

Get paid to sing!

FabJob Guide to
**Become a
Recording Artist**



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Contents

How to Use This Guide	3
About the Author	7
1. Introduction	9
1.1 Becoming a Recording Artist.....	9
1.2 Limos and Parties and MTV...Right?	10
2. Mirror, Mirror – Who is The Artist Presently Known as You?	15
2.1 Underneath It All: Your Musical Style	15
2.1.1 Identifying Your Style	15
2.1.2 Did Your Mama Name You Xerox?:	18
2.2 Seeing Stars: Your Artist Image	21
2.2.1 How Your Image is Developed.....	21
2.2.2 If The Shoe Fits: Creating the Best Image for You.....	23
2.2.3 Don't Write Checks Your A** Can't Cash: Why the Truth Will Set You Free	25
2.2.4 Remodelling For Humans: Improving Your Appearance	26
2.3 Tighten It Up: Honing Your Skills for Success	29
2.3.1 Your Singing Voice.....	30
2.3.2 To Dance or Not To Dance	33
2.3.3 I Love That Kid!: Cultivating Star Quality.....	33
2.4 Educate Yourself About the Business.....	37
3. Your Demo Package	38
3.1 Demo Package Checklist	38
3.2 Making Choices and Playing It Smart	43
3.2.1 Your Demo Budget	43
3.2.2 Picking a Producer	43
3.2.3 Choosing the Right Songs	46
3.3 Demo Package Do's and Don'ts	53
3.4 Putting It All Together	56
3.4.1 Recording Your Demo	56
3.4.2 Demo Duplication	59
3.4.3 Photos	60
3.4.4 Bios	61
3.5 Packaging Your Demo	64

4. Getting a Record Deal	67
4.1 Zen and the Art of Record Deal	68
4.1.1 Choose Your Shopping Team	68
4.1.2 Pick Your Target Record Companies	70
4.1.3 Develop a “Shopping Diary”	73
4.1.4 Distribute Your Demos	74
4.1.5 Follow Up, Follow Up, Follow Up	76
4.1.6 A Few Simple Rules to Remember	78
4.1.7 Don’t Give Up	79
4.2 How to Generate a Buzz	82
4.2.1 Play Live Shows	83
4.2.2 Sell Your Own Music	87
4.2.3 Give It Away	89
4.2.4 Create a Website	89
4.2.5 Participate in Showcases	98
4.2.6 See and Be Scene – Networking	102
4.2.7 Audition for a TV Show	111
4.2.8 More Ways to Generate a Buzz	114
4.3 Slip In Through The Side Door:	
Music Industry Jobs and Internships	117
4.3.1 Recording Studios	117
4.3.2 Internships	118
4.3.3 Crossing Over to Recording Artist	120
4.4 Slip in Through the Back Door:	
Becoming a Music Entrepreneur	123
4.4.1 Your Demo Materials	124
4.4.2 Getting Your Name Out There	134
4.4.3 Distributing Your Music For Sale	136
4.5 Even Jordan Couldn’t Do It Alone:	139
4.5.1 The Power Forward:Your Entertainment Attorney	140
4.5.2 The Point Guard: Your Manager	143
4.5.3 Accountants and Business Managers	147
4.5.4 Other Team Members	148
4.6 Signing the Deal	149
4.6.1 Types of Deals You May Be Offered	149
4.6.2 Major Labels vs. Indie Labels	151
4.6.3 How to Choose the Best Deal for You	152
4.6.4 Holding Out for What You Want	153

5. From Signing to Stardom	156
5.1 Pop Cherry – Your First Recording Project	156
5.1.1 Recoupable – The Word Every Artist Should Know	156
5.1.2 Pre-Production Development	161
5.1.3 The Recording Team	163
5.1.4 The Recording Process	169
5.1.5 Delivery Deadlines	171
5.2 Marketing & Publicity	173
5.2.1 Overview of the Process	173
5.2.2 Your First Single	173
5.2.3 Your First Video	174
5.2.4 What Happens After Your Album Release	175
5.3 Making Money	178
5.3.1 Artist Royalties	179
5.3.2 Songwriting and Publishing	179
5.3.3 Producing	182
5.3.4 Live Shows and Merchandising	184
5.5 Advice on Becoming a Star	185
6. Learning the Music Business	191
6.1 Resources	191
6.1.1 Books	191
6.1.2 Magazines	193
6.1.3 The Internet	195
6.1.4 Events	196
6.1.5 Record Stores	199
6.1.6 Radio, TV and Movies	199
6.2 Contact Information	201
6.2.1 Industry Organizations	201
6.2.2 Music Publishing Companies	202
6.3 Speak Like a Pro! A Glossary of Music Industry Terms	203

