



**musicadium™**  
digital distribution: your music, your way

# Nine Ways to Ride the Digital Music Wave

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Worldwide Digital Distribution



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## Before We Begin...

By now you've read the horror stories about big drops in CD sales worldwide, the rise of the 360 deal and the massive job cuts at major labels like EMI. You've heard about Live Nation – the touring company – signing Madonna, Jay-Z and Nickelback to massive, multi-million dollar deals. No doubt you've used Limewire and Bit Torrents to download music for free and 'bought' albums from Radiohead and Trent Reznor by deciding on your own price.

You've put all these things together and concluded quite rightly that the digital music revolution has the music industry in a spin. But where does that leave you? Well, here's the good news. Despite its new facade, the music business is very much the same old show.

It's the same old show because it's about the same old thing. Songs. The music business still orbits the love of great songs. And as long as there are music fans seeking out great songs and interacting with great bands, the music business will continue to exist in some form or another.

Amidst all the hype surrounding the digital music revolution, it's still your songs, gigs and fans that will propel you forward.

But what else? How can you - the independent artist, label or manager - make the most of the digital music revolution? That's where this e-book comes in. We've outlined below the nine ways we think you can do it.

First we'll summarise each of the ways and then we'll get into a bit more detail. Musicadium doesn't claim full knowledge, but each and every day we get to see what works and what doesn't in the digital realm.

We felt it only right to pass that information on to you.

1. Digital Distribution: The Ten Things You Need To Know
2. Understanding The Outlets
3. Where it All Begins: The Email Database
4. The Best Online Marketing Tool: MySpace
5. The Best of The Rest of the Online Marketing Tools
6. Blogs: Writing, Being Written About and Blog Aggregators
7. Your Bio: Dos and Don'ts
8. Respecting Old Media: Five Ways To Walk The Traditional Press Path
9. Be a Music Pro

## The Nine Ways

For those who aren't ready to read right now, here's a brief summary of what this e-book covers. Here are the nine ways to ride the digital music wave condensed into a single page.

1. Use a good digital distributor to get your music out there – going it alone is too hard.
2. Maximise your exposure on each of the outlets to drive sales.
3. Maintain an email database of your fans and communicate with them regularly to grow the reach of your music.
4. Use MySpace to promote your music, access new fans and expand your community.
5. Do more online by utilising the many marketing and promotional tools available.
6. Write a blog as a way of keeping fans up to date and get other bloggers to write about your music to build hype.
7. Have a one page, spell-checked bio with relevant information and clearly accessible contact details.
8. Don't forget to harness the power of TV, Print and Radio.
9. Go about your business like a professional by staying focused, giving it time and having patience.

# Digital Distribution: The Ten Things You Need To Know

Getting your music online puts you in front of a growing music consumer market.

So what's the best way to get your music online? The best way is to use a digital distributor. Before you start, here are The Ten Things You Need To Know about digital distribution.

## 1. It's a world apart from physical distribution

You can understand digital distribution by comparing it to physical distribution. With physical distribution, someone prints and presses your physical CDs and then distributes them to retailers like HMV or your local CD store. Physical distribution is limited by the number of physical CDs you produce and the shelf space of the CD stores where your CDs are sent. A digital distributor on the other hand encodes your music and packages it up digitally before sending it to the outlets like iTunes and Amazon mp3. And, unlike physical distribution, you can have unlimited copies of your digital album.

## 2. It gets your music to the world for a fraction of the cost

Digital distribution is simpler and much less expensive than physical distribution. It will cost you potentially thousands of dollars to manufacture and produce just a few hundred CDs for local distribution. Compare that to the cost of unlimited, worldwide digital distribution which, with the right distributor, will cost you less than \$100 and allow you to retain all your rights to the music and the lion's share of each song or album sold.

### 3. It's essential to use a distributor, going it alone is too hard

You can sell your music without a digital distributor. You can build a website and set up a system for people to purchase your album. But it'll cost you and you'll have to manage every single sale yourself. And you will run into the same old problem of people not knowing about you and not knowing if they can trust your ad-hoc payment system. You can even contact each of the outlets yourself. Most will send you back an email referring you to a digital distributor. Those who don't might give you a distribution contract and some instructions for delivering files via FTP (if they ever get back to you). But that will take months of effort and administration. Here's a better way. Use a digital distributor. And make the most of it by getting yourself the best deal.

### 4. There are three main business models used by digital distributors

1. The fee for service model where the artist retains 100% of royalties and then pays an annual renewal or storage fee.
2. The subscription model where the artist pays a monthly fee and a variable percentage of royalties.
3. The upload fee and royalty percentage model where the artist pays an upload fee but no renewal or storage fee and the distributor takes a cut of royalties.

