

**KICK A ★★**



**MUSIC  
MARKETING**

**JULIAN ★ ANGEL**

# Welcome to Kick A\*\* Music Marketing

*Make a difference – kick some butt*

So you are a musician. You want to make a difference. You do not just crave for attention and a little bit of appreciation. What you want is

**to be a leader in your market**

and, of course,

**you want to make money**

Good news, you are holding the right how-to guide in your hands (or read it on whatever computer or computer-like device). This will not be about other fly-by-night music marketing methods using poor man's free tools – you will now play the game the way record labels do. And as you've heard before, record labels still account for 90% of the releases that matter in any market niche.

So now get ready to learn how they do it. Skip the pleasantries.

## How to use this guide

Music marketing is a circle. A closed circle, to be exact. You record, you tease, you promote, you release (read it again, that even rhymes), you keep pushing, check back – in the meantime you sell – start recording new material, tease the new material... and so on.

There is a “start” button somewhere in recording your music. However, I totally understand that you might not find yourself in the middle of recording your first or new album right at this moment. Maybe your album has already been finished and you are about to release it soon. Or maybe you have just released it and now look for that extra push ahead.

To cut the long story short, if you find yourself at “start” right now, perfect. If you are at another stage (e.g. you have just released your record), that's great too. Just enter where you need to and pick the chapters of this guide accordingly.

**You can enter the game of music marketing any time, at any stage.**

In order to give you the best overview of music marketing, though, we'll start at “start”, which is about 8 weeks prior to your official release date. Enjoy.

## Your Main Objective

What you will do in order to successfully and effectively sell your music is this:

1. Find the people who exactly love your type of music
2. Put yourself in front of these people to get recognized by using influential media
3. Make it possible for these people to buy your music in the most convenient way

In this guide you will learn how to do exactly that and how to lay the foundations therefore.

## Your Music Marketing Plan

Here is an example of a typical music marketing and release schedule, one that we are going to use later on when we set up your campaign. You will not have to stick to the time frames rigidly, however, they give you a good idea of what is common in the way record labels and professional music promoters market albums. You will find a print version on the last page.

<b>8 weeks to release:</b>	send press releases to media contacts to tease the album, announce it through your newsletter and social media  set up digital distribution with timed release
<b>6 to 8 weeks to release:</b>	sample relevant media with promo material
<b>4 weeks to release:</b>	release music video and tease new album, announce video with another press release, newsletter, social media  release free digital single if you feel like  stock physical outlets with copies of the album
<b>10 days to release:</b>	start special pre-order campaign for die-hard fans
<b>RELEASE DAY:</b>	announce official release through newsletter, social media, eventually send another press release to media  Check if both physical and digital versions are available
<b>1 day after release:</b>	check back with media and inquire about interviews  check back with radio shows to tease more (air)play
<b>4 weeks after release:</b>	release another video, if available, announce its release

	through press releases, newsletter and social media
<b>up to 8 weeks after release:</b>	take care of late reviews, get more interviews and radio plays
<b>up to 12 weeks after release:</b>	use newsletter and social media to tease album by publishing late reviews and interviews
<b>after 12 weeks:</b>	swim, baby...

Okay, now this might be easier said than done. After all you will have to make a few preparations in order to run a campaign like this. Here is the first (and important) part of the plan again with requirements filled in:

<b>8 weeks to release:</b>	<p>send press releases to media contacts to tease the album, announce through newsletter and social media</p> <p>→ you will need media contacts to send releases to → you will need a newsletter and social media following</p> <p>set up digital distribution with timed release</p> <p>→ you will need a digital distributor</p>
<b>6 to 8 weeks to release:</b>	<p>sample relevant media with promo material</p> <p>→ you will need media contacts to send copies to</p>
<b>4 weeks to release:</b>	<p>release music video and tease new album, announce video with another press release, newsletter, social media</p> <p>release free digital single if you feel like</p> <p>stock physical outlets with copies of the album</p> <p>→ you will need contacts to physical outlets willing to sell your CDs or vinyl records</p>
<b>10 days to release:</b>	start special pre-sale campaign for die-hard fans
<b>RELEASE DAY...</b>	

**Great!!!** Now you know what to do. The cool thing? Next I will show you how to do it.

## Structure - This is what we will do / what you will learn

- **CHAPTER 1 Background Knowledge**  
What you need to know about the playing field for unsigned musicians
- **CHAPTER 2 Basic Set-Up**  
Your website, social media, newsletter
- **CHAPTER 3 Defining your market niche**  
This (and only this) will be the place where you market your music
- **CHAPTER 4 Building media contacts**  
Where to find, how to contact and how to treat them
- **CHAPTER 5 Finding physical and digital distributors**  
Where to find them and how physical deals look like
- **CHAPTER 6 Putting your music marketing campaign to work**  
A step-by-step how-to list based on the marketing plan above so your album release will be a success.
- **CHAPTER 7 Direct Marketing (and Pre-Sale)**  
How to run extra campaigns to address your existing fans. 100 sales at day one.
- **CHAPTER 8 Planning Your Next Release**  
How to use the time between two releases
- **BONUS CHAPTER Yet more tips you can use**  
Random tips to improve the results of your campaign
- Disclaimer (yes, we need one)
- Music Marketing Schedule (print version)

**Head over to the next page....**

## CHAPTER 1

# Background Knowledge

### *Understanding your playing field*

The underground is different from the mainstream. It is a remote often grey area. Many album sales (except digital sales) don't even get tracked, because the smaller underground stores are just not important enough to be connected to the "grid", which means Nielsen SoundScan, Media Control, the Phononet. Thus, nobody can really, officially, tell how much revenue is being generated in the place of sub-cultures. Not even the tax authorities may know.

If you are an underground artist, you have the chance of becoming a small star in your particular market niche. But outside that niche nobody may even know you. So forget fame, but embrace success. Get featured on your niche's number one website, but forget your local newspaper – too many different people with different tastes are reading it.

The underground, what we will call the hotbed for DIY artists, is a place for dedicated people. It's where you find the real fans, the die-hards. Exactly those people with the guts to have a taste of their own. And an opinion too. And these fans are different than the average music consumer.

#### **1.1 The Average Music Consumer**

Music consumers are those who mainly use music as background entertainment: at work, at home, in the car. They buy the latest Summer Holiday hit they heard at the pool bar. They download that love song to which they first kissed. It's the people who dig everything that's currently hip and being played on mainstream radio – until it becomes out of fashion. Remember those who used to listen to boy bands and now feel embarrassed? There you have 'em. People with no taste – I'm not saying "bad taste", but NO specific taste at all.

#### **1.2 Enter: The Fan**

A music fan is someone who managed to make up his own mind and develop an individual taste and mindset despite the mainstream doctrine. With an ideal piece of music in mind, the fan is constantly on the lookout for new material in a particular market niche. Material that seemed to be dead in the pre-internet days (because stores would hardly carry anything new in out-of-fashion genres), but with the internet at his fingertips, a fan can discover that stuff, be it Rockabilly, Psychedelic Rock, Disco, Minimal House, Dirty South, Doom Metal or whatever deep-down sub-genre.

Fan comes from "fanatic". From what I have found out about my own fans, they are maniacs. Collectors. They proudly upload photos of their latest purchases on their social media profiles to brag about their new findings. It's not unusual for some fans to shop at dedicated mail order stores for over \$500 a month. Fanatics, maniacs, collectors.

Speaking of collectors. They love (spell: L.O.V.E.) physical product. The CD (or Vinyl), the booklet with lyrics, pictures and liner notes. Depending on the genre, physical sales can amount up to 90% of the total revenue (most Heavy Metal, Blues and Jazz artists I have

asked). Even Rap artists report physical shares of 40 – 60%. So you should not just give physical a try, it is mandatory. Invest in a few professionally crafted discs.

Special editions and box sets are other items that are in high demand among fans: demo versions, alternate mixes, remixes, live recordings, merchandise, signed photos. Some boxes sell for a couple hundred bucks and even underground artists can well charge between \$50.00 and \$100.00 for their special editions.

### **Remember !**

A fan is a special interest person and should be treated as such. What researchers have found out about average consumers is not true for dedicated music fans. Mainstream music market statistics do not apply to the underground. Just ignore them.

### **1.3 The other guys in the game**

Your market niche does not just consist of musicians and fans. There are a number of middlemen as well: Media people (operators of websites and blogs, hosts of small internet radio shows, publishers of fan-zines...) and sales people (distributors, operators of - often small - mail order stores...). These people, I have found out, are dedicated fans too. They just have gone a step further to become a part of the scene.

Why does someone operate a website dedicated to Hair Metal without making any money from it? Why does someone dedicate her valuable time to a Bluegrass radio show that attracts 20 listeners on average? Because they love it. They love the music, so they support it. Again, these folks are just fans themselves!!! Keep that in mind when you reach out to them (we will get in depth with that later).

The same applies to mail order shops. Often one-man (or woman) operations that hardly make ends meet. Yes, they'd be better off with a generic eBay shop, but they decided to sell Prog Rock records, Electronica, rare Jazz vinyls or ethnic music. Why? For the love of music.

Once you dig deeper into your market niche you will realize it's an everybody-knows-everybody scene. A big community of likeminded people who all make their contributions:

- Musicians create the music.
- Media people get the word out.
- Distributors and mail order shops make the music available...
- ...so that fans can buy it.

All the people involved deserve their appreciation !!!

### **1.4 The Life of an Album**

While you can put your music up for sale as long as you live, in most underground markets an album is "hot" for roughly 3 months. After this period sales usually plummet and only happen

on an irregular basis. So you will have to focus your marketing energy on the two months before your release and the three months after.

### **An all Important Side Note**

Don't be afraid of using your very first album as a testing object. If you are just getting started, your first album might not have the biggest impact. Why? You are starting as a yet unknown musician (maybe) with little contacts in the business. But don't worry, you will grow with time. When you release your second album you will already be well known in your market, have more and better contacts, a wider reach – and sell more copies.

And here's the great news: With every new album you release your new fans will also discover your older material (you can help them do just that) and buy it. So even if a new album is only hot for three months it doesn't mean its life is over. Most of the people who bought my new album also bought my previous releases; sometimes right away, sometimes a bit later down the road. To this day my first album has been my most successful one.

