

## **15 Essentials of Digital Distribution & Marketing for Independent Artists**

by Michael Ashburne & Jamie Paratore

### **1. Copyright Registration**

If you are going to release your music to the public for sale, invest in some protection. Go on line to <http://www.copyright.gov/> and use form eCO to register your sound recordings (masters) and musical compositions within 3 months after your commercial release.

### **2. Sound Exchange**

Register yourself as an artist and as a copyright owner of your recordings with Sound Exchange at <http://www.soundexchange.com/>. This will insure you will collect your share of performance royalties from the digital performance of your recordings on internet radio and other websites.

### **3. Gracenote**

Submit your masters and complete identifying information to Gracenote. <http://www.gracenote.com/>. Gracenote's "fingerprint" software provides automatic master identification information for I-tunes users and many other digital services.

### **4. ASCAP and BMI**

Affiliate yourself on-line as a writer and a publisher with one of these performing rights organizations. <http://www.ascap.com/> or <http://bmi.com/> Register all your compositions on-line with your performing rights organization after you have affiliated. This will entitle you to collect your share of performance royalties for any analog performances of your musical compositions over the air on tv or radio or any digital performances over the web.

### **5. Artist Website**

Secure a Domain Name or URL for your performing name as soon as possible, (with as many variations as you can reasonably afford). <http://www.godaddy.com/> Create a compelling and organized website to house all activities related to your music business: music, videos, touring news, merchandise, e-commerce capabilities, visitor tracking, blogs, pod-casts, photos, press, contact information for artist etc. Be on alert for ways to promote your website; Use a link to your site as part of your on-line signature; offer to cross link with other local bands

### **6. Digital Distribution**

Secure digital distribution of your recordings so the public can buy your music online from around the world. Tune Core, CD Baby, and others will accept individual artists and enable your music to be listed for sale on retail websites such as I-Tunes right next to the stars.

### **7. Music Licensing**

Music Licensing: Sign up with one of the Internet based Music Licensing portals: Rumblefish, Gamecues, YouLicense, Pump Audio, Beatpick, or Ricall.

## **8. Email List**

An email list is a crucial asset. Find an email management system that makes it easy to capture, store and organize your mailing list, update and check for duplicates on a regular basis. Consider giving away songs for free in exchange for an email address. Create periodic newsletters to email to your fan base.

## **8. EPK: Electronic Press Kit**

Make your music, bios, and press clippings stand out in an organized and straightforward way. Include photos that can be pulled by press as well.

## **9. Blogs/Online Music Magazines**

Make an effort to reach out for these resources. "Tastemaker" sites can be very helpful in breaking a record. Keep some tracks and video free for exclusive blog and online outreach as they love exclusives.

## **10. Internet Radio Visibility**

Investigate opportunities to get music added to on-line radio stations. Research 'pay for play' streaming sites.

## **11. Social Media/Net working: Myspace and Facebook**

Create a presence on Myspace and Facebook. Use it to drive traffic to your own website. Read the "Musicians Guide to Social Media" at <http://www.spokensocial.com/things>

## **12. You Tube**

Create a video or two for You Tube uploading. Make it catchy!

## **13. Measure your Success**

Use website analytics software or consultants to measure the success of your online marketing campaigns; figure out what works and what doesn't to re-assess your online strategy.

## **14. Find the 5<sup>th</sup> Beatle**

If you are not savvy enough to do your own internet work, find someone who knows how to do it and make a deal for their services. If you want to train yourself, consider The Music Power Network <http://www.musicpowernetwork.com/> or Label 2.0 <http://evolvor.com/services/label-20/join-now/> which are both devoted to developing your internet marketing techniques in the music arena.

## **15. Live Performances**

Consider signing up with sonicbids <http://www.sonicbids.com/> and create a profile for potential live performance opportunities.

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