool tables, televisions, electronic trivia, anything to bring in more bodies and sell more drinks. They have to do this, regardless of how it affects (distracts) from the live music shows. Artists (who seemingly have no better option) gladly walk in, set up, and waste their evening playing for ungrateful, inattentive patrons, and force their true fans to watch a show while drunks are screaming about the latest touchdown.

**FRAN  
SNYDER**



**FOUNDER OF  
CONCERTS  
IN YOUR HOME**

[www.concertsinyourhome.com](http://www.concertsinyourhome.com)  
@CIYH

And everyone accepts it. That's life.

How can we have profitable concerts with an audience of 30-40 people? You create an event that is so special that one person (the venue) is willing to let the other (the act) keep all the money. Who would do such a thing? A house concert host.

## WHAT IS A HOUSE CONCERT?

It's an invitation-only concert in someone's home, presented by a host who does not profit from the event. Although there are many exceptions and variations from these guidelines, house concerts are usually...

- held indoors and on weekends
- attended by 20-50 people
- paid for by a \$10-20 donation per guest (for the performer)
- known to include light snacks, beverages or a pot-luck dinner
- attended by the host's friends, neighbors, co-workers, and maybe a few fans of the artist
- attended by a 25-60 age group
- performed by solos, duos and small groups
- performed with little to no amplification
- very intimate - the audiences sit close and are attentive
- performed as two, 40-minute sets with a 20 minute break
- stronger merchandise sales than traditional venues
- booked without a financial guarantee (sometimes a modest guarantee to cover expenses)
- known to house and feed the artist for the night



## THE GROWTH OF HOUSE CONCERTS

Due to space considerations, these house concerts are more likely to help singer-songwriter acts and small ensembles, but the variety of genres and spaces available continues to grow. Jazz combos, instrumental acts, or any act that can comfortably fit in a living room might really enjoy performing in these intimate spaces.

## ARE HOUSE CONCERTS THE PERFECT PILL?

Even a modest turnout (15-20 people) can be very satisfying, profitable, and not leave the artist scrambling for a hotel at the end of the night. Many house concert hosts provide food and a guest room for the night - two of the biggest expenses of being on the road.

## REBUILDING OUR "INFRASTRUCTURE"

Never before in our history has there been so much talent available, yet so much of that talent is "stuck." There are not enough venues where small successes are possible - places that are the necessary stepping stones for an artist building a regional or national fan base. Necessity is the mother of invention, and the development of new house concerts, by enthusiastic and savvy fans, is necessary — always has been. Just ask Mozart.





# HOW I MADE \$25K ON A 2-MONTH HOUSE CONCERT TOUR (AND HOW YOU CAN TOO)

## SHANNON CURTIS

The deep, intimate connections I make at community-driven house concerts are unparalleled; in terms of their practical money-making actuality, and also in terms of the meaningful and fulfilling experience they bring to my life as I share my music with people. They have been the avenue via which I've earned a growing, full-time income performing my original music. They have also been the foundation on which I've built what I believe will be a lifelong career-sustaining community of supporters for my work.



### WHY ARE HOUSE CONCERTS AWESOME?\*

**HARD NUMBERS:** On my 2nd-ever house concert tour, we did 50 shows, added 500 names to my email list, averaged \$500 of income every night, sold 700 CDs, 250 tees and totes, grossed \$25,000. Boom. (Oh and the following year, our numbers were up 20%; and the year after that, they were up another 15%.)

**BOOKING IS EASY-PEASY:** No emailing a booker 5 times and getting no response; your hosts are eager to have you and they actually email back!

**NO SHOW PROMOTION:** You heard me. All the guests are there by invitation of your host. By inviting THEIR friends and neighbors, THEY create a new little market for you to play every single night.

**IT'S A VIRUS:** Nearly every show, a guest asks me if they can host a show at their house on the next tour, for their unique group of friends.

**CONNECTION TO THE MAX:** House concerts are the most connective kind of performance I've ever done. Guests leave there feeling like they're a part of what you're doing. Which is the foundation of this:

- Partnership with community:
- + the intimate house concert experience
- = deep connection with people
- => long-lasting relationships w/ hyper-dedicated community of supporters

### SO HOW DO YOU PUT ON A SUCCESSFUL HOUSE CONCERT?

You need 3 basic things:

**HOST:** Someone who is a fan of you – they love you, or they love your music, or they love both = awesome!

**SPACE:** A place where a group can gather & sit for a show – living room, backyard, garage, art studio ...

**GUESTS:** A minimum of 20 adults – friends/neighbors/community of your host, invited by your host



## **HELP YOUR HOST PLAN A SUCCESSFUL EVENT:**

**GUEST LIST:** Ask your host to invite double the number of people they hope to have at the show.

**ADULTS ONLY, PLEASE:** Kids are adorable, but they can break the magic bubble of engagement you want to create and capitalize on at a house concert. Better engagement = better donations.

**THIS IS A “DONATION-BASED CONCERT”:** No ticket price, no suggested donation, just invitations asking guests to come prepared to make a donation to the artist at the conclusion of the show.

**GUARANTEE SHOWS:** For deep-pocketed supporters who just want to pay you to play... by all means let them!

## **SETUP & FLOW:**

**PRE-GAME PREP:** Show up on time, fed, dressed, and ready to engage with the host and guests all night; have soundcheck done and merch set up before the first guest arrives.

**SET THE SPACE UP FOR A HOUSE CONCERT, NOT A HOUSE PARTY:** It's not background music at a house party, so set up the guest seating area to reflect that – gathered in close, all facing the “stage” area.

**VOLUME THAT DRAWS THEM IN:** Loud enough to be heard clearly, quiet enough make people lean in and listen.

**MERCH TABLE WHERE THEY'LL SEE IT:** Visible from the concert area & in a high-traffic area where they'll likely pass by after the show.

**HAVE GUESTS ARRIVE 1 HOUR BEFORE SHOW TIME:** Work the crowd; chat them up while they're having a drink or two and getting comfortable in the space => they'll be on your side before you've played a single note.

**PLAY YOUR HEART OUT:** Bring your A game; play for 20 people like they're 2,000. Give 'em a show to remember.

**THE “ASK”:** Help your host make a killer donation announcement immediately after you've played your last note. Coach them before the show on what to say – i.e. not “tips,” not “gas money,” these are donations to express their appreciation for the concert they just experienced. LOTS more detail on this in my book! :)

**GO SELL YOUR STUFF:** Be at the merch table from the moment the performance ends until the last guest leaves.



Perform outside the box! Frats, sororities and house parties will be your best bet on non-weekend nights since most people (especially in small towns) don't go out to bars on Sundays-Wednesdays.

- *Matt Bauerschmidt*

Food – eating together is one of the coolest parts of doing house concerts. It's great to finish the first set, grab a bowl of veggie chili or some tortilla chips and have a chat with the audience about what they make of it.

- *Steve Lawson*

In my experience, having a few house concerts on a tour is refreshing. They pay better than most clubs, there's usually food, and sometimes even a place to stay for the night. Not to mention, your fans will be thrilled to say you came and played in their house.

Tip: Create a page on your website that explains how house concerts work. Make it easy for them to prepare for the show, and save yourself the stress of answering the same questions over and over again.

- *Cameron Mizell*

## CAMERON MIZELL



GUITARIST AND  
CO-FOUNDER OF  
[www.musicianwages.com](http://www.musicianwages.com)  
[@cameronmizell](https://twitter.com/cameronmizell)

## MATT BAUERSCHMIDT



CLUB PROMOTER AND  
ARTIST MANAGER

[www.therevelsgroup.com](http://www.therevelsgroup.com)  
[@2mattyb](https://twitter.com/2mattyb)

# STAY LOCAL!

## JON OSTROW

While every band hopes to create enough demand that they make their way up the tour-size ladder, there is a critical first step that gets left behind: touring locally.

As social media gives musicians more access to their fans on a larger scale than ever before, “grandiose” has become the new ethos. But in reality, these large-scale, widespread tours are a complete waste of your time if there is no demand in your music outside of your local turf.

So, just as you’ve had to do so many times before, you will have to make the most with what you’ve got... and what you’ve got is a local audience that has the potential to be turned into a loyal fan base. The following is a checklist to help you maximize the potential of every show:

### PLUG YOUR DAMN NAME!

Plugging your own name is a critical part of performing to a new audience. If you are playing to a local crowd, make sure you plug the band’s name every few songs. This is especially meaningful when playing to a local crowd, one that will most likely see and/or hear your name brought up in passing conversation, on fliers or online. And while you’re at it, don’t forget to give a quick mention to your upcoming tour schedule, too.

### OFFER EXCLUSIVE DEALS FOR REPEAT ATTENDEES

Offering any sort of exclusives is a great way to give your loyal fans just another reason to continue their loyalty. Try putting together exclusive offers that create incentive for fans to continue to attend shows on a regular basis.

- 1) Present last show’s ticket stub for half off the cover of that night’s show
- 2) Present 2 ticket stubs from current tour and receive \$5 off t-shirt
- 3) Present 5 ticket stubs from current tour and receive exclusive, unreleased EP

### DON’T BE AN ASSHOLE. RUN WITH THE PUNCHES.

No one likes to deal with a jerk, but this rule of thumb becomes critically important when touring in a local setting, as many of the venue owners, bartenders and even booking staff will know each other and communicate on a regular basis. You want to avoid the risk of being an outstanding asshole and having all of the venues in the surrounding towns blacklist you from performing.

This means dealing with a bad soundcheck, not crying about a lack of free beer and, very important, not putting too many people on the guest list! All of these things can quickly piss off the staff and is an easy way to ensure that you never play there again. Just roll with the punches and make the most of every situation. You are a touring musician...shitty situations are around every corner.



## LOCAL TOURING: PLAY WITHIN 180 MI RADIUS

### FRANK MAUCERI

The one thing I always say to the bands is to tour. Of course, that's after I tell them to leave music to the professionals, maybe you should go to plumbing school or become an accountant. Those that will try should learn this: make yourself relevant. Play a gig every weekend, either in your home town or within a 180 mile drive. Why 180 miles? If you work a day job, you can get to an out of town venue on a Friday night by 8 PM, in time for a 10 PM set. Be willing to sleep on someone's floor (a couch if you're one of the lucky few), or play a basement party. Plenty of really great bands started that way. Here's a trick: make friends with a drummer in a band in the nearest college town and trade weekend basement gigs. Anyone these days can (and will) make a record. It's very easy to do. Touring is the trick. Music fans of all genres still seem to prefer the live experience and buying records off of musicians they see live.



## OUTSIDE THE VENUE

### TONY GUIDRY

Imagine yourself as a young rapper who loves shoes — Jordans.

What's stopping you from filling a cooler or few thermos containers with hot chocolate, going to the stores where people are lined up all night for J's, and giving them something warm to drink? Maybe charge their phones for them. Let them use your wifi hot spot for 30 minutes.

I guarantee that a rapper who focuses on Jordan brand fans will see a 30-50% conversion rate by reaching out to folk sitting in line for the newest J's. Give them a little warmth and a little music. Get their email address. Get their social media handle. Tag them. Keep a list.



# GET OUT OF TOWN!

It's difficult for a band to stay in their local market for too long — after a while familiarity breeds contempt — although that might be a bit harsh — you get what I mean. There is always something new, cooler to see. The best way for a band to expand and grow in its home market is to leave for a little while. It enables a 'going away show,' sending pics and video to fans from the road ("here I am with my head in an alligator!" etc), and most importantly — a welcome home show. Even if it's just for a week, this kind of activity is important. You can start to tour just on weekends (the flower petal plan works well for this) and gradually build up your skills before stringing a few weekends together.

## WHEN YOU DECIDE TO GIG OUT OF TOWN

Do not go to any city unless you are sure of the outcome (thanks Sun Tzu). Get on the net. Get with other bands. Don't even think about making any money.

## THE \$50 YOU'RE NOT GOING TO GET DOESN'T MATTER RIGHT NOW

Rather, find other bands that will play for nothing and share equipment so the evening isn't a total clusterfuck. Gigswap!

Your plan (and for fuck's sake please have one!) needs to layer the unique elements of your band's strengths and weaknesses, the location of your fans, the availability of good clubs, and other bands to play with the inner needs of the band itself.

## TOURING PATTERNS

We can all draw nice patterns on a map, but it gets shredded when you start to book events, a certain club only has Thursday nights for your type of music so you have to double back. An important radio show can only happen on a certain day. You just have to fit the tour to the opportunities at a certain level rather than trying to fit the opportunities to your pre-conceived plan. Does this mean that you shouldn't make a plan? No, you need to be aware of all of these decisions.

You can tour:

- Regionally: usually involves a band staying close to their home base and slowly traveling further away in concentric circles.
- Weekend-PLUS
- Petal Pattern
- Weekend Hit and Runs

A gig is worth five rehearsals. Play as many gigs as possible, because no matter how well rehearsed you are, nothing comes close to the real thing.

— *Jim Clark*

**Q:** If you could tell a band one thing, what would it be?

**A:** Merch and tour.

— *Luke Stokes*

# JUDGING

Say what you want about band battles (beat battles or any kind of battles), but they exist. The mechanics make it easy for sponsors to award prizes as incentives to artists and to their audiences and they aren't going away.

Expect to have a short set and be unfairly judged by assholes who don't know the subtleties of your genre, like me...

More and more of these types of battles are happening online, too.

## Battle of the Bands Judging Criteria

Band: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Judge:

### I. Creativity/Originality (25%)

- Did the band have a unique or innovative sound?  
 Was their set cohesive, well put together.  
 How were the songs?

Score: \_\_\_\_/25

### II. Musicianship: (25%)

- Overall confidence and competence?  
 Were band members proficient at playing their instruments?  
 Did the band interact effectively on stage?

Score: \_\_\_\_/25

### III. Stage Presence/Crowd Reaction: (25%)

- Did the band create energy?  
 Did the band interact with the audience, was the crowd engaged?  
 Overall stage presence?

Score: \_\_\_\_/25

### IV. Professionalism: (25%)

- Appeared on time and ready to play?  
 Was there a quick, quiet and smooth stage set up?  
 Were they "nice" and easy to work with or did they come with excess attitude?

Score: \_\_\_\_/25

In case of a tie, the number of fans the band brings to the show will determine the winner.

TOTAL SCORE: \_\_\_\_/100

Summary Comments:

\_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_

# BAND BATTLES

## CHECKLIST FOR BANDS INVOLVED IN A BAND BATTLE

Don't even ask how the slots were decided — they are usually random, or pulled from a hat. The organizers either cared a lot and took care over it (and will be pissed at you for asking) or they won't have taken any care, asked a 10 year old to put the list together and will be pissed that you are asking — waiting for the next, sigh and ask for a 'better slot' creating a cascading cluster-fuckage<sup>m</sup> of time moving.

**BE NICE.** Help to promote ALL of the bands on the event — don't tell your fans the time you are on and create an event somewhere else so that you can pretend that you are late for a previous engagement, but really you are ruining the evening for everyone else.

**DO NOT BAD MOUTH ANY OF THE EQUIPMENT.** It might be the organizers, the roadies, the stage managers the other bands, but it's not yours and you didn't have to bring it and everyone else has to use it.

**DO NOT BAD MOUTH ANY OF THE OTHER BANDS.** (even with your really really clever backhanded compliments that seem funny BUT AREN'T) You never know if someone from that band is standing close by to you — and you just lost their help when your guitar inexplicably snaps in two right before your behind the head solo (it will) and you'll look like a total dick (you are, and I don't mean Clark).

**OFFER TO SHARE YOUR GEAR.** It might *seem* like you are helping the other bands — but really, you are helping yourself — because the audience won't be in a good mood when the night goes two hours long and EVERY SINGLE drummer has to tune their tom-toms. Drummers, don't tune your drums after the doors have opened. EVER.

**UNDERSTAND THAT IT'S NOT A PRESENTATION OF THE VERY BEST SHOWCASE OF YOUR MUSIC.** It's a fucking elevator pitch on a skateboard blindfolded in a wind tunnel smelling of piss... You don't need your personal bass drum mic — the sound guy might not even remember to put it in the PA or if he does he'll forget to take the 200hz hi pass off of the channel (sound man joke!).

And you will upset the judges; if they are any good they will be looking at everything *but* the shit you throw from the stage. *Everyone* can do that these days. It's all of the offstage stuff that matters.

**HELP OTHER BANDS.** Even if they kick your ass, then isn't it great to know a kick-ass band owes you a favour?

**THANK THE OTHER BANDS AND TELL PEOPLE TO STAY.** Make sure that *your* fans stay to see other bands. You might think it's cool to leave early with your fans to demonstrate how many fans you have, but you (you insecure prick) just eroded your community spirit and showed the judges that you don't care about the event or the community — massive FAIL. Plus, two bands from now, you'll see a much better bass player than the one you have, and you'll need to replace yours because he's shagging your girlfriend while you were slagging the sound system (to the sound guy) in the green room.

<sup>m</sup>This fuck brought to you by Josh White.

Be professional and polite to everyone. The staff helping might be people who run sound at other clubs and could recommend you for gigs. The load-in chick might actually be the club's booking agent. That other band might just need opening acts for big gigs. And the judges are bound to be somebody who has some power and clout in the scene. Just because you don't recognize someone does not mean they are not important.

Stay the whole time. Support the other acts. There is so much to learn in a situation like this if you pay attention. There are so many good contacts you can make if you talk to the other bands. And believe me, the judges are watching. And the judges are not impressed if you ask them if you can leave early because you have work in the morning... If nothing else, you can get a list of fill in musicians that shine above their crappy bands for when you have to fire your guitarist for being too drunk.

Take your win or loss and any feedback with a grain of salt. Sometimes the judges use criteria that you don't know about. Sometimes the judges have information you do not about you or other bands that affects their decision. If the battle was to be an opening band, the judges may have to evaluate whether your gear and band members will fit on the bus. Sometimes you just have an off night. If you have shown up, networked, and been open to the experience, you will leave further ahead than when you walked in.

*- Joanna Quargnali-Linsley*

## **GIG SWAP**

You are invariably going to come up against silence — silence from promoters, radio, stores, labels, journalists — everyone — there is a reason for it — everyone is busy, no one has the time. YOU have to get to level 1, 2, and 3 on your own.

Stop thinking about most of the things that you might have been thinking were important and start thinking about which basic human needs you can fulfill for a band traveling to your city: help with promotions, your audience, accommodation, food... these are the things that will be interesting to the self interested, the tired, the hungry the desperate for any audience greater than 2 oh my god — there's a site!

### **WELCOME TO GIGSWAP**

It would be interesting to look at a study of what it would cost to provide free accommodation to bands for two years. In return for e-mail addresses, photographs and autographs in a guest book and some other shit, your networking would go through the roof and your spare bedrooms would become the repository of so much knowledge (and probably some other nasty stuff, too) that you could write a book about it.



# DOES GIGSWAPPING ALWAYS WORK OUT?

## GREG WHITESIDE

Gig-swapping is always a risk. Bands often embellish their worth and/or bail out on their side of the deal. But it's worth trying. If you win over any of their fans, they will talk about it and hopefully come out the next time you're there.

- *Tims Myth*

Always do a little bit of research on the other band. If this is a gigging band that has done its fair share of shows then they should know the deal. It's just a matter of "you scratch my back and I scratch yours." If a band comes from a long distance, you hook them up with a place to sleep, hot meals, and show them a good time around your city. Make something special out of it. Just try to start good relationships with good bands in areas far away that you plan on going to as soon as you've earned a name for yourselves at home. One region at a time. When setting up a bill, find some bands you have networked with, three or four, go to the venue you're trying to play and present them with the bill; show the bills drawing power. (If you don't know any bands, it's because your networking game is weak. Don't bother setting up a bill until you got the networking part of the game down). When you're setting up a bill it's always best to work out who's paying for what as far as the PA goes. If you're playing at a place without a PA... (And never play at a place without a PA unless you're setting up a show at the teen community center or something like that.) If you're playing at a bar with no PA, it's because they don't do regular shows. No regular shows equals no walk in traffic there to hear bands, and the bar regulars aren't there to hear bands.

- *March into Paris*

Gig swapping is considered by many as a very important part of DIY booking and building a fan base. It's about networking with other bands. It's important to find bands that you relate to, so the fans will relate as well. Be creative with your website: the Everyday Heroes have a gig swapping form bands can fill out. Cool idea.

- *GigDoggy*

Preview the band and get a sense of their direction/attitude online. But there's no substitute for seeing the band play live.

- *SleepSix*

We chose bands by going to their shows and seeing them live before we invite them to play with us.

- *Throw The Fight*



# BUY ONS / PAY TO PLAY

This practice — once frowned upon and quite unusual is now common practice across the country. The fact is that there are so many artists willing to do ANYTHING to get a gig (whether or not it is going to do anything for their careers) that clubs have responded and, like anyone in a free market, they are selling stuff to the people who want it — opportunities to bands — whether they are real or not. Be careful — it's a chance to be in a big empty room, cold and trembling because they haven't turned the heat on yet.

## EVERY OPPORTUNITY SHOULD BE LOOKED UPON AS AN OPPORTUNITY TO FAIL AND FAIL HARD UNLESS YOU DO SOMETHING PRO-ACTIVE TO MAKE SURE YOU DON'T.

Designed by promoters to make sure that they can turn a profit and stay in business, even if all of the shitty bands don't have much of an audience, pay to play creates a very sad by-product: audiences show their support for band #4 by arriving just in time to see band #4 but by also leaving just before the start of band #5. I understand this — it makes sense BUT it robs these bands of the ability to play to each other's audience, it robs the audience of being exposed to other bands that might surprise them (yeah I know not always in a good way), but it also robs the band members themselves of playing in front of their peers — that's a pretty good adrenalin shot wasted... The solution to all of this is pretty easy. Bands can tell their audiences to stick around. Bands can stick around too instead of splitting early and loading out during the next band's set. That's RUDE, dude!

If you "buy on" to a larger tour then protect yourself with a couple things:

**Memorialize** what the manager, band or agent are telling you. They might say that they expect to play to 500 people a night... Well, write that down and, while they are confident that this will be the case, protect yourself with a formula and schedule of payments... 50% up front. 25% 1/2 way though and 25% at the end. Tie the last payment to something like, "You anticipate performing to 500 paying customers for 30 shows = 15,000 people... If the total attendance is less than 10,000 then the last payment is forfeit..." or something.

## QUANTIFY!

- 500 people x 30 shows = 15,000 people. If the **total** number of people is less than 10,000, then you can pro-rate the fee.
- If you paid 10k for the opportunity to play to 15000 people, then that's 66 cents per person. You can use that information if/when things go bad.
- If the total attendance is only 8000 people, then you could argue that you should only pay  $8000 \times 66¢ = \$5,333$ .
- Of course, you can **only** have this discussion and do something about it if you have held some of the fee back. You can avoid paying the last of a series of agreed payments; you should never expect to get a refund of monies already paid.
- Invest in yourself if you find the right tour to buy on to (it doesn't have to be a tour — it could just be one or two dates on a tour). You'll also need to invest in material to give away: shirts, cds, songs, etc and have enough people on hand to **take names**...







# 10 HOW TO MAKE YOUR SHOW AN EVENT

*Photo: Marija Hajster*

Always choose the smaller venue. The *worst* thing that can happen is that the show **sells out!** Put a sign up, leave a crowd on the street prompting cries of, “who’s playing there tonight?” Create the opportunity to place a great big **SOLD OUT** splash on your web page. No one (except us) will ever call to ask the capacity of the venue. Two hundred people in a room that holds 750 is a funeral. Put those same people in a 150 capacity bar and it’s a riot!

**Every show you do affects the next one — good or bad.** You are like a coyote on a frozen lake — you don’t move across the lake by bouncing up and down to test the ice: you slowly, gingerly edge your way cautiously forward — testing the firmness of the ice before transferring your weight onto the unknown patch of ice... OR, put in another, less Man vs. Wild kind of way... you don’t buy a big bag of ice before testing out a couple of little rocks do ya? Ok, got ya.

**When you create an event that’s notable and cool, people talk. When you don’t, they walk!**

VIDAL SASSOON THE  
 FUCK OUT OF IT!  
 RINSE REPEAT!  
 RINSE REPEAT!



### START SIMPLE:

- **Use a landmark event in your band's history.** Album release party? Make more of them. Release more songs — not one album every 18 months — an ep every 4 months, a vinyl single every month, a song a week. **DO SOMETHING DIFFERENT!** (See *The Difference* for the full explanation of all of the benefits of this.)

### USE OTHER EVENTS, TOO:

- **Your last show** before SXSW, the first show after returning from Germany. You don't *have* to go to Germany to have a last show before going to Germany gig! Or returning home... *pretend*. That's not really a lie — it's show business!
- **Your keyboard player's last show.** (YAY!)
- **The lead singer's birthday** (come watch him fuck up, miss all the high notes, split his pants and try to fuck the keyboard player's girlfriend).
- **Benefit show** — to get the keyboard player out of jail and the singer out of the hospital.

### ADD A CAUSE

- **Do I want to see your band? NO. Do I want to help starving children around the planet? YES.** You increase the chances of a better outcome for all concerned. This also gives you a reason to send out a legitimate update to everyone after the event. "Congratulations to all of us! We just sent \$500 to PETA2." ...

### ADD A COMPETITIVE ELEMENT:

- **Battle / Band, Best / Beat**
- **Most tickets sold** (for the cause)
- If you have a competitive element, you can add... **PRIZES.** You can recruit sponsors more easily — they don't have to donate \$\$\$\$. They can give a free haircut, or a free guitar, or a photo shoot, or a session, or some shirts. That costs them less and publicizes their business and the event, too.
- **A judge panel** can also add to the "poster power" of the event.
- More about this later!

### APPLY THE "GET IN FREE IF" MODEL:

- **Get in free** with four cans for the food bank.
- **Get in free** if you wear purple (Prince tie-in)
- **Get in free** if you bring an instrument for the local school.
- **Get in free** if you are a complete idiot

Don't worry too much about being a huge success  
 — concentrate on avoiding miserable failure.

### ASSIGN A THEME TO THE WHOLE NIGHT... & CROSS-POLLINATE:

- The Chicago White Sox biggest event is ELVIS night! Lots of baseball organizations think outside the box. The Cubs do a Star Wars night! Be as ridiculously outside of the box as them! Except, don't have "baseball night", the last thing most clubs need is a bunch of lunatics with baseball bats.

### SAME TIME EACH MONTH

- Allow your event to grow by hitting the same time each month with many like minded bands, artists, bakers, whatever! Use alliteration as a memory prompt — first Friday, \$2 Tuesdays, third Thursday, whatever Wednesday, Tequila Tuesday... I see art galleries do this very successfully.

### HIJACK AN EVENT (PIGGYBACK)

- Find a huge successful show that you have NOTHING to do with — and afterparty the fuck out of it! AC/DC after show event. Make sure you flier the shit out of the car park and send people into the crowd to direct people to your event. People are sheep. Damn!

### USE THE CALENDAR!

- **Pick a Month.** January gives us: National Blood Donor Month, National Braille Literacy Month (there's a t-shirt), National Soup Month
- **Add a Birthday.** A birthday is a great theme to hang a hat on and widen your audience. Johnny Cash's birthday provides an opportunity for you (and your fans) to step outside of your normal set list. (phev!)
- **Combine Two Birthdays.** Jan 8<sup>th</sup> and 9<sup>th</sup> are Elvis's and Richard Nixon's birthdays respectively. You could have a pill-popping, presidential, secretly recorded show, lose 17 minutes of it — then triumphantly announce that you've found it after a few weeks — send out another email!

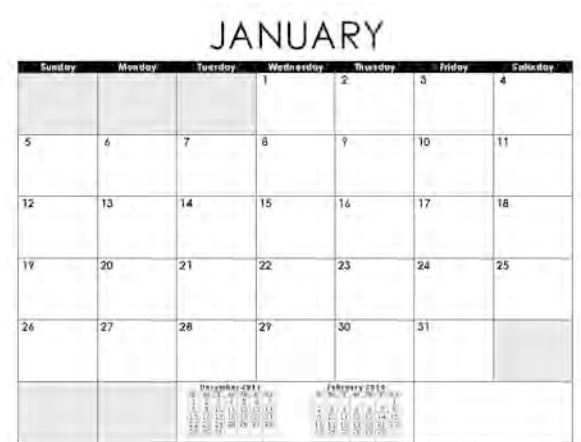
Combine all of these ideas and any more you can think of, then mix well.

Nothing is too dumb to succeed if approached in the right way (see Prince tie in).

### LESS FUN BUT STILL IMPORTANT:

- **DON'T play your local market too often.** Don't ask your friends if you are playing too often, it's their JOB to support you! They will lie! So, how often is too often? It depends... If I made it a rule that you should have a great new t-shirt or something for every local show, then that would be about right. But there would be some bands who are just crazy amped-up motherfuckers<sup>2</sup> who like screenprinting that would do a show each week with a new shirt and then stitch them all together at the end of the concert "series" to make a patchwork quilt of grooviness.

BUT, even though they are overplaying their market, *if* they have a new t-shirt at *every* show, then there will be all kinds of crazy "collect-the-set" people who will start going to all of the shows – NOT TO SEE THE BAND – just to "collect the set." This strategy also works for the lazy-ass band. If they can't get it together to create a new shirt design more than once every 12 weeks, then *great*. Now it's a real *event*.



All things being equal, if the choice is between booking a raging narcissist or someone with the reputation of being easy to work with, it's an easy call which one to give the gig to.

– Charlie Hunter

<sup>2</sup> This fuck brought to you by Terese Fleming.

- **Stay 2 pay periods away** from any large event you aren't piggybacking. It's that large national event's job to drain all of the money out of an area before moving on to the next one; give people a chance to recharge their financial batteries.
- **Getting more money for your shows: You need to PUSH in another direction.** It's not unprofessional or ungrateful to ask for more money — there just doesn't seem to be much point. IF you TRIUMPH, and double your \$\$\$, between the four members of your band, you each put an extra \$5 in your pocket — or looked at another way, you almost paid for the gas and the first round of drinks! Is it really worth raising the subject? I'd suggest just keeping your heads down and not causing any problems... You need to PUSH in another direction. How about asking if the venue would agree to some kind of drink special for an hour if you (and the other three bands) agree to waive any fee? You might be surprised at the reaction from the venue, then you will be able to hype the event with something that people are interested in — cheap booze! This will be a nice reward for anyone of your friends that has already seen you seven times and a great incentive for anyone that hasn't.

## MILES AND MONTHS / BEFORE AND AFTER

- **Make sure bands you have booked don't have competing events (they will!).**
- **Incentivise early ticket buying** - Once someone has a ticket then each person becomes a word of mouth poster for the show and a blocker of other events.

**Your Fan's Friend:** Want to come bowling next week?

**Your Fan:** No, I can't. I have tickets to go see \_\_\_\_\_"

**Your Fan's Friend:** Oh, screw bowling! I'll come, too!

- You can also do this by **creating a VIP package** – “Buy a pair of tickets NOW and you'll get the new shirt and EP FREE!” You will also gain the benefit of knowing there will be people at the show. OR you will be able to proactively deal with a show that looks like it will tank two weeks out. IF you wait until the day of the show to *hope* that people show up, all you can do is shit your pants and panic.
- **Price break / package / eBay**
- **Use the guest list as a seed-sowing device** – But *early!* when it means something. Give the people you have invited a +1; That way, they *have* to tell all of their friends so their friends can compete for the slot and that is why they'll blast it up on social media... "I have an extra ticket! Who wants to go with me?"
- **Use flyers** – *Not* in the hopes that anyone is going to read them but as a reason to walk around and meet people, make eye contact, talk! Place them directly into someone's hand. The flyer is the reason you aren't crazy.
- **In-store or afternoon acoustic show.** Not to gain 50 more people at your show, but to have the venue/business blast to their social media including info on your main evening event.



The guestlist is for friends, family & people you might want to fuck. Everyone else can pay. They have day jobs.

– Thor Harris

## ADD OFF STAGE ELEMENTS

- **Booths from vendors** – Maybe some of the businesses you reached out to promote, too.
- **Limited edition posters** – By three different artists = word of mouth to the artists' data bases plus items to put in your archive for future competitions, kickstarter levels, etc.
- **Art in foyer** – Launch, preview & code for wine! Once you introduce art into the equation, everything becomes groovier.
- **Merchandisers in lounge** – Book signing
- **More reasons!**

## THE AFTERPARTY

- Should be in a **different location** = word of mouth with a different data base than the one at the club or yours.

## OTHER CONSIDERATIONS THAT WILL MAKE OR BREAK YOUR SHOW:

- **Ticket price - Play for free!**

Think about how much you would pay to see you? And, how many of your friends have any money? **Exactly!** It makes your show immediately more attractive than many of the others that week. People will have more money for beer and merchandise. You're not giving anything away really. If you are good, you're just pulling in more people to be randomly EXPOSED TO YOUR amazing ARTISTRY and become fans FOR LIFE.

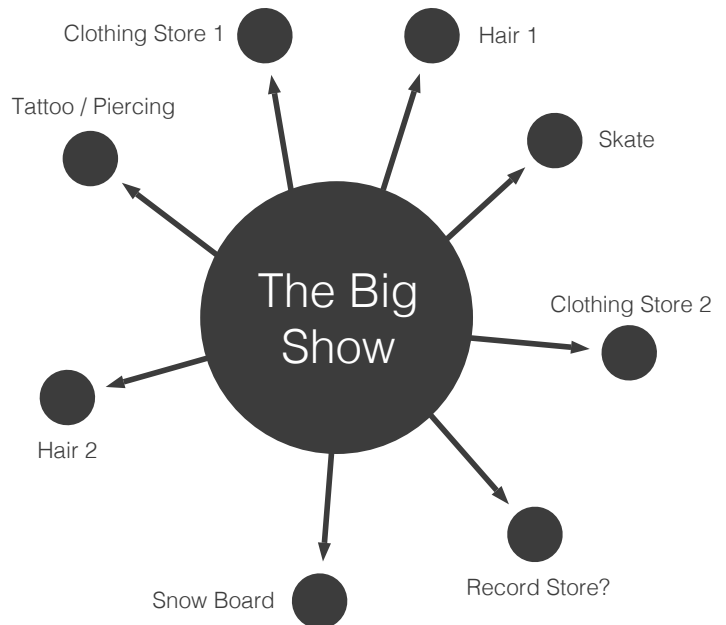
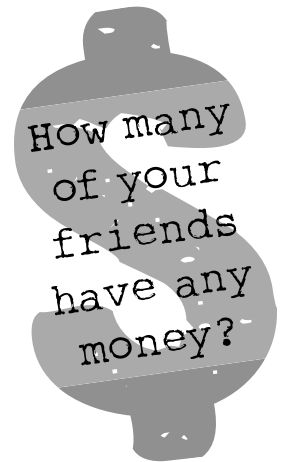
Think of yourself as a drug dealer. The first few hits free and as long as you have a good stuff the people will come. Just remember not to sprinkle too much baby laxative on your product!

- **Promote in places where people don't usually promote.**

Be smart — I don't mean the paint factory (although that's not a terrible idea). I mean tattoo parlours, clothing stores, skate shops, hair salons, piercing salons, bakeries, restaurants, coffee shops, anywhere and everywhere *except* the venue — that's easy and you should be all over that.

By doing this, your packages, energy, emails, posters will go further, have more impact and be a great introduction between you and these indie business owners that might form alliances with you moving forward.

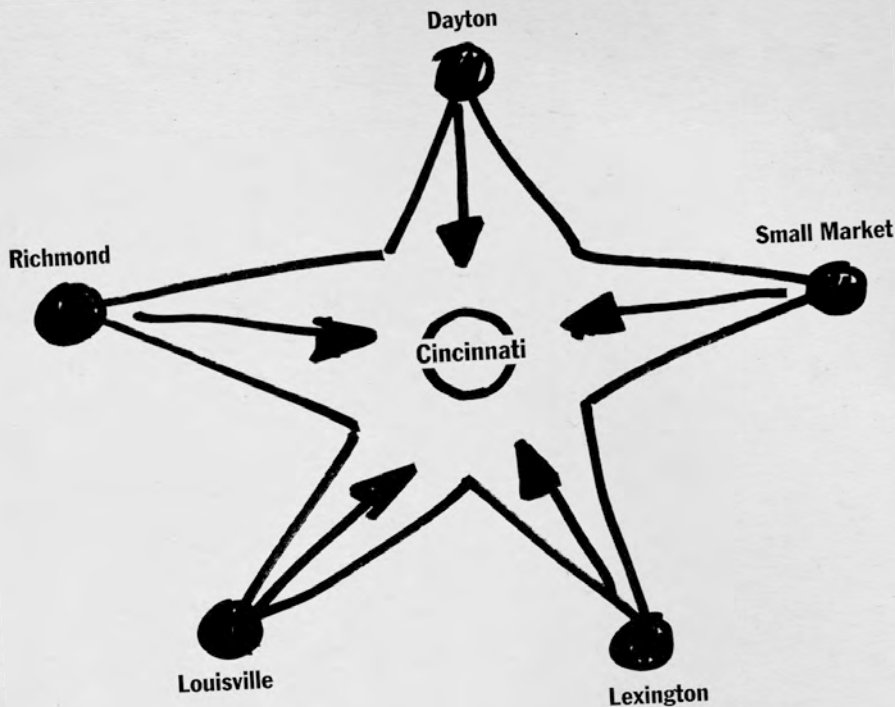
- **Secondary markets:** I cover this extensively in Tour:Smart — but, basically, before you OVERsaturate the local market — spend some time travelling in a 15-20 mile radius to some centers of activity in other areas.
- **Security** – Are security polite or overly enthusiastic and looking for trouble? Is the club a kind of mini Ferguson?





Or do a show online with StageIt, StreetJelly, Ustream, or others... but I'd really suggest the face-to-face approach. You can use one of the online services as a way to stay in touch or kick start an upcoming tour or release.

- **Bathrooms** – Depending on your audience this might be very important or not at all.
- **Parking** – Is there any? Or, is it crazy expensive?
- **Drink prices & choice** – It doesn't matter if you play for a low ticket price or FREE if your fans are being gouged at the bar. A good selection of drinks is also a good gauge of the attention the venue is paying to community of the overall experience.
- **Neighbourhood** – Is the venue located in a neighbourhood notorious for people getting their windows smashed? (you should provide security on the car park and advertise the fact!) Was someone murdered on the doorstep of the club last week (one of my dj gigs)
- **Myth** – Is the club one of mythological status - CBGB's would fall into this category if it still existed, The Apollo, just something to think about - a strong myth component would over-ride stinky horrible bathrooms (CBGB's)... well, almost.



**USE THE FIVE POINTED STAR INWARD-FACING CRUSH TECHNIQUE!** I understand that you want and *need* to perform more than once every 9 to 12 weeks — so start to travel in a 50 or so mile radius. Places where you think people will travel to another event. It might be more than 50, or less. Find out of the way places to build your audience instead of playing the same club over and over and over to fewer and fewer punters. Use the five pointed star inward facing crush technique!

# TICKETS

Both Eventbrite and Brown Paper Tickets are platforms you can use to effectively manage your ticketing needs (There are many many platform options.). Both have the facility to enable ticketing and payment before the show, reminders right before the show, and contact management after show. I believe they both have export directly to Salesforce, which if you are on tour, can massively change the outcome of a tour and fuel momentum. Imagine the band that tours, then at the end of the tour (after a few days) someone gets the short straw and has to enter all of the attendee names into the database. With an 80% success rate, some user error on the front end, drunken scribbblings, and fuckyou@yahoo.coms<sup>®</sup> in there, that's horrifying loss of the gold dust of fans!

With either of these programs, you can very quickly add all of the new addresses (with their permission, of course, which you will ask for upon buying a ticket!), you can easily send a newsletter to the 100 sign-ups from each of your first two shows with some pics, tracks, and news about the five separate flat tires you've had since Tuksa. Imagine the fuel that this adds to the fire when those 100 new fans are paid attention to and also they are enabled to send links for the rest of your tour along with maybe a pic of themselves at the show to their friends in one or two of the cities you have yet to visit. BOOM. Yes, you're welcome.

If you need a person to help you navigate all of this stuff, BPT are awesome with a person on the other end of the phone 24/7 in what is always a stressful time for any artist/promoter. Eventbrite, not so much. The decision is yours, but whatever, choose one!

BPT will also print real paper tickets and deliver them to you for that extra special show where the tickets could become collectibles. They are a "not-just-for-profit" company that is always trying to help artists... just sayin. *See more about tickets in Good Advice from Baad People.*

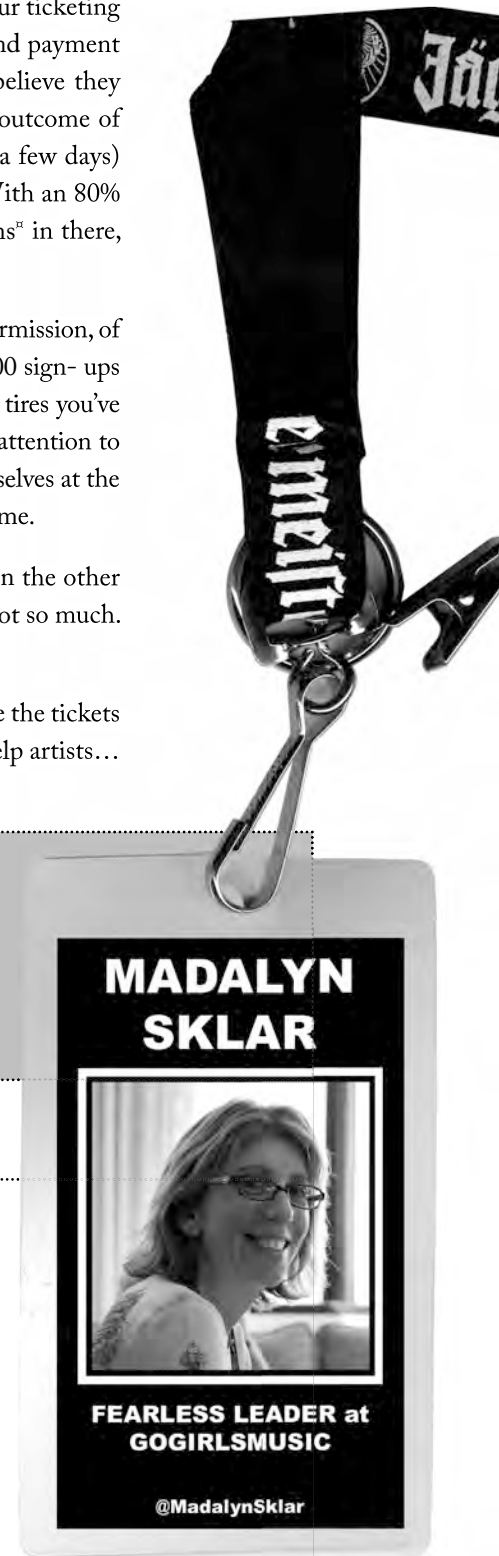
## 10 TIPS TO GET REAL FANS (NOT JUST FRIENDS) TO SHOWS

### MADALYN SKLAR

I get asked this question all the time. The answer is simply get out and hustle. Just because you're playing a show, it doesn't mean the venue will pack itself. There are many things you can do both online and offline to attract fans.

**1 UPDATE YOUR WEBSITE CALENDAR.** There is nothing worse than a bunch of outdated gigs listed on your site. It's a turn off and will give the impression that you are not out playing shows. As soon as you book a show, go update your website.

**2 SHOOT AN EMAIL BLAST TO YOUR MAILING LIST.** You have a mailing list, right? Use it! This is your most valuable tool in your arsenal, yet I find so many bands



<sup>®</sup>This fuck brought to you by John Hardin.

are under-utilizing it. You can easily manage your list and send out messages through ReverbNation or FanBridge. Be sure to collect email addresses at your shows, your website and through social media.

**3 SET UP A FACEBOOK EVENT.** Invite your local fans and friends.

### **DON'T WASTE YOUR TIME INVITING PEOPLE FROM ALL OVER THE WORLD. THEY AREN'T COMING!**

Make a friends list: Log into Facebook >> on the Left Sidebar scroll down to Friends >> Place your mouse over Friends and click More >> Create a List. Go through your friends and add the local peeps to a list and call it Local Fans. Every time you make a new friend/fan in your local area, add them to this list and watch it grow! You'll set this up once, add people to it as you become friends, then every time you create a FB Event you'll invite people from this list.

**4 TWEET YOUR SHOW INFORMATION.** Be sure to post a link for more details. Put in "Please RT!" at the beginning or end of the tweet. This will encourage people to share it.

**5 USE REVERBNATION.** They offer great tools such as the popular Facebook Band Profile application, FanReach to manage your mailing list, Event Calendar to manage your shows and so many other valuable tools. And I love how it all ties into your Facebook.

**6 GET OUT TO THE VENUE 10-14 DAYS AHEAD OF TIME AND POSTER IT UP.** Talk to the door person, the bartenders, sound guy. Get to know the people who work there. Buy them a drink, hang out, give them a CD. Be likeable and they'll tell everyone about you and your cool band.

**7 MAKE YOUR SHOWS MEMORABLE.** The best way to get people to your show is give them a great show. Get people talking about you. Word of mouth is very powerful.

**8 BE REALISTIC.** Don't place high expectations that you'll get instant results. It can take time. But be consistent with it.

**9 MAKE IT A HABIT: AFTER YOUR SHOW TO TALK TO YOUR FANS.** Walk around with your mailing list in one hand and your CDs in the other. Talk to people and encourage them to join your list and buy a CD. You'll be surprised at the results if you just ask.

**10 GET INVITED BACK TO THE VENUE.** Do this by thanking the venue and its staff on stage throughout the set. Thank them after your show. Send a Thank You card within a week of your show. That will get you noticed. It makes you memorable. You'll stand out from most of the bands because it's rarely done.

I hope you found these tips helpful. Getting more than just your friends out to a show takes some time, work, dedication and consistency.



# GENIUS PROMOTIONAL IDEAS

**Pegasus Unicorn:** Although they don't get the prize for best band name, they do get the prize for terrific idea to spice up an album release party. Take a gumball machine and wrap one gumball in gold foil. The person who gets this has a song written about them on the next album! The genius is in the name — not “the Gumball Song-About-You Contest!” but “the Instant Immortality Sweepstakes!” I fucking love this!

## Instant Immortality Sweepstakes

**Asleep** (band member Nicholas Kloss relays the story): Tired of flyering (and flyering and getting nowhere, really), the band created Punchy, the 15' high robot, complete with PA, voice altering effect, smoke and flailing arms. Punchy attracts more attention than the band and has actually made them jealous!

**Eric Idle** of Monty Python solved two problems with one **great** idea. He wanted a choir of lumberjacks for the “Lumberjack Song,” but it's expensive to travel with a bunch of extra people. He listed the opportunity on eBay so anyone to be in the choir. This was low risk — even if two of the eight were crap, it doesn't matter. They will be drowned out by the good ones. With a few velcroed lumberjack shirts, the theatre of the piece works really well. Plus, it's great word of mouth!

**You:** Oh my god! I'm going to be in the Lumberjack choir.  
**Your Friend:** What?  
**You:** I'm going to be in the "I'm a lumberjack choir" for Eric Idles show.  
**Your Friend:** Where?  
**You:** At the blah blah theatre.  
**Your Friend:** When?

\*\*\*Insert date and money here!\*\*\*

*Remember my fake tour of Germany from Tour:Smart? Well, Justin Pearson was way ahead of me with his fake correctional facility tour:*

“It was tacky and ridiculous, a weird mix of all the stupid shit we couldn't get away with in our other bands. For our first EP, we put out a live recording supposedly performed in a correctional facility. It was not believable at all, but we still managed to fool people here and there. The recording even ended with a staged riot.

Because of everyone involved there was a lot of hype around the band. We even promoted a tour of correctional facilities complete with t-shirts listing tour dates. However, we never left on that tour, since there was no way that we could actually play those places and there was no way that people on the outside could attend. But some people actually went to some of these correctional facilities to try to catch us live.”

- Justin Pearson

# PIMPIN' FOR TIPS CAN BE A PIECE OF CAKE!

## NANCY APPLE

It didn't come easy to me at first, but once I realized that part of my job includes begging (for gigs, better gigs, gigs that pay, free or discounted gear), I started working that tip bucket like a polyester suit wearing preacher passin' the plate - but in my case the plate has cake on it. Amen. Yum.

I discovered (the hard way) that if I put out a tip bucket but don't work it, my gas tank stays on empty. Now I put out that same tip bucket and ask people to write their name on paper money, fold that up and put it in the tip bucket, which makes them eligible for a fabulous door prize!

Being someone who collects nearly everything, it was easy to look through my yard sale pile for cool giveaways: Old tour shirts, CDs, shot glasses, Pez, lunch boxes, Elvis stuff, old 8 tracks, and VHS tapes. The fans actually get a kick out of whatever I give away, even when I say it's from the yard sale pile. It's even gotten to the point that if they have something cool in their own junk pile at home, they often give it to me for a door prize!

But even this can seem old hat after a while.

## YOU ALWAYS HAVE TO BE MORE CREATIVE THAN YOU WERE THE LAST GIG.

So I finally had no choice but to bring out the big guns: Chocolate cake.

I got in the habit of baking cakes for special fans on or near their birthdays a few years ago. The most popular is chocolate with cream cheese frosting. So one morning while looking around the house for door prize crap, errrrr stuff, I decided that all I really had left was junky junk. Cool junk gets tips, junky junk not so much. So I made three little cakes, each one enough to satisfy two hogs or four regular people. I could not believe it that night at our gig! People who normally tipped a couple bucks were tossing in all the ones they had in their pockets. Let's just say we did good.

So then last month, in an effort to up the ante, the grand door prize was dinner and a movie at my house (I cook the burgers and fries, they bring the Redbox), which got an even better turnout in tips! To even top that, the fabulous door prize this month was a custom made cake that will serve a dozen of their friends in whatever flavor they want (even though I know it will be chocolate, LOL), which I will bring to them special delivery at my NEXT show. This not only makes some lucky fan happy, but ensures they come back with a table full of friends to share their bounty!

See where I'm going with this? It's not rocket science, getting great tips is as easy as pie — or cake, or burgers...



# HAPPY BIRTHDAY DJANGO

## CHRISTO RUPPENTHAL

Jazz guitarist Django Reinhardt's impact on guitar playing cannot be overstated. He was truly a revolutionary! He led a band featuring the guitar when it was mostly considered a rhythm instrument. Django was one of the first successful lead playing guitarists during an era that was dominated by horns and which predated the electric guitar (although later in his career he played them).

A whole genre of his musical followers named "Gypsy Jazz" has sprung up. My band Caravan Gypsy Swing Ensemble is a strong part of this scene. We are based in Madison, WI but have played throughout the Midwest. We build our sound around bringing a fresh take on Django's music. January 23rd 2010 marked Django's 100th birthday. I wanted to figure out a way to make this a special day for the band. What better way to do that than to plan a birthday party for Django, and while we are at it release a new CD!

Back in September of 2009, we were coming off a summer full of great gigs, concert, and festival appearances throughout the Midwest. We felt like we were really on top of our game. We actually had plans to hit the studio in October to record a new CD when inspiration struck. Caravan GSE has always been a "live band" and the idea to bring the studio into the nightclub to capture our live performance came to light. We invited our fans and the public to join us at The Brink Lounge in Madison, WI on a Thursday night in late September for a live recording session with Audio For The Arts. Although we did go into the studio in October as planned, that September live recording became our "An Evening at the Brink Lounge" CD. Now that we had our new CD and an idea for our event we needed to get everything in order. The benefit of this type of event is that we really had a story to tell. And people paid attention!

By sending out professional press release invitations to our "birthday party" we got the papers to pay attention and got critics' choice for the release gig in all the local papers. Our email blast and social media posts played up the cake for Django and emphasized the party invitation vibe.

We added to the blitz by doing a couple live radio spots during the week leading up to the event and of course playing Happy Birthday to Django on the air. We also made sure to get ALL the appropriate DJs in town advanced CD copies so they could promote our "birthday party". Many of them not only played our music but also attended the show. One of them, our friend John Kraniak (it was actually his birthday too) of Madison, WI's WORT FM 89.9, actually emceed the event and can be heard on the CD announcing the band.

At the gig we performed all the new tunes from our new CD and filled out the night with many Django covers to a room PACKED with our friends and fans. Our birthday cake was a huge hit and is something that still comes up when talking with fans. We eventually had to post the recipe to the "Fans Section" of our



website. **We sold twice as many CDs that night as we ever had at another gig up to that point and made much more on merch than at the door!** We actually managed to sell more of a previously released CD that night than we do on average.

This whole scenario demonstrates the value of inbound marketing as opposed to outbound. We were releasing a CD but made the message be “lets all get together and celebrate Django Reinhardt’s 100th birthday” rather than “we are putting out a CD and you should come and buy one...”. It also goes to show how much traction you can have by presenting a themed night. And the best part about this is that we have made it an annual event to celebrate Django’s birthday year after year. In 2012 we even released a new concert DVD using the same model.



# PUNCHY THE ROBOT

## NICHOLAS KLOSS

Following SXSW, we prepared for an annual local music festival that draws approximately 2,000 music fans eager to drink and punch. It's the main event each summer in downtown Youngstown. To spice up a festival we felt had become predictable, the idea for a drinking and punching robot was born.

The response was immediate at the festival. People were amazed and amused. It was a crowd of drunk robots in awe of another drunk robot. Total idol worship.

We stole the local media, too. We managed to gather easy press. Not to mention, there are countless girls that took pictures with it and posted them on the internet.

We have since used Punchy to promote by taking him to a college campus the week before a show. We set him up outside the venue across the street from the campus, mid-day during classes and used the P.A. inside the robot to play our music. You can't escape a giant robot blasting noisy rock and handing you a flyer. It does draw a crowd. The campus police weren't too happy about traffic backing up and the noise but that made it even better.

Punchy works for us as a promotional tool as well as stage prop. Our guitarist's 3-year-old nephew thinks it's real. To us that means it's fulfilling it's duty considering many of the people you're trying to attract have the attention span and intelligence of a 3-year-old. Whatever draws people in and exposes them to your product, ultimately leaving them with a memory of your band is key.

**YOU HAVE TO STUN PEOPLE AND LEAVE YOUR BANDS IMPRINT ON THEIR BRAIN.**



**NICHOLAS  
KLOSS**



**DRUMMER  
AND JOURNALIST**



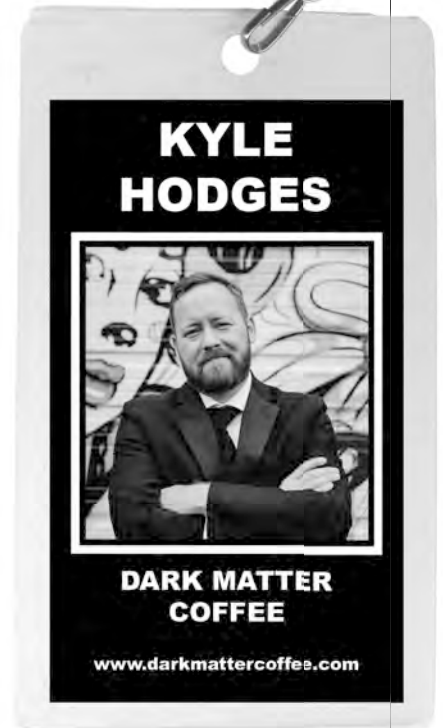
I read about Joe Pug in a blog on Chicagoist (that gave a nice review of his album). Joe included his personal email address in the article and invited anyone who wanted a copy of his album to email him. The catch — you had to ask for at least two and promise to send one to a friend. Genius! A friend just sent one copy of Joe's album to someone who works in publishing in LA and another all the way to France.



# TEN TIPS TO RUN A BLOCK PARTY

## KYLE HODGES

- 1 Having 12 months to plan is the best route of action. You will need every bit of this time to properly plan while simultaneously not stressing out. There will be plenty of time for that later.
- 2 Make sure your neighbors know about the party months in advance. Personal contact is best. Calls, letters, or delivering a stack of roses — whatever it takes to keep your neighbors happy will be worth it.
- 3 Communicate to the neighborhood the date, time, and details at least three months in advance, and every week afterward until the event. Small updates are good for everyone involved; people like to feel included.
- 4 Paperwork! Make sure your alderman, city, police, and fire department know what's going on. File any and all paperwork with them.
- 5 Insurance! Get a fucking COI (Certificate of Insurance) or don't have the party. Find a policy that will protect you.
- 6 Water, toilets, beer, EMTs. These all are necessary if you are planning on large crowds. People will need the basics to ensure they stick around.
- 7 Diversify the music line-up — having the same style will be boring. Keep in mind to have genre-friendly acts play consecutively and at the appropriate times during the festival.
- 8 Take care of the bands/musicians. If you can't pay them, at least have food, water, drinks, etc. to say thanks.
- 9 Be sure to have good audio and communicate with the acts playing. Consider the PA system, stage plots, how long and when each act will perform, and when to show up. Hold them to being punctual and playing at their scheduled time.
- 10 Promote your ass off. Start the promotions 90 days out. Intensify three weeks out. Be obnoxious the week of.





*Aaron Firestein*

# 15 REASONS YOUR SHOW WILL SUCCEED

- 1 You have booked four great artists, none of who have performed in the area recently.
- 2 It is on a good night of the week. This doesn't always have to be a Thursday/Friday/Saturday — sometimes a Tuesday is cool.
- 3 The venue is the right size (or too small).
- 4 Plentiful, reasonably priced secure parking close by. No one needs a smashed window or a ticket.
- 5 The club has a great selection of reasonably priced drinks.
- 6 There are special guest musicians sitting in with one of the bands. More of a draw without increasing the running time of the show (Poster power!).
- 7 The venue has a terrific sound system so the show will sound awesome!
- 8 The security at the venue isn't overly enthusiastic (or threateningly violent).
- 9 The event is a benefit. I don't give a shit about your band, but I do care about animals, children, the homeless, the planet, etc.
- 10 The event is being recorded. I want to support my friends' band plus I like the idea of hearing my own voice screaming FREEBIRD or something else really smart before the encore.
- 11 All of the bands I have carefully chosen for the event have terrific social media chops (I checked!).
- 12 Two of the artists have kick-ass street teams.
- 13 Signed limited edition posters have been made by two local artists. They are also selling the posters to benefit the causes!
- 14 There will be a VIP preview of the poster artwork (along with other artists that didn't make the cut) — before doors open in the foyer of the club.
- 15 A local art gallery is promoting the VIP preview event.
- 16 A local skateboard shop has donated some equipment to auction for the causes and has provided blank boards for the artists to decorate & auction. Auction includes tickets to the show (and mentions of it everywhere too!).
- 17 A local bakery that works with the homeless has donated baked goods for the VIP reception (and is publicizing the event).
- 18 Band #4 is trying really hard. They designed and printed a special shirt for the event and it's being sold at the bakery and the art gallery.
- 19 20 VIP passes have been sent out to tastemakers in the area 6 weeks in advance of the show. Secure in the knowledge that they have their pass in their hands (plus an extra for a friend) and knowing that it is now impossible to have some last minute embarrassing guest list bullshit denial, they start to talk about the event to their friends.
- 20 Local bloggers, radio and news teams are getting behind the event. They're tired of hearing nothing but blaming from all of the other local bands. Plus, they like baked goods and VIP passes and the guy from the radio station has a partial ownership of the skateboard shop.
- 21 All of the bands are performing at least one song by John Lennon. It is the anniversary of his tragic death.

22 The singer from band #2 will be busking on the street for the two weekends before the show in two secondary markets 15 miles away from the downtown area.

23 You deliberately chose another artist that is from a larger city 35 miles away. They are certain to bring a ton of their fans to make a good impression on the local promoters and they want to sound good on the live recording.

24 The ticket price is correct for the venue, the day of the week, the local economy, the unemployment rate, your demographic, and where you are in your progress to greatness (not very far along really).

25 Singer from band #1 is dj-ing an after-party at a local late night hang out. They have done an extensive e-mail campaign to their huge (and different) mailing list.

26 A larger artist starts to feel the momentum and offers to feature with one of the bands already performing. You are able to do this because you spent time working out all of the production bullshit that a 4-band production can create. Everyone is sharing equipment.

27 Larger artist's publicist pulls out all of the stops, partly to help the cause and the event, but mainly to show the other 4 artists what a great job she can do.

28 A liquor company rep stops by to offer help with the next one.

29 Three other bands are showing up with some of their friends. Even though they didn't make the cut to perform at this show, you have been to three of each of their shows in the last 8 months and if you support the scene, it will support you! Plus, they want to make sure you see them so they are in the running for the next one.

30 Neither you nor anyone in your band is a total asshole.

31 The venue doesn't smell too badly of piss.

32 You didn't hope that the "promoter" or anyone else would do any of this.



**Event**



Confirm objectives  
Fit theme to objectives  
Riff on theme to develop and identify:

- Ideas
- Revenue sources
- Sponsors
- Date
- Genre

**Artist**



Identify artists that will drive success  
Check availability / conflicts:

Stay at least one pay period away from large conflicting events!

Verify artist drawing potential

**RIFFING BEFORE YOU START**

**Marketing**



Look at the Poster Power of the event  
Adjust accordingly

**Partnerships**



Find local partners and businesses  
Art, food, alcohol, clothes ...

Identify sponsors who might want to donate tickets but not time.

**Accounting**



Get set up  
Invoices  
Petty cash  
Receipts  
Financial

Supervise and manage

**Budget**

Create one!  
Make sure you include:

- Venue hire
- Staff
- Talent
- Catering
- PA
- AV
- Publicity
- Artwork
- Printing
- Artist fees
- Insurance



Match your expenses against your income  
PLUS a safety net



**Venue**

Site inspections:

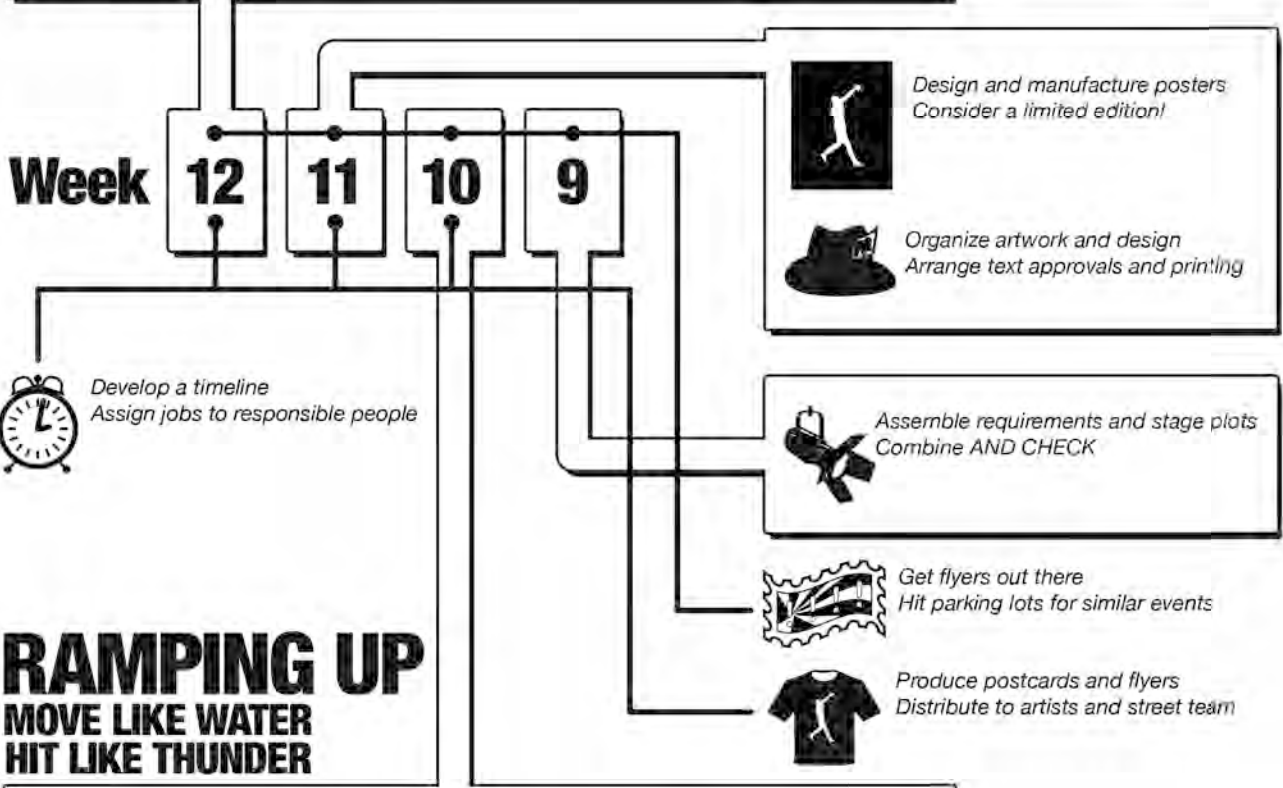
- Layout
- S.W.O.T. location
- Traffic patterns
- Capacity
- Curfew
- Existing policies
- Vibe
- Facilities (PA, etc.)
- Drink prices
- Security detail
- Security attitude
- Parking
- Disability accessibility
- Specialized issues








If outdoors -  
have a plan B for inclement weather  
Check for possibility of a secondary event





- Downstairs
- Other rooms
- Outside
- Acoustic stage
- Vendors lounge

	<p>Check for event clashes <i>Decide if they're a threat ...or an opportunity</i> Set a date and time</p>		<p>Create an image for the event. Assemble what's necessary Images Text Audio Releases</p>
	<p>Book a venue! <i>Right size Right facilities Right location Include safety nets!</i></p>		<p>Get information to the Media Unit Get press releases out</p>
	<p>Issue contracts <i>Include everything!</i> Fees      Performance limitations Rider      Merchandising Show time      Stage plots Set length      Running order</p>		



**RAMPING UP**  
**MOVE LIKE WATER**  
**HIT LIKE THUNDER**

	<p>Get contracts <b>back</b></p>		<p>Get materials to the street team Resupply as necessary</p>
	<p>Design and manufacture T-shirts Distribute to market and bar staff Be willing to start over!</p>		<p>Announce the event Radio Print Web</p>
	<p>Set up web RSVP system/ticket tracking Eventbrite, Facebook RSVP, or equivalent</p>		

	<p>Distribute posters and flyers At similar events Around the community Most visibilty possible</p>		<p>Invite big names Luminaries      Influencers Bloggers      Scenesters Don't ask them to publicize the event Play nice and they will anyway. Consider a VIP laminate!</p>
	<p>Make a VIP package Shirt      Laminate Poster      Balcony access Adjust for celebrity power!</p>		<p>Check up on artists Is your event on their site? Have they tweeted about the event?</p>

**Week**



Get flyers out there  
Hit parking lots for similar events  
Research markets within travel distance  
Get flyers and information to them



Keep an eye on other events that appear  
React/adjust marketing as needed

	<p>Send out press release</p>
	<p>Take the show's temperature RSVP numbers Guest list Ticket sales</p>
	<p>Check up on artists Are they still communicating?</p>











Post to online groups  
Band sites  
Music sites  
Craigslist  
Facebook groups



Postcards by mail  
Handwritten and typed  
USPS

# MAKE FRIENDS INFLUENCE PEOPLE

**SHOUT OUT THE NOISE  
MAIL OUT THE FUNK**





	Follow up on press release Verify receipt Reinforce message Update information		Check on artists Communicating regularly?
	Update and replace posters		Organize tech requirements Audiovisual team Sound check Lighting
	Consider promotional CD Useful for prizes and swag bags Include in artist agreements		Book a caterer (if needed)
	Design promotional opportunity Auction an onstage appearance? Have a wedding at the event? Ticket package with extras?		Check sales React if needed

**Week**

**4 3 2 1**



Notify bands of set time  
Helps bands motivate fans

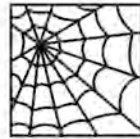
	Check posters If there aren't enough out there - GO BACK TO POSTER POWER
	Take temperature of show RSVP Guest list Ticket sales
	Check on artists Are they communicating enough?
	Book photographer



Mail VIP laminates






Research markets within range  
Get flyers and information to them



Post to online groups  
Band sites  
Music sites  
Craigslist  
Facebook groups



Postcards by mail  
Handwritten and typed  
USPS

	Check sales React if needed		Take temperature of show RSVP Guest list Ticket sales
	Check on artists Are they communicating enough?		Get reminders out there Email Text Tweet
			Facebook Calling Sidewalk chalking



**One Day Before**



Have a pre-show event  
 In-store acoustic    Launch reception  
 Radio interview    Preview party ...



Get reminders out there  
 Email    Facebook  
 Text    Calling  
 Tweet    Sidewalk chalking



Generate additional revenue  
 Recording of show (contracts permitting)



Review shot list with photographer  
 Ensure agreement with photographer on:  
 Deliverables    Context  
 Signage    Vibe  
 VIP policies    Event depiction



Arrange for settlement  
 Pay bands  
 Calculate merchandise percentage  
 Settle with providers, PA, venue, etc.



Post day sheet EVERYWHERE  
 Set list times  
 Important times  
 Contact numbers

Generation evaluation sheet  
 Compile information  
 Share with all stakeholders  
 File for next event

**DAY OF SHOW**



Organize signage  
 Signs  
 Banners  
 Set up merchandise display

**AFTER LOAD-IN**



Attend security meeting with staff  
 Work out issues that may arise  
 Stage diving, etc.  
 NEGOTIATE any important issues

**ONE HOUR BEFORE**



**DOORS OPEN**  
 Use clicker at door  
 Explain loudly that doors are now clicked

**SHOW TIME**



**THREE HOURS BEFORE**

Attend sound check  
 Resolve as much as possible

**THIRTY MINUTES BEFORE**

Deliver guest list to staff  
 Ensure it's CLEAR (typed, etc.)  
 Check doors every 15 minutes to resolve guest issues

**ONE DAY AFTER**

Have after-show event  
 Send thank-you letters and emails



Post and tag photographs



**ONE WEEK AFTER**

If part of a series, front-load the first events with larger-than-profitable guest lists, etc.

$$\Delta U_g = mgh$$



# 11

## THE SHOW

### HOW TO GET BETTER

Other fields, it seems, are so far, so very very far ahead of the music business — or at least the homestyle, cottage industry version of it. Take sports for instance. They routinely use video and still images to analyze performances. (Sprinters, keep your elbows in! Watch those hurdles! When you enter the first somersault, tuck your knees in!)

#### USE THE TOOLS THAT OTHER PEOPLE USE.

When you windmill that arm, think twice about the lucky charm bracelet and the perm. I know that the audience will never forget it, but reattaching a piece of scalp with hair (hopefully) isn't fun or anything you want to be lining up for.

Practice at home with a click (metronome) and you won't rush during the live set. Your drummer will play better.

— Lee Popa

Do more of what works  
and less of what doesn't.

It might be the frequency of a specific combination of moves. Great at first, excellent when repeated just in case someone missed it — but every fucking song? Look for the things that work with your face, the sneer, the smile. Did you realize that the super difficult drop move (eat your heart out Bruce Lee) actually showed more crack than a plumbers convention on the pavement in Compton? It might not be the moves; it might be the clothes. The way they bunch, snag or squeeze. Watch videos of your performance and do more of what works and less of what doesn't.

## GETTING A BETTER LIVE SOUND

Here's a brilliant idea — get a fucking map!

But we have GPS? Still get a map for when the GPS goes out... you know when right? When you are late for the most important show of your career (of course) just get there on time and, as Lee Popa says,

### EARLY IS ON TIME. ON TIME IS LATE.

Get to the venue on time and you will be able to get a decent sound check and implement some of this great advice.

Too difficult? Then, don't be a fucking asshole to the soundman... also works pretty well.

**OR**

Don't complain about the quality of the sound system or the soundman OVER THE PA?

Are you shitting me?

Anyway, here's some tips for you to print out, write some important phone numbers on, crumple into a ball then leave at a coffee shop:

The show starts when the  
first vehicle arrives at the  
car park. -Martin Atkins

You have to be consistently  
evolving. -Howie Kaplan

Sound check is for checking  
sounds. Shut the fuck up  
when everyone else is  
checking. -Thor Harris

# A GOOD SOUND STARTS WITH GOOD GEAR <sup>T:S</sup>

## LEE POPA

Get your sound before the show:

- Balance all of your sounds at your practice place.
- If your drummer is playing and you can't hear him or her, your amp is too loud!
- If all you hear is drums, you're not loud enough!
- Is your solo volume too loud? Does your clean sound match your dirty sound?

**THE VOCAL MIC IS THE MOST IMPORTANT MIC ON THE STAGE:** Treat it as such. Sorry, no matter how good your amps and drums sound, if you drown out the singer you have ruined the show.

**STAGE FEEDBACK MEANS IT'S TOO LOUD:** If the stage monitors feedback: you are too loud for the system. The clearer you hear the vocal, the better the sound of everything.

**PLAY A SOUND CHECK LIKE IT'S THE SHOW:** If the drummer lays back at sound check (plays quietly) then pounds at the show, you would be better off not sound checking. Don't lay back. Jump around and go for it so the settings you save at sound check mean something!

**SOFTER WILL MAKE YOU SOUND LOUDER:** If the soundperson can't hear you, they will put more of you in the P.A. The smaller the sound on stage, the louder the band is because the sound system is doing the work.

**MARK YOUR SETTING DOWN:** Get some tape and mark your settings. Don't fool around with your knobs during the show. If you do, chances are you will be turned down because your sound becomes erratic.

**GOOD HELP IS HARD TO FIND:** Respect the people that are helping you out. Learn the names of the people and thank them after the show even if you think they did a bad job. They did the best they could.

### NEVER YELL AT SOMEONE YOU DON'T PAY!

Start at the source with a good sound and it will be easy to get a good sound in the P.A.



SHIT IN = SHIT OUT

Don't dick around at sound check and piss off everyone with your petty concerns and screw the other bands that are waiting for their time.

— Mark Durante

# SOUND PEOPLE AND BALANCE

## MARK RUBEL

### MARK RUBEL



CO-DIRECTOR OF EDUCATION  
& INSTRUCTOR  
THE BLACKBIRD ACADEMY

Keeping in mind that sound is a major part of your audience's overall experience, it should be apparent that the sonics of your presentation are paramount. Unfortunately many bands and venues are crippled by bad sound. In many ways, there's nothing worse than a partially trained and/or clueless sound person. Everything you do goes through this filter, and an investment in training and communication will go far.

One problem is that people can get overly focused on their graphic EQ or how many milliseconds the delay is set to, and completely miss the most important aspect of their job — which, in my view, can be fairly succinctly stated:

Volumes:

- Is it too loud overall, and if so what can be done?
- Are the volumes balanced within the rhythm section?
- How's the balance between the rhythm section, vocals and lead instruments?
- Are the solos coming up and down?
- What's the most important thing that's happening now? Is it intelligible and at the proper volume?
- Can the musicians hear themselves? What do they need?



When on stage you should be larger than life, when off, you should be humble and accommodating.

— #musicolutions

Drummers: don't tune your drums after the doors have opened. EVER!



# BACKUP EVERYTHING!

## TOM VX

If you use Logic to run backing tracks, make sure to have a cd player and a cd with an audio version of those tracks (in case the laptop is stolen, someone spills beer on it, it gets set on an unshielded speaker and erased, run over by a snowmobile, etc). Also, get an external drive, back up EVERYTHING before the show/tour, and leave that drive at home... just in case.

Always always always have enough cables and direct boxes on hand to plug all your gear into the house PA. Put all these little essentials into a road case and then **DUPLICATE THE ROADCASE. SERIOUSLY DOUBLE EVERYTHING.** Cables break, DI boxes get stolen, strings break, you lose a gross of picks weekly, etc. Don't ever force yourself into a corner by relying on a single DI box or cable... That is just inviting disaster. And hey,

**MARK EVERYTHING. PAINT IT PINK SO THE GUYS IN THE BAND PLAYING AFTER YOU DON'T "ACCIDENTALLY" GRAB THEM.**

Make a checklist for each case, and then an over all checklist. I cannot count the times I have found a really nice, expensive snare drum at the club the next night, once we found a \$2500 guitar amp head! 99 percent of the time we figure out who it belongs to and set it aside, but not everyone is honest and nice. And besides, it's great that your amp isn't lost, but it's not doing you any good in Chicago at 7pm when you are playing in Milwaukee at eight!



You have to make each show special and different.

Get yourself a sturdy case like a Pelican Case or whatever. Preferably one that locks. Spray paint it pink, cover it in stickers, wrap bright tape around the handle, whatever you can do to make it easily identifiable from across the venue. Make this your everything workbox. Neatly fill it with everything you need to do your job. Batteries, gaff tape, cables, picks, sticks, whatever. Just keep it well appointed and ready for action. And make sure your gear is ready for action. Nothing like realizing the battery in your tuner is dead after the second song. Especially after your over enthusiastic bass player just did a high kick into your headstock. Label your cables, pedals, and anything else that could potentially walk away or be left behind.

**TAKE GOOD CARE OF YOUR EQUIPMENT AND IT WILL TAKE GOOD CARE OF YOU!**

— Casey Orr

# TOP 10 LIVE SOUND MISTAKES

## BRAD PACK

**1 FEEDBACK.** Hands down, the biggest problem you're likely to face when mixing live sound. As a live sound engineer, you get paid to keep feedback from occurring by using a process known as gain staging.

**2 LOW VOCAL LEVELS.** The vocal is almost always the most important element in a song, so it generally needs to be the most prominent in the mix. Many mixes suffer from low vocal levels for many reasons. Sometimes the singer is just soft spoken. Sometimes the other artists are too loud. Sometimes it's a technical issue with the mic or board. Just remember, you should never have to hunt for the vocal in a mix!

**3 LOUD INSTRUMENTS.** As we all know, sometimes musicians can be divas. This often causes volume problems, as some musicians feel they need to be louder than everyone else in the band. Maybe the drummer is beating the hell out the kit, maybe the bassist has too much sub, maybe the guitarist has his amp too loud. Aside from creating more stage noise, this forces you to raise all of the other instruments in the mix to compete. Try talking with the artists and explaining to them that their instrument is too loud for the venue, and it's hurting the mix. If they turn down, you will have more control, and can make the band sound better as a whole.

**4 ARTISTS' INCOMPETENCE.** Sometimes the problem is the talent themselves. Bad mic technique is usually the culprit here. Artists can accidentally cause feedback by pointing the mic at their stage wedge. Or, as seen at pretty much every rap or punk show, an artist will sometimes cup the mic, which causes altered frequency response and can result in feedback. Perhaps the singer keeps moving closer or further away from the mic. Ultimately, the artist has to assume some responsibility for their sound by using proper mic technique.

**5 BAD CABLES.** This is a very common problem in live sound. Cables can go bad at the drop of a hat, with little to no notice. Bad cables can cause loss of volume, interference, or general noise. At worst, the cable won't work at all, and will not pass a signal. Cables are usually one of the first things to check, as they go bad frequently, and are easy to check and replace.

**6 BAD MIC STANDS.** Nothing is more frustrating than watching an artist fight with a drooping mic stand on stage. Make sure that all of your stands are tightly secured and firmly set on stage. If a mic starts drooping during a performance, the artist rarely has a free hand to fix it, let alone the know-how. Another version of this problem is the kung-fu death-grip. Be sure not to over tighten the stand. If multiple people are using one stand, they will all need to adjust it to their height. You don't want to have to run from front of house all the way up the stage and make the audience wait while you lower a mic stand. That's just embarrassing for everyone...

**7 BLOWN SPEAKER/BAD DRIVER.** You should always test your system before sound check. Drivers can blow relatively easily, and it will greatly alter the sound of a speaker. This causes all sorts of problems like distortion, frequency shifts, and overall noise.

**BRAD  
PACK**



**AUDIO ENGINEER &  
INSTRUCTOR at  
SAE INSTITUTE**

**8 PHANTOM POWER.** This one is an easy one to fix, but a common problem none the less. Remember, condenser mics require 48 volts of phantom power to operate. Although most live sound mics are dynamic, we do use the occasional condenser. Don't forget to send phantom power, or you won't get a signal!

**9 TALK BACK MIC.** This one is another common mistake with an easy fix. During sound check you'll need to communicate with the band via the talkback mic and stage wedges. However, after sound check you should always remember to turn off your talk back mic, otherwise it will pick up the ambient noise in the room, and send it to the wedges/mains where it will muddy up your mix.

**10 MISCOMMUNICATION.** Finally, one of the biggest problems in live sound is generally unsolvable: miscommunication. Bands have a certain responsibility to prep you on what to expect when they play at your venue. This usually includes a technical advance of the equipment they will be using, and a sound check. Often times, the band will neglect to send out information ahead of time, and show up late (if at all) to sound check. This forces you to think on your feet and gives you little to no time to prepare.

**BUT IT WOULDN'T BE ANY FUN UNLESS EVERYTHING WENT HORRIBLY WRONG, RIGHT?**



## MUSIC TECHNOLOGY & THE CONTEMPORARY BAND TIPS

**PHELAN KANE**

### MUSIC TECH ON STAGE

One of the areas that can make your band really stand out from the rest of the crowd is to use music tech hardware & software on stage – no matter what style of music you play. Software like Ableton's Live, coupled with MIDI controllers, drum triggers and sampling technology can really create a performance that is interactive and exciting. Make sure you spend time in pre-production sessions getting it right before you hit the road. Rehearse with the gear until it's perfect. There's so much you can do on stage with technology so keep it simple, as things can easily get overcomplicated or breakdown during the gig. Be prepared for any eventuality on stage. Make sure that the technology doesn't hinder your performance — **it's all about improving your show!**



**PHELAN  
KANE**



**PRODUCER  
ENGINEER  
EDUCATOR**



# THEATRE/ER

## SOME PAGES ABOUT THE VISUALS

A band called Crossfire Choir had their debut show at the Court Tavern, New Brunswick, NJ. The bastards had spent \$150 on a beefed up PA system — the low end was magnificent. They seemed like they were ten times better, more powerful than any other band that had played there — I wanted to scream, "Not fair!! This is just a couple of plywood boxes on either side of the stage with a couple of 18" speakers in them!!" But, smart as hell, a great strategic spend of money and a terrific first impression. WIN!

In the early 80's I was touring with my three piece band Brian Brain — back in those days we were playing at the same clubs as Bauhaus, Pete Shelley, R.E.M. and U2. We were each playing to 100 to 300 people tops.

People raved about Bauhaus's live show! They had their own light show! WOW. We're not talking TOOL's last interactive digital screen synchronized EXPERIENCE here, we're talking FOUR spotlights placed on the floor used to see EVERY single act illuminated from the same angle. The four lights on the floor created a huge impression and WORD OF MOUTH years later. It's just like a new and wonderful sexual position; put it on the floor and change the angle.

A huge inspiration for me was **Alex Harvey**. He went on to perform at Wembley Stadium in the UK — but I saw him at Sunderland Locarno in 1975 performing to 200 people or so — back then they didn't have any money but I still remember the show.

### \$0

They had a song called "She Has a Hole in Her Stocking But She Keeps on Rocking" so, he had a stocking around his neck and used it as a prop.

### \$2

The next song was 'Framed,' the title track from their first album. As he introduced the song he stuffed the stocking into his cheeks and became the Godfather. He threw the saliva-damp stocking into the crowd, I caught it and curled into a ball as I hit the deck — clutching it as I was rained on with blows from the other eager fans.

### \$4

Alex had a thing for graffiti —he spray painted 'Vambo Rules OK' a gang he invented — over a sheet draped over his bass amp. Later, in front of 1000 or so at Newcastle City Hall, he spray-painted onto a polystyrene brick wall which he later crashed through.

### \$0

Towards the end of the show he climbed up the 10 foot high side truss of the club and removed a spotlight and used it as a searchlight across the crowd and then used it as a prop, kind of like a Halloween flashlight under the chin — just like Peter Murphy of Bauhaus — changing the angle of the lights.

Make a stage plot and  
an input list.  
Be organized.

## OTHER NOTABLE THEATRE:

The keyboard player in **Gravity Kills** developed a robotic keyboard stand that enables him to flail all over the keys like a puppet.

The drummer from **Alex Harvey Band** and **MGMT** sets up sideways — you can see both his legs working in a way I hadn't seen before.

**Peter Murphy's** mic stand had steps welded to the side.

**Thompson Twins** had umbrellas. Their stage show in the 80's features 7 or 8 white umbrellas which enhanced the reflection of the regular club lights - and pack up easily!

**The Orb** had giant inflatable balloons used as screens to project planets and more onto.



The **Talking Heads'** legendary show begins with just David Byrne on stage with a beat box for one or two songs — the rest of the band is brought out one by one. Talk about building the show's momentum!

At every **Flaming Lips** show the band uses theater to enhance the overall experience — rolling across the crowd in an inflatable ball, directing giant laser filled hands to a mirror ball, showering confetti and punching out balloons. BRILLIANT!

My band, **Pigface**, starts the show behind 8 8x4 white screens hinged together to form a curtain...We play the first 1 or 2 songs in silhouette. Building excitement and anticipation.

**Treat your audience as if they were the band and instead of being in the band imagine you are fans of the audience.**

Stop gazing at your shoes. Put on a show. People go to see a show, not to hear a show. Watch a video of your performance and do more of the good stuff and less of the lame stuff.

I think it's good when someone in the crowd can see your finger hit a key and actually hear the sound you made by doing so. To prepare my set sometimes I would go to a local bar and check out a dubstep night, and how the dj's play the crowd and trigger their reactions, and from that decided to focus more on what they weren't doing, rather than what they were doing. My guess is there may be an infinite number of ways to use laptops for live performances. The thing to concern yourself with should be reminding yourself that it's ok to go outside the norm when you are getting into electronic music in general. To keep it exciting, **be a rule breaker**. You can use most electronic music equipment in ways beyond its intended use, due to a little creative original thinking. Those are where the more exciting sounds are discovered.

— *Bangalore Chris David*

**TOM JACKSON**



**AUTHOR AND  
MUSIC PRODUCER**

[www.onstagesuccess.com](http://www.onstagesuccess.com)

## TOP 5 MISTAKES BANDS MAKE WITH THEIR LIVE SHOW

### TOM JACKSON

I'm a Live Music Producer, and I've been working on artists' shows for 20 years. I do what a record producer does for the recording – but I go into rehearsal halls and help artists get ready for their live shows, showcases, and tours.

I also get asked to speak at music conferences and colleges around the world to teach my Live Music Method, which will help an artist get a vision for their show, help them be more comfortable and spontaneous onstage, and

help them understand how to connect with an audience without changing who they are. It helps them get prepared to work with me and my team.

Here are 5 big mistakes bands make with their live shows, in no particular order:

**1 “WINGING IT” IS MISTAKEN FOR SPONTANEITY.** I constantly run across the attitude of “Dude, I’ve got to be spontaneous – I can’t rehearse my show!” Sometimes my reply is “Awesome – but if you really want to be spontaneous, make up the song right in front of the audience... that’d be real awesome!”

They look at me like I’m crazy or have 2 heads. Because of course they practice the music, dynamics, tempo, tones, melodies, and harmonies. They know those need to be right. And, if they’re a group, they work on making the music really tight. But instead of learning the right way to be spontaneous onstage, they mistake “winging it” for spontaneity! They jump around onstage and try different things, hoping something will work. And here’s the irony – when they do something verbally, visually, or musically in front of the crowd one night that gets a great response, they do that same thing the next night, too.

So where did the spontaneity go? They do the same thing they did the first night because it worked! That’s because spontaneity and winging it are 2 different things. In fact, if we rehearse right, we will leave room for spontaneity in our show.

Which brings me to the next mistake:

**2 PRACTICE IS MISTAKEN FOR REHEARSAL.** Artists know when they go into the recording studio, they don’t lay down basic tracks, add a few sweeteners, and a scratch track vocally, then turn to the producer and say, “Sounds great. Let’s get it to the manufacturer!” An artist who has any sense at all knows there’s more to be done with the recording. You need a final mix. In fact, the mix can even make or break the song. It’s why people like Grammy winner Al Schmitt get paid a stupid amount just to mix people’s songs.

But most artists don’t realize there is more to getting a live show ready than just “practicing” the music. Rehearsal involves the musical, the visual, the verbal, the rearranging of songs that were written for radio so they work live, and more.

**120 people in a 100 capacity venue is a riot.  
In a 500 capacity room, it’s a funeral.**

Which brings us to mistake #3:

**3 SONG ARRANGEMENTS INTENDED FOR RADIO ARE MISTAKENLY USED FOR LIVE SHOWS.** Some of you have heard me talk about the qualities of a sitcom for TV (22 min. of show + 8 min. of commercials = sitcom). As a musician, our equivalent to a sitcom is a song for radio. We know the rules for getting played on radio: 3-4 minutes long, a certain form, short intro, etc. But a live show and radio are 2 different things!

The Simpsons sitcom was made into a movie a few years ago. As a consumer, if you'd gone to the theater and paid \$10 for 22 minutes of show plus 8 minutes of commercials, you'd have felt cheated. Why? Your expectations are different in a theater. Well, your audience's expectations are different at a club or concert hall than they are when they turn on a radio. If you play your songs just as they were recorded for radio, you're making a big mistake. Those songs need to be rearranged to create a compelling live show.

Not understanding the audience's expectations is part of the 4th mistake:

**4 ARTISTS ASSUME THE AUDIENCE WANTS THEM TO SING SONGS OR PLAY MUSIC.** Audiences go to a live concert for 3 reasons: to be captured & engaged, to experience moments, and to have their lives changed in some way. As musicians, we make the mistake of thinking (partly because it's us, our adrenaline is flowing, and we're playing our own music) that we are awesome onstage and there are "moments" all through our songs. And there are – for us.

## BUT WE NEED TO CREATE MOMENTS FOR OUR AUDIENCE!

That's what a huge part of rehearsal is: finding the moments in the songs, and rearranging them so they become moments for the audience (not just us). Living in Nashville, a huge part of the music industry is still consumed with having a "hit song." A hit song will compel people (usually listening on radio) to go to iTunes or Google the artist to find the song... because it moved them emotionally. In other words, a hit song is a "moment" that connects the listener emotionally to the artist. It's a distinct craft and art. And it's why the best producers in the world get paid extraordinary sums to produce those hits for the artist!

But even well written songs don't necessarily become hits. (If that were the case, the tens of 1000s of songs written every year around the world that are well crafted, lyrically clever, and well arranged would all be hits.) But here's the good news: if you have a well written song, inside that song is usually a "moment!" You as the artist know it! And the Live Music Producer's job is to find that moment and help you deliver it in your live show. But if you're just playing songs, most people will miss those moments.

That's why delivering a song live onstage is so important, and you shouldn't make mistake #5:

**5 ARTISTS' SONGS ALL LOOK THE SAME, EVEN THOUGH THEY DON'T SOUND THE SAME.** As an artist you know your songs are all different. They have different themes, melodies, rhythms, and tones. They don't sound the same. But (for 95% of artists out there) they look the same. You need to be as creative with your show as you are with your music. Communication with your audience is 15% content, 30% tone or emotion, and 55% is what they see. So it can be a real problem if your songs all look the same, because to an audience that doesn't know who you are, your songs will start sounding the same. Most artists typically do the same thing onstage over and over for every song: the same movement from the same place... big mistake!



# BEING SPECIAL ON STAGE

## JOSH WHITE

- **PERSONALITY ON STAGE.** You might not be the best band in the world, but if you can interact with the crowd without being an asshole, you'll at least win friends if not fans.
- **PASSION.** You have to believe in the product you're selling (which is your fuckin' band!) - the crowd can spot fake sincerity and we hate it.
- **ORIGINALITY.** You don't have to have the most original music in the world, but do something original. A band I saw last night were doing a fundraiser and created limited edition specialized merch as prizes. All they did was make a crude stencil of their name and spray-painted it onto random things: slippers, a house coat, an ashtray, a supersoaker...it was awesome.

If there's a schtick in your act, make sure you can back it up with music. It's great to wear funky costumes and jump around like an idiot; but if the music sucks, you just look like an ass clown.



Onstage look like you are enjoying yourself — engage your audience.

— Paul Benjamin

When you are onstage — you have to get yourself in the mindset that you are going to die if you don't play the songs! If you don't — your career is over.

— Kevin Lyman

Tell your audience what to do. If you don't tell people what to do, they won't. But if you do, they likely will. So tell them — when you're on stage — that you have CDs for sale for \$10 at your merch table, and you'll sign them after your set. You'll sell a TON more product... and make a ton more money.

— Tony van Veen

Every performance should be an event, a spectacle that can't be missed, instead of just another gig.

— Punk Rock Panel, SDMT

# STAGE WEAR

## DJ PLEASURE KITTEN

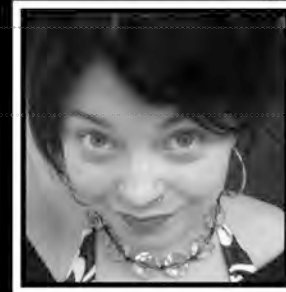
- Create a persona.
- Lead the market, don't follow it!
- Set yourself apart from the audience with your look.
- Developing a look will give your band more credibility.
- Buy quality pieces – cheaper is not always better!
- Do your research! Understand the music you're playing and the style that goes with it before you start purchasing.
- Make sure your group has a comprehensive idea of what image you're going for.
- Buy clothes that you feel like you look good in. If you don't feel like you look good, your confidence goes to hell and it WILL show in your performance.
- Start with a few core pieces. For example: 2 pairs of black rock-and-roll stretch jeans, 1 pair of blue rock-and-roll stretch jeans and a few shirts that you can mix and match to create different looks. This allows you to build your image without a huge initial investment.
- Have backups/alternate pieces on hand to replace items that may accidentally get stained/damaged/smell like last night's party; not every band has the luxury of frequent laundry stops on the road... unless of course you enjoy smelling like a sock, in which case — SOCK ON! — (Just don't hug me!)

**TIP: A LITTLE FEBREEZE CAN GO A LONG WAY TO PREVENTING EXTREMELY FUNKY SMELLS. TO UP THE ANTE, CHOOSE A SCENTED FABRIC SOFTENER SHEET, AND USE IT TO LAYER IN BETWEEN YOUR CLOTHES IN YOUR BAG.**

- Cool accessories can take your outfit to the next level; Rings, bracelets, necklaces, belt buckles, etc. (See Keith Richards of The Rolling Stones)
- A couple of unique pieces added to your wardrobe can take you from a player to a STAR!!!!...unless your band sucks, in which case your clothes are just waiting for your music to catch up with it ;)



### DJ PLEASURE KITTEN



**DJ AND PROMOTER FOR  
SHOWTIME DETROIT**

www.showtimedetroit.com  
@pleasurekatzen

**Wardrobe. There are no rules anymore except for this: Make sure that everyone in the band looks like they are in the same band! Nothing worse than showing up with three guys looking like they could be in Nirvana, and the fourth guy looks like he is in New Kids On The Block. If you don't feel that you can do all this, hire a stylist, or at least find someone you know who has style to help you.**

— Paul Natkin

**Never wear satin. You'll sweat right through it.**

— Gwenith Paltrow (*Country Strong*)

## BRENDA SIEGELMAN



LIGHTING DESIGNER  
THE DEAD MILKMEN

@BrendaClashgirl

# LIGHTING AND STAGING

## BRENDA SIEGELMAN

The first thing to keep in mind is that when people buy a ticket their expectation is to see a band. Never mind that some venues say “This is a listening room “ to justify not having any stage lighting. Just think about what happened when PiL played the Ritz in NYC behind a movie screen. (Ask Martin). Unless the entire audience is blind, they want to see you play. That’s what they came for.

Now you can hide your identity with masks, costumes, makeup, even chicken buckets on your head - others have - but the crowd wants to see you play, so you need lighting. If the club has none, your best defense is to bring a pair of clip on lights, equivalent of 200 Watts each, both with black cords, both with amber gels (you can get it at a music store), on clips or clamps. These should be aimed across the front of the stage from at least six

and a half feet or higher. The Stage Lighting Store online will give you advice & tutorials. If you’re willing to pay \$40, you can get the par 38, which will look good and allow you to use screw in bulbs. If not, clamp on work lights from your local hardware store will do until you get a pair of pars.

Remember that you are hanging lighting over peoples heads. Make sure they are secure. Buy a set of black shoelaces and use them to neatly tie the cords. Get a couple of short chains (dog choker collars are good) and a pair of carabiners. Wrap the chain around the light’s yoke and the bar you are hanging off of. Secure them with the carabiners. Now you’re visible.

### BRENDA’S STAGING TIPS

**1** Think about your look. **You may be dressed great, but how is the stage?** Buy some black extension cords and use them. If you have a power strip, that should be black too. If you don’t believe that this makes a difference, start looking at live band photos. It makes a huge difference. Avoid ugly yellow, orange, white, green and brown cords, as they say ‘amateur’ to everyone who sees them.

**2** Do you have your amp propped up on a chair or on milkcrates? Buy some opaque black cotton. Buy two 2 yard pieces. Cover the chair or boxes neatly before putting your amp down. It looks great now. Do you have a 6 foot piece left? Is the back wall really ugly? Take some double backed tape and hang the cloth on the wall behind the drum kit. This also gives you a small background for a backdrop piece. If you don’t use the black piece for the back wall, you can use it to cover the untidy pile of cases and jackets in the stage corner. The whole mess disappears under black cloth.

**3** Are you the opening act? Are you in a venue that has lights but does not focus them? Turn on the lights before you set up. See where they hit. Set up so that you can be seen in the light. If you can’t tell from looking at the lights, turn around and look at your shadow.

### WHAT CREATES A SHADOW IS LIT. WHAT DOES NOT IS IN THE DARK.

While this may sound basic, not everyone does this. Be flexible, you may have to move a few inches from where you normally stand.

4 If the venue you are playing has stage techs, communicate with them nicely. Smile at them. They will help you if you do not behave like dicks. Some techs aren't happy with their gigs and are just miserable, they may want to make you look bad — don't start a war over it.

Be sure to ask, "Will anyone be running the board for our set?" If so, let them know if you prefer bright, dim, active lights or a more static scene. Let them know if you hate a particular color, or want black outs or no black outs between songs. They will appreciate that you gave it some thought.

5 Headlining or doing a festival? Make a stage plot (a map of where the band members stand, where the amps, drums, and keys are) and make sure that the production manager or tech has it at least three days before the gig. Fax it, email it, mail it, bring it in, just be sure they get it. Your stage plot should be accompanied by your input list and monitor needs.

## GIVING IT SOME THOUGHT

1 People hate crowd blinder lights. It's a fact. They were great in 1974 for shouting out 'I wanna see you' on "All the Young Dudes", but every use after that has become tired, dated, and annoying. Don't use them.

2 If there is no follow spot or follow spot operator, whatever you are doing in front of the monitor line, where the light doesn't hit, will be the dark. You are invisible and jumping into the crowd will only make it more so. If you do have a follow spot op, make sure they know if you are going anyplace other than the stage during your set. They will light you but they need to know where to find you and when to look.

3 Don't climb on any piece of staging or equipment that is not your own with out checking with the venue or production people first. Even with permission, make sure that the piece can hold you, that you'll be lit and that you have a plan to descend from it gracefully. If not, don't do any climbs.

## LIGHTING

Lighting can be very basic or very complicated. The goal is always the same - make the band visible and help the audience feel the mood without roasting the artists. If your goal is something else, ask yourself,

### DOES THIS HELP THE ACT OR DISTRACT FROM IT?

1 Keep the band from dehydrating. Unless you are using LED's (I prefer to use them), this is a really serious concern. Never aim a 1k par at the drummer from close range. It's simply too hot and your drummer may spontaneously combust. For back light, aim at cymbals and drum hardware at the front of the kit. Hit it with reds and oranges and it will look like it's on fire, plus the reflected light off the cymbals will illuminate the drummer. Have a cool color like blue or lavender on the drum kit on another channel if you can. It will allow you to save the hot colors for extra visual impact. Try to keep symmetrical in your focus. When I can get a pair of floor lights, I like to aim them up at the bottom of the cymbals in a hotcolor to get a true visual splash when the cymbal is hit.

This heat thing goes for all members of the band, try not to hit the tops of heads directly from a close (under 4') range. The heat is dangerous. There are two other concerns: Never aim a light directly on a tube amp,



especially don't aim the light through the back tubes, again the problem is heat. The result could be a very expensive accident called a 'violent failure' where there will be hot shattered glass flying everywhere.

The other concern is helping your act see their tuners and indicator lights. Red will wash these lights out.

## **IF YOU SEE THE BAND STRUGGLING WITH SOMETHING TECHNICAL ONSTAGE, TAKE OUT ALL THE RED LIGHTS AND REPLACE THEM WITH AMBER UNTIL THE PROBLEM IS SOLVED.**

**2** Always carry a wrench, a flashlight, double backed tape, a few gels and something to cut them with. Know how to use these things. **Don't use silver duct tape on stage.** Get matte black gaffers tape (gaffers tape has much less sticky residue than duct tape) so it will not glare out. Have your own sharpie and board tape. The adjustable wrench is for tightening loose hardware on lighting clamps. Don't over tighten them because metal expands when it gets hot.

**3** I like my front primary light to be a peachy amber or chocolate. Look at LEE or Rosco for gel colors. These colors give a little healthy glow, and look good on all skin tones. They warm up pale skin and give a nice golden glow to darker skin tones. White light is called no color and when used from the front and sides will wash out all other colors. When used from overhead or the back, it will add emphasis. When I have a chance to have 2 other front washes, I prefer red and blue. By mixing these you can get ambers, lavender, magenta, etc. If you are lucky enough to be using LED's, you'll find that the peach tones are easier to achieve than the golden tones (LED's continue to evolve with the addition of white and amber to the RGB).

**4** Don't flash the lights for the whole song, every song. It does not look good on camera. If your band gets popular, whatever you do will show up on YouTube the next day. If the band doesn't not look good on video, it won't get watched.

**5** Don't hang lights off water pipes. Don't overload the dimmers (you'll have to add up the wattage to know the load). Don't put LED's on a dimmer... Just pay attention to what you're doing and no one gets hurt, OK?

**6** Watch and observe as many shows that have lighting as you can with an eye towards deciding what style you like and don't like. There's a lot of live sets on YouTube, so you can easily compare styles.

**7** Be aware that everything you hang has to come down at the end of the show... and lighting is always the first in and last out.

Good luck and have fun.

*Edited for content and clarity by Chris Gately*



It would be good to think of your laptop for performance as a legitimate instrument as much as possible and not just use it for music as much as you use it to surf Amazon or to check your social media accounts. Not that it's bad if you only have one computer as a laptop and have to use it for things other than music, but it may be helpful to remind yourself to switch mind sets when going from one to the other before they get mixed up and the music gets boring. Our subconscious minds pick things up from everywhere all the time that end up programming us and the way we think. We end up thinking things are our thoughts that really aren't our original thoughts, so it's good to check your programming and clean out the debris as often as you remember to, for your music, or any other area of life.

*- Chris Davis*

# HOW TO BE A BETTER OPENING BAND

## PRACTICE FOR CATASTROPHE & YOU WILL ALWAYS TRIUMPH

Exposure is the most precious commodity of all. It gets harder and harder to play to fewer and fewer people. It is essential that if and when you do get a chance to play to a wider audience, you don't blow it.

**DO: Be prepared** to have no sound check. If you don't get one, don't be upset. Get on with it. You've trained for this right? And don't mention the fact that you didn't get a sound check to the audience during your show. They probably had no idea... until now!

**DO: Tell** your drummer *not* to put his or her new drum heads on in the middle of the auditorium and start pinging away to tune them up in the middle of anyone's sound check.

**DO: Help** the other bands' merchandise person (carry some boxes, set up the table, etc). He or she *might* have something to do with the decision of who gets to play next time. Get him or her water or coffee — OR if you are going out for Thai food or pizza after soundcheck, offer to bring him or her and/or the soundman a slice!

**DO: Have** a few different versions of your set ready for an opening slot. If your set is going to be 30 minutes long, have a 20 minute version, even a 15 minute version ready. When the tour manager comes running into the dressing room and, because of any one of a hundred things outside of his control, gives you a choice of 15 minutes or nothing, you can be gracious under fire. You never know how he might show his appreciation — a six pack, a pizza, or a chance to be on the bill the following month when the band swings back... because you weren't an asshole!

**DO: Get** an uninterruptible power supply if you're using backup electronic reinforcement or anything electronic.

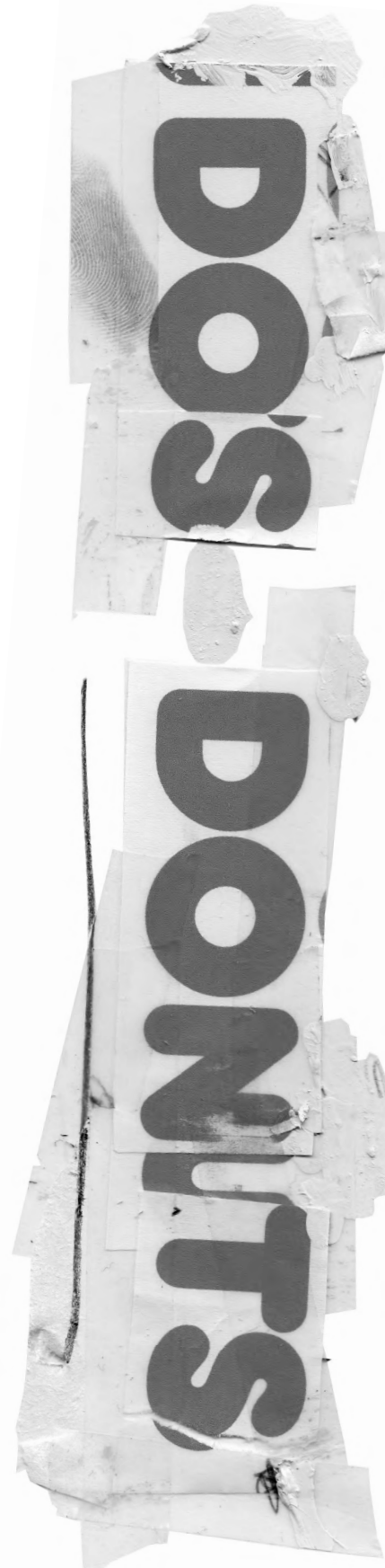
**DO: Turn on all the lights** when sound checking. That way you can see if the power of everything will cause a short circuit.

**DO: Pay for it** if you damage a mic, a monitor, or a mirror.

## BECOME AN ASSET TO THE OTHER ARTISTS AND THE VENUE. BE ONE OF THE REASONS THAT THE EVENT SUCCEEDS.

**DO: Communicate** with the label/management/venue/etc. Let them know if you are seeing good postering — is everything in the ad spelled correctly? Make sure the main band is on your flyer and it looks like you are opening. The band will get pissed if you do your own flyer that looks as if they are supporting you. Don't fuck<sup>2</sup> with their logos — make it respectful. Even if they don't *love* your music, people recognize hard work — it could be the reason you get offered another show.

**DO: Be nice.** Don't think that just because your album is good and you know the lead singer of the main band that you can do or say whatever you want — it means SHIT!



<sup>2</sup>This fuck brought to you by Chris MacDonald.

Never go over your time as an opening act. If you are asked to do 30 minutes, be off the stage at minute 29. Thank the promoter, thank the headliner, and leave them wanting more. (Consider this tip figuratively as well. It is a good parable to keep in mind as you move up in the music industry - online and off.)

– *Micah Solomon*

Don't assume your tour manager has it all together; sometimes you need to help him through his areas of difficulties.

– *Mark Durante*

In tune in time: tune up often and together. Pick places in the set to tune up. In the set, everybody needs to tune up at the same time. Two guitars slightly out of tune aren't as bad to the ear as one in tune and one out of tune.

– *Lee Popa*

## DON'T BE NEGATIVE.

**DON'T: Be too early.** Don't show up four hours early with 10 friends who want to see the main band soundcheck. Stay out of the way.

**DON'T: Call the tour manager seven times.** Get all of your questions together and call with a follow up. Have ONE person do the communicating.

**DON'T: Disappear** right before it's time to get onstage to try and stall until there are more people in the venue. Get ON and OFF stage at the correct time.

**DON'T: Ask for any more beer!** Is it worth saving \$8-\$10 to bother the hyper-stressed tour manager or club owner and make the point to them that when you do bother them, it's going to be related to alcohol? Buy a fucking 6-pack!

**DON'T: Hang around in any of the other dressing rooms.** Get you and your band out of the way. If you stumble across a huge spread of food or cases of beer and vodka and wonder if it's yours... it isn't!

**DON'T: Play the same city** a week before or after a free radio show. It will diminish your ticket drawing power and make you look like you just don't get it when the tour manager settles the show. "I thought that 'such and such' were a big draw — at least that's what they told me two months ago!" "Oh, yes they are," replies the club owner. "The show last week was amazing!" UGH, end of story.

**DON'T: Complain** about anything to anyone.

**DON'T: Get drunk** and start a fight.

**DON'T: Bring the girlfriend or boyfriend** you just broke up with because she or he likes the main band. Social dynamics could get strange.

**DON'T: Slag off (shit talk) the main band** or a sponsor anywhere in the venue (especially over the P.A. system). This could be damaging to a potential relationship. You have no idea who anyone is. You might be standing or peeing next to the band's publicist when you start slagging!

**DON'T: Be so insecure** that you start to act like what you think a really successful singer in a band would act like... You are in one of the opening bands!

**DON'T: Throw shit all over the stage** (literally or figuratively) unless you are the SuicideGirls and it's chocolate sauce. Don't go crazy and knock all of the mics over — the soundman will be pissed and he will remember you! The support network of people involved in these shows will be making decisions that directly affect your future and the success of your band.

Do yourself and everyone else a favor and *try* and streamline some of the equipment issues. Avoid a band with a drummer with 37 tom toms, bells, gamelan and a gong. See if all of the bass players will share a rig. Simple stuff that will allow a three or four band event on a Monday or Tuesday night to *not* become some kind of 2AM fiasco. Don't listen when the club owner will tell you it's a late crowd on a Tuesday: he's right — they're not coming 'til **Thursday!** Sure, the more bands on the bill the more fans in the crowd - but *please!*

# SETLISTS

## JON OSTROW

Keeping setlists varied is important for any tour, as social media has made it easier than ever for fans to track your setlists, listen to bootleg recordings or even stream your performance live via Ustream. But with a local tour, this is of the utmost importance, as playing similar setlists show after show will be a sure way to make fans lose interest.

As with any tour, the primary goal is to increase the loyalty of existing fans, meanwhile gaining new fans in the process. Working with a varied setlist is a great way to kick start this process. If you've got a relatively small catalog of original music, there are two things that you can do to help you mix up the setlists a bit:

**Cover Songs:** Always keep your fans in mind when putting covers together, as a simple yet well executed cover can be that memorable moment that sticks with them days after the show has ended. It is this achievement that will keep fans coming back time and time again.

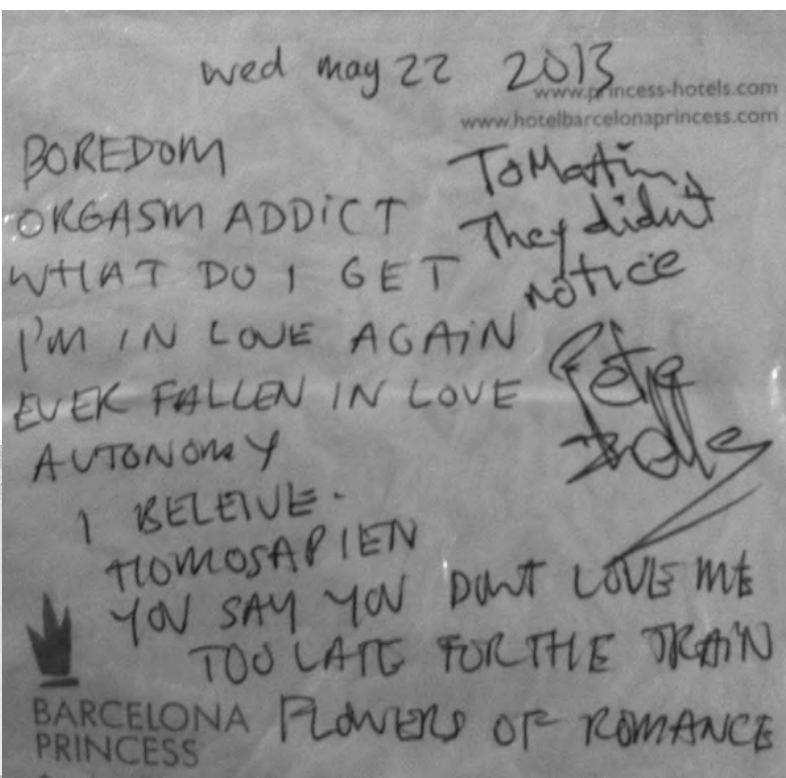
**Fan Favorites:** Again keeping your fans in mind, you will want to pay attention to audience reactions to all of your songs. Any songs that seem to garner the strongest reaction from fans may want to be performed at every show. Almost every band has that one song that everyone from bandwagon fans to the most diehard of fans wants to hear. Why not give the people what they want?



Pull a piece of paper out of your pocket and pretend that someone has requested your best song again — you can reluctantly agree to play it again.

Don't forget about the end of the set though — you **MUST** finish strong. Ever hear of an encore? You could even replay your best song at the end of the set as a remix version (just as long as you don't leave out the part that makes it the best). Variety, experimentation, and strategy!

— Jason Steele



Play more and pay attention to the audience's body language when you do. People running from the venue means that maybe you shouldn't be trying to hit those Freddie Mercury-like operatic high notes! People moving closer to the stage means they are drawn to your magnetic charismatic vibe. They like the songs and want to be close enough to touch you, or they're trying to steal your new effects pedal and swipe some of your Jagermeister. People leaving that venue means you are shit and your songs suck... or it's a cigarette break time!

— *Martin Atkins*

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Always be more awesome than they expect!

— *Chris Seth Jackson*

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Play songs people want to hear not just your newest ones. The audience won't know them yet, and they might not like them. Just because the songs are new to you doesn't mean jack. Familiarity is important. You are working for the audience, not the other way around.

— *Martin Atkins*

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I shortened the length of every song on the setlist, so I could fit more of them into a set and keep it faster paced.

— *Bangalore Chris David*

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Have a short closer that you can slot in at any moment. When the stage manager signals that you are low on time, don't play your 12-minute magnum opus. Maybe rain shortened your set. Be ready. No one wants to cut you, but if it happens, take it in stride. There will be other gigs.

— *Nate Van Allen*

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Quality only matters if there are people in the club. If there aren't, I don't have a club.

— *Chris Goldsmith*



# WHAT TO DO WHEN NO ONE SHOWS UP

- 1 Close the balcony before doors open (or any other side rooms if possible). Don't piss people off, but you can do a little crowd control.
- 2 Add tables — for no reason! They take up room!
- 3 Quickly walk around a three block radius and give out tix to people hanging out. Offer to buy a beer or two (I've done that!). 20 extra people helps a catastrophe become just a nightmare — those extra 20 might keep the people who actually wanted to come at the show longer.
- 4 Ask to borrow an amp from band #1 and a bass from band #2 — now they have to stay until your set is over! Buy them a couple of drinks so as not to be a total wanker.
- 5 **Vow** to put all of the techniques in this book to use before you **fail** again!

Playing safe is the riskiest thing you can do.

The gig is not the first activity in your battle plan to conquer another city. It should be the last!

In my days as a promoter I must admit there were times when I leaned heavily on the smoke machine button to deliberately fog the place out.... so that nobody would notice the gig was a little empty.

— Michael Johnson

The sound guy for the opening band is reading the manual for the board WHILE the band is playing... Not a good sign.

— Stevie Dacanay

**Bands:** if you are going to use live vocal effects, **HAVE YOUR SHIT TOGETHER.** Get a complete vocal chain (yes, that includes DI) that is reliable and doesn't feed back constantly when a straight 58 doesn't. Oh, and that electro-harmonix vocal thing is only acceptable as a special effects box... Nobody can understand you if you are singing through that. It's a toy.

— Tom Whittaker

# SHARE A BIT OF YOURSELF NEXT TIME YOU PERFORM

## TOM JACKSON

We listen to music through ear buds and stereo systems, on our laptops and iPhones, and in restaurants and elevators. We buy downloads, CDs, and albums.

The majority of music we experience on a day-to-day basis comes through recorded music.

But there is nothing that compares to seeing your favorite artist live! Being in the presence of the raw energy, excitement of the crowd, and uncut surprises of a great show is one of the best experiences you can have.

It's why I repeatedly tell artists, **"People come to see people, not just hear music!"** Your audience is hoping to make a connection with *you*.

So what are you sharing with your audience so they can make that connection?

For one thing, you'd probably like to share the message in some of your songs. That's one of the things that motivates us as musicians and singers. We want to reach out to people and tell them how we feel. We want to see if there are other people out there who feel the same way we do.

Sharing your message is more than just "singing songs," by the way. Have you learned the fundamentals of your onstage tools, woodshedded movement, rearranged your songs to bring out the moments, and worked on pouring yourself into the performance musically, visually, and verbally?

You probably want to share and express your uniqueness and personality, too. In order to do that, you'll need to develop your show with those same fundamentals and woodshedding. But you'll also need to develop your own confidence, authority, and charisma.

By the way, the good news is, an audience *wants* to connect to artists who are confident, who have a sense of humor and are fun, who are intense (in a good way), who are not afraid to pour their personality into their show, who are passionate about what they do, and who are in control. So if you learn how to do those things correctly, chances are you really will connect with your audience.

One of the things that can make a show special is when an artist shares a bit of themselves with their audience — learn how to do that the best way, and discover the changes it will make in your career.



# GIG AUTOPSY

Perform a gig autopsy after the show: what worked, what didn't. Not just the show itself, but everything from load in to load out.

Think about how your interaction went with the sound guy, club owner, fans...

How was the merch? Did something sell well? What about the sizes?

Then, of course, songs, song order, stage moves, audience interaction, stage volume levels etc., all the way until the last bag of drugs gets loaded into the vehicle.









# 12 STREET TEAMS

*Photo: John Collins*

Street teams work best when they happen organically. It might start as just two friends in one city, three in another, doing some very simple things to help, providing a safe location to ship to, putting up some flyers in the right places and generally spreading the word. One of the largest benefits for me was just peace of mind knowing we weren't going to be making all of the rookie mistakes that out-of-towners might.

The regional problems that you're faced with will eventually require you to involve like-minded enthusiastic followers to help spread the word. You *cannot* do it all on your own. In the beginning you have to, but eventually there will be people you can trust who get it, who can help. **But** don't think that this will enable you to take a step back and reeeelax — that's never going to happen. You have only shifted the workload and changed your responsibility.

When we started a street team back in the days before they existed we thought we'd really saved a bunch of time — and maybe we did in a way. We gained local knowledge and places to stay along with occasional lifesaving lasagna, some coffee and camaraderie. But beware — there is a responsibility that comes with accepting free help. There is a cost and sacrifice that you need to be aware of and honor.

During that first tour, I found myself happily exchanging hundreds of interactions for the 50 closer relationships with my street team captains who were talented and committed enough deal with three to ten members of their regional team. These days, there are militaristic frameworks for the application of these ideas, but back then we just winged it. I wanted to *not* be the guy who only called when we needed something. That's the nature of a friendship, right? So we ended up doing shirts and free tickets for anyone who helped, but also tickets to other shows that anyone wanted to travel to (a bit of a problem when we ended up with a big show in Chicago and one hundred street teamers on the guest list, which pushed us over the fire limit). But, remember the cost of time, effort, energy, and money when you send out 100 packages at Christmas time. When it works for *them* — birthdays, times of crisis etc. this ain't no one way street anymore. OK?

## **BE RESPONSIBLE AND HONOR THE RELATIONSHIP.**

There are places where you can stay one step removed and hire someone's team, but, for those of you getting into how this works you already saw the flaw in the plan — there is no ONE STEP REMOVED anymore. You're in it — up to your neck and as deep as your heart allows — or you aren't.

I've been talking business, efficiency and all the rest of it, but I have to take a second to alert you to the massive feeling of joy you will feel when you and your friends/fans/whoever take all of this on. There is the real concrete support of a hundred hands, interlocked and stretched out to catch you when you fall and push you up when you need it is uplifting and glorious.

## **A STREET TEAM IS NOT THE TOOL THAT HELPS YOU BUILD THE PLATFORM — IT'S THE GLUE BETWEEN EACH PIECE.**

# ATTENTION LOCAL BANDS!

## STEVE HARM

ATTENTION LOCAL BANDS: Tomorrow there is a Sevendust show at the La Crosse Center. Sevendust might not be your cup o tea. But there are probably a portion of the fans going to that show that might like YOUR band. So even if you are not going, you're going to be outside handing out download cards after the show, right? Handing out flyers for your upcoming shows? Handing out burned CDs (and picking up the ones that people toss)? You can easily eyeball the crowd and distribute your music/info to precisely the people you want to. No, not every 40 year old bedazzled jeans wearing Ed Hardy Affliction shirted concertgoer will be into your band. However, some of them will. You can miss an opportunity for promotion, or you can bust your butt with the rest of your band, being nice to people and spreading the word about YOUR band. Do you enjoy making music and want to do it for as long as possible? GO MAKE NEW FANS. You don't have to go to the show, but you can certainly capitalize on the fact that it is happening right here in town!

If you are going to market your band, wouldn't it make the most sense to market to people who are already music lovers? People who will drop some dough to see a live show? Who will buy CDs? Who will buy merch? That seems like shooting fish in a barrel.

**Do not put fliers on car windshields.** That is illegal, creates a huge mess, can get you ticketed, you can be blamed for cracking windshields and breaking wipers (even if it was not you that did it). In fact, hang out after handing out — pick up any of the stuff you handed out that people tossed. Better yet, pick up ALL of the junk tossed by people — you will have less resistance next time you handout stuff, and you will help ALL bands in the future!



**STEVE  
HARM**



**VENUE OWNER AND  
TALENT BUYER  
WAREHOUSE**





# 13 COVER BANDS

*Mini Kiss*

## **THE BEATLES WERE A COVER BAND FOR 8 YEARS!**

Why not start as a cover band?

I started playing in cover bands when I was 11. It gave me a broad appreciation of different musical styles, different beats, different structures. I played seven nights a week and Sunday afternoons to practice my craft, tired, ill, and delirious. I used to do my homework in the dressing room drinking beer! When I joined Killing Joke, I had to learn songs from the previous five albums from monster drummer Paul Ferguson. It made me a better drummer.

