

The Musician’s Cooler Presents:

Promoting Your Music with Podcasting

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(Author of the book “Get Your Band Out of the Basement (and keep them out of the asylum) – available at www.musicianlibrary.com)

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The Goal of this Document

The goal of this document is to not only you get your song played on a podcast, but to make sure you go through this process efficiently without wasting lots of time. This document assumes you have your music recorded, and is an mp3 format.

7/13/06 (This will be updated as the internet is an ever changing landscape).

SEND THIS DOCUMENT TO EVERY MUSICIAN YOU KNOW

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Different Markets

The College Market

Sure, it's cool to get your song on a college radio station. Well it is as long as you can stay up late on a Sunday night and hear that 1 hour show dedicated to local bands. It also assumes that your CD wasn't stolen by an intern who took it home and "forgot" to bring it back to the station.

Music Showcase Sites

You've seen these sites. You upload a song and a bio, and they swear they are going to get your music heard. You tell your friends that you are on this site, and they go and visit it only to get bombarded with advertising. Sure these sites want your music, but more importantly they want YOUR FANS.

Regular Radio Stations

According to his book *How to make it in the new music business: Lessons, tips, & inspiration from Music's Biggest and Best* Robert Wolf states "You better set aside 200,000 to get access to the airwaves." You better start checking for change in those cushions on the couch

Aren't there any people who actually want to play your music
and can reach a global audience?

YES! – THEY'RE CALLED PODCASTERS!

What is Podcasting?

A podcast is (more or less) an "internet audio show" (mp3 file typically) that is delivered automatically to a listener.

Here are some things you need to know:

You don't need an iPod to listen to one. You need a computer with an internet connection and speakers

There are over 3,000 podcasters in the "Music/Radio" category at Podcast Alley (a directory of podcasts at www.podcastalley.com). If each podcaster puts out 2 shows a week that's 6,000 shows that NEED YOUR MUSIC. There are podcasts for every type of music (jazz, rock, bluegrass, swing, metal, country, reggae the list goes on and on..) who don't charge you 200,000 to *maybe think about* playing your song.

First Things First

Go to www.podcastalley.com or any of the other podcast directories and search through the music related podcast. Listen to the quality of the other musicians. The focus is not their song writing skills, but the quality of the recording. Is your recording close to this quality? Great! I was hoping you would say yes. If you said “No” that doesn’t mean that podcasters won’t play it. It means they are less likely to play it. The first thing you need to make sure of is that you are providing the best quality of recording you can afford. It would also help if your song didn’t suck.

Where to List Your Music So Podcasters Can Find it

There are sites on the internet designed to not only promote your music, but geared towards podcasting. The site that is entirely geared towards the podcaster/musician/listener relationship is the **Podsafe Music Network** (<http://www.podsafemusicnetwork.com>). For the record, I am not affiliated in any way with the Podsafe Music Network.

There are other sites such as Garage Band (www.garageband.com) that also have ties to sites based on podcasting (www.gcast.com in Garage Band’s case). I also am not affiliate with Garageband.com **This document will focus on the Podsafe Music Network (PMN).**

Podsafe Music Network

The **Podsafe Music Network (PMN)** makes it easy for both the Podcaster and the Musician. The Podcaster agrees not only to play your song, but to **report when and where your song was played on their show** (now more staying up late on Sunday nights). The musician agrees to allow the podcaster to play the song royalty free. This is done via an agreement between the PMN and the musician (and the PMN and the podcaster. You can pull your music off the site at any time).

Benefits of the PMN

You have 100% control over what song is your single. Instead of sending a CD to a radio station and hoping they play the suggested single, you only upload the songs you want people to play.

You can see who has played your song. When a podcaster plays your song, they are required to report it.

How could I forget this very important benefit: **IT’S FREE**. If you’re looking for the catch there isn’t one.

No more email tag. Before there was a PMN, podcasters had to email you and ask for your permission. By listing your music here, you are giving them permission to play it as often as they would like to. Both you and the podcaster can quit worrying about sending email, and hoping it gets delivered.

