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Useful Information

BAND TIPS: LIST OF ACRONYMS



A&R - Artist and Repertoire

The person at a record label or publisher whose job it is to find new talent, and then be the contact at the company for the artist in question.

AAC - Advanced Audio Coding

Like MP3, but in theory a bit better. AAC delivers a better quality sound at a similar file size, but is still quite far away from toppling the trusty old MP3 as the standard digital music format.

AIFF - Audio Interchange File Format

Basically Apple's version of a WAV file. When your music has been recorded then it'll either be in AIFF or WAV; a massive filesize but crammed full of audio quality goodness before you compress the into an MP3 so it's easier to send/store. As I said above; a high quality MP3 will suffice in the vast majority of situations within the music industry; so rip everything at 320KBPS (kilobites per second) and you'll be fine.

AIM - Association of Independent Musicians

<http://www.musicindie.com/home>

APRA - Australian Performing Rights Association

Australia's version of IMRO.

ASCAP - American Society of Composers, Authors & Publishers

Unlike Ireland where IMRO is pretty much the only option you have in terms of signing up to a PRO, in the States you have three choices. ASCAP, BMI and SESAC.

AURA - The Association of United Recording Artists

Formerly the royalty paid for the public performance and broadcast of records had been distributed solely to record companies but since performers have become legally entitled to a proportion of this income a plethora of organisations has emerged to offer to administer this right on their behalf. AURA is one of a number of organisations set up to administer the payments due to performers on records.

ASCI - The Association of Songwriters and Composers of Ireland

is an information service. Newly formed and at its embryonic stage. Our aim is to tackle important issues such as: Perpetuity of Copyright and a higher content ruling on all licensed radio stations in Ireland for Irish songwriters and composers works.

BMI - Broadcast Music Incorporated

Another US PRO alongside ASCAP and SESAC.

BMR - British Music Rights

BMR is a lobbying body aimed at improving the legal framework within which everyone in the music industry operates. It addresses the issues both within Britain and on a European level, pressing for legislation in such areas as improved anti-piracy measures or stronger copyright enforcement measures.

BPI

BPI is the umbrella group for the entire record industry in the UK. It aims to raise the profile of recorded music. It is best known for the annual 'Brits' awards which have, alongside the Mercury Music Prize and the MTV Awards, done much to glitzy music in the same way the Oscars did for film.

CAE - from the French 'Compositeur, Auteur and Editeur' (Composer, Author & Publisher)
When you join a PRO (Performing Rights Organisation) you're given a CAE number. This is basically your identification number so that any money that you'll make from your publishing rights can find their way back to you.

CAI - Copyright Association of Ireland

While the CAI is not primarily concerned with music, it is committed to the improvement of the conditions under which all copyright owners operate. They run lectures and seminars on copyright issues and act as a forum for copyright owners, copyright users and lawyers working in the field.

CISAC - International Confederation of Societies of Authors & Composers
Effectively the 'trade union' of all PRO's.

DRM - Digital Rights Management

EAN - European Article Number

A European barcode which has one extra digit over a UPC (Universal Product Code).

EPK - Electronic Press Kit

An EPK is a press kit equivalent in electronic form. An EPK usually takes the form of a website or e-mail, though they are also known to exist in CD and DVD form.

FLAC - Free Lossless Audio Codec

Another digital media file type.

FMC - First Music Contact

FMC is an all-Ireland umbrella group set up to promote, develop and encourage the work of music collectives in facilitating the needs of grass roots musicians. FMC also provide an information and advice service for musicians.

GEMA - Gesellschaft für musikalische Aufführungs & mechanische Vervielfältigungsrechte
Germany's version of IMRO

GS1 - Global Standards

The guys who create barcodes.

IASCA - Irish Association of Songwriters Composers and Authors

ICE - International Copyright Enterprise

This is the system used by IMRO (Irish Music Rights Organisation – Ireland's sole PRO) to create, store and administer all the information regarding the songs they look after. Within a song registration you usually find information regarding the composer (the person who wrote the music), the author (the person who wrote the lyrics), their CAE numbers (which tells you who PRO they belong to) and their publishers CAE number (which also tells you which PRO they belong to).

IFPI - International Federation of the Phonographic Industry

Effectively the 'trade union' of all record labels.

IMRO - Irish Music Rights Organisation

IMRO is the body which administers the performing right on behalf of its members, be they publishers or individual members. If you are a songwriter whose work is performed in public or broadcast then membership is a must. See the [IMRO FAQ](#) for more information.

IP - Intellectual Property

As a musician you've got tons of this stuff. With every song, lyric, riff, hook, chorus, breakdown etc you create you've got a shiny new bit of intellectual property to call your own. IP refers to something that is rightly yours but isn't tangible and even though it doesn't physically exist you can still sell it or exploit it in various ways to make money from it.

IRMA - Irish Recorded Music Association

IRMA is an umbrella group for the Irish record industry. In addition to its lobbying role IRMA also commissions the charts for Ireland and organises the annual IRMA Awards. IRMA has recently set up the IRMA Trust which provides instruments to young performers who would not otherwise be able to afford them. This may yet prove to be one of the most vital contributions to the future of Irish music.

ISRC - International Standard Recording Code

A twelve digit alphanumeric code given to every song registered with the relevant body in that territory. Just as the ISWC code; royalties that are generated by that recording can find their way back to the correct copyright owner. Within the code contains the information; the country of origin, the organisation who administers the registration (the PPI in Ireland), the year of registration and then finally the unique identifying number. Remember: ISWC are for songs and ISRC are for recordings.

ISWC - International Standard Work Code

An eleven digit alphanumeric code given to each song registered to any PRO worldwide which makes it uniquely identifiable. Using either this or a 'Tunecode' (which is essentially the same thing but shorter), royalties that are generated by that song can find their way back to the correct PRO and then back to the author, composer and publisher.

JASRAC - Japanese Society for Rights of Authors & Composers

Japan's version of IMRO.

KBPS - Kilobits Per Second

There is usually a number preceding this acronym and the higher the number the better the quality of the file.

LC - Label Code

A four or five digit code given to a record label to identify who has released a record.

MP3

The most common type of digital media file

MCPS - Mechanical Copyright Protection Society

MCPS administer the mysterious 'mechanical' right in music. The mechanical right in fact means the right to make a recording or physical copy of a musical work. So if someone is releasing your music on record, or if they wish to use it in a film or advertising campaign or store it on a computer somewhere, membership of MCPS is a must. Like IMRO, MCPS operates worldwide through a network of related organisations.

MMF - Music Managers Forum

Effectively the 'trade union' for Music Managers.

<http://musicmanagersforum.ie/>

MPAI - Music Publishers' Association of Ireland

MPAI is the umbrella body for publishers whose catalogue of musical works is used in Ireland.

MPG - Music Producers Guild

MU - Musicians' Union

The MU is the organisation which presses for improved working conditions for professional musicians, especially those who make a living from session work where MU Guidelines will determine what they are paid for a session and what breaks they will have etc. The MU also offers a legal advice service to members.

P2P - Peer to Peer

Kazaa, Limewire, Bearshare, (the original) Napster: all P2P clients that allow the easy transferring of data between two computers over the internet.

PPI - Phonographic Performance Ireland

PPI is the umbrella body for record companies in Ireland and it administers the performance right in its members' releases. It licences broadcasters to use records, as well as premises where records are played, and distributes this income to its members and to those artists who have performed on records released in Ireland.

PPL - Phonographic Performance Limited

These guys are another essential income stream for all artists. They collect money for those who own the master recordings of a song and also the performers on said records. There is money generated every time the record is played on the radio or receives TV exposure.

PRO - Performing Rights Organisation

These are the guys who look after your performing rights and all the information to do with your individual songs. In the Ireland we have IMRO for Music, but there are various PRO's for different territories (which are listed below). Basically if you want to make money from your publishing rights then you simply HAVE to register with a PRO. Not sure what Music Publishing actually is? Click [here](#) for our Music Publishing guidelines.

PRS - Performing Right Society

The PRS is the equivalent of IMRO in the UK, and in fact before the establishment of IMRO was the body which administered the performing right in Ireland.

RAAP - Recorded Artist and Performers

RAAP is a not-for-profit Irish Performers Association which will collect and distribute Royalties to Irish Performers for public plays of their Material.

RIAA -Recording Industry Association of America

The RIAA is to the US what IRMA is to Ireland.

SACEM - Société des Auteurs, Compositeurs et éditeurs de Musique

France's version of IMRO.

SESAC - Society of European Stage Authors & Composers

Another US PRO alongside ASCAP and BMI. (Why European in the title? It goes back to when they originally started).

SGAE - Sociedad General de Autores y Editores

Spain's version of IMRO.

STIM - Svenska Tonsättares Internationella Musikbyrå

Sweden's version of IMRO.

TONO

Norway's version of IMRO.

UPC - Universal Product Code

Or as most people call them; barcodes.

VPL - Video Performance Limited

Part of the PPL; these guys collect all the royalties generated from when your music video has been played on various TV stations worldwide.

WAV - Waveform Audio File

Just like an AIFF, a WAV is a high quality digital file of your music. When you're successful in landing a sync you may often be asked for the WAV file of the song so make sure you keep them rather safe. Also; NEVER reproduce CD's to sell that are MP3's burnt onto audio CD; ALWAYS use the WAVs or you're making yourself sound worse than you actually are.

Taken from The BLOMIA (Big List Of Music Industry Acronyms) written by Sentric Music Publishing – Music Royalties Collection Service - <http://www.sentricmusic.com/>

Updated by FMC 2011

While the author (FMC) has taken all reasonable steps to ensure that the information contained in this article is accurate, such information is not guaranteed. The author and the FMC will not be held responsible for individual decisions taken as a result of information contained in this article which is intended for general information purposes.

The Irish Music Rights Organisation is a national organisation of songwriters, composers and music publishers. It administers various rights, including the performing rights in copyright music, in Ireland on behalf of its members and on behalf of the members of the 63 overseas societies affiliated to it.

IMRO is a not-for-profit company, limited by guarantee. Its principal activity is the collection of royalties when copyright music is broadcast or performed in public (e.g. in discos, hotels, restaurants, pubs, etc.) and the distribution of those royalties to the relevant songwriters and publishers.

Who can become a Member of IMRO?

Songwriters, composers and music publishers may become members of IMRO, subject to satisfying certain criteria. For further information please telephone or e-mail Membership Services in IMRO on 01 - 661 4844 or at info@imro.ie.

What is Copyright?

Copyright is a property right, regulated by statute (the Copyright Act 2000) which gives the owner of a creative work (e.g. a song or a piece of music) the right to permit or prevent the use of that work by others. Copyright confers on the creator of a work the right to allow or prevent a number of 'restricted acts'. These restricted acts include making a copy of the work, making the work available to the public and making an adaptation of the work.

Intellectual property refers to all intangible property such as copyrights or patents.

Can I Copyright a Creative Work?

There is no actual system for copyrighting a work of creativity. Copyright automatically subsists by virtue of an original work being produced in material form, e.g. tape, manuscript. If a dispute over ownership of a work arises it is important for the owner to be able to prove that he/she owned the work at a particular date. The following system may be used:-

1. Put the tape or sheet music or the lyrics of a song/work into an envelope.
2. Address the envelope to yourself and write the name of the song/work on the outside.
3. Post the envelope to yourself by registered post.
4. When you receive the envelope DO NOT OPEN IT. Make sure that the date is clearly stamped and that the envelope is completely sealed.
5. Keep the envelope in a safe place (e.g. your solicitor's office or a bank).

How Long Does Copyright Last in Ireland?

The copyright in a musical work expires 70 years after the death of the songwriter/composer who wrote the work or if two or more people are responsible for the work 70 years after the death of whoever dies last. The copyright in a sound recording expires 50 years after the date it was first lawfully made available to the public.

How Does IMRO Collect Royalties?

IMRO collects royalties by issuing licences, in return for a fee (a royalty), to TV and radio stations that broadcast copyright music and venues such as discos, pubs, etc. that perform copyright music in public. Royalties are payable whether the music is live or recorded.

Who Needs an IMRO Licence?

It is illegal to use copyright music without first obtaining the permission of the owner of the music. This permission is normally obtained by paying a royalty to IMRO in return for which a licence is issued.

The owner of any premises where copyright is performed in public needs an IMRO licence. For further information please contact IMRO on 01-661 4844.

For more information see the IMRO FAQ page:

<http://www.imro.ie/node/686>

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The development and adoption of the MP3 format has created a very real threat to the viability of e-commerce in music over the Internet.

What is MP3?

MPEG -1 Audio Layer III (known as MP3) is a format or set of standards for the compression and decompression of digital audio files. To create an MP3 file, a person merely has to insert a music CD into the CD-ROM/DVD drive of their computer and run an MP3 software programme which 'rips' the audio signals into a compressed form without a great loss of sound quality. A single music track on a CD will usually contain about 40 MB of data and, using a variety of techniques, MP3 compresses this data down to a file of about 4 MB. With such a small file size, music can be sent across the Internet relatively quickly or can be stored taking up far less space on a hard drive or recordable CD (CD-R) than it would have in its original size.

MP3 itself is a public domain format. This means that it is readily available for free and anyone can use it. Listening to compressed MP3 files requires an audio player software package that can decompress and play the file. These are widely available, often for free. In most cases, the software necessary to compress the audio file is actually included in a package with the audio player software. A digital processor (chip) that can run the audio player software and decompress the file is then necessary. A normal PC can do this or there are portable MP3 players such as MPMAN and Diamond Multimedia's Rio.

One important point about MP3 is that it contains no rights management software. Using MP3, one can rip any CD any number of times, send the tracks to anyone else or make the tracks available on a web site without the owners of the copyright knowing anything about it (the Moving Picture Expert Group last year began work on a new MPEG standard, MPEG 21 Multimedia Framework, which will integrate rights management software code).

Does this mean that MP3 is illegal?

MP3 software is not in itself illegal. Ripping the music on a CD without the permission of the copyright owners (the author of the song, the record company and the performers) is illegal when this is done for the purposes of sending or selling copies to other people or making the MP3 file you create available through music file sharing systems such as Napster.

What is Napster?

Some Internet entrepreneurs have used the fact that the MP3 standard contains no rights management software to create systems for music file sharing.

The initial file sharing systems were fairly straightforward in that people uploaded the MP3 files that they created from their CDs to a huge hard disk or database which could be searched and from which other people could download selected music files to their own computers. MyMP3.com is an example of this kind of site. It had tens of thousands of MP3 files available for download for free but has recently been prevented by the American Courts from offering copyright material for download without the permission of the copyright owners.

Napster is an example of a more complex file sharing system. It is based on a protocol developed by an American College student whereby MP3 files on a computer hard disk can be made 'visible' to other people. The owner of the hard disk just has to tell some central entity, in this case Napster, that a music file called 'X' can be found at address 'Y'. People looking for a song such as 'Yesterday' by the Beatles go to the central entity, make a search for 'Yesterday' and are given a list of places to go and download that song in MP3 format which can be decompressed using the Napster audio player software which is available for free.

Napster became a huge success in a short space of time and some other similar systems have also become very popular. In September 2000 the International Federation of Phonographic Industry estimated that there were 25 million infringing copies of recordings available in file swapping systems of this kind and that over 3 million tracks were downloaded from these services each day.

The Record Industry Association of America took Napster to Court in the US for facilitating copyright infringement. Their action was successful but has been appealed and a stay on the order which would have effectively closed Napster down has been granted. While this stay has been in place, BMG, Westlife's record company, and one of the largest media groups in the world, has negotiated an investment deal with the owners of Napster which will allow some or all of the recordings on their record labels to legally be made available on Napster in return for a share of a membership/subscription fee which Napster soon plans to introduce.

