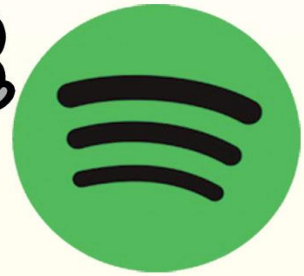




HOW TO



**PROMOTE YOUR
MUSIC**



INDEPENDENTLY



bandcamp



**DIY Tips and Strategies for
Marketing and Selling Your
Music Online**

**The Music Guy
MusicGuyOnline.com**

Introduction

The music industry has been in an interesting place for the past couple decades where the traditional formula and path to success have been thrown out the window.

The idea of having to get signed to a major label to survive has been challenged, as well, as most artists can perform their own marketing on a micro and guerrilla level thanks to the reach of the internet.

Not surprisingly, the majority of marketing your music will take place online, so let's take a look at the various resources for getting your music heard and how to use them.

Before We Get Started

Before we go any further, I CANNOT STRESS ENOUGH the importance of the quality of the music you're promoting.

Yes, you'll hear this from literally everyone giving advice on how to promote your music, but that's because it's the truth.

Unlike other commodities, you can't fake or skimp on quality in your music.

People also have extremely short attention spans, so your tune has to wow the listener right away to have a chance.

This means first writing a great song.

Hopefully you got this eBook in combination with my "[How to Write a Song – The No BS Songwriter's Bible](#)", but if not you can check it out by clicking on that link to learn all of my years of secrets to kickstart songwriting ideas and write HUGE hooks.

Unfortunately, you don't have the luxury of solely relying on the quality of a great song to shine through an otherwise bad recording.

This means you need a professional quality recording, mix, and master of your song, as well.

Thankfully, it's relatively inexpensive to record your music yourself and I cover a number of tips on that in the aforementioned [How to Write a Song ebook](#).

And in regards to affordable and professional mixing and mastering I've got you covered with [Music Guy Mixing](#) and [Music Guy Mastering](#), respectively.

You can also check out the [Music Guy's Fast Track Mixing Course](#) to learn tips and tricks for creating your own professional mixes.

Now that I've addressed what is again **THE MOST IMPORTANT ASPECT OF MARKETING YOUR MUSIC**, or having a quality product to market to begin with, let's get into the purpose of this eBook: how to promote your music independently.

I've structured this eBook in a linear way which makes sense and assumes that you're starting from the ground up.

If you're already well versed in any of the concepts I'm covering, simply move on to the next section as I promise there is a ton to learn over the next 50+ pages.

Now that that's all out of the way, let's get started covering how to market your music independently!

Get a Professional Website

First things first, you need a home base for all things related to your music in the form of your very own website.

To all of you out there who are relatively technologically inept like me, DO NOT WORRY; I've got you covered with a simple way to register and set up your very own website just for the cost of registering a new domain and getting monthly hosting (or about \$30-\$40 annually in total).

I have a couple tutorial videos which I'll link to in a moment which cover every single aspect of creating a website, from registering a domain and getting a hosting account to run the website on to designing the website itself and adding content using a user friendly free software used by millions of websites called WordPress.

But why do you need a website to market your music in the first place?

There are a number of reasons to have your own website.

One, it creates a central spot which people can always find you at and get your latest updates on news, concert, merch, etc., regardless of whether or not they use social media.

It's also a sign of professionalism in general as both important industry people and fans will take you more seriously if you have a website of your own and a professional looking and easy to use one at that.

In the same vein, it also enables you to send out emails from your website's domain name which looks infinitely more professional than using a Gmail account for correspondence regarding your music, particularly with industry people.

Your website also acts as an extra presence in Google and other search engines which can appear when people search for your name, giving you more traffic and exposure.

Getting back to the idea that this is the center of the universe that is your music, every other satellite social media profile which you'll create elsewhere and every email you send out will point back to this website.

Speaking of social media, some people challenge the idea that you even need a website of your own for your music due to the strong presence of Facebook and other social media sites.

While Facebook and other popular social media sites are huge parts of your marketing and networking strategy, we can't forget that the internet is constantly evolving.

A site like Myspace.com which itself was once THE one stop shop for music artists is now completely obsolete.

While you can't compare Myspace even at its prime to the massive influence or scope of Facebook today, the point is having a legitimate website of your own for yourself is your one constant address online which you know will never go out of style and that you will always have full reign over.

This means that you can design it to reflect the personality and identity of your music and do pretty much whatever you want on that site without having to adhere to the also constantly evolving rules of social networks.

This includes the absolutely essential practice of email marketing, which I will go far more in depth into in a moment.

So how do we do it? I did promise it would be easy.

How to Create a Website

I recommend putting together a website using WordPress, a completely free and intuitive software for running your website.

Simply by installing WordPress to power your site, you can easily change the look, structure, and overall design of the site whenever you want, post news/tour/merch updates, connect to your other satellite presences like social network profiles, and even build up a robust email subscriber base to more closely connect with fans.

Admittedly, there are a couple of technical website things which you'll need to know to get set up, but I've put together two VERY important videos which will simplify and expedite the entire process for you and explain it so easily that a child could do it.

Video Resources:

[How to Set Up a Band Website](#)

[How to Use WordPress](#)

I'll let the videos themselves cover everything, but to sum them up, the basic idea is:

Step 1 – Register a Domain (2 minutes) – This is the URL which you want people to go to to access your website. I recommend NameCheap or GoDaddy as a domain registrar (note those are affiliate links as I've used these companies myself for a decade and stand by them.).

Step 2 – Get Hosting (2 minutes) – The URL is worthless unless it's hosted somewhere, meaning the URL/website is actually online and accessible

when someone tries to access it. I recommend HostGator or CrocWeb as a hosting provider (again note these are affiliate links for companies which I've used to host my websites for a decade without issue.). It's unwise to skimp on your hosting provider because the cheaper options potentially mean that your website won't be online 365 days a year due to technical issues.

Step 3 – Connect That Website to that Hosting Account (1 minute) – This simply means informing your domain registrar where you're hosting account is.

Step 4 – Add That Domain To Your Hosting Account (1 minute) – This means creating a folder on your hosting account for your domain where the files will be kept.

Step 5 – Create a Database in Cpanel (2 minutes) – WordPress, the easy and free software I mentioned you should use to run your website needs a database before it will run to house any content you create for it.

Step 6 – Download and Install WordPress (3 minutes) – This just means downloading and uploading the basic files for WordPress to your hosting account. Once the files are uploaded to the account like I demonstrate in the above linked to video, WordPress will automatically install. You simply need to input the database information you created in Step 5 and it will install itself.

Step 7 – Design Your Website (1-2 hours) – This is the only time consuming aspect of the process, but WordPress significantly cuts down on the time it takes to do most things.

WordPress uses design templates called “themes” which dictate the look and feel of a website.

There are thousands of free themes which you can search for within the WordPress dashboard itself while you're logged in, and you can test them out.

If you don't find what you're looking for in the free options, I recommend checking out [ThemeForest](#) – a hub for very affordable premium themes.

The prices range from \$1 and top out around \$35, so you can get a very attractive and professional looking website with just a couple of clicks and

without spending much money. Plus, you know it will be a lot more unique compared to the millions of sites using the free themes out there.

Once you have a theme you like, you can customize its various features including things like color scheme and layout.

When your theme is set, you can begin to create pages and posts, with pages being more for static content which doesn't change (about, contact, etc.) and posts being more for timely news updates.

WordPress also uses things called "plugins" which are like apps for your WordPress run website which give it increased functionality.

There are thousands of free plugins which you can search through and install from your dashboard to achieve any kind of functionality you want from your website.

Again, I cover everything you need to know about running WordPress including the essential free plugins you should install in my video on how to use WordPress.

Here's the two video links one last time:

[How to Set Up a Band Website](#)

[How to Use WordPress](#)

Must Have Pages

Once your site is set up, there are a few basic pages which you'll want to get on your site and feature as part of its main menu which I'll go over now.

Biography

If someone is getting into your music for the first time, they'll likely want to know a bit more about you like where you come from, how you got your start, etc.

This is especially true about people in the industry, not to mention that it's essential for when you put together your press kit to send into labels.

It's a sign of professionalism, so get your bio up on your website and then you can put copies of it on your Facebook profile, Twitter profile, Spotify artist profile, or anywhere else you like.

Be sure to include at least one professional photo of everyone together here to go along with it.

You can also create individual bios for each of your members if you're a group or collaborate with anyone else. It's not necessary, but it's good for the ego and some fans enjoy this.

Contact

Create a contact page where you list your professional contact email (example@yourdomain.com) and any third parties who are involved with your music if you have independent PR, management, booking, or label people that you are affiliated with.

All of these contacts should also be replicated on every social media account you have.

The main point of all this is to make sure that media, bloggers, and anyone else can reach you via their point of contact of choice for booking, album/show reviews, interviews, etc.

Making this page and consequently this info easy to find ensures that you won't miss out on a great publicity opportunity just because they couldn't quickly find out how to get in touch with you and gave up.

A Personalized Email Address

I just mentioned the professional email address as something to obviously include in your contact info section. You won't impress anyone using a Gmail, Yahoo, Hotmail email address when corresponding with your fans or people in the industry.

After you've registered your domain and tied it to a hosting account, most hosting providers will give you a free email account(s) associated with that new site, so set it up and get a "yourname@yourdomain.com" address to ensure that you don't look like a two-bit artist. I covered this as part of the WordPress tutorial video as it's very simple to do in most hosting provider's

version of cPanel.

