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SUCCESS IN THE MUSIC BUSINESS

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INTRODUCTION:

Welcome to the Music Business. You have entered an industry where standard business principals and rules do not apply. A business that is controlled by a handful of major corporations operating in the global marketplace – Record Companies – which are a part of conglomerates that have a stake in nearly every phase of the entertainment industry worldwide. Their sole motive is to generate profit, and reward their shareholders with earnings year after year. The commodity Record Companies sell is the ultimate intangible product known to mankind. Sound Recordings. Music.

You are here because you want to participate in the Music Business. You have spent years, if not your entire lifetime, learning how to play an instrument and make it do things that most people can not do... make music. You have created original music – works of art that represent you – your creativity, your imagination and your passion. You want to share your music with the world, and have spent a great deal of time and your own money creating the ultimate intangible product known to mankind. Sound Recordings. Music.

There are a few things you need to know before you proceed into the deep dark world of the Music Business. The people that control the Music Business are motivated by money and job security. Using their experience and knowledge, they select “acts” that they feel can sell records/downloads and make the company money.

They sell an intangible product to a subjective marketplace. Since there are more than 6 billion people in that marketplace, each with their own individual preference in music, it is nearly impossible for anyone to know what will appeal to the broadest segment of the market. If the "Record Company Executive" successfully "breaks" a new artist into the market, they get to keep their job.

Success in the Music Business is based on numbers. In 1998, there were more than 30,000 CDs released to the marketplace each year by the Major and Major Independent Labels. Ninety percent of those releases (were talking 27,000 CD titles here folks!) sold fewer than one thousand copies. This leaves only 3,000 titles that sold more than 1000 units. Only a handful of artists are capable of selling more than a million units and that is after a massive promotion campaign costing millions of dollars.

In 2008, the Major and Major Independent Labels released 1000 CDs through traditional distribution channels. The same year, iTunes surpassed the 5 Billion song sales milestone and became the largest music sales vendor in the industry. Representing millions of artists from across the globe, including independents, iTunes essentially controls the music industry. Clearly, the Internet Age has changed the way the game is played.

The “standard practice” of the Record Company, is to sign artists to all encompassing and restrictive contracts that allow the company to reap huge profits **IF** the act can “make it”, or take convenient losses when the act does not. This is where you come in. Because the other standard practice of the Record Company, is to only sign acts that have one or all of the following elements:

**If you want to
Succeed in the
Music Business,
you need to take
your career into
your own hands.**

1. An original sound
2. Potential “hit” quality song(s)
3. A devoted fan following on a local, regional, or national level
4. A history of success within the industry
5. An intangible quality that could potentially generate broad appeal, even if for only a limited amount of time

You are here because you want to participate in the Music Business. If you want to Succeed in the Music Business, you need to take your career into your own hands. Knowing how to position your career so you **can** succeed, is where Relax Music Group comes in.

Our E-Book, **Success in the Music Business** provides you with a frame of reference – or a rule book – to the game of “Making It in the Music Business”. This guide was created to provide you with the information, insight, and tools essential to distribute and promote music to a wider marketplace. Anybody that takes the time to read this guide can learn how the business works and how to expose their Music through key elements of the Music Industry to a wider audience. In addition to a brief overview of the industry, this guide will examine the entire process of releasing and promoting Sound Recordings, with an emphasis on Radio Promotion, Publicity and attracting the attention of the Record Companies.

SUCCESS IN THE MUSIC INDUSTRY:

The process of achieving Success in the Music Industry is completely different for every recording or performing musical artist that signs a recording contract. Success in this industry is measured by an artist's popularity. There is no proven method that will guarantee an act will "Make-It in the Biz". Rather, each act that signs with a record label, takes a series of small steps toward the ultimate goal. The pinnacle of success in this industry is Stardom.

The path towards Stardom always runs through the Major Record Labels, who exist for one purpose only – Making Profit. These corporate entities are interested in only one thing from their artists – Hit Songs that Sell Records. Those artists that do get offered a deal must exhibit extraordinary talent, have written an incredibly popular song, or have worked some angle to get in the back door. In exchange for a "Recording Advance", a "CD Release", a modest "Promotion Budget", and "Tour Support" -- all of which are recoupable against the artist's percentage of "Record Sales" – an artist will sign away virtually all rights to their own music, including a percentage of your Live Performance income. You will do it too if you are given the chance.

However, the expenses the labels pay for, or the advances they give to the artist, all come out of the 8-12% of the artist's "Sales Royalties". If a label gives the artist \$100,000.00 in advances, promotion, etc., that \$100,000.00 comes out of the Artist's share of sales, not the label's. Not only that, the artist must sell enough units to repay recoupables, or could end up owing the label money when they are eventually dropped, at least on paper. What they can't recoup from you will be written off as losses, to offset the huge profits they make off the 1 or 2 projects they do break every year.

Since the industry has changed, the Major Labels just aren't signing new artists anymore. You must already have a proven track record of success and are generating a revenue stream on your own, before a Major Label will consider investing in your career. The days when record companies developed their roster of artists over a long career ended some time in the late '60's.

Even if you do sign a record deal, it does not necessarily guarantee your success. That does not mean that an artist will reach the status of "Rock Star" without support from a major label. Labels still know how to spend money breaking good talent, especially with Television and Film exposure, and are willing to invest in projects that they feel will make them loads of money. While signing with a label is a major step in your career, the only person who really cares about your career as a recording artist, is you.

The Internet era gives artists the opportunity to develop their own careers, and expose their music to a wider audience without the need of a label. While there is no guaranteed path to success in this industry, or a proven method of scoring a record deal, there are many ways that artists and musicians can make their own success. Since you're going to scrounge every cent you can find to record and release your music to the world anyway, with some insight and a few basic tools, you can begin taking positive steps toward reaching the next level.

Talent at all levels of the industry make more money from live performances and selling merchandise at their shows than they do selling their CDs or Downloads.

PART ONE: THE BASICS

What makes people want to listen to music? People listen to music because it makes them feel good. Like a drug, music causes a change in the emotional state of the listener with a wide variety of side-effects. Certain songs may trigger pleasant memories while others cause sorrow. Some songs make you want to shake your fist in the air and rock out while others lull you to sleep. It's the state change that makes people want to listen to your music and the intangible element that will determine how successful your music will be.

The Entertainment Industry is well aware of the emotional state changes caused by music. In fact, it could be said that that the industry only exists to cause emotional reactions in people. From television and the movies, to advertising and commercials, to the way radio stations are formatted and programmed – music created by recording artists just like you, reap billions of dollars in profits for the industry every year.

The artist or song that can induce a positive emotional state change within a wide variety of people, and a lot of them, stands the best chance of reaching success.

It All Starts With Your Sound:

While there is no “right way” to success, there are few basic characteristics common to all artists that make the big time. It starts by making music with a fresh, original sound that is unlike any other in your chosen genre. The industry, and music listeners in general, are always looking for the next new thing. Innovative acts always find a way to break through. For example, Nirvana helped to create an entire genre of music by infusing catchy pop songs with their “grungey” style of playing them. They followed the basic pop song formula (further outlined below) and even humorously named one of their most popular songs as such; “Verse Chorus Verse”. But it was their sound that made their music so popular.

Your sound is the way listeners identify you and the way your audience can pick your music out of the crowd. If you sound like everybody hot right now, it is unlikely that your music will grow beyond the local scene. While you may build a strong local or even regional following, if your music sounds like more of the same you'll never get noticed on the national level. However, if your music is innovative, uses a new type of instrument or an old one in a new way, or presents traditional sounds in a new light you may have a shot.

Your sound may come from the distinct nature of your singing voice, the effects you use on your guitar, or the fact that you use tribal drums instead of a standard kit. It is the sum of all the parts, whether you are a solo artist that plays every instrument or a 10 piece band with a horn section. Only when your sound is perfect to you and everybody in your immediate circle, you'll be ready to take the next step.

Your sound is your identity... the more you stand out in a fresh and original way, the more successful you will achieve.