What is wrong with file sharing systems?

Making the music on your CDs available via file sharing systems such as Napster is illegal. Ripping an MP3 file from a CD is also an illegal activity in many countries as it infringes the right of the copyright owner to prevent reproduction or copying of the CD.

More important, however, is the effect that using file-sharing systems will have on the development of legitimate e-commerce in music. After all, why should consumers pay to download music when the same songs are available from file sharing sites for free? Some people say that this is how it should be, that bits are bits and that content should be free' However, if this the case, how will artists and record companies survive?

Does copyright law apply to these systems?

Yes. The new Irish Copyright Act specifically prevents the "making available" to the public of copies of the work, without the consent of the copyright owners, by wire or wireless means, in such a way that members of the public may access the work from a place and at a time chosen by them (including the making available of copies of works through the Internet).

The Act also provides authors, performers and record companies with the exclusive right to authorise or prohibit the reproduction/copying of their works. Making an infringing copy of a work is a primary infringement of copyright while providing the means for making infringing copies or dealing with infringing copies are secondary infringements. Both primary and secondary infringements can be criminal offences, which on conviction carry very severe penalties including fines of £100,000 and/or prison for up to 5 years. If I upload music from a CD that I own or make it available from my own computer, am I breaching copyright?

Yes. It is important to remember that just because you own a CD doesn't mean that you own the music. It is a matter for the copyright owners to decide how their music will be heard, reproduced or distributed. You cannot make music available to members of the public without their permission. If you operate a site which includes MP3 files taken from CDs without the permission of the copyright owners you are also infringing copyright. A disclaimer does not protect you in this regard.

What if I just 'stream' or play music on my computer?

In most cases, this is still an infringement of copyright unless the stream is coming from a radio station or promotional site that has the permission of the copyright owners to make the music available.

The Music Industry Group is not opposed to MP3 per se and welcomes the development new ways of distributing music which are not based on the sale of physical objects such as vinyl records or CDs. However, the members of the group do oppose the violation of authors and producers rights.

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BAND TIPS: RIGHTS IN A SONG EXPLAINED



FirstMusicContact

I'm all rights, Jack

One day, with nothing else to do you wander down as far as the local record shop 'Mickey's Mental Metal and Bluegrass Hut'. As you're drawing near you hear what sounds like a Ten Speed Racer song you've never heard before coming out of the shop's huge sound system. Your curiosity roused, you nip in and Fat Charlie, the ex-roadie who runs the place tells you he has just got TSR's new album in stock. You ask if you can hear another track and being an obliging kind of guy Fat Charlie lets you hear the entire album at full volume.

You trot home a happier bunny and sit down for an afternoon of trash TV. In between Blue's Clues and Kipper you notice a familiar sound and realise that one of the tracks from the album is being used on an advert already.

It's a really catchy tune and you decide you have to have it as a ringtone. A quick SMS later, a questionable rendition of the song is bleeping and burbling out of your Nokia.

That evening, you're sitting around having put away the dishes and washed the cat and that song is still going through your head. You're driving your girlfriend mad humming it and you're desperate to hear it again. A brainwave strikes and you phone a request into the Tom Dunne show. You're in luck, Tom loves the song too and a few minutes later your radio is aglow.

Next morning first thing you head down to Fat Charlie's and part with your hard earned in return for a copy of the CD. As you're scuttling off home who should you run slap bang into but ten speed racer themselves. You tell them about how much you adore the album and the whole story of how you came to buy it.

'So', you ask them 'are you making any money out of this yet?'

'Well', they reply, 'because Fat Charlie played the album in the shop we'll get a performance royalty payment from IMRO for writing the song, and our record company will get a performance royalty from PPI, and because we're also the featured performers on the tracks we'll get a payment from RAAP as well. Now, none of these organisations run around taking notes of everything that gets played in a public place, but they carry out an analysis of what happens and we'll get a share of the overall pie based on how popular our music is.'

'What about the advert, then?' you enquire.

'Well with the advert, because we wrote the song they had to ask our permission to use the track and we licenced the use and charged them a one-off fee. So did the record company, because there is a separate copyright in the recording. Plus, we'll get a broadcast royalty from IMRO for every time it goes out on air and the record company will get a broadcast royalty from PPI.'

'Wow', you say, 'that's amazing. What about my ringtone, though? You're not telling me you get paid for that.'

'Yep' 'Every time someone downloads a ringtone we get a royalty from MCPS, who control the mechanical right. That's the right that comes into play whenever a recording is made.'

'So do your record company get paid for ringtones too?'

'Nope, because the ringtone doesn't use the original recording the record company doesn't control the rights – they would be owned by who ever codes the ringtone'

'Poor them', you say, 'but they must do all right out of selling the album'.

'Too right' they reply 'but so do we. As part of our deal with the record company we get an artist royalty payment from them for every copy they sell, and because we wrote all the songs as well MCPS collect a royalty of 8.5% of the dealer price on every copy that's sold and we get that too'.

'But you wouldn't get that if someone did a cover version would you?' you ask.

'Indeed we would' he enlightens you, 'the mechanical royalty goes to the songwriter whether they record the song themselves or someone else covers it!'

'Jeez', you say 'it's been a real eye opener. Nice to see you again. So, where are you off to now?'

'Well, first we're stopping by Fred's Cuban Cigars, then we're off to Alfie's Shiny Red Ferrari Shop. Ciao!'

Written by Greg McAteer, MCPS for fmc © 2003

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Why set up your own record company?

Recording and releasing music by a new and/or unknown artist is a very risky and costly venture. Most of the major record companies are not famous as risk takers and are reluctant to advance large sums of money to bands or artist whose recordings may not recoup the initial investment. Now that the recording industry is gripped by a world-wide recession, the major labels are becoming more careful than ever by concentrating their resources on successful existing artists and back catalogue sales. Many of their unprofitable portfolios of artists are dropped and potential new artists are lucky to have their demos listened to. Most independent record labels are usually set up in order to get the music of a band or artist to the ears of a wider audience, having tried to get a record deal through the usual channels. There are many advantages to owning your own label, but the most obvious initial benefit is the fact that you're in complete control of your own destiny.

The Product

The product (i.e. record) must be of significantly high quality. If the music itself is bad, no amount of plugging or advertising is going to entice people to buy it.

The Boss

Any would-be independent record label boss must possess personality traits such as initiative, persistence, resilience, responsibility and imagination. If you don't possess all those qualities (if it's an effort for you even to get your band a gig), then don't even think about going in to business. Running a label is a full time job (on top of the full-time job you may well have anyway). Most importantly, it requires tireless determination.

The Market

You need to understand thoroughly your potential audience. It is not enough to rely on what you think you know (i.e. your "gut feeling"). It is essential to actively research your target market. Augment your knowledge of the music genre you intend to target by reading as many specialist magazines as you can find. From this you can compile databases of specialist distributors, labels, publishers, DJs, press and shops.

At this stage, it's essential to establish that there really is an audience and market for your type of music. Carry out some basic market research - find out what people really think about it (not just friends and relatives- go for a cross-section), and whether they would part with their money to listen to it, then apply your findings on a larger scale. Bands tend towards overriding belief that their music is utterly fabulous, but are you prepared to put your money (and sometimes other peoples) where your mouth is? You have got to look at the record from a cold, clinical and objective business viewpoint.

A website can provide a good forum for judging reaction to your product, but people need to be able to find it. It is crucial to have links to other sites dealing with the same musical genre and to ensure your site is on all the search engines.

Finance

In order to convince other parties (family, friends, business associates) to invest money in your label, you have to convince them that you're capable of running it properly and successfully. A business plan includes proposed marketing and promotion of your product, and also its costing. By working out how much money you need to earn in order to cover business and personal expenses, you can decide on a price for your record, and work out how many units you need to sell in order to break even (i.e. the point where sales income equals costs). Make sure that this price is similar to the market price of new records. If you find that your prices would be ridiculously high and that your costs cannot be lowered any more, then it is time to consider cutting your losses and getting out of the venture.

You also need to draw up a cash flow forecast which predicts income and expenditure for the next twelve months, and a longer- term forecast covering the next three or four years. The income will be related to the amount of product sales. Make sure to include all the costs incurred such as recording, manufacturing, artwork, packaging, distribution, promotion, etc.

Admittedly, all this financial stuff can get a little complicated, but there are plenty of organisations which can offer advice and assistance. Not only banks and accountants, but Enterprise Centres, Chambers of Commerce, Trade Associations and LEDU, in Northern Ireland, can be invaluable . These organisations generally have local offices: (these would usually be listed in your phone book under Government Departments)

It may be possible to start up the label without any outside financial assistance by using savings, money borrowed from relatives, or day jobs in order to keep things ticking over. It doesn't take much initial capital investment to start a record label, but money will be needed for recording and pressing your first record (single, EP or album) and for its promotional costs. If you decide that you will need outside finance in order to get the venture off the ground, there are a number of options. The most obvious way of raising working capital is to approach a bank .

When one considers that for every record which sells over 15,000 units in Ireland, 150 others sell less than 1,000 units, it is not surprising that banks are unlikely to advance funds without some form of security (i.e. property , stocks and shares or life policies with cash surrender value). It is worth considering an overdraft on your regular bank account if the amount to be borrowed isn't too great. If you can't raise finance from 'normal' sources, there are a number of other bodies who might provide funding. You can find out who they are by contacting your local Enterprise Centre.

How much will you need to borrow? The cost of starting up a company starts at zero, but if you want to make a fair go of it, you'll need to join various industry organisations listed below which will cost about 150, and if you plan to employ a public relations (PR) company, you should set aside at least 500 for that. When approaching funding bodies, bear in mind that business loans rarely cover stock (i.e. the cost of recording and pressing your records), but a personal loan probably will, as long as you're sure you can meet the repayments.

Legal considerations

Legally, it's a lot simpler than you might think. There are three types of companies: (1) the sole trader; (2) the partnership; and (3) the limited company. If you plan to

operate as a sole trader (i.e. just you, working for your self), you only need to tell the Revenue Commissioners and the Department of Social Welfare (or Training and Employment Agency in Northern Ireland) that you're working for yourself. Similarly with a partnership, but, as the name implies, you'll be working with one or more partners. It is therefore wise to draw up a partnership agreement with the assistance of a solicitor. This outlines exactly who has put what in to the partnership, how profits will be split, how the work is to be shared, and what happens if the business is wound up . It could save a lot of bad blood and legal wrangling in the long run. Option (3) is the limited company. In order to set up a limited company, you need to register with the companies registration office Dublin Castle for the South of Ireland. (£51). In addition to protecting your company name (nobody else can use it), you're protecting your liability if the company folds with huge debts. This means that you wont have to pay out money from your own pocket since the company is, legally, a separate entity. In the case of the sole trader or partnership you could loose your house if your business goes under. There are other limited liability company criteria which need to be satisfied, not least the presentation of annual audited accounts which involves employing an accountant. For these and other criteria, again contact your Companies Registration Office.

If you think your annual turnover is going to exceed £20,000 (UK stg£40,000 (although it's worth noting that you can register voluntarily to charge V.A.T as this will also allow you claim all the VAT back on purchases such as equipment, services etc.)) you have to register for Value Added Tax (V.A.T), but consult a qualified accountant before you do this. Once the company has a name, you should open a business bank account in that name, start thinking about logos and the printing of stationary, and get a telephone connected if you don't already have one. Also the Internet, a fax and an answer phone can prove invaluable.

Official bodies

There are a number of official organisations you should join. By law you are not required to be a member of any of them, but if you're serious about your enterprise, they should be borne in mind. The main ones are The Mechanical Copyright Protection Society (M.C.P.S.) and IRMA and if you want access to current marketing information and, statistics, subsidised rates for trade shows like MIDEM, and blanket agreement negotiations facilities, you should join the International Federation of Phonographic Industries (I.F.P.I.). MCPS need to be notified of your releases and if you cover someone else's song the royalties will be paid to them through M.C.P.S.

It may also be worthwhile keeping in touch with umbrella groups such as the Northern Ireland Music Industry Commission, The Trade Board and The B.P.I as contacts are essential and seminars are often run by these groups.

Chart track compile the weekly Irish music chart and for a fee of £30 they'll put you on their Record Labels Register - which ensures that nobody else (on the register) is using your label name or catalogue numbers.

Also consider getting a barcode for your release, since this is how 95% of record sales are now registered with Chart-track. Just think, if your single started selling in huge amounts, and you didn't have a barcode , you'd never make the national chart. Barcodes are administered by the EAN (European Article Number). You pay them £ for a company which has just started trading, plus a one-off entry fee of £60 plus V.A.T. Barcodes comprise of 12 digits: EAN will give you the first seven , which form your exclusive company number, and you supply the final five. To ensure that Chart-

track is aware of your release, and its barcode number, just send them two copies of the record.

Taxation and Pay Related Social Insurance

The biggest potential headache at this stage is keeping regular accounts. You can employ an accountant to do this for you, which will obviously cost money, or you can keep the books yourself. Although it's tempting not to bother, especially if your business turnover isn't significant, consider the fact that company tax is assessed at the end of each tax year, and what you pay depends on how much profit you've made (i.e.the higher your profits are, the more tax you will have to pay). If you can't estimate your own tax liability the Revenue Commissioners will come up with their own figure.

The good part of this is that legitimate business expenses can be deducted from the final tax bill, and the downside is that if you can't prove how much profit your company has made, a figure will be assumed. Always keep sales receipts and expenses. Even if you don't enter them in a book, at least you'll have something to show the taxman when he comes looking for money. Also, Pay Related Social Insurance (P.R.S.I.) must be paid regularly. Most independent labels are initially run by band members, but if your plans include employing other people, there are legal obligations you need to know about. If you have any questions or doubts contact a solicitor. It is worthwhile checking with Fas and the T&EA as there may be grants or schemes to encourage job creation.

Control

You're in complete control of your own destiny. There's nobody making you compromise your music in any way. Your career is in nobody's hands but your own. Remember you will also own the 'sound recording right' in the songs that you release, which means you profit from them further if you license tracks for compilations or for use on TV, in films and in adverts.

Success

This is possible, but can mean a very long slog in terms of time, effort and money. However, by running your own label you're effectively cutting out the middle man (the record company), so you stand to make a lot more money in the long term.

Money

There are higher profits to be made by cutting out the involvement of a record company. The overall sales value of the company increases with the quality and success of its portfolio of bands and artists. Chris Blackwell sold Island Records to PolyGram (Seagram) for Stg300 million and Richard Branson sold Virgin Music to EMI for Stg210 million.

Useful Contacts*Manufacturers:*

MPO 01-8221363
Sonopress 01-8409000
Trend Studios 01-6160600
Zomax 01-4056200

Industry Bodies and Organisations:

First Music Contact 01 8782244
The Irish Trade Board 01 2695011
Companies Registration Office 01 8045201
IDB House NI 0801232234488
International Federation of Phonographic Industries 01 2693344
Irish Music Rights Organisation 01 6614844
PRS NI and Scotland 0044 131 2265320
Mechanical Copyright Protection Society 01 6766940
Phonographic Performance (Ireland) Ltd. 01 2882464

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Planning

BAND TIPS: Music Business Plan by Peter Spellman



FirstMusicContact

One thing I would never do is invite friends to Boston without first sending them a map. More than most cities, Boston (for the out-of-towner) is an urban tangle with few rivals. I remember my first visit to the city back in '77. It was a psychological and emotional roller coaster to say the least. And I had a map!