## 5. There are some questions you need to ask before you get started

So how to pick the right distributor? Start by asking questions. Here are nine questions to ask before you get started.

1. What is the distributor's upload/joining fee?
2. How much of a cut of your royalties is the distributor going to take? This is crucial. Remember, a royalty is a royalty forever. If you sell a hundred or a thousand songs, do you want the distributor keeping 9%/12%/30% of the money you earn for each sale?
3. Is there a renewal fee per album? How is the renewal fee charged? Is it per album or per year?
4. Is there a weekly, monthly or yearly subscription fee?
5. Is the distribution deal exclusive? Does it allow you to distribute your music to additional regions or outlets or are you bound to a single distributor?
6. Do you retain all of your rights in the music? If the answer to this question is no – tread carefully.
7. Are you locked into the contract for a fixed period? Keep in mind that a label isn't going to want to touch you if someone else owns your digital rights for an extended period.
8. Does the distributor respond to emails/questions? If something goes wrong with the upload, like a track name misspelt or the track



order jumbled, is the distributor going to be responsive? Can you call them? Do real people reply to your emails?

9. Where will your music be distributed? Is the distribution worldwide or limited to a particular region? In which outlets will your music be available? Make sure you cover the biggest outlets like iTunes and Amazon mp3.

## 6. If you do the maths, you can make a better choice

Once you answer all of the above, you can start weighing up the options. At this point, it pays to do the maths. Work out how much the distribution is going to cost you. Taking into account the royalty cut the distributor takes, work out how many songs you'll need to sell to break even. It's likely that the best model for artists with very low sales will be different to the best model for an artist selling in the thousands.

## 7. It has a whole range of benefits

Digital distribution allows you to build fan bases in places that you couldn't have reached previously. It allows you to reinvigorate your back catalogue cost-effectively. It gives you instant feedback on your most popular songs, the countries that like your music most and it's an entirely new income stream for independent artists.

## 8. It might even help you sign a record deal

If your dream is to get signed, digital distribution is a great way to prove your worth to a label. Digital sales are one of the all important 'indicators' that a label will look at when they are thinking about signing you. Good digital sales can be a great way to leverage a better deal.

## 9. It has its limits

Digital Distribution does not replace physical CDs, it does not replace the live show, and it does not replace the value of a great song.

## 10. It's a really smart move

Bottom line: digital distribution is a smart move. But it's not enough to distribute digitally, you need to promote digitally. This e-book helps you to make the most of the digital music revolution by showing you how to market and promote your music online to create a true fan base.

## Understanding the Outlets

When you arrive at the iTunes store homepage you are visiting the most valuable piece of real estate in digital music. Look at all the tiles – single of the week, the exclusives, the scrolling banners, the staff favourites and recommendations. As an artist you will find enormous value if, at some point in time, your music occupies one of the iTunes homepage tiles.

It's the same for all outlets – if you can feature prominently, your sales will increase.

The four principles below provide a good starting point to get you thinking about making the most of your music once it's available on the digital outlets.

### 1. Get in touch

Get in contact with a real person. Each outlet has someone in charge of deciding what gets pride of place in terms of promotion. The first task for you is getting in contact with these people to tell your story. This takes some patience and persistence. Ask around, go to the website, contact bands who are getting promoted on the outlets already and see if they'll share their secrets. Remember you're a small fish in a sea of digital music so you need to make sure you have a compelling reason for the music to be promoted by the outlet.<sup>1</sup>

### 2. Offer exclusives

Whether it's a b-side, cover or out-takes – outlets love exclusives. It makes sense. They want to be the only place that has a particular one of your songs so that everyone goes to them to buy your music.

<sup>1</sup> The 'Respecting Old Media' chapter will help you with this

### 3. Study the specific promotions.

Each outlet will have recurring themes for its promotions. Know your outlet back to front. You'll start to see patterns emerging about who gets placed where. This will help you to understand better where the best place for your music will be.

### 4. Be flexible with your price-point.

Consider dropping your price-point for a few weeks as a way to spark interest. Don't think about the lost dollars in terms of lost dollars. Think about them as an investment in marketing and promotion. People who were iffy at \$16.99 might be more inclined to try at \$10.99.<sup>2</sup>

<sup>2</sup> Outlets have specific pricing policies so always do your research on the outlet before you consider this option.

## Where It All Begins: The Email Database

So, you've put together a recording of your best tracks and you've been savvy, used a good digital distributor and your music's available for sale online.

But how do you make the music sell?

Simple: you make it sell by offering it to your true fans. Great songs and gigs will take you a long way to creating these true fans but you can do more.

