



THE DEFINITIVE PRESS KIT GUIDE FOR MUSICIANS

HOW TO CREATE A PROFESSIONAL PRESS PACKAGE,
FROM BAND BIOS AND PHOTOS TO PRESS RELEASES AND MORE

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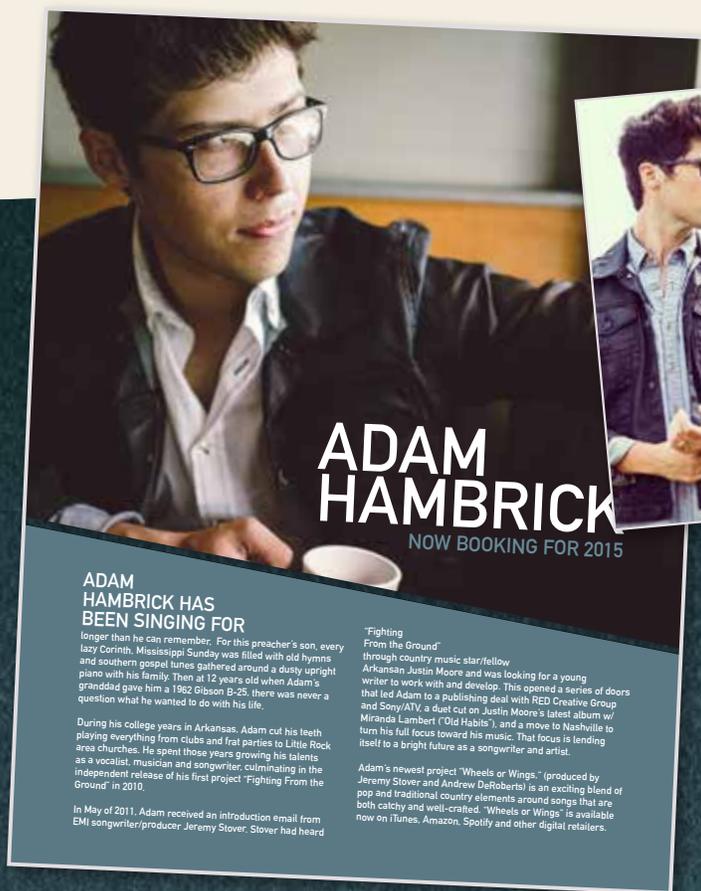
SECTION 1: WHAT IS THE POINT OF A BAND PRESS KIT?

A band press kit is an encapsulation of who you are as an artist – it's all there in one place. I worked as a writer at a music magazine many years ago, and I vividly remember how much I enjoyed rifling through the press kits of the bands I really liked to see how they presented themselves to the press. Typically there was a bio, a glossy picture, a CD or cassette, maybe a sticker or postcard, and various other goodies, depending on what they were up to at that moment.

These days, of course, there are multiple options for your press kit, including a variety of venues to host an Electronic Press Kit (EPK). Not to mention that your website, and web presence in general, is really a press package with lots of bells and whistles and an endless bottom which you can fill with your most current information and content.

For many bands, it might not be immediately necessary to have a printed press kit, but there are reasons why having a press folder could still be a major part of your promotion arsenal. When submitting a CD for review, seeking press coverage of a release party or major show, submitting music for placement or licensing, or arming yourself for a music conference, your printed press kit can still make an important first impression.

Regardless of whether you're putting a printed or electronic kit together, the same diligence and attention to detail is required to create a winning band press package. All of the same principles apply when it comes to writing a bio, creating press releases, posting photos, etc.



ADAM HAMBRICK
NOW BOOKING FOR 2015

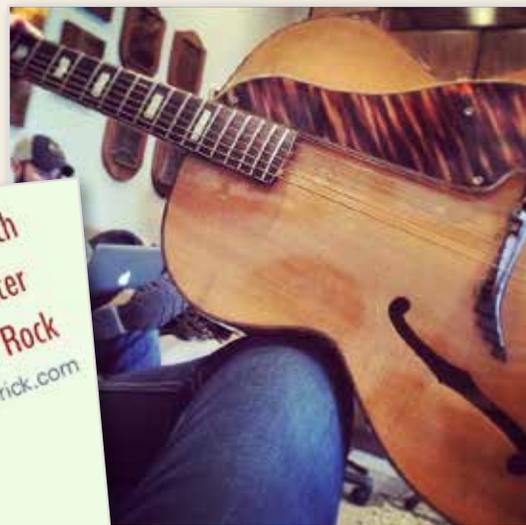
ADAM HAMBRICK HAS BEEN SINGING FOR
longer than he can remember. For this preacher's son, every lazy Cornith, Mississippi Sunday was filled with old hymns and southern gospel tunes gathered around a dusty upright piano with his family. Then at 12 years old when Adam's granddad gave him a 1962 Gibson B-25, there was never a question what he wanted to do with his life.

During his college years in Arkansas, Adam cut his teeth playing everything from clubs and frat parties to Little Rock area churches. He spent those years growing his talents as a vocalist, musician and songwriter, culminating in the independent release of his first project "Fighting From the Ground" in 2010.