Another added benefit is the PMN generates a chart system (most played, best rated, most listens). Many of the podcasters that are part of the Podshow network (www.podshow.com) have their music played on Sirius satellite radio. Now your music will not only get played in front of people who listen to podcasts, but also to the average Joe driving home listening to his Sirius satellite radio.

Lets face it, the average music lover is tired of big companies like clear channel forcing the same boring music down our throats. Podcasting is the independent distribution channel that bypasses old fashioned boring radio.

Listing Your Songs at the PMN (music.poshow.com)

It takes a few minutes to get your music listed at the PMN. It's really as simple as:

1. Go to www.podsafemusicnetwork.com
2. Click on Artist Register
3. Enter your login and password, your bands information, description, bio, website, influences, etc
4. Read (yes – I mean READ to make sure this will work for you) and agree to the terms of the agreement
5. Upload your song

NOTE: Currently the PMN is in Beta, but very, very soon will introduce their own affiliate program and ecommerce – yet another reason to list your music there

You get to enter a description of your band and music. Create your description, but also add a note for Podcasters (This is just a “little thing”. This might be adding “more than willing to cut an ID (more on that in a second), or come on your show” in your bio). Also each artist has their own blog. You might want to put the note there as well.

If you have a CD and it's listed at CDBaby.com, be sure to mention that as well (CDBaby.com has an affiliate program and the Podcaster can earn \$1 for every CD sold from their affiliate link

In general don't skimp on the bio. You finally have a podcaster viewing your page, and what do they find? A URL to your website where they have to search again for your bio. Why not make it easy on them, and copy your bio from your website and paste it here? It's a little thing, and it sure would make it easier on the Podcaster.

TIP: The PMN shows the **LAST** song you uploaded **FIRST**. Consequently, if you want your “Single” to be at the top of the list, you would upload it **LAST**. Currently many people upload their single first, and then it ends up at the bottom of the list.

WOO HOO – YOU'LL BE FAMOUS IN NO TIME (Well....um...)

Well, the other thing to keep in mind there are probably a few other musicians who have also listed their music on this site. Now I'm going to say something that is simple, and I can state that I have proven how true it is over and over.

STANDING OUT IN THE CROWD IS NOT GOING WAY BEYOND WHAT OTHER PEOPLE ARE DOING. IT TYPICALLY INVOLVES DOING THE LITTLE THINGS THAT OTHER PEOPLE FAIL TO DO.

You don't need to purchase the podcaster a gift basket, wash their car, and take them out for an expensive dinner. But there are A LOT of *little* things that you can do to work *with* the podcaster to make their life easier. They will appreciate it. When caught between what song to play (the person who did the little things or the person who didn't) most humans will reward those who made their life a little easier.

Little Things Mean A Lot

Now these are not huge things, but they are little details you can take care of to make you seem more professional, and remove any hurdles to playing your music. Here are a few things.

File Format

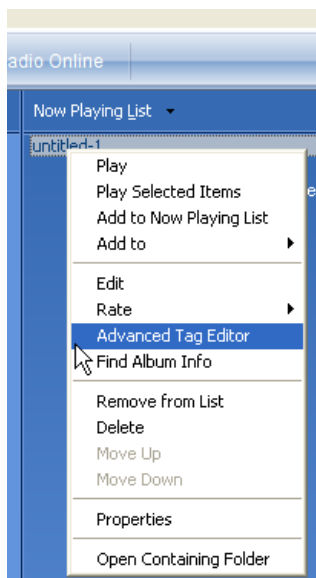
The podcaster needs your file in an mp3 format. While the higher the kbps the better the sound quality, 99% of all podcaster publish at 128kbps **or less**. The best thing to do is deliver your songs at 128kbps and allow the podcaster to reduce it down if needed (you can't boost a file at a lower recording level, but you can reduce a higher recorded level). Stick with standard formats. Many sites (including the PMN) use a flash player on their site to stream the music. Using a non traditional format may not work with other web based media players causing your music to play too slow or too fast. Stick with the current standard of 128Kbps

Full Song

Send a full song. Do not upload a 90 second version. Podcasters are playing full songs. Podcasters appreciate options. If you provide a full song and they decide to play half, they have the option. However if you only provide half a song, you have eliminated their options.