There are no shortcuts on the path to engaging true fans. You need to win them over personally, one at a time. You need to grab them and not let go.

You must share with them and make them an integral part of your growth.<sup>3</sup> When you play a live show, stick around afterwards and meet the people who are at your gig. Grab a beer with them, sit down and talk music and favourites and the future. Give them the chance to say, "I knew that band before they were big". They'll never forget it and they'll be your best fans over time.

True fans will be the best marketers you ever have. They will write about your songs, sing your songs, rave about your songs, play your songs on their stereos, request your songs on radio, have your songs on their MySpace, make mix tapes with your songs, put your songs on at weddings or funerals or when they are alone or at a party.

<sup>3</sup> It's possible that you might only need 1000 True Fans to keep you going. See the hidden chapter for more info.

1 The first step to building a true fan base is deciding how you'll communicate  
2 with them.

3 This isn't rocket science. You communicate with people just like you  
4 always have. Snail mail, phone, email, SMS and face to face. You can  
5 take your pick of these but the quickest, easiest way of communicating  
6 with fans is via email. It used to be the post. It will soon be the mobile  
7 phone. But for right now – email is your baby and you need to nurture  
8 it.

### 9 The Email Database

Your email database is an extension of your music and it all starts with an email address. At the very least, the database is going to include:

- A name
- An email address

If that's all your list contains, you get a C-, it's a pass, but only just.

A better email database will contain the following:

- A name
- An email address
- A postcode
- A country
- A mobile number

- A physical address
- A MySpace address
- The date you got the address
- How you got the address

You can be as specific as you want. The best databases in the world will include things like that fan's favourite songs, their favourite band members, their favourite shows, their purchase history of your products, their profession, their personal interests and so on.

Your goal with the database is to know your fans. The better you know your fans, the better you can target your message.

If you know a particular fan is a T-Shirt collector then that's the fan you need to be contacting when you are designing your T-Shirts.

If you know one of your fans prefers downloading your music then that's the fan you need to be contacting when your music goes digital.

The question then becomes, how do you get this information?

### Getting the Email Address

The first step in getting information is making sure you protect it. Don't let your fans down. If they give you their details then protect them with your life. Don't sell them or share them or be lazy with them.

The second thing you have to think about is where you and your fans make contact. When you figure that out, you can figure out the best

1 time to get their information.

2 Here are some obvious ones:

- 3
- 4
- 5
- 6
- 7
- 8
- 9
- When they add you as a friend on MySpace. That's the point where you write them a personal message and let them know that if they send you their email address you'll keep them posted with all your latest news.
  - When they buy your merch at a gig. That's the time to say, thanks for supporting us, drop your email here and we'll keep you posted when the next merch comes out.
  - When you sell CDs on your website, that's the time to note down their details.

## Growing the Email Database

Here are three ideas to grow your email list straight away:

### 1. The text way

Right before you play, ask everyone in the crowd to text you their email address (might want to have a separate band phone for this). After the gig, collate all the info – already you'll have a phone number, a location and an email address. Now send them an email thanking them for coming to the gig, directing them to your MySpace page and offering them a free mp3 of the show. Bam! You've just taken a huge step to creating true fans. If you can repeat this while you tour – you can start to see the potential for growth.



## 2. The Coldplay way

On your homepage or MySpace, give a free mp3 to everyone who joins your mailing list. Take it from Coldplay. Leading up to the release of 'Viva La Vida', they offered their first single 'Violet Hill' in exchange for an email address and a post code. The single was downloaded 600,000 times in the first 24 hours. As a result of their giveaway, they ended up with about 300,000 new email addresses. That translates into 300,000 new fans for the next time they need to market their albums, concerts or merchandise.

## 3. The Hippie way

Find a band whose fans will like your music. Preferably, it will be a band you are friendly with (otherwise you might get refused). Ask that band to write to their fans and tell them about you in exchange for you writing to your fans about them. Include a link to a page where these new fans can get an mp3 of your music for joining your email database.

Every time your music and your fans touch, it's an opportunity to know more, understand them better and improve your list.

Once you perfect your email list, you need to make everyone on it a VIP. As the world's most in-tune marketing mind Seth Godin would say: deliver "anticipated, personal and relevant messages" to everyone on that list for the rest of the time you are producing music. Reward them for letting you communicate with them. And never forget the golden rule of email databases: it's about them, not you.

## The Best Online Marketing Tool: MySpace

To make the most of the email database, you need to make sure people who like you can find out more. It's been proven that people wanting to find out more go to one place in particular: MySpace.