#### **Remember !**

An album is **hot** for about three months following its release.  
Do your best to make it all happen during that period.

Some unused space here, but I thought starting the next chapter on a new page would rock...



## CHAPTER 2

# Basic Set-Up

*What you need before you get started*

Before you start marketing your music like a professional you will need to set up shop, at least virtually. This means, you will need to create an operational environment.

## Your Website

I cannot stress this too much: You definitely need a website. A real one with your unique domain name. Many artists today rely solely on their social media profiles. But there are a few (big) disadvantages: You leave control solely in the hands of the operators of the social media networks. You subject yourself to their ever-changing rules. Finally, if the site comes out of fashion you will be left with a huge but inactive network (remember myspace and how artists had to find their former fans again on Facebook)?

Your website, however, comes with many advantages: individual design is just one. You can place graphics, messages, audio and video players almost anywhere you want. You can create sub-pages at your convenience. Here are a few basic and important things you definitely should provide on your website:

### 2.1 Online Shop

Many fans love the experience of buying directly from artists, especially when they can get their copies signed. I will later show you how I have sold 100 copies through my own website at day one of each album release.

Therefore you will have to be able to accept payments online. Immediate payments. The days are gone when fans would kindly inquire about prices and conditions via eMail or even send cash by mail. Instead, people are now used to placing orders online right away. eBay, Amazon and many other stores – it is ubiquitous.

Why should you provide an online checkout system? You will want to make use of your fan's buying mood before she changes her mind or the mailman delivers a bunch of bills she has to pay, leaving her without "music money".

PayPal offers a simple and easy to implement solution. If you sell only a few products, simple "Buy Now" buttons for each product (or group of products) will work fine. If your inventory gets more comprehensive a shopping cart system will become necessary.

Am I promoting PayPal? No, I just recommend it. Because customers worldwide are using it for its simplicity and its customer protection program. PayPal also offers payment via credit and debit card, so it is a really comprehensive solution. After all, it has worked for me as a

single solution to sell multiple albums as well as tickets for the MusicBiz Madness Conferences.

**Remember !**

Online checkout systems convert far better than old-fashioned ‘send us your money’ or ‘send us an email if you want to buy a CD’ methods. PayPal offers simple solutions.

## **2.2 Links to other stores**

Okay, not everybody will trust some notoriously unreliable musician from overseas and therefore prefers buying from a store he or she has already made good experience with. Usually fans just want to save shipping costs (and time) and prefer buying from a store in their country.

So you should not only make sure your physical products are available in your major territories, but also make sure you provide a list on your website with the most important outlets that carry your music. To make this list most appealing, use the logos of these outlets and link them directly to your product or profile page:

Instead of just linking to e.g. cdbaby.com you should link directly to cdbaby.com/yourband/yourcd. This will make the purchase more convenient.

You will learn how to get your CD in shops in Chapter 5.

**Remember !**

Provide direct links to a number of online stores that carry your music, so your fans can order from their most trusted or nearest store. Create a page on your website with these links or add them to a side-bar menu. Use the stores’ logos to make the list more appealing. Put your own online store on top.

## **2.3 Music Page**

Have a music page on your website that features the artwork of each album followed by a number of sound samples. You can either use excerpts of each song (20 to 30 seconds) or create a ‘medley’ with excerpts of all the songs on your album. This is about “try before you buy”. Don’t forget to add another “order” button or link to your web shop underneath or next to each album.

Since I do not fully agree with the terms and policies of most third-party providers I recommend hosting those few small mp3s on your own server and use stand-alone music players. There are quite a number of free flash audio players, especially for Wordpress you can choose from a number of great options. I do.

## **2.4 Press Page**

Provide a press or media page where journalists can download band pictures, logos and cover art. Make versions available for both print (300 dpi CMYK) and online use (92 dpi RGB).

### **2.4.2 Password Protected Press Page**

If you consider digital promotion (we'll cover this later) you should have a password protected press page ready which contains the above mentioned photos, logos and album covers, but a downloadable mp3 version of your album as well. The password protection shall keep freebie seekers from stealing your music.

## **2.5 Others**

With regards to selling your music via your own website, the music page and web shop are the two most important features. Feel free to add other pages such as Biography, Live Shows, Media and Contact. Don't add too many, because too many options are confusing (read Barry Schwartz "The Paradox Of Choice", if you like).

Make sure you keep your full website up to date. Nobody will order from a website that looks abandoned. So keep your content fresh, or even easier, put a "last update month/day/year" info on each page and manually update it at least every two weeks.

## **Your Social Media Presence**

Let's be honest and look at social media as what it is: it is a medium to stay in touch with your audience or customers. Social media is NOT a website and it is NOT a sales tool. Ask any social media expert you know and they will tell you. And this is what separates this course from all the others: you want to sell music, not collect likes. We could dedicate another full course to social media, so let's stay with the basics – which is what has done the job well for me.

## **2.6 Facebook and whatever may come next**

Anyway, you should have a social media profile. At the time of this writing Facebook is still all the rage. But use it correctly. Social media is like interactive advertising. And all advertising aims to lead potential customers to the place where it all happens: the store – in your case your website with an integrated online store, or one of the other stores that carry your music.

So make sure the same list of outlets which you provide on your own website is also visible on your Facebook profile and page. The "About" section would be a good place, since you cannot use the side-bar (see, one of the disadvantages here).

## **2.7 Choose your fans wisely**

You can add new fans to your circle of friends and force anyone to like your fan page as you feel. It's what advertisers call 'pushing'. The opposite, 'pulling' is when you just act interestingly without bullying anybody and leave it to others to send *you* friend requests or go and like your page. These will usually be the better fans, even if you might be dealing with smaller numbers. Right, it's about quality, not quantity.

Participate in stylistically relevant discussion groups and engage in conversations with other friendly musicians to get the attention of their fans and friends. That's a prime example for the pull-strategy.

The push-strategy has become too pushy recently, as everyone and their dog mail and post their 'check out my band' or 'plz like us' commandos and spam groups with them.

At any given time, avoid adding the hot chick with too many semi-nude photos on her profile. Yes, it might look cool having friends like her, but attention cravers will never buy from you. Look out for the average Joe who likes your type of music.

## **2.8 Social Media Branding**

When you post on your own social media profile, page or group add pictures. With current Facebook algorithms picture and video posts rank higher than just plain text. If you upload a picture, brand it. Put your logo on it, so it will look official, at least people should know that you are a musician and not just some random person with time to waste. You may also place a link at the end of each post that will carry your readers to whatever relevant site, e.g. your website or third-party store.

If you comment on posts by others, type your URL (yes, that of your real website) at the end of your comment – but do it just once per post.

## **2.9 Youtube**

Get a Youtube channel. Period. It is another new promotional tool through which fans discover music. But you may already know that. Once again, be sure to place the links to at least 5 most important outlets in your channel description and in the description of every (!) video. You will want to give those who enjoyed your music (video) an option to buy or get in touch. Place the "buy" links first, because selling is your priority.

### **Remember !**

Social media is interactive advertising. It does not replace a store. When using social media make sure you will get recognized as a musician or band (branding).

Always direct your fans to where the "meat" is. Social media profiles function as arms that reach out to pull people to your store (or gigs).

### **Also remember !**

Your website and online store are a priority. Likes come second, at best.

## **Your Newsletter**

A newsletter is the direct-marketing tool of the digital age. You can start your own for free (at first) using a provider such as MailChimp. With providers like that you can manage your mailing list, create and mail newsletters online, wherever you may be. You can also time your newsletters to be mailed while you are asleep.

SuperMailer is a local option that runs on your own computer and gives you a better hands-on feeling, because you won't have to rely on the fitness of a third-party service. It comes for a low one-time fee.

With either option you will get a code (and some simple scripts) which you implement on your website so that a sign-up form will show up.

Place the sign-up form visibly and where you deem it strategically useful. It is often recommended providing an incentive to your potential subscribers, such as a free mp3 of one of your songs, which they can download after completing their subscription (we will not discuss the technical side and programming, please ask a web designer to help you, but usually you will be able to do it yourself).

### **2.10. No Autoresponders**

I know, other so-called music marketing courses solely revolve around the subject of newsletter marketing and this is when autoresponders come in. Autoresponders send automated messages to your new subscribers, usually one per day for three or four consecutive days after they have signed up. The idea is to bombard your fans with special discount offers that are designed to look (just look) time sensitive.

Please – don't abuse your fans and stay away from automatic special offers. This may work in other business fields, but not in music. Music is too much of an emotional product and especially as an underground musician you will always have a quite personal connection with your fans. So, nobody wants to be a fan of a money-craving jerk who thinks his fans don't smell the rat.

### **2.11 Entertain and inform**

Instead, use your newsletter to give your fans a good time. Let them know what you are up to. Tell jokes. Give them free access to stuff that's exclusively reserved for subscribers: demos of new songs, exclusive studio pictures, alternate mixes.

Let them know whenever a new album comes out, when you play live or when you have been featured in the media. You may as well dedicate your newsletter to your whole music genre and the scene around it. Present albums by other artists, interview other artists, review live shows you have attended – this is what I do.

### **2.12 Advertise**

Place a little text ad within the first third of each newsletter to promote your music. Give three or four links to the most relevant stores, including your online store. That's it. No "only

today” sales language. Pull, don’t push. Just let your readers know it’s there and where they can get it.

**Remember !**

Make your newsletter as interesting as possible to your fans, so they will open and read it every time you send it out. Your goal will be to keep opening rates as high as possible so that your subscribers will not miss any news about your new album once it is ready for sale. Send your news at least every two weeks. Let your readers count on you.

**Phew. Now that we’ve covered some basics, let’s move on to cooler stuff...**

Not the cool white space here.

Next page...

...next chapter

## CHAPTER 3

# Defining Your Market Niche

*All about whom you want to reach*

“The niche is the new big” is what many marketers say nowadays. You no longer have to be a brand with worldwide recognition, it is just sufficient to be known in your very specific market niche.

Why ‘niche’? If you target only a very specific audience – exactly those people who love your type of music – you can minimize or even erase divergence losses. ‘Divergence loss’ means money, time and effort wasted when your message reaches the wrong people – those who just don’t care.

