



REACH FAME

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1. Getting Famous, what it's about.

Reaching the status of worldwide fame can be either lightning quick, with help from a headline or breaking news bulletin, or it can take years, with tons of work. What we are going to go over in this ebook is organized for you to make the most out of it and understand exactly what you need to do and how to go about doing it.

If you are looking for fame because it is your dream to sing on stage or tell jokes on HBO, then you need to critique and practice your act, then perform your act. If you wish to become an actor or model, you need to design your image and performance, then present yourself and act to an agent or audition.

You need to focus in on your image, performance, look at your personality, and work on fine tuning your craft, digging yourself a nice niche in the industry.

People who get famous, and keep the fame, "create" a new industry for themselves, within the big industries, either hip hop music, country music, dark comedy, kids comedy, etc.

They do something or perform an act or take on a personality that hasn't been done before, which is what I call a "sub-industry."

Most people make the mistake of rushing the process, because they are impatient. I have heard again and again: I only have 2 months to make this music thing work, and if it doesn't happen for me I need to forget about it. Now 50 million dollars of record sales or dvd sales is only worth 2 months of your time and then its back to waiting on tables?

It could happen for you, if you go about it the right way, like make the 5 o'clock news and impress all of your audience enough to remember your name in the morning, but if you are a rock band or a serious artist, there is a definite way to go about it, ensuring your place in line for fame, and no matter how long it takes, you need to implement the appropriate steps needed to first, design your vehicle for "getting there" then rehearsing your act or creating your image or show, then performing it either to people who you believe will do the work for you because they are "sold" on it, or do the work yourself which gives you the ability to create leverage for your career positioning.

2. Your position, what you do.

No matter what you want to do for your career or what you already have established, you need to follow certain guidelines and discipline yourself to a daily ritual which may include any or all of the following: practice, rehearsal, design, sometimes a physical workout, ear training, movement training, (including dancing) and the practice of dealing with people in the industry. Now there will be different people to speak to depending on which way you want to show the world what it is you do. We will get into all of this a little later, but for now, let's go over the differences in requirements for different acts.

Remember, in some cases, people have gotten to where they always wanted to get by first performing an act that they could realistically do faster and maybe more naturally than what their "Dream" was, but after establishing a name for themselves, It was alot easier to sing or act or rap or whatever it was that they wanted to do in the first place. With some exceptions of course.

Let's go over different arts and acts:

a. Solo Singer

Requires voice training and practice, Appearance, personality and performance (Possibly music composition)

b. Participating in a group of musicians

Requires individual practice and fine tuning of single performance, Group rehearsal, Band image, (It is great to create many different images and present them possibly in the form of pictures to a focus group or different people on the internet for opinion)

c. Organized acting group

Includes the process of creating an artistic commercial group image, performance, accuracy when delivering lines, Sub-industry is very important, something new, and with an exiting plot.

d. Organized Acting/signing

Requires voice rehearsal, acting, group acting practice, group performance rehearsal.

e. Contemporary art

The sky is the limit, but remember that you need to appeal to the public, not just what you feel is entertaining or visually stimulating.

f. Modeling

Image, presentation, personality. The modeling industry is very heavily reliant on agents or agencies that have fashion companies or advertising companies as clients.

g. Acting (Solo career)

Find your sub-industry, or decide how many sub industries you can handle as one actor.

A lot of the time, the agencies that hire you or have you sign a contract will fit you with a certain part or depending on what type of parts you have played in the past will dictate which direction they will seek or which roles they will work on having you do when working with you.

3. How the entertainment industry works

The entertainment industry is in business because people all over the world either directly buy the dvd's, cd's, mp3's for entertainment purposes, or associate music, faces, slogans or visual artwork with a product, (say for instance hairgel) that is the money maker for a big company.

So you have millions of people all over the world doing searches in an online search engine looking for a band that they saw on tv or that they read about in a magazine, wanting to outright buy the cd, resulting in your record label and distributor making money or a hairgel company paying your agent money to have you in their commercial.

Everybody needs to make money from somewhere. If the magazine is free for anyone to buy, then you better believe that they charge an arm and a leg for you to have an advertisement in the back of the magazine. If the magazine costs 6 bucks? That magazine will need to "feature" quality artists, actors, singers, models, interesting people and/or sports legends and put their picture on the front page to ensure that people will buy the magazine.

This is also the same with Cable TV. HBO will pay your production company a big check and in turn, needs to make sure that your program will keep all of the subscribers subscribing to HBO. If HBO starts to pick the wrong shows, shows that don't do as good as other shows, their revenue will have a different effect as opposed to having that well watched show, where people are glued to the station, and tell their friends that they "Need to get HBO to see this show, etc.

Some TV shows work differently then others, but the name of the game is money, and it is a huge business.

Some TV shows are free to watch, but then again, will draw huge crowds to see them, and that's why they do commercials. If you have a beverage company or high demand product that appeals to a general audience, you better believe it, the best place to advertise, with the most sales potential and exposure is by forking over a million bucks to have your advertisement shown for 30 seconds during the commercial break of the TV show.

Better yet, you can get a "block" of advertisements deal which will show your 30-second commercial during every commercial break.

Now as a company selling a product, how do you make sure that your 2 million spent on advertisements will actually sell your product? Whats a "sure fire" way of making sure you make your money back? Put a famous actor or rock band in the commercial. If you do that, so many more people will stop what they are doing and actually watch the commercial.