In May of 2011, Adam received an introduction email from EMI songwriter/producer Jeremy Stover. Stover had heard

"Fighting From the Ground" through country music star/fellow writer Justin Moore and was looking for a young writer to work with and develop. This opened a series of doors that led Adam to a publishing deal with RED Creative Group and Sony/ATV, a deal cut on Justin Moore's latest album w/ Miranda Lambert ("Old Habits"), and a move to Nashville to turn his full focus toward his music. That focus is lending itself to a bright future as a songwriter and artist.

Adam's newest project "Wheels or Wings" (produced by Jeremy Stover and Andrew DeRobertis) is an exciting blend of pop and traditional country elements around songs that are both catchy and well-crafted. "Wheels or Wings" is available now on iTunes, Amazon, Spotify and other digital retailers.



What does a press kit include?

The contents of your press package will vary, based on what you are promoting, but the basic elements are:

- BAND/ARTIST BIO
- MUSIC
- PHOTOS
- VIDEOS
- PRESS CLIPS
- PRESS RELEASE
- ONE-SHEET
- PROMOTION ITEMS (FLYERS, POSTCARDS, STICKERS, POSTERS)

One theme you'll note through the course of this guide is the idea of maintaining your brand identity in all your promotional materials. It may be distasteful to think of your music, your art, in terms of "branding," which can have corporate or cold connotations, but the idea of branding as it relates to your band concerns your image and how you present yourself to your fans and the world – something you want to take control of as an artist.

Establishing and maintaining a consistent brand is critical to creating a reliable and enjoyable experience for your music fans. Just as you need to work to make sure all your social networking accounts have the same look and feel as your music website, your press kit should be an extension of that same aesthetic. In other words, the color scheme and font palette should

be the same, your photos should present a consistent image – your overall promotional output should fit together like a puzzle.

It is also important to maintain consistency in your messaging. Your band bio and press releases – as well as your blog, newsletters, and tweets – should maintain the integrity and the voice that you've established as your own.

As mentioned, a press kit will look and be different depending on what it is you're promoting or where you are in your career, so you should first ask yourself, "What am I trying to accomplish?" Are you looking to book shows? Promote an important gig? Announce a new release? Sell CDs and merchandise? Get radio airplay? Get a song placed on TV? Whatever the purpose of your promotion, your press kit should reflect it, as should all your social networking efforts.

Where do you begin?

When establishing your brand, and putting together a press kit, one excellent place to begin is with your mission statement. Who are you, and what makes you stand out? If you're having trouble zeroing in on what that is, then study other successful artists you may be like. Make a list of what makes them resonate with their audience.

Everything you do to promote yourself should be an outgrowth of your mission statement, which stems from your relationship to your music, so get clear on that first. Write good songs, hone your craft, and work on your musical brand. From there, build out the other elements of your press kit, such as your bios, press releases, and photos.

Part of the journey to success involves stating your long-term goals and breaking them down into smaller ones. That said, your press kit (or any part of your promotional package) won't look the same in three,

WHAT IS A MISSION STATEMENT?

A mission statement is a short explanation of your band or organization's purpose, goals, and philosophies. A mission statement is a written declaration describing your band's reason for existing and should guide the actions of your band, provide a path, and direct your decision-making.



five, or seven years. At some point, you may need to consider hiring a publicist, but knowing about what the job requires and being your own publicity department for a while will help you make informed decisions when the time comes to grow your operation.

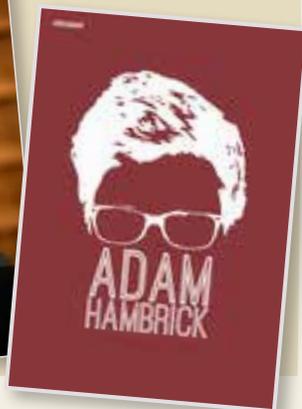
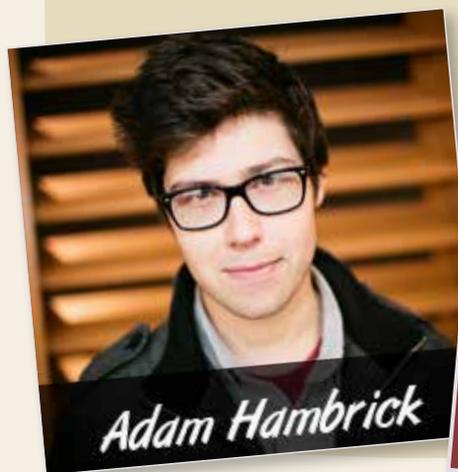
Building a brand

In the scope of the music industry, we can define branding as the practice of creating a name, music, promotional content, and image that identifies and differentiates you as a musical artist. Your mix of these elements becomes your brand, and it's the way to let the world know a product (song, CD, video, etc.) came from you. If your style, music, message, and reputation are consistent with a particular consumer's taste, you might be able to deepen the fan/band/brand relationship through your consistent musical and promotional output over time.



WHAT IS BRANDING?

According to entrepreneur.com, branding is “the marketing practice of creating a name, symbol, or design that identifies and differentiates a product from other products.” Your band's brand is defined by your **music style**, **lyrical messages**, **visual image**, and **stage show**, as well as the tone and content of your online and **social media** efforts, **CD and promotional designs**, and any other product or output from you as a musical outfit. Maintaining consistency and the integrity of your brand requires a sustained effort and a vision for what it is you want to accomplish and how you want to be viewed in the marketplace.