Maps - they lay out the land and point us in the right direction. A good music business plan is a lot like a map, though the "land" you'll be dealing with here - the music industry - is both more tangled than the city of Boston and can end up pointing you in any variety of "right" directions at the same time.

A good music business plan is the map to the fulfilment of your goals. Whether you're a band, soloist, production house or some other business, a plan can turn foggy notions into operational strategies, hunches into actions, dreams into reality.

Dreams. This is where it all begins isn't it? For this reason I like to think of one's business plan as a "vision/mission." It starts with vision. Before your first gig you envisioned yourself playing it. Remember? Vision precedes mission and fuels it with the necessary energy to go the distance. A mission implement vision and provides the vehicle that moves you towards your goal. Together they're unstoppable!

Why Write A Music Business Plan?

There are a number of specific benefits to writing a music business plan. A well-thought out business plan will:

- *Clear the way for creative thinking*
- *Pinpoint strengths and weaknesses*
- *Identify obstacles and problems*
- *Expose hidden opportunities*
- *Set proper priorities*
- *Coordinate your marketing program*
- *Take the guesswork out of budgeting*
- *Allow for meaningful review and revision*

Your business plan should never be viewed as a one-time draft written in stone but instead as a provisional guideline to help you take strategic and effective steps toward the achievement of your goals. It is never really complete because it parallels and reflects the dynamics of your own growth and development.

Besides the benefit of self-revelation, there is another important reason to draw up a business plan:

To attract investors and secure loans. No one needs to tell you how much it costs to launch a successful music career in the 90's. Between equipment, insurance, taxes, travel, recording, mixing, manufacturing, promotion, advertising and various fees and commissions, today's musicians and bands are left with little else to call their own. Enter investors.

Investors are willing to put up a certain amount of dollars to launch your music project with the hope and expectation of a return on their investment. The most important thing they'll need in order to decide to invest in you or not is a well-thought out business plan. The same goes for seeking bank loans. A plan reflects professional responsibility to the lending institution and greatly increases your chances of securing a loan.

How to Structure A Music Business Plan

A music business plan will have six main components.

1. *A summary page*
2. *A description of your business*
3. *A marketing plan*
4. *An operations statement*
5. *A project time-line*
6. *Financial projections*

We will look at each in turn. You may want to make a rough outline for your own plan as you read this article. Don't be surprised, however, if your complete plan ends up being forty pages long! This should be expected.

Would you like some free help drafting your plan? Then contact your local SBDC (Small Business Development Center). This is a federal program that is part of the SBA (Small Business Administration) designed to provide small business owners with counsel and resources. Your tax dollars pay this so use it! The SBA has a Small Business Answering Desk (800-827-5722). which can answer many general business questions including the location of the SBDC office nearest you.

While you may not find them to be experts on the music industry, they are experts in creating and developing small businesses, and you are one. Let's first get an overall sense of where we're going by displaying a complete outline of a business plan:

I. Summary statement

II. Description of your business or project.

- A. History and background
- B. Management description
- C. Business structure

III. The market for your product or service

A. Market description

1. General market information
2. Specific market information
3. Competition profile

B. Marketing plan

1. Positioning
2. Marketing mix
3. Pricing philosophy
4. Method of sales/distribution
5. Customer service policy

IV. Operations

- A. Facilities and equipment
- B. Plans for growth and expansion
- C. Risks

V. Project time-line

VI. Financial information

- A. Financing required
- B. Current financial statements
- C. Financial projections

I. Summary Statement.

Here you want to answer the following questions as succinctly as possible: Who are you? What will you do? (goals). Why will the business be successful? How will it be financed? - and When do you think it will turn a profit? (Remember, a 'profit' is not how much money you make, but how much you keep). Be ruthlessly realistic!

It is also in the summary statement that you list the products or services being offered (e.g. CDs, tapes, performances, etc.) as well as the names and positions of all personnel involved. The summary should close with mention of anything that is unique about your project.

II. Description of your business or project

This section begins to flesh out the summarization above.

A. Begin first with the history and background of your project. This provides the overall context in which to view your current work. List all data that pertains to the various facets of your present business. Don't pad it with your whole life story, just the pertinent highlights that have brought you to the present moment.

B. A management description should follow next. How is your business project organized? What does the leadership look like? (it's style and command chain.) How are decisions made and facilitated? What kind of ongoing business meeting schedule will be followed to insure smooth operation?

C. Decide on the business structure you will use (i.e. sole proprietorship, partnership, corporation, etc.). This is one of the first questions the start-up business person should ask. The answer to this question has many legal and tax implications, varies greatly from state to state and from time to time. Again, seek the advice of your small business advisor at your local SBDC office.

III. The Market for your Product and/or Service

Now we are getting into the essence of what you're uniquely about. Marketing means selling and it is an absolute truth that unless a start-up business can sell its offering it will not survive. Getting orders - selling your recordings or performances to paying customers - is of crucial importance to a new business.

To compete successfully in the music business, then, you must follow the same strategy that every successful business person uses. You must:

* Develop a product- in this case, your music.

* Locate clients for your product - do market research.

* Bring your product to the marketplace - use sales technique to convince potential clients to buy your music.

Does this mean you're "selling out"? NO! Or I should say, it all depends on your attitude. If you have a killer recording or a hot performance to sell and you market it accordingly, then you're not selling out. You're simply bringing a desirable product to a ready audience.

If, on the other hand, you would sacrifice your mother for a chance to claw your way to the top, then yes, you're probably selling out. Again, it's attitude. And you have to determine this for yourself. O.K., now that we've cleared that up let's look at some of the various facets of your marketing plan.

A. Description of the market for your product/service.

The first thing you need is information about your market in order to correctly position your product and find your own unique niche within it. This is called market research and, like all of your planning, should be viewed as an ongoing process. You will need both general and specific information about your market.

1. General Market Information. The general market for musicians is the music industry. Without a general understanding about this larger market context you will have a difficult time trying to find your way within it. It is crucial, therefore, for today's musician to have a grasp of such things as record company structures, music publishing, recording contracts, distribution and music media, and how all of these work together to bring music to people. You can learn about the industry by talking with industry people, taking courses and reading books and trade magazines (see free resource list offer at end of article).

2. Specific Market Information. Here you will want to ask: What part of this larger market do I fit into? In other words, who are my customers? What is their general age, their sex, professions, lifestyle and interests? This information will prove crucial to the development of your marketing strategy. In addition to your customers you'll also want to describe your competition. Be as specific as possible. Gather information on three or four successful competitors, assess the relative strengths and weaknesses of each, and compare your product or service with similar ones in terms of price, promotion, distribution and customer satisfaction.

B. Marketing Plan

Now that you've gathered information on both your general and specific market share, you're now ready to develop your marketing plan or strategy. This too can be broken down into several component parts.

1. Positioning - This is related to finding your market "niche." No matter what products or services you provide, you can carve out a niche for them based on your experience, skills, and interests and then build up that niche as you work to serve it. Ask yourself questions like: What do I do best? Who needs that the most? Where can I provide that product or service that will give me a chance to expand what I do to utilize my other interests? What do I have to offer that is special or unique? The answers to these questions will help you "position" yourself to most effectively promote what you're selling.

2. Marketing Mix - The particular combination of marketing methods you choose for your marketing campaign is referred to as your "marketing mix." Methods can include news releases, sponsorships, networking, publicity flyers, contests and giveaways, classified ads, trade shows, radio spots, charitable donations and literally hundreds more.

When making your selection, keep in mind this fundamental rule of successful marketing: The measure of a successful marketing campaign is the extent to which it reaches at the lowest possible cost the greatest number of people who can and will buy your product or service. Generally speaking, the more of your time a marketing activity requires, the less money it costs you, and vice-versa. For example, networking costs almost nothing in money but plenty in time. On the other hand, advertising in a city newspaper costs a bundle while requiring little in time.

3. Pricing Philosophy - How much you charge for your product or service will depend on many variables. Here is where your research about your competitors comes in especially handy. Undercutting your competition is one common way to gain market share. But there is another approach. Research has shown that buyers, when making a purchase decision, select what they consider to be the best value - all things considered. And this suggests that value is equal to the benefits they perceive divided by the price. Price, therefore, is only one part of the purchase decision process. If you want to increase your customers' perceived value of your product, you can do so by either increasing the benefits or decreasing the price. It is almost always preferable to work on the benefits, both tangible and intangible, both rational and emotional, both large and small, that will make it possible to sell at a higher price.

4. Method of Sales/Distribution - This is related to your marketing mix and details the methods you will employ in implementing the various parts of your mix. For a musician, one method might be the use of a booking agent. Another might be a record distributor or, perhaps, mail order.

5. Customer Service Policy - When considering customer service it is always useful to ask yourself why you continue to frequent certain businesses. More than price more than product quality, you will often return again and again to these businesses because you feel taken care of. The people of those businesses go the all important extra mile to make you feel special. They anticipate your needs and provide for them in the various ways they deal with you.

See if you can translate elements of this customer service policy into your own. Write down your philosophy and then list all applications you can imagine related to your business. How can you go the extra mile with your clients? Find ways of distinguishing yourself from your competitors in this area and you will insure a faithful clientele for years to come.

IV. Operations -

This has to do with the overall physical and logistical manufacturing of your product or service. It typically has three parts to it:

A. Facilities and Equipment will encompass such things as your rehearsal space, office space, studio, manufacturers you use, your instruments, sound and light equipment and vehicles you use to haul it all around. A brief note on equipment insurance should also be included here. Investors like to see the founders of a company have a cash investment in the business in addition to "sweat equity".

B. Plans for Growth or Expansion - Here is where you project your more general goals three to five years into the future, What will you need when you progress from local to regional success? Regional to national? National to international? Perhaps you'll want to develop sub companies within your primary company. Maybe a publishing wing, or a video branch, or perhaps a recording studio. Think it through as clearly and completely as possible.

C. Risks - This is another very important part of the plan. Not only does it show you're being open and honest with your financing source, but it forces you to consider and assess alternative strategies in the event your original assumptions do not materialize.

V. Project Time Line -

Here you want to articulate the schedule for your goal achievement, both short-range (e.g., obtaining radio airplay, booking high-profile gigs, procuring management, etc.) and long-range (e.g., signing a recording contract, having your song performed by a mega-star, etc.). Think through the essential steps needed for the attainment of each goal.

VI. Financial Information -

No matter how wonderful your plan is it isn't going anywhere without capital investment, whether it's yours or someone else's. This final section of your plan should be broken down into three sub-sections: The financing required, current financial statements, and a three-year financial forecast. Needless to say, this is the part of the plan potential investors and lenders will concentrate on the most. So the following is written primarily with seeking investors in mind.

A. Financing Required - While your first thought may be to ask for cash exclusively, there may be other resources that would help you even more. Perhaps what you really need is some people power assistance, or a touring van, or a new computer. These can sometimes be provided more easily than cash.

Whatever you decide you need, make sure it's based on a hardheaded and realistic assessment of the true costs of achieving your goals. A basic rule of thumb in estimating costs is to add 15% onto whatever figure you come up with. This covers all those additional "hidden" and unexpected expenses, which inevitably accrue.

B. Current Financial Projection: Financial projections are a key part of a business plan. They provide the reader with an idea of where you think the business is going. Perhaps more importantly, they tell a lot about your intrinsic good sense and understanding of the difficulties your company faces.

Often, financial projections are optimistic to an outlandish extent. They are usually prefaced with words like, "Our conservative forecast is..." Do not use the word "conservative" when describing your forecast. Be careful also not to use the "hockey stick" approach to forecasting, that is, little growth in sales and earnings for the first couple of years followed by a sudden rapid upward surge in sales and totally unrealistic profit margins. Excessively optimistic projections ruin your credibility as a responsible business person.

Include monthly cash flow projections, and quarterly or annual order projections (e.g. for studio time, CO manufacturing, etc.) profit and loss projections, and capital expenditure projections (see your accountant for explanations of the above terms). In making financial projections it is usually a good idea to include "best guess," "high side," and "low side" numbers. Sensible investors want to know what returns they can expect and especially how they will achieve liquidity. Tell them. Again, include alternative strategies. Don't worry if you feel a bit overwhelmed by the avalanche of detail your business plan requires. Who wouldn't? Give yourself time. It's helpful to set yourself a goal for completing the first draft of your plan - say three months from now.

Begin with one section at a time and meet periodically with your small business advisor to review your plan's development. He or she will be able to discern blind spots as well as affirm the plan's overall direction. If you're thinking of foregoing the effort altogether and just "winging" it, just remember that no planning inevitably leads to wasted time, money and energy - all three in short supply.

Remember too that the musicians you currently respect rose to their success with strategic planning and a keen sense of what "doing business" really means. Furthermore, today we are seeing the smarter bands being brought home because they know the inner workings of the music business and how to best organize their limited resources in order to penetrate it. How about you? Are you planning for success?

by Peter Spellman - Copyright © 1999-2000 MUSIC BUSINESS SOLUTIONS

Director of Career Development at Berklee College of Music, Boston, and author of The Self-Promoting Musician: Do-it-Yourself Strategies for Independent Music Success (Berklee Press). You can find him at Music Business Solutions.

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Recording

BAND TIPS: 12 Steps to Recording



FirstMusicContact

Recording your first demo is essential to the development of any young artist. It's the ultimate reference to your sound/style/attitude. There are many ways to approach your first recording, these are a few tips that should make the recording a successful experience.

1. Establish who the tape is aimed at (record companies or venues/promoters). If it's a record company it needs to sound like a marketable product, if it's for a venue/promoter, it needs to sound like the best gig you've ever done.
2. Decide where you are going to do the recording (budget and availability will go towards determining this) meet the engineer and find out what other work she/he has done before.
3. Familiarise yourself with what the recording process is. (what is multi-tracking? What is an overdub? Can we play to a click? What is a click?)
4. Record yourself rehearsing before you go into a studio situation, a portable cassette will do. (Now you have a reference to give the engineer)
5. Know what you want to sound like (bring reference CDs i.e. "I like the guitar sound on this" or "the drum sound on this is what I want". This can save hours of unnecessary time wasting).
6. How many songs do you include on your tape? Three songs is more than adequate, avoid the fifteen minute masterpiece ...a demonstration [DEMO] is all that's usually required.
7. Ensure that the songs chosen are well rehearsed and the structure/arrangement of the songs are familiar to all members of the group.
8. Have a copy of the lyrics/arrangement (of all songs) for the engineer recording the session.
9. Find out what the studio charge for the master tapes. (sometimes it's cheaper to purchase your own).
10. Always bring your own D.A.T.. Some studios do not provide these tapes, if you want a cassette copy, bring your own cassettes (it's a recording studio, not a music supply shop!)
11. Do a thorough check on all instruments needed for the session. Re-string and set-up any stringed instruments, re-skin and re-tune drums, check all FX for batteries/ correct power supplies, have a spare set of batteries, guitar leads and straps, always have two good quality electronic tuners.
12. Come to the studio a little before the session and ensure that all members turn up on time.

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BAND TIPS: Demo Fact Sheet



FirstMusicContact

Step one: Deciding the songs

The most important thing to consider when approaching this whole process is to have all your decisions about what songs you are going to record and why, made before you as much as book a studio. There are three common reasons people record a demo

To send to a record label. To send to a publisher. To send to venues to book gigs

In each of these there are common rules of thumb

Choose a versatile set. Rather than putting songs that sound the same on your demo you should use it as an opportunity to showcase your range both vocally and lyrically.

