

What is an indie record label? How? Why?

A record label can be run independently, but it requires a healthy plan and mindset. A friend in the industry (Nashville) recently said that a Label is really a bank that has capitol \$\$\$\$ or in many cases, 'creative capital' (friends in places and favors - person owes me one for that gig I did in 2019 for peanuts, and I wasn't a jerk). The label exploits the music and works to get it heard, reviewed, performed, talked about etc. Right now 2024, the barrier to entry is vanishing. Anyone can record at home and upload to a variety of DSP (digital stream platforms) via distributors like Distro Kid, CD Baby, Tune Core, and then a few more selective companies like Symphonic, InGrooves etc. Once the music is uploaded, the real work begins. With no energy or creative planning to get heard, the music will sit and potentially end up on 'Forgotify' a website that allows you to be the first to listen to one of 46.2 million songs with 0 streams! That's right! Did you know that there are approx. 103.5k ISRC songs delivered per day to DSP's?? So you, releasing your song are in a pool with 100k other songs any day you release. The power behind a good release starts months if not years before the song/album comes out. My suggestion is to put in the hard work.

1. Value your time and talent: Schedule a few hours each week on the calendar to just sit with a notebook and write down your plans for release. Plan out with a calendar how to spread the word over the course of 3 months - promotion. During this scheduled time- start with the physical uploading of the song and registering ISRC on your PRO for publishing, etc.

2. Create stories that tell the truth - photos, videos, notes, about the song(s)-all of this for later posting to social media and email blasts. Literally write out the narrative of what the song is about, how was it recorded, tell the story. Write it down before you have a deadline with a publicist! I call these are called - Marketing Assets.

3. Don't spend a second thinking about the folks that you want to impress. Who do you know that does and who believes in you?!!! Don't have an email list, fan list, huge social media following? Forget that. It's hard but forget trying to win someone over, stick with the folks that love 100% of what you create. They will spread the word. PS, most folks don't get taken seriously in their own backyard. It's ok, it's just how it is. Set your sights much higher than your hometown, your high school, etc. And....don't be a jerk ever. relationships matter.

4. Prepare: Ready to stay Engaged! Be ready with another release and book live shows, shoot a video. Your story doesn't have an ending and a spring break. You want to keep your fans engaged.

5. Fans! You don't have any? You can if you start. It's that simple. Start with 0, begin telling your story. Put out music. Be thankful, grateful, tell your story.

6. Legalize it! Cover your butt with legit registry of IP through PRO's - do not go any further unless you believe in yourself enough to register your music - (intellectual property registration through performing rights organizations ASCAP - USA, GEMA - Germany, IMRO - Ireland, JASRAC

- Japan, SOCAN - Canada, UBC-Brazil, KODA-Denmark, SACEM - France, STIM - Sweden, VCPCM - Vietnam, PRS - United Kingdom etc etc. In the US ASCAP and BMI will work with foreign PRO's on your behalf.)

7. Last but not least, You are in charge. You can move at your pace once you find it. You can change lanes when you need too. There are countless stories of artists that started really young and then artists that were 'discovered' late in life.

\*The Good the Bad and the Beauty of it all - The process of creation is absolutely amazing and can be life changing for the artist/creator and the fans. For the creators, this process can be all consuming and cause Postpartum Depression at the end of project completion. This is all too real. Taking time to acknowledge this throughout the process and attempting to build into the schedule/calendar, time to rest, rejuvenate and celebrate is the secret. Real talk: drugs and alcohol will numb, but cause more damage than good even in moderation. Keeping a real check on this is important for so many reasons. Have a partner you trust and will allow to speak to you with your health as a priority. You cannot create great music/art if you aren't around. This partner can be what fits you, doesn't have to be a romantic partner-life mate. I'm just saying, everything that goes into the entertainment industry life requires balance and trust. Real human relationships are your compass. No technological advances will replace real human connections, the process of creation, to the sharing with a community of art lovers. Seek real relationships.

Not only a business but a lifestyle, the entertainment industry is designed to never stop. It will eat you alive, but it can also feed you for life, if you are ready.