

WHAT TO LOOK FOR IN A DISTRIBUTOR

Written by Symphonic Distribution

Selling your music on iTunes, Beatport, Amazon and the like USED to be something only a couple of companies could do. But today with the growth of the digital era, hundreds of digital distribution companies exist that will try to get your business. It's important as an artist or record label that you make a smart, well-informed choice in entrusting your music to a reliable distributor that has the options and services that fit your current needs.

Here are some crucial questions that you can ask us and any digital distribution company out there when it comes to choosing the right company.

Do they have a staff?

It's important for you to know who is handling your material and precisely what their team knows and does. Request to speak to some of the staff through phone or even through Skype video messages. If they are too "busy," and if your Skype video shows the individual's bedroom or den at home – whether they are new or established – chances are the so called "organization" may just be for front. Getting to know who works at company is smart, so ask questions to the managers of the company's several business divisions. Talk with staff members to get familiar with what they do at the company. I'm incredibly proud to have a staff like the one we have now. Each one of them possesses resilience, professionalism, and ambition for the company and our clients and it's rewarding to see people that work long hours not for themselves but for the record labels and artists that bust their asses to make music and get it heard.

Do they offer support?

Those that know me know that I'm pretty much attached to the hip to this business. On vacations, business trips, holidays, when our office is closed – hell, even on my honeymoon – I was checking emails and responding to customer requests. Now, I'm not saying that the company you deal with should always be on hand at every single second of the day as I personally love and enjoy this business which is why I'm constantly connected. However, I feel that I have an obligation to respond in a quick fashion to any client that messages me. If I'm unable to speak, I will ask one of my staff members to chime in. The point in this question: Before you deal with any company, you should know their company hours, and how and where to reach them so that you can get a reply within 24 hours. Issues happen and if you are sitting here waiting around for an answer, it will just create further problems. Get familiar with their work ethic!

What type of technology do they have?

Here at Symphonic Distribution, our most important commitment for the remainder of 2013 and into 2014 is to develop more efficient technology than what we already have for record labels, artists, and eventually even other distribution companies to use. We've expanded our Content platform to deliver to more stores than ever before (including some such as Xbox Music, directly to them, not through another provider), have offered Daily Sales Estimates of various stores, and now even offer Label Statistics with an emphasis on social interaction.

Why have I just given you this brief resume of what we've done in the past two months of 2013? The point is that it is crucial to ask what type of technology a distribution company has. What are they doing to advance their systems? Are they staying updated with technology trends in the business? Find a company that has the technology that will allow you to track your sales, manage your content effectively and much more. As a side note, don't waste your time with companies that

say that basic things such as Daily Sales and a Content System are “coming soon” as these things are old news and if they don’t have them by now, all they will be doing is playing catch up.

Are there other ways they can get your music out there?

We’ve started to branch out to offer other services because Digital Distribution isn’t the only avenue artist and record labels can be making money from their music. We’ve branched out to provide Synch Licensing, CD Pressing, Mastering, Marketing, and have been delivering Ring Tones, Music Videos and more to iTunes for the past 2 years to diversify the offerings to clients. We will soon be the first electronic music-focused distributor to offer a premiere worldwide Publishing Administration Service, which will open up a whole new revenue stream for songwriters and composers.

Do they control your music and where it goes?

You are a record label and artist in the independent music industry, right? Then why in the hell would a digital distribution company ever make you deliver your music to places you aren’t interested in? From day one, we’ve been about choice and our system lets you choose when to release, which stores to make exclusive and doesn’t impose restrictions on delivering to 1 or the 100+ retailers we deal with on a direct basis. You should always have a choice on where your material is sent and if you aren’t being offered that choice then you should reconsider having that freedom.

Are they flexible on percentage?

When we first started, we had our own set pricing and percentage. But over the years, we listened intently to what our clients really want. That’s why we created the Distribution Option concept which lets you choose a deal that suits you. You get to choose from 5 options that each give you a % of royalties and/or even make it so you earn everything and we just get a fee for delivering. The point is YOU CHOOSE what you want. If you find yourself interested in any distribution company, the fair percentage nowadays is anywhere from 80%-90% of royalties and the 100% model is effective for those that have limited amount of releases. It’s a business and everyone should be compensated fairly for it so always keep that in mind and if they aren’t flexible, then perhaps ask them to state what the reasoning is for their pricing. If they can’t budge, they too like many businesses have their own costs and operations they have to run; thus there is a probably a good explanation as to why their pricing is as such.

What do people have to say about them?

Testimonials say a lot and you can definitely go by them but I always suggest going a step further. If you are familiar with who made the testimonial, speak to them directly and get their thoughts on the company. Know the pros and cons from someone that deals with them rather than just depending on the testimonials. I as well as many other companies can say that some partnerships work out great and there is nothing but positive vibes and then there are those that aren’t so positive but at the end of the day, it’s just business.

To conclude, there are many companies out there and we don’t like to promote ourselves as the best but we do work as hard as possible with as much detail as possible for each and every client of ours and questions such as these were ones that we’ve been asked and every individual aspiring to be involved with any company should ask.

By: Jorge Brea
CEO and Managing Director of Symphonic Distribution
jorge@symphonicdistribution.com

Symphonic Distribution was launched in the winter of 2006 by a Music Producer from Tampa, Florida. The company was launched with the intention of providing new and established record labels cost effective digital distribution to retailers such as iTunes, Beatport, Rhapsody, Amazon, and more with a strong emphasis on customer satisfaction.

By the end of 2007, the company struck agreements with over 250 record labels, and improved its offerings to include additional services such as Mastering, Marketing, Label/Artist Development, and more.

Article source: http://www.musicclout.com/contents/article-304-what-to-look-for-in-a-distributor.aspx?goback=%2Egde_3259553_member_269851393#%21