Cover bands are a great place to get your chops and weirdly, differentiate yourself. At the high end, bands like Los Straitjackets have released 11 albums and found a great niche for themselves in tv music world. I created a project called the Opium Jukebox to cover other bands songs using sitar loops and big slabs of hash.

**Familiarity is an opiate.**

*- Simon Pegg*

It's essential to have a great name. Some of the best ones I've seen :

- The Be@les
- ZomBeatles
- The Beagles (Beatles & Eagles)
- Earth Wind for Hire
- Bjorn Again
- No Way Sis
- AC/DSHE (3 guesses what their gimmick is)
- MINI KISS!
- High On Maiden
- Mentallica
- Alike Cooper
- Hayseed Dixie (do country AC/DC covers)
- The Stoned Roses
- The Scottish Sex Pistols  
(featuring Johnny MacRotten)
- T-Rextacy
- Cheap Chick
- Back Doors

## ABBA DUO - ABBASOLUTE

I looked at the cover band Abbasolute. Their pitch – offering different lineups at different price points and specifically detailing what you get. It is terrific!

Abbasolute have established a great reputation they have the best of everything you would expect from an Abba Tribute, lovely harmonies, great choreography, authentic looking costumes and all the best Abba hits. Abbasolute can perform as a 2 or 4 piece depending on budget and space and aim to deliver the perfect show everytime. The show is available as either 2 x 45 minute 'Abba' sets or a 1 hour Abba show and a 45 minute set of a mixture of party hits, 60's music and chart music.

Abba setlist includes :

- Waterloo
- Voulez-Vous
- Supertrouper
- Chiquitita
- Fernando
- Knowing Me Knowing You
- Money, Money, Money
- Gimme Gimme
- Dancing Queen
- Mama Mia
- Take A Chance
- and more

The show is fully self contained, with its own excellent PA system and stage lighting. All types of venues can be catered for.

When you incorporate covers into you YouTube strategy, you introduce fans into the equation. They will automatically assume they can request songs. Why just do the covers you want to do? Do the songs your fans want to hear. Enable this and you will win.

# COVERING YOUR ASS WHEN YOU COVER A SONG

## JOANNA QUARGNALI-LINSLEY

Covers are handled by compulsory laws that state you are allowed to perform and record (but not synch to video) songs written by other people WITHOUT THEIR PERMISSION as long as you pay them a set amount of money. Laws are different in different countries, and the United States is one of a small handful that allow covers. So, if you are going to do a cover, check the ownership of the song. Sorry to say, Gordon Lightfoot's "Ballad of the Edmund Fitzgerald" is off your list of options. He is Canadian, and Canada does not allow for compulsory rights to other people's songs. Same goes for all the Europeans out there, you **must** have permission to re-do their music. If you want to record a song owned in the US, you can... as long as you pay.

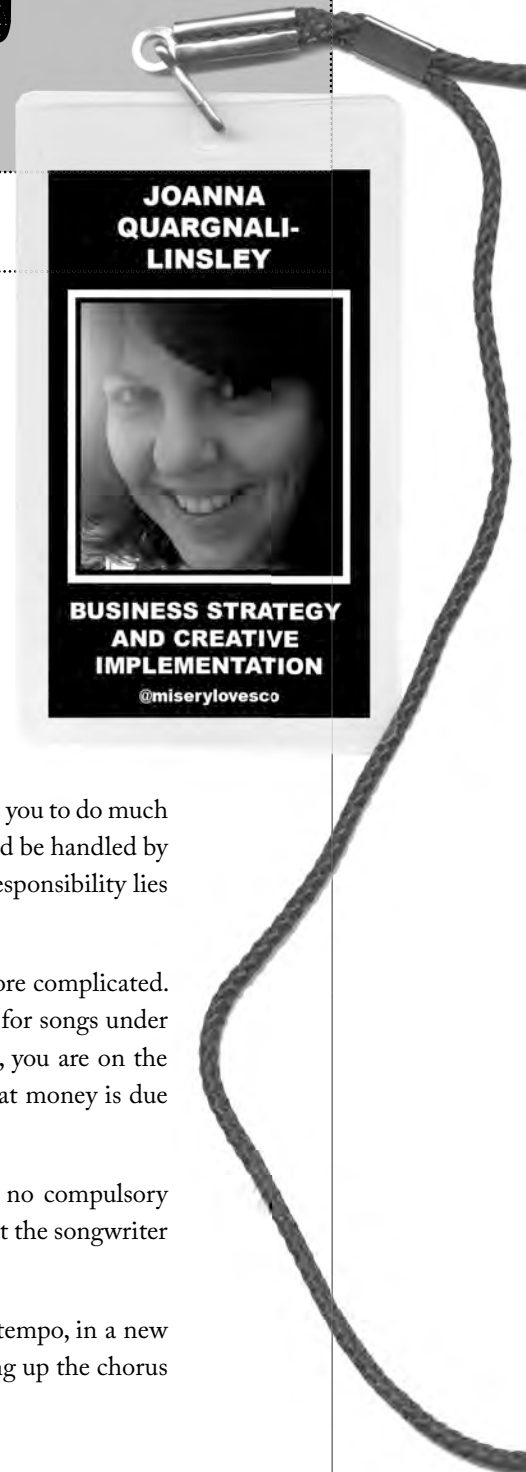
Assuming you know the publisher and owners of the PA (*see Copyright*) filed in a country that allows covers.

Performing a song that was written and/or is owned by someone else does not require you to do much to stay legal. The royalties to the PA copyright holder and the song's publisher should be handled by the blanket license owned by the venue where you are performing the song. Your responsibility lies in making sure that you are playing at licensed venues.

Recording a song that was written and/or is owned by someone else gets a little more complicated. You must pay for the right to record and distribute that song. Currently in the US, for songs under 5 minutes, the rate is \$0.091 per song. So, if you burn 100 CDs of your recording, you are on the hook for \$9.10. You can pay that through the Harry Fox Agency or Limelight. That money is due for every instance of the song including all downloads and physical sales.

In all countries, for all songs, videos require a Synchronization License. There is no compulsory Synch. You want someone else's song in a video, tv show, or movie? You better contact the songwriter and the publisher directly and work out a deal BEFORE you move forward.

And before you do a cover, make sure it is a cover. Reinterpreting a song at a new tempo, in a new key, with a new arrangement or a new feel is likely a cover. Rewriting lyrics, chopping up the chorus and changing the meaning is likely not.





# THREE WAYS TO DO A GREAT COVER SONG

## JESSI FREY

Cover songs can tell more than a thousand words about you. If you choose a cover song wisely, you can make your original material much more accessible to people who don't know you yet. Don't simply choose a cover song, because you're a fan of the original band and play it exactly like they do. Choose a song that tells something about you, that you can give a whole new meaning or that will establish you with a certain genre.

Here are three examples of well chosen cover songs:

**1 OFFER A NEW INTERPRETATION: JOHNNY CASH – HURT.** Nine Inch Nails' song "Hurt" is an iconic industrial rock song. It was written from the depths of a tortured young man's heroin addiction. The original version is full of anger and pain. Johnny Cash recorded "Hurt" at the age of 70, a year before he died. Cash's version gives a whole new meaning to the original song. His interpretation of "Hurt" is about an old man looking back to his life, full of love and regret to what he has experienced and made his loved ones go through. The lyrics and the music are the same, but his delivery makes this a whole new song.

**2 INTRODUCE YOURSELF: HIM – WICKED GAME.** HIM covered Chris Isaak's "Wicked Game" on their first album. It was the song that initially broke them into everyone's consciousness. The original song was a quiet, thoughtful country ballad, which HIM turned into a racy rock tune.

**3 BELONG TO A SCENE: APOCALYPTICA – NOTHING ELSE MATTERS.** Apocalyptica could be described as a cello quartet. However these cellist's identity is closer to a heavy metal scene than the classical music scene. Apocalyptica kicked off their career with an album of Metallica covers. That album established them in the heavy metal scene, and they have since released several successful albums of original material, collaborating with many heavy metal acts including Slipknot, Slayer and Soulfly.



I'd be just as happy as I am now if I was at the shithole down the street playing Creedence covers for six people.

- Dave Grohl

# BUILDING A SUCCESSFUL ENTERTAINMENT ACT OR COVER BAND

## AJ MENCONI

### WHAT WORKS:

**FOUNDATION.** Three veteran Chicago musicians: Trent Anderson, Drummer (Drummer Bang Tango 2009-2013, Touring Drummer Tuff, Stage Manager & Drum Tech for Quiet Riot); Kevin Cherello, Gtr (Stripping the Pistol, The Black Coral, Session gtr player at CRC); AJ Menconi, Keyboards (The Pop Culture Suicides, The Secret Saints, & Perv 54) have already had years of playing experience together in different bands, recording sessions, touring, and networks of potential fans and supporters.

**THE RAMP UP.** Before Sushi Roll Band even had a full band the three founders got together to discuss our ideas and goals of what we wanted to accomplish. The main goal was to have a working entertainment act that was playing out and making money. We were actually going to attempt to be paid for playing our instruments.

Wink, wink, nudge, nudge! For the first two months we just started picking songs to learn at home then rented an hourly studio for a couple hours a week to rehearse the songs as a unit. We were learning about four or five songs a week. Once we got up to 20 songs we knew we could start auditioning singers. Along the way we already were able to add a bass player. We started the idea of the band in December 2011 and didn't even play our first show until August 2012.

**THE SHORT LIST.** With our foundation & ramp up in place, we were able to create a short list of singers that we knew or was a recommendation through our networks. For the auditions, we reached out to about 12 singers and brought in three per audition. Since we already had 20 songs down tight and these were songs that anyone could go online to listen to we asked each singer to learn three songs for the audition. We would never pick a singer who didn't come in prepared because it already showed a lack of commitment and professionalism. Even though some singers may have been vocally more talented than others we ended up picking two female vocalist who were self contained and could entertain a crowd.

**LEARNING FROM BANDS THAT ARE ALREADY SUCCESSFUL.** It's always important to know your market. In the beginning of Sushi Roll we would actually go see other bands that were successful in the local market perform. We wanted to watch and learn what they were doing in their live shows that was making crowds react and ultimately making them successful. We also paid attention to what clubs and festivals the bands were playing and what management companies were booking them or managing them. This is actually quite easy to do with today's technology and via the internet.

**THE BAND NAME.** Once we actually had all the musicians in place it was very important to try and get everyone on the same page and make sure we all shared the same vision and goals of what the band was supposed to be. There are all kinds of different cover bands; some are tribute bands, some are decade or theme related



(disco, 80's hair metal, 90's alternative), some are wedding event background music bands, some are just some friends hopefully getting a gig at the local bar. For us, we knew we were experienced musicians who knew how to perform and eventually wanted to create a themed show. Our band members are fans of comic books, 80's Nintendo, Japanimation, and liked the chaos and silliness of Japanese game shows. We started mashing up songs and taking songs from all different genres and rolling them into one big song that people never thought could work together. We then applied dance beats and a new life and energy to most of the songs. All of this factored into our band name, Sushi Roll. Most people don't understand the band name, so that is an opportunity to have a dialogue with a potential new fan. Sushi Roll is ultimately a modern female fronted dance cover band that has been put together as a show that is high energy, danceable, and fun!

**PACKAGING.** Once we had a band name, it was important to come up with a strong logo, identifiable theme, and image that represented what we are. Once again pulling from our network, we had a logo created that we felt represented the band. Our desire was to incorporate the colors of red, white, and black. These colors are employed in all photos and stage costumes to create an identifiable look to the Sushi Roll Band. We also used our network to have band photos taken that were themed to create an image of our musical genre. Today's technology makes it easy for a band to assemble images and text for an EPK, webpage, and social media presence. Even though we bought a web domain, we just forwarded the URL to the ReverbNation page, which is a one page press kit that allows fans or buyers to see photos, videos, music, and tour dates right away. Bonus: it's free.

**BRANDING.** In 2011, the music industry top 40 was basically top 40 pop/dance hits like Beyonce, Rihanna, Katy Perry, Lady Gaga, P!nk, Kesha... so we really pushed the idea of being a female fronted band with our own spin. There was actually a need for this in the venues, but not many bands were offering this style of music. We felt comfortable that we may have found a niche for ourselves!

We were getting show dates based upon our image and photos alone!

Packaging is almost everything especially when it comes to selling the show. If your able to sell the band as a nice, neat, wrapped up present with everything in one place, it is much easier. Talent buyers don't have time to research bands, so realistically you're going to be purchased in one of two places: either off of your one page EPK or because someone saw you play live and they loved the show!

**PROFESSIONALISM.** When playing live shows make sure there is always a contract and just comply to the contract needs. The idea is to be low maintenance to the buyers and the venues. There is always a timeline listed on the contract and make sure your band is punctual. Pre-send a stage plot and input list to whoever the stage manager or sound engineer listed on the contract is. This doesn't only make you look professional, but it allows the venue or sound engineer to already have an idea what they are working with even before you come in. If there was good vibe at sound check, sometimes we like to tip out \$20 to the engineer, which they always appreciate, says "TRUST US," and it always seems to make them work a little harder during the show. They will also be happy to see you when you come back. It's important to identify the personnel of a venue, from being courteous to the staff to having a smile on your face while playing (even if things aren't going your way) All of this will give off the kind of band you are and ultimately if you are going to be asked back.

Even though you might think the show is about you...sorry, it's not! When you get up on that stage you are selling fun and drinks and that's it! Once you realize that, you will have much better success!

**GROWTH.** We had our band name and package ready to go! We finally put our first show date on paper for August 2012! There was finally something to work toward and talk about. It was easy to book the first few shows because with our foundation and network it was really just a few phone calls. By this time, we had about 35 songs and enough for a 90-minute set! For the first six months, we just really took any show we could get based off our initial network. After about five months of adding more songs and working out the kinks of the live show, we reached out to our first potential management company, Alliance Music Entertainment. AME already had a roster of successful working cover bands, so we went out to audition in their studios and struck up a deal. The 2013 outlook was looking good for Sushi Roll! Only one problem, now we were asked to headline shows and buyers want three hours worth of music which is two 90 minute sets and we only had one. Good thing it was January in Chicago. Not much to do during a Chicago winter! In the first year, we were the band who didn't really say, "No!" We pretty much played every show offered to us all over the Midwest as long as we broke even and could pay the rent for the rehearsal hall. We looked at it as a marketing expense. It was good because even some nights when we may have only broke even, there always seemed to be a few more shows that were offered at higher levels based on those shows. For example, we took a show for \$500 (lights and PA included) that actually turned into multiple \$1500 shows and a private event for \$2000. The point is the best way to really grow your band is by being out there playing. The likes will go up on social media and people will keep talking.

**VALUE.** Every six months, we get together to look at the numbers and see how the band faired against the year before and what venues seemed to work the best. Each year we have grown our value with higher paying shows, better venues, and better opportunities. We are starting to get to a place where we will be able to route the shows for the year, play less, make more, and really put a minimal cap on what we will take to play a show. So two years and 100 live shows later, we have just started to create a real value for the band and what it's worth. The band is self contained and all money made from the shows funds the band.

**FIX WHAT'S NOT WORKING.** If songs are not going over well, take them out of the set. If band members are not working out, replace them. Your band is usually judged on your weakest link – that's just how it goes. If you're receiving multiple requests to add a song to the set, add that song to the set. This is a business, so be proactive and fix problems. Don't sweep them under the rug; it will only get worse!

We went through three lead singers, three bass players, and performed about 60 shows before we really found the unit to take the band to the next level! We added a male bass player who has great lead vocals so we could do some of the male-fronted songs that were being requested and also give our female vocalist a couple breaks during a three-hour show.

## **LEARNING LESSONS:**

**SONGS.** Knowing that you're going to have to learn over 100 songs, don't get caught up on one specific song. If the band is struggling with a song put it on the back burner. "Time is Money" and things not moving along can lead to frustrated band members and even fighting. Although always a work in progress, we think we have a good read on song selection. We learn songs in blocks of fives, so three might be easy, one intermediate, and one difficult. Try to learn songs that already play to the strengths and the arrangement of the band. In the beginning we were gung ho on learning modern dance songs and we did, but realized a modern song will probably have a shelf life of six to nine months live, so was it really worth the time to learn

that song and what kind of crowd reaction are you getting from that song. Now that we have over 100 songs, I can assure you that a lot of the modern songs have fallen to the bench list. So we really only add about one really modern song every 60 days at this point and only if it's really burning up the charts.

We prefer to learn every song as is then we can put our twist on the actual real song. However, classic powerhouse rock tunes we tend to leave as is or you can receive backlash.

**KNOWING YOUR VENUE.** Song selection is key to any show so if you're playing out in the sticks, you might want to add a country tune or two to the set. The same goes for if you're going to play a beach party; you might want to add in a Jimmy Buffet song. We always do this, but we still play the songs in a Sushi Roll style.

**THE TAKE AWAY.** I think in the beginning of this project we were a bit naïve. Although we had experienced, original artists in the band, we didn't have experienced, cover band artists in band. There is a difference. We thought we were going to get great musicians together, learn some tunes, and go out and get paid. It wasn't even close to that easy! It took us at least two years, over 60 live shows, and multiple band member changes to get us to a comfortable place to even say we know what the hell we are doing. It's still a work in progress, but I can say we still have our main foundation that we started with and that is why we're able to keep it all together!

**FINAL ADVICE.** You're entertaining people! You're performing live music on stage and getting paid to do it, smile and be happy!



## SUSHI ROLL BAND 2015

Sarah Noel McConnell – *Vocals*

Zachariah James Verdoom – *Bass & Vocals*

Kevin Cherello – *Guitars*

Trent Anderson – *Drums*

AJ Menconi – *Keyboards*

Timmy Tame – *Guitars*



WASH DC  
GOOD ADVICE

FROM

BAAD PEOPLE!

# GUITAR TIPS

## JIM CLARK

**1 DON'T JUST PLAY.** Write Songs! Nothing beats a great song or a well crafted riff or hook, plus song writers get all the money!!! Guitarists have been responsible for some timeless tunes: George Harrison, Jimmy Page, Hendrix, Slash.....make sure you have a hand in the writing process.

**2 DON'T BE A DICK.** It might sound obvious, but even if you're the new Eddie Van Halen, nobody will want to work with you if your attitude sucks.

**3 KNOW WHAT YOU REALLY SOUND LIKE.** Get some form of portable recording setup. It can be an old tape recorder or a laptop running Logic, but it pays to collect new ideas and also listen back to rehearsals and recordings from the desk at your gigs.

**4 KNOW YOUR GEAR.** Make sure you use the best equipment you can afford and know how to use it to its full potential. So many players have guitars and amps worth thousands but don't have the first idea how to make them sound good in a band mix. A good place to start is often: Gain down and Volume UP!!!!!!!!!!

**5 I CAN'T HEAR MYSELF!** If you find yourself constantly turning up and up to be heard at rehearsals or gigs, only to result in a wall of feedback, you need to crank up the mid in your sound. You know, the control you always leave on 1 because it doesn't sound good in your bedroom...? Well, it does actually have a use.

**6 ANYTHING CAN AND WILL GO WRONG!** Therefore, where possible, always carry spares. Instruments, strings, cables, valves etc etc etc.....Don't forget some tools and be prepared to make minor repairs if need be.

**7 JOIN THE MUSICIANS UNION.** They will help you with the messy business side of things. They will read through and advise on contracts, publishing deals and other industry issues.

**JIM  
CLARK**



**GUITARIST  
JOURNALIST  
EDUCATOR**



More than two guitars is too much.

- Luke Stokes



# BASS PLAYER TIPS

## ANDREW MCKINNEY

- Be committed. To the band, the gig, and every note you play.
- Try to get along with everyone. Bass players often end up as peace-makers!
- Don't always rely on other people for things - rides, tuner, lunch etc.
- Be open-minded. Be willing to try new things and adapt.
- Have good gear that works.
- Spend time considering what is required from the bass to improve the music as a whole – don't put your own ego first.
- Be punctual.
- Focus on playing tight with the drummer.
- Listen to the band as a whole and understand your sonic niche.
- If you aren't learning new things and enjoying yourself, or earning loads of money, try and find another band!



## TIPS FOR DRUMMERS

Take a roll of carpet with all of the positions of the drums marked out. It will reduce bullshit changeover time and any confusion with microphones. Once a drum kit has been miked up by an enthusiastic, efficient sound man it's very difficult to rearrange. It doesn't eliminate but reduces the slippage of the bass drum.

Bolt/glue a little piece of wood to help stop the bass drum moving. Make sure that the carpet is large enough to go all the way underneath your drum seat. The weight of your ass will help keep the whole thing in place.

If drum monitors are poor quality or too large, think about a thumper. It's basically a small subwoofer attached to the bottom of your drum throne; every time you hit the bass drum, it vibrates the seat and increases the sensation of, basically, moving the world every time you hit the bass drum.

The drummer from the Pixies had a good idea (or their sound man did). He had a trigger in the bass drum to generate a more defined clicky-ier/more mid-range bass drum sound. It was easier for the drummer to hear where he was against a click without having massive amounts of low end volume washing all over the stage.

Monitoring loops and clicks can be tricky. Years ago I gave up trying to find a decent monitor engineer. I just hooked up a mixer amp and bought a couple of wedge monitors. Now I don't have to even acknowledge a monitor guy - just a raised eyebrow gets me more level from the keyboard guy.



# VOCAL TIPS

## NIKKI LAMBORN

The Seven Ps it what you should always remember....

### PERFECT PREVIOUS PLANNING PREVENTS PISS POOR PERFORMANCE

**YOUR VOCAL WARM UP IS MEGA-IMPORTANT.** It's not cool to think that you don't need a vocal coach. Having a personal trainer for your vocal chords is as important as having a personal trainer in the gym. Fitness for your voice and your body go hand in hand.

**ARRIVE ON TIME.** You cannot afford to miss your sound check. Your monitors are your lifeline!!

**MAKE SURE YOU EAT AT THE RIGHT TIME...**it's no good eating just before you go onstage. 2 hours before minimum and then make it something light.

**DO NOT BE OUT FRONT TALKING** with your mates before you go onstage. You will be shouting over loud music to be heard and by the time you've been out there for an hour you've used up your voice that should have been used for your gig.

**AFTER SHOW...** sign your CDs and get OUT!! Talking for another 2 hours after the gig when you have another one in another town tomorrow is not good. You need all the rest you can get. Your voice is a muscle not an amp, it can only last so long before it gets tired. Respect it.

**SLEEEEEEP!** Make sure you get plenty of rest. It's very rock'n'roll to be up all night partying, but when you can't sing the next day because you're tired, it's very uncool. Your voice will not work if you're tired.

**DRINKING.** The first sense that goes when you've had too much to drink is your hearing. Therefore you think you can't hear yourself and start to over-sing. The band will appear to be louder and you can't hear yourself. This ends up being a vicious circle. There's only one winner.

**NO TALKING DAYS.** When you are on the road doing a 40 date tour, you will need to have certain days where you literally don't speak until you start you warm up. Your voice needs rest. The way to do this is to tell the band members what you are doing so they know not to talk to you unnecessarily. This does work. Once again, your voice is a muscle; it needs rest and respect.

**KEEP WARM.** If you are hot and sweaty after your show don't go straight outside. Your muscles will tighten up and so will your throat. If it's not possible to have a shower, at least dry off and wrap up! Remember you have a tour to do. The whole band will suffer if YOU get a cold. **THINK:** the audience doesn't want to know that you're sick. They will just remember how bad you were. A cold is avoidable, there's no excuse.



# MORE VOCAL TIPS <sup>T/S</sup>

## CHRIS CONNELLY

The best thing I ever found was that H2Ocean stuff that Curse Mackey's pal sold: salt water in an atomizer spray bottle. You cannot beat it. Tea feels nice, but ultimately that is all. Throat Coat tea is good: make a flask of it, using boiling water and four teabags so it is very strong. This is excellent. I would spray the salt spray all the time and spraying it up the nose is excellent, too. Broadway night club singers will come home at night and snort warm salt water up their noses! Yuck! But it is the best thing to combat the smoky environments you find yourself in nightly.

These things have never done anyone any good:

- Cigarettes
- Marijuana
- Dry ice/booze (dehydrating)
- Coffee (dehydrating)
- Candy
- Dairy products

### AND LAST, BUT DEFINITELY NOT LEAST — TALKING!

If you have to sing every night, talking for extended periods of time really fatigues the voice.

Of course, everything is fine in moderation, but before the last Pigface tour, I had to give up cigs or I simply would not be able to sing—end of story. It was really shit or get off the pot time for me. Touring for a singer in winter is hard. A woolen scarf is essential to keep the throat warm.



## MARK WILLIAMS



**DIRECTOR OF  
SALES AND DEVELOPMENT  
FOR PRESONUS**

@presonus

# LIVE TIPS

## MARK WILLIAMS

### RULES ON CABLES

1. You can never have enough.
2. You have to clean and coil them after every show or they will not last.
3. Test them before every show.
4. If you lose signal for some reason, always test the cable first.
  - a. Put a different mic on the cable
  - b. Swap the cable with another one
  - c. Make sure all connectors on the cable are secure
5. Zip ties are great for keeping mic cables coiled after you are done using them and they are cheap. They also prevent a rat's nest (like the one in your practice space right now).
6. Learn how to solder. It's a lot cheaper to fix a single broken pin, than buy a new cable.

### MONITORS

1. If you can, make sure your monitors are capable of ripping the musician's head off. If you can get them to get you to turn down the monitor, you won!
2. A 31 band graphic EQ is a must for monitors. It allows you to quickly locate and isolate frequencies that are feeding back.
3. Powered monitors are easier to use. One less amp rack to carry right? Plus most have some built in tone and volume control.

### DIGITAL MIXERS

1. Digital mixers are the way to go. The reason is they allow you to store settings. Most of them have built in dynamics (compression, gating, EQ and etc.), effects and routing.
2. If you are switching bands you can mute all the inputs and solo say your IPOD to FOH (Front of House) usually by only hitting one or two buttons.
3. If you are playing different venues on different nights, you can use your setting from the previous night to get a jump start.
4. Can be intimidating if you have never used one.

### MICS

1. I prefer dynamic mics over condenser mics in the live environment. They tend to handle higher sound levels and handle abuse better.
2. **If a mic is fragile it doesn't belong on the stage.**
3. Try to keep musicians from abusing your mics. It's not cool to throw them around.
4. Keep an eye on your mics at all times; before, during and after the show. Mics have an amazing ability to grow legs and wander off.

# TICKETING

## VICTORIA GIROT

Eventbrite and Brown Paper Tickets (BPT) are equal in ways of promoting and ticketing your event on an external site.

Both let you add a description for the event, create and define multiple ticket levels and pricing, as well as to use promo codes for discounts.

Both Eventbrite and BPT let you create your own custom URL to help promote the event, and both companies integrate social media promotion.

Personally, I like Eventbrite more. Eventbrite lets you create your own personalized template. To do so in Brown Paper Tickets, you have to talk with their people, sending BPT your design ideas and photos you want added instead of doing it yourself. Which is fine if you have more time before your event than we usually do.

Eventbrite also has descriptive tracking to see where your ticketbuyers are coming to your link from (your company's Facebook, Twitter, an artist's page search, Google Search, etc) and Eventbrite also lets you check registrants and customers in with their Event App, allowing you to search alphabetically for their name, or to use the in app QR or barcode scanners.



# EARN IT YOURSELF'S TOP TEN PIECES OF ADVICE TO BANDS

## SARAH SATURDAY

**10 CHOOSE INTEGRITY.** Stop putting such a high value on “fame” and focus instead on “integrity” as your most sought-after virtue. Fame is a mirage, an idea about you that is in someone else’s mind. It is not a tangible thing that changes anything about who you are or how you feel each morning when you wake up. You can have integrity all the time. It’s a real thing, and if you maintain it in your work, you will work harder, enjoy your successes, and feel happy every day, regardless of what anyone else thinks. And, unlike fame, integrity will never fade away.

**9 EMBRACE YOUR SUFFERING.** It won’t be easy, and it shouldn’t be easy. No great art has ever been created that didn’t involve suffering. Learn to appreciate and even enjoy the trials and tribulations that come from pursuing a life that is devoted to your art and ideas. If you can enjoy the struggle, and the meaning behind the struggle, then you’ll be able to stay committed and make a career out of your passion.

**8 BELONG TO A COMMUNITY.** You can’t do this alone. Find a place to call home, and become part of a local community of artists, musicians, thinkers, idealists, and entrepreneurs. Help these people achieve your goals so that you can be part of their success. And in return, allow these people to help you with your goals so that they can help you achieve your own success.

### YOU ARE MORE LIKELY TO SURVIVE IF YOU ARE PART OF A FAMILY.

**7 LEARN TO BE POOR.** Thinking that you can make a decent living off of your art will be your biggest downfall. You will get frustrated when you can’t pay your bills, or go out with your friends, or buy new clothes, and it will make you grow impatient, which will make you make bad decisions that hurt your art and ruin your integrity, and probably ultimately cause you to give up. Assume that you will only ever be able to make ends meet, learn to live on little or no money, and...

### GIVE UP ON THE IDEA OF BEING RICH

...or having the material things that other people have. Money and objects are not as valuable as integrity and joy.

**6 RESPECT YOUR ELDERS.** Know your place. Learn the proper etiquette for attending and playing shows. Seek the advice and guidance of those who came before you in your local scene. Learn the history of your scene. Work twice as hard to prove that you deserve to be part of your community. Don’t demand respect; earn respect.

## SARAH SATURDAY



NON-FOR-PROFIT  
“EARN IT YOURSELF”

@sarahsaturday

**5 GIVE AND TAKE.** Don't just take from your community. Give back. Throw shows, promote your friends' bands, go to other bands' shows. Pay to get into shows. Collaborate with bands, venues, promoters, and artists in your scene on community-building events and fundraisers. Help your local DIY venue spaces. Volunteer to run shows. Educate your fans about the scene.

## TRY TO MAKE A DIFFERENCE IN YOUR TOWN.

Do something that will outlive you and your band.

**4 PREPARE FOR THE WORST.** If you are ready to commit to a more difficult path in order to spend your life doing what you love, then everything that happens along the way will be positive. If you are playing music for the right reasons, then this will not be a difficult commitment for you.

**3 STAY HUMBLE.** Be grateful when people help you. Say thank you to everyone you meet. Remember that you have a lot to learn. Don't forget where you came from. Be polite. Be kind. Assume the best. Ask for advice. Always strive to be a better musician, a better music supporter, and a better person. You're never finished. Never take anyone or anything for granted. No matter how good you are, there will always be someone who is better.

**2 LIVE IN THE MOMENT.** No matter what has happened before, or what might happen in the future, learn to appreciate each moment in which you are able to freely do what you love to do. Find the joy in the moment, in the fact that you're alive, in the fact that you are able to do something that makes you feel truly happy. Appreciate and focus on the good.

**1 MAKE ART.** Do something original. Play music because you are a creator and want to contribute something of lasting value to the world. Be a musician because you love music.



Don't change your art to make it fit the business;  
change the business to make it fit your art.

- Sarah Saturday

# REASONS YOUR BAND ISN'T MOVING FORWARD

## JOSH HOGAN

In all honesty there are definitely more than a dozen reasons why a band might not be achieving the level of success hoped for but for the purpose of this rant I have done the liberty of excluding the obvious things (instruments not in tune, can't sing in key etc) and instead have focused on common mistakes many up and coming and even established bands continue to make.

**12 YOU PLAY TOO FREQUENTLY:** All your shows are the same.

**11 YOU DON'T KNOW HOW TO PLAY YOUR SONGS LIVE (YOU ARE SIMPLY STANDING ON STAGE PRACTICING THEM):** There is a big difference between getting on stage and playing your songs vs. putting on a live show. People not only want to be, but deserve to be, entertained.

**10 YOU DON'T KNOW YOUR AUDIENCE AND HAVEN'T LEARNED HOW TO READ THE CROWD:** I have seen many bands that are oblivious to whom their fan base is. They assume they should fit in with "Crowd A" since that is the music they personally like, however in reality their core fan base is a different demographic altogether.

**9 YOU DON'T HAVE ENOUGH MERCHANDISE:** Merch is the cornerstone to generating revenue for many successful artists, yet so many bands have nothing more than a CD and a T-Shirt on their table.

**8 YOU LACK EVEN THE MOST BASIC OF ORGANIZATIONAL SKILLS:** Being an artist is great but you need to have some basic organization skills if you hope to stay focused and goal oriented.

**7 YOU RUSH EVERYTHING:** An obsession with urgency can be damaging to your career. The more you rush things, the more that can be overlooked. Take the time to slow down and focus on the task(s) at hand.

**6 YOU USE THE "USED CAR SALESMAN" TACTIC OF SELLING YOUR MUSIC:** Instead of engaging your fans and building relationships with them, you only reach out to them when you have something you want to sell them.

**5 YOU SHIT TALK OTHER BANDS WHEN THEY GET BETTER OPPORTUNITIES THAN YOU:** I've heard too many bands complain about another bands success. Not only is it counter productive, but 9/10 times, the reason the other band likely received their break is because they have a better work ethic than you.

**4 YOU DON'T KNOW HOW TO TAKE CONSTRUCTIVE CRITICISM:** If you aren't ready to take the criticism, don't ask for the opinion.



## JOSH HOGAN



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**3 YOU DON'T LIVE IN THE PRESENT:** Bands have an obsession with waiting for the 'future' to get better and/or reminiscing about the glory days of the 'past' all the while they are missing perfectly good opportunities in the present.

**2 YOU CREATE BARRIERS AND MAKE EXCUSES:** I hear far too many "I'm too busy" or "I'm too broke" excuses. If you can't put forth 100% effort at all time, then there is someone else that can (and will). Just remember point #5 when they get the break over your band.

**1 YOU ALREADY THINK THAT YOUR BAND IS THE BEST BAND IN THE WORLD:** Besides the obvious ego-driven problems from feeling this way, the most damning aspect is that if you think this, you have lost the desire to strive for something better.



## AN ARTIST'S BEST ONE, TWO PUNCH

### TONY GUIDRY

The world of music in many ways is madness. The best sounds often come from the craziest situations. I work primarily in urban music, but there's one constant that plagues every genre. That plague is ignorance. Very few artists take the time to learn how the music business really works, which often leads to frustration, especially at the pace of progress (or lack of progress) in their growth.

The simplest truth about success in the music business is that you need fans in order to be successful. There's no such thing as a "hit record" or "hot" song that only a dozen people recognize. Hit records are songs that are damn near universally liked by all who hear them, *and* they're heard by tens of millions to billions of people (think Mark Ronson & Bruno Mars' "Uptown Funk" or Pharrell's "Happy"). A hot record, on the other hand, is a potential hit that has been heard by enough people to gain some attention for the artist but not enough to sweep the artist or song into a high charting position. Many great, hot records never reach their hit potential because a knowledge of the business of music is required in order to catapult an organically growing record into a chart juggernaut.

Of course all artists dream of having hit after hit while becoming popular and famous (which most people equate with automatic riches). However, reality is a stern wake-up call. According to the RIAA, over 80% of new music releases sell less than 100 copies and roughly 95% sell less than 1,000 copies. These numbers include new artists with major promotional campaigns that are signed to major record labels, as well as independent artists who often operate on a shoestring budget.



Success is very elusive in the business of music. One of the reasons that everyone can't be successful in music is that success has many different definitions. For one artist, being able to make a living performing nightly in intimate venues is success, while their counterpart who does live shows in bigger venues and earns more, may see the lounge singer or bar musician as a failure. Better yet, the arena performer who rocks crowds of 10,000 and up may see both previous examples as failures. So the first thing to clarify before we even get started is that the following words apply no matter your vision of success.

Technically, the digital revolution began between the 1950's and 1970's, but it wasn't until the early 2000's that technology began to disrupt the total structure of the music industry. From digital recording software that made production costs plummet, to popular websites and social media seemingly making unknown artists into stars overnight, to digital downloads eliminating the need to physically own the music, today's music industry has evolved into an industry that requires early adoption of new tech *and* an understanding of the traditional aspects if one plans on earning income while remaining relevant. Thanks to technology, entry into the business of music is easier than ever. At the same time, entry doesn't mean success no matter your definition.

A vast majority of artists have a major misconception about how the business itself works. Artists believe that having musical talent entitles them to fans, money, and popularity. The truth is that talent, by itself, equaling any form of success in music is a fallacy. Also, there are no entitlements in the business of music. Every accolade and accomplishment is hard fought and earned. Despite the fairytale stories that the internet "created" many megastars, there were countless hours spent creating bunches of songs that nobody ever heard, along with years of hard work that made your favorite artist an "overnight" success.

Even with technology allowing us to reach the masses quite easily, actually getting people to tune into a new artist is an ever-growing challenge. Technology that allows anybody to become a rapper/singer/musician/producer, also allows these same anybodies to flood the digital landscape with everything from great to intolerable to garbage music. So the same advantage that technology provides also creates a disadvantage that prevents artists from being heard and liked strictly based on merit. In other words, it takes more than just placing great music online to build a fanbase.

I've worked on the campaigns for artists of almost every level. Primarily, I'm tasked with guiding the early careers of virtually unknown artists by helping to build a fanbase to launch their career. In my experiences working on the campaigns of these upstarts, I've learned that a multi-pronged approach is best. I've tried promoting music using just the internet and social media. I've tried lone radio campaigns. I've also tried the grassroots approach by itself (which I've found to be the *most* effective single component). After trying these methods individually (usually for budgetary reasons), I've learned that these three aspects working in tandem with each other create a buzz that is capable of actually launching an artist's career.

The standout artists in music have a certain charisma and charm that everyone won't notice when watching a video or listening to a song. Artists that can become stars have a quality that we call the "it" factor. This quality must be seen in-person by as many potential fans as possible - one on one, face to face. This aspect is key when building a fanbase that allows us to transition from marketing an unknown artist directly to a certain niche, into marketing a semi-known artist to a larger cross-section of people. The goal is ultimately to reach the mass market with the artist while increasing popularity, fame, and money (provided their paperwork for monetization is in order).

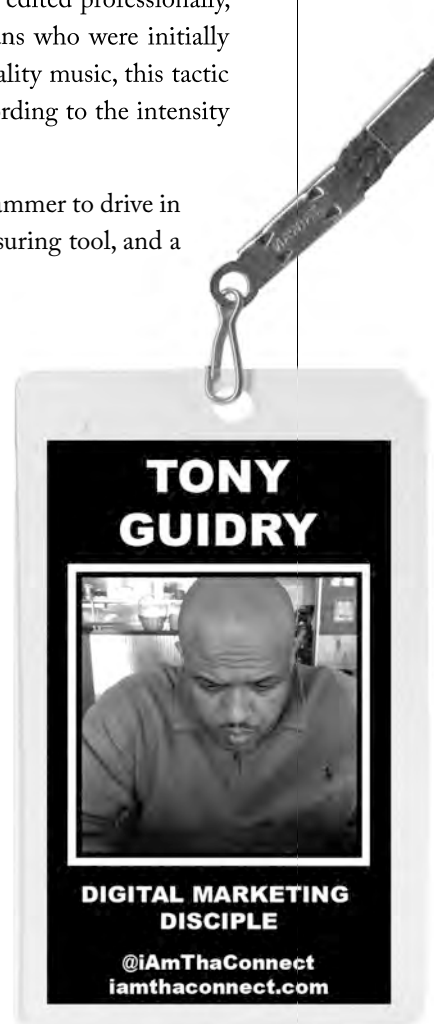
Too often, the artists who should be targeting a certain niche and starting out small, try to use mass marketing tactics that don't work for unknown artists (products). When studied closely, every successful company uses several different forms of promotion (a marketing mix) to spread the word about their products. They utilize print ads, tv commercials, social media campaigns, in-store sales, etc. Basic business principles teach us that more than one thing is required to spread the word about our products (which happen to be music and artists).

Using multiple methods of attack is the best way for up and coming artists to get noticed and gain the attention of their target audience. For example, there is some effectiveness in running a Facebook Ad campaign that generates views/listens to a particular video or song. But the effectiveness of such a campaign grows exponentially when you maximize that ad campaign with the artist physically visiting the marketplace and blanketing high-traffic areas with promotional posters and flyers, etc. Once the artist is physically in the marketplace, that same ad campaign that's garnering views and likes online will attract actual fans who are eager to share pictures of the new "hot" artist they meet in person, thereby increasing the buzz in the marketplace while increasing exposure of the artist's music. If the people feel that the music is great, this can easily put the artist in a position to work a door split with a local promoter and/or throw his or her own show in that area. If the artist is smart enough to capture this on video, the footage can be edited professionally, uploaded online, and promoted in such a way that causes re-engagement with the fans who were initially exposed to the artist and music during the promo run. When timed properly with quality music, this tactic becomes cross-promotional building both the online and actual "street" following according to the intensity of the efforts made by the artist.

The key here is to not get trapped into using just one tactic. Just as a carpenter uses a hammer to drive in some nails, a nail gun to drive in others, a screwdriver or drill to secure drywall, a measuring tool, and a level to ensure the work is being properly installed, in this same fashion artists need to:

1. use their social media presence to share their work with followers. (Using hashtags, ad campaigns, etc. to reach those who don't follow them)
2. post interesting content to encourage sharing
3. conduct promotional market tours and meet and greets to forge a bond and physical connection with fans
4. create great music for fans and potential fans while ensuring that the music is easily accessible via whatever platform they choose
5. perform as much as they can, everywhere they can, without paying for that opportunity to do so

In the fight to get your music heard, the combination of a well-run digital campaign along with a grassroots movement touching the people where they live is the most effective one-two punch that an independent or unsigned artist has in rising above the battle royal of bullshit that's dumped into the marketplace daily.



**GAELYNN  
LEA**



**CLASSICALLY TRAINED  
VIOLINIST & SONGWRITER**

[www.violinscratches.com](http://www.violinscratches.com)  
@gaelynnlea

# DISABILITY IN THE MUSIC INDUSTRY

## GAELYNN LEA

My name is Gaelynn Lea. I am a violinist turned songwriter from Duluth, Minnesota. I have been performing for over a decade, but my music career took a national twist when I won NPR Music's 2016 Tiny Desk Contest. After that I started getting a lot more offers to play out of state, so I started working with a booking agent to help me arrange tours. My husband and I both quit our jobs, sold the house, bought a van, and hit the road. As of this writing, I have played over 150 shows in the past nine months which took us to 37 states and five countries — life has been a whirlwind indeed!

I have a disability called Osteogenesis Imperfecta, or Brittle Bones Disease. This is a genetic condition that affects the collagen in my body and causes my bones to be fragile. I broke between 30-50 bones in utero, and this caused my legs and arms to be bent and shortened since birth. I have used an electric wheelchair since the age of two and a half... I ruined many a doorway while learning how to drive at such a young age!

Anyway, when I was 10 years old I decided that I wanted to play a stringed instrument. Lucky for me, I had a very encouraging and creative teacher. Because of my small stature, I couldn't play the violin or cello the regular way. So instead we had to figure out a way to adapt the instrument to fit me. We realized that I could play the violin upright like a tiny cello. It worked out great, and I have been playing that way ever since. I started performing in bands in 2006, writing songs in 2011, and touring in 2016.

I first met Martin Atkins shortly after I won the Tiny Desk Contest, at an NPR-sponsored event. We were both on a music panel after my performance. He was obviously super knowledgeable and nice, and he gave me his card and told me to look into his book, [Tour:Smart](#), and contact him with any questions. I devoured that book and so did my husband — it became our go-to as we planned to embark on our first national tour. I did eventually email him and now I consider him a dear friend.

Martin has facilitated some amazing events of which I am grateful to have been a part, including the Pigface 25th reunion concert at the House of Blues in Chicago. I played a solo cover version of their song "Point Blank" using just my violin, voice, and a looping pedal. It was one of the most fun and memorable shows of my life — not just because the performance was super exciting, but more so because I was introduced to the 40 people who comprised the band and crew that night. The Pigface members are some of the most welcoming, supporting, and hilarious people I have ever met, and I have kept in touch with more than a few of them. It's like having a whole new extended family!

I was asked to write a little tidbit for this book because as a touring musician with a disability, I have faced a number of unique challenges on the road. Some of these are just part of the deal, like needing the assistance of a travel companion (who is fortunately also my husband, Paul). But some of these difficulties could be fixed if we just raised awareness! So here is my list of the **fixable ways** we can make the music industry more accessible. Get ready, buckle up, and take a ride with my wheels...

## GAELYNN LEA'S LIST FOR VENUES, BANDS, & PROMOTERS TO MAKE THE MUSIC INDUSTRY MORE ACCESSIBLE

1 Make sure your venue is accessible to your guests. This means having an entry to the venue without stairs or with a ramp, as well as access to the concert space. Either have your public events on the main floor or make sure there's an elevator. This is so important! You may never have thought of this before, but a venue with a step and no ramp might as well have a sign outside that says, "People with Disabilities Not Welcome Here." Ultimately it's no different than saying LGBTQ people are not welcome. We just haven't been conditioned to think that way. Although the Disability Rights Movement is alive and well, it's not quite as ingrained as other civil rights movements... yet. That's why I am writing this list — to help raise awareness! This isn't just about being a "nice" venue owner — accessibility is the law in the United States. The Americans with Disabilities Act (the ADA) has been around for 27 years and counting — so every venue owner has a legal responsibility to be as accessible as possible, no matter how old the building is. So get with the times!

2 Be clear about whether or not you are an accessible venue. If you're an accessible venue already, be loud and proud! Put it on your website! Write it on the posters! I assure you, people with disabilities will take notice. Twenty percent of the population has some sort of disability, and that's a lot of potential customers. If your venue is not accessible, make sure that is clear on your website and posters too. Although it sucks to have to write it, it is *way* better than someone showing up to a show to rock out to their favorite band only to find they can't get up your staircase or they can't go to the bathroom all night. Plus, having to actually write the words "We are Not Accessible" on all your posters might motivate you to invest in a ramp or a bigger bathroom stall instead of upgrading your sound system or espresso machine. Accessibility needs to be a priority — it is the law, and it affects 20% of your potential customer base! Feel like you can't afford to modify your venue? There are tax credits for making these accommodations. There are electric lifts that are *WAY* cheaper than elevators. There are boy scouts looking for service projects. There are crowdfunding websites like Kickstarter and GoFundMe... so stop making excuses and start getting creative! Somehow you've always managed to pay your taxes and your rent (at least I hope so!), and if you treat it like another legal obligation (umm, because it is) you will find a way. Don't put this off any longer! Can't get up to code? Consider moving into a new space, or partner with a more accessible venue like a church and start co-hosting your public shows there instead.

3 Help your guests with disabilities feel welcome at your show. Not everyone with a disability uses a wheelchair — in fact, many don't! So here are some ways to be accessible to people with other types of disabilities:

- a. Make sure you have an accessible entrance and bathroom. Anyone with walkers, crutches, canes, wheelchairs, scooters, or age-related disabilities like arthritis will benefit from these basic accessibility features.
- b. Try to have at least a little seating towards the front (making sure the band is visible!) for people who may tire easily or have trouble standing for long periods of time.
- c. Remove trip hazards and make signs clearly visible for people with vision impairments.
- d. Offer to have lyrics captioning or an ASL interpreter for people with hearing loss upon request. If you can't afford to hire a professional, one DIY approach to captioning is having a presentation on a

TV screen to the side of the stage and requesting that the band submit their set list and lyrics ahead of the show. Get a staff person or a volunteer to run the presentation in time with the music so your deaf audience members can get in on the lyrics. This takes some advanced planning, but I have sent in lyrics to a number of shows, and I am happy to do so because I want *everyone* at my shows to have a good time.

e. Some people have sensory issues that make blaring speakers, mosh pits, and strobe lights a big problem. So if you can swing it, find a space away from the stage that is a bit more chill and keep the sound down. Lots of venues have adjacent rooms attached, and instead of blaring the music into that room too, keep the volume down, the lighting soft, and the vibe more chill. Many people will appreciate this kind of safe space.

f. Got questions? Ask! I am not a complete guru on accessibility, so I am sure there are things missing on this list — plus every venue is unique. Call your local Center for Independent Living (or CIL — this is a Federally-mandated disability organization that exists in every state) and ask them to come in and assess your space. Together you can think of ways to become more accessible.

g. Write: “Accommodations for people with disabilities will be made upon request, if possible, with advance notice” on all your promo material and leave a contact email. This is most relevant for things like captioning and helps you plan for less routine accommodations that may arise.

**4** Build a ramp to the stage — seriously! I have played a lot of shows in my life and unfortunately only about 25% of these venues have accessible stages. The other 75% have elevated stages without a ramp, ranging from six inches to four feet off the ground. But no matter how high the stage, my electric wheelchair can’t climb it — not even “just one step.” So this means I either have to be lifted onto the stage (it takes four adults to lift my chair because it is 260 pounds) which is bad for my chair and dangerous for me, or I have to play on the floor in front of the stage. This is not cool for obvious reasons, but also for a more subtle reason — no one else has to get lifted onstage. It is discriminatory! You don’t see four dudes lugging Paul McCartney or Beyoncé or anyone else onstage. It would be uncomfortable to watch and you’d wonder what was going on. It doesn’t have to be that way! Either:

- a. Build a permanent ramp.
- b. Buy a portable ramp.
- c. Buy a lift if the stage is really tall — there are both manual and electric lifts, depending on your budget.
- d. Take away the stage. If you can’t afford to build a ramp, then have *all* the bands play from the floor.

**5** Advertise your shows and music programs to people with disabilities. Look up some disability organizations in your community and send flyers or email blasts to them, too. Part of the reason people with disabilities may not go to shows is because they’re not sure if the venue is accessible. Or maybe they were never invited in the first place! You can help to change that by being inclusive about where you advertise your events. If you run an open mic or a community music group, it’s especially important to advertise to people with disabilities. It’s hard to hone your craft if you are not able to practice in front of people, and open mics and community music groups are great places to work on your chops. We will start seeing more musicians with disabilities as they are given more chances to perform. I started at open mics myself, but unfortunately it was in a venue that was completely inaccessible. I had to enter the venue through the kitchen, be carried onto the stage, and have help in the bathroom because my wheelchair wouldn’t fit. I wish I could say it was

different than that, but I'm still glad I was able to play! We can and should be doing better to help support new musicians with disabilities.

**6** Book more musicians with disabilities in venues and festivals. It might not seem like it, but there are many talented people out there playing music who have disabilities. I have been lucky enough to meet many of them on the road and you can meet them too! You just have to do some research and find them. One of the things music promoters and other artists can do is search out and book shows with artists who have disabilities. Call your state's VSA office (which stands for Very Special Arts) if you are having trouble finding people. Thirty-five states have a VSA agency, and many of them have a database of artists with disabilities. Otherwise, try calling local disability organizations, or turn to good ol' Google and Facebook!

**7** Remember that music is activism. The more society sees people with disabilities out there performing, the more disability will become a central focus when we talk about things like healthcare or accessibility or even just fashion, dating, or events in our community. Right now disability seems like an anomaly because it's not part of the cultural nor — but it doesn't have to be that way! Everybody has varying levels of disability and at one point or another, you might end up being disabled yourself someday even if you are able-bodied now. There's no shame in that, and part of the way we can express disability pride is to include disability in the arts. So if you book a venue or a festival, remember to be inclusive. Nobody would book a festival filled with all white dudes... at least not in 2017. In the same way, we don't need all able-bodied people to be performing all the time. Spread your wings a little bit and help change the social norms. On a similar note, if you are a radio DJ or a music writer, make sure you are including musicians with disabilities in your playlist/content. Representation matters!

So that's my list. I know all these ideas put together might seem intense if you've never thought about disabilities in the music industry before. It's a lot to take in and change won't happen overnight. But I want you to know what real challenges there are facing people with disabilities in the music world. Things won't get better if we don't start talking about them, educating ourselves, and working for change. But I also want you to know that performing has still been one of my greatest joys in life, despite all the barriers that still exist. Music is medicine. Music is energy. Music is love. Music is light. I know as a society we can do better, and I want to see progress happening for the future generations. Together we can make the world more accessible for everyone, including musicians with disabilities. So let's get out there and change the world!



**FUCK.**

*This extra large fuck brought to you by Hassan.*



# 14 COMMUNITY

*Photo: Kimson Doan*

Turns out, whether you like it or not, your future begins to expand and grow in the immediate circles around you. For breweries, organic carrots, heroes, government, anesthetics or an area network: it's all *local*.

I don't care if you start to think about community because you *should* or because you realize it's your only real way to succeed at the next level, whatever the reason...

If you want a bunch of musicians to come and see your band, go and see theirs... five times. Especially if they are crap and have no audience, you and your bandmates could be 50% of the crowd!

If you want a local club or promoter to care about your band, then care about their club. Promote bands other than your own. Help clean up the snow. Salt the load in areas. Help to promote. Post pics and tag them. Make sure that you stay to see the other bands on the bill. Stay until the end and introduce yourself afterwards.

**Whatever you do, whether you think you are involved in the community or not, you are.**

*- Josh Chicoine*

**ALWAYS BE NICE TO EVERYONE.**



How tragic, with so many huge obstacles to overcome if the largest one is...*you*.

Be authentically *nice*. Murphy's Law will fucking<sup>™</sup> make sure that anyone you are nasty to will be the one person that could make a huge difference to your career. Say thank you.

Here's my new rule: Be nicest to the people that there is the least reason to be nice to. It won't cost much in terms of money or time and you'll be glad you did.

## DON'T GIVE UP - AND DON'T GET DISCOURAGED, OR IF YOU DO - DON'T GIVE UP!

You might see other bands posting stuff like, "Thanks to the masses of people that came out and supported us!" Look at some pics of the crowd. The reality is that they are playing to the same 25 to 50 people you are. If you find yourself giving up then start again and never stop.

Encourage the rolling up of sleeves rather than the rolling of eyes and typing.

## GIVE BACK!

### SARAH SATURDAY

#### GIVE AND TAKE

Don't just take from your community. Give back. Throw shows, promote your friends' bands, go to other bands' shows. Pay to get into shows. Collaborate with bands, venues, promoters, and artists in your scene on community-building events and fundraisers. Help your local DIY venue spaces. Volunteer to run shows. Educate your fans about the scene. Try to make a difference in your town. Do something that will outlive you and your band.

#### BELONG TO A COMMUNITY

You can't do this alone. Find a place to call home, and become part of a local community of artists, musicians, thinkers, idealists, and entrepreneurs. Help these people achieve their goals so that you can be part of their success. And in return, allow these people to help you with your goals so that they can help you achieve your own success. You are more likely to survive if you are part of a family.



<sup>™</sup>This fuck brought to you by Andy Sernovitz.

One of the most important things that I see many bands lacking is a sense of community. If you are in any major urban hub, you can see live music on any night of the week at countless different venues. Reach out to your favorite other bands in the city. Reach out to your favorite restaurant and see if they want to donate some food for guests. Reach out to artist collectives, tattoo shops, etc., etc. You get the gist. Make your shows an experience, something that everyone can get behind. When everyone comes together for a communal experience, everybody wins. Don't be afraid to think out of the box as well. You would be surprised with what happens when you bring people from all different scenes of the city together. One of the most interesting interviews I ever did was with Chicago DJ duo Flosstradamus. When they spoke of their rise from the local to national level, the one quote that has always stuck with me was, "When we were on the come-up it wasn't Flosstradamus Flosstradamus but rather Chicago Chicago. We all did it together." One of the great things about today is that there is already a community to tap into and utilize.

— *Anthony Spina*

Stay Local. When you are 16 and you live in Cleveland, Ohio or Branford, Connecticut you want to escape. That is ok. We all hate where we come from. Sadly though it is also your greatest resource. If you really do want to get serious about having a career then your hometown is the most important first step. Local media needs local stories and nothing is more classic than: "Local Kid Rocks Out." These stories are much easier to pitch and land in the Cleveland Free Times—or in my case, The Branford Review—than the fucking New York Times. But they carry the same girth in your press kit. At the very least this is a place where you have a media advantage.

My second point here is your fan base. If you are constantly driving to play shows in New York, but you live in Milwaukee then you are, out the gate, setting yourself up for failure. I like to think building an audience begins at home and for as long as you can stomach it... you stay there. Really. I would rather build up with friends, co-workers, and family and let that hype get the attention from New York. Those stories are the best ones. The bands that get signed overnight are also the bands that have a rabid fan base. Imagine some douche major label band comes touring through the mid-west and the local promoter puts you on the bill as main support. You blow them off the stage and leave crickets in your wake. That band will most certainly go crying to their manager and you will benefit from your patience. You will have what every band in New York, Chicago and LA would kill for... buzz, and you did it all by staying at home.

— *David Lewis*

Get in with those bands that see the scene as a community, not as a group of competitors. There's a good chance there will be a lot of the latter, especially in the rock scene. The older guys are usually the ones to get to know. They've mostly gotten past that cocky phase.

— *Sylvan Lane*

Anyone doing anything anywhere is up against it. It's a cut rate, cut throat world and when everyone is struggling to stay afloat, stay in it, and get ahead. It's tough to take out ANY time to go and support someone else's dreams. It's easy to understand. To PROACTIVELY go out and support another one is a massive step... take it and you will grow your self, your scene and your power.

— *Martin Atkins*

# SUPPORT YOUR LOCAL MUSIC SCENE

## RUTH DANIEL

**Keep local:** There is always a desire to play gigs and work with labels outside of your home country, but there are huge potential audiences within where you are already. A sustainable approach to developing the music scene and industry is to act locally. Seek to develop fan bases in your own areas. Form street teams to work with you to champion your music to a wider audience. Ask your fans to organise local or regional gigs for you. Sometimes they can spread the word more effectively than you may be able to and in places such as dorms that you cannot reach.

### SUPPORT YOUR LOCAL MUSIC SCENE.

The local scene is supported by everyone in the community in Medellin. Go to each others gigs in your city.

### WHY WOULD YOU EXPECT PEOPLE TO WATCH YOUR BAND, IF YOU DON'T WATCH THEIRS.

There is a genuine benefit in working together — strength in numbers. It makes others who aren't part of what you are doing wonder what they are missing out on. Rather than being a lone band, work with other bands and artists to build a scene in your locality. If you are working in a niche or developing genre the power of your efforts is multiplied by the number of people involved. Collectivism is a great opportunity to share ideas and be noticed — nearly all the most important and lasting scenes have risen from shared effort and creativity.

Work with other local creatives to create a hub — local screen printing collectives, local graphic designers and local web developers. The ones who have a day job they hate, but would give their right arm to work with a band on a creative project.

Hold monthly meetings in your local area where you share news, advice, contacts and ideas; speak to each other regularly, call yourself the [your city] Music Collective then build an online presence for the collective of bands and artists within the Collective, pool resources to produce a CD featuring all the bands in your locality that each band will give away or sell at shows or in local cafes.

“But there are no venues in my city”... A venue can be anywhere. The hip hop crews play in all sorts of unconventional places. MC battles happen on the football pitch, in the street or on a bus. Play gigs in unusual spaces. These are often better than badly run local venues anyway, and you remain in control of your event. You keep any cash made and can curate the bands.

Engage local decision makers — ask them to invest in what you are doing. Show them the value of your music and that bands are working together and



they might fund a gig or support you in other ways. In Medellin, local hip hop crews have convinced the decision makers to sponsor huge hip hop events in the barrios.

Engage commercial sponsors — if enough people are into what you are doing, cool brands will want to get involved. Try the local brands first, as your initial audience will be local people. Get them excited about what is going on musically in your city.

So, when you have built all this buzz and excitement, like in Medellin, then the world begins to get wind of it and all of a sudden you can begin to do the next thing and reach out to people globally through the internet.

Medellin is the new punk. The internet is the new punk. Grassroots music scenes around the world are the new punk.

### **BYPASS THE OLD TRADITIONAL INDUSTRY.**

Be entrepreneurial about what you do and build a sustainable career in music. Remember that culture is an ongoing creative process that can only be achieved by collective effort; that the process of cultural production is, ultimately the most empowering and creative act that a human can engage in.



**Building an audience begins at home.**

**Bands sometimes give big lectures on stage about how important it is to support “the scene” but at the end of their set want to get paid ASAP and don’t want to wait until the other bands get done.**

– *Creepy Crawl*

**Everyone needs to start somewhere — if you can’t attract 100 people to a gig in your home city, what chance have you got getting people to be interested in you on the web.**

– *Ruth Daniel*

**Musicians are going to be the ones propelling the new model forward and they have to do it together.**

– *Kevin Lyman*

**If you want to save money, build locally.**

– *Kosha Dillz*

# NETWORKING AND BUILDING YOUR BRAND

## SHAUN BARRETT

### GENUINE NETWORKING: MAKING CONNECTIONS NOT JUST CONTACTS

In the do it yourself or die world we live in, networking is the social lubricant that helps all aspects of your band run smooth. Whether you're setting up shows with a friend's band, or trying to pitch yourself to some industry bigwigs, here are some basic dos and don'ts for making new friends that can help you.

### BE CAREFUL TO ACCOUNT FOR ALL THE BRIDGES YOU BURN BECAUSE SOME DAY YOU MAY NEED TO TRAVEL THAT TERRITORY AGAIN.

The biggest oversight in the music industry are your relationships. NO, not your girlfriend your family or your pet sea horse! Your professional relationships are the ones that require your undivided attention. Every person you meet at a show, sign a contract with, borrow money from, sell a CD to, or ask for an endorsement has entered into a relationship with you. As with all relationships, there are good ones and bad ones, but no matter what, when you are in a relationship, understand that there are rules and the more you want from the other party, the more they are going to want from you! The apex, however, is since you are likely the one asking for something, you are the one that is going to have to give something up first! This ain't prom night and you ain't my date!

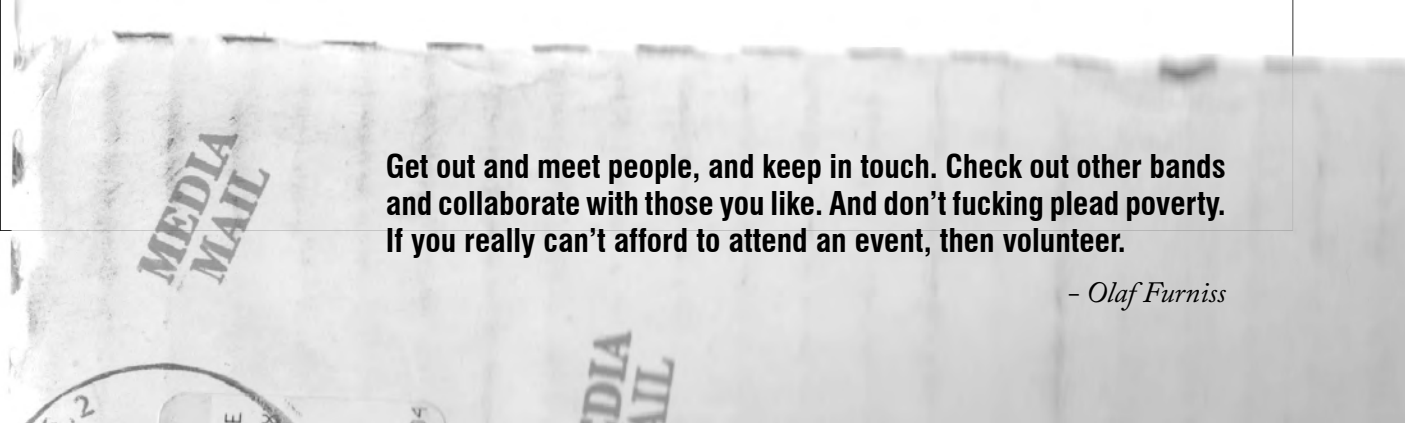
Remember that just as in anything else, when a relationship ends it can be bitter and be careful to account for all the bridges you burn because some day you may need to travel that territory again.

You need job divisions within the band — Pegasus Unicorn were great at this. It's not one person, it's a team. In addition to specific tasks for each person, one job should be on everyone's list: meet the audience and every single person you can in a venue; socialize, talk, listen, and smile. For some people I know that's difficult but this business and life in general is all about doing the things that are difficult. So, get better at it and develop your skill set.

### EXPAND, GROW, IMPROVE. . . .DESTROY!

Get out and meet people, and keep in touch. Check out other bands and collaborate with those you like. And don't fucking plead poverty. If you really can't afford to attend an event, then volunteer.

- Olaf Furniss





**DO**

Be a genuine person that people want to see succeed.

Have a passion for your music and band. If you don't, no one else will.

Wait to be asked what you have going on. If people want to know they will inquire.

Have confidence and be comfortable.

Your Homework. Knowing the what, where, and when goes a long way. The why, will come with experience.

Keep up with what your friends have going on and support them.

Let others talk you up, it means more coming from someone else.

Mention mutual friends, it helps keep the conversation going, and establish a connection.

Ask questions and remember the answers. It will give you something else to talk about next time you see that person.

Be flexible. Things seldom go according to plan and you need to be able to roll with it.

Introduce everyone you know to everyone else you know. (This works best in person.)

**DON'T**

Fake it, fluff numbers, or try and impress others.

Only talk about what your band has going on or is trying to do.

Be hurt when you aren't asked.

Be arrogant. If arrogance is your selling point, save it for the stage as nobody wants to deal with a diva.

Assume anything, EVER! A little bit of knowledge is dangerous.

Be a tourist. Being somewhere you hate just to try to schmooze sucks and doesn't work.

Believe the hype. Just because you make music doesn't give you a license to kill.

Name Drop. It doesn't impress anyone and you come off amateurish.

Overstay your welcome at the party. Trust your gut on this, if it doesn't feel right, it's not.

Be overly negative. Pessimism is a huge turn off and people will quickly tune you out.

Lose sight of what is important with networking. Bands and jobs come and go, but some people tend to stick around forever. Today's intern is next month's executive, so be positive, genuine, and someone people want to see succeed. It might not be the key to all your dreams coming true, but it's a big puzzle piece, and you will get a lot further.



**Network with key industry people at events and conferences.** Radio PD's and DJ's, club owners, band managers, label executives, and others all attend music conferences quite regularly. Say hello to these people, maybe buy them a drink or dinner, **but don't make a nuisance of yourself.** Respect their space and **don't try shoving a CD in their face two minutes after meeting** them. Introduce yourself casually, let them know who you are and where they can see you play. If it's a club owner, tell them you would love to come in during the day and do a free audition for a free gig. Just make sure you can get a place to sell your merchandise if you nab a gig. Offer to play at places that may not always host live music, like restaurants, coffee shops, stores, and malls.

— Chris Bracco

**DO'S  
DON'TS**

**ATTEND OTHER BAND'S GIGS:**  
This has to be the easiest way to get gigs, build contacts, and have a good laugh all in one. Chat to the band after their set. Build a good connection.

— *Marcus Taylor*

# NEW YORKERS EAT THEIR YOUNG

## CHVAD BERNARD

So you're in a band and you think you're ready for NYC? Here's what you can expect. As I'm writing this, on a Friday evening, there are 374 bands playing in NYC. There's **fierce** competition in NYC and in response to that, a lot of promoters create nothing more than what I like to call "meat-grinder events."

Every club in NYC wants a party every night of the week and they want people buying drinks **all night**. **Bring in the bands!** Expect no money. It's common practice in NYC for promoters to only pay you IF you bring in at least 10 to 15 paying customers that ask specifically for your band. Bring in 15 or more, you get half the door amount for those patrons. Bring in 14. **Nothing.**

Did I mention you're also playing with anywhere from six to nine other acts on the same night? Now the promoter can call it a **festival** and thus a **party**. Great, right? You're gonna have a **ton** of people there to see you rock the fuck out right? Wrong, wrong, wrong.

Here's how NYC rolls: Band #1 brings in 15 of their friends to see them play. Band #1 finishes. Band #1 leaves. Friends of Band #1 leave. Band #2? Rinse and Repeat. Some people would like to accuse all the others acts on the bill for being total asses for not hanging out and supporting the other bands. Honestly, 75% of the time you'd probably be right, but even if all the bands wanted to stay and party the whole fucking night with you, **they can't**. This is NYC, and space is something you find between people's ears but **not** in clubs. Ten bands worth of gear won't fit in most small clubs so when you're done playing, you need to get the fuck off the stage and out of the club. Most promoters won't even allow bands to load in more than an hour before they are supposed to be on stage. There's no room.

The club and promoter make out great though. Every band brings in a few people, eight out of the ten bands won't break 15 people because everyone they know is out at one of the other 374 shows going on in the city that night. Meanwhile the promoter keeps most of the door and the club gets all of the bar. You can make money with merchandise right? You can't sell merch because there isn't any room for merch and if there is room, it'll be in the part of the club that everyone avoids because it smells like shit and piss. Literally. Sounds pretty bad right? It can be.

### HOW CAN IT ALL BE AVOIDED? COMMUNITY.

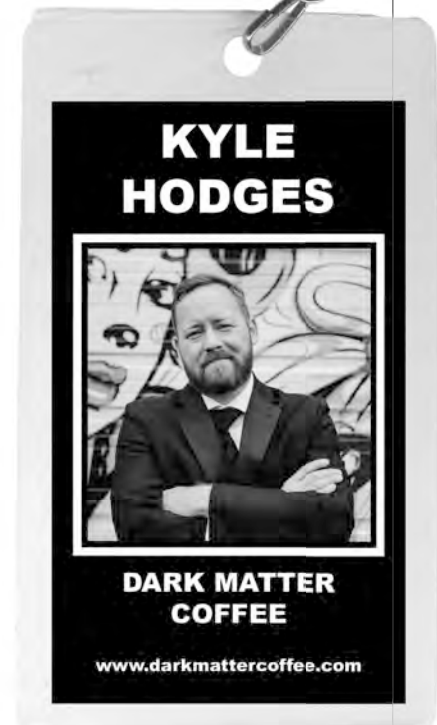
Contact the bands on the bill that play directly before *and* after you. Trade promotional materials and share your audience. Hang out a **little** longer before the next band arrives, share gear if possible and there's more room for everyone (the promoter can't kick you out as quickly either if that's your amp on the stage). 45 people drunk off their asses trying to dance through your set is a hell of a lot cooler than your 15 buddies from work (no offense to work buddies of the world). Hell, some of them might even like your stuff. Wanna survive in NYC? Know people! Make friends on message boards, call bands, whatever. Just know this: if you don't know anyone in NYC when you play, stay the fuck out. New Yorkers eat their young.



# TEN KEYS TO COLLABORATION

## KYLE HODGES

- 1 Explain the money situation. How much, how little; make sure whatever money is involved is clearly defined to both parties. Decide who is spending what, and how it will all be divided.
- 2 Timelines and deadlines must be clearly communicated. Explain who is responsible for what. Follow through and be proactive.
- 3 Contribute ideas. These are only ideas; you aren't doing the project by yourself. This doesn't mean that a portion of your ideas/artwork/text will be prominent in the final project — it just means that everyone gets a say.
- 4 While everyone needs to be happy, this is still a compromise. You give and you get. Know what is really important to you and communicate those expectations for the final project.
- 5 Assign a reliable person to keep the project on track.
- 6 When in doubt, ask questions so that everyone is operating towards the common goal.
- 7 Define how everyone will communicate on the project. All meetings/ phone calls/texts/etc. should be followed up with email as well. This ensures that everyone can return to that email when questions arise (and questions will always arise).
- 8 Be respectful of others' time and talent. Know their strengths and weaknesses, and structure the project around those.
- 9 Make it original. Too often the creative process focuses on replication or imitation instead of combining forces and making something new. Originality has a palpable connection that will attract the desired audience.
- 10 Communication is the key to every project execution and is the common theme throughout the previous nine points made above. Mastering communication is half the battle.





**Cultivating community is the core of business.**

*– Gary Witt*

**Relationships are the only real commodities in this industry.**

*– David Lewis*



# 15 MERCHANDISE

## THE ENGINE <sup>TS</sup>

When I see a band that I like, especially if I know they are in a van and struggling, I want to go buy the album and a shirt. If that stuff isn't there – or the person they have doing it is at the bar or someplace else – then I feel kind of cheated. Maybe that's just me, but I think that this is a circle of support. It's not just about the music or the money, it's about **people**.

**Your job** is to make sure that you are creating merchandise to complete the circle.

Merchandising is an essential part of the touring process, especially now. It is also the backbone of information for a new band with not much of a track record. It is no longer about trying to sell 10,000 CDs to 10,000 people. It is about selling

A mistake to avoid:

A touring band refuses to sell band merch, even their own LPs, at their shows because it's 'not compatible with their non-materialistic aesthetic.'  
No comment necessary.

– Marcy Rauer Wagman

more things to fewer, more-invested people, in a shorter amount of time, before attention is distracted. Frightened? You need to sell three CDs, ten downloads, two shirts, a recipe book, some art, and a hoodie to 1000 people... It all adds up!

## **A WELL-STOCKED MERCHANDISE BOOTH WITH UNIQUE, COOL, AND HARD-TO-FIND ITEMS WILL BE ANOTHER POWERFUL REASON FOR PEOPLE TO COME TO THE SHOW.**

None of this is about money. It's about momentum and the ability for you to do the most cool and important thing: make music, communicate with people, and keep it going. It all needs money. The vehicle (literally and figuratively) needs fuel. You can tell me that your music is the most important thing in the world to you, but unless you have a few hundred dollars in your pocket, you're not going to be able to remix the track that just doesn't work on your new album. You're not going to be able to add bells, backing vocals, or sitar to your favorite song; you're not going to be able to re-record those out of tune vocals or master that track so it slams on my tiny laptop speakers... So, my response really is: fuck the fuck off and get real... The art vs. business thing was old ten years ago and is just a lame-ass smoke screen, OK? Sell some shit! Leave your mark so you can come back to a better show next time.

---

# **DESIGNING MERCHANDISE**

## **THERE IS A DIFFERENCE BETWEEN MAKING ART AND DESIGNING MERCHANDISE.**

The designing part of the job takes into account the mediums — the parameters other than groovyness that are a consideration. The best shirt design in the world is no good to you if it needs seven different kinds of ink and screens and costs \$17.50 per shirt, you won't be able to give any away as gifts to promote your relationships. *However*, if you make shirts yourself and have them designed for your situation (one color/one screen), your chances of fucking up the design are minimal and you can make one shirt every 30 seconds. The shirt should be easy to make quickly and effectively. If you create (not design) a five color/ five screen shirt, then it'll take you nine minutes to make one shirt.

## **MAKE MORE LIVE ALBUMS**

The main thrust of live albums, up until fairly recently, was capturing someone else's moment, someone else's sound in the best way possible. That someone else, of course, being the band. Capturing a better, more adrenalized version of themselves.

It's not about the sound anymore...

"Design: Satisfying a set of requirements subject to constraints."

— Wikipedia

Make a simple shirt yourself  
that you can give away.

Flash drives can be a more effective merch strategy than DVD's when it comes to video promotion. They're small, digital storage devices with no moving parts that usually fit on a keychain. They're desirable; most students are required to have them, which means you'll likely sell more at colleges and all-ages shows. Buy them in bulk in as large a capacity as you can afford, have your band's URL printed on them, and load all of your videos in an upload-friendly size of one hundred megabytes or less. Instead of just selling a DVD and ending the transaction, kids might upload your videos to their own YouTube or Facebook accounts. Boom. You just intentionally encouraged virality.

– Max Goldberg

The motivation of the fan to own the music has changed dramatically. Let's take a couple who met not on the night The Who recorded Live at Leeds, but two nights later at the Manchester show. (Jeez, look at my old-ass self referencing an album recorded in 1970!) For them, a shitty cassette that the husband surreptitiously recorded on a Radio Shack portable with a crappy mic is ten times more important *to them* than the hi-fidelity version of the acclaimed Leeds performance.

How do you explain to someone who just finished listening to Johnny Cash's "Live At Folsom Prison" album that you actually *much* prefer a bootleg recording of him singing while ordering large fries and a milk shake from a drive-through on Highway 5 two days later because you were there!

### **IT'S NOT ABOUT THE ARTIST, IT'S ABOUT THE FAN.**

It is the sum of the fan's moments that resonate for them, the waves of energy that surround a point in time that sweeten the harsh tones of a bad recording, reduce the feedback and carry them along on a different journey than a quantitative checklist of tone, tune, and rendition. In this context the live album isn't a yardstick of sound quality. It is simply a memory prompt. The Grateful Dead had it right 20 years ago, encouraging live recording and facilitating exchanges. Stop gate-keeping concerts, supervising vibe, and rationing moments.

RETAIN THIS COPY FOR YOUR RECORDS.

03/12

**THE LIVE ALBUM ISN'T A YARDSTICK OF SOUND  
QUALITY. IT IS SIMPLY A MEMORY PROMPT.**

568

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**Lance Dillon Lyon:** I posted on a forum recently looking for a Pigface bootleg from the Preaching to Perverted Tour in Dallas, TX. The reason this show is so special to me is that I was 17 years old and told all my friends I was going to jump on stage and sing. They all doubted me, but sure enough during Supernaut I did it, and then when you guys played Suck, all sorts of people got on stage. Anyways, I'd love to see it if you have it. Thanks!

## THE ECONOMICS

If you are serious about performing, breaking, sustaining, or just being a great band and winning a larger audience, then you must perform 100 shows a year and maybe many more. If you get into the habit of recording shows and making them available (you see I didn't say *released?*), the tide begins to turn in your favor.

SO WHAT DOES ALL OF THIS MEAN  
TO YOUR BOTTOM LINE AND THE  
SUSTAINABILITY OF YOUR BRAND?

WHO WOULDN'T WANT TO SELL  
THAT MANY LIVE ALBUMS?

### GAS MONEY

10 CD'S \* \$5 = \$50 / SHOW

### VAN MONEY

10 CD'S \* \$5 = \$50 / SHOW  
\$50 \* 100 SHOWS = \$5000 / YEAR

Let's look at three ways you can enhance this strategy:

## PAY HOMAGE TO YOUR INFLUENCES

"Here we are in Athens, Georgia. We want to pay tribute to one of our greatest influences, REM, by performing three of their songs."

## USE "FREE IS THE NEW BLACK"

At your merch booth, list one of your live CDs as a freebie incentive when anyone buys your new shirt (or one of the tour shirts you made too many of...). Remember, **free is the new black**.

## RELEASE A "BEST OF" LIVE



Once you have started to build your live archive you can then selectively edit a "best of" together. It will showcase whatever it is that people seem to like about your band. By recording 100 shows, you'll accumulate more of these moments than you might think, especially if you pay attention to the calendar and use some of the strategies we have mentioned before. It's also an opportunity to showcase your show resume to newer fans by having a "Live on Warped Tour," "Live on the Road with Katy Perry," "Live in London," or "Live in Tokyo" album.

I *know* that not all of these strategies will work for everyone. The approaches need to be tailored to your band, your genre, and your vibe. Be authentic. Use these frameworks to build your own monster.

# SCREEN PRINTING

Teach yourself to screen print and make your own t-shirts. If you have an idea for a shirt you can shoot a screen for it and have the positive made at FedEx Kinko's. It's really easy. You can do ten shirts and if no one likes your shirt, well what have you lost? \$15. You don't have to have ten dozen shirts printed. Once you have the skill of screen printing (which is really easy) you can print up your own band posters too and have something cool to sell. If you do that for six months you'll have people that are big fans of the band looking for the posters from the first show you did because they are super cool. You can print your own scenery, print your own limited edition CD covers or scratch and sniff 7" vinyl. It's that one skill on top of all this other stuff that makes you unstoppable, except by that one person; yourself.

## THE IMPORTANT THING IS THAT MORE PEOPLE NOW HAVE YOUR STUFF.

You'll also be able to print a variety of products specifically suited to *your* audience: DJ bags, work shirts, your pant leg, posters, underwear, CD cases, the flight case for your Dean Guitars twin neck semi acoustic 12 string hollow body custom inlaid fret guitar too!

You can manufacture in smaller quantities. Then, when you've sold five or ten you can put a sign up that says "new design — sold-out!" People will freak out, ask you if you have any hidden in the van, ask if they can buy the display model because now they *know* it's a super cool shirt that everyone wants. You just made the shirt way more desirable. In fact, fuck it. Show up to your next gig with signs that say, "Sorry. New design **sold out!**" Take orders, sizes and email addresses. Let people know that you will email them the info for the next show and their shirt will be ready for them to pick up. Do you know what it's like to print a t-shirt that you *know* has already sold for someone who is going to show up at your show? Mmmmmmm wake up and smell the screen printing ink!

Not only does this skill allow you to you express yourself and experiment in more ways, it removes the iterations, filters, and time between more and better designs and underlines the unique qualities of your band. You can make merchandise so cheaply that you will be able to **give it away** and create more new fans for next time. Then, make more of the stuff that sells and none of the stuff that doesn't!

When you have experimented with various designs, find the *one* that people really like and the sizes that they prefer, then hand that design off to a larger company to manufacture in quantity.

Once you have this skill, you are unstoppable.

Make more of what sells and none of what doesn't.

# MANUFACTURING ON DEMAND

One of the problems you will face as you begin will be NOT knowing (until you have made 144 2XL shirts with the word FUCK<sup>†</sup> on them) that all of your fans are 14-year-old, size small, Christian girls. There are many print on demand sites and businesses that will let you create ‘mock-ups’ on a site – they only make the product when someone orders it. That’s GREAT news in terms of manufacturing RISK, but, you pay a high price for this service. You might, for instance, pay \$8 for a one-off book that would only cost you \$2 if you manufactured 1000 — BUT — the initial cash-flow benefits and the possibilities created by a fictitious range of merch might be helpful in the short term. Once you have the information that everyone likes the red shirt or the green coffee mugs or whatever — you can manufacture them in quantity. Many of these sites also facilitate web store creation too — so it’s a double hit!

WHAT	WHERE*
<b>SHIRTS, APPAREL, HATS MUGS, ETC</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Society6</li> <li>• CafePress</li> <li>• Zazzle</li> </ul>
<b>BOOKS, CDS, &amp; DVDS</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Lulu</li> <li>• CreateSpace (owned by Amazon)</li> <li>• Blurb</li> <li>• CD Baby</li> <li>• Disk Makers</li> </ul>
<b>CDS AND MORE</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• CDBaby (They handle warehousing, selling, and distribution of your CDs.)</li> <li>• Amazon</li> </ul>
<b>GAMES</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The Game Crafter</li> </ul>
<b>GCARDS, PRINTS, &amp; ART</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• ImageKind</li> <li>• OvernightPrints</li> </ul>
<b>UNCATEGORIZED</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• deviantART</li> </ul>

*\*I'm sure there are **loads** more!*

*†This fuck brought to you by David Alsemgeest:*

*In loving memory of Rey Alsemgeest, 2005/07/16 - 2014/08/31*

*"A fuck dedicated to my boy who never got a chance to say it himself."*

# MERCH BOOTH

You are your own chain store!

My newest merch booth is built on a cd case (with rollers) on top of a foldout keyboard stand (*below*).

Three flat screens are mounted on gas pipe to elevate them above anyone standing right in front. There are different movie loops playing on each screen: one has a copy of my China documentary with a splitter for two pairs of cheap airline style headphones, the large screen flashes messages about specials, credit cards and the great prices... There are video backgrounds of the bands, chinese television adverts a feature on my sound library, a video from Snapline and anything that looks good. It wasn't that time consuming to make in iMovie. Three dvd players are in a case underneath all of this so that laptops won't get stolen!

All of these groovy-ness magnetises people into your booth — that's how you can communicate!

You are your own distribution.



1. 2 Small Screens, \$60/each
2. Cabling, \$20
3. Flatscreen, \$120
4. DJ/CD Case, \$120
5. Pipe, \$80
6. DVD Players, \$50/each

.....  
Total: \$610

The merch booth now becomes a magnet inside the venue — moving screens flashing info about a new release or special deals draw people close to see what you have. It's a great investment! Make a movie It's easy to make a quick 30 minute movie loop in iMovie. You can change the prices and once you burn a DVD you don't need to leave your laptop at the merch booth.





# MERCH TIPS

## HAVE TIP JAR WITH HILARIOUS MESSAGE: “GUITAR LESSONS NEEDED! DRUG FUND PLEASE HELP!”

Make people laugh and give them a reason to put 25 cents or a dollar in your tip jar. Soon it'll add up to fill your gas tank, your tummy or, if in fact you are a drug addled idiot, your nose.

This isn't about one massive difference to the overall financial profile of your band, it's just *another* ten to 20 bucks a day coming in — not going out!

## HAVE MORE THAN ONE OF EVERYTHING (T-SHIRTS, CDS, ETC.)

Should the question be: “Would you like to buy this shirt? (yes/no),” OR “WHICH of these two shirts would you like to buy?” The second is a *very* different question! It doesn't include the answer “No” and will make a *huge* difference to your tour and your ability to grow. This is NOT about how much money you can make from merchandise sales. It is about memorializing the fragile vibe that you have created in the room that night and sustaining it until you can return! By having a choice you might sell five more shirts each night. This is another Aim Low, Get High technique. After 100 shows there'll be 500 more people wearing your shit!



# MERCH STRATEGY

I chatted with Keith Center from a DC based folk-core band called The Dreamscape Project. They had an interesting merch idea: Instead of a merch booth, each member of the band is equipped with a shoulder bag packed with a few of each item they have for sale and is charged with the responsibility of mingling and selling.

That's great, but *in addition* to having the roaming band-member-merchandise-assault-squad, set up a merch booth too. People like me need to know where the table is because that's where the merch is. Plus, not everyone wants to deal face to face with a sweaty band member; people are shy, people are timid.



## PRO MERCH TIPS!

1. Roll your shirts and mark sizes on ends with masking tape. You'll sell more shit by selling faster!
2. Don't give change! Overprice your stickers and give them away instead!
3. When the club gouges a high percentage, use two tallies — only settle one. Ouch. (Don't let your promoters read this!)
4. Have more than one fucking shirt, in more than one fucking size and in more than one fucking colour!
5. Have lights and flat screens for your booth! Be awesome and magnetic!
6. You are your own fucking<sup>™</sup> chain store — act like it.
7. Have a tip jar!
8. Never have an asshole behind your booth. It is the main distribution point for groovyness.
9. UPSELL. You only get the DJ Bag when you spend \$100 otherwise it's N F S!
10. If someone doesn't have money, give them shit anyway. You'll catch them next time — you will.
11. For fucks sake, get Square!
12. Never go to the dressing room at the end of the show. Go straight off stage to the booth.
13. Block traffic with your body.
14. Sign everything and give gifts to everyone.
15. Set up your booth where you KNOW it needs to be set up, not where you are told. Fuck that. (Again, don't let your promoters see this!)
16. Help other bands sell their shit. Be nice.
17. Make some of it yourself. There's more of a margin on a \$2.50 shirt and they're easier to give away.
18. Don't take your booth down until the last bartender has left. They have money! And booze!
19. Checkout One-Eyed Doll — Kimberly totally rocks it.
20. A.H.S.E.T.S! Always Have Something Else To Sell!

*"This fuck brought to you by David Alsemgeest:*

*"A fuck dedicated to my beautiful daughter Mei Alsemgeest,  
because she'll never be able to say it herself."*

# LOGO HIJACK

Logo hijacking — hitching a ride on a brand's ubiquity or commenting on the co-opting of shared space — whatever — is a dangerous path to follow. Notable examples that I am familiar with are the Pop Will Eat Itself Pepsi logo hijack surrounded by the lovely phrase “Sample It Loop It Fuck It Eat It.” Don't even ask me how they pulled it off — and even if my advice was to do it, do it, do it, I wouldn't put that in print in this book. Public Enemy, Negativland, you should read about all of their skirmishes with copyright law if you want to tread the line (*there is more great stuff from Greg Kot later in Copyright*). Right here we are talking about logo hijacking.

I've seen a MILLION bands use the Jack Daniel's logo very nicely — they didn't seem to be too aggressive about enforcing their rights — until Patrick Wensink used the tactic for his book, Broken Piano For President. In a huge marketing triumph, the company wrote the nicest cease and desist letter *ever* and even offered a graphic designer to help him create a new design. What a terrific case of word of mouth, brand management and a massive success for Patrick, whose book went to the top of the Amazon satirical book chart! But don't worry — this will never happen to you (or me). If we were to do something like this, then our asses would be sued to a crisp, handed to us on a plate and something else to do with cooking.

I've collected a few great examples over the last few years, but tread carefully. Don't fuck<sup>a</sup> with Disney.

1. Patrick Wensink's book cover created a four-day whirlwind of publicity, a nice cease and desist letter, and #6 on Amazon books.
2. Did Jack Daniel's sue the Man in Black? I don't think so. It's clever and it works — each brand supporting the other.
3. Same could be said for this really nice music/beer mash up... you can see how the brands blurr together and evoke a memory of Blue Velvet, too — good all around.
4. I'm not familiar with Whitechapel — so I can't speak as to if the coupling of their music with the White Castle logo works or doesn't — it just made me want crinkle cut fries.
5. I like the Launchpad in Albuquerque, NM — not sure about tying my brand to Starbucks, but as one shirt out of a few different ones, it gets the point across.
6. The company that worked with PWEI Designers Republic have their work on show at Design Museum near Tower Bridge in London

<sup>a</sup>This fuck brought to you by Northern Pike Productions.

1.



2.



3.



4.



5.



6.



# TOP 10 TIPS TO CONSIDER BEFORE ORDERING BAND MERCH

## CHRISTOPHER MILES

**1 PLAN AHEAD.** Leave yourself plenty of time for print production. Avoid making last-minute decisions that cause rush production charges and higher, expedited shipping fees. Consult your printer about turnaround times and schedule accordingly. If you're working with other vendors, designers or artists on the project, work in some wiggle room on your deadlines, too. Something is always late.

**2 UNDERSTAND YOUR DEMOGRAPHIC.** Whether you are producing goods for sale or promotion, the goal is to relate to your supporters. If you're new to the game, find out what your fans want. If you already have a following and a formula that works, stick with it -- you are keeping track of all your sales, right? If you do it right, you will have free advertising: literal walking billboards to spread your message for months/years to come.

**3 STAY ON TOP OF CURRENT TRENDS.** Sometimes you can add value by simply catching on early to a fad. Selecting garments that are the flavor-of-the-month allows you to demand top dollar for your wares. Tread these waters carefully, know your fan base and what they are doing. Your brand can quickly go "out-of-style" if you ignore the trends your fans are showing.

**4 SELLING MERCHANDISE IS A BUSINESS, TREAT IT LIKE ONE.** Research and budget the profitability of your projects. Make smarter decisions based on what makes good business sense. Some of the most iconic t-shirt designs were 1-color prints on a black, short sleeve t-shirt. Guess what? They were also some of the most lucrative. It's great to expand your options with 8-color or multi-location prints, but start off with simple designs that will at least **DOUBLE** your profits. Track your margins and purchase history, know what is selling and what isn't. Be accountable for every dollar spent.

**5 GOOD DESIGN IS IN THE DETAILS.** It's easy to slap some graphics on an assortment of shirt colors, but why not use the garment color to your advantage and work it into your image. Use the garment color as the background color in your digital files and incorporate the negative space in your graphic - saving both ink and money.

**6 KNOW YOUR COLOR MODE AND PROCESS.** Before you start designing your piece, know what Color mode settings are appropriate for your print process. Full Color printing uses a CMYK color mode while Screen Printing typically uses RGB color mode. Keep in mind that computer monitors will look different from final pieces. If color is important to you request a hard copy color proof. If you have a previously printed garment be sure to provide it to your printer for matching. It will help to reproduce what you already have if you make them aware of your expectations.



**7 MEASURE TWICE, PRINT ONCE.** If your time frame and budget allow, order blank samples to gauge your maximum print size. Be sure to measure the print area of the smallest garments in your order and re-size your print files appropriately. If your garment size ranges are too great for one graphic to accommodate your order may be split and larger quantity discounts would no longer apply. Ask your printer how this would affect your rates and weigh your options.

**8 RESOURCES. RESOURCES. RESOURCES.** There are lots of sources for inspiration on the internet, as well as useful reference tools. Take advantage of them. Begin by perusing portfolios of graphic designers to get the creative juices flowing. There are plenty of services offering free or for purchase stock photography, vector clip-art and fonts. Be aware that if you download from the internet, you should be sure to read and adhere to their terms and conditions on commercial use so you don't infringe on their copyrights.

**9 IF YOU AREN'T A GRAPHIC DESIGNER BY TRADE, ACT LIKE ONE.** No. 1 Rule: Follow Artwork Requirements. By following printer artwork requirements you are ensuring press-ready files are delivered when placing an order, allowing for quick processing and movement to production. Your projects will look better and your turnaround times will be shorter.

Vector art is preferred and will allow your artwork to be re-sized indefinitely without sacrificing print quality. Raster images (normally made in Photoshop or taken with digital cameras) do not allow for easy re-sizing. Pixel-based file formats, such as tiffs, can be re-sized without affecting your print quality provided that when re-sizing they are not re-sampled and resolution is not taken below the recommended ppi/dpi. Tip: If re-sampling is turned on, just remember that you are deleting pixels when you make the image smaller and adding them if you make the image larger (this is called interpolation).

**10 ORDER MORE THAN YOU NEED, BUT DON'T OVERDO IT.** Screen printing is both an art form and a manufacturing process. Despite your printer's best efforts, there will be spoilage. Spoilage can occur when quality control deems one or more pieces irregular or "not of retail quality". Most apparel is ordered specifically for the quantities specified in your order. If a piece is deemed irregular, it is common for printers to credit you for the damaged pieces if it falls below their threshold for setting the press up again and waiting for the new apparel to arrive. So if you need exactly 24 shirts for exactly 24 people, be sure to order a few extras of each size and ensure that no one is left without a shirt.

On the other hand, don't order more than what you can sell in a reasonable time frame. **The last thing you want is your capital tied up in dead-stock**, turning your risk into a liability. Sure, the unit costs are cheaper the more you order but as long as your profit margins are at, or above your projected levels then your investment is a sound one. Submit multiple quotes in the planning stages of your project to figure out where your price breaks are and what the advantages are of ordering more or less.



#### Illustrator Tips:

- Outline all fonts and text
- Embed any linked files

#### Photoshop Tips:

- Rasterize font layers
- Avoid "flattening" your image
- Create a separate layer to show your garment color



# MAKING MERCH ON NO BUDGET

## KIMBERLY FREEMAN

I knew from the beginning that merchandise would be the most important part of marketing my band, since I didn't have the money to advertise in other ways. I figured that if people were willing to pay ME to wear my band's name, I'd better find a way to make that available to them.

Any piece of fabric or clothing that I could find, anything someone else didn't want, that I found on the side of the road, that I could dumpster dive, stitch together or sacrifice from my closet became band apparel. I ended up pretty much making all of my own clothes into merch.

I started by using markers to make patches and put our name on t-shirts, underwear, hats, jeans, shoes, bed sheets (for patches) and anything else I could get my hands on, sometimes from the dollar store when I had a few bucks, and sometimes just a free score. I hand-stitched patches onto anything that wouldn't take the ink and sold the patches by themselves for \$1 each. I sold everything else for \$5.

I started getting creative with ugly clothes, cutting them up and reforming them into cute punk rock girl t-shirts, skirts, bandanas, hats, purses and more.

I then discovered the wonders of bleach.

I found that if the fabric was mostly cotton, I could bleach my band's name onto about anything dark. I came up with the idea when I saw a commercial for a bleach "pen," used for laundry stains. I got one for \$3 and started drawing onto t-shirts and trousers. This worked really well, but I had to find a cheaper way. The pen only lasted as long as a Sharpie in the end, and I was determined to keep my prices at \$5 for apparel.

I then thought to use bleach, straight out of the jug, which ran \$1 or less per gallon from the dollar store. I used q-tips, paint brushes and anything I could gather to paint bleach onto the fabric with. Almost anything I pulled out of the trash became stencil material.

### PEOPLE LOVED THE CLOTHING. IT WAS LIKE HAVING MY OWN LITTLE FASHION LINE.

Everything was unique and adorable, recycled and really punk rock. I sold enough at our shows to start buying t-shirts to bleach and hats and purses to paint from the thrift store.

Basically any mostly cotton black or dark-colored t-shirt that I could find for under \$2 could be turned inside-out and made into a band shirt with bleach. These went REALLY well. People were so excited to find out what was on the "inside" of their One-Eyed Doll t-shirt and stoked that it was a one-of-a-kind, that they were buying several at a time! Some fans would come to every show and get a new t-shirt every time. This was also before we came up with our logo, so each was really unique. It became kind of a competition to see who had an "earlier" One-Eyed Doll shirt, because you could see the evolution of the logo taking place throughout the different batches I'd made.



The thrift stores and dollar stores also had toys that were basically free. I took dolls and turned them into, “One-Eyed Dolls,” defacing and tattooing them with Sharpies, puffy paint, burning and sharp objects and sold them for \$10 each. They became so popular that I could never keep enough on hand. By this time, PJ Evans, who is now my drummer was helping me make shirts. We got really good at it.

I was at Walgreens one night and discovered 5-for-\$10 blank t-shirts. That became my new shirt hook-up when the thrift stores didn’t have enough, or if I couldn’t find them cheap enough.

Now we order our blank t-shirts online from a company. We still get them for around \$2 each and bleach them by hand. I also get blank trucker hats for just as cheap from the same place. We finally came up with a logo that would be really easy to bleach and paint by hand if needed but also looks good in print on posters and stuff. It’s nice, because we sell so many t-shirts now that I can’t take ten minutes on each of them anymore. I can make about 400 shirts in a day this way, and about 200 hats.

We still sell our t-shirts and hats for \$5 at shows, and for a little more online now that we have a website. I still make other specialty items, like toys and jewelry, too, just for shows.

Other bands make \$5 profit on their \$10+ shirts, but we sell five to fifteen times more shirts on average at a live show at \$2.50 - \$3 profit per shirt/hat. Not only that, but people often buy more than one or demand to pay more when they realize that the shirt they’re buying was hand-bleached by the band, or that their new hat was puffy painted by me.

Another cool thing is that people really get really attached to the shirt or hat that they bought and wear it a lot more, brag to their friends, etc. Sometimes people are inspired to make their own, too, which is really awesome.

We did a run of screen printed t-shirts once. A local mom and pop printed them for us for free to put their info on the back. They saw people every single day wearing One-Eyed Doll t-shirts, including a lot of musicians and decided it would be wise to advertise with us. This concept has really spread to other aspects of our merchandise now, too, like posters and hand bills. We do still stick mainly to the bleach shirts, because they’re just cooler.

We now fund entire tours, runs of posters, stickers and albums on \$5 bleached t-shirts and puffy-painted hats.





# BUNDLING TICKETS, MERCHANDISE AND COMMON SENSE

## BILLY GEOGHEGAN

One thing I have been talking to independent artists about is “fan club” ticketing and how it can really work for them. I hate the term “fan club”. Not only does it remind me of The Bay City Rollers, but it also disguises the benefits that taking control of some of your ticketing offers. For that reason, I tend to refer to this as just “advanced ticketing”, but that’s enough about my hang ups.

When booking shows, it is common to get 10-15% of the potential ticket sales to sell to your fans, or community, anyway you want. These tickets usually are designated to be either sold or returned to the venue/promoter before tickets become available to the general public through the venue’s or promoter’s ticketing company. This usually must be agreed to at the time of booking. It is not usually a problem, but you will occasionally run into stumbling blocks. When you meet resistance from a venue or promoter about this, I recommend pushing for it to a point but, be careful not to piss off the people who want to book you.

There are few reasons that make advanced ticketing worthwhile. One is that it gives you a reason to talk about a show or tour, with your community or fan base, much earlier than you normally would. If you were to simply announce a show three months in advance, there would be little reason for anyone to pay attention. But if there is a limited amount of VIP tickets or something offered with the advanced ticket purchase, it

becomes more noteworthy and memorable. Whether or not people buy advanced tickets, the event has been acknowledged and will be familiar and welcomed by the time the second round of promotion comes (by either you or the venue/promoter).

That being said, there will be some people who will buy advanced tickets if there is a reason. This could be that they are coming from a distance and want to be sure they can get in. It could be that you are just that good and sell out every show (good for you). But much more likely, it is because they like your music and want to support you.

If you are lucky enough to have people like this, why not make the most of it. You can sell the ticket and offer a discounted copy of your new album, t-shirt, DVD or a combination of any of the above. You can even offer some VIP package at a ridiculous price... you never know. Note that the value of the ticket must be kept to face value, or what the venue/producer will charge. The extra charge is for the extra merchandise/value you give in the package. It is thought that if people are buying something online that they are more likely to add on to the purchase if they are getting a special deal. This also allows more timid folks to buy your merchandise without the friction of having to approach your merch table at the show.

**BILLY  
GEOGHEGAN**



**'MUSIC DOER' AT  
BROWN PAPER TICKETS**

@BillyGeog

You can choose the best option for delivering the merch. You may choose to ship it immediately, which gets your new album heard earlier than if purchased at your show. And if it gets passed around at all, before your show (and it is liked), people are more likely to attend than if they never heard you at all.

If you don't want to, or just can't ship out merch to your customers, you can have them pick up their orders at the show. At least you will know the minimum number of items you need and where on the tour you will need them.

It may seem like a lot of work to sell an extra CD or T-shirt here and there, but once you get a method down for doing this, it will take very little time. And the more people see this and get used to it, the more comfortable they will become with ordering. These days, every sale is important. So even if you only sell a couple advance ticket/merch bundles per show, they add up. Plus there's a chance that those sales may not have occurred the day of the show.

Those who do not have this infrastructure will need to get something in place, or find a service that can fulfill their needs, and not take too big a piece of the already small pie. This can be tough when you are not guaranteed a ton of sales right away. There are plenty of services for ticketing and merchandise fulfillment, but most of them charge a set up fee, have big fees for your customers, take a large percentage of the sales or all of the above. Brown Paper Tickets is probably the best service in the U.S. for artists and small labels to use for implementing the concept of advanced ticket bundled with merch sales. I am not saying this because I work for the company. I work for the company because of their business practices. They have no minimum sales requirements, it is completely free for the artist/label and their services and tools are great.

No matter how you do it or what service you use (if any), it really does make sense to take control of your advanced ticketing and turn it into additional promotion revenue. In fact, for truly independent artists, it makes sense to take control of as much of the business side of your career as possible, as long as it makes sense. You need help and a team, but the more you keep in house, the more revenue streams are open for you to tap into. In these times of music business instability, you need to have all the options you can get.



**Percentage is the most important element to discount for a sale. People won't travel across town for a 5% discount on a BMW (\$2140) but will for 50% off socks (\$5)!**

# ACCIDENTAL MERCHANDISE

## JUSTIN PEARSON

After the Jerry Springer Show, this boring image of The Locust as drug addicts, rock stars, and assholes started going around, and our strange merchandise didn't help dispel this. But the merch that got people talking was created by accident. A few years back, Mark McCoy had a job for some promotional company. He would travel all over the states giving out crappy products for corporations. One of the promotions was for a Proctor and Gamble makeup line. He was supposed to give out these compact mirrors on college campuses. When Mark and his coworker arrived in San Diego, they were sick of the job and figured out that they could just throw the compacts away and fuck off on this company's dollar. Well, being the entrepreneur that I am, I figured out a way to use the compacts. I took ten thousand of them and ordered round stickers with the Locust logo on them. Once we put them on the top of the compact over the product logo it became a Locust compact. On tour, we quickly sold out of our new accidental merchandise. Unfortunately, this piece of merch became known as the "Locust coke mirror" and we got an image as being cokeheads. I have never done coke in my life. Never will. It's not like I was doing lines backstage and had this great idea to make merchandise for our band. Plus, I'm pretty sure that you can't really snort coke off a small compact anyhow. But somehow I still get labeled as a cokehead. Even on the last Some Girls tour, a slew of bullshit hardcore message boards claimed I was "coked out of my mind."





# 16

## THE STUDIO

Your relationship and understanding of what the studio is will change with time. At first, it is an obstacle. You have to try and maintain your focus and get your songs finished in the face of a million distractions. Later, it will be a friend and eventually an instrument itself.

Professional studios are setup for everyone to get a good result. They are generally *not* setup to have quirky things happen. Idiosyncratic stuff needs to be enhanced and underlined, not smoothed over. This is the antithesis of originality.

Even if you do end up finishing the album in a larger professional room, home recordings will give you the understanding of the songs and the process.

If you like something it doesn't matter if it's the \$5 or the \$10,000 version. One of those things is right. It doesn't matter if it stands up in the museum of every sound ever recorded. It needs to be right for you and right for the song. And if it's right and it was recorded on a micro-cassette or your

**The Beatles took 16 hours to record their first album and that included two extra singles!**

grandma's answering machine — it's right. Right is right... right? A professional studio might simply try and make you sound like other bands out there, conforming to an industry standard.

## STANDARD IS NOT STAND-OUT!

What are you recording? Why?

Of course, eventually, you will want to have a collection of great songs for your ALBUM, but, before you create some huge momentum-stopping tasks for yourself that's too soon in the life cycle, the development curve of your band and your music, just start with an EP's worth of music, ok? Record 5 or 6 songs with the intention of finishing 3 for a great first EP.

To choose the songs, play some shows and record those shows. Have a video camera pointed at the audience so that you can see their reaction. Slowly have your list of "best songs" *evolve*. Be aware — YOU ARE GOING TO LIKE YOUR NEWEST SONGS MORE. That's just the way it is. I cannot count the number of times that I have been in the pre-production stages of an album and, by accident, (although now I am on the lookout for it) someone mentions a couple of songs that always go down well — I will *always* ask — "well, why aren't we recording these songs?" The fact that *everyone* in Duluth has heard these songs 500 times doesn't mean that people in Illinois or Florida have even heard of the *band* — let alone gotten sick of them.

## IT'S NOT ABOUT YOU HAVING THE MOST FUN.

When you are recording, make notes and document the process. It's good to educate yourself about the progression of songs and the decisions you made, but it is also great content for your rabid fans. You're not huge and not many people care very much right now, but sometime soon, more people will and you'll be pleased you saved this stuff.

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# CHOOSING A STUDIO

This is a very competitive time for any studio still in business. More than the equipment, it's more a case of the right person doing it.

## A TALENTED PERSON CAN DO A BETTER JOB WITH MEDIOCRE EQUIPMENT THAN AN IDIOT CAN DO WITH THE MOST AMAZING SHIT.

You can EASILY compare equipment, facilities and prices to start the process of familiarizing yourself with what is available in your area; understand what is important for your band. Some studios are setup to be all things to all people — some are setup for great drum sounds, large bands or have a vast selection of different guitar setups. There is no reason that you can't mix and match studios to get what you think you need for the result you are aiming for. Take an Applebee's salad bar approach — have a nibble of everything. Don't be afraid to negotiate. Offer 50% off an advertised rate. Remember, you don't need a fucking<sup>2</sup> studio any more — they need you.

<sup>2</sup>*This fuck brought to you by Chanda Unmack:*

*"This FUCK is dedicated to all those who gave one about me. Cheers."*

**If you are writing from your bedroom your first recordings can be demo quality — your quality can grow with the size of your fan base — they'll feel like they helped you blow up.**

— *Sep V*

**Fun fact: Led Zeppelin's debut album was recorded in just 36 hours. Read that again.**

— *Eric Alper*

**Preparation is key to any and every studio experience. Anytime I book out time and prepare to start pushing record when the clock is ticking, I always ADVANCE THE GIG. Once the time is booked and confirmed and the deposits made doesn't mean the next thing you should do is just show up.**

— *Howie Beno*

Bring your session files that you've created to the studio with you (make sure to contact the studio to find out session specs like bit-depth, sample rate and file format before bringing your sessions in) and I won't have to spend an hour or more of your time figuring out the tempos for your songs and building session templates. So, already you've saved at least \$187.50 on engineer fees!

Also, if you want to record pop (popular, radio-ready) music, you're probably going to need to record to a metronome anyway in order to keep a steady tempo. It's much easier to record to a click, and simultaneously get an emotionally engaging performance, if you have these scratch tracks as a guide. Plus, you can make mixes of the scratch tracks with the metronome and you can practice playing to the tempo before you even get into the studio.

— *Tristan James*

# PREPARATION FOR THE STUDIO

BE PREPARED! If you aren't, then whoever you have chosen because of their high skill level to help make a better album will be involved in weeding through shitty lyrics, helping your drummer to play more simply, harder, or to a click.

- The best way to save time, money, and most importantly, get a better result, is simple—be prepared and rested!
- Make a checklist. How horrible to realize as you fire up the speaker for a listen through that you forgot to lay down bass on two songs! Fuck!<sup>18</sup>
- Drummers — practice to a click.
- Everyone else — help the drummer practice to a click!
- Don't be an ass. Don't be loud in the studio; it is not a show. It is a place of work where you are looking around to see what you can do to enable someone else's inspiration (I'm assuming that you have done everything you can think of to enable your own). If you are off your game then pissing around for a day getting drum sounds is going to disable everyone's magic and your budget.
- Hire the producer to do 'pre-production' with the band in rehearsals. This will work out much cheaper and better in the long run. You can sift through problems in a more relaxed atmosphere and have some down time to digest and discuss changes when you aren't on the studio tick tock dollar clock.
- Some song or arrangement changes need time to get programmed into everyone's head.

## TIME CAN BE YOUR FRIEND OUTSIDE OF THE STUDIO — IT'S YOUR ENEMY WITHIN IT.

- If you are recording at home (and you should!) make sure you archive your recordings in as professional a manner as you can for future fan-only releases and your own process.
- Even if you do end up finishing the album in a larger professional room, home recordings will give you the understanding of the songs and the process.

## PSYCHOLOGICAL

- Be on the lookout for insecurities and the possibility of people doing stuff to take the edge off and taking too much of the edge off.
- Meetings, discussions, and preparation can really enable some important band magic. As you move through the recording process, remember that you are all working as a team to make this happen.
- Once the drum tracks are done, the drummer can be a runner or document some of the recording process with a small inexpensive camera, a diary, or crayon.

## EQUIPMENT

- The night before a big session is not the time for someone to get new gear. You won't be familiar with it and it's inevitable quirks.
- Tune all stringed instruments.
- If you use batteries, make sure you have plenty of them. Don't assume the studio has them.

If the chorus of your song doesn't belong on a t-shirt, then maybe it doesn't belong in the chorus of your song.

<sup>18</sup>This fuck brought to you by San Diego Music Foundation.

## SINGERS

- Have all of your lyrics typed, printed, and a few copies available. I use them as a song map and springboard to discuss lyrical content/direction and it makes it easy to highlight words or phrases that need to be reworked. This will save you time and money. I also like to aspire to have a few t-shirt phrases within the lyrics, so being able to see the printed word is a plus and saves time.

## GENERAL STUDIO PREPARATION

Don't be afraid to experiment – with sounds, with words, with textures, with everything! **There is no right or wrong.** You aren't paying \$100 an hour for a studio and a jaded, washed-up, bitter engineer's opinion about your music, so it's just about how much time, energy and thought you want to put in. Be careful — you can completely overwork a song. Keep saving versions. Remember what you liked about a song or an idea in the beginning. Why did you move forward with this one over that one? Are those elements still there? Is it still interesting to you? Choose those elements and showcase them; as Geordie the guitarist from Killing Joke would say, "Feature it or FUCK IT!" If something is sonically getting in the way, then decide if it is one of these important sounds, and make a decision. You can always go back to an earlier version if you decide you have taken a wrong turn. Sometimes wrong turns are good, sometimes they are indeed, wrong turns.

Arbitrary elements — "it's always gone like that" isn't a reason.

Check to see if your arrangements are the way you would want them, or are they just the way they were at the first rehearsal?

Why is the introduction so long?

Do you feel that at any point you are marking time? Or do the elements tumble into each other making another listening mandatory?

The only bad news with all of this independence is that not only are you unplugged from all of the invoices from commercial studios and the unwanted opinions about your music and your sounds, you are also unplugged from some of the wanted and needed opinions, too. So try and make up for this by reading some home recording magazines, blogs and others for tips. Talk to others online about getting sounds, working song structures, etc. and **listen...** use your ears and your brain. You can *always* listen to anything you want and A/B (switching between two sounds or songs to analyze what's similar and what's different about them). You can always improve.

*There is no right or wrong.*

## KEEP EARLY MIXES.

Sometimes an early version of a song has some elements that you are experimenting with that, for some reason, don't make it onto the final version. Sometimes this is because the pieces just don't work for the song, sometimes it's because you're not into the vibe at the time. Very often these early versions can sound like re-interpretations of the finished track when in fact they are pre-interpretations.



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## BEFORE YOU LEAVE THE STUDIO

- Always take a little extra time to push the main vocal up 1-2 db higher (if you're not sure what this means, it's like pushing the fader one inch higher) — then do that again.
- Run a mix with all of the vocals muted and a mix with just the vocals. This way you can have some options once you have left the studio — vocals up mix, vocals down mix, instrumental mix, etc.

## THE WINDOW OF PERCEPTION IN THE STUDIO (AND ELSEWHERE)

The brain is a weird and wonderful thing — it knows all kinds of things better than you think.

I started to realize many years ago that sitting in the middle of the stereo field, straining to hear inconsistencies in a mix was counterproductive to critical problem solving listening. Sure, sit there in the stereo field. Look at your track sheet. Examine everything that's going on, but also be aware that when you first sit down in the studio (after a day off), or the first time you hear the song in a car, things will pop out into your brain. You might be surprised to hear an out of tune vocal, a drum stumble, something weird. But, here's where the brain kicks in. If the something that is wrong is going to take time and money and might not even be possible to fix, your rational left brain might start to play tricks on you... Is it really out of tune? Are you sure? Listen again. Are you really sure? By the third time you have listened, **you have lost your objectivity** and you're starting to get used to it. Try this with a song that you think is too fast or too slow, by the third time through if you play it at the correct speed the real, correct mix is going to start to sound too fast/too slow. This is the definition of MINDFUCK!

So, be aware of the opportunity that this refreshed, first time listen provides. Make notes, then trust your notes. Don't second-guess yourself! Malcolm Gladwell talks about this in [BLINK](#) in a much better way than I just did. Listen to your bomb-sniffing dog.

I have a video game in the reception area of the studio. I use it to occupy 50% of my brain. Any insights on mixes that leap out at me during game play I write down and act upon.

Do stuff you're not supposed to do. Sonic reflections sound cool. Record in strange places. Drums sound awesome in bathrooms! Put a micro cassette recorder under the drum set. It could sound like drums recorded through a phone. You can "tape scratch" as you play them back. Get Brian Eno's [Oblique Strategies](#) — great cards with suggestions to unblock your creativity.

☞ *This fuck brought to you by Megan Grady:  
"My name is Megan L. Grady and I approve of this fuck."*

## THE STUDIO COMMITTEE

You have to be careful — next thing you know you'll have a bunch of friends singing backup vocals and the bass player's coke dealer playing bagpipes for a reduced session fee of \$1000. **KNOW** what you want, be open to suggestions, listen, absorb then put on the facemask and the welding goggles and do the thing that *you* want to do. *Nothing* created by a committee is ever any good ever. Do not be afraid to say, "Yeah, you can sure play a mean xylophone... wow! It's not what I am looking for right now, but I have your information? Thanks!" You just need to get your basic ideas out of your head so you can listen to them — *then* you'll think about embellishments and changes... OK?

I listened to a band's first EP recorded at a super nice studio. Someone suggested a 3-piece horn section. It made perfect sense and sounded great — **but** — what about the next move? The live show when someone who *loves* the EP comes to the show... no horns? You can always add, but it's difficult to take away.

## BASS

Run the bass into a direct line in before it goes to anything else (amp, pedals, etc.). That way if something does not turn out right, you can go back and amp up the direct bass signal. See Murphy's Law.

Guitarist will be less reluctant to let you do this, but do it anyways and don't tell them! You'll be glad you did.

## DRUMS

Play the drums harder! Beat the shit out of them! For drums to sound forceful, you need more force in the front end to come out the other end. These kind of things can't be fixed with computers. Intent can't be adjusted with ProTools!

Pretend you're playing a live show! *That* much energy!

**A record producer is a psychologist, and that's probably your job, actually, more than just worrying about the music.**

- Butch Vig

## GRAVITY KILLS

Should I tell the story of an egotistical lead singer and a veteran producer standing in the producer's kitchen firing F-bombs at each other because both of them were wanting the project to be its very best and the singer not fucking realizing it?

**If you are working with a producer, let the producer fucking produce.** You hired the guy because you wanted to make a great record, not to tell you that your shit doesn't stink.

I think the hardest part of the recording process is not becoming immersed in the contextualization of the music you are working on or recording. In my opinion, recording music is about capturing a moment in time, a vibe, a feeling and a performance. Perfection is for the timid and the weak. I would much rather listen to something I believe in than some overly polished rubbish.

- Jeff Scheel

# CHOOSING A PRODUCER

## WHAT IS A PRODUCER?

It's not your producer's job to help you make the album you have in your head. It's that person's job to help you make the album you didn't know you could. By definition you are going to be surprised by some of the suggestions. *Get ready* to not feel ready.

In very simple terms, a producer is someone who has made a lot more albums than you and, in the right situation, will help you avoid many rookie mistakes. In a good scenario, they will help you communicate what's best about your unique vision: maximizing the positive, minimizing the negative. When you are making an album, you are trapped in a labyrinth — like a maze made out of hedges in one of those old whodunnit movies. You might have a cynical attitude going into it, but after an hour or so, you are starting to panic, have difficulty breathing and ready to cry. You are making wrong turn after wrong fucking<sup>a</sup> turn and going past the same ornate lamp post time and time again...

A producer — the right producer for you — is the guy sitting on the really high chair with, literally, a different perspective on your situation, the ability to see the way forwards and guide you.

In some cases, the producer will be a liaison between you and the label (whether you know it or not, the producer wants to have a relationship with the label). In the best case scenario, they can help you make the most dangerous, mind-blowing shit you have ever conceived of, while giving the label a few tracks to plug into whatever their promotional ideas are.

It is important that you take your time to choose the right producer. Some bands get pulled into an argument (all bands, really), but if *every* decision with your producer turns into a debate and a vote, you have negated the role of the producer. If you have very strong ideas about your sound, direction, vibe, song length, lyrics etc and are confident that there are no other viewpoints that might make more sense and help to communicate your vision, you might be better off just establishing a relationship with a good engineer and doing it yourself.

**First, gather information** — of all kinds. What bands do you like? Listen to their albums; listen to other bands like them. Look at the names of the producers and the studios involved. Soon you will start to form a broader picture of who is doing the work you like.

**Educate yourself** — it's not going to cost you anything but your time. You might start to see that most of the albums in your genre are produced by the same person, the same team or recorded at the same studios.

You don't have to concentrate on trying to find the best, most amazing magical producer for you. Sometimes it's easier to weed out the bad ones. You aren't just listening to sounds. (Don't get pulled into the world of technical stuff.) Just stick to good/bad, like/don't like. You might not know why, but that's ok. It's just important that you know what you do like so when someone starts explaining to you all the technical reasons you are wrong, you can still say "OK, but I still like it."

**Read blogs** — watch YouTube interviews with producers. Read, too! Then see about how you can get a piece of this experience on your recording.

<sup>a</sup>*This fuck brought to you by Tristan.*

You might not be able to afford your number one choice (and the studio that they are going to want to work in) but you might be able to use their facilities with a trusted second stringer and ask them to oversee. Geographical location can also be an issue – either good or bad.

Once you have secured the right producer, I'd suggest an early meeting, maybe at a rehearsal. This is also called pre-production. The producer should be able to guide you through some problems and areas to work on, and you will have the time to get your head around it.

Come with as many songs as professionally recorded as you can. You can get a small interface that can do an okay job of this or spend some time in your rehearsal space changing levels and making an okay live recording. If you have 20 songs, have the producer choose priority areas to work on.

Here's the rule for me; the song wins. Always. If it demands operatic vocals *and* bagpipes, it wins (and good luck). The song needs to find itself, even if that means you don't play on it. You have to serve the song once it's out there, lying on the floor.



Ryan Lykken

## GEORGE MASSENBURG



TECHNICAL EXPERT  
GEORGE MASSENBURG  
LABS

@gmlllc

# 10 THINGS TO DO BEFORE GOING INTO THE STUDIO

## GEORGE MASSENBURG

**1 MOST IMPORTANTLY, BE PREPARED TO LET GO OF THE OUTCOME.** Let the song find itself in the studio. You have to go for what sounds great in that moment, not necessarily what's true to the songwriter's demo, or even your mates' precious ideas.

**2 YOU CAN'T DO TOO MUCH PREPRODUCTION.** The more attention to detail you have ahead of time, the less likely you'll get stuck wasting time in the studio. This is not to say you must rehearse your songs to death; going over and over the same material the same way can be soooo fucking boring, but listening to and evaluating your material is as important as playing...maybe even more so. Never, never, never stop trying to make it better.

**3 EXPERIMENT WITH ALTERNATE GUITAR AND KEYBOARD VOICINGS — ESPECIALLY ONES THAT YOU'D ORDINARILY AVOID BECAUSE THEY'RE OUT OF YOUR COMFORT ZONE.** Always critically listen for how voicing of certain instruments support the vocals. When listening, dig deeply into the vague or unclear ideas & directions; ask guitar and keyboard players to spell "creative" voicings - "Chopsticks" is for 4-year-olds. Help your mates with arrangement & solo ideas. Beware of, "trust me, I'll get it together as soon as we're in the studio." Don't count on it; have a "fall-back" part or plan in case you aren't inspired in the moment.

**4 HAVE A REFERENCE.** Everybody has favorite recordings. If you're using an outside engineer, or are in the studio with any engineer for the first time, have that recording in your hand, preferably a CD or higher-resolution file of something that you really like the sound of. Should you hope that your band (or project) is going to sound like your reference, make sure it's a practical reference. You're not going to sound like Coldplay without the orchestra.

**5 REVIEW THE STUDIO'S EQUIPMENT LIST.** Make sure the studio has the gear that you think you're going to need. And remember in a multi-studio facility, one has to 'book' the more popular items, like C-12s. Keep in mind that often when a special piece of gear is on a studio's equipment list it only means that it's rentable, not included (and at Capitol, make sure you book the good EMT140, and the "Quad" live chamber before Al Schmitt does).

**6 IF YOU HAVE WRITTEN MUSIC.** If you're bringing parts for a player, make very sure that he or she reads (mind you, many of the best players don't, such as Jerry Douglass). And if you're not sure of how it's going to sound, record some synth work-ups of the parts using whatever sample libraries you can get your

Write down keys and tempos (go get a BPM tool for your iPhone) just in case you forget.

hands on. Whatever you're thinking, excellent players will have better articulation and execution, but it doesn't hurt to play it safe. Watch out for the really impossible-to-play-in-tune instruments, like English Horn. And if you have an idea for an Ulean Pipes (uh, actually any bag pipes) overdub, keep in mind that they play in very limited keys, and are never in tune. Not even close.

