

How to Submit Your Music to Record Labels

The secret to successfully pitching your music to record labels.

1. Know what you want!

Knowing what you want when submitting your music to a record label can help you effectively communicate your goals and vision to the label. This can make it easier for the label to understand how they can support and work with you. Additionally, having a clear idea of what you want can help you make informed decisions about which label is the best fit for you and your music. Have a specific ask in mind, and then make that ask specifically!

2. Provide the Right Information

Providing only relevant information to a record label when submitting your music can help the label quickly and easily understand your goals and what you are looking for. It can also help you stand out from other artists, as the label will be able to see that you have a clear understanding of what you want and how you fit within the music industry. Finally, in an effort to keep your pitch concise, don't over-provide too much info. If the label is interested, they'll reach out for more.

3. Come with Something Ready!

Presenting a finished product to a record label when submitting your music can show the label that you are dedicated and committed to your craft. It can also help the label see your full vision for the music and how it will fit into their plans/roster/catalog. Additionally, presenting a finished product can help the label understand what they would be signing on for if they were to work with you, giving them a better idea of the potential success of the project. A lot of artists submit their music too early!

4. Talk Like A Human

"Talking like a human" when pitching yourself to an indie label can help you come across as more relatable and approachable. It can also make it easier for the label to understand your personality and what makes you unique as an artist. Using a natural and authentic voice can help the label see you as a real person rather than just a product, which can help establish a stronger connection and potentially lead to a more positive working relationship. People like working with people!

5. Go Easy On The Name Dropping

Name-dropping can come across as arrogant or desperate, and can make it seem like you are more focused on who you know rather than the quality of your music. The label may not be impressed or swayed by the names you drop, and may even be turned off by the tactic. Relying on name-dropping can take the focus away from your own abilities and accomplishments, and can make it seem like you are not confident in your own talent. Only name drop when it is relevant to your pitch (eg. you worked with someone on their roster, or who they know that can vouch for you).

6. Allow for a TON of time...

Allowing for a lot of lead time when pitching your music to a record label can give the label ample opportunity to review your material and consider your request. It can also give you time to follow up and provide any additional information or materials that the label may request. Record labels generally have their year (or at least the next quarter) already scheduled. Expect the entire process to take a year, from initial emailing to release day.

7. Pitch to Only Hyper-Relevant Record Labels!

Submitting your music to hyper-relevant record labels can increase your chances of success because the label will be more likely to be interested in your music if it fits their style and audience. It can also help you avoid wasting time and resources submitting to labels that are not a good fit. Additionally, submitting to hyper-relevant labels can help you establish a stronger connection with the label and make it more likely that you will be able to build a successful and productive working relationship if you do get signed.

8. Don't Offer Labels More of What they Already Have!

If you are an independent musician who is heavily influenced by a specific popular artist, your general inclination might be to submit your music to that artist's record label. This is generally not the best idea. A&R reps are generally on the hunt for something new. They don't want more of what they have, they want to find new and exciting artists who can be the next big thing, not the next same thing.

9. Don't Pester!

A lot of indie record labels receive upwards of 10-20 pitches per day, sometimes more. You have a slim chance of being replied to, let alone signed! Having said that, there's no harm in following up. However, it's best to follow-up only once, 10 to 14 days later, and if you still don't get a response, understand that the label is likely not interested in working with you.

10. Be Organized!

Being organized when pitching yourself and your music to a potential record label can make it easier for the label to review your material and understand your goals. It can also help you present yourself in a professional and organized manner, which can increase the chances that the label will take you seriously. Being organized can help you stand out from other artists who may not be as prepared. At the very least, keep track of who you've already submitted to and if and who got back to you...

Bonus Tip: Keep Pitching!

Continuing to pitch your music to labels after facing rejection can increase your chances of eventually finding a label that is a good fit for your music. It can also help you build resilience and determination, which can be important qualities for a successful artist to have. Additionally, the music industry is constantly changing, and what may not have been a good fit for a label in the past may be exactly what they are looking for now. Give yourself time to grow, learn, and evolve as a musician, songwriter, and artist.



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