Put your best song first (self explanatory really) Keep in mind that A&R receive quite a number of demos on a daily basis you should be aiming to grab their attention as soon as possible so no instrumental solos at the beginning of the song!!!!

Step two: Booking the studio

Know in advance what equipment you will need or will be working on. If you are unsure then arrange to have a preliminary meeting with the studio manager, most reputable studios have no problem with this. It doesn't have to look good to sound good. Studios with frappecinno makers and leather sofas will usually have a price that matches. While comfort is important, especially if you have booked a couple a days, the equipment, acoustics and engineers should be top of your priority list. It is always a good idea to ask about past clientele of the studio, have a listen and see if this is what you're looking for.

How the end product turns out is up to you. The more the help you can give the engineer, the better he can help to give you the best possible result. It's always a good idea to bring recordings of rehearsals so the engineer has an idea of your sound. Also you should bring in example of other bands / musicians whose productions you like so the engineer knows what direction you want to go in.

Step three: In the studio.

There's an unspoken etiquette to being in a studio, here are a couple of dos and don'ts.

Do:

- turn up on time, it's your money you're wasting if you don't
- tune all instruments (including your voice) before the start of a session

Don't:

- bring all your friends along. avoid having your time in studio turn into a social event. You need to concentrate on getting the best possible results from this opportunity.

Step four. the BEWARE list

Beware of studios trying to keep your master tape. Depending on the type of system used (digital or analog) you will either get your material on tape (analog €250) or dat (digital €25). Most analog studios will rent you space on a tape allowing you up to two weeks to change your mind about your finished mix. Make sure that the studio has no ownership of your tapes; the only instance in which this happens is if you don't pay your final fee.

Beware of studios looking for royalty points. Under no circumstances should you include a signing away of royalties to a studio. They are legally entitled to nothing other than the agreed payment for studio hire. Get all costs and conditions for both parties in a signed contract before payment and have someone (fmc) look over it before you sign. Do all this in advance of your recording session.

DO NOT SIGN ANYTHING OTHER THAN A HIRE CONTRACT. Some studios have conned artists in to deals they have found impossible to get out of by they publishing or recording. If in doubt about anything you are being asked to sign then ask for time to look over it and show it to someone in the industry (fmc).

While these are actual events it is true to say that for the most part recording studios are staffed with great and talented professionals who will make your time with them as enjoyable and productive as they possibly can.

Demo studios

Recording Studios recommended by Irish bands on Breaking Tunes:

Cork:

Data Recording Studio +353 (0) 857632066

Limerick

Noel Hogan's Studio <http://www.noelhogan.com/>
Sonic Audio Studio sonicaudioirl@gmail.com

Dublin:

K9 Studio's +353 (0) 87 858 0004
A.P. Studios +353 (0)1 44 33 903

Derry:

Blast Furnace +44 2871 377870
Smalltown America +44 2871370442

Pressing Plants: Mid Atlantic Digital : 048 663 29437, Tony Mohan
A to Z: 00 44 181 9030046

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BAND TIPS: Home Recording by Joe Shambro



FirstMusicContact

My first recording studio was in my dorm room at Louisiana Tech University; I remember spending a lot of time getting the right sound with an incredibly limited budget.

If you're a college student musician moving into a dorm this fall, you might be considering turning your dorm (or small apartment) into a usable recording space, but your limited budget might make the goal of quality recording seem far off.

Fear not! It's never been a better time to set up a home studio; technology is growing fast, and the gap between expensive and inexpensive gear -- both financial and quality-wise -- is getting smaller every day.

Step One: The Recording Computer

Most everybody coming to college is bringing a computer with them; in fact, if you've got a computer made anytime in the last couple years, chances are it's perfect for recording!

Macs are widely considered the best for recording; their operating stability combined with built-in recording software make them perfect. If you choose a PC, make sure it runs with at least 1GB of RAM -- you'll also want a large hard drive, at least 7200 RPM, and make sure to defragment it often! Firewire and USB ports are also necessary for connecting your recording interfaces.

Step 2: Choose a Microphone

At very least, you'll need to choose a single microphone to do just about everything. If you've got a little bigger budget, you can choose two or three. It's up to you, your needs, and your budget.

If you plan on recording acoustic guitar and vocals, a single large-diaphragm condenser microphone will do great. Check out the Marshall MXL V67G; at \$99, it's a killer deal! Other great mics, especially for acoustic guitar, is the Oktava MC012, which are available cheap on eBay. It's up to you how much you spend, but just remember this simple rule: the better the source, the better the recording. Tune your instrument well.

Step 3: Recording Software

There's no doubt about it: Pro Tools is THE industry standard used in every major recording studio (and the majority of small home studios).

With cheap options such as the MBox series, it's never been a better time to start with Pro Tools. They contain everything you need to get started in one box, except speakers (monitors) and microphones.

If Pro Tools isn't in the cards for you, there's many other options. Apple's Logic is an awesome choice, as are many smaller packages, like Acoustica's Mixcraft. It's up to you and your budget what you use, but look for something with multi-track capability.

Step 4: The Recording Interface

Choosing what recording interface to use is difficult, especially with the huge selection within the \$200-500 price point.

If you plan to use Pro Tools, you'll need one of Digidesign's approved interfaces specifically for Pro Tools, either theirs or the M-Audio or Mackie compatible interfaces.

If you're wanting to use Garageband, you're in luck -- your Mac doesn't need anything other than a USB Microphone (check out Samson's USB line) and some speakers/headphones!

Anything else, and you'll want a good interface by a company like M-Audio or Apogee. It's up to you and your budget what you get.

Step 5: Audio Monitoring

In order to make great recordings, you'll need quality audio monitoring. In a tight situation like a dorm room or small apartment, you'll want to consider high-quality headphones or in-ear personal monitors.

Good speaker monitor brands to look for include Ediol, Event, and KRK. It's up to your budget what you choose, but the better quality, the better recording!

Considering headphones and in-ear style monitors, Sony's MDR-V6 is the standard for studio headphones, at around \$100. Future Sonics, Ultimate Ears, and Westone make great in-the-ear monitors which give you studio-quality sound directly in your ear.

Last But Not Least: Don't Forget the Accessories

Now that you're ready to record, don't forget the accessories! You'll have a computer, interface, microphone, and monitors, but what next?

Make sure to pick up at least one microphone stand, as well as a pop filter if you plan on recording vocals. You'll also want to make sure you have plenty of high-quality cabling between your components, and a power conditioner isn't a bad idea, either. From there, the sky's the limit! There's hundreds of fun recording toys out there -- and if you're like most of us, you'll find a reason to need most of them at some point!

Mastering & Selling

Keep in mind, after your studio masterpiece is done, you've got a little bit of work to do before it's ready for sale or distribution.

The first step is to have your album "mastered". This process makes your recording sound complete -- it evens out the levels, corrects minor frequency deficiencies, and makes your tracks flow. This process can be done by you, but the most efficient is to hire a service.

From there, you'll need to consider distribution and duplication. By far, the most popular way to sell your album indie is online via iTunes. With a few tools, you'll be on your way to indie recording success!

Written by Joe Shambro of Ask.com

FMC 2011

Gigging

BAND TIPS: DIY Gig Booking



FirstMusicContact

(This article is written with a USA context in mind, but all the info is transferable to Ireland and the Europe)

"My band seems to have this ongoing discussion, (more like an argument), about how many times a month we should be playing in our home town. Friends in other bands tell us not to play in town more than twice a month. According to them, we will "burn out our fans." But I think they are wrong and we should play as much as we can. What's the right answer?"

The answer to this ongoing question is to try to play in your home market between 2-4 times a month. But instead of just leaving you with that thought, lets explore the answer so you can have a full understanding of why this is the right number.

As I have always preached, your career needs to be anchored on your live shows and it needs to start in your home market. Especially since your live shows and the "proper" pre-show promotion will be 75% of all your future sales.

Your home market needs to be a large metropolitan city near you or that you are living in, that preferably has over 1 million people living there. If not, focus on the largest metropolitan city in your state that has at least 500,000 people. With that in mind, lets get down to business.

Artists will quickly say, "don't play more than a couple times a month because you will burn out your mailing list." They are right! If your primary focus for promoting your next show is to merely let your mailing list know, then it is true, your existing fans will get tired of being promoted to. Especially if they have come to a couple of your shows in the past and have bought your CD. You can bet they are "burnt out" by your ongoing requests for them to come to your future shows.

Most artists do not think creatively when promoting their next show. They make the mistakes of handing out flyers instead of sample tapes or sample CDs, or spending hundreds of dollars on a newspaper or magazine advertisements, that no one can hear their music through. So lets start from scratch.

Lets use Los Angeles as the major market that you live in. LA itself is approximately 90 miles in size (counting in the smaller cities around it). This is important to know because of the following reasons:

Creating the sample tapes and CDs, doing your market research on the targeted areas around the club, where your potential fans hang out and shop, allowing for the time to hand out the 200-300 tapes or CDs minimum, you are going to need to generate new fans. Plus the extra time, you will need to "redesign" the club for your show. If you find that you can do a couple of shows in the South part of your city and 1 or 2 in the North, East or West and adequately promote them, you can consider 4 to 6 shows per month.

Keep in mind that your city is a big place with over a million people. You are not going to get the same people at your next show, unless you invite them. Even though your city may seem limited in places to play, or even geographically on the map, don't let your mind become "limited" on what's available to you.

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Tim Sweeney is head of Tim Sweeney & Associates, an artist development company based in Temecula, California. His book, *The Complete Guide To Internet Promotion For Musicians, Artists & Songwriters*, has an excellent outline of exactly what a web site that generate sales should look like and what you should have in it.

To order any of Tim Sweeneys' books, contact the FMC at 8782244

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BAND TIPS: Running a Charity gig



FirstMusicContact

A charity, or benefit gig is one where musicians donate their services either for nothing or for a percentage of their normal fee.

Charity gigs have been known to lose money before now, either through bad production or bad luck. Therefore it is important to decide at the outset why one is running the gig: is it for publicity or fundraising? Gigs are quite a good way of publicising a cause, but an uncertain way of raising funds. Have you a network of ticket sellers or do you depend on your artists drawing power?

Some examples of approximate production costs:

1. Pub venue: €100 to €600, depending on printing and advertising costs.
2. Largish ballroom (capacity c.800+): €4,500 to €10,000, depending on size of PA, number of crew, advertising costs and insurance.
3. Theatre: €3,800 to €8,000, depending on size of PA, number of crew, advertising costs and insurance.

Timing is important in two ways:

1. Try to find out what other concerts are planned around the time of the benefit, and be prepared to change the planned date if necessary. Your gig is doomed if the biggest draw is a singer/songwriter who already plays down the road once a week, while the opposition is featuring a “flavour of the month” band and publicising it three times a night on television.
2. Give yourself two to three months run up to the gig. The advertisement in the newspapers on the day of the gig should confirm what people already know: i.e. do not rely on a newspaper ad to fill a venue - you need to have:

- posters designed, printed and erected.
- a press release sent to music press, local and national newspapers, a few weeks in advance of the show, followed by
- telephone calls to music journalists
- as many mentions as possible on local radio stations,
- handbills left in pubs, restaurants, colleges etc.
- word of mouth - perhaps use the “grapevine” which is part of the charity for which you are running the gig.

If, on the other hand, you can get a church or community hall free, fill it with no publicity at €5 a head and have a local band with its own PA play for nothing, go for it.

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BAND TIPS: TOUR MANAGEMENT by LISA TINLEY



FirstMusicContact

DO

- Budget in advance

Put together a realistic budget in advance of the tour with as much detail as you can, including crew costs, transport, accommodation, equipment etc. Look at it against your projected income (if you have a guarantee V percentage only include the guaranteed amount). Allow some contingency.

- Prioritise what crew you can take on the road

If you are not in a position to tour with a full crew, prioritise based on what you can afford. Start with a sound engineer, if you can build a good relationship with an engineer who makes you sound the best you can this is invaluable.

- Read your contract

Read your contracts, know how long you are expected to perform for and most importantly what you will be paid.

- Bring Merchandise

Be inventive with your merchandise and it's always a good idea to have members of the band go out to the merch area after the show. You'll definitely sell more.

- Advance your gigs

Contact each venue on your tour to confirm all the details including production details, access time for load-in, sound check times, doors and show times. Make sure you send them your stage plan and channel list in advance.

- Put together an itinerary

If you are doing a run of shows, put together an itinerary with all the relevant times and details on it and make sure all the band and crew have a copy.

DON'T

- Be Late

Turn up when you are supposed to for your sound check and your show. When you are late you make everyone else late.

- Do the dog on the production and dressing room rider

You can have what ever you want (once you get to a certain stage in your career) but remember you are paying for all of it. So if you don't need 4 local crew to load your backline in or half cases of champagne each night don't put it on the rider.

- Do the dog on the guest list

Don't put everyone you know on the guest list, get them to buy tickets especially when you are just starting out. Selling tickets is always good for you.

- Waste good support opportunities

If you get offered shows with a band in a similar genre that are selling out bigger shows than you are, make the most of it.

- Act like rock stars with everyone you deal with

Being nice to the people you will be dealing with at every venue, the local promoter, the venue crew etc. People will treat you a lot better if you don't behave like twats.

- Forget to settle your show

At the end of your show make sure you go through your settlement with the promoter especially if you have a percentage in your contract.

BAND TIPS: DJ/ Artist/ Performer/ Musician PERFORMANCE BOOKING AGREEMENT



NOTE: This is a standard, basic booking agreement meant to offer a structure for a booking contract based on various booking contracts that the FMC have devised and provided information on, It has no legal status and all legal agreements should be cleared by a registered solicitor.

This agreement ("Agreement") is mutually agreed upon by _____ also known as _____ ("Artist / Band / DJ") and _____, representative of _____ ("Promoter") on the _____ (date of Agreement).

1. SERVICES TO BE PROVIDED BY ARTIST / BAND / DJ

a) Provide at least a _____ DJing appearance at a dance party ("Event") located in the _____ (city and state/country) geographic area on _____ ("Date") between the hours of _____ (start time) and _____ (end time) ("Time").

2. SERVICES TO BE PROVIDED BY THE PROMOTER

a) Promoter agrees to provide all entertainment at the Event other than Artist / Band / DJ.

b) Promoter agrees to provide a venue for the Event, all necessary permits and licenses to lawfully conduct the Event, including obtaining and paying all work visas for Artist / Band / DJ as necessary, and all equipment for the operation of the Event and the performance by Artist / Band / DJ.

c) Promoter agrees to contact the following travel agent to make any and all necessary arrangements for prompt payment of airline costs incurred in Artist / Band / DJ's transportation to and from Event:
_____ (travel agent) _____ (phone number) for travel reservations from _____ to _____ and back, to arrive on _____ (arrival date), no later than three (3) hours prior to Event, and to depart on _____ (departure date) on _____ (airline).

d) Promoter agrees to provide Artist / Band / DJ hotel accommodations with a checkout time no earlier than three (3) hours before the airline departure time, consisting of ___ room(s) with 24 hour room service for a period of ___ night(s).

e) Promoter agrees to provide transportation, car service, or shuttle for Artist / Band / DJ to and from airports and Event location. If Artist / Band / DJ handles any transportation costs, Promoter agrees to promptly reimburse Artist / Band / DJ for the reasonable costs of such transportation.

f) Promoter agrees to provide a sober, (i.e. not intoxicated or inebriated by alcohol, narcotics and/or otherwise), responsible, trusted person ("Driver"), in their employ to escort Artist / Band / DJ to and from hotel, airport, venue, etc as well as to assist her in the event of problems checking in hotel, getting in venue, boarding flight, etc.

g) Driver is required to remain "on call" by way of cellular communication and/or pager throughout the duration of Artist / Band / DJ's stay, be in possession of a valid driver's license, hold current auto insurance on vehicle driven in amounts customary and reasonable and be in possession of detailed directions both to, from and including hotel, airport and Event location.