Let’s bring in the local newspaper again. And let’s say you are in a Blues band that wants to promote itself. Now you spend money on an ad, or at least lots of efforts courting the local journalists until they feature you. How many readers of that local newspaper could be Blues maniacs? Not too many. The local newspaper is being read by people of different ages and with different tastes and preferences. Some like rock music, others prefer hip-hop and some might even hate music. You get the idea, your local newspaper is not really the ideal place to get featured, left alone advertise (unless you’ve got an upcoming gig, the newspaper can be a good complementary option).

The idea is to narrow your efforts down to a very small but targeted group of people. I play Hair Metal and even Metal Hammer Magazine appears too generic for me, since there are also readers who like thrash metal, power metal, symphonic metal, death metal, doom, trash – the Hair Metal audience might only constitute a very small percentage here. I better look for websites, blogs, radio shows and fanzines that are only dedicated to Hair Metal and maybe – just maybe – two or three ‘neighboring’ genres.

**Your goal is to put yourself in front of the people in your niche.**

### **Remember !**

Marketing yourself only to a specific niche will save time, effort and money !!!  
Call it “efficient” and “effective”.

## **But which niche do you belong to?**

Now we’ll have to talk seriously about you and your music. I know that musicians do not want to be labelled or categorized. After all, music is art and art is free. No boundaries.

That's great from an artistic point of view. Not from that of a marketer. A marketer will ask "who is this for?". You wouldn't sell hamburgers to vegetarians or tampons to men, okay?

So please ask yourself "*Who is my music for*"?

If you are a traditional Rockabilly artist then the answer will be clear for you: 50s maniacs with tattoos who drive hot rods and wear petticoats (the girls).

But what if your music is a combination of various styles? Then go and point out the main genre. Metal band In Extremo, for example, combines heavy metal with celtic folk music. Yet the metal part is predominant, so they get filed under "Heavy Metal".

### 3.1 Defining the Niche by Music Genre

So think for yourself under which category you would like to be filed. Imagine the record store of your dreams, super large, featuring every music genre there is. Where do you want your fans to find your music?

You wouldn't want them to search endlessly in the "Rock/Pop" section. Instead, you want to direct them to the "Rock/Pop" building, then forward them to the "Electronic" room, point them towards the "House" section and then show them the "Acid House" shelf where your record sits and waits to be picked up.

How deep down into the sub-genres can you go?

To get an idea of how many, sometimes weird and obscure, genres there are, search the genres at CD Baby: [www.cdbaby.com/style](http://www.cdbaby.com/style)  
or at  
Music Dealers: [www.musicdealers.com/#!/mddtool&m=discovery-tool&v=tabs-genres](http://www.musicdealers.com/#!/mddtool&m=discovery-tool&v=tabs-genres)  
(try "Latin" and "World" on Music Dealers to see how far it can go).

Write down the route to your specific sub-genre. With the "Acid House" example above it would look like this:

**Rock/Pop → Electronic → House → Acid House**

We would then use "Acid House" as our niche. In case that should prove too narrow and too specific, we could expand our marketing to the more generic "House" niche. But not any broader!

Again, if your music is too complicated because it involves too many different genres, find the predominant genre and see how far down the genre list you can go. With 'official' genres



such as Celtic Metal, Jazz Rap and Progressive Bluegrass there is a good chance that a perfect genre already exists for you.

### **3.2 In Times of Doubt**

If you absolutely have no clue what you sound like, pick a few popular bands that sound similar to you and look them up on Wikipedia. The genre normally gets mentioned at the top of the band's description or in the info box on the right. Use the genre information you can find and take it from there.

### **3.3 Defining the Niche by Lifestyle**

If your niche comes with a certain lifestyle or attitude you will even be presented with a number of more groups to extend your marketing to. As mentioned above Rockabilly fans are not only focussed on the music but also show a certain interest in 1950s cars and fashion. So once you have done everything you could within the niche of Rockabilly music lovers you can move on and target Hot Rod owners too.

The same works for e.g. singer/songwriters with political messages, who can also reach out to appropriate political groups. Surf Rockers can address surfers even outside of the clearly defined music world. Country musicians find an extended market in Western fashionistas, western-style riders etc.

**However, focus on your primary audience first: the music lovers in your niche !!!**

#### **Remember !**

Define your music genre clearly. Dig down into the specific sub-categories as far as you can. This category will define your market niche: The people who like exactly that type of music. Ask yourself: "Who is my music for?" **Then put yourself in front of exactly these people.**

Great. Now that you have defined your market niche, aka your target audience, you can start with your conquest of exactly that niche.

**First get yourself a drink and blast some of your favorite music. You deserve a break.**

**Then move on to the next chapter...**

## CHAPTER 4

# Finding Media Contacts

### *How to create your own promotion department*

Now we will lay the foundations for you to put yourself in front of the people in your niche. If you want to promote your music and you don't have a record deal with a financially strong label, or if you cannot hire a professional promoter for some reason, you will have to do it yourself. You will have to be your own promo department.

This is often misunderstood when some smart guys say you do not need a record label these days. This does not mean that record labels have become obsolete – it only means that you will have to do the label work yourself. And you can !!!

Here's what you will need to have/do:

- Database with targeted media outlets and contact persons
- Manage and regularly update their contact information
- Maintain good relationships with your media contacts

But first of all:

#### **4.1 Find and contact them**

I love this part. So you have figured out what type of music you play and what your market niche is. Let's presume you play Progressive Rock and thus your market niche is the Progressive Rock niche.

In order to find the appropriate media outlets in your niche do the following:

- Go to your favorite internet search engine
- Enter the following search terms

**“Progressive Rock Reviews”**

**“Progressive Rock Interviews”**

**“Progressive Rock Website”**

**“Progressive Rock Webzine”**

**“Progressive Rock Blog”**

**“Progressive Rock Fanzine”**

Replace “Progressive Rock” with your own music genre, of course.

What you will find is a number of websites, blogs and even magazines that are dedicated to exactly your music genre. They review new albums, interview musicians, feature concert reports and all kinds of news related to exactly that specific genre.

Does anybody read them? Oh yes, you bet! Fans use such webzines, blogs and magazines as resources that have already filtered out the good ones from the wannabes. Or the wannabes have even sorted themselves out: no noise-making idiots would even spend money on sending promo kits to the media - but the professionals do and thus they get featured and seen.

**Yes, they feature unsigned, unknown musicians and bands too !!!!!!!!!!!!!**

#### **4.2 Review them**

Now you click on each of the search results to get an idea of what every website, webzine or blog is about. Review them carefully and find out whether they solely cover your genre or other related genres too and if they are relevant to you.

Then rank them by creating an A-, B- and C-List. Use online services like [www.alexacom.com](http://www.alexacom.com) or [www.websiteoutlook.com](http://www.websiteoutlook.com) to get a rough estimate of how many visitors these sites get per day.

**A-List:** 15.000 and more visits per day

**B-List:** 5.000 – 15.000 visits per day

**C-List:** 500 – 5.000 visits per day

**Below that:** Ignore, but never turn anybody with a smaller website down once they inquire about promo copies or interviews. If you are being a prick, the word will spread fast. Plus, you never know how big a now small website may grow during the following year.

Please remember that we are now talking about targeted niche websites, not Rolling Stone.

#### **4.3 Find Your Contact Person**

If the website or blog is being run by a single person, this will be your contact person. If the site has more contributors, take two or three minutes to find out which writer covers your genre (if the site is more generic) or who seems to be the person most likely to give you a great review.

Then send this person a personal eMail. I can't stress “**personal**” enough.

Here is a good example of a first-contact eMail:

Hi John,

I hope this finds you well.

My name is Julian Angel of the band Beautiful Beast. We play Hair Metal like 1989.

I really enjoyed the interview you did with (name of artist John has interviewed on his site).

Our new album 'Kick Down The Barricades' will be out on (insert date). I'd like to ask whether you would like to review the album on (name of John's website/blog) and/or eventually even do an interview afterwards.

To give you an idea of what we sound like, here are a few sound samples so you can find out if you'd really want to write about us: [www.beautifulbeastrock.com/music.html](http://www.beautifulbeastrock.com/music.html)

If you are interested, please give me an address I can send a copy to. Of course, we will promote the hell out of your review through our website, social media and newsletter once it is online.

I look forward to hearing from you, have a great day that rocks you all over

Julian Angel

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

(insert full contact information)

Now let's talk about a few points here.

- Notice the (honest) compliment on John's interview and the mention of his website, blog or magazine. This gives the eMail a personal touch other than the generic "Hey there" spam.
- I give John a link to a few sound samples so he can decide up front whether he loves or hates my music (which could eventually spare me a bad review full of personal insults – and some postage on top).
- I offer sending John a physical copy other than just digital sampling. Yes, this is the expensive part of music promotion. But I do this for a reason. Two, to be precise:
  1. It's more professional
  2. Guys like John usually don't make any money from running their websites, so a physical copy is the only reward they will get for their spreading the word. Since John is probably a maniac himself he will appreciate this.

- Offering to promote the review or interview is another sign of appreciation. While John promotes my album on his website I can send a few of my fans over to his website. It's a give and take. Besides, John sees that I understand the game.
- I provide my full contact information at the end of the eMail so John can see whom he is dealing with.

#### **4.4 Sample or save**

If your new album is already available on the market, you can sample your new media contacts right away. If it still takes a few weeks (or months) until your album comes out, save the contacts to you're A-, B- and C-List. However, let your contacts know, that you will add them to your list and send them your promo material once the album has been finished and your campaign starts. Give them a rough time designation at least.

#### **4.5 Add eMail Addresses too**

Don't forget to save your contacts' eMail addresses as well. Create a separate mailing list for your media contacts so you can send them press releases or just inform them once you have dropped all promo copies in the mail. Never send press releases in bulk where all recipients are visible. Don't send 'BCC' blind-copies either. Use a professional mailing list.

#### **4.6 Maintain a Relationship**

Nurturing a good relationship can be a difficult task, as it requires what is called 'soft skills'. The compliment on an interview (as shown in my eMail to John) or a little shoptalk about the music can be a good place to start. Adding new media contacts as social media friends is a good thing too (that's making good use of Facebook etc.). Just show that you're there and never shy away from a conversation. By now I have a number of media contacts whose life stories and family I know – and that of their pets too...

