

How to Get Your Song on the Radio

Whether you're a solo artist or in a band, one of the best ways to get your music out there is to get it played on the radio. Even if you start small at a local radio station, it can lead to national exposure. Sending in your songs can...

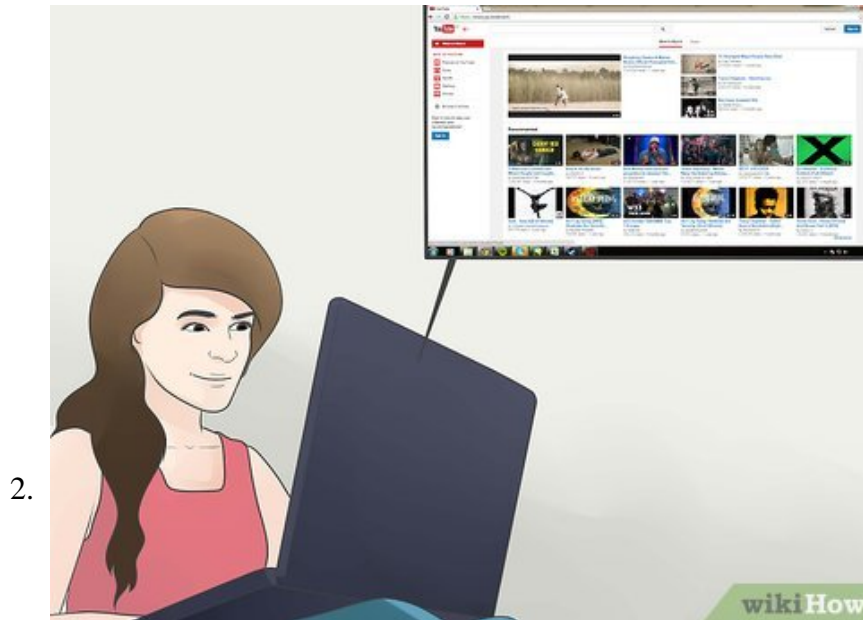
Part 1 of 3:

Getting Your Submission Ready



Prepare your music for distribution. Depending on where you're submitting, you will need to be able to send in your music on a physical CD or electronically through a digital format such as MP3.

1. For CD distribution, you usually don't need fancy packaging or elaborate press kits. In fact, many radio stations will request that you *not* send in materials like this. Some musicians insist that a plain silver CD-R with your name and the song title, accompanied by a track listing in a clear plastic case, is all you need.
2. Whatever packaging you choose, make sure all your information is clear, complete, concise, and correct. You don't want a music director to fall in love with your song only to be unable to figure out who it belongs to!



Make your music easily shareable online. Some radio stations may accept email attachments, but more often if they accept electronic submissions they will want a link to an online source for your music. You have many options for digital distribution.

1. If you want your music more publicly available, you can use services such as iTunes, Amazon Music, or Bandcamp. iTunes allows you to sign up to sell your music for free;^[1] Amazon Music requires you to use a distributor to sell your music through their Digital Music store.^[2] Bandcamp is also free to sign up and is becoming increasingly popular with artists.^[3] Examine several options and choose the best for your situation.
2. You can also get your music online by using websites such as YouTube or Vimeo. Read the Terms and Conditions for any website carefully; you want to make sure you keep your copyright and permission to sell your music!
3. Sites such as Soundcloud, Mediatfire, and Sendspace operate legal file sharing services that allow music directors to download your music without having to worry about viruses and other safety issues.^[4]



Compose a press kit. You may or may not be requested to submit a press kit with your music. However, it doesn't hurt to have one ready to go. Most press kits include several basic elements that will help people get to know you quickly.

1. Write a cover letter. This should be addressed to the person to whom you're submitting your music. Include your contact information, any webpages (YouTube, Facebook, website, etc.) that you have, and basic information about your music (genre, themes, etc.).
2. Write a short biography. This should be a short description of you (or your band, if you have one) and your accomplishments so far. You can talk about your influences and interests here, but keep this part story-oriented. Consider it like your introduction to a new friend.^[5]
3. Create a "fact sheet." This should include the essential information about you: name, style of music, other artists/bands you are similar to, instrumentation, etc.

Score
0 / 0

Part 1 Quiz

What sort of information should you include in your cover letter?

Your contact information, websites, and basic information about your music.

Yes! The cover letter needs to be an introduction and answer any questions that relate to you and your music from a professional standpoint. Read on for another quiz question.

Information about yourself or your band, listing your accomplishments.

Not quite. This information would be better suited in a short biography. The cover letter should tell the station how to contact you, something about your music, etc. There's a better option out there!

Personal details about yourself, such as your musical interests and influences.

Not exactly. Your cover letter should be a more professional document, and include things like contact information and websites. Save the personal stuff for the short biography instead. Click on another answer to find the right one...

You don't need information, you just need to market and sell yourself.

Nope. You should definitely put down some information about yourself in your cover letter! Focus on your contact information, websites, and basic info about your music. Choose another answer!

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Keep testing yourself!

Part 2 of 3:

Researching the Radio Scene

1.



Determine your radio options. The genre of music you play will help to determine the radio stations that are likely to play your song. For example, public radio stations (such as local National Public Radio affiliates) tend to focus on indie, jazz, and singer-songwriter types.^[6] Your local college radio station may be a good choice for music that draws a younger audience, such as rap, hip-hop, and rock.^[7] Make sure you send your song to a station that's shown they play that type of music.