Why is artist branding such an important element in determining a band's long-term success? Because in an abbreviated and unique way, it captures your essence and provides your fans with an identity they can recognize and embrace. Your press kit, and all your promotional materials and creative output, should promote your brand, and your mission statement should be reflected as well.

You should be able to ask yourself, “Which messages and values are my materials conveying about my identity as an artist? Is this the type of artist I want to be?” If you looked at all your artist materials, knowing nothing about yourself, would you be able to describe your fans? Does what you talk about on social media align with what you hope to communicate through your music and your own personal values?



WHY USE A PUBLICIST?

A publicist serves as your media advocate, advisor, and liaison. Publicists work to get their artist clients featured or reviewed in newspapers and blogs, TV shows, and magazines, helping to attract attention and create buzz on a local, national, or even international level. A public relations (PR) expert can also help an artist craft long-term strategies for publicizing a new release or tour, and can take the lead on putting those strategies into action.



SECTION II: YOUR ARTIST HEADSHOT / BAND PHOTO

Of course, to be successful in music, you need exceptional material. Work hard to write good songs and put on compelling performances and music lovers and critics might take notice. If your music is good enough – mixed with the right amount of exposure and luck – you can carve out a successful career.

Beyond songwriting, the fact is visuals really matter, so press photos and all your visual material shouldn't be an afterthought. Enticing photos, videos, album art, and graphic design will go a long way toward getting attention and will help to establish your brand and get people to pay attention and listen to your music.

Consider the fact that your headshot or promo picture might be the first impression potential fans and the press will get of you. If the headshot: a) is a cliché (e.g. in front of a brick wall, along a train track, on a rooftop), b) looks unprofessional, or c) doesn't successfully convey your brand, you might lose out on so many opportunities right off the bat. And when you're trying to make your way in the music industry, you can't afford to miss out on opportunities.

On the other hand, when your music photos support your lyrical message; music style; the content of your

website, tweets, and emails; and help convey your message as an artist and your artist brand, then they are doing their job!

Find a photographer

One key element to a great photograph is finding a photographer you can trust. That usually starts with finding a professional who is experienced in photographing music artists. That is not the same thing as having an acquaintance who purchased expensive camera equipment and has some time on her hands.

Hire a pro if you can afford it, someone who knows how to use the camera and lighting, and who can coach you to take your best shot. Do everything you can to help the photographer succeed.

Have a vision for what you're trying to accomplish and communicate that to the photographer. If he or she is not already familiar with your music, send them a few tracks so they get a better idea of what your music sounds like and what you're all about.

Some of the biggest prep work for a photo shoot is helping the photographer pre-visualize, which starts



with you sharing what you think are good band/artist photos. Find 5-10 photos that you really love, even if you can't articulate exactly why you love them, and get them to the photographer. The creative visualization process should also include scouting and determining locations and finding the right props and wardrobe ahead of the shoot.

Another key to taking good photographs is to learn to relax, and not put a lot of pressure on yourself to be a good subject. That is a large part of the photographer's job, and a big reason why having someone with experience and with whom you are comfortable is of major importance. Keeping your mind and heart open to the photographer's suggestions will help both of you get the most of the experience, and sometimes the best shots are the spontaneous moments in between the planned shots, and a good photographer will be ready for that.

But, as a general rule, plan out the shoot. Don't leave it up to the heavens to have a great day of shooting. You have to brainstorm and conceptualize how you want to come across and how that translates to your background, clothing details, hair, makeup, and location.

Shooting indoors or outdoors?

Ideally, you will make the most out of a photo shoot and have multiple outfits and locations to shoot.

Sometimes that's just not possible, and maybe not necessary, so determining whether you'll be working indoors, outdoors, or both is one major decision.

With indoor studio shots, you can control the lighting, while outdoor shots often provide better ambience and can help tell a more complete story.

If shooting inside, set up enough lights so that you don't have to use a flash. If you must use a flash, and you're working on your own, make sure whoever is working the camera reads the manual and can get the most from it. A built-in camera flash can often brighten



the foreground too much and leave the background too dark. If you have a detachable flash, use that. If your camera has a red-eye reduction setting, use it.

Good lighting can make an image more dramatic, can demonstrate a certain mood, and can make your images more memorable. Bad lighting can obscure facial features, cause strange and distracting shadows, and make it hard to tell what's going on in an image.



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While lighting can be adjusted after the fact with the help of image-editing software, there's only so much that can be done without distorting the image, so getting it right at the time of the shoot is vitally important.

If shooting outside, keep an eye on the weather forecast. Shooting on a slightly overcast day might provide the best results. If you want a cloudy or a moodier setting, wait to shoot on a cloudy day. If it's sunny, always be aware of where the shadows fall: they can either add or detract from your photo.

If you're going to shoot outdoors, it is always helpful to scout multiple locations and let the photographer know ahead of time what your choices look like. It could be helpful to take some shots at the locations ahead of time and share them with the photographer before the shoot.

If you're going to be indoors, choose a background. This might be limited by the places available to you, but determine what sort of vibe you want (whimsical? folksy? industrial?) and what you're trying to convey with the photo, and make sure your backgrounds are in line with that.