Naming Format

The actual name of the file should **not have any spaces in it**. Your song will eventually be downloaded. If you provide a song with a space(s) in the file name (example "David Jackson I'm Gonna make it.mp3" it may have issues as web based systems have to substitute symbols for spaces. Instead use underscores and/or dashes in the name to make it easy to read. Example "david_jackson-imgonnamakeit.mp3" Likewise avoid all special punctuation (apostrophe's, ampersands). A good rule of thumb when naming your file is to stick to numbers, letters, dashes, and underscores (and that's it nothing else).



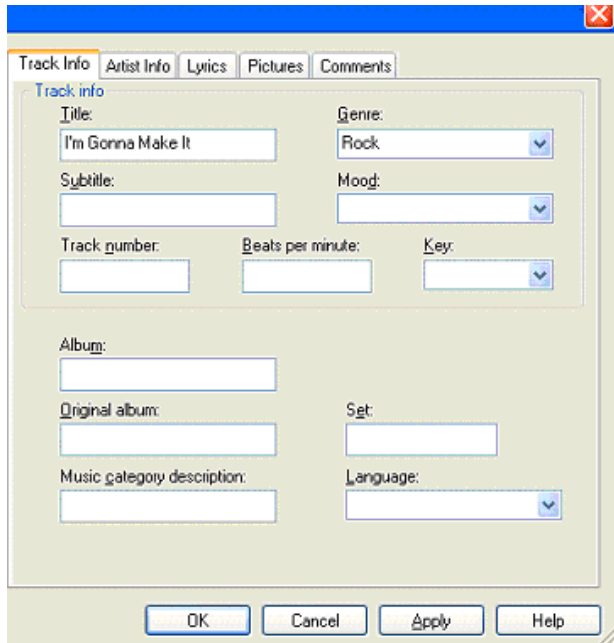
ID3 Tags a Breadcrumb Trail Back To You

The file name is the actual name of the physical file. ID3 tags are stored *inside* the mp3 file. Think of an ID3 tag as the ring of a tree. When a tree is chopped down, you can look at the rings *inside* the tree to get more information. The ID3 tags are the "rings" of your band and music. There are plenty of tools on the internet to help you "tag" your mp3 file. For this example we will use Windows Media Player as its free (and if you have a windows based machine, you already have it. You will see where there are fields for website information, lyrics, etc. **USE THESE** (cause most people are lazy it will make you stand out).

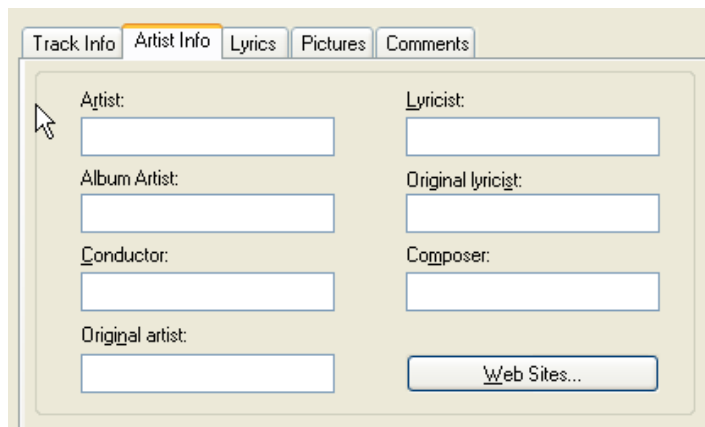
You can put your bio in the comments section along with any other notes for the podcaster.

Adding ID3 Tags to Your MP3 File

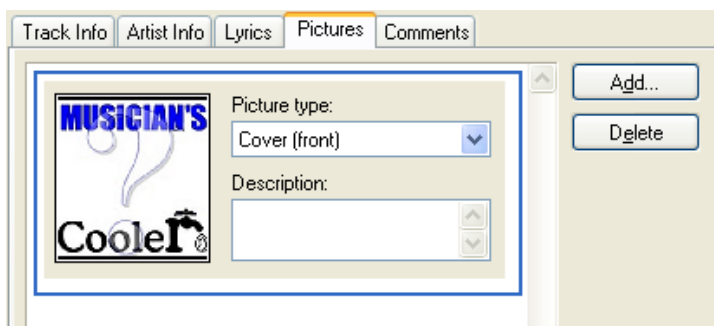
Open up an mp3 file in the Windows Media Player, and while its playing right-click on the file name and choose “Advance Tag Editor”



On the **Track Info** tab enter the **Title** of the song. If you feel so inclined, you can fill in the rest of the data. At a minimum it should have the song title.