You can then sign into and check your email via your hosting account or typically just by going to “yourdomain.com/webmail”, depending on the hosting provider.

You can create individual email addresses for different purposes. For example, you can create an email address for booking (“booking@yourdomain.com”) which you can list if people want to book you for a show, one for merch in case there’s an issue with your merchandise, one for the website admin in case someone has an issue with the website or accessibility, etc.

Alternatively you can just have one email address for everything or each member can have their own email, though I recommend if you’re displaying it here on your hopefully heavily trafficked contact page that you should just have one central email address.

With that in mind, I also recommend creating forwarding addresses for that central email, meaning anytime that account receives an email, you can have it forwarded to everyone involved’s personal email accounts at their Gmail, Yahoo, etc. so that everyone is in the loop without having to constantly check the main account.

Tour Dates

Pretty self-explanatory, but create a “tour”, “live”, or “shows” page for your menu to feature any and all live dates you have upcoming.

You can update this yourself manually, or if you partner with a free service like Songkick, a service which tells fans when artists they like are touring, you can integrate your account so it gets automatically updated on your site as the live dates update and progress.

Merch

Much like I mentioned with Songkick, most merch clients which you’ll partner with will have some sort of integration for this page of your site.

At worst you can use this page to link to wherever you sell your merchandise.

You might think to yourself, especially in the early days, that you're not big enough to warrant merchandise.

Remember that everyone likes to feel like they've discovered the next big thing or are early to the party that is your music. Combine that concept with well designed, good looking merchandise and you'll be surprised at how much you can sell.

Plus it's free advertising for your music out there in the world!

News/Blog

A blog is the part of the website in which you talk personally one on one to your readers and can give news updates.

Each member can have their own individual authoring name on the site or you can all just share the same one.

Use this space to keep everyone up to date on the latest happenings with your music including new releases, merchandise, tour dates, etc. and subsequently point them toward the relevant pages on your site.

Upload pics from your tour or recording studio experience on your blog to make your readers feel like they're experiencing the journey with you.

Press Photos

You should have a few quality photos of you and anyone else in your group on the site.

At the very least you should have one to go with your bio so that people can get an idea of what you look like. This goes a long way in connecting them closer to you rather than you just being the shadowy figure behind the music (which hey might work for you if you're someone like deadmau5, Gorillaz, or Sia).

Forum

Building your own forum is a great way to get traffic to your site and to develop people into even bigger fans after interacting with other fans and members.

The best and most trusted forum software for several years has always been vBulletin.

If you don't have the budget for a premium forum, phpBB and Simple Machines Forum are the two best free options.

Paramount when designing a forum is to get the right “skin” or basically to consider the aesthetic look of your forum. You want it to reflect the focus of your music/name.

Once the forum is set up, you should tweet about it, share it, post about it, make a video, etc. to spread the word.

Of course you can't expect anyone to go to an empty forum, so what most webmasters who start a new forum do is to create a dozen or so fake accounts and start the conversation themselves to make it seem like there's traffic on the board to initially attract new members until there are enough members for the board to self-sustain itself.

Again, play the incentive card to encourage people to make more posts on the board. Offer someone an exclusive download of a rare and otherwise unavailable song once they get to 100 posts, then another when they reach 500, and so on.

You can create a Discord Server dedicated to your music, as well, where people can go and chat about you and your music in real time similar to the forum, but the bonus with the forum is that it encourages people to spend time on your site which leads to more engagement whether that's email sign ups, merch purchasing, or news update views.

More traffic on your site can even lead to your site ranking better in search engines.

Of course it's not a good look when your forum is a ghost town, so you may want to hold off until you have at least something of a following.

Terms and Conditions, Privacy Policy

Speaking of ranking better, Google and other search engines reward sites which have dedicated pages for terms and conditions and a privacy policy with better rankings.

This just basically spells out in legal terms how you're using their data and is especially important if you're collecting any information from your users such as through an email sign up form.

There are lots of services which generate the content for these pages for free; all you have to do is put in your website's URL, name, etc., then simply create a new page on your site for each of these and paste in the generated content from the service and you're done.

Email Marketing

Yes, despite all of the other methods of communication, you absolutely need an email list for your music.

Email correspondence is objectively the best way to maintain contact and build a relationship with people and develop them into loyal fans who will support you by buying your music and merchandise, attending shows, and sharing your music with other people.

Like I mentioned earlier, social media comes and goes. Regardless of whether or not Facebook is around forever, your audience's engagement with it or any other social network will fluctuate.

The one constant which virtually everyone is always using is email.

This is why it's essential that you take your email marketing seriously, because it is a lifeline to and represents your most valuable segment of fans.

Note that most of your fans or everyone who visits your website will sign up for your email list, but those who take the time to sign up, you'll find they are some of your most committed fans and the email list will be an effective way to correspond and develop a relationship with them.

Dress it up and have some fun with it.

Don't think of your email list as just that, but as your "Fan Club". Get creative and come up with a neat name for the members of your fan club.

The Killers' fan club members, for example, are cleverly known as "The Victims".

If you're releasing your music under an interesting name, give your fans an

interesting name, too, to give them more of an identity (which they'll enjoy).

Again, your fan club is a great way to remain in touch with your most loyal fanbase and the fans who are most likely to purchase your music when it comes out, buy new merchandise, and come out to live shows as well as spread the word of everything which you do, so notify them accordingly when you have something worth mailing about.

Now the only question is how do we do it, and preferably FOR FREE?

How to Set Up an Email List

Setting up an email list and integrating it with your site is especially easy using WordPress.

First, you need an email marketing provider.

I recommend [MailChimp](#), especially if you're starting with your first email list. It's completely free for users with lists of 2,000 subscribers or less, and you can send out 10,000 emails per month on this free plan.

This means that if you have 2,000 subscribers, you can send out five emails to them each month which averages out to be a little more than one a week and you're still on the free plan.

After you surpass 2,000 subscribers, a small monthly fee kicks in, but honestly if you have a list of 2,000 subscribers or more then you should be able to leverage that fan pool to more than cover the costs of your email marketing provider (which on the first tier works out to be \$14.99 a month).

After you sign up for an account with MailChimp, you can create your first sign up form.

Navigate to their "signup forms" tab and create an "embedded" style form.

MailChimp's form editor makes it easy to both pick a design as well as pick and choose the information you want your subscribers to give you when they sign up.

Really the only piece of information which you need is their email address

itself, but asking for their first name allows you to automatically input their name whenever you write a new email to send out to your list, giving it an extra personal touch.

Another suggestion is to have them input their birthday so that you can send them a gift automatically in their email inbox when their birthday rolls around.

These are all things which are super easy to do in MailChimp and every other email marketing provider worth its salt.

Once your form is set up, MailChimp will give you some code for that embedded form.

While there is an official MailChimp plugin for WordPress, all you really need to do to integrate that form on your site is paste that code wherever you want that form to appear.

I recommend going in to your site's Widget section and adding an HTML section to the top of your right sidebar and pasting the code in there (which I covered in the [how to use WordPress video](#)).

That way, your sign up form will appear on every single page of your website, so no matter which page someone is currently visiting on your site, your email list is always highly visible and being advertised.

After your sign up form is set up and linked to your list in MailChimp, we just need to start getting people to sign up.

3 Tips for Getting People to Sign Up for Your Fan Club:

1 – First, you need an irresistible call to action on your sign up form to get people to sign up. When you're designing the form, this is where you tell people why they should sign up, otherwise it's just a blank space to put an email address in.

Your call to action is some piece of writing meant to get someone to take your desired course of action, or in this case sign up for your email list.

Remember that as a musician you have one of the BEST incentives to get them to sign up – free and exclusive music.

Offer an instant download of an exclusive song like a b-side or otherwise unreleased live version of a song which they can't get anywhere else just for signing up for the fan club.

You can advertise this on the form when designing it so that they know if they sign up they'll get that download instantly in exchange for their email address.

You can deliver this song by uploading it to your hosting account (like I showed how to upload the WordPress files in the video on [how to set up a website](#)) and then including a link to it in the first followup email which all new subscribers receive (you set this email up as part of your MailChimp form/list set up process).

2 - Eliminate any confusion and entice people by explaining exactly what kind of content you'll send them, as well.

Promise to notify potential fan club members about the happenings of your band first before you post it anywhere else. This means they get access to presales for shows (once you reach that level), new merch, news, and so on first and before anyone else.

Putting these last two concepts together, your call to action could be: "Join the official fanclub of (blank) to receive an instant download of an exclusive unreleased song and get presales on merch and shows before anyone else!".

3 – Lastly, make signing up for your email list as easy as possible. This means:

Your Website – I covered this already in featuring it on every single page of your site via the Widget as opposed to just have one specific page someone needs to go to to sign up.

Facebook – Another reason I like MailChimp is because their Facebook integration is seamless as you can create a tab on your artist page which displays your email signup form so you can drive signups from your Facebook just as easily as your website. You can title the tab "free exclusive song" to pique interest and drive signups that way.

BandCamp – I'll talk more about BandCamp later, but in short it's the best place to sell your music directly to fans because you get the greatest percentage of every sale out of any music selling platform out there at roughly

90%.

Again, I'll talk more about setting up your BandCamp profile later, but while it doesn't allow for a signup form per se, anytime someone purchases your music or even downloads something which you've set as a free download, they have to put in their email address as part of the download or purchase process.

This allows you to then take these emails from BandCamp and import them directly into your list in MailChimp so you can email them just like everyone else.