Everyone has their gripes about MySpace. And pretty much all of them are spot on. Yes, it's ugly, it's overcrowded, and it's full of spam and annoying messages about cheap handbags. And everyone abuses it by sending out way too much info to people who haven't asked for it. But MySpace has 5 million artists worldwide and is still the number one playground for music discovery. In terms of where it ranks when you type band names into Google's search engine, it's nearly always at the top.

### The MySpace Strategy

The beauty of MySpace is that it's free and allows you to keep in contact with people and reach out to new fans. It's the easiest way for people who are interested in your music to contact you and find out more. Here are the key principles for making MySpace work for you.

#### Readable text

You can't read what you can't see. So many MySpace pages are destroyed by putting hard to read text over an incompatible background photo. Make sure your text is easily readable, easily accessible and logically set out.

### Strategically placed Top Friends

This is the same principle as the one that worked in high school. Hang with the cool kids and you're likely to be slapped with the 'cool' tag, regardless of your actual status. Make sure your top friends include bands that you and your fans love. It's OK to have a few real friends scattered in there but strangers to your site aren't interested in meeting your best mates Shifty Pete and Boss Hog, they want to know what bands you sound like, love and associate your music with.

### Optional Music

MAKE THE MUSIC OPTIONAL! MySpace sites that blare music the second they are loaded make the blood boil and will result 9 times out of 10 in your page being closed. Let people choose if they want to hear your music.

### A good band photo/logo

Have a decent band photo or a well designed logo as your profile pic. It might sound boring but a simple pic of all the band together is the best way to go. You can get quirky in your albums but keep your profile pic straightforward.

### Links to your stuff

If you have merch, music online or a physical CD to sell, make sure you have clear links for people to buy them. If they are on your MySpace, you have their attention. Now you need to make it seamless for them to purchase your creations.

1 iTunes linkmaker is a fantastic tool to connect your fans with your music  
2 on iTunes. Go to [apple.com/itunes/linkmaker](http://apple.com/itunes/linkmaker) and you can generate the  
3 html to create a neat little 'Buy on iTunes' link.

#### 4 Copy

5 The best way to get ahead on MySpace is to copy. Find bands that are  
6 similar to yours but more successful. Start connecting with their fans.  
7 Add them as friends with a personal message. Post comments on their  
8 page – the less spammy and the more personal, the better.

#### 9 Be everyone's BFF

Top friends are so important. The more people who count you as a top friend, the more visible you become. Run a trial. Contact people and give them a copy of your album if they make you a top friend. It sounds kind of lame – like the unpopular kid at school who tries to win friends by buying stuff for them from the tuckshop – but trust us, on MySpace it's the only way.

#### Reply

It's amazing how many bands get lazy and don't respond to their messages. By responding personally to messages you are building a personal connection with your fans. You are taking a big step on the path to making them a true fan.

This is just the beginning. With MySpace you can do as little or as much as you want to make it work for you. Just remember – the more real friends you have, the more plays your songs have, the more comments you have, the more you are interacting with your fans, the more successful you are going to be.

1 And if you choose only one online marketing tool – make it MySpace.

2 To get started making the most of your MySpace, go here:

3 [http://howto.wired.com/wiki/Trick\\_Out\\_Your\\_MySpace\\_Page](http://howto.wired.com/wiki/Trick_Out_Your_MySpace_Page)

## The Best of the Rest of the Online Marketing Tools

MySpace is king when it comes to music discovery.

Now it's time to start looking at some more tools for you to use. Before you begin, the most important thing to remember is be selective.

These tools can be tremendously powerful for you as an independent artist. But you need to be realistic about how many hours you have each day to devote to your online marketing. While ubiquity is important, you shouldn't spread yourself too thin. There are a thousand sites pushing and promoting music and you will be well advised to take a small selection most appropriate to your music and make them really work.

Better to be master of one than jack-of-all.

Here are some of the best online tools for making the most of your music.

### YouTube

I will not insult your intelligence by explaining how YouTube works. If you don't understand, go to the site and you'll figure it out. All that needs to be said about YouTube is that as an artist you can create your own channel for people to view. When you create your channel, you can upload video clips of whatever you like. Preferably, you should upload your music videos or clips of you in band practice or at live shows. You could post interviews with band members or videos of you in the Tarago on the way to a gig.

As well as collating all things 'you', your channel is a great way of attracting people to your music. Within your YouTube channel you can add your favourite videos by others. When those videos are viewed, your channel is visible which means that YouTube users are able to click through and find out what else your channel has to offer.

Think about the kinds of things your fans love to watch and save them to your Youtube channel. It's a great way to bring people into contact with your music.

Bands like Weezer are getting huge leverage from YouTube. The Weezer single 'Pork and Beans' which mashed together the most viral videos of all time has been viewed millions of times over.

