

Dealing with Industry Professionals

by Gian Fiero

At some point every ambitious music artist will have to deal with an industry professional. It may be an agent who thinks that you have what it takes to sell out a venue, a manager who expresses interest in helping you achieve greater career success, or an attorney who will negotiate that long sought-after record deal for you. When the time does come for you to establish these crucial relationships, you will be able to navigate your way through them with greater results if you observe these fundamental dos and don'ts.

Dos

DO check into our backgrounds for credibility before dealing with us. With the ease and access of various search engines on the Internet such as Google, it literally takes just a couple of minutes to get information on someone. Your background check should also include past clients or associates that can vouch for them. Legitimate professionals love to have their backgrounds checked into. It gives you the opportunity to gain a deeper appreciation and value for the services we provide.

DO have a full and complete understanding of what our jobs are. Your knowledge of what various professionals do should not be limited to how our help relates to your success. There are many people and factors that will determine the extent (or limit) of your success in the music industry; know what they are before you assume that the professional you are working with has super powers to make you an overnight success.

DO know what we have to gain from our involvement with you. This is perhaps the most difficult step in this list for many music artists because it forces them to look at things from two perspectives that they are not very comfortable with: a business perspective and the perspective of someone else. Ask yourself when dealing with any industry professional, on any level, this one question: Why should they (or should they not) help you? If your answer has something to do with money, then you will always be partially correct.



Don'ts

DON'T assume that every industry professional wants to hear your music. When we have chance encounters with you on the street, at conventions, seminars, or parties, what we want is motivation for a *business reason* to listen to your music. You can accomplish this by telling us more about the music you do, rather than how great (you think) you are.

DON'T underestimate our creative sensibilities. The fact of the matter is that most industry professionals come from a creative background. We are intimately aware of what it takes to make a quality song, or give an outstanding performance because many of us have been involved in the creative process at some point in our lives. That coupled with the fact that we listen to roughly about three times as much music as you do because it's a necessity and a fringe benefit of our job.

DON'T let your mouth be your greatest sales tool – unless you are using it to sing. Your talent, songs, following, and promotional materials are the **ONLY** things that will provide us with business reasons that will inspire us to work with you. This is critically important because many industry professionals are merely performing a service for someone else, and we rely on these tools to build interest and support for you from the key allies and decision makers in the communities that we belong to.

In every case, remember that the effectiveness of any professional is going to be largely determined by how committed they are and the proficiency in which they do their job. If you don't need our help (or if you are unwilling to accept it) then we have no basis for a working relationship. Take the time to assess what your business needs are before approaching us, and be receptive to guidance when you do. After all, your success is our success, and we are in the business of helping you achieve that success.