3. COMPENSATION OF ARTIST / BAND / DJ

a) Promoter shall pay Artist / Band / DJ the sum of €____.____ in EURO ("Fee") for the rendering of service(s) hereunder. Payment, along with any correspondence pertaining to this Agreement is to be mailed to:

_____ (address)

b) Promoter shall pay promptly the sum total of all receipts for lodging Artist / Band / DJ unless either Promoter or Artist / Band / DJ has made other arrangements or reservations to accommodate Artist / Band / DJ.

c) Promoter shall pay Artist / Band / DJ 50 percent of the Fee as a good faith non-refundable deposit no later than one (1) week after receipt of this contract in order to secure booking engagements. Payment should be made in the form of cash in € (via wire transfer), cashiers cheque, or money order made payable to Artist / Band / DJ.

d) Promoter shall pay Artist / Band / DJ the remaining Fee no later than one (1) hour after her arrival in the form of cash in € unless otherwise agreed, and prior to the commencement of Artist / Band / DJ's performance.

e) Promoter shall not offset any expenses or taxes of any type against the Fee.

4. CANCELLATION

a) In the event that the Promoter cancels the Event with at least 30 days prior notice from its scheduled Date and Time as detailed hereunder, no refund of any monies paid in advance to Artist / Band / DJ shall be made and the balance of the monies due to Artist / Band / DJ shall be waived.

b) In the event that within 30 days of the Event, as detailed hereunder, the Promoter cancels the Event or if the Event fails to happen for any reason including Act(s) of God and/or closure by any local, state, or EU Law the full amount due shall be payable to Artist / Band / DJ.

c) Notice of cancellation in advance shall be deemed received only upon direct voice contact between Artist / Band / DJ and Promoter. In the event that this is not possible Promoter should notify Artist / Band / DJ by written communication sent via overnight express delivery.

d) It is hereby agreed and understood that should Artist / Band / DJ fail to appear for reasons such as any Act of God, civil war, natural disaster or airline or other transportation problem over which Artist / Band / DJ has no control, this Agreement still stands.

5. INVOICING AND PROMOTIONS

a) Artist / Band / DJ shall be billed on all promotional materials

as: _____ [name and affiliations of Artist / Band / DJ]

b) Promoter shall not represent Artist / Band / DJ on any promotional materials through the use of derogatory descriptions, gender specific terms or unsuitable images (such as obscene, violent or degrading depictions of women). Any questions regarding the appropriateness of a word, phrase or image should be directed to Artist / Band / DJ.

c) The production of and/or distribution of any/all promotional materials displaying Artist / Band / DJ's name(s) or likeness prior to Artist / Band / DJ being in receipt of the deposit required by paragraph 3(c) is unacceptable.

d) Promoter agrees to provide Artist / Band / DJ with copies of all promotional material involved in Event, such as fliers, posters, advertisements, photographs, video and audio recordings, within one week of end of Event.

6. EQUIPMENT PROVISIONS

a) Equipment shall be provided by the Promoter as follows:

Two (2) Technic model 1200 or 1210 Professional grade turntables including needle cartridges. (or whatever equip needed)

At least one (1) spare needle cartridge, per turntable, to be made readily available to Artist / Band / DJ during performance.

Professional grade mixer with cross fader. · Two (2) loud monitor speakers or one (1) loud monitor speaker that may be moved either to left and/or to right of the turntables.

Monitor volume must be accessible to Artist / Band / DJ during the performance.

Monitor power must be derived from a source other than that of the house system.

7. MISCELLANEOUS

a) Promoter indemnifies Artist / Band / DJ from any liability arising from actions of the Event Promoter, or Promoter's officers, directors, shareholders, principals, employees or agents, or arising out of the Event itself.

b) In the event that any legal action is brought against Artist / Band / DJ as a result of the Event Promoter, or Promoter's officers, directors, shareholders, principals, employees or agents, or arising out of the Event itself, Promoter agrees to bear all costs associated in the defence of itself and Artist / Band / DJ in such action(s).

c) This Agreement may be changed only by mutual agreement of authorized representatives of the parties in writing.

d) This Agreement and conduct pursuant thereto shall be governed in all respects by the laws of Ireland without reference to its principles of conflict of laws. Any disputes between the parties as to the Agreement shall be litigated before a court in California

and each party hereto consents and submits to the jurisdiction of such court over such dispute.

e) If Promoter signs below as any entity other than himself or herself as an individual, Promoter agrees that s/he is lawfully authorized to enter into this Agreement on behalf of such entity and that the entity represented is in good standing with any local, state, EU jurisdictions.

f) In the event that (1) Artist / Band / DJ is advertised for event but is not sent deposit or (2) proper travel arrangements to secure the booking have not been made, Promoter agrees that it is responsible for paying Artist / Band / DJ the full amount of the deposit regardless of whether Artist / Band / DJ is present at event. This payment should be sent via overnight express delivery no later than one (1) week following the event.

g) Promoter is required to ensure that the stage/DJ booth is kept locked at all times. Promoter is to ensure that no other person other than the Artist / Band / DJ and/or Event technical staff are to enter stage/DJ booth area, at any time, before and/or during Artist / Band / DJ's performance.

h) Promoter is required to fulfill all of Artist / Band / DJ's reasonable requests in regards to food and beverage needs and guest list privileges at the Event.

i) The number of persons attending Event shall not affect the said terms and conditions contained herein.

j) Nothing contained herein shall be construed as creating any agency, partnership or other form of joint enterprise between the parties.

k) This Agreement may not be assigned, in whole or in part, by either party without the prior written approval of the other party to this Agreement. This Agreement shall bind and inure to the benefit of the parties and their respective successors and assigns.

l) This Agreement constitutes the entire agreement and understanding between the parties with respect to the subject matter hereof. IN WITNESS WHEREOF, the parties have executed this Agreement as of the date set forth above.

Promoter(s): _____ (signature)

Representative of: _____

Artist / Band / DJ: _____ (signature)

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Updated April 2004

BAND TIPS: Bandtips Promoters by Karl Geraghty



FirstMusicContact

YOU'RE A BAND:

There are 4 options really:

1. Rent the venue. If you're confident you can pull a crowd then put your money where your mouth is. Speak to the venue and see what's included in the rent. Do they have a PR person employed that can help promote the show? Does it cost more to rent on a weekend and is that worth it? (ie, if it's €100 extra and you're charging €5 – will you get an extra 20 people on a Friday instead of a Saturday)
2. Get on the bill of a new band or showcase night. This is a chance to show the venue/promoter that you can bring a crowd so make sure you drag your mates/family/co-workers etc. along. If you show that you're worth 30 or 40 punters on a weeknight you're more likely to get support slots.
3. Support slots. These are usually chosen by whoever is renting the venue, ie the promoter or headline act. Target specific shows and do the research – don't expect others to do it for you. I could spend a whole day replying to bands about who is promoting this show, where to get in touch with that band etc. but I don't have the time. If you want the slot bad enough do the leg work.
4. Get paid. Once you've proven that you can bring a crowd you'll be in a position to negotiate a deal with the venue or promoter. This could involve a door split after cost or a fee vs a percentage. This will only happen after you've proven you can put bums in seats though.

YOU'RE A PROMOTER:

Do the research before confirming the show. Is there another gig on that night that might detract from yours? How many people paid in to see your headliner at their last show in your town? What was the ticket price? Is there a new album coming out before the show? Have they got someone doing PR?

Do agree a budget in advance. Make sure the band/agent/manager know the logic behind your offer. Include money for advertising, (and how it will be spent) a rider, a soundman etc. Don't forget to deduct any ticket charges, VAT and IMRO.

Do keep posters (especially the smaller ones) as simple as possible. There's no point in trying to put too much information in or getting too fancy and not being able to read it from a distance or not having it jump out at people walking by. All you're trying to do is let people know that band A is playing on date B in venue C. If your poster works they'll find out where to get tickets, what the band's website is, the address of the venue, when the album is out, what time doors are at etc. And make sure the headline act's name is big and easy to read! The bottom line is the poster is there to draw attention to the gig and not give you every piece of info about it.

Do Communicate. So many of the little problems that can end up in arguments on the day can be avoided by making sure production manager A has spoken to soundman B. What time is everyone arriving in the venue? Do the band want seats brought in? What time is the curfew? Is there someone to sell merch? Small issues easily dealt with in advance that can needlessly cause grief on the night.

Don't put on that band. (again) Too often you see bands playing on a nearly weekly basis and watering down their audience. As a promoter you need to make sure you know what other shows the bands are playing. With money tight, this is more important than ever – no one benefits from a poorly attended show.

Don't pull punches about ticket sales. Let the artist representatives know how pre-sales (if you're doing them) are going. If you're expecting the majority of tickets to be sold on the door – tell them that. If the show isn't doing as well as you expected, let them know this and see how you can work together and change this.

Don't forget to say thanks. Now that your show has been such a success you'll want to do another show with the band. Following up a successful show will help you build good relationships, not just with the band you've just promoted but with other bands represented by the same agent/manager etc.

<http://www.theworkmansclub.com/>
www.facebook.com/TheWorkmansClub

BAND TIPS: CD Duplication



FirstMusicContact

MASS PRODUCTION OF CDs

You've decided to go it alone as an independent record label and get the CDs made yourself, so where do you start, and what do you need?

Money. No CD manufacturer will give you credit, they'll want payment (cash, credit card, banker's draft) up front. Some even require payment with the order, although most will accept payment when the goods are ready for collection. The bigger your budget, the more CDs you can buy as the unit cost goes down as the quantity goes up; if 500 CDs cost, for example, EUR 1,400 you may find that 1,000 CDs will only cost another EUR 300!

ISRC Codes. Before you do the final Mastering, get onto PPI for these. Without these embedded in your PQ Master, royalty payments - which should be paid to you on every radio play - may not be paid.

A Registered Barcode. How would you feel if your CD was selling better than U2, but does not show up on the charts? It can happen. You need a registered barcode printed onto your CD packaging. Make sure your CD plant can supply this to you.

Master CD or DAT. Ideally this should be "Mastered" and contain PQ and ISRC codes, as many CD plants require all materials "ready to go". Some plants, such as Trend Studios, offer a full Mastering service. Most recording studios also claim to offer this service but, while their recording facilities may be superb, the Mastering process is a very specialised art, a marriage of human skill and technology, and it may be best to go to a specialist house.

Packaging. Have you decided how you want your CDs packaged? Look at your own CD collection, see what's in the shops, decide what you want and give a sample to your designer (we'll get to him/her next.) Bear in mind that the more sophisticated packaging options may be costly, especially if you only have a budget to produce one thousand CDs, or less.

A Designer. It's no good giving a CD plant a worn photograph of the band and a handwritten list of the songs, they will require finished artwork. This means a professional design produced in QuarkXpress or similar - and doing something on your home computer in Word or a cheap "design programme" does not count as finished artwork. If you do, this will lead to - at best - delays, at worst, your lovely colour pictures coming out in black and white.

Delivery and Storage. Consider how you will get your finished CDs home, to your distributor or to the shops. The driver of the 51 bus may object to letting you on with 10 large boxes, and your mum's Ka or Clio may not be big enough to carry 1,000 CDs; your bedroom might get a bit crowded if you try to store them there.

Talk to your chosen CD plant ahead of the project and get as much advice and information as possible from them. Do NOT book the venue for the launch before you have a solid commitment from the CD plant on a completion date; they will not give this to you until your masters and artwork are ready.

CD Plants in Ireland:

MPO 01-8221363

Sonopress 01-8409000

Trend Studios 01-6160600

Zomax 01-4056200

Note that there are numerous brokers or agents who claim to be manufacturers, but who simply take your materials and forward them to a third party (possibly in a foreign country). If in doubt, ask if they'll show you around their plant!

Paul Waldron

General Manager

Trend Studios

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Promotion

BAND TIPS: RELEASING A RECORD by Greg McAteer



FirstMusicContact

Anyone can release a record as long as they observe a few simple guidelines.

1. You must notify the copyright owners or their agents (normally MCPS of your intention to manufacture a record at least 14 days before you do it. MCPS will send you a form called a Statutory Notice which you use to submit the relevant details i.e. the track sequence, song titles, writers, copyright owners (if known) and name and address of pressing plant and quantity to be manufactured. Doing this early has advantages for the record company. MCPS can identify the correct copyright owners at the time of making the record and this can save reprinting of sleeves if the copyright owner of a song has changed. You are required by law to correctly identify the writer and copyright owner on the record/CD sleeve.
2. You must arrange to pay a fee, known as a mechanical royalty, to the owners of any copyright musical works on the recording. Most musical works are owned by composers or publishers who are members of the MCPS and it is to MCPS that you pay their mechanical royalties.
3. If the copyright owner is not a member of the MCPS then you must pay the mechanical royalty directly to them. If you can't trace the copyright owner you must arrange to hold a sum in reserve with which to pay the royalty if they subsequently make themselves known to you.
4. If you want to use a song which has never been released on a record before you must seek the permission of the copyright owner before doing so. If the song has been released you are free to release your version as long as you pay the mechanical royalty and notify the owners or MCPS.

Do I have to be an MCPS member to release a record?

No. MCPS represents the people who own the copyright works which appear on records so record companies are not normally members of MCPS.

How are mechanical royalties worked out?

The mechanical royalty is worked out as a percentage (currently 8.5%) of the dealer price, i.e. the price the record shop pays for the record. If all the copyright musical works on the record are owned by MCPS members, then the entire mechanical royalty of 8.5% of the dealer price is collected and distributed to the copyright owners. If some works are owned by publishers or songwriters who are not MCPS members MCPS do not collect their portion. MCPS only collects as much of the royalty as it represents.

What about royalties on a demo?

If the music on a demo is owned by MCPS members then you will have to pay for its use on your demo. Of course, in practice most songs on demos are written by the bands themselves and the writers will rarely have joined MCPS this early in their career so if the songs haven't been assigned to an MCPS publisher member there would be no royalty collected.

For more information contact Denise Coleman, MCPS (Ireland) Ltd, Copyright House, Pembroke Row, Lower Baggot Street, Dublin 2. Tel: 01 6766940 Fax: 01 6616316

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BAND TIPS: How Do I Get My Label Distributed



FirstMusicContact

This document was prepared by Twinbrook Music. It originally appeared on the Music Business Solutions Web site and refers mainly to distribution in the US but is also helpful for the European market.

<http://www.mbsolutions.com>

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If some of this seems ridiculously basic, you're way ahead of the game!

1. What's the first step?

Send us a sample of your product. Most distributors accept finished product for consideration only. CD's are the format of choice. Most distributors rarely consider cassette only releases for distribution, and they no longer deal with vinyl for the moment. Most distributors are strictly distributors and not a label (i.e. they do not manufacture finished CD's from your master). The music should be professionally recorded, and the artwork should be appropriate for the genre.

If you are pressing your own CDs and selling them, in distributor's eyes you are a label. A label must have its own name, catalog numbers, and Universal Product Code. We recommend a trademark search when naming your company. When designing the packaging, the catalog number (preferably consisting of a three letter label abbreviation followed by the number, [or instance ARC 1001) should be clearly visible on the spines, The catalog number should be the same for CD and Cassette. The UPC Code Bar Code) must be on the back cover of the CD and Cassette. Most distributors cannot distribute any product that is not bar coded, All of their important accounts currently insist on bar codes to track product. If you already have salable product manufactured without bar codes, this can be remedied by having decals printed with the appropriate codes.