**7 BE PREPARED WITH MATERIAL (SONGS).** Don't place all your hopes - and/or all your work-up efforts - on one (or even two) tunes. In addition to your "firm" tunes, have several more written and rehearsed, ready to work on.

Be objective about the participation of outside songwriters at your recording session. Invariably, they have themselves crafted a demo and they *know* that if you guys just perform and record it faithfully, it will change the world. It won't. They need to let go of their production ideas, they just don't know it. It's a RECORD - your record. Even Bob Dylan needed The Byrds. It needs to be bigger than the songwriters' initial vision.

When you record outside material, come up with your own arrangements and approach. Keep in mind that when you substantially change a registered song you are obliged to ask the songwriter's permission to do so.

**8 BE PREPARED WITH SPARES AND EXTRAS.** Have plenty of spare expendables: extra picks, guitar cables, batteries, full sets of electric & acoustic guitar strings, spare drum heads for every drum — top & bottom heads *and* kick heads.

It never hurts to have alternate instruments, if possible. If your song is performed with alternate tunings for, say, your acoustic guitar, it helps to have a second or third acoustic already tuned and ready to go.

**9 SORT OUT TRANSPORTATION FOR EVERYBODY.** In general, make sure everyone has a way to get to the studio on time. In NYC, make sure you plan around the NYC Marathon, any United Nations sessions, and all visits by the President or the Pope. The rule of anticipating traffic applies even more so to Amsterdam and Rome.

**10 PLAN AN EATING STRATEGY FOR THE SESSION, AND FOR AS LONG AS ONE MIGHT BE IN THE STUDIO.** Sort out who eats what, who hates what, and who might have a special need to be considered (such as "Steve hates mayonnaise"). Discuss possible break times for eating. Anticipate flexibility. Work out a budget. Avoid lima beans, etc...



One that sticks with me... when on tour with Larrie Londin, he told me that "ten minutes early is on time." (We were always the first two in the lobby.) Good advice whether on the road or in the studio.

— Rich Denhart

# PROJECT STUDIO

## JULIAN HERZFELD

### KNOW WHAT YOU WANT — STUDY!

Plan out your musical goals. Setting up a project studio can be expensive, so know what you want to achieve and purchase the correct gear. Do not make any expensive mistakes!

### AN AWFUL LOT CAN BE DONE WITH JUST A LAPTOP.

### LEARNING CURVE

Be prepared to work at it. Music technology is another type of instrument and the learning curve can be steep but the rewards are worth it. It may take years to become confident in all the skills you need to record, mix, master and produce your band's own material. Indulge in some research or enroll on a course. There are lots of courses available — from performance-based courses that include music technology to private tuition. Some of the best recordings I ever made were done in a crappy project studio in someone's basement or loft.

### THE ENGINEER'S SKILLS

An engineer's skills are "transferable." I have worked in some of the premier rooms in the world and some of the worst. And I coped. Sure, I loved working in Power Station, Hit Factory and the Record Plant... Engineering is the craft of capturing the performance, no matter where, and playing with the cards you are dealt. Give me an SSL, a Neve or a Mackie and I can give you a product you'll be happy with.



# CONSIDER RECORDING AT A SCHOOL!

## VICTORIA GIROT

Many media schools have the best recording studios around these days in terms of equipment. If you are able to allocate more time to recording and can deal with enthusiastic students learning as they go, you could get a terrific and very low cost result.

It's usually free, and most Music Technology schools have the option of recording posted on their website will have a contact to either email or a number to call. The band should call or email the contact, let them know the name of the artist, style they play, instruments and amplifiers they would be bringing in, and a number or email to contact the band. The contact at the school will be able to answer any questions regarding the session, such as "what kind of gear do you have? Can we record to tape? Can we bring food in the studio? Can we record all at once and then do overdubs later?"

It's students who are recording the band, so the band should expect slight mistakes, or certain experiences, (like the first week the instructor may have to spend more time one on one with students, instructing them on proper mic placements to get a specific sound, or maybe running the signal between rooms via tie lines.)

Bands should estimate to record 3-5 songs, depending on the length of the session and the preparedness of the band. If they come in with a set song order and click track speeds, it makes the session flow much faster. If they come in terribly un-rehearsed and expecting this to be a party (because "Yay! We're in a real studio! We're rock stars!") this is not the environment for them.

If the students enjoy working with them, and make progress, the band is welcome to come back for another session. If we have to ask the artist to leave because they're causing problems, they will usually not be allowed back in the facilities for quite some time, if ever.

Maybe you will connect with a student who could become your go-to engineer!

And remember — BRING YOUR OWN HARD DRIVE.



This is also a GREAT strategy for a band — become a valuable teaching tool and the school will want you back!



# CHEAP RECORDING: IS IT A MYTH?

## TOM WHITTAKER

Here's a few bands that have made good, cheap studio recordings – all examples are either readily available or online for free:

**Nirvana (Bleach):** Endino billed the band thirty hours of recording at a cost of \$606.17. Nirvana began recording with a five hour session on December 24, 1988. The band recorded again on December 29th through the 31st, on January 14th, and January 24th. (Note: They were recording on Christmas Eve and New Years Eve. This band was dedicated!)

**Future Ghosts (Spring):** Recorded on a friend's iMac (through the 1/8th inch jack out of necessity!). The drums were recorded by a friend of the band – who happened to be a drummer and recording student – at his house. The vocals were recorded at a project studio.

Their second record was recorded at home with an iMac, PreSonus 2 channel interface, Rode NT1 microphone, Apple Logic Express and GarageBand, Propellerhead's Reason and Reason Drumkits, and their instruments (bass, guitar, guitar effects, etc). They re-tracked guitars, vocals, and tambourine/percussion at a medium sized studio to improve the sound.

**Deathboy:** All early recordings were recorded with Rebirth, Cubase, and the gooseneck mic that came with his Sound Blaster sound card. (And they sound great!)

So, if you're inspired to get to work on your own album, here's a list of the essential home recording equipment you'll need to get started:

- Computer
- Recording interface
- DAW (Digital Audio Workstation. It DOES NOT matter which one. Whichever is easiest for you to use and has the features you need will work just fine.)
- Microphone

**WHERE TO SKIMP / WHERE TO SAVE:** A Shure SM57 microphone never sucks. It's probably not the best mic for any application, but it's cheap and, again, it never sucks.

**DON'T BE AFRAID TO EXPERIMENT!**

Lab Report's debut album was \$26 and One-Eyed Doll painted a producer's house in exchange for recording their album.

So what if it doesn't sound like whatever the big labels are putting out. Listen to Psychocandy, Loveless, Throbbing Gristle, etc. Those records are unique and beautiful. Don't compromise your sound, but don't be afraid to sound different. The Beatles recorded their drum tracks with 2 mics. Led Zeppelin's "When The Levee Breaks" used three drum mics and was recorded in a stairwell.

**DESPITE WHAT THE GUY WHO RUNS THE \$300/HR STUDIO TELLS YOU,  
THERE IS NO WRONG WAY TO RECORD ANYTHING.**



## WHAT, WHEN, AND WHERE

- Large format - drums, piano, and group strings.
- Medium format - guitar amps/acoustic, vocals, horns, and individual strings.
- Project format - D.I. guitar and bass, tambourines and shakers, synths and midi.
- Mixing Yourself vs. Using a Mix Engineer Have a workable demo for reference!

- Tom Whittaker

# RECORDING WITHOUT A BUDGET

## KIMBERLY FREEMAN

**KIMBERLY  
FREEMAN**



**ONE-EYED DOLL**

@OneEyedDoll

### DIY 101: ALBUM RELEASE

When I started my band, I was homeless. I was squatting in a 5'x8' storage closet in a group of connected aluminum units mostly inhabited by other homeless people and rented by a few metal bands as practice spaces in a parking lot in Eugene, Oregon. There were constant scabies scares, mostly coming from an entire family of lifer can collectors who lived a few units down from mine.

After a police dog training school bought the lot, and with a little bit of coaxing from a man with a pit bull, I moved out of the unit and into my van.

Needless to say, I started this project on less than a DIY budget.

Our first album was recorded live in my friend's garage, about two months after my band mates and I started playing together; two months after I picked up an electric guitar for the first time. I recorded the vocals in the bathroom with a drum mic. I remember having to exaggerate my diction and sing as loudly as I possibly could, practically yelling, because the mic wasn't picking up the consonants in my words.

We bought CDR's and slim cases from an office supply store one spindle at a time, copied and cut the album artwork at the copy shop and burned them on any computer we could borrow. We spray painted the disks, taped and glued the song lists on the back of the jewel cases and sold them for \$1 at shows.

To our shock, people not only bought our spray painted CDs at performances, but they saw them as limited collector's items, insisting on paying up to \$25 a piece for them. We made enough money on those CDs to make about 1,500 of them and help fund our first tour halfway across the U.S. a month later.

I also recorded an acoustic album in the bathroom of that same friend's house. Instead of buying jewel cases, my friend Jonny Flash taught me to make origami CD sleeves out of single pieces of paper. (*See Packaging later in the book.*)

We sold out of both the rock and the acoustic CDs in three months, making an average of \$10 profit per \$1 CD.

Our next recording was at Nebulost Productions in Bastrop, Texas: A real studio with more than two microphones and a real hourly rate. Again, I had almost no budget for the album. My drummer and I spent the entire summer painting our producer's home in exchange for studio time. We ended up paying for the whole production of our first "real" release in labor and were able to get the first 1,000 CDs professionally mastered and manufactured after lending my body to science at a pharmaceutical testing lab.

## MY DRUMMER AND I SPENT THE ENTIRE SUMMER PAINTING OUR PRODUCER'S HOME IN EXCHANGE FOR STUDIO TIME.

Our next album, “Monster” was also recorded at Nebulost. Since our producer’s house had already been painted and I’d been banned for life from the testing lab, we knew we’d have to cough up some cash for the studio. I decided two months before recording to put the album up for pre-order online for \$10, autographed, plus free shipping.

Along with offering the album up for pre-order, we gave our fans a chance to really be involved in the first limited edition run of the CD. The deal was, if they donated \$33 toward the making of the album, they could get their own name or a friend/sweetheart’s name listed in a special thank-you section on the booklet of the first 1,000 copies. People really loved the idea when I mentioned that it would make an awesome gift to put someone’s name in it as a surprise. Of course every fan who did this also happily bought the album for another \$10.

We made almost exactly enough in pre-release sales and name donations to cover our studio costs, master and manufacture the album and mail it out on release day. I did end up trading a little bit of housekeeping for the final mix, but in the end, we had a really great release that we would have had to wait another year to record for financial reasons.

We released the CD two weeks before Thanksgiving via a mini weekend Texas tour and sold enough copies and matching homemade “Monster” merchandise in three shows to record another album.

Of course, I branded this release heavily with homemade “Monster” T shirts, hats, gloves, posters and more to build our profits and increase the excitement for the album. Everyone who bought a CD just had to get something else, especially since I made it all myself. Even those who’d pre-ordered the CD still ended up buying plenty of merchandise from us at the show.

After attending one of the CD release parties and witnessing the amount of profit and excitement that had been independently generated behind the release, my producer offered a percentage deal on future projects instead of charging per hour for studio time.

Other studios are now picking up on the potential revenue behind my projects, and the competition to record my work has far exceeded the necessity.

I’m now planning my next four releases for this year alone, and I’m not going to have to worry about how to get the money to record them.

This all happened in about two and a half years.



# HOW TOKYO POLICE CLUB SUCCEEDED IN THE STUDIO

## JAMES PEW

Attitude - in the studio...and in life!

Relaxed, Positive, Creative, Driven, and Proactive

- They were very busy and focused in the studio.
- They knew what they wanted going in.
- They were well rehearsed.
- They had tested their material in front of an audience.
- They were prepared. Because of that they wasted little time with trivialities and made good use of the limited time they had.
- They had fun and kept things light. This is what is needed in order to have a creative vibe in the studio. And that's exactly what they had. It was a great experience working with them and lots of fun too.



**JAMES  
PEW**



**OWNER  
EUPHONIC SOUND  
RECORDING STUDIO**

[www.euphonicsound.com](http://www.euphonicsound.com)  
@jamespew

**MEDIA  
MAIL**

**MEDIA  
MAIL**

**In the studio, document everything...  
If it's any good, somebody is going  
to ask you to do it again.**

– Rich Denhart



## HOWIE BENO



PRODUCER AND  
ENGINEER

@lordgimlet

# STUDIO TIPS

## HOWIE BENO

The big day has arrived... and whether you're either headed into the studio for the first time or returning to complete your masterpiece, I've a couple of tips and pointers for "those about to rock..." in the studio...

### PREPARATION IS KEY TO ANY AND EVERY STUDIO EXPERIENCE.

Zoop... zooop... zooop. (The now unfamiliar sound of tape rewinding!)

Let's go back for a second. Preparation is key to any and every studio experience. Anytime I book out time and prepare to start pushing record when the clock is ticking, I always ADVANCE THE GIG. Once the time is booked and confirmed and the deposits made doesn't mean the next thing you should do is just show up. It's uber important to talk with the people who will be working with you on the session directly to let them know exactly how many different setups will be required, what instrumentation is involved, how many songs you will be recording. Where will the drums be setup? Is everyone recording at the same time and if so, how will the ISO's be divided up for separation? This helps give that person a chance to prepare mentally ahead of time and in some cases to reserve the best mics from the rest of the staff for your session first! Also, it's a great chance to check with him or her about items you may need from the studio. Just because the website says they have a certain mic or a certain amp doesn't automatically mean it's currently in working condition (though studios try to stay on top of that the best they can) and it may help prevent any surprises when it comes time to record. Often, I will send over a diagrammed layout of the rooms with a map of where each person will be and an input plot (much like for live) of each instrument to the control room.

If you are like most musicians, you take a lot of pride and care in your instrument. Be it the drummer with the special West African mahogany wood snare and brazilian lug nuts or the guitarist with the pickups that have the highest gain known to man, tuning knobs made from chicken bone, and a bridge setup that also doubles as an antigravity beer coaster... that having been said, **set up your instruments for the recording!** I can't stress this enough. Failure to do so can bring a session to a halt, full stop.

That guitar or bass that you've been lugging around from gig to gig for months or years now, while it may sound fine in practice or rehearsal is a ticking time bomb in reality. What will make it unrecordable? Pretty much everything — from grounding and electrical problems to neck intonation to fret buzz... and the studio is an unforgiving bitch. It more than can and gladly will reveal each and every flaw in your instrument — and do not expect the studio to have an alternate perfectly set up guitar or bass with your gauge of strings magically set up and ready to step in. That ain't gunna happen. I've seen sessions stop dead in their tracks and have to be rescheduled over such a preventable thing. This goes for drums as well. Have plenty of sticks

Sometimes it is the micro seconds that each player is off that creates something. When you go in and start correcting everything you can you create absolute unlistenable perfection. It's the human stuff — the ticks and the tocks that something is off or askew — that make it compelling, interesting, and hooky!

and stick options on hand, non cracked cymbals are a plus, and maybe even splurge and change the heads on your drums for the occasion!

## DON'T SHOW UP EMPTY HANDED!

Bring your own picks, always have extra sets of those semi wound part titanium part monkey blood 18 and a half strings! Batteries? Well doesn't your tuner and 28 pedals use them pesky 9V batteries? As does any DI. You will need spare batteries, I assure you... and when you don't have them, then the session has to stop as some one runs (usually YOU!) to the nearest 7-11 and buys some. In this newfangled age of recording we use computers to do just about everything. If you want a copy of the mixes or a copy of the masters when the session is done, make sure you have a hard disc or thumb drive on hand with enough room to copy to and take the files home with you...



## CAN YOU PLAY TO A CLICK?

Ever wonder why those parts you hear on your favorite records are so easy? I mean you can play rings around those parts in your bedroom or in the practice space — they're almost boooooooring! That's because recording is about capturing the song in it's most unique and favorable essence, which leads me to PRE-PRODUCTION. We all know how awesome and cool you are and how you can play 8000 notes a second without breaking a sweat! And your band is just as awesome and cool as you that's why they are your band... but can you play to a click? Can you play 2-3 chords consistently with the correct feel or "pocket" for minutes on end? And by consistently I mean not pulling a single string out of tune and making just the correct amount of the tops of the chords ring or putting your hat too far out in front of your kick or being able to lay back on a floor tom groove and have the kick lock in with your hands and vice versa... listen to all the parts of the song in rehearsal before its to be recorded. Work out any vocal harmonies in advance because I guarantee you that working out harmonies in the studio can be a clock eater. Big time! Is the drum part clean and precise and the best feel for the song? This is a pet peeve of mine. So many times great live drummers just can't make the transition well or easily to studio recording. Who cares how many notes you play if it takes away from any groove the song should have? Is the bass locking to the groove and not mumbling about? Are the guitar parts voiced and defined properly, section to section, part to part? Recording, I must stress, is about conveying a song idea and has nothing to do with each player showing off his or her virtuosity at every given second. It's a truly collaborative effort when, if it works well, it comes out amazing. When it's every man, woman, and child for himself (too often the case) turns out a jumbled mess...

Are the vocal melodies strong and locked in? Is the key correct for the singer?

## WORK OUT ANY VOCAL HARMONIES IN ADVANCE. PRINT OUT CHARTS AND LYRIC SHEETS IN ADVANCE.

This is not only a help and another round of clarification for you, but it also helps the folks behind the desk by providing them as much information as you can about what's happening as opposed to what's supposed to be happening.

Now that we've begun our hypothetical session, a couple things to keep in mind...

The “WANK A NOODLE”. Don’t be one. Just because there is an acoustic guitar or a piano or set of bongos or a really sweet vintage electric lying about does not mean it’s a good idea to automatically feel the need to start ceaselessly chattering away with all your nervous and under utilized boundless energy. Other people than you are probably trying to work and listen very carefully and intently to what’s being recorded (not you)! This is especially true in the control room. Also, chances are you are not the only bright bulb in the pack with the same stupid idea and soon enough a session can turn into a wank fest of people waiting for their turn to play. Imagine how quickly your session can elolve into sounding like every guitar center on any given Saturday morning! Trust me, it is very distracting and counter productive to the tasks currently at hand... If you are not the one currently working, just be considerate of those who are.

## **A SESSION CAN TURN INTO A WANK FEST OF PEOPLE WAITING FOR THEIR TURN TO PLAY.**

Do you want 50 of your best friends to come by and watch you being brilliant in your future environment? Absolutely! Is it a good idea? Absolutely not! Studio recording requires a certain degree of focus and attention to detail. You must take it upon yourself to exhibit “CROWD CONTROL”. You really are only shooting your own self in the foot by having extraneous people sitting in the session with you. Ultimately, horror of horrors, they will want to be social and chit chat and prove a huge distraction to you and anyone trying to get something meaningful done. Plus, studios tend to have nice gear. So they usually have detailed security entrance and exit procedures for anyone coming and going. Anytime your engineer or assistant has to start letting people in and out as they go for a smoke or a trip to the bathroom only takes away from their ability to efficiently work with you on your record. Isn’t the reason you are making your recording partly so that others can enjoy it later? Well, let them do that instead.

## **SET REALISTIC GOALS.**

Yes, studio recording does really take that long. There are a certain set of processes set in motion from the very first time that red light goes on (exhilarating isn’t it?): from doing various takes to comping (making a comprehensive take that shows off the best bits of each part) to cleaning up around superfluous noises and other such cricketty minutiae. These valuable processes do take time. Don’t expect that if you are going in to record a 5 song ep that has a running time of 30 minutes to take 32 minutes and well because the studio requires an hour minimum booking that you can mix it all in the remaining time. That ain’t gunna happen either. Even if your backing band were the Red Hot Chili Peppers themselves, that would never happen. A good rule of thumb is a song a day (and that’s even a bit of a stretch) so if you are doing a 3-4 song demo, I’d allow for a long weekend worth of time to accommodate that. And that may not include the mix.

Lastly and personally anecdotally, have “exact change”. The first time I ever went into the studio to record my buddies and I were very young lads of 18 and as I recall the afore agreed upon price was to be a thousand dollars for the time payable at the end of the session. Of course, we pooled together our hard-earned money and was just able to scrape up the necessary funds. When it was time to square up, we had forgotten the 20 dollars that we spent on pizza for lunch! Fawk! We just simply didn’t have it! With a certain amount of embarrassment on our part and a certain amount of grace and understanding on the part of the studio owner we left our \$980. And said our thank yous and goodbyes.



## KEVIN GUARNIERI



RECORDING &  
ENGINEERING INSTRUCTOR

@Guarnieri

# CLIMBING THE ENGINEER LADDER & THE GIG BAG

## KEVIN GUARNIERI

The following is a list of stuff you'll want to have as an assistant engineer. I called it my gig bag or my kit. I brought it with me to every session and took it home with me every night. I narrowed it down to ten things but mine had a lot more than ten things. And in all honesty its contents varied based on who my client was (Celine Dion had different needs than Snoop Dogg). These are the basics. Get yourself a backpack or duffel bag today and start stocking it. At the least it can show that you're prepared. In some cases it can save your client's ass and make you look like a hero.

- 1 **A LAPTOP COMPUTER** chock full of recall documentation, plug-in installers, drum samples, sound effects and music related software. What's that? You need someone to edit up the drums a bit while you retrack bass? You'll also want to have all the wireless access passwords readily available for the clients.
- 2 **MULTIPLE PACKS OF GUM**, mints, tea oil toothpicks. People have stinky breath and are self-conscious. Show them empathy.
- 3 **GUITAR PICKS** of every size and weight and a guitar tuner. You'd be surprised how often this comes in handy. I have a collection from almost every guitarist I ever worked with, weird how many people want to play with a 'Prince' pick.
- 4 **MATCHES**, lighter, Nag Champa (incense), candles, and gels for the crap studio lighting. Vibe is crucial, nuff said.
- 5 **GAFFER'S TAPE**, console tape in multi-colors and sizes. Shit falls apart. Shit needs to be labeled.
- 6 **SHARPIES** in multiple colors. I had a friend of mine who used to label the console without ever writing a word — awesome. You can get Sharpies in sets of 24 colors.
- 7 **A SMALL FLASHLIGHT** can help find the center of the speaker cone when looking through guitar cabs. Also helps keep the vibe alive when navigating candlelit rooms.
- 8 **NICE PAIR OF HEADPHONES**. Every studio has Sony 7506 or AKGs but distinguish yourself with a nice pair of Grados or Sennheisers.
- 9 **SMALL TIN FULL OF MULTI-CONNECTORS AND CABLES**. It's 2015, everyone has an iPhone. Make sure you can get it into a TT patchbay.
- 10 **MULTIVITAMINS**, Emergen-C, Aspirin, Tylenol, Alleve, Ibuprofen and Acetaminophen. Better living through chemistry.



Kevin Guarnieri put this list of essential elements for a budding engineer to have in his session bag. I included it so you can put the same thing together. This way, when — not IF — your engineer lets you down, you can come to your own rescue and keep the session and the energy moving!

# SAVE TIME. SAVE MONEY.

## TRISTAN JAMES

Instead of comparing the noise floor and total harmonic distortion of various popular preamps or making you dig through your neighbor's garbage for some rare and environmentally dangerous transformers, I'm going to talk about saving time, saving money, being efficient, and applying a by-the-second plan of action for your recording.

I'm one of those freak road-dog/studio-whore hybrids. As a studio engineer, I often find myself making an hourly wage, either in my own studio or being hired out for freelance work by clients working in various recording studios to track bands, produce and record TV and radio commercials, or mix/remix pre-recorded material. In all three scenarios, I find a shocking amount of inefficiency at all levels from the random retired shower singer who recently "rediscovered" their "talent" for singing and playing the keyboard, to the experienced producer working for a major ad agency, or a self-produced rock act with years of recording experience. If you're paying me by the hour, PLEASE, do be inefficient, I'll get paid much more, and I can work until you run out of money. However, if you want to pay me much less and get a better end product, keep reading.

### LEARN THE BASICS OF RECORDING AND EDITING

You don't need to be the next Massenburg or Chuck Ainlay, but you do need to know how to use a little Pro Tools and a microphone. Most major recording studios in the USA use Pro Tools, so I suggest learning it (yes, there are many other great platforms, but you'll see why owning a Pro Tools rig is important).

Before spending a dime on studio time, build demo/scratch sessions using Pro Tools LE. By doing this, I can almost guarantee that you'll make back the cost of buying an M-Box (or other comparable Pro Tools compatible interface) during your first album. Using the software's metronome and the tempo map, record a rough vocal take, along with guitar or piano, or some rhythm instrument that can give the band a feel for the song. Place markers at every key point in the song (IE: verses, chori, solos, outro...). Do this for every song. You've created a map of the song that not only establishes and predetermines the tempo for the songs, but it also gives an engineer, like me, a guide. Who cares, right? Well, I charge between \$40-120 an hour to record your band and I'm damn fast. But if it takes me 30-40 seconds to find, "you know that place where the solo ends and the pre-chorus comes back in," it will cost you more money. Let's say this happens at least 10-30 times per song, depending on the talent and other factors. If (hypothetically) I charge \$75/hr and you rock and only need to punch random sections of each song, say 12 times, and I have to find these sections by memory or ear at 30 seconds a pop that's 12x30=360s, or 6min. No big waste of time right? Well, you have a 15 song album, so really it's more like 90 minutes! Or more importantly, you just paid me (at \$75/hr, not including studio fees which could be much more expensive) \$112.50 to click around with my mouse while I attempt to find various sections of your music to punch in or overdub. If I see the markers, I can jump to each section of your song in 2-3 seconds using quick commands.

TRISTAN  
JAMES  
BEACHE



ACADEMIC DEPARTMENT  
DIRECTOR FOR  
SCHOOL OF MEDIA AT  
ILLINOIS INSTITUTE OF ART

Bring your session files that you've created to the studio with you (make sure to contact the studio to find out session specs like bit-depth and sample rate and file format before bringing your sessions in) and I won't have to spend an hour or more of your time figuring out the tempos for your songs and building session templates. So, already you've saved at least \$187.50 on engineer fees!

Also, if you want to record pop (popular, radio-ready) music, you're probably going to need to record to a metronome anyway in order to keep a steady tempo. It's much easier to record to a click, and simultaneously get an emotionally engaging performance, if you have these scratch tracks as a guide. Plus, you can make mixes of the scratch tracks with the metronome and you can practice playing to the tempo before you even get into the studio.

### **YOU CAN PRACTICE PLAYING TO THE TEMPO BEFORE YOU EVEN GET INTO THE STUDIO.**

Need more reasons to buy your own rig and save money? Make an agreement with the studio, before booking time, and ask them to provide you with copies of the session files after tracking (recording). Put them on your hard drive after the tracking session, and bring them home to edit and choose final takes. Edit all of the silence and noise out of your tracks and arrange the songs as needed. Make fades and cross-fades on your edits. Bring your hard drive back to the studio and you're ready to mix. You've just saved hours of studio costs and you've also had time to think about the mix and anything else you may need to record before final mix-down. This is exciting! It's the first time in history that anybody at any level with almost any budget could save so much money by doing this much pre-production at home.

**THIS IS EXCITING! IT'S THE FIRST TIME IN HISTORY THAT ANYBODY AT ANY LEVEL WITH ALMOST ANY BUDGET COULD SAVE SO MUCH MONEY BY DOING THIS MUCH PRE-PRODUCTION AT HOME.**

### **HAVE A PLAN**

Have a fucking plan! In addition to practicing like hell (you should be able to play, as a band, each song, 5-10 times in a row - FLAWLESSLY), before going into the studio, you should have a minute-by-minute outline of how to spend your time in the studio. How long and how much do you want to pay to record the rhythm section of your band? Or how long do you plan on taking to record your R&B vocal leads and harmonies on your hooks for your hip hop record? Plan it out, calculate, and budget.

### **IT WILL ALMOST ALWAYS TAKE LONGER THAN YOU THINK**

So overestimate if you don't know exactly. When you think about the time, or cost, of each song, each overdub, each stacked vocal, you'll have a much better understanding of the cost you are about to incur and how to manage and prioritize various aspects of your recording session. Or, you can come in without a plan and wing it and I promise you'll pay me for at least 3-7 hours of wasted time. Your choice.

## HIER/AN-ARCHY

Drop your egos and assign a band member to be, or better yet hire, a producer. So many times, bands hire AN ENGINEER, and expect them to give the band significant artistic suggestions or manage their time. That is the job of your producer. Technically, you're supposed to pay me royalties for production of your album, or at the very least give me credit on the album and a work-for-hire fee and contract. There should be one cook in the kitchen. This means one voice or representative of your band. If I get conflicting instructions or ideas from various members of your band, you will lose time and money.

When I contract with a band as a producer, I include a line in the contract with a single name of the appointed band representative. This is the band member I contact to relay info to the other members and provide me with a final voice or opinion of the band regarding various creative decisions. I do not and cannot work with 3-5 people with conflicting opinions, so again, drop the egos and let your most invested and valuable member be the voice of your band. You'll save money and stand more of a chance of not breaking up during the album recording.

## THERE SHOULD BE ONE COOK IN THE KITCHEN. THIS MEANS ONE VOICE OR REPRESENTATIVE OF YOUR BAND.

Same goes for mixing and mastering. Ideally, I'd like to mix alone, given initial instructions and vision from the band representative or producer. I'm much faster and creative this way. If the whole band sits in the room with me, everyone inevitably comments and makes suggestions and creative choices. This is fine by me, but be warned, it's going to cost you time and money. If you trust your band leader or producer, you'll be much better off letting them work with your engineer alone. Trust me on this guys.

## YOU'RE WELCOME

Even if you take one or two of these concepts and apply them or modify them to suit your act's needs, you're going to save a significant amount of time and money. Ultimately, it's up to you how you spend your time and money, but everything I've mentioned are parts of my job as an engineer that I don't necessarily have to do, or spend time doing. My clients could take much more initiative and control their budget at a much higher level and ultimately end up with an exponentially better end product because they are less stressed, less broke, and know exactly where they are going with their project.



**Only 3 takes in the studio. Too much time spent on details too soon destroy the genius that might be in there. If everybody has a say in everything good ideas will never surface and you will sit with an endless amount of changing ideas. Perfection is good, but just to some degree. Divide your say according to skill and check out the good ideas before you throw them away.**

*– Anders Odden*

## JULIAN HERZFELD



FREELANCE  
ENGINEER

@JulianHerzfeld

# CHOOSING AN ENGINEER

## JULIAN HERZFELD

OK, so your band has decided to record and you want it done right. 12 things to look for in an engineer – and how to keep a good engineer happy:

**1 MAKE SURE YOUR ENGINEER HAS NOT ONLY THE TECHNICAL CHOPS TO HANDLE THE JOB, BUT ALSO THE RIGHT ATTITUDE.** Yours is a creative endeavour. Make sure your engineer understands your music. The last thing you need is for your goth industrial metal band to sound like Coldplay.

**2 WHILE YOUR ENGINEER SHOULD HAVE A WORKING KNOWLEDGE OF YOUR MUSICAL GENRE, THEY SHOULD ALSO BE ABLE TO PULL FROM OTHER EXPERIENCES AS WELL.** The sound of your band is unique, but the creative/technical end can come from anywhere. There were many times when I was recording and mixing Pigface that I pulled a classical or hip-hop recording trick out of my hat.

**3 AN ENGINEER COULD BECOME YOUR DE FACTO PRODUCER.** Certainly they are your creative partner. Remember that he/she has a lot more studio hours under their belt and will be willing to share the knowledge of that experience. But, ultimately, remember who works for whom. They may have great ideas, but those great ideas should always be viewed in the context of what you're trying to do. Never forget it's your project – unless you want to sound like your engineer's band. (BTW: there is nobody in the world who wants to sound like my band.)

**4 INTERVIEW YOUR ENGINEER AND ASK FOR REFERENCES.** Pros will be more than happy to let you know whom they've worked with. With those names in hand, don't be shy asking about work ethic, creative input, attitudes, etc. Remember you are investing your trust and hard earned cash in this relationship and the experience and contributions this person brings to the studio.

**5 DON'T DISMISS THEM IF THEY'VE ENGINEERED COMMERCIALS.** Hell, I have done hundreds of national spots and what I learned was two-fold. One: how to be efficient. I can get great sounds up quickly. When you're working with a roomful of union musicians who charge by the hour – if not by the note – you have to be fast or die. Two: I've worked on everything from big orchestral dates to rock, jazz, hip-hop and industrial metal. The diversity taught me things about genres I would not have otherwise explored and I brought those skills to every session I worked on.

**6 NEGOTIATE ALL FEES AND COMPENSATION UP FRONT.**

**NOTHING CAN KILL A GOOD VIBE FASTER THAN A FINANCIAL MISUNDERSTANDING IN THE STUDIO.**

**7 LET YOUR ENGINEER BE YOUR CAMP COUNSELOR.** I once kept Al Jourgenson entertained with a cut-up collage project for a week while I mixed a RevCo record. It kept Al focused and enabled him to blow off steam while I diligently labored on uninterrupted.

**8 YOUR ENGINEER IS YOUR CREATIVE PARTNER, BUT NOT YOUR DRINKING/DRUGGING BUDDY.** If you want to waste time and money getting drunk or high in the studio, that's one thing. If your engineer says he/she does their best work when they're stoned, it's time to find a new engineer.

**9 ASK HOW LOUD AN ENGINEER LIKES TO RECORD AND MIX.** Even with metal or hip-hop, the volume in the control room should always be at a sane level on small monitors. You can't maintain a good listening perspective for long periods of time above 80db. If your engineer likes to mix loud, run, do not walk to the nearest exit. I can guarantee that when you listen to that mix the next morning, you'll wonder where all the high end and bottom went. Conversely, when you're ready to listen on the "big-boys" at 120db, let your creative partner preserve their hearing. That's what assistant engineers are for; high volume playbacks – and making crappy coffee.

**10 AND SPEAKING OF GOING HOME – REALIZE THERE IS A POINT OF DIMINISHING RETURNS.** When you're all tired and hungry, band and techs, take a break, have dinner, go home and get some sleep. Working around the clock isn't good for anyone's health or creativity. Efficiency sometimes comes from knowing when to say "when." I was once called into a project by a client who had been working non-stop for 2 weeks on a mix with no sleep. I sent the artist home, telling them to come back in a few hours. I tore the mix apart, started from scratch and replayed it for him 5 hours later. He turned to me after listening once and said it was far and away the best mix on the album.

**11 FINALLY, GIVE YOUR ENGINEER FULL CREDIT.** Nothing pisses a person off more than being dissed with no tangible reward for their efforts.



**Be creative & experiment!** Music Technology empowers the modern musician in ways never thought possible ten years ago. It is possible to record, mix and master your material in a home 'project' studio to a quality that was never available to Miles Davis & John Lennon. Use it!

– Phelan Kane

**Less is more!** Complexity and technical proficiency in one's performance is critical, yet at the same time one's ability to play at levels beyond their own capability defeat the possibilities of creating a masterpiece, let alone making a musical statement of any value to you or your audience. It is well known that some of the best results when recording can be achieved through minimalism vs. sloppy complexity. This is often true on the technical side of engineering a record as well. But as an artist, that is the decision the engineer will make. Your job is to make a great record. Keep in mind that an engineer cannot make a great sounding record if the playing is flawed.

– Reid Hyams

# IF IT'S NOT BROKE, DON'T FIX IT

## SEAN MCMAHON

### SEAN MCMAHON



**ENGINEER AND PRODUCER**

**PRODUCED FOR SLIPKNOT  
EDUCATOR AT  
MADISON MEDIA INSTITUTE**

At the surface, this phrase is trite, cliché. In practice, employing this principle within the aesthetic of your project workflow can help you consistently obtain and deliver on-fire performances from the artist.

Here is an example: I recently observed a guitar overdub session in Studio A at Middle Tennessee State University. The control room is absolutely gorgeous, boasting a gleaming, new API Vision console, a plethora of high-end outboard gear in a pristine acoustic 5.1 monitoring environment.

The guitarist outright nailed most of a 16 bar electric lead guitar overdub, but experienced difficulty performing an epic climax in the last two measures. Following the initial take, the student engineer got on the talkback mic and told the guitarist that they needed another take. They dropped into record at the top of the solo and the guitarist again experienced difficulty fingering his way through the final two measures. Again. On the third take the energy level dropped noticeably, but the guitarist came very close to playing the page in the last two measures. The engineer was still not satisfied and

requested another take. I observed six repetitions of the aforementioned scenario, with diminishing results on each successive take. The engineer burned out the guitarist and tainted the vibe for the remainder of the session.

The initial take of the solo was played with passion/energy/soul, but not perfectly.

The imperfection lay in the final two measures. They could have punched in between notes at the end of measure 14 going into 15, over and over again if need be until they captured a righteous performance. Performing a solo top to bottom with integrity is a noble virtue, but if you are overdubbing, why not use forty-year-old technology to its fullest advantage?

## BE AN ENABLER

This same principle can be extended to cutting basic tracks, vocal overdubs, or really just about any recording workflow on nearly every recording medium (with the possible exception of direct-to-disc recording – if anyone is still doing that!). Be an enabler, keeping the energy up to stimulate and capture vivacious performances from the artist. Sure, fix the spots when the vocalist forgot the words, or experienced a mucous moment. Just get in and out quickly to keep the session moving. If you are working in a DAW, you have numerous tools at your disposal to edit performances. Just save the editing work for later when the performers are done.



# A RECORDING STUDIO IS NO PLACE FOR DEMOCRACY

## JIM POWERS

When it comes to decision-making, a one vote per band member democracy in theory makes sense and seems fair. In the studio it's often a recipe for disaster.

For example, when listening back to their song mix in the studio, musicians naturally tend to focus on their own performance. Of course, this is important; they should feel satisfied with their contribution on a track. However, while each individual obsesses about their individual element in the recording and where it sits in the mix, the most important element of the recording is often forgotten: the sound and impact of the song as a whole.

What you don't want is your entire band sitting on a couch behind the console all chiming in with their opinions to a beleaguered engineer. Remember, a good mix is like a perfectly balanced house of cards. Changing one sonic element alters the perception of everything else around it.

### ... A GOOD MIX IS LIKE A PERFECTLY BALANCED HOUSE OF CARDS. CHANGING ONE SONIC ELEMENT ALTERS THE PERCEPTION OF EVERYTHING ELSE AROUND IT.

Also, inevitably at least a couple band member suggestions will be diametrically opposed to each other.

**BASS PLAYER:** Something's missing. It needs more bass. (Engineer adjusts bass level)

**DRUMMER:** Now, we lost the kick. Can you boost it a little?. (Engineer adjusts kick level)

**BASS PLAYER:** Hmm. Almost there, give us just a touch more bass. (Engineer adjusts bass level)

**DRUMMER:** Fine. Now, more kick please. (Repeat indefinitely)

The best songs come across as a singular experience, transcending any individual contribution. Someone has to be entrusted with looking out for the impact of the song above all else. The reality is, not everyone in a band cares equally about every track or pays equal attention to it. This is where a trusted producer, or band "leader" can be helpful as a more objective listener. Determine your best "steward of the song" to pay attention to the cumulative impact of the music and listen to them.

If the band is self-producing, then one, or, at most, two band members should complete an initial mix before bringing it to the entire band for feedback. Further mix adjustments can then be made accordingly, but at least you are starting with a mix that has direction and lowering the chances of ending up with a sonic mess of appeasements. You will also spend less time burning money and time in the studio.

You may think that the songwriter(s) should be the one looking out for the song. Often this makes the most sense, but not always. Some people are prolific creators but have no inner-filter, no sense of which ideas resonate with





others. Best then to rely on someone else in the band as a sounding board, or discuss song picks and favorite elements in a song as a band before you enter the studio and during playback ask yourself whether those elements are adequately presented in the mix. A great song is forever. Give each of your songs its best shot.



## RECORDING: TOP 5 STUDIO MISTAKES

### JAMES PEW

**1 MONITORING TOO LOUD IN YOUR HEADPHONES.** An overly loud playback mix will distort what you should be hearing clearly, and damage your hearing. Duh!

**2 NOT LISTENING TO YOUR INSTRUMENT WITH, AND WITHOUT, YOUR HEADPHONES.** If it doesn't sound good in the room...it's not going to sound good in your headphones. So start with the room, and then move on to the cans.

**3 BREAKING INTO A GUITAR SOLO** while the engineer is setting up the headphone mix for your band mates.

**4 NOT SOUND CHECKING AT THE SAME DYNAMIC LEVEL YOU WILL BE PERFORMING AT.** Plucking quietly on a guitar is useless during sound check, if you start hammering the strings after the producer hits record. Same goes for drummers... engineers want to hear your hardest attack when sound checking.

**5 PLAYING A DAMAGED OR POORLY SET UP INSTRUMENT.** Guitar players should absolutely have their guitars set-up (intonation) by a pro guitar tech, drums should not have old dull sounding skins (unless your going for an old dull skin sound...but honestly how often is that?), and an acoustic piano needs to be tuned by a professional before you record it.



**JAMES  
PEW**



**OWNER  
EUPHONIC SOUND  
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[www.euphonicssound.com](http://www.euphonicssound.com)  
@jamespew

Getting the most flattering headphone balance: too loud and the singer tends to sing flat and ahead of the beat, too soft and the singer will tend to be sharp.

— George Massenburg

# 17 MASTERING

## SONGS, CONTENT AND ORDER

Some bands put their best song third or last (to be difficult). **PUT YOUR BEST SONG FIRST!** The person listening might be busy and only have a few seconds. Yes that's right, a few seconds. That just doesn't just apply to busy industry professional like me... (oh yeah!) That's everyone on the planet! So, don't mess around. You might only have ten seconds to grab someone that has drifted along to your site so get with it!

**Mastering engineers are your best friend,  
but a shitty mix is a shitty mix.**

*– Justin Boland*

# MASTERING

Over the years, my approach to mastering and the business of it, itself, has changed.

In the 80's, it was a celebratory rite of passage that many bands were not allowed to attend; many mastering houses today still have the approach of a larger fee if the artist is present! PiL was the first band that I knew of where we were present at the mastering — making sure that a Virgin Records rep didn't dial out all the low end of the bass.

Once the amazing world of digital audio was upon us, I used time and space in the mastering room to concentrate and think my way through the multiple mixes that having your own studio inevitably generates. I used two tack editing to patch together the best, or most interesting mixes. This was time consuming and expensive, but created great results for me.

I decided a while ago to invest in some cool mastering tools for my computer, but also to use some of my analog gear to get the sounds I wanted in mastering. It's no longer a process that I do at the very end of a project, but rather something that I think about throughout the process — dynamics, feel, and the overall mood dictate the approaches I'll take. I still use this time to finalise (and finalise and finalise) my stereo edits. It is version 7 of a song — where I take out half of the arbitrary 16 bar intro, that illuminates the path to version 8, where I take out 4 more bars, and we get straight into the heart of the song. Nowadays, I'm happy diving straight into these "butcher block" edits, but I'll go through the step by step process just so an artist can be more on board with me, rather than FREAKING out because I just chopped the arms and legs off their baby.

## **A GREAT REASON TO HAVE SOMEONE ELSE MASTER, EDIT, ARRANGE, OR MIX YOUR MUSIC: IT'S NOT YOU!**

This leads me to a great reason to have someone else master your music — or edit or arrange or mix! It's NOT YOU! YOU can never have distance and objectivity on your music — you're IN IT! I can ALWAYS tell when a vocalist has mixed a track. Their vocals are usually buried several dB lower than I would mix. That's part shyness, perhaps. (In a lead singer? Yeah! Weird huh?) But they are also hearing their vocals inside their head, as their brains sing along with themselves, which, I think, gives them the illusion that their vocals are louder. If a vocalist asks you to turn their vocals down, DON'T. If they insist, then also mix another version "just for the hell of it," "because we are already here," "etc., etc." It is the mix that advertisers, labels, and Joe Public will always prefer anyway.

As far as speaker choices are concerned, there are pages and pages written about this and loudness wars. I say, listen on the speakers, the system, in the room that you are used to listening in — a laptop in the car. That's why some crazy studios used to have a fucking<sup>3</sup> car in the lounge, so bands could sit in the car and listen! One studio had its own radio broadcast antenna so that they could broadcast mixes to the bands as they drove around the neighbourhood! But also be aware that whatever you listen on isn't a surgical speaker designed to reveal the flaws in what you have done. So, that's another reason to go to a mastering facility, as a double check.

**New software and apps change the process. LANDR enables instant mastering as a finished process if you are a beginner or as a useful reference for a professional.**

*<sup>3</sup>This fuck brought to you by Bonnie Blackwell.*

**LOUDNESS:** (This HAD to be addressed in a few ways.) It's one way to deal with your wimpy introduction to an amazing song. You HAVE to deal with it because people will switch tracks if they can't hear your shit! No one is going to sit around through poorly recorded acoustic guitar meshed with sitar until minute 3:20, when the drums kick in! So, you can master the fuck<sup>2</sup> out of it – which can create weirdness when everything comes in at 3:20 and sound quieter than JUST the acoustic instruments – OR you can edit the intro especially for Internet SLAMMING! More work, more versions, but you have to create the right version for the medium you are communicating in!

The loudness debate needs to be removed from the vacuum of the mastering room. Everyone makes great points. Can it be better? Yes (most things usually can), but time and the circumstances *have* to be taken into account... 35mm film looks gorgeous and amazing, lush and beautiful. Glitchy video doesn't, but the shitty footage of a bomb going down a chimney during the opening salvos of whichever gulf war is priceless. No film buffs ripped it apart based on the white noise all over it. And, fuck, where would COPS or America's Funniest Home Videos be without shitty-quality footage? It's about more than just that.

**Rule #1: Louder is never better.**

**Rule #2: Louder is always better.**

- Dan Harjung

## LEAVE THE ROOM!

### TRISTAN JAMES

When it comes to mastering, decide as a band and send your member representative, or let your producer decide, on the following items:

- Gap spacing between songs
- Examples of ideal/similar mastering jobs
- Identify issues that you need to “fix”
- Determine track order (track list) before going to the mastering house

Don't crowd your mastering engineer and keep your ears fresh. This means that your producer or band rep should relay all of that information to the mastering engineer and then STEP OUT of the control room. Yes, leave the room. Your ears will get desensitized to the sound of your album (if they aren't already from tracking and mixing), and you won't be able to tell if it sounds the way you want it to. Also, if you just let your mastering engineer do what they do best, they'll do it much faster and better. You can request changes after they have attempted to achieve your initial suggestions.



**TRISTAN  
JAMES  
BEACHE**



**ACADEMIC DEPARTMENT  
DIRECTOR FOR  
SCHOOL OF MEDIA AT  
ILLINOIS INSTITUTE OF ART**

<sup>2</sup>This fuck brought to you by Colin C.

# TIPS TO PREPARE YOUR MUSIC FOR MASTERING

## TODD THOMAS

**COME WITH AN OPEN MIND.** Keep in mind a mastering engineer is an objective perspective. They are giving you fresh ears and if you have listened to your mixes for a month before your date, you may be used to the huge size of the bottom end while the mastering engineer may discover that this hugeness is actually eating your mix. Thirty days later when you have fresh ears you may agree with him. Give the mastering engineer the benefit of the doubt, but if you have a clear vision of what you want and they missed it, be sure to tell them!

**EMAIL YOUR ENGINEER THE FILES BEFORE YOU MEET WITH THEM.** If there is a problem with your mix bounce, you don't want to find out when it's too late. Most engineers will take a quick listen to your mix early to make sure there are no egregiousness errors. If there are, having your bounce checked first could save you a lot of headache. Use a service like MegaUpload, Dropbox or Mobile Me to email your files to the engineer, then you and him/her will feel more at ease when the actual day comes around.

**HAVE A COPY ONLINE AND WITH YOU.** It's much better to be overly cautious with backups. Even if you email the files to an engineer ahead of time, something can still happen to them. Make sure you take a copy with you and for extra protection, keep a copy somewhere online where you can get access to it. Most likely, you won't need it, but with something this important you'll want to be sure.

**BRING REFERENCE TRACKS.** Sometimes you'll be dealing with an engineer who understands your music and perhaps even appreciates it, but this is not always the case. For volume and style comparisons you'll want to bring in high quality MP3s or WAVs of other music you like or want to imitate so you can reference them to your own music. This will help the individual mastering your record immensely and can show you how you fair with your heroes.



Just do yourself and your listeners a favor and have a professional mastering house master your music. DO NOT have the mix engineer master your music, as he is listening to HIS mix and is too close to it to do what needs to be done. (And he's probably not a mastering engineer anyway!) This is the place to spend money. If you skimp everywhere else during the process, make sure you spend money here. (Use Metallica's "Death Magnetic" as a bad mastering reference.)

– Tom Whittaker

# THE FINAL CREATIVE STEP

## MAOR APPELBAUM

Mastering is the final creative step in the music and sound production process. It is about optimizing and enhancing a recorded audio track so it will sound coherent on most audio playback systems and formats regardless of the environment and media limitations. Mastering allows the project to achieve its full potential and artistic intent; it is all about the subtleties that can transform a good sounding song into a great sounding song. The mastering engineer obtains the ability to focus on certain elements of the sound and divert the listener's focus from the problematic areas to ear-friendlier sounding ones that gives that extra "something" which makes the track pop out to the listener and grab him, thus steering his audio attention to where the music sounds best. Catching the attention of the audience from the moment the music is played is like bringing them to the front row seat or opening a bigger window to a clearer and wider view of the music.

Through original and creative inclusions, omissions and/or adjustments, the mastering engineer creates the certain nuances that provide the final artistic perspective prior to a projects publication.

### THERE ARE THREE MAIN REASONS FOR MASTERING THE MIXES WITH A PROFESSIONAL MASTERING ENGINEER:

**1 OBJECTIVITY.** Due to the fact that the mastering engineer is not a part of the writing, producing, recording or mixing process, he holds an un-biased opinion towards the project and can evaluate the sound of the mix in an objective manner.

**2 ARTISTIC.** Although the mastering engineer is as objective as a listener, he has the ability to control and affect the final sound of the recording by adding to its feel, depth, volume, tightness, punch and color, all of which are contributing elements to the overall musical outcome and product. The mastering engineer gives a new perspective; he brings an additional informed, creative, and unique approach to the post-production part of the project.

**3 TECHNICAL.** The mastering engineer has the necessary tools to conduct the process of optimizing the sound quality of any given project. Such optimizations include:

- Harmonic & tonal content balancing
- Identifying and adjusting problematic frequencies
- Leveling and controlling the dynamics of the music
- Sequencing
- Editing and spacing

**A MASTERING ENGINEER'S TECHNICAL STEPS ARE VITAL TOWARDS IMPLEMENTING AND EXPORTING THE PROJECT TO ITS PROPER MEDIUM AND FORMAT.**

**MAOR  
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The experienced mastering engineer knows what to focus on and what to hide, what to take out and what to leave in, as well as figure out how all the factors fit with in the overall tone and texture of the music. In order to achieve a successful result, the mastering engineer tailors the sound seeking to align with the artist's musical intention. Due to his experience and knowledge from working on different styles of music, the mastering engineer has the ability to choose what is needed in order to balance the whole spectrum and enhance the outcome; what magnifies the identity of set song's overall feel and leave a mark on the listener.

The Mastering Engineer has two primary tools at his disposal. The first being his intellectual musical knowledge, auditory training, experience and taste that has been acquired over time. Keeping up with the current technology, musical trends and styles is an important role in order to cater a larger amount of clientele from all over the world. The second additive is the audio equipment in his possession, the mastering engineer has an arsenal of gear to help him process and optimize the final track from its original recording's sound. His intellectual knowledge and the audio equipment he operates is what we call the "the tools of the trade".

The gear can be in both analog and digital domain. Analog processors are based on analog circuitry, which utilizes tubes, solid states or the use of hybrid circuits to present the certain tonal characteristics possessed by them. Each piece of gear works differently based on how it is built and from what components the circuit. Some engineers like customizing the circuits and modifying them in order to tailor the sound to the engineer's specific needs and liking.

When using digital gear, the approach is different than using analog gear. The processing power can make a huge difference, but also the program that is installed in the components and runs the system making the calculations needed to process the audio can differ from various manufactures and models, therefore presenting different audio qualities and textures. In the digital realm such processing can be done by external hardware or internal software installed in the computer or an audio interface, known as plug-ins. They are all algorithm based and have the option to be rewritten and upgraded to a certain degree within the system. Algorithms are the mathematical functions that are embedded in the digital mainframe of a unit telling it how to handle the incoming signal and how to process it out. They can also be fixed in case of debugging or malfunctions that are fixed in a later time. The digital external gear has certain components that make it behave differently than plug-ins. Having power supplies, regulators, screens, connectors, electronic parts and their proximity, slightly alters the sound, regardless of the algorithm used. That is why some engineers prefer to test the external digital gear and the plug-ins and hear the subtle but different results.

The software plug-ins that emulate the vintage analog gear is always advancing with time, bringing more options and color to the user. However, in time the original vintage units have changed their tone due to the different manufacturing processes as well as maintenance. Each component has changed during different periods of manufacturing leading to different sound characters in the same units. These changes have contributed to the difference in the sound, regardless of how precise the emulation is. That is why engineers do tests between external analog equipment and plug-ins.

The choice comes down to preference, taste and situation. Both analog and digital equipment can deliver great results as well as make changes in how the music is perceived. There are many ways to approach mastering. Every engineer has his own way of working with the tools available, experimenting with various ideas and choosing what works best for that scenario. In the end it's all about accommodating the client's needs.

## HOW TO GET THE MOST FROM MASTERING?

It is highly recommended to reserve the mastering session prior to completing the mixing process. By booking the mastering engineer in advance, the producer or mixer can initiate communication and begin discussing the desired format, concepts and specific needs regarding the session ahead of time. Mastering sessions can be done attended or unattended; both have their advantages and disadvantages, choose what best fits the situation at hand:

## HOW TO EVALUATE THE MASTERING ONCE RECEIVING IT FROM THE ENGINEER?

### UNATTENDED SESSION

- The mastering engineer can devote his full attention to details while the client can provide pointers and guidelines over the phone or via e-mails before and after the session.
- The client has the opportunity to check the result on a stereo system that he/she is familiar with in order to identify issues that may need adjusting prior to approval and final mastering.
- The price may be lower and more flexible since the mastering engineer has the option of setting his/her own schedule.
- No need to spend time and transportation arriving at the studio.

### ATTENDED SESSION

- The client is an integral part of the mastering process. He can provide ideas on how the music should sound and discuss them with the mastering engineer directly.
- The client can approve changes, giving and receiving feedback on the spot.
- The mastering engineer can be distracted by the presence of others in the studio, which will result in a less effective, longer and possibly costlier session.
- In case the client is late to the session he/she still has to pay for lost time.
- First-hand viewing of the studio, the equipment and the process involved.

Take the time and examine the finished master. Check that it sounds consistent on several systems in which you listen to music on a daily basis. Optional playback systems are: home stereo (HI-FI), small monitors (mini/micro), car stereo, computer stereo speakers (multi-media) or laptop speakers. In addition, be sure to check the mastering using a variety of headphones and ear buds. If adjustments are necessary, notify the mastering engineer of what was heard, and through what systems was it utilized. Certain playback systems might sound harsh, crispy, honky, muddy or enhance too much bass or treble so there might be a need to alter the mastering to accommodate such systems. This can be addressed and fixed as part of the revisions.

In most stages of the music production process, good communication is important to achieve the desired sounding product. Inform the mastering engineer regarding any changes needed so that revisions may be made and sent out for evaluation and approval in a prompt manner. It is common that fixes, tweaks or “touch ups” will be needed in order to accommodate the specific needs of the client’s idea on how the music should sound. Therefore, keep in mind that the first mastering results might not be the exact sound imagined but it can still be changed to fit the artist’s taste, just like it takes a few recordings to get the proper vocal, guitar, bass and drum tracks or a few mix revisions to get the best recordings. It might take a few mastering revisions to get to the desired optimal sound of the music and the overall album sequenced. Discuss the options and revisions with the mastering engineer prior to the mastering to get a better picture of the process as well as if

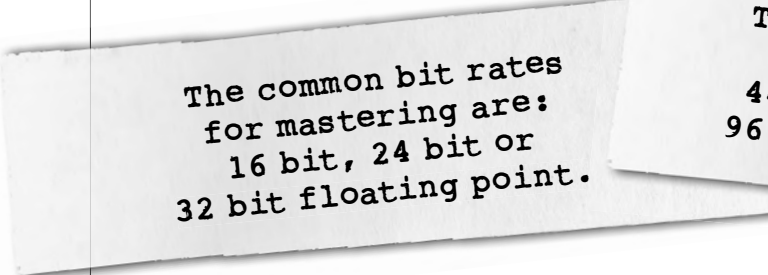


there may be any extra costs involved in such a case. Share with the mastering engineer your vision on how the album/EP sequence should be and he will work on adjusting the levels, tones, fades, cross-fades, gaps and cuts to give the piece fluidity as well as a solid sense of continuity.

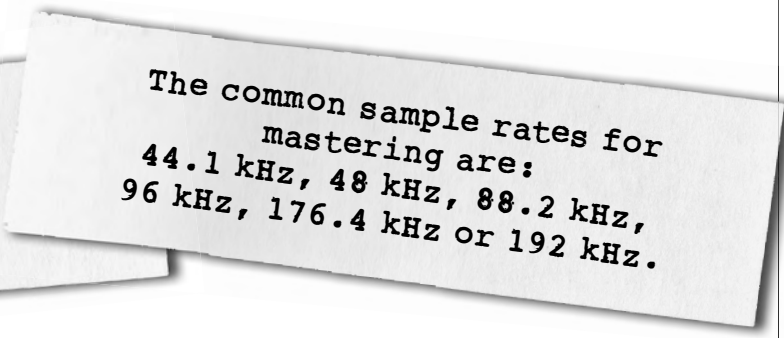
## **HOW TO PREPARE A MIX FOR MASTERING? TECHNICAL INFORMATION FOR THOSE WHO RECORD MUSIC IN A HOME STUDIO**

It is highly recommended to print the mix at the same sample and bit rate as the session is mixed on, for example: if the mixing session is at 48 kHz, 24 bit then keep it the same and do not up sample or down sample it.

It is best to check with the program's specifications and the system's optimal settings to know what will exceed the output system's audio capability. Such faulty attempts would result in a diminished sound quality and inferior outcome.



The common bit rates for mastering are:  
16 bit, 24 bit or  
32 bit floating point.



The common sample rates for mastering are:  
44.1 kHz, 48 kHz, 88.2 kHz,  
96 kHz, 176.4 kHz or 192 kHz.

Make notes ahead of time about any problems, concerns, or special treatments required. In order to achieve better clarity and punch, it is best to keep the headroom of the mix at a maximum -3 dB peaking. It is recommended not to add any limiters, finalizers, maximizers, multiband processors or any mastering plug-ins on the mix buss. Contact the duplication facility before the session and find out which format of master is needed to be made (PMCD, DDP, WAV or AIFF). Contact the mastering engineer and ask him what is the preferred format to send the mixes, the common digital recording formats are AIFF or WAV files, stereo interleaved or multi-mono.

For the cases of analog mixes wanted to be mastered and being prepared on analog tape (1/4", 1/2" or 1"), make sure to space songs (2-4 seconds) and to add alignment test tones (100 Hz, 1 kHz, 10 kHz and for more accuracy add 50 Hz and 15 kHz) at a 0 dB operating level. Make sure to leave a leader tape at the head and tail of the tape (15 seconds minimum). Indicate the tape recording speed (30 ips, 15 ips, or 7 1/2 ips) and the type of noise reduction, if any. When releasing the music on vinyl make sure you mention which songs will be on which side of the LP. An average side is 22 minutes in normal level. The hotter/louder the level is, the more space it will take on the record thus, each side becomes shorter.

Since current technology enables meta-data to be embedded in the CD-Text (artist name, album/EP/single name, UPC/EAN barcode, track names and ISRC codes) it will be helpful to provide an exact list containing all the above information to the mastering engineer along with the track running order. Inform the mastering engineer what is the needed output format and on what type of media it will be published and released on (CD, DVD, blue-ray, video, vinyl, cassette, MP3, streaming web video or sound tracks) so it can be optimized to fit the format of choice.

## HOW TO SEND THE MIX FILES TO THE MASTERING ENGINEER/STUDIO?

With the widening of the internet bandwidth and the improvement in file transferring systems, sending the tracks to the mastering engineer can be done online by uploading the files to FTP servers as one zipped folder or as separated files. Another option is to send the compiled tracks via postal or courier services on a data CD-R, audio CD-R, DVD-R, DAT tape, analog tape, flash drive or a hard drive.

## HOW TO CREATE WORK AND PROMOTE YOUR MUSIC IN OUR DAY & AGE

It is very important for the artists and the professional service providers who are hired to help the musicians achieve their goals to get credited on the albums, EPs and singles. With the Internet being the main platform for promotions as well as the continuation and development of alternate marketing methods, there is a growing opportunity for publicity. There are mutual benefits for the artists and the service providers (producers, engineers, mixers, mastering engineers, etc.) through the coalition of self-promotions on the constituents' websites and press releases. Having credits on websites and social media is beneficial for the both engineer and artist, because they become linked to search engines that potential music fans may find, access, and follow their current status.

This article is a window to understanding the technical as well as creative aspects of the production process called mastering. Mastering occurs after the recording and mixing but prior to release or broadcast. The process assists in the creation of a signature sound through certain audio alterations allowing a grander listening experience. Communication between the mastering engineer and the artist is essential. Through solid communication, the mastering engineer is better able to achieve the artistic goal intended of the project as well as accomplishing the task in an efficient and timely manner. This communication also assists in undertaking the formatting aspect. With such a variety of both audio output and playback systems (speakers, headphones, etc.) as well as the array of publishing and releasing platforms (radio, multi-media, internet streaming, MP3, CD, TV, DVD, blue-ray, movie soundtracks etc.), mastering the track to its appropriate formats holds a critical role in the overall construction of a musical project. These are the primary roles and responsibilities that fall under the position of a mastering engineer. Through their artistic as well as technical contributions, a song, track or recording has the opportunity to reach higher sound quality and therefore improve the overall audio experience for the listener.



Just a little bit on this subject as it applies to the whole mastering/best song first process: If you have a great song with a moody, subdued introduction, be careful about putting that online as your single, especially if it is going to be one of your first tracks out there. This is a generation of channel surfers. How long do you stick with a channel that isn't grabbing you? Not long. Consider mastering an internet edit of this song so it slams straight in. You can always do the extended version for the velvet-triple-fold-out-vinyl box set.

When you are finally done, mute all of the vocal tracks and run a mix as an instrumental. It's great to keep handy in case a game company wants an instrumental version of a song.





# 18 PACKAGING

*Johnny James and the Absolutes*

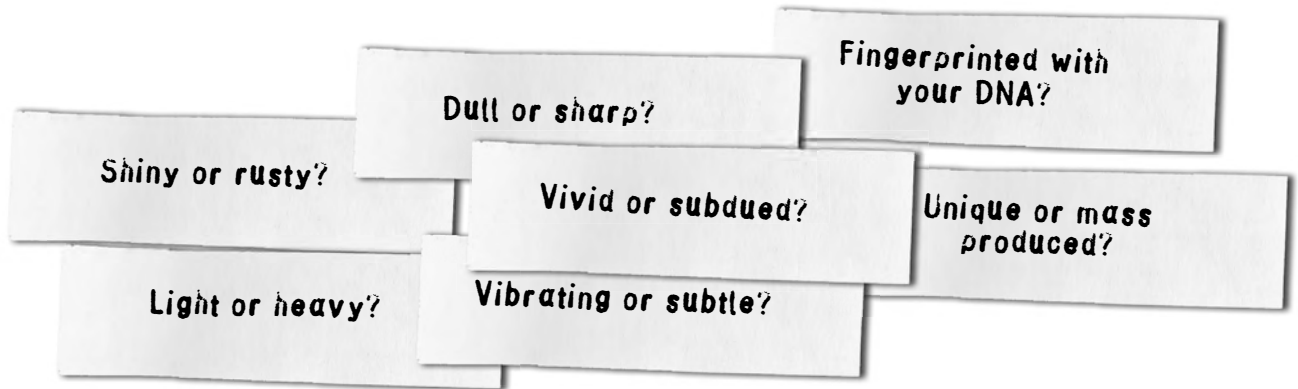
## MAKE COOL SHIT

**In a digital world, why is packaging important?** Just thinking about the package allows for abstract ideas to literally become physical and start to redefine or underline your brand. The act of creating the package will help you refine and define who you are.

Aside from artistic/aesthetic considerations, making something yourself allows you to tweak the mixture, to enter the world of one-of-a-kind unique arty-ness.

It also allows you to limit the manufacturing quantity to be more as needed – by you and your fans – not as needed by the minimum requirements of a catalog up-selling you from the 250 you need to the 2500 it would be CRAZY not to order!

Should the box that contains the music be:



The wonderful thing about *great* packaging is that it poses the question, “If the package looks as fucking<sup>2</sup> awesome as this, how amazing is the music inside!”

If your package doesn't look good then no one is going to pick it up and fondle it — and who doesn't want their package handled? We are more likely to buy something after we have handled it — plus, it can start a conversation and more interaction = more dollar action.

## YOU HAVE TO MAKE COOL SHIT:

Make your work **vibrate** with your unique energy and creative DNA. Smear it all over like germs on the remote control in the hotel room.

There are so many benefits to unique packaging:

- It makes you stand out from the competition,
- It's a great exercise for your band to think more clearly about what it is that you are (heavy, shiny, soft and furry, cuddly, nasty, rusty, etc).
- It enables you to manufacture very small quantities as needed – you don't need to worry about manufacturing the 101st cd/album/ep/cookbook until you have sold the first 100!
- You can experiment with different crazy ideas – make more of the ones that sell, no more of the ones that don't!
- You can sign and number the limited edition – it's not, “we only made ten because we ran out of glue and cat fur.” It's, “this is a strictly limited edition of only ten signed and numbered.”

**Hold onto and archive copies of each of the crazy things you create – start your own museum of you!**

Make sure that the answer to the question, “Do I want to open this package and check out what's inside?” is YES!

Great packaging won't save a shitty, badly recorded album but when it is combined with a great album it creates the kind of wrong math that I love. **1 + 1 = 11!**

<sup>2</sup>This fuck brought to you by Dean Peloquin.

Make your album art  
POP — even when it's  
the size of a thumbnail.

– Chris Robley

## METAL BOX PACKAGING:

After experiencing Led Zeppelin, Rolling Stones, Sticky Fingers and Uriah Heep's Look At Yourself, I joined PiL in 1979 in time to cowrite on just one track on the Metal Box (Bad Baby in case you are interested). The packaging of it set me on a track to keep on investigating. The box was featured in the Wall Street Journal in June 2008, almost 30 years later, which re-emphasised the value of that strategy.



I've seen the value,  
the longevity that the  
extra effort gives back.



When you start to experiment, you open up a whole new world of accidental stuff that makes you look like you know what you are doing. The first release on my label, Invisible, was a vinyl album in a screen printed shopping bag. I did it because we couldn't afford a proper printed sleeve, so I made the bags, as needed. There were a couple of nice surprises — the handles stuck up above all of the other releases in the record bin, inviting the customer to pick it up. Unexpectedly, the album was a tight fit in any well made bin, so very difficult to get back in. I don't think we sold an extra thousand copies because of this (we only ever made 1000, I think) but we might have sold a few more... PLUS, now I had the screen for the bag — I could use the very same screen for a shirt!

## YOUR IMAGINATION IS A POWERFUL TOOL — USE IT.

Learn from the past — remix it, make it your own — be inspired and re-inspire.

### Undertones, Teenage Kicks

I grew up listening to the Undertones on the John Peel Show and bought Teenage Kicks, which was 7" single wrapped in a folded poster. I didn't realize that 30 years later, I would recreate the same packaging idea when I bought a bunch of posters from the cultural revolution in China, made a red vinyl 7", and folded 42 different covers. Not stolen, but inspired by...







*Shogun Konitoki*

## **YOU CAN'T HAVE AN OBJECT OF YOUR DESIRE IF THERE ISN'T AN OBJECT - MAKE ONE.**

More inspirations from the past... this idea reminds me of Led Zeppelin 3; die cut holes in the gatefold sleeve with a hole that you can spin and look at the different images becoming visible. Hypnotic but a drag when all of your seeds got trapped in the middle...

Shogun Konitoki's idea is the same but hi-teched up. Dots on the vinyl come to life, but first you have to make the hand held battery powered strobe light!

The **genius** of this Zeppelin/Moldovar hybrid is that by the time you have watched the video, put together the small electronic DIY strobe light, burnt your fingers on the soldering iron, looked for the resistor that you lost, maybe it fell on the floor? Maybe it rolled underneath your laptop then realizing that the cat ate it — sitting and waiting for the cat to shit, wading through cat shit to find the resistor, trying to keep your burned blistered finger and your nice clean dressing out of it — but failing — **YOU ARE IN NO CONDITION** to make any kind of objective decision about whether you like the music or not! Genius on a stick!

This is also called the IKEA effect.

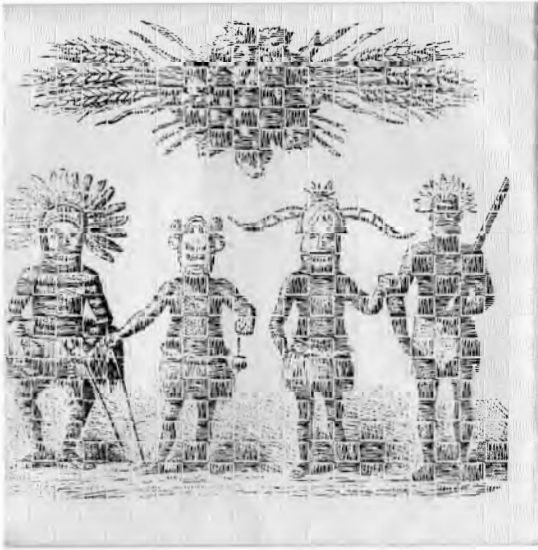
And the object is so cool that it tickles someone to take the time to stream one of your songs.

**“Feelings of attachment or partial adaptation to ownership may be produced by simply holding an item and these feelings are intensified with the duration of exposure.”**

*— Judgment and Decision Making*



## LETS START WITH CHEAP AND EASY...



“We were looking for something quick and cheap to give away for the ep, so I googled ‘cd cover origami’ and found a sleeve that holds a cd with no tape, glue, etc... The fancy “textured” paper I bought out on clearance from Office Max. The artwork comes from my personal **holy grail** of flyer/cd cover material — a first edition book called The Story of Man (which I recently found another copy online for \$1800 now that my copy is in pieces. Oops.) at a barn sale circa 1890, telling the white/anglo version of the world at the time with brilliant illustrations throughout. All the copying was done at Office Max for about 8 bucks. Quick, easy, and cheap. I numbered them and our closest fans/friends got a classy looking piece of artwork to boot.”

–Johnny James and the Absolutes

1.



2.



1. This Changes Everything, *A Guy Named Ken*

Note the addition of colour and inserts. Super easy and, if this was shrink wrapped, would look awesome.

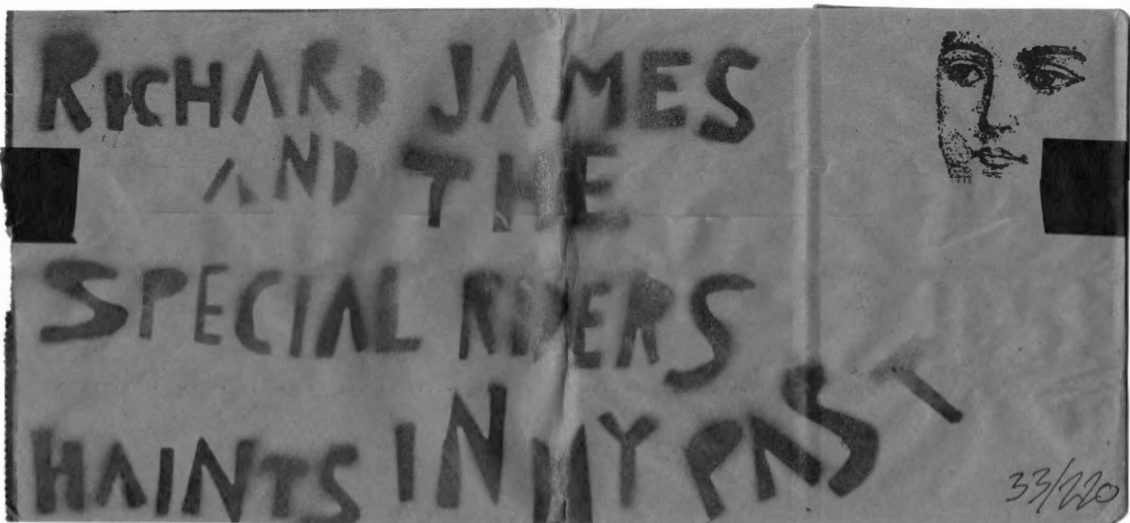
2. Destination, Desperation, & Delight, *Jubel Jenkins*

Initially very exciting. I thought that this was very home made (basically a sandwich bag), but the art is just a one piece colour copy.

3.



4.



### 3. Promo, *The Action 5*

Amazingly fuck-you<sup>1</sup> cardboard inept gluing catastrophe cover... oh, and I guess you could say it's recycled.

<sup>1</sup>This fuck brought to you by Brian Silver.

### 4. Haints in my Past, *Richard James and the Special Riders*

Love this; more home made. For some reason I love the fact that it doesn't make sense when folded. It makes me want to un fold it! Makes perfect sense...tease. And numbered!

5.



6.



## 5. Sleep, vx

Great use of the wax seal. I like the ceremonial aspect of this stuff, making it cool and vibey for the recipient. You also introduce the idea of some fans buying two copies — one to play and one to keep!

## 6. unprepared piano, j.frede

Simple folded brown paper with slot for tongue and string. I just went to put the disc back inside and found the little inserted piece of paper in there. That's what I love about the DIY package — you can put your finger prints on it, write notes, autograph — whatever!

7. Disastro Vanarchy, *The Music Box*

I love this; the insides are all individually typed and different! Awesome and a little scary!

I *had* to buy *two*. How many label owners buy two CDs from the same band... at SXSW! I just loved this to bits. The new model, every single one is different — nothing to do with the time and effort involved. *Everything* to do with getting a response. Awesomeness multiplied by groovyness at the corner of inky fingers and clickety-clack manual-typewriter one-at-a-time as needed supply chain madness.

&7.fuckin on a freight train

'88'. big flat mine .momma

-----&-----  
preventtheflu20secondsins soapandwarmwaterwilldood

'\_#'\_((fgjcfi03&%%66 7779I"2  
this is how it will be in the futur  
when we are the only ones left

THESE people=

Don't forget Jeff plays tenor  
Adam didn't cum with us but he will still bang  
ACCORDIUM  
booty

7.



cor E smel  
andy

anjolele  
th a spoon

Alex is a

andaccent  
TARMONIKAZoo

we will be

from shows

7 dogs on

eat too much

do you have

question right?

i know you have a pencil

HoHoHo

so just go ahead and hand it over

www.myap

www.myspace.com/themusicboxgroupsex

there is plenty of group sex  
in NEW ORLEANS n 2008

So this is where i lay down a bit of the  
free style for yaz. so i hope that you liike  
to hear about my day. I woke up today to  
find out where i was sleeping was not acceptable  
for sleeping during the day time. so i moved my

8.



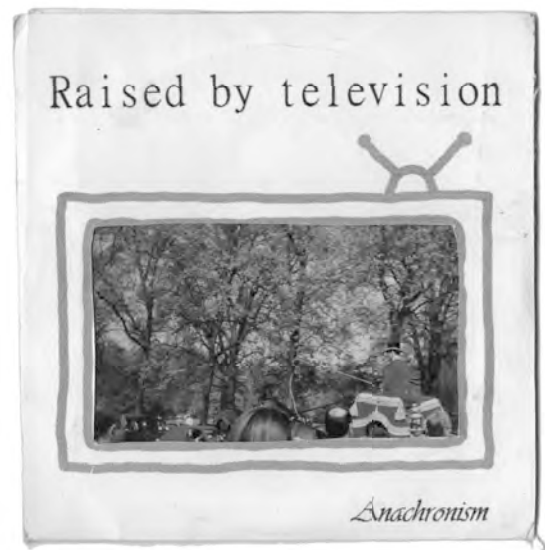
9.



10.



11.

8. *Aimee Bobruck*

I spend a lot of time messing around with making stuff, but I would have never thought of stitching a package together. You can see it on this image but there is a kind of extra pocket that had more information inserted into it. Bought at Waterloo Records in Austin.

10. **Scratch and Sniff**, *The Countdown*

Blueberry scented white vinyl 7". What does this record sound like? "Blueberries!" change the question! Change the outcome! Multisensory appeal.

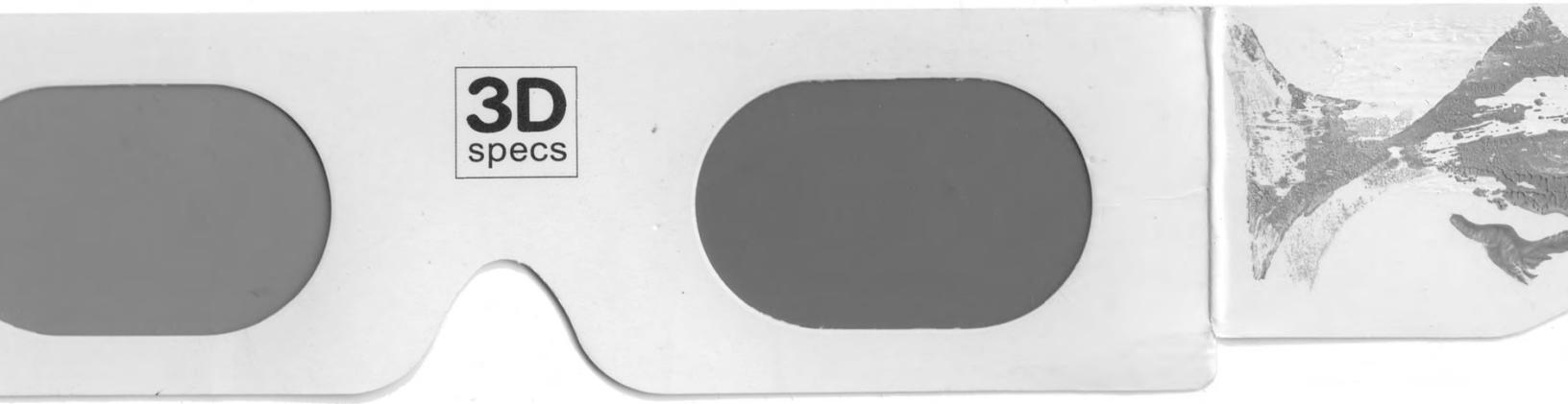
9. **To Glass in the Blast**, *John McKenna*

Home-made excuses a little bit (or a lot) of sloppiness. It is the certification of "lovingly made by hand." I like the seal; you have to irreparably damage it to open it!

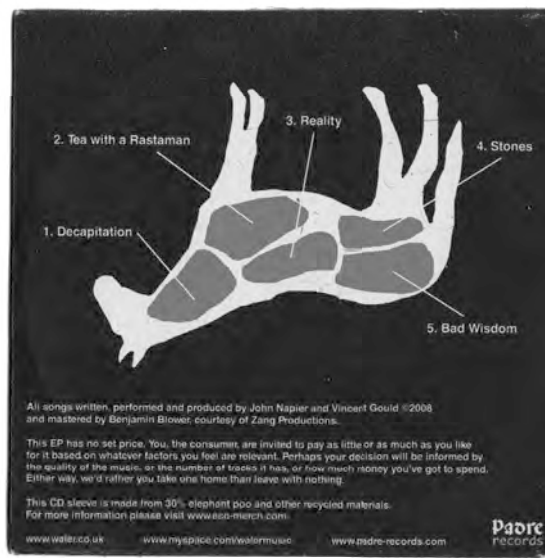
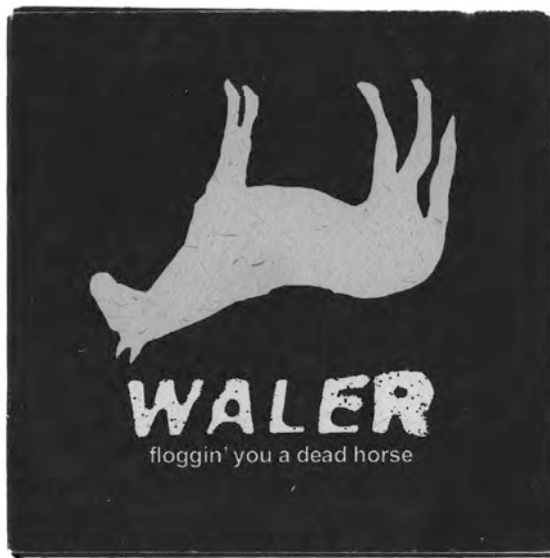
11. **Raised By Television**, *Anachronism*

This release combines the uniformity of mass production but really effectively introduces the home made arty element by inserting "found" photographs. Love it. I would emphasise the series by taking a photo of nine completed ones and inserting that into the package somewhere. Someone might want to buy a few more. At the least it shows the scope of the work that one piece on its own does not.





12.



### 12. floggin' you a dead horse, *Waler*

Horse poop. Not much, but enough to get your attention! Even now, I sniff the CD when I pull it out at lectures. I think it's only 2% horse poop; you don't have to go crazy to give yourself a marketing edge.

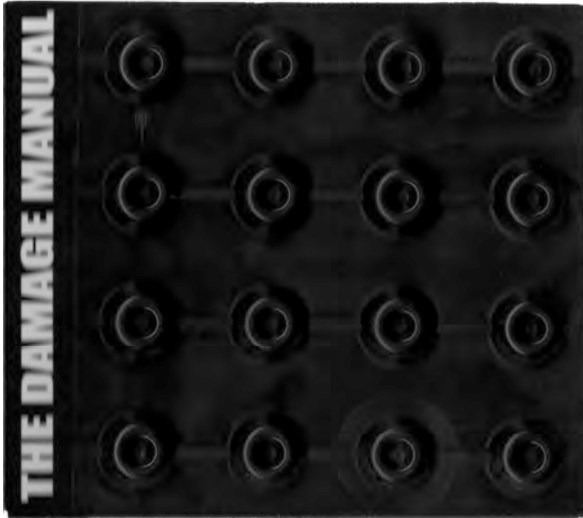
### 13. Sunshine Enema, *Marrow*

Ok, maybe you do! Here's the award-winning MARROW release Sunshine Enema. This release is on a USB drive inside of a bottle. Mine came with a personalized prescription.

13.



14.



15.



16.



14. **Limited Edition**, *The Damage Manual*

Partially-printed side spine and back with piece of Canadian basement flooring cut and glued onto the front... horrible finger shredding repetition, but totally worth it. The cover necessitated a promo video just so you could get the idea (that's a great yardstick) if a 2D photo doesn't explain it and you have to make a video, you're on to something. If a flat, shitty poorly lit photo explains it all, then what's going on? Where is the story?

15. **RX Dubs**, *Ritalin*

Screenprinted in white then signed and numbered in Sharpie. Made 50 at a time — minimum risk, maximum dub.

16. **The Dubs**, *The Damage Manual*

A screen printing jig enabled me to open out a digipack and print across the both faces front and back. I sign these and number them in a silver pen. **Don't** try and print the spine — you'll wreck 75% of them and they'll look crap! Once again you can make these in small batches as needed.

17.

17. **Creator of Scars**, *Iron Giant*

Diminished Fifth Records really got this right. You can download the shit out of anything – but the metal package for this makes it collectible.

18.

18. **Box Set**, *Dead Voices On Air*

Packaging as re-packaging!

Screen print, cut up a few pieces of cardboard, score, fold, stamp, emboss, crayon, pencil, tag, string, shrink wrap = WIN

Re-packaging 6 DVOA albums really helped keep things moving and literally wrapped their 6 cds in a more DVOA feeling vibe. Side note Mark Spybey's demo to my label was a cassette wrapped in a thin sheet of copper.....

19.

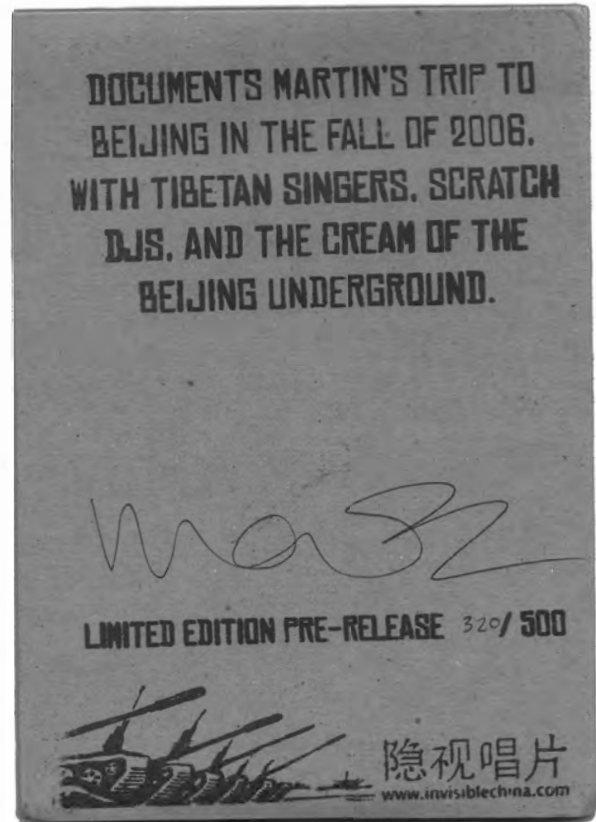
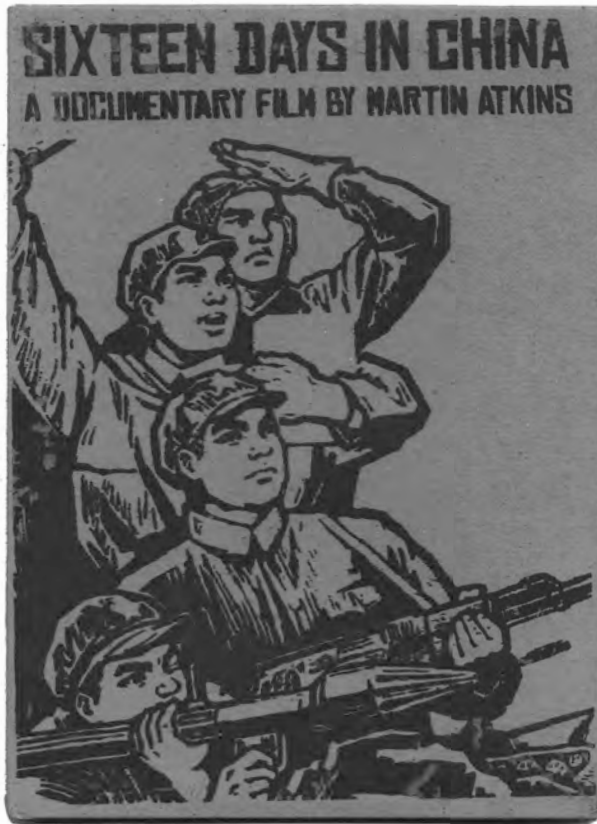
19. **Warped Tour EP**, *Skinny Lister*

KNOW YOUR AUDIENCE!

Skinny Lister like to drink (so does their audience), so their free hand out CD from the Warped Tour includes a beer mat and, in a very pub quiz friendly kind of way, had a question on the back.



20.



20. **Sixteen Days in China**, *Martin Atkins*

By making things at home yourself – you can create a pre-release of a professionally packaged release – enabling you to build advance vibe around the official release date (and once again – using a few of the 1000 kraft dvd covers you bought in bulk) AND signed and numbered!

21. In progress...

Use the same strategy with kraft dvd cases – this one I tried gluing wallpaper on and painting black – gives it an old bible type look – not sure what I am going to do with this idea yet.....

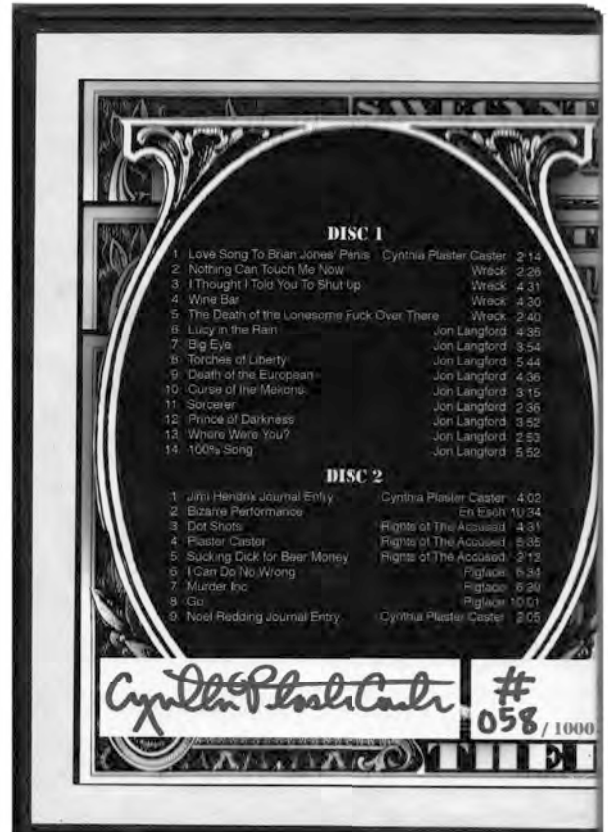
22. **Hard Aid**, *Cynthia Plaster Caster*

Using the regular DVD box as a base, you can create short run releases or use as a holder for physical press kits. This is a limited edition release we did to raise money for Cynthia Plastercaster, signed and numbered by the artist herself with some paper engineering on the inside! Signed and numbered!

21.



22.



23.



24.



23. **8-Track Limited Edition, *Pigface***

I thought the story would be ‘we had to break into Grandad’s car to listen to the advance copy of the album – the handbrake broke and we rolled down the hill into the river – we only just got out” But instead a guy called me that was watching the lot of used 8 tracks I was bidding on. He used to listen to one of them with his parents and offered a significant amount of money just for the track listing. Made for an interesting, unexpected story, which is what happens when you do the unexpected.

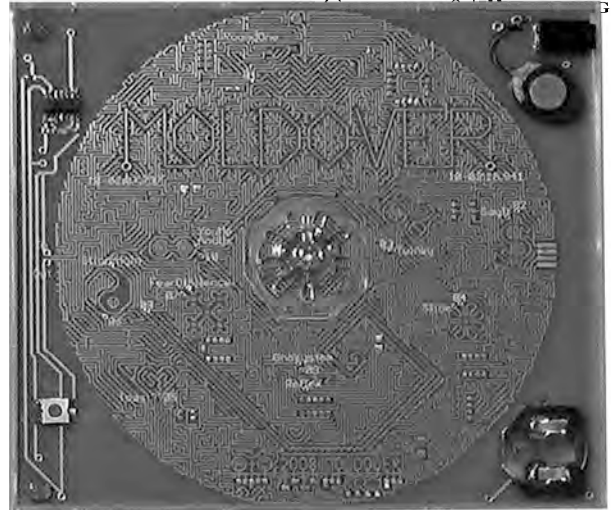
24. **Party is Over, *Pornostar*, *Snapline***

Printed in China – silver ink directly onto the cd case. Very interesting but a cautionary tale – many of the cds that were shipped to the US were damaged – and, unlike a traditional release that can be refurbished – or just have another case created – this is much more difficult.

25. **Awesome Edition, *Moldover***

Another great example of amazing packaging is Moldover. His album is a traditional CD with the backing made out of a circuit board. The song titles are written in circuitry and a few electronic components make a light sensitive Theramin complete with a headphone out jack! The time, effort and imagination put into this have paid off many times over. I’ve spent the last 24 months travelling the world and at every opportunity I evangelize about this amazing guy and his album. I’m not his manager, agent, label or publicist but I’m always talking about his amazing shit!

25.



26.



27.



### 26. One3Four Project, DJ Mighty Mike Saga

I don't know where I got this but I had to have it: a recycled old large floppy computer disc cut across the top and a cd inserted. How totally cool and easy to make is that?

### 27. Feeding Affliction

The Feeding Affliction guys stopped into one of my events and had shirts along with these foam fingers with a cd stuffed up in it. Slightly bulky but a big attention getter!

# LOADS OF MONEY

28.



29.



30.





28. **Gummy Song Skull**, *The Flaming Lips*

The Flaming Lips get it! A usb drive stuck inside an edible gummy head! Oh yes!

30. **10,000 Days**, *Tool*

The packaging for Tool's 10,000 days album is magical. Lenses create a kind of Victorian biopic party game device that, once you let your eyes blurr out a bit, slap you in the face with 3D.

This isn't DIY — roll up your sleeves and everyone in the band make it happen — this is what you can do when you have a giant fan base. The ONLY way they could pull off something as cool as this is by leveraging quantity to create a terrific experiential package. Of course, some of the fans got pissed off feeling that it took away from the amazing music!

29. **Liebe Ist Für Alle Da**, *Rammstein*

What a bunch of dicks!

31. **A Town that Found its Sound**, *GGRP*

This is pure genius: Audio engineering company GGRP Sound sent a 45rpm record in a corrugated cardboard sleeve that doubles as a record player. You can put it together one single step. Once is in position, you can play and scratch using a pencil. Clever.

What does it sound like? Total shit – that's not the point! I want it.



# STICKERING, SHRINK WRAP AND OTHER STUFF

The GREAT thing about shrink wrapping your unusual custom items is that

- 1) They won't get destroyed and covered in cat hair and piss when you drop the box out of the back of the van when you stop for Steven to throw up.
- 2) You can use timely stickers on the outside to do whatever you want with.

If you give away 20 – 100 cds to promote a 3 band show – you can sticker the outside with the show dates.

If you are selling your “live in Paris” or Pittsburgh or NYC you can sticker appropriately – ‘our last show at CBGB,” ‘best live show ever’ said the NJ something or other – see?

Or just general information just in case your merchandise person is NOT amazingly knowledgeable about the history of the band.

“This disc features the last performance of song #12 by guitarist\_\_\_\_\_”

## YOU CAN ALSO HAVE SOME FUN WITH STICKERS – I HAVE:

1. I just LOVED the idea of talking to someone in their head while they were looking at the album in the record store. Some people loved it. I received quite a few letters from record store owners **irate** that I was telling people to steal from their stores. I *wish* I had kept one that went on for pages and pages...
2. Not that it costs very much to make a roll of stickers – but when I saw these BONELESS stickers in a supermarket supply house – I thought it was a terrific opportunity to call our promotional cd the same name – voila – instant stickers, low cost and saved a week or so in turn around time
3. Did the very same thing with an interview disc – called it “lean juicy pork” boom!
4. You can start a little fight too if you'd like with a sticker. We must stop this scum – sheep on drugs!



1.

If you don't buy another record this year, buy this one, it features all of your alternative favorites: **MARTIN ATKINS** who is a member of **KILLING JOKE** and used to play with **PUBLIC IMAGE LTD.** Steal this record. The other main dude in pigface is **WILLIAM RIEFLIN**, who is with **MINISTRY**, go on, steal it now, no one's looking, yeah. Rieflin is also in the **REVOLTING COCKS**. If you have to buy it, at least make sure you dub off lots of copies for your friends. Others featured are **CHRIS CONNELLY**, he's in the **REVOLTING COCKS** too, **TRENT REZNOR** of **NINE INCH NAILS**, **PAUL BARKER** of **MINISTRY**, **COCKS**, **LEAD INTO GOLD** etc. **OGRE** from **SKINNY PUPPY**, **EN ESCH** from **K.M.F.D.M.**, **MATT SCHULTZ** from **LAB REPORT** on the a.t.g., and **WILLIAM TUCKER**, **PIGFACE** is Engineered/Produced OH! We ran out of room! Steal it...Steal it...Steal it...

2.



3.



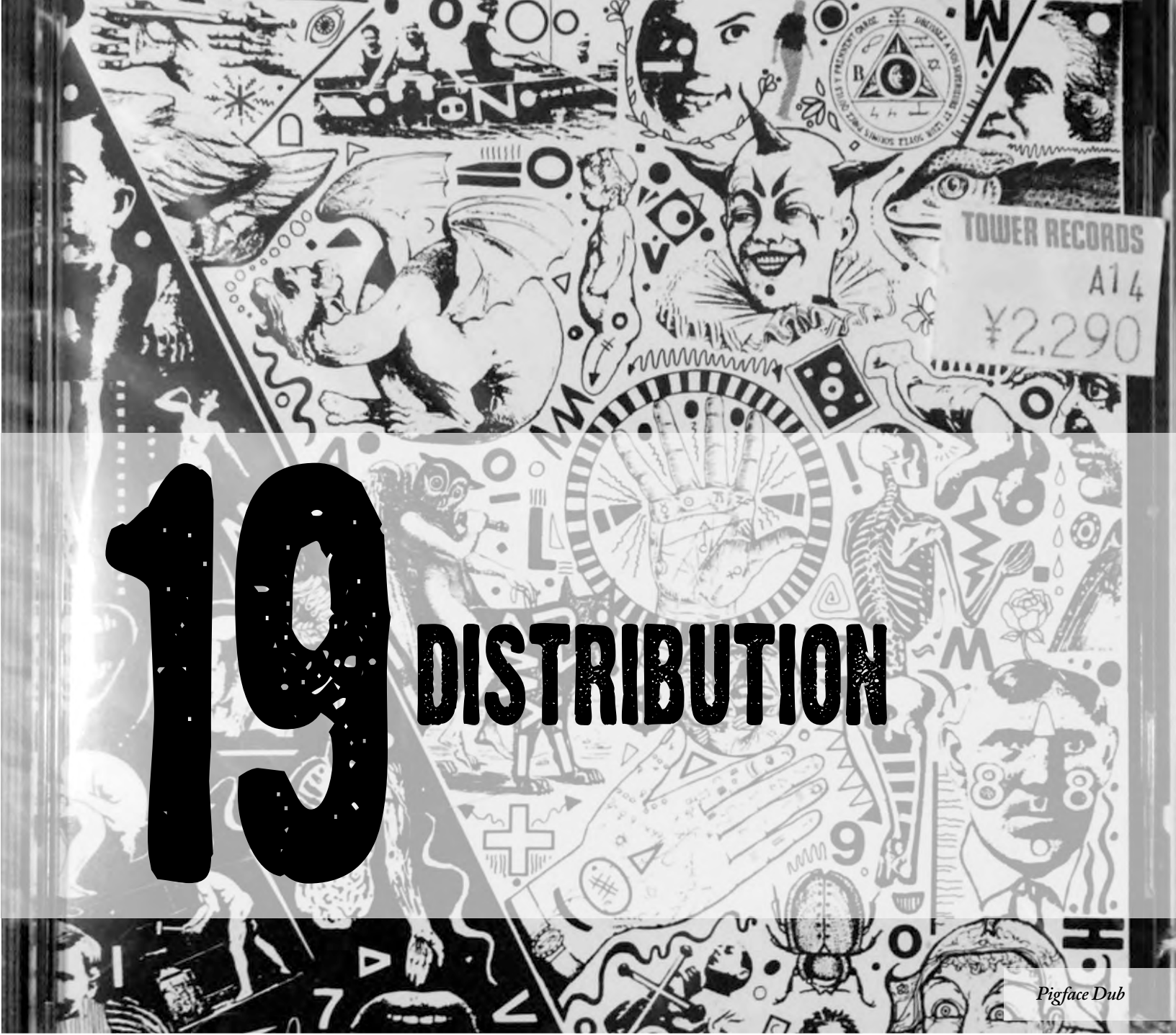
4.

### **WE MUST STOP THIS SCUM**

The **Partnership for a Sheep on Drugs Free America** was formed in 1996 to protect this nation's minds from the **EVIL** that is **Sheep on Drugs**. If you want to get involved, please contact us at PO Box 16008 Chicago, IL 60616 or start a chapter in your community. The time is now to rid the nation of this **VICIOUS EVIL FILTH** before it is too late.







# 19 DISTRIBUTION

*Pigface Dub*

## OLD SCHOOL PHYSICAL DISTRIBUTION

We look at old school physical distribution in class – if for no other reason then to let everyone coming into the business today know how totally fucking<sup>2</sup> lucky they are. Disintermediation defines the change in distribution – the removal of all the middlemen in between you and your goal/your audience/your fan or, as Tony van Veen says; your customer.

Back in the day I would manufacture cds, send them to my distributor who would then send them to stores – if they sold (and they remembered) they would order more, sometimes I would call stores and compile lists for my distributors so no one had to do anything except fill holes and make money – sometimes they did, sometimes they didn't. Sometimes an important salesperson in a region would be on vacation at a time when we were restocking before a tour during a new release, sometimes

**The most precious thing is to create a buzz and an audience.**

<sup>2</sup>*This fuck brought to you by Michael Jahne.*

they were fans, and sometimes they were not. *If* you got the cds into the store and they didn't sell, then they would be sent back for credit, sometimes the stores would sell cds, take them back then re-shrink them and return them, sometimes they got damaged and the distributor would refurbish them for you. *If* you really wanted to make a splash and get lots of cds out there so that people walking into a store would see the stuff, then you could purchase programs with chain stores like Best Buy or (in the day) Tower. For a few thousand dollars, they would take more of your cds than they perhaps thought they should, but they would trust you and your money and take that and your cds. *If* they didn't sell, then the cds would be sent back for credit but, of course, the cost of the program was non-returnable. *If* you participated in one of these programs with Best Buy and didn't sell, they would ban you from participating in another.

We would try and get more sales by carefully informing everyone we came into contact with how well a previous release had sold (we'd put this on the one-sheet too) noting any great review quotes and chart positions to help spur sales. I think at one point we might have believed that sales people were listening!

I bet some of my cds have been more places in the world than you have — here's one that went to Tokyo! Tower Records — then, sadly came all of the way back. At this point you start to realize that this is working for someone — just not you!

Touring helps stimulate physical distribution but as mentioned elsewhere here — if you are touring — then the best thing you can do is to spend time and money on your own merch booth and distribute information, groovyness and product yourself.

You don't need physical distribution at first — you aren't ketchup playing catch-up — you are groovyness playing saucy with your fans. Do more of that and eventually you might decide that there is enough demand for your music that it is time for you to be in stores across the country.



## DISTRIBUTION DOESN'T SOLVE ANYTHING UNLESS THERE IS ALREADY DEMAND.

If you want to spin the groovyness roulette wheel, a nice way to do this is through one of the indie chains, AIMS or CIMS — two coalitions of indie stores that you can deal with as one entity and participate in some programs. This can work alongside record store day if you have a fan base and great vinyl for instance — but once again this alone won't help you unless there is already demand. At this point I'd say that Record Store Day is flooded — the day to jump on is Casette Store Day or, get ahead of the curve and jump on 8 Track cartridge day!

Cassette  
STORE ▶ DAY  
7<sup>TH</sup> SEPTEMBER, 2013

## CIMS

The Coalition of Independent Music Stores (CIMS: [cimsmusic.com](http://cimsmusic.com)) is a group of some of the best independent music stores in America. CIMS was founded in 1995; its current membership is made up of 36 accounts that handle 40 stores in 24 states. Many of the accounts have been recognized by the music industry and their local communities for their outstanding dedication to customer service and developing artist support.

Each member is bound by its shared love of music, a reputation for great selection and customer service in each's community, yet each CIMS account is as unique as the market it represents. Most importantly, CIMS member stores continually seek to challenge the jaded, color-by-numbers advertising and marketing of other retailers.

## AIMS

The Alliance of Independent Media Stores (AIMS: [thealliancerocks.com](http://thealliancerocks.com)) is a group made up of forward-thinking music stores across the country dedicated to bringing you the best music shopping experience possible. AIMS stores are all locally owned and are widely different in “look and feel,” but are united in their dedication to putting artistic integrity ahead of mass-market commercial hype. In other words, it’s about the MUSIC.

AIMS stores are located coast to coast and membership currently stands at 25 stores in 21 cities. We are not a chain, but rather an association of independent stores working together to benefit our customers and record label partners. Visit any of us and you’ll find a wide selection of music that goes far deeper than most mass-market retailers (including formats such as vinyl and DVDs at most of our stores). Through our combined efforts we’ve helped support artists from the beginning of their careers, and we’re here to support the labels that support them. In many cases, AIMS member stores have their own in-house record labels, participating in all facets.



The smaller the audience,  
the bigger the problem.

# DISTRIBUTION – D.I.WHY?

We are all drug dealers. That’s the reason it’s okay to give your shit away for free, but only if it’s GREAT SHIT. Then, people will want **more** of your shit. This applies to band members as well — if you are dealing in great drugs for band members, #1 drug is an AUDIENCE. Then you will have less problems. If you are playing to next to no one, then all of the tiny problems that an audience makes go away (a fractured rib, a problematic piece of equipment, a bad attitude) will be magnified exponentially and inversely by the size of the audience.

It always surprises me when bands are ‘waiting for a distribution deal’ or cite lack of distribution as a barrier. It CAN be, but you are a band (not a ketchup company trying to fill demand on a supermarket shelf to tie in with your big Super Bowl push), you can accomplish much of what you need yourself — incrementally. There’s no magic bullet — it is travelling, meeting face to face and engaging that makes the

difference here — how do you think a product gets placed in a great POP position (point of purchase over by the cash register) someone, (a person) has gone into that store, missed the owner by 10 minutes then gone back at a better time and chatted, cajoled, pressured, whatever, to get the item into the store.

## THERE'S NO MAGIC TIME SAVING 'LIKE' BUTTON FOR THIS SHIT YOU JUST HAVE TO DO IT.

You just have to do it. *If* you hire another company to provide you with this kind of service, this is what they'll be doing except they'll have 5 or so other items that they care about, potentially more than yours. Now you are back to square one, in a very special place where someone who doesn't care about your shit is the *one* person who you have trusted to care about your shit. If the only obstacle to you doing this yourself is the knowledge of what it really is, then let this be the changing point and proceed onwards and upwards. If the stumbling block is *you* — your shyness and lack of communication skills — then **work on that** before you spend any more time working on another guitar solo (“you see, I went up to the diminished D# there at the beginning. It made the fingering weird.”). **Stop** — and deal with the stuff that's important.

Over a history of touring I always tried to take time out to stop in at retail outlets and

1. be nice
2. give them stuff
3. be nice to anyone that was there and
4. treat your merch booth as the retail outlet — because it IS!

Hip Hop guys distribute out of the back of cars by schools. **Take your shit to the people that want it.** Right where they are! Distribution is a piece of string that's pulled by the consumer not pushed by you or any of the people that will want to charge you money for pushing it!

I've seen bands about to embark on a 60-city tour lamenting their lack of distribution or trying to get into a chain that has 30 stores across the country — that's crazy — what better way to incentivize sales than by having the stuff right there in front of people, excited people, drunk people, with credit cards.

You are your own chain store.

Pledge Music is a life jacket for deserving musicians who have served their time in the lake of piss we call the music industry.

– *Ginger Wildheart*



Once you have crisscrossed the state, the region, the country several times, then you might need some distribution — maybe not for sales but for visibility in markets. That's why I have books through distro — not for the money (are you kidding me!) but for the visibility on the store front, on the shelf when I'm not there. It all adds up.

You don't need *global distribution* — you need your stuff to be where you are and you need to be where your stuff is.

#1 If you are a solo artist busking at three different locations each Friday, Saturday, Sunday afternoons — YOU are your distribution — 5 cds, books, whatever's each hour, and more e mail addresses and some donations is a great incremental way to move yourself forward. Aim Low Get High.

#2 If you are a band — same thing — you have the advantage that you can use strategy #1 and this one which is all of you coming together, some members of your band don't have to busk — the drummer for instance — can just float around the crowd getting names, selling.

#3 you don't need to perform in a traditional venue to sell and distribute — there is a guy in NYC that makes a decent living selling his books on the subway. He sold 14,000 books in 3 years!

Don't worry about getting paid at first. The most precious thing is to create a buzz and an audience. Apple Music, Amazon, CD baby, iTunes, print on demand, drop cards, giving it away — these are all opportunities for you to get your music and your art out there. The best person to start dealing with this is YOU and the band — take your CDs and merchandise with you as you travel across the country. For a fee CD baby acts as a provider for other services like Apple. Get your songs up on your Facebook, SoundCloud, Bandcamp, Reverb Nation whatever page, give CDs away for free when people give you their email address, get your music out there any way you can!

## THE LARGER DISTRIBUTION MACHINES ARE BUILT TO SUPPLY A DEMAND THAT ALREADY EXISTS.

So don't think that simply signing to a distribution company means that you will automatically sell a lot of music. There has to be a demand already out there in the market place.

## THERE HAS TO BE A DEMAND ALREADY OUT THERE IN THE MARKET PLACE.

Don't forget games! Loads of songs have become hits from games first — think inside the Xbox!



**RoseWintergreen:** Beautiful #newmusic by @HarrisonStorm. I discovered them unexpectedly in the city today busking!

I sell a product that's better than the competition at a price that's less than the competition.

- Frank Lucas (American Gangster)

# 10 RECOMMENDATIONS FOR DISTRIBUTION DEALS

## ED SEAMAN

**1 PICKING A DISTRIBUTOR – DO YOUR HOMEWORK.** When searching for a Label or Distributor you are going to hear a lot of bullshit. Interview them like a job interview — use the internet to look up good interview questions and prepare for the interview. Ask for references before making a decision, and check the references. Ask if they will supply their entire customer and supplier list so you can randomly check on them; too often you get references that are “best buddy” references. If a company is comfortable with you checking with anyone they do business with, they are probably a good partner.

Actually check their references, and dig deeper if you hear hesitation. Nobody really wants to talk shit about anyone — so if you hear hesitation or sidestepping in an answer, find out what they really mean. Prepare questions in advance in writing and ask them. Look for trends. Once you get into bed with a distributor it can be tricky getting a separation, so choose wisely.

**2 SQUARE PEG, ROUND HOLE.** Find out what the core competencies are of your trade partner. Make sure this is what you are looking for; are they about working a breaking artist at a granular level, market by market, or are they more of a national numbers shifter, filling a demand? Most distributors are the latter. If your expectation is that the Distributor is going to create the demand, and this is not their model, you are headed for a speedy divorce. Don't force it.

Consider this “Square peg, round hole” for other areas of your business. Financially, if a Distributor works in a certain model of reporting, payment, or accounting but you are expecting a different model, be accepting of their model. They most likely will not change their model and infrastructure just for you. If you force your model you may really set yourself up for failure...they may agree to something they cannot deliver. And nobody wins.

**3 INCLUDE DIGITAL.** If you expect your distributor to pull all the stops with support for sales, promotion, advertising, tour support, give them a piece of the digital reward. Everyone knows physical gets tougher and tougher. Distributors can be instrumental in funding and executing the marketing plans. They invest not only the funds for marketing, but also the labor of their staff, including creative planning. They may feel it is unfair to invest this time and money only to have another company reap the digital sales reward. If you want your distributor to really work for you, include digital.

**4 UNDERSTAND THE ACCOUNTING.** You, or someone in your organization, should fully understand the accounting *before* you enter into the written agreement. Your deal with artists should reflect the deal with the distributor so you don't put yourself in a negative cashflow position. Ask for sample reporting and accounting before entering into the deal; see what this looks like and understand what it means to you financially. Most distributors payment terms leave you with dry periods of cashflow. Can you work through this?

Beware of things being done to appease you, and don't demand things that will actually hurt you. For example, don't require a massive pressing of records thinking this will show good faith for the efforts of the release. It won't. Don't require a massive advertising campaign if sales aren't going to be at that level. You may get a lot more awareness this way, but at what cost?

**5 ROCK SOLID CONTRACT.** Never do a handshake deal. Get it in writing, and have a lawyer review the contract (contrary to point #10) Handshake deals rarely end well unless it is a longtime and trusted relationship.

**6 COMMUNICATION.** Find the best way to communicate with your distributor, and deliver information the way they want. They may want concise emails summarizing activity, information, etc. Push for a deal where you have access directly to the right people. Get past the Label Manager and communicate directly with the people that do the real work (salespeople, marketing, promotions). Delivering a direct message to these people is far better than a watered down message delivered through the wrong channel.

### GET FACETIME BUT MAKE SURE YOU ARE REALLY INVITED. DON'T FORCE A FACE TO FACE VISIT.

Know when the conversation is over. Distributors are hustling to make a living. Long phone calls are counterproductive. Get in, deliver your message, and get out. Repeat.

**7 SET THE TONE EARLY.** Make sure that the promises of the contract are upheld, and show that you are on top of it. If reporting is due no later than May 5th, contact them on the 6th and ask where the reporting is. As Martin says, “Don’t be an asshole”, but make sure it is clear that you are on top of things and you will not be taken advantage of.

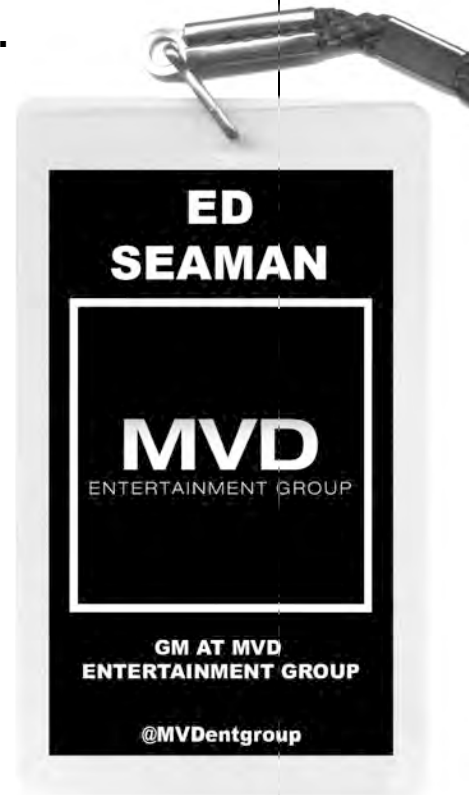
**8 ADVOCATE! (BUT DON'T BE AN ASSHOLE.)** You need to push for your records. You need to stay fresh on the minds of the people in the organization. But don’t be a nudge. Make sure that with each department you walk the tightrope of pushing for your label or artist without being THAT DREADED LABEL that nobody wants to talk to.

**9 HERE'S YOUR ORDER!** Show the demand by bringing them business. If possible, bring the order DIRECTLY TO A SALES REP. Sales reps are often paid on commission. If you bring them an order you put money in their pocket. Very endearing, and it also demonstrates to them first hand that there is money to make on your artist. They will go out and try & replicate this success.

### DON'T EXPECT THE DISTRIBUTOR TO CREATE THE DEMAND; YOU NEED TO DO THIS

Show the distributor the demand. Provide good summaries of activity including weblinks. Don’t use hype; data and communication are so good nowadays that hype is shallow. Instead show tangible evidence of the demand with real and raw data. Show tourdates, press clippings & reviews, social media statistics. Show pictures from successful performances. And bring them orders. They like orders.

**10 DO YOUR OWN LEGAL.** Use a lawyer for your contract, but make sure you understand it; don’t just hand off to a lawyer. After that — avoid lawyers. If you get into a scrap, settle reasonably, and settle quickly. You’ll dump a ton of money, time and negative energy if it gets in the hands of a lawyer, and even worse, if it goes to court. Making a quick concession and ending a dispute is far more productive. Don’t let spite and principle stand in the way of good business decisions. Cut bait and move on.





# THE COMPLETE GUIDE TO DIGITAL MUSIC DISTRIBUTION

## BRAD PACK

### BRAD PACK



**AUDIO ENGINEER & INSTRUCTOR at SAE INSTITUTE**

Years ago, the only way to distribute your music to the public was to get a record deal. They would pay for you to record an album, print thousands of copies and ship them all over the country. Not to mention radio promotion and marketing to help sell the record. But things are different now. Musicians can make professional sounding tracks with little more than a laptop, interface and a microphone. Artists can have their music heard all over the globe without ever pressing a single album. Record deals are so three years ago...

The CD is dead. And for that matter, so is the digital download. Vinyl is making a serious comeback, but pressing a physical record is another conversation. So how does the modern DIY artist get their music out there? The easiest way is through streaming. Sure, sites like Bandcamp and SoundCloud allow users to upload their music for free, but how do you get your music on Spotify, Apple Music or Google Play?

## DIGITAL DISTRIBUTION DEALS

Sites like iTunes, Apple Music, Spotify, Amazon, Google Play and Tidal, typically don't allow users to directly submit content. They only deal with approved distributors, or digital distribution aggregators.

Thankfully, finding a distributor is much easier than getting a record deal. Many companies like CDBaby, Tunecore and Distrokid allow users to create an account and sign up online. However, some companies like The Orchard, Stem or AWAL are invite-only, meaning they only work with clients they hand-select. They'll have their people call your people.

So what does a digital distribution aggregator do? Basically, they upload your music to different outlets in exchange for a fee (more on that in a minute). They don't own any rights to your music — they simply help you distribute it. You retain 100% of your rights. An artist can have distribution deals with multiple distributors, but only one distributor per release.

So, what sets one distributor apart from another?

## HOW THEY CHARGE YOU

The biggest difference between distributors is how they charge for their services. Some companies charge an annual fee. Typically, this is broken into several tiers based on how many songs you release. For instance, \$X to release up to 10 songs a year, \$Y for up to 25 and \$Z for unlimited songs. The unlimited option works

best for artists who release a lot of music in one year. Other companies charge a one-time fee when you upload music. Rates are different for singles, EPs and full-length albums. This option works best for artists who release projects less often.

Finally, some distributors don't charge any fees to distribute your music — they take a cut of your profits. Again, no distributor should be asking for a percentage of the rights to your music. But, some companies choose to charge a commission instead of taking a fee. That means, they get paid when you get paid.

So, aside from your budget, what else sets distributors apart?

## **HOW THEY DISTRIBUTE YOUR MUSIC**

Most distributors will tell you that they distribute to over 100, 150 or even 200 outlets. Neat! Can you name more than 10 places where people stream music? Just because your music is available somewhere, doesn't mean anyone will listen to it. When it comes down to it, most of us only really care about a select few streaming services. Most distributors upload to all of the major streaming services, so take this figure with a grain of salt.

The next big factor is speed of delivery. Some distributors can get your music uploaded in less than 24 hours. Others can take up to a week or more. It's always best to plan the timing of your release for marketing and promotion. But, some artists like the immediacy of being able to release hyper-current content. You're not going to win a rap beef waiting 5 business days to respond with some bars.

If you're not the spontaneous type, you may be more concerned with how your distributor handles pre-orders. Some offer pre-order options for free. Others charge per project. Some don't offer pre-orders at all. Remember, pre-orders count towards first week sales, which can help land you on the Billboard Charts.

## **HOW THEY HANDLE THE PAPERWORK**

One of the major benefits of working with a distributor is that they offer to handle some of the administrative paperwork for you. Which can be great for DIY artists who already have 100 other things on their plate.

If you want to distribute a cover song, you need to obtain a mechanical license. Without getting too deep into copyright law, once a song has been released to the public, if you want to use it, you must license it from the copyright owner. It costs you ~\$.09 in royalties to the copyright owner every time you print your cover song on a physical medium. Unfortunately, streaming royalty rates aren't so cut and dry. You can see the formula used to determine the rate from the Harry Fox Agency. Some distributors will obtain mechanical licenses for your cover songs for a fee. Others won't release cover songs at all. Don't forget, you can distribute different projects through different companies. Maybe one distributor makes sense for your original music, and another makes sense for your tribute band.

Many outlets require you to imbed an International Standard Recording Code (ISRC). An ISRC is essentially a digital fingerprint that keeps track of a song. They're used to organize credits and royalty payments. You can apply for an ISRC yourself on the website, but you'll need one for each song. Plus, you need to embed them on each of the files. Obviously, this can be time-consuming, which is why some distributors offer to take care of it for you.

Now that the songs are traceable, you need to make the album purchasable. That requires a Universal Product Code, or UPC. UPCs are used to track sales — they're the bar codes on the back of products. Even digital goods need UPCs. Thankfully, most distributors include them for free.

## **HOW THEY HANDLE ROYALTY COLLECTION**

Obviously, you'll need to sign up with a PRO to collect the majority of your royalties. But, there are other companies that can help you collect your remaining payments.

SoundScan is a sales tracking system that measures how many records are sold at brick-and-mortar and digital retail outlets. The problem is, they aren't entirely accurate. Roughly 14,000 stores report their sales each week. Stores are "weighted" based on the market they're in. Which means a CD sold in a small market may count as a single sale, but a CD sold in a larger market could count as 3 or 4 sales.

Record labels, distribution companies, managers, booking agents and promoters all subscribe to SoundScan. Their data is also used to form the Billboard's charts each week. If you want to make an impact on the music industry, you need to register your titles with SoundScan. If that sounds tedious to you, find yourself a distributor that will do it for you. Some do it for free, others charge a small fee, and some don't offer the service at all.

But wait, there's more! Non-interactive services like Pandora and SiriusXM pay out performance royalties too. 50% goes to the owner of the sound recording, and the other 50% is split between the performing artists.

Of course, collecting these royalties requires you to register your titles with another service — SoundExchange. Most independent musicians keep their master rights, which means they can collect royalties as the sound recording copyright owner, as well as the performing artist. Some distributors offer to collect sound recording performance royalties from SoundExchange. A few also collect songwriter royalties. Of course, they don't do it for free. Distributors charge between 10-30% commission for collecting SoundExchange royalties.

## **HOW THEY HANDLE YOUR MONEY**

After you've found a distributor that works with your budget and your administrative needs, the next thing you should think about is their payment structure.

Some companies will pay you as soon as someone purchases your music. Others will hold on to your money until you hit a "payment threshold". Payment thresholds can be as low as \$10, or as high as \$50.

Some companies pay out on a schedule. Weekly, monthly, quarterly and even yearly disbursement schedules are common. If you're relying on your royalties to pay rent (which I highly recommend against), make sure you find a company with a low threshold and frequent payout options.