#### **4.7 How many contacts?**

The number of contacts you will need for a professional marketing campaign depends on your genre – and your budget. Some niches are bigger than others and therefore offer more websites, blogs and other contacts. If you promote your music internationally (and you should!) then 40 contacts will be a good starting point. 100 is a great number for DIY marketers, while professional underground promoters sample 100 to 200 media contacts depending on the genre and the size of the market niche.

#### **Remember !**

Find the right media outlets in your market niche.  
Sort them by importance (i.e. number of daily visitors).  
Send physical copies (as a reward for their un-paid work).  
40 to 100 contacts will get you quite far.  
Also add international contacts (don't try to save postage).

## What about Radio?

Okay, they will probably not play you on regular commercial radio stations. They don't play me either. Occasionally they do, but 'what is good it for'?

Underground artists are often played by, you've guessed it, underground radio 'stations'. We are talking internet radio shows with anything from 15 to a few hundred listeners, run and hosted by another set of maniacs who are once more doing it mainly for the fun and for the love of music.

Such internet radios, even very small shows, have a huge advantage for you:

Besides the fact of being die-hard music fans, most listeners listen actively while sitting in front of their computer, laptop, tablet or mobile device. This puts them in the position of being able to look you up on google or even find you in their favorite mail order store while they are still enjoying your music.

In other words, you can get their attention and while they are still full of excitement your listeners can get more information about you and even make a purchase – something they cannot really do while driving their cars, being at work or ironing shirts.

From my personal experience I can say that I got more out of a few internet radio shows with an average of 50 listeners than I got from a one-hour interview with eight songs played on a local rock station with an average of 10,000 listeners.

So give internet radio a try. I mean "moderated" internet radio. Not the automatic stuff.

Use the same search methods you did to find media contacts, just add "radio", "online radio" or "radio show" next to your music genre.

### **Tip !**

eMail radio shows that want to play your music an mp3 with a short station ID. That is you saying "This is (your name) and you are listening to (name of the show/station)". Be creative, but keep it under 10 seconds. They appreciate it.

### **Remember !**

I recommend a 3:1 ratio when sampling webzines/magazines/blogs : online radio

## **But hey, is it all physical?**

It mainly is, but of course, there are a number of bloggers and radio hosts who prefer digital promotion. Bloggers who opt for digital versions often operate more 'generic' blogs or such dedicated rather to lifestyle than solely to music. While the hosts of smaller online radio shows really like the ease of implementing digital files in their play lists, they still appreciate the physical 'gift'.

I strongly recommend offering both physical and digital promotion and letting your media contacts decide. Again considering that media people in small genre niches are maniacs, they may still choose the physical copy.

Here's a lot of blank space again.

Feel free to take notes here.

Or just cut it off...

## **CHAPTER 5 ???**

Comes right next

## CHAPTER 5

# Finding Distribution

*Get your music where your fans are*

Selling your music through your personal website is great, but it's not enough. Not everybody feels good about buying from notoriously unreliable musicians (yes, many of us musicians live up to that prejudice and keep it alive). Others just want to save postage and order from a domestic retailer or just buy from their favorite store where they often buy in bulk.

Your job will be to make it absolutely easy for the vast majority of your fans to purchase your greatest good – your music. That means you will want to make your music available in both digital and physical format in as many territories (countries) as possible.

## Digital Distribution

Getting digital distribution is the easiest part here. What you need is a so-called 'content aggregator'. Content aggregators are services that acquire your music and place it with all the countless multinational outlets such as iTunes, Amazon, Deezer, Google Play, to name just a few.

Some content aggregators are CD Baby (they also offer physical distribution), iMusician Digital, Tunecore, Zimbalam and again countless others.

Basically you upload your music, artwork and information and they make your music available for download within usually just a few days. It may take a while for your content aggregator to place your music with ALL international download stores. Content aggregators can also provide ISRC codes, which you need for your individual songs to be recognized 'out there'.

The content aggregator you choose will also be the one to provide sales reports and pay you your share.

Content aggregators provide various 'plans' for musicians. Some charge a one-time set-up fee and take a cut of your earnings, others only charge set-up fees or annual fees and pass all your earnings to you, yet others only take that cut of each sale you make. Listing aggregators and their plans would be too much here, so check for yourself, which offer you feel best about.

### **Tip !**

Many content aggregators provide timed releases. If you register your new album far enough in advance (usually 6 to 8 weeks before release) you can set a specific date at which your album will be made available (through all their partner stores as well). So you can officially stick to your release schedule without allowing your album to "leak" prior to its release.



### **Tip !**

iTunes also allows pre-orders. Your fans can already pay for your album before it comes out, and once it gets released it will automatically appear in their own iTunes.

→ What's cool about this: All the pre-orders you have collected will be assigned to the official release day. So if you have collected 100 pre-orders over e.g. two weeks, iTunes will register 100 sales at day X (your release day). This gives you a good chance to rank high in iTunes' internal (genre) charts – or even in a country's official charts (sales are being assigned to the country in which they have taken place – not where you live).

You can also offer digital versions of your album through your own website. Pack your album in a .zip file and upload it to your server. Accept PayPal payments for your digital version. Once a buyer has completed the payment process he/she will be directed back to a confirmation page on your own website (you can determine and name that page, e.g. yourwebsite.com/thanks). Place the download link to your .zip file on that page. It's so easy. Change the link (path) of your .zip file regularly so it won't get 'stolen' once somebody passes the download link around.

## **Physical Distribution**

Remember that your fans are maniacs, fanatics and collectors? Once again I'd like to point at how much underground music fans love physical products, i.e. CDs and even vinyl. Now we will find physical distribution for you.

### **Retail and exclusive Distributors**

While I love physical distribution – and made lots of money with it – I'm not a big fan of retail distribution. CDs at big chain stores usually sit on the shelves way too long. That might not be true for major mainstream artists, but it is in deed true even for leading acts in smaller market niches.

If you absolutely want to get retail distribution you will need a professional distributor that supplies retail stores. Such distributors usually only work with labels. For independent artists, however, a few distributors offer their services especially to them, which include retail distribution. Basically a good idea, but these folks come with two downsides:

1. their deal is exclusive (at least within certain territories)
2. many of them have proven to be real crooks who deliberately provide false sales reports to the disadvantage of the artists.

So let's look at something far better **where you are in command**.

## **Mail Order Shops**

I love mail order shops, both as a fan and as an artist. But what is a ‘mail order’? Okay, you can guess by the name, they send you stuff. But let’s get real.

Music mail order shops are usually small, often just one-person operations that specialize in a very particular music genre. They carry everything from a genre’s bigger acts to private releases and the hard-to-get items in particular that you won’t find anywhere else.

Real fans are aware of the mail order shops in their genre and it’s no surprise that they love browsing them (their online stores) regularly for new music, which again gives you a chance of being discovered as an artist once you have made your records available through these stores.

In addition to that a mail order shop can function as your presence in a particular territory or country. A potential buyer from Europe might get scared away by international shipping costs from the U.S. and therefore might decide not to purchase your album. So you better have a stylistically dedicated store near your potential buyer that can ship your product at lower rates.

## **Territories and Hot Spots**

Not every market niche offers mail order shops in every country there is. This is when you should at least focus on “territories” such as Northern America, South America, Europe, Asia or Australia.

Add to this the genre-specific Hot Spots. For whatever weird reasons many genres have a particularly strong buyership in certain countries. For example, in my own Hair Metal / Melodic Rock niche these hot spots are England, Germany, Japan and the U.S.A.

You will (hopefully) find more than just one mail order shop in each country or territory. Then don’t pick just one since different fans may prefer different shops.

## **Find mail orders...**

To find the mail order shops in your niche use the same search technique as you did with media contacts:

- Go to your favourite internet search engine
- Enter the following search terms

**“Progressive Rock Mail Order”**

**“Progressive Rock Mail Order Shop”**

**“Progressive Rock CDs”**

**“Buy Progressive Rock CDs”**

You may also add a certain country to your search term.

Again, replace “Progressive Rock” with your genre, of course. Start very specific first (e.g. “Acid House” instead of just “House”), then become a bit more general – but always stay within your genre.

### **...and then contact them**

Contacting mail order shops is similar to contacting media people. Be personal and precise. Most of all, though, make it clear that carrying your new CD will pay off. Stores of any kind don’t want to carry, list and warehouse any non-sellers, left alone doing inventory.

So tell them what great efforts you will make to push sales. So here are a few so-called “selling points”:

- point at your coming marketing campaign (mention the number of media outlets that will receive your promo kit)
- alternatively point at an already existing campaign and then add...
  - number of outlets that have already received your promo kit
  - a few very good quotes taken from reviews (especially reviews by the bigger players on your A-List)
- eventually mention previous sales statistics (physical sales of 200 copies and more, otherwise don’t say anything)
- name-drop any persons who are popular in your niche that have contributed to the album (e.g. mixed by..., guest appearance by..., duet with...)
- your upcoming or current tour, especially if you tour with a bigger name act

This is an example letter to a mail order shop:

Hi Mary,

I hope this finds you well.

My name is Julian Angel of the band Beautiful Beast. We play Hair Metal like 1989.

Our new album ‘Kick Down The Barricades’ will be out on (insert date). I’d like to ask whether you would like to sell the album through (name of Mary’s mail order store).

To give you an idea of what we sound like, here are a few sound samples so you can find out if we are a good fit for you and your customers: [www.beautifulbeastrock.com/music.html](http://www.beautifulbeastrock.com/music.html)

We will start a marketing campaign in support of the new album on (insert date), which will reach a total of 100 personal media contacts in the Hair Metal and Melodic Rock market.

If you decide to carry our CD we will, of course, give you the best support we can and link to your store on our website, in our newsletter and social media profiles.

I look forward to hearing from you so we can discuss some details.

Have a great day that rocks you all over

Julian Angel

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

(insert full contact information)

I leave it to you whether you want to list prices right away or wait for a reaction first – which leads us to...

### **Pricing and the Whole Deal**

There is no law that tells mail order shops how much to give you per copy sold. So you can imagine that deals are quite diverse here. Some *keep* a fixed amount per copy, others *pay* a fixed amount per copy – but most of them are open to individual deals.

Whatever the deal may be, never (please repeat: “never”) accept being paid less than \$5.00 per copy. Five bucks is already very low (at least for a fresh record).