2.



Research your local stations. You're probably going to need to start small, especially if you haven't signed with a record label yet. College radio stations are excellent places to get your start, because they tend to be open to playing new and less mainstream music. They also tend to be less driven by advertising and business concerns than commercial radio, so they might be more willing to take a chance on your song.^[8] However, commercial radio stations may also be interested in your music, especially if you're a local act, so check out the websites for the stations in your area.

1. You can find radio station locators on the internet. These will allow you to search by state, city, or country.^[9]
2. Look for titles like "music director," "station manager," "production manager," or "DJ." These are usually the people in charge of receiving, selecting, and playing new music.
3. If you're not sure whom to contact, try calling the station's general information line and asking to be connected to the person in charge of music programming.
4. You can also call in to the station during a specific program: often, DJs answer the phone during their programs and you can ask them about getting your song on air. This works particularly well if you call a show focusing on the genre of music you make.^[10]

3.



Consider alternative radio. Internet radio is still broadcast radio's younger cousin, but it's another venue for emerging artists. Many internet radio stations allow -- even welcome! -- submissions from musicians who are new on the scene.

1. Pandora allows direct submissions.^[11] AmazingRadio.com is another online station that accepts independent and emerging artists.^[12] Live365.com will host your music in their Music Library, which will allow their online stations access to it.

4.



Make connections. Many DJs and radio stations have social media accounts now. Follow them on Twitter and Facebook and check out their blogs and playlists. You'll have a better chance of personalizing your submission if you know who you're sending your song to.

1. You can also reach out to radio stations and DJs through social media. A tweet to them about your music will get your name out there without seeming overly aggressive.

5.



Read guidelines carefully. Submission guidelines vary widely, depending on where you're submitting your music. In general, though, music on CD seems to be the preferred submission method. Few places will accept a digital file sent as an email attachment.

1. If the radio station's website provides specific guidelines, follow them! Nothing will turn off staff faster than you not following their directions. Many stations will discard music without listening to it if it isn't submitted properly.
2. If you can't find information about submitting your music online, contact the station with your inquiry directly. Send a short, friendly email explaining who you are, your musical experiences, and what your song is about. If you have a YouTube, Facebook, or other media page, include a link. Don't send any attachments; many places won't open email attachments because of security and virus concerns.

Score
0 / 0

Part 2 Quiz

What should you do if you can't find any information about submitting your music online?

Submit it anyway. If they didn't put requirements, they don't have any.

Not necessarily. There might be some guidelines that you overlooked, and nothing turns staff off faster than not following guidelines. You should still try to find out what the guidelines are, even if that seems hard to do. Try again...

Don't submit it or risk it. Go to a different station instead.

Not quite. That would be giving up too soon! Just because you're having a hard time finding their guidelines doesn't mean their guidelines don't exist, it just means you have to look elsewhere! Pick another answer!

Contact the station directly with an email and an attachment.

Almost. You do want to contact the station, but you don't want to include any attachments. Many stations won't even open an unsolicited email that has an attachment, because sometimes, that's how spammers send viruses. Click on another answer to find the right one...

Contact the station directly with a link but no attachments.

Yes! Email the station directly. While it is perfectly okay to add a link to a website, you shouldn't send any attachments. Most places won't open emails with attachments due to virus risks. Read on for another quiz question.

Want more quizzes?
Keep testing yourself!

Part 3 of 3:

Submitting Your Song



Customize your submissions. A personalized submission is far more likely to catch a music director or DJ's eye than a form email that's clearly been sent to 500 other stations.

1. This also goes for physical CD submissions. Whenever possible, customize your submission using people's names (if you can find them) and a brief statement of why you fit in with their station's "feel."

2.



Send in your music. Once you've established the guidelines for submitting your music, send it in! Give complete information -- your contact info and the CD's track listing are essential -- but don't send anything that isn't asked for.

3.



Wait. It can take days, weeks, or even months for your song to make it into the hands of a music director, especially if you've sent it to a larger station. Don't harass people with calls or emails. Remember, they get many submissions from hopeful artists just like you, and it takes awhile to listen to everything.

1. The radio station may give a time-frame for responding to you. If it's past that time-frame, a friendly email inquiry is appropriate, but try not to sound accusative or angry. A simple email asking if the music director has had time to listen to your submission yet will suffice.

4.



Prepare for rejection. It's always awesome when an artist gets a big break, but there are many artists and bands out there and only so much radio space. You may be rejected from the first several stations you contact, and that's okay. Be persistent and patient. Being rejected doesn't mean your music is bad!

Score
0 / 0

Part 3 Quiz

True or False: If you don't hear back within a few months, you can harass the station about it.

True

Definitely not! Stations get a lot of submissions, which can take a while to get through. If the time-frame for a response has passed, email station and politely ask them if they've listened to your submission. Try again...

False

Yes! Many stations get lots of submissions, and it can take a while to listen to. If the time-frame for a reply has passed, don't be afraid to send a friendly email asking about the submission. There's a chance your email went to their spam folder, or got overlooked for some other reason. A polite email can remind them you're still interested! Read on for another quiz question.

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