Songwriting:

Anyone planning on reaching financial success in the music business should follow one simple rule. People like pop songs. Why? Because that is what the entertainment industry has been feeding them since before they were born. All people born since the Beatles first hit in 1963, and everyone alive at the time, have had the “Pop Formula” encoded in their brain by the endless brainwashing of Radio, TV, Advertising and Movies. And while there are variations on the theme, every song that has ever hit number one on the charts have followed one of the basic pop formulas listed below:

Intro – Verse – Chorus – Verse – Chorus – Bridge – Chorus – End

Intro – Chorus – Verse – Chorus – Verse – Chorus – End

Chorus – Verse – Chorus – Longer Verse – Chorus – Bridge – Chorus – End

If you have been a musician for any length of time, you should already know this. It doesn't matter what chords are used, what key it's in, what kind of beat, or who's singing the lyrics, as those are all functions of your style and sound. You aren't “selling out” if you overlay “the formula” over your sound no matter what kind of sound you have. However, the ability to write well structured songs with catchy lyrics, and choruses with great hooks, is a valuable commodity in this industry.

Of course it is much easier to do on paper than it is in reality, and it's always easier making music you want to make instead of writing for a specific purpose in mind. But how many times have you heard musicians receive Grammy Awards that you thought had less talent than you do. They got there because they discovered a new way to present the same old formula, got lucky with a record deal and reached millions of people with their music. If you have talent, and a fresh, original sound that follows the songwriting formula, who knows, maybe you can win a Grammy Award too.

Recording Artists stand a better chance for financial success by following the time proven “pop” songwriting formula.

Get a Record Producer:

You have a smoking band, a couple sets worth of hit songs, and a sound that is unlike anything else in the universe. Before you spend a couple grand or ten recording your first CD, the first thing you need to find is a Record Producer. Not the kid with the spiked hair down at the guitar store who signed with an indie label a couple years ago. But a professional producer who's got real experience behind the board making hit records.

There may be no such individual in your home town because producers with real talent always end up in New York, Nashville or Los Angeles. The other thing about real professional producers is that they are very expensive; some command as much as attorneys in hourly fees. Whether you pay the kid with spiked hair a few bucks, or blow your recording budget on a few consultations with a real pro, you absolutely MUST have an independent, impartial set of ears listening to your music.

By definition, a Record Producer takes an artist's song, then polishes and arranges it into a marketable recording. The producer will analyze your music and help you make your music and sound the very best it can be. The producer, along with the recording engineer, will work all the knobs and wheels in the studio to make sure your sound is recorded with the best possible fidelity. Finally, the producer will mix and pre-master your record giving you a CD's worth of material that's ready for the world to hear.

Finding and hiring a producer with a proven track record of success, could be the only way to guarantee you get a chance to "Make It".

But the most important aspect of having a producer working with you on your project is the fact that he or she is not a member of your band. They will hear things in your music that you are incapable of hearing. They will help you to avoid the common mistakes most self-produced bands will make and they help you put your best performance down on tape. A good producer will teach you things you did not know about music, as well as things you did not know about yourself in order to make you a better artist.

You pay a producer for this service which means three things:

- One, every hour they work for you or your band it costs you money.
- Two, if you're paying them to make your music better, you had better do everything they say. Which takes us to...
- Three, you had better find a producer that you can get along with and who knows what they are doing in the studio.

Finding a producer outside of the major music centers isn't easy, but it's not impossible. Start by talking to your local studio owners and engineers. If they don't immediately offer their production services, chances are they know somebody in town that knows your style of music and can get it tracked. Of course, they'll recommend a producer that will make you buy time in their studio, but it's a place to start. It is also not a bad idea to interview and even "try out" several people in your search. Start by recording just a couple of songs at a time. If you hear a vast improvement in your sound, you'll know you have found the right one.

Pre-Production:

Pre-production is the key to a making a great recording. As your producer will probably tell you, you need to know your songs backwards and forwards before you can lay them down on tape. On top of the hourly fee you are paying your producer, studio time is expensive. The less time it takes you to record your tracks, the more songs you'll get to record with your budget. So before you spend a nickel on studio time, pick your best dozen songs and spend some time going over them with your producer.

After working in the changes, additions and omissions your producer asks you to consider, plan on spending a month rehearsing them. Recording in a studio is completely different than playing out live. After setting up and getting the sound, the first step to recording a song is laying down the basic tracks, usually just the bass, drums and rhythm guitar. So during your

pre-production rehearsals, just practice laying down basic tracks. No vocals, no leads, just the foundation to each of your songs. Play each song that way 100 or even 1000 times before going into the studio, and you'll hit the mark on your first few takes. All while keeping an open mind to change because you never know what new ideas might surface while you are in the studio.

Since the vocals, guitar solos, and other instrumentation are often recorded after basic tracks, it is a good idea to make a practice tape that everyone can work with on their own. Pre-production is the time to get everyone in the group ready for the studio, just like rehearsals get you ready to play gigs. You need to know how to play your music in the sterile environment of the recording studio, and getting in the right mind set always makes the task easier.

The more time you spend in pre-production means you'll spend less money in the recording studio, often with a better end result.

Recording:

Now you are ready to lay down your tracks. The first thing you're going to need is a studio. Studio time varies from studio to studio and can run anywhere from \$35.00 to \$5000.00 per hour to record. What the studio charges you is a function of what type of equipment they have and what time of day you want to record. There are several good studios in every major city in North America and most small towns will have at least one half-way decent basement studio that you could probably use.

If you're going to spend more than \$5,000.00 recording in someone else's studio, you should consider one other option. Building one of your own. You can easily acquire a good board and high quality computer for about the same cost, and rent good mics and outboard gear when you record your project. Your producer may have a piece here or there they could bring in for a nominal fee, and plenty of great records were recorded in bathrooms and basements. In addition, you'll have all the gear to make top notch rehearsal tapes, live recordings, and even stream live performances to the Internet, when you're not too busy making records.

No matter where you record your project, you need your producer behind the board making sure your sound is recorded properly. Countless hours of studio time can be wasted because things aren't mic'd properly, or there's noise from a poorly patched connection, or the levels were set too low. While it may be the engineer's job to work out the glitches, it's the producer's job to oversee the engineer.

Finally, take your time in the studio and don't rush. Plan on spending at least 10 hours per song to record and 10 hours per song to mix. Which is why pre-production is so important. If you've prepared yourself to the point that it sounds perfect in one or two takes, you'll have the time and the budget to record more songs.

If you only have enough money to record two or three songs, be sure you record your Very Best Songs and make them Sound as Perfect

As far as the process of making a great record goes, take that up with your producer. Every producer has a different method to their madness and may do things quite differently than we

could possibly outline here. Again there is no right way to success, and plenty of ways to fall short. Part of the experience of making a record is making mistakes and you'll learn plenty before you make your second one.

Packaging your Music:

Once you have your songs tracked, mixed and mastered, you'll need a visual package to go along with your music. Everything from the cover, inner sleeve, and tray card of your CD, to the glossy photograph you send out to the Press, to the letterhead you send to Record Labels, to the presentation of all these materials on your Web Site and Social Network Pages, should be coordinated to present you and your music in the best possible light. Before you can put all of that together, you really need to work on your image.

What is your image? What is it about you or your band that makes you special? Is it your look? Your sound? The way you dress or the way you talk? What face do you put on for your audience? What do you believe in? What do you want your audience to believe?

Your image, or persona, is another "intangible factor" that goes into the process of achieving success. It's not the way you are when your at home with Mom, but the way you carry yourself on stage or the way you drive your car down the street. Hip Hop artists call it Swagger, and no matter what type of music you play or how talented you really are, your image should always project confidence. Even if you feel shy on the inside, your persona should always be outgoing. Despite the nervousness you may feel before you to take the stage, your image should always show bravery. And regardless of how much you may hate dealing with bar owners or talking to fans, you should always be accessible.

Once you have defined your image, you need to package it properly and show it to the world. Hire a real photographer to take your group shots for the press. Have a professional graphic design firm lay out your CD cover art and Internet graphics to the specifications that will look great regardless of format. Have your manager write your biography; or at least get someone that knows how to write, like a reporter from the local college newspaper. And whatever you do, get a real webmaster to design your Web Site and MySpace pages instead of trying to do it yourself . Too many times great music gets passed on because the cover was lame, or the bio was too wordy, or the glossy was too dark, or your Internet Presence looks like the millions of other bands with poor images.