On the other hand, if a store wants to keep a fixed amount, I’d draw a line at \$7.00 and above. \$4.00 to \$5.00 for the seller is quite common.

And when *you* can suggest the deal?

You differentiate between two types of deals which also determine the amount you can charge:

### **Commission Deal and Wholesale Deal**

#### **Commission Deal**

With a commission deal you only get paid for the copies the store has actually sold. So you send them a certain amount of copies (depending on their influence and on how much they believe in you this can be anything from 5 to 25 copies to start with) and let them work their magic – on spec.

Having a commission deal means you will have to keep track (or inventory) with the copies you have sent, copies they have sold and how much you are due. So, proper accounting becomes necessary (I say it’s necessary for *you*, let’s ignore the authorities here).

Make sure to agree upon payment terms, so you know when to get your money – or when to start running after it. Some stores even pay daily (if they have sold anything), others pay you weekly. Being paid once or twice a year is quite common as well – or you just call them and ask whether they have sold anything and if it would be a good time to account for it.

With a commission deal I usually start negotiating at \$8.00 or even \$8.50 per copy, but I don't go below \$7.00.

### **Wholesale Deal**

Wholesale means that the mail order shops will buy a number of your CDs, pay you right away and bear all the financial risk. Since the shop will have the risk on its shoulders while you don't have to worry about keeping track of their sales it is fair (and common practice) to set the wholesale price a bit lower than the prices you use in a commission deal. So \$5.00 (absolute minimum) to \$7.50 per copy is a good range.

Here's a "Deal Chart" to give you an overview:

	<b>Commission Deal</b>	<b>Wholesale Deal</b>
features	You only get paid when the store has sold copies. You will have to keep track of copies delivered and copies sold.	You get paid right away, the store has the financial risk. Less hassle for you.
min. p. copy	\$7.00	\$5.00
max. p. copy	\$8.50	\$7.50 (okay, maybe \$8.00)

Offering a lower price per copy in a wholesale deal can be an incentive for the store to buy your CDs right away. Another discount could be provided e.g. for minimum orders of 20 or 25 copies.

### **Shipping costs and Returns**

Like it or not, but it's common practice that you, the artist, bear the shipping costs when sending your CDs to the mail order shops. The same is true for any returns. If you have a commission deal and want your copies back because the store doesn't seem able to sell, you pay for the postage.

### **Time your Release**

Actually all mail order stores I have worked with had been okay with holding my copies back until the official release day. If you want to time your release, make sure you ship your goods at least two weeks in advance, so the stores have enough time to prepare everything. A nice email reminder the morning before your release date is fine.

### **Other Mail Order Shops**

While not being dedicated to a particular genre, CD Baby has established itself as a trusted place for underground music lovers from all over the world to buy music. My experience with them is very positive. CD Baby offers both physical and digital distribution plus a few additional services and you can also time your release, both physical and digital.

Amazon is another example for a mail order shop, although a very generic one. Amazon offers programs for people like us to sell their stuff. As far as I am concerned I'm not selling

my CDs on Amazon directly. One of the mail order shops I work with does it for me and since their Amazon sales only amount to roughly 10% of their total sales I'm not applying too much focus on it anyway. Subject to change, you never know.

### **Mail Order Shops as Wholesalers**

A few mail order shops do not only sell to private customers but supply other mail order stores as well. So check with them if they do and let them know if you're not okay with that. I feel good about them selling my CDs to other smaller or far-away stores that are not on my radar, but I also ask them not to supply the stores whom I'm already dealing with directly.

#### **Remember !**

Make your album (physical and digital versions) available in as many (lucrative) markets or territories as possible. One mail order shop in the U.S., one in Europe, one in Japan etc. will be fine at the beginning. Find more as you go.

Provide incentives to buy wholesale. You will get your cash right away and it will spare you some hassle keeping track (although it's difficult for first-timers).

#### **Tip !**

Regularly check back with all your (physical) sellers to see how they are doing and ask if you can help them sell more (e.g. suggest special blow-out sales after a year etc.). Don't ignore those who bought wholesale from you, just because you already got the money. Help them as well, so they will be happy to buy from you again next time.

#### **Tip !**

Check with your sellers on time if they need more copies so you can send them more before they run out of stock.

G-REAT !!! Now that you've got it all set up it is time to market your new release.

Again, I recommend taking a break, having a drink, taking a deep breath...

...and then here we go.

## CHAPTER 6

# Market Your Music

### *Your fully fledged Music Marketing Plan*

Now it's time to put it all to work. Your framework exists, you've got your helpers (media contacts, distributors) at hand. Let's set up your marketing plan, the one I've already shown you at the beginning.

I will walk you through it step by step and we will discuss each step as it comes, e.g. we will look at the subject of press releases when it's time to send one. Whoops, it's already the first thing on the agenda.

### **The 3 Components of your Music Marketing Campaign**

To get the best out of your campaign we will split it in three components:

1. Media Campaign
2. Special pre-sale campaign for your inner circle of fans (Newsletter subscribers)
3. Special Facebook campaign (or whatever may be hip today)

While the media campaign will take up most of your time and effort, we will “weave” the Newsletter pre-saler and Facebook campaign into it. We will cover both separately.

Jump in headfirst... and swim.

### **Component 1: Media Campaign**

#### **8 weeks to go**

1. Set up digital distribution with your content aggregator and set a release date. If you consider CD Baby for physical distribution as well, send them your initial copies. They have a longer lead-time than smaller mail order shops.
2. Announce your new album in social media and in your newsletter. Use no more than three sentences for your social media post, no more than five in your newsletter. Add a picture of the cover art. Add a link to a page on your website which includes the full press release you will craft in step 3:

3. Then craft a press release in which you tease your upcoming album and eMail it to your media contacts.

Here's an example of a press release (keep it to the point and avoid stories about your youth, music college and the unknown bands you've played with):

Subject: **For Immediate Release – (band name) “(album title)” out xx/yy/zzzz**

**For Immediate Release – Beautiful Beast “Kick Down The Barricades” out xx/yy/zzzz**

Dear [Name – automatically filled in by newsletter software],

this is Julian Angel of Beautiful Beast. Our new album “Kick Down The Barricades” will hit the shelves on xx/yy/zzzz, which we think is worth a press release. So we'd highly appreciate if you published the following news. You will also receive a promo copy within the following two weeks. If you have any questions, please let us know.

**##### Beginning of Press Release #####**

On xx/yy/zzz Julian Angel's Beautiful Beast will start the De Lorean once again and take you back to 1989 with their upcoming third release “Kick Down The Barricades”.

Over the last year the band have crafted another set of ten traditional Hair Metal songs that intentionally defy any modern elements. “Kick Down The Barricades continues with the rather raw approach of its predecessor ‘California Suntan’ but features the melodic quality of our debut ‘Adult Oriented Candy’” says mastermind Julian Angel who recently made the news as the writer of a song in the new Dolph Lundgren movie “Ambushed”.

Produced and mixed by Angel, “Kick Down The Barricades” received the final touch by Rolf Munkes (Tony Martin Band, Empire) who mastered the album after an already successful collaboration on the band's debut record.

“Kick Down The Barricades” will hit the shelves of sophisticated stores in the genre on xx/yy/zzzz. A few audio samples can be found on the band's website [www.beautifulbeastrock.com](http://www.beautifulbeastrock.com)

**##### End of Press Release #####**



Please visit our Press Area if you need additional graphics:



[www.beautifulbeastrock.com/press.html](http://www.beautifulbeastrock.com/press.html)

Thank you very much for your support, please look out for your promo copy of “Kick Down The Barricades”.

Cheerz

Julian Angel

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

(add full contact information)

Our marketing plan originally provides for the official video to be released 4 weeks prior to the album release (and teased with a separate press release), however, you may as well promote it with this initial press release. Replace the sound sample language with the news about the video. Add the embed code (not the link) below the press release part, so that website operators can embed the video right within your published press release, other than just providing a text link.

So let's go through this press release and explain a few things:

- Mark the eMail “For Immediate Release”
- Again, notice the personal salutation followed by a message that explains why this eMail is being sent.
- It is useful to clearly mark the beginning and the end of your press release, otherwise some journalists will copy and paste your entire eMail including your (sensitive) contact information.
- Add the link to your website (yes, “website”) within the press release part. It's cool to provide the readers with a link and most website operators feel good about adding it.
- Add a small low-resolution graphic of your cover to freshen up the text-heavy message.
- Provide a link to your press area where more graphics can be found and downloaded.
- Make the recipient feel good about your press release by pointing at the promo copy he or she will soon receive.
- Thank the recipient for the support and again provide your full contact information to appear professional (and eventually avoid any legal issues, depending on your country's laws).

(the mention of Dolph Lundgren punching a guy to my music is not really relevant, however, it is a quick side note that implies that both the journalist and the reader are dealing with something rather professional ☺)

## **6 to 8 weeks to go**

Send promo kits to your media contacts. Of course, you are smart if you have already prepared them. Packaging some hundred press kits can be a daunting task (turn on some good music while you do this).

What should your promo kit include? Here we go:

1. Personal cover letter
2. Copy of your CD (remove the shrink-wrapping - peeling off and depositing the cellophane annoys many media people)
3. One-sheet about the new album (and you), which includes:
  - Cover art
  - Track list
  - Total running time (some critics care)
  - Name of your label (come up with something cool)
  - Name of (main) distributor (always looks good, if you name e.g. the biggest of the mail order shops you work with)
  - ISRC (the number you get along with a bar code, if applicable)
  - Names of band members (+ guest musicians, if they are popular)
  - Name of producer, mixing engineer...
  - Band website, Facebook, Youtube (or whatever is hot when you're reading this)
  - Release date (!!!)
  - Album info (written text, up to five sentences)
  - Band info (written text, up to five sentences)

Now put all this on one page. It doesn't have to be a glossy page, regular homemade prints are fine.

### ***Optional:***

Feel free to attach another one-sheet on which you add a few notes to each song. What it is about, who or what inspired you to write it. Not more than one page all together. While this may help a few media contacts better understand your music, it can also backfire when some angry dudes use this to your disadvantage.

For example, if you say that song XXX has been influenced by the band YYY some journalists might show no mercy and call you a cheap, uninspired copy of YYY. Yes, it happens all the time, so don't get mad. Some guys aren't nice, even if you've done your best to cultivate a good personal relationship.

