

How To Get Signed To A Label - Top 10 Ways

By Sophie Curran

Firstly, as a musical artist, there is no exact "formula" that can get you signed to a label and this may be disappointing for some to hear; but don't be discouraged.

Getting signed to a label can sometimes come about just by being in the right place at the right time. However, there are several things you can do to maximize the possibility of attracting a major label or production company and get them interested in signing you.

Here are 10 simple things you can do to help you get signed to a label:

1. Be well prepared! Make sure your skills are developed to the point that they can compete with the best the industry has to offer.
2. You must look "sign-able". No one will want to sign you to a label unless you are going to make them money. As such, you or your band must be confident, experienced, dedicated and professional. You need to have great songs and to stand out from the rest.
3. Don't wait to be discovered. Promoting yourself and developing your own fan base is a great way to get noticed by major labels. It helps to have an established following, a good street team, and some strong independent sales when seeking a record deal. The more you do on your own, the less the label has to do, and ultimately the happier they are. In fact, A&R will often seek you out (e.g. come to your show to hear what all the fuss is about) if you've done a really good job of promoting yourself.
4. Get out and do live performances. Offer to play at clubs for free if they are reluctant to book you. If you win over the crowd (or bring a healthy crowd of your own) they'll have you back. To build a regional fan base, you should be doing shows, selling CD's, trying to get some radio support (even if it's just college radio), and doing anything and everything else you can to get some kind of following.
5. Be creative. Go where your audience is. Does your music appeal to high school students? Play lunchtime shows at high schools. Or shopping malls.
6. Put together a "street team" of fans in your local area who can help promote your shows, and spread the word. Many young, die-hard fans will work like crazy just to be recognized, included on the guest list, and be considered something of an insider.
7. Use the power of the internet to create a buzz! Promote yourself online and expand your fan base even more. Set up your own website where fans can download your songs. Create a MySpace Music page and artist profile for free! Create a blog and network with other musicians. Have people sign up to your mailing list and build your database. Regular contact with your fans is crucial if you want to retain a healthy fan base. Give them regular news updates and information about gigs and CD releases.

8. Many artists sign up to an independent label first (or even start their own label) to develop their artistry, songwriting and performance, before getting signed to a major label. Consider doing this as part of your career development.

9. One common misconception is that major labels develop artists. This is simply not true. You need to bring the whole package, including performance ability, to the label. Having your own fan base, photos, press clippings or internet presence to add to your "demo" will certainly look more impressive!

10. A&R and managers receive multiple demo's every day and are subject to hearing some pretty awful stuff. If you can offer something that sounds amazing, along with a good "promo" (promotional) package it should greatly increase your chances of getting signed.

Ok, so let's recap. You've honed your skills, produced a tight product and created a strong buzz. You should now be well on your way to getting signed to a label. This can be a long road, so it's important to keep a positive mental attitude.

While every success story is different, you will find that most successful artists share a sense that their music "must be heard" at all costs, so cultivate this mindset in yourself. This belief will help you to persevere and to make connections with others who share your vision.

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