You can have a terrible sound and a great image, and make it in the music business. You can have a great sound and still never make it. That's just the way it is.

When someone looks at your CD, they should say, "Wow, I wonder what this sounds like?" When they look at your glossy, they should say, "He's cute!" When they read your bio, they should say, "Man, these guys are cool." And when they find you online, they should say, "There's the link to their latest MP3 file." If you can get them saying all of this, you've got a pretty decent shot of being heard above the fray. Now you need to press up some CD's.

Manufacturing/Pressing:

In the digital age the biggest question to ask is: Why bother pressing CDs? While most people within the industry certainly are beginning to embrace digital distribution on a wider scale, Radio Stations and Venues still “prefer” CDs. Most of the Indie, College and Public Radio Stations want physical product they can rip themselves. Venue owners, especially if they are not familiar with your music, want to see that bar code along with a slick press kit to decide if you’re worth booking.

The second reason to press CDs is to sell them as a merchandise item at live gigs. People want to “have a piece” of their favorite artists, and when fans make a connection with your Live music, they’ll be more than willing to buy a copy to listen in the car on the ride home. You will sell more CDs at your Live Shows than in any record store or online outlet, and will easily make up a sizable percentage of your merchandise sales.

Having said all of that, the most important item you will need to get your first CD pressed is aspirin. This is where a thousand things can, and often do, go wrong. Usually, the first mistake you make is who you choose to press your record. So you need to deliberate this decision very carefully. Almost as carefully as who you pick as your producer.

There are a couple hundred outfits where you can get your CDs pressed, all offering their various packages and price rates. The average rate is around \$1,500.00 or less per thousand CD’s with film costs, and if you pay more \$2.00 per disk you’re paying way too much.

Disk Makers undoubtedly presses more independent CD releases than anyone else. Since they also own CD Baby, they cover all of your Online Distribution and Sales including placement on iTunes. You are pretty much assured that you will get a quality product within the time promised, as well as lots of support for newbies. If you are going to press CDs, Disk Makers is certainly a safe bet.

But you may find someone closer or cheaper who can help you through the entire process and save you some money too. A simple Google Search will provide you with CD pressing companies located nearest to you. Most, if not all CD Manufacturers can provide you with a quality product, and using a plant nearer to your locale will save you money in shipping costs.

What Do You Do Next?:

You have a 1000 copies of a great looking CD showing lots of attitude. The packaging is backed up by 9 killer tunes and a couple of potential hits. You’ve got a great MySpace page and are adding new friends every day, and your single has already been downloaded 132 times. You haven’t made many iTunes sales yet, but you sold 14 CDs at the release party and have already given 50 away to family and friends. What are you going to do with 936 CD’s sitting in your bedroom closet?

Play Every Gig You Can Get!:

The first thing you need to do, is start booking some gigs. Find every venue within 150 miles of you, visit with each club owner and bar manager – Promo Pack in hand – and beg for a Friday or Saturday night, even if it's an opener. Talk to local and regional Booking Agents, and do what ever it takes to get them to book you gigs. Take any and every opportunity you can find or create to play in front of an audience no matter what it may cost you.

Every time you play to a crowd of 10 people or more, you will make a connection with at least 1 person. Every 10 connections you make with people, you make at least 1 life-long fan. Every life-long fan will buy every album you make and come see you play every time you're in their town. When you have a million of those, or a significant portion thereof, you may have a shot of making it in the business.

What the labels are really looking for, is a band of good looking kids with an album's worth of material, a couple of hit songs, and a fan base. The label will be interested in you if you can prove to them that you can sell records and concert tickets. If they are interested in you, they will definitely want to see you play live and will fly to your town to see you. If the place is packed, everybody's jumping around, the girls sing along to your ballads, you may make a slight impression. If you only have 50 people at your 1st CD release party, you know you have a lot of work to do.

PLAY IN FRONT OF AN AUDIENCE AT EVERY AND ANY OPPORTUNITY & MAKE EVERY SHOW YOUR BEST!

Mount a Local Promotion Campaign:

So how do you get more people out to your shows? The first thing you have to do, is make them know you exist. That doesn't mean hanging your banner off a freeway overpass. But it does mean pounding the pavement to every radio station, music venue, newspaper and street rag within a day's drive.

**You must conquer your local scene.
Once your home territory is secure,
you can expand your sphere of
influence outward.**

Everybody that claims to be a music critic should have your CD. Every DJ in town should have your CD. Every venue owner should have your CD, as well as a copy for every employee to take home. (You never know which waitress is "close" to the owner, and if she likes your music, you will get a gig!) Facets of the music industry exist in every town big and small all over the world. It's called "working the street", baby. You need the local industry wannabe's behind you before the crowds will think you're cool.

You will find hundreds of College and Public Radio stations, as well as tens of thousands of Internet Streams that want to play Cool New Music. There are RADIO STATIONS in YOUR HOME TOWN that will PLAY YOUR MUSIC. This means that every small town has at least one, and most larger cities a half dozen or more College and Public Radio Stations that will play a well made CD on their air. Make friends with every member of their staff, offer to do

benefit concerts, what ever it takes to get them to play your music as often as they possibly can on the air.

Then you can start working on getting the commercial stations to play your record, at least on their local shows. While it will take label support to get commercial radio on a national level, some stations will play exceptional local talent, even in regular rotations. So ingratiate yourself to the Program and Music directors; take them out to lunch, offer to babysit their kids, whatever. Buy some cheap overnight ads for an upcoming gig or offer to do a free concert. But give the players at your local Commercial Radio station a good reason to want to help break you.

And while you are at it, make sure you're making friends with the local press. Just about every major newspaper has a weekly entertainment supplement and every major city has a couple of street rags. Not to mention the 1000 Bloggers that are in your immediate area just looking for something to write about. Hit them early and often with press releases, photographs, schedule updates, recent news, or any other tidbit of information you can give them. The press has gotten lazy in recent years and would rather print stories just handed to them then work at making stories themselves. You write the story and then work them to get it printed.

PART TWO: BREAKING THE NATIONAL SCENE

Taking your “local phenomenon” to the national scene is one of the most difficult transitions of your career. No matter how much you dominate your local scene, there are 10,000 other bands that are on the verge of making it on a national level. The labels only sign a handful of new artists, and the competition for those slots is fierce. After several years of local notoriety without so much as a nibble from a record company, many bands simply break-up out of frustration. **DON'T GIVE UP!**

Most artists at this transition point don't realize they have their fate in their own hands. Even if you've been scouted by a label, but haven't been offered a deal, that only means that you'll have to do it all yourself. You'll have to become your own label, manufacture your own product, and promote your music on the national scene.

Remember, what the labels are looking for in artists, is Marketability. That means your Music, your Look, your Total Package, needs to be as good as any major artist out there. The other thing that labels are looking for are Fans. The labels want to see that you have a Fan Base that is willing to Buy Your Downloads and Concert Tickets.

Fortunately, the best tool for building your fan base is just a few clicks away.

THE INTERNET:

The Internet offers all artists the ability to share their music directly with their audience, on a virtual one on one basis. Talk about getting in touch with your fans. How satisfying it must be for an artist to see how many times your song has been downloaded, or get an e-mail from “Your #1 Fan”. But it's the Internet as a tool that offers the greatest opportunities to indie artists in starting your own record label and going into the Music Business for yourself!

Internet Distribution:

In the past, the biggest hang up for starting your own label has been selling records. Getting a distributor to put your records in just one store, let alone regional or even national distribution, was next to impossible. Without having records in the store, it did not make any sense for an artist to invest the enormous amount of resources needed to get airplay and press coverage.

Then along comes The Internet – and for the first time in history, finally – recording artists have the opportunity to bypass the label, and make their own paths to stardom. Internet distribution offers artists the ability to sell their music directly to a world wide audience, without the need for national distribution. For little or no out of pocket expenses, any artist with a CD to sell, can sell them online.

By using the Internet to sell and distribute music, the artist becomes their own label.