1. Introduction

A Star is Born

1.1 Becoming a Recording Artist

Recording artists get an amazing opportunity that very few people ever do: the chance to share their personal creative vision with the **entire world**. They are creators and messengers of music, and music is the universal language that has the ability to cross cultural and language barriers to touch the minds, hearts, and spirits of millions.

Being a recording artist is a powerful creative responsibility, and it can also be a *lot* of **fun**. Who *doesn't* want to go to fabulous **parties**, wear fabulous **clothes**, play fabulous concerts for thousands of screaming **fans**, and rub fabulous elbows with the **rich** and **famous**? Recording artists get to do all these things and more, which makes it one of the most popular fab jobs in the world.



In this guide you will discover the steps to becoming a popular music star so you can launch your own career. The information in this guide can help you no matter what type of music you want to perform. While the guide focuses on succeeding in contemporary popular music – **pop**, **rock**, **R&B**, **rap** and **hip hop** – many of the techniques can be applied in other genres as well, including country, jazz, Christian, new age, gospel, and even classical music. The information in this guide can put you on the road to achieving your dream.

The most significant step along the road to musical stardom is getting a recording contract. When you get a recording contract, you will become a “**recording artist**.” A recording artist is a musician or group of musicians signed to a record company for the purpose of recording music to be sold.

NOTE: I often use the terms “record” and “album” to refer to a full-length recording. CD’s are the most common format for selling music, but there are other formats (vinyl, cassettes, mini discs, etc.). The terms “record” or “album” include all formats.

Becoming a recording artist can seem like an impossible goal only accomplished by the lucky and the privileged. Not true. Talent, a real passion for music, determination, and careful preparation can help you to create real opportunities for yourself – you **do** have the power to create your own luck.

Music is not an exact science, so there is no set recipe for landing a record deal. That is a **good** thing – the more roads there are that lead to the goal, the more freedom you have to choose your own path. The key is to possess the best roadmap possible, know how to avoid ending up at the side of the road with a blown transmission, and to have a plan to put into action once you arrive at your destination.

That’s exactly what this guide will give you.

This guide is structured to cover some very important, often overlooked aspects of breaking in as well as the nuts-and-bolts of the process. I’ve worked in the music business for 12 years and counting, and I know from experience that being educated can give you a huge advantage.

You have to know as much about what *not* to do as what *to* do, and why. You need to know the truth – what’s real and what’s myth. You need to understand the way the people in the business *think*, and how that thinking shapes the business. You need to understand some key things about yourself – who you are as an artist, and who you are not. You need to know how to prepare, mentally and physically, for what lies ahead. You need to speak the language fluently. And finally, you need to know how to combine all this information with your talent to create a plan that will give you the best chance for success.

So let’s see what your daily life will be like once you have achieved that success.

1.2 Limos and Parties and MTV...Right?

What Life As An Artist is *Really* Like

Many people think the daily life of a recording artist is some variation of what they see on MTV. Regular people take the bus or a taxi, recording artists take a limo. Regular people go to work, recording artists go to parties. Regular people drink soda, recording artists drink champagne. True...sometimes.

TV shows like *American Idol*, *Pop Stars* and *Making The Band* have shown bits of the real job behind the glamour, but they don't show the whole picture. So what is the life of a recording artist *really* like?