That's why actors and rockstars have the big houses and the 5 ferraris in their garages. They are hot commodities, not only employed by their record labels and production companies, but fought over by different ones because they are a "sure fire" way of getting people to watch the screen, listen to the ad or program, or buy the DVD or CD.

There is always a reason that a magazine, radio station or XM Satellite radio will feature a rapper, artist or songwriter. Always. They do not do it because you ask them, they do it because they need to in order to make lots of money. For the next couple days I want you to think about this. Think about how every publication and broadcaster gets their money, and how you will fit into the equation.

a. The Music Industry

The music industry operates on a heavy sales premise. Albums and mp3's are sold, music is licensed for film and commercials and merchandise and image licensing are parts of everyday music industry commerce.

Only the strong survive, and to compete with the "products" that are sold by the record companies, you must be able to compete in numbers with the other products. For instance if a rapper sells 2 million records, and has 2 videos on MTV, 3 songs in rotation on national radio stations, and commercials on TV, then you realistically need to have as much exposure as him, first of all, and second of all, your album needs to be easily accessible in the stores. If you get all of the exposure that you need, but your CD is not easily available in stores, your "Conversion rate" will not be as good as your competition's.

The internet is a great tool to sell records or dvd's with. You can easily get a huge following immediately with the internet. In the ebook we will go over all types of marketing, including marketing with the internet, as well as "viral" marketing which is a "buzz" type marketing campaign creation. With classic methods such as having an ad put in magazines, you still need to wait sometimes 3 months for your ad to appear in the monthly issue from the date of the order, so with help from the internet and radio, you can create instant buzz.

The internet also happens to be killing the big record labels at the moment, but they are working feverishly to try to stop people from downloading free material and the regulations are coming soon. These new regulations that will make it impossible to download free music, will result in you making alot more money!

Let me break down the machine for you to better understand the industry:

The record labels: They work as the organization that funds you and hires everyone to work on your project and selling your project. They are basically the organizers and "contractors." They are on the hunt for solo artists and bands that have worked their way up the food chain and public demand resulting in a following is usually accompanied by a demand by all of the record labels. For instance, if a solo artist wins American Idol, most likely every record label will sign the artist. If a contestant of American Idol comes in second, half of the record labels will offer the artist a record deal, and if the artist comes in third, a couple of record labels will offer the contestant a deal and so on.

Sometimes, an independent artist can create a huge buzz by him or herself, and sell a million records themselves and do everything themselves keeping all of the money, opposed to a record label taking 80% of the revenue and leaving you with 20% (If you are lucky)

Other times, and most often, a record label signs an artist and produces the album, distributes the album only to have the album flop, and it ends up a disaster.

Manufacturers: Music industry manufacturers typically CD/Design manufacturers, will dub and burn the music, video or artwork on CD's, DVD's, Records, Tapes, Video game cartridges, T-shirts, flyers, posters, cards, and more.

Distributors: The distributor's industry is one of shipping and supply. They buy music from the record label and then the music stores place orders to the distributor. A distributor is kept in constant alert of what is hot and what's not, and sometimes works directly with an independent artist bypassing the record label in hopes to make twice the amount of money.

Publishers:

Publishers send you a percentage of royalties from your album being played on the radio or broadcasted. You as an artist do not have to pay them. They are paid by the record labels who use radio stations to play their music, resulting in people purchasing the music they have had distributed.

b. Hollywood

Hollywood is the location of the entire motion picture industry and community. If you want to become an actor or create motion pictures, Hollywood is the place to get hands-on experience and get started making or starring in movie roles. Some movies that portray hollywood are "peewees great adventure" "simone" "bullfinger" and "stuck on you." You can of course show the world your artwork, (whatever it may be, video, audio, print) without actually physically living in Hollywood California, using the internet, but if you chose to work from your home you should adopt website design skills, video editing skills and some audio mixing ontop of your already killer acting and screenplay chops.

Actors and actresses: Play the role or roles portrayed in a script

Writers: (Screenplay writers adapt a story from a book for the screen)
(Script writers write with the most fine detail)

Directors: Directors control the actual creative process of the production. They tell the actors or performers how to portray characters, recite lines, move around the set with extreme detail.

Producers: Producers are generally the ones that finance and oversee projects.

Agents: The Agent works for a percentage of what you get paid for a project. They seek jobs for the artist and then broker the deal, sometimes fighting for you so that you get the job over an other artist in the extremely competitive industry.

Managers: Managers are similar to Agents although they will go on tour with you and customize the schedule of your performances and "manage" your career campaigns.

Casting: Casting agents are the ones who you look for if you are an actor or actress and looking to star in a hollywood production, broadway play or a motion picture or dramatic performance.

c. NYC Arts

They are paid by the record labels who use radio stations to play their music, resulting in people purchasing the music they have had distributed.

d. Modeling Industry

They are paid by the record labels who use radio stations to play their music, resulting in people purchasing the music they have had distributed.

e. Other Industries

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f. Working an industry job

It is very important to understand the difference between working in the industry with a 9 to 5 getting famous.

Alot of people believe in the "at least get your foot in the door" concept.

What this means is simple: A handful of famous rappers became famous after working in the mailroom in a major record company like Sony

Records, and now tell the tale as if you need to perservere at what you do and "hang on," getting your feet in the door, blah blah...

Well, you can work as a janitor in a record label or in Hollywood if you like, but when it comes time to purchase a new wardrobe for a performance, fly to NY or get your hair done, working a 9 to 5 in these companies is sometimes not the best source of income.

Anyone who mentions how you can "climb the ranks" within a company from a ground level position should also explain to you that they will work you to the limit and expect years of loyal work at a somewhat low pay as well or they may be guilty of extreme dishonesty.