As we mentioned earlier, CD Baby can handle all of your online distribution, including placing your music with iTunes, as well as a handful of other online sales outlets. You can also work directly with iTunes, Amazon.com and other major outlets, which will get you paid faster than through your CD Baby account. All of these sites report their sales to SoundScan just like any other record store, so you will get some notice for the downloads you do sell.

In addition to selling your CD at gigs, on street corners or wherever you can, you can sell your physical CD and other merchandise through your Web Site. If you have multiple CD releases, keep your catalogue "in print". As you continue to your fan base, your newest fans will buy previous releases, earning you additional income over time. This is what the Record Labels have done over and over again for ages and you can do this too!

Web Site/Social Networking Pages:

How you present your image on the Internet will determine how successful you will be. Your Web Site and Social Pages are the key to your success and the most powerful tool in your arsenal. If the only way to win new fans is to let them hear your songs, your Pages permits anyone listen to your music 24 hours a day. If you need to offer your CD's to the national marketplace, your web site IS the only record store you need. Your site is a nexus where you can interact with fans, promote upcoming events and releases, and sell your music and merchandise online.

The first rule of using the Internet to expose your music is PUT YOUR WEB ADDRESS ON EVERYTHING YOU PRODUCE! From the hand bills printed to promote gigs, to every piece of merchandise for sale, to the CD COVER for God's sake, to materials sent to the industry – every item that has anything to do with your band should have your web site address emblazoned on it in big bold letters. As we discussed earlier, you must present a coordinated image for your act, and everything should point to your Internet address.

Which means that your web site had better be good, incorporating the following elements.

- Your own Domain Name: www.yourbandname.com – If you are serious about advancing your career, you need your own .com or .net address. Again, you want to tie all of your promotional efforts together and point them to your web site so your domain name must be easy to remember.
- Leased Web Hosting: There are thousands of virtual hosting companies that will host your site for less than \$10.00 per month, with enough storage, bandwidth and features like e-mail accounts. Each band member should have their own E-Mail account and personal MySpace Pages to further interact with your fans.
- MP3 Files: Your site should offer at least 2 or 3 full length songs for download, and they better be your best.
- E-Commerce: Use a 3rd party service such as PayPal to sell your music online. PayPal is easy to integrate, completely secure and deposits money directly into your bank account.
- Site Design: It is strongly advised that you seek the assistance of a professional web designer to incorporate all of the above elements into a great looking site. Your site should be visually stimulating without long load times, captivating your visitors before they

have a chance to click elsewhere. A good designer will provide you with a balanced design that presents your music using the latest techniques.

- Site Promotion: Once you have an excellent web site, you need to exchange links with every major music site online... all 1000 of them. Get your site listed with any and every music site that you think will send you at least one hit.

In addition to offering files to download and stuff for sale, your site should give your visitors plenty to do while they are there. Your site gives you the opportunity to experiment with a wide variety of media, including Video content. From lyric sheets and photos of the band, to video clips from your latest show, your site should be lush with a wide variety of content.

The more content you offer your visitors, the more often they will return to your site.

You also need a MySpace Music page, a Facebook page, a Twitter and a YouTube account; as well as Sonic Bids and Reverbnation pages... and probably 1000 other music sites online too! Your Web Site and Social Media pages should contain nearly identical content (Photos, Bio, Videos, etc.) and all be cross linked with one another. Again, your Web Site is the nexus for all this online activity and should have links for your fans to reach you on your Social Networking pages.

Once you have all of these pages linked up, you need to work 'em! You or a member of your band, should set aside an hour or two each day towards adding friends, communicating with fans, and reaching out to as many people in the world as possible online to get them to listen to your music. Your ability to reach out to people and win them as fans – By Any Means Necessary – is the Key to Success in the Music Industry. The more fans you have, especially online fans willing to come hear you play live gigs, the more successful you will be!

Second Life:

In addition to traditional online outlets, there are opportunities for you to perform live to audiences within the online virtual world of Second Life.

Second Life is an Online Virtual world populated by people from all across the globe. Citizens in Second Life exist as Virtual Characters, or Avatars, and can travel from place to place through the SL Viewer. Second Life has more than 19 million users; within the last 60 days, more than 1.4 million users have logged in, and at any given time, between 50,000 to 90,000 people are logged in and using Second Life.

There is music everywhere in Second Life. From Internet Radio streams, to Live DJ's spinning at clubs and events, to Live Music Performances, Music in SL is a driving force in it's growth. For the performing musician, Second Life offers you the ability to reach a completely new type of fan base that is highly interactive and extremely loyal to the artists and the performers they like. In addition, SL fans are for the most part, affluent and upwardly mobile; SL Fans will spend money on your music in the form of Tips, Ticket Sales, and Music Download Purchases.

Most importantly, Second Life has an economy! Funds are traded in the form of Linden Dollars, (L\$ or Lindens). The current exchange rate varies, from between 250 to 300 L\$ to

the US dollar. More than 1 Million US Dollars are exchanged in SL daily, and there are performing musicians that supplement their Real World income in the hundreds, sometimes thousands of dollars every month. Musicians can exchange the Linden Dollars they earn in Second Life, for US Dollars (or other currencies), using PayPal.

As a "Real World" musician, Second Life offers you an incredible opportunity to reach an entirely new fan base. Rather than be an incredibly small "needle" in the huge "haystack" of MySpace, Facebook and the World Wide Web, Second Life can offer the performing musician with an entirely new opportunity to become a Star in SL. In essence, Second Life provides you the opportunity to develop new fans that are enthusiastic, interactive, and willing to spend money on your music.

Many SL Musicians perform live concerts every day, growing their fan base on a daily, sometimes hourly basis. Relax Music Group has established a presence within Second Life, and offers Real Life performing artists Booking Agents, Managers and support staff to help you promote your music in world. For more information, you are encouraged to visit <http://www.RelaxMusicGroup.com/slmm.html>.

Are You Ready to Break?:

You practiced, rehearsed and recorded for months. You saved all your gig money to press your CDs. Your fans love you and you play to packed houses every weekend in your home town. When you found out the domain name you wanted was available, you felt a very positive vibe. When you saw your new site for the first time, you nearly passed out in excitement. You even downloaded your own songs from iTunes for good luck. You are now on a par with at least 10,000 other bands just like you. The only way for you to get noticed at this point, is to mount a national marketing campaign.

While you may have a great CD, and a way to distribute it all around the world, no one knows you exist.

PART THREE: MARKETING YOUR MUSIC

Your tools are no longer Recording Studios and Web Sites, but Postage Stamps and Telephone Calls. Now that you have a great record, and the means to sell it online, you need to start making friends in the Music Industry. The first place to start is getting your music played on the Radio.

Despite what you may have heard to the contrary, Commercial Radio is controlled by the Major Labels. Payola – or the practice of paying radio stations for airplay – is still widely used and very well concealed. You don't have enough money to get commercial airplay on a wide scale, and if you did, the labels would still try to prevent you from playing on their turf. However, there are hundreds of radio stations with good wattage and a lot of listeners, that would love to add your record to their rotations. Public and College Radio stations are still the only outlet for you to get your music played on the Broadcast Airwaves.

The final section of this guide will examine the process of distributing your music to Radio Stations and Music Publications, and how to build a story of success to entice the Record Labels.

RADIO PROMOTION:

The basic process of Radio Promotion is quite simple – send your CD to a radio station, and keep calling them until they play it. You will spend hours on the phone talking to the Music Directors, Program Directors and even Disc Jockeys from each station, just to determine if it's worth sending them your CD. But the more friends you make before your CD even arrives, the better chance you have getting it "added out of the box".

It's more than just getting a few spins at college radio... your goal is to hit the Charts!

It is important to have a basic understanding of the structure and function of the typical Radio Station staff. Your primary contact at each station is the Music Staff, particularly the Music Director. While each station has its unique style and character, they all follow the same basic hierarchy outlined briefly below:

- General or Station Manager: The GM (or SM) is responsible for overseeing all functions of the station.
- Program Director: The PD oversees all Program Content that goes out over the Station's Air. At most commercial stations it is the PD that actually decides what music gets added to rotation, while at most college/public stations, the PD mostly oversees program content and broadcast staff.
- Music Director: The MD reviews the music recommended by the AMD, decides what gets into rotation, and most importantly, compiles the station's weekly chart.
- Assistant MD: The AMD reviews the majority of the music submitted for airplay, and recommends selections to the MD.

