



Play Nice!

How to build valuable connections within the music industry

Be honest – when you think about people in the music industry what do you assume they're like? Do you believe they're:

- Unapproachable
- Scary
- Too busy to make new connections
- Actively opposed to meeting new talent
- Aggressive
- Only focused on money and business

If that's what you think, you're not alone.

It's a common misconception that the music industry is a closed shop, with artists, writers, producers, etc. all jealously guarding their territory, terrified that a rising new star will swoop in and steal their record sales.

In fact, (almost) everyone's really lovely. We're just hardworking people who love what we do!

It often comes as a surprise to aspiring songwriters to learn that people in the music business are *always* open to making things happen if you approach them appropriately. After all, this industry *needs* creative people if it's going to keep putting out new music and productions.



The secret sauce to making it in the industry

Do you know one of the most important factors when it comes to building connections within the music business?

Play nice!

The nicer you are, the more people will want to work with you. It's really that simple. When you combine being nice with a talent for music, it's a winning combination.

The trick is to be kind but confident. Know your strengths and what you bring to the table, but always approach any new relationship with an attitude of giving and wanting to help without expecting anything in return.

Put it this way – if you were on a dating app, you wouldn't be rushing down the aisle with the first person you swiped right, would you? You'd want to take your time, get to know them, see if they really are someone you have a connection with.

It's the same with music. There's no rush. Be selective with the people you approach – you don't swipe right for everyone on an app, and you don't want to work with just anyone purely because they're in the music industry. (Trust me – you really don't!)

Do your research

Think about the music you love right now. Is there a TV show or movie with an amazing soundtrack? Has there been a recent release you've got playing on repeat?



Research everyone who was involved in making that music. Consider the artist but also dig deep into the team behind them. Who's the A&R, publisher, music supervisor, writer, producer, manager?

Once you've got this list, you've got a great starting point for reaching out and building connections. In these times of social media people are more approachable than ever. You'd be amazed at how many industry movers and shakers are accessible on Instagram or Twitter.

Gone are the days when you'd have to hit the Yellow Pages to look up a telephone number for a manager or producer. (And if you don't even remember the Yellow Pages, consider yourself lucky to be born in the internet age!)

Now all you have to do is send someone a DM and you've got instant access to them.

Don't be a Dk!**

Just because you can DM someone without going through their secretary doesn't give you carte blanche to suddenly cold pitch your latest song to everyone. That's the best way to guarantee nobody's going to want to listen to it and then the world may never hear just how awesome you really are.

Remember the dating app analogy and take your time to get to know the person first.

Once you've found someone you'd be interested in working with, reach out to them and pay them a sincere compliment. Follow this up with an intelligent question about one of the projects they've worked on. Close out by saying



that even if they don't get back to you, you still appreciate what they do and are grateful they've taken time out to read your note.

Always put yourself in the other person's shoes and treat them the way you'd like to be treated if someone you didn't know reached out to you. These are busy people who don't owe you their time, so be polite, respectful, and undemanding.

Give without expectation

If you get a response to your DM (and you'll be amazed at how many people will write back), try to keep the conversation going without taking up too much of their time. Always approach the relationship with an attitude of being willing to help without adding any strings. Nobody likes to feel used, and people can sense if you're just treating them as a stepping stone to break into the industry.

Think of it as building a friendship – everyone loves to have more friends! Consider ways in which you can add value to someone in the industry – could you record some vocals for free? Help with a topline or guitar solo? Do you have other skills you could offer, like web design or creating flyers?

Always keep the focus on what you can give and don't worry about what you'll get in return. You're trying to build long term relationships which will last for decades, not short connections which fizzle out in five minutes, taking your career down with them. Eventually the right opportunity will come up and then you'll be the first person they'll turn to for help.



Assignment

Make a list of at least 30 different ways you could add value to someone. These could be music related, or they might be completely left field – maybe you could recommend a good place to stay in your town or offer advice on how to train a new puppy! Consider all your transferable skills and all the experience you have which someone else might find useful.

Keep this list to hand for when you start reaching out to industry contacts – you never know who might need what you can offer when you start talking to them!