<http://www.youtube.com/>

## Wikipedia

Wikipedia is a straightforward tool.

All you need to do is make sure your entry is accurate because the beauty and risk of Wikipedia is that anyone can edit your information.

If you are a smaller band, keep the item short and sweet. Make it factual not opinion based and include links to online articles referencing you.

If you are a really, really, really small band, don't worry about it. Yet. Wikipedia will probably delete you. Just make sure you fill out your MySpace profile with a tidy little bio and some clear contact details until you're at the point of needing a Wikipedia page.

<http://en.wikipedia.org/>

## imeem

imeem is a social networking site, much like YouTube except that as well as videos, you can stream music and photo montages. What sets imeem apart is the easy to build playlists. imeem playlists can contain videos, music or images. Just like YouTube, this is a great way to bring together your music, your videos and your photos in an easily managed form for your fans to discover.

Your playlists can then be rated by others and ranked. The top rating playlists on imeem receive upwards of 2 million plays and 25 million visitors reach the site per month.

That's a lot of music fans and a lot of people who are yet to discover your music.

<http://www.imeem.com/>

## Last.fm

Like imeem, the appeal of Last.fm is the ability to create your own channel. Think of YouTube as a TV channel. Think of imeem as a hybrid channel. And think of Last.fm as a radio station.

The power of Last.fm lies in the music community that builds around these unique 'radio stations'. With more than 21 million users, it's a massive community and one that exists solely to discover new music.

The feature which sets Last.fm apart is that you can be paid royalties for every song played on the service. There is also the very cool 'Audioscrobbler' which tracks all the music you listen to and builds a profile of your listening habits on your public Last.fm page.



From there, you can utilise music recommendations and social networking features and join groups that are relevant to your genre of music.

As an artist, you ought to have your music available on Last.fm. Again, there's a rabid music fan base on the site each day and you only need to convert a tiny fraction of that fan base to really start building a buzz.

<http://www.last.fm/>

## Facebook

Ah Facebook – the new social networking behemoth. With its billion dollar valuations and stratospheric user base growth, Facebook is everywhere.

I'm guessing if you know how to download an e-book then by now you've probably got a Facebook page.

Facebook is a mightily powerful tool. With 70 million users, the inter-connectivity it offers is almost unparalleled. Last.fm has built a great Facebook application to share the music you love with others. iLike is another Facebook music application that lets Facebook users go directly to iTunes to make music purchases. And there is the capacity to build your own band Facebook page and add friends through it.

Facebook doesn't lend itself to music discovery like MySpace but it is far more user-friendly.

For an example of how to use Facebook to your advantage go here:

<http://www.facebook.com/radiohead>

## Flickr

There is simply no better online image community than Flickr. Flickr is to photos what MySpace is to music, except that it's much prettier, simpler and easier to use. It's a great way for you to post photos of your fans, the audience at your shows, your tour snaps, you in rehearsal, you at festivals. It's about allowing your fans to invest in your story and to feel a part of what you do.

<http://www.flickr.com>

## Twitter

The best way to understand Twitter is this: imagine being able to update your entire community with your latest news whenever you want by answering the question 'what are you doing?' and in less than 140 characters. Think: "Band X is eating curry in Portsea", "Band X is buying guitars at Ellaways", "Band X is stoked their music is now available on Amazon mp3". Your fans can either subscribe on their mobile phones or view your updates online. If you can keep it interesting you'll keep your fans in the loop without needing a computer or a long email/blog post.

<http://www.twitter.com>

## Sonicbids

Sonicbids – with more than 15,000 members worldwide – started life as an electronic press kit generator for artists wanting to quickly and easily put together professional, competent press kits. While it still offers that brilliant service, it now links artists trying to get gigs with promoters looking for the best bands for their bill.

<http://www.sonicbids.com/>

## Virb

Virb falls in the social network category but it's more easily understood as a Rolls Royce MySpace. Where MySpace is spammy, ugly, uncustomisable and overcrowded, Virb is neat, clean, usable and easily manipulated. The catch is - Virb doesn't have MySpace's user numbers or online presence and it probably won't capture the volume of MySpace's user community.

But Virb has the potential to be a brilliant niche tool for musicians. It has all the basic MySpace features (tagging, groups, comments and messaging) as well as photo and video sharing, Virbtunes (which operates like Last.FM's Audioscrobbler and tracks the music you listen to in iTunes), Flickr integration, widescreen videos and the option to remove customisation when you just want a simple browsing experience.