Physical List – If and when you play shows, you can have a physical paper list at your merch booth to collect emails and later import them just like you did with BandCamp.

Anywhere Else – There are plenty of other places where you can get your potential fans' emails.

Some social networks won't integrate seamlessly with [MailChimp](#) like Facebook, but still may have an option for you to collect email addresses.

In this case you'd just physically import those addresses like you did with those received via BandCamp.

Just be sure to only add email addresses of those who have expressed an interest in you and your music, and make sure every subscriber always has a clearly visible option to unsubscribe in every email to ensure you don't get complaints which can damage your ability to get your emails successfully delivered in the future.

And lastly and without spamming folks, just promote your email list on any and all social networks and satellite profiles for your music by linking back to your site with that purpose.

Facebook

I think we can stop counting at this point, but Facebook has somewhere in the +billion figure range in regards to registered users, so once your website is set up go ahead and secure a fan page under your artist name.

In the old days, there were requisites about getting your own page name

such as having 25 “likes” of the page before you could get your URL.

Now as soon as you sign into your personal Facebook profile and click “create” in the top menu section, you can create a new page and even give it its own URL.

Select “Brand” from the options, then under the “category” field on the next page, type in musician and select “musician/band” from the drop down.

The rest is self-explanatory and, once the page is set up, over on the left you can select your custom name/@/URL.

Maintain consistency in the name you choose across your various social media platforms.

So if you discover that the name you want is taken, you can add “music” or “band” to the end of it.

For the sake of consistency you should duplicate whichever handle you end up going with across every other platform.

That way, anyone can easily find you on another network by using the same handle.

For that reason, it’s wise to set up all of your social network accounts at the same time, including Facebook, YouTube, Twitter, Instagram, BandCamp, and any other networks you might want to use.

After you’ve created your Facebook page, you can begin to work with its design.

The first thing to do is create a cover banner photo. You can include a photo of everyone involved in the group, or perhaps better, just stick with an original logo.

You can create it yourself if you have the software (like Photoshop), outsource it to an artistic friend, or outsource it to someone on a gig site like Fiverr.

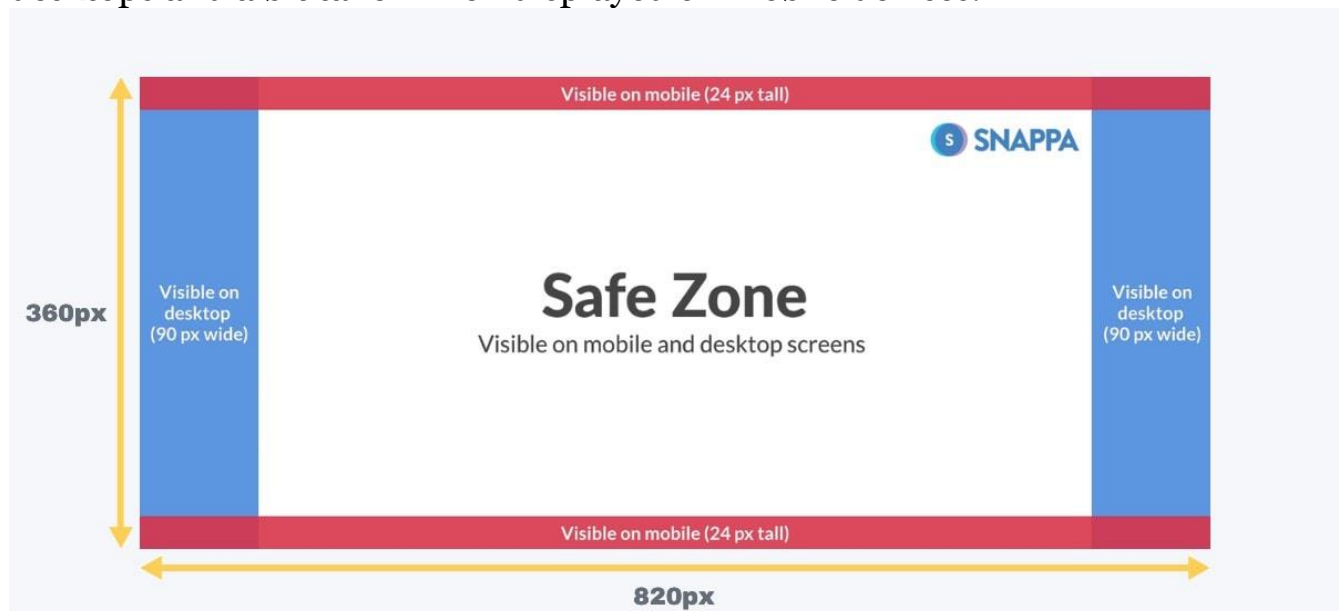
I recommend the logo because it’s more conducive to replicating again and again on different sites but also more versatile in regards to the various recommended banner or logo sizes which the different sites you’ll want to

feature it on require.

If you outsource this to someone else, get a variety of sizes for that logo all at once so that you'll have every social network covered.

Banner/Logo Sizes

Facebook – Facebook recommends a banner image of 820 by 360 (that's 820 pixels tall, 360 in width). Refer to the image (courtesy of [Snappa](#)) below to note that this image will be a bit wider when displayed on desktops and a bit taller when displayed on mobile devices.



For that reason, you want any text or logo image to be in that safe zone as anything outside will be lost on either the desktop or mobile version.

Twitter – Twitter recommends 1500x500 pixels, but again parts can get cut off, so 1263x421 (which maintains the same aspect ratio) is recommended for the “meat” of your logo.

BandCamp – BandCamp recommends 975x40-180 pixels, meaning the 40-180 length is negotiable and can work with taller or shorter images.

Profile Images – Most networks also include a space to feature a profile picture or avatars which is typically equal in dimensions, or a square.

For this reason, it's a good idea to also get a square version of your logo or even a variation since oftentimes this profile picture will be put alongside the banner picture. You can size this at 1500x1500, though many sites will

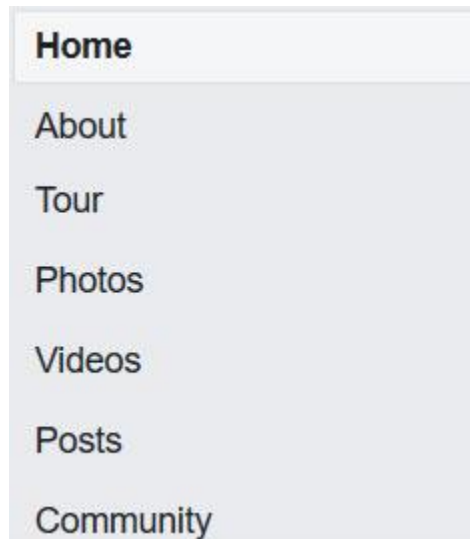
size it down.

Getting Back to Facebook...

Once you have your banner and profile images uploaded to Facebook, you can begin its navigational links.

Much like your website's menu itself, you can create tabs to navigate visitors of your Facebook page to the most relevant content regarding your music.

By selecting "Settings" near the top of your page, this brings up a whole host of options of things you can change about your page. Select "Templates and Tabs" on the left and you can pick and choose which tabs you want to keep, remove, or add.



The above picture is a good collection of tabs to have. While most are self-explanatory, let's address each one briefly here:

Home – Your home is just a link to the top level of the Facebook page itself, similar to a home link on your website.

About – Clicking this tab allows you to add lots of basic information about your music/artist/band.

Because you chose "musician/band" as the category, most of these are tailored to music, including other artists you like/recommend, record label/management information, etc.

You can change your username here, as well.

Tour – If you have a profile with a tour/live show tracker like Songkick or Eventbrite, you can create a tab and link it to your Facebook page so that it updates in real time and allows people to see your upcoming shows or even purchase tickets if the venue is set up for that.

Photos – You can upload photos from your live shows, recording sessions, or even just you and the other members in your day to day lives. Fans love candid shots and helps to make them feel more of a connection to you the artist.

Videos – Exactly the same as photos, but videos. So document your shows, recording sessions, or anything you like in video form and post them here.

Posts – News updates or just anything you want to share can go out in a normal post and will be accessed at this tab. Fans can comment on your posts just like they can with your photos and videos.

Community – The community tab is nice because it encourages engagement by singling out your page’s most active and engaged Facebook fans.

This gives fans the incentive to comment often and early on any and all updates you make on your Facebook page as it will feature the ones who do it the most here.

Likes/Follows

There are two types of social currency on Facebook, “likes” and “follows”, and you want them both. A quick rundown of the difference is:

Likes – When someone “likes” your page, they are publicly expressing their interest in your page. Depending on their settings, their friends can see that they liked your page and, depending on how many friends they have, that can be a lot of exposure for you.

Follows – When someone “follows” your page, they get updates in their personal feed regarding any updates you make on your Facebook page.

This means they’ll be alerted when you post anything or make changes to

your page.

Remember not to go overboard with the updates or you'll see a lot of unfollows very quickly.

The two are mutually exclusive, meaning someone can like your page without getting the follow updates, or someone can follow your page without actively "liking" it.

Again, you want both for the benefits I just mentioned in each.

How to Get Likes/Follows

There are a number of ways to get folks to both like and follow your Facebook page, both of which will get you exposure. Let's cover a few of them now.

Advertise Your Facebook Page – Duh! Sure it's a no brainer, but make sure people know that you have a Facebook fan page for your music by advertising it everywhere you advertise everything else.