On the **Arist Info** tab, you can enter information about the artist/band. **At least enter the name of the band./artist.**



Adding an Image

In the Advanced Tag Editor, click the Pictures tab, click Add, and then browse to the picture that you would like to display as album art.

Acceptable formats include:

- JPG
- GIF
- BMP

Although any size will work, we recommend that you keep the album art files relatively small (for example, 200 x 200 pixels), because the larger the art file, the larger the resulting song file.

*Note: I often find that adding a picture using this program doesn't seem to "Stick." **Here is the secret** that will save you HOURS of frustration. After adding the image (which may or may not appear on your screen) click on the **File** menu and choose **Close**. Then go back and open the file again. You will see your picture has been saved with your file*



Add a Comment

Think of the comments area as a notepad where you can leave notes for the podcaster. Add your contact info, website, etc. You've got your bio probably saved somewhere, why not make it easier on the podcaster and copy and paste it into this section?

By "tagging" your mp3 file you make it easier for the podcaster. Now when he listening to your song, they can look at the ID3 tags and get all your information (so they can announce it in your podcast). If you add ID3 tags to your file you will be doing another little thing that many bands don't. That was easy right? **Now let me show you how to save time, create valuable relationships, and avoid upsetting people.**

Verify Your Work

Listen to the song you are going to upload ALL THE WAY THROUGH. I have gone browsing through the PMN for bands only to click on their song and hear:

A) "Chipmunk" voices (a glitch in macromedia flash because someone decided to use a non traditional sampling rate – not the PMN's fault)

B) Nothing (silence). Your song isn't playing. Get in contact with the PMN. They are great guys and can help make sure your song can be heard

C) Hear the song having "issues" half way through the song.

D) A long silence at the beginning of the song. Edit any silence at the beginning of the song out (not everyone will be patient – and they may click the "next" button before they ever hear a note).

Also verify that any links to websites, etc are correct.

Now I Can Tell the World – But Not Everybody Cares!

You're excited, you've got your song with tags and you think everyone will play your song.

Let me give you the perspective of someone who has been on the receiving end of bands and their songs (I run www.battlingbands.com). **KNOW YOUR AUDIENCE.** By this I mean, **KNOW WHO YOU ARE SENDING YOUR SONG(S) TO.**

If you are a bluegrass band it would make no sense to submit your music to “The Scene Zine” (www.thescenezine.com) podcast as they play rock with a harder edge. It just annoys the podcaster. A tip to keep in mind: in the same way that you probably network with other musicians – podcasters talk to each other *all the time*.

I Love You So Much I Don't Know Your Name

As an independent music promoter I've received so many emails that start off with “to whom it may concern” and then have the next paragraph start with “I've listened to your show and I love it! I really think my band would fit.” Well if you listen to any podcast, the host(s) ALWAYS introduce(s) themselves. My reaction to reading that “I've listened to your show and I love it” is NONSENSE!. Consequently, as you haven't done your homework, chances are your music isn't right for my show. DELETE!

Form letters are easy (where you take the same paragraph and just change a few details and send it over and over). That's why everybody does them, and why everyone receiving them throws them away. A personalized message can go a *long, long*, way

Ready FIRE Aim

The above emails happen by musicians using a shotgun approach. “I'll submit my song to everyone, and anyone who doesn't want my song can just turn it down.”

The Smarter Approach

Instead of throwing your music at strangers why not create relationships with people who will play your music? People like to help their friends, so make friends with Podcasters. It sounds so simple (and it is), and yet its one of those **little things** that the average band fails to do. But your band is above average right?

Podcasters Want to Sound Like Radio Stars

As humans we are use to hearing certain things on the radio. Podcasters take huge amounts of time to prepare their shows to make sure their audience is getting the best sound quality they can afford. One thing you can do for the Podcaster is to record an “ID” (something we're used to hearing on the radio).