After your music is posted, there are opportunities for further monetization. Both YouTube and SoundCloud offer ad revenue for highly-streamed content. Some distributors automatically upload your music to these sites and start collecting ad revenue. Others simply require your approval, and some don't do it at all. Some distributors offer these services for free to their clients. Others take a commission between 5-30%. Remember, you can technically do any of these administrative tasks yourself — all it takes is time.

## BELLS AND WHISTLES

At this point, you've probably narrowed it down to a few solid choices. If you're still on the fence about choosing a distributor, check and see if they have any extra features. Some offer to submit your music to specialty sites like Pandora or Beatport.

Unfortunately, simply making your music available to people isn't good enough. In the past, record labels, radio stations and film studios were the gatekeepers. Today, it's Spotify. Spotify playlists are driving listeners (back) to consuming singles instead of albums. It's changed the way people listen to music forever. So, make sure your distributor has an in-house Spotify playlist plugger!

Last but not least, a few distributors will actually offer you cash advances like a record label. Of course, they're all recoupable. Aside from that, the details vary from company to company.

## WHAT'S THE BEST MUSIC DISTRIBUTION SERVICE?

You guessed it. It's the same answer you always get when you ask a question in the music business — it depends.

Companies like CD Baby and Tunecore have been doing this for a long time. Since back when music was released on pieces of plastic. They're the trusted names in distribution, but that doesn't always come cheap. Distrokid popped up in 2013 as an independent digital alternative, and have been going strong ever since.

In 2017, there were two interesting new additions to the distribution game.

LANDR started a few years ago as an automated online mastering service. Clients who are getting their music mastered need somewhere to release it. It only made sense for LANDR to incorporate a distribution deal into their mastering packages. If you plan to master your own tracks, they also offer a release-only option.

Amuse.io is "The world's first mobile record company." They're an app-only service that offers 100% free distribution. There are no fees, and you keep 100% of your royalties. Here's how they do it: "If we discover artists we believe in, we will offer them a record deal that includes marketing, financing, promotion and playlist pitching. We pay for the project but thereafter we split the profits 50/50 with the artists. If offered a record deal there is no obligation to sign with us."

It can be almost overwhelming. There's a lot of information to take in, and it all feels really important. Like if you mess up, you could be one of those people you hear about who got suckered. That's OK, most DIY musicians feel that way at first. Just make sure to read everything very carefully. Always weigh your options. Don't be afraid to ask questions. Welcome to the music business!

*This article originally appeared on The Pro Audio Files.*



# 6 ARTIST TIPS FOR MAKING MORE MONEY WITH CDS

## TONY VAN VEEN

**1 DON'T STOP MAKING – AND SELLING – CDS.** Forget about the traditional record industry, where CD sales are tanking. YOU need to maximize gig revenues, and CDs are the number one tool (together with T-shirts). Having a professional quality CD can make the difference between playing for beer money and walking out with cash for gas, dinner, picks, strings, and drumsticks.

**2 DO MASTER YOUR MUSIC PROFESSIONALLY BEFORE RELEASING IT.** Every label gets their new releases professionally mastered, but close to 75% of musicians don't (mostly for budgetary reasons). They should. Mastering DOES make a difference: your songs sound hotter, fatter, fuller, and just plain better. Spend the money on a professional mastering studio before you release your product. Otherwise you'll regret it every time you listen to it. I guarantee it (it happened to me).

**3 DON'T FORGET ABOUT THE ALBUM FORMAT.** The great thing about the ease with which artists can digitally release a single to the world via CD Baby (or other companies) allows you to go to iTunes as soon as your track is mixed. In many cases, that's great. But many fans still love albums, and like to buy a collection of tracks that's well put together. So release albums of new material, or even bundle existing singles into an album and re-release them. You'll drive incremental revenues.

**4 DO EXPERIMENT WITH OFFERS AND SPECIALS.** Customers (i.e. your fans) love a deal! So have fun and try new things. Offer the first 25 buyers of your new CD a copy of your old CD at no extra charge (also a great way to blow out slow-moving inventory). Or allow customers to "name their own price" for your CDs. You'll double (even triple) product sales revenues – guaranteed! Get creative, measure what works, and laugh all the way to the bank.

**5 DON'T LET ANY OF YOUR TITLES GO OUT OF STOCK.** The name of the game is driving revenues. The more products you have for sale, the more likely you are to make a sale. At every gig there will be potential customers who don't have your first album. Digital duplication technology from a company like Disc Makers allows you to make high quality CDs in small quantities, so you'll always maximize your gig sales.

**6 DON'T THINK OF PEOPLE ATTENDING YOUR CONCERTS, SIGNING UP FOR YOUR MAILING LIST, AND BUYING YOUR MUSIC, AS FANS.** I've never liked the designation of fan, because it creates a subtle mindset that these people are looking up to you, catering to your needs and whims. Nothing could be further from the truth. Instead, look at them as what they are: customers! And remember that it's your job to satisfy your customers, and give them value for their money (or they'll spend it somewhere else). You're there to serve your customer, not the other way around.

Don't think of CDs as a revenue stream, they are just large business cards...



# STAND FOR SOMETHING

## SCOTT COHEN

Build an audience. No audience no career. In the past that meant getting reviews or articles in magazines. Getting played on the radio or even better, appearing on TV. These were the best tools for reaching millions of people and building a fan base. Not anymore. Welcome to the 21st century.

How should you reach people today? Spam. Just spam people to death online. Market and promote the shit out of yourselves. Post, post, post. Sell, sell, sell. Sounds ridiculous. So why do so many bands think this is the way?

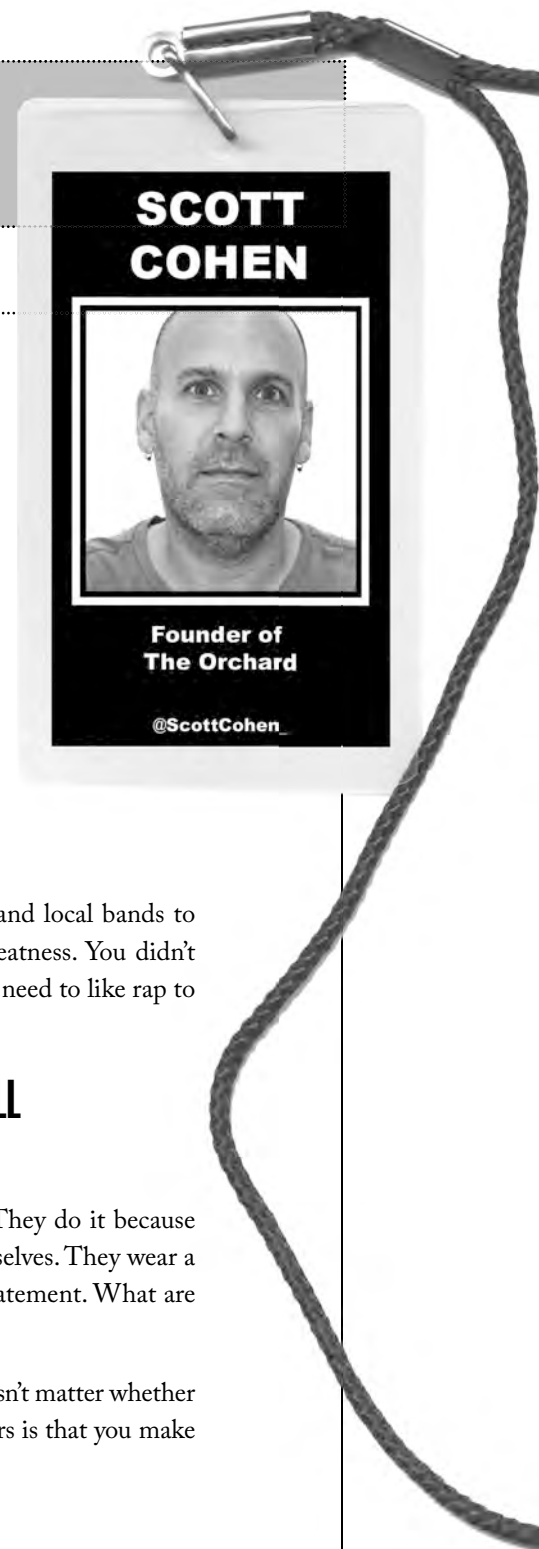
Building an audience takes time. Put out small bits of content on a regular basis. Feed people slowly. There is a customer journey. It starts with becoming aware of an artist. Hopefully that will lead to an interest to find out more. If you are great (and lucky) that generates a fan. And when you get it just right it ends with a small percentage of those fans becoming customers. The process needs to be a gentle balance between creating awareness and allowing for discovery.

You start with the people around you. If you can't convince your family, friends and local bands to be your fans you can't progress. You are not misunderstood. People recognize greatness. You didn't have to know anything about opera to recognize the talent of Pavarotti. You didn't need to like rap to understand that Eminem was special.

### IMPRESS THE ONES AROUND YOU FIRST AND THEY WILL BEGIN THE PROCESS OF SPREADING THE WORD.

But why would they spread the word? Not because they are trying to help you. They do it because you stand for something. People use bands to demonstrate something about themselves. They wear a Ramones t-shirt instead of a Justin Bieber t-shirt because they want to make a statement. What are you doing that would make fans want to use you to make a statement?

Don't get caught up on which tools or platforms are in fashion at the moment. It doesn't matter whether it's Facebook or MTV or Twitter or the Ed Sullivan Show (google it). What matters is that you make great music, stand for something and communicate to your audience.



One of the overlooked parts of Amanda Palmer's successful campaign was once she had succeeded, then she had a direct distribution channel for her new single to however many fans had donated. An additional \$100k anyone?

# 10 WAYS TO MAKE THE MOST OF YOUR NEXT DIGITAL MUSIC RELEASE

## CHRIS ROBLEY

### HOW TO PROMOTE YOUR DIGITAL MUSIC

In the Internet Age, EVERY musician is a global act; your audience is everywhere. With the popularity of YouTube, blogs, and social networks, you never know how or where you'll find your next fans. Hell, you could become an overnight sensation in a country you've never even been to before. As an independent artist, you can't afford NOT to sell your music digitally — because when something you've created goes viral, you need to be ready to capitalize on that splash.

But when it comes to promotion, it's easy to neglect the digital side of things — especially when you're about to release a new album or EP. You've got all those beautiful, new CDs and vinyl records sitting there in boxes just waiting to be purchased by fans, mailed to bloggers and critics, and given away to a few lucky friends. Compared to those tangible musical artifacts, things like on-demand streams and MP3 downloads can seem very... virtual.

The steps you take to promote your music digitally are just as important as the things you do to sell CDs, though. Your digital music promotion should be anything but virtual.

### WHO'S BUYING DIGITAL MUSIC AROUND THE WORLD?

Not all countries' music consumption habits are the same. In some regions, people prefer to stream music through services like Spotify or Rdio (\*more on this below). In other corners of the world, fans are more apt to purchase MP3s from retail giants like iTunes and Amazon. And in some countries, the CD still reigns supreme.

## THIS IS WHY IT'S CRUCIAL THAT YOUR MUSIC BE AVAILABLE EVERYWHERE IN EVERY FORMAT.

Here are a 10 tips to help you sell more downloads, encourage more streaming, and capitalize on every digital release:

- 1 Run an iTunes pre-sale for up to 30 days before the official release of your music. This gives you a month to build buzz AND capture sales from your early promotional efforts. As a bonus, all your pre-sales will be counted as sales on the official release date, increasing your chances of ranking on the iTunes charts.
- 2 Avoid "windowing" strategies where you delay making your music available in certain online outlets in hopes of boosting your traditional CD sales, or boosting MP3 sales over streams. The hype-machine (press, bloggers, etc.) is going to be focused on your act for a limited window of time, it's true. But that is all



the MORE reason to make your music available everywhere at once — because you can't think FOR your fans. You need to let them decide how, when, and where they interact with your music.

“Windowing” might work to maximize revenue for artists like Adele or Coldplay, whose fans skew towards an older demographic, and who prefer CDs and iTunes — but younger, more internet-savvy listeners rely on streaming services like Spotify and Rdio in order to share their favorite new music. This free and INSTANT (read: NOT delayed 3 months) sharing is what helps create a buzz in the modern music world; and a loud buzz leads to traditional download and CD sales, too. If it didn't, Macklemore wouldn't simultaneously be the top-selling artist in the iTunes hip-hop charts AND have the most-played track on Spotify.

**3** Use Spotify playlists to encourage fan interaction. Include your music in mixes for certain moods or occasions. Ask your fans to make their own playlists using your music (creating a “greatest hits” or a set list for your next show).

**4** Make your album art POP — even when it's the size of a thumbnail. Remember, in most instances online, your artwork will appear smaller than a CD case — so make sure it's visually striking and that the important elements are clearly visible when the image size is reduced. You DON'T necessarily need to worry about getting your band name and album title on there, since it will usually be displayed in the store next to the artwork.

**5** Make sure your fans know where they can buy your music online. Link to your preferred digital stores from your website's homepage. Mention at shows that your music is available on iTunes, Spotify, Amazon, and more.

**6** Link from YouTube to your preferred online store by including that URL in the first line of every YouTube video description.

**7** Continue to promote! With digital music, there is no “shelf life” — which means there's no such thing as a promotional cycle or album cycle.

## YOUR MUSIC WILL ALWAYS BE NEW TO SOMEONE

So keep spreading the word about your previous releases, even after you've put something new out.

**8** Use download cards to bridge the gap between digital music and the “real world.” Sell them at shows; use them as giveaways; and send them out with your press kits.

**9** Ask your fans to review your music on their digital retailer of choice. Positive reviews can make a big difference in terms of sales, so let the people who already love your music know how they can help you take things to the next level.

**10** Distribute your music worldwide with CD Baby. Having paid over \$300 million to indie artists, they are one of the most trusted names in music distribution. For a one-time setup fee, CD Baby will not only deliver your music to over 60 digital music retailers, including iTunes, Amazon, Spotify, Rdio, GooglePlay, and many more — they'll also make your CDs and vinyl records available to over 15k brick-and-mortar record stores worldwide, include your music in their sync licensing program, collect your global publishing royalties for you, AND set you up with your very own music store on cdbaby.com.





# BLOCKCHAIN

## BRAD PACK

### BRAD PACK



**AUDIO ENGINEER &  
INSTRUCTOR at  
SAE INSTITUTE**

For as long as music has existed people have been exploiting artists for income. The music business is built on a lack of transparency. Millions of dollars go unclaimed every year because songwriters and performers are either unaware of how to collect them, or unable to keep track of them all.

Benji Rogers wants to change that. He's set out to create a "new dynamic file format," called dotBlockchain Music, that's "designed to modernize rights management."

DotBC files work similar to zip files, embedding the "minimum viable data" directly into the song file. Minimum viable data includes basic information like artist name, writer(s) names, performer(s) name, and track title, as well as complex information like split royalty percentages for multiple writers, all copyright notices, UPC number, and IRSC.

Here's the beautiful part: Without verifying the minimum viable data, the file won't work. That means no-one other than the copyright holder can upload a song or alter it's data. To include others in a dotBC file contract (like additional writers or performers, record labels, PROs, etc), copyright holders tag them just like photos on social media. Users can either accept, ignore, or decline the tag, which helps verify songs. The verification process uses blockchain technology, which is essentially a public ledger of every transaction.

If anyone in the world streams your song, it's added to the public ledger. If anyone purchases your album from iTunes, that transaction is added to the public ledger for everyone to see, which prevents fraudulent entries. For instance, if a copyright holder tries to say their song was downloaded one million times and tries to claim those royalties, the dotBC file would reference the public ledger and only proceed if the transaction is verified.

It'll be slow going at first, but Rogers hopes to build a "global decentralized database" of music, complete with copyright, royalty, and ownership information. They've already got companies like SOCAN, CDBaby, MediaNet, and SongTrust on board, which gives them a catalog of more than 65 million sound recordings from major and independent record labels to start with.

Rogers hopes to make the music business more transparent and stop companies from benefitting from slowing down the payments of rights holders.

We're cheering you on, Benji!

**My advice to you... be nice. Be really nice. In fact be really nice, charming and helpful. People will pick up the phone every time you call and they may even do you a favor when you need it the most. I think it was Shirley MacLaine who said "Smile on your way up because you will probably have to smile at the same people on your way back down." These days the music business is changing every day. No one has all (or any) of the answers. If you love music and this business like I do, you have to keep going.**

*- Tommy Borscheid*

# HOW TO GET YOUR MUSIC IN A PLAYLIST ON SPOTIFY OR APPLE MUSIC

**CHRIS ROBLEY**

## **WITH THE RIGHT PLAYLIST, ONE SONG IS ALL IT TAKES**

Independent singer-songwriter Perrin Lamb put out an album that wasn't gaining much traction. More than a year passed with little to show for it in the way of streaming, radio, or YouTube activity. Then, seemingly out of the blue, one of his songs got placed on an official Spotify playlist. That song now has more than 10,000,000 plays on Spotify and helped drive up the play-count for deeper cuts in his catalog too.

## **THE POWER OF DIGITAL MUSIC PLAYLISTS IS NO SECRET. AND IT'S NOT JUST ON SPOTIFY.**

Playlisting has become a huge part of how music fans find their new favorite artists on Apple Music, Rdio, Deezer, and more. Some playlisting services (such as Soundrop.fm) can even draw source audio from several services (Spotify, YouTube, Deezer) so the playlist is accessible across multiple platforms.

The songs on a curated playlist are grouped together to appeal to a very specific audience — and that means more listens, more shares, more revenue for rights holders, and the chance of getting your music into the ears of music supervisors, many of whom listen to playlists as a way of finding the right songs for current TV and film productions. These opportunities are precisely why many labels PAY for prominent playlist placements, ranging from “\$2,000 for a playlist with tens of thousands of fans to \$10,000 for the more well-followed playlists.”

About now you might be wondering two things:

- 1) If Perrin Lamb's placement was random, how can I possibly duplicate his success?
- 2) If playlist spots are so coveted that labels are shelling out huge sums to scoop them up, how do I stand a chance?

Well, here's the answer to both questions: because of the number of playlists out there (and the fact that new songs are always being added to them), there are some simple steps you can take to increase your chances of getting a song onto a prominent playlist without dropping a dime.

## **WHO'S CREATING PLAYLISTS ON MUSIC STREAMING SERVICES?**

Everyone! (But that's not very helpful in terms of knowing your options or coming up with a strategy to contact these playlist creators). So here's a more focused list of streaming music playlist creators:

- 1. MUSIC BLOGGERS & MUSIC NEWS WEBSITES** — “The Best Americana Tracks of 2015” / “Bowie in Berlin”
- 2. MAGAZINES AND WEEKLIES** — “Songs from this Week's Best Local Concert Artists” / “Maine Coastal Living: Relaxing Songs for Your Seaside Vacation”

- 3. POLITICAL FIGURES** — “Keep on Rockin’ in the Free World,” “The Official White House Fitness Mix,” etc.
- 4. IN-HOUSE CURATORS AT THE STREAMING SERVICES (SPOTIFY, APPLE MUSIC, ETC.)** — “Depeche Mode: Influences,” “Popular Songs that Were Never Hits,” “Coffeehouse Music for Studying,” “Undiscovered Indie-Pop,” etc.
- 5. AUTHORS AND POETS** — Playlists that highlight the music that inspired or compliments their books (such as David Biespiel’s Spotify playlist for his latest poetry collection *Charming Gardeners*.)
- 6. BRANDS** — “Tea Time with Tazo,” “Fast Eddy’s Favorite Driving Songs,” etc.
- 7. OTHER BANDS** — Other bands might make playlists to showcase the music they’re listening to on tour, or songs by bands they’re playing with over the next six months, or musicians they admire in their own region.
- 8. RADIO STATIONS** — “Z101’s Most-Requested Songs This Week,” “KINK In-Studio: Acoustic Hits,” etc.
- 9. MUSIC FANS** — Perhaps the most obvious and most overlooked playlist creator: your average music enthusiast (there are literally millions of them making playlists across every genre and region).
- 10. YOU!** — Yes, I’m looking at you.

## **BEFORE WE TALK ABOUT GETTING YOUR MUSIC ONTO OTHER PEOPLE’S PLAYLISTS...**

... let’s tackle the obvious alternate solution: creating your own playlists. It’s relatively easy. Spotify even has this guide to show you how.

You can pick any theme and start compiling songs. The idea here is to work a few of your own tracks into the mix. Just a few, though. Be sure to spread the love to other artists so it’s truly a mix, not just a playlist of your greatest hits.

Collaborative playlists are also a great way to get your fans involved. And you can always team up with other artists to cross-promote your music: you put their songs on your playlist, and ask them to include a song of yours on their next playlist.

Oh, and here’s the really important part: be sure to tell people about your playlist. Tell your fans, tell the other bands who’ve been included, and post it on social. You want as many people as possible to listen and share these songs.

## **GETTING YOUR SONGS FEATURED ON PROMINENT PLAYLISTS**

In order to get your music onto high-profile playlists, you’re going to need to essentially “pitch” your music to an influencer, curator, blogger, business, etc. BUT, keep in mind that these folks might be inundated with similar messages from hundreds or thousands of other artists, so be sure that your pitch communicates clearly how your music can benefit the person you’re contacting.

In other words, be human, be clear, be brief, be cool, be helpful, be real, and make it easy for ‘em. How?

## VERIFY YOUR PROFILES WITH SPOTIFY AND APPLE CONNECT

In-house curators are reluctant to feature anything by artists who've not verified their profiles on the streaming platforms. So be sure to: a) verify your artist profile on Spotify, b) and claim your Apple Music artist profile through "Connect."

## GET AS MANY OF YOUR FANS AS POSSIBLE TO FOLLOW YOU ON THEIR PREFERRED STREAMING PLATFORM

Playlist curators don't always need to see that you're wildly successful and famous. Sometimes it really is just about the music. BUT, the more obvious it is that you have fans (and that those fans are active on the platform that hosts their playlists), the more obvious the benefit to them when they consider including one of your songs.

So be sure to share links to your Spotify and Apple Music profiles on social, on your website, and via email. Don't be afraid to ask your fans to follow you on Spotify or Apple Music. Some of those fans that are casual and occasional music steamers might not have known they could even do so.

## GET YOUR WHOLE DIGITAL HOUSE IN ORDER

Website. Social. Press photos. Artist bio. Tour calendar. Etc. Make sure it's all up-to-date and relevant. The more of this stuff that's in place, the better the impression you'll create when a playlist curator finally investigates you and your music.

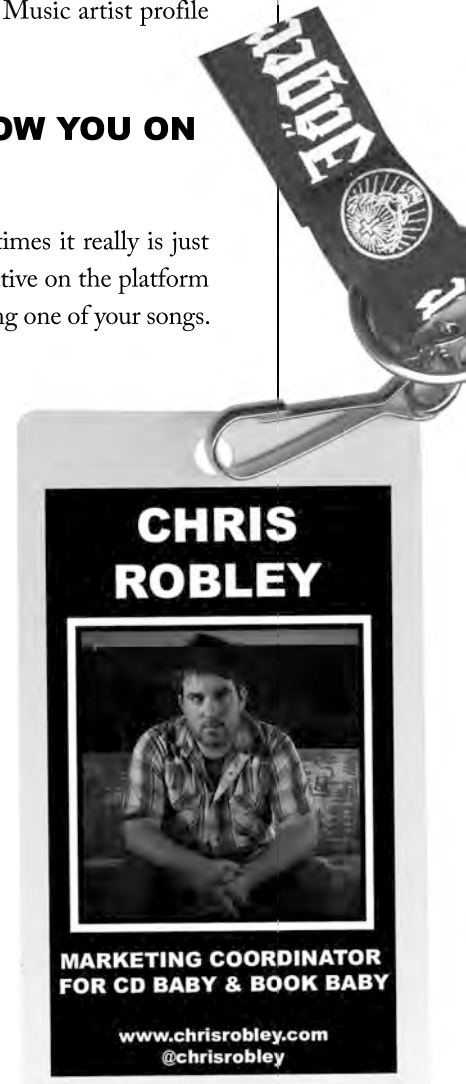
## LEAVE YOURSELF PLENTY OF TIME

All of the things mentioned above take time. And time is usually scarce when you're about to launch a new album or single. So give yourself some room and make sure to get things ready well in advance of your release date.

If you're targeting an in-house playlist, they're going to be more likely to include your stuff if it's delivered to them a week or two ahead of time. That gives them the flexibility they need in terms of debuting a new track in conjunction with a playlist feature. It's similar with a popular music blog. They're going to want to know about the single (and know that it's going to be available on Spotify on such-and-such a date) in advance of the release. This will help them plan accordingly if they want to put your song in a playlist that's time-sensitive, such as "This Week's Best New Tracks."

## FIND SOME PLAYLISTS THAT YOU LOVE AND MAKE AN INTRODUCTION

Time for some field research. Start putting together a list of playlists that you absolutely love, paying close attention to whether your song is appropriate for the playlist's genre or theme. Follow them (from your band account) on the corresponding streaming platform, and see if they also have a presence on Twitter, Facebook, Instagram, Snapchat, etc. and follow them there as well.



Also, don't neglect playlists created by local businesses, weeklies, radio stations, libraries, and such. Sure, you want to get placed on a big official Spotify playlist, but it might just be the momentum you get from a lot of smaller playlists that brings you to the attention of Spotify's editorial team.

Once you've found and followed a number of great playlists, it's time to show your appreciation. Leave comments. Get geeky. Demonstrate (casually) to the person who programs the playlist that you're knowledgeable about their music choices.

Of course, don't be a suck-up or sycophant. The idea is to begin an honest and low-pressure interaction with the "tastemaker" on the other end of the playlist. That shouldn't be too difficult, though, considering you already LOVE the music they're putting together, right?

Lastly, don't pitch your music... yet.

Hold your horses, and just use this time to establish the relationship.

## **OKAY, NOW CONTACT THE PLAYLIST CURATORS**

Once you've done the legwork and established yourself as a knowledgeable fan of the playlist (and not just another musician who wants a placement), it's time to make your pitch.

Jørn Haanæs gives this advice in a MusicThinkTank article about Spotify Playlists:

Everyone likes something fresh! Before your song goes public on the streaming platforms, send a personal note with a private link to the new track to your target playlist curators. Some of these may be tastemakers, media, or simply regular Joes who curate great lists. You can track them down through the platform OR research and send them an email.

For targeting playlists that are curated by the platform, research and find the "Artist Liaison" contacts for the streaming platforms in your region. Each streaming platform office has a few. Grab their contacts and reach out to them, asking for suggestions on who you can send your music to, to be considered for the playlist genre that best fits your music.

Send short and concise emails with clear links to the music, as well as info on what lists you are targeting. Give them some brief background on the band and where you're going!

## **BE SPECIFIC**

In an effort to keep your pitch brief, you want to be specific from the start about why your song is perfect for the playlist. This could involve genre, theme, topic, instrumentation, something noteworthy in your music career, or any combination of those factors.

For instance, if you write to the guy who runs the "Covers of Electronic Classics" playlist, you could begin the email with something like, "I'd love for you to hear my new chiptune cover of Kraftwerk's 'Computer Love.'"

Or write to the Maine Coastal Living folks and say "My newest single would be perfect for your playlist. It's an ambient folk ballad that we actually recorded in Camden with the windows open, so you can hear the ocean gently rolling in the background."

Okay, maybe I'm overselling it there with that last example, but you get the point: these people are busy, and they need to know in a matter of 5 seconds whether to check out your music or delete your message.

## **YOU GOT A PLACEMENT ON A PLAYLIST — SO SHARE THE NEWS (AND THE PLAYLIST)**

Again, it's all about driving plays, so share the playlist with everyone you can. Maybe even consider paid promotion on Facebook or Twitter (targeting both your existing fans, and people who follow the corresponding streaming platform, genre, etc.)

When you do share the playlist, be sure to tag the platform and playlist creator if possible so they can share the news as well.

## **FOLLOW UP, FOLLOW UP, FOLLOW UP**

Jørn Haanæs, in that MusicThinkTank article I mentioned earlier, goes on to talk about maintaining the relationship with anyone who places your music in their playlist:

These champions of your music will grow alongside you for years to come. Stay in touch and make sure to engage with them each time you release a new track. Invite these people out to shows when you're in their market and aim to build genuine relationships with them! Ask them for feedback on new material before it gets released and bring them into your band's family.

Which leads us to one final point.

## **ALWAYS START WITH THE ASSUMPTION THAT PLAYLIST CREATORS ARE APPROACHABLE**

Most people who create playlists are diehard music fans, just like you. They want to find the best new tunes AND whatever great songs might've slipped through the cracks. They want to discover it, love it, share it, and help those artists find a larger audience.

Some curators make it clear (explicitly or implicitly) that their decision-making is a closed system. They don't want inquiries and they don't want pitches. If that's the case, respect their wishes and leave 'em be.

But otherwise, you should assume that playlist curators are used to being contacted and have developed a system to field these messages. If those preferences have been made public, by all means, follow their instructions for submitting music for consideration.

If they haven't stated either way, keep your pitch short, helpful, respectful, and go with the mindset that you're actually helping them do their job. If you think of getting a song placed on a playlist like scaling a castle wall, you might never get out your grappling hook in the first place. Better to knock on the door expecting to be greeted (at the very least), and maybe, if you're lucky, let inside.







# 20 DEMOS

*Photo: Luke Chesser*

What is your demo?

What is a free copy of your really well recorded album?

A gift?

Nope, sorry. It is an imposition.

No one has any time. Everyone has stuff to do that they haven't gotten to. I have kids. I'd like to work out or play drums or just *sit*.

Music that I don't know hurts my head. It's not a joyful sing-a-long — how can it be; I don't know the words? My producer's brain listens and fragments everything into pieces and asks questions. Is this the intro? Why is it so long? Oh, ok, here comes the cool part.....oh, maybe not. NOW here's the cool riff — that's the bit! Right there. OH OH. This bit should have been edited out. I can hear the conversation between the band members that ended up democratically keeping this too long section of shit in the song. OR, worse — there wasn't even a conversation. Magically — I am in the

**When you hand me a demo and say, "this is the best thing you are ever going to hear"... you know what... FUCK YOU.**

*- Justin Pearson*



studio with you — just like when you tweet. “I’m at the dentists’ now I am there with you! Asshole. OH, what happened to the good bit — they haven’t repeated it? Now, they are relaxed and they think the song is over. The singer just did this cool thing that should be the intro. And it needs to be 2 minutes shorter. And my head hurts. And later that day. I’m going to still have these pieces of the jigsaw floating around in my head until they fit. Where did this headache come from? YOU fucker. You and your music.

This last bit was tough to write, I’m not an idiot, I just gave anyone that wants to slag me and the book a perfect reason, the ammunition and the quotable quotes to do it.

But, I think that this bit might be worth the price of the book?

I talk about it in lectures, the imposition of the demo ‘gift’.

A girl in the UK understood and stopped by during the meet and greet to offer me a one hour massage at a place down the street while I listened to her demo – that just sounded potentially HORRIBLE to me – so I declined but listened anyway and sent notes etc. One of my students James Van Lieshout got it perfect without knowing it – he invented the **Blackberry Jam Scam**.

I walked into class one day and saw a defrosting home-made looking jar sitting in front of him. I had to ask what it was: Home-made organic blackberry jam...mmmmmmmm.

He offered to bring me some the following week.

Brilliant, I think — this teaching gig is finally paying off! And the following week, sure enough, he is sitting there with the defrosting pot in front of himself — smiling!

I walk over, smiling too, I reach out for the pot of jam he is offering and prepare for the frostyness on my hand. Weirdly, my vision glitches like a sci fi movie. He reaches behind his back and things start to drop into slow motion. I can hear my own voice but it’s slowed too and, James’ hand begins to emerge from behind his back. I think I shout “shooter, shooter!” or something, but the reality is worse. Much worse. He has a copy of his demo!

I sweat, I panic, shake my hands and jog on the spot a little, “Keep calm, Martin. Keep calm.”

The solution filters down to me through the mist. I smile, I’ll accept the demo with the jam and on the drive back to Chicago, I’ll throw the demo out of the window!

Boom!

## Jam got, Problem not!

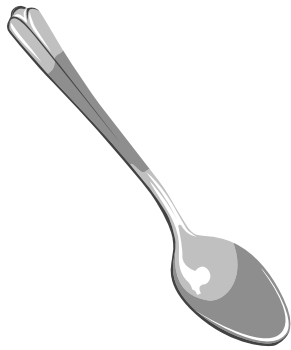
So, when I’m listening to demos (which I still do) and seeing live bands, my first questions are going to be:

- Does this band or artist fit into our genre niches?
- Does the band or artist have a personal vision that grows out of the ‘roots’ or is the music basically repeating what’s already been done? (You can’t imagine how many demos I get with Robert Johnson and Muddy Waters songs done in the original style, and you can’t beat the original versions, period).

– Bruce Iglauer

You have 15, 20,  
maybe 30 seconds.

– Tim Mays



On the drive from Madison to Chicago I'd glance at the pot of jam with anticipation, then glare at the demo on the seat beside it... "tick tock motherfucker!"

For some reason, I didn't throw it out of the window that night. I bundled it up with my bag and the jam jar and put it on the kitchen table, took care of a few things, did some social then went to turn off the light and head up to bed...I could see the jam jar glistening with condensation and a little trail of water across the table to the DEMO.....tick tock demo....night night Blackberry Jam.....

The following morning I woke up and headed downstairs, got the coffee going and put some toast down. Tick tock demo, tick tock.....

I opened up the jam jar. It made one of those noises that tells you it's been professionally sealed, then I caught the fragrance of the jam, blackberrys and sweetness — like the first taste of hash smoke from the joint across the room. You know there is going to be more.

Tick tock, demo. Tick tock.

The toast pops up. I spread some cold butter across the hot surface and put my spoon into the jam. Strange — it's not at all like store bought jam. It's quite runny and the spoon is just like a member of the Spice Girls, there is no way that it would stand up on its own. I stir it and once again get that fragrance.

Tick tock, tick tock. Mission Impossible countdown to demo zero motherfuckerrrrrr! Yeah, a world without Demos... cue trailer —

"In a world ruled by fear of shitty, badly recorded songs with the out of tune vocals too high and the great bass playing buried in a sea of piss poor engineering comes Demo-Lition-Man — he strikes fear into the cassette tape, apology wielding lackluster motherfuckers who darken our planet and steal the energy from situations everywhere... i love that hat... have you heard my demo....."

I pick up the spoon, pour a large ammount of jam onto the toast and spread em baby spread em. I pick up the toast, smell the fragrance again and bite, the toast crunches and crumbles and the butter and the jam and the garden and the fragrance and the joy and the love and the care and the growing and the love and the care and the joy and I'M FUCKED.<sup>23</sup>

I wipe the buttery jam residue from my mouth and the tears from my eyes as I head out to the car to listen to the demo.

Not only do I listen, I film myself putting the cd into the car stereo, making sure that the name of the band is clearly visible, then I post it on YouTube. I talk about it all over South America, Europe, Canada, all over the USA and I write about it in my book... this book.

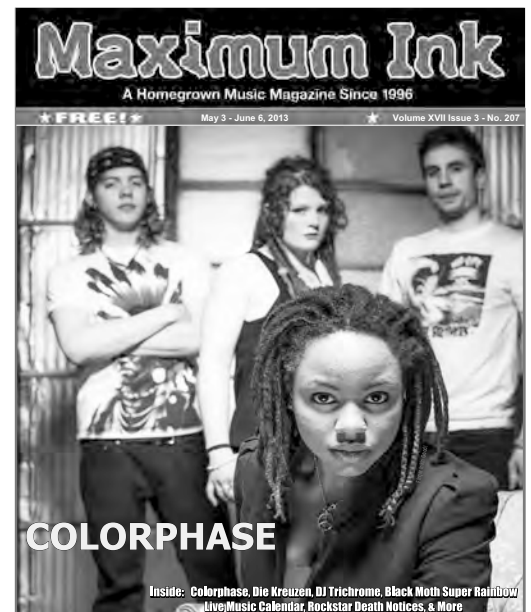
So, my question is, what's your Blackberry Jam scam? Without one, you're FUCKED.

<sup>23</sup> *This fuck brought to you by J. Allard.*



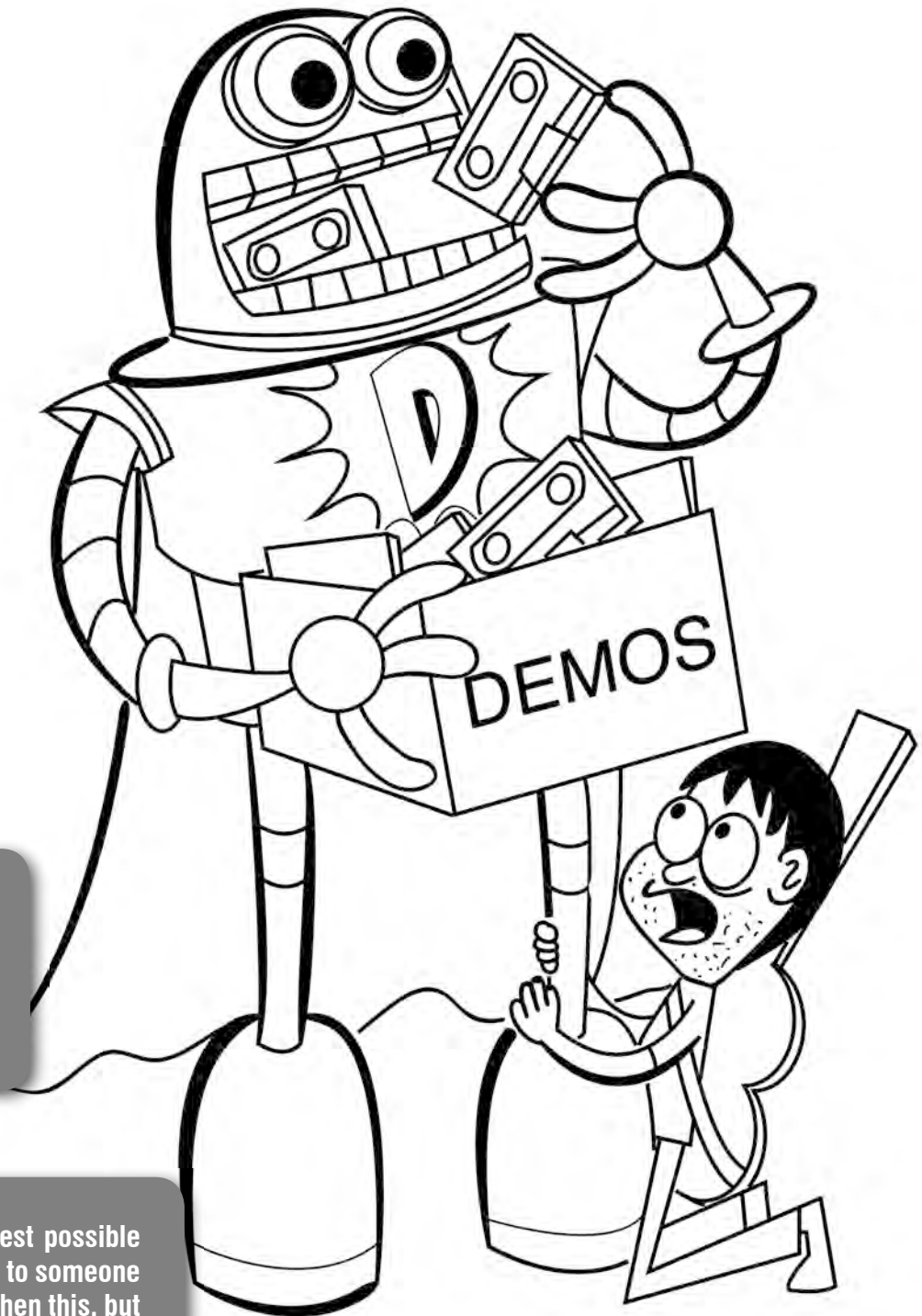
Truthfully, it's a crapshoot that we'll even listen to it at all.

— Rob Miller



James Van Lieshout (back right) with his band, Colorphase

# MY ROBOT EATS YOUR DEMOS



Don't send a demo too early. It will just end up in a pile of hundreds of others. You need a demo, a show, and a reason!

Represent yourself in the best possible way. Don't hand your demos to someone and say, "We're way better than this, but thought you might like to hear them."

- Kevin Lyman

# 10 REASONS WHY MOST DEMOS ARE REJECTED

## CHRISTOPHER KNAB

Since there is little I can do to stop anyone from ‘demo shopping’, (which I truly believe is a waste of time these days) the least I can do is try to improve the odds that your music will get listened to if you do send out 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.

- 1 **NO CONTACT INFORMATION ON CD, CDR AND/OR CDR CONTAINER.** Put your name, address, phone number, email, website URL, MySpace/Facebook address, on all submissions.
- 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 electronic and experimental music.
- 4 **POORLY RECORDED MATERIAL.** So you bought ProTools....so what...most submitted recordings sound horrible.
- 5 **BEST SONGS ARE NOT IDENTIFIED OR HIGHLIGHTED ON THE CD OR THE CDR.** Send only 3 or 4 songs and highlight the best ones.
- 6 **SENDING VIDEOS IN PLACE OF CDS OR CDRS.** Keep it simple. In the demo world all anyone wants is to check out your songwriting and musicianship. If you want to send a link to a video you have put-up on YouTube, which would be a better idea than sending a disc.
- 7 **SENDING UNSOLICITED RECORDINGS.** You sent them, but they never asked for them...which means they will probably mail them back to you.
- 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, did you?
- 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 frappacinos, but most demo recordings the industry receives are as bad as the first round contestants on American Idol.





**marteeen:** Now accepting demos — on 1TB hard drives.



**marteeen:** Now accepting demos — please insert cd into a bucket of chicken.



**marteeen:** Now accepting demos — please rent a hotel room, place demo on pillow and leave. Text me room number and credit card info.



**marteeen:** Now accepting demos — place cd in convertible Mercedes, leave keys, walk away. Don't look back.



**marteeen:** When sending me demos, be sure to include many versions so I can lose myself in all the decisions you were afraid to make.



*Paul Bennett Hirsch*

## **BOOKING YOURSELF VS. AGENTS**<sup>T:S</sup>

Good agents are increasingly rare these days, they are all overworked. Right now, there are a bazillion bands and tomorrow there will be a bazillion and ten. If you want to develop a larger audience and an increasingly better show, you're going to spend whatever time it takes to carefully make sure that your first shows are in the right places with the best chance of success. That is not necessarily the goal of an agent.

What do you get from an agent? You get a human being... a human being that can't really protect you and probably has less knowledge of the geography of the U.S. (and certainly your band), than you do. In terms of your career, for you, it might ultimately be worth spending three months slowly working on getting a show at a prominent nationally-known venue. For an agent, it's worth the commission.

<sup>T:S</sup> Originally appeared in *Tour:Smart*

A small band trying to get somewhere can do much better using their own resources, friends, and other bands because a smaller band cannot be a priority with an agent. Booking yourself is the best way to protect your band, and your future.

The first member of your team to add is a booking agent as the lowest level of gigs is the most competitive.

- Mark Kates

**I know the tour doesn't work - I know.  
But I need to make a boat payment.**

- Agent

Keep a detailed history of your shows and activity—the attendance, the ticket price, the day of the week, the weather, the guarantee, notes about the venue, how many shirts you sold, what size, and how many CDs you sold, is essential information for you to be able to pitch: “In the Midwest, we play to 300 people a night, have this many street teamers, and 3,000 kids on our mailing list. We could make sure that the dates for X band from Europe go really well.” This is an important building block in understanding the business of your band: the strong points and, just as importantly, the weak points.

Are your music and merchandise sales enough to justify or subsidize a buy-on with another band and larger audience? Hype and bullshit doesn't count. Honesty does. There is no benefit to having the agent or promoter expecting 200 people on a Tuesday night if only 120 people show up, it's a failure. If you honestly think you're good for 20 people and 47 people show up, it's a success. Professionals are used to seeing a band develop. Low numbers aren't necessarily the end of your new relationship with a promoter... lying and bullshit definitely is.

## **HYPE AND BULLSHIT DOESN'T COUNT, HONESTY DOES.**

You're not going to find an agent unless you get out there and start to do the work. A good agent is going to want to know the details and the peculiarities of your business so he knows some of the areas in which he can negotiate; does he have to concentrate on a better sound system? More lights? Vegetarian food on the rider? The only way you (and then your agent) can talk knowledgeably about these matters is for you to have been out there and to have done it.

You might actually want to ask yourself, “Do we need an agent or do we just think we need an agent?” Either way, a detailed record of your history—is essential. A good agent will point you in the right direction, suggest other bands for you to play with, and have good, almost managerial input for you.

**Gas prices will go down.**

- Agent

The agent told me it was a beautiful old theatre and it was - just completely wrong for our purposes. It was not an established venue and was nowhere near public transportation.

You might be thinking that an agent will protect you if you don't get paid. This might be true to a certain extent, but there are only so many venues, your agent needs to be calling that same venue the next day about another show, so be realistic and be humble. An agent is not going to jeopardize relationships with a venue that he has had for five years (and hopes to for another five) just for you!

Agents are not liable for the cost of horrific, lazy routing, you are. So look at the routing you're presented and pay attention before you're sitting in a van going backwards and forwards on the same highway.

If and when you get an agent it is not time to relax, it is time to stay involved! And really pay attention.

If you book yourself, you can use your connections to help yourself and an out of town band that is useful to you. You can make decisions based on the long term good of the band, not the commission. It's a quick learning curve, just like cocaine, the more you do, the more you'll know.

What if you could put together a focus group to analyze your music? Not a bullshit gathering of your friends and family (although that's fun and important but it's their job to support you and encourage you) but a group of people to give it to you truthfully!

If they don't like a song they will show you without hesitation – vocally (by booing) or physically – by walking out of the study itself! No bullshit, NO MERCY! PRICELESS!

Where can you go to take advantage of this service? What companies provide this kind of group? Book a fucking<sup>x</sup> show you moron. It's your audience!

## **AIM LOW - GET HIGH.**

Stop thinking about HOW you are going to fill a stadium with 20,000 people. The enormity and complexity of the task will overwhelm you. Instead, simply make the next show better: invite more people, perform better, be more welcoming before, during, and after. Use the shampoo technique... Rinse and repeat! Smell like oranges! You know for a fact that you can make friends with two more people per show, right? Do that, 9,998 more times and there you go!!

## **YOU ONLY HAVE ONE CHANCE TO MAKE A FIRST IMPRESSION.**

The show is not first in a chain of events... it's last.

Gigs are NOT a ca\$h machine...they are an investment.

<sup>x</sup>This fuck brought to you by Anne Marie Foley.



# THE CHICKEN AND THE EGG

## TOM WINDISH

**MA:** When should a band consider getting an agent?

**T:** There is a chicken and egg question here. An agent gets good shows and good shows lead to visibility but it's hard to get an agent when nobody knows your band. I would say that 95 times out of 100, a band should wait until there is a story forming about the band, i.e. people are talking about the band, enthused and a buzz is spreading organically. Before that happens, it will be difficult to have a good agent show any interest.

**MA:** What materials should they have ready for the agent?

**T:** Link to music to stream, photo, a few promising quotes about the band with links to the full article. Keep it brief but solid. **DO NOT EMAIL MP3S!**

**MA:** What is the important difference that an agent can make?

**T:** An agent has relationship with promoters, the people putting on concerts. The strength of those relationships can influence how much money a promoter will risk on a new act. Promoters will have greater faith in an agent who tells them that an act is going to develop a following if that agent has proven reliable with those statements in the past. Agents have relationships with other agents, managers and labels as well and hence can find support slots or put together tour packages that will get the artist in front of larger audiences. And finally agents have relationships with festivals and can get bands booked at festivals.

**MA:** Any mistakes or strokes of brilliance you have seen from artists

**T:** I tell artists:

### THE MAIN THING THEY NEED TO FOCUS ON IS WRITING GREAT MUSIC AND PLAYING GREAT SHOWS.

Be genuine. Do not worry about how another band is making more money or where your name is on the lineup. Just write great music, play great music, treat your fans and potential fans with respect, and you will be setting the stage for good things to possibly happen.

**MA:** What would make *you* want to sign a band to your agency

**T:** If I loved the music and if I liked the mentality of the musicians and the people they work with.



I've seen so many artists hesitant to hire an agent (if they can get one) because they don't want to give up 15% but it's so well worth the money and let's the artist do what they do best — create.

– Sue Schrader

...You build your following and your buzz, and you get a booking agent

– David Weiss

If no one will book you, book yourself. Throw a warehouse party! Bob Dylan built his reputation at cafes, Crash Worship at warehouse parties and raves, and Ani DiFranco playing every little corner of this fair land out of a beat-up VW bug.

– Anon

Absolutely nothing influences me to sign an artist more a thrilling live show.

– Bruce Iglau

The one thing I always say to bands is to tour.

– Frank Mauceri

NACA – avoid it and college circuit like the plague – It is expensive & booking people change very frequently at schools.

– Chris Goldsmith

# THE AGENT

## BOB LEFSETZ

Especially important in the beginning. He gets you the gigs, it's how you eat, it's how you stay alive. Go with someone who understands your music and has acts like yours. Sure, they might represent the superstar, but can they get you gigs in a club? The dirty little secret is when you truly become a star you can cram down the commission. Not that anybody wants to talk about this. Yes, when the gigs are gonna sell out anyway, why pay 10%?

But unlike managers, you can leave agents at will. That's not exactly true, but as a practical matter, it is. So agents are scared and you've got to establish trust, once you make it the power is in the hands of the act. USE IT!

Also know, like the manager, the agent only gets paid when you do. Do you really want to do that corporate endorsement or is the agent pushing it because he wants to get paid?



# WHEN SHOULD A BAND CONSIDER GETTING AN AGENT?

## PHIL BATTIATO

A band should consider getting an agent when there's enough good stuff going on with the band that an agent can help shape the live side and raise the band's profile through touring. Bands with good press, good live shows, and small but dedicated pockets of fans in nearby markets are probably ready to discuss hiring an agent. Bands that don't have these things but still hire an agent are generally frustrated with the experience from there because without the necessary tools (good press for instance) the agent will have little luck getting the band on the tours or festivals they probably want to be associated with.

## WHAT SHOULD THEY HAVE READY FOR THE AGENT (MATERIALS ETC.)?

Intestinal fortitude. The most important thing for me is that the band is in the headspace to commit to throwing everything they can at breaking the band for the first year or two. Those formative years when you first assemble your team are really tough; \$100 a night slots opening for bigger acts are not easy tours for bands to do but they are generally absolutely necessary to get to the next level. The acts that are hungriest and willing to do what it takes will get to the next level can take advantage and have that groundwork pay off on the next record or the next touring cycle. The acts that don't jump in with both feet end up sitting on the sideline and go from being that buzzy new band that people are interested in helping to that band that's a few years in and still at square one. Very hard to move those projects forward at that point.

## WHAT IS THE IMPORTANT DIFFERENCE THAT AN AGENT CAN MAKE?

Obviously, agents can ask the hard questions and advocate for their clients, be it getting paid better, getting better catering or a slightly longer set time. Past that though, the agent brings a touring vision to the table for the band and should know when it's right to headline and what size rooms to play on what ticket price, when it's right to support a bigger artist, when a band has toured too much and needs to go away to keep from oversaturating, and when to seize the moment and play as much as possible. It's as much art as science but good agents often just have a gut feeling as to what's best for their clients, and good agents are generally right.



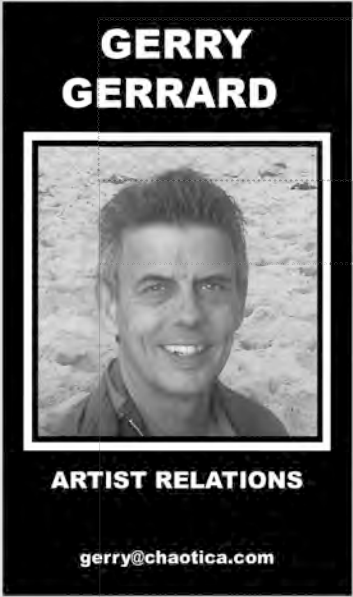
## **ANY MISTAKES OR STROKES OF BRILLIANCE YOU HAVE SEEN FROM ARTISTS?**

One mistake that I often see is a band that is offered a support slot on a big tour and feels that the offer is too low, gets a bit indignant, and decides to pass on the tour. We all want to make more money but I always operate with the end goal in mind....if the end goal is \$10,000 a night or whatever you set the bar at, who cares if you are offered \$200 per show to support Band X and you think you're worth \$300. If that tour will get you in front of 1000 people a night and help you be in a better position to end up being the big headline act down the line, that's probably a pretty smart tour to be on.

## **WHAT WOULD MAKE YOU WANT TO SIGN A BAND TO YOUR AGENCY?**

What I look for in bands that I sign is buzz first and a strong foundation in place second. It helps if people are talking about the bands you rep. I pitch bands for stuff all day and any pitch I make with a new artist is much more likely to be successful if the person I'm pitching to has heard of the act, saw a good review, heard good things from someone they trust, etc. So buzz first. Foundation second; good music, good live show, good label, publicist, and usually manager, and a bit of show history in some places so we are not starting from Fan 1. These people don't need to be hotshots with huge budgets, they just have to have a good head on their shoulders and be willing to work hard. Any act that I signed without good buzz and a good foundation around it is literally just me trying to get the band work because I like it with no real reasons or talking points to get others to pay attention. Those situations rarely if ever work out. In my experience if you have those ingredients in place you generally have a real shot at making something great happen.





# ADDING A LITTLE SOMETHING

## GERRY GERRARD

Martin Atkins is a very old friend of mine who started living and working in the US some time after myself which for me was in the late 70's. We were two lively Englishmen doing what we loved to do most and making music happen over here. We achieved it by carving out a network of interested indie promoters and record labels. Many of the people that we worked with then are now in high positions within the music industry, especially the agents and promoters who were doing a good job. At the same time many more great people have moved on to other industries perhaps in film, tv, and any other part of the entertainment business that is "not music". The music business is not for everybody. Maybe Hunter S. Thompson said it best:

**THE MUSIC BUSINESS IS A CRUEL AND SHALLOW MONEY TRENCH, A LONG PLASTIC HALLWAY WHERE THIEVES AND PIMPS RUN FREE, AND GOOD MEN DIE LIKE DOGS. THERE'S ALSO A NEGATIVE SIDE.**

This was pretty much the world that Martin and I were breaking into back then, him as an artist and me as a booking agent/promoter. As a young band those are the relationships that you have to forge. Now more than ever, the promoter and agent are key, and if you can't get an agent you have to make the relationships with the promoters yourself. Then the promoter will help get you an agent later on. The industry may not be as tough as it was back then. The collapse of the record companies got rid of a lot of dead weight, but in true darwinian fashion, some of the people left are both skilled and ruthless. I once saw a very talented musician friend of mine playing in a band in an awful bar. When I asked him what he was doing he said that he was done with being a professional musician and he was playing the worst gig's possible so that he doesn't even think about playing again. He was successful, I just came across him again on Facebook and he has managed to live a full and prosperous life without resorting to playing music for money again.

So what does it take for a band to make it in this tough business that we have chosen for ourselves. Never give up. Be obsessed with your art, never settle for second best and no matter how many times you get knocked down, get back on your feet and do it again but better. Find out who the good people are. They are there but you need some good radar as you will meet many charlatans on the way who want a piece of what you have. You must surround yourself with people that you trust but first do the job yourself, whether it is booking or promoting your gig's. You must know how to do it yourself before you trust someone else to do it for you, or you won't know what they are supposed to be doing.

I recently saw Neil Gaiman, the author, deliver a speech to graduating students at an art college. It was quite long and inspiring but he kind of distilled it down to 3 rules:

1. **MAKE GREAT ART**
2. **BE NICE**
3. **BE ON TIME**

He then added that for much of the time you could get away with two out of three of those rules. Very wise advice. I have watched many an artist get to the top using those principles.

Those rules may apply to artists, but they do not apply to the agents, managers, promoters and record companies that artists surround themselves with. From them, you demand PERFECTION! As an agent, every show I booked had to be perfect. If *anything* happened that the artist didn't like I considered it grounds for dismissal. That fear made me do the best job possible.

A great record company executive once told me that if a band thinks that being signed to a label is the end result, then they are in trouble. If they are depending on the marketing department of a label to come up with great ideas, then they are dead in the water. All the ideas from graphics to audio come from the artist. The labels, managers agents and promoters are just there to fulfil your vision. You should always be adding a little something that nobody else does. Bring that lighting special with you. Add some bass to the PA. Just do something to make yourself stand out from all the other acts that played the same venue as you.





HELP IS  
ON THE  
WAY

22

## MANAGEMENT

What kind of person are you? If you are looking to develop a *team*, then you should know your own weaknesses so that your choice of manager can fill some of the gaps in your skill-set.

Don't choose a manager purely on the basis of the artists that they have worked with or say they have — be careful to verify anything they say they have been involved with. I read an ad in the back of a trade publication that said:

**“It takes an awful lot of work to create two platinum albums, and here at the law firm of blah blah blah and blah we pride ourselves on ...”**

Hang on, it took me a while to realize they hadn't said they had been involved in a platinum album. They just said that it was a lot of work. I'm a difficult bastard, and I nearly missed it... if you were looking at ads for producers, managers, or whoever wearing your several pairs of rose-coloured spectacles, you might too.

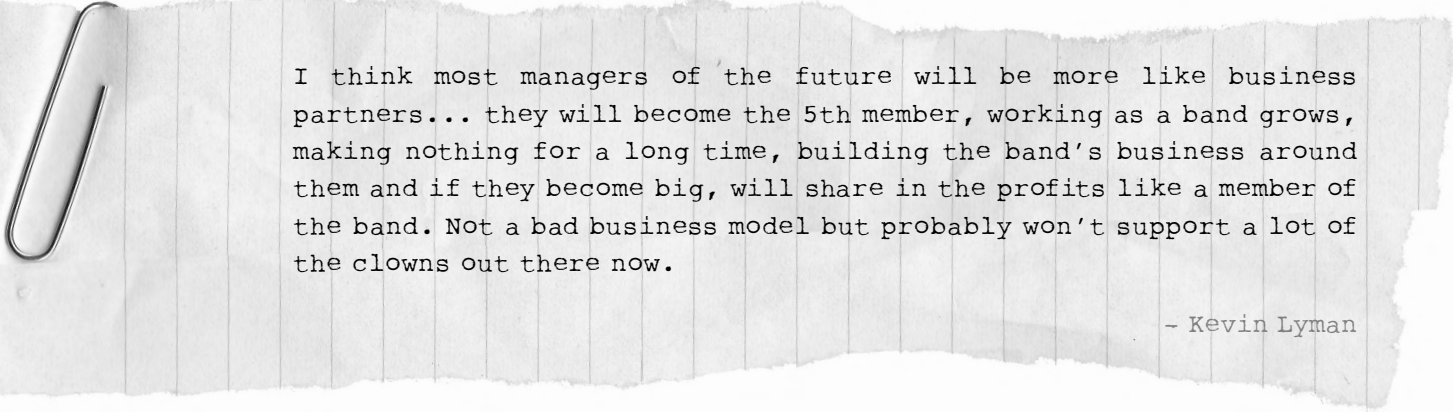
**Band management is so much more than someone just advising and counseling. It is the person you trust to take you to the next level in your career. A manager has to be mother, a father, a psychiatrist, and a baby sitter. What they need to be is someone who can take a product (a band), and marry art and commerce to perfection. It is a difficult balance.**

- Susan Ferris



You want a manager who's good at handling people, but how do you know when they are being *good* at handling you?

Many managers will *have* to make decisions in the short term (just like a CEO of a large corporation), but they aren't making decisions for the long-term good of the employees or the community – this is all about the short term benefit to the stockholders. (This can also be very true for agents.)



I think most managers of the future will be more like business partners... they will become the 5th member, working as a band grows, making nothing for a long time, building the band's business around them and if they become big, will share in the profits like a member of the band. Not a bad business model but probably won't support a lot of the clowns out there now.

- Kevin Lyman

Let's educate ourselves and look at a few managers, shall we? See what we can learn. I'll riff off a few that I know, and add in your own stories, too.

## COL TOM PARKER

Managed Elvis but became addicted to gambling and lost \$99 million dollars of the \$100 million he made with Elvis.

## DON ARDEN

The "Al Capone of Pop" managed Black Sabbath and The Small Faces. He allegedly dangled a rival out of a fourth floor window, sicked dogs on his daughter (Sharon Osbourne), and was tried for blackmail.

## ALLEN KLEIN

Managed The Rolling Stones but was fired for unethical behavior. He was investigated by the IRS for embezzling money from the Concert For Bangladesh.

## MALCOLM MCLAREN

Managed the Sex Pistols and the New York Dolls for a little while — I'm sure Johnny Rotten has a bunch of terrible things to say about him. He seems to me like a creative force and master manipulator. Malcolm got Johnny three recording contracts in as many months.

## PETER GRANT

Managed Led Zeppelin, beat up promoters, and hit policemen (so far so good). He got Zeppelin five times the royalty rate of The Beatles!

## 'BIG POPPA' PEARLMAN

Managed N'Sync and The Backstreet Boys. Justin Timberlake said he was "monetarily raped" by Pearlman. He was sentenced to 25 years in jail.

It's a good thing that most hip hop managers are above all of this crap!

Oh, except for Irv Lorenzo who manages Ja Rule — he was charged with laundering over a million dollars in drug money. Clipse manager Anthony Gonzalez was charged with heading up a \$10 million drug operation. Suge Knight spent nine years in jail. David Lee Gay Jr, manager of Plies, was caught with 80 lbs of coke... 80 lbs of coke! Now, *that's* a weekend!

It's a weird, trusting relationship when it works. Sometimes lying isn't lying. When I ask the tour manager how many people are in the crowd ten minutes before the show, and he tells me it's pretty packed when it isn't — he is doing his job. I *want* him to make sure the lights are really bright in my face so that I can only see the first four rows. We are entering a knowledgeable pact of fantasy protectionism — just like when my trainer says I'm almost there during my crunches. What he really means is, I'm almost halfway to the halfway point — or 25% of the way there. By the time I am recovered from how apalled I am that he wasn't honest with me, I am close to the end of the crunches...

The manager and tour manager's job is to keep this symbiotic (yes, I used it!) relationship web of lies together — recycling the degree of honesty just like last Wednesday's underpants. It's been a few days since I wore them and most of the wetness has gone and the crusty brown detrius of last week's lie has crumbled like stock into grandma's healing chicken soup.

It's important to choose a manager that has a successful history and that has industry connections. Find out who they have managed/consulted with in the past and what they were able to do for them.

It's also important to make sure both your interests are the same as far as genre, etc. Choosing a manager who has a track record with rap music will not help a jazz artist.

Finally, you need to make sure you're both on the same page as far as expectations and a timetable goes.

For a band to attract an agent or a manager — they have to have done the groundwork and create a predictable amount of income.

– Charlie Dahan

## THE MANAGER

### BOB LEFSETZ

He's the buffer between the act and everybody else. Most managers do the acts' bidding, but not all. Some managers tell the acts what to do, either through outright bullying or stating that without the manager they're nothing. If your manager has other successful acts, be wary of whether he's on your side.

Also, know that a manager works on commission. If the act does not get paid, the manager goes hungry. So these are competing interests. You might want to say, "no," but the manager might want to say, "yes." You only have one career, a manager can always get another act.

So choose your manager wisely. You have few options at the beginning when you're starting out. And if you leave you're gonna owe the manager money, maybe forever. **But that's rock and roll.**



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# DON'T

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**FIND SOMEONE  
WHO LOVES YOU  
WITH TIME ON  
THEIR HANDS**

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**- How I Survived  
the Punk Wars,  
*Hey! Hello!***

*Ash Pears / AshTV, Video Director*

# A MANAGER SHOULD HAVE YOUR BACK

## ALEXANDER FRUCHTER

The more that I study the music industry and how it has changed, I still think that at its core, a lot of roles have stayed the same. I think being a manager is one of those things. At the most basic level, an artist's manager needs to analyze upcoming opportunities and decisions. An artist's manager needs to be the frontline for an artist, and most importantly, always have their back. That does not mean that a manager should always agree or become a yes-man, but they do need to have their artist's back. As the artists have gained more control in releasing their music and interacting with their fan base, the role of the manager has changed a little in the sense that a manager may be expected to wear more hats and navigate new areas. It is much more than just answering emails. I think sometimes artists make the mistake of hiring the wrong manager with weird motives or objectives. I also see artists seek irrelevant things from their manager — sometimes they demand too much and other times they don't demand enough. It's really easy to get caught up with the wrong people, or have a manager that doesn't really know what he or she is doing.



**Negotiation is not about victory. It is about the highest possible mutual satisfaction for both sides. This philosophy is one of the reasons I am still in business.**

*– Shannon O'Shea*

**What's our manager/agent doing now?  
Not what you think.**

Your manager might be the more important choice right now (rather than a label).

— Johnny K

Being a manager — some bands don't want to be told 'how to be creative.' As a manager, you're subjected to recommendations from other people, you have to be a filter. Ideas come from everywhere. It's like dealing with your mother-in-law.

— Daniel Savage (BH)

Does the manager have ideas, a plan for growth?

— Sue Schrader

**An up-and-coming artist's dilemma is that successful managers usually do not have the time or inclination to invest the attention, and necessary money, in an unproven act,** whereas a young or relatively inexperienced manager may not have the necessary background to handle an artist properly, or may not have the clout to have a positive effect on the artist's career.

— The Firm of Jacobson & Colfin

Find one person who is good to represent you, instead of a lot of people with great titles that are just okay.

— Gabe McDonough

There's more than one way to skin a cat.

— Patrick Hertz

Fire attorneys, accountants, and managers regularly and often, and let them know this policy when you hire them so the slimy scumbags won't come back later and try to bufu you. A clean house is happy and productive.

— Danny Carey

Learn how to record. The better you get at it, the more you will save financially, and you'll create leverage for yourself when negotiating deals if you initiated the masters yourself.

— Emily White

If you're a good manager, you're going to do what's best for your act...

— Steve Hutton

A manager should say, "If you want all of the phone numbers of all of the other acts I manage — here you are."

— Jeff Castelaz

I don't want to care more than you do. Being a full time, professional artist in the modern era takes work beyond performing and recording — from promo to meeting people to connecting with fans in person and online.

— Emily White

# MANAGEMENT: FINDING YOUR NEW BEST FRIEND?

## SHAUN BARRETT

The old rules to what a manager does and doesn't handle are changing rapidly as the digital revolution continues to take shape. Here are some tips to knowing it's the right time to seek out management and what to look for while considering them.

### IS IT TIME FOR MANAGEMENT?

Do you want a manager because having one would raise the profile of the band and allows you to focus solely on writing and performing your music?

Do you need a manager because every member of the band is busting their asses, the band is starting to see a buzz, there aren't enough hours in the day, and you need guidance and help?

If you answered "yes" to want, keep working until you get to the need level, and chances are managers will start contacting you.

### GET THINGS TOGETHER

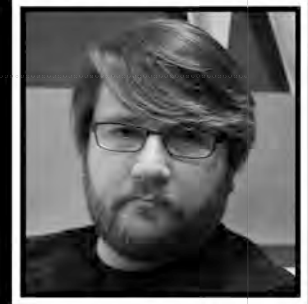
You're kicking ass at shows, taking names for the mailing list, everyone is exhausted, and needs direction... now it's time to start thinking about management, but where to start?

Have a band meeting that includes an honest and realistic conversation about where you are at and where you want to go. Make sure everyone is on the same page and write out an interband agreement. Put together a realistic six-month plan and outline what you are looking for a manager to do. Maybe you're really looking for a booking agent? It's OK if you don't have all the ins and outs pinned down, but approaching a manager with a list of accomplishments, a six-month plan, and what you are looking for from management will show how serious the band is.

### SHOP AROUND!

If you are in Madison, WI, and it doesn't look like there are any managers locally that can propel the band, look at Chicago, Toronto, London, or any corner of the globe. Finding the right person is vital so leave no stone unturned. Do your homework and only reach out to people that are a good fit for what you have going on. If someone specializes in Norwegian Black Metal and you are a Canadian singer-songwriter, make sure to find someone who has contacts that will further your career.

**SHAUN  
BARRETT**



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**You don't need to get a manager if you're not making money. Get advice instead.**

*- Rich Denhart*

If a potential manager approaches the band without much experience, but has a lot of passion for your music, don't discredit them as an option. Some of the best managers started by just loving a band and wanting them to be heard by the masses. If you decide to go this route, it's important to have realistic expectations and understand things might take a little longer, but their passion and loyalty will help the band in the long run.

Make sure to take a few meetings before making a decision. Each manager has a slightly different style, philosophy, and method, so it's important to get a feel for how they do things. The first manager you meet might seem to be the best, but if the third is the right one for the band, it's good to have all the options on the table.

### **GET ON THE SAME PAGE AND STAY THERE**

Whether you go with an experienced veteran or a passionate friend, you are putting a lot of your eggs in a manager's basket, so it's vital that you are able to trust them. Have a lot of conversations and trust your gut — if something doesn't feel right, then it's not. Spell out what the manager is and isn't handling for the band — it will save everyone involved drama down the line. Being on the same page and reaching for the same goals is key. Your manager doesn't need to become your new best friend, but they do need to add value to further your career and help achieve your goals.



**Your big-mouthed sister  
can be your manager 'til  
you find one.**

*– Marcy Rauer Wagman*

**When you or your manager is difficult, if you are irrationally demanding or repeatedly cranky, it doesn't get you anywhere. In fact, I've seen entire projects shut down because people refuse to work with them.**

*– Tommy Borschield*

**A great manager can be serious asset, but be aware that a manager often plays the middleman role between the artist and label. If that relationship is not handled extremely carefully it can decrease communication between the artist and the label. You may not need a manager. Many indie labels prefer working directly with (an organized) artist.**

*– Nan Warshaw*



# ADVICE

## MARK KATES

I am a manager having had a 20+ year career at record labels including more than 10 at the amazing Geffen/DGC where I was lucky enough to catch the tail end of the “old” record business and associated characters.

I had to fail at my own independent label to make the current transition and am quite happy to have done so. I work with amazing artists (MGMT, Saves The Day, The Cribs, Doves, Mission of Burma, Francis And The Lights, Bodega Girls, Faces On Film, Anthony Rossomando) and have returned to my beloved hometown of Boston after more than 17 years in Los Angeles.

My advice? Read this and Martin’s other book and learn.

There is endless information available about music careers these days. The most important thing to have is great songs, period.



### YOU DON'T NEED A MANAGER UNTIL YOU HAVE SO MUCH GOING ON THAT YOU NEED REAL HELP.

In this environment, you need to build an audience any way that you can, online and by playing live. The first member of your team to add is a booking agent as the lowest level of gigs is the most competitive. Get to CMJ and SXSW *if* you can afford it, but don't go into too much debt. Again, great songs are a requisite, so work on them until someone unbiased says they are so. Be a great performer but don't overact onstage. Most importantly, have fun. And before you blame someone else for something that went wrong, do one more thing yourself... because there is always more to do.



You should be working as hard as your manager. It is a team effort.

Nothing beats dealing with good managers and artists who know what they are doing and have win win objectives. The difference between giving each other energy or taking it away...

- Shannon O'Shea

People often ask what a manager does, and the answer, now more than ever, is everything.

- Emily White

In the height of the '90s, the manager could learn his craft by default from the record company people. That doesn't work today. The manager today really has to be the president of the independent artist's business.

- Jeff McClusky



# MANAGEMENT IS CHANGING

## SUSAN FERRIS

**Management is changing.** The old school way of thinking is long gone. Long considered the old boys club, the new face of management is young, mobile, and willing to take chances. Band management is so much more than just giving advice and counseling. It is being the person people trust to take them to the next level in their career.

It has often been said that if you want someone great to run a record label, get a band manager. They have to understand every aspect of how a band's career should function. They need to deal with every avenue from every angle.

A manager has to be a mother, a father, a psychiatrist, and a babysitter. Most of all, they need to be someone who can take a product (a band) and marry art and commerce to perfection. It is a difficult balance.

### A GOOD MANAGER

A good manager will have patience. They will understand the artist without allowing the artist to get in his or her own way. They will listen to the needs and wants of the artist. A good manager will make sure an artist understands reality without discouraging the dream.

You need to have the ability to put out fires and not be afraid to start them.

As cliché as it sounds, you need to think outside the box but understand protocol. It is easy to describe what a good manager should do. It is not always easy to find a manager who encompasses all these things.

### A BAD MANAGER

It would be easy to say that doing everything the opposite of what a good manager does is what makes a bad manager. Unfortunately, it is not that easy. The bad managers are sometimes very hard to spot, and worse, it can take a while to figure out that a band has found a bad one.

The bad ones tend to be the ones who “talk” too much. Making big claims of what they can do. Regaling bands with big stories of great success they have had. And ultimately weaving the web that bands think they are looking for. It's a very vaudevillian approach. These managers tend to have their own agenda. These are the managers who also tend not to listen. Or rather, listen selectively. What an artist doesn't say is as important as what they do say.

Another band I know had been searching for a deal for a long time, over four years. They finally found an indie label that seemed to be a perfect fit. The band was manager-less at this time, so they made the deal with a lawyer. After the band was signed and in the studio working on their debut release, they collectively decided it was time to get a manager. With the advice of some of their friends in the business, they took a handful of meetings. When it came down to the best two, they asked if the label would, in fact, take a meeting with



both managers. After taking the meetings, the label gave their opinion and the band made their decision. They picked the less-favored manager who had the vaudevillian approach.

The manager promptly caused problems with the label, tried to execute a coup with no success, started their own label, and bought the band back. The indie label made six figures, and the band has still not put an album out. The record was done almost two years ago, and the band has been sitting in their hometown scratching their heads trying to figure out what happened.

## WHAT SHOULD A BAND THINK ABOUT BEFORE THEY GET A MANAGER?

It is easy for a band to say they want to play arenas and sell millions of records. The chances of it happening are slim. It is more important that a band have many goals and that each one is attainable. Not as simple as it sounds.

Why do you think you need a manager? What do you think a manager is going to do for you? What are your expectations? Is the goal to just get signed? Do think you manager is going to get you shows?

It may seem like common sense but a lot of times bands go into meeting managers with expectations that just don't make sense. A band should meet with a few managers, but *not* go overboard. Sometimes meeting too many is just as confusing. Do your homework. Who else does the manager handle? Is it someone big? Are they going to have time to build your career or are they going to pass you off to the new kid who is just learning? Something to consider, and not necessarily a bad option, as you are getting the knowledge of the old with the energy of the new.

I had a client who had been a member of a big band and had been fired. He came to me to manage him. We worked together for two years putting his new band together, getting him a lucrative six figure deal with a great record label, and traveling around the world on some incredible projects that he was a part of. We were on our way to big things. I had just started my own company and it was exciting to have it kick off so big. As the ball began to roll and he was getting more attention, a very famous band manager called my client and wanted to know why he had this young girl managing him. He should have someone like this guy to take him to the next level! So my client immediately saw stars and more dollar signs and fired me. At that point, I told him to get his checkbook out and pay me now because I would sue him and this would save us a lot of time and money. He did and no, the group never really went anywhere. They fizzled out after a few years and the big time manager got bored and moved on to other things.

## IT IS OK TO DISAGREE WITH A MANAGER.

But if you disagree over fifty percent of the time, then neither of you are seeing eye to eye on things and it is time to move on.

Is having a new manager a bad thing? If you are a band that is just starting out, then having a manager who is just starting out can work in your favor. A manager should be someone you can grow with. If you have a good manager, then they should be with you for a very long time. It is important to know when to stay and when it is time to move on. If your manager is not growing with you, then it is time to move on. A new manager has a lot of energy and is willing to do things that a manager who is set in their ways may not be willing to do.

**A good manager will make sure an artist understands reality without discouraging the dream.**

*-Susan Ferris*



# THEN AND NOW

## LARRY WHITE

### IN THE BEGINNING

In 1964, I was a junior at San Leandro High School located in the San Francisco Bay Area. The Beatles were leading the “British Invasion” which was a modern day musical revolution.

The Rolling Stones, The Animals, The Who, The Kinks, The Zombies, The Dave Clark Five, Herman’s Hermits, Chad and Jeremy, Freddy and The Dreamers, and Peter and Gordon all followed The Beatles to America as British bands began to dominate Top 40 radio around the world.

American teens embraced the new music and garage bands began to emerge who naturally wanted to emulate the new sound with their own unique twists. Led by the music, a cultural revolution was impacting hairstyles, fashion, lifestyle, and politics in a profound way. Somehow, I had to be a part of this vibrant and exciting new scene.

On Saturday, May 8, 1965, I presented my first dance-concert at Spanish Hall in San Leandro with two local bands, The Talismen and Mark & The Uptowners. I hired the morning drive-time DJ from KYA Radio in San Francisco to M.C. the show. His name was Emperor Gene Nelson, and he was the most popular DJ in the city.

I had posters and flyers printed with photos of the bands and Emperor Gene Nelson. This was the first public appearance for both bands so my draw was the DJ. Everybody listened to KYA and Gene Nelson’s morning show. He always promoted his personal appearances on the air, essentially giving me free airtime on the most listened to Top 40 station in the Bay Area.

The show was a success, and I was on my way to a career in the music business.

Soon I was managing a local band called The Baytovens and spent every waking hour plotting and planning the band’s career. Those were not just formative years for me but for the entire music business. Five decades later, the music is still relevant, but man how things have changed in our industry.

### THAT WAS THEN, THIS IS NOW

*Then:* Every metropolitan city in the United States had at least one and maybe two Top 40 radio stations that played the hits. Everybody who liked contemporary music listened to those stations. AM radio dominated the listening habits of American youth.

*Now:* Everyone has literally thousands of options in which to listen and discover new music, thus fragmenting the audience and making it much more difficult to reach a target audience.

**LARRY  
WHITE**



**MANAGER  
THE BAYTOVENS**

**MR.LARRYWHITE@GMAIL.COM**

*Then:* We assembled press kits that included a cover letter, press release, band photo, biography, and relevant promotional materials. We then stuffed envelopes, addressed them and mailed them from the post office, all at a great deal of time and expense.

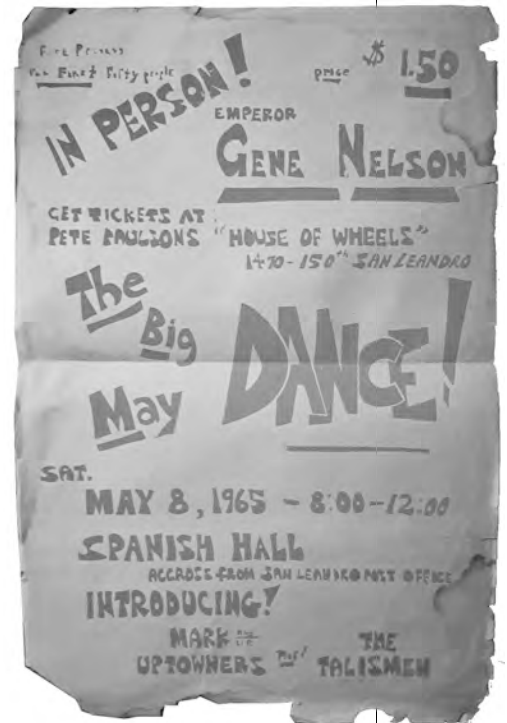
*Now:* We create a website.

*Then:* It was necessary to book time at a professional recording studio if we wanted to capture a quality sound. If we wanted distribute the music to others it was necessary to press vinyl. This was all very expensive and time consuming.

*Now:* We're able to create quality recordings on a laptop computer and upload the finished product to our very own website and various platforms available to us on the Internet.

*Then:* Our communication resources consisted of a telephone hardwired to the wall and the United States Post Office.

*Now:* We have mobile communication abilities that include talk, text, email, fax, photos, music all in one mobile device that works just about anywhere in the world, not to mention FedEx, UPS, Skype, and on and on.



## THE BASIC CHALLENGES ARE STILL THE SAME.

Make good music and create awareness and a fan base by performing locally, regionally and nationally. Remain diligent in all areas of marketing and promotion and you may have a career that spans five decades too.

Many of the artists that I referred to from the British Invasion are still going strong. The Who, The Rolling Stones, Paul McCartney, Ringo Starr, Peter Noone (Herman's Hermits) are all still recording and touring. At SXSW 2015, I saw The Zombies perform live to a wildly enthusiastic audience of all ages in a packed Austin venue. They're in their mid-70's and will be recording a new album on their return home to England.

BRAVO!







## WILL A FESTIVAL BENEFIT US?

There are hundreds of festivals around the country and new ones every week.

Many music festivals have a conference element added. Admission to panels and workshops is offered to artists as compensation/incentive to perform. I am *always* amazed — AMAZED — at the depth and value of information given at these events and how few of the artists actually take full advantage. Get ahead of your competition — **get educated!**

Festivals ARE an opportunity to network, hand out some flyers and see 1000 other bands each play to varying levels of audience. I think that's a valuable thing for you to do. You could also rent yourselves out like mourners at a funeral. "For \$50 a set, the five of us will scatter around the venue, sing along with 2 of the songs, and look around and smile at other people in the audience and pretend like, 'Hey, they're playing the hit now! Awesome!' We will also create a mini 'run' on the merch booth and each buy shirts and a CD, but only with money that you give us before your set starts and that's an additional \$50." OR — Jesus Fucking Christ — go down there with two other bands and each do it for each other. You know, just like everyone thought bands always did.

# MUSIC CONFERENCE SURVIVAL GUIDE

## DON'T BLEACH YOUR HAIR THE DAY BEFORE!

Although it's always a good idea to destroy hotel towels instead of your own, you don't want to drastically change your look right before a big event. The new aerodynamics of your head, or some long floaty extensions, will distract you.

## BRING A PORTABLE PRESS KIT

I tell anyone in a band or anyone managing a band to do something super-cool with your press kit. However, at a conference, portability is the key. Put it all on a disc, a flash drive, or a fancy DVD business card thingy.

## MAKE SURE THAT YOUR NAME, THE BAND NAME, AN EMAIL ADDRESS, AND A CONTACT NUMBER IS ON EVERYTHING — EVERYTHING!

Have these with you **at all times**.

Sure, business cards are old school bullshit, but get some! Lots of interactions at any well attended crazily scheduled event are on the run, passing in the street type encounters. Just handing a card is a great way to elongate the possibilities of the encounter. I'm not suggesting handing a card to someone is the be-all-end-all of starting a relationship, but the next time you encounter them, maybe they will remember you a little more. Inch by inch right? Plus, there's nothing worse than actually being asked for a card and not having one!



There's no excuse not to have a business card. Many services offer great deals. Moo had a great deal on cards that included free coupons for Lyft or Uber rides. Vista Print also does great stuff if you can power your way through the obstacle course of upgrades and pop ups!

## HELP SOMEONE

Go to conferences prepared to *help* someone: a band, a random person, a promoter, anyone. At times of high stress and high stakes, people will appreciate it more. A sweaty, damp extended hand is nothing more than germ explosion — unless you are dangling off a cliff; then it's a life saver. It's all perspective and circumstance. And the longer you're in this business, the more you appreciate what goes around comes around, so make sure the karmic shit you put out there is good, and you'll be surprised at the unexpected ways in which you're rewarded.

Weird things are in short supply.

CHANGE YOUR GAME — packing tape for postering, water, etc.

TIME! Hotels.com had kids stand in line for you at SXSW. Look around and apply your creative, problem-solving, customer service brain.

## DO SOMETHING!

Don't sit in the hotel room watching movies or reading Tour:Smart. Get out there and do it!

## DON'T BUY NEW EQUIPMENT THE DAY BEFORE YOU LEAVE.

Don't mistake an investment in brand new equipment for actually doing something that might help. At least you *know* just where to hit your crappy tube amplifier to get it working again. A brand new one acquired a few hours before the first show might have other characteristics you aren't prepared for. Last minute improvements might not be improvements at all. If your equipment is falling apart and it's fucking up your vibe, your show, your hands, then NOW would be the time to get something so that you can break it in before it becomes mission critical.

## TALK TO OTHER BANDS

This is an opportunity for you to do some concrete, real things to move your career forward:

- Seek out and meet bands from different cities across the US and around the world. Tell them about your show. Quietly hatch a plan to rave about each other's shows or at least SHOW UP and double the size of each other's audiences. Focus on the little things - not on playing to a full venue (you won't) but on NOT PLAYING TO NO-ONE!
- Kick start your band networking right now! Are you emailing bands with whom you are sharing a bill? Are you sharing costs in printing posters? Did you even print posters? There's no excuse to go in blind and unaware.

## SHOES

The same philosophy about hair applies to brand new shoes! You are going to be walking for several miles a day. If you aren't lying in bed at night crying and massaging your swelling ankles and knees then this is a sign that you are not taking *full* advantage of the event! So, the other very last thing you want to discover is that your brand new Doc Martens are really uncomfortable to walk in. Go with the comfy, worn out shoes you are used to. If they are really bad and fucked up, spray paint them black! Have one of those professional shoe people re-hab your shoes. They can work wonders and are sometimes at the airport. Make sure to tip 'em extra for the horrifying shit you are asking them to deal with.

SXSW has obviously changed (and expanded globally) over the last 25 years. If you want to recapture that original, smaller vibe, there are many festivals around the world — from Halifax Pop Explosion to Unconvention Events, San Diego Music Thing, Yellow Phone Music Conference (Milwaukee), CD Baby's DIY Musician Conference, and many more. Just Google!

**Get to CMJ and SXSW IF you can afford it but don't go into too much debt.**

– Mark Kates

**Stephen Francis from Model Stranger says he gets way more done at SXSW when he ISN'T performing! The vibe I get now is that some professionals have given up standing in line to see a poorly prepared band, and have opted for hanging out with old friends and accomplishing more that way.**



# FESTIVAL ADVICE

## NATE VAN ALLEN

**BOOKING.** Getting a gig on an outdoor event/festival can be very difficult. That advice is better left to talent buyers and booking agents and merits its own column. The majority of national festival spots are reserved for touring bands, and many of the local outdoor event promoters (at least here in Chicago) believe that their event can't be successful without a slew of cover bands. I believe it's a phallacy, but it's reality. Boo.

Here is some short advice from my experience as a stage manager and as a musician.

Let's assume you did get the gig, the best thing I can tell you, as with any show you get: Work as hard as the people that are putting on the show. It takes countless hours from a number of people to make any event happen. You should do no less. This includes promoting.

**LOAD IN/OUT.** Outdoor events are run on a very tight schedule. Be there when they ask you to be there. Have one person as the point of contact. We are not anointing a bandleader, just someone to talk to at all times for production decisions. Who in the band is best suited for that? Friends should not be put to "work" as loaders. One good person, who knows what they are doing, is worth more than five inexperienced friends.

**HOSPITALITY.** Be easy. Take what they give you. Most gigs have beer and water, might offer some light catering or meal buyout. I would prefer a buyout over some sub par festival catering anyway. If in a city, take the buyout, and find something good, unique, and local.

**GUESTS.** Don't overrun the backstage with guests. There is limited space and other bands have their important valuables back there. Sometimes guests can exhibit poor judgment. Keep them away from other people's stuff, including mine. Don't bring anyone back you don't know unless they are escorted at all times. Yeah, he/she looked good standing by the enhanced-water multi-media experience, but you are responsible for their behavior. Seal the deal and get out of there.

## EVERY MINUTE YOU ARE LATE TAKES AWAY FROM SOMEONE ELSE'S PERFORMANCE AND PUTS THE PRODUCTION INTO SCRAMBLE MODE.

**YOUR SET.** Start when they ask you to start. End when they ask you to end. Every minute you are late takes away from someone else's performance and puts the production into scramble mode. There are a lot of pressures and variables to deal with for the performers and the production team. Don't add to them.

Have a short closer that you can slot in at any moment. When the stage manager signals that you are low on time, don't play your 12-minute magnum opus. Maybe rain shortened your set. Be ready. No one wants to cut you, but if it happens, take it in stride. There will be other gigs.



## MARK DURANTE



**INDUSTRY MUSICIAN  
GUITAR ENGINEER**

[www.durantula.com](http://www.durantula.com)

# TUNE UP AND MORE

## MARK DURANTE

### DO

**KISS.** You know, **keep it simple** and **save** yourself and everyone else of lot of grief. With less to go wrong, you can have more fun playing and interacting with the crowd.

**SHARE YOUR GEAR** with the other acts when needed. Help out a band, and you will appreciate another band letting you use their gear when you're in a pinch.

**MAINTAIN YOU GEAR.** Prevent embarrassment when malfunctions happen during the show because you slacked off instead of taking care of you equipment.

**MAKE IT EASY.** Once again, everybody will thank you. Complicated setups can irritate everyone around you and waste time.

**USE MORE COMPACT EQUIPMENT,** especially on that first morning when you're packing the van, you'll appreciate saving the whole band a lot of grief and drama.

### DON'T

**DON'T TURN UP LOUDER THAN EVERYONE ELSE** and then tell the others to turn down!

**DON'T USE BROKEN GEAR** and expect someone else to fix it for you.

**DON'T REFUSE TO MOVE YOUR EQUIPMENT** to make room for other bands, you hate it when they don't want to do it for you, don't you?

**DON'T MAKE UNREASONABLE DEMANDS ON STAGE HANDS AND SOUND PEOPLE.** Don't expect perfect sound (get over that). Remember, this is supposed to be fun.

**DON'T FAIL TO TUNE UP PROPERLY.** Nothing is worse than music that would be brilliant if only it wasn't so out of tune.



DOS  
DON'TS

**IF YOUR STAGE MANAGER IS A JACKASS:** Unfortunately it happens. Roll with it. Always be polite. Always live up to your end of the agreement. Later, follow-up with the promoter and thank them for the gig. Politely mention the difficulties you had. Don't be personal. Hopefully, they already know that this person might be suited for other work, and open a spot for someone who really can make the experience good for all of us.

- Nate Van Allen

## FABRICIO NOBRE



DIRECTOR FOR BRAZILIAN  
ASSOCIATION OF INDEPENDENT  
FESTIVALS

@fabricio\_nobre

# TEN REASONS WHY YOUR BAND WAS NOT SELECTED FOR THAT FESTIVAL

## FABRICIO NOBRE

Since 2005, I have directed an organization that brings together the heads of independent music festivals in Brazil called ABRAFIN ([abrafin.org](http://abrafin.org)). In recent years, the biggest complaint I have heard from bands about ABRAFIN, its festivals and its curators is always, “Why wasn’t my band selected to play in festival, A or B or C?” or “This curator is horrible. How could he not select my *great* band to his festival line-up?”

I’ll try to write something here to help some bands to get “smarter!”

### HERE WE GO:

News: the curators just announced the lineup of the festival/event/show, in which your (or your friend’s or your boyfriend/girlfriend’s) band should be on, but unfortunately it did not happen.

There are several reasons for this “problem,” but I’ll try to summarize here in 10 REASONS why your (or your friend’s or boyfriend/girlfriend’s) band was not selected for that awesome festival (this happened with my band, it can happen to yours):

- 1 The curator to whom was entrusted the work to heal/choose/select bands for the event does not like the band, or finds them unsuitable for that event, or even likes the band, but he prefers 30 other bands selected.
- 2 You did absolutely nothing to participate and were only waiting for the result in your room, already “angry” and now comfortably complaining on Facebook, which should be working effectively for the band.
- 3 All members (or maybe just one) in your band are assholes (or suckers), or maybe just hard to deal with.
- 4 Maybe your band does not have a good crowd — no mobilized friends, family, or colleagues from other bands. Perhaps even the contrary, your “art” discourages public from other bands.
- 5 The band is new, and not surprisingly, you still need more work (rehearse more and be better prepared to set up a show) to play on a cool event with other good bands (do not give up, it is just the beginning, you will get there, folks worse than you have come...)
- 6 You have played a show that was organized by the same people that do the “awesome festival” you are now mad about, or that are done by curators or companies that are friends of their friends (these people know each other, they travel to conferences together, and they drink coffee together). The problem is that one show you screwed up/delayed/damaged equipment/passed the time/you sold the free ticket that was for your wife and bassist drank too much. As they say, your band “blew it!”

7 The curator has a crush on reggae, but you play salsa.

8 It has a hell of a buzz on the reggae scene in the festival's city, and the salsa that your band is already playing is a few years late (and you have not got it. Can salsa be cool again in a couple years? Now is not the time).

9 The keyboardist for your band already dated (and was not that good to) the sister of such curator, or the ex-girlfriend, or current boyfriend... And there's a big grudge about it. These things are hard to forget.

10 There is the possibility that your band (your friend's or your boyfriend/girlfriend's band) could be really bad and really suck. Have you ever thought about this possibility?



**DON'T BE THIS GUY:** Travis Scott arrested at Lollapalooza 2015 after telling fans to "jump the barricade." Not only dangerous for the media in the pit, but a criminal act. Brilliant move.

The American Music Association Conference in Nashville had 100 slots – they had 1800 submissions.

– Sue Schrader





GOOD ADVICE

FROM

BAAD PEOPLE!

# HOW TO MAKE AN EXTRA 100K IN THE NEXT YEAR

There should be an asterisk in there (if I was to be totally honest) but, this is SHOWBIZ right! Lets leave it at 100k! Or, **\$100k!**

There is a lesson interspersed within this overall lesson. I'm sure you'll see it. You are too too smart not to.

Start with a few little things:

**1 ROLL YOU T-SHIRTS.** Put a rubber band around them then put some masking tape over the end with the size written *huge* in sharpie. This means that when someone asks you for an XL — bang — you have it.

It also means that you don't waste ten minutes trying to find an XL, but fail. Then when someone asks you for a S, you don't find it but find the XL but the guy that wanted the XL has gone — and so have two of the 12 people who were waiting because they saw what a calamitous clusterfuck of a time warp they were going to be dealing with for the nest 30 minutes and did the extra bonus time for the baby sitter, less sleep, time before the alarm clock wakes them up calculation and bailed.

That, means two or three extra shirts per show = \$40 - \$60

**2 HAVE A CHOICE OF SHIRTS.** That means there is a higher chance of someone buying a shirt. When an artist only has one shirt, your question can only be, "Would you kike to buy a shirt?" When you have two shirt options, the question is, "Which one of these shirts are you going to buy?" Very different question.

2 more shirt sales per performance = \$40

**3 USE THE FIVE POINTED STAR.** No dollar value to this idea, but you'll build momentum and momentum equals success. (Eventually.)

**4 SCREEN PRINT YOUR OWN STUFF.** Instead of a shirt costing you \$6, it can cost you just \$3. This isn't just about saving money — you can be more creative. Come up with designs that don't sell and find out after just a few gigs rather than only finding out after you have ordered 100 or more. It also makes it easier for you to give stuff away! That's how you sell more too!

If you sell 10 shirts a gig, you save \$30 per show.

**5 CONSCIOUSLY CREATE (#1).** At some point, The Beatles stayed at a hotel in Portland (I think). An entrepreneur went into the rooms afterwards and bought the carpets, cut them into 1" squares, and sold them. I did the same thing with the Ministry Cage.

Additional stuff to sell (great for when everyone has the shirts!) per show, \$20.

**6 STOP THINKING THAT ANYTHING THAT HAPPENS IN THE WORLD OF STREAMING MONEY IS GOING TO AFFECT YOU.** Pharrel made \$6,300 from 105 million Pandora plays. Even if Pandora quadrupled their payment then quadrupled it again, it's still

$$6,300 \times 4 = \$25,200$$

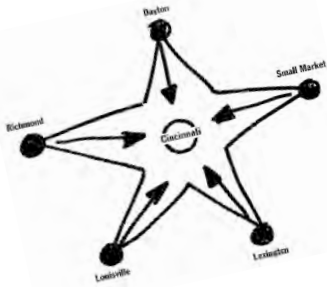
$$25,200 \times 4 = \$100,800$$

\$60

\$100

\$130

\$150



That's \$ .00096 a stream. The answer doesn't lie in getting involved in the accountant's problems and formulas. *Yes*, we need to understand it, but can you see that fighting for better streaming return might be okay for Pharrel, but it's not going to matter much to you and me? It's much better to look everywhere else and to ourselves for the answers. That way we're not sitting by the phone (Internet) hoping for someone else to save us.

## BITTERNESS AND PETTINESS IS THE ENEMY OF CREATIVITY. GET CREATIVE!

**7 GET OVER YOUR FEAR OF SELLING.** Some of us bleat that selling is selling out — it isn't. You are creating a bond when you sell. You have to sell onstage, right? The sad part of the song. The joyous middle section. Even though you are worried about your cat and you have heartburn. You have to sell. So, sell.

**8 HAVE A TIP JAR!** It can mean \$15 on a slow night, much more on others. Let people help you more if they can! As mentioned previously, put something funny and smart on the jar!

Additional per show, \$15.

**9 FREE IS THE NEW BLACK!** But be smart about it. Matthieu Drouin said that, "The songs we give away the most, sell the most." So, give your best stuff away and track the people that take it! Block Chain technology seems like it will revolutionize this whole area — by the time you read this maybe it has!

I'd say this strategy is worth an extra \$50 a show.

**10 (PROTECT YOUR) A.H.S.E.T.S.** Always Have Something Else To Sell! On tour, Youth Martin from Killing Joke paints pictures during the day and puts those paintings out at the merch booth at night. Is that selling selling selling? Or, connecting connecting expressing and connecting? He also has a book of poetry and a colouring book.

Who are you? What other pieces of your self can you put at the booth to connect with people? Read or listen to the Blackberry Jam Scam.

The other thing that you sell! \$20!

**11 PAINT THE PRODUCERS HOUSE INSTEAD OF PAYING FOR STUDIO TIME!** Savings, \$3000.

**12 INSTALL A JACUZZI.** Put extra bunk beds in your basement. Make your Wifi scream! Go to culinary school. Grow organic vegetables. This won't save you any money, but will be the reason that artists from out of town (from the cities that you want to play in) will stay at your place and owe you a return. Difficult to put a value on this. It will be the reason things will be better two years from now.

**13 STOP MAKING ALBUMS.** Make singles and eps and release stuff all the time in a flow.

**14 COVER SONGS ON YOUTUBE.** Target your audience and hone in on them using strategic covers. Fucking hell — if Ryan Adams can benefit from it, why cant you?

YouTube covers revenue, \$5.

**15 (a) FIND A PRODUCT** that you have an affinity with, use or like the owners of the company. Work with them to do cool stuff (see Vestal or Coldcock!).

\$165

\$215

\$235

\$3235



\$3240



\$3290

\$3340

\$3390

**15 (b) FORGET ABOUT REVENUE FROM MUSICAL CANDLES CARDS OR TOOTHBRUSHES.** If it ever happens, you won't care anyway. Impact on 99.9% of careers, \$0.

**16 STOP LOOKING FOR ANSWER.** Be the answer.

**17 ORGANIZE YOURSELF** and your show so that you have *at least* 30–60 minutes of sell time after the show. This is also communication time — friend making time — reason you are doing this time! Additional income per show, \$50

**18 MAKE A LIVE ALBUM.** An acoustic album — it doesn't have to sound good. It's great if it does, but it doesn't have to.

More sales per show, \$50.

**19 MAKE YOUR SHOW AN EVENT.** At first this is an investment, but after a while, you'll start to see the results; more fans at shows, more sales, more awesome.

**20 MAGIC MILEAGE DEDUCTION.** See the accounting chapter!  
Eventually when the vehicle is paid off, \$50.

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We have had a *bunch* of ideas here that will make you over \$160 extra per show. Nothing fancy or pie in the sky, just some solid ideas to put some more bricks in the Great Wall of China of your 7 year/overnight success. Now, how do we make more of a difference and get closer to the magic \$100K?

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**21 BOOKYOURFUCKINGSELF.** The only way for you to gain the traction you need is to perform 9–11 times per week on the road. These don't have to all be *big shows* — even with a small show you will sell merch, make friends and get fed. Some of these can be: house shows, acoustic coffee shops (if that works for you), lectures at a school about how you did all of this, busking. You think you are at war with the music business, trying to get the attention of someone when the reality is that you are at war with yourself and the numbers. Get your numbers right and everything else you want will follow. All of the equations change for the better, except the ones affecting your throat or laundry. Be careful not to over play your local market. Start to strategically get out of town. Use the flower petal pattern and rock it!

**22 CONSCIOUSLY CREATE (#2).** I make scenery for all of the tours I go on, not realizing that I was building up enough cool shit for my own gallery show. I made the Madonna art knowing that I wanted to cut it, stretch it, and sell it after the tour. I had a sign up sheet at the booth letting people sign up to be notified if I did decide to sell some. (Which of course I did — I was just playing hard to get.)

**23 YOU ARE YOUR OWN CHAIN STORE!** For fuck's<sup>™</sup> sake, get Square (or whatever alternative to cash people are using) because in some parts of the world these days, *no one* carries cash!

This is an extra 40–50% on your merch sales.

**24 GIVE UP YOUR APARTMENT AND LIVE ON THE ROAD.** This is where the rubber literally meets the road — *if* you are going to make a go of this, the numbers really start to make sense if you give up your apartment for a year. I've worked with artists that had to keep coming home to make

<sup>™</sup>This fuck brought to you by Jason Shepherd.

money at their day job to pay the rent on the apartment that they didn't need! You have to be careful and strategic, but at the right time, this could be the move that brings it all together.

**25 DO MORE OF WHAT WORKS AND LESS OF WHAT DOESN'T.** It's only when you have tried things in many different ways that you become the expert in what works for you and your audience. Once you have the data and the experience, this is easy. From just knowing the sizes of your audience so you don't buy any more small shirts (unless you are selling to your aging fans kids) or 2XLS if your audience is all kids. It's not just about these economic inventory questions – you'll also become the repository for all of the demographics and psychographics of what/who/when/where/why your audience actually is.

**26 BE MORE AWESOME THAN A PASTA RESTAURANT.** The Olive Garden (a "pasta restaurant") offered to babysit your kids for two hours if you'd come and eat at their restaurant. How does that mesh with what you are doing as an artist? Are you just whining and telling people that you have a gig and please support independent music because they should? Fuck<sup>u</sup> off! Start to understand, help, amaze and fuel your audience – be more amazing than a fucking pasta restaurant can you?

*<sup>u</sup>This fuck brought to you by Dakota Melrose.*



**FUCK.**

*This extra large fuck brought to you by Model Stranger.*



Nothing isn't marketing. Everything is.

Deciding not to market anymore *is marketing* in the same way that announcing that you aren't going to sell your music *is selling*.

**BE AWARE OF YOUR INDUSTRY, YOUR GENRE, YOUR VIBE,  
AND WHAT HAS GONE BEFORE YOU.**

This is by no means the eveythingyouneedtoknowaboutmarketing, but if there is one thing to get your head around other than Julie's amazing piece, the D.T.O. section should be your go-to for the future. You might follow the four P's of marketing (Product, Price, Promotion, Placement) but Three Floyds Brewery (beer is the new music) just napalmed those guidelines with Dark Lord Beer.

I chose to go the opposite route.

- Justin Pearson

**WHERE DO YOU WANT YOUR PRODUCT?** Nowhere, so you have to come to the brewery and queue up for several hours just like being in Poland in World War II, but with beer instead of potatoes.

**WHEN DO YOU WANT IT TO BE AVAILABLE?** Only on one day of the year.

**HOW MUCH OF IT DO YOU WANT TO SELL?** Not very much really

**SHOULD THE PROCESS BE FRICTIONLESS, EASY, QUICK?** Nope. Really fucking difficult now that you mention it.

Dark Lord Beer enthusiasts are hysterical train spotters that pay \$150 and up for a bottle. Put down your guitar and start brewing!

So anything you read really, just do the opposite. The rules are guiding the people who don't know enough to break the rules. Fuck<sup>u</sup> them! Or more accurately, join forces with them because by the time you read this it will be time to follow the rules again! Or will it?

Nobody cares even if they did follow the rules; No one has an attention span. The average person's attention span is 7 seconds. A goldfish has the attention span of 8 seconds. Sometimes you need to be that ad with the interference on the tv that makes one get up and reach for the remote. Sometimes you need to put the ring tone on your demo to make everyone's head turn. But you don't really want to be that asshole... or do you?

I guess I'm advocating education here. One of the main benefits of knowing who is original and who isn't is you can start to predict where things might go down the line. That's useful.

Of course an educator like myself looks like an asshole advocating for education, but, c'mon. If you really want to do this then paying attention to what has come before is pretty important, inspiring and a great way to determine what to avoid, what's right for you and your brand. While I'm on the subject, pretty much any activity at all is great for defining your brand; it doesn't have to be performing a song. Any activity will do.

It's easy to get sucked in to the latest trends, the latest fashions smoke screens and technology wars... I've tried to come up with some basic ideas and strategies that will work no matter what the prevailing forces of nature, economy, technology, or fashion are.

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## DO THE OPPOSITE: D.T.O.

One of those is quite simple. Do the opposite (or D.T.O.) This works in the macro and micro (if everyone is wearing 36" flares, you wear drain pipe jeans, if everyone is wearing drain pipes, you wear 36" flares). Take the temperature of any situation and adjust your approach accordingly. You will, at the very least, be different, ridiculed, ostracized and gain the inner malevolent drive for payback that will ensure your success.

When the radio station tells you that the only way they will receive submissions is by e-mail, that's when you D.T.O. and rent a furry yellow chicken suit and visit the premises for extended periods of time handing out promotional materials to anybody who might be able to help you. Then, after a few weeks, when you start to see two or three other people in yellow chicken suits either:

<sup>u</sup>*This fuck brought to you by Sarah Dope.*

1. Open a chicken suit cleaning and deodorizing service or
2. Change tactic, invent the Chicken Radar™ alerting anyone inside the building to the existence of one or more lunatics in big yellow furry chicken suits outside the building.

They'll need to keep checking their Chicken Radar™ until you let them know the coast is clear and while they are checking the radar why not listen to a new track from... YOU!

**WARNING:** Do not try this strategy in Europe, where furry outfit deodorizing technology is either nonexistent or years behind the times.

### THE MARIO SCENARIO™

I've never played Mario, but I get the impression that at some point Mario is above a vat of quicksand or acid or something and he has to keep transferring his weight from one foot to the other to be able to keep his head above water and his feet out of the molten lava/quicksand/or whatever it is.

### AS ONE GOES UP THE OTHER GOES DOWN.

This same phenomena could also have been illustrated using Britney Spears' dress and an erection.

Start with two recordings — your studio album and a new live album — you can have each of them creating a certain amount of value, not very exciting, not very *now*... but a starting point. Start to **give away** the live album... your revenue from that goes down — but your overall revenue might go up — you are creating an **event** and selling more of the higher priced items.

You could add a third wheel to this scenario (now it's no longer Mario — it's an octopus that was severely injured in a knife fight), but you could give away copies of a new EP with a bonus track from the album and a live track that isn't on the live album. Give that away to fuel sales of the other two... and a shirt and a hat and a concert ticket. Spin those fucking<sup>x</sup> plates.

You can expand the Mario Scenario to the complete catalog of a band on one side — live shows on the other perhaps?

### WHAT CAN WE LEARN FROM ELSEWHERE: THE SKYBOX MODEL

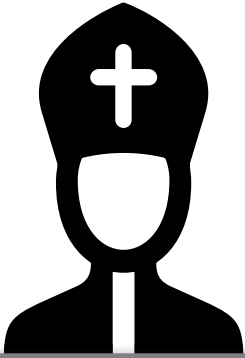
There are many ways to watch a baseball game — on a TV at a bar, interrupted by idiots, commercials and screams from fellow revelers and getting hit in the back of the head with a pool cue — but it's free.

Next step up would be to go to the stadium and buy “nosebleed seats.” Next step up — better seats. The top of the line would be a skybox with waiter service, an open bar and a private bathroom.

Here's the point — it is the same game being played for all of these fans. (Thanks, Ken McCarthy.) NOW — apply this model to a book, an album, a show, anything.

For example, if you aspire to the Jay-Z model of distribution, you move a million albums with one deal. But that wasn't selling music to people; that was selling the cloak of groovyness and vibe to the corporation. Tidal is not a distribution play either. We're lost in the details of royalties and the “artist crusade” against streaming, not seeing the old old path of A&R grooming of a band (Tidal) for the record deal (IPO).





Just the right amount  
of rong.

# DO SOMETHING DIFFERENT

## THE POPE

When The Pope wanted to spread the word to millions of Catholic women who had married divorced men that they could attend mass even though their husbands could not, he didn't try to communicate through 12 publicists in seven time zones in 36 countries. He called a housewife in Poland to tell her all about it. The media and the internet did the rest.

## TAYLOR SWIFT

Taylor Swift sent out Christmas gifts to some of her fans with handwritten notes. Not quickly scrawled notelets, but all over all sides of a note card, real shit! The internet does the rest, spreading images of crying fans everywhere. She also makes surprise visits to her fans, too. Smart as FUCK. When her last album came out, she had teams of fans travelling with her to blog/pic/Instagram/Tweet about the whole thing in real time for a week. Brilliant.

## BILL MURRAY

No strategy here but you can still get it: Bill casually photo bombs or crashes weddings or birthday parties for a little while — he does one small (but huge) thing. The internet and amazed delighted recipients do the rest.

## SLEEPIFY

Michigan-based Vulfpeck, created a 10-song album called "Sleepify" which was all silence, asking fans to listen to the album on repeat at night **because this is all about numbers**. They made the songs just long enough to register for a payment from Spotify (about 35 seconds). They received 5.4 million streams, and at first it seemed like Spotify thought it was cool — then not! They earned \$20k initially. BUT, and here it is, *this* is what we are supposed to be doing, right? Using our creativity to bend the rules and make them work for our needs? And inspiring others to do the same? Yeah — get your head out of the ditch, drink some coffee, and let the neurons fire!

## OLIVE GARDEN

Be more like the Olive Garden — no, don't give your fans indigestion — follow their lead. In early 2015, Olive Garden had a promotion where they would baby sit your kids while you went to their restaurant. So, my question to you, are you as awesome as fucking<sup>st</sup> Olive Garden?

Please don't let a pasta restaurant and an auto mechanic supply house embarrass the fucking entire music business with ground breaking customer fan-centric solutions that create word of mouth and valuable advertising — c'mon! Send a gift to your audience: bake them a pie, take them home, do their laundry! You still win!

If your answer is "I can't think of anything" then give the fuck up and make room for someone else.

<sup>st</sup>This fuck brought to you by Ken Strait.



## M.E.L.T. THE COMPETITION

There are many variables in developing yourself as an artist, your fan base, your everything... one thing you need to do is **M.E.L.T.** the competition.

**M**ONEY  
**E**FFORT  
**L**EVERAGE  
**T**IME

$$\frac{M}{2} * E = L * T$$

The less **M** and **L** you have, the more of **E** and **T** you'll need. But effort and time will eventually get you where you need to be. That's kind of inspiring really. DIY works, eventually, slowly... gradually, one brick at a time.

## WHENEVER YOU CAN HAVE A COMPETITION, HAVE ONE!

This is tent pole marketing. Arcade Brewery doesn't just launch a beer and hope that you hear about and like it. They have a design competition for the label first, inviting artists to submit a design for the label. Then they have a release party for the beer with bands. Use templates from other models — remix, remaster, drink faster!

Whenever you can procrastinate aggressively, stall, enthrall and throw them against a wall — the longer you can keep the coffee pot percolating, the longer the smell of coffee fills the room with glorious anticipation (unless you leave it too long then the kitchen fills with an acrid coffee crack smoke and no amount of sugar will ever make it drinkable).



*Label: Stephen Merlo*

## THE MORAL?

Don't do something huge — you can't. Do something small with a huge impact for one person for the right reasons and, hopefully, the internet and word of mouth will do the work you want.

I mean, if fucking Safelight windshield repair can inspire us by going to the zoo to replace a mother's broken windshield while her kids play — what the fuck<sup>st</sup> can you do?

**WARNING:** This is not a certainty. There is great information of how to accelerate and enable word of mouth elsewhere in this book.



# TACTICS VS. STRATEGY

At this point you should have a handle on D.T.O. tactics. You are working to capture attention and make a connection. Then what? Well, that's strategy.

## HAVE A FUCKING STRATEGY, WILL YA?!<sup>T:S</sup>

Who decided not to? Is it not hip to have a strategy but somehow hip to play on the wrong night to no one? Talk about dick-shrinking ego-shredding (and I use "dick" as a gendered-neutral metaphor...).

The next time you are sitting around during one of those "What If" conversations at rehearsal or in a bar, instead of going down the "When I win the lottery, I'm going to pay off your house Steve! You've always done great sound for us maaaaan" road, why not actually start on a path that has a beginning (right where you are now at the corner of Nowhere and Oblivion) and, while you might not be able to see the end, we can start to walk down that path... togetherrrr. (OK, now I'm crying... Does anyone know how to get tears – real tears of hope – out from my laptop?)

You need to have a **strategy**. It doesn't need to be one that will take you all the way to the top and allow for how many wait staff you will need at the sushi bar premier of whatever the fuck<sup>®</sup> it is,

## IT JUST NEEDS TO BE MORE OF A STRATEGY THAN NO STRATEGY AT ALL.

If right now you are saying, "My strategy is to let the music speak for itself," that's great. It has spoken to me and I'm going to punch you.

Marketing is not a dirty word.  
Take yours seriously.

– Micah Solomon

No matter how astounding your talent is, you're unlikely to  
break through without the appropriate marketing push.

– Charlie Hunter

When it comes to the world of emerging music, a HUGE mistake that  
is commonly made is to just market to everyone. This will never be  
the path towards success. Determine who your most loyal fans will  
be, learn everything about them, and then begin to market TO them  
(not AT them).

– Jon Ostrow

<sup>T:S</sup> Originally appeared in *Tour:Smart*

IT'S ALL ABOUT ONE NUMBER THESE DAYS.  
GET ONE FAN. DO IT AGAIN.  
GET ONE GIG. DO IT AGAIN.  
GET ONE CLUE AND  
MAKE IT HAPPEN.

# THE TRUST STRATEGY

I put up some discount codes on my Big Cartel site. (It's easy peasy and if you don't have a store — a super easy way to create a store and free for the first ten items!) The discount codes are easy to create. I created and shared 30%, 60%, and 90% simultaneously (a result of all of the **free** stuff I do and being more comfortable than the average person tackling some punk as fuck<sup>2</sup> risks!).

What do you think happened?

The first thing I did was to try and explain myself on Facebook, "HEY. I'm doing this thing. *If* you are having a tough time and you could really use a 60% or 90% discount on some of my shit, then have at it! *But*, if things are okay for you it would be **great** if you could buy some stuff at a lesser discount so that I can pay for all of the other stuff!"

The result was very interesting — a bunch of people bought with no discount. **No one** used the 30% off (that's intersection, huh!), about the same as used 0% used 60%, and a bunch, of course, used the 90%. But it wasn't as weighted as I thought it would be. You'd think (and be careful because your fans might be assholes who hate you!) that most people would use the 90% off. After a careful tally of about 80 orders from that day, it worked out to be the equivalent of a 55% discount across the store, but way cooler and much more interesting.

<sup>2</sup>*This fuck brought to you by Bendix Freutel:  
"This FUCK is adopted by d-oo-b.ch"*

Spend time getting to know who your fans are. How do they think? What are their interests? Point out common areas of interest you share with them. Get to know your fans on a personal level. Even your core fan base (friends and family), want to connect with the music you're playing. In order to stick with you, these people need more than just the unconditional love and friendship that has gotten them through the door to see you perform once or twice before. If they connect with your songs and what you're doing, they will come to every show, sing every word to every song, buy every t-shirt without you even asking. Growth of a fan base spawns from your core group of family and friends. The more you nurture your relationship with them, the more support they will show you including exposing you to their friends, co-workers and beyond.

Do the work yourself! Don't depend on bots or services to connect you or your band to potential fans. Today's music business is a direct path to fan platform. The only person that can develop and nurture a relationship with a potential fan is you, the artist directly.

- Shawn Kellner

<sup>2</sup>*This fuck brought to you by KansasConcerts Page.*

Get professional help with your graphics. It's tempting to try to do your own album design or get a friend to do it. Don't do it! This is your image -- you're building your brand, even if it's a tiny thumbnail on your iPhone screen. Get a professional photographer and graphic designer with music industry design experience to make you look great. The increased professionalism will pay off in increased sales.

- Tony van Veen

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## REVERSE CAT SPAYING

There is a very interesting number. Over several years, one unspeyed cat can be responsible for 420,000 more cats. Think of yourself as an unspeyed cat, creating new fans one at a kitten time! Spreading information just like an unfixed zombie spreads zombie-ness. One at a time. There you go, you zombie kitten. Go get 'em.

# LET'S DEFINE REAL MARKETING

## JULIE NIEHOFF

Let's define real marketing. If you put twenty people in a room and ask them to explain what marketing is, you will likely get 20 different, but similar answers. Most people will talk about reaching out with a message, telling people about your products or services – or in the case of a band, your music, your gigs, your recordings, etc. But there is a clear and important definition of marketing that is separate from sales, separate from communications. Changes in technology and changes in the way people in the world relate to each other have shaped the methods and tools we may use for marketing. But marketing existed before all of the social media stuff we have now. It existed long before email or cell phones.

### MARKETING IS NOT ABOUT WHICH TOOLS YOU USE; IT'S ABOUT THE PEOPLE YOU ENGAGE.

To make sure we are working from the same page, let me give you my simple definition of real marketing. There are three basic parts to my definition of real marketing:

**1 DEFINE AN AUDIENCE.** Decide on what group of people you want to engage, either by the area they live in, what they've told you they care about, an age group – whatever it is that makes them a group – even if it's just “people who came to your last gig in Dallas.” Decide on the group of people you want to reach out to.

**2 REACH OUT TO THAT GROUP WITH A MESSAGE THAT IS SPECIFICALLY FOR THAT GROUP OF PEOPLE.** So, if it's people that came to your last gig, your message mentions the last gig, thanks them for coming, and then you hit the ground with your message (a new song, new merchandise, another gig in a nearby area – whatever it is).

**3 ELICIT A PHYSICAL AND MEASURABLE RESPONSE.** This is the part that makes it marketing. Up to this point, we were still talking about communications – reaching out to people and giving them information. But when you add physical, measurable response, now you are marketing. So what's a physical, measurable response? A click in your email, a play of your song, a reply email, a phone call, a tweet, a share on Facebook (meaning they shared your message or offer on their own Facebook page). Basically, we are talking about any reaction people have to your message or offer that represents a decision to take action. And you must be able to measure it. THAT is what makes it marketing. So you can say “this worked, let's do more of this.” Or “this didn't work, let's stop doing that.”

Real marketing takes guess work and emotion out of your decisions. You don't have to wonder if people care about what you send to them, or what you post on Facebook. When you're really marketing, you *know* whether it's working because you are watching the reaction and measuring it.

When you send mass emails through a service, you are able to see who opened the email, what time they opened it, what they clicked on, if they forwarded it to others, how many they forwarded it to (You can't see *who* they forwarded it to. That's against privacy laws.)



but you can say with confidence “these people cared about this” or “nobody gives a shit about that, stop sending this kind of thing out.” Email marketing is extremely affordable. Most people pay between \$15 and \$30 a month to use a service that gives them this kind of information and it also makes it easy to create emails that have your logo, photos, colors and links that make the email look more like a webpage. It’s easy. If you can order a book on Amazon.com, you can create a cool email update or newsletter for your band that is completely trackable. (*Full disclosure, the author works for Constant Contact, the leading email marketing service for small businesses & nonprofits.*)

When you post on Facebook, or when you tweet on Twitter, you should always include a trackable link so that you can see whether people actually clicked it. You can see who retweets your Twitter posts but if you use a trackable link, you can see if anyone actually cared about what you sent out. You can get free trackable links using a site called Bitly.com. This site will let you put in your link, will shorten it, and will tell you how many people click on it. Bitly has also started generating free QR codes, so you can easily use those on your posters and fliers too. Check it out.

**So are you really marketing your gigs, your music, your merchandise, your brand, yourselves? Or are you just communicating right now – and hoping people care.** You can make it without marketing, but if you start to include some of these ideas, if you start to watch what happens and changing your messages and offers based on whether or not people are actually responding, the road to more people showing up and paying up is much shorter.

## **STARTING (AND KEEPING) THE DRUMBEAT**

So much of building a following, whether you’re a band or a pet sitter or a certified public accountant, is about whether or not people like you. It sounds stupid, but it is a fact. And, now that you know whether or not you are really marketing, you can start to focus on gaining more and more traction among those people that already follow and friend you. This is really just all about relationships. It’s about those people and whether they like you, and whether or not they think you like them.

## **THINK OF IT AS A GIANT MIDDLE SCHOOL LUNCHROOM.**

You are the cool kid. Are you making the rounds and sitting with everyone? Or are you just sitting still and waiting for the other cool kids to come to you? A little bit of both can’t hurt.

Now that you understand what real marketing is, you are able to take it to a different level, where you are no longer just reaching to the people on your list, or the people on your Facebook page. That is only going to take you so far. What you need now is a megaphone, and you need to teach all of those people how to use it.

Megaphone marketing is not about reaching the people on your list. It’s about reaching the people on *their* list. It’s about posting and sending messages, offers and updates that are remarkable – meaning, they are worthy of being remarked about. That’s what the word means. Anytime you send something in an email or post something on Facebook or Tweet about it, you should be thinking about whether or not it is something your people would want to share with others. And you have to make it easy to do that.

If you send an email, it needs to have a share bar. It’s just a simple graphic that most email marketing services make available for free and it lets your readers click one button to share that email with all of their friends on Facebook, or lets them tweet the message out to their followers. In one click. It’s genius, and it’s free.

On Facebook, there is a share button under every post. So if you post something on your band's Facebook page, every member of the band should then click SHARE under that post and share that message on their own profile pages. That puts the word out to people that for the most part, by definition, already care about what you post, because they are friends on Facebook.

Twitter's answer to megaphone marketing is the RETWEET. This is just a simple click that makes it easy for someone to see your tweet, and repost it for their own followers to see.

This is engagement marketing on steroids. I tell two friends, you tell two friends, and so on...until we have a drumbeat. All the cool kids end up coming to your table because of their natural sphere of influence. Wait – what?

Okay, sphere of influence. Everyone has one. Some people have two, one for their personal life and one for their work or professional life. When you start to deploy megaphone marketing, meaning that you are getting people on your list to share your updates and info with the people on their own list, you are leveraging what is called a sphere of influence. It just means that you are reaching people who already listen to someone else by getting that person to talk about you. It works the same way that big corporations may pay a Talk Radio host to mention their product and how much they like it, so that all of their loyal listeners will at least give it a second look when the opportunity comes. If you can get people talking about you, or posting online about you, *without* paying for a big endorsement, you are leveraging the sphere of influence. And it means you are doing something right.