For information on obtaining our own UPC code, Contact The Uniform Code Council, Inc. 8163 Old Yankee Road, Suite J, Dayton, OH 45456 (513) 435 3870.

(For information on the Irish or UK equivalent contact FMC)

2. How do distributors decide what to pick up for distribution?

The most important thing to remember is that the distributor is your customer. They purchase pre-recorded music that they believe they can sell to stores, who then sell to the consumer. There are a great number of factors that weigh upon their decision to distribute a particular recording or catalogue. Some of the most important questions they ask upon presentation of finished product are:

Is the artist well known with an established following?

Does the artist have a sales track record in the mainstream record trade?

Is there independent radio and/or retail promotion?

Is there a co-op ad budget? (see #10 below)

If this is a new artist, what sort of promotion can they expect from the label or the artist that will help sell records?

Is the artist actively performing or touring in their area?

Is there any current radioactivity on this title?

Are there any well-known guest musicians?

Does the label have the resources to press enough products if the demand becomes great?

What are the label's upcoming releases, and when can they expect them?

Does the label have a sellable back catalogue?

Does the label also sell to competing distributors in their territory?

How much of the catalogue is already on store shelves?

Does the quality of the recording, and the artwork measure up to the standards of its genre?

All of these concerns will have a bearing on the distributor's decision to pick up a label for distribution.

Unfortunately, it takes a lot more than just the inherent quality of the music to sell records.

3. Suppose the distributor has decided to distribute your label-what next?

The distributor will place an initial purchase order for goods to be shipped to the distributor's warehouse. The distributor may need a letter from the label authorizing our exclusivity for certain accounts in their territory.

Some distributors ask that new labels advertise a page in their monthly new release mailing which goes out to all their nearby accounts. The distributor will charge back the cost of this advertising against our account with you.

In order for them to effectively solicit your product, most distributors ask that you provide them with a suitable quantity of "One Sheets" and promotional goods with your initial shipment.

The "One Sheet" is a single 8 1/2" x 11" page describing your release in the terms that you feel will present your product in the most favorable light to the store buyer. This can include descriptions of the music, a list of the musicians, a reproduction of the cover, reviews, etc. The most important function of the "One Sheet" is for data entry, so it MUST include the catalog number and UPC code (either the numbers or a reproduction of the bar code will suffice). Most distributors will be happy to provide you with examples of effective "OneSheets" if you are interested.

Distributors prefer at least a box of promotional CDs (Also known as DJ's). The artwork should be clipped, punched, drilled or otherwise marked to discourage stores from returning promotional goods for credit. In store play is a great way to sell CD's. A lot of stores try a new CD only if the distributor can furnish them with an in store promo copy. In the long term it is not practical try to save a few dollars by not sending promos. No one will buy your music without an idea of what it sounds like.

4. What about your price to the distributor?

As a general rule of thumb, labels sell to the distributor at 50% of the list price. The most common price points for front line new releases are:

For a \$14.98 list CD, the distributor pays \$7.50, and for an \$8.98 list cassette, they pay \$4.50. Most distributors will tell you have that lower price points will stimulate sales on new artists and catalogue re-issues. If you sell CD's by mail order, the distributor will want you to charge list price plus a handling charge, in order to provide consumers the incentive to purchase your product through record stores.

5. How does your label get paid?

Some distributor's terms for labels that have established themselves by releasing product which consistently sells through at retail and is not returned by the distributor's customers pay on a 2% 60 days/end of month. That is, if the distributor receives your invoice on January 10, the invoice will be paid, with a 2% prompt payment discount taken on March 31.

Labels just getting started, or labels coming into a distributor's system for the first time can expect to be paid down to the distributor's floor inventory level plus an allowance for product still on store shelves on the above explained 60 day end of month basis. Let's say, for example, a label has billed a distributor for a total of \$5,000 worth of product. Let's then assume that \$1,500 worth of this product remains in the distributor's warehouse at the end of the first billing cycle.

This means that the distributor has "placed" \$3,500 worth of product at retail, some of which still remains on the stores' shelves unsold. The distributor is responsible for paying for the \$3,500 worth of product placed less a reserve of 15% to 20% for the label's product which may be returned to the distributor by the stores. The label should look for a check for about \$2,800 to \$3,000.

Payment for Christmas product is generally made at the end of March, after all returns have been taken from the stores and the distributor has returned all excess products to the label.

6. Returns?

One of the unique and unfortunate aspects of the American record business is the industry-wide returns policy. All goods must be 100% guaranteed against defects and overstocks, returnable for full credit for any reason. All the independent distributors must extend a 100% guarantee against defectives and overstocks to all of our customers. We regularly accept returns from our customers, issuing full credit for all acceptable product returned. If the distributor deletes a label from their roster, it will take them from 6 to 12 months to receive all the returns. Additionally, some of the larger chains currently practice withholding up to 20% of their payables to distributors as a reserve against returns.

From time to time, the distributor will return defective and overstocked product to their labels for full credit. Distributors hate returns, so they should try to order conservatively and often.

7. Shipping and Invoices?

For all shipments to the distributors, you should enclose a packing slip detailing what was ordered, what has been shipped, the number of cartons in the shipment, and the Distributor Purchase Order number. CDs and cassettes should be shrink-wrapped and in saleable condition. CD's should be sent jewel box only. Product sent in blister packs or longbox will often be subject to a repackaging charge. Invoices should be sent separately, under separate cover, to the distributor's Accounts Payable. The invoice should include an invoice number, invoice date, a detail of what was shipped, a ship date, unit prices, the distributor's Purchase Order number, and the total amount due. Each shipment should have its own invoice; do not bill separate shipments on the same invoice. Often times this is ABSOLUTELY NECESSARY for any payment to be made. The distributor warehouse guys don't usually write checks from your packing slips; it is imperative that they have the proper documentation to process payment.

8. Who is responsible for promotion?

Generally, distributors look to the labels to provide most of the promotion directed toward the consumer. This includes getting the records on radio, national advertising, publicity to print and other media. The object is to get people to go to their local record store looking to buy titles on your label.

9. What can I expect from the distributor?

The distributor's responsibility is to make the buyers in their territory aware of your releases, using their sales tools, promos, one sheets, airplay reports, touring information, etc., to convince the buyers that they should stock your product. The distributor can provide a flow of information to the retailers so that they can order the product that suits their clientele, and anticipate consumer demand. Many distributors don't provide store by store sales reports, but they may run an inventory report by request to gauge product placement and estimate sell through. If your title is a hit, it is the distributor's responsibility to make sure that their accounts are serviced with a consistent product flow.

When you call them with leads, stores that are interested in your product, they should follow them up right away. Additionally, they may arrange co op advertising for radio and local print media.

10. What is Co-op advertising?

Co-op advertising is a method by which a label can effectively pay for media space with product, preserving cash flow and maximizing the use of excess inventory. For example if you want to run an ad in a local newspaper advertising your new release and promote a local performance by your artist, the retailer will purchase the ad, deduct the cost of the media buy from its account with the distributor, then the distributor will deduct this amount from its account with the label. In return, the ad features your new release and the retailer is expected to make a significant "buy-in" of the product, give it favorable placement (end racks, etc.) and put the product on sale for a specified time period. This is a great way to get more media and retail exposure for your money. However, the distributors balance with the label should be significant enough to support this expenditure.

11. What if you take your label to another distributor?

For a variety of reasons, labels and distributors part ways. If you decide to have a third party distributor sell your product into your first distributor's account base you should expect the following:

The first distributor should ship its floor inventory to your new distributor, or to any location that you decide. The label will pay shipping.

The label should issue the first distributor credit for the product shipped to your new distributor.

The first distributor should pay the account down to approximately 15% of the previous total. This is to allow the distributor to make a deletion announcement to its accounts and to allow the stores return any of the labels' product to the distributor.

After 6 months, the first distributor should zero its account, making one final return of product sent back to it by the stores.

12. How can you help the distributor sell more records?

Keep them informed of your artist's whereabouts, tour schedules, etc. They need advance notice when your artist is playing in their territory. Then they can effectively solicit the stores to pay more attention to your product. If your artists are good with people, send them into the stores to meet with the buyers. Send them your radio tracking so that they know what stations are playing your music.

13. What is their territory? What about the rest of the country?

Many distributors belong to a coalition of independent regional distributors, and they can recommend that the other members pick up your label if potential national sales can justify their involvement.

14. What about overseas?

Does the distributor do any export business to areas outside North America? Some distributors look to the labels to provide them with a discount price for export, which they should pass on directly to their foreign territory customers, (who often bear all the freight and promotional expenses). Because export sales are one way (no returns) this can work out to be a pretty good deal.

by Peter Spellman

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A publisher is a manager of songs. Those artists who do not write their own material very often consult a publisher, in search of a song that feels right for them; so it can be said that a publisher places songs.

Royalties

There are two societies which collect royalties on behalf of their publisher members.

(1) The Irish Music Rights Organisation (I.M.R.O.) licenses and collects royalties for the public performance of music e.g. on the radio, in supermarkets, in pubs etc., on behalf of its members and the members of foreign-based affiliated societies. I.M.R.O. distributes these moneys four times per year. The criteria for writer membership vary, so it is worth checking with the I.M.R.O. Membership Officer. Broadly speaking, a writer needs to have three works which have been (a) commercially recorded or (b) performed in public at IMRO licenced venues on a specified number of occasions within the previous year.

(2) The Mechanical Copyright Protection Society (M.C.P.S.) collects royalties on behalf of its composers and publisher members every time music is mechanically reproduced i.e. pressed (with most major record labels and their subsidiaries mechanical are only paid on songs pressed and sold). Royalties are collected from record companies and the mechanical rate is currently 8.5% of the published dealer price exclusive of Value Added Tax, e.g. this works out as €1.75 on a €24.99 CD. Record companies pay the M.C.P.S. which remits royalties to its members on a monthly basis. The M.C.P.S. also collects royalties when music is synchronized onto TV and radio advertisements, films and videos.

Publishing deal

There is no standard deal between a publisher and a songwriter, but I.M.R.O. rules state that a publisher cannot control more than 50%. Deals vary from 50/50 upwards in favour of the writer of the song. Nowadays deals are rarely signed for the full duration of copyright instead opting to sign for shorter periods, assigning the work to the publisher for a finite time during which they can exploit the works and then having the songs revert back to the songwriter. Kick out clause or exploitation clause are common today, these clauses allow the writer to take back their work if the publisher fails to exploit the work.

Life of Copyright

Life of Copyright is the life of the author plus seventy years. Nowadays, songwriters rarely sign for the full period of copyright, and five or ten years is the norm. If a songwriter decides to sign for the full period of copyright, he or she should ensure that a “kick-out” or “exploitation” clause is in the contract; i.e. if the publisher does not exploit the song, the rights revert to the author.

Submitting a Song to a Publisher

It is important to consider the publisher's portfolio: some publishers specialise in a particular type of song - some do not. Writers should put two to three songs on a demo, including a lyric sheet and some background information on themselves.

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Publicity: The Rules...

In the hands of a genius, press and publicity becomes an art form. Take the KLF. When not burning a million pounds, or awarding alternative Turner Prizes, Jimmy Cauty and partner Bill Drummond took publicity into new realms. They blindfolded journalists and took them to the Scottish island of Jura. They wrote a book called 'How To Have A Number One Hit' (tip: get yourself a copy now). They dropped a dead sheep at the BPI awards. The KLF are an extreme example of the three golden rules of publicity. Keep it interesting. Have a laugh. And don't be afraid to make things up.

Think Dexy's Midnight Runners' Kevin Rowland wearing a dress as part of the promotion for his new album. Rave band Altern 8 bumrushing the queue at a rave to do a gig on a tank. The blue dummies that littered the streets of London before the release of Portishead's debut LP 'Dummy'. All of these, contrived or real, helped create a profile and press presence for the artist. Even a refusal to do press can create publicity; something proved by the anonymous Techno artists of late eighties Detroit. The point is that publicity comes in many forms. While the donkey work of mailing records, getting reviews and collating information needs to be done, you need a bigger picture, a plan. The music is the starting point, but the media need interesting, lively, opinionated people to write about. Magazines will always choose a mouthy band over a mousy one. No matter what the tunes are like (unless you are Supergrass)

Hype or Hit & Hope

So to the bottom line: there are two ways of approaching press and publicity. You either take the KLF's starting point, which is to point out that all a publicist needs is a phone, a fax, and a capacity to lie, or you scatter-fire your release across the media. This can be summed up thus: Hype or Hit & Hope. The former necessitates you being able to build up a buzz, and a word-of-mouth reputation that will get magazines running after you eventually, the latter suggests the more prosaic route of attempting to get coverage through reviews and magazine coverage.

The Hype route is clearly more fun, and often more profitable. What you need is an unassailable sense of belief in your band and your music, unstoppable energy, and often, a big gob. You need lots of friends to kick-start your fanbase, people who know people who can get journalists to hear your music, and good ideas. It's slightly different for bedroom dance acts, who just need to get their music to DJs, but for bands the rules haven't changed since Elvis. You need good ideas. The Stones were helped by a manager who told the previously nice boys not to take their sunglasses off in interviews (it made them seem harder, more mysterious, more sexy). The Jam and The Clash had agendas. Every band needs something.

Don't dismiss Hit & Hope as Hype's boring younger brother. The basics of press and publicity are as important as the big plans. Reviews in magazines help your distributor sell your music to shops. Coverage in the press helps other journalists and music industry figures become aware that you exist. It can help sales. Everyone in the music industry reads the music press, and it can help your ability to get signed. Take the case of future Folkie, Badly Drawn Boy. At the start of 1997, Damon Gough had just put out his first record on cool-but-tiny Manchester label Twisted Nerve. Thanks to a local journalist who freelanced for Select Magazine, Gough was included in a 'tips for the top' feature the magazine ran on the best new artists of the year, and ended up as the focal point of an A&R scramble. He was then signed by XL Recordings (home to The Prodigy, Basement Jaxx and electronic enigma Leila) for a reckoned £250,000. Press can help interest, but only your tunes can take you higher.

DIY Press

For most small bands and acts, DIY press is as effective as hired PR. It's cheaper (although you will need a budget for postage, stationary and phone bills) and you'll probably get similar results. As already mentioned, you need a phone and fax and capacity to lie. Know your medium: if you are a Rock band, read the Rock press, if you're a knob-tweaking bedroom boy, locate the Techno reviewer at Muzik or DJ. It's worth going to a good city newsagent (not just the crap one at the end of your road which sells OK and Bella!) and spending a tenner on an armful of magazines. Browse the ones which cover your kind of music, and buy the kind of magazines you would like to be in. Take them home and study them like a map.