One way to make the most of a shoot is to get shots of the background without the band/subject in the picture. These shots can be great for Facebook headers, website backgrounds, show flyers, etc., so they have an immediate tie-in to the other elements of your promotion or CD design and promote the consistency of your brand.

Wardrobe

As much as you need to plan out the location for the photos, you also need to plan out your wardrobe, hair, and makeup. Don't wait for the day before your shoot to get this together. Spend the days/weeks before meeting with a stylist or trying on clothes and have someone snap photos so you can really see what works best. Remember, this is all about promoting and

developing your brand, so how you look and come across in these pictures is very important.

Wearing whatever you'd wear for a gig is a common-sense approach to determining what you should wear for the photos. It's never a bad idea to get a few different kinds of shots in the same day, and if you have the opportunity, you should be prepared by having a variety of wardrobe and background options at the ready. This will give a consistent feel to the photos, but you will also be able to use them for different purposes: press shots for a variety of media outlets, album covers, bio photos, and your websites.

But ultimately, the photos should be about you and not what you're wearing. What you're wearing should not call attention away from your face, instrument, facial expressions, etc. As a general rule, plaids, polka dots, and major patterns are more distracting than solid colors, and wearing all white, especially if you're dark skinned, isn't ideal because white blows out a bit in digital photography. Solid colors, light or dark, are usually pretty safe.

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One last important detail for a shoot is to have a stylist – which could be a friend, girlfriend, or boyfriend – on hand to help with hair and makeup. It is always good to have someone besides the photographer on the set looking out for that pesky stray hair or random things in the background.

Composition

Composition has to do with the placement and spacing of people and objects in the frame; how the person or people in the photo relate to each other, what's around them, and what's in the background. Having a centered shot of the artist or band might be necessary, but composing a shot where the subject isn't centered can create memorable and compelling photos. Consider using negative space when composing each photo, or staggering the subjects if there are multiple people in the band.

You can even try sketching out compositions – where you want people, where you want the background elements, etc. It doesn't have to be a work of art; just a quick sketch to indicate what goes where. Then you'll have something you can refer to during the shoot to keep you focused on what your intentions are for the finished photo. But, of course, be open to a creative impulses and spur-of-the-moment ideas.

Props can also be part of your composition, such as the chair you're sitting on or a book or instrument you're holding. If props help convey your message, they can be worthwhile, but keep in mind that too many props can be confusing and distracting to the viewer, and you don't want to unnecessarily complicate your photos. Very often, a simple composition is the

most effective. Many famous photographers are known for drawing the viewer's eye to the important part(s) of the photo by minimizing the distractions of other elements.

After the shoot

Especially with the use of digital cameras, the standard for a photo shoot is to take an enormous number of photos in the quest to find the one or two that capture the magic you're looking for. With that in mind, plan on having to sift through hundreds of shots from a day's shoot.

If the photographer is also a photo editor, let him adjust your top 10-20 favorite shots, or you can do it yourself with any number of professional photo editing software packages. Things like cropping, altering brightness and contrast, and playing with effects can add subtle nuance and a pro touch to your photos.

One technical element to consider is file resolution, particularly if you ever intend to print your photos. A digital image is made up of pixels (tiny squares in the image), and the more pixels, the clearer and better the image will look and the less you will notice the actual pixels. Just because an image looks good on your computer monitor does NOT mean it will look good when printed. A standard image on a website might have a resolution of 72 pixels per inch (ppi) and most professionals print at 300 ppi. If you use a low-resolution image (anything below 300 ppi) for a printed piece, the image may appear blurry.

In addition, if you enlarge an image, either for print or use online, you can experience issues with low pixel count resolution. For a CD cover, for instance, your image should be roughly 5" x 5" at 300 ppi, or 1500 x 1500 pixels. Images for vinyl LP covers need to be that much larger to look good when printed. If you're taking photos yourself, use the lowest image compression setting on your camera, or set it to uncompressed (often referred to as RAW mode) if possible. Essentially, you want the largest image and file size your camera can save. Read your camera manual if you need help figuring out settings.

If you're shooting with film, you will need to get prints made and then scan them. The same specs are true when scanning: 300 ppi at print size, and be sure to use the highest-quality scanner you have access to.

SECTION III: YOUR BAND / ARTIST BIO

Your artist bio is not an autobiography, and it is not the introduction to your future memoirs: A band bio is a concise history and introduction to your act and a professional sales tool that is a fundamental part of your press package.

It's useful to have two versions of your bio, a long-form and short-form. Your long bio is best kept to 500 words, and no more than 750, while your short bio should be closer to 250 words. Your short bio is usually your long bio stripped of the historical details, focusing heavily on your mission statement and your most current promotion.

When you are an active, productive artist, your story is dynamic, and your bio is a way to inform fans and industry of what is happening *now*. If you experience a big milestone, land a big show, get management, book a tour, release an album or single, or celebrate any other major success, your bio should reflect that. A well-crafted bio is a forward-looking document that reflects where you are and what your plans are for the immediate future. If you don't update it frequently, it may appear that you've become inactive.

With this in mind, it helps to start your bio by describing your new album, or whatever your most current promotion/project is. Unless you're forming a super-group, the history of your origins as a band is not the most important piece of information: what matters is that you have a new album coming out and that you explain what the project is about. Write about the new album and get people interested.