### THREE THINGS YOU SHOULD TRY

Here are three strategies to try when you are really marketing. These things are all proven to work, but the suggestion here is for you to pick one to try. Give it a couple of weeks. If it works for you, try the other two.

**1 SET AN OBJECTIVE AND LIMIT DECISIONS.** What this one should really be called is “keep it simple, stupid” but someone else already wrote those words so it didn't seem right to use them here. No one wants a long email from anyone else. Churches, Chambers of Commerce and Schools can get away with it because people's time, money and kids go there – nobody reads the whole long thing, but they don't mind. Everyone else, including bands and musicians, need to go easy. No one has time to read a long message whether it's in an email, on Facebook, Twitter, or whatever. It's annoying, right? And the reality is that you get very, very little reaction from long messages.

### INSTEAD, DECIDE ON ONE THING YOU WANT PEOPLE TO DO AND GIVE THEM THE CHANCE TO DO IT.

Maybe that one thing is to join your email list, or to like your Facebook page, or to download your newest song, or to tell others about your upcoming gig. Choose one thing and drive it home. All links should point to that one action you want people to take. Decide on what it is you want people to do and send it out. Send it by email, post on Facebook, tweet about it, make phone calls, whatever the method, but be very clear about what it is that you want people to do.

You cannot give people fourteen decisions to make. One or two options will drive way more action than a list of thirty ideas. Don't believe it? Test it and prove it to yourself. Split your list into two groups and send out a message to half the people that has ten options...so, maybe you send out a list of gigs you have coming up or ten different songs you have recorded.

Then send the other half of your list just one gig coming up or just one or two songs to download.

## MORE OFTEN THAN NOT, THE MESSAGE WITH FEWER OPTIONS WILL GET MORE REACTION.

It's human nature.

**On average, you have two seconds to get someone to open or read your message**, and if they want to react, you have up to two minutes to get them to take action. If you take up that two minutes with making them read all of the options they have, they are much less likely to actually do the thing you are trying to get them to do. Make it short and simple and make sure that the action you want them to take is front and center (or at the top left/center if it's in an email). It's got to be obvious and easy to find.

*Note:* If you are asking them to click on something, make sure you include a text link as well as your graphic or picture link. About 35% of people cannot see pictures in their email, so if the only link you provide is a picture, some people that would have clicked will not see where to click.

**2 GIVE PEOPLE SOMETHING SPECIAL.** You must treat your fans and followers with great care. They need to feel like they are in a relationship with you. It sounds a little touchy feely, but go with it and you'll reap the reward. Create a special group for your most engaged fans and name it. This doesn't cost anything. Or call it a street team and let people sign up to be on it. Give them a job to do – getting the word out – and tell them how, and make it easy, and praise them when they do it well. It doesn't take much but when you nurture these relationships, they create more relationships. It's part of that whole sphere of influence thing.

You must give people something special, something they can only get for by joining your list, or liking your Facebook page, or posting your updates. Otherwise, you're just on a long, slow walk toward The Evil Unsubscribe. One-to-many tools, meaning things like social media and email marketing, make it easy and inexpensive to maintain relationships with many people without having to eat lunch with each of them – you just have to grant them access on whatever level you can give.

It doesn't have to cost money to make people feel special.

Write about what you know that they don't know. You know plenty. You know what it's like to get bumped in a show, or to record in a studio on a shoestring, or how you came up with the name of your last album. And you give access to what you have access to. You have more access than you think. Backstage access, early releases, special seating or free merchandise. It doesn't have to cost money to make people feel special. But it's only for those people that know how to pick up the megaphone and who bring other cool kids along. And seriously, they are all cool kids. You're not in the middle school lunchroom anymore.

When you give people something special, they tell others. Those people want to be special too. Super secret access is one of the quickest messages to spread. Make it exclusive and treat them well. You will be surprised by how many of them bring others into the mix.

**3 BE HUMAN, BE YOURSELF.** For artists and musicians, this is not as challenging as it may be for a banker or lawyer. But it matters, and you should do it. This is the real key. Find what makes you you, and exploit it. Be as much yourself as you can possibly stand to be. Pull back the curtains and let your followers and friends in to see what is making you tick. It's easy to do, and in some cases the hard part is in not doing it too much. It needs to feel special and it needs to be real. There are tactics; it's not just a mood.

First, write in what is called “conversational copy.” That just means that you should write your emails and social media posts the same way that you would speak them, not like you are writing a brochure. When you go to write something, picture a person where the computer screen is and speak out loud while typing what you speak. That’s a great way to get used to this. You cannot be afraid to be human. It is what will make all the rest of this stuff work.

Second, use photos of people. of yourself, of your band, of your dog, of your family or friends (with their permission) . Do not let thinking you are unattractive be the reason to stop you from doing this. Think of it this way; most of the people you are sending to also do not think they are attractive enough. It’s not about whether you’re good looking. It’s about building familiarity. When people see your face over and over again, they get the sense that they know you and they are comfortable interacting with you and they are more likely to speak to others about you in a favorable way – making you more **REMARKABLE**. Pictures of faces are more powerful than pictures of instruments or cool graphics from your album cover. Pictures of faces make all the difference. Preferably smiling, happy faces. Even if your band has a dark, desolate image, smile once in a while for the Facebook. Seriously!

Third, every once in a while, pull back the curtains a little farther and share something about yourself, a band mate, or a family member (again, only with their permission) that is personal to you – and has nothing or almost nothing to do with your music or your work. Something like... “I’m training for a 5K because it benefits a charity that matters to me” ...and why that charity matters to you. Or... “I’m going back to college to get my MBA...” or “I’ve realized I hate chocolate and never want to eat it again.” Share something that they would not otherwise know. It has to be honest, genuine, and you don’t want to do it every time; that takes away some of the value.

This is about making a real connection with people by letting them see who you really are.

## **IF IT DOESN’T FEEL RIGHT FOR YOU, DON’T DO IT.**

It will backfire. If it’s not genuine, people will sense it. If it’s real, people will know that it’s real and they will respond. They will respond in a way that cannot really be quantified, but you will see it, and you will see it immediately. These are the posts and emails that will get the most response. Be ready for that. This is where people who follow you will become people who care about you and about playing a role in your success.

It’s not mushy gushy stuff. It’s marketing on a level that allows you to build authentic, genuine relationships with a lot of people, using one-to-many tools like email and social media. You can manage all of these relationships without a lot of time or money if you are being exactly who you are and if you are smart about how you do it.

We can use the word interactive all day long to describe video games, ATM machines and self check-in at the airport. But the word interactive means you-to-me, me-to-you, interaction. When you start using the internet and email marketing to manage your fan relationships, you are technically adding just adding another screen interaction to their day. It is up to you, as an artist, as a business, to come through that screen and interact on a human level that matters. That makes a difference for the reader and in turn, makes a difference for you.

## **PLEASE BE REAL. PLEASE BE HONEST. PLEASE BE ENGAGED.**



**If your band page requires a LIKE before we can hear you — FUCK<sup>™</sup> YOU!**

<sup>™</sup>*This fuck brought to you by Cait Ash.*



# 5 STEPS TO GETTING FANS TALKING ABOUT YOU AND YOUR MUSIC

## ANDY SERNOVITZ

When you ask most bands where they get their new fans or how people find out about their shows, the answer is usually, “through word of mouth.” But when you ask them how that happens, nobody really knows.

Great word of mouth marketing isn't an accident or the result of dumb luck – it's the result of a consistent, well-executed strategy designed to earn the respect and recommendation of your fans. It's about giving people a reason to talk about you and making it easier for those conversations to take place. And the best news: You don't need a big budget or a huge crew – you just need a basic plan based on what I call the 5 T's – the fundamental elements of all great word of mouth: **Talkers, Topics, Tools, Taking Part, and Tracking.**

What to do:

**1 FIND YOUR TALKERS.** Who will tell their friends about you? Sometimes it's the folks buying the records, sometimes it's the curious ones checking out your show for the first time, and sometimes it's the music bloggers reviewing your latest album.

**Action step:** Be everywhere your fans are. Not just Myspace or your website. Think Facebook, Twitter, Flickr, YouTube, etc.

**2 GIVE THEM A TOPIC.** What will your talkers say? Topics don't have to be fancy, they should be simple, portable ideas that people can easily spread. It's things like how you're known for letting fans on stage during the show, how you put a hidden track on each album, and how you feature local artists as guest vocalists for a few songs.

**Action step:** Try a bunch of different topics and see what works. Play acoustic sets, throw out balloons, surprise everyone with ice cream before the show, and let fans design your shirts and posters.

**3 CHOOSE YOUR TOOLS.** Tools are what help spread your message faster and further. They're online stuff like blogs, social networks, and tell-a-friend buttons on your website. They're also offline stuff like shirts, posters, stickers, two-for-one tickets, and hats.

**Action step:** Bands have lots of tools at their disposal. Try listing shows as parties on Facebook (so fans can invite friends), giving show attendees something to take home and share with a buddy, and making it easy for the fans who want to wear your stuff to get their hands on it.



**4 TAKE PART IN THE CONVERSATION.** If someone is talking about your music online, you've got the opportunity to reach out and develop a 1-to-1 relationship with a fan. Today's tools make it easier than ever, and by setting up accounts on a few social networks and by commenting on a few key blogs, you can be well on your way to earning relationships with the type of fans that will drag in their friends to check out your next show.

**Action step:** Identify a few key talkers and introduce yourself, always disclosing who you are and who you're with. You'll have better luck if you're not just pushing your music, but rather, you're sharing behind-the-scenes stuff, promoting bands you admire, and sharing honest thoughts.

## YOU'LL HAVE BETTER LUCK IF YOU'RE NOT JUST PUSHING YOUR MUSIC...

**5 TRACK AND MEASURE THE RESULTS.** With so many modern tools out there, it's easier than ever to track, monitor, and follow-up on your word of mouth. Use freely available tools like Google Analytics, tracking links, and Google Alerts to quickly identify who's saying what and how influential they are. Get started right now by setting up simple alerts for your company name and for industry keywords.



# SETTING SHORT-TERM, MID-TERM, AND LONG-TERM GOALS

## JON OSTROW

Setting goals at all three benchmarks (short, mid, long) is an important part of any proper marketing plan and is crucial for you as an artist to stay on track as you market your music and your brand.

Short-term goals are typically set to be completed within six months to a year and can involve things like:

- hitting a certain number on your mailing list
- selling a certain number of albums
- creating enough material to record that first demo or book that first gig

These are goals that should be analyzed after the set time-frame is up, so that you can learn from past mistakes and successes to help you grow.

Mid-term goals are set from one year to anywhere up to around 5 years, and can involve things like:

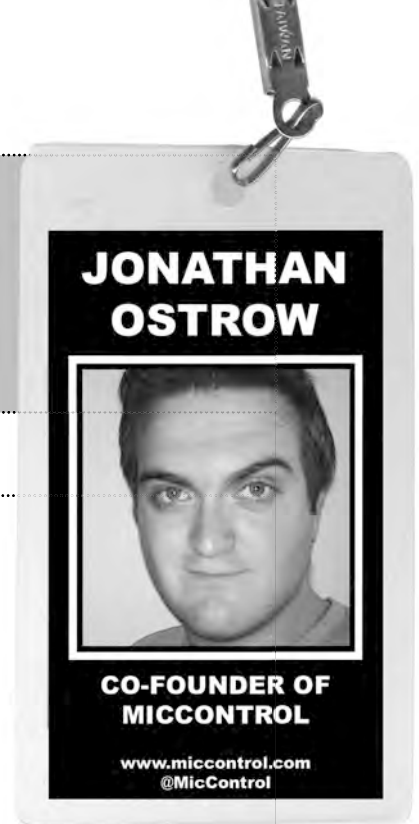
- booking the first significant tour (or even just selling out the current venue size and beginning to book venues with a larger max capacity)
- hiring a management company or a publicist
- building up enough demand in your brand to receive recognition from some of the larger music publications
- recording the first official, professional-quality LP

These are goals that should be challenging but realistic, should reflect the overall mission of the brand (you as artist or the group as a band) and finally should make significant steps towards advancing your career. These are the goals that take you from 'coffee-house artists' to established brand name.

Long-term goals are set from 6 to 15 years into your career, and can involve things like:

- booking a national amphitheater tour
- receive a major recording contract or distribution deal
- establish an endorsement deal with a major brand (i.e. Nike)

These are goals that you should be working towards throughout your career. By the time these goals are achievable, you will have established yourself as a strong and reputable brand within the music industry. Most importantly, these are goals that should reflect the ultimate success of your short-term and mid-term goals combined.



Imperfect strategy + relentless execution and iteration beats brilliant, unexecuted strategy any day of the week.

– Amber Naslund



# YOUR RECORD IS FINISHED, NOW WHAT?

## JAIME "BLACK" DE'MEDICI

So you're in a band and you've just released a brand new record that you've poured your heart and soul into. Congratulations! Of course, it's now likely that listeners and fans, both current and potential, are going to (illegally!) download your record. But this is good news! Now you have the ability to capture the attention of an extremely valuable wider fan base. Here are some ways to follow up on that momentum:

- It might seem obvious, but the importance of using social media such as Twitter and Facebook not only often but effectively cannot be overstated. Connect with your listeners.
- Likewise, go meet your fans in person at shows and music scene events. Don't limit interaction to strictly online engagements.
- Distribute free releases through your website. Properly tag your officially-released MP3s with artist info like song lyrics, web links, and other relevant information to help bring listeners further into your world.
- Generate auxiliary content, such as videos, podcasts, blog posts, streaming events, and whatever new possibilities the social web afford you.
- Finally, go where other bands haven't yet. Create your own approach to generating excitement around your music by getting listeners involved! Now, more than ever, music needs to be a highly personal experience to truly connect with the most passionate of fans. Generate that connection and you and your band have gained something far more valuable than the profit you would have gained from selling a record.



# OFF THE WALL MUSIC MARKETING TIPS AND IDEAS

**ADRIAN FUSIARSKI**



**MUSICIAN AND BLOGGER**

www.buzzsonic.com  
@Buzzsonic

## ADRIAN FUSIARSKI

**OLD SCHOOL MARKETING:** My experience marketing music started in the late 80s. My idea of 'marketing' was spending time stuffing envelopes full of cassette demos and posting them to indie radio shows in the UK, major record labels, venues and indie fanzines.

Out of a mail out of around fifty tapes (yes tapes!) we got three positive responses.

**WELCOME TO THE NEW SCHOOL:** Killer marketing tactics will only get you so far. If the music isn't up to scratch, all the effort and money in the world is ultimately going to lead to failure. Get the song right and the breakthrough will eventually take care of itself.

### KILLER MARKETING TACTICS WILL ONLY GET YOU SO FAR.

Having said that, you can make some noise using available tools online. Be a bit clever about it to set yourself apart from the herd.

One of the things I did that helped re-launch my music was to offer up various parts (vocals, hook, Midi file) of two of my tracks for remix. It's nothing new nowadays, in fact it's positively de-rigueur. You can offer parts of your tracks up for download on your own site or newer web communities like MixMatchMusic.com

With DIY remix culture exploding and related software becoming more powerful and affordable, sonic manipulators are growing hungry for disassembled pop music, and the music industry is beginning to see the benefit of increased exposure through releasing remix stems directly to the public.

Release a limited edition vinyl single. It's going to cost you around \$900 for 500 7-inch singles but the prestige that would add to your release would be invaluable. Since the rise of Napster and, later, iTunes, a market for single songs has been reborn, and one of the unintended benefactors has been the seven-inch. Even Sub Pop Records' famous singles club has been reactivated.

Singles are also highly collectible. "The punk and indie-rock undergrounds have always been particularly fond of the seven-inch as a badge of fan-hood, something doled out in limited quantities and often specific circumstances – on certain tour dates or on labels available only in a certain region." (from the Toronto Star)

Polow da Don has actually leaked songs — against the wishes of the artist and label — just to prove that a hit exists. The most famous example involves the high-profile Usher track, "Love In This Club," a song that eventually garnered huge radio play and fan response. Eventually, everyone came around — but what a risk. "That could have ruined my career," the producer continued. "But it was all gut."

— Paul Resnikoff

## OTHER MUSIC MARKETING TIPSTERS

Digital distributor, Tunecore, have tips to help you promote your release once you get it placed on iTunes and other major distributors. They're also doing video distribution nowadays, too. They also have a bunch of free PDF marketing guides.

Andrew Dubber's *New Music Strategies* give some useful insight on selling music online: "There are variations on this theme, but essentially it boils down to this very simple question: now that there's this internet thing, where's the money and how do I get at it? What's the best way to sell music online?"

Tom Robinson explains the answer to the question, "Does your music have value?" on his excellent blog. The more seriously artists treat their own work, the more seriously other people will take it. A series of full commercial releases gives you a better chance of airplay at radio. It also gives you a discography."

And I couldn't write this without mentioning something from CDBaby founder Derek Sivers. In particular, his much quoted,

**"STOP THINKING OF IT AS MARKETING AND START THINKING OF IT AS CREATIVE WAYS TO BE CONSIDERATE. THINK OF THINGS FROM THE OTHER PERSON'S POINT OF VIEW."**



Leaking... it's not just for underpants anymore.

Instead of working so hard to prove the skeptics wrong, it makes a lot more sense to delight the true believers. They deserve it, after all, and they're the ones that are going to spread the word for you.

- Seth Godin





ADMIT ONE

25 FREE IS THE  
NEW BLACK

An artist called Moldover created a new CD package with the song titles made in circuitry and a jewel case containing a light sensitive Theremin, which he made himself. I was happy to pay \$50 for the release. He has, so far, sold 500 units.

You do the math.

Shogun Konitoki have a vinyl release embedded with dots. To see and hear the release, in all of its spectacular glory, you have to first watch an instructional video then assemble the battery-powered strobe light kit that comes with the release. By the end of the process, I guess you are unable to make an objective decision about the music after investing all of that time preparing to be amazed. But you probably will be. Cost? \$69.00.

**The point is this: music IS free whether you want to believe that or not. Every piece of music you can think of is available free right now a click away. So...have the public get what they want FROM YOU instead of a torrent site and garner good will in the process (plus build your database).**

*– Trent Reznor*



I say **free is the new black**. That doesn't mean that everything you have ever done should be free. It means that, in the run up to a release of something new – it doesn't have to be an album – you give away some stuff. Make a new shirt that will be available with the physical release or with a code for the digital download.

Monty Python's sales went up 23,000% after they launched a site where you can get every single thing they have ever done for free!

They took control of this stuff.

Prince, Panera, Radiohead... Pay what you feel.

So, I think there are two paths; you can't download a t-shirt, a battery powered hand held strobe light or a light sensitive Theremin. So go the extra mile with the imaginative packaging that you put around your music. It's important enough for some imaginative bubble wrap, isn't it?

Or release material in smaller, shorter bursts; 6 EPs a year, perhaps? As you give away EP #3 for free with a shirt (\$10), someone gets interested and wants EPs #1 and #2, which are \$10 each. (Maybe with a shirt, maybe not.)

You are not just increasing the choices and the frequency that you communicate around a special event; you are also shrinking the time between creation and availability. Some of the examples above show. Free is not the enemy, even for a small band. But you have to be prepared to deal with the many factors at work in the hash reality of the new "economy." You don't want to constantly be surprised.

It's the songs that Metric gives away  
the most that sell the most.

– *Mathieu Drouin*



**MichaelSeanAnderson:** @marteeeen I'm an asshole. Sitting there becoming a fan in your FREE seminar while questioning the value of free. Next lesson?

# FREE IS THE NEW BLACK

## DISCUSSION WITH MARTIN ATKINS, JON ALLEGRETTO, AND JAGOFF PUBLISHING

**JON ALLEGRETTO:** Snoop Dogg, Trent Reznor, and Radiohead are fucking Snoop Dogg, Trent Reznor, and Radiohead. They can do whatever they want and people will buy it — regardless. We all know that. Even though I'm fond of all, none just popped up in the past few years... their work is already regarded, no matter if you like them or not.

For the rest of the world, if we continue to buy into the devaluing our art *unconditionally* — we lose. Our art is worth more than caving into the ideal that because it can be copied, we should just give it away regardless. To me, that is just insulting. It means that we accept that our art as insignificant. To ourselves or to others. That is primary. And frankly, I'm concerned that too many people don't see that. It's not that I don't understand the benefits of giving away music — I do — and I do give it away — but it should be my choice. Your choice, or our choice. It shouldn't be encouraged to be expected. Especially among the artistic community we all try to cultivate. People will always make copies. They always have.

Yes, we need to continually push to be revolutionary, and seek ways to entice audiences/the consumer. And to be in the forefront we cannot survive if we don't. It gives us even more reason to push. But I do not feel any of our brothers and sisters in this industry should never try to convince us to devalue our creations. The world needs to be reminded of the value of art and entertainment. Life sucks ass without it, and we all know it.

Give me your painting. Give me your sculpture... give me your feature film...

No? Oh, wait... Gee... why not?!

**MARTIN ATKINS:** I would say “yes” to all of that, Jon. I'll give you my China album, a free lecture, a free book, a free download of a book when you get a free shirt, a free consult, a free drum track, a sound library, or a free shirt. I'm a sexually transmitted disease — the only barrier to my spreading is *exposure*. The more you do this on the front end, the sooner you get to that exponential point. You are not devaluing your art by giving it away; you are acknowledging the gift that the person is giving back to you is spending their time listening to it. That's your chance to infect them, right? As I say a lot —

### IT'S NOT A GIFT REALLY. IT'S AN EXPLODING GUILT BOMB.

Unless you are crap, the true value of your creation comes in that moment when you perform and 100 people know the songs — that's it right? Momentum is key. Everything else is worthless.

**JON ALLEGRETTO:** I agree with what you're saying... and do my best to go about what I have in the same way, as you have taught me. I feel like creators in general are starting to get the short end of the stick the more I see people discuss this “free” thing though. Which is where I kind of went off there. I feel like it's becoming too accepted, and there comes a point where somewhere it needs to be resisted. I don't think giving it away devalues it — I think there is a lot of value in that and a lot of good that comes out all around. But I think that when society starts to demand or expect that you give it away, it does.

I also think I need to spend more time working my way around that.

I'm not in music to make money [clearly ;)]. It's not about that to me and never has been. And I'm going to print out what you said and put it on my wall and maintain that perspective and focus on that (not being a smartass here). I think I really needed that. Thank you.

**JAGOFF PUBLISHING:** Should have prefaced this post with "to each his own", but yeah Martin pretty much hit the nail on the head with this one. The STD reference was most on point.

And Jon, most definitely the giving away free aspect does not come without cost (time, gear, producing, mastering, graphics, CD/vinyl) and there is no guarantee that anything will even come of it. However, the reward can be far greater in terms of the public involvement, if you are able to strike the right chord.

The easiest bar to entry is to invite the public to add their voice into the mix. We do this by simply offering instrumentals and acapellas for remixing. Our last free offering through BitTorrent amassed over 8.5 million track downloads. Certainly having to pay for such a massive reach like this is far beyond our means and is central to getting word out there, especially when we know that traditional media outlets will never touch us (or any independents for that matter). We came to that conclusion long ago, but we work many channels, some traditional and others we pull directly out of our ass. Some work incredibly and other fall flat on their face, but we learned to be prepared to fail gloriously and are not afraid to do so (which is very freeing).

This sheer amount of tentacles out there brings back unexpected results and takes on things that we had never even considered. Therein lays the magic. The power of crowd sourcing creative communication should never be underestimated.

Add to this tools that are currently available to license your music and monetize loyalty (schwag, shows, donations, artwork, actions) or as Martin so eloquently put it "guilt bomb" and you can uncover incredibly powerful gaps/opportunities in the market that are not being served by the mainstream channels and jump on them.

The bottom line is:

## THERE IS NO ONE ANSWER AND ONE-SIZE DOES NOT FIT ALL

...which makes these times incredibly exciting as the rules are being made up as we all go along. Dive in.

The only one rule that remains constant is to be authentic.

**MARTIN ATKINS:** I'd also say, if everyone is giving their albums away for free, then you *always* need to do something different. I'd offer to do peoples' laundry if they'd listen to your album (that's a fair trade right? An hour for an hour?). If you gave people three great songs, and asked them to fill out a questionnaire or something, then they'd be happier to give you a chance while you babysat, did the lawn, shoveled snow. You'd get some good publicity and people *would* listen. That's the only hurdle really. Once you have infected them then the tables turn and you can sell them an old candle that you used to write the lyrics for the first song on the next album or vinyl and cassettes and 8 track cartridges and a cruise where you all get together and talk about whatever and 20 years from now have a reunion. If you do the math, it makes total sense to do *anything* (but something SPECTACULAR) on the front end to get the ball rolling. Plus, you might get shagged too.



Nobody likes a whiner. If you are complaining about how everyone likes some other band(s) because they give free stuff away, well, maybe you should give free stuff away. If, after that, nobody likes you yet.....well, chances are you just aren't that good.

- Tom Whittaker

We discovered we could build an audience by giving away stuff that costs nothing to produce and distribute.

- Roger McNamee *Moonalice & Elevation*

What you do today (to get paid) is remove the protective cup from your pants, remove your hands from your crotch, give the other person a hammer — not a namby pamby tiny nerf hammer, a fucking<sup>3</sup> huge sledge hammer — then you stretch out your arms and paint a glow in the dark target on your exposed nuts. The bigger and better you do this, the less likely you are to get ripped off. (Of course, everyone rips you off.) That's how they get to hear your music, and as long as it is more inspired than the caterwauling “right to be paid” or the other “would your plumber work for free” uninspired non risky lame ass shit - then, they'll love you and support you forever...

It's an electric, solar-powered, hybrid car kind of world. It's time to leave the horse and cart behind.

GIVE. GIVE. GIVE. GET. BARTER. MAKE.

<sup>3</sup>This fuck brought to you by Lee Dempsey.

# PAY WHAT YOU WANT

## JOSH HOGAN

With only a few weeks to go until the official release show of our new album 'Voices: The Tales of Broken Men' our band, Orchid's Curse was left with a difficult decision... How to sell CDs at a CD Release show?

Most CD release shows I've done with other bands I manage or work with on my Label (Diminished Fifth Records) end up selling less than 25 CDs at their show (and usually more t-shirts than CDs, haha).

I said to my band mates, we need to move 50+ CDs and the only way we are going to do that is to let our fans pay whatever amount they want. Instantly I was confronted with these scenarios (to which I replied):

**Q.** What if we just say minimum donation \$5?

**A.** Sorry boys the only way this will work is if it truly is 'what they want' not what we want...

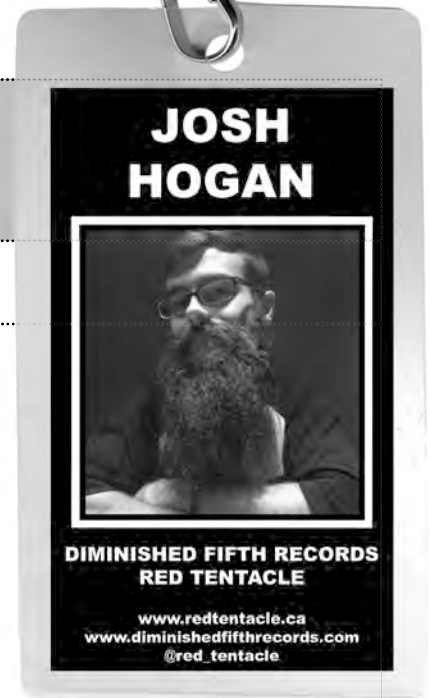
**Q.** What if they only give us \$1-2?

**A.** Fuck em', take their money and move on with your life.

My reasoning was simple.

1. CDs only cost about \$1.20 - \$1.50/unit to manufacture (As long as we average above that we aren't technically losing money)
2. We only make about \$5.00 or less from our distributor sales anyways
3. We still have 300 copies left from our first album and I'll be damned if I want 300 copies left of this new disc 4 years down the road.
4. People are naturally compelled to spend more voluntary than when told.
5. Our 2 new T-Shirt designs are \$15/each (non-negotiable) and we will more than compensate for the difference
6. Even if someone buys the CD for \$2.00 with change in their pocket at the end of the night they'd be more likely to become a fan of the band and attend future shows.

After much debate and some hard pushing, I convinced the band to try it out... so how'd it fair you ask? Well first off our release show was a huge success overall with just over 140 paid (\$8/cover) with close to 200 people in total (including supporting bands and a guest lists) in a 250 capacity venue. Our pay what you want ended up with us going through about 60/CDs with the average donation per unit being about \$7.00. Not to mention we sold about 35 shirts too! Now we are too small scale to do this for the entire release (like Radiohead or NIN have done) but for our hometown CD release show this was nothing but a huge success. Maybe now the band will trust me to take some more marketing risks!



Think about this when creating a democracy in your band — you won't always get what you want.



**SoloBassSteve:** The only album of mine that has a min. price on bandcamp has sold the least, by some margin. Coincidence?

## A QUESTION FROM RUMPUS

**Rumpus:** Is that one of the ways you see musicians being able to capitalize on the fact the audience holds all the power?

**Atkins:** If you've got an amazing album, and you give it to somebody, you're not losing ten dollars. Anytime of the day or night, when the person you gave that album to is in the bathtub, in the shower, while he or she is shagging somebody or just sitting around the house, that album is an exploding, never ending guilt-bomb. When you give everything away, when you give away all of the power, if your music is good, then people will want to come and watch you stand on stage singing those songs that have meant so much to them. It's this paradoxical thing. The more you give up, the more you stand to make back; the more you hold on, the less you stand to gain.





# 26 BUSINESS MODELS & REVENUE

## PHYSICAL

### THE DIFFERENCE

The difference is a strategy that provides a method for organic growth of the band, the music, and your fan base. It is a way for you to learn the craft of all of the 50 things that are involved in moving forward incrementally.

We are going to look at two scenarios for a band with \$1500 to invest in themselves.

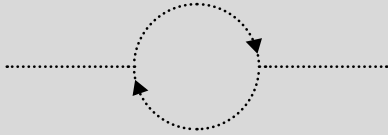
You might ask yourself, “In these times of TuneCore, iTunes, CD Baby, DiscRevolt, etc, why are we even manufacturing CDs or DVDs anymore?”

What you know is what you save and what you save is what you make.

– Chuck D

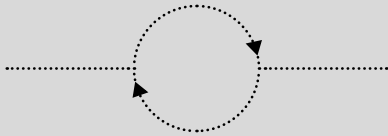


## DIGITAL ACTIVITIES INFORM PHYSICAL STRATEGIES



## CONTENT FROM PHYSICAL FUELS DIGITAL

## SELL 50 SHIRTS



## USE INFORMATION TO MAKE BETTER SIZE CHOICES ON NEXT ORDER

According to Spotify, 4 million songs on their platform have never been played.

Well, it is the physical manifestation of your vibe — in the form of a cd, a t-shirt, vinyl, cassette, or 8 track cartridge, that creates a solid foundation on which to grow. It's the smoke sealed in the jar. It increases its shelf life and helps you get to that tipping point with fans. You need the physical object to memorialize your transient temporary presence.

**SCENARIO #1:** The band takes the traditional approach, records their album, then manufactures 1000 copies and 100 t-shirts.

They have a cool cd release party, get some attention on the local radio station and blogs. Then head out and do a few shows. When they come back, they still have 900 cds left and they've sold 20 t-shirts, leaving 80.

That is the old old school — throw in a little bit of digital in the form of "HOORAY — we are now available on iTunes (or Spotify! Ha!)" as if that's going to make any difference. (Remember the string has to be pulled not pushed).

**SCENARIO #2:** Now let's look at another idea: **The Difference™**

## TAKE CONTROL OF THE MEANS OF MANUFACTURE

The band manufactures 150 copies of their newest album by screen printing home-made designs. As we might have discussed in Packaging — the last thing we need at this point is a mass produced, sterile package, shrink-wrapped, upc-coded and never touched by human hands. This is art — not surgery!

We don't need more than 150 (yet), and badly made art is cooler than a slick mass produced version.

A different approach with t-shirts, too — the band buys 100 blank shirts and comes up with two different designs. Twice the chance of selling more and some room for flexibility (sorry, that should be Flexibili-T™) applied to future printing. You don't have to print all 100 shirts at the same time, you could print 10 of each before committing any more of the blank shirts.

## JUST MAKE ENOUGH FOR ONE SHOW.

*(As mentioned in Merchandise...)* If you have made too few shirts of one particular design, then you can put up a sign that says "Sorry — SOLD OUT!" A great couple of words to put up anywhere in connection with your band. Create demand!

## FLEXIBILI-T™: A VERY IMPORTANT INGREDIENT IN ANY ENTREPRENEURIAL ACTIVITY

**Now**, record and release a live album from the first series of shows you've done. There could be a video on there (learn to use iMovie) You are starting to create collateral.

**Do not worry** about the quality of the live recordings. People aren't buying them to judge you — they're just buying it to support you! But — be honest — if it sounds like shit, then put a sticker on it that says that. They'll laugh, then buy it. (see "Feels like Heaven Sounds Like Shit" — Pigface! — and now theres ANOTHER shirt!)

Just make 100 copies of this live album. You can also make 50 copies of some remixes or demos. Now, the second time you play your home-town, you have more stuff to sell.

RETAIN THIS COPY FOR YOUR RECORDS.

03/12

**Remember – we are not trying to create the biggest selling live album of all time. We are simply fuelling relationships, giving people reasons to support us and memorializing the vibe in a tangible form.**

Make some work shirts — in the sizes that you *now know* your fans are. If all of your fans are parents, make baby onesies. If all of your fans are 80+, make adult diapers and steal their medication.

Now we are selling a *range* of items. Take control of the means of manufacture and energize your own unique creative process. Stop being afraid! Work, grow, communicate, learn! **Fail faster!** When you master screenprinting, it is very easy to create a wider range. We are just putting different items under the screen printing press. Different colored shirts — different styles.

## TAKE CONTROL OF THE MEANS OF MANUFACTURE!

We still haven't spent as much money as band #1. Now what are we going to do — YES! Another live album!

If you can sustain, keep your head above water as you absorb the lessons clanging down around you, then you can succeed. Your album — if we still want to think in those terms — will slowly improve because you are not committing to one version of an album, but rather a more fluid collection of songs that will grow and change as you do. You'll broaden your range of merchandise based not on hypothesis and endless band discussions — on a case by case basis (that's a joke about bands drinking a lot of beer!) but from real feedback from real fans.

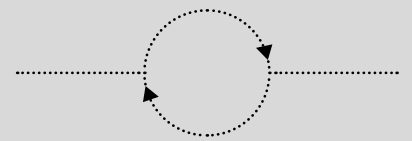
Now we're going to do something insane— we're going to make 50 copies of a fake German tour CD! It's show business – there's no such thing as a lie! If you don't know the names of any cities in Germany — just throw an old typewriter down the stairs — by the time it gets to the bottom — there's your tour!! Have a going away party and then hide in your mother's basement for a week before triumphantly re-appearing covered in hickeys and smelling of sausages.

As crazy as you might think this is, The Locust booked a fake tour of mental health facilities!

Now it's time to buy some more blank shirts — let's do some new designs — numbers 3 and 4, and let's do some of those baby shirts, too!

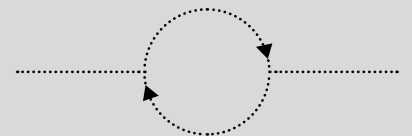
How many shirt designs should we make? Well, how many rolls of the dice do you want at the roulette table? Other than the fact that you don't roll dice at the roulette table, this is a perfect metaphor — or how many lottery tickets do you want? One or twenty?

**GIVE AWAY 3 SONGS.  
WHICH SONGS GET MORE  
TRACTION?**



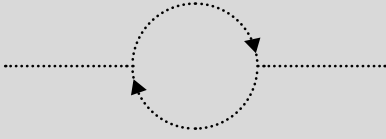
**USE INFO TO CREATE MORE  
SONGS THAT YOUR FANS  
WANT**

**PERFORM IN 5 CITIES.  
WHICH CITIES/DAYS/VENUES  
ARE BEST?**



**USE INFO TO PLAN  
BETTER SHOWS**

## GIVE AWAY FREE SONGS ONLINE



USE INFO TO DECIDE WHERE TO PERFORM NEXT

More possibilities = more opportunity, more information about what your fans like and what size they are, more experience about what works and, just as importantly, what doesn't.

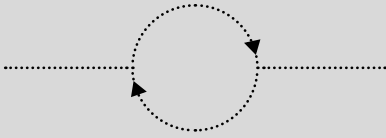
Now that you have a range of merchandise, you will sell more items because you are offering more choices, maybe some lunatic will LOVE YOU and buy everything? You always sell more when you give people a choice (and are credit card enabled!).

When you sell all of the items you have created — the gross is \$7500!

Even when you are giving stuff away — it's better to have a choice — you stand more of a chance of giving people something that they might actually want and then having them buy something else.

**IT'S NOT ABOUT THE MONEY — NONE OF MY SHIT IS REALLY ABOUT THE MONEY AND NEITHER IS THIS.**

AUTOMATE TWITTER FOLLOWER THANK YOU, "THX FOR THE FOLLOW! DOWNLOAD OUR SONG HERE"



PLUG NEW ZIP CODE INFORMATION INTO YOUR TOURING STRATEGY

SUSTAINABILITY = SUCCESS

This is a scenario that can work — that can sustain and if you can sustain you can succeed. You can make mistakes without those mistakes totally derailing you financially or creatively.

You can design crappy shirt prints and then stop selling them.

When it gets to the point that you need 500 cds, you switch to the traditional model — you have had time and feedback to tweak the content of your album before committing to it.

**THIS SCENARIO DOESN'T START WITH THE ALBUM — IT ENDS WITH IT.**

Now, make your own movie with a \$200 camera and iMovie. Put stuff up on YouTube Add a DVD to your list of items for sale.

I just read through a book that anyone struggling will probably buy... I had a quick skim through — nothing really ground breaking at all in actually getting anywhere — but the same old stuff on contracts (because that takes up a LOT of room) and publishing (ditto) and revenue streams....I saw a few I hadn't seen before:

- Musical Door Chimes
- Musical Candles
- Musical Flowers
- Musical Toothbrushes...

Phew! There it was all along, staring us all in the fucking face. I'm going to get my AC/DC musical candle — get it really going — then burn the shit out of this useless fucking book. I'm not saying it isn't full of information — it fucking<sup>is</sup> is — I'm just questioning the value

<sup>is</sup>*This fuck brought to you by The Exponential.*



of any of it really and also a little pissed off at the title. It's like me calling this book, "Get Signed You Genius You!" You're way too smart for that stroke, aren't you?

## HOW ABOUT THIS — PLAY MORE SHOWS!

The difference between a band doing 10 shows and a band doing 100 in one year (just in their tip jar) is \$1350, but then you have to get in to the whole:

- how to get more shows
- how to make your shows events AND
- how to be better at those shows
- how to build community

That's way too fucking complicated and perhaps the main reason they didn't write about it is that they couldn't chat with each other about it when they were tooling around in their luxury helicopter.

## SAFETY NETS

The music business (or any cultural/entrepreneurial activity) not only rewards risk, it requires it. I've always found that the existence of a safety net (and a second for when the first one is mysteriously eaten by safety net eating ants and a third for when the second mysteriously bursts into flames), enables me to risk more. So, paradoxically, for me, the existence of a safety net enables more risk. Let's examine a few easy to understand examples:

All of this stuff and much more is common sense (and you should already have them). The safety nets I'm talking about are more abstract, but in an abstract business, nonetheless real.

- A live recording of a show is a safety net – not an immediate one, but the knowledge of its existence can get you through a tour. Knowing that at some point down the line you can release the live album or a collage of best moments from 10 live recordings, or 10 live recordings individually targeted to people from Cleveland or Santa Fe who will want to hear if that was actually them screaming in between songs three and four is the safety net you might need.
- Relationships with other bands, other people, and other businesses are all safety nets.
- Two extra songs recorded in the studio.
- Video footage.
- The ability to perform an acoustic set.
- DJ at an after party
- A larger vehicle

**It's not one big thing  
— it's 25 small ones.**

## NETWORKING GRADUALLY WEAVES TOGETHER A SAFETY NET.

And, it's more and more the case that these additional services are necessary just to make a tour work. The Saturday afternoon live acoustic in-store appearance is becoming much more common place as an additional promotional device.

**There is a preponderance of hysterical protectionism from artists seeking to protect their "Dark Side of The Moon." Stop waiting. Stop perfecting. Make it available. Correct and fine tune as you go. If your plan involves reliance on ONE thing – song, book, movie – you're FUCKED<sup>®</sup> anyway.**

# REVENUE SOURCES

## FROM RECORDINGS

Downloads  
 Special Edition CDs  
 Vinyl  
 traditional CDs / DVDs  
 Foreign Licensing  
 Mix Tapes  
 Music Based Video Games  
 Sheet Music (Printed and signed)  
 Sync / Placement  
 Royalties - Film

## LIVE

Live Show Ticket Sales  
 Merchandise - T-Shirts  
 Merchandise - Other  
 Tour Sponsorship  
 DJ Gigs  
 Pre/Post Show Gigs  
 Celebrity Appearances  
 Live CDs - Physical and Download  
 Donations  
 Website Subscriptions

## NOTORIETY

Producing  
 Modelling  
 Acting  
 Endorsements  
 Workshops / Music Conventions  
 Clothing or Perfume Line  
 Celebrity Appearances

## PREVIOUS BANDS

All of the Above

## AND

Full Time Day Job  
 Part Time Day Job

## PUBLISHING - BOOKS

Lyrics Printed in Book  
 Books - Biographies, Memoirs, How To  
 Ghostwriting for Other Artists  
 Greeting Cards

## MUSICAL SKILLS

Private Lessons / Teaching  
 Endorsements  
 Workshops / Music Conventions  
 Recording Sessions with other Bands / Producers

## GRAPHICS / ART

Collaborate with other artists!  
 Numbered and Signed Art  
 Gallery Shows  
 Screenprint / Other

## STUDIO SKILLS

Remix of Songs  
 Recording Other Bands  
 Producing / Arranging  
 Collaborating with other Artists for Recordings

## FANCLUB / WEBSITE

Subscription Fees  
 Events Around Shows  
 V.I.P. Tickets  
 Merchandise Sales

## OTHER

eBay  
 Memorabilia, Vintage Clothing and Posters from Past  
 Concerts (Wolfgang's Vault)  
 Business Ventures  
 Writing / Reviewing / Blogging  
 Speaking

Bandhappy.com is a great way for musicians to schedule lessons while they are on the road.

Sometimes, making your show better, quicker to set up, or easier can create a revenue stream, too — like buying some monitors instead of complaining.

- Better gig
- Revenue stream to rent out when you are not busy
- Possible edge over the competition “let's hire the band with the monitor rig”
- Better sound when the PA is shit

# IN DEFENSE OF 1000 TRUE FANS: AN INTERVIEW WITH MATTHEW EBEL

I was lucky enough to get to chat with Matthew Ebel in March 2015 just as Amanda Palmer announced her commitment to Patreon. Ariel Hyatt had sent me an interview she did with him in about trying to make a living by just having 1000 true fans. Much of that interview still resonates today – some bullet points from that:

1. **Trying to sell cds at an open mic is like trying to sell timeshare condos at a telemarketing convention**
2. **Shove yourself into a niche**
3. **Get personal**
4. **Don't suck**
5. **Experiment in public**

## INSPIRED BY ARIEL'S INTERVIEW:

In 2008, Matthew was the poster boy for artistic entrepreneurial innovation when he targeted 1000 true fans to help support himself. He started to experiment with a subscription platform he created with WordPress and a couple of apps. He felt he had to try and do something — touring on its own was tough.

As the years progressed, he realized he was having trouble with growth. “The subscription model doesn't create growth,” he said. It cements an existing fan base. One year after 1000 true fans, he found his fan base stagnating a little. He had no time to book and execute tours.

He committed to two new songs and a live track each month to deliver to subscribers who jump in for anything from \$5 to \$350 a year. What most people go for is the \$13/mo. \$130/yr. model. With an idea from [Predictably Irrational](#) by Dan Ariely fuelling the premise that if you give people three choices, most will opt for the middle one.

The #1 trap of the subscription model he feels is overcommitting — way way way over committing (those are his extra ways, not mine). Over commitment is the express route to artist burnout and that being the one-way ticket to unsubscribers. His base was small, about 100 very patient fans.

It's also a question of people power — if you are only one person, it is a lot of work.

“Live recordings are the staple,” he said. “I record all of my shows with an interface and a laptop. It's the bedrock of my subscription model; two new songs plus a live track a month...” (Perhaps exaggerating Matt goes on to say) “...It almost killed me and became a burden.”

He predicts an avalanche of problems for artists inspired by Amanda Palmer to join Patreon without the depth of catalog, content or support to pull it off and admits to a slight twinge of jealousy after working hard in this field for a decade.

If artists are looking to create a subscriber base (either on their own through Patreon or Bandcamp), do it for at least 6 months to a year as a free trial for people to see if you are able to handle the commitment.



There simply is **no one way** to 'monetize' making music. There are a million different ways. Find ten ways that suit you. Then add ten more!

— *Martin Atkins*

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True Fans will buy whatever you put out, and they are willing to pay to get it. This is where you release really special, super limited-edition merch, such as box sets or lifetime passes to shows, signed by members of the band.

— *Jed Carlson*

It's important to have a look at all of the potential ways you could be making money. Not because it is going to mean a ton of money ('cause it probably isn't), but so you can make sure that you're firing on all cylinders, not just from a revenue standpoint, but from marketing and a cross pollination point of view. There might be some ideas listed here that are mind-blowingly obvious and some others that you've overlooked. If you are doing well in one area, it is a good reason to look at the other areas and wonder why you're not. Have a look at more about revenue streams later on in the book and think about them when choosing band members.



# 27 CROWDFUNDING

There are so many sites; you probably know Kickstarter, the ubiquitous “brand” of the discipline. There’s Indiegogo (IGG), Patreon, Fundable, Go Fund Me, Teespring, Causes, Crowdrise, Rockethub, Kiva, and many many more. Some are aimed at funding medical emergencies. Some are aimed at more artistic challenges. One, Rockethub, is an ingenious front end for the discovery channel. Although Pledge Music is included in this chapter, I don’t think it belongs in amongst the herd of crowdfunding platforms. It is more of a service (almost a new label model) that includes help to keep you on track. Benji Rodgers, the CEO, has a piece at the end.

A few things I have learned about the main outlets, Indiegogo and Kickstarter:

Kickstarter is “all or nothing” — if you don’t make your goal, then you don’t get anything.

Indiegogo allows you to keep any money that you raise (which initially might make it seem like the friendly version), but this option costs more and opens you up to some problems. For example, if you have a level for a 7" single and *one* person pledges at that level, then you are liable to create that 7" to honor that pledge level. You might need to make 200 7" singles to




actually break even, so you can see that it isn't always helpful to be given whatever you raise. But, more importantly for me, these platforms are all about the drama and, without the "all or nothing" cliffhanger of Kickstarter, there is no drama.

Bite the bullet — choose drama!

There is an "all or nothing" button you can choose on Indiegogo, but the brand feels associated with giving you whatever money you make, so many will not realize the difference.

From Kickstarters' own site:



Over 50% of campaigns fail.  
12% never receive a single donation.

This doesn't have to be you.

If you are serious about doing this, have a look at Amanda Palmer's history on Kickstarter. She didn't just explode onto the platform and raise a million — her most successful campaign was her fourth. She carefully studied the platform over 14 months and three projects before jumping in to the millionaires club.

## TIME

Kickstarter and others allow you to choose the length of your campaign: 30–120 days. More time doesn't always equal more money. Indiegogo recommends 70 days, but honestly, if you prepare well in advance (something that everyone agrees you should do), 30 days should be long enough. Frankly, I was exhausted after 30.

If you don't like your fans (or people in general), this might not be for you. Any kind of crowdfunding campaign exposes sides of you that you might not be comfortable sharing. I happen to think you need to be all about your fans, but if you don't, then you might want to rethink all of this. The band KORN had a spectacularly bad campaign run by what seemed like their management company, but there are other reasons to be careful, too. I've seen a difference in the response of some of my fans after running my campaign for this very book. I happen to like it. I can sense if someone in the audience is a contributor — it changes things. Instead of someone just laughing because "Martin said something funny," sometimes the response can feel like "we made a wise investment — our guy is funny."

This is small (perhaps subtle, but real), but part of a new situation that you can choose to create. If you don't like this new relationship, then don't crowdfund.

The other part of this is more serious. For two reasons: one slightly funny, the other not.

**1. WATCH OUT FOR THE ALLIGATORS!** One of my pledge levels is for me to play drums on an album (easy enough and fun). LizzRDSnake asked me to play along with her, her analog synths, and one or two of her pet alligators.

**2. UNPREDICTIBLE DELAYS.** After successful completion of the crowdfunding for this book and 6 months into creation, one of the main members of the team, my layout guy, Eric McNary was diagnosed with bile duct cancer. He didn't make it past that Christmas. What would normally have been just very sad — and something between myself and his family — now involved 452 other people. Everyone was terrifically understanding. The communications were difficult to conjure as I fluctuated between sadness, impatience and stress.

In the end, this book was delivered two full years past the anticipated delivery date. That's something else you'll have to deal with.

One thing is for sure, the more things change, the more they stay the same. If you are an artist and are looking for an alternative to all of the work of creating your business, proving concept, proving sales and slowly, incrementally building your fan base/customer base/cubase (musicians joke)/freebase(drug joke)/whatever — well, here's the harsh reality — there isn't an alternative to that work. Well, there is but it's just another different kind of really hard work in a different kind of sweaty kitchen. It's scary and 24/7, too. Pant-shitting, nail-biting, hair-twirling. **It's real as fuck.** You just get to choose your kitchen.

**IF YOU ONLY HAVE ONE ALBUM — YOU ARE FUCKED.<sup>11</sup>**

**IF YOU ONLY HAVE ONE SHIRT — YOU ARE FUCKED.<sup>12</sup>**

**IF YOU DON'T HAVE AN EXISTING FAN BASE — YOU ARE FUCKED!<sup>13</sup>**



Pick your favorite offensive shirt!

*This* is your base. There is no magic to this — although one or two people might decide to contribute because they saw your project and liked it or you, most of your support will come from friends, family, and followers.

**PREPARE!** Estimate how much you can raise.

How many people are on your direct mailing list?

How many people do you have access to via:

- |             |              |
|-------------|--------------|
| 1. Facebook | 5. Instagram |
| 2. Twitter  | 6. Other 1   |
| 3. LinkedIn | 7. Other 2   |
| 4. Tumblr   |              |

You need 20 strategies to succeed.

If you don't have enough friends and followers in 1, 2, 3, and 4, then begin this Kickstarter project by going out and doing whatever you can to gain more of each... rinse, repeat, rinse, repeat.

I would suggest  $1+2+3+4+5+6+7+8 = \underline{\hspace{2cm}}$  x 15% (because as much as you might hope — not ALL of your friends and contacts will contribute) x \$20 (that's the most popular contribution level) and might be a good place to start. Of course, this can be adjusted. If you have a small base, they might be much more loyal than a larger, less intimate one.

<sup>11</sup>*This fuck brought to you by Herbivore Productions.*

<sup>12</sup>*This fuck brought to you by Amy Abramite.*

<sup>13</sup>*This fuck brought to you by Paul Sowadski.*

**Lastly**, say a personalized *thank you* to everyone. I did it with a video, with e-mails only accessible to backers, and with a personalized note in with each pledge. *If* this is the new model, *your* new model, then you are going to want to do this again.

It doesn't have to be *all* about your band. In fact, it'll be pretty one dimensional if it is. Use the opportunity to educate your friends and fans about you as a person and your band as interesting people.

The thing that I wasn't prepared for was the immense gratitude I felt for anyone pledging ANYTHING. And, my need to thank each one individually. I spent an equal amount of time thanking people who pledged a dollar as those that pledged \$100. I was surprised and humbled by all of this.

You need to stay fluid, too. The things we thought would be grabbed up (2 CDs for \$15 with a poster) weren't, so we shrank them down. The Chinese red vinyl went immediately. I thought the \$1 fucks would go crazy — but, with the shennaningans you need to go through to donate a dollar through Amazon — I guess people thought they might as well spring for the \$5 clusterfuck, we added a 72 pt font FUCK at the suggestion of a student and, then, quite naturally, in partnership with Bleeding Heart Bakery, decided to create a chocolate covered fuck cluster — bringing the abstract into the digestive tract.

Overall with Kickstarter, it would be easy to call this a roller coaster ride. More accurate perhaps to call it a Kickstarter Krack pipe. If you don't have the help/machinery/wherewithal to make something like this happen, then you are dancing with the potential of showing anyone that cares that no one cares.

**IT IS LIKE AN UNEXPECTED GIG AT MADISON SQUARE GARDEN —  
IT'S ONLY TERRIFIC IF YOU ALREADY HAVE THE FANS TO FILL IT  
AND VERY DANGEROUS IF YOU DON'T.**

## **PLEDGE LEVELS**

You need levels of pricing — from free to very expensive, from home-made to very rare.

- The THING you are selling (the book, the album the object).
- The very cheap version - \$1 to \$5 digital no shipping!
- The very cool embroidered and bejeweled special numbered thing.
- The ACCESS thing (on the album, in the show, finger in the pie type stuff).
- The silly thing.
- The thing that reinforces more of who you are (the home made jam, the welding thing, the auto detailing thing, the roof repair, the hand-made coffin, whatever that underlines who *you* are)
- The crazy expensive thing just in case some lunatic really loves you.
- Something that transcends a physical object. (Josh Freeze had a level where you could spend a few days recording with him, take a drum kit and drop acid with him and Danny from Tool while driving up Pacific Coast Highway in a yellow Lamborghini on acid!).
- The shirt.
- The other shirt.
- The V.I.P. thing.
- Two or three things to hold back for “release” halfway though. You don't want to be just e-mailing “please contribute” endlessly. You can't change a level once someone has bought it, but you can add new ones.

Watch. REACT! Our cds weren't as popular as we thought, but the vinyl sold out in a day. We shrank the number of cds and added more vinyl! Plus, we were able to do an email saying, "Vinyl sold out — more added!" Someone suggested we add the "eat shit" shirt, so we gave a choice of 3 offensive shirts, enabling a "which offensive shirt would you choose?" push.

One band had some 50 inches of the drummer's body you could have tattooed!

Jenny Owens Young had a level where she would scream your name from a mountain top and send you the video.

## THE VIDEO IS ESSENTIAL!

Now you have all of the pledge levels you can start to think about the video. I made the mistake of doing the video first, then once I worked out all of the crazy levels — re-did it (twice!)

Don't get pulled into some 6-month production schedule HD, I-max video — this should be you and your partners in a garden, toilet, office, on a bus whatever — underlining some aspect of WHO YOU ARE. (our first five albums have been about fishing so here we are on the docks/in a boat/at the aquarium).

**HAND HELD SHAKY BULLSHIT VIDEO BEATS CRISP & CLEAN STAGNANT CONSTIPATED VIDEO EVERY TIME.**



**WATCH A BUNCH OF VIDEOS.** Amanda Palmer's latest video is great — she had cue cards so she didn't have to remember everything or look directly into the lens and ask for money. She was inspired by Bob Dylan's video for *Subterranean Homesick Blues*. Look, absorb, remix.

**ASK FOR HELP AND OPINIONS.** You can show people you invite a preview of your campaign before it goes live — **do this**. They will find a silly mistake that you overlooked.

**ALLOCATE TIME.** I was peeing sitting down for the first three days so I could keep typing on the toilet! Whatever you might think — the format is so compelling that you will be on the Kickstarter crack pipe before you realize it. It is a massive exposure to ask for help publicly — tremendous if you get it — humiliating a little if you don't and fuel for your enemies and the voices inside your head — so, you'll be thanking people and working on it constantly. **Be warned.**

**HELP OTHER PEOPLE.** One thing that really helped me was working to help other people during this — I DJ'd for Arcade Brewery on the first weekend, I spent several days working with Angel On My Shoulder on Mudfest in Eagle River, WI and spent an evening at WORT's radio fund drive, too. This kept me grounded.

**THE DOUBLE DOOR PRESENTS**  
**★MARTIN ATKINS★**  
**★MARTIN ATKINS★**  
**★MARTIN ATKINS★**  
**MONDAY 6/4 AT 7:30PM**  
**A KICKSTARTER PARTY**  
**FOR BAND:SMART**  
**NO COVER**  
**\*ALL DONATIONS WILL GO TO THE KICKSTARTER CAMPAIGN**  
**1572 N. MILWAUKEE AVE., CHICAGO, IL**

MARTIN PRESENTS HIS  
**'WELCOME TO THE MUSIC BUSINESS.....YOU'RE FUCKED!'**  
 LECTURE DIRECT FROM SXSW  
 AUCTION: MEMORABILIA, VINYL, SHIRTS  
 POSTERS, CDS, SCENERY, AND MORE!!  
**MUSIC**  
**CHRIS CONNELLY & MARTIN WILL PERFORM A SHORT**  
**DAMAGE MANUAL ACOUSTIC SET**  
**AND CHOCOLATE COVERED FUCK CLUSTERS**  
**FROM BLEEDING HEART BAKERY**

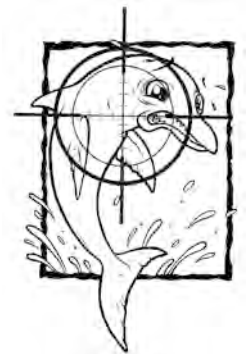
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[HTTP://WWW.DOUBLEDOOR.COM](http://www.doubledoor.com)  
[HTTP://WWW.THEBLEEDINGHEARTBAKERY.COM](http://www.thebleedingheartbakery.com)



**SHOOT THE DOLPHIN.** Work in the physical to fuel the digital and within the digital to create physical opportunities. The event we created at Double Door in Chicago was a great opportunity to thank people in person. Even though it was a small affair, it was broadcasted by Gigity.TV and spread the word in a different way. It's great to change the message and give people a rest!

Just posting a pic of the marquee for the event at Double Door meant I didn't have to post, "Don't forget to donate!"



# MORE ON INDIEGOGO

I attended a terrific lecture from Indiegogo's Chicago rep, Kate Drane. The content of the lecture and the fact that she is here in Chicago ready to help speaks volumes about the company.

Your social capital is on the line – you know, the leverage you try and build up so carefully day by day hour by hour not selling your shit. Be careful. You can blow it in an instant! Indiegogo has a less restrictive application and approval process. They have an algorithm that places the hard working campaigns at the top of their list. I like that idea. Kickstarter has a “staff choice” approach, but this “democratization of access to capital approach” is something I like.

Here are some of my notes and suggestions from Indiegogo:

- You will raise 87% more money if you have more than 2 social media platforms connected
- Campaigns with a team raise 339% more than campaigns that run solo
- Perks – choose levels that are low cost to you/high value to the consumer
- 1. • A higher goal doesn't mean you will make more money
- 2. • 87% of campaigns that hit their goal exceed it by over 30%

## NOTHING EXCEEDS LIKE EXCESS!

### THE PITCH VIDEO

- Answer the who, what, when, where, why, and how
- Keep it under 3 minutes
- Include a strong call to action
- Show off your team

## HONESTY, TRANSPARENCY, AUTHENTICITY... BREVITY!

### 3. PERKS

Campaigns with perks raise 143% more money!

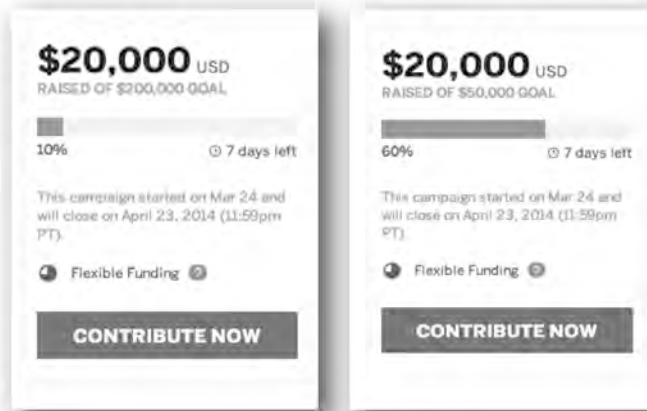
- 70% of successful campaigns offer 5-8 perks
- \$25 is the most popular price!
- Limited quantities create demand
- Perks launched later build excitement

1.

## Goal: Higher Goal Doesn't Mean More Money!

**“Green Bar Effect”**  
 People want to give to **successful projects.**

...*“Who eats in empty restaurants?”*

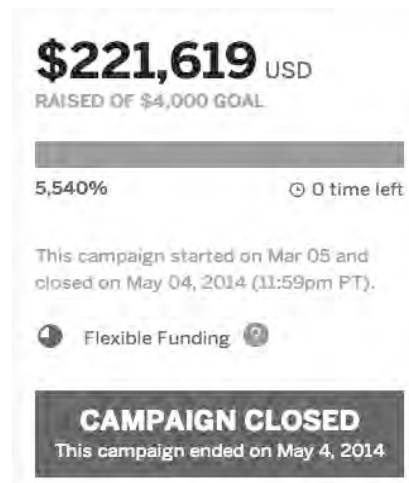


14

2.

## And they keep on giving!

- **87% of campaigns that hit their goal exceed it – by 30%+**



15

3.

### Perk Ideas

- Thank You tweets
- Skype lessons with band
- Digital and vinyl copies of your album
- Free entry to shows for life
- Exclusive merch
- Autographed memorabilia
- Unique experience with band
- Listening party



22



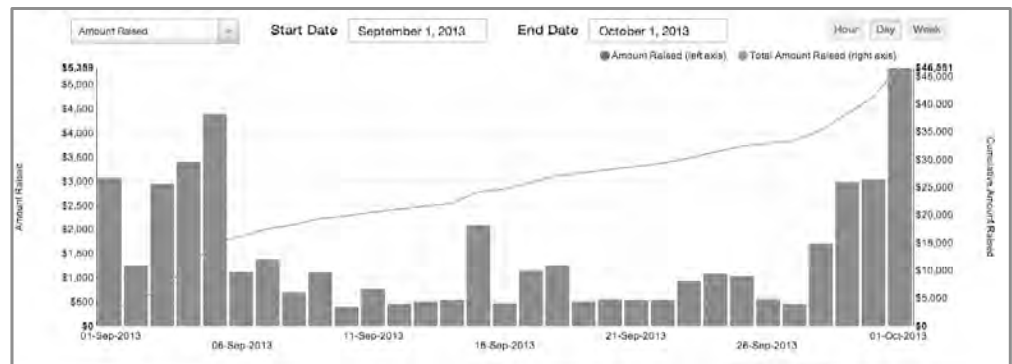
## PROMOTION

Don't leave your campaign to chance!

- You only get one chance at a first impression
- Utilize a soft launch, 30% inner circle
- Build out a team
- Have a schedule; wait on press!
- Run your campaign 21-45 days
- Launch on a Monday or Tuesday
- Email brings 20% more \$\$ than other channel
- Social media accounts for 22% of contributions
- Reach out to press, bloggers and do live events

## THE DUMBBELL EFFECT

Live: Don't Get Discouraged



**Almost always a “dumbbell effect” – contributions weighted heavily at beginning and end of campaign.**

28

Campaigns that send at least 3 updates raise 239% more than those that post fewer But,

**DON'T SPAM YOUR FRIENDS!**

**88% of Pledgers choose to buy a physical product, and oddly (well, at least to me) the compact disc is still alive and well for the superfan, with vinyl coming in a close second.**

*- Benji Rogers*

# ROCKETHUB IS THE WORLD'S CROWDFUNDING MACHINE

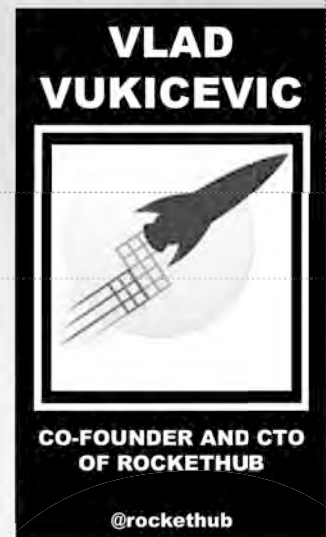
## VLAD VUKICEVIC

### WE DIFFERENTIATE OURSELVES IN THREE KEY WAYS:

**1 EDUCATION:** From the beginning, we've stressed the importance of empowering crowdfunding project leaders with the knowledge to run successful campaigns. Many false myths are still perpetuated - and debunking these myths is an important part of our mission. So a large portion of RocketHub is dedicated to presenting all the knowledge we've gained from first-hand experience and the immense quantity of data we've collected. This is seen in our ever-expanding RocketHub Crowdfunding Success School: <http://www.rockethub.com/education>

**2 DIVERSITY:** RocketHub is proud to be a diverse crowdfunding community. We host projects in four major categories: Art, Business, Science, and Social. This means that we have some of the world's top artists next to incredible scientists next to innovative entrepreneurs next to inspiring philanthropists. We've found that this encourages sharing of ideas and also significantly increases the potential for cross-pollination of funds.

**3 VALUE:** Crowdfunding is more than a set of financial transactions. It is a process that builds stellar content and presents fascinating stories. Because of this, numerous global brands have partnered with RocketHub to help promote and fund RocketHub projects. We work with companies such as A&E to feature and fund RocketHub projects - <http://www.rockethub.com/projectstartup>. In addition, brands such as Conde Nast and Dodge have leveraged RocketHub to build crowdfunding solutions for their own communities. These partnerships provide unparalleled value to the RocketHub community - in the form of external funding, added credibility, and access to millions of additional supporters.



#### Your Project on TV?

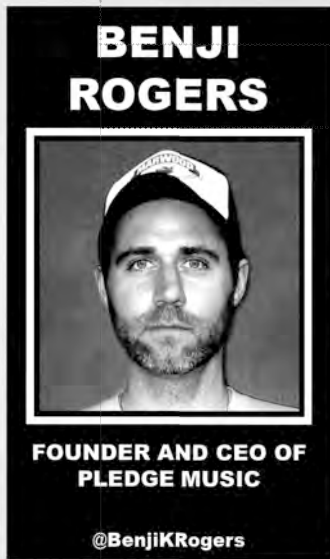
Get funded & get noticed.



Every day, the A&E Project Startup team scours RocketHub looking for entrepreneurial ideas like yours!

# HOW DOES AN ARTIST GET STARTED

## BENJI ROGERS



It's really quite simple, actually. We designed PledgeMusic to be a service – not a platform – which means that we want to make albums work. Making albums is hard enough, and we want to make it easier to get them into production and released. That said, we have a team of people who help walk artists through the process of building, launching and executing campaigns.

Through our site, an artist fills out a signup form, and then someone from our team contacts them within a couple of days. We then work with artists on a personal basis to help set a realistic target goal and timeline for their campaign. Rather than leaving them to guess about the most attainable goal or get stuck doing hours of research, we look objectively at artists' fan bases and web presence. Using data like Facebook fans, Twitter followers and e-mail lists, we use our own algorithm to determine an attainable goal for a project.

We have an 86 percent success rate which we are amazingly proud of. The team we have here are incredible and their job is to leave you with more time to make music. What one of the members of our team has in their head can save an artist weeks of work. So engage with us and we engage back.

### WHAT DO THEY NEED?

Great music, fans and a project. If an artist has a dedicated fan base and new music to release or a project in the works, they may have what it takes to start a PledgeMusic campaign. This really isn't a one-size-fits-all equation, however, and we've found that...

### SUCCESS OFTEN HAS LESS TO DO WITH NUMBER OF FANS AND MORE TO DO WITH AN ARTIST'S ABILITY TO ENGAGE AND INTERACT WITH THEIR FAN BASE.

This model is built to bridge the gap between artists and fans, and if an artist makes an good effort to build a journey for fans to enjoy, it works beautifully.

### HOW LONG DOES IT TAKE?

While every campaign is different, PledgeMusic differs from other fan-funding type sites in that we generally have longer time frames for campaigns. Some projects need a little more time to simmer, time to let fans in on what's happening and get them excited and involved in the project. To make sure artists are poised to be as successful as possible, we often encourage them to set smaller campaign goals and then surpass them. We've seen campaigns hit 600, 700, 800 percent of their initial goal, and that's great!

## WHAT MAKES PLEDGE MUSIC DIFFERENT THAN OTHER CROWDFUNDING PLATFORMS?

I say this often, but what really sets us apart is that our main focus isn't on funding albums. Yes, we are all about getting new music out to fans and making the funding and release process easier on artists, but the true concept of PledgeMusic is attaching a journey to that release and then inviting fans along for the ride.

PledgeMusic lets fans move from the position of consumer to the position of co-creator, producer and well, Fan! Rather than waiting on the release of a new album and listening to it alone, fans can now hear directly from the artist about the making of that album, the process of narrowing down the track list, the demo of the song that didn't quite make the cut, all while gaining access to exclusive in-studio photos and videos.

Fans get to step into the artist's world and truly understand the music and the emotions and motives behind the music in a way that hasn't really been possible before, and that's what gets us excited. In a quickly changing industry, it is important to have a platform through which indie artists can get their music to fans, but it's even more vital in our opinion to let those fans share experiences with their favorite artists - and vice versa.

## WHAT HAVE YOU SEEN WORK WELL?

In a word, it's engagement. Artists who invite their fans into a journey and then keep them informed with timely exclusive updates like photos, videos and blogs do brilliantly in this type of model.

One practical bit of advice I give artists is this: At every show you play, tell your fans to sign your e-mail list, and then send them a track in exchange for that. Get your fans involved right then while they're excited about you and excited about your music.

We saw Ben Folds do this at shows, and it worked amazingly well. While he was on stage, he told fans to get their phones out and send an e-mail to an address he gave them on the spot. By sending the e-mail, fans instantly received a free download and a link to Pledge on his new album, and Folds received thousands of new additions to his e-mail list.

## WHAT HAVE YOU SEEN THAT ARTISTS SHOULD AVOID?

When artists launch PledgeMusic campaigns and then leave them alone, expecting them to take off on their own, campaigns generally struggle. **Participation is key to this model**, and artists have to create something for fans to interact with rather than building a campaign and hoping it attracts attention without taking the time to keep fans updated.



# PATREON DO'S AND DON'TS

## MATTHEW EBEL

So you're thinking of jumping on Patreon or Bandcamp or some other straight-to-fans subscription system? Righteous. It's exciting and fulfilling, but could also kill your career entirely. (Paying attention now? Good.) You probably don't know who the fuck I am, but that's okay... In the Big Music Business World™ I'm nobody, but I'm still paying my bills the same way I have been since 2008: a straight-to-fan subscription system. Yeah, five years before Patreon was even a thing. If you want to keep your fans happy without burning yourself out or pissing people off, I've got ten tips to consider before you start taking people's money.

**1 DON'T BE A SUPERHERO.** When I started MatthewEbel.net back in '08, I thought I could write, produce, and release two new songs and a live concert recording every month until the end of time. With that kind of release cycle, how the hell was I supposed to book shows, do road trips, promote my act, sleep, have a social life, and create *even more* content for my non-subscribing fans? What happens when I get the flu? Nobody has that kind of time or energy unless they're Prince. The resulting burnout nearly ruined my interest in music entirely. So...

**2 DO MAKE UP A MENU.** Obviously your number one asset's going to be new original singles, but what else can you offer the kind of superhuman fans who'd sign up for monthly payments? Live recordings? Private webcasts? Postcards? An annual members-only bacchanal in your backyard? Write down anything you can think of. Now write down how frequently you think you can deliver each of those goods. Which leads me to...

**3 DO TEST THIS SHIT OUT PRIVATELY.** Seriously, you need to practice the routine of delivering goods that other people would actually pay for on a monthly basis. Do it for six months to a year at least, see what kind of output you're capable of before you embarrass yourself (listen to the voice of experience here). Here's an idea: Plan an album release for sometime next year, then spend the next 12 months writing and recording a new song every month with whatever other cool goodies you've got on your menu. See what you can actually keep up with, then use all those goods as perks for your album pre-order packages next year.

**4 DON'T OVERESTIMATE YOUR FANS.** The sales geeks know that 1% is considered a good conversion rate for an email list (meaning if you've got 1,000 people on your list, 10 fans are actually going to buy the new album). For something that's not just a sale but a commitment, don't be surprised if it's more like .1% of your fans that actually get on board. It's okay, the rest of 'em still love you, but come on... we're all afraid of commitment. Set your expectations so you're pleasantly surprised, not rudely disillusioned.

**5 DON'T UNDERESTIMATE YOUR FANS.** Since 2008 I have been consistently surprised by the dedication of some of my super-fans. I've had people drive from Florida to Boston just to have beers with me at my annual Beer Bash. Some of my supporters have spent literally thousands of dollars on me over the years because something I did in the studio touched them in a meaningful way. It won't take you long to figure out who's just supporting you and who's a born-again believer. With that in mind...

**6 DO KEEP THE BELIEVERS HAPPY.** Once you've made the commitment, your sole purpose is to keep those super-fans happy enough not to unsubscribe. Fortunately, though most of us artists are total shit in the analytics and marketing departments, a subscription makes it crystal clear who your top customers are. What are you doing to make them feel special? When's the last time you started a conversation with them that wasn't just a comment thread on your blog?

**7 DON'T FORGET THE REST OF YOUR FANS.** One of the things that nearly killed me was exclusivity. Think about it... if I'm releasing two songs per month for paying subscribers only, that means I have to create even more songs to share with people who have never heard of me before. Hiding all the best goods behind a pay-wall may make the subscribers feel special, but you'll never grow your fan base like that. For example, one of my perks was a members-only after-party after shows. By changing it to a members-get-in-FREE after-party, the non-members end up paying for all the beer while they hang out with my most ardent evangelists for a few hours. Win-win.

**8 DO SOME DAMN ACCOUNTING.** Sure, most of your goods are likely to be digital these days, but even those cost money. You're obviously paying a percentage to the credit card processor and Patreon, but what about band members and the mixing engineer? Then there's the physical goods like postcards, shirts, and even the beer at the after-parties. Postage may seem easy, but how many of your fans are in Germany or South Africa? At the end of the day, you have to make a profit, so make sure you're pricing your subscriptions with enough breathing room to pay for the goods and your rent. Make some coffee and a spreadsheet and work this shit out before you sign anyone up.

**9 DON'T BE AFRAID TO EXPERIMENT.** Use your devoted disciples to your advantage. By sending my Officer's Club new songs a few months before I share them with the rest of the world, I get all kinds of feedback on mixes, arrangement, and even lyrics. Those that pay for the annual goodie bag have helped me decide which shirt designs I should bring to live shows and which should stay exclusive (or just should have stayed on the drawing board). Most fans I've met are thrilled to be a part of the great music laboratory, even if they're the guinea pigs. Be honest with them and they'll give you the most usable feedback you'll ever get.

**10 DO THINGS THAT AREN'T MUSICAL.** Like I said in #5, I hold an annual Beer Bash for my top-tier supporters. Why? Because I love making beer. It has nothing to do with my albums or stories, but it's something I can share with my fans. Think about it... have you ever tried Dave Grohl's homebrew? I haven't either, but it would be fucking awesome. I'd pay for that privilege. Maybe you've got a sense of style that could turn into monthly fashion/makeup tips, or you make cool trinkets with an Arduino and LED's that could turn into a monthly how-to video. I'm betting you're good at something besides music, so start using all your talents.



SUBSCRIPTION  
PRESCRIPTION

JUST LIKE AN OLD MAN IN A DRIED UP,  
UNHAPPY MARRIAGE, COMES ONCE A MONTH





# 28 WORKING WITH BRANDS

Igor Son

The line between brands and bands, clothing labels and record labels has been blurred, or stonewashed if you like. And you will have to navigate through all of this to communicate less to more people...initially...or more to less from your basement. Denny's has started a program to help bands on the road by giving them coupons in return for posting photos and blogging about the restaurant. They even have some bands with celebrity status invent items for the menu, although, whoever let Taking Back Sunday create a sandwich instead of the Taking Back Sundae, should be fired.

Theres no such thing as "selling out" theres just existing or not.

Choose your protection carefully and realistically.

Try the local brands first, as your initial audience will be local people.

-Ruth Daniel



# TAKING BACK SUNDAE!



Treat your band like a brand and your fans like long term customers — they aren't buying one shirt, one ticket, one 7" single... they are buying a relationship.

*Ryan Lykken*

Full of the knowledge that *nothing* could be worse than a major label, artists are now approaching brands as if they are the answer — they are and they aren't. There is less time to develop during a campaign, not a three album deal, and anything that might have 'spiced up' a bands' reputation with the public will be anathema to a brand situation. Oreo has to have droves of lawyers on hand just so that they can live tweet from the Super Bowl. Brands are more protective of their logos than any label I have seen. Labels used to give an artist a few albums or a few years to get it right. Without that, we wouldn't have Bruce Springsteen and many others (which isn't entirely a bad thing... but actually, scratch that, that's kind of asshole-ish of me to say. I like Bruce – he had some great things to say at SXSW last year.).

This isn't meet the new boss same as the old boss. This is meet the new boss, "Be careful! Take your shoes off! That's new snow white carpet and don't swear!" Now, let's talk about the lyrics can we? Mmmmm... usually the more flexible the brand, the smaller they will be. When the stakes get higher, the restraints get higher.

I was just at a club in Seattle. There was a big sign in the dressing rooms NOT allowing any branded products on stage — maaaaan, I guess they realized how powerful that shit really is. You know something is good when there are signs against it.

What is your DNA: Just as you should research the tastes and vibe of a blogger or a radio personality or a producer or a label or anyone — you should also investigate the DNA of a brand. Nic Adler said, "Who is the Roxy? It is a 23-year-old guy looking to have a good time." By stating the DNA of his brand, it enabled better voicing of their social media presence. You should do the same for your band and then investigate brands that you think could be a good fit with you. Do not **not not** (get my drift?) shape your DNA to better fit with a brand. Manufactured and artificial is zombie daylight or whatever zombies don't like, in large amounts, to a brand. They want you — you are authentic as long as you have read the unofficial guidelines (which don't exist) and won't embarrass them (but still be edgy but not too edgy) But then, Sid Vicious seems to be the groovy of the moment, and how weird is that for a *brand*. Okay for the brand of Virgin Records 30 years ago — I guess that's it — **acceptability is just "totally unacceptable" plus time.**

**If accepted for sponsorship, do everything to include this company in all band promotions. Include them on your web site, mention them in interviews (press and radio), on stage mentions, on flyers, posters, CD liner notes, etc.**

– Adam Grayer

**You need financing and most of all free stuff. Get creative with it and never give in on this aspect of it all. I got tons of free pants from stores around where I lived coz I had a band long before they knew it was death metal. The thing is, you can get free stuff from different sources and make them support you as long as you stick out of the crowd. Advertising is expensive and you are an attention seeker, a poser, whether you admit it or not. A band is something normal people watch and sometimes envy.**

– Anders Odden

# SPONSORSHIPS AND ENDORSEMENTS <sup>T:S</sup>

When you are making music, standing on stage and, traveling around the country, you have something that larger companies want — grooviness, vibe, and an in with the hardest demographic to crack — other kids like you.

Look for things that are going on, things that you can plug yourself into, and start learning how to work with other companies. It isn't just about getting some kind of sponsorship. It's about getting it and giving back; delivering everything that the sponsor wants when they want it in a non-threatening way; and sowing the seeds for the next time, so that you can get to another level.

It might be just a small company that will pay you to place postcards at your merch booth or sign up people across the country, but what are you selling? Maybe it's just trustworthiness; the knowledge that if you say you are going to do this, then you will do it. There are more and more companies getting involved in sponsoring music: from liquor, beer companies, cars, clothing, shoes, food... You've just gotta open your eyes and find the opportunities.

Any help is more help than none and an opportunity for you to show that you can hold up your end of a relationship. Everyone looks to the big music instrument companies for endorsements. It's more of the inter-band, dick-length competition than anything else, remove the need for validation and concentrate on what's available. Every drummer wants a Pearl Drum endorsement. (Thanks Pearl, since 1983!) Every guitarist wants a Marshall Stack, a Line 6 something, a Hughes and Kretchnerr whatsit, etc.

It was the deal we struck with Aquarian drumheads that really helped the last few Pigface package tours, with three to seven drum kits on stage per night and 5 drumheads on each! It helped a lot!

## IT'S THE LITTLE THINGS THAT ADD UP.

An endorsement with Trueline drumsticks has been really helpful, too.

A full endorsement is an ambitious thing to try for, concentrate on establishing ANY relationship with equipment companies you are using on any level. Some of my deals are for equipment at cost, it's great to get ANY support. BE REALISTIC and humble...

I have a relationship with Presonus Audio and Audix microphones because I use their gear in the studio and out on the road. One of the benefits is just knowing I'm plugged into a support network of cool people and, when you're however many thousands of miles away from home base recording bands in China, that's great to know!

## SO, AIM LOW, GET HIGH!

# WANT AN ENDORSEMENT?

## DENNIS MOLLAN

I'm going to share with you what the other guys won't- when a company endorses an artist, it's a business deal pure and simple. They're hoping that you can advertise for them, and extend their market penetration for the cost of discounted product. So it's important that you meet the requirements, and be fucking cool.

Yeah, yeah, we all know that's what's going on, but no one is coming out and being honest about it.

The basic requirements for endorsement deals are that you be signed to a real label with distribution or be a regional artist playing *no less than* 100 verifiable shows a year.

Don't meet those requirements? Don't lose hope — we're still interested in you! So long as you're active in the social media world that is. If you're reaching thousands of people with every status update or video post, we're happy to make something happen.

If you meet these requirements, you can email your digital promo pack to us. Be sure to include your tour dates for the past year, your upcoming shows, and web links to any reviews of your CD or gigs.

Provide some details about your web/social media presence: how many Twitter followers, Facebook Fans, YouTube subscribers, Newsletter readers...

### FACTORS TO CONSIDER BEFORE CONTACTING US

Anyone looking for an endorsement or free/discounted product:

- Why do you want an endorsement from US?
- What are you bringing to the table? If we give you a deep discount, or free shit, what are you giving us? Don't tell us how you're going to "promote the shit out of these" at your local gigs. No one there cares! You'll need to bring more than that these days.
- What's your social media campaign look like?
- Are your bands photos and videos professionally shot, or did the drummer's girlfriend grab them with her phone?

**GET YOUR SHIT TOGETHER BEFORE LOOKING FOR ANY COMPANIES' SUPPORT.**



## SOME OF THE THINGS THAT WE'LL ASK FROM YOU IF WE DO CHOOSE TO WORK WITH YOU

- **LOGOS.** We're going to ask to see our logo on some of your promotional flyers. That's pretty standard...
- **PHOTOS.** Pics of you and your pedal board. We'll send you some shirts. Please wear them and take some photos. If you do a gig wearing a shirt, photos of that will get you FREE gear!
- **VIDEOS.** Demo or pedal board walk through videos are awesome — we love them. Your fan base loves them. If you shoot a video demo of the pedal you're using, we'll probably set you up with some free pedals.
- **INTERVIEWS.** Yeah, we'll probably interview you sooner or later. We'll include it in a podcast or other promo venture.

## SOME OF THE THINGS WE'LL PROVIDE YOU

- Deep discounts or sometimes free pedals
- Swag that is not available to the general public
- We'll list you and your URL our ARTIST page
- Random mentions and promo on our social media & newsletter networks

This is about all I can think of. I'm sure I'll get a few complaints on this so... flame on.



I can't tell you how often we just get these drummers that are very young kids, because someone told them they were a good drummer, they think they should get free drums. It's kind of a bummer sometimes.

— Jim Hendersheit

Sponsorships go to touring bands over non-touring bands. This is because sponsors want access to a touring band's show-going audience. That said, if you can make popular videos fairly reliably, this could be leveraged for a sponsorship.

— Max Goldberg



# RECAP

## START SMALL

Build upon each success. We define success these days as **something that actually happened!**

Regurgitate the information to your sponsors *and* your prospective future ones...

Barter! We sold spots in our survival guide that we distribute during SXSW. Several partners were “cash light” so we bartered the opportunity, exchanging several nights hotel for one ad!

Never underestimate the value of hard work. You might be smaller than Lady Gaga. She was one of the top grossing live acts in 2010 *not* because she is as huge as you think she is, but because she did two or three times as many shows as Bon Jovi.

If you are in a small band and you play to 100 people per night, that’s 10,000 people a year if you do 100 shows a year. Compared to a larger band that plays to 400 people a night and does 75 shows a year = 30,000 people. *But*, if you perform 320 shows in a year that’s  $320 \times 100 = 32,000$ .

**THE BAND DOES NOT HAVE TO BE SIGNED TO A MAJOR LABEL,  
BUT PLAYING LOTS OF SHOWS, YES.**

So, you can present that information as “our band performs to almost 40,000 people a year!”

You must complete the circle of support!

**IF YOU DON’T SHOW YOUR SPONSOR WHAT HAPPENED — THEN IT NEVER DID!**

“ Follow up on any submissions, but do so respectfully. Understand that any company that sponsors bands must receive hundreds of requests every week. After submitting, wait at least three weeks before following up. If you follow up within 24 hours of a submission, you risk harassing the sponsor and turning them off.

— Adam Grayer

**YOU HAVE AN OPPORTUNITY TO CREATE A STORY — USE IT.**

## SNOWBALL

**I CUSTOMIZE PERSONALIZE, MESMERIZE!** Make sure that you *know* who it is that you say that you want to partner with. Learn something about them. Look at their website. See how they present themselves so you can absorb this angle seamlessly into your pitch. Every company is different – so why on earth would your kinkos approach work for every one of them?

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“ Show the company you are promoting their product. Regularly send every sponsor photos, audio and video of the band promoting their product, along with regular updates on the band. Constant communication between a band and sponsor is extremely important. The pictures and video show the company they are getting a lot out of the deal.

Accept rejection respectfully. A company cannot sponsor every band that crosses their path. If you are rejected, thank them for their time and ask if there is anything that you can or should be doing that they would like to see to make a future submission more acceptable. Do not re-submit again for at least 6-12 months and make sure that you have something major to include if you re-submit.

– Adam Grayer

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**2 GIVE & GET (THEN MAKE).** List all of the things you are going to deliver and everything that you expect of them – the very last place that you want to have a problem is with a new sponsor is under-delivering – it seems like you are trying to slide something by them – even though it can be a genuine misunderstanding.

IF you think that they might be excited to come to the event, that’s great, but bear in mind you will be their go-to person all night – it might not be detailed in your agreement but you should roll out as many square feet of metaphorical red carpet as you can. Take CARE of them!

...WHATEVER IT TAKES should be your battle cry – or, way more than we ever thought it would take!

**3 DETAILS DETAILS DETAILS.** List the date of the event. Is it a benefit? Are you a not for profit organization (this can affect whether a larger organization will give to you)?

Detail realistic expectations of attendance & the individuals combined size of reach, especially the “tastemakers or influencers.” Including their mailing lists, Twitter, and Facebook friends Just like the nice down to earth humble cottage industry LadyGaga example earlier—you might only have 100 people at your show, but if each one of them has 200 to 3,000 Twitter followers and several hundred Facebook friends, the *reach* could be several thousand. As Bing Crosby would say, (and yeah, that’s how totally on top of new technology I am. I’m using Bing fucking<sup>a</sup> Crosby as an example!) **accentuate the positive.**

Summarize (realistically) your minimum expectations for the event plus influencers: VIPS? Media/press coverage? Special performers?

Include the event history and fundraising success. “Now in its third year with over twenty families helped and 500 grooving teenagers temporarily tattooed...” stuff like that.

**4 LAY OUT YOUR EVENT CLEARLY – DEFINE IT.** The act of defining your goals succinctly and clearly before the event plants that clear unruffled information in your head, ready to regurgitate just like last night’s dinner kebab after one too many Dos Equis.

<sup>a</sup>This fuck brought to you by Presonus Audio.

## 5 INFO PACKAGE.

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“ If accepted for sponsorship, do everything to include this company in all band promotions. Include them on your web site, mention them in interviews (press and radio), on stage mentions, on flyers, posters, CD liner notes, etc.

— Adam Grayer

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6 **MAKE YOUR SHOW AND EVENT AND YOUR EVENT A SHOW!** Your creativity needs to come cascading off the stage like fake come at a Gwar concert — sliding into every crevice of the venue, dribbling down the stairs, and filling up the ears of the security.

7 **DELIVER WHAT YOU SAID YOU WOULD WHEN YOU WERE THROWING THINGS OUT TO TRY AND CLOSE THE DEAL.** Follow through on everything you promise. Meet all deadlines (promo value is highly perishable), and don't mangle logos. By this I mean, don't change colours or come up with your own logo that they might like. This is the WORST crime you can commit, and you see I said CRIME, okay. The largest Americas Most Wanted dealio you can pull on a brand is to do anything to their logo except polish it, stand off to a distance, breathe heavily on it, and smile.

8 **FOLLOW THROUGH WITH THANK YOU.** And, without sounding like Ms. Manners, send a thank you card and a concise report of the event metrics/analytics. No bullshit. You can use forward thinking metrics on the preamble paragraph — “we have set the table for an expanding, more frequent event as we head into the future” — but the numbers need to be *real!*

I have discussed a few ways to help your numbers earlier. Here's another one:

Perform twice on the same day, change up your show so that the first show is different than the second: different opening acts, perform your first album at the first show, your second difficult, less-successful, more-keyboards, critically-panned album on the second show, with different onstage guests for each show, and create a special package deal if people buy both tickets so you can legitimately say for the show at your local 500 capacity venue.

“The last time we performed in \_\_\_\_\_, we sold over 900 tickets!”

Right, you sold them to the same 450 people, but you sold 900 tickets. You see — accentuate the positive!

BUT — don't start to actually believe that you played to 900 people and book a 1500 capacity show the next time around. Been there, seen that!

Don't get all yer support from one sponsor, mix it up. Even tho the \$ may be great, exclusive contracts can hurt.

— Mark Levin



# VESTAL WATCHES

Derek Boucher is Vice President of Marketing for Vestal International. He has been involved with the leading Watch & Eyewear brand for over a decade and is responsible for establishing and facilitating all of Vestal's marketing initiatives, both domestically and internationally. Derek manages the development and production of all marketing facets including retail strategies, creative direction, digital and online media, print campaigns, athlete and musician partnerships, event production, and more.

The major brands have teams of attorneys to approve anything "spontaneous" during the "lights out" moment during Superbowl XLV11. Oreos had an army of lawyers to approve their tweet, "Power out? No problem. You can still dunk in the dark." The tweet was the product of a two year planning campaign enabling the brand to tweet everyday, so the corporate machinery was in place to make things "spontaneous." If you can let go of the fantasy of global domination and world superstardom, then you can have a terrific fruitful relationship with an awesome smaller company, like Vestal, that works with your brand.

*MA: How much do you pay artists to endorse your brand?*

DB: We don't. The main benefit to the artist is that we will feature them in e-mail blasts, social media campaigns, and news. An artist will feature in our campaigns, online and in print. We've had features in Spin and Fader. We occasionally present shows for our artists.

*MA: Do you have any input in an artists direction? Are you worried by some of the edgier artists you are involved with?*

DB: No, none at all. We are a small indie company. We can get away with more than a larger company. We tell our story and our brands aesthetic through music and musicians.

We reach out to people we admire that also have a fashion component. We reached out to Justin [Pearson] as we were big fans of The Locust.



# Vestal

ALL DETAILS POSTED: VESTALWATCH.COM



TIME IS WHAT YOU MAKE OF IT

# IT TAKES TIME

## CURSE MACKY

Sponsorships and endorsements are something most musicians feel is important to their success. While not exactly the same thing, the terms are often used interchangeably especially in the early going. **Endorsement** typically relates to musicians, athletes, celebs endorsing products such as guitars, drums, cereal, shoes, cars, soft drinks and anything else under the sun. **Sponsorship** is when a brand put it's marketing and financial support towards a concert, a race car, your tour bus, a venue, festival and the like. Sponsorship or endorsement, the end game is the same. The goal is to develop a working relationship with a brand of interest for the purposes of procuring funding, marketing support, free or discounted instruments and tapping into the many resources a cool lifestyle brand may be able to offer for the betterment of your band/brand/business.

As musicians, we all like free gear and have visions of being in magazine ads. Every musician has his fave brands and many of us desire a working relationship with the brands we love. Some even feel entitled to such a relationship, that it's your birthright to have such a relationship. That's where your wrong. No one owes you shit. 9 out 10 times you're not ready, worthy or prepared to do what it takes to create a sponsorship or endorsement deal that's worth the time and effort for the person working at the brand. There is a lot of traffic and competition out there.

So how do you do get a sponsorship from your favorite brand or any brand for that matter?

It's all about relationship building. And these things take time. There are always exceptions but It's unlikely that you're going to come out of the gate and get sponsored by your favorite guitar company when there are more people on stage playing than in the audience watching you. However, you can begin to cultivate the relationship even prior to contacting them by getting great action photos and video of you using the products of the brand you want to eventually work with. Want to get the attention of ESP Guitars, then have incredible photos of you bleeding all over your ESP while catching five feet of air jumping off your amp. Definitely don't have a photo of you playing a BC Rich or some other potentially competing guitar brand as your Facebook profile photo. Want a Monster Energy endorsement? Then don't cover your guitar in Red Bull stickers. Don't tell the marketing guy for Marshall Amplification that they make your favorite amp and he should hook you up but all your pictures show you playing an Orange amp. In that case you should be reaching out to Orange. Make sense?

You have to be a poster boy or girl in the making to get on the radar of a brand you want to work with because that's what they are looking for. So if you have the great photo then you have started towards the goal of being on a poster or in a catalog for that brand. There is a lot of competition and brands only have limited budgets and resources. Brands want to work with people that are as passionate about their brand as they are. They are counting on you to transfer your enthusiasm to all 100 or 100,000 of your fans to help sell their product.

Be authentic. Strive to work with brands that you will be an asset to and that you can truthfully say you embrace their lifestyle and product. For some of you a time will come when brands may start seeking you to endorse their product but prior to that I recommend focusing efforts on the products/brands you most relate to and can intelligently speak about.

A+R and marketing folks love to see that people love their product. If you love a specific brand of drums and want to eventually have an official relationship with that brand, then BUY that brand, promote them in your social media and put your money where your mouth is. This is the best way to prove to a brand that you are aligned with them. Start tagging and posting photos to the Instagram and Facebook pages of the brands you desire to work with. I've seen this work and endorsement deals developed out of a regional artist just having consistently awesome content that was focused on the brand he was pursuing. "Just bought this awesome new guitar today, I love this brand!" This led to interaction on Facebook, then he met the A+R guy at the NAMM Tradeshaw and eventually got an endorsement deal. This is an organic approach that can create a lasting relationship because when the timing is right you will have a portfolio of content that proves that you have invested in this brand and are worthy of artist pricing, web presence and other promotional support. Be undeniable. Be patient. But never go fishing.

"Fishing" is when an artist just cuts and pastes the same email to every brand in one product category saying how much he or she loves the brand and would be an ideal candidate for some free gear. I have even seen emails meant for one brand where the sender even forgot to edit the name of the company from the previous email. Nothing as lame as telling one company how much you want to work with their competition! It's hilarious but also sad. So don't blast a bunch of brands at once. The music products industry is a tight knit group so don't go fishing or else you may wind up as a prime example of how not to do it and setting your career back a few steps. Fortunately you're not going to be that person right?!!

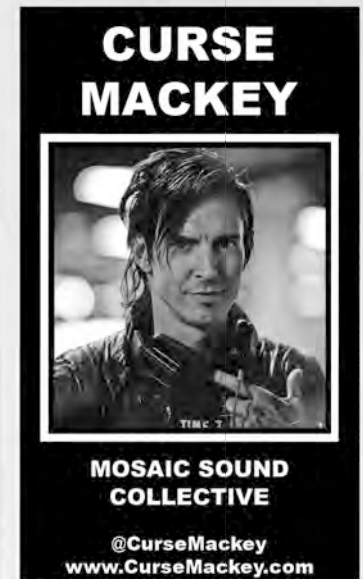
Once you've developed a fan base of 1000+ likes and are playing 30 - 50 shows a year then it can be worth starting to make your presence felt via direct contact. As you build your audience connect with the brands on social media by tagging them. Interact with other musicians that also post on that brands social media pages. The social media coordinators will see all of this activity. Also get out and network in person. It can't be done from home. If you like a brand and see that they are a sponsor on Warped Tour for example, then go to Warped Tour and introduce yourself at that brands tent. See if you can get an artist relations contact. Take a photo of you and the company rep and post it to your social media and tag the company. Is a brand you like hosting a drum clinic at the local music store? Go there. Say hi. Tell them about your experience with their instruments. Any opportunity to share your authenticity will help build your road to sponsorship success.

When you do eventually attempt to connect with an Artist Relations or Sponsorship Director via email then be concise and to the point. Use spell check. Don't clutter their inbox with long-winded emails and useless attachments.

If you don't get a reply, then try again a month or two later. Don't be annoying.

Respect the fact that most people you are trying to reach are super busy and are inundated with proposals and requests to sponsor things bigger than you. Be the kind of artist that is going to go above and beyond in everything you do starting with respecting the valuable time of the person you are wanting something from. Be patient.

You may not get a reply until you eventually meet this person at a trade show or sponsored event that the brand is involved in. Depending on how you've handled your contact attempts to this point, the conversation could be "Oh yeah, you're the guy who keeps sending me the poorly spelled emails with all of the big attachments clogging my cell phone mail server getting mad at me for not replying", or if you've been patient



*Photo: Chloe Reyes*

and courteous, "Man, I'm sorry I have been so busy and did not reply to you but I really loved that photo on your Facebook page where you were jumping off your amp with the blood all over your guitar. Keep me posted on what you are up to, here's my personal email, feel free to hit me up if you need something". Always take the high road and don't pour gasoline on any bridge that you don't want to burn.

Since there is always an artist with more fans than you, doing more, further along in the process one way to fast track the relationship is to create an event or develop an angle that sets you apart from the other 500 guys trying to get the same attention. Want to work with your favorite coffee company? Consider throwing a morning concert and give out free coffee. I know a guy who was able to get a sponsorship with a potato chip company because he promised to give out free bags of chips to all ticket buyers and to give chips to all of the bands. The chip company did not even know they were a popular brand amongst a specific scene in a specific market. The artist showed the brand why he was valuable. He connected them with an audience they didn't know they had. He gave their product out for free for others to sample and he gave the more influential members of the audience aka the bands, media and bar staff free product and asked them to all tag the brand in their social media.

The brand got an easy, low cost event sponsorship and the musician was able to open the door to doing more with a brand that he already liked and knew was a popular product amongst his friends. He created a win-win for all involved and set the stage to ask for more product, promotional support and a small sponsorship fee to help make the next event even better. We all want the big deal. These things take time. Creating a series of successes with quality content, under promising, over delivering and helping make the marketers job easier are key ingredients in building long-term deals with brands of interest.

Be advised, that employees come and go and that sponsorship is also a form of sales which that means that you may create the best proposal ever (in your mind) and it won't get replied to or you'll get a "Sorry, we have no budget", or "Sorry we don't have interest at this time". It can be very frustrating and if you can't deal with being told NO then pursuing sponsorship and endorsement deals may not be for you. However, if you can apply the tips offered throughout this book, be a class act while your growing your audience, and developing your communication and social media skills and think as creatively as possible to set you apart from the pack you very well may be just the bag of chips a brand is looking for. Also, look out for your fellow artists, sometimes hooking someone else up with a great opportunity that isn't a good fit for you can pay great dividends later. Good luck and good fortune, get out there and crush it.





# 29 LABELS

## **LABEL VS. D.I.Y.: WHY TO GET SIGNED**

I think the idea of wanting to sign to a label defines the gap between logical, objective thought and a more subjective process that is after all, a large part of music and any cultural endeavor that moves us. It's easy to look at some financial spreadsheets and show why, perhaps, it doesn't make any sense for one particular artist or another to sign with a label. There are advantages in terms of the weight of the label's catalog, leverage, and opportunities. There are also dangers detailed elsewhere in this book.

Let's jump outside of music business for a minute and consider the movie *In Bruges*. The movie stars Colin Farrell as a would-be hit man. After a botched job, his boss sends him to Bruges as a special treat to have a couple of enjoyable days before he is, in turn, shot. Part of the unfolding of the movie centers around the unfathomable choice of Bruges or indeed any city in Belgium as a place for someone to spend their last 48 hours on planet earth. Once you've sent all of your friends the obligatory postcard of the pissing man fountain, that's pretty

**When it comes to the record company(s), have the balls and belief in yourself to "just say no."**

*– Danny Carey*

much it. I'm not slagging on Belgium, but I think we can all agree that it is a baffling choice. But here's the point I was trying to get to, for Colin Farrell's boss, Bruges held an idyllic meaning in his heart beyond the sum total of great restaurants, opportunities for drugs, strip clubs, soccer teams, quality of beer, number of cable TV stations, divided by the benefits of downside of an exchange rate.

Bruges, to him, was simply the place where his father had spent time with him, bought him an ice cream, and paid attention.

And so, here we are. Even though the music business on a good day is an ornate fountain with a man pissing in it there are still people for whom participation in it by way of signing a deal is the only way to be made whole, be confirmed, be recognized. And what a thrill to accidentally stumble across a truly illuminating metaphor for what's so special about getting a deal?

Have a look on Wikipedia. There are over 3,500 "prominent" record labels listed there — some large ones, some tiny ones. My label, Invisible, has released about 350 albums over the last 30 years. It's a small operation, dedicated to doing things differently, making things happen that perhaps shouldn't, and sometimes caring more about a band than the bands themselves.

I've described my label as being my giant, very expensive record collection with the added element of being able to change, mix, produce, and develop the artist towards what they aspire to — or beyond. Money is seldom a factor (or a motivation). If anything, I'd probably be a lot better off if I had stayed the guy who used to play drums with PiL.

There are a million websites and it seems a book for everything you could think of: "A musicians guide to recording vocals in your upstairs bedroom with blue carpet", "an indie guide to recording drums at 726 South Wood Lane, Newcastle," "a famous producer's plan to help STEVE play better guitar, now Steve!"

Somewhere along the way of trying to get signed after I left PiL, sending demos and roughs to various labels and a spell with a larger independent, I came across a group of other musicians in New Jersey each with something great going on — radio play, production, studio time — something — but none of us had a deal. In the middle of a meeting at my old loft space (something like a cross between the set of Tom Hank's BIG and the Monkees' apartment) we pooled our cash and released a compilation album.

I can't guarantee that if you do something extra creative that you will get some more attention and a crazy unexpected story out of it. But, I can guarantee that IF YOU DON'T THEN YOU WON'T. START YOUR OWN LABEL.

## HOW TO GET A RECORDING CONTRACT

If you are looking for a large deal with a large label that can press GO on the large marketing machine in their control, you are also going to have to give up many of the things that you might take for granted. You are going to have to allow another voice — whether it is just the one person that owns the small label that's working with you — or a number of voices associated with your new team at the major — inside the decision making process... a group of people to make recommendations about the songs, the content

When a label works, when it truly captures a time, a genre, a vibe — it's magical.

The moment you have the leverage to get the deal you think you wanted, you don't need the deal anymore.

**Evil Empire:** There has always been a perception that the bigger companies (i.e. major labels) are evil juggernauts out to pilfer money and ruin the careers of musicians. True, the deals do occasionally take high percentages and their share of recoupable costs but that is something you know up front. If you care to read it, it's in the contract. In truth, these companies are populated by music loving maniacs and eccentrics. They found their way to the business because, put simply, they LOVE music. For example, the company where I currently work, The Orchard, is the biggest independent digital music distributor. From the outside we are sometimes seen as being very corporate. In actuality, I'm surrounded by driven, intelligent indy rockers who probably love bands a little too much.

– Tommy Borschield

“What will I do with my share of the advance?”  
Forget it, you're not getting one.

of your album, a possible new member... a group of people that weren't at many of the last set of shows, who aren't inside your head, who might not share very many of the values that you do. They are running a business.

Most of the people who used to be gainfully employed within the music business are now hovering around it like flies around the music business. **Beware people that will help!** There's no shortage of people prepared to help you with any and all of this for a price.

If I said, “the major labels suck!” You'd all cheer (except those of you here from either of the majors that are left). It's easy, way too easy. I've heard people saying recently, “You don't need a major label.” Well, fucking hell – stop the press! Hasn't that been true since, errrr, 1976? And here we are again, back to that point.

## **IT'S ALL ABOUT ONE NUMBER**

Attendance at shows is a way that people in the business measure success. It is a quick way to take the temperature of everything to do with the band:

- Are your songs great?
- Are your live shows great?
- Are you assholes?
- Do you hang around to talk to people after the show?
- Do you get all of the basics?

It all comes down to one number – how many people showed up. That means your songs could be shit but your live show is fantastic and you have an amazing street team. OK, I'm still interested. All of the variables are taken into account by that one number – how many people actually showed up to see you perform? You need to keep track of this number.

## **LOG EVERYTHING (EVEN THE WEATHER)**

The ticket price and the *real* number of how many people were there including the guest list, even the weather. Why? It's a factor. People don't go out when it is snowing and it is a valid reason for there to be a poor turnout at your last Denver or Chicago show. But unless you make a specific note about that fact



with any other details you can find (i.e. the most snow in April in the last 25 years), you're just going to sound like you're making one more excuse-making lame-ass band that didn't have anyone show up to their gig, and you're just fishing around for a reason... so make a note of it!

This information, accumulated over a year or two (or three) will make a record label think, "Wow, all we need to do are the things that are easiest for label to do – market, promote, distribute, and provide a little a bit of financial support." It gets difficult when a label has to psychoanalyze, babysit, create songs, troubleshoot the recording process, generally intervene, book shows, advise on merchandise, interface between the band and merch suppliers, persuade bands to play the hits, cheerlead, etc. These are all of the things that a band running their business should take care of on their own.

Somewhere along the way, you will start to understand how powerful entrepreneurial business and communication is and maybe you'll decide to reinforce the business structure you will already be running, rather than hand over the reins and the possibilities to others. BUT that will be up to you, and the elements that you decide are important to put in your agreement will be based upon experience of what it is that makes your band work as a band and as a business.

## HOW CAN YOU FIGHT FOR WHAT'S IMPORTANT IF YOU DON'T KNOW WHAT THAT IS?

The act of getting signed is not an accident, a day, something that you concentrate on and make happen one week – it is an on-going organic process. The person you send a package to next week will expect to see progress, movement forwards, positive activity the next time they hear from you. Big business wants interaction and relationships with small businesses that are moving forward without their help.

You need to stay active and create traction (however you are best at doing that) so that when the really important people from the label miss your December show in LA, you can let them know about the February show and the live tracks up on the internet and send them the t-shirt from Germany and keep reminding them until they get it and can come to your fourth show eight months later

### LOGGING YOUR SHOW

Logging your show tells someone at a record label some very important things:

- How hard you are prepared to work (actually work, talking about it doesn't count)
- If you have vehicle that works most of the time
- That even though that you've had 15 different guitarists in 17 days you're still making it to your shows and selling tickets
- That even if the album is poorly recorded and badly produced, people are still interested
- That you understand enough to take the time to log the number

# DO IT YOURSELF

## DAVID LEWIS

Why pay someone to do the work you can do for yourself? This seems so simple that I feel like I shouldn't say it. But so many musicians are aching for someone to do a shitty job on their behalf: hanging up posters, pressing cds, screen printing t-shirts and ruining your good name by being a dirt bag all over town. You can ruin your own name, why let someone else get the satisfaction?

### BE YOUR OWN DIRT BAG!

Furthermore it is so important that you take ownership and make connections for yourself. You should be in coffee shops hanging up those posters or calling to check on the status of your cds at the plant. In the long run those relationships that you foster with press, promoters, and most importantly fans, should be your own.

### RELATIONSHIPS ARE THE ONLY REAL COMMODITIES IN THIS INDUSTRY.

Too many bands want a label or manager when the only thing they bring to the table is manufacturing costs or their mom's credit card. To be honest if you can't stomach sinking \$500 into your band to make some cds or t-shirts then you will never have the follow through to succeed.

### SAVE US ALL THE HEARTACHE. QUIT NOW.



If you look to the label as a magic bullet for your band, think again!

— Rob Miller

The quickest way to get signed is the quickest way to get dropped.

— Nat Powers

# INDIE LABELS VS. MAJOR LABELS

## WENDY DAY

Just getting signed to a label is not enough. In fact, if you are happy solely to get a deal with a label, any label, you are doing yourself a huge disservice—you are setting yourself up to fail, unless you are just a lucky person by nature (in which case, play the lottery and stay out of the music business).

Some labels are great at radio, some are great at working the streets, some excel at making connections into film and TV or have great relationships with BET and MTV, and some have great connections with the top producers and mixed tape DJs. If you make outstanding radio songs and you do a deal with a label that has a weak radio department and no budget to pursue radio play, you are screwed and your career will falter. Each label is different, and it is important to know those differences as you are building a career in the music business. Just getting a deal, is not enough to guarantee success (not that anything in this fickle business can be guaranteed, but you want as much of a fighting chance as possible). And the labels consistently change, as the people who work for them come and go.

### EACH LABEL IS DIFFERENT

I have played a role in helping to build MANY millionaires in this business (Master P, Cash Money's Baby and his brother Slim, Juvenile, BG, Lil Wayne, David Banner, Twista, Eminem, etc). I feel my key to success has been in studying the labels, knowing the abilities of their employees and various departments (which are constantly changing), and really seeing who is able to do what well. Then, when shopping the deal, I have always linked up the artists with the labels that make a good fit. I make sure that the artist is covered by outside consultants in the areas where the label is weak. For example, if a major label is strong at radio but weaker on the streets, I make certain it is in the artist's contract to hire their own street promotions team along with the budget to do so.

With some labels, it is impossible to do this, so I make certain that I never do deals with those labels—they are not the successful labels anyway, so nothing is lost. Some labels are in business to make a certain percentage back above the investment they outlay to keep their investors or stock holders happy, so they are not interested in driving their artists platinum. Perhaps their business model is to spend no more than \$500,000 on the creation, marketing, and promotion of any rap record, and then their goal may be to make back \$750,000. It would follow that they would never spend more than half a million dollars and as soon as they achieve their sales goal, they would stop working the project and move on to another project. This is great for artists who don't have a chance of selling a lot of CDs, but frustrates most artists who feel they can sell more than 100,000 CDs (after all, for a label to make \$750,000 all they have to sell is 100,000 CDs). Might this explain why BG was double platinum at Cash Money through Universal, but never sold more than 250,000 CDs on any other release? Or did his fanbase just reduce in size...

**WENDY  
DAY**



**FOUNDER OF  
RAP COALITION**

@rapcoalition



Some labels spend millions of dollars to promote their artists without knowing what is effective, so their motto is spend, spend, spend. For an artist who desires fame and doesn’t care about making money, this would not necessarily be problematic. I imagine this is why we see so many broke artists on VH-1 “Behind The Scenes” specials, because they weren’t aware of ways to turn that fame into income for themselves. I also imagine this to be one of the reasons groups like The Lox allege to have not made money at Bad Boy in their early days.

Then, there are labels that change their staffs, or change their ownership, or change the original teams that had made the labels successful in the past. This is why labels such as No Limit, Def Jam, Universal, etc could be on top one day, and struggling to compete the next day. One thing is for certain in this business: success is created by hit records and hard work. There is no other route to take. It is impossible to have one without the other to succeed.

Although it is slowly changing due to the internet, the industry is still driven by radio right now--especially pop music, and rap is becoming more and more pop...have you noticed? This means that the days of selling

millions of CDs or single downloads without any radio play are over. Today, a run-away radio hit is almost a necessity to succeed. But in addition to a hot single, it is important to have a realistic budget and a connected team to follow up strong radio promotion. Radio is just one piece of the pie in creating a successful project. Even though radio is important these days, it is not enough, by itself, to succeed. And when I say radio, I am talking about Crossover radio play. That impacts sales more than any other type of radio--more than Urban, more than Mixshow, more than any other format.

Here are some of the things I look at when analyzing a label:

- Who is running the label? Have they had success before? With what kind of artists? With what kind of music? What and when was their last hit? Do they appear to know what they are doing? Have artists left that label to blow up elsewhere?
- Who runs the radio department? What records do they currently have at radio? Who are the priorities at radio? Which stations do they seem to have great relationships with? Which indie promoters do they hire? Are they a “one hit wonder” label (meaning, do their artists tend to have only one hit record and fade into obscurity, or do their artists have numerous hit records that lead to a successful career)?
- What other artists are signed to the label? What is their release schedule? Who are the priorities and will my artist be a main priority?
- Is the label good at the type of music my artist makes? Do they offer good artist development (or any at all)? Do they get a lot of press for their artists? Is the marketing staff strong? Does the staff have a good reputation? Does the staff turnover quickly or is it a good working environment?
- Is the bulk of the label’s staff an A-List staff or is it comprised of folks who are new to the business or the folks who could not get jobs anyplace else (a sign that the label is overly cheap and has no clue how to succeed)?
- Do they sign the majority of hot acts around the country or do all of their acts seem to come out of nowhere?
- Are their deals fair or are there a lot of disgruntled artists slamming them publicly?
- Is their presence on the internet strong? Do their artists seem to have great websites and have they mastered social networking, email blasts, the Blogs, and websites?

I am not any smarter than you. My connections are not great. I just study this industry under a microscope and place artists with the labels that appear to make sense for that type of artist. So far, it’s worked! And, if I can do it, you can do it. So before you take a deal, just any deal, make sure you understand exactly what you are getting into. Do the research and make certain the company to which you are giving the next five to ten years of your life, is worthy. Most are not. The real work begins once you get a deal, so make sure you have as much stacked in your favor as you can!



## INDEPENDENT RECORD LABELS

Anyone with proper financing, good music, and thorough music industry experience could choose to put out music independently. With the financial beating that most indie distributors are taking (the economy is in the toilet, in case you live under a rock), and ease with which one could upload and sell music digitally, it is easier now more than at any time in the history of music sales, to go independent.

With an indie release, the owner of the music has the ability and control. He or she controls where to market, promote, and advertise; what music to release and when to release it; what music to make; the image of the artist; the market, region, and territory; how much money to spend and where to spend it...basically all aspects of the project.

Since releasing the CD is most likely one's sole occupation regarding music, the decision of when to release the music and how long to work the project becomes contingent upon the demand in the marketplace

instead of a decision based on other releases within the indie label. The single can be worked for 12 weeks or for more than a year. The release of the album can occur after the first single or after three or four singles and numerous mixed CDs. The duration of the marketing plan can stretch from a few months after release to a year and a half after the release. The market climate and demand for the music will dictate the length of the project. The set up for the project can be two years prior to release or three months prior. The label decides based on the reaction of the potential consumers in the marketplace.

The team hired to work the project can be assembled from the available people most qualified to work the project. Outside consultants and promoters can be hired, and if they aren't working out well, they can be replaced in a timely fashion without damaging the project. If the consumer isn't reacting to a single or a style, an indie label can re-release a better suited single, or respond to the marketplace with a remix. An indie label is like a jet ski in the ocean able to turn easily, whereas a major label is like an ocean liner. It takes a long time and a wide space to turn an ocean liner off its programmed course, while a jet ski can turn on a dime.

### **LET'S LOOK AT THE FINANCIALS:**

If a CD sells for \$8 wholesale through an indie distributor, and there is an 80/20 split in place, the indie label receives \$6.40 for each sold CD and the distributor keeps \$1.60 per CD. For 100,000 CDs sold independently, the indie stands to make \$640,000 in gross revenues. If the CD is being sold through chain stores, such as FYE or Best Buy, there will be an additional \$2 per CD in price and positioning that goes to the chain out of the label's share. This allows for discounting and pays for location in the store such as end caps (on the shelves).

The cost to press CDs fluctuates, depending on the volume and where the CDs are pressed. Cost can range anywhere from 38 cents a CD to 75 cents a CD, or close to \$1, if the distributor supplies the pressing (that is called a P&D deal meaning "pressing and distribution").

Indies can also secure digital distribution through an indie distributor or can go directly to a web-based company like TuneCore.com that charges a flat fee to upload your music and then they pass the money from the sales site directly to you. So if you sell a downloaded album for \$9.99 on iTunes, they will pay you the \$6.99 that iTunes pays them. Your only cost to Tunecore is the \$50 you paid to upload your music initially. For my artist clients, this is a far better deal than splitting that iTunes income 80/20 with a digital distributor.

Because the indie label is seen as "the underdog," they often get reduced rates for advertising, promotion, pressing, production, recording fees, etc. And because the indie labels usually have less financing than a major label, their target market is usually a smaller area and the project is spread slowly as finances become available from sales of the project. Touring is more difficult because of the reduced funding, and it's rare that a mainstream publication or a mainstream television or cable show covers an indie artist. If seeing your artist hand out an award at one of the award shows such as the Grammy Awards, is important to you, it's doubtful that will ever occur for an indie artist. Securing video play at MTV and BET is also next to impossible these days.

### **MAJOR RECORD LABELS**

The role of the Major Labels has changed so much over the past decade that this could be somewhat outdated even by the time you read it. The major labels control radio and distribution pipelines in the music industry, and they aren't afraid to flex their strength.

Major releases are “advance” driven. The key to financial freedom for an artist is to secure as much money upfront as possible, and then to deliver the album for as little as possible and keep the split. This advance game was far easier to play in the 90s when the labels were flush with cash and could easily be talked into cutting big checks upfront. Those days seem to be over as major labels are hurting financially. Artists have also learned to deliver one or two hit radio singles so they can secure as many shows as possible performing the hit single(s). The major labels responded with 360 Deals—a way of eating into more of the artists’ share of the income.

Once an artist is about to be signed to a major label, behind closed doors on the label side, the label accountants and financial folks make a spreadsheet to analyze the possible sales potential for that artist. Once that figure is attained, the labels never offer more to the artist (even though it’s almost all recoupable) than is feasible for their risk tolerance. Of course they do not volunteer that information to the artist or the lawyer. In today’s economy, for a newer artist, the advance might be anywhere from \$50,000 to \$350,000. For a more established artist, that figure is often \$1 a CD based on the sales of the previous CD. *[Most contracts allow for an advance of 66% of whatever royalties were paid out for the previous release—but since few artists ever recoup, I have never found that formula applicable.]*

Once the album is recorded, the label decides where in their release schedule the artist fits. If the album has numerous hits and promise of strong sales, the label may put the artist into the release schedule sooner than if they feel the music is just mediocre. This is often the opinion of staff members based in NY and L.A., who are far away from the streets and have little clue about what’s hot and what’s not. The consumers aren’t fickle and out of touch, the gatekeepers at the labels are. I have seen artists sit for many, many years at major labels just waiting to come out. The artist usually has no income while sitting still, since touring fees are based upon the artist’s demand in the marketplace. A hit record (or two) changes everything!

Once the artist is on the release schedule, it’s difficult to change that date. It’s costly for a major to make changes (see jet ski versus ocean liner analogy in the Indie Label section). Once the single is in the pipeline,

**Indie labels are still passionate about music.**

—Kevin Lyman

**When negotiating, don’t negotiate with yourself. Once you’ve made an offer, insist on a counter offer.**

**If a project takes off and does better than anticipated, it’s difficult for the staff to focus on that project because there is another release coming through the pipeline that needs their attention.**

—Wendy Day



**Big labels are ineffective unless you have a radio hit, these days you have to do all the work that used to be done by all the people the labels laid off. They only want you if you're already a success.**

– *Daniel Savage*

it's usually a done deal. The major label works the single usually 3 months ahead of the album's release date with the intention of dropping a second single and the album at the same time. Because there are other releases in the major's pipeline, this schedule must be adhered to tightly, and change from the plan is rarely possible. Major labels release hundreds of projects each year, and each release is just one of the cogs in the wheel that make it turn. Except for the superstar releases, no release is more important than any other.

Everything is based on sales potential and possible income. Nothing is based on art form or community service or value to humanity. Since most of the major labels are publicly held corporations with stock pricing and trading volume as their focus, the financial bottom line becomes the focus.

Staffs at major labels work what is easiest since they work multiple projects at a time, and numerous releases each quarter. They have quarterly forecasts and budgets to meet, and the focus is on the bottom line at all times. There are numerous departments at a major label, and whether they work well together or not is often based on the cheerleading skills of the A&R person overseeing the current project. I've seen projects fail solely because the A&R person is disliked inside the label by the other staff members. First week sales numbers are crucial within a major label and if the release sells less than expected, the project is

immediately shelved and focus shifts to the next project in the pipeline, hoping for better success. Major Labels chase wins, not losses.

The staff is in place at a major label and it is rare that they use outside consultants except for radio, and sometimes publicity for the more established artists (with leverage). If a label has a weak video department or a weak publicity department, the artist just deals with that. Until an employee is fired or hired away by another label, they are often at that label for the duration. Politics are rife inside of a major label, and often moves are made based on politics rather than what's best for the project.

Because the releases are similar to an assembly line approach, if the major label drops the ball on a good project, that's seen as collateral damage and focus shifts to the next project to make up for it. They see artists as suppliers of the product they promote, not as creative people with dreams, ambitions, hopes, and a time limit for their career.

If the singles react well at radio, and if the music reacts well at retail the first week (good first week sales are 50,000 to 100,000 for a new artist, and 100,000 to 300,000 for a more established artist. Breakeven for a newer artist is usually somewhere around 150,000 to 300,000 albums sold), the label will often dump more money and effort into the project before moving on to another project, in an attempt to build a superstar for the next release of that artist's music.

At a major label, artists continually have to achieve expectations to secure the next level. This means, radio spins must achieve a pre-conceived level of BDS spins for the artist to get a video. The video must achieve a certain level of success in order for the label to offer tour support (money to help the artist tour). The first single must achieve a certain level of radio spins to get a second single, or sales must be at a certain SoundScan level to warrant spending money on a second single. The point is that these levels of achievement are based on research or actual sales rather than feedback or acceptance from the streets and consumers. This is why there is no longer artist development at the major labels.

The major labels are able to flex their power and get major placements for their artists: touring, retail, endorsements, radio spins, website banner ads, video play, appearances at BET, M-TV, talk shows, and major publications, etc. Indie labels are rarely able to do this. Also, major distribution takes precedent at retail stores over indie distribution, making it more thorough and easier to get CDs into stores through a major. The internet has leveled the playing field somewhat for digital distribution, however, the majors can afford the banner ads on iTunes and AOL/HuffPo Music's front pages.