Make friends with the Music Director. If you don't, you won't get played.

- Production Director: The other PD produces Commercial (or Sponsor/Underwriting) Spots, as well as Promo Spots and Station IDs.
- Traffic Director: The TD programs the Commercial (or Sponsor/Underwriting) traffic that is broadcast between songs and at the top and bottom of each hour.
- Sales/Underwriting Director: Responsible for selling commercials or underwriting.
- Chief Engineer: Responsible for all technical aspects of the station's broadcast signal.
- Disk Jockeys: They play your music on the radio.

Targeting Stations:

The goal of any airplay campaign is two fold. First and foremost, you want to build awareness with Programmers and DJs, who will play the hell out of your music if they like you. Secondly, you want to develop those markets where you are getting airplay, as potential locations for you to perform live gigs.

Before you begin sending out CDs, target your servicing to around 300 College and Public stations nationwide, focusing on those stations that report to CMJ. There are a plethora of online resources where you can look up the information on College Radio stations, and begin to compile a database. Since most College and Public stations have their own web sites, that also carry an Internet Stream of their broadcast signal, it will be easy for you to determine which station is worthy of your postage money, just by tuning in.

Of course, start with your home area, and work outwards from there, as airplay close to home will help you dominate your home marketplace. Targeting 300 stations will give you plenty of coverage of the major media markets, and at least one station in the smaller cities and towns, all of which can potentially be stops on your tour! You will also want to focus your attention on CMJ Reporting stations, as they have the potential to list you on their airplay charts.

Trade papers like CMJ compile their Top 200 charts on a ranking system that is based on a station's DMA, Frequency and Wattage, and listener potential. Getting your CD added to a station with a higher weight will give you a better chance at making it on the Top 200 chart. But every one in the industry knows this, which is why it is a bit harder to get charted at these stations. Which is why you need to pound the phones BEFORE you send out your CD.

Speak to the Music Director at each station BEFORE you send them your CD. If they don't sound interested in playing your music when you speak to them on the phone, send your CD to someone who does.

After narrowing down your servicing to 300 stations, plan on calling every station at least once before you ship your CD. Make sure to get current information including any address and personnel changes. A typical college station will change music directors every semester. Since your package needs reach the Music Director, be sure to at least ask who "is" the current Music Director. If you don't speak to the MD in person, be sure to address your package personally to them.

The easiest way to Target Stations, is to hire a professional promotions firm that deals with College Radio. Just as you have had professional assistance producing your music, promoting it should be no different. For every dollar you spend recording your music, you really need to invest at least two to three dollars promoting it!

Packaging and Shipping:

Once you've narrowed your list to the best 300 stations, you need to assemble the various elements you'll need to package your CD and mail it out. The following list will provide you with an example of what you will need to get the job done.

- **Self Sealing Bubble Mailers:** It is essential that you use an air-bubble mailer, as any other type will increase the amount of postage for each CD. The self-sealing mailer will also save you time, as you won't need tape to close the package.
- **Address Labels:** Make sure to address your packages to the proper Music Director or Specialty Show Host for the genre of music you are promoting.
- **Return Address Labels:** You need to put your return address on your package, but again, this is another item that you can put your web site address on as well.
- **One Sheet:** This is the only thing you put into your package beside your CD. Using a desk top publisher or word processor, layout your one sheet to include a brief 3 paragraph bio of the band, a 1 paragraph description of the album, and a highlight your best 3 songs. Don't waste money sending photos, promo kits, or any thing that will just end up in the trash. Print your one sheets as cheaply as possible, as they will end up in the trash too. **DON'T FORGET TO INCLUDE YOUR WEB ADDRESS ON YOUR ONE SHEET.**
- **Gimmick Item:** A clever gimmick can move your CD to the top of the listening pile, and draw more attention from the music staff. We've shipped everything from Condoms and Candy, to Hats and Halos, with a variety of success. Remember, every additional item added to the package increases the postage cost, and all you really need to ship each station the first time is a CD and one sheet.
- **Postage:** A CD and one sheet inside, and 2 labels outside, will cost \$1.78 in US Postage to ship in a Size 0 Air-Bubble padded mailer. Sending 300 units will cost \$534.00 in postage alone. You will have to either use a Postage Meter, Stamps.com, or buy the correct amount of postage in stamps as the Post Office will not put postage on such a large mailing.
- **Reservicings:** Plan on reservicing at least 50 stations with the CD, as invariably packages get misplaced, lost or stolen at college radio stations.

Have all of your elements laid out "assembly line style", and start by putting the address and return address labels on the mailer first. Fold the one sheet around the CD, and put it in the package sheet out. Once it is sealed, place the postage on the package making sure it will not fall off.

Take all of your packages to the post office at the same time, and plan on at least a week for your packages to arrive at the stations. A mailing that is shipped out by Wednesday, will likely arrive at the stations starting the following Monday. That Monday, you need to be on the phone calling your stations to let them know your package is on the way.

Landing Week:

Assuming the Post Office does their job correctly, all of your stations should have your CD within 7 to 10 days of shipping. During your landing week, your main job is to get your CD reviewed by each station, so they will all add your CD to their rotations at the same time. This is the first official week of your promotion campaign, and you should plan on calling each station at least every other week for the next 12 to 16 weeks.

Once the stations receive your package, they will open them, read the one sheet briefly, then throw it away and stick your CD in the "review pile". If your one sheet is particularly catchy, or you included a unique gimmick item, they may listen to it right away. But it will probably sit in their review pile until they receive either an e-mail, phone message, or speak with someone in person that is working the record.

While it may be possible to work your stations by e-mail, the personal connection made by telephone will go much farther towards getting more airplay. There are professional promoters that call these people every day, not to mention other indie bands doing the same thing you are. But MD's are generally open to talking to new people, and you should at least be able to make friends with the Assistant MD's and some of the DJs that like your style of music.

Add Week:

As you are making your set-up calls, be sure to let your stations know that you are going for "Radio Adds" on a specific date, the Monday or Tuesday of your Add Week. This is usually 2 or 3 weeks after you ship your packages. If your planning and coordination is successful, you should get between 20 to 50 stations to add your music that week. But don't be discouraged if only 10 stations add your record the first week. Due to the sheer volume of music they receive, some stations take 3 or 4 weeks to review a CD and add it to their rotation.

It will take about 4 weeks from landing week to get the majority of your adds. Obviously, not everybody will add your record no matter what it sounds like. Assuming your music is good, within the first 4 weeks you should have between 100 to 150 stations playing your music.

Giveaways:

Of those stations, the vast majority will have you in Light Rotation or Available in Library. The only way to improve your airplay at these stations, is to send giveaways. Giveaways can be anything, from more CD's, to T-shirts, hats and other schwag. However to improve your airplay, you need to saturate the DJ staff with copies of your CD.

Call up the MD, and tell them you want to send them 10 CD's to give to the DJ's. Ask them not to do any on air giveaways – you can tell them you'll send them on-air giveaways later in the campaign -- but to make sure the 10 best and most popular DJ's get a personal copy of your CD. This way, the people who actually play the music at each station, has a chance to

get to know your music, personally. They will be more likely to play your CD during their air shift if they know you exist, and can listen to your CD when they are away from the station.

PUT YOUR MUSIC IN THE HANDS OF THOSE WHO WILL PLAY IT ON THE AIR. But only send giveaways to those stations that are enthusiastic about playing your music.

Station ID's:

In addition to hitting your hottest stations with giveaways, offer to have the group do a Station ID. Ask each MD what they would like to have the band say, such as "You are listening to YOURBAND on station WXYZ in Anytown, USA". Ask the stations how they would like to get them, as an .MP3 or .WAV file for example. If you need to send a burned CD with your Station ID, be sure to include a T-shirt or a hat for the Music Director, and everyone on the music staff if you can afford it.