A lot of the time they use the promise of fame or fulfilling and prestigious jobs and/or experiences as leverage; In hopes of minimizing pay and imposing a "loyalty rewarded" policy.

"Getting your foot in the door" has not worked for hundreds of thousands of people. I would not take a job at Def Jam in hopes of getting famous. There are plenty of reasons to get a job at Def Jam, and I am even including "experience in the record industry" as one of them but getting famous has nothing to do with working in music, art, movies or modeling.

4. Building your act

Before you do anything, you need to decide what industry you will be working in, design your direction and act, model your craft, and rehearse your buns off. depending on your individual industry, your natural intake & talent level, and quality of rehearsal, the time to master one's skill can enormously vary. For instance, for a natural comedian, someone who repeatedly is told that they should do standup because they are "incredible" at it, may possibly be ready for presentation immediately. If you want to be a famous lead guitarist, it might take you possibly a few years to critique your skill.

First of all, you need to figure out what it is you do.

If you already know which industry you are going to enter into, it is now a good time to figure out which sub-industry you would like to focus on. If you already know that you are going to be working in the comedy industry, you need to figure out which sub industry.

Radio comedy, standup, motion picture, adult comedy, black comedy, satire, journalism comedy, kids comedy, etc.

It is a good idea to take into account that agents, A&R's, listings, and jobs are always done by the sub-industry. It's always more focused then you would like it. For instance, I myself do alot of different styles, play alot of different instruments and so on, so If I wanted to get a record deal with a Def Jam Rap label, I would not want to show them my rock guitar chops. I would want to show them my Rapping or beat making. If you do alot of things, or find that you want to do every possible sub-industry or medium under the sun, you probably will end up sabotaging yourself at the interview or showcase if you do too many styles or "stray" too much from your image style.

After you have decided which industry and then which sub-industry you are going to focus on, write and record a song, practice a script, a skit, a comedy showcase or gallery exhibit and practice it over and over again until you live it inside and out.

Work on one skit, script or one song at a time, because quality is always better than quantity.

Prepare two different presentations: The "on the street" presentation, which should be 5 seconds to 2 minutes long, and the showcase presentation, which should be 3 to 10 minutes long. Think 5 to 10 minutes of material at the most. That is how much time you will have to present your act in real life. If you are an actor, and you run into Steven Spielberg on the street, if you have 10 seconds worth of drama from one of his scripts prepared, you will be in good shape.

I am now going to suggest different "ideal" showcases for you to prepare for your meetings:

Actor: 5 different "snippets," each consisting of 10 second sections from movies. 5 different genres would be great. Ideally, make it a goal for yourself to prepare different snippets for every director.

For instance, have a couple Martin Scorsese snippets prepared, Robert Zimekis, Steven Spielberg, As many as you can do, but quantity ONLY after Quality. You could have only one snippet prepared but if it was the best ever, your in! Opposed to if you haven't practiced, and you begin doing multiple snippets for a famous director, he'll yell "Security!" and your audition is over. See what I mean?

Rapper: No matter what your time frame, you should think in 3's. Three separate verses (all different songs) is good, different tempos (Or "feels") as well as different subjects. Learn to freestyle as well as write your material. Improvisation, (Freestyling) is very important and gives you the freedom to customize your material to possibly fit the presentation. Written material and freestyle are easily told apart from the other especially if an audience is familiar with your style and skill. The freestyle will usually consist of far more simple one syllabl rhymes, as well as far more simplistic content matter and metaphors, and the written material is far more advanced and the rhymes can sometimes consist of two to as many as 8 syllable punchlines. The thing that is great about being an advancing rapper or singer is you don't need music, you can do it anywhere you might be.

Comedian: As a comedian, you again do not need anything other than your brain and your vocal chords to present your act. think 5 second to 20 second "mini" acts, and if your audience demands more or shows interest, keep those high-quality "mini" acts coming. Of course, another way to explain a "mini" act is a JOKE! But some "mini" acts will consist of buffers and softeners and skits and satire commercials, so the labeling of "joke" may get me into trouble down the road.

Depending on which type of comedy you are going to get into, the general preparedness philosophy will work for all mediums. Let me simplify: No matter if you are a stand-up comedian, voice genius (Imitating voices, celebrity voices) joke teller, knock-knock jokes, etc, stick to the 5 to 20 second "mini" acts standard. This will give you room to edit your master act to perfection.

Throw bad jokes out. DO NOT USE FILLER Only quality will do. you have all the time in the world.

After you have prepared a few "mini" acts, try doing them in front of a friend and see if you can make him laugh. You may make your friend laugh, but then when you try it in front of your mother, she may not understand it. This is okay, because different audiences find different jokes funny, but there are some acts that EVERYONE will find funny, and if you focus in on those you will be king.

At the same time, since you already have figured out which industry AND which sub industry you will be working in, you should try to figure out your audience and then test your jokes on your certain friends that resemble your audience best.

a. Setting goals

It is very important to set goals either hourly, daily, weekly, monthly or yearly and work towards achieving that goal.

Working towards a goal is similar to pulling yourself there instead of pushing yourself. The same concept applies to rear and front wheel drive! Which is better in the snow? Front wheel drive is better, because it is pulling the weight, instead of pushing it.