Prominently link to it on every page of your website which you can do with most themes or social plugins on WordPress, mention it in person when you get a chance, put it in your email signature for every time you send out an email, etc.

Get Your Friends to Like You – You've probably already got a number of friends on Facebook hopefully, why not make them work for you?

Send out a post where you ask everyone to check out and like and follow your page, you can invite specific friends to like it, as well.

If you have a lot of friends and they're good people, that'll get you a ton of likes and follows fast.

This can help you especially when you're just starting out with a new page because that initial burst of fans of your page will act as social proof and get your non friends/strangers who check out your page to like it, as well, after seeing others have done it before.

Buy Facebook Engagement – Buying Facebook engagement in terms of

likes used to be a bigger business before Facebook cracked down on it.

You can still find places to purchase social proof, but it comes with the warning that Facebook can generally detect when the social proof is from essentially bots (even if they are from real accounts in some cases) and will remove them in a future update or at worst penalize your site for having them.

Use Facebook Advertising – Using Facebook’s own advertising network is a great way to get people to check out your Facebook page.

Unlike purchasing likes, here you’re paying to exposure your page to actual people who might like your type of music.

Facebook can find them because its advertising system has the luxury of having many of its users’ personal information including musical tastes and preferences.

It determines which users would be most interested in your music and via the Facebook advertising solicits them to like and check out your page.

It’s easy to get targeted traffic and since it’s all through Facebook, it converts well when it comes to getting more fans for your page.

Join Relevant Groups – Joining and engaging in groups which are relevant to your niche is a good way to get the word out about your page and consequently have people check it out and possibly like it.

This means joining groups themed for your genre or for similar artists and becoming part of the community. Where you couldn’t before, you can now join and communicate with groups as your page.

Obviously you can’t just join and start spamming about your music, and most groups have rules about this, but it’s a good way to meet likeminded people and connect with your potential fans directly.

There are a lot of popular user curated playlists out there on Spotify, YouTube, and other networks/services, and many of them have groups for their playlists. Seek out the ones who are relevant to your sound, join, and engage with them on and off, leaving comments and chatting with other users.

Incentivized Likes – I’m not sure incentivized is a word, but you can

offer an incentive in exchange for getting people to like your content.

This is similar to when you dangled a song in exchange for someone signing up for your email list, but in this case you can require social engagement on Facebook (for example) or other social networks before you will release that content.

There are apps which lock content until someone likes or follows you on the network of your choosing, and you can drive these on your own website using a WordPress plugin.

There are plenty of [free content locker plugins](#) which allow you to unlock the content of your choosing (another song, for example) once someone follows you on Facebook, Twitter, etc.

You can also put content like videos in your fans only section of your page so that people can only access the videos by being a fan, thus encouraging them to remain a fan.

Add new content on a semi regular basis to your fan section and it almost feels like a neat exclusive membership community.

Live Stream Your Music Live – You can go live on Facebook anytime. Take advantage of this and stream your practice session or, if that's too muddy, stream acoustic stripped down performances of your songs, covers, or just hanging out with your other members.

If a page gets a reputation for featuring a lot of live events on Facebook, word of mouth will spread and you'll get a lot more people coming to your page.

Comment on Blogs With Facebook Comments Enabled – You probably started reading this last one and saw “comment on blogs” and thought to yourself, really? Blog commenting? Blog commenting isn't very exciting or helpful for how to get Facebook likes until you start commenting on blogs with Facebook commenting enabled. This means that everyone participating in the comment section discussion is currently on Facebook.

Apply the same tactics you usually use when blog and people will see your good insightful blog comments and just like they would check out your site they'll check out your Facebook fan page. The conversion rate for doing this and getting the like should be higher than a normal blogging scenario as

you're not trying to sell them something on a landing page, you're just trying to get the free like, and plus people are much more eager to visit a page on Facebook than someone's blog.

YouTube

YouTube is one of the most trafficked sites on the internet and the big name in video content; overall it's a great resource for musicians especially so you should get yourself an official account for your name, ideally under the same name as your other accounts.

It's easier to get a video to go viral as opposed to any other medium, so make it a point to create lots of interesting and entertaining content and spread and share it across the net. You never know when you could get a viral video of your own.

Tips to Get More Subscribers on YouTube

Covers

Don't forget that Justin Bieber got his start by making lots of covers of his favorite songs and uploading them to YouTube.

This is a great way to get more subscribers.

Cover both popular and lesser known artists in your genre as well as the biggest top 40 hits of the day to gain even more exposure.

Music Videos

This one is obvious, but make interesting or funny music videos to go with your best songs/singles.

Lyric Videos

Lyric videos are very popular, too, as people sometimes just want to focus on the lyrics of the song rather than anything else visually distracting. So rather than having them search for the lyrics of your music elsewhere, just include them in both the description of the video as well as in the video itself. You can use gig sites to get someone else to make one of these for you

and for dirt cheap.

Live Videos

Most folks have the latest smart phones which provide virtual professional video quality, so have a friend film a song or entire show of yours, get the sound from the board, and sync them together to make a professional live video. Have a few friends film from different spots to get multiple angles you can cut between, as well.

Regular Updates

Shoot videos from the road in different cities you might be visiting while touring, even if it's a one off show. Record yourself in the studio recording. All of these things help to make your fans get a better idea of who you are and feel closer to you.

Live Streams

Live stream your practices or just getting together with an acoustic guitar and taking requests. Establish a weekly or a monthly time to stream (you can do this on other streaming platforms like Twitch, as well) to show that you're active on that platform and encourage people to tune in and offer their requests each time.

Take advantage of your local market, as well. This means that when you add new videos to YouTube, put your city's name + "band" or "music" as the part of the title of a new video every so often so that you'll turn up when people search for local music.

Also remember that YouTube isn't the only game in town. Aside from Twitch which I mentioned, there are plenty of other places to put your video content if you do a quick search.

Twitter

Like everything else, Twitter has its place in marketing your music. Twitter is extremely important for 3 major reasons.

Networking

Twitter is fantastic for networking with other musicians and industry folks. I know of an artist who contacted one of their favorite artists via Twitter and locked down an opening slot on his tour after that artist checked out their music because of Twitter.

You can directly reach people via Twitter rather than having to go through the red tape and other channels, so it's a great chance to get your music right in front of the people who matter if you know how to find them and what to say.

Relationships

Twitter is a great way to build a relationship with your existing fans. Rather than tweeting automated messages with your album's purchase link, you should take the opportunity to express yourself and let your real voice and personality shine through.

Fans like to take to Twitter and follow their favorite artists as a chance to better get to know them and feel as if they are closer to them. This develops your followers into even bigger and more loyal fans who will be more likely to purchase your new music and see you live when you tour, so take advantage of it.

New Fans

Finally, Twitter is actually very effective for getting new fans.

When you're first starting out and new on Twitter, you can gain exposure simply by following other Twitter users.

Unless a user has thousands or maybe even hundreds of followers, they'll more than likely check out the profile of anyone new who follows them.

Of course, you don't want to just follow random users and expect good things. Instead, you should follow users who are fans of other artists that sound like you.

While there are tools to automate and help you out a bit with this, you can find fans of artists similar to you simply by using Twitter's "advanced search" feature (<https://twitter.com/search-advanced>).

This allows you to do a search for any artist you want using a number of different search parameters.

The search results will reveal potentially thousands of users who have tweeted about that artist during the date range which you specify and additionally with the advanced search you can even narrow it down depending on the engagement their tweet received.

Once you find the fans of the artists you're looking for, you simply follow them and wait for them to check you out.

Alternatively, you can head over to Facebook, find the official page of the similar artist you want, navigate to the people who have liked that page, then go through to the Twitter profiles of those who have connected their Facebook and Twitter profiles, then follow them on Twitter.

I prefer the advanced search via Twitter, however, because I find that these are the more engaged fans who have more recently talked about that artist and consequently are more likely to check you out.

Ideally they'll follow you back, but the point of this isn't just to get followers but to get someone who will check out your music. If they like your music, they'll likely follow you back anyway.

The less followers someone has, the greater the odds that they'll look into and check out a new follower than someone with lots of followers.

Remember that because these are regular people and not celebrities or brands, they'll be far more inclined to check out a new follower when the needle that is their follower count moves.

For this reason, it's important that your Twitter profile is optimized for people who are unfamiliar with your music.

This means ensuring that your 160 character "bio" section is a call to action to check out your latest music, and the one link which Twitter allows each profile to have links directly to your music somehow.

Once someone realizes from your bio that you have music, and depending how easily you demonstrate it is to check it out, out of curiosity they very likely might check out your music. Therefore, it's essential that you make

this as easy to access as possible via the link.

Earlier I mentioned a free service called BandCamp for selling your music directly to fans which I'll talk more about shortly.

The point to make here is that with BandCamp you can easily upload your music via your BandCamp profile then get a bit of code to paste on your website which essentially embeds a music player right on your site.

By creating a "Music" page on your site then embedding a player featuring your latest release, you can link straight to that page on your Twitter profile.

I prefer this over linking to Spotify or any specific store or service like this because not everyone who visits your Twitter profile may use that specific service. The music page/BandCamp player works for everyone.

Additionally, you can also tweet a link to a music video or lyric video for your best or latest song from YouTube with a call to action for people to listen to it.

This embeds the video so that people can listen to the song via that video right on your profile so they don't have to leave Twitter at all.

Then pin that tweet to your profile which means it will stay just under your bio and above anything else you tweet, keeping it highly visible and earmarked as the thing you want people to know about for anyone who checks out your profile.