Interviews:

Those stations that have you in a Medium or Heavy rotation, and definitely those stations that are charting you, should receive an offer to do a Phone Interview with the band. Phone interviews are an excellent opportunity to MENTION THE WEB ADDRESS a couple dozen times. Phone Interviews helps the station "sound Bigger", and it's an excellent way for you to reach out to the audience. Remember to present yourselves as approachable and "cool" without sounding arrogant.

Event / Gig Promotion:

Once you have a toe-hold at a station, you need to go play in their city... you need to go on the road. If you have a tour already planned, than make sure EVERY station and press outlet in EVERY city on your tour has your CD, promo kit, and free tickets for the staff to come down and see the show. Let each station on your itinerary know when you'll be in town, and again offer (if not insist) to do an interview. Make sure the station has CD's, schwag and tickets to giveaway on the air, and if possible, every DJ in the station promoting your show. The more you support your airplay by touring, the more your airplay will support your tour.

If you don't have a tour planned, start doing the grunt work. Ask the MD which venue is the best one in town to play, who to talk to, etc. IF they are into your music, you'll find that most MD's are more than eager to help you out. And if it's a good station in a good market, and they can get people out to see you play live, offer to do a free show.

Of course, there are local and regional booking agents that may be interested in helping you mount a tour. Contacting booking agents in markets where you are getting airplay can be another way for you get your band on stage in front of an audience. Again, booking agents want to see a track record of success as they want to make their commission off your

performance. Having a great press kit, web site and tens of thousands of MySpace friends will help you generate interest with venue owners and booking agents that are reluctant to offer you a slot on their stage.

Hitting the Charts:

You would be surprised to find out how few stations charting your record it takes to hit the chart. We mentioned the weighting assigned by the trade papers to stations that have exceptional listener potential. Target those stations and focus your efforts on getting airplay. It only takes a handful of heavily weighted stations charting your record for you to appear in the national trade papers like CMJ.

Labels are notoriously lazy in their A & R departments. There are some label interns who's only job is to look for new artists to receive a chart listing in CMJ, and THEN contact the artist. While plenty of acts have charted in CMJ and have never been heard from again, an appearance on their chart may get you noticed by a label right away. At least being on a chart somewhere is another positive item to put in your press kit.

By weeks 6 through 8, you should have at least half the stations who have added your record, with about 10 to 25 stations charting you, 30 to 50 stations with a track in medium rotation, and the rest in light or in the library. It will take about 25 charters to reach the Top 200, with a minimum of 5 heavily ranked stations listing you in their Top 10.

All of your activities at radio should be reflected on your website. Since many college stations broadcast online, your site should be linked to every station playing your CD that has a web site. Any station charting your record should be listed on your main index page. Not to mention telling all the fans on your Social Marketing pages what you are doing, who's playing your record, and how they can help you out by calling in their requests.

If your project can reach these goals after 8 or even 12 weeks, then you have accomplished your first goal. Building a story of airplay success to tell the industry.

Recurrent:

A typical CD release will last 8 to 16 weeks at college/public radio. There is an overwhelming amount of CD volume each station receives each week, causing all "new music" to go stale after as little as 8 weeks. If your CD is good, your music exceptional, and you are getting great feedback from the stations, you may be able to keep things going the full 16 weeks. But be prepared for stations to put you into Recurrent Rotation eventually. You can push for re-adds when you come to play their town and utilize the good will you've built at the station to get more fans out to see your show.

Keep in touch with your friends at Radio. At the very least, they'll play your next record. But they could eventually become the executive that signs your band.

Digital Radio Promotion:

In addition to College and Public Radio stations that play Indie Music, there are tens of thousands of Internet Radio Stations broadcasting all across the globe. Most promotion companies, such as Relax Music Group, has a Digital Promotion packages or offerings that can get your music in the hands of DJs and Programmers both at Broadcast and Internet radio stations.

While this does not replace a physical CD promotion campaign as far as industry impact, these services can help you reach DJs at a grass roots level, providing you with wider “underground buzz”. After all, if a DJ likes your music, they’re going to play your music. Whether they discover your files online or you send them a CD, getting your music into the hands of DJs that can expose your music is better than doing no promotion at all.

Just to be up front and honest, we have our own Digital Radio Promotion service that can get you airplay and exposure, that is both inexpensive and effective. (Yes we’re biased!) While we do encourage you to do your own research, you are invited to submit your music and get more information about our services by visiting <http://www.RMGDigital.NET>.

PUBLICITY:

Releasing your material to the Music Press, is very much the same as releasing material to the Radio Stations. You need contact all of the publications or bloggers you target BEFORE sending them material, and send them the materials they will need to print your review. However, where a radio station may take a week or two to add your record, most publications require a 2 to 3 month lead time if not longer, to print your CD review.

Coordinating your Airplay and Publicity is a question of timing. The better prepared you are well in advance, the more successful your project will be.

This simply means that you really need to plan your record release well in advance and have your CD’s ready at least 2 months before you ship to radio. If you are planning a radio add date of September 1, you need to ship to radio by August 15. If you want your CD reviews to appear when you’re getting airplay, you need to ship to press before June 15.

Even if you plan on targeting only Online Media for your publicity campaign, you want to provide them with a lead time of at least a couple of months.

Targeting your Audience:

For your first publicity campaign, target about 100 publications/bloggers, focusing on those closest to your home town. As with your preparations for radio promotion, you need to phone or e-mail each publication you intend to service, and see if they will accept your material for review.

For example, you wouldn't want to service a metal magazine if your sound is adult alternative. Your press kit is more than just a CD and one sheet, and they cost you money to produce. The more time and effort you put in on the phone calls and e-mails, will pay for itself in material that may end up in the trash.

Your main point of contact is the Music Editor, who will be the person that decides if your music is worth reviewing. Where a Music Director might add or even chart a CD they don't personally like, a Music Editor is far more subjective. If they don't like your album cover, your music, or your hairdo, you won't get much page space. An e-mail or quick conversation by phone, will help you determine if they are willing to give your music a fair chance.

Make friends with the Music Editors that like you. They could easily make your career.

Ask them how much lead time they need, and let them know when you are going for radio ads. If an editor is into your music, they will work with you to coordinate your timing with their schedule. But don't push, and take any space you can get. Also ask about advertising rates. You may need to buy ad space to promote an important show, and it doesn't hurt to let the music editor think you may spend some money with them.

Your Press Kit:

In addition to your CD, a typical press kit should include the following items:

- Cover Letter: A brief, polite cover letter introducing yourself should be included with your promo kit.
- Band Biography: This is where you can really improve your chances to get your CD reviewed, especially if you write the review yourself. Many publications, especially newspapers in larger markets, don't have the time or staff to write a story about every band they get CD's from. One way to guarantee space is to provide them with a bio that is so well written, IT can be published as the story.
- 8" x 10" Black & White Glossy Photo: Every music editor in the world has seen a million band photos. Yours must be unique, capture your image, and most importantly be easy to transfer to newsprint.
- Additional Materials: Any "supporting evidence" that helps you tell your story. While you probably shouldn't send reviews from other publications, items from airplay reports and chart listings to lyric sheets and other band writings, may be helpful in making your package stand out from countless others.
- Binder: All of your materials, except for maybe your CD, should be bound within a single folder or binder. Your binder should have a cover that reflects the entire package, be easy to remove and replace materials, and every item SHOULD HAVE THE WEB ADDRESS!
- Shipping: While the costs are completely determined by what you put in your package, it should be mailed in a air-bubble mailer that is large enough to hold your binder and CD snugly.

Your press kit MUST be impressive from the moment it's pulled from the mailer.

Follow-up Calls:

While you are going to spend a lot of time on the phone or sending e-mails, you need to contact everyone you send your press kit at least 4 times.

1. Before you send.
2. After it should arrive, to make sure it gets there. If it is there, ask them to listen to your CD and review your materials. If your package didn't make it, re-service it immediately.
3. 2 weeks after it has arrived. This should give them time to review it on their own. If they haven't listened, remind them of your add date. You want to ask them about their next deadline, and politely indicate your need for their cooperation.
4. 10 days after your last call/e-mail. If they haven't reviewed your record by your 4th call, they may not listen to it at all. It may be a factor of time, or a function of their motivation, but by the 4th call, you'll know if you are wasting your time.

