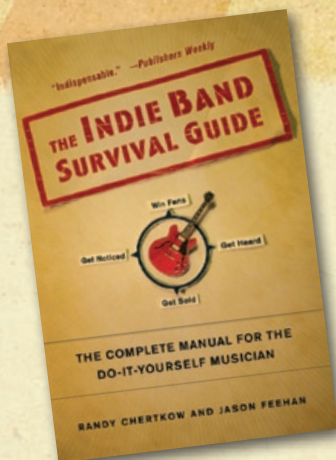




HELPING MUSIC CAREERS MOVE AHEAD

Planning Your Album from Beginning to End

A checklist to help you plan your next album,
get it distributed, heard, publicized,
and win fans worldwide.



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If you're sitting down to tackle making an album, there's a lot to think about; from clearing the rights for your cover songs, to converting the cover art to the right format. These issues can trip you up, or cause the album to take a lot longer than you planned. Some musicians get so lost in handling the technical production of the album that they forget generating publicity and buzz about a new release.

This checklist organizes everything that goes into making an album — from beginning to end — to help you plan everything ahead of time, so there are no surprises. Planning ahead will not only help you make the album as good as it can be, it will let you focus on promoting your album to maximize your sales. Think of it as your checklist before heading out on a long trip. You don't need to do everything that's listed below, but the goal here is to list out everything you may want to do so you're reminded of what you should tackle and when.

Before You Start

The checklist may be a bit overwhelming at first since it lists *everything*. But, keep in mind that doing it yourself does not mean do it *all* yourself. As Derek Sivers, the founder of [CD Baby](#), likes to say, "whatever excites you, go do it yourself; but if something drains you, find someone else who enjoys it and get them to do it for you."

The good news is that there are a lot of places where you can get help. In our book, [The Indie Band Survival Guide: The Complete Manual For The Do-It-Yourself Musician](#), we discuss how to work with your fans, friends, and family to help you succeed so you can focus on the music and building your fan base. These are the people who form the foundation of your "skill" and "opportunity" networks. But if you can't find what you need within your network to help you with some of the steps of making and promoting an album, you can also use a host of other services, tools, and professionals.

In this checklist we'll not only offer you advice for what you need to do, we'll highlight all the areas where [Disc Makers](#) can help you. By choosing what to do yourself, what to have friends and fans help with, and what you'd like a professional service to do, you can stay focused on what only a musician can do: working on your music and building your fan base.

How This Checklist Is Organized

We've divided the steps in this checklist into three phases:

- **Making Your Album**
- **Preparing for the Album Release**
- **The Album Release Show and Post-Release**

This checklist is just the beginning. Throughout this document, when more detailed information is needed, we'll link you to where you can find more detailed how-to information at our free and open do-it-yourself musician community and resource site, [IndieGuide.com](#). Of course, there's also our 336-page book, [The Indie Band Survival Guide](#), which covers everything about being a musician and how to do it yourself — whether it's playing live, attracting publicity, copyrighting your music, setting up a website, maintaining an active web presence, selling your albums and merchandise, and more.



The Complete Checklist

I. MAKING THE ALBUM

A. PRE-RECORDING and PLANNING STEPS

1. Decide what you're making: one album or an album series?
2. Choose your songs
3. Record at home or at a professional studio?
4. Rehearse
5. Fine tune your gear and instruments

B. RECORDING STEPS

1. Make mixes, listen, get feedback, and repeat
2. Make final mixes

C. MASTERING and POST-PRODUCTION STEPS

1. Choose a mastering house
2. Have the right formats and ask what files they need
3. Decide the order of the songs on the album
4. Decide on the amount of "space" between songs

D. LEGAL STEPS

1. Document who owns the songs and sound recordings
2. Get permission to record any cover songs, samples, or loops
3. Clear the legal status of all the artwork
4. Clear the legal status of all the text
5. Get permission for guest musicians (if needed)

E. REPLICATION and DIGITAL DISTRIBUTION STEPS

1. Replicating and duplicating CDs
 - a. Determine how many CDs to make and the costs
 - b. Decide on type of packaging (jewel case, sleeve, etc.) and what type of booklet (1 panel, 2 panel, multi-panel)
 - c. Get artwork design templates from the CD Manufacturer or use their online design services
 - d. Determine formats required for album art and text, CD art and text, etc., and use this format



2. Print your own discs
3. Digital Download Cards

F. ARTWORK and DESIGN

1. Choose a name for the album
2. Get a UPC barcode
3. Work on the artwork
4. Replicate the CD
 - a. Send/Mail the mastered album along with artwork
 - b. Proof artwork
 - c. Sign copyright release and grant approval

II. PREPARING FOR THE ALBUM RELEASE**A. PICK a RELEASE DATE****B. PREPARE for ONLINE SALES**

1. Pick your CD/Digital Distributor and sign up
2. Create your album's profile and upload your album's artwork

C. PREPARE AUDIO for PROMOTIONAL PURPOSES

1. Make MP3s from mastered wavs
2. Tag and name MP3s correctly

D. PLAN YOUR CD RELEASE SHOW, LISTENING PARTY, and/or TOUR DATES**E. GET YOUR ALBUM MERCHANDISE and PROMOTIONAL MATERIALS**

1. Album-related T-shirts and merchandise
2. Promotional materials: posters, postcards, stickers, flyers

F. PLAN and PREPARE the PUBLICITY CAMPAIGN

1. Plan PR campaign
2. Set up Google Alerts with your new album name and song titles
3. Update your "Music Resume" documents (Part I)
4. Prepare PR documents such as press releases
5. Compile your target PR lists



G. START YOUR PUBLICITY CAMPAIGN (Part I: Your own network)

1. Work with your street team and fans
2. Update your website (Part I)
3. Update your web presence (Part I)
4. Write your mailing list

H. START YOUR PUBLICITY CAMPAIGN (Part II: Involving the outside world)

1. Set up a tracking system
2. Send out your CDs, MP3s, and press releases
3. Put up posters and flyers
4. Follow up
5. Update your "Music Resume" documents (Part II)

III. THE ALBUM RELEASE and POST-RELEASE**A. SUBMIT CD for ONLINE SALES****B. ADD YOUR CD to GRACENOTE and FREEDB****C. LEGAL (Part II)****D. UPDATE YOUR WEBSITE and WEB PRESENCE (Part II)****IV. REPEAT!**

Making Your Album

Whenever we ask our favorite recording engineer, John Lisecki, about recording techniques and equipment, he always waves his hands in the air and says “you’re jumping the gun! How you record something is secondary to what you’re recording.” In other words, the music is the most important thing. It’s the centerpiece of your album, and the most important part of the recording process. It can also be the most fun.

A. PRE-RECORDING and PLANNING STEPS

Before you even hit the record button, there are a few things to consider.