While you can easily shoot a professional looking music video for your song with most smart phones today, you can also very quickly and easily just have someone create a lyric video for your music using a cheap gig service site like [Fiverr.com](https://www.fiverr.com) for as low as \$5.

Regardless of whether or not someone checks out your music, they may still follow you back as many people go ahead and follow someone who follows them first.

After someone follows you, you should send them a message back thanking them for following you and your music. If they haven't checked you out before, this should help ensure that they give you a listen.

There used to be lots of automated software options in the market for automating following and unfollowing people on Twitter, but Twitter cracked down on these in the last few years and purged the market of them.

But manually following people using the method I just covered can be a great way to get a lot of new eyeballs on your profile and consequently ears on your music.

Fortunately, following people is the best way to develop and build your own Twitter following, and the fact that you're manually following people who you know will be interested in your music (via the method I described) will help it grow even further.

And of course once someone is following you, your tweets will show up in their feed which will keep you on their radars every time you release new music or announce new shows or news.

For this reason, you don't want to abuse it by either sending out too many tweets (just like Facebook updates) or by tweeting too much promotional/self-serving content.

One of the major keys of Twitter like any other social network is to engage with your followers.

Don't shy away from chatting with them back and forth and responding to anyone who mentions you or sends you a direct message.

The more lively your engagement level on Twitter, the more follows and exposure you'll get. Plus, any public chatting you do with other users will be reflected in their feeds, as well, resulting in even more exposure.

Check out this article on [12 ways to get more followers on Twitter](#) for even more methods for exploding your following and your fan base. You also want more followers just for the sake of increasing your social proof.

More followers means more people will follow you because you've already got a lot of followers.

Last.fm

Last.fm is like Pandora for radio. It takes a look at the kind of music which

you listen to online and even on your own computer and puts together a custom mix just for you. As an artist, you can reach its over 40 million active users with your music by joining its music manager program and add your music and videos.

Last.fm will then play your tracks to listeners who enjoy similar music and the more it is played, the more it gets recommended. You can create your own profile page like other social sites, as well.

Additionally, as an artist you get real time analytical stats about your music as people listen to it. This way you can find out which of your songs people are skipping over or which ones they especially like.

Last.fm also offers an Artist Royalty Program which any artist can use whether or not you're signed to a label. You get money every time your music is streamed which isn't much, it's more like fractions of cents per play, but the more plays you get the more money you make and it's completely effort free and no maintenance.

Bandcamp

Bandcamp is an all-inclusive resource for musicians.

Bandcamp enables artists to sell their own music directly to fans through Paypal while only taking a 15% cut which goes down to 10% after you've sold \$5,000 in sales.

You can sell your music through a variety of digital formats with Bandcamp, and you retain full rights to your music.

And as I mentioned in the Twitter section, Bandcamp also offers a very cool audio player which fans or website owners can both use to easily embed your albums/songs for streaming right to a website.

It's also a good way to list and sell merchandise directly to your fans for only a 10% BandCamp royalty cut.

Payment for artists is quick and easy to claim, as well.

I'll talk more about Bandcamp in the **Selling Your Music/Getting Paid section**.

ReverbNation

ReverbNation is a nice all inclusive social network for just about anyone in the music business whether that's a venue, a label, a management company, or an artist themselves.

Just like with Facebook and RootMusic, you can post your tour dates, bio, photos, videos, other info, and your music. In fact, it's a bit overwhelming and cluttered as there are so many options.

A neat thing about ReverbNation is that it's simple to integrate it with lots of other services like Facebook or Apple Music.

Although it's a free site, you can spend money on ReverbNation for some premium services like distributing your music to streaming music sites/download pay for music sites, a feature for setting up a professional website, a FanReach feature for getting more fans, and a feature of putting together a professional digital press kit through ReverbNation to submit and show to labels.

Most of the premium features in my opinion are for artists who have no knowledge of how to do some admittedly basic things (many of which I'm talking about in this eBook) for promoting themselves, so you're mostly paying for the convenience.

Even if you're not planning on using it on a regular basis, you should set up a profile on ReverbNation as it's one of the bigger players for indie artists and it can be a great place for people to find you and your music.

Tumblr

Tumblr is another social network which gets lots and lots of traffic, so you can set up a blog here to pump out your updates which can be found by other users.

You can set your profile to automatically update and post anything which you post on another site like your main site itself.

Online Contests

There are a lot of contests for bands online these days. Winning an online battle of the bands competition can put you in front of a huge new audience, depending on the prize.

When I won the Ernie Ball Online Battle of the Bands when Warped Tour was still a thing, I won a spot on said tour and got to play in front of my exact audience and have the time of my life while doing it.

Even if you don't end up winning the contest like that, your music is still being heard by new people for free, and the further along in the contest you get, the more people who will hear your music and take you seriously; so make sure to do regular searches for new online music contests which you can enter, particularly the free ones.

Going on the Offensive

Setting up shop on highly trafficked social networks and expecting people to find you isn't enough; you have to go on the offensive.

Make note of blogs and other music related websites which are in your genre of music. Contact the owners of those sites (using your professional email address) and kick off the message with your intro.

Sample Intro:

“Hello! I wanted to let you know about NYC rock band (Band Name's) new record, 'Name of record'. It's 10 tracks of grooves, huge hooks, and sprawling jams. I'd love for you to share info about this release with the (Name of Site) audience.”

Then you include a link below to where listeners can stream the record for free and get a free song download if you have one.

It's imperative that this process be as simple as possible. The person you're sending this to should be able to easily navigate to and listen your music within two clicks of the email (one to get to the page your music is on and another to start playing the first track).

Making this process as simple as possible for the person you're contacting increases the chances that they'll actually check you out and ideally will review or make a post about your record to give you more exposure to a new audience.

After you include your music links, you should close out your message by thanking them for their consideration, letting them know there is more info below, and including your signature and role in the band.

Then, below the signature, you can paste in your bio or a shortened version of it, links to a photo or two, a video link or two of a live or acoustic performance of a song or any kind of video which you think would entertain them, and again links to your music in terms of where it can be purchased and streamed across the various platforms you offer (Spotify, Apple Music, Bandcamp, etc.)

The purpose of this is that you want to make it simple for them to include all of this information with their audience if they like your music and decide to write something up about you.

Subject Line

Also make sure to use an interesting subject line for your email which screams “open me!”. Making the recipient aware of exactly what's in that email without their having to open it to find out is a major plus; so use a title like “Album Download Inside from NYC Rock Band: Band Name” or something to that effect.

Developing the Relationship

After you've developed a reputation on a website, you can give them an exclusive listen to a track from your new record when you have one coming out in the future.

Webmasters LOVE their sites to have exclusives, and this is a good way to nurture your relationship with that webmaster to ensure that they'll continue to write about you and put you in front of their audience.

After you've sent your email and download link to a webmaster, check back in 2 weeks later with a follow up asking if they checked out your stuff.

If you get no response, that means they didn't like it or they didn't have time to check it out. If it's the latter then that follow up acts as a good reminder.

Either way, that second email should be the extent of your correspondence with them, from there it's on them to get back to you if they're going to do it; don't enter the realm of pestering them with a third email.

Blogs to Submit Your Music To

There are lots of blogs built around the purpose of discovering and showcasing great new music.

Their editors are passionate about finding new music and sharing it with their built in equally passionate audiences, so these online music blogs are good spots to gain more exposure for your music.

Note that I try to keep this list up to date as many of the blogs which were once well known for accepting submissions from artists are no longer around or accepting any more submissions, which is why you might not see a site or two referenced elsewhere.

A & R Factory

A & R Factory offers a variety of marketing services for musicians, but you can also submit a song of yours for a chance to be reviewed on their site at <https://www.anrfactory.com/submit-demo/>.

Aquarium Drunkard

Aquarium Drunkard is an audio blog which accepts submissions and churns out a ton of regular reviews, averaging nearly a post a day. They have also conducted a lot of interviews with some pretty big names in the music industry, so it's got a really nice built in following. Contact them at <https://aquariumdrunkard.com/contact/>.

Birp.fm

Birp doesn't get updated as much as many other sites on this list, but it's still worth a submission as they curate a monthly playlist of 100 new songs and has a nice built in audience, so submit to have a chance to get included at <http://www.birp.fm/about>.

Country Fried Rock

Country Fried Rock is a podcast which covers music submissions which have grabbed the attention of those involved. They have a number of requisites, such as your music has to have been written by you, no members can be under 18 years of age, they only consider albums, you have to have a website, you need to have your music on SoundCloud, and submitted music must be FCC friendly. If you qualify for ALL THAT, you can learn more about their rules and submit at <https://countryfriedrock.org/contact-info-for-interested-bands>

Drowned in Sound

So Drowned in Sound no longer accepts submissions, but it still has a robust community with which you can communicate and network with, so it still bears mentioning.

FACT

FACT began as a print music magazine but later evolved into the regularly updated music blog site which accepts submissions and features reviews and news on a variety of artists. Check them out and learn how to submit your music at <https://www.factmag.com/about/#contact>.

Gorilla vs. Bear

Gorilla vs. Bear is extra picky about the music it features, but thankfully they don't have any picky requisites on submissions. And if they DO feature your music, you know you're doing something right. Email chris@gorillavsbear.net with your submission.

HearYa

HearYa is another well curated and updated music blog which accepts submissions. Learn how to submit your music at <http://www.hearya.com/contact-us/>.

While many of these blogs prefer links to stream your music, HearYa (and other music blogs you might encounter) prefers digital downloads for their review, so create a number of free download codes which reviewers can redeem via your BandCamp profile and email that code to the reviewer.