Sending a press kit does not guarantee a review. If you do not follow up your servicing with a phone call or e-mail, your package will be ignored.

If you have a music editor that is particularly resistant to listen to your music, inquire about advertising rates and deadlines. If an editor thinks you may buy an ad, they'll listen to your music for sure. If they "suggest" that you buy an ad or they won't print your review, they really don't like your music. But it may be worth spending a little money, if you think their audience can help you sell concert tickets or drive visitors your web site.

Interviews:

Prepare to give interviews as much as you prepare for everything else in your campaign. If a publication, radio station, or even record label is interested in you, they will want to interview you. There are the standard questions, like "what are your roots?" and "who are your influences?". Then there are the off the wall questions like "what type of animal would you like to be?". Think of any stupid question you've ever heard asked of an artist in interviews, and be prepared to answer it.

Your answers should reflect your image and your attitude. You should come off as being accessible to your fans, while maintaining a hint of mystique. Your answers should be clever without being too intellectual, and you should convey a sense of humor without sounding like a smart-ass.

Whether it's broadcast over the airwaves, or printed on slick paper, there is a thin line between sounding cool, or sounding foolish.

Trade Papers:

While publications like Billboard and Rolling Stone do accept material from indie bands, don't hold your breath for more than a one paragraph blurb. It is well worth your efforts even if you

don't get print, because you just don't know who may end up with your package. However, you should focus on the College Music Journal, as they can have a direct impact on your Radio Promotion campaign.

Most of the college and public stations in the Essential Indie Database, report their weekly Top 25 charts to CMJ. Those charts are filtered through their ranking system, and compiled in to their Top 200 Airplay Chart. If you appear on that chart one time, you have another chip in your PR kitty. If you chart at Number One, you will definitely have at least a shot at a good indie record deal.

CMJ is a great indie resource and it is in your best interest in investing in advertising, and other marketing opportunities with them. CMJ also hosts an annual convention in NYC each fall, which offers you opportunities to perform live for radio programmers and other industry entities.

The more money you spend with the trades, the more you will get out of them. However, if one editor likes you AND your music, they could be a very helpful ally on your path to stardom.

COORDINATING YOUR EFFORTS:

In order to get the most out of your Indie Release, you must coordinate your efforts into a concerted Promotion Campaign.

Promotion Campaign: The following represents an ideal promotion campaign.

Week One:	Indie Press Serviced
Week Two:	Press kits land (arrive at Press) College Radio Advance Promotion Begins Indie Publicity Begins
Week Three:	1st Indie Press Week College Radio Advance Promotion
Week Four:	College CD Servicing 2nd Press Week
Week Five:	CD's Land - College Radio Promotion Begins 3rd Press Week 1st Trade Advertisements Published - CMJ
Week Six:	CD's Land - College Radio Add Week 4th Press Week – First Reviews published
Week Seven:	2nd Add Week, College Radio 5th Press Week – Reviews Published Begin Artist "Thank-You" Calls
Week Eight:	3rd Add Week, College Radio 6th Press Week – Reviews Published College Giveaways Shipped 2nd Trade Advertisements
Week Nine:	4th Add Week, College Radio 1st Chart Week, College Radio 7 th Press Week – Reviews Published
Week Ten:	2nd Chart Week, College Radio 8 th Press Week – Reviews Published
Week Eleven:	3rd Chart Week, College Radio 3rd Trade Advertisements 9 th Press Week – Reviews Published
Week Twelve:	4th Chart Week, College Radio 10th Press Week - Reviews published

After week Twelve you want to follow-up in those markets where you are getting airplay by booking any gig you can get. Once you have a firm date, all radio and press outlets should be notified, and a concerted "Event Promotion" should begin to get as many people out to that show. Start by offering every one at the radio station that is playing your album a slot on the guest list, as well as any press contacts you have made in that area. The more people you have in your corner when you play your first gig in a new market, the more successful that show will be, and the more likely you can continue to play in that market to build your fan base.

Product Requirements:

The following represents the minimum amount of product you will need to effectively execute your Promotion Campaign. Generally, you will want to target those radio stations and publications that you are relatively assures will at least listen to your CD. It would be very helpful to contact those outlets prior to servicing. You will want to target 300 College Radio stations, and hold 50 packages in reserve to re-service those stations that may have lost your package. You will also want to target about 100 Press outlets, and hold 50 packages in reserve for re-servicing.

To help further extend your promotion campaign, you will want to provide your best Radio Stations with at least 4 extra CD's for giveaways. You want the Music Director, the Assistant MD, and the Best DJ at each station to get a "personal copy" of your CD. That way, they can take your CD home with them and live with your music. They will undoubtedly find other tracks they like that will sound good coming over their air. By putting your CD in the hands of the people AT EACH STATION that can give you more airplay, you go from getting a hand full of spins for a few weeks, to an "up and coming" artist that the MD takes upon themselves to help break.

College Radio	350 CD's for College Servicing
	200 CD's for Giveaways. (4 CD @ 50 stations, min.)
Indie Publicity	150 CDs, Group Photos and Biographies

Trade Advertisements: It is strongly recommended, that trade advertisements are published in the College Music Journal (CMJ), several times during the course of a promotion campaign.

RECORD LABELS:

There is no right way to get a record deal. There is no formula to getting label interest. Some in the industry would say that “if you’ve got it, you’ve got it.” Others say that you have to make your own opportunities. One thing is for sure, you can make a living playing music without signing a record deal if you do what ever it takes.

Telling Your Story:

As mentioned earlier, labels are only interested in one thing. Earning profit. Labels invest in artists when they feel they have a halfway decent chance of recouping their investment. Before spending a dime sending anything out to the labels, you need to have a story of success to tell, with plenty of documentation to back it all up.

Document and build on every success you can accomplish, and convey that success in the materials you send to the labels.

What makes for a good success story? Sales, Airplay and Press Clippings. If you’ve been printed in 50 publications, played on 200 stations, and sell 1000 CDs and 10000 downloads online, you can play a hand at the table. This would be a very positive, and very modest level of success for your campaign, and attainable within a limited budget. With a fresh sound, a good record with at least one hit song, AND you’re playing across your region 4 nights a week, you may get some A & R types out to one of your shows.

Targeting your Audience:

If you intend to hit the major labels, contact them first. While you may not get past the office staff, they may be a valuable information resource. To start with, ask them for their submission criteria. If they accept unsolicited materials, your CD will be put in a vast stack the A & R department will listen to eventually. If they say they aren’t accepting submissions, don’t waste your time and move on to the next label. However, label secretaries are very savvy. While they have heard every story under the sun, if you are polite and can impart your story to them in 30 seconds or less, they may be more helpful.

Your primary target at any label is the A & R Director. This is a middle management position that is above the lowly A & R Representative(s), but below the President and Vice President of A & R. Why target the middle? First off, the reps have zero power, and the executives have zero time. While the Director will probably pass your package off to a rep for review, he does has enough juice to take your package upstairs. Assuming your packaging is clever, and you have a real story to tell, the Director will know immediately if your project has potential to earn the label money.

But your best chance for getting a Record Deal, is by going after the Indie Labels. Targeting the Indies is merely a function of money, which is why you need to call before you send.

While they may be really nice people who would love to work your project, most indie labels just don't have the money or the juice to advance your career.

There are several dozen indie labels that can see the little picture as well as the big one. These companies will know how to develop and break artists on a national level with a much smaller budget. By this point in your career, you are looking for someone competent to do your Radio Promotion and Publicity, and will spend their money to do it instead of yours.

What to Send:

This is the tricky part. On the one hand, some professionals would say just send the CD and nothing else. If the label doesn't hear the music they aren't going to sign you, so sending other materials is just a waste of money. On the other hand, press kits, airplay reports, chart listings and sales figures may be of more interest to the label than your music. If you can prove that you can make money with your supporting documents, they will be more willing to listen to your CD.

Taking it to the Next Level:

When you have real, serious interest from an Indie or Major Label, it is time for you to seek Professional Assistance. The old adage could never be more true... the act that represents themselves have a fool for a client. Once you have established yourself as a "rising star" on your own, you need to seek the advise and counsel of an Artist Manager.