## **4 weeks to go**

1. Supply all mail order shops that have agreed to stock your CDs with the desired number of copies. Give them enough time ahead so they can add your CDs to their

inventory, enter them into their online shop – and keep delivery times in mind if you ship internationally. Again, point towards the release date.

2. Release your video on Youtube (if you haven't already done so earlier)

Your video shall function as an appetizer to provoke people's curiosity. Send another press release to your media contacts following the example of your first press release, only this time you promote the new video taken from the forthcoming album (point at the album release date once again).

Add the embed code of your video. If your eMail program automatically converts the code, add a text file that includes the code. You will want to make it easy, actually a no-brainer, for your contacts to embed your video in their news pages.

Just as you did with your initial announcement of the new album at the beginning of your campaign, also send the news about the video to your newsletter subscribers and other friends. Give them the embed code as well so they can easily share it. Encourage them to do it.

Finally post the video on your social media profiles.

Use the description of your Youtube video to announce the forthcoming album (change info once the album is officially available) and to direct viewers to your Newsletter sign-up page where they can get a free mp3 of the song (see 3.)

3. Offer a free mp3 of the single, which should be the song featured in your video. While you give your newsletter subscribers a direct download link you can direct Youtube viewers and your social media friends and fans to your Newsletter sign-up page where they will get the mp3 in return for signing up.

**10 – 14 days to go**

Start a special pre-sale campaign for your die-hard fans, which means your newsletter subscribers. We will cover it in a separate chapter following your media campaign – but you will have to bring it in here.

This is now also a good time to check back with all the media contacts that haven't published a review of your album yet. Kindly ask them whether they have received it, had a chance to listen to or even write about it. Be nice and don't push them – even if you have a good reason to do so...

**1 – 2 days to go**

Kindly check back with your mail order outlets and remind them of your coming release day so they will have your new album ready for sale (just in case they forgot, which happens as they handle more records than just yours).

## **RELEASE DAY**

Get up EARLY !!!!!

1. Update your website, upload your online store page and check if it works so that you can take orders.
2. Wait until the most important (biggest) mail order shops have your album ready for sale (overseas stores can take a bit longer due to different time zones, depending on where you live)...

...then tell the world again that it's there. Whoever you tell about it, don't forget to include direct links to the five most important outlets. As more and more outlets have your album ready for sale, link to them from your website and social media sites.

3. Update the description of your Youtube video (and other video sites, if any) and switch from "coming soon" to "out now". Again, link directly to the most important outlets.

During your release day you will have to do a lot of checking back and updating – and hopefully sign, package and ship a large number of CDs.

Celebrate a bit, too.

### **Up to 8 weeks after**

Sell, sell, sell... and keep checking back with your media contacts about late reviews and inquire about interviews.

### **4 weeks after**

If you have another music video available, upload it now and announce it the way you did with your first video. Mind the video's description once again.

If you cannot afford another video clip, use an audio-only 'video' with stills (all kinds of photos from you, your band and especially your cover art), eventually add lyrics. Announce this as your second single off your new album.

### **8 – 12 weeks after**

Stop pestering the media. Those who have failed to publish reviews about your album will never do it. Decide for yourself whether to keep them on your list.

Use your newsletter and social media channels to tease the album once again, e.g. by posting more (good) reviews and interviews.

Online Radio is still an option.

## **12 weeks after**

You are now an artist without a current album. Start writing and recording new material. Until you have something new ready (and start all over again promoting it) use your newsletter and social media to stay in touch with your fans and keep your name in the game. Find more business contacts as you go, maintain existing relationships.

The period that stretches from when your album's "Hot Life Span" is over to when your next album comes out is often ignored, although this period is very critical. If you regularly use your newsletter and social media channels to stay on peoples' minds you will be in a yet stronger position once your next album is ready to be marketed.

## **Component 2: Newsletter Pre-Sale Countdown**

This is the part you will want to weave into your Media Campaign, as mentioned above. Here I will show you how I have sold 100+ copies of each album at the day of its release, directly through my website...

Here's what you will do:

1. Tease your new album through your newsletter
2. Run a "release countdown"
3. Pre-sell the album to your subscribers at a discount
4. Run the same but time-lagged release countdown on social media
5. Cash in

So here's the whole thing step by step:

### **7.1 Tease Your New Album through Your Newsletter**

You should involve your subscribers into the creation of the new album anyway, but now, about 8 weeks prior to its release you should get serious about it.

Send your newsletter out every week, at the same day so that your fans can count on it. Always announce the upcoming release of your new album. Include a picture of the album cover (with not too many kilobytes).

#### **Announce a special pre-sale for subscribers !!!**

Let them know that they will have the chance of buying your new album before the general public can, and at a discount (anything from 20% to 25% is fine).

### **7.2 Release Countdown**

In order to run your release countdown you will have to set aside a number of days. Set aside exactly twice as many days as there are songs on your album. Let's keep it simple and say your album includes 10 songs, okay?

So your release countdown will start 20 days prior to the official release date.

→ Your release countdown will then start 20 days before the album officially comes out.

→ Your pre-sale will start 10 days before the album officially comes out.

→ Announce the date at which the pre-sale will start in your newsletter (and only there)

20 days before the official release (in our example this is 10 days before the pre-sale starts, right?) you will eMail your newsletter **DAILY**.

Attach a short (max. 20 sec) mp3 excerpt of another song every day. Add a short comment to each song in your newsletter and don't forget to mention the pre-sale.

Keep doing this for 10 days with excerpts from all 10 songs. With only three days to go, tell your subscribers that at the day your pre-sale starts they will be given a "secret link" to the pre-sale page where they can place their order at a discount for the following 10 days (number of days based on number of songs).

In the meantime create (don't publish) that "secret" pre-order page that includes

- A PayPal "Buy Now" button set to the discounted price.  
Include two different prices: One for domestic orders, one for international orders.  
PayPal let's you do this with a dropdown menu.  
You can also add a custom field in which buyers can enter the name of the person for whom you will sign the CD.
- Cover artwork
- An audio player that plays a medley of all the excerpts you have eMailed.
- A headline that shows your subscribers they have come to the pre-sale page.
- List the delivery times for certain territories (domestic, international...)
- Add your contact information at the bottom to appear trustworthier.

### **7.3 Run Your Pre-Sale**

Once you have eMailed your 10 daily newsletters with all 10 excerpts of your songs, send another eMail at the day the pre-sale starts.

Upload / publish your pre-sale page before and see if it works.

I always say "Wam-Bam... here it is. And here's the special pre-sale link. You can now buy "(Name of Album)" at 25% off for the next 10 days, before anyone else can. Don't worry, I will remind you before the pre-sale is over".

It has usually taken 5 minutes until the first order came in – always from the same guy in France (he now has three Beautiful Beast albums with my signature and a "Hi XXX, you were the first to buy" dedication...).

With a 10-day pre-sale (in our 10 song example), send out a reminder at the sixth day and at the last (giving your readers that ‘last chance’). Let them know that the day after (which is your official release day if you’ve counted the days correctly) they can still buy your new album at regular price from any of their favorite mail order shops, iTunes etc.

At the official release day send another eMail to your subscribers and tell them that the pre-sale is over, thank them all for their orders and give them a list of outlets that now officially carry your CDs and downloads and link directly to them. Let your readers know that you’re now back to normal and they will be receiving your newsletter in the same intervals (e.g. every other week) as before.

Take the pre-sale info off your pre-sale web page and direct visitors to the “real” online store.

**Remember !**

Process pre-sale orders daily. Go to the post office daily to ship your goods. Your fans want to hold their copies before anyone else can – after all, that’s the idea of the whole pre-sale.

### **Component 3: Social Media Countdown**

The day you start your pre-sale for your newsletter subscribers you can start the release countdown on social media – we’ll use Facebook here.

Post one song excerpt per day along with a little description – and always include the official release date.

For more visual impact change your cover photo daily and let it say “10 days to go”, then “9 days to go” the other day and so on. I have seen a number of Hip Hop artists use that approach very effectively.

On your official release you post a list of outlets where your followers can get your music (direct links, of course, your web store should come first), after you have made sure all outlets are ready and have your album in their stores.

You see that your Facebook friends and fans will not get that discount, nor can they buy in advance. It’s something reserved to those close fans who have subscribed to your newsletter.

So with all the 10 days from here and ten days from now it’s probably best I give you a chart:

## The Release Countdown

Days to official Release	Action
20	<b>Start Newsletter Pre-Sale Countdown</b> (Song Sample 1)
19	Song Sample 2
18	Song Sample 3
17	Song Sample 4
16	Song Sample 5
15	Song Sample 6
14	Song Sample 7
13	Song Sample 8
12	Song Sample 9
11	Song Sample 10
10	<b>Start Pre-Sale</b> ----- <b>Start Countdown on FB</b> (Sample 1)
09	Song Sample 2
08	Song Sample 3
07	Song Sample 4
06	Song Sample 5
05	Song Sample 6
04	Song Sample 7
03	Song Sample 8
02	Song Sample 9
01	Song Sample 10
00	<b>End Pre-Sale / OFFICIAL      A L B U M      R E L E A S E</b>

Adjust the number of days to the number of song samples you want to provide.

### Bottom Line

Using the marketing method I have described you can conquer three audiences at one time to the best extent possible:

1. **Media Campaign:**  
You reach the fans in your market niche who haven't heard about you yet or aren't using any means (newsletter, social media) to stay in touch with you.
2. **Direct Newsletter Campaign:**  
You talk directly to your fans and give them an incentive (discount) to pre-order.
3. **Social Media Campaign**  
You tease your album to your Facebook audience so they cannot miss it once it is available for sale.



## CHAPTER 8

# Planning Your Next Release

*How to use the time between two releases*

### 8.1 Make Them remember You

Once the “Hot Phase” of your new album is over, work doesn’t stop for you. Keep your momentum going for maximum impact once your next album comes out. Stay in touch with your fans, media contacts and distributors.

#### 1. Stay in touch with your fans

Use your newsletter and social media channels to engage with your fans and to show them you’re still out there. Make sure they will remember you when you start promoting your next album.

#### Tip!

Make your newsletter entertaining and informative. Send it out at least twice a month. Tell stories, suggest music by other artists or talk about your niche’s lifestyle...