## LET'S LOOK AT THE FINANCIALS:

If a CD sells for \$10 wholesale, 80% goes to the major label and 20% goes to the major distributor owned by the major label. That \$8 goes to the major label and the major label accountants begin to go to work recouping what was spent on the project.

The standard record deal is for 12 to 15 points. So when an advance is \$250,000, that means it's an advance against a royalty. A 12 point royalty actually means the artist is entitled to make 12% of the retail sales price of each full length CD or download, minus some "standard" deductions, AFTER recouping (recouping is paying back all of the expenses from the artist's 12%).

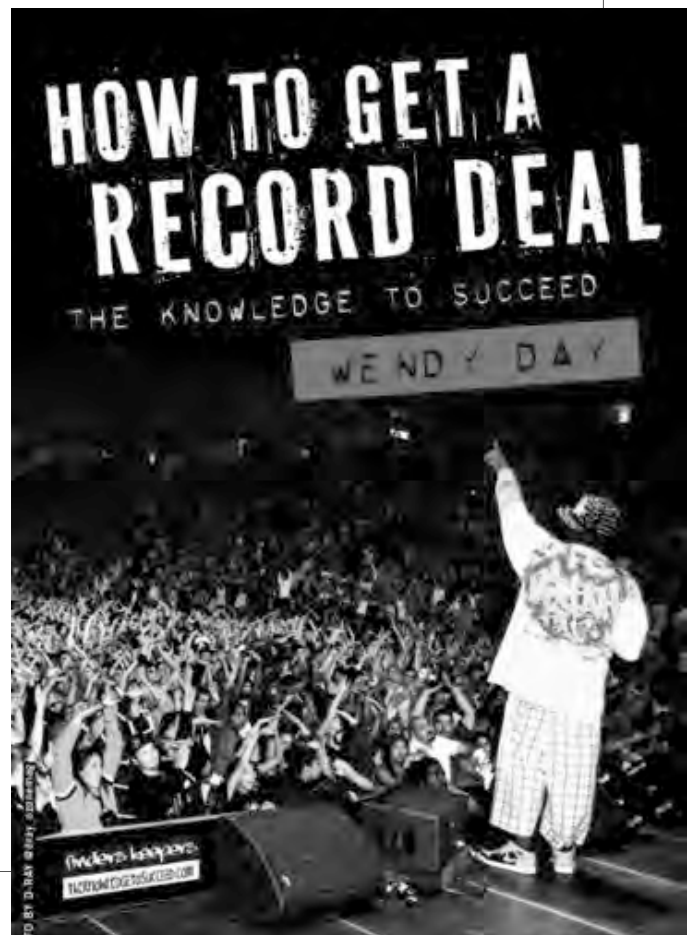
So, for example, if a CD sells for \$12, a 12 point royalty would mean the artist was entitled to \$1.44 a CD... now, most major label contracts have all sorts of reductions in their contracts (it's a pennies game) to give them more income. So that \$1.44 per CD gets whittled down to about 80 to 95 cents a CD. Then, the recouping begins.

If an artist sells 250,000 CDs, then that royalty is used to recoup the monies spent on promotion, recording, the advance, etc. So the \$237,500 (using the higher royalty example) goes to repaying the expenses. It costs between \$250,000 and \$1,000,000 to properly market a CD in today's economy, so you can see how rare it is for an artist to recoup. In fact, the artist's account is almost always in the negative — meaning more money was spent on the project than the artist was able to pay back from his or her 95 cents per sold CD.

This is why I called it an "advance" game. Rather than making money on the back end, the artist will most likely begin renegotiating for the next release. By now, he or she has caught on that there is no real money on the back end so they will try to get as much upfront as possible. The major label will try to advance as little as possible, but what they are really advancing is money coming in from the sales of the recent album, costing the label virtually nothing out of their own pockets. It's an "advance" game. The artist keeps securing advances, going further into debt on the backend (thanks to recouping).

Artists have no control over when their album comes out.

— Wendy Day



**What's ideal for one artist may be a career killer for another.**

– *Wendy Day*

All labels, indie or major, have to pay artists, by law, mechanical royalties which are about 9 cents per song based on publishing ownership, up to 10 or 12 songs per full length release. If an artist has more than 12 songs per release, that pennies-per-song total reduces based on a mathematical formula. This is why ownership of publishing is so key. Most major labels take (or buy) 50% of the publishing when an artist first signs his or her deal, so they are entitled to keep half of the mechanical royalties out the gate. If an artist is in financial straits (and most are) they may sell another portion of their ownership. It's not uncommon for an artist who has been sitting on a major label waiting to come out for years to only own 25% of his or her publishing by the time the album drops. I hear artists regularly say they had to give up a percentage of their publishing (usually half) to get their deals, but I have personally never done so. Not one deal I have negotiated ever had the artist retain less than 100% of his publishing. Not ever! Publishing for me isn't even open to negotiation. I believe the creator of the music and lyrics—the artists, should retain 100%.

Major Labels, on average, have the following departments:

- A&R
- A&R Administration
- Business Affairs (legal)
- Finance & Budgeting
- Accounting, Royalties
- IT (computers)
- Human Resources
- General Manager
- Marketing
- Publicity
- Promotion (Radio)
- Sales
- Video Production
- Tours
- Art/Creative
- Multi-Media
- Business Development
- New Media
- Product Placement,
- International
- etc.

Artists have no control over when their album comes out, what songs make it to the release, or their own image or sound. Contractually, the major labels own all aspects of an artist from their website, to their music, to their image and likeness. In rare extreme cases, the labels have even owned the artists' names

Whether you will be happier at an indie label or a major label is an individual question that only each artist and his or her team can answer. My recommendation is to get additional coverage within the contract so the artist will have back-up strength where the label is weaker. And no matter where you choose to sign, make sure they are a legitimate record label with a track record of success with the kind of music you make. A rock label trying to foray into rap music is NOT going to get lucky and win with your project, most likely (even if it's a major label). And vice versa. This is a relationship business. Success is often determined by the strength of the relationships built over the years. If all of your relationships are in the rock world and you decide to come into the urban world, you will be taken advantage of and most likely drained financially.

There are pluses and negatives to being signed to a major label or with being independent. One thing is for certain, to navigate through the murky waters of the music industry, one needs a strong team (your team consists of a Manager, an Entertainment Attorney, an Accountant, a Booking Agent, a Publicist, and I always suggest an experienced Internet Person) and guidance from trust worthy experienced people. Seek out the best folks you can find and attract to guide your career... You only get one shot!! Talent alone is not enough to succeed. In fact, talent seems to be the least important skill to have as an artist these days... maybe that's what's wrong with the music business.



**Independent labels take nothing and make something out of it. Major labels buy that something, and try to make more out of it.**

*– Tom Silverman*

**I was listening to Mathieu Drouin, the manager of the Canadian band Metric who are often cited as poster children for the new DIY. He said that one of the unexpected benefits of going it alone and hiring their own team – marketers, publicists, etc – is that there was accountability directly to them. They were writing the checks. With a band on a label – the label writes the checks so the degree of accountability directly to the band is less. This is huge!**

*– Martin Atkins*

**A huge swath of human unhappiness is generated by selecting someone to pick you, only to have that person abuse the power, let you down or otherwise seduce you into pursuing something that's not going to happen. Unchoose those people as choosers.**

*– Seth Godin*

**What's the trigger to get you to sign someone?  
ANSWER: Goosebumps.**

*– Kevin Lyman*

**When the label guy doesn't return your call,  
don't start calling more and on weekends.**

# A LABEL CHOOSING YOU

## ROB MILLER

Since you've asked me, the owner of the lowly but scrappy Bloodshot Records what we look for in a new artist, and not David Geffen or the CEO-of-the-month at DynaMusicTechNet Global LTD, I will assume that **we all understand my advice and taste and goals all come from the staunchly independent perspective.** We don't have to worry about shareholders or making sure the CFO's housekeepers at the Caribbean island getaway are paid, nor do we deal with pie charts, Venn diagrams, oily A&R men and focus groups. We don't care how many followers you have. I am a lifelong music fan who got lucky and gets to put out records I like for a living.

To start, there are a few questions you need to ask yourselves before even approaching a label. What are your goals? Expectations? Be brutally honest with yourselves. Why do you even want to make a record? Seriously. It seems like a basic question but one that needs to be asked. Is it for fun? Vanity? Cuz it'd be "neat" to have one? Because you sell out the local watering hole and everyone gets drunk and has a grand time? That's great; I love bands like that, but put the record out on your own and be happy to sell a few hundred. If you have a full time job, familial responsibilities and no intention or ability to do the road work, leave us out of it; be content to play for local friends and fans, there's no shame in that. Countless bands over the years have told us in effect "once we have the deal and are selling records we'll be willing to go on the road and support," or "we are ready to finish our songs once we have an agreement." Thinking that the label deal puts you on your way is like thinking that putting some greasepaint under your nose makes you Groucho Marx. Making a living in this racket is hard, dirty work; nothing can replace that. You need to have the confidence, arrogance and awareness to overcome the unceasing obstacles that'll come your way. Oh, and it's not a meritocracy, either; many a great band gets shunted aside in favor of some couch potato-friendly pablum. The septic tank metaphor (usually only the really big chunks rise to the top) is all too apropos. What we are looking for is a band or an artist that **HAS** to create, **HAS** to perform, that is committed to their art regardless. We want to see an unstoppable drive. We cannot care about your career more than you do, nor should anything like a lack of a label prevent you from your craft.

**What we are looking for is a band or an artist that HAS to create, HAS to perform, that is committed to their art regardless. We want to see an unstoppable drive. We cannot care about your career more than you do, nor should anything like a lack of a label prevent you from your craft.**



# A LABEL IS A FILTER

## ALEXANDER FRUCHTER

*MA: What is up with labels? Are they even necessary anymore?*

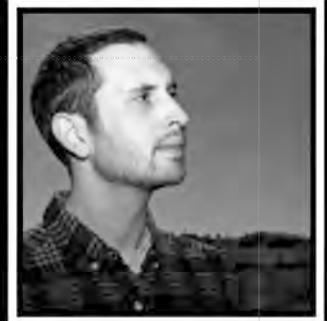
I think labels are still important, even though with new technology the aspects of that importance has changed. Artists are able to get their music out a lot faster and easier than in the past, and a lot of this music is also free, of a low audio quality, and released without large marketing campaigns, announcements etc. The power the labels used to have has changed a lot. Unfortunately, when labels had that control over bands and were true gatekeepers, some took advantage of the situation as well as their artists. So I understand that no one has any sympathy for these struggling major labels or the people behind the scenes that pull strings. From my experience with young artists and my students, I see that some younger people have this perception of labels as evil people who want to take money from musicians, but through my experience running an independent label, I don't see it totally the same way. I still think that a label is a filter system to fans to help build up a trust. It's like if someone sees Closed Sessions next to an artist they've never heard of, it's the label's job to make that introduction to a fan base that trusts us. A listener may say, "I've never heard of Alex Wiley, but I dig Closed Sessions, this must be worth it." Labels are also a group of experienced people who get excited about marketing and selling music, exploring licensing opportunities, executing social media marketing, booking tours, and creating merch. So I still think at the end of the day, a label is a creative group that conveys trust to the fans, and handles a lot of tasks so artists can focus on their music. Just because an artist can write the music themselves, record it in their bedroom, put it out via social media, attempt to contact the press, and possibly even book a tour by themselves, that doesn't mean that they should be doing all those things. That activity can come at the expense of their actual art and the creative aspects of their career, which should be their focus. A label is a group of people that get as charged up to do those things as an artist does for making music.

I'll cap it off with an experience I had with Rhymefest, who is a Grammy-Award winning artist and formerly signed to Jive Records. I've known Rhymefest for years and have worked with him as his DJ, quasi-publicist, spring-board, and even did a voice over part on his second album, *El Che*. He came by to the office last summer to discuss working on something new. He said, "Alex, you have the hard part. I have the easy part. I have to make music, you need to get people to care about it." That's what running a label is really all about, and that will always be necessary.

*MA: How do you see delivering an artists message? I know CS approaches this differently. Can you describe that, what led you to it and how it works in the new model?*

**The label's main job is to tell an artist's story, and really it's about putting that artist's story in different kinds of languages.** The way that you tell that story to fans is not the same way you explain it to the press. So if there's a blog that I know is run by a 19 year old, versus Greg Kot of the Chicago Tribune, the same story needs to be told for both people to understand it, believe in it, and be passionate about it. When we're working with an artist the key is understanding their music and their message. Then we figure out how we tie

**ALEXANDER  
FRUCHTER**



**FOUNDER OF  
CLOSED SESSIONS**

**@DJ\_RTC**

that music and message into a language that will allow the artist to accomplish their goals. That's what the real skills are, specifically for Closed Sessions, I think our label is different and unique because it is run by half a studio, and right above it is the creatives, the wordsmiths if you will. So we know how to get the most out of an artist by tailoring their sound from an engineering aspect, to upstairs with their story and everything else. We use social media as much possible—we shoot to have as close of a one-to-one relationship with our fans. When they show their support, we want to respond and give them things in advance. If they promise to share all our stuff on Facebook, we give them access to new music first. If they make their Twitter avatar the cover of our new project they get an MP3 for free, that is maybe otherwise only for sale. We try to engage them to be our voice. Closed Sessions came together to try and document the story behind specific songs, that's why we still document our sessions with photo & video to this day.

*MA: Digital vs physical — is physical important?*

Instead of fighting new technologies that force us to change, we embrace them by spotting the trends and going where people go. There's tons written about how major labels failed when they fought these technologies instead of utilizing them, and now they are sort of coming back around. With digital it's just the fastest way to reach fans, there are 13 year old kids just starting to purchase music on their own, and they have the ability to do that on their phones, they have no allegiance to CDs or records like my generation. With our fanbase being that way, we go digital. Partnering with Spotify or SoundCloud, using those tools that allow you to communicate with your fans, figuring out where they are at, get their feedback on new material. The physical aspect is still cool, but that's for the more die-hard fans who want to preserve a sort of artifact of music which is a big part of Closed Sessions. We've done physicals for some of our stuff, and we see it as a sort of add-on; like if you already have it for free, get a physical to have it autographed. Or if you get a shirt, we'll throw in a download card. We try to get music and material to people with as few barriers as possible. The music is a means to get the listener into the artist.

Okay, you've answered all the above questions truthfully and determined that you, yes, YOU have the goods and the guts to pursue this, how do you then get the attention of a label? The one and true and all encompassing answer to that is quite easy: be good. We have to LIKE the music. We have to totally believe in what you are doing and get behind it 100%. We have to be able to care enough about it to evangelize when no one is listening, to work on its behalf in the face of commercial indifference, and fight trench warfare. Life is too short, and staying in business in the venal snake pit that is the music industry is too grinding, maddening and frustrating to go to the mat for something that you just don't like very much.

It's as simple as that.

If that sounds too glib or too vague, let me explain lest ye get too discouraged by your inner-voice yelling "How the hell should I know what they like?" Indie labels are, by their very nature, products of their owners' idiosyncrasies. Since we don't have to answer to anyone but our own whims, it is in your best interest to do your research BEFORE sending music---you would hate to end up on a label that doesn't "get" you or doesn't care deeply or wouldn't know how to effectively promote you just for the sake of having a deal. To wit, think of several bands that track well with what you do, or artists you've admired or been influenced by. Are there any labels or outlooks on the biz or attitudes that tie them together? If so, follow the leads. Learn about your prospective mate. I mean, really, you don't Internet date without seeing the picture first, right? Without finding out some pertinent details? If they describe themselves as a Masterpiece Theater watching animal lover and you are a snuff film

**What is a label...besides a loan you have to repay eventually?**

— Daniel Savage

watching dog-fighting impresario you wouldn't go and get married would you? All I ask is that you put at least as much care into a potential artistic partnership with a label as you do finding a date.

## **PUT AT LEAST AS MUCH CARE INTO A POTENTIAL ARTISTIC PARTNERSHIP WITH A LABEL AS YOU DO FINDING A DATE.**

From this basic research, you should be able to find a manageable list of labels to intelligently approach. I'll stack my love of Motörhead against anyone's but that's just not what we do. If that is what you do, DON'T send us a CD anyway with the attitude of "yeah, but WE can be the exception;" it's just a waste of your resources and time. I have filled a dumpster with such "exceptions."

Once you have whittled down your A-list of labels, what should you send? Back to the first point, send the BEST you've got to offer. Don't be clever with sequencing or packaging. Thick packages with quotations of lofty praise from the Traverse City Nurses College Gazette and the door guy from Cooter's Bar who thinks you rule, or lists of bands you've "shared the stage with" (we ALL know that means "opened for") are annoying fluff and promptly get recycled. Fancy vellum cover sheets sent by a lawyer REALLY get shuffled to the bottom of the pile. Don't tell me who has influenced you. Hell, Rush influenced me as much as the Cramps. One influenced me to shave my head and start digging around for Charlie Feathers records, and the other influenced me to never like drum solos or go to arena shows---they almost turned me off Canadians altogether (but John Candy brought me back to my senses). Truthfully, it's a crapshoot that we'll even listen to it at all. It may sit in a box for two years, or it might only get noticed because of an obscure reference to Raising Arizona in the bio. Just the other day I opened a package that had nothing but a CD and a hand written note on a torn scrap of paper that said "Rocks" and a Myspace address. Turns out it was just some Iowa Doom Metal, but still, I listened. Again, the maddening and endearing vagaries of the indie world. Don't let it get you down.

## **DON'T LET IT GET YOU DOWN.**

What to do in the face of this? Continue on. Don't wait for us. Keep playing. Learn something from every show. Develop your material and hone your live show. Come to Chicago and let us know. Nothing gets things rolling faster than a killer live show. Get on the bill with our other bands when they come to your town and impress the hell out of them. Have them pass along another CD to us. Walk that thin line between persistence and annoyance. Nothing is more attractive to a label than a band whose music we love who comes to us with a built in fan base and a massive email list, a track record with clubs, accumulated goodwill from folks in their town or region and an organically created sense of momentum.

With all this said, and with all the caveats and limitations endemic in a tough environment, it always goes back to point one: if we love it, we will ignore all the common sense in the world and all our own rules and figure out a way to make it work. We have always regretted it when we didn't. Heart over brains. It's what makes independent music so great.

**...IF WE LOVE IT, WE WILL IGNORE ALL THE COMMON SENSE IN THE WORLD AND ALL OUR OWN RULES AND FIGURE OUT A WAY TO MAKE IT WORK.**

Good luck.





## BRUCE IGLAUER



**PRESIDENT AND FOUNDER  
OF ALLIGATOR RECORDS**

WWW.ALLIGATOR.COM  
@ALLIGATOR1971

# BLUES PERSPECTIVE

## BRUCE IGLAUER

### WHAT MAKES ME SIGN A BAND OR ARTIST?

Alligator Records is a specialized label. We release in the blues and roots rock genres. Our releases range from straight traditional acoustic and electric blues to a little rockabilly/Americana to electric singer-songwriters with some blues or Memphis soul feel. We're not trying to play the major label pop game. Our radio promotion is geared very much toward AAA and, when appropriate, Americana, as well as the specialty programming that fits our genres.

So, when I'm listening to demos (which I still do) and seeing live bands, my first questions are going to be —

- Does this band or artist fit into our genre niches?
- Does the band or artist have a personal vision that grows out of the 'roots' or is the music basically repeating what's already been done? (You can't imagine how many demos I get with Robert Johnson and Muddy Waters songs done in the original style, and you can't beat the original versions, period).
- How is the quality of the live performance? There is nothing we count on more than a great live show to turn on new fans. Our radio and press possibilities are limited, and a charismatic live performance can create a buzz on its own. So we never, ever sign artists or bands that are 'bedroom' projects and don't perform live. And absolutely nothing influences me to sign an artist more than a thrilling live show.
- If I love the music and the live show, then I begin to wonder about how together the artist or band is. Is this a working group, with firm personnel and rehearsed repertoire? Do they gig regularly, locally or regionally? Do they have professional management (good luck with that one!)? Do they have a reputable booking agent? Are they road-worthy (vehicle, more than one driver, equipment)? How about substance use or abuse? Does someone in the group have more than one working brain cell?
- The real key question, if I love the music, is—do they understand that they are trying to be in the business of being professional musicians? That this is a business that doesn't start and end when they do a live performance? I need musicians who want to make a living playing (and hopefully writing) music and are prepared to do this 24/7, during every waking moment. That means if my radio department wants them at a radio station to do an acoustic performance at 7 a.m., they're going to show up on time, sober and straight (enough) and be good. It also means that they are prepared to drive hundreds of miles to do a live gig for virtually no money because we believe it will be good for their careers, and do this over and over again, crashing on a friend's couch or sleeping in the van. And can they do a coherent, interesting interview? And do they understand that the chances are that even if they are totally professional, smart and do everything right, the chances are better than not that they will not be a success and end up working for Dad or sweeping the floors at the motorcycle repair shop, no matter how talented they are?

## THE BEST ADVICE I CAN GIVE A BAND / ARTIST

- **BE PROFESSIONAL.** Have a good looking, simple press kit, a good (short) demo that truly reflects what you're about musically, present yourself in a courteous way that indicates that you realize that there are thousands of other artists in line behind you, waiting for a shot. Be realistic, especially about money. If possible, be represented by a good manager, an experienced lawyer who understands what your value is in the marketplace and knows the music business, or someone other than your ditsy girlfriend or stoned buddy.
- **GIG ANYWHERE AND EVERYWHERE AS OFTEN AS YOU CAN.** You'll hopefully learn how to work an audience, create a street buzz, and to play from your position of greatest strength.
- **DON'T COMPROMISE TOO MUCH MUSICALLY;** it will just make you frustrated later. Be true to your musical self. Remember that if your demo is what gets you signed, you better be prepared to make a record that's in the same style, and perform in that style. All musicians get shoved into a niche—you're a punky alt rocker, a country balladeer, a reggae band, a blue-eyed soulster, whatever. You better be happy to operate in that niche, because if you're lucky enough to get a CD into a store (physical or digital), you'll be put in a category in which you will almost certainly be categorized forever. You won't have a chance to reinvent yourself or make your polka, classical or Spanish-language album down the road (unless you become a superstar, in which case you're talking to the wrong label).
- **REMEMBER THAT THE DEFINITION OF A SUCCESSFUL MUSICIAN IS ONE WHO IS MAKING A LIVING PLAYING MUSIC.** That's a great goal. Like with high school football players trying to become NFL players, one in a hundred thousand makes it. But in music there are minor leagues. If you can make a living playing music you love for a 100 people in a bar, then you're a success. You're just not a star.
- **DON'T CONTINUE TO PLAY MUSIC UNLESS IT'S STILL FUN.** When it stops being fun, it's a job. In that case, you'll probably have a better salary, more job security and more benefits sweeping that floor or working for Dad.
- **AND ALWAYS REMEMBER** that the guy from the record label is wise, has great judgment and you should kiss his ring constantly, especially if I'm that guy.

Record labels, at least those that live up to their mandate, still have a place in the ever-evolving music biz. In my opinion, labels should be just that: a label. A brand. A seal of approval. Ideally, a label should uphold a certain standard of quality, without necessarily adhering to an overly narrow or myopic genre. A label with a consistent catalog that puts art first, and that responsibly shares the wealth with its artists, is an enterprise worthy of your support and participation.

– Scott Schaefer

**SCOTT  
SCHAEFER**



**BLOODSHOT RECORDS**

@BSHQ



# 360 DEALS

## FUELED BY RAMEN

*Deal Points For The 11 Fueled by Ramen Bands Currently On The Roster, One Contract Doesn't Fit All*

### DEAL 360

**INCLUDES MERCHANDISE, TOURING, STREET TEAMS, FAN CLUBS, AND PUBLISHING**

**BANDS:** (with sales for last album) **Paramore** ("Roll," 705,000), **Phantom Planet** ("Phantom Planet," 130,000 on Sony)

This type of deal creates various synergies. Fueled by Ramen president John Janik says, "In Paramore's case, we sold singles with t-shirts pre-album release and bundled t-shirts with albums week of release in retail where both included large-scale in-store marketing." Janik says the band is also blowing up internationally now, "so we are strategically working the merchandise in specific markets and stepping up the band's presence in markets where touring, radio, and video are strong." Janik also notes that Phantom Planet's deal does not include publishing.

### DEAL: 240

**INCLUDES MERCHANDISE, PUBLISHING, AND FAN CLUBS.**

**BAND:** **Cute Is What We Aim For** (The Same Old Blood Rush With A new Touch)

"We launched Cute Is What We Aim For's debut album two years ago with an innovative web store promotion where we launched a series of t-shirts every couple of weeks leading up to the release of the album," Janik says. "The shirts contained lyrics from a song that we posted the same day online for streaming. When a customer purchased the shirt and album pre-order bundle, they received the ringtone for the song as a value added piece."

### DEAL 120

**INCLUDES RETAIL AND TOURING**

**BAND:** **This Providence** (This Providence," 28,000)

"This is a developing band, so this allowed us to establish a foundation with the merchandise and develop the brand as they grow," says Janik. "We had the ability to hey in to Hot Topic and other retailers that would not normally carry merch from a developing band because we had the Fueled By Ramen name behind it."

### DEAL 90

**INCLUDES ACT'S WEB STORE IN ADDITION TO RELEASING ITS RECORDS**

**BANDS:** **Cobra Starship** ("Viva La Cobra," 51,000), **Fall Out Boy** (Infinity on High," 1.25 million), **Gym Class Heroes** ("As Cruel As School Children," 504,000), **Powerspace** ("Kicks of Passion," 8,000), **The Hush Sound** ("Like Vines," 63,000), **The Academy Is...** ("Santi," 119,000) **The Cab** (Debut record out in April)

"We are launching new lines of merchandise for our bands like Cobra Starship approximately three times a year," Janik says. "We also create excitement as well as generate more sales. We are able to offer our artists an amazing solution because we are able to sell merchandise, albums, digital music, videos and ringtones in one place."



# WORKING WITH YOUR LABEL

## NAN WARSHAW

### FIND THE RIGHT LABEL

Make yourself valuable by developing a grassroots following through hard, smart touring -- that means over 90 dates per year. Once you've built your basic following, labels will come to you. Share and trade info with other bands.

Do the groundwork yourself for booking, publicity, promotion, and marketing.

Do your research! Find a label that already successfully works with artists in your musical genre. Make sure your music is a good stylistic fit, but not the same as an artist already on that label. Read the label's site and interviews with the owner(s); learn about how they work and think. Find out how they like to discover new music.

Only seek a label in a country where you tour now and will tour much more later.

#### **Communication is key.**

Pay attention to production deadlines and schedules if you want your record to come out at the time you were expecting.

Your record is not "done" until ALL the mixing and mastering is finished, artwork has been fully approved, and the art and music master has been sent to the manufacturer.



# YOU THINK YOU WANT A RECORD DEAL?

**TIM DONOHUE**

## **BY THE TIME YOU'RE DONE WITH THIS YOU WON'T, TRUST ME**

### *DISCLAIMER*

*This is designed to help non-lawyers understand some aspects of attracting the attention of record labels and perhaps obtain a recording artist agreement. It is not meant to be a treatise on the subject, but merely an outline of some of the techniques that have been successful in the past in obtaining recording contracts.*

*The author does not imply, warrant or guarantee that the application of some or all of these techniques will result in success for the reader. Nothing in this should be construed as legal advice. The information contained and provided herein is not a substitute for consulting with an experienced entertainment attorney and receiving advice and counsel based upon the facts and circumstances specific to a particular transaction or matter. Many of the legal principles mentioned herein are subject to qualifications and exceptions that may not be set forth in this booklet. Additionally, each state has its own statutes and case law and they are subject to change, so the information contained herein may not apply in every state.*

I'm going to break down a record contract into plain English for everyone out there that thinks they "need" a record deal.

## **READY, LET'S GET STARTED.**

The first paragraph is called the Preamble. It sets forth the date of the agreement and the parties to the agreement. Your band and the record company are the parties. The record company is almost always a corporation or a limited liability company and the band is the individual members of your band. You are signed "individually and collectively". In English, this means that contrary to what you've been told you cannot just quit your band and get out of the contract. Believe it or not some bands have already tried this and the record companies have lawyers too.

The next portion of the agreement usually sets forth the "Consideration" for the agreement. In legal terms in order for a contract to be valid, binding and enforceable there must be an offer, an acceptance, a "meeting of the minds" and this must be supported by adequate consideration. Consideration can be a promise, a set of promises, or money or a combination of all three. Consideration is difficult to explain at the law school level and is way beyond the scope of our discussion here today.

Every contract has to have a "Term" or time limit. If a contract has no set Term it can be interpreted as being perpetual (forever) and then can be invalidated as unenforceable.

The Term of most recording contracts is one (1) year or Initial Contract Period followed by "Additional Contract Periods" or "Options" to extend the Term. These "options" are the record companies to exercise, not yours. There are typically between three and six option periods. So theoretically you could be obligated to record as many as seven (7) albums under a record deal.

After the Term, a record company will generally define your recording services to be rendered to the company. 100 times out of 100 you are an "exclusive" recording artist. This means that during the Term of the agreement you will record for no one else except the record company. Additionally, during the Term,

anything and everything you record belongs to the record company, not you. Some companies will also include language that they have the exclusive right to use your name, likeness and biographical material.

The section entitled “Recording Commitment” details exactly how many albums you are contractually obligated to record and deliver to the company during each Term of the agreement. Usually it is one (1) album during each contract period and it must be delivered within 90 days of the company’s request for it.

Not surprisingly, the record company will also dictate how, when, where and with whom you will record the album. A company may allow you to consult with it regarding these decisions but the company’s decision is almost, without exception, final. The record company will not approve any recording session until a written budget has been submitted by you and approved by the company. The company is fronting the money and it will require accountings to the penny on all money spent.

You are responsible for delivering all information, consents and clearances required to manufacture and distribute the records recorded. Examples of this type of information are: names of composers and their complete publishing information and performance rights affiliations, timing of all songs, side person permissions, and names of engineers, musicians and credits to name a few, but not all.

You are also responsible for hiring and paying the record producer out of your recording budget and your royalties. The Company may advance the producer’s fee but you are responsible for paying it and it is deducted from sales and charged against (“recouped” against) your royalties. In fact, every single cent that the company spends is recouped against you. In the end you are paying for everything and the record company is basically advancing you a zero interest loan that the IRS treats as regular income and taxes you on. So far, so good, eh?

Some record companies will require you to provide and deliver the artwork for your album and then claim 100% ownership in the artwork and then require you to seek the company’s permission to use the artwork you created on your merchandise.

## **RECORDING COSTS:**

The Record Company will pay all approved recording costs with the recordings made under the agreement. Sounds good doesn’t it? It isn’t. The Record Company will pay. Then it will debit your royalty account for the amount of the payments made as “recording costs”. In the definition section of the recording agreements, the definition of recording costs includes pretty much everything, including the kitchen sink. Remember any money the record company “gives” you is recoupable from your royalties .(including your songwriter royalties from your publishing contract if you’re not knowledgeable enough to exclude them. It’s called “cross-collateralization” and it is a widespread industry practice.

The company can stop any recording session if in its judgment it anticipates that the recordings will not be satisfactory to the label. If your agreement calls for “commercially satisfactory” you could be screwed because it’s a subjective standard dictated by the personal tastes of the executives at the label. In other words the label can force you to re-record everything until it is “satisfactory” to the label. If your contract has a “technically satisfactory” delivery standard, you’re in better shape. That standard is objective and means that the recordings are done in a manner that allows the masters to produce proper compact discs.

The Company will also hold you personally responsible for any recording costs in excess of the approved recording budget and will cross collateralize those expenses from all your revenue sources.

**Understand your contract, a 50/50 split after expenses is a recipe for not getting anything because the label is in charge of the expenses.**

*– Evan Cohen Manifesto*

**Advances:** Any and all money paid to you or on your behalf is an “advance” and is recoupable. In other words you’re responsible for paying it back from your record sales before you see a penny of royalties. They buy you dinner; they’re going to charge it back to you, guaranteed so order whatever you want because you’re paying for it.

## **GRANT OF RIGHTS:**

Here is the one area that most bands have the most trouble coming to terms with. You sign the record contract you are SELLING your recordings to the record company. The company now owns the recordings forever. Think about it. You sell me your car. It’s mine. You can’t have it back because you think the label is messing with you. It’s mine. You sold it to me. I paid you. Get over it.

Here’s the best part. They buy your recordings by giving you a recoupable advance, which means you give them back the sales price and they get to keep the recordings. After you pay them back the sales price and all the other advances they will pay you a royalty of a percentage of what you used to own free and clear.

Under the grant of rights you sign away all ownership (“all right title and interest”) of ALL MASTER RECORDINGS recorded during the Term. You roll tape at rehearsal; the record company owns that recording.

You also grant the record company the right to manufacture and make copies of the recordings and to reproduce them, air them publicly and permit public performances. In short, you have sold the record company every single one of your exclusive rights as a copyright owner under the Copyright Act. If you didn’t then every time the label made a CD it would infringe your copyrights.

But it doesn’t because you sold those rights to the label.

In fact, you do not even get your statutory reversion of rights because you will be required to sign a contract in which you acknowledge and agree that every single recording is a “work made for hire” under the Copyright Act. This means that under the eyes of the law, you recorded these songs as an employee of the label and the label is the author and composer of the recordings.

**Royalties:** If you’ve performed every single one of your obligations under the agreement and you’ve recouped all advances made by the label you will receive a royalty accounting and payment every six (6) months. It will be anywhere from 10% -15% of the suggested retail list price of the CD. Sound good? It isn’t. Before you get that royalty the label reduces the royalty base price by taking packaging deductions for CDs, special discount programs to retailer.

Your royalty rate will also be reduced in other territories outside the United States, sales to armed forces bases, special record club sales and just about anything else they can think of to reduce the amount of money they pay to you, after they take their money off the top.

Royalty Accountings will occur every six (6) months unless the label owes you less than \$50.00. You typically have a very short time frame in which to object to the accounting (generally significantly less than your state’s statute of limitations for a breach of contract lawsuit and the contract will also state that you cannot sue the label for fraud, even if you catch them committing fraud).

## **WARRANTIES REPRESENTATIONS AND INDEMNITIES:**

In this section you agree that you will do nothing to cause the label to be sued and if the label is sued the label can seek indemnification from you. This means that you will essentially be sued in place of the label and/or you will write the check if the label loses the lawsuit or settles the case out of court.

**Definitions:** This is the section where the label defines every possible term in language most favorable to the label and least favorable to you.

**Suspension and Termination:** If you do not perform as required under the terms and conditions of the contract (e.g., you decide to go “on strike” to protest the treatment you’re receiving from the label), the label simply suspends the running of the Term of the contract until you come to your senses and behave. The alternative is the label terminates the contract (“drops” you).

## **MECHANICAL LICENSES AND CONTROLLED COMPOSITIONS**

Since the label does not own the songs which you record it must “license” those songs from the owner, which is you if you have not signed a publishing deal. The United States Congress has set the rate for this license. Not surprisingly, labels do not want to pay the “statutory rate” and pay you a reduced rate and limit the number of songs on which it pays the rate. You are legally entitled to be paid a license fee on every composition on the album. However, the labels do not see it that way and insist on a reduced rate and a limit on the number of payments.

**Legal and Equitable Relief:** The label seems to think that it has the right to restrain you from being a band if you breach the contract because it believes it cannot be adequately compensated for your breach by money alone. However if the label breaches you have no resort to equitable relief because the label requires you to sign an agreement where you agree that you are not entitled to even seek equitable relief.

**Assignment:** The record label can assign your contract to whomever it pleases. You cannot assign your duties or obligations to anyone because you have signed a “personal services” contract and it is not assignable.

Some labels are now requiring ownership in your merchandise, web site, publishing and live revenue.

Insanity.

Some labels will commit to a video but every penny it gives you is recoupable against your royalties and the label will own the video because it paid for it. Once you pay back the advance by being recouped it still owns the video. So you’ve paid for it and the album, but the label owns both.

**Sideman Provisions:** Because you are an exclusive recording artist you cannot play on anyone else’s albums without written permission from the label. Most labels will allow you to be a sideman as long as you are in complete fulfillment of your obligations under your contract.

So what exactly do you get by signing a recording contract?

You sell your recordings to a label forever. That label doesn’t have to pay you any royalties until you recoup all the advances it paid you. You also get interference from a bunch of people that are not necessarily interested in music; rather they are interested in the bottom line for the investors in the label.



Record sales are plummeting. Labels are closing and you have access to the best distribution vehicle in the world, the internet.

Sure it takes work, but with a social media presence, and some nice streams and diligence you can book your own tours, and sell your CDs, downloads and merchandise from your own site and keep most if not all of the money and be in complete control of your destiny. You can upload your videos on You Tube and offer webcasts and podcasts of your concerts.

In short, with the advances in digital media available at your fingertips you can do everything a label does on your own terms.

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## FRIENDS DON'T LET FRIENDS START LABELS

I talk a lot about D.I.Y. — it's what I came up through, in, and because of — but there is a large difference between doing this yourself and starting a label. You can and should create a brand for yourself. It gives you a legitimacy and another avenue of promotional and merchandise spin offs. At one point, someone said, labels are the new bands. I just want to throw down a little about my experience; releasing over 350 albums over nearly 30 years, starting a studio, tour production, and screen printing business that was terrifically helpful in developing many new bands, I have come to this slow, gradual truth. I have been guilty of prioritising some artists more so than they have themselves and investing time and money in the outcome that created albums way beyond the level that the artist themselves was prepared to invest in or touring opportunities that, in some cases, were not earned but given. So what? Who cares? At this point, I do. I spent a lot of time working on other peoples' projects that crashed, burned or just became side issues from artists that weren't really rabid about doing this at all costs.

### **SOMETHING HANDED TO YOU ISN'T AS PRECIOUS AS SOMETHING YOU FOUGHT, ATE DIRT AND DRANK YOUR OWN METAPHORICAL PISS TO GET TO.**

Make sense? I cannot get that time, energy curve, point of focus and articulation back to spend on my own projects or family. I spent it elsewhere at a cost to myself and my own personal projects. I had a blast but:

### **IF YOU START A LABEL BECAUSE YOU LOVE MUSIC AND YOU WANT TO HELP BANDS — MAKE SURE THAT YOU DON'T LOVE IT MORE THAN THEY DO.**

Weirdly, sometimes when you help your friends and peers, be careful because now you aren't friends or a peer — you are the label owner that can grant a touring slot, studio time and money to someone else who is waiting to be *given* a chance and you could find yourself excluded from the simple camaraderie that drew you to this in the first place.

I asked Justin Pearson owner of Three One G Records about how this all came together for him and he gave some advice to anyone who might want to start a label.

**D.I.Y.**

# THREE ONE G

## JUSTIN PEARSON

As far as starting a label, that is like asking why someone had a kid at an early age, or why someone committed suicide, or maybe even why someone has PTSD. It just sort of happened and I honestly think I had no control over it. If you consider many of the factors surrounding what I did with Three One G, you could take the fact that I was playing music and involved in a community that was pretty obscure, pretty much under the radar, and for the most part, at the forefront of what is now recognized as DIY ethics. I just figured out that I could do what I wanted. But the thing was, I had no expectations or even concept of the impact or lack of impact my actions would have. I was lucky to have people want to put out my band's stuff, but I also realized that for those people, to some, it was a hobby, or a way to be part of the "thing" we were all drawn towards, or maybe even just an ignorant strategy in some sort of life lesson. To be honest, I am not sure.

**I WAS CERTAIN THAT I COULD DO WHAT A LOT OF PEOPLE WERE DOING,  
AND AT LEAST DO IT AS CRAPPY AS THEY WERE, OR BETTER.**

Maybe it has something to do with the fact that I am a Leo too. Not sure though. But the part of your question asking what my advice for others would be, now that is tricky. See, I could say, I am in so much debt, people don't care about music like they use to, I (or we all) "ruined" our lives to do this thing I'm now discussing, and so on. But I would not really want to offer advice. Hell, what I have done and been part of for the last couple decades for the most part has been impractical on so many levels. But the sole reason for my actions was due to the fact that I just had to do it. Simple as that. Just like the things I mentioned, you know, people just end up fucking and getting pregnant. People do just commit suicide, people end up with PTSD for reasons beyond themselves.

**MAN, I JUST HAD TO DO THIS STUFF.**

I sort of knew many times along the lines that I might be wasting my time, money, and whatever else people put emphasis on as far as being important. But fuck it, I am a punk and it was just how things were going to pan out no matter how hard I tried to avoid it.



# AN UMBRELLA IN THE RECORD LABEL SHITSTORM

## JOEL GAUSTEN

*"Dodge the bullets or carry the gun, the choice is yours." – Killing Joke*

As a lifelong punk rocker, my heart fills with shock and dread whenever I hear an underground band in this day and age say, "We want to work hard enough to get a record deal." It's been nearly 30 years since the DIY explosion of the 1980s, yet the concept of actually doing things yourself seems increasingly lost on today's generation of rebels. This absolutely blows my mind, especially since contemporary acts of every genre are perpetually battling everything from illegal downloading to endless competition via social networking sites to get their sounds even remotely noticed in the modern music maelstrom.

With so much working against them right from the starting gate, it is ludicrous for any new act to expect anyone to care, let alone do all of their work for them. As the late Paul Raven once said to me, "Most musicians are fucking lazy bastards who don't take care of their own shit." Being able to string together a great tune and a killer stage show is all fine and good, but absolutely meaningless until the band convinces the world that they are actually worth someone else's investment. If you do work hard enough independently to turn your garage band into a monetary success, it's quite possible that you ultimately won't consider dealing with a label at all – especially when you consider the utterly terrifying realities many have faced when dealing with companies both great and small.

A few years ago, there was an awesome metal band in New Jersey who signed a major label deal, recorded an absolutely magnificent debut album and promptly left town to do a tour in Europe as the opening act for a mega-selling band. This was wonderful news to hear from a bunch of guys from our scene...until the label decided to dump the band's A&R guy and promotion team. After a year of little-to-no support from the new faces at the label, most of the guys in the band meekly returned to their construction jobs after being dropped. This was a demoralizing ordeal for the fellas, to say the least.

It was stories like these that convinced me not to consider getting involved with a major label when one came calling a few years ago. While it was really gratifying to be in the same room with music industry bigwigs, my enthusiasm turned to apprehension when it became clear that a record deal offers no guarantees that things would work out. It was too much of a risk for me to take at 25 years of age. Now that I'm almost 40 with a family, I appreciate my decision – as fucking excruciating as it was at the time – now more than ever. Whether it is publishing my own books or accepting tours with working bands as a hired-gun drummer, I've continued to make money in the music business – which, sadly, is more than I can say for so many of my comrades who raced to choke on the carrot being dangled in front of them.



# THINGS I TELL INDIE ARTISTS

## RICK BARKER

I am a *huge* fan of the indie artist. Hard working, driven, motivated and unfortunately, sometimes delusional. Not all, but more times than not I find myself dealing with someone who feels they have everything it takes, when in reality they are very far away. Here are some things I tell the artists I work with.

**1 95% OF THE TIME, YOUR MUSIC IS NOT AS GOOD AS YOU THINK IT IS.** I am so surprised by how many artist never re-write their songs, how many don't play it out, get some feedback and make changes.

*Note:* If the **only** people who have heard your music are related to you, it is not a hit song and it probably isn't ready. Get a pro to look at it and help make it the best it can be before you spend money on a fancy recording or video.

**2 NO TWO ARTIST PATHS ARE THE SAME.** There is no system or cookie cutter. Just because your favorite artist broke on the internet doesn't mean you will. Just because your favorite artist writes their own material, doesn't mean you need to also.

There are a lot of things that go into breaking an artist, and some of that is timing and luck which is not duplicatable.

**3 LIKES AND FOLLOWERS DO NOT EQUAL FANS.** There is a *huge* difference between someone "liking" you and buying your stuff. Most of it has to do with the relationship. Too many artist start asking for the cash way too early in the relationship. Don't get me wrong, something to purchase should always be available, but it should not be the main message, especially in the beginning.

**4 BE THE RIGHT PERSON, IN THE RIGHT PLACE AT THE RIGHT TIME.** I cannot tell you the amount of times an opportunity was blown because the artist was not prepared. You **do not** want to be seen before you are ready. Most of the time you don't have the music right, the web presence right, and the mindset right. Do not rush it if a career is what you are after.

**5 TREAT THIS LIKE A BUSINESS.** Surround yourself with a team that believes in you, and more importantly, understands this new music business. There are some great people out there that you can learn from.

**ALWAYS BE A STUDENT AND YOU WILL INCREASE YOUR ODDS OF BEING COMPETITIVE IN THIS GAME.**





**HOME TAPING IS  
NOT KILLING MUSIC**

**30** **COPYRIGHT &  
PUBLISHING**

AND IT'S ILLEGAL

You lying  
**fuck!**

Copyright originated in 1788 to protect the intellectual property rights of authors and inventors. This protection only lasted for 14 years with the option to renew for an additional 14 years at the creator's discretion. The spirit of the law was to give authors an incentive to create (hence protection for up to 28 years) and then give fair and open access to public when the copyright has expired, this promoting the "Promoting the Progress of Science and useful Arts" (Copyright Act)

Copyright is NOT a black and white issue and it bears a little thinking about before you take a position. For example, the position you take as a sampling artist is one that you might regret once you are the original artist. "Sample this!" today, but, "Oh, oh , please don't sample that!" tomorrow.

### **WHY IS IT STILL IMPORTANT?**

There are anomalies. Just because Girl Talk exists and gloriously tramples on every single copyright ever filed doesn't mean it's ok to infringe on copyright. Gregg Gillis is protected by an invisible cloak of groovyness and a staring match combined. Your music might be super cool but I guarantee you it's not cool enough to protect you – especially from the guy who wanted to sue Girl Talk but didn't and is now chomping at the bit to gnaw your (or anyone's) leg down to the bones.

If you think I'm joking then read a little about the Verve — it's a tale of old world versus new; old baseball bat business versus new groovy cool dudes not wearing cups.

RETAIN THIS COPY FOR YOUR RECORDS.

**Home taping didn't kill music. The only real danger to music is shitty bands with shitty songs and a lackluster live show with smelly armpits, zero people skills, and not enough juice for the fog machine.**

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ions are available  
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Waybill.

## HUG A PIRATE DAY!

The idea that piracy is evil has been promoted for decades but has never flown with me. **Creatives... get creative!** Netflix uses piracy data to decide what programs to develop next. Embracing pirates should be a core component of new business, just as long as they are not Disney ones (that will cost you more than singing "Happy Birthday" in a Mickey Mouse Aeropostale shirt).

There are some clever names for variations on the copyright theme: copyleft (wow!), copywrong...but I prefer the names I have heard for buildings...the intellectual property in New Orleans (I think) maybe I'll steal that idea!

## INFLUENCE V. INFRINGEMENT

Copyright is never cut and dried. There is inspiration, extrapolation, and influence before we get to thievery.

I remember sitting with Geordie from Killing Joke (one of my very favorite guitarists) chatting about a song called "Eighties." If you slow the majestic riff down you get Nirvana. Kurt even sent a Christmas card to the band saying, "Thanks for the riff!" Amongst the horror of that, Geordie raised an eyebrow and with a couple of moves turned "80's" into "Baby Come Back" by The Equals. In some ways it's all just a big bowl of magical soup. We each get different pieces as we ladle it all out and there is no accounting for riffs that get lodged, translated, updated, and regurgitated unknowingly.

## INTERNATIONAL COPYRIGHT

Intellectual property law is not simple. If you are really into it then you can look at copyright in different countries to see the effect of degrees of enforcement of the law. Germany has draconian measures and a stifled creative artistic community as a result, India and China — well, I'm not sure.

## CASE STUDY: PSY

You might think that Psy is an idiot (and you'd be right), but he is a very smart idiot. He allowed YouTube infringements to help fuel the total views on "Gangnam Style"— and, you can convert, acquire those views back for yourself once you get some virality. He garnered 1 billion views and a relationship with the UN because of his unlimited global reach. If you can't turn that into some appearances, a cookery book, and some fucking t-shirt sales then you should give the fuck up.

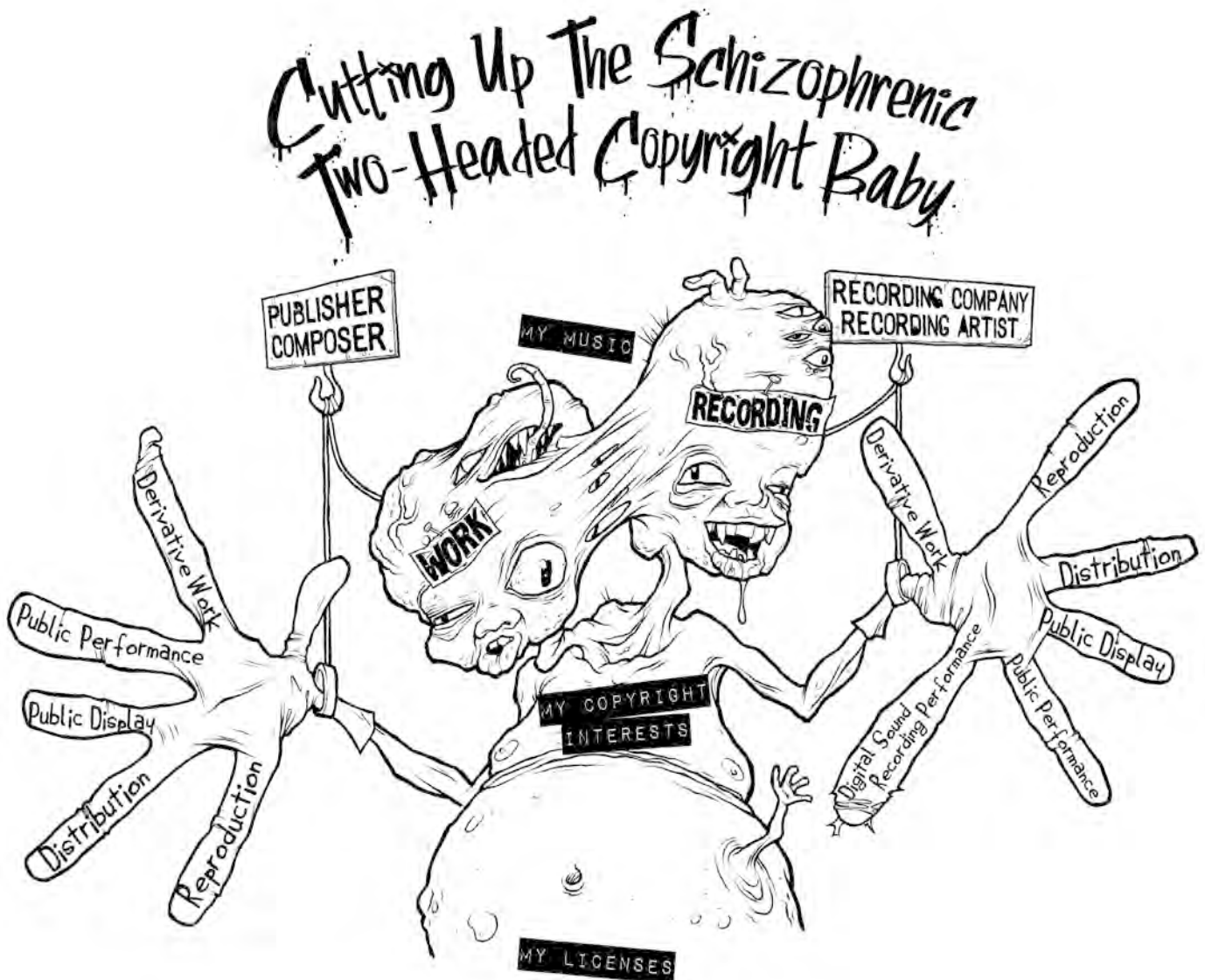
To say that copyright is a Mickey Mouse operation is more true than you might think; it's Disney's machinery that lobbies and keeps expanding the world of copyright. I understand that we need to protect our work (I am a label owner, an artist, and a dad thinking about what I am handing over to my family when I leave this world) but draconian measures aren't the answer either. Germany has all kinds of problems because their laws are so tight.

YouTube revenue, the latter generating almost US \$1 million for 33,000 parodies and related videos identified in September 2012 by YouTube's automatic identification system.[136] In total, AP estimated that Psy will earn at least US \$8.1 million in 2012.

“ On October 23, 2012, Psy met UN Secretary General Ban Ki-moon at the United Nations Headquarters where Ban expressed his desire to work with the singer because of his “unlimited global reach”. [4] On December 21, 2012, his music video for “Gangnam Style” exceeded 1 billion views on YouTube, becoming the first and currently only video to do so in the website's history. [5][6] Psy was subsequently recognized by the media as the “King of YouTube.”

– Wikipedia

Thanks to Matt Mason for [The Pirate's Dilemma](#) (while not quoted here) — that book is floating around in my head still and should be in yours too if you are serious about all of this.





# GIRL TALK

## GREG KOT

*Excerpt from Ripped*

Since the early nineties, electronic sampling had become increasingly expensive; the Biz Markie court ruling ended hip-hop's Wild West era, forcing labels to compensate copyright holders for even the smallest samples. The Beastie Boys' brilliant Paul's Boutique was literally the last of a breed, a sample-based hip-hop album that took the familiar, the famous, and the faded and turned them into something new. Danger Mouse's *The Grey Album* reinvigorated that venturesome spirit for a brief time, before sinking back underground under legal pressure. Danger Mouse clearly had no appetite for a fight. But *Girl Talk's* 2006 album, *Night Ripper* was something else; it made the case that Paul's Boutique was not the end of an era but actually the start of a new, more brazen one. It was a burst of outlaw creativity that would only be enhanced by more sophisticated technology in subsequent years.

"You can't overestimate the role Paul's Boutique played," says Mark Kates, who ran the Beastie Boys' Grand Royal label for a few years beginning in the late nineties. "There weren't rules there, and it helped create a new art in the way it manipulated preexisting recordings. Nobody had really done it on that level before.

### YOU CAN DRAW A STRAIGHT LINE FROM PAUL'S BOUTIQUE TO GIRL TALK.

The sixteen track, forty-two minute album, *Night Ripper*, was constructed entirely out of electronic samples brazenly lifted from hundreds of mostly well-known songs, including hits by major acts such as Madonna, LL Cool J, Elton John, Nirvana, Nelly, Lady Sovereign, and Fleetwood Mac. It was released on the Illinois-based *Illegal Art* label, which specializes in experimental sample-based recordings.

The sheer density of *Night Ripper* puts it several cuts above most mash-up projects. *Girl Talk's* Gregg Gillis spent a year concocting different sample combinations, editing them into tight compositions. The album's tracks are sequenced like a deejay set, with the beats per minute gradually ascending from 90 to 125. And though Gillis designed it as a dance album, it rewards closer scrutiny on headphones. The opening track, "Once Again," crams sixteen samples into 180 seconds, some so fleeting they barely register on the consciousness before new sonic treats drift within earshot.

A piano line from Elton John's "Tiny Dance" slips beneath a Notorious B.I.G rap from "Juicy" while the organ on Boston's "Foreplay/LongTime" ripples beneath a vocal loop from Ciara's "Goodies" and Ludacris's saucy rhyming on "Pimpin' All Over the World." Oasis's "Wonderwall" crumbles into Arrested Development's "Tennessee," and the Boredom's frantic "Acid Police" collides with the soothing harmonies of the Five Stairsteps' "O-o-h Child." One track alone ("Friday Night") blends at least twenty-one samples in three minutes, spanning four decades and artists as disparate as the Black Crowes, Salt-N-Pepa, the Waitresses and Daft Punk. He created this working through headphones on two computers, valued at about \$1,000 each, and a mixer-monitor laptop worth about \$3000.

"I work on music minimally eight hours a day, and on weekends I usually play shows," he says. "That forty hours of work results in about two minutes of new music in my set.

**GREG  
KOT**



**AUTHOR  
CHICAGO TRIBUNE  
COLUMNIST**

@gregkot

## I CAN WORK FOR EIGHT HOURS AND GET A FIVE-SECOND TRANSITION OUT OF IT.

It's a process of trial and error, mix and match, and it requires a certain amount of patience until you get just the right combination of elements."

That rigorous work ethic translated to a giddy, danceable listen and one of the best party mixes ever made. *Night Ripper* ended up on countless top 10 lists at year's end, hailed by critics as a brilliant piece of postmodern art, a reconfiguring of the past into something fresh, fun, and startling. It could also just as easily have been interpreted as a criminal act, a brazen affront to copyright law, an deliberate attempt to steal from other artists' work and then resell it as one's own.

"I feel all music does what I do," he says. "You take your influences and manipulate them into something your own. It's like the Beatles 'stealing' a Chuck Berry riff."

Gillis says he never gave a thought to trying to clear any of the samples. "It would've taken ten years to work out all the clearances, and I didn't think anything I was doing was going to hurt anyone's sales," he says. "And I didn't have any ethical or moral concerns, because I feel what I was doing wasn't hurting anyone. No one was not going to buy a Smashing Pumpkins album because I used a five second snippet of one of their songs. But I also realized that I was taking it over the edge of what I had done before, but *Illegal Art* never flinched. It's an extreme example of what they do, but not unusual."

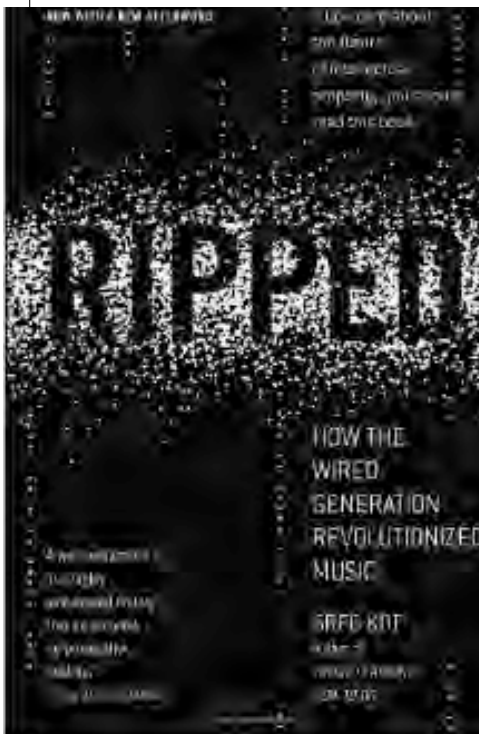
*Illegal Art* was founded by Philo T. Farnsworth, a pseudonymous university professor in Illinois with a master's degree in electronic music from Dartmouth College. "It was a watershed album for us in that it was the catchiest album we'd ever released to that point," Farnsworth says. "And we were definitely trying to test the waters with it, with more of a marketing push. It was a conscious decision on our part not to be this micro-indie label forever."

Yet because of the broader notoriety, *Illegal Art* had difficulty finding partners to manufacture and distribute the CD.

"We haven't received any sort of legal threats from the artists samples," Farnsworth said about a year after the record's release, "But we have had trouble manufacturing and distributing it. We could've sold a lot more if there weren't distribution problems."

Many of the manufacturers had signed antipiracy agreements with the record labels in exchange for their business. "This left no middle ground for many of them," Farnsworth said. "Either the samples were cleared or they weren't allowed to manufacture."

As one major-label executive said when asked point-blank about the possibility of suing Gillis and *Illegal Art*, "It would've been extremely bad publicity for anyone to sue a little label over a record that has barely sold ten thousand copies. Besides, everyone I know loves the album. We may be worried about what the copyright implications mean for our business, but no one can deny that the album is a cool piece of work."



Farnsworth says that he's not against artists being compensated for having their work sampled. "But the way compensation for sampling is set up now, it's an impossible situation," he says. "People can ask whatever they want for every sample, and that has turned sampling into a prohibitive art that even the biggest artists can't afford."

The entrepreneur envisions a sliding scale, where artists who sample only a four-bar beat would pay much less than those who lift a chorus. "A type of hip-hop has suffered. You can't make a Paul's Boutique or It Takes a Nation of Millions to Hold Us Back anymore," he says. "There has been a positive effect from the prohibition on sampling, which is that a lot of hip-hop producers are hiring musicians and creating a different kind of hip-hop. But it's wrong that the other kind can't exist."



The popularity makes people nervous, even though there's been no legal reaction whatsoever.



**KimDotcom:** How to stop piracy:

1. Create great stuff
2. Make it easy to buy
3. Same day worldwide release
4. Works on any device
5. Fair price

# WHAT DO BANDS NEED TO KNOW ABOUT COPYRIGHT?

## JOANNA QUARGNALI-LINSLEY

### WHY SHOULD YOU COPYRIGHT?

It is easy to protect your songs. Once you have put your creative work in a “fixed, tangible medium of expression”, your work is covered by copyright law. But, you still need to REGISTER that copyright with the Library of Congress. You do that online at <http://www.copyright.gov/eco/>. Registering within three months of publication also provides you some additional protections, like statutory damages if you win an infringement suit, as well as recovery of attorney fees. In order to file an infringement suit, your work must be registered.

Owning (and registering) a copyright grants you 6 exclusive rights in regards to that work

- The right to reproduce the work
- The right to prepare derivative works (i.e., use a piece of the work like in a sample)
- The right to distribute copies of the work to the public by sale or other transfer of ownership, or by rental, lease or lending
- The right to perform the work publicly
- The right to display the work publicly; and, in the case of sound recordings, the right to publicly perform by means of a digital audio transmission

### WHAT CAN YOU COPYRIGHT?

*Distilled from [www.copyright.gov](http://www.copyright.gov) and Title 17 of the United States Code § 102*

You can copyright 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, so long as the work has been put in a fixed, tangible format. To the average band, this implies an audio recording of some sort, but can include formats such as sheet music or even video.

You cannot copyright works that have not been fixed in a tangible medium of expression (improv that is not recorded), titles, names, short phrases, and slogans; familiar symbols or designs; variations of typographic ornamentation, lettering, or coloring; listings of ingredients or contents, ideas, procedures, methods, systems, processes, concepts, principles, discoveries, or devices, as distinguished from a description, explanation, or illustration, or works consisting entirely of information that is common property and containing no original authorship.

The copyright office reviews all applications for validity. If you have any questions, contact the copyright office or an attorney.

JOANNA  
QUARGNALI-  
LINSLEY



BUSINESS STRATEGY  
AND CREATIVE  
IMPLEMENTATION

@miserylovesco

## **NOW, WHAT DO YOU REALLY NEED TO KNOW?**

1. It is possible that your copyrights will be your retirement plan. It is possible that your grand children will still be collecting royalties.

## **DON'T "SHARE" CREDIT JUST TO BE NICE.**

You will hate yourself, and your ex-band mates for a very long time if you do.

2. A registered copyright does not prevent people from infringing on your rights. It does give you support in a course of legal action.
3. It is not worth suing someone who has nothing, unless you need to in order to preserve your rights. That is why many cases of infringement are not prosecuted. It does not mean that sampling, downloading, and YouTube videos are necessarily legal. It just means that there is no legal or financial advantage to suing.
4. There is no "legal" way to infringe on someone else. Only using 5 notes, changing the key, or changing the lyrics are all ways to infringe, not ways to get around a copyright.

## **WHAT ABOUT CREATIVE COMMONS?**

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

"Some rights reserved". Creative commons licenses are designed to work within current copyright law. In essence, the copyright owner "waives" certain rights. For example, a copyright owner might use a Creative Commons license to allow their song to be legally shared online.

There is some controversy around CC licenses. Also, it can be very difficult, if not impossible, to revoke a CC license. It can be very difficult, if not impossible, to enforce the rights you retain. If your work is already out in the public, it is difficult to control where it goes. That said, CC licenses can be useful if you're trying to achieve wide spread distribution.

## **HOW DO YOU REGISTER A COPYRIGHT?**

*Go to <http://www.copyright.gov/eco/>*

You can now register your copyrights online. You can upload your material and pay the fee by debit or credit card. The copyright office is always available to help you with the process. They are friendly, and will take your call if you have problems with your registration.

## **AND WHAT DO YOU REGISTER?**

Two things; the song itself, and the recording of the song. Song refers to the lyrics and melody independent of any specific performance. Its copyright is referred to as the circle c, © or PA (performing arts) copyright. Recording refers to the specific version of the song that has been recorded and it's copyright is referred to as the, circle p, (P), or SR (sound recording). Traditionally, the party that pays for the recording (i.e. - the record label) is the one that owns the SR.

You can also register your logo and album graphics with a VA (visual arts) copyright.

You can register more than one song at a time. As long as all authors are the same, and all songs are released together, you can save yourself some money and register a collection. Big corporations do it all the time, why shouldn't you? Just make sure you list each song title to make searching your material as easy as possible.

You should register the SR and the PA. While you can just register the SR, and have an implied PA, this can complicate licensing opportunities. Do yourself a favor, spend the extra money, and make it easy for someone else to pay you to use your work.

## HOW DO YOU GIVE NOTICE THAT MATERIAL IS UNDER COPYRIGHT?

The correct way to give notice of the PA copyright is with the copyright symbol © (the letter C in a circle), or the word "Copyright," or the abbreviation "Copr.," the year of first publication of the work, and the name of the owner of copyright. In the case of compilations or derivative works incorporating previously published material, the year date of the first publication of the compilation or derivative work is sufficient. *Example: copyright © 2002 John Doe*

The correct way to give notice of the SR copyright is with the copyright symbol (P) (the letter P in a circle), the year of first publication of the sound recording, and the name of the owner of copyright in the sound recording. *Example: copyright (P) 2002 John Doe*

## WHAT IF?

...someone wants to buy your copyright? First, celebrate! Then, talk to an attorney and decide if the price and exposure are worth it. Remember, royalties will be paid for a very long time to whoever owns the copyright.

...someone want to use your song in a movie or commercial? First, celebrate! Then, talk to an attorney and decide if the price and exposure are worth it. Synch contracts can be complex, but also very lucrative.

...you hear your song being played by someone else. First, celebrate! Then make sure you have done all

the things you need to do to get paid. (Registered your copyright, affiliated with ASCAP, BMI or SESAC, registered your song with MediaBase and MediaGuide) In the United States, covers are allowed under law without permission of the PA owner. The PA owner must, however, be paid. (<http://www.copyright.gov/carp/m200a.html>)

...you hear your song being played by someone else in a movie or commercial. Call an attorney. BOTH the PA owner and the SR owner must issue a license for a song to be "synched".

...the band breaks up and you never clarified who owns the copyrights? You probably should consult an attorney. Most likely, you have a mess. It is always best to clarify copyright ownership at the time of creation, and IN WRITING.

For more information look at <http://copyright.gov>, especially: <http://www.copyright.gov/circs/circ1.pdf> and <http://www.copyright.gov/eco/faq.html>

The image shows a sample of a Copyright Certificate of Registration form. The form is titled "CERTIFICATE OF COPYRIGHT REGISTRATION" and "FORM TX UNITED STATES COPYRIGHT OFFICE". It contains several sections for providing information about the work and the author. The author's name is "Dmitri Reed" and the title of the work is "The Sound of Silence". The form includes checkboxes for whether the work was published, the author's nationality, and the date of first publication. There are also sections for the copyright claimant's name and address, and a section for the date and nation of first publication. The form is numbered 1 through 4, corresponding to the text blocks on the left.

# COPYRIGHT YOUR SONGS

## HILLEL FRANKEL



Songwriters need to protect their work. You would not pitch your billion-dollar reality show to MTV without protecting it would you? Well maybe you would, but remember, when you record and send out samples of your songs they can be spread all over the world in the amount of time it takes to upload an MP3. That dude in Russia who wants that American pop sound can re-record your song and get his US partner (that he pays in petrodollars) to pay the \$35 filing fee and register the song first with the US Copyright Office, and you are shit out of luck and out of a hit song. Sure you could try and sue some day when the song is a hit for Sergey Putin. Just try and get a lawyer to represent you in a copyright claim using the CD of the song you mailed to yourself via U.S. post as evidence. If you came to me I would charge you a \$10,000 retainer just to get started. That's a bit more than the \$35 filing fee, isn't it? I would never take a case without copyright registration on spec or contingency fee as we call it, though artists and writers always try and get me to do so. Do you know why I won't take it?

### **BECAUSE WITHOUT THE OFFICIAL FILED COPYRIGHT FORM, REGISTERED WITH THE COPYRIGHT OFFICE YOU CANNOT GET INTO FEDERAL COURT.**

You need to pay to play here, brother. The online form is so easily available by googling "copyright forms" and downloading the new form "CO." There is really no excuse not to go for it. Only in federal court can you be awarded statutory damages for copyright infringement of \$150,000 + per infringement or request that all of the infringers' profits be held in escrow. This is the leverage necessary to get a settlement from the person stealing or sampling your song without spending tens of thousands of dollars to get to trial. Remember, the person who files the copyright first is presumed to be the owner and creator of the song. Disproving Sergey's first filing will require you to hire experts, take depositions and cost you more than you may ever earn in your entire music career. All because your cheap lazy ass did not want to file a (somewhat) simple form and pay a \$35 fee to the Copyright Office.

To summarize; packages with the CD mailed to yourself, or the MP3 e-mailed to your gmail account? WORTHLESS! Don't bother. If someone else filed first, You'll never have the funds to actually prove that you wrote it first in court. And the Federal filing will trump your self-mailed song package and render it useless, regardless of the postmark date.

There are other varieties of copyright applications including Creative Commons forms, which offer the writer various options of ownership and control of the composition or recording. But if you simply want to own it all and pass the rights and the earnings on to your kids one day, use U.S. Copyright Forms. Consider these songs and recordings your music 401K. If it's a hit it will never lose value and even if it isn't there may be value out there from the catalogue as time moves on. The U.S. copyright protects the registered song for life of the author plus 70 years after the author's death, so your kids will be able to enjoy income from

your songs long after you die. This is what musicians can pass along. Intellectual Property. If not the vintage Maserati, then maybe that song Pretty Woman, or Blue Suede Shoes or Summertime Blues or any other classic rock song that great deceased rock stars wrote and is still paying income to the families of the writers.

### **SOME QUICK COPYRIGHT REGISTRATION TIPS:**

**1** You can file all of the songs from an album (or group of recordings) on one copyright form and pay only one fee as long as: 1) the songs are all by the same writers (note: does not matter if the song splits are different as long as the same people wrote each of the songs) and 2) You list the Title as the album name and the song titles under “Alternative Title(s)” (note: Print out the form and type the song titles in by hand if they do not fit on the space provided on the PDF form, or use the CON continuation sheet).

**2** If the songwriters are different for different songs, you can still group them together based on which songs do have the same writers. If each song has a different set of writers you need to file a new form for each song. Sorry can't really save you the funds there.

**3** Consider if you are the owner of the actual sound recording copyright; 1. Did your band pay for the recording? 2. You did not sign a contract with anyone giving them the rights? Then you own it! You can then register the copyright in the recording and the songwriting at the same time. Click the box for Sound Recording on the top of the CO Copyright form and then on page two select the boxes for Music, Lyrics and Sound Recording/Performances. Then follow the instructions to finish the form.

**4** The copyright registration form does not require you to note who wrote what % of each song, as this form only protects the rights of the writers, it does not determine how the writers split the songs between each other or their publishers. Make sure to decide on and work out the writer's splits for the songs as you prepare the copyright forms, and keep the list of splits in a safe place. I guarantee you will be referring to them often. You will also need them when you file the songs with a performing rights organization such as ASCAP or BMI.





# COPYRIGHT BASICS

## KEITH HATSCHEK

### EXCLUSIVE RIGHTS, LICENSING LINGO AND MORE

The first and most important result of registering your song with the LOC is that a permanent and unequivocal date of copyright registration is established. Should your song be used without your consent, this date will be used by a court of law to affirm that the use or unauthorized adaptation occurred after you registered your song. Such unauthorized use is commonly referred to as an “infringement.”

Once your song has been registered, the full weight of copyright law can be used to protect your song, should it be used unlawfully. Penalties for using a copyrighted work without permission can be substantial, running anywhere between \$750 and \$30,000 for each infringed work. If a defendant willfully infringed, that is, he or she knew your song was protected by copyright, statutory damages can rise to \$150,000 per infringed work.

One more benefit of registering your song is that if you have a valid LOC registration for your song and the court decides in your favor, the infringing party will likely have to pay your legal fees in addition to whatever statutory damages are required.

**LICENSING LINGO:** In the world of music licensing, there are various types of music licenses, each of which is referred to by one of more common terms. It makes sense to learn these basic terms so that if you are speaking with a music publisher or anyone wishing to use one of your songs or master recordings you are starting from a common point. Here are four of the more common terms used in music licensing.

**MECHANICAL LICENSE:** This is the permission to use your song to record, manufacture, and distribute a new sound recording of your song. Even if you are recording your own song for a record label, under the terms of your contract, the label will need to secure a mechanical license before making the records and offering the song as a download. (Yes, downloads count as a record and as such, the publisher or songwriter must give advance permission to distribute or sell a song online.) Mechanicals, as they are frequently referred to, are audio-only licenses.

**SYNCHRONIZATION LICENSE:** Any use of your song in support of a visual medium is a synchronization (or synch, for short) license. When you hear a song used on a TV show or motion picture, a synch license was secured to pay the publisher for that use. Depending on the importance of the song in the context of the film or TV series, such licenses may generate tens of thousands of dollars shared by the publisher and writer.

**BLANKET LICENSE:** Ever wonder if Queen earns a royalty when you hear “Bohemian Rhapsody” blaring over the sound system at your local bowling alley on Rock ‘n’ Bowl night? They do. The three PROs typically secure annual agreements with any business or venue that features music playback or performance as part of its operations. The cost for such blanket licenses varies depending on the size of the venue and

Once you properly register your song’s copyright, you and your heirs will have exclusive control of it for your whole life, plus seventy more years.

– Keith Hatschek

typical audience size. For example, the blanket license fees paid by Madison Square Garden to use music during a NBA basketball game will be proportionally higher than your local bowling alley pays. But both types of venues help add to the songwriter and publisher's revenue streams when a song is frequently played.

**MASTER LICENSE:** This is the license needed to use a master sound recording in any commercial setting. Record labels often control most masters performed by top artists as they invested the money to record them in the first place. However, more bands are deciding to take the totally independent route, which will often result in the band retaining the master rights for their sound recordings. When such a band gains enough notoriety to attract the interest of a TV or film music supervisor, they may be in a position to profit from granting a master license and a song license if they also wrote the song in question.



**While at Unconvention I met Vijay Nair from India who told me that because India has neither traditional copyright nor any of the organizations that will help you (like we have in the States), he eventually came to some GREAT conclusions and actions on his own. I loved his idea of giving away a free copy of his album and inviting a fan to turn on another fan to his music. If that isn't the whole fucking point of it then WHAT IS?!**

# PUBLISHING

Publishing feels like the piece of the puzzle that not many really get. Tied in with copyrights and registrations, it can feel more bureaucratic than other more entrepreneurial avenues of revenue. With the length of a copyright being life of the author plus 70 years in the US, this area is one you should pay attention to. At the risk of seeming older than I am (or, really, as old as I am), a song I co-wrote in 1983 was just licensed into a movie; my 20% share is worth 3 or 4k — not to be sniffed at. Pay attention!

There are rights organizations you should think about joining (just one): SESAC (Canada), BMI, or ASCAP. These bodies will police plays (etc) for you. More and more companies are migrating into this field. TuneCore and CD Baby will also represent your catalog — not in a man on the street whispering your name into Rhianna's producer's ear kind of way — but in an accounting, follow up get the main stuff done kind of way. These are expanded administration deals and not a bad idea.

In the same way that you might research record labels, producers, or bloggers, you can also research publishing companies. The right publisher can be an advocate for you, another important member of team YOU. But, as mentioned elsewhere in fractured rights, the wrong one can be a real dampener on your momentum, introducing unnecessary time and agenda into negotiations that are taking place at a faster and faster pace.

Understanding music publishing and copyrights is an essential part of all of this. Whatever part of the business you want to go into, there is terrific stuff in the following pages from some pretty smart people. Read and succeed, because if you don't, you won't.

**Music publishing is the owning and exploiting of songs in the form of musical copyrights.**

*— Randall Wixen*

**Overall there is an argument about keeping everything separate (publishing, merchandising, masters, etc) but I'd argue to keep everything in one place — of course in the beginning that is with you — or, if you find the right place with them.**

**Beware if a label asks for your publishing.**

*— Evan Cohen Manifesto*

# WHAT IS MUSIC PUBLISHING?

## CHRIS ROBLEY

If you've written a piece of original music, you own the copyright to that composition — and you get to decide how that copyright is exploited.

In most aspects of life, “exploitation” is a bad thing. But in the music industry, exploiting a musical copyright is very, very good!

“Exploiting a musical copyright” means that the owner of a particular composition (the music and the lyrics) is putting that song to use in a way that generates money in the form of:

- mechanical royalties
- performance royalties
- licenses for synchronization
- licenses for sampling
- print rights for sheet music

**Fun Fact:** Speaking of sheet music, that's exactly how this whole business first came to be called “music publishing” — because back before the advent of recording and radio, publishing sheet music was one of the only ways to earn money from a musical copyright.

So to reiterate, music publishing is all about earning money from the usage of the song itself, as a separate piece of intellectual property from any specific sound recording of that musical composition.



# UNDERSTANDING PUBLISHING

## CHRISTOPHER CABOTT

### THE KEY TO MUSIC INDUSTRY SUCCESS

In view of the changing landscape of physical to digital record sales, understanding music publishing is more important than ever. The reason is simple. Subject to a few exceptions, the catalogs of songwriters generate income streams for the lives of the applicable writers plus 70 years after their death. On the other hand, record royalties usually only last for a couple of years after the single or album is released.

There are two copyrights in music. There is one copyright in an original song (music and lyrics) and a second copyright in the original recording of that song. One actually owns a copyright in an original song when he or she reduces it to paper (tangible form) and owns a copyright in an original recording of that song when he or she records it onto a cassette, recording software, etc. (tangible forms). These rights are not enforceable however, until they are registered with the U.S. Copyright Office.

Music publishing royalties are generated from the exploitation of songs – not the recordings of those songs. Recordings produce separate income streams. Recording artists do not receive publishing royalties, unless they actually write or co-write the songs that they record. There are six primary forms of music publishing royalties. They are (1) mechanical license royalties, (2) public performance royalties, (3) synchronization license fees, (4) copy license fees, (5) compulsory license royalties and (6) new media royalties.

The following is an illustration of how the dual copyrights generate income and why owning your publishing interests is so important.

Dre, 30 years-old, writes a four minute song titled “My Swag is Foundation Mag” on a traditional (non-work for hire) basis for Jon, age 24, who is signed to Foundation Records (“FR”), which owns the copyright to Jon’s recording of the song according to his record deal. FR releases the recording digitally on iTunes so that the label doesn’t have to incur packaging and manufacturing costs for CD pressings. “My Swag is Foundation Mag” is a hit single and sells a total of 1,000,000 downloads on iTunes during the first year after its release. It also receives a great deal of terrestrial radio play and some play on satellite radio. Due to the success of the single, Best Buy offers \$50,000 to use the song in a television commercial and \$50,000 to use the recording in the same. As time goes by, “My Swag” continues to play on “Hits of the 2000s” terrestrial radio stations, but not so much on the trendier digital, cable, satellite and Internet outlets. Like most recordings, sales reduce drastically in year two. During that year, “My Swag” only sells 1,000 downloads. The recording doesn’t register any sales thereafter.

Let’s analyze the income breakdown for the two copyrights. Under the typical 99 cents iTunes scenario, FR will receive roughly 70 cents after Apple receives its share. FR then has to pay Dre the 9.1 cents mechanical royalty, leaving roughly 61 cents. If Jon and the producer of the recording receive a royalty of 11 cents between them for artist and producer royalties, with 8 cents going to Jon and 3 cents going to the producer, which is a common royalty split for beginning artists and producers, FR is left with a profit of 50 cents per

download. Unfortunately, the Copyright Act doesn't afford FR the right to receive any public performance royalties from the terrestrial radio play, but the label does receive about \$10,000 from Sound Exchange for the play on satellite radio. The clearance of the recording for featured use in the Best Buy commercial generates \$50,000. In total, FR has earned about \$560,500 from the recording.

On Dre's side, as the sole owner of the copyright in the underlying song, he receives \$91,000 from the first year's downloads, \$50,000 from Best Buy for the synchronization license fee, \$135,000 from ASCAP – his Performing Rights Organization – for the public performance of the song (\$120,000 from all types of radio play and \$15,000 for the television broadcast of the Best Buy commercial.) In the second year, he earns \$91 in mechanical royalties, receives \$60,000 from ASCAP from radio play. Dre earns \$60,091 for the second year. His income for the two years totals about \$336,091. As mentioned earlier, in the years that follow, "My Swag is Foundation Mag" plays on "Best of ..." terrestrial radio stations. This decreased, but consistent, airplay generates \$15,000 in public performance royalties annually.

Unfortunately, Dre died at the young age of 62 – 32 years after the release of "My Swag." During his final 30 years, when the song generated \$15,000 a year, he earned \$450,000. His total income during his life for the song was \$786,091. If the song continues to do the same \$15,000 a year during the remaining 70 years of the copyright's existence – which hit songs can do – his heirs will receive an additional \$1,050,000.

Under the above fact pattern, "My Swag" the son – not the recording – earned approximately \$1,836,091 throughout the life of its copyright. During the same period, the copyright in the sound recording earned \$560,000.

The moral of the story is that in this changing music industry economy, owning publishing rights to the song you record is equally as important as getting the record deal in the first place. Remember, record deals buy cars and chains; owning publishing royalties buy houses and help you retire. The numbers don't lie.



# TOP TIPS TO GET YOUR MUSIC PLACED IN MOVIES, TV SHOWS, VIDEO GAMES & COMMERCIALS

## HYPEBOT

Recently both Hypebot and Music Think Tank posted a number of interviews with music supervisors and related industry figures on getting your music placed in movies, tv, video games and commercials. Here are the top tips and insights from those posts organized into five categories. The names of the supervisors are featured with a link back to each post which will have additional information of interest.

The key concepts are to understand how the process works, to present your work in a manner that music supervisors prefer and to make sure you have a visible audience and a strong web presence.

### DO YOUR RESEARCH.

“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 of 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.”

– Sarah Gavigan

“To get onto one of my TV shows, do music that’s appropriate for one of my shows...do your homework to see what kind of music I use on these projects and to pitch music to me that is appropriate.”

– Gary Calamar

“Read trade magazines and blogs, as well as developer and distributor websites. Production timelines for games are very long, so keep in mind music decisions are usually made about 8 or 9 months before the game is released.”

– Josh Kessler

### WHAT IS A MUSIC SUPERVISOR?



is an individual who combines music and visual media. Most TV shows & Films have a dedicated music supervisor who selects and sources the music for the production. Music Supervisors have become the new “A&R” person, as a good sync placement in a TV show, Film or Advertising commercial can make an artists’ career.

## FIND INTERMEDIARIES

“The smartest way in general is for people to reach out to licensing representatives, because licensing representatives will do specific searches based on specific criteria we will send out to them, and they themselves become filters.”

– *Thomas Golubic*

“Join music libraries that can help distribute your music to buyers in the licensing market.”

– *Sarah Gavigan*

“Start making relationships with the different music houses, libraries, and sync pitching agencies out there. Let them represent your music, but ownership of all of your stuff. This way they can send your music to agencies, editors, and producers for consideration.”

– *James Altvich*

“You can also link up with a pitching company with a proven track record of pitching songs to game companies.”

– *Josh Kessler*



## GO WHERE THEY LIKE TO BE FOUND

“I go to a lot of music conferences and festivals...Every time I get invited to an event, I go because I want to meet people who pitch music on the label side, development side, agency side, management side, the artists themselves.”

– *Andrea von Foerster*

“Hit me up, definitely. They can go through my website and just hit submissions. I check those all out.”

– *Chris Mollere*



### THE SONG "HAPPY BIRTHDAY TO YOU" IS THE BEST KNOWN SONG IN THE WORLD...



### BE ORGANIZED & GIVE THEM WHAT THEY WANT

“Never never never never never send an mp3 to somebody’s inbox without asking them first. We all get a lot of emails and that many people sending you mp3s will just clog up your inbox. I like things that don’t expire: ftp sites, box.net, Dropbox, Yousendit... I don’t need an entire press kit. I don’t need a bunch of pictures. What if I think you look kind of silly but I love your music? I really just want to know who has the publishing, who has the master, where are you from, and are there any samples.”

– *Andrea von Foerster*

“One thing all artists should do is to include metadata in their MP3 files, so that when I press Apple-I to check it out, I can see your phone number or email address. Gracenote your CDs, it makes it a lot easier to track artists down, especially because the track names don’t always transfer... Make sure to put in a link that doesn’t expire. Sometimes it’ll take me a month to get back and download from a link I’ve been sent.”

– *Chris Mollere*



## **BUILD AN AUDIENCE AND A STRONG WEB PRESENCE**

“The best way to get on my radar is to be a great band and to get somebody excited about you. I try to pay attention to what people are digging.”

*- Liza Richardson*

“Sometimes I’ll hear of a band three different places in one week. I start to think, ‘Oh, I’m starting to hear more about this band. It sounds like they’d be worth checking out.’ I’ll go ahead and check it out.”

*- Gary Calamar*

“Hype Machine is great. Music blogs in general are great. In many ways, I find more music that way than I do through some of the resources I reach out to.”

*- Thomas Golubic*

“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... 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.”

*- Sarah Gavigan*

“Build an audience and demand for your music commercially is the best way to get noticed.”

*- Josh Kessler*

**LEARN MORE ABOUT MUSIC LICENSING AND  
HOW TO MAKE MONEY WITH YOUR MUSIC AT  
THE MUSIC LICENSING DIRECTORY**

[www.musiclicensingdirectory.com](http://www.musiclicensingdirectory.com)



# SIGNS YOUR BAND IS GETTING SCAMMED

## MATT VOYNO

Yesterday a friend of mine called me with a question. His band had been contacted (via ReverbNation) by a company who claimed that they were a publishing and licensing firm in Los Angeles. Ooooooh Los Angeles.

The company told him that they saw his profile, liked one of his songs, and thought they could get their song placed in television and film. But of course there was a price, three hundred dollars to be exact (\$300!!!). For this price the company would spend the next year getting the band's music out there. Rrrrrright.

- That "Not Right" feeling: Does the offer feel weird? Does it feel like a scam? Does it sound too good to be true? If you've answered "Yes" to any of those questions then you're probably getting scammed.
- They contact you via a third party site (ReverbNation, Bandcamp, etc). You see what most of these companies do is use "Bots." A bit of computer code that is written specifically for these third party sites to find eager young musician. This used to happen a lot during the MySpace days. A company would contact you with a generic statement like "Hey \_\_\_\_\_, I really like your song \_\_\_\_\_. We think it would be a great fit with our company. Please send us a message if you're interested." Classic bot stuff.



### MATT VOYNO



ARTIST  
AND AUTHOR

@voino

**THIS HAPPENED TO ANNIE LENNOX FROM  
THE EURYTHMICS! A 'RADIO STATION'  
IN LA SENT HER AN EMAIL SAYING SHE  
HAD 'POTENTIAL' THEN TRIED TO SELL HER  
PROMOTION SERVICES.**

**MATT  
STEVENS**



**GUITARIST  
MEMBER OF  
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[www.mattstevensguitar.com](http://www.mattstevensguitar.com)  
@mattstevensloop

# 8 WAYS TO GET YOUR MUSIC LICENSED FOR TV, GAMES, AND FILMS

## MATT STEVENS

A recent article in Word magazine made the point that TV, Film and Game music placements are the new radio in terms of exposing your band to a mainstream audience. Top US TV shows can expose bands to a new audience very quickly, making Music Supervisors very powerful within the industry. Muse built a following in the US through a song placement in one of the Twilight films and I heard a story of an 8 year old boy who was a huge fan of 70's rock band Mountain thanks to Rock Band. Even the more credible artists are licensing tracks as this income stream can replace lost revenue from record sales. Before licensing your music to anything, it's worth taking legal advice and remember to join the relevant performing rights organizations for your area.

Here are some ways of getting into licensing:

- 1 MAKE FRIENDS WITH FILM MAKERS.** Contact short film makers on YouTube. Make an effort to connect with film students and animators at local colleges and universities, often they are looking for royalty free music and you can get some experience. A show reel of your music synced to film is useful for your website and previous credited work is good for your reputation.
- 2 CREATE INSTRUMENTAL VERSIONS OF YOUR SONGS.** Vocals can often be intrusive for licensing opportunities, making an instrumental version of your song will open more doors. If possible have stems available of your song as certain parts may need to be looped for a particular section of a film or game.
- 3 THE GAMES INDUSTRY IS EXPANDING EVERY YEAR;** from flash games and apps for Android and iPhone to the big console titles. Small companies making apps are easy to approach as they tend to be working under tighter budgets. There seems to be the most need for electronic stuff but it's worth a go for other styles. Approach developers in the same way as you would any other industry people, don't spam! Email the company and talk to them about their company and games and explain what you have done and that you would like to have your music considered for their games. Find out what games they already produce and if they use music similar to yours. These initial connections in the industry are vital, make sure you show enthusiasm and respect.
- 4 USE A COMMERCIAL SERVICE.** Many services are available from Taxi, Sonic Bids, Rumblefish to You License connect bands with licensing opportunities. They often charge you to submit music to the various licensing opportunities and some charge a membership fee. The best thing that can happen is you build a relationship with a publisher and eventually bypass these middleman, as usual it's all about who you know and these companies can improve your contacts, for a price.

**5 CONTACT PUBLISHERS DIRECTLY.** Using an online listing service or your local library find and contact some publishers. Often they will be looking for new acts, see if they already have acts in your genre. If you already have things happening with your band through social media, gigs and press this opens doors. As usual being proactive is the key, but be careful not sign an exclusive deal with any one company.

**6 BE DIFFERENT.** Publishers are drowning in identical stuff, often being unusual and interesting can really help. They have constant submissions of stuff that sounds exactly like Yann Tiersen, John Williams or Oasis/Jay Z/Gaga etc. Your reggae/death metal/dubstep song could be just the thing their client is looking for to make their advert unique.

**7 TRY WRITING SOME LIBRARY MUSIC AND SUBMITTING IT.** Library or production music is normally owned by the company rather than you as an artist. The idea is it is licensed and ready to go when a media production wants to use it. You have to be careful what you sign away but it's a good way to gain experience of creating music for TV. Often you have to say they can use the music for any purpose they choose. Approach with caution, but there is money to be made that you could use to fund more artistically worthwhile endeavors.

**8 USE ROCK BAND.** Rock Band is huge across the world. Using Tunecore you can get your track coded especially for the game and take a royalty on every sale you make just like an mp3 album, it could be good if you think you have the audience to make it worthwhile. Coding your songs yourself is apparently very difficult and is best left to experts. If this all sounds a bit too complicated Jam Legend is an online game similar to Rock Band. You can upload your own tracks and the users on the site can play a game based on your song using the same controllers as Rock Band and Guitar Hero. Some bands have developed a large audience through having their music featured in these games.

As long as you are careful about what you sign and your music is used in areas that are appropriate to your band's overall image, licensing is a great opportunity to both raise funds and exposure your music to a new audience.



If there truly is only one songwriter who will end up with all the publishing — well good luck to you.

— Anders Odden

# SYNC TIPS

## GABE MCDONOUGH

**1** Music supervisors are constantly in a time crunch. When we look beyond our personal libraries we need to send as few emails as possible. We don't have time to email every band/songwriter we know to see if they have something that might fit. We are more likely to call a label, publisher or independent pitching company, as we can get access to thousands of artists with one point of contact.

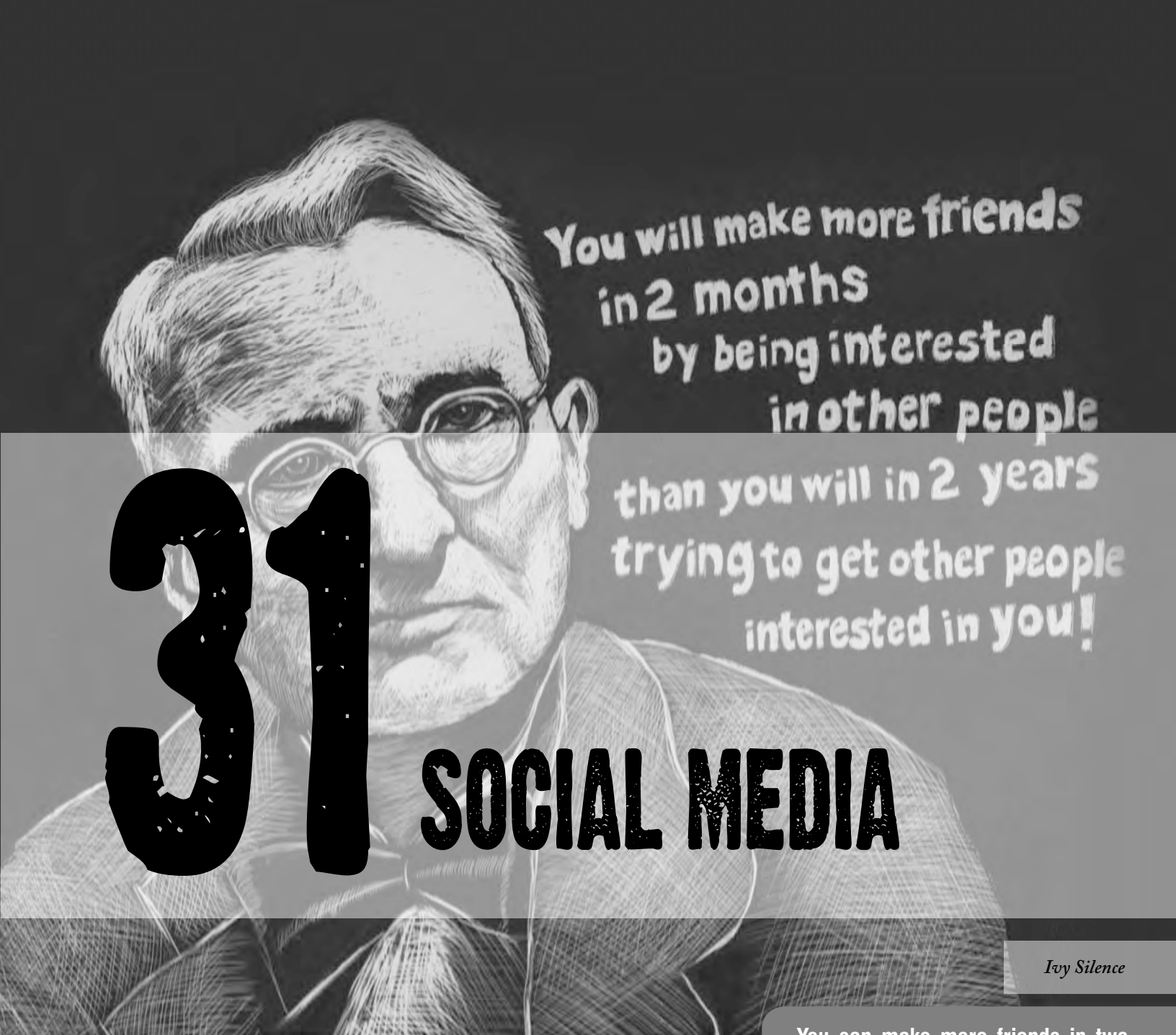
**2** Get your metadata straight. If I'm searching my music library for songs with "home" in them, I'll only find it if you have that word "home" somewhere in the metadata. Just as importantly, make sure you have contact info in that metadata. If I can't find you, I can't license your music.

**3** I've licensed a song in a minor key only a handful of times in my whole career. This advice only applies to ads of course, film and TV is a different story. Any human in Western society has been exposed to 10,000 hours of TV advertising in their life, making them an expert according to Gladwell's *Outliers*.

**YOU KNOW THE KIND OF MUSIC YOU HEAR IN ADS —  
PITCH SONGS LIKE THAT.**







You will make more friends  
in 2 months  
by being interested  
in other people  
than you will in 2 years  
trying to get other people  
interested in you!

# 31 SOCIAL MEDIA

*Ivy Silence*

**WELCOME TO THE INTERNET.  
YOUR TABLE IS READY.**

You can make more friends in two months by becoming interested in other people than you can in two years by trying to get other people interested in you.

*– Dale Carnegie*

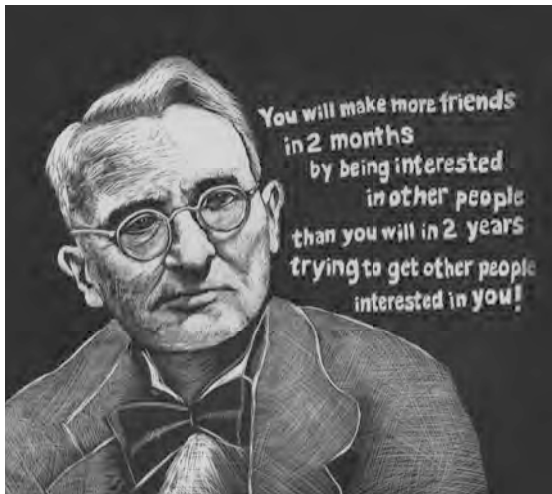
The Internet is the bright flashing light, like a new sunrise, glowing and vibrating with the new energy of possibility.

Expressed differently, it's basically as innovative as the flashing vibrating pager system that tells you when your table is ready at Hooters... it just connects a couple of things and makes a boring task a little easier so we don't have to stand in a rigid line like were English or something. It's flexible, but if you aren't there, or the thing at the other end of the connection is crap, served badly or doesn't create some kind of memory, then it's just a fucking flashing "tables ready" restaurant pager...

Would that save your shitty restaurant? No, of course not, so how can the Internet save your bland, unappetizing, overcooked, half baked band?



1.



2.



3.



4.



5.



6.



### DALE CARNEGIE SKETCH SUBMISSIONS

1. Ivy Silence

2. Unknown

3. Catherine de Leon

4. Robyn W

5. Naïve Quiet

6. Joseph Mosqueda

## THE MEDIA LANDSCAPE HAS CHANGED SO MUCH IN MY LIFETIME — NOT JUST THE TECHNOLOGY, BUT MAINLY HOW IT AFFECTS US SOCIALLY.

I grew up in the UK in the 60s and 70s where television was a “choice” between three channels, each of which shut down for the night around 11:30PM after playing the national anthem. This, combined with the size of the country (700 miles long by 100 miles wide roughly), meant that the whole country experienced an episode of Monty Python at the same time. Today, this is no longer conceivable. Choices bombard us every day. Hundreds of cable tv channels, thousands of terrestrial and satellite radio stations, not to mention all the other sources of entertainment — or distractions — that fly at us like snowflakes, each unique, for a moment anyway, as they hit our faces and melt or accumulate on our shoulders to be swept away like dandruff before an important date.

Let’s face it. No one cares about *anything* anymore. The upside? They will happily share all their interests in their profiles: cars, drugs, girls, gambling, organic food, circuit bending, fishing, ice hockey, ice fishing, ice ice baby, eagles (the birds not the band) tits! (the birds not the body part) cocks (ditto) swallows (ok stop!).

Music’s purpose has always been to form a connection between artist and audience. In today’s socially-driven landscape this is both easier and harder at the same time. Your job is to connect – connect through music but also through engagement. Form the bond first. This means that you will need more skills besides being good on your chosen instrument. You’ll need all of the social tools that many of you already have. Don’t worry if you are desperately shy... this is stuff you can work on — like a muscle. And just like anything else, the more ripped you are the better things will work. It’s no longer a small country with three media outlets, it’s the entire planet with almost infinite platforms... so how do you do it? The answer is simple – use Japanese table manners.

The internet / that's a toilet.

– Justin Pearson

The platforms you use are incredibly important to successful social marketing, but they will always be a close second to your intent and your message.  
– Gary Vaynerchuk

Divide and conquer — each of you take an area (of social) that appeals to you.

– Nate Levinson

MySpace is like The Constitution — it's still there, but nobody checks it anymore.

– Andy Borowitz

You know what differentiates that new song you made from all the others on the web? NOTHING! Build your skills and your friends first.

# JAPANESE TABLE MANNERS

1. When drinking alcoholic beverages, it is customary to serve each other, rather than pouring your own beverage.
2. Periodically check your friends' cups and refill their drinks if their cups are getting empty.
3. Likewise, if someone wants to serve you more alcohol, you should quickly empty your glass and hold it towards that person.

Most of you are quite familiar with the “quickly empty your glass” part but look at the rest and apply it to social media. Do *anything* but ask people to come to your show. Talk about *anything* except you! Ask them about themselves, their interests. No one cares about you. In New York City, locals walked past a guy who had just been stabbed, lying bleeding on the sidewalk.

## THAT'S YOU — METAPHORICALLY STABBED BY YOUR OWN MUSIC, ROLLING AROUND IN THE STREET LIKE AN OFF KILTER MOSH PIT OF ONE.

Like it or not, in today's musical ecosystem social media is *the* reason you'll be awesome or not, the reason you'll be in the right place with people to help you — or not. *You* have to get it right. **Stop** pretending it doesn't work or it somehow pollutes your artistic vision — that's just bullshit, laziness, and fear of the unknown.

**Stop** pretending you are waiting for everything to settle down so you can invest your time in *the* best social media platform, practice, or place. Those things are being developed, evolving and growing **now** — you need to be in it so you can discover the things that are important to you — get better at them, master them, and use them. Don't prattle on about Pinterest being shit. It is. Get over it.

**Stop** looking for the shortcut and the person to delegate it all to. That doesn't work. It only works if you (initially) do it all, create your voice and build up the friendships. It's not about just the number of followers — it's about connection. It's about hundreds of conversations, little blips, and memory boxes as you head down the corridor. A few tweet interactions can cement the permanence of a relationship. Just three or four back and forths create the bond.

If you're smart, you're always looking to streamline. You are trying to think of the one thing you can do that makes ten things happen. While there are helpful apps (detailed in this chapter along with insight and ideas) to help you make this fly, there aren't any big shortcuts. If you want to be able to tweet, “Help, I'm in Nashville and need a Cello, weed, whatever,” you have to build that shit up from the ground.

It is better to be present every day than just once a week. Always be yourself — authenticity is important. If you're an asshole that doesn't like people, then work on that. None of this will go anywhere if you don't.

In the end, it's not how you communicate, but what. The platforms change but the need for your message to cut through the clutter doesn't. The desire for connection will cut through the noise.

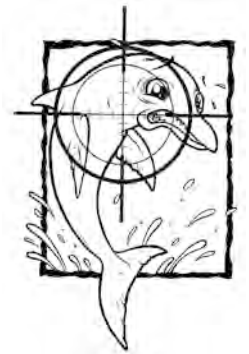


**PABSTTHEATER (Marc Solheim):** Social media can do so much for you if you're not constantly selling. #yellowphonemke

The key to winning at this game is just getting started. The great thing about diving in to whatever platforms you feel like right now is that you'll get better at it. You'll see which ones work for you, you'll discover that you *like* using that a certain one and you'll find that little bit of extra time for it. Do more of what works (for you) less of what doesn't. And, don't sleep, forget sleep for now.

## SHOOT THE DOLPHIN

Twitter is the new fax machine; Facebook is the new MySpace; MySpace was the new Friendster... if you want to take the time to look at some recent history, it's easy to predict where all of this is going — straight down the toilet. Social media platforms are ephemeral in their popularity. Use your smarts to get the email addresses of your friends, followers and fans (or, shit, physical addresses too so you can send a postcard). You'll be very glad you did, especially when Snapchat becomes the leading platform for the 65+ bunch. Just like a dolphin travels between air and water, your engagement needs to travel between digital and physical.



Outbound is out! Inbound is in!

— Andy Borowitz

## F.A.M.E.

The social media secret sauce for whatever the platform you are using:

**FIND:** The newest platforms/apps that appeal to you (and some that don't). Start to use them.

**ASSIMILATE:** Get the feel of it. Get over the hump of it. Start to spread your wings a little. Weed out the couple that don't feel good to you (after overcoming the hump because they'll all feel weird at first).

**MASTER:** Learn a few tricks and tips that make your expression of your self easier, quicker, more real, more real time.

**ENGAGE:** Engage people on that platform. Actually, you don't decide to do this — it happens if you are doing 1, 2, and 3.

There is a window with a new platform (new to the world, not new to you — if you're just discovering Twitter that doesn't count!). You'll find access to all kinds of people that you don't normally get. Gary Vaynerchuck makes himself available (but he's also a shareholder in Vine I think, so it's a little disingenuous). I've had exchanges with him, [Trainspotting](#) author Irvine Welsh, Gene Simmons in a bizarre time warp discussion about copyrights, and a writer for Dr. Who, Jason Arnopp (who contributed to this book!). So there is an advantage to using a new platform when it's nice and shiny — you can translate that attention in a smaller space to something real in the larger space. The new thing right now is going to be old old old laughably old by the time you read this. The thing that was awesome when you began reading this book is now MySpace hilarious. As long as you know, as Heraclitus said, that everything is changing all the time, you'll be fine. Make sure that includes your underwear, too.

There's a huge early adopter advantage to this. When you wade into unfamiliar shit, no one really knows that you're totally shit at it. You just have to be one tip ahead of everyone else to seem like a genius, and people like to hang with smart creative people who are totally up on shit.

# INSTAGRAM

I like Instagram (I'm @flowersfightforsunshine); it's great for sharing and sending photos to all of my other social media accounts. I can do that with Ripl, too. (More on that below.)

Think about your hashtag game (It is essential, but don't go bonkers.). Save lists of hashtags in separate docs so that you can cut and paste easy peasy. As with most of these platforms, try to post at least once a day. You have to interact and be polite. (Even on the platforms that weren't around when I wrote this.) Think about that Dale Carnegie quote: support, acknowledge, interact, connect.

Just like the hashtag on Twitter gets you twice the engagement, there are options on Instagram to build your profile, too. (Example: The s4s - shoutout for a shoutout!) As with all other platforms, do not buy followers. Who do you think you are. Donald Trump?

There are apps that will help – for a fee usually. (Iconosquare is something I'm checking out.) First, find where you like to be and where your audience likes to be, then choose the tools that help you do what it is that make you more you. There are photo collaging apps and video editing apps. As previously mentioned, find out who you are — do more of what works for you and less of what doesn't.

**Ripl** allows you to easily animate text over a pic or eight, creating a slideshow the internet sees that as a video. It's getting very easy to have hyper-awesome super-Hollywood pro stuff out there. Filters and animation can be applied to flyers and video. Get it. Use it. Abuse it. Delete it. Repeat it. Whatever. Using Ripl's pro version, I can save my as videos for later use. Otherwise they disappear.

Enough of the specifics; let's get bigger picture. There is cool stuff to help you with the platforms that you like, where your fans are, and rubbishy waste of time stuff that will creep into your repeating subscription charges if you don't watch out. These decisions are different for each individual, but there are places you should try and be. Anytime that you are doing a task repetitively, understand that someone has built an app so that you don't have to do that; someone else has made something to make your content look better or wonderfully worse in the best possible way. You just have to decide what's important and pay for it.

Be careful when responding to insults on social media — at least 20 years ago you'd have to write or type a nasty sarcastic letter and each hammer blow of the typewriter and necessitated ribbon changing was an opportunity for you to re-think your strategy — now, its very very easy to hit the send button before your mind has caught up with your fingers.

Why fight to stay above insults with a person that's beneath your contempt?

# CAN YOU EAT? THEN YOU CAN MASTER SOCIAL MEDIA!

## ARIEL HYATT

It happens to me all of the time when I teach artists social media. The face goes blank, the frustration begins to settle in and then the artist says it, “I just don’t have anything interesting to say.”

### REALLY?

I’m shocked by this every time. You are an artist; you do things we mere mortals are totally enamored by: you PLAY MUSIC, you write songs, you perform them in public! So *please*, do not tell me you have nothing interesting to say. I ain’t buying it.

All you are missing is a System for Social Media Success. Luckily, unlike sheer god-given musical talent, social media is a learnable skill.

As I was teaching my system to a client in my kitchen a few weeks ago over coffee and bagels and it HIT me.

### THE FOOD PYRAMID!

Remember that chart they brought out when we were in 2nd grade to show us how to eat well-rounded meals? I have re-tooled it for you so you can now participate on Social Media healthily! And you won’t even have to think about it – just follow along...

You wouldn’t eat only bagels all of the time. They are a treat once in awhile, but they are not healthy to eat every day – and a diet of only bagels would be boring!

Most artists are only serving their audiences bagels all of the time. Plain bagels. Over and over again.

Uninteresting.

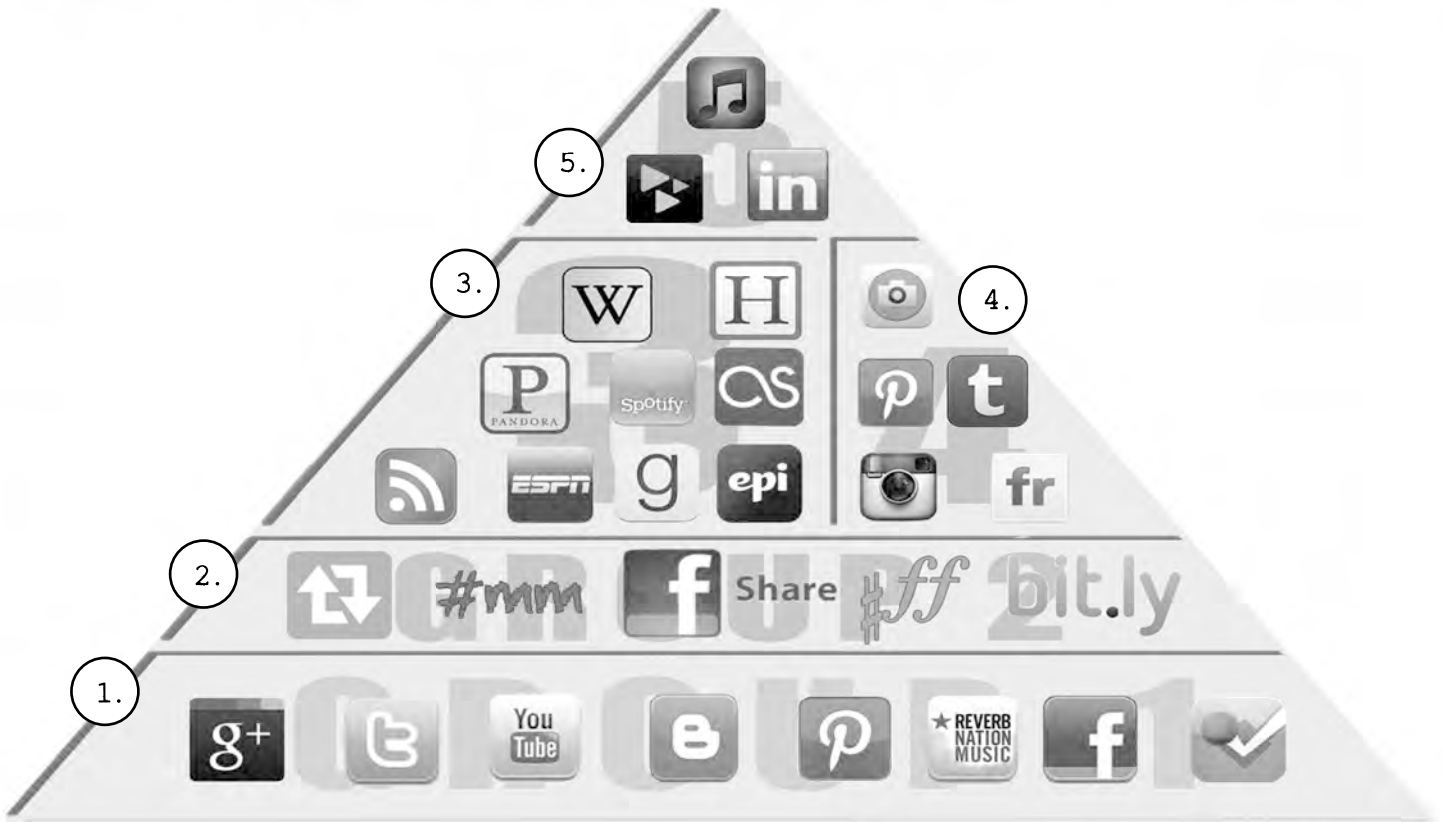
We want a burger, or a giant green healthy salad, we want some candy, Please give us protein! But you keep serving bagels, bagels, bagels!

These are five things that when used in concert with one another can help you ratchet up your social media effectively and manage it easily.

*See more from Ariel Hyatt about Your Three Communities later in the book.*



# CYBER<sup>PR</sup> SOCIAL MEDIA PYRAMID



## 1. DIRECT ENGAGEMENT, LIKE: BREAD, CEREAL, RICE & PASTA

WWW.CYBERPRMUSIC.COM  
FOLLOW: @CYBERPR

*Servings (Recommended Frequency): 3 – 4 out of every 10 posts.*

Make sure you're in a two-way conversation with people consistently.

**Facebook:** See something interesting something on their Facebook pages? Don't just "like", write a true comment about it and get more involved.

**Twitter:** Send messages to people or mention you are with them. Retweet (RT) comments you like by others.

**Blog Reading:** Create a Google profile and join communities of blog readers. Leave comments on blogs you like.

**Video:** Bonus! Make custom video comments or greetings with a Flip Camera; post them as comments or contributions. Subscribe to other people's channels, and comment on their videos.

**Location:** Create fun spots that relate to your band/music and check in. Interact with others when you are out and about.

## 2. SHINE A LIGHT ON OTHERS, LIKE: FRUITS & VEGETABLES

*Servings (Recommended Frequency): 3 out of every 10 posts*

All the best social media users know this and use it well. This takes all of the attention off of you and puts it onto others, and people will appreciate your kindness because you are recognizing them in front of new potential fans and followers and therefore helping them get known. Quote people you like by sharing their profiles and videos on Facebook and re-post on your blog. Link to articles and interesting things that catch your attention such as videos, photos etc.

#FF (Follow Friday), #MM (Music Monday) and RT'ing on Twitter -

Reprint pieces of things that they've written, or link to music players. Review albums – talk about why and how those albums influenced you by using <http://www.bit.ly> to track the effectiveness and to shorten your tweets.

## 3. CURATE CONTENT, LIKE: MEAT, POULTRY, FISH, BEANS, EGGS

*Servings (Recommended Frequency): 2 – 3 out of every 10 posts*

Content may be king but content curation is queen! The best part is you can set up an RSS reader to pull interesting content for you so you don't have to come up with anything brilliant – just select what you like and share it. And if it's interesting to you it's probably interesting to your community. Ask yourself: How do I spend time online? What do I read? Are there sites I visit daily? Add them to the RSS reader.

**Music:** Use Blip.fm, Song.ly, Jango, or LastFM to share music

**Recipes:** Post links to foods you like from Epicurious or TheFoodNetwork

**Media:** Post book reviews, music reviews or film reviews

**Blogs:** News, politics, celebrity gossip, parenting, fashion, art, sports – all make good topics for people to connect around

## 4. A PICTURE SAYS 1,000 WORDS, LIKE: MILK, CHEESE & YOGURT

*Servings (Recommended Frequency): 2 out of every 10 posts*

Visuals are extremely effective. And they mix up your strategy nicely. Take photos using your mobile, post them directly to Facebook or to your Twitter stream. Make a photomontage using Picasa [<http://picasa.google.com>] and post it on your blog.

I love Twitpic & YFrog because they are so easy to use and create instant Twitter integration.

Post videos on your custom Youtube channel, embed them on your blog and link them to your Twitter. They don't even have to be videos that you necessarily make on your own. They can be videos of artists you sound like or play with, videos that make you laugh, or subjects that are thematic to your music and important to you like a charity.

## 5. SHINING A LIGHT ON YOURSELF (AKA SELF PROMOTION) LIKE: FATS OILS & SWEETS (USE SPARINGLY!)

*Servings (Recommended Frequency): 1 out of every 10 posts*

Of course these are OK to do once in a while, not in an over-hypey, annoying way. Just like treating yourself to a great pastry or some fries: its OK – but not too often! It is after all, vital to tell people if you have an album coming out, a new track, a show, or anything that's newsworthy, noteworthy, and important for your fans and followers to know about. Don't forget about your specific calls to actions or these won't be fruitful.



# SOCIAL MEDIA

## RYAN MANNO

In an effort to help your band cultivate and communicate most effectively with an online audience, I offer up a personal list of social media dos and don'ts.

### DO TREAT YOUR BAND AS A BRAND.

Nike, Coca-Cola, Apple and your band all have one thing in common; they're brands. Music is a business and, whether you like it or not, you are the CEO. Operate your online platforms with the wisdom that we live and consume in a world where brand awareness has become currency. Brands, not things, sell.

The identity associated with your band is your brand. Who are you? What's your deal? Seriously. Tell me. Tell everyone.

For instance, when you see 'The White Stripes,' what comes to mind? Ex-husband and wife (or brother and sister?) dressed in red, white and black. Jack and Meg have expertly created simple and unique brand awareness, using only a hazy back story and a basic color palate.

Find your brand's story and tell it as succinctly, creatively and consistently as possible.

No, you don't need to wear matching uniforms on stage. But when I click thru your official site, MySpace and Twitter – they sure as hell better load at attention, uniform and matching. People trust cohesion, albeit subconsciously. Sync your message and think of my subconscious as a blank canvas, a clean slate ready to accept your brand as you've created it.

### DON'T BE DESPERATE.

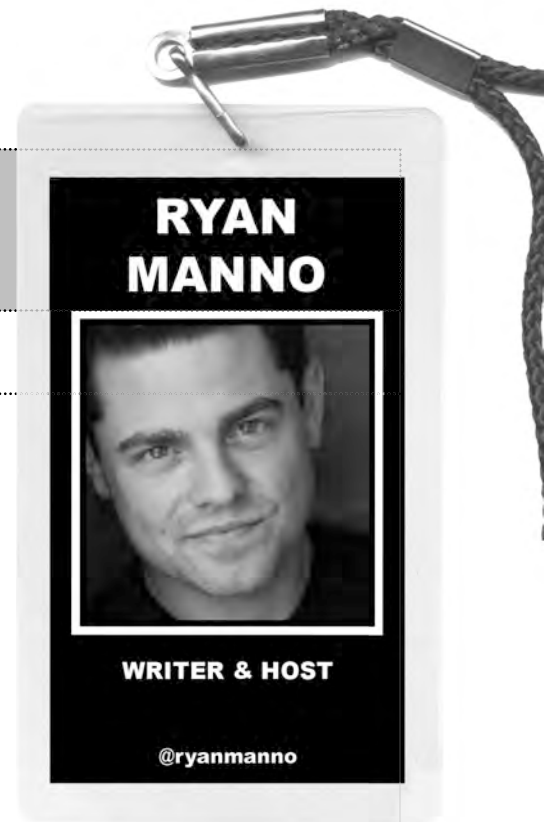
With the acceptance that you are indeed a brand, comes the responsibility of managing the message as such. If I check the Groupon Twitter page right now, I'd bet the farm and my firstborn that they aren't asking for more followers.

"OMG! Only 35 more to 14,000! Come on you guys. We need to hit 14,000 by lunch. Please RT!" Ugh. Un-follow. I'm out. Why would anyone care to see that? And why should I follow someone pumping out such lazy pollution?

**THERE IS NO QUICKER WAY TO BREAK TRUST AND LOSE RESPECT  
THAN TO APPEAR SO FUCKING PATHETIC.**

Your band doesn't need more followers. No one needs them. Shut up, stop whining and put pandering on permanent pause.

Care about the audience you do have. Not the one you don't. There's a reason you don't have them yet.



## DO GIVE ME A REASON TO FOLLOW.

Think about “needing followers” the other way and make potential followers need you. If I make that all important decision to invite you into my timeline, make me feel like it was worth it.

Look, if you are interesting and compelling enough, the followers will find you. Give me a Twitter exclusive song “just because” or a random 2-for-1 daily merch deal. Give away 5, 10, 20 guest list spots for your next show. Announce an impromptu show in a Burger King parking lot. Take a random follower on tour with you to document their experience. Be unpredictable.

Give me a reason to want to tell people what you’re doing and why they’d better start caring. Turn me into an empowered ambassador by engaging me and leading an army I’m proud to be a part of. Understand the importance of imploring your followers to be your soldiers, by giving them a reason to continue coming back to you. I’m loyal to brands that are loyal to me. Reward your audience and watch it grow.

I maintain that a happy, passionate and active batch of 100 is better than a lethargic legion of 1,000 who don’t and will never give a shit that you’re “bored, hungry and need an oil change.”

## DON’T CONFUSE THE BAND WITH YOURSELF.

I’ll use this example again – if we pull up the Threadless Twitter account right now, I would make that same bet that CEO Jake Nickell isn’t using his brand’s account to bitch about his job or ask what he should eat for lunch.

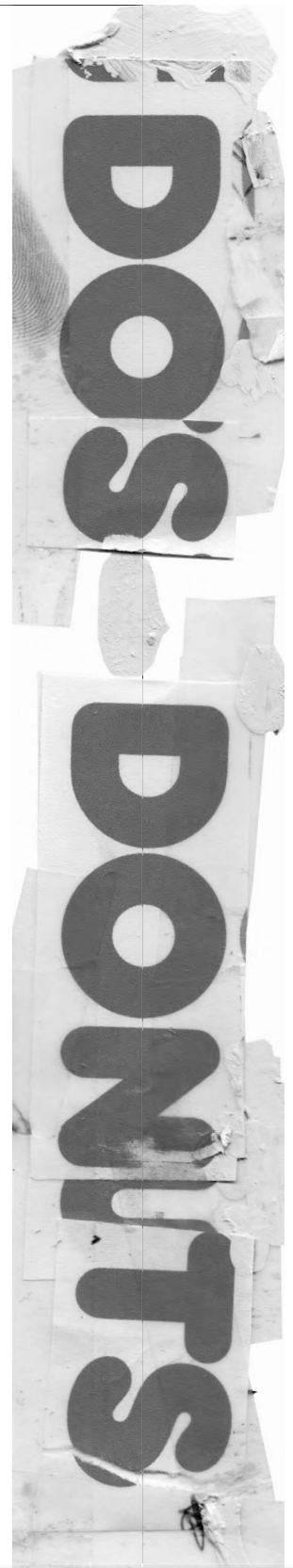
That’s what your personal accounts are for. And by all means, link to the parts of the sum. If I love your band, chances are high that I’ll want to know more about the lives of the people who make it up. And this is where I’ll expect and want to see a picture of your Grandma at Chili’s or if you finally got your furnace fixed.