A statement like "Artist X has recorded a career-defining album, meshing genres into a sound all his own," tells your reader nothing. A simple test is to ask yourself, with each phrase, could this describe any number of artists, or only my act or our new album? The closer to the latter you can come with every statement, the more compelling your artist bio will be.

The mission of a bio is in the information it presents, which is to say, you want to do your reader's homework for him. Everything a potential fan or

journalist needs to know about you and your new project should be right there.

It should also go without saying that all your written materials – bios, press releases, blog posts, etc. – should be well thought out and grammatically correct. Presenting your act intelligently and coherently says a lot about the quality of your music and how seriously you take yourself and your career. Use complete sentences, write focused paragraphs, and talk about one idea per paragraph.

Where it goes

Your long band bio should be on your official website. The long or short version should be part of each of your social network profiles – which should all include a link to your website. You own your website, it should be the official hub of your online presence, and you should always try to drive traffic to it.



START YOUR BIO BY DESCRIBING YOUR NEW ALBUM OR PROJECT

The Well Pennies
Los Angeles, California, USA
Duo Folk Pop

The Well Pennies are an indie folk/pop duo consisting of husband and wife team, Bryan & Sarah Vanderpool, writing songs that inspire something - however simple [show more...](#)

Overview Feed Music Videos Photos Calendar Press

About Geography Types

Biography

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THE WELL PENNIES are a Folk/Pop duo from Los Angeles consisting of husband and wife team Bryan & Sarah Vanderpool. The pair met in Boston while supporting each other's solo sets at popular venues like Club Passim, Lizard Lounge, and The Middle East. They fell in love, ran away to California and released their debut EP that was met with critical acclaim from press like Interview Magazine, Under the Radar, Daily Unsigned, and countless others. Taking influence from **THE LUMINEERS**, **PASSENGER**, and **SUFJAN STEVENS**, the pair combine their signature pop melodies and tight harmonies with beautifully produced lush arrangements. The band explains, "Our goal is to write songs that inspire something - however simple - to *...live an hour to get out and experience life.*"

Band Members

- Bryan Vanderpool
Guitar, Vocalist
- Sarah Vanderpool
Keyboardist, Vocalist
- Tony Green
Drums
- Tim Weed
Drums
- Kevin Brown
Drummer

Other Info

Cover band:
No

Links

As you'll be posting your artist bio on various pages and places online, consider that you are creating a piece of writing for a varied audience, so write and edit with fans, potential fans, and journalists in mind. In practical terms, writing for all these audiences means making sure that your prose is catchy and engaging while providing the relevant facts about you as an artist and your current and past accomplishments.

Tell a story

Storytelling, in the world of brand building, is one way to focus your message around a central theme and create consistency. Your story gives people additional reasons beyond your music to invest in you – emotionally and financially. As a musician, it helps to have an interesting narrative that moves forward and grows with you as your career develops.

If you're not sure where to begin thinking about your own story, start with some basics. Who have you played with? What big gigs have you had? What kind of sideman gigs and mentorship have you had? Have you studied with anybody notable? What circles and cliques do you run in? Write a list of five interesting things about you, your group, or your CD and use that as a springboard.

Think about what makes a good story. Typically that might include conflict and resolution. In the case of your band or career, drama can come in describing your band's or your own personal experiences overcoming obstacles as they relate to your recording or your group's formation, or elaborating on some specific story that relates to a song's creation or meaning.

Writing tips

Before you even think about writing a bio, you have to have a firm grasp of your story and of what your music sounds like. This concise description of your music and who you are as an artist or band should not exceed a couple sentences; in fact, some of the most effective band mission statements are phrases of 10 words or less.

If you don't already have a mission statement, and the prospect of summing yourself up briefly stumps you, think about what your fans might say about your music. Who do you sound like? Which qualities set you apart from other bands within your genre? You can even enlist the help of your fans with a survey via email or social that asks them to describe you and what your music means to them.

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Find that something in your story that will draw your audience in, and from there you can provide the details and information you have set out to deliver. Dig deep, look for something that will interest your readers and might prompt the press to interview you or review the CD.

Once you've set the story and established your mission statement, it's time to delve into your band/artist history. This is where you say the band started in Philadelphia in 2000, recorded an album two years later, opened for Pearl Jam in 2010, and work your way to the present chronologically. Then you might want to discuss the current project again briefly at the end.

While this is your story, testimonials from happy fans, inspired journalists, or raving bloggers that you can weave into your story will add a level of authenticity, sincerity, and human connection to your bio. Remember, people make their biggest decisions with their hearts, not their heads, so when you tap into readers' emotions with your story, you compel them to not only learn more about you but also spread

the word to others about your music. Your story also needs to be authentic and credible, as people will respond negatively if they feel you are being unethical or dishonest.

Another good rule is to avoid the use of hyperbole in your written materials. Don't say that you're "totally unlike anything ever recorded" or the "best band ever to strap on spandex" or any other needless superlatives. Let reviewers or other sources be the ones to include superlatives, and if it's real and true and was used in a quote or a review, you can include it as such in your bio.