#### 2. Stay in touch with media contacts

Being active on social media can help you stay on top of your media contacts’ minds, provided you have connected with them. Besides that send an occasional eMail to ask how they are doing. Make your eMail real: ask them for advice, recommend another good band or praise them for a great interview they have done recently. Once they ask you for help (it really happens once in a while) don’t be a stranger.

#### 3. Stay in touch with your distributors

Staying in touch with your distributors (mainly mail order shops) is a bit easier, because it is just common practice to check in every three months and inquire about sales and accounting.

In addition send the same occasional eMails you send to your media contacts. Recommend, help and ask.

Once you consider buying a CD from some other band, use that mail order shop to make the purchase, even if the same CD might be cheaper on eBay. Don’t use their online checkout to buy the CD. Send an eMail instead (“this is Julian from Beautiful Beast...”) and ask them to send it to you and provide you with payment details. This procedure is usually well received.

## **8.2 Prices and Blowouts**

Lowering the price of your CD once its hot phase has worn off requires a sure instinct. I highly recommend NOT running special discounts without real sense. You risk looking like a sell-out in need of quick money. I'm not a big friend of all those Black Friday and Cyber Monday sales either. I think they hurt the feelings of those who have just paid the full price only because they didn't want to wait any longer. Don't punish them for acting quickly.

You should not lower the price of a CD prior to 9 months after its initial release. One of the mail order stores I have been working with for many years told me it would cause damage to my standing within the market if I lowered the price too early.

So you better wait at least 9 months until you drop your price by a maximum of 15% to 20%. If you really want to blow out your inventory – or make quick money – offer special bundles as described in the next step...

## **8.3 Special Packages**

Once my latest album had been about 14 months 'old' I offered a "Special Deal for New Fans". Anyone who had just discovered me and my music could get all my three previous CDs for an incredible \$24.97 including postage (okay, postage in Germany has been around \$3.80 for overseas shipping then).

Providing a special "all our previous stuff at a price you cannot ignore" package helps new fans to get to know you and kind of "pre-convince" them of any potential new album you might be releasing in the future.

Again, let me stress that you should not do that too early in an album's life!

## **8.4 Collect Addresses from all Direct Orders**

Everytime when fans buy a CD directly from you they will provide their shipping address (no-brainer, right?). Collect those addresses. What for? Send them a postcard in a timely manner so they can participate in your next pre-order or pre-sale campaign. Postcards (as opposed to just an eMail) have been very effective marketing tools for many independent musicians. Design them neatly – well, appropriately so they fit your style – and don't forget your call to action: "Make use of our pre-sale discount from.... to....").

At least, though, collect the eMail addresses of your previous buyers (hmmm, let's ignore the legal aspect for a while, okay). Add them to an extra mailing list and send them no more than two (!) promotional eMails about your new album. Let them take advantage of your pre-sale campaign, of course.

Where do you get their eMail addresses? If your fans purchase e.g. via PayPal they provide at least the eMail address which they use for PayPal. CD Baby also sends you details about the people who have ordered your music from them, as long as they have not explicitly disagreed.

**Tip !****Cross-promote.**

Dedicate at least one page of your CD booklet to the promotion of the following:

- All your previously released CDs. Use a headline such as “Also available” and include the cover artwork of each previous CD along with its title, year of release and whatever important codes and numbers you may come up with. Then provide the exact URL of your own online shop where these CDs can be purchased.
- Your merchandise. If you have t-shirts to sell and if there’s still some space left in your booklet, provide a picture of that shirt and, again, the URL of your shop.
- Your newsletter. Make a call to action and encourage the owner of your CD to sign up. Provide an incentive, e.g. a free bonus track. Again, provide the exact URL.
- Your social media channels. List the URLs of your Facebook page and Youtube channel. Don’t forget the call to action...

**Okay. Congratulations. You’ve got it all by now. Next I will show you some random bonus tips that will help you get the best out of your music marketing...**

Lots of plain white paper again. Can you draw something on it?

## BONUS CHAPTER

# Yet More Tips You Can Use

*Random Tips to improve the results of your campaign*

## Facebook Tips

Let's take another look at Facebook (or whatever social media platform may be the new s\*\*\* as you're reading this) and how you can use it more effectively. We will not talk about their ever-changing algorithms, instead we'll focus on the human part...

### Branding

Let there be no doubt that you are a musician. A serious one, not just some wannabe. This can be a challenge especially when you participate in Facebook groups dedicated to your music genre and talk shop with other group members.

As a consequence you should only post music- and career-related things. Don't upload photos of your breakfast (unless you've taken it on tour and create a series of breakfast shots from every town you play in).

A few ideas of what to post:

- Anything related to the announcement of a new album
- Anything related to an upcoming gig or tour
- Anything related to the business aspects of your career
- Studio photos or video stills (making of)
- Live pictures
- Links to good reviews and interviews (or scanned copies of print interviews)
- Photos taken with other bands or musicians
- Photos of you signing a new (good) contract (mind privacy here, don't include third party contact information)
- Contests, questions and surveys related to your music
- Film or TV excerpts that feature you or your music
- Backstage footage

This doesn't mean that you cannot post a few private things here or there. Some fans really like to see what you're like at home. However, make sure you always post more music- and career-related things. Again, you will want to brand yourself a musician, even better, a star.

### **Branding Tip !**

Always add your logo to photos before you upload them. This will help establish your brand and stir curiosity.

### **Stir Emotions / Curiosity**

Every now and then you can upload a photo (of yourself or your band) and add one or two lines of your song lyrics right within that picture that describe your current mood or deliver any message you consider important. No further description required, your followers will get the idea. If the message is good they will be likely to share it.

### **Hash Tags**

Okay, don't over-use them. Feel free to add a hash tag with your music genre underneath your posts (e.g. #acidhouse, #progrock) so that the fans who look up such hash tags can find you.

Another smart idea is to post a hash tag with the title of your new album. This can create curiosity among your fans, especially if that hash tag appears out of the blue ("wow, do they have something new in the making?").

### **Contests**

Be aware of the legal aspects of running contests or raffles. Do not make buying an album or liking your page a requirement. Alternatively you can ask your fans to post photos of them holding up your CD or wearing your band shirt. You may as well have them upload videos in which they sing your song, dance to your music etc. This is a nice way to actively engage with your followers. Provide a prize.

### **Highlight Your Comments**

If you comment on someone else's posts or in a Facebook group you can highlight your comment by using HTML symbols, e.g. a black arrow. Such symbols can work as eye catchers in a longer list of comments.

### **Cross Promote**

While it is common practice to post Youtube videos on Facebook not everybody also shares e.g. screenshots of their recent (Twitter) tweets just to show they have an account. Maybe you will soon...?

### **Post at fixed times**

Consider running a series of regular posts that always appear at a certain day and time and give this series a good name.

### **Don't overdo it**

If you post too much and too often you will soon become boring in the eyes of your fans. Keep it to two posts per week and make these posts count.

### **Clean House**

Your Facebook profile should look like a place of high traffic and engagement. Clean your timeline every now and then by deleting posts that didn't get too much attention as well as annoying posts by others.

### **Don't spam, don't beg !!!**

Remember the „pull“ strategy we discussed earlier? Believe me, nothing is more annoying (and embarrassing) than a band that's constantly begging for likes. The same is true for bands that plaster social media groups with their videos. But hey, shouldn't you promote your videos?

Yes, you should. But before you spam yet another group with them, maybe consider building a relationship with a group moderator and ask *her* to post your video along with a personal recommendation. This will definitely have a stronger impact than yet another “Watch our video” post by yet another band.

### **Call to Action**

Make it clear to your fans and followers that you have an album for sale and show them where they can buy it. Show them the way, but again ‘don't beg’. Only call for one action at a time. If you provide too many options your fans will get confused and rather decide for none of your options and move on.

### **Remember !**

The goal of any social media activities is to direct your fans to the places that make you money: Your web shop, Amazon, iTunes, the mail order store, your monetized Youtube channel etc.

You can not put a “Like” in the bank, right...?

## **Youtube Tips**

A few no-cost ways to get the most out of your Youtube presence.

### **Play Lists**

Create a play list with about 20 or more songs by other artists in your genre. Add both popular artists and cool underground acts – and include your video. This increases chances for your video of being seen – and watched. Why? People who look for popular songs in your genre may end up watching (or listening) to your play list – and then, wam-bam, your song comes up.

Look for other artists and people on Youtube with play lists that feature your genre and ask them to add your video (while you add theirs in return, right...).

### **Thumbnails**

Use high-impact thumbnail images. Thumbnails with faces and light backgrounds are being clicked more often than anything else. If you use a face thumbnail try looking the best rocker, rapper or teddy boy you want to be.

### **Annotations**

Use annotations as a call to action. Ask your viewers to subscribe to your channel or go to your online store right away. What about a constant special deal for Youtube viewers? Use just one call to action, too many options still confuse your viewers.

### **Description**

Add the same call to action in your description. Further give information about the song: Song title, album name, year – then again provide the list with direct links to the five most important sales outlets. When adding links always place the http:// prefix in front of them so that the link actually becomes active.

### **Upload at the best time possible**

Thursday and Friday are the days with the highest activity on Youtube. Thursday morning will be a good time to upload (or activate) your video then.

→ Make sure to promote the living hell out of your video right away. The first 24 hours after a video's release are the most critical ones since they have an effect on how Youtube will rank it.

→ So consider running the same countdown you did with your album release with the release of a new Youtube video.

### **Tease your Video with other Videos**

What? Create some excitement and build anticipation with a video that is just a teaser (or trailer) for your actual video. Ask viewers through annotations and appropriate description to subscribe to your channel (better yet: your newsletter) so they won't miss the actual video once it is on. You can do the same with another 'behind the scenes' or 'making of' video. But don't reveal too much yet.

### **Tell the World**

As shown way above, let everybody know about your video the same day it gets released: the media in your niche (press release with embed code), your newsletter subscribers, your Facebook followers, your personal friends, your family.

## Offline Tips

Being online is just one part of music marketing. There still exists the real world and it's a place you should never ignore. The competition is far smaller there because not too many musicians actually feel comfortable about leaving home and promoting themselves on the streets. Offline or real-world music marketing can be the most effective if you combine it with the online part. Read on what I mean...