For those who value usability and aesthetics, Virb is a great alternative to MySpace.<sup>4</sup>

<http://www.virb.com/>

## Tubemogul

Instead of uploading your video to YouTube and every other user-generated video site, Tubemogul allows you to upload your video once and they will deliver it to all the important video sites for you. You can then just sit back and track, simply and in one place, how many people are watching. The basic service is free but if you want to get comprehensive, it's going to cost.

<http://www.tubemogul.com/>

<sup>4</sup> For a great example of how Virb can be integrated into your online presence, scroll down and read the second comment here: <http://lefsetz.com/wordpress/index.php/archives/2008/07/09/press-releases/>

## Artist Data

Like Tubemogul, Artist Data is a major timesaver. Upload your details to Artist Data and have them sent all over the place to MySpace, Last.fm, Sonicbids et al. You can keep fans up to date on your tour dates and save yourself from carpal tunnel syndrome.

<https://www.artistdata.com/us/>

## Bandzoogle/Mubito

You might have a MySpace, but it's no substitute for a really good website. And really good websites are expensive. Bandzoogle and Mubito keep their sites simple, easy and inexpensive. These sites are a great starting point for bands wanting professional sites without needing to pay a creative agency thousands of dollars to do annoyingly intricate flash intros.

<http://bandzoogle.com/OR> <http://www.mubito.com/>

## Blogs: Writing, Being Written About and Blog Aggregators

### Writing

A blog, for those under rocks, is a website containing your updates, commentaries, photos and music to share with others.

Blogs are an essential way of communicating with your fans.

If you go to sites like <http://www.blogger.com> or <http://www.wordpress.com>, you can start your own for free. You can even blog (in a limited way) through your MySpace.

As an artist, blogs are an excellent way to keep your fans up to date and give them an insight into your progress.

If you are thinking of starting a blog, read this first:

[http://sethgodin.typepad.com/seths\\_log/2006/06/how\\_to\\_get\\_traf.html](http://sethgodin.typepad.com/seths_log/2006/06/how_to_get_traf.html)

### Being Written About

One of the most powerful ways that music gets transferred is through the music blog networks.

Getting a positive write-up on one of the many established and influential music blogs can greatly increase the traffic to your site and potentially win you legions of new fans.

In an NYU study called 'Does Chatter Matter', it was found that a new CD

1 had sales that were 400% higher than the average CD when there were  
2 at least 40 blog posts about it in the month leading up to its release.

3 A new CD that had 250 or more blog posts about it in the month leading  
4 up to its release had sales 600% higher than the average CD.<sup>5</sup>

5 While the most popular blogs are a great starting point, they tend to  
6 profile independent North American artists. It could be tough getting  
7 written about if you don't fit their genre. Furthermore, most good blogs  
8 get sent hundreds of demos every day so it can be a challenge to stand  
9 out from the pack.

The secret is to find out who your fans are (your growing email database will assist you here) and where they are going for their music news and reviews. Chances are it'll be a blog, or a series of blogs.

That makes your task to get your name on the blogs where your fans go.

The great thing about blogs is that they are written by bloggers, guys and girls like you and me who love discovering new music. Most of the great blogs offer free mp3 downloads and to get a mention you might have to offer your music for free.<sup>6</sup>

## Blog Aggregators

Blog aggregators like The [Hype Machine](#) and [elbo.ws](#) keep a track of what the blogs are talking about and what songs are being posted and downloaded. These are updated daily and provide a great overview of the most hyped new music.

<sup>5</sup> Read the whole thing here: <http://archive.nyu.edu/handle/2451/23783>

<sup>6</sup> See the Helpful Links section at the end of the e-book for a list of some of the most popular music blogs.

1 If your music is picked up by one blog you can expect it to be picked up  
2 by others. This could snowball and you might find yourself on the top of  
3 a blog aggregator list.

4 Trust us, if you get that far, you won't have to go knocking on doors  
5 anymore because people will be knocking on yours.

## Your Bio: Dos and Don'ts.

You need a bio for your MySpace. You need a bio for your Wikipedia page. And you will need a bio for every time you send out news or music to someone who has never heard of you and wants to know more. To make things simple, here are the dos and don'ts of a good bio.

### Dos

DO KEEP it to a page.

DO USE paragraphs. Blocks of text are intimidating and ugly.

DO INCLUDE your website, your email address and a contact number/email at the bottom of the page in clear, easy-to-read font.

DO INCLUDE your band's collective five favourite albums.

DO INCLUDE short quotes from reputable sources.

DO USE a simple classification for your music like alternative rock or folk, 'unclassifiable' is not an option.

DO TAKE care with your band's logo, letterhead and font. This is so important. Public Enemy had their logo right before they produced a single song.