What's An ID?"

Let's say I have a CD. I've submitted my song "Are You Happy Now" to the PMN. I've found a podcast that plays this style of music. I could get a microphone and record an ID (identification). I'm not sure what the podcaster wants so I might do this a couple of ways.:

"Hi this is Dave Jackson of The Dave Jackson Band and this is my song Are You Happy Now"

"Hi this is Dave Jackson and this is my song Are You Happy Now, for more info go to www.jammindave.com
I could also cut an intro:

"Hi this is Dave Jackson of the Dave Jackson band and you're listening to (name of the podcast). "

"Hi this is Dave Jackson of the Dave Jackson band and you're listening to my favorite podcast (name of the podcast).take it away (host name)"

If you have a song you're wanting to get some exposure, *personalize* an intro.

"Hey (host name) here is my song (song name)

The podcaster knows that only *they* can use *that* intro. It's a one of a kind. Consequently, they feel special. Now when you're rich and famous they will have a collector's item.

Podcasting is all about being yourself. Put your personality into your ID

FOR GOD'S SAKE PUT SOME ENERGY INTO IT

You want to sound excited about being on the show, about having your music played, about YOUR MUSIC. Make sure your voice reflects this. Keep in mind this may get played every time they play your song.

Creating IDs and intros may take up to 2-3 minutes the first time you do one. Just take a breath, relax and talk. It's easy.

By creating ID's and intros you are doing a little thing that shows the following:

- A) You took the time to listen to the show. This shows you are attempting to NOT waste the podcaster's time
- B) You are taking your time to provide tools for the Podcaster to sound more like "radio" – only with good music.
- C) You make your song more personal. The band is no longer a name and a website: it's a person.

Getting Your ID to the Podcaster: Fast Forward to the Good Parts

Almost all Podcasters use the format of announcing their contact information at the beginning and/or end of their show. Most of the phone numbers they provide simply go to voicemail. One way to get an ID directly to a podcaster is to leave it on their voicemail.

Note: This is not my preferred method. It's easy, but you lose sound quality. Also you better say the ID correctly as you have no way to edit the voicemail (the podcaster can, but now you've given them more work – editing your ID).

You want to get the ID in the best format you can. The “cleanest” format is a .wav file This would be ok for a 10 second ID, but NOT for your song (.wav files are huge). You can also save it as an mp3 file (at 128kbps).

Don't go overboard and mix your voice and song together (that's their job). This is one *little thing* that you *shouldn't* do. Instead, provide the podcaster with a nice recording of just your voice recording the ID (make sure you have a good recording level – not too low, not too loud so that it distorts) so they can fade your music in under your ID.

If you have access to your website, upload the file to your server and then send the podcaster a link to your file.

Sending a link to your song is by far the preferred method to use. Sending an email with your mp3 attached can make you lots of enemies as it tends to block/clog a podcaster's email address.

Don't have access to your website? There is a website www.yousendit.com that allows you to upload your file and send a link to the podcaster (you will need their email address). The only time I would send a song as an e-mail attachment is if the podcaster specifically asked you to do that.

Reach Out and Touch Somebody's Ears

Nobody can sell YOU better than YOU. Just listing your songs in the many resources is not enough. Sometimes you have to nudge people. I will repeat a very important point here;

Only contact people who play the type of music you create.

Only contact people who play the type of music you create.

Only contact people who play the type of music you create.

This is *easily done* by using the **Search Podshows** link on the PMN.

So let's say I play “Hard Rock”



I can choose that from the drop down list and click “Genre Sort” a list of names of hard rock podcasts will appear. Click on the show’s name to display information that includes:

- The location of the podcaster
- Their website
- A promo of their show
- A description of what the show is about
- A link to listen to their show (keep your ears ready for that contact info).
- You can see the last few songs that were played on their show (does this fit your genre?)

Podcaster’s Want Listeners – So Play Nice

Look at the Podcaster/Musician relationship as a partnership. They provide you with exposure, you provide them with music. However you have something else the podcaster wants: Listeners.