Things you need to know about magazines: journalists get sent hundreds of records a week. Most freelancers don't work at magazines, they work from home. Most journalists don't listen to everything they get sent (and then they sell them, the bastards!). Despite the hurdles, you *can* get your records to journalists, but in order not to waste precious resources, you need to plan and target carefully. Remember that monthly magazines work six to eight weeks ahead of their street date, and that many of them won't review music once it's been released. So you need to send a record to a journalist approximately two months before it is released (although you can of course lie about the release date - everyone else does). Look on the masthead to find out who does what at the publication. Read the reviews and music features to see who reviews what. Identify the people who you think might like your music, based on the preferences they display in their reviews. See if they have a staff job (they'll be the people with titles on the masthead - freelancers just go under 'Contributors') and if they do, you can send records to the magazines' offices. If not, ring the magazines and ask if they forward records to specific journalists, or if they come to pick them up. Send information and make sure you put a phone number on. Do a press release to go with the release, not a letter. And if you are unsigned, don't say so. Just make up a name for your own label and say you are signed to label X. You might not get any results. Ultra-new bands can sometimes get coverage in specialised sections of magazines - both NME and Melody Maker have sections like this - or by having a well-placed industry fan mention them in interviews. The dance press are much less bothered by pedigree or a (ahem) track record, and a good new record can get quite extensive coverage in dance magazines. You just need to get it to the right person.

'Proper' PR

Proper PR can be worth it too. Bear in mind most professional companies charge at least €750 for promotion on a single (although you might find a few who will do your first PR for a few hundred less if they really like your music) and they *can't* guarantee results. What they *can* do, is provide a journalist swamped by a stream of free records with an idea of what's inside the mailer. If it comes from Phuture Trax, it's club music. If Hall Or Nothing is stamped on the front, you're likely to find Rock. And so on. A PR company does all the hard work for you. They already know the journalists, they know all the sections of all the magazines, they have the freelancers' home addresses. They have the knowledge that you don't (yet). The other main benefit of professional PR is the fact that they can get responses from journalists. They have relationships with journalists, and can ring them to find out what they thought.

Hiring a PR

In order to find the right PR for you, you need to find out who they already deal with. You need a PR that really likes your music (or they aren't going to do a good job). Usually they will ask to be sent a copy of the record before agreeing to work for you. When they have done, you should talk to them about the record, what they thought, where they see it being covered, and the kind of response they realistically think they could achieve. Once you've agreed to work together, you should expect regular reports on the progress of the record - who they've sent it to, what responses they've got and what reviews or features they expect. You can also expect a cuttings file of all the coverage they've obtained for you at the end of the promotion.

What else?

People with mega-budgets like UNKLE can afford to send out limited edition stickers, cut-outs, dolls, and small houses, but anyone with a bit of imagination can think of something to brand and send out. T-shirts and frisbees seem to be very popular, but you need to make sure that any merchandising you send is really good or it will devalue the perception of your record. A club once sent me a piece of toast in an envelope and followed it up with a fax about a club called 'Toast', so really you can do anything.

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BAND TIPS: Music Blogger by Niall Byrne aka Nialler9



FirstMusicContact

Dos

- Use aggregator sites like Hypem.com or Elbows to find music blogs that would be likely to post your music. Make a list of the blogs who post music similar to yours. Don't send rock music to an electro-focused blog.
- Do send music to music bloggers in other countries outside Ireland with a personal email approach. Bloggers often read other blogs so any features can help others check you out.
- When sending a mail, do include a link to a bio, contact info, release details, tour and member details. Make it easy for someone to get familiar with you and write about your music. Be concise and direct.
- Do put contact details on your website - email and phone number. You want to be contacted right? This applies to all media.
- Double check for correct spelling in all correspondence. Especially the names of the people you are addressing. It looks unprofessional otherwise.
- Don't send CDs to bloggers and online magazines. 99% of the time a digital link will do and you're only wasting your own money sending a CD (unless requested).
- If sending your music digitally for review, have options - Host it as a stream on a private Soundcloud and Bandcamp and use a site like Dropbox or FTP on your website to send a download link of the zipped release. Try to reduce the number of clicks it takes for someone to download and listen to your music.
- Keep self-promotion light and regular. A band whose name keeps cropping up will be checked out on curiosity but a constant barrage will just put people off.
- Always include links to your social media profiles: Breaking Tunes / Soundcloud / Facebook / Twitter / Myspace etc
- The tiniest bit of personalisation in your emails makes a HUGE difference. Do some research about who you're sending your promo to. Be sincere.
- Do Twitter right or not at all. Don't have an account that just spews the start of every FB post you make. It's about engaging with people.
- Do set up a [.com](#) website. Even if it just links to your other social media accounts where you are active. It's still the only platform you can fully customise and it's easy to include contact details, streaming music and Hi-Res image links.

- Get some good images. Bloggers don't care about appearances but when there's good music involved, they'll want a picture to post on their site along with your track.
- If contacting a blogger or online music publication, send a link (don't attach) to a press photo or album artwork JPG of about 800px wide, no larger than 1000px for use on the site. Online publications do not need massive 4MB hi-res images.
- If you don't hear back from a blogger, politely follow up your initial enquiry. However, do not harass them. The worst thing you could do is repeatedly ask "did you get that email?" or "did you listen to that track yet?".
- If you ask for feedback, be mindful that if feedback is given it can be negative too.

Dont's

- Don't send massive files or attachments to bloggers. Send digital press photos if required. Have these available online where you can link to them instead of sending them via large email attachments.
- If a blogger doesn't get in touch or reply, don't take it personally. Most music bloggers get hundreds of emails a day and are always behind in catching up. To that end, don't ask questions like "did you get that email?" or "did you listen to that track yet?". Feel free to follow up on the initial mail in a week or so
- Don't send PDF or Word doc press releases or bios. Include relevant info in the email.
- Don't send music to every blog email address you can find. Target specific people.
- Don't attach music in an email as a zip file or as individual MP3s.
- Don't use social networks to get in contact. Stick to email, which is easily referenced and can handle attachments, display links and images in one tidy package.
- If sending email don't CC everyone on your media list at the same time, exposing their email to hundreds of people. Use BCC in a mass mailout situation or use some proper mailing list software like PHPlist or Mailchimp.
- Don't ask a blogger to review your album or single if that blogger doesn't do reviews. again, a little research into who you are sending music to will help with this.

Written by Niall Byrne
<http://www.nialler9.com/>



BAND TIPS: MEDIA by Jim Carroll

Do NOT send any attachments (MP3s, photos, big stupid press releases) unless the journalist requests them first.

Make sure there is always a CONTACT TELEPHONE NUMBER on all communications. Papers and magazines work to very tight deadlines and an email address will just not do if The Ticket or Day & Night decide at 2.30pm that they want to put you on the cover. You snooze, you lose.

Always make sure there is a CONTACT TELEPHONE NUMBER on your suite of websites too. Get one of those cheap pay-as-you-go mobile phones if none of you want to give up your own number. Hey, don't knock it, those phones worked wonders for the Barksdale crew on The Wire.

Get some proper PHOTOS done. By "proper", we mean photos where all the band members are looking at the camera and not making rabbit ears behind the drummer's head.

Do not hassle journalists. It's not a good idea. Most of 'em get a zillion emails every day and if you start hassling them, you will up on their black lists. If the journalist doesn't write about you, just keep telling yourself that it's their loss.

Please don't be annoyed if journalists don't write about you. There are only a small number of journalists in Ireland who even bother to listen to new bands and new music these days. The rest of us only listen to what the major labels tell us to listen to. You may find that you're better off with bloggers - most of the Irish bloggers rave about all Irish music regardless of whether it's good or bad (please note that this is a joke, OK? Bloggers are gReAt).

Don't be stupid. Don't pitch a heavy metal band to someone who writes about trance. Know your audience. And please don't ever address an envelope to someone who works for one publication with the name of another publication. No amount of chocolate bars in the envelope will make up for that SNAFU.

Which brings us to... Press packs. YOU DO NOT NEED A PRESS PACK! Did you hear that OK at the back in Clonmel? YOU DO NOT NEED A PRESS PACK! Sending your CD to a journalist in a plain envelope with a basic press release will do. No need for fancy envelopes, printed photos, badges, bars of chocolate (which usually melt in the post anyway), lollipops or other bits and pieces. Send us the music (yes, we still listen to stuff on CD) and that should suffice. I always think that elaborate press packs are compensating for lousy music anyway.

Journalists like CDs and links to MP3 downloads. Some journalists like vinyl but, to be honest, you're better off keeping the vinyl to sell to your fans to make some money rather than giving to some hack. Charge them for it.

All journalists, without exception, despise streams with a passion which may surprise you. Journalists are capable of passion, you know. We hate streams because it means we're chained to our fecking computers and can't listen to your album while we're having a bath like we really want to do. If you must, link to a stream, but don't be surprised if hacks moan and whinge and grumble like kids deprived of Peppa Pig or Balamory for an hour about this.

<http://www.irishtimes.com/blogs/ontherecord>



FirstMusicContact

BAND TIPS: Public Relations

Do

Get in touch at least 2-3 months before your album is due for release.
Send in a CD or Soundcloud of the album (doesn't have to be mixed or mastered).
Include contact details with the music.
Book some relevant tour dates to follow the release of the album.
Pick a publicity company suitable for your music.
Get a good photo shoot done to include a range of portrait and landscape hi-res colour pics.
Be proactive.
Pay your bills!

Don't

Send in a hard copy photo of the band.
Get in touch a month before the album is due out.
Expect to get daytime radio play unless you have radio-friendly songs.
Set a release date until the you have definite dates for mastering/manufacturing or make sure you have the albums back at least a month before the release date.
Get your friends to text DJ's if you've hired a publicity company, it can backfire.
Get carried away with reviews, good or bad.

Written by Liza Geddes

www.frictionpr.com

BAND TIPS: RADIO by Jenny Huston



Do you accept Demos?

You are welcome to send demos to whomever you so wish. However, they are unlikely to ever get played unless they are broadcast quality. Even then a 'demo' will most likely be played on a late night, specialist music programme.

A Demo is just that. A demonstration of what you can do. The idea was that a Record label heard raw talent and wanted to sign you and pay to record it properly with a producer and have it mixed and mastered professionally. It is not a finished product and not usually suitable for National radio. The main failing of 'demos' is that they are not mixed for radio. National radio has processors and usually needs a 'bigger' sounding mix to allow for compression and prevent a song from sounding flat. That is why virtually all bands send radio edits or radio mixes to radio (especially the big international acts). They are different to the single or album track that you buy - Usually shorter so the song starts immediately.

Have you checked the shows playlist (if they have one). Does your music fit in?

Do not ask if you can send a CD, just send it. Most DJ's will not respond to an email asking 'can I send you a CD' or 'let me know if you want a CD and we will send you one'. YOU want them to have it, so take the chance and send it! They are highly unlikely to solicit your material as they already have more than they can listen too and to some people soliciting material implies obligation.

Do NOT send numerous MP3 attachments or WAV files. Many people have limited storage space on their email and will have to delete your email. Send a download link.

What address do I send CDs too?

If you are emailing a DJ from 2fm then you send post to them at RTE 2fm. The same applies for Radio Kerry. The address is available on the website, Internet and the phone book. Look for it yourself. Do you really want the first time a DJ hears your name or has direct contact with you to be a silly/seriously lazy question? It is not worth the risk. They may only remember you for that, rather than hearing your music with fresh unbiased ears.

Defensive follow-on question 'But maybe they prefer to have CDs sent to their house?'

Do you really think a national radio presenter is going to tell a complete stranger where they live? Security and the police advise against it.

What should I include in my press pack?

We don't need or want 'press packs'. They are a left over from the 80's. We want a well-labeled CD. That means the names of the Band and the songs on the cd and the sleeve. Include your website, facebook/bandcamp/myspace address and have a sticker with any relevant information on it: Where you are from, when you are playing, who you have supported/toured with and dates when the CD or download will be available etc. Give the presenter something to say about you and/or a reason for them to listen to it.

Do try and make the CD sleeve as professional as possible. If you have spent time or money on the music then give it a well-designed sleeve (people do judge a book by its cover). Do not send photographs or DVDs or spend money on expensive folders or envelopes or send pages of paper. They get recycled immediately. Radio cannot do anything with a printed photograph! You should be glad to know that we don't care if you are beautiful or totally plain. We only care what the music sounds like.

Can you give us some feedback/advice on our demo/singe/EP?

It is important to point out that it is NOT the job of a DJ to give feedback on music (if they do so it is out of the kindness of their heart). Airplay is very obvious feedback. It IS the job of A&R men and record labels to give feedback IF they have solicited your material. Do not ask for feedback unless you are prepared for disappointment. The volume of music sent to National radio presenters is staggering. There would not be enough hours in the day to listen to everything and to give feedback.

Advice: There are numerous industry bodies set up to do this – contact them. First Music Contact 'is a free information and advice resource for the popular music sector in Ireland. Funded by the Arts Council, FMC delivers a programme of useful activities for bands and musicians throughout their careers.'
<http://www.firstmusiccontact.com/> also IMRO, IASCA, RAAP etc.

Interviews and Sessions

Interviews can be a very hard sell. They can be dull and they are time consuming. It involves scheduling, preparation and editing for the presenter/producers. If you are looking to be interviewed make sure you have answered these questions BEFORE you approach radio. Why do you want to be interviewed? Do you have anything to say other than 'we have a new single coming out? Are you good talkers? Can you be more entertaining and engaging than your single itself? Honestly?

Begging to be interviewed is usually a waste of time unless it is a show that makes a point of regular interviews and is ALREADY playing your music. In most cases playing the song is far better PR for a band than an interview. Interviews can be very boring so many shows will not air them unless they are from someone very well known or extremely famous. A friendly intro to your song in a session is the best bet. '

Hi were ----- and this is our new single that is coming out next week that we recorded in/with -----, we hope you like it...' or something to that effect.

Do approach your local station. Local radio and community radio usually have dedicated Irish shows and are often more than delighted to have bands in for chats and acoustic sessions. Go for it!

Text and email campaigns

Don't get your friends to bombard a DJ or a station with requests for your new single or EP that you have just sent out. It does not imply demand, it implies unprofessional. It often causes the opposite of the desired result.

Thank you is free

Manners go a long way. Don't email DJs calling them 'bud' 'dude' 'lady' or 'hon'. Be polite. Using your common sense and being aware of people's show times and jobs will help you in your path to airplay (i.e. don't ask a DJ who is on air Monday through Thursday if they could play your single on Saturday night). You want them to spend 4 minutes listening to your track so take 30 seconds and find out when their show is on. Show some respect and be appreciative of people's time and support.