A good Manager knows the industry, knows people in the industry, and knows how to get things done in the industry. Your manager is the person that represents you to the industry, and protects you from the industry. Your manager is the person that does all your dirty work, freeing the artist to focus on recording and performing their music. A good manager will get the very best deal from the label and knows how to make them perform their best on your behalf. And if you don't have a deal, a good manager WILL get you one, assuming you can find a good manager. Finally, a good manager knows how to make you more profitable than you could possibly be on your own.

A good manager WILL be capable of taking you to the next level, stardom. From Fiona Apple to ZZ Top, all of the bands you hear on commercial radio or see on MTV, are there because of their managers. Most managers work on a retainer or commission basis, and charge as much as 25% of your income for their services. Signing a management agreement is entering into a partnership for the specific purpose of advancing your career. Which means before you sign with a manager, you should feel comfortable being around them, completely trust them, and consider them your friend.

Your Manager is the only other person that cares as much about your career as you do.

CONCLUSION: The Best Advice...

Signing a Record Contract is an excellent goal to set one's sights on, but it is a million to one crap shoot to achieve. While hundreds of new artists do sign record deals every year, tens of thousands of new artists do not. Nothing is impossible, and with the right set of circumstances, you could reach this goal. Regardless of the level of success you strive for, you will still need to:

- Work Hard.
- Write Great Songs.
- Practice, Practice, Practice.
- Record your very best songs.
- Produce the very best product that you can.
- Work harder promoting your music than you did creating your music.
- Spend as much time making friends as you do making music. (especially at Radio Stations, Venues, Media outlets and within the local/regional/national/Internet Music Communities.)
- Perform your music Live at any and every opportunity.
- Put on the very best performance that you can.
- Build your fan base. Be accessible to your fans.
- Don't rush your career. Take Small Steps Forward.
- Build on your successes and learn from your mistakes.
- Don't Forget Your Friends.
- Never Give Up.

IF you can do these things, AND get the luck you'll need to have the right person at the right label hear your music at the right time, you may get signed. In the meantime, structure your career to succeed on your own, without the support of a record label. Chart your own path to success and set goals that you can achieve on your own.

Obviously, you'll keep "the Record Deal" at the top of your goal list. But the second and easier goal to reach (relatively speaking) is self-sufficiency. Millions of artists from all genres make their living making music, having never seen the inside of a Record Company. They play their music live to an audience every chance they can get, and their "job" is playing music.

You don't need a record contract to make living, but you do need fans. You don't need a great recording, or a flashy CD package, but you must have fans. You don't even need your own material, but if you play out live you'll make new fans. Performing to a live audience gives you so many great opportunities, and there are so many places where you can play all across the country, it's almost easy to succeed.

While you will have to play a lot of gigs for little or no money, you will build a fan base. You will pour your blood, sweat and tears into your career and could spend years starving while you're playing your ass off. Over time, however, you will build a large enough fan base to support your career. Your fans will pay good money to see you play, will buy your CDs and Merchandise, and they will support you by turning other people onto your music.

It is, after all, the entertainment business. The best advice one can give is to be serious about the business part, for the rest have fun. It's fun making music. It's fun recording the songs in the studio you had fun writing in the basement. It's a whole lot of fun playing in front of a live audience. It's fun building a fan base because it's fun meeting new people who already like you because you made them happy with your music.

The biggest benefit to a career in Music, on any level, is that you will have fun doing it! No other industry can offer the level of pleasure one can derive from working a job – any job – like one in the Music Business. It is the most enjoyable career one could ever have, and if you can make your living working “in the biz”, you are a success.

Now go to work and have some fun...

AUTHOR'S NOTES:

I have had the good fortune to make my living in the Music Industry. Over a 3 decade career, I have been an Artist Manager, Concert Promoter, Booking Agent, Tour Manager, Publicist and Radio Promoter. During my early years, I was once a Disk Jockey, Traffic Director, Assistant Music Director, Program Director and the Station Manager at my College Radio Station. I was once the National Advertising Director at my College Newspaper. I also worked part time at the local Cable Television station where I was a Cameraman, Sound Engineer, Editor, Technical Director, Director and Account Executive.

I've owned and managed a successful Radio Promotion firm since the early '90's, where I lead a team of 11 promoters that got millions of spins for more than 250 artists. Then I stepped aside from music business temporarily in 1997, to become an Internet Site Designer and Webmaster, to learn the Internet from the inside out. If you've read and understand what I have written so far, I guess you could also call me a Writer.

Throughout my career, I seized every opportunity to learn about all facets of the entertainment industry, which is why I've worked so many different jobs. This has helped me do good things for the countless artists and groups I have worked with in the past. From bands that never left their basement, to solo artists that have gone from the streets to the top of the charts, my career has been to advance the careers of people with musical talent.

The one position I can never hold is that of a Musician. I do not have the talent – or the gift – to make music. I have never played with a band or performed on stage to a packed house. I will never know what it feels like to have people appreciate my work in real time, the way a performer connects directly with their audience.

I have, however, felt the satisfaction of breaking an unknown artist into stardom through my efforts. I know what it feels like to be awarded a platinum and a gold record for my hard work. I've driven all across the United States at least three times, making sure my guys make it to the gig on time. And I stood in the wings watching with a great deal of pride, my band play to 20,000 screaming fans. Then I went to the dressing room and made myself a sandwich.

As a manager, I've worked with bands that made the best music I've ever heard, who couldn't get noticed even on the local scene. I managed a band that played 6 nights a week, and broke up the day they received their first serious offer from a major label. And I got a record deal for a band I managed that never played out, didn't want to tour to support their record, and wasn't really all that good to begin with. Obviously, they did not sell enough records to get picked up on the second option.

As a Radio Promoter, I used to tell my clients the only guarantee I could give them is that they would not make it. With more than 500 CD's released EVERY WEEK, you must have a good record to get airplay, even at College Radio. Now there are 1,000 new music videos hitting YouTube every day!

However, I also used to tell my clients the most important fact... you won't find out unless you make the attempt. You have to try to succeed if you want to succeed. No one becomes a great superstar sitting alone at home. You have to get out there, get noticed, and work hard to make your own opportunities.

Then this newfangled Internet contraption came along. The industry has changed so much in just the last 5 years, let alone the last 3 decades... I had to learn the Internet -- at least for a while -- to get a grasp of how powerful the Internet can be, and how to use it as a tool to properly break new music. Now I tell my clients that **EVERYTHING YOU DO MUST POINT TO YOUR WEB SITES and YOUR WEB SITES HAD BETTER BE GOOD.**

As a full time Promoter, Manager and Consultant once again, I have come to the understanding that it truly is all about the music these days. It's just that with so many artists struggling to break through, the music has to be really, really good. You must to invest in promoting and marketing yourself to spread your music throughout the industry, to take your career to the next level. But you do not need the next level to make a very comfortable living as musician playing in a good band.

Throughout my career, I have seen and done just about everything there is to do in the music business. My only conclusion from a lifetime of music industry experience, is that the music industry does not make any sense. Music is a subjective art form. The way music appeals to people is completely different for each individual listener. However, the Music Industry is run by subjective people who mass-market an intangible product to an equally subjective audience.

Quite frankly, even the most experienced industry professionals could not pinpoint WHY one act makes it and the others do not. Because the industry signs so many acts that they already know won't sell squat, they are merely "test marketing" product on a grand scale. It's like throwing spaghetti against the wall – the strands that stick are a hit – the ones that hit the floor are history. Which means that the lowliest DJ and the most powerful CEO in this business know about exactly the same when it comes to making hits.

If you have it, you have it... if you don't, you don't.

My goal with the **Success in the Music Business**, is to provide you with a grasp of what the industry is all about, and how you can still succeed despite the tremendous odds against you. It is my hope that you will gain a basic understanding of how the industry really works, and how you can make it work for you. Musicians can and do make a decent living with their art. With the tips and tactics discussed in this guide, you can learn how to positively develop your career, earn more income for your efforts, and who knows... maybe even reach the ultimate goal... Stardom.

Best Wishes and Good Luck!

Patrick Rule
Co-CEO, Relax Music Group