## DO REMEMBER THAT PERCEPTION IS REALITY.

What you put out there is what people take in. If there were 4 people at your show last night, don’t tell me that. Try this instead: **“Thanks to everybody who came out to Metro last night. Great show. Great energy. We had an amazing time!”**

You aren’t lying. You’re thanking the four who were there. Now I’m wondering why I wasn’t and determined to be at your next show. Choose your words and context wisely. I’ll believe you.

Ultimately, my main point is to respect your band, keep it focused, remain engaged and stay smart.



As hard as it is to get people to spend money, it is much harder to persuade them to spend enough time listening to you to become a long-term fan.

– Roger McNamee

# THINGS PEOPLE DO WRONG ON FACEBOOK

## ANDREW WILKINSON

**ANDREW  
WILKINSON**



**MUSIC MANAGER,  
LABEL OWNER,  
DIGITAL STRATEGIST**

**DON'T UPDATE THEIR INFO TAB.** You should make sure this is filled at all times. Bio and links to your other sites: website, Twitter, YouTube, and most important an e-mail address. If you can't be contacted, how can someone offer you a gig or other opportunities?

**DON'T HAVE MUSIC ON THEIR PAGE.** It is very easy to add music to your site, with sites like RootMusic and ReverbNation offering music tabs. Even Bandcamp now offers a tab for streaming and selling your music within Facebook. Not making your main product available for fans and potential fans alike is a big mistake.

**POST DEMOS TO THEIR PAGE.** It may seem like I'm contradicting myself, but I'm not. There is a big difference between not posting music to your page and posting sub par music to your page. The former might deter people from clicking like where the latter is a sure fire way of ensuring that person never gives you a second chance. If you're starting out and still working on your music then you should hold off posting music until you are confident that it is good (exceptionally good!).

**SEND EVENT INVITES FOR EVERY SINGLE GIG EVERY SINGLE FRIEND.** The event facility on facebook has been overused to death. Facebook, knows this and have restricted how it works. It used to be that you'd send an invite and your fans would have to respond or it would sit like a constant reminder. But now your fans receive a simple notification, which most people ignore. Work out what gigs are important and what ones are not. Only send out invites to Single launches or send a link to a full tour listing. Everything else you should set up an event and simply link on your wall.

**DON'T ENGAGE THEIR FANS.** The whole point of Web 2.0 is interaction. Ask your fans questions, get their opinion. Use the questions option on your wall. Upload photos and videos to your wall and ask them to comment. This will allow their friends to see your posts too. You should also comment on your own posts. This encourages the two way conversation.

**DON'T ENGAGE WITH OTHER PAGES.** One of the great new changes with facebook in the last year is the ability to use facebook as your page. Under the Admins section on the top right of the page there is a link "Use Facebook As Band Name." This allows you to comment on other pages. (but not on peoples profiles). You should use this to have conversations with other bands, radio shows, bloggers etc... This will all add to greater awareness of your page.

**USE FACEBOOK AS THEIR MAIN WEBSITE.** If Myspace taught us anything, it was not to use a social networking site as our central hub. You could have 2000 like this week and a new site could pop up next week and everyone would abandon ship. This happened with both Mayspace and Bebo once Facebook started to become popular.

You should use Facebook as a means of driving traffic to your own website. Link to blog posts, music and videos on your site.

STOPS  
DON'TS  
DOES

# TWITTER

Amanda Palmer made \$19,000 using Twitter in one glorious weekend.

## TWEET IS THE NEW FAX!

Remember when faxes were the coolest thing on the planet and it didn't matter what shit you wrote on there - someone would be dislocating their back hanging upside down to see what was coming out of the other end... then the bulk faxes started then it was just trash lying on the carpet. *Don't* get wrapped up in the newest thing — it is what you are doing, not how you are communicating about it that matters. You can't do this stuff for a while and simply feel great when a new platform really takes off, gains traction or any of those wonderful phrases. We all know that the cool part is only separated from the shit part by, really, minutes.



## TWEET THE THING THAT YOU THINK THE PERSON THAT YOU WANT TO RETWEET YOU WOULD WANT TO SAY THEMSELVES

Then you are doing them the service of having them not blow their own trumpet.

**Link.** Then they can retweet you. There is a huge difference between retweeting what someone else has said and tweeting it yourself.

Sometimes I'll ask, "When is your gig?" It's a nice thing to do — they can respond with information. You are allowing them to be helpful instead of reposting again.

And, for fucks sake... **be present!**

Don't follow people just because they follow you!

## TOP 10 TWEET TIPS // NIC ADLER

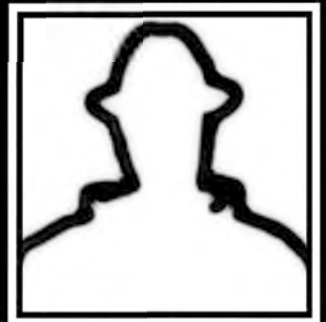
1. Find your voice.
2. Listen before you tweet.
3. Think before you tweet.
4. Content, content, content.
5. Timing is everything.
6. Be consistent.
7. Support others.
8. Use your tools.
9. Mind your manners.
10. Tweet.

**Q: What if I can't use Twitter?**

**A: I'd say find a better way to communicate with your fans, then. If you can't, maybe you should stop Twittering about your lunch and start providing useful information or social connection. If you can, why aren't you sharing this info with the rest of us?**

- Matthew Ebel

**NIC  
ADLER**



THE ROXY THEATRE

@nicadler

# THINGS BANDS DO WRONG ON TWITTER

## ANDREW WILKINSON

**DON'T UP DATE THEIR PROFILE.** It's so simple and so important, yet so many bands fail to do this simple task. You should post a link to your website. (Not Facebook, Myspace or Youtube) but your main website. You should describe your music in 2-3 words. You should name a couple of similar artists that you sound like, as you will show up in directories when someone searches such artists. Give a link to a sample your music, preferably a free download in exchange for an e-mail address. Upload a picture of band and not a logo (people are more likely to follow if they see a real face)

**DON'T TWEET REGULARLY.** There is no point on being on Twitter if you are not planning on using it. Unlike Facebook, Twitter works better when you post regularly, but try and make most or your tweets conversational rather than statements.

**AUTOMATE ALL THEIR TWEETS.** There are some automated Twitter accounts out there but they are usually breaking news, allowing followers to digest large amounts of info from a topic. But this does not have the same effect for a band. You need to be a person.

**AUTOMATE NONE OF THEIR TWEETS.** Although automation can deter followers, it can save you a lot of time adding to the number of tweets you send out. Eg. If you have a blog you can set it to automatically tweet when you publish a new post. Or if you upload a new video to youtube or add a new tour date (Be careful of the last one as uploading 10-20 tour dates at one time can fill up followers time line and annoy them).

**DON'T ENGAGE WITH OTHER USERS.** I've said this before and will keep saying it... Web 2.0 is all about interaction. If you're not engaging with others on Twitter, then you are wasting the service. Reply to people's posts, Retweet others tweets (try to use the RT @twitteruser rather than the Retweet link provided by Twitter, this way you can add your two cents at the beginning) Sending Music Monday (#mm) and Follow Fridays (#ff) is another way to award those who interact with you during the week.

**DON'T FOLLOW PEOPLE BACK.** Every few days you should take some time out and go through your new followers. If any seem interesting then you should follow them back (as long as they are human and not auto feeds). Use their name and maybe some info from their profile in the message, to show it's not an automated message.

**DON'T INVITE THEIR FRIENDS TO TWEET.** One of the easiest ways to dive into Twitter properly is to have tweet conversations with your real life friends. You are naturally use to having text conversations with them already. Once you get use to this you'll find it easier to start reaching out to others. It will also make you look approachable to others who will that your reply to tweets.

**DON'T USE HASHTAGS.** There are two ways you can use hashtags, first is to follow popular hashtags and join the conversation (you can find these in the discover section, but will need to scroll down below all the Bieber and One Direction tweets!). Following Later With Jools Holland or Glastonbury footage on TV you can make your views heard and gain new like minded followers. The other way is to have your own hashtag that your fans can use to join your conversation. This could be #singletitle or #albumtitle, release, a tour or competition.

Plus, a “#” changes the colour of the word that comes after it and gets you more attention.

**DON'T PROMOTE OFFLINE.** You should integrate Twitter with your live shows. Buy getting your fans to use hashtags or by uploading pics of people at your shows. Tweet before you go on a radio show and ask your followers to listen in and comment. Put your Twitter username on your flyers, business cards and at the bottom of all my e-mails.

**DON'T USE LISTS.** Lists seem a little excessive when your first starting out on Twitter but you'd be surprised how quickly you can lose track of your friends. Make a list for people you regularly interact with, another for other bands and one for media. This way if your off line for a few hours you can easily read through the important tweets. You don't have to follow someone to put them on a list and you can follow other peoples lists.

**DON'T USE IT TO SEEK OUT GIGS AND REVIEWS.** Twitter is one of the easiest ways to find Journalists, DJ, Promoters and other industry people and build a relationship. Use Twitter Search to find people you want to target and follow them, reply to their tweets, retweet them and send them interesting relevant topics. Only after you have built up a report should you direct them to your music and chances are they will already have looked before you do.

## ONE LAST THING

Twitter is a slow burner but if done right it's constant. Get even half of these right and you will be on your way to gaining followers and driving traffic to your website.



It is better to spend 1 hour each day on social media, rather than 7 hours on a Sunday.

# WELL, WHAT IS A GOOD DIGITAL MUSIC STRATEGY?

## VIRGINIE BERGER

### DEFINE YOUR OBJECTIVE

First of all, you can't throw yourself into marketing action, as small as it may be, without defining your objectives beforehand. It doesn't mean you have to draw a 5 years business plan. But you need to define the results you expect from your action. What is your objective behind your action? Is it to improve your online presence? OK, but what for? Touring? To be signed? Do you want to sell records, products relating to your music (i.e: merchandising), gig tickets? How many? Why are you on Twitter? What are your expectations?

At present, we are witnessing an excess of actions in the music industry. Are there any results at the end of the day? What is the most important key? Time spent on actions or the final results from the actions?

Most people get frustrated with their online results because they confuse tactic and strategy. It seems that they prefer getting into action, even before defining the reason of their actions. My father used to tell me:

**A VAGUE OBJECTIVE LEADS YOU TO PERFECT STUPIDITY.**

### BACK TO BASICS

Before starting off, let me remind you of a few tiny things:

- Not only do fans want to connect with your music, but they also want you to connect with them.
- Three steps for your expansion: getting attention, getting connected, and getting monetized.
- Adding value to what you create is the only way to compete with free of charge products.
- $Cwf + RtB = $$$$  (Connect with Fans + give them a reason to buy = monetization)

Why get attention and get connected to your fans? Because the biggest issue in the music industry is not actually about the price, but about the millions of content that is available. Nobody knows what to listen to and from what source.? Which is why being visible and creating a community space will give you a way to make money.

**YOU CAN'T FORCE PEOPLE TO GET INTO A RELATIONSHIP WITH YOU.  
BUT, ON A DAILY BASIS, YOU CAN PROVE TO THEM YOU ARE WORTH IT!**

So, let's get down to business:

**IF YOU ARE A BAND BUT DON'T HAVE A WEBSITE,  
THEN YOU HAVE JUST FAILED YOUR CAREER.**

## SEO IS NOT A DISEASE BUT A MEDICINE, ACTUALLY.

**RENEW YOUR CONTENT AND OFFER IT.** Most of artists' sites don't offer their fans and visitors a real experience on their websites. They are usually static and motionless, and rarely updated. Your site has to be a channel of diffusion and distribution. It allows you to get connected to your fans, to get to know them, follow them and interact with them.

You should update it on a regular basis, so it matches the image you wish to project. You have to offer: photos, videos, music (I take responsibility for it: offer music). Your fans and visitors chose to come to your website, so they can meet you. But if you are not around, the experience won't be rewarding for either of you. Fans won't be waiting for two years, or in between albums, to receive news from you. You have to be there.

Offer as much content as possible. Then again, OFFER... unknown recordings, studio or unplugged recordings... Get someone to shoot some footage of you, not only onstage but offstage as well, before or after a gig or of you discovering a town. Make podcasts explaining what inspires you. Don't hesitate to comment on your gigs. Allow your visitors to be able to contact you or comment everywhere. Wall, email, forum. Open your diary and update your gigs dates, TV and radio promotion.





# MOBILE: IT'S NOT JUST A CITY IN ALABAMA!

With all of the strategies we talk about in here — make sure that you are checking them on a mobile platform. That's where its all going. People tend to check them 150 times a day\*. Your shit needs to work on a phone/tablet/slurpee/whatever is in someone's hand. I was at a conference (duh!) and someone said SoLoMo – that's where things are going:

## SOcial — LOcal — MObile!

**Also from the same report:** More than 500 million photos are shared every day, the report said. Meeker expected that figure to double in the next year.

You don't need to be a super app programmer dude to take advantage of the mobile market – you can build your own very easily at band app. It's FREE and after you choose your background, some photos, some music, etc — boom! You are done!

*Artist Roadmap to Social Media*

THE ESSENTIALS	SHARE YOUR MUSIC	SELL YOUR MUSIC	TOUR DATES
YOUR OWN WEBSITE MAILING LIST FACEBOOK TWITTER YOUTUBE	ROOTMUSIC SOUNDCLOUD BANDCAMP VINYL REVERBNATION APPLE MUSIC	PLEDGE MUSIC VIBEDECK CHNL NIMBIT CDBABY TUNECORE	SONGKICK BANDSINTOWN ARTIST DATA EVENTFUL
BLOG/WEBSITE	SHARE YOUR VIDEOS	MAILING LIST	MEASURE
TUMBLR WORDPRESS SQUARESPACE FULLSCREEN VIRB BANDZOOGL	YOUTUBE VIMEO USTREAM LIVESTREAM JUSTIN.TV INSTAGRAM	FANBRIDGE MAILCHIMP TOPSPIN AWEBER CHAMPION SOUND	NEXTBIGSOUND GOOGLE ANALYTICS BUZZDECK HOOTSUITE

**TIP:** ONLY USE WHAT YOU CAN USE EFFECTIVELY  
FOCUS ON QUALITY, NOT QUANTITY OF YOUR NETWORKS

DATA + INFOGRAPHIC BY:  
@WEBMUSICGUY

RECEPTIVEMUSIC.COM



# 32

## EMAIL MARKETING

Don't skip this chapter — converting your Twitter/Facebook/Instagram/Tumblr friends/fans/followers to a place where you can send them your newsletter: tell them about shows, new shirts, a new release. Whatever happens to any of these platforms (remember MySpace?), this is an essential part of running your own business, managing your own career, creating your own future, and will be a part of any decision a larger entity makes about their potential involvement with you and your brand.

This area has just exploded with awesomeness recently — features that you wouldn't believe are now readily available, some for free! Let me ramble on and you can pull out the pieces that work for you

With *so* much being dependent on your subject line, why risk any mistakes! MailChimp has extensive information for you based on their last 220 million emails: words to avoid (like, surprisingly, FREE!) best words, best practices, a yardstick against other newsletters in your industry. I think they (or others) also have a service to check your letter for keywordliness (yes, I made that word up!) and spamminess.

**Obnoxious is the litmus test for creativity.**

MailChimp is free up to 2000 subscribers and can grow with you. You can track: recipients, opens, clicks (clicked on links in the email), redeems (it will track how many people completed an offer that was in the email). I think their theory is to just give you the basics you need. If you go with that, you'll still be overwhelmed by all of the things you need to be doing as you manage your own career, but slightly less overwhelmed than totally submerged.

Sent		Showing 1 to 10 of 13 entries				Search: <input type="text"/>	
	Date Sent	Subject	Recipients	Opens	Clicks	Redeems	
<a href="#">Details</a>	July 16, 2014	Western US tour with Patty Griffin; OKC show Aug. 1	1174	664	132	0	
<a href="#">Details</a>	July 7, 2014	July Newsletter	1097	686	243	0	
<a href="#">Details</a>	June 26, 2014	Vinyl "Songs" orders	19	14	7	8	
<a href="#">Details</a>	June 24, 2014	COme to my	1062	711	166	1	
<a href="#">Details</a>	June 10, 2014	Slight delay in shipping Vinyl "Songs"	19	12	0	0	
<a href="#">Details</a>	May 27, 2014	John Fullbright News: "Songs" available today!	877	454	182	0	
<a href="#">Details</a>	May 27, 2014	John Fullbright News: "Songs" available today! (TEST)	7	1	15	0	
<a href="#">Details</a>	May 19, 2014	John Fullbright News!	875	582	236	0	
<a href="#">Details</a>	May 12, 2014	John Fullbright Tour Update	1	1	0	0	
<a href="#">Details</a>	May 11, 2014	John Fullbright Tour Update	5	5	0	0	

## A / B TESTING — MIND-BOGGLINGLY AWESOME!

MailChimp has another awesome feature — let's say you have 10,000 emails (or any amount, really. I'm just trying to make the math easy on both of us.). Rather than agonizingly choose between the last two subject lines, you can A/B test! MailChimp allows you to enter two subject lines and set 1000 as the test number. Then, whichever one gets the most opens, it will use that one on the rest of the mail out! That means if one gets 5% opens and the other 10%, then your mail out will get 950 opens instead of 450!

That is *huge*, especially if you start to factor in conversion rates. If you have great items to sell, clearly pictured, at great prices and great information, this could translate into a huge result.

The larger players here, Salesforce, Constant Contact, are great to aspire to. These are the same tools used by the Obama campaign, so they are large and more than capable.

Use software to help you and your fans!

Users on social media are for rent. The only way to own your fans is through an email newsletter. If Facebook/Twitter go the way of MySpace and something new comes along (as you know it will), can you easily transition your fans to a new platform? Email is the only way to do this.

— Punk Rock Panel, SDMT

# 10 EMAIL MARKETING TIPS FOR MUSICIANS

## DAVID ROSE

**1 BEGIN WITH A GOAL IN MIND** – Why exactly are you sending out emails to your fan list? This is a very important question to think through before hitting the send button on your next newsletter. Hint: Email newsletters are a great way to maintain and strength relationships with existing fans. Also note, email is a very poor tool for trying to recruit new fans. Focus your email efforts on providing as much value to your fans as possible.

**2 GO PRO** – If you are serious about building relationships with your fans and marketing your music, using a professional email solution is a must. Sending emails to fans from your Gmail account might seem like a simple solution, but it's not! There are several companies that provide professional email solutions designed specifically for musicians including, FanBridge, ReverbNation and Topspin to name a few. Professional email solutions are a great investment of time and money. Go pro today!

**3 SEGMENTATION** – Segmentation is a term used to describe a targeting strategy in email marketing. Targeting the right fans with the right message is critical to your long-term email marketing success. For example, don't email everyone on your entire list about an upcoming show you've booked in Memphis! Pull a list of your fans in a particular market, Memphis for example, and only email them about the initial show announcement and a potentially a follow-up reminder or two as the show date approaches. Segmenting your audience helps prevent "list fatigue" from your subscribers that can lead to the dreaded "unsubscribes" from your list. Additionally, segmenting provides real value to the people you've targeted and are most interested in a particular piece of information (fans in Memphis hearing about a local, upcoming show for example).

**4 PERSONALIZATION** – Remember that whole "building a relationship with fans" goal? A little personalization in an email can go a long way with fan goodwill and marketing effectiveness. Emails that begin "Dear David" (John, Kate, etc.) are much more personal and effective than emails that begin without a greeting or with just "Hey fans". Most email marketing tools make automatically including your fans first name in the greeting quite simple. ReverbNation even has a tool that will search the Internet and find the names of your fans if you only have their email address.



Your mailing list is the corner stone of the church you're building. This is why Ticketmaster has power — they have your addresses! This will give you the ability to communicate directly with your fans and have a great, well attended show even if there is no rave preview in the local-paper.

**5 FREQUENCY** – Be consistent with your email communications but be very careful with the frequency they are sent out. I recommend consistently emailing your entire fan list on a monthly basis and rarely more often than that. It's ideal to send out your monthly email on the same day each month, the first Tuesday of each month for example. Emailing your entire list too frequently will ultimately lead to lower open rates and higher unsubscribe rates. Twitter, Facebook and blogs are much better tools for more frequent communications.

**6 CONTENT MATTERS** – Don't forget that your fans are music fans! Always be sure to include your music for download or streaming and videos in your emails. Providing exclusive content for members of your list is a great way to keep fans engaged and looking forward to getting your next email. Don't sweat the quality of your content too much. A live video shot with a flip cam or a new song recorded in your living room can turn out to be real fan pleasers.

**7 GIVE TO GET** – If you want something from the fans on your list be prepared to offer them an incentive in return. For example, if you want fans to join your street team or vote for your band in an upcoming contest offer them a free MP3 download of a new song as a way of saying “thanks” for helping.

**8 ANALYTICS RULE!** – Another advantage of using a professional email tool is the analytic reporting they provide on how your fans respond to your emails. Monitoring key statistics such as open rates, new subscriptions and unsubscribe rates will help you better understand the effectiveness of your email marketing efforts. If you send out an email that results in a high unsubscribe rate you did something your fans didn't like. Figure out what went wrong and be sure not to make the same mistake again.

**9 CROSS PROMOTION** – Always cross promote the other places where you connect with fans in your emails. If you have a band website, Twitter feed, Facebook Fan Page or blog be sure to always include links to these sites in your emails. Also, make it easy for your fans to sign up for your email list by including an email list signup option everywhere you have an online presence.

**10 NO SPAM** – It is very important that you NOT add people to your email list who did not personally sign up for it. Remember, emails are great tools for maintaining and strengthening fan relationships. Email is a highly ineffective as a tool for obtaining new fans. Adding unsuspecting names to your email list will only foster a negative impression of you from potential fans and might even get you dropped by your email provider. Don't do it!



**A purchased list is a dead list.**

– MailChimp



**solobasssteve:** “to unsubscribe, please reply with the word unsubscribe” - no, you get a proper mailing list, or just don't add me to your list w/out asking



# 33 WEBSITES

Websites used to be the domain (Ha! Geddit?) of the nerdy set, the programmers, the people who would make sure that they didn't tell you about all of the shit so you'd have to keep calling them. Now, it isn't. There are so many places you can go to build *working* websites, it's nuts — and you should — Wix, Weebly, SquareSpace and WordPress all spring to mind. One of the guys from Google recommends Wordpress. They have SEO smarts built in, podcasting, and the ability to handle video, too.

I'm just getting to grips with my SquareSpace and it seems slick as hell. They added audio, and by the time you read this they will have added more — they all will. I know SquareSpace generates 17 or 19 versions of each photo you upload so that whatever device is being used to access your shit, it looks correct. I'm not saying the others don't do that — I'm just telling you some of the things I have learned in this field. SquareSpace has a function to export from their site so if you find you need to migrate to the infinite possibilities of WordPress you can, but...

**IF YOU ARE LIKE ME, THE WORDS “INFINITE POSSIBILITIES” REALLY MEAN ME SITTING AT MY DESK CRYING AT 2AM NOT BEING ABLE TO DO ANYTHING.**

Start simple, build, succeed, do more of what works and less of what doesn't.

Band Zoogle gets you going quick. The important thing is, as always, *you* need to know who you are. It's pointless if the site is great for loading up photos in three languages, but you don't take photographs and all of your fans are in Indiana. **Get the platform that has the things you know you need.**

**Big Cartel** (*example below*) handles a lot of store functions super easily, putting the most popular items to the top (that's awesome) and handling all kinds of shopping cart stuff for you. You just have to load up a couple of pics and mis-spell the description of the items and BOOM you are up and running in an hour.

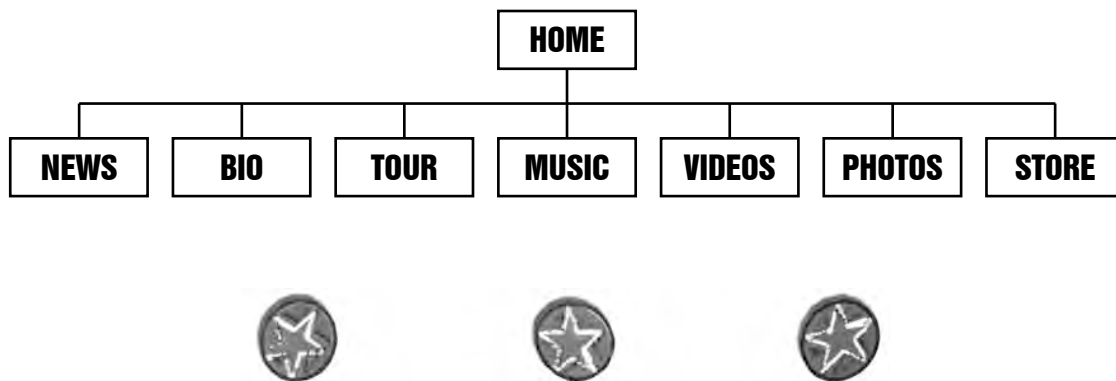
Make sure the platform is something you can use yourself. I have learned enough to know that if *you* can't put stuff up on the site, then it's all really meaningless. It needs to be a close to real time interface between you and your fans, and the insertion of another person and their schedule can just trash the timeliness and relevance of what you are doing.



# BUILDING WEBSITES

## LLOYD AUR NORMAN

The main thing I tell newbies is to not be intimidated by building websites. The most important part of the process is the planning before you build your website. If you don't have a proper call to action and an easy to navigate website, then all the graphics and bells and whistles are pointless and pretty annoying. A simple sitemap and a survey of your needs keeps your project in check and the technology becomes a way to get from point a to point b instead of some complicated roadmap where you can take any number of wrong turns.





# 5 THINGS FOR MUSICIANS TO CONSIDER BEFORE BUILDING A WEBSITE

## BRIAN JOHN

As artists, we all know the importance of maintaining a web presence. As social media continues to evolve, what remains constant is the need of a web “home base”, a space that is your own. It is critical that this web presence not be subject to the whims of Facebook developments or the limitations of a Twitter profile page.

Since I've begun the development of my own website, I've had to think in a completely different way about the web, and how it works. I've run into a few questions that, had I considered earlier, would have made this process a lot easier and less time consuming. It's very easy to say “I want a website”, but if you ask yourself these questions you will not only build a better site, you will also learn a lot about yourself and your brand.

**1 WHAT DO YOU WANT YOUR WEBSITE TO DO?** This is a critical question, because answering this properly will dictate much of the design and functionality of your site. All websites need to connect with fans, but how do you, as an artist, want to do this? What will your call to action be when a fan visits your site? Do you want them to purchase something, tell their friends to expand your following, follow your blog, or something else entirely? While all of these aspects are important, focusing on one will provide a direction for your users, and you as you design your site. This is not to say that your focus will not change in the future - that is the beauty of owning your own website. You can adapt it as your goals progress!

**2 IS IT INTUITIVE?** Navigation on a site is almost as important as the content itself. What good is having an amazing store-front if no one can find it? How about that last show you did - what good is thanking your fans who attended if it gets lost in the links? Start visiting the sites of other artists, some who you are not familiar with, and pay attention to your experience as you click around. Put yourself in the mind-set of someone who knows nothing about the artist, someone who is a fan, and someone who is a superfan. As you do, take notes on what was easy, and what didn't work so well - learn from their mistakes!

**3 IS IT MANAGEABLE?** There are some amazingly sophisticated websites out there, but you need to design something that you can manage with your own resources and time. If you or your group has a dedicated web manger, you can go as big and complicated as you like! More than likely, though, you will be responsible for taking care of this site by yourself. You need to make sure that the site you develop is not only something you know how to update, but also something you can update easily and often. Content is king, and nothing turns a potential fan off more than old or out of date information.

**4 IS IT SOCIAL?** Now more than ever, all aspects of your web presence need to talk to each other. The less time you spend updating multiple areas of the web, the more time you have to devote to your music! Make sure that your site can push notifications to

**BRIAN  
JOHN**



**PIANIST & COMPOSER**

Facebook, Twitter, and all your other social media outlets. Also, make it easy for your visitors to share your site, and its contents, with their social network. Strategically place links to Facebook and Twitter, so that a fan never has to leave your site to tell their followers how great you are!

**5 IS IT YOU?** Ultimately, people will come to your website to find out more about you. Somehow, you have caught their interest enough for them to seek you out. Thus, you want to be sure that every element reflects who you are as a person, and as an artist. Also, be aware of the type of fan you are trying to attract and consider how your presentation will meet, or defy, their expectations.



## WEBSITE DOS AND DON'TS

### DAVID DUFRESNE

- Do own your own .com website and maintain it yourself
- Do build your mailing list and be smart about you use it
- Do make your website the hub of your online strategy, and create amazing content for it.
- Do use social media to engage fans and bring them to your site
- Do sell music and merch directly to your fans from your website.
- Don't focus on acquiring Facebook "Likes" or Youtube "Views". E-mail addresses are gold.
- Don't think that a blog is a website (though your website should have a blog)
- Don't outsource your online presence to someone else
- Don't spam. Ever.
- Don't think any of this matters if your music and performing isn't incredibly good.



**DAVID  
DUFRESNE**



**HEAD OF STRATEGY  
AND GROWTH  
at BANDCAMP**  
@DavidDufresne

# YOUR WEBSITE

## VIRGINIE BERGER

Everything goes very fast. What is hype now might not be in a near future (Don't believe the hype, never!).

MySpace was supposed to revolutionize the music industry. Now, it's Facebook (if you don't have your fan page honey, then walk on the wild side), Twitter...

Some years ago, it looked very chic to own your MySpace URL. Not anymore. Twitter does. OK, but where will be Twitter in a few months time or a few years time? And what about the augmented reality? What for exactly?

To sum it up, what will you gain from it? ROI (Return On Investment) must be higher than your time spent on your action making. If not, it would mean you made a mistake about your action.

### THIS IS WHY YOUR WEBSITE HAS TO BE THE CORE OF ALL YOUR ONLINE STRATEGY.

Whatever exists, social networking, blogs, micro-blogs, your website only must be at the centre of it all. Micro-blogging will never replace blogging. Social media will never replace your website. Staying uniquely on MySpace will *never* get you to know your fans. Social media is like a display that should lead them somewhere else. Mind you, **social networks and your website are perfectly complementary**. You need them all. Your external presence and outwards links must lead to your website.

**1 MUSIC HAS GOT TO BE CENTRAL.** It might sound obvious, but I can ensure you that most of the time it is not.

**2 IF YOU ARE NOT SURE ABOUT WHICH PLATFORM TO USE, TRY SOUNDCLOUD.** Their Player is even customisable.

**3 LET YOUR FANS UPLOAD AND EMBED THEIR OWN VIDEOS, PHOTOS, REMIXES, COMMENTS, ETC...**

**4 YOU MIGHT WANT TO USE WORDPRESS AS A TOOL FOR PUBLICATION.**

**5 DON'T FORGET YOUR "SHOPPING" PAGE.** A tool like Bandcamp will take care of everything. I would like to lure you on Exsonvaldes French group Bandcamp. Now Bandcamp combines on your website.

**6 YOUR WEB PAGE DESIGN HAS TO BE LIGHT AND FAST.**



Product	Price	Other Choices
RADITUDE iTunes PASS	\$20	iTunes CD (Standard) - \$9.99
STANDARD CD + BLUE SNUCCIE	\$30	Deluxe CD (Only) - \$19.99
...BUT NOT THE KITCHEN SINK	\$150	\$75 - Deluxe CD + Photo Book + Tie-Die Snuccie \$45 - Deluxe CD + Photo Book

**7 DROP FLASH.** It is a SEO jilt. It gives sore eyes and prevents navigation from a mobile. You can try CSS. Flash, for a whole website, was OK in 2002...

**8 DROP ANY COMPLICATED THINGS THAT WILL FORCE YOUR VIEWER TO WAIT FOR 5 MINUTES BEFORE GETTING ON YOUR SITE.** (S)he wants to see you rapidly. Don't we live in a simple era? iPod is a rectangle with a circle. Google is a research application. Internet users are experimenting and want it to be fast. A five minute loading time might flatter the artist ego, but you are losing contacts here.

Best artist sites: [www.nin.com](http://www.nin.com), [www.weezer.com](http://www.weezer.com), [www.fanfarlo.com](http://www.fanfarlo.com), [www.cyrilpaulus.com](http://www.cyrilpaulus.com).



Squarespace has some really great templates, includes audio and makes it super easy to have mobile happening — for instance — any picture that you upload is re-worked 19 ways so that they all look good on all devices.

The Grid just launched and says it is a program that uses artificial intelligence to just make your site as you throw stuff at it... sounds awesome — unless you are a coder!

**FUCK.**

*This extra large fuck brought to you by Katie Crain.*

# 34 SEO



I'm not an expert, but it seems to me that this is the chart that you need to be paying attention to: your rankings. The visibility of your site is affected by so many things that you are in control of or can stimulate, strategise and party-ise!

Getting people involved, commenting, and linking pays dividends anyway, so why not spend some time working on it. Having said all of that, I'm probably that first person reading this that should pay more attention to it. As in anything these days,

## **DON'T THINK THAT TRICKS AND BULLSHIT TAKE THE PLACE OF AUTHENTICITY.**

They don't. Do it right. Be awesome. Read what these smarter folks than me have to say about it. I'll be reading right along side you.

# SEO IS THE NEW A&R

## GARY KUZMINSKI

After toughing it out in the studio for the last six months you've battled egos, you've battled booze, you've neglected your significant other and you've spent your last dime recording your new release. Now that your album is finally in the can and ready to go, what are you going to do?

Your master plan is to use Tunecore or one of the other digital music services to get your "tracks up on iTunes". Guess what? So is everyone else. You are guaranteed nothing and unless you know someone on the inside to pull a HUGE favor for you (meaning that you will owe a HUGE favor in return), you have no assurance that your music will even get heard. The only play that your music will end up getting is the traffic that you drive to it by annoying your "friends" on Facebook and Twitter. This is not the best of plans. Certainly there has to be a better option? You're in luck, there is and chances it is a tool that you use each and every day.

Ask yourself, "How would I go about finding what I want on the web?" and the answer becomes all too obvious. Search engines. It shouldn't come as a surprise to you that Google Is the #1 search engine in the world but are you aware that YouTube comes in at #2? Keeping this in mind it is best to think of everything as search from here on out.

The simple fact is that 80% of consumers use search engines to do research before buying anything, thus you greatly increase finding your audience if they can find you. Sounds great, now what?

You once were lost, but now you're found.

Before we get started you will want to familiarize yourself with a few terms: Search Engine Optimization (SEO) and keyword. Think of these as the language that describes your media/content to the user and the search engines. More appropriately it is the actual language that people are using to find your content, not the language that you think they are using.

**Please note: This article simply serves as the most basic of introductions to the world of SEO (search engine optimization). There are several awesome FREE resources available online, some of which I have listed at the end of this piece. Keep in mind that search engine algorithms change all the time - with that being said, I invite you to jump down the rabbit hole and enjoy the ride.**

If your media and content are not searchable then people cannot and will not find you.

## IF PEOPLE CANNOT FIND YOU, THEN YOU DO NOT EXIST.

Perhaps an even worse fate than not existing in the world of search is that your competition probably does. Not good, you lose.

**GARY  
KUZMINSKI**



**CO-FOUNDER OF  
JAGOFF PUBLISHING**

@JaGoFFmusic

Showing up in the search engines is one thing, showing up in the search results where people are actually looking and can easily find you is something entirely different.

As of this writing, 89% of users tend to only view the first page of a Search Engine Results Page (what we will refer to as SERP from this point on). 75% of those folks don't even bother to scroll down to the bottom of the first page - meaning they only view above the fold. Translation: People tend to only view the first five or six results before refining their search terms and move on. (For those keeping score only 8% of people tend view the second page of SERP).

To further complicate things you are competing with a variety of returns and media (news, paid ads, images, videos, Twitter feeds, 3rd party music sites, etc.) SERP real estate is shrinking as we speak and then of course there is mobile (a story for another time). The SEO train is not going to be slowing down anytime soon, so you may as well jump on.

Given that 75% of folks are only viewing the first few returns in SERP – it is clear that this is where you need to be. This isn't 1998 and showing up on the 2nd or 3rd page simply doesn't cut it. The solutions are many-fold and there are no guarantees that your site will even show up on the first page of SERP . Even if our website begins to rank, you are not guaranteed what landing page will you end up ranking for you? Much of this is out of your control; but you can attempt to influence it through the proper SEO technique.

The first thing to keep in mind is that Google does not care about you, Google does not care about your music or your website. They owe you nothing and you need them. That Google does care about is the user, how relevant your information is to the user and the overall user's experience. This is how search engines make money – by serving relevant ads (PPC - Pay Per Click). You want the search engines to like you, so if you are going to play - it is best to play by the rules. If you don't play by the rules you run the risk of getting Google slapped and then you're done for. Don't even think about trying to get over by using sneaking techniques (black hat), because you will always lose. Slow and steady wins the race. Stay white hat.

SEO primarily deals with what is known as organic returns. Organic is good. You want organic. You need organic. Organic simply means the returns that show up naturally within the SERP. You do not have to pay for placement; they do not read as ads, they are ranked by relevancy (among many other factors) and consequently hold more weight and value to the end user. Users don't tend to click on paid ads because they view organic as trusted and what they came for in the first place. Users are just like you, because you are a user. Got it? Good.

SEO is ALWAYS evolving and is as much art as it is science. It is best to think of it as a balancing act between optimizing your site to be user friendly (reads well) and so that there is enough keyword rich info for the search engines spiders to digest (in that order).

## **WHAT ARE KEYWORDS?**

Whether you are aware of it or not, every time that you search for something online you are using keywords or key phrases. These are the key words that lead you to whatever it is that you are looking for. Think of keywords as the intention of the user. It's pretty simple.

Keywords come in a two varieties, primary keywords and secondary keywords. Primary keywords are just that, the primary words that you want people to be able to find you with. "Entertainment Lawyer", "Music Producer", etc. Primary keywords are usually used in your web page titles, URL structure and site description,



etc. Secondary keywords are more specific and help the user drill down to the more specific content that they are looking for: “Chicago hip-hop producer”, “drum and bass beats instrumental”, etc. These secondary keywords get peppered in your headlines, body copy, tags, alt image tags, etc. The main role of secondary keywords is to support your primary keywords.

Every page of your online property portfolio offers you another opportunity to attempt to highlight another aspect of what it is that you are offering to the public. You want to make the most of it and expand the conversation across as many pages as you can. Each and every page that gets indexed by the search engine spiders has the potential to show up as a landing page in SERP and offers you the chance to engage a user in whatever it is that you are trying to interest them in. Use it.

While the basic idea behind keywords is simple the process can be very time consuming, it takes quite a bit of research, analysis and continuous trial and error. A great place to start experimenting is by using the Google Keyword Tool and Google Insights for Search to begin building your keyword lists. Spend some time familiarizing yourself with these tools and don't be afraid to experiment. Start by plugging in various words and phrases that relate to a specific page and then you can begin building your basic keyword lists. You will be surprised where this will lead you. In some cases you might find a new aspect of the business that you can exploit to your benefit. Both of these tools have many uses outside of just keyword development.

As mentioned earlier, SEO is an ongoing process. If you are using a proper Analytics tool, like Google Analytics (it's a freebie) you can get a better idea of how people are finding you, what pages they are hitting, so on so forth. From there you can refine your keyword list and further optimize your site.

**NOTE:** Language varies from geographic location to location; even within the United States (Is it “soda” or “pop”? Is it “box” or “boxes”? “Funk” or “funky”? “Sex” or “sexy”?). Each keyword and key phrase has drastically different search returns. Bigger is not always better. Relevancy is **always** better.

**TIP:** While Google Keyword Tool will help you discover and refine your keyword list, Google Insights for Search can aid in showing where exactly where these conversations are taking place.

**HINT:** It is usually not where you think. If you are a techno group based in St. Louis, you may discover that the conversation on this topic is heavily concentrated in Warsaw, Poland. This is helpful information if you are planning to build a database of potential music blogs or writers to hit up. It is also very useful if you are launching a Facebook or AdWords campaign. If you want to catch a fish, it is always best to fish where the fish are.

#### THINGS TO CONSIDER WHEN BUILDING YOUR KEYWORD LISTS

Singular vs. Plural	box, boxes
Geo location	Chicago house music, Detroit Techno music, Summer music festivals in NYC
Typos	tshirt, t shirt, tee shirt
Terms & phrases	most people use 2-3 (or more) words when searching “fix a flat tire”
Description variables	Funny, political, protest, scary
Synonyms	movie, film, video, documentary, animation, DVD
Modifiers & descriptors	black t-shirt, womans t-shirt
Acronyms	NYC, CBOT, USA, SXSW
Terms that your competition are using	Just because they are using them, doesn't mean you should
Terms that your clients are using	Probably not the terms you think
Longtail Keywords	women's red leather high heel pumps size 5

**QUESTION:** So now that you have toiled long and hard over your keyword lists, what exactly are you going to do with them? Answer: Everything.

PLACES TO INCLUDE YOUR KEYWORDS	
Domain name	if applicable. *if you are registering a new domain, register it for a number of years. Google likes that.
Website page titles	You are allowed about 70 characters, place your keywords/phrases in front. Do not stuff or be otherwise SPAM-y!
URL structure	ie.myband.com/t-shirts/bandname-womans-black-tshirt.html
Page descriptions	this appears underneath your page title in SERP and describes your page's content to the user and search engine. The viewable character count is about the size of tweet
Headlines	H1, H2, etc
Body copy	primary and secondary keywords
Alt Image Tags	Search engines cannot read images. Alt tags describe photo contents to search engines
File names	Band-name-live-chicago-pitchfork-music-fest-date.jpg
Blog posts	headlines/body copy/ tags
Social Media Properties	YouTube, Vimeo, Twitter, etc // hashtags/filenames/tags/descriptions/titles/etc
Track metadata	where applicable
Google AdWords	
Facebook Ads	

**NOTE:** When performing SEO, you want to make it enticing for the user. If your copy reads robotic, users are simply not going to click on your links no matter how great your keyword selections are. SEO is all about balance.

### **A QUICK NOTE ABOUT FLASH: DON'T USE IT!**

Search engines cannot read it and your site will basically be invisible. Unless you are using a third-party player like Rootmusic, Reverb Nation or SoundCloud to supplement your already optimized page information - Flash is probably a bad idea. Flash is good for making cartoons & games, if that is what you are using it for than more power to you. As far as building a site with it – don't do it.

### **A QUICK NOTE ABOUT SOCIAL MEDIA:**

In many cases, your social media properties will out rank your official website - get over that quick. If you are like the vast majority of the human population, you spend a large chunk of your time on the social networks, as opposed to visiting a specific band's website. It should come as no surprise to you that we no longer live in a website-centric world and at the end of the day: Who really cares how someone finds you? The important thing is that they have and that you give them a clear call to action as to what to do next.

In this day and age, having a solid social media plan is equally important to any endeavor and lucky for you that the social nets play an important part in your overall SEO strategy. This is a story for another time. Long

story short, you want to make sure that **all** of your online properties (digital assets) are properly integrated and that they cross reference each other in a way that is seamless to the user. Google likes this.

Many of the fundamental principles of SEO that we've touched on also parallel the world of social media. As with your site, pay attention to your titles, descriptions, headlines, tags, etc. Remember that *everything* is search-based and has an equal chance of showing up as a landing page in SERP. Make use of it.

A good rule of thumb:

## **IF IT IS MORE THAN ONE CLICK AWAY, YOU WILL LOSE THEM.**

Best to make the distance from “point a” to “point b” as short as possible. If somebody shares your video/music on Facebook or other social media properties, you want the important information to be visible within the content being shared (without being SPAM-y). NOTE: Avoid making anything that resembles an ad as it will prevent people from wanting to share it – unless you are doing a “Slap-Chop” mash-up/remix, don't do it.



### **Links to FREE SEO tools & resources:**

- Google Keyword Tool: <https://adwords.google.com/select/KeywordToolExternal>
- Google Insights for Search: <http://www.google.com/insights/search/>
- SearchEngineLand.com
- SearchEngineWatch.com
- SEOChat.com
- SEOMOZ.com
- SEOBook.com

# TIPS & STRATEGIES YOU AREN'T HEARING FROM HIGH PRICED CONSULTANTS

## TIM TOOMEY

I'm not going to add to the gigantic list of great SEO resources and basic SEO 101 strategies that you can easily find all over the web. Instead, I'm going to go over a few secrets that I have developed specifically for my online store, Assault Apparel, that will help those of you who are like me and don't have any sort of money to use for marketing and PPC like some of the other t-shirt shops around town.

### THINK LIKE A ROBOT

#### LINK TEXT, TITLE TEXT, CONTENT KEYWORDS, LANDING PAGES

A search engine spider uses a lot of information about your site to determine your search engine rankings. Using links with system text pertaining to your search term is a big factor. Using landing pages with specific keywords in your page title, as well as throughout the text in your actual page is another thing that gives you proper keyword density pertaining to the page titles.

Disable your site's stylesheet to get an idea of what a search engine is seeing when it comes to your page. The link text and text position on the site is very important. Be sure to have your links near the very top of the page and to carve out your site's links by putting `rel="nofollow"` on your anchor tags associated with pages you do not want spidered. This cuts down on the number of links on the page, thus giving you more weight on your pertinent links.

My links all use the word "t-shirts" as well as link to my landing pages with the same keywords sprinkled throughout the content. I would say that about 2% of your pages content should contain your keywords. Anymore than 2% is overkill.

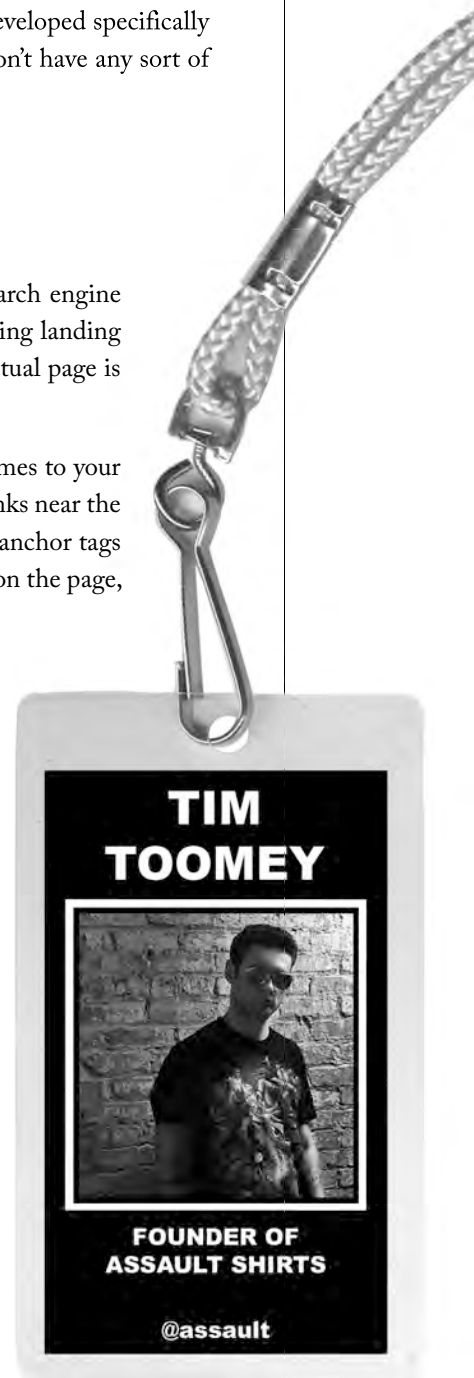
For example, you're never going to show up in the first 10 results for the keyword t-shirts, or tshirts, or even shirts. If you're just starting out, there's no point in trying to compete for this word. It's already dominated. The words you should be trying to get in the top ten for, are other searches with the word, "t-shirt" in them.

### MYTHS AND IRRELEVANT TECHNIQUES

While everything I've said are examples of things that have worked for me, I should precede all of these things with this statement:

#### GOOGLE'S SEARCH ALGORITHM IS CONSTANTLY CHANGING.

Last year it changed over 300 times, and no one is 100% how it actually works. Don't fall for the companies out there selling expensive "black magic" to get your site in top results. Most SEO boutiques are full of shit. I've done SEO campaigns for small and



big time clients, and independent SEO boutiques trying to scam business off of them gave our SEO work an F grade... no joke. Be wary of SEO marketing companies. There are about 50 techniques, and everyone is doing them. Any SEO company is probably on the verge of spamming if they're overpromising results.

Google, Search Engine Watch, and Search Engine Round Table are about the only three places I really trust. Google does not use meta keywords. Some search engines do, but I wouldn't waste too much time on this.

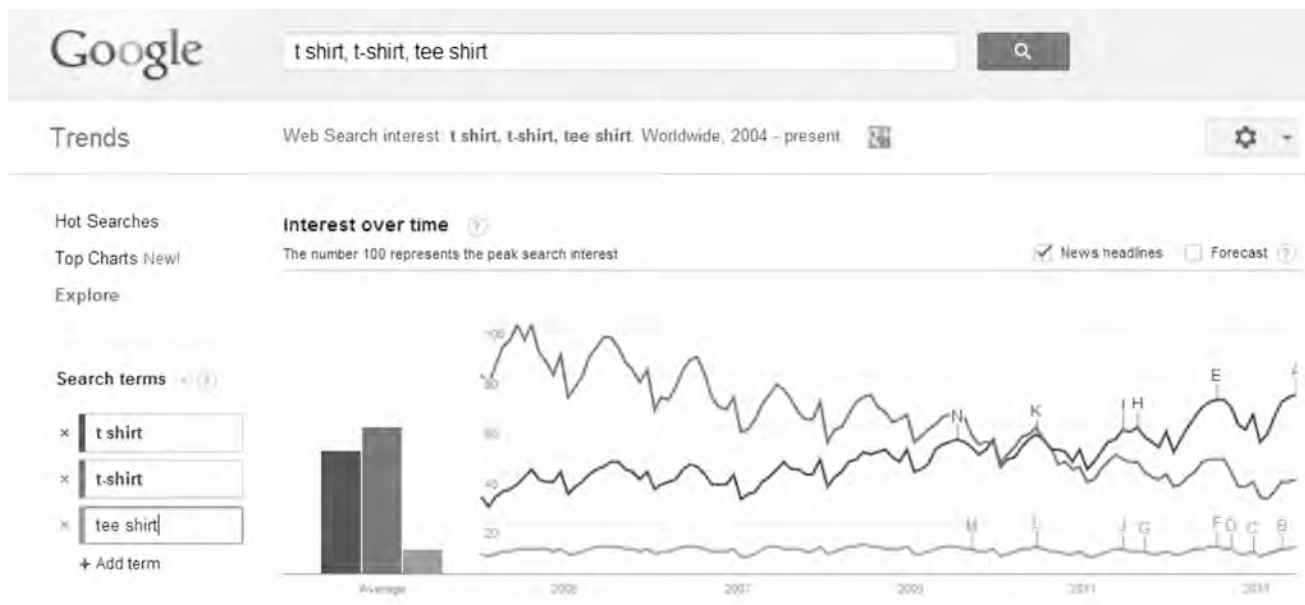
Loading up 30 character file names and 40 word alt descriptions on images is a waste of time and resources. "SEO Experts" like Acronym may tell you to do this, but the time wasted doing this could be used somewhere else and you may get flagged as trying to game Google. While it is important to use alt tags and to name images appropriately, overdoing this by using 40 word alt tags, and 30+ character names for your images is a bit of a waste of time and you run the risk of being flagged as loading your image and alt tags.

Don't use hidden text to fool Google. They'll find out and you'll get penalized.

Make an XML sitemap and submit it to Google, and update it constantly.

Don't overdo keywords in the title. Be specific, but don't be a total spammer.

Use Google Analytics, and setup E-Commerce tracking. You'll be amazed at the value of the information you get from this tool. I get 70% of my sales from organic search results, and plenty of that comes from Google Image search related to finding my product images with quality names and alt tags.



# OPTIMIZE YOUR SITE'S IMAGES FOR BETTER SEARCH RANKINGS

## CHRISTO RUPPENTHAL

Your website's images can generate TONS of traffic on your site through search engines like Google Images. Many people do not know about, or simply do not take advantage of these valuable means to optimize their site to attract maximum traffic. Once you know what to do you can grab more new fans or customers to your site simply by spending a few hours making your site's images searchable!

If you see an image of your dream guitar you instantly know what it is. Just as an example let's use a 1959 Les Paul Flame Top, one of the world's most collectable guitars. Unfortunately this instant recognition isn't possible for search engines yet. You need to help sites like Google and Bing know what they are looking at! How do you do this?

**1 YOUR FILE'S NAME.** Be sure to pick a descriptive file name for your image before you upload it to your site! Preferably you should name your file in a way that clearly specifies what content is contained in the image. This can have a positive impact on your image's rank for because it will help search engines identify its content and lands in the images URL.

So with SEO in mind, uploading your dream guitar image with the name "Near Mint 1959 Gibson Les Paul Flame Top Guitar" as opposed to "killerlespaul" will give much better results!

**2 YOUR FILE'S CAPTION AND DESCRIPTION.** Now that your image is uploaded to your site, what do you do? Many template sites like WordPress will allow you to add a Caption and Description to identify the content in your image! Intelligent use of these fields can have a positive impact on your sites rank! These are great places to pepper in searchable keywords that pertain specifically to your image's (and your site's) content.

The "caption" is a very short description of specifically what is in the image. It usually will be displayed on the public site. If you want you can use the same texts you used to name the file. Be sure to approach the caption and description of your image in complete description as opposed a funny pontificated opinion. So for example a caption of "A Near Mint 1959 Gibson Les Paul Flame Top Guitar" yields much better and more targeted results than "Killer Les Paul!"

The "description" is a longer more detailed description of your photo's content and what is happening in the image. It is often displayed when you use a thumbnail to link to a larger image. You might flush out your caption in your description like this "Billy Gibbons plays "Pearly Gates", a near mint 1959 Gibson Les Paul "flame top" guitar, live on stage by at a ZZ Top concert."



**3 THE ALT TEXT (THE BIG ONE!).** Now for the last VERY IMPORTANT step that is often overlooked because it requires digging a little deeper into your site's inner workings. What is this step you ask?

#### INSERTING IMAGE "ALT TEXT"!!!

ALT test is text that search engines use to "see" the content of a photo. It is pretty simple to plug into your site once you know what to look for. You simply add alt="your alt text" to your image's HTML. Here's an example:

Once you have that image of your dream guitar plugged into your site where you want it look in the HTML. It should displays like this:

```
 Add your  
ALT Text description into the brackets. 
```

This is the most direct way to tell a search engine what is in your photo and it will help drive traffic to your site!


Remember that your ALT text descriptions should be a complete thought rather than a list of keywords or obscure phrase. Search engines tend to stack readability over keyword lists. Also remember that visitors to your site are likely to see some version of your ALT text. So make it meaningful! That being said the descriptive text we used for the ALT text (as well as in the file name, caption, and description) does use keywords and keyword phrases like flame top, Les Paul, guitar, and near mint. Since these are directly relevant to your site's content, they're great to include as descriptive text. Just do it in a readable manner, not as a list.

Get your "image" out there.

What this all boils down to is that you have spent hours and hours building a beautiful site that reflects what your band or brand is all about. Why hide in the murk of the 11<sup>th</sup> page of Google results? With these tips you can maximize your images for the best possible search engine rank! In a few hours, you can crank up your site's search engine results and get your "image" out there.



Go to [www.google.com/trends](http://www.google.com/trends) to  
research and discover your most  
powerful SEO heavy keywords!



# 35

# ANALYTICS

Be frightened of *not* using analytics. I guarantee that it will be a more important instrument for your band than your lead guitarist... well, if not that then definitely more use to you than a keytar.

Wikipedia says, “Analytics is the discovery and communication of meaningful patterns in data.” Well, OK!

This doesn’t have to be some kind of science experiment. In a very basic form it can just be your merch guy letting you know (after 20 shows) that all of the shirts you sell are smaller than XL. So, you can STOP ordering XL and 2XL shirts. Once again, this isn’t about the ONE thing that will make you a star! It is about a million things that will make an incremental difference.

More broadly and more cool-ly, the back end analytics of Facebook or YouTube can show you where your fans are so you can *stop* going to Canada, Cleveland or anywhere else beginning with C where there aren’t any fans of your band — except perhaps Climax, PA — we all want to go there.

**DATA is the new BACON.**



Analytics will not only help you be more efficient with expenditures of money but time too. There are tools that look at all of your followers online and tell you WHEN they are usually online so you can STOP posting hilarious shit at 7am when all of your followers are sleeping and start to post that stuff at 7pm.

Geddit?

Most of this stuff is super cool, super easy (after you have clicked around a little), and super helpful.



## THE DATA DRIVEN DECISION: 3-D VISION

See, not all of my ideas and strategies involve foul language, breasts or references to past drug or alcohol experiences. This one is simple — use any and all available information to make better decisions and you'll look like you can see around corners!

Sports teams seem to spend a *lot* of time looking for *any* advantage from any source. Coaches know about prevailing winds, the angle of the sun, the state of the playing surface and the acoustics of the stadium. What possible excuse do you have to be surprised that the venue's capacity is 500, not 250 like you thought? Data allowed the Diamond Backs to go from the losingest team to the winningest *and* have the 5th lowest payroll.

NASCAR has recently added deep statistical analysis to its bucket of tools. Studies showed that drivers peak between 35,000 and 50,000 laps — right before they put a down payment on their double wide. Potential sponsors use this information to make a more informed decisions.

I have spent years fine-tuning my instrument so that I can make more educated decisions and then not second guess them into redundancy. Some data is good and can relieve you of (at least) some of the stresses that can build up.

### GOOGLE ANALYTICS

Thes One from Under The Stairs is all over it. They put a mix tape together from their new album and gave it away for free. They tracked close to 2,000 downloads in Beijing, booked a show there, and sold it out!

There have always been a few willing to go outside the box, but now more and more managers are realizing the potentially valuable use of statistics.

- Wikipedia.org

**Ariel Hyatt** // How do you use analytics to your advantage? What are your measurable online results, and how do your measures help you with your music career?

**Matthew Ebel** // Right now I'm tracking website stats via Google Analytics, CrazyEgg.com, and Compete.com, I also track email stats using Blue Sky Factory. Unfortunately, I have *no idea* what these stats mean or what course of action they suggest. Fortunately a friend, John Wall, is donating his time and expertise to help me interpret this crap. I'm a musician, FFS, not an analyst!

Most bands don't have the time or resources to "do marketing." But they've got passion and drive for their music and art. It sucks if they have to stop and "do marketing." But if they just focused on empowering and wowing their audience, the marketing happens as a byproduct.



Track where people are signing up on for your mailing list. If they came from Facebook, invite them to post on your page, or thank them for being a fan. If they signed up at a club, send them stories from that club — past times you played, or photos from the club. **Deepen the relationship** with stories only you can tell!

## RELATIONSHIPS DON'T SCALE AND THAT'S OK.

- Jenn Downs / MailChimp

# ANALYTICS

## JON OSTROW

Don't avoid analytics. One of the easiest things an artist can do in today's Web 2.0 world is to set up a Facebook page or a blog. However, an extremely costly mistake that is made all too often is to avoid the analytical side of web 2.0 because it can be time-costly. But the fact is, analytics are powerful (and many times free) tools that will help you study who your loyal fan-base *actually* is, so that you can nurture their interests.

Facebook has a free set of analytics tools built right into the site for you to use called Facebook Insights. So do yourself a favor and actually use it! If you are running a blog, Google has its own analytics system that is also completely free of charge that you should be using. But before you use either set of analytical tools, it's important that you understand what all of the graphs and numbers mean, and how you can use them to grow your brand. Here are a few links to help you get started: Facebook Insights, Google Analytics.



You can use data for everything. Research the vehicle most likely to get a speeding ticket. The Hummer H2/H3 is over 4 times the average. Use data to help your band.

**CHRIS  
DUNCAN**



**CLIENT RELATIONS  
FOR THE ORCHARD**

@cduncan86

# UNDERSTANDING THE IMPORTANCE OF METADATA AND ARTWORK

## CHRIS DUNCAN

In the digital space, an artist has seconds to prove their worth to a consumer. Our attention spans are shorter than ever before, so whether it's the music, artwork or metadata — it's extremely important to make sure you stand out from the crowd. While you may have wonderful music, if your artwork and metadata isn't up to scratch, people will simply look elsewhere.

Let's be honest here, if you saw a misspelled track, would you buy it? What if the title was in all caps? Would you purchase it if the artwork looked like it had been made in MS Paint? In an age when branding is so important, creating poor artwork and clumsy metadata is criminal.

Recently, iTunes has become much tighter at spotting mistakes in artwork and metadata. If they're not corrected, your music might not go online. Consequently, it's crucial to get the basics right prior to delivery. The motive behind these changes is to improve the customer experience — and it's understandable. The customer is king.

Don't consider artwork and metadata as an afterthought; consider it an opportunity to showcase your work online. Remember, first impressions count. Big time.



## TRACK AND MEASURE YOUR WORD OF MOUTH

Because so many people are now using social networks, it's easier than ever to track, monitor, and follow-up on your word of mouth. Using free tools like Technorati's blog search and setting up some Google Alerts, you'll be able to quickly identify who's saying what and how influential they are.

Action step: Create Google Alerts for your band name and for keywords such as band members, your albums, and concert tours. The more specific your alerts, the better success you'll have at tracking important conversations instead of getting an inbox full of irrelevant mentions.

— Andy Sernovitz



GOOD ADVICE

FROM

BAAD PEOPLE!



## MARCY RAUER WAGMAN



CEO, HEAD OF BUSINESS  
& LEGAL AFFAIRS at  
BIG WEST MUSIC

# EARLY MISTAKES YOU CAN AVOID

## MARCY RAUER WAGMAN, ESQ

Contrary to popular belief, indie artists are anything but independent. They're kind of like the Amish, without the rumspringa (pity). They conform to a set of rules and principles and embrace certain insular lifestyles. Like the Amish, one of the reasons they adhere to these immutable imperatives is fear of excommunication. Inherently, there's nothing wrong with adherence to principles or a belief system that allows one to maintain their status in their community. But sometimes, rules are taken to such an extreme that functioning in one's chosen career becomes impossible.

Because of the indie artist's devotion to strict indie tenets, real or imagined, they may be unwilling to engage in a vast number of traditional and non-traditional marketing and promotion activities for fear of expulsion. However seemingly "un-hip", they give these artists the potential to create viable, long-term music industry careers.

Here are a few bullet-in-the-foot moves from the indie artist front:

- An emerging artist didn't want to put his name anywhere on his CD's artwork because it's "not hip to see the name". The label and its distributor weren't too wild about that idea, as the promo copies to radio would get tossed and retailers wouldn't know where to place the CD in store bins, not to mention the fact that consumers would be kind of confused. In other words, no one outside his immediate circle would ever know his LP existed.
- A band refused to record in a (free) top-line recording studio with a (free) Grammy-Award winning audio engineer because it wasn't "authentic, not the right vibe". At the label's urging, they reluctantly recorded some tracks, but stopped short because they couldn't rectify the vibe/authenticity issue. They took the tracks to an indie producer, who gave the tracks his enthusiastic stamp of approval, used them on the LP, and the LP with the unauthentic tracks became an indie success story. But the indie artist was in the hole for the indie producer's recording and studio costs – he wasn't free. True, vibe is important, but when a band is first starting out, leveraging free and great is a beautiful thing.
- A brand new, never-toured-before band rejected a national tour opening for a major label, top-selling act because they didn't "have enough respect for him." Their new booking agent found it hard to find acts for which the band had the requisite amount of respect, so the agent dropped them, and consequently, they broke up.

These scenarios actually may seem perfectly rational to some indie artists. But they thwart creating a viable, long-term music industry career, and they don't forward the indie artist's musical cause, nor any other worthwhile message the artist may want to highlight. Indie artists must be wary of self-defeating stances that sacrifice their careers on the altar of fear of indie excommunication.

Less is more.

– Luke Stokes



# 3 THINGS I WISH I HAD STARTED EARLIER

## GRETA BRINKMAN

Are you just starting out? May I suggest the bass guitar as your instrument? It has only 4 strings, you only play one note at a time, and lord knows there are more than enough jerkface lead guitarists in the world already! Plus, bassists and drummers are generally really nice people; you'll be in good company.

If you decide to learn the bass, here are the three things I wish I had started earlier:

- 1 Always practice standing up, like you will be when you are playing with a band. Your muscles need to be trained in the way you're actually going to be playing.
- 2 Use that pinky finger on your fret-boardng hand! It feels weird at first but it will extend your reach more than you know.
- 3 If you want to be a "pro" bassist, learn to read music; you'll get a lot further in your career. And an extra bonus 4 and 5: learn to sing backup vocals and learn to play standup bass and you can increase your gigs substantially!

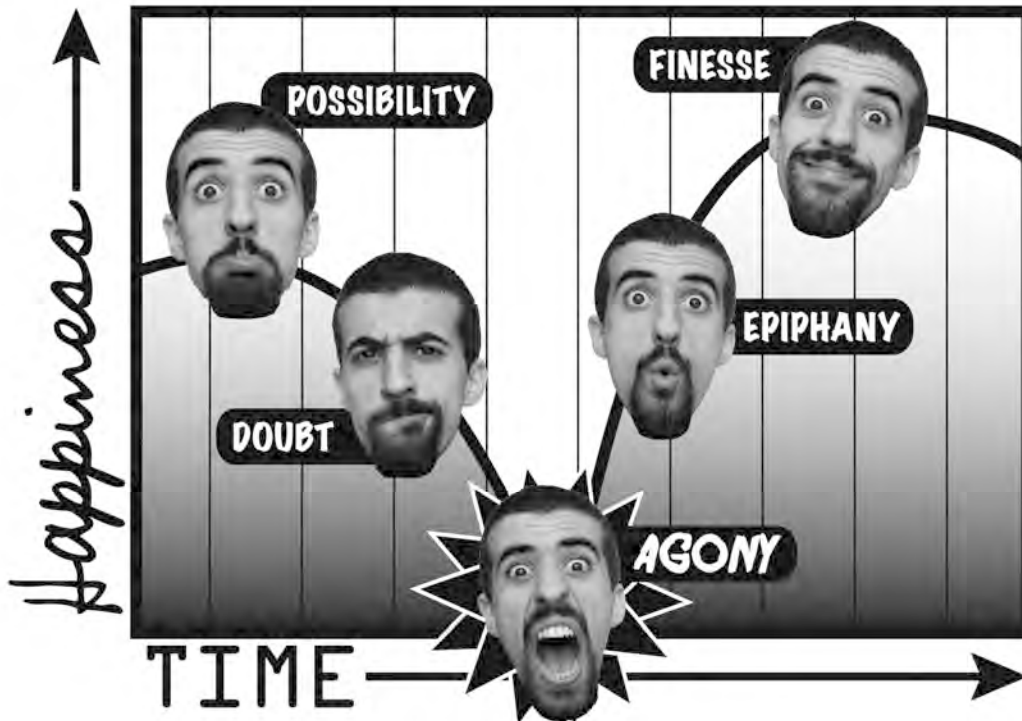


Illustration: Eric McNary

# HOW TO THRIVE IN THE (NEW) MUSIC

## MICAH SOLOMON

**1 LEARN SPECIFICALLY WHO YOUR FANS ARE AND USE TODAY'S TOOLS TO KEEP IN CLOSE TOUCH.** The Web, blogs, and simple, lowly email represent your unprecedented opportunity to learn who your fan base is and to cultivate and expand that base. Expect to put in a lot of elbow and knuckle-grease: today's fans of independent music really want to interact with you. For example, Jonathan Coulton, a phenomenon of the "new music business," spends hours every day chatting online with his fans.

**2 NICHE-R-US.** Don't try to be everything to everyone. Don't even try to be several things to several "ones." There isn't a "mainstream" anymore, or to the extent that this is an oversimplification, there are many, many mainstreams these days. We are living in a new world of hundreds upon hundreds of genres and subgenres, democratized recording opportunities, places like Oasis where you can get your music pressed affordably and professionally, places like CD Baby, Amazon, Super D and Digstation that can distribute it, and places like Netflix that stock hundreds of times the titles of Blockbuster. Discover who enjoys your music and find the people whose tastes are similar. And ignore everyone else. (For much more on this topic, consider Craig Anderson's online essay and bestselling book, [The Long Tail](#)).

**3 YOU CHARMER, YOU.** Be polite and professional. Courtesy is a key career-building tool.

**4 DO YOUR HOMEWORK.** Learn everything you can about this business. Then you'll know what qualities to look for in team members. Be inquisitive and watchful. When you see another artist succeed, ask yourself how and why it's happening. Is this just a fluke? Is it repeatable? Could it work for me? Dick Renko: "Videotape and audiotape your performances, and set out to learn from every one of them."

**5 WATCH OUT!** Prepare. Dates on the calendar may be closer than they appear.



If the internet is so fucking awesome  
– then how come all of the very best  
strategies for using it are pre-internet?



You certainly do not **NEED** radio to succeed... but it sure as fuck helps.

– *Dee Biznatch*

I'm not sure what radio means anymore. The next issue of cars from Ford won't have a radio. If there was a yardstick still of that old school, old model, old success, then radio play and chart position would be that measurement. Its like measuring the chlorine levels in the swimming pools at the workers gym in Fukushima. No one's swimming there anymore.





## WHAT DO THEY MEAN TO THE TRADITIONAL IDEA OF RADIO?

We're broadcasting ourselves and our interests. Take yourself and your radio transmitters everywhere you can. You negate the impact of the old school system and maximize your very best marketing tool – yourself. And, in any case, you cannot aim for a major radio push. Radio will only help you when you have built up a large enough following so that radio knows people won't tune out or switch off. Weird, huh? I used to *love* radio for the risks, the unexpected, and the filters of people like John Peel and more, they exposed me to stuff I wasn't aware of, taking me on a journey.

The filter is gone. Now radio is a mirror. Some stations are programmed by the listener!

On tour, make sure you let local stations know about an appearance. They might come to the show or help with a give away and they'll certainly want to help a local club. *If* you want to be important to radio, do something to help them during fund drives!

You have to be careful — when the promo company says “we'll make your music available to over 500 radio stations around the world!” the artist sees a limousine waiting at the bottom of the steps of the lear jet in South America as he gently asks for a translator so he can chat with all of these fans! The label owner in me sees a bunch of music sitting in inboxes, unchecked, unheard, and unnoticed, but *available* online.

There are some areas of the music business that feel like they aren't always playing to the things that will actually help you, but are pressing buttons from a time gone by. If you grew up listening and discovering new music on the radio, then it might still feel important.

## IT ACTUALLY IS STILL THE #1 WAY PEOPLE DISCOVER NEW MUSIC.

Radio is just one piece of the pie in creating a successful project.

– Wendy Day

Spotify's the new radio, SoundCloud's the new radio. I'm much more concerned with getting those numbers up than Top 40 radio. We do some independent, college radio promotion at times because those people are playing music they are passionate about. They are kids that are into music wherever they're at, they may also be the kids at their campus that throw parties or work at record stores, etc... But blogs and things like Spotify, SoundCloud, are where it's really at, they're almost like the new radio in that they curate their own playlists and taste.

– Alexander Fruchter

# AIRPLAY 101

## BRYAN FARRISH

We must short-circuit something that we are hearing everyday: “Artist XYZ got HUGE because of YouTube! One of her songs has 10 million views/plays!” Well, I have news for you. If you think that a counter on YouTube that says 10,000,000 is what caused Artist XYZ to get “big”, then you need to put your indie career on hold for a year and do nothing but study how things really work. If you use that line of reasoning to direct your career, you are going to fail hard and quickly.

Ten million (10,000,000) views or plays of a “hit” song is a joke. Actually, not just a joke, but a complete failure. If 10 million were the number that commercial AM/FM radio delivered, we would have no music stars at all. If commercial radio only delivered 10 million as it’s top “hit”, there would be no Elvis, no Beatles, no Stones, no Madonna, and yes... no GaGa. Do you know the number that commercial radio delivers a top “hit”? Do you really know?

**One Billion.** That’s right... 1,000,000,000. This is the number of radio “listens” that commercial AM/FM radio delivers one “hit” song. you can look at the TopListens.com chart for real numbers.



# CHOOSING YOUR SINGLE

## JESSE CANNON

You are terrible at picking your own single. We suggested you turn to fans and potential fans to choose your single but there is another wise way to go about this. Every city has a radio station or local DJ who plays music at the clubs. This person is usually one of the biggest tastemakers around. They are the leaders whose music taste the majority of listeners follow. Approach this tastemaker and ask them for input on picking your single. This will help you make a connection and a lot of the time a new supporter in the industry. This can help get you more radio play and get really wise advice from someone on the forefront of your music scene!



**JESSE  
CANNON**



**PRODUCER  
AND ENGINEER**

[www.musformation.com](http://www.musformation.com)  
@jessecannon



# RADIO DO'S, DON'TS, TALES OF FAILURE & SUCCESS... ALL IN A THIN CANDY SHELL.

## DEE "BIATCH" BIZNATCH

Be prepared to get asked shitty questions. Some radio people give a shit about the music and their station, but I would say most don't. Some of us that do give a shit, get thrown last minute interviews with bands we're not prepped for. If it's a less than desirable interview, you start asking questions. No lie. It makes for really awesome radio. You don't have much time, don't let a less than good interviewer ruin it for you. Own that shit dude.

**Funny always wins.** If you have nothing compelling to add to the interview, just be funny.

**Talk into the fucking mic.** Are you kidding me? We can't hear your drummer's smart ass comment from the corner of the studio. So if you're in studio for an on air interview and aren't on the mic, don't say anything. Unless you scream it. Put the funny guy on interviews. Trust me.

Don't ever stop doing meet and greets. **Ever.** Metallica does meet and greets and shakes hands, hugs, takes pics and talks your ear off for 25 minutes. You should be dry humping your fans. Meet them. Love them. Cuz if you fuck with them, radio will be pissed at you. Don't bite the hand that feeds. Ever.

Don't blow off interviews. If you don't want to do them, then you should probably not be in the music biz. If you do them with a shitty attitude, everyone will hate you and you will fail. As you should. We probably don't want to talk to you either. So let's make the best of it. Stop being a douche. We deal with enough assholes, the last person we need being a dick to us is someone that we're doing a favor for.

One of my fav interviews ever was on accident. My APD called me on a Saturday and said I could pick one of two bands to interview that afternoon at Summerfest. I googled them. One band wore too much hair product for me to take seriously, so I picked Theory Of A Deadman. I didn't like their music. I shut it off when it came on the radio. I thought they were average at best, so I figured the way to go was for me to avoid it. Let them plug their shit at the end of the interview, but I can't fake being interested in their tunes... So we talked for 25 minutes about everything but their music... dead hookers, 50 gallon drums of gold bond to dip their nuts in, adult diaper changing stations, sex in the trailer, STDs and the zombieapocalypse.... From then on, I played the shit out of them when I could. When I played them, I talked of their awesomeness. The next year when I got thrown a last minute interview with them at Band Camp, we picked up where we left off. **Love that band. Fucking love them.**

One of my least fav things to ever happen to me... happened about 14 times over again.

There was a band that got it's start here in our hood. I had worked damn near every meet and greet with them that we had ever done with them. Seriously, 10 years of meet and greets at an average of 2 a year. I don't expect to be remembered



very often, I'm not **that** narcissistic, but when I was the first DJ to spin your tune in the country, and then worked every meet and greet in this market ... you should fucking act like you give a shit about me. I eventually wrote both of the lead singer's projects off. I will never support him as an artist again. The rest of the band, hell yeah... but not that ass hat.

We will support good people. We're tired of industry turds ruining it for all the true artists. If you're a dick to our 10 people at a meet and greet, all 145,000 listeners will know in the morning, and will be reminded periodically of how much an asshole you and your band is. There was a band that played Band Camp that were such dicks to our Meet And Greet winners, and to staff (seriously, couldn't say the band name during a STAGE INTRO) that we wrote and recorded a parody of their own song all about how they were all diva's. We never played any of their songs again, except for the **FUCK YOU** parody song.

## YOU CERTAINLY DO NOT NEED RADIO TO SUCCEED... BUT IT SURE AS FUCK HELPS.

We know people ya know.

Mwahahahha... MWAHAHAHAHHAHA MWAHAHHAAAAHHA.



Radio isn't your solution. Radio isn't going to say, "Here's an artist that no one has heard of." They're going to say, "Here's the artist that everyone is talking about."

No, I don't know everything about your band, probably because YOU have done a shitty job making me notice you.

– Dee Biznatch

If my radio department wants them at a radio station to do an acoustic performance at 7 a.m., they're going to show up on time, sober and straight (enough) and be good.

– Bruce Iglauer

RETAIN THIS COPY FOR YOUR RECORDS.

Radio.. only if you are pop.. and 1 hit does not make it anymore.. we have so many options on how to listen to music that to actually purchase it is a commitment.. The formats of alternative and active rock keep shrinking and it seems like you can't get wide enough exposure to really influence sales.

– Kevin Lyman

ender's Copy

not all services and options are available to all destinations. Dangerous goods cannot be shipped using this Waybill.

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# I LOVE MUSIC

## JAMES VANOSDOL

I got into radio because I love music. When I landed my first radio job in the 1990s (at Q101 in Chicago), I was able to quickly carve a path for myself because I was considered a “music guy.” Being thought of in that way made me unique on the airstaff, and that in itself seemed insane. “Why isn’t everyone here a ‘music guy?’” I wondered.

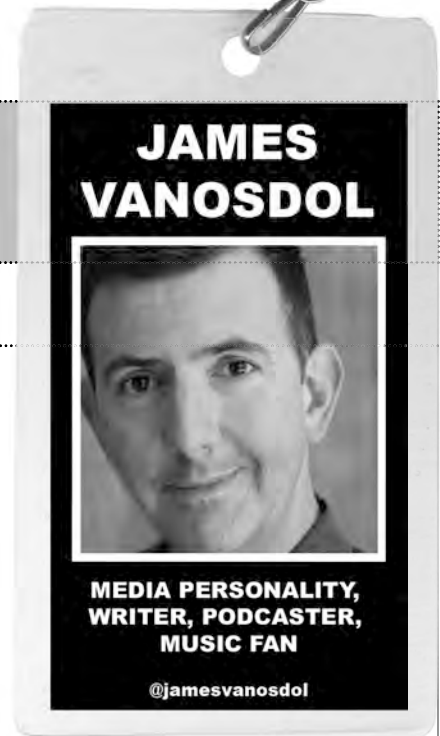
You see, most of the disc jockeys you hear on the air aren’t all that passionate about music. They like it enough, sure, but to them it makes no difference if they’re playing Lady Gaga or Slayer on the air. They’re more passionate about being on the radio; it doesn’t matter whose songs they’re talking over.

Most radio Program Directors (the folks that curate a station’s overall sound) are in that category. Please know up front that they don’t give a shit about you, your band, or that great song you just recorded. They won’t even listen to your music. Don’t even try. They’d rather chase singles that are trending or already on the charts than step out on an independent (or, gasp, unsigned) artist.

That said, “music guys” (and girls) can still be found at commercial radio stations, and they’re easy to identify: they’re the ones hosting weekend shows long after the sun’s gone down. They’re the indie program hosts, local music jocks, metalhead lunatic fringe, and longform interviewers. They’re the hosts that Program Directors need to cement a station’s coolness, but are unwilling to put on the air when people are actually listening. These hosts are the people to target with your music.

Those DJs not only will listen to your music, they actually want to. And guess what? They’ll play it on the air, too (subject to a DJ’s whims and the music’s overall quality, of course).

I was one of those DJs for years, and I was excited to open my mail every day. I fell in love with bands I’d never heard of, and played them as often as made sense. Granted, the spins weren’t heard during “prime time,” but they were spins nonetheless. The artists I played (the savvier ones, at least) were able to use the airplay to help market themselves to venues, agents, and other stations. Though it wasn’t heavy rotation, it was real airplay based on nothing more than the quality of the recordings. And that kind of airplay is what you make of it.





# HOW TO GIVE GOOD INTERVIEWS<sup>†</sup>

## RESEARCH

Look at all of the magazines, websites, outlets, blogs, and posts within your genre. Get to know the main journalists/contributors and reviewers. Who are the up-and-comers? Start to read what they have to say. You'll be better prepared for their style of interview and it will help you find a way in or, during an interview, a way out. It will also help you better target the press kits you are sending out.

Imagine some of the questions you might be asked and think about your answers.

It's your job to get what you need from the interview, not to complain because the interviewer was lame.

<sup>†</sup> Originally appeared in *Suicide Girls*

Be prepared to deal creatively and graciously with anyone's questions even if they demonstrate a basic lack of knowledge of your band. They're still there (either in front of you, at the other end of a phone line) and interested enough to ask.

## INTERVIEWERS

You might have a very nervous interviewer. You don't want a freak-out and a two-question, three minute interview. Think about helping the interviewer through the process so you can get what you need; 20 questions and two pages in the paper.

With a more experienced interviewer, it's a poker game. You need to be thinking about where they're taking the interview, anticipating, realizing that all of their questions are designed to reinforce a pre-conceived idea of what you are all about so that they can have an arty, clever piece in their paper. You have to block and then steer carefully without showing your 'tell.'

You need to be comfortable with the basics so your mind can bounce around, see what's around the corner, and come up with the creative insights for which you will surely become known. You need to be doing all of this whilst looking at the clock (because you've got four other interviews scheduled and you still haven't sound checked) but not appearing as if you're in a hurry. Keep a mental track of the cool phrases and ideas you are floating. You don't want to keep repeating the same themes to every interviewer in each city. Nutella the fuck<sup>2</sup> out of it... spread it around.

## PRACTICE

**Even a shoddy interview with an ill-prepared interviewer from a tiny fanzine in the middle of nowhere is practice for you and more column inches than none.**

What if you read the interview, but it was from an artist you don't particularly like? Would you think: "I still don't like this guy, but he made some interesting comments" or "Wow, this guy really is a dick!?"

## ... YOU DON'T WANT TO LOOK LIKE A COMPLETE ASS WHEN YOU LAND ON YOUR HOLE. ...

Another reason to practice is the same reason that you practice stage moves in the rehearsal room before you're on stage – you don't want to look like a complete ass when you land on your hole, physically, mentally, verbally, and musically. You want to realize that you sound like a complete prick at two o'clock in the morning listening back to the micro-cassette recording of your fake interview. Not when you are reading your half-page interview in the latest copy of your favorite magazine. The former is fixable; the latter is not.

Make it relevant to the niche you are talking to or, as politicians would say, "stay on message."

**Interviewer (from Knitting Magazine):** Err...

**Band:** That's why I feel an affinity with your readers – they do amazing things with wool. We're weaving a sweater made of musical notes and words. Both things give you a warm feeling in the tummy.

**Interviewer (Train Enthusiast Monthly):** Err...

**Band:** The band IS a train, fueled by the coal of ideas and excitement – every city is a station on our track to success. Yeah sure, sometimes there's a tree on the tracks or a problem with the signals, but we just have to deal with it.

<sup>2</sup>*This fuck brought to you by Saul Colt.*

**Interviewer:** I'm from FOX news.

**Band:** Hundreds or twenties?

The only thing that communicates and cuts through the crap is being honest. Anyway, after a while, you'll be too tired to remember all of the lies about you and Justin Beiber... But in order to be honest and project the answers you want to give, you have to be comfortable – not just in your chair, in your skin.

**HAVE A LOOK AROUND INSIDE THAT BAG OF STUFF BETWEEN YOUR SPIKY HAIR AND YOUR HORRIBLY SMELLY FEET – YOU'LL BE GLAD YOU DID... EVENTUALLY...**

**Don't waste a writer's time fronting with feeble attempts at being witty or clever.**

*– Jason Pettigrew*

**If you could tell a journalist one thing, what would it be? I love your writing style.**

*– Luke Stokes*



## ALEXANDER FRUCHTER



**FOUNDER OF  
CLOSED SESSIONS**

@DJ\_RTC

# STOP THE CHATTER

## ALEXANDER FRUCHTER

*How do you see artists approaching the getting of press. Is there a divide between the old school and the new? Are major publications even relevant?*

I see a divide between the “old” and “new” press, in that the old press is maybe clinging to the way things were done previously. That can be from acquiring a certain press release, or the way they lay out their pages, the kind of articles they do, maybe a certain old notion of “respect” they feel they deserve.

**THOSE OLD PRESS OUTLETS, AND THE RULES THEY FOLLOW,  
ARE BECOMING LESS RELEVANT.**

I think the biggest thing for me in regards to the press is that I always know specifically who I’m pitching something to. I’m careful not to waste anyone’s time. It’s great to send a mass press release, but I prefer to build relationships with the writers personally and if I know someone’s not going to like one of our releases, or an artist doesn’t fit the outlet, I don’t send it to them. The press is becoming less like certified or appointed music journalists, and progressing to more of a tastemaker role. Someone that could be starting out right now at 17, writing for a blog that’s read by ten people in a couple years can have a very popular website or write for a magazine that we want to be in down the road, or be the most popular music kid at their high school. That’s why the importance lies in artists building relationships with new writers—that’s how you grow and that’s how this thing works. When I ran a website that was my approach, to invest in new artists, and have the artists invest in me as a writer & my outlet as a credible outlet. All these formalities saying we need a specific press release, need this EPK, need certain types of photos, I think that’s a dinosaur model. This thing moves very fast, give people information in a place that is easy as hell to rip and embed, and go. Another thing we try to do is with every new piece of material, we focus on a new exclusive premiere, depending on who’s the best fit. If a song is a certain type of hip-hop, I may reach out to Noisey, if it’s something else with a whole different intended audience, I’ll go to Hypetrak. We let a fan release a song once. It’s all about trying to stop the chatter & owning 30 minutes of a collective music consciousness.



# HOW TO BE INTERVIEWED

## JASON ARNOPP

Now, you might think that a journalist giving you advice on being interviewed is a bit like a shark giving you advice on swimming. Happily, though, I'm an ex-journalist and write scripts these days, so I have no ulterior motives. Just looking to throw 10 ideas your way, which might make *The Wheels Of Interview* roll more smoothly than they often do...

1 Unless you're some kind of wacky comedy act, who decides to stay in character throughout your interviews, like *GWAR* or *Steel Panther*, do try to be yourself and enjoy it. Much like life itself, you've been forced into this situation, so might as well make the most of it. Unless the journo writes for the *NME* and wear leather trousers while looking down their noses at the rock press, they are not the enemy! They're not a Stasi officer, for Christ's sake. Relax and remember that they're here to give you the oxygen of publicity - even if they might intend to do so by pursuing their own stupid angle or agenda. Try to be nice. If you're nervous, bear in mind that they probably are too. So be good. Work together. Create something.

### IF YOU'RE NERVOUS, BEAR IN MIND THAT THEY PROBABLY ARE TOO.

2 Remember that the journalist will need a certain number of words in order to complete this article. Sitting there and mumbling "Yeah", "No" or "I don't know" won't help this cause. You need to open your mouth and capitalise on the fact that someone currently gives a shit about you, your music and your life. Hopefully, if the journo's any good, they'll help you out by asking 'open' questions which can't logically end with "Yeah" or "No" ("Why did you decide to make a concept album about a giant inflatable badger with anvils for hands?"). If not, do them a favour and help them along by spinning out your answer. Don't just vomit up a single splat of words - keep them coming. Projectile-paint this member of the press. Get *Exorcist* on their ass.

3 Try to get a sense of how trustworthy this writer is. Are they shifty? Do they make much eye contact? Do they smile? Do they genuinely seem to be a fan of your work? Adjust your levels of openness accordingly. Devote energy to the interview, but don't open yourself too wide. No sense in giving potentially sensitive material to a weasel if they're just going to twist it, misquote you and generally be a fucknut. Rely on common sense and develop your instinct.

### DEVOTE ENERGY TO THE INTERVIEW, BUT DON'T OPEN YOURSELF TOO WIDE

4 Doing a whole ton of interviews in one day? Being asked the same question repeatedly? Try not to cry about it too hard. Forgive me if I don't have a whole load of sympathy that something about you is so interesting that everyone wants to ask about it. The 16th journalist to ask the question doesn't know that the first 15 asked it. And even if they do, guess what? Journalist 16 needs their own version of you giving the answer. They need their own quotes, because, y'know, it's kind of unethical to take them from others. So be patient and answer that same old question. By all means, though, start to invent new answers for each interview. Because that'll be more fun for you and the journalist won't much care whether it's true or not.



5 For God's sake, try to be interesting. Yes, you might well be "all about the music" and that's very cool. But you know when you read other band's interviews and they say stuff you want to repeat to other people because it's so funny, or witty, or ludicrous? Try to inject some of that magic into your babbling. Try to develop a sense of what makes a good quote and hand a few to the journalist on a silver platter. They'll fucking love you for it and the interview will, by and large, be better. Watch an old David Lee Roth interview on YouTube and take on board just a touch of that charm, wit and personality.

6 As previously mentioned, the journalist might have their own stupid angle. Even if it's really stupid, like Your Ten Favourite Types Of Cheese, then you don't have much choice. It was probably dreamed up by editorial staff in a meeting where they thought it was absolutely hilarious - especially if your band name or album title has anything to do with cheese - because they're jaded, no longer care about the music and have made the mistake of thinking the readers don't either. It was then almost certainly greenlit by your PR, if you have one. As Martin might say, you're FUCKED. Unless you're as cool as The Supersuckers, who interrupted a good friend of mine, mere minutes into an interview he once did for Kerrang!, to say "Are all these questions gonna be about cowboy hats?", then refused to continue. But if you in any way need publicity, just persevere and make the most of it. Hey, might even be fun. Invent new cheese.

7 The journalist having an agenda is a slightly different matter. Again, it's probably been handed down to them by the editorial team. The journo may have been sent here to challenge you about something - to get you to answer the question posed by the article's headline. Do This Band Fuck Goats While Carving Pentagrams Into Them?, for instance. So once again: relax, be yourself and go with it. Answer the questions, provided they're not insanely personal, and by all means have an argument if you like. Chances are, conflict is what an agenda-handed journalist wants. It'll also make for a more interesting article, if we're honest. If you'd like to spice it up all the more, then feel free to walk out about three-quarters of the way through (thus ensuring that the journo has recorded enough words). One of my biggest regrets about my journalistic career is that no-one ever walked out on me. Sure, they might have issued death threats, got me in a headlock and jammed a knife in a table between my fingers, but they never walked out. Don't let another journalist feel like a failure! Get out that door.

8 You should know that a PR person "sitting in" on an interview is one of the most irritating things that can happen to a journalist. If the PR decides to do it of their own free will, or because of management, do both yourself and the journalist a favour and ask them to leave during the chat. Here's the thing it's so easy to forget: an interview is a two-way affair. A chat tango, if you will. You might be more comfortable with a PR sitting there, listening to every word, but a journalist won't. If they're anything like me, they'll be fucking seething for the first 15 minutes. This doesn't make for a fun, engaging interview experience. Kick the PR out. Their presence during interviews is a relatively recent phenomenon which magazines have gutlessly allowed to happen. Just like they've agreed to journalists having to go to record company offices in order to hear your new album and all kinds of paranoid, controlling bullshit.

9 You should also know that, every once in a while, the PR will have warned the journalist not to touch on certain topics. This may be because you've asked them to (Incidentally, why? Are you eight years old? Are you incapable of fending for yourself in conversation?) or because they're being over-protective. So if you're

I'll let you approve the story if you let me approve your band's final mixes and cover art.

-Jason Pettigrew

wondering why no-one ever asks about your Texas bar-room brawl with Eminem, which you're itching to brag about, check with your PR person to see if they've applied any 'conversational filters'. Mind you, as a journalist, I would always ask the thing I'd been told not to ask, on general principles. And no-one ever blew up on me. They just answered the question, like adults do.

**10** Have you come to the interview angry? Did the magazine in question give your album the written equivalent of a sulphuric acid enema? Cool. Angry's good - it'll give the journalist a great angle for the piece. Just try not to sound like a whining goose., ensuring that the angle's not favourable to you. Did this particular journalist write that particular piece? If not, then remember that the magazine is (hopefully) not a hive-mind or a gestalt entity. The journalist sent to interview you might well genuinely love your album, so try not to give them a hard time. And if the journalist did review your album, here's your chance to confront them. Just try to take the high road, if at all possible. You'll probably look a great deal cooler if you're casual and laidback about the whole affair, as if their opinion is a mere piss in the ocean. Then again, fuck it - call them a cunt and walk out. Just do it three-quarters of the way through, yeah? Perfect. That's a wrap.



Always, always, always practice doing interviews! Whether it's talking to yourself into a audio recorder, your computer, or just into the mirror when you're alone - do it. You will save yourself a lot of embarrassment when you do an interview for real. I've been fortunate enough to host shows where I've been interviewing others, I've done countless interviews myself as an artist, and I've witnessed peers and friends of mine in the industry be interviewed, and no matter where you're standing - it is painfully obvious when someone is unprepared. You can potentially embarrass yourself, your band mates, and risk looking unprofessional to whomever may be listening or watching.

Think about what questions you might be asked and how much or little the interviewer may know about you. Think about what questions someone who knows nothing about you might ask. Think about what questions someone who is your biggest fan might ask. Be prepared for any question they might throw at you!

Another important thing to keep in mind is that you shouldn't feel forced to simply answer the question you've been asked. Use any question as an opportunity to talk about what you want to talk about — remember, this is the platform whereby people will learn about YOU.

*-S-Endz*

**...any interview is an inbound link.**

*- Matthew Ebel*

# GETTING PRESS AND COVERED BY BLOGS

## EXCERPT: GET MORE FANS BY JESSE CANNON AND TODD THOMAS‡

### THE NEED FOR PRESS

No musician is able to build a fanbase without getting writers to write about them. Even if you aren't a critic's darling, you still need someone writing about you. Despite assumptions that the press is only looking for cool musicians, this isn't actually the case. While some writers are passionate fans that only write about what they love, many are constantly looking for new acts that are easy to write about to make their jobs easier to get through. This is why you must "feed" the press as much as you can. If you learn the tools and techniques that publicists use, you can easily make headway on getting your music out to the world and get written about in both print and online outlets.

It's important to remember that most of the writers who will write about you are fans of your music or writers who feel like you deserve coverage. Thinking about what gets fans excited and creating content accordingly is also what will get the press to write about you.

### DON'T PASS GO

Before you think about doing any press you want to make sure you have the following together:

- **MUSIC:** Duh! If you don't have any yet, there is no reason anyone will ever write about you unless you're friends with a writer already or were in a really cool band before the one you're in now.
- **BIO:** Writers need a story to write about and it's hard for them to know what to say if they only have music.
- **PHOTOS:** These don't need to be press shots, but their needs to be a visual element that looks good to accompany anything written about you.
- **PRESENCE:** The more together your website and social networks are, the easier it is to pour gasoline on the spark you get from press. If there is content for new fans, writers and potential team members to check out, it increases the likelihood they'll get more excited about you. The more you have going before you get some press, the more potential you have for it to be a big step instead of a little one. It may even be helpful to read the rest of this book before you pursue any press, to make sure you get everything ready in advance.

### TOOLS FOR GETTING PRESS

**TWITTER SEARCH:** When you get written about, it will usually get tweeted. Using Twitter's search engine ([search.twitter.com](http://search.twitter.com)) will let you see who's tweeting about you. You can then follow all of these people, interact with them and thank them. If you use Twitter's Tweet Deck tool ([tweetdeck.com](http://tweetdeck.com)) you can set up a constant feed in your deck of everyone mentioning you in a Twitter search.

**COMPETE:** Wondering how much traffic a blog gets? Compete (compete.com) can give you a guesstimate. While they are often very inaccurate for blogs with under 100,000 unique visitors a month, they can still give you a rough estimate about whether the blog you're thinking of working hard to get on is worth more effort than another blog. You can also ask a blog for its advertising information to get a more accurate number.

**PICTURES:** Blogs like ours and nearly every other blog across the Internet love good pictures and videos. At Musformation, we don't write articles unless we have an awesome image and preferably a video of the subject to put with the article. If you have some nasty, blurry picture that you're half drunk significant other took, it may be enough to make some writers give up on your article. I am constantly shocked at what graphic snobs some writers can be. But I can also understand, since I put a lot of time into making my blog look good and I don't want to litter it with crappy images. Very quickly you'll find the sprawling paragraph blurb you were about to get on your favorite blog whittled down to one sentence if you don't have an eye-catching graphic. You should have great, quality press shots uploaded to your Facebook, website and Flickr so that writers can easily find these pictures. Make sure you administer a Creative Commons license on the pictures and that they don't have watermarks from your photographer on them.

**YOUTUBE:** If it weren't enough that you needed press photos, some tastemaking blogs only use YouTube videos for their posts. If you don't have one, you're out of luck with their blog. In order to get good press, make sure there are links to a few different great videos on your YouTube channel.

**OFFICIAL.FM:** Official.FM is a site that promotes itself as a service that will give you one player to promote your songs on any website. Whether posting on blogs, social networks, email or IM, their player has you covered. You can choose to make tracks streaming or downloadable, private or public, so whatever you need in a music player, they have you covered. This comes in handy when promoting your music across blogs.

**SOUNDCLOUD:** Many blogs want to host streams through SoundCloud (soundcloud.com). If your music isn't there, a blogger may pass because they can't get a stream of your music in their post. Be sure to have your music easily found (read: linked on your website and social networks) on SoundCloud.

**SPOTIFY:** Spotify has this neat button called "The Play Button" that allows any blog to post your song if it's on Spotify. Many blogs are starting to use this button. Making sure your tracks are on Spotify was already a smart move, but this makes it even more crucial for getting press.

## GETTING WRITTEN ABOUT ON BLOGS

**STAY ORGANIZED:** As you find these blogs that will potentially write about you, be sure to keep track of them. Adding the relevant information for each blog to your contact database can help when you have to do this all over again the next time you release a song. Keeping the blog name, URL, contact info, preferred music submission format and notes on what they cover can help make your relationships with these writers grow. Keeping this list organized means you don't need to start from scratch every time you have a new release to promote.

**WHY BOTH LITTLE BLOGS AND BIG BLOGS MATTER:** When musicians are looking to get press, they often ask whether they should target big blogs or small blogs. The answer is both. Musicians sometimes get it in their head that the small blogs don't matter because no one actually reads them or the big blogs aren't worth trying for because they will never make it. While both of these points may be true, there is another side to each of those stories. Both of them have the potential to be a big break for you, so don't limit yourself to pursuing a single narrative of how your success is going to happen.

**THERE IS NO SINGLE PATH TO SUCCESS:** Keep in mind is that there is no system in the blogosphere. There is no one way to getting discovered; it happens a different way every time. Keep your mind open.

**KEEPING IN CONTACT WITH WRITERS:** Don't over-communicate with writers. Sending them a weekly update would be annoying. Instead write to them whenever you do something eventful. If you're going to send a bulk email to them, be sure to have a unsubscribe function and respect them if they don't want email updates anymore. It's a good idea from time to time to check contact info. On bigger sites, writers often come and go. You may need to update your contacts if you aren't getting a reaction from some bloggers over time.

**THERE ARE LESS MUSIC JOURNALISTS, MORE MUSIC FANS:** In this day and age there are fewer music "journalists," and more music fans blogging about their interests. You're rarely going to get covered on a blog unless this person is a fan of your music. Sure, sometimes writers will cover musicians they don't care for who have tons of fans, to get more page-views and increase their popularity. But when you're first trying to get covered by blogs, this will not be an asset you have on your side. You want to connect with writers the same way you would talk to a fan, since more often than not, they're your fans. Writers become successful because they're passionate about what they write about and their readers find that passion interesting. They have good taste in up and coming musicians and become a trusted source because they're fans of good music. Make sure you treat them like you would a fan. A fan that has a lot of power to help your music.

**MENTION SIMILAR MUSICIANS:** It helps if you mention someone that the blog has written about before. If you're finding blogs on Hype Machine that will likely write about your music, you might want to mention the musician that you searched for to find their blog. Remember that writers receive tons of emails all the time and they don't know you.

**BE COMPLEMENTARY:** No one likes an asskisser, but having a nice comment to say about their blog or music taste can really help.

**EXERCISE BREVITY:** A great piece of advice in most writing is to say whatever you have to say in as few words as possible. It isn't necessary to write a dissertation about your music and all the great things you've done. Keep everything you say to a paragraph or less if you can.

**WHAT DO YOU SEND?** What you send to a blogger is different every single time. Do some reading on the blog you're pitching and see if the blogger tells you what they prefer. Sometimes a blog will have a SoundCloud drop box or something similar where you can upload files. Other times they tell you that they want MP3s attached to an email with a bio. When a blogger's preference isn't known, it helps to offer them choices. Ideally, you'll want to send them to a place where there are both streams and downloads. Because of the nature of email filters, most email has size limitations. If you attach your song it can go to junk or never get to the blogger at all. Unless they ask you to attach an MP3, never attach it .

**KEEP IT CURRENT:** Even if you are pitching an old song, bloggers are the type of people who want to be up on what is fresh and new. Put a release date in your press release that is a few weeks in the future or 6-8 weeks ahead for a print publication.

**DO I REALLY NEED TO PERSONALISE MY BLOG PITCHES?** Todd and I have been a part of a lot of blog pitches and time and time again we see some general rules:

- If you mass mail with no personal touch, if you even get a response from 1 out of 100 writers you're going to be lucky.
- If you personalize them a little if you get 5 out of 100 to write about you you'll be lucky.
- If you become a big follower of a blog, comment, interact on social networks and really make yourself a part of a community you can get written on 1 out of every 4 blogs. The effort you put in goes a long way. There are countless other acts trying to get the same attention you want and even if your music is great, it will probably be ignored by people who would love it.

**TRY AND TRY AGAIN:** Odds are your first pitches to most blogs won't go well. As Malcolm Gladwell advises in his excellent book *The Tipping Point*, you should change something small each time you do a new promotion. Keep tweaking and making things better and better and observing what made other promotions successful. If a pitch didn't work for a certain blog, try changing it up a little next time and putting some time into improving your message.

**THANK BLOGGERS WITH TRAFFIC:** Make sure to link any nice writing on your social networks. Bloggers greatly appreciate you giving them traffic and new readers, just like you appreciate them giving you new fans.

**SOME TRADITIONS TO ADHERE TO:** While you don't ever want to send a boring, formulaic press release to anyone, you also don't want to be send an update that is complete chaos. Here are some formatting ideas that will make sure your updates are appreciated by your fans and writers.

- **HEADLINE:** In half a sentence, tell everyone what the big deal is. For example: "Maxwells Show With BeBe & The Boo Boos 8/23" or "New Song Up Now On Our Website."
- **TWO SENTENCE SUMMARY:** You gave away the secret in the headline, but now you have two sentences to say all of your info. This can go right under the subject or at the top of the body of your email
- **GET EXCITED:** You now have one paragraph to get everyone excited about what you're talking about. This is when you really let your personality loose and talk to your fans about why they should care about your news.
- **SELL IT SOME MORE:** Got other exciting news going on? Did something cool happen since your last update? Tell them.
- **OTHER NEWS:** If you have relatively boring news or want to remind your fans about a promotion you're pushing, you can now do it here. If your fans got this far, they actually care.
- **THANKS:** Always thank your fans for their support and caring enough to read this far. Do it in your own words and please don't write exactly what I just wrote. Write a sincere "thank you" in your own words and it will have a much greater impact.
- **LINKS:** What social networks are you currently trying to get fans to follow you on? Take the time to link two of them here.

**KEEPING IT EXCLUSIVE:** If the content is going to be exclusive, you have to make sure other blogs don't use it. Many blogs have song and video players they can use to make sure the song won't be stolen by other blogs. If they don't, there are a few tricks to make this happen. Vimeo's "pro" package has a feature where only the author can embed the video. Meaning only you have the embed code, so you can keep the video exclusive. TopSpin's streaming player can disable sharing to keep it exclusive as well.



## **BAD INTERVIEWS ARE YOUR FAULT, NOT THE INTERVIEWER'S**

Musicians are constantly complaining about how dumb interview questions are. Unfortunately, this is part of your job as a musician and inevitably you're going to have to deal with some braindead, uninformed questions in most interviews. Sadly for you, it's your job to learn how to compensate for the interviewer's stupidity. If an interviewer asks you a stupid question, make like a politician and answer it a different way or change the subject after one sentence with a "by the way." Sometimes you can avoid answering the question entirely and say something much more interesting. Musicians who blame the interviewer for the questions and "gotcha questioning" are morons and should be treated as such. Smart musicians like James Murphy, Jack White and Marilyn Manson find a way to always spit out what's on their mind, rather than what the interviewer is asking. This technique will take you much further than answering questions about your latest cover song or what your influences are.

## **RIDICULOUS CONTESTS CAN HELP RAISE AWARENESS**

In the battle to get press, a nuclear weapon on your side is having a good story to tell the world. One of the ways to get your foot in the door with blogs and newspapers is to run a ridiculous contest so that there is an interesting story to be written up. Case in point: The amazing band Manchester Orchestra once ran a contest for their tour where they asked fans to submit pictures of their bitch (aka their dog) and whoever had the most awesome bitch won free admission to a show (all while satirizing hip hop culture). This contest got them written up on tons of websites that didn't usually cover them getting them free press for their upcoming tour.

## **HOW TO HANDLE BAD REVIEWS**

One of the worst things you can do is to lash out at fans or bloggers who don't like your latest release. Aside from the fact that it makes you look immature, fragile and unconfident—it's just bad business. Many musicians start out with bad reviews, and their next release gets a great one from the same reviewer. If you lash out at that reviewer, the odds of that happening drop pretty fast. Let it go and realize it's just one person's opinion. When you see a fan or former fan tweet something bad about your latest release, instead of lashing out, write them something polite like, "I'm sorry you aren't enjoying it, hopefully you'll like what we do next." This makes you seem cool and will allow the fan to give you another chance, instead of closing a door on a relationship you once had.

## **GETTING REVIEWS**

Sadly, most of the mainstream press is reserved for hyped releases that readers are waiting for and those who advertise in a publication. Many advertisers will ask for preferential treatment to make sure they get interviews and reviews for their releases in the pages, in exchange for them keeping the paper in business with their ad dollars. With that said, you can still try to get into these pages with some smart tactics.

- **WRITERS:** Mail your record to the attention of writers who reviewed similar musicians to you. Send it to the main review address but mark it to their attention. If you want to submit to more than one writer, send multiple packages.
- **MATERIAL:** Mail them your physical album (singles are tough to get reviewed when you're an unknown). If you have vinyl, mail both CD and LP versions.
- **PRESS SHEET:** Send a sheet with a short bio and some reviews you've gotten. These reviews can convince a reviewer to check you out, especially if they know or respect the other writers.
- **SOMETHING FUN:** If you have a unique piece of merch or something fun to send the reviewer, do it. Usually it will end up in their office and it will keep you on the magazine's radar.

## KEEPING FRIENDLY PRESS RELATIONS

**SAY THANK YOU:** If you're fortunate enough to have writer's say nice things about you to their audience, you should certainly make an effort to thank them. You'll be surprised at how happy some writers are to hear from you. One of the reasons writer's blog is to make connections with the musicians they love. Most writers love to hear from the musicians that they write about. If the writer seems to like your music, it's not out of line to offer them some merch like stickers or a free shirt. Remember: Don't bribe them, just thank them for their kindness. Although the music business has changed in many ways, what hasn't changed is most progress is built on personal relationships. Offer to get them into shows for free whenever you're in their town and make sure to hang out with them at the show.

The biggest difference between you and a label or a publicist is that they're using the company credit card to buy drinks, dinners and schmooze press people. In this instance (and with a limited budget), it helps to use whatever resources you can. Remember that just because someone writes about your music doesn't mean they'll do it again, there are a lot of musicians dying for attention and you have to separate yourself somehow. The more you can build genuine friendships with writers, the easier it is to get written about by others. Writers like musicians who they think are great people, more than they do ones who have never been nice to them. Kindness goes a long way. It also helps that writers are usually interesting and have great advice for you. Nurture these relationships and reap the benefits.

**GIVE A PHONE NUMBER WHEN PUTTING WRITERS ON THE GUEST LIST:** We all know that it's a good idea to put local press on the guest list for a show, but there is a quick way to make this writer your enemy instead of your friend. Some venues are strict about the guest list and if there is the slightest transcription flaw in someone's name on the list, they will not allow them into a show. If you have a standard email you send out to everyone you put on the guest list, make sure you also put the cell phone number of the tour manager and/or responsible band member. If something goes wrong, you shouldn't have the writer left out of the show after making the effort to come see you.

**HIRING A PUBLICIST:** While it helps to start getting press for yourself, there comes a time when getting to the next level in the press requires a professional who can devote a lot of time to helping you get into bigger outlets. While this isn't cheap, it's a step nearly every musician takes after a certain level of success. One of the biggest mistakes both Todd and I as well as many other friends have made is hiring a publicist when we didn't have enough momentum in building a fanbase yet. If you expect to get a huge buzz and lots of placements when you haven't even gotten write-ups on small blogs, nine times out of ten you're going to end up disappointed. Most publicists can get you some easy placements, but they're best at taking you to the next level. If you're only on level one, it's not going to be worth it to spend thousands of dollars to get you to level two when you could devote a few afternoons to doing it yourself. If you have 600 Facebook likes and expect to get the coverage that the big indie bands get by throwing a few thousand dollars at the problem, you are most likely going to be wishing you had that money back to spend it in a more helpful way. Hiring out a publicist is a great way to build on top of some good press you've already gotten. But if you're still struggling to get any medium sized blogs to post about you on a regular basis, I suggest working hard on your own press for a bit longer. Before you spend lots of money that you barely have, I suggest giving your publicist some existing press and content to work off of.

When you feel you've gotten through to all the bloggers who will talk to you, it's time to hire someone else.







## VIDEO CONTENT

Don't over-think the process. This might be encouraged by documentary film makers, the 35mm crowd, or the professionals. I don't know of any picture that was saved by the quality of the lens work or the richness of the film stock. CNN realized this early into the first (or second or third?) Gulf ar. The first time the shitty, glitchy, baby monitor quality camera followed the smart bomb down the chimney, it was obvious that this amazing sequence could have been shot on a chad valley toy pixel camera without losing any of the impact. In fact, a little bit of glitchy distortion is great to keep people on the edge of their seats as they get ready to hit the TV to reset something or other. It's the visual equivalent of jalapeño pepper, a Xerox thumbprint, or a smudge.

**Hand-held shaky bullshit video beats crisp and clean stagnant constipated video every time.**

You will quickly see that it's the moments that count. As you start to routinely record, your camera will be running when something amazing happens – captured *live* the day your drummer stops speeding up / slowing down / drooling (delete one). Of course, this might never happen, but it's great to know that if it does, you're ready.

If you are worried about software editing, don't be. I accidentally learned the rudiments of iMovie on a school field trip with my eldest son — I mean, C'MON!

You can easily drag and drop from iPhoto onto movies (using slide shows) or straight onto DVD formatting templates.

After the first time you follow the process from start to web movie, you will start to apply end result experience to the front end of the next one. Now, when I see objects or opportunities, I film them and file the idea (and the footage) away. It gets easier to create scenarios that make editing easier and camouflaging to make the end result more seamless and professional. You'll also see establishing shots (like the outside an apartment) and you'll start to habitually take still and moving shots of signs, door numbers, and all of that stuff. It's easier, and sometimes much cooler, to have a traveling shot of the name of a town or school than it is to have animations of the titles bouncing across the page.

Now, I shoot title stuff in a few different ways.

I once stayed at the Rivington hotel for CMJ in NYC (amazing!). On each floor, the floor number was shown in a luminous light. I ran up and down the stairs to film each number. That's what I used for the 16 days in China doc. The way that the light tricks the auto-focus is amazing! A little bit poor man's "seven" — yeah right, I like it anyway.

I just saw Son of Rambow. There are some great sections where they use flip animation (where you painstakingly draw on the corner of a text book) for some of the tiles and links. That's also one of my favorite parts of FUZZ.

Film the printed label as it emerges from the Dymo labeler.

Cut and paste, lock and load, pan, fade, innovate, create.

Remember, if you just happen to be filming when you lay down the tracks for the new album, well, that's great. You had the fight between the bass player and, well, everyone, and the police breaking up the free concert on the roof. Oh my god, you are The Beatles!

Cameras can add fuel to a situation. Try walking out on stage with a video camera. Point to it and then turn it to the audience. They'll go crazy... Use them as a tool!

# 5 TIPS FOR DOWN AND DIRTY VIDEO PRODUCTION

## BRIAN WIEBE

**1 EMBRACE YOUR LIMITATIONS.** Do not let a lack of equipment or resources discourage you or derail your project. If the only camera you have is your phone, then use your phone. As someone who started filming videos in the stone age of standard definition, I am constantly amazed by the quality of video that I am able to capture with my phone. Music videos, commercials, video blogs, and even feature films have been shot on phones. Then take it a step further: Celebrate that you shot your project **ON A PHONE!** Every project is going to have limitations: equipment, time, locations, personnel, money, and so on. Many great films and videos are born out of these circumstances, because as the old cliché goes: necessity is the mother of invention. You **NEED** to make a video. You don't need a million-dollar budget to do so.

**2 RESEARCH.** There are literally a million video tutorials online about literally every aspect of filmmaking. If you have an idea, you can discover how to achieve it online. If you are looking for inspiration, these tutorials can provide ways to experiment with the equipment and software you already own. One aspect of research that is absolutely essential is workflow. You need to know what type of files you are creating and whether or not the computer and editing software you have at your disposal are capable of handling those files. I have seen it happen more than once: someone rushes to shoot on a top-of-the-line camera, only to find that their computer doesn't have the appropriate software and/or hardware to actually edit the footage.

**3 COLLABORATION & PREPARATION.** Good videos don't typically happen spontaneously, and they aren't typically made by one person. There is a reason Hollywood films have hundreds if not thousands of names in the credits. Video is a collaborative art — not many people can write, direct, act, shoot and edit, and I would be surprised if anyone can do all of those things well and at the same time. If you don't have a budget, then now is the time to call your friends and call in some favors. More often than not, people will want to be a part of a video production for little more than the cost of a meal (please buy your collaborators lunch). Coordinating all of these people is a job in and of itself. Having a carefully plotted production plan insures that you don't end up with a room full of people staring at you with a blank look on your face. Your plan should, at the very least, consist of a shot list, a schedule, and lunch.

**4 EXECUTE DURING PRODUCTION — DON'T FIX IT IN POST.** While you are in the midst of shooting your masterpiece, you have to make sure you are getting the material you need. There is a cliché phrase — “Fix it in post” (also sometimes “Fix it in the mix”). This phrase is notorious for being both false and a good indicator that your shoot is falling apart. There will be shortcomings during your production, but you have to spend the time to achieve the best results possible. Get multiple takes — you never know what you will end up needing in post, or if a file ends up corrupt, or if one performance will be better than another (or any other number of unforeseeable events). Make sure you are getting good video and sound. Take a minute to check it. And if it needs fixed, take the time to fix it **ON SET.**

**5 FIX IT IN POST!** Many filmmakers (myself included) have experienced this moment: You've completed a grueling production, you are watching your raw footage, and you think, "This is garbage. This is an absolute disaster. This is bad." There is a reflection of a cinema light in the shot. The acting is bad. The sounds has pops in it. The sky is falling...

Relax. Depression and self-loathing are just another step in the process of filmmaking. Take a minute. Take a deep breath. Then get back to work. I know I said, "fix it in post" is a terrible mindset (and it is), but there is a lot you can fix in post. You can re-record and replace dialogue — it's a pain in the ass, but you can do it. You can remove cinema light reflection with patience and software. You can build a better acting performance through editing. You can mix the sound. You can even change the story or visual approach through the post production process. You can make a video. Get to it.



# YOUTUBE

It's the second largest search engine. You need to be on there somewhere. You might be tempted to go off on a tangent here and start looking at all kinds of fancy cameras and some insanely complicated editing program. For me, it's more about the communicating quickly — being able to upload material pretty much as it happens. Yes, of course you can stream, but it's nice to be able to condense down something to the best moments, add links and define a purpose before it goes up.

The YouTube playbook is a great tool. Lots of terrific information, but its designed by YouTube to get you to be a dedicated YouTube worker-bee. Here's some information from it. You should take the time to read through the full playbook yourself, but here's some highlights.

The viewer is making decisions about your video, whether to stay or go, in the first 15 seconds. That's how long you have to engage them and get them to stay.

## YOUTUBE: JUST LIKE SHAGGING WITH ME — ITS ALL ABOUT THE FIRST 15 SECONDS.


Don't hold on to your best stuff for the third video in the series or even the second minute. **Put your best stuff first.**

You can brand the beginning of your video ("Live from Steve's Basement" whatever), but that can't be more than 5 seconds long and it too needs to be compelling. **Engage first – brand second.**

## EXPERIMENT

As I say in lots of places, do more of what works and less of what doesn't. To do that, you have to be looking at your analytics (it has to be your video channel to be able to look at this). **When** are people watching? **Where** are they watching from? During the video, **how** long do they stay engaged? You can check all of this on your own page — as long as you are looking! It's about incrementally moving towards wherever it is that you are going — no longer in the dark. With almost instant real world unfiltered audience feedback for you to see, understand, and respond to. By unfiltered. I mean that on YouTube, there are no people sitting watching because they think you'll be upset if they stand up and walk out. It's instantaneous — as soon as they are bored, they are gone. That's actually *terrific* if you can embrace it. Instead of wondering why the stupid audience doesn't get your genius, wonder why you don't get them.

**INSTEAD OF WONDERING WHY THE STUPID AUDIENCE DOESN'T  
GET YOUR GENIUS — WONDER WHY YOU DON'T GET THEM.**



If it's not on YouTube,  
it never happened.



**MAX  
GOLDBERG**



**COMEDIAN**

@maxgoldberg

# DISTRIBUTION TECHNIQUES

## MAX GOLDBERG

There are simple, free, and effective methods (that will be obsolete very soon) you can use to greatly increase the chances of your content being passed around. The simplest thing:

### **DON'T HAVE SHITTY CONTENT.**

You can use all the strategies, distribution deals, cross-links, and status updates you want, but at the end of the day, if individual folks don't share your content with friends on their own, you're not being effective. It's important to present your content in a way that allows and encourages people to share.

Please — don't throat-fuck people with promotional content. If you put a shitty promotional video in not just one, but dozens of places, you're just a spammer ruining the real value of the internet.

## **INSIGHTS AND ANALYTICS**

Knowing your audience's age and location is good, but understanding how they interact with your content is more valuable. You learn this by checking out the "viewer drop off chart" (also called "Hot Spots" in YouTube).

This lets you see exactly when viewers are clicking away, reloading, or skipping past parts of your video. It works by comparing your video with all other videos of the same length. The higher the graph, the "hotter" that point of your video is.

**VIDEO-BASED SPONSORSHIPS.** If your videos start picking up steam (meaning you're regularly releasing them and they're increasing in popularity), you'll have new opportunities to explore.



**STREAM YOUR SONGS.** Every single one! Since YouTube is one of the first places people turn to hear music nowadays, you want to make sure all your music can be found there. But you don't have the time or budget to make videos for every song; instead, create a stock slideshow of band photos and album art; use a program like iMovie to pair that same slideshow to every song you've recorded — then post them on YouTube.

- CD Baby

# 10 KINDS OF VIDEOS TO PROMOTE YOUR MUSIC

## CD BABY'S ULTIMATE YOUTUBE GUIDE FOR MUSICIANS

These days, you don't have to have a giant budget to make a great video. Affordable video and editing technology now allows DIY artists to get creative when it comes to making content for YouTube. Here are ten different approaches you can explore:

- 1 **THE STANDARD STORY-ORIENTED MUSIC VIDEO.** Ya know, like Michael Jackson's "Thriller" — something scripted with actors, props, costumes, and sets.
- 2 **LIVE CONCERT FOOTAGE.** Just like it sounds: a video of you playing a single song live. You can even shoot it on your iPhone!
- 3 **"TAKEAWAY" SHOW.** Think of it like field recording. Your band goes to a strange location and performs un-amplified for the camera, for the passersby, for whomever. Usually done with one or two cameras and minimal gear.
- 4 **INTERVIEWS AND MINI-DOCUMENTARIES.** Give your fans the stories behind the music! Have someone conduct an interview with you (or interview yourself). Try to document the story of your band in 5 minutes or less.
- 5 **VIDEO PRESS KIT.** A quick movie about your latest release or tour that you can use for PR purposes.
- 6 **BEHIND-THE-SCENES.** Behind-the-scenes snippets of your band writing, recording, putting up posters, fixing your gear, eating at your favorite taco cart, or practicing.
- 7 **ENCOURAGE FANS TO RECORD COVERS OF YOUR SONGS.** Why not? It worked for Steve Winwood and Taylor Swift!
- 8 **ANIMATION TOOLS.** YouTube has a number of easy animation tools you can use for free.
- 9 **STOCK/ARCHIVAL FOOTAGE.** If you have video editing abilities, this is a great option when you want to create a video quickly and cheaply. Just make sure the footage is in the Public Domain first!
- 10 **VIDEO SONGS.** The viewer hears the finished song, but all of the visuals are of individual tracks being recorded, all edited together at a fast pace to keep things interesting.



# 5 TIPS TO YOUTUBE PROMOTION

## CD BABY'S ULTIMATE YOUTUBE GUIDE FOR MUSICIANS

Here are a few extra things to keep in mind to help you make the most of your video presence.

**1** Add links at the top of the description field for each video. Let your fans know where they can purchase your music; simply enter the URL to your blog or website (or to your cdbaby.com artist page) at the very beginning of the video description field (to ensure that it's visible to all viewers). YouTube will hyperlink it automatically.

**2** Make the first 15 seconds count. As the saying goes, "Don't bore us. Get to the chorus." You've got to hook them upfront. YouTube videos are like pop songs; they're best enjoyed and shared when short and catchy. YouTube is proving there's some truth to Andy Warhol's saying, "in the future, everyone will be world-famous for 15 minutes." Only now, 15 seconds may be all you get.

To help you capture your audience's attention, the Official YouTube Blog has offered some good advice on how to make the first 15 seconds of your video irresistible:

Make compelling content first...

- Start off with something that will immediately grab attention, whether it's what you say or a stunning visual.
- Make it clear what your video is about early on, so viewers aren't confused about what they're watching.
- Tease the rest of the video so the audience is intrigued to see where you take them.