Be sure to mention that any podcast that plays your song you will gladly:

- A) Cut an ID and Intro
- B) Link to them on your website (where you link to the episode page where they played your song).
- C) Will mention it in your newsletter to your fans (where you link to the episode page where they played your song).

Reviewing the Process

Let’s review what we’ve talked about today:

- Make the best recording you can afford
- Prepare your MP3 File
 - 128 KBps
 - No spaces in file name, no weird characters (stick to numbers and letters).
 - ID3 Tags
 - You LISTENED to it all the way through
- Sign up at the PMN as an artist. Make notes to both the listener and the Podcaster. Make a blog entry.
- Upload your music, and verify that the song plays and the links work. Upload your single LAST.
- Search for Podcasters in your genre
- Listen to their shows to determine if your song would fit their format
- Collect the podcasters contact information and contact them

Be Patient – Be Smart

Realize the more popular a show, the more emails a podcaster will receive. In some cases, you may not even receive a reply. Podcasters are often “an army of 1.” So when they receive 873 emails in one day, it may take a while to get back to you.

NEVER – and I mean **NEVER** put a podcaster's email address on your newsletter list without their permission, not only is this bad, horrible, (and a career suicidal practice) it is **ILLEGAL**. **Don't you hate spam? So do podcasters. Why piss off the people that help you with exposure? BE SMART.**

Be Professional – Don't Call them A Troll

What happens if someone turns your music down? Then you can sleep at night knowing you did everything in a professional and courteous fashion. Every podcaster has their target listener in mind. However, music is *subjective*. You may feel your music first perfectly, but yet you get turned down. You have two options:

- A) Get angry and send a “flaming” email to the podcaster explain how stupid you think they are. Then make references to their Mother, and her intelligence.

REMEMBER – PODCASTERS TALK TO EACH OTHER!

While they may not feel your music is right for their show they may know another show where it does fit (or at least they did until you called them a stupid troll).

- B) Thank the podcaster for taking time to consider your music, and wish them the best. Ask them that if they know of another podcaster who might use your music to please feel free to mention your band to them (put that idea in their head). You could also thank them, and ask them if they know of any podcasters who might use your music. See? Playing nice and working together in a professional manner may actually affect the podcaster in such a positive way that they decide to play your music.

I'm Still Not Getting Played on Podcasts!?

Look for a website that will review your music (there are plenty that will do it for free). The point being you need an unbiased opinion of your song and its production quality (remember Podcasters want their shows to sound great). A great song may get passed over due to poor recording quality. Save your pennies, go back to the studio, and look at getting it mastered.

Also, there is that possibility that you just suck (ever watch the first few episodes of a new American Idol season?).

Other Resources From the Author

The Musicians Cooler Podcast – Where Musicians Trade Advice

www.coolerpodcasts.com

A free weekly podcast featuring information on building your fan base, getting more gigs, selling more CDs, website tools, promotional tools, tales from the road, and everything else you run across while being in a band.

Band Tools Free Email Course

www.BandTools.org

A free email course covering some tools that you can use with your band. You can also download and install the free Musicians Toolbar.(with links to musician related websites.

E-book – Get Your Band Out of the Basement (and keep them out of the asylum)

www.musicianlibrary.com

Jump start your band by using the 100+ tips and secrets to avoid the common pitfalls that wreck bands every day. If your band is 6 days old or 6 years old you will find information to make your band work as a team, get more gigs, sell more CDs and build more fans. Order now and receive the free gift “10 Stupid Things that Bands Do.”

School Of Podcasting

www.schoolofpodcating.com

Why doesn't your band start their own podcast? Everybody loves the “Vh1 Storytellers” series, why not make a series of your own and keep in touch with your fan base, why you build a global fan base through your podcast? Don't waste hours doing Google searches learning how to podcast. There are hundreds of resources and hours of audio and video tutorials to help you plan, produce, and promote your podcast.

First Time Visitor

www.firsttimevisitor.com

Not getting the results you want from your website? First time visitor allows you to see your website through the eyes of someone visiting it for the first time. You think your website is great (because you're on it every day). Likewise you think your car is easy to drive (and then your friends get in and can't find the headlights, wipers, etc). Includes a list of common mistakes that web designers make.

SHARE THIS DOCUMENT WITH A FRIEND