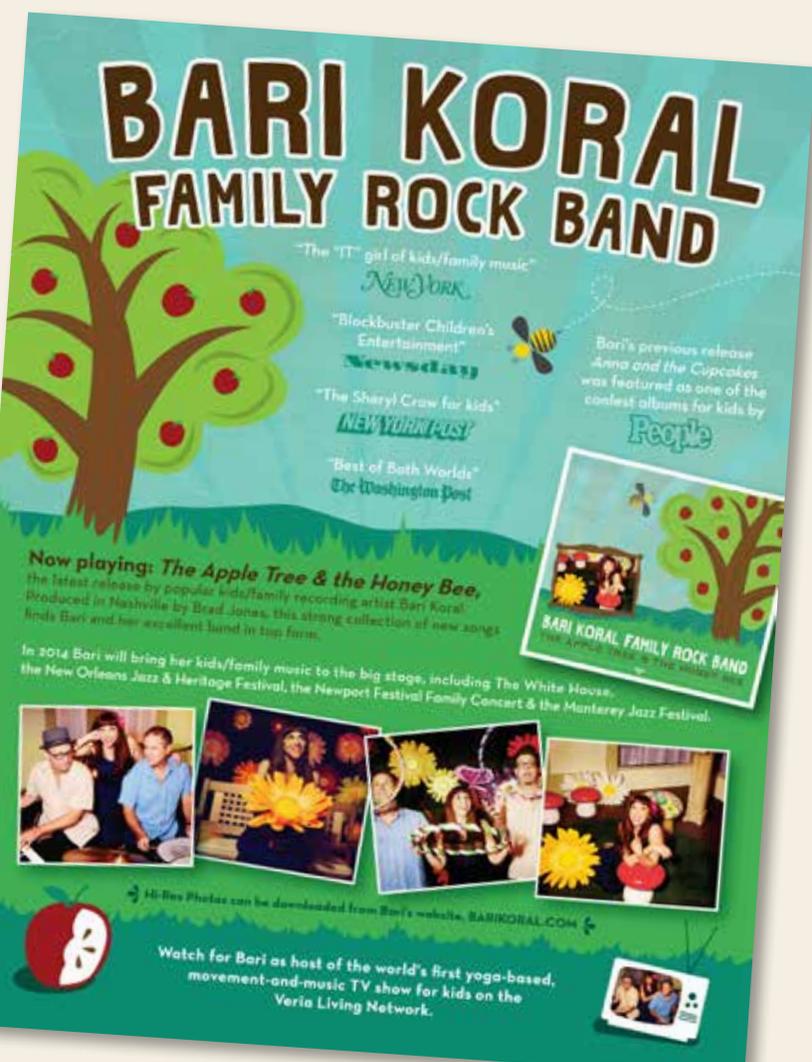
Above all, your band bio should have a positive tone, be straightforward, enlightening, and filled with relevant content. The narrative has to be interesting enough to get the reader to listen to your music and hopefully inspire taking an interest in your success.

One-sheet

While different from a bio, a "one-sheet" basically acts as your résumé, including a brief bio and the highlights of the detailed information you'll include in your larger press kit. You can think of it as a synopsis of your press kit, and it can be a very visual piece tailored specifically to what it is you are promoting.

For example, if you're promoting a record release, your one sheet can include details on the new release – where it was recorded, who produced it, great guest appearances – anything that might spark interest or give a writer or blogger an angle to work with. You can also call out specific tracks, highlight the singles, or talk about the lyrical or musical themes.

A one-sheet is also your extended business card, so any and all contact info needs to be provided. And, if it weren't clear enough by its title, all the information included on your one-sheet should fit on one side of an 8 1/2" x 11" sheet, ready for print, or easily delivered as a PDF file (not a Word doc).



A ONE-SHEET SHOULD HIGHLIGHT ALL THE INFO IN YOUR PRESS KIT

SECTION IV: YOUR PRESS RELEASE

Where a bio serves to highlight a current promotion and concisely tell your artist story, a press release is a written statement to the media that announces a news item, such as a scheduled event (live show, record store appearance, radio performance, interview), an award, or the release of a new product (a single, EP, or full-length album). Some people also use press releases as a way to generate a feature story, because many writers, reporters, and bloggers are more likely to consider writing a story on a band if they first see a press release.

A well-written press release acts as strong support for the other elements of your press kit and overall marketing campaign. It provides another way for you to tell your story as a musician, and enrich your brand by shedding light on the fact that you are proactively putting yourself and your music out into the world.

Remember who your audience is with press releases – writers, editors, booking agents, promoters, bloggers, and other industry people – and that such folks often have very little time and have lots of people vying for their attention. Make their work as easy as possible by making your information thorough and easy to find from a quick glance.

Content

The best press releases are short and to the point – keep your press release to no more than a page. The headline needs to go beyond the mundane and provide detail without being overly clever. The first short paragraph – the summary – should be no longer than three sentences. This opening paragraph needs to draw readers in and keep their eyes moving down the page, while still expressing all the details about what has or will happen.

Make the reader's job easy. If you're playing the Trocadero in Philadelphia, list all details. Tell the reader the date of the show, what time the show starts, what the address of the venue is, how long you're playing, if you're showcasing songs from your

new album, who else is on the bill, and where people can get tickets. Only announce multiple events within the same press release if they relate directly to each other – for example, a new album announcement combined with an official release party or an extended regional or national tour.

