

## **TEN REASONS SONGWRITERS SHOULD PITCH THEIR OWN SONGS**

(by Brent Walker 13/12/2013)

When I signed my first publishing deal with Major Bob Music, I thought, “This is great! I can just sit in my writer’s room, write every day, and let our three songpluggers pitch my songs and get ‘em cut.” This was a mistake. Not that Scot, Mike, and Jesse weren’t smart, hardworking guys who wanted me to succeed. No, those guys worked hard for all of their writers. It was a mistake because I spent the first couple years of that deal missing out on the benefits of pitching my own songs. Here are ten benefits.

### **1. My odds improve.**

It’s HARD to get cuts, so I want all hands on deck. Simply put, the more songs of mine that are getting pitched, the better the chance of the right song hitting the right ears at the right time.

### **2. My back catalogue stays active.**

When you leave a publishing deal, it’s natural for your pluggers to back-burner your old songs and focus on their current writers and their newest songs. Pitching my own songs helps keep my best old songs in circulation.

### **3. I hear my songs more honestly.**

Sitting across the desk from a producer or A&R rep makes me hear my songs differently. Little flaws which I might’ve ignored before become more obvious, especially if they pass on the song. Over time, this kind of listening makes my “flaw-detector” more sensitive when I’m writing.

### **4. I demo songs more wisely.**

On a related note, the experience and feedback I get from pitching helps me demo only my best-chance songs. My flaw-detector is more sensitive, and I ask myself important questions like, “Do I ever pitch this type of song? Does this type of song ever get kept or cut? Is this song going to replace one of the songs I’m currently pitching? Am I excited about playing this song for so-and-so?”

### **5. Nobody knows my catalogue better than I do.**

Sometimes, a song may sit around for years before the right pitch comes along. A plugger probably won’t remember it if it’s not in the regular pitching rotation. But I might. For example, when I heard that comedy legend, Ray Stevens, was doing a political album, I dusted off an old, never-before-pitched song called “Fly Over Country,” which had reverted back to me from my Major Bob deal. Ray cut it.

### **6. It builds my personal brand.**

An A&R rep may hear five of my songs in a day from five different sources. That’s great, but they might never know those are my songs. They might associate the songs with my cowriters or the publishers who brought them. If it’s ME in the room, though, the rep hears several of my songs in a row and get to put my face to the name on the CD. And I get to do the same, which is handy if I see them out at an industry function. Oh, and I hopefully get them to like me as a person, which never hurts.

**7. It can lead to co-writes.**

When an A&R or producer associates your amazing songs with you- an amazing person – and you happen to be in the room with them... they might just decide to hook you up for a co-write with another writer they dig or (even better) one of their artists. It's a beautiful thing.

**8. I get the inside scoop.**

The A&R/producer can tell me what they need, and I can ask followup questions. That may bring to mind another song from my catalogue (from any publisher I've had) which I can play right then or send later. And this info won't have the chance of getting mis-relayed or not relayed at all to me by my plugger.

**9. My songs are the focus of the pitch meeting.**

My plugger goes into meetings representing several writers, all of whom are really good. So while I might land a couple of songs in the meeting, there are others that won't be mine. But in my meetings, I'm on all the songs. More pitches, more chances to win.

**10. I develop my own contacts.**

What happens if your songplugger gets hit by a bus? Or if you lose your publishing deal? If you're only relying on your plugger's contacts and don't have any of your own, your songs aren't gonna get heard as often. I've been between deals, and it felt good knowing (and not just hoping) that my songs were still getting pitched.

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