I have found that weekly writing out a list with circles next to the numbered items "todo" for that week, gradually filling in the circles after I complete the task, has enabled me to clearly think out and execute everything I needed to do for the last few years. It was actually the key to my success. A friend of mine showed me an online service where you can go and type them in, but to tell you the truth, the "Write on a piece of paper" method seems to work much better and is much quicker. (Quicker than signing on to the internet etc)

Aside from setting "short-term" goals, definitely think about the future, and what you want to achieve, say in the next year or so. What type of material would you like to be able to perform, do you want to achieve a better appearance? Or possibly have the ability to play a certain guitar solo? What about polishing your already stellar creative output? or recording a cd? Maybe just getting your single on every radio station in the US. Think through your priorities. What do you need to do to make it? And make it happen. Remember, all you need is your killer performance, so time spent in the practice room, or in a lesson, is time well spent.

b. Rehearsing

Time to rehearse. Rehearsal is a necessity to success. No matter if you are a doctor, lawyer, musician or baker, you need to rehearse. Practice makes perfect. Some people have it easier than others, say for instance that you are a tuba player. You can't practice in your apartment. What if you are an astronaut? You won't be able to practice until you drive to the Nasa training building!

If you are in fact able to practice, don't take it for granted. Start practicing. If you are in a band or group, you may need to rent a rehearsal space out for all of you and split the cost evenly down the middle, say for instance if it costs \$400 a month to have a rehearsal space, and you have 4 band members, then get everyone to fork over \$100 a piece and you'll be in business.

The one thing you have to know, is that your body has something called "Muscle memory." If you repeat something enough, your body will take over and your mind relaxes. What this means is once your mind relaxes, you can start using it again and accelerate your speed, or polish your movements or performance. Its like you shift your gears. The actual practicing of one piece of music or the reading of a script over and over again will end up becoming so easy for you, that you can then "shift" your gears and then "graduate" to a new level that will enable you to either progress the speed of the piece of music or polish your reading of a script becoming the best actor in the world, understand what I am saying?

c. Record your demo

To begin this sub-chapter, I am going to explain three different examples of demo-making.

The first, is the most common: Recording three or four songs on a cd and then manufacture or "short-run" manufacture the cd and send it out to radio stations, record labels, etc. This method is fine, but make sure that you are sending it to the right record label. Also, with that being said, make sure that your sound is going to have suitable radio stations or record labels fit for it when it's done in the first place!

Record the songs, possibly record different versions of them, (In different studios, live, electric remixes, etc) and then play the collection or "side by side"

d. Prepare your reel

If you called up a production company or music house looking for a job, you probably heard the words: "Do you have a reel?"

A "reel" is usually a video tape, DVD or cd that contains all of your best examples of work that you have done. It usually only lasts a few minutes, (The amount of time that the people watching have until they go back to their busy and hectic workday.)

e. Written documentation/Resume/Bios

Regardless of how incredible you are at what you do, you should contemplate printing out a resume or bio to have in your portfolio and to hand out if someone asks for it. It always stinks when everything is going great up until the point when you are asked for your documentation and you don't have anything to give them. For a resume, you should have it done in the classic resume format, and for your bio, have that done in the classic format and you can possibly have a picture of you at the top of the page.

It is always a good idea to look at existing bios and resumes of other artists, actresses, actors and entertainers to get a good idea of what you might want to do with your own documentation. A good place to look up other bios and resumes is at google.com.

Type in an artists name and then "resume" or "bio" after the name to start getting some ideas.

f. Make a Portfolio or "Press Kit"

A portfolio to an artist is essentially a collection of your best works, similar to a reel, except printed. A portfolio or "press kit" to a rapper or actor is a folder that includes pictures of the artist, business cards, bio, resume, and nowadays, a DVD is a good idea no matter if you are a musician, band, rapper, actress, actor, model or comedian. Include your best songs, music videos, live performances, movies or whatever you feel is your strongest material but make sure that you have carefully handpicked ten minutes of your BEST material to include in your "Kit."

5. Presentation

There are of course a lot of elements that are incorporated into one, powerful successful star in the entertainment world.

In this chapter we will go over four of the most important aspects in creating a star, and they also happen to be some of the most important factors that an A&R, Casting agent or creative director will look for in an artist or entertainer.

Here they are:

a. Quality of material

Many factors go into the quality of your material. First, your originality. When someone is watching or hearing you perform or present yourself, is the "style" of your performance similar to works they have seen or heard before? Depending on how "familiar" your material is, this can very well work against you. Even though sometimes you need to work within the grid and not come across as being on another planet, doing things that are not "recognized," a "fresh" perspective and Originality is necessary in the making of the "next big star."

Quality of your songwriting, witty comedy or your portrayal of a character is very important. If you are a comedian, have punchlines every four seconds, but if you are not dynamic, no one laughing, etc you will not be hired. Now on the other side of the spectrum, a comedian with incredibly hysterical performance, punchlines and imitations, but only every 10 seconds, will get hired on the spot.

Quality is important. When working on your performance, getting together your "playlist" and so on, make sure you reach a certain level of quality before moving onto the next song or act on your playlist.

b. Appearance

Now this chapter can be about a gorgeous, flashy, well dressed singer with designer shades and diamond covered head and all that, or it can be about a gimmicky, overweight and obnoxious comedian who is the funniest act you have ever seen. Appearance is important. It is what you as a "fan" or the audience sees on their plasma screen TV in the car, or on the computer.

