

Press Kit

Packaging is an artistic statement in itself and taking a little bit of time and pride in it shows that:

- 1) you're a creative individual; and
- 2) you're serious about your music.

The key elements of a press (promotional) kit:

- biography
- 8x10 photograph
- press clippings/quotes
- audio sample

1. Bio

This is your band's "resume", and should cover the following:

- what you've done
(eg. made a CD, played various places, appeared in interviews, and possibly how the band came together);
- what are your skills and strengths (musically!);
- what are your goals.

Your bio is supposed to include all the tidbits that the press would want to include in their articles about you. Put together a document that will at least give the reader a feel for what you are all about. Provide a description of the your sound - people like a frame of reference. Give the reader a nice, concise three or four sentence description of the sound. You don't have to dress it up to much. If you cover traditional blues standards, then there's really not all that much to say. If you do something a little more innovative, then describe appropriately.

In addition, it's a good idea to include a paragraph somewhere that neatly summarizes the bio. This simplifies the job of those writing articles or looking for something to pass on to the DJ, and this way they'll summarize it just like you want them to. And while no one likes to "label" themselves, the reader will want to know how you see yourselves.

Let the reader know what you have happening for the next couple months. Tour plans, about to go into the studio, a recent release, or a big show with a popular local band. Most bands don't have a bio longer than one single-spaced page. Generally, three or four paragraphs should be plenty. Leave out anything that isn't pertinent. Remember to Spellcheck.

2. Photograph

Black and white works well for any purpose. An uncluttered shot works best, keeping in mind that publications will size you down. Visual media (TV, magazines, etc.) will want an ACTUAL photograph, not a laser copy, for reproduction purposes. Anyone else you're aiming to impress should also get an original. Laser copies are fine for general use as long as they're not grainy or dark.

3. Press Clippings

If you are fortunate to have a lot of it, sort through and keep the best. A good technique is to select quotes from each article (including the byline) and compile them on 1 or 2 pages. They will be more likely to get read, and there's a rather nice impression left by reading a continuous string of glowing compliments, uncluttered by other stuff.

4. Audio Sample

If you're sending out a demo, whether CD or cassette version, ensure that it is marked with your copyright notice, band name, and phone number. Also helpful is an insert, with a list of track titles (and all songwriter credits if you're sending it in search of a recording or publishing deal.)

5. Additional Material

The container: you can go with a basic folder, or have one custom imprinted with a colour photo, logo, etc. etc. If you're preparing a fair number of kits, look into the price of custom jobs. This is the first thing that's gonna hit their eye.

Cover Letters

- This is where you make your requests. If you're sending it to a record label, specify if you are seeking a complete artist deal, a publishing deal, a distribution deal, or whatever. Nothing fancy is required, but you need to introduce yourself. Your kit should be addressed to a specific person, so here's where you remind the person about any past contact you've had with them. If you are sending it unsolicited, tell them where you found out about them, or who recommended you.

Lyric sheets

- If your lyrics aren't on your CD or cassette, you may want to include these. This is crucial if you're going for a publishing deal.

Stickers/posters/postcards

- Most people aren't going to display these until they're fans, but these items are useful in showing that you're working at self-promotion, and how serious you are. Beware of poster creases.

Pens and other assorted gadgets

- If they're useful, they're a good idea. (Nobody's gonna throw a pen away.)

6. Final Points:

- Take a hard look at your finished package.
- Is it a good representation of the image you're going for?
- Always put time and effort into making a Media Kit that looks respectable and shows that you actually care.
- Keep it up to date.