### Flyers

Flyers are classic promo tools. Mainly used to promote concerts they also work well to simply advertise a band's album(s). When you design them, place a QR code on them which, once scanned, directs people to your website, music page or online store. In today's fast-paced world ease-of-use has become crucial for people to actually take action.

Place your flyers in relevant clubs and bars or hand them out at concerts of similar bands. However, be professional and ask for permission to promote yourself on someone else's property.

### Posters and Concert Flyers

Use the same call-to-action on concert posters and concert flyers or even concert ads. Add a QR code that leads to discounted tickets or 2-for-1 deals.

### Them Flyers again

Have flyers printed that promote your new album. Then ask the mail order stores that carry your album to include these flyers with every order they ship. This gets your message right in front of fans who buy records. Some stores have really done this for me.

Since the mail order guy who distributes your flyers will want his customers to buy directly from him, you should either create custom-made flyers for him or use a generic call to action such as "now available at your favorite store". Don't put your contact or store information on these flyers.

### Show up in Person

If your band really looks like a band (other than just a random group of people), show up together at concerts and parties. A soul band in uniform pinstriped suits or a gothic act in full make-up is a definite eye catcher. Have your flyers or business cards with you.

### Store Displays

Got a roll-up banner, fancy sign or a cool looking box that holds your CDs? Some local record stores might agree to place them at their point of sale.

### Network

Go where other musicians and industry people meet: Jam sessions, open mic nights, showcases, industry conferences and trade shows. Make contacts and cultivate them. The



band or journalist you meet today may be a big act a few years from now willing to give you a shot.

### **Busking**

Playing on city streets might not be or work for everybody. But promoting your concert with an acoustic set in a local mall the same afternoon is quite a cool idea. Sell tickets right there. Get a permit.

## **General Music Business Tips**

In this section I'd like to explain some things and dispel a few myths about the music business. Just because it's "music" doesn't mean the business is different from any other type of business. Okay, creating and selling music is a lot cooler than e.g. brokering insurances. However, even the music business involves a lot of deskwork, accounting and polishing doorknobs.

As shown above – if you do not have a record label deal you will have to do all such work yourself. There's no way around it. You will have to issue proper invoices, go after the money and pay taxes. Just like a guy who owns a grocery store or a newsstand.

So do yourself a favor and dismiss the idea that the music industry is different.

Most importantly, though, don't believe the next crook that walks up to you and tells you that it's all different and he's got the solution. Such solutions will often cost you lots of money for nothing.

So...

### **Don't Pay The Ferryman...**

...before he's reached the other side. Record companies, managers, agents, publishers and distributors – they all only make money once something gets sold. No payment for mere attempts. This is particularly true for the species known as...

### **Song Pluggers**

Every now and then you will meet someone who offers to pitch your music to industry contacts such as record labels, music publishers and music producers. These folks are known as "song pluggers". They will charge a fee for their "service", which can range from \$100 to anything beyond sanity.

Now you may wonder, hopefully, why they settle for a one-time 100 bucks if they could make so much more if they signed you and your music and took a few percent of your royalties. The answer is simple: They don't have much of a chance of signing you. They just pitch but don't really have the leverage needed to actually place your song. They depend on your cash.

So you better only work with the folks who will take a cut of your earnings. All the “we will never touch your royalties” is just sweet talk. It’s marketing speech, so you will be happy to pay to have your music pitched (after all, will you get proof that they actually DO pitch your music?). So forget those online music submission sites in particular who tell you they are the exclusive entity to pitch music for some big project. It’s B.S.

### **Music Promoters**

If you want to hire a music promoter, look for someone professional. Someone with excellent industry contacts in your particular genre. A promoter’s contacts make all the difference to a sole “mail fulfillment service” that just sends your promo packages to ‘whom it may concern’. Industry contacts are personal and are being maintained on a regular basis. Promoters and journalists regularly talk on the phone or even meet in person. So you actually pay for a promoter’s leverage.

Promoters also send you regular reports about your campaign with links to (all) online reviews and interviews, copies of print reviews and play lists of radio stations that featured your music.

Considering the fact that especially in smaller market niches promoters usually send physical copies to their media contacts you can assume fees from \$4.00 to \$7.00 per copy/contact.

Avoid online press kit submission services that send your news flash to 500 outlets with just one mouse click. I doubt those 500 contacts have actually agreed to getting those news mails. After all I did get mails from one of those services without even being a journalist, left alone having signed up. In other words, I got spammed.

### **Get it all in writing** (no legal counsel or advice here)

Contracts are there to secure the entire agreement between two parties in writing. So whatever has been promised with reference to your career or the release of your record, put it in writing. Explain what “album release” stands for. Specify a minimum number of copies, distribution channels and a release date. If the label fails to adhere to that, you should get all your rights back - immediately. If the label doesn’t want to sign, look for a better one – or do it yourself as described in this course.

### **Show up in Person whenever you can**

The more personal you can be with prospective business partners, the better. I have secured all my partner- and sponsor deals for the MusicBiz Madness Conferences because I have visited my partners in person to discuss the details. Prior to that I have made my pitch on the phone. So if you want to get in touch with a record label or music producer, try to catch them at a trade show or showcase. If you can’t, use the phone. Cold eMailing is far less effective.

Once somebody suggests a personal meeting, get there. It’s often a test to see if you are willing to sacrifice your time or spend some money on gas or a subway ticket in order to further your career.

### **Keep learning**

Read trade magazines and industry websites. Get familiar with technical terms and other industry standards so you will be a competent dialog partner when it counts. This will also help you reveal the bullshitters (did I just say that?).

### **Be easy to contact**

Always include your full (!!!) contact information in business emails as well as on your website. Not only does it make you look more sincere, it will also help others to reach you as quickly as possible. Sounds like no-brainer, but 6 out of 10 musicians don't care. Do your best to catch all phone calls. If you can't, return the call within no longer than one hour.

### **Hard work is the root of all success**

Most musicians I know get up early – and work. Do the things that make you feel uncomfortable: call club owners, bookers, labels or publishers. Organize your own showcase while you bear all the risk. Invest money (wisely). Exercise your threshold muscle.

### **Success is mutual**

Don't lean back once you've secured a gig or signed a record deal. Don't let others do all the work. Help promote your gig, call your personal press contacts, get sponsors – whatever you can do, do it. Your business partners will love you for it, as this puts you ahead of most others.

### **When You need a Record Label**

The question whether you need a record label or be better off alone is a personal one. Decide for yourself:

If you can sell, say, 500\* copies of your album by yourself and make \$6.00 each (totals \$3,000) you'll be better off than getting your \$1.50 off each of the, maybe, 1,500 units a label can sell for you.

So as a rule of thumb I'd suggest that you go for a label deal only once they can move at least 3 times as many copies of your album as you can all by yourself.

→ Regularly talk with other artists in your niche about their label experiences, number of copies sold etc. Some will be happy to tell you, so you can get an idea of what's possible in your market.

\*) Please note that according to CD Baby statistics the average DIY musician sells only 88 units of each album (physical and digital put together).

### **Record Labels as Spring Boards**

It's not a bad idea to use a record label to gain popularity with your first two records and then do it all yourself with album #3. With a decent fan base to market yourself to and more money to keep for yourself, you could about quadruple your revenue.

This is how many (former) major artists have done it, such as Moby or Trent Reznor. I have witnessed this procedure on the indie circuit as well. Whether that's morally acceptable – see for yourself...

### **For the long term**

When promoting your latest album think about how this can affect your popularity (and your income) in a couple of years from now. If you diligently promote album #1 it will definitely benefit album #2, 3 and 4. Each album can be a baby step to a successful career.

### **A Smart Way to make Industry Contacts**

Other than being a bull at the gate, try making industry contacts outside the field of pitching your music. Maybe you can contribute to a trade magazine or some industry website or blog as a writer and interview industry people. Once you have interviewed e.g. an A&R manager, she will take you much more seriously once you start talking about your music.

It's about getting a foot in the door. I have made some really good contacts by hiring industry people as speakers for the MusicBiz Madness Conferences. While you don't have to set up a full industry meeting, maybe consider hiring some label person for a single seminar.

### **Now swim.....**

I hope you have enjoyed this music marketing course. May it help you get the success you deserve. Using the method described for the first time will be like planting a seed for your career. Applying it again and again with any new album will work like a fertilizer. Oh yes, do it like a farmer: plant the seed, reap the rewards. Use the rewards to plant more seeds, then reap bigger rewards. By the way, farmers are a good example for long-term success. After all, their crop takes time to grow.

Here's to your full, never-ending success !!!

Julian Angel

**Disclaimer**

None of the advice given within this music marketing course shall be deemed legal advice and/or legal counsel. The author of this book is not a lawyer. Please consult a lawyer to get binding legal advice.

This book shows a music marketing strategy that has worked for many independent, self-marketed musicians and bands. There is no guarantee this strategy will work for everyone, nor can any results be guaranteed in terms of units sold or money earned. Some market niches offer better and bigger opportunities than others. Results may also vary given the time and effort put into the marketing of ones music.

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Blank space again...

..but I promised you a printable version of the music marketing schedule, all on one page.

It's just a few inches down from here....

# Your Music Marketing Schedule

(once again on a single page so you can print it)

<b>8 weeks to release:</b>	send press releases to media contacts to tease the album, announce through newsletter and social media  set up digital distribution with timed release
<b>6 to 8 weeks to release:</b>	sample relevant media with promo material
<b>4 weeks to release:</b>	release music video and tease new album, announce video with another press release, newsletter, social media  release free digital single if you feel like  stock physical outlets with copies of the album
<b>10 days to release:</b>	start special pre-order campaign for die-hard fans
<b>RELEASE DAY:</b>	announce official release through newsletter, social media, eventually send another press release to media  Check if both physical and digital versions are available
<b>1 day after release:</b>	check back with media and inquire about interviews  check back with radio shows to tease more (air)play
<b>4 weeks after release:</b>	release another video, if available, announce release through press releases, newsletter and social media
<b>up to 8 weeks after release:</b>	take care of late reviews, get more interviews and radio plays
<b>up to 12 weeks after release:</b>	use newsletter and social media to tease album by publishing late reviews and interviews
<b>after 12 weeks:</b>	swim, baby...