Something else included in this subchapter should be "image." I think of image as your ticket to a certain part of the charts, a gateway to visual understanding, allows your audience to visualize you when you are not on the screen anymore, and accept you. An original and creative image will intrigue your audience, and if you are original enough, an audience will begin to respect you even before they hear your music or watch your performance.

c. Personality

Most of the time, an artist's personality should "work" with his or her image. It should have a productive contrast, and what I mean by that is: If you are a gangsta rapper, if you dress like a ballet dancer, you are setting yourself up for a possible capsize or genre backfire, which can have a devastating effect on your album sales or genre placement. I will explain why.

When your album or movie first comes out, people will identify with you as what you are claiming to be a part of. The vast majority out there will believe only what they want to believe and they will basically tell you what part of the store your album or movie will be in, and if it just plain sucks. If the Ballet dancer rapper wanted to have a certain amount of CD's sold, and is even liked by the vast majority, he might end up being respected as a comedian instead of what he wanted to be known as.

Bad attitude:

Say for instance you have incredible material, you look great and everything is wonderful, but your attitude stinks. When you are working on getting your first album out, and everyone starts interviewing you, all you have to do is act like you don't like anything, or act a little too cocky, and then you will lose half of your sales due to the fact people are first envious of your success and then now, hate you because you are cocky or boring. Also, even while starting out in the beginning, the industry does not have tolerance for a bad attitude. Your producer might love your voice or act, but if you have a bad attitude, your fired!

Being on your best behaviour all the time is a little challenging to say the least, I'll admit, but staying positive through an interview or actual business deal is walking the line in the middle and not risking getting squished. You should always maintain a friendly persona, even if you were just given 40 million. Enemies and people who do not like you because of your attitude will take you for all your worth one way or another. But if you always walked in the middle and respected all people, no one will mess with you and make up stories about you because they will know it would be impossible to first ever be believed, and second, suffer the pounding from the people who believe in you.

d. Performance

So you have a kickass album and it is getting tons of radio play. You get asked to do a tour. Will it sound like the album live? It better! Practice with your band or make a cd for your lines to recite and practice your material over & over again, and your body will memorize it so that you can do things at the same time as you act, sing, rapp or entertain in other ways.

6. How to communicate with the entertainment industry

This chapter will teach you how to communicate with the people who will help "make" you famous, or "help" you get famous.

a. Who not to talk to

Once you are ready for either accepting an offer made by an A&R of a record company or merging your already profiting entertainment business with a label, it is important that you study my advice and take it seriously. You might have heard stories and plenty of exaggerated tall tales of how someone knew someone and got this or that but usually if the exaggerated story had truth to it, wouldn't you see that lucky person on MTV after a year of recording or so?

Sometimes the desperate exaggerator did in fact have a short meeting over coffee with someone who works in the Universal building, but but this someone works in an entirely different department then the much needed A&R department.

95% of my experience with people who would say things like "Im in talks with Sony" or "Im signed to Def Jam" in the studio either would end up in situations where they were trying to get free studio time hoping that I would find their "so-called-connection" valuable, and then when I denied them "free service" I would never hear from them again, (and not on the radio either) or they simply had self esteem problems and were looking for respect. A small amount of the other 95% failed at passing a demo past the first stage of "artist development."

It is very important that you do not follow leads outside of your plan. Do not take candy from strangers or eat food on the side of the road. Once your act is prepared, perform it, hire an agent, or make calls to the company. Do not work with people promising you things instead of paying you. The world doesnt work like that. They are lying if they do not have an upfront deposit or advance for you!

First off, from where you are as an artist, other artists have their place in connection to you. It is not a place of investment or financial gain. The connection is simply of a personal comparison you can make for research purposes, to do your own artist development, or you might be interested in an artistic collaboration, but other than those two reasons, unless the artist has a bag of cash for you or sets you up with a connection as a friend, I wouldn't believe everything you hear, because a lot of the time people will use the promise of fame or a connection as currency to get something from you. Just remember that you really do not need anything or anyone other than yourself to create a successful career in entertainment. If you have material, performance, appearance and presentation all in one package as YOU then you will find out that they will come to you with minimal exposure.

If you have not worked on your package you will find yourself getting rejected after every interview and other artists lying to you and wasting your time using the "Record deal anticipation tactic" as currency. As soon as people find out you are an artist, actor or musician who is ambitious and does modern material, if you are not busy working for a major label they will try to offer you situations instead of what really matters which is either to listen to your music, or watch your reel and pay you a tax-deductible check, which is usually a loaned amount. Critique your act, and keep conversations short. I would not waste any time talking to someone longer than 5 minutes, because that is just enough time to find out if they are themselves an A&R, Artist development or in a high level of administration in the record label.

b. Who to talk to

Talk to A&R's, Casting agents, creative directors, producers (Only producers if it's at the right time.)

The best circumstance to talk about what you do is when they ask you or they are in need of something. It's great to hang around them as well. You don't want to talk about it if they are on vacation. It is also IMPOSSIBLE and embarrassing to try to put headphones on DJ Clue's head as well, so don't try it. A boombox works great, but make sure you turn it on with low volume BEFORE you tell him that you are going to play him your stuff. The cd should be playing a GREAT part of your song when you turn it up for him.

Sometimes an actor or performer will get sick and they will be in dire need to re-cast in a matter of minutes because in the movie industry and record industry, everything goes together like clockwork and the meter is running. In this case, they will need someone to play the part. There is a good chance that if the creative director is familiar with your work and they have been impressed, they may ask you to fill in, and that can be your "foot in the door" this being said say if you are working a job in the company.

If you have an important job your position may require constant attention, therefore even though you impressed the creative director at one point in time, you can't get away from your post for that amount of time needed to fill in for the sick actor. It would be ideal, in theory, to "be available" and "on call" like a fireman that shoots down the poll when the alarm rings.