...share your channel branding later.

A flashy intro may look cool, but it's not the star of the video — let them see you, or your great content, first. Make your branding compelling by making it entertaining or unique to each video

**3** Add tags to your channel and videos. Tags are important. Tags are keywords that help people find your video in YouTube's search engine. What will your fans type into YouTube to find your video? Tag your videos with venue names, your band name (correct spelling and misspellings), song names, city, state, genre and other relevant keywords. Then when someone types in a search for your song or band.

**4** Choose great titles for your videos. Not many people on YouTube are going to be searching for "sadsong-ver.2 w/o vocals recorded at John's." Include your band name, song name, the venue or location (if relevant) and maybe even a few specific keywords that accurately describe your music. For instance: Tommy Jug Band plays Silly Girl at Sunnyside Tavern, Portland, OR – Country Funk and Bluegrass.

**5** Respond to every comment. Responding to comments will not only make your fans feel appreciated, it will also inspire others to comment on your videos. Try sparking conversation by asking a question, or by pointing out something interesting in the video.





# 39 ACCOUNTING

Accounting is your friend — or someone in the band's friend. Some people keep tour diaries, but you know the deepest, most detailed, accurate and time sorted diaries are the accounts. It's all there: two cases of beer, speeding ticket, paid \$15 to the hotel guy (petty cash) because they realized you stole the pillows, trip to the emergency room, occult books from the thrift store, another case of beer, another trip to the emergency room, triple A, dinner for friends that let you stay, misc (drugs), studio enhancement (drugs), or just drugs.

My mate and guitarist with Brian Brain, Geoff, kept such great track of everything that we even knew what the X-factor was going to be each day (I remember it as \$23). We didn't know what X was going to be, we just knew that something was going to surprise us and cost us \$23 one afternoon or \$46 after two days. That's powerful stuff to be able to predict the future, and maaaaan, Lisa has some amazing tips that I wish I'd had 25 fucking<sup>2</sup> years ago! Thanks Lisa! Please don't skip this chapter!

# ACCOUNTING

## LISA MALINA

What do accountants and musicians have in common? Nothing in particular. Just sounded like a good way to start an expose about important things you should know about accounting and taxes. If you don't read further than this, at least I had you at "Hello".

As an accountant that specializes in entertainment, I meet all types of personalities: rock stars, divas, intellectuals, you name it. Each has their own agenda, their own idea of success, and their own perception of how things should be. While I serve many different functions, let's face it: my primary jobs, at the end of the day, are to help bands keep track of their finances, to prepare their tax returns, but more importantly to keep them out of trouble with the IRS. A lot of new clients come to me because they received an IRS notice and their manager/lawyer/etc gave them my number. I'm like the "Cleaner": someone brought in when things go wrong that can clean up the mess. In the end, it makes me a hero, but it can be a pain in the @\$\$ to take care of sometimes, and in almost every case, was preventable with some good accounting/tax management, and good advice.

Which brings me to the beginning: why do you need an accountant, and what can I tell you that relates specifically to the music industry?

Your accountant is an amazing resource, and one of your most important confidants. Like your doctor, your lawyer and your spouse, they are people that will know an insane amount of information about you, so choose wisely. Giving this type of information to anyone is risky, and you want to make sure you make the right decision. You wouldn't choose an Orthodontist to do your brain surgery, and the same goes for your accountant. Make sure the person you choose has integrity, understands your industry and is qualified to do the type of work you want them to do. This is an important point: Learn who your accountant is!

Just because you bring your paperwork into a tax preparation location in the local strip mall (not naming names), does not mean the person sitting behind the desk preparing your tax return is an accountant. There are generally three types of people that prepare tax returns: Paid Preparers, Enrolled Agents (EAs), and Certified Public Accountants (CPAs). Each has a different background and depending on what you need, may or may not be the right choice for you.

**Paid Preparers** are just that: someone paid to prepare tax returns. Because they may or may not have a formal accounting and/or tax background, there are new regulations that require Paid Preparers to pass an IRS tax test, and get an ID number called a PTIN number. But while they are tested on how to prepare basic tax returns, they may not be knowledgeable about more advanced tax issues, such as record deals, advances and international touring. Make sure you inquire about their qualifications before having them prepare your return.

**Enrolled Agents (EAs)** have a high level of tax knowledge, and have passed an IRS tax exam that is more difficult than the one for the Paid Preparers. They are considered experts at preparing tax returns and researching IRS regulations, and can represent you before the IRS if you receive a tax notice. But many do not have additional education relating to accounting and financial reporting, which means that they might

not be able to help you with creating financial statements and offering accounting advice. When hiring an EA, be sure to inquire about their qualifications, and make sure they fit with the needs of the band.

Which brings me to **Certified Public Accountants (CPAs)**. CPAs are licensed by the State Department of Professional Regulation, and are trained in accounting, tax, auditing and business law. As such, they can help you with band accounting, give you financial reporting advice, prepare the band/band member tax returns, represent you before the IRS for tax matters and even help review portions of legal contracts. Depending on your needs, you may or may not need someone with all of these qualifications, but nevertheless they can be a good resource on many levels.

Which brings you to me, a CPA, and what I can offer in this expose that is worthwhile reading for a band. While accounting may not be the sexiest career to be a part of, I've married it with a pretty rockin' specialty that makes it as much fun as accounting can possibly be (pun intended). Since it has its own challenges and issues that need to be addressed, I first need to supply you with a new bag of tricks to help you be successful. For that, I give you a list of resources:

**PER DIEM RATES.** Per Diem is the daily travel reimbursements for work-related travel away from home. In lieu of actual receipts, the IRS allows you to deduct a pre-determined amount for meals and hotels based on the city you are traveling to. These rates change from city to city, and there is a government website that lists the approved per diem rate allowed for anywhere in the United States:

[www.gsa.gov/portal/category/21287](http://www.gsa.gov/portal/category/21287)

**MILEAGE RATES.** The tax-deductible mileage rate changes each year, so you need to make sure you are using the correct amount for travel reimbursements and deductions on your tax return. You can find the current rate on the IRS website at [www.irs.gov](http://www.irs.gov), and type "standard mileage rates" in the search box.

**STATE DEPARTMENT OF REVENUE.** Each state has its own Department of Revenue that maintains the tax information for the State. Some have "Department of Revenue" in their name, but not all. (For example, California uses "Franchise Tax Board" instead.) Regardless of the name, each can be found on the Internet by doing a search that includes "(State Name) and Department of Revenue".

Now armed with this resource information, following are the nuggets of wisdom I can confer that won't make you better musicians or bands, but will hopefully help keep you out of trouble...and on the happy side of your accountant. I thought long and hard about what should go into this list, and decided to detail the issues, questions and challenges that I address time after time with each new artist I meet. But please note that this excerpt is not a substitute for qualified professional advice. Since everyone's tax situation is different, you should consult with a competent tax professional to make sure the information contained in this list is relevant to you.



To incorporate or not incorporate? Now that is the question. There are many things that go into this decision and it is best to discuss it with BOTH your lawyer and your accountant. Believe it or not, each may have a different take on this point, as one views it from a legal liability position, and one from a tax perspective. I highly recommend getting both advisors input on what is best before making the final decision.

**S-CORPORATION VS. LLC.** Almost every new client I meet that wants to incorporate begins the conversation with, “I want to be an LLC”. My first question is always: Why? Every musician/band has unique legal and tax issues, and those help determine which entity type is best. If you can enter the conversation with an open mind, you may be surprised at the outcome.

Use an accounting system of some sort. Whether it’s a logbook you write everything down in, Excel spreadsheets, or an accounting software like Quicken or QuickBooks, you need to keep track of both your income *and* your expenses. It will make your life easier in the long run, and your accountant’s! Not only will it help to prepare your tax return at the end of the year, it will also help you figure out where all your money went when you were out on tour.

### QUICKBOOKS PRO

One of the best business aides I’ve found for the touring musician is QuickBooks Pro by Intuit. If you are looking for an incredibly easy system by which to keep track of all your accounts, income and expenses along with inventory, this is the tool to use. I have no ties to the company or the product. When my accountant recommended it to me, I was looking for some method that allowed me to keep track of my book sales along with checking and invoicing. QuickBooks has a business category specifically for writers/artists who keep an inventory of product, such as books, CDs, t-shirts, etc. It was easy to set up and maintain. When tax time comes around QuickBooks offers a variety of reports that precisely tabulates your year’s transactions that can be printed to hard copy or to file and handed or emailed to your accountant. Throughout the year you can print various reports to help you stay on top of the business. There are other applications available, but none so friendly.

– *Jeri Goldstein*

Receipts! Receipts! Receipts! I cannot stress this point enough! The official IRS position is: no receipt, no deduction. So if you have a lot income at the end of the year, and did not save many of the receipts to use as deductions, you may end up paying more tax than you needed to. One nugget of help here: refer to your resource list above for Per Diems. If you did not save your hotel and meal receipts when you were on the road, you can use the Per Diem calculations instead.

**MILEAGE DEDUCTIONS.** While you may know that you can deduct mileage out on tour, did you know that you can also deduct the mileage for ALL driving done on official band business? That means every trip to the studio, lawyers office, bank to make deposits and withdraw cash, Guitar Center to buy new strings... everything is deductible. All those little trips can add up to big bucks over the course of a year.

**MAGIC DEDUCTION:** mileage for a touring band. In the first year you place a band vehicle in service (i.e. start driving it around), you need to decide whether to deduct actual costs or mileage. The catch is: whatever you pick the first year, is permanent for the life of the vehicle. If you are a band that mostly tours local, chances are the car payments/insurance/maintenance costs, etc are higher than your mileage deduction, so you will probably go with actual costs. But if you are a band that does a lot of touring, mileage is probably better. But here's the magic: there is no limit to the number of miles that can be deducted. So imagine you purchased a beat-up van for \$3,000 and then went on the road and drove 10,000 miles on tour in 2009 when the mileage rate was 55¢ mile (refer to mileage rates in the resource list above). Your tax deduction for mileage that year would be \$5,500 (10,000 miles x 55¢/mile): almost twice what you paid for the van! Take this deduction over multiple years (hopefully the van lasts that long), and you can see the tax benefits add up.

### **...THERE IS NO LIMIT TO THE AMOUNT OF MILES THAT CAN BE DEDUCTED.**

**MAPQUEST (OR OTHER DRIVING DIRECTION WEBSITE).** At the end of the year when you need to know how many miles you drove on the East Coast tour, and realize that you didn't keep track of the number of miles, Mapquest can be a great resource. Simply type in the various beginning and ending locations, and Mapquest will calculate the number of miles in between. Even better, print off the direction sheets, and you now have "written verification" to support your calculation of the number of miles.

1099s are on your transcript! Just like in high school and college, the IRS keeps track of everything submitted to them, and creates a "tax transcript" for you and the band. Every W-2 you receive from a job, every 1099 the band receives, and all of the interest the bank reports as received by the band bank account. Each document that is filed becomes part of your transcript under your social security number or band EIN number, and the IRS computer then matches each of these forms to the tax return you file at the end of the year. A common thing I run into is a band that has \$X dollars in total 1099 income, but only half that amount was listed on their year-end tax return. The IRS catches this one quite easily, and I've acquired many new clients from this point alone.

States require tax returns, too. While everyone knows that you need to file a tax return with the IRS, many don't know that you are also supposed to file a state tax return for ANY STATE YOU EARNED INCOME IN. That means, if you do a West Coast tour and earn money in Washington, Oregon, California and Utah...you are supposed to file a tax return in Washington, Oregon, California and Utah. Yep. I didn't make that one up.

**The States are not (necessarily) your friends.** Referring to state tax returns above, each state has their nuances, and you should find out what they are before you perform there. States like Texas are wonderful for a band to tour in because there are no state taxes due unless they earn a high amount of income, unlike California who (in 2011) had a minimum tax payment of \$800, even if the band only earned \$10! Then there's New York who won't accept the federal Sub-S Election status (i.e. S-Corp), and requires that you submit a separate application (and fee) with them to be treated as an S-Corp for the state return. Bottom line is, learn what you are getting into by researching the respective state's Department of Revenue website ahead of time (refer to resource list above), and see if touring in that state is financially worthwhile. Better yet, ask your accountant to do it.

Engagement Letters for tax returns. Like the contract you have with your manager, booking agent and record label, many accountants will present you with an Engagement Letter for you to sign prior to preparing your year-end tax return. It generally details everything about your client/accountant relationship: what each of you is responsible for, what the payment amount or rate is, and what happens in the case of termination of the



contract on either side. The key in this agreement is that it usually states that you (and not the accountant) are responsible for the information contained in the tax return, and the accountant is only responsible for clerical or tax regulation application errors. (Translation: if you forget to give your accountant all of the information to complete your return, it is your responsibility, not theirs.) As with all contracts, it may look like a lot of legalese, but you should read the agreement, and make sure you understand and agree with the expectations on both sides, before signing.

## **YOU PAY THESE PEOPLE FOR A REASON... MAKE THEM DO THE WORK THEY ARE HIRED TO DO.**

**USE YOUR RESOURCES.** Your manager, lawyer and accountant are all fabulous people that can help you succeed. You pay these people for a reason. Ask them questions, and make them do the work they are hired to do. If you don't like the answers, is it because you don't want to listen...or because they don't know what the fuck they are talking about. In order to succeed in this business, you need to know the difference, and sooner rather than later.

So, there you are. You saw it through to the end, and hopefully learned something along the way. While not as exciting as most of the other information in this book, it is just as important, and as relevant now, as it probably will be five years from now. As long as death and taxes remain the two certainties in life, I will continue to have a job...and musicians will continue to need accountants.



## **FLEXIBLE EQUATIONS**

Traditional accounting cannot understand that the cost of doing everything GWAR is not an accounting problem. If you let the accountants loose on it, then they'll make "perfect sense" of it by firing half of the band (most bands have no more than 5 members), and losing the expensive — and, let's face it, smelly — costumes... Then they can triumphantly reveal New GWAR! Two guys with a drum machine that can tour in a prius... Cost efficient, sleek, and able to make more of a profit, except it's totally uninteresting and alienates the fan base that has been painstakingly built at massive cost of time, money, blood, sweat, and beers. Even worse, they're no longer able to make any profit... It's NOT about accounting and it's not about poetry. There's a spot in the middle where the two converge and create a hybrid, gloopy, malleable inspiring mess.

# MAKING BAND MONEY MAKE SENSE

## JOSH HOGAN

When it comes to most independent bands, the handling of band finances is a scary and often avoided subject. Money is kept in a metal box, backs of outdated and beer stained show posters and set lists contain primitive, near caveman like scratches which record crude trades of money for merchandise. In an attempt to make your lives easier, here are a few tips to help make managing your band money more... manageable.

### KEEP RECORDS OF EVERYTHING

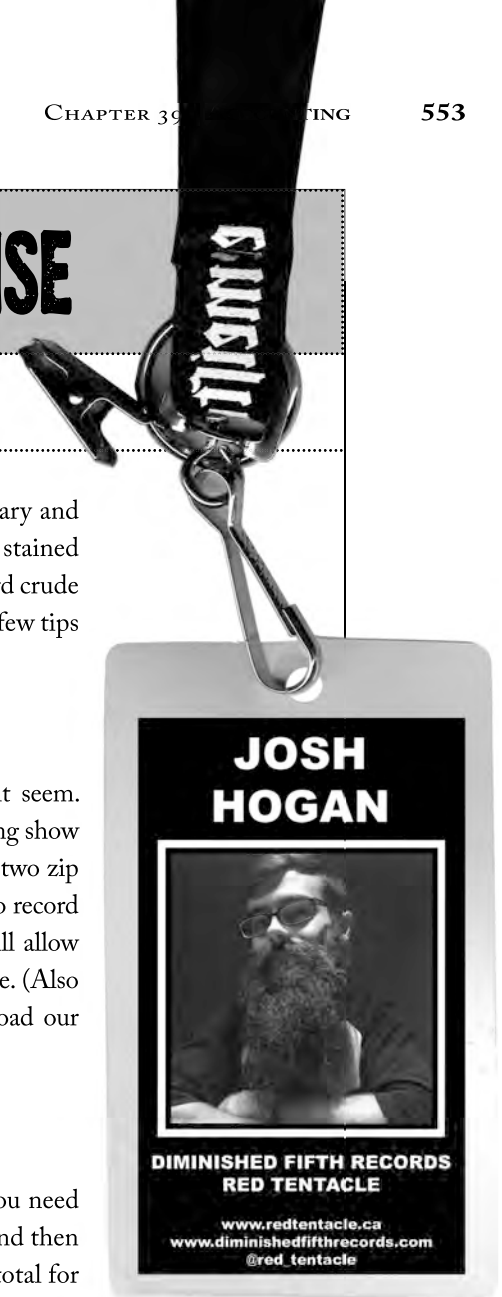
Keep track of everything band money is used for no matter how trivial it might seem. Highway tolls, food receipts or items like buying a new bin for merchandise or printing show posters. I'd suggest picking up a small portable filing cabinet or at the very least use two zip lock baggies, one for receipts of money in and one for money going out. You can also record everything on a simple spreadsheet, on your laptop or on a piece of paper. This will allow you to see how much money, or lack of, you have in the band fund at any given time. (Also to make keeping track of your merchandise sales easier than ever you can download our Merchandise Sales Trackers for free here)

### MAKE A BUDGET

If you have an upcoming tour or want to release new album the very first thing you need to do is create a budget. Itemize and list every expense you foresee for the project and then assess how feasible it is to achieve (recommended you add 10-20% on top of your total for overage and unforeseen expenses). The vast majority of times you will need to raise capital and there are a variety of ways to do that. Most bands will need to do more than one of these to raise capital to fund a new album or tour.

- Play shows
- Sell merchandise
- Crowdfund
- Financial investor. Be it a label or a private investor.
- Private loan / credit card. May not be ideal, but if you expect a reasonable return on investment it could be worth it.
- Get creative. The power of one's desire should never be understated, where there is a will there's a way.

Once you have your budget you should also create a schedule or a timeline which sets specific targets or goals (both financial and in terms of what stage you should be at in your project).



**ASK YOURSELF “IS IT WORTH IT?”**

Regardless of the stage in your career or your mindset on success you should always ask “is it worth it?”

Ex: Let’s say your tour budget is \$2000 and after assessing your budget you expect to only make \$1000.

To a serious band trying to raise capital for a new album that would not be worth it, however to a few friends on a mini-vacation that could be the best use of a couple hundred dollars each to hit the road and have fun. Additionally it is important to look at things in a long term scope as many independent bands will need to tour a market multiple times before establishing enough of a fan base there to make for a financially successful tour.

By keeping track of money you’ll be able to better assess the values of your investments and more importantly able to make smarter decisions about the career and future of your band.

**REMEMBER IF YOU ARE DOING IT RIGHT YOU WILL NEVER BE  
SPENDING YOUR MONEY, ONLY INVESTING IT.**





# 40 LEGAL

## THE LEGAL STUFF ISN'T REALLY ANY PROTECTION

I don't mean to be flippant when I say that the legal stuff is no protection – there is certainly a consequence to paperwork or the lack of it – I'm just trying to counteract the books and books and books by lawyers that seem to think an agreement is the be all end all of everything – and, maybe for them, it is. But an agreement without the will, leverage, money and time to enforce it – is useless. It is important to have some things negotiated and memorialized BEFORE they go horribly wrong – but then don't rely on those pieces of paper to do anything for you. OK? Paper can't enforce itself. “Nicely worded contract, where's your bat?”

The time to deal with legal issues is before they arise, once they do, you are just buying the attorneys a new pool.

**An agreement in the beginning is key.**

*– Marci Rolnik*

The idea of reading through a contract (or a chapter in a book that alerts you to things in contracts you should be worried about) can be daunting. So, dear artist, don't be worried! I made up a nice little Halloween story for the people at NPR and we've reprinted it here. Sometimes when we look at some of the "old school" contracts, it might seem like we are looking into the dim, dark past, *but* I have to tell you, the contracts from the newer smaller companies are way more frightening and dangerous than anything I have ever seen before. One contract I just looked at asked for 8 albums, 18 songs per album... and the advance? ZERO. That's not a bad decision — that's a career ending decision. Be careful out there. Read this chapter for fucks sake. Call someone.

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## HAUNTED HOUSE

The large house at the end of the block stands scarily like a challenge and sticks in my mouth like a bad tooth demanding attention from the end of my tongue. I could stand outside for a long time — that's the easy way. Don't even go near the building. Walk up and down the street, pacing like a prizefighter before the fight.

But, there are stories and rumors about this house, passed down from one group of kids to the next. Always rumors and my invincibility level feels good, especially as I don't know the dangers that await.

I walk through the gate, rusty at the hinges and at an angle, and step up to the front door of the old Victorian. The floor creaks. Signs say "DO NOT KNOCK," "No Solicitors," and, my favorite, "Never mind the dog — beware of the owner" with a picture of a gun.

I ring the bell, half expecting an electric shock as I do so. Nothing. I try again. Nothing. So, like a b-movie contract player, I grab the medieval looking Home Depot reproduction sanctuary knocker. It creaks as I pull back and pound on the door.

Still nothing from inside, but the door creaks open.

I walk past the grandfather clock that sits guard in the hallway, keeping the house on track with chimes on the half hour and hour. The tick-tock providing an interesting polyrhythmic counterpoint to my heart beat which seems louder and louder inside my ears. A small table to the left has a few pieces of long neglected mail, strangely addressed to "jointly and severally."

The staircase is in front of me, almost an optical illusion as it stretches for what seems like five stories up. There is a door I can see at the very top. It looks like it is bolted shut, but I *know* I need to be in that room. Determinedly, I start the climb. The clock chimes behind me and I almost fall down the stairs but hang on to the dusty rail.

The steps creak like the bones of an old night watchman getting ready for another shift. After just two flights, I'm breathless. The steps are steep, but I know I have to make it to the top. Something very important is in that room. Suddenly, the lights go out. A door to the left is locked. There's a calendar on it, a day written in red and blue paint on an old piece of wood.



A beautiful woman is in a bedroom to the side. As the door opens, I smell perfume and warm air from the flickering logs in the fireplace behind her. The coziness wraps around me. She opens the door further and shows a stocking thigh outside of her red Chinese robe. I see wine opened on the small table. We lock eyes, and she raises an eyebrow as an invitation.

In cartoon fashion, I shake my head to clear it and set back on my mission to climb to the room at the top of the stairs. The warmth from the fire in the bedroom disappears as the woman closes the door in retaliation for my dismissal of her charms and I start back up to the third floor.

Something important is in that room. More important than the woman in the robe.

The steps get steeper and the air gets thinner but I proceed. It's tough going. My legs are getting weaker... I stop to try and get my bearings. The wine is making my head spin a little — a bad idea I think under these circumstances.

A door at the top of the third floor landing marked “map room” is partially open but I cannot force it any more. My legs are heavy. My head is light. It feels like the carpet is moving. Down below me the clock chimes the half hour — has it been that long already?

I move to the last flight of stairs, narrower steeper. Each step an immense effort.

The pounding in my head gets louder and the image of the door upstairs is obscured by cob webs. I start to flail away at them. They wrap around my face. BLLLLLLUGHHHH. Some of the cobwebs get in my mouth. The stairs feel like I'm on a treadmill, losing the power and the resolution to make it to the top. I hear music. Gentle soothing music from downstairs and as my ears prick up, my nostrils flare, too, with the smell of fresh baked bread. As I unwrap the cobwebs from my face, I'm engulfed with that smell that transports me to a simpler time and I'm soothed. I'm transported back to the bottom of the stairs. I smile happy. I'm safe.

There is a tap-tap-tap like a bird on the window. Not a Hitchcock bird, the first of a thousand, tapping on the window, but more a friendly dove. A flock of one just kind of tap-tapping, like a nagging doubt might tap you on the shoulder...

Except, weirdly, it's exactly the other way around; this is a nagging doubt that sounds like a bird tapping on a window! But what is it? What is it?

I look down. The carpet pattern is weird, and the peeling wallpaper is a pattern I can't decipher.

It's not a pattern on the walls, there are words, "notwithstanding the forgoing", "in the event that", "providing that the songs will be technically and commercially acceptable", "shall not be deemed to be delivered until the Term (with a capital T)" "Jointly and severally"...

"Perpetuity! Perpetuity! Perpetuity!"

The signs on the door come into focus. I'm not in a haunted house — this isn't some Halloween prank with an exit door. This is your life, your career, and you're trapped inside a recording contract.

SCREAMS.

**The idea that you have to have contracts to do [business] agreements, that you have to have formal understanding between people in order to have a long relationship, is a complete fallacy.**

*— Steve Albini*

# A FEW BASIC ELEMENTS TO ANY CONTRACT

## JOINTLY AND SEVERALLY

Means that it's not just the band or artist that is signing the deal — it is all of the people who make up the artist (sometimes whether they sign or not) and this clause prevents you from changing the name of your band to (say) ten Inch Nails to get out of your deal....

## THE TERM

This is a period of time that the contract covers. I guarantee is not the period of time that it said it is — you just haven't found the option to extend (their option, not yours) or the other elements that define the beginning and the end of the Term.

## WHAT YOU THINK YOU MIGHT BE GETTING PAID

Is probably not, check on the percentages, what is deductible, when, what is the timing of payments — you might be waiting for a while and Ca\$hflow is king. Who else takes money before you do — if these people are mentioned (sub distributors, management companies etc) be careful and see if you can see those agreements (probably not) but at least find out what the payment terms are. Sit down in a quiet room and write down all of these things then run an example — or ask your nerdy friend to run those numbers for you.

## BREECH / CURE

This helps everyone. Neither party is deemed to be in breach until they have been told they are. Simple enough you say as you slam down the phone, happy that you have told those motherfuckers what's what, except, legally, you haven't done anything. The contract will define how you tell each other anything, it is probably a certified letter to a specific address with return receipt requested (that's the postcard that you fill out and they sign — you get the postcard in the mail with their signature showing that they received it. Do not lose this!)

Once you have notified the other party, then you each have a specified amount of time to cure the breach.

## 50 / 50 SPLIT OF PROFITS

This means there won't be *any* (unless the expenses are within your control).

## PERPETUITY

Don't know what that word means? Well, labels use it instead of "forever and ever and ever." Now do you understand? Fuck.<sup>2</sup>

<sup>2</sup>*This fuck brought to you by David Baker.*

**THERE IS MORE GREAT LEGAL  
CONTENT IN VARIOUS SECTIONS  
THROUGHOUT THE BOOK.  
GO, ENJOY EM!**



# 10 REASONS TO READ A CONTRACT (OR HAVE A LAWYER READ IT)

## CHRISSIE SCELSI

No matter how many episodes of 'Behind the Music' VH1 produces with artists bemoaning the results of bad decisions like not reading a record contract before signing it, or of having a divorce attorney read your record contract, bands still continue to make the same mistakes. The best way to proceed as a band is to arm yourself with information by doing things like reading this book, and get advice from a licensed entertainment attorney in your area before signing a contract.

Successfully negotiating certain provisions can depend on a number of factors, including the clout of the respective parties. While you may or may not be able to get exactly the terms of the contract that you want, you need to understand what the terms mean and how they affect you and your band. I've worked with both sides, labels and bands, so I'm not trying to pick on one side or the other.

Here's a list of reasons why your band should at the very least read and understand the provisions of a record contract before signing it, if not have it reviewed by a licensed entertainment attorney in your area.

**1** It can determine who owns your masters, and your songs. This is a big deal, as the life of a copyright in the U.S. currently is the life of the author plus 70 years. The ownership of the copyright to a sound recording or song also includes the exclusive rights to exploit the recordings or songs. Even though you may have a right to terminate your grant of the copyright to the label in 35 years, that is a long time to wait to get your rights back. Make sure that you are getting value in terms of support from the label in exchange for granting the rights to your music, and that you are clear as to who has the right to register the works with the Copyright Office and the like.

**2** Is it a contract, or a deal memo? There are differences, and a deal memo isn't always enforceable as a contract depending on how clear the terms of the memo is, and whether it is properly executed. A big difference between the two types of agreements is that a deal memo will typically only set forth the basic terms of the agreement, where a full record contract will flesh out these terms, as well as representations, warranties, dispute resolution mechanisms, and other important provisions.

**3** A contract might limit who you can record with, and who you can release music with. Planning to put out a 7" split with your friend's band on glow in the dark neon green vinyl? Depending on your record label and contract, you may not be able to do that.

**4** It spells out **how**, **when**, and **if** you get paid! Of course you're excited about getting signed, but when you're wondering where your royalty checks are, or why you're stranded without tour support money while out on the road, you'll wish you had read what you signed, and understood how it affects you getting paid.

## CHRISSIE SCELSI



ENTERTAINMENT AND  
NEW MEDIA LAW  
PUNK LAWYER

@PunkLawyer

5 It spells out how you can make sure you are being paid correctly. I get the question of how can a band be sure that a label is paying them correctly often from bands. My first piece of advice on this topic is to make sure that a contract includes the right to audit a label's books, and spells out how that process will occur. This is how your band would be able to make sure you are being paid correctly, and you will want to understand how this process works, who gets to choose the accountant, and related matters. My second piece of advice would be to get an accountant who is familiar with record contracts and royalties to help you track your royalty statements and whether payments are being made in accordance with the contract.

6 It can affect who is in your band. Ideally you would have a band partnership or other agreement spelling out the internal operations of your band and when you can kick a member out, but if you don't, a label's contract may spell out not only how you can fire a member of your band, but also what rights that member may have. If you have a band agreement, make sure that the contract incorporates it, and if you don't, consider how you would like the process of removing a band member to work and what rights that member would or would not have upon leaving the band.

7 They get a percentage of what? 360 deals are being used by more and more labels, and can mean that a label gets not only a percentage of profits generated by music, but also merchandise, touring income, and other sources of income such as licensing. You need to understand what percentage of your potential income you are giving to the label, and make sure that they are bringing value to the table in exchange for that.

8 Hey that's my Twitter account? Just like your master recordings, a contract may spell out who has ownership of your website, social media accounts and even your band name. This is a really hot area, and you want to make sure these issues are clear before you sign a contract.

9 You licensed our music for what? So you're a hardcore vegan? Political activist? Just picky about what type of movies, games or products for which your music is licensed, like if your death metal band's song is used in a shampoo commercial? Would you want the right to approve such licensing requests?

10 People who are your buddies at the start of a contract may not be your buddies if things end badly. This is one that pains me and my entertainment law colleagues, when we talk with a band looking to sign with a label, and the answer to the contracts question is "oh, we don't need a contract, we're all buddies." Even if everyone involved are good friends, you have to remember that the label and the band have different interests at the end of the day, and as a band, you want to make sure that your rights in the event of a dispute are spelled out. Without a contract, you could end up with these rights left unclear, and stuck in a contract with a label that no longer wants to work with you, let alone pay you.



**A contract without leverage is like a propeller without the shaft — but there soon will be!**

# TWO LEGAL MUST DO'S FOR YOUR BAND THAT WILL ONE DAY SAVE YOUR ASS

## HILLEL FRANKEL

### ORGANIZE YOUR BUSINESS

Early on (As you are recording your first great 7" vinyl), decide what type of entity your band will be. Is there one main guy who writes the songs, puts up the money and controls the band? Then maybe this is a sole proprietorship and he handles all of the band funds and pays out the band members and fills out a schedule C on his tax form listing the band as his personal business. Or maybe you want to divide the income evenly or in some form of designated income split; you become a partnership. I would suggest then that you also form a corporation or LLC with the Secretary of State's office in your state (usually between \$100 to \$200 filing fee + about \$250 attorney fees if you use one). Forming a Corp or LLC for your band separates the band member's personal assets from that of the band. This can save your ass big time if something happens on the road for example and the band gets sued. There was the story about the lead singer of a band who beamed someone in the mosh pit unintentionally with the base of his mike stand. The whole band was sued individually because they were not a corporation, and each person was subject to having to pay from their own personal assets. Further when you form a corporation, a lawyer can help you draft a Shareholders or partnership agreement which would become the band's business bible. You can address all band issues of payment and investment and departing members, publishing splits, equipment purchases and anything else you can think of, within this agreement BEFORE THEY CAUSE disputes that may break up a band. Sometimes, if the band has issues that are unsolvable, you will discover this in the process of incorporating and preparing the shareholder agreement, thus sparing the band the years of torture of being stuck together on the road when it will never work out anyway. There are also a variety of tax benefits and write offs. Plus, you get to look like a real business to agents, venues, labels, publishers, licensors, sponsors (who will not work with you if you have not formed a business entity) and most importantly your girlfriend or boyfriend or your folks who otherwise think you will be a failure.

### GET A LAWYER TO REVIEW YOUR CONTRACTS

Hate to be a self serving twit here, but if you are an unseasoned musician (less than 10 years in the biz) you don't know what the fuck you are talking about when it comes to music contracts. These contracts are archaic, there are a million ways they can screw you, and if you don't know what is in them they probably will. Many times I have had to try and undo deals that were already done by an artist who said; "that sounds fine to me, I just want to be signed". NO YOU DON'T!



Not under those terms. What if the label signs you and never puts out the album? Want to be signed to a label for the rest of your life with no release? What if the royalty rate is so low or has so many deductions that there is no for you to ever get out of the red? Digital deals are no better and can be even more complex. Get a lawyer, or you will never see any money and you will be stuck in a bad deal. Guaranteed. Even good deals become bad deals if things don't happen as planned. You need someone who understands the ins and outs, to write in the outs, that get you out. Got that! Hire a lawyer. A good musician that acts as his own lawyer might as well make his next disk on a 1984 Atari. If however, you like the original Atari sound. More power to you...



**If you're going to make deals in this business,  
sometimes there might be bad deals. But know  
what you're doing.**

*- Peter J. Strand*

# WANT LONG TERM SUCCESS? CREATE YOUR BAND AGREEMENT TODAY!

## JO-NA WILLIAMS ESQ.

You ever wonder why some bands continue to release music year after year and still have harmony 10 or 20 years later? Why do some bands seem to have great chemistry on stage and off-stage, in interviews, and no one seems jaded or bitter? Can bands really have that kind of harmony? Want to know their secret?

The most successful bands have ironed out the details of their band's operations in a band agreement. I know what you're thinking, "Paperwork, contracts, business, ugh! I don't want to deal with any of that, I just want to make music!" I totally get that, but listen—if you're serious about becoming a legend you need to nail down all the sticky details that could lead to your band's future status as the next "Rolling Stones" or the next "Broke Unknowns."

Yes, every band is different but the crucial trap most bands fall into is not building a proper business foundation from the beginning. "How will the profit be split?" "Who owns the songs?" "Who makes the final business decisions?" "What happens if a band member wants out?" Some of the most amazing bands in history never got past their first or second album because they broke up over details like this. But you're more savvy; you won't fall into this trap.

### HOW TO DRAFT A BAND AGREEMENT

So, how do you do this? What are the main topics your agreement should cover? Here are a few crucial steps to create your own band agreement and move to the next level with direction and a solid foundation:

- 1 **SET A DATE.** Decide upon a date for the band to get together without distractions. It will take a few hours.
- 2 **WRITE A LIST.** Make a list of topics you want covered in the agreement. This list includes the following:
  - How is the profit split from shows, merchandise, touring, album sales, etc.
  - Who owns the Copyright in the music? This can be a sticky topic if different members created different components of the songs.
  - Who owns the name of the band, should you break up?
  - How are band changes made - Hiring, firing, dissolving the band
  - Who's the deciding vote if the band can't reach a consensus.
- 3 **HIRE A MUSIC LAWYER.** If you want your agreement to be solid and legally binding you need a legal representative. However, this can get costly, especially if your attorney gets paid hourly. A more affordable way to get the legal eyes you need is to take a stab at creating the agreement, THEN have an attorney review and revise it. **CAUTION: DO NOT SKIP THIS STEP!** It could mean the difference between paying a few hundred or THOUSANDS in fees and court costs if you end up in a dispute. Be proactive, not reactive.



**4 COME TO A REASONABLE DECISION YOU CAN LIVE WITH.** Make an agreement that addresses all your concerns and reaches a compromise. Remember why you decided to form a band; you believe in each other. Hold onto that belief and try to be respectful and understanding to everyone's opinions and/or concerns.

**5 GO – GO PLAY, GRIND AND MAKE IT HAPPEN!** I know it can be uncomfortable to face your business responsibilities “head on,” but if you want the type of career filled with longevity, money, and screaming fans from here to the other side of the world, don't fight it. Embrace your business side and access your dreams. We're waiting on you!

*Legal stuff: this article is for information purposes only. It does NOT replace the advice administered by a licensed attorney in YOUR state based on your specific situation. I know you wouldn't assume I was your lawyer cause your mama “didn't raise no fool.” But mine didn't either, hence the disclaimer!*



### **BAND PARTNERSHIP AGREEMENT:**

Clarify each band member's rights and responsibilities. There are rules to being in a band. Make sure you put them in writing. An official agreement covering the rights and responsibilities will give all band members the confidence to handle issues that invariably come up. What if someone quits? Who owns the name? What if the band breaks up? Who gets the van? What about new members — what do they get?

You can get a Band Agreement template from Legal Zoom for \$29.99.

Make sure its all clear from the beginning — if you can't break down a dollar — then how can you expect to break down a million?

— Chuck D

Everything has to be in writing even if you are dealing with friends.

— Evan Cohen



Everything has to be in writing even if  
you are dealing with friends.

— *Evan Cohen*

# LET'S GO THROUGH A TYPICAL MANAGEMENT CONTRACT

## TIM DONOHUE

### TIM DONOHUE



ATTORNEY

### EXCLUSIVE MANAGEMENT AGREEMENT

This AGREEMENT, made as of this \_\_\_\_\_ of \_\_\_\_\_ of 20\_\_, is between ("Manager") at and individually and collectively [names of individual band members] p/k/a "[name of band]" (herein collectively referred to as "Artist"). Whereby Artist desires to obtain the counsel and advice of Manager in regards to Artist's career in the entertainment industry. For the avoidance of doubt, Manager shall have no claim to any pre-existing entertainment activities of any of the individual members of Artist. Accordingly, the parties hereby agree as follows:

**1. TERM:** Manager is hereby engaged as Artist's exclusive personal manager. The Initial Term of this agreement shall be for a period commencing on the date hereof and continuing until the earlier of twelve (12) months from the date hereof, or (2) the last day of the Album Cycle in respect to the first LP recorded by Artist and released on a record label with distribution by a major distributor. If at the end of the Initial Term manager is involved in negotiating a record deal, the Term shall automatically extend for a reasonable period of time, not to exceed ninety (90) days, until the negotiations with that specific record label have either been successful or ceased. Manager shall have an option to extend the Initial Term for an additional period of one Album Cycle in respect to the Second LP (the "Option Term") if album sales by Artist during the Initial Term exceed or are equal to \_\_\_\_\_ (\_\_\_\_\_) records sold. The term's conditions applicable to the Initial Term shall apply to the Option Term.

**1.** You are hiring the manager. The Manager is not hiring you. This sometimes gets lost. This person or company works for you. You do not work for the manager. Every management contract has a "Term". The Term with a capital "T" defines the length of the contract between you and the manager. This agreement contemplates an initial term of 12 months or the last day of the Album Cycle of the First LP recorded by you and released on a label with distribution by a major distributor. The term (lower case "t") "major distributor" means a distributor such as Sony/BMG, WEA, and Universal.

The manager wants at least a year or the completion of an Album Cycle to attempt to get something accomplished. I've seen initial Terms of management contracts vary from as short as six months to as long as five (5) years. This trend toward tying the Term to the completion of an Album Cycle protects the manager's interest, not yours.

If, at the end of the initial Term, the Manager is negotiating a record deal for you, then the Term is extended for an additional 90 days so the manager can finish the deal and earn the commission.

This paragraph also gives the Manager the right to extend the Term of this agreement for an additional Option Period for the Second LP if the First LP sold in \_\_\_\_\_ units or more. Everything is subject to negotiation. Everything.



For the purposes of this agreement, "Album Cycle" shall mean the period beginning upon Artist's commencement of pre-production of the applicable album of Artist's recording commitment under the Recording Agreement and ending upon the later of:

- (i) Artist's commencement of pre-production for the next album under the Recording Agreement;
- or (ii) completion of all touring and personal appearances in support of the applicable Album.

**2. SERVICES:** Although a fiduciary relationship exists between Artist and Manager, Artist hereby acknowledges that Manager is not an employment agent, theatrical agent, and manager has not promised to procure employment or engagements for Artist, and that Manager shall not be obligated to procure any employment or engagements for Artist hereunder.

(a) Subject to the limitations set forth above, Manager agrees during the Term thereof, to advise, counsel and assist Artist in connection with all matters relating to Artist's career in all branches of the entertainment industry, including, without limitation, the following:

- (i) in the selection of literary, artistic and musical material;
- (ii) with respect to matters pertaining to publicity, promotion, public relations and advertising;
- (iii) with respect to the adoption of proper formats for the presentation of Artist's artistic talents and in determination of the proper style, mood, setting, business and characterization in keeping with Artist's talents;
- (iv) in the selection of artistic talent to assist, accompany or embellish Artist's artistic presentation, with regard to general practices in the entertainment industries;
- (v) with respect to such matters as Manager may have knowledge concerning compensation and privileges extended for similar artistic values;
- (vi) with respect to agreements, documents and contracts for Artist's services, talents, and/or artistic, literary and musical materials, or otherwise;

**1(i).** This paragraph attempts to define the term "Album Cycle". This is important because a contract for personal services needs to have a definite Term or it could possibly be perpetual (last forever) and that can make it unenforceable.

**2.** Manager acknowledges a fiduciary duty. This is rare. Most managers will not do this. This means that if the manager breaches this duty to you in addition to contract damages, you can, in some states seek punitive damages against the manager for a breach of the fiduciary duty. Manager also acknowledges he/she is not a booking agent and will not seek employment for you.

fiduciary // involving trust, esp. with regard to the relationship between a trustee and a beneficiary: the company has a fiduciary duty to shareholders.

(vii) With respect to the selection, supervision and coordination of those persons, firms and corporations that may counsel, advise, procure employment, or otherwise render services to or on behalf of Artist, such as accountants, attorneys, business managers, publicists and talent agents; and

(b) Manager shall be required only to render reasonable services, which are called for by the Agreement as and when reasonably requested by Artist.

**4. COMPENSATION:** (a) Subject to the limitations set forth above, Artist will promptly pay a Commission to Manager in the amount equal to twenty (20%) percent of all Gross Monies (defined in subparagraph 4(b) below) received by or on behalf of Artist, or credited to Artist's account during the connection with:

3. Paragraph 3 is omitted. It concerned granting the Manager a Power of Attorney. In plain English, a Power of Attorney, is you giving someone else the power (and authority) to sign your name and bind you to contracts you might not even see. In the world of bad ideas this is one of the worst ever. If a manager will not strike a clause granting a power of attorney seriously consider walking away. **There is no reason for a power of attorney.** Today you can be reached instantly via email and texts. Therefore, a manager can get you any document that needs your signature with the click of a mouse and has no legitimate reason for requiring a power of attorney.

(i) contracts or agreements for employment (oral or written) entered into or substantially negotiated during the term, including any and all renewals, extensions, modifications, substitutions and additions thereto or;

(ii) all entertainment industry services in regard to or stemming from activities and products created or rendered during the Term by Artist.

(b) "Gross Monies" as used herein shall include all forms of Income, payments or compensation and/or any other thing of value, including, salaries, advances, fees, royalties, bonuses, gifts, shares of receipt, stock and stock options, paid to Artist or applied for Artist's benefit directly or indirectly (i.e., any corporation, partnership, or other entity in which, Artist has an interest), regardless of by whom procured, received by or on behalf of Artist or for Artist's account as a result of Artist's activities in and throughout the entertainment industry, including consideration for the rendition of Artist's services.

(c) Notwithstanding the foregoing, Gross Monies shall not include:

(i) music publishing or other royalty income retained by or payable to third parties including, without limitation, songwriter royalties payable to third party songwriters and third party publishing administration fees;

(ii) bona fide third party costs incurred in connection with motion picture and television synchronization licenses;

- (iii) actual recording and production costs (including, without limitation, fees to session musicians, singers, producers, engineers, mixing, mastering, sample and clearance costs) of Artist's master recordings and audiovisual works;
- (iv) deficit tour support payments and other monies paid to third parties by Artist or on behalf of Artist for independent promotion, marketing, publicity and similar purposes;
- (v) fees, advances, royalties and other payments paid to third parties in connection with the master recordings and audiovisual works including, without limitation, record producers, audiovisual work producers and directors;
- (vi) any income derived by Artist from any passive, non-music business investments;
- (vii) audit and collection expenses;
- (viii) income paid for opening acts and sound and lights;
- (ix) monies derived from the sale of Artist's instruments;
- (x) monies derived from compensation for injury or as punitive damages;
- (xi) monies paid to third party talent agents;
- (xi) cost of the collection of monies owed to Artist;

4. Plain English, your manager receives 20% of everything you make in the entertainment industry.

**5. CONTINUING COMMISSIONS:** Upon the expiration or earlier termination of the Term of this Agreement, Manager's commissions for the years succeeding the expiration of such Term ("post-term commission") shall be calculated and paid with respect to term produced in all respects as provided in Paragraph 4, except that the percentages shall be as follows:

Company shall receive no further commissions after the end of the fifth year following expiration of the Term hereof.

**6. MANAGER EXPENSES:** Artist shall reimburse Manager for all reasonable, non-overhead expenses incurred by Manager in connection with the rendition of services on behalf of Artist by the (30th) thirtieth day of the month following the month in which the expenses were incurred. Travel and accommodation expenses shall only be incurred at Artist's request or with Artist's written consent and shall in no event be of a higher quality than those incurred by Artist and shall be pro-rated if such travels, accommodation or other expense is incurred on behalf of other artists in addition to Artist. Any other individual expense in excess of two hundred fifty dollars (\$250.00) and

5. Most managers will resist a "Sunset Clause". Many feel that they planted the orchard so they own the fruit it produces, forever.

monthly total expenses in excess of seven hundred fifty dollars (\$750.00) shall require Artist's prior written approval.

6. Your manager will need to incur some expenses to get the job done. Reimbursement for expenses is customary and fair. Make sure you come to an agreement on what you can afford; a ceiling above which the manager needs written approval and what expenses you will not pay.

7. You agree to hold up your end of the bargain and keep working and not sit on the couch and expect your manager to perform miracles because he/she is your manager now. The manager is not a booking agent and expressly states that. You will immediately notify your manager of any offers you received.

**7. ARTIST'S CAREER:** Artist agrees at all times to pursue Artist's career in a manner consistent with Artist's values, goals, philosophy, and disposition and to do all things necessary and desirable to promote such career and earnings there from. Artist shall at all times utilize proper theatrical and other employment agencies to obtain engagements and employment for Artist. Artist shall consult with Manager regarding all offers of employment inquiries concerning Artist's services. Artist shall not, without Manager's prior written approval, engage any other person, firm or corporation to render any services of the kind required of Manager hereunder or which Manager is permitted to perform hereunder.

**8. ADVERTISING:** During the term hereof, Manager shall have the exclusive right to advertise and publicize Manager as Artist's personal manager and representative with respect to the entertainment industry.

8. You want your manager to get your name out there. Just make sure that any photos, biographical material, etc. that manager uses are pre-approved by you.

**9. SCOPE:** (a) This is not an agreement for the exclusive services of Manager, and Artist understands that Manager performs the same or similar services for others, however, Artist shall not engage any other person, firm or corporation (herein after "Person") to render the same or similar services as Manager during the term hereof.

(b) This agreement shall not be construed to create a partnership between the parties. Each party is acting hereunder as an independent contractor. Manager may appoint or engage any other persons, firms or corporations, throughout the world, in Manager's discretion, to perform any of the services which Manager has agreed to perform hereunder except that Manager may delegate all of his duties only with Artist's written consent. Manager's services hereunder are not exclusive to Artist and Manager shall at all times be free to perform the same or similar services for others as well as to engage in any

and all other business activities. Manager shall only be required to render reasonable services that are provided for herein as and when reasonably requested by Artist. Manager shall not be deemed to be in breach of this agreement unless and until Artist shall first have given Manager written notice describing the exact service that Artist requires on Manager's part and then only if Manager is in fact required to render such services hereunder, and if Manager shall thereafter have failed for a period of thirty (30) consecutive days to commence the rendition of the particular service required.

**10. ASSIGNMENT:** Manager shall have the right to assign this agreement to any and all of Manager's rights hereunder so long as manager remains primarily responsible to Artist. This agreement is personal to Artist, and Artist shall not assign this agreement or any portion thereof, and any such purported assignment shall be void.

**11. LEGALITY:** Nothing contained in this agreement shall be construed to require the commission of any act contrary to law. Whenever there is any conflict between any provision of this agreement and any material law, contrary to which the parties have no legal right to contract, the latter shall prevail, but in such event the provisions of this agreement affected shall be curtailed and restricted only to the extent necessary to bring them within such legal requirements, and only during the time such conflict exists.

**12. NOTICES:** All notices pursuant to this agreement shall be in writing and shall be given by registered or certified mail at the respective addresses herein.

**13. MISCELLANEOUS:** (a) This agreement shall be deemed between the Manager and the Artist and shall be binding upon the persons constituting the Artist and upon their heirs, executors, successors, and assigns. The Artist shall be jointly and severally liable for the performance of each and all of Artist's separate and collective obligations hereunder. All of the provisions hereof shall apply to Artist and all persons constituting the Artist, as if each of the persons constituting the Artist had executed separate agreements with Manager and regardless of the name, names, or service marks under which any or all of the group members may perform. Any new member of the Artist shall be automatically bound by the terms and conditions herein as if such new member had executed this Agreement. If the group terminates the relationship, or if a member of the group leaves or ceases to

**9.** Your manager has the right to manage other artists in addition to you. You are not partners with your manager. The manager can hire others to assist manager in performance of manager's duties.

**10.** Managers can sell this management agreement to a third party (e.g. a bigger management company) as long as manager remains the person primarily responsible for your career. On the other hand, because you are an artist and performing personal services you cannot sell your obligations to another artist.

**11.** If anything in this agreement is deemed to be illegal or unenforceable it will be removed from the contract. The remainder of the contract will remain in full force and effect as if the offending provision was never a part of the contract.

**12.** If you want to change, modify, or notify the manager of anything regarding this contract it must be done in writing. It must also be sent registered or certified mail so that there is a record of the mailing. It is a basic rule of contracts that you cannot modify a written contract with an oral/verbal agreement.

**13(a).** This contract binds each member of the band individually. You can't up and quit the band in order to get out of the management agreement. Any new members of the band will be bound by this agreement. (I don't believe that is enforceable for a number of reasons that are beyond this discussion. I would strike that sentence.)

**13(b).** You are over 18 years of age. You are not signed to another manager. You have the capacity to make and perform a contract (e.g., you're not insane, mentally incapable of entering or performing a contract).

**13(c).** If it is NOT in the written agreement it is NOT part of the agreement. Any modification of this agreement must be in writing, not verbal. This is called a "merger clause". A merger clause means all of the prior discussions; verbal agreements are "merged" into this agreement and replaced by this written agreement, and/or those prior discussions. Any provision that is illegal or unenforceable will be stricken. The remainder of the agreement continues in full force and effect as if the offending provision never existed.

**13(d).** Whatever Court may be asked to determine any disputes regarding this agreement must apply Illinois contract law in rendering a decision. This agreement does not contain a venue provision. Most contracts will also choose a jurisdiction and venue as well. This means that only the Court of a specific state or federal jurisdiction have the authority (jurisdiction) to hear the dispute. If you live in Illinois, your manager is in Los Angeles, and the jurisdiction is the state and federal courts located in Los Angeles County, you're going to have a hard time litigating the contract. Make sure you at least ask for jurisdiction where you live.

be a member of the group, manager shall have the option to continue to represent such member(s) of the group for the remainder of the term.

(b) Artist is not under any disability; restriction or prohibition, either contractual or otherwise, with respect to Artist's right to execute this agreement or to fully perform its terms and conditions.

(c) This agreement sets forth the entire agreement between the parties with respect to the subject matter hereof. No modifications, amendments, waiver, termination or discharge of this agreement or any provision hereof shall be valid unless confirmed by written consent by both parties. If any provision hereof shall for any reason be illegal or unenforceable, such provision shall not affect the validity of the remaining portions and provisions hereof.

(d) This agreement has been entered into in the state of Illinois and the validity, interpretations and legal affects of this agreement shall be governed by the laws of the State of Illinois applicable to contracts entered into and performed entirely within the State of Illinois.

By signing below, each party agrees to be bound by the terms of this Agreement.

ARTIST:

By: \_\_\_\_\_

Manager

By: \_\_\_\_\_

**Good luck!**

# ACCESS OVER OWNERSHIP: CONSUMPTION TRENDS OF MUSIC FANS

## EDDIE SANDERS, ESQ.

According to the 2016 BuzzAngle U.S. Music Report, there was exponential growth over 5% increase in total music consumption (streams + downloads + physical sales) and a 25% increase in song consumption but a substantial over 20% decrease in downloads and physical sales. These numbers tell us the culture of music consumption has shifted from an iTunes library/CD library ownership to a streaming service, curated playlist driven market.

Just as the digital download brought an end to physical distribution (cassettes and CDs), streaming platforms (Spotify, Tidal, Apple Music) have become the #1 source of music consumption in the past year. 82% of YouTube's 1.3 billion users use the site to consume music. Streaming services have seen a 125% increase in paid subscriptions in the past year. Subsequently, in 2016 there was more music streams (average of 1.2 billion per day) than total downloads in the entire year (734 million). Society is still consuming music and at a large rate, and the focus is clearly on access.

Why is this shift happening? The modern day music consumer craves access and convenience over ownership and self-collection. Anchored in new technology, access has changed many archaic industries for the better. From taxis, movie rentals, food delivery and now music distribution we have seen shifts in consumption based on technologically driven changes. Netflix has eliminated the need to drive to a movie store, Uber no longer requires you to own a car and Postmates gives you access to more eateries from the comfort of home. Streaming services gives its consumers a user-friendly platform, followed by the value found in having access to a wide variety of music and the ability to discover new artist. The ability to curate their own and listen to friend's playlist has given birth to a community based listening habit. Consumers crave reliability in the streaming service, a safe environment and security around the payment process. Music consumption is now mobile. In recent years, the smartphone has overtaken the desktop computer as the most used device for music consumption. We live our lives on the go and we want our music to parallel that lifestyle.

Understanding market trends and new technology will assist artists in navigating a crowded and competitive marketplace; ultimately give them a chance to stand out. Before an artist can truly reap the benefits, I would recommend they understand what ownership percentage they have in the music they create. There are two major copyrights in music; the sound recording and the musical composition. The most important question is, which one do you, as an artist, have ownership in? It is imperative that there is a paper trail in securing the trademark of your artist and brand name before entering into any agreements. This understanding gives artist the freedom and control to maximize their growth in the industry. Understanding your value protects you when entering into agreements with labels or brands that involve the exploitation of your art.

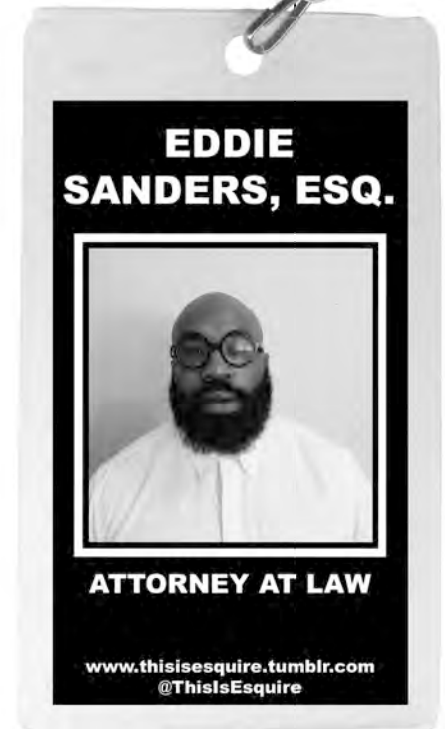
Streaming gives access to consumption patterns and habits not provided by traditional means of distribution. Streaming platforms provide the location, time and frequency of users streams. This data can be useful to maximize different revenue streams of an artist. The trend of data driven advertising isn't new to other industries, but for independent artists it's important to understand its functions. Comprehending these

patterns allows artist to not only understand when their fans consume music but also, *why* they consume certain music. The why factor opens the door for artists to determine the best touring routes for a new release, the most appropriate quantity and variations of merchandising to offer. Implement the key to access over ownership trend throughout your approach in this industry, consumers love convenience.

Artists can make a good living by determining the best direct to consumer method to provide new content to their fans. Find a digital music aggregator either, CDBaby or TuneCore to deliver your music to a larger audience. SoundCloud is an amazing platform to you use initially, however; you may restrict the growth of your potential fan base by not using platforms such as Spotify and Tidal. Additionally you are missing out on the financial benefit of using an aggregator. Develop a platform to build your audience. Every artist should have a website, that can connect fans to new content and social media links. Following these steps the artist can ensure they have supplied the convenience to the demand of the consumer using a direct and accessible approach. Remember consumers love convenience, direct and convenience access.

Advancements in social media and new technology have been consistent disruptors in the archaic physical distribution music industry. Snapchat and Instagram Live allow for artists to preview new music and connect directly to fans. These are more examples of community based consumption patterns we will continue to see. Fans not only want to interact with the artist but additionally connect with the fans of that artist. We will continue to see the release of new content via social media. Grammy Award Winning, Chance The Rapper, released his most recent visual from the Coloring Book project, Same Drugs via Facebook Live. As social media develops, artists will have the opportunity to become more and more engaged with their fan base. Discerning who your fans are, what they look like and their thinking process helps the artist make the best decision of how and when to release content.

I'm excited to see what this industry will look like in a few years time. Who's brainstorming and creating the next bigger and better innovations in technology? Music streaming platforms are most convenient so it's become the industries market leader, but what new media will help shape the future? With the many advancements of technology and the continuous developments in music platforms, music lovers have no choice but to look forward to the endless possibilities of what the future generations will bring.





**ALLESANDRO  
QUARGNALI-LINSLEY**



**MUSICIAN  
PRODUCER  
AND ARTIST**

# WHAT TO DO WHEN SOMEONE LEAVES THE BAND

## ALESSANDRO QUARGNALI-LINSLEY

The situation is an opportunity to unite the band. You can reflect on what the individual brought to the table. Think about what would have made a better fit, both musically and logistically.

It is a virtual certainty that at some point - maybe several points - a member of your band is going to leave. They'll decide that they're looking for something different out of their musical career, or you'll decide that they're not working out, but either way there'll be a clean patch of carpet in the rehearsal room. What do you now?

Your instinct (after roundly cussing their memory) will be to get ads going and fill that space. Yes, that needs to happen, but there are some other things you need to take care of to make sure that you don't have nasty surprises later on.

If you were smart you already have a contract between the members of the band. Then the nuts and bolts of the departure should be pretty smooth: copyright ownership defined, contact information filed, back rent paid, cut of the current savings dispersed or retained, etc... If you did not have a contract already... well, good luck.

The band's primary product is its music, so you need to make sure the ownership of the material and payout of the royalties are clear even if you haven't yet recorded anything. So if you haven't already, go read the copyright sections of this book.

If you have already read them, go read them again.

Bands make all sorts of stupid agreements about their copyrights. This is usually due in even parts to a desire to be egalitarian ("We're in this together, man") and some bad misconceptions about what copyrights are and how they work. Situations like this are where those stupid agreements will bite you.

For instance, the person collecting money from the sale of CDs and Digital media is legally obligated to get the royalties to the owner. So, if your agreement says your ex-guitarist owns a portion of the PA or SR, you will need to be able to send him checks in perpetuity. That can be awkward, even untenable if the split was nasty. Even with an amicable split, it's cleaner if the departed has agreed to relinquish their claim.

SRs are the easier of the two to deal with, normally, because they are usually owned by whoever paid for the recording. If you're signed, the label probably owns the SR so the point is moot. If you self produced but the album hasn't recouped, then it's probably sufficient to reimburse the ex-band-mate for their portion of the recording costs. If there's more at stake - real sales and name recognition - then it's probably worth some time with an entertainment lawyer.

PAs are more problematic. You can rerecord a song to create a new SR, but you can't "rewrite" a song to get a new PA. You may find it easier to "retire" the songs from your catalog than to fight it out. Which is why having a contract in place to cover this sort of thing would have been best.

While the parting may be amicable, time and money can change even the closest friendship, and if things get moving (read: money and fame) you'd better believe that everyone who feels that they have even the slightest claim on your cache will be sniffing around with their lawyers. So best to get things in writing, and now.

If the split was nasty, or turns nasty because you're trying to protect your interests, the departed will likely take any opportunity to delay, pick a fight, refuse, and in general make your life difficult. So be pragmatic. Be willing to give up short term for the bigger gains. Go ahead and pay him out for the last gig even if he never showed. Don't hold his equipment in lieu of rent. Do get his signature on the dotted line saying that he was let go (or left) for due cause.

## **NOW WHAT?**

Now that you've dealt with the old, how about the new? The need to build or even just maintain momentum was hard enough before, so how are you going to keep the train rolling while down a member?.

If you have an amicable break up, it might be possible to keep your ex band mate on for gigs, tours, etc, though you cannot expect them to be reliable. It can also take a long time to find a replacement, and your ex-mate may not be willing to keep up the fight for 6 months.

"Jobbers" are an alternative - for a price they will hit a rehearsal or two and show up for your gig. If you go that route, make sure that you get 3 or 4 in your stable. They put bread on the table by playing and can't afford to take a lesser paying gig to do you a favor. They will drop you - sometimes without warning - if a better deal comes along, but don't take it personally. It's just business.

And all the while, you'll be running ads in your local rags, online, in music stores, and any place where musicians go.

## **THE BIG OPPORTUNITY**

It is extremely likely that your sound is going to change as the lineup changes, particularly if you're not big enough to get your pick of replacements. Be open to allowing the change to be dramatic - especially if you have long term difficulty filling the part.

Perhaps the position doesn't need to be filled at all? Fewer instruments create space in the sound - use it! What happens if you cover the empty bass guitar position by switching to a baritone guitar? Replace the trumpet with a fiddle player? Add a bass-pedal MIDI board and replace the guitarist with a synth?

Don't get caught by the trap of needing a specific lineup or instrumentation because everyone else in your genre uses it. Instead, take opportunity to break the mold. No one ever made it big by playing it safe, nor by doing what the other guy does.

Desperation will not give you good results - this is your musical career, so be calm and play the long game. Taking on a substandard musician to fill the slot just so you can gig or get into the studio will eventually

bring you down: your loyal fans might stick around (they're sometimes shockingly understanding) but you won't get new ones. Anything you write will be poisoned by their inability to play at your level, and it will unravel.

If circumstances force you to take on a mediocre musician for some length of time, tell them you're giving them a chance to improve "on your dime" but you're going to continue to look. If they're serious about being musicians, then a setup like this should drive them to do their best and who knows, they might surprise you. If they're all ego and no skill, they'll walk and good riddance.

### **NOW THAT YOU HAVE A NEW GUY:**

New members should have a probationary period before you finalize (read: sign contracts). During that time, be careful about how you handle new material, for all the reasons mentioned above. You want to minimize the opportunity for that one guy who flaked after 8 rehearsals to come back 6 years later complaining about how that major hit was written when he was in the room and therefore he has a stake in the PA.

It's up to you how you want to handle the rest of their contract - rent, gig income, merch - but royalties for PA/SR shouldn't enter into it. The new person didn't write any of the material, and certainly didn't record any of it. They shouldn't feel entitled to any of that and you shouldn't offer it.

People leave bands about as often as - and for lots of the same reasons that - people break up. The difference is that most couples don't generally form businesses together that have potential long-term consequences to their livelihood. As with all aspects of your musical career, approach lineup changes with an awareness of what the legal ramifications are, what you're trying to accomplish, and how to handle all of the non-musical variables in such a way that you can be free to create and perform.



RETAIN THIS COPY FOR YOUR RECORDS.

03/12

**Contrary to what you might think, if you leave the band you are still under contract to the label and it can force you to perform or it can suspend the contract and effectively end your career.**

- *Tim Donohue*

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# LEAVING A BAND GRACEFULLY

This is never easy, even when it's the right move there are emotions running deep — financial considerations, fear, hurt, and emotional bruising on both sides of the equation.

I tried to leave PiL the right way the Christmas of 1984/85, giving notice before an Australia/Japan/US tour started that I would be leaving at the end. I thought I was showing empathy and being considerate. It was a big mistake. Resentments grew, dividing lines were drawn and I became the enemy of the band, so much so that I refused a “chill out” week on a beach in Hawaii after the tour. (I've still never been.)

## MAUREEN HERMAN LEAVES BABES IN TOYLAND

How would I do things differently? Well, I wish I had Maureen Herman for inspiration and guidance back then. Read and marvel at how she dealt with an unexpected departure from Babes In Toyland, a band that she helped resurrect and find the funding for a comeback. Not only does she do it with amazing grace, when fans start a tidal wave of uproar, she eloquently calms them and supports the new bass player putting the best of the band first. You (or at least most of you) cannot fathom the altitude of the high road on something like this. The mark of a person is not how you react in the good times when triumph is not just the name of a motorbike you want, it is how you conduct yourself in the face of adversity — especially when that shit-cake hits the fan. How do we measure a person then? Not feet and inches but atoms, miles, heart and velocity. Maureen Herman is a giant.



**Maureen Herman, August 23<sup>rd</sup>:**

First, I'd like to thank everyone for their incredibly kind thoughts and support. I may write like a motherfucker, but I don't know if I could ever find the right words to express how much Babes in Toyland's fans mean to me. It's true that I am no longer the bassist of Babes in Toyland.

Due to personal differences, Kat and Lori have made the decision to tour with someone else. I wish them nothing but the best and hope the tour is a huge success. When Kat and I first discussed playing again, one of the things we were most excited about was the opportunity to play in front of our kids. I can't help but be grateful that our too brief reunion gave me the chance to play in front of my daughter, Anna at our show at the Roxy.

Again, thank you all for being incredible fans and friends, and let's have a kickass rest of the year, shall we? I look forward to interacting with you all on my current and future creative projects.

**SEE NEXT PAGE FOR MORE**



**Maureen Herman, August 24<sup>th</sup>:**

An Open Letter to Babes in Toyland Fans:

After announcing my departure from Babes in Toyland yesterday, just before the U.S. tour, I was shocked and overwhelmed by the outpouring of support, well wishes, love, and poignant sharing I received. It made me feel good to know I mattered to you. I was so lucky to be a part of the legacy that is Babes in Toyland, and I want to express my support and enthusiasm for my replacement, Clara Salyer.

I have been in Clara Salyer's shoes, and I hope that Babes fans will be as patient and welcoming to the new Babes in Toyland bassist as you were to me when I replaced the fabulous Michelle Leon in 1992. Though I had planned to do these tours and play for you all, and would have liked nothing better, things just worked out differently. As someone who life has thrown more than a few curveballs at, I have found that things that seemed devastating and painful at the time, turned out to be the launchpad for unparalleled miracles in my life. I expect nothing less from this pitch.

Clara will be playing songs I love, songs I co-wrote, songs I've had the luck to have performed all over the world. I want her to do well--I want her to soar. I want the band to fly higher than ever. I hope Clara gets to know that feeling of majesty while playing Ariel, a song where Kat's vocals have never ceased to give me goose bumps, even in the hottest club. I hope she gets to feel that psychic connection and raw power while locking into Lori's inimitable, precise pounding on the toms during "Bruise Violet." Or the surge of energy when you slide down the E to begin "Handsome and Gretel" and look over at Kat and smile, as you watch the crowd come to life from the stage like an electrocuted mob.

I already got to do that. I know she can deliver those songs to you with all the skill and heart and attitude of a bona fide rock star--if she's just given the chance. It takes a lot of guts to get up on a stage with Kat Bjelland and Lori Barbero, trust me. It wasn't easy.

In 1992, I got the call to join from Lori while sitting at my desk at Columbia College Chicago where I was the English Department Secretary and a student. Michelle had just endured a horrific tragedy with the murder of her boyfriend, Joe Cole. She was devastated. The band had just signed to Reprise Records and were about to embark on a U.S. tour opening for Lush. She just couldn't do it and the pressure was on. They parted ways and it was a difficult choice for everyone.

Lori and Kat took a chance on me--I'd only been playing a few years and had only done a handful of shows. But I was a friend, and I could make them laugh. You need that on tour almost as much as knowing the songs. They wanted me in the band, and we were leaving for tour in two weeks, with our major label debut recording session following immediately after.

Clara has had even less time, and is facing crowds upset about the change in personnel. I want her to know she has my support and I want her to have yours. You are the best fans in the fucking universe--and that's probably why you feel so intensely about it, as some of you have expressed anger and sadness and disdain. Please don't. Please remember it's rock and roll--it's music--and I'm not the only one who can play it.

I was a Babes fan before I was the bassist. I saw their first show, before Kat was the lead singer. Kat, Lori, and original bassist Michelle Leon slugged it out the hard way and earned their place in the burgeoning indie rock scene, touring the country in a beat up van, sleeping on floors, getting paid crap. They were unknowns winning over fans one by one with hard work, undying persistence, guts, and talents. They deserve every bit of their legacy. I was lucky enough to be a part of it for a few albums and a lot of miles. And I want to thank Michelle for doing all that hard work, and writing those great bass lines, and always being wonderful to me.

On September 1st, instead of driving to Salt Lake City to play, I will be taking my daughter to her first day of school. I will be working on my book. I will be creating a new life for myself. That is not a terrible tragedy. In fact, that's a dream to some people. It's the way things are.

If there's anything that recovery has taught me, it's acceptance. I remember when I lost my iPhone in England on the last tour and I was unfazed. My bandmates and our crew could not understand why I was so calm--they said they'd be freaking out. I thought about it for a second, and answered, "AA." I didn't used to be like that, but I've changed. People change and everything changes. I've come through a lot, and I've been insanely lucky about things I've gotten to do, including play--twice--for this fabulous rock and roll band.

I know I'll be OK, I know that everything is as it should be. If I can accept this change, and welcome Clara with open arms, ears, and heart, I know you can. Don't miss these shows, don't miss out on being a part of a new chapter for the band, while I go on happily to write my own. I will play music again, and I have a project brewing for 2017. I'm not going to walk away from Kat and Lori or from playing music like I did last time. I will be at their next LA gig, whenever that is, cheering them on. And afterwards we'll laugh our asses off.

Thank you again for all your messages and well wishes for me and my family.

Much love and gratitude,

Maureen Herman







# 41 BLOGGING

The same rules apply here as with gigging:

## **REGURGITATE, ESCALATE**

Nothing good has happened until someone else says it has. However tiny the source, you humbly thank them and regurgitate, retweet, re-anything. Sometimes, larger outfits watch the smaller ones (who they are convinced have their ears to the ground and will discover the next thing first).

Make sure to put your hysteria and insecurities away. Be nice. Be calm. Strategize.

Make things easy-peasy for the blogger. Just like any outlet you are looking to be involved with, do your research. Find out who. Find out how. Find out the best time (when). Be careful of hierarchies; the larger ones don't want to be scooped by the smaller ones, nor bothered too soon in the journey of an artist when the story isn't quite formed.



**START SMALL.** You need to get your chops up and it's silly to blow a huge relationship with a rookie mistake. Along the way you'll find your own strategies that work.

**JOIN THE COMMUNITY.** Read what they are saying. Don't try and do this with 50 bloggers. Pick 5 or so to start, including some tiny ones.

**BE NICE.** There is no outlet too small (and by that I mean radio, print, press, blog, distro, etc). The small ones become big. It is no favor for you to grant an interview to a huge outlet, but you could be someone's first interview. They will never forget that.

Start your own blog or podcast and interview bloggers about what they like!

Just as in anything else now, there is no economy of scale AT ALL here. Everyone is different. Everyone might need a different approach: a SoundCloud link, a cd, a cassette tape. Whatever way a blogger says they want the info, get things to them that way. Otherwise you are diminishing your chances of any kind of result.

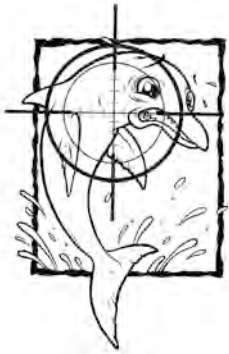
**ENABLE THE RE-TWEET / REGURGITATE APPROACH.** Unless your blogger is Arianna Huffington, they are still building their own entrepreneurial business, too. All of the "rules" I have laid down for you apply to them, too. *If you are part of their community then you can, and should, regurgitate their input for them, but also enable them to regurgitate less horribly.* You can say "great interview with \_\_\_\_\_ on \_\_\_\_\_ today!" Then they can retweet /regurgitate **you**. Say thank you. *Note: This is more effective when you have worked to build up your own following. The first thing they will probably do is check your number of followers.*

Without a following, you can be of service by asking "when is your show?" When they respond, they are answering your question, *not* retweeting more information about their show. Again.

**Dale Carnegie** works well here, as does **Shoot the Dolphin**. Take a second to step outside of the digital domain whenever you can. By following feeds, you will see stuff like "I'm in Vegas! Where should I get breakfast?" Anything could be an opportunity for you to alert a friend, band mate or relative to stop by \_\_\_\_\_ with some coffee for \_\_\_\_\_ and some tickets to \_\_\_\_\_.

You can also take a Zappos approach. If a blogger states "Hungry. Typing non-stop," send them something. It doesn't have to be a pizza to the door like Zappos did (maybe a little bit stalker-y), but you can certainly send some kind of a gift card... completely without terms and conditions, otherwise you ruin everything!

**SWAG BOMBS.** Swag bombs work! I send out Welcome to the Music Business – You're Fucked shirts and give them away on the street. The resulting traffic is well worth it! Then you can respond to the "Where can I get that shirt? MUST HAVE!" posts as a genuine friend imparting sought after information as a service, not some asshole selling t-shirts.



<sup>n</sup>*This fuck brought to you by Carlos Bocanegra.*

# REGURGITATE. ESCALATE.

# GACK!

STARR\*

*Chris Starr*

**ARIEL HYATT:** Has your fame in the podcasting and online world, and your popularity with podcasters helped you to earn more money?

**MATTHEW EBEL:** Absolutely. By getting into podcasting when it was still shiny and new, my music was passed around a very excited community very quickly. Almost all of those people became long-term fans, making repeat purchases of my music and merchandise.

You must write frequently and often for more than one reason. First, the search engines will pick up your blog quicker and more often if you post every day or two. Second, your readers will return more often if they know there is going to be new content every day.

— *Adrian Fusiarski*

# CREATE A BLOG

## VIRGINIE BERGER

Creating a blog allows you to be closer to your fans. Do not hesitate to post info, comments, or music links you like. Let your viewers share your articles on Facebook and Twitter. Blogging has lots of advantages. Ask an artist who likes your music to say so (i.e.: Sigur Ros/Fanfarlo, Passion Pit/John Mayer). Your presence is multiplied and you are improving interaction with your fans. You can post different types of contents, with key words, so your online presence is increasing thanks to SEO.

But careful, again the blog is not your website. It can't be your unique online strategy. It's complementary. Do not hesitate to tease your viewers, play with them and inspire them.



**As a blogger, I prefer to receive music from SoundCloud because it's easier to embed, but when I search for band's music, I would search Bandcamp before SoundCloud. Just to clarify, Bandcamp can be embedded, too, but I prefer the customization options in SoundCloud.**

*- Rosemary Bystrak*

# BAND BLOGGING WORTHY OF YOUR FANS' ATTENTION

**CHRIS ROBLEY**

## **BLOGGING 101 FOR MUSICIANS**

Because the basics are all you need. Want to create entertaining content that is worth a minute of your fans' time? As with most pursuits, it's really all about the rudiments.

**1 KEEP YOUR BLOG POSTS SHORT.** Fans are inundated with info about their favorite bands these days. If someone only has a minute to kill on Facebook and they're trying to choose between looking at Metric's newest Instagram tour photo or your 8 paragraph blog post about recording—they'll go for brevity. So keep things short.

**2 KEEP THE MESSAGING SIMPLE.** If you have a lot of news to share, great! Just break it up into multiple blog posts so you don't muddy up the messaging. Shorter, simpler, but more frequent blog posts also help you feed the insatiable social media beast.

**3 LET YOUR VISUALS DO THE TALKING.** Lastly, the more visual something is, the less you have to say in words—and that is going to appeal to your fans who've fried their online attention spans for the day. But crappy videos, photos, or banners only work against you; shoddy posts condition people to tune you out, so don't produce half-baked stuff just for the sake of populating your blog with content on a regular schedule.

**4 YOUR BLOG IS AN EXTENSION OF YOUR LIFE, NOT THE OTHER WAY AROUND.** If you invest MOST of your energy into producing compelling and professional music, videos, artwork, website design, tour posters, and photographs—and if you work to create memorable REAL LIFE experiences—the blogging will take care of itself.







# 42 GREEN

I have a slightly different take on the whole green/recycle crusade. I think that there are enough people screaming about the planet-the planet-the planet, and people are either doing their bit or they aren't, but what I have seen explode is the "hotel-towel strategy" that began a decade ago and spread across the US faster than thrush across a Catholic girls' school. The first time I saw the sign in the bathroom of a very nice hotel, I thought it was a great strategy — "Help us save the planet by letting us know which towels really need washing" made perfect sense. But when I saw knock offs of the same card **everywhere** (I mean hotels didn't even care if you checked in with like five other people and a meth lab), then I knew something was up. Universal adoption only seems to happen when you appeal to peoples' self interest. I'm not saying everyone, but *lots* of people. So, if I can throw a few green strategies at you that might help your business, then that's good for all of us and, accidentally and happily, for the planet, too.

**OK?**

Ok.

Do I care about your shitty band? NO! Do I care about the planet? YES!

Congratulations — you've been GREENWASHED! That's a phrase coined by Jay Westervelt back in the 80's. I think a little bit of greenwashing is a good thing — we need to bathe in it a little bit, soak our feet in it... right?

How can you be greener and help yourself with a local show? How about introducing your **Save the Planet Rideshare!**

Really it's the "please please please come to my gig because if there's no one there, the review will be terrible and we'll never get to play there again and I'm in love with the entire bar staff!" But it's expressed much more effectively as: Save the Planet Rideshare!

Or, using the strategy from the beginning of this chapter and appealing to everyone's self interests, "Save the Planet and Save More Money for BEER rideshare!"

There are lots of sites where you can enter the zip codes and easily strategize a couple of routes that will make a difference. You can incentivise this further by offering a shirt, a special download, or after party access to the rideshare peeps — right! When gas goes to \$5 a gallon, you aren't begging people to come to your show — you are SAVING THE PANET!

Make sure that you play venues close to public transportation. It seems like you are making a GREEN statement, but really how the fuck else are your fans going to get there and back drunk?

OR you could offer to do this for an established value. Generate some cash to green-i-fy the backstage areas of a local club and guess what? You are backstage talking about it, washing the reusable plates (that we used to call... plates!) instead of Styrofoam. You can explain why and at the same time, play your shitty demo in the background, *but* an entirely green backstage area or a strategy for the venue is a great PR generator and will give the venue an edge when they are placing bids for an eco-friendly national act.

There it is again — we help ourselves *and* the planet.

With any kind of CAUSE marketing – when you get involved with organizations – they get involved with you!



Create an Eco-Rider. Incorporate environmental requests for venues directly into a rider. Many of the tips listed here can appear in your rider. Here are some examples of what other artists have included in their eco-riders:

- Venues will have a complete recycling program backstage, throughout the audience area and parking lots;
- Venue to allow concertgoers to bring their own bottles and provide free refills to reduce packaging waste;
- Venues to purchase renewable energy credits or carbon offsets for each show;
- Caterers will provide washable plates, cutlery, and biodegradable cups for all meals;
- Venue to have an in-house composting program for catering scraps;
- Concessions company to use 100% biodegradable foodware and/or recyclable plastic cups and bottles to be recycled by venue;
- Dressing room and backstage facilities to have water-efficient appliances.

# DAYTIME EVENT

Quite accidentally, Vans Warped Tour is a daytime event...

The fact that Warped Tour occurs all day reduces our emissions by hundreds of tons by reducing the need for illumination. While for us this is just a fortunate effect of producing an all day summer festival, for others planning an event-it is an important consideration to make and one that can result in substantial energy and monetary savings.

So, without being a cynical bastard ALL the time — GREEN can give you a promotional PR edge over your competition — if you are running a studio- there are only so many cool vintage very expensive microphones you can source and buy – but add GREEN to your studio and you not only get a PR edge but savings and, at least in the city of Chicago — then some \$ from the city too. Roof gardening helps reduce heat use in winter and air conditioning in the summer AND gets you a green and green rooftop place to hang out and listen to ixes and do a nice video interview or acoustic set.

Jack Johnson built the first ever sustainable studio, Eco Recording Studio. The fact that we'd all be better off if some of that music burst into flames and self destructed in a cloud of carbon offset right before mastering 'tragedy strikes as new album bursts into a cloud of toxic cd gas!'

It's good for labels, too! In business since 1991, Smog Veil Records focuses primarily on underground, challenging, unknown, and/or bombastic rock'n'roll. Co-owner Frank Mauceri stated that the company now has a green initiative, and that its headquarters are now powered by wind and solar energy. With downloadable only releases there are also advantages of inventory reduction and start up costs of a vinyl pressing or cd run.

## MARKETING

- Using E-press kits, E-booking services (Gig Masters), E-ticketing, Facebook & Twitter - hellooooo
- Recycled and/or potato-starch tickets/posters/postcards/flyers/banners, soy ink, ect.
- Link to your greening efforts/partners/vendors on your website/facebook/ect. - educate!
- Outdoor groups, vegetarian meet-ups, peta, environmental science clubs/depts./cos. Are all in your corner now — market to them!

## MANUFACTURING

- Organic, no pesticide/herbicide/fungicide cloth for shirts/panties/caps/ect.
- Recycled paper/pens/ect.
- Non-toxic wristbands and headwear liners - [www.bandzorb.com](http://www.bandzorb.com)
- Potato-starch guitar picks
- Research and be aware.

## AND MERCHANDISING

The intersection of GREEN + sustainable + reuse + recycle + economic collectors edition is ONE-EYED DOLL'S Kimberly Freeman and her innovative bleach t-shirts.



# SMOG VEIL

## FRANK MAUCERI

Going green for indie labels now is the only way to survive. I promote five things for indie labels who want to go green:

- Recycle
- Reuse
- Reduce
- Innovate
- Go Invisible

It's easy to recycle, that's a no-brainer. Reuse is also simple: for starters, gather up all the boxes and mailers received and reuse them for mail orders. Reduce is also simple: make a point of eliminating the use of paper products in your office. Issue press releases and 1-sheets as pdf files instead of printed goods. Innovate is also simple: we're musicians and creative people, figure out a solution that no one has thought of yet. Go invisible is the most important aspect of record labels going green: the vast majority of consumers now buy downloads. Eliminate your CD and vinyl inventory in favor of downloads. It's more profitable in the long run anyways to base your business around reduced inventory and steady cash flow.



Global warming is Dick Cheney shit, and you don't want to be Dick Cheney.

- Frank Mauceri



ELECTRIC  
VEHICLE  
PARKING  
ONLY



# VANS WARPED TOUR

## KEVIN LYMAN

- We switched to bio-diesel 5 years ago... we worked with companies to fuel onsite to ensure what we need, up to 5000 gallons a day.
- When we wanted to switch to plant based utensils, we worked with Cisco, the large, institutionalized food distributor, to bring these products in and they became part of their national catalog.
- Recycling bins on all of our tour buses.
- Solar stages: we have built two staged and the second one can now produce enough power to run a full 9 hour day.
- Volunteers each day to collect and sort recyclables on site.
- Started a program this year to collect old cell phones to be recycled in a safe way.
- Electronic tour Books...and text program.



**Here's a fun carbon footprint calculator so you can see how you are doing compared to U2:**  
[friendstothestars.com/green-touring.html](http://friendstothestars.com/green-touring.html)



SEX &

43

SEX AND DRUGS

**GROUPIES**

Some people like to be backstage, some people like to be where they can't go, some people just want free beer...

There are famous groupies, drunken groupies, and people who are just trying to get the hell out of dodge and make a connection.

**BE CAREFUL, NOT JUST BECAUSE YOU MIGHT BE BREAKING SOMEONE'S HEART,  
YOU MIGHT ALSO BE BREAKING THE LAW.**

Was it Groucho Marx that said "I wouldn't want to be a member of any club that would want me for a member" or was it "I wouldn't want to be in the back of the bus with anyone who has been with every member's member?" Remember?

And for every action there is an equal and opposite reaction. Your level of involvement is up to you, your God, and the STD clinic. Don't let this preoccupation upset the show, sidetrack a performance or a band itself. Remember, you are performing for the entire audience not just the person you want to be performing on later.

Spending an hour with one person means you don't have the time to spend five minutes each with 12 others.

**WARNING:** If you think it's up to you whether your experience makes it onto the internet, think again. If you've already had a look at [smokinggun.com](http://smokinggun.com), you'll have seen all of the details of a band's backstage requirements. Now imagine if what you were reading about was sexual technique and dick size. Metalsludge is one of many groupie sites, and man, if you're off your game on stage, don't have much in your pants, and smell, are you in trouble! There's nothing quite like the combination of live show review, point-by-point sexual technique critique, and anatomic details. Seems like the most powerful ego-shredding lawn mower ever. Some of this stuff is just horrifying! Check out these excerpts from [metalsludge.com](http://metalsludge.com):

### **THIS COULD BE YOU:**

- What a fat lazy piece of shit. He has no charisma in the sack or on stage! After screwing thousands of chicks, he just doesn't put any effort into it anymore. If you hook up with XXXX, you deserve a painful yeast infection. Not to mention he has the build of Cartman from South Park
- ...has nothing to be bragging about! Our source said he was a very lame lay, had an average cock, and lasted all of 2 seconds.
- He has a very nice cock, above average in length and it's pretty thick. He can go ALL NIGHT! He's kinda aggressive, so beware. He will actually take time to get to know you, and is into anything you are into. He does like oral but will give it in return so that is a plus!
- Reports are that he doesn't shower much. He does have an above average cock and can be a lot of fun, but his ego is totally out of line and out of control.
- Maybe three inches if you pull on it. Could be the drugs though.
- He will treat you as a prize the next morning and show you to the roadies like the catch of the day. Can be kind of crude that way!

Stop smoking shitty weed, answer your phone,  
and take care of emails so you can succeed,  
make a bag of money, buy some amazing  
weed and ignore your emails.

**In the end, the drugs and alcohol always beat art.**

*-Patton Oswald*

How would you deal with a front man who drinks a little too much on tour? Most of the time at home he is fine, just a few incidents here and there.

It's too easy to go off on a rant - it depends how talented the guy is - and if this starts to escalate when the shows are BIGGER, better etc. - that's really something to watch out for. IS it really bad when he goes off on one?

You might try and get one of these moments on video and then, while watching the cool moves on stage maybe the video ends up showing him being an ass to someone at the merch booth or something like that or ranting onstage at some innocent 14 year old that starts crying - then HE MAY decide to do something about himself - otherwise, it's just going to get worse and worse and more unpredictable or sadly, more predictable, as he starts to fuck up everything in his path...

He might be Elvis Presley in which case you might want to cut him some slack, take lots of photographs and stay at a safe distance - some people are on their own path and cannot be deterred no matter how destructive it all is...

- Jay Godin

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Someone has to say it: avoid drugs and alcohol. This possibly unpopular notion stems not from Puritanism or for other dogmatic reasons, but out of concern for the life and health of musicians, their working lives and the music itself. Obviously the road is littered with dead, crippled and compromised artists at every level. As far as I'm concerned, it's a stupid waste and a betrayal of their talents and possibilities. There is no shortage of external obstacles and challenges to be encountered- why would you deliberately impair yourself? You don't need it to have fun. It's not where creativity comes from- that's yours, take responsibility for it. If you have a drug or alcohol problem, commit to getting better, to getting help and to getting away from it. Music is too important, and life too good, to go around anaesthetized.

- Mark Rubel

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Drug use in music is not getting worse, it's always been bad. There's something within some artists that attracts drugs and addictions. I see it in every genre of music: rap, rock, country, dance, etc. That doesn't make it right, it just makes it reality. Drugs aren't the problem, they are the symptom of the problem.

- Wendy Day

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Be on the same page as your bandmates when it comes to traveling, friends and girlfriends, drinking and drugs, or any activity that could irritate. Agree on what is acceptable or not before problems arise.

- Mark Durante

**CYNTHIA  
PLASTER CASTER**


**IMMORTALIZING ROCKSTARS'  
DICKS AND TITS IN PLASTER  
FOR ABOUT 40 YEARS!**

[cynthiaplastercaster.com](http://cynthiaplastercaster.com)

*Photo: Jim Newberry*

# BE NICE TO GROUPIES <sup>T:S</sup>

## CYNTHIA PLASTER CASTER

### A WORD OF ADVICE TO ALL YOU ROCK STARS OF THE PRESENT AND FUTURE

Be nice to your fans. Treat us as you would treat yourselves.

Remember the way it felt after Keith Richards signed your guitar, and asked what kind of music you played? You couldn't believe he gave you the time of day. Whether you wanted an autograph or sex from Keith, one thing's for sure — at one time, you were the adoring, starstruck fan.

And now the tables are turned. So, what's the big deal about being nice to people who buy your music and go to your concerts, as long as they don't maul you?

When it comes to groupies, even if you don't care to partake in the gifts we offer, take our interest in you as a major compliment. Forgive us if we get a little excited meeting you, our hero, in the flesh. It only means that we think you rule.

All right, maybe you've been feeling cranky and burned-out on touring your ass off. But don't vent your frustrations out on us, doll. Deal with it in a more healthy, productive way, like working out, playing soccer, writing even more fabulous music. Getting over yourself is good for the soul.

Now that you've got some good karma, what better reward is there (besides playing live on stage) than the icing on the cake? The doll you get to take home with you after the third encore! Rather than trying to sleep in a strange hotel bed alone, cuddle up with a new friend and discuss the state of the music business, among other things.

C'mon now, doesn't it make sense to be nice to groupies? Your record label might think so. Groupie interest in you is what interests the media. It's a publicist's dream come true. Hello, Random Notes.

Still have trouble being nice? Well...

### **DON'T BITE THE HAND THAT FEEDS YOU, PAL. YOU MAY GET YOUR DICK BITTEN OFF.**

BE NICE TO GROUPIES AND OTHER FANS, OK?

Oh, and don't forget to be nice to your other long-suffering support system — your tour manager.



# DRUGS AND SUCCESS WON'T MIX

## MIKEE PLASTIK

As an artist, no one will have your best interest in mind but you! Everyone watches and reads Hollywood-induced stories about the "Rockin' Roll lifestyle" with various famous bands and artists, but you are not getting the entire story. The reality is that those are the very few entities that fell through the cracks of the hundreds, if not thousands, that could have been greater, yet sabotaged themselves in an industry that is already near impossible. How do I know? I experienced it first-hand. After working my ass off for 8 years to get to the opportunity of having my music licensed and tour with some of my peers, I started experimenting with the many poisons that were thrown in front of me. I became a full-blown heroin addict while simultaneously recording, promoting and touring. Eventually, there is only room for one thing and the addiction wins out. Instead of doing what needs to be done to put on the best show of your life, you are busy scrambling around looking for your fix in a town that you know no one. When, or if you do get your fix, you're too fucked up to perform your parts right. If you don't get your fix, you're too fucked up dope sick to put on a great performance. Above all else, you are putting not only your safety, but your band mates as well, in jeopardy. Imagine while on the road to success, your bus or van were pulled over by police for something as simple as a tail light out and they found your dope, EVERYONE IS FUCKED (including the tour and your success). A lot of artists never get an opportunity; to fuck it up with something that could have been controlled is asinine. I have been fortunate enough to get more opportunities, but only after cleaning my life up and setting myself behind a few years. I will always have to live with the thought that I may have been further ahead right now from my earlier opportunity(s) than where I currently am. It is important that if you have an addiction issue from the get-go, that you go into rehab (or get some type of help that will work for you) prior to attempt moving forward in the business of music... trust me, your chances will be slimmer than slim to none otherwise. To sum this up:

**DO NOT CREATE A ROADBLOCK ON A STREET THAT IS ALREADY TOO NARROW.**

It could be your biggest regret!



Don't fuck anyone in the band. There are tons of people to fuck who are not in this band. Dumbass.

—Thor Harris

There's no 'high' in 'team.'  
Who do you think you are?  
The mayor of Toronto!







GOOD ADVICE

FROM

BAAD PEOPLE!

# THE TRUTH ABOUT CATS AND DOGS

## JOANNA WEBER

Most musicians, managers, promoters and other industry types will fall into the behaviors of certain animal types, which - once you learn how to spot them - makes it easier to know whom to trust. It's not an exact science, and there are rare chameleons, but most people you meet will be one of these types.

### CATS

Watch out for Cats. These make up the majority of the creatures you'll encounter in the life of your band. Cats are gorgeous and affectionate and love nothing more than to nuzzle up against you, making you feel like the most important person in the world ... so long as it suits them. Cats are ultimately self-interested and fickle. They are only interested in your interest in them. Cats are every vain, preening vocalist and coke-sniffing industry executive. Cats aren't especially vindictive, but your needs will always come secondary to their own.

**Do** enjoy hanging out with Cats - they're tremendous fun - and light flattery will get you everywhere.

**Do not** depend on anything a Cat has promised you. If you need someone dependable, trustworthy and stable, you need a Dog.



### DOGS

You don't need to be a Dog to reach the highest levels, but there must be at least one Dog in the band. Though a lot (if not most) of bands have a Cat as the lead singer, bands dominated by Dogs tend to last longer and get further. Consummate professionals - they turn up and do what's required, on time and without drama. Dogs can be gruff and humorless, but they've been around long enough to know how things work and have little patience for timewasters. Dogs are coolly charming and don't lose their tempers. All they want to know is when, where, and how much. They're the least likely to rip you off, and the least likely to be ripped off. Dogs can be good company, and occasionally even fun, but they are there to do a job.

**Do** be honest and straightforward with the Dog: if you treat them fairly, they'll work hard to keep everyone happy.

**Do not** step on a Dog's tail. They will bite, but at least they don't sting.



JOANNA  
WEBER



PRINCESS STOMPER  
JOURNALIST

@princessstomper



## SCORPIONS

A scorpion, being a very poor swimmer, asked a turtle to carry him on his back across a river. “Are you mad?” exclaimed the turtle. “You’ll sting me while I’m swimming and I’ll drown.”

“My dear turtle,” laughed the scorpion, “if I were to sting you, we would both drown.”

“You’re right,” cried the turtle, “Hop on!” The scorpion climbed aboard and halfway across the river gave the turtle a mighty sting. As they both sank to the bottom, the turtle resignedly asked why he did it.

“It’s just my nature,” replied the scorpion as he drowned.

**Do** be on your guard. There are plenty of scorpions out there - normally people in bands who view your band as rivals and will try to sabotage your chances in the mistaken hope it will aid their own. This can be active (badmouthing you to others) or passive (not returning favors).

**Do not** worry too much about them once you’ve identified them. By their very nature, they’re as doomed from the outset as the Sloth.

## SLOTHS

The Sloth is a bit of a mess. They’re fantastically talented ... so long as they can stay upright. If they could sober up and clean up, they could make a good go of it, but for every drug-addled pop star that gets to number one, there are thousands more that would be lucky to live to 40, and tens of thousands more with lifelong health problems and ruined careers caused by excessive alcohol and drug use. The saddest thing about the Sloth is the lack of respect the other animals have for them - they tend to be regarded as a bit of a joke. Sloths can - and often do - recover, taking their rightful places among the Dogs.

**Do** be cautious around the Sloth - they can be a real handful when they’re worse for wear, and certainly unreliable.

**Do not** hold a former Sloth’s bad behavior against them: often their eagerness to be taken seriously means they’ll be very hardworking and trustworthy, unlike the Parrot.

## PARROTS

The Parrot delights in telling you how many stadium tours his band is going to play. The Parrot has a plan, and will reinvent music as we know it. The Parrot has connections, and will definitely get you that key gig. The Parrot's band will be the biggest band on earth, though they've never played any gigs and don't actually have any members except the Parrot himself. The Parrot has never achieved - and will never achieve - anything of note, but he'll tell you all about it. The Parrot talks endlessly, but his words mean nothing.

**Do** take everything the Parrot says with a bucket of salt. Whatever the Parrot tells you, he's unlikely to deliver.

**Do not** cut the Parrot off altogether. Every so often, one of the Parrot's wild promises will actually come to fruition. The Parrot, unlike the Owl, usually knows in theory what he's talking about.

## OWLS

Owls are the wisest of all your supporters. They might be your fans, or just people who hang out with your band. They've been around longer than everyone else and know so much better than everyone else - especially the band. The Owl will drone on and on about the direction you should be taking, and why this release was better than that. They'll publicly admonish you in front of the Puppies to prove the elevated nature of their standing, and will generally flap around and make a lot of noise before crapping over everything and flying off when you actually need them.

**Do** be firm with the Owls and don't let them take over, or they'll scare away new fans.

**Do not** make the mistake of pandering to the Owls. Just because they shout the loudest doesn't make them right. They're a lot less helpful than Puppies.

## PUPPIES

Puppies are the cult in your cult following - your most enthusiastic and eager fans. You may regard Puppies as noisy and irritating, but while it's hard to lose their devotion, it's possible to lose their respect. Puppies are annoying, excitable, often indiscreet, and occasionally deeply weird. Puppies are also endlessly loyal, they'll stick with you when everyone else has left, and will always be eager to help in any way they can.

**Do** set clear boundaries. The Puppy wants to be your bestest friend, so do politely ask them not to ring you at home, and if they email you every day, tell them that they should post instead on your band's forum, where you really look forward to seeing how other people react to their views.

**Do not** take them for granted. Puppies are by nature gregarious, and may be equally devoted to several acts or causes. Just as Puppies compete with each other for your attention, those who value the Puppy's boundless enthusiasm are competing with you for their loyalty. Puppies might drift off to where they're more appreciated - so throw them a bone occasionally.



The music industry can be a vicious place and it's impossible to come out entirely unscathed. Even Cats and Dogs can leave you scratched and bitten, but you can avoid being stung or crapped on. Be careful who you trust, but recognize good intentions from those who have them: some of these weird beasts can make good companions.



Everyone in this business should take a psychology course. Every day you will deal with multiple personality types, sometimes you will deal with a person with multiple personalities! You will have to deal with divas, degenerates, drunks, cry babies, and every other conceivable type of person. Learn to adapt your game to work around these people. Learn to take control without confrontation. You'll get what you want a whole lot easier if you don't argue about it, just do it.

— Casey Orr



# 12 VENUES YOU NEED TO PUT YOUR STICKERS IN

## KOSHA DILLZ

I have made the moniker sticker *Kosha Dillz is Everywhere* so people can feel my presence. Whether it has been the greatest thing for my career, I don't know... but I can tell you that my stickers are indeed everywhere, and if you see them once, you will say that very same thing. I once wrote about festivals that you should attend so you can promote your own music. To make it even nuttier, why don't we go to the depths of the venue hell, where we can we place our stickers to live in piece, serenity, and promotion.

**1 REGGIE'S.** One my favorite dirty venues to be at in Chicago, this place is run by real punk rock people that do not leave you in the dust. Although it's on the tougher side of town and further a way from the hip north side shit, just imagine all those stickers in the green room you can be a part of. Some of the best rap shows get put there and you can take a shower there or even sleep in the green room. The stickers are there forever, and touring bands from everywhere stop through, from metal to country to rappy rap music.

**2 VAUDEVILLES MEWS.** Des Moines, Iowa is not known for the epic music scene, but it's a gold nuggets in the mid west that bands use for a C market drop off. The venue holds a shitload of stickers, and it's great to be seen in a popular city of the midwest that many of the world consider the middle of nowhere. They will think you are everywhere.

**3 529.** I opened for B.O.B here once in 2009 after a Sonicbids victory for some @a3c festival thing. All I can say is this place is a piece of shit and if you can leave your mark here Atlanta will remember you forever. I think it's the best place to go.

**4 KNITTING FACTORY.** The NYC place was where I saw a G..O.O.D. Music party with Kanye West in front of 300 people, Rakim play in front of a sold out house, and even have a release party of my own. More importantly the backstage experiences were timeless, and tagging your name on those walls would etch you in stone. Take the same mentality and play the one in Brooklyn.

**5 7TH STREET ENTRY.** This is a Minneapolis staple. Sure you are thinking that you should be in the big room at first street entry along side the remnant of Prince and purple rain but you need to pump your breaks buddy. Sticker up and tag the 7th street entry and sneak on over to the other side to smack up a stick if ya can. Anyone who ever gets to the big room has to play the small room first. Nothing wrong with that though. if it wasn't this venue, I would say previously it was the Dinkytownner, but that place is R.I.P.

**6 RED 7.** An amazing in door + outdoor venue that is located in the prime of Austin's downtown, every major production company throws shows here and

**7 CROCODILE CAFE.** Nirvana played here. Pearl Jam did. And now you will play here. I saw G-Eazy's sticker there, and now he is on a amphitheater tour with Lil Wayne. You should get your sticker there too.

**8 ROXY.** The #1 music venue on Twitter.

**9 CAT'S CRADLE.** North Carolina is where they all come to...when...they come to North Carolina? Cat's Cradle is a legendary venue. Be seen here.

**10 REPTILE PALACE.** Oshkosh, Wisconsin is one of the least likely places to end up being seen, but this is the most logical place for anyone to put up their sticker. If someone comes here and finds you, well they're most likely as crazy as you are.

**11 HIGHER GROUND.** Burlington Vermont is a staple in the music scene and everyone will venture out to this place. The college town has a good taste in music and I have literally travelled hours out of my way to play here for even 2 minutes at a time. I think you should too. Sticker up here.

**12 THE FOX THEATRE.** This is the most known venue of all in Boulder, Colorado for any touring act, and being that is in the middle of America, I would also fly here on a moments notice to rap. The venue is prime ground for being remembered in the Green Room and even across the street, you can drop some stickers off to andy at the record store, Albums on the Hill. You will find that Higher Ground and Fox Theatre are basically the same venue in the same type of town! Burlington and Boulder are major markets that you need to be in. If not you...your stickers!

**EXTRA CREDIT:** The Traveling Sticker - The traveling sticker is the best one of call time. Put it on a Warped Tour truck, or put it on the back of a trailer. When its parked outside a gas station and a curious person comes up and takes a peek, you might have just earned another person who ...well...will say they saw your sticker on the back of a truck.

I compare underground music to wrestling. It takes a specific kind of breed of person to slap stickers in unique places, play renegade shows, and continue to eat nature valley oats bars for 99 cents at the same groundhog's day gas station in every struck stop in America. But to the people who really understand the sticker game, its the same as a dog pissing on a hydrant. Its a language only some of us understand.







# APPENDIX

## APPENDIX A

### THOSE WHO GAVE A FUCK. THANK YOU.

JAMES VANOSDOL; KEVIN "\$PECIAL K" GUARNIERI; SAM HARMON; MARCUS OHANESIAN; CHAD FERGUSON; CHRISTIAN PICCIOLINI; R. KEVIN NELSON; TOM LASH; DANA SCHNITTMAN; GULTURE ENTERPRISES; DON WEBB; EMILY REHM; BRE LUCERO; ALLI O'MALLEY; THE HIBOU; MICHAEL BODNAR; AMANDA HARTWIG; OAK; CHRIS MACDONALD; ERIC RIDENOUR; KUPIART.COM; TERESA LARSON; SCOTT FARRELL; SOPHIA CACCIOLA; SCOTT COHEN; ARNE WOJCIECHOWSKI; ANDY SERNOVITZ; JENNY HENKEL; BEATRIZ CASTILLO; NORTHERN PIKE PRODUCTIONS; REID HYAMS; WIL JONES; DARWIN WARD; JULIAN HERZFELD; HALEY FRESCO; MARILEE CAMUSO; SHANNON OKEY; RON G., RANKZERO; BRUCE HOUGHTON; KELLY GABANY; JOEL GAUSTEN; MADALYN SKLAR/GOGIRLSMUSIC.COM; MICHAEL OROIAN; SCOTT MASSIE; JOHNNY JOHNSTONE; THE QLS; ANDY FLYNN; RYAN VAN ETTEN; CLAIRE LAWRENCE-SLATER; ALEX FUCKING ZANDER; MICHAEL BRANDVOLD; RYAN DIETZ; THE INFAMOUS ROBERT ALLEN PIEHL; WILLIAM GEORGE PARHAM; KEVIN KOSSOW; KEN STRAIT; DIANE BISGEIER; MARK KENDALL ANDREWS; BENDIX FREUTEL; WENDY HERRMANN; STEPHANIE BRONSON NOVAK; MICHAEL JOHNSON; LISE SMITH; LIZ NOWAK; TONY VAN VEEN; COURTNEY BLOCK; SOLVEIG WHITTLE; CJ MARSICANO; PHIL GREER; JEN THE MUSIC MAVEV; LINDSAY CASEY; ROBERT LEUTHOLD; CHRIS DUNCAN; SAUL COLT; DAVID MARTIN; SHAUN BYER; TRISTAN; MIKE BAILEY; ANDREW; AZTALANTURF; BONNIE BLACKWELL; MIKE BROWN; MICHAEL A ROSE; CLINT CHAMBERS (ANYONE'S GUESS); GEORGE U. GRAHAM III; PAUL SCHUH; RAVEN LYNCH; COLIN C; SHANE RILEY; FILTERCAKE; DAVE CARTER; CHRIS TUKE; NICHOLAS ROHDE; BOB NANNA; ROSS GREENAWALT; JON ALLEGRETTO; M KWEE; KEVIN BARRON; ZAK EINSTEIN; MARSHA; NOTHINGFACED; UNIT27; PAULY DOERR; WAYNE WATRACH; STEVEN SEIBOLD; SARAH SATURDAY; PILAT

**ALEKSANDR; ANDREW "UNREPENTANT" HERDEG; KEN GILROY; GOMONKEYGO; DEAN PELOQUIN; STEVE JOYNER; DAVE COOL; GREG HEERDT; ALEX LIVADAS; CHANDA UNMACK; RENEE RITCHIE; WILL KLEMM; DRUM! MAGAZINE; BRIAN SILVER; DIANA BARNES, SUEDE MANAGEMENT OR JUST SUEDE MANAGEMENT; EMILY BURTON-WEINMAN; ZACH DURLIN; ADAM HAGERUP; KALLIE; JACK RABBITS; GEORGE BLAKEMAN; MIKAEL KINN; PRO TONE PEDALS; GLENN WILSON; STEPHANIE DICKARD; KATT; ALEPH; KATT; ALEPH; BRIAN BENDER VECCHIONE; DAVID HOOPER; RYAN PROCTOR; PRETTY THINGS PEEPSHOW; KIA B.; STEVE VANDENBOSCH; GARFIELD STUDIOS WINNIPEG; DV; BIG ROAD; EMILY ARAKELIAN; SHELLY CORBETT; FLAPSANDWICH; KIMBERLY FREEMAN; NICOLE RUDAT; JOSH GONZALES; SEVA DAVID LOUIS BALL; DAVE KUZMA; SLESK; DEBORAH M THOMSEN; MICHAEL JAHNKE; CHRISTINE INFANGER; DAVE PLATT; MIKE PACHAK; THOMAS E. FARRELL, II; STEFAN SCHNEIDER; JASON PITMAN; LAURA JEAN HOCKING; MICHAEL PETRICONE; BETTY X; DAVID ROSE; J ALLARD; BRIAN MCGRAW; JAMES CURRIE; VISHAL AGARWALA; CHRISTO RUPPENTHAL; NATALIE MAE MUSIC; BRETT WALKER; JO SMYTH SIROCCO FONIK; ANNE MARIE FOLEY; BOBDOG; DENNIS KUMP; HASSAN; LAINIE "ROCKNROLLQUEEN" LEVINSON; KATHY BERRY; CHRISMORGAN; A SMITH; KURT TISCHER; MIKEE PLASTIK; GREGORY DIAZ; JAMES WEBSTER; MATTY SULLIVAN; BRAD GRAHAM; PAUL KHOURY; MODERATRIX; I AM NATION; DEREK J BROWN; TREVOR LEVIATHAN TRIGGS; DAMIAN HARVEY; GARETH DYTON; MIKE; HEATHER MEOW BRUCE; ALEX LIVADAS; BRENDAN LAZAR; KÃ©RA ONEIL; ANDY STERNBERG; CHRISTIAN MENSES; LAURA VIERA QUINN; MEGAN IRVINE; BELLADONNA LUGOSI; BRYAN SCHAEFER; SIMONE DU GARFUNK; DONALD RUNAAS; LILITH KEMNITZ; MORGAN MOTSENBOCKER; CHRISTIAN BACH; DANIEL AKZINOR; KEVIN BROWN; DESTROY THE EVIDENCE; MATTHEW LONGMIRE; ASHLEY N. MILHOLLAND; ZACH BROCK; CALVIN HORNE; MARY SWEENEY; JP; MARY; TIMOTHY HALL; SANDI RENNILLO; TEDDY WELLS; SIR BOWLER "HAT" BACONHAM; BOON SHERIDAN; PUJO MELKENS OF THE WU-TANG; MEGAN GRADY; PETER CLARKE; KEITH CRUSHER; JIM HAKU; GARY SEGARS, PROSEVERE; D.R. & VICTOR Z GLENN; D.R.GLENN; CHRIS SETH JACKSON; MEGAN KAISER; TRAVIS WALL; ED; REGIS MURPHY; DONNA TROYER; ANDY KUNZ; BRIAN; REDTENTACLE; KATRINA HOUSE; MUSIC BUSINESS SCHOOL; ABE SAUER; CHARLI BINGUS; VICKI COUNCIL; KEITH HATSCHEK; RRAVEN; JEFFREY DUPUIS; SAN DIEGO MUSIC FOUNDATION; JAKE MODICA; DANIALLE "SWEET LEW" LEWIS; ZEBRANA BASTARD; SHELLY HARTMAN; CLIFF AND IVY; MAX MEAD; JASON SHEPHERD; DIXON'S VIOLIN; BRIAN HOUCHINS; MAGDALENA MIASTOWSKA; KEO VANG; MARK HUNTER; RICHARD MICHAEL OF OUR LAST STORY; MATTF\_INGSMITH; OREN FROM FINESPUN; MERE DARLING; MARK KILBORN; MIRANDA BREWER; COMMANDER BANANA NA!!; GEORGE PERCY; SEAN WAINWRIGHT; MOLLY MURDER; JOSHUA FLECK; RIFF LIFTER TOURING; MEDIACHICK; DAKOTA MELROSE; ANDREW PLAN; G. SAYER; KAREN OGDEN**

**BRYSON; MARK SHILANSKY; DAVID ALSEMGEEST; REY ALSEMGEEST; JOSH TWEEDY; BRISTER STREET PRODUCTIONS; CAT DE LEON; JOSEPH LEVEQUE; MATTHEW BELTRANO; JULIAN GRANT; JOE D'ANDREA; ZIVA HADAR; THOMAS ZIEGLER; TERESE FLEMING; MEI ALSEMGEEST; JOHN POPE; MODEL STRANGER; PYRA DRACULEA; LANCE CURRAN; T-BAG LANNON; LARRY ASH; PRINCESS STOMPER; MACANDREWS; CORY GOTTRON; BRADLEY FUCKING FISH; TESSA MAKES LOVE; JEN BACHELDER; LEIF HUNNEMAN; SETH WARREN; SARAH DOPE; JASON CHARLES MILLER; TOM SILVERMAN; DAVID ALSEMGEEST; SARA CLARSON; CAIT ASH; YANN FAUSSURIER; ROCKY MAXWELL; RICH DENHART; JASON MCNINCH; BIFF BEEFTONE BLUMFUMGAGNGE; HARLAN NORTH; VALERIE PALLSON; THANK YOU AND FUCK YOU, RUSS MEUCHEL. HAVE A GREAT FUCKING DAY!; ED ALLARD; GOPAL METRO, BLACK SQUADRON; XENOBIA; JOHN REEVES, AKA THE GREY WIZARD DUDE; KANSASCONCERTS PAGE; ANGELINA CARDONE; UNKILTED!; WILLIAM DAVID CYMBALIST, AUTHOR OF STORY TIME; VINCENT SALETTTO ; KRISTEN PLATT; HAMPTON MILLS; JOHN THIBAULT; LEE DEMPSEY; MR. CRISPY; JASON PURCEL; ANITRA DE LORENZO; CHRIS "STARRMAN" STARR; DEADFILMSTAR; FRANK WILKES; SALLY BE; HEIDI OLSON-STREED; THE SEXUAL SIDE EFFECTS; JOSH WHITE; KEN MCGRATH; THE EXPONENTIAL; GEORGE REIFF; DERKUS; SHELLEY BARBER; LOUIS PACKER; EDDIE DEAN; TONY PARIS; MICHAEL J. THUMM; CHRISTOPHER RAMOS; E.J. FRIEDMAN FROM LOUDERSOFT; MICHAEL COPELAND; COUNT ZEE; MICHAEL COBRA; HERBIVORE PRODUCTIONS; STACEY JOY ELKIN; BUCK FAST; AMY ABRAMITE; INGRID PUCCIARELLI; WAYE MASON; MATTHEW BILE; BRAD WEBER; MIKE SPREIER; PILGRIMOMEGA; SPAZTRICK; JIVEWIRED.COM; ETHAN ADELSMAN; ALEX WESTNER; KATHY WHISLER; PAUL JAMROZY AKA SAINTPAUL BRELIS); ROYCE FARRELL; JADE DELLINGER; DARREN HUBBARD; COLLIN GEDDIS; SHAWN FARRELL; VAS; ALANA & DAVE PIPER; MIKE HUBERTY; PAUL SOWADSKI; MARK IVERSEN; PAUL FUCKING RESTA; ED HEALY; BRENT ROEMER; JAMES TAYLOR; MARY TAYLOR; ORION ROSS MCHUGH; JIMMY HANKINS; JENNIFER ANNE BUCKLEY; ROBERT; KYLE J. SMITH; LAURIE SCULLY; TYLER MCCAIG, VISIONTHENET; PRESONUS AUDIO; ADAM COOKE; CNCO; DROR KESSLER; ERIC VONDRAN; ADAM HAIT; COURTNEY BLANKENSHIP; TODD SATTERSTEN; DEREK HASSAN; A. MANN; POÃ Â® "THE MUSICAL ANOMALY" Â®; ISSAC & PAUL HILLARY; DAVID EDWIN STONE; NORMA DESPERATE; ARIEL HYATT; DAVID BAKER; GRANT GEBLER; PETER PILTINGSRUD; MERI ST. MARY; MATT HART; DOUBLE EYELID; ADAM STERN; KONZERTSCHNITT; SCOTT GARRETT; KATIE CRAIN; DAVID CANALES; JOHN HARDIN; ROBERT HALSTEAD; BRIAN THIBEAULT; PAMELA KONKOL; KENNETH M. HARGIS; A.S. SWANSKI; ANDY LEWIS; GEORGE HANUS - SAN FRANCISCO, CA; JOHN DECARLO & COMPANY; DAMION CHAMP; TERRANCE WENRICH; @NIKKIBOZZY; J-SIN PTGRW; ZAC BENTZ; GRANT KRULL; TOMMY P DELANUIT; MICHAEL GALLINA; CARLOS BOCANEGRA; KEVIN ROGERS; BLAYNE ALEXANDER; DAN HUYSER; LAURIE VIETS; AUSTIN RUHSTORFER**

# APPENDIX B

## ADDITIONAL PACKAGING EXAMPLES:

### (AND A LIST OF SUGGESTIONS FROM MY FACEBOOK FRIENDS)

That **Zovietfrance** cassette which came in a clay box with an irradiated seagull feather inlaid in it. **Led Zeppelin** "Physical Graffiti, **Kiss Alive II** came with so much cool stuff my head practically exploded, **Tool 10000 days**, **The Flaming Lips** album that came in a real human skull., **PIL** "Metal Box", **Zoviet France** – Mohnomische, **Beatles** - Sgt. Pepper, **System of a Down** > Steal This Album <, **Cheech and Chong** - Big Bamboo **Elton John's** "Captain Fantastic", **Alice Cooper** Schools Out. Desk that opens up to reveal album., **Feederz**, 1st LP with the sand paper cover that destroyed records filed next to it!!, **WHO** Quadrophenia because the picture book told the story., **DURUTTI COLUMN**: Sandpaper Sleeve. Factory Records: FACT 14, **Big Black** - Headache in a genuine bodybag poly sleeve on red vinyl 7" + 12" with coroner's photos of shotgun to the head victim!!!, That **Spiritualized** package that looked like a medicine box and the **Dead Kennedy's** tape (In God We Trust) that was purposely blank on one side...., also like the 7" poster sleeves **the cure** did with 'The Walk' and 'Close to Me', peel & see & sticky fingers are quite good - and first **soft machine** LP with spinner which predated the **zep** - sonic boom with spinner - **talking heads** speaking in tongues Rauschenberg see thru tri color spinners with clear vinyl... and the see thru **faust** of course..., **NIN** - All That Could Have Been, Live Deluxe Edition with the gray cloth covered box and the bonus LP Still., The **Monty Python** Instant Record Collection was no slouch either., the **alice cooper** album with the sailor outfits that came in the cardboard box thing, **TOOL** - 10000 Days, Too Old To Rock And Roll, Too Young To Die....**Jethro Tull**., **PIL** metal box, or the pink vinyl **rolling stones** miss you/far away eyes 33" single., **Sex Pistols** Who Killed Bambi picture disc, **Chimp Eats Banana's** parody of Metal Box, it was called Cardboard Box, a shoe box to be exact, cassette only release., **Merzbow/Shora** – Switching Rethorics, the **Pixies** boxset Minotaur, fuckin amazing!!! Pink velour covering...damn right!!! **The Damage Manual**, because I know you had to cut each plastic cover., **Neu!** Vinyl boxset is cool too, coloured vinyls, stencil, and orange t-shirt! , **Kiss's** guitar case cd box set collection, **Alice Cooper's** Schools Out Vinyl Record pop up school desk, **Misfits** black coffin box set, Mom's Apple Pie #1 album with vagina pie slice cover, TVT Records Fresh Meat Bologna CD packaging, **Pink Floyd's** Pulse CD with flashing pulse light, **Small faces** OGDENS NUT GONE FLAKE, **Derek and Clive's** Ad Nauseam album with the fake puke packaging, they must've spent a fortune on veg soup., I always loved this silk-screened 7" we did back when I was in **The Undead**., LOVE **the Countdown** 7" packaging. So simple yet awesomely effective. And it smells nice., **Public Flipper** Limited, which folded out to become the funnest board-gamer ever., Big Black Songs about f\*\*cking, **ELP** Brain Salad Surgery, **shellac** 1000 hurts in the ampex box, **jefferson airplane** long john silver which the lp turned into a stash box or prob my fav **faces** ooh la la where the lp cover turned into a puppet of sorts., **Led Zeppelin III**, **Rammstein** - Libe Ist Für Alle Da, **Deathstars** - Night Electric Night (Deluxe Australian Edition), **NIN** - The Fragile, Anything that **KMFDM** have put out. Metal Box (**PIL**), Ogdens Nut Gone Flake (**Small Faces**), E. Pluribus Funk (**Grand Funk Railroad**), Schools Out <w/ panties> (**Alice Cooper**), Satanic Majesties Request/Sticky Fingers/Exile On Main Street/Some Girls (**Rolling Stones**), Stand Up (**Jethro Tull**), Physical Graffiti (**Zep**).... and then there is Live at the Fillmore East (**The Mothers of Invention**) or an indy 12" E.P. out of Seattle '82 called Life In General.....the **Rev Co** EP for "Do Ya think I'm Sexy," CD came in a clear sleeve that included a pouch of KY Jelly., I liked the **Buzzcocks** in the plastic bag and the **Invisible** compilation in the shopping bag.

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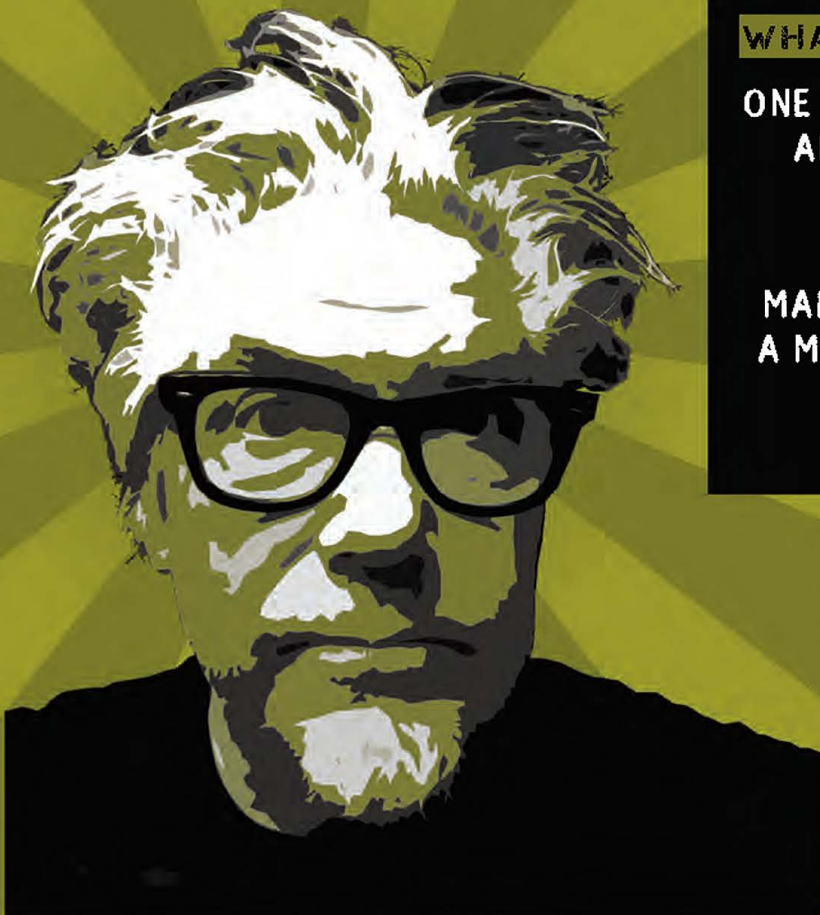
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