Use real, meaningful language in your press release – not lofty, empty hyperbole that you think will sound impressive. Using big words and industry terms, name dropping, or otherwise padding your release to convince others that what you are doing is important is just going to make you look like an amateur.

Keep telling your story

Press releases are more than just compiled facts – like much in the world of promotion, they're about telling a story. The gist of the two most common announcements in press releases are: "Band Releases Record" and "Band Plays Show(s)." Telling an absorbing story about events that seem rather commonplace in the music industry is certainly a challenge, but your job is to grab the attention of – and provide something valuable to – someone who reads countless press releases every day. But remember, nothing turns an editor off faster than hype for its own sake.

Your biographical information is an important part of your press release; but rather than copying sections of your bio verbatim, go ahead and add a few details that offer a new spin on you and your music. If you are releasing an EP, provide a bit of insight into your songwriting and recording process, or highlight something

special about the lyrical or musical themes of the album.

Before you sit down to draft your own press release, take a few minutes to look at what other bands have done. Press releases can be laid out in many different ways with creative uses of color, graphics, bold text, and other formatting devices; and they can take many different editorial approaches to telling stories and sharing news. Seeing a wide variety of examples can



give you an idea of what direction best suits your music and your brand.

When you're looking over other artists' press releases, take note of what you like about their form and content, what's easy to read, what draws you in, and what bores you. Knowing what you find effective and engaging as a reader can help you craft something powerful.

Now what?

As with anything else you put out into the world – new music, a new website, a live performance – your press release will not magically get attention. You need to rally around it with engaging email and social media interaction. Many musicians use services like [PRWeb](#), expecting they will pay the fee and the press release will get automatically read by fans and everyone else they want to reach.

While a service like PRWeb can help your press release filter through some of the meaningless noise that shows up in web searches, it cannot provide the outreach you can when you effectively promote your event on Facebook and Twitter and respond personally to the excitement of your fan base. Your press release is just one point of contact in your larger effort to promote your new show, CD, etc. You also have to get

your homegrown marketing gears in motion.

Don't take a buckshot approach and send your press release to every journalist, blogger, and publication you can find. Make sure your contacts are current and correct. Make sure that you know what kind of music or content the person you're reaching out to covers, and that your content and promotion fits in with what they do.

When you're sending a press release via email, make your subject line as concise, informative, and eye-catching as possible. Journalists get hundreds, if not thousands, per week, and a lot of journalists simply don't get around to opening emails for many days unless they've got something in the subject line that's so intriguing they can't ignore it.

Also, while a press release is sent out to the mass media through PR wires or email blast services, a "niche" pitch sent out on a smaller, more focused scale might be the better choice. The purpose of courting niche press outlets – be they bloggers, podcasters, or beyond – is to connect your band with people who share something specific in common. The best way, by far, to make a connection with these outlets is to weave a story that solidifies your place within the niche and the people who share those similar interests.

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SECTION V: VIDEO



Videos are an obvious way to infuse your press package with something visual and show fans and industry exactly what you're all about. Of course, like anything, a poor-quality video can have the opposite effect, and turn someone off completely or damage your brand by making you look and sound amateur.

For that reason you want to make sure to set a high bar with the videos you post. Think quality, not quantity. Keep a high standard and be very critical of your video-taped performances. Don't post videos that have mistakes, are out of tune, or have distorted or unprofessional sound. In practical terms, setting a high bar begins with thinking twice before posting every single bit of video you shoot. It can also mean planning, budgeting, and networking further ahead to try to get quality video and audio recording capabilities set up if you want to shoot an upcoming gig.

Start by asking yourself why you want to make a video. What is the result you are trying to produce? Are you trying to promote an album? Introduce your live show to new fans? Release your latest single? Keep a connection with your base?

There are dozens of reasons to make a video, and they don't all have to include a music performance to be effective or build your brand in a positive way.

Here is a list of 16 types of videos you can create and post, and once you've compiled a few, it makes sense to set up a YouTube channel and consolidate your efforts on one branded page.

1) Music video. To do this with any degree of professionalism will take a bit of time and money, but a simple video with a great concept can go a long way, as many indie artists have proven. It's a good idea to get outside help and enlist people who you trust absolutely to give you feedback and let you know if something is not working. Be very critical of a music

video, especially if you intend for industry or press to get a hold of it.

2) Campaign video. This is almost like an elevator pitch, mission statement, and bio all in one. Think of the effective videos you've seen by people who are seeking money via crowd funding. A campaign video can help strengthen your brand, tell your story, and be a great companion piece to your EPK or press package.

3) Behind the music. Let people in on your wild ride, but don't set out to make a movie about your entire career from birth to yesterday in one shot. Bite-sized pieces will actually work better for holding interest.

4) Interviews. Interview every cool or crazy person you meet in your day-to-day life as a musician, including your band mates, fans, and anyone who might make for a compelling study.

5) Cribs. Make a video to show folks around your home town or rehearsal studio.

6) Live footage. This sounds easy enough, but take the time to make sure the sound and video quality are exceptionally good. A phone camera one-shot is not what you're after if you're trying to win the hearts and minds of new fans and industry. Remember, be your own harshest critic and set a high bar.