1. Decide what you’re making: an EP, an album, or an album series?

When it comes to increasing sales of your music, the formula turns on quantity. It takes a lot of time and energy converting a person into a fan that is willing to purchase your music. But, it takes less time and energy getting a fan who’s already purchased some of your music to purchase additional music from you. This is where having a back catalog of music to sell comes in.

Instead of focusing all your time, money, and energy on one album, think of it as a collection that can be packaged and released multiple times. For instance, set out to make one main album and a series of additional albums or EPs (a short album of approximately four songs) with material based on the songs of the main album. That way, while you’ll focus publicity efforts on creating awareness of the main album, you can also build your discography and back catalog with a series of EPs such as:

- Songs that didn’t make the cut (outtakes and b-sides).
- Live versions of some of the songs found on the main album.
- Original demos of the songs found on the album.
- Remixes of some of the songs on the main album.
- A “commentary” album where you talk about the music much like a director talks over the movie on a DVD.

2. Choose your songs

It should go without saying that your album should contain your very best music. This is where the concept of producing an album series becomes helpful — it’s easier to cut the songs that aren’t the “best,” but still give them a home on another release that’s a part of the series (outtakes and b-sides).

Additionally, you need to decide if you’re recording all original songs or if you’re including cover songs. If one or more of the songs are covers, then you’ll need to clear the rights so you can record it. If they’re original songs, then you’ll still need to keep track of who wrote what and who owns the sound recordings as we recommend in “Legal (Part I).”



3. Record at home or at a professional studio?

Professional studios cost money, but they have the know-how and talent to make your recordings sound “radio-quality.” However, time is a factor since studios typically charge by the hour. Recording at home costs money up front, but pays off over time the more you record. Of course, one of the hidden dangers of recording at home is you can spend months or years “perfecting” just one song!

RESOURCE: Disc Makers created [StudioFinder](#) to help you find a recording studio. With over 16,000 studios, the free resource can help you find the right recording studio in your area.

4. Rehearse

If you choose to record at a professional studio, rehearse and arrange the songs before you step into the studio. This will save you time and money. Some musicians write out parts using sheet music, while others record their practices or preproduction demos as guides they can refer to later while at the studio.

5. Fine Tune Your Gear and Instruments

Whether you’re recording at home or at a professional studio, make sure your gear is up to the task. You don’t want to use instruments or cables that crackle or cut out or amps and speakers that play right “most of the time.” If you play drums, make sure you have fresh heads. Put new strings on your guitar a few days before the session. If you’re recording at a studio, bring extras of everything as time is money, and always make sure you have fresh batteries! At a recording studio, the meter will be running while you’re running to the store for supplies. Get them ahead of time.

B. RECORDING STEPS

Recording is part science and part art. There’s no right way to record but many have an opinion about it. We’ll stay out of the debate and keep our tips here simple:

1. Make Mixes, Listen, Get Feedback, and Repeat

Record your parts, listen, get ideas, and make decisions on what to change, add, or re-record. When filming movies,

TIPS:

- Involve your street team (your most die-hard fans). Let them get behind the scenes on early mixes and get their feedback on your music. They’ll identify the “best” songs and maybe even start suggesting a running order or album title. Not only will this continue to develop the relationship between you and your fans (and make your street team feel special), it will generate buzz within your fan base as to what you’re working on and start the promotion ball rolling.
- Consider releasing some of these early mixes as part of your album series.



directors get copies of what was filmed that day (called “dailies”). You’ll want to get mixes of what you recorded so you can get feedback, get new ideas, make any necessary changes, and make sure you’re on track. Get others to listen to your tracks and elicit feedback.

2. Make Final Mixes

When the time comes, you’ll produce the final mix. Listen to the final mixes on many speakers to hear how it sounds. Mastering your album after mixdown is highly recommended, and if you plan to do this, make a full mix, as well as one with instruments only and vocals only. The mastering house can use these to make your vocals stand out. Keep in mind that while mastering can make good mixes sound great, it can’t always make a bad mix sound good.

C. MASTERING and POST-PRODUCTION STEPS

Mastering is frequently misunderstood by musicians. Often it’s seen as an extra step that’s not necessary. This misconception can be easily dispelled when you hear what a mastering studio can do for your music. Getting your album mastered will (among other things) equalize the entire album, edit minor flaws, eliminate hum and hiss, apply noise reduction, adjust stereo width, adjust volumes, and add dynamic expansion and compression. Mastering can help with licensing, and can get your album noticed and played by radio, the web, and other media outlets where the quality of the sound can mean almost as much as the quality of the song.

With more and more musicians recording at home, professional mastering can make even more of an impact. As Brian Lipski, senior mastering engineer at the [SoundLab](#), at Disc Makers says, “If you’re recording and mixing in a small project studio, with less than ideal acoustics and only a small set of near field monitors, be aware that certain frequency ranges (particularly the low end) may not be reproduced accurately. Over the course of many days or weeks working in this environment, your ears will become used to this inaccurate sound and you will tend to over mix or EQ those frequencies to compensate. The result may be a mix that sounds severely unbalanced when played back on systems outside of the studio.” Given the tools and experience mastering engineers have, they can identify the problem areas of a mix and “fix it” so as to help you achieve a balanced mix — one that sounds great regardless of the system it’s playing on.

HEAR WHAT MASTERING CAN DO FOR YOUR MUSIC

Writing about mastering is like cooking about ballet. It needs to be heard to be understood. You can check out before-and-after samples of Disc Makers’ mastering house, the [SoundLab](#), online [here](#).

Better yet, they’ll send you a [free CD comparing before-and-after samples](#) so you can hear it on your home sound system. But don’t just listen to the CD on your best system — challenge it. Compare the before-and-after sound quality in your car, through your TV, on a boom box, and over headphones with a portable CD player. Put it through the test. You’ll hear the difference in each of these settings and come away with a better understanding of what mastering is and how it can really put the polish on your music.

To get a free CD demonstrating the differences between a non-mastered track and a mastered one, head [here](#).



1. Choose a mastering house

Although you need to record somewhere local to you, you are not tied to home for mastering. Mastering houses are only as good as the specialists they employ. When looking for a quality mastering house, you'll want to hear examples of their work and determine if it's the right sound for you. For example, Disc Makers has their [SoundLab](#) mastering house, which has been used by a variety of artists ranging from Eminem, Jason Newsted of Metallica, and the Roots.

RESOURCE: For more information about the SoundLab at Disc Makers, [click here](#).

2. Have the right formats and ask what files they need

Confirm with the mastering house which format they require for your music (i.e. wav file, CD, but **never** MP3). For instance, the SoundLab at Disc Makers will accept your music on CD, data disc (CD or DVD), analog reel, or DAT.