## Don'ts

DON'T say you sound like Nirvana, The Chilli Peppers or The Beatles. I promise you, no matter how good you are, you are only going to be a letdown if you use those bands as yardsticks.

DON'T refer to your band as 'incendiary'. That word is to be used by others to describe you only. (Unless you are Jimi Hendrix, in which case, use away).

DON'T use words like 'best', 'coolest' or 'hottest' in relation to your talents. Be specific.

DON'T spell d-e-f-i-n-i-t-e-l-y with an 'a' (definitely is not a word).

DON'T muck around with cursive text and loopy fonts. You want people reading what you wrote, not guessing.

DON'T talk about the last bands you used to be in. Unless of course you were in Bloc Party or a band with a reasonable profile. A press release from a band the reader doesn't know becomes very irrelevant, very quickly when it starts talking about a bunch of other bands the reader doesn't know.

DON'T overdo the in-jokes.

## Respecting Old Media: Five Steps Along the Traditional Press Path

While there is much to be said for making the most of all forms of new media, no artist can afford to ignore the traditional press path.

You still need to be doing your utmost to get coverage in the following:

- Newspapers
- Magazines
- Street press
- Community/College radio
- Commercial radio
- TV

All these will enhance the reach of your online marketing and promotion.

Generally, the best person to generate momentum on the traditional press path is a publicist or a label with existing relationships in the relevant industries.

That said, you can have an impact without the experts.

The only way to do it is to get out there and make the phone calls and push through the rejections and awkward silences that will get thrown

your way.

Here are the five things you need to keep in mind.

## 1. Bait your story with a hook.

Just as great songs have unforgettable hooks, so too, your band's story needs to have a great hook.

A hook is basically a way of selling your story in a sentence. A way of getting people interested without spending twenty five minutes explaining the special drop tuning on the second verse of your EP's hidden track.

To make my point, consider these oft-repeated music industry hooks:

- Elvis: 'The White Man Who Sings Like A Black Man'.
- Eminem: 'The First Great White Rapper'.
- The Spice Girls: 'Girl Power'.

Regardless of whether you want to be Elvis, Eminem or The Spice Girls, you can learn the power of a good hook from their examples.

Your challenge is this: make your band stand out in just one line.

## 2. Be relentless.

When you're going down the traditional press path, you are effectively a salesperson for your band. All of the basic skills of sales will apply.

You will need to know your product (in this case, your music, your hook, your bio), identify your customers (in this case radio, TV and journalists),

1 listen to and understand what they need, present what you want in a  
2 logical way and follow through.

3 Beyond the basic sales stuff, you just need to be relentless.

4 When you're starting out, no-one will take your calls or respond to emails.  
5 You have to be patient and keep going back, pushing yourself up  
6 people's priority lists through sheer force of will.

7 And the hard bit? Do it without annoying people.

### 8 3. Don't lie, don't oversell, don't under-deliver.

9 These are cardinal. You only have one reputation, don't risk it being  
sullied. Tell the truth; even if it means you miss out. Don't exaggerate  
what you do, people aren't stupid. And finally, if you are going to make  
promises (i.e. that you sound like Oasis or that your guitarist is a virtuoso)  
make sure you deliver on them.

### 4. Make yourself an easy target.

You need to be easily contactable. If people have an inkling you might  
make for a good story, make sure they can reliably get in contact with  
you.

That means labelling your CDs, your press releases, your MySpace, your  
website and your emails with contact details.

A phone number, an email address – whichever – just make sure it's clear,  
current and correct.

## 5. Walk a mile in their moccasins.

When you're approaching traditional media, walk a mile in their moccasins. Ask yourself, if I was in their shoes, what would make me run a story on my band?

If the only answer you can come up with is 'charity' then give up. You need to put yourself in the shoes of the journalist, the radio announcer, the TV producer, the street press editor.

What do they want? To sell more radio/TV/newspapers...

How do they do that?

By printing and broadcasting great stories that everyone wants to hear.

## 9. On Being A Music Pro

If you're in music for the long run and if you want it to be your life, then you have to be a music pro.

Being a music amateur is no bad thing. There's plenty you can get out of your part-time music life.

But if your goals are higher, if you want music to be your livelihood and not just a pastime, then you have to be a music pro.

And being a music pro means treating music like a profession.

Like any profession, time and sacrifice are crucial. To be a lawyer or a doctor, you'll need to study for years and you'll start your career tens of thousands of dollars in debt. To be a plumber or a mechanic, you'll have to endure years of long days, getting paid a pittance and doing crappy jobs until you get to do real work. A career in music is no different.

