

THE SONGLAB: MUSIC BUSINESS DEJARGONISED

D.I.Y PRESS RELEASE



The Key To Gaining Press

WHY IS GAINING PRESS IMPORTANT?

- The fundamental answer to this question has not really changed very much, its about targeting people to get them to listen. However, how it is achieved has changed dramatically due to the decrease in printed media and the increase in online media.
- Gaining press in online media is far more than just about winning fans, its about building web presence which is then scanned by numerous forms of NLP (Natural Language Processing) and used as data for gauging metrics of growth.
- For instance, Spotify will scan outside of their platform to see how artists are performing outside of Spotify (see **THE SPOTIFY ALGORITHM** doc). This informs them more about artists and their songs in order to source data on them when considering the suitability of their music to new listeners.
- Gaining press is a critical step in gaining organic growth.
- This starts with a press release.

WHAT IS A PRESS RELEASE?

- A press release is a statement of intention that informs the news media of a particular event, moment, release or story.
- There has to be a purpose to it. It informs interested parties weeks in advance of a pending action.
- It gives notice for those parties to be aware that something is taking place soon and that they might be interesting in covering this news in their publication, podcast, news portal, music blog, etc.
- A press release needs to be insightful but concise. It also needs narrative with a compelling angle.
- Sometimes it can be difficult to try and write something interesting, especially if the focus is truly only “I have a new single coming out”. A journalist needs something to chew on so to speak so being economical with the truth or thinking out of the box can often help a song to break through the crowded market place.

STRUCTURE PART 1

- A strong headline that is backed by a narrative is important. Just think about how many times music bloggers read titles like “ Singer releases new single”. It is not very exciting, even if it's a music related blog.
- This about your back story. Is there something in your past which links through the meaning of this song?
- Perhaps there is something topical right now which links to some lyrics in your song?
- Maybe there's a story you've built to help to sell the song. It doesn't need to even be true. It just needs to be interesting. Don't let the truth get in the way of a good story.
- FFO: This stands for For Fans Of. Journalists will really appreciate you helping them by telling them which artists your music can be compared to. It helps them to figure out suitability and choice of publication. Remember that many blog writers write for many blogs and many journalists write for many publications as they are often freelancers.
- There is also an additional benefit to placing your FFO in your press release. It may well be mentioned in some way in the blog features that spawn from it. This is your chance to influence how Spotify see you when they use their NLP to scan your web presence (see THE SPOTIFY ALGORITHM doc). If an indie band states that their FFO is Catfish and The Bottlemen, Two Door Cinema Club and the 1975, it doesn't mean that your fans also like section on Spotify will populate with this but it does mean that Spotify are able to pull suitability on it through placing your music in front of fans that also listen to those bands and similar artists to them that have a similar monthly listener ratio to you.

STRUCTURE PART 2

- The first paragraph should be the release details. Start this with a large font (much like this document right now) and outline the name of the artist, the name of the song, the release format and the release date. This section does not need to link with your title and narrative.
- The song details. Now move into a slightly smaller font and talk about the detail of the song. Identify the genre/s, explain the sound, what significant instruments are used and how the song feels to an audience. Limit this to two or three sentences. If you write this section well, many bloggers will copy and paste it into their own write ups so be sure to use description well and think like how a journalist might think. Don't write this section how about you wrote the song. Write about what the song is. This section should be able to give the readers an idea of how the song sounds before they've even heard it.
- The narrative. Go back to the press release title and the main narrative. This is where you link to the relevance in your headline and expand briefly on the story you have run with.

STRUCTURE PART 3

- Use some quotes from others about your music. The higher the profile of the quoter the better. This could range from a music producer, a radio presenter, a past media piece or perhaps even an endorsement from someone in the music business.
- Contact Details. It sounds simple I know but ensure that all contact details are in this section because that's where people expect to see them. Use your social handles, email, website and phone number.
- Create a link to the song. The song is not released yet so create a private soundcloud link and put that link into your press release so that interested parties can hear it before you release it (See RELEASING YOUR MUSIC doc).
- Create an EPK (electronic press kit) and upload it to a web based link such as dropbox. Bloggers especially will need this. Place in your EPK access to photos, videos, contacts details and music. Bloggers will need access to this when preparing their piece on you. If it is accessible online it means they don't need to communicate with you and this saves them time.

BE PATIENT

- **Be patient. It is so important to be patient. Don't chase bloggers. Everyone does that. Be different, be cool.**
- **Send a cover letter and use peoples names. It might sound fussy but starting an email with "Hi" and not using someone's name can be perceived as rude.**
- **Good manners will serve you well in this industry and dealing with the press is no different.**
- **Leave your press release with them. They may or may not be interested this time or next time.**

WHERE TO SEND YOUR PRESS RELEASE

- **Send your press release to which ever news media outlets you are trying to appeal to.**
- **There's nothing to stop you from sending your press release to music bloggers that you find on the internet and or by using a publication which features many bloggers contact details.**
- **However, there is a modern push towards centralised platforms such as MusoSoup and Submit Hub where you are able to upload your campaign and make it accessible to interested parties for a small cost. This tends to yield better results with less time spent.**

SUMMARY

- A press release is hugely valuable tool when gaining momentum in a release campaign.
- Being concise and finding a strong narrative are possibly two of the most important facets and arguably the to two most difficult to achieve.
- If this feels like too much of a big step there is another option.
- You can hire press release writers or copy writers who specialise in this skill. However, be brave and give it a go first. You might just nail it yourself.