Most musicians think mastering houses work with only your final mix, however some will ask you to prepare two separate mixes — one with a mix of just the music and another with just the vocals. This allows them to adjust the vocals in the mix so they're not too loud or buried in the mix. It also allows them to make "radio edits" by dropping obscenities so radio can play the song over the airwaves.

3. Decide the order of the songs on the album

This can be one of the hardest parts (especially if you're in a band as everyone has an opinion!), but determine your preferred song running order for the album ahead of time so you don't waste time on the clock debating your song order.

4. Decide on the amount of "space" between songs

A mastering house usually helps with this as the space between the songs helps set the pace of the album. Sometimes you'll want the next tune to kick in immediately, other times you'll need to give a song some time to breathe before launching into the next song.

D. LEGAL STEPS

Before you can ask Disc Makers to mass produce copies of your disc, there are a few legal issues to clear first. You are required to sign a release form declaring that all the music on your album is original and "owned" by you. If all your music is original, you'll check that box and move on. However, if you record any cover songs or incorporate any copyrighted samples or loops, you have to provide proof that you received the proper permissions. That's where the next steps come in.



1. Document who owns the songs and sound recordings

If you're in a band or collaborating, co-writing, and co-recording your music with another person, you should document who wrote what while you're making it.

Items you should document include:

- Who owns the copyright in the song and/or how writing is split among the songwriters.
- Who owns the sound recording(s).

Additionally, you should document who the publisher is. Publishing is too large a topic to cover here. If you want details on publishers, see the chapter on "Your Rights" in [The Indie Band Survival Guide](#), which covers rights, ownership, and licensing.

HOW-TO: Download our simple and free "[Song and Sound Recording Split Agreement](#)" and use it as a template to keep track of who owns what of your original songs and sound recordings.

2. Get permission to record any cover songs, samples, or loops

Cover songs are any songs that you or your band members did not write. For instance, if you decide to record your own version of "Freebird," you need to get permission from the copyright owner and pay a license fee to duplicate it. All CD manufacturers will ask you to guarantee that you've done this before printing any copies of your disc. **This is true even if you have no intention of selling your version of the cover song.** It's the duplication of it that makes it a "copy" under the law, not selling it.

Additionally, any samples and loops you incorporate into your music need to be cleared as well. One way around this is to use samples and loops that are already pre-cleared and royalty-free. Most sample libraries or discs sold at music retail stores and sites are royalty-free. Also, some musicians create and release their own pre-cleared and royalty-free samples and loops licensed under Creative Commons. For example, [ccmixter](#) is one such resource.

RESOURCES:

- For a list of loops, samples, and sounds you can use — many of which are royalty-free — head to [indieguide.com](#)
- If you want more information on recording cover songs, loops, and music copyright, you can also read the "Your Rights" chapter in [The Indie Band Survival Guide](#), which includes practical and detailed information on the rights you have to your own music, how to register your own music copyrights, how to license your own music, and how to set up your own publisher so that you can fully profit from your music.



3. Clear the legal status of all the artwork

Just like you need permission to use cover songs, you'll need permission to use any graphics, fonts, or photographs you don't own. One way around this is to use pre-cleared and royalty-free artwork.

RESOURCE: For a list of [pre-cleared and royalty-free fonts and graphics](#) you can use, [head here](#) to IndieGuide.com.

4. Clear the legal status of all the text

If you intend to print the lyrics to a cover song you got permission to record, this needs a separate license. It's one thing to get permission to record the cover song, it's another to type out the lyrics. Under the law, there are actually two different things that you're copying. As a result, you'll need to get permission to copy the lyrics to the liner notes of your album. If you don't, it's best to leave them off. (And, yes, technically you need permission from the songwriters of your original songs to reprint their lyrics!)

5. Get permission for guest musicians (if needed)

Ever see a sentence in a CD's liner notes that reads: "So-and-so guest musician appears courtesy of so-and-so label?" This is usually due to exclusivity clauses in the label's contract that bind the musician to the label. To the extent you collaborate or work with a musician signed to a label, you'll need the label's permission for them to participate. You'll want to ask the guest musician if this is something that needs to be done.

E. REPLICATION and DIGITAL DISTRIBUTION STEPS

While the internet has brought about new formats such as MP3s and new distribution methods such as iTunes, Amazon, and file-sharing, there are CD players everywhere: in homes, computers, radio stations, cars, etc. If you want to get radio airplay or do a press campaign, they expect a CD.

CD OR NOT CD, THAT IS THE QUESTION

While you may hear that CD sales are down in the mainstream media, the statistics for this come from the major labels whose business model was selling plastic. As an indie musician, you sell music, not CDs, and you need to make the best decision for yourself. This shouldn't be based on the economics of a label. Indie musicians operate on a different scale and model than labels. Beyond legitimizing your album and helping to paint a complete story about who you are as an artist, CDs may be an integral part of your revenue stream.



For indie musicians, the decision to make a CD usually comes down to just a handful of factors:

- Your projected CD sales
- Your publicity campaign, and
- Your radio campaign

SELLING LIVE and ONLINE: Press for sales

While online distributors such as CD Baby will sell your CD to the world, the bulk of your CD sales usually occurs at shows. It's one of the easiest ways that you can sell your music to someone, and it's usually an easy sale: after a great show, fans often want to own their own copy of the music. Plus, CDs are usually the biggest money makers since the cost to produce them is far less than what you can sell them for. If you've released a CD already, check your sales from shows and see what that number is (and if you haven't started tracking this yet, start doing so). Once you know this, you can usually come up with a break-even-point on how many shows you have to play to pay for the CD costs. This will help you estimate how many CDs to make.

One way to improve music sales at shows is to sell digital download cards. These cards allow you to sell your music digitally. Disc Makers has partnered with [DigStation](#) and [CD Baby](#) to make this process easy, for you and your fans..

RESOURCES:

- To learn more about selling your CDs online or getting them digitally distributed, head to CDBaby.net.
- To learn more about creating your own [custom-designed digital download cards](#), see the Digital Download Card section below or [head here](#) for more information.
- Selling at shows has a lot of components to it, and is a broader topic that we cover in the book. To learn more about maximizing your sales at shows, see the "Play Live" and "Get Booked" chapters in [The Indie Band Survival Guide](#).

PUBLICITY CAMPAIGNS: Press to impress

As we talk about in the "Get Publicized" chapter of [The Indie Band Survival Guide](#), the press and media often judge your work by how things look. Imagine what you'd think if you were a journalist or music critic and got a CD burned from a computer with your band name scrawled in permanent marker on the front. Creating your own professionally-made disc sends the message that you're serious about your music and they should take it seriously as well and give it a listen.

