

A photograph of a musician with dark hair, wearing a light-colored t-shirt and blue jeans, playing a red electric guitar on a stage. The stage is outdoors, with a large, dark, textured canopy overhead. In the background, there are yellow curtains and other stage equipment. The text "Marketing your Music" is overlaid in large white font, and "First Steps" is overlaid in a smaller white font below it.

Marketing your Music

First Steps

Steve Allen

Marketing your Music First Steps

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Preface

This e-book is distributed freely to visitors and friends of the website Marketing Your Music <http://www.marketingyourmusic.net>.

This e-book offers basic information about the first steps you should take in starting your own professional band.

More detailed information about the marketing of the artist or band may be obtained in the e-book Marketing Your Music – Success Strategies available [here](#).

Other e-books by the same author:

[Personal Management in the Music Industry](#)

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The Dream

It's the dream of almost every adolescent to have their own rock band, create new sounds, reach success and everything else that all of this could bring. Screaming fans, respect, autographs, tours, luxury hotels, glamour etc.



So, on one of those sunny days, we waken from this sweet dream and, without the notion that time has passed by so quickly, we're adults, living our "normal" lives, earning just enough bread to get by, doing what our parents always wanted us to do.

I know a doctor who still dreams of having a different life, a life that will excite him... once he confided in me that he would gladly exchange everything that he had built, if he could have the chance to go back to what he loved best, music (he was a guitarist in a heavy metal band).

Where do all these dreams hide?

Now you have your own company, or that job, which in society's eyes is respectable in a good company, and you decide not to let the old flame die. You decide to have a bit of fun and return to "waging a bet" in the music industry.

For you to be launched as a musician, or manager of a band, you will need abilities in business, purchasing, sales, market research, man management, delegation of tasks and be fashion conscious.

All of these actions together make up marketing in the world of music.

For this project, just like in any other business, you will need to designate a quantity which you are prepared to invest. Treat music like any other commercial adventure in your life. Never as a profitable hobby.

A Budget and Business Plan (with a target public defined) are necessary, just as in a "conventional company". This way you will not fall into the trap of making

emotional decisions, diverting your attention from your real objective. Save your sentiments for your music.

To start your band, a “music business”, you will need musicians, instruments (good musicians normally have their own), transport, publicity and a structure to manage your contacts. It doesn't matter if your objective is to record or perform live; the work involved will be intense.

In the next chapter we will talk about this...

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[Work with what you most like to do, obtaining concrete tried and trusted information about marketing your music.](#)

Thinking about the Product

Before you adventure out at putting a new band on the market, you need to think about the “product” you wish to promote. A new idea, a new song, a different message that will be easily understood, perhaps even create an entire cultural and musical movement, just as the Sex Pistols did, managed by Malcolm McLaren.



Do some market research to see what has already been done. Madonna promoted sex, Boy George promoted the gay movement; Bob Dylan promoted an anti-war movement.

Each one had their style and a different message which was easy to be understood by a specific target public.

These artists were successful not because they were the best musicians around, but because they were the best in terms of marketing.

You remember Madonna sat on a chair, with legs open in the style of Mae West.

Making a prevision about which will be the next movement six months, one year, five years from now, is a fundamental tool in the production of your plan of action.

Don't forget that before those who are successful today, are already in the market. You will need some years to gain your space and you will need to be up to date.

The Musicians

Finding musicians to start a band is easy. After all, musicians make a loud noise and much of the time are larger than life.

Associating yourself with responsible musicians, however, could be a little more difficult. If you are taking your band-company seriously, you will need to investigate at your local Musicians' Union, which is always a good source for professional musicians (this only applies to the United Kingdom where professional musicians are encouraged to join the Musicians' Union. Maybe in other countries, exists something similar like a council of musicians etc.).

Enter in contact with those musicians which match up to your needs.



A good basic formation is a drummer, bass player, lead and rhythm guitarist, and keyboard player.

Normally it's a good idea to make sure that some of them know how to sing. Alternatively look for a vocalist and backing vocals if necessary also.

Of course, if you are part of the band, you will be taking on one of these positions and if your band plays Punk rock, perhaps you will only need to have three members, a power trio.

Pay attention also to the attitude and look of the musicians. Remember: We're not talking about a band made up of friends; we're talking about a business.

Interviewing the Musicians

Hold your interview for the selection of your musicians with calm, asking for the curriculum of each one. Maintaining a good conversation is important.

Ask them to play some runs and passages of tunes that you wish to hear to guarantee the quality of their playing.

It's important that they have the ability to learn new tunes quickly, and that they are versatile, feeling comfortable in playing tunes of different genders.

Negotiate with each one about wages or alternative forms of payment. You could offer a fixed salary independent of the number of shows made, percentage of the ticket sales, fixed price for presentation or financial partnership in the company (band).

These details could be resolved during the interview and put into a contract to avoid misunderstanding later on.

Also make sure that the musicians combine between themselves, in the way they act, their personality and musical style.

The musicians need to be "interesting" (principally the vocalist), having energy and presence. Don't confuse this with beauty.



This is important because later the image of the band will have the same importance as the music.

Remember "The Monkees", from the United States, launched during the 1960s and continuing during the 1970s. The band was formed to compete directly with British band "The Beatles".

The truth is that in the beginning, none of them were musicians, but the image and the message was what were being sold. Music also played its' part but a little later on.

Also, who doesn't remember "The Sex Pistols" from Great Britain? As musicians at the beginning they were terrible, but, once again the message was more important than the music, in their case, being rebellious. The image was aggressive and none conformist.

But anyway, each artist had charisma, or a good visual look and it's this that sells.

Avoid parents and relatives in your selection of musicians. It's only a personal opinion, but family and business don't mix very well.

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