Let's look at some of the basic responsibilities:

- **Recording** album projects
- Performing in **music videos**
- Doing **interviews** for radio, TV, magazines, and newspapers
- Appearing for **photo shoots**
- Going on **promotional tours**
- Performing **live shows**
- Working together with their record company to develop **marketing** and **promotional strategies** for their projects
- Appearing for **autograph signings** and in-store appearances
- **Training** consistently to keep their voice, body, and musicianship in top form
- Interacting with **fans**

Sounds pretty simple and straightforward (and quite a bit of fun), right? It certainly can be. Remember that there are duties within these duties, and additional ones will pop up as your popularity increases.

Want to see an example of what a couple days in your life could be like? Let's look at two sample itineraries – one for a new artist just beginning their career, and one for an established recording artist in the midst of promoting their album.

NOTE: You'll see the term "A&R person" used below (and throughout the guide). A&R is short for "Artists and Repertoire." This person works for a record label and is responsible for finding and signing new talent, and for overseeing the recording projects. (See the "Speak Like a Pro" section in chapter six for more definitions.)

This Is Your Life, New Recording Artist!

DAY 1

- 8:00 a.m.** Wake up
- 9:00 a.m.** Meet with personal trainer at the gym – develop workout and nutrition regimen
- 11:30 a.m.** Home, shower, change
- 1:00 p.m.** To record company for development meetings
- 1:30 p.m.** Meeting with A&R person re: recording budget and development plans
- 2:30 p.m.** Meeting with new vocal coach
- 3:30 p.m.** Meeting with new artist development coach
- 5:00 p.m.** Meetings with possible producers for album project
- 8:00 p.m.** To recording studio to meet with songwriters
- 12:00 a.m.** Home

DAY 2

- 9:00 a.m.** Wake up
- 10:00 a.m.** Meet personal trainer at gym for workout
- 12:00 p.m.** Home, shower, change
- 1:30 p.m.** Meeting with A&R person, marketing rep, and stylist at record company
- 2:30 p.m.** To clothing stores with stylist and marketing rep to explore wardrobe possibilities
- 7:00 p.m.** To producer's home studio for songwriting session
- 3:00 a.m.** Home

This Is Your Life, Popular Music Star!

DAY 1

- 7:00 a.m.** Wake up
- 8:00 a.m.** Personal trainer appointment – meet at gym for workout
- 9:30 a.m.** Home, shower, change
- 10:30 a.m.** To record company for press interviews (magazines and newspapers)
- 11:00 a.m.** Press interviews and photos
- 3:00 p.m.** Lunch break
- 4:00 p.m.** Meeting with A&R person & producer at record company (for remixing new single)
- 5:00 p.m.** To rehearsal studio – rehearsal for LA live performances
- 11:00 p.m.** Back home, pack for LA trip

DAY 2

- 5:00 a.m.** Wake up
- 6:30 a.m.** Car pick up – to airport
- 8:30 a.m.** Flight leaves NYC for LA
- 11:00 a.m.** (LA time) Arrive in LA
- 12:00 p.m.** Check into hotel
- 12:30 p.m.** Depart hotel for LA radio station
- 1:15 p.m.** On-air interview at radio station
- 2:45 p.m.** Sound check at LA club for live performance
- 5:00 p.m.** In-store autograph signing – Tower Records
- 7:00 p.m.** Dinner break



- 9:30 p.m.** Arrive at LA club
- 10:00 p.m.** Hair and makeup
- 11:30 p.m.** Live performance – first show at LA club
- 1:00 a.m.** Live performance – second show at LA club
- 3:00 a.m.** Return to hotel

Busy (and exciting!) schedules, and pretty typical in both cases. Of course, you'll have some weeks that are even busier, and some weeks where you'll have a lot more free time. It's important for you to know **what to expect** so that you can be prepared to meet the demands of your career and to make the best of every opportunity that comes your way.

The information in the next chapter will explain how you can **prepare** yourself for this exciting career. As you read, you will encounter some music industry terms. Knowing these terms will come in handy when you are speaking with the people who have the power to give you a recording contract. If the meaning of a particular term isn't clear, either through the context it is used in or with an outright explanation, you can refer to the "Speaking Like a Pro" section, the alphabetical glossary in section 6.2 of this guide.

Ready to get started on your path? Good...**let's roll.**