Of course the appearance is only one factor. Another is how many discs you want to print by hand in order to meet the goals of your publicity campaign. If you want to send a disc to 100 or more press and media outlets, it may make financial sense to do a CD run. Not to mention



saving you time to work on those activities that matter more than sitting by your printer changing ink cartridges.

Some press and media will accept MP3s. As a result, many publicity campaigns can start with this instead of mailing a physical disc out. However, if the press you're dealing with will eventually want a disc, you may want to send them your CD, given the appearance factor.

HOW-TO: To learn more about how to run a publicity campaign, see [How To Run A PR Campaign](#) at IndieGuide.com

RADIO CAMPAIGNS: Press for play

If you plan on trying to get radio play, there's no way around pressing a CD, especially if you're considering commercial radio stations. Generally, even college radio stations won't be too interested in a home-pressed CD-R or MP3 file. Finally, if you intend to hire a radio promoter, don't waste the money by getting them to generate interest in your music and then following up with a home-burned disc.

HOW-TO: To learn more about how to run a radio campaign, see [How To Run A College Radio Campaign](#) at IndieGuide.com

1. Replicating and duplicating CDs

If you want your album to have the look and feel of a major commercial release, then, you'll want to replicate your disc. The replication process physically stamps data onto the surface of the plastic disc, while the duplication process encodes the data by burning microscopic holes into the dye layer of a recordable CD. Replicated discs last longer and are more durable. Duplicated discs, however, provide flexibility in terms of quantities, fast turn-around times, and cost.

In general, replication is most cost effective on orders of 300 discs or more, and offers more packaging options. Duplication is most cost effective on orders of fewer than 300 discs and can be turned around significantly faster than replication on shorter runs.

a. Determine how many CDs to make and the costs

Do you want 5 CDs? 100? 500? 1,000? 5,000? Essentially, it all turns on your goals. Are you going to promote your release to the press? New media? Are you going to target college radio? Or are you going to focus on podcasts and music blogs? These decisions will help you reach a decision on how many CDs you'll want to make.



To determine the size of the print run that makes economic sense, you should do your best to estimate the amount of copies you'll need for:

- **Your Press Campaign:** Determine the number of press outlets, both new media and traditional media, that you plan to send a CD.
- **Your Radio Campaign:** Determine the number of CDs you plan to send to radio stations.
- **Promotional Copies:** Estimate the number of CDs you'll need for promotional purposes such as giveaways, contests, fan thank-yous, etc.
- **Free Copies:** Determine the number of CDs that you'll pass out to your fellow band members, family, friends, street teams, etc.
- **Copies for Sale:** Estimate the number you'll want left over so you can sell them for a profit. If you have past sales figures of CD and digital sales of your music, then you can use these to project the number you expect to sell through show CD sales, online CD sales, consignment sales, and any other physical CD distribution.

Depending on how many you order (and how fast you need them done), your cost per CD could range anywhere from under \$1 to \$4. Once you know your cost and number of giveaways, you can determine how many you need to sell to break even.

SHORT-RUN DUPLICATION

With Disc Makers short-run duplication service, you can order CDs in smaller quantities in a number of popular packaging formats in. That means you can buy fewer CDs up front and, when you sell out, you can simply re-order your CD.

For more information about Disc Maker's short-run duplication services, [click here](#).

b. Decide on type of packaging (jewel case, sleeve, etc.) and what type of booklet (1-panel, 2-panel, multi-panel)

You'll have a host of options to choose from. For example, Disc Makers offers jewel cases, slim cases, eco-friendly Digipaks and wallets, jackets, paper sleeves, and more. With regard to booklets, the options are nearly limitless.

With respect to radio campaigns, the CD case that you pick is important. CD libraries used by radio stations, journalists, and reviewers are modeled around the size of a standard jewel case. So, to the extent your goal is to get your CD in the hands of radio and the press, you'll want to keep this in mind.

However, every rule is made to be broken. George Hrab, a successful indie musician and podcaster out of Pennsylvania (GeologicRecords.net), has done a fantastic job packaging his CDs in unique ways to help them stand out from the crowd. For example, one of them comes in a tin box, another in an embossed paper sleeve, and another in a large DVD-style box. All of them feature detailed liner notes, photos, and other



extras. Each one stands out as a piece of art, giving his fans a genuine reason to buy the physical CD; his sales have benefited from this approach.

c. Get artwork design templates from the CD manufacturer or use their online design services

Always use the approved templates for your artwork. If you don't, it may cost you time and money down the road to get it right (not to mention your own grief and frustration).

RESOURCE: For an example of the variety of templates available from Disc Makers, check out [Disc Makers' Design Template](#) page.

d. Determine formats required for album art and text, CD art and text, etc., and use this format

Sometimes different formats are required for different parts of the CD. For example, the on-disc print might be different than the booklet print. Your supplied file may need to be a CMYK image, or RGB, or be in a specific file format. For these tasks, you can use professional products like Adobe Illustrator or Photoshop or free software like [GIMP](#). Disc Makers provides a document that spells out the file requirements if you are supplying your artwork. [Click here to read and download the document.](#)

RESOURCE: For a list of [artwork and graphic tools](#) you can use, [head here](#) to IndieGuide.com.

2. Print your own discs

Depending on how many discs you want to print, it may save you money to do it yourself. Disc Makers has its own line of duplication machines and CD/DVD printers, priced anywhere from \$200 to over \$5,000. Keep in mind, this is just one cost. You'll still need inserts, ink, cases, and blank discs (preferably one without a brand logo on them). [Disc Makers sells blank media](#), including blank CD-Rs with your artwork silkscreened on them. This beats writing the name of the album in permanent marker and adds a level of professionalism to your one-off CD manufacturing.

3. Digital download cards

Just like iTunes sells gift cards that allows the purchaser to buy any music from its site, you can now sell your own digital download cards specifically for your album. Disc Makers can create



custom-printed cards with your album’s artwork for downloads on [DigStation](#) or [CD Baby](#). On the back are instructions and a unique code that allows your fans to download your album. This is a great new way to sell your music at shows or anywhere at all. You don’t have to tote 25 CDs around with you, just stash a stack of download cards in your wallet and you’re ready to sell your music on the go. Once you purchase the download cards (currently it’s \$98 for 100 cards), they are yours to sell or give away as a free promotion. Each card is good for only one complete album download.

RESOURCE: To learn more about creating your own [custom-designed digital download cards](#), see the Digital Download Card section below or [head here](#) for more information.

F. ARTWORK and DESIGN

One of the things that separates a CD from an MP3 is the artwork, design, and depth of information you can convey. Below is a comprehensive list of what you may want to consider for your album art.

GETTING PROFESSIONAL HELP WITH ARTWORK and DESIGN

Designing the graphics for an album tends to be one of the more time consuming parts of the CD creation process. How your CD appears is just as important as the music inside — especially when it comes to promotion and publicity.