WHAT IS AN ELEVATOR PITCH?



An elevator pitch is a summary intended to quickly define your band, your sound, your unique selling points, and the nature of the products you offer. The phrase reflects the idea that it should be possible to deliver your summary in the course of an elevator ride, or somewhere between 15-30 seconds.

7) Sound check videos. Heeding the advice above, this can be a chance to post a cover song or alternate version of a tune you wouldn't normally play live. And remember, folks outside of the biz love learning how things work from your perspective, and these kinds of videos could be interesting to people who will appreciate the look inside.

8) Backstage. Post dressing room shenanigans, the after-show party, and the folks at your show.

9) Tour diary. Video diary updates when you're on tour that include where you're playing, what it's like inside the van, and reviews of the accommodations – which may be another look inside the van – can be a great way to hype a tour and give fans a taste of the road life.

10) In the studio. Video yourself during recording sessions. This is an excellent way to keep in touch with fans while you would normally be off the radar.

11) Rehearsal footage. Give your fans a sneak peek of brand new tracks from the practice room.

12) Song-meanings and inspirations. Share what you were thinking and feeling when you wrote a song. This approach can go great with an alternate/acoustic version of a song.

13) Alternate/acoustic versions. Record yourself playing acoustic versions of your favorite or most popular songs.

14) Covers. Record yourself playing interesting arrangements of music you love. (Don't forget to get a sync license if you're doing this!)

15) Lyric videos. These can be effective for promotion and are a relatively low budget way to produce a video to accompany a new release.

16) Vlogs (AKA video blog). This is basically an online diary or recurring installment that features you speaking directly to the camera (usually). Expose your personality, engage with your fans, and let them know what's on your mind.



VIDEO BLOG (VLOG) A RECURRING INSTALLMENT OR VIDEO DIARY



SECTION VI: FLYERS, POSTCARDS, STICKERS, AND MORE

Once you have great photography in the can and something to promote, printed materials and digital promotional items like postcards, flyers, and posters can be another excellent way to build your brand. Use imagery from your other media – websites, CD covers, press photos – and add another pillar to your marketing efforts.

Whatever the message, you need it to get across to your audience in the most direct way possible. Try to keep your copy to a few sentences; rework it until your message is tight and direct.



**YOUR AD
OR PROMOTIONAL
PIECE MUST HAVE
ONE STRONG
CALL TO ACTION.**

Your ad or promotional piece must have one strong call to action. The key here is using a verb: “Buy tickets now!” “Pre-order our new album.” “Subscribe today.”

If someone has gotten to a point where they are ready to click through to your offer, they should land on the page where they can buy your product, sign up, watch the video, etc. Don't force people to jump through hoops after clicking through your ad, as each additional step will cause you to lose people's interest.

SECTION VII: PRESS CLIPPINGS

Make sure that there is a “press” section in your press package and online endeavors that covers all of the digital and print publicity you receive. The best way to do this online is to include:

- the title of an article or review
- the publication it was included in
- the content type (feature, interview, review, etc.)
- the date the piece was published
- a quick excerpt featuring some important quotes or highlights
- a link to the original placement
- a screenshot of the page (in some cases)

In a printed piece, include a pertinent excerpt and credit the original source and author. If you are able to collect direct quotes from members of the press, things a DJ or interviewer said on the radio or TV, or things that have been posted on social networks, adding a separate page or section with that information is a good way to show that you're generating a buzz.

Press quotes provide essential third-party endorsements of you. Of course, you may be sending out a press release before receiving reviews or a feature (in other words, you have no press quotes), and you want to get people to talk and write about you. If that's the case, it's even more important to deliver an exciting and interesting bio to make up for lack of quotes about your band.

You should also consider reaching out to popular local bands and musicians you have collaborated with on shows or other projects and ask them to jot down a few thoughts about you and your music, or about the experience of playing with you live, and then include the best one or two as quotes for your press page.



SECTION VIII: DO IT AGAIN

Make sure there is a “press” section in your press package that covers all of the digital and print publicity you receive. As your career advances and your press clips accumulate, your story will evolve and your press kit should reflect the most current information available. It’s important to constantly update your bio and press kit, as well your various web outposts, whenever there’s a new wrinkle or development.

As your story and legend grows, it is important to keep your press kit to a manageable size. When contacting press, band bookers, or anyone in the industry, a good practice is to send your one-sheet as an initial contact with a link to an EPK or a shared folder where they can access your larger press kit materials. You won’t make

a good first impression if you clog someone’s inbox with an enormous batch of attached files. It’s always best to use PDFs rather than Word or text documents and JPEGs or other standard image files for your photos.

You work hard on your music and your art: make sure your press kit reflects the message, image, and brand you want the world to see. These materials will speak for you, and in many cases will be your introduction to press, fans, and industry, so make that first impression count, and always give your audience a place to go where they can hear your music, see your videos, and be motivated jump on your bandwagon.

Written and edited by André Calilhanna with excerpts and inspiration from Echoes’ [blog posts](#) contributed by Michael Gallant, Keith Hatschek, Jon Ostrow, Julia Roberts, Cheryl B. Engelhardt, and Ben Sword.

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