HighClouds

Born from an online radio station, HighClouds reviews albums and EPs from new and relatively unknown artists. Check out <http://www.highclouds.org/music-submissions/> for information on how to submit one of your songs to their site.

Indie Music Filter

Indie Music Filter is Toronto-based music which focuses more on the indie genre, large as that umbrella is. Visit <https://indiemusicfilter.com/contact-info-for-indie-music-filter> for information on emailing with a SoundCloud link to one of your songs.

IndiePulse Music Magazine

IndiePulse has its own online radio station IPM Radio which it showcases submissions on and the blog side covers music from and conducts interviews with independent artists music. You can email them at indiepulsemusic@gmail.com regarding a review of your track.

Indie Shuffle

Indie Shuffle makes popular monthly and weekly custom playlists. As you'll notice at <https://www.indieshuffle.com/pages/about/>, they use SubmitHub (which incidentally was founded by the founder of Indie Shuffle) like many other music blogs for submitting your music for review, and you'll also notice that they're very well regarded among the music blogs which accept submissions and use SubmitHub.

Kings of A&R

Kings of A&R calls themselves "the music industry site where fresh faces get discovered. Sounds perfect for our purposes, so learn how to contact them at <https://kingsofar.com/contact/>.

Metal Injection

If metal is your genre, Metal Injection has got you covered. Problem is, at the time of this writing, they are not accepting demos.

But unlike some other sites out there which have just plain dropped off the radar, Metal Injection is still heavily updated and specifically mentioned at <https://metalinjection.net/contact-us> to check back in the future as they sort out their submission system, so it's possible that by the time you're reading this, they'll be back up and running to review your latest metal masterpiece.

The Music Ninja

Electronic, rock, folk, and hip-hop are all genres covered by The Music Ninja who vows to listen to every song he receives and reply to as many emails as possible. Information on submitting at <http://www.themusicninja.com/contact/>.

Pigeons and Planes

Pigeons and Planes seems to have gotten absorbed by Complex over the last few years, but they still create a lot of music content and you can still submit music at submissions@pigeonsandplanes.com or post your music to their Reddit created expressly for this purpose at <http://www.reddit.com/r/pigeonsandplanes>.

Songdew

Songdew is a huge community of artists and listeners which allows you to upload your song and have it featured on their sizable site. There's an upload link right on the main page, so head over to <https://songdew.com>, create an account, and submit away.

This Song is Sick

This Song is Sick is another platform to submit your music and have it featured on. They link to a very specific URL with "TypeForm" for submissions which I get the feeling could easily change after I'm writing this, so just head over at <https://thissongissick.com/> and from the menu click on "Submit a Song".

Xune Mag

Xune Mag is another site which takes submissions from undiscovered artists in any genre and also performs reviews, interviews, and playlist submissions. Check them out at <https://xunemag.com/submit-music/>.

Hype Machine

Hype Machine is a fantastic curated music aggregator which rounds up music shared on blogs and puts it all into one massive feed.

As such, you can find 500+ blogs to submit your music to which I haven't mentioned here.

Check out their blog listing at <https://hypem.com/sites/> where you can search by name or genre to find the blogs who would love your music.

Blog Rolls

Many music blogs feature a “blog roll” section on their site.

Blog rolls are a listing of links to other relevant blogs, meaning you can potentially find dozens of more music sites to submit your music to by checking to see if each site you're submitting to has a blog roll, so keep this in mind when checking the above or any other music blogs.

Submit Hub

I mentioned [SubmitHub](#) earlier as the service many music blogs use to receive submissions.

It's worth a look independent of any one specific music blog because it allows you to submit a song to a lot of blogs at once, and even narrows them down by genre(s) the blogs prefer when you submit.

This is a freemium service, meaning it offers both free and premium credits which are used to submit your music.

A free credit can only be used with certain blogs as some exclusively only accept songs submitted with premium credits.

Premium credits are also used to get your submission pushed to the top of a blog's queue (assuming they accept both free and premium credits) and means that they are required to listen to and give feedback on your track.

The premium credits directly help finance the blogs which receive the submission, hence the priority which premium credit financed song submissions get over the freebies.

If the blogger likes your song, they'll accept it and open a dialogue with you to talk about how it will be featured on their site.

In terms of cost, premium credits average about \$1 per one credit, though the more you buy in bulk the less you pay per.

Some of the more selective premium blogs may even charge two or even three credits per submission, but the premium submissions and their increased visibility ensures that your song doesn't slip through the cracks.

Consequently, songs submitted with premium credits are roughly three times more likely to be accepted, though it admittedly varies from blog to blog.

In general, statistics aren't great regarding the acceptance rates on music, though most of this stems from the fact that a lot of artists submit rough songs which are either severely lacking in songwriting/composition, production, or both.

This just goes back to the first thing I said in opening this eBook which I'll reiterate: you can have the best marketing plan in the world for your music, but if you don't have the goods to back it up, you're wasting yours and everyone else's time.

Incidentally, SubmitHub also recommends a tough skin with the review process if you go premium with your submission, but it's still a viable way to get your music in front of tastemakers and possibly in front of their audiences if they like your music.

SubmitHub's Charts

One more thing to mention is that SubmitHub actually keeps track on their own platform of which songs get most accepted by music blogs under the ["popular" menu link](#) on their site.

They use these stats to put together charts reflecting the absolute most accepted and therefore popular and recommended songs submitted

through SubmitHub.

This can potentially provide you with a lot more exposure as both music fans as well as other music blog owners will have a chance to check you out on SubmitHub alone.

The charts give information on each artist listed, including genre, where to hear the song (outside of SubmitHub), and contact information for that artist.

With playable audio of every song on the chart right there, this is also a cool place to check out other hot underground music which is currently getting some love to find your own personal next favorite thing.

Online Radio

Let's not forget about online radio which still has a huge following and is a great way to gain more exposure. Here are a number of online radio stations which accept submissions:

[Amazing Radio](#)

[Radio Paradise](#)

[The Lot Radio](#)

[KALX Radio](#)

[Beyond the Dawn Studios](#)

[Red Light Radio](#)

[dublab](#)

[NTS](#)

[GotRadio](#)

[TRP](#)

[AndHow.FM](#)

[Know Wave](#)

[KINT98 Online Radio](#)

[KEOS 89.1 FM](#)

[RMBA radio](#)

[3Wk](#)

[Rinse FM](#)

[Dublin Digital Radio](#)

[TMV Café Radio](#)

[Berlin Community Radio](#)

[Hotel Radio Paris](#)

[Diskotopia](#)

Selling Your Music/Getting Paid

After you've taken the time to write your songs and either recorded them yourself or paid to have them professionally recorded, you're probably not against making some money from your music if possible.

This isn't about getting signed to sell your music or having some marketing department of a label working to sell your music for you, but rather where you can sell and offer your music for streaming on the internet with little hassle.

Let's talk about what I believe is the best way to get your music to your listeners as cost effectively as possible while also covering all of your bases.

[DistroKid](#)

I swear by BandCamp as being the best way to sell your music directly to fans with virtually no middle man because it pays out the best commission per sale.

But remember that while we'd prefer it if someone purchased our music from where we get the highest percentage of the sale, it's not as if we can pick and choose where people decide to buy or access our music.

Some consumers exclusively deal with Apple, for example, so if you neglect to put your music on their platform then you can miss out on exposing and selling your music to an entire audience.

Alternatively, some music lovers (myself included) use streaming services like Spotify to find what they're looking for.

For all of this, it behooves you to have your music readily available in and on as many online music stores/streaming services online as possible.

If nothing else, this is greater exposure for your name and your music and looks professional when your music is alongside everywhere the major stars' music is, but most importantly it gives your fans a chance to get your music regardless of which service they use.

Consequently I completely recommend that you use [DistroKid](#) (click this

referral link to get 7% off your order when you sign up) to get your music listed on the internet's music stores and streaming services.

After doing A LOT of research on the subject and using Distrokid, Tunecore, and Ditto, I have found Distrokid to far and away be the best option because:

It's the most cost effective option out there. Most services charge per release, but for a single artist account with Distrokid it's just a single \$19.99 per year.

You can upload AS MUCH MUSIC AS YOU WANT for that one time annual fee. There literally is no cap which is great for artists who just want to put out a single or any music they create as they record it without worrying about the cost per single or album release.

They also roll out your music and get it in stores much more quickly than any other service out there.

Remember that most competitors like Tunecore charge per release and charge you an annual fee for each album on top of that.

So for argument's sake you were going to release 3 albums in 1 year.

With Distrokid that would cost you \$19.99. With Tunecore that would cost you \$29.99 PER ALBUM, so roughly \$90.

But that \$29.99 per album deal with Tunecore is just an introductory rate, it goes up to \$49.99 the next year, costing you roughly \$150 the second year just to keep those 3 albums in stores.

With Distrokid it would just cost you another \$19.99 the next year. It's laughable the difference in the cost and you'd think you're getting something truly special with Tunecore for paying all that extra money, but that's not the case (keep reading).

Distrokid takes ZERO commissions on your earnings so you get 100% of the royalties owed to you. You get every penny of every purchase (minus the store's such as Apple Music's cut) and stream. Payments are received within a day or two, as well, after making a withdrawal.

Additionally, you can split the commissions earned on music so that specified percentages can automatically go to any collaborators, producers, bandmates, managers, etc. so you don't have to keep track of that yourself.