But if graphic design isn’t among your talents, you can always find someone to do it for you — whether in your skill network, a professional graphic artist, or an art service. [The Design Studio at Disc Makers](#) offers professional design and artwork services for those who don’t have the expertise to do it themselves.

A design studio can do more than just prepare album artwork. If you don’t have a good set of logo images ready to go for your website, T-shirts, merchandise, banner ads, etc., you can get their help to make a set of graphics that you can use over and over again. Merchandise plays such an important part of an indie musician’s income nowadays that many musicians and bands take the time to create a variety of brand-related images based off their name and logo so that they can make an assortment of merchandise for their fans to choose from.

RESOURCES:

- For more information about [The Design Studio](#) and how it works, [head here](#).
- To [check out samples of The Design Studio’s work](#) for other musicians, [head here](#).
- For an example of the information they ask for to work with you to create your band logo or album artwork, check out their [logo design information guide](#), [merch information guide](#), and [CD/DVD design information guide](#).



1. Choose a name for the album

Self-evident, but a major choice nonetheless.

2. Get a UPC barcode

If you want to sell your album in any store or online digital retailer such as CD Baby, you'll need to have a unique Universal Product Code (UPC), or barcode. Not only do many of the sales outlets require a barcode to sell music, but the primary sales tracking authority, Soundscan, only tracks albums with barcodes. If your release becomes a big hit, but doesn't have a barcode, Soundscan won't know about your sales. The Billboard charts, as well as other charting authorities, base their rankings on these Soundscan numbers.

You usually need this at the artwork stage since the barcode needs to be incorporated within your design (typically on the tray card). For a fee, the CD manufacturing house may provide you one, but know that other services such as [CD Baby](#) will sell you one as well.

3. Work on the artwork

How much artwork is needed generally depends on your packaging, but in general you'll need to design:

- Cover art
- Tray card
- On-disc print
- Booklet/liner notes

4. Replicate the CD

Once all the artwork is finalized and your album is mixed and mastered, you're ready to get it replicated.

a. Send/Mail the mastered album along with artwork

Once finalized, you'll need to ship the mastered disc and artwork.

b. Proof artwork

Always proof your artwork, and have someone not involved with the creation of the artwork proof it as well. Once approved, any missed errors or misspellings are your responsibility, and what's worse, you'll have 1,000 or more copies printed with the same mistake. It's a good idea to proof a physical copy, not just an online PDF, as there's something about holding a physical proof in your hands that can help you spot problems better than checking images on a computer monitor.

c. Sign copyright release and grant approval

Before anyone can replicate or duplicate your disc, you need to sign a release stating the work is original or that you have the required permissions. See the "Legal (Part I)" section above for more information.



LINER NOTE CHECKLIST:

MUST-HAVES:

- Album Title
- Artist/Band Name
- Copyright and publishing information/notices for:
 - Music (original or covers)
 - Artwork
 - Text
- Performance Rights Organization the songs are registered to (if applicable)
- Track Listing
- Your website
- Contact Information — You never know where your CD may end up. Be sure to include ways you can be contacted.

OPTIONAL:

- Where and when the album was recorded
- Where the album was mastered
- Who played what
- Running times for songs
(this is helpful for DJs to know if you're seeking radio play)
- Guest musicians
- Other albums for sale and where they can purchase them
- Song notes
- Lyrics
- Thank yous



Preparing for the Album Release

The difference between albums that get noticed and the ones that don't comes from taking the time to plan and prepare for the release in advance. This means you need to pick an official "release date" far enough into the future to give you time to do all the necessary things to build buzz about your album and grow any publicity.

It's best to not set your release date until your CDs are in your hand. If you are going to publicize your album in the traditional press or do a radio campaign, you'll want to set the official release date at least 8-12 weeks after you've received the copies of your album from the CD manufacturing house. If you forgo the traditional publicity and radio route and focus more on running a new media campaign (blogs, podcasts, etc), which craves immediacy, then you can have a shorter lead time. However, keep in mind you still need time to get all your album-related merchandise, T-shirts, posters, and other items in order.

Of course, this means you'll be sitting on the album for a while before the release date, but fight the urge to simply release it to the public the moment you get it delivered to your house. Following the steps below before the release will help give your album the greatest chance for success and sales.

A. PICK a RELEASE DATE

This date will be used on all of your press materials (whether traditional or new media), fliers for your CD release party, and more. Once you have this date, you can work backwards from it to plan out the time you for the rest of steps in this section. The official release date should give you enough time to make all the necessary preparations.

B. PREPARE for ONLINE SALES

One of the big reasons you don't want to get your albums back from your CD manufacturing house and simply release the album to the public is that it takes time to get it in the stores, both physical and digital. You'll want it available for purchase while you're busy promoting it to encourage sales. Otherwise, you're wasting part of the benefit that your hard-earned publicity is generating.

1. Pick your CD/Digital Distributor and sign up

You want to make your album available everywhere. CD and digital distributors are your ticket to worldwide sales. In exchange for the fee and/or cut of the album or song track sale, they handle all the business transactions. [CD Baby](#) is the web's biggest distributor of independent CDs, and there are plenty of other outlets from which to sell your physical CDs and downloads.

While you can sign up with as many CD stores as you'd like (these are usually non-exclusive deals), there can't be more than one distributor bringing the same album to the same store



(iTunes, Amazon, Rhapsody, etc.). Make sure the digital distributor you sign up with gets your music in as many outlets as possible.

2. Create your album's profile and upload your album's artwork

Most distributors ask you to fill in the details about your album and songs at their website. Here's what you should have available for the online stores:

- Album title
- Artist or band name
- Album summary (a one-line sentence about the album)
- Album description
- Genre
- Track names, order, and timings
- Songwriters and publishers
- Album cover art ready for upload
- Your bio/artist description
- Your website
- Your contact information
- Your logo

Given your distributor will likely share whatever information you enter into their database with other stores, getting this information right and thinking through what you're entering is important. For instance, CD Baby sends your albums info and artwork to over a dozen outlets, including iTunes, Rhapsody, and Amazon. A typo, misspelling, or half-thought-out description about you and your music at this stage will be replicated throughout the web, and even if you fix it, the search engines will keep the mistakes for quite some time afterwards. Get someone else to check it over!

C. PREPARE AUDIO for PROMOTIONAL PURPOSES

1. Make MP3s from Mastered wavs

If you intend to promote your music through podcasts, MP3 blogs, websites like MySpace or Facebook, or even the press, having ready-made MP3 versions of your music will save you time and energy.

TIP:

You always want to make it easy for someone to buy your music. So, keep a list of the hyperlinks where your music is sold handy (your CD Baby album page, your iTunes page, etc.). These hyperlinks are the ones you'll be going back to again and again as you add them to your website, a new web presence, in your newsletter, in your email signature, or on a press release. You'll also want to add them to other "offline" promotional items you create such as your postcards, stickers, and posters.