That's why actors that make their living working as an online trader or entrepreneur always get the jobs because they make their own hours. It is very important to be able to make your own hours if you want to be able to make auditions, although if you make it to the first day of casting all of the audition appointments have not been filled yet and are all available, but be careful, the better the part, the longer the line will be, and the more people will be on line for the audition.

c. Interpretation

This section is about interpreting what it is you do when being interviewed by the people who will work with you and make it their goal to sell millions of records, DVD's tickets, art pieces and more. You can also refer to the act of performance interpretation, but at this point in time, you need to learn how to communicate with these people who will "partner" with you.

One of the most important aspects of communication, and what managers and agents are best at, is INTERPRETATION.

Mastering "Interpretation" is the skill of explaining what it is you do to an A&R, manager, or other creative direction person.

You get sometimes as little as 5 seconds to state your case to an A&R and in that time, you need to accomplish certain things.

The first thing you need to do is introduce yourself.

Now depending on the situation and how you ended up there, you need to "customize" a game plan that will lock you in and get you a meeting, interview or on the spot deal.

If the A&R or casting agent is someone who is not interested at all in what you are doing, obviously your time frame will be shorter then if they were interested. (Of course.) Like I had mentioned before, 10 seconds to present yourself and "interpret" what you have to offer.

The strongest effect is an actual physical performance without a cd player or dvd player. Sometimes, this is impossible, for instance if you are a producer of beats: in this case, have a boom box ready with a "medley" of beats on CD in the player. If you are an actor, introduce yourself, and "dive in." begin performing immediately, but make sure you execute a scene or skit that is "time tailored" for the specific moment. It needs to be a short scene, a few seconds worth, so that your audience is engaged and appreciates that you are not imposing on too much of his or her time. This is the aggressive, no-bs approach to getting signed. Show them what you have to sell them.

After your short "sample" performance is done, it is time to interpret. The "scout" or director is now familiar with what you do and how you do it, and now will see more eye to eye with you when you start selling yourself, not to mention that this person will now trust that what you are saying or doing is 100% the truth, opposed to having to "prove" things to them constantly, or having to wait for the person to listen or look at your reel. Doing an impulsive performance can break your boundaries so you have freedom to make moves and advance in your negotiations.

Alot of the time, if you mention to them that you are a rapper or actor, they may ask to "see" some. right then and there you will either bust into character or tell them you are not good enough and that will be the death of your interpretation. Learn how to freestyle no matter what it is that you do. Managers freestyle, businessmen freestyle, it's all called improv. Improvasation that is. The art of making things up as you go along, and making sure it is quality stuff and you are getting done what it is you meant to get done.

One thing you can do that works:

Make a tape or cd of you asking the following questions, and after every question, leave a 10 second space for you to answer. If you are making a cd, then start a new track after the 10 second space, so that every track starts with a question and not with the space.

The meaning of this is so you can practice. Practice along with the cd or tape interviewing yourself.

So...What brings you here?

How long have you been doing this?

How did you hear about us?

Do you have any experience?

What brought you into the industry?

Do you work well with people?

Why would you want to work in this terrible, miserable industry?

What are some of your best accomplishments?

Have you worked with anyone before?

Explain in one sentence why I should sign you:

d. Representation

If you are representing yourself, you need to professionally give a no-bias opinion of what you can deliver, meaning you need to in a way step outside of your skin and talk about yourself as if you are another person standing next to you. You will also need to be genuine and passionate, speaking from your heart as yourself. Depending on what you are saying, some things are better represented from someone else, and some things better said from within you.

For instance, saying that you love music and have since you were young can come from you. Anything passionate can come from you.

It's a good idea to state competition facts and accomplishments from a more professional and less emotional standpoint, the way a manager would talk numbers. Do this to keep it strictly numbers, maintaining the professional environment that you have come to expect when getting a check from these people you are speaking to.

e. Meet the big boys

I recommend doing as much of the work as possible by yourself, before approaching the "big boys." Design your image, act, songs and/or dramatic performance, then rehearse it until your act is polished. Then go out and perform. Create a huge following. The more time and attention you give each stage in the process of artist development, the bigger and stronger your following will become. At that point, you will be able to get representation such as a manager. Once you are performing, invite managers to your performance and begin speaking with them and meet with them, and compare the terms and what they are claiming to be able to do for you. See, since you created a following before you began to shop your work, the ball is in your court, and you are going to be able to take advantage of the managers instead of them take advantage of you! (Don't tell them that though.) You now can pick and choose which manager or agent you would like to work with and have work for you since you are valuable to them. The good managers and agents have very high standards, and for that reason, the labels work exclusively with them.

They are respected by major labels and the major labels and major production companies count on them for the fresh talent. See? You want one of those managers or agents and the only way to get one of them is to build your worth yourself. The more you have built your worth, the better. If you have sold 500,000 records by yourself, each record at \$5, your gross profit would be \$2,500,000! Since you are already selling cd's by yourself, the record company will have PROOF that they will make their money back. At the same time, the record company would have to take into account that if they want to have you sign their contract, they will have to put together a very lucrative offer or you will either keep doing it yourself or go with a record company that is offering something better. See? The company will know this.

The goal is to become something of a hot commodity before you shop your album, so that you can get a better deal with lower interest rates, better terms that are more in your favor and much more money. That representation will be able to work miracles for you if you have done work before wanting to advance to a bigger market.