You need to do it every day. Whether its practising, contacting people, writing bios, setting up your MySpace or finding a booking agent, you need to go after it with the same fervour as anyone else seeking to make a living out of the thing they love. To grow as an artist, to expand your networks and hone your skills, you're going to have to get out and stay out of your comfort zone. As soon as you get that feeling that maybe you're going too far, that you're flying by the seat of your pants, that the adrenaline is the only thing getting you through, that's when you know you're doing the right thing.

There is one sure-fire way of not making it and that's being lazy.

1 Being lazy will mean you never give yourself a chance at writing a great  
2 song, at playing a great live show, or building your true fan base.

3 Set aside a time every day, or every week for contacting the media.  
4 Set aside a morning each week for contacting people via MySpace.  
5 Practice even when you don't need to.

6 Set goals, be disciplined and remember: when you're ready to quit,  
7 you're closer that you think.<sup>7</sup>  
8  
9

<sup>7</sup> These are Bob Parsons' words, not ours. [https://www.godaddy.com/gdshop/bp/gear.asp?app\\_hdr=&ci=9946](https://www.godaddy.com/gdshop/bp/gear.asp?app_hdr=&ci=9946)

## An Online Music Manifesto

I will write great songs.

I will play great live shows.

I will generate true fans.

I will make an informed choice for my digital distribution.

I will get the most out of the outlets.

I will maintain an email database.

I will communicate anticipated, personal and relevant messages to that database.

MySpace is my friend.

I will use all the tools available to me to make the most of my music.

I will spell-check my bio.

I will respect the traditional press path.

I will be patient.

I will keep moving forward.

I will never give up.



## Helpful Links

In compiling this e-book, we have been inspired, informed and engaged by a number of different sources. It might be in your interest to follow through on these and learn more.

Much of the information found here has been developed on the Musicadium Blog:

[www.blog.musicadium.com](http://www.blog.musicadium.com)

To hear about the inner workings of the music industry and the future of digital music, you can't go past:

<http://www.lefsetz.com/wordpress/>

<http://www.hypebot.com/>

<http://www.musicthinktank.com/>

<http://www.coolfer.com/>

<http://blog.wired.com/music/>

For a free, easy-to-read guide to making the most of music online head here:

<http://newmusicstrategies.com/ebook/>

To find out how the world's consumption patterns are changing and how you can take advantage:

<http://www.thelongtail.com/>

There is an expanded theory behind the necessity of 1000 True Fans:

[http://www.kk.org/thetechnium/archives/2008/03/1000\\_true\\_fans.php](http://www.kk.org/thetechnium/archives/2008/03/1000_true_fans.php)

For great tips on PR and promotion go to:

<http://www.arielpublicity.com>

As an artist, your success will depend on how well you market yourself.  
You cannot ignore the insights of the irrepressible Seth Godin:

<http://sethgodin.typepad.com/>

He has written some brilliant e-books:

<http://www.salted.com/unsalted/files/knockknock.pdf>

[http://sethgodin.typepad.com/seths\\_blog/files/whos\\_there.pdf](http://sethgodin.typepad.com/seths_blog/files/whos_there.pdf)

And his music industry advice is priceless:

[http://sethgodin.typepad.com/seths\\_blog/2008/01/music-lessons.html](http://sethgodin.typepad.com/seths_blog/2008/01/music-lessons.html)

[http://sethgodin.typepad.com/seths\\_blog/2008/03/the-live-music.html](http://sethgodin.typepad.com/seths_blog/2008/03/the-live-music.html)

Some of the most popular music blogs include:

<http://www.stereogum.com>

<http://www.daytrotter.com>

1 <http://www.arjanwrites.com>

2 <http://this.bigstereo.net>

3 <http://music.for-robots.com>

4 <http://Gorillavsbear.net>

5  
6  
7  
8  
9  
Enjoy.

## About Musicadium

Musicadium is a Digital Distributor. We help independent artists and labels to sell their music worldwide on iTunes, emusic and Amazon mp3. We pay our artists and labels 100% of royalties - we take no cut. We help our artists and labels to access promotional opportunities on each of the outlets.

Musicadium charges only an upload fee and an annual renewal fee. We can provide barcodes if needed. Musicadium's distribution deal is non-exclusive, there is no lock-in time period, artists and labels are free to leave as they please and most importantly, they retain 100% of all rights to their music.

Musicadium is Australian-based and run. We support independent and established musicians by offering an easy, flexible and inexpensive avenue for them to distribute their music to the world.

Digital is the fastest growing delivery channel for music. By joining Musicadium, independent artists are taking an important step in their sustainability.

### What next?

To find out more go to [www.musicadium.com](http://www.musicadium.com)

For any further questions send an email to [info@musicadium.com](mailto:info@musicadium.com)