If the hyperlink is too long or hard to remember, you can create a shortened URL for it. Services like [tinyurl](http://tinyurl.com), is.gd, and bit.ly will shorten lengthy URLs. Some, like [tinyurl](http://tinyurl.com), will allow you to come up with your own custom name. For instance, we changed the link to our Sham Rock album from cdbaby.com/cd/bturtle, which isn't very descriptive in print, to tinyurl.com/shamrock-album.



2. Tag and name MP3s correctly

Audio promotion is not simply encoding wavs to MP3. Once you send an MP3 of your music out in the world, you don't know where it'll wind up. You have to fill out the ID3 tags and add the album art so anyone who ends up with your MP3 on their iPod knows who you are and where to find more of it. After all, your music is your greatest sales and fan generation tool.

HOW-TO: For step-by-step instructions on how to properly ID3 tag your music, see the free IndieGuide.com article [How To Create MP3s So Your Fans Will Always Find You](#) at IndieGuide.com.

D. PLAN YOUR CD RELEASE SHOW, LISTENING PARTY, and/or TOUR DATES

If you play live, your CD release show will become an integral part of the next step — your publicity campaign. A live show to support your album release gives you an additional reason to contact the press and media and keep them updated. If you don't play live, then throw a listening party. As we say in the book, publicity is all about *multiple* impressions. To the extent you plan a tour in support of the album, this gives you additional, targeted places in which to focus your publicity efforts.

If you are going to play live in support of your album, start cementing venues and dates early. While in the past most musicians had to play locally or in concentric circles from where they reside, you now can tour more effectively by playing shows where your fans are. We recommend using Eventful.com's free and powerful Demand tool. With this tool, you can target (and budget) your tour accordingly based on where your fans are and where they want you to go.

TIPS:

- Getting a countertop display is helpful for selling your CDs in stores or at gigs. In our book, [The Indie Band Survival Guide](#), we talk about one band, [Yvonne Doll and the Locals](#), that had a lot of success in building up an audience for their shows by setting up counter displays and giving away their CD at the bar they played at a week or two before the show. By doing this, the band connected with the local customers of the bar, and built their name recognition. Frequent customers of the bar came to see her band. Disc Makers sells these [professional displays](#).
- Looking for gigs? Every replication order with Disc Makers includes a free six-month membership to [SonicBids](#), an online portal that helps musicians gain access to thousands of shows, showcases, venues, music conferences, and licensing and sponsorship deals. Sonicbids allows you to set up an Electronic Press Kit (EPK) where you can include all the necessary music, info, pics, links, bios, and videos you want promoters, event organizers, industry execs, and press agents to have — all in one easy spot, and all digital.



HOW-TO: For step-by-step instructions on how to book live shows without missing any of the important steps including using Eventful.com, see the free IndieGuide.com article [How To Book A Live Show](#).

E. GET YOUR ALBUM MERCHANDISE and PROMOTIONAL MATERIALS

You'll want album-related merchandise ready for sale by your release date.

1. Album-related T-shirts and merchandise

Since you are doing all of the publicity and marketing for your new album, you can get the most out of your work by having merchandise and T-shirts created to sell along with your new album.

RESOURCE: Disc Makers manufactures custom-printed clothing and merchandise such as T-shirts, hoodies, hats, and more. To learn more, [click here](#).

2. Promotional materials: posters, postcards, stickers, fliers

Having posters and sending out postcards to advertise your new album and shows is a tried and true way to generate promotion. Because they have much of your artwork, Disc Makers makes it easy and affordable to print posters, postcards, and stickers for you to help you promote your release.

RESOURCE: Disc Makers is a printing resource, and can print all your posters, postcards, stickers, and fliers. Download their [Design templates](#) to get you started. To learn more [click here](#).



CD RELEASE SHOW / LISTENING PARTY QUICK CHECKLIST

SOME of the STEPS YOU'LL WANT to COVER for the ALL-IMPORTANT FIRST SHOW or LISTENING PARTY IN SUPPORT of YOUR ALBUM INCLUDE:

- Booking the venue.
- Scheduling your CD release show/listening party in advance — with enough lead time for all your publicity efforts to pay off. Give yourself about 8-12 weeks.
- Involving your street team and inviting them in advance.
- Sending an announcement to your mailing list.
- Updating your music resume documents, website, and web presences.
- Writing a press release about the show/party.
- Sending the press release at least 8-12 weeks in advance for traditional media and one to two weeks for new media (sometimes even the day before or day of).
- Put up posters and get a CD display case to the venue a few weeks before the show to introduce their regulars to your music.

F. PLAN and PREPARE the PUBLICITY CAMPAIGN

The following material has filled many books, so rather than go into detail about how or why you'll want to do all the steps below, we'll simply list them out so you don't forget to do them.

1. Plan your PR campaign

This should be your overall strategy for the album and any live shows you do in support of it. Most bands do both a traditional media campaign (such as newspapers, magazines, and radio), as well as a new media campaign (such as podcasts, music blogs, MP3s, entertainment blogs, [Last.FM](#), and more).



PROMOTION = CREATIVITY

Publicity is not just compiling lists and following steps mechanically. It can and should be fun and creative too. It won't be hard — you're a musician, so you're already creative. It's at the planning stage that you should be channeling that creativity into how to build excitement and buzz about your upcoming album.

Here's a few to get you started:

- Do a contest.
- Make a video. It worked in the days of MTV and still works today in the days of YouTube (see [Ok Go's treadmill video for "Here It Goes Again"](#) for an example of a unique low-budget video that went viral).
- Create a Flash game based on a song on your album.
- Partner with a blog or podcast. For instance, when our band [Beatnik Turtle](#) released our album [Sham Rock](#), we worked with the podcast [The Gigcast](#) to create a cross-promotional online hide-and-seek contest, giving away the new CD.

Getting noticed and planning a creative and effective promotional campaign for your music is a big topic. We talk extensively in [The Indie Band Survival Guide](#) about how to get noticed.

2. Set up alerts with your new album name and song titles

You'll want to keep up-to-date on what people are saying about your new album and songs. In the physical world this is difficult, but online it's as easy as setting up a Google Alert with your band name, as well as the name of your album.

HOW-TO: For step-by-step instructions on setting up Alerts for your music, see the IndieGuide.com article [How To Get Automatic Alerts When Your Band Is Mentioned Online](#) at IndieGuide.com.