I hope that these answers to FAQ will help you to save some time, money and mistakes and get your music to the right ears! Good luck with it all

Very best wishes,
Jenny Huston

<http://2fm.rte.ie/jenny/>



Additional Information

BAND TIPS: Record Shops

Name and Address	Phone	Email
A - Z Music Centre, Goff St, Co Roscommon	(090) 6625085	
Abbey Discs, Liffey St Lr, Dublin 1	(01) 8733733	
Abbey Discs, Northside Shopping Centre, Dublin 5	(01) 8483216	
All City Records, 7 Crow St, Dublin 2	(01) 6772994	
Anthem Music, 59 Main St, Portlaoise, Co Laois	(0502) 62188	
Apollo Discs, 10 Park La, Buncrana, Co Donegal	(074) 9673968	
Apollo Discs, U6 Carndonagh S.C., Carndonagh, Co Donegal	(074) 9363647	
Atmosphere Music Store, U7 The Arcade Main St, Dungloe, Co Donegal	(074) 9522349	
Big Brother Records, 16B Fade St, Dublin 2	(01) 6729355	
Black Spot Records, 12 Wickham St, Co Limerick	(061) 412570	
Blacktrack Music Stores, Unit 36 Douglas Court S.C Douglas, Co Cork	(021) 4364433	
Blacktrack, 30A, Crescent S C Dooradoyle, Co	(061) 228479	
BPM Records, 19 Selskar St, Co Wexford	(053) 40760	
BPM Records, 4 Blackfriars, Co Waterford	(051) 858090	
C D Net, 9 Rafter St, Enniscorthy, Co Clare	(054) 42160	
CD World, Dundalk S.C., Co Dundalk	(042) 9335369	
Celtic Note, 12 Nassau St, Dublin 2	(01) 6704157	
Chapters Musicstore, 108/109 Middle Abbey St, Dublin 1	(01) 8730484	
City Discs, The Granary Unit 2 Temple Bar Lane South, Dublin 2	(01) 6330066	
Claddagh Records, 2 Cecilia St, Dublin 2	(01) 6770262	claddagh@crl.ie
Comet Records, 5 Cope St, Temple Bar, Dublin 2	(01) 6718592	
Cosmic Sounds Ltd, 1A Farmhill Rd, Goatstown, Dublin 14	(01) 2986551	cosmic@iol.ie
Discland, 39 Trimgate St, Navan, Co Meath	(046) 9021110	
DK Music, The Court Shopping Centre Main St, Newbridge, Co Kildare	(045) 431567	
Dolphin Discs, 56 Moore St, Dublin 1	(01) 8729998	irishmus@iol.ie
Dolphin Discs, 97A Talbot St, Dublin 1	(01) 8747438	irishmus@iol.ie
Downtown Records, Bridge St, Westport, Co Mayo	(094) 9026841	
D'Plast Ltd, Cartongeeragh, Co Longford	(043) 45364	
Earplay Records, Bridge St, Ballina, Co Mayo	(096) 78963	
Eilte Records, Swanlane Manor Lough Gowna, Co Cavan	(043) 83600	
Empire Music, 118 O'Connell St, Co Limerick	(061) 317211	
Fiddlers Trad Music Shop, Main St, Ballyvaughan, Co Clare	(065) 7077960	
Final Vinyl, 40A Camden St, Dublin 2	(01) 4758826	
Freebird Records, 1 Eden Qy, Dublin 1	(01) 8731250	info@freebird.ie
Gift Shop The, Lower Main St, Dungloe, Co Donegal	(074) 9521010	
Golden Classics, Kilbride St, Tullamore, Offaly	(0506) 22700	
Golden Disc Group Ltd, 11 Windsor pl Pembroke St, Dublin 2	(01) 6768444	
Golden Discs, Unit 1 Carlow Shopping Cntr, Co Carlow	(059) 9141982	
Grahams Music, 4 Mount St, Mullingar, Co Westmeath	(044) 48428	
Hazel Records, Dublin rd, Monasterevin, Co Kildare	(045) 525009	
Heartbeat City, Church St, Tullamore, CO Offaly	(0506) 41822	
Heartbeat City, U13 Market Cross S.C., Co Kilkenny	(056) 7752949	
Heartbeat City, Unit 14 Town Centre Mullingar, Co Westmeath	(044) 43667	
Hickeys, Main St, Bantry, Co Cork	(027) 51666	
Hicksons Records Ltd, 33 Main St, Arklow, Co Wicklow	(0402) 39949	
HMV Stores, 18 Henry St, Dublin 1	(01) 8722095	
HMV Stores, 65 Grafton St, Dublin 2	(01) 6795334	
HMV Stores, Cruises St, Limerick	(061) 418881	

Name and Address	Phone	Email
HMV Stores, Patrick St, Cork City	(021) 4270447	
HMV Stores, The Pavillion S.C., Swords, Co Dublin	(01) 8902433	
HMV Stores, U 22 Blanchardstown Centre, Dublin	(01) 8221775	
HMV Stores, U316 , The Square Tallaght, Dublin 24	(01) 4525844	
HMV, Main St, Swords, Co Dublin	(01) 8902433	
Hot Shot Records, O'Rahilly St, Ballina, Co Mayo	(096) 21637	
Irish Heartbeat Music Store, 29 High St, Co Kilkenny	(056) 7723244	
John Hunt, St Patrick St, Castlerea, Co	(094) 9620111	
K 'n' B Music, Main St, Maynooth, Co Kildare	(01) 6293320	
Killybegs Sounds Ltd, Main St, Killybegs, Co Donegal	(074) 9732222	
Knotted Chord The, Cook's la O'Connell St, Ennis, Co Clare	(065) 6822152	
Lee Records, 71 High St, Tralee, Co Kerry	(066) 7127589	
Letterkenny Tapes, U19 , SC Letterkenny, Co Donegal	(074) 9121714	
Living Tradition The, 40 MacCurtain St, Cork	(021) 4502564	
MC Music, Main St, Listowel, Co Kerry	(068) 24124	
Melody Maker, The Diamond, Co Donegal	(074) 9722326	
Metro Music, 19 Rathfarnham S.C., Dublin 14	(01) 4931322	
Mix Master Records, Market sq, Castlebar, Co Mayo	(094) 9023732	
Mojo, Saimer Court, Ballyshannon, Co Donegal	(071) 9858180	davemojo@eircom.net
Mojos Records, 4 , Merchants Arch Temple Bar, Dublin 2	(01) 6727905	
Mojos Records, Temple Bar, Dublin 2	(01) 6727905	
Mulligan Records, 5 Middle St ct Middle St, Galway	(091) 564961	
Multi Sound, Musicland Hse, Main St, Co Cavan	(049) 4361312	
Mulveys Music Master, Main St, Carrick-on-Shannon, Co	(071) 9622846	
Music & Photo Centre, 12B Main St Lr, Buncrana, Co Donegal	(074) 9362796	
Music Box, Finglas Village, Dublin 11	(01) 8643959	
Music Centre, 6 New St, Killarney, Co Kerry	(064) 33737	
Music Centre, Lr Main St, Letterkenny, Co Donegal	(074) 9127140	
Music City, 103 Main St, Bray, Co Wicklow	(01) 2724100	
Music City, 19 Upper Georges St, Dun Laoghaire, Co Dublin	(01) 2846064	
Music City, 302 Lr Rathmines Rd, Dublin 8	(01) 4910972	
Music City, Bray - 103 Main St, Co Wicklow	(01) 2724100	
Music City, Dun Laoghaire - 19/20 Georges St Upr, Co Dublin	(01) 2846064	
Music City, Head Office Unit 21 Southern Cross Bus Pk Boghall rd, Bray	(01) 2014949	
Music City, Rathmines - 302 Lwr Rathmines rd Dublin 8	(01) 4910972	
Music House The, 6 Orchard la Main St, Dingle, Co Kerry	(066) 9152633	
Music Net, 9 Rafter St, Enniscorthy, Co	(054) 37655	
Music Room, Grattan St, Co Sligo	(071) 9143748	
Music Shop The, Dungarvan, Co Waterford	(058) 48770	
Music Shop The, U7 Tesco S.C., Ennis, Co Clare	(065) 6840966	
Music Store The, Bernies Mall Main St, Roscrea, Co	(0505) 23481	
Music Works, u7 The Old Malt Mall Middle St, Galway	(091) 566621	
Music World, 3 Lá Touche pl, Greystones, Co Wicklow	(01) 2876953	
Music Zone The, Unit S7 Market pl, Clonmel, Co Tipperary	(052) 27772	
Music Zone, U5 , Carrigaline Shop Com Carrigaline, Co Cork	(021) 4377768	
Musicworld, 10 Golden Island S.C., Athlone, Co	(090) 6474372	
Premier Music Store, 58 O'Connell St, Clonmel, Co Tipperary	(052) 29811	
Pulse, Connaught St, Birr, Co Offaly	(0509) 22677	
Purple Moon Records Ltd, 7 Crow St, Temple Bar, Dublin 2	(01) 6777349	

Name and Address	Phone	Email
Rainbow Records, Parnell ct Parnell St, Co Waterford	(051) 878450	
Rainbow Records, Tullow St, Co Carlow	(059) 9143387	
Raygun Records, 25A Florence Rd, Bray, Co Wicklow	(01) 2042337	
Record Collector, Basement 30 Wicklow St, Dublin 2	(01) 6791909	
Record Rack, 1-2 Lr Market St, Ennis, Co Clare	(065) 6820769	
Record Shop The, O 'Connell Street, Dungarvan, County Waterford	(058) 41933	benoneill@cablesurf.com
Record Sleeve The, Monaghan S.C., Co Monaghan	(047) 71559	
Record Sleeve The, Navan SC, Navan, Co Meath	(046) 9029945	
Record Sleeve The, U5 Longwalk S.C., Co Dundalk	(042) 9327374	
Redlight Records, Eglinton St, Co Galway	(091) 568340	
Resistance Records, High St, Mall, Co Kilkenny	(056) 7756645	
Rhythm Records, 1 , Aston Quay, Dublin 2	(01) 6719594	
Ritz Music & Video, 308 Ballyfermot rd, Ballyfermot, Dublin 10	(01) 6260567	
Road Records, 16b Fade St, Dublin 2	(01) 6717340	
Round Tower Music, 48 Downside, Skerries, Co Dublin	(01) 8490644	
Roxy Records Ltd, Unit 25 Douglas S.C., Co Cork	(021) 4892484	
Roxy Records, 5 Gladstone St, Clonmel, Co Tipperary	(052) 70846	
Roxy Records, Killarney, Co Kerry	(064) 31524	
Roxy Records, The Square Tralee, Co Kerry	(066) 7121320	
Savins Music Centre Ltd, 111 O'Connell St, Co Limerick	(061) 414095	
Selectah, 4 Crows St, Dublin 2	(01) 6167020	
Signals, Sam Maguire Sq, Dunmanway, Co Cork	(023) 56799	
Sinnotts Disc & Tape Centres, 8 Michael St, Co Waterford	(051) 875622	
Sky Music, Duty Free Dublin Airport, Co Dublin	(01) 6704157	
Smile Records, 59 South gt Georges St, Dublin 2	(01) 4782005	
Sound Cellar, 47 Nassau St, Dublin 2	(01) 6771940	
Sound Quality, 13 Dublin St, Co Monaghan	(047) 84203	
Sounds, MacCurtain Hill, Clonakilty, Cork	(023) 41691	
Sounds, The Square Skibbereen, Co Kerry	(028) 22284	
Soundwaves, U60 , Sky Court Shannon, Co Limerick	(061) 362627	
Spindizzy Records, 32 Georges St, Arcade, Dublin 2	(01) 6711711	
Square Discs, U7C, The Square, Co Wexford	(053) 21700	
Star Music, Quinsworth S. Arcade O'Connell St, Co Sligo	(071) 9142029	
Stax A Trax, 93 Glaslough St, Co Monaghan	(047) 83388	
Sunnyday Records, Old Golf Links rd, Co Dundalk	(042) 9322943	
Synthetic Records, 2 Washington Street, Co Cork	(021) 4278282	
Top Twenty Ltd, 7 nth Main St, Naas, Co Kildare	(045) 879297	
Top Twenty Ltd, u8 Newbridge S.C., Co Kildare	(045) 432915	
Top Twenty, Kieran St, Kilkenny, Co Kilkenny	(056) 7763669	
Tower Records, in Easons, O'Connell St, Dublin 1	(01) 8786680	
Tower Records, Wicklow St, Dublin 2	(01) 6713250	
Track One Music Hi-Fi Store, Fitzwilliam sq, Co Wicklow	(0404) 67389	
Trax Ltd, U1 , Laois SC Portlaoise, Co Laois	(0502) 22839	
Vinyl Room The, 79 Grand Parade, Co Cork	(021) 4273379	
Virgin Megastore, 22 Henry St, Dublin 1	(01) 8733855	
Virgin Megastore, Queens Old Castle, Co Cork	(021) 4279299	
Virgin Megastore, U152 Town Ctr, Blanchardstown Co Dublin	(01) 8221909	
Virgin Megastore, U240 Level 2 The Square Tallaght Dublin 24	(01) 4522922	
Virgin Megastore, U30-31 Liffey Valley S.C, Dublin 22	(01) 6239207	
Wax Factor ltd, 24A Abbeygate St Upr, Co Galway	(091) 539149	

Name and Address	Phone	Email
Whites For Music, 30 Sth Main St, Wexford	(053) 22067	
Wired Records, 43A Main St, Arklow, Co Wicklow	(0402) 31703	
Zhivago Music Store, 206A Eyre Sq SC, Co Galway	(091) 566976	
Zhivago Records, Galway S C Headford Rd, Co Galway	(091) 562346	
Zhivago Records, Terryland SC, Co Galway	(091) 562382	
Zhivago Sound & Vision, 13 , Galway S. C., Co Galway	(091) 509966	
Zhivago Sound & Vision, H.O. 5-6 Shop St, Co Galway	(091) 509950	
Zhivago Sound & Vision, Unit 4 Dunnes Terryland, Co Galway	(091) 509951	
Zhivago Sound & Vision, Zhivago Eyre Sq Ctr, Co Galway	(091) 509963	
Zone The, 10 Grafton Ct, Co Longford	(043) 40786	

While the author (FMC) has taken all reasonable steps to ensure that the information contained in this article is accurate, such information is not guaranteed. The author and the FMC will not be held responsible for individual decisions taken as a result of information contained in this article which is intended for general information purposes.



BAND TIPS: Radio Stations

Northern Ireland

Name:	email:
BBC Radio Foyle	
BBC Radio Ulster	ni_news@bbc.co.uk
Frequencies: 92.4-95.4FM	jacquie.henriette@citybeat.co.uk
Cool FM	music@coolfm.co.uk
Frequency: 97.4FM.	news@downtown.co.uk
Q101.2FM	reception@q101west.fm
Q102.9FM	manager@q102.fm
Q97.2FM	gm@qradionetwork.fm
Seven FM	info@sevenfm.co.uk, bryan@bryangallagher.com
Six FM	james.devlin@nothernmediagroup.com
U105	news@u105.com

National

Name:	email:
100-102 Today FM	100-102@todayfm.com
2XM	
4FM	info@4fm.ie
Newstalk 106-108 FM	info@newstalk.ie
RAIDIÓ NA GAELTACHTA	rnag@rte.ie
RTÉ 2FM	info@rte.ie
RTÉ Lyric FM	julie.knight@rte.ie, prpromotions.lyricfm@rte.ie
RTÉ Radio 1	info@rte.ie, newsdesk@rte.ie

Local

Name:	email:
98FM	info@98fm.com, firstname.lastname@98fm.com
Beat 102-103FM	news@beat102103.com, gabrielle.cummins@beat102103.com
C103FM	info@c103.ie, music@c103.ie
Clare FM	info@clarefm.ie
Cork's 96FM	info@96fm.ie
Cork's RED FM 104-106	info@redfm.ie
East Coast FM	mail@eastcoast.fm
FM 104	sales@fm104.ie
Galway Bay FM	info@galwaybayfm.ie, keith@galwaybayfm.ie
Highland Radio	enquiries@highlandradio.com
iRadio	info@iradio.ie
KCLR 96FM	info@kclr96fm.com
KFM	info@kfmradio.com
Limerick's Live 95 FM	mail@live95fm.ie
LM FM	info@lmfm.ie
Mid West Radio	studio@midwestradio.ie
Midlands 103	info@midlandsradio.fm
Northern Sound Radio	info@northernsound.ie
Ocean FM	studio@oceanfm.ie
Q102	info@Q102.ie
Radio Kerry	news@radiokerry.ie
Radio Nova 100	info@nova100.ie
Shannonside 104FM	info@shannonside.ie
South East Radio	info@southeastradio.ie
Spin 1038	info@spin1038.com
Spin South West	info@spinsouthwest.com
Sunshine 106.8	mail@sunshineradio.ie
Tipp FM	reception@tippfm.com
WLR FM	reception@wlrfm.com, studio@wlrfm.com