You can pick and choose which stores and streaming services will receive your music. This includes: Spotify, Apple Music, Amazon, Google Play, Deezer, YouTube Music, Pandora, TIDAL, and many more including 150+ smaller outlets through MediaNet.

Distrokid boasts a clean, user friendly interface for uploading music, making a withdrawal on your earnings, or accessing your stats on a track or album level.

After uploading your music, it almost always appears in stores within 2-3 days.

You keep 100% ownership of your music.

“Spotify for Artists” allows you to easily edit the profile which appears on your Spotify page from your Distrokid account, thus giving your artist page on Spotify more credibility and a more professional look.

It also will connect to Songkick to display any upcoming shows you have locally for your listeners on Spotify which is an invaluable tool for getting more people to your shows.

Distrokid offers a number of optional bonuses when uploading your music, as well. For instance, for \$4.95 a year, you can activate YouTube Money on a release, meaning if your music is detected in any YouTube video, you'll be notified and ad revenue will go to you rather than the person who uploaded the video.

They even have an admittedly grim but potentially useful “Leave a Legacy” option where for a single, one-off additional payment of \$29.00 per upload, you can ensure that your release will remain in stores forever. So even if you die and your yearly Distrokid membership lapses, that release will stay in stores and will continue to pay out royalties to whomever is in charge of where that money gets deposited.

While the basic \$19.99 annual membership tier gets you all of the above, you get added benefits on the next level.

On the second tier (“Musician Plus”) for \$39.99 annually, you can release music under a second name, choose your release dates, pick a custom label name, and use custom ISRC codes. The latter is important if you're importing your music from another service so that your plays and sales are carried over.

You can also release music under multiple artist names at the second tier and beyond.

I use the “Label” tier at \$79.99 a year which gives me all of the above listed features and lets me have up to 5 artists which is great for me because I release music under a number of different genres and names.

Distrokid also has great and responsive customer service. One of the main ways Distrokid is able to offer such great rates compared to their competitors is that they keep their overhead very low. The company themselves is mostly automated and the staff is very small, yet I've never had a single issue with their customer service.

It's unlikely you'll ever have an issue that you need resolved by customer service, but if you do it's nice to know that they'll resolve the issue quickly and effectively.

And finally, if you still don't believe that Distrokid is the best option out there, then just ask Jeff Price or Derek Sivers, the founders of Tunecore and CD Baby, respectively, who each left their respective companies/Distrokid competitors and went on to call Distrokid the best distribution service available to musicians. This is completely true, look it up!

And one last time, remember to get 7% off when you sign up by doing it through [this 7% off referral link](#).

Now let's talk about the biggest name in music streaming, and how you can use it to earn royalties and get more fans.

Spotify

I started using Spotify shortly after it became available in the US via the UK over a decade ago, and since then I've seen it grow into the juggernaut it is

today.

It's the gold standard in music streaming, almost single-handedly making music streaming relevant thanks to its easy to use interface, useful features, and massive catalogue.

Spotify is a pretty cool service if you're a music fan; you have instant streaming access to over 50 million songs, high quality fidelity in terms of the music itself, the ability to make queues and playlists, and the latest social and sharing capabilities to go with it all.

They've even added a dedicated section for live shows where they'll mention every single artist who you might remotely be interested in who is playing a show in your area in the future. They do this by pulling straight from your listening history.

Arguably most valuable as far as I'm concerned are the custom playlists which Spotify creates from your listening history.

My favorite is the "Discover Weekly" playlist of 30 songs which Spotify knows you haven't heard either from artists you already listen to or from artists which are similar to those you've listened to but haven't discovered yet.

I've discovered (hence the name) dozens of my favorite artists from this feature alone.

This is all FREE, mind you, save for a few interspersed advertisements every 4 songs or so which can get annoying after a while.

Personally I listen to music most of the day in some capacity, so I go for the premium membership which cuts the ads out and gives you the same access to Spotify on your mobile device.

You can even sync and play your queue/playlist to your device or computer when you don't have an internet connection and all without ads.

As a musician, however, it's crucially important that you get your music in Spotify via [Distrokid](#) or another distributor for 3 major reasons as well:

1 – Relevance

First off, getting your music on Spotify is simply important from a perception point of view.

Virtually every relevant artist today is on Spotify, so it's not a good look if you mention your band to someone and they can't find you on Spotify where many people (250+ million and growing every day) go to find music.

There's over a million artists on Spotify - don't be the one that's not.

2 – Influence

Secondly, Spotify is so influential nowadays that it actually helps to shape the Top 40 charts.

Not only do songs which get lots of attention on Spotify drive more sales and plays to those songs, but streams themselves are actually figured into Top 40 positioning and are considered along with sales with a greater influence each year as more and more music listeners turn to streaming.

Just getting one of your songs on an influential playlist can land your music in front of thousands or millions of new listeners.

For this reason you should always be including Spotify playlist links to your music when marketing your music alongside every other relevant link.

3 – Revenue

Finally is the money you can make from Spotify. You've undoubtedly heard jokes at how insubstantial the amount of money paid out for each stream is.

How much you receive per stream varies from country to country and I'm relatively sure depending on how many repeat listens you get versus new listeners, as well.

There is no precise amount you can expect to receive per stream.

For me personally, after several months of plays to several artists on my Distrokid account, I've found that I've averaged somewhere around 0.0035 cents per stream. Not very much, HOWEVER...

... I also average about 150k streams a month total between the 5 or so bands/artist names on my account which I create and distribute music through.

That's just over \$500 a month I'm making exclusively from streams from Spotify alone. Granted I make far more from Spotify than I do from (digital) music selling stores, and I receive very little from other streaming services like Deezer, but that's still **more than \$500 in passive income each month** simply from the music which I put my heart and soul into.

Yes, it's a great feeling, but it didn't happen overnight.

I've also found, perhaps unsurprisingly, that the more plays and listeners you get, the more exposure your music gets.

There are many reasons for this, social proof being one of them. Spotify shows roughly how many plays your top songs have as well as the number of people who have listened to your music in the last month.

If someone stumbles upon your music on Spotify and sees you have 20 monthly listeners, they may leave as quickly as they got there. Alternatively, the more listeners you have, the more credibility someone unfamiliar with you will give you.

Also, the more plays and listeners you have, the more likely your music will appear above other artists with similar artist/album/song titles in the search results, resulting in more listens.

Plus Spotify is more likely to add your music to its custom weekly playlists for listeners if you have more listeners than not because it's taking those listeners as votes of confidence that your music is worth listening to.

Fair or not, this is why it's important to, one: get your music on Spotify and other services, and two: to promote it whenever possible.

And again, if an influential playlist curator stumbles upon and likes your music and decides to add it to their playlist, you might find your plays explode overnight.

There are [lots of stories](#) of artists who end up on influential playlists and go from obscurity to raking in millions of plays and thousands of dollars in royalties practically overnight.

Spotify for Artists

I mentioned this earlier when discussing [Distrokid](#), but Spotify even displays upcoming shows for artists.

By using Distrokid's free “Spotify For Artists” feature, you can connect all of this information to your profile on Spotify so anyone listening can be alerted to any shows you have coming up which are local to that listener.

You can also add a custom artist bio and add photos to give your artist profile a more professional look and make it stand out from other artists who aren't taking advantage of it.

Even more importantly, Spotify for Artists allows you to submit one of your unreleased songs directly to Spotify for consideration on their curated playlists.

Note that it has to be an unreleased song which you submit through this process, and make sure you submit it sooner than later as you typically need to submit it 7 days before the release, minimum.

Also make sure to fill out your artist profile in full and with effort as bare profiles won't look good to someone from Spotify who is reviewing your song for playlist inclusion.

This leads me into one of the biggest questions independent artists have regarding Spotify today: **how do I get my music on Spotify playlists?**

How to Get on Spotify Playlists

I mentioned how to get your music considered for playlists by Spotify itself just now, but what about the thousands of other popular playlists out there which are user created and curated?

Find out who is curating influential playlists in your genre and reach out to them.

The music blogs I mentioned earlier typically all have their own Spotify playlists which they put out from the music folks submit to them, but in addition to them, check out:

[SubmitHub](#) – I mentioned this in the blog section, but this is such a huge

service with links to so many playlists and blogs, let's give it another mention here.

[Soundplate](#) – Soundplate has tons of genre specific playlists to submit to.

[IndieMono](#) – There are plenty of genre playlists to submit to.

[AlexRainBird](#) – This user makes popular playlists in the indie, rock, and ambient genres.

[Pop Justice](#) – If their contact page is any indication, these are pop tastemakers with a sense of humor.

[\[PIAS\]](#) – A very popular UK based playlist maker.

[Songpickr](#) – Another great service to submit to but with a lean acceptance rate of 7%.

[Work Hard Playlist Hard](#) – You can submit to their playlist or many other playlists they feature. They even remove from their listings those which ask for a submission fee.

[Daily Playlists](#) – Just link to your song on Spotify to submit. As simple as it gets!

Soave – Submit your songs to Soave's many chill themed playlists at soaverecord@gmail.com.

[For The Love of Bands](#) – Independently curated playlists in a lot of genres. Simon Field – Simon Field curates electronic playlists. Follow him on Spotify at <https://show.co/ZY3nhAI> to submit.

Don't strictly sell your band/name; compliment the list and talk about the artists you've gratefully discovered through it (assuming it's a situation where you're sending a personal message along with your music).