3. Update your "Music Resume" documents (Part I)

Your "music resume" contains the following important brand elements:

- **Your Bio**
- **Your Fact Sheets**
- **Your Online Press Kit**
- **Your Offline Press Kit**
- **Your Tour Schedule**
- **Other PR Documents with the New Album Information**

These are the documents that you'll either send out (to the press, bloggers, music reviewers, etc.) or need updated online if they have questions or need more information. Updating these



now will save you time and energy later when you start sending these out or people start asking you for them. Plus, they'll help you update your website and web presences consistently.

4. Prepare PR documents such as press releases

Sending a press release is a simple way you can notify the media of your album and CD release show. They're not that difficult to write and there's even free press wires that will help you blast out your release to the media.

HOW-TO and RESOURCES:

- For step-by-step instructions about how to write your own album press release, see the free IndieGuide.com article [How To Write A Press Release](#) at IndieGuide.com.
- For a list of resources to distribute your press release (many of which are free), see the [PR Wires](#) section at IndieGuide.com.

5. Compile your target PR lists

There's plenty of outlets within your arm's reach that you can target to get your music reviewed and heard. This is a large topic and we tackle this throughout [The Indie Band Survival Guide](#). But, in short, you'll want to compile a list of:

- Album review press, magazines, zines, and websites
- Traditional local and national press
- New media press
- Commercial, college, and public radio stations
- Internet radio stations
- Music blogs
- Music podcasts
- Radio stations
- Non-music blogs covering topics in your niche
- Non-music podcasts covering topics in your niche
- Other websites

If you find a website, blog, radio station, or podcast that looks like it may play your music but lacks details about submitting, reach out to the blogger, podcaster, or website owner directly. Always obey the rules of submission. Don't miss out on coverage by making their life more difficult.

This is a step where the free and open IndieGuide.com comes in handy. The indie community has a list of just about everything you need to target as well as a list of additional resources to get you started.



RESOURCES TO GET YOU STARTED FROM INDIEGUIDE.COM:

- For a list of press sites to help you with your publicity campaigns, see [Press Release Writing Services](#).
- For a list of blogs to target, see [Music Blogs](#).
- For a list of podcasts and podcast directories, see [Music Podcasts](#) and [Podsafe Collectives](#).
- For a list of radio stations, see [College And Indie Radio](#).
- For a list of music blogs to target, see [Music Blogs](#).

G. START YOUR PUBLICITY CAMPAIGN (Part I: Your own network)

There's a lot you can do within your fan network to build buzz about your upcoming album.

1. Work with your street team and fans

As we say in [The Indie Band Survival Guide](#), it's people, not technology, that makes things happen. Your fan network is no exception. Don't be afraid to involve them and ask for their help. Keep your fan network up-to-date about the upcoming album and give them exclusive cuts from the album as a reward and to whet their appetite.

Involve your fan network early so you can create missions and steer their enthusiasm from random acts of buzz to a coordinated effort that's in line with your overall strategy.

HOW-TO: For step-by-step instructions on how to effectively motivate and manage your street team, see the IndieGuide.com article [How To Create And Manage A Street Team](#) at IndieGuide.com.

DON'T HAVE YOUR OWN WEBSITE?

As we say in [The Indie Band Survival Guide](#), don't rely on MySpace or Facebook as your website. Sites like MySpace and Facebook are important for promotional purposes, but these are what we call "web presences." Every musician needs a home base — a site that you control, with your own domain, where you're not competing against advertising.

Every replication order with Disc Makers comes with a free HostBaby trial. HostBaby is a web hosting service for musicians. [HostBaby](#) features include 4GB of space, hundreds of design templates to choose from, an email newsletter tool, gig calendar, streaming audio, guestbook, and blog/news page tools. You also get unlimited email addresses @yourdomain. Often overlooked, writing from your own band's domain name is a simple, consistent, and effective branding and promotional practice.

For more information about [HostBaby](#), [click here](#).



2. Update your website (Part I)

Once you update your music resume documents, you're ready to update your website to announce and feature your new album. This should include blogging about the upcoming release, but also could include adding a song or two to your website's audio player (i.e. the "radio single") to generate interest.

3. Update your web presence (Part I)

Update your web presences with news about your upcoming album (MySpace, Facebook, Twitter, Eventful, etc.). Remind fans about your mailing list and blog so they can stay informed as to when the album drops. Add the "radio single" to your web presence audio players.

4. Write your mailing list

Nothing justifies a new newsletter like announcing your upcoming album or show.

H. START YOUR PUBLICITY CAMPAIGN

(Part II: Involving the outside world)

The media lists you compiled will become the focus of this phase. These are the places that should get your album in advance — before the public (i.e. the press and radio copies that you factored into your "how-many-CDs-to-manufacture" decision). The goal is to generate reviews and build buzz about your album before the official release date when the album goes on sale to the public.

Note that how and when you approach the traditional media and how and when you approach the new media is different. This is a big topic — if you want more information about this, see the "Get Publicized" chapter of [The Indie Band Survival Guide](#).

1. Set up a tracking system

To coordinate a publicity campaign, you'll need to keep track of who, where, and when you sent your CDs, MP3s, and press releases to. This can be as simple as a spreadsheet that you complete as you send albums or MP3s out, or something more elaborate, like an off-the-shelf customer/relationship management software system.

HOW-TO: Download the free "[Publicity Plan Spreadsheet](#)" at IndieGuide.com to use as a template to keep track of your publicity campaign, who you contacted, and when to follow-up.



2. Send out your CDs, MP3s, and press releases

Finally, it's time to reach out and write or send your CDs, MP3s, press releases, etc. to your targeted media.

3. Put up posters and flyers

If you purchased album-related posters and flyers, start using them to spread the message about your upcoming release. Enlist your street team for help in distributing these materials. Be sure to allow them to keep a few for themselves as well.

4. Follow up

You'll want to verify that everyone received the CD (if shipped) or MP3 (if sent or linked to through an email or uploaded to their website). Most musicians fail to follow up, but this gives you an excuse to make a second impression and get your name in front of the reviewer, blogger, radio manager, or podcaster.

HOW-TO: For step-by-step instructions on how to run your publicity campaign, from getting that first coverage to moving up to larger press, see [How To Run A PR Campaign](#) at IndieGuide.com.

5. Update your "Music Resume" documents (Part II)

As reviews come in, be sure to update your music resume documents (bio, fact sheets, press kits, etc.), future press releases, website and web presences with any review quotes and clippings.



III. The Album Release and Post-release

*Most of the hard work will be behind you by this point, but there are still a few things you need to do – namely, releasing the album for sale to the public. While your music is at the heart of what you do, your identity, image, brand, website, web presence, merchandise, and publicity is what you use to connect with your fans. It's what you need to focus on after the music is released, and it's a big part of what we cover in *The Indie Band Survival Guide*.*

Most of all, celebrate all your successes. You put in a lot of good work and you definitely deserve it.