When you meet with the Senior A&R's, presidents, CEO's etc, use your interview skills that I showed you before. The interview should go smooth if you want money and a trustworthy situation. You want people to be honest with you, friendly with you and generous. Treat them how you would like to be treated. Know what you want out of the deal before you get there, but be ready to IMPROVISE as well.

You may sit down with your lawyer and manager and the senior A&R may have chaged the terms of the deal completely, and therefore you should know what they are talking about cause after all, it is your career they are talking about.

7. Auditions

The audition process works the same for many fields in the arts. Let us take, for an example, a look at the classical industry. There are several professional routes which will require an audition: the symphonic orchestra audition, the free-lance musician (large orchestras, smaller groups for Broadway shows, etc.), competitions, and teaching positions. The first, most important rule is that if you have to practice hard for the last month before an audition (because you feel that you are not ready), you should not take the audition! You must have prepared for months (sometimes for years) in preparation for an audition.

The larger orchestras will have several rounds of auditions, each with different repertoire required. A good idea, if you are considering an orchestral career, is to write to all of the orchestras with openings, request their repertoire list, and make a book of the most common excerpts and repertoire requested. These you should practice for years, keeping them in your fingers, ready for an audition when you find the orchestral opening that sounds interesting to you. The larger and more prestigious the orchestra, the more difficult the excerpts. There used to be a saying: "for every 30 auditions, you might get a bite." The large orchestral audition is a difficult one, but with patience and diligence, you can succeed.

The process is the same for a competition. Competition is fierce in the arts. Try not to compare yourself with any other competitor. You have no idea what the judges are looking for - you may have something special in your playing, your acting, your singing, etc., that makes you stand out among others. Prepare the audition list way in advance, invite your friends and colleagues to listen to you - have "trial runs" in other words. Be open to criticism - this can only be helpful.

A university position requires that you teach and perform in front of an audience. Prepare a good recital program (usually 45 minutes) of contrasting pieces (sonatas and short works of different eras) that are "audience grabbers." If you can, find a master class situation (ask a professor friend if you can give a class for his/her students) so that you can practice being articulate and clear in your directions. Again, ask for criticism - how you can do a better job.

There are many books with ideas for conquering nerves - these are easy to find on the internet with tips on visualizing, calming nerves, etc.

8. Hollywood

Want to become a movie star? The place that thousands of people all over the world have traveled far to do it is Hollywood California.

Nowadays because of the internet, I feel I am obligated to mention that if you use the internet correctly, it can be a thousand times more powerful than working in Hollywood and a much faster vehicle to reach fame, but Hollywood is where it's at. If you are looking for the hands on experience, thousands of acting auditions, up close and personal work with the best directors and world famous actors, you might contemplate traveling to Hollywood, CA to begin a powerful career in motion pictures or TV shows.

a. Building your reel

Even if you have talent and you are gung ho to audition immediately, you need a reel. Do you have any past experience or films that you have starred in? Include samples in your "portfolio" or "reel." The best of the best examples of your work should be included as well as your Bio, Resume, (telling your experience and qualification history) and professionally shot PHOTOS.

What you should do TOMMORROW is go on to the internet, or in your local arts newspaper, and find a photographer. A photographer that can take gorgeous headshots and possibly some body shots, etc. Sometimes, depending on if you are trying to show them you are best playing a certain act or persona, photoshop a background. (If you don't know how to do photoshop, ask your photographer about this.)

So, Get your headshots done, include them in your folder. Bio, complete with picture (For the bio, maybe not a headshot, include a friendly type of picture with you posing relaxed and proper.

After headshots, put together your DVD of past examples (Your best acting or other moments) and **INCLUDE YOUR CONTACT INFORMATION!**

b. The audition process

The audition process in Hollywood is incredibly competitive and cutthroat. This however is nothing to worry about since you are going to create a system of collecting audition data, (Data being time and place of audition) and then put the data together and group them so that you have a travel log.

Let me explain:

There is an audition at 4:00 pm at the B studio and then another audition at 5:00 pm at a studio a couple blocks away. You will obviously "kill two birds with one stone" if you do those two auditions and not do one that occurs at 4:30 (if it is not as good of an audition.

You need to learn how to RECOGNIZE good auditions, best auditions and bad auditions. If there are two bad auditions that are occurring around the same time and it would be possible for you to do them, but at the same time one incredible opportunity across town, do the one incredible opportunity, since quality beats quantity. Set your priorities and focus. Buy a daily planner book that you can physically write in the entries (And pull them out quickly) so when you are booking an audition with someone (sometimes after the audition is full and no spaces are left) you can assess your schedule and jot down what time and place the audition is.

You should be on your best behavior from the beginning to the end, be careful with the guy or secretary taking your name at the beginning too. They can sabotage you if you are rude.

Hopefully you have practiced to your "interview practice cd" and so when they ask you boring questions when you stand up to the plate you can glide through them and move on to the good stuff (which is what you came there to do in the first place.)

Do your best. Concentrate before you start, and bring back one of your best moments practicing at home and feeling what you felt at home while performing at such a level. Make sure you are trying to make a product that you can enjoy as art and do your absolute best. Perform with fluidity. Smash the audition.

After the audition, tell them that you enjoyed it and maybe double check they have your contact information (in a non-neurotic way.)

Depending on the company or "studio" you cannot tell if they were impressed or not but they were either very excited and impressed with your work, or they were not. Judges and casting agents a lot of the time keep their feelings to themselves. You can however with some experience get familiar with their reactions while you are performing and afterwards as well. These reactions should not be taken with much importance, since you cannot do anything anyway, (just wait) to find out if you have been picked for the part or asked to come back to the next audition.

c. Working in LA

After you "mack" the audition, and score the "gig," you will be either given an orientation day where the job and schedule of the gig are explained to you in detail and documented, or you will just be given a schedule and information card.