And when all else fails, **make your own lists, ideally with your own band/artist name as part of the name.**

Have your ear to the ground in your genre for the best up and coming talent (which is easy to do when you're submitting to and checking out other underground playlists) and feature them on your own playlists. Keep it up and you'll build your own audience up.

Of course, don't forget to feature a new song of your own on each list.

Apple Music

Apple Music has largely replaced iTunes and integrated music streaming alongside digital purchasing.

This service gives you the artist a respectable 63 cents per dollar for the transaction, though that figure changes and becomes convoluted if you're on a major label.

With **Distrokid** you can get your music on Apple Music for purchase or streaming and can be assured that any revenue earned from purchases or streams of your music on that platform will go to you.

Use the same techniques mentioned in the Spotify section for getting on Apple Music playlists, as well.

Bandcamp

Bandcamp gets my vote as the best service for musicians when it comes to selling their music directly to fans.

It's completely free for musicians to sign up and you can set your own price for each and every individual song or album which you upload to their site and can even set up preorders before your new album/music drops.

When someone purchases your music through Bandcamp, the money goes right into your Paypal account immediately, no muss, no fuss.

Best of all, Bandcamp pays you an industry leading 90% (85% until you reach sales of \$5,000) of every song which you sell through their site. That means you get 90 cents for every song which sells for a dollar of yours while Bandcamp only takes 10 cents for themselves while doing all of the processing and analytics for you.

Again you get paid promptly through PayPal, and Bandcamp's customer service is friendly and very responsive.

Something which also sets Bandcamp apart from its peers is that your fans

can choose to download music which they have purchased from you in a number of high fidelity formats rather than limiting them to just one.

You can give away free downloads on your page and your fans can stream your entire album if you wish so that they can hear it for themselves in full before making their decision to purchase or not.

Additionally, on Bandcamp, on average **ALBUMS outsell TRACKS 5 to 1**; a very encouraging statistic considering you're making a lot more money with the purchase of a full album compared to a single or two. This is in contrast to other sites in which on average **TRACKS outsell ALBUMS 16 to 1**; not very encouraging.

Selling merch through Bandcamp is incredibly easy and cost effective, as well.

Ultimately all of this together makes Bandcamp the best deal when it comes to selling your music in this digital era, and again it's completely 100% free.

It's not as if they're completely new to the scene, either. They've been around for over 10 years, though they've gained a lot more exposure in the last year or so, and have served roughly 20 million downloads in that time.

One more thing to be aware of is that Bandcamp now has a feature where you can sell your merch through them directly and get a great rate in doing it.

I make it clear to my fans that if they want to support me, they can purchase my music at Bandcamp.com and I get nearly all of the money which they spend (which a lot of fans care about), not to mention I can set the price of my album as low as I want to encourage more sales and consequently more notoriety.

In Summation

Make it clear to your fans whenever and wherever you can that the best place for them to purchase your music is through your BandCamp profile where you get to set the price and earn an industry leading 85%-90% of every sale.

At the same time, use TuneCore as the best option to get your music listed in all of the major music stores and streaming sites at once for a one time

cost and for the above listed benefits which you won't find matched anywhere else.

Patreon

Patreon is an intimate service in which your fans can directly financially support you and what you're creating, and in return you can give them exclusive perks and content unavailable to everyone else.

The beauty of Patreon is that it's almost tailor made for smaller scale artists who don't get a lot of exposure as these are oftentimes the artists with the more passionate fanbases.

This makes sense because these are the fans who feel a closer connection to this artist because they're not as widely known, and these are the artists who themselves have more incentive to have a closer connection with their fans.

Consequently, it's oftentimes the smaller artists which have a much larger percentage of their fans supporting them on Patreon than larger, more well known artists have.

As an example of an artist who is using Patreon effectively, let me give a shout out to one of my favorite artists in singer songwriter Richard Edwards.

Richard was the creative force behind the sometimes-chamberpop-sometimes-indie rock band Margot and the Nuclear So and So's during the decade between the mid 2000's and the mid 2010's.

After health issues left him largely unable to tour, Richard dissolved the band and began to release music under his own name.

Despite a couple one off television performances on their earlier work, Margot never had a huge following, but it was a name that people recognized.

Choosing to go "solo" (despite him being the main creative force behind that band) and release music under his own name coupled with the fact that he was unable to tour or largely even perform behind that music has obviously meant that the music he's put out under his own name hasn't got nearly as much exposure.

Still, Margot did have a small but loyal following, and the fans that kept up with that band followed his musical transition.

As an aside, I absolutely love the music he's putting out now more than I ever did during my peak Margot fandom, but I digress 😊.

The point is, as part of that transition Richard put together [a Patreon page](#) for his music and told his fans about it.

And while at the time of my writing this he only has a little over 300 "members" supporting him, the two member tiers are \$5 or \$10 a month, meaning over 300 people give him \$5 to \$10 a month, meaning he's receiving anywhere from \$18,000 and \$36,000 a year of near passive income (minus Patreon's 5% cut), and that's on top of whatever income he gets from more conventional streaming and purchasing of his music.

Among other things, at the \$5 tier Richard offers access to music streams and lots of otherwise unreleased demos from the early days that non-supporters can't get.

At the \$10 tier, supporters can get all of that plus access to \$10 supporters-only live streams of intimate acoustic performances of his songs.

He also notifies his supporters of updates regarding his music before any other outlet, so there's an extra feeling of exclusivity.

All kinds of creative types use this service besides musicians, but musicians in particular can get a lot out of it because they lend themselves to always having an audience/fanbase and it's always easy to come up with music related perks to shower on your supporters and incentivize potential supporters to go ahead and sign up.

Honestly, many fans won't even care about the perks, they just appreciate your music and get enough fulfillment out of knowing that it's their monthly patronage in part which allows you to continue to make the art that they love.

You can also set up various goals with a deliverable promise at the end if you reach it. An example would be releasing an exclusive song or video once you reach 50 members.

Goals help to drive up member totals, particularly if you're close to reaching the next goal.

The real takeaway is that you can easily argue that Patreon is the most valuable place to develop a robust presence and community, because engagement here translates directly into income for you.

For this reason, it's important that you link to and mention your Patreon page whenever possible from your website, your email list, and your social networks, and remember to stress the exclusive perks which members will get each time you do.

Misc. Marketing Tips

Here are a few more miscellaneous tips which don't really fit in anywhere else:

Physical CDs

If you have physical CDs, as well, then another place to think about trying to sell them is in your local Mom and Pop record stores in your city. You can make a deal with them to sell them on consignment, meaning you get paid after the CDs sell.

Some stores will have their own contracts which they'll use when you bring your music to them. It will specify how much of a cut they get per copy and they of course make note of how many you're giving them to begin with. If a store doesn't have a contract, you might think about drawing your own up for these situations to use.

Obviously sell these at any live shows which you have as this is the only place where you get 100% of the profits of the sales of your music.

Vinyl

Vinyl is back in a big way with sales this year alone being the highest they've been in this millenium. This trend will only continue as interest continues to grow to get back to the ritual of purchasing physical releases in its most cherished form in vinyl.

Note that **mastering for vinyl** is a different process given the limitations of the medium, and it can be expensive to get a vinyl pressing compared to

CDs, but it's still something to consider if you think you have the market/fanbase for it.

Podcasts

Start a podcast which broadcasts live shows and gives teasers or full plays of your new music. Build up a list and continue to broadcast more live shows through the podcast. Podcasts can be downloaded or streamed through the same services like Apple Podcasts and Spotify and can be a nice way to get new fans and build on the ones that you've got.

PPC Advertising

Advertise your band and new music on music streaming sites and music related social networks like Spotify or Facebook and MySpace, respectively. It costs money, obviously, but when you consider how many people use and listen to Spotify, for example, it can be an EXPLOSIVE way to gain fans overnight.

You can also go to micro job sites like Fiverr.com and pay people to advertise your band or even just generate some social proof on your various social network presences, though there's no guarantee that they'll actually do it unless you have a way of checking up on them.

This is why it's much better to develop a fan club of dedicated fans who will be willing to do these kinds of things to promote you online but for free (though you might throw them some free exclusive tunes – hence the exclusive fan club idea).

Forum Marketing

Post on similar bands in your genre's forums along with forums of highly trafficked music blogs in your genre. Post often and develop a relationship with people there, i.e. don't just wildly and blatantly spam about your band. Nothing turns a potential listener off faster than hardcore spamming.

Ad Swaps

I mentioned building your email list/fan club earlier. Find a similar artist, maybe someone whom you're friends with and who has a fan club or email list of their own, and strike a deal to email your list about the other artist while they email their list about you; this is a great way to expose yourself

to an entirely new audience but one which will enjoy your style of music.

In Conclusion

I've covered a number of ways, platforms, and general tips for promoting your music independently throughout this guide.

If I can leave you with one idea, it would be to stress the importance of finding your audience.

Most artists' goal is to amass a following of millions of fans around the world. Realistically, this only happens to a fraction of a percent of artists.

Instead of shouting about your music to 100,000 people who won't appreciate what you're doing anyway, find and reach out to the 1,000 true fans who will support you and love what you do.

If my section on Patreon was any indication, that's where the key to succeeding in the music business today lies.

You're the only person on this planet who can make the kind of music that you do, so use the tool that is the internet to connect with that precious invaluable pool of supporters who will recognize, appreciate, and reward you for that.

If you keep working at your craft of making music and practicing these tips (and use the additional information and resources at [MusicGuyOnline.com](https://www.musicguyonline.com), of course), the results will snowball and you'll watch your fanbase continue to grow.

To your success in the music industry,

-The Music Guy