A. SUBMIT CD for ONLINE SALES

You'll want to give enough lead time so your CD can be available at stores and your music available for download at digital retailers such as iTunes, Amazon, Rhapsody, etc. Unfortunately, timing is everything and the exact digital release date is not one of the things you have direct control over.

For instance, while it takes CD Baby only a few days to get your CDs available for sale on their store, it takes much longer to distribute your music to all the digital retailers taking anywhere from three weeks (at the minimum) to four months before it's completely distributed and available.

B. ADD YOUR CD to GRACENOTE AND FreeDB

Ever wonder how the album, band, and song name get filled in automatically in your MP3 player when you load a CD into your computer? The [Gracenote Media Recognition Service](#), formerly CDDB and [freeDB](#) are the engines behind this. Both do the same thing — they get listeners to fill in the necessary track information themselves so they have it handy and help others with the same CD.

Once you release your CD, add your information so it's entered correctly. Most fans, though they mean well, don't enter everything or are not always the best spellers. To do this, simply load your CD into a player that supports each service (iTunes works with Gracenote and the free tool, Audiograbber works with freeDB).

As an additional service, Disc Makers will do all this for you as part of any of their web bundles, so you don't have to worry about it.

C. LEGAL (Part II)

Once your album is released, you'll have all the information you need to register:

- **Your song and sound recording copyright with the U.S. Copyright Office.** Keep in mind your songs and sound recordings are copyrighted at the time you make them. However, you



can always register them with the Copyright Office. Doing so provides third party evidence that you claim you own the song or sound recording and establishes a date. It also gives you a few additional rights. Waiting to register after the release ensures you have all the information they'll ask you to disclose in their forms (including the official publication date to the public – the release date).

- **Your original songs at a Performance Rights Organization.** Registering your songs at a PRO such as ASCAP or BMI will ensure that if your song generates performance royalties, they'll know where to send the checks to.

Copyright, publishing, performance royalties, and licensing your music for profit is a big topic, so for more information see the "Your Rights" chapter in [The Indie Band Survival Guide](#).

HOW-TO and RESOURCES:

- For a list of performance royalty organizations in your area, see [Rights And Royalties Organizations](#).
- For information on how to join a Performance Rights Organization and get the most licensing fees from them, see the IndieGuide.com article [How To Join A PRO And Get Double The Income](#) at IndieGuide.com.

D. UPDATE YOUR WEBSITE and WEB PRESENCE (Part II)

Be sure to update your website and web presences. Some of the items you don't want to forget include:

- Announcing the album is out and hyperlinking to all the places it can be bought.
- Announce where you've been played (podcasts, blogs, websites, radio, etc.).
- Posting any new positive album reviews.
- Thank those people and fans who helped make the album a reality or helped promote the album.
- Cross-promote those that have blogs, podcasts, or websites that promoted you.
- Ask fans/street team to continue to spread the word and create missions to keep them organized and on-task.
- Update websites you maintain presences on to announce that the album is out and where it can be bought.
- Thank those who helped (and cross-promote when possible).
- Ask fans to spread the word through their networks.



IV. REPEAT!

Make more music! Work on your next album and repeat the steps we've outlined. With every album release you'll find the process easier and easier. You'll have your systems down pat. Your name will gain recognition, and you'll accumulate more fans who can help. You'll start to build relationships with the press, bloggers, podcasters, etc. And, promotional opportunities will start to come to you.

ABOUT

About the Authors

RANDY CHERTKOW

Professionally, Randy Chertkow is an Information Technology specialist with over fifteen years of experience in enterprise-class Fortune 100 companies. He has a Bachelor's in Business Administration in Information Systems from University of Iowa and a Master's of Science in Computer Science: Data Communications, with a secondary concentration in Artificial Intelligence from DePaul University, where he graduated with distinction. Randy has played music all his life, including jazz, rock, and classical music. His instruments include baritone, tenor, alto, and soprano saxophones, flute, B \flat and bass clarinet, guitar, bass, and anything else he can get his hands on. He started at the challenging New Trier High School Jazz program and went on to study jazz at Berklee College of music and then completed a Perfect Set course at the Bloom School of Jazz. He writes, records, and performs with Beatnik Turtle as well as performing with theater companies around Chicago.

JASON FEEHAN

Professionally, Jason Feehan is a practicing corporate attorney that works for a multinational executive search firm. He has a Bachelor of Science in Political Science and Psychology from University of Iowa and a J.D. from Chicago-Kent College of Law. He plays guitar, keyboards, sings, records, engineers, and produces. He founded Beatnik Turtle in 1997, growing it from a four-piece band into an eight-piece rock machine with a full horn section and a recording studio all its own. Unfettered by a formal music education, he often learned to play instruments as he



wrote the music, and used nearly anyone in arms-length who could play or said they could play a musical instrument. He is a very prolific songwriter and has written close to a thousand songs, three of which are actually not too bad.

BEATNIK TURTLE

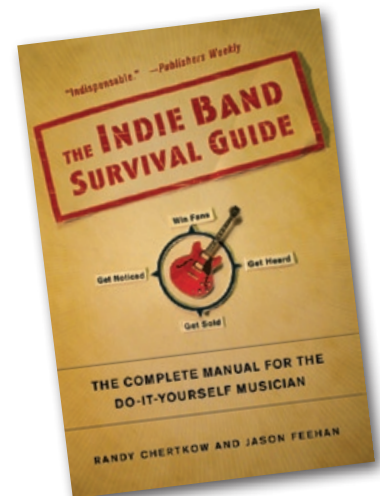
The authors' band, Beatnik Turtle, is a horn-powered pop-rock group based in Chicago. They have recorded eighteen albums, released over 450 songs, and successfully completed a song of the day project where they released one song for every day of 2007 at its website, TheSongOfTheDay.com. They've written music for TV shows, commercials, films, podcasts, theatre (including Chicago's Second City), and have licensed music to Disney/ABC Family.

About the Book and indieguide.com

THE INDIE BAND SURVIVAL GUIDE

(St. Martin's Press; 336 pages)

The Indie Band Survival Guide: The Complete Manual For The Do-It-Yourself Musician is the ultimate resource for musicians looking to record, distribute, market, and sell their music. Musicians Randy Chertkow (by day, a tech expert) and Jason Feehan (by day, a lawyer) cover every step of the process and lay out practical steps to get your music heard, noticed, sold, and win fans worldwide.



IndieGuide.com

IndieGuide.com is a free and open resource, based on the book, that shares practical information, gear, sites, and resources that are available to musicians – growing and changing as much as the new indie music environment does. Think Wikipedia, edited by musicians, with ratings and comments just like Amazon. Add to that an automated link checker to make sure you don't waste time on resources and information that has disappeared. And since it's open, it grows and adapts as often as the new indie environment does. Join up, keep track of and share your gear collections, and help your fellow indie musicians all at one site.



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