Practice your script and/or other documentation and make sure you are perfectly comfortable with performing within the job and you have room to enhance your performance and do it easily.

After business and getting your job done, get to know the people and expand socially. This is where "connections" come in handy. Hollywood is hollywood. most everyone you meet on the job is someone to bounce ideas off of, talk to and possibly trade gigs, and befriend. Once in the industry and working there, meet people and exchange info. Email is great, because it is less "intrusive" and if someone decides to contact you, it doesn't impose on your time as much and you can design your communications instead of having to "make it up as you go along" and possibly say the wrong thing, etc.

If you do a good job on your first gig, the director and/or casting agents and producers will want you again. You build up your reputation and before you know it, you will be working on multiple projects and making some good money, getting closer and closer to your goal which is: Get famous!

9. Become an “everything” celebrity

Are you multitalented? A musician, singer, comedian and actor? Well you have a few options. You first have the option of picking one talent to focus your energy into, and you will have better leverage (and will make more money this way)

Or: You can put all of them together, come up with a stage name, possibly an identity as well, and present this one act to the world on the internet or to companies like record labels or hollywood agents.

Or: You can do all separate demos and reels and send them all over the place. (With this method you can have a website made and feature all of the acts on the site)

In this chapter, I will go over what you need to do in order to get started as an "everything celeb" and also certain methods that multitalented people can use to their advantage to advance their careers.

a. Designing your image

What are you capable of doing, is it that you happen to have had experience in many different industries or you would like to have immediate crossover success? Figure this one out because you need to start working in certain areas if you are rusty or inexperienced in it. It is hard to get accepted by record labels, agencies, etc if you are "spread out too thin." You need to be good at what you do. The companies will not necessarily sign someone who does a bunch of things, they sign you "if you are good at what you do." You could be a good songwriter and singer and that's all, and they will sign you. You could be a drummer, guitarist, rapper, singer, producer, video editor, dancer, comedian, actor and model but you better be good at all of those things because you need to fit the role of the person they are looking to invest in.

b. Rehearsal Management

Professionals custom design their schedule to allow maximum practice. Pull out that dataplanner, and book some rehearsals, practice or script readings and stay the course. Set those goals for yourself. .

10. Using rejection to your advantage

Getting rejected sometimes is a good thing; It shows you what industry people you don't need to waste your time on. All in all, the best thing to do that I found was to document what happened in the interview. Write down what went wrong, what you were told and then come up with remedies for the challenges you were faced with. More and more, as time progressed, I would find that I was growing ever more familiar with the types of things people would ask of me and I would use that time to "Break out of the mold" so to speak, which I found got me somewhere. When a record exec or Hollywood casting agent asks you something in an interview, (Not an audition) They will be most impressed if you give them an answer they weren't expecting.

Next time you have an interview, if you have carefully documented and designed a plan based on what went wrong, you will come out of the interview a winner.

11. Using an interview or meeting to your advantage

When you are meeting with a top exec in the entertainment industry, you can consider yourself as gotten to where many have a lot of trouble getting to. Represent yourself to the fullest. Your actions speak louder than words, but most of the time, you will need to use words to represent the actions. Just make sure you don't blow hot air. Exaggerating or blowing smoke might have worked with the bouncer in the club or the secretary, but now you're in the big office and it's time to talk money. These people have one thing on their mind: Money. Business.

If you answer perfectly with these people, (The way you should in a JOB interview) they will think you have experience in interviews but have never been accepted; Hence all of the experience in hundreds of interviews.

People with unbelievable talent get picked with just one interview sometimes and you need to be able to rely on blowing them away rather than answering perfectly. Act like an artist; Give them a laugh or two and then bring the emotions out of them with your song.

12. Tricks of the trade

A. How to package your material:

Put yourself in their shoes for a second: The two kids in the room open up hundreds of parcels and envelopes everyday, stack all of the cd's in a pile and then at the end of the day deliver them to the entry level A&R.

The entry level a&r then listens to them one by one. This is if you are an "unsolicited submittal." The problem with this is that the entry level a&r really does not have any "say" in the process, no power, so if you impress him with your packaging, it does not matter, the guy who makes the decision to forward your stuff won't ever see the packaging.

Now I have a trick that I invented, which involves doing some research on the internet beforehand, read the bio's of the artist development people. (This is very important that they are artist development people.) Connect with them on a personal level: Send THEM your cd. Design the cd cover so that it will impress them personally. (Depending on their personal interests.)

B. What the A&R's are looking for at this very moment:

The main objective:

1. Find you before the other record labels find you.
2. Weed out the trash from the good ones.
3. Get promoted, because you are good at finding awesome bands.

13. Keeping your fame

This chapter is worthy of becoming 1, 2 or even 10 separate ebooks. Once you have begun your major career as an international sensation, you will be confronted with challenges like no other time in your life, and you will enter into a new dimension of an extraordinary size.

The best thing you can do now, is make sure that you are surrounding yourself with people that you can trust and that are honest and hardworking. Be wary of people who are in it for intentions you cannot quite pinpoint or if they are doing it for free and don't have material of their own. These people might try to attach themselves onto connections that you make resulting from YOUR hard work.

You need people who you can trust. You also don't want to have to worry about your bank account numbers and have some incompetent record label attorney or CPA mess up your taxes or state licensing.



REACH FAME

By James Avery
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